

Hop Houses in Otsego County, New York

by © John LaDuke

A thesis submitted

to the School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts Folklore

Department of Folklore

Faculty of Arts

Memorial University of Newfoundland

October 2015

St. John's Newfoundland and Labrador

Abstract

This master's thesis is an examination of the hop house as it exists within Otsego County, New York. A hop house is an outbuilding type used in the drying and processing of hops. Research is based on a survey of fifty two hop houses within Otsego County, supplemented primarily by archival research conducted at the New York State Historical Association. There are five subjects covered within this thesis. The first is a history of hops cultivation in Upstate New York. The second part reviews the forms and functions of the hop house. The three main forms are common, step-up common, and draft pyramidal. The third examines the distribution and patterns of hop houses within Otsego County by utilizing profiles from the survey. The concentration of hop houses is found to be highest in the fertile valleys that have easy access to the former location of the Great Western Turnpike. It is also found that the conservative nature of hop houses in Otsego County can be attributed to small scale farms and production peaking before major technological change occurred. The fourth covers folklore and material culture associated with hops cultivation. This includes crop prediction lore, courting customs, and the various specialized tools used during picking and processing. The final subject examines and proposes solutions for the subject of hop house deterioration. The specialized use of hop houses makes them prone to neglect. This thesis recommends that a new or current organization take advantage of the current craft beer boom to bring attention to hop houses. It also proposes forming a closer relationship with owners in preserving hop houses.

Acknowledgments

I would like to give thanks to all the owners who allowed me to examine their hop houses. None of this would have been possible without their help.

Very big thanks to Alfred Bullard for taking me around Otsego County and for being a guru on all things hops related.

I would also like to thank my father David LaDuke and good friend Matthew Nardoza for helping with measuring many of the hop houses.

Another thanks to the New York State Historical Association, the Greater Oneonta Historical Society, and the Oneida County Historical Society for helping with archival research.

Finally I would like to thank my supervisor Gerald Pocius for all the support he has given me throughout the entire process of writing this thesis.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Figures.....	v
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: History and Background.....	12
Chapter Three: Forms and Functions.....	26
Chapter Four: Patterns and Distribution.....	51
Chapter Five: Hop Pickers, Tools, and Folklife.....	102
Chapter Six: The Present and Future State of Hop Houses.....	111
Chapter Seven: Conclusion.....	123
Bibliography.....	127

List of Figures

Figure 1.1- Location of Otsego County within New York State.....	2
Figure 2.1- Freshly picked hops, Farmers' Museum, Cooperstown.....	12
Figure 2.2- Sixteenth century oast house elevation drawing.....	14
Figure 2.3- Nineteenth century English oast houses.....	15
Figure 2.4- Hop pickers in Emmons, town of Oneonta.....	21
Figure 3.1- Typical Otsego hop house, town of Hartwick, 1966.....	26
Figure 3.2- Typical hop house layout.....	28
Figure 3.3- Kiln vent, Lee hop house, town of Otsego.....	29
Figure 3.4- Stove room, Pope hope house, town of Otsego.....	29
Figure 3.5- Drying room, Sondergaard hop house, town of Decatur.....	30
Figure 3.6- Drying slats, Sondergaard hop house, town of Decatur.....	30
Figure 3.7- Plaster and lath, H. Smith hop house, town of Springfield.....	31
Figure 3.8- Lath ceiling, Beardslee hop house, town of Pittsfield.....	32
Figure 3.9- Asbestos lined kiln, Karker hop house, Schoharie County.....	32
Figure 3.10- Storage room, Knapp hop house, town of Otsego.....	33
Figure 3.11- Press room, Beardslee hop house, town of Pittsfield.....	33
Figure 3.12- Door into kiln, Wedderspoon hop house, town of Otsego.....	34
Figure 3.13- Common hop house, town of Hartwick, 1966.....	35
Figure 3.14- Screw beam hole, Chase hop house, town of Middlefield.....	36
Figure 3.15- Drawing of Harris press.....	36

Figure 3.16- Circular saw marks, Seamon hop house, town of Exeter.....	37
Figure 3.17- Windowless hop house in Oneida County.....	38
Figure 3.18- Pyramidal hop house, Karker hop house, Schoharie County.....	40
Figure 3.19- Conical hop house, Oneida County.....	41
Figure 3.20- Hop house dimensions graph.....	42
Figure 3.21- Clapboard siding, H. Smith hop house, town of Springfield.....	43
Figure 3.22- Smith hop house, town of Springfield, 1966.....	44
Figure 3.23- Gothic style hop house, Montgomery County.....	46
Figure 4.1- Major roads and settlements of Otsego County.....	51
Figure 4.2- Hops production in Otsego County, 1864.....	55
Figure 4.3- Townships of Otsego County.....	57
Figure 4.4- The Beck hop house, town of Middlefield.....	58
Figure 4.5- The Black hop house, town of Middlefield.....	58
Figure 4.6- The Bowen hop house, town of Middlefield.....	59
Figure 4.7- Floor plan, Bowen hop house, town of Middlefield.....	59
Figure 4.8- The Chase hop house, town of Middlefield.....	60
Figure 4.9- Floor plan, Chase hop house, town of Middlefield.....	60
Figure 4.10- The Harrington hop house, town of Middlefield.....	62
Figure 4.11- The Hayes hop house, town of Middlefield.....	62
Figure 4.12- The Van patton hop house, town of Middlefield.....	63
Figure 4.13- The Yeager hop house, town of Middlefield.....	63
Figure 4.14- The Slater hop house, town of Middlefield.....	64
Figure 4.15- The Snyder hop house, town of Middlefield.....	64

Figure 4.16- The Red Creek farm hop house, town of Middlefield.....	65
Figure 4.17- The Bernegger hop house, town of Springfield.....	65
Figure 4.18- The Bridger hop house, town of Springfield.....	66
Figure 4.19- The H. Smith hop house, town of Springfield.....	66
Figure 4.20- Floor plan, H. Smith hop house, town of Springfield.....	67
Figure 4.21- The Patterson hop house, town of Springfield.....	68
Figure 4.22- The Van Alstine hop house #1, town of Springfield.....	69
Figure 4.23- The Van Alstine hop house #2, town of Springfield.....	69
Figure 4.24- The The Thayer hop house, town of Springfield.....	70
Figure 4.25- The Bates hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	71
Figure 4.26- The Collis hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	72
Figure 4.27- The Garretson hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	72
Figure 4.28- The Morton hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	73
Figure 4.29- A. Smith hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	73
Figure 4.30- The Young hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	74
Figure 4.31- The Zook hop house, town of Cherry Valley.....	74
Figure 4.32- The Lindberg hop house, town of Burlington.....	75
Figure 4.33- The Shillieto hop house, town of Burlington.....	75
Figure 4.34- The Layton hop house, town of Burlington.....	76
Figure 4.35- The Corinne hop house, town of Burlington.....	77
Figure 4.36- The Parsons hop house, town of New Lisbon.....	77
Figure 4.37- The Murphy hop house, town of New Lisbon.....	78
Figure 4.38- The Lee hop house, Fly Creek, town of Otsego.....	79

Figure 4.39- Floor plan, Lee hop house, town of Otsego.....	79
Figure 4.40- The Knapp hop house, town of Otsego.....	80
Figure 4.41- Floor plan, Knapp hop house, town of Otsego.....	80
Figure 4.42- Pope hop house, town of Otsego.	81
Figure 4.43- The Orenstein hop house, town of Otsego.....	82
Figure 4.44- The Pernat hop house, town of Otsego.....	82
Figure 4.45- The Wedderspoon hop house #1, town of Otsego.....	83
Figure 4.46- The Wedderspoon hop house #2, town of Otsego.....	83
Figure 4.47- The Thering hop house, town of Hartwick.....	84
Figure 4.48- The Lloyd hop house, town of Hartwick.....	85
Figure 4.49- The Green hop house, town of Hartwick.....	86
Figure 4.50- Floor plan, Green hop house, town of Hartwick.....	86
Figure 4.51- The Johnson hop house, town of Richfield.....	87
Figure 4.52- The Skramko hop house, town of Exeter.....	88
Figure 4.53- The Seamon hop house, town of Exeter.....	88
Figure 4.54- The Evers hop house, town of Roseboom.....	89
Figure 4.55- The Van Buren hop house, town of Roseboom.....	90
Figure 4.56- The Gage hop house, town of Roseboom.....	90
Figure 4.57- The Brooker hop house, town of Westford.....	91
Figure 4.58- The Bush hop house, town of Westford.....	92
Figure 4.59- The McGrath hop house, town of Worcester.....	92
Figure 4.60- The Beardslee hop house, town of Pittsfield.....	94
Figure 4.61- Floor plan, Beardslee hop house, town of Pittsfield.....	95

Figure 4.62- The Sondergaard hop house, town of Decatur.....	95
Figure 4.63- Brick around pipe exit, Sondergaard hop house, town of Decatur.....	98
Figure 5.1- Hop box, H. Smith hop house, town of Springfield.....	105
Figure 5.2- Wagon holding hops, Oneida County.....	106
Figure 5.3- Hop shovel, 1966.....	106
Figure 5.4- Former hop stove, Cooperstown.....	107

Chapter 1: Introduction

The hop house stands as a spectre in the rolling hills of Otsego County, New York. There are no more individuals who operate them, and few even recognize their original purpose. Most of the hop houses that do remain have either been left to rot in the field, or converted into workshops or storage sheds for those with the money to maintain them. Despite their obscurity, the hop houses of Otsego County are a silent reminder of a golden age for agriculture in New York State. In nineteenth century Otsego County, hops dominated the landscape.

When most people think of New York State, they imagine the sprawling metropolis that dominates its southern fringe. The State of New York in contrast to this popular perception has many identities. Among them is the mainly rural region known as upstate New York. This area encompasses the vast majority of New York's land area, yet the majority of the state's population does not inhabit it. Despite upstate New York's smaller population, it can still be divided into several sub-regions. Otsego County lies in the area referred to as Central New York (figure 1.1). It is neighbored by the counties of Schoharie, Delaware, Chenango, Madison, Oneida, Herkimer, and Montgomery. This area lies outside the range of upstate New York's major metropolitan areas, and as such is rural in character. Most of the of the 60,000 inhabitants of Otsego County live within the Upper Susquehanna Valley, which stretches from the Village of Cooperstown to the City of Oneonta. Oneonta is the County's most populous

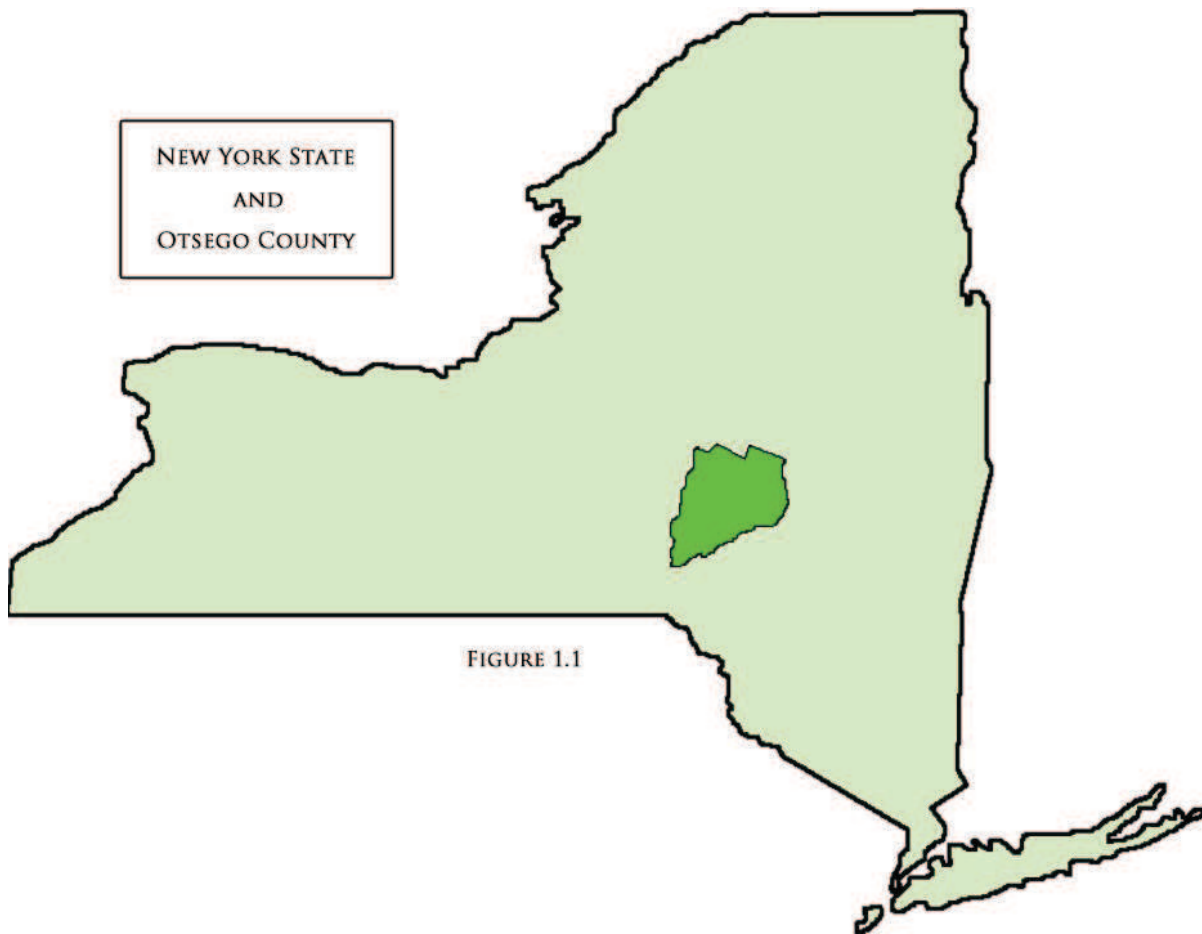


FIGURE 1.1

settlement, with Cooperstown acting as the county seat. The majority of the Otsego County consists of forested hills interrupted by the more developed river valleys. The northern portion of the county is more level as it slopes into the Mohawk Valley. The southern part is the most mountainous, containing the foothills of the Catskill Mountains.

Otsego County is notable for the character of its architecture. Many if not most of the buildings in the County were built during the nineteenth century. As a result, the architectural landscape has not changed a great deal for the past one hundred and fifty years. This makes Otsego County a prime hunting ground for agricultural buildings built during this period. The reason for this feature can be partially attributed to a lack of

development. According to the 2013 census, Otsego County has a population of 61,683 people. The 1880 census listed the population as 51,397.¹ In the span of 130 years, the total population of the county has only increased by 17%. Housing stock as a consequence has kept much of its original character due to the demand for housing having been primarily met during the nineteenth century. While the houses themselves have been well preserved, farm outbuildings have not benefited in the same way.

When I first began my academic career, I did not intend to study either folklore or architecture. My undergraduate degree is in history and philosophy, with my interest at the time resting mostly with European subject matters. After I graduated, I found myself without a clear path. In that interim period, I decided to work as a real estate agent in the village of Cooperstown. My first taste of architecture had been a drafting class in high school. This experience had taught me the basic construction terms, though I never took it wholly seriously. This changed when I began working with real estate sales. I found great joy in exploring properties, each new listing promising a new adventure. I loved how every building was different in its own unique way.

I eventually decided to pursue a degree in folklore sometime in the Spring of 2013. It was not my original intention to specialize in vernacular architecture. Eastern European folklore was my first interest. This changed after taking the class Folklore Research Methods at Memorial University of Newfoundland. The focus of the class was on the vernacular architecture of the St. John's neighborhood of Quidi Vidi. This course required students to measure and research a set of buildings within the neighborhood's

¹ "Census of population and Housing," United States Census Bureau, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

limits. I found the skills I had acquired during my time as a real estate agent were readily applicable to this task. After completing the course, I decided I wanted my thesis to focus on vernacular architecture.

My two options were to either study buildings in Newfoundland or to work in Otsego County. Having already a sound knowledge of the layout and forms of buildings in my homeland, the latter choice was the more appealing option. Examining an outbuilding type eventually became my prerogative. They are generally simple structures, and conveniently do not have residents. Unfortunately for me (though fortunately later), Henry Glassie had already done a project on the barns of Otsego County in his work *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York*. I had to then think outside the box, about the less glamorous outbuildings. That is when I remembered that a thing called a “hop house” existed in the county. I admittedly knew very little about these structures. Growing up I was told that Otsego County had a golden age of hops. Then the “blight” came, and within an instant it was all over. The only remains of this bygone era were the hop houses that dotted Central New York. Despite the importance of these structures, I knew only how to recognize the circular and pyramidal kiln structures often promoted by heritage groups.

My assumptions were shattered when I began my fieldwork. As it just so happens, the forms I was familiar with were not the norm. The average hop house does not look much different from a small Yankee (or English) barn. Even more surprising was that I had been surrounded by these structures all my life without knowing so. I had seen many of them countless times, but had not a clue what their original purpose was.

The landscape in which I had grown up was suddenly transformed into a very different place. The question then became, what makes a hop house unique?

To answer this question, I set out to conduct field work within Otsego County. My fieldwork consisted of three tasks. The first was to survey as many hop houses in Otsego County as possible. I conducted this survey during the Summer of 2014. This work was conducted by way of photography and recording the architectural features of each hop house. I also noted the GPS coordinates of these structures, allowing for the creation of an accurate map. I focused my survey to the northern reaches of the County in order to make the most of my limited time. Also due to time restrictions, I was unable to survey every road. A combination of word of mouth and research on prime hop regions in the county led me to the most likely places with hop houses. The second task was to draw floor plans for a select few of the hop houses. To create as meaningful a data set as possible, I drew buildings of various types and from various locations across the county. The names of the hop houses I chose based on the historical owner. If this could not be obtained, I used the current owners name. The final task was conducting research at the New York Historical Association (NYSHA) Research Library and other nearby historical societies. Conveniently, I had an intern position at NYSHA that required me to digitize materials relating to barns from their American Folklife Archive. During my work, I discovered student reports created during the 1960's for the Cooperstown Graduate Program that detailed various hop houses. These reports included detailed plans and interviews with individuals involved with the hop industry.

My internship was integral in both increasing my sample size, and getting first hand accounts of hop houses in use.

The term “hop house” is not one commonly used in the national vernacular. Being that hops are only grown in a few select regions of the United States, this is to be expected. The terms “hop barn”, “hop kiln”, and “oast house” are other alternate names for the structure. The term “oast house” is especially popular among the English. Hop house is the standard name used in upstate New York, so it is the term I choose to label these structures. A building can be labeled a hop house if its built or refurbished purpose is for the drying, processing, and storage of hops. When hops cultivation dominated the economy of Central New York, these structures were one of the most common outbuilding types in Otsego County.

Despite the importance of hop houses in the history of upstate New York, the amount of material written on them is limited. More times than not they are relegated to a section of a study rather than the focus. Dutch barns have attracted more interest in terms of upstate New York vernacular architecture research. In the past twenty years or so, this trend has begun to change. While materials are still limited, several authors have done valuable research on hop houses within upstate New York.

The most thorough work has been done by Dr. Michael Tomlan of Cornell University. Two works of his stand out in this regard. The first and most important is *A Report on Hop Houses in Central New York* created for the Madison County Historical Society in Oneida, New York. This bare bones work is dense and precise in its examination of hop houses. The report is separated into four chapters:

1. Brief History

2. The Functional Requirements for and Development of the Hop House in New York
3. A Field Study
4. Critique for Comparison and Evaluation

The first chapter covers the history, though in not great detail. The second chapter delves into what makes a hop house a hop house. This is perhaps the most important chapter, detailing all the traits of upstate hop houses. The third chapter examines various examples of hop houses throughout the upstate region. The final chapter discusses where the hop house stands in its present form.

Tomlan's second work is a continuation and expansion of this report, titled *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States. Where as A Report on Hop Houses in Central New York* focuses exclusively on hop houses in Central New York, this book is an examination of hops culture in the entirety of the United States. This includes analysis of the hops growing regions of New England, the Midwest, and the Pacific Northwest. Only one chapter in *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States* covers hop houses themselves. With Tomlan being a historic preservation professor, it is no surprise that this is among the more dense chapters. *Chapter 5: Hop Kilns, Hop Houses, and Hop Driers* traces the entire evolution of hop houses within the United States. Two hop houses from Otsego County are used as examples. The first is the remnants of the Moakler hop house on County Route 33. Tomlan uses this example to iterate how older hop houses were often expanded with pyramidal additions. The other Otsego County example noted by Tomlan is the Slater hop house located on County Route 52. The Slater hop house is used by Tomlan for the purpose of illustrating how the common hop house was consistently used throughout the lifespan of upstate New

York hops culture. Due to the fact *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States* has an expanded scope, it is less useful than *A Report on Hop Houses in Central New York* for my own purposes. Whereas the previous book covers the forms and functions of all of the standard upstate forms, *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States* merely mentions them in passing.

Another important work in the field is *Barns of New York State: Rural Architecture of the Empire State*. This book was published in 2012 by Cynthia Falk, a professor of material culture at the Cooperstown Graduate Program. Her book is a comprehensive survey of barn and outbuilding types found within the State of New York. Though hop houses are not the leading subject, they are profiled in much more detail than most works. This is the most up to date study, being written in the last two years. *Chapter 4: A Farm Building for Every Purpose* is the section which details upstate New York hop houses. Being that Falk is based in Cooperstown, it is no surprise that many of her examples are derived from Otsego County. Her example of a common hop house is the Pope hop house located on the premises of the Farmers' Museum in Cooperstown.

A less known but important work is Sandra Martin Bullard's *Hop Time!* Consulted by her Husband Albert Bullard, Sandra Bullard provides an overview of hops culture as it existed in Otsego County. While short, this work is crucial in that it provides an illustrated guide to the various types of hop houses.

