

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

RECEIVED 2280

AUG 14 2015

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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 entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Lithuanian National Association Hall

other name/site number Tri-Cities Opera

2. Location

street & number 315 Clinton Street  not for publication

city or town Binghamton vicinity \_\_\_\_\_

state New York code NY county Broome code 007 zip code 13905

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A. Peepert DSHPD 7/30/15  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:)

for  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 9-29-15

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

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

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Social/meeting hall

Commerce/trade/professional  
Recreation and culture/auditorium

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

No style

foundation Stone  
walls Brick  
roof Synthetics/rubber membrane  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached

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## 8. Significance

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### 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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Social History

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### Period of Significance

1917 - 1964

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### Significant Dates

1917

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### Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

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### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

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### Architect/Builder

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### Primary location of additional data:

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

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreege of Property** 0.5

**UTM References**

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 422557 4662381  
Zone Easting Northing

2  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Bruce G. Harvey, edited by Kathleen LaFrank, National Register Coordinator, NYSHPO

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 2013

street & number 4948 Limehill Drive telephone 315-492-1454

city or town Syracuse state NY zip code 13215

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## Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**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.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

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## Property Owner

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

name/title Tri-Cities Opera

street & number 315 Clinton St. telephone (607) 729-3444

city or town Binghamton state NY zip code 13905

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**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Lithuanian National Association Hall
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Name of Property
Binghamton, Broome County, New York
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County and State
-----
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number 7 Page 1

The Lithuanian National Association Hall is located on the south side of Clinton Street in Binghamton’s First Ward, between Stanley Street and Janette Avenue and immediately east of Clinton Street’s termination at Glenwood Avenue. Immediately behind (south of) the building, the Norfolk Southern Railroad runs east-west. The surrounding neighborhood consists primarily of one- and two-story commercial buildings, interspersed with historic churches, small-scale manufacturing buildings, and single-family residences. The building occupies a large, one-acre parcel that is the original property associated with the hall. The east side of the parcel is occupied by a parking lot. At the rear of the parking lot, two non-historic metal additions are attached to the rear of the original building and connected by enclosed hallways. To the west, separated by a narrow alley, is a one-story, non-historic brick building used by the opera for set and costume storage. The nomination includes one contributing building and one non-contributing building.

The Lithuanian National Association Hall is a two-story building constructed of steel and timber framing, with brick walls and a flat roof. It is rectangular in plan with the narrow end facing the street. The symmetrical façade is clad in yellow brick and dominated by a broad central Romanesque arch on the second floor above a double entrance. A large commercial style window opening flanks the central entrance on each side of the first floor, while three double-hung windows flank the arch on each side of the second floor. The generally restrained façade is enlivened by small diamond patterns in brick along a course above the second floor windows, and the identity of the building, Lithuanian National Association, is set in terra cotta within a stepped gable above the central bay. The building measures approximately 50 feet wide by approximately 115 feet deep.

The principal elevation, facing Clinton Street, is clad entirely in buff brick laid in stretcher bond, with the exception of matching concrete lettering beneath a stepped gable. This brick façade is one and one-half bricks deep, with red brick walls extending back to form the long sides. The façade is divided horizontally into three: a first and second floor, and a wide, subtle entablature between the second floor and the eave. The first two floors of the façade are symmetrical with a central entrance bay flanked on each side by windows. The central entrance bay is two stories in height and is dominated by a broad round arch that is Romanesque in inspiration. The arched window opening consists of a voussoir

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formed by brick headers with two concentric lines of footers that spring from a belt course between the first and second floors; the belt course consists of vertical bricks that project slightly from the façade. The arch and the spandrels are slightly recessed and set within a rectangular frame above the belt course. The window within the round arch is divided into four vertical panes that are separated by wooden vertical muntins.

The central bay on the first floor consists of a modern double door set within a matching wooden frame. The doorway is protected by a modern curved awning that spans the entire central bay. A wooden entablature separating the entrance on the first floor and the arched window on the second now contains lettering identifying the building as the Tri-Cities Opera.

The bays on each side of the central entrance bay are identical. The first floor consists of a single full-height window opening that spans nearly the entire bay and is recessed slightly behind the façade. A plate glass window with a broad wooden panel above and below is flush with the inside edge of the opening. The outer side of the first floor window bay on each side consists of a narrow single door opening; the opening of the right bay (looking toward the building) has been covered in wood paneling. The left bay includes a single wooden door beneath a glass transom. The second floor of each bay consists of three evenly spaced double-hung windows. The windows are recessed slightly behind the brick façade, and each has a slender stone sill. The windows have contemporary metal-frames.

The first and second floors of the façade are divided by a belt course. The course consists of a row of header bricks laid vertically above a row of footers. Both rows project slightly from the façade and use bricks of the same color as the rest of the façade. The top section of the façade consists of a subtle entablature, all in the same buff brick as the rest of the façade. The lower course is formed by four rows of footers placed vertically, with square diamond patterned buff stone inserts spaced regularly within the course. A row of headers laid vertically is placed directly above. Eight rows of bricks then separate the row of headers and the eave of the flat roof. A stepped gable then rises above the central entrance bay. The stepped gable provides space for an inset panel in which "Lithuanian Nat'l Association" is spelled out in capital letters. The edge of the roof is then marked by a slender gray stone lintel. The roof is flat,

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with three levels. The highest level is in the front, extending approximately three bays back from the façade. The roof then steps down approximately three feet.

