

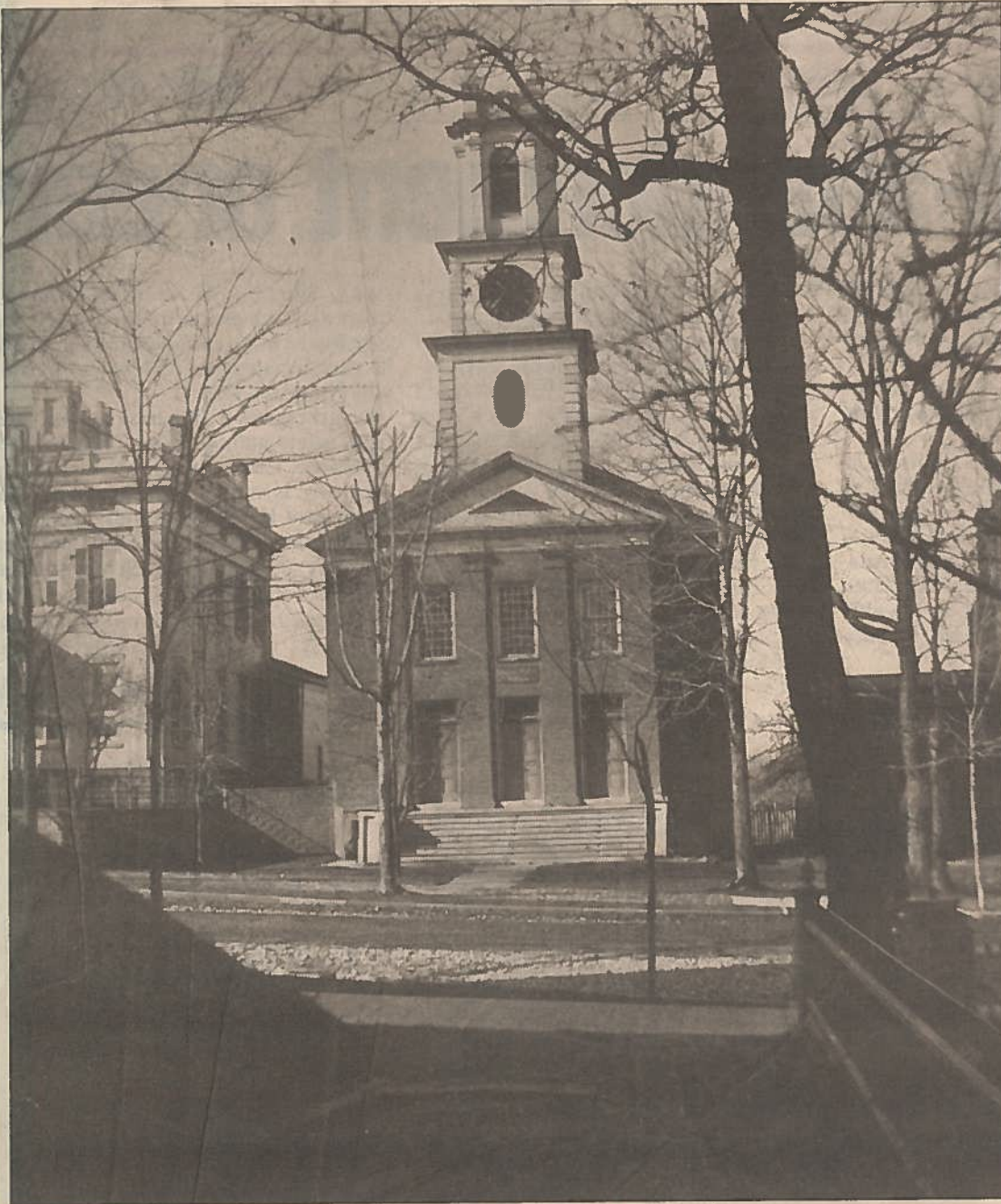
# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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By C.W. Lattin, Orleans County Historian

No. 20

## Albion First Baptist Church 5/16/03



Albion First Baptist Church was legally incorporated on Dec. 22, 1830. In March 1831, a building lot was purchased on the west side of Main Street, just one lot north of West State Street. Here the congregants built their meeting house, which was completed and dedicated in 1832.

In 1858, plans were formulated to erect a new Baptist church at the corner of West Park and Liberty streets, which was dedicated in 1860.

Our photo shown here was probably taken in the 1880s, when the old meeting house was being used as a concert hall. By the early 1890s, it was torn down and remained a vacant lot until the Odd Fellows purchased it and erected their IOOF temple on it in 1907.

The picture is done with great clarity and detail showing the neighboring residences. To the left is the home of Roswell S. Burrows, now the Swan Library. To the right was the former residence of attorney Gideon Hard. This house served as the first home of the Sheret Post. It was torn down in 1924 when Will Robson built the Rialto theatre on this site.

The First Baptist Meeting House was truly a fine example of Federal styling. Built of brick with a three sectional bell tower, including a community clock, it was reminiscent of a New England meeting house. Notice the three front doors, which was typical of such houses of worship at the time. Here for example women would have entered the left door and men the right door, being seated on separate sides of the church. However, upon departure, they all made their exit through the center door. A meeting house of this sort would have had second floor seating in side galleries extending the length of the interior. Notice the small panes of clear glass used in the windows. The use of stained glass did not occur much until the mid-19th century. In other words, all our early churches in the country had clear glass windows.

Our photo also shows Main Street being unpaved, with boardwalks for people. Behind the fence in the lower right corner we see a chain pump before municipal water was supplied.