

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 12 1983
date entered

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

1. Name

historic Rensselaerville Historic District

and/or common

2. Location *old Albany, Pond Hill, Methodist Hill Rds., and Main St.*

street & number various _____ not for publication

city, town Rensselaerville _____ vicinity of

state New York code 36 county Albany code 001

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name various

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Albany County Courthouse

street & number Eagle Street

city, town Albany state New York 12207

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title New York Statewide Inventory has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date June, 1982 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records NYS Division for Historic Preservation, Agency Bldg. 1, Empire State Pl.

city, town Albany _____ state New York 12238

7. Description

Condition

excellent

deteriorated

good

ruins

fair

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date NA

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The hamlet of Rensselaerville is located in the northeast quadrant of the town of the same name in Albany County, New York. It is approximately twenty-seven miles southwest of the city of Albany, via NYS Route 85. The village sits at the edge of the Helderberg Hills (part of the Appalachian Uplands) and is ensconced in the narrow, forested valley of Ten Mile Creek. This valley is surrounded by steep sloping hills that rise to a height of 2000 feet above sea level, the highest elevation between the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys to the north and east and the Catskill Mountains to the south. The Catskills themselves command the entire southern view from Rensselaerville. On clear days, the Berkshires of Massachusetts and the Green Mountains of Vermont are visible to the east from Old Albany Hill Road and occasionally the Adirondacks can be seen on the northern horizon.

The Helderberg hills and ridges represent the remnants of a dissected plateau that was once a broad plain sloping upward to the west into the Catskills. Continuous weathering and glaciation have created a region of bare rock or rock thinly covered with soil, particularly in the area about Rensselaerville. The region as a whole, therefore, is not fertile, a significant factor in the historical development of Rensselaerville.

The Helderbergs are notable, however, for their scenery and Rensselaerville is no exception. Ten Mile Creek, for instance, a tributary of Catskill Creek which drains this entire region, is a splendid example of a hanging valley, entering the main valley through steep ravines and a series of falls exposing beautiful rock sections. The most impressive of these waterfalls is that at Rensselaerville. Once important as a source of industrial water power and the initial impetus for settlement, it is now part of a nature preserve which surrounds the hamlet.

The historic district includes most of the buildings within the hamlet of Rensselaerville. It consists of approximately ninety structures and related outbuildings situated along Main Street and three intersecting roads entering from the north and east. Main Street is a long, winding avenue which runs in a general east-west direction just north of the ravine of Ten Mile Creek. It connects a number of regional highways including routes 351 and 353, which enter Rensselaerville from the south and southwest, Route 85 out of Albany, which joins Main Street at its west end, and Old Albany Hill Road, formerly part of the Delaware Turnpike from Albany, which intersects at the east end of Main Street.

The architecture of this rural community presents unusual variety even though the majority of structures date to the first half of the nineteenth century. While the Greek Revival style predominates, many buildings exhibit elements of transition from both the Federal and Georgian periods. The Palladian motif of the Jenkins House (unique site number 001-09-0026, view 9) and the Stevens House (unique site number 001-09-0074, view 18), for instance, reflects an earlier, colonial era. In contrast, the delicate tracery in the fanlights of the Rider House and the slender classical features of its doorway provide distinctive examples of the Federal style (unique site number 001-09-0039, view 14).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Historic Dis. Item number 7

Page 2

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

But it is bold classical ornamentation and Greek form and proportion which largely characterize the architecture of Rensselaerville. Such features include massive columns and pilasters, broad simple moldings, pedimented projections, heavy cornices and unadorned friezes. There are a number of Greek Revival forms in the district, such as those illustrated in views 1A, 11, 25, and 26. Classic Greek Revival style doorways, flanked by pilasters and sidelights with horizontal transoms above, also appear on dozens of structures from the very modest (view 25) to the most highly ornamented.

A number of structures exhibit the application of flush siding rather than clapboard in the facade to create the effect of stonework. The Presbyterian Church (unique site number 001-09-0044) remains the best example of this technique. "Stone" quoins have even been replicated in the first tier of the steeple. Other photographs (views 10 and 14) provide other examples.

Though a relatively small community throughout its history, the hamlet was, nonetheless, able to employ a resident architect-builder for nearly half a century. Ephraim Russ is identified as the designer and builder of all of the village's church buildings: Presbyterian Church (view 1A), Episcopal Church, Methodist Church (view 3), and Baptist Church. He also constructed at least half a dozen of Rensselaerville's finest residences during the first four decades of the 19th century. Examples of these are the Jenkins House (view 9), the Stevens House (view 18), and the Rider House (view 14). Little material survives concerning Russ's activities and it is not known if he worked in areas outside the hamlet.

Buildings in Rensselaerville are primarily constructed in wood on low slate or stone foundations, reflecting the abundance of these resources locally in the early 19th century. There are a few brick structures in the district, however; a number of brick facades, including the row houses on Main Street (unique site number 001-09-0012, view 12); and a few brick foundations such as the old Methodist Church (unique site number 001-09-0045, view 3).

Most of the buildings in the district are situated at or slightly recessed from the street, but a few are set back and attractively landscaped. Conspicuous examples include the yard and stone fence adjacent to the Stevens House, the stone terracing in the hill behind houses on the south side of Main Street (view 6), and the Jenkins House (unique site number 001-09-0026, view 9), situated among a grove of trees.

At one time, Rensselaerville served as a commercial center to the farmers of the surrounding region. They came to the village to have their wheat, corn, and rye ground at the grist mill (unique site number 001-09-0002, view 15), to have their milk processed at the local creamery (unique site number 001-09-0030, view 21), and to select needed building materials at the saw mill (since demolished). They purchased a variety of goods from local businesses and supported various professional services. The shops, offices, and inns which were located on Main Street between Route 85 and Methodist Hill Road no longer exist as such. Over the years they have been almost entirely converted to

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 7

Page 3

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

residences and, though remnants of many storefronts remain visible, most have been eliminated or altered. There is only one apparent original storefront remaining in the district (unique site number 001-09-0077).

The declining regional importance of Rensselaerville in the late nineteenth century resulted in a steadily declining population. Consequently, even before the mid-twentieth century, a number of houses began to serve only as summer residences, a situation that prevails today. There has been no construction here during the twentieth century with the exception of two homes, one on Methodist Hill Road (unique site number 001-09-0051, view 27) and one on Main Street (unique site number 001-09-0028, view 28).

The following is a list of structures in the Rensselaerville Historic District. With the exception of four intrusions, all contribute to the visual and historical integrity of the district. The architectural development of the district began with the establishment of the community in the early nineteenth century, then continued through its expansion and prosperity as a commercial center, its economic decline and physical stagnation in the late nineteenth century, and its revitalization as a summer residential community and retreat in the twentieth century.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7

Page 4

Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

MAIN STREET

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0001	ca. 1854	4	Two-and three-story clapboard structure built against a hill; five-bay facade with two-story portico and central doorway; side entrance features simple Greek Revival doorway with pilasters and entablature; two small extensions to the rear and an out-building at the head of the driveway; small barn on the opposite side of Main Street (1a) is under the same ownership. Built by Dr. Gilbert Titus, a botanical doctor.
001-09-0002	1880	15	The mill is built into the ravine of Ten Mile Creek; a three-story wooden structure with the gable end to the street; 6/6 window sash throughout; front section of the second and third floors extends over a loading area at the first floor entrance; a one-story gabled addition projects from the west facade. This is the site of the hamlet's original grist mill, erected in 1789 by Samuel Jenkins of West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. That building was destroyed by fire and the present mill erected. The building is currently undergoing restoration by the Rensselaerville Historical Society as a working grist mill museum and craftshop.
001-09-0003	1930's		Small wooden garage; (<u>Intrusion</u>)
001-09-0004	Prior to 1820		Formerly a wagon house/carriage painting shop; building was converted into a residence about 1920 and turned on its foundation so that the main entrance faces Main Street; simple, two-story, three-bay clapboard structure, unadorned but for a one-bay pedimented entrance porch supported by attenuated columns.

