

First Annual
Cobblestone Tour

A Motor Tour Between Childs
and Oak Orchard on the Ridge Road

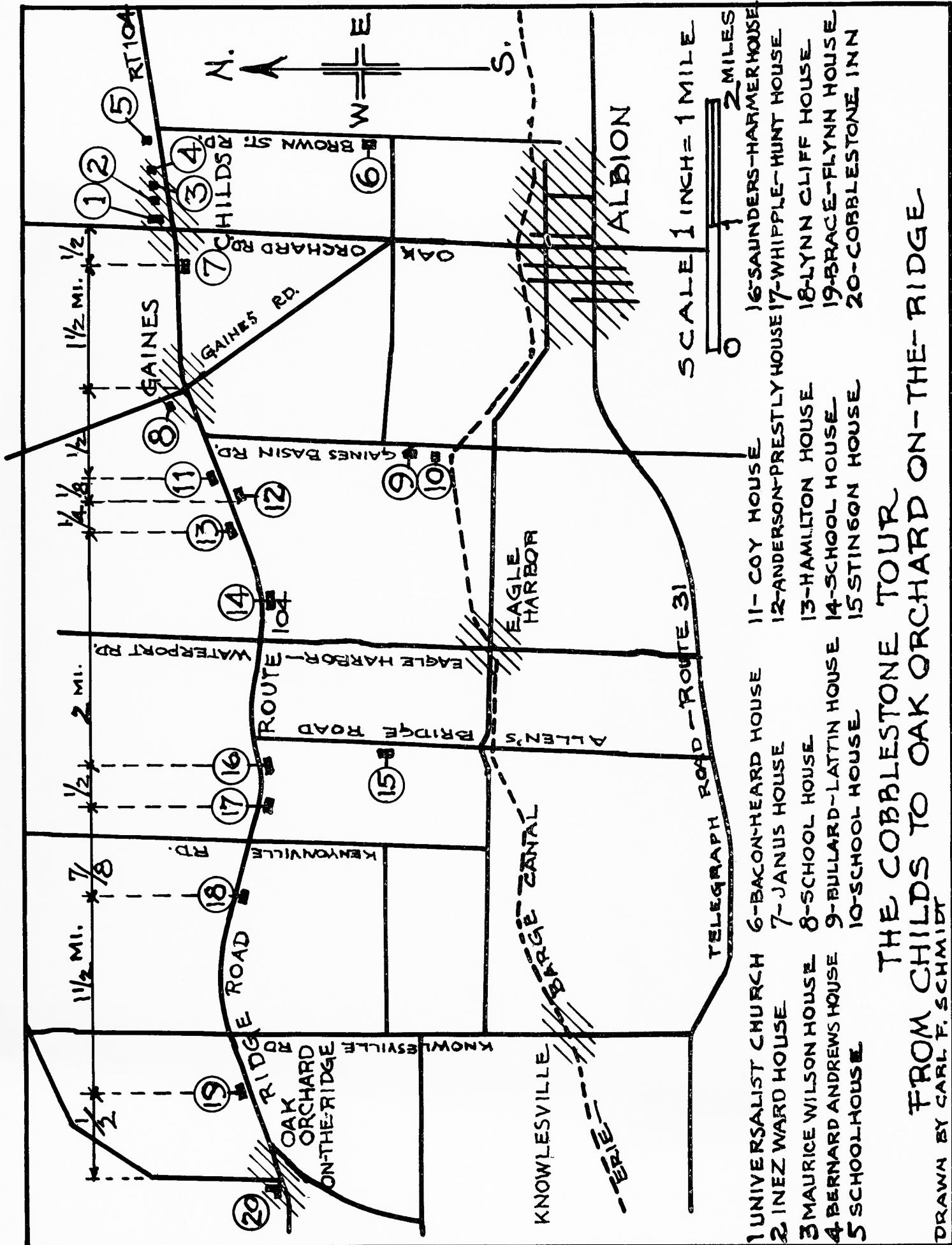


Saturday, June 10, 1961



Sponsored by
The Cobblestone Society

PRICE \$1.00



THE COBBLESTONE TOUR FROM CHILDS TO OAK ORCHARD ON-THE-RIDGE

DRAWN BY CARL F. SCHMIDT

FIRST ANNUAL COBBLESTONE TOUR

Sponsored by the Cobblestone Society of Childs, New York
Saturday, June 10 - 12:30 - 5:30 P. M.

STOPS

1. Universalist Church..... open
2. Mrs. Inez Ward's House..... open
3. Maurice Wilson House
4. Bernard Andrews House
5. Childs Schoolhouse..... open
6. Bacon-Heard House
7. Leon Janus House
8. School at Gaines
9. Bullard-Lattin House..... open
10. District No. 2 Schoolhouse
11. Austin Coy Hcuse
12. Anderson-Prestly House
13. Hamilton House
14. Schoolhouse
15. Stinson House
16. Saunders-Harmer House..... open
17. Whipple-Hunt Hcuse..... open
18. Lynn Cliff House
19. Amos-Flynn House
20. The Cobblestone Inn..... open

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

By Carl Schmidt

1. Universalist Church - open

The First Universalist Church just east of the four corners in Childs was built by John Proctor in 1834 and given to the Society. The inscription on the front of the church reads, "Erected by the First Universalist Society in the year 1834 A. D." "GOD IS LOVE".

