

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only  
received MAY 18 1984  
date entered JUL 2 1984

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic

and/or common Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

2. Location

1 district + 13

street & number various not for publication

city, town Town of Berkshire vicinity of

state New York code 36 county Tioga code 107

3. Classification

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name various - refer to individual inventory forms

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Tioga Co. Real Property Tax Services

street & number 60 Court Street

city, town Owego state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title A Survey of Berkshire has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date Fall, 1981, Cornell University  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

city, town Albany state New York 12238

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <input type="checkbox"/> see inventory forms

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

#### Methodology

The historic resources of the town of Berkshire were identified by means of a comprehensive historic structures survey conducted in 1981 by students in Cornell University's Preservation Planning Workshop in cooperation with the town historian and the Newark Valley Historical Society and under the guidance of the New York State Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation. The survey focused on the historical development of Berkshire as illustrated by its historic architecture. The project did not include any attempt to identify properties whose primary significance was archeological.

All of the properties surveyed were recorded on New York State Building/Structure inventory forms and subsequently evaluated against the criteria for eligibility for the National Register. One significant concentration of historic structures and 13 individually significant properties emerged from this evaluation and now form the basis for the multiple resource nomination. The multiple resource area incorporates a total of 65 structures, 54 of which contribute to the historical and architectural significance of the nomination. Of the 17 properties included in the historic district, 15 are classified as contributing, including a total of 25 significant buildings and dependencies. Two non-contributing properties occur within the district. Among the 13 individually included properties, there exist a total of 29 contributing buildings and dependencies. No historic resources within the multiple resource area have been listed on the National Register to date.

#### Description of Township

Berkshire is one of nine towns in Tioga County, New York. The township covers an area of 17,443 acres and includes a population of 1,335 according to the 1980 census. Approximately one-third of the population resides in the unincorporated village of Berkshire, located near the center of the township. The township is characterized by a generally rugged topography with elevations ranging from 1,000 to 1,700 feet above sea level. Three principal valleys formed by the east and west branches of the Owego Creek and the smaller Wilson Creek drain this area from north to south. The three streams join and enter the Susquehanna River 12 miles south of the township at Owego. The uplands are rocky with acidic soils; however, excellent farmlands occur in the valleys, particularly along the broad flatlands of the east branch of the Owego Creek. Approximately one third of the town's acreage is woodland, and a large area is in permanent pasture.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area  
Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., N.Y. Item number 7

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Page 2

Most properties in the town and, therefore, most of its historic resources are farmsteads or, in the village, residences. The town has three church congregations, all housed in historic church buildings represented in this nomination. One occurs within the historic district; two are nominated as individual properties. None of the commercial or industrial buildings in the town were found to meet the National Register criteria; most are modern, with the few remaining older structures suffering from severe alterations and/or extensive additions.

Within the village of Berkshire, houses and churches tend to be built on lots, each averaging approximately one acre in size. No setback lines were established historically, but houses tend to be spaced at regular intervals approximately 70 to 80 feet from the main roads. Mature trees occur randomly on lots adjacent to Main Street, and in rows along the sidestreets. Conversely, the farm complexes in the township tend to remain on large tracts of farmland of 100 acres plus. Farmhouses and barns tend to form building groups surrounded by shade trees adjacent to the highways. Some subdivision of farmland has occurred in recent decades along the highways, resulting in small building lots occupied by smaller, single family residences. Much of the low-lying land in the township remains open and in production, while pasture areas on the steeper slopes and ridges tend to have reverted to native woodlands.

Nominated Resources

A wide range of building types, architectural styles and periods of construction are represented in the multiple resource area. The earliest extant building identified in the survey and included in the nomination is a small residence constructed about 1815 on the Royce Homestead in a simplified and vernacular interpretation of the Federal style. Six other vernacular Federal style and transitional Federal/Greek Revival style frame residences are included in the nomination, including five in the historic district and one structure nominated as an individual component. These buildings generally date from the 1820-1840 period. Also surviving from this period are a distinctive group of four Federal style brick residences, all located on individually nominated properties.

