

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 551 Otter Creek Rd not for publication
city or town Johnsonville (located in Town of Pittstown) vicinity
state New York code 083 county Rensselaer code 09 zip code 12094

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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 at the following level(s) of significance:
___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

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

- private
- public - Local
- public - State
- public - Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5		buildings
		sites
1	1	structures
		objects
6	1	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Pittstown Farmsteads

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC, multiple family dwelling
- AGRICULTURE, storage
- AGRICULTURE, agricultural field
- AGRICULTURE, animal facility
- AGRICULTURE, agricultural outbuilding

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- DOMESTIC, multiple family dwelling
- AGRICULTURE, storage
- AGRICULTURE, agricultural field
- AGRICULTURE, animal facility
- AGRICULTURE, agricultural outbuilding

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- MID-19th CENTURY
- EARLY REPUBLIC
-
-
-

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- foundation: stone, concrete
- walls: wood, vinyl, metal
- roof: slate, metal
- other:

Narrative Description

Summary Description

The Cannon farmstead (551 Otter Creek Rd) is centrally located on rolling land (about 660' above sea level) in the Town of Pittstown, Rensselaer County, New York, at the east end of Otter Creek Rd near its intersection with Johnsonville Rd (CR 111). The historic farmstead lies in the northern part of Lot 133, the

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southern part of Lot 149, and the western part of Lot 150 in Sawyer's Third Tract of the Pittstown Patent. Much of the recently re-forested land has been returned to tillage, and the land is fenced using posts and high tensile wire. The house and outbuildings, except for the sheep barn, are located on two levels west of a wetland created by a south-flowing tributary of Otter Creek, which forms the east boundary of the property. The farm drive forms a U between the house, which faces directly onto the highway, and the horse barn located behind it. A hen house stands on the north side of the drive east of the horse barn. A corncrib, retrofitted as a sap house, is located east of the house and the drive. A recent extension continues west past the horse barn up the rise to where the main barn group housing the dairy operation stands. West of the buildings, the land rises fairly quickly to a ridge of 700'. This runs roughly north-south and protects the buildings from the prevailing wind direction. A family burial plot is located midway up this sloping pasture. The house is partially fronted by mature sugar maples, which also line the highway west of the buildings to the sheep barn, which stands on the north side of the road at the top of the rise.

Building List

House (east wing and ell built ca.1830; central two-story block and west wing added ca.1870; contributing; back of west wing extended 2002): The frame house is composed of a central, two-story, frontal gable block flanked by side-gabled, one-and-a-half-story wings. The higher of these wings, with half windows in the upper story, projects from the west wall of the main block; a slightly lower wing with narrow frieze band windows projects from the east wall. A long woodshed ell, now used as an apartment and a one-bay garage projects north from the eastern, lower wing. The west wing retains a long, shed-roofed back ell (added 2002) spanning its back wall. This roof, now with a standing seam metal roof, is slightly raised above its historic profile. The front roof faces of the wings, the ell, and the main block all have slate roofs. Except for the ell, these have bands of turned slates forming a sawtooth pattern visible from Otter Creek Road. The backs of the wings have recently added standing seam metal roofs. The wood clapboard siding is covered with vinyl siding.

Both wings and the main block retain front entrances off the shallow open porch spanning the front and east side. The most stylish entrance is located asymmetrically in the three-bay center block. This casing has a large extended architrave trimmed with a large, rounded moldings and is flanked by sidelights. The entrances centered in both three-bay wings lack the sidelights and have less elaborate versions of the main entrance casing. The main block is capped by a full return and a tympanum filled with sunburst design composed of lapped boards framing a single round-arched light made of blue glass. The wings have partial returns. The entire building retains most of its original, regular fenestration plan with a variety of vinyl sash. Most windows are flanked by louvered vinyl shutters.

The interior of the center block and west wing retains most of its original Italianate-style trim scheme dating to the ca.1870 construction period. This includes a wide staircase with carved newel post and balustrade, six-panel doors, and pocket doors in the parlor. An unusually spacious staircase accesses the attic above the center block, where the butted rafters can be viewed. From this level, no tying joints connect the three sections of the house.

Horse barn (1902, builder: Melvin Quackenbush; contributing): The three-story, gable-roofed frame horse barn has a banked foundation allowing entry into the second level of the north long wall. The frame is built with circular sawn lumber. In addition to its traditional post-and-beam walls, a hanging truss allows a single span in the two wagon bays on the ground floor. These open east onto the yard directly behind the house. The horse stalls are located in the western part of the ground floor. The slate roof, with a decorative band of turned slates on the side facing the road, has a "Gothic" gable in the south face with a square-headed Palladian window. The

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frame cupola ventilator is turned on its corner on the ridgeline and has a pyramidal roof and louvered openings. The barn has window openings on a different plan on each façade. These mainly have two-over-two wood sash, but on the west wall, an earlier pair of six-over-six wood sash is used in the second story. Much of the building's upper two stories are mow space, but the east end of the third floor was designed for wool storage. An opening through that section's floor drops from the wool room into a wool packing room directly below on the second story. The stone foundation is partially replaced with poured concrete, but the building retains its horizontal clapboard siding and a cornerstone carved "1902."