All of the decorative efforts for the building were expended on the façade. The sides and the rear of the building are clad in a simple red brick. The east side of the building is most visible, as it faces a parking lot. The east side of the front section, which contains parlors on the first floor and offices on the second floor, features three evenly spaced double-hung windows in metal frames on the second floor level. The east side of the middle section, which contains the auditorium and stage, features four evenly spaced double-hung windows on the first level, while the rear section features a low brick chimney that is flush with the wall and is flanked on one side by a double-hung window and on the other by a small, square single-pane window. The west side of the building is separated from its neighbor by a narrow alley and visibility is limited. It has three double-hung windows on the second floor of the front section with a contemporary double window on the first; three double-hung windows on the main floor of the middle section, with a contemporary double metal door at the ground level; and a projecting metal shed on the rear section.

The building’s interior consists of a mix of office and public meeting spaces in the front and an auditorium and raised stage in the rear. The center double doors on the façade open to a central hallway, with a parlor on left (east) side. The west side was also originally divided off by a wall, but that wall was removed, leaving the space open to the central hall; the beam indicating the presence of the wall remains and is supported by slender wooden posts.<sup>1</sup> The ceiling in the entire first floor front remains clad in decorative pressed tin with metal coves. The space on the right has been altered with the addition of a modern kitchen.

Only the front section of the building has a second floor. Access to the second floor is gained by a narrow staircase along the east wall, with a door to the street at the east side of the façade. Much of the current second floor has been altered with the addition of new walls to form offices; however, several

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<sup>1</sup> The original use of the rooms facing the hall is unknown. They may have been commercial spaces or they may have served a social function for the club. See item 8.

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original components remain. In particular, much of the ceiling remains clad in decorative tin with the exception of areas that have been replaced by modern dropped ceilings. In addition, the window within the round arch on the façade remains open, bisected by what appears to be an original wall.

The principal interior feature of the building remains the first floor auditorium and stage. This area occupies the full width at the rear of the first floor. Access is gained by a set of six steps at the rear of the central hall and through a set of double doors. The stage, which is raised above the wooden floor of the auditorium, is located at the rear of the building facing toward the front. The tall ceiling forms a shallow, segmented barrel arch illuminated by early pendant lights and is clad in acoustical tile. Outside light is allowed in the auditorium by tall single windows on both side walls. The side walls are divided into four bays, each marked by a pilaster that connects to a beam that spans the ceiling. The beams project downward from the ceiling and feature pressed tin coving. The rear of the auditorium, surrounding the entrance from the central hall, contains an enclosed control and lighting room above the auditorium floor. Access to the control room is gained by an enclosed stairway on the west side of the rear of the auditorium. Stairways lead from the east side of the stage to the basement and to the rear exit, while a trap door in the stage floor provided access to the basement for surprise entrances and exits during performances. The door remains in place, visible both on the stage and in the basement, but is no longer functioning.



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The Lithuanian National Association Hall is significant under criterion A in social history for its long and important association with the Lithuanian immigrant community in Binghamton. Constructed in 1917, the building was the most important center of activity for Binghamton’s strong and vibrant Lithuanian immigrant community and their descendants until 1964, when it was sold to the Tri-Cities Opera. The two-story brick building is located in Binghamton’s First Ward, one of the city’s early residential, commercial, and industrial neighborhoods. Many of the region’s new immigrants settled in the First Ward, drawn to the city’s growing industrial might in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Lithuanians in particular began to arrive in the 1880s and 1890s, leaving a nation that was frequently besieged and occupied by various neighboring states. The Lithuanian immigrants soon gathered themselves into a closely-knit community in their new city and a number of particular organizations formed that were oriented toward cultural awareness, commercial development, support for the native country, and mutual aid. The Lithuanian National Association Hall served as a focal point and gathering place for all of these groups. Over nearly fifty years, the building was the scene of concerts, plays, mass meetings, and other community functions put on by several different Lithuanian groups. In particular, the hall was a center of activity related to Lithuanian politics, especially Lithuanian independence and socialism, both issues of strong concern among the Lithuanian community in America. The building retains a high degree of integrity and continues to represent the history of eastern European immigrants in the city and the region.

Binghamton

Binghamton’s First Ward is a traditionally mixed-use neighborhood located west of the Chenango River and Binghamton’s downtown area. The earliest center of development in Binghamton was on the east side of the Chenango River, originally named Chenango Point. The city is named in honor of William Bingham, who purchased 10,000 acres in the area in 1792 with the intent of establishing a community that could take advantage of the transportation and power benefits of the Susquehanna and Chenango Rivers and their tributaries. Bingham’s agent, Joshua Whitney, spurred the development of grain and lumber mills in the area, which, combined with the access to markets by way of the two rivers, established a tradition of manufacturing and commerce in Binghamton.

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The early focus of development was on the east side of the Chenango River. One of Whitney’s first public works projects, however, was to construct a bridge over the Chenango River at the location of a ferry, carrying the road on the north side of the Susquehanna River west across the Chenango River to connect to the River Road, now Front Street (which now forms the eastern border of the First Ward). The bridge, completed in approximately 1804, extended Court Street in Binghamton and allowed for a significant development on the west side of the Chenango. The initial development on the west side was along the Main Street corridor, lying at the southern edge of what is now the First Ward. The area surrounding the intersection of what is now Main Street and Front Street across the river, though much smaller in extent than downtown, was still the subject of dense development by the mid 1820s. The west side of Front Street, from what is now Eaton Place to North Street, was completely filled with buildings, as were both sides of Main Street extending west from the river to what is now Murray Street. The east side of Front Street, meanwhile, had only scattered buildings both north and south of Main Street.<sup>1</sup> In the years immediately preceding the arrival of the railroads, development had extended north on Front Street nearly to what is now Clinton Street. Although undeveloped in 1838, many of the streets in the eastern section of what is now the First Ward, lying north of Clinton Street and west of Front Street, had already been laid out.<sup>2</sup>

Binghamton continued to grow through the mid-nineteenth century largely because of its role as a regional center for both manufacturing and transportation. Drawing upon its location as a traditional crossroads where overland travel routes gained access to both the Chenango and Susquehanna Rivers, Binghamton continued to provide access to markets with new transportation routes. In Binghamton’s early years, the Chenango Canal provided a vital outlet for people, agricultural produce, and early manufactured goods. Completed in 1834, the canal linked Binghamton and its environs to the Erie Canal at Utica, which in turn gave access to important markets in Albany and New York City at dramatically lowered shipping rates and cemented Binghamton’s role as a regional commercial center. The canal remained in operation until the 1870s, but its impact was soon lessened by the next wave of

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<sup>1</sup> Moor, J.C. “A Map of Binghamton,” September 19, 1825. MS in the collections of the Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, NY.

