

Mount Albion tower honors the fallen

BY C. W. LATTIN 5-20-10
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As we approach Memorial Day, it is timely that we look at one of our county's historic memorials. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Mount Albion Cemetery is a tower that was erected in 1876 as a memorial to the men who died in the Civil War from Orleans County.

In 1868, a corporation was formed known as the Orleans County Monument Association. Around \$3,000 was raised and in 1874 work to erect a memorial tower at Mount Albion Cemetery was begun.

When work came to a halt, the Mount Albion Cemetery Association contributed \$2,000 to finish the project. This was done in the spring of 1876, with the tower being dedicated July 4, 1976.

This observatory stands 68 feet high at the summit of Mount Albion. The 12-foot-square lobby contains 467 names of fallen soldiers from Orleans County inscribed on nine marble tablets. A circular staircase winds in 82 steps to the observation deck above.

The tower in the Gothic

Bethinking of Olde Orleans

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Revival-style is made of our native Medina Sandstone, which in this case is pink in color. A tablet over the entrance notes: "In Memory of the Men who died in defense of the Union 1861—1865 Orleans County."

By the 1960s, the tower had become neglected and was in need of serious repair. Albion High School students in a mock government day expressed concern over its deterioration in 1973. In July 1974, the Orleans County Historical Monument Corp. was formed to raise \$21,000 necessary for restoration. The goal was exceeded and masonry repair occurred in 1976.

On July 4, 1976, the tower was re-dedicated as part of our country's Bicentennial.

In 1874, an Albion news correspondent wrote: "The American people do not like to build monuments. We would ask why? Perhaps they think although we engrave the names of the

heroic dead upon marble tables, that they are already engraved upon something more enduring. ... The tablet of the heart." In this spirit of cherished remembrances let us recognize this historic landmark as a hallowed memorial to untold heroic sacrifices. We the living must "resolve that these

dead shall not have died in vain." Our photo taken in the 1890s shows visitors at the tower. When we visit this shrine, may we gratefully acknowledge that the soldiers and sailors memorialized here gave this nation ... "a new birth of freedom."

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