

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Belt-Gaskin House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 77 Chapman Avenue [] not for publication

city Auburn [X] vicinity

state New York code NY county Cayuga code 011 zip code 13021

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements as set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

7/13/2005
Date

Signature of certifying official/Title : Commissioner for Historic Preservation

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] see continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register [] see continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register [] see continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain)

Signature of the Keeper date of action 10.5.05

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Non-contributing	
1		buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
1		TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Resources Associated with the Freedom Trail, Abolitionism and African American Life In Central New York

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single family dwelling

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single family dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Mid/late-19th Century: vernacular

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls heavy timber framing with vinyl siding

roof shingles

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Continuation Sheet

Belt-Gaskin House, Auburn
Cayuga County, New York

Section 7 Page 1

Description: Summary

The Belt-Gaskin house, located at 77 Chapman Avenue (formerly Cornell Street), is a two-story, three-bay frame house in a residential neighborhood that emerged on Auburn's south side, near Harriet Tubman's home, in the late 1860s. Built about 1868, the Belt-Gaskin home is surrounded by other homes of similar date. Twentieth century changes include one-over-one window sashes, vinyl siding, a porch across the front of the house, and a back door on the northeast corner. Otherwise, the house retains its historic location, design, setting, feeling, and association.

Description

The Belt-Gaskin house is a two-story, three-bay frame house with a stone foundation, approximately 30 feet wide by 20 feet deep, with unsoffited eaves and a back wing that extends the whole width of the house. It is located on a 66' x 165' lot on the north side of Chapman Avenue, 73.59 feet from the northeast corner of Chapman Avenue and Garrow Street. (See Deed Plot Map, City of Auburn N.Y., Military Tract Lot #56.)

A porch across the front of the house is a twentieth-century addition, as is the small center window above it, replacing the original full-size center window. One-over-one window sashes have replaced what were probably original six-over-six (or perhaps four-over-four) panes. A back door was added on the northeast corner in the late 1990s.

The front door leads directly to a central stairway that divides the house into two basic sections, the right one slightly wider than the left. To the right is the living room. To the left, with a door, is a bedroom. There is one window in each room, facing the front (south) side of the house. The dining room adjoins the living room on the northeast corner of the house. The kitchen is behind the bedroom, on the northwest corner of the house. Behind the kitchen is the utility room. There used to be a back staircase, now closed off, between the utility room and little anteroom behind dining room. The current entrance on the northeast corner was added in the 1990s. There was a fire in the house at one point and part of back wing might have burned. There are 3-1/2 bedrooms upstairs.¹ Other than the generally intact room configurations, little historic fabric survives in the interior.

¹Conversation with Judith Bryant, owner, April 6, 2005.

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The house was most likely built in two sections between 1868 and 1874. Between 1865 and 1870, Thomas and Rachael Belt, African Americans born in Maryland in 1805, returned to the U.S. from Canada. On November 5, 1868, Thomas Bell purchased Lot 12, on the north side of Cornell Street (now Chapman Avenue) from Horace and Mary Fitch. Horace Fitch was the son of European American abolitionist, industrialist, landowner, and Underground Railroad supporter, Abijah Fitch. An 1868 manuscript map by John S. Clark, from a survey by A.C. Taber, shows a series of small houses built along the north side of Cornell Street on lands "conveyed by Abijah Fitch on Garrow and Richardson Farms," including Lot 12. In 1868, Horace Fitch seems to have owned only a "vacant lot" on Cornell Street, assessed for \$100, but the assessments may have lagged behind actual construction of these houses. In any case, in 1869, Thomas Belt paid taxes on a residence valued at \$200. In 1874, his property was valued at \$450, so it seems likely that the house at 77 Cornell Street was built in two pieces, with a small house (perhaps the current back wing) built by 1868 and a larger section built sometime between 1869 and 1874. The house was assessed for \$325 in 1875 and \$300 in 1877.²

Twentieth century changes include one-over-one window sashes, a porch across the front of the house, and a back door on the northeast corner. Otherwise, the house retains its historic location, design, setting, feeling, and association. There are no outbuildings located on the property.

² Tax assessment rolls, 1868-1875, Cayuga County Records Retention Office.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location
- C** a birthplace or grave
- D** a cemetery
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance: See continuation sheets

Areas of Significance:

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage/Black

Social History

Period of Significance:

1868- ca. 1950

Significant Dates:

1868

Significant Person:

Thomas and Rachel Belt

Mary Gaskin

Cultural Affiliation:

NA

Architect/Builder:

na

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by historic American Building Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other: Office of the Cayuga County Historian

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**Belt-Gaskin House
Auburn, Cayuga County**

Continuation Sheet

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Significance

Summary

The Belt-Gaskin house has been continuously identified with freedom seekers or their descendants and with the Auburn African American community in Auburn since its construction about 1868. As an anchor for a stable neighborhood of freedom seekers and European Americans who purchased homes in newly-opened streets surrounding Harriet Tubman's home after the Civil War, this house represents the continuity and importance of freedom seekers in Auburn from the 1860s to the present. It is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, under the MPDF for Historic Resources Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central NY, Section F, 1-b, as a site associated with freedom seekers who stayed in central New York, and under Section F, 3, as a site associated with an African American community.

Significance: Discussion

Associated with two main African American families in Auburn (the Belts and Gaskins) from its construction between 1868 and 1874 to the present, this house represents the continuity of freedom seekers at the core of the African American community in Auburn from the post-Civil War to the present.

