

County cemetery dedication upcoming

BY BILL LATTIN

Orleans County historian

At 10 a.m. Monday the old and abandoned County House Cemetery will be dedicated with a new monument. This is a project that has been undertaken by students of the Albion Middle School through the guidance of teacher Tim Archer.

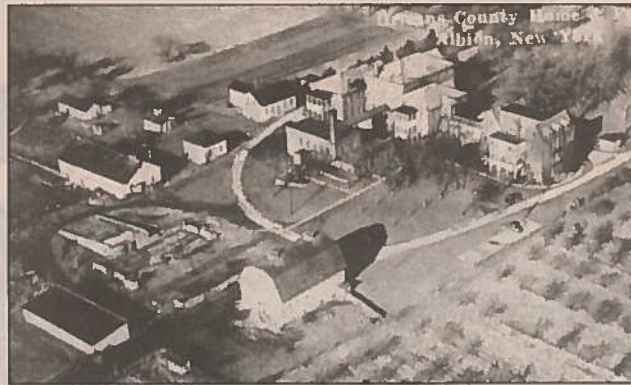
Over the past two years, students have delved into the history of the old County Alms (poor) House once located on County House Road. A burial ground up a lane about a quarter-mile in length from the now Civil Defense Center has been reclaimed from nature. More than 50 headstones have been uprighted on a plot the county has cleaned up.

The cemetery was used for paupers who died at the old county home whose bodies were not claimed by family. The burial ground was used from the mid-19th century into the early 20th century, when it was abandoned.

Middle school students have researched who is buried there and the various reasons people went to the County Alms House. Our photo from an old post card shows the complex before all these buildings were torn down about 50 years ago. The cemetery is located out in the middle of a field that was once part of the County House farm.

Some reasons for people having lived and died at the Alms House are taken from a ledger titled "Record of Inmates" from 1896-1933: The two most common reasons for dependence were intemperance and old age. However, other causes include cripple, chronic alcoholism, feeble-minded, one arm off, idiot, blindness, paralysis of limbs, varicose veins, fell from a load of hay, epileptic fits, acute alcoholism, sick and unable to work, fractured skull, a baby and no home, crushed foot by cars, stroke of apoplexy, severe headache, mal-nutrition, fingers cut off in buzz saw, tuberculosis, pleurisy, dropsy with Brights, Locomotor Ataxia, unable to talk — very sleepy — this young man cannot tell where he came from or where he wants to go;

Lumbago, Typhoid fever, stone cutter's consumption, no home is deaf, rheuma-



tism, bruised back — fell from apple tree, parents cannot provide, bunch on face, can't live with husband, frozen hands, bladder trouble, old age — demented, sugar diabetes, no home vagrant, injured on the BL&R, blood poison, fractured spine, throat cut (suicide), family have the measles, pneumonia, paralysis, deaf and dumb no home, skull wound — badly injured by the breaking of

derrick while working in Fancher & Robinson Quarry;

Razor wound left arm, no support from husband, pregnancy out of wedlock, mutilated hands, no one to care for her, bad thumb, bad eyes, destitute — no home, insanity, bullet wound, venereal disease, cancer, attempted suicide, mental defection, ulcers on leg, drink, shock, drugs, senility and finally bad business management.

Vol. XXXIII, No. 24

Bethinking of Olde Orleans

Indeed, were it not for this record the existence of some of these people would never be known. It brought to mind this rhymed chronicle of Norman Dukes by Master Wace, which holds a basic truth:

"All things to nothingness descend, grow old and die and meet their end; Man dies, iron rusts, wood goes decayed, towers fall, walls crumble, roses fade; Nor long shall any name resound beyond the grave, unless't be found in some clerk's book; it is the pen gives immortality to men."