

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

OMB NO. 1024-0018, NPS FORM

RECEIVED 2280

425

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties or 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 information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, 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 Valentown Hall

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Valentown Square

[] not for publication

town Victor

[] vicinity

state New York code NY county Ontario code 069 zip code 14453

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

J.W. Adams
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

24 March '97
Date

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

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

Signature of commenting or other official
State or federal agency and bureau

Date

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this 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: _____

for
Edson W. Beal 5/9/97
Signature of keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property/Category of Property/Number of Resources within Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

(check box)

(do not include previously listed resources in the count)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	5	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site			sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure			structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object			objects
		5	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM:

NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

COMMERCE/TRADE; specialty store
 SOCIAL; meeting hall
 RECREATION & CULTURE; community hall

Current Function

RECREATION & CULTURE; museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

late 19th Century; vernacular commercial

Materials

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
 walls frame/clapboard siding
 roof asphalt shingles
 other

Narrative Description

See attached continuation sheets.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Valentown Hall
Victor, Ontario County, New York

Section 7, Description, page 1

Description

Valentown Hall (1879), a three-story, gable-roofed frame commercial building/social hall, is situated at the crossroads of High Street and Valentown Road just east of NYS Route 96 in the town of Victor. Located in rolling hills three miles northwest of the village of Victor in northwest Ontario County, the immediate neighborhood was once a quiet, rural agrarian area but is now characterized by rampant suburban residential and commercial development. Valentown Hall and its ancillary buildings (including a contributing, early nineteenth century farmhouse [with three contributing dependencies] and a modern, non-contributing house) occupy a gently sloping, partially wooded, 14-acre lot that represents the only intact portion of the once much more extensive holdings associated with the complex.

Valentown Hall, originally built in 1879 as a community and commercial center for what the builder had hoped would be a booming rail terminus, retains a remarkably high degree of integrity of location, design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling and association. Vernacular and utilitarian in character, the hall is a three-story, ten-bay rectangular frame building sheathed with weathered pine novelty siding. Built into a slight hill, the superstructure rests on a random fieldstone foundation which is exposed below grade on the south and west elevations. The moderately pitched gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has overhanging eaves with simple cornices and fascia which accommodate an interior, or Yankee, gutter system.

A full-length, one-story porch with a concrete floor and a hipped roof supported by turned posts extends across the front (west) facade. Fenestration throughout the building is generally symmetrical. First- and second-story windows contain six-over-six double-hung sash and third-story (i.e., the ballroom floor) windows contain tall, nine-over-nine double-hung sash. All windows feature simple wooden trim and most have original glazing.

The front (west) porch provides shelter and access to four separate retail spaces, including a large general store in the

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Valentown Hall
Victor, Ontario County, New York

Section 7, Description, page 2

north half of the building, three small shops in the southwest quarter of the building and an open public mall area in the southeast quarter of the building. Nine separate doors provide access to the interior, and irregularly spaced, double-hung windows light the shops and provide display areas. The second story features ten slightly irregularly spaced six-over-six windows, and the third story features five nine-over-nine windows, each of which is roughly centered above a pair of corresponding windows on the second story. The north elevation features two centrally placed six-over-six windows, one each on the first and second stories, and one centrally placed nine-over-nine window lighting the third-story ballroom. The attic level is marked by a round-arched window in the apex of the gable end. The south elevation, overlooking High Street, features two asymmetrically placed six-over-six first-story windows, two regularly spaced six-over-six second-story windows, two tall third-story windows (currently boarded over with weathered siding) and a round-arched attic window.

Below grade on the east (rear) elevation are three wooden pedestrian doors, a large wooden stable door and a large, fixed fifteen-light wooden window. Ten regularly spaced six-over-six windows mark the second and third stories, and five tall nine-over-nine windows mark the ballroom level.

Room configurations and original fabric survive virtually intact throughout most of the building's vernacular, utilitarian interior. All floors throughout the building are hard pine. Interior walls are sheathed in original wainscoting, or plaster and lath. Baseboards and simple wooden trim around door and windows openings survive intact throughout the building. All doors and door hardware are also original.

