

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

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 1883 Barn

other names/site number _____

name of related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 2981 Elmira Rd

city or town Newfield

state NY code _____ county Tompkins code _____ zip code 14867

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

not for publication

vicinity

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x 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.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
3	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE/storage

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

RECREATION AND CULTURE/art gallery

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/animal

facility/chicken coop

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: WOOD, STONE, CONCRETE

walls: WOOD

roof: WOOD/Shake

other: _____

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Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The 1883 Barn is prominently located on the southeast side of Route 13, between Alpine Junction and Newfield, New York. The building is a double-drive bank barn with a timber structural bent frame, partially dismantled fieldstone and concrete masonry unit foundation, board and batten wood siding, and gambrel roof topped with a twelve-foot cupola and hammered tin weathervane. The large size of the barn, measuring eighty five by forty-seven feet in plan and sixty feet tall, is a testament to the area's fertility and the status and ambitions of the farm family that had it built. A combination of original features and those dating to the period of significance from the mid-1960s to the late-1970s remain on the exterior. Original elements include the siding, cupola with paired six-over-six sash windows in north, east, south and west elevations, large sliding doors on the east elevation and smaller sliding doors on the west elevation (the former operate; the later are currently fixed), and some windows. Those added by Romanoff and Saltonstall in their mid-1960s conversion include hand-split cedar shakes on the roof, brackets and stars in the cupola, bracketed rain hoods over the sliding barn doors, and several additional windows. It is one of the last remaining loose hay storage structures in Tompkins County and among the most iconic, well-known, and well-loved structures in the region. The property also contains a contributing chicken coop and a contributing stone wall that stretches around three hundred feet.

Narrative Description

The 1883 Barn is located at 2981 Elmira Road, on the southeast side of Elmira Road (Route 13) in Newfield, New York, approximately a mile north of Alpine Junction, six miles south of the hamlet of Newfield, and thirteen miles south of the City of Ithaca. The barn is sited on the west edge of a 41.54-acre lot close to the highway. Fields of goldenrod are to the immediate north, south, and east. A dirt vehicular turnabout accessed from the highway is directly north of the barn. To the east, a small wood frame henhouse is located approximately a hundred feet from the barn. The henhouse, with plank siding and gable roof, appears to have been substantially reconstructed by Romanoff and Saltonstall. Chaffee Creek runs north-south through the property at the base of a wooded hill that ascends to the eastern property line (shared with Newfield State Forest). A 1960s-era, hand-laid stone wall with a wood upper fence surrounds the west, north, and south sides of the barn creating an enclosed, private space and a buffer from the noise and traffic along Elmira Road. The barn is oriented with its gable ends facing north and south and its long sides perpendicular to the road.

The barn's structural system is composed of a timber bent frame with mortise and tenon joints in a square rule layout. Timbers are native yellow pine, chestnut, and hemlock. Additional details about the structural system and interior organization are provided in the section "1883 Barn - Early History" below. The exterior features ten-inch-wide pine boards with battens covering the joints. Both gable ends are embellished near the peaks with identical motifs of painted black on faded red swag with the text "A.D. 1883," framing a pair of louvered vents. Paired two-light, double-hung sash are on the main level, near the center of the north elevation; one two-light, double-hung sash is on the main level, in the west half of the south elevation.

The east elevation features two large sliding (or "roller") doors with 1960s-era paired twelve-light sash. Later (1988-90s era) board and batten infill walls are located behind the sliding doors—these walls have pairs of steel

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doors with nine-light windows. Banks of four, one-over-one double-hung sash windows flank the north and south ends of the elevation and two additional one-over-one windows are located between the sliding doors. Centered above the two decorative rain hoods covering the sliding door tracks, and immediately below the eave, is a bank of four six-light sash windows. Centered above the sliding doors are two plank doors. The operable sliding doors face a 1990s-era sixteen by forty-four foot wooden deck and seventy-five foot access ramp. The west elevation has two pairs of wood panel fixed (originally sliding) doors with bracketed rain hoods that are smaller in scale than those on the east elevation. Single, one-over-one sash windows are centered above each fixed door pair. A pair of additional one-over-one double-hung sash windows is located toward the north end of the wall.

The roof features its original cross-gable cupola that Romanoff and Saltonstall substantially reworked in the 1960s (adding decorative moldings and replacing louvered panels with sash windows). A lightning rod tops the cupola, replacing the weathervane installed in the 1960s and lost sometime after 1988. The wood shingles covering both the cupola and the barn roof date to Romanoff and Saltonstall's conversion project.

The post and beam timber frame structure appears straight, strong, and serviceable. Much of the board and batten wall envelope is original. Currently, the exterior is weather-beaten and in need of repair, especially in the southeast corner where water from a broken downspout has been trained on it without interruption for years, rotting the exterior wood and interior sheetrock wall and creating a sizable opening in the east gallery. Current owner Seth Adams temporarily covered this opening on the exterior with plywood in 2024.

Inside, the loft features a run of queen posts on either side of the hay track that support longitudinal purlins at the break between the gambrel roof's two pitches. The introduction of outer struts connecting the queen posts with the outer plate allowed for the omission of a central strut characteristic of earlier trusses that obstructed movement of laden hay carrier.¹ The original two by three inch roofing nailers are set on four by six inch rafters. Immediately beneath the roof peak, the original wood hay carrier track is suspended from each pair of rafters. The track runs the length of the roof.

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The only surviving areas of the original fieldstone foundation correspond with the backside of the ramp. At the ground level, isolated portions of the concrete footings and concrete masonry unit (CMU) walls built by Romanoff and Saltonstall in the 1960s also survive. The most substantial extant remnant of Romanoff and Saltonstall's CMU foundation is located along the north side of the east wall (north of the surviving fieldstone foundation wall). This portion includes a bank of three, six-light sash windows that were either reused from the original foundation wall or salvaged from elsewhere. The wall corresponds with the basement's north studio space that was part of Romanoff and Saltonstall's conversion. Portions of the studio ceiling also survive. Smaller sections of extant Romanoff and Saltonstall CMU walls are located along the south side of the east wall (again with three, six-light sash windows) and on the east side of the south wall. Both sections still have surviving stucco parging on expanded metal lath adhered to the interior surface. A single section of CMU wall, with embedded plumbing fittings, also survives along the center of the west elevation. This is a remnant of the stucco-covered partition that once enclosed the 1960s era bathroom and shower. All other features, partitions, and materials that Romanoff and Saltonstall installed in the basement—creating storage spaces and closets, the

¹ Information regarding the structural configuration was provided in part by Richard Lazarus, oral interview, February 7, 2025.

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large carpentry shop and studio bedroom on the north side, the built-in shower, sink, and toilet in the center bay, and the and track doors on the south end do not survive.

The center of the ground level basement features two rows of timber supporting columns set on poured concrete footings in rows. Dating to the period of Catron's ownership (2000-2024), these supports replaced earlier timber columns. The earlier masonry walls were removed, ostensibly to allow for more clear height—an effort that met with failure. Work ceased nearly two decades ago when the barn was essentially left to the elements. The existing basement foundation requires immediate repair, and missing portions require reconstruction to save the structure.

The main level interior, reached via the wood ramp and deck and through the roller doors on the west side, retains most of the partitions, finishes, features that date to the 1960s Romanoff and Saltonstall conversion and the Brandes alterations in the late 1980s. The original south drive bay remains open the entire forty-three-foot depth of the barn to the west wall. The drive bay's south wall features the "recycled wood" collage surface that Romanoff assembled using donated and found wood scraps, as well as a metal ship's ladder to the rafter level. The north wall has a vertical wood plank finish with a band of three fixed-light windows opening into the kitchen. The east wall, infilled by Brandes so the drive bay doors could be fixed in an open position, has an unfinished horizontal plank surface. The drive bay's ceiling (added in the 1988-1990 renovation) is wood tongue and groove above rafters laid perpendicular to the length of the drive bay featuring combination ceiling fans and light fixtures.

An opening toward the west end of the drive bay with a large 1960s-era vertical plank door on strap hinges opens to the first of two galleries on the south end of the barn created by Romanoff and Saltonstall. The west gallery features plasterboard wall finishes, linoleum floors, and traces of since-demolished restroom wall partitions and plumbing dating to the 1960s renovation and later alterations in the 1980s. Portions of the interior wall surface have been removed revealing batt insulation between wall studs. The ceiling is unfinished tongue and groove with combination ceiling fans and light fixtures. The east gallery has similar finishes but also features a wood built-in work desk and cabinet dating to the Saltonstall and Romanoff era along the north wall. A horizontal opening with louvers is located approximately five feet above the floor in the center of the partition wall between the west and east galleries.

The space located between the two drive bays—an area that originally housed the granary and later the Romanoff and Saltonstall kitchen, living room, and darkroom—retains most of the 1960s-era alterations, excepting the darkroom. The living room, against the east wall of this center bay, has surviving plasterboard wall finishes and pantries flanking the passage between living room and kitchen. The kitchen has ceramic quarry tile floors, reused plank wood cabinets and butcher-block countertops. A brick-lined cooking alcove with surviving stove top is located along the north wall as is a wall-mounted oven and pass through opening between the kitchen and cooking alcove. The kitchen's west wall is covered with three Romanoff scrap metal mosaics made of galvanized steel, copper, and tin sheet metal, as well as a sink, counters, and reused wood cabinets, all dating to the 1960s. On the ceiling above the kitchen is a skylight set between six-by-ten-inch ceiling beams and currently covered by mattresses. A longitudinal central passage bridges the center bay, connecting the east and west ends of the barn between the kitchen and what was the Saltonstall darkroom. Little remains of the darkroom beyond some surviving partition walls and framing painted black.

The barn's north end remains largely open as it did before and after the Romanoff and Saltonstall project. This area was used as country store in the 1990s and includes remnants of the alterations undertaken to adapt the space for this function. These include plasterboard walls on the west, north and east walls, a horizontal plank infilled area corresponding with the original north drive bay door opening on the east elevation, and a vertical plank wall on the south side. A tongue and groove wood ceiling is located above the original north drive bay

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and a dimensional lumber ceiling covers the remainder of the space to the north. Wood counters dating to the Brandes-era store with glass, wood plank, and log faces remain in the space. In areas where the plasterboard wall has been removed, batt insulation installed during this period is visible.

In the loft space above the main level, an area that Romanoff and Saltonstall referred to as the “rafter level,” the two living compartments they installed in the 1960s survive. The room on the east wall has double built in beds, vertical tongue and groove walls, and a horizontal band of 1960s era windows on the east exterior wall, and a glass door; the room on the west, a private study, features a cedar-lined alcove and louvered doors. Both of these wood-framed rooms are insulated and remain structurally intact and serviceable. The remaining unfinished areas of the loft, above the main level, have floors covered with blown cellulose insulation, with two large defunct commercial HVAC units flanking the center span of beams on the north and south ends and insulated ducts traversing the space. All date from the 1988-1990 rehabilitation. While the loft interior (as is true of much of the main floor interior) is currently covered in bird droppings and guano, it remains in serviceable condition.

Additional details about the alterations Romanoff and Saltonstall made to the building are provided in the “1883 Barn - Romanoff and Saltonstall Conversion Project” section of this report. Additional details about the 1988-1990 alterations are included in the “1883 Barn - Post-Romanoff and Saltonstall Era to Present” section of this report.

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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.

