



# Orleans County Historical Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS: Mr. Cary Lattin Interview #2

## SUBJECTS

### \*\* History of the Cobblestone Society

Cobblestone church  
Cobblestone School  
the Ward House  
Blacksmith's Shop  
Print Shop  
bridge to the shop  
Farmer's Museum  
Cobblestone Tours  
backhouses and privies  
the Cobblestone Gift Shop  
the Cobblestone Museum  
moving buildings

Masonic corner-stone service

Curator: C. Wilson Lattin (Bill)

the Estes organ

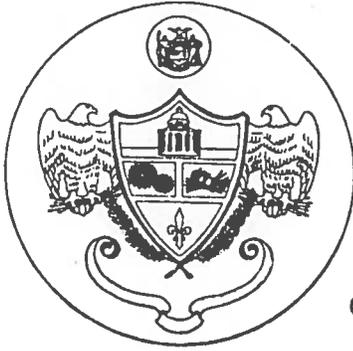
services in the church

pumpkin festival/patriotic/lamplight

weddings, etc.

Book: Cobblestone Landmarks of New York State

two stories as told by Cary Lattin



# Orleans County Historical Association

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW: Mr. Cary Lattin

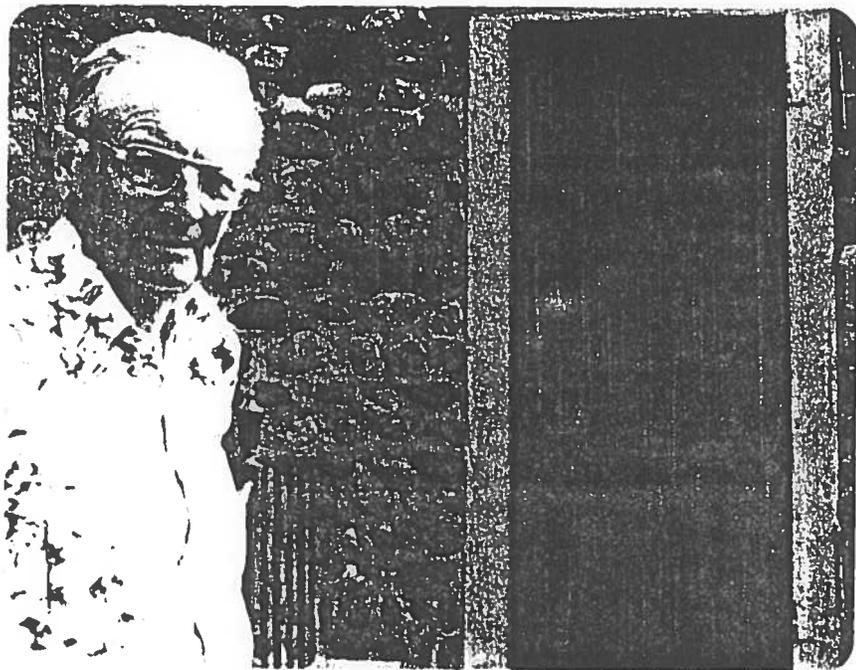
Mr. Cary Lattin  
Gaines-Basin Road  
Albion, New York

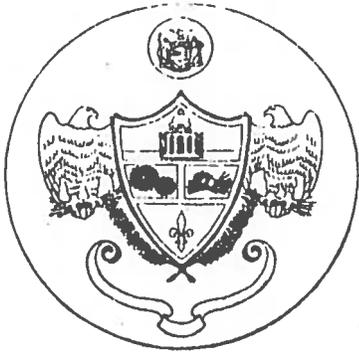
Cary Lattin was born June 11, 1898.

The interview was conducted by Helen McAllister of Medina, N.Y.

L Lattin

Mc McAllister





# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Cary H. Lott  
Signed  
July 24, 1979  
Date

Understood and agreed to:

Helen M. McAllister  
INTERVIEWER  
July 24, 1979  
Date

For the Orleans County Historical Association, July 24, 1979, Helen McAllister of Medina, New York is interviewing Mr. Cary Lattin.

Mr. Lattin lives with his wife, Avis, in a beautiful cobblestone house on the Gaines Basin Road near Albion, New York.

This interview concerns the Cobblestone Society.

L I'll try and tell a little bit about the history of the Cobblestone Society, why it was formed and how it was formed.

During the year 1959, when Gaines had the Sesquicentennial celebration at Gaines, there was going to be a one day celebration or fair. It took about two months to get ready for this Sesquicentennial celebration. We wanted to visit the points of interest around the town and we wanted to visit the Cobblestone Church at Childs. We went to the Universalist Board in Albion and asked them if they would open the church for one day so we could see the interior of this beautiful old Cobblestone Church. Two or three of us went down to the church and word came 'round, and we went through the building. The plaster was bad in the ceiling and it was in kind of rough shape. There were many windows that were broken and the Universalist Board decided that it would be risky to have a bunch of children running around in the church. They might jar some plaster and break somebody's glasses ! So we didn't have the Church to visit. During the Centennial, and after the Centennial, people commenced to ask: "What's going to happen to the old church ?" When you tell a damn

Yankee that he can't have something, hell is out for dinner-time. Then they want it! They learned that in Prohibition. When they told the American people they couldn't have booze, they got booze, one way or another. So, people in the neighborhood were concerned. People in the district were concerned, and in the town. People out in the provinces were concerned. "What's going to happen to this old beautiful church?" And people would say: "What's going to happen to it?" We had no organization formed that could maintain the building; or had no society formed that could operate the thing like it is today.

During the winter of 1959 and '60, Bob Frasch taught school in Holley, history and English, and he formed a Yorker Club in the Holley High School. One of the projects was to find the cobblestone houses in the Town of Murray and get all the information on these 14 cobblestone houses in Murray. There wasn't too much information available. He came into the office when I was County Historian and asked me what I knew about a cobblestone house. I said: "I have lived in one about 60 years. And by way of talking about cobblestone buildings, there's a beautiful church building in Childs." He said: "Let's see it." So we proceeded to go down to Childs, stopping by Homer Brown's house to get the key to the church. When he saw the interior of this old Cobblestone Church, he really flipped! He said, "This building should be saved!" I said: "Yes, I know it should be saved but how are you going to save it? We have no organization whatsoever to do this. We have no money. We have no organization, and how are you going to form an organization as quick as that?"

