

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Thomson Family Farm

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Thomson Hollow Road

☐ not for publication

city or town New Kingston

☒ vicinity

state New York

code NY

county Delaware

code 025

zip code 12459

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this ☒ 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 ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant. ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☒ locally. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other, (explain:)

Thomson Family Farm

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

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

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
5	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
9	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/fields, outbuildings
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
LANDSCAPE/agricultural landscape

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/fields, outbuildings
DOMESTIC/single dwelling
LANDSCAPE/agricultural landscape

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

no style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone
walls walls

roof asbestos
other

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

The Thomson Family Farm is located in the southwest corner of the town of Roxbury, in the Catskill Mountain region of New York. Located just north of the Middletown town line, the site is within a deep hollow, which extends northeast from the hamlet of New Kingston (in Middletown) into Roxbury and divides Round Top (3,060 ft.) from Plattekill Mountain (3,260 ft.). The farm is located near the head of the hollow, on the west side of Thomson Hollow Road, in a setting of cleared fields and steep forested hillsides. The nominated property is approximately ninety acres in size. This represents the largest intact portion of the Thomson farm. Other land once owned by the Thomsons has been sold off, developed and/or reforested. Those parcels no longer reflect the agricultural history of the property and are excluded from the nomination. Although only two buildings (farmhouse and dairy barn) survive, the landscape is characterized by open fields, forested hills, stone walls, tree lines, building foundations, documented building sites, and other features that document the use of the land during the period of significance.

The original Thomson farm dates to c1820, when John Thomson, a Scottish immigrant, purchased a portion of Great Lot 41 in the Hardenburgh Patent. Over the course of a century the farm grew from a subsistence farm into a large commercial and dairy farm before passing out of family ownership in the 1930s. The evolution of the farm is reflected in changes in acreage, land division and the number and type of farm features. The last complete description of the property was provided by Ralph Thomson in 1988. The latter Thomson, nephew of Andrew J. Thomson, who operated the farm in the early twentieth century, described the farm as he remembered it from his youth. As Ralph Thomson described and sketched it, the c1910 farm consisted of the farmhouse and seven outbuildings (dairy barn and milk house, sheep barn, horse barn, privy, wood shed/granary, shop, saw mill) within a clearly demarcated agricultural landscape of fields, gardens, orchards, animal yards, a pond and several sluiceways.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

The farmhouse and barn are clustered at the end of an east-west driveway providing access from Thomson Hollow Road. The driveway is lined with a row of Canadian spruce trees planted in the mid-nineteenth century. The house was constructed with its primary façade oriented to the south; however, the east side elevation, which faces the driveway, is generally used as the primary entrance today. The dairy barn is north of the residence, and the remains of the wood shop, horse barn and root cellar, and saw mill are northeast of the house. The remains of a small barn, known as the sheep barn, are located on the south side of the driveway, southeast of the house. The original pond, north of the horse barn, is dry but is still visible. The creek still runs east-west on the north side of the stone wall behind the spruce trees, and the ground shows evidence of where this creek was once diverted to the pond. Portions of the underground stone sluiceway from the pond to the house can also be seen. There is a stone slab bridge over the creek that separates house and barn and another at the bottom of the stairs behind the kitchen wing. A new pond occupies the space west of the house that was once the site of an orchard. An extensive system of stone walls survives throughout the property, even in the once-open but now wooded hillside fields.

Farmhouse

The exact construction date of the farmhouse is not known; however, it was apparently built over the period c1835-40. During the period c1870-1908, the house received a number of alterations to accommodate changes in occupancy and function. The residence is a one and one-half story wood-frame building surmounted by a gable roof. It is built into a hillside and has a stone basement that is exposed on the north and part of the east elevations. The building is constructed of heavy, hand-hewn mortise and tenon framing. The basement has a stone slab floor with the foundation of a chimney in the east half. The interior end chimney above it, as well as another interior end chimney at the west end of the house, have been removed. The main body of the building is rectangular in form, five bays wide by two bays deep (40' x 30'). There are two small wings: a kitchen wing (20' x 20') extends from the north elevation and a smaller pavilion (14' x 14') extends from the south elevation.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Each wing is of wood-frame construction and surmounted by a gable roof. Three sides of the main section are sided in six-inch hand-hewn clapboard, while the east elevation and the two wings have four-inch clapboard siding. The roof features asbestos shingle cladding; on the main section, this covers wooden shingles. Much of the fenestration is from the historic period and includes wooden double-hung sash windows and panel doors; the original multi-pane sash has been replaced with two-over-two sash and a few windows and doors have been replaced or added. The building features a wide frieze and a deep overhanging cornice with returns.

