ITHACA LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION (ILPC)

NOTICE OF MEETING & AGENDA

The regular monthly meeting of the ITHACA LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 19, 2022. This meeting will be held remotely as permitted by the Governor’s Executive Order 11, which was extended to August 13 on July 14, 2022. Virtual participation in public meetings is authorized by Part WW of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022 of New York State and Local Law 2022-05. More information, including the written procedures governing the use of videoconferencing technology, is available at http://www.cityofithaca.org/339/Boards-Committees.

For remote viewing/attendance: A live stream of the proceedings is available at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7RtJN1P_RFaFW2IVCnTrDg ; a recording will made available through the same link following the conclusion of the proceedings. If you are a member of the public wanting to observe the meeting, please simply watch the live stream. If you are an applicant or member of the public wishing to comment during the proceedings, you should both follow the meeting via the live stream and join the meeting via Zoom. (You will be placed in a waiting room until your allotted time to speak.) Members of the public wishing to be heard are strongly encouraged to register by 3:00 PM on the day of the meeting. To register, please send your name and physical address to aharris@cityofithaca.org, subject line: “ILPC Speaker Registration – July 19, 2022”. Written comments may be submitted to the aforementioned email address no later than 3:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Use the subject line: “ILPC Comments – July 2022,” and include your legal name and physical address along with your comments in the body of the email. Each comment is limited to three minutes and will be read aloud at the meeting.

To join the meeting with a smartphone, tablet, or computer go to https://zoom.us/j/92673617267?pwd=b2s3WHFFS3JMOGE0UWUxYW9YZWc3Zz09
Or dial in by telephone at +1 646 558 8656 US
Meeting ID: 926 7361 7267
Password: 010679

I. PUBLIC HEARINGS

II. PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS OF INTEREST

III. OLD BUSINESS

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
   • June 21, 2022

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

If you have a disability and would like specific accommodation in order to participate, please contact the City Clerk’s Office at 274-6570 by 12:00 p.m., no later than 2 days (not including weekends and holidays) before the meeting.
VII. ADJOURNMENT

ACCESSING ONLINE MEETING MATERIALS:
Online meeting materials, like applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness and supporting materials, are available electronically via the “Document Center” on the City web site (www.cityofithaca.org/DocumentCenter), under “Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission” > “Applications for Certificates of Appropriateness” and in the relevant address folder. Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or you need any assistance accessing the meeting materials.

"An Equal Opportunity Employer with commitment to workforce diversification."
RESOLUTION: Moved by XXX, seconded by XXX.

WHEREAS, 209 South Albany Street is located within the Henry St. John Historic District, as designated under Section 228-3 of the City of Ithaca Municipal Code in 2013, and

WHEREAS, as set forth in Section 228-4 of the Municipal Code, an Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, dated June 27, 2022, was submitted for review to the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission (ILPC) by property owner Samantha Blasbalg, including the following: (1) two narratives respectively titled Description of Proposed Change(s) and Reasons for Changes(s); (2) five photographs documenting existing conditions; (3) a photograph showing the proposed material installed at another location; (4) three renderings of the proposed material; and (5) an invoice for the proposed material that includes product specifications, and

WHEREAS, the ILPC has reviewed the entry in the annotated list of properties included within the Henry St. John Historic District for 209 South Albany Street, and the City of Ithaca's Henry St. John Historic District Summary Statement, and

WHEREAS, as stated in the narrative Description of Proposed Change(s), the project involves replacing 24 vinyl insert windows throughout the residence with Renewal by Anderson™ windows, 5 wood sash basement windows with Renewal by Anderson™ windows, and a sliding door on the rear (west) elevation, and

WHEREAS, the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness is a Type II Action under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and the City Environmental Quality Review Ordinance for which no further environmental review is required, and

WHEREAS, the applicant (has/has not) provided sufficient documentation and information to evaluate impacts of the proposal on the subject property and surrounding properties, and

WHEREAS, a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering approval of the Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness was conducted at the regularly scheduled ILPC meeting on July 19, 2022, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the ILPC has made the following findings of fact concerning the property and the proposal:

As identified in the City of Ithaca’s Henry St. John Historic District Summary Statement, the period of significance for the area now known as the Henry St. John Historic District is 1830-1932.
As indicated in the individual property entry in the annotated list of properties included within the Henry St. John Historic District, the Colonial-Revival-Style residence at 209 South Albany Street was constructed in 1927.

Constructed within the period of significance of the Henry St. John Historic District and possessing a high level of integrity, the property is a contributing element of the Henry St. John Historic District.

The property’s original 8/1 and 6/1 wood window sash were replaced with 1/1 vinyl insert units prior to the historic district’s local designation in 2013. The project under consideration includes the restoration of the original lite configuration of the windows on the primary (west) façade, including an 8/1 configuration on the first floor and 6/1 configuration on the second.

In consideration of this and all approvals of proposals for alterations, new construction, or demolition in historic districts, the ILPC must determine that the proposed exterior work will not have a substantial adverse effect on the aesthetic, historical, or architectural significance and value of either the landmark or, if the improvement is within a district, of the neighboring improvements in such district. In considering architectural and cultural value, the Commission shall consider whether the proposed change is consistent with the historic value and the spirit of the architectural style of the landmark or district in accordance with Section 228-6 of the Municipal Code. In making this determination, the Commission is guided by the principles set forth in Section 228-6B of the Municipal Code, as further elaborated in Section 228-6C, and by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, and in this case specifically the following principles and Standards:

Principle #2 The historic features of a property located within, and contributing to the significance of, an historic district shall be altered as little as possible and any alterations made shall be compatible with both the historic character of the individual property and the character of the district as a whole.

Standard #2 The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard #6 Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. When the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

Standard #9 New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the
property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

Vinyl Windows
With respect to Principle #2, Standard #2, and Standard #9, the replacement of the non-historic vinyl windows and siding door (will/will not) remove distinctive materials (but will/and will not) alter features and spaces that characterize the property. [If “will” describe feature or space and how it will be inappropriately altered]

Wood Sash Windows
With respect to Principle #2, Standard #2, and Standard #9, the replacement of the wood-sash basement windows (will/will not) remove distinctive materials (but will/and will not) alter features and spaces that characterize the property. [If “will” describe feature or space and how it will be inappropriately altered]

With respect to Principle #2 and Standard #6, as shown in the submitted photographs, the severity of the deterioration of the basement windows requires their replacement. The proposed new work (will/will not) match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. [if material will not match, explain why not and why that’s acceptable].

Also with respect to Principle #2, and Standard #9, the proposed windows and door (are/are not) compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of the property and its environment. [if “not”, describe qualities of the project that are not compatible and in what ways they are not ]

RESOLVED, that, based on the findings set forth above, the proposal (will/will not) have a substantial adverse effect on the aesthetic, historical, or architectural significance of the Henry St. John Historic District, as set forth in Section 228-6, and be it further,

RESOLVED, that the Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission determines that the proposal (meets/does not meet) criteria for approval under Section 228-6 of the Municipal Code, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the ILPC (approves/denies) the Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
ILPC Meeting – July 19, 2022
Resolution – RA

RECORD OF VOTE:
Moved by: 0
Seconded by: 0
In Favor: 0
Against: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0
Vacancies: 1

Notice: Failure on the part of the owner or the owner’s representative to bring to the attention of the ILPC staff any deviation from the approved plans, including but not limited to changes required by other involved agencies or that result from unforeseen circumstances as construction progresses, may result in the issuance by the Building Department of a stop work order or revocation of the building permit.
APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
Ithaca Landmarks Preservation Commission (ILPC)
Planning & Economic Development Division
City of Ithaca, 108 E. Green St., 3rd Floor, Ithaca, NY 14850
Bryan McCracken | Ph: 607-274-6555 | bmccracken@cityofithaca.org
www.cityofithaca.org/boardscommittees/ilpc/index.cfm

Date: 06/27/22 Building Permit Application # (REQUIRED): in progress
Applicant’s Name: Samantha Blasbalg Phone: 401-743-6996
Applicant’s E-Mail address (REQUIRED): BLASBALGS@GMAIL.COM
Property Address: 209 S Albany St

Owner’s Name (if different from Applicant): 
Owner’s Mailing Address: 

Proposed Work Includes (check all that apply):

☐ New Construction ☐ Site Changes (paving, fencing, patios, etc.)
☐ Addition ☐ Signage
☐ Accessory Structure ☐ Demolition
☐ ALTERATION: Primary Structure ☐ ALTERATION: Accessory Structure

Submittal Requirements
All documents are to be sent to the attention of Bryan McCracken at the above address.

STAFF-LEVEL REVIEW:
Submit one (1) hardcopy and one (1) electronic copy of application and attachments. See City of Ithaca Historic District & Landmark Design Guidelines for a description of work that is eligible for this expedited review process.

ILPC REVIEW:
Submit eleven (11) hardcopies and (1) one electronic copy of application form and all attachments. Complete applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on the last Tuesday of the month, 21 days prior to the regular ILPC meeting at which the application will be reviewed. ILPC meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month.

