DECD
State of Connecticut
Department of Economic and Community Development

HISTORIC RESOURCES BUILDING AND STRUCTURES

Please send completed form to: Stacey Vairo, National Register and State Register Coordinator,
State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Economic and Community Development,
One Constitution Plaza, 2nd Floor, Hartford CT 06103
* Note: Please attach any additional or expanded information on a separate sheet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Building Name (Common) Strong Family Farm Record No. 9182

Building Name (Historic) Strong, Nathan and Abbey, Farmstead

Street Address or Location 274 West Street

Town/City Vernon Village _____ County Hartford

Owner(s) Geraldine R. Strong, 274 West Street, Vernon, 06066 ○ Public ◉ Private

PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling

Historic Use: Agriculture/Subsistence: agricultural outbuilding; Domestic: single dwelling

Accessibility to public: Exterior visible from public road? ◉ Yes ○ No

Interior accessible? ○ Yes ◉ No If yes, explain _____

Style of building Gambrel barn, vernacular style Date of Construction 1917

Material(s) *(Indicate use or location when appropriate):*

☐ Clapboard ☐ Asbestos Siding ☐ Brick ☐ Wood Shingle ☐ Asphalt Siding

☐ Fieldstone ☐ Board & Batten ☐ Stucco ☐ Cobblestone ☐ Aluminum Siding

☑ Concrete (Type poured) ☐ Cut Stone (Type _____) ☑ Other Horizontal wood siding

Structural System

☑ Wood Frame ☑ Post & Beam ☐ Balloon ☐ Load bearing masonry ☐ Structural iron or steel

☐ Other _____

Roof *(Type)*

☑ Gable ☐ Flat ☐ Mansard ☐ Monitor ☐ Sawtooth

☑ Gambrel ☑ Shed ☐ Hip ☐ Round ☐ Other _____

(Material)

☐ Wood Shingle ☐ Roll Asphalt ☐ Tin ☐ Slate ☑ Asphalt Shingle

☐ Built up ☐ Tile ☐ Other _____

Number of Stories: 1 1/2 Approximate Dimensions 40' x 60', plus additions

Structural Condition: ☐ Excellent ☑ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated

Exterior Condition: ☐ Excellent ☑ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Deteriorated

Location Integrity: ◉ On original site ○ Moved When? _____

Alterations? ○ Yes ◉ No If yes, explain: _____

FOR OFFICE USE: Town #_____ Site # _____ UTM _____

District: ☐ S ☐ NR If NR, Specify: ☐ Actual ☐ Potential

PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT'D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:

☐ Barn ☑ Shed ☑ Garage ☐ Carriage House ☐ Shop ☐ Garden

☑ Other landscape features or buildings: open fields, privy

Surrounding Environment:

☑ Open land ☐ Woodland ☑ Residential ☐ Commercial ☐ Industrial ☐ Rural

☐ High building density ☐ Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

See continuation sheet.

• Other notable features of building or site *(Interior and/or Exterior)*

See continuation sheet.

Architect _____ Builder Frank Hutchinson

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

Cunningham, Janice, Connecticut's Agricultural Heritage: an Architectural and Historical Overview, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation & State Historic Preservation Office, 2012.

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Kristen Young Date 11/14/2012

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name Kristen Young and Todd Levine Date 12/12/2012

Organization The Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude:
41.841072, -72.465359

Threats to the building or site:

☑ None known ☐ Highways ☐ Vandalism ☐ Developers ☐ Renewal ☐ Private

☐ Deterioration ☐ Zoning ☐ Other _____ ☐ Explanation _____

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The Strong Family Farm is located on 8.52 acres of land on the west side of West Street. A curved driveway extends to the west off the road, leads behind the house (along the west side), and has two openings. One opening of the driveway is to the south of the house and the other is to the north. There are numerous buildings on the property including the barn, a farmhouse, a garage, two chicken coops, and two sheds. The house is to the east of the barn, and one shed plus the garage are to the northeast of the barn. Further to the northeast are the chicken coops. A shed/privy is directly to the west of the house. Two silos were once located on the west side of the barn, one of which has a foundation still extant. Further to the west of the barn are open fields.

The c. 1878 farmhouse was constructed by Nathan Morgan Strong, himself, with the money from his wife's inheritance. The main façade faces east and its ridge-line runs approximately east-west, perpendicular to West Street.

