

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HALL FARM

“The history of Bennington is more largely the history of the State than that of any other single town. It was the first town organized, and the independent and courageous spirit there developed gave direction to the Commonwealth.” - Henry Leonard Stillson, at the Bennington Centennial celebration, 1891

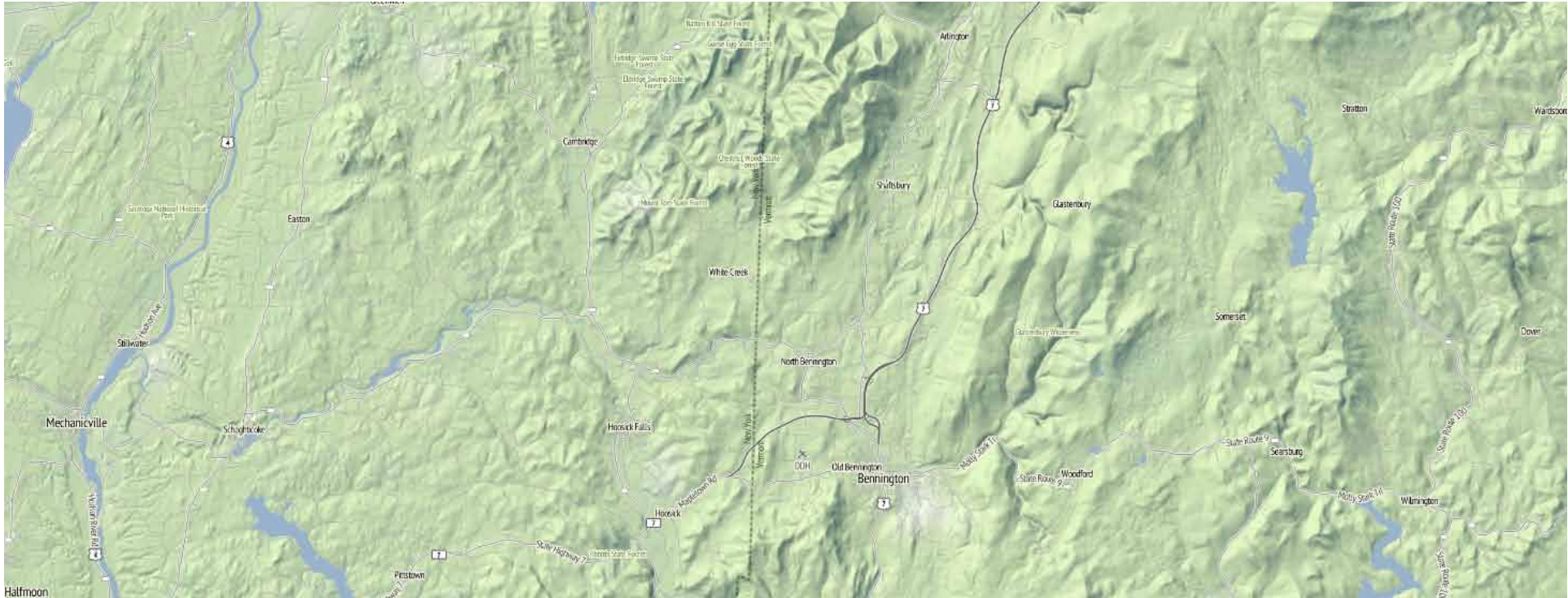
The Corn Crib’s context is both spatial and temporal. Neighbors walk past the Park-McCullough house, Hiland Hall farmhouse and garden, the Youth Agriculture Project, Lucien Hanks Community Garden, and over the Moseley Bridge to get to the Mile-Around woods and connecting trails. This physical route winds through the history of the site, and connecting those two threads is an important part of this project. The Corn Crib stands at the transition between historic houses and landscape - both conserved and in active use.

The structure is a product of the more than century-long farming practices conducted by the Halls, Parks and McCulloughs, who purchased neighbors’ land over time to form a 650 acre grain and dairy farm that served the community and employed hundreds of people over the course of its life from 1779 to 1993.

Farm and family history are entwined, with the major figures ranging from farmers to lawyers, politicians, industrial moguls, historians, artists and philanthropists. Despite the changes in the family businesses (and its increasing wealth and size) the farm continued operation, utilizing advanced practices and topographical sensitivity to raise cattle, chickens and sheep alongside corn, oats, vegetables and manicured formal gardens.

Concurrent with some of that operation, and since the shuttering of the dairy farm operation, large swaths of the farm were given to the Fund for North Bennington and Vermont Land Trust for agricultural conservation purposes, with smaller parcels sold to private owners. Now the landscape supports a network of trails alongside community gardens, horse pastures, hay fields and private homes.

Those transitions coupled with the timeless space of the landscape are what make the site an opportunity for learning and creation.



