

Watson - Soules - Youngman House (Site)  
HISTORY SHEET  
General Information

Name of Structure: Joseph Watson

Address: 12398 Van Vleck Rd

Parcel ID: (542289) 76116-00-326206 (Dist 1, Lot 56)

Atlas: 1853: "P.O."; 1858: "L Watson", 1874: "J Watson";  
1904: "F.L.Watson"  
(Joseph, Lester, Frank L)

When Built / Mason: mid-1830s; Thomas Robinson, mason

When Razed: 1987 or 88

Why: Deteriorated and abandoned

Original Owner: Joseph Watson and family heirs (Lester, Joseph M, Frank L)

Subsequently: Charles Soules (1917), Gordon Youngman (1953)

Original Use: Combination house & Post Office

Subsequently: Residence

Pictures: Yes

Description:

Structural details:

2-story, long side faced Rt 89; entrance on left, flanked by 2 windows w/3 windows centered above lower openings (the one above the door was aligned with the door's right edge. Door had side lights and transom. Interior chimney on the right gable end. Left side had just one window, on the upper story toward the rear of the house. No breaks in cobblestone wall to suggest there had ever been any other openings.

Masonry details:

Façade had oval lake stones, laid horizontally in alternating bands of red and white stones of 2 rows each with some round stones scattered in; horizontal joints were flat Vs, verticals were crudely formed pyramids; coarse pebbly mortar. Left side (facing Van Vleck Rd) masonry was similar to front, except multi-colored fieldstones were used. Cobbles were set 4/Q or 3/Q depending on quoin size (abutting white frame addition (rear left quoin corner of house). Quoins were roughly squared gray limestones; lintels and sills were wood. Per Carl Schmidt (1966) the entire right wall was covered with plaster. Verlyn Klahn (1955) makes no note of this. The implication is that the right wall was originally cobblestone. A frame addition was attached to rear wall. Robert

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Roudabush's 1979 photographs<sup>1</sup> show significant deterioration of left front, specifically all the quoins were gone. The space between the 2 lower windows of the façade were patched with bricks to replace the cobbles which had fallen off.

### Historical Context

From *Butler Revisited*, by members of the Butler Historical Preservation Society, © 2005, p 16:  
"Across Van Vleck Road from the Roe School was a cobblestone house built in the mid-1830s by Thomas Robinson of Huron. Mr Robinson emigrated from Ireland. He was a stone mason, This house was built of the smaller, more uniform lake cobblestones that were characteristic of the later time period. The 1874 Town of Butler map, from Atlas of Wayne County NY by D.G. Beers & Co. shows Joseph Watson as the owner of the house. He was married to Nellie Roe, daughter of Sophia (Henderson) and John Seymour Roe. In 1904, Frank L Watson, great grandson of Jacob occupied the home. The property was sold in 1917 to Charles and Florence (O'Neil) Soules. The Gordon Youngman family purchased the house in 1953. In the late 1900's, the house had deteriorated, and was eventually demolished. Allen and Kim Youngman now live in a new home on the property, and operate the farm."

The only picture of it in the town's possession was taken well after it was badly deteriorated—part of the roof gone, some of the facade stones fallen away exposing the rubble wall beneath in various places, some patching with brick. It had clearly been long abandoned. A chimney was on the right (south) end.

When **Lester Watson** died in 1866, ownership transferred to son **Joseph M.** Joseph (wife Nellie Roe) died in 1899 and his brother **Frank L** became owner. According to records at the Butler Historical Society, he sold it in **1917 to Charles Soules** who ultimately sold it to **Gordon Youngman**. The property remains in the Youngman family with a new house on the site (built in 1994 per property records). The cobblestone house had deteriorated beyond repair and was torn down in 1987 or 88.

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<sup>1</sup> Carl F Schmidt *Cobblestone Masonry*, © 1966; Verlyn Klahn *Cobblestone Structures of Wayne County*, Hoffman Essay winner, 1955; Robert Roudabush cobblestone inventory 1976-1980.

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Correspondence with Youngman Family, 2019

Email (12/24/2019) to Shawn Youngman: ... seeking information as to when the house was torn down and any family photographs of the house.

Email (12/26/2019) from Shawn Youngman: "... My dad actually living in that house as a kid before it was torn down ... My dad said it used to be used as a stopping point for people passing through the area, like a hotel/tavern. I'll send you some pictures if I can find some ... It was torn down sometime in the late 80's, probably 1987 or 88."

NOTE: I never followed up; have no new pictures.

