

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



267

### National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *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 STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Location

street & number 5482 Holley-Byron Road [ ] not for publication

city or town Clarendon [X] vicinity

state New York code NY county Orleans code 073 zip code 14470

#### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

*Ronald Perpoint DBHPO*

*4/1/15*

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) \_\_\_\_\_

*Edson H. Beall*

Signature of the Keeper

date of action

*5-26-15*

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

**Orleans, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**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)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	3	buildings
1	_____	sites
_____	1	structures
_____	_____	objects
<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

**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**

N/A

N/A

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(enter categories from instructions)

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

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

WORK IN PROGRESS

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

foundation stone

\_\_\_\_\_

walls stone, clapboard, cement-asbestos

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

roof asphalt shingle, metal

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

**Orleans, New York**

Name of Property

County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property 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 that 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 boxes that apply.)

- 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.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**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 Building Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Significance:**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Settlement \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance:**

ca. late 1820s – ca. 1950 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates:**

ca. late 1820s, ca. 1861 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person:**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation:**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder:**

Stone mason "Murphy" \_\_\_\_\_

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**  
Name of Property

**Orleans, New York**  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 53.68 acres

**UTM References SEE CONTINUATION SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL UTM REFERENCES**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>118</u>	<u>250715</u>	<u>4781998</u>	3	<u>118</u>	<u>250563</u>	<u>4781511</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>118</u>	<u>250698</u>	<u>4781657</u>	4	<u>118</u>	<u>250324</u>	<u>4781525</u>

**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.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Erin Anheier [Contact: Jennifer Walkowski, NYSHPO]

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date February 20, 2015

street & number Peebles Island Resource Center, PO Box 189 telephone (518) 268-2137

city or town Waterford state NY zip code 12188

**Additional Documentation**

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 SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner** (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO)

name Darryl & Donna Sommerfeldt

street & number 5482 Byron-Holley Rd telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Holley state NY zip code 14470

**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, D.C. 20503

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

**Narrative Description of Property:**

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is an architecturally significant example of Federal style domestic architecture in western New York State. It is a rare remaining example of stone construction from the early 1800s in the Clarendon area. Built by an early settler of the area in the late 1820s, it is constructed of stone which was quarried on the property.<sup>1</sup> The two-story, five bay stone house has an original one-story stone lean-to on the rear (west) elevation. A small one-story wood frame addition was added to the north end around 1860. The building reflects the translation of high-designed Federal style details to the available materials, skills and resources of Orleans County during the 1820s. While built of roughly cut, irregular shaped stones, the exterior exhibits an awareness of sophisticated design feature, such as the use of key stones in the window lintels, an elliptical arch with keystone above the main entrance and quarter-elliptical windows in each gable end. Interior details include modest wood trim and moldings and split-board lath with plaster. Still a working farm, its setting evokes the feel of the nineteenth-century agricultural enterprise it was and would be recognizable to the original owner. The development of the property is representative of the western migration of early nineteenth century America, the transformation of wilderness into productive farmland and the subsequent success of the farmers due to the convenience of shipping goods on the Erie Canal, which opened in 1825. For all but six years of its history, the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House has been owned by only two families. Although the house itself has stood vacant for seven years, it is currently in the process of being rehabilitated for use as a single-family residence.

**Setting**

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is located in the Town of Clarendon, Orleans County, New York, a few miles to the south of the hamlet of Clarendon, in an area known locally as Honest Hill. The Town of Clarendon is located in the southeastern corner of the Orleans County, just north of Genesee County and to the west of Monroe County. The property is located on the west side of Byron-Holley Road (Route 237), a north-south route, and is located just north of the intersection with New Guinea Road. The house itself is oriented facing east and is set back approximately 54 feet from the street. This land was originally part of the 100,000 Acre (or Connecticut) Tract, in a parcel that was designated as Lot 41 of Township 2, Range 14.

The nomination includes the current 56-acre farm associated with this property. This acreage appears to conform to the approximate acreage of the property as purchased by Merrick Stevens from his father John in 1861. According to the original Articles of Agreement between John Stevens and the State of Connecticut issued on November 8, 1814, the original purchase was for 104 ½ acres, however Stevens split the property between his two sons upon his death.

<sup>1</sup> David Sturges Copeland, *History of Clarendon from 1810 to 1888* (Buffalo: The Courier Company; 1889), 130.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

Much as it was historically, the surrounding area is dominated by agricultural uses, with a scattered few residences located along this route. The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is still an active farm situated in a rural, agrarian setting. Mature trees surround the house, with the south lawn featuring a shag bark hickory, a maple and a pine. The front lawn has three large pines, while the north lawn contains two pines and two silver maples. The back lawn is open, with the exception of a large pine directly outside the door from the stone section of the house. A well is located just to the northwest of the house. An unimproved one-lane circular drive wraps around the house.

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is a two-story, side-gabled, five-bay center-hall Federal style residence constructed of roughly coursed fieldstone. The house also features an unusual one-story stone shed roof lean-to that projects the full width of the rear (west) elevation. The continuous stonework indicates that this one-story section was built concurrently with the main building. The building originally had interior end chimneys, which are documented clearly in historic images. The chimneys still survive but they have been rebuilt above the roofline, and no fireplaces survive on the interior. At the north end of the house, a one-story wood frame wing was added, probably ca. 1860, as a kitchen wing. This wing is composed of a kitchen with a spacious front porch and an enclosed wood shed. This addition appears to have been added in two stages, with the kitchen being an earlier addition followed by a lean-to wood shed at the west.

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House contains several agricultural resources on the property. These buildings are located to the rear (west) of the house and outside the arc of the driveway. They include a hen house (ca. 1910), a corn crib (ca. 1910), and a wooden pig barn (ca. 1940, expanded ca. 1970s), which are all contributing resources to the site. Non-contributing outbuildings are a corrugated zinc coated metal storage barn (ca. 1970), a high-tunnel greenhouse frame (2011), and a hoop building clad in plasticized material (2011). While non-contributing due to their recent construction, these buildings still help convey the continued agricultural uses of the property.

Exterior Description of House – Ca. 1820s Stone House

The main house has a footprint that roughly measures 40-feet north-south by 20-feet along the east-west axis. The primary five rank east elevation of the two-story stone portion has its main entrance in the center bay. The main entrance features the original paneled wood entry door flanked by sidelights, set within the masonry opening. A decorative elliptical wood panel is set above the entrance door and is surrounded by an elliptical stone arch with a prominent keystone. This wood panel features delicately beaded moldings which mimic a typical Federal style fanlight window. This panel itself is a later replacement, however it is in keeping with the style of the house and may have been reused from another building.<sup>2</sup> However, a wood panel appears to have

<sup>2</sup> According to the Sommerfeldt family, when the panel was removed to repaint it, it fell apart into pieces. A similar panel was constructed, similar to the original, to replace the deteriorated original. Its size and style are comparable to those typical of the Federal period.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

been original to the house, as a beam runs directly behind it on the interior, suggesting that a transparent glass window was never installed in the building.<sup>3</sup>

The house retains many historic ca. 1900 wood double-hung windows. The five second-story windows feature two-over-two lights. The two first-story windows have modern six-over-six replacement windows. The first story windows feature jack arch stone lintels with articulated keystones. The lintels of the second floor are covered by the simple entablature beneath the eave. The two-over-two windows have wooden sills, while the six-over-six windows have concrete sills. The basement level windows are partially below ground and feature bold splayed stone lintels.

The west side of the stone house reveals the one-story shed-roof extension, which measures forty-feet wide (the width of the rear elevation) and projects nine-feet in depth. This extension contains a center wooden door with two raised panels and a three-light transom, which appears contemporary to the original 1820s construction of the house. This is flanked by two windows to the north and one to the south. The more northerly one is a later addition, likely mid- to late twentieth century, when an interior bathroom was created. It is smaller and interrupts the symmetry of the other historic openings. The other two windows have lintels pieced of horizontal voussoirs with wooden sills. Above the one-story projecting section, the second-story wall is visible and has two windows aligned above the original ones on the first floor.

The south side of the house has two windows on each story under the main two-story gable. These have splayed stone lintels with keystones. A single window with a horizontal stone lintel is in the one-story section. All have wooden sills. The roof line of the one-story section is that of a lean-to. There is no distinction in the stonework of the one- and two-story sections, indicating they were constructed at the same time.

Just beneath the gable of the two-story block are two triangular wooden insets. From inside the attic, it becomes clear these are actually quarter-ellipse openings, now boarded up. It's unclear if these openings ever contained a window or if, like the transom at the front entry door, they contained decorative wood panels. These openings also exist in the northern gable of the stone section. They appear triangular from the outside due to the wide wooden entablature which covers their rounded portions. This simple entablature also obstructs the lintels of the second story windows on the front of the house. It seems likely that this trim was added in an attempt to modernize the residence when the Greek Revival style became popular, probably around 1840-1850. It is also possible that the house was originally designed with a stone-end stepped gable, which was modified to a simple side gable profile during the Greek Revival era, but additional investigation is needed to confirm this.

