

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 Walter Coulter Homestead Farm
other names/site number _____
name of related multiple property listing N/A

Location

street & number 615 Seedorf Road ☐ not for publication
city or town Bovina ☐ vicinity
state New York code NY county Delaware code 025 zip code 13740

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	
5		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
5	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

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/ outbuilding, animal facility, field

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/ outbuilding, animal facility, field

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: Stone

walls: Wood

roof: Asphalt, steel, wood

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 Walter Coulter Homestead Farm is located at 615 Seedorf Road in the Town of Bovina, Delaware County, New York. The property encompasses approximately 71 acres of land marked off by stone walls that fence former meadows and pastures and line the highway. The buildings on the property are a group of vernacular wood-frame buildings including a contributing one-and-a-half-story, side-gabled house (ca. 1855), a contributing three-story basement barn (built in phases from mid-1800s through ca. 1917 with a contributing milk house added ca. 1940), a contributing spring house of similar date to the milkhouse, and a contributing tool barn (ca. 1885). Narrow tributaries of Coulter Brook, which drains westerly through the nearby hamlet of Bovina Center (a.k.a. Brushland), meander through the generally level area of the property near the house site. There are also areas of second-growth woodland of mixed hardwoods. The property is accessed from Seedorf Road, a town highway that branches easterly off Coulter Brook Road and climbs out of the valley from Bovina Center. Until the mid-1900s, Seedorf Road crossed the ridge dividing the Coulter Brook drainage from the Plattekill drainage and met Sanford Hollow Road in the adjacent town of Middletown.

Narrative Description

The Walter Coulter Homestead Farm is located at high elevation (2,000 feet) in the town of Bovina, Delaware County. Bovina lies in the northern Catskills west of the Hudson River, south of the Susquehanna River and north of the present border between New York and Pennsylvania. This upland region is technically described as a dissected plateau of generally level sedimentary layers formed in marine environments and later cut by valleys formed by streams and glaciation. The geological layers vary in composition and color throughout the Catskills.

The property is enclosed on the south by a steep ridge ascending to more than 3,000 feet. The nob, known as Mount Pisgah (3,365 feet), is almost due south of the farm. The farmstead itself spans a comparatively level area and straddles several small watercourses forming the headwaters of Coulter Brook. Geologically, the region is characterized by gray shale known locally as bluestone and red sandstone in "layercake" formation cut by narrow valleys formed by the numerous tributaries of the Delaware River watershed. One of these streams runs east to west behind the residence. Another is culverted under Seedorf Road east of the house and flows westward through light woods alongside the highway to meet the first stream west of the house, where both eventually debouch into the main course of Coulter Brook. That stream descends northwesterly more than 300 feet to meet the Little Delaware River east of the hamlet of Bovina Center.

The property is reached by Seedorf Road, which aligns with Coulter Brook from the point where it forks from Coulter Brook Road near the Bovina Center Cemetery. The cemetery is about one-quarter mile east of the hamlet. From that intersection, the road climbs steeply, flanked by stone walls, to the generally level section where the house and buildings set back from the north side of the highway. Here the road forms the present south boundary of the 71.32-acre property. The road rises steadily again for another half-mile, nearly to a saddle

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in the ridge at about 2,740 feet. There, the maintained section of Seedorf Road ends, but until the mid-1900s, it continued over the saddle and connected the hamlets of Bovina Center and New Kingston. The latter is on the Plattekill in the neighboring town of Middletown.

The current irregular property boundary encompasses land north of Seedorf Rd. More than half of the property is wooded; the remainder is open land. Stone walls mark off different sections of the property into open land once used as pasture and meadow. Additional walls partially frame the tributary of Coulter Brook running east to west just north of the house. The house and outbuildings mark the last surviving farmstead on this section of Seedorf Road.

Walter Coulter house (one contributing building)

The house (built ca. 1855) is set back about 150 feet from the highway. The one-and-a-half-story, side-gabled, wood-frame dwelling faces south. A narrow, single-story, shed-roofed wing projects from the east elevation. Interior end chimneys repaired with twentieth-century brick project above the ridgeline of the main block. The house rests on a local stone foundation banked to the northwest corner of the building. A ground-level door is centered in the rear elevation of the foundation and faces the stream flowing westward about 50 feet behind the house. On the exterior, the foundation continues unbroken under the lean-to on the east wall. In the cellar, however, the main foundation supports the east wall of the main block and there is just a shallow crawlspace under the lean-to. The wood clapboard siding is bond by corner boards on the western corners of the main block. Wood water table boards frame the lower edge of the house on the front, rear and west walls. The lean-to retains corner boards and water table boards matching the main block. Plain eaves project slightly over the front and rear walls; on the east and west peaks, the raking cornice boards are tight to the building.

Exterior

The generally symmetrical façade retains a center entrance with a wide wood six-panel door flanked by two windows on either side. The entablature framing the main entrance incorporates sidelights above plain panels. Simple squared pilasters set off the sidelights from the door casing and clapboarded walls of the house. A plain board lintel capped by a heavy bed molding completes the entablature. (Photo 1 & 6). The west elevation features two evenly spaced windows that flank the interior chimney flue centered on that wall (Photo 5); on the east elevation, a one-story, shed-roofed lean-to spans the first story from front to back (Photo 2). The upstairs fenestration in both gable peaks is identical: two windows slightly smaller than those on the first-story are placed nearly adjacent to the chimney flues at either end of the house. Between these openings and the front and back corners, small windows with six-light casements are tucked under the slope of the roof near each corner. There are just three windows on the rear wall of the main block, in the first, second, and fourth bays from the east end of the house and two dormers with double windows on the roof (Photo 3). Except for the four casements, all windows in the main block retain wood nine-over-six sash. There are six-over-six windows in the lean-to. All window casings feature simple wood drip caps.

Interior

The principal entrance to the farmhouse is nearly centered on the front façade and opens to a center hall that extends more than three-quarters of the depth of the main block. The door and sidelight assemblage establish the width (about six and a half feet) of the hall. A single-run staircase with a simple balustrade and a turned curly maple newel post (Photo 7) ascends the east wall of hall to the upper half-story.

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The hall is flanked by one large room on either side. Doorways facing each other near the main entrance open to these rooms (Photo 8), which extend about three-quarters of the depth of the house (slightly less than the stair hall). The west room, or parlor, is slightly narrower than the east room. A door in the east wall of the wider east room opens to the lean-to (Photo 10).

The rear quarter of the first-floor plan is divided into four rooms. The one directly behind the stair hall is a closet with no exterior window; it has a small, highly placed interior window in its west wall (Photo 14). This room retains peg rails that were probably part of the original scheme. The room west of the closet spans the rear wall of the parlor and is entered through a door in the rear, or north, wall of the parlor as well as one from the hall. This room has two windows, one in the gable wall of the house and one in the rear wall. Two small rooms of unequal size are reached through doors in the rear wall of the large east room. Each of these rooms has a window in the rear wall of the house.

Upstairs, there are two full-height rooms, one on either side of the stair hall (Photo 16). These rooms are centered under the ridgeline, and their widths match the parlor and east room below (Photo 14). The stair hall extends to the rear wall of the house. There is a narrow room on either side of the hall under the slope of back roof face. These are entered through low doorways off the hall (Photo 15). Each room is lit by its original casement window and a gabled dormer window on the rear roof face. The dormers were added after the period of significance. An attic matching the depth of the two rooms under the back roof face spans the front of house. A plank door in the stair hall enters the western part of the front attic. A door in the wall of the east bedroom enters the eastern section of the front attic.

The trim scheme is characteristic of farmhouses built through much of the nineteenth century in the region. The most elegant work with double-fascia casings featuring extended architraves and large trimmed panels beneath the windows is reserved for the parlor (Photo 12). Casings with a single-face boards and back-banded with flattened ogee moldings trim the openings in the center hall, large east room and three of the four small rear rooms on the first floor. In the large east room, paneled wainscoting capped by a chair rail protected the plaster from furniture being moved for various room uses. All doorways on the first floor retain wood thresholds and feature six-panel wood doors with period cast iron latches. Wood plank floors of varying width, but generally regular within specific rooms, are used throughout. There were wood mantelpieces in both large rooms on the first floor. Both were stored when an owner in the last quarter of the twentieth century had massive decorative stone chimney fronts built in those rooms (Photo 10 and 13). Upstairs, doors and windows are trimmed in plain boards with beaded interior corners. Except for the plank door to the front attic, six-panel doors with period cast iron latches match those throughout the first floor.