The Church has a center entrance, flanked by large single double hung windows with twenty over twenty sash. There are similar windows above the three lower openings. The Tympanum of the front gable is filled with flush wood siding.

It is a good example of Early Period cobblestone work. The stones were picked up in the fields and are of various sizes and colors laid in courses about four and one-quarter inches on centers. The quoins at the corners are roughly cut from ledge limestone and vary from eight by fourteen inches to nine by twenty-three inches. The window sills are four-inch thick wood planks and the lintel above the entrance door consists of a double row of brick headers with a row of brick headers laid flatwise above.

The wood cornice is distinctly of Post-Colonial design. The interior of this church is very interesting to the architectural historian because very few alterations have been made since it was erected. Of special interest are the mural paintings back of the pulpit platform.

2. Mrs. Ines Ward's House - open

Next, east of the Universalist Church is the small split-level cottage of Mrs. Inez Ward. It was built during the late 1830's or early 40's when the masons were beginning to favor the water-washed variety of cobblestones and most of the stones are of this type. They are of various shapes sizes and colors laid four courses to the quoin height. The horizontal "Y" (cont'd.)

is formed with a trowel and the vertical joint between the cobblestones is embellished with a short bead made with a metal tool. The quoins are red-sandstones with a smooth face and rough edges. This house also has a four-inch high brick header course above the window openings.

The cobblestone work on the side walls is an entirely different pattern which is frequently found in this area. There are no horizontal or vertical joint embellishments but each cobblestone is set in a hexagonal depressed area. Sometimes the vertical sides are longer than the two upper and lower angular sides. The result is entirely different from the general practice during the cobblestone era. A similar pattern was used in the basement walls of Chartres Cathedral but on a larger scale.

Note this house has a hip roof, a type of roof that was rarely used in western New York State.

3. Maurice Wilson House

In this house the mason selected various colored water-washed stones of various shapes and sizes and laid them in horizontal rows. But he used the hexagonal depressed pattern peculiar to the Town of Gaines, without horizontal or vertical joint embellishments. The courses are about three and one-half inches center to center of cobblestones. The lintels above the windows are four-inch high brickheaders. Roughly cut red sandstones were used for quoins and vary in size from thirteen to sixteen inches high and from seventeen to twenty-three inches long.

The cobblestones on the sides are larger and vary considerably in size. The courses vary from four and one-half inches to five inches from center to center of stones.

4. Bernard Andrews House

This house has been considerably changed by alterations and additions. However, we can still study the cobblestone work of the original house. The cobblestone house was built in the 1840's with very small water-washed cobblestones of various colors, and laid five courses per quoin height. The horizontal joint was "V" shaped and the vertical joint was embellished by striking a small bead with a metal tool. The second story windows still retain the original wood plank sills and wood beam lintels. The first floor sills have been replaced by concrete sills and painted.

The cobblestones on the side elevations are very rough fieldstones, three courses to a quoin height, and laid without any embellishments to the horizontal or vertical joints.

5. Childs School House - open

The Schoolhouse in Childs was built under the direction of William J. Babbitt and bears this inscription: "School District No. 5 - Town of Gaines A. D. 1849. Wm. J. Babbitt, Esq. gratuitously superintended the erection of this building and made the district a present of this bell."

This schoolhouse is now the property of the Cobblestone Society and plans are to restore the building as a typical schoolhouse of the 1840-1850 era. The Society is hoping that they will soon be able to obtain posession of the Universalist Church. Then they will be in a position to make Childs, New York, the Cobblestone museum and will then be able to bring to the attention of the people, the rich architectural heritage of Western New York State -- the cobblestone buildings.

The cobblestones in this building are of the small water-washed variety about one and one-half inches high, of various colors with grays predominat-

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ing, and laid in courses about two and one-quarter inches high. The cobblestones are laid five courses to the quoin height with a wide "V" shaped horizontal joint. There is but a slight indication of a pyramidal embellishment between the vertical joints. The quoins, window lintels and sills, and the lintels above the doors, are red sandstone. This school, like a number of houses in the Gaines area has a projecting red sandstone sill course.

The cobblestones on the side elevations are the same type of stones as the front, but larger, and laid four courses to the quoin height, with a similar horizontal joint.

The schoolhouse has two front entrance doors and is finished with a three-member entablature, the design of which is Greek Revival in proportion, but the moulding profiles are in the Post-Colonial character.