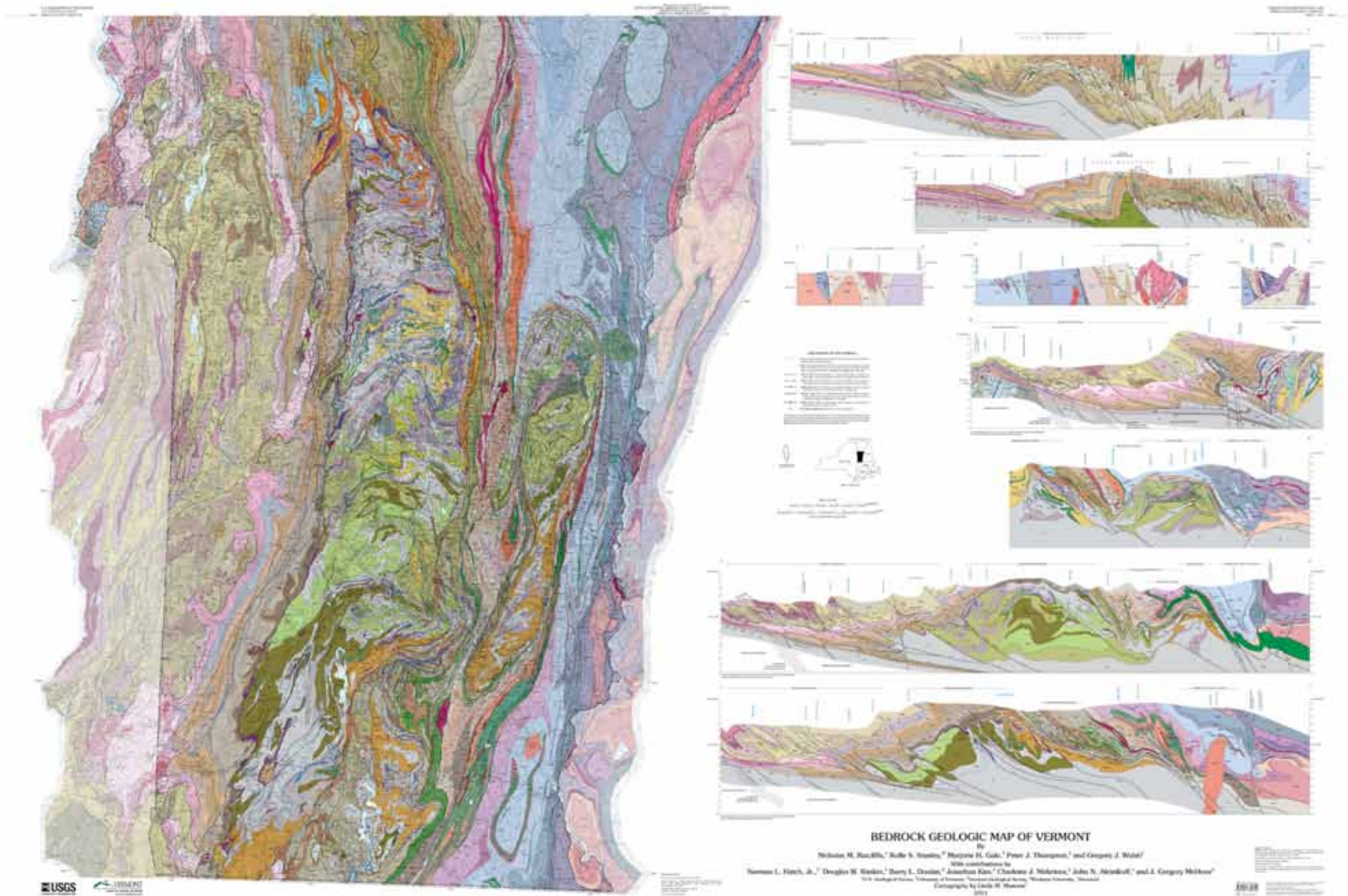
NATURAL LANDSCAPE

North Bennington resides in a valley between the Taconic Mountains and the Green Mountains within which lies Otter Creek, the Batten Kill, and the Waloomsac river. Limestone, Taconic Schist and Silurian rock make up the geology of the valley, which funnels into the Hudson River Valley.

As an access point to the larger scope of geological appreciation at a regional and national level, Bennington is a southern entrance to the Long Trail, 270 miles of hiking paths laid out by the Green Mountain Club. It is the nation's oldest long distance hiking trail, and was the inspiration for the Appalachian Trail, which joins the LT for 100 miles.



Cut through Syncline and Anticline in the Ordovician Bascom Fm, Bennington Bypass (Photo: Tom Eliassen, 2003).
Courtesy of the Vermont Geological Survey



Bedrock Geological map of southern Vermont, 2011. Courtesy Vermont Geological Survey

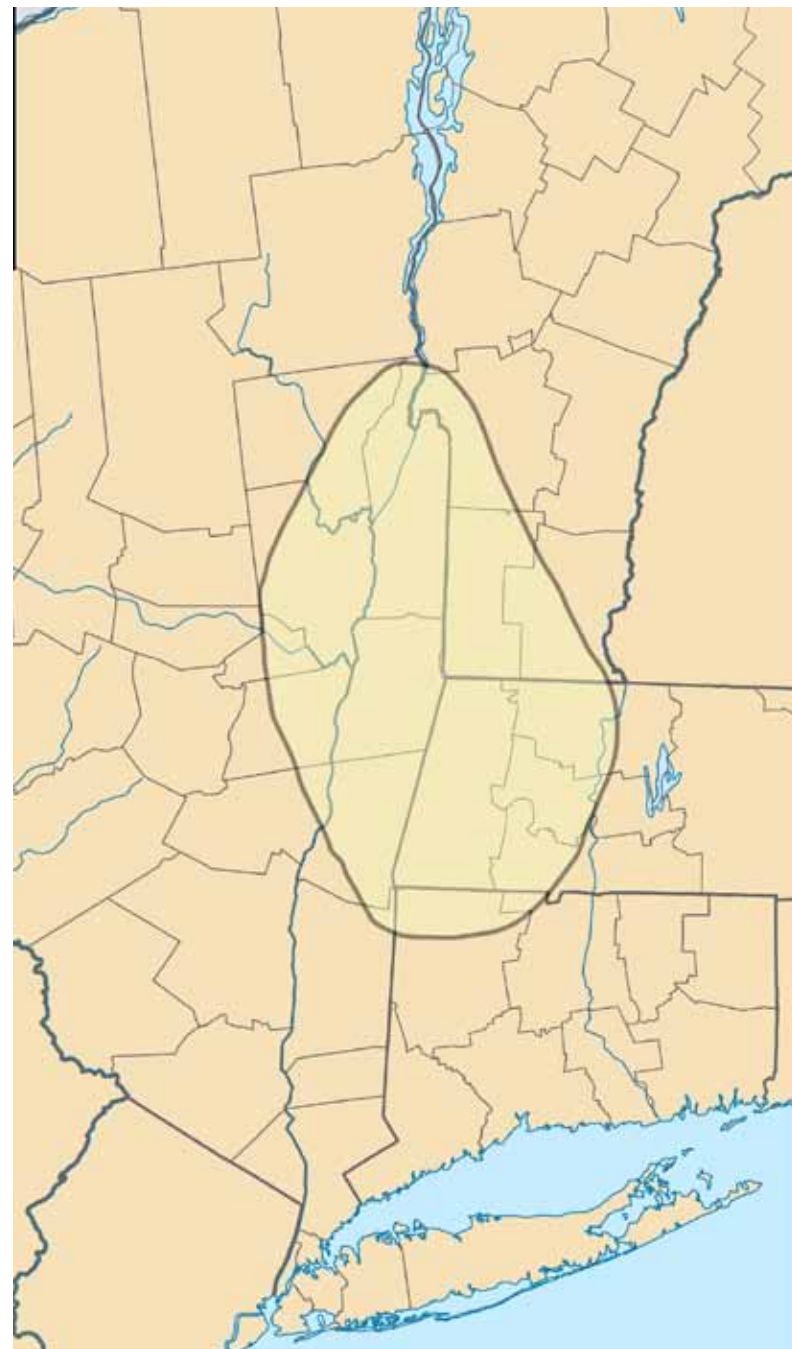
THE DAWN LANDS

Southwest Vermont is home to the Iroquois, Mahican (Mohican) and Abenaki Peoples. The word Abenaki means “people of the dawnlands”. When compared to the more interior Algonquian peoples, they call themselves Wôbanuok, meaning “Easterners”. They have lived in the region for thousands of years. Before European colonization, they made their homes in birch-skinned dome shapes or long hoop houses, with tipis for the winter to shed snow, lined with bear and deer skins for warmth. They practiced complex farming, and would surely have hunted in the Taconic mountains and fished in the Batten Kill, which even today is rich in trout.