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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

CONSERVATION/Historic Preservation

Period of Significance

1965-1977

Significant Dates

1965

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

John Swarthwood (original builder)

Victoria Romanoff and Constance Saltonstall

(conversion)

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance of the 1883 Barn runs from 1965, when Victoria Romanoff and Constance Saltonstall acquired the building and began its adaptive use, to 1977, after which the adaptation of the building and its use as a residence and for public events largely ceased.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The 1883 Barn at 2981 Elmira Road in Newfield, Tompkins County, New York is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Conservation/historic preservation. Originally built as a hay barn in the early 1880s, between 1965 and 1977, it was owned by two pioneering preservations of the region, Victoria Romanoff and Constance Saltonstall, who used it as a laboratory for developing skills, experience, and ideas that would serve them in their future and more public endeavors. The rescued building, an early barn conversion, also served the pair as a seasonal residence and private art gallery. Both the process of converting the barn and the exhibits that were held there were well covered in newspapers and helped raise the public profile of historic preservation regionally. The barn's conversion also reflects broadly this particular era, when historic preservation was part of a larger counter-cultural movement emphasizing a return to the land, an embrace of folkways, and a practice of budget- and environmentally-conscious recycling.

In 1882, Isaac Osmun began construction of a hay barn in the rich farming valley, "Pony Hollow," in the southern Tompkins County town of Newfield. The barn assumed its new and enduring significance under Criterion A for Conservation: historic preservation when two artists, Constance Saltonstall and Victoria Romanoff, purchased the barn in 1965 and began to convert it for their own use as a living space, studio and darkroom space to practice their arts—printing making, photography, sculpture, and painting—and exhibition space. At the 1883 Barn, Romanoff and Saltonstall cleaned the structure from top to bottom, refinished the basement, added windows, insulation, and interior partitions on the first and second levels to create living and work spaces, all while leaving the timber frame intact and visible. They meticulously repaired the board and batten exterior and the rooftop cupola and completely reroofed the building. They finished the exterior with a distinctive paint scheme: an antique white with red and forest green trim, with the iconic "A.D. 1883" painted scroll at the top on both the north and south gable ends. Romanoff and Saltonstall undertook the barn conversion project amidst a growing counter cultural movement that emphasized a return to traditional craft and folkways, a "back to the land" spirit that included self-sufficiency, recycling and adaptive re-use, and a growing appreciation for American vernacular and agricultural architectural history. Across the United States, professional craftspeople and amateurs adapted historic barns and other agricultural buildings for dwellings, studio space, and other functions. They were supported by a host of new publications, trade associations, and networks that fostered traditional trades training and popular interest in rural living. Between 1965 and the 1980s, the 1883 Barn was also the setting for numerous art and agricultural exhibitions, most notably, the 1976 exhibit *Giddy-up Napoleon, It Looks Like Rain: A Look at Farming in Tompkins County*.

The conversion project took place just before passage of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act. The barn served as a training site where Romanoff and Saltonstall developed hands-on rehabilitation experience and developed a growing passion for preservation. As advocates and craftspersons they allied with Historic Ithaca and other partners to preserve historic buildings throughout the city (the Boardman House and Clinton House, two important Ithaca resources, both listed on the National Register, among many others) and county. They were living examples of how bringing arts and preservation communities together could yield successful results. In 1980, Romanoff and Saltonstall received a Preservation Award from Historic Ithaca for their adaptive use of the 1883 Barn. Many awards, fellowships, and other accolades followed. From 1988-2000, the barn was owned by Jo Ann Brandes; in the early 1990s it was adapted to function briefly as a country market. The property changed hands again in 2000, when it underwent a prolonged attempt by its owner to alter the foundation, work that undermined the barn's structural stability. Since 2000, the 1883 Barn has been neglected and left to the elements. Surprisingly, it remained undamaged by illicit occupation or use and avoided destruction due to arson. The barn exterior, its timber frame structure, and its distinctive interior are sound and ready for rehabilitation,

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and the character-defining features of its 1960s adaptation remain intact and clearly illustrative of this important era of preservation history.

Narrative Statement of Significance

1883 Barn - Early History

The land on which the 1883 barn was constructed was in the southwest quarter of township number six, a division of the more than 330,000 acres obtained in the Watkins and Flint Purchase of 1794.² Isaac Osmun (born in 1809) owned the property at the time the barn was constructed. Drawing from archival materials that have not been located for this project, Romanoff and Saltonstall wrote that “The barn was built to help sell off a major portion of farm tract that had no structures on it.” They stated that “Farmer Isaac Osmun was advised by friends and neighbors that a handsome barn would enhance the prospects of such a sale. Mr. Osmun summoned the help of a local master carpenter to supervise and execute the construction.” Romanoff and Saltonstall identified John Swarthwood, a Horseheads-based carpenter as the builder and said he began work in 1882.³ The construction took place toward the end of a millennia-long tradition of timber-frame craft with accompanying rituals of assembly (so called “raising-bees”) that brought communities together. Bent construction, in which each individual bent is pre-assembled on the ground before being raised into position, required the assistance of numerous workers to raise them into position and secure them along the barn’s longitudinal axis.

The 1883 Barn’s design and scale, like all agricultural buildings, are attributable to both tradition and the prevailing agricultural practices in the area at the time—the ways in which livestock and silage were handled, moved, and kept. It was intended to facilitate putting in and taking out hay as efficiently as possible in an era before hay was baled for transportation and storage. The hip, or gambrel roof, is wide at the top, enabling full loads of hay to be moved near the track along the peak; the larger area of the roof, though, features steep sides that increase capacity in the haymow and allow rain to run off quickly and snow to not stand, reducing moisture in the shingles.

The barn was constructed shortly before substantial technological changes would remake the way barns were built and used. Glenn Harper and Steve Gordon have noted that “the period from 1890 to 1920 was marked by great innovation and experimentation in farm building design, especially in the Midwest. A corresponding farm modernization movement encouraged agricultural scientists to test their new designs and products in the ‘real world’ laboratory of the farm.”⁴ Along with the arrival of electric light, gasoline engines, hay balers, and other technological innovations, new barns were increasingly built using plank-frame construction (in place of the timber-framed buildings like the 1883 Barn). Plank frame barns that followed featured plank girders, trusses, purlins, and other structural elements, made from two by four, twelve-inch planks that were less expensive and required less skill and fewer people to assemble. The rows of trusses eliminated the need for cross beams thus providing greater clearance for the hay carrier. The 1883 Barn’s timber frame was an interstitial form, adapted to allow clearance for a hay track and carrier through the use of queen posts and ties that obviated the need for cross beams.

² As identified in deed research and John Marcham, “Town of Newfield,” in *The Towns of Tompkins County: From Podunk to the Magnetic Springs*, Jane Marsh Dieckmann, ed. (Ithaca: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1998), 159.

³ Victoria Romanoff and Constance Saltonstall, *1883 Barn Sale Prospectus*, Ithaca, NY, 1988, 6.

⁴ Glenn A. Harper and Steve Gordon, “The Modern Midwestern Barn, 1900-Present,” in *Barns of the Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 213.

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The barn's large scale is also attributable to the fertility of the valley in which it was located as well as the prosperity of agriculture in the area in the late nineteenth century. Although many farms on the town's western side by Connecticut Hill were abandoned due to their elevation, acidic soil, and poor drainage, those close to the 1883 Barn were especially productive. The ability to produce cash crops for export had expanded throughout the middle of the century, especially with the 1870s arrival in Newfield of the Ithaca & Athens Railroad (later part of the Lehigh Valley Railroad). The founding of the Newfield Grange in that decade (1874) further signaled the importance of agriculture to the area's economy.⁵

Originally, the barn sat on a fieldstone foundation. Along the bank on the east side, the foundation ran from stone footings to the sill (holding back the original, likely earthen, bank). The north and south ends of the east foundation may have been stone knee walls on stone footings with timber framing and wood siding from the knee walls to the sills. These upper wall areas would likely have had windows for light and ventilation. The original gable ends would have featured doors to move cows into and out of the spaces. The interior would have had walks, feed passages, a gutter for drainage, wood cattle stands (stall partitions, or stanchions), and other fixtures for tending to and milking cows, as well as calf pens and perhaps stock pens. The precise nature of the barn's historic foundation and basement configuration cannot be reliably described because the north and south side foundation walls were concealed by a shed addition and because of the removal of material during both the 1960s conversion and the early 2000s foundation work.

The main floor would have been multi-functional and included a granary (along the center of the east wall between the two drive bays), feed room, and other spaces. Wagons laden with hay would be pulled up the ramp and into the drive bays. A hay fork or sling at the end of a rope that ran through a pulley assembly (carrier), that ran on the hay track, and out to an animal would be used to gather loads of hay and lift them into the haymow. Little is known about how the Osmun family utilized the barn and its place in their lives and holdings. Isaac Osmun died on February 21, 1893, and was buried in Cayuta Cemetery.

In the decades after its construction, the 1883 Barn saw the diminishment of Newfield's population as earlier generation farmers relocated to agricultural areas further west. New influxes of Czech and Finnish farmers partially made up for the losses. During the Great Depression in the 1930s, the federal government purchased and then reforested millions of acres of abandoned and marginally productive farmland including land immediately to the east of the 1883 Barn property. In the 1950s, one thousand five hundred acres of this land was transferred to New York State and became Newfield State Forest.⁶

Changes made to the building during the eighty years between its construction and 1965 were minimal. It appears to have retained its original roof, siding, and interior configuration. At some point after construction, the barn acquired a sloped shed-roofed extension on each of the gable ends that are seen in a few surviving photos of the building taken around the time of its 1965 acquisition by Romanoff and Saltonstall.

Twentieth-century owners of the property that contained the 1883 Barn include members of the Robert C. Robertson family and Charles J. Wopat. Presumably farming operations continued throughout the first half of

⁵ Marcham, "Town of Newfield," 165. Barn preservationist, Richard Lazarus noted this in an oral interview, Richard Lazarus, oral interview, February 7, 2025.

⁶ "Newfield State Forest," New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, <https://dec.ny.gov/places/newfield-state-forest#:~:text=History,and%20Sayre%20railroad%20in%201871>.

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the century.⁷ A neighbor in the 1990s recalled “working on airplanes in the barn in the early 1950s. In bad weather, wings were detached so aircraft could be trundled inside.”⁸

On April 20, 1955, Herbert and Geneva Wimer sold the property including the 1883 Barn to Ivan R. Bower and Harriett S. Bower.⁹ According to neighbors, the Bowers maintained a small dairy operation, grew crops, and were the last to actively operate the site as a farm.¹⁰

Victoria Romanoff and Connie Saltonstall

Victoria Romanoff was born on October 30, 1939, in Riga (then part of the Soviet Union, current day Latvia). Her family was displaced during World War II. Her father and brother traveled to New Zealand. She and her mother lived in a displaced persons camp in Hamburg, Germany, before emigrating in 1953 to Providence, Rhode Island, where her mother taught Russian at Brown University. Victoria received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1961. Three years later she obtained a Master of Fine Arts from Cornell University. In 1965, she purchased the 1883 Barn in Newfield with Constance Saltonstall and began its rehabilitation and conversion. Prior to this project she had no construction trade experience or skills beyond the competencies she had developed in her arts education. As she later recalled, “the barn taught me everything.”¹¹ She “picked up carpentry ‘in situ,’” by repairing the barn’s framing, siding, windows, and roof. She learned masonry by repairing the foundation and laying the wall around the barn using stones gathered from the creek bed.¹² Romanoff transferred these newly acquired skills to other rehabilitation and restoration projects in Tompkins County and beyond. Working in partnership with Saltonstall and then Sarah Adams, she became one of the most influential preservationists in the region with a career spanning more than fifty years.

