

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## MASONRY RESTORATION An Update

There are still nice people in the world! One such person is William Nestle who has made it financially possible for the Cobblestone Society to do the exterior restoration of the stucco on its newest building acquisition at the Cobblestone Museum Complex in Childs. This donation comes in the form of a memorial to his father, Clifton Nestle, who, with his grandfather William Briar used the structure from 1922 to 1939 as a gunshop. When Rose Wells, owner of the Chatterbox Restaurant in Gaines donated the building to the museum a little over a month ago, it was discovered that the exterior walls were at one time stucco which had been removed when newer siding had been put on.

The photo accompanying this article shows Bruce Midkiff, a local mason, doing the restoration work. The building is of plank construction with hand split lath on the exterior to which was applied the stucco. Two layers of stucco have now been put on by Mr. Midkiff. A base coat with crosshatching marks, underlays a finish coat which has been left treated with a fine texture. The overall thickness of the two layers together is approximately three-quarters of an inch. The stucco has been left natural in color. The mortar mix in this restoration is based upon old recipes appropriate for split lath in a situation like this. The mix used five parts of

sand, one part lime and one part cement.

Although it is the first time Bruce Midkiff has done an exterior wall just like this, he is no newcomer to the masonry trade. He has worked off and on in masonry for around twenty years and since this last spring has gone full time into masonry repair and restoration. He has had many consultations with Newell Mix who has done extensive repairs to many cobblestone structures. Bruce Midkiff has also picked up on this unique form of masonry repair and is quite accomplished himself in what is labor intensive and tedious work. Presently he is repairing a large crack in the front of the cobblestone residence of Bill and Dee Robinson in Childs.

Bruce Midkiff and his family moved to the Town of Gaines from Rochester four years ago. Having quit working at Kodak last December, he likes what he is doing much better than his previous job. This writer noted that he took great interest in the unique restoration possibilities of stucco work at the cobblestone museum and accepted this job as a challenge. Mr. Midkiff also donated part of his labor - indeed another nice person. The finished work speaks for itself. It's one beautiful job! Truly a fitting memorial to Clifton Nestle and William Briar.

However, the entire project is not yet complete as interior work, porch restoration and access board walk await for next year when more funds can be obtained. Anyone wishing to contribute toward the restoration of this structure which will be used as a harness and cobbler shop, may do so by sending a check to the Cobblestone Society, designated for the harness shop. Mail to Donald B. Ross, Route 98, Albion, N.Y. 14411.