Before the French and British arrived, the tribes and Peoples joined the Wabenaki Confederacy. The confederacy united five North American Algonquian language-speaking First Nations Peoples. It played a key role in the American Revolution, with two of its constituent peoples signing the Treaty of Watertown in 1776.

Native Peoples in the region sided primarily with the French, who had claimed Vermont during the early Colonial period. The Wabenaki fought alongside them against the British in six major wars before their eventual defeat in 1763 in the Seven Years’ War (locally referred to as the French and Indian War). For many years after the nearby colonies, especially New Hampshire and New York, disputed control of Vermont, which at that time was called the New Hampshire Grants.

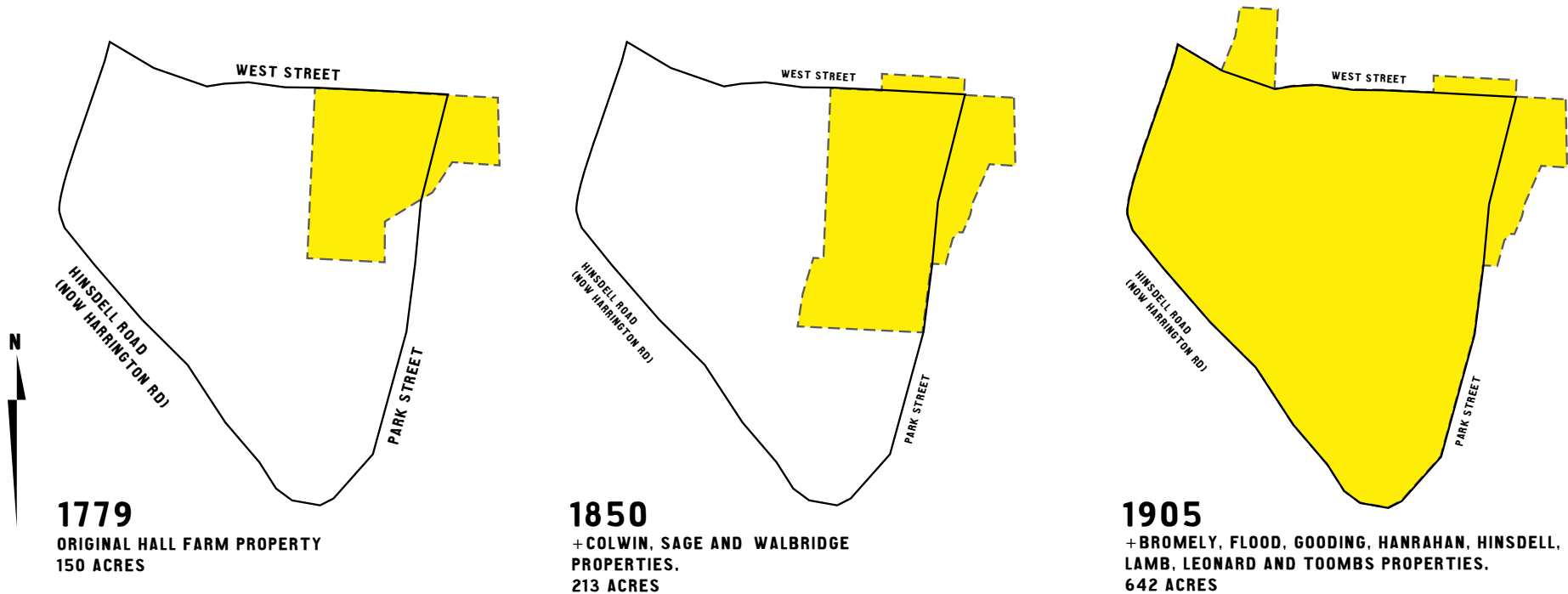
European settlers who held land titles granted by these colonies were opposed by the Green Mountain Boys militia, who eventually prevailed in creating an independent state, the Vermont Republic. Founded in 1777 during the Revolutionary War, the republic lasted for fourteen years. Aside from the Thirteen Colonies, Vermont is one of only four U.S. states (along with Texas, Hawaii, and California) to have been a sovereign state in its past. In 1791, Vermont joined the United States as the 14th state, the first in addition to the original 13 Colonies. It abolished slavery while still independent, and upon joining the Union became the first state to have done so.



Historic Territory of the Mahicans



6 Topography of Hall Farm property, with modern day North Bennington to the upper right.



THE BEGINNINGS OF THE HALL FARM

The Hall Farm is tied closely to the families that owned it over the years. It is documented as far back as 1779, as 150 acres owned by Thomas Hall. He passed it down to his son Nathaniel Hall and wife Abigail (Hubbard) Hall. They ran the farm and raised their son, Hiland Hall. He was adamant about studying history and was a fast study in law, passing the bar at 21 years old. His list of jobs begins as a lawyer in Bennington and quickly expands from there.

He was a representative of his town in the legislature in 1827, clerk of the county court in 1828, state attorney for the county court in 1828, and state attorney for the county from 1829 to 1831. In January, 1833, he was elected to fill a vacancy in Congress and served until March 3, 1843. During the next decade and a half he filled the offices of state bank commissioner, 1843-1846, judge of the supreme court of Vermont, 1846-1850, second comptroller of the treasury, 1850-1851, and federal land commissioner for California 1851-1854. Up to this time, Hiland had been a member of the Whig party, but his

anti-slavery principles led him in the middle fifties to identify himself with the rising Republican party. He was a member of the Vermont delegation to the Republican National Convention in 1856, and was nominated as the Republican candidate for governor in 1858. He was elected by a substantial majority, and reelected for a second term in 1859. He was a major supporter of the Bennington Monument.

He married Dolly Tuttle Davis and the two had a daughter, Laura Van der Spiegel Hall. She and a young Bennington lawyer Trenor Park became involved. The two married in 1846 and had two daughters, Eliza Hall Park and Laura Lila Park. The family went west, where Trenor became a land claims lawyer and managed the Mariposa gold mines. They had a son, Trenor Luther Park, and then returned to Vermont. Trenor bought the farm from Hiland Hall, and built a huge mansion (the “Big House”) adjacent to the Hall farmhouse in 1865.

