

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

DRAFT

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Snell-Gillett House

other names/site number _____

related multiple property listing N/A

2. Location

street & number 213 Mill Street

☐

not for publication

city or town Theresa

☐

vicinity

state NY

code NY

county Jefferson

code 045

zip code 13691

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.)

- ☒ private
☐ public - Local
☐ public - State
☐ public - Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 2 | 0 | buildings |
| 0 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 2 | 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.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN: Queen Anne

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STONE: Limestone

walls: SYNTHETICS: Vinyl

roof: METAL

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 Snell-Gillett House is a two-and-a-half story, wood frame house with eclectic and highly decorative details characteristic of the Queen Anne style. It was built ca.1880 in Theresa, Jefferson County, New York. Located just east of Theresa's downtown, the home is characterized by an L-plan with a cross-hipped asphalt roof punctuated by three prominent gabled wall dormer bays --two on the façade, and one capping a full-height window bay on the east elevation. The façade faces south towards Mill Street which connects this semi-rural residential area to Theresa's Main Street across the Indian River. The Snell-Gillett House stands out amongst its neighbors for its intact original woodwork and the ornamental details of the house, and it remains one of the best extant examples of Queen Anne style in Theresa. The house was expanded to the west likely between 1893 and 1900, creating the current configuration.¹ The partial width open porch with turned balustrades, several fully divided stained-glass windows, and highly decorative spindle work throughout are representative examples of Queen Anne details common to the area in the late nineteenth century. In addition, the interior of the house retains most of its floorplan from the late nineteenth century, with only a 1960s kitchen conversion. It also retains historic finishes, including an ornately carved staircase with newel post, wood panel pocket doors, and wood trim. The property includes a contemporaneous wood carriage house that retains historic integrity as well.

Narrative Description

Location and Setting

The Village of Theresa is located in northern Jefferson County, in the North Country region of New York State. The Indian River with its high falls passes through the length of Theresa, with the Snell-Gillett house residing just to the east of the river. The nearest city to Theresa is Watertown NY (the county seat), approximately twenty miles to the south. This neighborhood was originally called Brooklyn when it was established in the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, and as such, it is characterized by residential dwellings situated on informally landscaped lots with mature trees and shrubs. Most of the lots are up to an acre, but not substantial enough to reflect the agricultural and rural nature of the surrounding county. The .67 acre on which the house

¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Theresa, Jefferson County, New York: 1888 and 1912. The current owner's family received oral accounts passed down from the Snell family and Ruth Makepeace, long-term resident of 216 Mill Street, that the house was indeed built in two stages. A comparison of the 1888 and 1912 Sanborn maps indicates the footprint grew between those dates. The deed transfer from Jacob and Lucinda Snell to their son James in 1893, combined with 1900 census data indicating that two generations of the Snell family resided in the house that was divided into two indicate the alteration was likely between 1893 and 1900.

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sits is surrounded by other wood-frame residential properties dating from the mid-to-late nineteenth century, two of which also exhibit similar detailing consistent with the Queen Anne style. Others reflect the popularity of other nineteenth century styles including Italianate and Shingle.

Mill Street, also designated as State Route 26, stretches across the heart of the village where it then becomes Main Street, serving as the primary commercial thoroughfare. The Snell-Gillett House faces south towards the road, and travelers heading north towards the popular tourist town of Alexandria Bay on the St. Lawrence River will pass the home just before entering Theresa.

Snell-Gillett House ca. 1880-1900 (one contributing building)

Exterior Description

The Snell-Gillett House is a two-and-a-half story, wood frame Queen Anne structure topped with a cross-hipped metal roof (Photo 001). It was originally built with wood clapboard since replaced with vinyl to weather the harsh climate of northern New York. However, most of the historic wood architectural features such as spindle work, decorative vergeboard, and an ornamental cornice were carefully and sensitively preserved. The foundation is made of original cut limestone blocks, likely locally sourced from the adjacent St. Lawrence County. The house consists of a primary rectangular volume running parallel to Mill Street, with a slightly smaller wing projecting to the rear. This gives the house an L shape, although this configuration is not particularly apparent from most elevations, particularly because the rear of the house abuts a large and steep hill.

Fenestrations are all historic and primarily consists of original single-hung wood windows on the ground story, and 1960s aluminum sash windows on the second. There are notable casement stained-glass windows in each wall dormer dating to the earliest time of construction. For much of the house's history it served as a duplex, converted from single-family when the Snell family expanded the house to the west ca. 1893-1900. In the 1960s the Gillett family reverted the interior to a single-family home, which it remains today.

The façade of the house (south elevation) is asymmetrical, but roughly four bays wide. A partial width projecting porch corresponds with the earliest Sanborn maps of the area (see *Figure 1*), although the balustrade and posts are modern and based on original features. The one-story porch roof is slightly hipped, with a metal roof and a small front-gable pediment centered above the entry stairs. A decorative dentil course runs below the

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porch eaves. Though set back under the porch, the original double wood entry doors with colorful inlaid stained glass are a key historic feature. The windows on the ground story of this elevation are original wood two-over-two sash windows capped with ogre pediments.

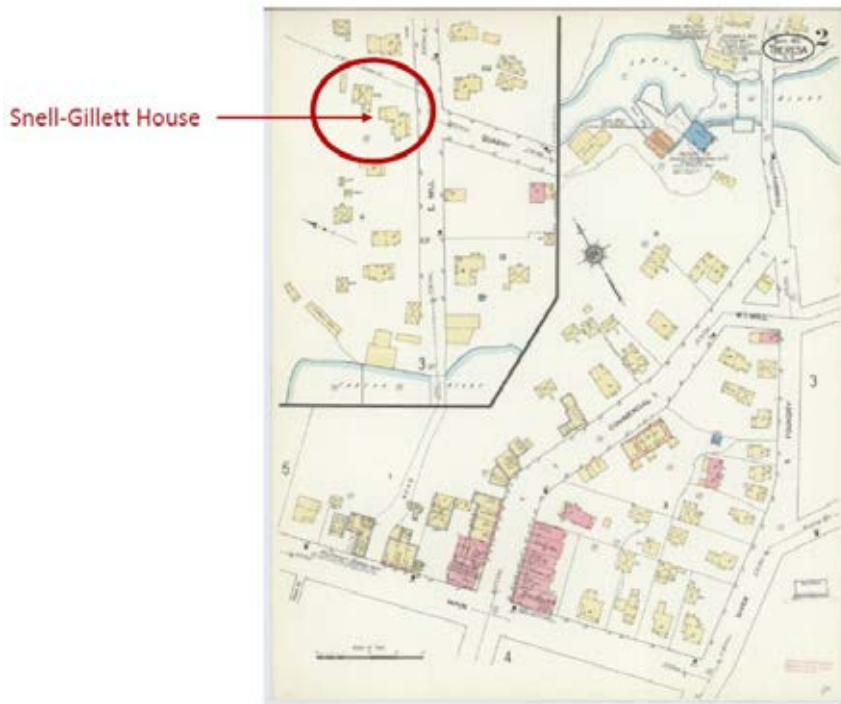


Figure 1: 1912 Sanborn Map of Theresa, NY

The upper stories of the façade are most notable for a set of highly decorative wall dormers. Each dormer is supported by decorative brackets and hanging decorative spindles, and the dormers include ornately carved vergeboard terminating with decorative return eaves. They each boast a fixed, multi-color stained-glass window with a decorative surround centered under their dormer gables. It is worth noting that the wall dormers are not centered with the porch or entry, though an undated photo likely from the 1890s (*Figure 2*) shows that the façade was initially symmetrical and contained only one dormer. It is apparent that when the Snell family expanded the house to the west, they simply copied the original wall dormer and window fenestrations and elongated the porch slightly

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Figure 2: Undated photo of the Snell-Gillett House as originally constructed. Photo is property of the Gillette Family, owners of the house from 1960-present

The original second-story windows seen in *Figure 2* all remain in place, but with the addition of another set of paired sash windows added under the “newer” dormer that was created when the house was expanded. Either end of the façade is chamfered at forty-five-degree angles and contain one sash window on each story, creating a bay window effect on the interior rooms. The façade and side elevation’s eaves connect over these angled ends of the façade, supported by decorative spindle and bracket supports. The photo from the 1880s indicates this design flourish was original.

The western elevation (Photo 005) is two bays wide and includes a one-story, partially enclosed projecting hip-roof porch on the lower story. This portion of the house is the addition from the last years of the nineteenth century and the porch appears in the same configuration in the 1912 Sanborn. The open portion of the porch includes a turned balustrade and more framed turned spindle detailing under the porch eaves. Where enclosed, the porch includes a double sash window, and a single door leading to the home’s western kitchen. The upper story includes two single aluminum sash windows with the same ogee pediment capping surround seen throughout the rest of the house.

