

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

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**MAYBE YOU CAN HELP**



The Orleans County Historical Association and the Cobblestone Society are planning a joint publication on the cobblestone buildings in Orleans County. Now in the planning stages it is expected to be ready for distribution and sale about a year from now. Delia Robinson, director of the Cobblestone Society Resource Center will be compiling and basically writing up the information on each structure. Recently, the Cobblestone Society has sent out a questionnaire to cobblestone building owners seeking historical information which may not already exist in the Cobblestone Resource Center files. An excellent response has been returned as a result of that questionnaire to the home owners, which is very much appreciated. Incidentally, it is believed that there are 97 existing cobblestone structures in Orleans County. As near as can be determined there were perhaps as many as 114 over a century ago.

Put in perspective, there are a few over 1000 cobblestone buildings in North America with approximately 800 located in Central and Western New York. That translates into 90 percent of all the cobblestone structures in North America are within a 75 mile radius of Rochester.

Alan Isselhard, President of OCHA and a photographer, has agreed to take pictures of the cobblestone buildings as needed. However, because this will be a book dealing with local history, good quality old photos will be used when at all possible. This volume will include information even on those structures which no longer exist.

Our photo with this article, is an example. It is a fine quality documentary, that of Gaines District No. 4 cobblestone School House located on Rt. 279 near the corner of Rt. 104. We believe this was

taken in the year 1888 which makes this the earliest known view of that school. It shows the building in a much more pristine state than we have come to know. During the earlier part of this century the group of three windows on the left were removed and replaced with an entire wall of windows. We must remember that this picture was taken when the school was already close to 50 years old. On the back side of the photo, written faintly in pencil are the children's names: Ulysees Patty, Ellen Norton, Geo. Norton and Jay Gage. This wonderful picture was recently given to the Cobblestone Museum by Mrs. Daniel Radzinski who had acquired it from her grandfather's effects.

My point to this is: there may be many people who have no connection to a cobblestone house but who might very well have an old photo of one. We appeal to your sense of community spirit, pride and history, if you do. We are not asking you to give up your originals. All we want is the visual information. Old photos such as this can be easily copied even on site if need be. If you have an old picture of a cobblestone building, chances are we would like a copy even if you can't identify it or even if it's out of Orleans County. Pertinent information may even be found on the reverse side. We are looking for photos of both existing and non-existent cobblestone structures.

The book committee is made up of Ronald Herlan and Alan Isselhard of OCHA and William Nestle, Ellen Blake, Evelyn Lyman, Delia Robinson and C.W. Lattin for the Cobblestone Society. If you have any older photos of a cobblestone building and wish to share them, please contact Delia Robinson at 589-4355 or any of the above. Maybe you can help!