

**Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Outstanding Resource Values:
Outstanding Resource Value: Historic and Cultural Landscape**

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November 23, 2009

Regionally Significant Histories in the study area:

Early English Settlement Patterns

Industrial and Economic Development

Commerce and the Farmington Canal

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The Tobacco Valley

Conservation and Development

Background

While not a comprehensive inventory of all culturally significant sites (or outstanding resource values, ORVs) in the proposed Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Study areas, this document surveys those properties near or adjacent to the river that fit into broader historic themes on the cultural landscape. In the 1980s, Robert Z. Melnick, Emma Jane Saxe, and Daniel Sponn published the bulletin, "Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park System" in which they articulated a whole new way of interpreting an unplanned landscape. They defined a "rural historic landscape as "a geographic area that historically has been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, roads and waterways, and natural features." Cultural landscapes are therefore geographic areas that include both natural and cultural resources and particularly those that integrate the two. The following examines significant histories connected to the Lower Farmington River and its corridor, which may be articulated in publically recognized historic and cultural resources: buildings, structures, circulation patterns such as roads and trails, land use and development, spatial and settlement patterns, and the use of natural resources, particularly for agriculture and industry.

In a 2009 report, Dr. Kenneth L. Feder and Mark L. Banks cited several historic districts and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places found near or adjacent to the Farmington River and Salmon Brook. Feder and Banks agreed that their status as properties listed on the National Register, an honorary list of historic resources created in 1966 by the National Historic Preservation Act, acknowledges

their importance and supports their inclusion as ORVs. National Register listings, however, are not necessarily representative of the entire historic landscape, nor are they always the most significant themes of the historic landscape. The National Register's resources tend to reflect the focus of local planning preservation efforts and emphasize European English resources and resources of architectural importance. In recent years, preservationists have added more industrial sites, but it is important to note that most of the properties on the National Register reflect the development of primarily middle to upper-class Anglo-American communities from the 1600s through the 1950s, particularly those sites of architectural significance. This is especially true in Connecticut. Furthermore, the National Register does not recognize cultural resources less than fifty years old and therefore any significant resources from the late twentieth century, particularly as related to the recreational uses of the river during that era, have not been officially recognized with a listing. Most of the study area's nationally recognized ORVs contributed to the development of the river within four historically significant contexts: agricultural settlement including the tobacco valley, religious revivalism and the Underground Railroad, transportation and commerce, and urban/industrial development.¹

Historical Contexts

Pre-history and Native Settlement

The archaeological record has helped document human settlement in the Farmington River Valley. According to the Feder and Banks report, humans initially populated the region from the end of the Pleistocene 11,000 years ago through to the Early Archaic period between 10,000 and 8,000 years ago. As they began to establish stable economic systems during the next 3000- 4000 years the river functioned as a camping and trading center. Settlements grew larger during the Woodland period and ultimately domesticated crops (primarily maize, beans, and squash) became part of native subsistence. By the time English colonists arrived, native peoples lived in villages at current-day Windsor, Farmington, and Simsbury. The people in the Farmington River Valley named it *Tunxis Sepus* ("bend on the little river").² The arrival of explorers, missionaries, and migrants

¹ The state of Connecticut also keeps a State Register of Historic Places to record locally significant properties. These resources do not rise to the same standards of national significance and architectural integrity as the National Register. We have decided not to include all of the State Register sites in this cultural landscape review. First, the state register sites have a very low threshold for significance. Listing is usually motivated by the desire to receive tax credits to preserve or rehabilitate a property. Second, State Register sites require limited documentation, especially for historical significance and the state has not maintained a single, comprehensive list of consistent standards over the years. Third, since this river designation is about national significance, it seems logical that we emphasize the National Register properties, though we have also cited some resources recognized by the HABS/HAER inventory. HABS/HAER (Historic American Building Survey/ Historic American Engineering Record) is an older National Park Service administered federal program begun in 1935 that documents historically significant resources that may not have maintained their "architectural integrity." This means that the physical structure has changed so significantly over the years through alterations or decay that it does not resemble the era of its importance and no longer conveys that significance.

² Christopher Bickford, *Farmington in Connecticut* (Canaan, N.H.: Phoenix Pub, 1982), 1.

from Europe changed these communities economically, socially, culturally and often politically.

The Simsbury town website describes the 490 acres making up the East Weatogue Historic District. Located in Simsbury along East Weatogue Street and Hartford Road east of Farmington River, the district reflects the settlements of the Massacoe Indians, a group closely related to the Tunxis who lived in Farmington. Archaeologists have found many items from an Indian village dating 8000 years ago. However, as an example of the inconsistency with which resource managers have identified historically significant ORVs, the National Register form for the East Weatogue Historic District only emphasizes its historical significance regarding early English settlement.³ Native Americans continue to live in Connecticut throughout the modern period, but there are few non-archaeological historic sites that document their post-colonial history.

Early English Agriculture and Settlement

Native Americans knew the shallow and winding Farmington River as the Tunxis River. Also called as the Great River, the Windsor Ferry River, and the Rivulet, the river created acres of fertile soil. These meadowlands, the waterway's opportunities for trade, and the availability of former Indian lands attracted the first English settlers to areas of the Farmington River Valley where they settled among the Tunxis Indians.⁴

These early settlement patterns echoed that of English agricultural villages. Rather than individual farms, settlers built their homes in clusters surrounded by the outlying fields and farms. Because of the political structure with which the English established their colonies, many political entities, like towns, began as extensions of existing "Parent-towns" such as Simsbury and Windsor, but usually broke off to form independent communities. Throughout the early eighteenth century, Connecticut Colony officials argued with individual towns over property lines across the region. Several historic districts along the Farmington River reflect this pattern including the Palisado Avenue and Broad Street Historic Districts in Windsor, the East Weatogue and Terry's Plain Historic Districts in Simsbury, the Farmington Village Historic District in Farmington, and the Granby Center History District in Granby.

In 1633, settlers from Plymouth, Massachusetts established a trading post at the confluence of the Connecticut and Farmington Rivers. The site where these first English settlers in Connecticut clustered around the east side of the river to guard against perceived Indian attacks is today the town of Windsor. Windsor's historic districts identify the two earliest town settlements positioned on either side of the Farmington River. The linear shaped Palisado Avenue Historic District extends north from the Farmington River, several hundred yards upstream where it meets Connecticut River. The district includes fifty-seven contributing properties: houses,

³ Town of Simsbury, "Historic Simsbury," www.simsbury-ct.gov/Public_Documents/SimsburyCT_WebDocs/historic, accessed November 3, 2009.

⁴ Bickford, 2.

barns, religious and educational institutions, a bridge (Palisado Avenue Bridge), a cemetery and a town green. These initial English settlers in the Connecticut Valley lived along Palisado Avenue and Palisado Green until the church relocated to the south side of river in 1750s. The community positioned the Green as the center of the community and located it atop a ridge to protect from flooding. They also erected a stockade (or palisado) to protect against anticipated Indian attacks before and during the Pequot War.

The 1986 National Register nomination for the Palisado Avenue Historic District cited its architectural as well as its historical significance. The district boasts primarily eighteenth-century buildings, but many seventeenth-century ones are likewise included. The majority of these are vernacular in style with twentieth century alterations. Victorian and colonial revival buildings from the twentieth century also reflect the more recent changes in the community. A high concentration of brick construction provides a unique visual continuity. A HAER report cited the district's steel bridge as significant for connecting the Palisado settlement to a later one across the Farmington River.

Due to its key location near the confluence of the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers, the Palisado settlement was a busy trading center. But due to the arrival of a railroad depot, the settlement recalled in the Broad Street Green Historic District became the center of commercial and institutional life in Windsor in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, whereby the riverside Palisado remained the colonial center eventually evolving into an elite residential area. According to the 1987 National Register nomination form, the Broad Street Green Historic District reflects the transformation of colonial commons, or greens, into park-like areas for community activities. Its thirty-five properties boast several historical styles from colonial vernacular to Queen Anne to International and modern representing building trends from the past two centuries and echoed across nearby towns.⁵

The Farmington River bisects the nearby town of Simsbury, which the English founded in 1670. Simsbury's level land of fertile soil attracted English settlers throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. An Indian attack in 1676, part of Metacombet's rebellion (*aka* King Phillip's War), reportedly destroyed the initial buildings. Historic maps show that settlers rebuilt a cluster of buildings with outlying fields typical of the period, by 1730. Simsbury's East Weatogue Historic District, designated in 1990 for both historic and architectural significance, includes 124 properties located primarily in farmland. The site never had boasted significant waterpower, so industry never developed in the area. The district still recalls the historic rural village and still carries well-preserved examples of eighteenth, nineteenth, early twentieth colonial and colonial revival buildings.⁶

⁵ Matthew Roth, Bruce Clouette and Robert Griffith "Palisado Avenue Historic District," 1986 and "Broad Street Green Historic District," 1987, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, in National Register Files, History Office, Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCCT);

⁶ "East Weatogue Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, 1990, CCCT.

