NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018 (Expires 5/31/2012)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**United States Department of the Interior**
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Oatka Cemetery

other names/site number Scottsville Cemetery

## 2. Location

street & number 411 Scottsville-Mumford Road | N/A not for publication

city or town Wheatland | N/A vicinity

state New York code NY county Monroe code 055 zip code 14546

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this _x_ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property _x_ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

**___ national ___ statewide _x_ local**

Ruth A Pierpont DSHPO 12/24/13
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

for Edson H. Beall 2.24.14
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Oatka Cemetery
Name of Property

Monroe County, NY
County and State

## 5. Classification

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

| | |
|---|---|
| X | private |
| | public - Local |
| | public - State |
| | public - Federal |

**Category of Property**
(Check only **one** box.)

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

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

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 1 | 0 | objects |
| 2 | 1 | **Total** |

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

N/A

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

0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/cemetery

**Current Functions**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/cemetery

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

No style

**Materials**
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: N/A
walls: N/A
roof: N/A
other: N/A

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

Located adjacent to the village of Scottsville, the Oatka Cemetery is a historic, but still active cemetery on a rectangular property, encompassing just under ten acres. The nominated cemetery is the result of the union of two cemeteries: the Scottsville Cemetery, a settlement period cemetery established circa 1810, and the Oatka Cemetery, a designed cemetery founded in 1883. The older Scottsville Cemetery occupies the northeast quadrant of the property and is clearly differentiated from the later, more organized and much larger portion. The property has a gravel road that runs through the outer portions of the grounds. Two additional road remnants run through the center of the property and connect with another former road that marks the original boundary of the oldest portion of the property in the northwest. Although plots in the older section are more compact, all of the cemetery plots in general are square or rectangular in shape, with the exception of a few plots that follow the curve of the end road. The total number of plots is approximately five hundred, with 3,425 burials indicated by markers. Plots tend to be owned by families and several are marked with a large monument surrounded by individual burial markers for family members. For the most part, burials are oriented east to west with the majority of the markers facing west. The cemetery includes a wide array of funerary art, with excellent examples including the large female figure atop the Brown family marker that can be seen from a distance, located in the southern central section of the cemetery. Several Celtic crosses top a number of family monuments, attesting to the region's Scottish heritage. The grounds also include a historic windmill constructed in the 1890s for pumping water, historic iron fencing along Scottsville-Mumford Road, and a noncontributing garage of recent date on northeast edge of the property.

**Narrative Description**

Oatka Cemetery is located on the south side of Scottsville-Mumford Road (NYS Rt. 383) in the town of Wheatland, New York, on the west edge of the Village of Scottsville. The property is generally a flat parcel of land, which dips down at the south end. It is bounded on the west by open cultivated farm land, on the east by the village of Scottsville highway maintenance and fire departments, on the south by open land, and on the north by Scottsville-Mumford Road. Across the road are scattered commercial and residential properties and the Holy Angels Roman Catholic Cemetery. The Oatka Cemetery is slightly less than ten acres in size. Roughly two-thirds of the acreage contains the largest concentration of burials, marked by headstones and monuments. Minor landscaping includes small scattered groups of young trees, majestic conifers and mature shade trees. The cemetery is accessible by an oval loop of a gravel paved road, with two entrance/exits off of Scottsville-Mumford Road. The south end of the loop includes an additional curved connection between the

two outside roads. The remnant of a gravel and grass roadway runs through the center of the grounds. The north boundary of the cemetery is marked by well-maintained iron fence with a pedestrian gate that was installed in 1906. The decorative iron fence parallels the road where it marks the front boundary of the cemetery and has openings for the entrance near the east end and the exit at the west end. The fence is curved at the main entrance and a closed pedestrian gate is centrally located. Another short drive extends south from the road past the east gate entrance. This connects to a non-historic small concrete service cemetery garage.

According to a historic map of the cemetery, the one-acre Scottville Cemetery was expanded to the east and south in increments of one acre, first in 1861 and again in 1881. Three years later (1883) the Oatka Cemetery Association was established, assuming ownership and oversight of the cemetery and its operations. Two more acres were added in 1905, expanding it to a rectangular five-acre site. Throughout the twentieth century, additional acreage was acquired until it reached slightly its current size in 1995. Although a small portion of the cemetery was added after the period of significance, the boundary was drawn to encompass the entire property, which retains an overall consistent character reflective of its 1883 plan.

Oatka cemetery features mostly traditional headstones and monuments with several notable Celtic crosses, obelisks and statuary markers. Because the cemetery grew out of an existing early nineteenth century burying ground (the Scottsville Cemetery), the cemetery markers reflect the range of materials and funerary art popular in the region from the early 1800s to the present. Marker materials include marble, granite, limestone, sandstone and slate. Many, including the more monumental crosses and obelisks, are embellished with the motifs and allegorical designs commonly found in nineteenth and early twentieth century funerary art.

From the east gate entrance, the overall view of the cemetery shows neat rows of grave makers and family monuments with scattered trees and shrubs. The cemetery plots are generally arranged in a grid pattern and currently number over 500 total plots with 3,425 known grave sites. The plots in the northwest section, the oldest portion of the cemetery, vary in size and orientation, while the remaining portion of the cemetery contains square and rectangular plots of more or less equal size. Interments along the east road indicate that this is the more recent portion of the cemetery with plots marked with low twentieth century style monuments. The older portions to the west and south contain several mid to late nineteenth century obelisks and tall upright grave markers.

Two tall objects located in the south end of the property are a metal windmill and a large female figure on top of a granite pedestal. The windmill towers over the southwest portion of the property on plot number 121. It was erected in the 1890s to provide power for the water pumping system. The full-sized female figure is north

of the windmill and stands on top of the Brown family monument. Also visible from the east entrance is a cemetery shed in the northeast portion of the building. It is a late-twentieth century concrete building that resembles a one-story domestic garage and is noncontributing due to age. It also has a separate driveway extending to Scottsville-Mumford Road.

