

Small building, long history

BY C.W. LATTIN
Orleans County historian

It was 20 years ago, in August 1987, that the small building in our photo was moved to the Cobblestone Museum complex in Childs.

Pictured here around 1910, it was being used by Gates Knickerbocker as a jewelry shop in Gaines. He had purchased it in 1883 and moved it about 500 feet east to a lot which later became incorporated into the property remembered as the Chatterbox Restaurant.

It was Rose Welles who graciously gave the former shop to the Cobblestone Museum in 1987.

The little building was built by Starr Chester in 1838 and was used by him as a shoe shop near his residence on Ridge Road. He died in 1880 and it was Mrs. Chester who sold the building to Knickerbocker. When he died in 1914 it was sold to Alfred Bentley, who later sold it to Clifton Nestle in 1922.

Mr. Nestle used it as a gun repair shop and paint store until 1939, when he sold it to Floyd Berns. It was then used a rental property for various purposes, including housing.

Its move to the Cobblestone Museum was made possible by Rice Homes Inc. which donated their services. The shop was placed on a former property boundary. The northern half now sits on land willed to the museum by Mrs. Nellie Vagg. The south half is located on land given to the museum by Mrs. Neva Murray.

Once located on its present site, restoration was under taken by the museum staff and mason Bruce Midkiff who reproduced the quality of original stucco to the outside walls. This was paid for by William Nestle in memory of his father Clifton Nestle.

At the museum, the building has been used to emulate the historic character of John G. Peters (1877-1963) Harness Shop which was once located in



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lyndonville. Following his death his children donated the contents of their father's former shop to the Cobblestone Society. The building now serves as our attractive feature in a grouping of four structures located on Route 98 in Childs. Here visitors can see what a harness shop was like before the automobile became ever present.

As an update here it should be mentioned that during this

past summer Boy Scout Aaron Kirby, with help from his father Dennis and other scouts, undertook to paint the exterior of this shop as a project to attain his Eagle Scout status. Other students, who have also over the past four years attained Eagle Scout status by working on projects at the Cobblestone museum, have been Brian Applegate, Ben Metcalf and Dale Adomo.