Originally trained as a printmaker and artist, Romanoff worked on various art initiatives in a variety of media. While living at the 1883 Barn she was especially focused on developing wood sculptures made from assemblies of cast off, salvaged, and recycled parts of building interiors and exteriors and furnishings—stair balusters, chair backs and spindles and various other turned wood items. At different scales, the resulting assemblies appeared as urban skylines of fantastical buildings, towers, minarets, and spires. An exhibit of this work along with her ink and enamel drawings and photos by Connie Saltonstall, which she named *Babylon Prior to Urban Renewal* after one of the pieces, was held at Cornell University’s Telluride Association in April and May 1972.¹³ Numerous other exhibitions and installations followed, continuing her earlier experimentation with collage and often focusing on agricultural themes.

In 2016, on Historic Ithaca’s fiftieth anniversary, Romanoff was listed first among the speakers at *Saved from the Wrecking Ball: Preserving the Clinton House and Other Stories from Ithaca’s Early Historic Preservation Days*.¹⁴ She held positions on the City of Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission, with Historic Ithaca, Historic Clinton House, and other groups. She was one of the original seven individuals whose signatures appeared on the “Ithaca Hour” notes, a form of alternative local currency established in the early 1990s that got

⁷ Tompkins County Deed books, Robert C. Robertson II and Barbara Anne Robertson, April 30, 1946, to Wimer, 287/199; Robert C. Robertson, (Sr.) March 5, 1946, to Wimer, 288/345; Charles J. Wopat, et al, July 20, 1945, 288/475.

⁸ Karey Solomon, “Shopping for Slices of Americana in Newfield,” *Ithaca Journal*, August 21, 1990, 3C.

⁹ Tompkins County Deed Books, 376/566.

¹⁰ Robert Mazourek, proprietor of Mazourek Farms, Tractor and Farm Equipment Dealer, interview with author, January 11, 2025.

¹¹ Victoria Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025.

¹² Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025.

¹³ *Babylon Prior to Urban Renewal* program, Telluride Association, Cornell University, 1972.

¹⁴ A poster for the event is reproduced in: Mack Travis, *Shaping a City: Ithaca, New York, A Developer’s Perspective* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2018), 174.

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media attention from around the world as a means fostering community self-reliance.¹⁵ After the death of Constance Saltonstall, Romanoff was a founding member of the Saltonstall Foundation and served on the Board of Directors until 2007.

Constance Saltonstall was born October 8, 1944, in Boston, Massachusetts, and grew up on a family farm in Ellis Hollow, just outside Ithaca. Known as Connie, she was the daughter of Nancy Smith Saltonstall and Leveritt Saltonstall Jr. and granddaughter of Massachusetts senator Leveritt Saltonstall. She graduated from the Cambridge School in Weston, Massachusetts, and studied at the Rhode Island School of Design and the Agriculture School at Cornell University. Romanoff recalled that Saltonstall purchased land north of Ithaca, in Lansing, while she was still a student and that she would spend time riding a tractor and cultivating fields of sunflowers.¹⁶ After a period in Rome, Saltonstall returned to the Ithaca area and purchased the 1883 Barn with Vicky Romanoff. Saltonstall was a self-taught photographer who worked primarily in thirty-five millimeter and medium format. Her first show was the 1972 joint exhibit with Vicky Romanoff, *Babylon Prior to Urban Renewal*, at Cornell's Telluride Association. Her photos included various images dating between 1966 and 1972 of Tompkins County buildings and landscapes including several of Saltonstall and Romanoff's work on the 1883 Barn.¹⁷ The Johnson Museum at Cornell University hosted another exhibit organized in collaboration with Romanoff, titled *Architectural Preservation in Tompkins County*.¹⁸

Parlaying a growing expertise gained at the 1883 Barn, Saltonstall and Romanoff established the historic preservation firm, Romanoff and Saltonstall. Their hands-on design, and advocacy work were essential to the early preservation movement in Ithaca and Tompkins County and resulted in the saving and rehabilitation of numerous buildings. Like Romanoff, Constance Saltonstall was heavily involved in local preservation affairs including serving as vice president of Historic Ithaca. Between 1974 and 1987 she returned to Europe, living in Holland and Paris, where she continued painting and photography. She returned to the Ithaca area in 1990 and constructed a new house on her family's farm property in Ellis Hollow.¹⁹ Days after being diagnosed with cancer, she began drawing up plans to endow an arts foundation. After she died on May 21, 1994, four friends and colleagues, including Vicky Romanoff, served as founding members of the Constance Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts in 1996. The foundation, set on the two-hundred-acre Saltonstall farm and using Saltonstall's house as a base, continues to support individual New York State writers and visual artists with grants, project funding, and residencies.²⁰

1883 Barn - Romanoff and Saltonstall Conversion Project

In 1965, Ivan and Harriet Bower sold an approximately forty-two-and-a-half-acre lot on the east side of Elmira Road (Route 13) to Saltonstall and Romanoff. This lot included the 1883 barn and a small wood-frame hen house. A year later the Bowers sold another two lots of twelve acres and seventy-three acres to Saltonstall and Romanoff. This land, on the west side of the highway, included a nineteenth-century wood-frame house associated with the farm (Figure 1).²¹ Romanoff later recalled that the house was in a deteriorated state when

¹⁵ John Yaukey, "Ithaca Money enters the local economy," *Ithaca Journal*, October 1991, 4A. The money, and Romanoff's signature, is mentioned in Paul Glover, *Hometown Money: How to Enrich Your Community with Local Currency*, a self-published book, <https://archive.org/details/hometown-money>.

¹⁶ Victoria Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025.

¹⁷ *Babylon Prior to Urban Renewal* program, Telluride Association, Cornell University, 1972.

¹⁸ "Constance Saltonstall" (obituary), *Ithaca Journal*, May 24, 1994, 4.

¹⁹ "Connie Saltonstall," The Constance Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts, <https://www.saltonstall.org/about-us/connie-saltonstall/>.

²⁰ Kathy Durland Dewart, "Bringing Art to Life," *Saltonstall NewSalon* [annual newsletter], 2004, 12.

²¹ Deed data

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they purchased the property, and its condition was further compromised after their purchase when a car exited the highway and hit the building. Romanoff and Saltonstall, who had never occupied the house, demolished it at an unknown date.²²

They began work without a clear design or plan with the aid of several friends and helpers (Figure 2). “‘We had nothing particular in mind when we started,’ Romanoff said, adding that she originally sought to ‘work with what we had and not lose the building’s openness.’”²³ Much of the first year was spent cleaning out the structure—of materials left behind by the previous owner and their livestock. Clearing tons of manure and sandblasting layers of old lime paint revealed the extent to which the foundation had deteriorated. They lifted the barn with screw jacks and inserted new concrete footers in place of rotted wood beams (Figure 3). They built new concrete masonry unit (concrete block) walls on the north, south, and west sides, and the east side walls flanking the surviving area of original masonry wall.²⁴

On the exterior, they replaced the entire roof surface with twenty-four-inch long hand split shakes that survive on the building in 2025, reworked the cupola (replacing louvers with sash windows), and installed a hammered tin weathervane.²⁵ They covered the barn’s brown color with a new paint color and accent and repainted the faded “A.D. 1883” and swag in the gable ends (Figure 4).²⁶

The primary finished area, with a kitchen and living room, was in the center of the barn’s main floor, in a space that originally served as the granary. The arrangement allowed light to filter from the windows in the rooftop cupola, down through the loft and skylight and into the kitchen and central passage and other areas on the ground floor (Figure 5).

The kitchen featured exposed ceiling beams, fieldstone countertops, and a cooking area and appliances concealed within a brick-lined cooking alcove to retain the “rustic effect” of the space (Figure 6). Bricks in the alcove were salvaged from the Ithaca City Hall, demolished in 1965. Most distinct was the scrap metal collage that covered the kitchen’s entire west wall (including behind the counters and sink). Romanoff assembled the collage by nailing into geometric patterns pieces of metal she gathered from the Ithaca-based building supply company, Robinson and Carpenter. According to Romanoff, the “old-timers” there would set aside materials that were left over or would otherwise be discarded—whether it was bits of lumber, unsold windows, or metal—for Romanoff to pick through. Romanoff and Saltonstall also received assistance from Cotton-Hanlan, a lumber dealer in downtown Odessa that Romanoff recalled was very generous and supportive. When workers there got to know Romanoff and Saltonstall and learn about the barn project, the workers would set aside piles of cut boards and scrap that were not commercially valuable for her to select from and purchase at little charge.

Cotton-Hanlan also provided much of the material Romanoff used to design and construct the wood mosaic that covers the entirety of the south wall of the south drive bay. Like the metal mosaic on the kitchen wall, this featured scrap wood planks of varied dimensions, colors, species. Some of the boards came from the barn itself;

²² Romanoff, interview, January 24, 2025.

²³ Polly E. Kreisman, “Newfield’s 1883 Barn: A Study in Restoration,” *Cornell Daily Sun*, November 22, 1977, 8.

²⁴ This treatment was in keeping with foundation work common earlier in the century in which failing stone walls were “removed and replaced with a solid concrete or concrete block” wall. Richard Lazarus, “Recommendations for Appropriate Repairs to Historic Barns and Other Agricultural Buildings,” unpublished paper prepared for the New York State Barn Coalition, March 26, 2002, page 3.

²⁵ The weathervane’s fate is unknown. It appears in photos included in the 1988 sales prospectus but is not currently on the building. A local legend claims it was stolen by helicopter. Victoria Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025.

²⁶ Kreisman, “Newfield’s 1883 Barn,” 8.

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most were selected from stashes at the lumber and hardware dealers.²⁷ Many retain layers of paint, nail holes, saw marks, and other distinguishing features the speak to previous use and lend the wall a varied texture and visual complexity. The mosaic draws upon the sculptural work Romanoff was engaged in at the time as well as that work's tendency to reappropriate and assemble into new compositions wood objects that had had previous uses.

The living room, immediately east of the kitchen, was filled with light from two large windows Romanoff and Saltonstall inserted into the east exterior wall (between the sliding doors) (Figure 7). One of the living room walls was covered with a display of ferns and other greenery planted in a ten-foot-long sod tray.²⁸ Along the west wall of this main level central bay, they constructed a darkroom for Saltonstall's use. The darkroom had black walls, sink, counters, and photo processing and printing equipment and supplies. Saltonstall and Romanoff inserted a partition wall in the south end of the main level to create two gallery spaces that were finished with tongue and groove ceilings, plasterboard walls, and battleship gray linoleum floors. Photos from the period show the two painting and working in the space as well as using it for exhibits. They left the main level's north end largely unchanged so that it served as a showplace for the barn's exposed structural system.

On what Romanoff and Saltonstall called the "rafter level" (approximately four feet above the kitchen, living room, and darkroom ceilings on the main level), they inserted two wood-framed compartments: to the east, a bedroom, and to the west, a private study area with a cedar-lined, built-in alcove.²⁹ This area was only accessible via a ship's ladder affixed to the south wall of the south drive bay. The kitchen, living room, and darkroom on the main level as well as the bedroom and study in the rafter level were all insulated.

