

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Shipment of horses

It may seem hard to believe that this picture was actually taken on Main Street in Albion in March 1934.

The dark, massive structure in the upper portion of the photo is the First Presbyterian Church. The large, wooden building to the left was known as the Exchange Hotel. This property is now the municipal parking lot.

And, what about all those horses?

My thanks to Assemblyman Charles Nesbitt for the gift of this picture to the Orleans County Department of History. A great-uncle of his, Harry Nesbitt of Peter Smith Road in the town of Kendall, dealt in horses.

This is a shipment being

driven down to the Peter Smith Road farm now known as Kendall Johns.

These horses had been delivered by train, and were unloaded at the local railroad yard between Clinton and West Academy streets in Albion.

Broncos, old saddle and draft horses and even colts were rounded up in the west and shipped to markets in Kansas City, Omaha, Chicago and Buffalo.

I think, because of the Great Depression, horses were put back into service because of the high cost of machinery.

It was reported in the April 1934 Albion Midlander, that the demand for horses had

not been greater since the World War.

During the 1920s, the population of horses declined from 20,092,000 in 1920 to 12,163,000 in 1933. Horse breeders had turned their attention to other pursuits and horse raising became a minor business.

In the early 1930s, however, Orleans County farmers, as well as farmers and in other areas, needed work animals to assist them in their operations.

Harry Nesbitt — an entrepreneur in the business of agriculture — was able to provide, through his contacts, the needed horses for local farmers at the time.

