

COBBLESTONE ARCHITECTURE
IN THE ROCHESTER AREA

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INTRODUCTION

Buildings come and buildings go. Buildings over a hundred years old have a tendency to fall in disrepair, to possess too valuable a location, and to gradually cease to exist. One group of buildings, however, built around a hundred years ago in the Rochester area, has not gone this way of all architecture quite as rapidly as others and does not offer the prospect of doing so in the near future. To withstand the northern New York climate, these buildings were built of a material that had withstood more destructive natural forces than lake gales or summer heat; they were built mostly in the country and in small villages where land values do not change enough to warrant the destruction of a building (they may not warrant its upkeep but that is another question). So they managed to survive and have come, just recently, to be of interest to the student of architecture.

To the latter, this category of architecture is known as cobblestone (to the owner or neighbor it is often anything from fieldstone to just plain stone). Buildings of cobblestone are found in great quantity throughout upper New York State, the former pathway of a glacier. Only a few men have devoted their efforts to the investigation and examination of this unusual expression in architecture; thus, it has been the purpose of this paper to examine and

record by means of photography the cobblestone buildings within a radius of roughly fifty miles of Rochester.

To make this investigation of most use to those interested in the subject, careful attention has been given to the organization and presentation of the material. Chapter I discusses the geological and constructural aspects of cobblestone buildings and aims primarily at distinguishing these from other stone buildings. Chapter II gives a survey of the functions and the various architectural styles of these buildings; chapter III presents examples of the structural and decorative use of cobblestones. In chapter IV a correlation of all this material to the textural surface of the buildings and a suggestion of the complexity of classification and analysis is attempted. The appendix gives the exact location of the photographed examples and the identification of all the pictures in the paper.

The students presenting this paper were greatly aided by the personal information of Mr. George Chapman of Webster and Mr. Chester Harmon of Scottsville; by the advice of Dr. Carl Hersey, Dr. J. Edward Hoffmeister, and Miss Margret Denny; by the aid of Miss Marion R. Davis; and by the invaluable information and generous assistance of Mrs. Bertha L. Gaptill.

I COBBLESTONES DEFINED BY GEOLOGY AND CONSTRUCTION

A. Cobblestones Defined by Geology

B. Cobblestones Defined by Construction

A. Cobblestones Defined By Geology

For tens of thousands of years, a glacial ice-sheet slowly advanced and retreated over New York State. The action of this glacial ice-sheet left, not only the conspicuous and interesting geological features of this area, but a distinctive building material: cobblestones - i.e. rounded stones from two and a half-to eight-inches in diameter (fig.1). The direct work of the glacier was the transportation of material: the invading ice-sheet gathered up an immense quantity of loose rock rubbish, carried it many miles southward, and deposited it in varying degrees of thickness over the land. This variable veneer of glacial deposit is called the till sheet or drift mantle.

The student of cobblestone architecture is interested in the way the retreating glacier deposited its drift mantle. There are two characteristic drifts: the ice-laid drift and the water-laid drift. The stones of the ice-laid drift, composing the drumlins, are unassorted fragments of many sizes and kinds of rock. These rock fragments are usually glaciated or exhibit striation and faceting. The stones of the water-laid drift, composing the larger part of the moraines in this area, are rounded forms of rock fragments deposited in layers of assorted sizes by streams or lakes. For further conciseness in this paper, the stones deposited in the ice-laid drift and used in cobblestone architecture

will be referred to as glaciated cobblestones; those deposited in the water-laid drifts as water-laid cobblestones.

The distribution and composition of the glacial till sheet in upper New York State determined the range of cobblestone buildings. In the Rochester area, the location and type of glacial deposit, along with economical and chronological factors, determined local variations and characteristics. The first type of glacial deposit to be considered is the till sheet. It contains rocks ranging in size from boulders to cobblestones. Because the stones were near or on the surface and made plowing difficult, their removal from tillable soil was of prime importance to the settler in his earliest attempts to clear and farm the land. These stones are of irregular size and shape; the majority of them are limestone, granite, or sandstone fragments.

The second type of glacial deposit influencing cobblestone architecture is found in the drumlins (fig. 2), singular hills characterized by a long, gentle slope toward the south and a steep decline on the north. These hills of subglacial construction are composed of ice-laid till deposited beneath the under-surface of the advancing glacier. In figure 3, the concentration of drumlins is seen to be in a two hundred mile strip stretching inland east from Rochester to Syracuse - the area containing the greatest distribution of cobblestone buildings. From these stones deposited over the countryside in the ice-laid till sheet and in the drumlins, the glaciated cobblestones for most of the cobblestone buildings were gathered.

The third glacial deposit of cobblestones lay in the moraines, deposited at the receding edge of the melting glacier. The morainial belt in this area stretches along Ridge Road West within twenty miles of the lake's edge and ends in a large morainial drift between Irondequoit and Sodus (fig.4). In the pits around Ridge Road West are the water-laid cobblestones with their sharper edges worn away; on the beach of Lake Ontario are the lake-washed cobblestones, almost completely rounded and smoothed by the action of the lake (fig.5).

Thus, through its movement of glacial forces, nature left this building material within easy reach of the settler. Fences, foundations, and finally entire houses were built of cobblestones, if for no other reason than that the disposal of such an amount of stone was a serious problem. The cobblestone building was built from the land on which it rested and the glacier contributed the material through its production of such a quantity of regularly shaped, ever-present stone.¹

1. All information on the geological formation of this area is from Herman Fairchild's books listed in the bibliography.

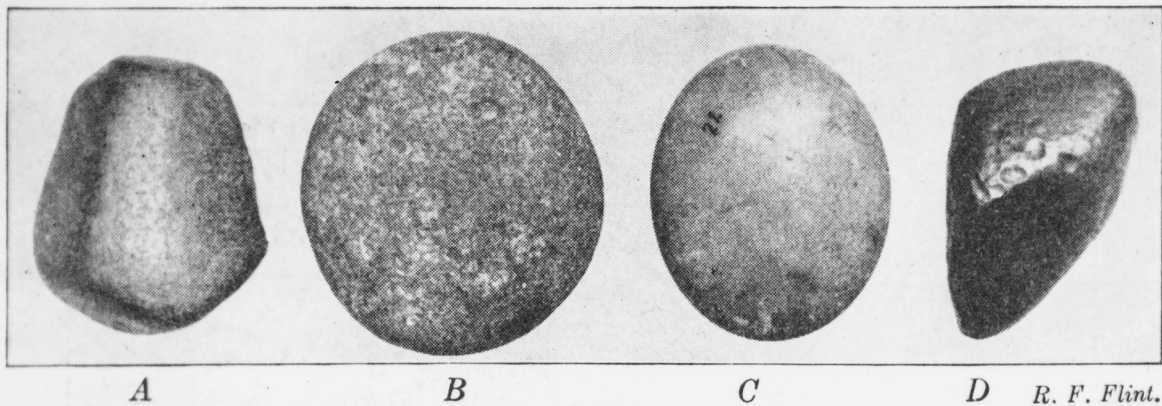


Fig. 128. Comparison of stones fashioned by different agents of erosion. The long diameter of each stone is about 4 inches.

- A*, Glaciated stone from till, New Haven, Conn.
- B*, Wave-worn beach cobble, Branford, Conn.
- C*, Stream-worn cobble, Snake River, Washington.
- D*, Ventifact, Glass Mountains, western Texas.





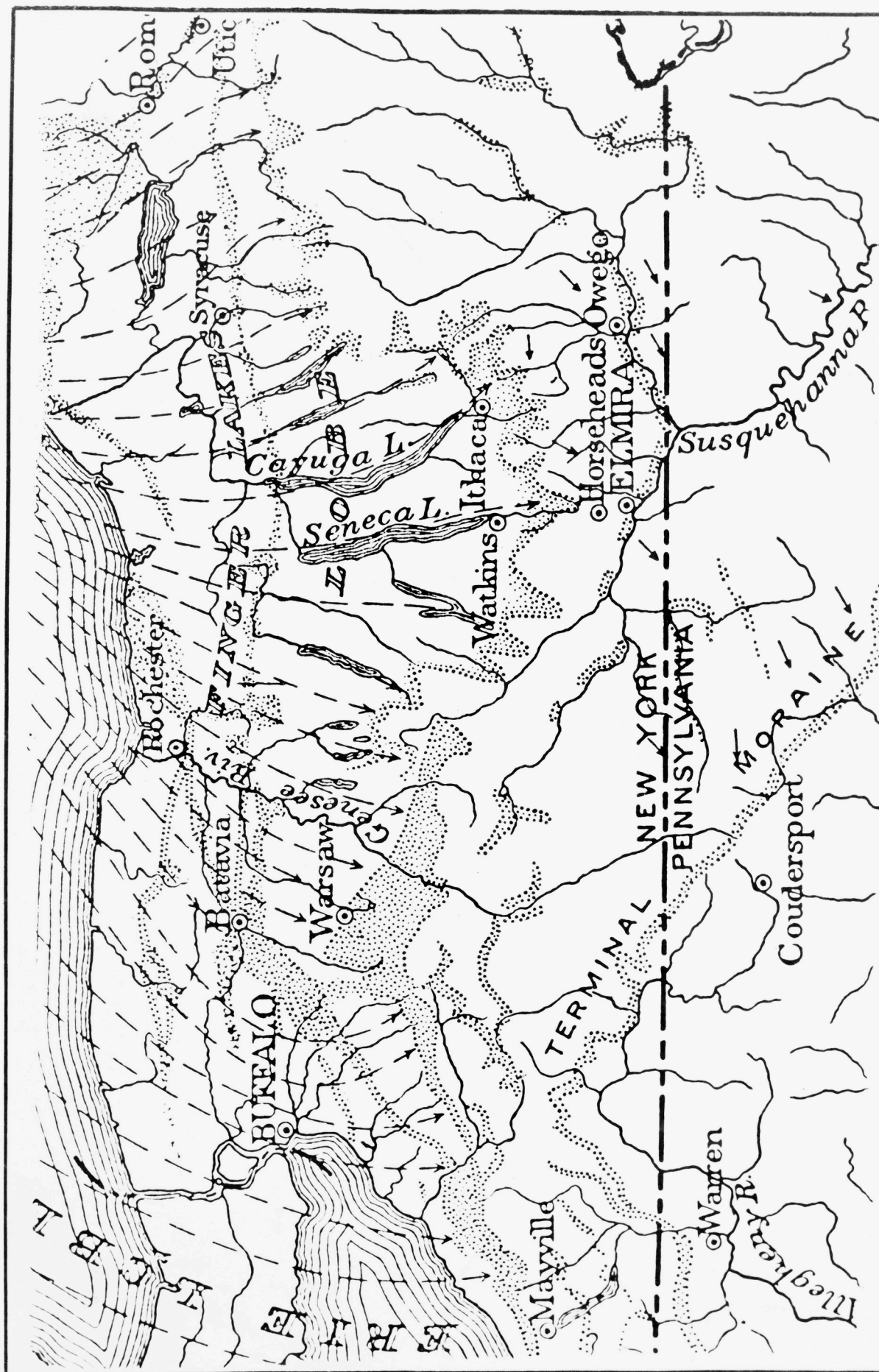


Figure 124. MORAINES IN NEW YORK.
The terminal moraine marks the limit of the Quebec ice sheet.



B. Cobblestones Defined by Construction

The construction of buildings from small stones is not new. Many other countries have produced buildings of stones gathered from the fields and hills; these field-stone buildings, however, have been constructed with little or no concern as to size, shape, and color of the stone or to the evenness of the horizontal courses. The stone house, built of the particular size stone known as the cobblestone and constructed with at least some rudimentary concern for the size, shape and regular laying of the stone, is classified as a cobblestone building rather than a fieldstone building. The actual construction of the cobblestone walls of these houses is difficult to investigate because so few of the houses are in ruins. Three of the four known ruins in this area - the Sheldon Road House, Mendon; the Plank Road House, Ontario Center; and the First Christian Church, Greece - have been investigated and photographed, however, in an attempt to clarify the structure of cobblestone walls.

