

Second M. E. Church of Parma (Site)
HISTORY SHEET
General Information

Name of Structure: Second M. E. Church of Parma

Address: NE Curtis @ North Rd (~480 Curtis Rd), Hilton
Parcel ID: (264089) 016.03-2-29.1

Atlas: 1852 "M.E.Ch", 1858 "Ch"; 1872 "M.E.Ch"; 1902 "Bartlett";
1924: "Achter & Lighthart"
District #5, Lot 38

When Built / Mason: c.1847 (date stone in gable)
Abandoned for services 1884

When Razed: 1948 or 49

Why: Deteriorated into ruins

Original Owner: North Parma Society
Subsequent Owners: Ira Cross; blacksmiths S. Achter and J. Lighthart; Patterson; Henry Smith

Original Use: 2nd M.E. Church
Subsequent Use: Various: barn, blacksmith, basketry

Photographs: Yes

Description:

Design details:

One-room, rectangular construction typical of the period. Nearly identical with extant cobblestone SH at corner of Ridge and Trimmer Rds.

Masonry details:

Very small lake-washed cobbles, 5/quoin. See CFS, pg 62-63, for excellent detailed description of construction technique and masonry style.

OVERVIEW

The cobblestone church was built in 1847 at Bartlett's Corners after a schism among the Methodists. Its dimensions were 36' by 46' and it cost \$2,000¹. In 1884 the Methodists

¹ <https://archive.org/details/historyofmonroec00mcin/page/n453/mode/2up?q=parma>
continued on <https://archive.org/details/historyofmonroec00mcin/page/n459/mode/2up?q=parma> History of Monroe County, New York, by William H McIntosh, © 1877

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reconciled and built a new church, abandoning the cobblestone. In 1861, at the outbreak of the Civil War, some of the first Parma recruits were enlisted at a meeting in the cobblestone church. In its post-religious service days it was used as a farm barn and a blacksmith shop. The depression came and the roof began to leak. It eventually fell in and the building continued to erode until the town finally tore it down in the late 1940s.

REFERENCES

The church was constructed on a corner of property owned by Luman Cross. Five years after it was built his son, Ira L. Cross, was born. As an 86 year old adult Ira documented the history of the 2nd M.E. Church of Parma, the cobblestone church, and life in Bartlett's Corners in those early pioneer days.² This was in February 1938 and he died 10 months later on 11/28/1938.

David Crumb, Parma Hilton Historian, chronicled a comprehensive history of this building in his email to me dated January 21, 2022. It reads in part:

"I have been interested in the old Cobblestone church at Bartlett's Corners since I was a kid. I vaguely remember the old building when I was 5 or 6. My mother pointed it out to me as we were heading for Hilton Beach and our cottage. The next time we went by it was being demolished. Later in life, Evan Wheeler, a neighbor who lived at the corners in a brown bungalow told me he had the date stone in his garage. His family had been members of the church and, while he did not recall attending the church, he saw it every day throughout his life until demolition in around 1948 or 9. He went over and picked up the pieces of the date stone which said 'Second M. E. Church in Parma 1847' and had been over the main entrance door. The pieces were in his garage. He told me I could have them. I took them home and placed them in the barn. Later after leaving home for college and career responsibilities I forgot about them. Later in life after returning home and taking over the farm not far down Curtis Rd I discovered the date stone. The Hilton Methodist Church, built in 1883 and absorbing all of the several Methodist churches in the Town of Parma, heard I had it and sent some members out to investigate. I told them they were most welcome to the stone if they would preserve it. Never heard much for about 10 years and then a man was sent out to collect the stone who repairs old gravestones. He restored it beautifully and it now hangs in the main entrance of the church on West Avenue in Hilton along with a photograph of the old cobblestone church.

When I was a young boy I used to visit with May and Josephine Curtis. They were the grandchildren of Elias and Nancy Curtis. Nancy Curtis was the daughter of

² Excerpts are at the end of this history sheet.

