

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



585

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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

1. Name of Property

historic name Western New York Wine Company

other names/site number Philip Argus House and Winery

2. Location

street & number 9683 Middle Road

N/A not for publication

city or town Pulteney

N/A vicinity

state New York code NY county Steuben code 101 zip code 14840

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Robert Rupert DSHPO 7/8/14
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register removed from the National Register

other (explain:)

Edson H. Beall 9.10.14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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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.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC/residence

DOMESTIC/residence

AGRICULTURE/barn

AGRICULTURE/barn

AGRICULTURE/winery

AGRICULTURE/winery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE VICTORIAN

foundation: stone

walls: stone, wood

roof: asphalt, metal, slate

other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

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Summary Paragraph

Just north of the village of Hammondsport in Steuben County is the Western New York Wine Company, composed of buildings built for Philip Argus in the 1880s and is one of the oldest wineries in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. The property is located along the west side of the west branch of Keuka Lake, a Y-shaped lake bordered by Yates, Schuyler and Steuben counties, in an area that has historically been producing wine since the mid nineteenth century. The property consists of 28 acres which includes non-historic vineyards on the west side of the property between Middle and West Lake Roads, which dramatically slope down the hillside towards Keuka Lake. The main building is a connected house and winery at the west edge of the property on the west side of Middle Road where it overlooks the vineyards. Sited facing east, the residential portion is a two-story, L-shaped building built in 1886, constructed of stone with a cross gabled roof. The winery is a three-story stone building with a cross-gabled roof, built around 1890. The buildings were originally built as stand-alone buildings and were connected in the 1970s by a single story addition or hyphen. Another addition was added to the north side of the winery and extended west for use as an annex and a garage. East of the house is a large gambrel roofed English barn, built around 1880 and is contributing to the nomination. The house still functions as a residence and the winery building produces champagne and sparkling wine for the current owner (Chateau Frank).

Narrative Description

Located at 9683 Middle Road, the Western New York Wine Company is located on a rural 28-acre parcel between the hamlet of Pulteney and the village of Hammondsport, Steuben County, New York. The winery is at the western edge of a steeply pitched lot that extends towards Keuka Lake, with its eastern boundary terminating mid-hillside. Two acres on the west side of Middle Road are occupied by the winery building and a sloping hill to the east is primarily devoted to vineyards. The majority of the parcel has vineyards located on the east side of Middle Road with 26 steeply sloped acres devoted to vineyards surrounded by woodlands with views overlooking Keuka Lake. Vineyards are also planted in smaller plots on the north and south sides of the building. A barn is at the westernmost edge of the acreage, across the street from the winery on the east side of Middle Road. A manmade pond is located just southeast of the barn. The winery consists of an 1886 house and ca.1890 winery building that were originally separate buildings but were connected in the 1970s by additions. The ca.1880 barn is also contributing to this nomination.

The residential portion of the building is a two-story fieldstone L-shaped house with a cross-gabled, hipped roof. The gable-front portion is at the north end of the house, has an east-west orientation and fronts onto Middle Road. To its south is a wing that has a north-south orientation. An east facing covered porch is in the space between the intersecting wings and has views which overlook Keuka Lake. The house is of fieldstone construction of narrow, roughly quarried stone that is horizontally coursed. Larger more finely cut stones are used at the corners of the residence. The north wing is two bays wide by three bays deep with a front gable. The south end of the façade is three bays wide by three bays deep with a hipped slate roof and an offset gable end. The roof materials are a combination of slate and fiberglass-simulated slate. Detailing is limited to the stone lintels, and the roof eaves and fascia are plain. A single brick chimney rises from the residence.

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Dormer gable windows are located on the east and north roofs of the residence and have twelve-over-twelve sash. The windows are original throughout the residence and consist of evenly spaced two-over-two double-hung wood sash with simple rectangular cut stone sills and low-sloped pentagonal lintels. Decorative detailing is minimal and includes gabled roof dormers with twelve-over-twelve sash windows and fixed ocular windows are within the gable ends. There is also a full-height framed bay window with wood paneling in the east elevation and an early twentieth century porch.

The east elevation serves as the entrance façade with a set of stairs leading to the porch. At the north and west sides, the porch has the exterior masonry walls of the residence. At the east and south sides, it has a wood balustrade that spans between brick piers, which carry sloped wood columns that support the low-sloped roof of the porch. The porch floor is concrete, and its roof is painted thin-stripped wood. A set of stairs between the northern most porch piers is in front of the entrance doors. Two wood and glass entrance doors are located at the northwest corner of the porch, at the intersection of the front-gable and side-wing. A full-height framed bay window with paneling extends into the porch space from the living room located in the south wing. A secondary entrance is located at the south end of the residence, within an enclosed gable-front board and batten porch.

The house consists of a below-grade basement, a first floor, and a second floor. The basement has a fieldstone foundation, poured concrete floor and exposed timber joists reinforced with steel beams and posts. An original cistern is still in the basement, though not in use. The southern half of the basement is storage for the house, but the northern portion is used as storage for the winery. Basement access is via a staircase located in the bathroom. The building's first and second floors are used as a residence. The more public rooms are located on ground level. A vestibule is a framed addition on the south elevation, and leads into the kitchen. The south wing is arranged as a modified four-square plan with the kitchen at its southwest, the dining room at its southeast, the living room at the northeast and the bathroom at the northwest. The house's second floor also shares a four-square plan with a bedroom in the southwest, southeast and northeast corners. The northwest quadrant is a common area and stair that leads to the kitchen. The first floor of the north wing is occupied (from east to west) by the family room, main stair to the second floor, bathroom and bedroom. Its second floor has a master bedroom, a study, and a bathroom, all of which are connected by a hallway and a stair. The interior floor plan is true to its original design. A door at the west side of the north wing accesses a 1970s winery storage section that is located between the house and winery.

