

Bethinking of Old Orleans

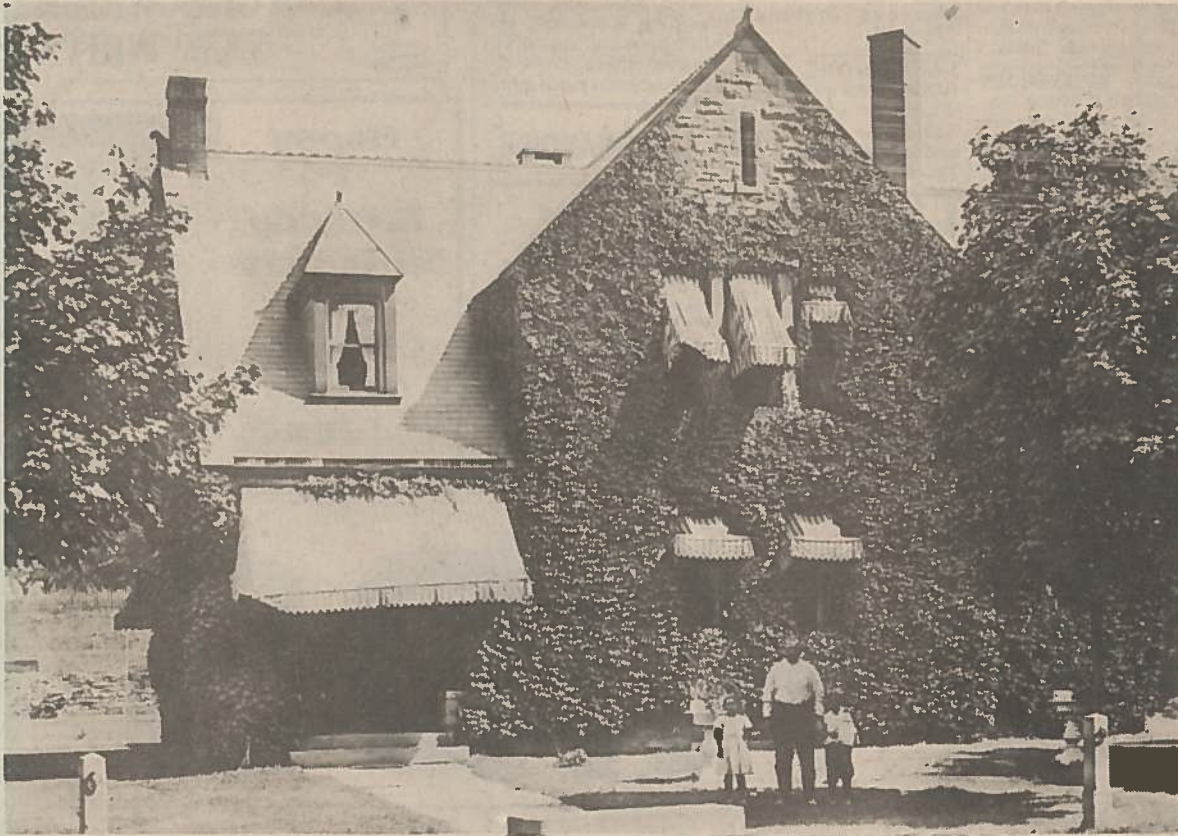
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CEMETERY TOUR CULMINATES ARCHIVES WEEK



*"All things to nothingness descend,
Grow old and die and meet their end,
Man dies, iron rusts, wood goes
decayed,*

*Towers fall, walls crumble, roses fade,
Nor long shall any name resound
Beyond the grave, unless 't be found
In some clerk's book; it is the pen
Gives immortality to men."*

Forsooth! It is the written word which gives us our bearings and perspective on the past, written in the record books and emblazoned on monuments. As you may know, New York State Archives Week was Oct. 8 to 14. It is a week designed to raise public awareness and support for the preservation of valuable archival records and to promote the idea of increasing access to these records. From Genealogy to land boundaries, the written word, safely deposited for reference, is of vital importance for future generations. Archival records naturally include photographs and maps which give us pictorial images as well. Without this kind of information we would simply be lost.

As you may also know, a tour of Mt. Albion Cemetery took place on Saturday, Oct. 14 from 2-4 p.m. The tour started at the Cemetery Chapel on Route 31 east of Albion and was led by yours truly.

Directly across Route 31 from the Cemetery Chapel is the Mt. Albion Cemetery office containing a vault which holds the vital records for those thirty-some thousand who sleep in the eternal city of Mt. Albion. The cemetery office is open every weekday morning. Mr. Phil Knight is the superintendent and Mrs. Valarie Blake is office secretary.

Our photo accompanying this article is from the cemetery archives. It shows the present office as it looked in 1909, when the superintendent also lived there. Standing in front is the superintendent,

Fred M. Standish, and two of his children, Hubert and Marion. Hubert later assumed his father's position as superintendent. The house, erected of Medina Sandstone, dates to 1888. In this picture we notice it is covered with vines and awnings. With air conditioning, awnings of this character certainly have become a thing of the past. Our tour of Oct. 14 did not include going into the office or vault, thence its mention here as a most viable part of the cemetery.

Our tour however, did include references to some things not found in the records vault. Not all information is archival. Monuments for instance, are not filed. And often, there is more to a monument than the chiseled words. Here is what one genealogy researcher told me after the Boxwood Cemetery tour: "All I ever paid attention to were the names and dates. Now I see there is a lot more expressed through the symbolism which should not be ignored."

It is true that between the written word and symbolic illustration we do get a more complete understanding and picture of the past. Much of the information is in the archives of the vault, but most of the pictorial images are monumental. It is these on which our tour focused on Saturday. In some cases the marble and granite imagery is equally as important as the archival material, worthy too of preservation. Getting a better understanding of this aspect of our cemetery will help focus our overall appreciation of what we have both in the vault and on the monuments.

The Merrill-Grinnell Funeral Home Inc. displayed an antique casket at the chapel. A \$10 prize was awarded for finding a particular symbol. The Friends of Mt. Albion Cemetery welcome you to this event with the theme S O U L, Save Our Unusual Landmark. Donations will be accepted for the restoration of stained glass at the cemetery chapel.