Well, people commenced to get concerned. The Historian of the Town of Albion, Katharine Billings, whose ancestors had been attendants of this church and the Historian of the Town of Gaines, Howard Pratt, was interested. And that's the way it hung fire. The next fall, in 1960, Charlie Thompson called me one morning about six o'clock and said: "Say, they are going to sell the Cobblestone Schoolhouse. We better do something about it." I liked that - - - "We better do something about it." So I went down to see Charlie and he said all the district schools have been centralized in the five schools in Orleans County: Kendall, Holley, Albion, Medina, and Lyndonville. He says: "You know they are going to sell this building next week Tuesday at Albion Central School. They are going to dispose of it." "Well," I said, "Charlie, will you go up to the meeting? You can vote." He said: "Yes." "Well you go up to the meeting and vote against selling it; to hold us on the table for six months until we can do something?" And he said: "Sure." Charlie stuttered a little bit. So I took it upon myself to go and see about 12 or 14 people in the immediate district, Gaines # 5, to see if they would go to the Albion Central School meeting and see if we couldn't save this - - - stall this off; for four or five or six months until we could get an organization. Bob Frasch and I went to the meeting and asked if we couldn't be heard, and we both talked about holding this up until an organization could be formed. Our main purpose was to save the Church. This was the main building. The Cobblestone School and the Cobblestone Church. We gave them a pitch and they listened. Walter Balcom was there. He had gone to school at this Cobblestone School. He had attended the Cobblestone Church when they had their meetings there, during the

summer, twice each summer. He had a very fine vocabulary of four-letter-words. He got up and said: "I make a blankety-blank motion that this blankety-blank schoolhouse be left on the table for six months, and if you blankety-blank guys can't get organized in that time, you don't deserve the damn school !" And, they voted unanimously to hold the sale up for six months. They tossed us a torch and then we had to do something. So we got an ad-hoc-committee, so to speak. We had no money. We had no funds. We had nothing ! And on this, we wrote a letter, Bob Frasch, it was in his writing. And we got Katharine Billings, the Albion Historian, and Howard Pratt, who was Gaines Town Historian, and Morris Wilson, who lived next door to the Church and one or two others. Bob Frasch and the committee and myself signed this letter. We sent this letter out to 100 people. We went through the telephone directory and looked in there and saw names of people we thought would be interested in saving their heritage. Well, the meeting was called at three o'clock on a cold Sunday afternoon in October 1960.

You know there were 65 people showed up at that meeting, and we had a slate of officers drawn up. We'd asked all these people if they'd either be a director or an officer, and we told them what we wanted to do at this meeting. There was about 60 people signed up to be members. Some of them paid a \$2.00 dues right then. So we had the thing started. We agreed to meet at the Village Inn, in about two weeks and get an organization meeting.

We had a dinner meeting over at the Village Inn and we had the west room pretty well filled up. There were probably 89 to 100 people there who were interested in saving this building. Carl Schmidt was there. He

was also at the first meeting. He had written a book about cobblestone buildings in 1944. The little books that he wrote in 1944 are collector's items today ! So we had a slate of officers drawn up. We had a cross section of our people: we had an attorney, we had two architects, we had school teachers, we had farmers, and we had business-men on this thing. We had a cross section of what was going on. With the help of the attorney and Bob Frasch, they came up with a set of by-laws and a constitution. We asked for a charter from the New York State Department of Education. And we were wise. That was our attorney's advice. "Get this charter from the State Department of Education if you possibly can." So we had the application for a charter and it was signed by, I think, the directors and the officers. By the end of the six months we had a temporary charter. So when the school-house came up for sale, the next April, that was in 1961, we had \$129.00 in our fat little hands to pay for the school-house ! That's what we had to pay for deeds and search and the necessary proper papers that has to be signed to transfer the property. So we owned the building.

We were in business. Carl Schmidt came up with the idea that we would have a tour that spring, 1961. And, we held a Cobblestone Tour and made money. It was held right around this vicinity. That fall we had an auction in the school-house to make money, but our main concern was to save the church. We had made some overtures to the Universalist Board in Albion, and they were in our corner, so to speak. We kept trying. John Brush, who was a director on our society, was in the hierarchy of the Universalist State Convention, and his influence didn't hurt a bit !

He was a trustee of St. Lawrence University. He had endowed St. Lawrence University very well. It took about two or three years before the final papers came through. After the papers were signed by the Universalist State Convention, and the Universalists over here had relinquished what they had in the building, it seems that they sat for six months in Judge Serve's office. I saw him one day in the courthouse hall and I said: "You know, Judge, why can't you hurry that up a little bit? We want to get title to that building and we want to do things!" He says: "You know, Cary, don't try to coerce a Supreme Court Judge. I wouldn't want to put you in jail."

Mc He said, what?

L Don't coerce, influence, a Judge unduly.

So in about three years we got clear title to the Cobblestone Church in Childs. We were in business real good. The Cobblestone Society put a roof on that building that cost \$2200 before we owned it. That's how much we thought of the building. So we had two buildings.

Well, our angel, John Brush, is a good friend of mine. I've known him as long as I've known anybody around Albion High School, and he is a fairly wealthy man. I said: "You know one day that we should restore the tower." There was a tower on that church when it was first built. The tower was removed in 1918 because it was getting deteriorated. The timbers were rotten. So, they decided, the Universalist Society, to take the tower off. And he said: "I think so too, and I will pay for it." So John and I went to see Hobert Snell who was the only contractor close by; and John and Hobart made a deal, and the tower was restored. I can't tell you what year it was. Perhaps in '63

or '64. And John Brush paid for it himself. I remember when he was up there; the terrace in front of the church was in bad shape when we bought the church. They were all covered over with woodbine. Nobody knew there was a terrace there, just thought there were some steps going up there. So one day when there were some of the directors down there, we decided to pull up some of the woodbine, and discovered there was a terrace ! It looked pretty crummy. One day John says: "I think we better do some repair on the front of the church. I will repair the terrace and furnish some landscaping." So we went to see "Pat" (Pasquale) DiLaura, who was the last of the Orleans County Quarry-men. He was as fine a gentleman as I ever hoped to know.

