

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

OMB NO. 1024-0018, NPS FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations 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 information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classifications, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from 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 The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District

other names/site number n/a

**2. Location**

street & number n/a [n/a] not for publication

city, town Penn Yan, Milo, Torrey, Dresden [n/a] vicinity

state New York code NY county Yates code 123 zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby 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.)

J.W. Alderman  
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation  
Signature of certifying official

17 Nov. '95  
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 commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby, certify that this property is:	Signature of keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> see continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:)	_____	_____

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
6	4	buildings
13	0	sites
26	0	structures
5	0	objects
50	4	Total

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

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Historic and Architectural Resources of Yates County, New York

n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(enter categories from instructions)

- INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
- INDUSTRY/waterworks
- INDUSTRY/storage/warehouse
- TRANSPORTATION/rail-related
- TRANSPORTATION/water-related
- TRANSPORTATION/pedestrian-related
- DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**Current Functions**

(enter categories from instructions)

- INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility
- VACANT/not in use
- DOMESTIC/single dwelling

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(enter categories from instructions)

n/a

**Materials**

(enter categories from instructions)

- foundation n/a
- walls \_\_\_\_\_
- roof \_\_\_\_\_
- other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

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

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The Crooked Lake Historic District is located along a seven mile recreation trail (the Keuka Lake Outlet Trail) that parallels the Keuka Lake Outlet, which is situated in Yates County, New York. The Keuka Lake Outlet originates at Keuka Lake, Penn Yan, New York and flows to the east to Dresden, New York where it empties into Seneca Lake.

The Keuka Lake Outlet is a unique geologic feature, a deep gorge cutting through rolling farmland to connect two of western New York's Finger Lakes; Keuka Lake to the west and Seneca Lake to the east. This gorge was formed approximately 10,000 years ago during the final retreat of the glaciers. The gorge descends from 40 to 275 feet below the surrounding countryside and is covered in dense brush and undergrowth. The extreme western and eastern ends of the Outlet are situated within populated areas, the Villages of Penn Yan and Dresden, respectively.

The fast flowing water of the Outlet proved to be a focal point for the European occupation of this section of western New York. Hydropower was generated from the Outlet and used to operate the many mills that were built on its banks. The Crooked Lake Canal was built parallel to the Outlet and north of it to provide for the transportation of raw materials and completed goods in and out of the area. In some sections of the district, the Outlet was realigned to allow for the construction of the canal. When the canal proved inadequate and uneconomical, the Fall Brook Railroad was built to facilitate the movement of goods. For almost two hundred years the Keuka Lake Outlet has been the location of thriving industrial complexes, which processed the raw materials of Yates County into durable goods.

In the 1980's, the towpath of the canal and, later, the bed for the tracks of the Fall Brook Railroad, were developed into a hiking trail, to allow the public access to the beauty of the Keuka Lake Outlet. The hiking trail, in the vicinity of Penn Yan, is paved and contains exercise centers for hikers. As one travels to the east, the paved trail is replaced with a cinder path. The trail ends east of the NYS Route 14 bridge over the Outlet in the Village of Dresden.

The cultural resources contained within the proposed Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District are associated with the Crooked Lake Canal, the Fall Brook Railroad and the mills that were built along the Keuka Lake Outlet. The types of cultural resources found in the district include mill sites, mill ponds, mill races, the canal prism, canal locks, dams for mill ponds, bridges, a turntable for the railroad, whistle stops and mile markers. These types of cultural resources characterize the district as an industrial district connected by a single transportation corridor.

Several mill sites are located along the trail. Except for Birkett's Mill, these structures are in varying stages of decay because they have not been in use for a number of years. The mills were primarily built of wood, with stone foundations, during the first half of the nineteenth century. Over the time of their occupation, the original structures were expanded and their function frequently changed.

The mills were located along both banks of the Outlet. Large expanses of flat areas immediately adjacent to the Outlet were ideal locations to situate these mills. The

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flats allowed for the easy access of the fast flowing water by means of mill races. These flat areas are usually flanked by precipitous cliffs that plummet into the Outlet. Development along these sections of the Outlet was impossible due to the steeply sloping terrain.

At the height of the industrial activity in the area as many as forty mills were tapping into the water power of the Outlet. Areas such as Fox's Mill and May's Mill were thriving hamlets containing distilleries, mills, stores, post offices and train depots. May's Mill now is the location of a few modern trailers and one late nineteenth century house. However, the subsurface archaeological potential at May's Mill must be extensive based upon the many structures that were once located there and the relative lack of modern subsurface disturbance.

Within the district there are nine areas that contain dense concentrations of standing and subsurface archaeological remains relating to a variety of historic uses along the outlet. Industrial remains, canal locks, canal prism sections and railroad features are located within the proposed district boundary. These areas from west to east include St. John's Mill site, Fox's Mill site, the Dibble Spoke Factory site, Shutt's Mill site, Milo Mill site, Seneca Mill site, Mays Mill site, Cascade mill site and the Hopeton Mill site.

The boundaries for the Crooked Lake Historic District were defined using both topographical and archaeological factors. The north and south boundaries of the district were drawn to primarily correspond to adjoining property lines. The lines have been drawn to include the maximum number of resources while excluding extraneous land. The western boundary of the district is provided by the Main Street Bridge over the Outlet in the Village of Penn Yan, New York. The easternmost boundary of the district is defined by the Conrail Corporation Railroad Bridge, which crosses the outlet in the village of Dresden.

The district is unusual in that it contains many distinctive cultural resources associated with mill technology and the canal and railroad that are visible along the trail. Cultural resources that are visible today that were associated with the railroad include the foundations of a passenger station, the remains of a turntable, bridges and whistle stops. The canal prism, mile markers and the remains of canal locks are the types of cultural resources associated with the canal. The magnificent stone foundations, headrace remains, tailrace remains, penstocks, dams, smoke stacks and a rusting steam engine are examples of the types of cultural resources that are visible today that were once active aspects of the milling technology along the Outlet.

The milling technology was in operation and evolved over a two hundred year period. The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District provides the unique opportunity to study the evolution of an industry for almost two hundred years, a research opportunity not available anywhere else in western New York. Patterns of technological evolution may come to light with the study of the mills on the Outlet.

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The district also contains a wealth of subsurface archaeological remains that could be used to augment the understanding of the history of the European occupation of the Keuka Lake Outlet. Because of the remoteness of the Outlet, most of the district is undeveloped and undisturbed. At Hopeton, mill remains have been left undisturbed since 1850. This is a unique archaeological opportunity in western New York. The sites of Fox's Mill and May's Mill contained large, multi-function occupations that have been left intact and would provide an archaeological experience largely unavailable in this portion of New York State.

Building List:

1. Main Street Bridge over the Outlet ca. 1880

Photo No.: 1

The Main Street Bridge, a contributing structure, over the Outlet is the western most structure in the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District and establishes the western boundary of the district. It is located in the Village of Penn Yan and was built in 1884. The structure is the only example of a multiple-arch stone bridge in Yates County. The bridge was built by Ira Lunt between that dates of March 19 and September 17, 1884. The engineering company associated with the construction of the bridge was the firm of Davison Bros. of Wilmington, Delaware. According to the contract, drawn up for the construction of the bridge, stones from the old lacks and piers were used to build the walls of the bridge. The only modifications to the intact structure was the covering of the ordinal dressed stone with a concrete wash and the addition of a concrete balustrade in 1930. The Main Street Bridge has been designated a local landmark by the Penn Yan Historic Preservation Commission.

2. Birkett's Mill ca. 1824

Photo No.: 2

A contributing building that was originally built in 1801 by Abraham Wagener. The oldest part of the current mill building is the gambrel-roofed structure that is situated parallel to Main Street and was built in 1824. Many additions have been made to the structure including the building of two upper floors and the removal of roof dormers. The original structure was moved back from the Outlet slightly with the construction of the Main Street Bridge. Modern equipment now grinds the buckwheat flour for which Birkett's Mill is famous. This section of the Village of Penn Yan has been the location of milling operations for almost two hundred years. Birkett's Mill is part of the Penn Yan Historic District and already on the National Register of Historic Places.

3. White's Mill ca. 1796

Photo No.: 3

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Across the outlet from Birkett's Mill are the remains of the foundation of White's Mill, a contributing site. This mill was built in 1796 by David Wagener. David Wagener was an influential individual in the building of the Village of Penn Yan as were his descendants. White's Mill was inherited by one of David Wagener's son, Melchior, and was to provide an income for David's widow. In 1913 the mill was destroyed by fire. Foundation remains are visible in this section of the district. Archaeological reconnaissance in the vicinity of White's Mill could provide information on building techniques of the late nineteenth century. White's Mill is one of the oldest mill sites in the Crooked Lake Historic District.