6. Bacon-Heard House

Hosea Bacon first came to Gaines in 1819 to visit his brother, Moses, but soon after returned to Connecticut. About 1823, he returned to settle and built a small frame house. He married Matilda Ellen Kimball in 1828, but waited until 1835, to build the cobblestone addition to his frame house. The new addition contained a large fireplace, bake oven and a sink of green marble that Hosea brought from Vermont. The cobblestones were gathered from along the Ridge Road and the red Medina sandstone quoins, sills and lintels came from stone quarries near Albion.

James Thompson, an Englishman, was the mason, and Orrin Beach, the carpenter for the two-story cobblestone structure erected in 1851 to replace the first frame house. Werner Bacon, then sixteen years old, was learning the mason trade at the time and laid all the cobblestones on the south end elevation. The cobblestones were gathered along the lake shore, near Kent, and hauled to the building site with ox teams at a cost of fifty cents a load after they had been picked up and loaded on the wagon by the buyer.

The main house, built in 1851, is a typical center entrance type, flanked by two windows and finished with a three member cornice with a very wide frieze. The cornice returns on the end elevations are six feet long. This is much longer than the usual practice. All the details are in the late Greek Revival style. The entrance is a simple and dignified design.

The cobblestones of this 1851 house are very small water-washed red or grayish stones laid five and six courses to the quoin height. Note the small pebbles laid under the quoins to make up the variation of courses. The horizontal joints are finished with a metal beading tool and made very straight.

The cobblestones project considerably from the wall, and this is emphasized by the "V" between the stones. The vertical space or joint between the stones is also embellished with a stroke of the beading tool.

The cobblestones on the wing, said to have been built in 1835, consist mostly of rounded water-washed stones laid five courses to the quoin height. The horizontal joint is finished with a beading tool. The cobblestones do not project as much as those on the later house, nor is the "V'd" space between the stones as deep. The beaded embellishment between the stones is struck on the diagonal. The quoins are red sandstones about twelve and one-half to thirteen inches high.

7. Leon Janus House

About one-half mile west of Childs four-corners, on the south side of the highway, stands the cobblestone house now owned by Mr. Leon Janus. The two-story gable end faces the street and the cornice returns are similar to those on the Bacon-Heard House, also about six feet. A one-story wing extends to the north with a porch along the front. Spaced across the porch, four Doric columns support a three member entablature and roof.

The cobblestones are small rounded water-washed stones of various sizes and colors, laid five courses per quoin height. The horizontal joint is a very straight bead made with a tool and the vertical joints are embellished with a short bead stroke made with a tool.

On the east end elevation the cobblestones are also water-washed stones, a little larger than on the front and laid four courses to the quoin height, but without emphasizing the horizontal joint. The stones are laid in the hexagonal shaped sinkage.

At the north end the cobblestones are oval-shaped water-washed cobblestones and most of them about one inch or less in width, and they vary in color. Here, the mason used a definite beaded horizontal joint as on the front elevation, but laid the stones four courses to the quoin height. The cobblestone work under the porch is similar to that of the north end wall.

The entrance is a beautiful example of the Greek Revival era with small Doric columns and pilaster supporting a simple entablature.

8. School at Gaines

At the intersection of Route #279, behind the building on the northwest corner, stands an old cobblestone schoolhouse which has been considerably altered and an addition added in the rear. The cobblestones are a mixture of water-washed and fieldstones. Round and oval cobbles vary from two to two and one-half inches and the fieldstones are about the same size but are sometimes as long as six inches. The corner quoins are thirteen to fourteen inches high and from seventeen to nineteen inches long of red sandstone. The cobblestones are laid about four courses to each quoin height, with a rough horizontal "V'd." joint.

The second house north of the schoolhouse was the home of Cyrus Witherell who built many of the cobblestone houses in this area as well as doing much of the carpentry work.

9. Bullard-Lattin House - open

South of the Ridge, on the Gaines Basin Road is located the cobblestone house now owned by Cary Lattin. It is a two-story structure, with an off-center entrance, flanked by two windows on one side and one on the other. Brigadier Bullard built the house in the early 1840's and Cyrus Witherell was the mason. Mr. Bullard's son, known as "Jockey" John Bullard, who lived to be ninety-five years old, often related how he helped to gather the cobblestones along Ridge Road as well as on the lake shore, when he was a boy. Mr. Lattin's grandfather bought the house in 1887.

The cobblestones are a mixture of water-washed stones and fieldstones with water-washed variety predominating. They are of various sizes and colors and on the front elevation are laid four courses to each quoin height. The quoins are of red sandstone about twelve inches high and eighteen inches long.

The side elevations are constructed of larger fieldstones, laid about three courses per quoin height and flush with the masonry wall without any indi-
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cation of horizontal jointing. Some stones are so large that they extend through two courses.

The carpentry work is done in the Greek Revival style with interesting castiron frieze windows.

