

V. THE TOWNS AND THEIR SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The nine townships of Yates County display an impressive degree of scenic landscape and natural resource variation from north to south, east to west. Each one has a unique landscape character and convergence of land uses and natural features which, together, contribute to its own quality of place. In this section, each town of Yates County is introduced, followed by a description of its scenic and natural resources. This is preceded by a general discussion of what constitutes a scenic resource, how one goes about evaluating "scenery" and a brief description of the methodology and process used in the Yates County Scenic Resource Inventory. Geographic data categories and the computer-generated natural resource maps which were produced in the project, are also described in this section of the guidebook.

What is a Scenic Resource?

The notion of a scenic resource involves developing an understanding of certain issues regarding the larger rural landscape in visual, spatial terms. The collective landscape of rural America contains an infinite spectrum of elements with origins both natural and artificial. In a state of constant flux, its patterns, textures and colors change with the seasons, amending the matrix of visual and spatial elements. The underlying landform represents a geologic and topographic foundation over which the sum of human activity has accumulated through the course of centuries. A vast sustainable medium, the landscape governs the rhythms and cycles of all living creatures.

Landscape historian J.B. Jackson refers to landscape as "a composition of man-made spaces on the land", indicating a distinction between landscape and wilderness, where the latter contains only the systems of the natural world to the exclusion of those of the human world. In his definition, the interaction between man and land is a critical aspect of "landscape". This concept was further articulated by John R.

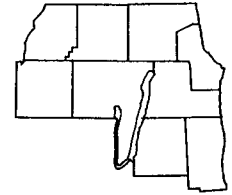
The interaction between nature and human activity begins to define the essence of a rural landscape.

Stilgoe in *Common Landscapes of America*. For Stilgoe, landscape is the realm of

shared influence where nature and artifice merge, where the natural is tamed by the human and where the human is mellowed by the natural.

A landscape happens not by chance but by contrivance, by premeditation, by design; a forest or swamp or prairie no more constitutes a landscape

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than does a chain of mountains. (Stilgoe, 1982).

So in both of these references it is not nature alone, but the interaction or *common ground* between nature and human activity that begins to define the essence of a rural landscape.

This common ground, agrarian and pastoral, has appeared in literature, music and art throughout the history of civilization. It has existed as the Eden of Biblical Times, the Arcadia and Elysium of antiquity and the paradise of the Middle Ages. It once included the quiet knoll where the shepherds of classical literature played their "rustic flutes" while the flocks grazed contently. The pastoral landscape had inspired the paintings of the French Impressionists and the misty piano concertos of Debussy and it continues to inspire the inhabitants of our age. With the complexities of life, increasing urbanization and depletion of vital natural resources at the threshold of a new century, such a refuge, an *arcadia*, will become even more valued.

Judgements were made about which components, taken together, form a scenic vista.

Although *arcadia* has existed primarily as a theoretical concept and iconographic place in literature, there are actual landscapes which exhibit that rare convergence of elements. In New York State, the epitome of such a realm is the valley and hill country of the Finger Lakes. Within this region, the area encompassed by Yates County is unmatched in its rich beauty and its striking resemblance to the bucolic descriptions of Virgil and Homer.

Our surroundings are experienced primarily through the visual sense. When we look upon the features of a landscape, we are experiencing *scenery*. That which is *scenic* is said to possess exceptional or beautiful scenery. The bundle of such exceptional places in a particular region can be described as the *scenic resource* of that area. The following section of this

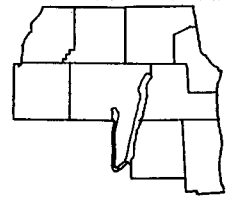
publication contains the product of a detailed analysis and investigation into the scenic resources of Yates County.

The Scenic Resource Study

The process of documenting and evaluating the scenic resources in Yates County involved field data-gathering through "windshield surveys" and interpretation or judgments about various components which together form a scenic vista. In each of the nine towns, a local representative, frequently a long-time resident of the area, was consulted. In this way, the cultural values of the resident population have become an integral part of the process and product of this scenic inventory.

Initially, seven general criteria were identified in the project for assessing scenic resources. These were gleaned from other scenic resource studies, including the U.S. Soil Conservation Service Scenic Assessment Program of the early 80's, adapted to the Yates County context.

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Views/Vistas from travel corridors — what is seen and how often; near versus distant views.

Unique Character of Landforms — visual congruency, height, profile, texture and scale

Unique Landscape Elements — rare to ordinary

Countryside Structure — edges, enclosures, openness

Scenic Resource Meaning — history, symbolic value, educational value

Fragility — capacity to absorb visual change

Fitness — human care versus dereliction, maintenance

The specific landscape components that were sought in the scenic inventory are listed below. The "publicness" of the view, including view accessibility and frequency, was factored into the assessment. Outstanding scenic resources were represented by unique single components as well as the convergence of several components.

