

Bethinking of Old Orleans

8-22-85

C.W.Lattin • County Historian

ORLEANS COUNTY NURSING HOME

Vol. VII

No. 34

On Sunday, Aug. 25 at 2 p.m. the Orleans County Home and Infirmary will celebrate its 25th anniversary of dedication. At this time the public is most cordially invited to attend the exercises and open house following the



program. It was on Aug. 28, 1960 that the present structure was dedicated with a cornerstone-laying ceremony. Included here is a photo of former county historian Cary H. Lattin and Lester Canham, chairman of the Board of Supervisors lowering a time capsule into the chamber of the cornerstone which was sealed into place during the ceremonies. The other photo shows the ground-breaking ceremony which took place on May 7, 1959. Included in this picture from left to right are supervisors Manley Whipple, Manley Morrison, Lester Canham, Justin Roberts, Michael Paduchak, County Attorney Mark Heath, Clerk of the Board Doris Craddock, Welfare Commissioner Victor Hawkes, and Supervisors Harold Hill, William Knights, Milton Bowen and Thomas DiPalma.

As part of the 25th anniversary program, Stephen Heard, administrator of the facility has announced that the County Board of Legislators has agreed to change the name from the Orleans County Home and Infirmary to The Orleans County Nursing Home. A granite tablet by Brigden Memorials will be unveiled and dedicated during the ceremonies on Sunday. The inscription on the tablet which will later be mounted on the building is as follows:

ON THE 25th ANNIVERSARY
OF ITS DEDICATION
THIS FACILITY
WAS RENAMED THE
ORLEANS COUNTY
NURSING HOME
August 1985

"The Temporal Body is the House of the Eternal..."

The first action in Orleans County toward the erection of a County House was at the fall meeting of the Board of Supervisors in 1829. The following year a site was purchased on County House Road and the first building constructed. In 1878 the first County-House was replaced with a much more commodious structure. In 1903 another addition known as an Infirmary building was added.

As the social welfare program was gradually taken from local responsibility the requirements of State and Federal welfare agencies demanded more adequate facilities. Since approximately two-thirds of the cost of our County welfare program was reimbursed from State and Federal funds it was imperative that necessary action be taken to qualify for this assistance.

A Special Committee of the Board of Supervisors was appointed in 1957 to study this matter. As a result a thorough investigation by New York State Welfare Department consultants indicated that, because of high costs of repair and restricted capacity, the renovation of the old County Home and Infirmary buildings was completely impractical and that current needs could best be met through a new structure. The decision to proceed with plans for such a new structure was further prompted by the indication, through the experience of other Counties where facilities had been likewise consolidated, that a reduction in percapita costs of care and administration would result.

Consideration of building on the County House Road location was ruled out because of inadequate water supply. The availability of village water and sewer services and the desirably central geographical location were prime factors in deciding on the present 20 acre site on Route 31, west of the Village of Albion, which was purchased in 1958 at a cost of \$10,000.

By unanimously adopted resolution on June 5, 1958 the Board of Supervisors authorized a new County Home and Infirmary at a cost not to exceed \$1,000,000 for construction and equipment. Orleans County was fortunate to be approved for Hill-Burton aid, which was an agency of the Federal Government established to assist financially in the constructing and equipping of infirmaries and hospitals with priority being based on need. Slightly over \$200,000 was received from this source.

Today, although this facility is 25 years old, it is a model of a health care institution. Recently re-roofed with a sloping roof taking the place of the original flat one, the building stands ready for the future for those who wish to avail themselves of its nursing services.