

# Albion firemen's hose tower

BY C.W. LATTIN

3-31-11

Orleans County historian

Over the past several weeks I have reflected in this column on some unusual manmade structures from our county. This week I'd like to show a 1958 photo of what was truly a landmark in downtown Albion before its demolition in 1959.

This was the Albion Firemen's hose tower, which was erected in 1880 for a cost of \$900. It stood at the lower end of Platt Street on the east side, just in back of business blocks fronting East Bank Street.

During the late 19th century and into the 20th century, hose towers were not uncommon in connection with a fire house. The Albion one was somewhat unique in that it was a freestanding structure rather than being directly connected to the fire station.

Following a fire, one end of the wet fire hose was attached to a pulled system and hoisted up 40 some feet to the top of the tower. All excess water was thereby drained from the stretched-out hose dripping into a drain on the floor.

The tower you will notice had a chimney, so a stove could be heated up for drying purposes. About



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Vol. XXXIII, No. 13

## Bethinking of Olde Orleans

50 feet of stone pipe radiated heat, as well.

Once dry, the hose was let down and reeled up ready for the next fire.

All this was necessary especially in cold weather

when fire hose would freeze, rendering it useless.

By 1959, the hose tower had become obsolete and needed extensive repair. Rather than spend money on its restoration, this unused brick building was torn down.

*C.W. Lattin is the Orleans county historian. His column appears every Thursday in The Journal-Register and The Albion-Advertiser.*