Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XIX 12-3-97 No. 49

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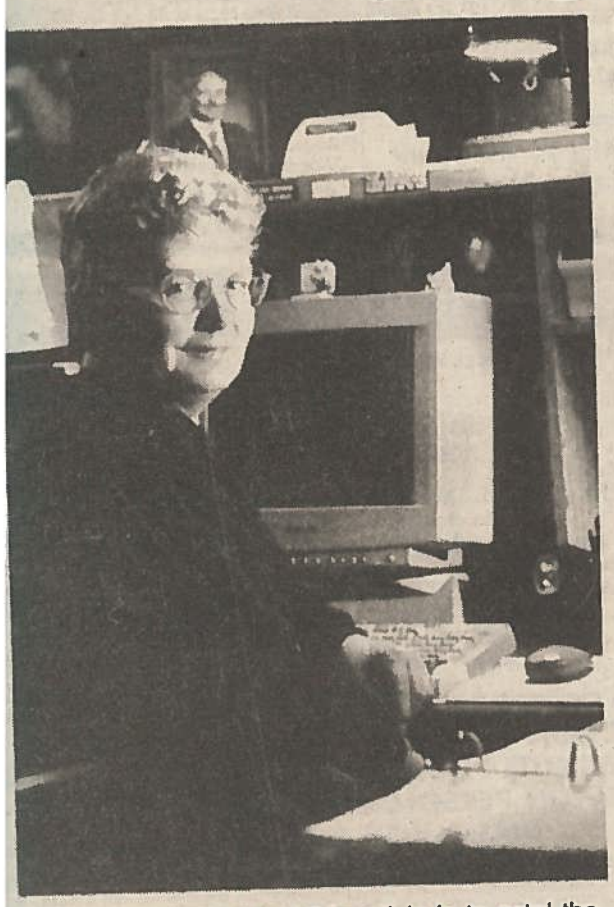

The sole purpose of this article is to extol the volunteer work of Sharon A. Kerridge. She is a behind-the-scenes lady who spends hours transcribing cemetery records. Recently she has performed the colossal task of completing Mt. Albion Cemetery. In this body of work Sharon has compiled information not only from the records, but burial permits, census records and monuments. Yes, Sharon has read every monument in Mt. Albion and taken good notes. Her completed alphabetized computer printout has all the names of those buried there. Incidentally, there are over 19,000 names which fills a 1,000 pages on both sides. What a seemingly insurmountable task and challenge!

By Using all the sources from which to draw information, Sharon's listing therefore, is more complete than any other single source. It is a genealogist's dream. What a friend we have in Sharon and her willingness to share the information. She says without her computer she could'nt possibly have done it.

Sharon is the coordinator of the Orleans County, New York GENWEB. Her e-mail is sak @ eznet.net. The web site is: http://www rootsweb.com/nyorlean/.

Her completion of Mt. Albion is the result of working on the project for over 2 1/2 years. Counter checking, proofing and collating, to me is tedious work, but to Sharon it's a hobby.

She says that one person who has been a tremendous help to her is Marjorie Schultz of Medina who is know as the "Census Lady of Orleans County". She has voluntarily transcribed the 1850, 1855, 1865, 1875, 1892, and 1915 census records and alphabitized by Town and indexed them. She is currently working on 1830 - 1880 and 1900 census records. Marjorie has also helped Sharon on cemetery stone readings. Sharon says that Douglas Murphy and Bob Hales have helped her get records on to the Web site. She also notes that Kim and John Myers, coordinators of the N.Y.S. GENWEB have been especially helpful. She indicates too, that what she has done for Mt. ALbion, Richard and Shirley Nellist have done for all the cemeteries in the Town of Ridgeway which is also on the WEB.

In a recent interview, I met with Sharon at her home in Gaines where she and her husband George Kerridge have lived since 1972. I asked her how shc got started in such an endless project. It seems that in 1988 she started researching her own family genealogy and soon afterward her husband's family. She got hooked! For George's family, her first stop was the Gaines Town Clerk's office and from there the LDS Family History Center in Medina. There David Luthart was very helpful and encouraging. Bev and Clint Eastman, now associated with the center, have also lent their support.

She soon discovered that information was to be found but that it was scattered. DAR cemetery records from the 1930's although very helpful, needed updating. So for something to do because she could see the need, she started with Gaines, pulling together all cemetery records, monument information and coupling it with census facts. From Gaines, she went on to Carlton and so on. People who use and need this kind of information for genealogy research, started to see that Sharon's contribution was invaluable. Soon people said why not do Mt. Albion. It seemed like an insurmountable task to her. But undaunted, she began this project. She was told that there were about 30,000 interments in Mt. Albion. Well it seems nobody really had an actual count. With her work now complete, we know for sure, that there are close to 20,000 burials. The cemetery can hold 30,000.

Sharon says that with her on-going project she hopes to have within the next two years or so, all the rest of the cemeteries in Orleans County on the computer. You'll be interested to know that Sharon has discovered 80 cemeteries in Orleans County. They range in size from two burials in a coupe of rural cemeteries to almost 20,000 in Mt. Albion. Sixty of those 80 cemeteries have now been completed. She finds that Town Clerks and most churches who hold records are willing to share their information. Sharon, through her devotion to seing a project to the finish, has made the data much more accessible. And from my perspective she has made the lives of all our local historians much easier. We all thank her very, very much for her time, talent and tenacity.