

In March, 1976, while doing some nature photography in Mendon Ponds Park, I came across the cobblestone house in the center of the park. After examining the stones and mortar carefully, I realized that after forty years in New York State, I did not know anything about cobblestones, and resolved to do some study on the subject.

The project began with the determination to photograph for study all of the cobblestone buildings in Monroe County. The basic plan was to examine the stones and mortar with the idea of attempting to see if a mason's style was distinctive enough to identify in various buildings. Later, this expanded to the present total of 660 buildings in 21 counties.

At the beginning of the survey of each county, a list of locations was compiled from Schmidt's 1966 edition, along with whatever information we could get from the county historical society. A county road map was procured and the approximate location of each structure marked, so that trips could be planned and executed efficiently. In some instances, buildings could not be found, either because they had been destroyed or modified, or because the specified location was in error. In some instances, cut stone buildings or other historic buildings were listed.

Addresses of houses were upgraded by adding house numbers wherever possible. The address was deemed important, since it was practically permanent, whereas the name of the owner or occupant could change at any time. Names were recorded where possible. Permission to photograph was sought if anyone was at home. Two owners out of 660 refused such permission. No attempt was made to see the inside of a house, although we did accept several invitations from owners known to us.

At each building, an overall photograph of the front of the structure was made, which established the direction of light and shadow to help in locating the other areas photographed. Front corners were photographed to record the structure of quoins and the number of stones per quoin in front and side walls.

Photographs were all made with color film, both for transparencies and prints. Five cameras were used, some recording only special structures such as lintels.

Notes taken included name of occupant, address, building date, if known, and the important photographic data. Each camera was listed in a notebook, and the number of the next frame on each film recorded after photographing each building. This number became the first frame of the next building. Each new building had an overall view recorded on each film, so that all detail photographs on that same film belonged to that building until a new building was recorded.

The location of each building was recorded on the map as accurately as possible for future use.

This study was the combined effort of a number of people, including historical society correspondents, county historians and home owners. Record keeping when traveling was done mostly by Dorothy Roudabush, who also did all of the typing except for photo labels.