<sup>3</sup> The Colonel Lewis house and the razed Colonel Rice house, contemporaries of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House located nearby on the same street and attributed to the same mason, also display similar arched wooden transom panels, suggesting that a glass fan window was likely never present. During the razing of the Colonel Rice home it could be seen that this decorative panel concealed a large horizontal hewn beam as it does in the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 4

Exterior Description of House – Ca. 1860s Wood Frame Wing

At the northern end of the original stone house is a one-story wood-frame addition measuring roughly 16-feet by 22-feet. Likely built as a kitchen wing, replacing an early basement cooking hearth, the addition features a stone foundation and wood clapboard sheathing with some mid-twentieth century composite shingles at the rear. It is fronted by a full-width front entry porch with a stone foundation and square columns. The porch is in deteriorated condition. Currently under stabilization and restoration, the porch, with its Italianate influenced scroll sawn brackets, appears to date to the era when Stevens's son, Merrick, took residence in the house in 1861.<sup>4</sup> The roof of the porch extends nearly horizontally from beneath the soffit of the addition. The front elevation of the wood-frame wing features a central entry door flanked by two large windows, all of which have been replaced with modern window units of the original size. There is also an original door on the south end of the porch entering into the dining room in the stone section. The door to the dining room has a single glass pane in the top half and a single raised panel on the bottom half and appears to date to the 1860s or 70s, likely added along with the kitchen wing and porch. The trim around the glass and the panel has a detailed profile.

The pitch of the gable end of the north side of the wood-frame wing echoes the gable of the original stone building. During recent restoration work, the east and north elevations of the kitchen wing have had salvaged historic wood clapboard with a matching profile and 3½ inch lap installed, replacing the deteriorated wood siding. Where the modern siding has deteriorated on the west elevation, evidence of the historic wood clapboard sheathing is visible. The windows of the north elevation are not matching and appear to have been updated, along with other interior kitchen elements, sometime in the mid-twentieth century.

The rear (west side) of the wood frame wing has a modern steel six-panel door above a simple two-step wooden stair, flanked by single pane windows.

Interior Description – First Floor

The interior plan of the original stone building is relatively simple, consisting of a center hall flanked by a north and south parlor in the main body of the stone house, and a series of rooms at the rear (west) located within the one-story rear portion. This one-story area apparently originally had a small central vestibule space, aligned to the center hall in the main body of the stone house, with a room to the north and south, however it has been slightly reconfigured to contain a bathroom and two other rooms. The adjacent kitchen wing, connected to the stone building via the north parlor, consists of two rooms; the main eastern kitchen space and an enclosed but unfinished woodshed/utility room at the west. This utility room may have possibly been an open work porch that was later enclosed.

<sup>4</sup> The modest Italianate posts have been temporarily replaced by salvaged Victorian-era turned posts while the deteriorated and collapsing porch is being reconstructed. The Italianate posts and scrolled brackets, which were quite deteriorated and unstable, remain on-site and are to be repaired and reinstalled.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 5

Overall, finishes and trims are modest, and rooms typically feature wood plank flooring, plaster walls and ceilings, and a simple bead and ogee profile molding around doors and windows. The north parlor has been finished with some modern materials, including laminate flooring and a textured ceiling, but retains original door and window moldings including paneled or simple jam moldings, accommodating the significant width of the stone wall which measures 21-inches at the ground floor. Originally, the north and south parlors had fireplaces, which have largely been removed, but the north parlor contains a stone-clad pier that likely conceals the historic chimney. Where some wall plaster has deteriorated in the south parlor along the interior division with the hall, vertical boards are visible, revealing the construction method of interior partition walls. Most openings retain original four-paneled doors with historic ceramic door hardware or thumb latches. Many rooms contain Art Deco style light fixtures, suggesting that the house was first electrified in the 1930s or 40s.

The main entrance opens into the center hall, and the main stair is located to the right. At the western end of the hall is a door, leading into the rear rooms in the one-story area. The steep and narrow stair has a modest turned wood newel post with a spherical top. The spindles of the banister have a square cross section. Along the stringer are decorative scalloped brackets.

The original function of the three rooms on the first floor in the one-story section along the west side of the house is somewhat unclear. Historically, this space contained a small central vestibule, flanked by a northern and southern room. The southern room is large enough to have possibly been used as a bedroom. If the north parlor was used as a kitchen prior to the wooden addition in the 1860s, the small northern room may have been used as a pantry or scullery.

The kitchen, located in the ca. 1860s wood-frame addition and accessed at the north of the dining room, features cabinets and cupboards built by Fred Sommerfeldt around 1950. An enameled cast-iron sink with integral drain-boards sits in a metal cabinet centered beneath a window on the north wall with a scalloped wooden valance. A two-panel door on the west wall leads into the woodshed. Signatures written in pencil were found on the horizontal boards of the kitchen walls (since covered with drywall). Some are illegible, but the signature of Fred. H. Stevens was clear. This indicates that the wooden addition was present prior to 1917, when the Stevens family sold the house. The floor originally consisted of five-inch wide tongue and groove boards, but is currently covered with sheet vinyl.

Accessed at the west wall of the kitchen is a small, enclosed, but unheated, utility space known as the woodshed. This appears to have been constructed from salvaged logs and roughly milled salvaged lumber. The exterior walls consist of horizontal boards (likely the original clapboard) nailed to the studs. The rafters are exposed. There is some visible charring to some of the rafters, suggesting that a fire once occurred on the east wall, which is shared with the kitchen.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 7 Page 6

Interior Description – Second Floor

The house's second floor is accessed via the main center hall stair, and has the same type of center hall with parlors plan of the lower floor. However, the eastern part of the center hall has been enclosed with a modern partition wall to create a closet space for the southeastern bedroom. Despite this change, the stair rail remains intact and undisturbed by this modern partition. A section of plaster has fallen from the ceiling, revealing split-board lathe.

There is one large room to the north of the stairs and two rooms to the south. The two on the south have a connecting doorway, and based on the baseboard trim, appear to be an original configuration. Like the first floor, the second floor rooms retain the historic four-paneled doors with thumb latches. Floors are random width tongue and groove boards approximately five inches in width. Baseboards are approximately six inches tall and feature a bead running near the top. The plaster walls and ceilings vary from fair to good condition.

The northern room has one window on the west, one on the north, and two on the east. Windows have a plain reveal but a bead trims the edge of the facing trim where it meets the reveal. This window trim is found in the other rooms of the second floor as well. The southwestern room has one window on the south and one on the west. The southeastern room has one window on the south wall and two on the east wall. The windows and doors in this room have an additional ogee trim along their outside edges. A door on the north wall would have originally led into the center hall, but now enters a closet which has a window on the east wall.

Interior Description – Attic

The attic is accessed through an opening in the ceiling above the stairwell. In the attic, the roof framing is visible. There is a hand hewn ridge beam with chamfered corners supported by vertical gable support posts which are roughly 2x4 members at the ends near the chimney stack. The gable supports sit on the outside tying beams at ceiling elevation. They are each mortised into the ridge beam with one horizontal peg. Rafters are sawn, showing a vertical saw kerf. Common rafters with barefaced tenons are mortised into the ridge beam and pegged with one peg, uncut and extending through the beam. The pegs appear to be skewed to avoid contact at exit. The rafters end at the plate with 2x2 sprockets to support the roof overhang. The south end of the attic still contains the brick angled chimney, although the portion above the roof appears to be rebuilt, and there is no longer a fireplace below it. The north end of the attic contains a twentieth-century block chimney.

Interior Description – Basement

The basement of the building is accessible from an interior stair, stacked beneath the main stair, or through an exterior walkout stair made of stone with stone retaining walls located at the southern elevation of the building. There is a full-height section with an earth floor under the two-story stone portion of the house and a crawlspace beneath the one-story stone section at the west. The basement has hand-hewn ceiling joists which are crudely

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

formed from various knotty, irregular wood members. Four of these joists measure fifteen inches wide running west-east. There is evidence in the basement that the stone portion of the house once had fireplaces at both ends. On the southern wall of the basement the entire fireplace support remains. Its construction appears consistent with one in the contemporary Colonel Lewis house, which is nearby. On the northern wall of the basement, there are two stone piers which appear to be the partial remains of a large fireplace structure. The large scale of this northern fireplace suggests that this may have been the primary cooking hearth for the house. However, it is difficult to tell if the basement or first floor would have housed the cooking hearth, as both have been altered.

Outbuildings

The property is still actively farmed, with cultivated fields as well as livestock. Behind the house are agricultural outbuildings. These include contributing buildings of a hen house, a wooden pig barn and a corn crib. Non-contributing buildings are a corrugated zinc coated metal storage barn and the frame for a high tunnel greenhouse. A hoop building covered with plasticized material is a non-contributing structure.

The wooden hen house, built c. 1910, is behind the house and slightly to the south, with a gable running east-west. Still in use, it has a fenced 65 foot long run extending to the east.

To the west of the hen house is the wooden pig barn with a single gable running north-south. It measures 72 x 24 feet, approximately one-third of its length (southern end) is an addition from c. 1970. It has what appears to be a poured concrete foundation. It is sided with 5 ¼ inch horizontal tongue and groove wood with a scalloped cross section and a metal roof.

West of the pig barn is an 8 x 37 foot corn crib, also from ca. 1910. It is wooden and of pole construction. To the west of it sits a modern 32 x 75 foot hoop house used to store agricultural equipment.

Across from the corn crib, to the north, is 32 x 49 foot ca. 1970 zinc coated corrugated metal storage barn. The 30 x 90 foot frame for a modern high tunnel greenhouse is located northeast of the metal barn.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

**Statement of Significance:**

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is locally significant under criterion C as a rare surviving example of a late Federal period stone house located near Clarendon, Orleans County, New York. Constructed of limestone quarried on-site in the late 1820s for John Stevens, an early pioneer settler to the region, the house also represents the early era of settlement and development in rural Orleans County. For its associations with the early settlement and development of Clarendon, the property is significant under criterion A. The period of significance begins with the initial construction of the house, ca. late 1820s, and concludes in ca. 1950. This era encompasses all significant architectural changes made to the property by the long-time owners the Stevens and Sommerfeldt families.