Similar to Hiland's career growth, Trenor's success increased exponentially over the next few decades with risky business ventures, namely a controlling interest in the Panama Railroad, which he ultimately sold for 7 million dollars.

The Park's eldest daughter, Eliza ("Lizzie") Park, married John G. McCullough, one of her father's business associates in California. After Trenor's death (on a steamship crossing through Panama) in 1882 she bought out her siblings' interest in the Big House, and received the Hall Farm as part of her inheritance.

Lizzie's and John's son, Hall Park McCullough, inherited the farm upon her death, and his interests in early Americana began to reflect on the how he approached the farm and houses on the property. His notes are copious. At the height of the farm's operation, the lands were growing potatoes, oats, hay, wheat, corn, peas, beans and alfalfa. Woods were managed for timber, and the barns were full of livestock. Yearly averages from 1942 list 24 Jersey cows, 90 Sheep, 14 Pigs, 17 Horses, 50 Ducks, and 1600 Chickens

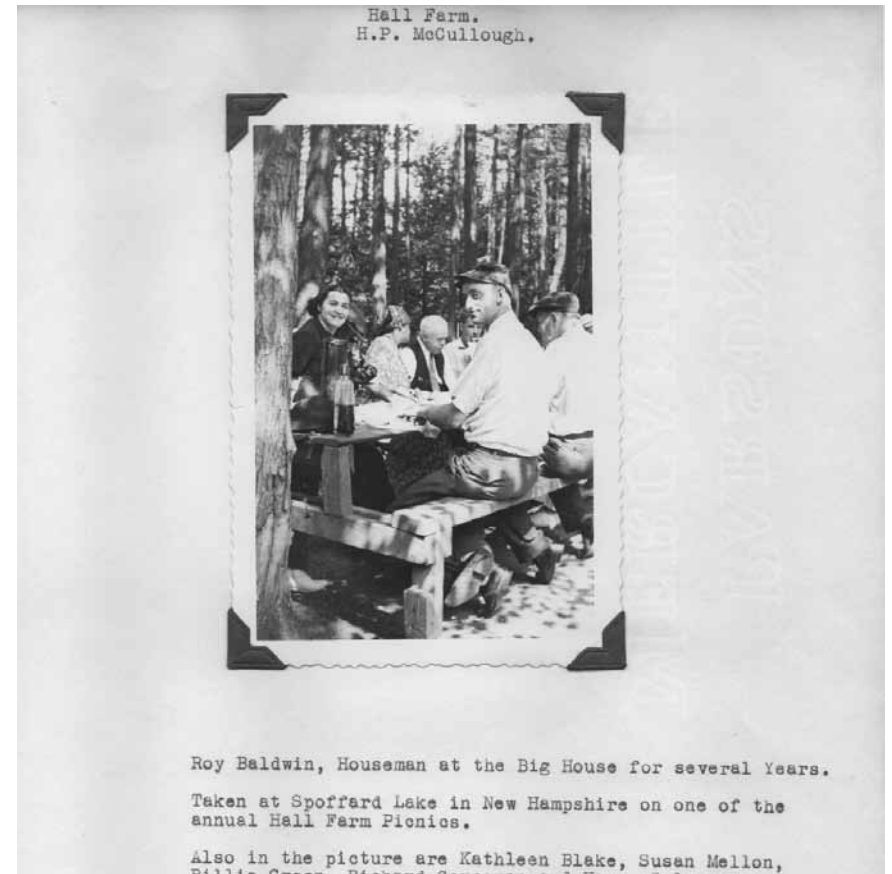
Along with detailed farm records, he created a book of every employee who worked on the farm from 1895 to 1949. This compilation is distinct from the other cataloguing and business documents of the farm. It is clear that this was a hobby, not a requirement, and is a generous way to include the employees in a story otherwise dominated by one family.



The book is a glimpse into the 1940s, and is also the decade when the Corn Crib was constructed, the largest of three on the farm. The primary subject of the book is the employees and it includes photos, salaries and personal

details, sometimes including workers' obituaries when they appeared in the newspaper. Photos range from posed to in-action shots while working, fishing, or while on yearly farm picnics. Some snapshots are in recognizable places in the landscape, some reveal farming practices that have no other surviving artifacts on the grounds or in the Park-McCullough archive.

Hall also mentions the farm's finances: according to his survey, it lost money every year in increasing sums, due to the fact that it paid full salaries to employees after retirement. What is also clear is a strong loyalty to the farm, with some employees staying on for 30, 40 or even 50 years. The farm expanded until the 1970s, and documents abound from these decades.



HALL FARM
H.P. McCullough.

Hall Farm Employees by the Decade.

1900.

James Riley
Edwin Eddy
Luman Russell
Clarence Harrington
Merritt Hewitt
Elmer Harrington
Elias Elwell
William Green
Merton Olin
W. E. Simonds

These were the year around workers on Hall Farm in 1900.
The base rate of pay was \$22.50 per month with board.

The average monthly expenditures for the Farm were about \$425.00 and it took about \$150.00 from the Bank to balance the monthly statement.

1910.

Elias Elwell * William Green *
Luman Russell *
Clarence Harrington *
Elmer Harrington *
Asahael Salmon
John DeLong
Charles Johnson
Harry Lathrop
Harry Colvin
Michael Corcoran
Edwin Eddy

The average wage has by this decade gone up to \$37.08 per mo.

Monthly expenditures now mount up to around \$500.00 per mo.

50 percent of the employees have been with Hall Farm 10 yrs or more.

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HALL FARM.
H.P. McCullough.

1920.

Elias Elwell **
Clarence Harrington **
Elmer Harrington **
William Harrington
John DeLong *
Ernest Flanders
Edward Cone
Patrick McCarthy
Rollin Coy
Edward Austin
Charles Johnson *
Luman Russell **
Cornelius McCarthy
Michael Morrissey
Harold Flanders
Leslie Harrington
Frank Moon
Ransom Salmon
Harry Colvin *
Victor Kenyon.

William Green **
Edwin Eddy **

Year round employees in 1920. Average wage \$78.00 per mo.
Expenditures jumped up to average about \$1500.00 per mo.
40 percent have been at the farm 10 yrs or more,

1930.