In the basement area below the main level, Romanoff and Saltonstall poured new concrete footers, redid foundation walls with metal lath and stucco-covered concrete masonry blocks, plastered between the exposed ceiling beams, and installed new partitions and plumbing. The thirty-two by forty-two foot south side of the basement was largely left open; a pair of roller doors provided access to the courtyard garden. Storage closets and utility space, with a stairway and water tank and hot water heater, were in the center of the basement; a bathroom with shower, toilet, and large sink was located along the west end of this central area. The north side featured a studio bedroom with a cast-iron stove and exposed chestnut ceiling beams to the east and a large carpentry shop to the west—both rooms measured thirty-three feet by fourteen feet.

Romanoff and Saltonstall built a fieldstone wall with a wood upper portion along the west, north, and south sides of the barn using rocks hauled from the Chaffee Creek bed east of the barn (Figure 8). Approximately three hundred feet long on the west side, the wall took about two years to build. Reducing noise from the nearby highway, increasing privacy, and providing an enclosed space for entertaining—the wall was an essential step in the process of turning the barn and its immediate surroundings into a habitable space.

A 1988 real estate prospectus stated that the barn featured "2 large ornate banners on the gable ends. One had the A.D. 1883 lettering clearly visible and was repainted. The other side remains a mystery, although research is continuing."³⁰ The feature no doubt contributed to public recognition and appreciation for the barn; there was also ample historical precedence for painting the date on the side of the barn historically and decorating the

²⁷ Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025.

²⁸ Peg Gallagher, "Home Was a Barn," *Ithaca Journal*, December 20, 1970, 7C.

²⁹ Romanoff and Saltonstall, *1883 Barn Sale Prospectus*, 6.

³⁰ Romanoff and Saltonstall, *1883 Barn Sale Prospectus*, 13.

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gable ends of barns in general. Pennsylvania Dutch Barns commonly had hex signs painted on their sides. In the twentieth century, product manufacturers would provide the materials required for a new paint coat to the owners of prominently situated barns in exchange for painting an advertisement on one side. In the mid-1960s, George Vander Sluis, a painting professor at Syracuse University, began studying traditional barn embellishment. In 1967, in response to what Vander Sluis claimed was the annual loss of three to four hundred barns in New York State, he received a New York State Council of the Arts grant to paint decorative patterns of “stars, circles and squares of very bright colors” on the sides of seven barns around Syracuse.³¹

The design and reconfiguration of the barn was undertaken with careful attention to the barn’s monumental size, structural arrangement, and historic character (Figure 9). Exterior windows were sympathetically installed to retain its appearance. On the interior, while the center bay was partially enclosed to provide living, sleeping, and studio space, the overall openness of the barn was retained, and its structural system was left exposed. The drive bay on the south was the primary entrance on both sides. It was intentionally left open to the full height of the structure. A local newspaper quoted Romanoff saying, “One of the things people are most interested in is the interior architecture of the barn....” She added, “The entryway, empty except for a potato picker, gives everyone a chance to examine the barn’s structure. Guests can look up the entire seventy-foot height of the barn from this spot.”³² For these reasons, the barn received Historic Ithaca’s Citation of Recognition in 1980 for adaptive use.³³

As noted, the 1883 Barn project provided an architectural and preservation apprenticeship for Romanoff and Saltonstall. Romanoff recently recalled that, “The barn taught me more about architecture than I could have learned from four years in a university.”³⁴ That education was not limited to the development of carpentry, masonry, and other technical abilities required for its stabilization and conversion. Over the ensuing years, they also learned about the barn’s construction and character, its strength and resilience, by living daily amongst its timbers. Romanoff remembered, “The barn’s response to what happens in rain, its response to wind, it could speak when it was unhappy. In a heavy wind, if it came across from the north, the barn would moan and groan because it was supposed to give. It would give a long sigh, then all the joints would lock back into position and then almost would say ‘ah.’ It was amazing.”³⁵

Daily Life and Events at the 1883 Barn

Was the 1883 Barn project ever considered complete? A 1970 newspaper profile, written after Romanoff and Saltonstall had been at it for five years, said it would probably be “several more before it is in what they consider acceptable condition.”³⁶ Work did slow in the mid-1970s, as the barn shifted from active construction site to space for artistic expression, public engagement, and quiet entertaining with friends.

Neighbor Bob Mazourek recalled evenings when Romanoff and Saltonstall hosted movie nights by projecting a film onto a sheet hung from interior beams.³⁷ Parties were held in the courtyard between the barn’s south end

³¹ “New York Barns Decorated as Preservation Aid,” *Preservation News* VII, no. 5 (May 1, 1967): 7.

³² Gwyn Zimmerman, “Dusting Off the Past,” *Newfield News* IV (October 20-26, 1976): n. p.

³³ Romanoff and Saltonstall, *1883 Barn Sale Prospectus*, 13.

³⁴ Victoria Romanoff, oral interview, March 4, 2025.

³⁵ Romanoff, oral interview, March 4, 2025.

³⁶ Peg Gallagher, “Home Was a Barn,” *Ithaca Journal*, December 20, 1970, 1C. The future work specifically mentioned in the article—adding an interior pitched roof and “wild balcony” in the bedroom cubicle and “catwalks running all around with areas where you can just sit and read if you want to”—were never realized.

³⁷ Robert Mazourek, proprietor of Mazourek Farms, Tractor and Farm Equipment Dealer, interview with author, January 11, 2025.

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and the stone walls, facilitated by track doors in the foundation wall that could be opened for easy flow between interior and exterior. The courtyard featured Katherine crabapple trees and a fieldstone barbecue in the southwest corner.³⁸ Goats appeared from neighboring farms, tempted by tastier feed than they received at home.³⁹ In November 1977, the couple hosted *Four Ways*, an exhibit featuring Romanoff's collages, wall hangings by Anna Abraham Gardner, photo portraits by Emil Ghinger, and serigraphs by Margaret Corbit.⁴⁰ This, being the last recorded date of an event which put the converted barn in the public consciousness, ends the period of significance. They also held benefit events and fundraisers in support of political campaigns including Dan Hoffman's run for Ithaca mayor, that featured volleyball, music, and food (Figure 10).⁴¹

The most significant event organized at the barn was a two-week exhibit held daily from October 17 to 31, 1976. Titled *Giddy Up, Napoleon! It Looks Like Rain!*, after a popular nineteenth-century plowing song, the exhibition celebrated the long history of agriculture in Tompkins County (Figure 11).⁴² A collaboration between Saltonstall, Romanoff, and Sarah Adams, the event was presented to the public as an open house (or open barn) that also marked the completion of Romanoff and Saltonstall's decade long conversion project. The *Ithaca Journal* noted that "To be sure, the renovation work has been done sporadically. But it's now accomplished and the two are ready to open the barn door, so to speak, and let the crowds in."⁴³

The exhibition featured three primary components. First was an exhibit of photographs by Groton, New York, resident Verne Morton. Born in 1869, Morton was a schoolmaster turned photographer who in 1897 began capturing on glass plate negatives of everyday rural life around Groton and Dryden—his students, his family and neighbors at work on their farms.⁴⁴ A recreation of a period kitchen with food on the stove served as a focus around which to share information about Cornell School of Home Economics faculty member Martha Van Rensselaer's efforts supporting farm women (staffed by a mannequin from Ithaca's former Rothschild's Department Store that Romanoff salvaged and dressed for the part). One newspaper writeup noted that "Information is given about work done by Martha Van Rensselaer through Cornell's School of Home Economics to help 'women participate with other women in learning new skills and becoming more equal partners with their husbands.'"⁴⁵ Lastly, a multi-media slideshow called "Change is Traditional? A Farming Fantasy in Slides and Sound" connected past farming with the present. Primarily assembled by Saltonstall, the show combined "split screen and dissolves, and a soundtrack that brings whole herds of cows and flocks of chickens right inside the old barn."⁴⁶

In addition, visitors could wander the grounds and view old farming implements including a rehabilitated threshing machine, peruse old advertisements from the *American Agriculturalist*, and try out chairs that Romanoff designed using steel tractor seats and steel angles welded together by Michael Sweeney.⁴⁷

³⁸ Romanoff and Saltonstall, *1883 Barn Sale Prospectus*, 6.

³⁹ Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025.

⁴⁰ Marilyn Rivchin, "Art at the A.D. 1883 Barn," undated clipping, (November)..., unknown paper, n.p.

⁴¹ "Sunday in the Country, A Benefit for Dan Hoffman, Undated poster by Victoria Romanoff, 19____.

⁴² Gwyn Zimmerman, "Newfield Exhibit Surveys 100 Years of Farming," *Newfield News* IV, no. 37 (October 13-19, 1976): p. 1.

⁴³ Marylu Carnevale, "Giddy Up, Napoleon—It Looks Like Rain," *Ithaca Journal*, October 16, 1976, 10.

⁴⁴ Gretchen Sachse, untitled essay in *Giddy Up, Napoleon! It Looks Like Rain* program, 1976. Morton took thousands of photos between 1897 and the 1940s. Many were published in the *Sunday Post-Standard*. Today they are part of the History Center in Tompkins County collection.

⁴⁵ Bereano, "Barn Reflects 19th Century," *Ithaca Journal*, October 28, 1976, n.p.

⁴⁶ Carnevale, "Giddy Up Napoleon," 10.

⁴⁷ Gwyn Zimmerman, "Dusting Off the Past," *Newfield News* IV (October 20-26, 1976): n. p.

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The centerpiece of the exhibition was the barn and its conversion to a new use. As the program for the event noted:

This 70 foot high relic of farm history is a handsome example of its kind. Isaac Osmun's barn, completed in 1883, was largely the work of a craftsman named Swarthwood, whose ingenuity and precision can still be admired in the detail of the granary, the original windows, the cupola. The present owners, Connie Saltonstall and Victoria Romanoff, have in the last ten years completely restored and renovated the building. From basement caverns to the eyries of the loft, it now houses workshops, studios and living quarters, but all this has been accomplished with no essential loss of its barn-ness, the echoing hush that belongs to high and vaulted spaces. For those with childhood memories of hayloft hideaways, the warm sweetness of sound and smell, the shadowy dimness of light filtered through cobwebbed windows, old 1883 will revive long-gone days. What better place to explore and perhaps to view with wonder, the ways of doing and making do of our forebears?⁴⁸

Over its two week run approximately four thousand five hundred people visited *Giddy Up Napoleon*—four hundred attended the event on one of its more popular days, Sunday, October 24.⁴⁹

Saltonstall and Romanoff lived in the barn during the warmer months. When cold weather arrived, they heated the converted, central parts of the barn with electric heaters and closed off other interior spaces. Romanoff recalled that the depths of winter were spent in Ithaca or on long sojourns to Florida.⁵⁰ By the late 1970s, Saltonstall and Romanoff's work on the barn had largely ended. Their occupancy of the 1883 Barn declined and the two parted ways. In 1988, they offered the barn for sale through Ithaca realtor, Richard T. Mellen. A fourteen-page sales prospectus that Romanoff designed using Saltonstall's photos, told the history of the barn and its conversion between 1965 and 1976 and described its restored layout in drawings and images (Figure 12).⁵¹ Jo Anne and Ron Brandes purchased the barn in 1988.

1883 Barn Conversion as Prelude to Other Preservation Work

Even before the process of converting the 1883 Barn was finished, the skills Romanoff and Saltonstall, developed and honed there, found new expression. Public support for saving, fixing up, and reusing older buildings was on the increase and the field of historic preservation was taking shape. In the five years after they started the barn project, a local newspaper stated they had "redone many homes in the Ithaca area in their own style, which is difficult to define. 'It's whatever the situation calls for,' said Vicki. 'It can't be called modern because often the materials we use are anti-modern.'"⁵² The ongoing demolition of important historic structures in Ithaca spurred Saltonstall and Romanoff to become involved in advocacy efforts as well as hands-on restoration.