Main Barn (one contributing building)

The large, three-story main barn (ca. 1850) is capped by a gabled roof with a north-south ridgeline (Photo 20). The barn embodies three main building phases. The ground-floor basement designed as a cow house for a large butter-producing operation comprises three bays constructed using heavy mortised timbers and a later-added fourth bay built using sistered dimensional lumber (Photo 21). The lower portion of the east wall is reinforced with lumpy concrete often referred to as poor-man's concrete for its inconsistent appearance. Wood cupboards are installed above the shelf this reinforcement created (Photo 22). The poured concrete floor seems more consistent than the foundation reinforcement and probably dates to the second quarter of the twentieth century along with the later northernmost bay. The entire basement is whitewashed as was standard for dairy farms by the 1920s. There is little evidence of stanchions or of a manure removal system.

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The present two-story mow is lightly built using dimensional lumber and appears to replace an earlier, much lower mow constructed using heavy timbers like the first story. The upper level of the two-story mow is entered over a ramp and through a gabled “flyover” that connects with the massive stone-faced bank centered opposite the east side of the middle bay of the older three-bay section. (Photo 20) Four triangular trusses project above the mow floor, one over each bent of the early three-bay barn, and provide the support that affords a largely unobstructed span in the mow. Wagons filled with loose hay were driven onto the loading floor from the ramp and flyover in the center bay, one story above the mow floor. A harpoon (still in place) slid along a steel track under the ridgeline, grasped the hay from the wagon, and released it into the mow compartments above the first and third bays. A grain room is located under the wagon floor, immediately above the ground-level cow area. Chutes for dropping hay to the cows in the grade-level basement abut the exterior walls of the barn. The barn is sided in vertical wood boards and retains a stone foundation. It has a recently replaced steel roof.

Milkhouse (one contributing building)

A small wood-frame milkhouse (built ca. 1940) on a poured concrete foundation nearly abuts the southeast corner of the main barn; its wood-shingled, gabled roof extends to touch the south wall of the barn. It is clad in wood novelty siding (Photo 26). A small six-light window high on the west eave wall illuminates the interior; a sliding door made of vertical wood panels is centered on its east eave wall. The interior incorporates a poured concrete tank where milk cans were kept cool in water to prevent spoilage before the milk went to the milk station for shipment. The interior walls are clad in whitewashed novelty siding. A poured concrete loading area spans the east side of the milkhouse in front of the door.

Tool Barn (one contributing building)

A one-story, gable-roofed tool barn (built ca. 1885, possibly remodeled early 1900s) stands midway between the house and the main barn, its steeply pitched ridgeline running north–south. Two sliding doors made of vertically beaded boards slide over each other on a steel track and span the front façade (Photo 28). The interior offers an unobstructed storage area lit by four-light windows in the east and west eave walls.

In addition to standing buildings, the stone foundation of a sizable building stands about 100 feet northeast of the house. Photographs show that this was an early barn, probably an English threshing barn, that may have been repurposed as a stable and wagon barn later on. Behind the house and near the stream, a pair of low stone pedestals form a maple arch used historically for boiling sap. The large stone slab now set on top supported a pottery kiln in the 1990s-2000s (Photo 30).

Springhouse (one contributing building)

A small wood-frame springhouse (built ca. 1940) similar in size, construction, and design to the milkhouse stands east of the tool barn, its gable end facing the eave wall of the tool barn (Photo 29).

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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.)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1826–1948

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

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

The Walter Coulter Homestead Farm located in the Town of Bovina, Delaware County, New York, is locally significant under Criteria A in the area of agriculture. Collectively, the property embodies the development of a family farm by generations of descendants starting with Walter Coulter (1804–1876), the first son of Francis Coulter (1771–1846) and Agnes Glendinning (1772–1843), Lowland Scots forced to abandon their leased lands in the Scottish Borders during the period ca. 1750–1820. Walter leased Lot 68 in Great Lot 40 of the Hardenburgh Patent in 1825 under the standard system of land tenure in this section of New York. There he opened and expanded one of numerous high elevation farms owned mainly by the descendants of the settler generation of Scottish immigrants. Like many of his neighbors, Walter bought the property he'd leased when long-term leases were banned in 1846 following the Anti-Rent War era of 1839–1845. By 1855 he owned 209 acres, and his family resided in the modest, finely built, wood-frame house on the property. Four generations of Walter's descendants — his son Francis, his granddaughter Hannah, his great-granddaughter Loruhamah Monroe Jocelyn, and his great-great grandson Earl Jocelyn — operated and improved the farmstead until it was sold out of the family in 1948.

The property is also significant under Criteria C for architecture. The residence is a highly intact and characteristic example of the vernacular one-and-a-half-story, side-gabled, wood-frame houses constructed regionally during the early nineteenth century. The three-level basement barn exemplifies the additive pattern of update and expansion of existing outbuildings exhibited on many farmsteads as dairying moved from one of several commodities produced in the mid-1800s to the singular one by the 1920s. It incorporates a high earthen ramp sided with stone accessing the mow that is a distinctive feature of many Delaware County barns built ca. 1885–1915. Well-built stone walls line the highway and enclose pastures, open land, and wooded areas. A maple arch built near the house for boiling sap is an unusual survival and represents the prodigious amounts of maple sugar produced on the farm in the mid-1800s.

The Walter Coulter Homestead Farm — land, house, and outbuildings — is one a handful of surviving properties that are representative of Lowland Scottish agricultural practice and habitation in the uplands of the northern Catskills. The period of significance extends from 1826, when the farm was established and the stone walls were built to define the agricultural fields, to 1948 when the property was sold out of the family.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Scottish Lowland clearances and Settlement of the Town of Bovina

The settlement history of the upland areas of the northern Catskills by Lowland Scots beginning ca. 1800 and continuing until ca. 1820 is distinctive within this region of New York. They formed a community in Bovina and adjacent towns that established traditions of inheritance and cemented coherent communities that lasted largely intact into the twentieth century. After the mid-1900s, changes in the dairy market discouraged those on comparatively small and very remote farmsteads. Over the next quarter century, nearly all properties above about 2,000 feet of elevation ceased production. This recession into the valleys continues to the present day.

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The Walter Coulter Homestead Farm lies within Great Lot 40 of the enormous Hardenburgh Patent that was granted to Johannes Hardenbergh in 1708. This remote tract of more than 1,500,000 acres in the Catskills west of the Hudson River remained largely untenanted by Europeans until after the War of Independence. In fact, European settlement in the royal colony of New York adhered almost entirely to the valleys of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers until after the Treaty of Paris that ended the conflict in 1783. Although the patent was untenanted and unproductive, its original eight owners regularly bought, sold, and divided their shares in it. Thus, by the mid-1700s, the patent had numerous owners.

Judge Robert Livingston (1718–1775) of Clermont (Dutchess County) began buying parcels from the proliferating heirs of the original patentees and others in the 1740s. When he'd acquired about a third of the patent, he forced an agreement from the remaining holders that the land be partitioned into great lots for lottery among them in 1749.¹ His ten children with Margaret Beekman Livingston (1724–1800) all lived to inherit lots owned by Robert. Their daughter Janet Livingston Montgomery (1743–1824) received part of Great Lot 40 in the division after her father's death.²

While lotting was the first step in establishing settlements to make land productive, few could be enticed into the high elevation regions of the Catskills even during the quarter century of rapid outmigration from New England and southeastern Pennsylvania after the War of Independence. In eastern New York, the landholding class established in the colonial period preferred to lease their lands for a steady income over selling fee simple deeds. In the buyers' market of plentiful western lands during the 1780s and 1790s, American-born settlers passed over the upland regions of the Hardenburgh Patent for lands they could own outright.³ By 1800, the stream of emigrants from colonial-era settlements had slowed greatly.⁴ Some had settled in what became Delaware County in 1797 on valley lands along the branches of the Delaware River and its major tributaries. The lack of fee simple tenure combined with the lack of roads to move goods to market from upland sections, however, remained a barrier to upland settlement. Moreover, it was poor wheat land, and rents were levied in wheat. Only those who could not be choosy could be encouraged to take up leases there.

