

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC HOLLAND LAND OFFICE

AND/OR COMMON

Holland Land Office Museum

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

131 West Main Street

__ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Batavia

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

__ VICINITY OF

35

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

Genesee

CODE

37

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY** DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT**OWNERSHIP** PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION** IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS** OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE** YES: RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO**PRESENT USE** AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

County of Genesee, Donald Constable, Curator

STREET & NUMBER

131 West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Batavia

__ VICINITY OF

STATE

New York

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Genesee County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Batavia

STATE

New York

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1967

 FEDERAL __ STATE __ COUNTY __ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress Annex/ Division of Prints and Photographs

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Holland Land Office, the third and last of the Company's offices, was built by Joseph Ellicott in 1815, on the north bank of the Tonawanda Creek, in Batavia, New York. The one-and-a-half story limestone structure measures 47 feet long and 36 feet deep. A full, pedimented portico, supported by four stone pillars shelter the front (north) doorway, which is framed by pilasters and possesses a fanlight transom. There are two dormers on either side of the gable roof on the second floor, and there is a fanlight in each gable end, at the attic level. The interior is laid out in a central hall plan, and it is believed that there were two rooms on either side of the hall, divided by a partition which housed fireplaces and the flues. Such a partition now exists only in the eastern half of the first floor. These rooms would have served as offices but are now used as museum space. The second floor contains one large and two small rooms which are also used as exhibition space. The structure of the office has been altered, primarily by the installation of steel I-beams to support the roof, and by braces to support the ceiling in the west room of the first floor. The roof has been recovered with asphalt tiles.

The greatest alteration to the office has been the two additions, which are connected at the rear(south) of the building. The first addition is a one story, rectangular cinder block structure which was added in the 1940's. It is connected to a L-shaped frame addition, which extends to the west and runs parallel to the Land Office at a distance of about twelve feet. This addition was built in 1970. Both additions contain either museum or office space. Either side of the Land Office is flanked by houses or commercial properties of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. During the tenure of the Holland Land Company, the office stood alone on two acres of land.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

1815

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Joseph Ellicott

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Holland Land Company, incorporated in 1796 by six Dutch banking houses, acquired vast amounts of land in western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania. In surveying the land and selling the lots directly to the homesteaders, this speculative organization played a major role in the settlement of the northern frontier east of the Great Lakes.

The Holland Land Office, in Batavia, New York, was built in 1815, the third and final American office of the Holland Company. This two-story stone building on West Main Street now houses a Genesee County museum, and presents a virtually unchanged appearance.

HISTORY

As the 18th century neared its end, speculative fever for western lands gripped not only American, but European investors as well. The fast turn-over of lands and the quick and spectacular returns won by some speculators attracted investment not only from the fly-by-night gamblers, but from those stable financial elements best able to develop the new West. These elements desired to settle the land, not merely exploit it on a shoestring basis for immediate profit. After some preliminary reconnaissance six Dutch banking houses combined to speculate in American lands. As early as 1792 three members of the group, Stadnitski & Son, Van Eeghen and Ten Cate and Vollenhoven, had commissioned their agent Theophile Cazenove to purchase frontier land in western New York and northwestern Pennsylvania. By 1794, they had purchased over five million acres in this territory. Three other Dutch houses joined, Van Staphorst, Willink and Schimmelpenninck, and in February, 1796, the Holland Land Company was formed. The Company was headed by a director and six commissioners in Holland, and a general agent in Philadelphia. Cazenove served as the American agent until 1799, when he was replaced by Paul Busti. Before this time, in 1794, Joseph Ellicott was hired by the Company to explore the new acquisitions in Pennsylvania.

Although much of the Company's holdings had been previously owned by Robert Morris, as a form of speculation, the lands had not been surveyed or divided into lots. As this process was necessary before any land could be sold, in 1797, Joseph Ellicott began a survey of the Company's purchase in New York, a tract of over three million acres, virtually the whole of the state west of the Genesee River.

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ray Billington, Westward Expansion (New York, 1948).
 Paul D. Evans, The Holland Land Company (Buffalo, 1942).
 Charles Shedd, "Holland Land Office," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, form 10-317, 4/18/59.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 7	7 2 9 1 2 0	4 7 6 4 2 8 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Holland Land Office National Historic Landmark boundaries are coterminous with the Office Museum lot boundaries as recorded on the City of Batavia tax map. The rectangular lot measures 158' 8" from east to west along the south sidewalk of West Main Street, and approximately 75' south from said sidewalk to the north bank of Tonawanda Creek. The post historic additions are not contributory to the national significance of the landmark.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service

DATE

1/7/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street

TELEPHONE

202-523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

1/26/79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

1/25/79

ATTEST Bill Tolson
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC
 LANDMARKS)

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The survey, which necessitated the subdivision of lands into townships six miles square, grouped into a series of ranges, required two years to complete. In 1800, when the lands were open to settlers, Ellicott was appointed agent, under the supervision of the general agent, and he established his land office in Batavia. As the agent on location, Ellicott was instrumental in the Company's success, and also in establishing policy. He was responsible for laying out roads, dividing townships into small lots, contracting land sales, collecting installments, and granting deeds and mortgages. He laid out the city of Buffalo, was a firm supporter of the Erie Canal, and wielded a measure of influential power in western New York. Ellicott eventually resigned as land agent in 1821 to avoid a conflict between political and business interests.

With the decline of large land sales on the frontier, the Company found itself forced to dispose of its holdings in small lots and on credit. In the words of Paul D. Evans, a foremost authority on the Holland Company, "In carrying through this process (disposing of land on credit to the small farmer) they were confronted by a host of complex social problems. They were no longer mere cogs in a machine that constantly transferred wild land from one owner to another; they became guardians of a people's rights and interests, promoters of a people's life."¹ This leniency was largely due to the advice of Joseph Ellicott and his experience as land agent.

The Holland Land Company continued its operations until 1856 or shortly thereafter, up to which time it maintained a record of enlightened management in the settling of the frontier.

¹. Paul D. Evans. The Holland Land Company (Buffalo, New York, 1924), pp. 12-13.