

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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4-5-02 Neighborhood Schools

The Albion Central School District is now celebrating its 125th anniversary. With this in mind, I thought it would be of interest to look at what it came from.

By the mid 19th century, there were more than 130 school districts in Orleans County. Naturally, without school busing, students had to walk to school. The state education department disapproved of students having to walk over a mile to school. The Town of Ridgeway had 16 school districts, usually with a one-room school house for each district.

Likewise, as the Village of Albion grew, more school houses were needed to accommodate the accessibility needs. These one-room schools for grades 1 through 8 were free to all. The earliest school in Albion was a log building on the west side of Main Street, north of the railroad, which served until it

became obsolete. Circa 1835, a school was built on East State just west of Clarendon Street on the south side. The front part was brick. The rear part, which might have been the original portion, was made of cobblestone. This building was removed more than 90 years ago. Another school of this time frame was on the south side of the Beaver Street, between Main and Liberty streets.

Our photo is from the Caroline Street School, which was on the north side of Caroline just east of Ingersol Street. The picture, taken in 1891, shows Grades B, C and D with their teacher. This was obviously a wooden school house. By the mid 19th century, schools were also built on West State Street where Lafayette Beach Park is located and on West Avenue where the OTB office is now situated. Both of these struc-

tures were of Medina Sandstone and looked similar in style, with West State consisting of two rooms.

In 1882, Central School was built at East Park and Platt streets. This building had four classrooms. In 1934, it was sold to the American Legion for \$1. It now serves as a county office building known as Central Hall and is the only neighborhood elementary school building still standing in the Village of Albion. As consolidation came about, then centralization in the 1950s, the district schools met their demise.

Free secondary education did not come about until the mid 19th century. Before then, the academies handled higher education or grades 9 through 12. Students paid tuition, giving those who could afford it an advantage over those who could not.

The Medina Free Academy was established in 1850,



making it one of the earliest free public schools in the state. The Albion Union Free

School was established in 1876, this being the forerunner to the present Albion Cen-

tral District, which is now observing 125 years of existence.