

241 Prospect St.  
Newark, New York  
June 6, 1954

Miss Gerda Peterich  
Rochester, New York

Dear Miss Peterich,-

I was most interested in the story of the "Cobblestone Age" in the Times Union Saturday night. My son, Herb Jackson, tells me you are gathering additional information. Last year I wrote the history of our village in connection with its centennial, and one chapter was devoted to old landmarks. While we have a number of cobblestone houses around here, I was particularly fortunate in one case to have a letter written in 1935 by a grandson of the builder of one of them. Then, in 1932 when I was correspondent in Newark for the Democrat Chronicle and the Times Union I did a feature on the little hamlet of Gysum, not far from here on the Canandaigua Outlet which, at that time, was a cluster of cobblestone buildings.

Your report was interesting to me, too, because I have just been trying to secure information about a cobblestone house on the Price farm, and have been unable to ascertain its origin. The daughter of the present owner has no idea who built it originally, but knows that the cobblestones were brought from Lake Ontario, and that the walnut woodwork, thruout, came from the trees on the farm.

On the chance that you would be interested in the house I wrote up in the history of Newark, I shall quote from the letter, eliminating irrelevant information:

"The story of the cobblestone house on the corner of West Maple Avenue and West Avenue was told by Franklin J. Keller, grandson of the builder, Jacob Keller, in a letter written in 1935 to C. H. Stuart. (Mr. Keller was in his nineties at the time) Mr. and Mrs. Stuart purchased the house and restored it in 1925. Jacob Keller came to Newark from Columbia County when a young man and bought the farm that lies around and west of the stone house. He first lived in a log cabin, but built the stone house about 1845 and 1846. It took two years to build the house. The lumber and field stones all came from the farm except the cobblestones that are in rows around the outside wall, and the sand. The sand was taken from a sand pit on West Avenue. The logs for the lumber were cut on the farm and were sawed up in the rough at a sawmill that stood south of the Budd house.---The lumber, to be dressed was taken to a mill on the Outlet (Canandaigua) at Phelps.--The moldings were made by hand and the lime was burnt by a man named Horn about two miles west of Fairville. (A hamlet a few miles north of Newark) The small round stones on the outside of the wall were drawn from the lakeshore north of Fairville by Dellavan Keller, son of Jacob and father of the writer, Franklin. Delevan was the oldest of six sons and two daughters.

"It used to take three days to make the trip for a load of stones from the lake shore, if he had good luck, but sometimes longer as there was no road three miles north of Fairville, only a rough crooked trail."

In my scrapbook of clippings of my work correspondent is the story of Gypsum. I took snapshots of the buildings

but these I would not want to part with. This story published in 1932 shows a cobblestone woolen mill with wooden flume; a cobblestone church; cobblestone school and a fourth building was a tavern of stone and plaster, not cobblestone.

Skipping some of the information I quote:

"It is like turning the pages of an old scrap book to drive through the hamlet of Gypsum on the shores of the Canandaigua outlet on the town line between Manchester and Phelps. Its century-old tavern, schoolhouse, church, mill and many residences, with only a scattering of more modern structures comprise the little hamlet.

Gypsum, or Plainsville as it was first called, was one of the earliest settlements in this section. John and Jacob Vanderhoof came from Morris County, N.J. in 1798. Their father, Garret Vanderhoof followed and 1000 acres of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase were subsequently deeded him on June 5, 1800----In 1831 Jacob, who had married moved his family to a fine stone structure on the corner of the main stage route from Buffalo to Albany, and the road from Palmyra to Vienna, now Phelps. Here was born the youngest of his nine children, who was to become the Mother of the present owner and occupant, Mrs. Cora Mosher Haynes. (Since this was written 22 years ago I am sure Mrs. Haynes is dead now) (There follows three paragraphs on the house and possessions, but since it is not a cobblestone I won't quote that)

"In 1813 a Baptist society was formed. Early services were held in the schoolhouses at Plainsville until the need of a building was realized and subscriptions taken in 1833. The building of Lake Ontario stone was erected on ground donated by Jacob Vanderhoof. Originally the church was composed of a large auditorium and gallery. Later the gallery was made into a second floor, which included the pulpit. (Services are no longer held there but the church still stands)

"Across the street from the church stands the district school. This, the third schoolhouse built in Gypsum, was erected in 1838 and is still in use (I am not sure that it is in use today)

"Older than any of these buildings is the large mill on the shores of the Canandaigua outlet erected according to Mrs Haynes about 1820. It is almost entirely of stone with a wooden addition at the west end. The ruins of the wooden flume which carried the water from the now empty mill pond to the water wheel may still be seen. A thriving woolen business was once conducted within its walls. Mrs. Haynes recalls her mother telling how the ballroom of the tavern was converted into a dormitory to house the workers. Later the mill was used for grinding flour."

The rest of the story has nothing to do with the stone houses. The mill, I am sorry to report, collapsed a few years after my story was written, but the church and school house still stand, and seem to be quite a bit older than those you mention.

There are a number of cobblestone houses nearby and I understand there are many near the village of Walworth. One of particular interest was recently restored by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Vickery of this village. I believe their address would be Phelps R.D. if you cared to write them. The house is beautiful and the date is in the medallion under the eaves but I cannot remember exactly what it is.

I hope you have found the foregoing of interest.

Cordially, *Cecilia B. Jackson*  
(Mrs. Herbert B. Jackson)