

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## THE BENTON CORNERS SCHOOL



*Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attained to with diligence."*

--Abigail Adams

Our photo this week shows the Town of Albion District No. 2 School House in 1916. The school was located just north of Benton's Corners on route 98 south of Moore-Nesbitt Inc. The structure, is currently the residence of Mr. and Mrs. William Seager.

Sixteen students making up the school's population, pose with their teacher. To the right, we see three adults including two women standing and a man laying on the ground. These three are perhaps, parents or school-connected officials.

Some of the students, none of whom are identified, show an item of interest. The boy in the front center, poses with a rather large old-time football. The boy behind, shows a partially finished basket-weaving project. The girl next to him holds a notebook. The boy to the far right, holds a net for perhaps catching specimens of butterflies. These objects certainly signify that these students, over eighty years ago, were receiving a well-rounded education in a common school.

Let us now focus upon what's in the background. First, the flagpole, and a pole it is. We may assume that someone in the district went to the woods and simply cut a very tall, straight, slender tree and made it into a flag pole. Indeed, the first flag poles were just that.

As to the schoolhouse, what a neat, trim, precise and well kept structure it appears to be. The

belfry has a stripe of a different color painted in the roof shingles. The windows are all outfitted with blinds (shutters) with the ones in front being closed. The transom over the front door is even shuttered. In the gable we note the plaque which states "Albion District No. 2, 1884". To the rear of the school house is a privy or outhouse. A board fence surrounds the property. Note the absence of any shrubbery on the grounds in relationship to the building.

From a news clipping about the district published in 1932, it indicates that an old school ledger states: "The property of the Second School District in Barre bought by Almeron Tripp, Clerk, Nov. 24, 1838. Keep your records just and true and no quarrels will ensue". Good advice even now. In 1875 the north part of the Town of Barre was subdivided to create the Town of Albion where this school district was then located.

The cost of running the district in 1837-38 was \$126.62. In 1848 Oliver Wolcott got a contract for 18 cords of wood at \$3.00 per cord to heat the school. In 1897 just one hundred years ago the teacher was paid \$180.00 for 36 weeks of instruction. In 1907 the teacher earned \$396.00 for the same number of weeks.

The first school house in the district was built some time between 1820-1825. The one pictured here was built in 1884. In 1932 there were 52 taxpayers in the district. The school closed prior to 1952 and thereafter the students of the district were sent to Albion.