

Bethinking of Old Orleans

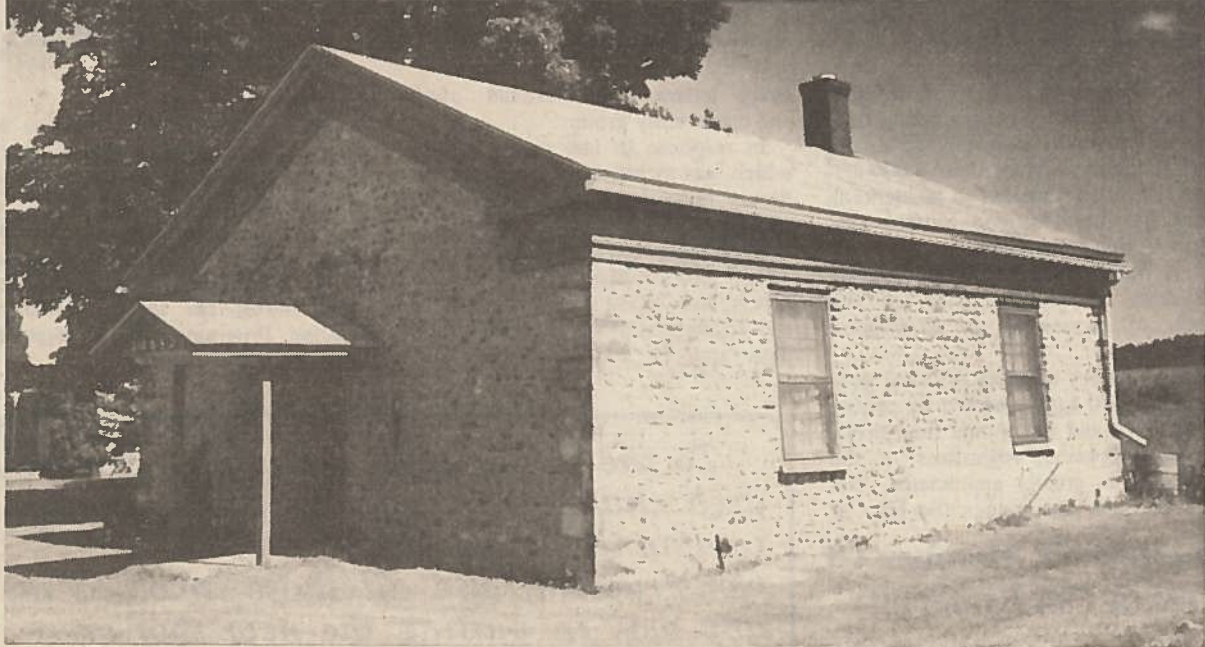
C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XVIII

11-21-96

No. 47

GAINES SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1



This group photo of students who attended District No. 1 of Gaines circa 1924-25 has recently come to my attention. I would first like to thank Susan Hibbs Bennett for sharing it with the county department of history. It is indeed, an excellent representation of multi-culturalism. My first thought was, public schools welcome everyone and always have. What is equally as interesting, is upon first glance it is hard to determine the gender of the child fifth from left in the front row. You might expect to see a boy with hair like that from the mid-1970's but it is indeed, unusual from the mid-1920's.

Secondly, I would like to thank Janice Barnum Thaine, Deputy Historian for the Town of Gaines, who was able to identify all the students and teacher with help from LaVerne Morrison and Helen Brust. They are:

Front Row: Lillian Lacey, Louis Hollenbeck, August (Gus) Watts, Harold Rush, Linwood Watts, Pauline Hollenbeck, Luther Rush, John Lacey. Back Row: Morris Hollenbeck, Laverne Morrison, Gordon Wakefield, Frieda Hollenbeck (Hobbs), Helen Rush (Brust), Mrs. Clara Hall (Rorick) Teacher, Mary Watts, Grace Neal (Draper).

Other teachers who also taught at this school over a period of time were: Mr. Howard Pratt, Mrs. Charles Burroughs, Miss Eleanor Metz, and Mrs. Pheobe Emerson Beales. At the time this picture was taken over seventy years ago, Mrs. Hall would probably have been earning a yearly salary of between \$700 and \$800.

Another interesting fact about this picture is that the fifteen students of various ages, ranging in grade levels from first to probably eight, represent only seven families. Indeed, public schooling

before busing was localized. These children would have walked to school, some of them for a distance longer than a mile.

District No. 1 of Gaines schoolhouse is still standing as shown herein. It is located on the south side of route 104 east of the Eagle-Harbor Waterport Road. This cobblestone building, erected in the late 1830's is now used as an antique shop owned by Angie Lusk of Holley.

Before Centralization occurred in the early 1950's each town was divided into school districts. The Town of Gaines had twelve school districts numbering one through twelve. To my knowledge, all the school houses are still standing in Gaines but have been reused for other purposes including residences.

At the annual meeting of each school district, the voters of that district elected a trustee, clerk and collector for one year each. In essence these three were the board of education. The trustee had the power to hire and fire the teacher and make other executive decisions. If the voters didn't like what he did, they would vote him out the following year.

The cobblestone building shown here is one of over one hundred cobblestone structures in Orleans County which is included in a book entitled Cobblestone Buildings in Orleans County by Dee Robinson. This book which is now being printed is expected to be released before Christmas. This has been a joint effort of the Cobblestone Society and the Orleans County Historical Association. More information about how, when and where to acquire this unique book, will soon be forth coming.