The oldest section of the cemetery is in the northwest quadrant and dates from 1810 when it was established as a settlement era cemetery known as the Scottsville Cemetery. Lots tend to be long, narrow rectangles and in spite of the lack of depth, the burials tend be in neat rows with the markers facing the roadway. In general, the markers are of an early to mid-nineteenth century style of tall, flat stone markers with sentimental or religious iconography (flowers, ivy, vines, sunrises, bibles, sheep, etc.) Most stones are weathered marble and a few slate stones mark some of the earliest burials. Divisions between family groups are indicated by wider spaces between stones within the row. A typical arrangement for this older section is seen in the Carpenter Family plot, which occupies two contiguous lots (218 and 216) near the iron fence along Scottsville-Mumford Road. Burials are in a straight line extending south from a plain obelisk monument at the head of the row. Family markers are marble, with taller, flat rectangular stones indicating the burials of adult members and smaller stones for children. Any interments dating after the mid century have markers that are generally rounded and seated on a base. Family monuments in this section of the cemetery are less common than the newer sections and the monument is usually a plain obelisk or column.

Areas to the south and east of the Scottsville Cemetery portion show the subsequent expansion of the property and have a different organization clearly differentiated from the 1810 portion. These expansion areas show a deliberate layout pattern, indicating that an overall design was being followed. Plots in the later sections of the cemetery are larger, more uniform in shape and size and carefully arranged in a grid pattern of long rows oriented north to south. Remnants of two roads run through the middle of the grounds and the plots along them reflect the mid and late nineteenth century expansions of the cemetery in terms of size, orientation and marker styles. Most family plots dating from the mid nineteenth century have family plot markers of plain marble or granite monuments with low head and/or footstones indicating the location of the burials. With larger plot sizes, more separation exists between groups of families and one still retains its plain metal and stone fencing.

Monuments dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are generally granite and ornately decorated with religious and funerary symbolism. Several of the family plots have decorated Celtic crosses, reflecting the Scottish heritage of the region and the persons interred within Oatka Cemetery. Noticeably absent from the cemetery is the use of angels and other figures on top of monuments, except for the very prominent Brown family monument near a stand of trees in the south central section of the grounds. The large gray granite monument has an ornate base with carved acanthus leaves and a life-sized female figure dressed

in classical robes with an arm extended heavenward. She carries a cross in her other arm, which is draped with garlands of flowers.

Markers dating from the mid to late twentieth century are generally located on the outer edges of the cemetery. These are generally granite and lower in height than the earlier stones. Many are double markers indicating two side-by-side interments, usually of a husband and wife. A number of more recent markers have bronze plaques attached with information about the decedent. These markers lack the ornate decoration found with the nineteenth century burials and is generally limited to military or fraternal associations or religious symbols.

One unusual feature is the inclusion of a potter's field, unmarked in the cemetery, but indicated on cemetery maps. The field shows as being in the southwest section of the cemetery, encompassing plots numbers 303 through 308 (six plots in all). The actual number of graves is unknown and only a handful of stones can be seen, which is to be expected since it was an area reserved for burials for indigents.

Oatka Cemetery
Name of Property

Monroe County, NY
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

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

- [x] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [X] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [ ] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [X] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

### Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exploration/Settlement
Landscape architecture

### Period of Significance
Ca. 1810-1963

### Significant Dates
1810, 1883, 1961

### Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation
N/A

### Architect/Builder
unknown

**Period of Significance (justification)**
The period begins with the establishment of the Scottsville Cemetery ca. 1810 and continues through it being incorporated into the Oatka Cemetery Association in 1883. As an active cemetery, the end date is 1963.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**
Under Criterion Consideration D, the Oatka Cemetery is significant due to its age as a settlement era cemetery and for its 1880s expansion following the principles of a landscape-lawn plan.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Oatka Cemetery is significant under criteria A and C as an intact settlement era burial ground that provides information about the earliest citizens of the area and for the distinctive landscape design of its 1880s expansion, which incorporates the earlier cemetery within it and illustrates late-nineteenth century attitudes about cemetery design. The earlier cemetery, which serves as the final resting place of the village of Scottsville's early settlers, served the village and the surrounding area from its first burial in 1810. The information on the markers and accompanying iconography provide demographic and genealogical information often missing from the recorded histories of the community the larger, later portion of Oatka illustrates the lawn plan cemetery design type that became popular following the rural cemetery movement of the early to mid nineteenth century. By the time the Oatka Cemetery Association was founded (1883), the rural cemetery as a type was seen as old fashioned, and although the association occasionally referred to it as the Oatka Rural Cemetery, the plan adopted for the expanded grounds rejected the highly romantic and seemingly haphazard arrangement of burials hidden amidst dense plantings and manipulated landscapes of the earlier rural cemeteries. Although no designer has been identified, the newer portion was clearly planned to preserve the relatively flat landscape, which allowed families to display unobstructed, prominent and ornately decorated monuments and grave markers. For the cemetery association, the landscape was ideal for laying out ample-sized plots in a grid pattern, a highly efficient division in terms of economics and maintenance. Still active, the Oatka Cemetery has a high degree of integrity, especially in terms of location, setting, design, feeling and association.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

## Criterion A: Settlement of Scottsville and Wheatland

The village of Scottsville was established at the eastern end of the town of Wheatland, just west of the Genesee River and along the Oatka Creek. Isaac Scott, for whom the village was named, arrived in 1789, followed by a trickle of settlers. Scott's log cabin was the first dwelling in what is now the village. After 1800, the flow of settlers increased, as the fertile land along the flood plain of the Genesee River was advertised for sale and the Oatka Creek became a power source for milling. Newcomers to the area included a significant influx of immigrants from Scotland, purposely recruited by Charles Williamson, the land agent for the Pulteney Estates, who was charged with selling the land and establishing settlements.