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The rear of the house (north elevation) opens to a small yard that backs up against a twelve-foot cliff face. This elevation is where the two wings of the house connect, creating the L. There are two small projecting one-story shed roof porches along this elevation: one open porch with a turned balustrade; and a fully enclosed porch used for storage. Fenestrations on both stories of this elevation primarily consist of original wood hung windows with decorative surrounds. There is a rear shed addition projecting at the northeast corner. This serves as the current kitchen but was previously a mud room. The addition appears on the 1912 Sanborn Map of the house, but a closed-off stairway under this section indicates that it was built over a cellar entry originally on the exterior. Most likely it was added at the same time the house was expanded to accommodate the growing Snell family. A wood porch projects to the east from the addition and allows for accessibility access. However, this porch is contemporary and not original to the building.

The east elevation (Photo 4) is three bays wide, with a central, two-story, three-sided projecting bay, capped with a gabled wall dormer similar to those on the façade. Each side of the projecting bay has double hung windows, the first story has two-over-two wood windows and the second story has one-over-one replacements, all capped with the ogee pediment motif. The wall dormer includes fan brackets and spindle supports that come to a point over the second-story bay windows. To the left of the bay is a one-story projecting entrance porch with a turned balustrade and posts. Like elsewhere on the house, the ornamental framed spindle work under the eaves indicates that this porch was original, however the stairs have likely been replaced. The door to this porch is notable for its inset stained glass identical to the dormer windows and entry.

Interior Description

The original house, built ca. 1880, encompasses what is now the main front entrance hall, the parlor/music room just off the entrance hall, and the living room, piano room, study, first floor bathroom, dining room, pantry, and kitchen (*Figure 3*). Upstairs, this original portion of the house includes four bedrooms, a large central hall, and a bathroom. The west wing addition, built ca. 1893-1900, encompasses a west parlor/art room, the now defunct west wing kitchen and pantry, and two bedrooms and one bathroom on the second floor. Evidence suggests that the expansion was at least partially done in support of the conversion of the house to a two-family residence.

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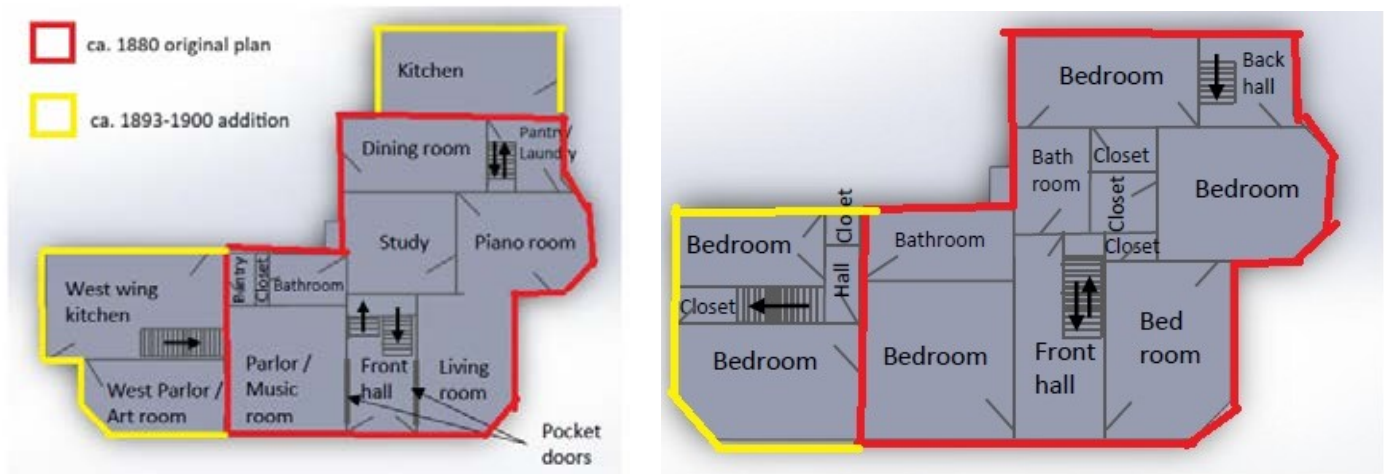


Figure 3: Current Floor Plan of the house, indicating the original house and later addition

Despite having been reverted back to a single-family home in the 1960s, the Gillett's largely kept the floor plan intact, but discontinued use of the west wing kitchen. The interior floorplan thus reflects the house's late nineteenth-century expansion. Taken together, both sections of the second floor include a large central stairway, at the front of the house, two secondary stairways to the north and west sides of the house, six bedrooms and two bathrooms.

The interior of the Snell-Gillett House has exquisite original detailing and retains a high degree of historical integrity. The soaring nine-foot-plus ceilings found in most of the rooms are striking. Original features include wood paneled doors with colorful stained-glass windows in the entry and side doors, hardwood floors throughout, brass hardware, a tin ceiling in old kitchen, two wood pocket doors, lathe and plaster walls, and a particularly spectacular grand paneled staircase.

First Floor

The front door opens onto the impressive main entry hall and staircase. This a rectangular room with two original large wood paneled pocket doors: the one on the right leading to the living room, and the one on the left leading to the parlor/music room. The front hall retains its original hardwood floor and baseboards, as well as door trim displaying carved plinths inset with decorative rosettes. The double paneled entry doors are a notable feature with multi-colored stained-glass filtering in light from the outside. The stairway is highly decorative with turned balusters and a large, tapered newel post with inset paneling and designs common in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century.

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The living room is located to the east of the front hall and features high ceilings and original woodwork, including wide carved baseboards and the same plinth/rosette door surround found throughout the rest of the house. A built-in bookcase was added in the northwest corner of the room in the 1960s, effectively replacing a door to the den behind it. The bookcase was built in such a way to preserve the integrity of the original surrounding door trim as part of the bookcase. A wide archway connects the living room to the piano room.

The piano room, which was likely the original dining room until the 1890s conversion, is notable for its tripartite window bay and paneled/colorful stained glass exterior door that leads to the eastern entrance porch. Original details include wood trim and interior doors that connect the piano room to the pantry, dining room, and study. The dining room is adjacent to the piano room with original details that include wood beadboard wainscotting, metal floor register, a wood and glass panel exterior door, and a continuation of the wood trim seen throughout the house. The dining room was renovated in the late 1960s by Arnold Brown (1914-1992), a local carpenter, to accommodate the Gillett family. Renovations include the removal of much of the wall between the dining room and kitchen, which was replaced with a wooden chest-high buffet peninsula, and the addition of a built-in corner cabinet. The renovations were sensitively made in order to preserve the wood beadboard wainscotting and other original materials. There appears to have originally been a doorway, removed and plastered over pre-1960, that lead from the dining room directly to the study to its south.

The kitchen is located to the north of the dining room which is connected via an open doorway and the buffet peninsula added in the 1960s. Mr. Brown also built wood kitchen cabinets, a coat closet with sliding doors, and a heated "hot seat" with under-seat storage in the kitchen during this time. The study is located to the west of, and immediately adjacent to, the piano room. The room contains a short wood panel door that accesses a crawl space under the main stairway to the south. A doorway to the living room to the south of the study was filled in to make a built-in bookcase in the living room in the 1960s as described above, and modern wood paneling was added to the south wall of the study in the 1970s. The character of the original house is preserved with original wood details including the wood panel interior doors with ornate brass doorknobs. The first-floor bathroom is located to the west of, and is connected to, the study. It has had multiple renovations over the years, most recently in 2018, but to preserve the feel of the original house, the bathroom retains its original wood trim, door, and an original vertical pocket window.

The parlor/music room is located at the front of the house between the main front entrance hall to the east and the west parlor/art room to the west. The rooms across the front of the house were built to impress, and they

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reflect the Snell's' affluence in Theresa. Original details in the parlor/music room include ornate, intricately carved wood brackets within the doorframe to the art room, a wood panel pocket door leading to the main front entrance hall, a single-hung window with leaded glass in the upper sash, and the same wide carved wood baseboard and trim found throughout the house. (see Photos 008 and 011). The adjacent second parlor, called the west parlor/art room, is located at the front of the house and was added as part of the west wing addition ca. 1893-1900. It has many identical original features carried over from the parlor/music room, including original wood detailing and a large single-hung window with leaded glass in the upper sash. A projecting propane fireplace was added in 2024 to provide supplementary heat to this part of the house.

There is a second kitchen that was added to the original house as part of the west wing addition, but it ceased operation when the house was converted back into use as a single-family home by the Gillett family in 1960. Aside from the wood trim details throughout the house, this secondary kitchen includes a built-in wood pantry, a stamped tin ceiling, and paneled and glass doors leading to the west elevation.

Second Floor

The impressive main stairway provides access to the second floor of the house via a single large landing. Like the first floor, the second includes original wood floors, fenestration trim that displays plinth and rosette motifs, plaster walls in most rooms, original brass door fixtures, and metal floor registers. Floor and stair carpeting was added in places ca. 1970s but the original wood floors remain underneath. The four bedrooms built as part of the original house ca. 1880 generally mirror the footprint of the first floor below, including the northeast bedroom, which like the piano room below features a tripartite bay window. A back stairway with original wood balustrade with turned spindles connects the second floor to the pantry below. The second-floor main bathroom was most recently renovated to improve access to modern conveniences in the 2000s.