Interior finishes include hardwood floors with wood baseboards in most of the rooms, except for the bathrooms and kitchen, which are modern tile and linoleum, respectively. The hardwood is an in-kind replacement, matching the original wood flooring. Most walls are painted gypsum and a few have been updated with wood paneling, wallpaper or tile. Additional historic interior features include decorative exposed wood ceiling beams added in the early twentieth century and wood paneled interior doors with original trim. The original windows have decorative interior surrounds that are angled wood panels with fixed shutters, deep wood sills, apron and trim. Two wood staircases are original to the house. The primary stair is open, with wood treads, risers and handrails. At the second floor it retains its original chamfered wood newel post with horizontal fluting and pyramid finial. Extending from the post is a second floor wood handrail with turned balusters. The secondary stair is enclosed, with wood treads, risers and a handrail.

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The winery is a three-story, rectangular, fieldstone building. It is sited behind the house, oriented north-south. Originally an independent structure, it is now attached to the house by a one-story connector. The winery is built into a hillside, with only one story above ground at its west side and two stories exposed at its east and south and with a ground level cellar accessible on the north. The winery's fieldstone is wider than the house, has more variety of shapes, and is also horizontally coursed. The front-gabled roof has asphalt shingles, with plain eaves and fascia. The south elevation of the winery has its entrance at the first floor level that is two bays wide, with two pairs of original batten wood and glass entrance doors. Above it are windows that are double-hung six-over-six wood sash and six-light wood casement windows at the attic level. Window and door openings are adorned with brick arched lintels and stone sills. The north elevation is partially obscured by the 1970s addition but has centered openings in the basement, first and second floor levels with similar brick arch detailing as seen in the building. The east and west elevations are partially enclosed on their northern halves by the later additions. The three windows of the second story are visible on the east elevation, but the first story has been enclosed by a 1970s laboratory section that spans the space between the winery and house.

The winery building is three-stories high with an open floor plan with each story serving a single function. On the interior, fieldstone is exposed on all floors, as are the timber floor joists that carry the floors. Dark, cool conditions are maintained in the cellar due to the below-grade masonry which averages around 50-55 degrees, deemed optimal for wine storage. The basement has a poured concrete floor. The first level is used as a visitors' area and is accessible by the original wood and glass doors at the south elevation. Linoleum has been laid over the wood floor. An original wood framed stair connects the first floor to both the basement and the second story. The second level is currently used for storing supplies and has a wood floor of narrow strip. A square hatch in the floor opens into the first story. The second story is brightly lit due to its many windows, which are original six-over-six wood sash. The second floor is used for storage and the ground floor is for washing, drying and labeling.

In the 1970s, additions were constructed around the original house and winery and are considered reversible. The additions include a laboratory that connects the house to the winery, a winery addition on the north with a cellar, an annex and a garage at the rear of the complex. The annex addition encloses the northern half of the west elevation of the winery building. The roof of the laboratory between the two buildings is flat and has shared access from the second floors of the winery and house. Only the second story is above-grade on the west side of the winery building. A pair of doors is accessed by a set of concrete stairs, with an adjacent single window.

The exterior of the house and winery have remained largely unchanged since their construction. All original buildings are intact and in their original locations. Original historic architectural features are extant and the general condition of the complex is excellent. In spite of some renovations in the interior of the house (replacement of the wood floor) and winery and the building retains its original configuration and historic features including circulation, floor plan, restored original windows, paneled interior doors and stairs. The interior of the winery looks almost identical to historic photographs.

Located just east of the house, across Middle Road, is the timber post-and-beam English barn that is built into the hillside with a full basement and is adjacent to the vineyards. The barn is aligned to Middle Road, with its metal gambrel roof

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running parallel. The barn is a traditional vernacular frame agricultural building, utilitarian in purpose and function for the vineyard. Its present function is for the storage of agricultural machinery. The exterior is painted vertical lumber siding that has aged well over time. It sits on a fieldstone foundation, which serve as the walls to the basement level and can be accessed from the east via a door. The first floor has two pairs of oversized sliding doors. On the east side, the siding extends over the masonry to grade. There are gable end wall vents on both the north and south faces of the barn. The gambrel roof provides space for extra storage.

The accompanying vineyards on the property are planted with varieties that were developed in the mid to late twentieth century by Dr. Konstantin Frank although some Concord grape vines survive that were planted in the 1880s by Philip Argus. Sixteen acres of vineyards on the east side of Middle Road have rows oriented north to south, running against the slope to reduce soil erosion. Grapes grown here include Pinot Meunier, Rkatsiteli (a varietal originating the Eastern Caucasus Mountains), Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Riesling and Pinot Gris. A non-contributing man-made pond is just south of the barn, dug in the 1970s.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

agriculture
architecture

Period of Significance

Ca. 1880-1921

Significant Dates

Ca. 1880, 1886, 1890, 1919, 1921

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Alonzo Speers (builder)

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

The period of significance, ca. 1880-1921, extends from the earliest building date until Prohibition closed the winery. This period roughly coincides with the early expansion of the wine industry in the Finger Lakes Region of New York State.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary) N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

From the mid through the late nineteenth century, many vineyards and wine cellars opened in and around the village of Hammondsport on Keuka Lake and gradually spread east through the Finger Lakes. Developing the vineyards into a wine industry was largely due to a number of immigrants like Philip Argus, who recognized that the Finger Lakes area had similar weather and soil conditions as the wine regions of Europe. Many of them had years of wine-making experience and by the end of the nineteenth century, they made winemaking into a major part of the local Finger Lakes economy. Philip Argus began planting grapes on the east side of Middle Road along Keuka Lake after purchasing land in the town of Pulteney in 1879 and established the Western New York Wine Company, one of the oldest in the region. The property was a classic estate winery with vineyards and special purpose buildings that followed the standard for winery design, which included a buried cellar and a winery building of masonry construction. His winery followed the characteristic form of other period wineries that came to dot the landscape around Keuka Lake. Philip Argus combined his European background with American practicality to produce wine and the winery continued until the Volstead Act of 1919 forced his family to sell the property. For these reasons, the Western New York Wine Company is locally significant under National Register Criterion A for its role in agriculture and the development of the wine industry in the Finger Lakes. The buildings are also significant for architecture (Criterion C) and for retaining the form and historic features of an early wine operation that are still commonly used at present.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