<sup>2</sup> Tower, F. C. “Map of the Village of Binghamton,” 1838. MS in the collection of the Broome County Historical Society, Binghamton, NY.

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transportation innovation. In 1849, the New York and Erie Railroad arrived in Binghamton. Chartered by the State of New York in 1832, the railroad’s stated purpose was to connect the port of New York City with Lake Erie at Dunkirk, NY. Construction on the line began in 1836; it crossed the Hudson near Nyack and skirted the Catskill Mountains before arriving at Binghamton in late December, 1848. In 1851, Binghamton became a terminal on what was to become the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad. Then, in 1869, the Delaware & Hudson Railroad connected Binghamton to Albany.<sup>3</sup>

These connections to outside markets provided a great stimulus to Binghamton’s already developing manufacturing base. Though originally based largely in timber, the city’s industrial base soon diversified. By 1850, as the local supplies of lumber diminished, the production of cigars came to prominence. The city boasted only four cigar shops in 1850, largely producing for a local market only. By the late 1880s, however, cigar manufacturing was the city’s largest employer, with nearly 50 firms of all sizes putting some 6,000 people to work. Other important industries in the area that emerged in the late nineteenth century included the manufacture of shoes, the city’s second largest employer in the late 1880s, photographic equipment, paper, and ice. This rapid burst in manufacturing brought vast numbers of people (including many immigrants) to the city in the late nineteenth century, and the city’s population exploded from 16,000 in 1880 to 47,000 by 1910.<sup>4</sup>

First Ward Neighborhood

When the Binghamton was incorporated in 1834, the village was divided into five wards. The First Ward was identified as “that part of the village which lies west of the Chenango River.” This definition was revised as the city expanded further to the west. When the city charter of incorporation was passed in 1867, only a few families lived in the First Ward. Several years later, in 1871, John Murin moved to the area from Scranton, Pennsylvania, initiating the first Slovak settlement in the neighborhood. Murin attracted railroad workers to the neighborhood, boarding them in his own home. Other Slovaks worked in the factories or on the canal. Many of these workers built their own homes in the neighborhood, sparking a dramatic increase in population and a corresponding demand for churches, schools, and

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Bishop and Jeffrey Slack, *Reconnaissance Level Survey of Local Historic Resources*, Rep. Vol 1. (Binghamton: City of Binghamton, 1991), 26.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop and Slack, 7.

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recreational facilities. In addition to Slovakian immigrants, Russians, Poles, and Lithuanians were also attracted to the neighborhood, leading to a rich mix of Eastern European cultures. By the turn of the twentieth century the community included churches, schools, community halls, and libraries.<sup>5</sup>

In 1919, the First Ward was identified as the most densely populated and fastest growing area in Binghamton. Its population of 15,000 included more than one-quarter of the entire city. The growth of the population surpassed the availability of services, leading local leaders to demand changes. A local newspaper reported an assessment of the ward’s needs. The activists described the ward as congested, with “not a patch of green for a playground or an acre of land set aside for them [children] as a breathing spot, no public fountain or drinking fountain or comfort station.” They stressed the immediate need for a playground and drinking fountains and the eventual need for a branch library. The observation was made that leaders “have been expressing these ideas more and more forcefully in the past five years, especially since the conclusion of the war.” The latter referred to the return of young men from World War I and noted that “business [was] booming and “there were high wages everywhere.”<sup>6</sup>

Clinton Street, just over a mile in length, marks the spine of the First Ward and its main commercial district. As streetcars began to link the disparate neighborhoods of Binghamton together in the late nineteenth century, a new line was constructed down Clinton Street. The street has long been noted for its juxtaposition of churches and bars, both of which served as community meeting places for the working-class population. The prolific number of churches catered to the variety of different national and ethnic immigrant groups, providing a way for new immigrants to maintain their native languages and customs. During the Depression, speakeasies were common in the neighborhood.<sup>7</sup>

By the 1980s, the First Ward had a long-term stable population, many of whom had lived there for more than half a century, and the neighborhood was still characterized by its distinctive mix of residences, churches, factories, and small businesses. The population was poorer, however, and businesses were more likely to be antique shops than groceries and hardware stores. Churches and bars, however, have

<sup>5</sup> “Rapid Strides Made Since ’67 In First Ward,” undated clipping, Ford Scrapbook, Broome County Historical Society .  
<sup>6</sup> William L. Engle, “First Ward Asks Improvements as Start of City-wide Campaign,” *Republican Herald* 12 August 1919.  
<sup>7</sup> “The First Ward: Life Gets Tougher,” *Press and Sun Bulletin*, Susquehanna Edition 10 December 1978, 4-10.