The stone Federal style residence was said to have been constructed for John Stevens and his family by a local stonemason known only as "Murphy." The Stevens family, which arrived in Orleans County in 1813, was one of the earliest settlers to the Clarendon area. John Stevens himself played a large role in helping develop and settle the "Honest Hill" area, as this small region became known. Stonemason Murphy is credited with two other nearby limestone residences Federal style residences were built in the area around this same era, although the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House remains the best and most intact example of this group. The architecture of the house reflects the use of pattern books and other design guides, as it is stylistically a typical example of a Federal style building, with its central elliptical arched entry and five-bay, side gabled profile. However, elements of the building reflect adaptations to the technology, skills, and materials available in rural Orleans County during this era. The building also has an uncommon one-story projection along the entire width of its rear (west) elevation, which appears to have been part of the original construction of the building. Around 1861, when John's son, Merrick Stevens, took up residence in the house, a one-story kitchen wing was added to modernize and update the building. The house was passed down through three generations, and the Stevens family owned the property until 1917.

The house has also been owned for many decades by the Sommerfeldt family and is now home to the fourth generation. The family continues to maintain the agricultural use of the property, and the house itself is being rehabilitated in stages for use as a dwelling once again.

**A Brief History of Clarendon**

The settlement that became Clarendon was established in 1811, when Eldredge Farwell purchased 200 acres and built a saw mill. He was the first Euro-American to live in what is now Clarendon. As the area surrounding the mill grew, it became a hamlet known as "Farwell's Mills." The name was changed after the town of Clarendon was formed from part of the Town of Sweden in 1821. The first blacksmith shop opened in 1813. Growing through the early 1800s, the town boasted a commercial center that included a tannery, a distillery, a pearl and potash factory, an ashery, a carriage manufacturer, a wagon repair shop, a lime kiln, a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

**Orleans, New York**

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

grain storehouse, a butcher, a barbershop, a coffin maker, a cooper shop, a canning factory, an ice house, multiple stores, a tavern and inns. Clarendon had expected the Erie Canal to be constructed adjacent to the village; however, the canal was rerouted three miles north to avoid a steep escarpment. Instead, prior to the railroad reaching Holley in 1851, Clarendon was a stopping point for teamsters on the way to the canal. Today Clarendon has about 3,800 residents and is located in the southeast corner of Orleans County, New York. The hamlet is no longer a commercial center. It is residential with two gas station/convenience stores. The subject property is 3.25 miles south of the hamlet.

The Stevens Family, Early Settlers

John Stevens and his wife, Elizabeth (nee Lewis), known as Betsey, were among the earliest settlers to the Clarendon area, arriving in the area in 1813. Like many settlers to western New York, both John and Betsy Stevens came from eastern New York State. Settlement in western New York was limited at the turn of the nineteenth century by unclear ownership of the land and the continued presence of the British in the region. After the Revolutionary War, conflicting claims of ownership were made by both New York State and Massachusetts, as both states claimed this region based on colonial charters. It was not until 1786 that a settlement was reached between the two states under the Treaty of Hartford. While this treaty helped bring some resolution to the issue, it complicated matters by giving New York the right to govern territory west of the Pre-Emption Line, based on a survey beginning at the 82<sup>nd</sup> milestone on the New York-Pennsylvania boundary line and running due north to Lake Ontario. But it also gave Massachusetts the authority to buy the land rights from the Native Americans and to resell this land. It was not until the Treaty of Big Tree (near present-day Geneseo) in 1797 that the Native American title to the land in western New York was largely extinguished, although several areas were reserved for the Native Americans to use and live on, including reservations at Buffalo Creek, Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Tonawanda. While these factors presented legal challenges to purchasing land for settlers, settlement in the region was also made difficult by the continued presence of the British, who refused to vacate Fort Niagara until 1796. Their close proximity to Canada led to much fear and hostility. It was not until the conclusion of the War of 1812 that the British were finally expelled from western New York, and the region became more stable for safe, active settlement.

The area that now is the Town of Clarendon lies within a tract known as the 100,000 Acre Tract or, more commonly, the Connecticut Tract. This land changed hands a number of times until it was sold in 1801 by Robert Morris to the State of Connecticut and Sir William Pultney, each owning one undivided half. In 1811, they divided the parcel between them.<sup>5</sup> The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House sits upon the Connecticut lands.

John Stevens was born in Saratoga County, New York, just north of the state capital of Albany, in 1774, while Betsey was born in Washington County in 1780. The two married in 1800 in Oneida County, suggesting that they were slowly making their way into the western regions of New York State. The couple settled in Cohocton,

<sup>5</sup> Orsamus Turner, *Pioneer History* (Buffalo, NY: Jewett, Thomas & Co.), 398.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

Steuben County in the early 1800s and welcomed several children, including sons Samuel L. (born 1801) and Merrick (born 1802). Perhaps seeking new farmland, the Stevens family arrived in the Clarendon area in 1813, initially settling on Lots 68 and 80 of Township 2, located about a mile east of the nominated house. Their early dwelling was described as primitive but typical of many early pioneer shelters during this early era of settlement. Their house was described as having a bark roof, a basswood floor and a blanket for a door.<sup>6</sup> Also in 1813, John Stevens, along with help from Daniel Gleason and Joseph Barker, cut an early road through the woods to the south of the village of Clarendon, providing the earliest route between the village and the area that became known as Honest Hill.<sup>7</sup> Today, this thoroughfare is Holley-Byron Road.

It is along this early road that John Stevens eventually built his stone residence. On November 8, 1814, one year after arriving, John purchased from the State of Connecticut the east part of Lot 41, Township 2, Range 14, consisting of 104 ½-acres of land at a cost of \$304.35. Stipulated in his purchase was the understanding that, within one year of the purchase, Stevens would build a building “suitable for the habitation of man...at least eighteen feet square” and clear at least four acres for cultivation. John Stevens was the first settler in the area, and constructed a log house to house his growing family, now including six children. Log houses were often the first type of shelter built, using the logs removed from the land as farmland or grazing land was cleared. Later, additional land was cleared and an orchard was established with trees from Eldredge Farwell’s nursery.<sup>8</sup>

Documenting the exact early history of the property is made difficult by a lack of early land records. The first deed for the property in the possession of the Orleans County Clerk is dated January 24, 1839. This deed transfers 70 acres from the State of Connecticut to John Stevens. The most likely explanation comes from the way in which the area properties were originally sold. Settlers took possession of a property and began improving it. They were given a document called an article. This article could be transferred to other people if the original settler decided to leave the property. The article acted similar to a deed until the original purchase price was completely paid. Whoever held the article at the time of complete payment was issued a deed. It appears that John Stevens did not complete payment until 1839, at which time he received the deed.

While no definitive documentation clearly notes the construction date for the stone house, later histories note that the log cabin was replaced by the stone house in the late 1820s.<sup>9</sup> This date corresponds to the architectural style of the house, as the edifice is a typical example of a five-bay center hall house of that period and retains many elements of Federal era architecture. Elements such as the decorative fan above the front entry door also suggest limitations still prevalent in Orleans County, either material restraints or inadequacies of the craftspeople building the residence. This detail typically would have been a glass window in a traditional Federal style house, but here it is a wood panel which simulates the appearance of a glass transom. The stone

<sup>6</sup> David Sturges Copeland, *History of Clarendon from 1810 to 1888* (Buffalo: The Courier Company; 1889), 169.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>9</sup> David Sturges Copeland, *History of Clarendon from 1810 to 1888* (Buffalo: The Courier Company; 1889), 130.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

**Name of Property**

**Orleans, New York**

**County and State**

Section 8 Page 4

for the building, a medium grey limestone, came from a quarry located in one of Stevens's pasture lots, to the north and east of the house.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that the stone was quarried by John Stevens himself, a man with no documented experience with stone quarrying, explaining the irregularity of the stone. The size and design of the house must have been very impressive at that early date, as it was still being described as a mansion as late as 1888.<sup>11</sup>

While the construction date may be approximated, a record of the construction of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House does exist. In an article from 1888, the author recorded a conversation with Edward Stevens, son of John and Betsey, during which Edward recalled the circumstances of the early development of the property. Edward Stevens recalled locating to the farm at the age of seven years old and helping to "hew" a house for his aging parents, presumably the original log house. As Edward was born around 1808, that would place the construction of the log house around 1815.<sup>12</sup> In speaking of the subsequent stone house he recalled, "I carried every stone in my arms up a ladder to the masons; wheelbarrows were not known then." While this account is surely an exaggeration, the article also reveals that Edward Stevens left New York in 1839, so this narrows its construction date down to an era that corresponds to local histories that date the house to the late 1820s. Even in 1888 Edward recalled several familiar landmarks on the property, still visible at that time, including an apple tree and a poplar tree which Edward and his brother Samuel had planted.<sup>13</sup>

John and Betsey's daughters, Melinda and Lucinda, married and continued the migration to the west, ending up in Michigan. Son Edward continued on to Wisconsin and later to Nebraska. Sons Samuel L., Merrick and Schubael remained in the Clarendon area and became respected members of the community. Records show that Samuel L. served in the militia as 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant in 1818. He was constable in 1830 and commissioner of highways in 1828, 29, 31, 36 and 44. Merrick served as a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant in the light infantry company in 1820 and became an assessor for the town in 1846. Schubael became a well-known minister for the Free Will Baptist church in the area. John, Betsy, Samuel, Merrick and Schubael all lived in Clarendon until their deaths. Following Betsy's death in 1844, John remarried, wedding a woman named Mary, who died in 1859.<sup>14</sup>

The three sons who remained in the Clarendon area grew up to reside on portions of their father's homestead. After briefly living in the adjacent town of Barre, Merrick relocated back to the Honest Hill area, where he purchased approximately 54 acres of his father's property in 1861 for \$2,650; this parcel included the stone house.<sup>15</sup> While John Stevens purchased 104 ½-acres back in 1814, the 1860 Federal Agricultural Census indicates that the farm consisted of 120-acres of land. Merrick had married Lucy Tousley, the daughter of another prominent area resident, William Tousley, a Revolutionary War soldier, and had two sons, Charles, who

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> 1808 is calculated from the ages reported on the 1860 and 1880 Federal Censuses

<sup>13</sup> *Holley Standard newspaper*, August 16, 1888.