Similarly, the Terry's Plain Historic District, not listed until the early 1990s, was one of the first settled areas in Simsbury but also remains primarily agricultural. In 1738, about six homes formed a settlement known as Terry's Meadow. Its district's twenty-seven contributing properties, on about 300 acres, are located on the east side of the Farmington River between a large meander in the river and Talcott Mountain. Periodic flooding made the soil fertile sandy. However, the soil there was less rocky than in many areas of the Farmington River Valley. The district recalls how early English settlers used the Farmington and Connecticut River valleys for grazing, crop and hay production, and later commercial dairy and tobacco production (see section on Tobacco Valley).

Embedded in the Terry's Plain historic rural landscape are open fields of 10-140 acres, thirteen historic houses that were once part of farm complexes, and fourteen agricultural outbuildings. The district includes a wide variety of vernacular architecture that reflects Federal, Greek and Colonial Revival, and Victorian domestic themes. Two-lane paved public roads provide the transportation routes along which most of the houses sit. Historical markers identify the sites of the first settler's house from 1660, the location of the ferry in 1666 that crossed Farmington River at that point, and a colonial militia training ground.⁷ The Simsbury Center Historic District reflects Simsbury's community history with 79 properties of architectural significance extending north from the Farmington River where it joins the Connecticut River. It includes a green, cemetery, residential homes, religious sites, and historic monuments. The center linked to Windsor via a ferry, which served as the main route to Simsbury's "mother" town.

Early Windsor and then Simsbury included the town of Granby before its founders left to establish their own community. Originally settled in the eighteenth century, Granby echoes other colonial settlement along the Farmington River with its clustered settlement patterns and outlying fields, but it is located along Salmon Brook (the district is located along the south side of Salmon Brook Street). Due to a fire in 1876, most of the thirty-five contributing properties in the Granby Center Historic District, date from the nineteenth century. The Granby area hosted early gristmills and sawmills in its flat land, harnessing waterpower from the streams. Granby remained largely agricultural, but due to the impact of the railroad, one can still see a series of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectural styles in the district. The Judah Holcomb House, individually listed on the National Register, is a well-preserved eighteenth-century home built on original Salmon Brook property that lies within the study area.⁸

The towns of Avon and Farmington also claim properties on the National Register noted for architectural significance, but these echo many of the historic themes of the districts along the Farmington River Valley. The Avon Congregational Church and Avon Center Historic District (over 200 resources built prior to 1950 contribute to Avon's historic character. Many represent Avon's early English settlement along

⁷ Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin, "Terry's Plain Historic District, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, 1993, CCCT

⁸ "Granby Center Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, CCCT; Louisa Rraback, National Register Nomination of Judah Halcomb House, 1988, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, CCCT.

the west side of the river near Simsbury border.⁹ In addition to the Farmington Village Historic District, Farmington's historic resources include the Gridley-Parsons-Staples Homestead, the property of which originally fronted the river, the Stanley Whitman House, which is a National Historic Landmark, and the 160-acre estate, late nineteenth century Colonial Revival Hill-Stead House designed by female architect Theodate Pope Riddle (now a museum famous for its collections of French impressionist paintings acquired during the life of the famous artists). While each of these individual properties recall Connecticut's agricultural heritage the Farmington River also encouraged other types of economic and commercial activities from stone quarrying (represented by the Ketchin Stone Quarry in Simsbury) to manufacturing.

⁹ Janice Cunningham, Cunningham Preservation Associates, "Avon Center Historic District," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2003, CCCT.

Industrial and Economic Development

Commerce and The Farmington Canal

One of the most significant cultural features of the Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study area is the historical Farmington Canal that crossed paths with the Farmington River from the early to mid-nineteenth century. The canal's transportation and commercial activities and the resulting industrial and economic development signified profound internal changes in Connecticut. The canal reveals a cultural landscape that evolved out of the interaction between people and the land, and the landscape's continued transformation as the canal line turned into a railroad in the late 1840s. From the canal's inception to the present day, the landscape reflects advances in the engineering of the canal and the industrial railroad.

In the wake of the Erie Canal's success cutting through northern New York, the Connecticut legislature incorporated the Farmington Canal Company in 1822 to evaluate the feasibility of a canal for facilitating transportation and commerce throughout the state. Designed by the chief engineer of the Erie Canal, and constructed between 1825 and 1829, the Farmington Canal extended from Granby south to New Haven Harbor. Massachusetts also incorporated a company to discuss extending the canal northward from Granby to Northampton, Massachusetts.¹⁰

The historical significance of the Farmington Canal in relation to the cultural landscape is tremendous. In 1829 when the canal was completed, a total of fifty-six miles and twenty-eight wooden locks made up the canal. This construction represents not only innovative feats of early nineteenth-century engineering, but also the initiation of significant changes to the landscape. Six locks were located in Granby, while the canal in Simsbury and Avon flowed over large culverts to carry the canal over small streams.¹¹ Granby's forty-foot wide Salmon Brook Culvert was one of the largest stone arches constructed in the country at the time. From Granby south through Farmington smaller culverts lined the canal. Aqueducts were the most challenging engineering component of the canal. In Farmington, a 280-foot aqueduct over the Farmington River was constructed of wood and stone. Six stone piers supported the twelve-foot wide by six-foot long wooden trough that shuttled canal boats across the river.¹² Because the Farmington River supplied a large amount of water for the canal, a feeder dam in Unionville was constructed to the same specifications as the main canal to carry water from the river to the canal. Its navigation would be similar to the main canal.¹³ The construction of these engineered structures revealed the first major change in landscape due to man-made efforts in the Lower Farmington River area.

¹⁰ Michael S. Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)", Item 7, CCCT.

¹¹ Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)," Item 7.

¹² Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)," Item 8.

¹³ Carl Walter, "Map of the Farmington Canal," 2000; History Reference Maps Case, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut.

The canal had a remarkable impact on business and industry in the towns through which it passed. With two basins, the town of Avon shipped a number of agricultural products, such as cheese, as well as lumber to New Haven via the canal. In 1831, the Farmington River Manufacturing Company was founded in the developing town of Unionville after a wharf and warehouse had been constructed in the village to help cope with commerce brought by the passing canal. The newly constructed warehouse and wharf in Unionville furthered the town's industrial development during the canal years.¹⁴ We discuss Unionville in Farmington and Collinsville in Canton, which experienced similar growth from the canal, later in this document.

Increased commerce created the need for new businesses to cater to the needs of those traveling the canal. In 1930, a canal investor constructed the Union Hotel in Farmington, now currently part of the Miss Porter's School, to house canal travelers. The hotel also offered a shuttle carriage to and from the hotel to canal docks. The Phelps House and Canal Hotel were founded in Simsbury as a hotel and tavern that accommodated tired travelers.¹⁵ These hotels were significant for bringing business to the area that would not have occurred had the canal not been built. Also economically significant was Granby's copper ore mining, which benefited from having the canal nearby for shipping purposes.¹⁶ By 1835, the canal had been in use for five years and six more shops had appeared in Farmington, likely due to increased canal travel and commerce. Though the canal was not profitable for its investors, the number of shops, hotels, and businesses that were founded and thrived confirmed the importance of the canal for the development of Lower Farmington River communities, all of which influenced the emerging cultural landscape of the canal area.¹⁷

Unfortunately for canal investors, the canal never proved profitable. Construction costs that ran over-budget resulted in the canal's needing constant repair. By 1848 the canal was in the process of being replaced by a railroad set alongside the canal. The growing popularity of railroads rendered the need for a canal obsolete by the late 1840s.¹⁸ A survey of the land from New Haven north to Bristol Basin in Plainville and then to Collinsville revealed that a railroad could be constructed alongside the canal bed. Doing so would allow the canal bed to be used as a receptacle for snow and ice that needed to be cleared from the railroad during the winter months.¹⁹ The New Haven and Northampton Railroad opened in 1848 and

¹⁴ Bickford, 240.

¹⁵ Trout, "The Story of the Farmington Canal," 14; Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)," Item 8, page 6.

¹⁶ Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)," Item 8, page 6.

¹⁷ Bickford, *Farmington in Connecticut*, 241; Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)," Item 8, page 6.

¹⁸ *An Account of the Farmington Canal Company; of the Hampshire and Hampden Canal Company; and of the New Haven and Northampton Company, till the Suspension of its Canals in 1847* (New Haven: Thomas J. Stafford, 1850), 21, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut.

¹⁹ Twining, Alexander, "Engineer's Report on the Survey from New Haven City up the Canal to Plainville" (New Haven: Hitchcock & Stafford Printers, 1845), 6-8, 11-12, Special Collections, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, CT.

operated through the 1980s, running alongside the former canal bed.²⁰ As the railroad came to fruition Connecticut again utilized the latest engineering concepts. With the canal era having come to a close, railroads were now the primary mode of transportation for industrial and commercial needs.

The Farmington Canal and railroad in the Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Study area today reflects a significant cultural landscape by demonstrating the impact of human activity. While many portions of the canal lack original historic integrity, remains of the built resources that defined the landscape of the canal and railroad, such as locks, aqueducts, culverts, and railways reflect historical engineering efforts. These give the landscape a unique character. Today, the presence of the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway along the former canal and rail line signifies the adaptive reuse of the landscape to reflect people's changing needs and wants for recreation.

