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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

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John Newton Proctor 1828-1889

John N. Proctor was born in the Town of Gaines and passed his boyhood years on the family farm. He attended the district school and the Gaines Academy.

At an early age he became a clerk in the general store of Erastus Woodruff in the hamlet of Gaines. Within two years, still less than twenty in age, he accepted a similar position with William Gere in Albion. With his shrewd business sense he won his employer's confidence and was taken into partnership. When William Gere died he then formed a partnership with Gere's son Isaac.

Mr. Proctor was also involved in farming and other business interests. For several years he was a large shareholder in the Curtis Manufacturing Company directing its management as president.

In politics he was an ardent Democrat and served as trustee and president of the Village

of Albion. He was also a member of the Board of Education as well as president of that body.

For many years he was a trustee and very prominent member of the First Baptist Church in Albion.

In October 1852 he married Frances Gere the daughter of his business associate, William Gere. Their only child was Clara who became the wife of William P.L. Stafford the district attorney who prosecuted George Wilson for murder and who was executed in 1888.

Stafford and his wife Clara had inherited the Proctor residence at the south west corner of Main and West Park Street in Albion. It was Stafford who ultimately sold this beautiful mansion built in the 1870's by Proctor to St. Joseph's Church which retains it today as the church rectory.

*By C. W. Lattin
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