> Constructed on a Latin cross plan with its primary ridge perpendicular to the street, this structure exhibits a large cross gable which culminates in a south-facing projected bay. As the photograph indicates, the roof is steeply pitched, the entry porch has scroll brackets and turned posts, and the windows are capped by projected cornices. The modillioned cornice of the porch is repeated across the bay between the first and second storys [sic]. The ocular window is repeated at the north gable (Abbott).

West Street extends to the north off Hartford Turnpike (Rte. 30), which runs northeast-southwest through the center of the Town of Vernon. The property is located less than a mile to the north of the intersection of West Street and Hartford Turnpike (Rte. 30), and to the south of the intersection of West Street and Peterson Road. Directly to the east of the property is the intersection of West Street and Dart Road. Just to the southwest of the Strong Family Farm is a school, and southeast is the Vernon Public Safety Building and Police Department. On the east side of West Street is Vernon Center Middle School. To the north are a few open fields. Surrounding the property on the south, east, and west are residential properties and a few open tracts of land.

• Other notable features of building or site *(Interior and/or Exterior):*

Architectural description:

Inventory of structures (C – contributing, NC – non-contributing):

Farmhouse	c. 1878	C
Barn	1917	C
Garage	c. 1920	C
Shed	Late 20th c.	NC
Shed/Privy	c. 1878	C
Chicken coops	20th c.	C

Barn:

This is a 40' x 60' 1 1/2-story gambrel-roof barn built in 1917 with a gable-roof (Addition I) and a gambrel-roof addition (Addition II). The ridge-line runs approximately east-west, perpendicular to this portion of West Street. The barn and additions have horizontal tongue-and-groove siding painted yellow with white trim, concrete foundations, and asphalt shingle roofs.

Exterior:

The main entry is located on the north eave-side of the barn and is reached by a ramp. It consists of double-height side-hinged doors with trim and original iron strap hinges. A long thirteen-pane transom window is located above the door. Two six-pane windows with trim are near the east corner of the north eave-side of the barn. The grade declines slightly toward the west, revealing a concrete foundation.

Four small rectangular vents are set within the concrete foundation of the west gable-end of the barn. A pair of six-over-six double-hung windows with trim is located in the gable-peak. No other features are found on this side.

A small single-pane window with trim is near the intersection of the barn and Addition I on the south eave-side of the barn. Addition I is attached to the south eave-side of the barn, extending to the south. Near the east corner of the south eave-side of the barn is a nine-pane window with trim.

Addition I is 32' x 52' and has a gable-roof whose ridge-line runs approximately north-south, parallel with this portion of West Street. The west side has a door near the north corner that once opened into a silo, which is no longer extant, and five nine-pane stable windows with trim spaced evenly along this side. Near the south corner is a small gable-roof extension with a door that was once attached to an additional silo, which is no longer extant, and a six-pane window with trim on the south side of the extension. The south gable-end of Addition I has a six-pane window above a shed-roof extension, which extends to the south. Attached to the east side of this extension is a gable-roof extension, extending to the east and forming an L-shape. A wooden fence along the east and north sides of these extensions encloses a holding pen. Continuing on the south side of Addition I is a pair of side-hinged doors with trim reached by a steep concrete ramp. A set of three nine-pane windows are found just to the east of this. Along the east side of Addition I are eight nine-pane stable windows with trim, spaced evenly.

Found on the east gable-end of the barn is a nine-pane window with trim near the south corner. A pair of six-over-six double-hung windows with trim is found in the gable-peak. Attached to the north half of the gable-end of the barn is Addition II.

Addition II is 35' x 35,' 1 ½-stories, and has a gambrel roof whose ridge-line runs approximately east-west, aligned with the ridge-line of the barn. This addition was built c. 1918 and was originally used to process the milk in the south half and store ice in the north half. A pair of side-hinged doors with original iron strap hinges and trim is found on the south side of Addition II. To the east are a pass-through door with panels and trim and a six-pane window with trim. On the east side of Addition II is a six-pane window with trim near the south corner, then heading north is a pass-through door and an overhead garage door. Above the garage door is a small side-hinged door that was once used to access the ice stored inside. A six-pane window with trim is found in the gable-peak of the east side of Addition II. A shed-roof extension is attached to the north side, extending the entire length. This was added in 1964.

