

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

SEP 6 1988

NATIONAL
REGISTER

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 E.A. Wildman & Co. Tobacco Warehouse
other names/site number Green Warehouse

2. Location

street & number 34 Bridge Street N/A not for publication
city, town New Milford N/A vicinity
state Connecticut code CT county Litchfield code 005 zip code 06776

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>2</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>2</u>	_____ Total

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

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] Aug. 30, 1988
Signature of certifying official Date
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
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. [Signature] 10/20/88
 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] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Agriculture/storage

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

vacant/not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Mid-nineteenth century post
and beam warehouse

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone

walls Clapboard

Brick

roof Asphalt

other _____

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The E.A. Wildman & Co. Tobacco Warehouse is a long, narrow, two-story frame building located on Bridge Street, in a commercial section of the village of New Milford, Connecticut. The building occupies most of a one-fifth acre lot squeezed between Middle Street, a short residential street of nineteenth-century homes to the east, and the tracks of the former Housatonic Railroad to the west. Its immediate neighbors include a contemporaneous Italianate brick block to the west, across the tracks, but the streetscape is composed primarily of twentieth-century buildings, most of them commercial. (Photograph 1).

Constructed in 1870 as a warehouse for packing and shipping locally grown cigar wrapper leaf tobacco, the building is of clapboard throughout, lighted by large 12 over 12 windows set in plank frames. Ornamental trim is minimal, confined to wide sill and corner boards and a frieze, the latter suggestive of a Greek Revival influence. The gable roof is asphalt-shingled, with a single small chimney stack and a gable-roofed cupola lighted by small six-light windows. (Photographs 1,2)

The warehouse measures 35' wide and 167' long, and consists of two distinct sections. The front section, 35' x 119', was built in two parts between 1870 and 1874. It is five bays wide and sixteen bays deep, and rests on a stone foundation faced with brick above ground level. The rear third of the building, 35' x 48', is a smaller tobacco warehouse, four bays wide and five bays deep, that originally stood in the rural Park Lane section northeast of the village of New Milford. It was dismantled and attached to the rear of the existing building in 1901.¹ It has no foundation, resting instead on small brick piers. There is also a brick boiler room and a 30' brick chimney stack attached to the east side of the rearmost section. The front and rear sections are similar in appearance and construction but differ markedly in condition. While the front section is well-preserved, the rear addition suffers from deterioration, including buckling floors, a sagging roof, and severe damage to several support members, which has resulted in the use of cables to hold the upper story together. (Photographs 2,5,7)

The building's facade is simple, set back from the sidewalk by a small, casually landscaped yard area. A one-story porch with a simple railing and posts of reinforced 2"x4"s stretches across the front. This porch was constructed during the 1950s. The large front door, located in the center bay, is an original rolling door, set into an interior sliding track.

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It features eight sunken panels, four above and four below. A secondary entry door in the easternmost bay of the facade is half-glazed and panelled. Above the porch is painted signage announcing the Green Warehouse Co., the building's longtime twentieth-century occupant. (Photographs 3,4)

The east and west elevations are virtually identical, except in door openings and in the rear addition. In the west elevation is a half-glazed panelled door in the fourth bay, and two additional doors in the rear addition, which originally opened onto a railroad siding platform which is no longer extant. In the east elevation is an opening in the fourth bay which is no longer in use, as well as a set of rolling barn doors with a double crossbuck pattern in the ninth bay, which would have been the main loading entry for farmers delivering wagonloads of tobacco. Attached to the 1901 addition to the rear is a one-story brick boiler room with a shed roof and segmentally-arched windows, the chimney stack, and a deteriorated platform which allows access to a door in the southernmost bay of the second floor of the 1901 addition. (Photographs 2, 5, 6)

The building's construction is a variation of mill construction common to New Milford's tobacco warehouses. Flooring and framing members are of oak and chestnut, locally cut and milled. Braced floor joists are upheld by single lengths of heavy 10" x 14" beams across the width of the building. These in turn are supported by chamfered 9" x 10" posts. Wedge-ended saddles or shoulders set atop the posts provide further reinforcement to the structure by distributing the load from the floor above. Each floor would have been laden when the warehouse was in use with hundreds of 30" x 52" cases of tobacco, each weighing 325-550 pounds. Ceilings in the front section are uniformly 11'. (Photographs 8, 9)