As the number of farms increased in the area, the 1830s and 1840s became years of great prosperity in the town of Wheatland, which had become a major wheat growing area for the Genesee Country region, hence the name. Grist mills were established along the creek and transportation improvements made shipping wheat and other products more economical to Rochester, eleven miles to the north, for processing and shipping on the Erie Canal. In addition to improved roads and bridges built across the Genesee River, the construction of the Scottsville-Genesee River Canal (1837-39), the Genesee Valley Canal (1840-1878), and the Scottsville and Le Roy Railroad (1838-1840) lowered costs for transporting local products. The village of Scottsville developed along the Oatka Creek and its prosperity in this period was reflected in the building of fine homes on Rochester Street, as well as shops, taverns, hotels and businesses on Main Street, and mills along the creek. In the 1820s, a mile-and-a-quarter water raceway was constructed through the village from a dam on Oatka Creek that provided more power for additional mills.

Growth of the village and increased settlement brought with it the eventual need for a burial ground and in 1810, land was set aside west of the village for that purpose. The first documented burials in the one-acre Scottsville Cemetery, as it was known, took place when a Finch family member died and was buried in a plot alongside the road (plot #229). Like most settlement-era burial grounds, the Scottsville Cemetery became the final resting place of the village's founders and early settlers, including two who were laid to rest in plot #283. This plot was a little larger than most, visible from the roadside and fitting that these two men and their families had such a prominent spot. One was Isaac Scott, the founder of the village of Scottsville and the other, Dr. Freeman Edson, the village's first physician. Buried alongside the men were their wives and children and the several small markers with the Edson family indicated a high level of mortality, in spite of Dr. Edson's profession. The inclusion of the two families on the one lot also suggested that they were related.

The Scottsville Cemetery was among the earliest burying grounds from the settlement period in the town of Wheatland. Due to the town's rural character, most of its cemeteries were located near small settlements and included the Wheatland Baptist Cemetery in Belcoda (1811; NR listed, 2006) and the Garbuttsville Cemetery (1827). A few family cemeteries were located near their respective homesteads, such as Warren Cemetery on River Road, which served eleven related families and grew to contain thirty six burials, half of them bearing the Warren name.

Two religious-oriented cemeteries were also located in the town in the nineteenth century. The presence of a strong early nineteenth century Quaker community in the southeast section of the town resulted in the building of a Quaker school in 1822, a Quaker Meeting House in 1834, and the establishment of a Quaker Cemetery in 1834, all on Quaker Road. In the 1850s, a five-acre site owned by the Catholic parish became the Holy Angels

Cemetery on Caledonia Avenue in the village of Scottsville. The village of Mumford in the west part of the town established the Mumford Rural Cemetery, which was formally incorporated later in 1881.

**Criterion C and Criterion Consideration D: Cemetery Design**

According to cemetery records, lands to the east and south were added to the old Scottsville Cemetery in increments of one acre, first in 1861 and again in 1881. Attempts were made at a rural cemetery design with the first expansion, with the addition of curving roadways and slightly larger plots. In 1883, the newly formed Oatka Cemetery Association adopted a plan that altered the character of the cemetery from densely crowded, long narrow plots to long parallel rows of evenly spaced and nearly equal sized squares. At this time, all plots were given numbers, resulting in a total of 330 plots on three acres divided into long rows. A new parallel road system ran north to south between every two rows of plots, ending at a curved road on the south end of the property. No designer was credited with the design that resulted in an overall grid plan with spaces between the plots. This created a more open appearance and allowed for larger family monuments, thus avoiding the crowded burials seen in the older portion of the cemetery. Some families added fencing to outline their space. All plot holders were responsible for the appearance of their plots and were required to pay dues for general maintenance.

Improvements to the grounds were made when possible, depending on the amount of money collected. The earliest existing plan of the newly created Oatka Cemetery, drawn in 1884, showed 330 numbered plots on three acres, a parallel road system going north to south between every two rows of plotted sites and a curved road in the western portion. By 1905, improvements were made to the road, showing a more developed road system with a curving entrance. A third map, drawn in 1909 by Brown Brother's Continental Nurseries Company of Rochester (New York) served as a proposed planting plan for the cemetery; however, it was never implemented. It also depicted a curving road system that proposed to widen the roads in the old Scottsville Cemetery, also not implemented.

Engaging the Brown Brothers reflected nineteenth-century trends in landscape planning adopted by the cemetery association and in controlling the appearance of the cemetery. This trend began the 1830s with the Rural Cemetery Movement, when new attitudes toward burial customs and gravestone design changed the appearance of burial grounds. Burial grounds became cemeteries, moving beyond mere depositories of the dead to parks where the living were encouraged to spend time privately mourning deceased family members and reflecting on death and the afterlife in a setting that emphasized the serene beauty of nature. Many of these cemeteries were located in rural settings just beyond city or village limits and in essence became public parks. To highlight the park atmosphere and assist the living with respectful contemplation, rural cemeteries

featured elaborate entrance gates, chapels and receiving vaults, benches, fountains, gazebos and man-made lakes. Curving roads were carved through the natural landscape, which was often augmented or manipulated to make hills higher and valleys deeper. Lush plantings of trees, flowers and shrubbery were added to enhance vistas and create picturesque settings.

Another important change was that families could purchase plots before they were needed, often erecting a central monument featuring the family name; the monument was then supplemented with low individual head or foot stones as burials were made. Often, the remains of family members buried in family graveyards were moved to the newly established cemeteries. Simple headstones were replaced with prominent stone monuments, sculpture, or tombs, depending on the wealth and status of the families. Markers often contained classical, religious and or allegorical figures and symbolism that was less severe in reminding the living about the brutality of death.