In the 1893-1900 addition there are two bedrooms, and a bathroom connected via a small hall. Here the original hardwood floors are exposed, and the wood detailing seen in the original house is carried over. The west wing bathroom was most recently renovated to provide modern conveniences in the 1980s. The ceiling plaster was removed from the west upper hall and northwest bedroom in 2024 for safety.

Attic

The attic is unfinished and extends over the entirety of the second floor of the house, approximately 1400 square feet. It is accessed by a door and stairs from the main second floor central hallway. Three chimneys pass

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through the attic space and illustrate the evolution of the house: the oil furnace chimney which originally served the main coal furnace, the wood fireplace chimney added in the 1970s, and the chimney that once served the second coal furnace on the west side of the house, unused since the mid-1980s. The three original casement windows of the attic are historically significant, displaying the colorful multi-lite stained-glass motif seen elsewhere in many doors.

Carriage house ca. 1880

The carriage house is a two-story side-gable rectangular structure located to the northeast of the Snell-Gillett House, built contemporaneously with the house, ca. 1880. The wood-frame building is three bays wide, with two of the bays having since been converted to roll-up wood garage doors. The entry is a single door to the left of the garage bays with a small front-gabled wood awning. Centered on the second story is an original hay loft door, and there is a louvred cupola centered on the ridgeline of the metal roof.

The first-floor interior features two bays that originally accommodated horses and carriages but has since been used to house automobiles since at least 1960. To the west of the garage bays are two rooms that were used as a veterinary office by the home's owner, Roger E. Gillett from 1960-2003. The first story office also has a one-story open covered kennels area in the rear (north) of the building from this time. Despite its conversion to the veterinary office in the twentieth century the carriage house largely retains its original footprint, association, location, and character, with original exterior cupola, wood clapboard, and hay mow door, and interior wood horse stalls.

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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.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

ca. 1880 to ca. 1893

Significant Dates

ca. 1880; ca. 1893

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Period of Significance (justification) The period of significance begins ca. 1880, the earliest estimated construction date, and ends ca.1893, the approximate date of the west wing addition.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

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

The Snell-Gillett House, located at 213 Mill Street in Theresa, New York, is locally significant under Criterion C in the area of architecture as a distinctive example of the Queen Anne style of architecture in an area of northern New York that was rapidly industrializing but still remained largely isolated. The property enjoyed a long association with two families noted for their contributions to the local economy from the nineteenth to the twenty first century. During the mid-to-late-nineteenth century, Theresa and its surrounding region experienced rapid growth in both population and water-powered industries. It is in the context of this expansion that the Snell-Gillett House was constructed. The Queen Anne styles represent a departure from the classical revival styles popular prior to the Civil War, particularly in rural areas of northern New York where builders initially relied on locally sourced materials. The expansion of railroad lines extending north from the Erie Canal and other important transportation waterways allowed hydropower industries such as logging, milling, and tanning to thrive; but it also exposed rural areas like Theresa to fashionable architectural trends and allowed them access to the materials that could bring them to life. Just like their counterparts in cities, successful local entrepreneurs in the nineteenth century conceived of their homes as direct reflection of their newfound accomplishments. The Snell-Gillett house illustrated this through two generations of the Snell family.

The house was built in two phases. The original house was built ca.1880 by prominent local businessman Jacob H. Snell. With his son James, Jacob founded and operated the prosperous Snell & Makepeace Flouring Mill in Theresa. James was subsequently responsible for the expansion of the house to the west ca. 1893-1900, but the home's original form set the precedent for this expansion, carrying over the Queen Anne details seamlessly from the original house. The residence displays double entry doors, notable cornices, large vertical windows with decorative ogee pediments. It incorporates fundamental early elements of Queen Anne such as a hipped roof with gabled dormers, a partial-width asymmetrical porch, spindle work, and detailed gable ornamentation. For some of the Snell's tenure the house was occupied by at least two generations of the family, functionally and physically separating the households.

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Throughout the twentieth century the property underwent more functional alterations such as the current kitchen addition, a reversion to a single-family home, updates to porch railings and supports, minor cosmetic changes such as carpeting and built-in bookcases and cabinetry, and replacement plaster ceilings where failing. The house remains one of Theresa's most intact and expressive examples of Queen Anne, documenting a period of prosperity in Theresa during the late nineteenth century.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Historical Context

The Village of Theresa is located in the Town of Theresa in northern Jefferson County, one of the most northernmost regions of New York State. It is bordered by the towns of Alexandria and Orleans to the west, LeRay to the south, Philadelphia (NY) to the southeast, Antwerp to the east, and St. Lawrence County to the northeast. The Indian River traverses the entire length of the town and separates the Snell-Gillett house from the downtown core of Theresa. The nearest city is the county seat, Watertown, which is approximately twenty miles to the south.

Before the arrival of European settlers, Jefferson County was located within the northern extreme of Haudenosaunee hunting territory. The Haudenosaunee were a confederation of six Native American nations, which included the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora nations.² Jefferson County was held by the Oneidas and Onondaga nations as hunting grounds, occasionally visited by the St. Regis, Massasauga, and other Canadian tribes.³ The Indian River that bisects the town of Theresa was known as "Ojequack" in the Seneca dialect and served as an important transportation route. According to the Town of Theresa historian Tim Minnick, indigenous people traversing the Indian River would portage around Theresa's fifteen-foot upper falls (later dammed to provide water to power mills) near the present Mill Street bridge, to the nearby ninety-foot High Falls before continuing their journey down the Indian River, across Black Lake to the Oswegatchie River, and into the St. Lawrence River valley. Native American hunting and fishing rights were

² "About the Haudenosaunee Confederacy" Haudenosaunee Confederacy, accessed April 29, 2025, <https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/who-we-are/>

³ Hamilton Child, *Geographical gazetteer of Jefferson County, N.Y., 1684-1890*, ed. William H. Horton (The Syracuse journal company, 1890), 10.

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reserved by the Oneidas until the area was settled by people of European ancestry following the Macomb purchase.⁴

The Settlement of Theresa

After the Revolutionary War, millions of acres in New York State were opened for expansion and agricultural settlement. In the late 1700s, a speculator named Alexander Macomb purchased roughly four million acres in northern New York, including what is now Theresa. The area first passed to the Antwerp company and then to James de Le Ray as part of his 220,000-acre purchase from the Antwerp Company in 1800.⁵ Le Ray (1760–1840) was the son of Jacques Donatien Leray de Chaumont of France. His parents hosted Benjamin Franklin on several occasions during Franklin’s service as United States minister plenipotentiary to France. The Le Ray family was wealthy and provided military supplies and aid to the United States during the War of Independence.⁶ Despite his pedigree, James Le Ray found himself with direct ties to Theresa. As the Jefferson County historian Hamilton Child recalled in 1890, Le Ray:

Recognized the natural advantages at the High Falls of Indian River and in 1810-11 erected a sawmill [in Theresa] and produced large quantities of lumber. In 1817 the sale of lands was commenced in Theresa by Mr. Le Ray, the usual terms being three dollars per acre, and seven years' time given for payment...This locality was first known as High Falls, but was subsequently named Theresa, by Mr. Le Ray, in honor of his daughter. Colonel Sinesa Ball and James Shurtleff, both of whom came in 1817, were the first settlers in Theresa.⁷

As LeRay discovered, Theresa is ideally situated upon the impressive high falls of the Indian River, a shallow river flowing more than seventy-five miles from Indian River Village to Black Lake, which empties into the Oswegatchie River and ultimately into the St. Lawrence River near Ogdensburg, NY. Theresa’s location along the Indian River has historically provided both economic opportunities and natural beauty, shaping its development over time. The Upper Falls and High Falls of Theresa were instrumental in the selection of the site for the village, as they provided waterpower for mills before the advent of electricity and other sources of

⁴ Child, *Geographical gazetteer*, 10.

⁵ Child, *Geographical gazetteer*, 9.

⁶ “Founders Online: Thomas Jefferson to James Le Ray de Chaumont, 29 May 1818,” National Archives, accessed February 12, 2025. <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-13-02-0066>

⁷ Child, *Geographical gazetteer*, 692.