<sup>14</sup> David Sturges Copeland, *History of Clarendon from 1810 to 1888* (Buffalo: The Courier Company; 1889), 351.

<sup>15</sup> Deed dated June 25, 1861.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 5

died young, and John J. Lucy's obituary identified her and Merrick as early pioneers of the town and called her a highly respected lady, a member of the Free Will Baptist church, living a true Christian life and a friend to all.<sup>16</sup>

Merrick transferred the property to his son, John J. Stevens, in May 1881 but continued to reside in the stone house with his son's family until his death in 1893.<sup>17</sup> Reports of Merrick's death say he passed away quietly at his home after a brief illness and referred to him as a loving husband, a kind father and a true friend, much esteemed by his friends and neighbors for his many sterling qualities.<sup>18</sup> Like his father and grandfather before him, John J. Stevens played an active role in the community and was a well-known and well regarded figure. John J. Stevens served the town as a collector in 1857, 1859 and 1860. He also held the post of constable in 1857, 1859 and 1883 and served as a commissioner of highways. He was a member of the Holley International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) for over forty years. In 1868, he acted as assessor for the town and as excise commissioner in 1877. He was drafted into service in the Civil War on August 8, 1863, as part of the 300,000 called from Rochester, NY. John J. married Ellen Frances Hooper in 1854 and they had three children, Fred H., Charles H. (who served the town as collector in 1883 and inspector in 1887), and Lucy Gay. John J. Stevens passed away in 1918, at the home of his daughter in Port Washington, Long Island, New York, having sold the farm in April 1917. His body was brought back to Clarendon for internment, with the Holley I.O.O.F. having charge of the services at the grave.<sup>19</sup>

The Stevens family helped to grow and shape the Clarendon area through much of the nineteenth century. John Stevens played a key role in helping settle the Honest Hill area in the early 1800s by carving one of the earliest roads in the area (eventually Holley-Byron Road). His labor helped to open up this area for settlement and farming. While he remained a humble farmer throughout his life, his family served numerous public roles in the area, helping to establish the Stevenses as a well-known and well respected family in the Clarendon area for over one hundred years.

Transfer to the Sommerfeldt Family

After belonging to the Stevens family for 103 years and three generations, the property changed hands fairly rapidly for six years, before being purchased by the Sommerfeldt family, who have held it for over ninety years to date. In April 1917, the elderly John J. Stevens sold the property to John S. Miller for \$4,100. Miller and his wife, Amelia, held it only until November, when they sold it to John S. and Mary L. Hill. Widowed Mary Hill sold it to Lewis H. Letson in April 1921 for "\$1 and other valued considerations." Two years later, in April 1923, Letson sold it to Fred C. and Jennie A. Sommerfeldt, residents of Rochester, NY who wished to move closer to Fred C.'s parents, who had settled in Barre.

<sup>16</sup> *Holley Standard newspaper*, January 13, 1881.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Holley Standard newspaper*, February 9, 1893.

<sup>19</sup> *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle newspaper*, February 21, 1918.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 6

Fred C. Sommerfeldt ran the farm from 1923 until his death in 1961, and he made some improvements to the house to modernize it for twentieth century living. He may have electrified the house in the 1930s or '40s, based on the remains of several Art Deco style fixtures, and it appears that he had the bathroom installed in the 1940s or '50s. Sommerfeldt also built the extensive kitchen cabinetry during this same era, bringing that room up to modern standards. After Fred C.'s death, the sons, Norman and Fred H., ran the farm with Norman and Jennie living in the stone house. Fred H. built a new house next door, which still survives.

Widowed Jennie sold it to their son, Norman E. Sommerfeldt, in 1979. At Norman's death in 1996, his brother Fred H. sold the property to his son, Darryl E., and his wife, Donna J. Sommerfeldt, in 1997. Darryl and Donna never resided in the house. Half of the downstairs of the house was rented out to a farmhand for a period of six years between 2001 and 2007. The house has since been used for storage and the land continued its agricultural use. Today, their son, Douglas E. Sommerfeldt, is rehabbing the house, which has been vacant since 2007, and has recently made it his residence.

Agricultural Significance

Orleans County developed through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into a prosperous agricultural area. However, the first settlers did not find open fields, facing forests and swampland in the area. Once land ownership was completed, settlers quickly worked to clear some of the land, often utilizing those timbers to erect log houses. The Stevens property is consistent with this type of development, being obtained in 1814 by John Stevens, after laboriously clearing a road through forest to the southern portion of the town and to the Honest Hill area, where he would later construct his residence. He began to clear the land for agriculture and built a log cabin. Only after this task was accomplished, and he was able to establish some success as a farmer, did Stevens build the stone house which would become his permanent home. Although an exact date of construction is not known, local history indicates it as the late 1820s. This date also correlates with the increased prosperity of the area due to the completion of the Erie Canal.

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, just a few miles north of the property, helped New York State prosper and become known as the Empire State. The increased ease and speed of transporting goods on the canal to the port of New York City, and potentially from there to other parts of the world, made commerce expand exponentially. The cost of transporting a load of wheat from western New York State to New York City fell to one-tenth its previous level. This enabled New York's fertile Genesee Valley to emerge as a leading wheat producer. The canal also helped establish cities like Rochester and Buffalo as early centers of industrial milling, so much so that Rochester became known as "The Flour City." The relative speed of moving goods on the canal, as opposed to overland, opened widespread markets for perishable goods raised in western New York, such as fruits and vegetables. This meant greater economic success for farmers with access to the Erie Canal to ship their goods, which translated into the ability to improve the homes in which they lived.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 7

Crops such as wheat, barley, oats and rye with beans, turnips, potatoes, peas, etc. were the principal crops in Orleans County up to the Civil War and for some years beyond.<sup>20</sup> The Stevens's farm followed suit according to the federal agricultural censuses of 1850, 1860, 1870 and 1880. This would have been the era when the farm was owned and operated by John Stevens and then his son Merrick. Wheat and oats were the principal crops, along with Indian corn, Irish potatoes and beans. An apple orchard was also part of the farm, as recalled some years later by son Edward. In addition, there were milking cows, swine and sheep present on the farm. The sheep business appears to have fluctuated the most during the mid-1800s, as 20 animals were recorded in 1850, 37 in 1855, none in 1860 and 1870, and only 17 animals in 1880. Throughout this era, the farm contained between 2 to 5 horses, 3 to 11 milking cows, 2 to 13 swine and up to 9 other cattle. The 1880 census was the first to record poultry, citing 35.

The 1855 New York Census shows that John Stevens, then 80 years old, grew a diverse number of crops, some of them for the use of his family, but many likely for sale. In this year, the census recorded that Stevens's farm consisted of approximately 75 acres, and that he had plowed 30 acres, leaving 6 fallow and 8 in pasture. In 1855, the farm was growing 10 acres of beans, 9 of oats, 8 of corn, 6 of winter wheat, 1 of potatoes and 2 acres of meadow which produced 2 tons of hay. He also produced 200 bushels of apples. This is an impressive work load for an 80 year old. John's son Merrick also was active into his eighties and was repeatedly praised for it in the local paper, which reported his work threshing beans, building rail fence, hoeing, sawing and splitting stove wood.<sup>21</sup>

The diary of John J. Stevens, dated January 1873 to March 1874, reveals a rare glimpse into the daily life on an Orleans County farm during this era. Activities mentioned include drawing numerous loads of stone, indicating the quarry may still have been in use; trading horses and cows with neighbors; selling pigs, cows, and turkeys; attending to calving cows and foaling horses; buying hens; drawing logs from the swamp, splitting wood; buying bush clover seed and seed corn; husking corn; plowing the garden; growing and selling wheat, oats, beans, corn, potatoes and apples; buying buckwheat; planting a new orchard, picking apples; breaking and plowing new ground; repairing the granary; haying; and making sausages. John J. Stevens's diary also reveals the spirit of community present in the area, as despite his own heavy workload, he also mentions mowing, plowing and threshing on other people's property.<sup>22</sup>

From 1884 through at least 1901, John J. Stevens also worked as an auctioneer as documented in many issues of the Holley Standard newspaper providing accounts of auctions and his advertisements. The paper also indicates that quarrying was still being done in 1889 by reporting that the town of Byron had purchased a large quantity

<sup>20</sup> Horton, et. al., *History of Northwestern New York: Erie, Niagara, Wyoming, Genesee and Orleans County* (publisher), 476

<sup>21</sup> *The Holley Standard newspaper*, January 31, 1884; July 3, 1884; January 1, 1891

<sup>22</sup> (*This is the diary mentioned in the first sentence of the paragraph and included in the bibliography; I didn't think it needed a footnote.*) I would include the official record/footnote of this diary so that people can locate it in a library or archive.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 8

of stone from John J. Stevens for building bridges. It states “they claim that the stone from the Stevens quarry is superior to any they can find.”<sup>23</sup>

The hen house and corn crib are the only surviving outbuildings from the Stevens’s time, and they appear to date to the ownership of John J. Stevens during the early twentieth century. The Sommerfeldts recall previous agricultural buildings behind the house, including a nineteenth-century barn with a north-south orientation that sat directly west of the house; this would be in front of the metal barn and south of the greenhouse. Behind that was a hen house large enough to house between 100 and 200 chickens. Both of the buildings fell into disrepair and were razed in the second half of the twentieth century. There was also a mention from the Sommerfeldts regarding a second nineteenth-century barn, which sat right next to the existing greenhouse frame but was slightly further east. This barn was recalled to be in disrepair in the mid-1960s and soon after collapsed and was cleaned-up in the late 1990s.