CRITERION A: AGRICULTURE

Development of the Wine Industry around Keuka Lake

Prominent settlements around Keuka Lake (also known as Crooked Lake) included the village of Hammondsport and the hamlet of Pulteney, both of which became prime locations for the earliest commercial grape and wine production in the Finger Lakes region, dating to as early as 1829. The village of Hammondsport was established on the south end of Keuka Lake in the 1790s. Like most land in the region, agriculture was the primary pursuit of the early settlers, with much of it concerned with a variety of subsistence and cash crops. Eventually, the area became known as a center for grape growing where it spread to the other Finger Lakes, but it took until the mid-nineteenth century for wine grapes to be successfully produced and commercially processed. The first major event in the history of the local wine industry was the founding of the Pleasant Valley Wine Company of Hammondsport in 1860 (NR Listed, 1980), the first bonded winery in the region, followed by the Urbana Wine Company in 1865. These wineries served as models in terms of business practices and in the practical matter of physical design, setting the pattern that was copied by subsequent wineries. By the late nineteenth century, grapes were a major crop for local producers. The New York Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva was

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founded in 1882 for the purpose of conducting agricultural research and a major part of its research included improvements for grape growing, which helped to establish the Finger Lakes as a recognized wine and grape-growing region with Keuka Lake as its center. A 1932 history of Central New York noted:

No other place in America witnessed such successful transplanting of European wine production as did the Lake Keuka belt. This section has proven itself the natural home of the grape, where it has developed to perfection. The vineyards form a series of terraces rising 400 feet above the surface of the lake, almost precipitously in places and they receive from sunrise until sunset the warmth of the sun. From that early beginning in the year 1829, the culture of grapes spread locally, until in the heyday of the industry, some twenty-five years ago, the Lake Keuka vineyardists numbered several thousand persons; the annual output of grapes from the Lake Keuka vineyards alone totaled over 35,000 tons.¹

Contemporary with Hammondsport, the town of Pulteney was located just north of the village on the west shore of Keuka Lake where the grape came to dominate agriculture by the end of the nineteenth century. The climate, soil and the lake provided ideal conditions for growing grapes and the hillsides along the lake became covered in row upon row of grapevines. The setting was often described as picturesque for miles around, attracting visitors to the wineries to view the scenery and enjoy the tranquility of Keuka Lake, one of the jewels of the Finger Lakes.² The earliest recorded vineyard in the Keuka Lake area was established in 1829 by The Reverend William Bostwick who planted vines in his rectory garden of St. James Church in Hammondsport. The cuttings were a gift and the intent was to make wine for religious services. In 1840, two additional vineyards were established in the area, one planted by Andrew Reisinger, a German immigrant who was a vinedresser by profession.³ The lake and the terrain attracted a number of German immigrants, who were "familiar with grape-culture and wine-making," who settled around Keuka Lake and shared their expertise with others.⁴

Little of this would have been possible without advances in transportation and commerce that began in the region in the 1830s. In 1833, the Crooked Lake Canal opened, allowing agricultural shipments (including grapes) to be transported from Keuka Lake to Seneca Lake. In 1837, the first steamboat on Keuka Lake began hauling produce from Hammondsport north to Penn Yan for transfer to the canal. By mid-century, goods could be transferred to the Fallbrook Railroad that connected to the New York Central Railroad. By the end of the nineteenth century, several steamboat lines operated on Keuka Lake with piers scattered up and down its shores. Large icehouses were built at the ports to cool shipments bound for distant markets.⁵ According to a 1932 history of the region:

Grapes were not regarded as possessed of commercial value in the Keuka fruit belt, until about the year 1850. At that time, the late William Hastings, a pioneer business man of Hammondsport, having developed grape cuttings as obtained from the vines of Mr. Bostwick, shipped a small consignment of the fruit to New York City, where it commanded ready sale. Years later the enterprise had enlisted some hundred property owners and some 250 acres in Hammondsport and vicinity were devoted to vineyards. The first large shipments of grapes were made in 1856 by the late J.W. Prentiss in the Town of Pulteney. He shipped over two tons of the fruit to New York where it sold at a price netting him sixteen cents per pound. Immediately a new interest was awakened, resulting in an intensive effort towards development of the fruit, with a corresponding annual increase in the acreage devoted to the crop, and with more property owners entering the enterprise. The rapid increase in grape production soon extended the demand for the

¹ Harry Roberts Melone, *History of Central New York, Volume 1*, (Indianapolis: Historical Publications Company, 1932), 221.

² Emily Radigan, *Pulteney Steuben County New York and the Immediate Surrounding Area* (undated, published paper in the files of the Steuben County Historian), 2.

³ Finger Lakes Wine Alliance, "History of the Region," www.fingerlakeswinealliance.com/history-of-region.html, 2014.

⁴ W. W. Clayton, *History of Steuben County, New York* (Philadelphia, PA: Lewis, Peck & Co., 1879), 96.

⁵ Keuka Lake Association website, <http://www.keukalakeassociation.org/>.

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fruit, which up until that time had been confined solely to table use. It was about that time that the wine industry in the Lake Keuka section witnessed its inception.”⁶

At this point in time, grape growers supplied grapes solely for the fresh fruit market, due to the American Temperance movement, which began to wane in the 1860s when the national focus turned to the Civil War. By 1860, 3,000 acres of grapevines dotted the shores of the Finger Lakes.⁷ By 1900, more than 10,000 acres of vineyards producing 15,000 tons of grapes each year ringed Keuka Lake in a band that was one-half mile wide and 50 miles long.⁸ By the early 1900s there were at least twenty-three wineries in the Hammondsport and Pulteney areas, including the Western New York Wine Company, established by Philip Argus.⁹