4. Yates County Malthouse ca. 1884

Photo No.:5

The Yates County Malthouse is a contributing building. This structure replaces a grain house that was situated directly on the water's edge and was built in 1834. It is a three story brick structure that is abandoned. The intact D6 mile marker, a contributing object, is situated between the Yates County Malthouse and the Outlet.

5. Railroad Passenger Station ca. 1884

Photo No.:6

The foundation remains of a passenger station is situated between the Yates County Malthouse and the Outlet Trail. Only the foundation stones remain of this contributing site. This structure was associated with the Fall Brook Railroad, which was built in the later part of the nineteenth century to replace the Crooked Lake Canal.

6. Railroad Turntable ca. 1884

Photo No.:7

The remains of a curved wall and a large circular hollow are all that is left standing of the turntable associated with the Fall Brook Railroad. The Fall Brook Railroad consisted of a single track. After the train had completed its journey from the Village of Dresden to Penn Yan, the engine was placed on the turntable and turned around so that it could complete the trip back to Dresden. The turntable is a contributing structure that is situated just west of the High Bridge.

7. High Bridge ca. 1850

Photo No.:8

The High Bridge was originally built in 1850. The central pier is still visible. This contributing structure was named the High Bridge because it was the highest bridge along the course of the Corning & Canandaigua Railroad. The Corning & Canandaigua Railroad was the first railroad line built in Yates County. It provided the impetus to build the

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Fall Brook Railroad with the demise of the Crooked Lake Canal. The abutments that currently support the bridge were built in 1876 to allow for the passage of larger and heavier trains.

8. Plympton's Bridge

ca. 1801

Photo No.:9

Plympton's bridge was built in 1801 in order to connect the settlement building around Lawrence Townsend's residence and the log cabin inhabited by John Plympton and later by his son-in-law, Enoch Sherman. The road that crossed the Outlet at Plympton's Bridge was laid out by the road commissioner, Samuel Lawrence. The stone abutments are all that are evident of Plympton's Bridge, a contributing structure, in the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District.

9. St. John's Mill Complex

ca.1809 - 1875

Photo Nos.:10 and 11

The St. John's Mill Complex is a contributing site. In 1809, Samuel Lawrence built a sawmill on the south side of the Outlet and the stone walls of the foundations still exist. In 1825, a fulling and carding mill were built on the north side of the Outlet. The property passed into the Mallory family and, in 1867, was sold to Joseph St. John and Charles V. Bush. The sawmill, on the south side of the outlet, was converted to a grist and feed mill in 1875. The St. John's Mill continued in operation until 1915. A plaster mill and planing mill were erected on the site in the later half of the nineteenth century. The planing mill was built by Richard Franklin and Harry Tuthill, in 1886, and converted to a box and basket factory. The milling complex at St. John's was in operation until 1915. Foundation remains and partial stone walls are still evident at this site. Traces of the entire water-control system, from the dam and headrace through the penstock to the tailrace, are visible at St. John's. The canal prism, headrace, tailrace and dam are four contributing structures at this site. Foundation remains of the plaster and planing mills were destroyed with the construction of the sewerage treatment plant.

10. Fox Mill Site (Keuka Mills)

ca. 1823 - 1946

Photo No.:12

The Fox's Mill Site, a contributing site, is located near the intersection of Outlet Road and Fox Mills Road. In 1823, Solomon Weaver and George Shearman built a gristmill and soon after a sawmill was erected in this section of the Keuka Lake Outlet. A distillery, tannery, blacksmith shop and plaster shop were built in the following twenty-five years. In 1865, Lewis and W.H. Fox converted the site to the manufacture of straw-pulp paper. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1946 leaving the stone foundations. Other visible remains at Fox's Mill include the penstock, some of the dam, a canal lock

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and an intact raceway. The dam, canal lock, intact raceway and mill pond are four contributing structures that are associated with the Fox's Mill site.

11. Dibble Spoke Factory

ca. 1823 - 1913

Photo No.:13

Also in the vicinity of Fox Mills Road was the Dibble Spoke Factory, a contributing site. In 1824, William Frazee built a linseed oil and sawmill in this location. In the mid-nineteenth century, Albert Randall ran a sawmill, a flax mill and a wool carding mill. The flax mill was converted into a wheel and spoke factory in the 1870s. The factory was destroyed by fire in 1893. Remains of the race way, an earthen dam and foundation stones are still in place. The raceway and dam are two contributing structures at the Dibble Spoke Factory.

12. Black Fulling Mill

ca. 1820

Black Fulling Mill, a contributing site, is located about one-tenth of a mile east of the Dibble Spoke Factory. The Black Fulling Mill received its name because it was painted with tar in order to prevent fire, which destroyed so many of the large nineteenth century structures in this area. Dam remains, a contributing structure, are still visible in this area.

13. Shutt's Mill

ca. 1814 - 1887

Photo No.:14 and 15

Shutt's Mill was a large industrial complex that was situated on both banks of the Outlet. This contributing site was the location of a sawmill, the Ontario Cotton Manufactory and a fulling mill. In 1814, a cotton mill was built by Jesse Smith and Aaron Romer on the north side of the Outlet. The cotton mill was converted to a gristmill by 1830. On the south side of the Outlet was located a sawmill. In the later half of the nineteenth century, the mills in this part of the district were manufacturing goods such as ax-helves, hoop shingles, tool handles and wheel spokes. In 1887, the complex was converted to paper manufacturing and was destroyed by fire in 1933. An intact wooden sluice and dam remains, two contributing structures, are located on this site. Visible foundation stones parallel the Outlet Trail for about 300 feet, indicating the large size of Shutt's Mill.

14. Milo Mill

ca. 1800 - 1961

Photo No.:16, 17 and 18

The original structure, a gristmill, of this contributing site was built in 1800 by John Lawrence. In 1868, the mill was turned into a distillery. By the later part of the nineteenth century, the mill was producing paper products and continued to do so until 1961. A tall brick chimney, a small white office, a steam engine and pistons and



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extensive foundation remains are visible at the Milo Mill site. The tailrace and dam for the Milo mill pond are still visible. The tailrace, the dam and the mill pond are three contributing structures at this site. A whistle stop and the D4 mile marker, two contributing objects, are located one-eighth and one-half mile east of the Milo Mill.

15. Seneca Mill ca. 1790 - 1884

Photo No.:20 and 21

The Seneca Mill location has been the site of extensive milling operations. Originally, the Friends' Gristmill, a contributing site, was built here in 1790 by the Publick Universal Friends. This was the first mill to be built in Yates County. This mill burned in 1825 and was immediately replaced. The Seneca papermill, a contributing site eventually encompassed the entire area in 1884. The best preserved canal lock, a contributing structure, is located north of Seneca Mill. A long groove that accommodated the pivot rod for the wooden gates is visible on the edge of the lock.

16. Rag Mill ca. 1884

Photo No.:22

A small brick mill called Rag Mill was located near Seneca Mill. This contributing site was thought to be associated with the paper making process occurring at Seneca Mill. Extensive foundation remains with individual rooms are evident at Rag Mill.

17. May's Mill ca. 1805 - 1900

Photo No.:23, 24 and 25

May's Mill was the location of a flour mill built in 1805 by James Parker. Later a fulling mill, a distillery and a sawmill also occupied the site. A woolen cloth factory was built in 1816 and became known as the Farmer's Factory. Growth at May's Mill continued until the late 1880's. There are no surface remains associated with this contributing site. Modern trailers (non-contributing) and one home (contributing) associated with the canal currently occupy sections of May's Mill site.<sup>†</sup> Some remains of the mill race are evident. The Mill race, dam remains and the mill pond are three contributing structures at May's Mill. The D3 mile marker, a contributing object, is located west of May's Mill. Archaeological reconnaissance in this area would probably uncover extensive historic structure remains.

18. Cascade Mill ca. 1827 - 1910

Photo No.:27 and 28

The three structures, contributing buildings, that remain at the Cascade Mill location belong to the Taylor Chemical Company. In 1903, this operation was the largest manufacturer of carbon bisulfide in the world. In 1827, Meredith Mallory erected a

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gristmill in this location. In 1866, a number of paper mills were erected in this section of the district. One of these mill manufactured the brown paper used to wrap Cuban cigars. The chemical factory continued in operation until the 1960's. Two noncontributing buildings are located in this section of the district and once housed tire selling stores. They are now abandoned. A whistle stop, a contributing object, is located about one-quarter mile west of the Cascade Mill.