The Sheldon Road House shows how the earlier cobblestone houses were constructed. On a fieldstone foundation, twenty-one inches thick, were raised the upper walls roughly sixteen inches in thickness. On this set-back of about five inches (fig.6) the floor joisting was laid. The upper story walls show how a five inch cobblestone facing was built into the rising wall (fig.7). The fieldstone wall

was laid in a crude fashion of coarse stone; interlaced into this, however, in the process of building, were cobblestones laid in regular horizontal rows. The courses of cobblestones, divided by a troweled "V" joint, are laid with three or four rows to the quoin (sixteen inches high). Plaster is applied directly to the interior face of the fieldstone wall, in this case, without any interior studding or lath. [The remaining fragments of standing wall will be pulled down sometime this spring (1951) and the cellar filled in.]

On a dirt road near the intersection of Plank Road and Ontario Center-Macedon Road, Webster, the only remaining part of a cobblestone house is a low section of wall. A cross-section of this wall (fig. 8) shows how selected lake-washed cobblestones were laid up with the fieldstone wall. As the fieldstone wall was built, the smooth, egg-shaped cobblestones of the exterior were laid in even rows with their larger ends well imbedded in the masonry adhering to the layers of the backing wall. As in icebergs, only part of the cobblestones appears on the surface of the wall, to give the impression of a much thinner wall composed of stones only a fraction of their actual size. Although sturdily cemented to the back wall, the cobblestone facing is joined with an occasional longer stone laid back into the rising structure (lower right hand corner of figure 8). This type of wall gives the feeling of a less structural use of cobblestone than the walls of the Sheldon Road House, but has less of the veneer-like quality of the building technique discussed in the following paragraph.

The last cobblestone building investigated, an example of cobblestone veneer-facing (fig. 9), is the First Christian Church in Greece, built by J. Putnam in 1844. This building has been gutted by fire recently; although only partially roofed the walls stand intact except for some minor gaps around the window and door openings. The eighteen-inch thick walls are constructed of three layers of stone. The interior layer is composed of fairly large size rocks interlaced with a middle layer of medium size fieldstone by coarse masonry. Between the layers and the stones themselves large gaps in the masonry are apparent; no attempt has been made to make this inner wall impervious to rain or wind. This function is filled by a two-or three-inch veneer of water-laid cobblestones applied to this crude wall in regular horizontal courses. The veneer is joined to the backing wall by the occasional penetration of longer cobblestones into it. Although the individual cobblestones are badly weathered, the cobblestone facing still completely protects the wall behind it from the destructive forces of nature.

Through examination of these three cobblestone buildings, the difference between cobblestone construction and other stone masonry is made apparent. The bearing wall itself is not entirely built of them - behind the exterior layer of cobblestone is a substantial wall of fieldstone. The cobblestone facing was built into and partially integrated with the rising wall, but was laid more carefully (in jointed horizontal rows) than the cruder fieldstone wall which it

covered. Cobblestone construction thus tends to be less a distinctive way of building and more a method of finishing the surface of the fieldstone wall.









II FUNCTIONS AND STYLES OF COBBLESTONE BUILDINGS

A. Functions of Cobblestone Buildings

B. Styles of Cobblestone Buildings

A. Functions of Cobblestone Buildings

By far the greatest number of cobblestone buildings were built as domestic dwellings. However, this type of construction was used for nearly every type of building needed by a predominantly rural area and age. In some cases, buildings have been converted for a different use, but, in most cases, the buildings continue to be used for the purpose originally intended. Only a few characteristic examples of public buildings will be discussed, since the structural or textural use of cobblestone did not undergo any change.

In a society closely bound to the church by religious and social bonds, it is not surprising to find churches and meeting houses of durable and expensive cobblestone construction. One of the earliest cobblestone buildings in the area is the Quaker Meeting House (fig.10) near Scottsville, built in 1834. The double entry - one for men, one for women - is its most prominent characteristic. The Quaker sect had been founded in this area in 1804 by Isaac Cox, who in 1838 built a cobblestone house not far from this building. The Meeting House was constructed of glaciated cobblestone gathered from the fields and laid without much attention to the regularity of the courses. Built by a group little given to material display, it reflects in its construction the economic and religious position of its builders.

The First Baptist Church in Webster (fig.11) is its complete antithesis. Built in 1857, the building expresses in design the spirit of ecclesiastical architecture, in construction the desire for an impressive facade, executed in the finest selected lake-washed cobblestone. The other walls, not quite as finely or uniformly selected, present a subtle contrast with the front. The workmanship in laying up these walls represents the greatest technical skill reached in cobblestone construction. The aesthetic effect achieved with these carefully selected cobblestones is comparable to that gained in other building materials.

Another category of public buildings including cobblestone examples is the early one-or two-room schoolhouses. Two of these are located between Rochester and Childs on Ridge Road West. The earlier one, District School #8 of Parma (fig.12), was built in 1845. It is a simple, one-room building slightly suggestive of the Greek Revival style in its heavy cornice and its full entablature. The cobblestones of the front are lake-washed and not carefully selected for size and color; the number of rows to a quoin decrease from five on the front to four on the side as the stones become larger; the back is made up of very large stones laid in uneven rows. The later building by two years, District School #5 in Gaines (fig.13), differs only in that, slightly larger in size, it has a double entry and a short, square bell tower atop its ridge pole. The lake-washed cobblestones of the front, selected for their uniform reddish color, are Medina sandstone. The stones of

the sides and back are water-laid and become progressively coarser. These public buildings, like the churches, reflect greater care for texture than the domestic dwellings in the same area which are seldom built with selected lake-washed cobblestones.

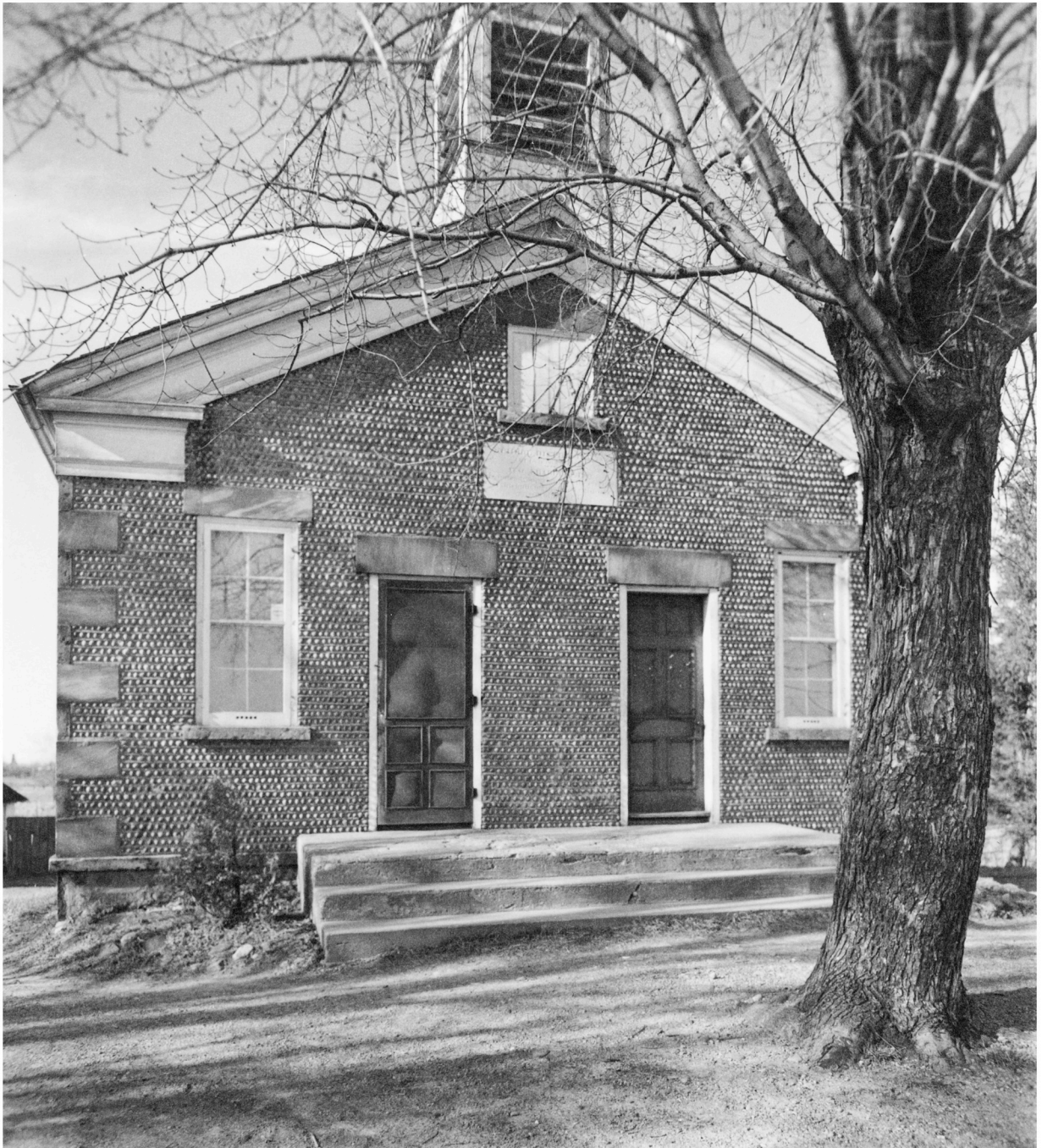
Various other buildings were built of cobblestone to serve different purposes. In East Victor is a store building (fig.14) still in use as such; other similar store buildings are in Victor and Scottsville. A small building in West Bloomfield was built in 1841 originally as the Ontario and Livingston Mutual Insurance Office (fig.15). Although the method of construction was painstaking and difficult, an occasional farm building made of cobblestones is found; the King Farm in Phelps (fig.16) presents an unusual collection of these with its many barns and farm buildings stretching out behind the cobblestone residence. Even walls of cobblestone construction, rather than the usual fieldstone masonry, have been found around old cemeteries and gardens (fig.17).

Cobblestone construction was changed little in its adaption to the various needs of public and commercial buildings. The careful attention to uniformity of size and color reflects the usual attempt to distinguish, through elaborateness, the group's buildings from the individual's.