Among their early notable projects was the 1971 effort to save the Boardman House, an 1860s Italianate residence in downtown Ithaca that had previously been home to Ithaca College before new owner, Tompkins County government, threatened demolition. Working alongside Historic Ithaca, the Romanoff and Saltonstall raised funds, passed petitions, and increased awareness of the building's architectural importance and potential

⁴⁸ Bea MacLeod, untitled essay in *Giddy Up, Napoleon! It Looks Like Rain* program, 1976. The program also featured an essay on the history of agricultural education and home economics education at Cornell University by university archivist Gould P. Colman.

⁴⁹ Kreisman, "Newfield's 1883 Barn," 8; Zimmerman, "Dusting Off the Past," n.p.

⁵⁰ Victoria Romanoff, oral interview, January 24, 2025. Romanoff's mother had a home in Tarpon Springs, Florida.

⁵¹ Victoria Romanoff and Constance Saltonstall, *1883 Barn Sale Prospectus*, Ithaca, NY, 1988, 13.

⁵² Gallagher, "Home Was a Barn," 1C.

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for reuse.⁵³ They were also involved in the 1972 restoration of the covered bridge in Newfield village and the rehabilitation of Simeon's, a well-known restaurant in downtown Ithaca. Work on the restaurant included repairing and replicating much of the restaurant's interior plasterwork.

Their most significant effort was directed toward preserving Ithaca's Clinton House (Figure 14). Located on a prominent downtown corner, the 1830s Greek Revival structure, with monumental columns and pediment on its facade, was originally a grand hotel. Romanoff and Saltonstall served as project managers and along with a host of volunteer laborers began the process of rehabilitating the structure.⁵⁴ Collaborative and inclusive, the Clinton House initiative drew upon the energies and talents of a network of partners, friends, and volunteers—Sarah Adams, Carol Sisler, Gretchen Sasche, Stephen Jacobs, Allan Treman, Sylvia Reinhardt, Mary Shelley—with a shared goal of preserving Tompkins County's historic character from the onslaught of Urban Renewal and reckless development. Vicky and Connie's partnership spanned the years 1964-1974. V. Romanoff and Associates with Sarah Adams was established around 1976-1977.

A decade later, Romanoff and Adams were involved in the preservation of Clinton Hall, a 1837 to 1846 Greek Revival commercial building next door to Clinton House. The building was severely damaged in a 1975 fire and was threatened with demolition when Romanoff and Adams, along with Jules Burgevin, Historic Ithaca, and its then executive director, Carol U. Sisler, and other community members, helped forestall its destruction.⁵⁵ In 1985, developer Joseph Ciaschi purchased the building and hired Romanoff and Associates to lead an extensive rehabilitation campaign that included reconstructing historic cast-iron storefronts, the second-floor balcony, and the roof balustrade.⁵⁶

Awards, funding grants, and other honors were bestowed upon projects that Romanoff and Saltonstall and, later, Romanoff and Sarah Adams, undertook as designers, design consultants, and craftspersons. Their work won Historic Ithaca's Major Award in 1974 (for the First Presbyterian Church in Trumansburg), in 1982 (for the Boardman House in Ithaca), in 1986-87 (for Clinton Hall in Ithaca), in 1985 (for the Holgate Residence in Ithaca), and in the late 1980s for Romanoff and Adams's Greek Revival house in Jacksonville, New York. They received a Historic Ithaca Citation for Simeon's Restaurant in Ithaca (1975), the Miller-Heller House in Ithaca (1979-80), and the Tompkins County Red Cross Headquarters (1984-85). In 1980, Romanoff and Adams received the Winston Churchill Traveling Fellowship, awarded by the English Speaking Union of New York for the study of eighteenth and nineteenth century English storefronts.⁵⁷ The research also led to publication of the Romanoff and Adams illustrated booklet *New York State Storefronts* in 1982. Romanoff's work on the Station Restaurant (including converting two train cars into period bedrooms) won Historic Ithaca's Certificate of Recognition in 1998. Her recreation of a nineteenth-century Parisian pastry shop (Renée's Patisserie) in Cayuga Heights won Historic Ithaca's inaugural Significant Elements Award (2001). She received Historic Ithaca's

⁵³ See, for example, Victoria Romanoff, "Boardman House" (Letters to the Editor), *Ithaca Journal*, March 10, 1972, 6; Constance Saltonstall, "Boardman House Returns" (Letters to the Editor), *Ithaca Journal*, June 19, 1972, 6; Jeff Frank, "Boardman Decision Postponed 2 Weeks," *Ithaca Journal*, October 16, 1972, 1.

⁵⁴ "Clinton House," Historic Ithaca, February 8, 2022, <https://www.historicithaca.org/post/clinton-house>.

⁵⁵ For early coverage of the effort, see: "Buy the Clinton House," *Ithaca Journal*, November 29, 1972, 1; "Kick-Off Campaign to Save Clinton House," *Ithaca Journal*, December 16, 1972, 8.

⁵⁶ *Ithaca's Neighborhoods: The Rhine, the Hill, and the Goose Pasture* (Ithaca: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1988), 33.

⁵⁷ Victoria Romanoff and Sarah W. Adams, *New York State Storefronts* (Ithaca: Victoria Romanoff and Sarah W. Adams, 1982). The publication is still available for purchase from the History Center in Tompkins County, <https://thehistorycenter.net/Sys/Store/Products/73685>.

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Award of Merit for her design consulting and contracting on projects including the restoration of the Nelson-Guiry House in Trumansburg (2002), the Katz Residence in Cayuga Heights (2002), the conversion of a nineteenth-century fire station into the Ithaca Clock Museum (2004). She received the “Pride of Place” award from the City of Ithaca for her design consultanting and contracting work on numerous projects including the Telluride Association at Cornell University (2004), Ithaca Children’s Garden (2004-2005), and the State Theater (2006).

Beyond Tompkins County, Romanoff won awards from the Regional Conference of Historical Agencies (in 1981 for the interior rehabilitation of the Maine Federated Church in Maine, New York), the American Concrete Institute, the Preservation League of New York State (in 1981 for St. James A.M.E. Zion Church in Ithaca), and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which gave Romanoff a 1983 Honor Award that described her as “An artist who took on a second career as a restorationist, carpenter and expert on storefront facades, Romanoff has become a valued consultant in central New York, taking a lead role in the efforts of both Ithaca’s Landmarks Commission and the city of Ithaca.”⁵⁸ Romanoff’s projects have received funding from various sources including the New York State Council on the Arts, the Bowers Foundation, the National Park Service’s Save America’s Treasures program, well as community development grants.

In addition to coverage in the *Ithaca Journal* and other local publications, Romanoff’s firms’ work was featured repeatedly in the national historic preservation press. Their rehabilitation of the Farmers and Shippers Hotel building in Ithaca was included in a 1988 *Old-House Journal* special issue on commercial restoration.⁵⁹ Romanoff wrote in *Old House Journal* about her and Sarah Adams’s efforts preparing drawings and restoration guidelines for the Charlestown Historical Society on the Caribbean island of Nevis in 1991.⁶⁰ Most widely covered was Romanoff and Adams’s relocation and rehabilitation of their own mid-nineteenth century Greek Revival house in Jacksonville, New York, in the late 1980s. It was featured in *Old House Journal* in 1989 and *House Beautiful* in 1998. A profile in the 2002 book, *The American Farmhouse, Country Style and Design*, noted that the house stood “empty, abandoned like so many of its neighbors—and about to be fodder for the wrecking ball” before Romanoff and Adams moved and then “returned the farmhouse to its original stature.”⁶¹

The 1883 Barn conversion, the Ithaca and Tompkins County preservation projects, the art projects using found, salvaged, and repurposed materials, were all underpinned by a philosophy of conservation. It was part of the era’s countercultural thrust (as noted below), but it also was a consequence of both women’s upbringing. Romanoff, experienced in the privations of post-World War II displacement camps and emigration, and of limited financial means, saw reuse as a necessity. When Saltonstall and Romanoff were named 1973 Women of the Year, newspaper coverage confirmed this perspective: “‘I cannot stand waste,’ said Ms. Romanoff, answering the question of when her interest in historic preservation began. ‘I began recycling anything I could when going to college and ran into financial troubles. So I started recycling as something that had to be done, and from that emerged the philosophy that this is the way it should be done.’”⁶² Saltonstall was influenced by

⁵⁸ “1983 Honor Awards: Victoria Romanoff,” *Preservation News*, June 1983, 5. Other information about Romanoff awards drawn from Historic Ithaca files and Romanoff’s resume.

⁵⁹ Before and after photos of the building are included in the editor’s page article “Don’t Go Away, We’ll Be Right Back,” *Old-House Journal*, July/August 1988, 2.

⁶⁰ Victoria Romanoff, “On the Move, Nevtian Style” [Letter to the Editor], *Old-House Journal*, July 8, 1991, 10.

⁶¹ Lea Rosch, *American Farmhouses: Country Style and Design* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 122-129. The project was also mentioned in “Reader Moves,” *Old-House Journal*, January 2, 1991, 34-35.

⁶² Barbara Geehan, “Helped Give Clinton New Life,” *Ithaca Journal*, January 1, 1974, 1, 7.

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her mother and great grandmother, who were both interested in preserving old buildings—the latter had helped establish the first historical society in Groton.⁶³

National Context for 1960s-70s Barn Conversions

Adaptive reuse is about as old as architecture. When the needs of a community, family, or individual change or when new buildings are introduced, existing structures are altered, expanded, reconfigured, and used again. Hotels become office buildings; schools become apartments. Agricultural structures, subjected to regular adaptation to evolving conditions and forces (soil, climate, market, available labor, technology), were especially pliable.

Converting barns into dwellings, especially in ways that retained the barn-like character of the structure, seem to be relatively rare in the United States prior to the 1960s. When encountered, such projects commonly adapted the barn's structural frame but otherwise worked to distance the new dwelling from its origins. For example, the conversion of an unidentified clapboard English-type barn that appeared in a popular home design book in 1922 resulted in an unrecognizably different structure. The effort "transformed the erstwhile barn into a dignified country house of the stately Colonial type in which it is impossible to find any resemblance to its plebeian beginning."⁶⁴ The post-World War II housing crisis included stories of returning GIs unable to find suitable housing and resorting to living in barns and chicken coops refinished with the most basic domestic touches.

Adaptive reuse became a more considered practice with the rise of historic preservation in the mid-twentieth century. Loss of barns accelerated when agriculture consolidated and small family farms came under threat. Changes in technology made old barn structures impractical for new ways of working and new agricultural machinery. There were also suspicions that owners were not rehabbing or maintaining disused barns out of a concern that by doing so, they would prompt a spike in their property taxes.

At the same time, and probably in response to the increasing disappearance of small farms and farm buildings, there was a growing scholarly and popular interest in barns and the traditional construction practices and materials that they embodied. Books by Eric Sloane, including *A Reverence for Wood* (published in 1965, the same year Saltonstall and Romanoff purchased the barn), *An Age of Barns* (1967), and others celebrated the age value of old vernacular buildings, tools, construction practices, and landscapes. They championed the reuse of well-made things, such as a barn door recycled as Sloane's dining room table with marks on it that told of the door's earlier history: scratches from where the farmer lit a match after leaving the barn, more scratches lower down, perhaps left by the farmer's dog, mouse holes, one completed, one partial and then abandoned.⁶⁵

Barn conversions were also frequently associated with the 1960s emergence of countercultural movements that encouraged followers to forego conformity, embrace conservation for ecological, economical, and anti-consumerist motives, and seek refuge from urban malaise by getting "back to the land," in rural areas where people could be left alone and escape normative expectations. Like communities in the Hudson Valley, the Catskills, the Berkshires, Vermont's Prickley Mountain, and others, the Ithaca area drew those interested in such experimental, 'off the grid' living arrangements. Lavender Hill, for example, an LGBTQ+ commune established in 1972 in Dryden (about ten miles from the 1883 Barn), featured "do-it-yourself" dwellings

⁶³ Geehan, "Helped Give Clinton New Life," 1.