Applications must be accompanied by thorough documentation of existing conditions and proposed changes, including (as applicable): photographs of existing conditions; site plans showing location and dimensions of proposed change; drawings or sketches showing proposed changes on each affected elevation; description of design details and materials to be used (manufacturer’s data sheets may be used); samples of proposed materials; scale drawings of any proposed signs including colors, typeface, and illumination details; historic photographs, if the intention of the project is to return a property to a documented prior condition; and a statement from a qualified contractor or design professional attesting to the physical condition of any element that is proposed for replacement due to deterioration.
**Description of Proposed Changes** (use additional sheets if necessary):

We are looking to replace all windows in our home with Renewal by Andersen windows as well as a sliding door on the back of the home. Current windows in the living space of the home are vinyl replacement windows that pre-date the creation of the historic district. The windows in the basement are original to the home, but are in a state of disrepair (more details in following section). We have chosen Renewal by Andersen because their windows most faithfully recreate the look of historic windows with modern materials and will be more aesthetic than the current windows. Attached are spec sheets for the windows as well as pictures for current windows and proposed replacements.

The scope of work with Renewal by Andersen at this time is only to replace the first floor and basement windows, but we would like for this application to also cover replacement of the upstairs windows as well, which we are planning to do next year. All windows for upstairs will be the same style (and in most cases, nearly identical size) to the double-hung windows for downstairs.

**Reasons for Proposed Changes** (use additional sheets if necessary):

For the living space of the home, the vinyl windows have reached the end of their service life. One of the windows fell inwards during operation and hit someone in the head. Rather than replace them with comparable vinyl windows which are lower quality and not in keeping with the historic district, we are hoping to replace them with Renewal by Andersen windows.

The basement windows are original, but we are hoping to replace these as well. We have electrified our home and heat with air source heat pumps. The basement windows are the last major source of air infiltration, as most of them are in such disrepair that you can see daylight around the frames. Without a good seal around these windows, they are also a vector for humid air entering the basement in the summer months. We have mold allergies in our household and have installed an industrial dehumidifier, but it works overtime since there is no way to completely close the basement windows due to their state of disrepair. We are hopeful that the Renewal by Andersen windows are sufficiently aesthetic that they will be in keeping with the Historic Commission's guidelines.
Front view of home:
View of existing window:
View of basement window:
Interior view of basement window showing light coming in from outside:
View of kitchen windows:
Example of proposed windows installed in another local home:
Proposed windows for front of house on first floor to aesthetically match the style of the windows in the top of the front door:
Proposed windows for all other double-hung windows:
Proposal for kitchen windows:
| ID# | ROOM: | SIZE: | DETAILS: | PRICE:
|-----|-------|-------|----------|--------
<p>| 101 | Room 1 | 72 W 82 3/8 H | <strong>Patio Door</strong>, Gliding, 200 Series Perma-Shield, 2 Panel, Active / Stationary, Exterior White, Interior White, <strong>Performance Calculator</strong>, Performance Data Unavailable, <strong>Glass</strong>, All Sash: Tempered High Perf. SmartSun Glass, <strong>Hardware</strong>, Anvers®, Oil Rubbed Bronze, <strong>Screen</strong>, Gliding, Full Screen, <strong>Grille Style</strong>, No Grille, <strong>Misc</strong>, Lead Safe procedure (per window over 61” wide) |  |
| 102 | Room front | 36 W 60 H | <strong>Window</strong>, Double-Hung, 1:1, Flat Sill Insert, Exterior White, Interior White, <strong>Performance Calculator</strong>, PG Rating: 25 | DP Rating: + 35 / - 35, <strong>Glass</strong>, All Sash: High Performance SmartSun Glass, No Pattern, <strong>Hardware</strong>, Oil Rubbed Bronze, Estate Finish Extra Lock, <strong>Screen</strong>, Fiberglass, Full Screen, <strong>Grille Style</strong>, Simulated Divided Light (FDL w/o spacer), <strong>Grille Pattern</strong>, Sash 1: Colonial 4w x 2h, Sash 2: No Grille, <strong>Misc</strong>, Lead Safe procedure (per window up to 60” wide) |  |
| 103 | Room front | 36 W 60 H | <strong>Window</strong>, Double-Hung, 1:1, Flat Sill Insert, Exterior White, Interior White, <strong>Performance Calculator</strong>, PG Rating: 25 | DP Rating: + 35 / - 35, <strong>Glass</strong>, All Sash: High Performance SmartSun Glass, No Pattern, <strong>Hardware</strong>, Oil Rubbed Bronze, Estate Finish Extra Lock, <strong>Screen</strong>, Fiberglass, Full Screen, <strong>Grille Style</strong>, Simulated Divided Light (FDL w/o spacer), <strong>Grille Pattern</strong>, Sash 1: Colonial 4w x 2h, Sash 2: No Grille, <strong>Misc</strong>, Lead Safe procedure (per window up to 60” wide) |  |</p>
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### Itemized Order Receipt

**DBA:** RENEWAL BY ANDERSEN OF CNY  
**Legal Name:** Solvay Glass of CNY, LLC  
**PA003807**  
**735 Erie Blvd. West | Syracuse, NY 13204**  
**Phone:** 315-422-3500 | **Fax:** 315-579-2681 | **sales@rbaofcny.com**

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- **WINDOWS:** 16  
- **PATIO DOORS:** 1  
- **SPECIALTY:** 0  
- **MISC:** 0  
- **TOTAL:** **$45,191**

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*Renewal by Andersen is committed to our customers’ safety by complying with the rules and lead-safe work practices specified by the EPA.*

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*04/18/22*
— REQUIRED PUBLIC NOTIFICATION —

Upon application for a Certificate of Appropriateness, a public notice of the proposal must be posted by the owner or owner’s representative on the property for a minimum of 10 days. This notice must remain in place until a decision to approve or deny the Certificate of Appropriateness has been made. The notice must be placed at or near the property line in the front yard, so it is be plainly visible from the street, and, in cases where a property has frontage on more than one street, an additional sign must be placed at or near the property line on any additional street frontage.

Standard signs for this purpose are available for purchase from the City of Ithaca, Division of Planning and Economic Development, at a cost of $15.00 each. Alternatively, an applicant may create their own signs, as long as the following required content is included and the signs have dimensions of at least 18”x23”:

PROPOSED EXTERIOR OR SITE ALTERATIONS TO THIS PROPERTY WILL BE REVIEWED BY THE ITHACA LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION ON [INSERT DATE], BEGINNING AT 5:30 P.M. IN [INSERT LOCATION OF MEETING]. PUBLIC COMMENT MAY BE SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE OF, OR DURING, THE ABOVE-REFERENCED PUBLIC HEARING. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: BMcCRACKEN@CITYOFITHACA.ORG, 607-274-6555.

Applicant’s Statement:

I understand incomplete applications cannot be processed and will result in delay. This application is complete to the best of my knowledge and includes the following attachments (check all that apply):

☐ photographs of existing conditions
☐ site plans showing location and dimensions of proposed change
☐ drawings or sketches showing proposed changes on each affected elevation
☐ description of design details and materials to be used
☐ samples of proposed materials
☐ scale drawings of any proposed signs, including colors, typeface, and illumination details
☐ historic photographs, if the intention of the project is to return a property to a documented prior condition
☐ statement from a qualified contractor or design professional attesting to the physical condition of any element proposed for replacement due to deterioration
☐ other (specify): ____________________________________________

Applicant’s Signature (REQUIRED): _______________________________ Date: 06-27-22

STAFF USE ONLY:

Date Received: __________________
Staff Review: ☐ yes ☐ no Approved: ☐ yes ☐ no Referred to ILPC: ☐ yes ☐ no
ILPC Review: ☐ yes ☐ no
Date of Public Hearing: ______________
Description:
209 South Albany Street is located on a small, shallow lot on the east side of the street, one lot south of West Green Street. The house and its attached garage occupy the entire width of the lot and are in close proximity to 207-209 West Green Street on the north and 211 South Albany Street on the south, with only paved driveways separating the properties.

It is a small three-bay, two-story wood frame bungalow-type house built in 1927 in a simplified Colonial Revival style. The house is square in plan with center symmetry, a rear addition, and steep side-gabled roof. A shed dormer projects from the roof and covers most of the second story of the west façade. Walls are clad in wood shingles, the foundation is parged masonry, and a brick chimney projects from the northwest section of the roof. A gabled portico with curved underside and substantial brackets covers the front door. Single 1/1 windows are located on each side of the door. On the north façade, single 1/1 windows are spaced evenly across the first story and a pair of 1/1 windows is in the gable end. An attached one-bay garage is located at the southeast corner of the house near a secondary entrance on the south façade. The garage has a single overhead door and is connected to the house by a shed roof. A narrow concrete driveway runs from the garage to the street.

Significance:
Contributing. Architecturally significant. Garage contributing and architecturally significant.
209 South Albany Street is architecturally significant as an example of a modest bungalow-type house executed in the Colonial Revival style. Its original form and massing are intact. The replacement of the original 6/1 and 8/1 windows with 1/1 windows does not have a significant impact on the integrity of the building. The garage was built at the same time as the house and is architecturally significant as an early automobile garage constructed at the same time as the house.

