

Rethinking of Old Orleans

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Upper Landauers

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During the late 19th Century and the early part of the 20th Century, Albion had two Landauer Dry Goods stores and Medina had one.

In downtown Albion, both stores were located on the west side of Main Street. To distinguish the two apart, people commonly referred to them as upper Landauers and lower Landauers.

Our photo from the late 1890s shows the clerks who worked at upper Landauers. This store was actually know as Landauer Brothers: the brothers being Louis and Samuel. It was these two who also owned and operated the dry goods store in Medina by the same name.

Lower Landauers in Albion, however, was known under the name of Landauer and Strouse. This was operated by Jacob Landauer and H. Morris Strouse.

It was this business that was simply known as Landauers when it closed around 20 years ago.

This was located in the block between West Bank Street and Beaver Alley. The upper Landauer store was just up Main Street, between West Bank and West State streets. This location's store front, when our picture was taken, is now Shea's Shamrock.

Unfortunately, none of the six women or two men are identified in this photo. To the right is the E.W. Wilcox Hardware Store, where we see a child's wagon with a box in it and a one-horse cultivator standing next to it. This store is now the Family Hardware.

The Landauer Brothers dry goods firm was founded in 1860 by Isaac Landauer. Upon his death in 1895, his nephews acquired the business.

Samuel Landauer, a resident of Medina,

was the buyer for both the Albion and Medina stores. He was in charge of the Medina store, which was located on the east side of Main Street near the northeast corner of East Center Street.

Louis Landauer lived in Albion and he was in charge of the Albion store known as upper Landauers.

I believe upper Landauers in Albion had closed out by the early 1920s. However, the store in Medina is listed in the 1930 Orleans County Directory. J.C. Penney's later had the old Landauer location.

Perhaps, Louis Landauer is the young gentleman who is standing to the far left in our picture.

Louis, and his wife Clara, lived in a large house on West State Street in Albion. This later became the Christopher Funeral Home and now serves as apartments.

Louis and Clara had two daughters Thekla who graduated from Albion High School in 1916 and Velma who graduated in 1918.

According to my father who graduated in 1917, these two girls must have been very charming and popular. Back at that time, high-school-aged boys, who were their friends, liked to visit these girls on Sunday evenings at their home.

The reasons for the visits were: they were allowed to play games, listen to the Victrola and even dance to the music. Mind you, this was Sunday when all proper young ladies and gentlemen were supposed to refrain from all of the above because it was the Sabbath.

With the Landauers, however, it was different. The Sabbath for them was Saturday because of their Jewish faith.

It is no wonder the boys found this a delightful place to visit on what was a very austere day for the youth of long ago.