The south elevation is the primary façade. At one time, this elevation was organized symmetrically, five bays wide with a center entrance. Although this arrangement is still evident, there have been two significant changes to the south elevation. A projecting three-bay oriel window replaced the original southeast window in the Victorian period and a small square wing (which originally had a separate entrance) replaced the original southwest window in c1895. Between these two features is a vertical panel door with trabeated surround (not original to this house) and half-sidelights. This is flanked by two small windows that may be replacements of the originals.

The east gable end elevation, facing the driveway, has been used as the primary entrance since c1900 or earlier. At some time, probably in the late nineteenth century, the first-story south window was replaced with a door, which is now the main entrance to the residence. The entrance is sheltered by a full-width, Victorian-era porch with a hipped roof supported on columns with Doric capitals. Historic views indicate that the current posts are at least the third ones to support the porch, which at one time also had a decorative balustrade. Within the last twenty years, the other first-story window was replaced with French doors, opening onto the porch. The half-story is marked with two small square windows and two rectangular double-hung sash windows.

rectangular kitchen wing extends to the north. This one and one-half story, three-bay by two-bay pavilion is surmounted by a gable roof set perpendicular to the body of the house. The kitchen wing is either original to the

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

building or a very early addition. It is constructed of lighter framing but shares a continuous stone foundation and basement with the rest of the house. In addition, repair work revealed exterior clapboard on the north elevation of the main block, behind the gable of the wing. The east elevation of the wing has a first-story entrance and two windows. An internal chimney, which may have served a stove, has been removed.

The kitchen wing fills half of the north elevation. The gable end of this wing features a wide frieze and molded cornice similar to those on the main section and is broken by one window on the first story and two in the half-story. The remainder of the north elevation features a single window on the first story, lighting the northwest corner of the main house, and a small window in the upper story. An internal brick chimney pierces the roof of this quadrant.

The west, now the rear, gable end elevation features the same half-story window configuration as the east elevation; however, the two first-story windows have been replaced by doors and a contemporary deck extends across the entire west side, including the west elevation of the 1895 wing. This small square addition features a gable roof set perpendicular to the south elevation. On the west, the steep drop in slope provides for a fully exposed basement with ground level entrances to the main house and both wings. The west elevation of the kitchen wing features two small windows and a door. The latter provides access to an original set of stone steps that lead down to a stone slab bridge over the creek.

The interior of the residence retains the outline of the original plan but reflects alterations to its decorative and functional program. These changes were made to accommodate changes in occupancy, family relationships and functions, as well as changes in taste over time. Entering from the original center entrance on the south elevation, the building is organized around a center hall with stairs flanked by rooms. Although the hall formerly allowed passage to the back of the house, the through passage has been enclosed for use as a kitchen pantry. West of the hall, the space was originally divided into a larger room and two small chambers. It is now

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

one large space used as a living room. This room has access to the small square addition in the southwest corner. In 1893, when James Thomson sold the farm to his son, this half of the house (west of the hall) was reserved for his use. This division of space and function is specified in the deed, as was the elder Thomson's right to construct the small wing, which served as a kitchen, and to use a small room at the top of the stairs for an unmarried daughter.

East of the hall, the large front room, with the oriel window and access to the porch, is now used as a kitchen. The room behind it (with French doors) was used as a dining room in the early twentieth century and retains this use. From evidence in the framing, it appears that room divisions in the east half of the house at one time mimicked those on the west side, with one large space in the front and two smaller ones behind it. Behind the current dining room, there is an entrance to the kitchen wing, which has been reconfigured into contemporary living spaces, a pantry and a bathroom.

Stairs in the hall provide access to the half-story. Records indicate that the stair was constructed in 1840, at the same time that the half-story was finished for use as bedrooms. The upper floor of the farmhouse is now divided into three bedrooms, bathroom and laundry room. The earlier second floor plan, with one large bedroom flanked by two smaller ones in each half of the house, has been slightly altered, and the original stair to the attic has been replaced by a closet.