Evidence that the Belt family were freedom seekers is circumstantial but compelling. About 1805, Rachael Belt and Thomas Belt were born in Maryland, almost certainly in slavery. In the 1840s, they came to New York State, where their son George was born about 1849. Perhaps as a result of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, they left New York State for Canada, where another son, Isaiah, was born about 1854.

Between 1865 and 1870, Thomas and Rachael Belt returned to the United States. On November 5, 1868, they bought a house on Cornell Street (now Chapman Avenue) in Auburn, New York, in a neighborhood near Harriet Tubman's home, where many other freedom seekers, as well as many Irish and U.S.-born people of European-American descent, were also buying homes. The Belt house appeared on an 1868 manuscript map by John S. Clark, from a survey by A.C. Taber, along with a series of small houses built on the north side of Cornell Street on lands "conveyed

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Belt-Gaskin House
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Section 8 Page 2

by Abijah Fitch on Garrow and Richardson Farms.” The Belt house also appeared on an 1871 map by W.W. Richie.³

In 1869, Thomas Belt paid taxes on a residence valued at \$200. In 1874, his property was valued at \$450. It may be that the house at 77 Cornell Street was built in two pieces, with one part (perhaps the back wing) built by 1868 and another section built sometime between 1869 and 1874. Another possibility is that the rise in assessments did not reflect a change in this building but a general rise in tax assessments for the whole area.⁴

The Belts purchased their new home from Horace and Mary Fitch. Horace Fitch seems to have been acting as agent for his father, European American abolitionist Abijah Fitch. Born in Cooperstown, New York, in 1800, Fitch became a prominent businessman in Auburn, affiliated especially with the Auburn and Syracuse Railroad. He was also a long-standing abolitionist and Underground Railroad supporter, organizer of the Cayuga County Anti-Slavery Society in 1838, member of the First Presbyterian Church, a supporter of *Frederick Douglass's Paper*, and a Liberty Party activist. In 1851, he collected funds to defend a fugitive named Long, challenging the constitutionality of the Fugitive Slave Law. Friend of abolitionist and women's rights activist Martha Wright, Fitch was also a confidant of William Seward. He accompanied Seward on his trip around the world at the time of Seward's purchase of Alaska. When Fitch died in 1883, his obituary noted that “at the beginning of the anti-slavery excitement and all through the contest to the triumph of the principle of natural right, Mr. Fitch was one of the most ardent and enthusiastic advocates and promoters of the new idea, his house being one of the stations on the ‘underground railroad’ for the aid and assistance of escaped slaves.” Fitch's sale of this lot to the Belts was part of his larger policy of selling lots to freedom seekers generally. In all, we know of about twenty lots that Fitch sold to African Americans in this neighborhood, not counting property he sold to African Americans elsewhere in the city.⁵

³ Deed, Horace and Mary Fitch and wife to Thomas Belt, November 5, 1868, recorded July 25, 1870, Cayuga County clerk's office, book 129, page 498, Clark, John S., “Plot of the Lands as Conveyed by Abijah Fitch on Garrow and Richardson Farms, Auburn, N.Y.” A.C. Taber, Surveyor, September 1868. Cayuga County Clerk's Office, Auburn, New York; Cunningham, P.A. *Cayuga Co., N.Y.* (Philadelphia: W.W. Richie, 1871); Tax map, Bernard Corcoran, April 4, 2005, <http://co.cayuga.ny.us/realproperty/77chapman>.

⁴ Tax assessments, 1868-74, Cayuga County records Retention Center.

⁵[Biography of Abijah Fitch], Elliot Storke, *History of Cayuga County* (Syracuse: D. Mason, 1879), 541 and 200; “Death of Abijah Fitch,” February 1, 1883, *Weekly News and Democrat*, found by Beth Crawford; “Abijah Fitch, Grantor Deeds, 1823-36” and “Sales to Blacks,” Sheila

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**Belt-Gaskin House
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The Belt family found safety, economic security, and home-ownership in Auburn. But this house represents much more than the story of a single family. The Belt-Gaskin house represents the movement of whole groups of African Americans who migrated from Maryland and Delaware to Canada before the Civil War (many of them to St. Catharine's, Ontario) and who then returned in the 1860s to the U.S. and purchased homes along newly-opened streets near Harriet Tubman's home, including Chapman Avenue, Garrow Street, Fitch Avenue, Parker Street, and Union (now Richardson) Avenue. Many of Harriet Tubman's own relatives followed this same migration path, including two of Harriet Tubman's brothers, her sister-in-law, and many of her nieces and nephews. One nephew, William Henry Stewart, Jr., purchased the house directly west of the Belt house, at the corner of Chapman Avenue and Garrow Street.⁶

In fact, the Belt-Gaskin home was one of a whole row of homes on Chapman Avenue and Garrow Street purchased by freedom seekers from Abijah Fitch, including the one next door at 64 Garrow Street (where Henry and Jane Snyder, listed as mulatto, born in New York, lived in 1870, purchased in 1880 by William Henry Stewart, Jr., Harriet Tubman's brother, and his wife, Emma Moseby Stewart); one around the corner at 62 Garrow, purchased by Helen and Isaac White (Isaac was born in Maryland); 60 Garrow Street (purchased by Robert Griffen, son of freedom seekers Charles and Mary Griffen, born in Maryland); 58 Garrow (purchased in 1870 by Mary and Charles Griffen, freedom seekers from Maryland); 54 Garrow (purchased in 1876 with a mortgage from the Auburn Theological Seminary by John Purnell, freedom seeker from Maryland, and his wife, and Mariah Jane Purnell); 66 Garrow Street (owned by Clarence "Dye" Stewart, another one of Tubman's nephews, and his wife, Lena Stewart); and 12 Chapman Avenue (purchased by Maryland freedom seeker Thomas Stoop in 1869 with a mortgage for \$450 from Horace Fitch). All of these are still standing, but further research is needed to assess their National Register eligibility either individually or as a group.