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modern power. The Village of Theresa is also called the “Heart of the Indian Lakes” due to the twelve lakes located wholly or partially within the township.⁸

An 1864 map of Theresa shows a surprising amount of development--at least ten mills and foundries clustered along the upper and high falls of the Indian River, a testament to the impact that waterpower harnessed from the Indian River delivered to the growing town. At the time the village incorporated in 1871, Theresa consisted of about 1,200 acres and had a population of about 1,100 people.⁹ Gideon Snell, Sr., father of Jacob H. Snell and a previous superintendent responsible for constructing portions of the Erie canal and the New York Central railroad in the early nineteenth century, was elected as one of the village’s first trustees.¹⁰

The Growth of Theresa

In 1835, Anson Ranney built a grist mill on the upper falls of the Indian River, where the Snell & Makepeace Flouring Mill would later be located. In 1850, Anson D. Gardner purchased the mill and ground grain into flour for the surrounding community. A.D. Gardner sold the mill to the newly formed firm of Snell & Makepeace in 1867. Snell & Makepeace consisted of Elliot Jackson Makepeace (1828-1888) and Gideon Snell, Jr. (1840-1916), brother of Jacob H. Snell (1831-1900) and uncle of James H. Snell (1861-1952), the builders of the Snell-Gillett House. Jacob H. Snell joined his brother’s firm in 1869, as did James H. Snell upon the death of his father thirty years later. Snell & Makepeace was known as an innovative firm, as James H. Snell’s obituary noted, it was the “first north of the main New York Central tracks in New York state” to equip their entire mill with rollers in 1882.¹¹ Snell & Makepeace ran the flouring mill on the Indian River until its sale in 1916, at which time it was noted that the Snell & Makepeace plant was “reputed to be one of the finest in the state if not in the United States”.¹² Today, the dam on Theresa’s Upper Falls is gone, as is the mill that once belonged to Snell & Makepeace after it burned in 1972. However, a dam on Theresa’s High Falls on the Indian River still produces electric power for the residents of Theresa and the surrounding area.

⁸ “Recreation,” Town of Theresa, NY, accessed February 8, 2025, <https://www.townoftheresany.com/recreation.html>.

⁹ Child, *Geographical gazetteer*, 690.

¹⁰ “Gideon Snell, 76, Dies at Theresa. He Was Well Known Resident of That Town. Had Been Ill Since April.” *Watertown Daily Times*, July 12, 1916.

¹¹ “James H. Snell is 89 Years Old,” *Watertown Daily Times*, June 2, 1950.

¹² “Purchases Theresa Mill.” *Watertown Herald*, March 4, 1916.

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On December 9, 1872, a year after incorporating, the first train arrived in the village of Theresa.¹³ Theresa was a stop on the expanded Utica and Black River Railroad, which ran from Utica north to Ogdensburg and Potsdam on the St. Lawrence River. The railroad was vital to the economic growth and survival of communities in the North Country, as it facilitated the movement of goods to and from markets in the Great Lakes and East Coast. Only 190 miles from Albany, products from Theresa and its surround could be transported entirely by rail or via the Erie Canal east to Albany, and then south via the railroad or Hudson River to New York City. The rail line later became the Rome, Watertown, and Ogdensburg Railroad, which was taken over by the New York Central Railroad in the early twentieth century.¹⁴

The growth of the village of Theresa was nearly thwarted by a pair of devastating fires in 1859 and 1890. As nineteenth century historian Hamilton Child recalled, the first fire “spread devastation on both sides of the river, destroying one barn and two dwellings, two or three saw-mills, a woodworking shop, machine shop, a foundry, a gristmill, and a cloth factory. The bridge was also totally destroyed.”¹⁵ Despite this, villagers re-built, and constructed a number of houses in the 1860s and 1870s, with a high concentration of buildings appearing on a map as early as 1864 (the Snell-Gillett property was owned by J. Cuppernell at that time.) The population of Theresa grew to 2,389 people by 1880. However, a second devastating fire struck the village in 1890. The fire destroyed over forty-two buildings on the west side of the Indian River, causing damage in excess of \$100,000, a huge sum at the time.¹⁶

The Snell-Gillett House

The Snell-Gillett House is located in a residential section of the village of Theresa that was formerly known as Brooklyn, referring to the upscale, tree-lined residential area in Theresa located on the eastern side of the Indian River from the Main Street of the village. Development of this section of the village in the mid-nineteenth century was driven by the establishment of water-powered mills along the nearby Indian River upper and high falls. As such, the neighborhood became a popular area for mill owners to build grand homes that displayed their prosperity. The Snell family was among them, commissioning the family home to be built just one tenth of a mile from their Snell & Makepeace flouring mill, affording the owners an easy commute. The Snell’s’

¹³ Tim Minnick, email direct message to Amy Gillett Stenard, January 28, 2025.

¹⁴ “History of the Mohawk Valley: Gateway to the West 1614-1925 Chapter 87: History of the New York Central Railroad and Other Valley Lines”, Schenectady Digital History Archive, accessed April 30, 2025, <https://www.schenectadyhistory.org/resources/mvgw/history/087.html>

¹⁵ Child, *Geographical gazetteer*, 690-691.

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business partner Elliot Jackson Makepeace built his own home a mere couple hundred feet southeast.¹⁷ Located at what is now 216 Mill Street, the Makepeace house shares several characteristics with Snell-Gillett that indicates they likely used the same architect and/or builder. E.J. Makepeace's daughter, Ruth Makepeace Markell, continued to live in the house until the 1960s, sharing the history of the neighborhood with the Gillette family. An 1888 Robinson map of Theresa shows that more residences had been built along East Mill Street (Figure 4). The Snell & Makepeace grist mill and upper falls dam appear on the opposite side of the Indian River from the mill owners' residences, on the north side of West Mill Street. The 1912 Sanborn map of Theresa (Figure 1), published after the Snell-Gillett House west wing was built, shows the footprint of the house in its current form, indicating the west expansion that took place ca. 1893-1900.



Figure 4: 1888 Map of Theresa from E. Robinson's Atlas of Jefferson County, Plate 020

Architectural Analysis

The Queen Anne style of architecture was becoming wildly popular among middle class and wealthy homeowners at the time that the Snell-Gillett House was built. Despite its namesake who ruled England from 1703 to 1714, the style evolved in the 1860s from English movements spanning the late-fifteenth to the early-

¹⁶ Child, *Geographical gazetteer*, 690-691.

¹⁷ Tim Minnick, direct email to Amy Gillett Stenard, January 14, 2025.

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eighteenth centuries in Britain. It drew inspiration from a wide variety of historical precedents, including Tudor half-timbering, Classical-inspired designs of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, and late Medieval influences that preceded them. English architect Richard Norman Shaw is widely considered to have pioneered the style, or at least experimented with models that directly inspired interpretations in the United States. Henry Hobson Richardson built the Watts Sherman House in Newport, Rhode Island in 1874, introducing Queen Anne to the upper classes in America at the same time that railroad networks made shipping pre-cut materials convenient.¹⁸

Queen Anne architecture offered an eclectic and fanciful departure from the restrained designs of the early-Victorian era. It satisfied Americans' desire for nostalgic and romantic architectural styles after the Civil War and allowed the rapidly growing middle and upper classes to signify their wealth and newfound disposable income. Queen Anne homes were often affordable yet ornately designed, with a plethora of architectural pattern books that offered pre-made designs and plans that could be applied using just a builder. In contrast to contemporary architectural styles of the time, such as Italianate and Second Empire designs, Queen Anne architecture allowed for individual expression, eclecticism, and flexibility. For example, the Snell-Gillett expansion ca. 1893 appears relatively seamless at first glance. The irregular forms, massing, and varied surfaces allow for alterations that do not interrupt a formal and symmetrical design. Were one to construct a similar addition or remove a cornice on an Italianate style residence, the change would fundamentally alter the hallmarks of the design; a Queen Anne could accommodate similar modifications without fundamentally losing characteristics of the style.

Queen Anne architecture was promoted in publications like *The American Architect and Building News*, one of the first architecture magazines, as well as by builders, manufacturers, and of course by the wealthiest homeowners who adopted the style. The Queen Anne style was an eclectic but distinctive aesthetic, with surfaces that often displayed an array of materials such as brick, stone, patterned shingles, stucco, half-timber, clapboard, and slate. Notable identifying features include steeply pitched, irregular roof shapes, dominant, front-facing gables or dormers, bay windows, partial or full-width porches, and towers or bays capped with cylindrical or conical roofs.¹⁹ Classical patterns such as dentils and pediments were not discarded completely but were largely relegated to detailing rather than serving as key forms.

¹⁸ Geoffrey Hintz, National Register Nomination, Yeomans House, 2024, 4-15

¹⁹ "Queen Anne," Architectural Styles of America, accessed February 8, 2025, <https://architecturestyles.org/queen-anne/>.

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The Queen Anne style in the United States can be broadly divided into four principal subtypes distinguished by their ornamental detailing: Spindle work, Free Classic, which uses classical columns instead of delicate turned detailing; Half-Timbered, common in the Northeast but rare; and Patterned Masonry, usually a high style found in urban areas throughout the country. The Snell-Gillett house falls into the spindle work subtype that highlights its design and architecture. Spindle work was made possible with the invention of machine lathes that could create lacy, decorative spandrels, knob-like beads, Eastlake detailing, and turned balustrades.²⁰ These elements could be applied to nearly any surface, but are most commonly seen on porches, under eaves, as both interior and exterior brackets, and as vergeboard/fascia. Unlike some of the other sub-types, spindle work was a more affordable alternative to half-timbering and patterned masonry, particularly in rural areas where master masons and other craftsmen were not as readily available to implement elaborate designs.