Such were tenants being forced to depopulate Lowland Scotland as their landlords enclosed lands for grazing and new agrarian practices including new crops and new methods like soil enhancement and crop rotation. Traditional farming methods among their tenants had centered for centuries on the allocation of narrow strips of land called "runrigs" where they grew a narrow range of crops. Family groups grazed their livestock freely in common pastures. In 1695, the Scottish Parliament allowed the consolidation of runrigs and the division of common land. This inaugurated a long period when landlords seeking to improve production gradually reduced

¹ This discussion is outlined in the "Burns Family Farm, Bovina, NY." National Register Nomination, 2007, prepared by Jessie Ravage and edited by Kathleen A. LaFrank. It relies on sources cited in "Scottish Agricultural Revolution" in Wikipedia. These include Robert A. Dodgson, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c.1493–1820*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998; T M. Devine, *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed, 1600–1900*. London: Allen Lane, 1998; and Devine, Thomas Martin, *The Transformation of Rural Scotland: Social Change and the Agrarian Economy, 1660–1815*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994. BBC-radio Scotland broadcast "Scotland's Forgotten Clearances" on 16 May 2003) (<http://mccowan.org/media.htm>)

² Janett Montgomery died without issue, and her youngest brother Edward (1764–1836) inherited Lot 40. Edward's daughter Coralie Barton (1806–1873) by his second wife Marie Louise Magdaleine Valentine "Louise" (nee d'Avezac) de Castera Moreau de Lassy (1785–1860) later inherited Janett's portion of Lot 40.

³ Destinations included other places in central New York, Ohio, western Pennsylvania and northern New England.

⁴ The predilection is voiced in advertisements for settlers and emphasized by where advertisements were placed. Joseph Ellicott, the land agent for the Holland Land Company opened in western New York beginning around 1800, in correspondence with his Dutch employers lamented that the great flood of New Englanders of the 1780s and early 1790s had largely dissipated, leaving him scrambling for potential settlers.

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the number of people required to work their land. Recent scholarship (post-1995) by mainly Scottish historians discusses “Lowland Clearances” in contrast with the much better known Highland Clearances. While the latter were often forced through police action, clearance in the Lowlands was more often done by rapidly increasing rents to consolidate land under different management.⁵ Although clearance was more gradual in the Lowlands, it was both inexorable and comprehensive. It is said that by 1820, the entire class of cottars were virtually gone from Lowland Scotland.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, people of economic means and potentially also political power named Cockburn turn up in both New York and Scotland. In Scotland, Adam Cockburn of Ormiston created tenant villages for some former tenants, but these could not accommodate the numbers who were uprooted. William Cockburn (1736–1810) was a prominent surveyor in New York, especially in the area west of the Hudson River and south of the Susquehanna River. His sons James (1775–1848) and William, Jr. (1769–1806) worked with him. It seems more than coincidence that large numbers of Lowland Scots emigrating in family groups arrived in the northern Catskill uplands when New York landlords sought tenants on lands that were being passed over by Americans. The Lowland Scots settlement in the unleased, unsettled upland areas of northern Delaware County served the purposes of landed interests in both New York and the Scottish Lowlands. Some latter day local historians have suggested that the Scots chose this landscape for nostalgic reasons. While upland Bovina offers a wild beauty to the modern eye, for people intent on farming to make ends meet, these unfamiliar conditions were probably not romantic.

While Scottish immigrants who settled in the northern Catskills found a harsh existence, they may not have viewed themselves as victims of the land tenure system so much as its abuse by landlords. For them, long term tenancy was the norm. Having been tied to leaseholds, often for generations, the Scots were accustomed to a system that appears to have engendered enduring community ties. The census of 1820, the first conducted after the Town of Bovina was established by the state assembly in 1819, shows how completely people with Scottish surnames had settled the newly established town. It recorded that 141 of the town’s 1,267 residents were foreigners.⁶ How many more were not American-born cannot be reliably traced in the census until 1850, the first census to record birthplace. It appears that some were naturalized by 1820 and counted as Americans.⁷ The density of Scots and their descendants established through settlement and a subsequent high birth rate were likely the leading factors in setting the new town of Bovina.⁸ The Scots persisted and established a community of prosperous farms that formed the economic and social basis for most Bovina residents until the mid-twentieth century.

Coulter family settlement in Bovina

Francis Coulter (1771–1846) arrived in Albany from Roxburghshire, Scotland, with his wife Agnes and infant daughter Isabel ca. 1800. They are recorded in Stamford a bit later, one of the towns from which Bovina was

⁵ Historians of the early 1900s dubbed these changes as the Scottish Agricultural Revolution, applying the term to the period ca. 1750–1820. Clearance, however, began as early as 1700 and continued as late as 1900, and the term “revolution” for the changes is less favored among recent scholars. Terminology aside, hundreds of thousands of cottars and tenants moved to industrial towns in Scotland and northern England or they emigrated to North America.

⁶ Horatio Gates Spafford, *A Gazetteer of the State of New York*: etc. (Albany, New York: B.D. Packard, 1824): 56.

⁷ Naturalization was instituted by Congress in 1790 and required only two years of residency. Walter Coulter’s parents were apparently among these as they are not marked as foreigners in 1820.

⁸ The 1820 census reported nearly 500 children under the age of ten and another more than 200 between ten and sixteen years.

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established in 1819.⁹ In 1805, Francis acquired the lease for Lot 56 (156 acres) in Great Lot 40 from Louisa Livingston.¹⁰ Lot 56 was adjacent to Coulter Brook (named for the family) at about 1,700 feet elevation.¹¹ Francis's annual rent was 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ bushels of grain (wheat) per year. When he died in 1846, the Coulters' third son David (1813–1877) paid \$46 in cash to take over his father's lease in December.¹² David reported a prosperous farm in the 1850 census.¹³

The Coulters' eldest son Walter (1804–1876) acquired the lease for Lot 69, a 102-acre parcel, in 1826. The rent books show no previous tenant, indicating that Walter undertook the arduous labor of opening his own farmstead about a mile and a half east of his father's homestead farm and 300 feet higher in elevation.¹⁴ The pattern of moving up the valleys into the interior was inaugurated decades earlier in New York. So also, was the pattern of elder sons opening new farmsteads and younger sons inheriting the parental homestead because parents were still active when older sons achieved majority and generally married.

Walter married Margaret Storie (1806–64), also of Lowland Scottish descent, in 1823. The 1830 census might record that the couple lived under his father's roof on Lot 56 as Walter was not recorded as a head of household that year.¹⁵ The following year, the young couple's eldest son Francis (1831–1909) was born. He was the first of their offspring to achieve majority. By 1840, Walter headed his own household of eight people, probably living on Lot 69.¹⁶ As his household grew, Walter leased additional land. In 1836, he leased fifty acres adjoining the southeast corner of Lot 69. In 1846, he further leased seventeen acres, bringing his leased lands to about 170 acres.¹⁷

Walter reported a farm of 250 acres in the agricultural schedule in the 1850 census, indicating he'd leased or owned more land for which we have neither lease nor purchase records. Walter may have held a fee simple deed(s) to the additional eighty acres because landlords began selling lands in the aftermath of the Anti-Rent

⁹ Ray LaFever, "Biography of Francis Coulter, 1771-1846." (<https://www.dcnhistory.org/biocolterfrancis.html>)

¹⁰ Cora Barton account book. Great Lot 40 encompassed the central section of the town of Bovina. The Janet [née Livingston] Montgomery Tract was in the northeastern corner of the great lot and surveyed in numbered rectilinear lots ranging from about 100 to 180 acres. "Map of the Town of Bovina" [ca.1822]. This map shows the owners of the great lots that comprise the town of Bovina. It also shows how these lots were surveyed into lots of varying sizes. Raymond LaFever, librarian at DCHA and the Bovina town historian published a partial image in his "A New Old Map Of Bovina," Bovina, NY History Blog, Wednesday, April 25, 2012.

¹¹ United States Geological Survey, Delhi 1:62,500 quadrangle, 1909. (https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/ht-bin/tv_browse.pl?id=e68d0be1b0aed03ed9819ddc7a4931cd)

¹² "Cora Barton Rent Book." Francis Coulter records pp. 48-49, 237-238, and Walter Coulter record, pp. 90-91. Both records note the purchase of the leased lands. (Delhi, N.Y.: Delaware County Historical Association, images provided by Bovina Town Historian Ray LaFever)

¹³ *United States Census for 1850*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, Household (HH) 1083/1086. (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HT-D1JR-B?view=index&action=view>) David's farm is recorded on pp. 3-4, line 4, of the agricultural schedule. (Census book in Delhi, N.Y.: Office of County Clerk) David married Margaret Hamilton in 1838. His parents Francis and Agnes ("Nancy") died in 1846 and 1843 respectively. (Ray LaFever, Biography of Francis and Nancy Coulter, <https://bovinanyhistory.blogspot.com/2010/10/bovina-pioneers-francis-and-nancy.html>)

¹⁴ "Cora Barton Rent Book," pp. 90-91.

¹⁵ *United States Census for 1830*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, page 3, ln 14. The tic-mark record leaves the household of seven people open to interpretation.