The 1880s were a crucial years for the wine industry on Keuka Lake, with an explosion of development in both wine-based business and tourism. One 1884 booklet emphasized the seasonal pleasures of Hammondsport’s “uplifted vine-clad hills, green with the early summer, or purple and amber in vintage-time.” Another booklet noted “immense wineries, and grape packing houses,” had stores of “millions of bottles of Champagne silently acquiring age and value.” It further noted, “There are a number of wine cellars on the lake, which make champagne equal to the imported, and various kinds of still wines are noted for their purity and their flavor. A trip through any one of the cellars is very interesting and visitors always welcome.”¹⁰

In spite of its growth and popularity, the wine industry came up against a resurging anti-alcohol movement in the early twentieth century. Whiskey and other spirits were typically targeted, but wine was swept up in the fervor even though few regulations regarding wine existed at that time.¹¹ At first, the economic and political clout of the wine industry helped ensure that New York State could avoid initial attempts at prohibition, but in 1919, the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution banning the production and sale of alcohol was passed by two-thirds of the states. Consumption of alcohol was still allowed for personal, medicinal and sacramental uses, but production was now the responsibility of the consumer. Wine making shifted from a national industry to home production with the law allowing up to 200 gallons of wine for personal use. By the time the law was repealed (December 5, 1933), the wine industry around Keuka Lake was devastated, resulting in the closing of many wineries and wine related businesses, including Argus’s winery. Only a very few were able to reopen after the repeal; however, the grape packing industry continued to flourish during Prohibition for the fresh fruit market, sustaining some of the surviving vineyards. One account attempted to place a positive assessment of Prohibition in the region:

“The rise and fall of a four million dollar wine trade and the development of vineyards in Central New York forms one of the most interesting chapters in the agricultural development of the area. For Concord grapes, as well as other varieties, are nowhere in the world grown with more satisfactory results than in this district, particularly about Canandaigua, Keuka and Seneca Lakes. Today approximately 12,000 acres of grapes are under cultivation by 1,160 growers whose crop averages a yield of \$800,000 a year. The grape counties are Schuyler, Yates, Seneca, Steuben, and Ontario. To date the grape acreage in the district has decreased five

⁶ Melone, *History of Central NY*, 222-223.

⁷ Richard Figiel, *Culture in a Glass: Reflections on the Rich Heritage of Finger Lakes Wine*, (Lodi, NY: Pioneer Printing, 1995), 18.

⁸ Keuka Lake Association website, <http://www.keukalakeassociation.org/>.

⁹ Melone, *History of Central NY*, 224-225.

¹⁰ All quotes from Kirk House, “Window on the Past: Cool, Healthful, No Mosquitoes,” *The Courier*, 10 June 2010.

¹¹ Paul Lukacs, *Inventing Wine: A New History of One of the World’s Most Ancient Pleasures* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012), 184.

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per cent since prohibition. To improve the prospects of vineyardists, the Finger Lakes Grape Marketing Committee was organized May 3, 1929 at Penn Yan and since has stimulated the popularity of the luscious produce of vineyards of the district. At present the revenue to grape growers is a little less than before prohibition, but it is much less than it was directly after passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. There were a few years from 1919 to 1927 when grapes sold for as high as \$125 a ton, and, from \$80 to \$100, was very common. In 1931 the average price was thirty dollars a ton, under cost of production. A period of about sixty years witnessed the rise and fall of the American wine and champagne industry, which at its height more than three decades ago, gave rich promise of eclipsing European production. Domestic wines were then produced, which in the opinion of connoisseurs, were close rivals, if not excelling the vintage of France, Spain and Italy, which for centuries have enjoyed enviable reputation as wine makers."¹²

History of the Western New York Wine Company

Philip Argus established his winery on a parcel of land that was originally part of the 170 acre Benjamin Eggleston farm, located at the intersection of Wright and Middle Roads in Pulteney. The Eggleston family was one of the oldest in Steuben County, being among its original settlers. Historic atlases of the area indicated that the property was owned by Benjamin Eggleston until 1846, and then by his widow Sally until 1879 (the year of her death at age 91). It was at that time, Philip Argus purchased the farm for his house and winery. Argus was a native of Pfalz or the Rhineland-Palatinate region of Germany, which was the second largest wine producing area along the Rhine River and the largest producer of Riesling wines. Both his father, Jacob Argus and grandfather, Leonard Argus, had vineyards in the Pfalz, where Philip learned how to grow grapes and make wine.

Born in Rheinzabern near the Rhine River in 1836, Philip immigrated to Wisconsin in 1855 where he worked on a farm. He married Appolonia Beihl whom he met there in 1859, also a German immigrant. They lived in Wisconsin until 1860, when they moved to Hammondsport, attracted by the fledgling wine industry. For five years, he worked in the vineyards then moved to Kansas where he spent twelve years farming and struggling to grow grapes. After locusts destroyed his vineyards, he returned with his family to Steuben County in 1879 and settled in the town of Pulteney. Determined to succeed at grape growing, he purchased 48 acres, which he cleared, set out forty acres of vines and was soon producing "the finest quality of wines."¹³ At that time, the varieties grown were native grapes, which included Catawba, Isabella, Delaware, Diana, Iona and Concord.¹⁴ Argus was one of many Keuka Lake wine makers credited with putting American wines on par with European wines in the American market.¹⁵ The property's vineyards were located between Middle Road and the Lake Shore on a hillside location that was an ideal microclimate for grape ripening in a region that was generally too cold for viticulture. It was pointed out that

"Not only do the lakes take the edge off frigid upstate winters, often keeping vineyards 10-15 degrees warmer than locations just a half mile away, but they also cushion the transitions of spring and fall. On the first hot days of April and May, the cooling influence of nearby water tends to delay the emergence of tender new vine shoots until the risk of damaging spring frosts has passed. In fall, the effect reverses: summer heat stored in the surface layers of the lakes radiates up to ripening grapes, postponing first frosts until as late as November."¹⁶

¹² Melone, *History of Central New York*, 220-222.

¹³ Harlo Hakes, ed., *Landmarks of Steuben County* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Company Publishers, 1896), 339-340

¹⁴ Clayton, *History of Steuben County*, 96.

¹⁵ "Keuka Lake Wine Industries," *Penn Yan Democrat*, 9 October 1925, 6.