While these works laid the foundation for my knowledge of hop houses, they still leave something to be desired. Tomlan's work is mostly based on archival work. Due to

the lack a surveys, Tomlan can only make generalizations without making definitive statements. One example comes when Tomlan notes that the Reilly Hop House of Oneida County is the only known hop house with brick nogging.² During an internship with the Oneida County Historical Society, I discovered this feature is not an anomaly among Oneida County's hop houses. Falk's work too suffers from lack of references from a survey. An example of this is how she refers to late style hop houses as growing in size. In contrast to this, I found that some of the smallest hop houses were of the late period.

While the work on hop houses is limited, the range of works completed on farm outbuildings is much richer. Academics such as Thomas Visser, Thomas Hubka and Henry Glassie have all influenced my research in less direct ways.

Thomas Viser's *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings* was crucial for my work. His book provides a detailed guide to the construction techniques and identifying markers for the various outbuildings of New England. The buildings of upstate New York follow the New England tradition, so dates and techniques are applicable to this region as well. Viser even has a brief section written on hop houses in the chapter "Farm Buildings for Specialty Crops".³ While not great in depth, it is one of the few sources that provides any sort of information on hop houses built within New England. Being that the hop houses of Otsego County have their origins in their New England counterparts, it is critical to understand these structures.

² Michael Tomlan. *Hop Houses in Central New York* (Oneida: Madison County Historical Society, 1983), 48.

³ Thomas Durant Visser, *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997),182.

Another work which is more loosely tied to the subject is *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York*.⁴ Unlike Tomlan, Glassie based his work on surveys conducted within Otsego County. It is an incredibly detailed project which covers the entire breadth of the county. It is important in that Glassie covers the details in how barns in Otsego County are constructed, for hop houses were built under the same principles. Though Glassie mention hop houses, they do not feature predominantly in this work. The Yankee barn tends to be the focus in Glassie's study, a fair choice considering this style is by far the most predominant in Otsego County.

My intention is for this thesis to fill in some of the blanks left by these other authors. While studies on hop houses exist, they have not been as regionally focused. Few have made use of survey data in making their conclusions. While the focus of my study is on hop houses of Otsego County, its consequences are far more wide reaching. The period in which hop houses were built was a time of rapid change in the rural way of life in New York. Diverse farming that made use of varied crops was being replaced by monoculture in much of the country.⁵ Methods of transportation were also changing. Where once carriage roads dominated trade, the opening of the Erie Canal 1825 shifted travel to New York's waterways. Finally, the pace of technological advancement had accelerated at never before seen rates. All of these turning points in history are reflected in the architecture of hop houses. Thomas Carter and Elizabeth

⁴ Henry Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1974).

⁵ Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York*, 185.

Collins Cromley argue, "If culture determines behavior, and we can see such behavior in the things people make, it is logical that we can also move in the opposite direction, working back from the object in an attempt to explain the ideas, values, and beliefs- the culture- that caused that object to come into being." Architecture in this way acts as a fossil, preserving a moment in time.

Chapter 2: History and Background

The scientific name for hops is *Humulus lupulus*. It is a perennial plant that generally grows between the latitudes of 38° and 51° (figure 2.1).⁶ Its main use by cultures is for the flavoring of beer. This is accomplished by boiling the dried flowers of the female hop plant into a

concoction referred to as “wort”. Yeast is added to this mixture to produce the alcoholic beverage we have all come to love. Hops are infamous for the bitter taste they imbue, caused by alpha acid resins.⁷ In North



FIGURE 2.1
FRESHLY PICKED HOPS, THE FARMERS' MUSEUM, COOPERSTOWN.

America, the main hop growing region is the Pacific Northwest, while in Europe, Germany and Central Europe are leading producers.

In terms of agricultural products, hops is a fairly recent cultivar. The first mention of hops being consumed is by Pliny the Elder in the first century AD.⁸ This instance was not for the flavoring of beer, but rather as a salad green. Early beer did not make use of hops, and the plant did not become a mainstay ingredient until it was adopted by

⁶ A.H. Burgess, *Hops: Botany, Cultivation and Utilization* (New York: Interscience Publishers, 1964), XVII.

⁷ John Palmer, *How to Brew: Everything you Need to Know to Brew Beer Right the First Time* (Boulder: Brewers Publications, 2006), 42.

⁸ Burgess, *Hops: Botany, Cultivation and Utilization*, 1.

brewers in Bohemia sometime during the middle ages. Its adoption is owed to the antioxidants in hops that prevents infection from fungi and bacteria.⁹ Modern hops come in an assortment of varieties. They can range from the extremely bitter Chinook to the aromatic Fuggle.

In order for hops to be effectively used in beer, first they must be dried. For much of history, this task was accomplished with kilns. In upstate New York, hop kilns are referred to as “hop houses”. A hop house can be defined as a building whose purpose is for the drying and processing of hops. While hops can be sun dried, the hop house allows for the whole process to be hastened. The origin of the American hop house traces its roots to England. In comparison to the rest of Europe, hop cultivation started fairly late within the that country. A hint as to why can be gleaned from a petition to parliament in 1442, which refers to the plant as the “wicked weed”.¹⁰ Such wording suggests that the use of hops for flavoring beer was looked down upon by the mainstream beer establishment at the time.

The first English treatise on hops was written in 1574 by Reginald Scot. His book *Perfect Platform of a Hop-garden* details the entire act of hops cultivation during the period. Scot is perhaps most well known for his early skepticism of witchcraft, and his accompanying treatise on the subject. What is most striking about this work is the practices described by Scot are very similar to the ones practiced by nineteenth century Otsego farmers. The images of hops growing on poles sticking out of mounds within the

⁹ Stephen Beaumont and Tim Webb, *The World Atlas of Beer* (New York: Sterling Publishing, 2012), 15.

¹⁰ J.Y. Stratton, *Hops and Hop-Pickers* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1883), 17.

book were also seen in the fields of Otsego County. Even more importantly, a hop kiln is pictured.

The “oste house” depicted by Scot at first glance does not resemble later hop houses (figure 2.2). He describes a small structure with three rooms. When carefully examined, the “oste house” follows the same principles as the upstate hop house. Scot writes:

The chief matters that are by me to described herein, are the furnace below, wherein the fire is to be made, and the bed above where on the hops must lie to be dried: this I have chiefly to advise you of, that you beside the whole house and every part thereof as close as you can, and to place it near your garden for the better expedition of your work, and somewhat distant from your house to avoid the dangers of fire.¹¹

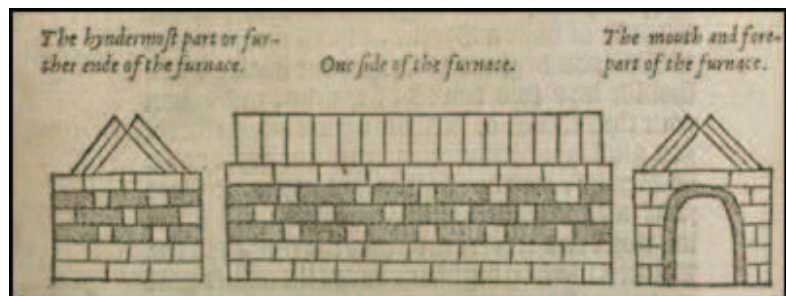


FIGURE 2.2
SIXTEENTH CENTURY OAST HOUSE ELEVATION DRAWING.
(SOURCE: *A PERFECT PLATFORM OF A HOP GARDEN*)

This descriptions could be used for an upstate hop house as well. Like the seventeenth century English farmer, the nineteenth century New York hop farmer built his hop house with the same basic principles. A room with a furnace and drying rack, kept away from the other buildings due to the fire danger.

There are other features as well that can be seen in upstate hop houses. The bed for the hops is described as being rows of “lathe”. Next to the bed, a small window

¹¹ Reginald Scot, *A Perfect Platform of a Hop Garden* (London: Henry Denham, 1576), 44.

is mentioned that allows for the hops to be shovelled into the room below.¹² This feature is analogous with the hop shoot found in their upstate counterparts. Being that the goal of the seventeenth and the nineteenth century hop farmer is the same, there was little reason to alter the design. The adding of the fourth room to the basic design was an accommodation for the advent of a new technology, namely the invention of the hop press.

From this point to modern day, hops production has been a part of the English agricultural landscape. While hops was booming in upstate New York during the nineteenth century, the English, too, saw a golden age in growing the “wicked weed”. The oast houses of England were functionally the same as their upstate counterparts (figure 2.3). Reverend J.Y. Stratton describes a typical oast houses from the late nineteenth century as such:

This building consists of spacious floors for the drying, packing and storing the hops, in addition to a number of kilns, generally of circular form...The drying-floors or kilns are covered in horse-hair, on which the hops are placed in the early part of the picking to the depth of eight or ten inches...¹³



FIGURE 2.3
NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH OAST HOUSES.
(SOURCE: *HOPS AND HOP-PICKERS*)

¹² Scot, *A Perfect Platform of a Hop Garden*, 47.

¹³ Stratton, *Hops and Hop-Pickers*, 36.

Though the English oast houses had a unifying aesthetic, this is not to say they all looked the same. William Moy Thomas describes in 1852:

...most of them brick built and perfectly circular up to a height of fourteen or fifteen feet, whence they terminate in a cone, surmounted by a cowled chimney, peculiarly shaped, to allow the vapour from the hops to escape...Some of the oast-houses are square-but the shape is old fashioned-and some are long; for no two farmers agree in any one particular as to the treatment of hops.¹⁴

What can be surmised from this statement is that no two hop houses were alike. This statement could be applied to upstate hop houses as well. While unifying patterns exist, there is no consistent standard by which all hop houses were designed.

While the English method of hops culture would come to be replicated in America, it was not necessarily the norm in the rest of Europe. Germany during the same period put more responsibility upon the dealer. It was the dealer who was expected to own the kiln and dry the hops. Farms in Germany were also small family run operations, thus not necessitating the need for hired hop pickers.¹⁵

Despite New York State being one of the original thirteen colonies, Otsego County was settled fairly late compared to other locations in the Northeast. White settlers did not come into the area until 1740.¹⁶ Major settlement of the region that would become Otsego County did not begin in earnest until after the American Revolution. Otsego County was created as a political entity in 1791, being split off from the then

¹⁴ William Moy Thomas, "Hops' from Household Words" in *The Hop Bin: An Anthology of Hop Picking in Kent and East Sussex* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014), 60.

¹⁵ Ezra Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States: Being a Practical Treatise on Hop Growing in Washington Territory, from Cutting to Bale* (Washington: E. Meeker, 1883), 147-148.

¹⁶ Duane Hamilton Hurd, *History of Otsego County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts and Fariss, 1878), 12.

larger Montgomery County.¹⁷ Cooperstown was named county seat, and has remained so to this day.

Being in a rugged and isolated section of New York State discouraged early growth within the County. Settlement expansion accelerated after the completion of the Great Western Turnpike in 1803.¹⁸ This toll route connected Cherry Valley to Albany, making travel far easier. The area became even more connected to the outside world when the nearby Erie Canal was completed in 1825.

The first grower of hops in upstate New York was James Coolidge in 1808. He resided in Madison County, just south of Waterville. It took several decades after this for upstate New York to become a dominant force in hops production. The first primary hops growing region within the United States was New England. It was there that the first hop houses of America were built.¹⁹ The turning point for New York hops came after a bad harvest hurt the crop in England after 1822. Originally, American brewers preferred hops from Europe. As crop failures spread in that region, preference was given to American hop growers by the mid-nineteenth century. By 1849, upstate New York had surpassed New England as the largest producer of hops in America.²⁰

Even though upstate New York was the largest producer of hops in America, the area in which they were grown was a small section of the state. The three largest producers in New York State were Otsego, Madison, and Oneida Counties. The land

¹⁷ Hurd, *History of Otsego County*, 23.

¹⁸ Christopher Dobbs, "Road to America: The First Great Western Turnpike", MA Thesis, Cooperstown Graduate Program, 2002, 6.

¹⁹ Visser, *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings*, 182.

²⁰ Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States: Being a Practical Treatise on Hop Growing in Washington Territory, from Cutting to Bale*, 62-65.

area of these three counties account for a mere five percent of the land area in New York State. Other significant producers of hops were Herkimer, Schoharie, and Montgomery Counties. Schoharie County was a late comer in terms of the other counties, but its production rates in later years would come to rival the big three.²¹ All of these counties are located in an area referred to as Central New York.

One of the advantages of hops farming in Otsego County was its proximity to markets. The closest center of beer production was in the nearby Mohawk Valley. The City of Utica at its peak had ten operating breweries at the end of the nineteenth century.²² The most important of these was West End Brewing Company, which survives to this day as F.X. Matt Brewing Company. They brew the popular Saranac line of beers and Utica Club. Another nearby large brewer was Louis Bierbaur Brewery/ Bierbaur Brewing Company in the Village of Canajoharie.²³ This brewery was in operation from 1869 to 1920. With access to the Great Western Turnpike and Erie Canal, Otsego County was a short journey from New York City markets as well. This was especially important considering that New York City during that era was the largest hop market on Earth.²⁴ Despite the amount of hops grown in Otsego County, brewing was not a major industry within the area until recently. Most of the breweries opened within Otsego County during the age of hops were short lived endeavors.²⁵

²¹ Michael Tomlan, *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 19.

²² Daniel Shumway, *Utica Beer: A History of Brewing in the Mohawk Valley* (Charleston: History press, 2014), 9.

²³ Daniel Shumway, *Central New York Beer: A History of Brewing in the Heart of the Empire State* (Charleston: The History press, 2014), 13.

²⁴ Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States*.

²⁵ Shumway, *Central New York Beer*, 29.

By the turn of the twentieth century, hops production in upstate New York was on the decline. New territories in the Pacific Northwest were eclipsing the New York hop producers in both efficiency and amounts produced.²⁶ Another blow was a devastating mold referred to as the “blue blight”. The actual identity of this blight was the downy mildew, first reported in New York around 1909.²⁷ This mold was devastating, forcing many farmers to give up the business altogether. The final straw was when prohibition was enacted in 1920.

One of the few grower of hops within Otsego County after the blight was Edward Moakler. He would continue cultivating them well into World War II, providing hops for the production of “near beer”.²⁸ Edward’s father Martin had been perhaps the largest hop producer in Otsego County during his time, owning nine different hop yards. Martin was also one of the area's largest hop dealers, benefiting from a close friendship with August Busch of Anheuser-Busch fame.²⁹ After the blight, Martin retired from the business and focused his efforts on real estate investments. In neighboring Oneida County, A.E. Brandis was still growing hops by 1951. Despite being ninety years old at the time, he continued growing the crop with wooden poles. He even still dried the crop with a hop house he owned on the premises of his property.³⁰ These two were very

²⁶ Tomalan, *Tinged with Gold*, 33.

²⁷ Tomlan, *Hop Houses in Central New York*, 17.

²⁸ Hop House Report, William Corsaro, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0092, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

²⁹ Shumway, *Central New York Beer: A History of Brewing in the Heart of the Empire State*, 31.

³⁰ Ted Townsend, “Hop Kilns Fade Away into Farming Oblivion”, *Utica Daily Press*, May 11, 1951.

much the exception. After prohibition, the amount of hops produced by New York has been negligible until modern day.

While hop houses are the main focus of my thesis, their place within the greater hop industry is important to understand. In terms of the amount of work placed in growing hops, only a small amount of it involved hop houses. They were only required for the two week window in which hops needed to be dried. The hop house is a piece of the puzzle in the larger picture of New York hops culture. An understanding of their place within this is required before the structure itself can be examined.

The planting of hops generally began in late spring, or whenever the threat of frost had passed. The rhizomes are planted in mounds that are lined in rows. For most of its history in Otsego County, the hops were trained to grow on wooden poles. Later set-ups trained the hops to grow up cotton twine that was tied to the wooden poles, making the harvest easier.³¹ It also allowed for poles to support two hop plants, one per piece of twine.³² In the early years the wood was locally sourced. As more and more trees were felled and land was cleared for grazing, this option vanished. In later years, the wood had to be sourced from Canada.³³

The hops were ready for harvest usually in the last week of August or the first week of September.³⁴ The farmer would determine the hop's readiness by its color. Earl

³¹ Hop House Report, Cheryl Magruder, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0108, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, 66-0108, New York State Historical Association.

³² Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0104, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

³³ Hop House Report, Webster Slack, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0097, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

³⁴ Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0106, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

Richards Sr. of East Springfield described the desired color as being that of a “goldfish”.

³⁵ It was important to harvest the hops in a timely manner, otherwise they would become “rusty”.³⁶ The hops grower and his family were ill equipped to bring in the crop themselves. The hops had to be brought in and dried quickly. To accomplish this, “hop pickers” were brought in



FIGURE 2.4
HOP PICKERS IN EMMONS, TOWN OF ONEONTA.
(SOURCE: THE GREATER ONEONTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY)

to pick the hops from their bines. This task took several weeks of hard work, making it one of the busiest times of year for Otsego County farmers (figure 2.4).

While the farmer did not usually take part in the picking, he was heavily involved once the drying had to be done. The picked hops would be carried to the hop house, then spread along the covered slats in the drying room. This would generally be started in mid-day, then last into the next morning.³⁷ All through the night the stove had to be stocked and the hops turned. This was often the responsibility of the farmer, who would stay up all night to accomplish the task. One farmer was reported to stay awake during this time by keeping chewing tobacco in his mouth, which would drip into his throat if he

³⁵ Hop House Report, Henry Bacot, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0101, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

³⁶ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

³⁷ Hop House Report, William Corsaro, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

fell asleep.³⁸ A hop picker recalled one farmer stripping down naked to turn the hops in order to tolerate the heat.³⁹

The kiln was typically heated with a special stove, burning either wood or coal. While the drying process was occurring, a small metal bucket of sulphur was left to cook on top of the furnace. This was done in order to bleach the hops a golden color, a trait desirable to brewers.⁴⁰ The sulphur (more colloquially known as brimstone) was usually added about halfway through the drying process.⁴¹ This also resulted in a powerful stench to emanate from the hop house during use. As one could imagine, this was good impetus to keep a hop house away from the farmhouse.

After the hops were dried, they were then shoveled into the storage room of the hop house. The actual bailing of the hops was not done until the farmer was ready to sell. This was determined by what the current price of hops was.⁴² It was not unheard of for farmers to keep harvests stored waiting on the right price.⁴³ When a buyer was found, it was time to bale the hops. A device on the lower floor known as a “hop press” was the main tool in this process. A typical bail ranged from 150-200 pounds.⁴⁴

Due to the size of the hop yards, seasonal workers had to be brought in to complete the task. Most of the “pickers” came from urban areas, especially Albany, New

³⁸ Hop House Report, James Gold, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0099, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

³⁹ Hop House Report, William Corsaro, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁴⁰ Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States*, 102.

⁴¹ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁴² Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive

⁴³ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁴⁴ “Contract to Consign Hops”, Oneida County Historical Society Archive, 1985.100.2, Oneida County Historical Society.

York City, and Philadelphia.⁴⁵ One hop grower in Milford found pickers by recruiting hobos he found around the Oneonta railroad yards.⁴⁶ Pickers in general would stay on the farm for as long as it took to pick all the hops. This process often took between two to three weeks.⁴⁷ During this period, the farmer had to both house and feed the pickers. Housing could range from specifically built boarding houses, the farmhouse, or even sometimes the hop house itself.⁴⁸

Once all the hops were picked and bailed, the next step was to bring them to market. This was not done directly by the hop farmer, but rather through hop dealers. One of the most prominent of these figures in Otsego County was Dave Wilber. Originally from Milford, Wilber established himself as the largest hop dealer of the region. In a letter from 1888, Wilber tells one of his agents to buy from several farmers in Cherry Valley for no more than 80 cents a pound.⁴⁹ The hop farmer had to battle with local forces in order to secure a reasonable price. Dave Wilber would eventually found Wilber Bank, an institution that would last until its merger with Community Bank in 2011.⁵⁰ Other well known dealers in Otsego County included Martin Moakler, Ed King, Fred Quiaf and the Fay brothers.⁵¹ Though hop dealers would come to the farmer, sometimes the farmer would send their product directly to New York City to get a quote on price.

⁴⁵ Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program.

⁴⁶ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive

⁴⁷ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁴⁸ Hop House Report, Robert Schwabach, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0107, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

⁴⁹ "Wilber Hops 1888," Coll. 2013.113.01, Greater Oneonta Historical Society.

⁵⁰ "Community Bank System Completes Merger with The Wilber Corporation", accessed April 12, 2015, [://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110411005381/en/Community-Bank-System-Completes-Merger-Wilber-Corporation#.VOaa7C4l-Jk](http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110411005381/en/Community-Bank-System-Completes-Merger-Wilber-Corporation#.VOaa7C4l-Jk).

⁵¹ Hop House Report, Alfred Bullard, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0095, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

Due to the constantly fluctuating price, some farmers would pre-sell their crop at a flat rate before it was even harvested.⁵²

The price of hops was determined by quality. Ezra Meeker described the best quality hops as, "...cleanly picked, properly cured, bright in color, well matured, not broken, neatly bailed, free from defects." He divided hop quality into five categories, with the top being the "fancy hop". Other grades could be sold, just at lower price. The "medium" quality hops for example were often used for lager and porter beers due to their less hoppy flavor.⁵³

Because price was determined by weight and quality, it was common for less scrupulous farmers to try and bloat the numbers. There were several ways one could increase the weight of their yield. The least dangerous was to bail the hops on a humid day. This insured the hops would gain weight by way of absorbing the moisture.⁵⁴ Another tactic was to simply fill the bags with something that was heavy. Such items included plaster and cobblestones.⁵⁵ There were also tricks to increase price for quality. Harry Shaul of Cherry Valley recalled one farmer mixing poor quality hops with good quality in order to inflate the weight of the more expensive variety.⁵⁶

In terms of world history, the era of upstate hops is a blip on the radar. In contrast, the one hundred years of production for the relatively young New York State is

⁵² Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁵³ Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States: Being a Practical Treatise on Hop Growing in Washington Territory, from Cutting to Bale*, 46-47.