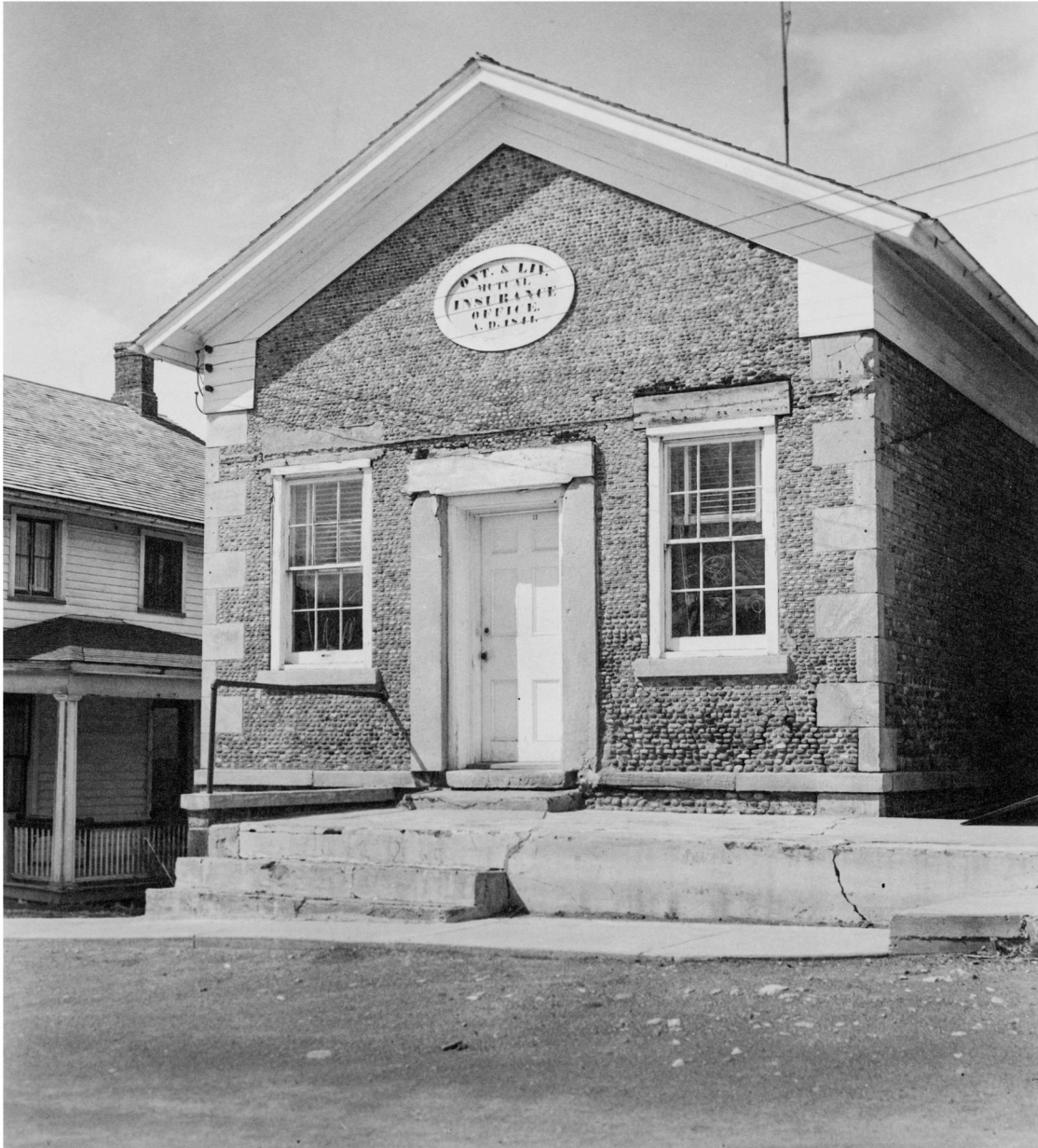
















B. Styles of Cobblestone Buildings

During the period when most of the cobblestone buildings were erected - 1830 to 1860 - three architectural styles were in use: the Post-Colonial, the Greek Revival, and the Romantic Revival. Each of these styles was reflected in turn, in domestic cobblestone buildings and was used with little modification in this unique building material. The actual method of construction had little effect on the adaptation of the style by the builder. The stylistic variations in cobblestone houses can be found in most of the houses built from pattern books, by local master builders or carpenters. The study of the design of cobblestone buildings thus is the study of the contemporary development of various architectural styles in this area, rather than that of a style indigenous to this particular material.

The most simple cobblestone house greatly resembles the early Colonial dwelling in its restricted, undeveloped plan. The Crowell-Petrie House near Clarkson (fig. 18) is a small rectangular four-room building with a center entrance opening directly into the main room. The chimneys have been located on the outside walls rather than in the center of the house; a steep stairway rises on the west end of the main room to a low attic. The exterior construction reflects, as does the interior plan, the simplicity and restraint imposed upon the builder by the material at hand.

and by the means of the owner. The cobblestones, gathered from the morainial drifts and from the fields, are of various sizes and shapes and, although laid in fairly horizontal courses, lack any jointing. The corner quoins are uneven slabs of fieldstone, dressed in a rather crude fashion; the door and window lintels are of brick.

The Post-Colonial style is found in many of the earlier houses, particularly in the Henrietta-Scottsville area. The design of these simple block-mass dwellings, with their economy of plan and minimum of decorative detail, was fittingly used by the earlier settlers in the building of their permanent dwellings. The Fischell House (fig.19), Rush, is a fine example of this style of architecture in cobblestone. The house, planned with a central hall and stairway flanked on each side by two rooms, has the wide doorway and elliptical fanlight characteristic of Early Republican houses. The regular symmetry of the facade with its straight limestone window lintels and corner quoins is unaffected by the cobblestone construction. Other examples of this style are the Herendeen House (fig.20) near Farmington. The Dean Homestead (fig.21) in Webster, the Bonesteel House (fig.22) near Victor, the Cox House (fig.23) near Scottsville, and the Able House in West Henrietta.

The greater number of buildings in this area reflect, in varying degrees, the Greek Revival style dominating the era of cobblestone building. As in other types of construction, the element of style in cobblestone houses extends, from a complete expression of archeological features to the

adapted and modified details of modest country homes. Perhaps the finest example of the domestic Greek Revival style in cobblestone is the T. Barron House (fig. 34) between Geneva and Canandaigua. The house is adapted to the narrow temple plan by placing the entrance at the right hand corner of the front to enable the application of the tetrastyle, colossal portico to the front with a minimum of adjustment. The narrow, two story, central block is flanked by one story wings to extend the total area of the plan. A full entablature runs the entire circumference of the central part of the house; the columns are Ionic and fluted; the pitch of the gable roof is reduced to a practical minimum - every attempt has been made to reproduce the fashionable Greek Revival dwelling. The construction of the building also reflects the effort upon the part of the owner - builder to create a fashionable house reflecting his social and economic position: the red Medina sandstone facade is of small lake-washed cobblestones imported from Lake Ontario and carefully selected for size and color; they are laid in straight horizontal courses with an even bead joint.

As houses in the Greek Revival style were also built by owners of more modest means the plan was modified, the portico was reduced or omitted, the decorative detail was crudely executed or completely eliminated, until only a faint suggestion of the style can be found in some of the small rural houses. The Wychmere Farm House (fig. 25) near Webster, shows how the style was adapted with more than usual good taste to an unpretentious cobblestone house.

The portico front has been omitted entirely, while the pedimented gable is only suggested by the partial return of the entablature. Unfluted pilasters cover the usual cut-stone corner quoins. Only one wing has been built and this contains the entrance. Piercing the full entablature are the characteristic frieze windows with their cast-iron grills. The cobblestones for the front are fairly small, selected, lake-washed, and red Medina sandstone; the sides are predominantly black granite and yellow quartzite. Although an unpretentious farm dwelling, both the style and the construction reflect the greatest concern for design and workmanship. The Neulendyke house (fig.26) near Orchard Beach, with its unusual red Medina sandstone quoins, and the Mendon Pond Park House (fig.27) are other fine examples of the Greek Revival in modest farm houses.

During the period of cobblestone construction, another "revival" influenced architectural design - the Romantic Revival. Various influences are found in this category: the castellated Gothic; the Tudor cottage; the Italian villa; the Swiss chalet; and the Hudson River bracketed. Only in a few cobblestone houses of this area were elements of romantic design adopted, however. In the E.L. King House (fig.28) near Phelps, the contemporary influence is felt in the pointed cobblestone arches over the windows, in the clustered flues of the chimney, and in the steeply pitched roof and front gable. This simplified cottage design reflects the influence of Downing and Davis, whose cottage and villa designs were often published at that time in the

"Genesee Farmer" and the "Cultivator". The plan has been left, however, because of the limitations of the structural material, without the numerous appendages and excrescences of the "Gothic" style. Here, again in harmony with the authenticity of the design elements, the cobblestones are finely selected, lake-washed, and are laid in regular horizontal rows by a skilled mason.

The Baker House (fig. 29) near Farmington, built eight years later, shows the same influences as does the King House. The only differences are that the two small dormer windows have been omitted, and the lintels are of the cut stone, and a later porch has been added. Another cottage type house, near the intersection of Martin Road and Telephone Road, Henrietta, reflects the same Downing-Gothic style.

The Hayden House (fig. 30) near York is an unusual example of transitional architectural design executed in cobblestone. The plan is similar to that of other Late Colonial or Early Republican houses; to the narrower side, however, a colossal portico with simplified Corinthian columns has been applied. The steep roof, the wide overhang of the eaves, and the clustered flues of the chimneys are other features making the stylistic classification of the house difficult.

The architectural designs of these houses are familiar to any student of American architecture - little change has occurred in their translation into cobblestone. The designs of these buildings only reflect the contemporary popular

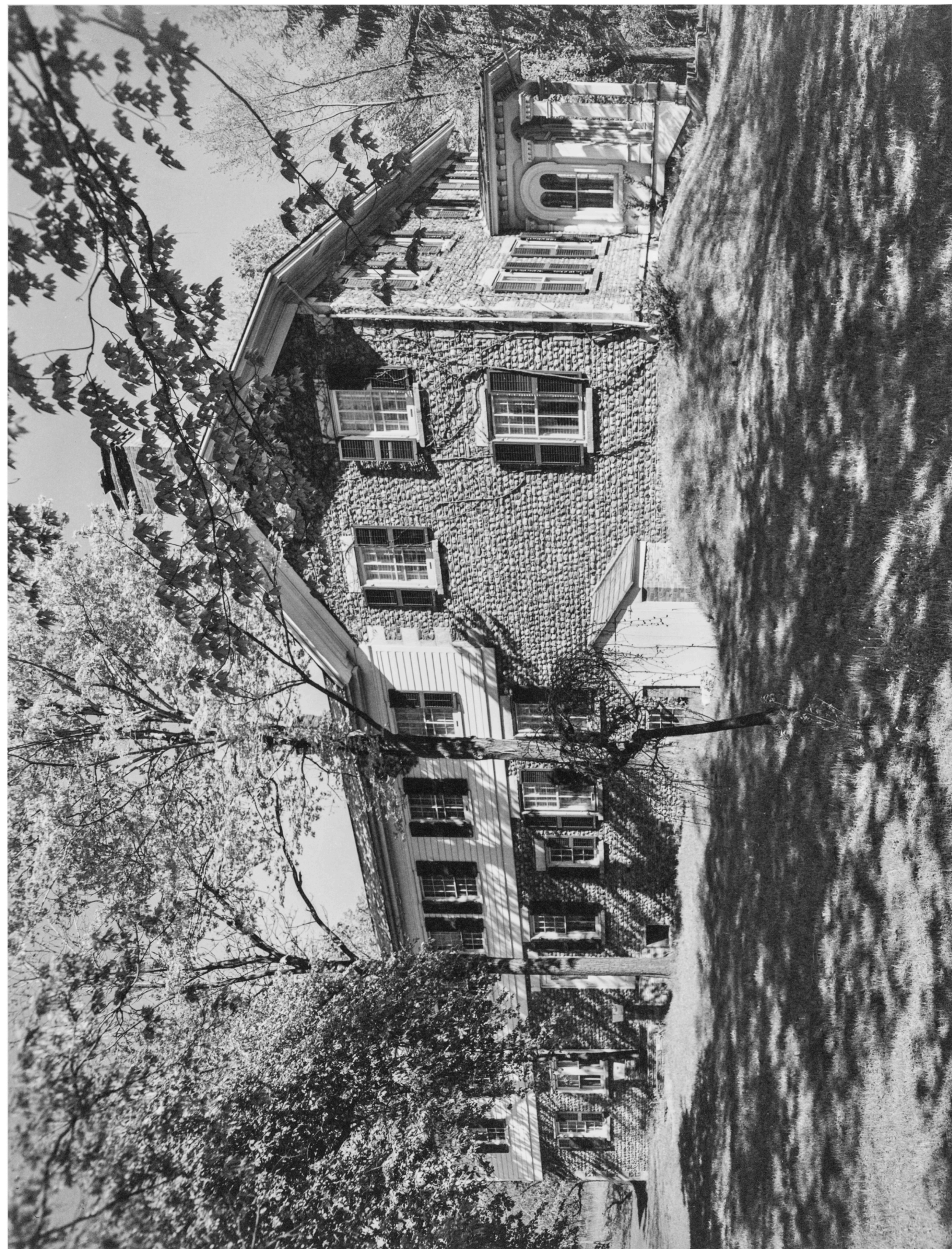
designs, executed, as in other methods of construction,
with a greater or lesser degree of faithfulness and skill.
The distinguishing nature of cobblestone architecture does
not lie here.





