In May 1976, public interest in the preservation and reuse of the former canal and rail line prompted the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (CTDEP) to author "A Proposal for Selective Restoration," for the Farmington Canal to evaluate the possibility of restoration based upon use of the former canal as a recreational greenway, and for preserving the land. The CTDEP's study concluded that reuse of the trail would provide recreational opportunity as well as help preserve a historical and cultural resource.²¹ In the 1980s, the Farmington Rails-to-Trails Association was formed. This organization played a large role in influencing the cultural landscape by converting the canal from a feeble, leftover canal and rail line into a greenway.

On September 12, 1985, the National Park Service listed the Farmington Canal on the National Register of Historic Places. This designation acknowledged the canal's historic and cultural significance as a phenomenal engineering and construction feat, as an example of the internal improvements movement of the early nineteenth century, and its important impact on the culture and economy of the region. The canal's significance as a resource for learning more about the engineering practices of the era also supported its designation as a National Register Historic District.²²

The existing condition of the circulation pattern of the canal and railway strongly resembles that of their original pattern. Whereas the canal was designed to follow the most geographically logical path along the Farmington River, the railroad later followed the same route, being constructed alongside the original canal. Presently, the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway follows the same pattern as the canal, thus preserving the historical integrity of the original circulation pattern from Granby to New Haven. Presently, in the Lower Farmington River area, the greenway extends through Farmington, Avon, Simsbury, and most of East Granby along the border of Granby, before ending just short of the East Granby/Suffield

²⁰ Trout, "The Story of the Farmington Canal," 18.

²¹ Jonathan Clapp, "The Farmington Canal: A Proposal for Selective Restoration" (Hartford: Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, 1975), 2, 39, New Haven Colony Historical Society, New Haven, CT.

²² Raber, "Farmington Canal (New Haven and Northampton Canal)."

town line. The Farmington River Trail branches off of the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway, extending northwest through Farmington and along the Avon/Burlington town line and then northeast through Collinsville and into Simsbury before merging with the Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway.²³ The changes that ultimately led to the recreational greenway reflect the changing imprint on the land according to the needs of the time period. Whereas the early nineteenth century featured a canal in response to the “canal era” taking place across the country, the railroad overtook the canal, as railroads became the premier mode of industrial and passenger transportation. Finally, as the desire for recreational outlets grew in the mid to late twentieth century, the adaptive reuse of the canal and railroad pattern again influenced the evolving cultural landscape of the Lower Farmington River area.

Small-scale Manufacturing and Industry

Following the construction of the Farmington Canal, the region’s economy expanded to include small-scale manufacturing. The canal and the accompanying feeder dam (built in 1828) stimulated industry and raised the water level of the river, stimulating waterpower development. The Farmington River Manufacturing Company sold water privileges for sale and lease.²⁴ Entrepreneurs established waterpower industries and factories all along the river and its tributaries.

Several of the earlier agricultural settlements, when feasible, harnessed the river’s waterpower for gristmills, sawmills, and fulling mills to support the agricultural economy even before the construction of the canal. However, only certain sites along the river were conducive to capture the power of falling water. Flooding frequently caused damage to settlements, bridges, and mills. Furthermore, dams for mills, as well as canals, prevented fish from returning upstream and large portions of the upper Farmington were depopulated of many species.²⁵ In the 1760s, a gristmill was located near Unionville where Zack’s Brook empties into the main course. A gun forge was located at banks on Zack’s Brook in the 1790s. Listed on the National Register for engineering and historical significance, Simsbury’s gristmill was located on the north side of Hop Brook as early as the late seventeenth century and operated for almost 250 years. Available waterpower along Salmon Brook and the lower Farmington fueled industrial plants such as the gristmill at the West Granby Gorge. The 1824 Tariff Act and the Farmington Canal greatly increased interest in industrial enterprises. By the late nineteenth century, the Farmington River Valley helped the Central Valley dominate the state’s industrial development.²⁶

²³ Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection State Parks Division, “Connecticut Greenways Council Officially Designated Greenways,” 2009, <http://www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/greenways/greenwaysmap2009.pdf> (accessed October 29, 2009).

²⁴ Bickford, 241, 249.

²⁵ William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 152.

²⁶ Janice P. Cunningham, “Central Valley: Historical and Architectural Overview and Management Guide,” *Historic Preservation in Connecticut*, Vol. III, Hartford: Connecticut Historical Commission, 1995.

In Windsor, industrial development ranged from ice-cutting to the Poquonock Mills. There, the Tunxis Company created cotton and woolen textiles bringing in European immigrants as a labor force of 300 by 1900. The mill operated from 1848 through the early twentieth century, establishing Poquonock as a mill village as entrepreneurs established similar enterprises around it. However, the site was razed in 1936.²⁷ Sawmills, gristmills, and cider mills could also be found along the river in Hartland. Ward's Mill in Hartland used waterpower from the West Branch of the Farmington River for a Calico textile mill, from the 1830s to 1857. The river's west branch has mineral elements used in Manila paper and the company manufactured that product from 1874 through the 1930.²⁸ Farmington had a gristmill and fulling mill. An East Granby textile company manufactured wire-cards while in Burlington, the Farmington River hosted waterpower industries producing goods such as cider brandy, flintlock muskets, wooden shingles, and carriages.

Tariffville, Unionville, and Collinsville are the most significant surviving ORVs reflecting the river's small-scale and rural industrial and manufacturing heritage as well as the workers and industrial architecture of the late nineteenth century. Unionville, a site where the townships of Farmington, Avon, and Burlington meet, grew into a town after the Farmington Canal opened. The confluence of the Farmington River and Roaring Brook hosted mills as early as 1780. However, the Farmington Canal, as well as the waterpower made available by the feeder dam, granted the former mill town of Langdon's Quarters the ability to transport goods and become a thriving manufacturing center. The town voted for a raceway; a small canal running parallel to and southwest of the river creating a waterfall by 1845. Now listed as a State Register Historic District, Unionville constructed its first bridge spanning the river in 1846; a covered bridge replaced it several years later. By 1850, twelve shops and factories in the village of Unionville, powered their factories with water wheels. Unionville industrialized between 1860 and 1880 with fifteen shops, mills, and factories including two paper companies (Cowles Paper) and one hardware (Upson Nut Company).

Evidence of the nineteenth and twentieth century homes of investors and workers survives today. The need for cheap labor invited unprecedented waves of immigrants in the 1840s and 1850s to Unionville, particularly those fleeing from the potato famine in impoverished Ireland. The willingness of Irish, Italian, and Eastern European people to work for low wages made them attractive employees to factory managers.²⁹ Like the nation at large, the economic changes of industrialization created a concentration of wealth and new middle and working classes. The remnant resources represent over 100 years of industrial heritage.

Some properties in Unionville are individually listed on the National Register. Today a storage space, the Unionville Tunxis Firehouse in Unionville, built in 1893 is both architecturally and historically significant as a political force in Unionville.

²⁷ Windsor Historical Society, *Windsor (Images of America)*, Arcadia Publishing, Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 38-39.

²⁸ Ransom, Stanley Austin, *History of Hartland: The 69th Town in the Colony of Connecticut*, Hartland: Hartland Bi-centennial Committee, 1961), 124-25.

²⁹ Bickford, 248; Unionville Historic District Study Report, May 9, 2002, copy located in CCCT.

The Unionville Museum/ West End Library is located at the bend in the Farmington River near the northwest corner of Farmington. This impressive example of Renaissance Revival architecture is a Carnegie- funded library designed by the noteworthy architect Edward Tilton.

Collinsville in Canton owes much of its development to industry that began during the Farmington Canal years. The year after canal construction began in 1826, Samuel Collins and his brother purchased a gristmill on the Farmington River in south Canton for the purpose of starting an axe manufacturing business. The Collinsville Historic District in Canton was nominated to the National Register in 1976 due to its preservation as a compact and intact nineteenth century mill town. The Collinsville Ax Company designed the mix of mill buildings designed for ax and tool manufacturing. The town functioned as a company town from the 1830s to the 1960s. In spite of several buildings lost to flooding over the years the district includes worker housing connected to the industrial complex by a bridge complete across the Farmington River. Since the factory grew from a gristmill, the Collins family planned to use waterpower. The company originally powered the mill by water wheels, but later heated buildings with coal and steam. But in the early twentieth century, the Collins Company installed two hydroelectric generating plants on the Farmington River. Since 1966, an investor company known as the Collins Company has served to host several fledgling business ventures. Along with the factory, the Collins Company constructed houses for its employees and was responsible for bringing telegraph wires through the newly developing town, as well as for setting aside land for churches.³⁰ Placed on the National Register in 1997, the Canton Center Historic District contains sites of old gristmills in addition to political, economic, and religious structures that reflect the growth of the town in the last century.³¹

Tariffville is yet another industrial historic district within the study area. With the Farmington River as its eastern boundary, this mill village is located in the northeast corner of Simsbury. The Tariff Manufacturing Company essentially founded the community soon after the Tariff Act of 1824 at the waterpower site and it soon became a center for trade in the region. The National Register nomination form cites a multi-story stone carpet mill for architectural significance but the structure also reflects the historical use of the Farmington River for waterpower since 1825, in this case from the gorge. The community evolved west of the river and residents laid out Main Street parallel to the river due to the need for worker housing, primarily that of European immigrants including Scottish weavers. The other primary roads, Elm Street and Winthrop Street run perpendicular. Listed in 1993, the 90-acre Tariffville Historic District still recalls a nineteenth century village with 165 contributing structures. The workers' homes are two-story gable roofed frame houses typically built to house two families. Other resources include a firehouse, school, cemeteries, and many well preserved Colonial and Victorian-style residential and outbuildings of architectural

³⁰ Buckhurst Fish & Jaquemart Inc, "Town of Canton Plan of Conservation and Development." September 2003, 43. <http://www.townofcantonct.org/content/124/default.aspx>. Accessed August 31, 2009.