⁵⁴ Hop House Report, Alfred Bullard, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0095, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

⁵⁵ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁵⁶ Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program.

an important aspect for a substantial amount of its postcolonial history. At a time when New York State was the most populous state in the union, it also enabled it to be an agricultural leader as well. The ending of New York State's hop dominance also reflects a decline in the fortunes of upstate in general. The new global interconnectedness that had given upstate New York a vital path to foreign markets had also sown the seeds of its destruction. It only took one region (specifically the Pacific Northwest) to provide a more attractive option to cause a mass migration of the industry. It also ensured that the fortunes of upstate hop growers were tied to the fortunes of other growers at different corners of the globe. After heavy industry came to a decline in the Northeast during the mid-twentieth century, upstate New York was left in an economic malaise that has continued to this day. The rise and fall of the hops industry is a predecessor to the fate that would afflict all of the region. Hop culture in upstate New York reflected prosperity in the region as a whole.

Chapter 3: Forms and Functions

A hop house is an outbuilding whose main purpose is the drying and processing of hops (figure 3.1). For most, this definition places the hop house within the category of barn. This can be witnessed by the spread of the term “hop barn”. Neither term was the common name used during the era of hops



FIGURE 3.1
TYPICAL OTSEGO HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF HARTWICK, 1966.
(SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION)

production. Most written literature of the time uses the word “hop kiln”. The Oxford Dictionary defines a barn as “A large farm building used for storing grain, hay, or straw or for housing livestock.”⁵⁷ A kiln in contrast is defined as “A furnace or oven for burning, baking, or drying, especially one for calcining lime or firing pottery.”⁵⁸ The traditional definition of barn is surprisingly specific. Under it, a hop house would not be considered a barn. Oxford Dictionary’s kiln definition is more in line with the hop house. It is understandable why their builders with this context would see the hop house as a kiln.

⁵⁷ “Barn”, Oxford Dictionaries, accessed February 10, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/barn.

⁵⁸ “Kiln”, Oxford Dictionaries, accessed February 10, 2015, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/kiln.

When one looks at a hop house structurally, it is in line with the barns built within Otsego County. It uses the same framing techniques and mostly the same materials. A hop house may not be officially defined as a barn, but it most certainly comes from the same architectural lineage. Dr. Gerald Pocius noticed a similar pattern in fish stages. Though the fish stage is unique from the barn, the ones built in Newfoundland are based on the same designs.⁵⁹ People tend to build structures in line with what they know. A builder of hop houses in Otsego County then would apply the same methods used in barn construction on a hop house.

Because of this fact, there is no need to explore intensely details such as framing techniques in depth. Henry Glassie's work *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York* describes these patterns in great detail. In writing on the structure of the hop house, my intent is to hone in on details that make the hop house unique. My work is meant to build upon my those before me, not to replace or modify. As such, this chapter will cover those aspects that do not apply to other outbuildings within New York State.

All hop houses have the same basic room setup (figure 3.2). Each one can be divided into two sections, a kiln side and storage side. Both sections are further divided between two rooms, with one on each floor. In many respects, each section acts like a separate building. Both sides are self contained, only connected by two doors which are often shut. Many farmers treated each section as its own entity.⁶⁰ This trait allows for

⁵⁹ Gerald Pocius, "The House that Poor-Jack Built: Architectural Stages in the Newfoundland Fishery" in *The Sea and Culture of Atlantic Canada*, Larry McCarren, ed (Sackville: Mount Allison University Press, 1992), 77.

⁶⁰ Hop House Report, Alfred Bullard, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

one part to be destroyed without completely compromising the other. It is not uncommon to find hop houses where the kiln section or storage section outlived its counterpart. This was the case with one of the Moakler hop houses in Middlefield.⁶¹

This chapter will describe the form and functions of the hop house as it is found in Otsego County, New York. As such, it is important to establish and define what the main terms to be used

are. The kiln section rooms will be referred to as the stove room (lower) and the drying room (upper). The storage section's two rooms are the storage room (upper) and press room (lower). The term slats refer to long narrow pieces of wood found in the drying room. Lath is similar, but more flat. The next step is to describe the key components that make up a hop house. Each part of the hop house will be broken down and described in detail. These descriptions will be of a general type, with exceptions and variations noted. While hop houses come in a variety of forms, they all have the same base component parts.

The kiln section of the hop house is the most likely to have a foundation or stones walls, with rectangular air vents commonly found along the base. The purpose of

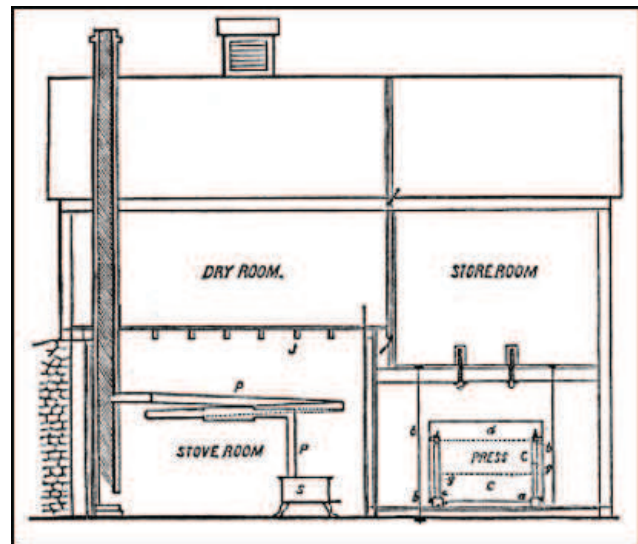


FIGURE 3.2
TYPICAL HOP HOUSE LAYOUT.
(SOURCE: *THE HOP*)

⁶¹ Hop House Report, William Corsaro, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

these vents is to allow for a draft to be created. Each vent generally has a small hatch that allows for air control (figure 3.3). Not all hop houses used such methods to create a draft. Some merely a left door open to create the same effect.⁶²

The first floor room of the kiln section is the “stove room”. It is here that the hop stove (or furnace) is located (figure 3.4). This room usually has a dirt floor, and is often recessed into the earth. The stove in all pictured examples rests in the center of this room. Above the stove room rests the “drying room” (figure 3.5), through which the heat



FIGURE 3.3
KILN VENT, LEE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.



FIGURE 3.4
STOVE ROOM, POPE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

of the stove would travel. The exhaust from the stove most commonly in Otsego County exists from the outside wall. Some of these have a brick outline for the exit to prevent

⁶² Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0106, Cooperstown Graduate Program.

heat damage to the wood. In rare cases, the exhaust pipe connects to a brick chimney.

A common attachment to the kiln section was a stairway and platform that connected to the second story door. Such an addition allowed for the hops to be



FIGURE 3.5
DRYING ROOM, SONDERGAARD HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF DECATUR.

more easily unloaded into the drying room. This feature was especially important to those hop hop houses not built on a bank for easy access. During my survey, I came across no hop house where the original platform survived. There were several where the platform was reconstructed, such as the Beardslee and Pope hop houses. Photos from the early twentieth century reveal this feature to have been an original aspect of hop house construction.

The drying room has a floor which consists of one inch wide slats that allow for the air to rise through them (figure 3.6). Often referred to



FIGURE 3.6
DRYING SLATS, SONDERGAARD HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF DECATUR.

as a “drying cloth” or “kiln cloth”,⁶³ a burlap like cloth was stapled down on the slats. The material of the drying cloth was usually burlap, though in rare cases cheesecloth was used as well.⁶⁴ The purpose of this room was for the direct drying of hops. As such, the drying cloth had to be of a loose weave to allow for the heat to easily permeate through it. A few feet above the floor in the room is usually found a one foot width wood paneling. The purpose of this

was to indicate how high to stack the hops upon the slats.

⁶⁵ It was through the drying room that hops were unloaded into the hop houses. The door into the drying room can be found on



FIGURE 3.7
PLASTER AND LATH, H. SMITH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

either the gable end or side of the hop house.

Typical hop house kilns have plaster and lath covering the interior walls, which rest upon studs that line the interior (figure 3.7). This distinctive feature is one of the sure signs an outbuilding was once a hop house. The purpose of the plaster and lath is to keep the heat as insulated as possible during the drying process in the kiln. In rare cases, the plaster and lath was even used to cover the ceiling of the kiln. This oddity

⁶³ Hop House Report, R.G. Case, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁶⁴ Hop House Report, Stephen Sevits, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0095, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

⁶⁵ Hop House Report, R.G. Kooklian, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-100, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

can be seen in both the Beardslee hop house of Hoboken and the Johnson hop house near Richfield Springs (figure 3.8). This was presumably an experiment to see how insulated one could make a kiln. Some later hop houses used other methods for insulation as well. The Karker hop house near Cobleskill, the McGrath hop house in Worcester, and the Hayes hop house in Middlefield Center all have wood sheathing covered in asbestos paper lining the kiln wall (figure 3.9). In the Van Alstine and Green hop houses, only the wood sheathing is used.



FIGURE 3.8
LATH CEILING, BEARDSLEE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF PITTSFIELD.



FIGURE 3.9
ASBESTOS LINED KILN, KARKER HOP HOUSE, SCHOHARIE COUNTY.

The second part of the hop house is the storage section. The upper level room of the storage section is referred to as the storage room, connected to the drying room by one or more doors (figure 3.10). It was in this room that the hops were stored after they

were dried. The storage room floor is often lower than the drying room slats, with small stairs leading up into the connecting doors. This was done to make it easier to move the dried hops from the drying room into storage.⁶⁶ The storage time could last between a few weeks to over a year, depending on what the current price of hops was at the time.⁶⁷ It is through the storage room that the stairs or ladder from the first floor enter.

The area below the storage room is the “press room” (figure 3.11). It was in this room that the hop press was located, which turned

hops into bales. This room has the largest doors of the hop house and is the main entrance. Early period hop houses have a large summer beam⁶⁸ that runs across the



FIGURE 3.10
STORAGE ROOM, KNAPP HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.



FIGURE 3.11
PRESS ROOM, BEARDSLEE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF PITTSFIELD.

⁶⁶ Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program.

⁶⁷ Hop House Report, Henry Bacot, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁶⁸ A large load bearing beam found in timber framed structures.

center of the press room, with the screw beam for the press being anchored to it. The press room also contains a “hops shoot” in its ceiling, the hole which was used to funnel hops into the press. This room has a set of doors that connect it with the stove room. The door connecting the two rooms normally had a small window, allowing for someone to check on the stove room without actually entering it (figure 3.12).



FIGURE 3.12
DOOR INTO KILN, WEDDERSPOON HOP HOUSE,
TOWN OF OTSEGO.

Forms

Hop Houses in Otsego County do not have a homogeneous exterior form. There are several variants, each within a distinguishable type. There is also a diversity in building material, though the majority use wood. Tomlan divides hop houses into two types: the common hop house and draft kiln hop house.⁶⁹ Common hop houses are typical gable roofed barn structures, though there are variations within this paradigm (figure 3.13). Tomlan unfortunately does not go into great detail on the sub-types of common hop house. Despite their name, there are several variants in which common hop houses can be found. One of the more common variants in Otsego County is what Sandra Bullard in *Hop Time!* refers to as a “step-up kiln”.⁷⁰ The kiln section of a step-up hop house is raised from the storage section. This variation

⁶⁹ Tomlan, *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States*.

⁷⁰ Sandra Martin Bullard, *Hop Time!* (Cooperstown: Barton-Butler Graphics, 1998).

in the form is common throughout Otsego County. Around 20% of the hop houses surveyed fell within this type. The common hop house can also have differential features based upon the period which it was built. The construction of hop houses is divided into two periods.

The early period of hop house construction lasted roughly from 1840-1860 according to most scholars.⁷¹ The earliest hop houses are squat and low and became taller as they evolved.⁷² Several important features define this period.



FIGURE 3.13
COMMON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF HARTWICK, 1966.
(SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION)

The first is the use of hand-hewn beams with mortise and tenon frames. While saw cut beams were in use during this time period, it was still common practice to hand-hewn the larger framing beams. In most of the early hop houses, a large summer beam is found in the press room, typically ranging from 10-15 inches in width. The other hand-hewn beams that form the frame in comparison typically are 7-11 inches in width. It is on the summer beam that a hole for the screw beam can be found (figure 3.14). The screw beam was used for early hop presses, integral in applying pressure for the

⁷¹ Cynthia Falk, *Barns of New York: Rural Architecture of the Empire State* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 139.

⁷² Falk, *Barns of New York: Rural Architecture of the Empire State*, 139.

creation of hops bales. The lath in the kiln section is also typically hand split during this period. Saw-cut lath is also used in the early hop houses, though it becomes far more prevalent in later years.

After 1860, the hop house went through several changes. The Harris press was invented during this time, eliminating the need for a screw beam.⁷³ Previous presses required a screw beam to apply pressure to the bales in order to compress them. This screw required a large summer beam to be mounted in, necessitating the use of post and beam construction. The Harris press in contrast makes use of levers pulled by hand (figure 3.15). Another important development was the invention of



FIGURE 3.14
SCREW BEAM HOLE, CHASE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

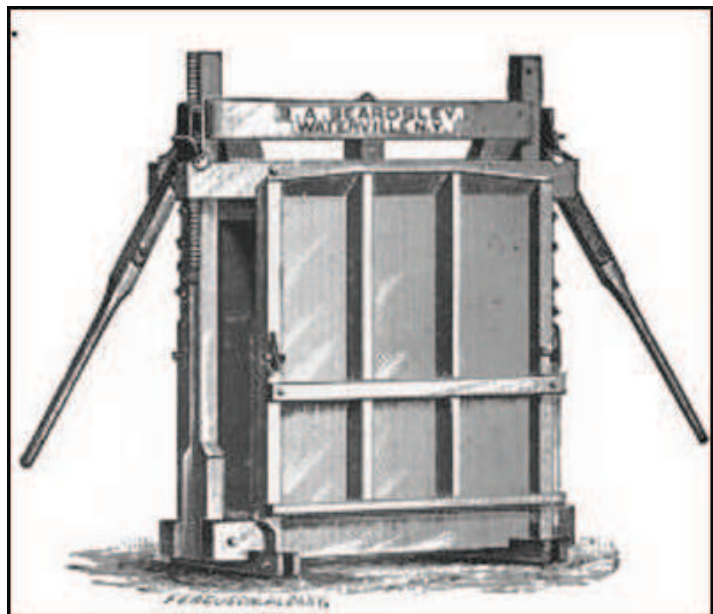


FIGURE 3.15
DRAWING OF HARRIS PRESS.
(SOURCE: *HOP CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES*)

⁷³ Tomlan, *Hop Houses in Central New York*, 28.

balloon framing in 1830's Chicago.⁷⁴ Though balloon framing had been around since the construction of early period hop houses in Otsego County, the introduction of the Harris press meant it was now a viable option. Without the need for a large summer beam, the post and beam method of construction was no longer a necessity. Balloon framing also meant that the hop houses could be built under more condensed designs. The Parsons hop house and Lee hop house are so condensed that they do not utilize stairs. A ladder is instead used to reach the second story. This is not to say that all the late stage hop houses are small. The McGath Hop House of Worcester and Hayes Hop House of Middlefield Center are two large step-up hop houses built during the later period .

Balloon framing allowed for the builder to have a wider selection of sizes to choose from. Despite the advantages it allowed, balloon framing was not utilized by all builders of late era hop houses. The Seamon Hop House of Exeter is a late period hop house that still makes use of



FIGURE 3.16
CIRCULAR SAW MARKS, SEAMON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF EXETER.

mortise and tenon framing. It is evidenced as a late period construction by the circular saw marks on its beams (figure 3.16).

⁷⁴ A construction style in which studs run from the sill to the top plate.

Late period hop houses are easier to spot than their earlier counterparts. This can be attributed to the structure taking on a more distinct form. Early period hop houses made extensive use of windows. They often cover the entire hop house, kiln section and storage section alike. As the hop houses evolved, this feature became less prominent. An early twentieth century photo of a step-up kiln hop house in Oneida County depicts one with no windows on the entire building (figure 3.17). There are several probable reasons for this development. The more windows on the kiln, the less well insulated it was. Many early period hop houses had small windows on their kiln section, likely for the purpose of letting enough sunlight in to see but not enough to give full exposure. The windows also acted as ventilators, so they were tolerated. As hop houses became more

specialized and advanced, windows became too much of a liability. The use of cowls on ventilators during the late period allowed for greater ventilation.⁷⁵ These devices would change direction depending on the wind, allowing for more efficient ventilation.



FIGURE 3.17
WINDOWLESS HOP HOUSE IN ONEIDA COUNTY.
SOURCE: ONEIDA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

⁷⁵ Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States: Being a Practical Treatise on Hop Growing in Washington Territory, from Cutting to Bale*, 101.

Another distinguishing feature of the late period is an incorporation of English features. In Otsego County, several hop houses began to be built with pyramidal roofed kiln sections after 1860.⁷⁶ Often the pyramidal kiln was added as an addition to an older hop house, much like the step-up kiln. The Beardslee hop house is such a case, with the pyramidal section supposedly added on in 1860. The clearest indication of such a feature being an addition is the evidence of plaster and lath in other parts of the hop house. In rare cases, a kiln could be added to a barn to convert it into a hop house. Such an example can be found with the Green hop house of Hartwick. The original storage section is wider than a typical hop house, most likely originating as an Yankee barn. It was this period that saw the upstate hop house divided into two types.

The Common hop house is the most common iteration (hence the name) in Otsego County. They are simple looking buildings, making them the hardest to identify as a hop house. Common hop houses are rectangular in structure, with gable roofs. Most originally featured a cupola on one end of the roof, denoting the location of the kiln section. Many of the common hop houses have lost this feature with the deterioration of age. This method was not universal, with some hop houses using windows to vent the kiln instead.⁷⁷ Despite their basic structure, the common house was built during the entire age of hops in Otsego County. This version was also easily convertible into other forms. A common variant of the common hop is the step-up kiln. This version features a raised gabled kiln section. The raised kiln is usually facing the same direction as the storage section, though this is not always the case. This addition

⁷⁶ Falk, *Barns of New York: Rural Architecture of the Empire State*, 139.

⁷⁷ Tomlan, *Hop Houses in Central New York*, 40.

was commonly added on to allow for the drying room floor to be raised, making it easier to move the hops.⁷⁸ Common hop houses were also often first built with a step-up kiln section attached.

The second major type of hop house is the draft kiln hop house. The draft kiln itself can be divided into two types. The first is the pyramidal, the most common iteration of the form (figure 3.18). The draft kiln hop house was regarded as the standard for the “professionals”. In his book *Hops Culture*, Ezra Meeker contends that the pyramidal hop house is the premier form.⁷⁹ Despite being recognized by publishers as the standard, pyramidal hop houses only make up a small percentage in Otsego County.

The pyramidal form itself can be divided into two forms: a tall form and a squat form.⁸⁰ The only tall form example left in Otsego County is the Beardslee hop house. This variation closely resembles the English oast house. In the English book



FIGURE 3.18
PYRAMIDAL HOP HOUSE, KARKER HOP HOUSE, SCHOHARIE COUNTY.

Hops and Hops Pickers, the examples given look almost identical to the Beardslee hop house in form. The squat pyramidal has four examples remaining in Otsego County.

These hop houses are structurally similar to the step-up hop house, though with a

⁷⁸ Bullard, *Hop Time!*

⁷⁹ Meeker, *Hop Culture in the United States: Being a Practical Treatise on Hop Growing in Washington Territory, from Cutting to Bale*, 100.

⁸⁰ Bullard, *Hop Time!*

pyramidal roof instead of a gable one. The other version is referred to as a conical hop house. This form is a direct imitation of the most common oast house form in England at the time. This conical hop house is not present in Otsego County, though neighboring Madison and Oneida Counties do possess them (figure 3.19).

In terms of size, hop houses in Otsego County vary greatly. Most fall within the category of “small” when compared to the average sized Yankee barns. The Bowen Hop House measures 38’x23’ and the Lee 28’x18’.

The hop house was not fixed at these small sizes, and was often scaled up to keep up with production. The Karker Hop House of Schoharie County for example measures a very sizely 64’x24’. Large hop houses within Otsego County include the Wetherspoon hop house and the Patterson hop house. The larger examples are most often late period hop houses with balloon frames. Some of the smaller hop houses, too, were of a balloon frame.