"Pat" DiLaura was Mr. Stone Quarry, Medina Sandstone. He was 80 years old at the time, and he said he would take upon the job of restoring the terrace. He still had some influence at the quarries in Hulberton, and he went down there with some of his trucks and got a couple of loads of stone to relay this terrace. With his stonecutter helper, Sandy Malone, "Pat" DiLaura relaid the stone. Frankie Swierczynski let us have four or five of his colored boys over there to do the grub work. They had to dig out the trench and do some of the heavy lifting for "Pat". There was "Pat" DiLaura and Sandy Malone that made the terrace and that was laid in 1966. It looked pretty nice. These shrubs that were replanted, came from a nursery up in Newfane; and that first summer they were planted there. They guaranteed these shrubs to live. I said: "That awful nice, to guarantee these shrubs !" However, he says: You got to water them this summer." I watered them 27 times that summer. I got water for free from Hank Radzinski's spigot.

You know, neighbors are better than money sometimes. When Hank Radzinski was going to get his license for a Liquor Store, right next to the church, he was having problems. The Secretary of the Orleans County Liquor Authority came to me and said: "How many times are you going to have service in your church?" It wasn't my church and I wasn't having the service, but that's what he said. I said: "We don't know whether we would have any service." "You know" he said, "Hank is going to have problems getting a liquor store next to a church." I said: "If you talk to any Cobblestoner and they try to do any one thing to stop his liquor store, clobber them!" I told Howard Pratt, and I told a couple of others: "If they wanted to have a liquor store there, he is going to get it in spite of hell. Let's have his good will." So we had his good will. When we wanted water, we had thousands and thousands of gallons of water! I talked to Hank about it and he says: "I know it. I appreciate what you guys didn't do." So we were in business.

About that time or a little later, Nellie Vagg, who lived kitty-corner across the street, had a Blacksmith's Shop. It was her husband's Blacksmith Shop. The original shop, which was a brick shop, was built in 1830, and that burned up in the fall of 1921. The farmers needed a Blacksmith in 1921 to repair their tools and shoe their horses and do the necessary things around the farm that had to be done. So the farmers pitched in and helped Joe build a Blacksmith Shop, and he was off and running! He operated that shop until in the 1950s.

Joe Vagg and Nellie Vagg were solid citizens. Nellie Vagg worked in the shop with Joe. She would run the bellows and help build the fire when they were setting wagon tires. She was the only woman I ever knew that

always wore black stockings. Even when she got to be an old lady and was through with the Blacksmith's Shop. She always wore black stockings because black stockings in a Blacksmith Shop was more appropriate than colored stockings. They were solid citizens. And, I mean solid citizens ! He earned all his money with an anvil and a hammer. He sent two kids to college. The girl went to Elmira and graduated there and the boy went to the University of Rochester and graduated there. And he got to be the Night Editor of the Democrat and Chronicle (newspaper). So they didn't do too bad. Nellie Vagg decided to give the Blacksmith Shop to the Cobblestone Society. It was to be ours at the end of five years, or at her death, whichever came last, and she lived longer than five years so after she died, we got clear title to the shop. We put a roof on the Blacksmith Shop about the time that we acquired it. It may have been a little before; but about that time. So now we had three buildings. We had the church, the school and the Blacksmith Shop.

Bill Lattin was hired, or asked, to be curator, January 1, 1971.

Mc Bill Lattin. (C. Wilson Lattin, son of Cary and Avis Lattin)

L He has the sharpest pair of eyes of anybody that I have ever known. He says: "Everybody looks but very few people see." And it's true. He knows more about the cemeteries and headstones in Orleans County than all the undertakers and grave diggers put together. Or if there is anything unusual about a building, he knows where it is and what's it all about.

He was coming through East Center Street in Medina one day and he noticed this little building up at Maine's Lumber Company. It stood there and it was always boarded up. So wheels got to winding around in his mind, and he said: "You know, it would be a

nice building for a Print Shop." So he went down to see Erling Maine one day and Erling says: "What can I do for you, Bill?" He says: "Do you own that building in the lumber yard in Medina near your lumber yard?" He says: "I do. What about it?" Bill says: "I want it." He says: "you want it?" He says: "Yes, I want it for the Cobblestone Society for a Print Shop." Maine thought a minute or two and then said: "Okay, I'll go along with you." Bill had a building dropped in his lap. Well the next thing was, how are you going to move it? So he was talking with Dr. Houck who was the Superintendent of Schools in Albion, and about this time they was starting this CETA program. Bill wanted to talk to Houck about how we could get help: could we get CETA workers, and one thing and another, and how are you going to move the building? "Well," Bill says: "you know, Keeler could probably move that if he would." And he says: "You know Jim Keeler. Why don't you ask him?" So he called Jim Keeler right away to see if he'd move this building, 12 by 20 with a little shed on one end of it. Keeler took a look at it and he said he would move it. However, the roof would have to come off. So they went up to Medina with their tools and equipment and CETA workers, and we took off the roof. That way it would go under the telephone and utilities lines across the road. So Keeler moved the building from Medina to a site in there on the same property that Nellie Vagg had given us. A triangular piece of ground on the south side of the brook, with room enough for this Print Shop. The building was moved in there and was set on piers. That summer the CETA workers put the roof on, painted the building, built the chimney

and built the wall under it. Up to CETA workers. These kids never had a trowel in their hands before. They did a remarkable job. They had to get from the Blacksmith Shop over to the Print Shop and they had to build a bridge over the brook. CETA workers built this bridge over the brook by design and plans Bill (Lattin) made. That is the way to get over there. It is a nice bridge.

Bill was talking to Dave Stevenson at one time. He had been Past Master of Renovation Lodge, and he was coming up as the District Deputy. He casually says to Dave: "You know, we ought to have a corner stone laying for the Print Shop." Dave says: "That's a great idea." In order to lay a corner stone by the Masonic Fraternity you have to have the Grand Master from New York to do it. So he contacted William R. Funt, who was Grand Master, and he was tickled to death to come up in this area and lay the corner stone ! There hadn't been a corner-stone-laying in Orleans County for probably 40 or 50 years. Well, I won't say that. A Masonic service. The corner stone over at the Infirmary was laid in 1960. So the Grand Master and the Grand Lodge came up here and laid the corner stone under the Print Shop. The stone they used had been taken out of the old Infirmary which was built in 1878, just 100 years prior. When they tore the building down I was up there and they were dismantling the building and I told Wally Forder, who was custodian at the Court House; I says: "For God's sake, don't let them bury that stone up in the rubbish. That should be saved." It said "1878" and on the other end of the stone was the Masonic square and compass. He said: "We don't want it around the Courthouse. If you got

room there we'll bring it over to the farm." So he brought it over here and we used it as a step to get in the corn house for about 18 years. So we had the stone that was just 100 years old when the stone was laid there. It was probably about the same age as the building. So the printing material that Harold Hill's father had given us was moved over there, and we had a nice little print shop. Sid Eddy from the Eddy Printing Company in Albion, New York, gave us some other type of things that was used in the printing business. They were old. People might say: "Why save a Print Shop?" Printer's ink will sell anything. And, if it wasn't for printing, where would the Holy Bible be today? It's the best selling book at the present time. The Bible has got more volumes sold than any other book that comes out. It always has been. In my lifetime there are two types of printing that have become obsolete: the hand set and the linotype. They don't do that any more in print shops. Linotyping is out. It's all electronics. And, there will be something faster than that in a few years. So there's two types of printing in my life time that have become obsolete. These old presses we have in the Print Shop is the old hand set type. So much for the Printing Office.