Decoration and finishes throughout the house vary, reflecting its long history; however, the majority of the finish work appears to reflect the c1840 period. Wide-board floors are generally found throughout. All of the walls in the half-story are clad in wide, horizontal board siding, some still covered with wallpaper. This cladding also covers the lower half of the walls in the front entrance hall. In the contemporary period, framing has been exposed in some parts of the house and some partitions have been moved or eliminated.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 6

Dairy Barn

The dairy barn is immediately north of the farmhouse and is also oriented to the east. The barn, constructed c1881, is a large three-story building (34' by 48') with a hand-hewn heavy timber frame. The barn sits on a cut-stone foundation and features a gable roof and vertical-board siding. The barn was constructed on land that slopes gradually to the west, so that the lowest floor, which sheltered the dairy herd, was at ground level. This level contains stalls for twenty-five cattle, a large herd for the period. A steep ramp, constructed of dressed stone, provides access to the upper level from the east; this allowed wagons to unload hay at the top, storage level. There is an attached milk house at the southwest corner of the barn. This is a small rectangular wood-frame structure with gable roof and wooden clapboard siding. Alterations to the barn include the addition of several windows over the years to accommodate new uses and the recent loss of the gable-roofed portico that sheltered wagons as they approached the upper entrance.

Horse Barn Foundation

The horse barn foundation is east of the dairy barn. This building, which apparently predated the dairy barn, was 30' by 40' in size and built into the hillside. The horse barn was a two-story wood-frame building with clapboard siding, gable roof, corner boards, wide frieze and cornice returns. The stone foundation survives, as does the basement cold cellar. The latter is of stone construction with a stone slab roof.

Wood Shop Foundation

The stone foundation of the wood shop is northeast of the farmhouse, adjacent to the barn. This building was of wood frame construction with clapboard siding, a gable roof, corner boards, wide frieze, and cornice with returns.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 7

Sheep Barn Foundation

The stone foundation of a small barn referred to as the "sheep barn" is located in the large field southeast of the farmhouse. This barn was apparently built before the dairy barn and may have been the earliest agricultural building on the farm. From historic photos it appears to resemble the traditional English threshing barn in size. In the early twentieth century, when the photos were taken, it was clad in vertical-board siding.

Granary Site

The wood shed/granary was located immediately east of the house, only a few feet from the east porch. This was a small two-story wood-frame building with clapboard siding, a gable roof, corner boards, a wide frieze and cornice with returns. There were entrances on the south and east elevations and a small window in the east gable. The first floor was used as a wood shed and the second floor as a granary.

Unknown Building Foundation

There is a stone foundation southeast of the house; however, there is no documentation about the appearance or function of a building on this site.

Water Power System

The water power system consisted of a mill pond and dam, sluiceways, saw mill, and a water-powered butter churn. A mill pond was created by damming a stream that originated on Plattekill Mountain and entered the property near Thomson Hollow Road. The mill pond (dry) and dam are northeast of the farmhouse, near Thomson Hollow Road. Three sluiceways extended southwest from the pond. These were constructed of wood and stone and were partially below ground. Portions are visible today. One sluiceway ran to the mill that was adjacent to the south elevation of the house barn. This was used threshing and grinding as well as sawing wood.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 8

Another sluiceway was diverted to farmhouse, where it powered an overshot wheel near the west elevation of the kitchen wing. According to Ralph Thomson's description, a wooden bar attached to one of the spokes of the wheel passed through an opening in the cellar wall and was connected to a six-foot churn ladle.

Spring Water Delivery System

Water for the house and barn was delivered from a spring on Round Top Mountain, east of the farmhouse, via a system of ten-foot-long bored logs connected by forged double-ended cone-shaped nipples. Among other uses the spring water was used to cool the milk used in the cheese making operation.

Other Building Sites

The existence of several other farm features has been documented; however, their sites have not been identified. These include:

- original log house (c1820), two rods (approximately thirty-three feet) from the current farmhouse
- chicken house, northwest of the house
- pig house, west of the house
- privy, straddled the stream northwest of the house.

Landscape Features

Landscape features include cleared fields, forested hills, including the remains of a sugar bush, an extensive system of stone walls that extends up the surrounding hillsides, Canadian spruce trees lining the driveway, and garden sites.

Thomson Family Farm

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

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.

