

Erin -

Here's what we were discussing yesterday: another "lost" cobblestone - this one discovered while I was scanning the book, "Images of America: Bath NY," a 2004 Arcadia Press publication in the Corning Glass Museum gift shop.....

This particular building is not in the Schmidt book nor any other publication I've seen that documents cobblestone buildings. It's the former gatehouse at the Davenport family's estate, "Riverside" in the village of Bath, Steuben County (click on attachment - above - for photos).

The Davenport family were arguably Bath's most well-known citizens. Their philanthropy established a Home for Girls (orphanage) - which is also shown in these photos (large, stone building). The local hospital is named for them, as is the local library. One of the Davenport brothers is also responsible for hiring the Tiffany Co. to re-decorate the interior of Bath's First Presbyterian Church, which remains one of the great treasures of the region. That Tiffany interior remains intact & is breath-taking, having just seen it yesterday, during one of their public tours.

The family estate, "Riverside," must have been quite impressive, from the photos in the book. It was located on the edge of the village. Scanned above are images of the main house, the cobblestone gatehouse/driveway/stone gates, the carriage house, and the girl's home/orphanages.

Today, only the carriage house survives (a photo of it is included in Dan Fink's book, "Barns of the Genesee Country"). The orphanage was closed in 1959 - demolished in the 1960s. I don't know when the main house and the cobblestone gatehouse were demolished. Nor what happened to all the acreage of the Davenport family's estate. Some of their other property - up on a hilltop - became Mossy Bank Park.

The cobblestone gatehouse is remarkable and quite elegant. However, it's difficult to estimate exactly when it might have been built. While the walls (stone courses, quoins) look to be of traditional mid-late 19th-century cobblestone masonry - there's a large chimney (in background) whose design more resembles the type of sophisticated chimney you'd see on a late 19th/early 20th-century English Tudor Revival building (perhaps a later addition?). Offhand, I don't recall seeing any photos or mention of any other cobblestone gatehouse buildings in any of the known books on cobblestone.

As the Davenport family was of significant wealth, another possibility is that this gatehouse actually dates from a later period - similar to the early-20th-century addition added to the estate-size, cobblestone residence in Geneva. That house was greatly enlarged in the early 1900s - using cobblestone construction. At the time, they apparently were able to find masons who had the skills to do this specialized type of masonry (historic cobblestone walls).

Many of the photos in this book are from the collections of the Steuben Co. Historical Society & Historian's office. It would be interesting to see if there is additional documentation (written, photos) on the gatehouse/its construction. The Davenport family papers are at Cornell University

((<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM01173.html>
<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/EAD/htmldocs/RMM01173.html>)).

A high-resolution copy of this photo - showing the cobblestone gatehouse - would be an important addition to your archives at the Cobblestone Society & Museum.

In discussing cobblestone buildings in NYS, it's often asked: How many cobblestone buildings were originally built? The standard answer I've seen is "approximately 1,000." However, an exact count (much less inventory) of all the buildings doesn't exist. The inventory completed by Rochester engineer Robert Roudabush was done in the 1970s - by which time a number of the cobblestone buildings had been demolished. Historic photos, such as those in this book, are another way to discover the actual number of cobblestone buildings, both extant & lost.

Cynthia Howk

Architectural Research Coordinator (Editor's Note: Former, now retired)

The Landmark Society of Western New York

133 South Fitzhugh Street

Rochester, New York 14608

(585) 546-7029

www.landmarksociety.org (<http://www.landmarksociety.org>)