Interior:

The interior of the barn is accessed by the double-height side-hinged doors found on the north eave-side of the barn. The entry leads into a large open space with wood plank floors and walls. A loft is found in the east gable-end of the barn, but the west gable-end is open to the roof. Built-in ladders are found in both the gable-ends, leading to the double windows in each end. A grain chute is located on the south side of the barn, and was added sometime during the 1960s. The balloon frame is constructed with wood with sawn marks.

> The framing is almost entirely 'actual size' framing, meaning the board dimensions are true to their measurements—for example, the exterior wall construction is typically 2-inch by x 6-inch wood stud framing at twenty-four inches on center. In select locations, this framing has been replaced by modern lumber. The gambrel at the major barn structure is formed with a 6x6 beam, supported by a pair of 2x8 (actual) boards sloping from the bottom plate. A pair of split nominal 2x8 boards slopes from the top plate to the ridge, which also features 2x4 (actual) collar ties. (Gilley Design Associates)

In the loft it is apparent the knee walls are 6' high, from which the rafters spring. Canted interior posts support purlin plates, and create an open room with no vertical posts. Collar ties are found near the top of the roof. The roof deck is constructed of horizontal wood planks. The hay fork is still extant and hangs on the track that runs the length of the ridge.

A large opening along the south eave-side wall of the barn leads to Addition I which has concrete flooring. A center aisle runs north-south with cow stanchions along the east and west eave-sides of the addition. Manure gutters were located behind the stanchions, so the cows faced the center aisle. White wash is still extant in Addition I.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criteria:

1. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
2. Embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.

Historical background:

This property was originally purchased by Nathan Morgan Strong, a carpenter by trade, from Ben Ellis in the late 19th century. He built the house on the property in 1878 with the money his wife, Abbey Hollister, received as her inheritance. At the time it included two floors with five bedrooms, a parlor, a living room, a dining room, a butlery and pantry, and a kitchen. Nathan Morgan and Abbey had two children, Norman Hollister Strong and Mary Jane Strong. Norman Hollister Strong became a painter by trade and married Ella Dart. Norman Hollister and Ella Strong lived elsewhere in Vernon, however, they moved into the farmhouse with Nathan Morgan and Abbey when Abbey became ill. Farming was not the Strong Family's main profession but a mode of survival. Haymaking was a necessity at the time. They often had a pair of work horses, some pigs, and other animals to help them survive. Norman Hollister and Ella Strong had two children, N. Morgan and Edna. N. Morgan Strong married Gwendolyn Randall in 1910 and moved to a house in Vernon. They had two children, Norman Randall and Gwendolyn Strong.

The early 1910s proved to be difficult as Nathan Morgan, Abbey, and Norman Hollister all passed away during this time. This left Ella Strong and her daughter Edna alone in the house with hired help. N. Morgan Strong continued to run the farm, and in 1917, he and his family moved into the farmhouse with his mother and sister. This meant there were three generations of Strongs living in the house. N. Morgan's son, Norman Randall Strong, helped on the farm starting at a very young age.

In July of 1917, the barn on the property was destroyed by fire, killing a team of horses, and numerous pigs. N. Morgan Strong decided to build a new one, set further back from the road in the apple orchard. He used wood from chestnut trees that died from the blight for the foundation and flooring. A cement mixer was being used on a farm nearby, so it was moved to the Strong Farm to lay the foundation of the new barn. Frank Hutchinson (a local builder) was hired to construct the barn. The plans are believed to have come from Storrs Agricultural College, however, this has never been confirmed. The silo that was first erected was made by the Amos Bridge Company in Hazardville, CT (a section of Enfield). The hay fork that is still extant was purchased from Star Hardware in Rockville. The barn was completed in November of 1917.

During the late 1930s, Norman Randall Strong and his father (N. Morgan Strong) partnered to run the farm. Norman Randall refused to work unless a tractor was purchased, so they purchased a Ford tractor, and sold the work horses. Horse stalls were replaced by cow stalls and calf pens. A garage with an apartment above was built on the property sometime during the 1930s where Norman Randall Strong and a hired hand lived. In the 1940s, the silo was re-built and a new one was added. Norman Randall Strong married Geraldine Risley in August of 1942. They had three children, Carol, Morgan, and Nancy.