According to the census of 1870, Rachael Belt was 65 years old. She was keeping house for her husband, Thomas Belt, also age 65, a porter in a store, and her two sons still at home, George, age 21, a teamster, and Isaiah, age 17, who attended school. Eliza Williams, seven years old, born in Canada and listed as mulatto, also lived with the Belts, as did four-month-old Clara Hale, born in New York. Thomas's will, dated 1882, mentioned other children, too: Julia Belt Cannon (wife of Plymouth Cannon, a freedom seeker from Maryland who had settled at 77 Fitch Avenue

Tucker, Cayuga County Historian's Office; Eliza Wright Osborne, "A Recollection of Martha Coffin Wright by her daughter," typescript, 15, Osborne Papers, Syracuse University; *Auburn Daily Advertiser*, January 8, 1851; *National Era*, December 23, 1847; *Frederick Douglass Paper*, June 10, 1852, August 13, 1852.

⁶ Tax rolls, 1868-1875.

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Belt-Gaskin House
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in Auburn, one street north of Chapman Avenue), Charlotte Belt Washington (wife of John Washington of Auburn), Harriet Belt Williams (wife of George Williams of Canada and perhaps the mother of Eliza Williams), and Emeline Belt Thomas (widow of John Thomas of Canada).⁷

The Belt family's connection with Plymouth Cannon is particularly interesting, since his story as a freedom seeker is well-documented. He ran away from Nat Horsey in Horsey's Crossroads, Delaware, in 1858, with five other people, who all went to St. Catharine's, Ontario. At least one other person who ran away at the same time, one of the Mitchell brothers, probably also ended up in Auburn, living at 63 Mechanic Street in 1863.⁸

Some confusion has been generated regarding the spelling of Rachel and Thomas's last name: while nearly all evidence confirms their name was Belt, a few hand-written records that seem to say "Bell" and the confirmed existence of a family in Auburn named "Bell" has generated some question as to whether or not Thomas and Rachel's last name could possibly have been Bell. For the purpose of National Register listing, the strongest evidence points to "Belt," hence that name is used here. Further research may reveal additional information; however, for the sake of recordation, the following information is offered about the Bells. Zadoc, Joseph, and Howard Bell were all born in Washington, D.C.⁹ Zadoc, age 25, was a machinist. He had married a Uretha (Reda) Bell, age 23, born in Canada. Jane Bell, age 13, was in the county orphan asylum. Two other women, Mary Bell (age 40), born in Canada, and Jemima Bell (age 14), born in Canada, and working with Cornelia Langham, were living as the only African Americans in other households.

In 1870, Zadoc Bell was appointed, along with Nelson Davis (Harriet Tubman's husband) and others, to a committee to care for the AME church property, probably to the short-lived St. Mark's AME Church (not the AME Zion Church). In 1880, Zadoc Bell and Uretha Bell were living at 17 Garrow Street, just around the corner from Thomas and Rachael Belt. Joseph and Howard Bell were both living on Genesee Street.

⁷ 1870 U.S. Census and Thomas Belt will, 1882, City of Auburn Records Retention Center.

⁸ William Still, *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872), 463-67. Thanks to Kate Clifford Larson for finding this story. The Cannon house is no longer standing. It has been replaced by Roosevelt Memorial Church.

⁹ Census records show that Zadoc, Joseph, and Howard Bell were all born in Washington, D.C. According to Auburn Bicentennial Committee, *Auburn: 200 Years of History, 1793-1993* (1992), 39, Zadoc, Howard, and Howard's wife Julia (b. Canada) are buried in Lot 92 Home at Fort Hill Cemetery.

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The 1872-73 Auburn City Directory listed Thomas Belt as a clerk, George Belt as a laborer, and Isaiah Belt as a student. In 1878-79, Thomas Belt was working as a gardener, George Belt was a cook, and Isaac Belt (by then living on Parker near Fitch Avenue) was a laborer.¹⁰

By 1880, the Belt home at 77 Cornell Street housed two nuclear families. Thomas Belt (listed as a laborer) and Rachel Belt (keeping house) lived with Clara M. Belt, niece, ten years old, whose mother had been born in New York and whose father had been born in Virginia (probably the infant who had been listed in the 1870 census as Clara Hale). George Belt, laborer, and Mary Belt, keeping house, were listed as a separate family in the same house. Emma Belt, niece, age 10, born in New York, whose parents had been born in Maryland, lived with George and Mary Belt.¹¹

In 1894, Reverend John Thomas was boarding with them when he died. Reverend Thomas was then pastor of Thompson AME Zion Church and, according to his obituary, was “the oldest active minister of the Zion connection.” He had been born in slavery in Virginia in 1814 and had come to Auburn, noted his obituary, in 1850, as pastor of the AME Zion Church. Further research is needed to ascertain whether or not he was related to the Emeline Belt Thomas noted in Thomas Belt’s 1882 will.¹²

After Thomas Belt’s death, Thomas and Rachael’s son, George, continued to live at 77 Cornell Street with his wife Mary E. Belt. In 1896-97, the Auburn city directory listed George Belt as a janitor and Mary Belt as a cook and nurse. On the fourteenth day of July, 1897, George Belt, who would have been 48 years old, made his will. He gave his house and lot on Cornell Street to his wife Mary E. Belt and to Blanche Virginia Reed, the infant daughter of his deceased niece Clara M. Reed, who was then living with George and Mary, to be used by them as tenants in common as long as they lived. When they died, the house was to be given to the AME Zion Church.¹³

¹⁰ *Boyd’s Auburn City Directory, 1872-73* (Auburn, N.Y., 1872); Alonzo P. Lamey, *The Auburn 1878-9 City Directory!* (Auburn: Daily Bulletin, 1878). Thanks to Bernie Corcoran for finding these.