The Snell-Gillett also embodies several notable features that specially exemplifying Queen Anne architecture in rural New York State circa 1880-1900. Communities so far removed from even moderately sized cities relied heavily on the shipment of materials via rail rather than the work of local craftsman and architects. The architects qualified to build the most ornate homes were more drawn toward urban projects or seasonal camps in the nearby Adirondacks. Whether or not a formal architect was involved, the Snell-Gillett house is indeed grand. It has a cross-hipped roofline interspersed with three front-gable dormers on two elevations, a full-height projecting window bay, and an interior defined by sixteen rooms. It showcases an asymmetrical façade with two dominant front-facing projecting wall dormers, characterized by ornate turned spade work and detailing under the eaves, porches, on the dormers, and interior and exterior balustrades. Throughout the house are brightly colored stained-glass windows and door insets, and the partial-width original front porch includes a small pediment, a nod to classicism but not an embodiment of it. The dormers are the most impressive feature of the house, with their crenellation and inlaid arch designs within the gables.

The dedication to the Queen Anne style continues inside, with double front doors that feature multi-paned stained-glass insets and carved panels entering an ornately carved paneled hallway. The house retains carved wood pocket doors, hardwood floors, wood paneling and wainscoting, and baseboards and trim with plinth and rosette designs that remain unpainted. Spindle work is highlighted in the ornate main stairway with a large carved wood newel post and at least one doorframe is embellished with a fanciful spindle work bracket. The

²⁰ Virginia McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*, 4th ed. (Alfred A. Knopf, 2019), 345-346.

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piano room and upstairs bedroom both feature the projecting window bay, allowing for natural morning light, while the chamfered façade corners also allow for multiple corner windows in the art room, living room, and two bedrooms above.

The original house was built after the devastating fire that occurred in Theresa in 1859, and the Snell family, who lived in the Town of Theresa at the time, would have been very aware of the risk of fire and its devastating impact. There are two design choices that indicate that the fear of fire may have influenced the design. Unlike many Queen Anne homes, the Snell-Gillett house lacks both fireplaces and ornate chimneys. Like most late-nineteenth century houses, the balloon frame house could serve as a tinderbox and burn quickly, particularly when clad with wood instead of brick. The Snell's appeared to have opted for strictly coal heat, although smaller cement-block interior chimneys allowing for ventilation from a 1970s propane fireplace.

Although impressive, the Snell-Gillett's lack of materials aside from wood and leaded glass, and the focus on mass-produced spindle work, reflects the limitations in which even the wealthiest rural residents were bound. The Snell-Gillett house is decoratively rich, but the primary option for prosperous residents in Jefferson County in the late nineteenth century was still largely limited to what could be shipped by rail and assembled by the family or a local builder. As such, the residence serves as a quintessential example of an intricate but somewhat rural Queen Anne design.

When the original part of the house was constructed by Jacob Snell circa 1880 it was three bays wide with mirrored projecting window bays on the east and west side elevations. A photo taken prior to the ca. 1890s expansion (*Figure 2*) shows that the façade was remarkably symmetrical for Queen Anne, although the compound roof and chamfered southwest and southeast elevations indicate some deviation from earlier rigid styles such as Greek Revival and Italianate, both of which are extant throughout Theresa. The photo indicates that the original section of the house retains remarkable integrity even after the expansion, with little changed except the west elevation and detailing on the entry porch. Fenestrations remain in place with ogee pediments, the spindle work on the vergeboard and eaves is present, the stained-glass dormer attic window is visible, and the covered side porch projecting from the east window bay appears original as well. The pediment above the entry is also original, appearing directly above the entry both then and now, although the porch was expanded to west likely when the addition was added. An 1888 Robison map of Theresa (*Figure 4*) shows that the L footprint was already present, although each mass appears equal, aligning with what is known about the original

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plan. The carriage house was also present in its current location and was therefore likely built at the same time as the house. This map also indicates that son James Snell owned the house directly to the east at what is now 215 Mill Street. A one-and-a-half story frame cross-gable house, it was diminutive in comparison to the elder Snell's home, but unsurprising for the newlywed James, who married Florence Hildreth in 1885.

The 1912 Sanborn map (*Figure 1*) indicates that by this time the current plan was solidified. All porches except the contemporary accessible covered porch near the northeast corner appear, as does the enclosed kitchen addition in the rear, used as a mud room until the 1960s. It is unknown when this one-story shed addition was added, but it was likely constructed during the expansion prior to 1900. In 1893 the aging Jacob and Lucinda Snell deeded the house to their son James, and by 1900 the house was considered two households, with Jacob and his family residing in half, and his mother and sister Jessie in the other. This indicates that under James's ownership the family decided an expansion was necessary, perhaps to help care for their parents while also raising the next generation of children. A decade later Jacob's son Karl lived in half, and Jessie and Lucinda had moved to the smaller Snell house next door with Jessie's husband Junus Wahadt.²¹

As these patterns of occupation show, the addition to the Snell-Gillett house is an important part of its history because it shows the ways in which even prosperous families continued to accommodate multiple generations under one roof into the early decades of the twentieth century. Prior to institutional housing and social safety nets, the elderly relied on their children for care when possible, and younger generations often stayed at home prior to marriage (and in neighboring homes after). The Snells obviously felt it advantageous to modify their home to best accommodate their familial needs, and their financial situation permitted them to do so.

Additionally, the prevailing residential architecture at the time allowed for flexibility and growth without sacrificing key features of the Queen Anne style.

Comparative Analysis

During the late-nineteenth century, Queen Anne architecture flourished in Theresa as much as it did throughout the United States. Despite its remote location, influences from large urban centers filtered into Jefferson County, influencing financially successful residents like the Snells who increasingly had disposable income. The expressive and nostalgic nature of Queen Anne architecture appealed to people who had the financial means to display their status and sophisticated taste through their homes. Although Theresa couldn't draw from

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a large pool of architects and builders in the ways which Buffalo, Albany, and New York City could, architectural pattern books and mass-produced design features offered inspiration and guidance. These resulted in Queen Anne buildings even in the far reaches of New York, particularly those who gained direct access via railroads after the 1860s.

During the mid-nineteenth century, residential construction in Theresa was dominated by frame houses, many were modest folk homes for mill workers. Managers and successful proprietors built Greek Revival and Italianate buildings on both sides of the river. Next door to the Snell-Gillett house at 207 Mill St. is a fair example of the Italianate style that pre-dated and slightly overlapped with the Queen Anne style. This home retains its dominant cornice with bracketed eaves, symmetrical vertical windows, and rectangular appearance. Interestingly, it has a decaying Queen Anne wrap-around porch addition with a pedimented side entry, likely added as a way to “modernize” the home during the Queen Anne building phase in Theresa.

At least four other homes east of the Indian River date from approximately the same date and also embody the spindle work sub-category of Queen Anne architecture. In rare cases, the fascia or vergeboard, turned spindles, and highly decorative brackets of this type may indicate the one-of-a-kind work of a master carpenter. But in based on these nearby properties, it appears that the prosperous residents of Theresa used similar mass-produced spindle work and pattern books, perhaps shared between one another. The spadework detailing can be seen applied to many houses throughout the neighborhood east of the Indian River. The most notable neighbors are 216 and 217 Mill Street. The house at 216 Mill Street was built for Jacob H. Snell’s partner, E.J. Makepeace, in 1897.²² It has a cross-gable and hipped compound roof, an asymmetric façade, and a distinctive wrap-around porch. Like the Snell-Gillett house, it retains intricate spindle work and spindle wheel corner brackets, moderate classical revival elements such as dentil detailing and a porch pediment, and identical multi-colored stained-glass windows in the dormer attic. The Makepeace house displays good exterior integrity, but it lacks the extensive gouge and spindling beneath the gables, symmetrical gable-front dormers, and the ornamental ogee pediments over the windows.

The house at 217 Mill Street sits on a corner lot next to the small frame house originally owned by James Snell in 1888. It is a Queen Anne built around the same time as the Snell-Gillett House, and for some time in the

²¹ 1900 and 1910 United States Census, Theresa, Jefferson County, New York, “Lucinda Sell”, *Ancestry.com*

²² Tim Minnick, direct email to Amy Gillett Stenard, January 14, 2025.

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1970s and 1980s a member of the Gillett Family owned it. The two-and-a-half frame house has a cross-hipped roof with a projecting bay capped with a dormer similar to the Snell house. The windows are hooded with original ogee pediments, similar too Snell's, but in a different pattern. This home displays more classic Queen Anne characteristics via its original wood cladding, including shell-patterned wood shingles in the dormer. It also includes some bracketed corner spindle work on the east elevation, but not nearly as much as the Snell house. Most notably it has lost its original porch, entry door and the woodwork throughout the interior has been painted over or removed.

117 Bridge Street to the north also appears to share spindle work details, applied to a similar form as the house at 216 Mill Street. The two-and-a-half story frame residence is dominated by a projecting mass with a front-gable, and a hipped roof block with a cross-gable bay behind. The asymmetrical façade is quintessential Queen Anne, and it retains ogee pediment hoods over the windows in many places. At least two angled corner elevations include the spindle work brackets seen on all four of the similar homes. But this house has lost most of its integrity, with replacement windows, cladding, and its original porch enclosed entirely at some point. It lacks the attention to detail and integrity of materials and design that the Snell-Gillett retains.