10. District No. 2 Schoolhouse

Just south of the Bullard-Lattin House, on the Gaines Basin Road, stands District No. 2 schoolhouse built in the late 1830's. The front wall is built of water-washed stones of various sizes and colors and laid three and one-half courses to the quoin height. The horizontal joint is a sharp "V" shape made with a trowel and fairly straight.

On the side elevations the cobblestones are much larger, about three courses per quoin height, and are laid in the pattern peculiar to the Gaines region; that is each cobblestone was laid in a small hexagonal panel with elongated sides, with a "V'd" joint separating the stones on all sides without emphasizing the horizontal joint in any manner.

The cornice is in the typical Greek Revival manner.

11. Austin Coy House

About one-half mile west of the Gaines Basin Road, on the north side of the Ridge Road, stands the Austin Coy House. It is one-and-one-half story, center entrance type of house. The cobblestones are of the fieldstone variety of various sizes, colors and shapes, laid in a rough cement mortar formed into a crude wavy horizontal joint. Some of the stones are laid in a depressed panel, so typical of some of the work in this area. The quoins are various sizes of roughly shaped stones.

The window frames are made of wood planks with plank sills. The lintels are formed of a row of bricks set vertically.

12. Anderson-Prestly House

Just west of the Coy House on the south side of the highway stands the Anderson-Prestly House. The main house was probably built by Nahum Anderson and the wing was later built by his father, Robert. We know that Cyrus Witherell built the wing in 1859. The walls of the main house are of the fieldstone variety of various sizes, shapes and colors laid with a wavy "V" shaped horizontal joint made with a trowel. In a few places the mason attempted to embellish the vertical joint between the cobblestones with a short "V'd" effect. The courses vary from three to four inches high.

The corner quoins are roughly cut gray limestone about six inches high and of various lengths. The cobblestones are laid two courses per quoin height. The lintels over the windows are built up of four courses of bricks laid horizontally.

The cobblestones in the later wing are more carefully selected rounded stones of various shapes, sizes and colors. They are laid four courses to each quoin height. The quoins are red sandstone, fairly well squared with a smooth face. They are about twelve inches high, seventeen inches long and six inches thick. The horizontal joint is a "V" shape, made with a trowel, and the vertical joint between the cobblestones is embellished also with a short "V" shape.

13. Edward Hamilton House

The Hamilton House is a one-and-one-half story cobblestone cottage with a three-member entablature, in the Greek Revival style. The upper part of the second floor windows extend through the architrave and frieze of the

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entablature. The cobblestones on the front of the house are a mixture of small fieldstones and rounded water-washed stones of various colors and shapes, laid four courses per quoin height. The horizontal joints are "V" shaped and the vertical joints between the cobblestones are embellished with a short "V" shape.

The cobblestones on the end walls are larger, and vary considerably in size, shape and color. They are laid in horizontal courses but without the usual horizontal jointing. Each stone is encircled with a flat "V" shaped depression. Due to the variation in the sizes of the stones the hexagonal depression usually found is lost and it becomes an all-over wall pattern.

14. Schoolhouse

The cobblestones in this building are of the fieldstone variety of various colors and shapes including some rounded water-washed stones. They range from small cobblestones two inches in diameter, to rounded stones from three by four or more inches. Some stones are about two inches high and from six to eight inches long. They are roughly laid in horizontal rows without any emphasis on the horizontal or vertical jointing. The wall is a flush masonry wall as was used for many years before the "Cobblestone Era". The side elevations are similar to the front.

The corner quoins are red sandstones about twelve inches by eighteen inches and the cobblestones average about three courses per quoin height. The window openings have a row of four-inch high brick headers across the top, with red sandstone sills.

The side walls are finished with a three member entablature in the Greek Revival manner but the mouldings are rather crude.

15. Stinson House

The Stinson House on Allen's Bridge Road is very similar to the Saunders-Harmer House on the Ridge Road, but the cobblestones are not laid in a herringbone pattern.

In the keystone of the elliptical arched gable window are cut the letters "H. S." and the date "1841".

It is a two-story house with the narrow gable end facing the street and the principal entrance is located on the left side of the front. The entrance door is flanked by wide mullions and sidelights, with fluted Ionic columns in front of the mullions and pilasters against the side jambs, which support a miniature three-member entablature.

The main cornice consists of the usual three divisions---cornice, frieze and architrave. The cornice returns on the front are about six feet long, which is much longer than usual, but is typical of a number of houses in this locality.

The front wall is laid up with small water-washed cobblestones, of various sizes, shapes and colors, five courses per quoin height. They vary from one and one-half inches to one and three-quarters inches high and the courses, from joint-to-joint are from two and one-quarter to two and one-half inches high.

The quoins, sills and lintels on the front are gray limestone. Note the exceptionally high stone sill course across the front of the house.

The cobblestones on the sides of the house, as well as on the one-and-one-half story wing on the south side of the main house, are of the same var-

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iety as the front, except they are larger, and are laid four courses per quoin height.

