

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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REMINISCENCES



Reminiscences was the Title of a column which appeared in the Orleans Republican back in the early 1920's. I believe these little historical nuggets were compiled by the editor, Lafayette H. Beach. A number of these one-liners have been selected for reproduction here. At the heading of each column it stated: "Doings of the Old Days Long Gone By - Do you remember?"

"When every farm house in the autumn had strings of dried apples and peaches decorating every foot of available space?"

"When every boy and girl knew how to play a jewsharp?"

"When as late as in the sixties, pots and kettles were to be seen on cranes in open fireplaces in the houses of some of our pioneer settlers?"

"When oysters were sold in miniature wooden kegs in quart and gallon sizes?"

"When a poll tax was collected in Albion and every man of 21 years or over was called on to 'cough up' one dollar yearly?"

"When the Western new York Hedge Co. induced farmers to edge their farms with hedges which later took money, time and labor to pull out?"

"When Gates Sherwood used to buy dressed pork for \$4 per hundred and draw it to the railroad stacked up on sleighs like cordwood?"

"When the clothiers gave suspenders or a tie free with a suit of clothes?"

"When the hotels ran buses to meet all trains at the Central Railroad Station and the porters entered into lively competition for patronage?"

"When venison and bear meat were sold in the local markets every winter?"

"When the Bidleman Tennary at Gaines made a market for the farmers hides and drew great bales of leather to Albion for shipment by railroad?"

"When Albion had a sportsmen's club which staged live pigeon shoots?"

"When town pumps were located in convenient places for the benefit of residents without wells?"

"When the traveling junkmen visited your home and swapped tinware for wood ashes?"

"When George Wilson traveled with his panoramic wagon of war views and dispensed root beer from his octagon stand on East State Street as peopled journeyed to Mt. Albion on Sundays?"

"When Dick Gordinier, the black whitewasher artist from Medina used to whiten the ceilings of homes and prided himself on never leaving a streak or dropping the wash on carpets or furnishings?"

"When the butcher used to give away liver and other interior trimmings and never expected that one day they would exchange for coin?"

"When we bought paper collars for 10¢ a box and those with a linen surface for 20¢?"

"When young men dressed in skin-tight pantaloons with straps under the boots to keep them stretched out?"

"When country school teachers were paid \$5.00 a week and boarded 'round'?"

"When the local newspapers always published the list of letters uncalled for at the post office?"

"When fish peddlers from the lake sold whitefish at your door for 25¢ each and when luscious watermelon with rich red meat and black seeds sold from the farmer's wagons for 10¢ to 15¢?"

"When one of the accomplishments of every grocer was the ability to roll a cornucopia to hold your purchases before bags came into general use?"

"When the county clerk occupied a little one-story brick building standing west of the Court House and so dark that gas jets were always burning?"

"When ice was delivered at your house all summer for five dollars?"

"When barbers gave a man a year's shave, haircut and shampoo for \$10 or \$1.00 a month?"

"Our illustration from a 19th century printer's cut, depicts quite nicely, this last reminiscence. It shows one man being shaved with a straight razor while the other barber is giving a second man a haircut. A third patron waits his turn by reading a newspaper. Note in this scene the foot rest for the man in the first barber's chair and the spittoon standing on the floor nearby."