

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name \_\_\_\_\_  
other names/site number Sanford Road Historic District  
Stillmeadow

### 2. Location

street & number 480 and 487 Sanford Road  N/A not for publication  
city, town Southbury (Southford)  N/A vicinity  
state Connecticut code CT county New Haven code 009 zip code 06488

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>10</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>10</u>	<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A  
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

[Signature] June 10, 1993  
Signature of certifying official Director, Connecticut Historical Commission Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 7/29/93  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
AGRICULTURE/storage/processing/field/  
animal facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)  
DOMESTIC/single dwelling  
AGRICULTURE/processing/storage  
outbuilding/animal facility

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English

foundation stone  
walls weatherboard  
  
roof asphalt shingle  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Sanford Road Historic District is a small rural enclave in Southford village in the Town of Southbury (Exhibit A). It consists of two houses and their associated outbuildings on both sides of a dip on this partially unimproved road. Much of the former farmland on the north side of the road has reverted to woodland but to the south there are open fields behind the buildings as well as the head of Jeremy Brook, which runs through that property. A man-made pond on this brook is found to the northeast.

The Ephraim Stiles House, the earlier house in the district, is a post-Revolutionary Cape with several additions (Inventory #8; Photograph #s 1, 2, 3). The main block, which has a center chimney with a 14-foot square base, is clapboarded but the rear kitchen ell, dating from the late nineteenth century, is sheathed with vertical siding and has an end chimney and a woodshed at the rear. A one-story shed-roofed addition was added to the southeast gable end of the main block in the late 1930s. A small roofed arbor and wellhouse (rebuilt in 1926 over a stone-lined well) are located beside the ell (Inventory #9). Other outbuildings are a screened and roofed structure set on an old foundation next to the pond and a circa 1920s shed at the rear of the property (Inventory #s 10, 11). The foundation of the former, which may have been from an earlier house on the property, incorporated an end hearth which is now hidden by a concrete floor. A large barn associated with the property burned in the 1960s and several smaller structures were removed in the 1930s.

The Stiles House is set perpendicular to the road with a northeast facing five-bay facade, which has the typical configuration of regional Capes of this period: a high roof plate and paired windows on either side of the center door. There are six-paned windows in the gable peaks and one remaining four-paned window in the eave of the south gable, all probably original sash. The arrangement of the operating windows in the end elevations has been changed, with one added at the second floor of the south gable, and the first floor windows have been paired at the other end. Most of the sash are replacements with a 12-over-8 configuration.

The interior of the main block has the standard plan of a central-chimney Cape; the stairs to the second floor rise from the rear of the house, a common arrangement in Southbury. There is a front room on either side of the stack and the original kitchen at the rear, with a small room on its south side, possibly a former pantry, separated from the kitchen by a steep straight-run enclosed staircase. There is an outside rear door at the raised landing at the foot of the stairs, with a window above. The fireplaces in the two front rooms are similar with a molded frame and a shallow mantel set above, both typical of the late eighteenth-century. Most of the passage doors have four recessed panels and some may display original hardware. Original finishes that remain include the plastered walls in the staircase and closets.

See continuation sheet

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Sanford Road Historic District, Southbury, Connecticut

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The early kitchen fireplace, which has circa 1935 panelling and mantel above, replaced after damage by fire, has a brick beehive bake oven set into the left rear of the firewall (Photograph #4). It has an unusual design: partially protruding into the firebox and supported by corbelled stone. Underneath the oven a stone can be removed to dump ashes or coals, which drop to an ashpit below in the base of the stack. Instead of the more standard rectangular opening, the ashpit has a shallow arch and its stone interior has a shallow dome.

The Benjamin Osborne House is a vernacular Cape set on an ashlar foundation (Inventory #1; Photograph #s 5, 6, 7). Built about 20 years later than the Stiles House, it faces the road and consists of a four-bay main block and several additions. The central chimney of the main block is set behind the ridge of the gable roof. The four-bay facade has a high boxed cornice which extends around the end elevations with pronounced returns. The off-center entrance is sheltered by a hip-roofed porch supported by slim columns of the Colonial Revival style, dating from the early twentieth century. Most of the windows are original, with nine-over-six or six-over-six sash. There is a hip-roofed one-story addition on the west elevation. The older part of the kitchen ell with its stack is original construction which has been enlarged and extended and has an attached woodshed at the rear.