³¹ Carole Anstress Paine, "Collinsville Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory– Nomination Form* 1976, CCCT.

significance. By 1840, 200 people lived in Tariffville. Worker, as well as higher style Greek Revival homes for supervisors, extended further up the hill from the river. The Canal Line Railroad arrived in the 1850s. Financial pressures closed the Tariffville mill by the 1860s, but commercial trading in tobacco, a chief economic activity in the area (see below), allowed the town to survive.³²

The industrial growth of Unionville, Collinsville and Tariffville precipitated the settling of new villages across the developing landscape of the Lower Farmington River area as other industries also took advantage of the availability of waterpower. Part of the Avon Center Historic District, Nod Brook runs up through Ensign-Bickford Fuse Company, a complex which includes twenty-one factory and worker housing structures. Currently the Farmington Valley Art Center, the Climax Fuse Company is also documented on the Department of Interior's HABS/HAER inventory. The facility produced fuses intermittently from the 1850s through to the 1950s. Ensign Bickford took over the company in 1907 then merged with a Simsbury operation that had begun in East Weatogue and later moved to Hop Brook.³³

All of these industries demanded a transportation infrastructure to move supplies and materials regionally and in some cases nation and worldwide. Metal truss bridges, including Farmington's Meadow Road Bridge and Simsbury's Drake Hill Road Bridge reflect the evidence of circulatory infrastructure between the river towns, as evidenced by the ferry, roads, the canal-line railroad, bridges, and the Farmington Canal reveal the region's commercial interests. Canton's Town Bridge Road, built in 1895, is an example of late nineteenth century engineering. One of the largest remaining in the state, the bridge was built by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company and was also one of several iron structures to reliably transport goods across the Farmington River to and from the Collins Ax Company in Collinsville.³⁴

Abolitionism and the Underground Railroad

The advantages that Farmington River Valley communities had for agricultural development, small manufacturing industries, commerce, and transportation made the study area a thoroughfare for goods, services, and travelers to and from the North. Notably this also included runaway slaves on a system of shelters that historians refer to as the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad was essentially a locally organized network to help runaway slaves escape, sometimes by hiding them and assisting them to the next safe haven, and ultimately by finding them transportation to their destination. For those traveling through Connecticut, this usually meant Canada. The Underground Railroad had no real centralized activity, however both white slave owners and abolitionists referred to the network by the 1830s. Free blacks had sought legal, violent, and subversive

³² David Ransom, "Tariffville Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, 1992, CCCT.

³³ Janice Cunningham, Cunningham Preservation Associates, "Avon Center Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, 2003, CCCT.

³⁴ Bruce Clouette and Hoang Tinh, Historic Resource Consultants, "Town Bridge," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, April 30, 1998, approved June 30, 1999, CCCT.

methods for freeing slaves for decades and prior to the Civil War, historians estimate that at least 1000 escaped each year.³⁵

The American Revolution had encouraged antislavery sentiment and organizational activity in the North beginning among non-blacks. Connecticut had outlawed the slave trade in 1788. The state passed legislation to gradually emancipate its slaves by age twenty-five if born after March 1, 1784. Slavery was therefore legal until about 1848. Many slave owners tracked and caught their runaways because fugitive slave laws since 1793 allowed them to pursue their slaves into states where slavery was illegal. This was especially dangerous after the Compromise of 1850, which not only allowed the pursuit of runaway slaves but required citizens to assist in their return. But the growth of abolitionist sentiment helped increase more support for escape as opposed to capture. William Lloyd Garrison organized the inter-racial American Antislavery Society on 1833, one year after the formation the New England Antislavery Society.

Slavery remained integral to the economic, political, and cultural life of the South. However, slaves were not always passive victims of the slave system. They resisted violently, as in the case with Nat Turner's Rebellion in 1831, covertly, by continuing African customs or creating new ones, or they could take dangerous risks by running away. In competition with the slave system of the South was the concept of "free labor" advocated by many in the Northeastern states. In his book, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, Historian Eric Foner elaborated on the idea that this competing ideology, as much as abolitionism and a desire to preserve the union, gave the North the moral justification to eventually go to war with the South. Although the term might suggest the same meaning, the word "free" had nothing to do with bondage or working for no wage; rather, it indicated concepts of freedom, independence, and self-reliance. The notion emphasized an egalitarian vision of individual human potential, the idea that anyone could climb the ladder of success with hard work and dedication. Such concepts and confidence in individual potential at least partially grew out of the religious revivalism of the era known as the Second Great Awakening. At the same time, secular American philosophers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, were stressing ideas of self-reliance through new systems of belief, such as transcendentalism. Free labor ideology gained tremendous strength from the process of industrialization. As in Europe years before, industrialization changed the nature of work and production in the Northeast. In the "Agrarian Republic" of early America, the home was the center of manufacture and production. Skilled workers learned specialized trades through apprenticeships. Industrialization moved the workplace to the factory, where machinery required far fewer skills from laborers. While the changes created a working class, it was far different from the system of racial hierarchy and dependence seen in the plantation system. The nineteenth century saw many of these examples of this industrial activity across Connecticut and particularly in the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers.

³⁵ Marie Tyler-McGraw, "Exploring a Common Past: Researching and Interpreting the Underground Railroad," Washington, DC: History Office, National Park Service, Online Books, c. 1997.

In addition to presenting a competing socioeconomic system, the industrial changes of the Northeast in the early nineteenth century also initiated an awkward relationship between the North and the South. The South providing the raw material for manufacturing in the North, so in a sense the slave system in the South supported the northern industry. Industrialization wrought many changes and it is no coincidence that several reform movements emerged about the same time. The values imbued in the “free labor” system and the Second Great Awakening fueled abolitionist sentiment. Hartford, Connecticut’s Beecher family embodied the most dominant reform trends of the era. Lyman Beecher was a famed preacher in the popular religious movement and his two daughters were active in other aspects of reform. As Catherine championed women’s domestic role and moral authority in society, Harriet became one of the most famous abolitionists, when she published her indictment of slavery in the best-selling novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which also featured a runaway slave.

The standard documented work on this topic is Horatio T. Strother’s *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut* first printed in 1962 and again in 1969 by Wesleyan University Press. The press has since contracted researcher Diana McCain to utilize digitized source material to more thoroughly document Underground Railroad activities in the state.³⁶ Due to the secretive nature of the Underground Railroad and the romance surrounding the topic, historians seem to disagree on whether or not there is irrefutable proof that particular houses served as station sites, but oral testimony and reminiscences indicate that many of them likely were. Oral history has its weaknesses, but it frequently offers clues that can link stories to primary documentation.

The National Park Service launched a model project in Oswego County, New York for supporting the oral tradition of the Underground Railroad with primary research. In 2002, Judith Wellman, who coordinated the Oswego County project, published an article in the journal *The Public Historian* discussing the issues involved when identifying Underground Railroad sites as historically significant cultural resources.³⁷ Based largely upon oral histories, various historians have cited several sites in the Farmington River Valley as hosting Underground Railroad routes and stations. However only a handful of the suspected sites have adequate primary documentation for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Wellman’s standard was that at least one reliable primary source corroborated oral evidence.³⁸ Even identifying resources according to this standard would require extensive research resources beyond the scope of this study. Carol Shull, who held the position of Keeper of the National Register, argued that because the National Register was primarily established to promote preservation, physical integrity, the ability of a property to convey the significance for which it is listed, was still an important aspect of listing. In Farmington, several of the sites

³⁶ Horatio T. Strother, *The Underground Railroad in Connecticut* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1962).

³⁷ Judith Wellman, “The Underground Railroad and the National Register of Historic Places: Historical Importance vs. Architectural Integrity,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter, 2002), pp. 11-29 and Carol Shull, “The Underground Railroad: Refining Eligibility Criteria,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring 2002), 89-91.

³⁸ Wellman, 16.

that people and organizations have identified as stations on the Underground Railroad are also resources in the Farmington Historic District noted for their architectural significance rather than historical significance.