Corn crib (built ca.1865-1900; contributing): A corn crib with outward sloping slides stands east of the house. It retains a low ridgeline frame ventilator set slightly to the rear of the frontal gable slate roof, louvered shutters in the peak, and horizontally slatted slides. Its gable walls retain wood novelty siding. Its center entrance has sliding wood door made of beadboard. It retains its wood floor. The northeast and southeast corners stand on piers.

Hen house (built 2001, non-contributing): On the east side of the steps and path up to the main barn, the new chicken house is built into the bank on a poured concrete foundation. It has wood novelty siding and a painted metal roof. It houses a small egg flock.

Main barn group (north wing built ca.1862; west wing built ca.1895, with milk house added to east wall of hay barn, early 1960s; free stall addition (replaced 1990s) and new milk house added early 1960s; contributing): The main barn group on the upper level retains two historic period barns set at right angles to form an L-plan with a narrow gap (about two feet) between them.

The north wing was built as a three-bay, frame basement barn with its mow entrance located in the center bay on the north wall. This was reached via an earthen bank. The stone foundation remains exposed on the north exterior wall, but is heavily reinforced with poured concrete on the interior. The frame is constructed entirely of circular sawn lumber. The common rafters supporting its fairly low-pitched roof are butted, and a later door in the east peak accommodated a hay fork running on a track hung from the ridge. The milking parlor is now located in this building. The exterior has vertically laid wood siding and a slate roof with a band of turned slates forming a sawtooth detail on the face visible from Otter Creek Road.

The west wing was built as a three-bay hay barn with a single large wagon entrance centered in its west wall. Its post-and-beam frame is constructed entirely of sawn lumber and set on a low, level stone foundation. Both roof and walls are clad in later-added metal siding, which may conceal or replace historic finishes.

These two nineteenth-century buildings form the core of a much expanded dairy barn. The additions have poured concrete foundations and floors, metal siding, and metal roofs. The most prominent are a large new free stall barn (built ca.1990); a leanto connecting the historic barns at the northwest corner of the old main barn group; an addition (built 1972) on the east wall of the older north wing used as a holding area; and the milk house (built early 1960s) with a bulk tank.

Sheep barn (built 1899; contributing): The sheep barn is a gable-roofed, frame building constructed using large circular sawn timbers. Its foundation and much of its lower level, where there were walkout bays, are now buried, hiding the date stone on its southeast corner. The mow floor is gone, but the wall framing is largely intact. The building retains wood clapboard siding and a slate roof.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property 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.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1807-1962

Significant Dates

1807, 1826, 1855, 1899, 1902, 1944

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Melvin Quackenbush, horse and sheep barns

Period of Significance (justification)

The Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead was first developed ca.1807 during the settlement period of the Third Tract of the Pittstown Patent. The period of significance extends to the 50-year mark to encompass continued agricultural use in historic buildings.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

The property includes a small family cemetery in pasture adjacent to the dwelling house. It is the final resting place of the early owners of the farmstead and so historically associated with it.

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead, located in the Town of Pittstown, Rensselaer County, New York, satisfies National Register of Historic Places Criterion C as an intact and representative example of an historic farmstead in the Town of Pittstown. This property is being nominated in association with the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) entitled "Historic Farmsteads in Pittstown, New York." The Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead retains an intact assemblage of historic agricultural outbuildings and house embodying characteristic construction features of the region during the cited period of significance, and which exhibit distinctive and qualifying attributes as outlined in the associated MPDF context. These illustrate the variety of farm buildings constructed in the region from the early 1800s through the first quarter of the twentieth century. As a group, they also illustrate how later generations adapted some earlier buildings to meet new requirements. Among the farmstead's contributing resources are a bank barn (built ca.1862) and hay barn (built ca.1895) joined in a main barn group; a sheep barn (built 1899); a horse barn (built 1902); a corn crib (built ca.1862-1900); and a vernacular dwelling house built in two stages and incorporating details characteristic of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. These resources survive in an intact rural setting, which provides an appropriate context for this substantially intact Rensselaer County farm.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Ownership of the Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead, ca.1807-2012

The Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farm is located in the central part of the town in Sawyer's Third Tract of the Pittstown Patent, which remained largely unsettled until after the American Revolution. After the war, lots were quickly bought, or occasionally leased, mainly by New English outmigrants. Silas Herrington, Jr., (1782-1832) assembled the historic Herrington farm property located in Lots 149 and 150 between 1807 and 1821. He moved to Hoosick with his parents Silas, Sr., (1740-1819) and Frelove Fisk (1749/50-1831) from Scituate, Rhode Island, the year after the Treaty of Paris ended the American Revolution in 1783. In 1807, about the time he married Annatharosa Wing (1786-1861) and a little before their first child, Smith (1809-1868) was born, Silas, Jr., began acquiring land in the nearby Sawyer's Third Tract in Pittstown.

