

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## GORDIS HARDWARE

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Shown here is an interior view of the Gordis Hardware Store at Holley as it appeared prior to W.W.I. Behind the counter is Charles M. Vincent and the Proprietor Ira Edwards.

In 1916 Mr. Edwards retired after being in the hardware business at Holley for 45 years. Starting out as a teacher, he taught in district schools and then became principal of the Holley Academy in 1865. After two years he became principal of the Medina Academy. Deciding to enter business, he returned to Holley, and on March 10, 1870, began the hardware business, in partnership with Sidney Godley. A few months later he bought out his partner and the firm continued under the name of Ira Edwards. In the fall of 1872 he moved to large quarters in the Robb block, and when fire destroyed the South side of the Square in 1874, he lost his entire stock. The Bliss building on Thomas Street was just completed and he became its first tenant. In 1886 he moved to his own block, where he then continued the business (where the Gordis Hardware store is now located). While he always attended closely to business, Mr. Edwards still found time to support every movement for the betterment of Holley. He served as president and trustee of the village, supervisor of the town, and Member of Assembly for two terms. Fred A. Edwards purchased his father's interest in the business and continued it with his brother Frank under the name Ira Edwards Sons. In 1942 Fred Edwards sold the contents to Six and One Ladder Co. from Rochester. The store then remained closed for about eighteen months. On September 28, 1944, at the age of 58, A. Earl Gordis, a farmer on the Lynch Road, and his wife Fanny bought the building from Mr. Edwards and put whatever merchandise they could purchase on the shelves. During W.W.II Merchandise was very hard to get and there was a market for almost anything you could supply.

In the Spring of 1946 P. Orren Van Orden joined his mother and step father in the store. Orren S. Van Orden joined his father and grandfather as a partner in 1959, after graduating from the U of R with a B.S. in Business Administration. A. Earl Gordis continued to put in full days at the store until 1973 when at the age of 88 he retired.

P. Orren Van Orden was appointed to the office of Town Clerk on Feb. 7, 1955 to fill the term of Thomas Hayes who had died. Mr. Van Orden served as Town Clerk until Dec. 31, 1975, when he was succeeded by his son who in turn served three terms retiring from the office in 1981. The Town Clerk's office was therefore located at Gordis Hardware for over a quarter of a century.

The elder Mr. Van. Orden retirec' in 1976 selling his interest in the store to his son who continues to operate it today. Mr. Earl Gordis will celebrate his 97th birthday on May 22, 1982. His wife Fanny Gordis will celebrate her 92nd birthday on Nov. 1, 1982. These two fine people have seen many changes in their lifetime, but one thing that hasn't changed is the large selection of merchandise which can be found at the Gordis Hardware, "On the Square", in Holley.

Credit is due to Mr. Orren S. Van Orden for research of all the above facts contained in this story.