

Bethinking of Old Orleans ⁶⁻¹⁻⁸³

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L. Monacelli photo copy

Vol. V

No. 22

ARCHITECTURE DESTROYED

Part V

Franklin Clarke House 1888 - 1967

For many years this was the home of Anne and Catherine Clarke, daughters of Franklin Clarke who was an Albion druggist and book dealer. It was built in 1888 at the height of the "Queen Anne" style. No one is quite sure why or how the term "Queen Anne" came into use for describing this particular mode of architecture which became very popular in the 1880's. However, an 1883 critic wrote: "Queen Anne has been made to cover a multitude of incongruities, including indeed, the bulk of recent work which otherwise defies classification, and there is a convenient vagueness about the term which fits it to that use." To generally describe the visual qualities of the style as we know it today, is perhaps a little easier. Queen Anne buildings are strongly asymmetrical with steep gables, high chimneys and a variety of shapes and sizes for windows. One will also usually find a rich mixture and variety of building materials contrasting one another. Colors were also important as they were usually dark and carefully selected to blend with one another. Frequently attic or second stories project over the first floor. Towers or turrets may also be seen tucked into corners or sides. Thus a general description of the Queen Anne style describes the Clarke House.

Although this picture shows the house covered with vines, the first floor was Medina Sandstone, the second, natural wood shingles and the gables were stucco. It was definitely asymmetrical with high peaked roofs which included a turret on the left side. In a word, it was simply superb. Likewise, the interior was equally as fabulous in the creative use and division of space. There was never a better example of this style ever built in Orleans County. But in 1967 progress took its toll when this house was demolished to make way for Bells Supermarket on South Main Street in Albion. The lower photo showing this masterpiece being wrecked, speaks for itself.

"Folly, wasteful folly....."