

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## ELIZUR PLATT 1803-1875

Elizur Platt for whom Platt Street was named in Albion, was born at New Haven, Conn. in 1803. He was the only son of John and Abi Platt. In 1825 he married Lydia Merriman of Bristol, Conn. and soon afterward moved to Clarendon, N.Y. Here four sons and a daughter were born, two of the sons dying in infancy.

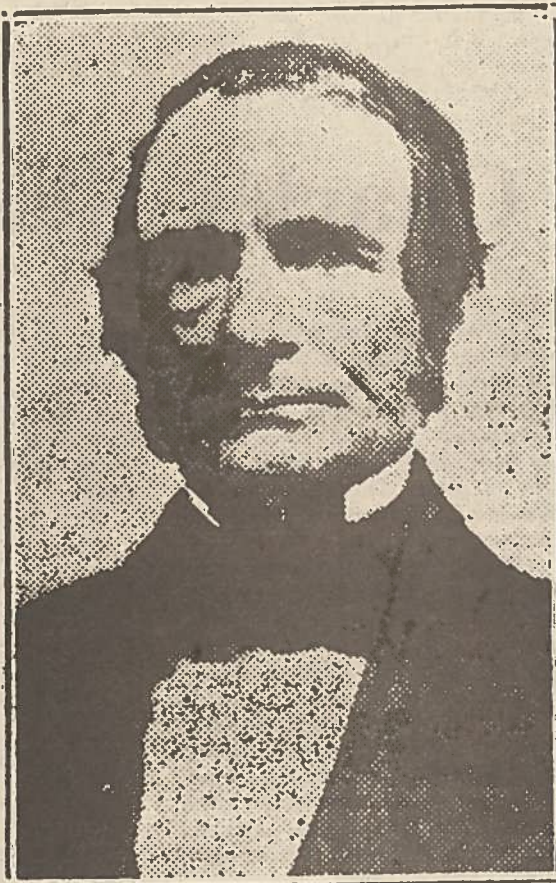
In Maplewood Cemetery just south of Clarendon there is a monument which was erected by Elizur Platt as a memorial to his father, mother and two sisters. The infant sons are not mentioned. The father John Platt is actually buried in Connecticut.

Elizur Platt stayed in Clarendon for approximately ten years during which time he ran a mercantile business. In the mid-1830's he moved his family to Albion where he acquired the Red Line Packet Co. which operated on the Erie Canal. His canal boats took passengers between the points of Troy and Lockport. The Red Line Packet Co. furnished both meals and lodging enroute plus carried mail for the government.

As a purveyor of food and lodging on the canal boats it was only natural that his next business venture was to operate the hotel known as the Mansion House in Albion. This was located immediately north of the Erie Canal on the west side of Main Street where Burgio's garage is now located.

At this time a tall liberty pole stood on these grounds with an eagle mounted on a perch half way up. A replica of that liberty pole was dedicated at the Cobblestone Museum properties near the Farmers Hall in Childs, N.Y. in 1982. Perhaps it was Elizur Platt who initiated the original one. He operated the Mansion House until it burned. At this point he built a hotel at the southwest corner of Canal and Market Streets in Albion known as the Platt House. Canal Street was later changed to Bank Street and Market Street became Platt Street. At this same time Mr. Platt also built a fine Creek Revival Dwelling on the east side of Platt Street. This beautiful and imposing house with four white pillars still stands today as an outstanding landmark from the second quarter of the 19th century. It is currently owned by John Gavenda but in the recent past was the residence and office of Dr. John Ellis.

In 1859 Elizur Platt sold the Platt House to R. Harrington. In 1862 the structure burned but was replaced with what later became the Orleans Hotel. It was also during the 1850's that Elizur Platt operated a stage coach line to Rochester. In addition to these various business ventures he was one of the directors of the Bank of Orleans when it



**ELIZUR PLATT**

was incorporated in 1834. Mr. Platt also served as a trustee of the First Baptist Church of Albion.

In the late 1850's the Platt Family moved to Chicago. Theron Platt, son of Elizur, founded employment working for George Pullman who was a building mover before spending full time in manufacturing Pullman cars. Pullman specialized in removing brick structures.

In Wheaton, Illinois Elizur Platt also operated a hotel which he called the Platt House until 1871. He then built a large livery barn and remained in that business until his death in 1875. Mrs. Platt died in 1886.

Although Elizur Platt was not born here, nor did he die here, he left his mark on the community. Indeed, there were many people who passed through this area on a westerly migration from the New England States to the western frontier. The Platts stayed longer than some and were per chance more prosperous than many who sought a better life.