



Bethinking of Old Orleans

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The Gaines Liberty Pole

Our pictures here were taken 20 years ago, on July 4, 1982, at the Cobblestone Society Museum in Childs. It was on this occasion that the liberty pole near the Farmers Hall was dedicated to the people of Gaines.

The left-hand photo shows the pole with an eagle half way up on a perch. A stone at the front of the pole, lettered by Brigden Memorials, states: "To The People of Gaines This Liberty Pole Replica was erected in the Year of the Eagle 1982 By the Cobblestone Society."

Pictured at right are, from left: Richard Cook, chairman of the museum and grounds committee; Arthur Eddy, county legislator; Steven Hawley, assemblyman; James Hubbell, Gaines councilman; Roger Rush, Gaines councilman; Ronald Radzinski, Gaines supervisor; and David Vagg, Gaines councilman.

The occasion was the annual Patriotic Program held each year at the Cobblestone Museum church in Childs. In 1982, the Orleans Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution also took part in this program.

Liberty poles were one of the earliest American political symbols. They were erected throughout the colony of New York and ranged from rude logs to high, white-painted poles sometimes festooned with pennants or other patriotic decorations. After the American Revolution, political parties began to erect liberty poles as focal points around which to rally.

It is said that a tall liberty pole once stood in the hamlet of Gaines and may have been

erected by Democrats in the 1870s. It is also said that Francis Harling (1827-1897), a blacksmith near Riches Corners, once made some straps of iron for fastening two poles together end to end so as to erect a taller liberty pole than one already placed by another political party.

From a column of reminiscences which appeared in the Orleans Republican in 1922, we know that a tall liberty pole with a big wooden eagle resting on a perch half-way up once stood in Albion. This was located on the west side of Main Street by a hotel known as the Mansion House, which would have been located somewhere between what is now the Lake Country Pennysaver office and the Erie Canal. Nothing else is known about the liberty pole or when it may have been erected or by whom. I believe it must have stood there back in the 1870s.

This year, on July 7, the 31st annual Patriotic Program will take place in the historic Cobblestone Church at 11 a.m. The Rev. Richard Eilers, pastor of the Gaines Congregational Church, will deliver the patriotic message. A room in the basement of the Cobblestone Church will be dedicated to Charles A. Danolds (1818-1899) and Mary Jane Patterson Danolds (1821-1911) and will serve as a gallery for historic exhibits.

The Danolds family of Eagle Harbor was active in the Cobblestone Church during the 19th century. C. A. Danolds was a contractor who widened portions of the Erie Canal in the 1850s, built a section of the Welland Canal and sold horses to the Union Army during the Civil War.