¹¹ 1880 U.S. Census.

¹² Lydia Rosell, “100 Years Ago,” August 4, 1894, *Cayuga Accent*, *Syracuse Post-Standard*. Found by Judith Bryant.

¹³ Will of George Steven Belt, July 14, 1897, Surrogate’s Court. Witnesses were Underwood, Starke, and Seward.

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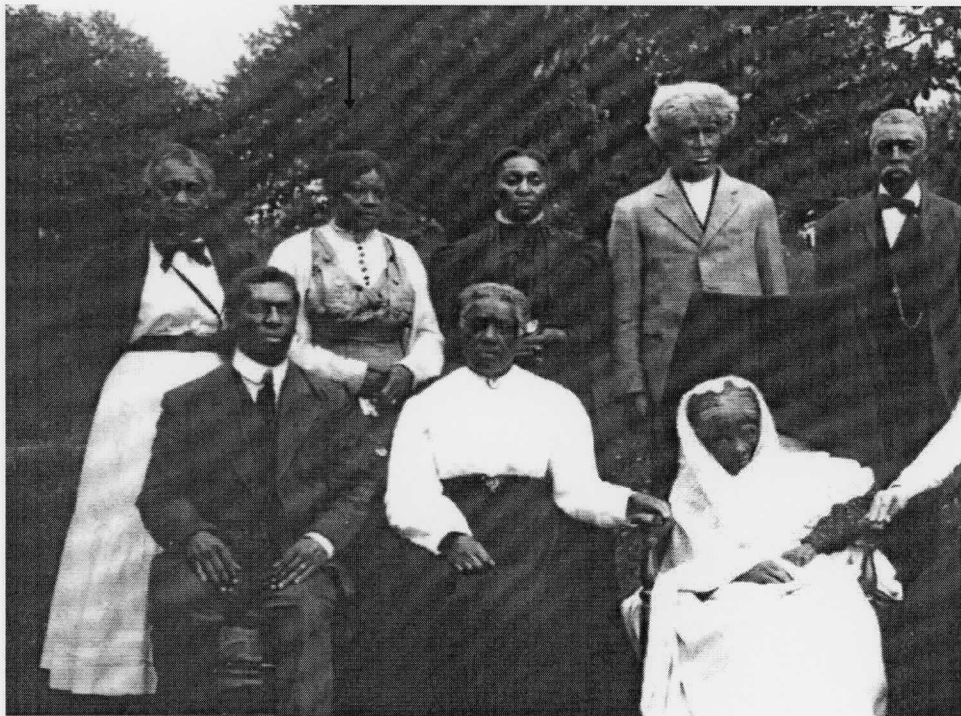
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In 1927, Philip and Mary Gaskin purchased this house. Philip Gaskin had been born in Virginia about 1854. He came with his parents, Richard and Mary Gaskin, from Virginia in 1864, when he was ten years old. Richard Gaskin, a Union veteran, and Mary Gaskin were almost certainly freedom seekers themselves. They purchased a house on Dixon Road in Ledyard in 1869. In 1886, they sold their Ledyard property and moved to 18 Aspen Street in Auburn. Their son Philip married Mary Elliott, daughter of Ann Marie Stewart Elliott (one of Harriet Tubman's nieces) and Thomas Elliott (a freedom seeker from Maryland and one of the famous Dover Eight). Mary Elliott Gaskin was one of only three people mentioned in Harriet Tubman's will. She inherited one-third of Tubman's estate.¹⁴



Above: Mary Gaskin is in the back row, second in from the left. Picture taken in 1913.

¹⁴ For information on Richard and Mary Gaskin, see Judith Wellman and Paul Malo, "Gaskin/King House," Survey of Historic Related to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Auburn and Cayuga County," 2005, Cayuga County Historian's Office; Harriet Tubman's will, 18 November 1912, Surrogate's Records, Cayuga County Records Retention Office.

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Philip and Mary Elliott Gaskin moved first to 35 Union Avenue (now Richardson Avenue), near her parents' house. Then, in 1927, they purchased 77 Cornell Street, where they lived with their children, Richard, Alida, Mary, Rose, Philip, and Jennie. Philip Gaskin, Jr., continued to live in the house with his wife, Myrtle, and their children, Laberta and Philip III.

Three descendents of Philip and Mary Elliot Gaskin still live in central New York. Pauline Copes Johnson lives in Auburn. Her mother, Jennie Gaskin, married Guy Copes. Joyce Stokes Jones, who now lives in Syracuse, was the daughter of Alida Gaskin. Laberta Gaskin Greenlea, who now lives in Rochester, was the daughter of Philip Gaskin, Jr., and Myrtle Gaskin. They are all great-great-granddaughters of freedom seeker Philip Gaskin, great-great-granddaughters of freedom seekers Ann Marie Stewart and Thomas Elliott and Richard and Mary Gaskin, and great-great-grand-nieces of Harriet Tubman.¹⁵

Laberta Gaskin Greenlea grew up in this house. She remembered that there was a fire in this house at one time, and they found some names on the walls of the back stairway. They wondered if "Aunt Harriet, when she came to visit my grandmother, was part of the Underground Railway."¹⁶ Given the age of this house, it is quite possible, even likely, that Harriet Tubman did visit this house. Whose names these were on the walls of the back stairway and how they came to be written there will remain forever a mystery.

