

## "FROM THE HISTORIAN'S FILE"

"A stone is a stone is a Cobblestone!"

Webster's New World Dictionary (College Edition) has the following: *Cob-ble-stone (kab' l ston')* A rounded stone of a kind formerly much used for paving.

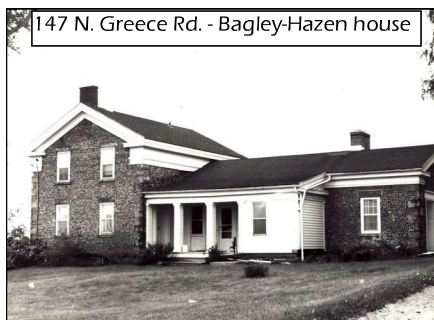
Well that is fine, but mention Cobblestone to the average Western New York resident (especially those living in the northern counties) and your answer could well be; "Oh, those buildings from the 19th century faced with round stones all in rows". The Town of Greece is fortunate to have four surviving Cobblestone buildings. All are private homes, but there once were several schools and at least one church that are now long gone from Greece. In western New York they are concentrated along route 104 from Wayne County westward to Niagara County. Workers who mainly learned their trade working on the first Erie Canal, which opened in 1825, built most of these beautiful stone buildings. The sandy soil near the Ridge Road and northward to Lake Ontario yielded stones (formed by the Glaciers) of rounded or oblong shapes in the recently cleared farm fields. A special mix of slow drying cement was used to set the stones. Patterns of stones and the way the stones were set varied for the 25 year period this type of construction was in vogue. Although Western New York has the largest concentration of Cobblestones, they can be found in Ohio, Michigan and as far west as Wisconsin, plus the Province of Ontario, Canada.

Cobblestone buildings were costly to build so only the more prosperous could afford to have them built. The rising cost of labor and the further distance it was necessary to travel to acquire the proper stones eventually caused this unique type of construction to be obsolete. Variations of the Greek revival style were common at this period. The costly, but sturdy Cobblestone style and cheaper wood frame construction prevailed during the 1830s to 1850s.

The four Greece buildings shown are all on the Historical Survey of 101 selected sites in the Town of Greece, completed by the Landmark Society in 1995. One, the Covert-Pollok house is also listed on the National Landmark site.

Sadly, the Westfall-Mercier house at 4350 West Ridge Rd. may not be standing much longer. It has been offered to anyone willing to move it off the property as a development is planned for that site. Thus far there have been no takers. It will more than likely end a casualty of progress. That is what tragically happened to a Cobblestone at Parma Corners on Ridge Road West at route 18. For more information about these four buildings or the other 97 sites, go online to Historic site survey, Town of Greece: <http://greece.ny.gov/ghcp/main>.

For more interesting details about Cobblestone buildings and their construction go to The Cobblestone Society web site at [www.cobblestonemuseum.org](http://www.cobblestonemuseum.org). The Cobblestone Society complex in Childs, N.Y is closed for the season, but if you travel west on Ridge Road you can easily view that complex and 40 plus Cobblestone homes along the way to Niagara County. Going eastward out of Monroe County on old Route 104, you can easily pass just as many, if not more than the West Ridge route. Don't forget that a Cobblestone building is just as often found on a side road as on the main roads. Enjoy our unique concentration of Cobblestone structures here in Western New York State.



Photos, data supplied by **Alan Mueller**, Greece Historian's Office. If you have any information on our photos, call Alan at 663-1706.