Documents do describe Farmington as the site of an 1835 riot when local abolitionists invited Simon Phelps of the American Anti-Slavery Society to speak at the Farmington Academy. A crowd of twenty to thirty protesters threw a brickbat through a window. When the protesters stormed the building, Phelps' supporters had to escort him from the building. The town put thirteen of the men on trial, but no one was convicted. The riot revealed divisions in the town where one resident reported that one-quarter to one-third of Farmington's citizens supported the abolitionist cause. On January 15, 1836, a group of 200 passed resolutions opposing antislavery societies and activities and to support leaving slavery decisions to the states.³⁹

However, the antislavery coalition in Farmington remained strong. Farmington's own anti-slavery society, believed to be one of the first in the state, numbered about seventy. Farmington's women's abolition organization, which reached about forty members, drafted two petitions to the General Assembly to advocate better conditions for Blacks in Connecticut and Washington, DC.⁴⁰ According to Strother, the registration sheets, and other documents, Farmington River Valley towns boasted about thirty-five attendees at the state's 1838 anti-slavery convention. Newspapers and proceedings offer the strongest documented evidence corroborating oral tradition that the Farmington Valley may indeed have participated in the Underground Railroad activity.⁴¹ The groups continued to pressure the General Assembly to outlaw slavery and in 1847, to promote black suffrage twenty-one years before state law. The activity divided the town politically. Farmington abolitionists formed a third political party, the Liberty Party and ran candidates. No one from the party ever won, but the activity did block Democrats and Whigs. Also in the 1840s, Farmington abolitionists brought the Africans from *The Amistad* case to await their trip home. The case is significant today as an example of slave resistance and as a case around which the abolitionist movement rallied and gained support, especially in Connecticut. Defense attorneys John Quincy Adams and Roger Baldwin successfully argued that the Amistad prisoners were human beings rather than property. That event helped solidify Farmington's abolitionist reputation and leadership in the northern abolitionist movement. It is the strength and persistence of this reputation that makes the historic properties in Farmington significant and these well preserved properties solidify Farmington's historic association with the Underground Railroad.

The largest cluster of activists lived in the center in the town of Farmington, with over 100 pre- 1835 homes, located just east of the Farmington River, making up the town's well preserved historic district, some of which served as Underground Railroad stations. Farmington, a largely agricultural community located just east of

³⁹ Bickford, 211.

⁴⁰ Strother, 165.

⁴¹ Connecticut Anti-Slavery Society, *Charter Oak* vol. 1. No. 1, pg. 1 (March 1838).

the Farmington River, served as a hub for various Underground Railroad routes and abolitionist activism. It was a highly trafficked segment of a larger migratory pattern for fugitive slaves.

Fugitive slaves on their way to Canada came through Connecticut through various routes. One likely route had escaping slaves arriving in the port cities of New Haven or New London and traveling up the west side of the Connecticut River Valley to Canada. From New Haven many would go on to Meriden, Southington, or Waterbury and then to Farmington. Farmington was ideally located. The stations there would guide people along the Farmington River through Bloomfield or Avon, then to Simsbury and Granby (and on to Springfield, Massachusetts). Another route through Greenwich also stopped in Farmington.⁴² There is very little evidence that participants used the river itself for travel. However, Historian Strother reported that Gabriel, a shoemaker, directed the slaves along the Farmington River to Granby or West Suffield.⁴³ Still, this cluster of sites represents a physical network of properties across a common cultural landscape, one that lay adjacent to the river and owed its development to the agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing opportunities located along it.

Several National Register designated sites along the Farmington River represent the historical context of the Underground Railroad. The First Church of Christ, Congregational in Farmington and the Avon Congregational Church both reflect the traditional beliefs of the Puritans as central meetinghouses for the initial settlements. The strict role of the church in the community would lessen with the religious revivalism in New England, known today as the Second Great Awakening.⁴⁴

Farmington's First Church of Christ Congregational, designated a national historic landmark in 1975, served residents and famous guests such as the Amistad captives in 1841. The church is emblematic of the role of organized religion among abolitionists.⁴⁵ Its minister, Noah Porter, was one of the most vocal abolitionists in Farmington and his house, along with several other sites mentioned in reminiscences and oral histories, is included in the Farmington Historic District, established and designated in the early 1970s. In Farmington, at least three homes in the historic district allegedly served as stations (Horace Cowles, George Hurlburts, and William McKees), but many believe the Elijah Lewis and Samuel Deming homes also served as stations. Horace Cowles' home, from which Samuel Smith Cowles published an abolitionist newspaper, is individually listed and Williams' home and carriage house became a National Historic Landmark in 1998.

⁴² William Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 128-9.

⁴³ Strother, 171.

⁴⁴ Susan Babbitt, Connecticut Historical Commission, "Avon Congregational Church," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, 1972, CCCT.

⁴⁵ Marcia M. Greenlee, Historic Projects Director, Afro-American Bicentennial Corporation, "The First Church of Christ Congregational," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, September 27, 1974, CCCT.

Austin Williams' and Timothy Wadsworth's homes, also located in the Farmington Historic District, hosted many of the Amistad passengers until they returned to their homeland in West Africa in 1841. One former-captive drowned while swimming in the Farmington canal basin awaiting his return home. Austin F. Williams' Farmington-based Freedmens' and Refugees Home Agency provided local farmers with labor, both field and domestic. Six other Avon men, including, Amasa Woodford, Romeo Andrews, John Chidsey, Phineas Gabriel, Bela Kellogg, and John Willard, moved fugitive slaves from Farmington on to Bloomfield. In Bloomfield, US Senator and famous anti-slavery reformer Francis Gillette's large stone home, built in 1833, was the primary stop, although Gillette also used his barn in Hartford as a stop. Gillette, the son of an evangelical preacher during the Second Great Awakening, and many others were active in many reform movements of the day in addition to abolitionism, including temperance, women's rights, and moral reform. Gillette was one of Connecticut's most prominent abolitionists and particularly through his newspaper, the *Hartford Press*, he introduced the issue into state and national politics.⁴⁶

The properties in this Underground Railroad network that preservationists and local historians have decided possess the architectural integrity to be listed on the National Register are also part of Connecticut's Freedom Trail. In 1995, the Connecticut State legislature created Connecticut's Freedom Trail in response to a nation-wide and National Park Service initiative to recover African-American history. The Connecticut Freedom Trail provides an itinerary of National Register sites associated with the state's African Americans. It includes the First Church of Christ Congregational, the Cowles House, the Lewis House, the Norton House, the Deming House, the Deming Store, the Art Guild, the Noah Porter House, the Timothy Wadsworth House, Riverside Cemetery, and the Farmington Canal ticket office as places in Farmington associated with the Underground Railroad and/or the Amistad affair.

Unfortunately, the recognized properties and the existing documentation emphasize a simplified story of dichotomy: prominent "moral" northern whites aiding passive, grateful, black victims. Current Underground Railroad historiography is underscoring the long existing, pre-1830s Black abolitionist movement trying to emphasize the bravery and excruciating choices fugitives had to make to escape slavery.⁴⁷ Strother mentioned one unnamed "colored man" who lived with abolitionist George Hurlburt. He received and sent messages and guided fugitives along the Underground Railroad.

Finally, the National Register properties were and are largely located within the village portion of a largely agricultural community. While under the threat of suburban and commercial development for many years, they are largely well protected and preserved and possess significant architectural integrity. However

⁴⁶ Bruce Clouette, Consultant, Connecticut Historical Commission, "Francis Gillette House," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, December 24, 1979, CCCT; Siebert; Freedmens' and Refugees Home Agency, Circular/ Broadsides, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.

⁴⁷ See Keith P. Griffler, *Front Line of Freedom: African Americans and the Forging of the Underground Railroad in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

according to Wellman, “villagers were active in networking but they often sent fugitives to outlying farms.”⁴⁸ A problem, therefore, is that these homes are associated with prominent community members, and those participants with less stately dwellings, some of whom were African-American, or were rural farmers and are no longer visible through the built environment.⁴⁹ There were likely many other sites that were a part of this network, particularly those lying far outside the village borders, but decay and/or alteration have obscured them from the visible historic landscape.

The Tobacco Valley

Tobacco harvesting began in the southern colonies in the early seventeenth century, fueling the growth of an economy based on slavery and the plantation system. Connecticut has long been recognized as a producer of fine tobaccos. Today Connecticut shade-grown tobacco is a product highly regarded and widely appreciated by cigar aficionados. However, due to an increasing demand for land by real estate developers looking to build industrial parks, malls, and housing developments, the amount of Connecticut land planted with tobacco has shrunk dramatically over the past fifty years. Once one of the state’s largest sources of income, tobacco cultivation has been reduced to the status of virtual afterthought in the state’s economy.

Including a narrative of the development of tobacco farming is essential when documenting the history of the Farmington River Valley. Any effort to depict the Connecticut environments where the state’s complex identity as a simultaneously agricultural and industrial economy is demonstrated inherently illustrates the significant role the tobacco industry played in Connecticut’s economic development. Such a study is critical to better comprehend the landscapes in which cultivation of the crop took place. Considering the particularly productive nature of the farming areas along the Farmington River this region is of critical importance.

