

Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

ARCHITECTURAL TOUR



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The Orleans County Department of History is pleased to announce a special tour of the seven historic churches around the County Court House Square in Albion, Oct. 19 between the hours of 2:00 P.M. and 5:00 P.M. The tour and open house at each church is being held in celebration of Architectural Heritage Year in 1986 in New York State. The churches which are on the National Register include: Christ Episcopal 1830, United Methodist 1832, First Baptist 1860, First Free Methodist 1860, First Presbyterian 1874, Pullman Memorial Universalist 1894 and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic 1896. Knowledgeable members of each congregation will be at their respective churches to greet and inform visitor's of their church building's history and architecture. They will also speak about their congregational history and answer questions about their denomination history and theology. You may begin the tour at any one of the seven churches on October 19. This will provide an opportunity for those interested to see interiors with which they may be unfamiliar. The Albion churches are voluminously rich with magnificent architectural details, art and stained glass.

At the Baptist Church visitors will see a beautiful stained glass window which until several months ago had been boarded up for many years. At the Episcopal Church visitors will get their first glimpse of a new stained glass window of Mary, a memorial to Minnie McNaughton by her son William. At the Universalist Church visitors can see innumerable Tiffany windows including a signed work which was recently discovered through research to be entitled "Christ the Consoler". Likewise, at the Methodist Church visitors will see a beautiful Tiffany type window of the "Good Shepherd" depicted amongst a flock of sheep. At the Presbyterian Church, Orleans County's tallest building, one can see a magnificent Gothic rose window. Visitors at St. Joseph's Church will see richly illuminated stained glass windows depicting various biblical characters.

The photo included with this week's column is another Exceptional Entrance from Orleans County. It is the main entrance of the First Free Methodist Church in Albion. Beginning in the 1840's American architects turned from rigid Grecian architectural forms to more imaginative Gothic shapes and designs. The Carpenter Gothic building became an American style. Such buildings were frequently sided with what is known as board and batten siding. In other words, wide vertical boards were attached to the frame work with the seams being covered over with a molding. Such was the treatment of the exterior walls of the First Free Methodist Church built in 1860. But the Free Methodist Church is an exception. It is not Gothic. Rather than using pointed Gothic arches for windows and doors, the openings are round headed which is definitely not Gothic. What then, do we call this unusual style? Perhaps the best terms are Norman Style or Norman Revival. At any rate the designer of the church selected the Norman motif for this Exceptional Entrance. The Norman Style actually dates back to the 1100's. The pretty zig-zag design over the arch is certainly unmistakably Norman quality. The entrance is truly a very rare and well preserved architectural masterpiece. This is one of the only wooden Norman Style buildings to be found anywhere around. Indeed, all of the Albion churches are a wealth of extraordinary architectural work, well worth the time