NPS Form 10-900
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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received JAN 20 1984
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Scoville Powerhouse

and or common N/A

2. Location

street & number Twin Lakes ~~Road corner of~~ and Beaver Dam ~~Reads~~. NA not for publication

city, town Salisbury NA vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Litchfield code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
___ district	___ public	___ occupied	___ agriculture	___ museum
X building(s)	X private	X unoccupied	___ commercial	___ park
___ structure	___ both	___ work in progress	___ educational	X private residence
___ site	**Public Acquisition**	**Accessible**	___ entertainment	___ religious
___ object	___ in process	___ yes: restricted	___ government	___ scientific
	___ being considered	___ yes: unrestricted	___ industrial	___ transportation
	NA	X no	___ military	___ other:

4. Owner of Property

name Selig D. Sacks

street & number 110 East 87th Street

city, town New York NA vicinity of NA state New York 10028

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Salisbury Land Records, Town Hall

street & number Main Street

city, town Salisbury state CT

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes X no

date 1983 ___ federal X state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 S. Prospect St.

city, town Hartford state CT.

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
___ excellent	___ deteriorated	___ unaltered	_x_ original site
_x_ good	___ ruins	_x_ altered	___ moved date ___
___ fair	___ unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Overview

The Scoville Powerhouse, located on the northwest corner of Twin Lakes Road and Beaver Dam Road in the Taconic section of the Town of Salisbury, is about 3 1/2 miles northeast of the center of town and 1 1/2 miles south of the Massachusetts border. The 2 1/2-acre site is at the western end of Twin Lakes where the waterfall of their outlet into Schenob Brook has long been used for generating power. The 2-story, 20x50-foot building, constructed c. 1900 of granite, brick and concrete to furnish electricity for the Scoville Estate is a picturesque building with high hipped roof, medieval gables, and fine granite door and window surrounds. (Photograph 1)

Exterior

The Powerhouse faces east, toward Twin Lakes Road and the dam. The road runs on top of the dam (Photograph 2) while the penstock leads from the dam under the road into the Powerhouse.

The front elevation of the building is dominated by two large symmetrical gables over large, partially glazed, wooden doors such as might be found in a carriage house. (Photograph 3) The gable roofs have barge boards. In each gable end there is a 9-pane window with elaborate carved wooden surround, whose curvilinear base rests on the tops of the voussoirs of the arched doorway below. The balance of the gable ends are pargeted in a raised medieval motif. The doorways below are made of large granite blocks with the voussoirs at the tops forming 3-centered arches. The brick wall is seen as panels between the doorways and on either side of the doorways, and in the area below the low granite string course. The high hipped roof, slightly flared at the eaves, is covered with asbestos shingles,[1] with metal finials at each end of the ridge line.

The gables on the side and rear elevations are smaller. At the upper floor the multi-paned windows are casements under transoms. The ground slopes off to the rear, providing the waterfall for power, so that the west elevation is two stories high. (Photograph 4) A central projecting stair tower has double granite quoins at its corners, an unsusual feature, while the corners of the building have conventional quoins. There is a door at the foot of the stair tower with a keystone in its arch and there are keystones in the arches of the flanking windows at this level. These windows have multi-paned double-hung sash, 10-over-10.

The tail race emerges from the building at the north end of the rear elevation under a segmental arch of granite voussoirs to become Schenob Brook. (Photograph 5) A horizontal shaft, single runner, wicket gate, Francis turbine, presumably original, is still in place in this arched cavity under the building. (Photograph 6) The turbine was capable of generating about 23 horsepower.[2] It charged wet cell batteries, of which no trace remains.

A second structure on the premises, located southwest of the main building, is a frame garage with attached greenhouse.