The first story contains a large general store, three smaller shops (formerly housing a bakery and meat market along with cobbler, barbers, and harness shops) and a large open mall which can be entered from all four former retail spaces. A small fireplace with wood pilasters and mantle is located at the south end of the mall/common area. The second floor can be reached from any one of four original staircases. The large room above the general store once housed the Valentown Grange; other rooms were used for schools of music, art, acting, and business.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Valentown Hall
Victor, Ontario County, New York

Section 7, Description, page 3

The third floor, or ballroom, is reached by means of two enclosed single run staircases at each end of the building. The north stairway leads to the ticket booth and lounge/common area while the south stairway terminates at a door beside the stage. Floors are hard pine and interior walls are sheathed in wainscoting, plaster and lath. The eighteen-foot-high ceilings are sheathed with pressed metal. Three original chandeliers with decorative medallions are symmetrically spaced along the center of the ballroom ceiling. Along the walls are rollaway benches; a wooden stage is located at the south end of the ballroom. Tall, narrow nine-over-nine windows extend from the top of the wainscoting almost to the ceiling. Virtually all fabric and hardware are original. A steep, single run staircase rises from the lounge/ticket booth area at the north end of the ballroom to the attic. The attic is unfinished and features a uniform board truss system with substantial cross bracing.

The basement, once a stable for patrons' horses, has a poured concrete floor and random fieldstone walls. Rough hewn beams and timber provide interior support. The basement is entered by means of doors on the east facade and by an enclosed interior single run staircase under the store.

There are four contributing support buildings associated with Valentown Hall, including an early nineteenth century farmhouse and its three dependencies: an outhouse, a shed and a garage. The farmhouse, believed to date from the 1830s/40s, is a modest, Greek Revival style building with a rectangular, gable-roofed form. It is distinguished by finely crafted, vernacular period detailing (including a slightly recessed, trabeated, off-center doorway and cast-iron grilles in several of the attic windows) and a cobblestone foundation. The outhouse is a small, rectangular, gable-roofed building with vertical board siding; the shed is a rectangular, shed-roofed building with weathered vertical siding, and the garage, believed to date from the early twentieth century, is a rectangular, salt-box-like building with horizontal board siding.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- [] A Property is 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.
[X] C Property that 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 pre-history or history.

Criteria Considerations: NA

- [] 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.

Area of Significance

Architecture

Period of Significance

1879

Significant Dates

1879

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)
na

Cultural Affiliation

na

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance: See attached.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Fisher, J. Sheldon. Owner; interviews.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- [] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
[] State historic preservation office
[] previously listed in the National Register
[] Other State agency
[] previously determined eligible by the National Register
[] Federal agency
[] Local government
[] designated a National Historic Landmark
[] University
[] recorded by Historic American Building Survey #
[X] Other:
[] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
Valentown Historical Society

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Valentown Hall, Victor, Ontario County
Victor, Ontario County, New York

Section 8, Significance, page 1

Statement of Significance

Valentown Hall is architecturally significant as a rare surviving example of a large scale, multi-purpose commercial building and community center in what was once a quiet, relatively undeveloped section of the rural agrarian town of Victor. Currently operating as a private museum, the vernacular, utilitarian building retains a remarkably high degree of integrity of design, materials, craftsmanship, feeling and association. The main building of the complex is complemented by an intact, early nineteenth century, Greek Revival style farmhouse which, in turn, is complemented by three intact dependencies.

Valentown Hall was constructed in 1879 by Levi Valentine in anticipation of the arrival of the Pittsburg, Shawmut and Northern Railroad and was designed to be the rail terminus and focal point of commercial, social and communal activity in what Valentine hoped would be the booming metropolis of Valentown. ("Valentown" is a cognomen of Valentine and Town, Valentine's mother's maiden name.) Unfortunately, the rail company went bankrupt before reaching Valentown; not only did Valentown not become a booming metropolis, it barely survived as a viable crossroads village. Valentown Hall remained an isolated relic in rural Victor, providing secondary services to occasional customers from the nearby villages of Fishers and Victor. By the second quarter of the twentieth century, the underutilized hall had fallen into disrepair and was slated for demolition. In 1940 it was acquired by a private citizen and, over the decades, has been converted into a museum designed to illustrate how Valentown Hall might have flourished had the railroad come to town.