Many original features remain on the interior, including plain board passage and cabinet doors, plaster walls and ceilings, and plain board trim around windows and doors. The parlor fireplace has been covered but an angled fireplace in the northeast corner room remains. It has a triangular firebox and hearthstone, a tall cupboard above the mantel, and a surround framed with a molded architrave. The kitchen fireplace in the ell has granite-block cheeks and brick above an iron lintel (Photograph #8). The bake oven to the right and its surrounding masonry were removed when the kitchen was enlarged and the panelling above the fireplace is a modern replacement.

Five of the six associated outbuildings frame the farmyard. (See Exhibit A for their approximate location.) The larger gambrel-roofed barn (30' x 60') has a banded, vertical board silo on its south elevation and a stone and brick foundation (Inventory #4; Photograph #9). Rebuilt in 1924 and oriented with the ridge running with the path of Sanford Road, it originally had its gable end facing the road. The smaller barn of the same roof type dating from 1930 is located to the rear of this building (Inventory #5). The older nineteenth-century barn consists of two gable-roofed sections set at 90° to each other; part of it may be contemporaneous with the house (Inventory #2; Photograph #s 7, 10). It is located behind the house, as is the privy (Inventory #3). Farther west is the chicken coop and across the brook, accessed by a plank bridge, is the smokehouse, which is still in use (Inventory #s 6, 7; Photograph #10). An early twentieth-century cidemill, powered by a gasoline engine, once stood next to the road on the west side of the farmyard but there are no visible remains.

A complete inventory list of buildings in the district follows:

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Section number 7 Page 3Inventory of Contributing and Non-contributing Buildings

Inv. #	Address	Name/Style or Type/Date	C/NC	Photo. #
1.	480 Sanford Road	Benjamin Osborne House, Cape, c. 1810	C	5,6, 7,8
2.	" "	barn, c. 1810 and c. 1850	C	7, 10
3.	" "	privy, c. 1900	C	
4.	" "	barn with silo, 1924	C	9
5.	" "	barn, 1930	C	9
6.	" "	chicken coop, early 20-th century	C	10
7.	" "	smokehouse, late 19th-century	C	10
8.	487 Sanford Road	Ephraim Stiles House, Cape, c. 1785	C	1,2, 3,4
9.	" "	wellhouse, c. 1926	C	
10.	" "	outdoor living room, screened and roofed, c. 1940	NC	
11.	" "	shed, c. 1920	C	

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
SOCIAL HISTORY/ETHNIC HERITAGE  
LITERATURE

Period of Significance

c. 1785 - 1930  
1914 - 1949  
1934 - 1980

Significant Dates

c. 1785; c. 1810

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Taber, Gladys Bagg (1899 - 1980)

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Sanford Road Historic District is a cohesive entity that contains significant examples of rural vernacular domestic architecture dating from the founding of the United States and a large body of associated well-preserved contributing outbuildings, which illustrate at least a century of agrarian practice. While the district's early historical associations embody the more traditional familial patterns of the agrarian economy of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it achieved its greatest significance in the early twentieth century through its association with two fundamentally different yet harmonious cultural phenomema which had an impact on the rural landscape: the influx of both European immigrants amd urban dwellers. Further significance in this period is derived from its association with Gladys Bagg Taber (1899-1980), a noted author and columnist.

Architectural Significance

The two vernacular farmhouses, which are the foci of the district, have integrity of form and design. Together, they illustrate the important changes in house design that took place within a few decades, and typically, although they were built in a period when their more urban counterparts were embellished with stylistic detail, they are relatively unadorned. While the Stiles House is more traditional in its plan, essentially a holdover from the colonial period, the Osborne House plan is less conventional. By making a few simple changes in the Cape layout, there was a more efficient use of space. Built before woodstoves came into common use and still utilizing the relatively primitive cooking and baking methods of an open fireplace, the kitchen occupied a separate ell. As a result, the main stack could be placed more to the rear and the front rooms expanded in size. No space is lost for an entrance hall, a necessary feature in the Stiles House for access to the front rooms. Typically, a kitchen ell was added to that earlier house later in the nineteenth century, again with its own stack, but one that was fitted originally for a woodstove.

