

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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ARCHITECTURE DESTROYED KNOWLESVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

"For thy servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof". Psalm 102 Verse 14

Not only one, but two churches, have been purposely demolished on the same site in Knowlesville. The first church was built in the year 1832 at a cost of approximately \$3,500. The congregation which erected it was organized in 1817 and was the first religious society to be established in the Township of Ridgeway. As the top photo indicates, the church was built in the Federal Style of architecture which became popular in the 1780's and lasted through the 1830's. Neoclassical in form, buildings in this style are usually symmetrical with low pitched roofs and restrained details. The over all quality of this fine church certainly emulated the colonial buildings of New England.

But progress being what it is, "the old brick church" was razed in 1893 to make way for a modern edifice which was to cost \$12,000. Already one begins to wonder about the soundness of logic in making such a decision. However, the new church which took its place was also a truly fine piece of architecture. It was built in the popular Victorian Romanesque Style of the 1880's and 90's which typically features doorways and windows with arched tops. Frequently in brick buildings such as this, stone window trimmings and stone stripes are used to make divisions of space. In Romanesque architecture an asymmetrical approach is taken towards design rather than the symmetrical balance which was used in the earlier church. Large massive shapes with bold towers and high peaked roofs typify this style. As is evident, the second Knowlesville Presbyterian Church had all the features and qualities that good Romanesque architecture expresses. But in 1964 because of diminishing members, the church closed its doors and the congregation was dissolved. The building was turned over to the Presbytery and in 1969, without much prior information, it was bulldozed to destruction. The only thing which remains today is a vacant lot and the name Presbyterian Road on which it was located. It appears the attitude "if we can't have it, then nobody else can" must have been used in making the final decision to wreck this edifice once built for the glorification of God.