

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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C.W. Lattin County Historian

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TIME TO TAKE NOTE

This article is being put forth in an attempt to give everyone fair notice about an important date in our local history. Exactly one year from now on April 15, 2000 Orleans County will be 175 years old. It was on April 15, 1825 that the N.Y.S. Legislature officially enacted the legislation which created Orleans County as of that date. It is an important milestone in our history and can serve as a catalyst for various recognitions of our past.

Prior to 1976 the Orleans County Centennials Corporation was formed to coordinate local celebrations of our country's Bi-Centennial and the county's Sesquicentennial. To date, there has been no attempt to establish a Septuicentennial committee. However, I can tell you that the public historians who represent the towns and villages of Orleans County have discussed ways in which to recognize our rich heritage. This has been done in collaboration with the Orleans County Historical Association and Wayne Hale of County Tourism.

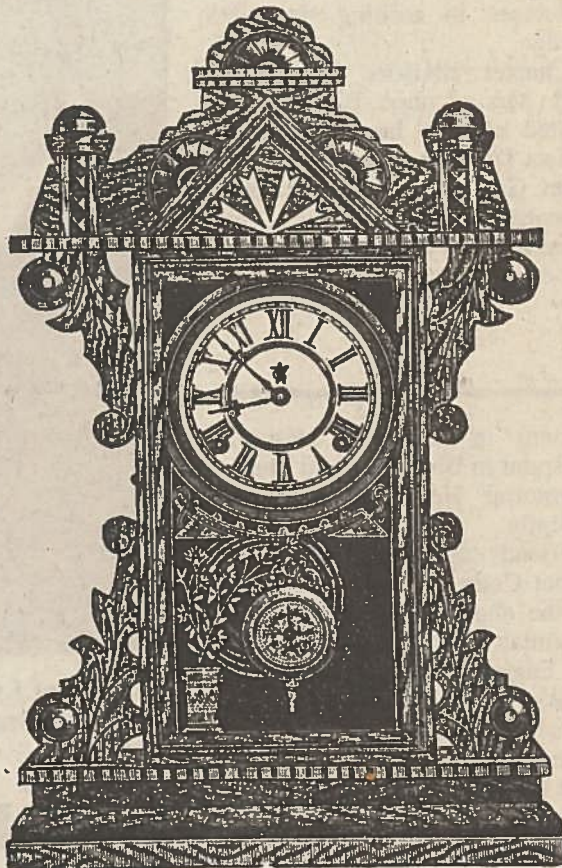
Here are some ideas which have been proposed to help celebrate Orleans County's 175 years:

1. The Orleans County Historical Association plans on publishing a booklet on the historic markers in the county. There are around 70 which have been placed since 1913. They represent the highlights in our history. The booklet would contain the text of each marker plus an appropriate illustration relating to the context of each one. In essence, this would be a county history.

2. Within Orleans County there are six museums with physical properties and collections. It is hoped that through some coordination, all six museums might be open over a given day or weekend so that they become a focus for a driving tour visit for those interested.

3. Cemetery tours are another way to learn about our history. Such tours in the past have been very popular at Mount Albion. But there are other local cemeteries which are of interest. Public historians would like to include these on some guided walking tours. Those being considered are: Boxwood at Medina, Hillside at Holley, Beechwood near W. Kendall, Millville in the Town of Shelby, and of course, Mt. Albion. These tours, if set up, would be spread over several weekends.

4. In 1986, to celebrate Architectural Heritage Year, all the churches at the County Square in Albion were opened on a Sunday afternoon in October so people could visit them to admire the architecture, windows, pipe organs, etc. As County Historian, I would like to see this happen again as over 200 visitors appeared in 1986 to learn about



this aspect of history.

5. Historians have also kicked around the idea of publishing a calendar or even a placemat with historical highlights. Along with these projects, an historical marker might be created to denote our county's formation.

These are only a few ideas which have been put forth that the public historians feel could be realized with relative ease. But there is certainly an opportunity for any individual or organization to create their own event or make a lasting contribution to this milestone in our history. At this point everything is still in the talking stage and optional. However, any number of events or projects could occur during the calendar year of 2000 to make recognition of various facets of our heritage, thus celebrating our 175th birthday.

Think about it! Come up with some ideas. County Historian office hours - Monday 9-12, 1-4, Thursday evenings 7:30-9:30, Fridays 9-10. Phone 589-4174.