Interior

On the upper level, the high ceiling of narrow, beaded boards is exposed. It is supported by four braced collar beams. (Photograph 7) The front slope of the ceiling is interrupted so that the spaces of the front dormers become part of the room, but the rear slope is not pierced for the rear dormers. The window reveals are deep since the walls are between 15" and 18" thick. Interior walls are exposed brick, painted. The floor is concrete, about three feet thick. The iron spiral stairway from the upper level to the lower level fits into a rectangular enclosure. (Photograph 8) The entrance at the upper level to the stairway is treated architecturally in a polygonal shape. The doorway, outlined in granite blocks, has a molded cornice supported by console brackets, in granite. (Photograph 9)

A section of the penstock is visible in the lower level. It has provision in an elbow valve to stop the flow of water when repairs to the turbine were necessary. The walls of the interior of the lower level are exposed yellow brick above a glazed buff brick dado, except for the southeast corner where glazed white tile were used. The ceiling construction of shallow brick vaults on iron beams supports the heavy concrete floor above. (Photograph 10) The change in wall surfaces suggests that there may have been interior partitions on this floor.

The turbine is supported on steel beams under the floor of the lower level, at the north end of the building. Water fell on the turbine from the conduit visible in Photograph 10, and from the turbine to the tail race and brook. No other components of the power generating system remain. Presently, water flows from Twin Lakes to the brook via a bypass, not through the Powerhouse.

Architect and Use

The architect for the Scoville Powerhouse is unknown. Examination of materials listed in the bibliography and inquiry to present-day members of the Scoville family have failed to turn up any record of the building's construction.

The building is considerably larger than necessary to house the power generating equipment, but what additional use(s) it was put to is unknown. The large doors of the upper level suggest a storage function, but there was a Scoville carriage house almost directly across the street, so it probably was not used for this purpose. As the Scoville estate was a working dairy farm, the glazed tile of the lower level suggest a possible milk processing operation, but this is conjecture.

1. The shingles are said to be asbestos by County House Inspections, a civil engineering firm of Falls Village, Connecticut, in its report on the condition of the structure dated August 12, 1981, addressed to Selig D. Sacks. The report says the use of asbestos shingles is "somewhat uncommon in this area."

2. The description of the turbine and estimate of its capacity were given by Henry Obermeyer, Obermeyer Hydraulic Turbines, Ltd., Collinsville, CT, during interview February 23, 1983.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	religion
1400–1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law	science
1500–1599	agriculture	economics	literature	sculpture
1600–1699	x architecture	education	military	social/ humanitarian
1700–1799	art	engineering	music	theater
1800–1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy	transportation
x 1900–	communications	industry	politics/government	x other (specify) Local History
		invention		

Specific dates c 1900 **Builder/Architect** Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criteria C (Architecture) and A (Local History)

The Scoville Powerhouse is an excellent example of a picturesque estate outbuilding of the type built at the turn of the 19th century. Its massive brick and granite construction, high hipped roof and detail of medieval inspiration make it unique in northwestern Connecticut. (Criterion C) The prior use of the site's waterpower for an iron forge and blast furnace and the prominence of the Scoville family in the Salisbury community give the Scoville Powerhouse an important place in local history. (Criterion A)

Criterion C - Architecture

With his design for the New Zealand Chambers (1872), an office building in the City of London, Richard Norman Shaw (1831-1912) launched the style whose growth and development eventually led to the Scoville Powerhouse. The Powerhouse reflects the Shavian influence from the New Zeeland Chambers in its large, arched, multi-paned windows, and in the pargeting of its gable ends which is similar in material and motif to the pargeting of the coved cornices of the Chambers. Details of this nature were favored by Shaw and his followers who rejected the then popular Gothic and Tudor Revival styles in preference for medieval and 17th- and 18th-century precedents. The curved bargeboards and elaborate carved window surrounds in the Powerhouse's gable ends reflect this preference. The heavy granite quoins and heavily articulated granite door and window surrounds, in the manner of the 18th-century Gibbs surround associated with James Gibbs (1682-1754), are further reminders of the search for centuried-old practices.

The building materials of the Powerhouse also reflect contemporary interest in progressive construction and engineering techniques. The thick brick and granite walls and the 4-foot concrete floor between the two levels have withstood the test of 80 years in good fashion. The shallow brick vaults on steel beams that support the concrete floor were the state of the art toward the end of the 19th century, well regarded as a strong and fireproof construction technique. In the Powerhouse the vaults are a fine example of their type, and are easily visible. While there is no record of the original roof covering, the selection of high quality building materials throughout the structure suggests that the hipped roof originally was covered with slate. The spiral iron stairway, obviously custom made to fit the unusual plan, is handsomely done. Only the ceiling of the upper floor uses combustible material.