The outbuildings of the Osborne farmstead have exceptional integrity and are important contributors to the district not just for their historic rural ambiance, or as a rare surviving collection of many different building types which are exceptionally well-maintained, although these inherent qualities are clearly present. More importantly,

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records.  
Beers, F. W. Atlas of New Haven County: The Town of Southbury. New York: Beers & Co., 1868.  
Colby, Anne. Personal communication, 11/8/92.  
Cothren, William F. History of Ancient Woodbury from the First Indian Deed in 1659 to 1871. 3 vols. Waterbury: Bronson Brothers, 1854, 1872; Woodbury: Cothren, 1879.  
Smith, H. & C.T. Map of New Haven County, Connecticut, 1856.  
Southbury: Townwide Architectural Survey (intensive level). Connecticut Historical Commission, 1990-1991 (compiled by Mary McCahon).  
Zontok, Tessie. Personal communication, 11/8/92.

See continuation sheet

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 # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Boston University Library

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of property 11.24

UTM References

A 

1	8
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6	5	1	5	6	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	9	1	5	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	8
---	---

6	5	1	6	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	9	1	2	0	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

B 

1	8
---	---

6	5	1	7	3	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	9	1	3	2	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

  
Zone Easting Northing

D 

1	8
---	---

6	5	1	4	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---

4	5	9	1	4	7	0
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The district boundaries are delineated on the attached district map drawn from Southbury Assessor's Map 42, dated 4/13/83, and encompass Block 15/Lot 6 and Block 18/Lot 2 in their entirety.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The district boundaries encompass all the land and buildings still associated with the historic properties included in the district.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant  
organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 11/18/92  
street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347 4072  
city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

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they evoke the multi-purpose representative farmscape of the nineteenth century and demonstrate its functional and architectural continuance into the twentieth century.

Historical Background

The Sanford Road Historic District encompasses land that was owned by the Stiles family from about 1750. Benjamin Stiles Esq. (1720 - ), reportedly the first lawyer in Old Woodbury, had extensive landholdings in the South Parish, later Southbury, which included property in the district developed by his descendants in the late eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> A son, Benjamin Stiles, Jr., was also a prominent and influential citizen. A lawyer and graduate of Yale like his father, he lived in an elegant Georgian Colonial on Main Street.

The district properties are closely associated with a grandson, Ephraim Stiles (1753-1821), the son of Francis Stiles, who removed to Salisbury, Connecticut. Ephraim married Sarah Trowbridge in 1780 and built 487 Sanford Road about 1785 on what was then a 180-acre farm. He also owned a barn across the road on a 30-acre parcel and its neighboring farm of 47 acres. Some of Ephraim's family left the community as they came of age, part of the general migration from Connecticut farms in the early nineteenth century to New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Two daughters remained in town: Sally, who married Benjamin B. Osborne, and Ruth, who became Benjamin's wife after her sister died. Ruth and Benjamin lived at 480 Sanford Road from about 1810 and the house may have been built during his first marriage, possibly as early as 1800. A prominent man in Southbury, Osborne was the state representative in 1825.

The settlement of Ephraim's estate after 1821 was complicated and possibly delayed by the remove of the heirs, but by 1846 Ruth Osborne had sold her house to Ebenezer Hurlburt and Monroe Smith. Later it was inherited by Amanda Smith, Hurlburt's daughter, and remained in that family until 1916. At that time the Osborne House and farm of 50 acres was sold to Thomas Philliponis. Charles Smith (relationship unknown), who had received the Stiles House and land across the road, sold it in 1831 to Cyrus Bostwick and it remained in that family until 1887. After several intervening owners, the Stiles House was acquired by Gladys Taber in the 1930s.

Historical Significance

Thomas Philliponis (aka Phillips; 1885-1949), born in Lithuania, was one of the many immigrants who left Europe before World War I and came to the United States seeking farmland or employment. By 1910 more than one-third of Connecticut's population was foreign born. Most settled in the major manufacturing cities but a considerable number were farmers, especially in eastern Connecticut. Philliponis was one of a limited number who came to this part of the state and brought old Yankee farms back into production. He married Lena Masolsky, also born in Lithuania, and they had five children. After working

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in New Jersey and at the American Shear Company in Hotchkissville (in Woodbury), he had saved enough money at age 31 to buy the 50-acre Osborne farm in 1916 along with an additional 20 acres.

