

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received APR - 6 1983
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

4

1. Name

historic Keeseville Village Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number various _____ not for publication

city, town Keeseville _____ vicinity of

state New York code 036 county Clinton/Essex code 19/31

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> multiple resource area	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	NA	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name multiple ownership

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clinton County Courthouse/Essex County Courthouse

street & number Margaret Street/Court Street

city, town Plattsburgh/Elizabethtown state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Statewide Inventory of
title Historic Resources has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1982 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Division for Historic Preservation

city, town Albany state New York

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>NA</u>

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The historic resources of the village of Keeseville were identified by means of a comprehensive survey/inventory of structures conducted during the spring of 1982 by the Friends of Keeseville, Inc. under the guidance of State Historic Preservation Office staff. This nomination consists of an historic district of 142 structures and three individual properties located outside the district boundaries. All properties included in the nomination were recorded on New York State building/structure inventory forms and systematically evaluated against the National Register criteria. The multiple resource nomination encompasses all those properties within Keeseville's village limits whose historical and/or architectural significance can be determined from information currently available. Other vernacular examples of regional architecture may be nominated in the future if additional information becomes available to substantiate their historical significance. Furthermore, those properties whose primary significance is archeological have not been evaluated. No historic resources within the multiple resource area have been listed in the National Register to date.

The village of Keeseville is situated on the northeastern fringe of the rugged Adirondack mountains in two counties. The swift Ausable River bisects Keeseville, separating Clinton County on the west bank from Essex County on the east in its final plunge toward Lake Champlain to the east. The Ausable River remains Keeseville's most prominent visual feature, and historically it has served the community as a source of power, transport, building stone, water and recreation. From the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the river became the focus of numerous hydraulic industries such as tanneries, breweries, planing and sawmills, iron forges, nail factories and rolling/splitting mills which were established along its banks. Though floods, ice floes and fires have destroyed a number of Keeseville's industrial and commercial buildings, the remainder of the village survives with a remarkably high degree of architectural integrity.

In plan, the village reflects the economic and social forces which contributed to its historical development as a community. Factories such as the extant stone and frame Adirondack Horse-Nail Company complex were clustered near their source of water power along Ausable and River Streets. The modest vernacular frame houses historically occupied by workers are generally located near the factories along Ausable and Beach Streets. The ornate and stylish residences of prosperous mill owners and businessmen are situated on the heights overlooking the river along Main, Pleasant and Front Streets.

The civic and commercial center of Keeseville developed along Main Street and Front Street. The most important structures in this area are a cluster of rare stone Classical Revival style commercial buildings and the Masonic Temple, which together illustrate the versatility of Ausable River sandstone as a building material in the early nineteenth century. Between 1868 and 1885, construction of the Mould and Kingsland blocks of attached, two-story commercial buildings expanded Keeseville's commercial district across the river to Front Street. Sharing a common bracketed cornice and symmetrical round-arched windows above the storefronts, these commercial

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blocks survive with a remarkable degree of integrity of design, materials and craftsmanship.

✓ The Keeseville Historic District encompasses the commercial, industrial and residential center of the community as it existed in the nineteenth century. The district boundaries separate the historic core of the village from areas beyond, where modern residential development predominates. Most buildings within the district retain integrity of design, scale, and materials. Included within the district are structures representing a variety of functions and styles spanning the period from 1820 to 1936. The dominant building style found in the village is the Greek Revival, corresponding to the period of Keeseville's greatest prosperity and growth. Aside from its high percentage of extant Greek Revival residential and commercial structures, the district also contains numerous rural vernacular adaptations of Federal, Gothic Revival, and Italianate architectural forms and examples of more modest working class dwellings. A small number of buildings reflect early twentieth century architectural influences.

The historic district is linked across the Ausable River by two historic bridges. A massive, single-span stone arch bridge erected in 1842 carries Main Street to its juncture with Front Street. To the south, a steel suspension foot bridge built in 1888 survives intact to form part of the district's southern boundary. Additional information concerning the district is contained on the enclosed New York State historic district inventory form.