Connecticut’s Tobacco Valley is the product of convergent geological features, the result of which is the ideal environment for growing this demanding crop. Tobacco Valley is largely identified as that region physically shaped and culturally influenced by the Connecticut River. Flowing more than four hundred miles from the Canadian border in New Hampshire, the river passes through a landscape of floodplains and fertile freshwater meadows identifiable, most notably, between Greenfield, Massachusetts and Middletown, Connecticut. In these meadows, known traditionally as the *intervales*, can be found rich, loamy deposits perfect for the cultivation of tobacco.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Wellman, 21.

⁴⁹ See Griffler; Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*. New York: Harper Collins, 2005; John Hope Franklin and Alfred Moss Jr. *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (New York: McGraw, 1994).

⁵⁰ James F. O’Gorman, *Connecticut Valley Vernacular: The Vanishing Landscape and Architecture of the New England Tobacco Fields*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 11.

In July 1899, the Secretary of Agriculture authorized a soil survey of a section of the Connecticut River Valley long identified as being ideal for tobacco production. The survey covered the heart of the Connecticut Tobacco Valley of which the Farmington River is a central feature. The survey region stretched roughly forty-miles from South Hadley, Massachusetts to South Glastonbury, Connecticut and included an area ranging from five to ten miles on each side of the river and encompassing four hundred square miles, or 256,000 acres. The report described the valley as being, “Bounded on either side by hills rising to elevations of from 50 to 100 feet above sea level in the neighborhood of Hartford, and to a little over 500 feet in the northern part of the area surveyed.”⁵¹ It continued noting, “The country is level or gently rolling, sloping gradually back to the high-rounded hills and low mountains which form the boundaries of the valley.”⁵² The richest soils in this region are the sedimentary deposits of a large glacial lake once located around what is today Hartford. The sediments of this since receded glacial lake are sandy, rich, and well drained, perfectly suited for raising tobacco.⁵³

As noted, the majority of the lower Farmington River Valley falls within the Department of Agriculture’s 1899 soil study survey area. As such, the agricultural qualities of the soils in this region are well documented. Several soil types typify those in the Farmington River region including ‘Enfield Sandy Loam,’ ‘Hartford Sandy Loam,’ and ‘Windsor Sand.’ All three of these soil types are particularly well suited to growing tobacco.⁵⁴

The 1899 survey highlights the productive quality and exemplary characteristics of the Connecticut’s valley region’s soils. It goes so far as to argue that, “The most interesting and most promising feature in the agriculture of the Connecticut Valley is the tobacco industry, which has given a world-wide reputation to the valley and has provided work and sustenance for a large number of people.”⁵⁵ The verdure of these valley meadows has long drawn the attention of settlers and semantics alike. A comment by Thomas Cole, father of the Hudson River School of landscape painting, effectively encapsulates what was a largely shared opinion of the environment’s richness. Such was his impression of the landscape that he wrote, “The imagination can scarcely conceive Arcadian values more lovely or more peaceful.”⁵⁶

James F. O’Gorman argues in his study of Tobacco Valley architecture, *Connecticut Valley Vernacular*, that the agricultural impact of the river was such that it shaped the formation and naming of river settlements. Gorman identifies farming communities such as, “Middlefield and Westfield through Wethersfield, Bloomfield, and Enfield in Connecticut, across the state line into Massachusetts, past Longmeadow to Springfield and Northampton (known as the “Meadow City”), and on to Hatfield, Deerfield, Greenfield, and Northfield near the top of the

⁵¹ Milton Whitney, *Description of a Soil Map of the Connecticut Valley: United States Bureau of Soils, Circular No. 7.* (Washington: United States Bureau of Soils, 1900.), 1.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ O’Gorman, 14.

⁵⁴ Whitney, 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 2.

⁵⁶ O’Gorman, 12.

state.”⁵⁷ He notes, “Town names celebrate the rich intervalles, the geological basis for their existence.”⁵⁸ While the majority of attention is granted to the larger Connecticut River many parallels and a similar narrative can be made for its tributary the Farmington River.

As its namesake suggests, the Farmington River flows through a series of towns with deep agricultural roots. Like the river into which it eventually drains the Farmington irrigates and fertilizes a swath of rich meadows perfectly suited and long utilized for tobacco cultivation. Like the Connecticut River Valley the terraced valley rising from the Farmington River benefits from the sandy and loamy nutrient-rich soils and from the deposits of clay that maintain moisture close to the surface.⁵⁹

For those unfamiliar with the long-intertwined histories of tobacco and the valley region surrounding the Connecticut River and its tributaries it may come as a surprise that such a stereotypically tropical plant is native to this temperate region. Long before the arrival of Europeans Native Americans took advantage of the agricultural potential of the intervalles, growing domestic tobacco beside their other crops and partaking in the smoking of tobacco, known to them as “poke” or “ottomauch”. A 1944 study by the Imperial Agricultural Corporation (IAC) notes how distinctly different native tobacco was from that grown in the state in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As the IAC report states, “The wild tobacco seed indigenous to this continent produced a heavy, black leaf, the smoking of which could hardly have come under the heading of pleasure.”⁶⁰ Regardless of this opinion the tobacco crop was central to native cultures and held significant ceremonial importance.

As settlers moved into the Connecticut and Farmington River valleys in the mid-to-late seventeenth century they adopted the cultivation of tobacco, planting it in small backyard gardens beside other agricultural staples such as corn, beans, and squash. By 1700, tobacco production increased to such a degree that records indicate the crop being exported from Connecticut to destinations such as England and the West Indies. This trade included Farmington River Valley farmers such as Timothy Loomis of Windsor, who exported ‘221 weight’ of tobacco to Barbados in 1739; and Ebenezer Grant, also of Windsor, who between 1744 and 1767, is recorded to have produced and exported several thousand pounds of the leaf. The towns of Simsbury and Suffield similarly show exports for the years 1750 and 1753, respectively.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 14.

⁶⁰ *Tobacco Land in Old New England: How Yankee Ingenuity Defied Nature; Brought Tropical Climate to Connecticut; Created an Important and Prosperous Agricultural Business in a Great Industrial Area.* (Hartford: Imperial Agricultural Corporation, 1944), 1.

⁶¹ Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Committee on Historical Publications, *The History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.), 4-5.

Until the last quarter of the eighteenth century tobacco remained, for most, a plant raised for personal consumption. This all began to change, however, with the introduction of the cigar, allegedly by Connecticut native Israel Putnam, in 1762. At that time tobacco was relatively inexpensive and widely available to New Englanders. Soon a vibrant cottage industry grew up around the process of rolling cigars. Initially practiced by women over long, cold winters Connecticut cigar rolling began to be professionalized in 1810 when Roswell Viets and his brother Samuel started cigar factories in East Windsor and Suffield, respectively. Branded names such as Supers, Windsor Particulars, and Long Nines rapidly increased in popularity eventually dominating markets by the 1830's.⁶²

A dramatic increase in the acreage of tobacco cultivated resulted from the commercialization of cigar manufacturing. Not long after the cigar industry began to explode local experiments planting tobacco seed from Maryland resulted in a hybrid dubbed 'Connecticut Broadleaf'. The quality of the leaf eventually earned it national notoriety as a high quality cigar tobacco and increased the plant's status to that of a cash crop. In 1830 the total tobacco production of all of New England was 540,000 pounds. By 1859 this had increased to nine million pounds. Connecticut alone produced seven and a half million pounds in 1870, a number that rose to fifteen and a half million by 1880.⁶³

The increased popularity and economic value of tobacco resulted in a proliferation of tobacco farming that can be seen throughout the Farmington River valley's historic record. Tobacco farms are mentioned throughout the numerous National Register nomination forms documenting the region, many of which previously mentioned in this study. One of the earliest citations in this regard comes in the National Register form for the individually listed Captain Oliver Filley House in Bloomfield, Connecticut. This study identifies the adoption of tobacco farming by Captain Jay Filley the size of whose crop necessitated the construction of a tobacco-specific storage barn by 1846. Filley sold his farm in 1847 and eventually moved to Hartford to work as a tobacco dealer. A Samuel B. Pinney bought the Filley farm in 1854 and maintained tobacco farming on the property. By 1860 Pinney's crop amounted to 6,000 pounds, a total that ranked him among the top eighteen growers in town.⁶⁴

Numerous other Farmington River Valley tobacco farms are documented on the National Register. A nomination for the Pine Grove School district in the Avon, Connecticut includes the fifty-two acre farm of Oliver Thompson, at the time of whose death in 1895 held 10,000 pounds of tobacco. The Terry's Plain Historic District along the river's route through Simsbury, Connecticut includes the late nineteenth century farms of several tobacco farmers including Roswell Terry (forty-one acres), Calvin Goodrich (thirty-two acres), Joseph L. Bartlett (one hundred seventeen acres), and Lucius Goodrich who is identified as growing 14,600 pounds

⁶² Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Committee on Historical Publications, *The History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.), 4-5.

⁶³ O' Gorman, 17; Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, 13.