III STRUCTURAL AND DECORATIVE USES OF COBBLESTONE

A. Structural Uses of Cobblestones

B. Decorative Uses of Cobblestones

A. Structural Uses of Cobblestones

Thus far, only the use of cobblestones for entire buildings has been discussed; in many cases, however, this material has been used independently of cobblestone buildings or where other materials were customarily used. Foundations, lintels and, in one case, columns are those structural elements found executed in cobblestone.

Cobblestone foundations have been found frequently beneath frame houses. In contrast with the many fieldstone foundations of cobblestone houses, these foundation walls have been very carefully executed in many cases. In areas where coarser stones were most frequently found, the use of small, selected cobblestones suggests the possibility that, when only the foundation was to be executed in cobblestone, greater care was taken in the selection of the limited number of stones. The general impression gained through examination of the numerous cobblestone foundations within the Rochester area is that they were often of more carefully selected stones of the kind most plentiful in the immediate area. In the morainial area, west of Rochester, a large number of foundations are of finely selected, water-laid stones, laid in carefully jointed rows. In the area east and south of Rochester, most of the foundations examined are of coarser stone gathered from the fields, ranging from all large stones to all small stones in one founda-

tion. In nearly all cases, however, an attempt was made to select stones of similar size, whether large or small. Another interesting observation is that more cobblestone foundations appear under frame houses than under cobblestone buildings, whose foundations are often of irregular fieldstone or very crude cobblestone construction.

Window lintels of cobblestone houses, also occasionally executed in cobblestone, present another interesting structural variation. (Usually they are done in cut limestone, occasionally in brick, as in the Crowell-Petrie House, fig.18.) The Blodgett-McCall House (fig.31) near Murray has unusual window and door lintels constructed of lake-washed cobblestones (roughly one and one-half inches thick and nine inches long) set vertically to form a flat arch. The Chugg House (fig.34), also near Murray, shows the only other example found of these long, flat stones used for lintels in this manner. Here, another refinement was attempted by using longer stones in the center and shorter ones on the ends - a crude attempt to gain the impression of an arch. The nearness of these houses to each other suggests that the same mason worked on both or that one is directly inspired by the other.

One more example of cobblestone lintels was found in the E.L. King House near Phelps. In this house the pointed arches above the three front windows (the sides and back windows have flat lintels) are of the same selected lake-washed cobblestones as the rest of the house, laid in rows of three to follow the window heads (fig.32). This is one

of the few examples of cobblestone used to further the stylistic design of a house; in other houses the stylistic details are done in wood, such as the cornice and pilasters of the Wychmere Farm House (fig.25) and other Greek Revival houses; in stucco, such as the pilasters of the Alton Church (fig.39); or in limestone, such as the pointed arch lintel of the Baker House (fig.29).

The columns of the porticoed front of the Greek Revival cobblestone house near Rome is the only other known example of cobblestone used in the execution of a house's structural detail. These columns show, perhaps, why cobblestones were not used more often for structural details. The construction of columns in the cobblestone technique nears the point of structurally violating the character of the material and of producing an effect of inappropriateness.

The fewness of examples of structural details executed in cobblestone indicate that the early builders felt the proper and appropriate use of them - in the bearing wall. Although the textural and decorative patterns were refined and elaborated upon, the structural feeling for the cobblestone wall remained.

B. Decorative Uses of Cobblestones

Very early in the period of cobblestone building, the desire to use his material more creatively, perhaps more artistically, arose in the mason-builder. In a type of construction where little applied or worked decoration was possible or appropriate, the inherent characteristics of the stones had to be exploited. Local variations and regional characteristics were expressed in the use of horizontal bands, herringbone bands and facades, diagonally set stones, alternating bands of differently colored stones, and selected stones of a uniform color and size.

In the Blodgett-McCall House, near Murray, a singular pattern in cobblestone was achieved by laying long, flat stones in horizontal rows. Every fourth row was made up of longer, narrower lake-washed stones laid end to end to form a narrow band (fig.33). Although the stones are not of uniform length, they form an effective contrast to the square or round cobblestones of the other courses.

In the nearby Chugg House (fig.34), three courses of long, flat, lake-washed cobblestones were laid to form a band, herringbone in pattern. This band was repeated at the sill line of both the first and second story windows, at the cornice line, and again near the peak of the gable. Because the house is unpretentious, the material roughly selected, and the craftsmanship crude, this attempt to

introduce a pattern of more carefully selected stones, requiring greater skill and time in laying, is doubly interesting.

Another use of the herringbone pattern, where more money and greater skill permitted, was on entire walls. The Baker House in Farmington is a fine example of the herringbone pattern extended over entire wall surfaces. On the north wall and the porch wall, the same reddish lake-washed cobblestones used on the other walls were laid diagonally to form the herringbone pattern (fig.35). In the more modest Davis (King) Farm House near Parma, only the front wall, sheltered by the porch, was done in the herringbone pattern; the stones, however, are smaller (two inches to two and a half inches in length) than those used in other herringbone patterns and, therefore, form a more complex pattern with six courses to a twelve-inch quoin (front cover).

Another interesting variation in the diagonal laying of cobblestones is found in the south wall of the wing of the Baker House (fig.36). The rounder stones of the lower part of the wall and the larger ones of the upper part were all laid so that the stones slant diagonally to the left in every row rather than alternating in direction as in the herringbone pattern.

The varied coloring of the different kinds of stone also offered decorative possibilities to the cobblestone mason. By grouping a number of rows of stones of the same color and general shape, the mason succeeded in introducing

bands alternating in color. Examples of this kind of decorative banding have been found between Sodus and Alton, a lake shore region with many regular lake-washed stones of red Medina sandstone and other smooth, colored stones. In the Feller House in Sodus village, four courses of the prevalent red Medina stones alternate with a single course of whitish stones (fig.37). In the Upson House (fig.38), near Wolcott, the courses of white stone have been increased to two to offer a greater contrast to the two red courses of stone. The Alton Church (fig.39), with its broad, contrasting bands of four white and four red rows of stone is in its aesthetic effect reminiscent of some Spanish or Italian building of the Renaissance.

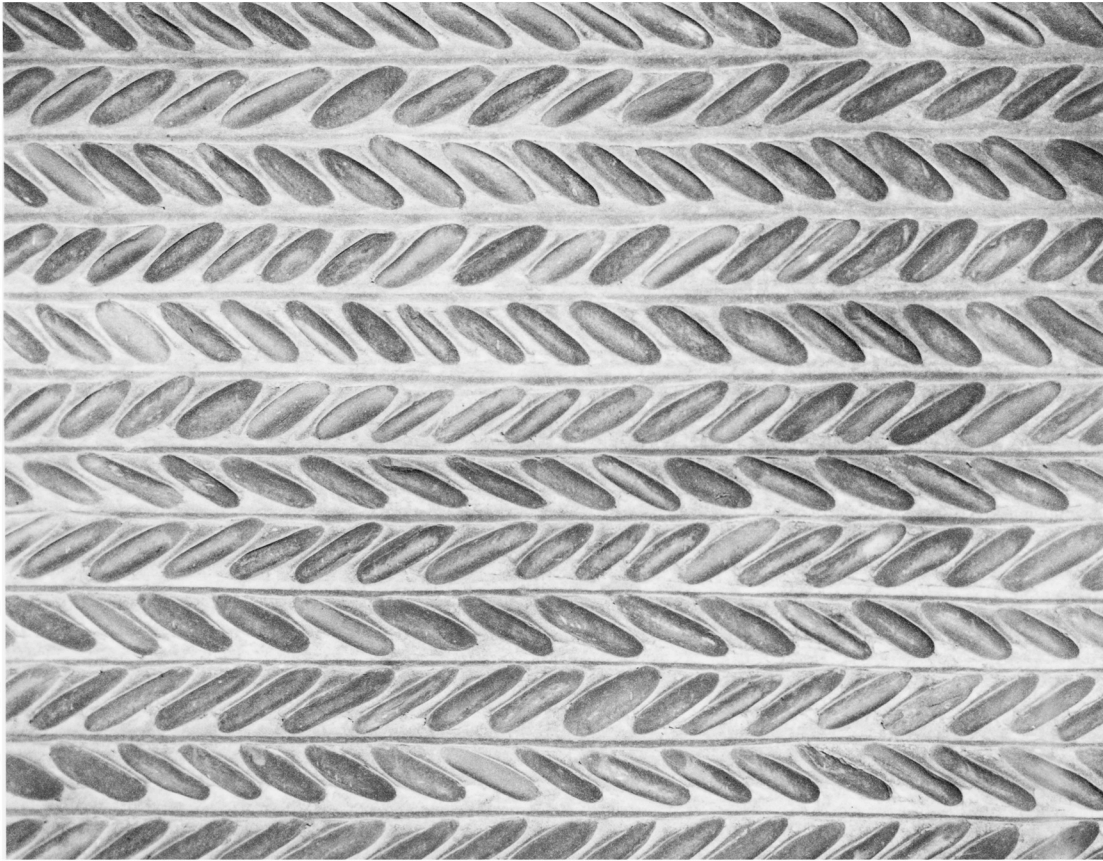
The finest achievement in using cobblestones decoratively is, perhaps, in the selection and use of stones of uniform color and shape for an entire wall. The contrast of the front wall of finely selected, reddish lake-washed stones with the salt-and-pepper effect of the black granite and yellow quartzite of the side walls of the Middleton-Chapman House (fig.40) illustrates well this use of a uniformly colored wall. The front and side walls of the Wychmere Farm House nearby show the same use of contrasting colored textures. In the walls of the Webster Baptist Church (fig.11) a most extensive use of this uniformly colored texture creates the greatest wonder and admiration for the patience and artistry of the cobblestone mason.

The builders' use of their material in this manner is indicative of both their good taste and creditable ingenuity.

