

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## 1999 REFLECTIONS OF PUBLIC HISTORIANS PART I

1-6-00

For the sixteenth consecutive year local public historians in Orleans County have been polled for the year's highlights in their respective municipalities. Here is what they have reflected upon:

**Kendall**, Joette Knapp, Town Historian. We begin our series with a vintage photo of the Kendall Dist. No. 3 schoolhouse from around 1915 located on the West Kendall Road. This structure, following centralization, has been transformed into a residence. For 1999 events in Kendall, Joette reports that little of major importance has happened. Although she indicates that water lines have been extended and that the former Union Hall in the hamlet of Kendall is being remodeled inside and out to become "Bubba's", a restaurant.

**Yates**, Virginia Cooper, Town Historian. Like Kendall, Virginia reports that not too much has happened in the town during 1999. However, water lines were extended and the Town Highway Garage was rebuilt at Yates Center.

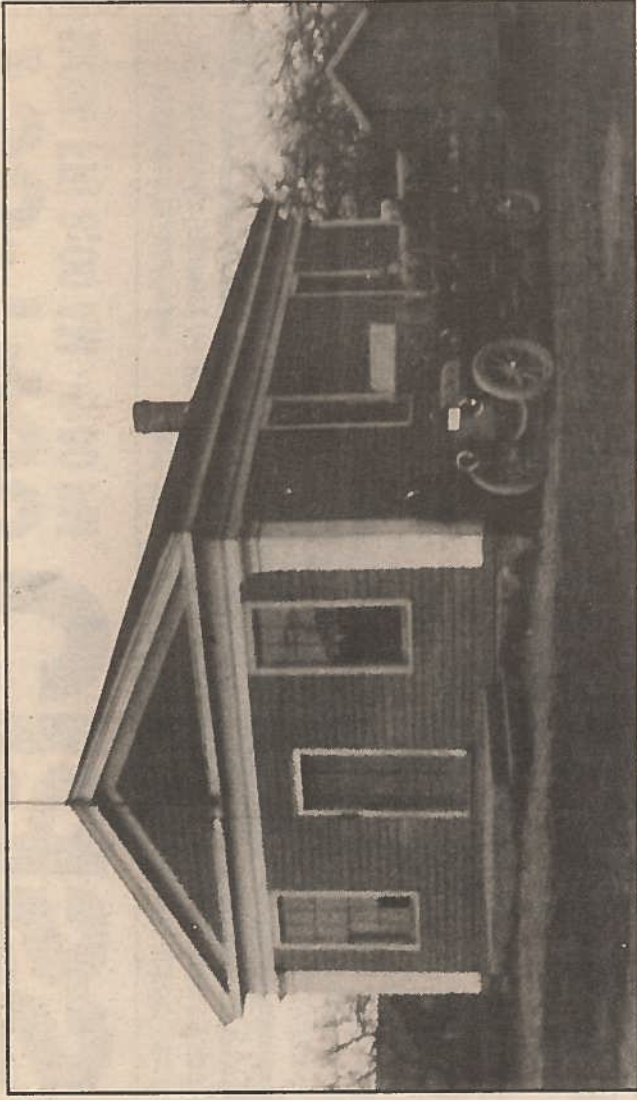
**Gaines**, Delia Robinson, Town Historian, Janice Thaine, Deputy. Like other municipalities, Gaines was also involved in extending water lines through Federal Grants. However, during 1999 the town suffered several unfortunate incidents. On January 9 the Town Highway Garage at Childs collapsed due to an overload of heavy snow on the roof. In July the Town Hall was struck by lightning which caused damage to the cupola, computer systems and telephone lines. The very dedicated tax collector, Margaret Miles was stricken with a stroke leaving the work for her deputy to complete.

But on the positive side there were some good highlights. The inventory of town records was completed through a grant from the State Archives and Records Administrator. The personal papers of Robert Anderson, the second Supervisor of Gaines, were given to the town. This is a treasure trove of local history which sheds light on early events, and people in the town. These were donated by Mildred Merrick of Coconut Grove, Florida. The historic Cobblestone School, a part of the Cobblestone Museum at Childs was 150 years old. This anniversary was noted with a celebration and historical booklet in September. A new gift shop has opened in the hamlet of Gaines and the Watt Fruit Company expanded their operations with the addition of a greenhouse. Two historic markers were erected in the town during 1999. One at the historic Cobblestone School and other at the Union Cemetery near the Watt Fruit Company on Rt. 98.

**Albion**, by Neil Johnson, Village historian. The historian's post in the Town of Albion is currently vacant. These reflections therefore include both the town and village.

The Avon Injected Rubber and Plastics plant fire in April was the most dramatic event. The fire was kept from spreading, toxic fumes did not cause any injuries and the major part of the plant (the old Hunt Wesson warehouse) was salvaged. The plant was back in operation in a few weeks and the rubble neatly cleared away.

The DEC judge head the arguments for and against the landfill proposal. The main arguments against boiled down to (1) the sandstone under the landfill is badly cracked



and will allow seepage; (2) seepage is already occurring in wells north of the canal; (3) any barrier will eventually leak in time; (4) the heavy truck traffic will be a hazard to our children and will destroy our roads; (5) the 250 foot landfill will be an eyesore and bad for tourism; and (6) we don't want it. The judge's decision should be rendered early in 2000.

Monroe Muffler and AutoZone put up storas on West Avenue on the site of the former Maine Lumber, continuing the trend toward turning West Avenue into Albion's main business district and further incorporating Albion into suburban life.

**Barre**, by Helen Mathes, Town Historian. The year 1999 started with lots of heavy snow in January causing barn roofs to cave in. Farmers had an average yield on crops. Sale prices were very low, we still have ten dairy farms but we are losing Starview Kennels business after 21 years. They will be sorely missed. Barre youth have been very

active in 4-H, sports, music concerts, plays at school and churches. Another exciting Balloon Fest was held August 14 & 15 at Pine Hill Airport. The Town Board has hired an architect to draw up plans for a new town hall. Hopefully we will have one soon. The tax rate was down this year. Changes on the Board this coming year will be Mark Chamberlain as Supervisor replacing George Mathes who is retiring. Sadly Arnold Foote died April 11. Dr. Harling will replace him as councilman.

**Carlton**, by Lysbeth Hoffman, Town Historian

1. A HUD grant of \$400,000 was received in late summer. The funds are being used to further extend the lines of the Carlton Water District.

2. The Ashwood Road has been resurfaced.

3. Swings, slides and other playground equipment have been set up in the Carlton Town Park.

Part II next week