Residential design during the 1840's and 1850's is represented by five vernacular Greek Revival buildings. Of the four nominated residences built in this style, one occurs in the district and three are included as individual components. The fifth Greek Revival building, now used as a farm outbuilding, appears to have served as a store or professional office originally and no longer stands on its original site. Also included in the multiple resource area nomination are two

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., N.Y. Item number 7

Page 3

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

farmhouses which illustrate the influence of Carpenter Gothic design during the 1850's. The Italianate residential style is represented by four houses built between 1860 and 1875. All are located in the historic district.

Late Victorian period architecture, from 1875 to 1900, is represented by two very modest frame residences within the district and three churches, two of which are outside of the historic district and have been included as individual components. Two of these churches were designed by regionally prominent architects Pierce and Dockstader (later Pierce and Bickford) of Elmira New York and represent the only examples of high-style Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne style architecture in the town. Of these two churches, one is built of frame construction and occurs within the district, whereas the other is built of brick and is located a short distance away; it is included as an individual component. The third church building is of frame construction but represents an entirely different, vernacular form of Victorian architecture. It is located in the small hamlet of East Berkshire.

Twentieth-century buildings are poorly represented in the township due to a general lack of growth after 1900. Only the Calvin Buffington House, built in 1909, located outside of the district and the 1932 Community Hall, located within the district, were found to be significant. The Buffington house represents a fairly common early twentieth century suburban house type elsewhere, but is rare in Berkshire. The Community Hall is individually undistinguished but contributes to the character of the historic district due to its compatible scale, fenestration, and materials.

Historic agricultural structures dating from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century are becoming increasingly rare in the township. The multiple resource area nomination includes representative examples of these structures within farm complexes. This group includes three mid-nineteenth century gable-roofed barns, two late nineteenth or early twentieth century dairy barns, and one large early twentieth century chicken house in addition to an assortment of small sheds and other dependencies. In the historic district, 10 contributing outbuildings are included, generally taking the form of small late nineteenth century barns and carriage houses.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** c.1815 - 1932      **Builder/Architect** various

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Berkshire Multiple Resource Area nomination includes 13 individual properties and a small historic district which represent the economic and architectural history of the town of Berkshire from about 1815 to the early years of the Great Depression. A group of farm complexes document the town's change from subsistence agriculture early in the nineteenth century to agriculture based on export of dairy and poultry products early in the twentieth century. No significant industrial or commercial buildings remain to represent the township's milling and manufacturing history, most of which was centered within the hamlet of Berkshire. The village historic district, however, located at the intersection of Main Street and Leonard Street, illustrates the central social and economic role of the hamlet in the historical development of the the surrounding township. Architecturally, the buildings included in the nomination exemplify the distinctive and changing characteristics of an evolving vernacular building tradition. Because of Berkshire's geographic isolation, innovations in technology and fashion were at first adopted only gradually and selectively. By the 1880's, however, rail transportation and a broadened sphere of economic interest diminished the community's isolation, as evidenced by the construction of stylish churches, which are the town's only examples of high-style architect designed structures, and up-to-date residences. With the turn of the twentieth century, Berkshire's economic growth was arrested, leading to a corresponding lack of construction and expansion within the town. Several historic resources from that period are included in the nomination, however, representing the town's history in the period before the Great Depression. Taken together, Berkshire's historic resources illustrate the town's growth and development between 1815-1932, recalling the economic, social and architectural history of an isolated rural township in New York's southern tier.

### Historical Development

Little is known about the prehistoric occupation of the Owego Valley. The Susquehanna River seems to have been a major highway from the earliest times and in the historic period a large Iroquois settlement was recorded at Owego. Maps of the eighteenth century show the Onondaga Trail leading through Owego to Onondaga (near Syracuse), following the East Branch of Owego Creek more or less as Rte. 38 does today. Thus,

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resources Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., N Item number 8

Page 2

For NPS use only
received
date entered

it is likely that the valley was heavily traveled from the prehistoric period, but to date no archeological sites have been recorded in the town.

