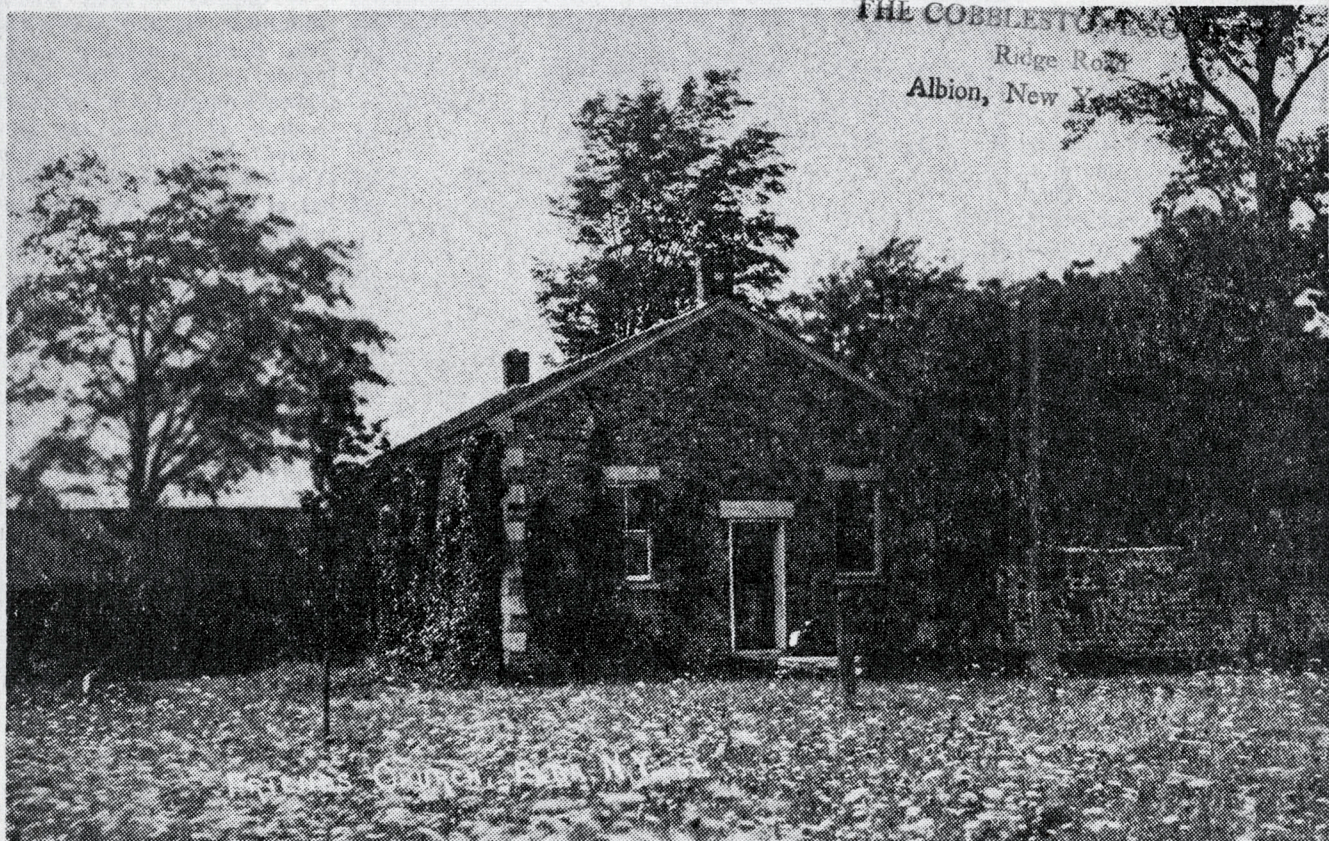


Cobblestone Examples Noted in Genesee Recall Construction Over Century Ago



ELBA LANDMARK — One of the best known cobblestone structures in Genesee County is the former Friends Meeting

House at Quaker Hill and Lockport Rds. at Elba.

8 THE BATAVIA DAILY NEWS
Saturday, April 23, 1966

By Miss Charlotte M. Reed
Genesee County Historian
Genesee County, interested always in all forms of historic preservation, is especially proud that as the "Mother County" of Western New York it has been identified from the beginning with the extensive cobblestone movement centered at Childs in Orleans County.

Our own grouping of this unique architecture, though not numerically as large as in certain sections, is nevertheless praiseworthy and shows that we have been alerted to the importance of our own contribution to the valuable record.

One recalls with regret that today only the site remains of the once famous Cobblestone Block on Batavia's Main Street where was printed the first issue of the Daily News, June 25, 1878. This is true also of the county's cobblestone "Lunatic Asylum" — an adjunct of the County Farm, then known as the "Poor House"—built in 1828.

We know definitely of two homes, at least, that are now gone; one in the town of Elba and another in the town of Pavilion. The latter—The Timothy Miller house—built by Jack Wallace 1831-1837 was on the Summit St. Rd. out of Le Roy and was destroyed by fire in 1930. Oakfield's oldest mercantile building, built in 1846, which, successively housed a blacksmith's shop, a laundry, pool parlor, garage, bicycle shop, and at the time of its razing in 1964, a shoe-repair shop, was another landmark now regretted.

