

Glances at Cobblestone Education

by Virginia Lattin Morrison

Gaines has always been interested in giving the best education possible to its children. In 1813 a twelve foot log cabin between Gaines and Childs was set aside for this purpose. Part of this is now incorporated in the William Morrison home on the north side of the Ridge. A real building was established at the four corners in Gaines Village and after 1817 was known as District No. 4. The tract of land where this building now stands was deeded by the Holland Land Company to Oliver Booth on January 4, 1817. He in turn deeded it to Caleb Knapp on July 18, 1839. Caleb and Ann Knapp then, on June 9, 1844, deeded the property to the Trustees of School District No. 4, for the sum of \$65.

The Albion Central School District kept the property until December 8, 1958 when they deeded it to the Gaines Community Center which in turn deeded it to the Cobblestone Society on July 27, 1962.

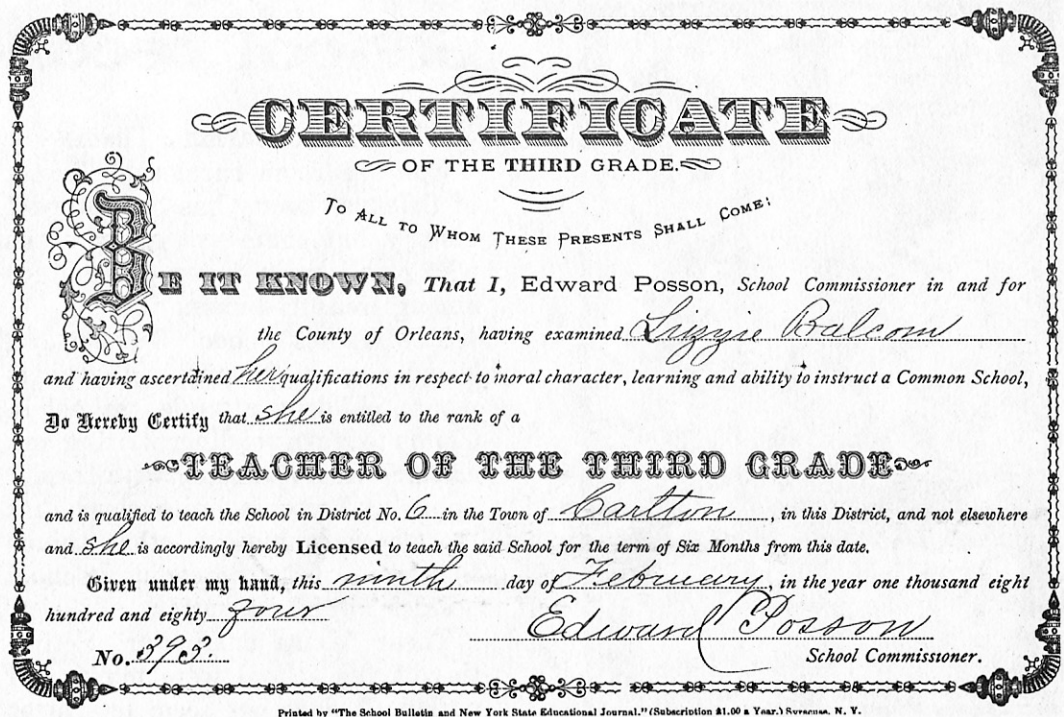
The first teacher in the village school was Paris Dolley. His assistant was Miss Mary Stout. Others who taught there were Clarissa Burbank, Mrs. H. J. Hovey who in 1837 was ordained as pastor of the Gaines Church and the Hon. Almanzor Hutchinson. In 1879 it was said, "The public school in the village at the present time is second to that of no other village of its size in the country."

In 1882 a new wood floor was laid and at the school meeting the trustee demanded that he be given enough money to buy hooks for the blinds and locks for the doors.

The school year 1882-1883 began with Frank H. Lattin (member of New York State Assembly 1916-1929) teaching the advanced group and Miss Edith Dunning in charge



Frank H. Lattin



Third grade teaching certificate of Lizzie Balcom.

of the primary room.

The following notes were taken from a diary kept by Dr. Lattin at that time:

January 11, 1883 — at school — had examinations today — scholars stand better than expected.

January 12. Had examinations this A. M. Speaking this P. M. All the girls responded and part of the boys — rest will respond later.

March 10. Cool and rainy. Walked to Albion to see about cards for my scholars. Went to see Miss Dunning. She is quite sick.

March 12. Miss Dunning still sick. I shall teach both rooms this week.

Ho! for a picnic —

March 16. My winter term of school closed this day — have taught 80 days.

March 22. Got my school money for winter term this morn. \$136.

March 26. Warm and pleasant. Commenced spring term of school — 19 scholars in advanced room. New schedule.

School hours:

- Commence A. M. 8:30
- Recess 10:15 — 10:30
- Noon 12:00 — 1:00 P. M.
- Close 3:13 P. M.

April 2. At school — whipped Homer Parker for making obscene picture on Perry Fellows book.

May 9. Very cold for this time of year — Strawberry vines have badly winter killed. Stayed after school this p.m. to drill my "young ideas" in their dialogues.

May 22. At school — Belle Perry got mad and took her books and went home.

At the Old Schoolmates Reunion in 1924 this last incident was much talked about. But no one could remember why the lady was so angry.

No record has been found of when the school was modernized with the banks of windows in each room. The picture of the Old Schoolmates Reunion pictures three windows to the south so it was after 1824. While trustee, Guilford D. Ward had the bell and belfry placed on the school-house.

Since 1882 the size of the school has fluctuated from two rooms to one room and back. When Virginia Lattin Morrison went there in 1912-1917 there was just one room but



Miss Lizzie Balcom

about forty students. In the '30's there were enough children in the district to necessitate the use of both rooms. The late '40's saw the attendance dwindle so that in 1953 when the district school was closed only one room was in use.

In 1898 the teachers were paid \$7.00 and 5.00 per week. The budget for the school year 1906-1907 was \$493.09. When the school closed the budget was a little over \$6,000. The price of education had risen but had the quality changed?

In addition to teachers mentioned in the text, this is a partial list of those who taught before 1924: Arthur J. Weed, Miss Garrison, Lowell Smith, Courtland M. Chester, C. H. Bidelman, Lloyd Crossett, Carrie Kenny Berston, Jennie Hutchinson McKendry, Cora Skinner Porter, Belle Davis, Sadie Rice Fuller, Helen Andrews Beckwith, Frank Thurber, Miss Carrie Kenny, Net Bason, Alexander Filer, Frank Chester, Susie Ruggles and Julia Wilder.