The early settlement of Berkshire is related closely to the so called "Boston Purchase" a tract of 230,400 acres which was awarded to the government of Massachusetts after the Revolutionary War and sold in 1787 to a syndicate of eleven men (later, sixty) from Berkshire County, Massachusetts. After the transfer of title became final in 1789, the land was surveyed, partitioned, and distributed among the proprietors. The present town of Berkshire includes 67 lots averaging about 260 acres each. Various parties of explorers and surveyors visited the land prior to the purchase and allotment, but it was not until spring of 1791 that the first settlers came to Berkshire. Because of the large lot size, settlement was quite dispersed, but community activity logically concentrated on the Owego Creek and the trail that paralleled it (now Rt. 38). A community known as Brown's Settlement formed in the southern part of the town and the northern part of Newark Valley township, along what is now Browns Road. Here the county's first church was erected in 1803. The present hamlet of Berkshire formed on the lots owned by the Leonard, Williams, and Ball families, names which recur in town history. The early settlers initially practiced a subsistence agriculture, raising grain, sheep and swine. Their first buildings were built of logs and primitive in construction. No buildings survive which represent this initial period of settlement.

In 1800, a tannery was built on the East Branch of the Owego Creek, near the present day intersection of Glen Road and Main Street. A saw mill is thought to have developed at about this time or a few years later, which thereafter supplied the township with milled lumber for construction. Berkshire developed additional self-sufficiency with the establishment of a carding facility in 1806 and a blacksmith shop in 1808. A tavern was opened in 1814 and a harness shop was built in 1817. One or more grist mills were probably established in this period as well. Buildings built during this second period of development were permanent structures reflecting the prosperity of the maturing community.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY Item number 8

For NPS use only
received
date entered

Page 3

None of the buildings constructed during the first two decades has survived, but of this second generation of buildings in Berkshire one, the Belcher House (component 6c), is included in the nomination. A simple one and one-half story farmhouse on the Belcher farmstead, it is believed to have been built c. 1815 by Elijah Belcher. The oldest remaining structure in the township, it is an excellent representation of the early domestic architecture of this period. The building was constructed of sawn lumber, probably unavailable in Berkshire before 1800. It reflects a vernacular building tradition imported by the first settlers from their home in the Berkshire region of Massachusetts with features such as a central chimney (no longer in place) and modified Federal style detailing. A product of Berkshire's self-sufficient agriculture during the early nineteenth century, this house in turn was replaced by a larger two-story frame house built by Elijah Belcher's son thirty to forty years later as agriculture in Berkshire became increasingly prosperous.

In the 1820's and 1830's, the village began to play an increasingly important role as a center for local trade and the processing of grains and forest products. By 1835, one grist mill, three saw mills, two carding machines and several fulling mills had been established in the township, most of them along the creek in the village. Here were built the homes of the millers and merchants as well as the first permanent church buildings. The development of the village during this period is represented by vernacular examples of transitional Federal/Greek Revival houses including the Leonard House (component 1.12) and the Berkshire Free Library (component 1.1), a former residence. Both the Leonard House and the library feature transitional Federal-Greek Revival characteristics such as wide entablatures with relatively shallow cornices. The library is designed with a typical five-bay center entrance facade, whereas the Leonard House includes a gabled three-bay facade oriented toward the street and an asymmetrical side elevation on the east facade. Modest examples of domestic architecture of this period are also located in the historic district on the north side of Leonard Street (components 1.13, 1.14). A slightly later example of the typical two-story, five-bay center entrance house occurs north of the hamlet outside of the historic district and was built by Levi Ball, possibly in the 1830's or early 1840's (component 9a). The large six-over-six sash, the corner pilasters and the trabeated entrances are features commonly associated with vernacular Greek Revival, yet the basic house form and several details still reflect Federal style design. None of the industrial buildings, stores or churches of this period has survived.

