

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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STEEPLE STEWARDS



Urge them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous givers, to practice sharing, and to treasure up for themselves a sound foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that is really life.

I Timothy, 6:18-19

Living up to these words, the congregation at the Albion First Baptist Church have taken on the expensive restoration project of their steeple. During the month of June it was hard not to notice the steeple-jacks at work on this extraordinary landmark. The church, which was dedicated in 1860, has naturally suffered from nature's constant attacks of wind, erosion, snow, ice, moisture and extreme temperature changes which cause structural decay.

Mr. Chuck Tanguay of the Upstate Aerial Contractors from Canandaigua, assayed the architecture problems, made recommendations and consequently was hired to undertake the project. Because of serious leaking in the steeple, lower parts of the tower were deteriorated. Phase I which is now completed was to restore the steeple. Phase II within three years will secure the lower portion and Phase III will eventually undertake other roof repairs and repointing of side walls.

With this project we see workers in the photo suspended on ropes repairing the base of the steeple. New gutters of copper were installed along with copper hips on each ridge of the steeple. The dormer windows were found to be in deplorable condition and were completely rebuilt. The slates on the spire were checked one-by-one, adjusted, renailed or replaced. This was indeed, a

time-consuming task. And to top it all off, a new copper finial was built and installed along with a lighting arrester. It was a little over thirty years ago that the original Zinc finial was removed and a simple cap put on the top of the spire which made it look truncated.

Albion Baptists can be applauded and thanked for their decision to preserve this beautiful historic landmark. You see, it's not just for Baptists. It's for everyone. It's a community treasure in architectural form which bespeaks a part of our rich local heritage. Beneath this steeple on the basement level is our first community holding vault which was used before the present receiving vault at Mt. Albion Cemetery was built. Being a public-spirited congregation, the Baptists felt they were providing a beneficial service during the cold months when the ground was frozen which prohibited burials. The steeple tower also contains a historic clock with three dials and a bell, all in working order.

Steeple, by their sheer dominating nature, command our attention no matter what a person's affiliation. They symbolize aspiration or to aspire to greater things. They lead your eyes upward and point heavenward. Indeed, the Albion skyline would be less interesting without this unusual hexagonal spire giving testimony to the faith of our ancestral forebears.

"This is the Lord's House! It has been passed on to us from people in by-gone times who cared about us and gave us a house of worship in which we are nurtured spiritually over and over again."

The Buildings and Properties
Commission-First Baptist Church,
Albion, N.Y.