



Bethinking of Old Orleans

2-14-03

Vol. XXV

No. 7

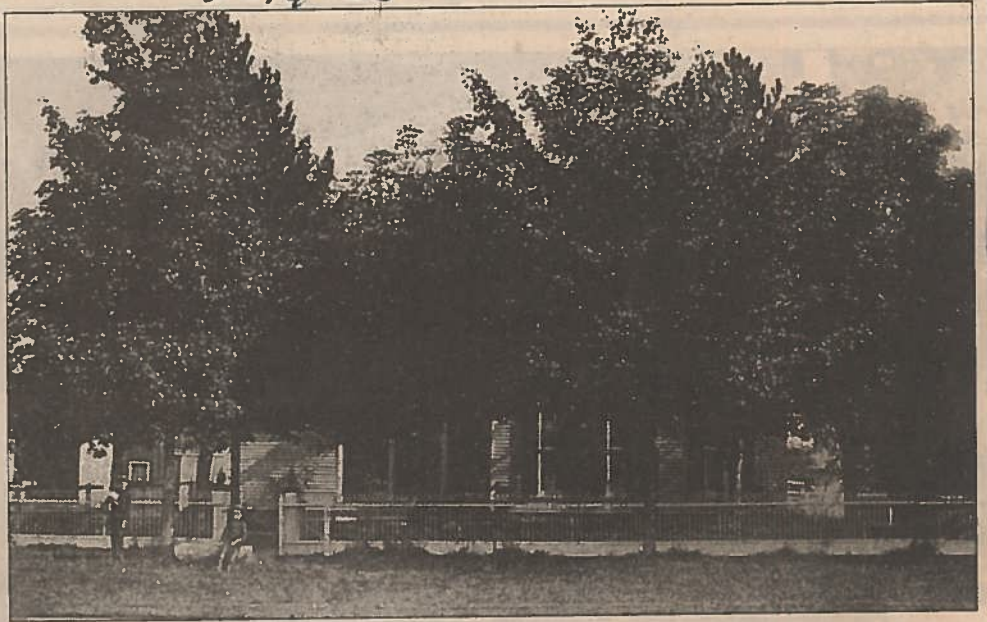
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The Lafler Residence *Transition of a house*

Both of our photographs are of the same farmhouse located on Gaines Basin Road. The lower picture was taken in the late 1880s before the house was remodeled. In this view we see the two older sons of William A. and Ida Lafler in front of the fence. Henry A. Lafler is to the left holding a cat while William A. Lafler is seated on the horse block or stepping stone.

The house here consists of a large main body at right with a wing including a porch to the left. Just a little over 100 years ago the Laflers modernized their home. The wing at the left with the porch was severed from the main part of the house along with a back utility wing. This portion was moved several hundred feet to the north where it was placed on a new foundation. Along with other improvements this then became a tenant house for the Lafler farm. This is now the home of Mrs. Edward DePeters.

To take the place of the half of the house which had been moved off, the Laflers built on a new addition. The upper picture, taken around 1905, shows this part to the left of the porch, which was



the dining room. A huge porch was added which included a sleeping porch off the second floor bedroom. The child standing at the top of the steps is Herbert A. Lafler, born in 1902, a late-in-life child to Will and Ida. The family dog appears to be resting on the horse block at the end of the sidewalk. During the mid-1950s, Mr. and Mrs. John DePeters removed the large porch. This residence is now the home of Dean and Karen Neal and family.

To the left in the distance we can see a small portion of the Lafler icehouse. The very left side of our photo cuts off part of the windmill placed over a well. When the Laflers remodeled this house they had running water put in. The windmill pumped water from the well to a large tank housed in the haymow of the barn where it was insulated in the winter.

Being elevated provided gravity feed water to the bathroom and the kitchen sink. For this time frame to have running water on a farm was quite progressive.

The windmill reminds me of a story my great aunt Anna Clift told. As a child, she grew up right across the road from the Laflers. Sometime during the 1880s, she and the Lafler boys who are pictured in the upper photo decided to sky dive off the windmill. Now this was before parachutes so they got some umbrellas instead, climbed part way up to the windmill and, on a count of three, jumped holding the umbrellas above their heads. They only did this daring feat just once. The umbrellas inverted and one of the Lafler boys got a broken arm. Kids — they do the damndest things. Always have and always will.