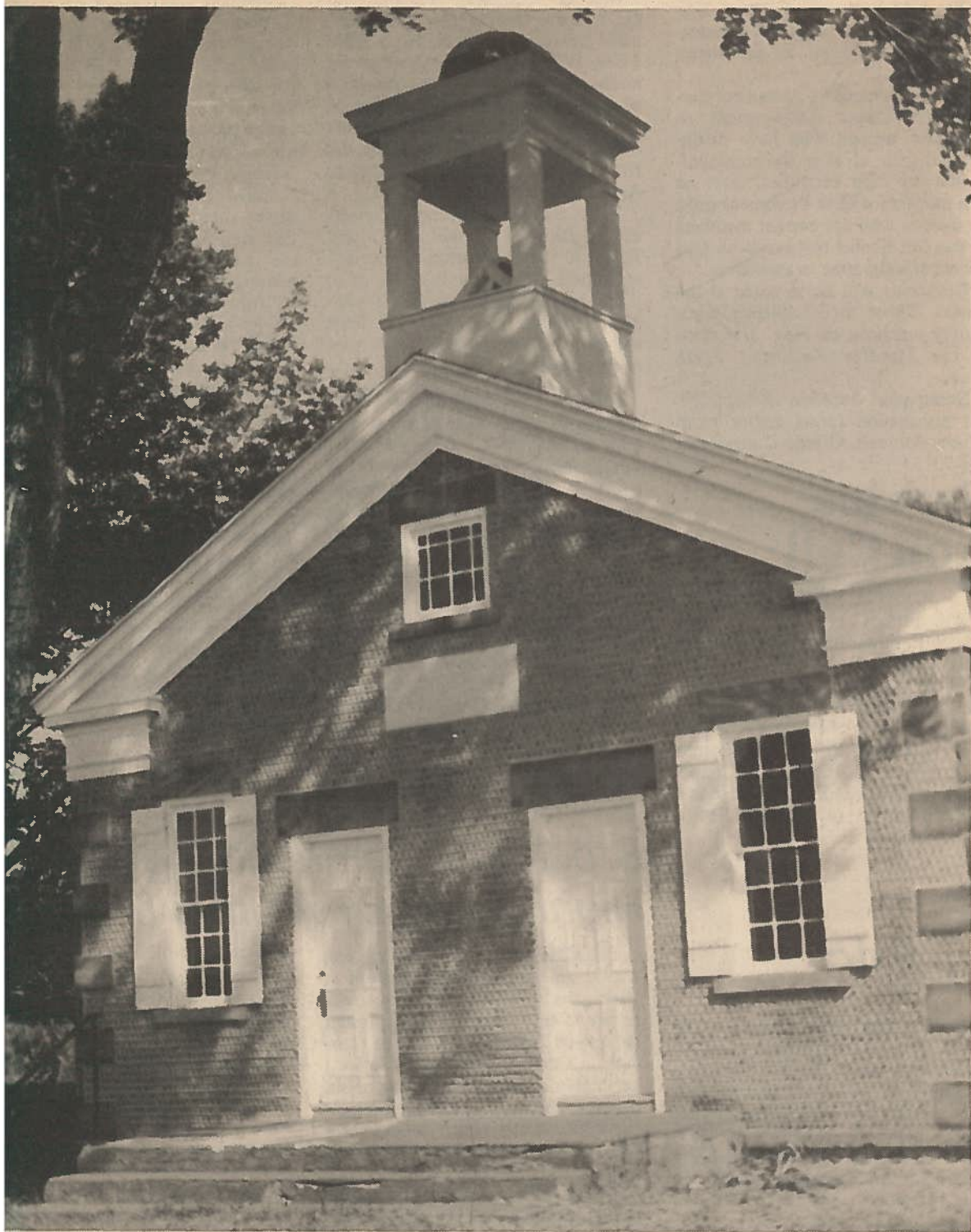


# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## WHAT'S DIFFERENT?

This is the Cobblestone School at Childs, N.Y. which is part of the Cobblestone Museum Complex. What's different? During the month of August the Cobblestone Society has undertaken some visual improvements and restoration of the visage of this historic building. This was done for several reasons but the most prominent, for the 140th anniversary of the building of the schoolhouse. It was last painted in the mid-1970s, but since then, older photographs have been found which give further clues. Therefore, the building has been restored the way it looked back in the 1880s. Window sash with nine panes have been installed replacing ones which were later added with only four panes. Board shutters were built and painted white to also correspond with old photos. The boys and girls front doors previously painted brown, have also been done in white. Thus the character and appearance of the building has been restored. But beyond this other improvements have also taken place. A rotted post in the belfry was rebuilt by volunteer Bill Schubert and a hand rail installed at the steps by George Callard. Grounds work has also occurred with the cooperation of John Ugorek, neighbor to the school. In this process two sandstone hitching posts were unearthed in an ash heap in the backyard. Apparently these were once located in front of the schoolhouse.

On Sunday, September 17 from 1-5 the Cobblestone Society will host its annual Old Timers Fair. As part of this program, the Cobblestone School will celebrate its 140th anniversary. A special souvenir of the school will be given out that day. On hand will be Janice Barnum Thaine, an alumna of the school and a museum interpreter, to speak with visitors. Her mother and grandfather were both teachers at the school.

The school was built of lakewashed cobblestones in 1849, these being hauled up from the beach of Lake Ontario by ox cart. At the time, it replaced a log schoolhouse located across the road. William Jenks Babbitt, an early pioneer in Gaines oversaw its construction. The marble tablet in the gable notes: "School District No. 5 of Gaines AD 1849, Wm. J. Babbitt, Esq., gratuitously superintended the erection of this building and made the district a present of the bell." Cast letters on the bell also denote "AD 1849 W.J. Babbitt, Esq. pays twenty-five dollars for this bell and gives it to school district No. 5 of Gaines." Now in working order, it rings out for museum visitors. The school with sloping floor to elevate students in the rear of the classroom is unique. The Cobblestone exterior veneer is made of small water washed stones sorted small, medium, and large with the smaller ones being used on the facade. In June of 1952 school district No. 5 of Gaines closed its building and centralized with the Albion district. In 1961 the school was acquired by the Cobblestone Society for \$129.00 (legal fees) from District No. 5 of Gaines.

The Old Timers Fair will spotlight this historic building on Sept. 17. Many area artisans will be on hand at the museum complex located at Routes 104 and 98 to demonstrate old times skills and crafts. These will include: spinning, weaving, candle dipping, basketry, chair weaving, decoy carving, blacksmithing, printing, stenciling, quilting, tating, saw sharpening, story telling, rug hooking and needlecrafts. The committee for the event includes: Virginia Kildoo, Laura Close, Virginia Weis, Bill Schubert and William Nestle.

The Old Timers Fair provides family entertainment of an educational nature. The history of not only the school 1849-1989, but a host of old time skills will be awaiting you.