By the late nineteenth century, the evolving outlook toward death shifted the emphasis of a cemetery from a place of contemplative mourning for the living to a place for celebrating the life and accomplishments of the decedent. In addition to the continued used of religious and allegorical symbols, family and individual monuments added iconography reflecting personal achievements such as fraternal orders, occupations and military service, which helped to memorialize the dead. As the rural cemeteries aged, family plots became crowded and as populations relocated, maintaining the plots became an issue. The grounds in general were often regarded as unkempt, overgrown and difficult to maintain.

In an attempt to gain more control of the cemetery as a landscape, cemetery associations increasingly turned to the example of Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio. Established in 1845 as a rural cemetery, it was later redesigned by Adolph Strauch, a German trained landscape designer who designed a number of private estates before becoming superintendent of the cemetery in 1855. He designed new sections of the cemetery with wider roads and larger plot sizes that were similar in size and shape. He continued to employ curved roads, but plantings were carefully managed to open the view and emphasize approaches into the grounds. For a neater appearance, Strauch convinced plot owners that smaller individual markers would allow for larger, more substantial family markers. These could be seen from greater distances, providing that fewer trees and shrubs were added to the plot or eliminated altogether. These innovations opened the view of the cemetery and put greater control of the landscape into the hands of superintendent. Strauch’s ideas, codified as the landscape-lawn or lawn-park cemetery, were widely published in the press and, by the 1880s, became the accepted pattern for cemetery landscape design.

Strauch's redesign of Spring Grove coincided with the founding of the Oatka Cemetery Association in 1883. The cemetery recently expanded from one acre to three and the association was looking toward adding even more acreage. With expansion came the question of how to divide the land in order to satisfy the needs of the plot holder and bring in additional revenue. The new landscape-lawn design allowed the association to adopt the grid system for plot organization, which would result in the maximum number of plots of similar footage and would generate sufficient capital for overall maintenance of grounds and roadways. Roads were widened and limited to between every two rows. The association also imposed a subscription, or "tax system," for assessing all plot holders an annual amount that would be applied to maintenance and improvements. Newspaper accounts of the association's annual meetings often refer to the reluctance of the plot holders to pay their annual fees. When the association wanted to raise money for fencing, it began a subscription campaign in 1894, but it lacked sufficient funds until 1906, when the association was able to purchase a fence from the Architectural Iron Works Company (Cincinnati, Ohio) and install it along the north end of the property.

One previous improvement had better success than the fence campaign. In May of 1898, a subscription campaign raised sufficient funds for installing "a system of Water Works. . . W. [water] well, wind mill, tank & piping through said grounds & other necessary fixtures" at a cost of $300."[1] Cemetery records listed the names of subscribers and the amounts contributed, which included seven men who each pledged to contribute a day of labor. The windmill for pumping the water was built near the south end of the grounds and became a defining feature of the cemetery; it is still extant today, even though it no longer generates power for the irrigation system.

Around 1890, the Brown family added a monument that became a landmark in the cemetery. It was the tallest monument in the entire cemetery and featured a life-sized female figure clad in classical robes with her right hand raised toward heaven and a large cross tucked under her left arm. Only one other burial accompanied the monument, that of William Brown, brother of wealthy farmer Thomas Brown. William Brown never married and lived and worked on his brother's large farm until his death in 1898. William was a Civil War Veteran, enlisting as a private in the 8th New York Cavalry that was also known as the Rochester Regiment. In 1864, the regiment was active in the James River area, where William was taken prisoner and held for six months before being released and mustered out of service in 1865.

Half a century later, another Brown family member active in the armed services was memorialized with an inscription carved into one side of the monument. Nicholas Van Vranken Franchot Brown was a student at Hobart College in Geneva when World War II began and he joined the Army Enlisted Reserve at the college.

[1] Subscription for Water Supply for Oatka Cemetery, May 6, 1889. Oatka Cemetery Association Records.

The reserve was called to active duty in 1943. He served as a rifleman in the 78th Infantry Division until he was killed in action on January 10, 1945 and buried overseas in the Netherland American Cemetery. He was a grand nephew of William Brown and his parents, Eugene and Rubegale Brown, were buried in the adjacent lot (#20).

Several plots nearby the Brown family featured Celtic crosses, a form that appeared in American cemeteries in the 1890s and in the early twentieth century in communities with a strong Celtic heritage. The cross was believed to be a symbol of eternity depicted by a large ring running through the arms of the cross. Decorations often included intricate interwoven designs. Many of the earliest settlers in the town of Wheatland came from Scotland and their descendents embraced this heritage by using a Celtic cross as a family monument. A large, granite cross with an elaborate wreath marked the plot occupied by family members of Dyer Dayton Stanley (D.D.S.) Brown (1819-1887), who was elected the first president of the Oatka Cemetery Association. One of Scottsville's most prominent citizens, he served as the Scottsville postmaster in 1852, Monroe County clerk from 1858-60, and was a member of the committee that officially nominated Abraham Lincoln as a candidate for president of the United States at the Republican National Convention of 1860. He was also owner and publisher of the *Rochester Daily Democrat* newspaper from 1865-70 and a director of the Rochester and State Line Railroad.

Another Brown family Celtic cross included the word "mizpah" to symbolize the separation of a husband and wife by death. L. Adell Franklin predeceased her husband, Judge Selden S. Brown, in 1912. Her granite cross featured an intertwined endless knot and stylized lettering that reflected the Arts and Crafts tradition of the early twentieth century. Another Celtic cross with intertwined patterns was placed in plot #14 for Elizabeth S. Brown. It was also lower in height with the cross resting directly on the shouldered portion of the marker. The marker has no inscribed dates and is presumed to be the marker for Judge Selden's second wife.