16. Saunders-Harmer House - open

One of the most charming of the cobblestone houses is the Saunders-Harmer house built in 1844, by Isaac V. Saunders, and now owned by Miss Florence Harmer. The narrow gable end of the main centerportion of the house faces the highway and on each side are one-story wings with porches across the front. The entrance, on the east side of the main two-story center section, is composed of a six panel door flanked by wide mullions and narrow sidelights. In front of the mullions are two beautiful small Ionic columns, and in each jamb a pilaster, which support a delicately designed three-member entablature.

On the front, and on the side elevations above the porches, the mason used thin long oval shaped cobblestones laid in a herringbone patterns. The height of the cobblestones vary from three and one-half to four inches and from one-half to three-quarters inches thick and are of various colors, laid up three courses per quoin height. The horizontal joint is a "V" shape and some of the vertical joints between the cobblestones are embellished with a bead made with a metal tool. The quoins, lintels and sills are gray limestone.

Under the porches the cobblestones are small round water-washed stones, of various colors, laid five courses to a twelve-inch quoin height. The horizontal joint is a wide "V" shape with a "V" shaped vertical joint.

On the rear elevation the mason used the unique local hexagonal pattern without a horizontal joint.

Cyrus Witherell was one of the masons employed on this house and he was paid seventy-five collars for his services.

The exterior and interior details of this house are worthy of study and are a mixture of Greek Revival and Post-Colonial mouldings and in good scale with the entire design.

17. Whipple-Hunt House - open

About one-half mile west of the Saunders-Harmer House stands the Whipple-Hunt House. It is a two-story center entrance type with two windows on each side of the entrance. The entire front of this house is of cobbles laid in a herringbone pattern. The cobblestones vary from three to four inches long and from one-half to one inch thick, of various shades of red and gray sandstones. The stone courses vary in height depending on the length of stones used in the course. Sometimes two courses of long stones and one of short stones are used to equal a quoin height, and again three courses of about the same height equal a quoin height. The quoins, lintels, sills and sill course are of red and gray sandstones.

The horizontal joints are "V" shaped and are very wavy and no attempt was made to embellish the vertical joints.

On the end elevations the mason used rounded fieldstones and water-washed stones of various shapes and colors laid three to four courses per quoin height as high as the cornice line. The horizontal joint was formed into a "V" shape with small triangular pyramidal shapes of mortar to embellish the vertical joints. Above the cornice line, in the gable ends, on the side elevations, the cobblestones were laid in a herringbone pattern.

Note the elaborate attic window in the gable ends as well as the interesting window enframements on the interior with their wide paneled aprons and paneled jambs.

18. Lynn Cliff House

This is an interesting type of construction -- the exterior walls are only six inches thick. A plank frame was erected first and one layer of cobblestones laid on the exterior and they rest on three-and -one-quarter inch thick wood plate at the grade.

It is one-and-one-half story house with a center entrance flanked by two windows. The windows are nine lights over six and have wood lintels and sills. At the corners are thirteen inch wide wood pilasters with Greek Revival capitals.

The cobblestones are generally oval shaped water-washed of various colors, with some field stones. The oval shaped cobblestones are all laid in the wall vertically with wide "V" shaped horizontal joints. A few of the vertical joints between the stones were embellished with a short "V'd" joint but generally they were left plain.

19. Amos-Flynn House

The Amos-Flynn House is a two-story, center entrance type house located on the north side of Ridge Road just west of the road to Knowlesville. A one-story wing with a porch extends to the west, the details of which are in the Greek Revival style while the main house has a bracketed cornice in the Victorian manner. This Victorian cornice is probably a later addition.

The cobblestones on the main house are rounded fieldstones of various shapes and colors laid four courses to the quoin height, although one large quoin has five courses. The horizontal joint is a flat "V" shape made with a trowel with a flat pyramidal embellishment in the vertical joint between the cobblestones. The quoins are roughly squared red sandstones, and the window openings have red sandstone lintels with wood plank sills.

The cobblestones in the wing are smaller, laid five courses to the quoin height, and are of various colors.

20. The Cobblestone Inn - open

The large cobblestone structure on the northwest corner at Oak Orchard, now the Cobblestone Inn, was for years known as the Spencer House. It is now owned by Oscar Szanto. It is an "L" shaped plan with stepped gables at the ends. The main entrance is on Ridge Road but there are two minor entrances on the Oak Orchard Road side. The porch is a later addition.

The main entrance is embellished with pilasters on each side of the door supporting a three-member entablature. The details are in the late Greek Revival style. The main cornice is a simple wide-projecting type characteristic of the Italian Villa era of the Victorian period. It may be a later alteration.