The agricultural use of the land by the Sommerfeldts is better known, as living descendants have supplied descriptions. Purchasing the property in 1923, the Sommerfeldts grew all the food stuffs, plant and animal, that they needed for the family. What is now the south pasture was an apple orchard. They maintained 3-4 dairy cows at a time. In addition, they specialized in raising pigs and corn for sale. Other crops grown beyond the needs of the family included small grains and kidney beans. In the 1960s they switched to beef cattle. Today the property supports beef cattle and chickens. Crops currently being grown on the property are tomatoes, garlic, pumpkins, peppers, sweet corn and cucumbers. However, most of the land is pasture, with the exception of a hay field towards the back of the property.

Architectural Significance

The late 1820s Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is an example of early nineteenth century Federal period architecture. This was the dominant style of domestic building in America between 1780 and 1820, although most examples were of frame construction. Styles like the Federal Style were brought into central and western New York with the settlers themselves, many of them coming from areas in eastern New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, where the Federal Style had been well established by the early 1800s. Architectural styles were also disseminated throughout the expanding country by the growing prominence of pattern books and other architectural publications. The books and journals were easily portable and could be shared by builders and carpenters. This brought these styles to a broader audience, into areas without trained architects, as the nation grew westward.

That rural farmer John Stevens constructed such an elegant and sophisticated house suggests that he was trying to convey his own personal wealth and success. It appears to reflect his sense of triumph over the wilderness of

<sup>23</sup> *The Holley Standard newspaper*, August 22, 1889

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 9

Orleans County. Having previously lived in settlement-era log houses, he had achieved a level of financial and social success that allowed him to create an elegant and sophisticated residence. Evidence of this attempt to convey his status, despite limitations in available resources and materials, are suggested by like the wood panel over the entry door – in a more established area this would have certainly been of glass. But he made do with what resources he had in Clarendon and still attempted to mimic this detail. The stone itself is interesting and suggests the challenges facing builders in early nineteenth century Orleans County. It is rough-cut and irregular in size and shape, not the product of sophisticated stone cutting, yet it is laid in a rather sophisticated attempt at mimicking certain high style details. Details such as the use of keystones above the front windows, the elliptical stone arch with keystone above the front entrance, as well as the now obscured pair of quarter-elliptical windows on each gable end suggest a familiarity with Federal style architecture. This might suggest that a skilled mason, identified only as Murphy, was involved in setting the stones, while the quarrying may have been done by Stevens himself, who was a farmer, not a professional stonecutter. Steven’s desire to have a fashionable home may have also led to the slight “updating” of the house, which appears to have happened in the 1840s or 50s, when a simple wood entablature was added at the eaves as an apparent Greek Revival touch. These stylistic details indicate that John Stevens was aware of the popular architectural styles and trends, and desired that his home be in sync with prevailing and even changing tastes.

The house has two stories, and is a side-gabled, five-bay roughly coursed fieldstone house with a one-story fieldstone section on the back (west side). The one-story section appears to have been built simultaneously with the main building. Originally, the north room on the first floor may have served as a kitchen for the house, or cooking may have occurred in the basement. The main entrance has an elliptical fan above with sidelights flanking the door. The Stevens-Sommerfeldt house experienced a slight updating (c.1840-1850) to reflect the Greek Revival style with the addition of a wide band of wooden trim beneath the roof, to simulate an entablature. This was done at the expense of obscuring the quarter-elliptical windows in each gable end and the lintels of the second story windows. A one-story wooden addition is on the north end, and this appears to have been added as a kitchen wing around 1861, when son Merrick Stevens took ownership of the house. The spacious porch fronting the wood kitchen wing featured scrolled brackets, suggesting the influence of the Italianate style, which was popular in the 1860s.<sup>24</sup> The wooden addition appears to have been added in two stages, with an eastern kitchen space later followed by an enclosed wood shed and utility room to the west, . The house originally had chimneys on each of the stone gable ends and a chimney on the northern end of the wooden addition.

<sup>24</sup> These brackets have temporarily been removed, as the severely deteriorated porch required has been undergoing reconstruction and stabilization. They have been retained on site and the intent is that they will be restored.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 10

Stone Construction in Clarendon

Like many areas of western New York, stone construction was less frequently employed for building in Clarendon than wood construction. Continued clearing of the land for agriculture meant the removal of forests, which made lumber cheap and readily available, be it in the form of logs or later as planed lumber. Most buildings in the area are of frame construction.

Clarendon soil has a great many rocks in it, the result of ancient sedimentary and glacial deposits. There is still an active commercial limestone quarry and, in the past, there were at least five commercial Medina Sandstone quarries. In addition to actual quarrying, any disturbance of the land for agricultural purposes brings up a quantity of stone. This stone was used primarily for building the foundations of the predominately frame houses and barns. However, there were a handful of houses built of stone, a few commercial buildings, a schoolhouse, a church and a chapel.

Two other near-by and contemporary houses were built with stone from the same quarry, which was located on the Stevens farm property.<sup>25</sup> These are the Colonel Schubael Lewis and the Colonel Hubbard Rice houses. The Colonial Lewis house is on the east side of Route 237, just south of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House, and is still used as a family residence. Like John Stevens, Lewis first constructed a log cabin on the property in 1818. The Colonel Rice house (demolished), which was located just south along Route 237, was built after Rice took possession of the land in 1825.<sup>26</sup> All these houses are attributed to a stone mason named Murphy.<sup>27</sup> They are of similar style and massing, with the Stevens House and the Lewis House being five-bay, center-hall Federal period houses. The Rice House was a story and a half as opposed to a full two stories. All three houses were detailed with an elliptical stone arch with keystone above the front entrance and chimneys on the gable ends. Of these, the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is the most intact; the Col. Lewis House has been parged, concealing its stone construction, and the Rice House was demolished in 2007.

In addition to the three houses built from the quarry on the Stevens's property, there is a five-bay, side-gabled ca. 1830 Federal style stone house to the north of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House. This house was at times owned by Valentine and Orson Tousley, brothers of the wife of Merrick Stevens. The construction history of this building is unknown, but it possibly may have been built with stone from the Stevens quarry.

All other known stone buildings in Clarendon were built later in the nineteenth century. There are side gabled Medina Sandstone houses at 4290 Holley- Byron Road (1833), 42304 Fancher Road (1837), 4160 South Holley Road (1863), and a front gabled house at 4539 South Hulberton Road (1847). Another Medina Sandstone house was at 17144 Fourth Section Road; built in 1833, it was demolished ca.1990. The 1849 Butterfield Cobblestone House at 4690 Bennetts Corners Road (NR listed) uses fieldstone construction faced with a lake stone veneer.

<sup>25</sup> David Sturges Copeland, *History of Clarendon from 1810 to 1888* (Buffalo: The Courier Company; 1889), 130.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 132

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 8 Page 11

Stone commercial buildings known to have been constructed in the area include the Clarendon Stone Store (1836, NR listed), a stone mill demolished in the 1960s, and a blacksmith shop razed in the 1980s. There was also a stone schoolhouse, which was built in 1846 but is no longer extant. The limestone Universalist Church was built in 1835 but razed in the late twentieth century. The chapel in Hillside Cemetery (1894, NR listed) was built of Medina Sandstone.

The 1855 New York Census gives an indication of the relative rarity of stone residential architecture in Clarendon. That year a total of 332 houses were recorded as existing in Clarendon. Of this total, 81 percent (269) were of frame construction, and 13 percent (45) were log. Stone houses totaled 5 percent (15) and 0.9 percent (3) were of brick. Of these fifteen recorded stone houses, only ten are currently known by the town historian. The entirety of Orleans County in 1855 had 5,299 dwellings with only 182 (3.4 percent) being of stone.

Integrity

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is a good representative example of the late Federal style, and the house retains a good level of integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. The house has remained in a largely rural, agricultural area in Orleans County since its original construction in the 1820s.

