



Bethinking of Old Orleans

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The County House, Circa 1904 6-18-04

Today's professional photograph was taken of the Orleans County House and grounds 100 years ago. On the back of the picture we find "Frank L. Weller, Photography, Holley, NY."

This was the main building of a complex made up of a number of structures including barns and an outbuilding at the Orleans County Home and Farm. It was located on County House Road in the town of Albion west of Route 98. This building was built in 1878 and served the county until 1960, when the present nursing home was dedicated on Route 31 west of Albion. In the early 1960s, the large complex on County House was raised.

In our photo, we note that great care was taken of the

grounds. Formal plantings and flowerbeds seem to adorn the front lawn. Notice the urns filled with geraniums and several flowerbeds, which appear to be carefully attended. In fact, a garden hose on a large reel appears in this scene. Two women standing on the porch of the main entrance look like they are speaking to a man below them on the path. There are at least six bicycles parked along the path, suggesting some employees may have used this form of transportation.

It is certainly interesting that someone climbed out on the roof to pose with an umbrella shading themselves from the sun. The large cupola must have been quite a nice observatory five floors above the ground. A

huge flag is mounted from its peak. One might conjecture that there was a problem with draft in the chimney as it has been extended upward at least 16 feet with sections of stovepipe.

In the fall of 1829, the Orleans County Board of Supervision took action to erect a "Poor House." In 1830, the land on County House Road was purchased and the first County Home was built. By the 1870s, it was deemed unfit and the structure in our photo was erected in 1878.

The cornerstone was salvaged when the building was torn down and was reused in 1978, in the foundation wall of the Cobblestone Museum Print Shop in Childs.