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Philander Curtis one of the gentlemen of the locale who put up, along with John Smith Jr., half the money to build the church. They were tired of going all the way to Parma Center about 4 miles away to attend the M.E.C. 1830 there. May Curtis the elder recalled attending this church. Philander Curtis and his daughter Nancy were ardent members of this church. Later in life when the congregation split due to differences of opinion a Freewill Methodist church was built east on Curtis Rd on the north side of the road just beyond Nancy and Elias house on the south side. Nancy and Elias stayed with the much diminished congregation at the Cobblestone church. It was about 1882 when some Methodists rose up and said "we need to pull together and cut the petty thinking and just become Methodist". That was when the Hilton Methodist Church was built in Hilton. It is still very active today after 139 years.

The abandoned church was later used as a blacksmith shop and it was a recruiting station for Parma recruits during the Civil War in 1861. In Ira Cross's memoirs in 1936 published in the Hilton Record he states that when a boy he witnessed the recruiting business and gives an in-depth account. Later in the 1990s I visited with his daughter Julia, who was then 100, and she reminisced that when a child she and her friends used to play in the church which her father used as a barn. She recalled climbing up in the cupola. Later she said the church roof began to leak. During the depression years no one took the leadership to have the roof fixed and it finally fell in. Finally as the church was very close to the Curtis Rd itself, the town conferred with the owner, Henry Smith, and it was decided to have it demolished. Brayton Miles and his men were the demolition crew. I knew Brayton and he told me felt kind of bad taking it down, but not much he could do. The stone debris was taken back to Lake Ontario for fill. I never learned just where and there has never been any evidence of any chunks of cobblestone showing up."

Dorothy Wells Pease (DWP), *1940-41 Cobblestone Inventory of Upstate NY*: "The ruin of an old Methodist Church farther west on Curtis Road at Bartlett Corner is of special interest because it is possible to study the construction of the wall where the door jambs have been removed. The date stone reads: "Second M E Church. IN PARMA. 1847". It was probably built by the mason who built the Flanders Curtice house the following year. The stones, like washed and glacial mixed, of all sizes and shapes, were laid five courses to the quoin. Some of the long stones run back into the stone wall which indicates that the wall and the facing were laid at the same time. More recently the building was used for a blacksmith shop but now the roof is gone and the floor overgrown with weeds."

She photographed the roofless of the structure the walls which were more-or-less intact at that time. Among Carl F Schmidt's collection, archived at the Milne Library at SUNY

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Geneseo, is a negative of a closeup of a section of wall showing the detail of the structural wall constructed of large stones mortared together.

DOCUMENTED USES AFTER ABANDONED AS CHURCH

Ira Cross came into ownership of the church building in the early years after it was abandoned for religious services.

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1912-07-11/ed-1/seq-5/> Hilton Record
"A family is now residing in a portion of the old stone church owned by Ira Cross at Bartlett's Corners."

Blacksmith Shops at Bartlett's Corners

[Hilton NY Record 1919 May - 1920 Grayscale - 0526.pdf](https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-03-18/ed-1/seq-7/) (3/18/1920)

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-03-18/ed-1/seq-7/>

"Thomas Kinney, who has conducted the blacksmith and wagon shop at Bartletts Corners for several years has rented his property to S. Achter and J. Lighthart. "

[Hilton NY Record 1919 May - 1920 Grayscale - 0804.pdf](https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-09-30/ed-1/seq-7/) (9/30/1920)

"Advertisement for Ditchers ... perfects drainage for your land ... saves time and labor ... manufactured by Achter & Lighthart, Blacksmiths, Bartlett's Corners Hilton NY, Workmanship Guaranteed"

[Hilton NY Record 1919 May - 1920 Grayscale - 0848.pdf](https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-10-21/ed-1/seq-7/) (10/21/1920)

[http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-10-21/ed-1/seq-7/](https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-10-21/ed-1/seq-7/) Hilton Record

"Ira Cross has sold the old stone church building at Bartletts Corner to the firm of blacksmiths there. They are remodeling the building and will later occupy same instead of the present shop. They expect to put in electricity for light and power purposes. They will put in a power drill, saw, etc."

