



Bethinking of Old Orleans 3/19/04

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George & Martha

Today's curious photograph, dating back to the 1930s, shows a historical display set up in the front window of the McNall Furniture Store in Albion.

I discovered this awhile back among some of my fathers' belongings, which he had carefully stored in an old trunk in the attic.

Unfortunately, there is no information written on the picture except the photographer's seal, which is that of James S. Lent. It appears the picture was taken at night with the interior being brightly illuminated.

It's my guess, however, that this may have been a display put on in 1932 for the 200th anniversary of Washington's birth. It is also my belief that it was done cooperatively between the Orleans Chapter DAR and the Lemuel Cook Chapter of the S.A.R. (Sons of the American Revolution). My father was a member of the S.A.R. while that local chapter was in existence.

Certainly, the theme in the display is all about George Washington. Note two pictures of him, one on the wall with an accompanying portrait of Martha and one standing to the lower right on the floor showing him with a horse. In fact, some unidentified man is dressed up like Washington seated by the mantle and

flanked by a woman impersonating Martha.

Indeed, the whole picture is very patriotic and represents a time in history when people were more cognizant of the father of our country and his leading role in the birth of our nation. "First in war, first in peace and first in the heart of his countrymen."

Aside from the patriotic ambience, there are a number of artifacts displayed here, several of which my father must have loaned for the exhibit. I recognize the mantle clock, with wooden works, which he got from a hotel in Gaines many years ago, and the ladder back chair, which must be about 200 years old. Other individuals must have loaned artifacts as well, since there is a gate leg table, a Windsor chair, a drum, spinning wheel, guns, a powder horn, a tilt top pie crust table, a saddle and a Chippendale mirror. On the back wall hangs a woven coverlet from the 1830s or 1840s, which covers the doorway into this display window.

McNalls frequently allowed civic organizations to use their storefront window for community purposes. Note the valance in the top of the window, which was typical in display windows like these years ago.