



Rethinking of Old Orleans

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Orleans Bank

Our illustration is taken from the 1857 map of the village of Albion. It shows the bank of Orleans, which was chartered by an act of the New York state Legislature in 1834. This place of business was located at the southwest corner of Main Street and West Bank in Albion. In 1859, it was recognized as the Orleans County Bank with Eli-

zur Hart as president. Following the Civil War, it became known as the Orleans County National Bank.

In 1866, when this building was barely three decades old, it was torn down and replaced with the present grey sandstone business blocks. The bank was located right on the corner of Main and West Bank streets in what was known as the Granite Block. Here the bank remained until 1924, when it moved to the northwest corner of the same intersection. Here it was known as the Orleans County Trust Co., then later Marine Midland and presently HSBC.

The bank building in our picture was certainly a large, residential type structure. Perhaps in older terms that's why they were referred to as banking houses. Note the door on the Bank Street side. I think this

was the entrance to the banking room.

Let me also point out the gable ends of the building. First, with the number of chimneys we might readily assume this building was heated with fireplaces in the beginning. Also, many masonry houses of this time frame were constructed with this type of gable with no roof overhang.

In other words, the wall continues up above the roof in a decorative treatment such as we see here. Shingles would have been flashed into that wall. Surely, leaks would have eventually resulted. By the 1850s, most of these gables were removed and replaced with Italianate, bracketed overhangs.

Our picture also indicates that there was a decorative railing above the roof-fronted Main Street.