Though the length of hop houses vary, their width is surprisingly consistent. This chart illustrates

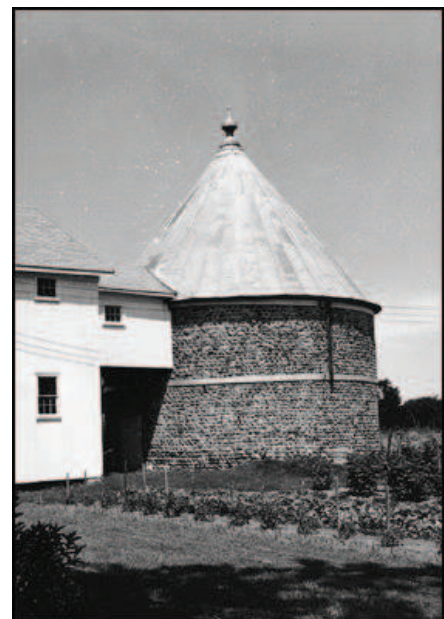


FIGURE 3.19
CONICAL HOP HOUSE, ONEIDA COUNTY.
(SOURCE: ONEIDA COUNTY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY)

this observation (figure 3.20):

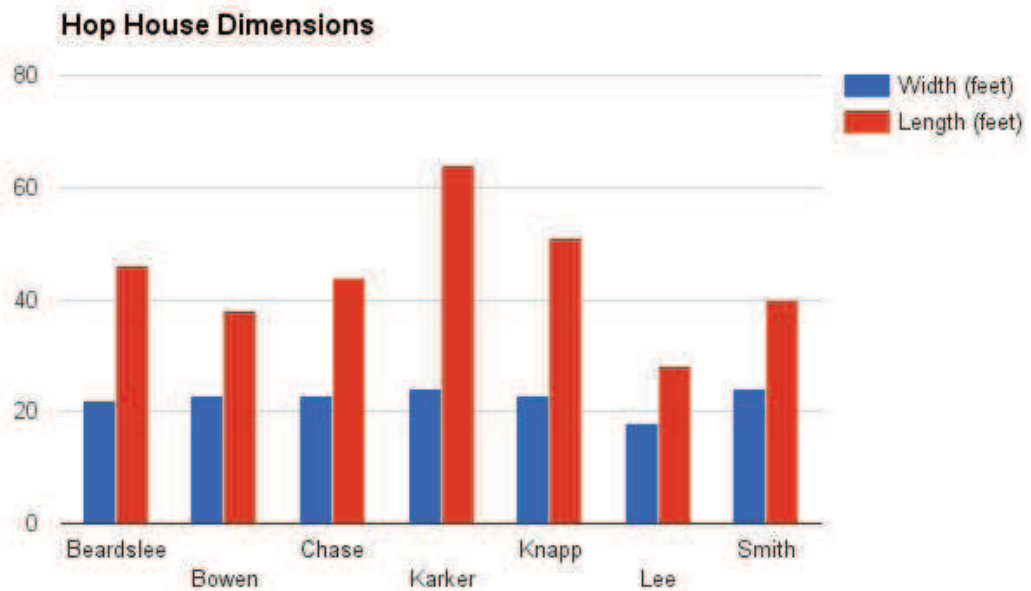


FIGURE 3.20

The measurements from this chart were taken from hop houses which I took measured drawings. While the lengths vary considerably, the widths of the hop houses all fall within a few short feet of each other. While hop houses were not professionally pre-planned⁸¹, it appears that there was a consistent standard by builders on how the proportions a hop house should be. This small sample of sizes is taken from hop houses from all eras. While the forms of hop houses kept on evolving, their basic proportions remained intact. Gerald Pocius noticed the same pattern when examining store houses in Newfoundland.⁸²

⁸¹ Hop House Report, James Gold, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁸² Pocius, "The House that Poor-Jack Built", 77.

Construction Materials

Construction materials of Otsego County hop houses are overwhelmingly of wood. A typical hop house has a wooden frame, and either board and batten or wooden clapboard siding (figure 3.21). The type of frame depends on the era of hop house.

Early period hop houses sport mortise and tendon post and beam, while later period ones often have balloon

framing. Mortise and tenon

was still used in the late

period, as evidenced by the

Seamon hop house.

Originally the roofs would

have been covered in

wooden shingles, but today

most have been replaced

with either asphalt shingle or metal roofs. Stone is another material sometimes used in

the construction of hop houses. In Otsego County, hop houses that make use of stone

typically use them as either a foundation, or the wall of the kiln room. There is only one

hop house in the county that is completely made of stone, which is the Bates hop house of Cherry Valley.

Another unusual type of construction material is found in the Smith hop house of Springfield Center, built around 1850 by the Smith family (figure 3.22). This atypical hop house was constructed from tightly fitted mud bricks created on site. These bricks



FIGURE 3.21
CLAPBOARD SIDING, H. SMITH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

consisted of water and gravel that were mixed by oxen.⁸³ The farmhouse of the Smith farm was also constructed from this material, though the structure now has a wood facade.

Another two hop houses use stone for their kiln sections. One is the Garrets hop house that is north of Cherry Valley, and the other is one of the Van Alstine hop houses in East Springfield. Both of

these hop houses have screw beam holes in their summer beams, placing them firmly as early period. All of the hop houses that were built with major non-wood components are concentrated in the northern part of the county,



FIGURE 3.22
SMITH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD, 1966.
(SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION)

specifically in the towns of Springfield and Cherry Valley. Of the three made of stone, all of them consist of locally quarried limestone. It is important to note all four of these hop houses date to 1861 or earlier. This irregularity suggests that there was a time of experimentation happening in barn form of the northern reaches of the county. Such a task could be undertaken with the abundance of limestone in the northeast corner of the county.⁸⁴ With the entry of the Harris press and the embrace of the balloon frame, such experimentation was put to an end.

⁸³ Hop House Report, Webster Slack, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

⁸⁴ Diantha Dow Schull, *Landmarks of Otsego County* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980), 2.

It is also important to note the materials not used in Otsego County. In Madison and Oneida County, cobblestone hop houses are found. This phenomenon does not exist within Otsego County. While fieldstone and limestone structures are common enough, cobblestone never became a local tradition in terms of large construction. Its use can only be seen in the construction of barn foundations on the eastern fringe of the County. Cobblestone's use in upstate New York can be traced to Irish workers on the Erie Canal. The area of its use as a result follows the path of the canal, where these Irish workers settled after the job was complete.⁸⁵

In terms of decoration, the Otsego County Hop house keeps with a plain aesthetic. Decorative elements are rare among them. Many hop houses are currently colorfully painted, but few have this as an original feature. There is evidence that some hop houses were painted during their era of use. A picture of a step-up kiln hop house from Oneida County from the turn of the century hints at a barn-like red and white theme (figure 3.16). There are examples of hop houses with influence from contemporary decorative fashions. The Van Patton Hop House in Middlefield Center has an Italianate trim underneath its gables. In nearby Montgomery County, a hop house exists with heavy Gothic influence (figure 3.23). These examples are, however, the exception, not the rule. Being that the hop house was mainly a work building prone to fire, this characteristic is not surprising.

The Otsego County hop house builders were not as conservative as it may appear, however. While they do stick to more conservative forms, the technology used

⁸⁵ Susan Edward, "Cobblestone House: A Part of the Landscape", *Historic Preservation*, 1978.

kept up with current trends. The hop house of Otsego County, after all, was the heart of a farmer's livelihood, so it stands to reason they would want this as up to date as possible. This need for staying current can be observed by the number of hop houses being converted into draft kilns after 1860.



FIGURE 3.23
GOTHIC STYLE HOP HOUSE, MONTGOMERY COUNTY.

Many builders abandoned post and beam construction when a more economical substitute became available. More conservative areas in contrast kept the post and beam construction well into the twentieth century. One can also see experimentation in the terms of mechanics as well. The kiln was modified often in the hunt for the perfect insulator.

Identifying Hop Houses

When I first began my hunt for hop houses, I assumed they would be easy to identify. In this regard I was completely wrong. Common hop houses in many ways resemble older Yankee barns. Without knowing the subtle traits of common hop houses, it is a difficult task to differentiate the two. It becomes even harder when hop houses have been converted for other uses, such as garages and hay barns. Knowing the ins and outs of hop house forms becomes essential in these cases. In order to ease the

work of future surveyors, I decided to include a some information to assist in identifying hop houses in the field.

Draft kiln hop houses are fairly easy to identify. A stone conical addition to a barn is rarely anything but a hop house. The only structure one could possibly mistake for this form are conical stone smoke houses. These structures are significantly smaller, so confusion in this regard is minimal. Pyramidal hop houses too are also easy to spot. A barn with a pyramidal attachment is almost certainly a hop house.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of hop houses do not stand out in the same way. Common hop houses are far more likely to blend into the landscape. Despite this, there are several characteristics which one can take advantage of. An easy sign is door placement. Since hop houses are divided into two sections, non-gable side doors cannot be in the center. The main door will always be on the side of the press room, with smaller doors located on both sections on the upper story. Typical Yankee barns in contrast will have their main door located at the center, due to the three bay design. Main doors located on the side of the hop house are often sliding doors. This feature cannot be used to identify all hop houses. Several common hop houses have their main door located on the gable end.

Cupolas can also act as an identifying mark. Though not universal, cupolas can still be seen on many of the older common hop houses. These cupolas will always be located on the kiln side, acting as a way to ventilate the heat. Most barns that use cupolas will have them in the center, satisfying the human need for symmetrical design.

Step-up kilns are one of the easier forms to identify. A building with a raised gable section that is not as long as the lower section can often prove to be a hop house. The raised section rarely has a window, though this is not universal. Late period hop houses can also be more easy to identify. Due to their balloon frames, they are often very tall. Their height and considerable narrow frames set their silhouette apart from the Yankee barn. Early era hop houses are the hardest to spot. Many are of considerably squat stature. Examples such as the Bowen hop house and the Lindberg hop house show just how subtle hop house forms can be.

Another hurdle in hop house identification is the effect of later modifications. Those hop houses that have seen post-hops use are often modified in such a way to make them more suited for their new found purpose. The Bates hop house and the Orenstein hop house have been converted into homes. Both these structures benefit from being very recognizable hop house forms. More typical common hop houses require a more discerning eye. The Schafsteck hop house near Cherry Valley has been converted into a kennel with a metal roof and vinyl siding. Several hop houses such as the Bowen hop house and the Lloyd hop house have been converted into garages. It is probable that some hop houses have been so radically converted that it would be almost impossible to tell their original form without examining the frame structure underneath.

The foundation for many hop houses can also be a revealing feature. It is not uncommon for hop houses with foundations to have rectangular vents on the kiln section side. Some of these vents still have small wooden hatches that were used to

control the draft. If a hop house is built on a slope, the kiln section is often the one to be on the lower part. This allowed for ease of access to the storage room. Some hop houses have a small door that leads into the crawl space beneath the buildings. This was most likely used as an area to store firewood or coal.

The structure itself is not the only clue one can work with. Knowing the sorts of locations a hop house will typically be is important as well. Hop houses are most often located away from other farm buildings on a farmstead. This can be attributed to two reasons. Firstly, they are a serious fire hazard. If the stove fire was ever to overtake the structure, it is wise for it to be no where near a barn that may be full of hay. Secondly, hop houses could produce a powerful stench. This is a result of the use of sulphur in bleaching the hops.⁸⁶

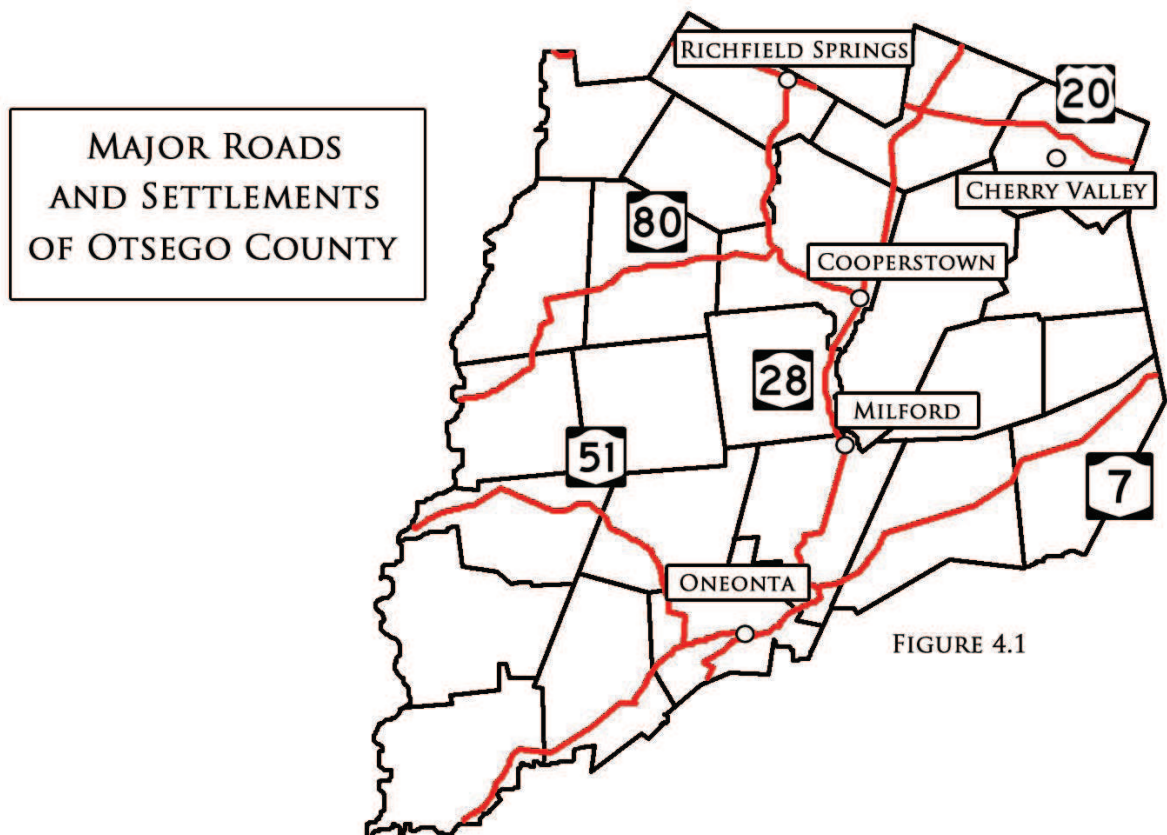
The hop house as it exists in Otsego County comes in a variety of forms and sizes. Despite the diversity, all hop houses share a distinct layout that reflects their intended purpose. The hop house from its inception is structured in a manner to further the intended purpose of hop drying and storage. Much as there is convergent evolution in nature, so too is there convergent evolution in architecture. Buildings that share the same purpose will inevitably take on similar forms. The evolution of the hop house mirrors the builder's attempt to improve its ability. The number of types also speaks to the subtle differences in opinion as to what constitutes the optimal expression of form. While the base architectural form stays consistent, the expression of this form was left up to the individual builders. The hop house in this manner is a great example of

⁸⁶ Hop House Report, Cheryl Magruder, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

vernacular architecture before the industrialization of building construction. It is consistent forms reflected in limitless expression.

Chapter 4: Patterns and Distribution

The hops growing region within upstate New York is very centralized. The core area roughly follows US Highway 20 from the Hamlet of Sharon in Schoharie County to the Village of Cazenovia in Madison County. While hops were grown outside this area, the vast majority of cultivation occurred within these parameters. The traditional viewpoint is that hops planting occurred twenty miles north and south of US Highway 20.⁸⁷ The average distance of hop houses in my survey from US Route 20 is around seven miles. In Otsego County, US Highway 20 runs west to east in the northern



⁸⁷ Falk, *Barns of New York: Rural Architecture of the Empire State*, 191.

reaches of the county (figure 4.1). It passes through the towns of Cherry Valley, Springfield, Richfield and Plainfield. Interestingly, the path US Highway 20 takes does not consistently stay within the borders of Otsego County. When it exits Springfield, the road goes through the town of Warren in Herkimer County. From Herkimer County, it re-enters Otsego County through the town of Richfield, then goes through Herkimer county again in the town of Winfield. US Highway 20 then finally enters Otsego County for the last time in Plainfield. This arterial highway weaves through the northern tier of the county, passing seamlessly from one county to the next.

It is no coincidence that the hops industry huddles around this specific stretch of US Highway 20. The parts of the highway that supported hops corresponds almost exactly with the original location of the Great Western Turnpike. This toll road was the first major highway to penetrate into upstate New York. Constructed in 1803, the original route of the Great Western Turnpike stretched from Albany to Cherry Valley. As a result of this path, the highway is often still referred to as the “Cherry Valley Turnpike”. Over the years the road was expanded, and eventually came to stretch through most of Central New York. With a reliable route open to Albany, agricultural goods could be much more easily shipped from Otsego County to larger markets. Large freight wagons became a common sight on the Great Western Turnpike for much of the nineteenth century.⁸⁸ With this context in mind, placing hop production near the major transportation corridor of the time was a practical decision.

⁸⁸ Dobbs, “Road to America: The First Great Western Turnpike”, 24.

In terms of building techniques, upstate New York is firmly within the New England stream.⁸⁹ Houses, barns, and outbuildings within this region look almost identical to their neighbors in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont. This is especially true of Otsego County. Being easily accessible by way of the Great Western Turnpike surely made the county an appealing target for New Englander settlement. While houses found along this stream could see some modifications, the Yankee barn builders tended to keep the same basic form.⁹⁰ Henry Glassie noted that Otsego versions of the style were conservative in the vein of this tradition.⁹¹ In contrast, hop houses are far less of a widely distributed form. They only appear in uncontinuous growing regions. The upstate hop house building tradition does, however, come via the New England Stream. The original American hop houses were built in New England before the New York industry took off.⁹² Judging by the descriptions of these early New England hop houses, they mirror the very early period Otsego hop houses. The Lindberg hop house in Burlington matches exactly the description given by Visser when writing about a typical New England hop house.

The number of hop houses remaining in Otsego County is surprisingly high. When I first began my survey, many people informed me that very few hop houses were left. There was a sense that these structures are inevitably doomed to perish. I myself

⁸⁹ Fred Kniffen and Henry Glassie, "Building in Wood in the Eastern United States: A Time Place Perspective" in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, eds. Dell Upton and John Vlach (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 174.

⁹⁰ Fred Kniffen, "Folk Housing: key to Diffusion" in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1986), 11.

⁹¹ Henry Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1974), 220.

⁹² Visser, *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings*.

expected only to find a handful in my search. After my fieldwork was complete, I had located fifty-two hop houses within Otsego County. There are several which I most likely missed, either due to remodelling or simple mis-identification. I was also not able to scour every road in the County, due to time constraints and limited manpower. Despite this, I was able to locate a substantial number which far surpassed my expectation. It appeared as though hop houses are more common than many had ever known.

This fact only applied to Otsego County unfortunately. In the Winter of 2015, I began working as an intern for the Oneida County Historical Society in Utica, New York. Knowing Oneida County had been part of the hops growing region, I thought it may provide me an opportunity to examine hop houses in a neighboring county. The Town of Sangerfield within Oneida had been one of the most productive of townships in the region.⁹³ I eventually decided to explore the area of southern Oneida County also well known for its hop production. The Village of Waterville had at one point been the center of the hops market in America.⁹⁴ A lithograph from 1885 depicts Waterville surrounded by a plethora of hop houses. With such a strong connection, surely there could be a number of hop houses hidden within Oneida County as well?

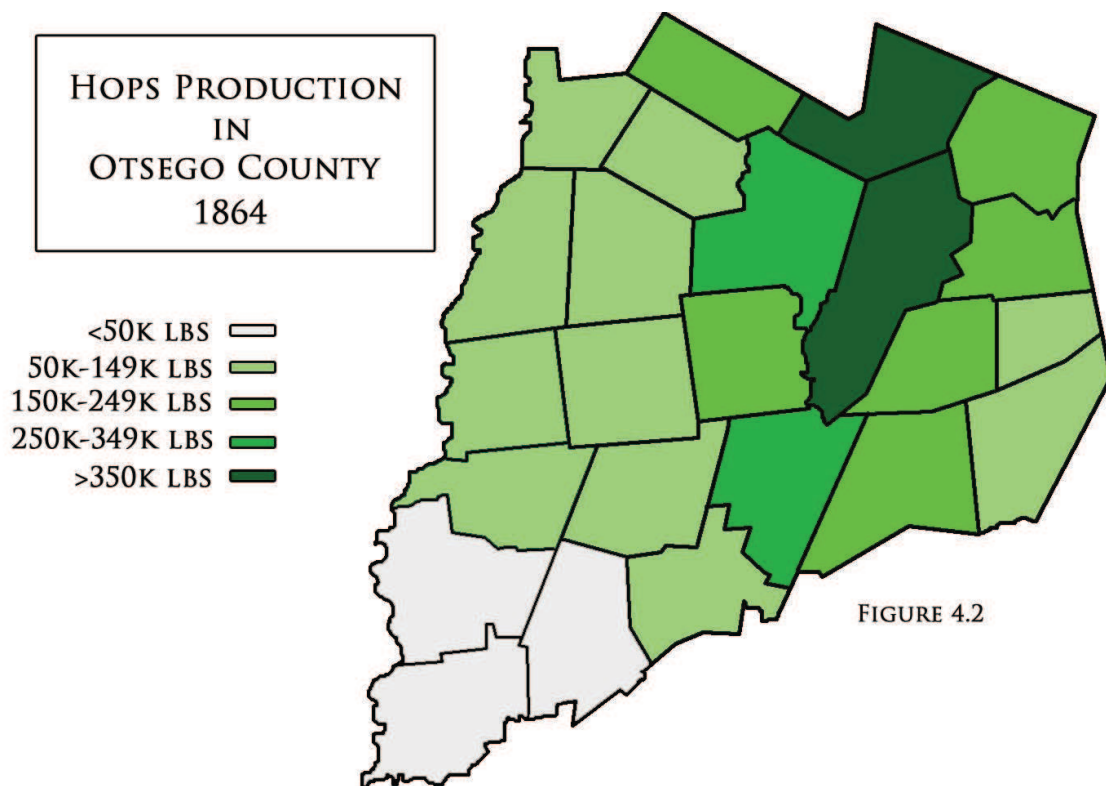
In the course of my fieldwork, I was only able to locate a handful of hop houses within Oneida County. Unlike Otsego County, my expectations were anything but exceeded. This anomaly is not from a lack of hop house construction in Oneida County. During the era of upstate hops cultivation, Oneida County was consistently ranked third

⁹³ *Census of the State of New York 1865* (Albany: Charles von Benthuyesen and Sons, 1867).

⁹⁴ Janice Reilly, "Life at Home and in the Fields" in *Oneida County: An Illustrated History* (San Antonio: HPNBOOKS, 2014), 29.

in overall production. Yet despite all this, most of the county's hop houses have vanished. The number of hop houses remaining in Otsego County are an exception, not the rule.

Though the hop growing region of Central New York surrounds US Route 20, proximity to it in Otsego County does not correlate with higher yields. The township of Plainfield contains the route, yet was not one of the major hop producers. When one examines the hop production data, the core hops growing areas within the county surrounded Otsego Lake. This region runs from north to south, from the town of Springfield to the town of Milford (figure 4.2). What all these areas have in common is easy access into the Susquehanna Valley. Being the largest water system within the county, the soils within that valley and its tributaries are the richest. Hop production



within upstate New York had two necessary qualifiers: proximity to The Great Western Turnpike and rich soils.