⁶⁴ "The House That Was a Barn," in *The Country Life of Book of Building and Decorating*, Reginald T. Townsend, ed. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page, & Co., 1922), 10.

⁶⁵ Eric Sloane, *A Reverence for Wood* (New York: W. Funk, 1964), 27.

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constructed by and for its residents.⁶⁶ Lavender Hill has been listed on the National Register. Whether apolitical or deeply engaged with issues of gender or sexual marginalization, whether motivated by financial necessity or an anti-consumption bent toward reuse and recycling, these projects typically came about due to the determination of enthusiastic and idealistic young builders who did not fit traditional builder profiles. They often made up for a lack of experience with resourcefulness, strong wills, and a willingness to learn. They countered skepticism about their abilities and whether their ambitions were “realistic,” by developing proficiencies and seeing successful projects through.

Romanoff and Saltonstall’s barn conversion, as well as their later work as preservationists, fit within this framework. Both had only rudimentary construction skills when they started; they were women working in trades dominated by men. They were also outsiders who lacked deep family roots in the area. But, over time, as they climbed the roof of the barn to repair the cupola and install new shingles, hauled stone from the creek and laid hundreds of feet of walls, and as they gave new life to this prominent local landmark, they won respect—from local craftspeople, building material retailers, and family members who originally doubted their vision for the barn.

A thorough inventory of barn conversions from the second half of the twentieth century, even in New York State, is beyond the scope of this report. Research on the topic is in its early stages and common tools utilized by preservationists and architectural historians such as surveys and theme studies, are lacking. Identification of some notable projects that bore similarities to the 1883 Barn, as well as some resources promoting such work that were in circulation at the time, begin to place Romanoff and Saltonstall’s project into a wider cultural context.

The 1961 conversion of a barn on the Chesterwood estate of sculptor, Daniel Chester French in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, provided an early precedent demonstrating how such buildings could be reinterpreted for the arts. On the exterior, the 1840s barn retained its general historic appearance; on the interior, remade as studio and gallery space, the trusses were left exposed and the walls finished with stucco. Eight years later, the National Trust for Historic Preservation acquired the site and renamed the barn the “Barn Gallery Museum.”⁶⁷ Later, in the 1960s, painter and photographer, Marcella Comès Winslow had a barn on her summer farm in Sandwich, Connecticut, converted into a studio/living space.

In 1963, seeking escape from the city, New Yorkers Jean and Cle Kinney purchased a disused tobacco farm in New Milford, Connecticut, remodeled the house for their use and converted the barn to two apartments they rented to weekend visitors. The Kinneys began a series of building relocations and conversions, including a hot dog stand and a train station, then traveled the country compiling other examples that later resulted in the 1974 book, *47 Creative Homes That Started as Bargain Buildings*. The book noted that, “In this increasingly standardized world, many people resist living in a home that is like every other one.”⁶⁸ It lists other barn conversion projects including an 1870s stone barn in Falls Village, Connecticut, that the Frank Morss family adapted into their home beginning in 1968.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Jacob Hill, “Danby’s Lavender Hill —A 1970s LGBTQ+ Commune—Added to Registry of Historic Places, *Ithaca Times*, February 21, 2025, <https://www.ithacajournal.com/story/news/2025/02/21/ithaca-lavender-hill-lgbtq-commune-national-register-of-historic-places/79425486007/>.

⁶⁷ Diane L. Maddex, “French at Chesterwood: ‘Six Months in Heaven,’” *Preservation News*, IX, no. 1 (January 1969): 3-4, 6.

⁶⁸ Jean and Cle Kinney, *47 Creative Homes that Started as Bargain Buildings* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1974), viii.

⁶⁹ Kinney, *47 Creative Homes*, 3.

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Rick Lazarus, a noted timber framer and barn preservationist who has worked in the Tompkins County area since 1974, has been involved in at least seven barn conversions, all dating to the period after Romanoff and Saltonstall's project.⁷⁰ Lazarus noted that when the interest in timber framing and barn conversions began in the 1970s there were still tradesmen in their sixties or seventies who had learned timber framing from earlier craftsman and passed along that direct and continuous knowledge. But there were also a lot of people drawn to the work that had no direct instruction from someone with barn expertise, but who, like Lazarus, learned from one project to the next. Randy Nash, owner of New York State Barn Co., Inc., is another well-known Upstate New York barn expert with over fifty years moving and reusing agricultural buildings. He and his family live in a converted Dutch barn that Nash found in Fishkill, New York, dismantled, and then relocated to Cazenovia, where he reassembled and reconfigured it as an energy-efficient dwelling. As of 2012, Nash had worked on over one hundred and fifty buildings and reconstructed more than seventy.⁷¹

Other barn conversions in the area around Tompkins County include the Yellow Barn at La Tourelle, a former farm converted into a luxury hotel, spa, and bistro in the 1980s; an English-style barn moved and converted to a dwelling in the 1990s on Updike Road in Ithaca by Cornell professors Arch and Esther Dodson; and a silo and part of a barn converted to a dwelling on Hines Road near Trumbull Corner (Newfield). One of the oldest buildings on the Cornell University campus (the 1874 "Big Red Barn") began as the university president's stable and carriage house, and was then adapted into a cafeteria, alumni center, storage building, and eventually the Graduate and Professional Student Center.⁷²

Many of these projects were done without fanfare. Other barn conversions were higher profile. In 1967 the New York City-based firm Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Architects converted three existing gambrel-roofed barns for use as a theater, art studio, and music practice rooms in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, for Simon's Rock of Bard College.⁷³ The Barns at Wolf Trap in Fairfax, Virginia, are part of the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. Built from two reconstructed late eighteenth-century barns (relocated from New York State) with seating on the threshing floors and haylofts, it opened in 1981 to considerable acclaim.

The interest in preserving historic barns and the desire to convert them to dwellings overlapped with a growing popular interest in new timber frame structures. The Timber Framers Guild was established in 1985 to support the craft through information sharing, community building, and the training of a new generations of practitioners. In 1981, Tedd Benson wrote, *Building the Timber Frame House: The Revival of a Forgotten Craft*.⁷⁴ Practitioners translated a growing understanding of how historic barns were built into new construction. Thomas Visser recalled how when saving barns in 1970s New England, he became aware of historic construction methods and "incorporated this knowledge while assisting in the building of several new barn-like timber frame houses."⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Richard Lazarus, oral interview, February 7, 2025. Although essentially retired today, from the 1970s, Lazarus ran a company dedicated to house and barn rigging, moving timber-frame structures, undertaking structural repairs, and barn and other timber-frame conversions.

⁷¹ Barbara Clarke, "Randy Nash Headlines CFP Annual Meeting," *The Upland Journal* (Cazenovia Preservation Foundation), Spring 2012, 1.

⁷² Katya Hrichak, "Carriage House to Student Center: The Big Red Barn Over the Years," Graduate School, Cornell University. <https://gradschool.cornell.edu/announcements/carriage-house-to-student-center-the-big-red-barn-over-the-years/>.

⁷³ Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates, *Hardy Holzman Pfeiffer Associates: Buildings and Projects, 1967-1992* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), 236.

⁷⁴ Tedd Benson, *Building the Timber Frame House: The Revival of a Forgotten Craft* (New York: Scribner, 1980).

⁷⁵ Professor Thomas Durant Visser, University of Vermont History Department / Historic Preservation Program, communication with author, January 27, 2025.

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In May 1977, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's mountains/plains regional office teamed up with *Successful Farming* magazine to establish the "Barn Again!" program to preserve historic farm buildings. While the program favored (and supported with small grants) rehabilitation projects that resulted in the continued use of farm buildings as farm buildings, two of the four categories for which they made awards were "rehab for a new use" and "addition for a new or expanded use."⁷⁶ In its inaugural year, the program recognized projects converting barns for non-agricultural use, including a bed and breakfast and a dance and concert hall.⁷⁷

Thanks to those first-generation projects and programs like Barn Again!, conversions were an established practice by the 1980s and 1990s. Publications continued to support new practitioners and property owners interested in understanding, rehabbing, and adaptively reusing their historic barns. Books appeared that provided guidance to those interested in taking on a conversion project, such as *Your Barn House* by Betsy and Hubbard Cobb (1991), and in the UK, Kate Corbett-Winder's *The Barn Book: Creative Conversions for Country Living* (1990); barn rehabs also featured in innumerable books and articles about adaptive reuse.⁷⁸

Among preservationists, though, there has always been a line when the changes made to a farm structure result in the loss of its historic character. *Preservation Brief 20: The Preservation of Historic Barns* issued in 1989 by the National Park Service's Technical Preservation Services branch cautioned readers that "The conversion of barns to housing is not new, but has become increasingly popular in recent years. Yet the changes involved in converting most barns to housing are so great that such conversions rarely preserve the historic character of the resource."⁷⁹ Mary Humstone, director of the Barn Again! program, asked "Is a barn still a barn when it has been dismantled, moved hundreds of miles, rebuilt on a suburban lot surrounded by patios and lawns, and converted to a home with new siding, roof, windows, and porches? Absolutely not."⁸⁰ The work that Romanoff and Saltonstall undertook on the 1883 Barn was marked by a light touch and minimal intervention. It was based upon their deep appreciation for the barn as an artifact that conveyed the skills of the original builders and the importance of agriculture to the area's history, as well as their own philosophy of creative recycling. Ultimately, the project and the resulting setting became a tool to convey the ongoing relevance of that history.

1883 Barn - Post-Romanoff and Saltonstall Era to Present

Jo Anne and Ron Brandes of Long Island purchased the property that included the 1883 Barn from Saltonstall and Romanoff on September 9, 1988. Working in partnership with brothers Kent and Darrell Coker, they undertook an extensive interior cleaning and sanding campaign as the building had been largely uninhabited for a decade. They painted the building and completed renovations that included installing new wiring, insulation, and a heating and air conditioning system. Most of this work was done to insert a new retail operation on the north half of the main floor—an area left largely untouched by Romanoff and Saltonstall. The project also included construction of infill board and batten walls and pedestrian doors in both drive bay openings. Lastly, a ramp with wood lattice sides made of pressure-treated lumber was constructed on the east side, providing an accessible approach to the main entrance. In the summer of 1990, Kent Coker and the Branes opened the

⁷⁶ "Trust Boost's 'Barn Again!' Future for Old Farm Structures," *Preservation News*, July 1987, 6.

⁷⁷ Mary Humstone, "Old Barns Win with Barn Again!," *Preservation News*, June 1988, p. 21. In 1988, Debbie Langhals, of Columbus Grove, Ohio, won a merit award for the conversion of their barn. Can't tell what for, though.

⁷⁸ Kate Corbett-Winder, *The Barn Book: Creative Conversions for Country Living* (North Pomfret, VT: Trafalgar Square Publishing, 1990); Hubbard and Betsy Cobb, *Your Barn House* (New York: Henry Holt, 1991).