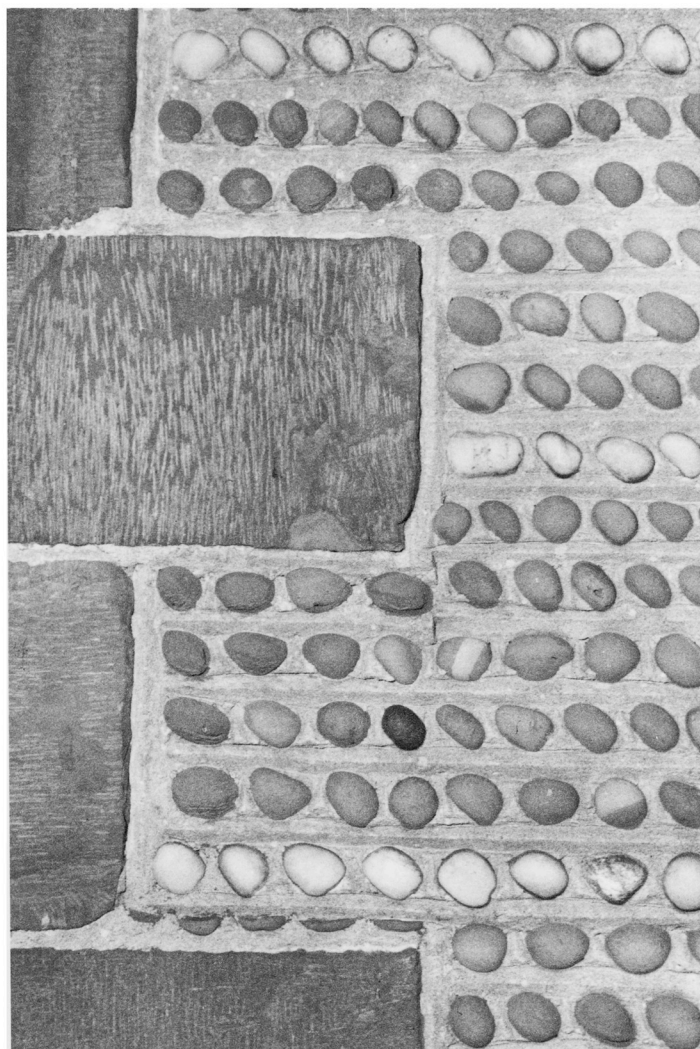
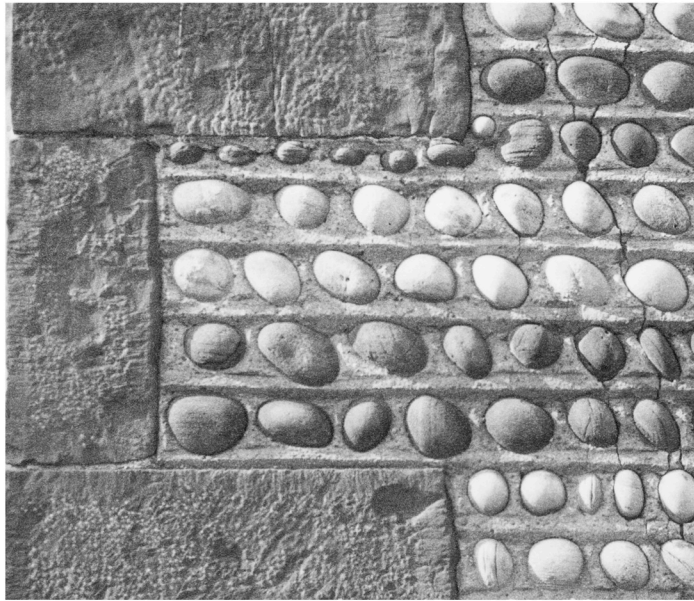
They created, with a material difficult to use, decorations for their buildings from the natural shape and coloring of the stones themselves, in a manner appropriate both to the material and to the structure of the building.

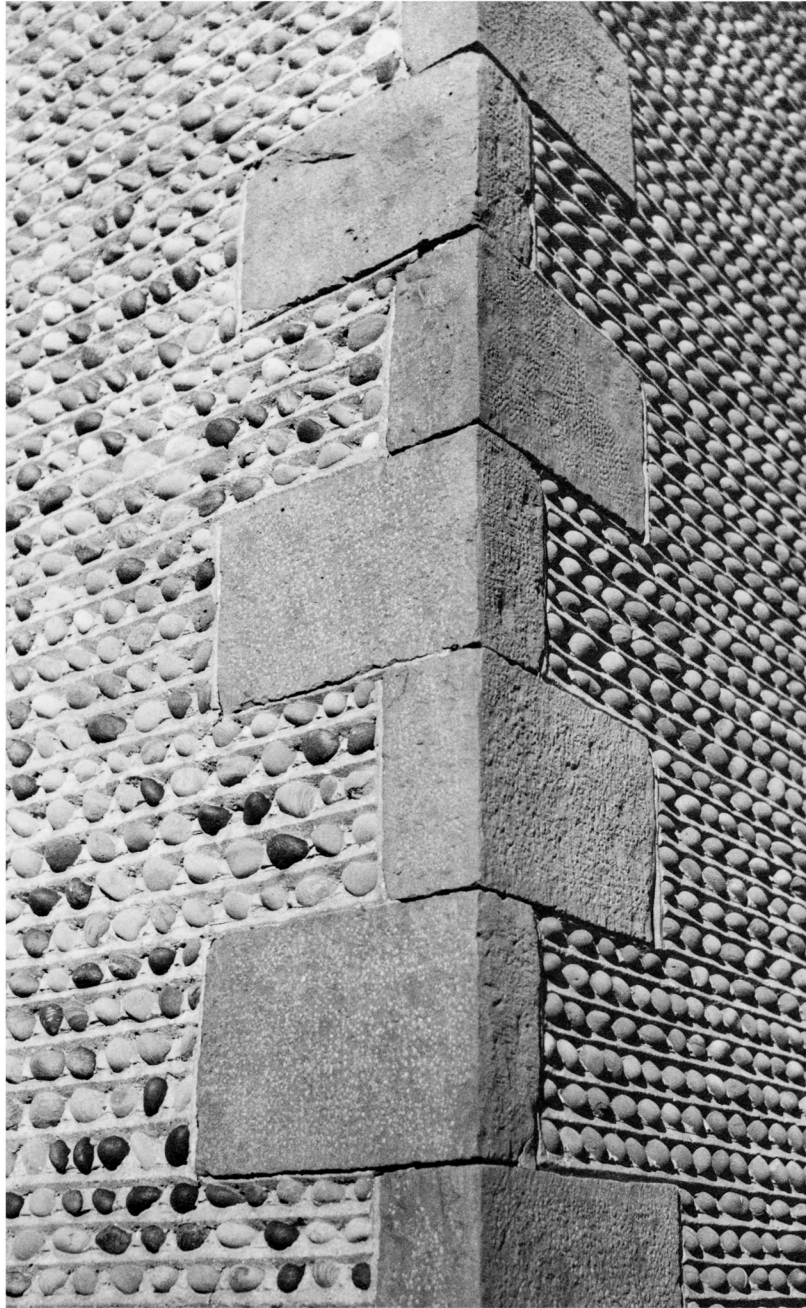


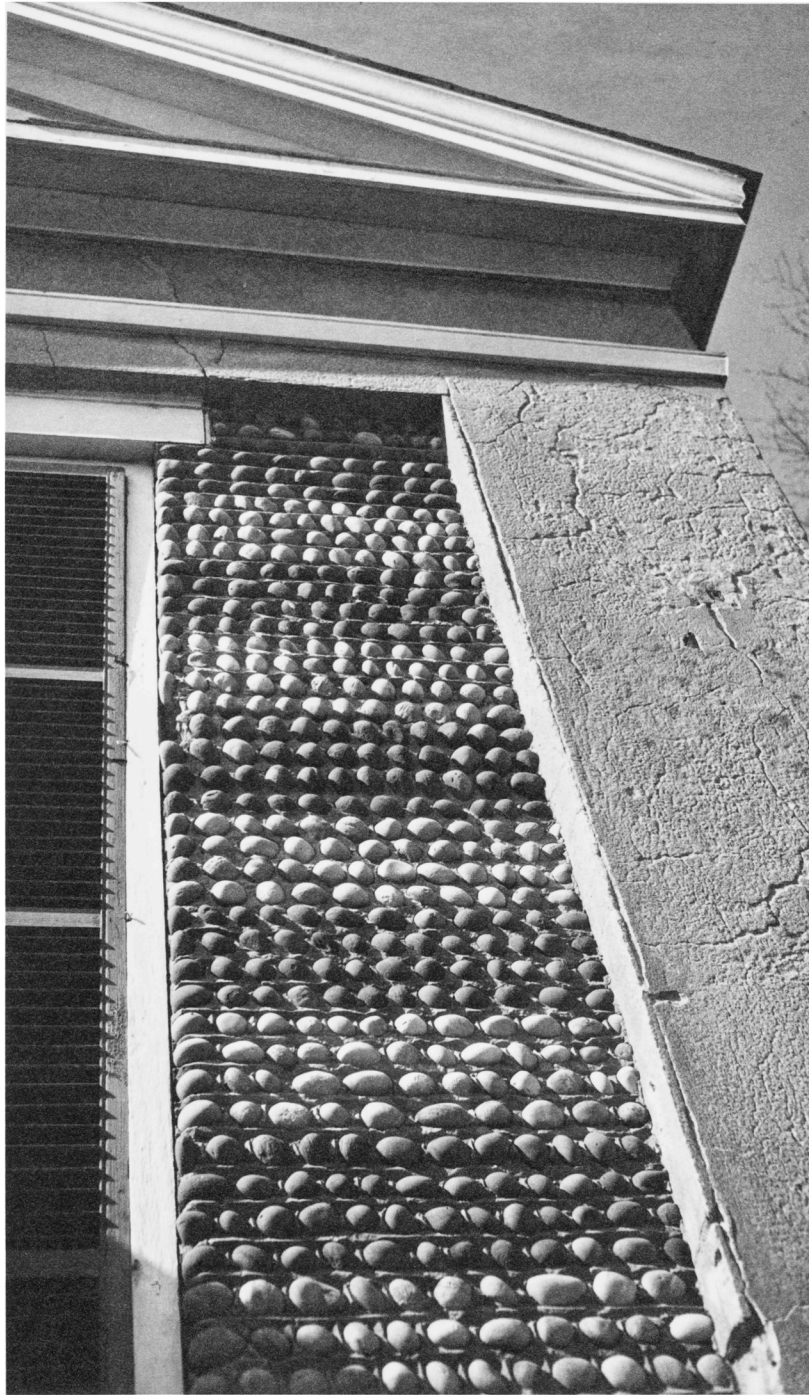












IV COBBLESTONE TEXTURES

A. Geographic and Economic Determinants

B. Variations Within Individual Buildings

A. Geographic and Economic Determinants

The main points considered, thus far, have been how cobblestone construction differs in kind and use of stones from other masonry, how function and architectural style have affected cobblestone buildings, and how cobblestones have been used structurally and decoratively. Texture, the surface appearance of the structure, has been left to last because it must be reviewed in relation to all the above points and because its discussion tends to center around the individual building rather than the group. Cobblestone Architecture by Carl F. Schmidt discusses texture mainly in relation to chronological development. Although the date of construction is an important factor (especially as related to the masonry jointing), other factors - the geographical location of the building and the economic position of the builder - must be as carefully considered in a study where the majority of building is restricted to roughly thirty years and relatively few dated examples are known.

The basic masonry techniques may differ, the style and function of the building may change, the structural details and decorative uses of the stones may vary, but the characteristics of cobblestone texture remain. This texture, however, varies with the type and size of cobblestone used. As discussed earlier, the stones vary not only in mineral content but in how and where they were deposited - the

larger, rougher glaciated cobblestones are found in largest quantity in the fields of the drumlin area; the stream-washed cobblestones, their rougher corners reduced by the glacial streams, are deposited in the morainial drifts along the Ridge Road; the lake-washed cobblestones, even more smoothly polished by the action of the waves, lie along Lake Ontario's shore. Thus the house built of the type of stone most plentiful in its area will reveal its geographical location, to some extent, in its texture.

In the general region of the drumlins, south of Rochester, nearly all the buildings investigated were built of the glaciated cobblestone deposited in the till sheet. (The exceptions, such as the E.L. King House near Phelps, the Barron House near Geneva, and the Baker House near Farmington, were built of stones imported from the lake.) Figure 41 of the Herendeen House near Farmington shows how in 1832 these stones were laid in roughly horizontal rows with little attempt to keep a well-molded, horizontal joint. The Quaker Meeting House (fig.10) near Scotteville, the Scotteville Store, and the Fischell House (fig.19) near Henrietta are other houses presenting similar textural surfaces. Figure 8 of the Sheldon Road House near Henrietta and figure 23 of the Bonesteel House near Victor show the care with which the same kind and size of stone were laid in courses divided by a straighter, more pronounced jointing. In the West Bloomfield Insurance Office, the front (fig.15) has been built of glaciated cobblestones thoroughly selected for extreme smallness and laid with both a horizontal and a vertical "V" joint.