In examining the distribution of hop houses in Otsego County, one must be careful in what conclusions can be made. The hop houses that have survived are but a fraction of the number that once existed at the peak. Beer's *Atlas of Otsego County* in 1868 shows well over twenty hop houses existing in the town of Middlefield alone during this period.⁹⁵ Areas with high concentrations of hop houses may not be a reflection of total hops production or building activity. While Oneida County was among the top hops producers, there are more hop houses remaining in the nearby and less productive County of Montgomery. Examining distribution requires one to take into the various factors that may account for modern numbers.

I conducted a survey over the Summer of 2014 in order to answer some of these questions. I identified fifty-two hop houses within Otsego County. Before I make any sort of conclusions on distribution, it is important to establish hop houses as they exist today within Otsego County. The following section will provide descriptions of the various hop houses I personally visited during my fieldwork. Due to the limits of time and permissions, some hop houses have far more detailed descriptions than others. I have done my best to accurately convey as much detail as possible within these parameters. The names of the hop houses are based on either historical or the current owners, depending on the information available to me. This section is divided into the townships

⁹⁵ F.W. Beers, *Atlas of Otsego County, New York, 1868* (New York: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis and G.G. Soule, 1868), 20.

in which the hop houses are found (figure 4.3). Also mentioned are the various communities of hamlets and villages that exist within the townships.

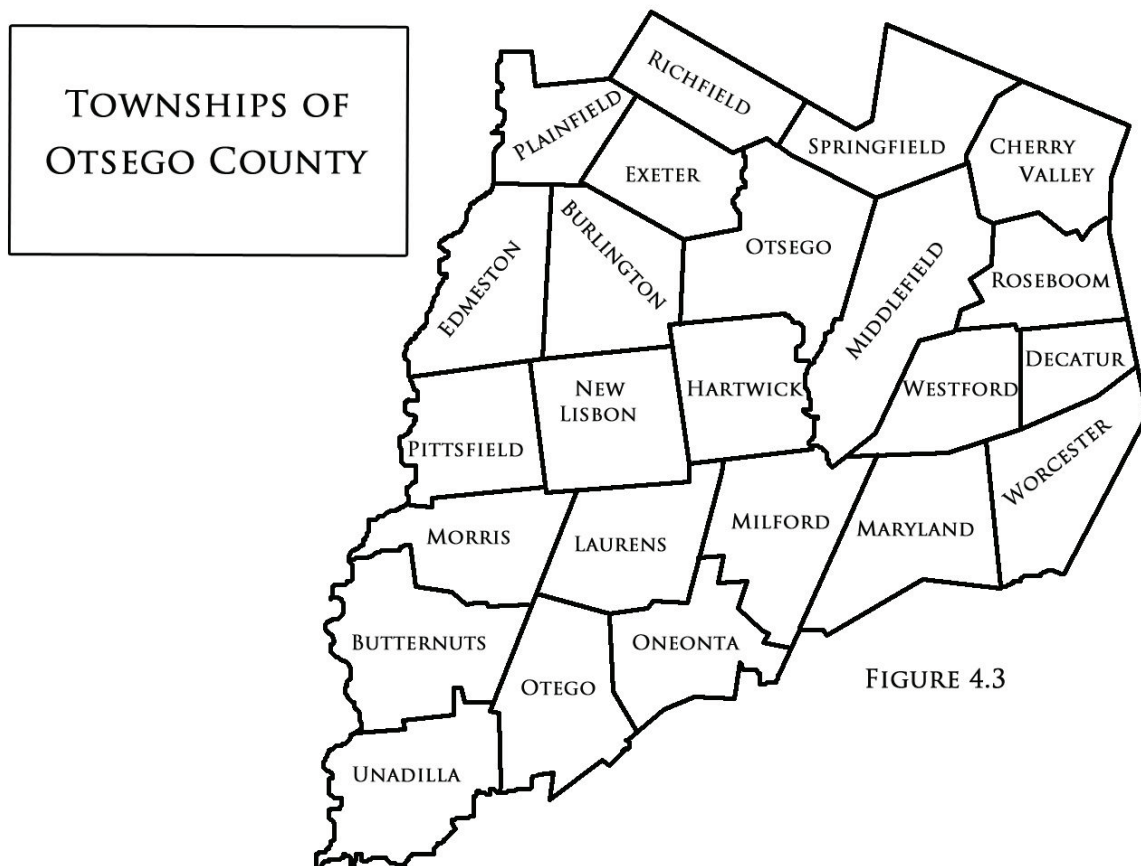


FIGURE 4.3

Town of Middlefield

The Town of Middlefield was consistently the most productive of the Otsego townships in hops cultivation. It is no surprise then that many of the remaining hop houses are found within Middlefield's borders. The highest concentration of hop houses in Middlefield are found along County Route 33 (Middlefield Center Road) in the Red Creek Valley. Others are located along State Route 166, following Cherry Valley Creek. The hop houses of Middlefield are not just limited to the river valleys. Cornish Hill and

Pollack Mountain both have hop houses still remaining on them. Communities within the town of Middlefield include: Middlefield, Middlefield Center, Phoenix Mills, Whigs Corners, Westville, and Bowerstown.

Beck Hop House (figure 4.4)- Located on State Route 166, on the corner with County Route 33. The Beck hop house is a step-up kiln common hop house that is possible early period. There are no windows on the exterior, though it is not certain if that is original. The exterior condition appears to be fair, though the interior is unknown.



FIGURE 4.4
THE BECK HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

Black Hop House (figure 4.5)- Located on Pollack Mountain Road, a route that runs between Middlefield Center and Roseboom. The Black hop house is a large



FIGURE 4.5
THE BLACK HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

step-up kiln common hop house. This hop house appears to recently have gone under some renovations. The siding has been replaced and the structure as a whole looks to be in good shape.

Bowen Hop House (figure 4.6 and 4.7)- Located at the end of Bowen Road, a dead end road that branches from County Route 33. The Bowen hop house is perhaps one of the most inconspicuous of hop houses. It is an early period hop house that has seen several modern changes. The building is currently being used as a garage and storage area. Most of the walls of the kiln section have been removed, except for one wall. It is on this wall that the last of the plaster and lath can be found.



FIGURE 4.6
THE BOWEN HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

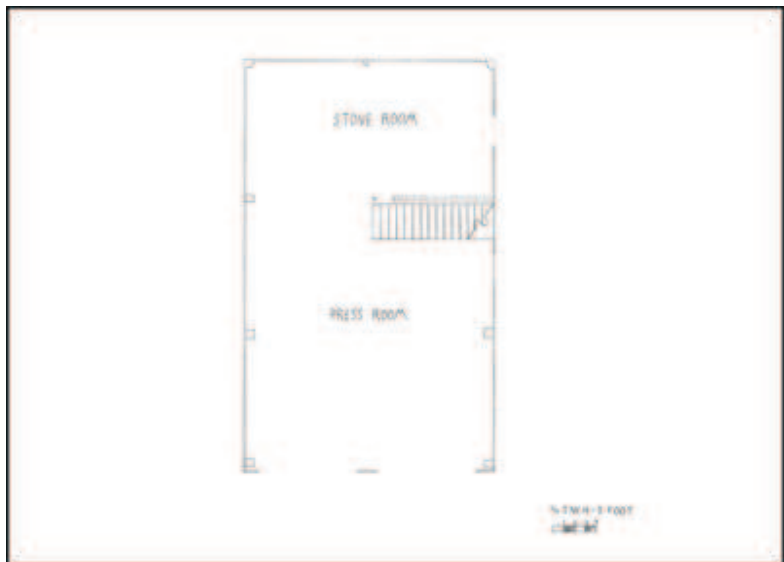


FIGURE 4.7
FLOOR PLAN, BOWEN HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

The drying slats have also been removed. The structure is otherwise typical for an early

era hop house, sporting a hand-hewn mortise and tenon frame.

Chase Hop House (figure 4.8 and 4.9)- Located on County Route 33, just south of Whig's Corners.

The Chase hop house is one of the least recognizable hop houses in the survey. A large barn attachment and silo has been added to its southern end. The entire building has been given a large stone understory as well. Evidence suggests the Chase hop house was converted into a dairy barn sometime in the late

1800's. It was common occurrence for Yankee barns to be converted into two-story



FIGURE 4.8
THE CHASE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.



FIGURE 4.9
FLOOR PLAN, CHASE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

dairy barns during that period.⁹⁶ Less usual is for a hop house to undergo the same transformation.

The hop house has been changed in modern times as well. The entire interior has been remodeled into a commercial space. Modern doors adorn the front, a bathroom has been added in the rear, and a modern style loft now encompasses the upper-story. Despite all the changes, irrefutable evidence exists of the space having been a hop house. The main framing beams still feature traces of the plaster and lath. This exists in the still intact imprint of white plaster on the dividing members. The most definitive piece of evidence is the screw beam hole still remaining on the summer beam.

Having hand-hewn members and a screw beam hole marks this as a pre-1865 hop house. Its short profile suggests the Chase hop house is an early era example. The addition of stone understories on barns was typically done in the later half of the 1800's.⁹⁷ The most likely explanation is that the building was originally constructed as a hop house, then was converted into a dairy barn sometime in the late 1800's.

Harrington Hop House (figure 4.10)- Located on State Route 166, just north of the village of Mildford. The Harrington hop house is an early period common hop house with several original features intact. Both the cupola and hop shoot remain along with much of the plaster and lath. The condition of the hop house is rapidly deteriorating, and

⁹⁶ Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York*, 185.

⁹⁷ Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York*, 185.

requires attention

immediately if it is to survive.

Hayes Hop House (figure 4.11)- Located on Hayes Road, a dead end route that branches from County Route 33 just north of Middlefield

Center. This is one of the few examples of a late period step-up kiln hop house located within the town of Middlefield.

It is in fairly good condition, and remains owned by the Hayes family.



FIGURE 4.10
THE HARRINGTON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.



FIGURE 4.11
THE HAYES HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

Van Patton Hop House

(figure 4.12)- Located on County Route 33 within the hamlet of Middlefield Center. The Van Patton hop house is a step-up kiln common hop house that has been restored.

Supposedly part of the hop house was built as a blacksmith shop in 1850. Its last use for drying hops was in 1911 by the Van Patton family.⁹⁸ This hop house is unique in its

⁹⁸ Hop House Report, Ross Fullam, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

decoration. Its gables sport italianate detailing, a feature not seen on any other hop houses within Otsego County.

Yeager Hop House (figure 4.13)- Located on Butterball Road, three miles east of Middlefield Center. This is the only hop house surveyed within the town of Middlefield that is of the pyramidal form. The Yeager hop house is a squat pyramidal, not unlike the Brooker hop house.

Though its siding has some damage, its structural integrity appears to be stable.

Slater Hop House (figure 4.14)- Located on County Route 52, around one mile east of Bowerstown. The Slater hop house is a late period common hop house built on a bank.



FIGURE 4.12
THE VAN PATTON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.



FIGURE 4.13
THE YEAGER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

It has a large understory section accessible by way of a small door facing the road. The kiln section and storage section have different style siding and foundations, suggesting a late period addition. The condition of the hop house is fair, with much of the siding deteriorating. The structure as a whole appears stable, though it is doubtful it will remain so for long.

Snyder Hop House (figure 4.15)- Located at the end of Snyder Road, within the hamlet of Middlefield Center. The Snyder hop house is most likely an early period common house, with a structure in very poor shape. Part of the roof is beginning to cave in. Immediate action is needed to save this hop house.

Red Creek Farm Hop House (figure 4.16)- Located on County Route 33, just north of

Bowerstown. The Red Creek Farm hop house is a common house currently owned by the Cooper family. It is one of the few hop houses that still has the cupola remaining. A



FIGURE 4.14
THE SLATER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.



FIGURE 4.15
THE SNYDER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

new kiln was at one point added, as evidenced by a residual kiln window and left over lath. The hop house is very well maintained, though the original main door and press room walls have been removed.



FIGURE 4.16
THE RED CREEK FARM HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF MIDDLEFIELD.

Town of Springfield

The Town of Springfield is among the most geographically level townships in Otsego County. As such, it has traditionally been one of the most farmed regions in the county. It is in the northeastern part of the county, bordering both



FIGURE 4.17
THE BERNEGGER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

Herkimer and Montgomery Counties. Hop houses can be found throughout this township, with the highest concentration near the hamlet of East Springfield.

Communities within the town of Springfield include: Springfield, Springfield Center, East Springfield and Middle Village.

Bernegger Hop House (figure 4.17)- Located on Allen Lake Road, around two and a half miles West of Springfield Center. This early period common hop house has a hand-hewn mortise and tenon frame. The hop house is in no danger of ruin, but still requires several repairs.



FIGURE 4.18
THE BRIDGER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

Bridger Hop House (figure 4.18)- Located on Continental Road, over a mile southwest from East Springfield. The Bridger hop house is an early era step-up kiln hop house. Though its interior condition is unknown, its exterior appears to be in stable condition.



FIGURE 4.19
THE H. SMITH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

H. Smith Hop House (figure 4.19 and 4.20)- Located on County Route 31, just south of the hamlet of Salt Springville. Is most likely one of the oldest hop houses in Otsego

County. The framing beams are all hand-hewn, and the original lath in the kiln section is hand-cut. It is important to note that there are two screw beam holes in the press room. This indicates that at some point before 1865, the type of press used in the hop house was changed. Despite its age, most of its original details remain. Both the screw beam and hop boxes remain within the building. The kiln was lifted at some point. The lower portion of the kiln has hand cut lath, while the upper portion is

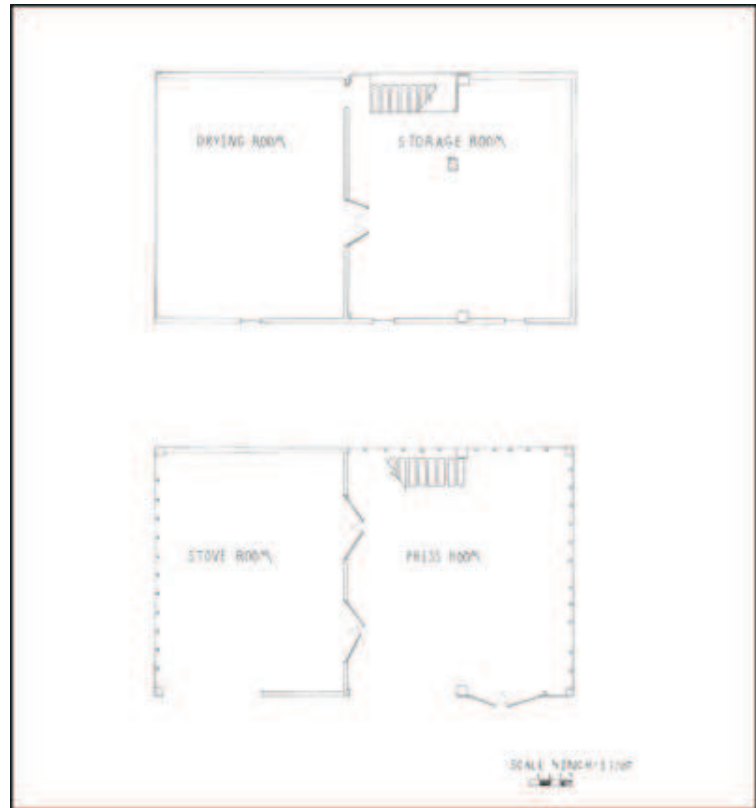


FIGURE 4.20
FLOOR PLAN, H. SMITH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

machine cut. The drying slats reach above the lower portion of the windows. This evidence suggests that the slats were raised, most likely to allow for a better draft.

The building has a typical shape for an early era hop house. It is fairly squat, though larger than many other examples. There are several features of note regarding the structure. Rather than the typical one door leading from the press room into the stove room, there are two. Both these doors still have the peeking windows in tact. The placement of windows too is unusual. All the windows are located on the front facade,

and are symmetrical. This suggests that an aesthetic factor was taken into account when building the structure. There was also most likely a cupola on the kiln section being that the window on that side is not located on the upper portion of the gable end.

Patterson Hop House (figure 4.21)- Located on Allen Lake Road, which runs between State Route 80 and US

Route 20. The Patterson hop house is a late period common hop house most likely built in 1882. This hop house has a balloon frame of both sawn and

hand-hewn members.⁹⁹

There is no evidence of a

cupola ever existing, with the sash windows being the most likely means of ventilation.

The structure itself is in very poor shape, being overrun with vegetation. Immediate action is needed to save the building.



FIGURE 4.21
THE PATTERSON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

Van Alstine Hop Houses (figure 4.22 and 4.23)- These two hop houses are located on the Van Alstine family farm. The first is on County Route 31, about one and a half miles north of East Springfield. The second on Van Alstine Road, a little over a mile northwest

⁹⁹ Hop House Report, Stephen Sevits, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

from East Springfield. The first hop house is an early period common hop house with a half stone kiln. The upper portion of the kiln has been removed, with the roof lowered.

The framed members are all hand-hewn, with the summer beam and screw beam hole still existent. The second hop house on the Van Alstine farm is a common step-up kiln.

This hop house has several unique features. The first is that it does not have plaster and lath covering the interior kiln section wall. It instead makes use of close fitting wood sheathing. The second is placement of the slats. Instead of simply having rows of parallel slats, this hop house



FIGURE 4.22
THE VAN ALSTINE HOP HOUSE #1, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.



FIGURE 4.23
THE VAN ALSTINE HOP HOUSE #2, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

has several rows of slats in the center that run at a different direction. Both hop houses also share another unique feature. Both feature a pulley mount on the front end gable. This was most likely used to more easily load and unload hops. This detail is found on

only two other hop house within Otsego County, with one being the other Van Alstine hop house.

Thayer Hop House (figure 4.24)- The Thayer hop house is located off of State Route 80, a few miles south of Springfield Center. This common hop house house has been converted into office space by SUNY Oneonta as part of their Biological Field Station. It still retains its cupola and identifying layout. This structure is under no threat at present.



FIGURE 4.24
THE THAYER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

Town of Cherry Valley

The town of Cherry Valley is the earliest settled area of Otsego County.¹⁰⁰ It was also

among the most prolific hop producers. Many of the hop houses follow Cherry Valley Creek, which was a center of hops production in this township. Several hop houses are also located near the border with Montgomery County, on the slope into the Mohawk Valley. The town of Cherry valley is perhaps most infamous for the Cherry Valley Massacre of 1778, one of the pretexts for the Clinton Campaign. Communities within the town of Cherry Valley include: Cherry Valley, Salt Springville, and Center Valley.

¹⁰⁰ Hurd, *History of Otsego County, New York*, 119.

The Bates Hop House (figure 4.25)- Originally constructed in 1861, this building was briefly commandeered as a recruitment barracks during the Civil War.¹⁰¹ It was constructed by James George (a local builder) for DeWitt C. Bates. After 1865, it reverted back to its original purpose. The limestone used in the construction of the hop house was quarried locally

from behind the property.

Since the end of the hops era, the Bates hop house has gone through several uses. In 1952, the building became home for the Cherry Valley Historical Association.¹⁰² The



FIGURE 4.25
THE BATES HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.

hop house also was the

location for a lilac shop until recently, and now stands as a private residence. This building is unusual in that it has two kilns, both gabled structures that go parallel to the storage section.

The Collis Hop House (figure 4.26)- Located at the end of OP Fields Road, which branches South from County Route 54 just east of Cherry Valley. The Collis hop house

¹⁰¹ Hop House Report, Michael Winey, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, Coll. 66-0096, New York State Historical Association.

¹⁰² "A Slightly Short History", The Cherry Valley Historic Society and Museum, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.historiccherryvalley.com/history2.html>.

is an early period common step-up hop house, though the height difference is not great.

This structure has a screw beam hole, confirming it as being an early example.

The Garretson Hop House

(figure 4.27)- Located on Mill Road, only a few hundred feet from the border of

Montgomery County. The

Garretson hop house is a large early era hop house with a half limestone kiln.

Despite its size, the building is most likely pre-1860. This can be evidenced by the

existence of a screw beam hole. This hop house as a

whole is in very good shape, having been meticulously maintained by its current owner.

It neighbors the nearby Zook hop house.



FIGURE 4.26
THE COLLIS HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.



FIGURE 4.27
THE GARRETSON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.

Morton Hop House (figure 4.28)- Located on the hilly Morton Road, about halfway between the village Cherry Valley and Roseboom. The Morton hop house is a late period common hop house with circular sawcut members. It retains much of its original features, including a hop shoot. It also features a storage area under the main floor accessible by way of a small door. The condition is fair, though it is under threat of deterioration.



FIGURE 4.28
THE MORTON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.

A. Smith Hop House (figure 4.29)- A common hop house located on County Route 31 within the hamlet of Salt Springville. The A. Smith hop house has had a central door added, making it resemble a Yankee barn. The small window found on the kiln section is common among barns within the vicinity of Montgomery County.



FIGURE 4.29
THE A. SMITH HOP HOUSE, SALT SPRINGVILLE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.

Condition of the hop house is fair, with it not being in immediate danger.

Young Hop House (figure 4.30)- Located on Wikoff Road, a dead end route that splits off from Dietsche Road about a half mile south of Cherry Valley. This is a squat pyramidal hop house with the main doorway located on the gable end. The Young hop house is in very poor condition, with much of its frame beginning to sag.



FIGURE 4.30
THE YOUNG HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.

Zook Hop House (figure 4.31)- The Zook Hop House is located on Keller Road, just south of Van Deusenville.

This hop house is an early period common hop house with a mortise and tenon frame. A notable feature of this building is a series of windows located on the second story of the front facade. This trait is also seen on hop houses and barns in neighboring Montgomery County.



FIGURE 4.31
THE ZOOK HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF CHERRY VALLEY.

Town of Burlington

The town of Burlington is part of the northwestern part of Otsego County. The majority of the population live along Butternuts Creek in the Butternut Valley. Though Burlington was never a leading town in hops

production, it retains a number of hop houses. Communities within the town include Burlington Green, Burlington Flats, Wharton, and Patent.



FIGURE 4.32
THE LINDBERG HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF BURLINGTON.