19. Hopeton Mill

ca. 1790 - 1850

Photo No.: 29 and 30

Hopeton was the location of a gristmill, a contributing site, that was built in the 1790's by Charles Williamson. The elaborate raceways and foundation stones are all that remains. As the Village of Dresden boomed, Hopeton dwindled. It was abandoned by the 1850's. The mill pond and raceway are two contributing structures at Hopeton. Archaeological reconnaissance in this section of the district would uncover remains of one of the earliest gristmills built on the Outlet that was left undisturbed since 1850.

Name of Property

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

[X] 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.

[X] C Property that 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.

[X] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

[ ] 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.

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Historic Archeology

Engineering

Industry

Architecture

Transportation

Period of Significance

ca.1788 - 1945

Significant Dates

n/a

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

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): Primary location of additional data:

[ ] 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 Building Survey #

[ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

[X] State historic preservation office

[ ] Other State agency

[ ] Federal agency

[ ] Local government

[ ] University

[X] Other

Name of repository:

Yates County Office of History

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The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District, located along the Keuka Lake Outlet that connects Keuka Lake to Seneca Lake, is historically and archaeologically significant as an encapsulation of milling technology in western New York for almost two hundred years. Structural remains of mill sites, dating from the late eighteenth century to the present, are evident along the Keuka Lake Outlet Trail along with their attendant dams, headraces, tailraces and mill ponds. Evidence of two modes of transportation through the gorge are also visible: the canal prism for the Crooked Lake Canal and the bed for the Fall Brook Railroad. Many structures associated with these means of transportation can be seen along the trail such as the foundation remains of a train depot, bridges, a turntable, whistle stops, mile markers, and canal locks. A total of 5 contributing buildings, 15 contributing sites, 28 contributing structures and 4 contributing objects comprise the cultural resources of the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District. Two non-contributing buildings are also located in the district. This total of 52 contributing cultural resources represent an unusual and cohesive group of archaeological remains that, with further evaluation, will add to the understanding of almost two hundred years of hydropowered industrial development in western New York.

Historically, the Crooked Lake Outlet has been viewed as a logical location for the development of milling enterprises. The fast moving water of the Outlet provided a constant source of hydropower. As early as the 1790's, European settlers built their mills along the banks of the Outlet. The Universal Friends arrived in this area in 1788 and built a mill near the falls at the present location of Seneca Mill. Charles Williamson, a land agent for the Pulteney Associates, built a grist mill, sawmill and carding operation at Hopeton that thrived until the 1850's. At the western end of the district, David Wagener was buying land and building mills, in the 1790's, that would encourage the development of the Village of Penn Yan. At the height of the occupation of the Outlet, a total of forty mills were tapping into the bountiful source of water power of the gorge. The later half of the nineteenth century saw the function of the mills change from the processing of raw materials to the manufacturing of finished goods. Wheel spokes and axle helms were manufactured in structures that once processed grain and wood. The production of paper and paper products dominated the industrial output along the Outlet in the later part of the nineteenth century. It is thought that the Crooked Lake Outlet may have been the originating point for the straw-pulp paper industry.

The district is historically significant in that it encapsulates the origins, development and transformation of milling technology in western New York for almost two hundred years. As milling technology changed and grew more sophisticated, from a raw material processing technology to a finished goods technology, the form and function of the mills changed also. These technological changes had many repercussions that were felt sociologically and culturally throughout Yates County and that were reflected in changes in the life style of the local inhabitants.

The district is also historically significant in that it contains remains of some of the earliest mill sites in western New York. The Friend's Mill, the gristmill at Hopeton and David Wagener's Mill in Penn Yan were all built in the later part of the

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eighteenth century. Extant remains of all three mills are situated in the Crooked Lake Historic District.

The district is archaeologically significant. It contains many intact archaeological remains because it is located in a relatively isolated area of western New York. The mills along the Outlet were subject to fire that allowed only the stone walls or foundations to remain standing. No other forces, except for a small amount of bank erosion, have disturbed the sites. Therefore, the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District contains many well preserved and undisturbed mill sites that would yield much information on the technological processes that were occurring through the late eighteenth century to the present. Many of the mill sites still have intact raceways, including the remains of headraces, tailraces and penstocks. A study of the various waterways that fueled the mills could easily be accomplished using the archaeological data base of the district.

The location of the early nineteenth century mill at Hopeton has been left undisturbed since the 1850's. Here at Hopeton is an opportunity to excavate a gristmill, sawmill, carding mill and their attendant buildings. Such a vast, undisturbed commercial complex is an unusual archaeological opportunity for western New York. Most early nineteenth century industrial sites are located in the downtown areas of large cities and have been subject to much subsurface disturbance.

The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District has an enormous potential for the generation of public archaeology projects, which adds to the significance of the district. The unique topographic feature of the Outlet, a seven mile gorge situated 275 feet below the surrounding countryside, enhances the unfolding of the historic story being told by the standing remains of the mill sites in the district. As one traverses the Outlet, large flat expanses of land, usually at the bend of the Outlet, contain either standing or subsurface remains of various mill sites. These flat areas are flanked by steeply sloping terrain that was and is currently devoid of occupation. It is a hauntingly beautiful sight to round the bend of the Outlet Trail and view the partial walls of the St. John's Milling Complex, Shutt's Mill or Milo Mill; some of these sites still containing mill race remains and the actual milling machinery in full view. To walk the Outlet is to walk the history of milling technology in western New York from the late eighteenth century to the present.

#### EARLY HISTORY OF THE OUTLET

Prior to the 1780's, the European occupation of Yates County was sparse. Jacob Fredenburgh was believed to have arrived at the present location of Penn Yan in 1787. He stated that his activities were restricted by the Senecas and that he was only allowed to fish in one stream, later called Jacob's Brook, which currently flows under the present location of Birkett's Mill.

Followers of Jemima Wilkinson, the Universal Friend, were the next group of white people to inhabit Yates County. In 1787, a four member committee, including David Wagener, came to Seneca Lake from Rhode Island and found a suitable location for their

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settlement. David Wagener and the Friends built two of the first mills along the Outlet.

In the late eighteenth century, with the purchase of the pre-emption lands from Massachusetts by Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham, the settlement of Yates County began to increase quickly. Both New York and Massachusetts had been granted the same tract of land by two English kings in the seventeenth century. In 1628, Massachusetts had been granted lands west to the Pacific by King Charles I. In 1664, King Charles II granted to his brother, the Duke of York, land extending 20 miles east of the Hudson River to the Pacific. The Treaty of Hartford ceded to New York sovereignty over the land and granted to Massachusetts the soil and pre-emption rights. This meant that the land would be purchased from Massachusetts subject to negotiation with the local Indian tribes. Once the negotiations had been completed the settler would be living in New York.

In 1788, a line was drawn 82 miles west of the State of Pennsylvania's northeast corner then running due north to Lake Ontario. This line was known as the Pre-emption line and was inaccurately surveyed. In 1793, a new pre-emption line was correctly surveyed to the east of the old line, creating a stretch of land in between the two pre-emption lines referred to as "the Gore". This triangular piece of land amounted to 86,000 acres and created much confusion as to who, in reality, owned what land. Parts of "the Gore" are situated within the eastern end of the Crooked Lake Historic District. Tracing of the original homestead of Jemima Wilkinson has been complicated by the inclusion of her land in "the Gore".

#### The Society of Universal Friends

One of the earliest groups to settle the Keuka Lake Outlet were followers of the Public Universal Friend. This group, founded by Jemima Wilkinson, left Rhode Island to seek refuge in the wilderness and arrived in Yates County in 1788. The Friends built one of the earliest mills on the Outlet, at the present location of the Seneca Mill, and it was appropriately called the Friend's Mill. The mill was a sawmill and gristmill with a 26 foot overshot wheel and two courses of stones brought from Connecticut.

The Friend's doctrine apparently appealed mostly to women. Many single women kept their own households and farms, some even leaving their husbands to raise their children alone in the wilderness of Yates County. So many women gathered around Jemima Wilkinson, many in their own independent households, that they were described as the "Faithful Sisterhood".

#### Charles Williamson

Phelps and Gorham fell upon hard economic times and sold out to Robert Morris, who sold the remaining tract of land to the Pulteney Associates, a London syndicate. Charles Williamson was a land agent for the Pulteney Associates and he set about selling land and making improvements along the Outlet. Drawn by the hydropower of the gorge, Williamson built a large commercial and industrial site at Hopeton in 1794. Williamson

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also had a road built to cross the Outlet at Hopeton to allow easy access to the prosperous colony of Universal Friends. The Hopeton Gristmill cost 2800 pounds sterling to build, which was an exorbitant amount for the construction of a mill at that time. Williamson's settlement at Hopeton prospered until the 1850's when fire destroyed the mill. The milling complexes at Dresden replaced the ones at Hopeton so that Hopeton was eventually abandoned.