¹⁶ *United States Census for 1840*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, image 554, 3rd line from bottom page. (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYTP-3KQD?view=index&action=view>). This census only recorded heads of household, and his family is not recorded adjacent to his father's. This indicates they probably did not live adjacent. Walter had probably moved to his leased property.

¹⁷ *Book of Deeds 45*, page 261. This deed executed in 1854 records Walter's three leases in Great Lot 40, when he bought them out for fee simple tenure. Subsequent deed references take the format ####. All deeds referenced are located in Delhi, N.Y., in the Office of the County Clerk.

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War period (1839–45). This tenant uprising occurred in areas of New York patented by the British crown before the War of Independence where landlords still leased their lands for long periods, often 100 years or over three lives, or generations. Resistance developed quickly when largely deferred rents on the Van Rensselaer estates were called in after the death of Stephen Van Rensselaer, often called the Last Patroon, in 1838. Unrest spread to other areas owned by different landlords in the Mohawk Valley and Catskills regions. Resistance against evictions and tax collection took several forms including secret meetings, masked costumes, posses, occasional tarring and feathering of opponents, and eventually the murder of a sheriff's deputy Osman Steele in the town of Andes, Delaware County, adjacent to Bovina. Trials and convictions in 1845 concluded the unrest. Its lasting result was the elimination of agricultural land rents exceeding twelve years and all feudal tenure in the new state constitution ratified in 1846. Brothers Walter and David Coulter were among hundreds of tenants who bought out their leases. It appears that Walter continued to buy adjacent acreage: in the 1860 census, he reported ownership of 300 acres. That figure remained constant until after his descendants sold the homestead farm in 1948.

AGRICULTURE: Patterns of cultivation in the upland regions of the northern Catskills, ca. 1826-1940

The Walter Coulter Homestead Farm and its associated records illustrate how a densely wooded tract at high elevation in the northern Catskills became a prosperous farmstead encompassing three times its original lease and was cultivated for various commodities by five generations of the Coulter family.

Walter Coulter's first lease taken out in 1826 encompassed approximately 102 acres of generally level land near the top of the Coulter Brook drainage. Ridges rising several hundred feet more enclose it to the east and south; land of similar elevation (2,000 feet) to Lot 69 spread northwards towards the brook's main course and thence to the more distant encircling ridge. To the west, the land drops steadily nearly 300 feet to his father's farm on Lot 56, where Walter was born.

Details of life and work for this early period can be guessed at from a few records. In 1820, Walter's father Francis reported three persons engaged in agriculture. These were probably himself, Walter, 16, and James, 12. Of 116 households in Bovina, only nine reported no one engaged in agriculture and counted 294 farmers overall. Virtually all men in Bovina farmed.¹⁸ It seems that the Scottish settlers responded quickly to the unfamiliar climate and physical conditions. There were no runrigs or commons; the land was heavily forested, rocky and steep. Little is known of their sources of advice, but the rent books show the Coulters paid their rents in the cash value of wheat rather than grain itself. This indicates success in areas other than wheat cultivation. By 1824, the land was acknowledged as grazing land, and within a generation their town was named Bovina for the cattle that grazed there.¹⁹

In the early 1800s, cattle were raised especially for beef that could be salted and barreled for the Atlantic market. Hides were tanned in the surrounding region. Butter was an emerging commodity. In 1820, farmers in Bovina reported 1,552 cattle, an average of nearly fifteen cows per household. Good pastures and hay production were probably both high priorities to improve the quality of production, but in 1820, less than

¹⁸ The 1820 census recorded those working in agriculture. In 1810, Bovina was not yet a separate town, and that census did not record occupations.

¹⁹ Spafford (1824), 56.

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twenty percent of Bovina's 25,944 acres were yet cleared.²⁰ As cattle can be turned out to browse rather than being pastured in cleared fields, and it seems likely that much of this livestock fed that way with only enough hay cut to get through the coldest, leanest months. The sheep counted in the town average twenty-one animals per household.²¹ By 1830, the amount of improved acreage nearly doubled from 4,867 to 7,373, and Bovina farmers reported more than double the number of cows and sheep as in 1820.²² Many of the stone walls still found on the Walter Coulter Homestead Farm likely date to Walter's earliest tenure. These would have to protected meadows to be cut for hay and fields for crops from pastures. The foundation of a small barn, probably built to store grain and hay, may be the only remnant of the very earliest buildings on his farmstead.

The 1830 census recorded 197 households in Bovina with a still growing population. Head of household names represent the second generation of settlers working their own farms although Walter Coulter was not recorded as a head of household that year. A decade later, in 1840, he reported heading a household of eight: his wife and their six children. Their neighbors in the census are a close match for houses on lots adjacent to Lot 69 depicted in 1856.²³

The agricultural schedules recorded in 1850 display very active and generally prosperous farms in an area that is today mainly reforested and retains a mere handful of properties representative of this densely abundant historic activity. Walter reported oversight of 250 acres in 1850 and valued his farm at \$2,500. This was above middling in Bovina and displayed a successful property. Like his surrounding neighbors and farmers throughout the region, his production was diversified as a hedge against fickle markets. Butter was a highly reliable commodity, and his sixteen milch cows produced 1,800 pounds of butter and 100 pounds of cheese. He cut fifty tons of hay, mainly to feed his livestock. He raised small quantities of varied grains. Like all of his neighbors, he raised a larger (100 bushels) amount of oats for fodder.²⁴

Throughout Bovina, most farmers reported making maple sugar. Walter boiled 600 pounds in 1850. Sugaring required few tools and was carried out in the late winter months when farmwork was slow as it preceded the cows coming in for milk production and the busy planting and haying seasons. In the antebellum period, this sweetener offered a domestically produced sweetener not produced on sugar plantations and its value rose accordingly.²⁵ The amounts produced in Bovina indicate managed sugar bushes, especially on the properties developed by the men of Walter's generation, who had leased lands at higher elevation than the settler generation. As an example, Walter's brother David on their parents' homestead reported 100 pounds. This may show that where land was cleared earlier, there had been less regard for this species' potential.

The 1850 census was recorded four years after the state's constitutional convention that abolished "feudal" land tenure and limited leases on agricultural lands to twelve years.²⁶ The surviving physical evidence in the northern Catskills suggests that the ability to hold fee simple deeds to the properties encouraged the rapid

²⁰ Spafford (1824), 56. Acreage provided in T.K. Gordon, *Gazetteer of the state of New York: etc.* (Philadelphia: printed for author, 1836): 422. The 1820 census recorded commodities that could be marketed and tended not to record production for home use except where those items diminished importation of foreign goods, especially textiles.

²¹ Aggregate figures recorded in 1820 census of 1,552 cattle and 2,299 sheep reported in Spafford (1824), 56.

²² Gordon, 422.

²³ Jay Gould, *Map of Delaware County, New York* (Philadelphia: Collins G. Keeney, 1856).

²⁴ The amounts of hay (one ton/bovine and equine; half-ton/bovine) and oats (horse fodder) indicate support of his livestock with some surplus that might have been retained rather than being sold into the commodities market.

²⁵ Susan Fenimore Cooper, *Rural Hours* (G.P. Putnam, 1850; reprinted Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1998): 13-17.

²⁶ Constitution of the State of New York, 1846, Article 1, sections 12 and 14. (https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/New_York_Constitution_of_1846/Article_1)

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improvement of farmsteads in the 1850s and 1860s among those who bought out leases. This period intersected with innovations in agricultural production that supplied rapidly growing urban markets in the United States. These factors gave rise to an era of sustained productivity and profitability that lasted into the late 1800s in the northern Catskills region.

Walter and David Coulter were among those who began buying the lands they'd already leased and improved. In 1854, Walter bought the three parcels of land he'd leased for \$670.²⁷ In 1856, David bought Lot 56, which their father Francis had leased, for \$624.²⁸ In 1864, Walter's eldest son Francis, at age 33, bought Lot 123 outright from Cora Livingston Barton for \$327.²⁹ This lot was at even higher elevation than Walter's homestead farm, and Francis appears to have been the first person to open a farmstead on it. He was surrounded by neighbors venturing in the same way, indicating continued expansion among the Scottish descendants in this period. In 1869, Francis's farmstead was labeled "Cozy Nook."³⁰

Walter Coulter's agricultural schedules show that he continued to add acreage to his farm nearly until his death in 1876. The Homestead Farm was augmented until ca. 1870. Between 1870 and 1875, he added 125 acres of woodlot that may have been discontinuous.³¹ As land continued to be clear, the value of wooded land rose. Throughout this period, Walter continued in the pattern of general farming, subtly changing his production as market demand changed. During the late 1860s, he ceased raising sheep as he increased butter production to 3,000 pounds in 1870. He planted an orchard that produced \$10 worth of fruit in 1870. Historically, apples were grown for cider making. The new orchards planted in the 1860s across New York were top-dressed orchards producing apples to be shipped as fruit. The farm's value rose incrementally, from \$2,500 in 1850 to \$3,000 in 1855 to \$3,500 in 1870 to \$5,000 to \$6,000 in 1875. Walter's success is mirrored across many individual farms recorded in the Bovina agricultural schedules of the censuses. The increase in value of his property appears to have been expressed in outbuildings, implements and increased livestock, especially cows producing butter.