Inside the front entry is a foyer, faced by a floor-to-ceiling window with small panes, beyond which is a wainscoted room originally used for storage and later used for display of harness and fertilizer. To the right of the foyer is a similarly wainscoted office. (Photograph 10)

To the left of the foyer is a stairway which ascends to the second floor. There is a second set of stairs near the center of the building along the east wall, and a short flight of stairs from the second floor to the attic. The building is divided into large spaces on each floor by means of rough partitions which run from floor to ceiling. One middle partition on each floor consists of a clapboarded former exterior wall, marking the original 70' length of the building as built in 1870. The wall dividing the front section from the 1901 addition is likewise a former exterior wall. The interior walls are roughly finished with

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sheathing, and in some places with tongue-in-groove pine installed horizontally, probably after the turn of the century. A room in the front of the second floor was partially finished as an office during the twentieth century, but the rest of the building consists of large, roughly finished open spaces. There are three spaces on each floor in the front section, with the 1901 rear addition providing an additional large room on the first floor and another adjacent to the upper level. The stone basement of the front section was also used for tobacco storage. It has a concrete floor. With the exception of the offices and two other rooms, all of the open spaces in the building were used exclusively for the storage of cases of tobacco. The exceptions are the middle room on the second floor, used for sorting and processing tobacco during the winter months, heated for the comfort of workers by steam pipes around its perimeter; and the upper floor of the 1901 addition which was used as a sweat room. This room has a high ceiling and also has steam pipes around its perimeter. Heat provided by the boiler below raised the temperature in the room to 120° - 130° F. for four weeks to sweat the gum and greenness out of the tobacco, which had previously been packed in cases. (Photograph 9)

A number of features associated with tobacco warehousing survive in the building. A large tobacco press is located in the basement, and the original H. B. Smith Co. coal-fired boiler is in the boiler room. In addition, three primitive elevators are in the building, two in the front section and one in the 1901 addition. Instead of cars, these were hoist systems which used grappling hooks for lifting wooden cases of tobacco between floors, guided by ropes from large pulleys in the attic. Two of these were hand-powered and one had a hydraulic pump, which survives in the basement. (Photographs 11, 12)

¹ Green, Burton, New Milford - A Tobacco Town, unpublished manuscript in possession of the author, pp. 2 -3. Mr. Green has the contract for moving and re-assembling the smaller warehouse, dated January, 1901.

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)

Agriculture

Architecture

Period of Significance

1870-1930

Significant Dates

1870, 1901

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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

The E.A. Wildman & Co. Tobacco Warehouse in New Milford, Connecticut, is significant historically for its long association with the tobacco trade of western Connecticut's Housatonic Valley, of which New Milford was the center. (Criterion A) Built in 1870, it is a well-preserved example of the earliest tobacco warehouses constructed in New Milford, incorporating features and methods of construction that later became standard. It is the oldest of four former tobacco warehouses identified in the village of New Milford to survive. (Criterion C)

Between the end of the Civil War and the Great Depression of the 1930s, Connecticut's Housatonic Valley, along with the Connecticut Valley of central Connecticut, was the major supplier of high-quality wrapper leaf tobacco to the cigar industries of New York and Philadelphia and for export to Germany and the Netherlands. The deep, iron-rich soils of the river valleys of the Housatonic system and the fine sandy loams of its glacial ridges proved adaptable to sun-grown Broadleaf and, after 1879, Havana Seed Leaf tobacco. These tobacco varieties became, along with dairy products, the chief cash crops for farmers within a twenty-mile radius of New Milford during the mid-nineteenth century. By World War I, when local tobacco production peaked, over 3000 acres throughout New Milford were devoted to the crop.¹ The village of New Milford, central to the growing region and possessed of superior rail facilities, supported twelve packing firms which seasonally employed up to a thousand men, making tobacco the town's largest employer.² Tobacco remained a major local cash crop until after World War I, when the popularity of cigarettes, the development of synthetic cigar wrapper, foreign competition, and the Great Depression combined to send New Milford-area production into decline. By 1950 the crop was no longer grown for market in the Housatonic Valley.³

The E.A. Wildman & Co. Tobacco Warehouse, built in 1870, dates from the beginnings of New Milford's emergence as a major center of cigar wrapper leaf production. New Milford area farmers conducted their earliest experiments in tobacco culture for market during the late 1830s, on small plots with seed purchased in Hartford. The first shipment to market was

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in 1840, over the newly-completed Housatonic Railroad.⁴ By 1870 the tobacco production of Litchfield County, centered in New Milford, exceeded one million pounds and accounted for 15% of Connecticut's total crop.⁵ Production surged again during the 1880s, following the introduction of Havana Seed Leaf.

