

Bethinking of Old Orleans

Vol XXI

C.W. Lattin County Historian

8-27-99 No.33

WEST BANK STREET VIEW



Our photo shown here was taken in the late 1880's by Francis J. Burnette, a professional photographer, whose studio was located at 17 West Bank Street in Albion. He stood at the intersection of Main Street and West Bank Streets and pointed his camera in a westerly direction. Dead center in this picture hanging off the second floor of a two-story business block is his sign which states: "F.J. Burnette Photographer". The photo takes in a clear view of the north side of West Bank between Main and Liberty Streets. Note that the street is unpaved.

Mr. Burnette captured in his work a fine enclosed carriage pulled by two white horses who posed with their driver. On the opposite side of the street we can see a sign stating: "H.B. Doolittle Dentist". This was Horace Doolittle whose practice by the turn of the century was known as H.B. Doolittle and Son when George P. Doolittle joined with his father in dentistry.

As to the buildings shown here, the one to the left (stone) now houses the Family Hardware with its side door about under the Doolittle sign. The

two story brick block where Burnette had his studio was demolished over thirty-five years ago when Marine Bank expanded for a drive-in teller and parking lot. I can remember several store front businesses in the building including: the Marsh Hardware, a dry cleaning shop, Nick Passarelli's Shoe Store and DePeters Liquor Store. This two-story building and the three-story building to the right, were constructed in 1882. The one at the corner, now HSBC Bank, was built by Wm. G. Swan for rental property. This included three store fronts, offices on the second floor and the Odd Fellows Lodge in the third floor before they built their own temple building.

Local legend notes that in 1882 when this building was under construction, Mr. Swan kept track of the time laborers wasted on the project. This was time spent lighting their pipes, tying their shoes, standing around talking, quitting early, taking unnecessary breaks, etc. When the building was finished Mr. Swan added together all the wasted time. He then figured his workers had wasted enough time to have built a small brick house.