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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References**Bibliography**

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

settlement
agriculture
social history
architecture
archeology

Period of Significance

1820-c1930

Significant Dates

1820

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

na

Cultural Affiliation

na

Architect/Builder

na

Primary location of additional data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

The Thomson Family Farm is significant for its association with the settlement of the New Kingston valley and the agricultural history of Delaware County. Settled in 1820, the farm documents the history of an important local family and illustrates the development of a small family farm over the course of more than a century. The farm is located at the head of Thomson Hollow, four miles north of the hamlet of New Kingston. Although the farm is actually in the town of Roxbury, the Thomsons formed close associations with settlers of the New Kingston patent in the town of Middletown because geography dictated that travel was far easier to New Kingston than to Roxbury and because their shared Scottish ancestry provided important social connections with New Kingston's large Scottish population. John Thomson, a Scottish immigrant, established the farm in 1820, leasing a farm in Great Lot 41 of the Hardenburgh Patent. Over the next century, the farm evolved from a subsistence farm to a large commercial operation, raising hay, buckwheat, oats, rye, apples, maple syrup, sheep, pigs and, most important, cows. Both the second and third generations of Thomson farmers kept sizable herds of twenty to thirty cows. Butter was the farm's chief cash crop and the Thomsons were known for the high quality of their product. Three generations of the Thomson family are associated with the development of the farm: John Thomson, who was responsible for initial settlement and development; his son James H., who took it over in the mid-1850s and greatly enlarged production over the next half-century, and his grandson Andrew J., who purchased 106 acres from his father in 1893 and maintained a flourishing farm into the late 1920s. In the early twentieth century, the Thomson farm was a substantial operation, with open fields, cleared hillside pastures and numerous buildings within a clearly articulated agricultural landscape. The Thomsons were especially efficient in making use of the abundant water supply on their mountain farm. The farm retains evidence of the spring-fed pipeline that provided water from Round Top Mountain for household and barn use and of a second water-powered system constructed by damming a stream from Plattekill Mountain. The latter powered both a mill for sawing wood and threshing grain and an unusual water-powered butter churn. The significance of the farm is enhanced by the survival of a substantial amount of physical and documentary evidence of its long history. In addition to the farmhouse and dairy barn, the property retains the foundations of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

several buildings and structures and a number of documented building sites; information suggests that there are other sites that have not yet been identified. There are also numerous landscape features, such as stone walls, field divisions, and vegetation. Finally, James Thomson's dairy, which contains details of farm operations over a fifty-year period, and numerous historic photographs and other material has also been preserved. Together these features and archival material provide an exceptionally thorough understanding of the farm's history.

The Thomson Family Farm is also significant for its potential to provide substantial archaeological data. The information potential for the various deposits on this farm are important in two ways. First, the deposits have the potential to provide significant information on the lifestyle, habits, and socio-economic standing of the residents of the farm. Second, due to the high level of knowledge available regarding the various outbuildings and their uses, these deposits provide an unusual opportunity to look at archaeological deposits from well-documented buildings. The available information on how each structure was used will help in developing models of how these structures should look in the archaeological record, helping to develop recognizable signatures that can then be applied to other sites where the activities that created archaeological deposits are not as well documented. While not quite "ethno-archaeology," examination of the deposits associated with these outbuildings in conjunction with the detailed knowledge about how many of the structures were used has the potential to help elucidate the data from many other sites.

Town of Roxbury

The town of Roxbury, settled in the late eighteenth century, was formed from the town of Stamford in 1799. Roxbury is an interior, mountainous district, broken by the streams and tributaries of the Delaware River. Roxbury's earliest European settlers were John C. and Joseph Keator from Ulster County. The Keators purchased a farm on Lot 38 of the Hardenburgh patent, the immense eighteenth-century land grant that included and in the Catskills between the Rondout and Delaware rivers. This settlement, in the Batavia Kill Valley, southeast of the hamlet of Roxbury, became one of the most prosperous agricultural areas of the town. Other

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

early settlers arrived from the Fairfield, Connecticut area and established farms near the hamlets of Stamford, Grand Gorge and Roxbury. In the early nineteenth century, the town had small industrial settlements at Shackville, south of Roxbury, and Hubbell's Corners, to the north; however, Roxbury, located between them, eventually became the town seat. Roxbury's importance increased with the coming of the Ulster and Delaware Railroad in the 1870s, as the railroad became one of the chief outlets for the butter and cheese that were the town's primary exports. The town's main industry until the twentieth century was agriculture, and it was known for its high quality "Roxbury butter." In the early twentieth century, with the railroad providing easy access to the mountains, the town developed a substantial tourist industry and saw a period of increased growth.

John Thomson (1788-1857)

The Thomson Family Farm was established by John Thomson in 1820, shortly after his emigration from Scotland with his wife and two children. John Thomson was one of three brothers who settled in southeastern Delaware County during the first quarter of the eighteenth century. James arrived in 1800, settling in the town of Bovina, on the west side of Round Top Mountain, and Andrew followed in 1825, also settling in Bovina. John Thomson purchased land in the Plattekill valley between Round Top (west) and Plattekill Mountain (north and northeast). Although this land was within the boundary of the town of Roxbury, Plattekill Mountain provided a substantial obstacle to travel to the rest of the town. Instead, the Thomsons and other nearby farmers were oriented to New Kingston, four miles south in the adjacent town of Middletown, or to Bovina Center (town of Bovina), via a road over Round Top.