The first deed recorded his purchase of 84 acres in the western part of Lot 150 from Nehemiah and Rebekah Bayliss of Hoosick for \$2,250 on 28 May.¹ The relatively high price for this parcel strongly suggests that this property already had improvements—a house and possibly barns and cleared land. If so, it appears none of the buildings survive. In 1813, Silas bought 30 acres in Lot 149, adjacent to the west side of Lot 150, from Henry and Ruth Norton for \$900.² His final purchase, for 57.44 acres, also in Lot 149, was from Elijah and Eunice Hyde for \$1,866.90 in 1821.³ This brought the farm's acreage to about 165 acres.⁴

Silas's early death in 1832 at age 50 left his widow Annatharosa with at least four children, Lydia (1813-1890), Merritt (1816-1888), Nelson S. (1820-1901), and Ephraim (1824-1897), ages 21 to 12, on the farm. It appears that the two eldest sons, Smith (1809-1868) and Abraham (1810-1839), were already married and established on their own farms in the neighborhood. Abraham's untimely death seven years later, however, led to a lengthy period of litigation amongst the heirs of Silas Herrington, Jr., and Abraham's widow, Sallie Comstock (1812-1883), about the home farm, Abraham's farm, and the guardianship of Abraham's two sons when she married a man Reuben Miller. She petitioned without success to retain both guardianship of her children with

¹ *Book of Deeds 15/199*. Troy, New York (Office of Rensselaer County Clerk). All subsequent deed references located in this repository. Three years later, Herrington and Jonathan Yates paid Asabel Hitchcock and Ann (widow of Moses Northrup of Kingsbury) \$300 to quit claim the latter's right to all of Lot 150. This may indicate that Herrington and Yates shared the lot on lease earlier.

² 15/200.

³ 85/164.

⁴ Deeds after 1871 combine the two parcels in Lot 149 with the western portion of Lot 150 as a tract totaling 171.40 acres.

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Abraham and control of their inherited property located farther north on County Route 111. Instead, her former brother-in-law, Smith Herrington (1809-1868), gained guardianship of his two nephews and their property. Since the distribution of Silas's property among his heirs remained incomplete in 1839, the settlement of Abraham's estate, as one of his father's heirs, was tied to settlement of Silas's estate. Neither estate was settled until 1860, when the Abraham's younger son achieved majority.

By that time, Silas and Annatharosa's third son, Merritt was long since married and established on his own farm nearby, daughter Lydia had married Jacob Lansing Abbott and moved to her husband's farm (Thomas-Wiley-Abbott Farmstead under the same MPDF) farther south on County Route 111, and the youngest, Ephraim, had moved to Hoosick to work as a mechanic. Nelson S., the only son still at home when his father died in 1832, achieved majority and managed his father's farm. The census records show that this farm was both larger and more productive than those of Smith and Merritt. One cannot help but wonder with the litigious atmosphere at home why the youngest Ephraim might have pursued another livelihood in a different town.

During the quarter century while the dispute continued, he married Sally Ann Lamb (1822-1891), with whom he raised nine children. The 1855 census listed Charles W., 12; Smith, 9; Mary J., 6; Merritt, 5; Willard, 2; and Sarah E., 7 months. Russell, 3, and Nelson S., 4 months, were added in the 1860 enumeration. Emily F., nearly 2 in the 1865 state census, was the last. For at least a portion of that time, Nelson's mother lived with him and his family. She apparently lived elsewhere in 1850, but in 1855, the state census recorded her living in her son's household. The 1860 census, reflecting the settlement, recorded her living under Nelson's roof, but the owner of \$3,300 of real estate and \$143 of personal property and maintaining her own household. This large group lived in a frame house valued at \$200 in 1855 and \$300 in 1865.⁵ Since Silas, Jr., probably built this house for his young family in the early 1800s, his widow may have found it comfortable to remain there. In addition, it appears that Nelson may have focused on the farm rather than his family's accommodation. In April 1855, he bought an additional 43.49 acres in the north part of Lot 133 from Nathan Brownell, executor of the will of Benjamin Wallis, for \$2,848.60.⁶ This substantial sum may have stretched his resources thin, but this parcel might have insured his family's livelihood should the settlement of the two estates not be favorable.