In the early 1950s, N. Morgan Strong went to work for the State Department of Agriculture, and Norman Randall Strong took over running the farm with the help of a neighbor farmer, Fred Ecker. In 1965, due to the lack of income from dairy farming, Norman Randall Strong sadly sold his dairy cows and started work as the Superintendent of Grove Hill Cemetery. His daughter, Carol Strong, raised some turkeys as a 4-H project.

The raising of turkeys continued on Strong Farm until the early 2000s. During this time, they also raised chickens and sold eggs. During the 1980s, Morgan Strong took over the running of the farm. The Strong Family Farm was a working farm until the last few years after Norman Randall passed away in 2010. The farm is still owned by Geraldine Strong and her children. The Strong Family Farm is in the process of becoming a 501c3 non-profit corporation, and hopes to become an agricultural learning center. The barn is currently un-used. This property and these buildings have remained in the Strong family for well over 100 years.

Architectural significance:

This is an outstanding example of a gambrel-roof dairy barn. The balloon frame, and all the original materials have been very well maintained and are still intact. Even the cow stanchions remain intact in their original location. The hay fork, purchased from Star Hardware, a local store, continues to hang from the track along the ridge of the roof. Furthermore, the barn continues to sit in its original location.

The property gains significance due to its association with the Strong Family. This prominent family has owned the property for well over 100 years and operated one of the last running farms in the area. Many of the family members throughout the years have contributed their time to the community, joining numerous local organizations. N. Morgan Strong served as a State Legislator, worked for the State of Connecticut Department of Agriculture, and was successful in having a vaccination for cows for the Bang's Disease (Brucellosis) passed.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Photographs and field notes by Kristen Young - 11/14/2012.

Interview with Nancy Strong - 11/14/2012, 274 West Street, Vernon, CT.

Map resources:

Vernon GIS Viewer accessed 12/12/2012 - http://gis.vernon-ct.gov/vernon/
Lot Number: 27-0019-00004

Aerial views from:
http://maps.google.com/ and http://www.bing.com/maps - accessed 12/12/2012.

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed 12/12/2012 at UConn MAGIC:
http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html
http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html .

USGS Historical Maps accessed 12/12/2012 at http://historical.mytopo.com/ .

UTM coordinates accessed 12/12/2012: http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html .

Print and internet resources:

Abbot, S. Ardis, Architectural and Historical Resource Inventory Survey of the Town of Vernon, Vernon Historical Society, 1981.

Connecticut State Library online accessed 12/12/2012: iconn.org or
http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Historic Barns of Connecticut Resource Inventory, 2010,
http://www.connecticutbarns.org/9182

