

14th

ANNUAL

COBBLESTONE TOUR

**JUNE
FIRST
1974**



THE COBBLESTONE SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF
COBBLESTONE BUILDINGS IN AMERICA

FOUNDED IN 1960 IN CHILDS, N. Y.
POST OFFICE: ALBION, N. Y. 14411

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL COBBLESTONE TOUR

Saturday, June 1, 1974

1 P. M. until 5 P. M.

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IN APPRECIATION

The Cobblestone Society gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the cobblestone home owners whose generosity made this tour possible: Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Gervais, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Zambito, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Buchholtz and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Brown. Also we wish to thank LeRoy Historical Society, Mrs. Virginia Barons, Genesee County Historian and Mr. Donald Constable of the Holland Land Office as well as Mrs. Etta K. Brown Alexander Village Historian and Mrs. Neva C. Waite, Alexander Town Historian.

Map and description of houses by O. William Shelgren, Jr.
Photographs by Orleans County Department of History

1. THE LE ROY HOUSE, 23 East Main St., LeRoy

The front portion of this house was built in 1817 as land office and residence for Judge Egbert Benson. He came here to oversee the selling of land owned by the New York City firm of LeRoy, Bayard and McEvers. Benson was a cousin of Herman LeRoy, senior member of the firm. In 1819 Jacob LeRoy, son of Herman, came to understudy Benson and eventually to succeed him. Between then and 1825 the house was enlarged to its present size. Mr. and Mrs. Jacob LeRoy lived here until 1837 when they returned to New York City. The house was sold and passing through various hands became the home of the LeRoy Historical Society in the early 1940's.



To the right of the entrance hall on the east side are double parlors which, with the sliding door and closet separations, are typical of a New York City town house of the early 1800's. The suppression of the staircase by locating it off of the central hallway was

another innovation in planning which appeared in larger homes in the early 19th Century. This permitted the hall to extend uninterrupted, from front to back. The porch which spans the entire rear of the house is a unique feature. Originally this extended somewhat beyond the east and west sides of the house.

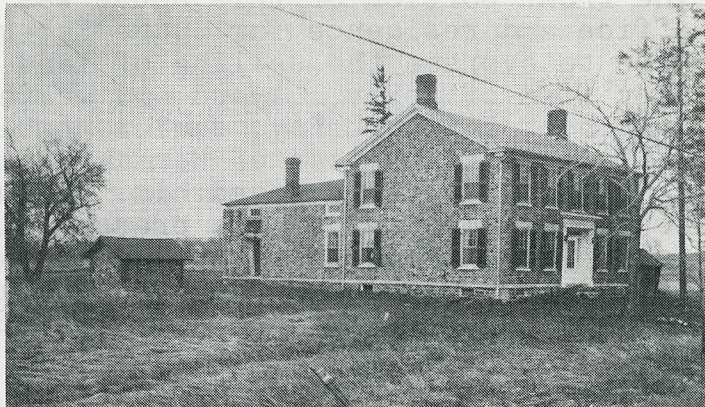
Downstairs in the basement are the original kitchen and auxiliary rooms. The original cooking fireplace and bake oven had been removed when the Historical Society acquired the house but their outline was discernable on the floor. They were reconstructed under the direction of Harold Olmsted. On the second floor the unusual thing to notice are the painted glass panes in various doors. These were done when the building was a boarding house for the local Academy.

The front half of the house has brick exterior walls while those of the rear half are built of stone. Painted stucco covers these to unify the differing materials. The triple windows on the front are unusual and were originally called 'Venetian windows'. (This arrangement also occurs on the Batavia Club building which originally was a bank.) The front porch with its Doric columns is Greek Revival in style and probably dates to no earlier than 1835. The house is filled with a wealth of material from the early families of the village and area.

CANCELLED

2. MINOR - GERVAIS HOUSE, 9295 Fargo Road

Built between 1835 and 1840 by Giles Minor, this comfortable, commodious house has just been acquired by Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Gervais who will be moving in later this summer. It is built of field cobbles with limestone quoins, lintels, sills and watertable.



The front portion is two stories high, with a center entrance opening into a stairhall. This entrance is slightly recessed and surrounded with handsome white woodwork. Windows still retain their original shutters and multi-paned sash. On the rear is an 'L' shaped $1\frac{1}{2}$ story wing which housed the original kitchen, woodshed, and other small rooms, the necessary components of a farmhouse of this era. There are five fireplaces, several retaining their original mantels. To the north of the house is a cobblestone smokehouse.

The south wall of this house suffered the collapse of its cobblestone facing in 1973. The former owner, working with one mason carefully relaid the cobblestones, diligently working the mortar joints to match the old. This rebuilt area can be detected by the slight difference in mortar color (the new mortar is grayer than the old). One cannot but admire the care that went into this reconstruction.