In a similar manner, the texture of many of the cobblestone buildings along Ridge Road West show the use of only the area's water-laid stones or the mixture of these with either glaciated or lake-washed cobblestones. The surfaces of the Blodgett-McCall House (fig.33) and the Chugg House (fig.34) illustrate a type of texture found with variation throughout the area. In the Crowell-Petrie House (fig.18), the same kind of stone, mixed with coarser cobblestone from the fields, is laid without jointing, flush in the mortar; in the Morton Schoolhouse (fig.42), the stones (including some smoother lake-washed stones) have been selected for flatness and laid horizontally.

Along Ridge Road East the texture of many of the buildings assumes a different quality from the use of the smaller, smoother stones gathered from the lake shore. Although the stones may not be perfectly selected for similarity in size and color, the overall appearance is in marked contrast to that of coarser cobblestone textures. The Universalist Church in Webster (similar to the Middleton-Chapman House fig.40) shows how the varicolored stones have been set on the side walls in even rows with a perfectly straight joint to give an impression of almost mechanical perfection. The Solomon Upson House (fig.38), the Feller House (fig.37), and the Wychmere Farm House (fig.25), are all fine examples in the lake shore area of this type of texture.

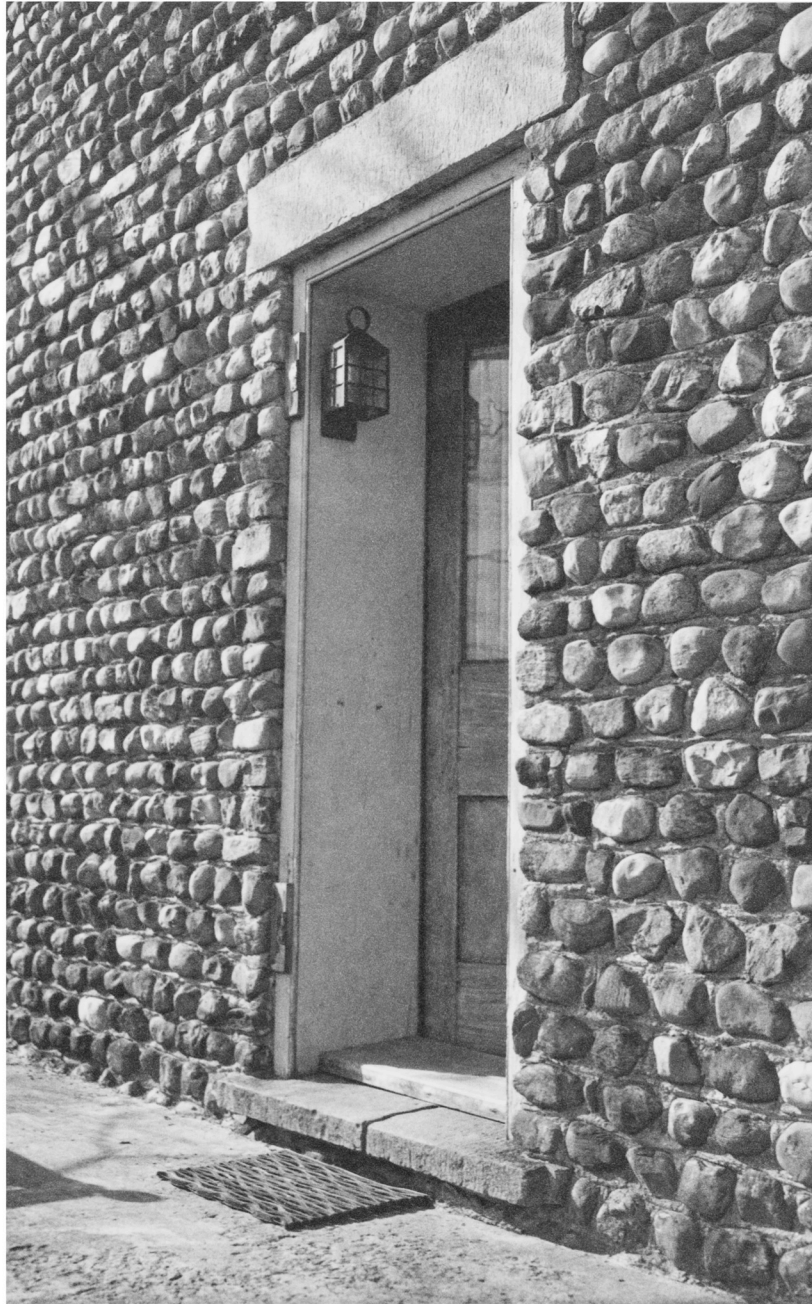
The location of the buildings, therefore, in an area of a particular type of cobblestone deposit, along with the greater refinement gradually achieved in the laying of the stones

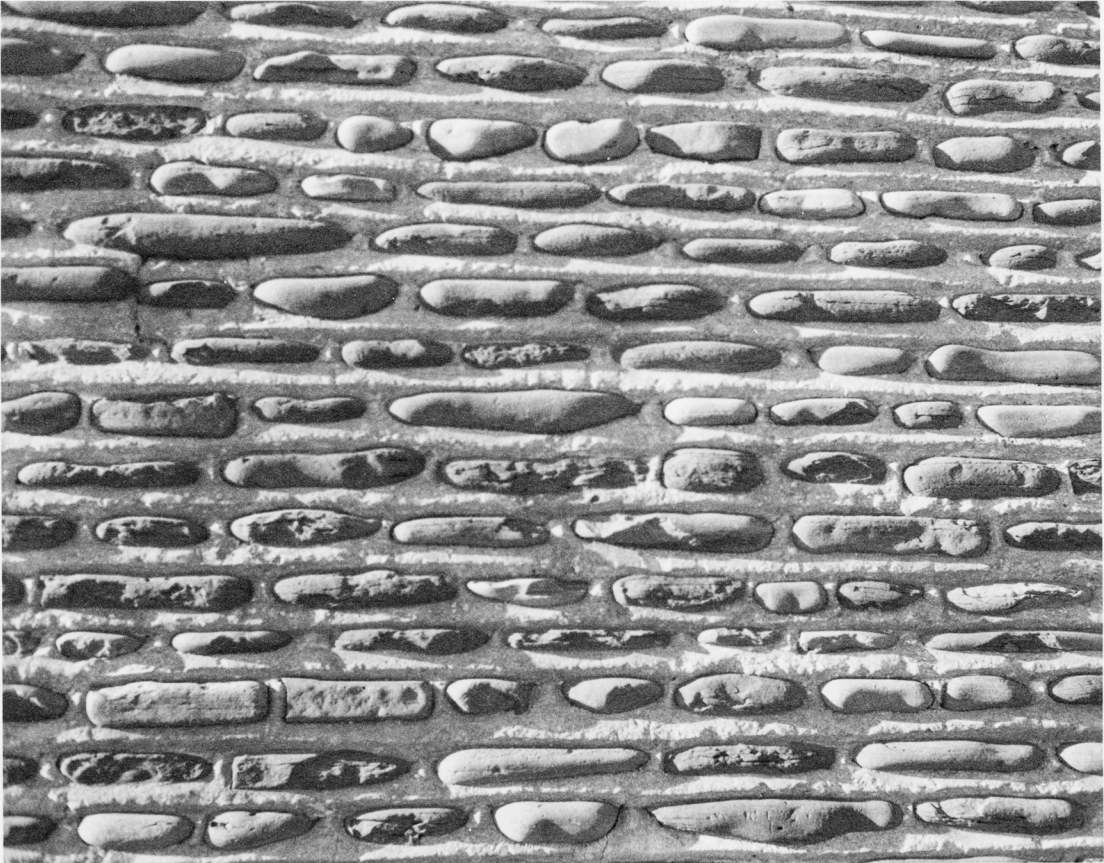
and the molding of the masonry jointing, explains to some extent the variations in textures of the cobblestone wall. Another possible factor in the analysis of some buildings is the economic and social position of the owner or owners. In general, public buildings reflect the larger financial resources and the greater regard for distinctive appearance of the collective owners. The stones, for the most part, are selected very carefully for uniform size as in the Webster Baptist Church or the West Bloomfield Insurance Office; they are selected, in other cases, for a uniform color (the Gaines School, fig.13) or an unusual color effect (the Alton Church, fig.39). The fine lake-washed stones of both the Gaines and Parma Schoolhouses indicate that for these special public buildings a type of stone not found in large quantities in the area may have been brought from the other side of the Genesee River. Thus, these public buildings differ from the usual domestic dwellings in the use of a type of stone uncommon to the area or in the consistent use of a particular type of stone throughout the building. The Scottsville Quaker Meeting House (fig.10) uses the stone at hand in a crude manner. This inconsistency, however, proves consistent with the creed and means of a predominantly rural sect.

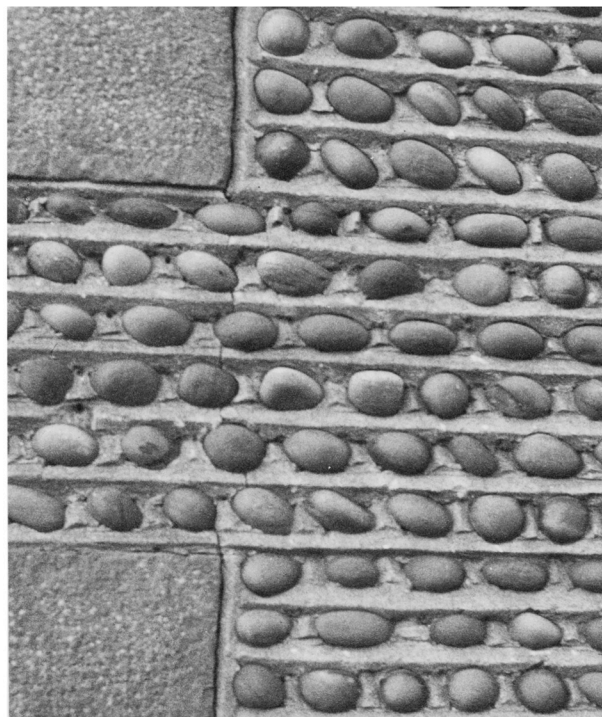
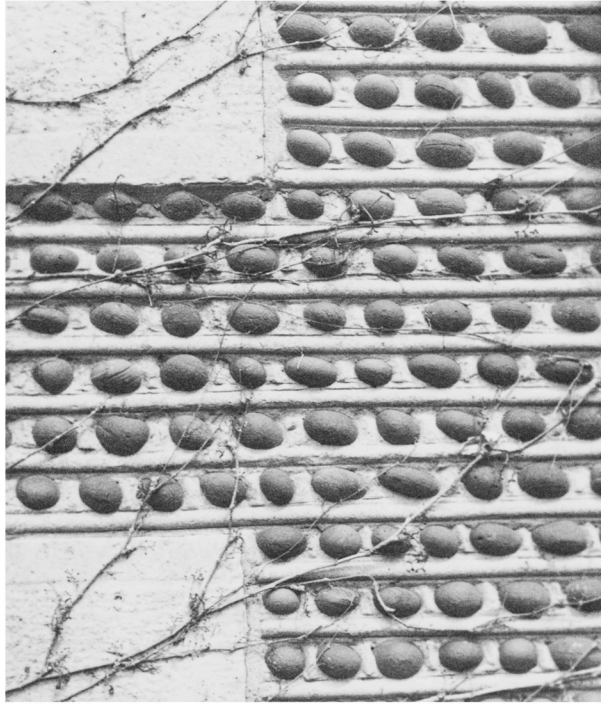
Domestic dwellings, when presenting an unusual textural pattern, seem to have been built with the distinguishing in mind and purse. Only general conclusions can be drawn as in other suppositions on texture, but these seem most probable after examination of cobblestone construction in relation to architectural design and location. The ex-

cellent design of the Barron House (fig. 34) suggests that any less finely selected and evenly laid type of cobblestone masonry would have been inconsistent with the obvious desire of Mr. Barron for style and sophistication. Similarly, the then modish Romantic Revival design of the Baker House (fig. 39) proves consistent with the use of the transported lake-washed stones on all the walls but the back, and with the two types of decorative patterning - the herringbone pattern and diagonally-laid stones. The many cobblestone buildings on the King Farm (fig. 16), including the Downing cottage styled E.L. King House, indicate that the owners liked and could afford good design and cobblestone construction. The E.L. King House (fig. 28) also differs from neighboring buildings in its use of small lake-washed cobblestones of red Medina sandstone and in its use of the bead rather than the more common "V" jointing (compare these two jointings in figure 43). More modest cobblestone houses show less costly refinements by the use of selected stones on only one wall, a single or double band of differently colored stones, or, as in the Ridge Road West area of coarser stones and less prosperous farms, an occasional band of differently shaped and laid cobblestones.

