

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian



(L. Monacelli Photo Copy)

Vol. VI

No. 27

## A BALLOON ASCENSION

The photograph included here was taken in Albion on July 4th, 1868. It depicts a large balloon being filled for an ascension as a crowd of people looks on. The building in the background is the Harrington House which later became the Orleans House. This was before the Village Hall was erected across the street.

Following the ringing of bells at sunrise, a Grand Firemans Parade, band concerts, reading of the Declaration of Independence and an oration, people gathered to watch the balloon ascension on East Bank Street in Albion. The day was concluded with a display of fireworks in the evening. The following account from an Albion newspaper gives us detailed information on the ascension and its outcome. Such information as this is readily available on microfilm at the Swan Library and may be viewed and/or copied on the new microfilm reader printer there. Here then, is the story as it appeared one hundred - sixteen years ago.

"Prof. Squires made a successful but nearly fatal ascension from this place last Saturday. Early in the morning he commenced to inflate his balloon, manufacturing his own gas. The process went slowly on during the day. At times the crowd was very large and the attention was held until seven o'clock in the evening, when he arose amid the shouts of the vast number assembled. The balloon rose gracefully and took a northeasterly direction. Mr. Squires thinks his highest point about two miles. He was in sight not far from fifteen minutes. When not more than two miles travel from the lake, he attempted to descend but struck in the edge of a piece of woods tearing through the trees and bounding with frightful velocity. Again he came down - the balloon lying its side across the tree tops tearing the netting and nearly detaching the car. The balloon instantly bounded up again and came down near Kendall Corners striking in a 'soft basswood tree,' as Mr. S. expresses it, and some people near by ran, took hold of the balloon and rescued the Professor from his perilous position.

A hack was driven for Mr. Squires and he was brought back by his jolly friends early Sunday morning."