

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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THE PRESBYTERIAN SPIRE

The spire of the First Presbyterian Church in Albion is a landmark for all. Now that it is being repointed, our attention is drawn to this 175 foot wonder in stone. The work has been let to Raymond E. Kelley, Inc. of Buffalo at a cost of \$65,000.

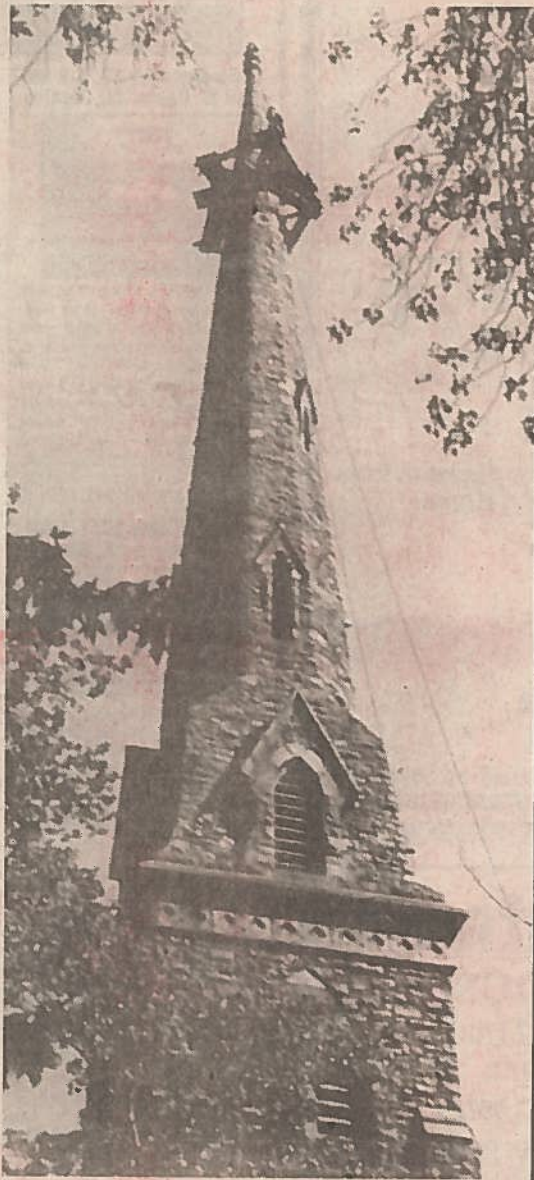
Visible for miles around it is a picture of gracefulness and a symbol to aspire to greater things. It is built of our native Medina Sandstone and designed by A.J. Warner, an architect of some regional note in his day. Elizur Hart, a local banker and business man left \$50,000 to have the church edifice built in 1874. The initial cost of construction came to a total of around \$80,000. The church is Gothic Revival in style which is reminiscent of Gothic architecture from 13th century France.

According to legend, Mr. Hart wanted the Presbyterian spire to be higher than the Baptist steeple a couple of blocks away. Another legend handed down about this landmark is that the mason who finished the work on the capstone or finial then stood on his head on top of it and shouted "Hurrah for Grant." At the time U.S. Grant was our president. We can assume that the tower and steeple were surrounded by wooden scaffolding when this occurred. That in itself must have been quite a feat of engineering.

Before the finial was hoisted up into place it stood on the ground for all to see up close. School children all had a chance to sit on it and fathers would lift their little ones up on it. Consequently, these children boasted for years afterward that they had sat on top of it.

Our photo shown here, was taken by Fred Holt in 1937 when the steeple last had a major repair job. At that time the top fifteen feet was found to be ten inches out of plumb and leaning slightly to the northeast. No evidence of recent shifting was found at that time. The contractor pronounced the steeple as good as new and not likely to need any repointing for at least thirty years. That was 63 years ago, the same amount of time that elapsed from when the church was built to the first major repointing in 1937. At that rate, it is not likely any steeple jacks will be needed again until the year 2063.

This is the tallest building in Orleans and the tallest between Rochester and Buffalo. The finial in the shape of Fleur-de-lis is five feet ten inches in height and is



actually comprised of three stones anchored by a steel rod extending down into the lower masonry. In religious symbolism the Fleur-de-lis would be seen as a symbol of purity.

Notice of Cemetery Tour

Our annual Spring Tour of Mt. Albion Cemetery will take place on Sunday, May 28 at 2:00 p.m. The guided tour starting at the chapel will be led by Bill Lattin and Neil Johnson. It will cover the older eastern part of Mt. Albion.