David Wagener and Family

During the late 1790's, David Wagener purchased the Birdsall sawmill and built a large gristmill across the Outlet from the present location of the Birkett's Mill. In 1799, when he died, David Wagener owned most of the land upon which the future Village of Penn Yan would be built. His son, Abraham Wagener was given the property on the north side of the Outlet and his other son, Melchior and David's widow were given the property on the south side of the Outlet. Abraham Wagener built a mansion near his mills and donated property to the Village of Penn Yan, upon which were built new buildings for the county. The Wagener family has played a prominent role in the development of the Village of Penn Yan.

**THE EVOLUTION OF THE MARKET ECONOMY**

Agriculture has been the economic base for Yates County since the first settlers arrived in this part of western New York in the late eighteenth century. The gently rolling terrain and the rich soil made the area ideal for the production of crops.

Initially, each family raised enough food to provide for their own needs with a little extra for barter. Farms were small enterprises in these early days and just about every inhabitant of Yates County was a farmer.

Potash was the first major cash crop, produced from the ashes of the thousands of hardwood trees that were burned before the land could be worked. Whiskey was another major cash commodity. Grain was expensive to export due to the lack of efficient modes of transportation. Distilling the grain into whiskey was a cheap way to reduce the bulk of the crop and to make the transport of the grain less expensive. Taverns and distilleries were found in abundance in Yates County. The Village of Penn Yan was once known as Pandemonium, due to the drunken behavior of its inhabitants.

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, immigration into Yates County was rapid and constant. The population of Penn Yan grew to more than 3000 by 1855. Prosperity in the area can be directly linked to the successful growing of wheat that climaxed in the 1850's. In 1852, Yates County grew more wheat, in relationship to its acreage, than any other county in New York State. This was during a time when western New York grew most of the wheat for the entire country. Larger markets had to be opened for the abundant, locally grown produce. The construction of the Crooked Lake Canal and, later the Fall Brook Railroad opened the isolated agricultural regions of Yates County to development by facilitating the movement of goods and by lowering the cost of shipping them.

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The Crooked Lake Canal and the Fall Brook Railroad

The rapid development of the farming economy and the milling industry along the Keuka Lake Outlet necessitated the building of a means of transportation for the raw materials into and the finished goods out of the Outlet. The many farms outlying the gorge were producing large quantities of fruit and grain that needed to be shipped to local markets. Canal construction was occurring throughout the State of New York in the early 1800's. Therefore, a water route was envisioned for the Outlet area to allow easier access to the Susquehanna River and the markets in the large eastern cities.

David Thomas, an engineer trained on the Erie Canal, surveyed possible alternatives for the Crooked Lake Canal and recommended a route through the gorge. He also recommended a dam and guardlock at Penn Yan to raise the level of Keuka Lake to provide an adequate water supply for the mills along the Outlet. In 1831, construction on the canal began, following a course along the north side of the Outlet.

The Crooked Lake Canal was built to handle the same size boats as the rest of the Erie system. It was 42 feet wide at the water line, 26 feet wide at the bottom and four feet deep. The 27 lift locks built along the canal were 90 feet long and 15 feet wide. The seven mile passage from Penn Yan to Dresden took about six hours to complete.

The Crooked Lake Canal never became a money making proposition. The diversion of water into the canal from Keuka Lake was also adversely affecting the hydropower for the mills. These two factors contributed to the closing of the canal in 1878.

Although the Crooked Lake Canal had been a failure, the need for a mode of transportation within the gorge was still a necessity. Before the Crooked Lake Canal had been opened the idea for a railroad had been discussed for the Outlet. Canal fever usurped the plans for the railroad but in the 1870's, with the inadequacies of the canal rather obvious, the idea of a railroad was resurrected. The changes in the milling industry also necessitated the building of a railroad. Huge amounts of raw material were required by the paper industry in order to produce their paper products as was the capacity to carry heavy rolls of finished paper. A syndicate was formed, comprised of mill owners along the Outlet, to buy the right-of-way of the canal for the bed of the railroad. In 1884, work on the railroad was begun at both Penn Yan and Dresden with rail lines being laid on the old towpath of the canal. The Fall Brook Railroad operated for almost one hundred years. In 1972 Tropical Storm Agnes damaged the tracks beyond repair. The line was officially abandoned in 1974.

The building of the railroad necessitated the construction of a new bridge to carry Main Street over the Outlet. A bridge builder, by the name of Ira Lunt, was hired to oversee the construction.

Ira Lunt

Ira Lunt was the overseer for the construction of the Main Street Bridge over the Outlet in 1884. This bridge forms the western border of the Crooked Lake Outlet



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Historic District. The bridge replaced an older structure and is a multi-arch stone bridge built by a well-known bridge builder of the late nineteenth century. Ira Lunt worked for the construction firm of Dawson Brothers of Wilmington, Delaware and arrived in Penn Yan in April, 1884 to oversee the project. Contract specifications for the bridge indicated that the foundation was composed of materials taken from old locks and piers. The Yates County Chronicle stated that Ira Lunt expected to complete the job by the end of the summer and did, indeed, complete the project in September, 1884. The bridge is still standing today, over one hundred years after its construction.

#### THE EVOLUTION OF THE MILLING INDUSTRY

The milling technology along the Outlet paralleled the evolution of the agricultural economy in the areas surrounding the gorge. The early economic base was agricultural and was reflected in the raw material processing function of the mills of the early nineteenth century. By 1820, there were located along the Outlet, seven gristmills, fourteen sawmills, an oil mill, four carding mills, two triphammers and several distilleries. Manufacturing during this time concentrated on the processing of locally available raw materials such as wheat, timber, flaxseed, wool and corn.

The mid-nineteenth century was a period marked by prosperity and this prosperity is, again, reflected in the milling activity of the Outlet. Wheat, barley and wool were being produced in record yields and new mechanical devices allowed for the more efficient raising of crops. It was at this time that the hydropower from the Outlet is being tapped by a total of forty mills.

Climatic factors and the inadvertent introduction of the wheat weevil destroyed the wheat producing economy in the later part of the nineteenth century. New sources of income had to be sought.

Fruit production had always been a strong component of the Yates County economy. However, with the collapse of the wheat industry, fruit production became a more important enterprise. During the 1890's, the planting of vineyards reached its peak. Fresh fruit, dried fruit, cider, juices, wine and vinegars were products being shipped out of Yates County to the local markets. This change in the agricultural product base is reflected in the milling enterprises that had arisen along the Outlet. Gone are the mills that processed the wheat into flour and the trees into lumber. Now mills were being converted into complexes that produced finished products such as wheel spokes, axe helms and baskets. Baskets and boxes were an important part of the fruit growing industry.

Perhaps the single most important industry to develop along the Outlet was the paper making industry of the 1890's. Cascade Mill and Seneca Mill were two mills that, later in their history, were converted to the production of paper and paper products. At Cascade Mill, the original mill structure was used as a gristmill. In 1866, a series of paper mills occupied the site, including one that produced thin brown paper for the use packaging cigars. This paper was made from straw pulp and was exported to Cuba. At Seneca Mill, a basket factory replaced the oil mill that was situated on the north bank

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of the Outlet. On the south bank was built a paper factory that produced book paper, heavy wrapping paper and sugar bags.

The evolution of the market economy of Yates County was reflected in the patterns of milling industry along the Outlet. As the agricultural output grew and prospered so did the number of mills that were processing raw materials. When the wheat industry collapsed, mills were converted to produce finished goods and, finally, with the demise of agriculture, all the mills but one were abandoned. Birkett's Mill is the only functioning mill left on the Keuka Lake Outlet today.

Archaeological and Historical Significance

The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District is archaeologically significant because it will allow the preservation of sites that will generate information on the evolution of hydropower and milling technology in Yates County. The remains of the Crooked Lake Canal and the Fall Brook Railroad are archaeologically significant in that they will yield information pertinent to the understanding of the relationship of these modes of transportation with the milling community.

Each mill site in the district can contribute to completing the picture of the overall theme of industrial evolution in the Keuka Lake Outlet. Each mill site contains a distinct mix of structural remains, race remains and internal site patterning. Investigations at these sites are likely to yield important data pertaining to the construction techniques of late eighteenth century building, the changes in construction techniques over almost two hundred years, and the pattern of reuse of mills.