[Rochester NY Daily Record 1920 - 0936.pdf](https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1920-12-14/ed-1/seq-7/) (12/14/1920)

Cross, Ira L and wife to S Achter and ano; town of Parma \$1

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1921-11-17/ed-1/seq-8.pdf> Hilton Record

"The talk that Achter & Lighthart are going to discontinue their business at Bartlett's Corners is just a rumor. Mr Lighthart is to leave, but Mr Achter will continue the business of general blacksmithing, horseshoeing, and wagon work. S. ACHTER

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<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1921-11-17/ed-1/seq-1.pdf> Hilton Record
"A GOOD TRACTOR — Are you looking for a good tractor? If so, come and see me about a Wheat Tractor. The first tractor to travel from coast to coast on a demonstration. This powerful tractor will, no doubt, give you great satisfaction in work as well as in price. S. ACHTER, Bartlett's Corners."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1922-08-17/ed-1/seq-7/> Hilton Record
"S Achter, who with his brother-in-law started in the blacksmithing business at Bartlett's Corners, in the T. Kinney shop, about three years ago, and later moved his business into the old stone church across the street and erected and occupied a new house on the same lot, moved to Rochester last Monday. Mr Kinney is now conducting the business, as he did previous to the other parties coming on the scene. There was not patronage enough for two shops there."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1923-07-12/ed-1/seq-5/> Hilton Record
WANTED— A few more scholars to complete evening class in basketry. Will also teach afternoons. Mrs F. S. Patterson

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1924-06-19/ed-1/seq-5/> Hilton Record
"This locality now has a basket factory. Mr and Mrs Patterson have purchased the old stone church building at Bartlett's Corners and are manufacturing reed ware. We are told they turn out very fine goods."

Hilton NY Record 1924 Jul - 1926 Jun Grayscale - 0016.pdf (7/24/1924)
<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1924-07-24/ed-1/seq-5/> Hilton Record
"Mr and Mrs Patterson, who conduct the basketry at Bartlett's Corners in the old church building, have erected a refreshment stand on the lot next west of them, owned by Ira Cross."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1926-11-04/ed-1/seq-5/> Hilton Record
"The Patterson family, who have resided in the old stone church at Bartlett's Corners for several years and conducted a gas station and basketry there, moved last Sunday to Rochester."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1931-06-18/ed-1/seq-7/> Hilton Record
"An old landmark, the cobblestone church at Bartlett's Corners, is rapidly disintegrating. The roof has fallen in."

<http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1933-03-02/ed-1/seq-1/> Hilton Record
"Mr and Mrs William H Mitchell ... 60th wedding anniversary ... For many years he was organist and choir director in the old cobblestone M.E. Church at Bartlett's Corners ... His regular business was that of carriage maker at the Bartlett & Hawkins carriage, harness and

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blacksmith shop and has always prided himself on the fine appearing vehicles which he turned out.

Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, Mon 2/27/1933

<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/15739073/60th-anniversary-with-photo-and-history/>

Hilton Couple Mark Anniversary of Their Wedding 60 Years Ago

"William H Mitchell, 86, old-time singing master, and his wife, formerly Mary Jemina Wake, 79, observed their 60th wedding anniversary today ... He played the organ and was choir leader at the old cobblestone Methodist Church which was built in 1842 [sic] and located at what is now known as Bartlett's Corners, a mile north of Hilton. This old cobblestone church, now in a dilapidated condition, was abandoned by the congregation in 1884, when a new church ... was built in the village of Hilton. Bartlett & Hawkins took over the building and conducted their carriage, harness and blacksmith shop in it, employing Mr Mitchell as a carriage maker ... "

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1934-07-05/ed-1/seq-8.pdf> Hilton Record

"... until the formation of the North Parma Society in 1846, when they completed a fine substantial structure at Bartlett's Corners, built of stone at a cost of \$2,000. After the joining of the two churches, the building was used as a carriage shop and for other purposes until today it stands a crumbling ruin."