The New Kingston patent was a five-thousand-acre land grant from Robert Livingston to citizens of the city of Kingston, on the Hudson River, who had lost their homes in the fire of 1776. The Livingston grant was divided into one hundred lots, each fifty acres in size and overlaid on a natural landscape of steep hills that framed the Plattekill Creek, which ran north-south through the center of the patent. From the hamlet of New Kingston

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

three deep hollows extended north to the edges of the patent. Thomson Hollow, the easternmost of these, extended beyond the patent and terminated just north of the Thomson farm in the town of Roxbury. Although the New Kingston patent was set aside for Dutch settlers, very few Dutch took advantage of Livingston's offer and New Kingston was settled almost exclusively by Scotch immigrants. These physical and social factors created a strong connection between the farmers at the head of Thomson Hollow and New Kingston's farming community. This area of Roxbury, known as the Thomson District after its first settlers, was also home to a number of other Scottish families, including the Archibalds, Hendersons and Millers. These farmers used the New Kingston post office, attended the New Kingston Presbyterian Church, and took advantage of New Kingston's other commercial and civic facilities.

The John Thomson farm was described as Lot 150 within Great Lot 41 of the Hardenburgh Patent. Thomson originally leased the farm from John Hunter of Westchester County for an annual rent of \$25.50 a year; however, the first five years were allocated to him for a shilling, or about \$17. Although the exact size of Thomson's parcel is not known, Lot 150 was noted on an early map as 135 acres. As was typical, the acreage changed over the course of the nineteenth century; however, by c1893, when it passed into the last period of Thomson occupation (Andrew J.), it was defined as 106 acres. The nominated farm is the core of that parcel, including most of the Thomson land on the west side of Thomson Hollow Road.

During the John Thomson period (1820-c1857), the first activities were clearing the forested land and developing a subsistence farm. As clearing progressed, an extensive network of stone walls was built, defining boundaries, roads, fields and orchards. The first Thomson residence was a log house. Barns were constructed in 1822 and 1834. The latter barn was constructed at a cost of \$80 for carpentry and \$14 for stonework. This may be the building referred to as the sheep barn, the foundation of which is evident today. Although the exact construction date of the one and one-half story frame farmhouse is not known, its form and style suggest that it

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

was built c1835-40. James Thomson's diaries (see below), which begin in 1838, record substantial work on the building in 1840. For example, between March and July of that year, Thomson reports laying a brick chimney, building a stair and finishing the bedrooms, plastering and finishing the "big room" and kitchen, and building a "burner chimney top," presumably for a stove. John Thomson and his wife, Marian Boyle, had four children, Janet, James, Andrew Y. and John B.

James H. Thomson (1818-1904)

Information about the development of the farm after 1838 is derived from the diaries of James Thomson, John's oldest son, who operated the farm from his father's death in 1857 (or a little before) until the early 1890s, when he turned it over to his own son Andrew. James Thomson began to keep a diary in 1838, when he was twenty years old, and kept it from 1838 to 1841 and then again from 1857 until his death in 1903. Additional information about the farm in this period has also been related in the letters and memoirs of Ralph Thomson (1893-1988), James's grandson, who spent time on the farm in the early twentieth century.

James Thomson was responsible for the greatest expansion and development of the farm. Ralph Thomson notes that three hundred acres had been cleared and that his grandfather was operating two farms, his and that of his brother John B. Thomson. This adjacent farm (possibly part of the 1820 lease) was later farmed by James Thomson's son Jacob, and seems to have been closely associated with the nominated farm during the nineteenth century. It is not clear when this farm passed out of family hands. In the James Thomson period, the family raised hay, both for its own use and for sale, grew buckwheat, rye, straw and had a large garden and orchard, from which they harvested apples, grafted trees and made cider. The family also raised and sold sheep and sold wool. There were two pigpens, and James's diary for 1839 notes that he "fixed a place in the old house to make hams." Most important, they maintained a large herd of cows, from which they made cheese and butter, the farm's most important crop.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Two streams running through the property provided for an abundant supply of water power and the Thomsons took full advantage of it as they developed the farm into a larger operation in the late 1830s and 40s. They dammed a brook to create a pond and built a mill, which was used for threshing, grinding and sawing wood. They also constructed a sluiceway and waterwheel adjacent to the house in order to provide power for a butter churn in the basement. Churning operations were carried out most days of the week. The butter was packed in ten-pound pails, sold locally or shipped out. Before the railroad arrived in Roxbury, James Thomson described his own trips to New York City, traveling via steamboat from Catskill, to sell butter. In 1839, he reported that he "got to New York at daylight and staid (sic) all day and to the Museum in the evening." The success of his dairy business is reflected in the large new dairy barn constructed in 1881.

