

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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**ARCHITECTURE DESTROYED**  
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### The Hart Residence

One of the most extraordinary residences ever built in Orleans County was the home of Hon. E. Kirke Hart which was located on South Main Street in Albion. Mr. Hart purchased the property and what we can assume was a Greek Revival house from Judge Noah Davis in the early 1870's. Upon acquiring the property E.K. Hart had the house transformed into the extravaganza you see here. By adding a four-story tower, a Mansard roof and various other decorations, the house became a notable example of one in the Second Empire Style. Other names for this particular mode of architecture, which was popular during the 1860's and 70's, include the Mansard Style and the General Grant Style.

During the Second Empire of Napoleon III an extension was added to the Louvre in Paris (1852-1857). The design of this addition directly influenced American architects who began to emulate it for their own purposes. Hence, the Second Empire name. Houses in this style always have Mansard roofs which have steep sides and flat tops with frequent dormer windows. The sides may be either convex, concave, straight or ogee as seen in the contour of the Hart house roof. Towers usually form a focal point whether or not the house is balanced symmetrical or asymmetrically. Double windows are often used with either arched or square tops. The Hart house was made of brick which had for many years been painted a light grey.

Hon. E. K. Hart was one of the richest men in Orleans County during his life time (1841-1893). He was a banker and a large stockholder in several other enterprises. In 1876 he was elected on the Democratic ticket to one term in the U.S. Congress when our Congressional District was Monroe and Orleans Counties. Upon the death of Mr. Hart the house was inherited by one of his sons, Charles Hart. In turn, his children did not want the house as it was extremely costly to maintain. The property was also one of the highest taxed in the village.

At any rate the house was demolished in 1942 which left a vacant lot on South Main Street for the next twenty years until W. T. Grant built on the site. Then just a few years ago, after Grants closed, the store was taken over by Dales Super Duper which is also shown here. What a sad commentary on us as Americans, to think that we have so often deliberately obliterated beauty. It is sad indeed to realize we've gone from palaces to parking lots. Where does the blame lie? Perhaps on local governments for not having more stringent ordinances to prohibit "helter skelter" commercialization. The arts and architectural preservation have to be government's business or we will otherwise be swallowed up in mediocrity.