A departure from the tradition of vernacular frame architecture in the township of Berkshire is reflected by the presence of four Federal style brick houses built between 1827 and 1835. Material for these houses was supplied by Stephen Ball's short-lived brickyard of these

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY Item number 8

Page 4

For NPS use only

received

date entered

dates, which also produced brick for the important, but no longer extant, 1834 Congregational Church (demolished in 1889). No record of the design of this building has been discovered, but it is possible that it resembled the Federal style brick First Congregational Church of Stockbridge Massachusetts built only ten years earlier in the home town of many of Berkshire's early settlers. The use of brick during this period appears to have been motivated by a desire to build a more permanent and monumental structure in the case of the church and to express in a conspicuous way the owner's wealth and status in the community in the case of the four brick residences.

All of the existing brick houses are located outside of the historic district on individually nominated properties. Three of these residences, including the Nathaniel Bishop Collins House, the Deodatus Royce House and the Lebbeus Ford House present variations on the common five-bay center entrance design. Each of the three was built as a farmhouse. The Collins House (component 7a) is the only Federal style house in Berkshire with elliptical fanlights at both the entrance and the central second-story window and with cornice mutules. The rectangular openings are spanned by plain rectangular stone lintels. The Royce House (component 3a) is similar but it does not include an arched second-story opening. The Royce House includes a well-preserved brick ell at the rear, which appears to be contemporary with the house. The Ford House (component 12) differs from the Collins and Royce Houses in its use of brick jack arches over the window openings. It includes an exceptionally well-preserved elliptically arched entrance with sidelights. The last of the four brick houses, that of Robert Akins (component 5a), was initially built as a three-bay, side entrance house. Its depth has been extended by a series of later brick and frame additions. The Akins House is the only one of the four brick houses to feature a denticulated cornice and is the only one to have retained its original six-over-six double-hung sash windows. All four of the structures are typical of vernacular Federal architecture common elsewhere in the state a decade earlier; their late appearance in Berkshire is a further indication of the township's economic and cultural isolation during the early nineteenth century.

The period from 1830 to 1860 was one of great economic expansion for Berkshire. Farm acreage doubled during these years, but the population remained relatively constant. Agricultural production shifted from an emphasis on livestock, feed grains and wool to an emphasis on wheat, and the export of flour. These developments led to the expansion of individual farmsteads, resulting in the construction of new and larger houses and barns. Industries along the east branch of the Owego Creek expanded to meet rising levels of agricultural production and new demands for wood and leather products. For example, in 1839 David Williams expanded his 1818 flouring mills and in 1849 Deodatus Royce built a new water-powered saw mill, while the Leonards expanded their tannery. These



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area  
Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

For NPS use only	
received	
date entered	

developments established economic ties with other areas in the Southern Tier of New York and tended to reduce the degree of economic, social and cultural isolation characteristic of Berkshire earlier in the century. This fact, coupled with increasing prosperity, resulted in construction of somewhat more stylish residences in the 1840's and 1850's. The prosperity of this period is reflected in the construction of a variety of vernacular Greek Revival style residences including the Lyman Akins House, the Stephen Ball House, the J. Ball House and in the historic district, the Williams House. These residences illustrate distinctly different building types within the Greek Revival mode. One of the finest of these structures is the Stephen Ball House (component 2a), built in 1849. It is one of only two Greek Revival houses with porticoes in the township and remains almost completely intact. The simple, rectangular temple form of this building is typical of this period in New York State; however, its thin columns and entablature and more steeply pitched roof planes more closely resemble vernacular manifestations of this style in New England. The other house designed with a portico is that of Lyman Akins (component 13a). This house is the only example in Berkshire of a temple-form house with a center entrance and flanking wings. Despite its deceptively plain exterior detailing, it is in fact a more sophisticated house in layout and composition. It was probably built c. 1850.

The J. Ball house (component 8a) is a representative example a type of Greek Revival style residence, with three-bay gabled facade and attached side ell, which is common throughout rural New York State but rare in Berkshire. This house features broad entablatures with returns, corner pilasters, and an entrance with sidelights and a rectangular transom. It was probably built c. 1850. The George Williams House (component 1.6a), located on Main Street in the historic district, is a larger and more stylish variation on the same house type. Similar examples are common in villages in upstate New York, but this is the only one of its kind in Berkshire.