At some point, an elaborate system was constructed to carry water down from a mountain stream via a pipeline made of ten-foot-long bored logs, which were connected by forged double-ended cone-shaped nipples. The spring water was used for household functions, including keeping the milk cool for butter making, and in the barn. Although the biggest cash crop was butter, they also made cheese, and in 1840 James Thomson reported building a cheese press. The Thomsons also produced oats, wool and maple syrup and raised sheep, pigs and cows. The farm had two sugar bushes, on the east and west sides of the hollow; these were planted quite a distance up the hillside in order to provide a better grade of sap. Buildings constructed in this period include the wood shed/granary, dairy barn, horse/carriage barn and workshop.

James Thomson married Jane Amos and they had eight children: John became a minister and moved to Sprakers, in the Mohawk Valley. William was a shopkeeper in Hobart and Jacob was a farmer and shopkeeper in Margaretville. Amos became a doctor and lived in Saratoga Springs. Margaret died in infancy and her sister Marian became a schoolteacher. Another sister, Annie, married and became a farmer in Bovina. Andrew Thomson, the oldest, took over the home farm. In 1893, James Thomson sold a 106-acre parcel, noted as part of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Farm 150, to Andrew for \$3500. It is not clear whether the elder Thomson retained a connection to the adjacent farm in this period.

The deed specified that James Thomson would retain use of the western half of the house and have access to the cellar and upstairs. He was also granted the right to build a small addition and a "a room at the head of the stairs for the use of [his] unmarried daughter as long as she may need [it]." The small, two-story wood-frame addition on the southwest corner of the farmhouse was constructed as a kitchen for the elder Thomson and his daughter in c1895. This addition originally had its own exterior door, as well as a separate basement entrance. The deed also stipulated that the elder Thomson and his daughter were to have "milk butter, eggs, meat, potatoes and flour," as well as the use of a horse for as long as they needed it. James Thompson is reported to have had a noted dairy farm, prosperous and well run. At the end of his life, he was described as a "well read man" and a "leading Prohibitionist."¹

Andrew J. Thomson (1864-c1930)

Information about the history of the farm during the Andrew Thomson period (1893-c1930) was also gleaned through the writings of Ralph Thomson. Ralph, the son of Andrew's brother John, spent several summers on his uncle's farm in the early twentieth century. He was intimately familiar with the layout and operation of the farm and is pictured working in the fields along with his uncle in 1910. Andrew Thomson (always known as Uncle Dick) married Nettie Hewitt and they had two children, Milton Amos and James Wallace.

During the Andrew Thomson period, the farm continued to prosper and was described a flourishing farm "in perfect order."² Andrew Thomson maintained twenty-five sheep and a large milk herd of twenty or more Jersey milch cows. As Ralph Thomson described it, the farm had two separate cow pastures, one on either side of the

¹ *Leading Citizens of Delaware County: Biographical Review*. (n.p., 1895).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

hollow, which accommodated the cows during the day and at night. The farm continued to raise pigs and chickens and produce hay for the cattle, as well as buckwheat, oats, apples and maple syrup. Like his father, Andrew Thomson traded in butter rather than milk, with Ralph noting that they were too far from the creamery to make shipment of fluid milk practical.

Post-Thomson Period

In the 1930s, the Thomsons sold the farm to the Dougherty family. By 1949, the Doughertys had acquired the Andrew Thomson farm, two farms to the south and other land in the area. During this period, the farm went into a period of decline. By the 1950s and 60s it was abandoned and many of the buildings had fallen to ruin. Following two subsequent owners, one of whom used the property as a hunting camp, the current owners acquired the Thomson farm in several purchases in 1987. Since that time, they have undertaken a vigorous restoration of the house and the reestablishment of an agricultural landscape.