Through their husbandry and industry it thrived as the Phillips dairy farm, a typical relatively self-sufficient enterprise. In addition to dairy cattle, they raised chickens and pigs, and had draft horses. Some land was used for feed crops: corn for silage and turnips for the swine, which were slaughtered and preserved in the smokehouse. An average of 250 barrels of cider a year were processed in the 1940s in the old mill next to the road (no longer extant) from apples from their orchard. In 1924 they rebuilt the larger barn and silo and by 1930 had built the smaller barn to the rear. After Thomas Philliponis died his estate passed to his widow, Lena. After her death in 1955, the present owner, her daughter Tessie Zontok, inherited an undivided share of the family holdings in 1958. The remainder was divided among the rest of the family and then included an additional 160 acres and another farmhouse. Tessie Zontok, who owned the present nine-acre nominated property outright by 1967, continued to farm here with her husband, John Zontok (of Slovak descent) until his recent death in August, 1992. Born in East Morris, Connecticut in 1908, John Zontok owned and operated a large farm there until 1976.

Gladys Bagg Taber (1899-1980) came to Southbury in 1934 not to farm but to enjoy the rural ambiance, purchasing the Stiles House first for a seasonal retreat, later her permanent home, which she named "Stillmeadow." Like many artists and writers in the early twentieth century, she found the Connecticut countryside conducive to her work and the majority of her writings were done there. She made some changes to the house, including the small shed-roofed ell on the south side and the replacement of the panelling of the kitchen hearth, but the land itself had an intrinsic scenic value and was left in its natural state. Although the landscaping around the house has been improved and maintained, the large acreage formerly associated with the property, now subdivided, has generally reverted to woodland; former outbuildings are gone although the foundation of one near the pond was utilized for a screened and roofed outdoor living room in 1939. The scenic quality of the brook was enhanced when a section was enlarged for a pond and wildlife habitat in 1967. Taber's descendants still use the house on a seasonal basis and her published works and mememtos are displayed there.

Taber's long literary career as a columnist and novelist, which was so entwined with her life at Stillmeadow, began in 1925 and continued until her death. A graduate of Wellesley, with a M.A. from Lawrence in Appleton, Wisconsin (where her father was a professor of geology), Taber later taught writing at Columbia and Randolph-Macon in Virginia. A member of P.E.N., the literary society, she is also included in The Authors and Writers: Who's Who: A Reference Guide. Her more than 50 works of fiction and non-fiction were published by some of the major publishers of the day, including J. B. Lippincott, later Harper & Row, and Little Brown & Co.