The earliest local tobacco dealers were growers themselves, who sorted and packed the crops they grew and purchased in barns or other out-buildings on their own farms. Following the Civil War, however, major New York and Philadelphia wholesalers who supplied the cigar industry began to form partnerships with local dealers and to build or lease warehouses along the tracks of the Housatonic Railroad in the village of New Milford. E.A. Wildman & Co. was one of these early partnership concerns and was in many ways typical of tobacco dealerships in New Milford. Edward A. Wildman was a native of the tobacco-growing "Plains" area in the Still River Valley of Brookfield, who began dealing in tobacco in 1866. Although the firm and the warehouse was initially known by his name, Wildman's chief role was to act as local buyer and agent for Julius Bunzl and Henry Dormitzer of New York, major leaf tobacco dealers to the cigar industry. Although Wildman was a partner and held a half interest in the warehouse from 1870 until 1877, it was Bunzl and Dormitzer who purchased a one-eighth acre lot from Dr. James Hine, financed and constructed the warehouse, and held title.⁶ The warehouse was originally 70' long, but was expanded to 120' by 1874. The operation was an average-sized one for New Milford. According to statistics assembled by the New York Tobacco Leaf, a trade publication, E.A. Wildman & Co. packed 450 cases of tobacco in 1878, a figure which put it at the exact median of the seven major dealerships then in business, the largest of which packed 665 cases.⁸ By 1882, following a boom in tobacco production caused by the introduction of Havana Seed Leaf, the firm's output had increased to 800-1000 cases a year.⁹ In 1900, a banner year for tobacco in New Milford, the capacity of the warehouse was expanded by the addition to the rear of the building of a smaller warehouse which had originally stood in the rural Park Lane district northeast of the village of New Milford, which was taken apart, moved, and reassembled; and by equipping the basement of the warehouse with skid-like wooden platforms.¹⁰

Ownership of the business and of the warehouse remained in the hands of the original partnership and its successors. William Green, a native of Kent, Connecticut, was made a partner in 1877 and became one of New Milford's most respected tobacco dealers, known throughout New England in tobacco circles. Edward A. Wildman left the firm in the 1890s. In 1905 Julius Marqusee, an associate of Bunzl, acquired sole control of the warehouse after Bunzl's death. In 1912 Marqusee sold out to William Green, his son Sherman D. Green, who had been a buyer for Marqusee in Wisconsin, and two other partners. Three generations of the Green family, all of them leading figures in the local tobacco trade, operated

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a tobacco business in the warehouse until 1950. The family also owned and ran the Manchester Cigar Co., a New Hampshire cigar factory, which at its peak manufactured a million cigars a day, for a period in the 1920s and produced "Green's Best" cigars in the New Milford warehouse. As a sideline, in 1912 Sherman D. Green opened a saddlery in the warehouse that gradually became its main use as the tobacco industry declined. It was continued by his son, Perry Green, who added another successful sideline in organic fertilizer. Perry Green was the last active tobacco dealer in the Housatonic Valley, surrendering his license in 1960. He also holds the rights to a tobacco strain developed by the family, registered with the U. S. D. A. as Housatonic Valley Havana Seed Leaf Type 52.¹¹ Thus the warehouse was associated with tobacco for a longer period than any other facility in New Milford. It was sold by Perry Green in 1985.