The cobblestones are generally of the rounded fieldstone variety of various shapes and colors with some rounded and oval water-washed stones. The cobblestones range from one and three-quarters to two and three-quarters inches high. Due to the size of the quoins which vary from fourteen to sixteen inches high, there are from five to six courses of cobblestones to a quoin height. The horizontal joints are a wide shaped flat "V" and wavy with an indication of a pyramidal "V" shape in the vertical joints between the cobblestones. The quoins, sills and lintels of the windows, and the grade sill course are of red sandstone. Note in this building the quoins are larger than usual and roughly squared blocks of stones. In this locality the builders favored the use of a projecting stone sill course across the front of the house.

COBBLESTONE

MASONRY

By Carl F. Schmidt
Scottsville, N. Y.

Until about two decades ago, cobblestone houses were accepted by up-state New Yorkers without much thought. That here developed a type of masonry wall of unique beauty and interest was never realized except by a few people. With but few exceptions, this type of masonry wall is not found elsewhere in our country. However, there are a number of cobblestone houses in Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Ontario, Canada. In most localities, the first examples of these houses were erected by people who had migrated from the New York State cobblestone area.

Generally, we can say that Rochester is about the center of the cobblestone region. If we draw a circle, with a radius of about sixty miles, using Rochester as a center, we would include about ninety percent of all the cobblestone buildings.

There is no particular secret regarding the construction of this type of masonry wall, - using small stones laid in horizontal rows. Masons have used small stones to build walls for centuries. Some of these examples, particularly those in France, closely resemble the early cobblestone work in this area. Near Dieppe there are sections of the old city walls dating back to the fifteenth century that have similar stone masonry. Also in England there were walls built of small stones called "flint-heads", which could have been the source of inspiration.

The first cobblestone houses were built of fieldstones dropped by the glaciers that once covered New York State. The stones were a great source of trouble to the pioneer farmers trying to plant and cultivate their fields. The stones were laboriously gathered and built into miles of dry-stone-wall fences. Many tons of these stones were used in building foundation walls for houses and barns but these walls were built of various sized stones and small boulders and the face of the wall was flush. Then, sometime between 1825 and 1830, some mason built a house using the smaller fieldstones about three to four inches high in regular horizontal courses. This idea spread very rapidly.

There are usually several reasons that influence the development of a certain type of architecture or construction in a locality. This was true of cobblestone masonry. It was essential that the farmer clear his fields of stones because they interfered with the plowing and reaping. Children often helped to clear the fields of stones and they also sorted and sized the stones by dropping them through a hole cut in a board or through an iron ring called a "beetle ring."

In order to build the numerous cobblestone buildings many more masons were needed than are normally required. During the cobblestone period masons were plentiful in this locality because when the Erie Canal between Rochester and Buffalo was surveyed the engineers discovered that in many places it would be necessary to excavate the canal channel through sandstone beds. They decided to use these excavated sandstones to build the locks and bridge abutments. After construction started the contractors realized more masons were needed to complete the canal within the specified time and western New York could not supply them. Hence, they advertised for masons in New England and Pennsylvania. After the completion of the canal many of the imported masons, attracted by the fertile farmland and the business prospects created by the canal, made western New York their home. Consequently, there were many more masons in proportion to the other building craftsmen and the masons needed work to supplement their farm income. The use of cobblestones as a building material supplied this need.

Paint was expensive at this time and cobblestone walls did not require any painting.

Architecture has always been in a process of development or decay. It never stands still. The same is true of cobblestone masonry and its development can easily be traced through the usual divisions of early, middle and late periods. The Early Period included the work done between 1825 and 1835. The Middle Period extended from 1835 to 1845 and the Late Period from 1845 to the end of the Civil War. The passing of the generation of masons that worked on the Erie Canal between Rochester and Buffalo and the increase of wages caused by the Civil War ended the era of cobblestone masonry.

During the first half of the Early Period the masons used stones of various sizes and shapes as well as different colors, just as they were gathered from the fields. The exposed stones were from two and one-half to three inches high and from three to six inches long. A few stones eight to ten inches long are also found scattered in the wall. The horizontal mortar joint varied from one to one and one-half inches wide. It was a wavy, irregular line, formed into a flat "V" shape, the sharp edge projecting and was formed by the mason holding his trowel at an angle when striking the joint.

This form of a "V" joint greatly appealed to the masons and it spread very rapidly. The sides of the "V" are pitched more sharply and it is made a continuous line as straight and even as a trowel can form it. The "V" joint made the stones appear to project beyond the surface of the wall and in the sunlight each stone has a highlighted and shaded surface as well as a shadow. The effect of sunshine playing on such a wall made of various colored sandstones and granites is like the painting of the early modernists, myraids of dabs of color that vibrate in the light.

During the later half of the Early Period the masons became more careful in selecting stones of a more uniform size and laid them more evenly with straight horizontal mortar joints. They also began to embellish the vertical joints between the stones with a projecting "V" shape of mortar or building up a small pointed pyramidal shape. But this embellishment of the vertical joint was never permitted to touch or interfere with the continuous horizontal joint. The tendency throughout the cobblestone era was to use smaller and smaller stones and to reduce the width of the horizontal joint.