Likewise, what is said to have been the first school in Alexander, was built of cobblestone and stood on Church St.; several now living have told your historian of having attended it before it, too, was leveled. We are constantly finding evidence of other cobblestone structures; some torn down because of deterioration or a regrettable lack of understanding of their historical significance: others removed in the cause of "progress."

Alexander Structures

Among those still standing throughout our fair county — a delight to cobblestone connoisseurs of the mid-1960s, Genesee lists several outstanding treasures. We find in the town of Alexander the Town Hall housing the Yorker's Museum on the third floor, which was built in 1836 of field cobbles it was the former Genesee-Wyoming Academy — one of Western New York's most important

places of higher learning.

Three homes are still the delight of their owners: one on Rt. 98, built in 1837 and occupied by the Brown family; two, remodeled former school houses, are on the Dodgeson and Sand Pit Rds., respectively.

Batavia boasts one on the Batavia-Oakfield Townline Rd., built about 1850—the home of Dr. and Mrs. Irving W. Wiswall. An 1830 home on the corner of Bethany Center and McLernon Rds. in the town of Bethany, is now occupied by the Drew Lloyd family.

Stafford has two buildings—one on the east side of Fargo Rd., built in 1840 by Giles Miner. Distinguished by its smoke house, stepping block and hitching post, it is now owned by the Harry Trietleys, who have preserved these interesting features. On the west side of the Fargo Road stands the William Hanson house built in 1831 of rather large farm stones of varying sizes, by John Warren who came from Bishop's Taunton, Devonshire, England, in 1830. Extensively modernized by an addition on the north end, one notes that the original north and south walls were built with no window openings.

In Le Roy Area

Going to Le Roy from Batavia, we find the Chapion-Barone home on the north side of Rt. 5 at the western edge of the village. Built between 1832 and 1836, this story and a half house, was carried out in Greek Revival design. Time has brought little change other than a replacement of the original small square portico—enhanced by its Doric columns and a wide frieze matching the architectural trim of the house with a 20th Century porch extending across the front.

Darien has one quaintly small rectangular building on the Harper Rd. north of Rt. 20. Built in 1863 as Judge Ridley's "Court House," it was later used, from 1914 to 1937, for a post office and for a time for voting purposes. Now is owned privately as a little home.

The town of Pembroke claims not a single cobblestone, but its neighbor, the town of Alabama shows evidence of the stone—perhaps, we would like to think, even in greater numbers than the one remaining house which built prior to 1860, sports an addition and whose owners, the Scarborough, said that in remodeling it for occupancy, hand-hewn beams and the outline of a fireplace and bake-oven were discovered.

Almost opposite at the corner of Maple St. and Ledge Rd., is a small school house, set in the midst of a tiny rural graveyard. In recent years it has been plastered over and no trace of its cobblestone identity is visible.

The present John Martin house on the Judge Rd. in Oakfield was built 1825-1830 by two brothers, Daniel and Disbrow Calkins. Working in the Summer on the Erie Canal as stone masons, they are said to have brought the cobbles from Lake Ontario—and worked on the house in the Winter. They built a second house which we understand was not cobble and planned a third—but never completed it. The pile of stones and a well are today's mute testimony to the plan.

Elba Landmarks

Going out the Oak Orchard Rd. from Batavia (Rt. 98), Elba adds four more to our list. The Moses True-Hartman home, built in 1836 of cobbles of varied colors and shapes, stands with its front entrance facing Maltby Rd. The old Ford home on the Ford Rd. (Rt. 262) two miles east of Rt. 98., is said to have probably been built by the same mason as the Underhill-Wiswall house because of the similarity of workmanship. It has recently been purchased and is slated for restoration.

And in the heart of Elba we find a little old blacksmith shop at the corner of Main and Mechanics Sts. Enticing in its promise of "untold stories," the old Friends Meeting House at the corner of Quaker Hill and the Lockport Rd.—once known as Snoker Hill, has been used as a Summer home for several years. Its entrances—one for women and one for men, as it was originally built in 1836, have been closed up with masonry. Only recently did it pass from the Staple Family—descendants of one of the founding members, William Weeks. It is now owned by State Police Investigator Ronald A. Butterfield of Attica.

Of novel interest we list two smokehouses which have recently been brought to our attention: one in the town of Darien and the second, the "Tryon Smoke House;" the latter termed "an architectural gem" by our Le Roy historian. Standing a mile from the razed Timothy Miller house in Pavilion, it was presumably built in the 1830s.

And thinking back, we recollect that the building which is now the Star Dry Cleaning Es-

tablishment on East Main — once a huge square home in Batavia's elegant residential section—has lost its identity with the cobblestone era. The lower half built of cobblestones has been plastered over with stucco.

Almost daily Genesee's Department of History finds new data for its Cobblestone Story—research for which has been in progress at the Holland Land Office since the origin of the project. Any and all information and pictures are still welcome. The help of everyone is needed as well as that of the historians. In 1965, a map locating Genesee's known cobblestones was compiled and filed with the Cobblestone Society — as requested. Now in the foreseeable future, definite plans find us scheduled as part of one of the annual tours.