

LIBRARY LOT

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BY C.W. LATTIN
Orleans County historian

With plans progressing for the new Swan Library in

Albion and a contractor now selected, I thought it would be interesting to see what was once on the lot.

A sign on South Main Street next to ACE Hardware states: "Future Home of Swan Library." It is a large vacant lot which was most recently the site of Dales Supermarket now razed. Prior to Dales the site was the WT Grant and Peterson Drug Store from the early 1960s. Prior to that for around 20 years there was simply a vacant lot.

Our accompanying photo shows what was on the site prior to 1942. It was the extraordinary residence of Hon. E.K. Hart (1841-1893) one of Albion's richest men. Hart bought the property in the early 1870s from Judge Noah Davis. He then had the existing Greek Revival house of the early 1850s completely transformed into one in the Second Empire style. The Mansard roof was added creating a third floor and a four story tower was added as a focal point of interest.

E.K. Hart was an Albion banker and a stockholder in various enterprises. In 1876 he was elected on the Democratic ticket to one



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term in the U.S. Congress. Upon his death the house was inherited by his son Charles Hart and in turn it was inherited by his children. They weren't interested in maintaining the property. Unable to sell the house even after several organizations

considered it, the house was torn down thus eliminating the huge cost of taxes.

The Hart house was the largest of three residential lots on the site. The Flintham/Burrows house to the north was later torn down to expand Dales. The smaller Warner/Cole house to the south was removed in the 1960s. Therefore the new Swan Library takes in three old residential lots which were all intact when our photo was taken back in the 1930s.