Several examples of altered Greek Revival buildings occur on the Royce farmstead. The farmhouse (component 10a) was originally built as a one and one-half story Greek Revival residence but was altered within a short period of time to its present Gothic appearance. Its Greek Revival eyebrow windows with cast-iron grilles remain, however. A small, one-story frame structure with Greek Revival entablatures and returns is located behind the farmhouse and is now used as a garage (component 10c). It is believed to be a small professional office or store building moved to the Royce farm at an undetermined date. Despite the removal of a large portion of its facade, evidence of a central, trabeated entrance and flanking nine-over-six sash windows is still visible. The only other Greek Revival period commercial structure

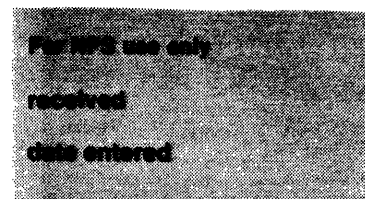
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY Item number 8

Page 6



surviving in Berkshire is the Lynch General Store, adjacent to, but not included in, the historic district. The building is not included in the nomination due to the severity of its alterations.

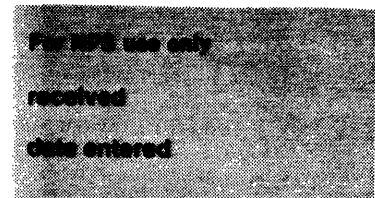
Carpenter Gothic architecture, which first appeared in New York State during the 1840's and 1850's, is poorly represented in the town of Berkshire. The style had appeal to urbane and romantic tastes that were probably not cultivated in Berkshire at so early a date. However, two vernacular farmhouses from the 1850's indicate the superficial influence of this style in their steeply pitched roofs and Gothic porch detailing. The first of these is the Royce farmhouse, which has been described above as an altered Greek Revival residence. Gothic details include a Tudor-arched verandah and pointed attic openings capped by characteristic label moldings. The Belcher farmhouse (component 6a) includes an almost identical verandah with the addition of extremely ornate scroll sawn lattice-work covering the underlying crawl space. This house continues the traditional five-bay center entrance approach typical of the Federal period, but its steeply pitched roofline identifies it as a mid-century house. Both of these houses reflect the prosperity of Berkshire's agriculture during the 1840's and 1850's. In the first case, the Belcher family had developed the need and the resources to build a larger and more substantial house immediately adjacent to the earlier 1815 structure. The Royces, on the other hand, simply enlarged and updated their earlier residence.

Similarly, these farmsteads provide evidence of the expanding agricultural economy during this period. Large mid-century barns at the Belcher, Royce, and Levi Ball farms (components 6b, 10b, 9b) attest to the dramatic growth in grain production between 1830 and 1860 and the need for large-scale storage buildings for grains, feed and livestock. Despite the historical importance of mid-century industry to the town's growth and development, no extant industrial structures of this period, other than barns, remain.

The hamlet of Berkshire became an increasingly important center of trade and manufacturing for the township during the 1860's and 70's, particularly after the advent of rail service to the community in 1869. By 1870, Berkshire included an axe factory, a rake factory, a sleigh shop, a cooperage, a creamery and a cheese factory, as well as the Buffington carriage works. With the stimulus of the railroad, the mills and tannery continued to expand. In 1882, a hub factory was established and in 1883 a new mill was constructed to manufacture broom handles and chair parts. Industrial expansion and a rise in service-related and professional employment led to an increase in the population and wealth of the hamlet. Several Italianate style residences in the historic district express this prosperity. The Darbonnier House (component 1.10a), c. 1865, exhibits typical Greek Revival massing and fenestration; however, its detailing, including drip pendant brackets and attenuated porch columns, is clearly

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY Item number 8

Page 7

the result of the Italianate style influence. The Daniel Witter House (component 1.4a), built c. 1865, is a more typical and pure example of an Italianate style country house and includes a low-pitched hipped roof, a square-based cupola with a finial, and paired drip pendant brackets supporting broad, flat eaves. The large house west of the Darbonnier House (component 1.11a) also represents this typical Italianate house type and is believed to date from 1874. It includes flat roof eaves without brackets and arched windows in the cupola. Houses of this type were particularly common as farmhouses in central and western New York during the late 1850's and into the 1860's. Again, they appear somewhat later in Berkshire. No examples of this type were found on farms in Berkshire. A very modest and vernacular example of the Italianate style is the former Methodist Episcopal Church parsonage, also included in the historic district (component 1.17a). Its only identifying features are its flat hipped roof with broad, unembellished eaves and its front porch with attenuated columns on plinths. This house was built between 1869 and 1875.

