

# We remember them

BY C. W. LATTIN

Orleans County historian

**T**his photo, taken around 1897, shows "inmates" at the old County House on County House Road. Posted alongside them with bicycles are Mr. and Mrs. Varnum Ludington. He was superintendent of the poor at the time.

On Monday, the old Potters Field at the former Orleans County Alms "Poor" House was dedicated. This came about as a service learning project for seventh-graders at the Albion Middle School, with special direction and incentive from teacher Tim Archer. The old cemetery which was abandoned has now been cleaned up through the efforts of the school and county working together with the aid of many

individuals.

As county historian, I gave the following remarks at the ceremony:

"On Saturday evening I came up here to look over the progress in reclaiming these grounds from nature. As I approached this little knoll it reminded me of 'Boot Hill,' which too was a desolate wind-swept graveyard. Now the students don't remember Boot Hill, but those of us who watched the TV series 'Gunsmoke' will agree that this potters field is not unlike Boot Hill, with its simplistic grave sites, some of which were unmarked on a lonely hill outside of Dodge City. I could picture here an old buckboard wagon pulled by a team of horses coming up that lane bearing a simple board coffin, followed by a few staff members of the alms

house and perhaps a local clergyman to state some solemn words at the open grave.

"I thought about the work accomplished here and that truly the great voice of America does not come down from on high but rather from the common citizenry. It comes rolling from the hills and hinterland and small villages. Just think of what a few citizens have done here in now making this hallowed ground more respectable. Citizens can and do make a difference.

"All of you students are citizens, what an accomplishment and what a difference a few have made. In my opinion, no higher title can be bestowed on anyone in this country than simply citizen. But with that comes the awesome task



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a wreath at this appropriate monument, let us remember them through these words by Roland Gittelsohn:

"In the rising of the sun and in its going down, we remember them.

In the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter, we remember them.

In the opening of buds and in the rebirth of spring, we remember them.

In the blueness of the sky and the warmth of

summer, we remember them.

In the rustling of leaves and in the beauty of autumn, we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength, we remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart, we remember them.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember them.

So long as we live, they too shall live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them."

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