Each mill site has some aspect of its watercourse intact. Individual sites could be evaluated to examine how the race integrated with the mill it served and how each was constructed to generate optimal use from the water power. Investigations could yield data pertaining to the materials, technologies and designs used in millrace construction, the evolution of millrace building technology and basic descriptive data of the races such as length, width, depth and water flow capacity. The wheel mechanism for the mill may have influenced the type of race constructed for an individual site.

Some of the machinery is still intact and visible at the Milo Mill Site. The Milo Mill fly-wheel was built at The Tripphammer Forge Site in Rochester, New York. A study could be conducted that would trace the patterns of trade from one industrial district to another throughout New York State.

Excavations at Hopeton would yield much valuable information on the construction of one of the earliest gristmills in western New York. This gristmill built in 1794 by Charles Williamson, an agent for the Pulteney Associates, was constructed at an astronomically high fee. This large expenditure may be reflected in the types of materials and quality of construction of the site. Another gristmill was built in the same location and was in operation until 1850. Remains of a pre-1833 warehouse, the tailrace, a carding mill, the gristmill, the headrace and a tow house are all still

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evident at Hopeton left in an undisturbed context since 1850. Such a large, intact industrial complex is a rare archaeological find in western New York.

The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District reflects the evolution of the Outlet milling industry and the dependence of water power and a viable mode of transportation within the gorge. The canal prism and mile markers, the extant railroad buildings, bridges and whistle stops and the mill sites with their attendant raceways, dams and foundation remains are all evident of an evolution from a raw material milling industry to a finished product industry to the total collapse of the industry. The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District is an unusual collection of cultural resources that will add a wealth of information to the understanding of historic and cultural processes occurring in Yates County for almost two hundred years.

The cultural resources in the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District represent a unique concentration of remains associated with almost two hundred years of milling technology in western New York. A total of 52 contributing buildings, structures and objects comprise a district of unique significance that allows an intensive study of the evolution of industrial technology. No other collection of cultural resources exists in western New York.

Name of Property

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property approximately 300 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1 8	3 3 9 5 3 9	4 7 2 6 8 9 3	2	1 8	3 3 9 2 5 2	4 7 2 6 8 2 3
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
3	1 8	3 3 8 9 4 3	4 7 2 6 3 6 6	4	1 8	3 3 8 6 4 6	4 7 2 6 2 6 6
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description

(Explain 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 M. Lisa Spaulding Edited by: John A. Bonafide, Program Analyst NYSHPO  
 organization Spaulding Archeological Services, Inc. date 7/1/95  
 street & number 147 Irving Terrace telephone 716-877-6297  
 city or town Buffalo state NY zip code 14223

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name n/a  
 street & number \_\_\_\_\_  
 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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The western boundary of the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District is provided by the Main Street Bridge over the Outlet in the village of Penn Yan, New York. Birkett's Mill anchors the northwest corner of the district and foundation remains of David Wagner's Mill anchors the southwest corner. The northern boundary is generally defined by the publicly owned railroad bed/canal right-of-way and the southern boundary is generally defined by the southern boundary of lands of NYSEG and Friends of the Outlet. The Outlet and the trail provide a backbone throughout the entire district. The eastern boundary is defined by the Conrail Corporation Railroad Bridge over the outlet.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Boundaries for the Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District have been drawn to include those remaining buildings, structures, sites and objects that are associated with the industrial development over almost two hundred years with the area known as the Keuka Lake Outlet. The western border was established at the Main Street Bridge over the Outlet because to the west of that location the structures along the Outlet are already in a National Register Historic District. The district continues to the east in a continuous manner, encompassing all cultural resources that are situated on both banks of the Outlet. The eastern terminus of the district is defined by the Conrail Corporation Railroad Bridge that crosses the outlet in the village of Dresden.

UTM References (continued)

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3. 18/338943/4726366	4. 18/338646/4726266
5. 18/338629/4725956	6. 18/338376/4725752
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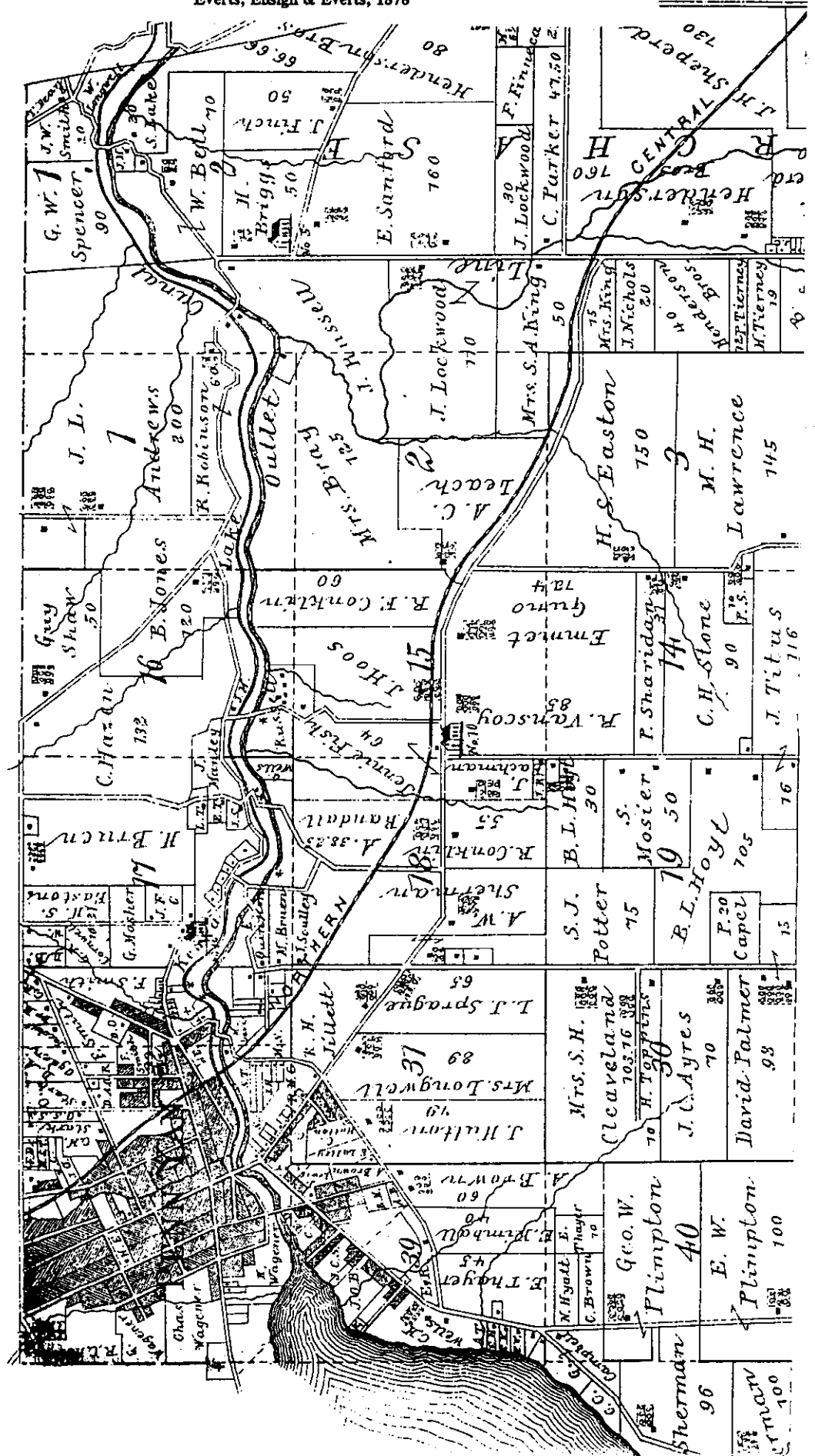
# Penn Yan and Milo Sections of The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District

Taken from: A Combination Atlas Map of Yates County, New York  
Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1878