Elias Elwell ***
Clarence Harrington ***
Elmer Harrington ***
William Harrington *
John DeLong **
Ernest Flanders *
Patrick McCarthy *
Rollin Coy *
Ellis Bouplon
Edward Cone *
Charles Johnson **
Lloyd Pratt
Michael Morrissey *
Arthur Rugg
Frank Moon *
Martin Elwell
Sealy Wilkinson
Cornelius McCarthy *
Charles Becker

Ransom Salmon *
William Green ***
Edwin Eddy ***

Average Wage rate in 1930 was \$83.00 per month.
Expenditures averaged about \$2,200.00 per mo.

77 percent of the employees have been at the farm 10 yrs. or more.

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HALL FARM EMPLOYEES

H. P. Mc CULLOUGH



Name Ellis Bouplon
Date of Birth 1892
Nationality Born in White Creek, New York.
Year Employed Apr. 1920- 1933
Years of Service 13 Yrs. Died in 1933. Died 20 Jan. 1933
Monthly Compensation \$83.00 per Mo.
Occupation Teamster

Date 2/13/49.

HALL FARM EMPLOYEES

H. P. Mc CULLOUGH



Name Ransom "Happy" Salmon
Date of Birth May 22nd., 1892
Nationality Born in Hoosic, New York.
Year Employed Nov. 1910-1917. 1923 to present.
Years of Service 32 Yrs.
Monthly Compensation \$40.00 per Month
Occupation Farm Hand. Chauffeur.

Date 1/26/49.

HALL FARM EMPLOYEES

H. P. Mc CULLOUGH



JAMES (Jimmy) RILEY.

Name; Jimmy Riley
Date of Birth; 1830.
Nationality; Born in Ireland.
Year employed; Walked from New York on landing
stopped over night at Hall Farm, went on fur-
ther north, and returned and started here in
the fall of 1849. Died 13 April, 1906.
Years of Service; 57 years.
Monthly compensation; In 1893 wages \$20, board
\$10.72
Occupation; Gardner.

Date May 16, 1949.