IN IRA CROSS' OWN WORDS

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1938-02-10/ed-1/seq-1.pdf> and

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1938-02-10/ed-1/seq-2.pdf>

The Hilton Record., February 10, 1938

"Reminiscences of Early Days in the Town of Parma, By Ira L Cross

Editor's Note — Believing that Ira L Cross, who is in his 87th years is the best one to tell the younger generation about the life in this community during the town's youth, we asked him to prepare a paper, comparing those times with these and telling incidents of interest that might otherwise pass from the memory of present citizens unless it was set down in black and white. Mr Cross has kindly responded with the following article.

"I was 86 years of age on December 9, 1937, and while this may sound strange, so long as one does not sense it, why worry? ... I have taken a little excursion with memory back to my childhood, youth and young manhood days and even up to the present, and have made some comparisons between then and now. I make no attempt at chronological order, for I have no notes to draw from, just flashes of memory, as I write. ...

I was born in a log house 1½ miles north of the village of Hilton and have spent most of my life there on the farm where my grandfather settled with his family in 1811, when all that country from the present village of Hilton to the lake was an unbroken wilderness. ..."

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Note: Page 1 introduces the reader to Mr Cross as aforementioned. Page 2 tells of life of a rural family in the days of spinning wheels, interesting local people, school life for the children.

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1938-02-17/ed-1/seq-1/> and
<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1938-02-17/ed-1/seq-2.pdf>

The Hilton Record., February 17, 1938

REMINISCENCES, By Ira L Cross

Editor's Note — Ira Cross, 86, continues his story as told to a young friend accompanying him in his travels down memory lane.

"You were asking me, George, if I remember the Civil War. Sure I do, as it started in 1861 when I was ten years old and I remember well when the news came that the Rebels had fired on Fort Sumpter [sic], and what excitement there was in town. How President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 men to enlist for three months or for the duration of the war. How that in the town there was a company of men formed who called themselves Wideawakes, who marched the streets at night in uniform carrying torch-lights on their shoulders, one man carrying the Stars and Stripes and heading the procession, a fife and drum corps next in line, then the men in uniform.

Speakers came out from Rochester and held meetings to create enthusiasm—war meetings, they were called. I remember one in particular which was held in the old stone church at Bartlett's Corners. The church was filled. I noticed (ie watched) from my seat in a window sill up near the front. A recruiting officer was present and after the address called for volunteers, of which there were thirteen, and a Mr John VanVoorheis gave a fine black horse for cavalry service from his farm in Moul Road (John V. Curtis of Hilton is his grandson). I recall the names of many of the boys who enlisted that night, John and Jasper VanCourt, Daniel Meech, Joe Herffer, Theodore Sands, Manley Herrick, Henry Teller, Robert Haslip, William Morris, George Raymond, Peter Tenny and Francis McDougall. Some of them went into the "Old Thirteenth", some into the 108th. Raymond and McDougall went into the Sharpshooters.

Another incident later that made quite an impression on me as a boy of 12 or so was that of seeing a stranger in a very dirty uniform passing the house, walking very slowly, tanned as brown as an Indian but so very, very thin. We soon learned his name was Manly. He had seen many northerners in a Southern prison and had just been exchanged for a Confederate prisoner, which was no unusual thing in those days. His prison had been an open air stockade, thus he was in the rain or sun all day and sleeping on the ground at night ...

Those were anxious days for all who had relatives or friends in the army. I remember how anxious all were to get the paper that would bring news from the front, and you want to remember, George, that this was more than twenty-five years ago and we in the country did not get a daily paper as we do today. In fact, all the paper we had was a weekly, and it was brought by a Mr Parks who started on foot with a bundle of them and came out Ridge Road to

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Parma Corners and west to Thomasville, where he lived. Thomasville is located about a mile south of Straight Lake, north of Hamlin. Thus his trip from Rochester to his home was 28 miles. He sold papers to anyone on the way who wished to subscribe. After every battle there would be column after column and page after page of the names of men listed as killed, wounded, missing or taken prisoner who had enlisted from the Rochester area."