There are also several Queen Anne houses that were built elsewhere in Jefferson County ca.1880-1890, many located in Watertown NY, the closest city to Theresa. These include several in the established residential neighborhood south of the city square roughly bounded by Washington and Sherman Streets and encompassing Paddock and Ten Eyck Streets. The Snell-Gillett house differentiates itself from other Queen Anne residences in Jefferson County through several important and distinct features:

Ornamentation and Detail: The exterior of the Snell-Gillett House has extensive original ornate detailing. The decorative gouge and spindle work, including narrow bands of spindle work fascia in the large wall dormers on the south façade, ornate window crowns, and stained-glass door panels and leaded-glass window panels are more elaborate and plentiful than seen in other local Queen Anne-style residences of a similar age in the area, which may have simpler or less plentiful detailing. The comparison houses in Watertown are on streets that have more Queen Anne-style houses, some with towers, and feature multiple-gabled asymmetric facades similar to the Snell-Gillett House but have fewer original decorative details than the Snell-Gillett House.

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Original Woodwork Throughout: The interior of the Snell-Gillett House is unique for its extensive original ornate woodwork found throughout that retain extremely high quality and are preserved in their original state.

Setting: The Snell-Gillett House stands out on a street with a variety of architectural styles. It continues to retain its rural village setting and is a good example of the type of Queen Anne materials that were accessible to rural residents.

Heating The Snell-Gillett House was originally heated by two coal furnaces, different from the fireplaces and water-based radiators usually found in Queen Anne houses throughout the country. The history of Theresa includes two devastating fires which caused significant damage to many structures in the village in the late nineteenth century. The Snell-Gillett House may have been designed without fireplaces to reduce the risk of fire in a small village suffering from the aftereffects of these huge conflagrations.

Expansion The historic addition prior to 1900 exemplifies the way in which family units lived and functioned prior to the social safety nets and institutions for elderly people were established in the twentieth century. Although many Queen Anne buildings were re-configured for apartments in the twentieth century, the Snell-Gillett house was specifically re-designed very early in its history to accommodate a single family in two households. In essence, it served as a hybrid between multi-family and single-family models.

Additional Historic Context and Ownership History:

The Snells were prominent citizens of Theresa and pioneers in the roller flour industry in northern New York. Jacob H. Snell entered the firm of Snell & Makepeace by 1869, a milling concern which was formed as a partnership in 1867 between his brother Gideon Snell Jr. and Elliot Makepeace, and which was ideally situated on the upper falls of the Indian River.²³ His son James H. Snell was born in Theresa in 1861, and by 1869, at the young age of eight, saw the millstone that was brought to Theresa by Anson Ranney in the 1830s in operation at the family mill. Snell & Makepeace were prone to risky and bold investments such as outfitting the entire mill with rollers, one of the first in New York to do so. But their business decisions appear to have paid off. In fact, James H. Snell was visionary in urging the production of a breakfast food made of wheat in the late nineteenth

²³ "Plan New Concern for Theresa Mill - Business on Same Site Has Been Operated Continuously Since 1838," *Watertown Daily Times*, March 31, 1916.

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century, at a time when oatmeal was the breakfast food of choice. The cereal was manufactured for a dozen years before it was dropped.²⁴

By 1890, Snell & Makepeace was owned by Jacob H. Snell, his brother Gideon Snell, Jr., and John J. Makepeace, son of founder Elliot Makepeace, and was known as manufacturers of Hungarian roller flour, meal, feed, and mill stuffs. Jacob Snell died in 1900, and John J. Makepeace followed in 1914. Snell & Makepeace ran the flouring mill on the Indian River until riparian rights litigation in 1915-1916 led James H. Snell and Gideon Snell Jr. to sell the Snell & Makepeace mill in 1916.²⁵ James H. Snell then formed a new business with his son Karl H. Snell in 1918, called James H. Snell & Son, located on Main Street in Theresa and operating as a flour and feed store.²⁶ Tragedy struck the Snell family in 1937, when James H. Snell's only grandchild, Agnes L. Snell, aged just 26 years old, died in a car accident. James H. Snell's only child, Karl H. Snell, father of Agnes, died in the house a few years later in 1940.²⁷

During the Snell ownership of the Snell-Gillett House, Jacob H. Snell (1831-1900) and his wife Lucinda Shurtleff Snell (1834 – 1921), James H. Snell (1861-1952) and his wife, Florence E. Hildreth Snell (1863-1942), his son Karl Hildreth Snell (1888-1940), his daughter-in-law Gertrude L. Dixon Snell (1888-1973), and his granddaughter Agnes L. Snell (1910-1937), all occupied the house at various times until its sale in 1947. After the sale of the house from James H. Snell to Alwyn A. Flick and his wife Beulah Flick in 1947 James H. Snell continued to reside in the house as a lodger until his death at Mercy Hospital in Watertown, NY in 1952.²⁸ In total, the property was owned by members of the Snell family for over seventy years.

Between 1947 and 1960, the Snell-Gillett House was briefly owned by Alwyn A. and Beulah Flick, and then Lewis E. and Margaret I. White. In 1960, Dr. Roger E. Gillett (1933-2009), and his wife, Jane T. Gillett (1935-2024), bought the property at 213 Mill Street and converted the house back into a single-family home to accommodate their growing family. The Gillett family also has deep roots in the area. In about 1838, Samuel Gillett his spouse Lucy Gillett, and their son Ira Gillett, ancestors of Dr. Roger E. Gillett bought and

²⁴ "James H. Snell is 89 Years Old," *Watertown Daily Times*, June 2, 1950.

²⁵ "Plan New Concern for Theresa Mill - Business on Same Site Has Been Operated Continuously Since 1838." *Watertown Daily Times*, March 31, 1916.

²⁶ "Theresa Feed Dealer Makes Son a Partner Firm of J.H. Snell & Son is Organized – To Improve Property," *Watertown Daily Times*, March 4, 1918.

²⁷ "Karl H. Snell, 51, Dies at Home," *Watertown Daily Times*, July 5, 1940.

²⁸ "James H. Snell Succumbs at 91," *Watertown Daily Times*, June 3, 1952.

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homesteaded a farm near the Indian River on land previously owned by James Le Ray de Chaumont in nearby Antwerp, NY. The Gillett family farmed this land for generations until they were displaced in 1941 for the expansion of Pine Camp (now Fort Drum).²⁹

Dr. Roger E. Gillett was a veterinarian who was born in Theresa in 1933 to parents Leslie E. Gillett and Margaret Hall Gillett. After graduating from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (D.V.M.) degree in 1956, he and his wife Jane T. Gillett (B.S. Cornell University) returned to the North Country to practice veterinary medicine. With the help of his wife, Dr. Gillett ran a large animal (predominantly dairy cow) and small animal veterinary practice out of an office located in the carriage house on the property for over forty years. Dr. Gillett started the Theresa veterinary practice in partnership with Dr. Byron McAvoy of Hammond NY, St. Lawrence County, but later broke off with his own solo practice in Theresa.³⁰ Dr. Gillett's veterinary practice territory grew until it encompassed an area roughly twelve-to-fifteen-mile radius around Theresa - a total of about 450 square miles of territory populated by up to an estimated 20,000 dairy cows. In 1984, he was co-founder and owner of the Thousand Island Animal Hospital in Alexandria Bay, NY, while continuing to maintain his veterinary office in the carriage house at 213 Mill Street in Theresa until 2003.

Dr. Roger E. Gillett and Mrs. Jane T. Gillett were both very active in the local community. Dr. Roger E. Gillett served on the Theresa Village Board, was a director of the local bank, and was very active in the Theresa Rotary Club. Mrs. Jane T. Gillett served as the President of the Indian River Central School District and Jefferson County school boards, President of Literacy Volunteers of Watertown, NY, Director of the Craft School in Clayton, NY, and Girl Scout leader for many years. Dr. and Mrs. Gillett raised their four children Susan J. Gillett, Dr. Edward R. Gillett, Amy A. Gillett Stenard, and Dr. Anne M. Gillett in the house. To accommodate their growing family, Dr. and Mrs. Gillett updated the house with a modern kitchen, cabinetry in the dining room and upper bathroom, modern bathroom features, an oil-burning furnace, and a wood-burning fireplace. Dr. and Mrs. Gillett were committed to preserving the unique and historic features of the house, especially its carved wood details. Ownership of the property was conveyed to Susan J. Gillett (1957-2022), and her husband

²⁹ Bertha Bortle Beal Aldridge, "*Gillet, Gillett, Gillette Families: Including Some of the Descendants of the Immigrants Jonathan Gillet and Nathan Gillet...Also of the Descendants of Barton Ezra Gillet, 1800-1955*," 1955, Accessed March 4, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/gillettgillettgil00aldr/page/52/mode/2up?q=Antwerp>

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H. Jeremy Lipschutz (1953-2017), in 2006. As of 2025, the property has been owned by members of the Gillett family for over sixty-five years.