The significance of the E. A. Wildman & Co. Tobacco Warehouse lies not only in this long association with the local tobacco trade, but also in its physical qualities. Its size and scale, its sturdy method of construction, and its fine state of preservation make it an excellent example of a building from the earliest period of tobacco production in the Housatonic Valley. Its simple, barnlike structure and appearance, absent of the stylish touches which marked later warehouses, reflect the transition from storage of tobacco in farm outbuildings to specially built warehouses adjacent to the railroad. Its heavy oak and chestnut frame incorporates the earliest appearance in New Milford of the use of wedge-ended saddles at stress points to help distribute the massive loads of hundreds of tobacco cases, each weighing between 300 and 500 pounds. This framing feature became standard in later warehouses. Most of the few alterations to the building have been additions, and it contains such relics of mid-nineteenth century industrial technology as a tobacco press and the elaborate pulley systems which hoisted cases between floors. Its original doors, fenestration, and siding are intact. Its simplicity contrasts with the other extant tobacco warehouses in the village of New Milford. The Simon Solomon Tobacco Warehouse, built in 1872 on West Street, is clearly Italianate in style, with a bracketed cornice and flat roof, and has been converted into offices and apartments. The Carl Schoverling Tobacco Warehouse on Wellsville Avenue and the J. Stuart Halpine Tobacco Warehouse on West Street, which are individually listed on the National Register, are later, larger structures, dating from 1897 and 1900 respectively. These more technologically sophisticated warehouses incorporate such advanced features as freight elevators, sorting rooms lit by skylights, and specially-built sweat rooms with interior shutters for heat control, features entirely lacking in the more primitive Wildman warehouse. The significance of the Wildman warehouse is augmented by its 1901 addition, which although no longer in its original location is one of the few rural tobacco warehouses in New Milford to survive in any form.

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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Interview with Perry Green, October, 1987.
- ² New Milford Gazette, December 22, 1900, p. 4.
- ³ Green, Burton, New Milford-A Tobacco Town, unpublished mss., July, 1987, p. 7.
- ⁴ Danbury News, January 24, 1883, "The Beginnings of Connecticut Seed Leaf," reprinted from the New Milford Gazette.
- ⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics, State of Connecticut, 1870, p. 103.
- ⁶ New Milford Land Records, 51:602, 659, 54:70.
- ⁷ Beers, Frederick W., Atlas of Litchfield County, Conn., New York, 1874. P. 43, "Map of the Village of New Milford."
- ⁸ Danbury News, August 27, 1879, "The Tobacco Crop in the Housatonic Valley," reprinted from the New York Tobacco Leaf.
- ⁹ Orcutt, Rev. Samuel, History of the Towns of New Milford and Bridgewater, Connecticut, Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1882, p. 528.
- ¹⁰ New Milford Gazette, December 22, 1900, p. 4
- ¹¹ Interview with Perry Green, October, 1987.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Beers, Frederick W., Atlas of Litchfield County, Connecticut, N.Y.: 1874.

Danbury News, "The Tobacco Crop in the Housatonic Valley," Aug. 27, 1879, reprinted from the New York Tobacco Leaf.

Danbury News, "The Beginnings of Connecticut Seed Leaf," Jan. 24, 1883, reprinted from the New Milford Gazette.

Danbury News-Times, "Tobacco-All But the Memory is Gone From the Housatonic Valley," Oct. 31, 1968.

Gilchrist, Alison, National Register nominations for Carl Schoverling Tobacco Warehouse and J.S. Halpine Tobacco Warehouse, New Milford, Conn. Copies at Connecticut Historical Commission, 59 South Prospect St., Hartford, CT.

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:

Connecticut Historical Commission
59 S. Prospect St., Hartford, CT 06106

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property .23

UTM References

A 18 | 632400 | 4603760
 Zone Easting Northing

C []

B []
 Zone Easting Northing

D []

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The nominated property is identified on the accompanying Tax Assessor's Map of New Milford as Lot 77, and is outlined in bold. It is described in Volume 366, page 662 of the New Milford Land Records, located in the New Milford Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Main Street, New Milford, Conn.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification The boundary includes the entire property that has been associated historically with the building. It includes the original purchase of one-fifth of an acre by Julius Bunzl and Henry Dormitzer of New York City from James Hine and wife of New Milford on April 19, 1870, which is recorded in Volume 51, page 602 of the New Milford Land Records.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William E. Devlin
 organization N/A date August 21, 1988
 street & number 36 Park Lane West telephone (203) 354-1370
 city or town New Milford state Connecticut zip code 06776

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Green, Burton, "New Milford-A Tobacco Town," unpublished mss. in possession of author, July, 1987.

Hughes & Bailey, "A Bird's Eye View of New Milford," Milwaukee: 1906.

Martin, E. Paul, "Eighty-Plus Years in New Milford," mss. in New Milford Public Library, 1980.

New Milford Gazette, Obituary of William Green, April 11, 1919.