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HALL FARM EMPLOYEES

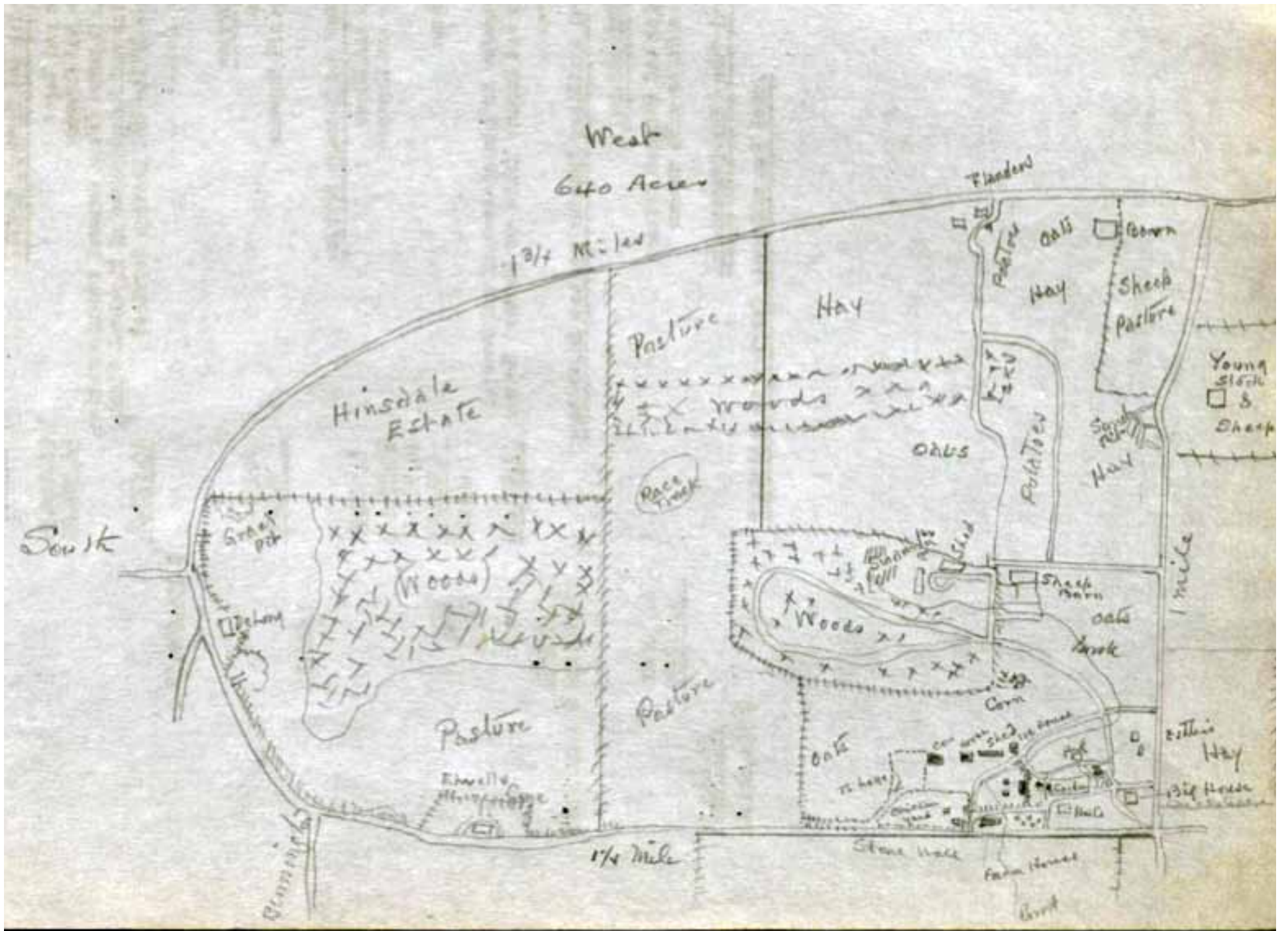
H. P. Mc CULLOUGH

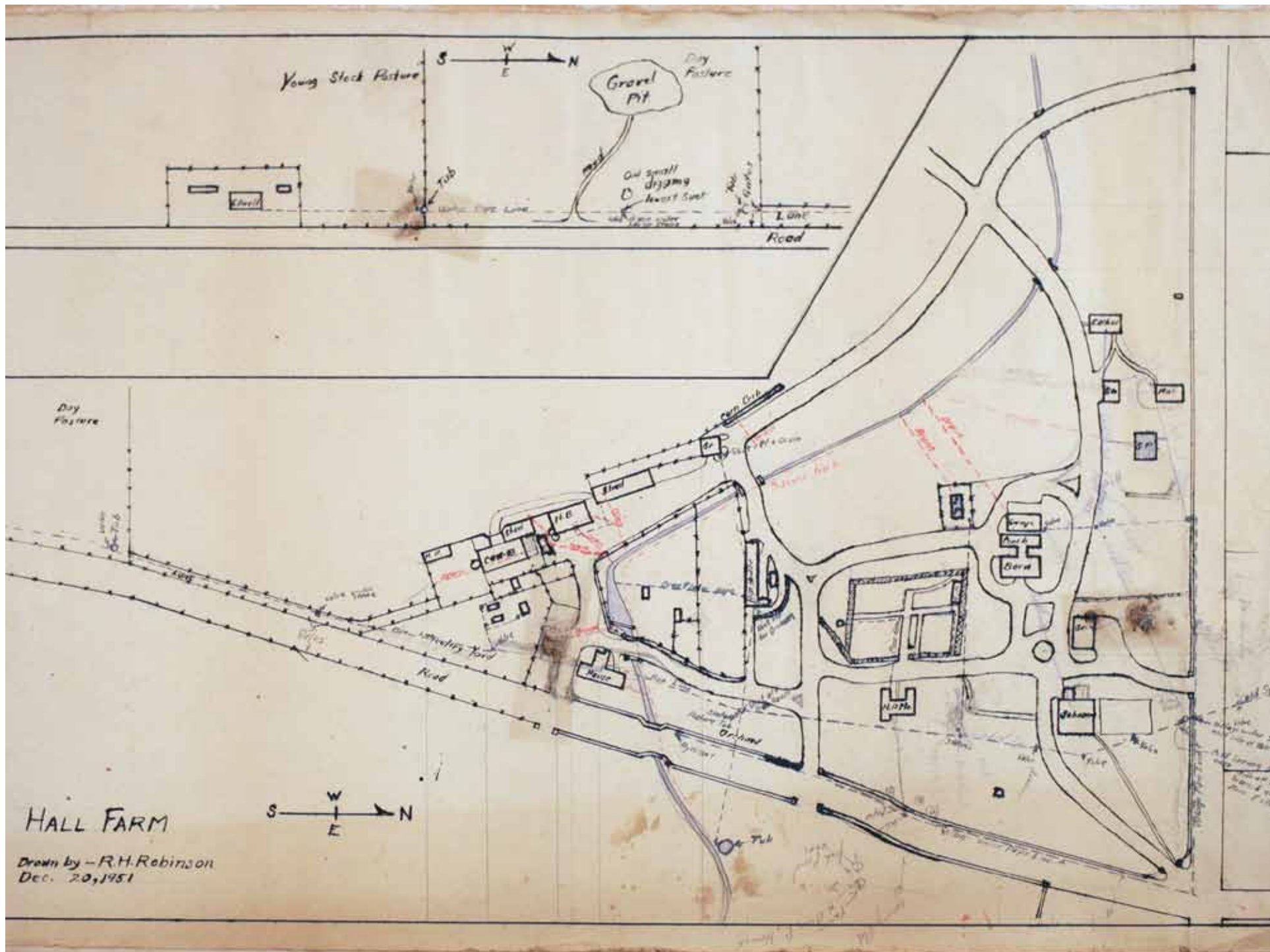


Name Leon Cone
Date of Birth June 7th., 1913
Nationality Born in Shaftsbury, Vermont
Year Employed July, 1933 - Apr 1, 1949
Years of Service 16 yrs.
Monthly Compensation Started at \$83.00 per Month
Occupation Farm Hand, Butter Maker, Teamster.

Date 1/26/49.

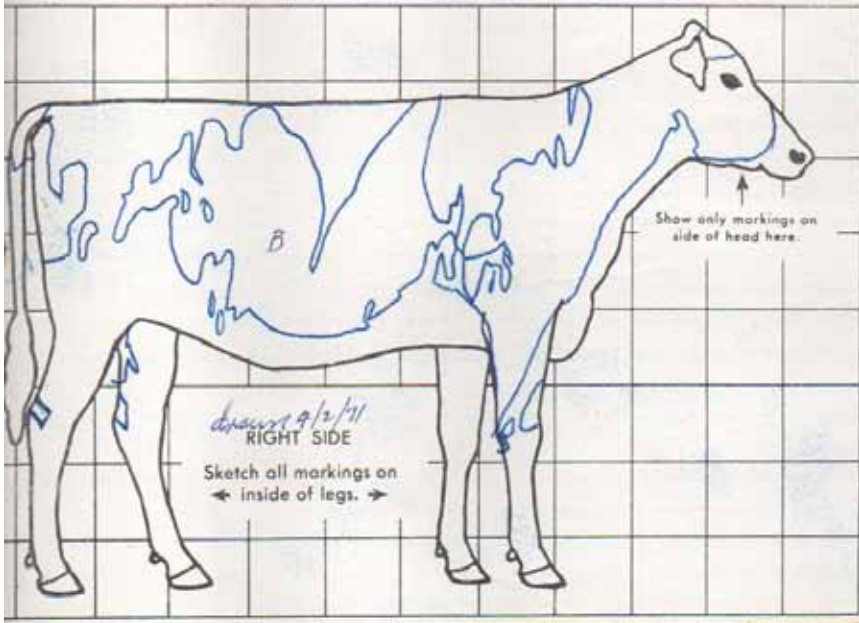
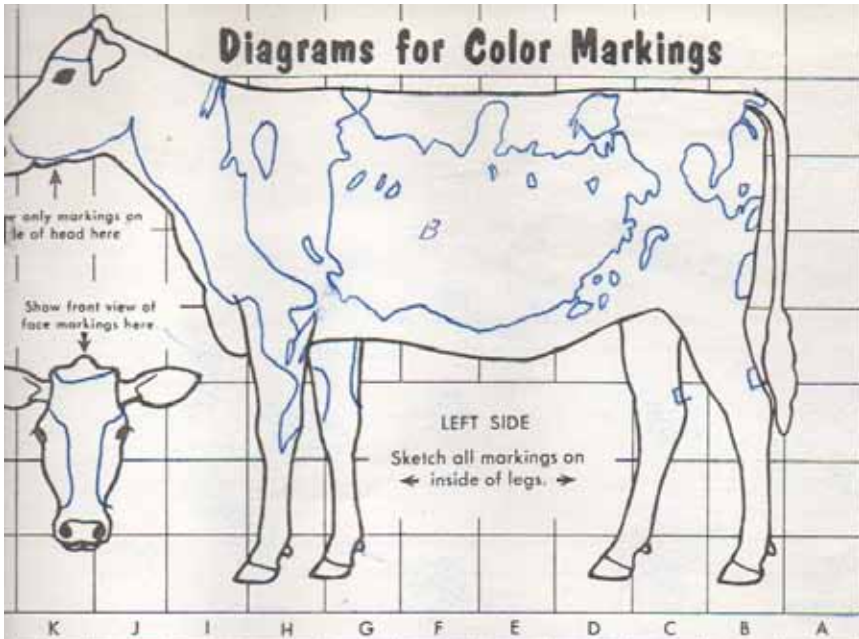
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14 Aerial of property looking west, 1954