The high hipped roof with flared eaves and the big steeply-pitched gables contribute light and shadow and a stylish air to the building that one is surprised to find on a country road in Salisbury.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2.5

Quadrangle name Bashbish Falls Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	18	631510	4654250
B			
C			
D			
E			
F			
G			
H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

The nominated property is described in the Salisbury Land Records at volume 126, page 772. This is the land that now goes with the Powerhouse.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA
state	NA	code	NA	county	NA	code	NA

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	David F. Ransom, Consultant = edited by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator
organization	Architectural Historian
date	May 1, 1983
street & number	33 Sunrise Hill Drive
telephone	203 521-2518
city or town	West Hartford
state	CT

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national ___ state x local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Director, Connecticut Historical Commission date January 13, 1984

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the National Register date 2/16/84

for Keeper of the National Register

Attest: date

Chief of Registration

The Powerhouse is one of several buildings constructed by the Scovilles during the development of their estate in the 1890s. A large stone house built in 1894 burned in 1915, but a picture at the Scoville Library shows that it did not resemble the Powerhouse architecturally. On the other hand, the gatehouse (still standing) for the Scoville mansion, on Beaver Dam Road, that does not show on the Sanford 1899 map, copy attached, does resemble the Powerhouse, even to the pargeted gable ends. The carriage house (now a residence) across Twin Lakes Road from the Powerhouse also is of the same style. The conjecture is, therefore, that these three buildings, the Powerhouse, gate house and carriage house, may have been part of a single building program carried out after the mansion was built, after the Sanford map of 1899 and after the Scovilles bought the Powerhouse site in 1899.[1] Accordingly, the date of construction arrived at for the Powerhouse is c. 1900.

At the turn of the century, estate support buildings, such as stables, gate lodges, boat houses, etc., were considered integral to the success of the overall estate and, therefore, received careful attention in planning. The function and appearance of the buildings were addressed by architects as an important part of the general scheme. The question received attention in the literature of the times as a recognized segment of the work.[2] In that era of eclectic styles, the principal houses and their outbuildings might be in the Colonial Revival, Tudor Revival, Jacobethan or other style. Often the outbuildings used several materials, such as stone for the first story with shingles or stucco or half-timbering above. The result often was picturesque, in the traditiin of Shaw, as was the case with the Scoville Powerhouse. The Powerhouse is outstanding for its elaborate medieval details carefully coordinated with mass, proportions, fenestration and high hipped roof for a design of considerable sophistication.

Criterion A - Local History

Samuel Church Scoville is the first member of the family known to have mined iron ore, in the 19th century, on his farm in the Taconic area. The iron was of high quality suitable for use in the manufacture of wheels for railroad cars. The fabrication of iron for this purpose was developed by Samuel Church Scoville's sons, Jonathan Scoville (1830-1891) and Nathaniel Church Scoville (183-1890), who moved to Buffalo, New York, where they carried on a substantial and successful business in the manufacturing of railroad car wheels, and increased the family fortune.[3] Jonathan Scoville never married, but Nathaniel Church Scoville had two sons, Robert Scoville (1876-1934) and Herbert Scoville (1877-1937), who, after their father's death in 1890, returned with their mother to Salisbury. They added to the family land holdings, built the large house in 1894 where they all lived together, operated a model dairy farm, and built the Powerhwrt Scoville went on to practice law in New York City, while Robert Scoville served in the state legislature and at the end of World War I was Federal Food Administrator for Connecticut. Herbert Scoville, Jr., continues to live on Beaver Dam Road.

The 1899 Sanford map shows that the powerhouse which is the subject of this nomination was not the first electric generating facility in the immediate vicinity. In the upper left hand corner of the map, on land of Robert and Herbert Scoville, is found an "Electric Light Plant." The "Old Landon Furnace" is still in place. The Scovilles discontinued the earlier plant and built a new one on the site of the old furnace, perhaps because the traditional location at the foot of Twin Lakes provided better waterpower.