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

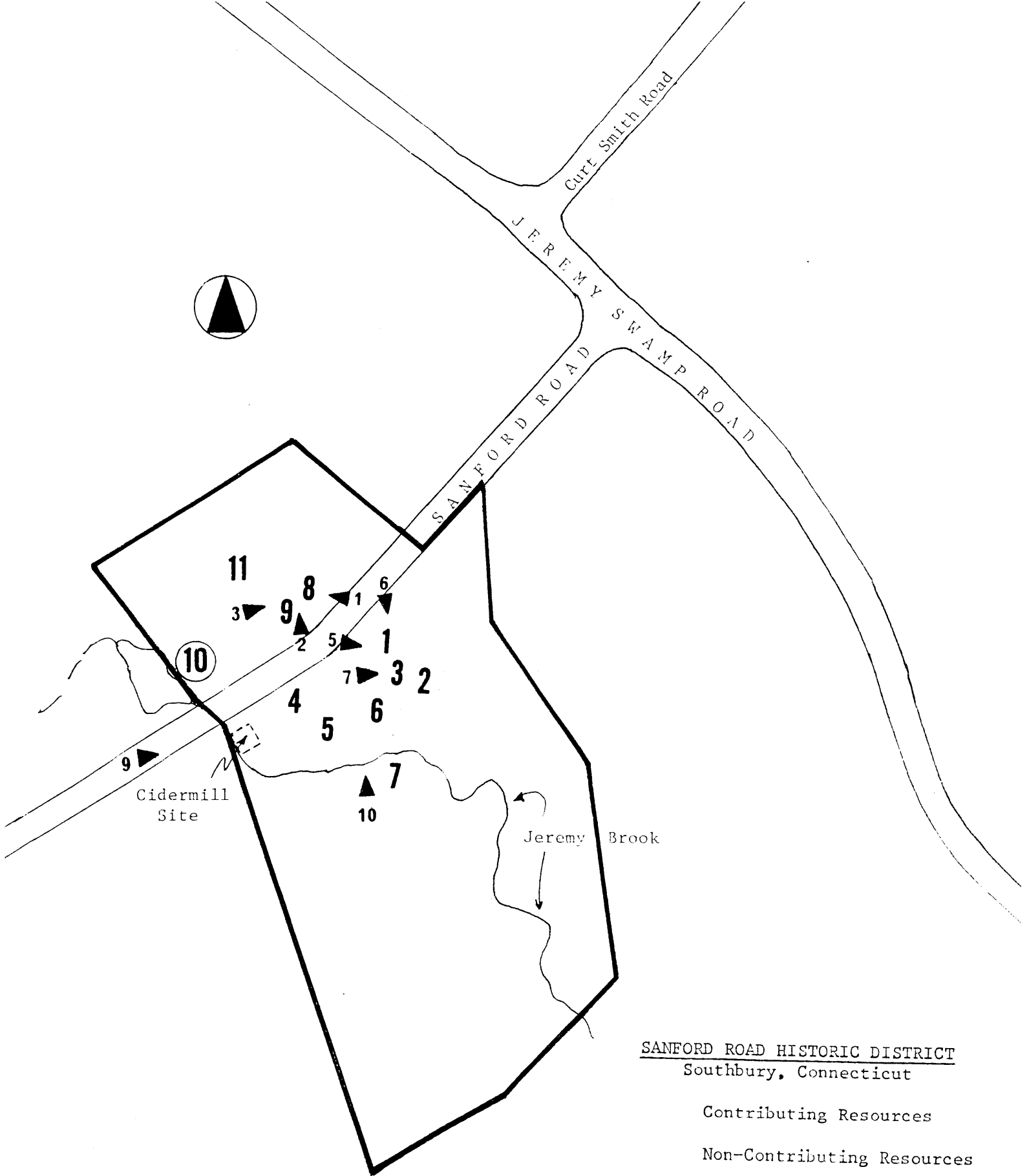
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Taber's popularity reached its height in the 1950s when the world view of the post-war generation was influenced first by magazines and movies, and later television, all promoting the societal values of home and family. Laying claim to a special niche in this popular culture genre in the print media, Taber first presented her vision of domestic country life at "Stillmeadow" in "Diary of Domesticity," a regular feature in the Ladies Home Journal, where she was an editor and columnist from about 1937 to 1958. A similar column, "Butternut Wisdom," was published in Family Circle in the 1950s and she was a contributor to other magazines of the period such as Saturday Evening Post, Cosmopolitan, and Good Housekeeping. While at Stillmeadow, she wrote on a number of topics, including cooking and dog breeding, and published five more novels and several children's books, but she is best known for a series of books which arose from the columns, such as Harvest at Stillmeadow, the first in 1940, and Stillmeadow Album, a photographic essay, in 1969. Many of her manuscripts are archived at Boston University Library and her loyal fans have established "The Friends of Gladys Taber," a national organization to perpetuate her memory.

1. Old Woodbury is the name commonly used to differentiate the larger colonial town (173 square miles) from the smaller present-day Town of Woodbury. Until the late eighteenth century, Old Woodbury also encompassed the parishes which became the towns of Washington (incorporated 1779), Southbury and Bethlehem (both incorporated 1787), and Roxbury (incorporated 1796).



SANFORD ROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 Southbury, Connecticut