Remaining buildings on the south side of Main Street have been built against the hill which slopes sharply from Main Street to Ten Mile Creek. These structures generally present two stories on Main Street but most rise to a full three stories in the rear.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7

Page 5

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0005	ca. 1803		Small frame one-and one-half-story structure with lean-to extensions at the rear and west facades; blinds conceal first floor windows. Building thought to be a residence of one of the hamlet's flour millers in the 1820's; referred to as "middle mill cottage."
001-09-0006	ca. 1830	2	A two-story, three-bay residence with a one and one-half story addition at the west facade; main facade (gabled end to street) features flat corner pilasters, a circular window in the gable, and the only decorative window caps in the village; design also appears in a bracketed hood over the main entrance; side addition has gabled wall dormers.
001-09-0007	prior 1825	2	Two/three-story structure with a double gable roof, clapboard siding, and 6/6 window sash. Formerly a mortuary and cabinet shop. Also used as a confectionary in the past; now a residence and post office.
001-09-0008	prior 1825		A two/two and one-half story modest frame residence; typical of former small commercial concerns in the hamlet; previously occupied by a number of businesses, including a grocery, barber shop, woodworking shop, and meat market.
001-09-0009	prior 1854		A one and one-half story, four-bay structure with eyebrow windows under the eaves and an entrance at either end of the facade. Originally occupied jointly as a residence and shop.
001-09-0010	ca. 1830		Small, narrow building; gable end to street; 6/6 window sash throughout; location of a shoe shop in the 1850's and 1860's.
001-09-0011	ca. 1820		Two/three-story, five-bay frame building with green asphalt shingles on the main facade; original first floor storefront window altered; remainder of facade features fluted Ionic corner pilasters, a broad unadorned frieze, a Greek Revival entrance with entablature, and a recessed doorway flanked by pilasters and horizontal transom above. Former location of a number of commercial concerns including a millinery shop, post office, and ice-cream shop.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 7

Page 6

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0012	ca. 1820	12	These five rowhouses exhibit brick facades except for the clapboard structure at the far west end of the group. The village library, located at the opposite end of the row, was extensively altered about 1920 and the roofline raised at that time. The remaining structures exhibit Greek Revival proportions and some minor detailing. They were built together and have interconnecting attics. These buildings originally housed a number of businesses including general merchandising, a harness shop, grocery, and doctor's office. All first floor storefronts have been altered and the buildings are now primarily residential.
<p>The following three structures have been altered on the interior (ca. 1960) and interconnected so as to create one large residence. The exteriors of the original buildings have been maintained intact.</p>			
001-09-0013	early 19th Century		A two/three-story, four-bay clapboard structure; gable end away from street; 6/6 window sash throughout; previously connected to the library building by an interior doorway.
001-09-0014	early 19th century		A two/three-story, three-bay structure with a brick facade. It exhibits a simple recessed doorway flanked by sidelights and a horizontal transom above, a flat, unadorned frieze, and 12/12 window sash.
001-09-0015	early 19th century		A two/three-story frame structure with aluminum siding. The building is positioned with the gable end fronting Main Street. It features a simple Greek Revival style doorway, 12/12 window sash, and a small side porch on the east facade with a garage entrance below in the sub-Main Street level.
001-09-0016	Unknown	26	Simple two-story, three-bay structure with clapboard siding on the first story and wooden shingles on the second; a one-bay pedimented portico projects from the main entrance; a garage has been added on the west facade.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 7 Page 7

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0017	Ca. 1850	26	Small one and one-half story clapboard structure with the gable end facing Main Street; facade is plain but for a simple Greek Revival style doorway flanked by pilasters and capped with an entablature; windows exhibit a variety of sash including 2/2 on the first floor and 9/6 in the gable story.
001-09-0018	prior 1820	26	A two-story, three-bay Greek Revival style temple front structure with a two-story, four-bay extension with asymmetrical fenestration on the east facade; detailing of the main entrance is repeated in the entrance to the side extension; doorways are recessed and flanked by sidelights with horizontal transoms above; main house has floor-length windows on the first story, corner pilasters, and a full two-story pedimented portico supported by four square, battered columns; the bays of the side extension are separated by simple, flat pilasters.
001-09-0019	ca. 1840	26	Two-story, three-bay residence with simple, unadorned brick facade; a three-bay, one and one-half story extension projects from the east facade; this section exhibits a simple one-story portico with some bargeboard decoration.
001-09-0020	ca. 1840	26	Two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with simple Greek Revival molding about the doorway; shares a common wall with the building to the west (0019).
001-09-0021	ca. 1840	26	A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with the gable end facing Main Street; building exhibits Greek Revival detailing of massive proportions, including corner pilasters, frieze, and main entrance; a fanlight appears in the gable and a recessed doorway is flanked by sidelights and a horizontal transom above.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 8
Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0022	ca. 1840	26	A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure; it features a simple classical entrance with narrow pilasters and an entablature inset with a horizontal transom; a fanlight appears in the gable (facing Main St.) and second floor windows have 12/12 sash. This was at one time the site of the hamlet's Methodist parsonage.
001-09-0023	ca. 1840	26	A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with pedimented gable fronting Main Street; the effect of stonework is accomplished by use of flush siding in the pediment, which is inset with a fanlight; entrance is distinguished by double pilasters, sidelights, entablature and horizontal transom.
001-09-0026	1812	9	Jenkins Homestead. Located at the far east end of Main Street. It is set back from the roadway among a variety of trees including elms, maples, locusts, black walnuts, and white pines. The structure is a transitional style exhibiting features of both Georgian and Federal residential architecture. Like other homes in the hamlet built during the same period, the Jenkins house is a broad, five-bay structure with a central Palladian window and wide, pedimented doorway. The original 12/12 window sash has been replaced by a 6/6 sash. This change is noticeable in the Palladian window which maintains the old muntin divisions. The home was built for Johathan Jenkins by architect-builder Ephraim Russ. Since construction in 1812, the homestead has been occupied continuously by members of the Jenkins family.
001-09-0027	1825	10	This unusual building is distinctive for its careful attention to detail and proportion. It features a recessed portico of two bays with a column in the center. At the left of the porch is an entry balanced on the opposite side by an exterior closet door. The central portico is flanked by single pilastered and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 9

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
			arcaded bays. The effect of stonework is accomplished by use of flush siding on the main facade. Two gables, slightly separated, complete the side elevation of this structure. The home was built for Gurdon Conkling by architect-builder Ephraim Russ.
001-09-0028	1960's	2 8	A one-story aluminum-sided modern residence (<u>Intrusion</u>).
001-09-0029	1850	20	Easternmost building in the district. It is the only stone structure in the hamlet and was extensively repaired in 1937-38 with stone from a local quarry. The structure is built against the steep hill descending into the hamlet from the south (RT. 351). A small one-story extension projects from the west facade. It has a balustraded patio above. A modern two-car garage (001-09-0029a) is also situated on the property.
001-09-0030	ca.1850	21	This is a long, rectangular, one-story clapboard structure with scalloped wooden shingles decorating the doorway and the gable of the west facade. It was built as a creamery for local farmers who bought shares in the concern. The operation was abandoned in 1940 and the structure subsequently altered into a residence.
001-09-0031	1884		A one and one-half story structure with both clapboard and barn board siding. There is a semi-enclosed (screened) rear extension. Originally a foundry; closed around the turn of the century.
001-09-0039	1823	14	Rider House. A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with a pedimented gable facing Main Street and pilasters and arcades defining each of the three bays. The effect of stonework is accomplished by use of plain members on a surface of flush siding in the facade. A graceful arched doorway is flanked by simple thin pilasters and a fanlight of delicate

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 10
Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0039 (Continued)			tracery above. The Rider house was built by Ephraim Russ for Eli Hutchinson of East Hampton, Long Island, one of the village's first settlers. He was engaged in tanning, merchandising, and milling.
001-09-0040	prior 1854		A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with a double gable roof steeply sloped in the Gothic mode; triangular windows appear in each gable and there is a pointed arch with Gothic tracery above a rear window in the west facade.
001-09-0041	ca. 1814		A two-story gabled clapboard structure. An exterior chimney is constructed against the south facade; building is situated on property behind site no. 001-09-0040.
001-09-0042	ca. 1820		A two-story, four-bay clapboard residence with gable ends oriented away from Main St. It has a Greek Revival style entrance with fluted side pilasters; a one-story portico extends the full length of the main facade. A hatter's shop, blacksmith's shop, and carpenter's shop occupied this site in the early 19th century, probably in the large rear structure, since converted to a garage. The main house served as a mortuary in the early 20th century.
001-09-0043	ca. 1820		A one and one-half story, three-bay clapboard structure (gable end facing Main St.) with two rear extensions. It is a long, rambling house on the interior, constructed on several different levels. The simple Greek Revival style doorway is flanked by pilasters and capped with an entablature. Window sash is generally 12/12.
001-09-0044	1842	1A	This is a Greek Revival style structure essentially designed along the lines of masonry architecture, though executed in wood (notice, for example, the quoining in the first tier of the steeple). The effect of stone-work is consistently obtained through use of flush siding. There is a four-tiered steeple

