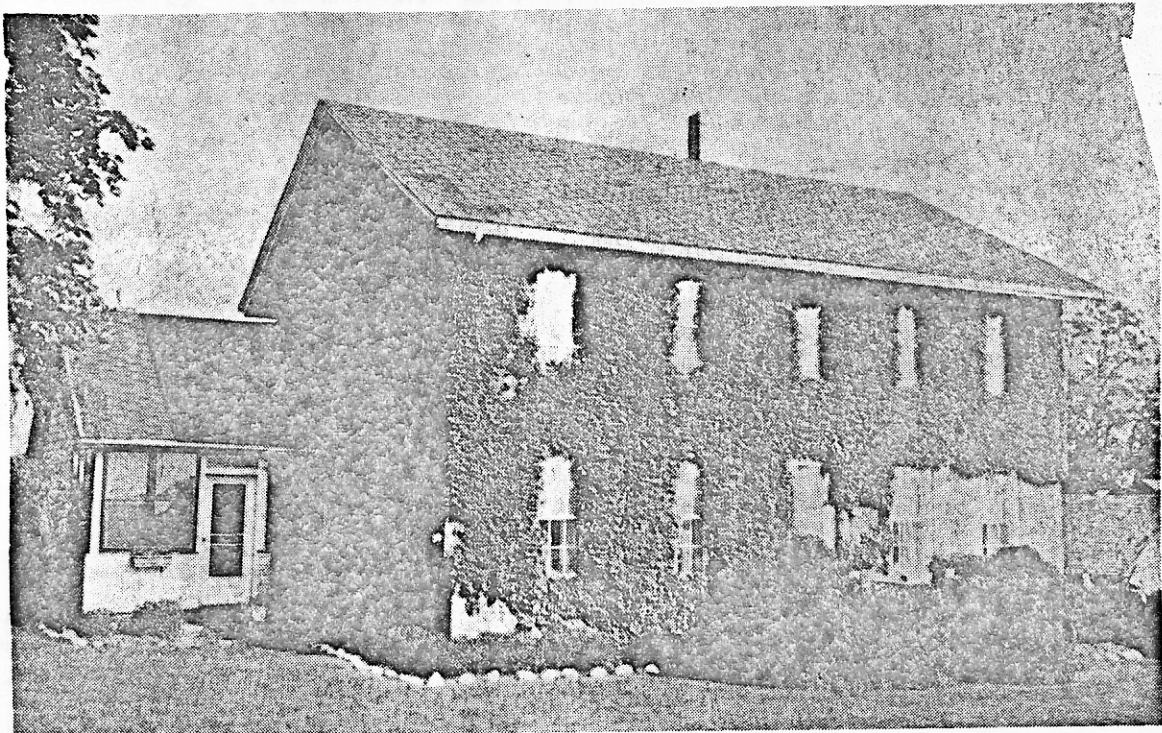


HENRIETTA'S HOMES AND HERITAGE



The George Miller Cobblestone House at West Henrietta and Brooks Roads

By Marilyn Krisanda

The homes in Henrietta present a rich and varied picture of 19th century architecture ranging from impressive brick and stone residences to humble frame cottages.

Each period of architecture reflected the people's own individual feeling of the time. It is not necessary to here retell those first rigorous years of the pioneer settlement of Henrietta. When the cobblestone houses went up, however, there can be no doubt what was on their minds -- this was their home and they were here to stay! This is just the feeling you get viewing the George Miller house on the corner of Brooks and West Henrietta Roads.

Henrietta has more than its share of these cobblestone houses and they have not gone unnoticed over the years. Carl F. Schmidt, Architect, Historian and Artist, of Scottsville, N.Y. for many years has done research on this very interesting architectural development. In his books, "Cobblestone Architecture" (1944) and

"Cobblestone Masonry" are measured drawings, sketches and photographs, and brief historical facts on hundreds of these homes including those in our town. His research uncovered the wages of the early cobblestone mason -- "... a dollar a day (10-12 hrs.) and lunch; as much as a dollar and a quarter a day with no lunch." Further investigation by Mr. Schmidt, revealed that the towns of Henrietta, Rush, Mendon and Farmington were probably the sites on which the first cobblestone houses were erected and "if we were to draw a circle with a radius of 60 miles using Rochester as a center we would include about 90% of all the cobblestone buildings."

With this information as a background, let us now examine the history of the George Miller cobblestone house. On June 26, 1822 this piece of land was sold to William Henry Gorton, the son of a Baptist preacher for the sum of \$336.60; the deed was recorded in 1828 and shortly after this the house went up. Residing here also was Jared Gorton (probably Wm.'s nephew) who later inherited the property. It is interesting to note that at the first cattle show and fair for the Monroe Agricultural Society in October of 1823, Jared Gorton walked off with a premium for the second best half acre of potatoes. The yield - 168 bushels (by 1968 a good yield could conceivably be 300 per half acre). For many years, potatoes have continued to be grown by the present owners, though not for competitive purposes.

In June of 1868 Amanda and Jared Gorton sold the property to Daniel Fenner for \$5,500. He was an early settler in Henrietta having come here from Rhode Island with his brother, Joseph around 1812. They were both carpenters and farmers - Joseph settling on Lehigh Station Rd. and Daniel later on W. Henrietta Rd. At the turn of the century, the present Mr. Miller's father, Ludwig, purchased the property and in 1932 George A. Miller became the owner and carried on the family tradition of farming.

The house itself is as beautiful on the inside as it is on the outside. To the right and left across the front and just off the center hallway are the front parlors; across the rear is a bedroom and a dining room. Originally, the open fireplaces on the north and south side of the house went from the basement to the second floor. These were sealed off through the years and only one fireplace, centrally located, was added in the living room. Throughout the original doors, woodwork and moldings and many panes of glass have survived through the years. In the upstairs hallway, off which are five bedrooms, is

an open cupboard which runs from the ceiling to the floor.

The walls of the house are some 20" thick, for stone houses are subject to damp-penetration unless the stones are laid in thick, heavy courses. You can see the great thickness of the walls when looking at the deep inset windows with wide sills and when walking from the older part of the house to the frame addition across the back and south side. Originally here stood a kitchen, pantry, milk-room and woodshed.

On the outside, ivy vines nearly cover the front of the house. The gardens to the south enhance the beauty of the setting.

Now it is time to leave this heritage home. It is, indeed, a landmark in the town and as long as it stands, it is a reminder to resident or tourist of the outstanding determination of the early pioneer settlers of Henrietta.