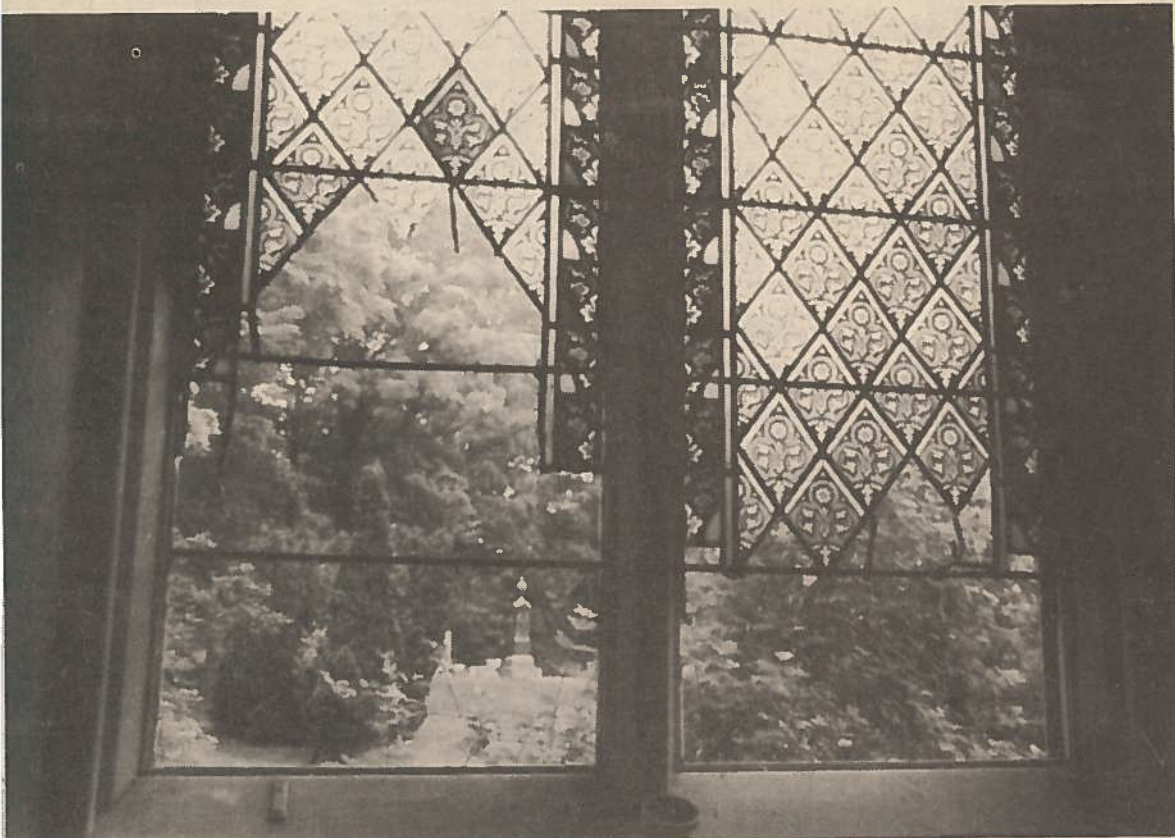# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W. Lattin County Historian

Vol. XVII   **No. 38**

S - O - U - L

Save Our Unusual Landmark will be the focus of this year's walking, guided tour of Mt. Albion Cemetery. The tour will take place on Saturday, October 14 from 2-4 p.m. commencing at the Mt. Albion Cemetery Chapel on Rt. 31 east of Albion. We anticipate this will be at the height of the fall foliage colors. And, yes, there will be a $10.00 prize given to whom ever first finds a certain symbol designated at tour time.

Last year over 300 people attended the tour so it is by popular request that another is being arranged. Our route will vary some over last year's and I have invited two guest speakers who will talk breifly at two specific grave sites. Along with this, I've also arranged through the courtesy of Merrill-Grinnell Funeral Homes to have them bring their antique casket which will be displayed in the cemetery chapel.

Speaking of the chapel, let me now draw your attention to the accompanying photo which shows the present condition of the west window in that building. The sad account of this is: Over a decade ago vandals broke out about a dozen pieces of glass in the left lancet. Cemetery maintenance workers then covered the outer portion of all the windows with plexi-glass. The stained glass was never repaired, but at least what remained, seemed protected. Around three years ago the plexi-glass was ripped off the west window and close to over 100 pieces of stained glass were then simply stolen, leaving then the bottom portion of each lancet in a ruinous condition.

All four windows in the Mt. Albion Cemetery Chapel are original. They are good examples of the early type of stained glass work found in our region and date to 1875. The diamond-shaped pieces are stenciled flowers in black on either pale pink or pale green glass. The borders are smaller pieces of glass in red, yellow, and blue. There is also a different religious symbol in the apex of each window.

At last year's tour many people were appalled to see this unfortunate damage and disregard for a work of art. It was suggested that a Friends Group might help and that donations to restore the window might be in order. Since then, a small group has met, calling themselves Friends of Mt. Albion Cemetery which is an ad hoc committee of the Mt. Albion Cemetery advisory committee under the auspices of the Village of Albion. Three stained glass studios were contacted and asked to give estimates for doing restoration. All three came in the same "ballpark" as to price. But above and beyond duplicating the missing glass, all the windows also now need to be protected with bullet-proof lexon rather than the present plexi-glass. Likewise, the chapel needs some other minor repairs, including interior redecoration. This should be done in a restoration color scheme. The chapel which abuts the holding vault is occasionally used for funeral services and meetings of the Friends of the Cemetery.

A goal of $10,000 has been set for our fund-raising campaign to correct the damage and to prevent any damage to the other windows in the future. We hope to obtain these necessary funds and let a contract to a studio and do other necessary work to be completed by Memorial Day 1997. Donations to this worthy cause may be sent to Friends of Mount Albion Cemetery, East Avenue, Albion, N.Y. 14411.

Over twenty years ago the Orleans County Historical Monument Corp. was formed to raise funds to restore the Tower at Mt. Albion which was completed and re-dedicated in 1976. Likewise, the same group restored the Mt. Albion Cemetery Lily Pond in the early 1980's as a memorial to Volunteer Firemen. Mt. Albion Cemetery is on the National Register of Historic Places and is a decided asset to our community for its beauty and its historical enrichment.

Save
Our
Unusual
Landmark