Perhaps the most spectacular Celtic cross erected was the Fraser-Miller monument in plot #22. It memorialized another important family in Scottsville, that of Romanta Tillotson Miller (1843-1928) and his wife Etta Fraser Miller **(**1845-1927).[2] Their children each had separate small markers around the main monument. One of their sons, R.T. Miller, Jr. (1867-1958), was a well-known Chicago philanthropist who donated funds to the Scottsville Improvement Society to buy a building which later became the Scottsville Free Library. He also paid for the substantial marker made from sandstone. The very top of the cross resembles a church roof. The heart of the cross featured highly stylized religious Alpha and Omega letters with a carved Cross of Christ further down the stem of the cross. Intertwined loops, cords and knots decorated most of the face of the stone.

[2] See Romanta Miller House National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 2013.

The pedestal portion of the base had a carved inscription of a bible verse from Isaiah: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee.” The family members were descendants of William Fraser, who emigrated from Inverness, Scotland in 1804. Etta Fraser Miller’s father, James Fraser, was one of Wheatland’s pioneer settlers.

Plot #86 contained another Miller family monument, this time for Myron (1835-1890) and Emma Halbert Miller (1840-1926), which took the form of a tree trunk with limbs cut off, a common form found in many late nineteenth century cemeteries. The cut down tree symbolized the end of the family line with that generation. The cast-stone marker depicted a tree trunk with ferns at the base. Wrapped around the top of the trunk was another cut off branch and behind the trunk are three smaller logs (“Father”, “Mother”, “Elbert”) with drapery, signifying sorrow or mourning. The logs flanked a square planter supported by a small trunk. Myron died at age 55; his wife, Emma died 36 years later and their only son, Elbert, followed in 1939. Myron Miller was a founding trustee of the Oatka Cemetery Association and Elbert Miller was the longtime publisher of the local Scottsville newspaper.

Other common nineteenth-century funerary symbols included the obelisk, a classical symbol of mourning that became popular in the late eighteenth century and carried over into the nineteenth. Other common symbols were broken columns for a life cut short and urns, a classical Greek and Roman receptacle for containing cremated remains (another symbol of death). Sheep and lambs commonly depicted the death of a child, especially infants, signifying innocence, indicated by the marker for the infant son of John and Mary Herrington (plot #320) or that of Elizabeth Hall (plot #207), who died in 1853 at the age of one year and twelve days.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, granite stones became popular due to their durability and ability to be ornately decorated. The family marker (plot #116) for businessman George E. Slocum (1824-1906) was characteristic of this type of decorative work, with a polished granite surface with an incised decorative border of flowers around the top of the monument and a prominent letter S. The entire marker rested on a rock-faced base. Slocum was a founding member of the Oatka Cemetery Association. In 1881, he sold an acre of land to the Scottsville Cemetery for its expansion and after the association was formed, he served as its treasurer. Slocum settled in Scottsville in 1849, starting out as a tinsmith and eventually opened a hardware store. He also invested in the Scottsville Agricultural Works, which made wagons, carriages and farm implements that he sold at his store. Slocum was a founder of the Scottsville Literary Society and researched and wrote a 1908 history of the town of Wheatland. His monument (plot #116) was made of polished granite resting on a rock-faced base and decorated with an incised decorative border of flowers around the top of the monument and a prominent letter S.

Other village notables buried in the cemetery included Isaac Salyerds (1850-1932), also a founding trustee of the Oatka Cemetery Association and builder of the Salyerd Building in the village (#1-3 Main Street), a grocery and meat market. Dr. Freeman Edson (1791-1883) was a nephew of Isaac Scott, and served as Scottsville's first postmaster. He was also a school commissioner, railroad stockholder, and village medical doctor for 70 years. Carl Schmidt (1894-1988) was a noted architect, historian, artist, and author of fourteen books on the architecture of the region. He was buried in plot #418.

**Conclusion:**

Still an active cemetery, the Oatka Cemetery is an excellent example of two different examples of cemetery types adopted by the local community and the caretakers of the cemetery. The result was the juxtaposition of an early nineteenth settlement burial ground era with a late nineteenth/early twentieth century lawn park cemetery. Through planning and design, the two were combined to provide one, almost seamless property on a large, open and relatively flat landscape. The improved cemetery also included important improvements such as roadways, a windmill and a decorative iron fence. As tastes and attitudes toward death changed, so did burial practices, providing information about the various members of the town through the location and size of family plots, arrangement of individual burials and marker decoration. The cemetery retains a high degree of integrity. Its value to the community was underscored when the association replaced the lost inscription of the Isaac Scott marker with an additional, permanent metal marker. The association continues to carefully maintain the property for its members and for the community as a whole.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

"Articles of Incorporation." *Rochester Union & Advertiser,* 29 March 1883, 2-c4.

Field, Florence A. "Records of Burials Compiled from the Burial Book of Oatka Cemetery and Gravestone Inscriptions, Scottsville, NY." 1983. Available online at http://mcnygenealogy.com/cem/index.htm#whe .

Gilbert, Catherine and Barbara Chapman. *Images of America: Wheatland*. Arcadia Publishing, 2008.

*Historic Preservation Report: Wheatland/Scottsville/Mumford*. Reconnaissance Level Survey, Vol. 1. Rochester, NY: The Landmark Society of Western New York, 2003.

Landmark Society of Western New York historical files, Rochester, New York.

Oatka Cemetery Association maps (1884, pre-1905, 1909) and archives. Town of Wheatland, Scottsville, NY.

"Oatka Cemetery Improvements." *Caledonia Era*, 1 August 1906, 1-c2.

"Our Solider Dead." *Scottsville Bee,* 27 May 1910, 1-c3.

"Permanent Fund Larger than One Year Ago." *Scottsville Bee,* 16 May 1917, 1-c2.

Pike, Martha V and Janice Gray Armstrong. *A Time to Mourn: Expressions of Grief in Nineteenth Century America.* Stony Brook, NY: The Museums at Stony Brook, 1980.

Reisem, Richard. *Buried Treasures in Mount Hope Cemetery, Rochester, New York; A Pictorial Field Guide.* Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, Rochester, NY 2002.

