

Bethinking of Old Orleans

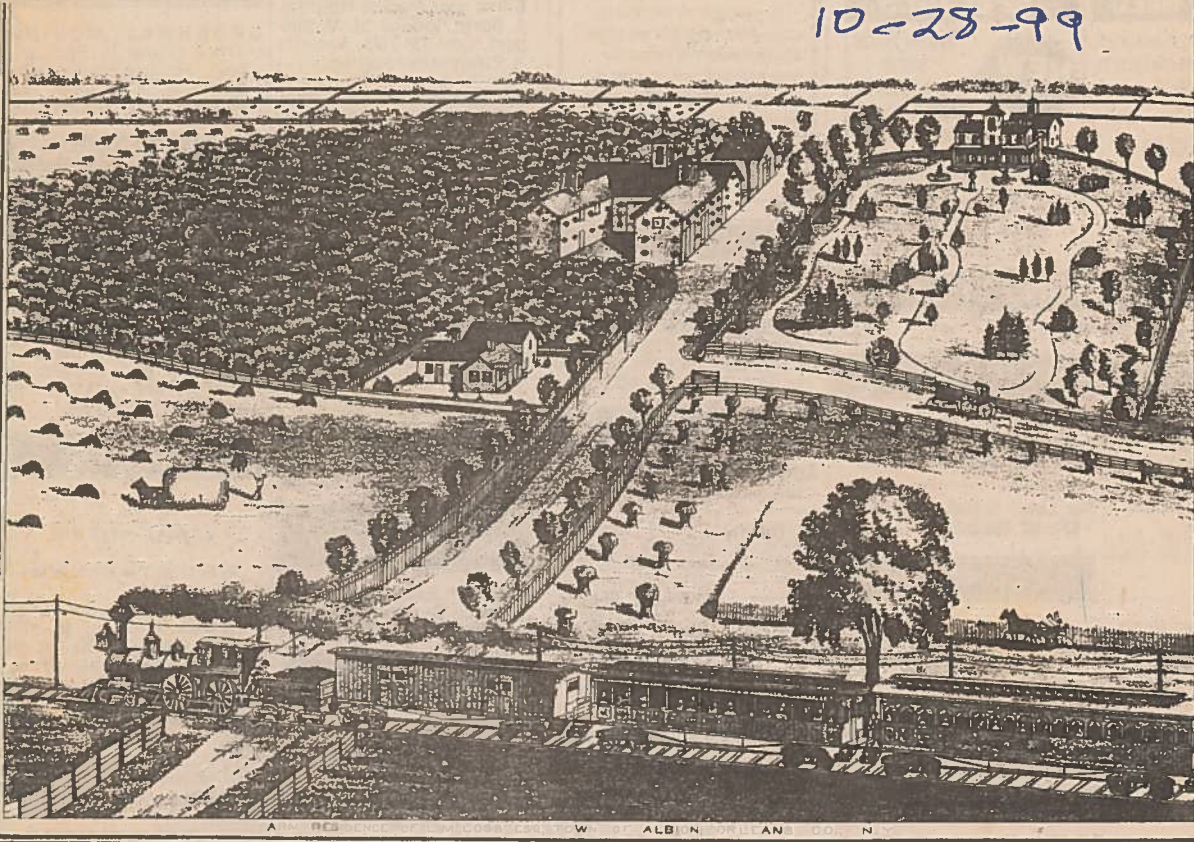
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WHAT A DIFERENCE

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The illustration shown here is one from the 1879 Historical Album of Orleans County. I have selected this scene for its current familiarity. However, from what we see in this one hundred twenty year old view, it is difficult to recognize just where this place is. The railroad, roads and house in the distance are still there but everything else has changed.

So where is it? From our bird's-eye perspective we are looking north into an area which is now the Albion Correctional Facility. The house in the center of the lithograph at the end of a road is now the approximate location of the gate house to the prison. The house and the barns in the distance were removed years ago. The other house in the upper right hand corner with a tower was greatly altered in the 1930's for the superintendent's residence when the Albion State Training School was enlarged. The original Western House of Refuge which was built in 1892 was just behind this residence extending easterly to the village limits.

Our 1879 scene is one showing great prosperity and development. At the time this was the farm, Lewis M. Loss. I judge the trees surrounding the barns are an apple orchard. In the distance is a

cow pasture. Note the elegant landscaping in front of the big house.

In the middle ground agriculture abounds with the harvesting and loading of hay cocks onto a horse drawn wagon. In the field to the right, a horse drawn reaper is being used to cut wheat. A couple of laborers are stacking sheaves or bundles into shocks.

In the foreground we see a passenger train being pulled by a steam engine. Note here, the fireman shoveling coal out of the coal car. Next in line is the baggage car followed by a passenger car and then a sleeping car. The passenger car has printed on it "New York Central & Hudson River Rail Road." The other car has printed on it "Wagners Sleeping Car." Notice also along the railroad the poles and wires for telegraph service.

This illustration tells us a lot about life in the last quarter of the 19th century. Agriculture was predominant, travel was by rail and fast communication by telegraph. Where there is a wheat field, there is now a parking lot. Where there is orchard, there is now a complex of prison buildings. Likewise, the picket fence has given way to chainlink and sensitized barbed wire. Without question, we can say "What a Difference".