Annatharosa Herrington died in 1861. When her estate was settled, Nelson bought out his siblings' shares to his parents' farm on 7 May 1862 for \$2,200.⁷ Sally Ann Herrington, Nelson's wife, died in 1891. At the end of that year, when he was 71 years old, he deeded the 171.45-acre home farm—minus an eleven reservation to his brother Merritt and the school house lot on the south side of Otter Creek Road—sembled by his father, Silas, Jr., as well as an adjacent 66.93-acre parcel in Lot 133 to his sons Nelson S., and Willard.⁸ Even so, the 1900 census recorded Nelson S., Sr., as head of household. Nelson, Jr., 40; Willard, 48; and Sarah Elizabeth, 46; lived with their father, who was recorded as married (this appears to be an error as no wife is recorded).⁹

Nelson, Sr., died in 1901, and sons, Willard and Nelson, Jr., maintained separate households in the, by then, much enlarged dwelling. Willard lived in the older, smaller section, now the east side of the house, and Nelson S., Jr., lived on the west side.¹⁰ Willard never married, but Nelson married Marietta, also called Etta (b.1874), ca.1905. The 1910 census recorded their one-year-old daughter Gladys. Jennie Fenton, 63, lived with them. A decade later, Lydia J. Fenton, age 72, lived in Nelson's household, and is likely the same person. Through 1920 Willard and Nelson maintained separate households. That year's census recorded Nelson as the

⁵ Population schedules for the *United States Census for 1850* (Household 1015 in Pittstown), *New York Census for 1855* (Household 81 in First Election District), and *United States Census for 1860* (Household 451, p.82).

⁶ 98/114.

⁷ 116/269.

⁸ 701/60. This deed dated 1944 provides the description and title chain of the property extending back to the 1891 deed.

⁹ *United States Census for 1900*. (www.ancestry.com)

¹⁰ Paul "Clark" and Edna Brownell, Interview with author, 15 April 2009.

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partner of Willard, head of household. By 1930, Nelson, 70, was head of a household composed of his two older brothers Willard, 77, and Russell, 73.¹¹ Willard died in 1935¹², but so far, no gravestone or death record is located for Nelson, his wife, or offspring. On 26 November 1937, Marietta Herrington, widow of Nelson, Jr.; Russell Herrington, either Nelson's older brother or, more likely, his son (b.1852); and his daughter, Emily F. Abbott (b.1863), sold the property to Ralph Sherman.¹³

Paul C. "Clark" (1914-2010) and Edna V. Brownell (1917-2011) bought the farm from Sherman, Clark's cousin, in 1944.¹⁴ The Brownells came from the Groveside section of Pittstown, where Clark had worked in the feed business for 12 or 13 years. They met playing characters in a three-act play in a church in Boyntonville. They raised two son, John, b.1938, and Earl, b.1941, on the farm.¹⁵

Matthew (b.1954) and Margaret "Peggy" (b.1955) Cannon bought the farm assembled by Silas S. Herrington, Jr. (1782-1832), between 1807 and 1821 from the Brownells in 1979. Until the Cannons started added property to maintain competitiveness in the Northeastern milk market, the property retained the boundary it achieved by 1855 under the ownership of Nelson Herrington, Sr., in 1855. The Cannons have had new property descriptions drawn up incorporating the lands added to the old property. The Cannons have also raised two sons on the farm.

Architectural and agricultural development of the Herrington-Brownell-Cannon farmstead

Silas Herrington, Jr., began assembling his property in Lots 149 and 150 in 1807. That year, a quit claim deed filed in 1810, shows that he purchased Lot 150 in 1807 in partnership with Jonathan Yates from Nehemiah and Rebekah Baylis.¹⁶ A retroactive deed recorded after the quit claim deed delineated the physical division of the lot, which may have been undivided until that time.¹⁷ The division gave Herrington 84 acres lying along the west bank of a south-flowing seasonal watercourse roughly splitting Lot 150. His purchase of two adjacent parcels in the southern part of Lot 149 in 1813 and 1821 brought his farm's acreage to roughly 165 acres. This acreage, with only the slightest changes, along with additional land purchased in Lot 133 in 1855 forms the lion's share of the farm today.

The price paid for the parcel in 1807 may indicate that there were already some buildings on Lot 150. If so, none appears to survive. The form and some details of the east wing of the house, composed of a one-and-a-half-story, three-bay, side-gabled main block and a slightly offset single-story back ell, appear to date later, about the period of Silas's death in 1832. This section retains the massing and regular fenestration plan of a vernacular frame dwelling constructed in the first third of the nineteenth century. Clark and Edna Brownell, who bought the property in 1944, found a small creamery or "cheese house" dating to the pre-Civil War period. This building had rows of shelves for milk pans, where cream could rise in relatively cool conditions, as it was partially below grade. It was located in the yard west of the woodshed ell on the east wing. The two small-scale blocks of the east wing, both with prominent Greek Revival-style cornices and partial returns, are overshadowed by large additions added during the third quarter of the century. In the later period, the older blocks were updated with new trim, doors, and sash. In 1826, Silas appears to have been settling his financial affairs as he recorded the deeds for the three parcels of land comprising his farmstead.¹⁸ This might also indicate plans for improvement to the property

¹¹ These census records were reviewed at www.ancestry.com.