Physical evidence of the farm's prosperity includes the modestly scaled, finely built, wood-frame farmhouse; the earliest part of the main barn; and possibly the frame of the tool barn northwest of the main barn. The 1875 census was the only one to record outbuilding valuations. Walter's outbuildings were worth \$1,000, a high figure for the time. The interlocking wood framing members of all three buildings appear to be entirely of the same species, possibly elm, and are consistently hewn and mortised. The only aboveground evidence of earlier buildings is the low stone foundation of a barn between the house and tool barn with characteristic 3:4 proportions that often signify an "English," or early hay and grain barn. It appears to have been later used as a

²⁷ 45/261.

²⁸ 48/429.

²⁹ 57/400.

³⁰ F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Delaware County, New York* (New York, N.Y.: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis, and G.G. Soule, 1869): 32 (Town of Bovina plate).

³¹ *New York State Census for 1865*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, Agricultural schedule, pp. 37–41, line 9, reports Walter owned 272 acres. His agricultural schedule (pp. 3–4, line 9) reported in the *United States Census for 1870* reports 310 acres. His agricultural schedule (pp. 33–37, line 30) reported in the 1875 state census reports 425 acres. This last in combination with the great increase in woodlands indicates that Walter had bought forested land. This might have augmented a sugar bush and/or added a woodlot for lumber and fuel. It appears to have been subtracted by 1917 or always regarded as not part of the homestead farm. It may not have been contiguous. No recorded deed indicates its location, purchase, or subsequent sale.

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stable and implement barn until it was demolished.³² The three-bay milking herd barn might have incorporated a mow above; if it did, it was removed in a later building phase.

Walter Coulter fell ill late in 1874 and was recorded as having dementia in 1875.³³ His second wife, also Margaret Coulter (b. ca. 1832), was appointed executrix of his estate when he died in 1876. Among her tasks was compiling an inventory of the estate for its division amongst herself as the widow, his six surviving children, and two grandchildren born by his deceased daughter Mary Ann Monroe. This meticulously recorded document enumerates ample hand tools and farm implements including hundreds of spiles for tapping maple trees and vehicles of all types. As was customary, the dairy cows and horses were individually described and assigned values. His personal estate was also extensive. Among items listed was a library of nearly 100 volumes that ranged widely with emphases on religious topics, history and geography. There were also comfortable household furnishings. After subtraction of his debts and costs associated with his death, the total came to \$5,250.42.³⁴ The proposed settlement was challenged by his daughter Nancy Jane Liddle. The Court of Surrogate determined that the farm would be auctioned off publicly for division of funds amongst the heirs. Francis, Walter's eldest son, bought the farm for \$4,570.25 on 28 May 1878.³⁵

The auction deed provides the first full, if brief, description of the "Walter Coulter Homestead Farm" of "300 acres more or less." It was, "All that certain piece or parcel of land ... bounded north by lands of William L. White, on the east by lands of Gilbert Dicson [*sic*], on the south by lands of Andrew Boyd and Martin Tuttle, and on the west by lands of Andrew Thompson." These names correlate well with the Bovina plate in the 1869 *Atlas of Delaware County*. This description remained basically unchanged until 1948, when it was sold out of the family. A metes and bounds description was used to subdivide the property in 1979.

Based on neighbor proximity, Francis moved his family — wife Loruhamah (a.k.a. Amy) and five children — to his father's homestead farm by 1880. Lacking the detailed agricultural schedules of the third quarter of the century, we are left to infer the farm's management during his tenure from physical evidence. The most apparent improvement is the large stone-faced earthen bank accessing the enlarged haymow that replaced the one first built above the three-bay cow barn. Ramps vary in placement and height depending upon slope and whether, as in this case, they were additions to earlier barns or part of a planned single construction phase.

These larger haymows were loaded with loose hay using ceiling-mounted pulley systems. Tracks mounted under the ridgepole with sliding harpoons replaced many pulley systems by the early 1900s. Both systems work best with an unobstructed span. On retrofitted barns, this meant altering the roof truss system and increasing the height of the mow as was done on this barn. This barn's retrofit was executed with milled rather than hewn lumber and secured mainly with metal fasteners rather than the older mortise-and-tenon joints. The middle section of mow floor, below the wagon floor accessed from the ramp, could house a variety of ancillary functions making these main barns the multi-purpose buildings encouraged in agricultural periodicals of the time.

³² A photograph taken when the cows were sold by the Seedorfs in the 1960s shows part of this building. (Delhi, N.Y., DCHA; provided by Bovina Town Historian, Ray LaFever)

³³ *New York State Census for 1875*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, population schedule, HH 140/141 (page 15). In the surrogate documents, their neighbor was recorded being paid to care for him.

³⁴ "Household inventory of Walter Coulter estate," 20 March 1877. Box 12. (Delhi, N.Y.: Office of Court of Surrogate)

³⁵ 85/255.

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By the early 1900s, ground-level basements were preferred for better ventilation. Although the east wall was later partially reinforced with concrete, the retrofitted Coulter cow barn was, through its earlier design, already at grade. Numerous variations illustrating the patterns of retrofit and new construction can be observed throughout the county, mainly at lower elevation due to the recession of any farming from higher elevations.

Francis Coulter reported as a joiner in at least one earlier census so he might have been especially well qualified to oversee the barn improvement. If he, rather than his father, oversaw construction of the tool barn, possibly the heavy timbers in the smaller building formed an earlier, lower mow over the three-bay cow barn. Some of the timbers display evidence of reuse. The tool barn features the characteristic gable-front configuration combined with the clear span interior that eased moving wheeled implements in and out. Such outbuildings were built throughout the region from the mid-1880s into the early 1900s. If it was built in conjunction with the addition of the high mow of the main barn, this would date the tool barn to the same time.

The 1910 census taken the year after Francis and Loruhamah Coulter died recorded every property along Seedorf Road as a “dairy farm” for the first time, evidence of the increased specialization away from general farming in Bovina. Hannah J. Coulter (1870–1933), their youngest daughter, acquired the farm after her parents’ deaths. Her married sisters Elizabeth Adee (1860–1937) and Margaret “Maggie” Monroe (1868–1915) held twin mortgages for her.³⁶ That year, Hannah reported renting the farm, apparently from her father’s estate, and being an employer. Her nephew, Chester Adee, 19, a highway worker and niece Martena Monroe, 11, lived with her.

During the 1910s, specialization, especially towards fluid milk production over butter, continued apace while events in the Coulter family affected the homestead farm. Hannah Coulter remained on the farm at least through 1920 although it seems that Lewis Jocelyn, husband of her niece Loruhamah Monroe (b. 1895), probably managed the property after they married in 1911.³⁷ Lewis was reported as the head of household managing the property and paying its taxes during the 1910s.³⁸ About two years after the death of Jocelyn’s mother-in-law in July 1915, her widowed husband James deeded the property to Alexander Hilson, who owned the feed store in Bovina Center.³⁹ It is unclear whether James was acting for his sister-in-law Hannah or as the administrator of the Coulter estate. Two months later Hannah satisfied the mortgages held by her sisters since 1910. Collectively, these transactions shifted who held what proportion of interest in the homestead farm. Based on construction technology and design, it seems they also provided funds to improve the main barn a third time. Whether Monroe or Jocelyn oversaw the work is unknown. Either way, it seemed a good investment for Monroe’s daughter and his three Jocelyn grandchildren.

The ground-level basement of the main barn was extended northward with one additional bay framed using sistered dimensional lumber, probably to accommodate a larger dairy herd and possibly install stanchions, by then standard practice. Until then, the barn may have had no stalls or simple tie stalls. The gable-roofed mow

³⁶ 94/287 and 94/289. Each sister loaned \$205 with a five percent annual interest rate. Their two brothers both died in 1900 without issue.