The early forge and gristmill at this location were built, c. 1748, by Jacob Bacon and Daniel Parke. Hezikiah Camp bought the forge in 1759. Phineas Chapin then became the entrepreneur and the village became known as Chapinville, the name appears on the Sanford 1899 map. The blast furnace was built in 1825 and operated by Chapin & Sterling until 1840 when it was sold to Horace Landon. His successor, the Landon Iron Co., sold the property to the Scovilles. At this time a spur from the Central New England Railroad still ran to the furnace. The spur was used for bringing iron ore to the furnace and for shipping out the pig iron produced by the furnace. The U. S. Postal Service renamed the post office Taconic in 1920, and the community has been known as Taconic since that time.[4]

The property Herbert and Robert Scoville purchased in 1899 consisted of 14 acres with gritsmill, abandoned and wrecked furnace, office and dwelling houses and wheel house and water power rights and privileges and dam and flume.[5] In addition to clearing the site for the new building, the Scovilles presumably at this time also introduced the underground conduit for the new turbine.

How long the Powerhouse was used to supply electricity to the Scoville estate is not known, but presumably it became uneconomic when commercial power lines were put through. Pieces of land were sold off from time to time, the Powerhouse itself was sold in the 1950s and was converted and remodelled into living space. At present the building has been cleared of earlier interior domestic arrangements in preparation for new interior rehabilitation as a residence.

1. Salisbury Land Records, 39/2, May 5, 1899. The carriage house and the gate house are not congihuous to the powerhouse and therefore are not included in the nomination.

2.

See Charles Edward Hooper, The Country House, A Practical Manual of the Planning and Construction of the American Country Home and Its Surroundings, Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1913, pp. 250-273. The emphasis in the text is on functional planning of practical arrangements for the purposes to be served by the estate support buildings. The illustrations, however, show attractive buildings with half-timbered gables, flared eaves, conical roofs and the like, or with eclectic Colonial Revival designs. The effect in all cases is the picturesque. Walter F. and William L. Price of Philadelphia, among others, were successful practitioners of this architecture. For an enormous stables complex of stone in the crenellated style of a medieval Irish castle, designed by Augustus S. Allen, see Lisa and Donald Sclare, Beaux-Arts Estates, A Guide to the Architecture of Long Island, New York: The Viking Press, 1980, pp. 63-65.

3.

The brothers' financial success provided funds for construction in Salisbury of the Scoville Memorial Library (1894, Stone, Carpenter & Wilson) that is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

4.

This account of Chapinville history is taken from Arthur Kellogg Wessels, A History of Twin Lakes, Twin Lakes Association: 1980, and from Alice G. Angus, "Taconic in the Town of Salisbury," The Lure of the Litchfield Hills, June, 1943, pp. 18-30.

5.

Salisbury Land Records 39/2, May 5, 1899.

Angus, Alice G., "Taconic in the Town of Salisbury, " The Lure of the Litchfield Hills, June 1943, pp. 18-30.

County House Inspections, Falls Village, CT, letter dated August 12, 1981, to Selig D. Sacks.

Hooper, Charles Edward, The Country House, Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1913.

Larcen, Donna, "'Ideal' Weekend Retreat Becomes Family Home," Hartford Courant, September 4, 1977, part D, p. 1.

Obermeyer, Henry, Obermeyer Hydraulic Turbines, Ltd., Collinsville, CT, interview, February 23, 1983.

Saint, Andrew, Richard Norman Shaw, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976.