The massing of the two story, five bay home with center hall, elliptical fan and sidelights of the front door and symmetrical details are all representative of this style. Integrity of design and materials on the main block of the exterior is very high and virtually unchanged since its construction. The integrity of the interior plan is largely intact, and the building retains much of its modest original trim and materials such original floors, doors, trim and most original plaster in place. There is evidence that there were once fireplaces on each end of the main block, but these have been removed.<sup>28</sup> The interior of the northern addition was remodeled in the mid-twentieth century but is within the period of significance. The windows appear to be historic but non-original, given the large panes of glass in the 2-over-2 windows, but they likely date to the early twentieth century and fall within the period of significance. Given its age and near continuous occupation for well over a century, the house has undergone remarkably little remodeling. The setting of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House remains comparable to the nineteenth century agrarian feeling that the Stevens family would have originally known, and the property remains in current use as an active farm.

<sup>28</sup> The fireplaces may have been removed in the early twentieth century during the period of significance. It appears the kitchen fireplace would have been removed in the ca. 1950 kitchen remodeling by Fred C. Sommerfeldt. The other large fireplaces may have been removed during this same era, as mid-century interior photographs show stoves used as a source of heat.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

---

---

Summary

The Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is significant as a relatively rare and largely intact example of a stone-built Federal period house, meeting criterion C in the area of architecture. The house demonstrates the desire to project a sophisticated and fashionable appearance with the limited resources and materials available in the relatively undeveloped area of Clarendon in the 1820s. It is also notable under criterion A for its association with the Stevens family, among the earliest settlers of the area, who contributed to the development of their community.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

**Bibliography:**

Gazetteer and Business Directory of Orleans County, NY, Hamilton Child, Syracuse, NY: 1869.

Historical Album of Orleans County, New York, Sanford & Co., NY, 1879.

Landmarks of Orleans County, New York Illustrated, Isaac S. Signor, Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Company, Publishers, 1894.

The History of Clarendon From 1810 to 1888, David Sturges Copeland, Buffalo, NY: The Courier Company Printers, 1889, reprinted. Cornell University Library, 1995.

A Field Guide to American Houses, Virginia and Lee McAlester, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

National Significance and Historical Context, available online at [http://www.eriecanalway.org/documents/07-2\\_National\\_Significance\\_Final.pdf](http://www.eriecanalway.org/documents/07-2_National_Significance_Final.pdf)

The Dairy of John J. Stevens, dated 01 January 1873 - 05 March 1874, transcription available in office of Historian of Clarendon New York.

Deeds located in the Orleans County, NY Records Department.

Federal and New York Census records 1820-1910

History of Northwestern New York: Erie, Niagara, Wyoming, Genesee and Orleans County, John Theodore Horton, Edward T. Willams, Harry S. Douglass, New York NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1947  
The Holley Standard newspaper, Holley, NY January 31, 1881; January 31, 1884; July 3, 1884; August 16, 1888; January 1, 1891

The Rochester Democrat and Chronicle newspaper, Rochester, NY, February 21, 1918

Pioneer History of the Holland Purchase of Western New York, Orsamus Turner, Buffalo: Jewett, Thomas and Company, 1849

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

See attached boundary map with scale.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries encompass land that was historically associated with the property, and reflect the current legal parcel boundaries.

Additional UTM References

<u>Point</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
5	250147	4781779
6	250181	4782031

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 2

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

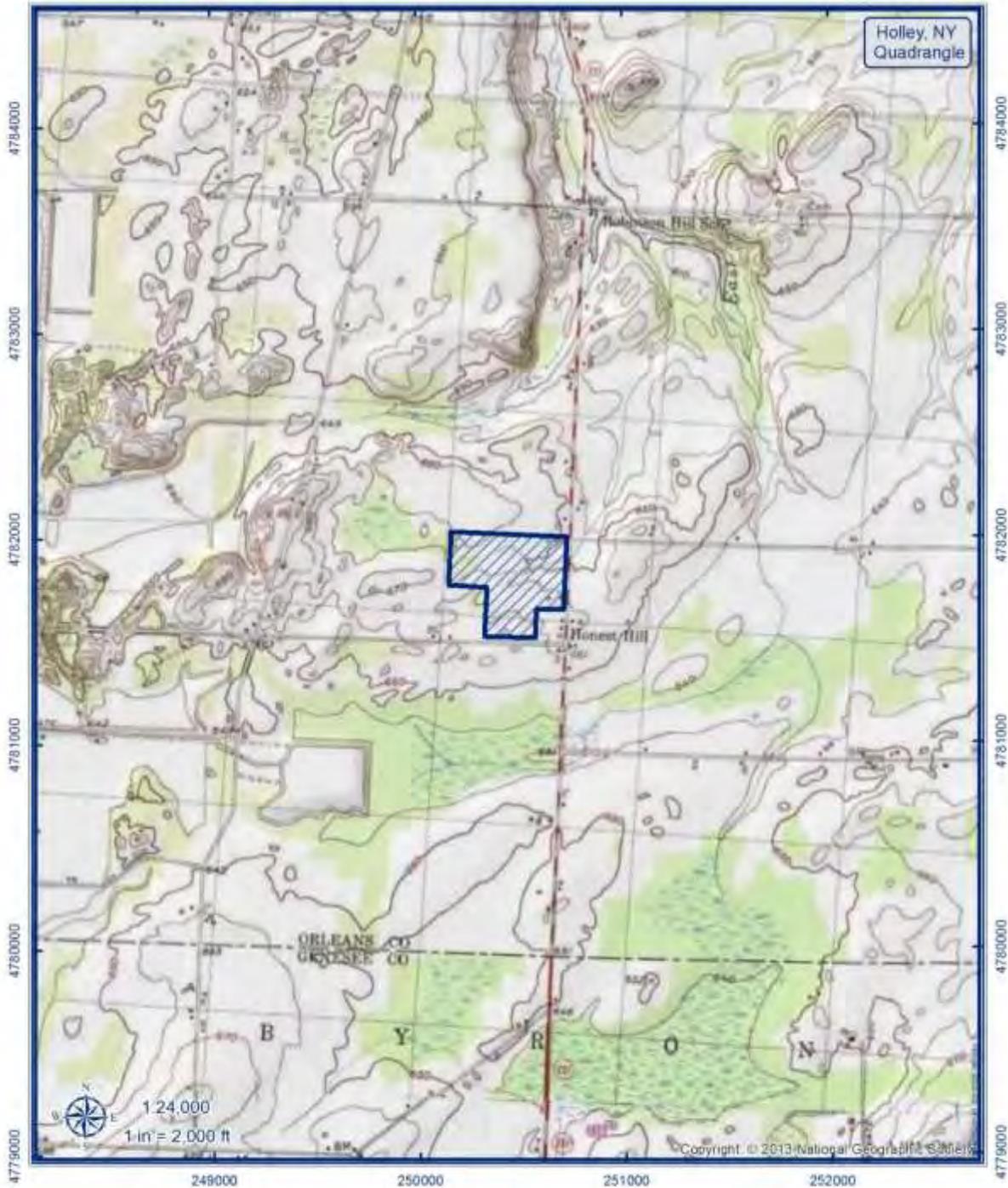
Name of Property

Orleans, New York

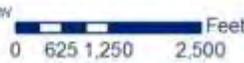
County and State

Stevens-Sommerfeldt House  
Clarendon, Orleans Co., New York

5482 Holley-Byron Rd.  
Holley, NY 14470



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



 Stevens-Sommerfeldt House

 Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

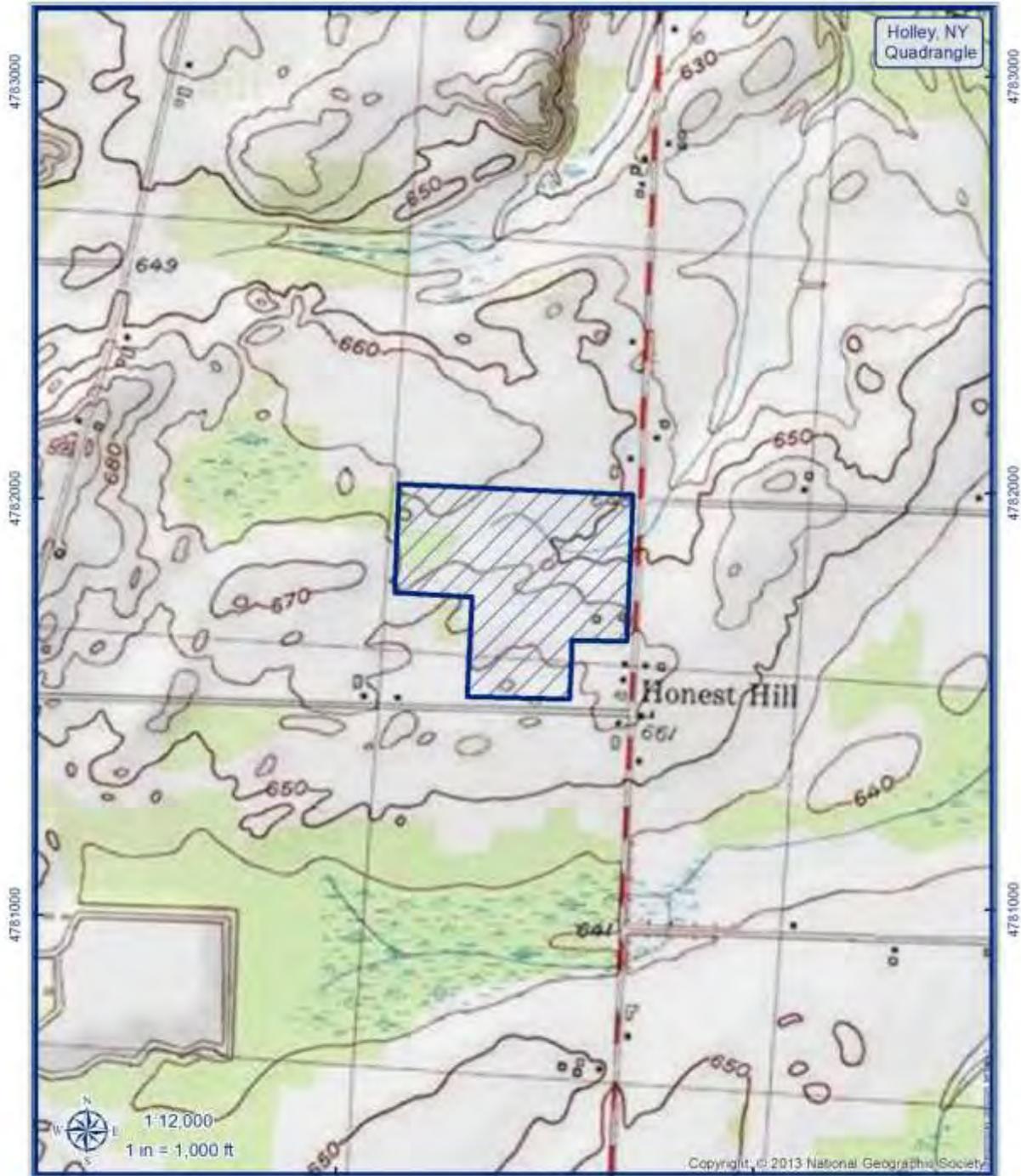
Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 10 Page 3