The Belt-Gaskin house is currently owned by Judith Bryant, great-granddaughter of William Henry Stewart, Jr., Harriet Tubman's nephew, who purchased the house next to the Belt-Gaskin house in 1884.

¹⁵ Conversation with Pauline Copes Johnson, April 8, 2005.

¹⁶ Conversation with Laberta Gaskin Greenlea, January 12, 2005.

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Conclusion

The Belt-Gaskin home, associated with two African American freedom seeking families whose descendents still live in Auburn and central New York, represents the importance of freedom seekers to the core community of African Americans in Auburn, New York. It also represents a major migration of African American freedom seekers from Maryland, Delaware, and elsewhere who went to Canada before the Civil War and then returned to the U.S. in the 1860s to purchase homes on the south side of Auburn. Many of these homes were sold by European American abolitionist and Underground Railroad supporter Abijah Fitch, on streets newly-opened near Harriet Tubman's home. Located on its original site in this stable neighborhood of houses dating to the 1860s and 1870s, the Belt-Gaskin house retains its original location, setting, form, feeling, and association. It is a remarkably intact example of a home that has been associated with African American freedom seeking families from its initial construction to the present.

Property Belt-Gaskin House
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

MPD Historic Resources Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central NY
Section 9-Bibliography Page 1 of 1

Bibliography

Manuscripts

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Belt, George Steven. Will, July 14, 1897. Cayuga County Records Retention Office.

Belt, Thomas, Will, 1882. City of Auburn Records Retention Center.

Census records, 1870, 1880.

Deeds:

Abijah Fitch, Grantor Deeds, 1823-36" and "Sales to Blacks,"

Horace and Mary Fitch and wife to Thomas Belt, November 5, 1868, recorded July 25, 1870, Cayuga County clerk's office, book 129, page 498.

Osborne, Eliza Wright. "A Recollection of Martha Coffin Wright by her daughter," typescript, 15, Osborne Papers, Syracuse University.

Tubman, Harriet. Will. November 18, 1912, Surrogate's Records, Cayuga County Records Retention Office.

Wellman, Judith and Paul Malo. "Gaskin/King House," Survey of Historic Related to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Auburn and Cayuga County," 2005, Cayuga County Historian's Office.

Printed Materials

Auburn Bicentennial Committee, *Auburn: 200 Years of History, 1793-1993* (1992), 39.

Auburn Daily Advertiser, January 8, 1851.

"Death of Abijah Fitch," February 1, 1883, *Weekly News and Democrat*, found by Beth Crawford. "

Fitch, Abijah. Elliot Storke, *History of Cayuga County*. Syracuse: D. Mason, 1879, 541 and 200.

Frederick Douglass Paper, June 10, 1852, August 13, 1852.

National Era, December 23, 1847.

Rosell, Lydia, "100 Years Ago," August 4, 1894, *Cayuga Accent, Syracuse Post-Standard*.

Still, William. *The Underground Railroad* (Philadelphia: Porter and Coates, 1872), 463-67.

Oral interviews

Belt, Helene, April 6, 2005

Bryant, Judith, April 5, 2005.

Greenlea, Laberta Gaskin, January 10, 2004.

Johnson, Pauline Copes, February 23, 2004; April 8, 2005.

Maps

1868 Clark, John S., "Plot of the Lands as Conveyed by Abijah Fitch on Garrow and Richardson Farms, Auburn, N.Y." A.C. Taber, Surveyor, September 1868. Cayuga County Clerk's Office, Auburn, New York.

1871 Cunningham, P.A. Cayuga Co., N.Y. Philadelphia: W.W. Richie, 1871.
City Hall, Auburn, New York

1882 City Atlas of Auburn, N.Y. Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins, 1882.
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nycayuga/maps/1882/index.html#1882>

2005 Tax map, plotted from current tax information by Bernard Corcoran, Cayuga County Real Property Office, 2005.
<http://co.cayuga.ny.us/realproperty/77chapman>.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately .75 acres

UTM References: 18: 371380/4753160

Verbal Boundary Description: The boundary of the nominated property coincides with the legal lot lines as delineated on the attached county tax map (#115.83 – 2 - 56)

Boundary Justification: The boundary coincides with the full extent of land historically and currently associated with the nominated resource.

11. Form Prepared By: Judith Wellman and Sheila Tucker; assisted by: Judy Bryant, Helene Belt, Bernard Corcoran, Laberta Gaskin Greenlea, and Pauline Copes Johnson.