- Contributing Resources
- Non-Contributing Resources
- ▶ Photograph Views

Bold line is District Boundary

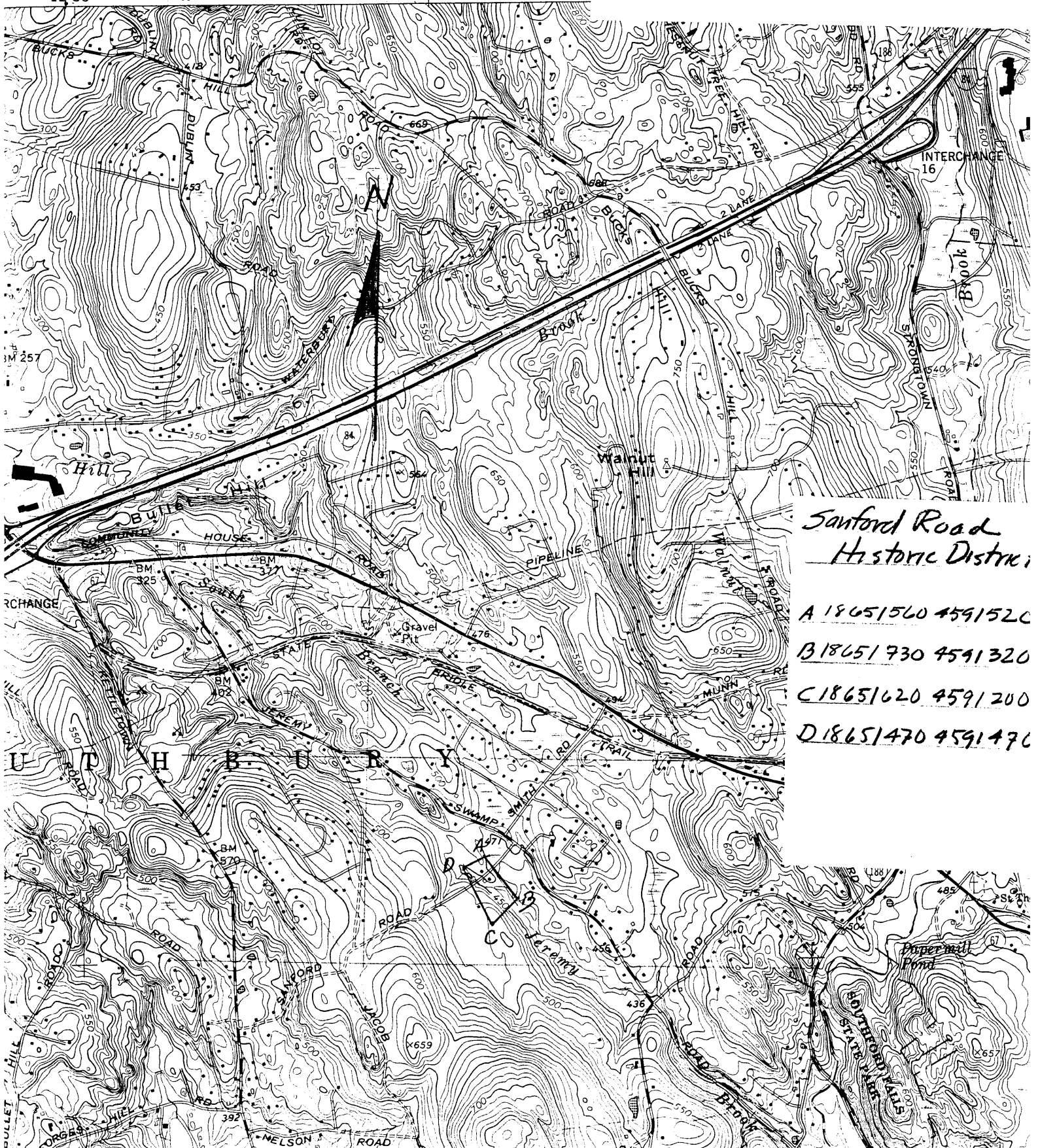
STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

6367 II SW  
(WOODBURY)

See Project Notes  
for original location  
(also Southbury location)

HOMASTON 17 MI.  
WOODBURY 3.2 MI.  
12'30"

650



Sanford Road  
Historic District

- A 18651560 4591520
- B 18651730 4591320
- C 18651620 4591200
- D 18651470 4591470

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Section number Photos Page 1

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List of Photographs

Note: All photographs were taken by Cunningham Associates Ltd., 11/92, and the negatives are on file with the Connecticut Historical Commission.

1. View: Ephraim Stiles House: facade  
and southeast end elevation Facing: W
2. View: Ephraim Stiles House:  
end and rear elevations Facing: N
3. View: Ephraim Stiles House:  
rear additions Facing: E
4. View: Ephraim Stiles House:  
original kitchen fireplace Facing: N
5. View: Benjamin Osborne House:  
facade and west elevation Facing: E
6. View: Benjamin Osborne House:  
northeast elevation Facing: S
7. View: Benjamin Osborne House:  
with barn and privy Facing: NE
8. View: Benjamin Osborne House:  
fireplace in kitchen ell Facing: E
9. View: Benjamin Osborne House:  
barns (1924 on l; 1930 on r) Facing: NE
10. View: Benjamin Osborne House:  
outbuildings Facing: N