

2-25-76

# Macomber Cobblestone Kept Busy During Prohibition

An artist rarely omits his signature or symbol on his work. But it's very rare that we find a mason following tradition when troweling cobblestone art.

Fortunately, Enoch Macomber chiseled--for posterity, his name and date of construction in stone above the front door lintel of the home he built in Murray.

Macomber laid up a functional Middle Period dwelling (common to this prolific building period) using a mixture of fieldstones and water rounded cobblestones of various sizes.

He was more selective with the front wall by laying up four courses to the quoin. Larger stones were used in the end walls, which required one less course to the quoin or corner stone.

With the exception of some brick lintels on the sides in comparison with sandstone lintels on the front, this house

uses almost the exact pattern used on the abandoned Beadle-Rosie house which Macomber built within a three-year period.

The accompanying photo was taken prior to 1975 improvements and repairs to the building, which eliminated the north overhang or roofed canopy to the east (left of picture). The cobblestone also has a clapboard east wing (partially shown) which remains.

Before Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, the Underground Railroad was quite active in this area, helping runaway slaves and their families to freedom via Sandy Creek, Lake Ontario, and then Canadian shores.

The old Hurd Barn, mentioned two weeks ago, was used for runaway slaves' hiding place, along with certain homes along the Ridge. During Prohibition, Rum-Runners hid their liquid contraband in designated



MACOMBER HOUSE--Photo shows cobblestone on Ridge in Murray, taken in 1975, before canopy was removed.

places in the barn. Thus Murray on the Ridge contributed in past covert activities, twice in history.

And, it is quite evident that for many years prior to Repeal, large tonnages of local apple crops were consigned for a more profitable venture than eventual pie-making.

The Macomber place also served the Rum-Runner. The present owner states that a hole remains in the cellar which gave access to a tunnel.

The tunnel was dug under the Ridge to a barn opposite the cobblestone which was not only another hiding place, but where a still operated unbeknown to government officials. The barn is long-gone but traces of the foundation are still visible here and there. Later on, and as a follow up after Repeal we presume, the Macomber place operated as a tavern for a period.