In the Town of Kendall, there was a church that was built down there in Kendall by the Universalists in 1855, and it was used by the Universalists from 1855 for about 25 or 30 years. The congregation was kind of falling apart. They just couldn't operate. So they sold it to the Lutherans. The Lutherans took over this old church, Greek Revival, and they used it until they outgrew the church and they built a new church. Then it was used for a Town Hall and a

school, when they was building the school down at Kendall. And in 1977 and '78, the building was just standing there and the people was wondering what they could do with it. Well, some of the people wanted to form a society, a social club. They wanted to do it but they couldn't get together. The girl who is Historian in the Town of Kendall, Delores Sedore, - - and I think she said something to Bill. "Have you got any idea what we can do with that building?" Well, Bill said, right off the top of his head. "Why don't you give it to the Cobblestone Society?" Well she didn't know whether they wanted to do that or not. That gave her something to think about! Bill went down to see the Town Board, or Mike Paduchak, who was Supervisor, and he said: "Well, we'll think about it." Well they thought about it and they said they'd give it to the Cobblestone Society but they had to have it moved off of there by the 1st of June. Here was a building, 30 by 44. The firemen was itching to set fire to it for a practice job. It was a damn shame to burn up a nice building like that! So Bill went back to Houck to see if he could get CETA workers. And, they were allowed three CETA workers. And, Bill thought he could get the building off of there. They had about, I don't know, about four weeks to take this building apart. They had to letter and number the boards and take it apart with these three green CETA workers. And Bill, who is not a carpenter; but he knew how to drive a nail and saw a board off pretty square. And they had - - - when they got the building taken down and got the - - - Pete Roth, who was our neighbor at Childs, with a big flat bed trailer, drew it up. And Bob Brown with another truck. They had, I think, two or three days leeway on their deadline, the 1st of June. So then we had a building but where

are we going to put it ? So in the town, when we were having our Board Meeting, the early part of April and May that year and talking about this building; we had no place to put it. Somebody suggested that maybe Mrs. Neva Murray would give us a little ground, or we could buy a little piece of ground next to the Print Shop. So Mrs. Veeder Howard, who was on the Cobblestone Board, and Bill Lattin went to see Mrs. Murray and asked her if we could beg, buy, borrow or steal some land to put a church on. She thought about it for a few minutes and they had quite a discussion. I don't know whether they went to see her twice or not. But anyhow she said she would talk with her children, and if it was agreeable with them, she would give us this land. So she gave us the land adjacent to the Print Shop, out to the road, # 98, and up to where this brook runs. So we have a brook on two sides of our property, south of it and east of it.

Then we came up with the idea that sometime it's going to be named Cobblestone Brook. But that's got to go to the Federal Government to name a stream. It has no name at the present time. Assemblyman Steve Hawley told me: "I think you have to go to the Federal Government to get this." So maybe if we get Congressman John LaFalce and some of these others, we'll have a ribbon cutting down at the brook, naming the brook.

So the boys and Bill went to work on this church. It sat on 12 or 14 piers and they started putting this building back together. Well, the building wasn't in as good shape as we had anticipated. Many of the roof boards had to be replaced and some of the siding had to be replaced. So it cost us more than we had

anticipated, to put this building back together. The deadline on the CETA workers was the middle of November, that fall in 1978. They got the south part of the roof on in fairly warm weather in November. And, it started to turn cold. They had a little problem putting on the tar paper on the north hip of the roof. The sun didn't shine on that so good and it was hard to work it. But they had it on and had the building closed up by the middle of November. I think it was quite a job for three greenhorns and one kid put that building back together.

This year Bill has CETA workers to help. They are painting and finishing the floor and fixing up the inside of the building. It is a beautiful room. It's painted kind of yellow and it's all fixed up nice. It's going to be a beautiful room to use for a Farmer's Hall, to put our obsolete farm equipment in. It's going to be called Farmer's Hall. So now we have six large buildings.

Three years ago Bill discovered the old privy at the Bacon Homestead in Five Corners. It was attached to the house. It was a Victorian style of architecture. He finally found out who owned it and he went to see the owner who was Melva Ferris, and she wanted \$250. for the building. That's the backhouse from Five Corners.

Mc A privy and a backhouse are the same?

L The same thing.

We didn't hesitate too much. It was a hell of a price to pay for a backhouse; but at the same time it was very unique ! We weren't certain, but we think that perhaps somebody like Caledonia Mumford had an idea, and she knew she could get this \$250.

So we had to pay her \$250.00. And in about two weeks time, one of our members, Nettie Ferris, Gave us a check for \$250.00. So maybe Nettie knew what she was spending the money for. Pete Roth picked it up on a fork lift and took it down back of the Ward House. It's an Eastlake design and it's a very elaborate privy. The paneling in the inside is all in the diagonals. It has a pretty little cupulo on it, a ventilator, and the windows slide back in the walls. So that's back of the Ward House.

The next year we had the chance to get the privy at Gaines from Mrs. Hockenberry. They were going to sell the place and they wanted to give the Cobblestone Society something. So they decided they would give them this privy. It was made to set back of the first bank in Orleans County, The Farmer's Bank of Orleans. It's a seven holer, a big backhouse ! It is federally designed; probably one of the oldest buildings in the County. (See NOTE: Page 16 1/2).

Then later that year, Elaine Wilson of Kuckville had just an ordinary privy down there, and she gave it to the Cobblestone Society. That was moved in there on a truck and set back of the Print Shop. In the case of an emergency, it is functional. That one they use.