³⁷ Loruhamah married a dairyman named Louis Jocelyn (b. 1880) in July 1911. (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:9Q97-YSG7-SV7?view=index&personArk=%2Fark%3A%2F61903%2F1%3A1%3AXVG1-YLN&action=view&cc=1618491>; retrieved January 5, 2025) Edna Jocelyn’s birthday is recorded in the 1915 state census. (“New York, State Census, 1915”, database, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:K9NQ-3B4> : 4 June 2022), Edna Loretha Jocelyn in entry for Lewis D Jocelyn, 1915.)

³⁸ Town Historian Ray LaFever reports Lewis Jocelyn and the Francis Coulter estate paid the town taxes in 1916. In 1924 and 1935, the taxes were paid by Hilson Bros.

³⁹ 198/379. This deed notes the unrecorded deed from Munroe to Hilson.

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was also extended northward; if a haytrack hadn't been previously installed under the ridgepole, it was probably added in this phase. The rough concrete reinforcement of part of the east wall foundation might also have been done ca. 1917. Improvements like these were made pragmatically by farmers throughout the region as building an entirely new barn was very costly. By 1920, all six farms along Seedorf Road carried mortgages, probably all taken out to make improvements. This seems to represent the onset of borrowing in hopes of remaining competitive. For many, it led to permanent and eventually crushing indebtedness. The main barn on the Walter Coulter Homestead Farm property is the only remaining example of its type on Seedorf Road; the ramp for the barn on the farm across the highway is the only other marker of this neighborhood.

The construction of the milkhouse, the final augmentation of the main barn, appears to date to ca. 1940 when Loruhamah Jocelyn's elder son Earl (1914–2004) reported that he owned and managed the homestead farm with his wife Violette.⁴⁰ A milkhouse with tanks for storing milk was now essential to any dairy operation in the region because fluid milk was now the sole commodity produced on individual farms. Earl's mother Loruhamah disappears from the historic record after 1930 when she was reported as a divorced dairy farmer living with three children ages nine to sixteen on the homestead farm. She retained a hired hand.⁴¹ By then her aunt Hannah reported living with Loruhamah's brother.⁴²

Earl Jocelyn paid off the Hilson mortgage and sold the homestead farm to Charles and Agnes Tator Seedorf of Queens, New York, in September 1948.⁴³ He moved his family to Kissimmee, Florida, where he managed dairies for the rest of his working life.⁴⁴

The Seedorfs worked the farm into the mid-1960s. They added a parcel of about 50 acres across the road in 1956.⁴⁵ This increased the property to the 349.167 acres delineated when the property was surveyed after Agnes' death in 1975. Her heirs, a son and daughter from her first marriage, settled her estate.⁴⁶ Like others holding disused upland farms, they retained a local surveyor who subdivided the property for recreationists. The 71.32-acre parcel in this nomination, which includes the house and farm buildings, was sold to C.T. Shen of Tenafly, New Jersey, in June 1979 along with the parcel across the highway.⁴⁷

The Shens exemplified the large number of people from the New York City area who bought Catskill properties as vacation homes for skiing, summer getaways, and hunting in the 1970s and 1980s. They retained a German-born local stone mason to build elaborate rustic stone mantels for the hearths at either end of the first floor of the house. The mason also repaired the stone walls throughout the property, which has improved their

⁴⁰ *United States Census for 1940*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, HH 120 (page 11, ED 13-5). Loruhamah seems to disappear entirely from recordkeeping after 1930.

⁴¹ *United States Census for 1930*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, HH 30/30. Loruhamah reported running the farm on her own account in 1925; Lewis was gone. New York State Census for 1925, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, Coulter Brook Rd, p. 2, lines 6–11.

⁴² *United States Census for 1930*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, HH 22/22.

⁴³ Deed recorded at 280/86 transferred the property from James A. Hilson to Earl Jocelyn on 9 September 1948. Deed 280/299 recorded Earl Jocelyn selling the Walter Coulter Homestead Farm to Agnes and Charles Seedorf on 17 September 1948.

⁴⁴ *United States Census for 1950*, Kissimmee, Florida. (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHK-9QH7-YRBH?view=index&action=view>) Earl's obituary was published on 5 December 2004 in the *Orlando Sentinel*. (<https://www.orlandosentinel.com/obituaries/earl-s-jocelyn-fl/>; retrieved 13 December 2024)

⁴⁵ 369/68. This parcel is located in Lot 16 in the part of Great Lot 40 distributed historically to H.B. Livingston.

⁴⁶ "Survey of Property of Agnes Tator Seedorf, Town of Bovina, Delaware County, N.Y." Instrument #2366. Drawn May 24, 1979. (Bovina, NY: Office of County Clerk).

⁴⁷ 591 207.

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longevity. The Shens later sold the property to artists. They in turn sold to the present owners Curry Ford and Gigi Laidan in 2022.⁴⁸

ARCHITECTURAL ANALYSIS

In the northern United States, nearly all settlers constructed wood-frame buildings with the abundant lumber on their lands. By the early nineteenth century, this American tradition was several generations old and well-established. It may be that Scottish settlers adopted the material because building the full-height stone walls of the masonry houses standard in Lowland Scotland required skills that few immigrants brought with them. The side-gabled, one-and-a-half-story house type they saw being built around them was both functional and comparatively easily built by local joiners and carpenters. Moreover, its strongly symmetrical exterior represented an orderly home that mirrored an orderly farmstead. In the Catskills, where many people acquired fee simple deeds to previously leased lands in the post-Anti-Rent War era beginning in 1847, this house type persisted through the mid-nineteenth century especially in remote upland areas.⁴⁹ The physical evidence indicates that such houses continued to define how a home should look.

The one-and-a-half-story, side-gabled, center-entrance house type modified the older colonial-era hall-and-parlor prototype found throughout southern New England. In central New York, the massive center chimney of the prototype was gradually eschewed in the 1820s and 1830s for smaller interior end chimneys that vented both heating stoves and, increasingly, iron kitchen ranges. This afforded space for the center stair hall that became standard for newly built houses during the second quarter of the century. This interior change correlated with the symmetrical front façade, a preference drawn from the strong classical influence exerted on taste of the time. The symmetrical gabled end walls superseded the earlier extended back roof face, or saltbox, profile, and placed the entire house under the main roof.

The interior layout adheres to traditional ratios in floorplan found in many farmhouses of the time built in the region. The first-floor layout incorporates a center stair hall extending roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of the depth of the house. This is flanked by large rooms of the same depth in the front of the house. While these houses present as symmetrical, the rooms on either side of the side center stair hall differ somewhat in width. Usually, the more formal parlor, marked by the finest trim scheme, is slightly narrower than the opposite room, which served multiple everyday family uses. A row of small rooms spans the rear third of the house. Upstairs, the slope of the roof creates low-ceilinged spaces at both the front and the rear of the house. These areas were used as small bedrooms and as attics for storage. In the Coulter house, there is one full-height room on either side of the hall, the east one wider than the west one, matching the widths of the rooms below. The space under the sloping front roof face is an attic; the corresponding space under the back roof face is now a bedroom and a bathroom.

The Coulter house incorporates an unusual lean-to spanning the east elevation that breaks with the overall symmetry of the principal façade. No obvious break in the foundation indicates this was a later change. The foundation encloses a crawl space unlike the full-height basement under the main block, indicating the lean-to

⁴⁸ 1660/281.

⁴⁹ Few such houses are identified and documented beyond the local level. A county-wide survey completed in the early 1990s by Delaware County Historical Society found many such houses. The Burns Family Farm (NR listed in 2007) is among the few listed in the National Register. There are additional examples in the New Kingston survey and subsequent National Register nomination in Middletown, which borders the east side of Bovina.

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housed utilitarian space. Inside the house, a doorway connects it with the large east room, adjacent to the hearth. It appears this was an attached woodshed, possibly also used as a summer kitchen, and was part of the original design.

Walter Coulter probably built the finely crafted one-and-a-half-story house soon after he acquired his deed to his previously leased lands in 1854. A year later, Walter reported a family of ten – himself, his wife Margaret and eight unmarried children – living in a frame house valued at \$1,200.⁵⁰ This probably replaced an earlier, simpler house that might have stood closer to the highway as was more common. An earlier house might have stood near where the road crosses a stream. The present site, set back about 150 feet from the highway and partially encircled by another tributary, is backdropped by the encircling ridge. This seems an unusually Romantic choice suggestive of Andrew Jackson Downing illustrations of how to site a house picturesquely within its surroundings. Property names, among them “Cozy Nook” chosen by Walter’s son Francis, that seem similarly suggestive are sprinkled over the 1869 map of Bovina.