BARN NAME *Walloomsac Model Idene*

Barn No. *975*

H. B. No. *7802627*

E. T. No. *13WAR 3161* *4/16/71*

Born *April 1, 1971*

Bred by *John & Mae Cullough*

Address *21. Bennington, VT*

Purchased from

Address

Date Purchased

Cost \$

Sold to *Lisa Campbell*

Address *Salem, N.Y.*

Price \$ *525.00*

Date of Sale *10/2/73*

Transfer Filed

Date Vaccinated

Died

Cause

BANG'S TEST		TB TEST	
Date	Result	Date	Result
		<i>11/2/72</i>	<i>N</i>

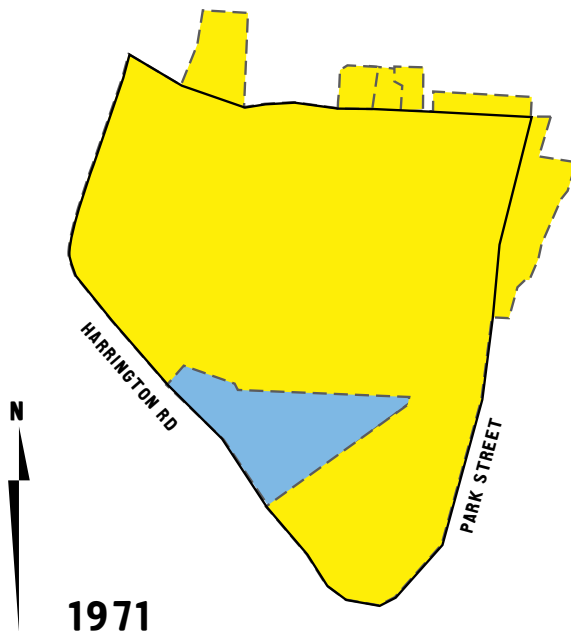
The Hall Farm cattle book contains 1,095 entries, with every cow's markings, pedigree and vaccinations noted with intense detail. This is cow #975 - Walloomsac Model Idene, sold in 1971 for \$525

SIRE *Longfellow [unclear] Type [unclear] 1/12/25*
ABS-611-2-2490 P.A. April 1971
2-2490 16798-3-57-579 P-D
2-2490 16244-596 2500 18
2-2490 d. 100-970 78976 0/168 1-55
dams 100-770 72-346

DAM *Walloomsac Model Idene 688952*
831 0180
01118 756 mm 2-202 12121-3-8-457
01118 756 mm 2-246 15599-3-6-565
01118 756 mm 2-2 764 6394-3-7-234

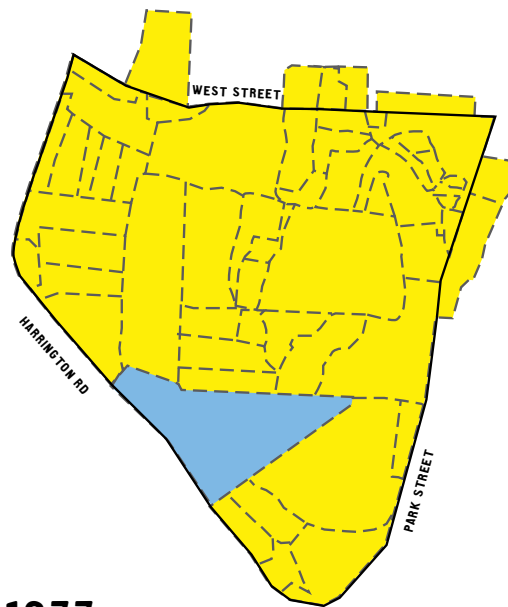
PEDIGREE
Canadian Royal Project 1305 460
495 397 1989
2-2490 1490 -3-54-531 469-10
1985
296 Longfellow 102-170 52-547
2-2490 d. 103-970 58-466 0/168 1-25
Lisa Campbell 1305 460 989-1985
4-9 (2) 411 mm 2-2 363 1546-48-038
7-2 mm 2-2 363 30651-47-1269
411 mm 2-2 400 mm
Walloomsac Model Idene 1280-1280
687-85
2-2490 17278-3-57-534 P-D
2-2490 17370 523-165-9
01118 d. 101-270 50-966
2-2490 99-670 80-966 0/168 1-70
Walloomsac Model Idene 608 336 2
698 279
248 mm x 01118 205 10316-4-3-440
01118 756 mm 2-2 10319-4-4-449

Genealogy of Walloomsac Model Idene 11-22-57
2-2490 1305 460 1305 460 -198
2-2490 d. 103-550 53-376 0/168 1-10
4-95-813 200 74 11 mm 34 308655746-3-387
1-16-71 273 640
Genealogy of Walloomsac Model Idene 7-2-57
1055 1280 d. 11215-3-75-835
Genealogy of Walloomsac Model Idene 7-2-57
Genealogy of Walloomsac Model Idene 7-2-57
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Genealogy of Walloomsac Model Idene 7-2-57



