

June 1954
Dangle

I read with much interest your article on Cobblestone houses in the June 5th Times Union.

My grandfather James Robinson was born in Ireland in 1830 of Scotch parentage and came to this country at the age of two. His father was a stone mason and he taught his two sons the trade (namely Jim and Bill Robinson). They settled in Rose, New York and there is still a beautiful Cobblestone house near the Cemetery that they built. The Arch way of the Rose Cemetery was dedicated in memory of another brother John. My grandfather moved from Rose to Gypsum Plainsville - a little place outside Clifton Springs New York & he built many houses in that vicinity. Sometime take a drive down that way and see the old schore house now a residence - its beautiful.

I wouldn't be at all surprised if Grandpa built the old Hicks house at Phelps that you wrote about as Phelps is only a few miles from Plainsville. My mother told me that when she was a girl they always said around town "There are two kinds of Cobblestone houses - the regular kind & the kind the Robinsons built"

They had some mark that they put on their houses to distinguish them but as my mother is dead I would not know what it was. Sometime I would like to go to the house at Rose N.Y. & see if I could find some distinguishing mark & then look on some others & see if they compared. He invented some sort of contraption that they called a head - a sort of box like affair with a hole in the center through which the stones were pushed so that all the stones would be uniform in size. They would drive an old horse & wagon from Plainsville to Lake Ontario (some feet) & bring the stones back. He also built the Oswego harbor & have heard him tell many times of building numerous Cofferdams. He also told me of places so tight that there wasn't room for a mans whole body & they would hold one another by their feet to place the few remaining stone in the job. would have written before but had prison dog. I hope this will be of some interest to you.

Yours truly
- Mr C. J. Dangle
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