3. ALEXANDER TOWN HALL, Alexander



This is one of the largest cobblestone structures. It was built in 1837-38 at a cost of \$7,000 as the Genesee-Wyoming Seminary and functioned as such until 1886. The peak enrollment was 300 students coming from 14 states, many from the South.

After the Civil War, enrollment declined (especially from the Southern States). It then functioned as a private school, then a Union Free School serving as such until 1938.

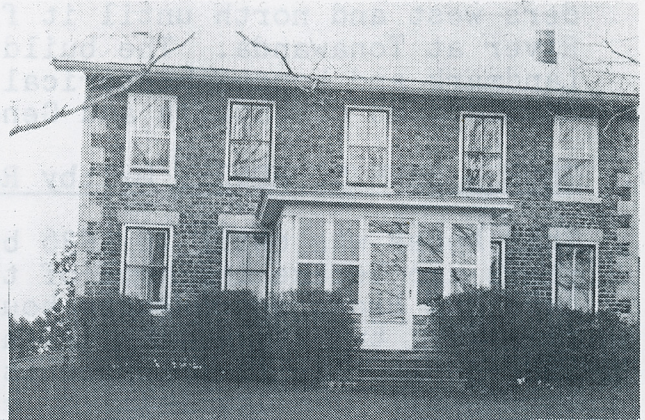
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The first and third floors were originally class rooms while the second floor was the study hall. In 1940 it became a community center. In 1958 the third floor became a museum of local history.

A hipped roof with a flat deck surrounded with a simple balustrade and centered with an octagonal cupola crowns the building and provides the dignity requisite for a Seminary.

4. HASTINGS - BROWN HOUSE, Route 98, 2 miles north of Alexander

This house is supposed to have been built in 1837 or 1838 by the same mason who built the Alexander Town Hall (Genesee-Wyoming Seminary). The main portion is two stories high with a center entrance. This center entrance is now under a fairly new porch.



The Doric columns of which may have once been the columns of a porch just the width of the entrance. Doric pilasters frame this entrance with its handsome original 8-panel door. Cobbles are field cobbles, and typical of the cobblestones found in buildings in Wyoming and Livingston counties, are more nearly rectangular. Contrast these with the cobblestones found in Orleans, Monroe and Wayne County buildings. The concrete block wing extending to the north supersedes a wooden wing of almost the same size. Up above the windows in the gables on the north and south walls are inverted 'T' shaped limestone ornaments.

Inside, the center stairhall retains the original staircase with simple stair rail rising up from a handsome scroll termination. As is customary, the living room has the most elaborate woodwork with paneled reveals at the windows and wood panels below. The other rooms have simpler trim.

5. HOLLAND LAND OFFICE, West Main Street, Batavia

Built in 1815, this was the third structure to house the land office of the Holland Land Company. It is not known who was responsible for the design - it may have been Joseph Ellicott, surveyor of the 3,000,000 acres purchased by the Dutch investors group. Local limestone, roughly squared, was used for the exterior walls. The portico, with its four Roman Doric columns, gives a monumentality to a building that would otherwise be somewhat insignificant.

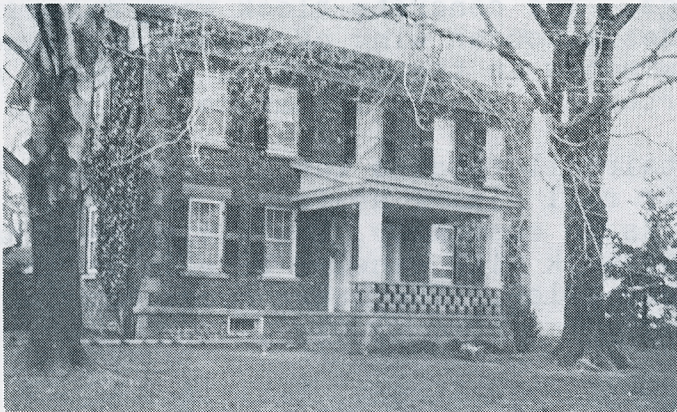
cant. Smaller Roman Doric pilasters flank the entrance underneath the portico. To the west, a wooden addition has been recently built which provides needed additional area for the



museum functions. Behind, is Tonawanda Creek which meanders west and north until it finally meets the Niagara River at Tonawanda. The building is a National Historic Landmark and houses historical collections related to the development of Batavia and Genesee County.

6. TRUE - ZAMBITO HOUSE, Maltby Road, Town of Elba

This house was built in 1836 by Moses True and several years ago became the home of the Anthony Zambito family. Like the Brown and Gervais houses, the main portion is a five bay, two story, center entrance building. The porch that shelters this entrance is of 20th Century origin and is unusual with its shingled columns. The entrance door is flanked with sidelights whose wooden muntins (dividers) simulate leaded glass by the insertion of circular pieces at the intersections. Simple molded wood trim with corner blocks frame the entrance inside and out. The windows retain their old shutters. A unique feature is the round wooden molding that frames the sash.



