

Cobblestone Buildings Object of County Hunt

By RICHARD G. CASE

Cobblestone buildings — from gracious homes to stubby smoke houses — are the object of an Onondaga-wide search by history detectives this week.

The Onondaga Historical Association and the state Cobblestone Society have been cooperating in a study attempting to inventory all of the county's structures built in the general cobblestone era, 1825 - 1860.

The small stones were droppings of an antique glacial sweep of Onondaga. They prov-

ed pesky to farmers trying to plow their fields but were excellent building materials.

Examples in the area are Liverpool's Cobblestone Hotel and the Gothic Revival Munro house on Route 5, west of Elbridge.

Meet Fridays

Cobblestone also was a common material for outbuildings and barns. Historical association snoopers have even found a small cobblestone vault in a cemetery near Cicero.

Focus of the search is the OHA's annual meeting at 8 p.m.

Friday in the association building, 311 Montgomery St.

Onondagans who know about or own cobblestone buildings are invited to the sessions to help the detectives fill out their list. An illustrated lecture on cobblestone in upstate New York will be presented by Robert W. Frasch of Cortland State College and the Cobblestone Society.

OHA president Richard Wright and his staff have given Frasch their inventory but many other structures are believed missing.

Among the people Wright and Frasch would like to meet is the unknown man who visited Cobblestone homes in the county 15 years ago. At the time he said they were built by his grandfather.

Wright points out that cobblestone is to be separated from fieldstone construction. In cobblestone, small rocks are laid in horizontal rows.

"It's like the building was clapboarded with cobblestones," Wright said.

Rare Example

The Cobblestone Hotel is included in the recent study "Architecture Worth Saving in Onondaga County." The structure also is called the J. P. Hicks Building.

The hotel recently has been partially covered with a commercial stone product but the architecture study terms it "a rare example in this area of a commercial store front executed with stone piers and lintels."