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remained a neighborhood staple.<sup>8</sup>

Lithuanian Immigrants

Eastern and central Europeans, including those from Poland and various Slavic countries, predominated among Binghamton's immigrants. Immigrants from Lithuania, one of three Baltic nations lying to the northeast of Poland on Russia's eastern frontier, began to arrive in large numbers in the 1880s and 1890s. Lithuania, along with Estonia and Latvia, was located on the east side of the Baltic Sea. With its access to ocean ports, Lithuania was subject to geopolitical maneuverings among Russians, Poles, Germans, and other Europeans throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Lithuanian immigration to America began in the 1850s during a famine and continued during Polish-Lithuania insurrections in the 1860s. Out-migration was reinvigorated in the 1880s during a period of Russian domination.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, Lithuanians were rarely identified as such in early immigration records; many were instead identified as Poles, Germans, or Russians. In addition, Eastern Europeans who identified their faith as Roman Catholic were often recorded as Polish. Even with these incomplete numbers, however, more than 250,000 Lithuanians entered the United States between 1899 and 1914.<sup>10</sup> After entering the country in New York City, most Lithuanian immigrants settled in various industrial cities throughout the northeast, particularly in New York and Pennsylvania. Others moved further west, with Chicago having the largest Lithuanian population in the United States, prompting Upton Sinclair to feature a recent Lithuanian immigrant as the focal point of his powerful industrial expose novel, *The Jungle*.

As refugees from a country that had been under siege for a generation, most Lithuanians congregated in cities and formed closely-knit communities. According to Roucek's 1936 study, several of these "colonies" could be found throughout the smaller cities of upstate New York, including Amsterdam, Rochester, Utica, Herkimer, Niagara Falls, and Binghamton. "The tendency of the Lithuanians to form settlements," Roucek noted, "enables them to organize their social life through social, literary, religious,

<sup>8</sup> Tom Tobin, "First Ward Undergoes Change," *Binghamton Press*, 24 July 1983, 1B-2B.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Slabey Roucek, "Lithuanian Immigrants in America," *American Journal of Sociology* 41(January 1936), 448.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

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beneficial, and co-operative societies, imitating as far as possible their social institutions at home.”<sup>11</sup> Many of these organizations were cultural in nature, helping the immigrants to maintain an awareness of their home country; most of the Lithuanian communities in cities such as Binghamton maintained an interest in Lithuanian literature, drama, painting, and other forms of art.

While there is limited hard evidence, it is likely that Lithuanians were present and active in Binghamton by the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; in 1911, Binghamton’s first May Day celebration was held at the Royal Arcanum Hall on Henry Street and was jointly sponsored by the Local Binghamton Socialist Party, the Jewish Workmen’s circle, and the Lithuanian Socialist organization. By the mid-1910s, Binghamton had a large number of Lithuanian organizations. A 1915 obituary of a young Lithuanian woman who was tragically killed by a train on Glenwood Avenue, for example, noted that she was active in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Lithuanian Socialist Local, the Lithuanian National Association, the Lithuanian Benefit Society of Binghamton, the Lithuanian Singing Society, and the Lithuanian Literary Workers.<sup>12</sup> Subsequent newspaper articles made reference to many other groups, some of them no doubt short-lived or ad-hoc groups. These include the Binghamton branch of the American Lithuanian Congress, the Binghamton branch of the Committee for Restoring Lithuanian Independence (after Russia, under Josef Stalin, annexed the Baltic States in 1940), the Lithuanian Alliance of America, the St. Joseph’s Society, the Association of Lithuanian Workers, the Lithuanian Mutual Aid Society, the American-Lithuanian Literary Society (which also had a Women’s Auxiliary), and the Lithuanian Council of Binghamton.

Lithuanian National Association

Although it was only one among several groups, the Lithuanian National Association (LNA) played a central role in Binghamton’s Lithuanian community. The LNA was incorporated in June of 1913, with the stated purpose of carrying on a construction and realty business; however, no records of such construction and realty activities were found.<sup>13</sup> A month later, the LNA purchased the property at 315

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 450.

<sup>12</sup> Obituary for Anna Simulinas, *Binghamton Press*, 12/20/1915.

<sup>13</sup> *Binghamton Press*, 6/5/1913.

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Clinton Street from the St. Joseph Lithuanian Society.<sup>14</sup> The St. Joseph Lithuanian Society was a parent organization for the St. Joseph Lithuanian Church, a Roman Catholic parish (now incorporated into Holy Trinity parish on Prospect Street). The St. Joseph Lithuanian Society had purchased the property in 1911, and began construction of their church building at 315 Clinton Street. According to a recent report, the parish abandoned plans for the building in 1917 and sold the building, which was under construction. Although not defined in the report, it is likely that only the foundation of the church had been constructed at the time of the sale.<sup>15</sup> The nominated hall was built on this foundation. Unfortunately, none of the available records identifies an architect for the Lithuanian National Association Hall. In addition, there are no records of the Lithuanian National Association that allow for an evaluation of how it operated as an organization.

The LNA Hall is located near the western end of Clinton Street, near its terminus at Glenwood Ave. The westward extension of Clinton Street from its intersection with Front Street took place during the late nineteenth century. An 1866 map of Binghamton shows lots platted on Clinton Street as far west as West Street, though only the block immediately west of Oak Street shows any concentrated development. By 1876, however, a revised Broome County atlas shows the full extent of Clinton Street, terminating at what is now Glenwood Avenue, near the railroad crossing. The city limit crossed Clinton Street near what is now Holland Street, but the 1876 map shows buildings on the north side of Clinton Street between the city limit and Glenwood Ave. The LNA building’s lot was identified as belonging to W. Van Wagoner. William Van Wagoner had purchased the property in 1863 from Ammi and Anna Doubleday; Van Wagoner’s estate then conveyed the property to his descendants, John B. Van Wagoner and Eliza Neally, in 1891. In 1911, Neally sold the property to the St. Joseph Lithuanian Society.<sup>16</sup>

The earliest Sanborn Fire Insurance map that shows this western portion of Clinton Street is 1898. This map shows several buildings on the south side of Clinton Street near the current LNA Hall lot but no

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<sup>14</sup> Broome County Deed Book (BCDB) 244: 511, 7/20/1913.  
<sup>15</sup> BCDB 230:591; information on the St. Joseph’s Lithuanian Society’s plans to construct a church at the property comes from “Tri-Cities Opera Company, Inc., Roof and Façade Rehabilitation Project,” a report prepared by Root 2 Architecture for the Tri-Cities Opera Company, Inc.; the report does not cite a source for the claim, but is not unreasonable.  
<sup>16</sup> BCDB 61: 268, 8/12/1863; BCDB 146: 57, 4/17/1891; BCDB 230: 591, 6/21/1911.

