

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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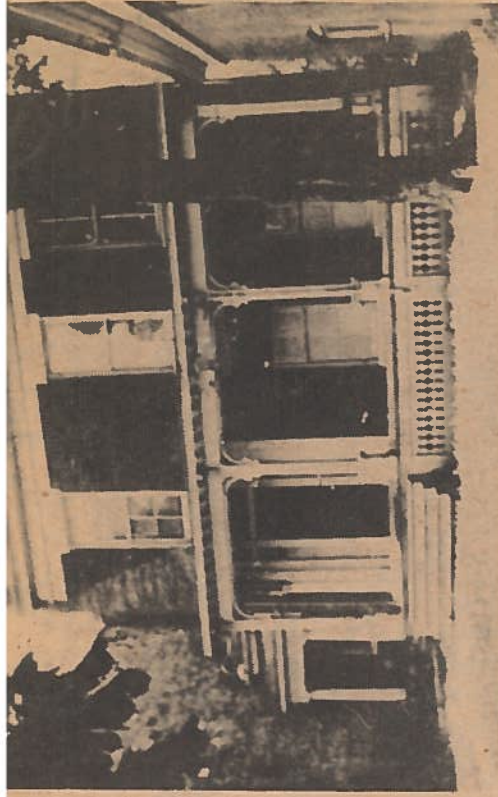
Origin of Sheret Post #35

The American Legion is one of the world's greatest Veterans organizations with members throughout the world at over seventeen thousand Posts.

The very first American Legion Post was established in March 1919 in Paris, France following World War I. It wasn't long however, before this organization found its way to Orleans County. A charter for a Post in Albion, N.Y. was granted in July 1919 by the State organization of the American Legion. This Post was to be known as Sheret Post No. 35 comprising the towns of Barre, Albion, Gaines and Carlton. The Post was so named in honor of Sergeant James A. Sheret. Four Sheret brothers of Albion served during W.W.I. They were Bugler, Andrew Sheret who was wounded in action, John Sheret, Jr. a quartermaster in the Naval Aviation Service, Private Egbert Sheret and Sergeant James A. Sheret, who were both killed in action on Sept. 29, 1918. They were killed the day that their division broke the Hindenburg Line. During the fierce attack on this German bulwark near Ronssory, Sergeant James A. Sheret displayed amazing courage in single-handed attacks on enemy positions. He charged two enemy strong points with his revolver and killed the occupants, and then rushed against a machine gun squad held by four Germans. He succeeded in killing one of these but was then surrounded and killed by the other three. This was a superb act of individual heroism which exhibited the fighting spirit of the American Army. This particular story of gallantry was published in the "Ladies Home Journal." Although two Sheret brothers made the supreme sacrifice, the local American Legion Post, contrary to some belief, was named in honor of just James A. Sheret. Sheret Post held its first election of officers on Sept. 4, 1919. Col. Louis M. Spaulding and Dr. Ralph E. Brodie were largely instrumental in establishing this Post. Judge Bernard Ryan who was also a leading organizer was elected its first commander. Sheret Post #35 is the oldest Post in New York State west of the Adirondacks. In October 1919 it was reported that there were 150 paid memberships. Membership was open to any U.S. citizen who was in the military or Naval service of the U.S. during the period between April 6, 1917 and Nov. 11, 1918.

The American Legion in those early years served much like a lobbying organization. Through their efforts, increased base pay came about for the disabled, vocational training was supported and they assisted in the re-employment of service men, compensation, back pay, etc. The Legion inaugurated and set in motion a program of civic betterment and community development.

The first Sheret Post home was located on North Main St. in Albion in the house pictured here. Adjacent to the Odd Fellows Temple, it had



previously been used by the Christian Church Association. It was one of Albion's older homes and had at one time been the residence of Dr. Quackenbush. Having served as a church facility, its interior space was suitable for American Legion assemblies and social events. By 1924 however, Sheret Post sold this property to Will Robson who razed the building and erected the Rialto Theater on the site. For the next decade Sheret Post occupied several upper rooms in the theater building.

In 1934 when the Central Primary School building was no longer used, the Albion district sold the property to the American Legion Sheret Post for the sum of \$1.00. It was at that time when major alterations took place in the building transforming it from a school into a community building. In the mid 1940's the basement of that building was renovated into a bar room. Sheret Post #35 remained in that building until December 1980 when they moved into the former and newly renovated A & P Store.

This Post home is clearly an American Legion shrine. Inside the front lobby is mounted a beautiful memorial tablet with the names of the WWI heroes from the towns of Barre, Albion, Gaines and Carlton. This tablet was unveiled and dedicated at the original Post home on No. Main Street on Memorial Day 1920. It was made by W.S. Tyles Co. of Cleveland and boasts a large spread eagle on top and a representation of the old Liberty Bell. The tablet which cost \$490.00 to cast was hung on the front of the Court House from 1924-34 and then in the old American Legion building on East Park Street from 1934-1980.

On this Veterans Day we again make note of the gallant acts of heroism by Orleans County heroes by dedicating a new memorial at the Orleans County Administration Building. Sheret Post will be participating along with other Veterans organizations in these dedication exercises. It was Gen. John Logan who said "Let no ravages of time testify to coming generations that we have forgotten as a people, the cost of a free and undivided republic." Through the decades since 1919, Sheret Post through its color guard, one-time band, community support of numerous projects and other various untold acts of Americanism, has reminded us that we are indeed, greatly indebted to those who have died for our liberty and freedom.