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 11

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0044 (continued)			with heavy cornices rising through the pedimented gable. The same heavy proportions of the cornices appear in the architrave. The main entrance is flanked by large fluted Doric columns. The tall vertical doorway is flanked by pilasters and sidelights and decorated with dentils in the molding above. The Presbyterian Church was founded in 1796. The present structure was erected by architect-builder Ephraim Russ in 1842.
001-09-0057	ca. 1800	1A	This is a two-story, five-bay residence with a wide, pedimented central doorway and a pedimented portico supported by fluted Ionic columns. There are corner pilasters on the main facade and flat Ionic pilasters at the rear of the east and west facades. Decorative molding is found throughout the entire building under the eaves. Three small decorated cottages are situated behind the main house on the east end of the property. This was formerly a small house; enlarged by Dr. Isaac Hyde of Connecticut as a home and hospital; subsequently bought by John N. Huyck, a local merchant, who added the Greek Revival style portico.
001-09-0058	1848	1A	This is a large two and one-half story, five-bay clapboard structure with a double gable facing Main Street. It features an elaborate central recessed Greek Revival doorway flanked by double Ionic pilasters. The first house on this site was built by Dr. John Frisbee early in the 1800s. It was subsequently moved further back on the property and the front added for an inn (fifteen rooms). A store and ballroom were constructed later, attached to the main house. The ballroom was reached by an outside stairway. In the 1840s, the inn was owned by Potter Palmer of Chicago's famed Palmer House. In 1851, John L. Rice, a young daguerreotypist, came to the village. He moved his business into the structure in 1862. The store has subsequently been run by three generations of Rices.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 7

Page 12

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0059	ca. 1818	1A ✓	This is a two-story, five-bay clapboard structure. It has a two-story portico running the full length of the facade supported by large, square, battered columns. There is a central Greek Revival style doorway and a smaller undecorated entrance to the far left of the facade. It was built by one of the village's earliest settlers, Appolas Moore, known as the Union Inn from 1864-1873, and at one time housed the <u>Rensselaerville Press</u> . It served as the terminus for the stagecoach from Albany.
001-09-0060	early 1800's	2	A small, two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with a two-story rear extension. The gable ends are situated away from Main St. A one and one-half story portico extends the length of the main facade. An apothecary shop at one time occupied the enclosed portion of the porch at street level.
001-09-0061	ca. 1820	2	This is a two-story, three-bay brick structure with the gable end facing Main Street. The original storefront has been altered, but the recessed doorway flanked by Doric columns remains intact. The building has been a general store, laundry, antique shop, and now a residence.
001-09-0072	ca. 1806	18	This is a two-story, five-bay structure with two rear extensions. The main structure has a central, double doorway and a one-story, five-bay decorative portico which is its most distinguishing feature. The first structure to stand at this corner was built as an inn by Dr. Reuben Frisbee in 1790. This frame house was subsequently moved. Dr. Frisbee's son, Franklin, completed the first section of the present Catalpa House in 1806. It was rebuilt in 1858. Originally a severe frame structure, it was rebuilt again in 1883 and enriched with Victorian trimmings at that time. From 1922-1972, it was operated as an inn under the proprietorship of Edith Lounsbury.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 13
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0073	ca. 1827		This is a two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with a pedimented gable (flush siding and a fanlight). The front doorway is flanked by fluted pilasters and sidelights with a horizontal transom above. There is a small extension from the north facade and a barn at the rear of the property. A store was built on this property before 1820 by Appolas Moore. The present structure became the Baptist Manse in 1919.
001-09-0074	1809	14a, 18	Built as an inn by architect-builder Ephraim Russ. It was designed in a transitional style, exhibiting features of both Georgian and Federal residential architecture. Like other homes in the village built by Russ during the same period (for example, site no. 001-09-0026) the Steven's House is a broad, five-bay structure with a central Palladian window and wide, pedimented doorway. The original 12/12 window sash remains.
001-09-0075	1803	5	This is a two and one-half story, five-bay clapboard structure with three gabled dormers facing Main St. There are central doorways on both the first and second floors entered by way of a two-story portico supported by simple square columns. Except for the dormers, window sash is 12/12 throughout. It was built for Asa Colvard, an early politician, sheriff, and town supervisor, who operated an inn from the site.
001-09-0076	1800	5	Built by Samuel Jenkins, the village's first settler. It is a one and one-half story ell form clapboard structure with gabled dormers in the Main St. facade. There is a raised portico running the full length of the facade with a small arched carriage entrance below.
001-09-0077	early 1800's	24	A large, three-bay clapboard structure with a storefront at the first floor level. A barn to the rear has been converted into a residence and studio.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 14

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

MAIN STREET CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0078	prior 1820	24	A one and one-half story, five-bay clapboard structure with gables situated away from Main Street. There is a small extension from the east facade connected to the main house by a one-story portico with bargeboard decoration. The main facade features a central doorway flanked by sidelights and corner pilasters.
001-09-0079	prior 1854	24	This is a one and one-half story, five-bay clapboard structure with asymmetrical fenestration. There are small, square, eyebrow-type windows under the eaves in the main facade.
001-09-0080	prior 1820	24	A three-story, five-bay clapboard structure with the gable end oriented toward Main Street. It has a simple Greek Revival style doorway (central) with a horizontal transom above. There is a bay window on the first floor of the south facade and a small, one-story rear extension. The building is located immediately adjacent to Ten Mile Creek.

REAR OF MAIN STREET (CREEK ROAD)

001-09-0024	ca. 1850		This building faces east on Creek Road and is situated on flat ground adjacent to Ten Mile Creek. It is a central block form with small wings to the west and south. The main building is one and one-half stories, clapboard, four bays wide and exhibits a recessed doorway with Greek Revival detailing. A broad plain frieze extends around to the south facade.
001-09-0025	ca.1850		This building fronts immediately on the north bank of Ten Mile Creek but main openings have an easterly orientation. It is a modest one and one-half story clapboard structure with corner pilasters, a broad, unadorned frieze, 6/6 window sash, and eyebrow windows in the west facade.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 15

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

ALBANY HILL ROAD

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0032	1830		Former school house. The structure has been converted into a two-story, three-bay brick residence with a two-story clapboard modern extension. The main facade is distinguished by a simple, but decorative doorway flanked by pilasters and capped by an arch inset with a sunburst. This land was originally reserved by the proprietor, Stephen Van Rensselaer, as a schoolhouse lot for the hamlet.
001-09-0033	1815		Episcopal Church. This as a one-story rectangular building with three bays in the main facade. A central pavilion rises through a pedimented gable into the steeple. The main entrance is flanked by slender pilasters and capped with a pediment inset with a fanlight. Upper level and steeple openings are arched. Lower level windows exhibit a 12/12 sash. The Episcopal cemetery is situated immediately north of the church building. The structure was designed by architect-builder Ephraim Russ.
001-09-0032	1850		Episcopal Rectory. This is a one and one-half story brick structure with a rear extension. The main house faces southwest. It has a large two-bay gabled dormer (altered) flanked by single-bay gabled dormers.
001-09-0035	prior 1854	16	The main entrance of this residence faces northwest. The house is built into the hillside and rises to a full three levels in the rear. It is a gabled clapboard structure with a shed roof sloping to the east. There are shed dormers projecting from the west ridge, a single doorway flanked by pilasters, and a two-bay portico extending from the northwest facade to the first bay of the west facade.
001-09-0036	prior 1854	16	This is a simple one and one-half story, three-bay clapboard structure with a central entrance. It has fluted molding around the doorway, eyebrow windows in the frieze, corner pilasters and a combination of 9/9 and 6/6 window sash.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. District Item number 7 Page 16

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

Albany Hill Road Continued

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0037	prior 1850	16	This is the last structure in the district from the northeast. It is oriented toward the south, looking down Albany Hill Road. The residence is a two-story, five-bay clapboard structure built against the hillside. It has some Greek Revival style detailing but has undergone considerable alteration, particularly at the rear elevation.
001-09-0038	prior 1850	16	This is a one and one-half story, three-bay clapboard structure featuring a simple Greek Revival style doorway, dentils under the eaves and a combination of 6/6 and 9/6 window sash. There are small extensions from the main building on north and west facades. This was the toll house for the old Delaware Turnpike.