"Scottsville Loses One of Her Honored Citizens." *Scottsville Bee,* 12 November 1906, 1-c2.

Slocum, George E. *Wheatland, Monroe County, New York: A Brief Sketch of its History.* Scottsville, NY: Isaac Van Hooser, 1908 (reprint).

Schmidt, Carl F. *History of the Town of Wheatland*. Rochester, NY 1953.

Sloane, David Charles. *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History.* Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

Oral History interviews:

Leroy, Richard. Member of the Oatka Cemetery Association. General information on the Oatka cemetery, 2011.

Conrad, Nancy Jo. Secretary of the Oatka Cemetery Association, 2011.

Oatka Cemetery
Name of Property

Monroe County, NY
County and State

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

____preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
____previously listed in the National Register
____previously determined eligible by the National Register
____designated a National Historic Landmark
____recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
____recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
____recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

**Primary location of additional data:**

____State Historic Preservation Office
____Other State agency
____Federal agency
____Local government
____University
__X__Other
Name of repository: **Oatka Cemetery Association**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** ±9.94 acres
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | Zone | Easting | Northing | | Zone | Easting | Northing |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 18N | 274458 | 4766005 | 3 | | | |
| 2 | | | | 4 | | | |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

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

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary is the same as for the period of significance.

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ann Parks (Preservation Consultant) and Virginia L. Bartos, Ph.D., (NYS OPRHP)
organization _____ date March 2011
street & number 103 Loud Road telephone N/A
city or town Fairport state NY zip code 14450
e-mail annparks@frontiernet.net

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Oatka Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Wheatland/Scottsville

County: Monroe State: New York

Photographer: Ann Parks

Date Photographed: 29 September 2010

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

0001 of 0022. View from road looking southwest toward oldest portion of cemetery.
0002 of 0022. View from road at east entrance, looking southwest.
0003 of 0022. Newer east section of cemetery looking southwest and non contributing garage.
0004 of 0022. View of remnant of center road, north end of cemetery looking south.
0005 of 0022. Carpenter family burials in northwest (older) section of cemetery, view looking northeast.
0006 of 0022. North central section of cemetery, view looking northeast.
0007 of 0022. Northwest section of cemetery, view looking north.
0008 of 0022. Herrington stone, view looking west.
0009 of 0022. Isaac Scott marker, northwest section of cemetery, view looking northeast.
0010 of 0022. Central section of cemetery along Scottsville-Mumford Road, looking northeast.
0011 of 0022. South central section of cemetery, view looking southeast.
0012 of 0022. Windmill at south end of ring road, view looking south.
0013 of 0022. Brown family monument, plot # 31.
0014 of 0022. Celtic Crosses on Brown family plot # 63.
0015 of 0022. Celtic Cross on Brown family plot #14.
0016 of 0022. Northeast “newer” section of cemetery, looking northwest.
0017 of 0022. Fraser-Miller Celtic Cross.
0018 of 0022. Myron Miller monument.
0019 of 0022. Slocum monument.
0020 of 0022. Memorial inscription on base of Brown monument (plot #31).
0021 of 0022. East (newer) side of cemetery, view looking northeast from end of ring road.
0022 of 0022. View of east side of cemetery, view looking southeast.

**Property Owner:**

Oatka Cemetery
Name of Property

Monroe County, NY
County and State

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

name N/A

street & number _____ telephone _____

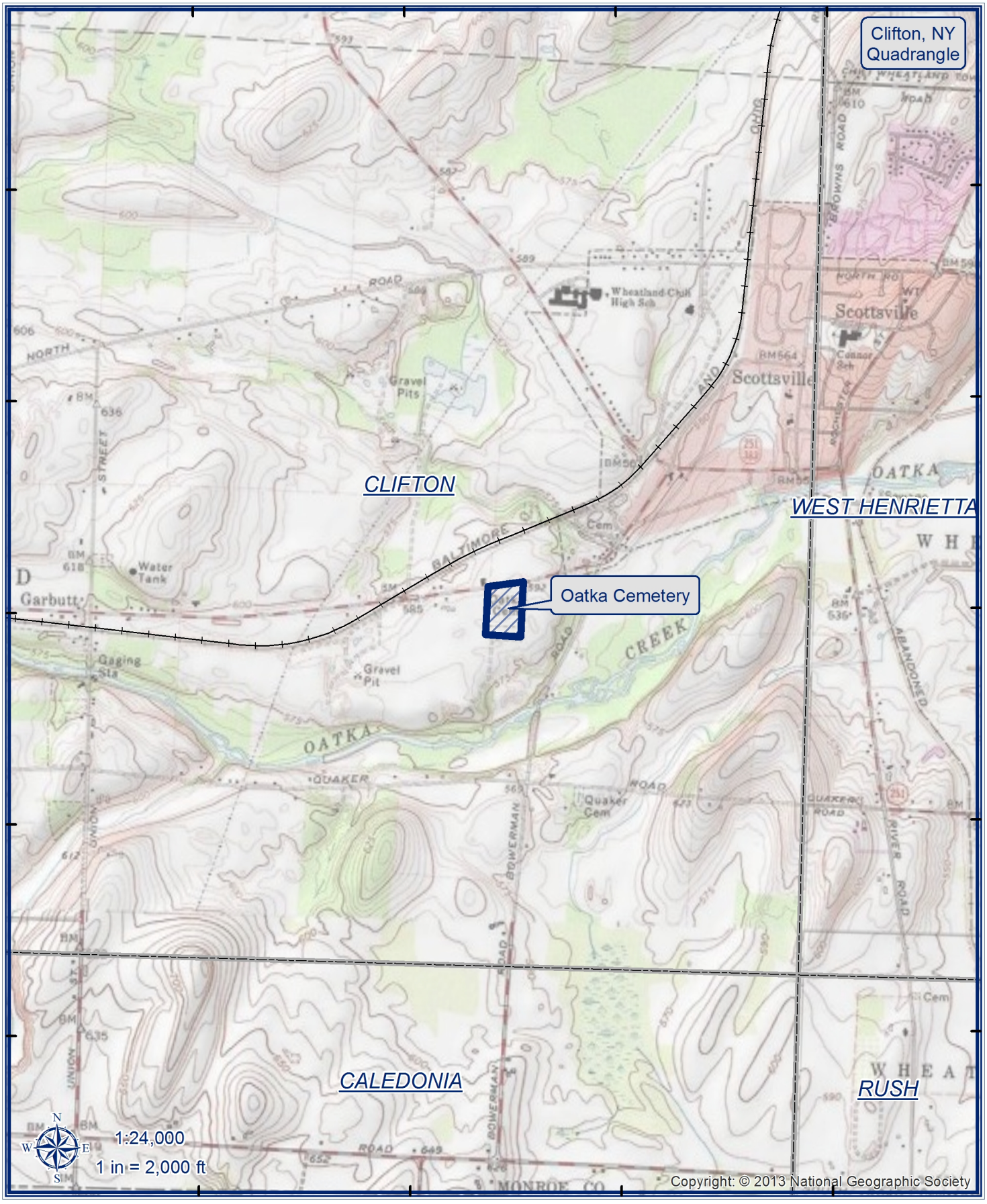
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement**: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

# Oatka Cemetery
## Wheatland, Monroe Co., NY

*411 Scottsville-Mumford Rd.(SR 383)*
*Scottsville, NY 14546*

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*Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N*
*Projection: Transverse Mercator*
*Datum: North American 1983*
*Units: Meter*

0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

Oatka Cemetery

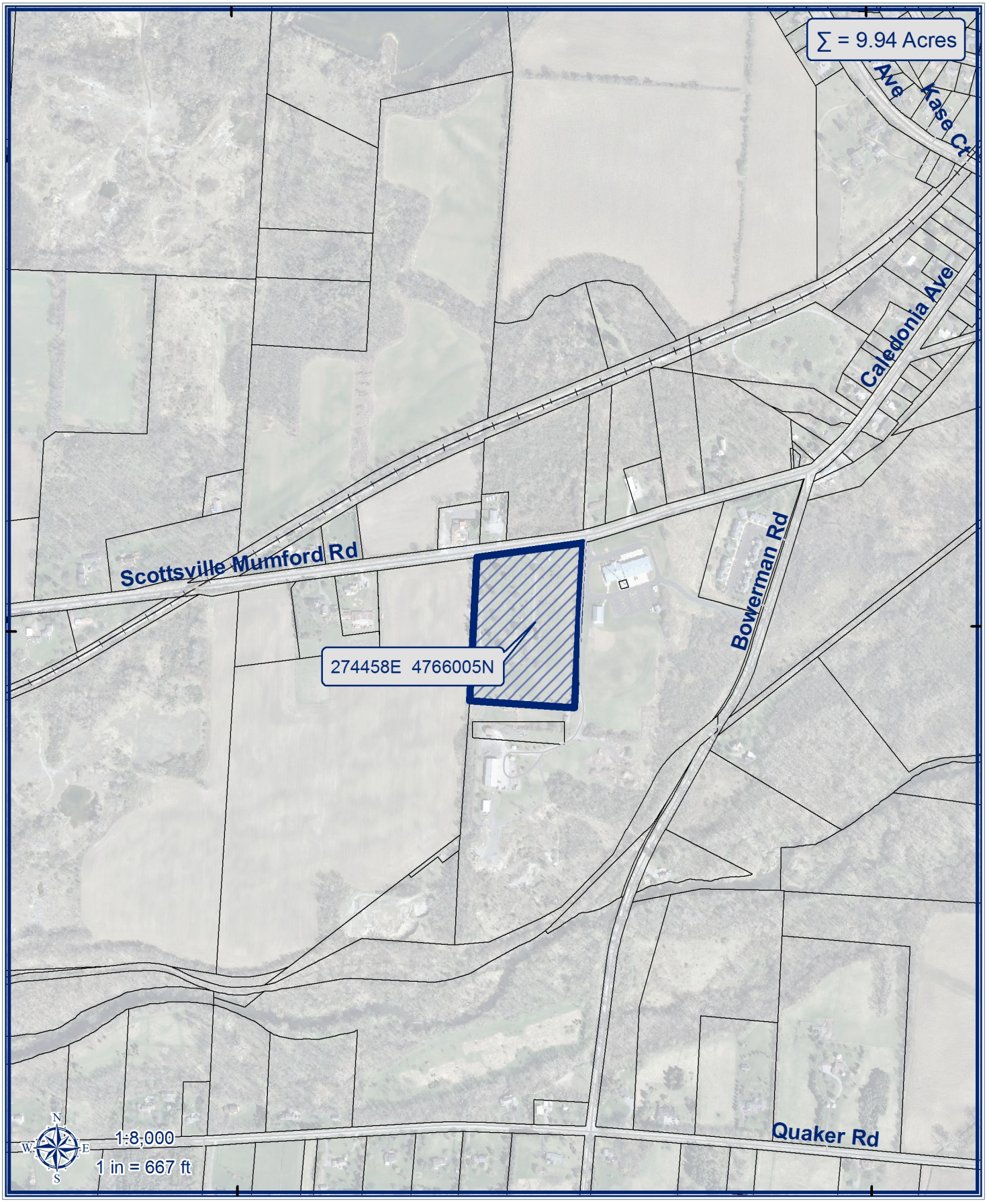
USGS quad index

*Tax Parcel Data:*
*Monroe Co. RPS*
*http://www.monroecounty.gov*

OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE

# Oatka Cemetery
# Wheatland, Monroe Co., NY

*411 Scottsville-Mumford Rd.(SR 383)*
*Scottsville, NY 14546*




*Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N*
*Projection: Transverse Mercator*
*Datum: North American 1983*
*Units: Meter*

Feet
0 255 510 1,020

Oatka Cemetery

*Tax Parcel Data:*
*Monroe Co. RPS*
*http://www.monroecounty.gov*

OFFICE OF PARKS · RECREATION · HISTORIC PRESERVATION
NEW YORK STATE

NO PLANTING FLOWERS
IN GROUND PLEASE.
NO POTS OR CONTAINERS
OF ANY KIND ON GRAVES.
URNS AND CROCKS ONLY.
BY ORDER OF
THE CEMETERY BOARD

PETTIS
MARLOWE

IRA CARPENTER
wife of
IRA CARPENTER
1812 - 18

GEORGE R. HALL
MURDERED
Dec. 8. 1849.
AGED 36 YRS.