Stevens-Sommerfeldt House  
Clarendon, Orleans Co., New York

5482 Holley-Byron Rd.  
Holley, NY 14470



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



Stevens-Sommerfeldt House



Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 1

Additional Information

Photo Log:

Name of Property: Stevens-Sommerfeldt House  
County: Orleans County  
State: New York  
Photographer: Jennifer Walkowski, NY State Historic Preservation Office; Erin Anheier (#12)  
Date Photographed: October 29, 2014; June 13, 2014 (#12)  
Location of Original Digital Files: Peebles Island Resource Ctr, PO Box 189, Waterford, NY 12188  
Number of Photographs: 13

Photo:

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0001  
Primary east elevation of house, looking southwest

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0002  
Front entry detail, east façade, looking west

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0003  
Detail showing decorative elliptical panel above entry door

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0004  
South elevation showing one-story projection, looking north

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0005  
Rear west elevation, showing one-story projection and rear of kitchen wing

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0006  
First floor, center hall showing main stair, looking west

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0007  
First floor, former dining room, showing historic doors and jambs, looking southwest

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0008  
First floor, door to west rooms from center hall, showing paneled jamb, looking west

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0009  
First floor, kitchen, showing mid-20<sup>th</sup> century cabinetry, looking northwest

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0010

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 2

---

---

Second floor, north bedroom looking northeast

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0011

Second floor, door detail in small south room

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0012

Attic, showing half-elliptical fan lights at gable and chimney, looking north

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0013

Basement, detail of joists, looking north

NY\_Orleans County\_Stevens-Sommerfeldt House\_0014

View of farm outbuildings located to the west of the main house, looking west from rear of house

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

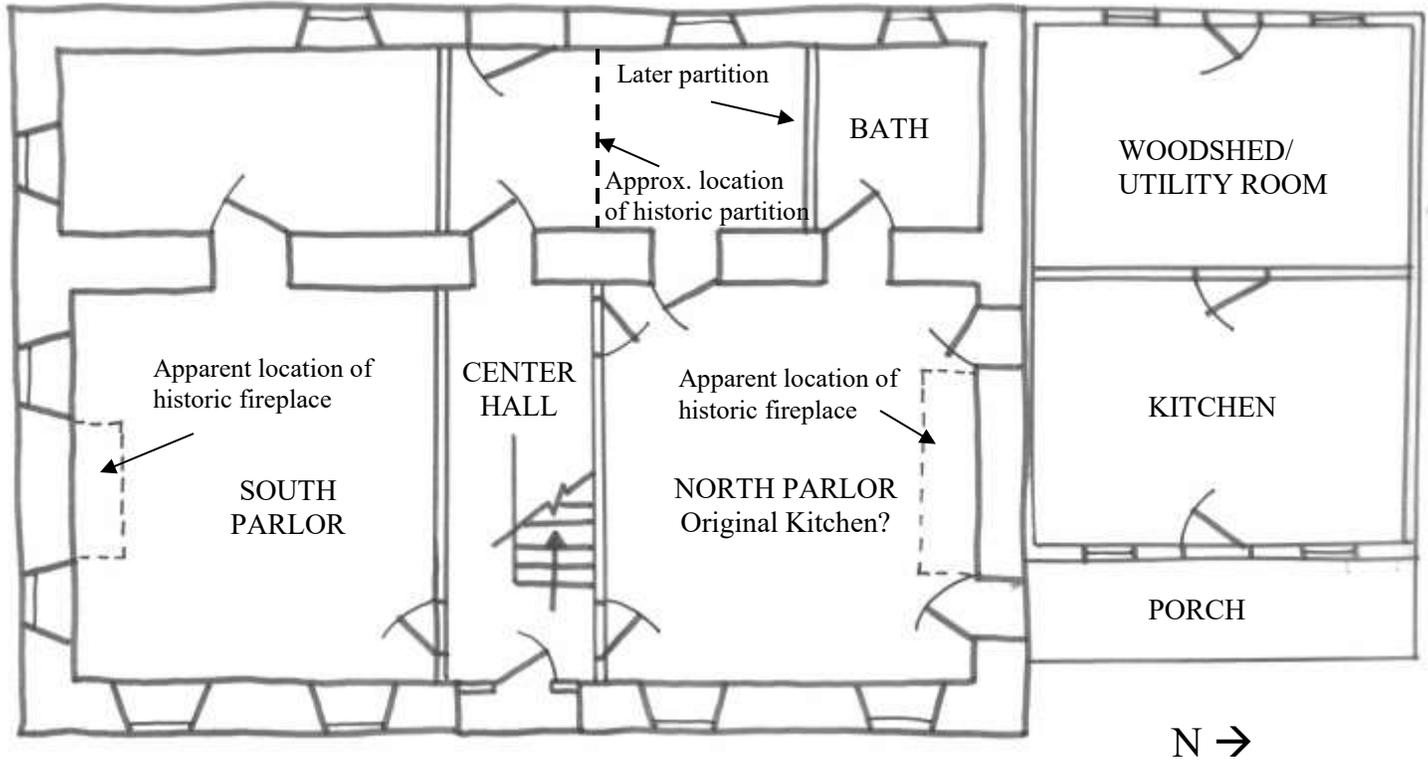
Section 11 Page 3

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



Stevens-Sommerfeldt House, First Floor Sketch Plan  
*Not to scale*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