METHODIST HILL ROAD

001-09-0045	1839	3	Conkling Hall. This is a large, rectangular former church building built on a brick foundation. The central pavilion rises to a modest steeple (partially removed). Openings in the main facade are capped with pediments. Tall, vertical windows in the north and south facades include as many as eighty-five lights each. This was originally a Methodist church built by Ephraim Russ. It was purchased by F.C. Huyck in 1903 and converted into a community hall.
001-09-0046	prior 1820		This is a simple two and one-half story, three-bay clapboard structure built on a brick foundation. A recessed doorway is finished in decorative wood panelling. The building is oriented with the gable end toward the street. The main facade features only corner pilasters and roof returns. There is a small one-story rear extension with Greek Revival style detailing. A private school was begun here in the 1860's. It is now a private residence.
001-09-0047	early to late 19th century	22	Rensselaerville Cemetery. A small picturesque rural cemetery incorporating an early burying ground. Hillside location is laid out with curving roadways and ornate nineteenth century sculptural markers.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. District Item number 7 Page 17

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

METHODIST HILL ROAD CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0048	1840s	11	This is a one and one-half story Greek temple structure. The pedimented portico is supported by four fluted and battered Doric columns. The main facade consists of three bays defined by flat pilasters. It also features floor length windows and a Greek doorway flanked by pilasters with a narrow, horizontal transom above. The original house was built before 1840. It was enlarged in the 1840's in the Greek Revival style, possibly designed by Ephraim Russ. At this time, the property was owned by O.M. Chittenden, a village attorney.
001-09-0049	1909	19	This is the northeasternmost structure in the district located on Methodist Hill Road. It is set back a considerable distance from the road and nearly concealed behind several large trees. The house was built for Rev. John Gordon in the Classical Revival style. It features a two-story (double) pedimented portico supported by columns.
001-09-0050	1807	8	A modest two-story, five-bay clapboard structure. The only decorative elements are slender corner pilasters and the pilasters, entablature, and dentils of the entrance in the east facade. The south facade serves as the main entrance and features a modest portico.
001-09-0051	1949	28	Small one-story clapboard structure (Intrusion).
001-09-0052	1854	7	A modest two-story, four-bay clapboard structure with a one-story rear extension. A one-story portico extends the length of the east and south facades. It exhibits simple bargeboard decoration. A large outbuilding is situated at the rear of the property.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 18
Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

METHODIST HILL ROAD CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0053	prior 1854	7	A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with the gable end facing Methodist Hill Road. There is a one-story, three-bay portico with bargeboard decoration projecting from the main facade. A small garage is also situated on the property.
001-09-0054	1830	7,25	A two-story, two-bay clapboard structure with a pedimented gable facing Methodist Hill Road. A broad frieze envelopes the building. The main facade features corner pilasters and a Greek Revival entrance with a recessed doorway flanked by fluted pilasters. A one-story rear extension has eyebrow windows in the frieze. Two large outbuildings are situated behind the main house.
001-09-0055	Unknown		A small, modest, two-story, two-bay clapboard cottage with Greek Revival proportions.
001-09-0056	1850	17	Formerly a carriage house. Renovated in 1979-80 as a private residence. The building features modern hipped roofs and large dormers. (<u>Intrusion.</u>)
<u>ROUTE 85</u>			
001-09-0062	prior 1820		This is a one and one-half story clapboard structure with asymmetrical fenestration in the main facade. There is a one-story extension projecting from the south facade with a simple portico and bargeboard decoration. This is purported to be one of the oldest structures in the village. It served as a doctor's office during the second half of the 19th century.
001-09-0063	prior 1854		A two-story, two-bay clapboard structure with a one and one-half story extension from the south facade. The main entrance to the building is in this addition. The main building is situated with the gable end toward Main St. It is decorated with corner pilasters. A one-story portico extends the length of the side extension. There is a large outbuilding situated just north of this property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Historic Dis. Item number 7 Page 19

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

ROUTE 85 CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0064, 64a	Unknown	23	Two small outbuildings probably dating to the early nineteenth century.
001-09-0065	prior 1854	23	A two-story, four-bay clapboard residence with a one-story extension from the north facade. It features a simple Greek Revival style doorway flanked by thin pilasters, capped with an entablature inset with a horizontal transom and slightly projecting entablatures over each window.
001-09-0066	1836	13	Former Baptist Church. This is a two-story, three-bay structure with a central doorway flanked by simple pilasters and capped with an entablature. There is 12/12 window sash throughout. This was built as a Baptist Church by Ephraim Russ. It has now been converted into a residence and ceramic studio. The church spire has been removed.
001-09-0067	1833	13	This is a two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with the gable end facing Route 85. The facade features corner pilasters, a pedimented doorway, and a fanlight in the gable.
001-09-0068	1830	13	This is a two-story, two-bay clapboard structure with a one and one-half story rear extension. The gable end faces Route 85. The facade features corner pilasters, a simple Greek Revival doorway and a variety of 12/8 and 9/6 sash. It was built for Gideon Cornell, founder of the First Presbyterian Church.
001-09-0069	1827	23	This is a two-story, five-bay clapboard structure with a one-story extension from the north facade. There is a central doorway with horizontal transom above and a three-bay portico projecting from the main facade, supported by Doric columns. Both the main house and the extension exhibit corner pilasters. There is a large barn building, now a garage, on the far northern edge of the property.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7 Page 20

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

ROUTE 85 CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-0069	(Continued)		This house was headquarters for the militia during the anti-rent wars. It has served as the Presbyterian Manse in recent years.
001-09-0070	prior	23	A two-story, three-bay clapboard structure with an enclosed front entrance (modern alteration). There is a one-story extension at the north facade and a small porch with a bargeboard decoration.
001-09-0071	1800	23	This is a two-story ell with a pedimented gable fronting on Route 85. There are corner pilasters on the main facade and a blocked swag in the pediment. This building served as a boarding school for a time in the 19th century. It later was the winter residence for the proprietor of the Catalpa House.
ROUTE 351, MEDUSA ROAD			
001-09-81	c1830		This is a two-story frame residence with clapboard siding. It is built into the hillside and has an entrance to second floor principal rooms on the east end. Simple, unembellished details predominate throughout.
001-09-82	c1830		This is a one and-a-half story frame residence with clapboard siding. A shed addition is attached to the rear. A large enclosed front porch obscures the facade.
001-09-83	c1840		This is a two story frame residence with clapboard siding built in the Greek Revival style. The facade is on the gable end. A later porch appears on the facade as well as an addition on the north side.
001-09-84	c1860		This is a two story frame residence with clapboard siding. It reflects the Italianate taste with a flat roof, bracketed cornice and decorative porch details. A kitchen dependency has been removed from the rear.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 7

Page 21

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

ROUTE 351, MEDUSA ROAD CONTINUED

<u>Unique Site No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Photo</u>	<u>Description</u>
001-09-85	c1850		This is a small, one and-a-half story frame residence set back from the highway. Additions to both ends have altered the form and sealed off the house but maintains its association with the district.
001-09-86	c1850		This is a small one and-a-half story frame residence with novelty siding. A shed with two vehicular doors is attached to the north end and a vestibule encloses the entrance on the facade.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates (1790-1910)

Builder/Architect Ephraim Russ and others

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Rensselaerville Historic District is historically and architecturally important as a rare surviving example of an intact early nineteenth century hamlet in a dramatic natural setting. Settled by New England migrants who were attracted by farming opportunities and the development of regional turnpikes, the hamlet quickly became a business and financial hub for the region and a small manufacturing center supporting its own laboring class. By 1832, Rensselaerville was one of the most prosperous villages in the state and this prosperity was reflected in the construction of many substantial residences exhibiting regional interpretations of the most sophisticated architectural fashions of the period, in its support of four religious congregations, and in the development of many local businesses. The regional importance of the hamlet declined after 1850 with the advent of railroads and canals which by-passed this remote location, and by the late nineteenth century, Rensselaerville had reverted to a quiet rural village. Today a wealth of intact residential architecture from the first half of the nineteenth century, as well as examples of early village industry, recall a prosperous era. The subsequent genteel additions and modifications to the village as it evolved into a primarily summer residential community have made a contribution to the significance of this now remote retreat in the Helderbergs.