¹² Rensselaer County cemetery lists located at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrensse/cemh8.htm>. Subsequent death dates found in this database of gravestone inscriptions.

¹³ 587/339.

¹⁴ 701/60.

¹⁵ Paul "Clark" and Edna Brownell, Interview with author, 15 April 2009.

¹⁶ 15/198.

¹⁷ 15/199.

¹⁸ Four deeds, one a quit claim clearing his title to the western portion of Lot 150, were filed on 15 July 1826.

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such as a new or remodeled dwelling house. As late as 1865, the census recorded the numerous Herringtons crammed into this house, by then old-fashioned and small and valued at \$300.

The deaths of Silas, Jr., in 1832 and his son Abraham in 1839 and the subsequent two decades of litigation to settle their estates may have stalled further construction on the Herrington farm until after the estates were settled in 1861. While it seems likely there was at least a threshing barn by the mid-1800s, none survives. Probably within a decade of the settlement, Nelson S. Herrington, who bought out his siblings' share in the farm in 1862, built the bank barn, which now forms the north wing of the main barn group. Its roofline and dimensions, with a relatively low mow, are characteristic of the 1860s and 1870s, when few Pittstown farmers had yet installed hay tracks and horse forks to aid in loading hay in their barns. The mixed lumber preparation technologies, with hewn long timbers and sawn posts and braces, is also characteristic. The barn's slate roof, matching those of other newer buildings on the farm, is probably a later alteration.

In spite of litigation, the 1855 state census recorded Nelson Herrington running a prosperous farm of 136 acres of improved land and 40 acres unimproved with a total value was \$8,160. He kept \$1,150 worth of stock and had \$150 in implements. His livestock included four horses and four oxen for motive power. He kept two one-year calves and milked six cows, which produced 300 pounds butter and 500 pounds cheese. Sally Ann would have used the small creamery, or "cheese house," located west of the woodshed and behind where the prominent center block of the house would later be built. This was furnished with shelves for milk pans to allow cream to rise. Nelson kept 80 sheep and cut 72 fleeces for 288 pounds of wool. This sizable wool flock were probably kept in a barn now gone. He kept pigs for domestic use, but they sold \$30 worth of poultry and \$20 in eggs. He had 60 acres of pasture and 33 acres of meadow, from which he cut 33 tons of hay. His fields produced above average yields. Harvests included 50 bushels of spring wheat from five acres, 262 bushels rye from 13 acres, 400 bushels corn from 21 acres, 420 bushels oats from 14 acres, and 500 bu. potatoes from 3 acres.¹⁹

The 1865 state census included the 43.49-acre parcel in the north part of Lot 133 purchased from Benjamin Wallis's estate and totaled 163 acres improved land and 55 unimproved. Herrington plowed 55 acres, an unusually large number for the region, kept 67 acres in pasture, and mowed 40 acres, which yielded 45 tons of hay in 1864. Despite a highly prosperous farm producing a variety of field crops including 200 bushels of oats, 175 bushels of winter rye, 275 bushels of corn, and 200 bushels of potatoes, the family still lived in a frame house valued at \$300.²⁰ The entire farm was valued at \$15,260, with \$1,200 in stock, and \$200 in tools. Like many of his neighbors, Nelson had begun growing flax as a cash crop to sell to the twine and oil factories along the Hoosick River. He planted 2 ½ acres in 1864, which yielded 23 bu. seed and 300 pounds lint. Wool was among his most significant cash crops. In 1864, he sheared 130 sheep for 550 pounds of wool. In 1865, he sheared 157 sheep for 600 pounds. He milked six cows to make 700 pounds of butter. He kept three horses and 2 oxen. He butchered nine pigs for 1,300 lbs pounds of pork and sold \$35 worth of poultry and \$25 in eggs. He also harvested 60 bushels of apples and made 6 barrels of cider.²¹ The farm value suggests that the bank barn stood by this time, but a large portion of his hay crop must have been stacked rather than put away in the mow. The corn crib built using lumber prepared similarly to the barn may also have been standing by this time. North of the corn crib stood a frame pig house, removed in the late twentieth century.²² The corn crib is the only small outbuilding that survives from the historic period on the farm.

Nelson farming nearly 400 acres in 1875, but no deeds show his owning more than the parcels accounted for earlier. It appears he was managing another farm, but did not own it. The valuation of his real estate

¹⁹ *New York Census for 1855*, Pittstown, First Election District, Agricultural schedule, p.5, line 42. The census was apparently recorded before he bought the additional parcel in Lot 133 following the settlement of Benjamin Wallis's estate by executor Nathan Brownell.

²⁰ *New York Census for 1865*, Pittstown, First Election District, Population schedule, Household 341.

²¹ *New York Census for 1865*, Pittstown, First Election District, Agricultural schedule, pp.9-12, line 42.

²² No pictures of this building have been identified.