This summer a lady came to Bill and said: "You know, I'm sorry you bought that privy from the Five Corners." She says: "I've got one that I would like to give to you. It was used in the home of Rufus Bullock in Albion; Bullock's Backhouse." When they put in plumbing there after the place was sold out of the Bullock family and the Fanchers bought it, they put in modern plumbing in Albion around 1910 or '12, they was putting in sewers then and everybody had to get

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**NOTE;**

Reference is made to a seven hole privy which was used for the first bank in Orleans County and was probably one of the first buildings in Orleans County. At the turn of the century, this old bank building was used as the parsonage of the Gaines Congregation Church. We moved there in 1904 and lived in that house until 1919. During that 15 years I have no recollection of other than the ordinary three holer: two large and one small. There was only room enough inside so that the "Sears and Roebuck" catalogue was in easy reach of any seat.

Luther Burroughs - - December 1979

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rid of backhouses in Albion. One of the sons took it up to his farm, and then later it was transported down west of Waterport. That's a very unique privy too, and that was given to us this year and moved up back of the church. That was the project of our buildings.

I have neglected to say when we acquired the Ward House. Mrs. Ward lived there and when we was organized she was very interested in the Cobblestone Society. And, if anybody forgot to turn the lights off at the church, or the scuttle house door was blowing open on the tower, she always would call up and say: "You better come down and shut it up." When people came along there before we had a regular curator there, she would let people in to the church. She had a key to show them what the church was like. We asked her at different times: "You know, Mrs. Ward, we ought to have that building some time." "Well," she said: "I know you should. I can't afford to give it to you, and you can't afford to buy it." Well, she was going to go to Texas and live with her son. She was about 91 years old. So we had a committee appointed to go and talk to Mrs. Ward: Howard Pratt, Nettie Ferris and myself. Finally she decided she would sell us the Little House, and we bought it in '74. We gave \$16,000.00 for it. And by paying all that money for the Little House, we had to scrape the bottom of the barrel of the Cobblestone treasury. That cleaned us up. Then she wanted to sell the contents of the house, and there was quite a lot of nice antiques in there. The son, Willis, had taken out the best things, which was natural. When we went down there that morning to see about the sale of the interior, I was surprised.

To me it looked better than I had thought it would, so we bought the contents for \$1,500.00. He said: "If you will give \$1,500.00 for them, I will give the Society \$500.00." It was some kind of write-off on his tax business, you know. So he paid \$500.00 then, and next year after we had an auction or two, we had the other \$500.00. George Wolfe, who was President at the time, was very insistant that we get this debt paid off. So we had to pay fairly dear for the house, but it would have been a shame if somebody else had acquired it and had a bad neighbor there. You see the house and church are in spitting distance, and it makes a nice office. There's a nice office in the basement of the house, and it's a nice little home.

It's two-tenths of a mile down to the schoolhouse. It's all walking distance. Anybody can walk. Yes sir, we got a nice thing. We got a nice setup.

I took Bill and Avis and Heather over to Mumford (Museum) two or three years ago. I didn't go in because I couldn't walk around in there. And when they come out I said: "Bill, how does it look?" He says: "It's nice." He says: "Our church is far superior to theirs." And, Cooperstown<sup>Museum</sup> has been up here to see it, the boys from Cooperstown, several of them. Pere Gulbet came up one day to give us advice: what to do and what not to do. All we have to do to the church is preserve it. We don't have to restore it. It's already just the way it is. It was used for cabbage storage for about 25 years. Balcolm Brothers stored cabbage in there. The floors have all been taken out of the basement and we put in 57 tons of

gravel to level it up, and put a cement floor in the basement. There was several of us helped push cement around and Howard Pratt and Curtis Murray ironed the cement level. They leveled it out. I wouldn't take on that job, but I helped push cement around.

Then we started the little Museum. The first exhibit we had in there was just Cobblestone pictures that had been taken by Gerda Peterich. That was the first year's exhibit in there.

Mc What year was it when the Museum was started in the basement of the church, Cary ?

L Well, maybe '67. I can't tell; '67 or '66. They had just these panels in there, and these Cobblestone pictures. Then we had a girl come up from Utica who was a museum designer. She had it designed in a sort of horseshoe. You came in the west door. That was the only access to the building. The other door had been nailed up. We operated that way for a couple or three years. The first year we had that set up, Eleanor Wilder was down there for a while. We hired her. But I don't know whether she didn't like it or she didn't have a way to get back and forth. So that kind of petered out.

Mc What did she do when she was there ?

L Sat there and be there for the people to come in. We had different exhibits in there. And then about 1969 or '70, we hired a fellow by the name of John Lovell, who was a student out of - - I don't know whether it was Brockport - - - he wanted a job there and he wanted about \$1700 for that summer. John Brush, our angel, was on the Board and he said: "I will underwrite it." He gave the money to hire John Lovell for that summer. He didn't do too much.

He sat there and he did some cataloguing. People would come and he would take the money, and that was it.

Mc Did you ask for donations, or had you arranged for a set fee when people came ?

L Well we got donations of a dollar. If you wanted to give more than that, we liked it. So the next year I think he wanted a better job and there was some hassling. Bill said that he would do it. And there was some hassling on the Board about Bill doing it. I disqualified myself to get out of the meeting. I said: "I am not going to be here. If you are coming to a tie, then I'm coming back." But Bill was hired, or he wasn't hired, because they didn't give him enough for peanuts. And he started there the first of January 1971, and he's done a damn good job! He's changed it every year. It's been changed quite a lot. You have got to have a lot of imagination and a lot of talent, and a lot of ability to do that.

Mc Do you mean that the museum has been changed ?

L It's been changed around. It's been changed and it's different; it looks different. People went by as if there was someone in there a couple of years ago. Jesus ! In ten years, it's different ! Bill had the office over there by the west door, and a couple of years ago he decided to have it over at the east door. Then you can see the Ward House. It's right together. He changed it again this year. Changed the new office space there.

Mc Now you have a gift shop there. Is that run by the Arts Council ?

L No. That's the Cobblestone. Donna Rodden, Mayor of Albion, takes care of that. She writes the checks and pays the folks off. There's nice things in there. Bill said: "When they started this gift shop, I say what goes in there. I'm not going to have a lot of

kid booties and crap." He said it's got to be something - - good stuff to go into the gift shop. But Donna Rodden takes care of that and does a darn good job at it. It's been changed around. When we get the big things out of the church basement, they will go over to Farmer's Hall. The farm equipment, we want to get the farm equipment over there.