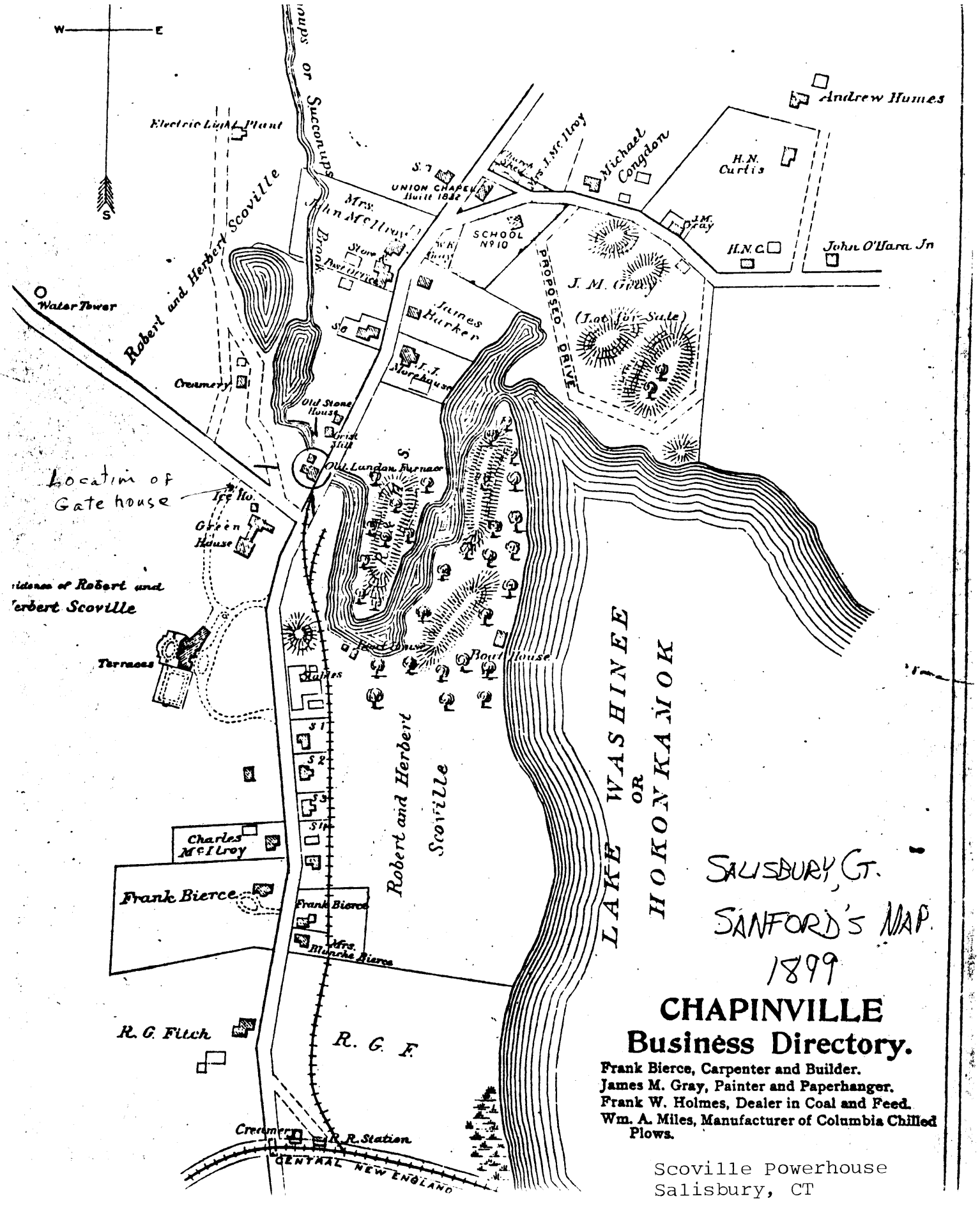
Salisbury Land Records, 39/2, 69/280, 76/594, 77/276, 95/510, 114/12.

Sclare, Lisa and Donald, Beaux-Arts Estates, A Guide to the Architecture of Long Island, New York: The Viking Press 1980.

Scoville, Herbert, Jr., and his cousin, Donald T. Warner, interviews, February/March 1983.

Scoville Papers at Scoville Memorial Library.

Scoville Scrapbook at Connecticut Historical Society.



Salisbury, Ct.
Sanford's Map
1899

CHAPINVILLE
Business Directory.

Frank Bierce, Carpenter and Builder.
James M. Gray, Painter and Paperhanger.
Frank W. Holmes, Dealer in Coal and Feed.
Wm. A. Miles, Manufacturer of Columbia Chilled Plows.

Scoville Powerhouse
Salisbury, CT