LANDFORM

- Level to gently sloping hills
- Rolling hills of moderate height with moderate-to-steep slopes
- Prominent landmark hills
- North-south U-shaped glacial valleys
- East-West V-shaped gorges
- Fan-shaped alluvial deltas

VEGETATION

I. Non-crop:

- Mixed deciduous/coniferous forest
- Small woodlots
- Hedgerows
- Wetland/swamps
- Conifer plantations
- Object trees

II. Crop:

- Vineyards
- Orchards
- Vegetable crops
- Grass/Grain crops
- Pastureland with farm animals

WATER

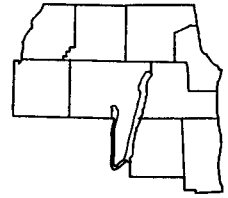
- Major lakes
- Rivers
- Streams
- Waterfalls
- Farm ponds

HUMAN ACTIVITY

- Picturesque settlement areas
- Historic/contextual architectural elements
- Compatible/integral country roads
- Old rail lines

From the "windshield survey" the points, districts and corridors of superior visual quality were documented on field maps, along with notes and photographs depicting the character and expanse of each view. In addition, the maps delineated the significant landform in each township, as steep topography functions as a primary factor in scenery either as a place to view from (such as a promontory or hilltop) or the receiver of one's view (a distant hillside). A delineation of the most dramatic topographic relief for each town thus illustrated a scenic resource element

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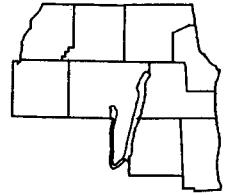


worthy of consideration and protection.

Areas which encompass several view points or a corridor of high visual quality were studied with respect to the character and sensitivity of the foreground, middle and distant ground.

Once the scenic data had been collected and recorded on-site and panoramic photo-sweeps processed, the information was then assembled and analyzed in the studio to generate district delineations within and from which scenic vistas were exceptional. Within these districts, individual point locations of highest scenic value were noted along with historic building and site designations provided by the Yates County Historian, which were documented on the maps and number-referenced to a list.

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Computer-Generated Resource Maps

In addition to the scenic resource inventory, several categories of geographically-reference area resource data were mapped and digitized on an ARC/INFO computer graphics mapping system. Three computer resource maps (at 1"=2000' in full color separation) were generated for each town containing the following area resource information.

Computer Map One: Steep slopes of 15% and greater over a continuous running distance of 500'; publically owned lands including parks, wildlife management areas and other public open spaces and preserves; classified wetlands; surface water, rivers and streams; cemeteries; roads and municipal boundaries.

Computer Map Two: Forestlands of 5 acres and larger; prime agricultural lands; Open and semi-open transitional fields (i.e. old pasturelands/brushlands); settlement areas: villages, hamlets, linear places,

crossroads, lakeshore residential, highway commercial, industrial, institutional.

Computer Map Three: Road system with road names and public water and sewer service areas.

Primary sources of information included Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

maps of wetlands 12.4 acres and larger, 1985 aerial photographs at a scale of 1" = 1000' and New York State Department of Transportation 1977 planimetric/topographic "strip" maps at 1" = 2000' based on the USGS quadrangles.

Some of these data categories (like steep slopes, wetlands and prime agricultural land) clustered into protection oriented groupings or critically sensitive resources that need to be guarded when considering development propositions in the future. Other data clusters indicated "receiver" groupings, or resources that are more akin

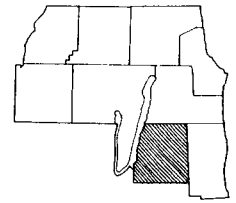
to accommodating development such as the existing settlement areas and transitional fields. The fundamental characteristics of these resources is described in the next section of this report, Part VI, Growth Management Districts.

Three computer resource maps were generated for each of the nine towns in Yates County.

Each town will now be introduced followed by a summary of its scenic and natural

resources. These have been keyed to planimetric and photographic representations of the most important vistas, scenic districts and historic and natural resources in each town.

AUTHOR'S CORRECTION
All graphic map scales in Chapter V and Appendix are labeled incorrectly and should read 7000 (not 700) feet.



BARRINGTON

The land in Barrington is made up of a matrix of sloping hills and valleys.