The town of Rensselaerville obtained official status within Albany County in 1790. It was a large, rambling entity and consequently gave way to other towns from within its own boundaries, including Berne in 1795 and Westerlo in 1815.¹ The town of Rensselaerville formerly comprised the southwest corner of the manor of Rensselaerwyck. The origin of the manor dates to the establishment of patroonships under the "Freedoms and Exemptions" granted by the Dutch West India Company in 1630. Subsequent grants in the late seventeenth century from the English government to the Van Rensselaer family, proprietors of the manor, gave sanction and definition to their holdings which encompassed thousands of acres on either side of the Hudson River near Albany.²

Although Rensselaerswyck was the only successful manorial estate in New York, it remained largely unproductive prior to the Revolution. When proprietor Stephen Van Rensselaer III came of age in 1785, he undertook the task of settling the more remote parts of the manor. This included Rensselaerville, which was at that time considered the least accessible and least valuable part of the patroon's grant.³ Van Rensselaer commissioned a survey of his holdings and the Helderbergs were subsequently divided into 160-acre lots. He offered free use of land for seven years and, therefore, perpetual leases subject to payment of goods or in-kind services.⁴

Lot 249 in the town of Rensselaerville included most of the land that was to become the village of Rensselaerville. This subdivision was probably set aside as a "village lot" at an early time and, consequently, deeded in parcels much smaller than the designated 160 acres. No inhabitants resided within the bounds of lot 249 at the time of the Van Rensselaer survey in 1786. A number of individuals had settled in the vicinity, however, even before the survey was undertaken. These settlers apparently built their houses upon the highest points of land. "Tree marked paths were the guide from one cabin to another and were the beginning of...present roads from hilltop to hilltop."⁵ This attraction to the hilltops concentrated in an area about two miles

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 109

Quadrangle name Rensselaerville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	8
---	---

5	7	1	3	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	7	5	4	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

B

1	8
---	---

5	7	1	4	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	7	4	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	8
---	---

5	7	1	4	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	7	2	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

D

1	8
---	---

5	7	1	3	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	6	9	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

E

1	8
---	---

5	7	1	0	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	6	7	8	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

F

1	8
---	---

5	7	0	9	9	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	7	0	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

G

1	8
---	---

5	7	0	8	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	7	1	1	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

H

1	8
---	---

5	7	0	8	5	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	7	0	7	0	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Verbal boundary description and justification The district boundary includes all the contributing historic buildings contained within the densely developed nineteenth-century hamlet of Rensselaerville. No immediately adjacent buildings fall outside the boundaries except intrusions. The western boundary for site #001-09-0080 was determined by the historic lot boundary for the hamlet. See attached map for description.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	n/a	code
state	n/a	code	county	n/a	code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Botch

organization Rensselaerville Historical Society

street & number NA

city or town Rensselaerville

Contact: Neil Larson
NYS Division for Historic Preservation
Agency Building 1, Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238 (518) 474-0479

date March 1983

telephone NA

state New York

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

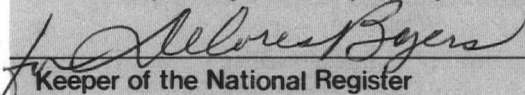
title Commissioner

date 8/9/83

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the
National Register


Keeper of the National Register

date 9/15/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 8

Page 2

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

west of the present village of Rensselaerville at a spot referred to locally as Mt. Pisgah. The original hamlet had its roots here as early as 1788 but soon relocated to the site of the present hamlet in the valley of the Ten Mile Creek.

The first settler in Rensselaerville was Samuel Jenkins from West Stockbridge, Massachusetts. He came in 1788 and built a grist mill the following year on the site of the present mill structure.⁶ Other migrants from Massachusetts and Long Island, Connecticut, and Rhode Island came within the next few years and built in other parts of the village. During the early years of the 1790's, the granting of leaseholds by the patroon multiplied and large numbers of farms were cleared not only in Rensselaerville but in all parts of the Helderberg region. Abundant hemlock forests furnished resources for leather making and, before the end of the decade, there were tanneries in every quarter of the town. The hamlet itself grew as a consequence of these activities and additional mills, tanneries, and factories appeared along Ten Mile Creek.⁷

The construction of the Delaware Turnpike in Albany County in 1805 and other adjunct roads and turnpikes, however, probably contributed most to the growth and prosperity of Rensselaerville. The Delaware Turnpike originated in the city of Albany and ran directly through the hamlet of Rensselaerville. The hamlet's position along the road made it a convenient stopping place for coaches traveling to and from the western part of the state.⁸ As the hamlet prospered under these conditions, its architecture acquired a distinctive quality unsurpassed in the region. Numerous pretentious residences were built such as the Stevens House and the Rider House. Four grand churches create an exceptional scale in the tiny community. The Episcopal Church was erected in 1814; the first village Baptist Meetinghouse in 1836; a Methodist Hall in 1839; and the second village Presbyterian Church in 1842. Ephraim Russ, a resident architect-builder, is responsible for the design and construction of all the church buildings and at least a half dozen of the hamlet's most attractive homes.

By 1843 the hamlet was at its peak. At that time, the population was estimated at between seven hundred and one thousand. Within the hamlet there were eight schools, three clergymen, three lawyers, four doctors, sixteen merchants and grocers, hotel keepers, one tanner, one hatter, and numerous mechanics, artisans, and farmers.⁹

The position of Rensselaerville in the first half of the nineteenth century reflected a general regional and even statewide prosperity. The years following the Revolution in New York witnessed a remarkable growth and expansion. This was a time during which thousands of villages were established and a period during which the resources of forest and stream were comprehensively tapped. By 1825, the rural regions of the state were by no means completely filled but every district had been entered. No large blocks of farmland remained unsold and in general the basic pattern of farms and villages had been set.¹⁰ Rensselaerville was no exception to this trend.

The early nineteenth century was also a time of the great New England migration occasioned by the forces of an increasing population outgrowing an available land supply. The proximity of New York State to the eastern seaboard made it an attractive destination for many.¹¹ With the exception of a few German and Scottish families, the

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Historic Dis. Item number 8

Page 3

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

settlers in Rensselaerville were from New England.¹² They built the mills and tanneries. They dammed the Ten Mile Creek to ensure a more constant and reliable source of power. They established churches and worked the thin rocky soil of the region. They came as farmers, tanners, millers, storekeepers, and even professionals. Many came as poor men but within less than a generation they prospered.¹³

This spirit of expansion, improvement, and prosperity which characterized the early nineteenth century probably caught the imagination of the young patroon, Van Rensselaer. His development of the ancestral estate no doubt contributed to prosperity in the Helderberg towns and in the hamlets such as Rensselaerville.¹⁴ But, equally important, a primitive transportation system persisted throughout the early decades of the nineteenth century. Migration into this marginally fertile region, therefore, occurred less for the opportunities it offered newcomers than for the fact that pioneers could migrate little further west and still maintain transportation links with regional market centers.¹⁵

The agricultural importance of the Helderbergs and the central function of the village of Rensselaerville were short lived once improvements in transportation began to take effect. Rural decline commenced as early as the 1830's. The canals and railroads that opened the west to settlement and exploitation completely by-passed Rensselaerville. Transportation difficulties, tolerated in earlier times because of their universality, became a distinct economic disadvantage. At the same time, depletion of hemlock forests crushed an important local industry. The shallow soils of the region were completely exhausted after only a few decades of unscientific management. And, by mid-century, competition from the wheat and corn belts of the west accelerated the pace of rural decline in southern and western Albany County.

A twenty-seven percent decline in the population of the Helderberg towns occurred in the forty years following 1840. The town of Rensselaerville itself declined by more than 1000, leaving fewer than 2500 inhabitants by 1880.¹⁶ The village experienced a similar decline. A population of more than seven hundred in 1843 fell to only slightly more than five hundred in 1873 and many of the mills and factories subsequently closed.¹⁷

In an effort to stem this decline, a manufacturing concern was undertaken on the Upper Falls at Rensselaerville as late as 1870. F.C. Huyck, a village storekeeper, and his partner, Henry Waterbury, hoped to manufacture felts for use in the paper making industry. The Huyck Felt Mills are a thriving concern today but the operation lasted only eight years in Rensselaerville before relocating in Albany. The closing of this mill marked the end of active manufacturing in the village. The grist mill and buttery served the small regional farming population through the 1930's. Shops and hotels continued a bit longer, but all are now closed. The village serves a strictly residential population today and now attracts people seeking picturesque rural environments and summer residences.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received _____

date entered _____

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 8

Page 4

FOOTNOTES

1. Mary Fisher Torrance, Old Rensselaerville, p. 17.
2. Mrs. Washbon, Rensselaerville Reminiscences and Rhymes, Albany, New York: Charles Van Benthuysen & Sons, 1890, p.6.
3. Henrietta Riter, "150 Years: Trinity Episcopal Church," 1965.
4. Mrs. Washbon, Rensselaerville Reminiscences, pp. 6 and 9.
5. Ibid., p. 10.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
7. Ibid., pp. 27 and 38.
8. William Keller, "Rensselaerville: An Old Village of the Helderbergs," The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs Vol. X, 1924, No. 4 p. 4.
9. Mrs. Washbon, Rensselaerville Reminiscences p. 60; J. Disturnell, A Gazetteer of the State of New York, Albany: J. Disturnell, 1842, p. 53.
10. John Thompson, ed., Geography of New York State, Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966, p. 140.
11. Ibid., pp. 143-144.
12. Mrs. Washbon, Rensselaerville Reminiscences p. 13.
13. Mary Fisher Torrance, Old Rensselaerville, p. 19.
14. David Ellis, Landlords and Farmers in the Hudson Mohawk Region, 1790-1850, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1946, p. 38.
15. Mrs. Washbon, Rensselaerville Reminiscences p. 8.
16. David Ellis, Landlords and Farmers, p. 210.
17. Mrs. Washbon, Rensselaerville Reminiscences p. 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Rensselaerville Hist. Distr. Item number 9

Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brown, Francis. Edmund Niles Huyck: The Story of A Liberal. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1935.
- Disturnell, J. A Gazetteer of the State of New York. Albany: J. Disturnell, 1842.
- Ellis, David K. Landlords and Farmers in the Hudson Mohawk Region 1790-1850. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1946.
- French, J.H. Gazetteer of the State of New York. 1860.
- Goldring, Winifred, "Geology of the Berne Quadrangle," New York State Museum Bulletin. Albany, New York: University of the State of New York, Aug. 1935.
- Howell, George and Tenney, Jonathan. Bicentennial History of Albany: History of the County of Albany, New York from 1609-1886. New York: W.W. Munsell & Co, 1886.
- Keller, William, "Rensselaerville: An Old Village of the Helderbergs," The White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs. Volume X, No. 4, 1924.
- Parker, Amasa. Landmarks of Albany County, New York. Syracuse, New York: D. Mason & Company, 1897.
- Rensselaerville, N.Y., Rensselaerville Historical Society Research Collections.
- Rensselaerville Historical Society. People Made It Happen Here: History of the Town of Rensselaerville ca. 1788-1950.
- Riter, Henrietta. 150 Years: Trinity Episcopal Church. n.p. 1965.
- Thompson, John, ed. Geography of New York State. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1966.
- Torrance, Mary Fisher. The Story of Old Rensselaerville, n.p. 1939.
- Washbon, Mrs. Rensselaerville Reminiscences and Rhymes. Albany, New York: Charles Van Benthuysen & Sons, 1890.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received
date entered

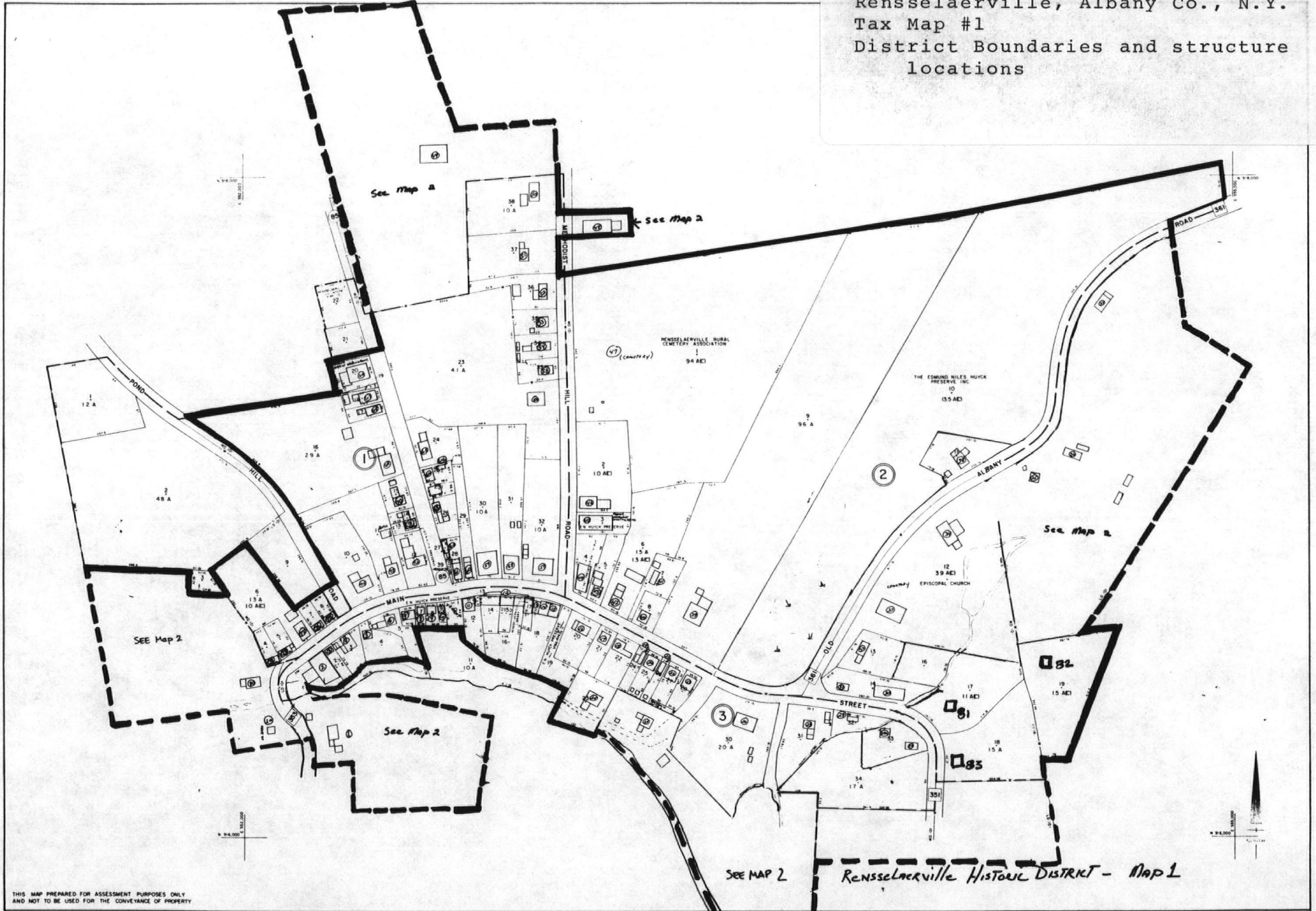
Continuation sheet Rensselaerville His. Distr. Item number 10

Page 2

Rensselaerville, Albany County, N.Y.

- I. 18/570780/4707000
- J. 18/570640/4707060
- K. 18/570570/4707120
- L. 18/570570/4707230
- M. 18/570640/4707330
- N. 18/570690/4707410
- O. 18/570650/4707850
- P. 18/570740/4707860
- Q. 18/570910/4707630
- R. 18/570960/4707560

Rensselaerville Historic District
 Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
 Tax Map #1
 District Boundaries and structure
 locations



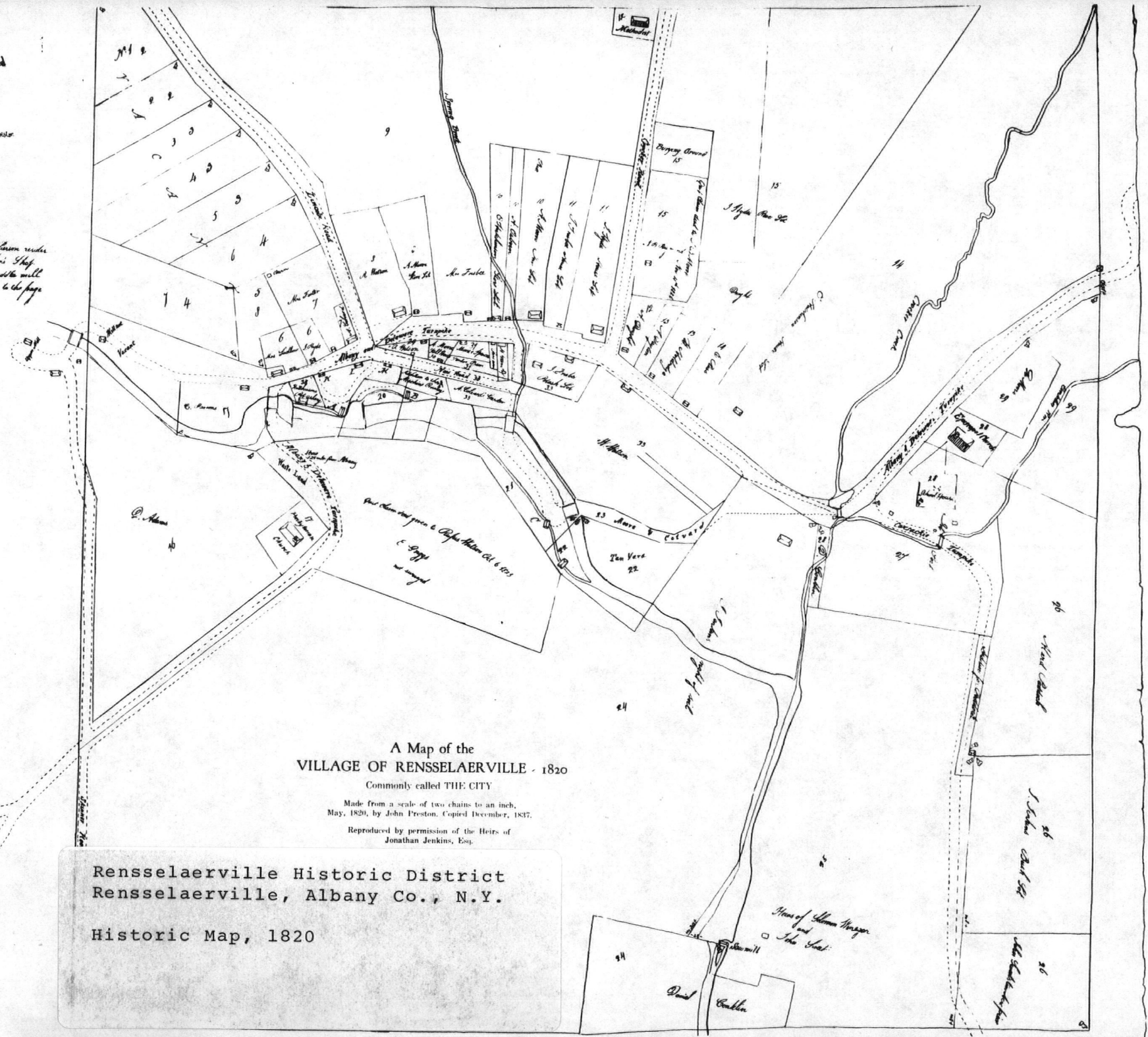
THIS MAP PREPARED FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY
 AND NOT TO BE USED FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY

SMITH & MAHONEY ENGINEERS & SURVEYORS ALBANY, N.Y.		REVISION TABLE		PROPERTY TAXES		ASSESSMENT		VALUATION		MARKET VALUE		MARKET VALUE		MARKET VALUE		MARKET VALUE		MARKET VALUE		MARKET VALUE			
NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY	NO.	DATE	DESCRIPTION	BY
1	12-15-09	Initial Map	SM	1	12-15-09	Initial Map	SM	1	12-15-09	Initial Map	SM	1	12-15-09	Initial Map	SM	1	12-15-09	Initial Map	SM	1	12-15-09	Initial Map	SM

TAX MAP
 TOWN OF
 RENSSELAERVILLE
 ALBANY COUNTY, NEW YORK
 137.09

A MAP
of the
village in Rensselaerville commonly called
THE CITY
and from a scale of two chains to an inch May 1820
John Preston

A Represents the Mills Mill
B The Machinery House
C The Saw Mill
D The Bark Mill
K The house in which James Sisson resides
L John Conklin's Collieries Shop
M A. Simmons' Millinery and the mill
The red numbers refer to the page
of the Folio

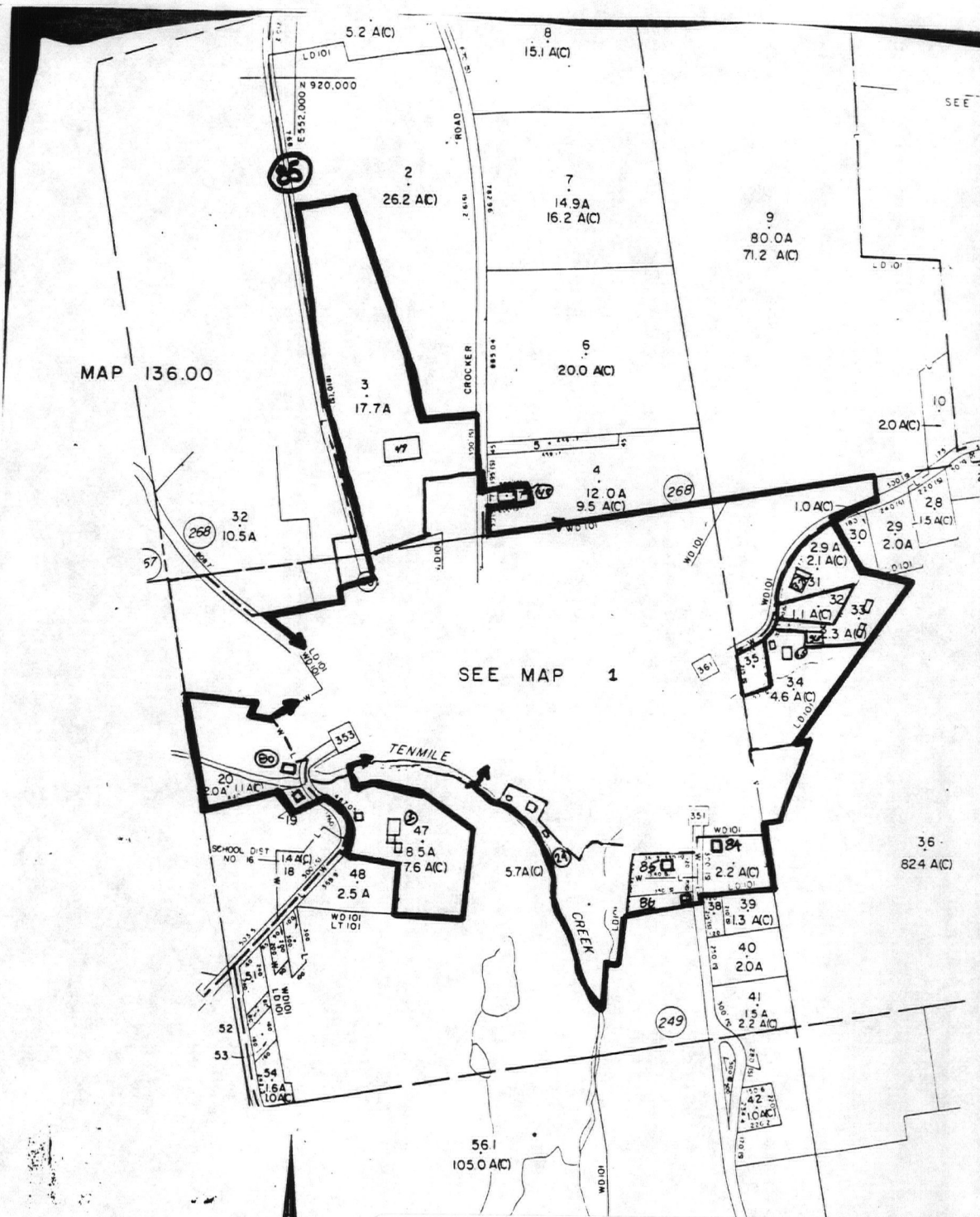


A Map of the
VILLAGE OF RENSSELAERVILLE - 1820
Commonly called THE CITY

Made from a scale of two chains to an inch,
May, 1820, by John Preston. Copied December, 1837.

Reproduced by permission of the Heirs of
Jonathan Jenkins, Esq.

Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Historic Map, 1820



Rensselaerville Historic District
 Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
 Tax Map #2
 District Boundaries and structure
 locations



ADVANCE PRINT

THIS TAX MAP HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED
 BY THE NEW YORK STATE BOARD OF
 EQUALIZATION AND ASSESSMENT.

TAX MAP
 TOWN OF
 RENNELAERVILLE
 ALBANY COUNTY, NEW YORK

COMPOSITE OF
 MAPS 136.00, 137.00
 AND 137.09

400 800
 METERS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Rensselaerville Historic District
Albany County
NEW YORK

AUG 12 1983

Working No. _____
Fed. Reg. Date: 2-7-84
Date Due: 9/8/83 - 9/26/83
Action: ACCEPT 9/15/83
 RETURN _____
 REJECT _____
Federal Agency: _____

Entered in the
National Register

- resubmission
- nomination by person or local government
- owner objection
- appeal

Substantive Review: sample request appeal NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- alterations/integrity
- dates
- boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
- clarity
- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
- relationship of integrity to significance
- justification of exception
- other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



Rensselaerville Historic Distr.

Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983

Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View **1**: Telephoto view of distr.
from Rt. 351



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
View 1A: Albany Co., N.Y. 12238
Main St., north side, looking
east toward Presbyterian Church



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany Co., N.Y. 12238
View 2: Main St. looking east
just west of Rt. 85



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983

Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 3: Old Methodist Church, now
Conkling Town Hall, east side
Methodist Hill Road



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983

Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 4: House, east side Route
#353 (first structure in district
from the south).