¹⁶ Figiel, Richard, *Culture in a Glass: Reflections on the Rich Heritage of Finger Lakes Wine*. (Lodi, NY: Pioneer Printing, 1995), 36.

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In his obituary, dated September 6, 1906, Philip Argus was regarded as a local pioneer, a well-known vineyardist and the original owner of the Western New York Wine Company. He was noted as "an industrious, straight-forward man in business, a kind parent, always genial and hospitable."¹⁷ After Argus's death, his son John operated the business and after his death, the property was left to his sisters, Barbara and Mary Argus. When Prohibition decimated the wine market, Barbara Argus conveyed the property to George Schoeffler in 1921. From that point in time, the Western New York Winery ceased operating. The wine company survived the death of Philip Argus, but failed to outlive Prohibition.

When Philip Argus began his wine operation, one of the first buildings constructed on site was a barn. The next building was a new stone residence in 1886, followed by a fruit pressing facility (c 1890). A local mason from Pulteney, Alonzo Speers, built the house and presumably the winery building. According to historic atlases, Speers also rented land from Philip Argus. At its peak, the winery was capable of an annual production of 12,000-15,000 gallons from 35 acres of varietal grapes on the grounds overlooking Keuka Lake. The grounds also included lake access, as the holdings extended eastward toward the shore, allowing steamboats to pick up boxes of grapes and bottles of wine for market directly from the property.

The construction of the winery added to the growing reputation of the Keuka Lake wine industry and garnered local attention. In 1886, *The Hammondsport Herald* reported that the "improvements being made upon the vineyard property of Philip Argus in South Pulteney are worthy of special notice." The article continued:

On the upper road he is erecting a stone dwelling, the upright of which is 20 feet by 48-feet with a wing 24-feet by 28-feet. There is a cellar underneath the whole, ten feet in depth, which can be used for storing wine or fruit. The masonry is being done by Mr. Speers of Pulteney and the work is pronounced second to none in this section. Mr. Argus intends to put up a building in the rear of the new dwelling, 20-feet by 60-feet, also of stone and will be used for a pressing & fruit house. Mr. Argus was early interested in grape culture in this locality and did much for its advancement. He left here in 1865 to establish a home in Kansas, where he engaged in grape growing. The venture proved a failure and he returned to this place in 1879 when he located on his present place of residence, which is second to none along the shores of Lake Keuka. He has been greatly aided in his successful work by his sons, two of whom have been employed at the Urbana Wine Cellars for a number of years. Mr. Argus can be congratulated upon possessing such a fine property"¹⁸

George Schoeffler, a grape farmer, owned the property from 1921 until 1969 when it passed to his son LaVerne, the vineyard manager at Gold Seal Winery (NR listed 2010) and a founding member and vice-president of the New York State Wine Growers Association. Schoeffler sold the property in September 1969 to Greyton H. Taylor who was famous for successfully developing French-American hybrid grapes in New York State. Taylor's intention was to use the old Argus winery as a museum. His son Walter eventually established the wine museum on his own Bully Hill Winery estate. He sold the Argus property in 1979 to Willibald (Willy) K. Frank who established Chateau Frank, with a specialty in sparkling wines.

¹⁷ "Death of a Pioneer," September 1906. Photocopy. Unknown source.

¹⁸ "A Desirable Property," *Hammondsport Herald*. 20 October 1886.

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Willibald's father was Dr. Konstanin Frank, whose studies of growing classic European vinifera grapes in cold climates brought new national respect for the Finger Lakes as a wine region.

Willy Frank was the first to successfully transplant champagne grapes from France in the United States. These grapes were reserved for making sparkling wines according to traditional French methods and the property once again operates as a premium sparkling wine facility in the original Argus winery buildings. At present, the Finger Lakes Wine Region is the largest wine-growing region in New York State, encompassing Canandaigua, Keuka, Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. Over one hundred wineries are located in these 11,000 acres, growing French-American and European vinifera grapes. It is one of the few locations that these varieties can grow, due to similar climate conditions as their originating vineyards. Today, New York State is the third largest grape producer in the United States, with the Finger Lakes Region representing the majority of the vineyard acreage. In a 2008 study, there were 37,000 vineyard bearing acres in New York State, on over 1,400 farms, employing nearly 600 vineyard workers.¹⁹

Criterion C - Architecture

The buildings of the winery are significant under Criterion C for architecture as a late nineteenth century masonry building and a wood beam construction barn that retain much of their period features. Considered as a unit, they are a rare surviving example of late nineteenth century winery design that followed a pattern adopted by American producers at that time. The house and winery were typical of the functional nature and efficient arrangements that were key elements of traditional winery design, but need to be examined in the context of European winemaking. In Europe, wineries were designed as utilitarian agricultural buildings with practical layouts specific to the region, but had common features such as a cellar for fermentation and areas for wine-pressing, bottling and storage. The design of traditional wineries required ways to naturally control temperature and to efficiently transform the grape from harvest to bottle. As a result, wine fermentation took place in partially or completely underground cellars as a way to control temperature.²⁰ Philip Argus was from Germany, which had a number of wineries with deep stone cellars underneath farmhouses. His winery on Keuka Lake used the same design tradition, as did other local wineries.

Little has been written about the winery building as an agricultural architectural prototype, in spite of its long history going back many thousands of years. Faculty at the University of Nis in Serbia recently published an academic study of current trends in designing wineries versus traditional construction. The authors stated:

“At the beginning of the evolution of this building type, the winery had little significance in the landscape; it was a small room connected to the housing area with thick adobe walls and few openings that were able to support large thermal amplitude between day and night. The wineries were built with different materials: the cheapest were those made of leather cow or ox, while in the most important wineries were used adobe, stone or brick. The roof trusses were made of wood or carob covered with reeds and mud. The winery

¹⁹ Economic Impact of Grapes Stonebridge Research. “The Economic Impact of Grapes, Grape Juice and Wine on the New York Economy, 2008.”