Mc Your Print Shop is now printing stationery ?

L That's right. Kendall Orlip-Wilt is the printer.

He has taken - - whatever you call it - - - a sabbatical leave from teaching school and he's taking a year off. He's the printer over there. He prints stationery and different cards and things. What he can make over there is his. What would we have to pay somebody to be in the Print Shop ? You see, he's happy, and we're happy to have him with us. He can make a buck on printing this paper. He buys the paper. It don't cost anything and he buys the ink and he's just using our pressing room. It's nice to see people printing these old things by hand. So we are lucky to have him. He's a good guy.

Anyone that wants to use the church is welcome to use the church. The church from Barre Center has been there. Gaines, West Barre and the Universalist Church in Albion were there this summer, and St. Paul's Church from Holley was there last Sunday. The Episcopal Church; they had a picnic out in the back yard. We are very glad for other organizations to use the church.

Mc You also have weddings in the Cobblestone Church.

L Yes, we have weddings. We had a wedding there last week. The 5 Masonic Lodges have used the church for nondenominational services. They have breakfast at the nearby Village Inn with their wives and families

and sweethearts. They have some very good speakers at those meetings. We had Henry P. Smith, who was our Congressman. We had Barber Conable and we had a Supreme Court Judge from Buffalo a couple of years ago.

Mc I like the fall program with the Pumpkin Festival.

L We have the Patriotic Service around July 4th, and we have the Lamplight Service in October. That church is beautiful when it's lighted by lamps. There are 120 lights in that building.

Mc The organ in that church is quite beautiful.

L Well, we had the organ overhauled this last winter. Last summer there was a group of people from Rochester, and I was talking to the man and he said: "Do you know anyone that wants to buy an organ?" I said: "No." I said: "What are you, an organ man?" And he said: "Well, I repair organs." And I said: "You're just the man I want to talk to! We have an Estes Organ in the church that needs some work on it. Would you take a look at it? What would you charge us to do it?"

Mc That's a little foot pedal organ, isn't it?

L Yes, it is. Well, he took a look at it and he told me what it would need. And then he said: "I won't charge you too much." So we took the organ down to him last fall and we said we would like it by the first of May. He put a motor in it so Bernard Lynch, who is getting weak legs like all the rest of us old timers, can pump the organ.

Mc The Schoolhouse is of great interest to a great many young people.

L Howard Pratt used to hold school down there for youngsters coming in by bus loads: Warsaw, Tonawanda, and Lyndonville. (See J. Howard Pratt Interview)

*at Public library*

He decided about three years ago that he didn't want to do it any more. He was 86 or 87 and he didn't want to do it any more. So Janice Barnum Thaine is taking over and she is doing a damn good job. She was down there last year and had a group from West Seneca. There was about 50, and they were having lunch up to the Village Inn and I was invited to this luncheon. And there was another group there from Cheektowaga, I guess. And, they said they would be down in three weeks; but they wanted the same school "marm". That's how much they like her. She's very popular with any group whether they are kids or old folks. She's good !

Mc Cary, perhaps this would be a good time for you to tell us a little about the book of which you are a part, telling about the book autograph party that was held in the Schoolhouse. That was a fun thing ! Can you tell a little bit about that ?

L We got a grant about eight or ten years ago, from the New York State Council on the Arts, to do some research on a Cobblestone book. The committee was Bill Sheldon, Bob Thrash, Gerda Peterich and Cary Lattin. It was given for the sole purpose of research, all about Cobblestone houses in New York State; and we went at it. It took a long time. I did a lot of leg work locating these houses all over Central and Western New York. I got all the information I could on these various houses, in Central and Western New York, and the ones that was too far away, like two or three houses in Albany. I contacted the County Historian in those different counties, to get further information. Finally it came to printing. It was printed by the Syracuse University Press.

Gerda Peterich, who had taken these pictures, died in 1974. It was too bad she didn't live long enough to see this book finished. It came off the presses last December and I'm kind of proud to be a damn small part of it. (Cobblestone Landmarks of N.Y. State)

Mc

Not a small part !

L

Well it was. I didn't do any of the writing. It's a pretty nice book and the photographs are excellent.

Mc

Cary, will you also tell us about the annual Cobblestone Tour ? I think your wife has played a big part in it.

L

Well, she's done a little. We had a tour. Carl Schmidt was the one who got us on to this tour.

We've had an annual tour and we've been as far east as Cayuga County and as far west as Niagara County. This year it was in Monroe County, around Clarkson. Last year it was in Warsaw (Wyoming County) and we had the finest houses we ever had on the tour. Not Cobblestones; but beautiful homes. And, it was the poorest attended. We had a very small crowd. We had a good crowd of about 500 people on the tour. So we made a little money this year. We made about \$1000. or \$1100.00. It takes money to make the mare go !

Mc

The Cobblestone Society has grown, hasn't it ?

L

About 300; not too many people. I don't know why it is; there are very few people in and around Medina that are members. I don't know what the rivalry is between Albion and Medina. Nobody can explain it. We have people in Connecticut that are members and people in California. Maybe they feel sorry for us and want to give us a few dollars.

Mc

Most of your members are from around this area ?

L

Yes, this area. When the church tower was restored

in 1963 or '64, we made provision to have one of the louvres that could be removed at the top of the tower, in case we could ever acquire a bell. John Brush, who was on the hierarchy of the Universalist Society of the State Convention, found a church that had been torn down in a town north of Syracuse, called Cicero. He located the bell that was in this church. I borrowed a pick-up truck from "Jinks" Johnson, who was the Supervisor of the Town of Yates, and we went to Syracuse one day to get the bell. But when we got down there, we found the farmer had this bell in some remote shed. It was agreeable that we have the bell. We had to find somebody that would pick it up and put it on the truck. It weighed 1590 pounds. We weren't about to pick up three quarter of a ton of bronze bell ! So we found somebody there that had a fork-lift and picked the bell up and put it on the pick-up truck. We brought it back, and Ray Severns unloaded it with his tow truck and set it beside the church. It was visible from the road. In about a week's time Don Smith, who was with the New York State Police, a BCI Investigator, came to me one day; and he says: "Cary, I see you got an old bell down there, or a new bell, for the church." He says: "I would advise you to move it. Where it sets it's too visible from the road." He said: "That bell is valuable. (Laughter) Somebody will be stealing it." So Frank Swierczynski moved it around in back of the church where it was out of sight. The bell weighs 1590 pounds. At the time, the metal in that bell was worth pretty near a dollar a pound. We had probably \$1200.00 worth of metal in that bell and it set back of the church for two or three years. Finally one day we knew that Petronio was going by Childs with a portable crane

and Jerim Klapper, who knew Petronio, prevailed on him to stop and put the bell up in the tower. And he and Bill Woolston, who had worked around the tower some, put in some stairway and put in some more posts to support the bell. He and Klapper swung the bell in, on a chain hoist and put it in the cradle that had been taken up there to hold the bell. So we have a bell that rings. And it's pretty nice to have a bell there. When you ring it, you can really hear it.