Contact: Nancy L. Todd, Program Analyst

organization Division for Historic Preservation date June 2005

street & number Peebles Island, Box 189 telephone (518) 237-8643 x 3262

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

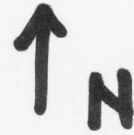
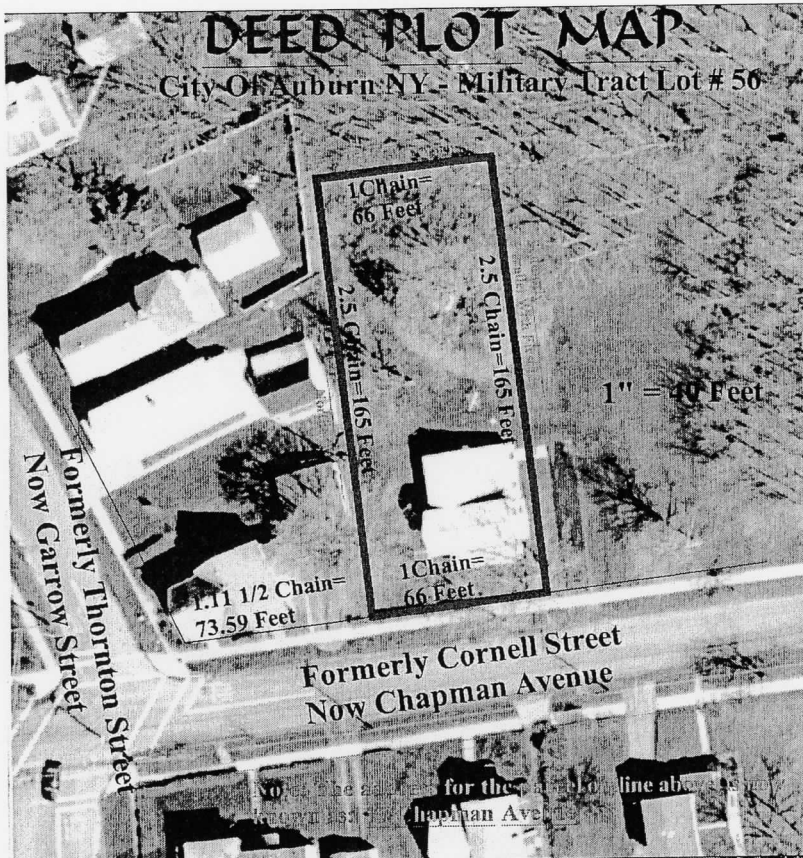
Property Belt-Gaskin House
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

MPD Historic Resources Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central NY
Section 10-Geographic Boundaries Page 1 of 1

Description

The nominated property begins 73.59 feet from the NE corner of Chapman Avenue and Garrow Street and extends 66 feet along the north side of Garrow Street, 165 northerly, 66 feet westerly, and 165 southerly to the place of beginning. These are the historic boundaries of the property.



Deed from Horace & Mary Fitch TO Thomas Belt
Dated November 5, 1868 - Recorded July 25, 1870 (129/498)
Current deed - Judith Lauersons & Paul A. d'Oronzio
TO Judith d'Oronzio (1060/257) June 27, 2001
Background B&W Aerial Photo Above Is Dated: May 2000



Auburn Tax Map
Parcel #115.83-2-56
Drafted by: Bernie
April 4, 2005

Cayuga County NY
Office Of Real Property Svcs
160 Genesee Street
Auburn, NY 13021
(315) 253-1270

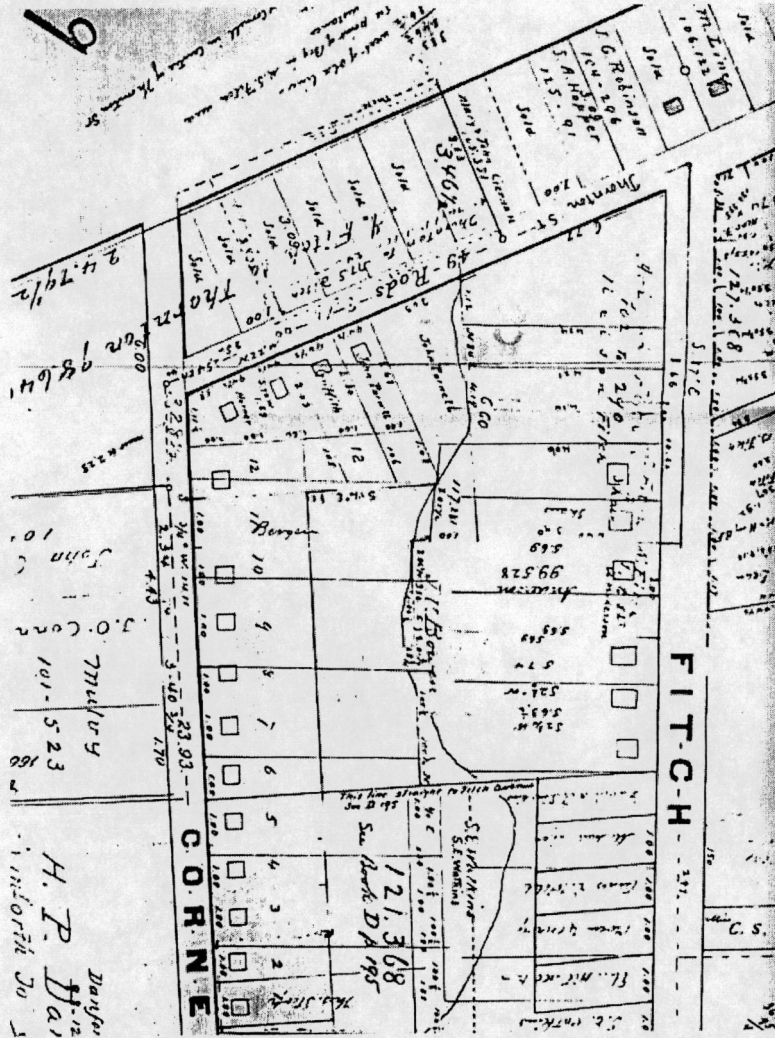


Map prepared by Bernard Corcorna, Cayuga County Office of Real Property Services
April 4, 2005

Property Belt-Gaskin House
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

MPD Historic Resources Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central NY
Continuation Sheet: Maps, Page 1 of 2