Valentown Hall sits on the edge of an earlier village founded by Ichabod Town in 1809. The section of western New York containing the town of Victor was originally part of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase of 1788. In 1809, Town purchased 140 acres in Range 4 of the Victor Tract and proceeded to build a small village located where three Indian trails intersected (the present-day High Street, Turk Hill Road and Valentown Road east of Route 96). Town's early village contained his own log dwelling, a cooper shop, blacksmith shop, trading post, and

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Valentown Hall, Victor, Ontario County
Victor, Ontario County, New York

Section 8, Significance, page 2

schoolhouse. He also erected a sawmill on the bank of a nearby stream. During the War of 1812, American troops reputedly camped on the village quadrangle. Town's enclave grew and prospered, bolstered by the thriving agricultural enterprises in the surrounding rural township. By 1855, a plank road served Town's village.

During the spring of 1861, Samuel Valentine, who had married a Town daughter, erected several structures on the south side of the quadrangle which were painted red, white, and blue to show support for the northern war effort. These structures are longer extant. Mr. Town's village subsequently became known as a patriotic center with 4th of July celebrations held annually well into the twentieth century.

In 1879, Samuel Valentine's son, Levi, learned that the Pittsburg, Shawmut and Northern Railroad had been surveyed to run through the Town village center. On speculation, Levi designed and, with the help of carpenter Giles Wood, constructed a proper community center which he called "Valentown," a cognomen of his own last name and that of his maternal grandfather's. Befitting its soon-to-be role as the center of business and social activity, the hall was an impressive three-story commercial and community center complete with a massive ballroom in the third story. The first floor contained a general store, a bakery, a cobbler shop, a barber shop and a meat market. These stores opened onto an interior mall, or public space. The large room above the general store was adapted especially for the Valentown Grange, the largest organization to use the building. The basement contained stable space for patrons' horses. Schools of music, art and acting, and business offices were also located in second floor spaces. Of particular note was the Valentown School of acting which graduated Jessie Bonesteele in 1882. Ms. Bonesteele founded her own acting company which trained such future stars as Mary Pickford, Ann Harding, Catherine Cornell and Melvin Douglas.

Still surviving in its original condition, including the intact form, utilitarian design and decoration, and interior configurations, Valentown Hall is an architecturally significant example of a late nineteenth century commercial/community

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Valentown Hall, Victor, Ontario County
Victor, Ontario County, New York

Section 8, Significance, page 3

center. Characteristic features of the type include multi-purpose function of the building, with areas for commercial transactions, informal socializing, organized community events and local fraternal meetings. As a multi-purpose facility, Valentown Hall served (at least for a brief moment) as a focal point of communal activity, as did many late nineteenth century general stores. Typical of late nineteenth century commercial facilities, Valentown Hall featured small, specialized shops, each with its own proprietor and its own particular product; this practice was later replaced by the early modern department stores with one proprietor offering all products.

Unfortunately, the Pittsburg, Shawmut and Northern went bankrupt and its right-of-way passed forty miles from Valentown. Levi Valentine was forced to sell Valentown Hall, which continued under new owners as a modest commercial center until about 1910. During World War I, Valentown Hall was used as a military drill hall and also housed the local Red Cross. J. Sheldon Fisher, the present owner, purchased the property in 1940 before scheduled demolition could occur. He restored interior spaces to house a museum known as the "Ghost City of Valentown." He also encouraged use of the building as a social center. In 1945, Mr. Fisher, Sr. founded the Victor Historical Society; today, the building houses an extensive collection of local memorabilia including Mr. Fisher's large collection of regional Indian artifacts. The museum remains a popular tourist attraction and a widely recognized local landmark.