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supports this conclusion. His own farm rose in value only \$720 to be valued at \$16,000, with \$1,000 in outbuildings, \$1,575 in stock, and \$400 in tools. The dairy and wool production remained relatively constant from 1865. The orchard of 100 trees had matured and bore 200 bushels of apples. He also pressed 6 barrels of cider.²³ This orchard, which spanned the southeast facing hillside rising west of the house, was lost in a hurricane a century later, when the Brownells owned the property. While most of the outbuildings combined for the \$1,000 valuation are gone, the frame house, valued at \$3,500 in 1875, had been enlarged to its present size. The center block, built against the old east wing as can be seen from newer block's attic, and the west wing of the house, were built during the previous decade. While the exterior is strongly Greek Revival-style in form, the heavy rounded trim, interior plan, and decorative scheme reflect the Italianate taste with a gracious stair hall in the center block and heavy trim in the public rooms.

After Sally Ann Herrington's death in 1891, her widowed husband deeded the property to their sons Willard and Nelson S., Jr. Soon after their acquisition, they added three large new outbuildings to the property in quick succession. Before their father's death in 1901, they built a hay barn (ca.1895) adjacent to the bank barn, which forms the west wing of the main barn group. They hired Melvin Quackenbush, a builder who lived between Pittstown and West Hoosick, to construct the large sheep barn in 1899 and the three-story horse barn with a wool packing room in 1902. The horse barn features a cupola ventilator turned 45 degrees, which became a signature of Quackenbush barns. The sheep barn and horse barn retain slate roofs, which appear to date to their construction. Both have a band of turned shingles creating four rows of saw teeth on the roof face visible from Otter Creek Road. The bank barn and the house have matching roofs, and the corn crib has a plain slate roof. The hay barn's roof is covered with later metal roofing, and the underside cannot be viewed to see whether that covers an earlier roof. Roofing and re-roofing with slate was popular in Pittstown when railroads opened after the Civil War. These routes connected with lines in western Vermont, where slate was quarried.

The hay barn is among the few examples in the study of a new building being constructed to make up the main barn group rather than an older building being moved and reused. While it is a simple, functional structure, the sheep and horse barns are large, well-developed examples of their type and period. Both suggest a prosperous farm with a focus on wool production. Fairly large scale sheep farming was relatively common in the area at the turn of the twentieth century, so the Herrington property was not unusual.²⁴ The survival of its large, turn-of-the-century sheep barn, however, is. The Herringtons also built two smaller outbuildings in the early twentieth century: an ice house and a frame smokehouse. An historic photograph shows these frontal gable frame buildings, both on poured concrete foundations and clad in wood novelty siding with deep eaves roofs marked by raking cornices. Like most of the buildings on the property, these had slate roofs.

The property sat idle a few years after Nelson S. Herrington, Jr.'s death in 1935 at age 70. The fencing, especially, was in poor condition. Nelson's heirs—his widow, a daughter, and probably a son—sold the property to Ralph Sherman in November 1937.²⁵ Sherman and his father worked the property as a dairy farm in the late 1930s. They refurbished the old ice house, since demolished, as a milk house. When Ralph went into the feed business in Schaghticoke, his cousin Clark Brownell took over the farm and subsequently bought it in 1944.²⁶ The farm had stanchions for 21, but at first he bought fifteen milkers. He also bought a 1939 John Deere A tractor and ploughs for \$1,000, although he kept a team for much of the work into the 1950s. The horse barn had three stalls and two boxes. Of the 250 acres, about 100 were in tillage with about 20 of that in corn. He notes there was "quite a lot of pasture" and between 50 and 60 acres of woodlot.

The Brownells used the horse, dairy, and hay barns much as Ralph Sherman had. Since they did not keep

²³ *New York Census for 1875*, Pittstown, First Election District, Agricultural schedule, pp.9-12, line 2.

²⁴ Clark Brownell, Interview with author, 15 April 2009.

²⁵ 587/339.

²⁶ 701/59.

Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead

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sheep, they used that barn for heifers and hay. During his first four years on the farm, Clark Brownell sold his milk at the Buskirk Gold Medal Farms station. He then joined the Dairymen's League. Their inspector agreed that Clark could strain the milk in the barn and carry it in cans down to the milk house, the former ice house. For home use, they kept pigs for meat and hens for eggs.

Brownell added a stanchion barn to the west end of the cow barn in the 1950s. In the early 1960s, he was the first in the area to put in a pipeline. At first, everyone pooh-poohed this improvement, but they all copied him in a few years time. Without it, the Brownells would have left the farm. The Delaval clock in the milk house given as a gift by the salesman is still in the milk room. The only building the Brownells demolished was the cheese house located west of the woodshed ell on the older east wing of the house.

In 1979, Matthew and Peggy Cannon bought the former Herrington farm from the Brownells. The Brownells had sold to a man named Kalkowski in 1977, but "he didn't last two years." The Brownells carried the mortgage for the Cannons, who came from New England seeking a farm. Peggy grew up on a Vermont dairy farm; Matt comes from suburban Boston. They really wanted to farm, and, as Matt notes, they liked the area and the owner financing was a big help to them starting out.