This discussion of textures of cobblestone buildings has attempted to suggest the similarity of texture within one particular area and the possible economic factors contributing to inconsistencies within these areas. The few available accurate dates of buildings must be considered, also, in any attempted analysis and should be used, whenever possible, for an accurate discussion of the individual building.







B. Variations Within Individual Buildings

One outstanding characteristic of cobblestone architecture and the resulting textural quality of the walls has been thus far neglected: all walls of a cobblestone building are not alike. Former discussion of the subject by Mr. Schmidt has failed to correct the impression that the textural surface, as in other types of construction, is consistent throughout the building. In nearly every one of the houses investigated there has been some variation in the four walls of the individual building. The variation ranges from the subtle difference of reducing the courses of stone by one, per quoin, successively from front to rear, ^(fig. 44) to the major difference of using large irregular fieldstones for one wall. Whatever the cause or reason, few cobblestone buildings in this area are consistently of the same textural pattern throughout.

The most widely found variation in texture is the above mentioned reduction of the courses of stone by one, per quoin, successively from front to rear. Small stones (relative to the average size of the stones in the area) are used on the front; larger stones are used on both sides, thus reducing the number of courses to the same height quoin (usually twelve inches) by one course; the back is laid with still larger stones, so that the number of rows to a quoin is reduced again by one. In figure 44, this is clearly seen

in the closeup shots taken to scale of the Lockwood House on Culver Road: the front wall has five courses to a quoin, the sides four and the back three. This same variation of five-four-three courses to a quoin is also found in the Fischell House (fig.19) and the Sheldon Road House (fig.7) - in these houses and others in the same area, using the same kind of stone and the same size height quoin.

To name and designate all the other variations would be to discuss individually almost all the cobblestone buildings in the area; only a few, either characteristic of a general practice or notably inconsistent, can be discussed, therefore, in greater detail. The Webster Baptist Church (fig.11), although using the most finely selected stone, decreases the number of courses to a quoin from front to back - a characteristic not unusual in buildings of excellent design and well selected material. On the other hand, the Baker House (fig.29), using the same fine grade of stone, offers a much wider range of textural pattern in a single house: the front is laid with the stones five to the quoin and the south side with four; the north wall and the porch are laid in the herringbone pattern with four rows to the quoin; the south wall of the wing has diagonally-laid stones, three to a quoin; the back wall is constructed of coarse fieldstone masonry. The Davis (King) House (front and back cover) is similarly constructed with a fieldstone back wall, with the side walls of large cobblestones laid four to a quoin, and with a herringbone-patterned front.

The West Bloomfield Insurance Office has, perhaps, the greatest number of rows to a twelve-inch quoin (ranging from eight rows at the bottom to ten rows at the top) on the front, while the sides have only four rows. An unusual variation is found in the Cox House (fig.23) where the back and sides are laid with five courses to the quoin and the front with four; in the Parma Schoolhouse (fig.12) where the back is of randomly-laid rocks and the sides and front are of carefully selected stones laid four and five to the quoin respectively; and in the Herendeen House (fig.20) where there are roughly two rows to a quoin in all the walls except for an occasional quoin with three rows.

This brief presentation can only attempt to suggest this factor for consideration, along with the other data, in the investigation of cobblestone architecture. As stated before, the variations are almost as many as there are buildings and, therefore, defy categorical discussion. They are merely another of the many aspects of cobblestone architecture. This discussion has been offered mainly to further suggest the impossibility of accurately dividing cobblestone architecture into three chronological periods, as done by Carl Schmidt in Cobblestone Architecture; such a simplification is considered by the writer as misleading and inconsistent with the general character of the subject.



CONCLUSION

Little mention has been made throughout this discussion of the aesthetic quality of the cobblestone material. The feeling of these houses in stone is captured when they are seen rising from their countryside with the ever changing light-play of sun and clouds across their walls or standing on the streets of a small town together with their less noble neighbors in wood. The effectiveness of cobblestone depends upon light, for without it the texture of the stones is deadened and the fascinating patterns disappear. In the country building of coarse cobblestone, surrounded by the open fields, the beauty of cobblestone lies in its perfectly organic expression of nature's material, in its complete fitness of position as a building created from and on the soil. In a town church of fine uniform cobblestones, it stands as a manifestation of a people's desire to take multitudinous perfections and to create from them spiritual unity.

The cobblestone building stands as an individual. Built in primarily rural areas by single craftsmen, they received less of the imprint of the fashionable and more of the creative urge of their designer-builders. For cobblestone architecture is full of countless and individual variations. No two buildings were built quite the same because each building was, of necessity, the expression of varying

material and personal skill. The buildings stand, perhaps, as the last large scale work of the builder-craftsman, even then being driven out of existence by the machine. Cobblestone buildings defied the mechanical in all but their latest examples - and, then, ceased to be built.

V APPENDIX

Location of Photographed Examples

A. Location of Photographed Examples

Cobblestone Houses

figure

Baker House, built in 1850: Macedon Center- Farmington Road, one mile north of <i>Maygog Rd., Macedon</i> Farmington, New York.	
General view	29
Herringbone pattern	35
Diagonally-laid stones	36
Barron House, built in 1848 by T. Barron: Route 20, two miles west of Geneva, New York. General view	24
Blodgett-McCall House, built in 1840: Route 104, Ridge Road West, one mile east of Murray, New York.	
Cobblestone lintels	31
Horizontal bandings.....	33
Bonesteel House: Route 98 and Turk Hill Road, five miles north of Victor, New York.	
General view	23
Chugg House: Route 104, Ridge Road West, one mile west of Murray, New York. Herringbone bands	34
Cox House, built in 1838 by Isaac Cox: Scottsville- Canawaugus Road, one mile south of Scotts- ville, New York. General view	23

Crowell-Petrie House: Route 104, Ridge Road West, three miles west of Clarkson, New York. General view.....	18
Davis (King) House: 4968 Ridge Road West, Parma, New York. Front wall (herringbone pattern).....	front cover
SSide wall	back cover
Dean Homestead: 93 West Main Street, Webster, New York. General view	21
Feller House: North Maple Avenue, Sodus Village, New York. Colored bandings	37
Fischell House: Fischell Road, one mile from North Henrietta Road, Rush, New York. General view	19
Hayden House, built by Moses Hayden: River 1828 Road, York, New York. General view	30
Herendeen House, built in 1832: Macedon Center- Farmington Road, two miles south of Farm- ington, New York. General view	20
South wall (glaciated cobblestones).....	41
King House, E.L.: Route 96, Phelps Township, one and one-quarter miles east of Phelps, New York. General view	28
Pointed cobblestone window lintels	32
Bead jointing	43
Lockwood House: 1092 Culver Road, Rochester, New York. Five-four-three courses of cobblestones to a quoin	44

Mendon Pond Park House: Douglas Road, Mendon

Pond Park, Mendon, New York.

General view 27

Middleton-Chapman House, built in 1844: Route

18, Lake Road, nine miles west of

Pultneyville, New York.

Red Medina sandstone front 40

"V" jointing 43

Neulendyke House: Dufloo Road, Orchard Beach,

New York. General view 26

Plank Road House: dirt road, off route 350

(Ontario Center-Macedon Center Road),

one-half mile north of Plank Road, Webster,

New York. Remaining first story wall 8

Sheldon Road House: Sheldon Road, one mile west

of Clover Street, Mendon, New York.

Interior view of foundation and first story wall .. 6

First story wall 7

Upton House: Route 104, Ridge Road East, six 1847

miles east of Alton, New York. Colored bandings..... 38

Wychemere Farm House: Route 18, Lake Road, six

miles west of Pultneyville, New York.

General view 35

Cobblestone Churches

Alton Church: Route 104, Ridge Road East, c. 1851

Alton, New York. Colored banding 39

First Baptist Church, built in 1857:

77 Park Avenue, Webster, New York.

General view..... 11

First Christian Church, built in 1844 by

J. Putnam: Latta Road and Long Pond Road,

North Greece, New York. Section of front wall 9

Quaker Meeting House, built in 1834: Scottsville-

Canawaugus Road and Quaker Road, Scottsville,

New York. General view..... 10

Cobblestone Schools

District School #5, built in 1849: Route 104,

Ridge Road West, East Gaines, New York.

General view 13

Morton Schoolhouse: German Church Road and

Redman Road, one mile east of Morton,

New York.

West wall (unselected, mixed cobblestones) 42

District School #8, built in 1847: 5346 Ridge

Road West, Parma, New York. General view 12

Cobblestone Buildings

East Victor Store: Route 96, East Victor,

New York. General view 14

King Farm Buildings: Route 96, Phelps Township,

One mile east of Phelps, New York.

General view 16

West Bloomfield Insurance Office, built in 1841

by the Ontario and Livingston Mutual

Insurance Company: West Bloomfield,

New York. General view 15

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POSTSCRIPT - 1953

POSTSCRIPT - 1953

For the sake of a more complete photographic documentation of cobblestone architecture in the Rochester area, additional outstanding cobblestone buildings and important structural, geological, and textural features of cobblestone architecture have been photographed since the completion of the paper, COBBLESTONE ARCHITECTURE IN THE ROCHESTER AREA, in June 1951, and are presented to the University of Rochester with available data by the photographer in April of this year, 1953. In arranging this material, the organization adopted for the paper has been maintained in order to facilitate the integration of the new material with the original text and illustrations. Reference is made to the corresponding chapter of the paper.

Should it prove that some important cobblestone structures have been overlooked, photographs of these will be added subsequently. The writer would appreciate further information useful to her in tracing cobblestone buildings unknown to her, particularly ruins of cobblestone buildings which shed further light on the art of cobblestone masonry. Circumstances permitting, further investigations will be made into the origin of this

masonry technique. It is suggested that information be gathered on problems of repair and maintenance of cobblestone buildings and on masons who might be willing to experiment with this technique. A chemical analysis of specimens of mortar used in different areas would undoubtedly prove valuable. These projects, however, are beyond the scope of this paper.

Gerda Peterich

LIST OF SUPPLEMENTARY ILLUSTRATIONS

with location of photographed examples.

Chapter IA: Cobblestones Defined by Geology, pp.3-5 figure

Deposit of cobblestones as found in drumlins45

Photographed at a gravel pit on route 251
near Mendon, N.Y.

Chapter IIA: Functions of Cobblestone Buildings, pp.10-12

Former blacksmith shop at Alloway, Wayne County, N.Y.....46

Built in 1832. A small octagonal building on
a side road off route 14. Village historian:
Mrs. George Innes, Lyons, N.Y.

Chapter IIB: Styles of Cobblestone Houses, pp.13-18

Taber House, near Castile, N.Y., dated 184447

On the road between Perry and the Wolf Creek
entrance of Letchworth Park, about four miles
from Perry. Very evenly laid rather square stones,
typical of that section (see also ill.48). Stone
not very carefully selected for size and color.