Lindberg Hop House (figure 4.32)- Located on Patent Road in the Butternut Valley, a branch off road from County Route 16, just south of Burlington Green. This hop house is an early period common house of considerably small size. It has a hand-hewn post and beam frame. The storage section is built upon a slope, giving one easier access to the door leading into the



FIGURE 4.33
THE SHILLIETO HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF BURLINGTON.

storage room. The building is in reasonably good shape, though many of the original details such as the drying slats have been removed.

Shillieto Hop House (figure 4.33)- Located along County Route 16, within the hamlet of Burlington Green. This is an early period common hop house with a step-up kiln. The kiln vents are still visible along the kiln section in the front. The hop house appears to be in fair condition, though some of the siding is deteriorating.

Layton Hop House (figure 4.34)- Located on Jacobs Road, roughly two and a half miles northeast of Burlington Flats. This hop house is a banked common hop house, with the cupola still intact. The exterior of the barn appears to be in fine shape, though the interior condition is unknown.



FIGURE 4.34
THE LAYTON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF BURLINGTON.

Corinne Hop House (figure 4.35)- Also located on Jacobs Road, just past the Layton hop house. The Corinne hop house is a common hop house, most likely late period

judging by its height. Though the interior condition is unknown, the exterior is in good shape.

Town of New Lisbon

The township of New Lisbon lies in the central part of the county, between the towns of Hartwick and Pittsfield. The main areas of settlement lie within the Butternut Valley which runs through the middle of the town. New Lisbon is the location of the brewery

Butternuts Beer and Ale, just south of Garrattsville.



FIGURE 4.35
THE CORINNE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF BURLINGTON.

Parsons Hop House (figure 4.36)- Located on State Route 52, five miles north of the Village of Morris. It is a small late era hop house with a saw-cut balloon frame. The Parsons hop house is built on a bank, but the stone



FIGURE 4.36
THE PARSONS HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF NEW LISBON.

foundation is under the storage section. This is one of the few hop houses that has an original door leading into the kiln room. There is a crawl space under the storage space accessible through the kiln room. This was most likely used to store wood for the stove.

Murphy Hop House (figure 4.37) - Located within the hamlet of Garrettsville, on State Route 52. The Murphy hop house is a common hop house that has been converted into a garage with few of its original features remaining. It still retains the



FIGURE 4.37
THE MURPHY HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF NEW LISBON.

distinctive shape of a hop house in spite of this. The structure is well maintained and should stand into the foreseeable future.

Town of Otsego

The town of Otsego is located in the heart of Otsego County. It is also the administrative center of the county, with Cooperstown acting as the county seat. The Susquehanna River originates from Otsego Lake between the towns of Otsego and Middlefield. The main hop growing areas in Otsego are the Oak Creek and Susquehanna Valleys.

Communities within the township Include: Cooperstown, Fly Creek, Oaksville, Index, and Pierstown.

Lee Hop House (figure 4.38 and 4.39)- Located on Goose Street, within the Hamlet of Fly Creek. The Lee hop house is a small late period hop house. It exhibits several features typical of this form. It has a balloon frame, with a tall height and short length. Due to the presence of later era cut nails, its building date is somewhere between 1865-1890. The kiln section rests of a stone foundation on a slope, with draft vents still existing on two sides. A new door has been cut into this section.



FIGURE 4.38
THE LEE HOP HOUSE, FLY CREEK, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

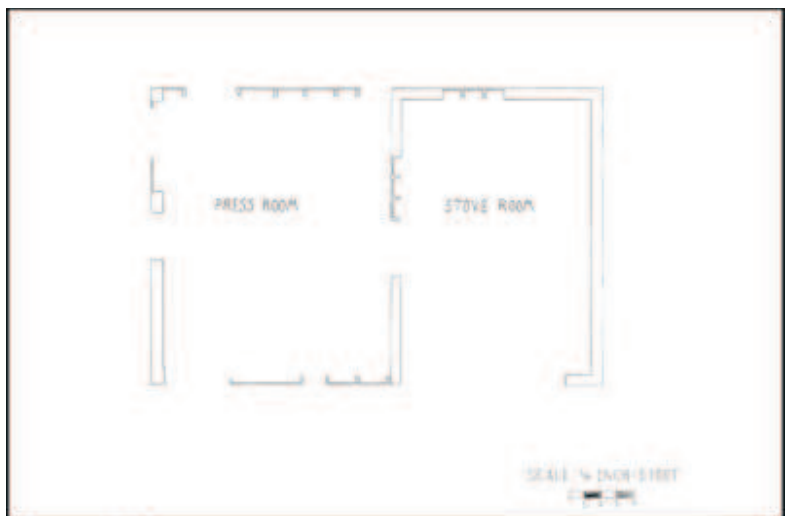


FIGURE 4.39
FLOOR PLAN, LEE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

The interior has seen some modification. The slats have been removed, and another story has been added to replace them. There is no staircase into the second

story, a narrow ladder serves this function instead. There is also evidence of fire damage in the kiln section, with many of the roof rafters featuring scorch marks. Despite this damage, the writing on the press room wall remains. In chalk are written the original weight numbers of the hops bales pressed in previous years. There is also chalk art depicting a flower, most likely the work of one of the pickers.



FIGURE 4.40
THE KNAPP HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

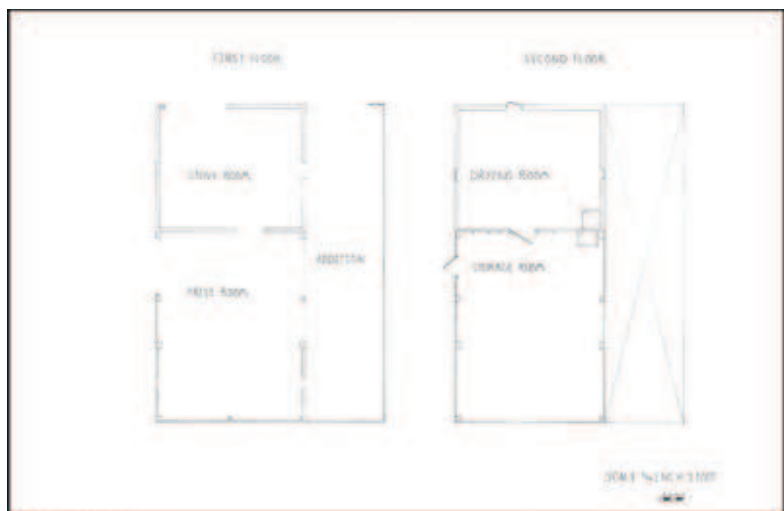


FIGURE 4.41
FLOOR PLAN, KNAPP HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

Knapp Hop House (figure 4.40 and figure 4.41)- Located on County Route 26, around four miles north of Fly Creek. The Knapp hop house is an early period common hop house with a mortise and tenon frame. It has a lean-to addition on its eastern side, as well as late addition doors on the southern side. Through physical evidence, it can be observed that the hop house was expanded at some point. The northern side has hand

split plaster and lath, but has no wall dividing it from the main storage section. A new kiln was at some point added to the southern side. The new kiln has machine cut lath, and the dividing walls and doors still remain. The drying slats were removed at some point and replaced with a standard floor. There are hay remains still left on the upper floors, hinting that the hop house was converted into a simple hay barn. There are no stairs leading into the upper level, a ladder being required to reach it. The building as a whole has been very well maintained. It has a fresh coat of paint and little sign of rot. It is interesting to note that there are no windows currently, though there is evidence that they did once exist on the newer kiln.



FIGURE 4.42
THE POPE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

Pope Hop House (figure 4.42)- Located within the Farmer's Museum, off of State Route 80. The Pope hop house was originally located within the town of Burlington, but was moved to the museum in recent years. This is a very early era hop house, built before the use of hop presses was widespread. It is the only hop house within Otsego County that has been restored to original period condition. The lath and plaster, roof, and many other features have been rebuilt.

Orenstein Hop House (figure 4.43)- Located just south of Pierstown on County Highway 28. This is a late period pyramidal hop house converted into a residence. The lower part of the storage section has been turned into a three car garage.

Pernat Hop House (figure 4.44)- Located on County Route 26 in the Fly Creek Valley, almost three miles north of Fly Creek. This is a large common hop house. There are several notable characteristics of this building. Firstly is a strange addition on its western side. This addition is fully lathed and plastered, and appears to have been a living space. It unusual in that it has windows in the stove room. The building itself is also unusually wide for a hop



FIGURE 4.43
THE ORENSTEIN HOP HOUSE, PIERSTOWN, TOWN OF OTSEGO.



FIGURE 4.44
THE PERNAT HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

house. The hops shoot entering the press room still has some of the original burlap funnel remaining. The siding of the building is damaged, but the interior is in good

shape. Drying slats are still in place, and writing of hops weight numbers remain written in chalk on the press room wall.

Wedderspoon Hop Houses

(figure 4.45 and 4.46)- The hop houses of the Wedderspoon Farm are located on Wedderspoon Hollow Road, just north of Pierstown. Both are late

period common hop houses. One is a standard single kiln, while the second has three

sections. The second hop house is a T-shape, with each end having a kiln. The center area acts as the storage section for all the kilns. The presence of so many kilns on the property suggests that the

Wedderspoon Farm was

highly productive. Both hop

houses are in poor physical condition. The first smaller hop house has much of its rear siding missing, and the larger has both siding and roof damage.



FIGURE 4.45
THE WEDDERSPOON HOP HOUSE #1, TOWN OF OTSEGO.



FIGURE 4.46
THE WEDDERSPOON HOP HOUSE #2, TOWN OF OTSEGO.

Town of Hartwick

The Township of Hartwick is named after German Lutheran minister John Christopher Hartwick. He received a land grant in 1761 that is part of the present township, and intended to create a Christian utopia within its boundaries. After his death, a seminary was founded in his honor that would one day become Hartwick College.¹⁰³ Hartwick is a rather hilly town, dominated by the Otego Valley. In recent years the town has seen heavy development along State Route 28. This is due to the success of the little league tournaments organized by the Dreams Park. Communities in the town of Hartwick include: Hartwick, Hartwick Seminary, Toddsville, and Clintonville.



FIGURE 4.47
THE THERING HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF HARTWICK.

Thering Hop House (figure 4.47)- Located on Thering

Road, a dead end route that breaks from County Highway 11 around three miles east of the hamlet of Hartwick. This a late period common hop house with a balloon frame. A lean-to addition has been added, and plywood siding has replaced the original. The structure as a whole is not in good condition, but is not in immediate danger of ruin.

¹⁰³ Hurd, *History of Otsego County, New York*, 157.

Lloyd Hop House (figure 4.48)- Located on Greenough Road, a route that runs between Lower Toddsville Road and County Route 11. The Lloyd hop house is a common hop house that has been converted into a garage. Despite the change,



FIGURE 4.48
THE LLOYD HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF HARTWICK.

this hop house still features plaster and lath in the interior. It also has large vents along its foundation, as well as a storage area underneath the main floor. The hop house is in currently good shape with no immediate threat.

Green Hop House (figure 4.49 and 4.50)- Located on County Route 59, roughly 3 miles northeast of Hartwick. The Green hop house is unique in that it most likely began its life as a Yankee barn. The storage section is a wider width than the kiln section, and features no windows. Its also sports hand-hewn mortise and tenon framing, yet does not have a screw beam hole. The storage section also features a loft rather than the standard two floors of most hop houses.

The kiln section is a late period pyramidal. It most likely dates from the later end of this period, due to the use of wood sheathing as the insulator.

The slats are still intact, though none of the drying cloth is. The whole barn has been renovated in an attempt to restore it. The wood siding has been recently replaced with board and batten, and the roof with a metal green one. A small lean-to addition has been added to the corner of the kiln section. The sole item within this area is an electric box that turns on the installed lights, necessary for a building that lacks windows.



FIGURE 4.49
THE GREEN HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF HARTWICK.

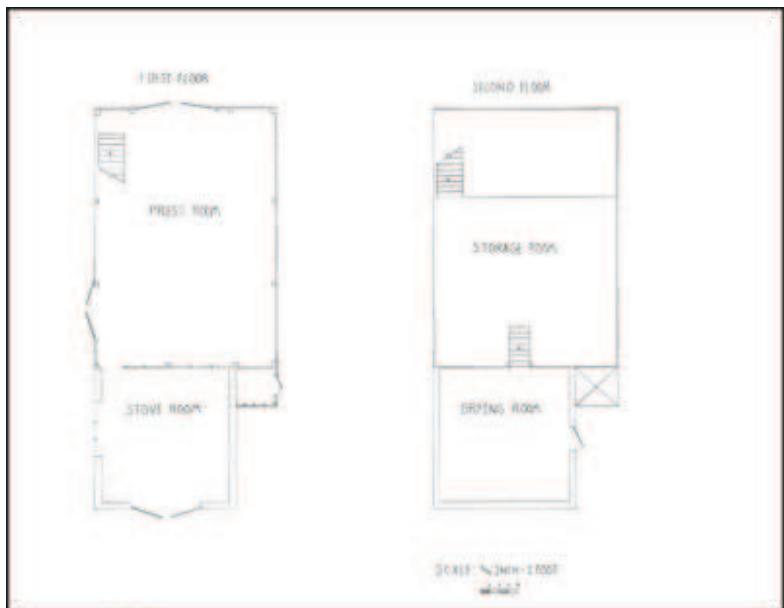


FIGURE 4.50
FLOOR PLAN, GREEN HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF HARTWICK.

Town of Richfield

Despite being located in the heart of hops country, few hop houses remain within the Township of Richfield. During my survey, I was only able to identify a single hop house

within this town. Communities within the town of Richfield include: Richfield Springs, Monticello and Brighton Corners.

Johnson Hop House (figure 4.51)- Located on Prey Hill Road, approximately three and a half miles from Richfield

Springs. An early period common hop house with the unusual trait of having plaster and lath covering the kiln section ceiling. This hop house is in critical condition,



FIGURE 4.51
THE JOHNSON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF RICHFIELD.

with the roof beginning to cave in. The Johnson hop house will most likely collapse in the near future if immediate action is not taken.

Town of Exeter

The township of Exeter is located in the northwestern region of the county, bordered by Canadarago Lake on its eastern end. Though not a populous area of Otsego County, Exeter had respectable hops production numbers. Both hop houses located within the town are late era common types. Communities within the town of Exeter include: Schuyler Lake (pronounced by some locals as “scar” lake), Exeter, and West Exeter.

Skramko Hop House (figure

4.52)- Located on Wing Road, about two miles north of Schuyler Lake, on a hill facing towards Canadarago Lake. This is a late period common hop house that has been fairly well kept, though it is now overgrown with

weeds. The interior is also in good shape, with much of the lath and plaster still in place. The Skramko hop house is in no immediate need of protection.



FIGURE 4.52
THE SKRAMKO HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF EXETER.



FIGURE 4.53
THE SEAMON HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF EXETER.

Seamon Hop House (figure

4.53)- Located on County

Route 23, almost three miles northwest of Schuyler Lake. This hop house is a common later period version, though it still has a mortise and tenon frame. The drying racks remain, though they are in poor repair. Structurally the building is in very good shape.

Town of Roseboom

Roseboom is unique in the distribution of its hop houses. The majority of its remaining numbers are located within the population center of the township, the hamlet of Roseboom. Roseboom is also one of the youngest of townships within Otsego County. It was not split off from the town of Cherry Valley until 1854.¹⁰⁴

Communities within the town of Roseboom include Roseboom, Center Valley, South Valley and Pleasant Brook.

Evers Hop House (figure 4.54)- Located at the intersection of State Route 165 and John Deere Road within the hamlet of Roseboom. The Evers hop house is a late-era common hop that has been converted into a garage. It appears structurally safe, but the interior condition is unknown.



FIGURE 4.54
THE EVERS HOP HOUSE. TOWN OF ROSEBOOM.

Van Buren Hop House (figure 4.55)- Located on John Deere Road, at the end of a branch off section. The Evers hop house is a large post and beam common hop house with saw-cut lath. The side of the hop house has had three large openings cut into it in order to store farm equipment. The hop house is in fair condition, though it appears to

¹⁰⁴ Hurd, *History of Otsego County*, 315.

be near a critical state. Much of the siding is coming off and little has been done to maintain the hop house.

Gage Hop House (figure 4.56)- Located on County Route 57, within the hamlet of Roseboom. The Gage hop house is a large common hop house that is unusual in that it is not directly on a road. Due to this distance, not much can be discerned from the structure from the road. It appears to be in fair condition, with a good roof but peeling siding.



FIGURE 4.55
THE VAN BUREN HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF ROSEBOOM.



FIGURE 4.56
THE GAGE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF ROSEBOOM.

Town of Westford

The town of Westford is part of the eastern region of the county, neighboring Middlefield. Along with Decatur, it is part of the least populated and most rugged regions

of Otsego County. Communities within the township include: Westford, Elk Creek and Maple Valley.

Brooker Hop House (figure 4.57) - Located on County Highway 36a, just south of the hamlet of Westford. This is a squat pyramidal hop house. Several modifications have been made over the years. The original doors have been replaced with garage doors, and the windows have been updated.

The building likely date from the mid-twentieth century. Overall condition is stable, though the building has not been maintained for several years.



FIGURE 4.57
THE BROOKER HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF WESTFORD.

Bush Hop House (figure 4.58)- Located on County Route 35, around two and a

half miles northeast of Milford. The Bush hop house is a common hop house that has been converted into a garage. It has had several recent updates, including new siding and part of the foundation being replaced with concrete. As such, the structure of the hop house appears sound.

Town of Worcester

The town of Worcester (pronounced wooster) is not traditionally considered one of the core hops producing towns. It is on the periphery of hops country within Otsego County. The hop house located within the town is one of the later forms.

Communities within the town of Worcester include:

Worcester, East Worcester, South Worcester, and Barton Corners.

The McGrath Hop House

(figure 4.59)- The McGrath hop house is around one mile north of the hamlet of

Worcester on County Route

39, in the Decatur Valley. This building is a later period step-up kiln hop house. Rather than using plaster and lath, the interior of the kiln is lined with asbestos paper nailed to wood sheathing. Interestingly, the kiln section has its gable facing a different direction



FIGURE 4.58
THE BUSH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF WESTFORD.



FIGURE 4.59
THE MCGRATH HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF WORCESTER.

than the storage section. The structural integrity is in fairly good shape, and is in no immediate threat.

Town of Pittsfield

The township of Pittsfield lies in the western part of Otsego County, bordering the Unadilla River. This town was not a large producer of hops and is fairly sparsely populated. The one known hop house is located within the Unadilla Valley, across the river from New Berlin. Communities within Pittsfield include: Pittsfield, Hoboken, Silver Lake, and Finksville.

Beardslee Hop House

(figure 4.60 and 4.61)- The Beardslee hop house is a pyramidal hop house located in the hamlet of Hoboken, within the Unadilla Valley. It is part of the Beardslee homestead, which is on the



FIGURE 4.60
THE BEARDSLEE HOP HOUSE, HOBOKEN, TOWN OF PITTSFIELD.

National Register of Historic Places. The storage section of the hop house is an early period version, having its screw beam still in tact. The pyramidal side is fairly early itself, with hand cut lath lining its interior. The kiln rests on a large stone foundation with vents

along three sides. The vents do not retain their latches, having been converted into windows

The hop house itself has undergone extensive restoration work. Many of the framing beams have been replaced and reinforced. The siding and roof have been replaced as well. The Beardslee hop house is still owned by the Beardslee family, and has been designated on the National Register of Historic Places. This is the only hop house within Otsego County to receive such designation.

Town of Decatur

The town of Decatur is the least populous of the Otsego townships, and is also among the most rugged. Despite this, two hop houses are found within its borders. One known hop house is located on its southern fringe, and the other at the eastern side.

Communities within Decatur

include: Decatur, Gothicville, and Furnaceville.



FIGURE 4.61
FLOOR PLAN, BEARDSLEE HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF PITTSFIELD.

The Sondergaard Hop House (figure 4.62)- Found on County Route 39 in the Decatur Valley. It is around one and a half miles north of the McGrath hop house. A late period common hop house that was built on a slope above Decatur Creek. This building is in

reasonably good shape, with much of its plaster and lath still holding in place. The slats still have the original drying cloth stapled to them. The owner believes that after the end of hops production, this hop house was used to dry



FIGURE 4.62
THE SONDERGAARD HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF DECATUR.

beans. The biggest recent change made to the structure is a large door that was cut into the kiln section.

Patterns in the Hop House Tradition

One of the most difficult parts of this paper is examining patterns that exist within Otsego County. Being that a mere fraction of the original hop houses still stand, stating generalizations can be dangerous. Making any sort of definitive statement on patterns is precarious at best. With that said, there are hints of variation which can be glimpsed through existing structures. Such patterns are not confined to county borders, with several of them bleeding from neighboring regions. It is necessary to have some understanding of the forms that exist in other the counties of the hops region.

A noticeable difference between Otsego County and its neighbors is the conservative nature of its hop houses. Michael Tomlan most certainly noticed this trend. Though working with barns on a whole, Henry Glassie witnessed how the barns of Otsego County too tended to be conservative.¹⁰⁵ In my own work, I discovered the hop houses of Otsego County do not come in the same plethora of forms found in Madison or Oneida County. Older hop houses tended to be clustered around US Route 20 and Otsego lake, while newer ones were more common at the periphery of the region. Overall, around 90% of the hop houses covered in my survey were of the common type. Only five hop houses were found with pyramidal roofs. Looking at the data, this trait does not appear to be cultural in nature, but rather practical.

In 1865, Otsego produced around 3,000,000 pounds of hops.¹⁰⁶ In neighboring Oneida County, the number was 1,200,000. By 1875, these numbers had reversed. Oneida County was producing 3,100,00 pounds and Otsego 1,300,000.¹⁰⁷ The production during those ten years had exploded in Oneida County while drastically declining in Otsego. What is important about these production numbers is the dates when they occurred. It was after 1865 that the late period hop houses began to be built. Otsego County's production numbers began to drop in the same period, resulting in the older hop houses being able to meet demand. Since Oneida county was vastly

¹⁰⁵ Henry Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1974), 220.

