

Bethinking of Old Orleans

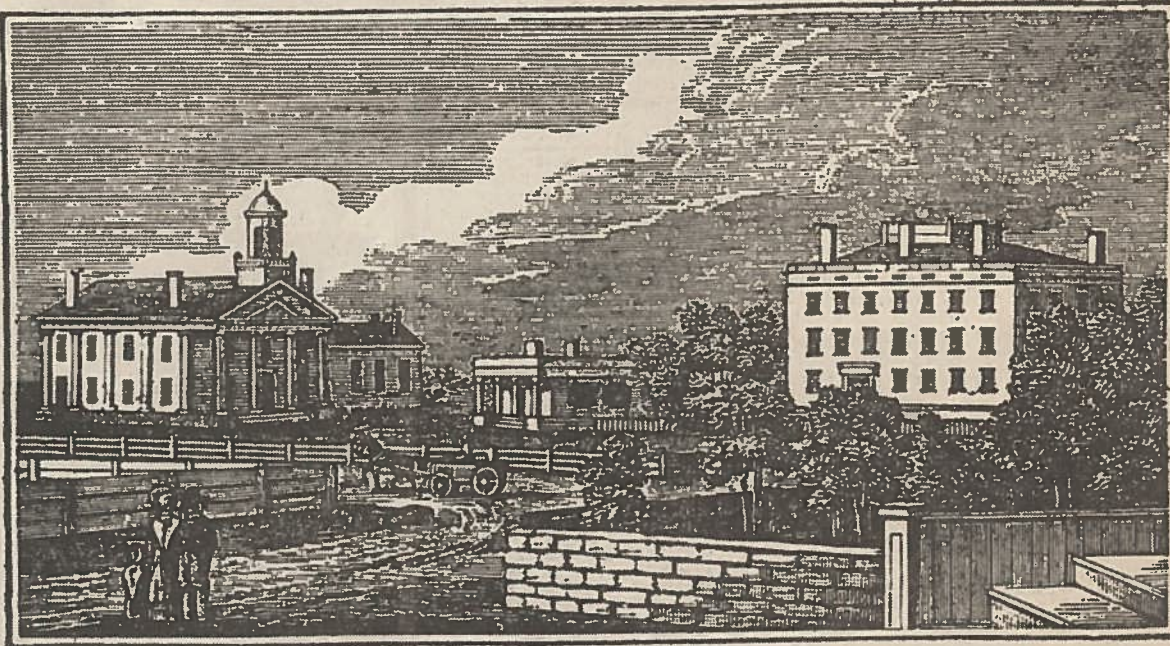
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COUNTY BUILDINGS



The illustration shown with this article is out of "Landmarks of Orleans County" by Isaac Signor 1894. Taken from an old wood cut dating back to 1840, it shows the Court House Square in Albion at that time. With work presently underway to replace the roofing material on the County Clerk's building and the prospects of an addition to the Court House, this picture may be timely. By studying this, we can get a basic idea of the development of this historic district.

First, to orient you in this view, we are looking in a southeast direction. The horse and wagon are in the intersection of Main and East State Streets. The wagon therefore, appears to be heading down East State Street.

The building to the far left is our first County Court House which was erected in 1827 at a cost of a little over \$6,000. This building which had a belfry and faced Main Street was used until 1858 when it was deemed to have inadequate space. At that time our present Court House was erected near the same site but facing State Street. The original Court House was then removed.

Directly to the right and next to the first Court House is also shown an early county jail. It appears to be connected to the Court House but it was actually a separate building which was built in 1838. It was used until 1902 when it too was deemed to be an inadequate facility. At that time it was demolished and another jail was erected for a

cost of \$50,000 which in 1972 was also demolished.

Dead center in this woodcut is a very small building which was built in 1836 at a cost of \$2,000 for a County Clerk's Office. It was used until 1883 when the present County Clerk's Office was erected to give more commodious space in a fire-proof structure for vital records. The older clerk's office was then demolished with its site becoming part of the Court House lawn.

The building to the far right in this early view of Albion shows what was once the Phipps Union Seminary. This was a girl's finishing school operated by Caroline Phipps Achilles that occupied what is now part of the Court House Square. The Phipps Seminary closed in 1875 and in 1882 the county purchased the property, demolished the building and erected our County Clerk's Office.

In the very lower right hand of this old print a set of steps appear. These were the steps of the First Baptist meeting house which was erected in 1830 and only used until 1860 when Albion Baptists erected their present church edifice. The meeting house was then used as a concert hall and eventually was demolished in the 1890s. In other words, all the buildings depicted in this 1840 view were torn down for one reason or another, all over 100 years ago. The only thing which remains from this old print is the Medina sandstone retaining wall now in front of the Swan Library.