<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1938-02-24/ed-1/seq-1/> and
<https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn88074080/1938-02-24/ed-1/seq-7/>

The Hilton Record., February 24, 1938

R E M I N I S C E N C E S, By Ira L Cross

Editor's Note — Ira Cross, 86, continues his story as told to a young friend accompanying him in his travels down memory lane.

"My earliest recollection is of three Protestant churches, one at Bartlett's Corners which was a Methodist Episcopal... I will tell you now something of the history of the Methodist Church as I remember it. It had the inscription 'Second M E Church in Parma built in 1847'. As a small boy I went there to Sunday School with my mother. It was the nearest church, **the land on which it stood having been bought from a corner of my father's farm in Curtis Road.** Fifteen years later this M.E. Church at Bartlett's Corners had become quite a prosperous church when a serious thing occurred—a split in the ranks of Methodism—a division of the membership. Those who went out from the old church called themselves Free Methodists and built themselves a church east of the cobblestone church in 1863. Another one was also built that same year at Parma Center. There were only seven members left at the Bartlett's Corners church, but they didn't give up ... There was a superannuated preacher living at Hunts Corners who came down to preached to them ... the Lord was going to come again in mighty sweeping power ... We saw men who were swearing men become praying men, men who were drunken become sober, men who were Sabbath-breakers become church-going men, and men who were gamblers become upright citizens. This was in the 70s. Rev. E.K. Whitney was the pastor when this stirring revival took place. It followed evangelistic services held in the Free Will Baptist Church in Hilton ... We heard the there was such a thing as sin in the world, that it was firmly entrenched in the hearts of men and that there was only one way to get right with God, and that was by confessing your sins, seeking His forgiveness and living a new and consecrated lie of prayer and testimony and church loyalty. ...The present Methodist church in Hilton is the result of the evangelist services held in the old stone church under the leadership of Rev. Whitney.

... You ask me, George, why the name Bartlett's Corners was given to the crossroads north of our village, at the old stone church and schoolhouse. It's like this, as I remember it: 80 years ago or so on the corner where Mrs Thomas Kenney's gas station and store now stands,

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there was a little old blacksmith shop where an old man by the name of Penkiff used to shoe horses and do repair work for the farmers. Then later came a man by the name of **Bartlett**, who bought the property and erected a larger shop. A few years later his half-brother, by the name of **Hawkins**, entered into partnership with him and a second large building was erected as a woodworking shop. For years this place did a large business manufacturing wagons, light one-seated buggies, and later two-seated ones. They did not simply buy and sell these vehicles, but built them from the ground up, buying the hubs, spokes and fellies (outer rim of the wheel to which the spokes are fixed), and putting them together, building the bodies also, and the iron work was all done in the shop, as well as the painting..."

The "*Reminiscences of Early Days in the Town of Parma*" series of 3 weekly articles by Ira Cross ends this way:

"When I started out with you, my boy, over this memory trail, I had no idea just where our lane would lead us, or just how far we would get. I just wanted it to be about something that you of this generation were not familiar with. I have given you flashes of memory up to 1884, not much later, and I will leave it to someone else to bring it up to date from there.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/142557241/ira-luman-cross> (1851-1938)

The Hilton Record, December 1, 1938

Ira Cross — Death claimed one of Hilton's oldest citizens Monday November 28, the passing of Ira L. Cross, 86, a lifetime resident of Parma, at his home in Lake Avenue, after having been in failing health for the past few months.

Born in a log house, 1½ miles north of Hilton, on December 9, 1851.

He was married on October 20, 1873, to Jennie Haslip, who passed away in 1909. On January 1, 1919, he married Fernie Stevens.

Besides his wife, he is survived by one son, Herbert Cross of Rochester; three daughters, Mrs C.M. Nellis of Hilton and Mrs D. C. Rymer and Mrs M. D. Kentner (Julia Cross Kentner) of Rochester, four grandchildren, and one great-grand-child.

Funeral services were held at Hilton Baptist Church this afternoon. Burial in Parma Union Cemetery.