When they sold the farm, the Brownells were free of debt. The farm included, in addition to the small outbuildings, the horse barn, dairy barn, hay barn, and sheep barn when the Brownells bought the property. There was also a one-room schoolhouse at the bend in Otter Creek Rd overlooking the valley. Arsonists burned that building in the mid-1980s, after the Cannons bought the place.

The Cannons have added land and buildings in an effort to keep pace with the market, and they do carry debt on the property. They have expanded to 111 stalls and have put an eight-berth milking parlor in the basement of the old bank barn, which formed the north wing of the main barn group by the turn of the twentieth century. They restructured the drive to allow the tractor-trailer access to the milk house, which is attached to the east side of old hay barn located on the plateau behind the house and horse barn. Matt Cannon reckons there are at least thirteen additions to the main barn group.

The Cannons removed all of the remaining small historic-period outbuildings except the corn crib in the yard area behind the house. On the site of the old ice house/milk house and the smoke house, they built a domestic-scale hen house and yard in 2001. When they first moved in, the long ell north of the house's east wing was still used as a wood shed. They have converted it to a garage for the use of tenants renting the east wing of the house. The Cannons use the wagon bays of the horse barn as their garage. The entire farm has a conservation easement held by the Agricultural Stewardship Association of Greenwich, New York.

Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Please refer to bibliography for Pittstown Farmsteads MPDF. Additional sources used to prepare this nomination are cited in footnotes.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 195 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1
Zone Easting Northing

3
Zone Easting Northing

2
Zone Easting Northing

4
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

Please see attached map showing the historic property boundary minus two recently subdivided house lots totaling 30 acres. The remainder of the historic boundary of the approximately 225-acre property are encompassed by the larger, post-historic boundary.

Boundary Justification

The boundary uses the historic boundary of the farmstead established by 1855 excepting two recently subdivided house lots. These are located at the edges of the historic boundary. The first (tax parcel 34.1-25.12) is located east of a tributary of Otter Creek, which provides a physical and visual boundary on the historic and present-day of the farmstead. The second (tax parcel 34.1-25.2) is in the southwest corner of the historic farmstead and is accessed by a narrow strip along a treeline on the west line of Lot 133 in that section. The remaining boundary of this lot is defined by a woodlot adjoining open land. Thus, these two parcels are visually separate from the historic farmstead. Although the present owners have added nearly 200 more acres, the historic farmstead boundary can be delineated on the current tax map by historic lot lines on the south and north by current farmstead boundaries in Lots 133 and 150 respectively, the north conservation easement boundary in Lot 149 (adjacent to the Baum-Wallis farmstead and its conservation easement), and Baum Road on the west. This boundary is adopted because it both delineates the historic boundary and may be identified in modern tax maps.

Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead
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County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jessie A. Ravage
organization Preservation consultant date 4 August 2012
street & number 34 Delaware St telephone 607-547-9507
city or town Cooperstown state New York zip code 13326
e-mail jravage@stny.rr.com

Photographs:

List of digital photographs for NY_Rensselaer County_Pittstown Farmsteads MPS_Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead

Photographs of property shot by Jessie A. Ravage (34 Delaware Street, Cooperstown, NY, 13326, 607-547-9507, jravage@stny.rr.com), April 2012.

- 0001: Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead buildings, except for sheep barn, viewed from east-southeast on Otter Creek Rd
- 0002: House viewed from southeast
- 0003: House and horse barn viewed from southwest
- 0004: Main barn group including hay barn (left, or west wing) and bank barn (right, or north wing) with later milk house built against long wall of hay barn, viewed from south east
- 0005: Bank barn (north wing of main barn group) with shed-roofed addition viewed from northeast
- 0006: Sheep barn viewed from northeast, near entrance to drive to house and other outbuildings
- 0007: Corn crib, viewed from north-northwest

Property Owner:

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

name Matthew and Peggy Cannon
street & number 551 Otter Creek Rd telephone _____
city or town Johnsonville state NY zip code 12094

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photographs of Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead, Pittstown,
Rensselaer County



0001. View of all buildings except sheep barn from east on Otter Creek Rd



0002. House from southeast

Photographs of Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead, Pittstown,
Rensselaer County



