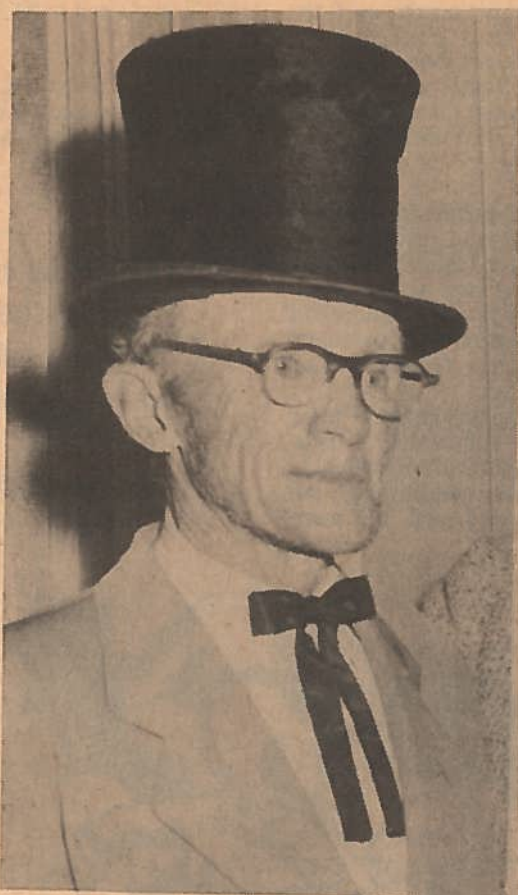


Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian

Retires As Gaines Historian



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J. Howard

No. 51

Pratt 12-22-86

As of December 31, J. Howard Pratt, long time historian for the Town of Gaines, will retire from his post. During the past 30 years or so Mr. Pratt has become recognized as an interpreter of local history through various media. He is recognized as the author of two books on local history. The first, published in 1978 entitled "Memories Of Life On The Ridge," tells about Western New York from the 1890's to the 1920's. The second publication in 1983 entitled "Saga Of The Ridge" tells about the early settlement times in our area. This stemmed from a long series of articles by the same name in the Albion paper.

During Pratt's career as a local historian he was actively involved in the formation of two historical societies, those being the Cobblestone Society in 1960 and the Orleans County Historical Association 10 years ago. He was a very prominent figure in the Gaines Sesquicentennial during 1959. In fact, the picture of him which accompanies this article is from that event. In 1984 he was also active in the Historic Gaines Jubilee.

For several years after the acquisition of the Cobblestone School at Childs by the Cobblestone Society, Pratt conducted classes there for local elementary students to visit on field trips. Indeed, through his efforts the present education program at the Cobblestone Museum as we know it today was established.

Many people will also remember J. Howard Pratt disguised as Lincoln. Having a keen interest in the great emancipator, Pratt would give talks on Lincoln, his times, his work and his philosophy. Many an audience both young and old has enjoyed his interpretations of Lincoln during the past. In 1968 J. Howard Pratt was awarded a Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History. During his lifetime since 1889 he has of course, seen many changes and done many things. His first job was teaching in the rural schools. Districts in which he taught included Barre Center, Oak Orchard on the Ridge, Riches Corners and Eagle Harbor. He was also engaged in farming, raising Guernsey cattle. During the late 1930's Pratt was the 4-H County Agent in Orleans. His interests have included not only local history but painting, chair caning and travel, including several trips to Ireland.

On December 27th at 12:30 p.m. the Orleans County Municipal Historians will give a luncheon at the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church in Albion to honor J. Howard Pratt. Reservations at \$6.00 each may be made by calling Della Robinson, Deputy Historian of Gaines, at 589-4355 before December 23.