TOWNSHIP

MIL O

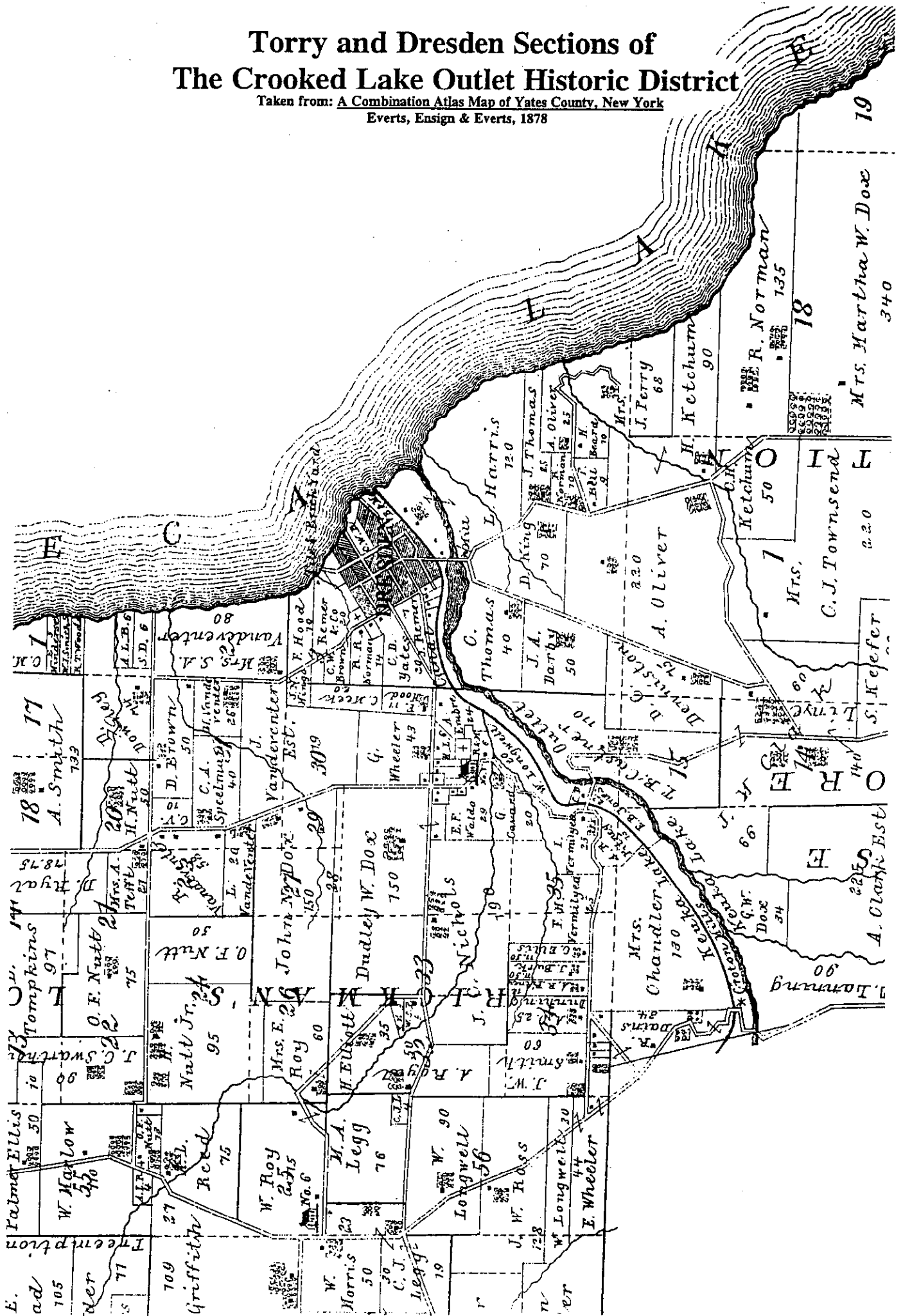
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# Torry and Dresden Sections of The Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District

Taken from: A Combination Atlas Map of Yates County, New York  
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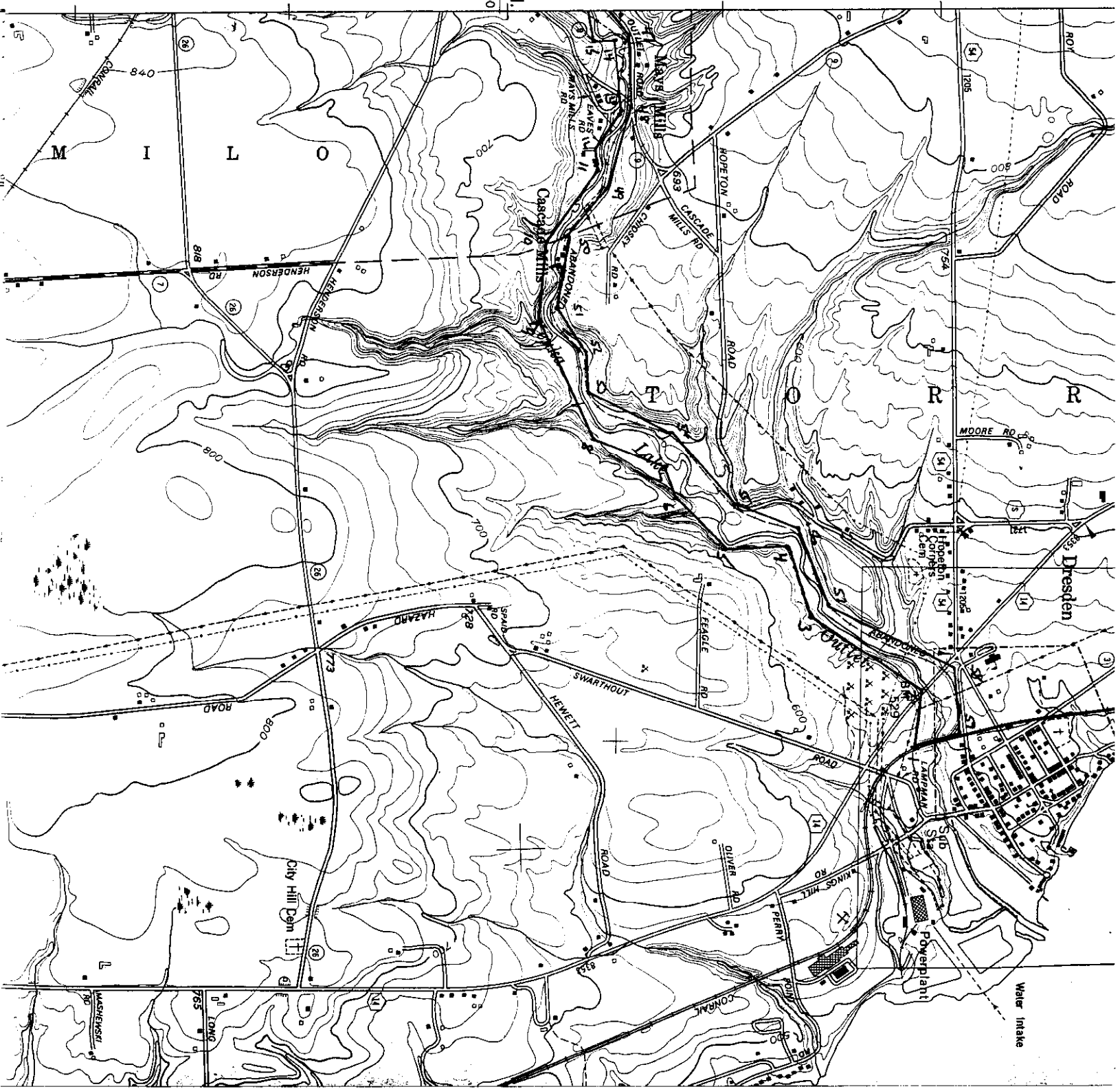
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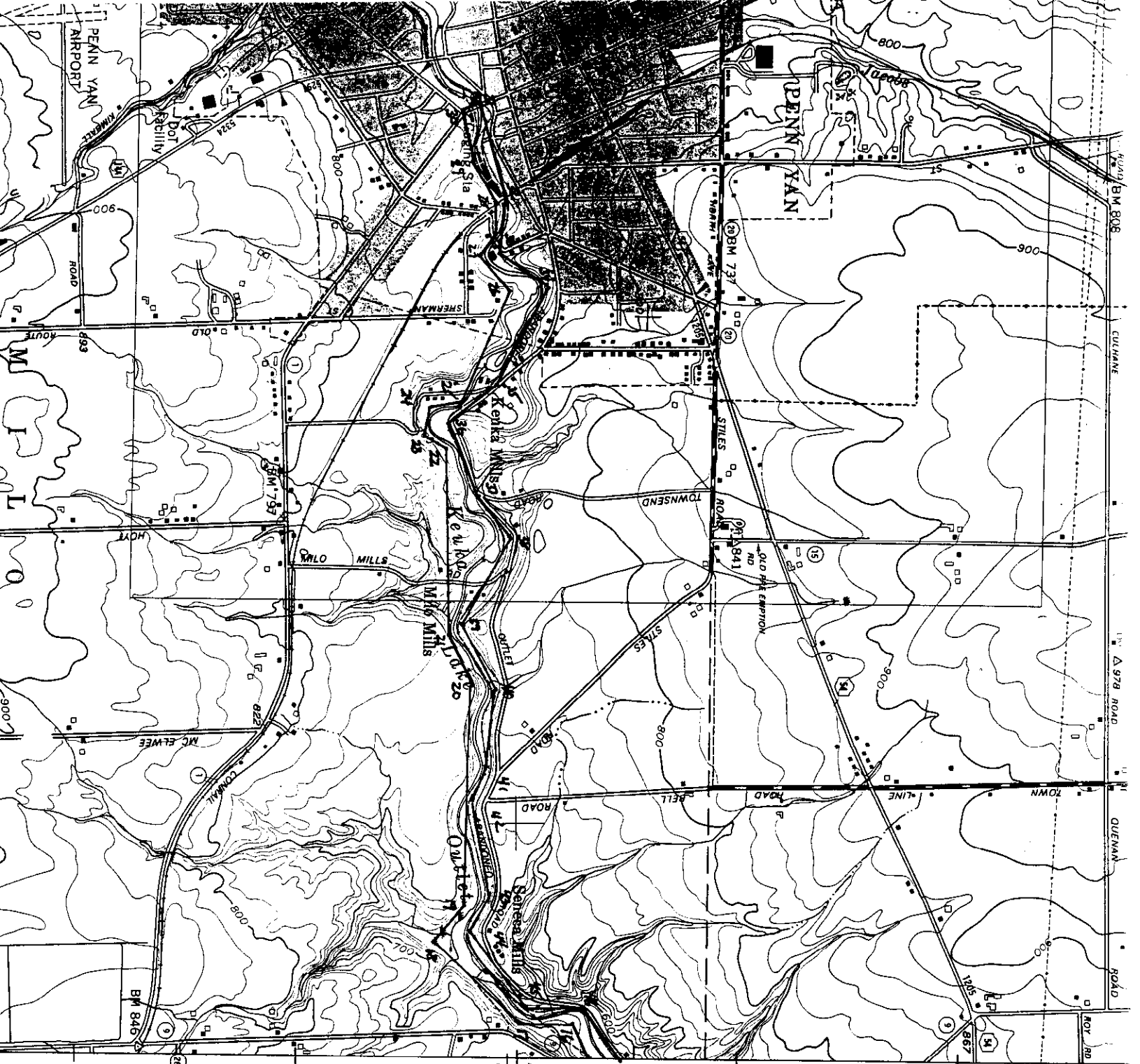
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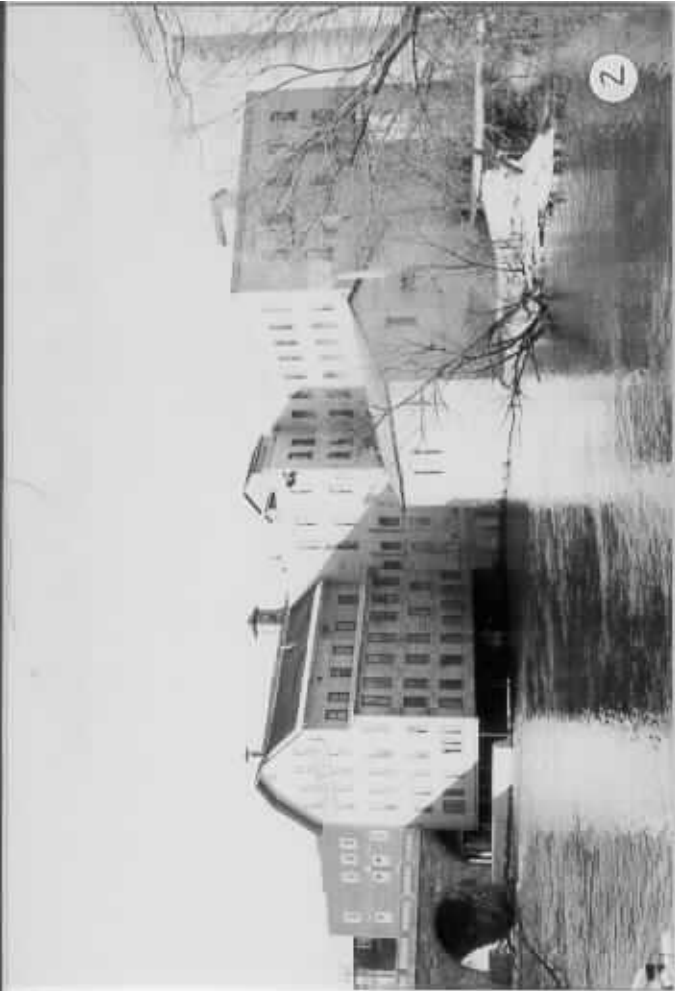




