

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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SERENE SCENE

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Recently a distant cousin of mine, Van Morrison Hess, gave me this wonderful old photo. Judging from the quality of the picture and various characteristics, it could have been taken around 1886. It depicts what was then the Edward Bullard home in the Town of Gaines. This is currently the home of Steve Entz. For many years this was the Spanton farm residence. It was built of cobblestone in the late 1830's or early 1840's. The land this house stands on was first purchased by Ebenezer Durkee in 1834. The next owner was Solomon Wilson who purchased it in the late 1830's. It was probably Wilson who had the house built.

He was a native of Orange County, N.Y. and a miller by trade. In fact, he owned a grist mill located on Otter Creek which had been purchased from John Froctor. Solomon married Clarissa Drake, a daughter of Henry Drake, who lived on the property just east of this. Solomon died in 1840 at the early age of 33. His widow married for her second husband, Smith Stevens, who owned

the property into the 1860's.

The 1875 Orleans County Atlas shows E. Bullard as owner of this place at that time. The 1887-88 Orleans County Directory indicates a Mrs. Edward Bullard as being there then.

It's possible that this is Mr. Bullard in the picture holding a lead to the large steer or prize bull. Perhaps it is Mrs. Bullard standing toward the center of the picture. Another woman holds the bridle of a horse while a younger woman to the far left, holds a child's hand.

The arrangement of subjects in this picture is quite typical of the period. They are spread out through the scene rather than grouped together as we have become accustomed to do in this century. Notice also, the flower beds out in the lawn to the lower left and the tripod and kettle to the right with flowers in it. If we look carefully at the porches, we can see they have brought inside chairs outside. The idea of having just porch furniture as a seasonal thing would have been foreign to people in situations like this locally in the 19th century.