

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received AUG 6 1985
date entered SEP 13 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic COBBLESTONE BUILDINGS OF ROCK COUNTY - Thematic Nomination

and/or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Various. See attached documentation. not for publication

city, town - vicinity of

state Wisconsin code 55 county Rock code 105

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Owners: See attached

street & number

city, town - vicinity of state Wisconsin

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Rock County Court House - Register of Deeds

street & number 51 South Main

city, town Janesville state Wisconsin

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places
title Rock County Historic Sites has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975/1976 federal state county local

depository for survey records State Historical Society of Wisconsin
Rock County Historical Society

city, town Madison, Janesville state Wisconsin

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cobblestone Buildings of Rock County-Thematic Nomination includes three individual buildings of cobblestone construction built in Rock County between 1843 and 1854. Seven of the structures have previously been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). They are: the Lathrop-Munn House (1977 NRHP), the Deacon Samuel Hinman House (1974 NRHP), the Turner-Barber House (1983 NRHP) Bluff Street Historic District, and the Carpenter-Douglas Barn 1983 NRHP), all in the City of Beloit; the Kellogg-Damrow House (1979 NRHP) in the City of Janesville; the Samuel S. Jones House (1978 NRHP) in the Town of Clinton; and the Richardson-Brinkman House (1977 NRHP) in Clinton Village.

The unifying theme of the nomination is the distinctive use of cobblestone in exterior construction. The technique of cobblestone work was apparently brought to Wisconsin by settlers from New York State where cobblestone buildings are found in concentration particularly in the Rochester area.¹ Cobblestone structures share one architectural feature in common: the use of small field or creek-bed stones. These stones rarely exceed four inches in length and are laid up in horizontal bands between an extremely hard mortar of lime, sand and very small pebbles. The Rock River valley, a major glacial outwash site, abounds in these stones, and all of the cobblestone buildings in Rock County are located near glacial outwash streams, south of the terminal moraine. The finished cobblestone work is a veneer which hides a rubble, brick or quarried limestone wall that may vary in thickness from 8 to 14 inches. The mortar itself is grey in color and protrudes outward in a narrow V-joint. Other architectural features which the buildings share are limestone quoins, lintels, sills and watertables. Invariably the structures are rectangular in shape, have simple gable roofs and are modest in size.

Five of the structures previously listed are built in Greek Revival architectural style. Of the remaining two, the Kellogg-Damrow House reflects the Gothic Revival style in its high pitched roofline and tall narrow windows, while the Carpenter-Douglas Barn represents a type of domestic, utilitarian structure without particular style. Of the three new buildings being nominated, all are Greek Revival in style comparing favorably with the 5 already listed. Stylistically all of the buildings have limestone quoins and, with the exception of the Kellogg-Damrow House, feature returned cornices on the gable end. Limestone watertables and lintels are found in all of the structures with the exception of the Richardson-Brinkman House which has wood lintels.

Built between 1843 and 1854 the Greek Revival style buildings compare favorably with other structures of frame, brick and limestone built in this period in this style in Rock county. The Greek Revival style buildings in the county are generally 1 1/2 and 2 story structures built on a basic rectangular plan with wings sometimes added at right angles to create more interior space. Buildings in this style all use the returned cornice, and it is probably the one easily identifiable feature of all the structures. In scale the 1 1/2 and 2 story mode of construction is repeated county-wide, and the cobblestone buildings are very similar to other Rock county structures of the era, except that the building material lends a more massive and substantial appearance in comparison to the lighter appearing wood and brick work. The one Gothic Revival style building (Kellogg-Damrow House) also compares favorably with other structures in this style, especially those in the Cooksville area, where a concentration of Gothic brick and Greek Revival style houses can be found. There are relatively few Gothic Revival style houses in Rock County, perhaps less than a dozen, and the Kellogg-Damrow House is therefore significant for this reason as well.

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7. Description (cont.)

As a thematic grouping of buildings the ten structures embody characteristics of both a period and method of construction. Rock County was settled during the second quarter of the 19th century when the Greek Revival style had become the dominant building style in America.² New Yorkers carried the cobblestone technique with them as they moved into the western frontier east of the Mississippi River valley. While more than 700 cobblestone buildings in upstate New York have been recorded by the Cobblestone Society, only a few remain scattered in the Midwest. "...on both sides of the Illinois-Wisconsin border the second largest group of American cobblestone buildings appeared in the 1840s and 1850s."³ According to the Cobblestone Society, approximately 90 percent of all known cobblestone buildings are centered around the Rochester, New York area. "There are a small number of cobblestone buildings in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Vermont and Ontario, Canada."⁴ Construction of cobblestones ceased after the mid-1850s due to the ready supply of other building materials, previously scarce.

