

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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C.W. Lattin County Historian

No. 11

## John H. Denio 1817-1911

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John H. Denio was born on June 24, 1817 in Greenfield, Mass. He was the second youngest of five children of John and Harriet Stiles Denio. The father was printer by trade who published a newspaper. Consequently, John H.. Denio followed in his father's footsteps. In 1837 they came to Medina where the two of them published a paper. We find that in 1840 John H. Denio was the clerk of the Medina Village Board of Trustees.

In 1842, however, the Denio's moved to Albion where the father and son combination became publishers of the Orleans American. This was back when newspapers were essentially political organs. John Denio from the early days of the Republican Party's establishment was a leading advocate. Throughout his life he was an eloquent supporter of its principals and a powerful force in its local councils, having been an organizer of the party in Orleans County. He supported the party through voice and pen and was the first to give speeches locally on behalf of William McKinley in 1896.

John H. Denio was elected to two terms as County Treasurer beginning in 1848. He was District Deputy Provost Marshal for the

county during the Civil War and was one of the members of the county committee's to fill quotas. He was himself, ineligible to serve because of his age, but under a law was allowed to send a representative in his place. Since this was not required, he received a testimonial citation from the government following the war. I believe he was the only Orleans County resident to receive such a citation.

We might well call John H. Denio an entrepreneur as he was engaged in many business enterprises. These interested included banking, insurance, stone quarrying, real estate, milling and farming. In 1877 he built the three story business block on Main Street which is now the Olde Coach Inn. This was intended to be a steam grist mill with the store front being used as a feed and flour store leased to Lorenzo F. and Albert Collins. The mill was capable of grinding out a thousand bushels of wheat an hour. John H. Denio also owned a farm west of Albion where the Albion Correction Facility is now located. This was devoted to general farming with an emphasis on apple orchards. The road which once led from Route 31 down to

the Albion Eagle Harbor Road coming out near the canal guard gates was known as Denio Road. This now is part of the Albion Correctional facility was appropriated by the State during the early 1930s when the prison was expanded.

In 1852 Mr. Denio joined the Albion Lodge of Odd Fellows becoming widely known in Odd Fellow circles. He wrote and published a book on Odd Fellow history which was widely circulated. Upon his death in March 1911, John H. Denio was survived by three children who were: Elizabeth H. Denio of Rochester, Mrs. Henry Fisher of Batavia and Lorenzo Denio of Albion. He was predeceased by a daughter Lillian Denio in 1910, a son William in 1858 and wife Celinda of 60 years in 1900.

NOTICE: On April 15, 1825 through an enactment of the NYS Legislature, Orleans County came into being. To celebrate this 175th anniversary, an historical program will take place Saturday, April 15, 2000 at the Orleans County Courthouse. It will begin at 1:30 p.m. and end at 4 p.m. Several local historians and the Community Mass Choir will participate. The program is being



arranged by Bill Lattin and Neil Johnson under the auspices of the Orleans County Department of History.