

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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Albion Firemen's Hose Tower (1880-1959)

It's not all that uncommon to find a hose tower in connection with an older firehouse. But the Albion firemen's hose tower was unique, standing as a completely separate building not being connected in any way to the firehouse. It was built in 1880 for the purpose of drying out wet fire hoses following a fire. One end of the wet hose was attached to a pulley and hoisted up to the top of the tower which let it stretch out and thus drain off all excess water. A large grate was located in the floor directly under the hose for draining the water into the sewer. You will notice a chimney on the roof. A stove with around fifty feet of stove pipe extending upward was used for heating the tower and drying hoses in colder weather. Once dry, the hose could then be rolled up on its reel and made ready for use when needed again.

Built of light red brick, this landmark stood in back of what used to be Karns Monument Works or nearly behind the present-day Perfecto Cleaners in downtown Albion. From 1880 to 1890 a four-foot-high castiron fireman portrayed standing on one foot and shouting through a megaphone, stood on top of this tower. It seems Albion firemen had filched this piece of statuary from a fire department in Canada. It is believed that some firemen from Seabreeze absconded with it next and that later it was "acquired" by firemen at Honeyoe Falls where for many years it has been mounted high upon a building, making it irretrievable. In fact, it's now the only remanent from the old hose tower which was razed in 1959. The tower had served its usefulness and rather than spend money for upkeep or restoration, which might be considered now, it was demolished. The place where it stood remains vacant.

"All things to nothingness descend...."