The high stone foundation of the present house is banked to the rear, affording full-height access to the utilitarian space in the well-built cellar underneath the neat symmetrical façade and, conversely, easy access to the brook behind the house. In 1865, two of Walter’s sons, William S., 32; and James A., 30, still lived under their father’s roof and reported as masons. Perhaps they built this foundation. Eldest son Francis, 24, reported as a joiner in 1855. He might have planned the house frame of heavy interlocking timbers. In this period and neighborhood, declaration of occupations other than farmer was unusual, and the sons probably all worked as farmers too on their father’s highly productive farm. Their work in the building trades might indicate they’d found plentiful work spurred by the regional shift from tenancy to ownership.

Classicism continued as the strongest stylistic decorative influence in rural New York through the mid-nineteenth century and Walter Coulter’s house combines decorative details characteristic of both the earlier Federal and later Greek Revival tastes. The pilasters, sidelights and straight lintel of the main entrance feature Greek Revival molding profiles. The deep frieze at the eaves, although unadorned, indicates the Greek tendency for weighty trim, while the narrow board window casings with plain drip caps typify vernacular choices spanning as much as a century of house building in the region. Similarly, the nine-over-six wood sash used in most openings were in common use by the 1820s for modestly scaled houses. The casing on the doorway to the lean-to, which houses the present kitchen, although on the front façade, matches the windows indicating its lower position in the decorative hierarchy of the house.

The interior decorative scheme employs a characteristic hierarchy of detail and blends details popularized as “Roman” (Federal) or “Grecian” (Greek Revival) from the most public to the most private spaces. The formal west room, or parlor, features windows capped by extended architraves with molded panels below typical Greek Revival design. The less formal east room features squared heads on the casings and paneled wainscot, all trimmed with Greek Revival molding profiles. The wainscot indicates a room used variously throughout the day and the seasons for eating, indoor chores and socializing. Since furniture was regularly moved to accommodate these multiple uses, the paneling protected the plaster walls from damage.

Three of the four rooms spanning the rear wall on the first floor have casings matching those in the large east room. The room at the back of the hall has no exterior window (there is a small one on the west interior wall) and seems to have been a closet with narrow peg rails with beaded edges wrapping the walls. Like virtually all

⁵⁰ *New York State Census for 1855*, Delaware County, Town of Bovina, HH 68/69.

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rural vernacular houses from this period in the region, the upstairs casings are narrow planed boards with beaded interior edges to protect them from damage. Walter's 1877 inventory indicates that although plainly finished, even some of these rooms might have had carpet and window treatments by the time he died.

The figured maple newel post is the only decorative feature of the single-run open staircase in the generously proportioned center hall. This appears to be the only maple used in the building. Perhaps its use here was a nod to this species' role in the household income.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

Maps

- Beers, F.W. *Atlas of Delaware County, New York*. New York: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis, and G.G. Soule, 1869.
(<https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/63eb0760-c5f7-012f-9bb5-58d385a7bc34#/?uuid=644e34c0-c5f7-012f-52b7-58d385a7bc34>)
- Gould, Jay. *Map of Delaware County, New York*. Philadelphia: Collins G. Keeney, 1856.
(<https://www.loc.gov/item/2012593655/>)
- United States Geological Survey: (accessed via <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer>)

Primary sources

- Bovina, Town of. Index to Assessment Roll. 1821, 1824, 1827, 1828, 1833, 1841, 1845, 1849, 1851, 1852, 1853, etc. (<http://www.dcnynhistory.org/taxrolbv.html>)
- Gordon, Thomas F. *Gazetteer of the state of New York: comprehending its colonial history; general geography, geology, and internal improvements; its political state; a minute description of tis several counties, towns, and villages ... with a map of the state, and a map of each county, and plans of the cities and principal villages*. Philadelphia: printed for author, 1836.
- New York State. Censuses for 1855 through 1925. (Manuscript census and agricultural schedules for Town of Bovina, Delaware County Clerk's Office, Delhi, New York;) other documents retrieved via FamilySearch.org.
- Spafford, Horatio Gates. *A Gazetteer of the State of New York: embracing an ample survey and description of its counties, towns, cities, villages, canals, mountains, lakes, rivers, creeks, and natural topography ... with an appendix....* Albany, New York: B.D. Packard, 1824.
- United States of America, Censuses for period 1820 through 1950. (Manuscript census and agricultural schedules for Town of Bovina, Delaware County Clerk's Office, Delhi, New York; other documents retrieved via FamilySearch.org.)

Secondary sources

- Munsell, W.W., [ed.]. *History of Delaware County, New York, with Illustrations, Biographical Sketches, and Portraits of Some Pioneers and Prominent Residents*. New York: W.W. Munsell, 1880.
- Van Valkenburgh, Norman J. *The Hardenburgh Patent: The Largest Colonial Grant*. Phoenicia, New York: West and Brooks, 1988.

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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):

24NR00045

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 71.32 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 42.245778	Longitude: -74.736610
2. Latitude: 42.243810	Longitude: -74.732103
3. Latitude: 42.241503	Longitude: -74.731524
4. Latitude: 42.240727	Longitude: -74.732486
5. Latitude: 42.238283	Longitude: -74.735280
6. Latitude: 42.242177	Longitude: -74.739157

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 is drawn to encompass the 71-acre parcel (197.-1-14.22), the subdivision of the Walter Coulter Homestead Farm that includes the farmhouse, outbuildings, and a representative section of the historic property.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jessie Ravage

organization _____ date January 2025

street & number 34 Delaware St

telephone _____

city or town Cooperstown

state NY

zip code 13326

e-mail jravage@stny.rr.com

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.)

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Point	Latitude	Longitude	Point	Latitude	Longitude	Point	Latitude	Longitude
1	42.245778	-74.736610	3	42.241503	-74.731524	5	42.238283	-74.735280
2	42.243810	-74.732103	4	42.240727	-74.732486	6	42.242177	-74.739157



1:6,000



Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone: 18N



Nomination Boundary (71.32 ac)

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2020



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

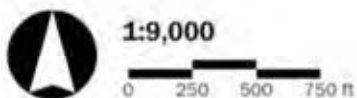
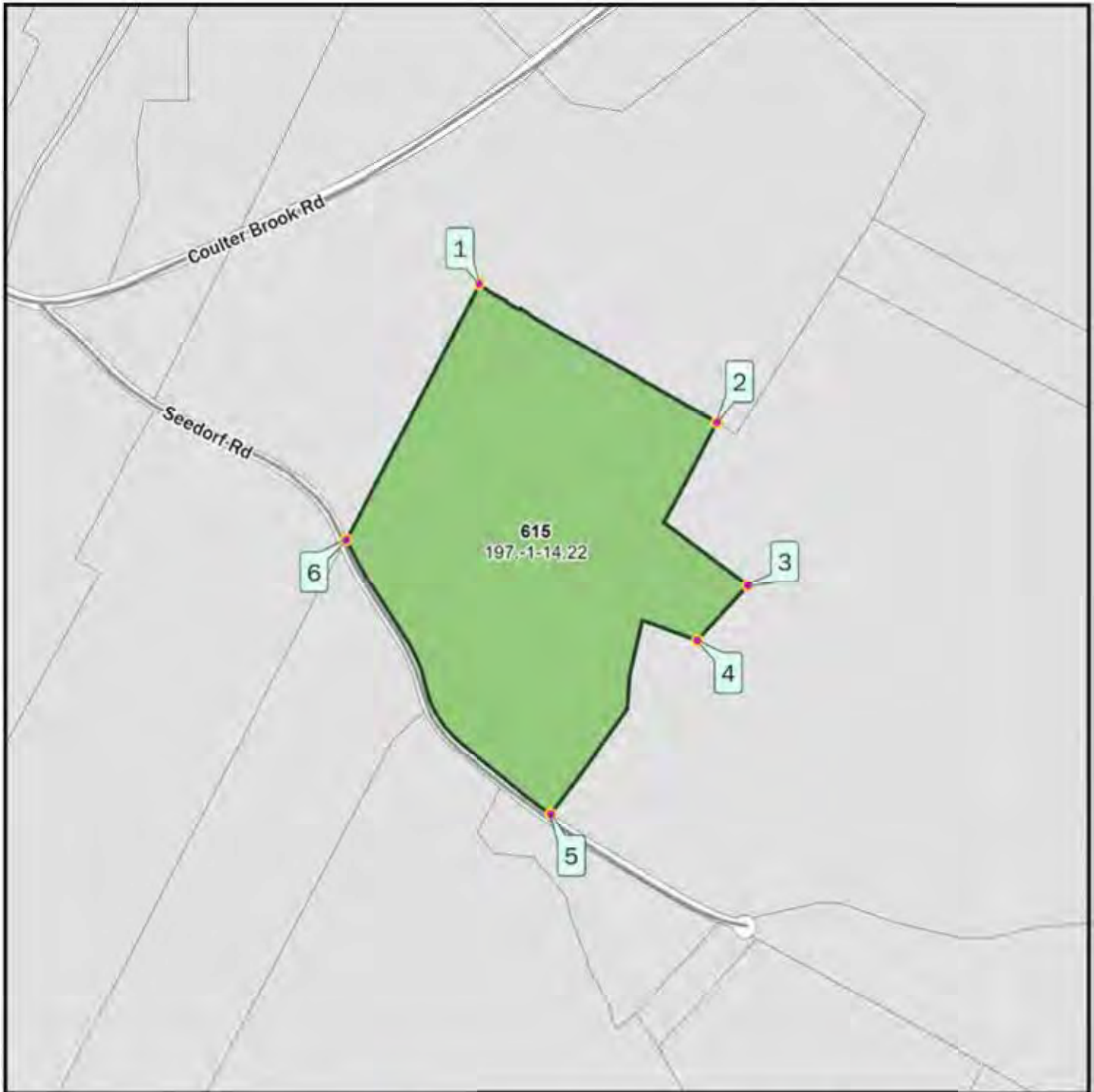
Mapped 02/07/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

