

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## MORE THAN A HOUSE TOUR



On Saturday, June 2 the Cobblestone Society will hold its 1990 Tour of historic houses from noon to 5:00 P.M. This year the tour will take in eight historic homes in Albion and Lyndonville. These homes vary greatly in character and architectural style and therefore are all unique unto themselves.

The ticket price of the tour includes not only the eight architecturally significant homes but also the Smith Arboretum and the seven historic buildings at the Cobblestone Museum Complex located on Routes 104 and 98 in Childs, plus the historic Pullman Memorial Universalist Church at the corner of Route 98 and East Park Street in Albion.

Variety is perhaps the best word to describe this year's tour. You will see everything from Country Colonial at the Pollard residence to spectacular Victorian at the Vanderheite home near Knowlesville, to nostalgic 1920's at the Nestle-Schasel house in Childs, and everything in between at the other dwellings. And yes, don't miss the Smith Arboretum.

It is the Smith Arboretum that I wish to particularly address here. In 1935 William Smith, father of Marian Smith the present owner, acquired an abandoned farm on Platten Road in Lyndonville for his family's future home and arboretum. The Smith Estate, known as "Robin Hill", now consists of forty-three acres including seven acres of ponds. After making roadways, the first lawn was mowed in 1938.

The Medina sandstone house, which will not be open to visitors on the Cobblestone tour took three years to build. The Smith family moved into this residence in 1951. William Smith and his son George trimmed all the locally-quarried stone to an eight-inch face. Visitors on the tour may however, stroll around the dwelling to view the plantings and shrubbery.

Presently there are over 450 specimens of trees and shrubs in this registered arboretum. Among some unusual species are Giant Sequoia, Black Cypress, and Meta Sequoia, the last thought to be extinct for a number of years. William and George Smith, who both took great pride in their grounds,

never bought anything from a nursery. They started their own trees, shrubs, and plants from seeds. They also used wildflowers, ferns, wild plants, and bulbs to enhance their landscaping. The many shrubs and plants also attract birds, making this a fine sanctuary. Five members of the Smiths are also buried on the estate in a private cemetery. Presently, two gardeners care for these attractive and beautiful grounds. For many years Smith's Pond was a nesting place for swans until dogs and foxes proved survival of the fittest. So as this week's photo of the arboretum suggests, this is not just a tour of houses. There is really something for everyone on this self-guided driving tour. Tickets will be on sale June 2-beginning at 10:30 either at the Cobblestone Museum in Childs or the Pullman Church in Albion.