

# BETHINKING OF OLD ORLEANS

Vol. XXVI No. 43

10-28-04



BY C.W. LATTIN

**T**his picture was taken a little over 100 years ago on West Park Street in Albion. I think my great-aunt Anna Belle Lattin Clift is seated on the lower rung of the ladder holding the dog.

These five young women appear to be picking some sort of fruit off the trees. It is hard to tell what the trees are, but obviously tall ladders were needed for this harvest.

You can't help but notice the long dresses and skirts worn for this working activity. I judge that one of my great-aunt's friends rode her bicycle to this location as we see it leaning against the stepladder.

Notice the huge woodpile to the far left in the photo. Winter

or summer, a good supply of wood was needed for cooking purposes on the kitchen range.

To the far right, at the edge of the driveway, we can see a "horse block" or stepping stone at the edge of the sidewalk. This made it much easier to get in and out of high carriages.

I remember Aunt Anna telling she had a dog back at that time, which may be the one shown here, who would steal eggs.

It seems during one summer, everyday the dog would bring home an egg totally unharmed in transport. The neighbors a few houses away had some chickens in a coop and hens would lay eggs out around the yard. The dog evidently thought he was contributing to the household needs by presenting an egg. My great aunt, however,

was not too happy about it as she felt if the neighbors found out they might complain. Eventually, on his own, the dog ceased to bring any more eggs home.

It was common for people in villages 100 years ago to have chickens or even a cow for their own dairy products. After all, milk spoils rapidly. Without good refrigeration, it was sometimes necessary to have the cow on site for fresh milk products.

Now, obviously, people in villages did not keep a herd of cows, but it was not unusual for 19th century villagers to own a cow. After all, the great Chicago fire of 1871 was in effect started by a cow, which essentially tells us cows were not just farm animals.