In the Middle Period the stones averaged from one and one-half to two and one-half inches high and from two to four inches long, and were more carefully selected for size and shape. About the late "thirties" the masons began to mix rounded water-washed stones with the field stones. These round or oval shaped water-washed stones found in the gravel pits and along the shores of Lake Ontario had a certain fascination for the masons because they became the preferred material. At first the lake-washed stones were laid up in the walls of various colors from gray to dark red. Then it became fashionable to carefully select the stones all of the same color. Since red sandstone is abundant in this area, most of the houses were built of various shades of red or red-brown stones.

The horizontal mortar joints were reduced in width, averaging about three-quarters to one inch wide. The horizontal "V" joints and the pyramidal embellishments between the vertical joints were carefully made with a small trowel. However, in the early "forties" some mason made a metal form that would strike a bead or half circle about one inch wide to form the joint and also used some form of straight-edge or guide to make a perfectly straight line.

During the Late Period the masons carefully selected lake-washed stones of the same color and size. The tendency throughout the period was to use smaller and smaller stones and to reduce the width of the horizontal joint. The stones averaged from one inch to one and one-half inches high and the horizontal mortar joints, either a "V" shape or bead, were not more than three quarters of an inch wide.

The appearance and character of the cobblestone wall had completely changed. In the Early Period the stones were actually an integral part of the wall, they were a part of the construction. In the Late Period the small cobblestones were merely a veneer applied against a structural stone wall. The small lake-washed stones had no structural feeling. All the sparkle and life of the variegated colored walls disappeared because all the stones were of the same size and color. It has a monotonous, machine-made appearance. The beauty of the walls built of larger stones of various colors and shapes during the latter years of the Early Period and the first half of the Middle Period is apparent even in a photograph. These walls expressed a feeling for material rightly used and did not make a display of it as was done in the Late Period.

We divided the era into three stages, as early, middle, and late to understand the process of its development. It simplifies teaching but we must realize that all craftsmen in an epoch do not follow these divisions. Some masons learned how to lay up cobblestone walls in the Early Period and continued to lay up this type of masonry in the Middle and Late Periods, as there were some carpenters who continued to run their own wood mouldings with moulding planes long after woodworking shops were cutting mouldings by machine. There are houses built late as 1846 in which the cobblestones are laid up in the Early Period manner. But we do know that a cobblestone wall built of rounded water-washed stones was not built before the latter half of the Middle Period and that a wall built of small lake-washed stones, all of the same color was not built before the Late Period.

It was during the Middle Period, when craftsmanship and skill were nearly balanced, that the best work was done. The masons vied with each other in experimenting with new methods and patterns of laying the

cobblestones. Some selected only squarish stones, others oval shapes. The oval shapes were set in the wall vertically, or diagonally, sloping the stones to the right or left. Herringbone patterns were common using thin oval-shaped stones from three to six inches long and from three-quarters to one inch thick.

In Sodus and Alton a mason built up his walls by using some white cobblestones. In one house he laid up the front wall with five courses of red lake-washed stones and a course of white lake-washed stones and the stones were graded from large stones at the grade to small stones in the peak of the gable. In another he built the front wall with alternating bands of red and white stones. Each band consisted of two courses of stones. In the church near Alton the front wall was built of alternating bands of red and white stones and each band consisted of four courses of stone.

In and near Childs there are a number of houses, no doubt, the work of one man or group of men who did not like the idea of emphasizing the horizontal mortar joint. The cobblestones were laid in horizontal rows but a concave depression was formed around each stone to make it project a pattern very similar to this, but larger in scale, is to be seen in parts of the basement walls of Chartres Cathedral. The result is an all-over pattern with high lights and shadows on each stone as well as in the depressions surrounding the stones.

During the first half of the Early Period the walls were built like stone walls of this type had been built for centuries. The walls, about eighteen or twenty inches thick were built of three rows of field stones, the middle stones breaking the joints. The wall was frequently tied together with elongated stones, three or four inches in diameter, and ten to eighteen inches long, with the small ends exposed. Triangular shaped stones with one end exposed were also built into the wall. Large stones, six to twelve inches thick and twelve to twenty inches long were built into the inner two-thirds of the wall. The entire thickness of the wall was carried up at the same time and the wall had a sound structural appearance.