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buildings on the lot. In 1918, however, the Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the “Lithuanian Hall” in its current location. The diagram for the building shows the central entrance hall, leading back to a large open space, the current auditorium, with pilasters on the walls, and a stage at the rear of the building. The building was heated by steam, with electric and gas lights. A smaller two-story building was immediately adjacent on the east side, where a parking lot now is located, and a small building separated from the hall on the west, where a brick building now is located. Neither building is extant.

After being completed in 1917, the LNA Hall quickly became one of the key centers of activity for Binghamton’s Lithuanian community. Various local organizations and groups made use of the space, although no organizational records for the LNA were found that provide details on how these events were coordinated. Most of the earliest reports of activities at the LNA were overtly political in nature, as both the promise of Lithuanian independence and socialism were particularly strong themes among the Lithuanian community in Binghamton in the early twentieth century. Many of the events at the LNA Hall in the late 1910s were focused on socialism, which was particularly strong among Binghamton’s Lithuanian community, as it was with other eastern European immigrants.

The “Red Scare” of the 1920s, the rampant concern throughout America of an infiltration by Communists following the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, was experienced in Binghamton in 1919. The presence of a large number of eastern European immigrants who tended to congregate among themselves within the First Ward (rather than assimilating into the rest of the city) as well as the groups’ strong socialist element had local officials worried.<sup>17</sup> The local newspapers carried several reports in 1919 and 1920 about possible socialist, communist, and Bolshevik activities in the city, always in association with the First Ward and Clinton Street. In particular, the manager of the Lithuanian Hall, John Manac, was arrested in late December of 1919 on charges that he was raising funds for the Communist Party.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Roucek noted that Lithuanians, perhaps because they “had to fight for their nationalism so long under so many adverse circumstances,” do not assimilate speedily; p. 451.

<sup>18</sup> *Binghamton Press*, 12/30/1919, p. 10.



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Organizations affiliated with communism were growing rapidly, the article noted, among both men and women, mostly “of foreign extraction.” In the wake of raids and arrests in New York City and Albany targeting both communists and socialists, a number of leaders moved to Binghamton, where they led membership and fund-raising campaigns, with meetings allegedly “held about once every ten days, either in Lithuanian Hall on Clinton street, or in Slovak Hall on Starr avenue.”<sup>19</sup> In September 1919, the two-act drama *The American Worker*, staged at the LNA Hall, was castigated as being Bolshevik propaganda. It was, according to the newspaper report, particularly hostile toward the clergy along with capitalists. According to the newspaper report of the performance, “Members of the police force were called to attend the so-called show and according to reports at the police headquarters today, it is possible that arrests will be made because of the portrayal of some of the characters in the drama.” The play was carried out in a foreign language, presumably Lithuanian, but the meaning was, apparently, quite clear.<sup>20</sup>

Earlier that year, a group of Lithuanians began circulating a petition that asked President Wilson and his administration to recognize Lithuania as an independent state. Many residents of the First Ward then began seeing flyers that opposed the petition, on the grounds that an independent Lithuania would be an invitation to the leaders of England and America to overturn the “working people’s government.” It was clearly a pro-Bolshevik flyer, which outraged many of Binghamton’s Lithuanian community.<sup>21</sup> In January 1920, the city’s Lithuanian Socialist Association held a meeting at the LNA Hall, hoping to woo back the communists who had seceded from the organization. According to the newspaper account, the principal speaker “devoted most of his talk to an analysis of the Communist party platform, comparing it with the Socialist platform, and showing how the latter is better fitted to the needs of the American working class. He held the close attention of his audience for about three hours.”<sup>22</sup>

The tone of the events and meetings at the LNA Hall changed from the 1920s through the 1940s, with a decreased emphasis on overtly socialist activities. This was due in part to the crackdown on

<sup>19</sup> *Binghamton Press*, 1/20/1920, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> *Binghamton Press* 9/22/1919, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> *Binghamton Press* 4/19/19, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Binghamton Press*, 1/22, 1920, p. 10.

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communism and its perceived allies throughout America. Newspapers in Binghamton noted that the local police were paying particular attention to the radical meetings at the LNA Hall in the early 1920s. In addition to socialism, the Lithuanian community in Binghamton was vitally concerned with the status of the home country. Lithuania had been a part of the Russian empire through the nineteenth century, but the upheavals of World War I combined with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia created an opportunity for Lithuania to declare its independence in 1918. Anniversaries of Lithuanian independence were celebrated at the LNA Hall in Binghamton, while threats to the fragile independence were noted and protested. The Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in 1940, then re-annexed it in 1945 after Nazi Germany had occupied the country. The LNA Hall hosted many speakers during the 1940s and 1950s who sought to raise awareness of the plight of Lithuanians under Nazi and Soviet domination and who sought to put pressure on the United States government to work to stop the spread of the Russian domination of eastern Europe. In 1946, for example, the former attorney general of Lithuania and former underground leader during World War II spoke to the Lithuanian-American Council at the LNA Hall, describing the complete domination of Lithuania by the Soviet Union.<sup>23</sup>

From the World War II years until the early 1960s, politics returned to the LNA Hall, but they were less overtly socialist. The events were, instead, oriented more toward union and workers' programs. City directory listings for 315 Clinton Street from the late 1940s and early 1950s referred to the Workers Recreation Hall as one of the occupants, in addition to the Lithuanian Hall. Various May Day meetings were held at Workers Recreation Hall in the late 1940s, while the early 1950s saw several union meetings for the United Shoe Workers of America and the International Fur and Leather Workers in their attempts to organize the Endicott-Johnson Shoe factories, attempts to organize at the Fairbanks Company's Glenwood Avenue valve plant, and support for the International Order of Workers.