Architecture

Although the James Thomson diary provides an extensive record of farm operations, there are only a few brief references to buildings. However, information about the development and appearance of buildings and structures is provided by the buildings and sites themselves, numerous historic photographs and Ralph Thomson's writings. The current farmhouse is apparently the second dwelling on the site. Reference has been made to an original log house, a typical first dwelling in the settlement period, sited about thirty-three feet from the existing house.³

The exact date of construction for the farmhouse is not known but it was apparently built c1835-40. The heavy timber wood-frame house with stone basement is a typical example of a nineteenth-century farm dwelling in

Biographical Review.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 9

Delaware County. The building is distinguished by its one and one-half story form and five-bay center-hall plan. There is a kitchen wing, another typical feature, constructed perpendicular to the main block of the house. This is either an original feature or an early addition, since its foundation is continuous with that of the main block. Like most other regional farmhouses of the period, the building features restrained Greek Revival style decoration. Although chimney locations varied, historic photos reveal that this example had interior end chimneys; these had been removed by the mid-twentieth century and no fireplaces survive. Interior work on the house may have been completed over a period of time, as in 1840, James Thomson's dairy makes references to finishing bedrooms, plastering, and making a stairs (24, 27 June; 28 July).

A number of late nineteenth and early twentieth century changes document the evolution of the house to meet the changing needs of the family. Although the house was constructed with its primary entrance façade oriented to the south, the east end elevation, which faced the entrance road, was redefined as the main entrance with the replacement of a window with a door and the addition of a full-width porch. The new entrance led directly into the largest room on the east side, used as a parlor in the early twentieth century (now a kitchen). Concurrent with the change in orientation, the symmetry of the original south façade was abandoned with the addition of a Victorian-era oriel window east of the original main entrance. In 1895, a change was made to the west end of the original façade when a wing was added to create a separate apartment for John Thomson, James's father, after Marian Thomson died. The elder Thomson was given the western half of the first floor and a room at the top for the stairs for his daughter. The redefinition of interior spaces to accommodate aged parents as farms passed from one generation to the next was another typical adaptation of farm dwellings.

The building referred to as the sheep barn (no longer extant) may have been the earliest agricultural building on the site. Photographic evidence suggests that this small rectangular building was a typical New England

³ *Biographical Review.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10

threshing barn. The dairy barn that the Thomsons constructed in 1881 reflected the prosperity of the farm and its successful dairy operation. The large wood-frame barn was constructed with a steep, cross-gabled banked entrance, allowing vehicular access directly to the upper level grain storage bins. The bank barn was the most common barn type in Delaware County during the second half of the nineteenth century. This barn featured an exceptionally steep bank constructed of large dressed stones. In general, stonework on the farm is substantial in scale and somewhat overbuilt; even basements and foundations, places where the stonework would not generally be seen, feature large and finely dressed stones.

Photographs reveal that a number of other farm buildings were probably constructed in the same period. The horse barn, wood shed/granary, and shop (all no longer extant) all feature corner boards, wide friezes and cornices with returns.

Archaeology

The archaeological deposits at the Thomson Family Farm are significant for the wide range of research potential that they hold. In addition to the intact structural elements of the farm, an initial surface reconnaissance has identified a number of potential archaeological deposits. Differential vegetative growth, combined with glimpses of buried foundation remains, indicate that at least one and possibly two structures were present in what today is an open field southeast of the farmhouse. Intensive examination of these deposits could help in gaining a better understanding of how the farm evolved and of the activities that may have occurred at these locations.

Although the ground surface west of the kitchen has been modified in recent times, a cursory archaeological examination suggests that there are likely deposits in this area that would help in understanding the mechanical systems associated with the butter churning activities that reportedly took place within the basement of the farmhouse. Remains in this area would be related to the mechanical systems that transferred water power from

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11

the sluiceway and waterwheel at the north end of the farmhouse into the mechanical energy that operated the butter churn system in the basement.

At this point the exact date of construction of the farmhouse is not known. Archaeological investigations of the builders' trenches associated with the various sections of the house have the potential to provide information on construction periods and techniques.

The initial surface survey identified the potential for sheet scatter/midden deposits in several areas around the house. These deposits have the potential to provide information on economic and social status of the residents of the farm as well as a greater understanding of discard patterns on the farm.

Full survey of the property would likely find evidence of a number of other building sites that have not yet been identified as well as providing additional data on those building sites that are currently known and the activities that occurred at each site. Of particular interest would be the discovery of the remains of the original residence, which was reported to be within thirty feet of the current farmhouse. The initial survey indicated that much of the area around the farmhouse is still intact and therefore likely to contain intact deposits associated with the original residence.