The house was constructed in 1927 for Leroy J. and Pearl Stevens, who purchased the property from Charles Gay. Gay subdivided his 211 South Albany Street lot to create the parcel. Leroy Stevens, who was in the taxicab and real estate business, sold the property to Isadore and Sydelle Lewis in 1930. Sydelle Lewis owned the Morris Lewis clothing store on South Cayuga Street and owned 209 South Albany Street until 1953.

Sources:


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.

1. Name of Property
   Historic name: Andrus Block/Home Dairy Building
   Other names/site number: Firebrand Books Building
   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
   (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location
   Street & number: 141-143 East State Street
   City or town: Ithaca  State: New York  County: Tompkins
   Not For Publication:  Vicinity: 

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
   I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets
   the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic
   Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I
   recommend that this property be considered significant at the following
   level(s) of significance:
   ___national      ___statewide      ___local
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   ___A      ___B      ___C      ___D

______________________________  ______________________
Signature of certifying official/Title:  Date

______________________________  ______________________
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
The Firebrand Books Building
Tompkins County, New York

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:) ___________________________

Signature of the Keeper ___________________________ Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private: [x]

Public – Local

Public – State

Public – Federal

Category of Property
The Firebrand Books Building
Tompkins County, New York

(Check only one box.)

Building(s)  x

District

Site

Structure

Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing  Noncontributing
buildings
sites
structures
objects
Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register  N/A
6. Function or Use

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

**COMMERCE/TRADE:**
- Business
- Professional
- Specialty Store
- Restaurant

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

**COMMERCE/TRADE:**
- Business
- Professional
- Under Renovation (First Story)

7. Description

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

**Late Victorian/Italianate**
____________________
____________________
____________________
____________________
____________________

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: **Stone, Wood, Brick, Metal**
Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

See Attached Continuation Sheets.

Narrative Description

See Attached Continuation Sheets.
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.)

- [ ] A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [x] 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.)

- [ ] A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- [ ] B. Removed from its original location
- [ ] C. A birthplace or grave
- [ ] D. A cemetery
- [ ] E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- [ ] F. A commemorative property
- [ ] G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
The Firebrand Books Building
Tompkins County, New York

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Social History
Literature
Commerce
Architecture

Period of Significance

1872-2002

Significant Dates

1872-1929: Andrus & Church
1929-2002: Home Dairy Cafeteria
1984-2000: Firebrand Books

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

Bereano, Nancy K.

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown
Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

See Attached Continuation Sheets.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

See Attached Continuation Sheets.
9. Major Bibliographical References

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

See Attached Continuation Sheets.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Primary location of additional data:

___ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other
   Name of repository: ________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ____________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property N/A
The Firebrand Books Building  Tompkins County, New York

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**
Datum if other than WGS84: __________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)
1. Latitude: 42.439392  Longitude: -76.497477
2. Latitude:  Longitude:
3. Latitude:  Longitude:
4. Latitude:  Longitude:

Or

**UTM References**
Datum (indicated on USGS map):

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<th>or</th>
<th>NAD 1983</th>
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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundary is indicated on the attached Tompkins County GIS Parcel Maps.

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

The boundaries were selected based on the attached Tompkins County GIS Parcel Maps.
Boundary Map 1. Tompkins County GIS Parcel Map. 143 East State Street is identified with the number 10.

Boundary Map 2. Detail of Tompkins County GIS Parcel Map. 143 East State Street is identified with the number 10.
11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Jeffry J. Iovannone
organization: Cornell University
street & number: 1635 Ellis Hollow Rd., Apt. 1
city or town: Ithaca
state: NY
zip code: 14850
e-mail: ji223@cornell.edu
telephone: 716-193-2318
date: 6/21/22

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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

• **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)
The Firebrand Books Building

Photographs
Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: 143 East State Street

City or Vicinity: Ithaca

County: Tompkins State: New York

Photographer: Jeffry J. Iovannone

Date Photographed: 3/8/22

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 5: View of 143 East State Street looking southwest down The Commons towards Cayuga Street.

2 of 5: North elevation (front) view of 143 East State Street, looking south.

3 of 5: East elevation view of 143 East State St., looking southwest.

4 of 5: East elevation first story window, looking west.

5 of 5: South elevation view of 143 East State Street, looking northwest.
Photo 1. View of 143 East State Street looking southwest down The Commons towards Cayuga Street.
Photo 2. North elevation (front) view of 143 East State Street, looking south.
The Firebrand Books Building  
Tompkins County, New York

Photo 3. East elevation view of 143 East State St., looking southwest.
Photo 4. East elevation first story window, looking west.
Photo 5. South elevation view of 143 East State Street, looking northwest.
The Firebrand Books Building, Tompkins County, New York

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations 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.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.
CONTINUATION SHEETS

The Firebrand Books Building (143 East State Street), Tompkins County, Ithaca, New York

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

143 East State Street, located in The Commons, a pedestrian mall in the heart of Ithaca, New York’s downtown commercial district, is a late-nineteenth century commercial brick row building with Italianate influence (Figure 1). It was built in 1872 as a bookseller and printer for the Ithaca-based firm Andrus & Church. The building is located on the south side of the section of East State Street that comprises The Commons (east-west from Tioga Street to Cayuga Street). The principal elevation faces north on East State Street and is representative of Ithaca’s commercial and cultural growth from the late-nineteenth to the early twentieth century as, due to the founding of Cornell University, Ithaca transformed from a rural village into a center of higher education. As one of the most prominent buildings on East State Street, the property is also representative of the transformation of The Commons into a pedestrian mall and center of recreational activity in 1974, the first of its kind in New York State.

Over its lifespan, the building has alternately been known as the Andrus Block and the Home Dairy Building. The second floor was also home to Firebrand Books, a nationally-recognized lesbian and feminist press, from 1984 to 2000. The building embodies the characteristics of a late-nineteenth-century Italianate commercial row building—in particular, the first story storefront—and also contains distinctive architectural features that illustrate the prominence of the bookselling and printing industry in Ithaca. 143 East State Street has symmetrical form and massing and is four stories high with a rectangular plan. The building faces, and sits directly on, The Commons on a densely built up pedestrian mall alongside other
late-nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first-century commercial buildings (Figure 2). The Home Dairy Alley runs along the east elevation of the property, and an adjacent brick row building, 137-139 East State Street, flanks the west elevation.

The period of significance for the building is 1872 to 2002. From 1872 to 1929, the building was home to the local publishing and bookselling firm Andrus & Church. From 1929 to 2002, it housed the Home Dairy Cafeteria, a regionally-significant eatery that contributed to the growth of Ithaca’s commercial downtown and the development of The Commons. From 1984 to 2000, the office of Firebrand Books, a nationally-significant small lesbian and feminist press, was located on the second story. Consequently, in addition to the Andrus Block and the Home Dairy Building, 143 East State Street should also be known as The Firebrand Books Building. It is an intact example of a late-nineteenth century commercial brick row building, embodies distinctive characteristics of the Italianate style, and is one of the most architecturally sophisticated buildings located on The Commons.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

143 East State Street is a four-story, four-bay red brick commercial row building with masonry load bearing walls and a stone foundation. The architect is unknown. The building is in overall good-to-excellent condition and displays several distinctive characteristics of the Italianate style in addition to other decorative features. The windows are round arch single-hung sash with wood frames, keystones, vermiculated (cut with free-flowing, worm-like designs) corner stones, stone sills, and brick lintels. The first story façade of the principal, north, elevation was replaced from cast iron—a common feature of Italianate commercial buildings—to oak wood around 1929 when the property transitioned from Andrus & Church to the Home Dairy
Company (a bakery and cafeteria with locations throughout Upstate New York). The brick walls are laid in a running bond. The building has a flat roof and a metal cornice and brick corbels at the top of the north (front) elevation. 143 East State Street has two entrances that face The Commons: the first, located in the third bay, leads to the first-story retail space; the second, located in the fourth bay, leads to the rental spaces located on the upper three stories (listed under the address 141 East State Street).

**Exterior**

**North Elevation (front)**

The primary façade of 143 East State Street is the north elevation, which fronts onto The Commons (Figure 3). The property is a rectangular four-story red brick commercial row building oriented north to south. There are four bays. The main entranceway is located in the third bay and leads to the first story retail space. The secondary entrance is located in the fourth bay and leads to the rental spaces on the upper floors. The building sits on a stone foundation.

The first floor storefront has a cast-stone bulkhead and a golden oak façade that contains pilasters and a signboard. Decorative masonry quoins that are alternately incised and vermiculated articulate the corners of the building. The quoins are topped with vermiculated stone consoles and stone globes. A large, muntined, plate glass display window spans the first two bays. The transom area above the display window is composed of small, square panes of prism glass. The main entrance, located in the third bay, is set back from the façade and contains a carved wood door with a segmental arch glass pane and a stained-glass transom. The secondary entrance, located in the fourth bay, is also set back from the façade and contains a glass pane door in a wood frame and a transom window. A metal blade sign is affixed to the pilaster that
separates the primary and secondary entrances. The oak wood façade contains a gilt lettered sign that reads HOME DAIRY CO. in the frieze band area and is crowned with a metal cornice.