The railroad gradually began to effect a change in the farm economy as well by providing access to the growing market for fresh dairy products in distant urban centers. Milk could now be shipped to Binghamton or New York City in a matter of hours. Industrial structures related to these developments are not represented in the nomination due to demolition or the severity of alterations; however, it should be noted that the Buffington factory, an early railroad station and a coal house remain in the village. On the farms, large dairy barns with characteristic gambrel roofs at the Belcher and J. Ball farms (components 6d, 8b), reflect the growth of dairying in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The railroad also reduced Berkshire's cultural isolation. By the 1880's, architecture in Berkshire had caught up with other rural communities in the state. Late Victorian period influence on architecture in Berkshire is seen in modest vernacular houses such as the Mary Witter House (component 1.3a) and a similar house east of the former Methodist Parsonage (component 1.16) both within the historic district. However, its finest expression in Berkshire was in its school and churches. The two most distinguished examples remaining in Berkshire are the First Congregational Church and the Methodist Church, both designed by prominent Elmira architects Pierce and Dockstader and both built in 1889. The Congregational Church (component 4) is an exceptionally significant building which combines elements of Victorian Gothic and Queen Anne style design. Its exterior is executed in brick. The interior is arranged in accordance with the Akron Plan, with its characteristic auditorium seating and diagonal axis and orientation. The Methodist Church (component 1.5), located in the historic district, also features auditorium style seating; however, its frame exterior is less pretentious. Both church designs were published by the architects in design books during the 1890's.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

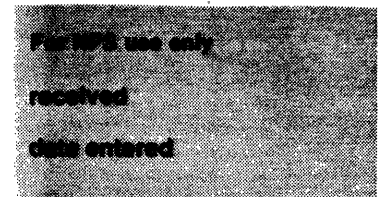
Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY

Item number 8

Continuation sheet

Page 8



They represent, for the first time in Berkshire, architectural design contemporary with other areas of the state and are without exception the most architecturally sophisticated buildings ever built in the township.

A third church, built for a newly established congregation in East Berkshire in 1888, is also included in the nomination (as an individual component). The East Berkshire Methodist Church (component 14) represents the only example of vernacular late Victorian period church design in Berkshire. The simple massing of this frame building, with its steeply pitched roof and frontal belfry, was common throughout the country during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This church survives with a high degree of integrity and retains "picturesque" details such as its latticed gable detail and scalloped rafter ends. A similarly designed school building in the hamlet of Berkshire was also built in 1888 and included jerkin-head gables and a similar belfry. It was located behind the present Fire Department building in the historic district but was destroyed in 1962.

Economic development in Berkshire levelled off with the advent of the twentieth century. The farm economy remained relatively unchanged until the Great Depression (1929) with the exception of a three-fold increase in poultry farming during the first three decades of the century. Architecture during this period is poorly represented in Berkshire due to the general lack of growth. The only twentieth-century residence included in the nomination was built in 1909 by Calvin Buffington, a leading manufacturer and inventor in Berkshire (component 11a). The house is typical of suburban residential architecture of this period and is a rare representative in Berkshire of early twentieth century pattern book design. The Buffington House is also significant for its association with Calvin A. Buffington, a leading manufacturer and inventor in Berkshire.

The Depression resulted in the sharp decline of agriculture in Berkshire as smaller farms failed and families left the township for urban centers in search of jobs. Manufacturing also left Berkshire as the smaller concerns became obsolete. Industrial buildings were abandoned and fell into ruin or were eventually demolished. Houses and churches within the hamlet, however, have in most instances survived.