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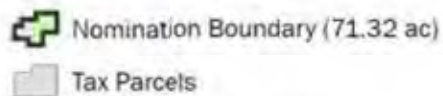
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Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N



Delaware County Parcel Year: 2023



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation

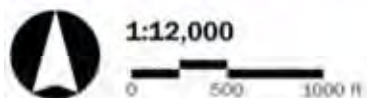
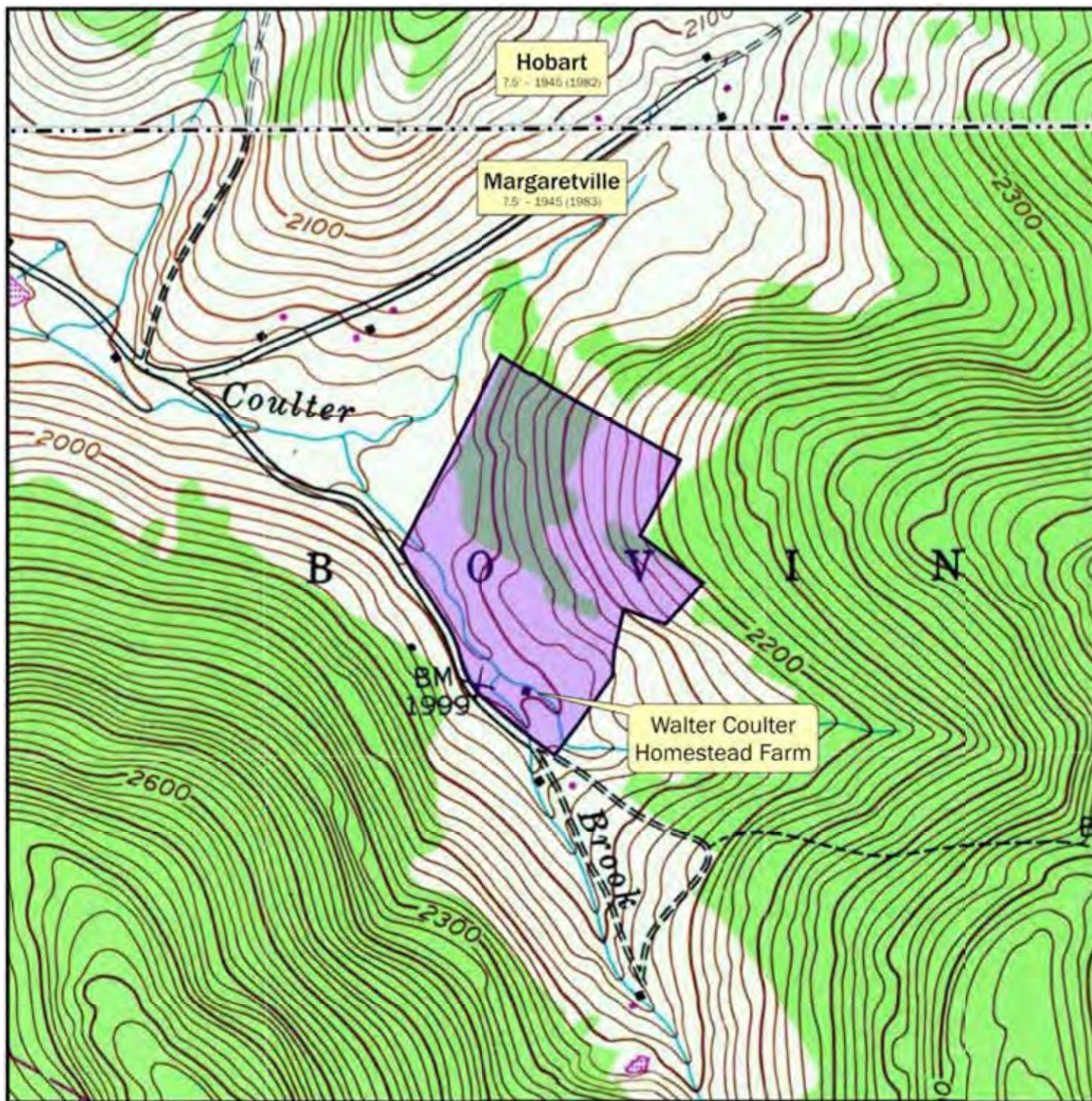
Mapped 02/07/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

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Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

 Walter Coulter Homestead Farm



New York State
Parks, Recreation and
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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: Walter Coulter Homestead Farm

City or Vicinity: Bovina

County: Delaware

State: New York

Photographer: Jessie Ravage

Date Photographed: November 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 0001: House, front and west side
- 0002: House and tool barn, viewed from southeast showing the stone wall enclosing the stream running behind the buildings
- 0003: House, east gable wall and back wall showing recently added gabled dormer windows and open rear deck
- 0004: House, northwest corners of the banked stone foundation
- 0005: House, west gable wall and front with main barn farther east; shows slope of the land north to the stream behind the house
- 0006: House, principal entrance, south wall
- 0007: House, first floor, stair hall showing staircase with curly maple newel post, view northwest
- 0008: House, first floor, stair hall, view southeast showing staircase on east wall and the main entrance
- 0009: House, first floor, view west through door in east room to west room (parlor) across the stair hall. Shows six-panel door with cast iron latch, pine floors with thresholds to rooms, and different trim schemes in each space
- 0010: House, first floor, east room, view east to door entering the lean-to and the stone fireplace on east wall (post-1980), and doorway to northeast room in main block
- 0011: House, first floor, east room, northwest corner showing paneled wainscot and door casing to room in rear quarter of the house
- 0012: House, first floor, west room, parlor trim scheme on west window
- 0013: House, first floor, west room, stone fireplace (post-1980) on west wall with shallow closet adjacent on north side
- 0014: House, first floor, closet at back of stair hall showing peg rail, interior door casing, and small window between closet and northwest room
- 0015: House, first floor, lean-to, view south
- 0016: House, second floor, stair hall, view north past staircase to rear wall of the house, showing doorways to all four rooms
- 0017: House, second floor, east bedroom, view east
- 0018: House, second floor, front attic, view east towards partition and showing plan door to the attic
- 0019: House, basement, southeast corner

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- 0020: Main barn with milkhouse, south end and east entrance bank with gable-roofed entrance to wagon floor in mow; milkhouse at the west end of the south gable wall
- 0021: Main barn, ground floor, view southwest from east wall showing framing and main entrance
- 0022: Main barn, ground floor, east wall reinforced with concrete and cupboards above; feed chute at the right
- 0023: Main barn, view southwest from north end of mow floor showing raised wagon floor, roof framing, and truss over first floor bent.
- 0024: Main barn, view east on wagon floor to mow entrance from the high bank, showing framing of the mow
- 0025: Wood mantelpiece from parlor stored in the main barn
- 0026: Milkhouse, east side
- 0027: Milkhouse, west side, showing relationship with main barn
- 0028: Tool barn, front (south) and east side
- 0029: Outbuildings viewed from north, from left to right: main barn, springhouse, and tool barn
- 0030: Maple arch with more recently added top slab, northeast of house, near stream running through the house

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.