Inside, the entrance stair hall extends through the main portion of the house. The main stair remains intact with its handrail start- from a graceful scroll at the bot- tom. Scrolled brackets fill the triangle under- neath each tread on the stringer.

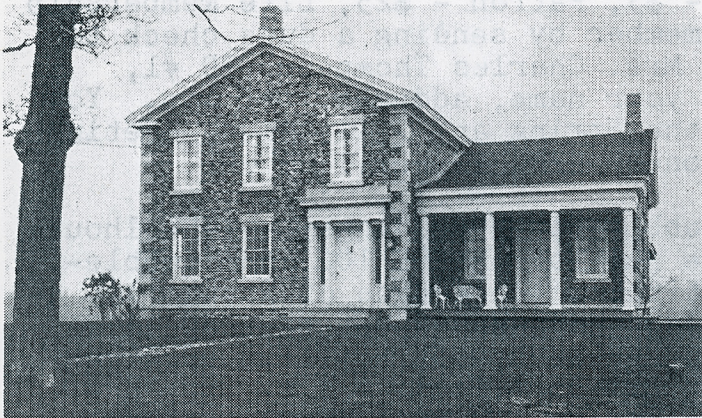
The living room, to the east, has the expected fancier woodwork with paneled reveals at the windows and panels below. This room was originally smaller with small bed- rooms at the south end. The partition between living room and hall comes in the middle of a window which is blanked

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off in the living room. The rooms in the west side of the hall have simpler woodwork. The Zambitos have added, in the northwest corner room, the old weathered wood boards which contrast handsomely with the old white woodwork. A narrow, steep enclosed stairway opens off the hall. This may have led originally to the attic over the rear wing.

The rear wing is one story high and is unusually long. The west and rear walls are of cobblestones. Mr. and Mrs. Zambito have converted the first room of this wing into their dining room. It may have originally been the kitchen or a 'Keeping Room' (the old equivalent of today's Family Room). In their redecoration of this room, the Zambitos uncovered the brick-framed arched opening. The original purpose of this is unknown, and it has been left exposed to serve as display shelves for glass and china. At the rear end of the wing is what was originally the woodshed which is being converted to a game room. The stone walls are left exposed on the inside and here is a good opportunity to see what is behind the cobblestone facing.

7. FORD - BUCHHOLTZ HOUSE 'Castleton', Route 262, Town of Elba



Nathaniel Ford, the original owner of this house built in 1841, named it 'Castleton' and the Buchholtz have continued this tradition. When they acquired the house several years ago, the interior was in a sorry state of repair. The porch was gone and a sense of desolation engulfed the building.

Now one can see the splendid restoration performed by the Buchholtz.

The main entrance is fully developed Greek Revival with Doric columns at each side of the door and sidelights. These columns support a wood entablature with horizontal moldings. Notice the blocks of 'guttae' (round pegs) on the projection of the cornice and the anthemion at each end. These come from ancient Greek buildings and their use in the Greek Revival style is purely decorative. The cobblestone walk leading to the front door is original and it was entirely covered with grass until the Buchholtz uncovered it. Many of the cobblestones on the face of the wall are split stones, with the split face exposed. Again, notice the general rectangularity of the wall cobbles typical of this region.

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Prior to the Buchholtz' ownership, few changes had been made to the interior, even to the extent that virtually all of the woodwork still had its original paint colors. These have been duplicated in the restoration and are proof that white was not necessarily the universal color in the 1840's. The two-story main portion of the house was heated originally with stoves since there are only small chimneys on this portion. Notice the corner block trim in the living room with the carved anthemion ornament and the paneled woodwork around the windows. The staircase in the entrance hall is of solid walnut. The stringer has unusual ornamentation in the shape of diamonds. In the wing to the east is the family room with its stone framed fireplace. Again, notice the colors on the woodwork which are duplicates of the original paint, put on in the early 1840's.

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THE COBBLESTONE SOCIETY welcomes new members. Annual dues are: Active Membership - \$3, Patron - \$25, Life Membership \$100. You may become a member by sending a dues check to the society's Treasurer, Mrs. Charles Thompson, RD #1, Albion, N. Y. 14411 with your name, address, and Zip. You will receive notices of the Spring and Fall annual meetings as well as the "Cobblestoner" news letter.

The society owns three cobblestone buildings; a schoolhouse located in Gaines Village just off Route 104, the Cobblestone Church at Childs at the intersection of Routes 104 and 98 as well as a cobblestone school just east of this intersection on Route 104. This school built in 1849 has been preserved as a one-room schoolhouse and classes are conducted here during the Spring and Fall by appointment to give today's children the experience of attending classes in a one-room school, taught by a former country schoolteacher. The 1834 cobblestone church is unique with little change since the 1870's and houses a museum in the basement with exhibits illustrating the regional life and history.

The church museum and school are open to the public during the summer months (mid-June to mid-Sept.) from 11 to 5 Tuesday through Saturday, 1 - 5 Sunday, closed Monday. Admission free.