⁷⁹ Michael Auer, *Preservation Brief 20: The Preservation of Historic Barns* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1989), 11.

⁸⁰ Mary Humstone, "Viewpoint: Restoration vs. Move-It-or-Lose-It, What Should We Do with Old Barns?" *Preservation News*, August 1989, 5. Humstone's article is countered on the same page, by another article by Martin Harris on the same page that argues it is better for the frames to be moved and reused than lost entirely.

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American Country Food Store in the north side of the barn with Coker as manager. The store was described as a “gourmet emporium featuring unique food from across the country.”⁸¹ There were dips, pickles, salsas, jellies and other products from forty-eight states—each meant to reflect or symbolize the character of the region where it originated. It is unknown when the business ceased, though it appears to have been short lived.

On August 10, 2000, Richard Catron , then of Ulysses, Pennsylvania, purchased a 41.54-acre lot that included 1883 barn from Jo Anne Brandes.⁸² Over the next two decades, Catron attempted to rework the basement to provide additional space for an intended adaptive reuse project. New timber support columns on concrete footings were added and the space excavated. Over time, much of the concrete masonry unit walls built by Romanoff and Saltonstall in the 1960s were removed, leaving only limited portions to support the structure above. The project was later abandoned. In 2024, foreclosure proceedings were initiated to collect on delinquent property taxes. In 2024, Seth Adams, of Enfield, purchased the property at auction and initiated plans to rehabilitate the structure for a new mixed-used development using state and federal rehabilitation tax credits.

⁸¹ Solomon, “Shopping for Slices of Americana,” 3C.

⁸² Tompkins County Deed Records, Liber 1400, Page 178.

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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): 10908.000117 (USN)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 41.54 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

Site Coordinates:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 42.308798 | Longitude: -76.672803 |
| 2. Latitude: 42.305633 | Longitude: -76.668426 |
| 3. Latitude: 42.303302 | Longitude: -76.671603 |
| 4. Latitude: 42.306002 | Longitude: -76.675276 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was drawn to include the current parcel, which matches the original parcel purchased in 1965 by Romanoff and Saltonstall and was the subject of their preservation work and efforts.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christine O'Malley [edited by Johnathan Farris, Ph.D., NYSHPO]

Organization Historic Ithaca

date July 3, 2025

street & number 212 Center Street

telephone 607-273-6633

city or town Ithaca

state NY

zip code 14850

e-mail christine@historicithaca.org

Additional Documentation

1883 Barn

Name of Property

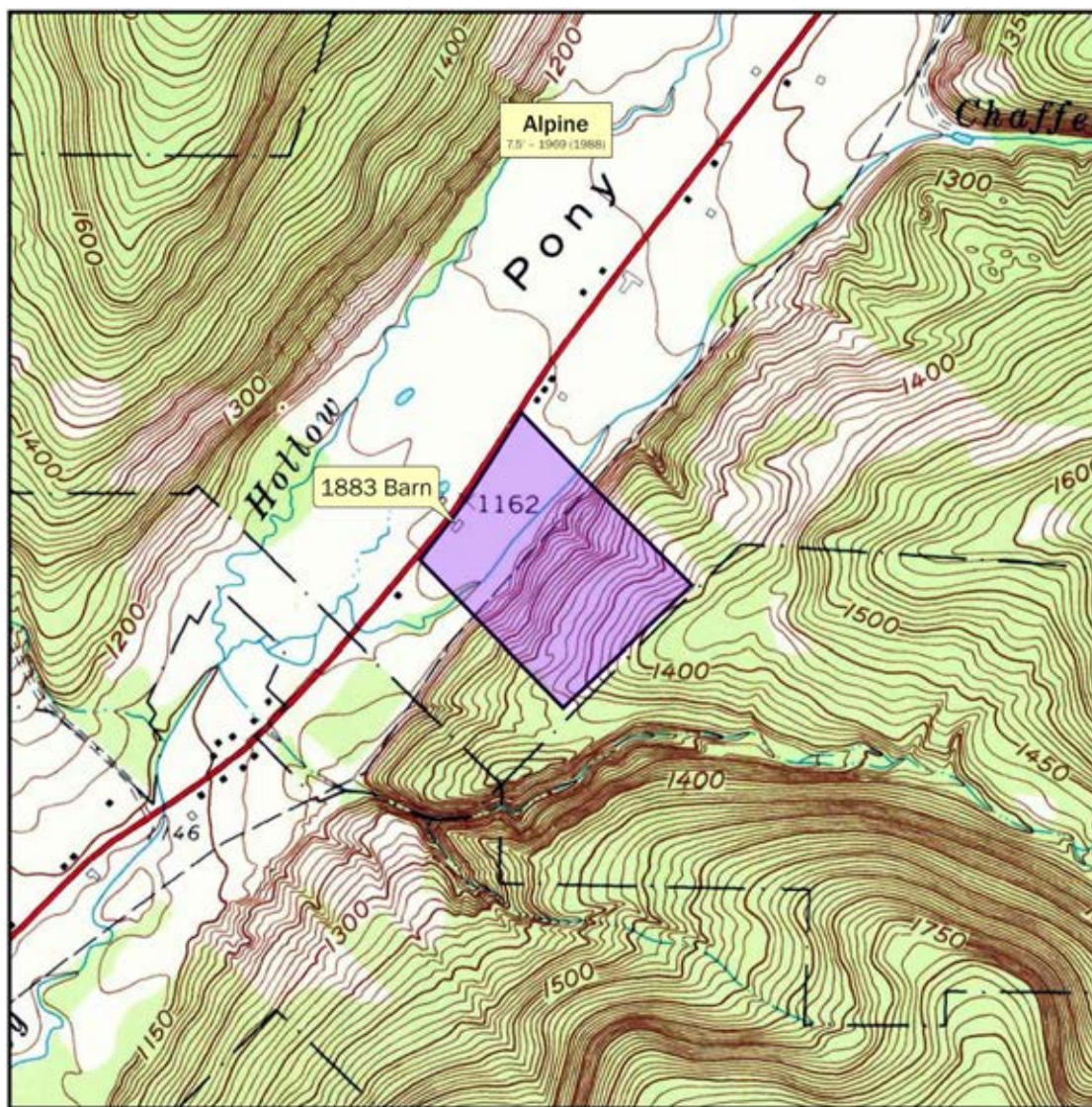
Tompkins Co., New York
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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **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. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)



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Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

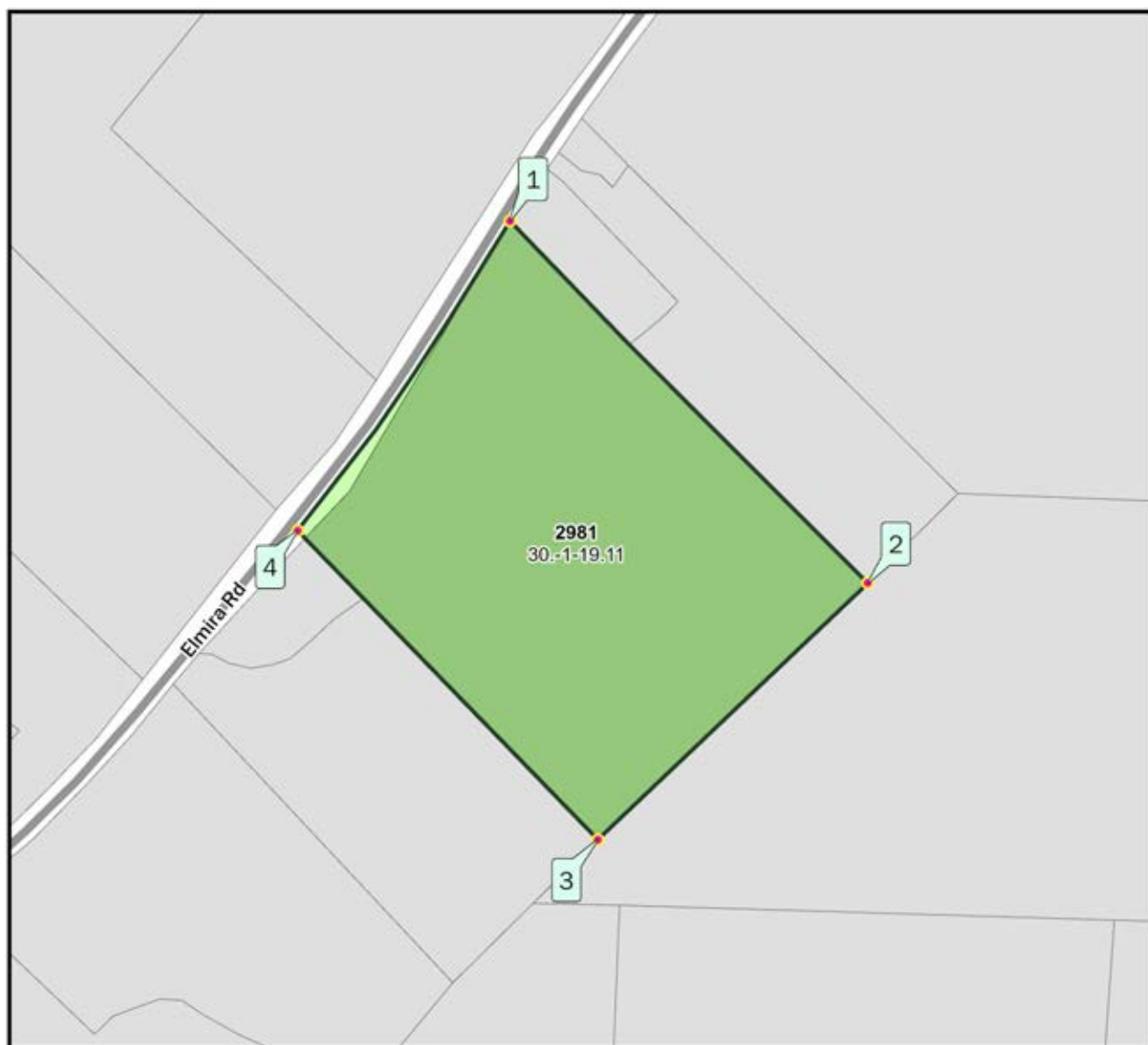
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 New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation
Mapped 07/16/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPD

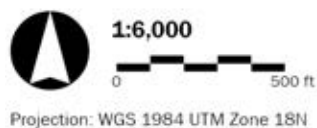
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2	42.305633	-76.668426	4	42.306002	-76.675276



Mapped 07/16/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

1883 Barn

Name of Property

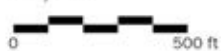
Tompkins Co., New York
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2	42.305633	-76.668426	4	42.306002	-76.675276



1:6,000



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (41.54 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2021



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Mapped 07/16/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

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Historical Photos

(Note: All photos courtesy of Victoria Romanoff.)