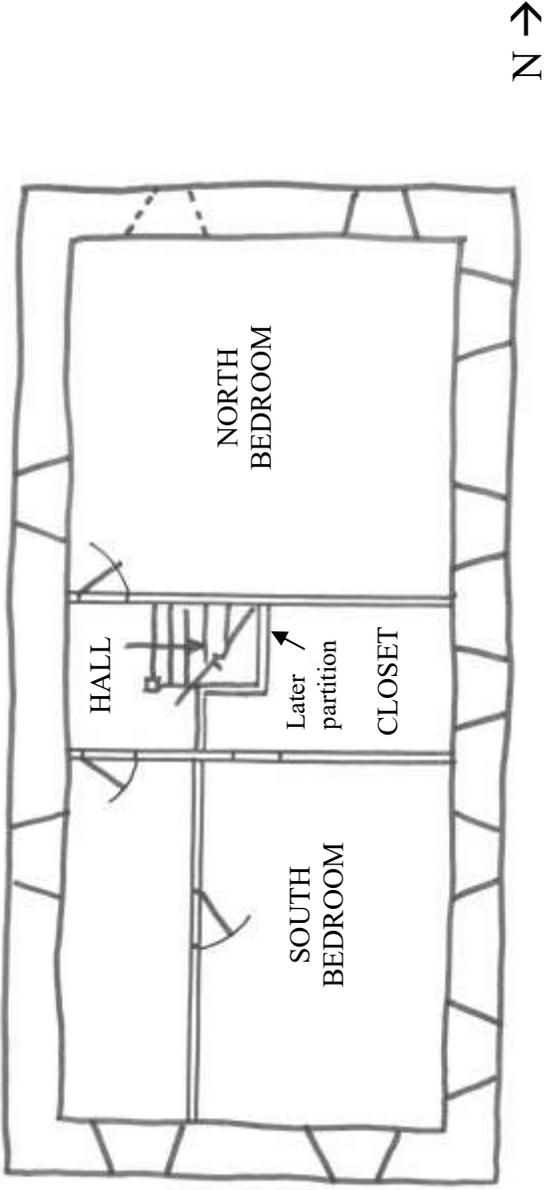
Section 11 Page 4

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



Stevens-Sommerfeldt House, Second Floor Sketch Plan

*Not to scale*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 5

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

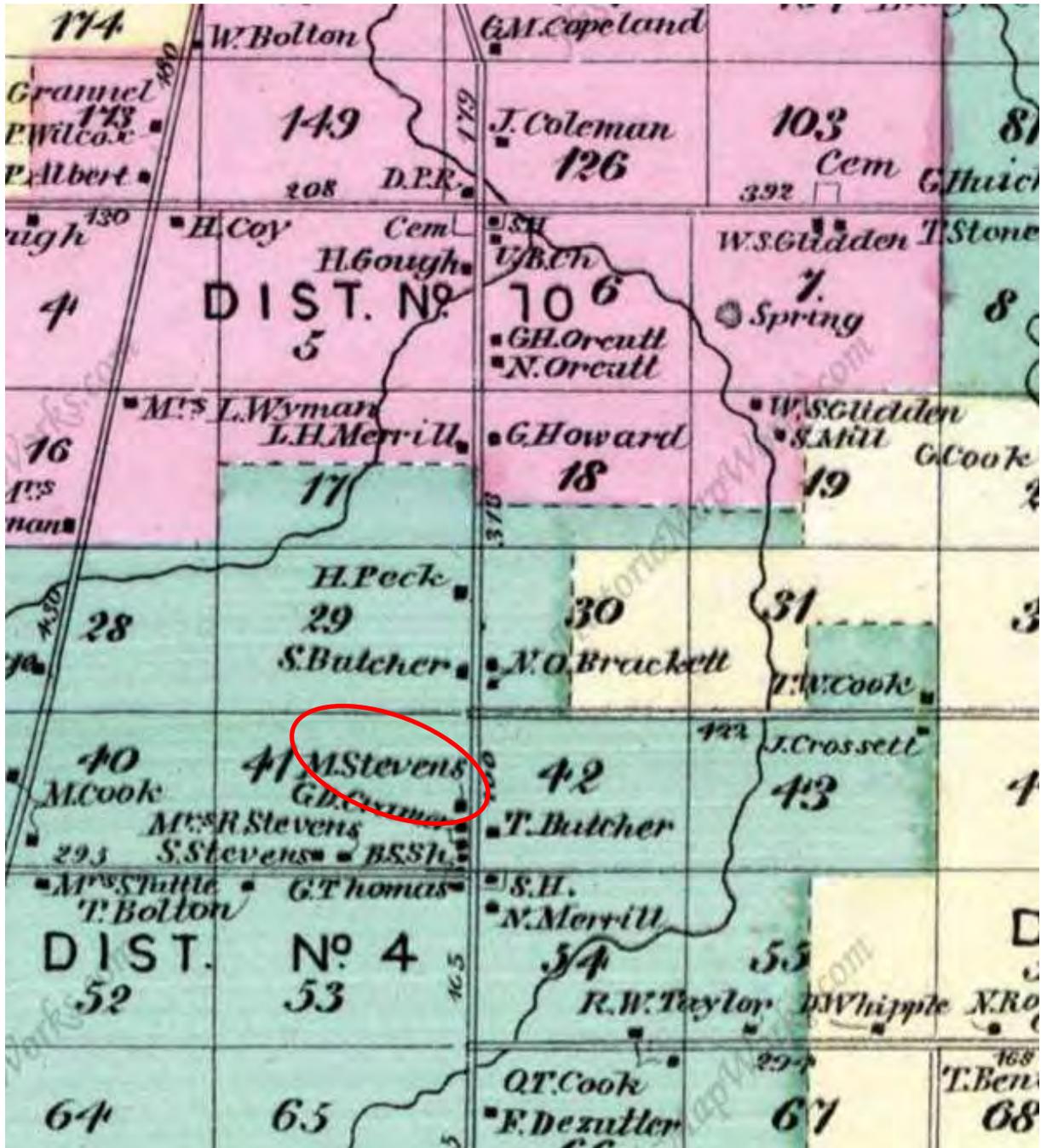
**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 6



Detail, Map of Clarendon Township (1875)

The location of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is indicated, under the ownership of Merrick Stevens.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State

Section 11 Page 7



Detail, Map of Clarendon Township (1913)

The location of the Stevens-Sommerfeldt House is indicated, under the ownership of John J. Stevens.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 8

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



**Stevens – Sommerfeldt House, Front Elevation (ca. 1900)**

This early photograph of the house shows the original Federal style entry door flanked by sidelights. This photo suggests that the “fan light” above the entry door was historically a painted panel, as it is currently. Note, though, that the building is generally largely intact.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 9

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



**Stevens – Sommerfeldt House, Front Elevation (ca. 1900)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

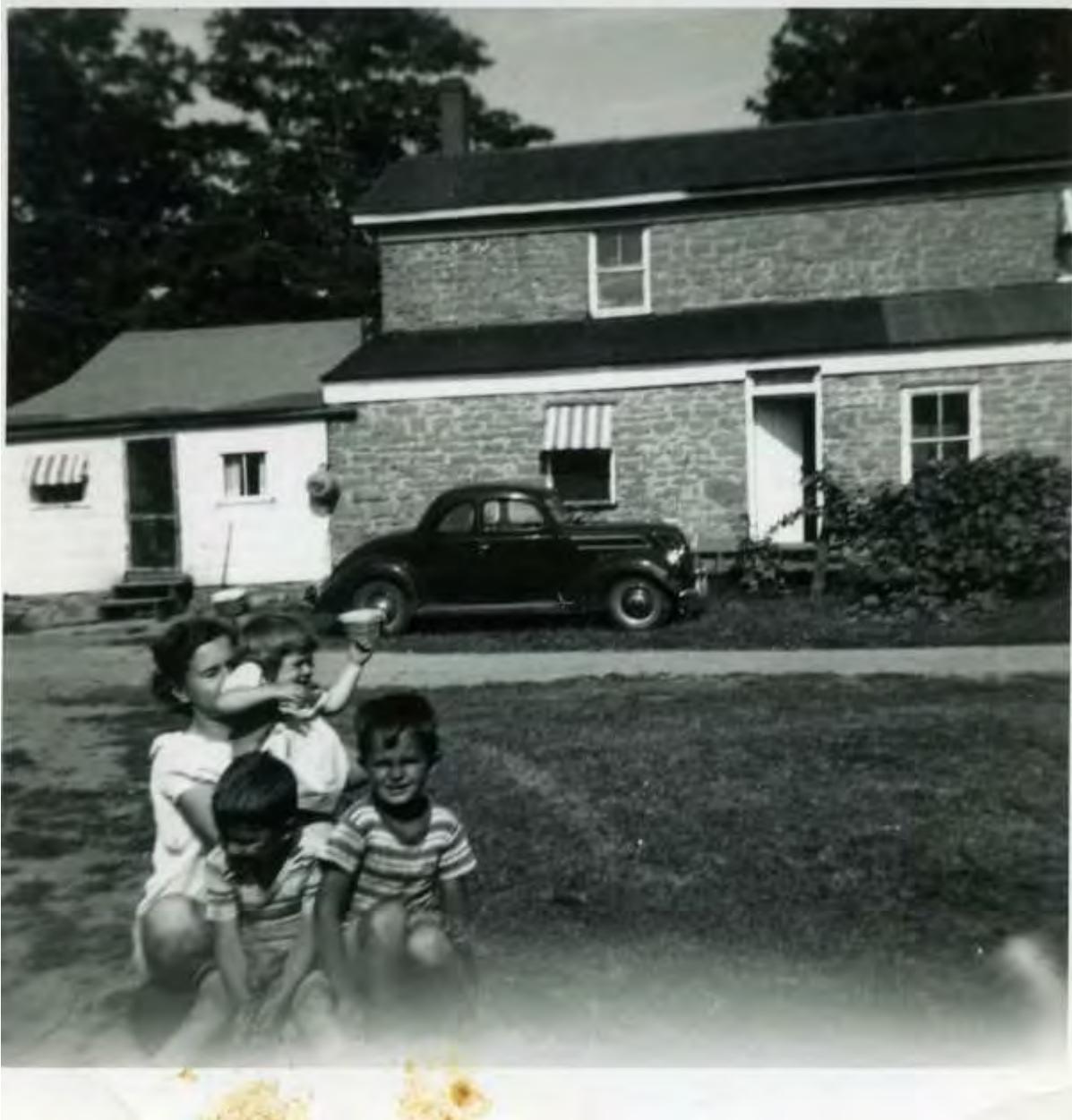
Section 11 Page 10

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



**Summerfeldt family photo showing west elevation of house (ca. 1940)**

Note that the bathroom window, which is presently located to the left of the window right above the automobile, was not in existence at this time. The bathroom was likely added sometime ca. 1940-50.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 11

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



**Stevens – Sommerfeldt House, Front Elevation (1970)**

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section 11 Page 12

**STEVENS-SOMMERFELDT HOUSE**

Name of Property

Orleans, New York

County and State



Stevens – Sommerfeldt House, Entry Door Detail ( February 1970)



5422



























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Stevens--Sommerfeldt House

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Orleans

DATE RECEIVED: 4/10/15      DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/06/15  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 5/21/15      DATE OF 45TH DAY: 5/26/15  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000268

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      5-26-15 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

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

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

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

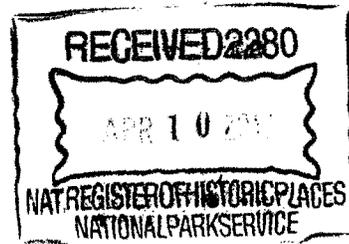
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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



## New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Division for Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 189, Waterford, New York 12188-0189  
518-237-8643



Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor  
Rose Harvey  
Commissioner

3 April 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

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

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

Union and State Streets Historic District, Cattaraugus County  
Manhattan Beach Jewish Center, Kings County  
Liverpool Cemetery, Onondaga County  
Stevens-Sommerfeldt House, Orleans 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