EARL
INFANT SON OF
JOHN & MARY
HERRINGTON
910

LYDIA
ISAAC SCOTT
DEY
IN MEMORY OF
ISAAC SCOTT
HUSBAND OF
LYDIA SCOTT
WHO DIED JUNE 2
1818 IN THE 78
YEAR OF HIS AGE

CURTIS
SLOCUM

BURRELL

BROWN

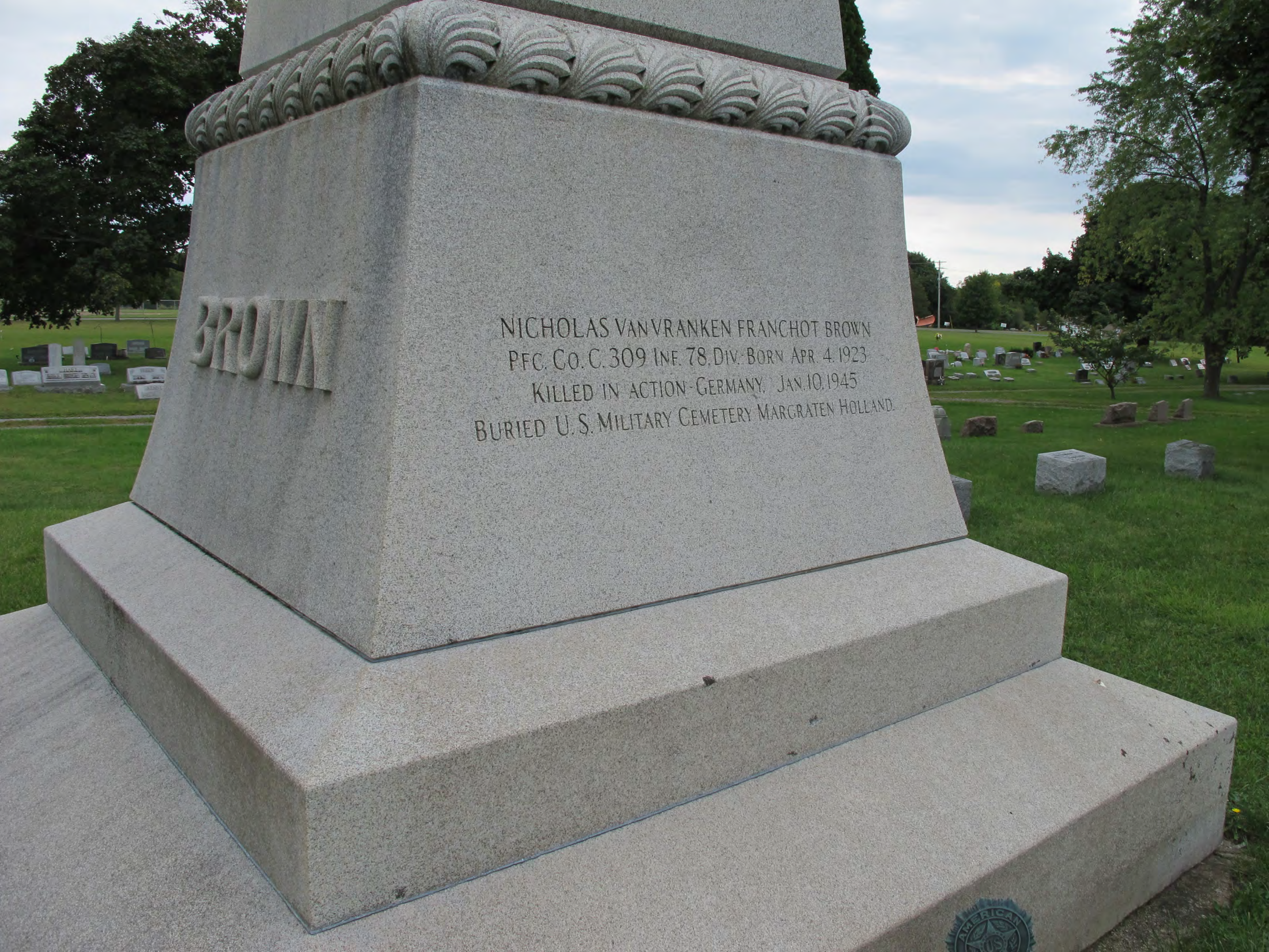
BROWN
BOSWELL
RICHARD K. LEROY
1943

KING BROWN
1886 — 1945
HIS WIFE
ANNIS M. BROWN
1885 — 1972
OLIVE G. BROWN
1909 — 1990

ASKIN

PEACE WHOSE MIND

GEORGE ENGS SLOCUM
1824—1906
LYDIA FORT SLOCUM
1829—1904
SLOCUM


BROWN
NICHOLAS VANVRANKEN FRANCHOT BROWN
PFC. CO. C. 309 INF. 78. DIV. BORN APR. 4. 1923
KILLED IN ACTION-GERMANY, JAN. 10. 1945
BURIED U. S. MILITARY CEMETERY MARGRATEN HOLLAND.