

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## SOUTH BARRE SCHOOL



The South Barre School was known as District No. 9 of the Town of Barre. This one-room schoolhouse, built in 1845 of cobblestone, is located at the corner of Oak Oak Orchard Road and the Culver Road. It is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Engle.

Our photo, shown herein depicting the students, is absolutely astounding when we consider the number involved. On the back side of the picture, written in old lettering, it states: "South Barre School taken Feb. 22nd 1894. No. of scholars 60 in all." Someone else has written "Capitola Grinnell - teacher." Well, if you count them, there are only 59 students and Miss Grinnell. Because of the backdrop, it is obvious the photo was taken in a studio rather than at the school.

I got to thinking that Feb. 22nd is Washington's Birthday. It occurred to me the picture might have been part of a celebration. So just on an off-hand chance I checked the old local newspapers on microfilm at Swan Library. Sure enough, the Orleans Republican of Feb. 28, 1894 carried a brief mention of this under a column entitled "Our Letter Box". It is as follows: "Miss Capitola Grinnell, with her South Barre School of sixty scholars, celebrated the 22nd by going to an Albion photographer and having their pictures taken in a group." No doubt on this occasion there must have been several parents involved in transporting the "scholars" to Albion. We might imagine at that time of year a couple of bob-sleighs were used. Incidentally, Feb. 22, 1894 was a Thursday when they took this field trip one hundred and two years ago.

Back in 1968 Barre Historian, Helen Mathes was able to get the students identified through one who was still alive. These are: Minnie Lintner, Joe Sheeler, Libbie Miller, Sam Amis, Willie Driesel, Leon Wright, Mabel Woodward, ——— Dutton, Albert Foote, ——— Gurney, Richard Bates, Martha Sheeler, Claire Andrews, Gladys Gibbs, Harry Woodward, Luella Seager, Velma Harding, Ada Andrews, Rose Bates, Cornie Harding, Earl Gibbs, Rebecca Dutton, Edna Gibbs, George Foote, Mamie Sheeler, Charlie

Crowley, Nellie Sheelar, John Dutton, Bessie Gibbs, Florence Gibbs, Sidney Kerrison, Rhoda Bates, Henry Delano, Rose Dutton, Walker Fellows, Nellie Harding, Eddie Engel, Christy Engel, Joe Jefferson, Clarence Carpenter, Dan Maloy, Charlie Batchellor, Carl Driesel, Lena Jefferson, George Amis, Anna Miller, Anna Lintner, Elmer Gibbs, Mabel Driesel, Archie Bates, Dennie Sheeler.

Aside from probably being pretty well-disciplined, I dare say this was a drug-free school! Any elementary or Junior high school teacher of today will tell you that thirty students is too many in one class. Here, Miss Grinnell had twice as many under her charge. It makes you wonder how she did it. Upon studying the picture, you will note there is certainly quite an age range from those in the back to the little ones seated in the front. We know that frequently the older students helped the younger ones which not only helped the teacher but also helped reinforce the older ones learning. None the less, having all these students in one classroom must have been a handfull.

You're probably wondering what she was paid. I don't know. But my grandmother Lattin who taught in Dist. No. 10 of Albion in 1891-92 in a schoolhouse at the northern end of Culver Road was paid \$6.00 a week. It evidently was a tough year for her so she demanded \$10.00 a week the following year and got it from the trustee. What I'm saying is, Miss Grinnell might have earned fifty-five or sixty dollars a month in her position. She would have taught all the subjects at the time and been responsible for almost anything else that came along with running a one-room schoolhouse and its daily program.

Capitola Grinnell (1870-1928) was a well-known woman in Albion. She first taught school several years in this vicinity and later worked in the business office of the Albion Telephone Company. In 1928 she was working as a probation officer for the N.Y.S. Training School (Albion Correctional Facility). At the time of her death, she left one brother and four sisters including Mrs. Enos Rice of Barre Center.