²⁰ Charter of Fontvraud, online at <http://www.charter-of-fontevraud.org/?page=human-history-7000-years-of-cultivation-architecture-winery-design>

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remained related to the rural character in its materiality as an adobe, brick or stone building but took on new proportions due to the use of new roof solutions, the wooden trusses that allowed more lights into rooms."²¹

This passage summarizes the development of the winery as a building type, originating in Europe, before moving into the United States.

The Argus house and winery buildings were intentionally sited on the west side of Middle Road where the topography was generally flat and at the highest elevation. On the east side of the road, the majority of the property was planted with grapevines on a steep slope down towards the lake. The barn stood at the westernmost edge of the vineyards, on Middle Road, diagonal from the residence. In this manner, the grape growing and winemaking processes were separated, but quite close to expedite production. Aesthetically, the residence and winery were constructed of local stone. This building material was consistently selected in European models as the best choice suited for the construction of a winery. Though the source of the fieldstone for the Argus buildings is unknown, it is assumed to be locally quarried since several nearby winery operations use similar stone and masonry.

A European tradition familiar to Argus and used by his early Keuka Lake contemporaries was to build into a hillside. The upper floors of these wineries were typically at ground level at the rear of the property. This allowed horses to bring wagons up the hill from the vineyards to the upper level crushing room. Gravity would then feed the pressed juice down to the middle floor for fermentation. Gravity again would send the wine to the cellar for storing and aging before bottling. This design was a concept originating in the days before electrical power, which still works today as the functional prototype for winery buildings. The layout allowed for a second fermentation of the sparkling wines in the bottle, aging the yeast for several years in the bottle. Riddling racks in the cool cellars permitted the bottles to be rotated to allow the yeast to settle in the neck of the bottle. The layout of the room allowed for the efficient disgorging (removing the yeast from the wine), washing, drying, labeling the bottles and then finally warehousing the finished product until shipping for sale.

The Argus winery buildings embody the European prototype for function while reflecting an American aesthetic of period style. The second floor of the winery historically functioned as the grape crushing room with its doors at grade on the west side to accept delivery of grapes from wagons. The still extant second story floor hatch allowed for the easy downward movement of crushed grapes to the first floor where the grape-must was pressed into juice. The juice was the fed by gravity into the cellar where the wine fermented in oak casks. By using this floor plan, the winemakers eliminated the need for pumps. The cellars took advantage of the insulating qualities of stone and by being partially embedded to allow a cooler constant temperature needed for the aging and storage of wine. Less evident today due to additions, the cellars were burrowed into a hillside, accessible from the north at grade level. The partial enclosure of the cellar appeared in a 1970s construction photo, which also showed how the design facilitated movement of goods in and out of the building without hoists, as both the basement and first stories had their own exits. Supplies could be moved in and finished goods moved out with ease to their destinations.

²¹ Jevremovic, Jordanovic and Vasic, Contemporary Trends in Designing Wineries, Innovative Engineering vs. Traditional Construction" University of Nis, Serbia. Undated

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Alonzo Speers, a local Pulteney native, was credited for the winery's masonry ca. 1890 construction. It had a symmetrical plan, stone cladding, a steeply pitched roof, and arches above doors and windows. Similar to other American industrial buildings, a ceremonial entry was distinguished from the service entries by more careful finished stonework. The use of the masonry at the exterior walls served as a reminder of the cellars below ground level.

Speers also constructed a house for Philip Argus in 1886. It was as a modest home with minimal detailing due to its stone building material and, although an designer for the house has yet to be identified, it followed a style similar to an earlier winery in the region, the Gold Seal Winery (NR listed 2010), which had stone buildings constructed in 1865. The house built for the winery manager used the picturesque Italianate style, which was modeled after country Tuscan villas and other Italian rural buildings. The style was popular in the mid nineteenth century in the United States, and even though it may have been viewed as "old fashioned" by the time Argus established his winery, it hearkened back to European tradition and was appropriate for a residence connected with a winery. The house included some Italianate elements such as an overhanging roof, first floor bay window on the façade, curved window lintels and a two-story L-shaped form. It also included a hipped roof and dormers, reminiscent of the Queen Anne style and were possibly a later updating of the building. Another update was the addition of a first floor porch on the façade, added around the turn-of-the-twentieth century as evidenced from its Colonial Revival features that included square wood roof support columns with sloping sides, simple cornice and low hipped roof. The columns rested upon square brick piers with a concrete cap that extended from grade to well above the porch floor. Piers were connected at the porch floor level by a solid wood balustrade, painted white to match the supports. The use of stone gave it an Arts and Crafts feeling, making the house an eclectic collection of architectural elements from many periods.

Conclusion

After Walter Taylor sold the property to Willy Frank in 1979, the winery established by Philip Argus returned to being used for its original purpose. Now owned by Chateau Frank, the house and winery were renovated for use again as a residence and for producing sparkling wines. Through reusing the property, Chateau Frank preserves the significance of the Western New York Wine Company as it relates to the early developmental history of the Finger Lakes Wine Region. The house may look American in character, but its essence lies in the union of winemaking traditions of Europe and America. The winery is one of many small wineries that contribute to New York State's status as the third largest wine producing state in the country. Although most of the grapes grown are new varieties unfamiliar to Philip Argus, the hills are once again producing grapes and carry on the tradition established when Argus planted his first vines in the late 1880s.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service. "Pleasant Valley Wine Company" National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. 15 September 1980.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: Johnson-Schmidt & Associates, Architects

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ±26.22 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>320962</u> Easting	<u>4704463</u> Northing	3	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>320455</u> Easting	<u>4704302</u> Northing
2	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>320957</u> Easting	<u>4704200</u> Northing	4	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>320381</u> Easting	<u>4704373</u> Northing
5	<u>18N</u> Zone	<u>320398</u> Easting	<u>4704465</u> Northing				

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

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

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The property boundary encompasses the remaining acreage of the original 45 acres purchased by Argus in 1880, which includes the winery complex, barn and 22 acres of hillside acres. It originally had lake front access, but land sales after Argus's ownership resulted in seven acres of lakefront vineyards being sold to another winery. The portion is still currently under different ownership.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susan Lawson
organization Johnson-Schmidt Associates, Architects date 12 June 2014
street & number 15 East Market St telephone 607-937-1946
city or town Corning State NY zip code 14830
e-mail susan@preservationarchitects.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Western New York Wine Company

City or Vicinity: Pulteney vicinity

County: Steuben State: New York

Photographer: Megan Klem

Date Photographed: 6 March 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0012: Façade (East elevation) of residential portion of winery, view looking west.

