

BETHINKING OF OLDE ORLEANS

The paintings of Peter B. West

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In 1980 the late Stephen Chapman of Albion gave the Swan Library two paintings by local artist Peter B. West. Both inherited by Chapman they had originally belonged to Stephen Hallock (1883-1920) for whom Stephen Chapman was named. Since 1980 the two works of art have hung in the old Swan Library.

The larger painting done in 1887 depicts the Hallock residence on the east side of Route 98 just south of Albion. The other painting is "A Catch of Bass and Pickerel" also done in 1887.

With the opening of the new Hoag Library at 134 South Main St. both paintings have been rehung there in the lounge. They are now together in the same space and more readily visible than ever before.

Peter B. West was born in England and studied painting there. He emigrated to the United States in 1873 and for a while at least worked for Phineas T. Barnum decorating his parade circus wagons with animal pictures. At one time he lived on Clarendon Road in a house no longer there and that he raised South-down Sheep. A painting interpreting his interest of these animals was given by the late Jesse

Davis Stevenson to the Cobblestone Museum in 1979 and may be seen there. We know that West and local water colorist Alvin Briggs shared a second floor studio in Albion near the canal.

It is plain that West left in his work a legacy of beauty. His animal subjects in dark tones are clear and succinct. He was noted in his own day first and foremost as an animal painter. Several of these works still remain locally, giving testimony to his talent for painting sheep, horses, goats, dogs, deer, cattle, fish and game, rabbits and chickens.

During the last three decades of his life, West created many paintings for the locally well-to-do all of which in essence



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were status symbols in their time. As to Stephen Hallock it has been said he was Orleans County's first self-made millionaire.

He began a long and active business life without a dollar and with his brother Isaac, at first operated a threshing machine. He also engaged in farming and raising stock including horses, cattle, sheep and swine and was considered one of the best judges of such. He was a progressive farmer owning several farms in Orleans County along with

farms in Kansas, Nevada and other western states.

With a keen eye for business he was a dealer in stocks and bonds and held many good mortgages on farms and other real estate. Many times he helped those who were in distress, unable to help themselves. He was a strong supporter of the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church and was survived by his widow the former Sarah E. Gibson whom he had married in 1860.

Mr. Hallock was laid to rest in Mt. Albion with the family lot being marked by one of the largest monuments in the cemetery.

Our illustration with this story is of the Hallock Farmstead painted in 1887 by P.B. West.