- Figure 1: Barn prior to Romanoff and Saltonstall conversion project, note original farmhouse prior to demolition, and shed roof addition on barn gable end.
- Figure 2: The 1883 Barn conversion involved many assistants and volunteers.
- Figure 3: Vicky Romanoff and friend leveling barn and installing masonry block foundation.
- Figure 4: Romanoff repainting gable end.
- Figure 5: Interior layout of converted 1883 Barn. Basement floor (1) at bottom, includes: 1) studio bedroom, 2) carpentry shop, 3) bathroom, 4) storage space with access to main level, 5) utility and storage, 6) storage. Main floor (2) in middle, includes: 1) open area, 2) kitchen and living room, 3) darkroom, 4) bathroom, 5) west gallery, 6) east gallery. Rafter level (3) at top, includes: 1) bedroom, and 2) study. Image from 1988 sales prospectus.
- Figure 6: Romanoff working on the kitchen. Wall mosaic is to rear.
- Figure 7: Romanoff working on the living room, with window opening cut but sash not yet installed.
- Figure 8: Romanoff and friend building the stone wall.
- Figure 9: State of the conversion process in 1968, showing how alterations were sensitively integrated into the barns historic configuration.
- Figure 10: Poster for political fundraiser by Vicky Romanoff.
- Figure 11: Connie Saltonstall photographing the "Giddy Up Napoleon" exhibition.
- Figure 12: 1883 Barn as shown in 1988 sales prospectus.
- Figure 13: Romanoff working on Simeon's restaurant rehabilitation.
- Figure 14: Restoration of the Clinton House in Ithaca.

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Figure 1: Barn prior to Romanoff and Saltonstall conversion project, note original farmhouse prior to demolition, and shed roof addition on barn gable end.

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Figure 2: The 1883 Barn conversion involved many assistants and volunteers.

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Name of Property

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Figure 3: Vicky Romanoff and friend leveling barn and installing masonry block foundation.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

Tompkins Co., New York

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Figure 4: Romanoff repainting gable end.

1883 Barn

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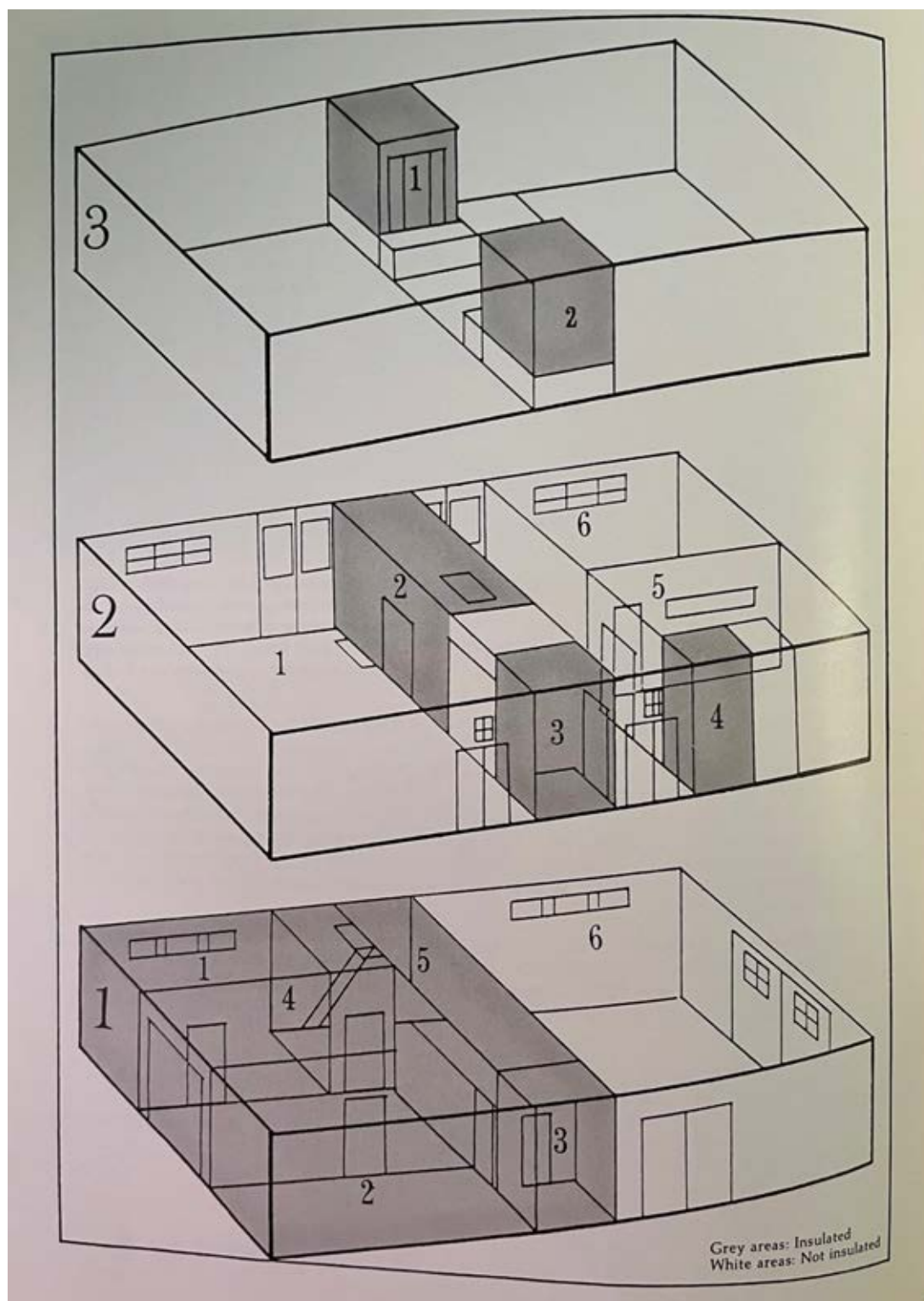


Figure 5: Interior layout of converted 1883 Barn. Basement floor (1) at bottom, includes: 1) studio bedroom, 2) carpentry shop, 3) bathroom, 4) storage space with access to main level, 5) utility and storage, 6) storage. Main floor (2) in middle, includes: 1) open area, 2) kitchen and living room, 3) darkroom, 4) bathroom, 5) west gallery, 6) east gallery. Rafter level (3) at top, includes: 1) bedroom, and 2) study. Image from 1988 sales prospectus.

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Figure 6: Romanoff working on the kitchen. Wall mosaic is to rear.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

Tompkins Co., New York

County and State



Figure 7: Romanoff working on the living room, with window opening cut but sash not yet installed.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

Tompkins Co., New York
County and State



Figure 8: Romanoff and friend building the stone wall.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

Tompkins Co., New York

County and State



Figure 9: State of the conversion process in 1968, showing how alterations were sensitively integrated into the barns historic configuration.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

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County and State

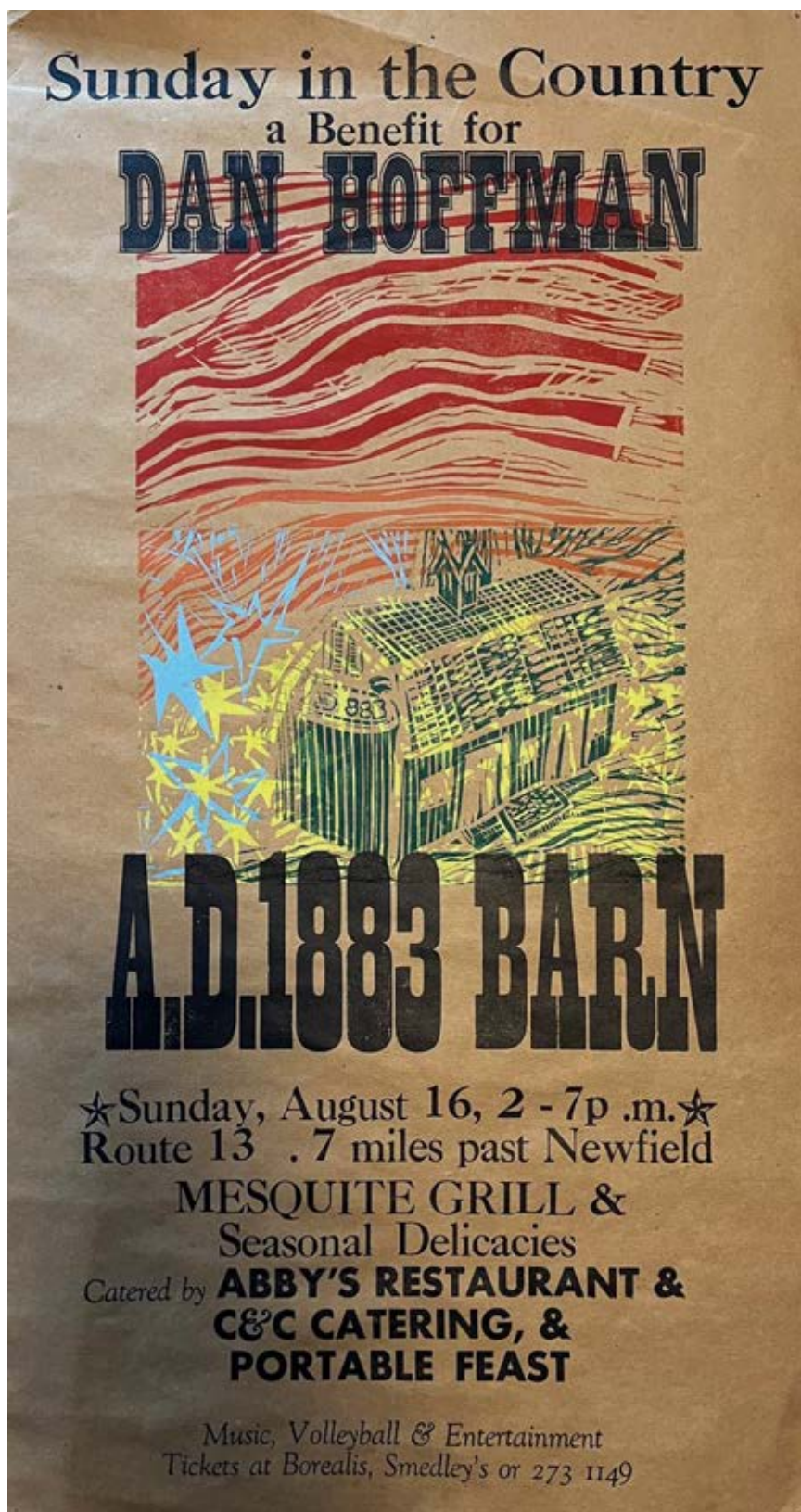


Figure 10: Poster for political fundraiser by Vicky Romanoff.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

Tompkins Co., New York

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Figure 11: Connie Saltonstall photographing the *Giddy Up Napoleon* exhibition.

1883 Barn

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Figure 12: 1883 Barn as shown in 1988 sales prospectus.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

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Figure 13. Romanoff working on Simeon's restaurant rehabilitation.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

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Figure 14. Restoration of the Clinton House in Ithaca.

1883 Barn

Name of Property

Tompkins Co., New York

County and State

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: 1883 Barn

City or Vicinity: Newfield

County: Tompkins

State: New York

Photographer: Seth Adams

Date Photographed: 10/29/2024, 11/1/2024, 07/17/2025

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo Kitchen Interior

Photo 001 out of 015 West elevation exterior

Photo 002 out of 015 East elevation exterior

Photo 003 out of 015 North elevation exterior

Photo 004 out of 015 Chicken coop west elevation Exterior

Photo 005 out of 015 Northeast view exterior

Photo 006 out of 015 Southwest elevation exterior

Photo 007 out of 015 Collage wall in live-work area interior

Photo 008 out of 015 Kitchen mosaic metal wall interior

Photo 009 out of 015 Living room interior

Photo 010 out of 015 Open space converted in 1990s for use as a farm shop

Photo 011 out of 015 Upper floor view of exterior of study pod

Photo 012 out of 015 Upper floor view of exterior of bedroom pod

Photo 013 out of 015 Bedroom interior showing berths

Photo 014 out of 015 Bedroom interior showing berths

Photo 015 out of 015 Gambrel framing in unfinished part of upper floor

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.

