Valentown Hall, Victor, Ontario County

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 14 acres

UTM References

- A. 301470/4766420
- B. 301600/4766420
- C. 301600/4766300
- D. 301520/4766370
- E. 301400/4766370

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary coincides with legal lot lines of the nominated parcel as identified on the attached county tax map.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is drawn to encompass only 14 acres of the once extensive Fisher family holdings. The bulk of the former holdings have been subdivided and developed with modern commercial enterprises. The surviving 14-acre portion is the only section that retains its original rural, open character.

11. Form Prepared By:

contact: Nancy L. Todd, Program Analyst
organization NYSHPO, Division for Historic Preservation date March 1997
street & number Peebles Island, PO Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643
city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188-0189

Research submitted by: Spurgeon King, Historic Preservation Consultant
Rochester, New York

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.

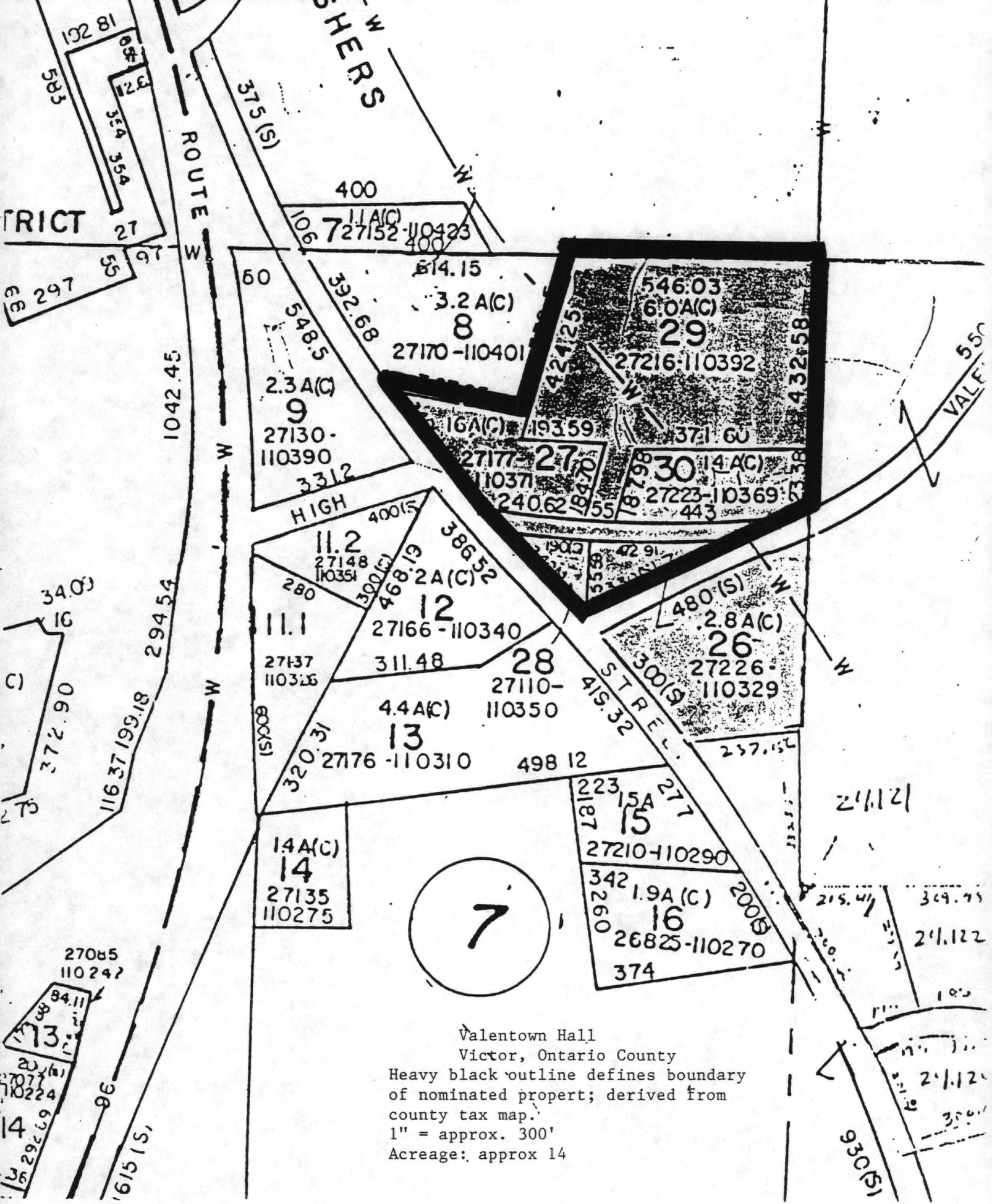
Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name _____
street & number _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____