The second floor has four round arch single-hung sash windows representative of the Italianate style with painted wood frames, stone sills, brick lintels, keystones, and vermiculated corner stones. A belt course and a row of corbels separates the second floor from the third, and the bays are divided by brick pilasters with stone capitals. The window in the fourth bay is narrower in width than those in the first three bays.

The third floor, like the second, has four round arch single-hung sash windows with painted wood frames, stone sills, brick lintels, keystones, and vermiculated corner stones. A belt course and a row of corbels also separates the third floor from the fourth, and the bays are divided by brick pilasters with stone capitals. The window in the fourth bay is, again, narrower in width than those in the first three bays.

The fourth floor, like the second and third, has four round arch single-hung sash windows with painted wood frames, stone sills, brick lintels, keystones, and vermiculated corner stones. The bays are divided by brick pilasters. The front elevation is topped with brick corbels and a metal cornice with dentils and bracket-like consoles. The cornice is emphasized on either side by stone capitals.

East Elevation

The side, east, elevation stretches from The Commons to the rear of the property, accessible via the Home Dairy Alley (Figure 4). The brick walls of the elevation rest on an exposed stone foundation. The main four-story block contains five bays. The rear addition is one story and contains no openings.
The first floor contains two large two-over-two round arch windows with stone sills, transoms, and painted wood frames in the first and third bays (Figure 5). A side round-arch entranceway is located in the fifth bay and contains a carved wood door with a fan lite set back from the Home Dairy Alley. At present, the entrance is covered with a metal gate. The second, third, and fourth floors all contain five round arch two-over-two, single-hung sash windows with painted wood frames, brick lintels, and stone sills. The elevation is topped with a simple stone cornice that spans the length of the building’s east side.

**South Elevation (rear)**

The rear, south, elevation is four stories and has three bays (Figure 6). The first floor contains a one-story addition constructed of red brick laid in a running bond. The addition is topped with metal flashing at the roofline.

The second, third, and fourth floors each contain three round arch two-over-two, single-hung sash windows with painted wood frames, brick lintels, and stone sills. A metal fire escape is attached to the building on the third and fourth floors. The rear elevation has a metal snow-catcher at the roofline and is crowned with simple stone capitals on each side.

**West Elevation**

The side, west, elevation flanks the adjacent property located at 137-139 East State Street. This three-story, late-nineteenth century commercial brick row building with terracotta detailing was constructed in 1884 in the Renaissance Revival style. It was historically known as the Sage Block and was designed by prominent Ithaca-based architect William Henry Miller for
Henry W. Sage, a local businessman and early trustee of Cornell University. Miller’s office was also located on the third floor (Figure 3).  


**Integrity**

143 East State Street maintains a high level of integrity and conveys its function as a prominent commercial building in downtown Ithaca, particularly one associated with printing and bookselling. It retains many of its original character defining architectural features and distinctive workmanship as a late-nineteenth century commercial brick row building with Italianate influence. Changes made to the building during the Home Dairy era—the addition of an oak wood façade and signboard with gilt lettering on the first story of the front elevation—have acquired their own significance over time. 143 East State Street clearly represents Ithaca’s transformation into an educational metropolis in the late-nineteenth century and the city’s continued association with world-class education and intellectual production.

**Statement of Significance**

The Andrus Block/Home Dairy Building, or, The Firebrand Books Building, at 143 East State Street was constructed by William Andrus, Jr. and William Andrus Church, of the prominent Ithaca-based bookselling and printing firm Andrus & Church, in 1872. Designed with distinctive characteristics of the Italianate style, in addition to other decorative features, the four-bay four-story commercial brick row building is representative of Ithaca’s expansion into a center of education, culture, printing, and publishing beginning in the late-nineteenth century.
From 1929 to 2002, it housed the Home Dairy Cafeteria, a regionally-significant eatery that contributed to the growth of Ithaca’s commercial downtown and the development of The Commons.

From 1984 to 2000, the building was also home to Firebrand Books, an award-winning lesbian and feminist press founded by Nancy K. Bereano, a local editor and activist. It is also representative of the changes in publishing and print culture in the United States from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth centuries. The building embodies the transition from male-owned publishing firms to women seizing the means of production during the Second Wave Feminist, Gay Liberation, and Women In Print movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Accordingly, 143 East State Street is significant under multiple National Register criteria.

It is first significant under Criterion A in the areas of Social History and Literature for properties “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.” The building is representative of the type of commercial property that developed during the expansion of Ithaca’s downtown from the late-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century. As the home of Firebrand Books from 1984 to 2000, it is additionally representative of the impact of the second wave feminist movement, the women in print movement, and the LGBTQ movement both locally and nationally.

The Firebrand Books Building is also significant under Criterion B for properties associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.” 143 East State Street was the business headquarters of Nancy K. Bereano, a nationally-renowned and award-winning editor, publisher, and activist. Bereano’s work as a local labor activist and advocate for anti-racism and women’s and LGBTQ rights directly connects to the mission of Firebrand Books as a small lesbian, feminist, and anti-racist press.
The building is finally significant under Criterion C for properties that “embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction… or that possesses high artistic values.” It is an excellent, representative example of a late-nineteenth century Italianate commercial row building that emerged in Ithaca’s rapidly expanding downtown. It is also one of the most architecturally distinctive buildings on The Commons, and its character-defining features convey the prominent role publishing, intellectual production, and the distribution of knowledge played in the development of Ithaca as a city.

The period of significance begins with Andrus & Church’s construction of the building in 1872 to when Home Dairy proprietors Robert and Nancy Avery sold the property in 2002. It also comprises the time Nancy K. Bereano founded Firebrand Books in 1984 to the press’s closure in 2000.

The Growth of Ithaca, New York

Ithaca, New York (population approximately 32,108), is a small city in Central New York located on the southeastern end of Lake Cayuga, the largest of the eleven Finger Lakes. The land on which the city now resides was, and remains the traditional and ancestral home of the Gayogög:hn'ę, one of the six nations of the Hodinohsö:ni. The State of New York ratified the United States Constitution in 1788, which gave the federal government sole right to negotiate with Indigenous Nations. In February of 1789, however, they continued their negotiations with individual nations, including the Gayogög:hn'ę. That same year, the Gayogög:hn'ę people ceded their territory to the State of New York save a U-shaped parcel of 100 square miles at the north

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end of Cayuga Lake and a small area on the Seneca River reserved for fishing for the price of approximately one cent per acre.\textsuperscript{4} Two thousand acres of present-day Ithaca were then purchased by Simeon DeWitt, a surveyor of Dutch ancestry.

Tompkins County was formed in 1817 from parts of Cayuga and Seneca counties, and on March 16, 1821, the State Legislature divided the township of Ulysses into the current Ulysses, Enfield, and the town of Ithaca. The village of Ithaca was incorporated on April 2, 1821, with an initial population of around 1,000 residents.\textsuperscript{5} The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 transformed Ithaca into a significant commercial area of New York State, and the opening of the Seneca-Cayuga Canal in 1828 created an important link from Tompkins County to the Erie Canal and areas west. Tompkins County was thus integrated into a broader transportation network.\textsuperscript{6}

In the late-nineteenth century, Ithaca further changed from a small rural village to an educational metropolis due to the founding of Cornell University in 1865 and Ithaca College in 1892, initially established as the Ithaca Conservatory of Music. Ezra Cornell, a native Ithacan, returned in the mid-nineteenth century after acquiring significant wealth from the telegraph business. Cornell desired to use this fortune for lasting public good. He became involved in local affairs and politics and was elected to the State Legislature. There he met Andrew Dickson White, a historian with visions of establishing a “great university.” Cornell and White worked together to secure funds from the Morrill Land Grant Act to found such a university in Ithaca. Cornell additionally contributed $500,000 to the university’s endowment and 200 acres of his farmland.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{4} Jordan, \textit{The Gayogoh:no' People in the Cayuga Lake Region}, 53-55.
\textsuperscript{5} Jane Marsh Dieckmann, \textit{A Short History of Tompkins County}, (Ithaca: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1986), 40-41.
\textsuperscript{7} Dieckmann, \textit{A Short History of Tompkins County}, 111-115.
Cornell University, founded in 1865, officially opened its doors to students in 1868. The university was also the catalyst for much residential and commercial development in downtown Ithaca to support an increasing faculty and student population. As local historian Jane Marsh Dieckmann observes: “With the expansions of Cornell University and its need for services came a rapid growth of the village… The business area developed on Aurora and State streets chiefly, extending south to Six Mile Creek.” This growth led to Ithaca reincorporating as a city in 1888. By the 1920s, the city had a well-developed downtown, and was able to support a variety of businesses and commercial ventures. Ithaca clearly became the commercial, political, and cultural center of Tompkins County.

**Development of The Commons**

State Street, the present day site of The Commons, has been the commercial center of Ithaca since its incorporation as a village in 1821. Throughout the nineteenth century, State Street’s development was impacted by a series of fires. In 1840 and 1842, major fires destroyed many of the buildings between Aurora and Tioga. In 1871, Ithaca’s largest fire to date destroyed eleven buildings on State Street, including the one formerly located at 143 East State. Several of the most distinctive buildings in downtown, including the Andrus Block and the Griffin Block (224 East State), date from the period of rebuilding that directly followed the 1871 fire. By the

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9 Dieckmann, *A Short History of Tompkins County*, 43.