⁶⁴ Connecticut Historical Commission, Captain Oliver Filley House," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form*, "May 15, 2007.

of tobacco in 1870, a fifth of the town's total production. The nominations for the Tariffville Historic District in Tariffville, Connecticut and the Broad Street Green Historic District in Windsor, Connecticut likewise stress the significance and extent of tobacco cultivation throughout the Farmington River Valley.⁶⁵

Of this impact Gorman writes, "Tobacco became the most lasting of a series of fads or 'crazes' for producing cash crops that reached back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, produce that was intended to furnish the agriculturalists with hard currency in an increasingly money-oriented industrialized economy."⁶⁶ He continues, "In addition to the cultivation of potatoes, onions, cucumbers, and garden vegetables, the farmers successively sought income from lumber, then cattle, then broom corn, and, finally, tobacco."⁶⁷ This development had a dramatic influence on the landscape and the economy of the region. The acreage of land used for tobacco cultivation exploded between the early nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gorman notes that while less than four hundred acres of the entire Connecticut River Valley were planted with tobacco in 1839 this number had risen to 31,000 acres by the industry's peak in 1921.⁶⁸

The growth of the tobacco industry changed the Farmington Valley landscape not only with regards to the types of crops sewn in its fertile soil but also in respect to the architectural landscape. The tobacco barn, a simple yet functional and refined example of vernacular architecture, is the most prevalent vestige of this rapidly disappearing industry. Born out of typical New England barn designs the Connecticut Valley tobacco 'shed' found its own significance by the second half of the nineteenth century.

Although these barns demonstrated as much individuality as the farmers who utilized them there are several generalities among them. Designs typically consisted of long, narrow, low, gable-ended wooden structures devoid of windows or extensive ornamentation. Barn walls were formed from rough-sawn plank siding ranging in width from eight to eighteen inches. Roofs were covered with shingle, slate, sheet metal, or asphalt. Utilized as combination drying and storage spaces the barns were laid out to facilitate easy filling with their open, pass-through designs. Extensive air circulation was provided by roof and eave ventilation as well as by moveable siding secured either vertically or on the horizontal. Sheds were typically framed two or three bays wide and ranged from twenty-four to forty feet in width. Generally fifteen feet deep, each of these multi-bay units, known as a 'bent', became the common unit of measuring the capacity

⁶⁵ Connecticut Historical Commission, "Pine Grove School National Register District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, February 11, 1980; Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin, Consultants, Connecticut Historical Commission, "Terry's Plain Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, December 10, 1993; David Ransom, Consultant, Connecticut Historical Commission, "Tariffville Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, April 2, 1993; Matthew Roth, Bruce Clouette and Robert Griffith, Consultants, Connecticut Historical Commission, "Broad Street Green Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, December 20, 1999, CCCT.

⁶⁶ O' Gorman, 14.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

of the tobacco barns, i.e. a 'six-bent shed' being half the size of a 'twelve-bent shed'.⁶⁹

While the exact capacity of tobacco sheds varies, common measurements establish a ratio of two bents being required to house one acre of tobacco. Looking at the number of acres under tobacco in the Farmington River valley and the state as a whole one quickly realizes the structural demands of the crop. Even the smallest farmer requires a shed of at least several bents while larger farms necessitate multiple barns each, often of a dozen bents or more. Some of the sheds continue to be used, while many of those that have been abandoned are falling into disrepair.⁷⁰

In 2009, the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation surveyed Connecticut's barns to document a number of extant Farmington River Valley tobacco sheds. These include sheds from a farm in Canton, one in East Granby, one in Granby, one in Simsbury, nine in Windsor, and a farm in Windsor Locks. Many more barns likely exist than have been included in the Connecticut Trust survey, as they have been separated from their agrarian past and those that once cared for them. Regardless of the nature of their current use or condition, these barns are a standing reminder of the long, deep history of tobacco farming in the Farmington River Valley and of the structural investment required by the crop.⁷¹

As tobacco shed design became more formalized, so to did the crop grow increasingly specialized by the late nineteenth century. Resultant of a direct response to the characteristics of the composition of the cigar the state's crop shifted to reflect demand. Cigars typically contain three component layers. The first is the 'filler,' the bunched leaves at the center of the cigar; the second is the 'binder,' a layer that forms and maintains the shape of the cigar; and last is the 'wrapper,' the outer and finishing layer of the cigar. The aesthetic character of the cigar, particularly that related to the quality of the wrappers, results in this component becoming the most critiqued, and expensive part. For this reason Valley farmers embraced the growing of Connecticut Broadleaf due to the product's relatively fine texture, pleasant flavor, consistent visual quality, and the resultantly high market prices it fetched. Farmington River Valley and other Connecticut tobacco found its way into all parts of cigars, however the high quality of Valley leaf and the lucrative profits that could follow have historically led to the majority of the State's product being sourced for wrappers.

The final decades of the nineteenth century planted the seeds of change in the Farmington River Valley as shifts in consumer preferences began to emerge. A movement away from broadleaf towards shade-grown varieties of tobacco began around the turn-of-the-century, eventually resulting in drastic alterations to the landscape. Grown outdoors, under full sun, Connecticut Broadleaf varieties tended to produce a fine, yet darkly colored wrapper favored by wealthy smokers in the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1880's and 1890's, however, tastes gravitated

⁶⁹ Ibid, 51.

⁷⁰ O' Gorman, 51.

⁷¹ Ibid; Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation website, <http://www.connecticutbarns.org/survey>. Accessed November 18, 2009.

towards lighter wrappers raised from Sumatran seed and imported from Indonesia. Rapidly, this Indonesian-grown leaf started to garner favor over Connecticut broadleaf tobaccos.⁷²

In 1880 only thirty-eight pounds of Sumatran-grown tobacco was imported into the United States. By 1883, however, this number had expanded to a staggering four million pounds. Unlike Connecticut-grown tobacco the imported product was cultivated in the shade of jungle canopies resulting in a light, thin-veined leaf. Early efforts to find a similar seed that would grow in the Connecticut Valley included testing unique seed strains in an attempt to find one similar to the popular Sumatran style, yet still suitable for growing in Connecticut. A strain from Cuba, called 'Hazelwood', crossed with the Sumatran seed and dubbed 'Big Cuba', eventually proved the perfect fit.⁷³

Experiments with the Sumatran-style seed proved the plant could grow in the Connecticut and Farmington River valleys. However, the adaptation of Sumatran leaf to Connecticut's growing environment was not met with immediate success. Intense sunlight damaged the fine leaves and the naturally thin leaf grew even thinner as it withered in the Connecticut sun. Efforts to establish a native Sumatran crop appeared doomed for catastrophe.⁷⁴

Reluctant to accept failure the U.S. Department of Agriculture teamed with the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station to work out a solution. Operating out of a department sub-station in Windsor, Connecticut, less than two miles from the Farmington River, and in the heart of the region's tobacco producing area, their first effort included the aforementioned soil study, the intention of which was to identify those areas that might prove suitable for growing a Sumatran style tobacco. Second, in 1900 they attempted to grow a third of an acre of Sumatran seed under the shade of cotton tents. The tents, constructed of light cotton cloth, filtered and reduced the intensity of sunlight. The fabric enclosures also increased humidity within the tents, mimicking the tropical environment in which the Sumatran seed naturally thrived resulting in a healthy crop of Sumatran tobacco along the Farmington River in Connecticut.⁷⁵

After the success of the Connecticut Experiment Station's tests growing shade tobacco the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Experiment Station teamed up with thirteen Connecticut Valley tobacco farmers to apply the discovery on a larger scale. Nine of the selected farmers were located along the Farmington River. These included; H. Woodford, Avon, Conn.; C.O. Gates, and James Stewart, Pine Meadow; Clark Bros., Poquonock; August Poleur, Windsor; L.M. Case,

⁷² O' Gorman, 22.

⁷³ Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Committee on Historical Publications, *The History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.), 17.

⁷⁴ *Tobacco Land in Old New England: How Yankee Ingenuity Defied Nature; Brought Tropical Climate to Connecticut; Created an Important and Prosperous Agricultural Business in a Great Industrial Area*. (Hartford: Imperial Agricultural Corporation, 1944.), 6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 7; U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Catalogue of Connecticut Shade-Grown Tobacco: Sumatra and Havana Seed Wrappers*. (Washington: United States Bureau of Soils, 1902.), 1.