Despite these occasional union-related meetings, events at the LNA Hall from the 1940s to the 1960s tended to be more cultural in orientation. These included a celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lithuanian independence in early 1938, featuring a mass meeting followed by a concert and dance; a concert and dance in 1940 to benefit victims of war in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuanian, put on by the

<sup>23</sup> *Binghamton Press*, 12/2/1946, p. 8.

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Binghamton branch of the American Lithuanian Congress; a protest of Stalin's annexation of Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia; a performance of *Pilate's Daughter* by the Dramatics Group of St. Joseph's Lithuanian Church; a concert of Lithuanian and light opera songs performed by Lithuanian-American singers, sponsored by the Lithuanian Worker's Alliance; an address in 1949 by the president of the National Lithuanian-American Alliance; an annual meeting in 1953 of the Seventh District of the Lithuanian Alliance of America that included dinner, a musical program, speeches, and more. While there were occasional events at the LNA Hall that were not put on by Lithuanian groups, a search of available newspaper databases found no Lithuanian events at venues other than the LNA Hall.

In addition to hosting programs that used the auditorium and stage, the Lithuanian National Association also rented office space on the second floor. As early as the 1930s, the city directories listed Anthony Klimas at 315 Clinton Street along with Lithuanian Hall. Klimas was a photographer who maintained a studio at the LNA Hall; his portraits of newly married couples regularly graced the local newspapers. Unfortunately, Klimas was also in the newspaper in 1950 as a news item; he and one other man were arrested and accused of "possessing obscene photographs of nude women with the intent to give them away or exhibit them." Klimas pled guilty and paid a \$500 fine.<sup>24</sup> His photography business, however, continued unabated until he close it in 1961. The other principal renter through the 1950s was the Valley Engineering Company. This company provided primarily mechanical engineering and drafting services and regularly advertised for designers and drafters. The available records do not indicate if either of these businesses were oriented toward Lithuanians. As for the two spaces flanking the center hall on the first floor, although they appear as the kind of typical commercial spaces found in buildings of this type, city directories through the years list no businesses in them. This suggests that they were always used as social spaces for the Lithuanian hall. Further research may illuminate their history and function more clearly.

The Lithuanian National Alliance Hall was clearly a central point for one of the major immigration groups in Binghamton and especially the First Ward neighborhood surrounding Clinton Street. Lithuanians began congregating in the First Ward on Binghamton's west side at least by the early

<sup>24</sup> *Binghamton Press*, 2/14/1950, p. 5.

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twentieth century and by the 1910s they were a significant part of Binghamton's immigrant community. This importance was solidified and made public with the construction of the Lithuanian National Association's hall at 315 Clinton Street. From its construction in 1917 until the Lithuanian National Association sold the building to the Tri-Cities Opera Company in 1964, it served as a focal point for the political, social, and cultural concerns of the Lithuanian community in Binghamton.

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**Major Bibliographic References**

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Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

The nominated one-acre parcel has been associated with the property since it was purchased by the Lithuanian National Association in 1913.

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Photographer, photos 1-8: Bruce G. Harvey  
4948 Limehill Drive  
Syracuse, NY 13215

Photographer, photo 9: Chris Snyder  
Preservation Planner  
City of Binghamton  
City Hall  
Binghamton, NY 13902

Date: 2015

Tiff Files: CD-R of .tiff files on file at  
National Park Service  
Washington, D.C.