The most recently built structure included in the nomination occurs in the historic district. Built in 1932, the school annex (component 1.15), also referred to as Harper's Playhouse, indicates an economical approach to the provision of needed facilities during the lean Depression years. In its simplicity and lines, it recalls Berkshire's early nineteenth century vernacular traditions. Historically, it illustrates the continuing role of the hamlet as a center for social activities and institutions.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY Item number 8

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Page 9

Growth in Binghamton and Ithaca during the 1960's has resulted in a suburbanization of outlying rural areas. Berkshire is to some extent becoming a bedroom community with increased dependence on these two urban centers for employment and goods and services. Dairy farms and a large sawmill are currently the largest industries in the township.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property refer to individual inventory forms

Quadrangle name Richford, N.Y.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References see continuation sheet

A 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

B 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

D 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

E 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

F 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

G 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

H 

--	--	--

--	--	--

--	--	--

### Verbal boundary description and justification

refer to individual inventory forms

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries n.a.

state code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mark L. Peckham

organization NYS Division for Historic Preservation March, 1984

street & number E.S.P., Agency Bldg. 1, 13th floor telephone (518) 474-0479

city or town Albany state New York 12238

## 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation date 5/7/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

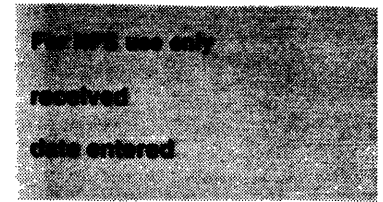
**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Berkshire Multiple Resource Area

Continuation sheet Berkshire, Tioga Co., NY Item number 9

Page 2



- Beers, F.W. Atlas of Tioga County, New York. New York, New York, 1869.
- Camp, J.R. Early Berkshire: A Historical Review. Berkshire, New York, 1975.
- Gay, W.B. Historical Gazetteer of Tioga County, New York, 1785-1888. Syracuse, New York: W.B. Gay and Company, 1888.
- Geil, S. Map of Tioga County, New York, from Actual Surveys by Samuel Geil. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: E.D. Marsh, 1855.
- Kingman, L.W. Our Country and Its People. Elmira, New York: W.A. Fergusson, 1897?
- Peirce, H.B., and Hurd, D.H. A History of Tioga, Chemung, Tompkins and Schuyler Counties, New York. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Everts and Ensign, 1879.
- Reed, R. Architects of Standing: Pierce and Bickford, Elmira, New York, 1890-1930. Thesis, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, May 1981.
- Tioga County Deed and Will Books, County Clerk's Office, Oswego, New York.
- Town Historian's Files, Berkshire Free Library, Berkshire, New York.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received 5-18-84  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 1 of 2

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Berkshire Multiple Resource Area  
State Tioga County, NEW YORK

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Akins, Lyman P., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

2. Akins, Robert, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

3. Ball, J., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

4. Ball, Levi, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

5. Ball, Stephen, House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

6. Belcher Family Homestead  
and Farm Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

7. Berkshire Village Historic  
District Substantive Review

for Keeper Barbara Boyd 7/2/84

Attest

8. Buffington, Calvin A., House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

9. Collins, Nathaniel Bishop,  
House Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest

10. First Congregational Church Entered in the  
National Register

for Keeper Melora Byers 7/2/84

Attest



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received 5-18-84  
date entered \_\_\_\_\_

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 2 of 2

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Berkshire Multiple Resource Area  
State Tioga County, NEW YORK

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

11. Ford, Lebbeus, House  
*Entered in the National Register*

*for* Keeper *Melora Byers 7/2/84*

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

12. East Berkshire United Methodist Church  
*Entered in the National Register*

*for* Keeper *Melora Byers 7/2/84*

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

13. Royce, J. B., House and Farm Complex  
*Submitted for Review*

Keeper *Ann Van Donge 7/2/84*

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

14. Royce, Deodatus, House  
*Entered in the National Register*

*for* Keeper *Melora Byers 7/2/84*

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

15.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

16.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

17.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

18.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

19.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_

20.

Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Attest \_\_\_\_\_