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Snell-Gillett House

Name of Property

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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): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .62 Acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Snell-Gillett House

Name of Property

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

1. Latitude: 44.216786

Longitude: -75.789468

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary coincides with the legal lot lines of the nominated parcel ((23.72-1-16) as identified on the county tax map

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Amy Gillett Stenard; Leslie Krupa, NY SHPO

organization _____

date May 1, 2025

street & number 4953 Lansing St. NE

telephone 727-871-2815

city or town St. Petersburg

state FL

zip code 33703

e-mail aag33@cornell.edu

Additional Documentation

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.

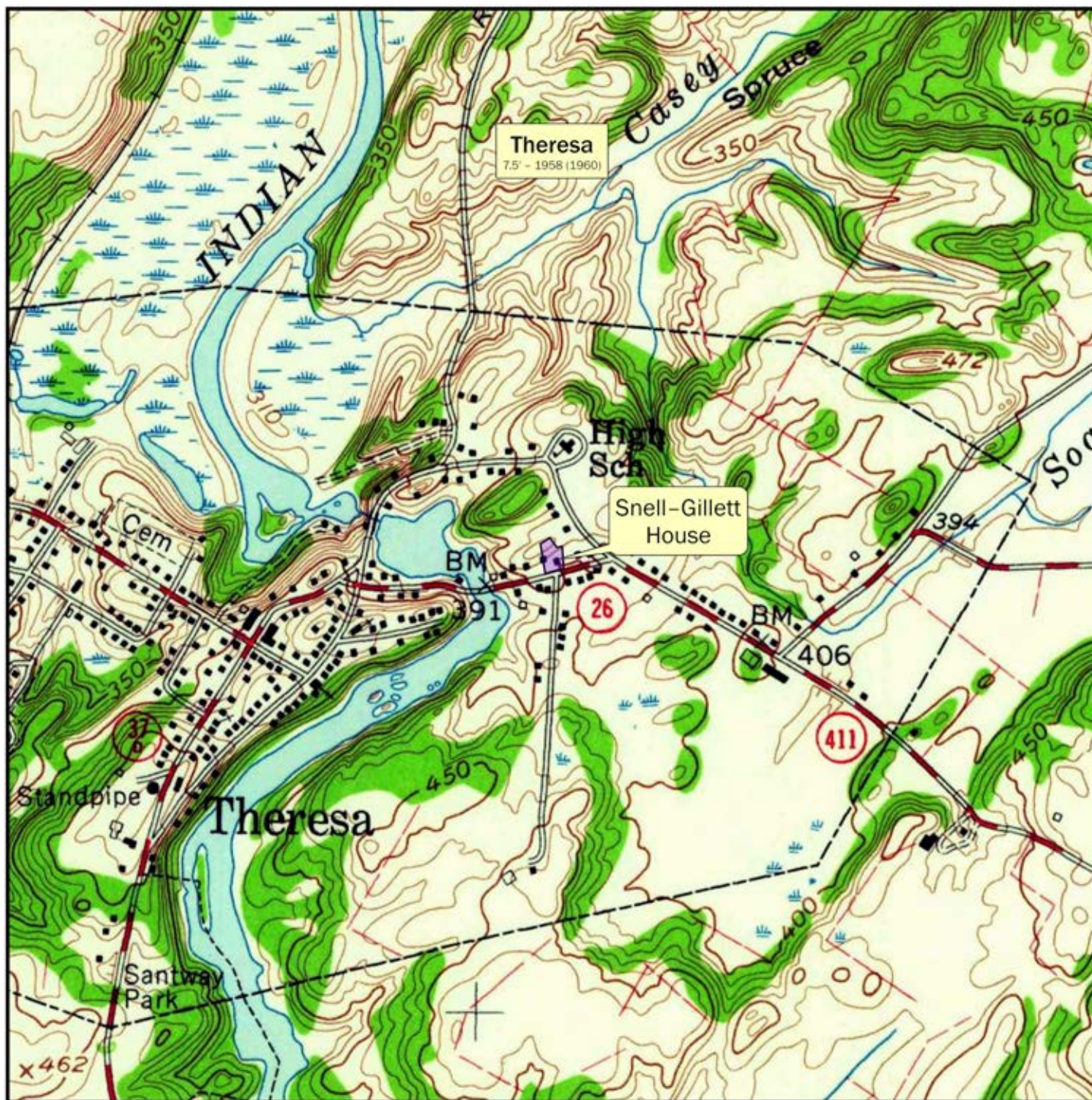
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Snell-Gillett House

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1:12,000

0 500 1000 ft



Snell-Gillett House



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

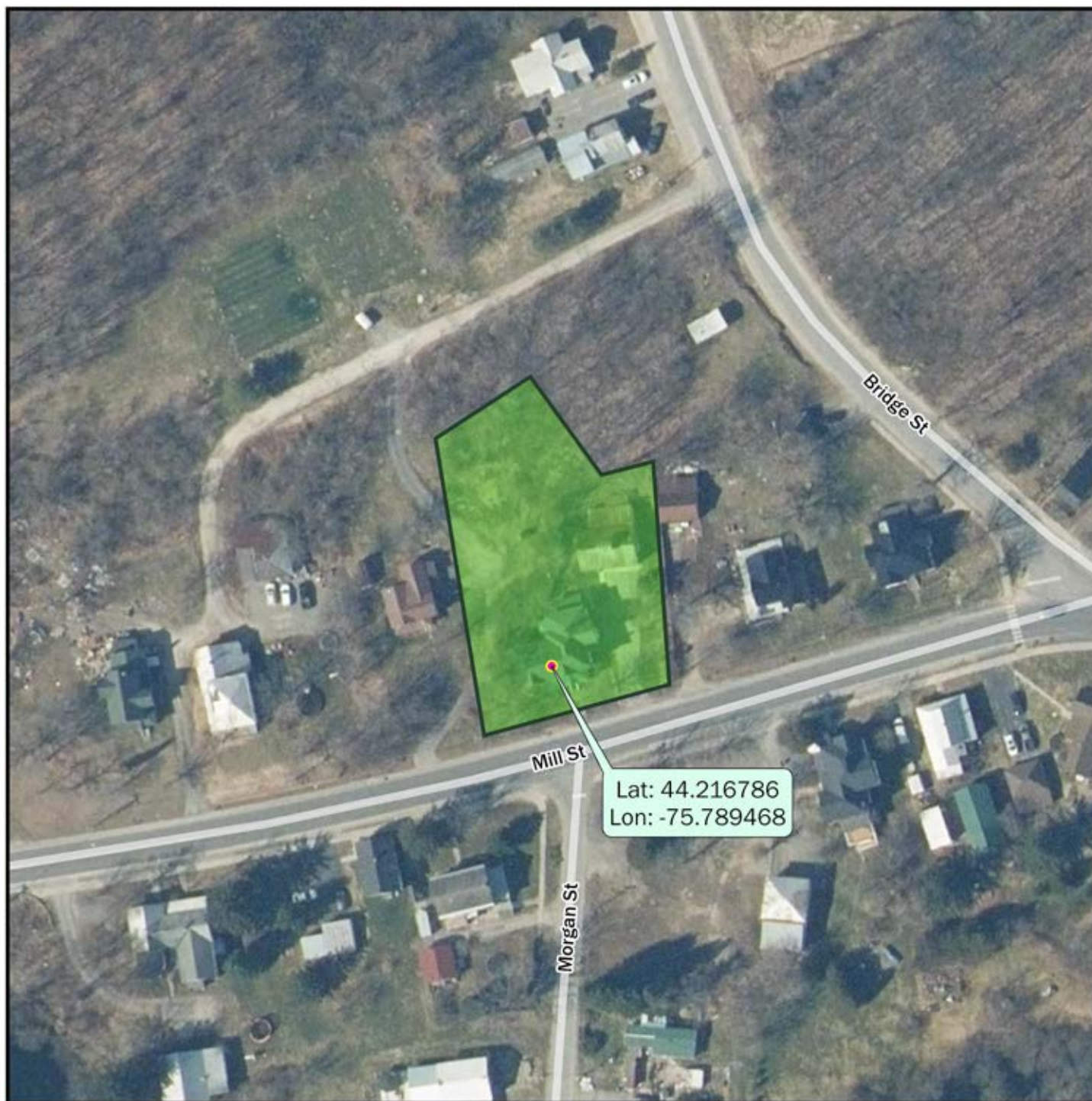
Mapped 04/11/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Snell-Gillett House

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1:1,200

0 50 100 ft

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Nomination Boundary (0.62 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2022