Mc Yes you can. Yes.

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"ADDITIONS by CARY LATTIN" *—(on taped interview)*

I During the Blizzard of '76 or '77 it was pretty rough. All my life I have had a friend who is always pestering me, all my life. We was friends in District School and he always had a practical joke. Like putting a live bull frog in my dinner pail, or trying to get a date with my wife the day before we were going to be married. But during the Blizzard he was coming home one night real late. About five o'clock in the afternoon he couldn't go any further; he was bogged right down. And he could see a dim light in the shape of a farmhouse. So he went to this old farmhouse to see if he could get in and get warm. He knocked on the door and the door opened up like that and the lady stepped out and said: "What can I do for you?" He says: "Can I come in and get warm?" She says: "You can come in here but you can't get very warm because the power is off and the furnace has conked out." "Well" he says: "Ain't you got a stove?" "Yes, there's a Franklin

stove in the parlor." So he said: "Let's get it going." And he went out in the woodshed and all he could find was two or three old orange crates, some bushel baskets and some Playboy magazines. So they started a fire and they kept warm huddled around the stove. So about 11 o'clock the fuel was gone. He didn't want to break up Hitchcock chairs or nice old tables so he said: "The best thing for us to do is get in bed." She says: "My good boy, I have never been to bed with a man in my life." "Well" he said: "You better get with it." So about daylight, he heard the furnace kick in. They got up and she made a nice breakfast. They had a nice breakfast: orange juice, coffee, and bacon and eggs; a nice breakfast. And finally they heard the snow plow go by. He says: "I guess I better be on my way." And he lit a cigarette and started to go out the door, and she said: "My good boy, what is your name?" He says: "I am Cary Lattin." (Laughter) He was a loudmouth, and in a few days it got back to me. And I thought, well - - that will die down like all his other practical jokes. But in about a week's time after that, I was going through the obituaries, and the old gal had died! In about three weeks I got a very official envelope from the Surrogate's Office, from Judge Doherty. The next day I had the pleasure of writing the following letter to Joe: "Dear Joe, Thanks for using my name. She left me the farm!" (Laughter)

MC

II

Is that true? You rascal.

Senior Citizens have it pretty damn good. I got a raise out here the first of July. Got enough raise now to buy my whiskey. Just like getting it free nowadays. This raise in getting Social Security. You know I've got some friends that have been Senior Citizens for quite a while. They don't need the money

but they take it, and they go to Florida. This last year they decided to go in one car; double up and go in one car. So they flipped whether to go in the Cadillac or to go in the Continental. So they went in the Continental. Well the first day they got along in Pennsylvania and they wanted to see Mamie Eisenhower's spread, where Ike was there. The next day they was down in Virginia and they went by a big fancy motel, and there was a big neon sign with a steer on it. On the other side of the drive-way was a big Red Lobster sign, and they knew they could get surf-and-turf there, so they stopped and went in this fancy motel. They went in and had a nice dinner. And one of the girls was having a birthday. They had champagne and when they went back to the motel nobody was "feeling any pain". They was laughing and having a good time and somebody said: "Why don't we switch partners tonight?" They laughed about that, you know. They thought that was great. And about three o'clock in the morning, one old guy said to the other old guy: "I wonder how the girls are getting along?" (Laughter)

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Mc Well, Cary, thank you very much for this.

L Better not show that to Mac!

Mc Thank you very much for this fascinating history of the Cobblestone Society, and two of your stories told as only you can tell them !

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Transcribed by Luther Burroughs of Albion, New York.

Several additions and deletions by Cary Lattin.

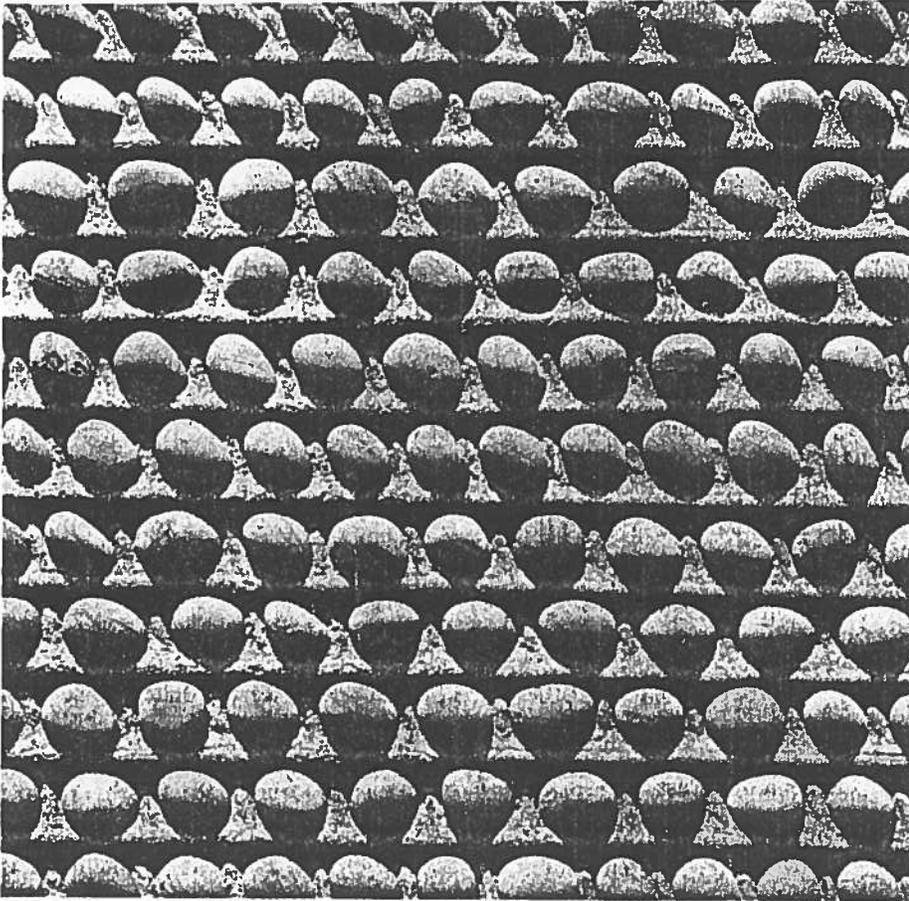
Final typing by Lysbeth Hoffman of Lakeside, New York.