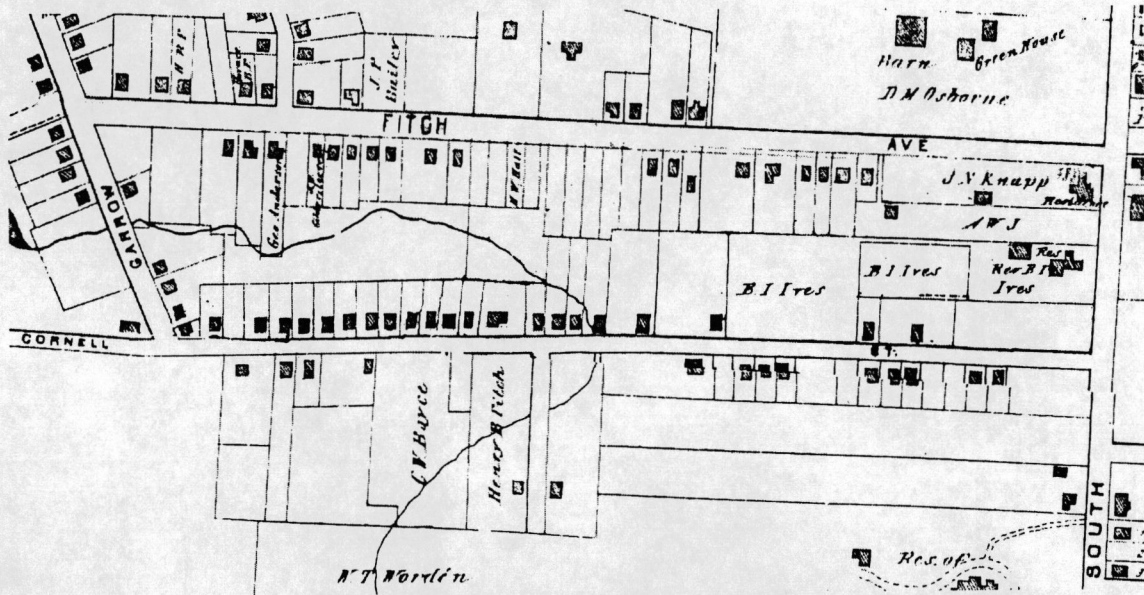


Clark, John S., "Plot of the Lands as Conveyed by Abijah Fitch on Garrow and Richardson Farms, Auburn, N.Y." A.C. Taber, Surveyor, September 1868. Cayuga County Clerk's Office, Auburn, New York.

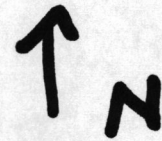
Property Belt-Gaskin House
Location Cayuga County, New York

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

MPD Historic Resources Relating to the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism, and African American Life in Central NY
Continuation Sheet: Maps, Page 2 of 2



1871 Cunningham, P.A. Cayuga Co., N.Y. Philadelphia: W.W. Richie, 1871.
City Hall, Auburn, New York



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Belt--Gaskin House

MULTIPLE NAME: *Freedom Trail, Abolitionism, and African American Life
in Central New York, NPS*

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Cayuga

DATE RECEIVED: 8/24/05 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/13/05
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/28/05 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 10/07/05
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 05001135

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 10.5.05 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in the
National Register