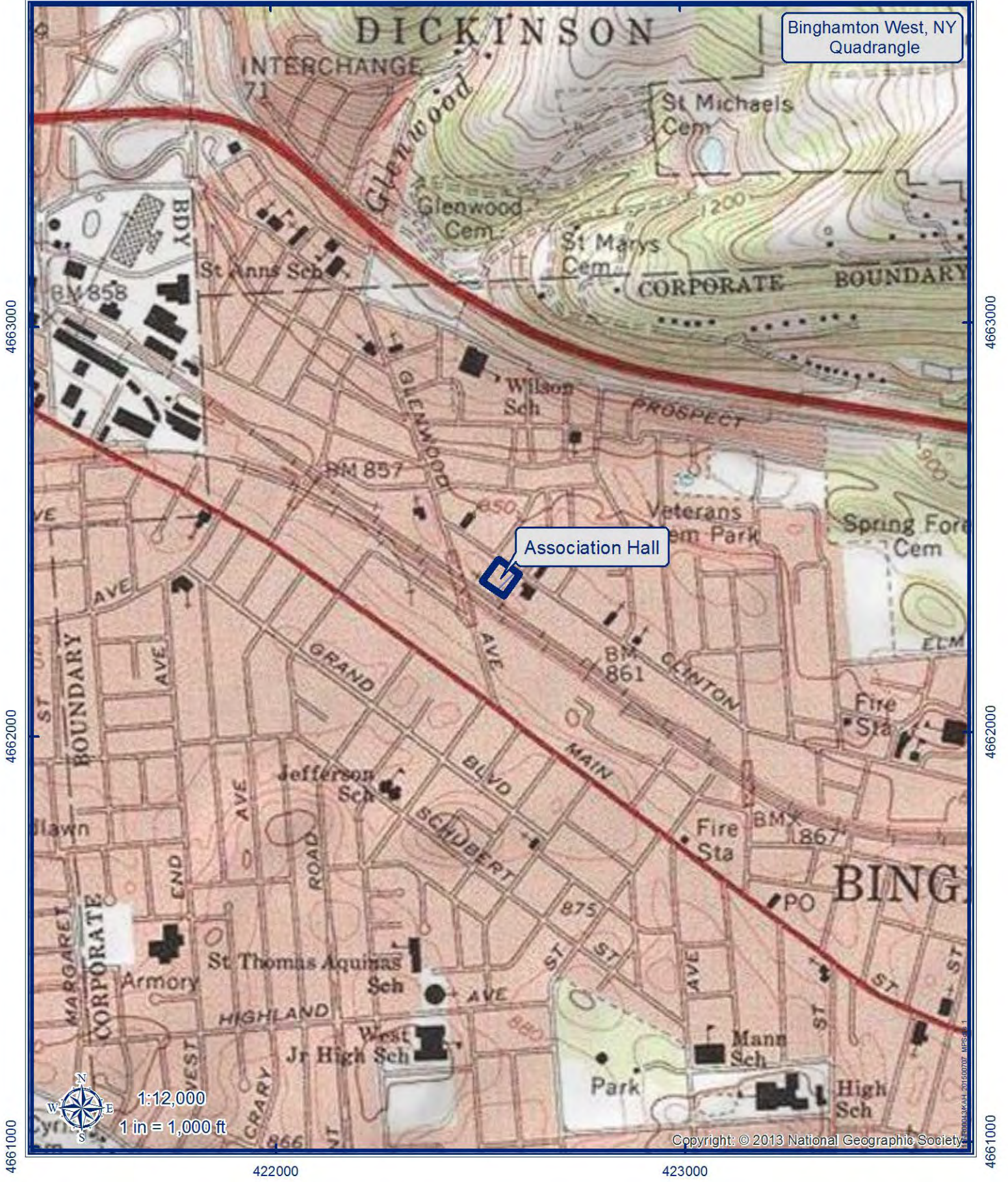
and

New York State Historic Preservation Office  
Waterford, NY

Photo List:

- 0001. exterior, looking southeast at façade and east elevation
- 0002. exterior, façade, looking south
- 0003. exterior, east elevation, looking southwest
- 0004. interior, east parlor
- 0005. interior, west parlor, now open, showing entrance to auditorium at left
- 0006. interior, auditorium, view from stage
- 0007. interior, second floor, front office
- 0008. exterior, non-historic addition attached to rear of hall
- 0009. exterior, non-historic building west of hall

Binghamton West, NY  
Quadrangle



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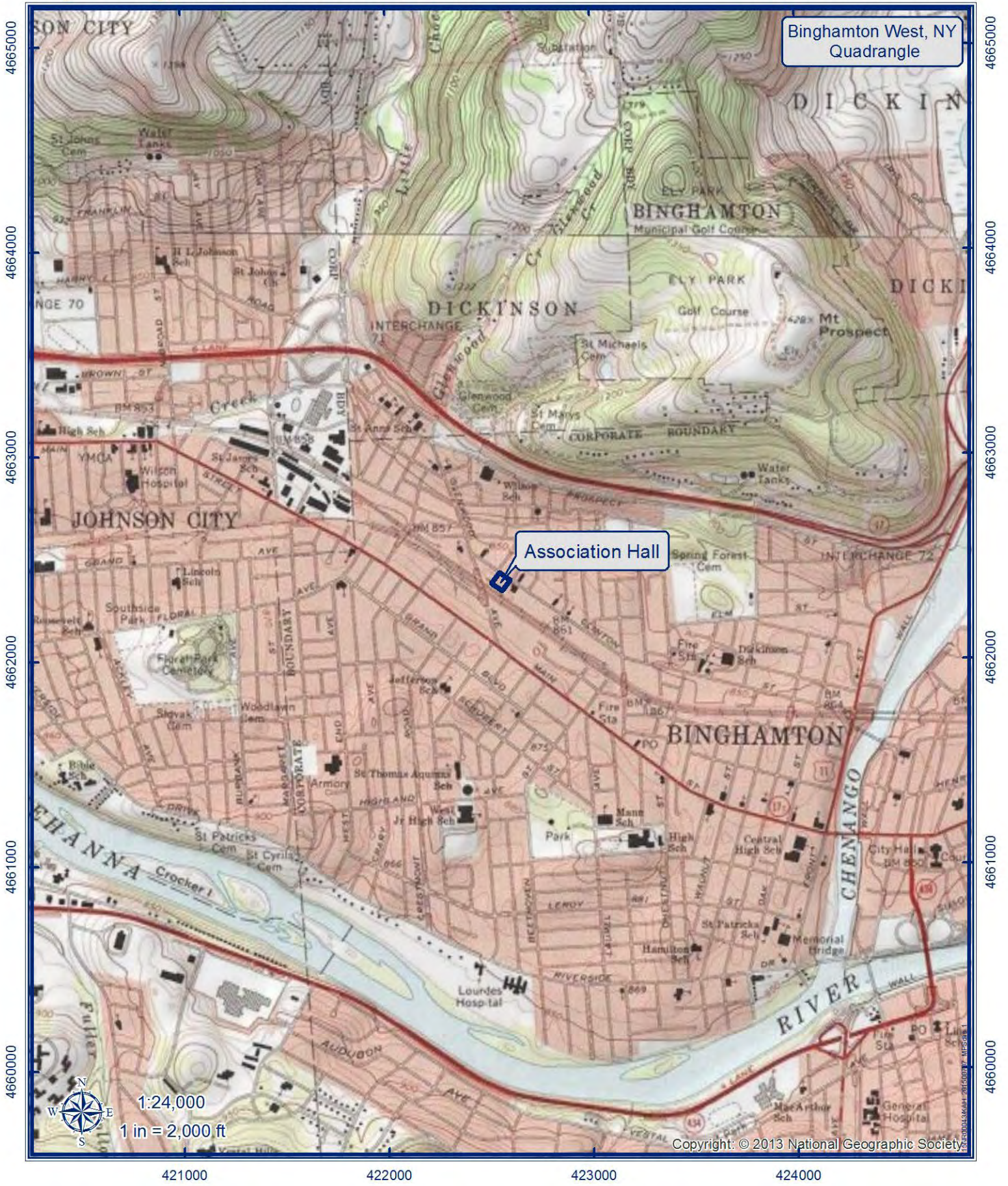
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