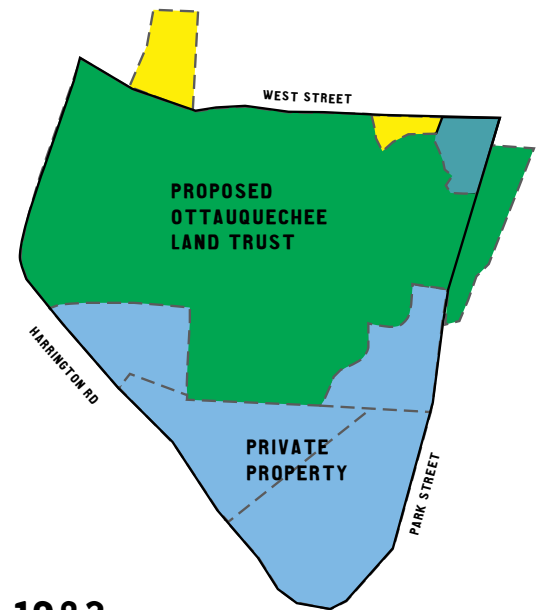
1971

CATTLE HERD SOLD
LAND RENTED TO VARIOUS FARMERS FOR
ROUGHLY A DECADE



1977

68 PARCELS POSSIBLE FOR SALE



1983

PARK STREET LOT SOLD TO KENNETH NOLAND
"OTTAUQUECHEE LAND TRUST" PROPOSED TO
PRESERVE FARM AND LANDSCAPE

DISBURSEMENT AND CHANGE

In the 1970s, the McCullough family was unable to support the farm and much of their other expenses, so the herd was sold and the farmlands were rented to local farmers for a decade to little success. The Big House was given to a nonprofit organization set up to transform it into a living history museum. In the 80s and 90s, some portions of the land were given to the Vermont Land Trust and Fund for North Bennington, others sold to private owners with strict deed restrictions against development. The sculptor Kenneth Noland acquired the two large milking parlors and turned them into studios, while other barns sat unoccupied for years. Two burned down, others were dismantled. The smaller of two corn cribs and the large breeding barn is no longer on the site, that field is now the Lucien Hanks community garden.

In 1978, the newly formed Park-McCullough association organized a sculpture show, highlighting a local community of steel sculptors orbiting

around Bennington College. The 15 sculptors chosen for the exhibition were either local or related to the town in some way, and the list of artists reads like a who's who in the art world of the late 1970s. David Amesly, Walter Darby Bannard, Willard Boepple, Anthony Caro, Brower Hatcher, Colin Kerrigan, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Nicholas Pearson, Larry Poons, David Smith, Margaret Swan, Roger Williams, Isaac Whitkin, and James Wolfe. Multiple pieces from each artist were arranged on a large gravel patch on the property and displayed for three months in a free exhibition.

The Hall Farm continued operation until the early 1990s, but with a smaller footprint and decreasing staff. Bud Briggs was the last employee of the family there, and stayed on with the Park-McCullough Association as the groundskeeper until 2010.

15 SCULPTORS IN STEEL AROUND BENNINGTON
1963-1978



The Park-McCullough House Association
North Bennington, Vermont



Ordnance, 1971
steel, rusted and varnished, 4' 3" x 6' 4" x 11' 11"
Lent by the artist



Dominion Day Flats, 1974
steel, rusted and varnished, 7' 1" x 15' 1" x 6' 1"
Collection: Kenneth Noland



Farm buildings in the 1980s, looking South. The hay drying barn, corn crib, large poultry barn, secondary corn crib can be seen. Mount Anthony is in the distance.



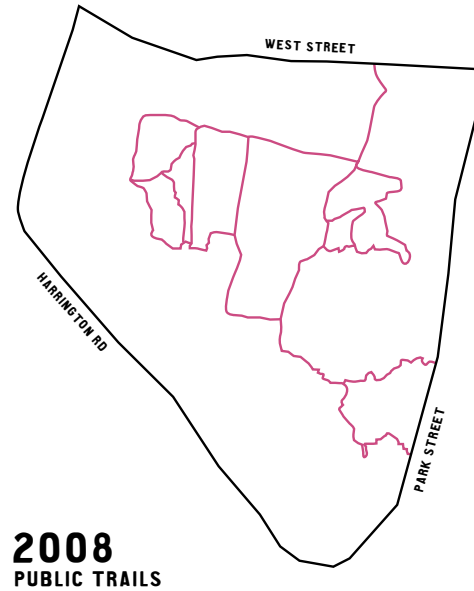
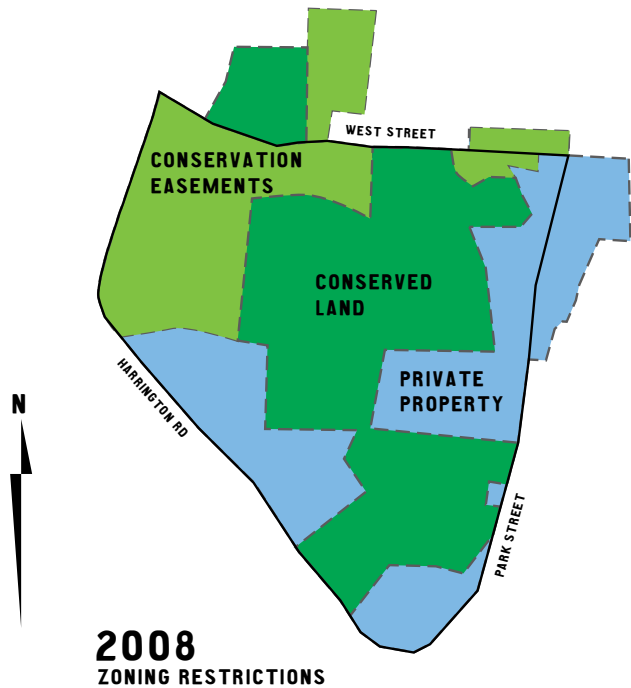
Looking northwest from park street. The milking parlors, manager's house and other support structures.



Corn field, adjacent to West St, looking East. 1985



Hanrahan pasture and barn, looking West Northwest



THE SITE TODAY

Since the 1990s, the landscape of Hall Farm has shifted towards a public use, with a network of walking trails available to neighbors, orbiting around the Mile-Around woods. A one mile walk was originally set up by Trenor Park to help remedy a serious case of anxiety (perhaps brought on by his complex business projects), which he accomplished without disturbing a single living tree. It has been maintained since its creation and in 1994 Ethel McCullough Scott and Bill Scott donated the woods to the Fund for North Bennington, which now manages over 400 acres of land in and around the village.

The land is in active agricultural use, and doubles as public space, with walking trails and expansive views. The cost of maintaining these areas is principally covered by gifts from the public. The Corn Crib sits in the borderline between public uses, private ownership, and conserved agricultural land. It is a marker of the past, and at present stands as an unused structure in the landscape.





View looking east-southeast from Trillium Woods, 2010



Grove road leading to the Mile Around Woods



Lucein Hanks Community garden, looking southeast



Looking southeast towards Mount Anthony, across active hayfields



24 Aerial of structures, before the installation of Moseley bridge, ca. 2012



The addition of the historic Moseley wrought iron bridge creates a new trio of historic structures. 2013



26 View of the hillside and west face of the Corn Crib, 2013.



The trio of historic structures, February 2014