

## A LANDMARK

One of the most noteworthy landmarks in all of Orleans County is the steeple of the First Presbyterian Church in Albion. Visible for miles around that 175 foot wonder is a picture of gracefulness unequalled anywhere in this region. Constructed entirely of our native Medina Sandstone it remains a monument to Elizur Hart who in 1870 gave \$50,000 to have the present church ediface erected. It is said that Mr. Hart wished that the Presbyterian spire exceed in height the Baptist steeple just two blocks away. The church was dedicated in 1874 and represents the style of Gothic Architecture prevalent in 13th Century France. For several decades following its erection, many an Albionite boasted about sitting or standing on his head on the capstone or finial in his youth. That is, of course, when the capstone was still freshly hewn and resting on the ground before being hoisted into place. The very scaffolding alone which had to have surrounded the steeple during its construction must have been an involved network and an engineering feat in itself.

The photograph herein shows the steeple undergoing restoration work in 1937. After weathering the storms of 63 years without any repair, it became evident that reconditioning was necessary when three small stones fell from its height. A committee of solicitors was organized to raise money for restoration purposes to which 333 members and 105 other individuals contributed to "save the steeple". A contract was let by the Trustees to William Summerhays and Sons of Rochester who appointed William James Superintendent of the six-week project. The steeple was found to be badly in need of repointing, and the top 15 feet was found to lean ten inches to the northeast. No evidence of recent shifting was discovered and the structure was pronounced "almost as good as new and not likely to need attention for at least thirty years." The cap stone, five feet ten inches in height, comprised of three stones, one above the other, is kept rigid by a steel bar three inches in diameter as a core extending down into the lower masonry. The top two levels of windows, eight in all, were boarded up to prevent pigeons from entering. The higher windows are four feet six inches high with the lower ones being seven feet high. The diameter of the steeple at the lower windows is eleven feet. On October 17, 1937 the church spire was rededicated and remains today as an expression of joy and beauty piercing the Albion skyline above.

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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