10 Dieckmann, *A Short History of Tompkins County*, 51.

11 William E. Robertson, “History of Ithaca Commons” (The History Center in Tompkins County, 1988), 1-4.

1870s, the business section of the city on State and North Aurora streets was built up with large commercial blocks (such as the Andrus Block).\footnote{Dieckmann, \textit{A Short History of Tompkins County}, 45-46.}

The 1920s and the expansion of Cornell brought significant commercial development and expansion to the downtown area. By the 1950s, however, Ithacans were concerned the city’s downtown was deteriorating. In 1963, the city established the Urban Renewal Agency and ushered in an era of urban development and restoration. During this time, important historic buildings such as the Cornell Public Library and the Ithaca Hotel were demolished, thus prompting the formation of Historic Ithaca and a preservation movement within the city.\footnote{Dieckmann, \textit{A Short History of Tompkins County}, 53.}

In addition to the efforts of local preservation advocates, the Urban Renewal Agency assisted in the building of important resources such as the Rothschild’s department store building, Center Ithaca, and The Commons, a landscaped pedestrian mall located on East State Street between Cayuga and Tioga and North Tioga Street between East State and East Seneca. The concept of a downtown mall was floated during the 1960s but did not take shape until the election of Edward Conley as mayor in 1971 (Figure 7). Conley campaigned under the slogan “Make Ithaca Happen Again,” and made downtown revitalization a priority of his administration.\footnote{“Hello, 1975!,” \textit{The Ithaca Journal}, January 1, 1975.} City planners sought input from a broad range of individuals, including business owners, public agencies, and ordinary citizens. The Commons was designed by architect Anton J. Egner and Associates with Marvin Adelman as landscape architect. Modeled after the Boston Common, The Ithaca Commons was conceived to accommodate a wide variety of activities: the original design included a fountain, a children’s play area, diverse forms of seating and plantings, covered pavilions, and a modest amphitheater.\footnote{Snodderly, \textit{Ithaca and Its Past}, 21-24.}
Construction of The Commons commenced in 1974 and was completed in 1975 (Figure 8). The project was financed entirely by local funds split between the public and private sectors. At the time, it was the first pedestrian mall in New York State. The Commons was largely regarded as a creative project that revitalized Ithaca’s commercial center, and Egner and Adelman won an award for their design. Not all Ithacans were equally enthusiastic, however. Robert and Nancy Avery, owners of the Home Dairy Company at 143 East State Street, feared the construction would adversely affect their ability to remain in business. In May of 1974, the couple sought a permanent restraining order to halt construction of The Commons. They were ultimately unsuccessful, and by 1975, Nancy Avery agreed with Mayor Conley that the mall contributed to Ithaca’s downtown revitalization and the growth of local businesses. Since the 1970s, The Commons has remained the focus for downtown commercial and recreational activities.

**The Construction & History of 143 East State Street**

In 1824, William Andrus, Sr., a traveling bookseller and auctioneer from Connecticut, came to Ithaca and established a printing and bookselling business with Ebenezer Mack, a printer from Owego, New York, and the former proprietor of The Ithaca Journal, under the name Mack & Andrus. Andrus was, according to The Ithaca Journal, “one of the early settlers of Ithaca [who] played an important part in the development of the community and Cornell University.”

In 1831, Mack and Andrus purchased the three-story brick building then located at 143 East

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17 Dieckmann, *A Short History of Tompkins County*, 53-54.
20 Dieckmann, *A Short History of Tompkins County*, 54.
State Street from William B. Skidmore. In 1836, the firm became Mack, Andrus, & Woodruff, and in 1842, Mack left the firm and John Payne Gauntlett, the foreman of the bookbinding department, became a partner. Gauntlett later became the 30th President of Ithaca. The firm was then known as Andrus, Woodruff, Gauntlett, & Co. William Andrus, Jr. entered the firm in 1852.²³

The business underwent several more changes in partners and became Andrus, McChain, & Co. in 1859, and Andrus, McChain, & Lyons following the death of William Andrus, Sr. on December 20th of 1869. William Andrus, Jr. took over for his father, and upon the death of Joseph M. Lyons, William Andrus Church, the grandson of William Andrus, Sr., purchased Lyons’s interest in the firm. In 1878, George McChain and Frederick K. Andrus withdrew from the company to assume management of the Ithaca Paper Mills at Fall Creek, which had previously been part of the business. William Andrus, Jr. and William Andrus Church continued the family printing and bookselling business, and from 1878 to 1929, the firm was known as Andrus & Church.²⁴

In 1871, the original three-story brick Andrus Block was destroyed by fire and replaced in 1872 by the present building at 143 East State Street, flanked to the east by the Sprague and Wilgus blocks (both now demolished) (Figure 9).²⁵ The 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicts a four-story brick building with a narrow rectangular footprint (Figures 10 and 11). The property is designated as a bookseller. The Andrus & Church printing office is shown behind the main retail building to the southeast in a separate three-story brick building.

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Ithaca historian D. Morris Kurtz describes the first floor of the Andrus Block as “a salesroom for books, stationary, wallpaper, etc., carrying a large stock and fine assortment of everything in this line, especially publications in demand by students at the University.” Kurtz further notes that “in the rear of this building [the Andrus Block] is a three story brick structure occupied by the printing office and bindery. There are five presses in operation and a fully equipped bindery and printing office in the building.”

In the late-nineteenth century, in addition to regular books and pamphlets, Andrus & Church printed all of Cornell University’s publications including the *Cornell Review* (a monthly publication), the *Cornell Era* (a weekly publication), and the *Cornell Sun* (a daily publication).

Andrus and Church were able to finance a building with a sophisticated architectural composition and fine detailing. This evidence shows the prominence of publishing and bookselling as commercial enterprises in late-nineteenth century Ithaca.

William Andrus, Jr. died on December 18th of 1917 at the age of 80. *The Ithaca Journal* reported that “his death terminates one of the most interesting and successful business careers in the history of commercial Ithaca.” Andrus’s estate was inherited by his daughter, Florence S. Andrus, and his will requested that his business continue under the name Andrus & Church. William A. Church, with Florence S. Andrus as a silent partner, operated the business at 143 East State Street from 1917 to around 1929 before relocating to the adjacent Sprague Block (now demolished). The 1929 *Ithaca City Directory* lists Andrus & Church as located at 143 East State Street. The building was sold to Florence S. Andrus in 1929 by Church and his wife,

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27 Dieckmann, *A Short History of Tompkins County*, 201.
Luella. The 1930 *Ithaca City Directory* lists William A. Church Co., bookbinders, as located in the rear of 147-149 East State Street. Florence Andrus then leased the building. The 1930 directory lists the occupants of 143 East State Street as the Home Dairy Cafeteria, Monroe M. Sweetland (lawyer), and Harvey L. Van Pelt (physician).

The Home Diary Company, a chain of cafeteria-style restaurants and bakeries that specialized in “old-fashioned” home cooked foods, was founded by Frank E. Allen, a businessman from Pittsford, New York. By the mid-twentieth century, Allen owned 28 Home Dairy locations throughout Upstate New York and one in Pennsylvania. He later opened an additional location in St. Petersburg, Florida. The Ithaca Home Dairy, which opened on August 26th of 1929, was co-owned by Allen and brothers Emery and Leigh Howell. At this time, the original cast iron storefront, which featured an entablature and three columns that divided the display window (Figure 9), was replaced with a wood façade of golden oak and a signboard with gilt lettering. Prism glass, a popular feature of early twentieth-century storefronts, was added to the transom area above the display windows to provide better interior lighting. Significant changes were also made to the first floor interior. A cafeteria was installed and the ceilings were lowered to accommodate Home Dairy’s business (Figure 12).

In 1937, Florence Andrus willed the property to William A. Boyd, who sold it to Ethel May Duffy that same year. During the 1940s, Edgar L. Berry joined Home Dairy as a fourth partner. In 1957, Duffy and her husband, Herbert N. Peters sold the building to Frank E. Allen, Edgar L. Berry, Frances E. Berry, Emery J. Howell, Leigh Howell, and Olga Howell. Allen, the Berrys, the Howells, and Emery Howell each owned a quarter of the property and the Home Dairy.

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Dairy business. The building, and the business, were again sold in 1971 to husband and wife Robert and Nancy Avery. Robert Avery was Edgar L. Berry’s nephew, and he worked at Home Dairy as a baker since 1962. Nancy Avery joined her husband in 1966, and Berry trained them as managers. They took over in 1967 before purchasing the business from the original owners in 1971. During their tenure, the Averys made no significant alterations to 143 East State Street’s exterior aside from sandblasting around the mid 1970s.33

On November 29, 1979, Thomas D. Hoard, the City of Ithaca Building Commissioner, approved a proposal submitted by the Averys to rehabilitate the second floor of 143 East State Street into two business offices following a walk-through inspection. At the time, the second and fourth floors of the building were vacant, while the third was used for a photography studio. During the 1960s, the second floor was previously used for business offices, the third for a dance studio, and the fourth as a ballroom.34 Following the 1979 rehabilitation of the second floor, the upper three stories of the building continued as rental space for a host of Ithaca businesses including, from 1984 to 2000, the office of Firebrand Books.