✓ The three individual properties nominated as components of the multiple resource area include: the Tomlinson House (1846), a rare late Federal style structure in the community incorporating a Classical, monumental portico as part of its formal design; Rembrandt Hall (1851), a brick Gothic Revival style cottage in a picturesque knolltop setting; and the Double-Span Metal Pratt Truss Bridge (1877) crossing the Ausable River between Ausable and River Streets, an important engineering and transportation feature. Additional information concerning these properties is contained in the enclosed New York State building/structure inventory forms.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates: c 1815 - c 1936 **Builder/Architect** Seneca Perry, Isaac Perry et al

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Keeseville Village Multiple Resource Area is a significant grouping of 145 historic structures which reflect the development of an important center of Adirondack commerce and industry from 1820 to 1936. Located in a region of abundant iron, timber and water resources, Keeseville prospered as a manufacturing community from the early nineteenth century. The village retains significant representative, well-preserved examples of industrial and commercial buildings, working-class houses, stylish entrepreneurs' residences, and three bridges spanning the Ausable River in an historic setting which survives substantially intact. Keeseville's rich architectural heritage includes distinctive regional examples of Classical, Gothic Revival, and Italianate design, many by prominent local artisans Seneca and Isaac Perry; a group of civic, commercial, industrial and residential structures built of local Ausable River sandstone; a massive stone arch bridge, a steel suspension foot bridge, and a two-span metal truss bridge, reflecting a broad range of nineteenth-century bridge engineering. The Keeseville Historic District and three individual structures which together constitute the multiple resource area preserve the essence of an historic Adirondack manufacturing village to a degree rarely encountered in the region.

The great potential water power of the Ausable River and its proximity to rich iron ore deposits and timber resources attracted the first permanent white settlers to "Anderson Falls" by 1808. A sawmill, grist mill and dam existed by 1812, and the settlement became Keeseville in 1815. Entrepreneurs John Keese and his son Richard established the Keeseville Rolling and Slitting Mill Company in 1816, the first such enterprise in New York State. Oliver Keese established a large woolen factory in 1819, and extensive industrial development soon followed along both sides of the Ausable. On the eve of the Civil War, Keeseville was a bustling Adirondack mill town, containing "... 7 churches, the Keeseville Academy, 2 extensive rolling mills, 3 nail factories, a machine shop, an ax and edge tool factory, a cupola furnace, an axletree factory, a horseshoe factory, a planing mill, 2 gristmills, and a nail keg factory," with a population of 2,569.¹ The village prospered through the Civil War years by capitalizing upon the vast wartime demand for manufactured horseshoe nails. Using the patented nailmaking machines of local blacksmith Daniel Dodge, the Ausable Horse-Nail Company established by the Kingsland family in 1862 dominated the local iron industry, generating the wealth and investment capital reflected in many of Keeseville's finest residences

¹J.H. French, Gazeteer of the State of New York, (Syracuse, 1860), 235.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Everest, Allan. Our North Country Heritage. Plattsburgh, 1970.
French, J.H. Gazeteer of the State of New York. Syracuse, 1860.
Hurd, Duane Hamilton. History of Clinton and Franklin Counties, New York. Philadelphia, 1880.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____
Quadrangle name Keeseville See Continuation Sheet Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
UTM References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Verbal boundary description and justification The boundaries of the Keeseville Historic District are those delineated on the enclosed large-scale planning map. Boundaries of the three individually nominated properties are delineated on the enclosed large-scale tax maps attached to individual inventory forms.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	New York	code	36	county	Clinton	code	19
state	New York	code	36	county	Essex	code	31

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Raymond W. Smith, Program Analyst
organization Div. for Historic Preservation date 2/83
street & number Agency Bldg. 1, Empire State Plaza telephone 518-474-0479
city or town Albany state New York

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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Ann Webster Smith

title Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation

date 3/15/83

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

See continuation sheet for listings date _____
Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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and commercial structures. The stone company office and nail factory buildings, the ornate homes of Edmund and Nelson Kingsland on Main Street, and the Kingsland Block of Italianate style commercial buildings on Front Street attest to the importance of the Ausable Horse-Nail Company in the development of the community.