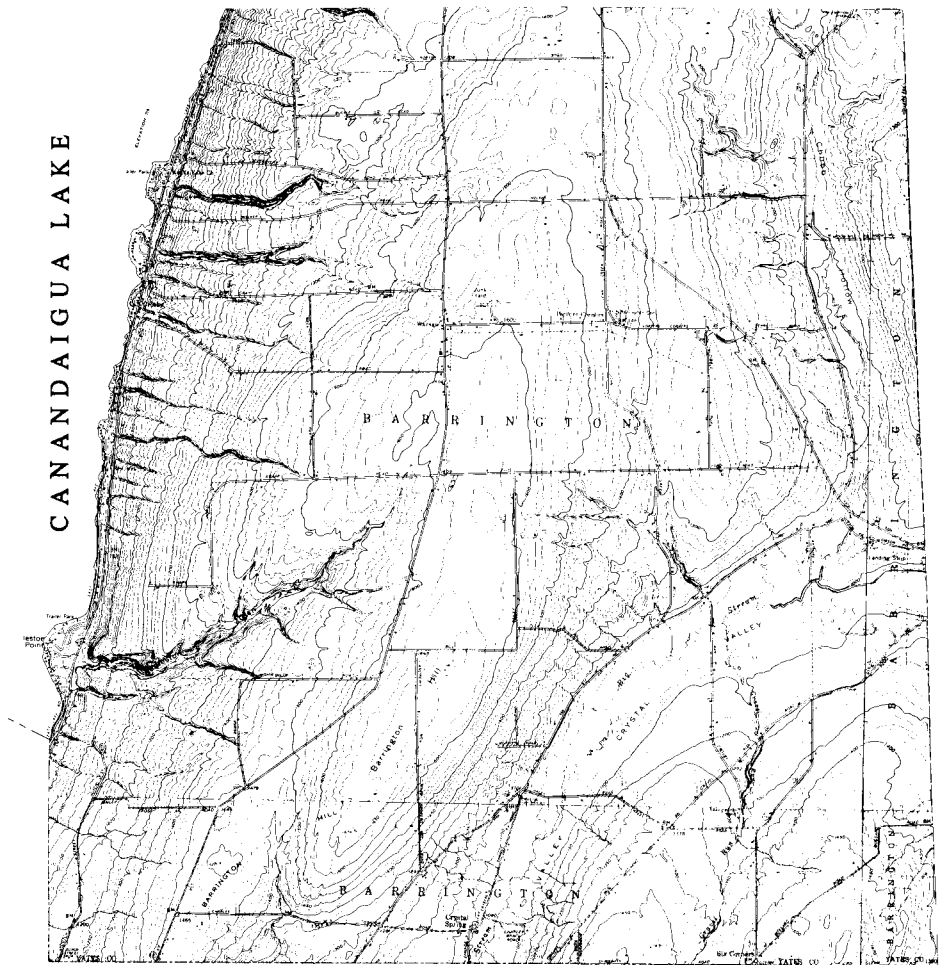
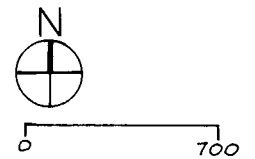
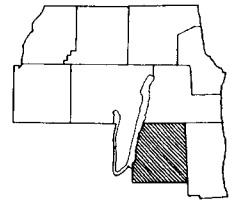


Figure 12. Town of Barrington Existing Conditions Map.