The Averys owned and operated Home Dairy until 2002 when they closed the business and sold 143 East State Street to Thomas Rivera, a member of the religious organization the Twelve Tribes, in 2003. The Twelve Tribes opened a café called the Maté Factor in the first floor retail space in 2004. In 2003, prior to the opening of the café, the organization made several alterations to the building. They applied oak muntins to the plate glass display window to create the illusion of simulated divided lights. They replaced the aluminum-framed primary entrance door with an oak door and stained-glass transom that remain in place today. Finally, they repainted the oak HOME DAIRY CO. signboard and left it in place for several years before they

34 “143 East State Street.” City of Ithaca Building Division Records.
installed a wood Maté Factor sign over it. The secondary entrance door remains original to the
Home Dairy-era of the building.\textsuperscript{35}

In 2012, Rivera deeded the building to fellow Twelve Tribes members Jonathan Jedd and
Robert Masse. Maté Factor closed in 2019, and the first story exterior and interior of 143 East
State Street are currently under renovation for a new café. The upper three stories continue to
function as rental space. The distinctive vermiculated keystones on the second, third, and fourth
floor windows of the primary façade were shaved off sometime between 2019 and 2020, and the
HOME DAIRY CO., signboard was removed from the storefront on June 29th of 2022 (Figure
13).\textsuperscript{36}

\textbf{Women’s Liberation & The Women in Print Movement}

The Second Wave Feminist Movement (sometimes quaquually referred to as the Women’s
Movement) emerged in the United States in the mid-to-late twentieth-century. Second Wave
feminism can be broadly divided into two primary camps, or philosophies: liberal feminism and
radical feminism (also referred to as women’s liberation). Liberal feminists sought to integrate
women into U.S. society through a civil rights model. Radical feminists, in particular separatist
feminists, advocated for structural change through the creation of a variety of women-centered
and women-controlled institutions. Women of color feminists further drew attention to the ways
systems of gender, race, sexuality, and class intersected and challenged white feminists for their
centering of white, middle-class women’s lives and issues. Women’s liberation was not one

\textsuperscript{35} Bryan McCracken, City of Ithaca Historic Preservation and Neighborhood Planner, email to Jeff
Iovannone, July 8, 2022.

\textsuperscript{36} “143 East State Street.” City of Ithaca Building Division Records. On September 27, 2019, the Twelve
Tribes filed a permit with the City of Ithaca for repointing brick work.
univocal movement but, in the words of cultural scholar Jamie Harker, “was a combative, simultaneous, and complicated braid of multiple conversations, movements, and manifestos.”

By the mid 1970s, the perspectives of “socialist feminism” and “cultural feminism” emerged from women’s liberation. Socialist feminists worked to build a diverse coalition of women to address economic inequality. Cultural feminism, according to historian Sara M. Evans, “focused on creating a ‘women’s culture’ including art, music, and a variety of woman-run institutions. Given its primary emphasis on lifestyle, cultural feminism drew much of its energy from the emergence of a lesbian community, now visible to itself and open to the world for the first time.”

The Women in Print Movement is located within the cultural feminist strand of women’s liberation. Influenced by Marxism, cultural feminists, including those involved in Women in Print, strove to change the economic organization of society as well as the contents of its culture. The compatibility of cultural feminism and lesbian identity further illustrates why a majority of those involved in feminist print culture were lesbian.

Publishing and bookselling became a major component of women’s liberation, and women believed expression free from patriarchal, heterosexist, and racist institutions were essential to a feminist revolution. The development of a feminist media allowed women to tell their stories, analyze their experiences, and develop nuanced critiques of oppression. The growth of the movement depended, in part, upon the dissemination of information and ideas through feminist newsletters, newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, and books.

The 1970s saw the establishment of numerous feminist publications and women’s small presses, often founded by women who had no prior experience in publishing, but who understood the necessity of representation to the overall health and success of women’s liberation. By 1973, approximately 560 feminist periodicals existed in the United States.\footnote{Travis, “The Women in Print Movement,” 278.}

Women’s bookstores emerged in cities throughout the United States as a vehicle for the distribution of emerging feminist books and periodicals. A feminist bookstore network was established as part of the broader Women in Print Movement.

Cultural and literary historian Trysh Travis’s definition of the Women in Print Movement is worth quoting at length:

A product of Second Wave feminism, the Women in Print Movement was an an attempt by a group of allied practitioners to create an alternative communications circuit—a woman-centered network of readers and writers, editors, printers, publishers, distributors, and retailers through which ideas, objects, and practices flowed in a continuous and dynamic loop. The movement’s goals were nothing short of revolutionary: it aimed to capture women’s experiences and insights in durable—even beautiful—printed forms through a communications network free from patriarchal and capitalist control. By doing so, participants believed they would not only create a space of freedom for women, but would also and ultimately change the dominant world outside that space.\footnote{Travis, “The Women in Print Movement,” 275-300.}

A primary catalyst of the movement was the national Women in Print Conference, a gathering of women involved in publishing, including owners of small presses and women’s bookstores, editors, and bookstore workers. The first conference, held in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1976 in a Campfire Girl campground, was organized by publishers June Arnold and Parke Bowman, co-founders of the press Daughters, Inc., based in Plainfield, Vermont, and lesbian activists Charlotte Bunch and Coletta Reid, former members of the lesbian separatist collective The Furies. Approximately 132 women representing 80 organizations attended the conference.\footnote{Travis, “The Women in Print Movement,” 279-280.}
Among them was Carol Seajay, co-founder of the Old Wives Tales women’s bookstore in San Francisco, California.

The conference helped establish a national network of, in the words of cultural scholar Kristen Hogan, “bookwomen” and provided them with the technical skills of the book trade necessary to empower themselves. Carol Seajay, co-founder of the Old Wives Tales women’s bookstore in San Francisco, California, also began production of *Feminist Bookstores Newsletter* (after 1984, *Feminist Bookstore News*), a trade publication that “united not only booksellers, but Women in Print Activists from every part of the communications circuit for nearly twenty-five years.”44 As Hogan further observes of the connections forged at the first Women in Print conference: “This conversation among the bookwomen grew into a feminist literary advocacy network that would change both the vocabularies of feminism and reading and publishing in the United States.”45

The Second National Women in Print Conference was held in Washington, D.C., in 1981. Significantly, approximately 25 women of color involved in publishing attended. Black feminist writer and activist Barbara Smith announced the founding of Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, “the first publisher owned and operated by, for and about women of color.”46 The third and final iteration of the conference was held in 1985 in San Francisco, California, and focused largely on skill-sharing.47

The Women in Print movement was defined by the tension between two broad types of feminist, and more specifically lesbian feminist, writing: the “feminist avant-garde” and the

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popular or “pulp.”  

This debate was exemplified by June Arnold and Barbara Grier, founder of Naiad Press, based in Tallahassee, Florida. Arnold valued and published literature that favored experimentation and explicit feminist politics, whereas Grier preferred work that was popular and accessible. She dismissed the literary gatekeeping represented by publishers like Arnold. Both, however, were united in the idea that literature should play a fundamental role in the creation of a distinctly lesbian feminist culture and consciousness, and getting books with lesbian content into the hands of lesbian readers was of the utmost importance.

Small women’s presses and feminist bookstores worked in tandem within the movement. The bookstores provided the presses with a stable retail outlet for their publications and also provided space for book tours, readings, workshops, and the general creation of community and exchange of information. Titles by white heterosexual women tended to be the most marketable, but presses such as Aunt Lute, Crossing, Firebrand, Kitchen Table, and Persephone foregrounded works by lesbians and/or women of color such as Dorothy Allison, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde.

As Hogan observes: “The bookstores and presses, interdependent, were both necessary. While the presses worked to publish, reprint, and distribute women’s work, the bookstores gathered this physical evidence for the energy of women’s authorship and artwork.”  

Women’s bookstores were also movement spaces where ideas from feminist books and periodicals were read, discussed, argued over, and put into practice. The first feminist bookstore in the United States, Information Center Incorporate (ICI): A Woman’s Place, located in Oakland, California, opened in 1970. By 1977, there were approximately eighty-six feminist bookstores, and by 1978, there were ninety-six.  

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of women’s liberation that essentially functioned as resource centers, not purely commercial spaces.