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



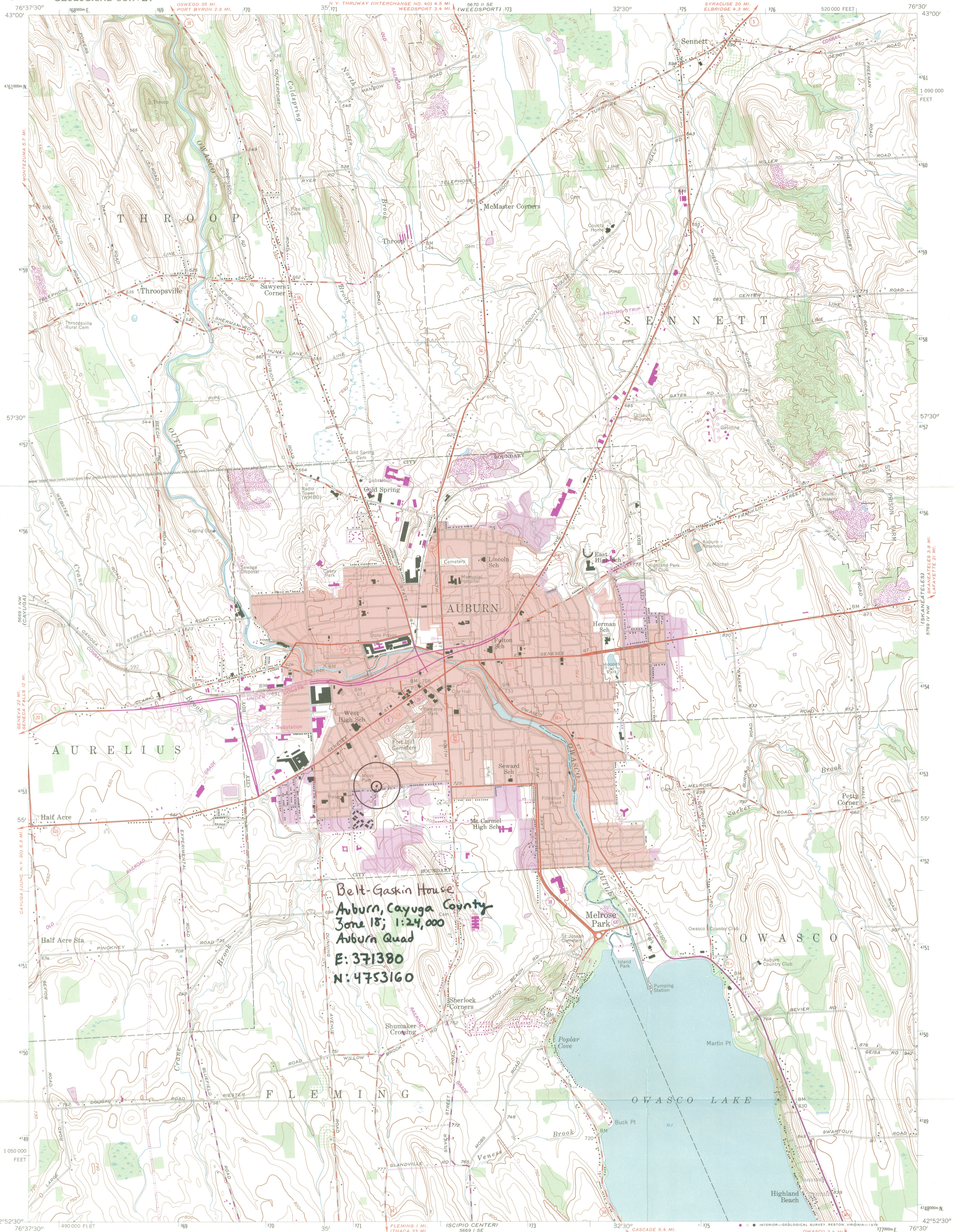
Belt-Gaskin House

Auburn, Cayuga Co.

Photo & Neg : N. Todd, 2005

OPRHP

View: front and side
elevations



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and TVA
Culture and drainage in part compiled by Corps of Engineers,
U. S. Army, from aerial photographs taken 1942
Topography by plane-table surveys 1954

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on New York coordinate system,
central zone

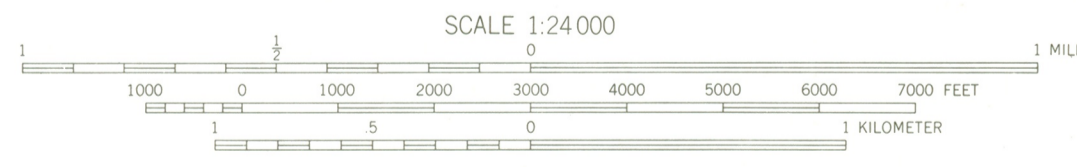
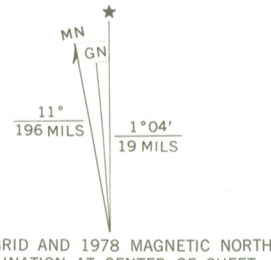
Red tint indicates area in which only
landmark buildings are shown

1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries of
the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs
taken 1976. This information not field checked
Map edited 1978

Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



ROAD CLASSIFICATION	
Primary highway, all weather, hard surface	Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather, hard surface	Unimproved road, fair or dry weather
Interstate Route	U. S. Route
State Route	

AUBURN, N. Y.

N 4252.5—W 7630/7.5

1954
PHOTOREVISED 1978
AMS 5669 I NE—SERIES V821

Nancy Todd
New York State Office of Parks Recreation &
Historic Preservation
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York

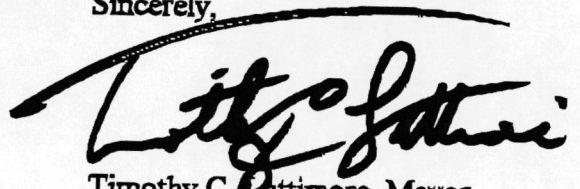
Re: Waive 60-day notification period

Dear Nancy:

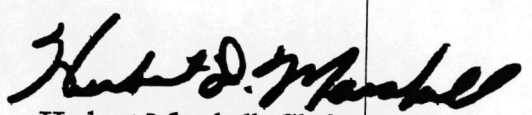
We understand that new applications are being considered as a part of the New York State and National Register of Historic Places relating to the Underground Railroad study that is currently underway throughout the City of Auburn and Cayuga County.

As such, we waive the right to a 60-day notice period in order to have these properties considered for review.

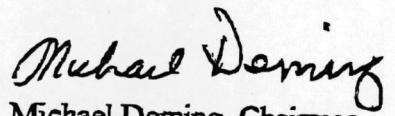
Sincerely,



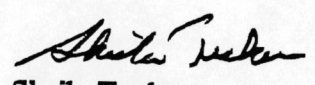
Timothy C. Cattimore, Mayor
City of Auburn, New York



Herbert Marshall, Chairman
Cayuga County Legislature

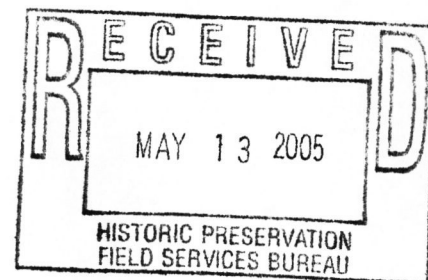


Michael Deming, Chairman
Historic Resources Review Board



Sheila Tucker,
Cayuga County Historian

JUDITH G. BRYANT
64 Garrow Street
Auburn, New York 13021
(315) 252-6432



Nancy Todd, Field Representative
Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation
Peebles Island State Park
P.O. Box 189
Waterford, New York 12188

Dear Nancy:

Previously known as Judith d'Oronzio, I am the owner of record of the Bell-Gaskin House at 77 Chapman Avenue, Auburn, New York. I do hereby agree to allow this building to be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith G. Bryant".

Judith G. Bryant

cc: Judith Wellman