

# HENRIETTA'S HOMES AND HERITAGE



## The George Miller Cobblestone House at West Henrietta and Brooks Roads

By Marilyn Krisanda

The homes in Henrietta pre-

sent 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 develop-

ment. In his books, "Cobble-

stone Architecture" (1944) and

"Cobblestone Masonry" are mea-

sured 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 cobble-

stone 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 cob-

blestone buildings."

With this information as a back-

ground, let us now examine the

history of the George Miller cob-

blestone 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 (prob-

ably Wm.'s nephew) who later

inherited the property. It is in-

teresting to note that at the first

cattle show and fair for the Mon-

roe Agricultural Society in Octo-

ber of 1823, Jared Gorton walked

off with a premium for the sec-

ond 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 pur-

poses.

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 Is-

land with his brother, Joseph ar-

ound 1812. They were both car-

penters 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, Lud-

wig, 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 beauti-

ful 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 par-

lors; across the rear is a bed-

room and a dining room. Orig-

inally, 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. Through-

out 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 out-

standing determination of the early

pioneer settlers of Henrietta.