

Rethinking of Old Orleans

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No. 21

Old Mansion House — Holley

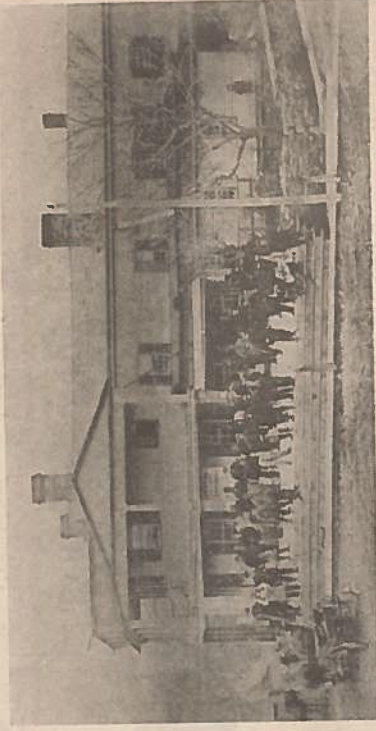
5-24-02

It's my guess this picture was probably taken at least 120 years ago. The building shown was known as the Mansion House. The photographer who took this shot pointed his camera in a southerly direction. To the far left we can see up Thomas Street as the Mansion House was located at the Holley Square. By the end of the 19th century this old wood frame building was obsolete and eventually was replaced with a sandstone hotel at that corner.

Like many early taverns of the 1820s and 1830s, a second story porch was a feature of the architectural plan. Here not only rooms were available but also food and drink. Proper ladies of the 19th cen-

ture, when this picture was taken, would not have been seen hanging around such a spot. I think that's one reason why all those pictured here are either men or boys. Several top hats may be seen in the crowd which helps date the picture. A couple of horse drawn wagons are tethered to hitching posts by a board walk. Notice to the right side of the picture a wooden flag pole at the edge of the street, which is unpaved.

Old photos of this vintage also show us the use of many chimneys. Four appear here and there were probably more. When the Mansion House was built, fireplaces would have been in use. The need for several chimneys on a house continued as stoves



came into use before central heating.

The 1869 Orleans County Directory lists the Mansion House in Holley with Eli D. Olds as proprietor. The 1887-88 directory lists the Mansion House with Frank Crocker as the proprietor. Why the picture was taken is anybody's guess.

Notice: A guided walking tour of Mt. Albion Cemetery, conducted by local historians Neil Johnson and C. W. Lattin, will take place at 2 p.m. on Sunday. The tour will take place in portions of the eastern part of the cemetery, starting at the chapel.