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

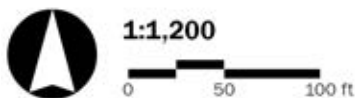
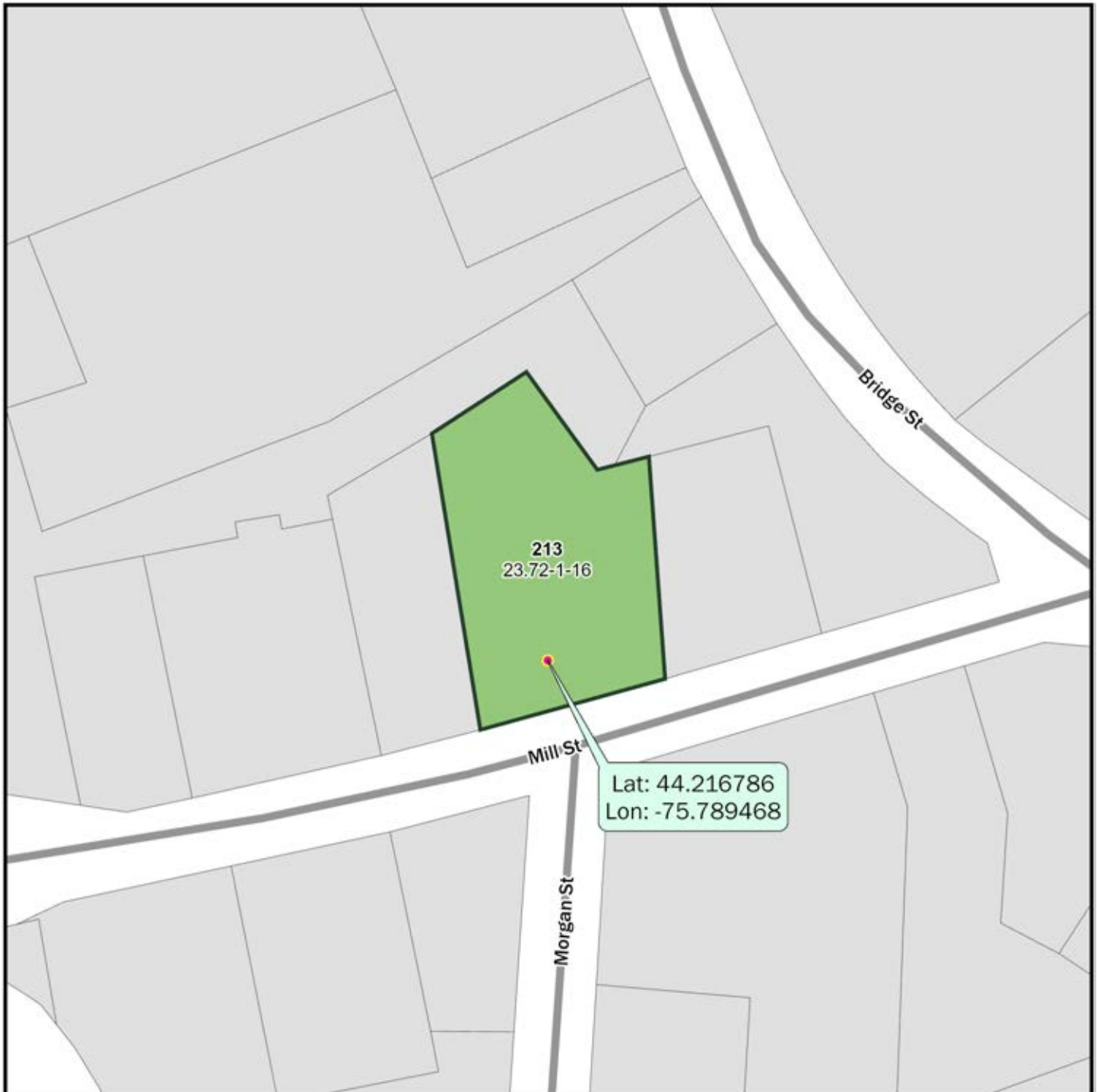
Mapped 04/11/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Snell-Gillett House

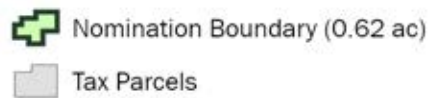
Name of Property

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County and State



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Jefferson County Parcel Year: 2024



**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

Mapped 04/11/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

Snell-Gillett House

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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: Snell-Gillett House

City or Vicinity: Theresa

County: Jefferson State: New York

Photographer: Amy Gillett Stenard

Date Photographed: September 1, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

Photo 1 of 16: House Exterior: façade looking north

Photo 2 of 16: House Exterior: facade looking north from across the street

Photo 3 of 16: House Exterior: east elevation looking west

Photo 4 of 16: House Exterior: east elevation looking southwest

Photo 5 of 16: House Exterior: southwest elevation looking northeast

Photo 6 of 16: House Interior: front entrance hall looking east

Photo 7 of 16: House Interior: front entrance hall details

Photo 8 of 16: House Interior: living room details, looking west

Photo 9 of 16: House Interior: piano room, looking east

Photo 10 of 16: House Interior: dining room, looking southeast

Photo 11 of 16: House Interior: parlor/music room, looking west into west parlor/art room

Photo 12 of 16: House Interior: west kitchen details, looking north

Photo 13 of 16: House Interior: second-floor bedroom, looking southwest

Photo 14 of 16: House Interior: attic, stained glass window detail

Photo 15 of 16: Carriage House Exterior: looking north

Photo 16 of 16: House Interior: second-floor bedroom, looking east

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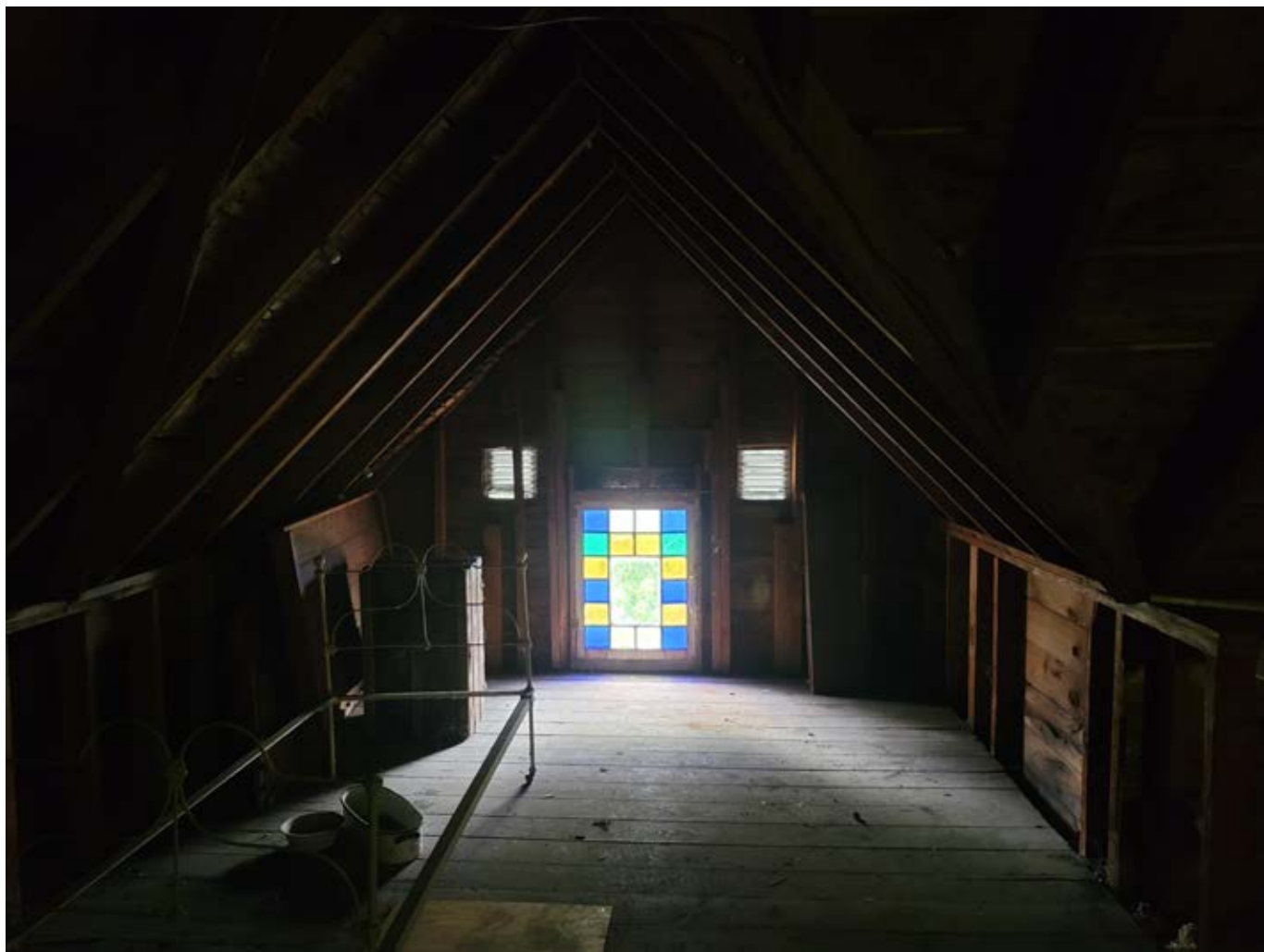


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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. 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