

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

5-17-99

Vol XXI

C.W. Lattin County Historian

No.19

## CENTRAL DRUG STORE



Our photograph here is one of clarity and sharpness for being almost ninety-five years old. On the back is indication that it was "taken Tuesday, August 30th 1904". It depicts the Central Drug Store in Albion which was located in the Swan Block at the northwest corner of Main and West Bank Streets. This space is currently inhabited by HSBC, formerly Marine Midland Bank.

The names of the people in the photo were also written on the back. Standing in the entrance recess L to R are: "Charles M. Burrows, M.D. Prop., Agnes McCabe, Book-Keeper, George H. Noble, Manager, George W. Annis, Head Clerk and Robert L. Moore, Junior Clerk". Also noted is "Wm. Barker, at left in reposeful interest."

The 1903 Orleans County Director has a full page ad for this business. It states: "Central Drug Store, Albion, N.Y. Manufacturing Pharmacists wholesale and retail dealers in....Drugs, Medicines, Wines and Liquors, Books, Stationery and Fancy Goods. Largest House of Its Kind In Western New York. Charles Moore Burrows, M.D. Proprietor."

From the photo we can also see what was being advertised and sold. In the left window is a sign for "Little Minister" cigars. An arrangement of what appears to be shoe shine brushes is also displayed in the window. Underneath is a sign for LeRoy Cigars. The right hand window has a display of books and a very large and fancy druggists' decanter in three parts of tiered fashion. At

each end of the awning are signs advertising "Hires Rootbeer, the best drink on earth." Standing on the sidewalk is a keg full of baseball bats. To the far left we can see just a glimpse of West Bank Street. The business which barely shows to the far right was the grocery store of James H. Bailey.

Notice how all are attired in dress clothes. This was just an average work day which indicates that the employees dressed in such fashion to make a good impression on the public who patronized their store. Years ago even the shoppers got dressed up to go downtown. You would have felt out of place had you not changed your clothes in order to look your best. For example, even Mr. Barker, just a passerby, is well dressed with an overcoat. To us, for August 30, this looks like a lot of clothing for what must have been fairly warm weather. Yet we see no sneakers, sandals, shorts or T-shirts. On the other hand, the men's hair styles are quite common today.

Another thing worth pointing out here are the gigantic pieces of window glass which I estimate to be between eight or nine feet high. This photo disproves the misconception of always using small panes of glass when it comes to the restoration of a store front such as this. The Swan Block was built in 1882 and these windows are probably the originals.

Notice: A guided walking tour of Mt. Albion Cemetery will take place on Sunday, May 30 at 2 p.m. with Historians Neil Johnson and C.W. Lattin.