

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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TOWER RESTRUCTION



The accompanying photo shows the Cobblestone Church in Childs as it presently appears with scaffolding. The tower, which has been a cause of concern for a number of years, because of leaking, is now being reroofed. This historic cobblestone landmark was erected by the First Universalist Society in 1834. In 1919 the original tower was dismantled because it leaked and was deemed unsafe. In 1964 it was decided to restore the bell tower to this landmark which was paid for with funds (\$6,000) given by John D. Brush in memory of his mother Eva M. Brush. A bronze tablet in the cobblestone church lobby indicates this also noting: "A Mother, Earth's Most Godlike Creation". Using old photographs as reference for the restoration, O.W. Shelgren, Jr. of Buffalo designed the

present tower as a copy of the original. Although the building was brought back to its original aesthetic splendor, problems with leaking started to occur which over a period of twenty-five years, have caused deterioration of ceiling plaster in the choir loft and lobby. Although the Cobblestone Board tried to attend to this matter on a number of occasions, the leak persisted in spite of the good intentions of many contractors.

It goes without saying that sometimes towers, chimneys, cupolas, skylights and flat roofs leak incessantly and trying to find the leak is next to impossible. The Cobblestone Board of Directors was determined to solve the mystery and correct the problem. Don Ross as financial officer, was put in charge of seeking funds and finding a contractor to do the job. Estimates ranged from \$5,000 to \$28,000. Through Don's efforts, the Cobblestone Museum received a grant of \$5,000 via the Gene-see Park Commission, which was made possible through the offices of Senator Daly and Assemblyman Hawley. The museum also received the remaining amount to restore the tower from the Orleans County Foundation. This amounted to \$8,350 making up the total estimate of \$12,350 from Joe Baker's Quality Construction. In fact, that's Joe and his associate Tom Fien in the photo of the tower shown here.

Once the scaffold was put up Joe and Tom could examine more closely the tower and its problems. Fortunately, it rained while they were doing this which led them to discover the place of intrusion. Water, during certain wind conditions, was filtering in at the very top around a moulding and then running down behind pilasters, where it dripped. Hence, the very upper portion of the tower has been modified to correct the situation, although it will appear the same. Likewise, galvanized roofing has been installed on top and on the ledge which will make it impervious for years to come. As part of this restoration, the tower will also be primed and painted. Following this, restoration of plaster work and interior painting will occur, greatly upgrading the appearance of one of Orleans County's most noteworthy historical landmarks.