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# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin • County Historian

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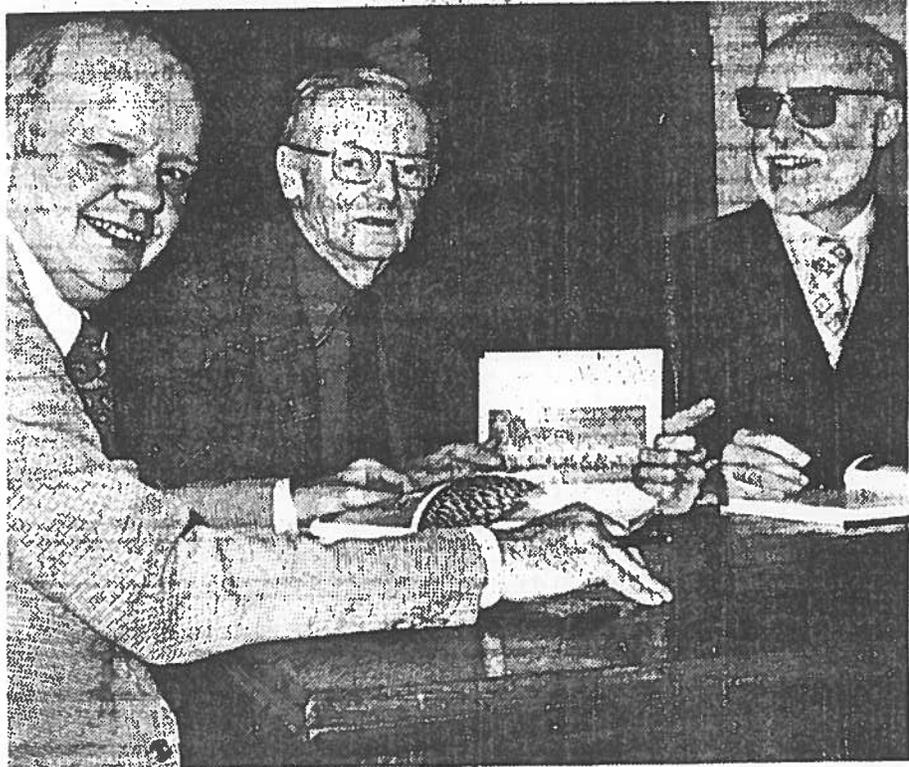
## VOL II

### MILESTONES

It was just twenty years ago when Robert Frasch a Social Studies teacher in Holley walked into the County Historian's office and inquired as to what might become of the old Cobblestone Universalist Church in Childs. From that simple inquiry the Cobblestone Society was born. On Oct. 19, 1960 an organizational meeting was held in the Cobblestone Church headed by Cary H. Lattin and Robert Frasch was elected the Society's first President along with other officers and directors.

From that time onward there has been an accumulation of artifacts and buildings coupled with events reminding us of our local history and cobblestone heritage.

The first event for making money to be applied toward preservation and restoration, was a tour of cobblestone houses which was held in June of 1961. For each successive year the Cobblestone Society has arranged an annual tour of homes making this year's tour the 20th. A milestone indeed, and it is perhaps anticipated with more enthusiasm than any of the society's annual events. You won't want to miss the chance this year to browse back through history in the area of North Greece on Saturday, June 7 from 1-5. Tickets will be on sale at McNall's Furniture Store, 4975 Ridge Road West beginning at 11 a.m. on the day of the tour.



**COBBLESTONE AUTHORS--**The three authors of "Cobblestone Landmarks of New York State," which completed its first printing of 2,500 paperbacks and 1,500 hardcover editions, were busy signing books at the Swan Library yesterday. From left are Olaf William Shelgren Jr., of Buffalo, Cary Lattin of Albion, and Robert W. Frasch. The authors are all members of the Cobblestone Society. Lattin, one of its founders, is a retired Orleans County historian. Frasch was the society's first president and is director of the School of Science and manager at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. Shelgren is a past president of the society and an architect in Buffalo. The book was prepared through a grant from the New York State Arts Council. (J-R Photo)

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# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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VOL. II

NO. 41

## COBBLESTONES AND PUMPKINS FOR GOOD OLD TIMES

On Sunday, October 19 the Cobblestone Society will celebrate its twentieth anniversary with two different events. Beginning at 2:00 P.M. until 5:00 P.M., the third Annual Pumpkin Festival will take place on the museum grounds at Childs along with a pumpkin contest for students through Junior High age. At 7:30 P.M. the Eighth Annual Lamplight Program will take place with Affiliate Artist Barbara Hocker singing.

It was a cold rainy Sunday afternoon on October 23, 1960 when the Cobblestone Society was officially organized at the old Universalist Church in Childs. Many area residents were concerned as to the fate of the cobblestone church at the time, since the Universalists were desirous of selling the property. With around sixty people in attendance a slate of officers was approved who are shown in the photo above taken on that occasion. From left to right are: Maurice Wilson, Vice-Pres., Cary H. Lattin, director; Katharine Billings, Secretary; Robert Frasch, Pres.; J. Howard Pratt, Director; and Hannah Thompson, Treas. From that concern for preservation just two decades ago the Cobblestone Society has become widely recognized as an institution symbolizing Orleans County. Acquisition of the church did not stop there as six historic buildings and related architecture now make up the Cobblestone Museum Complex.

October is not only the anniversary month for the Cobblestone Society but also the month in which the Cobblestone Church was dedicated 146 years ago. The foundations were dug in April 1834 and the stones used in the masonry were collected from surrounding fields as pioneer farmers cleared their land. It was largely through the efforts of John Proctor and at his own expense, that the church was erected for the First Universalist Society of Gaines. Chiseled in the marble tablet above the entrance are the immortal words "God Is Love" which capsulized the reason why the church was conceived and built.