Email from Wolcott historians, Jim and Ruth Chatfield, 12/24/2013: "Across Van Vleck Road from the Roe School was a cobblestone house built in the mid-1830s by Thomas Robinson of Huron. Mr Robinson emigrated from Ireland. He was a stone mason, This house was built of the smaller, more uniform lake cobblestones that were characteristic of the later time period. ... In 1904, Frank L Watson, great grandson of Jacob occupied the home. The property was sold in 1917 to Charles and Florence (O'Neil) Soules. The Gordon Youngman family purchased the house in 1953. In the late 1900's, the house had deteriorated, and was eventually demolished. Allen and Kim Youngman now live in a new home on the property, and operate the farm."

Genealogical / Biographical Information

<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/cemeteries/sandhillcem.html>

Sand Hill Cemetery (½ miles south of intersection of Van Vleck Rd & Rt 89

WATSON Joseph d. 10 Aug. 1860, 86y

WATSON Roxey, his wife d. 25 Aug. 1877, 91y

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/210234122/joseph-watson> (? - 8/10/1860, 86y)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/210234163/roxy-watson> (? - 8/25/1877; 91y)

1850 Census:

<http://wayne.nygenweb.net/census/butler1850b.html>

157 WATSON Lester 30 Male Farmer b. NY

Elizabeth 27 Female b. NY

Chas F 1 Male b. NY

Joseph Watson 75 Male Farmer b. MA (Lester's father)

Roxy Watson 63 Female b. MA (Lester's mother)

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1865 Census:

<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/census/1865butler2.html>

**WATSON Lester** 46 male farmer b. Columbia

Elizabeth 42 female wife b. Schoharie

Charles F. 16 male child farmer b. Wayne

**Joseph M.** 14 male child b. Wayne

**Frank L.** 12 male child b. Wayne

Earnest 9 male child b. Wayne

Harriet 6 female child b. Wayne

Roxy (widow) 78 female mother b. Columbia

Lester Watson's compensation for managing the post office at Butler 7/1/1848 - 6/30/1849

<https://books.google.com/books?id=69k9AQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA81&lpg=RA1-PA81&dq=lester+watson++post+office+butler+ny++1835&source=bl&ots=OXkAYldYLG&sig=ACfU3U3068z5tiR3A1cy3R8kqdGgRIImQ3A&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiwtscb1-T4AhVcEmIAHeM9A4wQ6AF6BAgZEAM#v=onepage&q=lester%20watson%20%20post%20office%20butler%20ny%20%201835&f=false>

**Post Offices New York**

Note—Compensation of Post Masters, and nett proceeds of their offices from July 1, 1848 to June 30, 1949 (p 74)

p 81

Butler, Wayne County, Lester Watson, (compensation) 14.86, (nett proceeds) 24.86

<http://wayne.nygenweb.net/cemeteries/butcentcem.html>

Lester 1818-1866

Elizabeth (Cook) wf. 1822-1905

Joseph M 1850-1899

Helen M wf. 1852-1925

**Butler Center Cemetery**

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126672430/lester-watson> (1818-1866)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126672443/elizabeth-watson> (1822-1905)

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126672388/joseph-m-watson> (1850-1899)

Rochester NY Democrat Chronicle 1899 - 2435.pdf (1/30/1899 )

"**Joseph M Watson**, a prominent farmer and resident of Butler, died at his home 2 miles SE of Wolcott Saturday morning in his 45th year. He'd been in failing health for nearly 10 months, since his injury last spring in a runaway accident when his head was plunged violently against a

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stone fence. He is survived by a widow, his mother, two brothers—Frank M Watson of Butler and Fred Watson of Chicago, and one sister, Miss Hattie Watson, of Syracuse.”

Wolcott NY Lake Shore News 1904-1908 - 0134.pdf (3/30/1905)

“Mrs Lester Watson, of Butler, who has suffered for several years past with heart trouble is now very low with pneumonia. She is 84 years old...”

Rochester NY Times Union 1931 a - 0619.pdf (12/4/1931)

WOLCOTT - Funeral services for Frank L Watson, 78 were conducted yesterday. Surviving are a brother, Fred Watson of Chicago and a niece, Mrs John Eckert of Clyde.

Note: Unknown where he is buried.

<https://wayne.nygenweb.net/history/1914officers.html>

Frank L Watson Town Assessor, Wolcott NY

Note: No evidence that Frank took over management of the farm or lived in the house upon his brother's death. All references indicate he lived in Wolcott and was an active member of the grange there. He was unmarried and had no brothers to help manage the farm.