¹⁰⁶ *Census of the State of New York 1865* (Albany: Charles von Benthuyesen and Sons, 1867).

¹⁰⁷ *Census of the State of New York 1875* (Albany: Charles von Benthuyesen and Sons, 1877).

expanding during this later period of hop houses, this led to late period hop houses being the dominant form in that county.

Though Oneida County during this period outpaced Otsego County, it never reached the same number of hop houses. The hop houses of Oneida County are fewer in number, yet tend to be larger and less conservative. Agricultural censuses once again can be used to shed light on this phenomenon. The typical hop farmer in Otsego County generally grew around 2-5 acres, yielding 1000-3000 pounds a year.¹⁰⁸ The larger farms sometimes produced over 10,000 pounds per year, but these were the exception. In southern Oneida County, 10,000 pounds yearly output was less rare. In the town of Augusta, many of the hop fields ranged from 5-10 acres.¹⁰⁹ These numbers reveal that Otsego County was made up of a large number of small hop farms, while Oneida County's were more consolidated. Being that each farmer in Otsego County had smaller yields, each would need but a small hop house to get by. The result is a landscape dominated by large numbers of small hop houses, rather than a few large ones as became the case in Oneida County.

The dominance of the early period hop houses is merely one of the patterns found within Otsego County. There are several features that can be identified, and not all are common throughout the county. Borders of counties are far more porous than more controlled municipalities. It is not unusual for there not to be a sign to tell a traveller they have left one county and entered another. Focusing my study on Otsego County from this perspective can be seen as arbitrary. Contrary to this argument, a solid

¹⁰⁸ *Census of the State of New York 1865.*

¹⁰⁹ *Census of the State of New York 1865.*

border acts as a useful tool in defining my limits. Cultures after all tend to be a spectrum without clear ends and separations. An “arbitrary” border allowed me to take a slice of the upstate cultural spectrum, and to parse what I could from it. In this task, I discovered several features both contained within Otsego County as well as overlapping with neighboring counties.

The Beardslee hop house, mentioned earlier, is unique in many ways. One of its curious traits is that the furnace is vented through a brick chimney between the kiln and storage section. In most Otsego Hop houses, the furnace is vented through a metal pipe that exits the building through an outside wall. The point at which it exits is bordered by brick to protect the wood

siding from the heat (figure 4.63). The use of a full brick chimney is not common in Otsego County, but it was found in neighboring Oneida County. An article from a 1951 issue of the *Utica Daily* has pictures of several hop



FIGURE 4.63
BRICK AROUND PIPE EXIT, SONDERGAARD HOP HOUSE, TOWN OF DECATUR.

houses still surviving during that period. Several of these hop houses have the center brick chimney, like that of the Beardslee hop house. Surviving examples in Oneida County also exhibit this feature. The Richards hop house in the township of Paris is a large late period common hop house with a central brick chimney. The central brick chimney from this evidence appears to be a common feature in the hop houses of

Oneida County. But the question becomes why would the Beardslee hop house share a trait with a region far north of it?

The answer can be found by looking at the geography of the land. The Beardslee hop house is located within the Unadilla Valley. This valley stretches all the way into Oneida County, through the towns of Bridgewater and Paris. In this way, the hamlet of Hoboken is more easily connected to Oneida County than its fellows in Otsego County. It would stand to reason that building patterns would travel easier down the valley as well. Other architectural features are common to this corridor. Henry Glassie's survey of barns in Otsego County noticed a common string of foundation types in the western part of the county. Cobblestone and herringbone style foundations are common throughout this region.¹¹⁰ When one travels up the Unadilla Valley into Herkimer and Oneida County, cobblestone structures continue to be common place. It is not only borders that control cultural transmission, but geography.

Ease of access is created by natural geography, but can also be influenced through man-made construction as well. US Route 20 provides an excellent example of this. Several patterns of architectural traits follow this arterial highway. An often overlooked cultural tradition is one Cynthia Falk noticed, which I will call the Schoharie painted barn.¹¹¹ In 1971, a student of the Cooperstown Graduate Program named Barbara Hamblett wrote a paper titled "Riddle of the Barn". In this work, Hamblett documented the various patterns used on Schoharie painted barns. She based her research on conducting surveys in Schoharie County and the surrounding areas.

¹¹⁰ Henry Glassie, *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1974), 220.

¹¹¹ Falk, *Barns of New York: Rural Architecture of the Empire State*, 15.

Hamblett found that the highest concentration of painted barns was on US Route 20, especially the section that runs from Duanesburg to Carlisle.¹¹² Much like the hop house, the concentration of painted barns becomes less dense as one gets further from US Route 20. In both cases, it appears that both cultural and economic trends followed this important highway.

Both of these trends also saw a convergence. R. Jedlick of the 1966 Cooperstown Graduate Program documented a unique hop house just outside the Village of Sharon Springs in northwestern Schoharie County.¹¹³ This building is an agglomeration of various traits. Its basic form is that of a common hop house, and a short one at that. Despite its shortness, it is actually a late period hop house. This is evidenced by it having a brick chimney at its far side. The windows on its kiln add a feature common in the town of Cherry Valley and Montgomery County, both neighboring regions. The native Schoharie touch is finally added with the addition of painting patterns in line with Schoharie painted barns.

Though the common hop house is dominant in Otsego County, variations of this type can be found. My survey found that roughly 20% of the hop houses in Otsego County are step-up kilns. This includes both early and late period variants. There does not appear to be any geographical correlations with this type. It was most likely a standard upgrade utilized by many hop house owners to expand production. Another

¹¹² The Riddle of the Barns, Barbara Hamblett, May 16, 1971, Coll. 71-0290, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

¹¹³ Hop House Project, R. Jedlick, May 16, 1971, Coll. 66-0112, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

variant are those with hop houses with double-kilns. Both the Wedderspoon and Bates Hop houses are prime examples of this form.

Identifying patterns in hop houses is not an isolated endeavor. The trends found among hop houses are not limited to this specific structure type. Being that barn builders and hop house builders were one and the same, the same subtle touches can be found in both. Identifying the hop house as it exists in Otsego County is merely a means in which one can examine the trends of vernacular architecture as a whole within the region. Limiting the survey to hop houses provides a means to this end. The small windows on Montgomery hop houses can be found on barns within that area too. The painted Schoharie hop house is an extension of a greater outbuilding trend. These differences are not happenstance, for they reflect cultural trends that define a particular region. By mapping and examining these features, it will further the study of the movement of peoples and ideas.

Chapter 5: Hops Pickers, Tools and Folklore

No building exists within a void. As a folklorist, I have come to understand that buildings tell the story of both the structure themselves and the people who use them.

Dell Upton writes,

...the noises that we make in going about our business, and the smell that arises from cooking, smoking, garbage dumps, are equally aspects of the physical environment modified through “culturally modified behavior.”¹¹⁴

The hop house cannot be fully understood until it is contextualized within the time and place it inhabited. The people who worked with them did not merely observe them from upon some secluded hill. They smelled the hops as they were unloaded onto the upper floor. They felt the heat of the stove as the hops were turned upon the slat floors. They heard the the fiddle play as the dance was held in the press room. The hop house was not merely a decorative piece, but a part of the lives of all those who lived with them. This section of the thesis will examine the folkways and tools related to the hop house. Not all tools related to the hop industry are examined, instead I focus on those which are most important and most likely to still be found in a hop house.

Being that hops were grown within Otsego County for a hundred years, it stands to reason that rich cultural traditions sprung up around the act. Henry Glassie once wrote, “Buildings, like poems and rituals, realize culture.”¹¹⁵ The hop house is merely one expression of hops culture. Among the other expressions of hop culture was the

¹¹⁴Dell Upton “The City as Material Culture” in *The Art and Mystery of Historical Archaeology: Essays in Honour of James Deetz*, ed. Anne Elizabeth Yensch and Mary C. Beaudry (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 1992), 52.

¹¹⁵ Henry Glassie, *Vernacular Architecture* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2000), 17.

development of folkways. One of the richest sources of hop folklore came from the pickers. Several informants interviewed from the Cooperstown Graduate Program spoke of various beliefs that surrounded the harvest.

The hop plant itself has often been the subject of local folk use. Jared Van Wagner in the book *Golden Age of Homespun* notes several of these uses. Hops were used for medicinal purposes, common among plants with a distinctive aroma. One such use was creating a “hop pillow” to relieve insomnia.¹¹⁶ The use of hops for insomnia, however, is not a native upstate folk remedy. It was reported that King George III of England used hop pillows to relieve insomnia in 1787.¹¹⁷ Hop tea and hop poultices, too, were used to treat ailments.¹¹⁸ Though hops has a variety of folk uses, these account for a fraction of hop use. Its use in beer was ultimately what drove production of the crop.

Folkways sprung from the very act of picking as well. A common tradition among both pickers and growers involves a bug once called the “hop merchant”. This caterpillar is known today as the Comma (*Polygonia comma*), a butterfly common throughout the eastern United States. The eggs of the Comma are often laid under hop leaves, which the caterpillars feed upon after hatching.¹¹⁹ As a result, pickers would commonly come across this insect while in the process of picking. The most well known piece of folklore concerning the hop merchant was that their color could be used to determine the price a hop crop would fetch. Cocoons with a gold ring meant the crop would bring in a good

¹¹⁶ Jared Van Wagenen Jr, *Golden Age of Homespun* (Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1953), 81.

¹¹⁷ Thomas, “‘Hops’ from Household Words” in *The Hop Bin: An Anthology of Hop Picking in Kent and East Sussex*, 59.

¹¹⁸ Van Wagenen Jr, *Golden Age of Homespun*, 81.

¹¹⁹ Clarence Weed, *Butterflies Worth Knowing* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1917), 153.

price, while those with a silver one predicted a poor price.¹²⁰ The hop merchant was also part of courting folkways. Girls who found a hop merchant could expect all the nearby boys to chase them for a kiss. A boy who found one could take his pick of one of the female pickers from whom he would steal a kiss. Courting rituals were not uncommon during the harvesting season.

Another kissing custom involved the bine of the hop plant. When pickers were working with the plants, they would sometimes come across bines that formed a circlet. These anomalies were referred to as “kissing rings”. Finding one would trigger the same response as finding a hops merchant, a kiss must be taken.¹²¹

These courting customs reveal an important aspect of the hop picking season. The whole event of hop picking served not only the purpose of bringing in the harvest, but also as an occasion for young people to meet and find spouses. To promote this, dances were often held at the end of each week during harvest. As Arthur Stocking of Springfield recalled, many young men during that time found a wife from among the pickers.¹²² The pickers often were not those desperate for cash, but rather city dwellers seeking an excuse to escape for a bit. It allowed a brief respite from urban dwelling, and an opportunity for their unwed daughters and sons to meet prospective spouses. The picking season for them was a sort of rural respite.

Despite this, pickers often had a poor reputation among locals and the farmers themselves. Arthur Stocking recalled one farmer not eating with the pickers over this.¹²³

¹²⁰ Hop House Report, Henry Bacot, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

¹²¹ Hop House Report, Ross Fullam, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

¹²² Hop House Report, Webster Slack, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

¹²³ Hop House Report, Webster Slack, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

Harry Shaul of Cherry Valley too had a bad experience with pickers. Working as yard boss, he remembered having to constantly break up fights.¹²⁴ Clifford Clump made note of rowdy hop pickers, noting that fights at the dances were common.¹²⁵ Such behavior does not necessarily mean that hops pickers were coming from the lower dregs of society. Rowdy pickers could be part of the still modern phenomenon of the “ugly tourist”. Vacation spots always have to deal with guests who act in a more rowdy manner than they would otherwise act at home. When people are away, they tend to do things that they would normally not be able to get away with at home.

Though the hop house is the most prominent example of material culture related to hops, there is a plethora of other artifacts well. Hops are a specialized crop, and as such require specialized tools. Unfortunately, surviving examples of these are very rare. During my survey, I found only one hop house to still have any items remaining relating to hops culture. The only sizable repositories for these artifacts are NYSHA and local collectors.



FIGURE 5.1
HOP BOX. H. SMITH HOP HOUSE. TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD.

¹²⁴ Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0106, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

¹²⁵ Hop House Report, Robert Schwabach, November 16, 1966, Coll. 66-0107, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive, New York State Historical Association.

One of the most well known pieces of hops culture material culture is the hop box (figure 5.1). These items were what pickers placed the hops in once they were removed from the bine.

These boxes were divided into two compartments, allowing two pickers to use

them at once. As can be observed from photographs, these boxes were often fitted with a canopy on top. This would have blocked the sun's hot rays while the pickers worked outdoors. The box was also used as a measure to determine when to place the hops in a sack.¹²⁶ Sacks would be loaded upon wagons, which would eventually make their way to the hop house (figure 5.2).

Other less ubiquitous items were used as well. Many of these had to take into account the delicate nature of the hop flower. When moving large quantities of hops, an item known as the "hop shovel" was used (figure 5.3).¹²⁷ Though taking on the form of a



FIGURE 5.2
WAGON HOLDING HOPS, ONEIDA COUNTY.
(SOURCE: ONEIDA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY)



FIGURE 5.3
HOP SHOVEL, 1966.
(SOURCE: NEW YORK STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION)

¹²⁶ Hop House Report, James Gold, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

¹²⁷ Hop House Report, William Corsaro, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

standard shovel, it used burlap for the shovel's bottom to ensure the hops were not harmed. Another related tool is the "hop rake".¹²⁸ This item resembles a standard wooden rake, sporting unsharpened wooden dowels for teeth. The hop rake was used in turning over the hops on the slats during the drying process in the kin.

One of the most important pieces of equipment was the hop stove (figure 5.4). These large furnaces could not be made on the farm, and one had to buy them from a manufactory. One of the most prominent of these was the Lyons Manufacturing Company of Solsville, New York. This company was well known for giving promotional lion-shaped weathervanes with every purchase.¹²⁹ More local makers existed as well. Several hop houses in Otsego County used furnaces made by Ira Rickard, a blacksmith in Cobleskill.¹³⁰ These stoves were fueled by either wood or coal. Though Meeker advocates for coal as the better of the options, accounts seem to suggest wood was the more commonly used fuel source.



FIGURE 5.4
FORMER HOP STOVE, COOPERSTOWN.

An item related to the stove is "brimstone". These objects were sulphur sticks shaped into a cylindrical form.¹³¹ They were placed in small metal buckets upon the stove, and allowed

¹²⁸ Hop House Report, John Ott, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

¹²⁹ Hop House Report, Henry Bacot, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

¹³⁰ Hamilton Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Schoharie County, N.Y. for 1872-3* (Syracuse: Hamilton Child, 1872), 223.

¹³¹ Hop House Report, James Gold, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

to cook during the drying process. The metal buckets were held in place by metal wire that was hung from the drying racks. These artifacts often remain to this day. The main purpose of the sulphur was to bleach the hops, as noted earlier.

Another important item is the “hop press”. Being that hops had to be shipped great distances, forming them into bales was the most economical option. The hop press was a device that applied enough pressure to compress the dried hops into manageable bales. The first version of the hop press used a large screw beam to apply the pressure. Screw beams had to be mounted on something, the most common being the summer beam. These screw beams were most commonly made of wood. Later versions were also metal, as seen by material evidence. This version was replaced by what was known as the “Harris press” in later years. The Harris press needed no screw beam, and instead made use of two levers to apply the pressure. Two people as a result were needed to use the device. These devices were also much more mobile since they were no longer set into place. Of the hop presses to survive, they are almost always Harris presses.

The work of the hop farmer was not done once the hops were baled. Specialized tools were required to finish the process. Before they could be shipped, the baled hops had to be sewn into sacks, using a large needle.¹³² Another tool used during this step took a core sample from the bales. This was done by a hop dealer or the farmer himself in order to send a sample to be evaluated in quality.

¹³² Hop House Report, Alfred Bullard, November 16, 1966, Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive.

As can be seen, every stage of hops raising involved a unique set of both actions and tools. The industry had evolved to a point where these tools had standardized forms, making my job much easier in describing them. The industry was so specialized, that there are several other tools that were utilized as well. This overview has given a brief look at some of the more important tools, and I will leave a more thorough examination to later academics.

Hop houses did not operate in a void. They were part of a living community, and as such melded with it. People, customs, and tools all were related in ensuring the vitality of hops culture. These things did not merely co-exist with hop houses, but shaped them as well. The invention of the Harris press, for example, allowed for widespread adoption of balloon frames. Sometimes people themselves directly affected the look of a hop house. A common feature found within hop houses is writing left from pickers and growers. The most common of this “graffiti” is three digit numbers that often line the press room wall. These numbers were used to keep track of bale weights. Names of people, too, are often found written within the hop house. Typically written in chalk or carved in wood, these names reflect hop pickers and workers who wanted to leave their mark long after they had left. Other names are written in stencil. This feature can be used to determine the names of farmers who owned the hop house. Stencils were used to mark sacks with finished bales, and presumably the painter was using the hop house wall as practise. Art made by pickers and farmers was not always practical in nature. In the Lee Hop House of Fly Creek, there is a drawing of a flower on the press room wall.

The art and writings found within hop houses confirm what should be self evident; these structures were part of a cultural ecosystem. Human beings worked, played, and altered the hop house as they would any part of their environment. Though the hop house has not been used for its intended purpose for one hundred years, it still remains a part of the cultural fabric to this day. Children play in them, farmers store equipment in their kiln, and new owners live within their walls. In this sense, it is a mistake to say that the hop house is some relic of the past. This will only be true once everyone of them has disappeared from the landscape. The intention of my work is to record a segment of their existence, not to be the definitive last word.

Chapter 6: The Present and Future State of Hop Houses

Problems

One of the primary reasons for me to conduct this study was the accelerating loss of hop houses within Otsego County, both physically and within the local consciousness. These structures were once considered a unique and recognizable feature of the Otsego County landscape. Their prominent place as a cultural icon has been lost with time. While conducting my research, it was common for hop house owners to not know the true identity of their building. Common mistaken identities included barns, workshops, and houses. Even my father grew up with hop houses without ever realizing it. As a child, he and his friends believed the hop houses they played in were originally domestic houses due to the plaster and lath.

The lack of awareness among Otsego County residents to the nature of hop houses is one of the greatest threats. If an owner believes their hop house to be an old run down workshop, they are less inclined to preserve the building. Many of the hop houses are located on still operating farms, and often a farmer must ensure valuable space is not taken up. When such a problem arises, it is often the hop house that is first to be targeted for removal.

Unlike the Yankee barn, hop houses lack a place within the modern age. Even the oldest of Yankee barns can typically still be used by the farmer for modern farm tasks. The hop house lacks this utility. They are so specialized for their intended purpose, it makes it difficult to convert them for other uses. Several farmers have made

some moves to incorporate the hop house into a dairy focused farmstead. Many of the hop houses covered in the survey had large lean-to additions. Most of these were added in order to allow for the storage of farm equipment. Larger doors were required in these cases, which were usually added on the kiln section. Agricultural use is not the only repurposing function of hop houses.

Not all hop houses are owned by farmers. Otsego County is not nearly as agricultural oriented as it once was. Many farmhouses in the county are now lived in by working professionals or used as summer homes. These owners have fewer options in what to do with their hop houses. A common repurposing is use as a garage. The Bowen hop house is a prime example. Large garage doors have been added to its front side, and new windows under its front gable. It is only because some of the plaster and lath remain that one can confirm it is a hop house.

While the conversion of hop houses ruins some of their historical value, it is a better option than the common alternative: destruction. The hop houses that remain are a fraction of the number at their original peak. Lithographs from the period show settlements surrounded by hop houses. Why have hop houses so quickly disappeared?

Natural deterioration has been the most dangerous threat to hop houses. As noted by Tomlan, one of the unfortunate traits of some outbuildings is that many lack foundations. This fact leads to the sills resting directly on the ground, making them prone to rot.¹³³ The severity of weather is another direct threat. For Cooperstown, the average temperature high of the year is 77 F. The average peak low comes in January

¹³³ Michael Tomlan, *Hop Houses in Central New York*, 60.

at 10 F.¹³⁴ On top of a wide range of temperatures, annual snowfall is fairly high. The average amount of snowfall in Cooperstown is eighty-three inches during the winter.¹³⁵ A hop house with a weak structure can easily be brought down by heavy snow building up on the roof. The high precipitation too is troublesome. Those hop houses with deteriorating roofs will quickly have their roof rafters rotted by the intruding moisture.

The other major threat is the human one. During my research, I came across countless stories of hop houses being torn down by their owners. There are several reasons one would remove such a cultural icon. The first is related to the natural threat. As noted before, it is not hard for a hop house to succumb to the harsh weather of upstate New York. It is hard to repair or maintain a hop house under such conditions. It can be very expensive to make these repairs, especially for a building that has little practical use. The hop house is left to deteriorate without hope for relief. Eventually the building can become an eyesore, necessitating removal.

There are other impetus' to destroy one's hop house. Another threat is the increasing demand for barn lumber. Mortise and tenon beams have become a hot commodity as a decorative item. There are signs throughout the Otsego County that read "We Buy Barns". These barns no doubt will see themselves stripped of their materials and shipped elsewhere. Locals, too, have been known to repurpose the materials from hop houses. There are reports of hop houses being stripped for items as simple as flooring.

¹³⁴ "Climate Cooperstown- New York", US Climate Datat, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/cooperstown/new-york/united-states/usny0326>

¹³⁵ "Climate Cooperstown- New York"

These combined threats have led to a drastic decline in the number of hop houses. Otsego County has been fortunate in that there has been a lack of large scale development. Neighboring Oneida County has not been so lucky. The of growth urban sprawl in the Utica-Rome metropolitan area has engulfed areas that were once prime farmland. This development may account for the lack of hop houses remaining in that county. Though Otsego County has escaped this fate, its situation is still serious.

Solutions

In writing my thesis, I did not simply want it to be an examination of the hop house as it existed and exists today. The hop house is an iconic part of Otsego County's landscape. By studying what remains, I could better understand what needs protection. Now that I have established the current status of hop houses within Otsego County, I can begin examine possible solutions. There are two different areas in which progress can be made in the preservation of hops houses. These are awareness and preservation programs.