Additionally, the remains of a number of known outbuildings are still visible. Archaeological investigation of those sites is likely to result in the recovery of detailed data, which can be combined with the well-documented use of each structure to provide archaeological signatures for these various types of structures that can be used in the analysis of archaeological data from other, less well documented sites.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

Bibliography

Davis, Shirley. Interview. 2002.

Delhi, New York. Delaware County Historical Association. James Thomson Diaries.

Leading Citizens of Delaware County: Biographical Review. n.p., 1895.

Long, Lincoln. *The Long Papers: Historical Sketches of the New Kingston Valley.* ed. Gilbert M. Palen, Jr.
n.p., n.d.

Munsell, W.W. and Co. *History of Delaware County, New York.* New York: George MacNamara, 1880.

"Town of Roxbury." Electronic text by Mike Martyn.

<<http://www.rootsweb.com/%7Enydelawa/books/munrox.html>>

Thomson, Ralph W. *A Shadow of Light.* n.p.: Vantage Press, 1976.

Thomson, Ralph W. Letter (with annotated map) to Jim Blackwell. 29 December 1988.

Thomson Family Farm

Name of Property

Delaware County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approx. 90 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	18	527283	4678997
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	18	526432	4679248

3	18	536812	4679642
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	18	527273	4679413

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen LaFrank, Program Analyst

organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date February 2002

street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 x 3261

city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

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

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Boundary Justification

The boundary was drawn to include the largest intact parcel associated with the Thomson Family Farm during the period of significance. The ninety-acre nominated parcel represents the core of the Thomson farm as it existed in the early twentieth century and includes all surviving farm buildings, sites of all primary agricultural features, and a significant portion of the fields and woodlands associated with the farm during the last period of Thomson ownership. Other adjacent land that was either once associated with the Thomson family or acquired after the family's demise has lost integrity and no longer conveys significant information about the history of the farm.

☐ See continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vicinity
Delaware County, New York

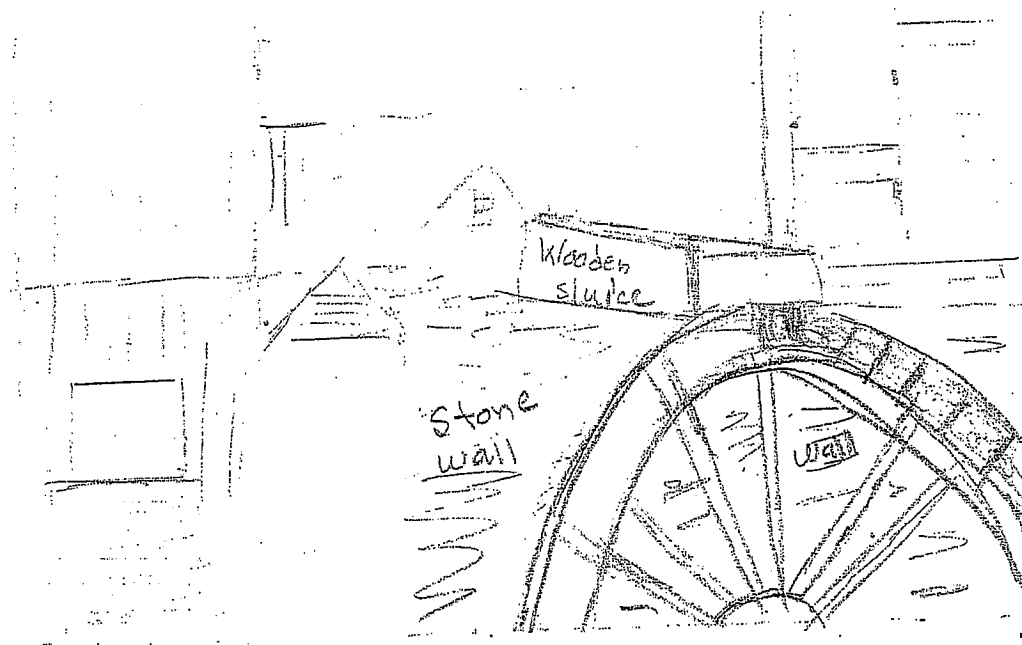
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 11 Page 1

Research and documentation provided by:

Linda Blackwell
Thomson Hollow Road
New Kingston, New York

☐ See continuation sheet



Thomson Family Farm
New Kingston Vic.
Delaware Co. NY

Sketch of water wheel
powering butter churn
by Ralph Thomson
c 1988