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and Historic Preservation

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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
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Units: Meter

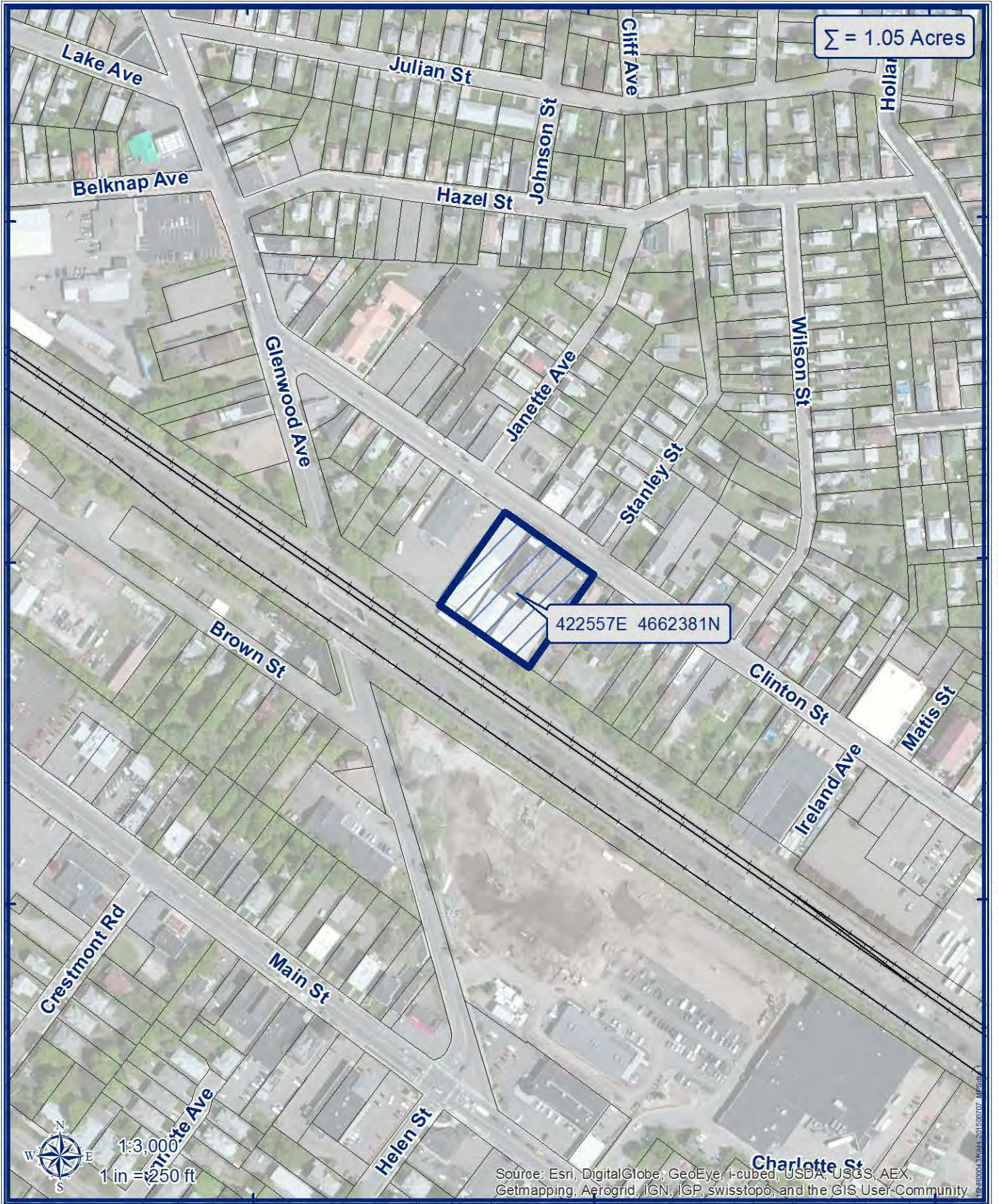


Lithuanian Hall



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$\Sigma = 1.05$  Acres

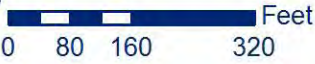
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1 in = 250 ft

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User-Community

422400 422600 422800

Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N  
Projection: Transverse Mercator  
Datum: North American 1983  
Units: Meter



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LITHUANIAN ASSOCIATION

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THE CITY OF CHICAGO  
NO PARKING  
EXCEPT AS NOTED

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Lithuanian National Association Hall

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Broome

DATE RECEIVED: 8/14/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 9/09/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/24/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/29/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000673

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT       RETURN       REJECT      9-29-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

**ANDREW M. CUOMO**  
Governor

**ROSE HARVEY**  
Commissioner

**RECEIVED 2280**

**AUG 14 2015**

**Nat. Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service**

24 July 2015

Alexis Abernathy  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
1201 Eye St. NW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Re: National Register Nominations

Déar Ms. Abernathy:

I am pleased to submit the following three nominations, all on disc, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

American Radiator Factory Complex, Erie County  
Endicott Johnson Medical Clinic, Broome County  
Lithuanian National Association Hall, Broome County

Please feel free to call me at 518.268.2165 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank  
National Register Coordinator  
New York State Historic Preservation Office