0002 of 0012: East & south elevations of residence with winery portion visible in the rear, view looking northwest.

0003 of 0012: South and east elevations of winery building, view looking northwest.

0004 of 0012: East & north elevations of barn, view looking southwest.

0005 of 0012: View from north looking south at winery, showing barn on left, residence and winery to the right.

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0006 of 0012: Interior view of historic staircase in winery building.

0007 of 0012: Interior view of first floor of winery building.

0008 of 0012: Interior view of second floor of winery building, facing east.

0009 of 0012: Interior view of second floor of winery building, facing west.

0010 of 0012: Interior view of first floor living room in residence.

0011 of 0012: Enclosed stair and second floor landing in residence.

0012 of 0012: Second floor master bedroom in residence.

Property Owner:

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

name Chateau Frank, Inc. (Frederick Frank, president)
street & number 9683 Middle Road telephone N/A
city or town Pulteney state NY zip code 14840

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

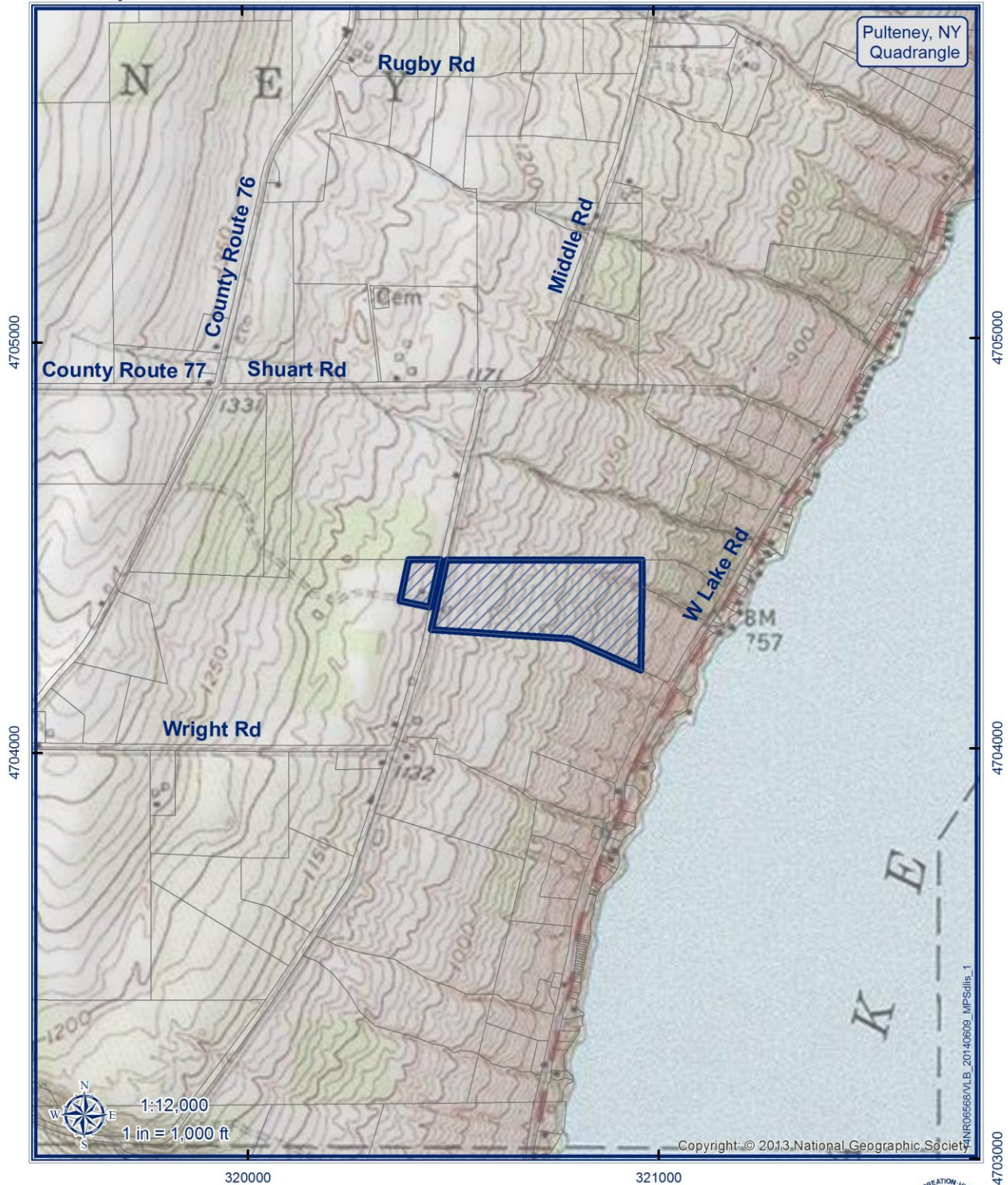
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Western New York Wine Company
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Western NY Wine Co. (Philip Argus House & Winery)
Pulteney, Steuben Co., NY

