

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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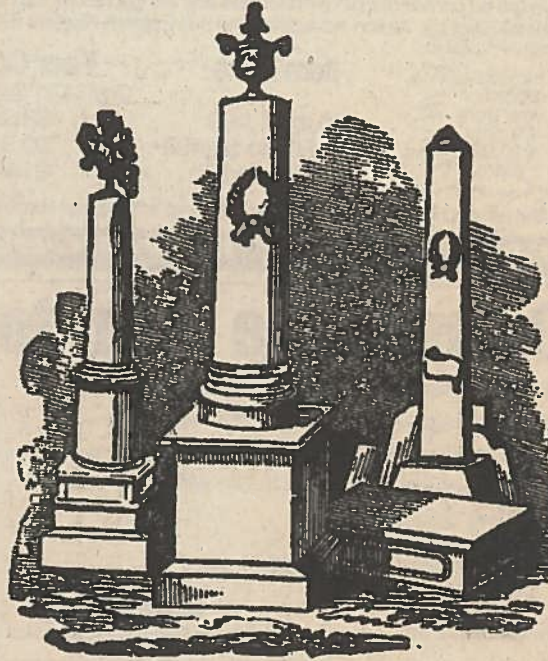
## MT. ALBION FALL TOUR

The fifth annual Fall Tour of Mt. Albion Cemetery will take place on Saturday, October 10 beginning at 2:00 P.M. rain or shine. The starting point will be at the cemetery chapel with historians Bill Lattin and Neil Johnson. This tour will somewhat cover the northeastern quadrant of Mt. Albion, taking in some of the oldest part of the cemetery.

Mt. Albion was formally dedicated 155 years ago on September 7, 1843. The first actual burial occurred just a little over a month after that with the death of Coddington Swan on October 10, 1843. He was the father of William G. Swan who was the benefactor of Swan Library in Albion.

The original ground for Mt. Albion included twenty-five acres which was purchased of Jacob Annis and Lyman O. Patterson at forty dollars an acre. The illustrated Historical Album of Orleans County, N.Y. 1879 states: "After making the purchase the trustees employed Mr. Marvin Porter, an engineer of superior taste and qualifications, to lay out the grounds upon a general plan into lots, avenues and paths ..."

Mt. Albion is certainly a Victorian concept of what such a hallowed place should be. Prior to the second quarter of the 19th century, such places were known as burial grounds or graveyards. There was little attempt to landscape or give the graveyard a park-like feeling. Graves were simply laid out in tight rows. The Victorian ideal was to make the cemetery a beautiful serene place with vistas, flowering shrubs, fountains and sculpture. The hills, glens and terraces of Mt. Albion reflect a totally different approach to cemetery design as conceived by the Victorian mind. This approach suggests that we as Americans, by the 1840's, were beginning to emerge from a strictly utilitarian past into an age where basic necessities were no longer the consumption of time. Therefore, Mt. Albion and cemeteries like it, reflect art, culture, refinement and a yearning for a romanticized culture on a relatively new frontier.



There was a need for a sense of heritage which particularly developed in the second quarter of the 19th century.

We can plainly see the answer to this in Mt. Albion through the placement of innumerable obelisks and pedestal monuments which had their origin in the early days of civilization. The huge monolithic spires of Egypt date back prior to the 40th century B.C. Monuments of the pedestal type had their beginnings in the ancient Roman era. Our ancestors often topped their monuments with Grecian funeral urns to suggest mortality, sorrow and memory.

Prior to the opening of Mt. Albion Cemetery, there was a burial ground in Albion located south of the canal, north of State Street and immediately east of the west branch of Sandy Creek. All remains here, were eventually removed to Mt. Albion and the old graveyard was completely done away with. That is why it is possible to find monuments in Mt. Albion with death dates which preceded 1843.