Valentown Hall
 Victor, Ontario County
 Heavy black outline defines boundary
 of nominated property; derived from
 county tax map.
 1" = approx. 300'
 Acreage: approx 14

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Valentown Hall

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Ontario

DATE RECEIVED: 4/08/97 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 4/22/97
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/08/97 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/23/97
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 97000425

NOMINATOR: STATE

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 5/9/97 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



VALENTOWN

Valentown Hall, ~~Victor~~, Ontario Co
Valentown Square - Box 456
Fishers, New York 14453
(716) 924-1810

Photo: S. King, Rochester, 1996
Neg: OPRHP, Albany

VALENTOWN

HISTORY OF VALENTOWN HALL
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RESTORED BY
LAWSON FISHBEY



Valentown Hall, Victor, Ontario Co.
Valentown Square - Box 456
Fishers, New York 14453

(716) 924-1810

Photo: S. King, Rochester, 1996
Neg: OPRHP, Albany



Valentown Hall

Victor, Ontario Co.

Photo & Neg: N. Todd, OPRHP, 1996

View: contributing garage
behind 1830s farmhouse



Valentown Hall

Victor, Ontario Co.

Photo & Neg : N Todd, OPRHP, 1996

View : overall setting, with
non-contributing residence in
background



Farmhouse

Valentown Hall

Victor, Ontario Co.

Photo & Neg: N Todd, OPRHP, 1996

View: Front facade of
contributing farmhouse



Valentown Hall

Victor, Ontario Co.