Women’s presses and bookstores also showed mainstream commercial publishers, perhaps inadvertently, that there was a market for feminist books. Due to the changing economics of the book trade in the mid-to-late 1990s, women-owned presses and bookstores declined when large publishing houses began to produce works by women in greater numbers and big box retailers, such as Borders and Barnes & Noble, increasingly carried titles with feminist, LGBTQ, and anti-racist content. Chain stores and the rise of internet retail further diverted business away from feminist bookstores and diminished their numbers. By the 1990s, few women’s presses founded during the 1970s and 1980s remained. Feminist publishing thus saw an ideological shift in focus from revolutionary social change to the promotion of print culture as a lifestyle.⁵¹

**Gay Liberation & the Women’s Movement in Ithaca**

The City of Ithaca and Cornell University have a rich history of gay and lesbian (LGBTQ) and feminist organizing. The Cornell Student Homophile League, the second gay student organization in the United States, was founded in May 1968. By 1970, the organization changed its name to Cornell Gay Liberation Front to reflect the “out and proud” stance of the broader Gay Liberation Movement.⁵²

Cornell GLF initially met in 24 Willard Straight Hall, the student union located on Cornell’s central campus, but students had few expressly gays spaces to socialize. When a new bar, Morrie’s, opened at 409 Eddy Street in Collegetown in the spring of 1969, gay and lesbian

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Cornellians decided to make the space their own. Morris F. Angell, the bar owner, initially welcomed their business but became hostile over fears Morrie’s growing reputation as a gay bar would damage his involvement in local Democratic politics. Following multiple instances of discrimination wherein Angell ejected Cornell GLF members from his bar, the organization called for a boycott. Conflict between the bar and gay and lesbian students and local residents culminated in a 200-300 person demonstration on October 15th of 1970. The Morrie’s demonstration is considered the first protest in the United States organized by gay students.\(^{53}\) By March of 1971, Cornell GLF concluded their boycott after Angell, following negotiations with the organization, issued an apology.\(^{54}\)

Some gay and lesbian students were less interested in taking over bars and thought both gay students and community members needed a space they controlled.\(^{55}\) Under the leadership of Cornell GLF, the Ithaca Gay People’s Center opened at Sheldon Court on 410 College Avenue in April 1972 (the center later relocated to 306 East State Street, and the original location is no longer extant). Open to students at Cornell, Ithaca College, and local residents, the Gay People’s Center became the place from which Cornell GLF enacted the four central facets of their mission: education, peer counseling via the organization’s “Gayline,” social opportunities, and political engagement. The center was jointly financed by the University, Cornell GLF, and the Graduate Coordinating Council.


Though some women were involved in the Cornell GLF, such as Janis Kelly (a founding member of the Cornell Student Homophile League) and Jane Gallop (who became involved after the group transitioned to the GLF), the organization, and by extension the Gay People’s Center, was mostly male dominated. At Cornell, women were excluded from traditional academic disciplines as well, and in 1969, author and activist Sheila Tobias organized a feminist conference at the University, which drew 2,000 attendees. The conference, in addition to a spring 1970 course, entitled “The Evolution of Female Personality,” prompted graduate students to organize for additional courses and workshops. This led faculty to form an ad hoc committee focused on women’s studies. The Cornell Women’s Studies Program was the first founded at an Ivy League university.

Cornell’s Human Affairs Program (HAP) also emerged out of the context of student activism in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The initiative allowed students to receive credit for taking courses with local residents where they engaged in hands-on community organizing. The HAP provided a bridge between the University and the broader women’s movement in Ithaca. Feminist students connected with community activists such as those involved in the City Federation of Women’s Organizations, among others. The Federation, originally founded in 1910, owned and operated the Women’s Community Building, a new location of which had been opened on February 14, 1960, at 100 West Seneca Street (Figure 14). Their goal was “to act as a catalyst for the improvement of the lives of women in Tompkins County.” By the mid-to-late 1970s, the Women’s Community Building was home to approximately 40 community

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organizations, offered a variety of classes and programs, and any social group could use the building as a meeting place for a small fee.\(^{58}\)

The *Women’s Resource Guide to Ithaca*, published in June 1976 through the Office of the Dean in Cornell’s College of Arts and Sciences, compiled a variety of women’s services and spaces that existed for women in the Ithaca community at the time. It covered such diverse areas as political groups, women’s publications (including writing groups, libraries, and bookstores), meeting places, community centers, arts & crafts, and women’s music.\(^{59}\) The diversity of women’s identities are acknowledged through inclusion of resources such as the Gay People’s Center (then located at 306 East State Street) and the Southside Community Center (which serves Ithaca’s Black community). In the area of publications, the guide lists the Ithaca Women’s Center Library (located at 101 North Geneva Street), the Women’s Studies Library located in Room 431 of Cornell’s White Hall, *Women Writing*, a newsletter that provided information about women’s feminist presses that was published in Newfield, New York, and Smedley’s Bookshop (located at 119 East Buffalo Street).\(^{60}\)

Smedley’s, according to the guide, was “a feminist and socialist bookstore committed to women, politics, beauty, and fun. The titles range from the intensely personal to the widely social. They [the bookstore] are working toward positive alternative ways to make life more liveable.”\(^{61}\) Smedley’s first opened in 1976 under the ownership of a Marxist-feminist collective and was named after the journalist, feminist, and spy, Agnes Smedley. At that time, the bookshop was collectively owned and operated by Harriet Alpert, Kate Dunn, and Camille Tischler. In

\(^{58}\) *Women’s Resource Guide to Ithaca*, Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Cornell University, June 1976, 105. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

\(^{59}\) It appears the *Women’s Resource Guide* was only published once in 1976 and was compiled by Diane Brown, Susan Gumbiner, Caryn Spector, and Beth Willensky.

\(^{60}\) *Women’s Resource Guide to Ithaca*, 77-78.

1981, the collective sold the business to Irene “Zee” Zahava, who turned Smedley’s into a more all-encompassing women’s bookstore. In 1984, the bookshop moved from 119 East Buffalo Street to 307 West State Street (Figure 15).62

The feminist community that formed around Smedley’s helped to launch the political career of activist and organizer Roey Thorpe, who in 1994 became the first openly gay person elected to the City of Ithaca Common Council.63 The bookshop regularly hosted events featuring notable feminist writers who came to speak at Cornell but then gave a community reading at Smedley’s. Several of these writers were published by Firebrand Books (such as Cheryl Clarke and Audre Lorde). The local relationship between Firebrand and Smedley’s (Firebrand published authors whose books Smedley’s would then sell) is a microcosm of the Women in Print Movement’s “alternative communications circuit” described by Travis. Feminist publishers, like Bereano, relied on women printers, distributors, and booksellers, like Zahava, to support them.64 Smedley’s closed in August of 1994 with plans to transition the business into a writing center for women. “When Smedley’s first opened,” Zahava told The Ithaca Journal, “it really was the only source for a lot of things. Now you can get almost everything I carried at other bookstores in town.”65

64 Travis, “The Women in Print Movement,” 279.
Nancy K. Bereano moved to Ithaca from New York City during the 1960s when her then husband secured a teaching position in Cornell University’s College of Engineering (Figure 16). She became involved in the local anti-war movement, welfare organizing, and was advisor to a welfare rights group, but was not initially involved in the women’s movement or gay liberation.

Institutional changes at Cornell following the takeover of Willard Straight Hall by the Afro-American Society on April 18, 1969, provided Bereano with the opportunity to deepen her activism. Cornell’s Human Affairs Program allowed Bereano to teach a course on the politics and economics of the American welfare system. Several of her women students soon became her peers and brought her into the women’s movement.66 It was through her connection to Cornell that Bereano also met Janis Kelly who, in addition to influencing her as an activist and editor, also became her first female partner.67 Kelly would later help organize the 1985 Women in Print conference and co-authored the pamphlet Making It: A Woman’s Guide to Sex in the Age of AIDS with Cindy Patton that was published by Firebrand Books in 1988.68 Bereano’s involvement in the women’s movement then led her to lesbian and gay, and later LGBTQ, liberation and to feminist books.

In need of employment, Bereano applied and was offered a job editing the Feminist Series at Crossing Press, a small publishing house then located in Trumansburg, New York. Her work as an editor had a profound effect on her emerging consciousness. As she explains: “It totally changed my life. I came out at the same time that I was doing this. Each book took me to

67 Janis Kelly interview, Haftan M. Eckholdt papers, #7622. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
68 Making It also features illustrations by lesbian cartoonist and Firebrand author Alison Bechdel. Published as part of Firebrand’s “Sparks” pamphlet series, it is considered the first publication about lesbians and AIDS.
a different place. I was reading all of these amazing magazines, a plethora of wonderful feminist magazines existed at the time. So there was always new literature to read as well as articles that talked about substantive things that you had to then stop and think about—and what did this mean in terms of your life?”

Bereano published emerging feminist authors such as Michelle Cliff and Cris South, and convinced Crossing Press to acquire and reprint works by established writers Judy Grahn (*The Work of a Common Woman*) and Audre Lorde (*Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*). She published 17 titles over her four years at Crossing. Despite bringing notoriety to the press, she was fired in 1984. One month later, she founded Firebrand Books in Ithaca with financial support from family and friends, most notably the well-known lesbian feminist poet Adrienne Rich.

Bereano took up residence on the second floor of 143 East State Street (listed under the address 141 The Commons), then owned by Home Dairy proprietors Robert and Nancy Avery (Figure 17). The prominent location of The Commons, coupled with its reputation as the center of Ithaca’s commercial downtown and the fact that 143 East State Street’s second floors offices were recently rehabilitated, made the building an ideal choice for Bereano who, true to the name of her press, wanted to make her mark on the publishing world.

Bereano attended the third Women in Print Conference, which had an important influence on the early years of Firebrand, in particular the press’s commitment to anti-racism and publishing women writers of all identities. To this point, as part of the conference, Bereano co-facilitated a workshop with Betty Powell of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press on “The Politics of Survival: Women’s Publishing at Mid-Decade.”

