

# Thinking of Old Orleans

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## RE-DEDICATION OF PULLMAN MEMORIAL CHURCH

"Erected By A Son As A Memorial To His Father

James:Lewis:Pullman

In Recognition Of His Love And Work For

The Universalist Church And Its Faith

And In Memory Of His Mother

Emily:Caroline:Pullman

One With Her Husband In The Joys And Hopes

Of Religion

Dedicated January 1895"

These words are found inscribed on a large brass tablet which is mounted in the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church. On Palm Sunday, March 31 at 3 P.M. a public re-dedication ceremony for the newly restored sanctuary of this church will take place. Last fall a volunteer group of members and friends repainted the church sanctuary. A deep dark rose color was used which emulates the original color scheme. More recently new carpeting has been laid which now restores the sanctuary to its original splendor. 1985 also marks the 90th anniversary year of the dedication of the Pullman Memorial Church which is also to be celebrated on Palm Sunday. The service for this occasion will include participants from the community and other churches as well as several guest musicians. The congregation of the Pullman Memorial Church extends a cordial and warm invitation for all to join them in this joyous occasion.

The history of the Pullman Memorial Church is a rich and unique one. It is not surprising that the congregation of this church recognizes the value and importance of restoring their sanctuary even as to original color. The name Pullman has many historical implications both locally and on a national level. George M. Pullman 1831-1897, manufacturer of the famed Pullman railroad sleeping car, moved to Albion, N.Y. from Chautauqua County, N.Y. with his parents James and Emily Pullman in 1845. They lived in the house at 228 East State Street. James Pullman was a cabinetmaker and building mover. George was one of ten children and took an interest in his father's trade. As a young man he procured a contract for widening part of the Erie Canal which involved moving buildings. During the early 1850's he moved to Chicago where he gained a reputation as a building mover and contractor. Upon saving his money he procured the patent for the sleeping car design. In 1858 he purchased two second-hand railroad coaches and remodeled them into the first two Pullman sleepers. From this start, George M. Pullman became a leading industrial magnet and a millionaire by the end of the 19th Century. Although Mr. Pullman remained in Chicago the rest of his life, he maintained friendships with people he had known in Albion.

In 1890 Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Danolds of Albion visited the Pullmans at their summer home which was situated on one of the islands of the St. Lawrence. At that time, Mr. Danolds suggested that a need existed for a Universalist Church in Albion as the only Universalist Church in the vicinity was located at Childs and



it was rather old and antiquated. It was due to this suggestion that George Pullman proposed the idea of building a church in memory of his parents if the Universalists could raise \$5,000 to show their earnest desire. Great interest was shown in the wonderful offer by Pullman and on August 18, 1891 a meeting was held to legally organize and incorporate the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church. The following persons were elected to the first board of trustees: C.A. Danolds, John Lattin, Mrs. Joseph Hart, Sheldon Warner, Mrs. S.S. Spencer, W.A. Tanner, J.D. Billings, Adelbert Chapman, Mrs. F.E. Kittridge; Treas. George J. Reed and Clerk, F.E. Kittridge. On December 25, 1892 it was reported that the \$5,000 guarantee fund had been raised. Accordingly, in April 1893 George Pullman arrived in Albion by his special car and presented plans for the proposed church drawn by S.S. Beman of Chicago. Pullman also selected and purchased the site for his church. On May 19, 1894 the cornerstone was laid with Masonic ceremonies.

Stone for the church was quarried at the DeGraff Quarry on East State Street in Albion. It was built in

the style of architecture known as Old English Gothic. Sparing no expense, Pullman hired the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company of New York to create the innumerable windows in the church. By January 1895 the church was completed and a dedication service was held on Thursday morning, January 31. George Pullman's brother, Rev. Royal H. Pullman, a Universalist clergyman, delivered the dedicatory sermon. In the afternoon the Rev. Dr. Charles Fluhrer was installed as the first pastor with the installation sermon being given by Rev. James M. Pullman, a second brother, also a Universalist.

Once the entire project was complete, George Pullman had spent over \$70,000 including the lot purchase and erection of a memorial to his father and his mother, both of whom are buried in Mt. Albion Cemetery. Two bas relief bronzes which portray James and Emily Pullman are mounted near the main entrance of the church. Their son George M. Pullman died in 1897 but his presence still remains today in a very tangible piece of the past which he erected for future generations to come.