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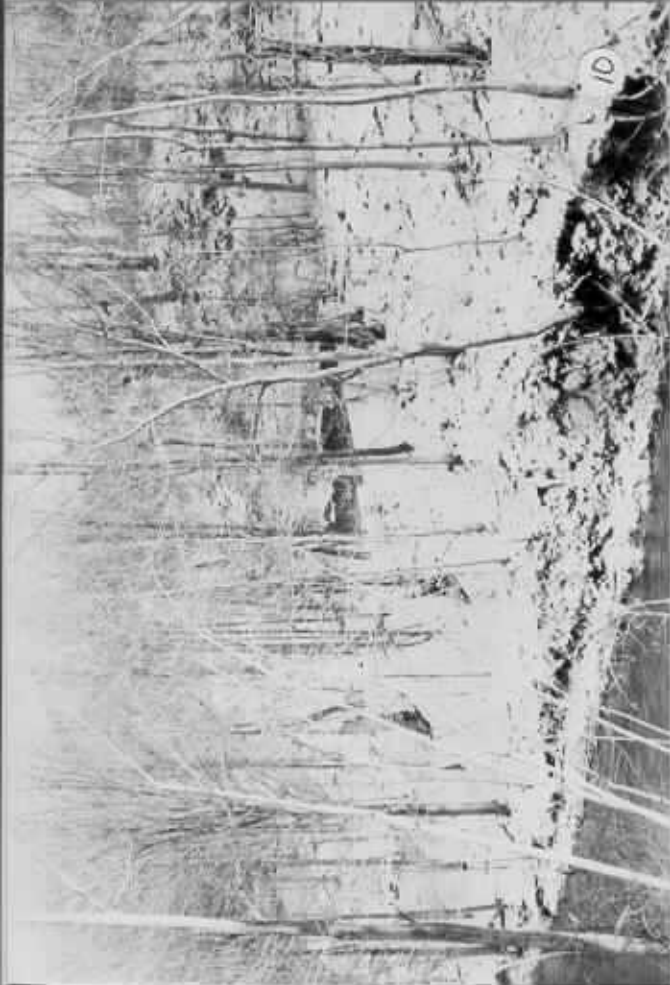
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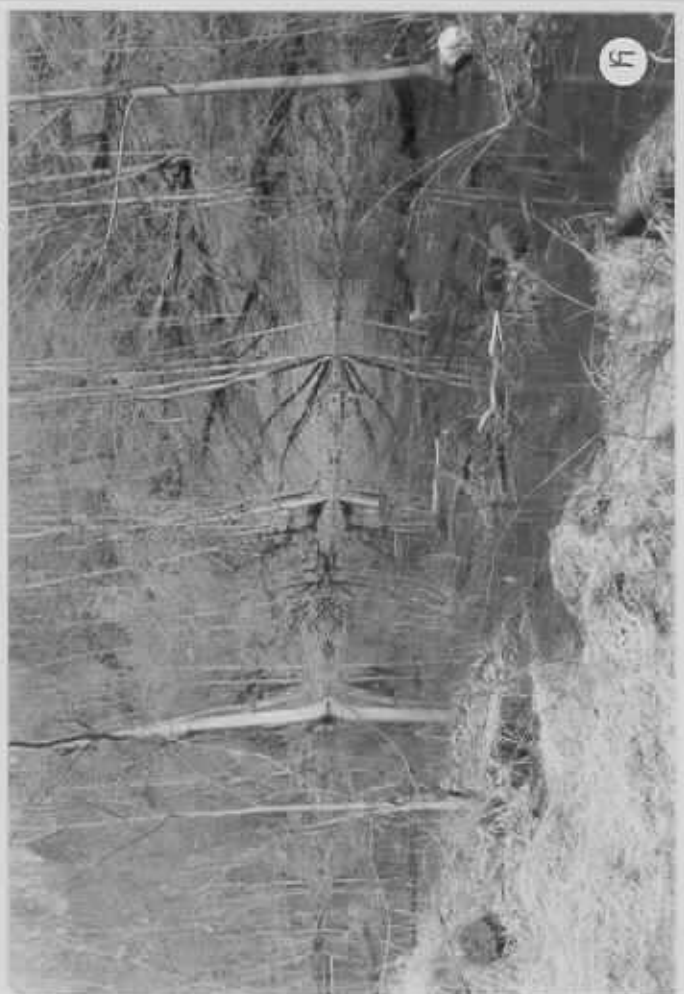
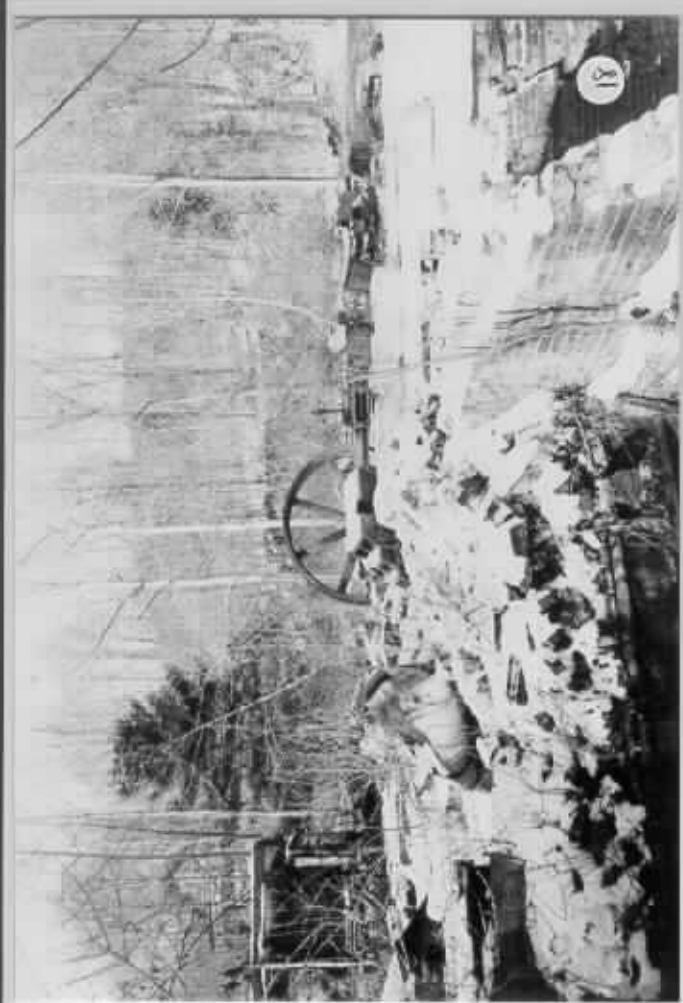






