

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin

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Historian



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**MEET**  
**CECILIA A. WHITE**  
**Historian, Village of Medina**

Cecil White, Village Historian of Medina was born, grew up, and has lived much of her life in that community. Before marrying she was Cecilia Hoffman of the family for which Hoffman Road gets its name. Prior to graduating from Medina High School, she worked part time in the office of Dr. Howard Maynard, M.D. She was much influenced by him and wanted to be a doctor. However, due to various reasons she opted to attend Rochester Business Institute from where she graduated in 1928. As a secretary, Ceil says, "My first job was to suffer through the stock market crash in of all places, a brokerage house." From there she was a secretary and public stenographer in a sales office for a Steel Company, and then worked in the advertising department of B. Forman's. Yet medicine was on her mind, so she took a job at Strong Memorial Hospital where she also

enrolled in their program with the University as a major in pre-med. Working and going to school, she completed three years of studies in six but finally gave it up due to health reasons.

It was then that she married James A. White who passed away in 1961. They moved from Rochester to Geneva where she became chief clerk in a government office involved with rationing during World War II. During this time she also worked many hours as a volunteer at Samson Hospital for Red Cross.

In 1948 Ceil and her husband moved to Medina and took up residence in the East Avenue home she grew up in. Back here she worked first at the Journal Register and then took a job at FMC in Middleport where she was a secretary to the Director of Research and Development.

In 1966 she ran and was elected a trustee to the Medina Village Board. This was the first time a woman was ever elected to that body in Medina which opened the door for women to run for public office in other parts of Orleans County. Being frustrated with village politics she resigned that position to become Village Historian in 1969. At the time she succeeded Dwight Waldo as historian.

Archival and historical material for the village is housed in the third floor of City Hall on Main Street. As historian she has tried to organize this material so that it would become useful in some sort of filing system. Ceil writes frequently for the Medina paper a column entitled "The Historian's Scrap Book". She also has given innumerable lectures and slide presentations on Medina history to service clubs and students. In 1972 she wrote a booklet on Medina history for the 140th Anniversary. At that time she felt that it was necessary to have some sort of local history museum in Medina. With the help of Robert Waters the Medina Historical Society was chartered and Ceil White became its first president. In 1979 a building was acquired which was dedicated this past Fall. It was this past year that she also updated her booklet on Medina's history for the Sesquicentennial.

Aware of the importance of microfilming, Ceil has seen to it that area newspapers and records have been done. Thanks to Louise and Abbott Brownell, early Medina papers are now preserved for posterity. With help from Bob Waters, she hopes to have all the Medina Journals on microfilm. Through a grant she acquired, the village minutes dating back to 1832 have been microfilmed up to 1904.

Ceil White is one lady who is involved in the betterment of her community. She is on the Board of Medina Memorial Hospital, a member of Medina BPW, and is very active in Sacred Heart Church, its Rosary Society, as well as serving as secretary to the pastor. She is a member of Region 8 Municipal Historians and has been president of that group. She also holds membership in the American Association for State and Local History and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It's not surprising that she was once the Journal Register's Woman of the Year or that in 1979 she was given the Distinguished Service Award by the Medina Chamber of Commerce.