In Rock County these ten structures are the only examples of the mason's skill in laying up cobblestone walls which survive with substantial integrity. As early as 1848 the Beloit Journal described some of the city's buildings as of cobblestone, "or pebbles dug out of the surrounding bluffs."⁵ The 1870 census of Beloit listed 25 cobblestone houses.⁶ In a survey conducted in 1980 by the City of Beloit and the Rock County Historical Society only one barn and seven houses remained, and two of those had serious overbuilding and obliteration of cobblestone integrity.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

A comprehensive survey of structures in Rock County, Wisconsin was conducted in 1975, in which only thirteen extant cobblestone buildings were revealed out of some 3,300 surveyed sites. Two of these are in Beloit, and the third is in Beloit Township. In addition, two farmhouses which have cobblestone foundations were inventoried.

Because of the large number of buildings which were inventoried, no numerical count exists of houses according to particular styles. The inventory revealed, however, literally hundreds of houses in the Greek Revival style, or with significant Greek Revival details, but relatively few Gothic Revival style houses. In all cases, however, these styles of building were scattered throughout the county, although certain types of construction such as rubble stone houses and barns, or cobblestone structures, were prominent in particular areas.

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7. Description (cont.)

NOTES:

1. Perrin, Richard W.E. Historic Wisconsin Buildings, Milwaukee, 1975/79, p. 97.
2. Douglas, Nancy Belle and Hartung, Richard Penn. Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings, Janesville, 1975, p. 24.
3. Shelgren, Olaf William et. al. Cobblestone Landmarks of New York State, Syracuse, 1978, p. 5.
4. Our Cobblestone Heritage, Cobblestone Society, 1970, p. 3.
5. Beloit Journal, August 9, 1848, p. 3.
6. Rock County Census Records, 1870, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
7. McLenegan, Annie. Centennial History of the Town of Turtle, Beloit, 1936, p. 147.
8. Portrait and Biographical Album of Rock County, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1889, pp. 214-15. The History of Rock County, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1879, p. 742.
9. ibid.
10. Beloit Free Press, Vol. 47, No. 6, February 8, 1894. History of Rock County, 1879, p. 839.
11. Combination Atlas Map Rock County, Chicago, 1873, p. 38.
12. Town of LaPrairie Tax Roll, 1869-70, 1893, 1894.
13. Seibert, Mrs. Joanne. 3455 Spring Hill Drive, Janesville, Wisconsin. Interview with Ruth Ann Willis. December, 1980.
14. The History of Rock County, Wisconsin, Chicago, 1879, p. 782.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below							
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater				
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation				
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)				

Specific dates see individual descriptions **Builder/Architect** see individual descriptions.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Introduction:

The cobblestone buildings of Rock County are significant as a distinct type and method of construction built during a specific period of Wisconsin history. Built primarily by settlers from New York state, where cobblestone construction was common in the 1830s and 1840s, these structures represent a period of construction in southeastern Wisconsin that lasted less than 20 years from 1840 to 1860. Unique in the employment of cobblestones as an exterior wall veneer, the buildings in this nomination are all that remain of the cobblestone-craft in Rock County, and retain significant integrity.

Architectural Significance:

Noted Wisconsin architectural historian Richard W. E. Perrin described cobblestone construction as "An interesting variant of fieldstone masonry...Medium-sized, egg-shaped stones, probably of glacial origin and worn round by marine or fluvial action, were carefully selected for uniformity of size and sometimes of color, and laid in even courses, apparently for visual effect..."¹ Each structure included in the nomination fits into this description of cobblestone masonry.

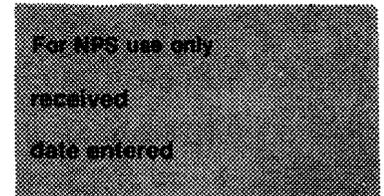
The cobblestone, applied as an outside veneer, was a construction technique that was painstaking as well as time consuming, requiring the selection of small cobblestones either gathered from fields around the residence or from river and creek beds nearby.

A visitor to the Rockford, Illinois area just south of the Rock County, Wisconsin border described the construction technique that was used in making cobblestone buildings in this region. "At Rockford, I noticed some neat houses built of pebbles laid in cement. I was told that in order to facilitate and give regularity to the structure a case of boards is used, which in proportion as the work advances is moved along and raised, and within which the materials of the wall, a course of pebbles and a course of cement alternately are laid."² This technique is used to describe the cobblestone construction techniques in New York State³ and again by Perrin in describing Wisconsin cobblestone construction methods.⁴

Perrin also noted that the cobblestone technique apparently "...originated in central and northern New York state with the greatest concentration to be found within a sixty mile radius of Rochester."⁵ In this connection it is interesting to note that the Clark-Brown House was built by a Lewis Clark from Genesee County, New York;⁶ George M. Murray, builder of the Murray-George House, came from Pompey, Onondaga County, New York;⁷ and William Stark, original owner of the Stark-Clint House, came from Tomkinsville, New York.⁸

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8. Significance (cont.)