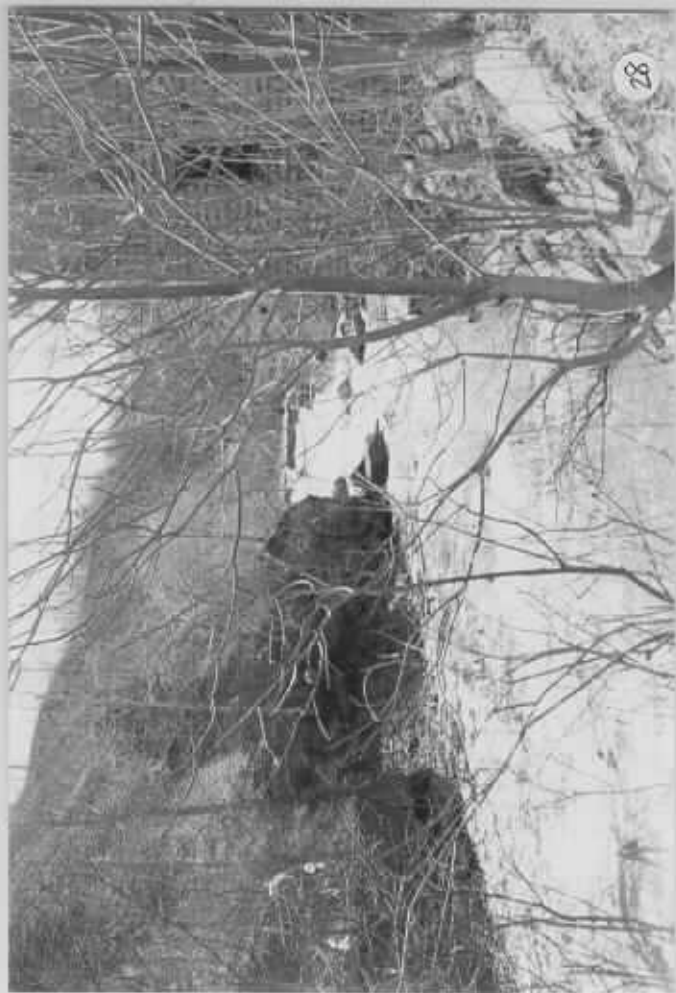












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B Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District  
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Buffalo, ny  
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A Crooked Lake Outlet Historic District  
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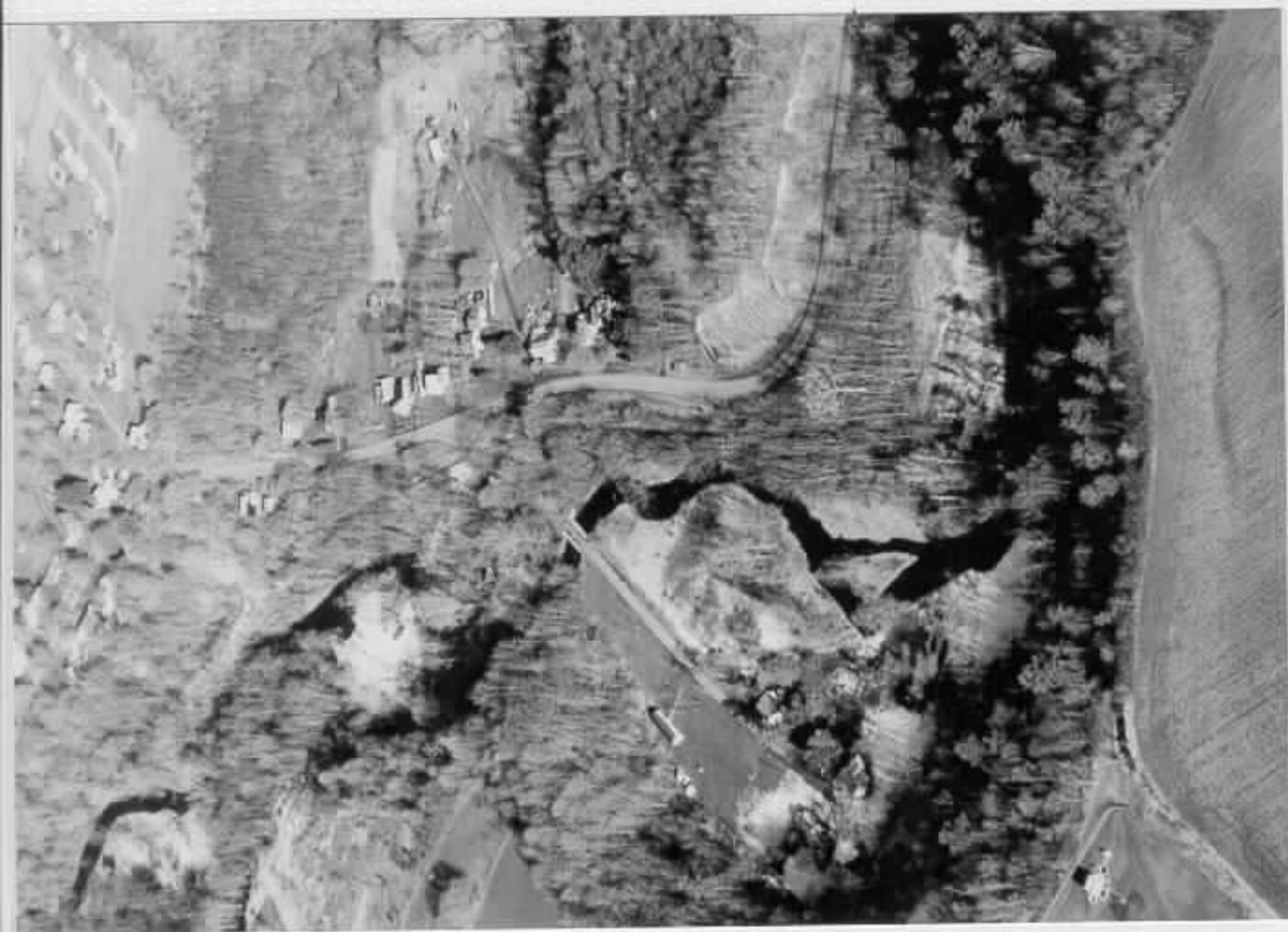
Crooked Lake Outlet Historic  
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