9683 Middle Road
Pulteney, NY 14840



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

0 325 650 1,300 Feet

 WNY Wine Company

Tax Parcel Data:
Steuben Co. RPS
steubencony.org/rpsweb2

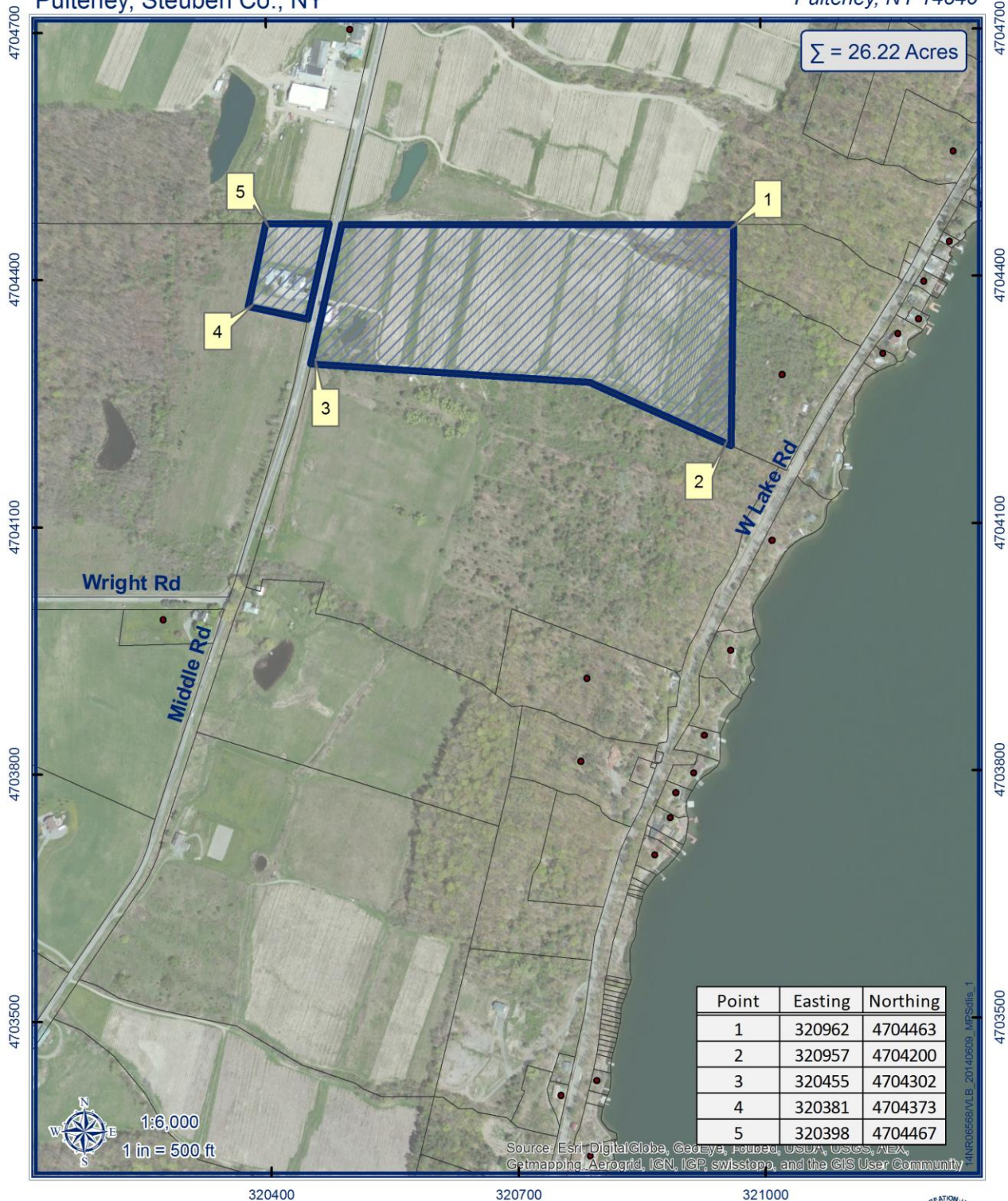


Western New York Wine Company
 Name of Property

Steuben County, NY
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Western NY Wine Co. (Philip Argus House & Winery)
 Pulteney, Steuben Co., NY

9683 Middle Road
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Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: North American 1983
 Units: Meter



Tax Parcel Data:
 Steuben Co. RPS
steubencounty.org/rpsweb2





ADT















WRIGHT WAY

DECEMBER 1950
CORK & TRAY MANUFACTURERS

CAPISU

CAPISU

BRUTE
SULFITES









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Western New York Wine Company
NAME:

MULTIPLE
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: NEW YORK, Steuben

DATE RECEIVED: 7/25/14 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 8/22/14
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 9/08/14 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 9/10/14
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 14000585

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 9.10.14 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in
The National Register
of Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA _____

REVIEWER _____ DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

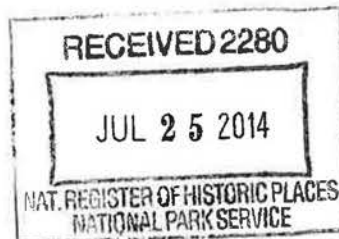
DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

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

9 July 2014

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

Re: National Register Nominations

Dear Ms. Abernathy:

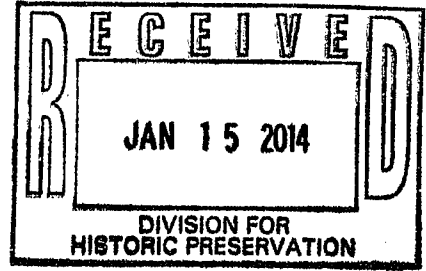
I am pleased to enclose the following five National Register nominations, all on discs, to be considered for listing by the Keeper of the National Register:

Oakwood Cemetery, Niagara County
First Presbyterian Church of Le Roy, Genesee County
North Star School District # 11, Monroe County
Western New York Wine Company, Steuben County
Hopkinton Green Historic District, St. Lawrence County

Please feel free to call me at 518.237.8643 x 3261 if you have any questions.

Sincerely:

Kathleen LaFrank
National Register Coordinator
New York State Historic Preservation Office



STATEMENT OF OWNER SUPPORT

Before an individual nomination proposal will be reviewed or nominated, the owner(s) of record must sign and date the following statement:

I, Frederick Frank, president of Chateau Frank Inc., am the owner of the property at
(print or type owner name)

9683 Middle Rd., Hammondsport, NY 14840
(street number and name, city, village or town, state of nominated property)

I support its consideration and inclusion in the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

A cursive handwritten signature, appearing to read "F. Frank".

1/8/14

(signature and date)

9683 Middle Rd.

Hammondsport, NY 14840

(mailing address)