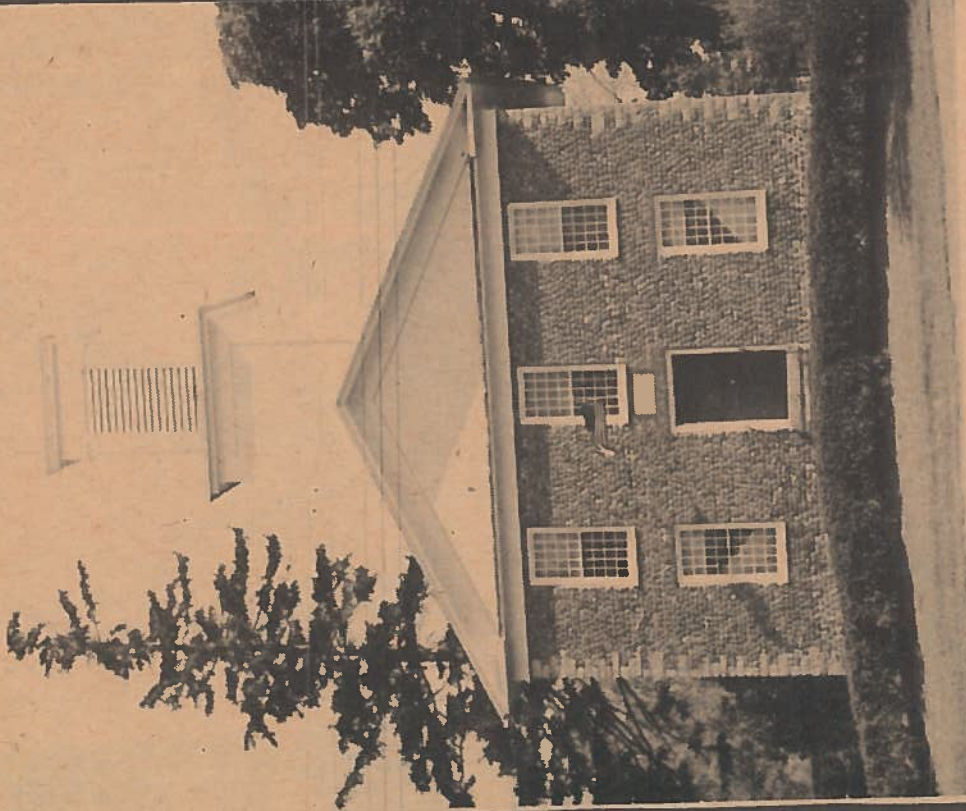


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**BELLEVUE OF
Old Orleans**

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(L. Monacelli photo)

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SESQUICENTENNIAL COBBLESTONE CHURCH

It was in October 1834 that the historic Cobblestone Church at Childs was completed and dedicated. A century and a half has elapsed since that joyous day of satisfaction occurred for local Universalists.

To celebrate this particular milestone of history in the Town of Gaines, a gala weekend has been planned at the Cobblestone Church Oct. 27 - 28.

event will occur on Saturday evening, 10:00 at 2:00 p.m. in the Cobblestone Church. The Gaines Jubilee Choir will perform and a keynote address will be delivered to the N.Y. State Convention of Universalists who will attend the program en masse along with members of the Cobblestone Society. The address to be given by Mark and Donna Morrison-Reed co-ministers of the First Universalist Church of Rochester is entitled "T'm OK, You're OK, He's OK, She's OK, It's OK, They're OK..."

On Sunday, the following day, the Annual Pumpkin Festival will be held in the Cobblestone Museum between the hours of 1 and 5 p.m. A host of pumpkin goodies and beverages will be served at that time.

The Sesquicentennial weekend will be climaxed with a very special Annual Lamplight Service beginning at 7:30 p.m. in the church on Sunday evening. At that time Kenneth Radnofsky, saxophonist will perform, the Gaines Jubilee Choir will sing and a message will be given by Rev. Donald Reidell, President of the N.Y.S. Convention of Universalists.

The First Universalist Society at Childs was organized in 1833. Until the church was built the congregation met in various homes and was served by traveling pastors. In the Spring of 1834 negotiations were completed by John Proctor to purchase a lot on which a church edifice could be built. As soon as the bargain was completed, a hired man of Mr. Proctor's deposited a load of stone upon the lot to take immediate possession. The foundations for the church were dug in April 1834 and the church was pushed to completion and dedicated in October 1834. The building committee in charge of the project consisted of John Proctor, Joseph Billings and W.W. Ruggles. Stones were gathered from local fields and brought to the site on carts pulled by oxen. Local masons and joiners then spent the fair weather season erecting what has become one of our leading landmarks. We can thank in part, John Proctor for footing much of the expense in building this church.

From 1834 to 1864-65 the church was served by six different ministers, some of whom only stayed for a very short time. By 1865 the Universalist Society at Childs had become dormant. But in 1873 Rev. Nelson Snell was sent to the area by the Niagara Association of Universalists. With his words of encouragement, new interest was aroused. At that time Charles A. Danolds, Arnold Cornstock, Jonas Sawens, Mr. Shattuck, Myron and Drake Billings, Wm. A. Tanner, Maynard Jaquith and Lewis Porter along with many others were inspired to raise \$1,000 to refurbish the old church.

The old pulpit was removed from the south wall, the seats turned around facing the north wall and a platform was built with a more modern pulpit placed upon it. The center section of a gallery was removed and a choir loft built in the rear. The aisles were carpeted, pews cushioned, the woodwork grained and a deceptive painting was added to the north wall. In June 1874 the building was rededicated. In the Spring of 1877 the society was reorganized with a membership exceeding 125 and became known as the Church of the Good Shepard.

By the 1890's the need was felt for a Universalist Church in Albion. Again it was Charles A. Danolds who took a leading role by persuading George M. Pullman to build the Pullman Memorial Universalist Church in Albion in memory of his parents. From the time the Pullman Church was dedicated in January 1895 members of the Cobblestone Church at Childs attended church in Albion. Twice each season however, services were held at the Cobblestone Church until the mid-1950's. By then the church building had deteriorated and there was talk of selling it.

In October 1960 the Cobblestone Society was formed with expressed purpose to acquire and save this historic specimen of American architecture. From that time twenty-four years ago, the Cobblestone Society has grown, prospered, and saved a truly great part of our local heritage.