New Milford Gazette, "S.D. Green Dies Suddenly in Hospital," April 30, 1950

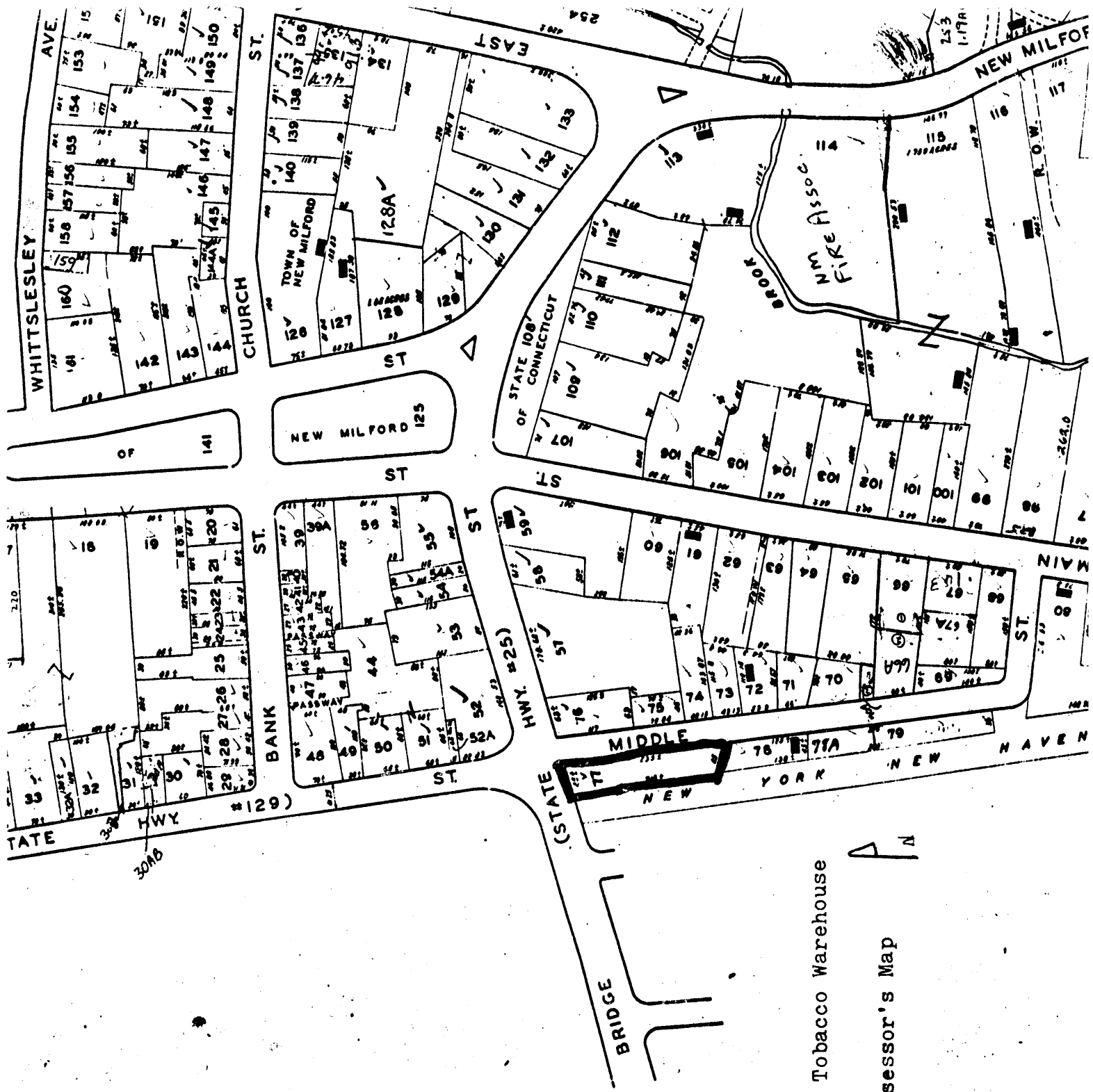
New Milford Land Records, Tax Assessor's Records, and Vital Records
Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, New Milford, Conn.

Orcutt, Rev. Samuel, History of the Towns of New Milford and Bridgewater, Conn., Hartford: Case, Lockwood & Brainard, 1882.

Tobacco Institute, Connecticut and Tobacco, Tobacco History Series, Washington, D.C.: 1972.

INTERVIEWS

Perry Green, former owner and tobacco dealer, October, 1987.



E.A. Wildman & Co. Tobacco Warehouse
 34 Bridge Street
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 New Milford Tax Assessor's Map
 Scale 1:200

SEE PLATE 149