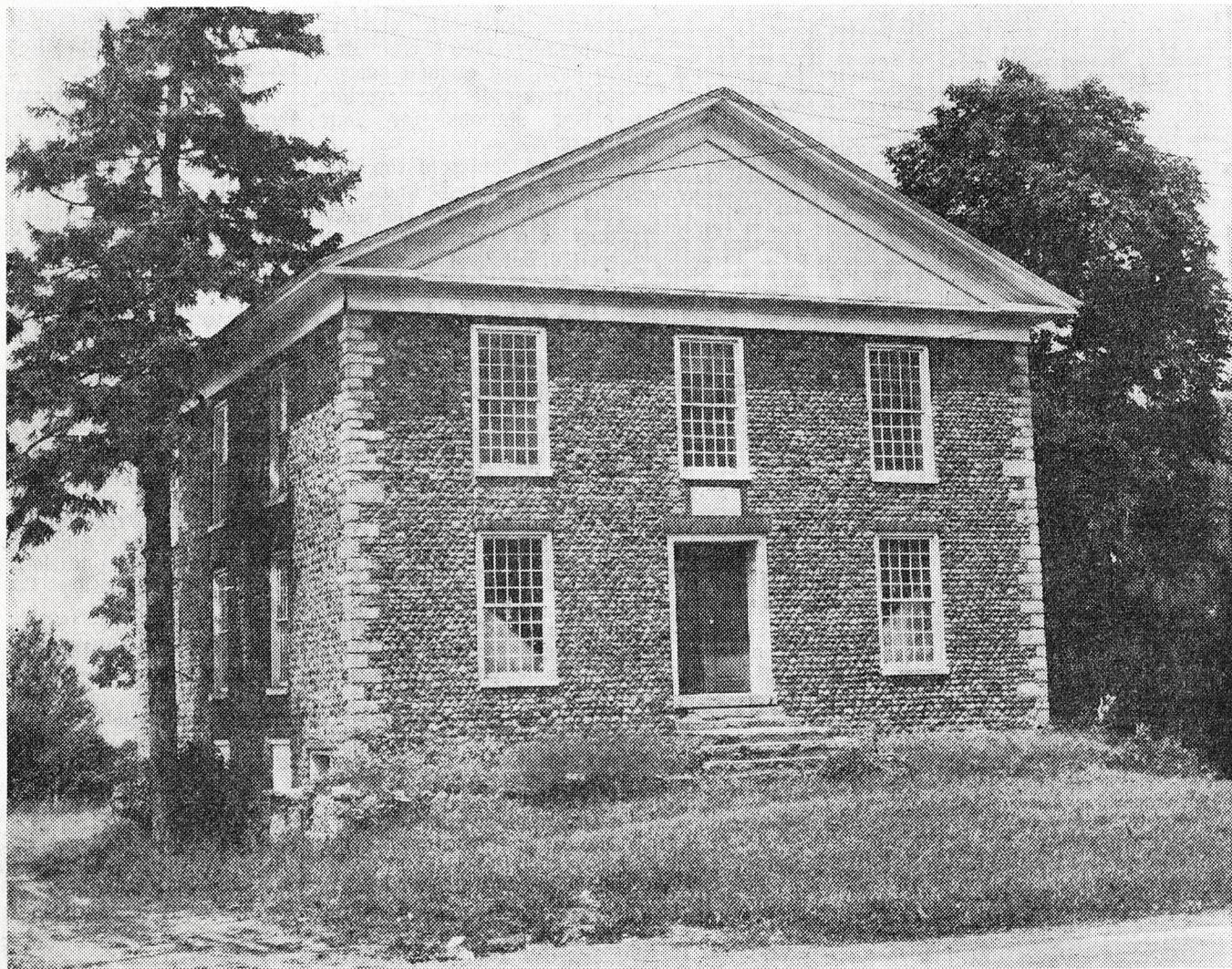
However, when the masons began to select smaller and smaller stone to form the horizontal courses, the cobblestones in the face of the wall assume the character of a veneer or facing.

One method of building the veneer or facing is as follows: The inner structural stone wall was built up several feet or more in advance of the facing. A wood frame work was built up on the outside of the wall and a plank set up horizontally on the frame in line with the proposed course of cobblestones. The plank was the same thickness as the height of the cobblestones and the stones were laid up so that the outside edge of the stones just touched the plank. It kept the outside edge of the stones in perfect alignment vertically and horizontally. A metal tool, either a "V" shape or a bead was used to strike the bottom horizontal joint using the bottom of the plank as a guide. After a course of stones were laid the length of one side of the house the plank was raised to lay the next one.

There were, no doubt, other methods used by the various masons, but they were never recorded and are completely lost. We do know that some masons made every effort to keep their particular method a secret although there is no particular secret of laying such a wall that present day masons could not learn and they would most likely rediscover the various methods used by the cobblestone masons.

VANISHING AMERICANA by Chief Photographer Fred Powers—

Childs Cobblestone Church May Be Museum



BUILT IN 1834—This cobblestone church no longer vibrates on Sundays to hymns sung by Childs churchgoers. It was closed when the First Universalists built a church in Albion but it still is a mecca for photog-

raphers for while churches aren't vanishing, cobblestone ones are. The Cobblestone Society is trying to get this Route 104, Orleans County landmark for use as a museum. Stones in church took 3 years to collect.

The Chapter House of
the Orleans County Chapter
N.S. D.A.R. was built
about 1825. The first
occupant was a surveyor of
the Erie Canal. Later it became
the property of Hon. George
B. Church, a prominent
lawyer in the early history of
the State.