Photo & Neg: n Todd, OPRHP, 1996

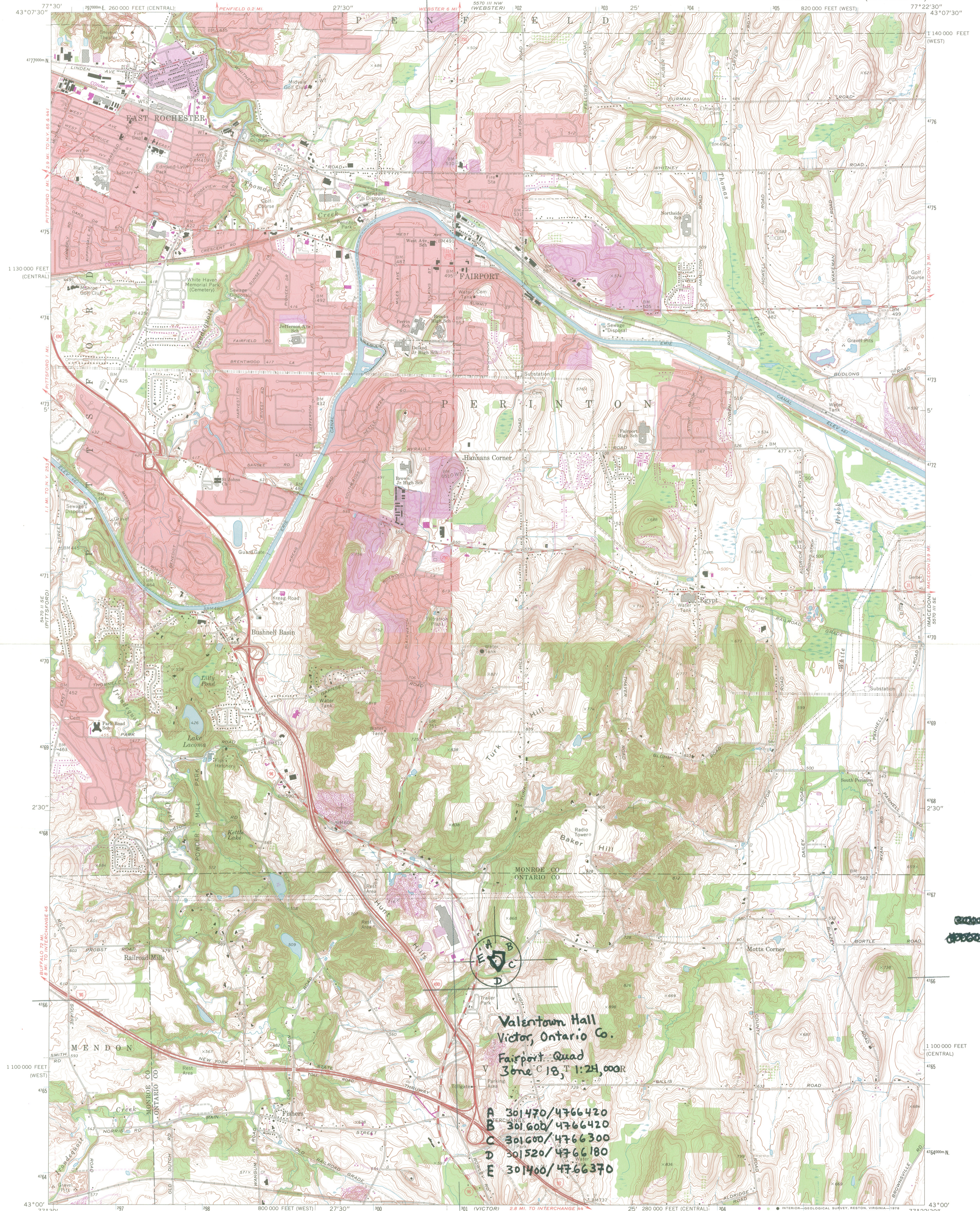
View: contributing shed behind
ca 1830s farmhouse



Valentown Hall
Victor, Ontario Co.

Photo & Neg: N Todd, OPRHP, 1996

View: contributing outhouse
behind ca 1830s farmhouse



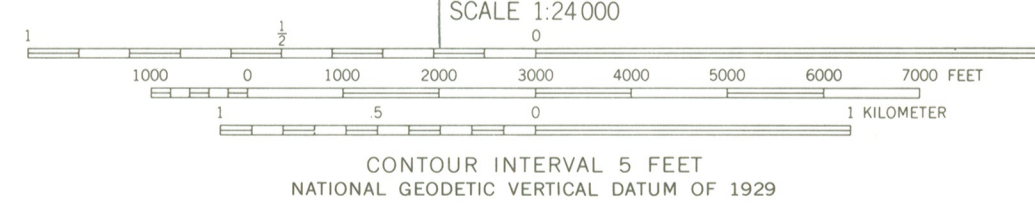
Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS, USC&GS, and New York Geodetic Survey
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1971
Supersedes map dated 1952

Projection: New York coordinate system, west zone (transverse Mercator)
10,000-foot grid ticks based on New York coordinate system, west and central zones
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue, 1927 North American datum

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown

UTM GRID AND 1978 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Primary highway, hard surface
- Secondary highway, hard surface
- Unimproved road
- Light-duty road, hard or improved surface
- U.S. Route
- State Route



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1976 and other source data. This information not field checked. Map edited 1978
Purple tint indicates extension of urban areas

FAIRPORT, N. Y.
N4300—W7722.5/7.5

1971
PHOTOREVISED 1978
AMS 5570 III SW—SERIES V821

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