Keeseville possesses singular architectural significance and integrity among the communities of the Adirondack-Champlain region. The majority of structures built during Keeseville's boom period (1825-1880) have survived without substantial alteration: The modern village remains as it existed throughout much of the nineteenth century. The significant examples of Ausable River sandstone construction and the large number of both modest and stylish frame structures spared by the fires that devastated parts of the village contribute to Keeseville's remarkable historic setting. Among the most unusual of Keeseville's residences is the Tomlinson House, a late Federal style house built in 1846 which incorporates a formal Classical portico in its principal facade design.

The stylistic treatment and high level of craftsmanship exhibited in many village residences built between 1830 and 1855 can be attributed to Seneca and Isaac Perry, an exceptional father and son team of local carpenters-joiners most noted for their ornate and delicate circular staircases. The Mills (1836), Arnold (1840), and Kingsland (ca. 1855) houses are notable Perry structures which are among the most significant examples of vernacular residential architecture in the village. Rembrandt Hall (1851), a Gothic Revival style cottage which retains its circular staircase, was designed by Isaac Perry shortly before he left Keeseville to pursue formal architectural training in New York City. Isaac Perry's subsequent career included designs for St. Lawrence State Hospital, numerous state armories and civic structures, and completion of the New York State Capitol. Seneca Perry's own Italianate style residence on Vine Street lies within the historic district.

Keeseville's three historically significant bridges represent a chronology of diverse nineteenth-century engineering solutions to the problem of spanning the Ausable River. The earliest crossing in the village, the massive stone arch bridge on Main Street, was designed by local surveyor/engineer Silas Arnold and erected under his supervision in 1842. The 110-foot masonry span built of local Ausable stone is one of the largest and best-preserved examples of its type and period surviving in New York State. The stone arch bridge continues its historic function as the principal span connecting the Essex and Clinton County portions of Keeseville.

The Double-Span Metal Truss Bridge known as the Lower Bridge is located upstream at the southern edge of the village. Manufactured by the firm of Murray, Dougal and Company of Milton, Pennsylvania and erected in 1877, the 214-foot, pin-connected bridge consists of two identical wrought-iron spans incorporating the patented Pratt truss design. Although its original stone midstream pier and abutments have been replaced with

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concrete, the bridge superstructure is well preserved and retains complete integrity. With its full complement of decorative finials, builder's plates and decorative portal bracing, the bridge is significant as the earliest extant example of a metal Pratt truss bridge in New York State.

Keeseville's third historic span is the Steel Suspension Foot Bridge located near the center of the village. Erected for factory workers on the site of two earlier foot bridges, the present structure consists of a stiffened steel deck suspended from five-strand steel cables between lattice-braced steel towers on opposing banks of the Ausable. Built in 1888 by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company, East Berlin, Connecticut, the 240-foot structure is significant as one of only two known extant examples of its type built by this prolific bridge-building firm and the only one located in New York.

With the decline of the Adirondack lumber and iron industries in the 1880's, Keeseville's importance as a manufacturing center of the region likewise declined. During the twentieth century, tourism and residential growth as a suburb of nearby Plattsburgh have maintained Keeseville's economic base. The Adirondack Northway (Interstate Route 87) bypassed the village in the 1960's, thereby contributing to preservation of the historic community. In the quality and variety of its structures and in the overall integrity of its setting, the village of Keeseville remains a superb historical example of a nineteenth-century Adirondack mill community.

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Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

dnr-11

Name Keeseville Village Multiple Resource Area
State New York

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

1. Tomlinson House

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper

Delores Byers 5/20/83

Attest

2. Double-span Metal Pratt Truss Bridge

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper

Delores Byers 5/20/83

Attest

3. Rembrandt Hall

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper

Delores Byers 5/20/83

Attest

4. Keeseville Historic District

Entered in the
National Register *for* Keeper

Delores Byers 5/20/83

Attest

5.

Keeper

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest