

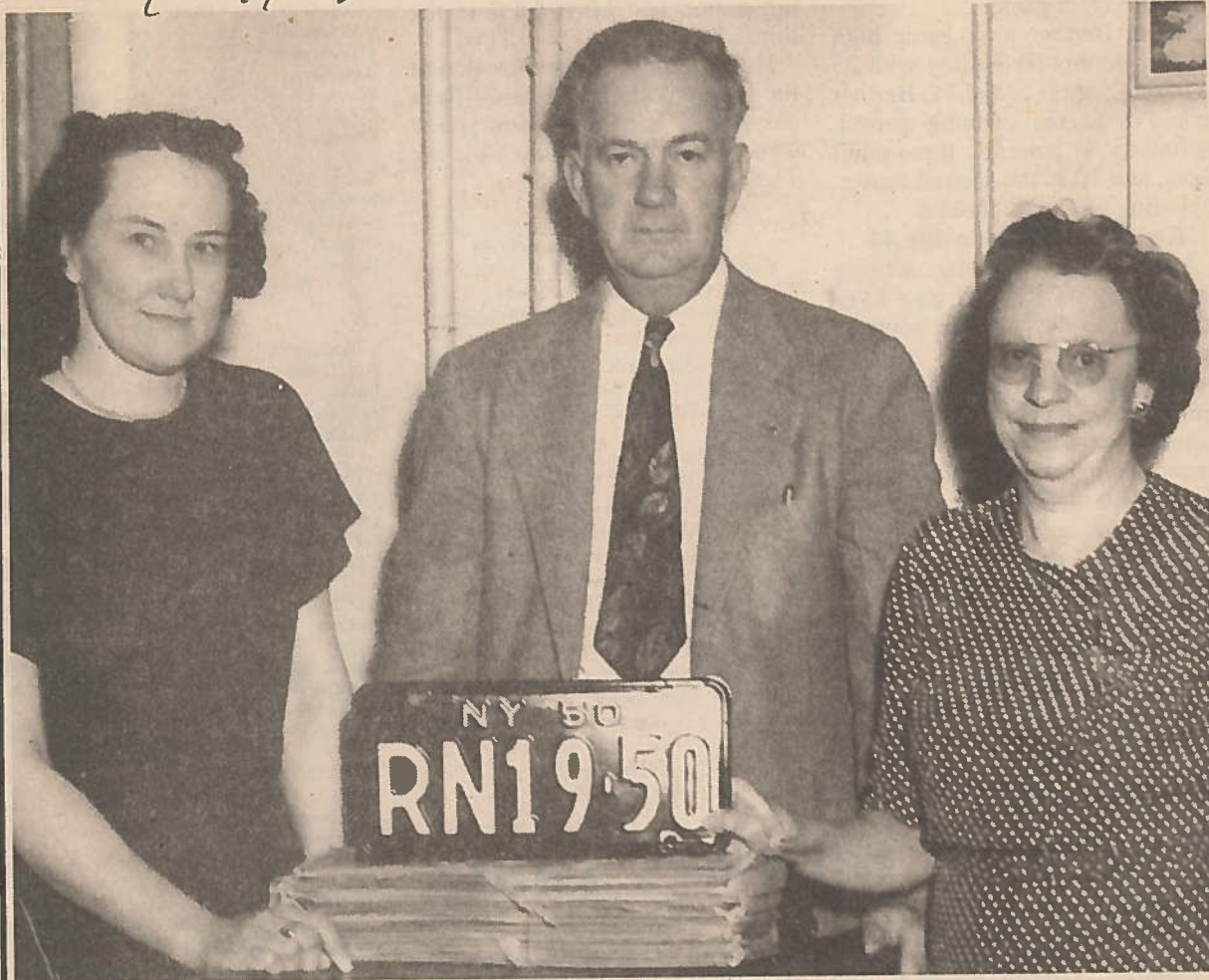
# Bethinking of Old Orleans

Vol XXI

C.W. Lattin County Historian

No.52

12/29/99 **SOME CHANGES**



"Life is its own journey,  
presupposes its own change  
and movement, and one tries  
to arrest them at one's  
eternal peril!"

Laurens Van der Post, 1951

Our photo which accompanies this article was taken just fifty years ago. It shows our County Clerk at the time, Murray Richardson flanked by Doris Craddock on the left and Alma Swartz on the right. These representatives of the Orleans County Dept. of Motor Vehicles are displaying the new 1950 license plate. Already we note a change as they were black plates with yellow letters and numerals. It seems to me that on alternating years the colors reversed. Mr. Richardson served as County Clerk from 1947-1955. Doris Craddock was later clerk to the Orleans County Board of Supervisors.

Although many of us knew or remember these three people, they have all been deceased a number of years now. As we close out 1999 and look back over fifty years we certainly observe many changes.

Back when this photo was taken the Motor Vehicle Office was located in the basement level of the County Clerk's Office. It was entered through a flight of steps down to the ground level on the north side of the Clerk's building. It was not handicapped accessible as it is today. This was before there was a county parking lot for employees and patrons. When you did county business you simply parked along of the streets surrounding the County Square.

Surely one major change is the volume of

business which occurs now as compared to fifty years ago at the D.M.V. Our three friends in this picture did not have the advantage of computers and the direct line of information from Albany that is available now. They never heard of word processing or spell check. In fact, they didn't even have a copy machine at the D.M.V. Manual typewriters and carbon paper were the standard procedure. When they picked up the office phone, the operator from the telephone company came on and said: "number please." Area codes and zip codes were still a ways away. Today it would be difficult for the D.M.V. to carry on daily business without a FAX machine. How amazed this threesome would be that you could send a letter through the phone system. Likewise, these people never conceived of cellular phones or imagined driving about talking on the phone from your own car. Such equipment is standard for some county employees today. Back in 1950 they didn't have cruise control, seat belts or no fault insurance. License plates like these weren't going on Corvettes, motor homes or sport utility vehicles either. Photo ID's and a corner for little kids to amuse themselves in the Motor Vehicle Department were a long way down the road in 1950. Elevator music was unheard of and car radios were by no means standard equipment. The New York State Thruway had no yet opened and many dirt roads remained to be paved.

As we pursue our way down roads to a new millennium, we can expect even more changes. It is truly hard to believe just how many things the folks in this picture have already missed in technological improvements alone over the past fifty years.