0003. House and horse barn from southwest

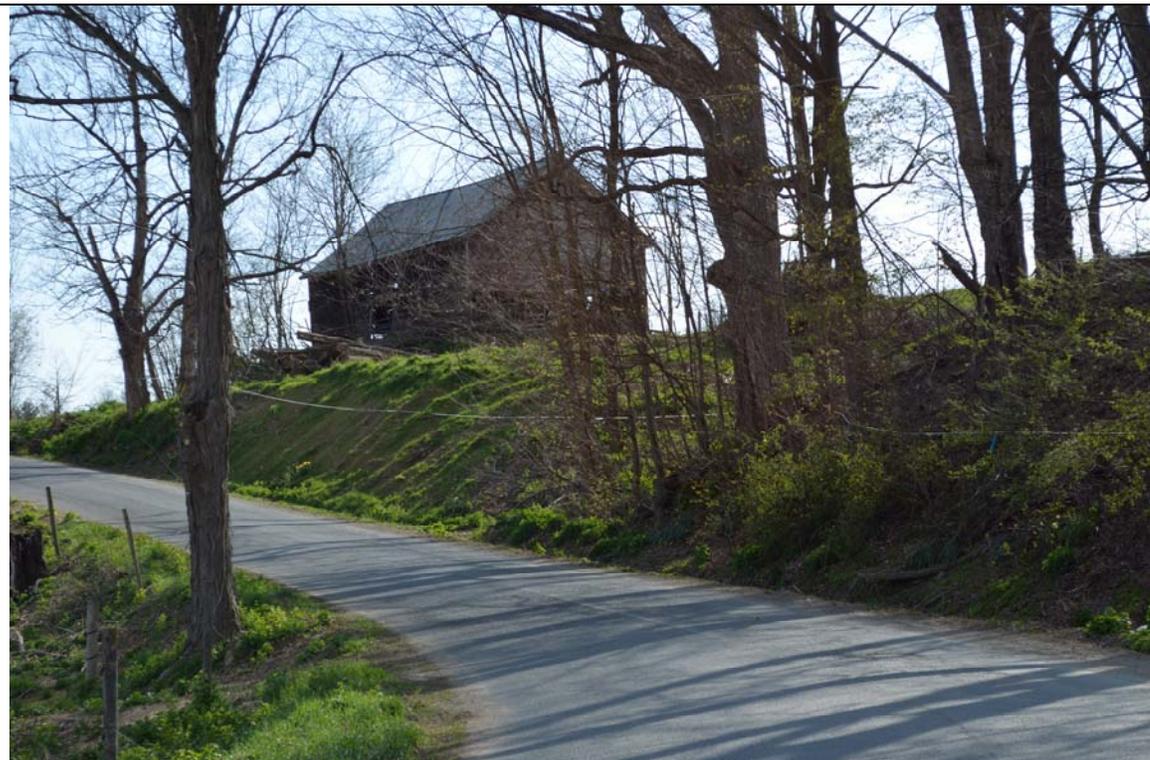


0004. Main barn group and barnyard viewed from southeast

Photographs of Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead, Pittstown,
Rensselaer County



0005. Main barn group viewed from northeast showing back of old bank barn



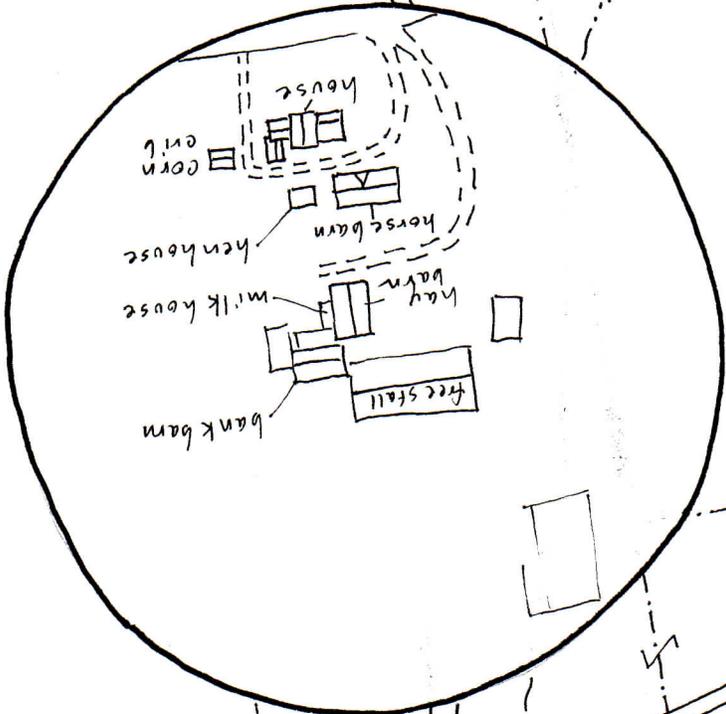
0006. Sheep barn viewed from northeast on Otter Creek Rd

Photographs of Cannon-Brownell-Herrington Farmstead, Pittstown,
Rensselaer County



0007. Corn crib

Jessie Ravage
7 August 2012



34-1-25.121
Johnsville Rd (CR110)

sheep
barn

see
inset

Over Creek Rd

Baum Rd

Cannon-Brownell-Herrington
Farmstead
551 Over Creek Rd
Town of Pittstown
Rensselaer Co,
New York

Lot 149 / Lot 150

Lot 133

34-1-25.2

Lot line
Property boundary