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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 JETHRO WOOD HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON  
 Jethro Wood House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
 Poplar Ridge Road

\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN  
 Poplar Ridge

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF 33

STATE New York CODE 36 COUNTY Cayuga CODE 11

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mr. John Charles

STREET & NUMBER  
 Poplar Ridge Road

CITY, TOWN Aurora STATE New York 13026

VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.  
 Cayuga County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Auburn STATE New York

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
 None

DATE

\_\_FEDERAL \_\_STATE \_\_COUNTY \_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
 SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	(house) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	(barn) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	(minor)	

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jethro Wood House is a two story frame house, covered with white aluminum siding and topped with a shingled gable roof. Wood constructed the house circa 1800, utilizing a framing method similar to one used in barn construction. Vertical posts, hand hewn of single timbers, were positioned at regular intervals along the length of the front and rear sides. Each row of posts was then mortised and pinned to a square beam or plate which runs the length of the house. These two parallel beams, mortised to the posts, are exposed in the attic. The vertical posts are also exposed on the inner walls. The house has a partially raised basement as well, within its rubblestone foundations.

There are two chimneys, an internal one on the east gable end, and an external one on the west gable end. The internal chimney has been sealed off and its fireplaces have been closed. The others are open.

There are three doorways in the farmhouse, the front door, which is centrally positioned in the north facade, the side door which is located on the southern corner of the east side, and the rear door, no longer in use, in the center of the south facade. The front door is the only door with decoration. It is flanked by sidelights and surmounted by a transom window. Its simple pedimented hood has been recently repaired and is now supported by modern wrought iron beams.

The interior of the house is simply divided into a series of rooms by thin partitions, some of which have been removed or added over the years. A new kitchen was installed recently and the rooms are generally papered with post-historic but not recent vintage wallpaper. However, such features as wainscoting, chair rails and the banister of the stairway appear to be of the historic period, although no documentation has been made. The attic appears virtually unchanged and provides an excellent view of the structure of the house and roof.

To the rear of the house there are evidences of a frame addition, but the owner believes this addition, which collapsed and was removed recently, was of post-historic origin. Other outbuildings include the barn, which was formerly located behind the house to the south, but was moved to the east. The original structure burned some time ago and its stone foundations are presently occupied by a prefabricated sheet metal structure. The house well, which is located on the southeast corner of the house, has been covered over. Finally, there is a woodshed, located across the road, north of the house, which has been converted into a garage.

The Jethro Wood House was formerly the main farmhouse of the Wood farm. At present however, it serves as a tenant house for a more recent, larger farmhouse which is situated directly across the road from the landmark. The Wood House is presently vacant and the owner is contemplating its sale. Aside from the farmhouse and complex to the north and another farmhouse to the west, the Wood House is surrounded by farmland.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES    1800-1834    (years of Wood's occupancy)    BUILDER/ARCHITECT    Jethro Wood

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The quantity and efficiency of agricultural machinery today, sometimes obscures the fact that until relatively recently the mainstay of agricultural technology, the plow, differed only moderately from its ancient predecessors. When Jethro Wood patented his revolutionary cast-iron plow in 1819, the standard plow in use in the United States was a cumbersome and inefficient wooden implement. Although previous models for a cast-iron plow had been developed as early as 1797, Wood's model not only produced a cleaner furrow, but was easily repaired, as it consisted of three separate parts which were standardised and interchangeable.

The Jethro Wood House, near Poplar Ridge, New York, is a two story frame farmhouse where Wood lived and worked for the better part of his adult life. It is privately owned and presently used as a residence.

BIOGRAPHY

Little is known of the early life of Jethro Wood, except that he was born on March 16, 1774 and spent his youth at White Creek, Washington County, New York. Seven years after his marriage to Sylvia Howland in 1793, he moved to Cayuga County, New York, in the vicinity of Poplar Ridge, where he took up farming. At the same time, he pursued his early interest in improving the design of the plow. The instrument, as it was commonly produced at that time, was wooden and unwieldy, and except for the addition of the wooden moldboard (circa 1730), was of the same design as that used by the Romans. Others before Wood, including Thomas Jefferson, had attempted to improve the plow. Charles Newbold had patented a one piece cast-iron plow in 1797, but American farmers feared that the metal would poison the earth. Although English farmers had widely adopted a similar cast-iron model, it was not until 1819, that such a plow became prevalent in the United States.

Wood's first patent for a cast-iron plow was granted on July 1, 1814. Little is known about this early model, except that it was unfavorably regarded by both the inventor and the farmers. Nonetheless, Wood continued to experiment, and produced a second model, which was patented on September 1, 1819.

Wood's plow of 1819 possessed two outstanding merits. Most importantly, he had improved the design of the plow plate, particularly the moldboard, thereby allowing for cleaner and smoother plowing. The balance and strength of the instrument were also improved. The second improvement was the interchangeability

(continued)

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Russell H. Anderson. "Jethro Wood," Dictionary of American Biography, vol. XX (New York, 1943).
- S. Sydney Bradford. "Jethro Wood Home," National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, form 10-317, 1/29/64.
- Percy Bidwell and John Falconer. History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860, (Washington, D.C., 1925).

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 8	3, 6, 6, 3, 6, 0	4, 7, 3, 2, 7, 5, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at a point 40' due west of the southwest corner of the Wood House, proceed due north to the southern curb of Poplar Ridge Road, thence proceed east along said curb for 120', thence proceed due south for 220', thence due west for 120', thence due north to the point of origin. These boundaries enclose the Wood House and its immediately contingent grounds which have remained relatively untouched. The barn foundations and the wood shed do not possess sufficient integrity to contribute 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

DATE

Historic Sites Survey

1/15/76

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1100 I. Street

523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Washington, 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

10/12/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC  
LANDMARKS)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET Jethro Wood House ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

of the plow's three separate parts, the moldboard, landside and share. As production of the parts became standardised, it was possible for a farmer to replace one damaged part rather than purchase an entire plow.

The farmers' traditional fear of iron poisoning the soil was soon overcome by the convenience of the new plow and the various endorsements of agricultural societies and journals.

Despite Wood's patent, countless imitators produced the Wood plow, and the inventor and his heirs waged a constant and costly battle in the courts, to preserve his rights. His patent was extended once, but the costs of proving his case had exhausted virtually all his royalties. After his death in 1834, the state of New York appropriated \$2000 for Wood's heirs.

Jethro Wood cannot be given the sole credit for the widespread use of the cast-iron plow with interchangeable parts. As previously mentioned, both cast-iron and the use of interchangeable parts had been previously adopted in Great Britain. In 1819, some seven months before the granting of Wood's patent, Stephen McCormick of Virginia had patented a detachable plow with a cast-iron moldboard, which received widespread use throughout the South. However, Wood's model did possess improvements which were unique, and the widespread acceptance it received, especially in the North, was of sufficient significance to earn him fame as a major benefactor of American agriculture.