House of Frederic Short, 44 East Street, Nunda, N.Y.....48

Captain Hand's History of Nunda dates this
house 1831. Papers of deed at Genesee Court-
house. In a conversation with the owner, Carl
F.Schmidt expressed the opinion that the
house was built about 1840. - Rather flat,
square, yellowish stone, very evenly laid,
five rows to a quoin in front and four at
the sides. The original house is the structure
now appearing to be annex in the rear of the
house. The main house is a square surmounted
by a low hip roof of four equal sections with
a low square deck. The pedimented dormers with
windows flanked by pilasters are reminiscent of
the dormers of Benjamin Latrobe's Belvidere
(1812), 20-30 miles south of Nunda, though the
latter have an elliptical decoration included
in the pediment.

At Oakland, N.Y., another low square cobblestone
house has obviously been built by the same mason,
though in a slightly coarser technique with four
courses to a quoin in front. The basements of
these houses are of the same cobblestone construc-
tion (see ill.55), although at Nunda it has been
covered with cement at a later date. A prominent

figure

feature of the Oakland house is the mansard roof. No indication has been found that this mansard was added at a later date.

Octagonal residence at Madison, N.Y. 49

On route 20. Built about 1840 by Dr. James Coolidge. Date recorded at the New York State Historical Association and published in the New York State Historical Association Quarterly, April 1952. Material and masonry technique identical with polygonal block at Bouckville (ill. 50). The sections in the back of the house are of varying sizes.

Because of the early date of this octagonal house it may be well to mention that the interior does not have the enclosed stairwell typical of Orson Fowler's octagonal residences.

Polygonal Block at Bouckville, N.Y. 50

On Route 20. Built about 1850 by Dr. James Coolidge. Information about date from the historian of Madison County, Robert H. Palmiter, the present owner of the house, verified this date from the original papers.

Residence of LeRoy Munro at Elbridge, N.Y. 51-54

Built for John Munro, about 1851. On Route 5, north side, west of intersection of Route 31c. This house is easily overlooked, as it sits back from the highway, well hidden among old trees. Very fine lakewashed cobblestones, layed six rows to a quoin with horizontal "bead" joints. Quoins and masonry technique are identical with those of the Barren House, Geneva (1848). Both houses are the work of a highly skilled mason.

The design for this house may have been taken from A. J. Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses (1850), design XXIII: "A Cottage Villa in the Rural Gothic Style", page 295. This design shows the front elevation of the residence of Wm. J. Rotch of New Bedford, Mass., "built from the plans of Mr. Davis". However, there are certain differences which constitute a simplification of the front elevation: the porch has three instead of five bays and the oriel window over the center part of the porch is modified and the window above omitted. There is no balustrade around the

roof. Of this A.J. Downing writes: "The parapet of this (the Wm. J. Rotch) villa surrounds a narrow walk on the roof - entered from the side of the central ridge - which commands a view of the harbor of New Bedford." The omission of the walk is easily explained by the different scenic surroundings of the Elbridge house. - The design of the veranda piers is found in A.J. Downing, page 310.

Chapter IIIA: Structural Uses of Cobblestones, pp.19-21

Basements in cobblestone technique 55

While most cobblestone houses have basements built of large field stones, cobblestone basements have been used widely for frame houses, as for example in the Greek Revival house at Henrietta, N.Y. (intersection of Route 15A and 253). In a few rare instances, a cobblestone basement is used with a cobblestone house, as in a house in Oakland, N.Y.

"Cobblestone Villa", Holland Patent, N.Y. 56

Occupied by Mr. J. C. Rawson. On Route 365, left side of road, coming from Rome. The column on the left side of the photograph has been rebuilt recently, but the original cobblestones have been re-used. Mason: Rudolf Abbuhl, Rome, N.Y.

This is the only known example of a portico executed in cobblestone technique.

Chapter IVA: Cobblestone Textures, p.26 ff.

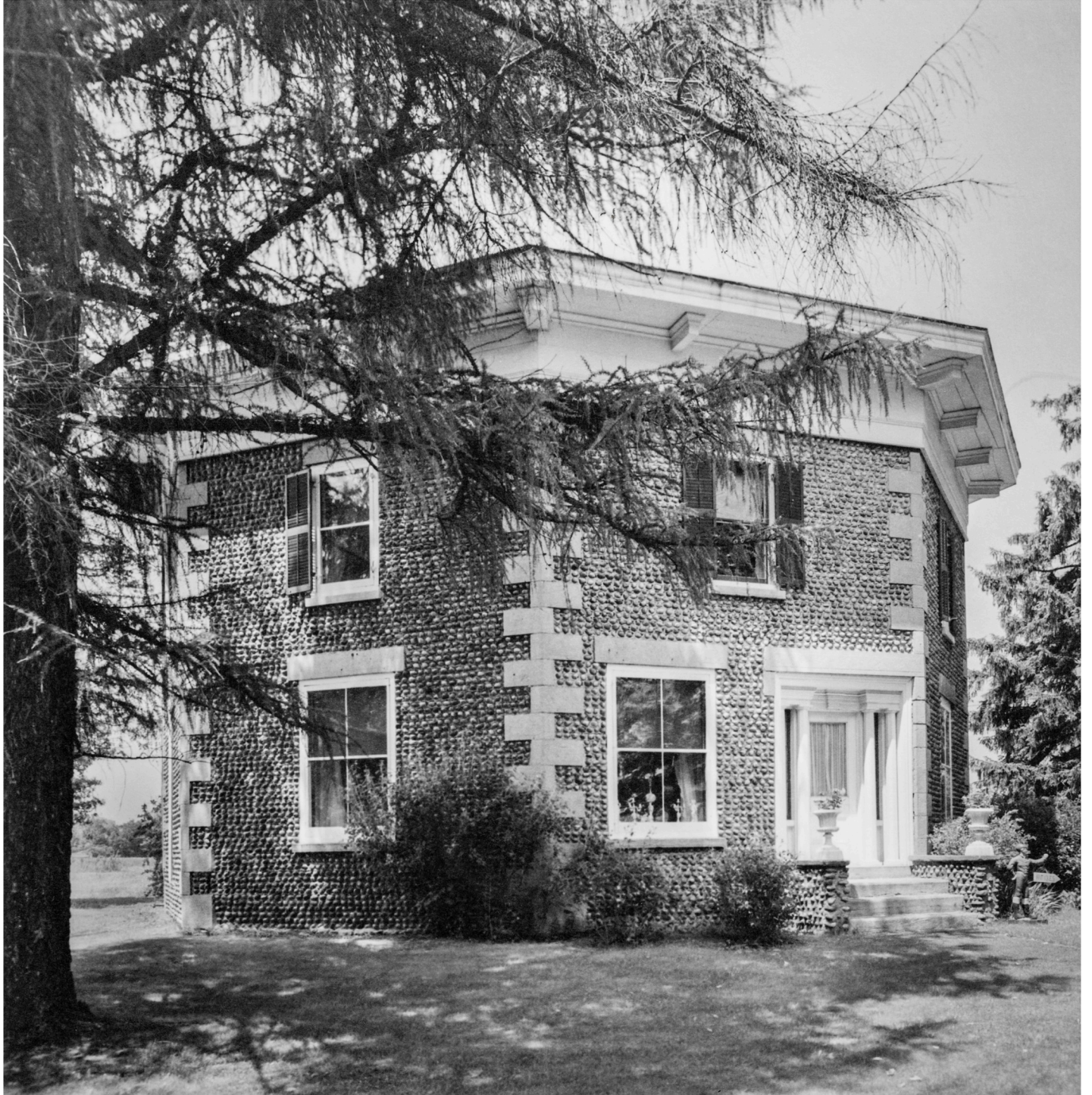
This interesting variety of texture, in which the stones are layed perpendicular to the joints, is found in a fine Greek Revival house on the south side of Route 104, just west of Childs, N.Y. There are three to four courses of cobblestone to a quoin. 57



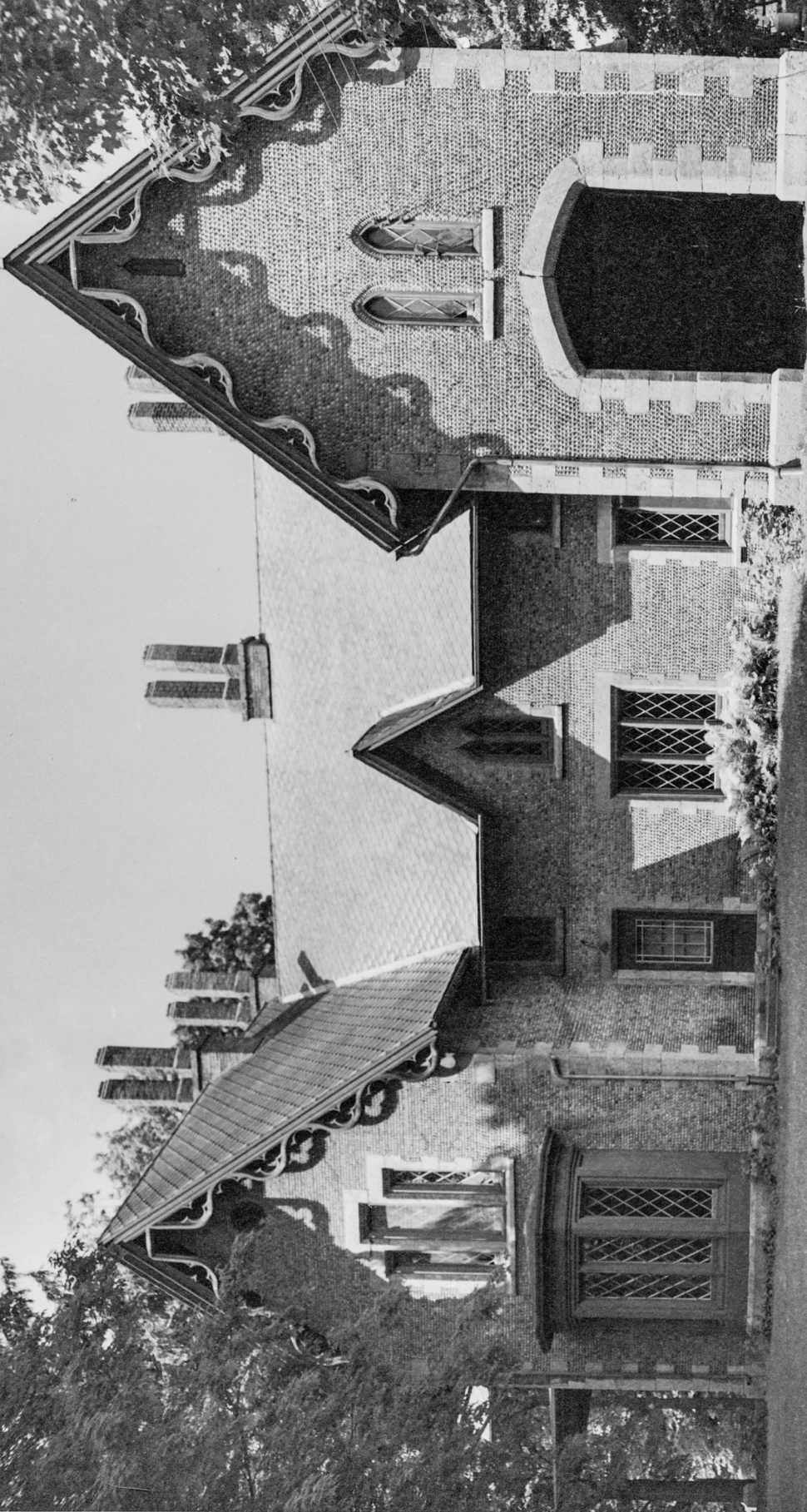


















55





