

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

4-27-83

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Vol. V

No. 17

## ARCHITECTURE DESTROYED PART I Donalds Mill

Within the last decade we have come to realize the importance of architectural preservation in this county. Through the Historic Trust, National Registry, Landmark Societies and even our own Cobblestone Society, more people are beginning to recognize and realize the value of old buildings. We have to some degree, graduated from that era following World War II when it was felt everything had to be modern and streamline in appearance. Yet, sometimes because of our misunderstanding of design values from former generations, much has been destroyed. Since the Bicentennial we have become more aware of our American Heritage and yes, we must lament our short sightedness in not appreciating and preserving along the way, some notable buildings.

Through a series of articles to follow in this column I think it will impress upon you the importance of preservation by seeing some significant architecture which has been destroyed in this county over the past one hundred years. A few of these buildings were destroyed unintentionally but most have been demolished on purpose all in the name of progress. As this series unfolds you will see that in almost every case nothing of any architectural importance has been rebuilt on the same site.

The building pictured here in two states, before and after, was a four-story cobblestone flour mill located on Otter Creek north of Eagle Harbor. It was built in 1837 by Willis P. Collins and James Leaton. However, it burned in 1849 but was immediately rebuilt and as we believe, the same shell was used. Later it was owned and operated by Charles A. Danolds and Sons, followed by the Powell Brothers and finally J. Ray Totten. In September 1926 a fire of undetermined origin destroyed this magnificent cobblestone structure, the largest ever built in Orleans County. Fewer than a half dozen cobblestone buildings were ever built locally for commercial purposes and when you consider that there are fewer than 800 cobblestone buildings in America, this was indeed a loss. Following the 1926 fire, the walls which you see in the lower picture were razed. Only a very small section of the basement wall remains today which is part of a small building on the site.