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70 Nancy K. Bereano, interview with Jeff Iovannone, September 27, 2019.
71 Women in Print Third National Conference program. Firebrand Books records, #7670. Box 64, Folder 49. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.
importance of longevity for feminist publishers, as well as how the books they published allowed
women readers to live more fully realized lives.\textsuperscript{72}

Firebrand published its first three titles in the spring of 1985 with three more following in
September through October of that same year. The press had an explicitly lesbian and feminist
focus and followed “an open submissions policy for manuscripts” that encouraged “inquiries
about theory, fiction, and poetry.”\textsuperscript{73} Bereano continued to produce 3-to-10 titles per year, and by
the late 1990s, Firebrand had over ninety titles in print. Whereas Andrus & Church was a
regionally significant publishing firm within Tompkins County, Firebrand Books acquired both
local and national significance, influencing not only feminist and LGBTQ publishing, but print
culture as a whole. The most significant period of 143 East State Street’s history, therefore, are
the years Firebrand occupied the second floor (1984 to 2000).

Firebrand Books was distinctive from earlier women’s presses, such as Daughters, Inc.
and Naiad, in several key ways. First, the press was founded with an anti-racist sensability. At
the 1985 Women in Print Conference, Bereano stood alongside a group of white women who
supported the women of color in attendance after a rift occurred during one of the panels.\textsuperscript{74} As
Pam Mitchell, writing for \textit{Gay Community News}, reported:

In the closing plenary session, one caucus after another expressed concern over the
absence of women of color from the conference. The low level of participation by women
of color—less than a dozen were present—and the lack of workshops addressing Third
World and anti-racist issues was in marked contrast to the last Women in Print
Conference… In a statement read at the plenary, the Women of Color criticized the
exclusion from the conference of the category of writers.\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{74}The Humanities Pod, “Rural Poetics: Part 2 with Nancy Bereano.”
Of Firebrand’s first three titles released in 1985—*Mohawk Trail* by Beth Brant, *Moll Cutpurse* by Ellen Galford, and *Jonestown and Other Madness* by Pat Parker—two were by lesbians of color (Brant and Parker).

Second, Bereano’s editorial sensibility, and Firebrand’s catalog, included a wide variety of genres, blurring the line between, the “feminist avant-garde” and the “popular.” Works of literary fiction, such as Dorothy Allison’s short story collection *Trash* (1988) and Leslie Feinberg’s novel *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) stood alongside compilations of Alison Bechdel’s comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* and works of genre fiction like Jewelle Gomez’s black lesbian vampire novel *The Gilda Stories* (1991), Karen Cadora’s science fiction novel *Stardust Bound* (1994), or mystery novels by Marion Foster.

Third, Bereano published writers with perspectives outside the coastal geographic focus of the mainstream Women’s and LGBTQ movements (New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco). Firebrand authors such as Dorothy Allison, Leslie Feinberg, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Mab Segrest wrote from an explicitly southern feminist or working-class perspective. The press, therefore, helped expand the consciousness of the Women’s and LGBTQ movements beyond large, cosmopolitan cities located on the east and west coast.

Fourth, Firebrand’s proximity to Cornell University also helped Bereano elevate the profile of her publications through university-sponsored events and readings from authors such as Dorothy Allison, Beth Brant, and Joan Nestle. As noted above, it was common for Firebrand authors to read a Smedley’s Bookshop following their time at Cornell, thus supporting the local relationship between feminist publishing and bookselling.

Fifth, Firebrand was a multiple award-winning publishing house and helped launch the careers of authors such as Dorothy Allison, Alison Bechdel, Leslie Feinberg, and Minnie Bruce
Pratt. “Publishing [Allison’s] first book, Trash, made me understand just how good lesbian literature could be,” observed Bereano, “I really understood at that point that the reason our books didn’t get published by the mainstream had nothing at all to do with the quality.” The success of Trash allowed Allison to secure a contract and advance from Dutton (an imprint of Penguin Books) for her novel Bastard Out of Carolina, which allowed her to complete the manuscript. Bastard became a finalist for the National Book Award in 1992.

Firebrand also helped propel lesbian cartoonist Bechdel to mainstream recognition. Her best-selling graphic memoir Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic was published by Houghton Mifflin in 2006 and was later adapted into a stage musical, which premiered Off-Broadway in 2013.

Pratt’s reception of the 1989 Lamont Poetry Prize (today known as the James Laughlin Award) for her collection of poetry Crime Against Nature (1990) is perhaps the most historically significant honor received by a Firebrand author. The Lamont was one of the most prestigious poetry prizes in the nation, and Pratt’s book was one of the first works of lesbian literature to receive recognition from the dominant literary establishment. Crime Against Nature explores Pratt losing custody of her sons after divorcing her husband and coming out as a lesbian during the 1970s. According to feminist scholar and poet Julie R. Enszer, “Pratt’s award is significant because it was given to a book that is very political, to a poet who was intimately involved in lesbian print culture beginning in 1977, and to a book published by the feminist press, Firebrand Books.”

In 1996, Bereano herself was recognized with the Lambda Literary Publisher’s Service Award for her contributions to LGBTQ and small press publishing. Firebrand received its first

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Lambda Literary Awards (or, “Lammies,” as they were commonly known) the year the awards were founded in 1989: two for Allison’s *Trash* in the categories of Lesbian Fiction and Small Press Book.\(^78\) Between 1989 and 2000, Firebrand publications were awarded more “Lammies” than any other publishing house, a dozen in total.\(^79\)

Finally, unlike many other women’s presses founded during the 1970s and 1980s, Firebrand was able to survive throughout the 1990s in part due to Bereano publishing titles with queer and transgender, as opposed to specifically lesbian and feminist, content such as Feinberg’s *Stone Butch Blues* and Riki Wilchins’ *Read My Lips: Sexual Subversion and the End of Gender* (1997), a collection of essays that explored transsexual identity.

Feinberg’s semi-autobiographical novel *Stone Butch Blues*, one of the first published works of transgender fiction, won the 1994 Lambda Literary Award and the Stonewall Book Award-Barbara Gittings Literature Award from the American Library Association. *Stone Butch Blues* became Firebrand’s overall best-selling title. By 1996, 30,000 copies had been sold (a significant number for a small press).\(^80\) “It opened transgender issues to a much wider issue than had existed before,” Bereano observed in a 1997 interview with *Lambda Book Report*. “God only knows it shook up my life,” she continued, “I think that I was probably on the same political awareness level as a lot of lesbian feminists out there in terms of trans issues.”\(^81\)

Changes in the publishing and bookselling industry during the 1990s, namely the inclusion of books by women and LGBTQ authors in mainstream publishing houses and chain bookstores coupled with the rise of internet retail, forced Bereano to close Firebrand and sell the

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\(^79\) Kauka, “A Life’s Work,” 1; 8-9.


press to her distributor, Logan Publisher’s Consortium, in 2001. Bereano also felt that, by the late 1990s, gay readership had changed. Lesbian and gay readers wanted books that emphasized assimilation into the mainstream, whereas she had a different politics.\(^{82}\) Despite changes within the feminist and gay publishing industry, Firebrand had secured a reputation as a nationally-recognized leader of the publishing revolution that occurred from the 1970s onward. Stephen Landesman, writing about Bereano’s retirement for *The Ithaca Journal*, described Firebrand Books as a “widely renowned press” and “one of the most prestigious lesbian, gay, and feminist publishers in the world.”\(^{83}\)


\(^{83}\) Landesman, “Firebrand founder speaks up.”
Figure 1. U.S. Geological Survey map indicating the location of 143 East State Street, Ithaca, New York (see arrow). Source: U.S. Geological Survey, National Geospatial Program.
Figure 2. View of 143 East State Street looking southwest down The Commons towards Cayuga Street. Photo credit: Jeff Iovannone (3/8/22).
Figure 3. North elevation (front) view of 143 East State Street, looking south. Photo credit: Jeff Iovannone (3/8/22).
Figure 4. East elevation view of 143 East State St., looking southwest. Photo credit: Jeff Iovannone (3/8/22).
Figure 5. East elevation first story window, looking west. Photo credit: Jeff Iovannone (3/8/22).
Figure 6. South elevation view of 143 East State Street, looking northwest. Photo credit: Jeff Iovannone (3/8/22).
**Figure 9.** The south side of East State Street, looking southwest, c. 1909. The Andrus Block, with its original cast iron storefront, is flanked to the west by the Sage Block and to the east by the Sprague and Wilgus blocks (now both demolished). Source: Snodderly, *Ithaca and its Past: The History and Architecture of the Downtown* (Ithaca: DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County, 1982).
Figure 10. 143 East State Street (then identified as 43) and the surrounding area as depicted on the 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Source: Library of Congress.
Figure 11. Detail of 143 East State Street and the Andrus & Church Printing Office as depicted on the 1888 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Source: Library of Congress.
Figure 13. The storefront (north elevation) of 143 East State Street, looking south, with the oak HOME DAIRY CO. signboard removed. Photo credit: Jeff Iovannone (6/29/22).
Figure 14. Illustration of the Women’s Community Building (100 West Seneca Street location). Source: Lee Shepherd, “Ithaca’s womanpower was felt early in the fight for rights,” *The Ithaca Journal*, February 4, 1985.
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