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany Co., N.Y. 12238

View 5: Houses, northwest corner
Main Street and Pond Hill Road



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany Co., N.Y. 12238

View 6: Rear of houses fronting
south side of Main Street



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany Co., N.Y. 12238

View 7: Looking south on Methodist
Hill Road (houses on west side of
road)



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany Co., N.Y. 12238
View 8: House, site No.
001-09-0050



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 9: Jenkins House, so. side
Main St.; Site No. 001-09-0026



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983

Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 10: House, So. side Main St.;
Site No. 001-09-0027



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 11: House, east side Method-
ist Hill Rd.; Site #001-09-0048



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 12: Rowhouse, so. side Main
St.; Site No. 001-09-0012



Rensselaerville Historic Distr.
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., NY
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 13 View east side of Rt. 85,
looking north



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 14: **House**, no. side Main St.
Site No. 001-09-0039



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 14a: Doorway and window,
Site No. 001-09-0074



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983

Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238

View 15: Grist Mill, so. side Main
St.; Site #001-09-0002



Rensselaerville Historic Distr.
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 16: looking north on Old Al-
bany Road (above Episc. Church)



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., NY.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 17: House, west side Methodist
Hill Rd.; Site No. 001-09-0056
INTRUSION



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 18: House, no. side Main St.
Site No. 001-09-0074(0072 at far
right)



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
View 19: House, west side Method-
ist Hill Road; Site #001-09-0049



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 20: House, so. side Main St.
Site No. 001-09-0029



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 21: Old Buttery, No. side
Main St.; No. 001-09-0030



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative : NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 22: Rensselaerville Cemetery
East side Methodist Hill Road



Rensselaerville Historic Dist.
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1982
Negative at: NYS Div. for Historic
Preservation Albany,
N.Y. 12238
View 23: looking south on Rt. 85



Rensselaerville Historic Distr.
Rensselaerville, Albany, Co. N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 24: Looking from south on to
west end of Main Street



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 25: House, west side Rt. 85
Site No. 001-09-0068



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 26; So. side Main St. looking
east from Presbyterian Church



Rensselaerville, Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, NY 12238
View 28: West Side Methodist Hill
Road, Site No. 001-09-0052

INT. 22



Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.
Photo by: Judith Botch, 1983
Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, N.Y. 12238
View 29 : So. Side Main St.
Site No. 001-09-0028



INTRUSION

Rensselaerville Historic District
Rensselaerville, Albany Co., N.Y.

Photo by: Judith Botch 1983

Negative: NYS Div. for His. Pres.
Albany, NY 12238

View 30: So. side Main St. # 001-09-0003

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name

Rensselaerville Historic District

County, State

Albany County,
NY

Reference Number

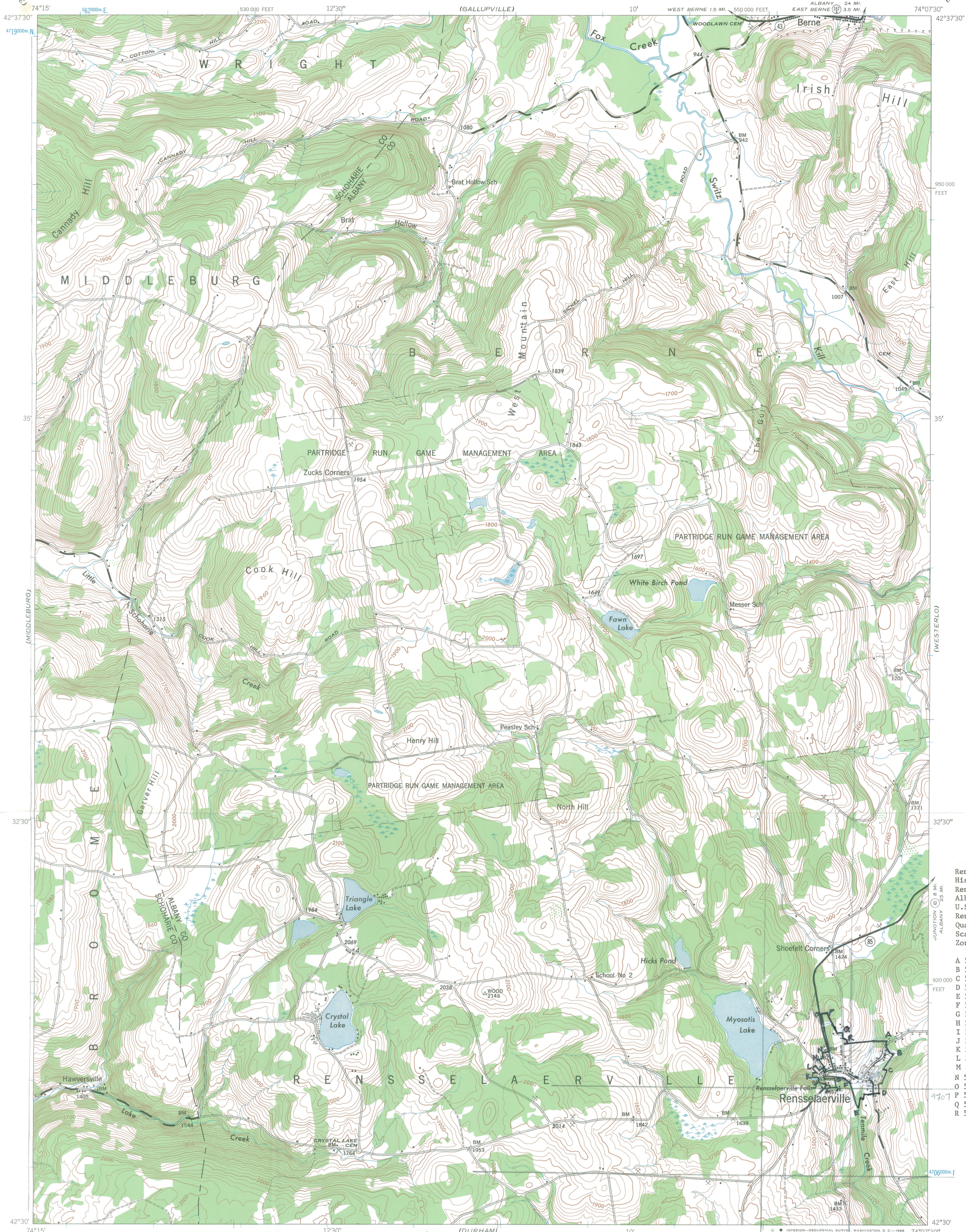
83001635

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

Nomination Form

Photographs (#25)

USGS Map

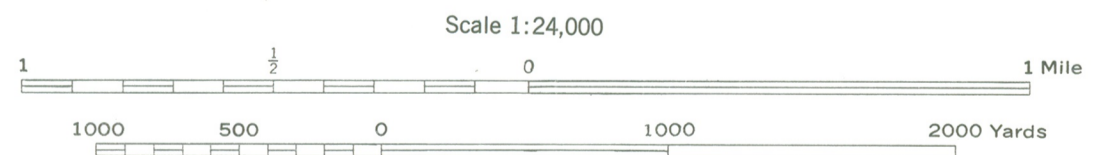


Rensselaerville
Historic District
Rensselaerville
Albany Co., N.Y.
U.S.G.S. Location
Rensselaerville
Quadrangle
Scale 1:24,000
Zone 18

- A 571390/4707540
- B 571480/4707400
- C 571410/4707210
- D 571320/4706950
- E 571090/4706780
- F 570990/4707060
- G 570830/4707110
- H 570850/4707020
- I 570780/4707000
- J 570640/4707060
- K 570570/4707120
- L 570570/4707230
- M 570640/4707330
- N 570690/4707410
- O 570650/4707850
- P 570740/4707860
- Q 570910/4707630
- R 570960/4707560

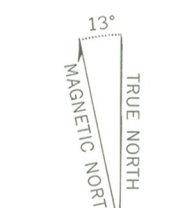
Mapped by Tennessee Valley Authority under direction of the
Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, 1944.
Control by USC&GS and TVA.
Topography by U. S. Geological Survey and Tennessee Valley Authority
by Stereophotogrammetric methods (Multiplex).
Field completion surveys by TVA.
Wide-angle photography by TVA, 1943.
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
1943
Dependable hard-surface, heavy-duty road. U.S. Route 7
Loose surface graded, dry weather road.
Secondary, hard-surface, all-weather road. State Route 20
Dirt road.
More than two lanes indicated by note along road with tick at point of change. 2 LANE 1 & LANE



CONTOUR INTERVAL 20 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

REPRINTED FROM MILITARY EDITION FOR CIVIL USE
TEN THOUSAND FOOT GRID BASED ON NEW YORK PLANE COORDINATE SYSTEM, EASTERN ZONE
ONE THOUSAND METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR GRID TICKS ZONE 18, SHOWN IN BLUE
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST



RENSELAERVILLE, N. Y.
N4230-W7407.5/7.5
EDITION OF 1946