These settlers came from the New York area where cobblestone construction can now be seen in its greatest concentration, and presumably they brought the technique of the craft with them to Rock County.

These settlers made use of cheap local materials to construct substantial houses. Glacial deposits of roughly rounded stones were found in fields in the southeastern portion of Rock County. The stones could also easily be dug out of the river banks along Turtle Creek and the Rock River. The mortar mix used for cobblestone masonry had a limestone base. The area of southern Wisconsin in which Rock County lies abounds in limestone material.

Of significance is the fact that these buildings, and three others specifically excluded from the nomination, are all that remain of a much larger group of cobblestone structures built during the 1840s and early 1850s. The Beloit Journal in 1848 described some of Beloit's buildings as being of cobblestone, "or pebbles dug out of the surrounding bluffs."⁹ Likewise the 1870 census of Beloit listed 25 cobblestone houses.¹⁰ by 1980, when a survey was conducted by the City of Beloit and the Rock County Historical Society, only three houses and one barn retained their cobblestone integrity in the city of Beloit. The structures included in this nomination represent not only a significant collection of cobblestone construction, but all that remain intact to illustrate in Rock County the craft of cobblestone work.

EXCLUSIONS:

Three structures of cobblestone construction have been excluded from the nomination because significant architectural elements have either been lost or concealed.

In Beloit, Bryden Motors and the Floridian Club, at 548 and 530 Broad Street respectively, were built before 1858. both houses show on the 1858 plat map of Rock County and are listed in the City of Beloit tax record from 1856. Both are hipped roof, 2 story structures. Small attic windows can be seen in the frieze of the Floridian Club. but, in remodeling the buildings for commercial purposes in the 20th century, structural changes and additions have radically altered the visible integrity of the buildings.

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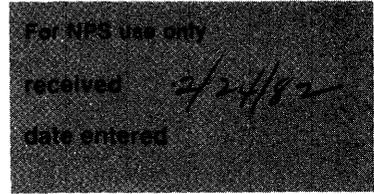
8. Significance (cont.)

FOOTNOTES

1. Perrin, Richard E. Historic Wisconsin Buildings, 1835-1870 (Madison, WI 1967) p. 76
2. Moore, Nathaniel Fish. A Trip From New York to the Falls of St. Anthony in 1845. ed. by Pargellis, Stanley and Ruth Butler, (Univ. of Chicago, 1946) p. 14
3. Shelgren, Jr., Olaf; Cary Lattin and Robert Frasch, Cobblestone Landmarks of New York State. (Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY, 1978) p. 17-21.
4. op. cit. Perrin, p. 76
5. Perrin, Richard E. Historic Wisconsin Buildings, (Milwaukee Public Museum, Milwaukee, 1975) p. 97.
6. ----- The History of Rock County, Wisconsin, (Western Historical Society, Chicago, 1879) p. 742
7. Ibid. p. 782.
8. Beloit Free Press, Vol. 47, No. 6, February 8, 1894, (Wm. Stark obituary)
9. Beloit Journal, August 9, 1848, p. 3.
10. Rock County Census Records, 1870, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, WI.

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Multiple Resource Area --
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Cobblestone Buildings of Rock County Thematic Resources

State WI

Conn 9/13/85

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

✓ 1. Clark- Brown House

RECEIVED
SEP 13 1985

for
Keeper Melrose Byrum 9/13/85

Attest

✓ 2. Stark-Clint House

Substantive Review

Keeper Beth Grosvenor 9/13/85

Attest

✓ 3. Murray-George House

RECEIVED in the
APPROVAL REQUEST

for
Keeper Melrose Byrum 9/13/85

Attest

4. Turner-Barber House

Keeper

Attest

5. Carpenter-Douglas Barn

Keeper

Attest

6. Belle Cottage (Kellogg-Damrow House
(previously listed 5-8-79)

Keeper

Attest

7. Jones, Samuel S., Cobblestone House
(previously listed 2-23-78)

Keeper

Attest

8. Lathrop-Munn Cobblestone House
(previously listed 8-22-77)

Keeper

Attest

9. Rasey House
(previously listed 12-27-74)

Keeper

Attest

10. Richardson-Brinkman Cobblestone House
(previously listed 7-28-77)

Keeper

Attest