Barkhamsted; and Wm. Hayes, R.H. Reed, and Ariel Mitchelson of Tarrifville. Thirty-six acres of Sumatran shade tobacco were planted, the results being far above the expectations of the most optimistic participants. The catalogue notes, "The leaves are of a medium size, and of uniform color, with small veins, so that the whole side of the leaf may be used for cigar wrappers. They are thin, but very elastic and cover well. The taste is excellent, having none of the bitter taste frequently possessed by the important Sumatra leaf... In this respect it could hardly be excelled."⁷⁶ It was immediately determined that eight hundred acres of shade-grown tobacco should be planted the following season.⁷⁷

By 1902, only two years after the Connecticut Experiment Station's first tests, production of Connecticut shade-grown tobacco had jumped to 700,000 pounds. This rapidly increased to 1,800,000; 4,600,000; and 8,600,000 pounds respectively for 1910, 1919, and 1923. The development of Connecticut shade-grown farming effectively resulted in the industrialization and specialization of tobacco agriculture. As the cultivation of shade-grown tobaccos grew more profitable fields of broadleaf were slowly replaced by acres of white tents sprawling across the landscape. Due largely to economic pressures, specifically the high infrastructure costs of raising shade-grown tobacco, the production of the crop increasingly fell under the control of large corporations. By 1936 entities such as the American Sumatra Corporation, the Hartman Tobacco Company, Cullman Brothers, Inc., and the Consolidated Cigar Company, controlled much of the Connecticut land planted with shade-grown tobacco.⁷⁸

The expansion of the shade-grown business did not, however, eliminate the presence of outdoor tobacco in Connecticut and the Farmington Valley. In 1929, at the apex of Connecticut Tobacco cultivation, 1,700 small farmers raised 13,600 acres of outdoor tobacco, yielding twenty million pounds worth \$5,700,000. This can be compared to shade-grown production, largely controlled by the corporations, which planted 7,200 acres, yielding 8,400,000 pounds at a value of \$8,000,000. Despite the continued presence of outdoor tobacco it is hard to ignore the much larger per acre value of the shade-grown crop, a significant driver for its consolidation.⁷⁹

Even as the tobacco farming became increasingly incorporated the process of farming tobacco remained primarily a manual, low-tech venture. Due to the fragility of the plant tobacco is principally planted, tended, harvested, and prepared by hand. Despite this, the organizational systems and scale of the business increasingly mimicked those of the numerous mechanized industries found throughout the river valleys that suited the plant so well. The notoriety that Hartford County enjoyed as a manufacturing center; in part due to the success of Farmington River Valley businesses such as the Collins Axe Company, the Poquonock Mills, the Sequassen Woolen Company, the Tariff Manufacturing

⁷⁶ Ibid, 3.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Committee on Historical Publications, *The History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936.), 17.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 25.

Company, and the Bickford-Ensign Fuse Company; was quickly matched by the renowned quality of Valley tobacco. By 1923, just over twenty years after the Connecticut Experiment Station's tests growing shade tobacco, production of the crop accounted for over a third of the total monetary value of Connecticut agriculture. Between 1923 and 1927 the value of tobacco was double that of any other crop per acre and by 1928 it was worth three times as much as the second most lucrative product, potatoes.⁸⁰

As the aforementioned 1944 Imperial Agricultural Corporation (IAC) study notes, Connecticut Tobacco farms "produce a wrapper leaf of uniform color and elasticity free from blemishes, with small veins, natural taste, good combustion, and good aroma."⁸¹ These characteristics generated a high demand for the crop and created a lucrative agricultural rebound for the Connecticut broadleaf market in steep decline at the end of the nineteenth century. Exceptionally, the Connecticut shade-grown industry could not be replicated outside of the Connecticut and Farmington River Valleys where it was grown. The IAC writes, "Most of Connecticut's agricultural industry has been usurped by other states. For instance, the bulk of onion and corn production, in which Connecticut once ranked high, has moved to other localities where growing and shipping costs less. But for many decades the Connecticut Valley has remained America's leading producer of shade-grown tobacco wrapper, in spite of steadily mounting costs."⁸² Even in states with similar climates and soils, and despite scientific analysis and attempts to mimic growing conditions, efforts to grow 'Connecticut Valley leaf' outside of the region failed.⁸³

While the shade tents helped the plant to flourish in their growth and allowed Connecticut tobacco farmers to remain competitive in cigar wrapper markets they did, and still do not, reduce the natural hazards that make the tobacco crop so difficult to bring to market. With a crop so dependant on aesthetic perfection there are many factors that can compromise the quality and marketability of the leaf. In the planting phase late snowstorms threaten to destroy the seedlings; in June heavy winds, rain, and flooding associated with the hurricane season menace the fragile crop; July breezes bring potential plagues of destructive blue mold spores; and even after harvesting in August the crop is not safe as barns can be damaged by storms or fire, and leaf stored within can be reduced to rot by overly wet weather. Despite these factors the potential for a highly lucrative crop reinforced, and continues to reinforce the determination of tobacco farmers to remain in the business.⁸⁴

Tobacco farming in the Farmington River Valley is historically and culturally significant due to the important role the crop played in the economic and demographic development of the state and for the national recognition it gained as an exceptional agricultural product. Part of the level of quality attributed to

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ *Tobacco Land in Old New England: How Yankee Ingenuity Defied Nature; Brought Tropical Climate to Connecticut; Created an Important and Prosperous Agricultural Business in a Great Industrial Area.* (Hartford: Imperial Agricultural Corporation, 1944), 4.

⁸² Ibid, 5.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ "Staying in Shade," *Hartford Courant*, October 25, 2006.

Connecticut tobacco is given to the ideal geographical and meteorological conditions present in the Connecticut and Farmington River Valleys; part is given to the indigenous adaptation of new techniques and technologies in order to produce tobaccos typically only found in tropical climates; and part, honestly, is chocked up to sheer luck. These factors make Connecticut's Tobacco Valley a historically unique and significant landscape within the region's impressively diverse cultural panorama.

The survival of this historical resource, however, is very much in danger. Due to a combination of health and social influences only 2,000 Connecticut acres were planted with tobacco in 1996, a shadow of the high of 30,000 acres planted in the 1920s and 1930s. As the leaf disappears from the fields the sheds are often the last reminders of the once lucrative practice. Today, even those that have outlived the farms they once served are increasingly threatened by residential and industrial sprawl.

Conservation and Urban Development

The industrial era's advent of manufacturing and demand for labor precipitated one of the largest and most rapid eras of urbanization and suburbanization nationwide. With the rapid rise of cities, city managers and politicians scrambled to build an infrastructure of services to support the exploding and dense urban populations. Rivers provided waterpower, but also the resources to sustain large population concentrations. Cities like Hartford searched for a water supply and targeted the Farmington River. Efforts to secure municipal water supplies pit urban industrial communities against rural agricultural ones, and reflect the growing dominance of urban interests nationwide. Both the Nepaug Reservoir (1914-16) in Canton and the Barkhamsted Reservoir in Hartland and Barkhamsted, created by Nepaug (Canton) and Saville (Burlington) Dams built on tributaries of the Farmington River respectively in the 1930s, reflect this tension.⁸⁵

Officials originally looked to Salmon Brook in Granby, but Granby's residents made their demands too high arguing that Hartford could not take any water that flowed into Farmington River. The Hartford Board of Water Commissioners first long fought downstreamers to dam the NePaug River. In 1911, downstreamers agreed to with the compensation of the Barkhamsted Reservoir near Hartland—and together the dams and reservoirs represent two major developments on the Farmington River Watershed. Nepaug Reservoir has three dams: Nepaug, Phelps Brook, and East Dike. Hartford first tapped the reservoir for city water in water first in 1922. The Barkhamsted Reservoir flooded out long-time residents. These reservoirs have since become sites of recreation. Conversion of small agricultural villages and manufacturing sites into recreational areas also occurred elsewhere in the state, representative of urban industrial dominance reaching out to the hinterlands

⁸⁵ Stacy M. Pirog, "Water Grab: The Barkhamsted Reservoir Story," MA Thesis, Simmons College, May 2007.

Urbanization also spurred a backlash known as the conservation movement. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conservationists wished to balance the ill effects of industrialization by protecting natural resources either for respite or to increase the efficient use of natural resources. The McLean Game Refuge located in Granby and Simsbury reflects important historical and intellectual currents in environmental conservation. Connecticut Senator and Governor George McLean willed 3400 acres that included the east and west branches of Salmon Brook for the McLean Game Refuge in 1933 to serve as a “wilderness recreation” area for public enjoyment. The gift and mandate reflects a view of nature reflective of environmental attitudes of the day, which never fully explored or defined the relationship between human and nature. McLean’s wishes have presented site managers with ecological and cultural questions that challenge the practicality of wilderness preservation amidst continuous agricultural and recreational use.

Other ORVs not included in thematic discussions:

Now owned by Department of Environmental Protection, the Heublein Tower is the highest point on Talcott Mountain. It consists of a variety of family camp buildings built by the founder of a food-beverage company who introduced European and foreign foods locally. According to Alison, the 1915 country retreat is unique in Connecticut. Its architecture reflects the Middle and Eastern European influences, but its historical significance lies in the late nineteenth century lifestyle of a Hartford entrepreneur, fairly typical of upper class lifestyles at the time.⁸⁶

General Recommendations

While the focus of the Farmington River and Salmon Brook designation as a National Wild and Scenic River focuses on its outstanding natural and recreational resources, development along the river needs to take into account the continuous human relationship with the river. The natural and the cultural are not always easily distinguished as people and their settlements have historically used the river for agricultural and industrial purposes. Documentation and recognition of historic properties identify many of the remnants of this relationship, but not everything has survived in physical form. Those properties and entities that are preserved are not always compatible with the public's changing definitions of nature and recreational preferences. Preservation efforts are often dependent on economic impetus and changing notions of historic significance. It is therefore critical to recognize historic themes in order to recognize and identify historic significance.

⁸⁶ Alison Gilchrist, "The Heublein Tower," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 1983; SC Wadsworth, "The Towers of Talcott Mountain," *The Connecticut Quarterly* 1: 2 (Spring 1895), 180-186.

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