Barrington



THE NINE TOWNS OF YATES COUNTY

BARRINGTON

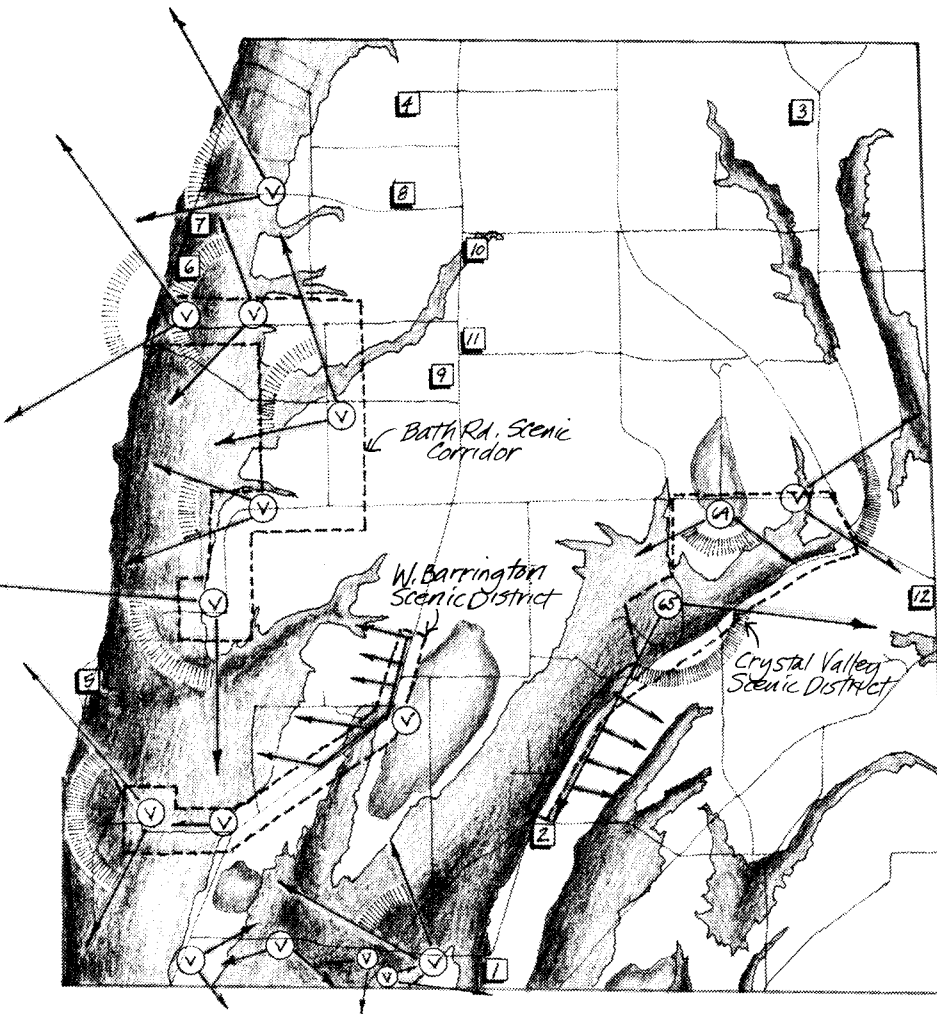


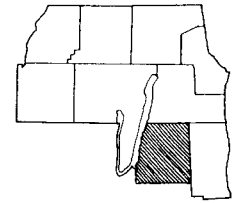
Figure 13. Town of Barrington Scenic Resources Map. Views/vistas are indicated with arrows and *V*, scenic districts are in dashed lines, slope structure shaded, and historic sites are numbered in the boxes and coded to a listing for each town.

The overall character of Barrington is pervasively rural.

The Town of Barrington was originally established in 1822 as part of Steuben County. With the creation of Yates County in 1823, Barrington was eventually annexed to become a part of Yates County in January of 1826. Located in the south central portion of the county, Barrington covers approximately 37.4 square miles or about 23,957 acres. This roughly 6 x 6 1/2 mile town accounts for about 9% of the county's total land area. The Town is bordered by Keuka Lake to the west, Milo to the north, Starkey to the east, Schuyler County to the south and a small segment of Steuben County on the southwest corner.

The land in Barrington is made up of a matrix of sloping hills and valleys. In the central and western sections of the town, many spectacular views of both Keuka Lake and Bluff Point can be seen. To the east are two valleys, Chubb Hollow and

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Crystal Valley which direct water into the Big Stream, flowing east into Seneca Lake. The land elevation above sea level varies from a low of 715 feet at Keuka Lake to a high of 1674 feet at Barrington Hill.

The major land uses in the town are comprised of forest and agricultural based activities. Forestlands occupy over 50% of the town's land area. Much of the remaining agricultural land is in transition and significant portions are being reclaimed as woodlots and forest. The active agricultural lands are used as cropland, pastureland and vineyards.

Along with the Town of Italy, Barrington is one of the least developed and populated towns in Yates County at approximately 1,090 permanent residents, a population figure which reflects a 17% increase from 1970-80.

Years ago, Barrington was known for its mineral springs and was a popular resort destination with a large hotel and auxiliary facilities. Today, not much remains of this

former community in the small hamlet of Crystal Springs, although a modest commercial springwater operation still exists. The only present-day hamlet in Barrington is Warsaw, a very small settlement which is located roughly in the geographic center of the township. The largest concentrations of seasonal and year-round residents can be found along the shoreline of Keuka Lake. However, the overall character of Barrington is pervasively rural, with most people spread out over the entire township.

Significant vistas exist from the west slope of Barrington toward Bluff Point.

Scenic Resources in Barrington

This town is characterized by a vigorous rolling topographic condition. The dominant physical landmarks include the 1600 foot high Barrington Hill, the "U"-shaped Crystal Valley (Figure 14) and Eggleston Gully which is a major "V"-shaped gorge formation that terminates with an extensive outwash delta at Eggleston Point. It is in the south part of this valley that Crystal Springs once thrived as a major resort.

Significant vistas on the west side of this town include excellent views to Bluff Point in the Town of Jerusalem and in the south-east section, from the east flank of Barrington Hill into Crystal Valley (Figure 14).