One of the greatest challenges is simply to bring about awareness that the loss of hop houses is even an issue to begin with. Many of the people who own hop houses within Otsego County have no idea about the identities of their structure. This lack of awareness needs to be combated first. Without any sort of value attached to them, the forgotten hop houses are in great danger of being neglected or even torn down. During my survey, I came across countless stories of hop houses being removed because they fell into too great of a disrepair.

More programs need to be enacted to bring about awareness of this issue. In neighboring Madison County, their historical connection to hops has been embraced. Each year in September, an event called Hop Fest is held. This festival was established by the Madison County Historical Society in 1996.¹³⁶ The activities that occur during this event range from food and beer pairings to presentations on the historical importance of hops. On top of this, the Madison County Historical Society also maintains a Hop Heritage Trail. This self guided tour brings one through Madison County to various sites that relate to hops. This includes various hop houses, a modern hop farm, and the historical society itself. A brochure for the trail includes descriptions, pictures, and locations of several hop houses found throughout Madison County. Otsego County has no equivalent. There are occasional public lectures on hop heritage, but these are usually small scale events.

The first step in raising awareness is creating a large scale event or place that can emphasize the importance of hops and hop houses within Otsego County. The closest thing to a hops advocate is the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown. Hops are grown on its grounds, and a restored hop house has been relocated onto the premises. The easiest way to raise awareness is to simply build off this already established venue. Ways to expand include a hops picking celebration, brewing with said hops, or any way to create events around the building and cultivation. While some of these things are done by the Farmer's Museum, they could be expanded into the rest of the county.

¹³⁶ "Madison County Hop Fest, Oneida, NY", Madison County Historical Society, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.madisonhopfest.org/>.

Another method of building awareness is by copying the model of Hop Heritage Tour of Madison County. There is already the Cooperstown Beverage Trail that encourages tourists to visit all the breweries, distilleries, and wineries within Otsego County.¹³⁷ It would be conceivable to create a historic counterpart to this. Much like Madison County, a select group of hop houses and sites relating to hops could be chosen as destinations. In the Madison County Hop Heritage Trail, the “base of operations” for the tour is the Madison County Historical Society. Being that the society created the tour, it ensures that travellers are given context before they make their visits. Such a nexus would have to exist for the Otsego County version as well. The easiest way to accomplish this would be to have a current organization take such a position. The most obvious candidate would be the New York State Historical Association, though other organizations could certainly take on this role.

The creation of an Otsego County heritage trail would not only raise awareness, but also encourage preservation as well. A partnership with hop house owners would have to be formed in order to begin a trail. Such individuals will likely be attracted to the program in order to show off their respective structures. Pride can be a powerful tool in attracting participants in such programs. Once hop house owners joined the trail, it would encourage them to maintain their building. It may be wise on the part of the organization that organizes such a trail to also stipulate to partners that they must maintain their hop house to a certain extent as part of the agreement.

¹³⁷ “About this Trail”, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.cooperstownbeveragetrail.com/about>.

The second way to encourage preservation is direct support through programs. Generally in Otsego County, there are few avenues in which a historical building can receive recognition or grants. The most commonly utilized path for recognition of historical significance is the National Register of Historic Places. This government body is “the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation.”¹³⁸ To be considered for the list, a building must meet the following criteria:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A.** That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B.** That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or
- C.** That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D.** That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.¹³⁹

Being that most hop houses are over one hundred years old and are unique to the area, they can qualify for such a designation. Even with this resource, it has not been widely utilized for hop houses.

One of the few ways for owners to acquire preservation funding is directly through New York State. The Farmer's Protection and Farm Preservation Act of 1996 provides those who rehabilitate historic barns with a tax credit equal to 25% of the

¹³⁸ “National Register of Historic Places Program: Fundamentals”, National Park Service, accessed April 12, 2015, http://www.nps.gov/Nr/national_register_fundamentals.htm.

¹³⁹ “National Register Criteria for Evaluation”, National Park Service, accessed April 12, 2104. http://www.nps.gov/Nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_2.htm.

restoration costs.¹⁴⁰ There is a problem for this program for hop houses. This tax credit requires the barn to be “income-producing”. This stipulation ensures the tax credit is only open for commercial entities, excluding hop houses located on residential properties. Unlike dairy barns, hop houses are not used in modern agriculture. Meeting this criteria is unlikely, even for commercial enterprises.

More locally in Otsego County, the primary preservation organization is Otsego 2000. The organization describes itself as “... a not-for-profit organization founded in 1981 to protect the environmental, agricultural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources of the Otsego Lake region and northern Otsego County.”¹⁴¹ Otsego 200 unfortunately does not provide direct funding of rehabilitation. Instead, this organization assists owners with finding programs that meet their needs. Regular workshops are given to instruct the public in how to look for funding opportunities in restoring a structure. There is an award program, but this is only for buildings that have already been restored/rehabilitated.

As noted, the support for hop house owners is limited. Grants can be applied for, but they are not readily accessible to someone without knowledge of where to look for them. This is why there needs to be a local advocate for hop house preservation. A good example of an advocacy program exists in the Canadian Province of Newfoundland. The Heritage Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador has created its own register of historic places within that province. All of the properties listed are easily accessible online, including their locations on Google Maps. This organization does

¹⁴⁰ “Tax Credit programs”, National Park Service, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/>.

¹⁴¹ “About”, Otsego 2000, accessed April 12, 2015, <http://www.otsego2000.org/about/>.

more than keep lists as well. It encourages houses to be listed by giving plaques that designate a home as historic.

A similar system could be implemented within Otsego County. Pride is a strong motivator for restoration and maintenance. A current or future organization could create its own register of historic properties within Otsego County. This would be especially useful for barns and outbuildings, structures often neglected by the larger organizations. While it may be hard to establish enough money for grants, it would at least reward those who take the time and money to work on their hop houses.

Another model to examine is that pioneered by the folklore organization Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY). Folklorist Varick Chittenden wrote an article titled "Put Your Very Special Place on the North Country Map!" in 2006 that described TAUNY's efforts to preserve significant locations. They used City Lore's Place Matters program as a model.¹⁴² The thing to take from TAUNY's work is in how they engaged with the community to further their agenda. Rather than relying on purely a small staff and meager funds, TAUNY outsourced much of their work to the community. TAUNY allowed the community to submit materials on historic sites, and relied on locals to convey their meaning.¹⁴³ Much of the field work as a result is conducted by those with the passion to preserve their local landmarks.

¹⁴² Varick Chittenden, "Put Your Very Special Place on the North Country Map!: Community Participation in Cultural Landmarking", *The Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 119, No. 471 (2006).

¹⁴³ Chittenden, "Put Your Very Special Place on the North Country Map!: Community Participation in Cultural Landmarking", 60.

The model implemented by TAUNY could be applied to hop houses as well. If one was to create a hop heritage trail within Otsego County, it is doubtful enough funds could be procured for an organization to have complete control over the experience. The key to success is to form a partnership with those who own hop houses or other important aspects of hop culture. While an organization can act as a nexus and advocate, the owners of hop houses would be in charge of giving the experience any meaning.

This model would also assist in the full identification of hop houses in Otsego County. It can be extremely difficult to identify modified common hop houses, especially if one has to enter the interior to confirm the identity. Those with these hard to find hop houses would be encouraged in such a scenario to come forward and have their structure identified. Creating a sense that the public would be key players in hop house preservation is instrumental saving them. At the end of the day, hop houses are privately owned pieces of property. It is the job of advocates to encourage their owners to do what's best in terms of heritage preservation.

Most of these options are more or less short term solutions. The best case scenario is for enough interest to be generated to eventually lead to the founding of a society or museum in the area that advocates for the preservation of hops culture within Otsego County. One of the issues with relying on current organizations is that hop houses will never be their primary prerogative. As such, only limited amounts of time and money from a organization will be wholly committed toward the cause. There needs

to be a dedicated group that acts as the keepers for hop houses and anything relating to hops culture.

Being that hop houses are not terribly valued by many, their monetary value is not of any great significance. Because of this, a hop house could be procured for a reasonable cost. A new organization would have little trouble in finding a hop house for purchase for the use in educational purposes. The most costly expense would hiring those with the expertise to restore it. While the Pope Hop House is a great example, it lacks the iconic look of a pyramidal or conical hop house. In order for a new organization to attract enough attention, procuring a draft kiln hop house would be ideal.

Having an organization which is widely known as being the “hop place” would also ensure there is no question where an individual would go if they want to save their hop house. As of right now, the owners of hop houses have no clear path in which they can gain the information they need. They must rather split their time between several organizations, and also be able to identify which of these organizations pertain to them. With there being a visible organization that is involved with all things hops related, there would be no question about where one would go if they were interested in getting help in preserving their hop house. Such an organization could also provide guides in how one can restore a hop house, and the appropriate stylistic choices.

Sadly, there is no magic bullet to solve this crisis. While measures can be taken to stop the hemorrhaging, many more hop houses will be lost in the meantime. An active and proactive public has to become engaged with the problem. While raising awareness is important, it can not make individuals act if they have no will to do so. The

most important step is making people feel connected with the structures. They have to come to view hop houses an integral part of their heritage.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

America has entered a new golden age of brewing. In 1981, there were three breweries operating within New York State.¹⁴⁴ As of writing, New York State now has 165 craft breweries alone.¹⁴⁵ Beer production has gone from the job of a few to a widespread industry. Home brewing, too, has become widespread, with more people than ever knowledgeable in the process of beer making.

The culture of hops has benefitted from this boon. A New York State law allows microbreweries to sell glasses of beer on the premise if at least 20% of the hops are grown in New York State.¹⁴⁶ This and other laws by the state government have been encouraging a comeback of the industry. Another important impetus is the fact that hops grown in New York fetch a higher price than those grown in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁴⁷ This has led to a surge hops in cultivation returning to upstate New York. Otsego County is no exception to this. Louis and Alicia Haggard began a hop farm near Cooperstown recently to take advantage of the demand. While production is nowhere near what it once was, there are signs that the industry is witnessing a rebirth.

Hop houses can benefit from this trend. Hops is no longer an obscure cultivare and is now entering the mainstream consciousness. Awareness is still limited, as there are bound to be hiccups along the way. One of the new beers produced by brewery Ommegang is titled "Hop House Ale". Unfortunately, the image utilized on the label is

¹⁴⁴ David Dawson, "Matt Wages Beer Battle", *The Observer-Dispatch*, April 5, 1981.

¹⁴⁵ Brewers Association, "State Craft Beer Sales & Production Statistics, 2013," accessed February 18, 2015, <http://www.brewersassociation.org/statistics/by-state/>.

¹⁴⁶ Karen Angel, "New York Farms get Hoppy," *Bloomberg Business*, October 23, 2014.

¹⁴⁷ Angel, "New York Farms get Hoppy."

that of an English style oast house. Being that hop houses are no longer an essential element of the brewing industry, it is understandable modern brewers would be disconnected from them.

This is the sort of issue I wish to combat. Awareness is preservation's greatest asset. With the current technological trends, it has never been easier to disseminate information to the general public. Now is the time to advocate for hop houses. More and more are falling into disrepair, and their iconic silhouette is in danger of never being seen again. The public must be made aware that this bleak outcome could become a reality within our lifetimes. And not only must awareness be spread, but also the reasons for why hop houses are important to the county's historical heritage.

Several features make the Otsego County hop house unique. The most apparent is the conservative nature of their design. This is not a cultural trait, but one borne from the economic and environmental realities of the county. The first is the fact farms were small and plentiful in Otsego County. This meant small hop houses were the norm. The other influence was that the hop industry peaked before the introduction of later period hop houses. The need for hop houses would have been mostly met by the time of late period construction. Changes in materials used, too, are not necessarily cultural, but rather a result of materials available to their builders. While these patterns are not the result of culture, none the less they become a part of it. The hop houses of Otsego County reflect the cultural, economic, and environmental factors that have shaped the region.

In this respect, I have laid out in this thesis the uniqueness of Otsego County's hop houses. While hop houses in upstate New York are often treated as a single cultural block, this is not the case. A variety of patterns and differences exists across Otsego County. Conservative limestone kilns can be found in the northern reaches of the county, while more modern hop houses are more common on the southern fringe. Decorative bleed over from neighboring counties can be found as well. This diversity would be further intensified if one was to take into account the entire region of Central New York.

There is a long way to go before one can be confident about the future of Otsego County's hop houses. There have been no major moves made to protect this important part of Otsego County's cultural landscape. There are signs that this trend will soon be reversed. Craft beer is becoming more popular, and with it interest in hops cultivation. This may soon translate into increased awareness of hop houses. My hope is that by attempting to record as much as possible, I can be a part of this tide of change. It will have to be the responsibility of both policy makers and the public to continue the work I have started.

At the very least, I have deepened knowledge of a subject not nearly as well examined as it should be. Previous writers on the subject have noticed trends within the county, but have never delved into the reasons for their existence. Henry Glassie noted conservative barn forms, yet never determined why. By focusing on one particular county, these individual inquests have gotten the consideration they deserve. Being one

person with limited time, I did not gather as much knowledge as Otsego County deserves. My work has laid the foundation for whoever takes this research further.

Regrettably, much is still being neglected. Other counties are in desperate need of surveys as I have done with Otsego County. Montgomery County has an extraordinarily high number of hop houses left, yet there is no initiative to record and preserve their historic character. While I do hope this issue is remedied, I realize that it is probable nothing will be done. There are countless architectural treasures that are in need of preservation in upstate New York, and limited people and funds dedicated to the cause. It is not until there is almost nothing left that urgency may come to the communities that once held host to these structures. I can only pray that this fate can be diverted. Only time will tell.

Bibliography

Books and Articles

Angel, Karen. "New York Farms Get Hoppy." Bloomberg Business, October 23, 2014.

Ballard, Sandra Martin. *Hop Time!* Cooperstown: Barton-Butler Graphics, 1998.

Beaudry, Mary and Anne Elizabeth Yensch, eds. *The Art and Mystery of Historical*

Archaeology: Essays in Honour of James Deetz. Boca Rotan: CRC Press, 1992.

Beaumont, Stephen and Tim Webb. *The World Atlas of Beer*. New York: Sterling Publishing, 2012.

Beers, F.W. *Atlas of Otsego County, New York, 1868*. New York: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis and G.G. Soule, 1868.

Burgess, A.H. *Hops: Botany, Cultivation and Utilization*. New York: Interscience Publishers, 1964.

Campbell, Dudley. *A Sketch of the History of Oneonta*. Oneonta: Herald and Democrat Press, 1883.

Carter, Thomas and Elizabeth Collins Cromley. *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005.

Child, Hamilton. *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Schoharie County, N.Y. for 1872-3*. Syracuse: Hamilton Child, 1872.

Chittenden, Varick. "Put Your Very Special Place on the North Country Map!: Community Participation in Cultural Landmarking". *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 119, No. 471 (2006): 47-65.

- Census of the State of New York 1865*. Albany: Charles von Benthuyesen, 1867.
- Dawson, David. "Matt Wages Beer Battle." *The Observer-Dispatch*, April 5, 1981.
- Dobbs, Christopher. "Road to America: The First Great Western Turnpike." MA Thesis, Cooperstown Graduate Program, 2002.
- Doel, Fran and Geoff. *The Hop Bin: An Anthology of Hop Picking in Kent and East Sussex*. Stroud: History Press, 2014.
- Edward, Susan. "Cobblestone House: A Part of the Landscape". *Historic Preservation*, 1978.
- Falk, Cynthia. *Barns of New York: Rural Architecture of the Empire State*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.
- Glassie, Henry. *The Variation of Concepts within Traditions: Barn Building in Otsego County, New York*. Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1974.
- Glassie, Henry. *Vernacular Architecture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Howard, Brian, ed. *Oneida County: An Illustrated History*. San Antonio: HPNBOOKS, 2014.
- Hurd, Duane Hamilton. *History of Otsego County, New York: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of its Prominent Men and Pioneers*. Philadelphia: Everts and Fariss, 1878.
- Meeker, Ezra. *Hop Culture in the United States: Being a Practical Treatise on Hop Growing in Washington Territory, from Cutting to Bale*. Puyallup: E. Meeker, 1883.

- Myrick, Herbert. *The Hop; Its Culture and Cure, Marketing and Manufacture: A Practical Handbook on the Most Approved Methods in Growing, Harvesting, Curing, and Selling Hops, and on the Use and Manufacture of Hops*. Chicago: Orange Judd Company, 1899.
- Palmer, John. *How to Brew: Everything you Need to Know to Brew Beer Right the First Time*. Boulder: Brewers Publications, 2006.
- Pocius, Gerald. "The House that Poor-Jack Built: Architectural Stages in the Newfoundland Fishery" in *The Sea and Culture of Atlantic Canada*. Larry McCann, ed. Sackville: Mount Allison University Press, 1992.
- Schull, Diantha Dow. *Landmarks of Otsego County*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1980.
- Scot, Reginald. *A Perfect Platform of a Hop Garden*. London: Henry Denham, 1576.
- Shumway, Daniel. *Central New York Beer: A History of Brewing in the Heart of the Empire State*. Charleston: History Press, 2014.
- Shumway, Daniel. *Utica Beer: A History of Brewing in the Mohawk Valley*. Charleston: History Press, 2014.
- Stratton, J.Y. *Hops and Hop-Pickers*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1883.
- Tomlan, Michael. *Hop Houses in Central New York with Guidelines for their Identification and Evaluation*. Oneida: Madison County Historical Society, 1983.
- Tomlan, Michael. *Tinged with Gold: Hop Culture in the United States*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992.

Townsend, Ted. "Hop Kilns Fade Away into Farming Oblivion." *Utica Daily Press*, May 11, 1951.

Upton, Dell and John Michael Vlach, eds. *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986.

Van Wagenen, Jared Jr. *Golden Age of Homespun*. Cooperstown: New York State Historical Association, 1953.

Visser, Thomas Durant. *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997.

Weed, Clarence. *Butterflies Worth Knowing*. New York: Doubleday, Page, 1917.

Archival

Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive. 66-0092 to 66-0108. New York State Historical Association.

Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive. 66-0112. New York State Historical Association.

Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive. 71-0290. New York State Historical Association.

Greater Oneonta Historical Society Archive. 2013.113.01. "Wilber Hops 1888," Commercial Establishments, SC-V, Greater Oneonta Historical Society.

Greater Oneonta Historical Society Archive. 2013.374.03. "Emmons," Histories - Towns, SC-VII, Greater Oneonta Historical Society.

Oneida County Historical Society Archive. Drawer 19, agriculture 200. Oneida County Historical Society.

Oneida County Historical Society Archive. 1985.100.2. Oneida County Historical Society.

Oneida County Historical Society Photo Archive. Drawer 19, agriculture 203. Oneida County Historical Society.

Oneida County Historical Society Photo Archive. Drawer 19, transportation 022. Oneida County Historical Society.

Oneida County Historical Society Photo Archive. Drawer 20, bridgewater355. Oneida County Historical Society.

World Wide Web

Brewers Association. "State Craft Beer Sales & Production Statistics, 2013." Accessed February 18, 2015. <http://www.brewersassociation.org/statistics/by-state/>.

Business Wire. "Community Bank System Completes Merger with The Wilber Corporation. Accessed April 12, 2015. <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110411005381/en/Community-Bank-System-Completes-Merger-Wilber-Corporation#.VOaa7C4I-Jk>.

Cooperstown Beverage Trail. "About the Trail". Accessed April 15, 2015. <http://www.cooperstownbeveragetrail.com/directions.php>.

Madison County Historical Society. "Madison County Hop Fest, Oneida, NY." Accessed April 12, 2015. <http://www.madisonhopfest.org/>.

National Parks Service. "National Register of Historic Places Program:

Fundamentals". Accessed April 12, 2015.

http://www.nps.gov/Nr/national_register_fundamentals.htm.

New York State.

National Park Service. "Historic Preservation Office: Tax Credit Programs.". Accessed

April 12, 2015. <http://parks.ny.gov/shpo/tax-credit-programs/>.

Otsego 2000. "About". Accessed April 12, 2015. <http://www.otsego2000.org/about/>.

Oxford Dictionaries. "Barn". Accessed February 10, 2015.

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/barn.

Oxford Dictionaries. "Kiln". Accessed February 10, 2015.

http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/kiln.

The Cherry Valley Historical Society and Museum. "A Slightly Short History." Accessed

April 12, 2015. <http://www.historiccherryvalley.com/history2.html>.

United States Census Bureau. "Census of Population and Housing." April 15, 2015.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html>.

US Climate Data. "Climate Cooperstown-New York." April 15, 2015.

<http://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/cooperstown/new-york/united-states/>

[usny0](http://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/cooperstown/new-york/united-states/usny0).

Figure Sources

Figure 2.2- Scot, Reginald. *A Perfect Platform of a Hop Garden*. London: Henry Denham, 1576.

Figure 2.3- Stratton, J.Y. *Hops and Hop-Pickers*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1883.

Figure 2.4- Greater Oneonta Historical Society Archive. 2013.374.03. "Emmons," Histories - Towns, SC-VII, Greater Oneonta Historical Society.

Figure 3.2- Myrick, Herbert. *The Hop; Its Culture and Cure, Marketing and Manufacture*: Chicago: Orange Judd Company, 1899.

Figure 3.15- Meeker, Ezra. *Hop Culture in the United States*: Puyallup: E. Meeker, 1883.

Figure 3.17- Oneida County Historical Society Photo Archive. Drawer 19, agriculture 203. Oneida County Historical Society.

Figure 3.19- Oneida County Historical Society Photo Archive. Drawer 20, bridgewater355. Oneida County Historical Society.

Figure 4.64-Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive. 71-0290. New York State Historical Association.

Figure 5.2- Oneida County Historical Society Photo Archive. Drawer 19, transportation 022. Oneida County Historical Society.

Figure 5.3- Cooperstown Graduate Program Archive. 66-0104. New York State Historical Association.