



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

# TOWER RESTORATION

BY C.W. LATTIN

This snap shot shows recent restoration work occurring to the tower on the historic Cobblestone Church in Childs. The project was let to Kevin E. Johnson of Clarendon, who replaced all the exterior wood on the bell tower. The pine siding on the base was badly rotted which has now been replaced with cedar. The pilasters in the upper portion have likewise been rebuilt. Two years ago Mr. Johnson completely rebuilt the belfry on the Cobblestone Museum School at Childs.

The original bell tower placed on the roof of the Cobblestone Church when built in 1834 was removed in 1919. Marv and Fred Houghton, local father and son carpenters, did that project. In 1964, John D. Brush of Rochester, who grew up in Albion, paid to have a replacement tower erected on the Cobblestone Church, as a memorial to his mother Eva M. Brush.

This was designed by O.W. Shelgren, a Buffalo architect based on an early photograph. Hobart Snell of Jeddo built it on the ground in two parts, which were hoisted into place by a crane during the summer of 1964. Leaking off and on for 40 years has been a problem which is believed now to be corrected.

As a final touch to the memory of Eva Brush, a bell was placed in the tower during September 1967. John Brush looked far and wide for an old church bell. Finally, he found one at Cicero, which had been taken out of the Universalist Church there when it was torn

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down. There seem to be no records to date that indicate whether the Cobblestone Church original tower had a bell or not. If it did, what happened to it? No one remembers Fred Houghton saying anything about removing a bell. But since the church had a tower chances are it had a bell.

The Cicero bell cast of bell metal weighs 1,600 pounds and has the following information cast on it: "Troy Bell Foundry Jones & Company Troy, NY 1871". The cast iron carriage which holds the bell simply states: "Pat. 1855". Like any church bell, this has a clapper which hits inside the bell when swinging back and forth in its carriage. However, there was also a hammer which was mounted under the bell on a separate pull rope. This was used to hit the bell for tolling purposes. Back in the 19th Century, church bells were often used to alert firemen to a fire as well as to summon people to church. The toll was used at funerals, being rung the number of times the deceased person was in age, i.e. 47 years old 47 rings. It is a different sound than the usual "ding-dong" giving more of a dead sounding ring rather than one that sounds jubilant.

This refurbished landmark now is an outstanding piece of local architecture which was listed by the United States Department of Interior as a National Historic Landmark in 1993. This is the only such historic listing in Orleans County. It further should be noted that funds for this project were given by members of the

Cobblestone Society through solicitation efforts and a grant from the Orleans County Foundation.