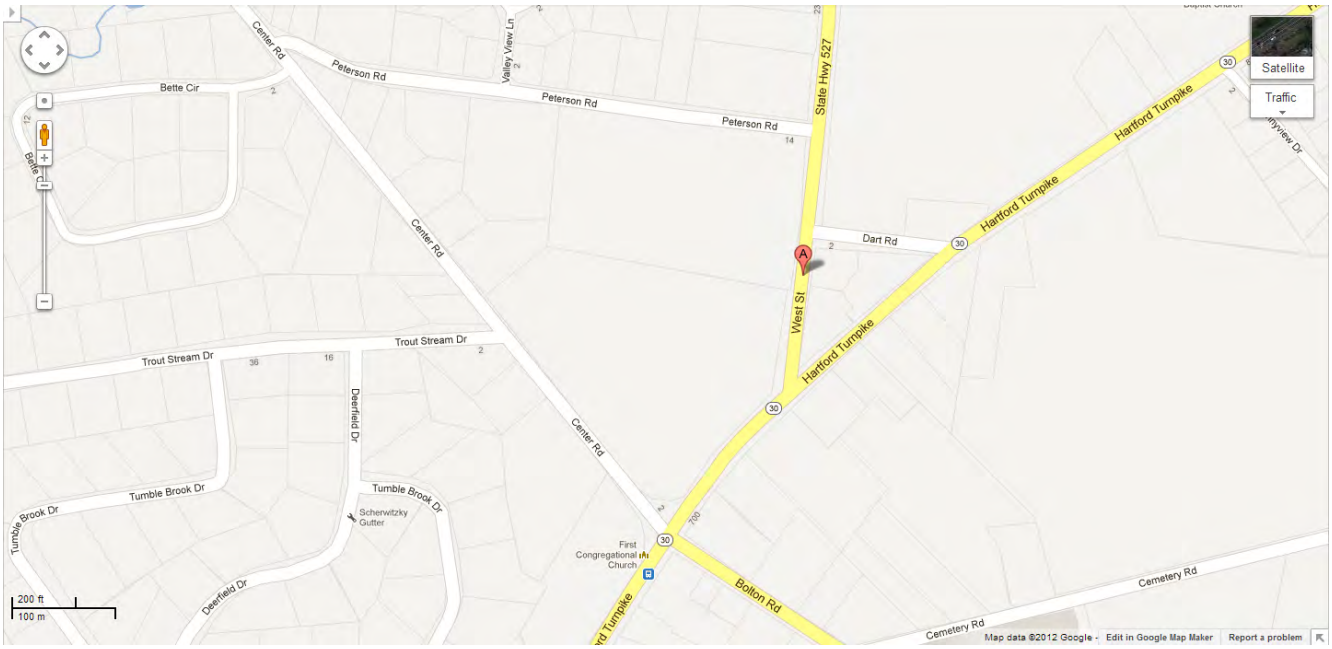
Gilley Design Associates, Architectcs, LLC, Capital Needs Assessment & Feasibility Assessment: The Strong Farm, Project No. 20819, May 2009, CT Trust for Historic Preservation files.

Sexton, James, PhD; Survey Narrative of the Connecticut Barn, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Hamden, CT, 2005, http://www.connecticutbarns.org/history.

Strong, Norman Randall, Narrative of the Strong Family History, typed by Nancy Strong, 2010.

U.S. Federal Census, accessed 12/12/2012 at
http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/hqoweb/library/do/census/search/basic

Visser, Thomas D., Field Guide to New England Barns & Farm Buildings, University Press of New England, 1997.



1. Location map of 274 West Street, Vernon, CT - from https://maps.google.com - accessed 12/12/2012.

2. Parcel map of 274 West Street, Vernon, CT – from http://gis.vernon-ct.gov/vernon/ - accessed 12/12/2012.

3. South view - aerial "bird's-eye" view map of 274 West Street, Vernon, CT – from http://www.bing.com/maps - accessed 12/12/2012.

4. Site map of 274 West Street, Vernon, CT – from https://maps.google.com – accessed 12/12/2012.

5. Southwest context view of Addition II (on the left), the garage, the shed/privy, and the farmhouse (on the right). Camera facing northeast.

6. West context view of the chicken coops (on the left), the garage, a shed (located behind the garage), and the farmhouse (on the right). Camera facing east.

7. West context view of the chicken coops (on the left), the garage, and the barn (on the right). Camera facing east.

8. West side and south side of the garage and shed. Camera facing northeast.

9. South side of the chicken coops. Camera facing north.

10. South side and east gable-end (main façade) of the house. Camera facing northwest.

11. West and south sides of the shed/privy. Camera facing northeast.

12. North eave-side of the barn, camera facing south.

13. North eave-side and west gable-end of the barn. Camera facing southeast.

14. West gable-end of the barn and west eave-side of Addition I. Camera facing east.

15. West gable-end and south eave-side of the barn, and west eave-side and south gable-end of Addition I. Camera facing northeast.

16. South eave-side of the barn and south gable-end of Addition I. Camera facing north.

17. Southwest corner of the shed-roof extension and gable-roof extension. Camera facing northeast.

18. North side of the gable-roof extension, east side of the shed-roof extension, and east eave-side of Addition I. Camera facing southwest.

19. South gable-end and east eave-side of Addition I, south eave-side and east gable-end of the barn, and south eave-side of Addition II. Camera facing northwest.

20. East eave-side of Addition I, east gable-end of the barn, and east gable-end of Addition II. Camera facing west.

21. Interior view of the west gable-end of the barn. Note the hay fork above the window. Camera facing west.

22. Interior view of the east gable-end of the barn. Note the built in ladder below the window. Camera facing east.

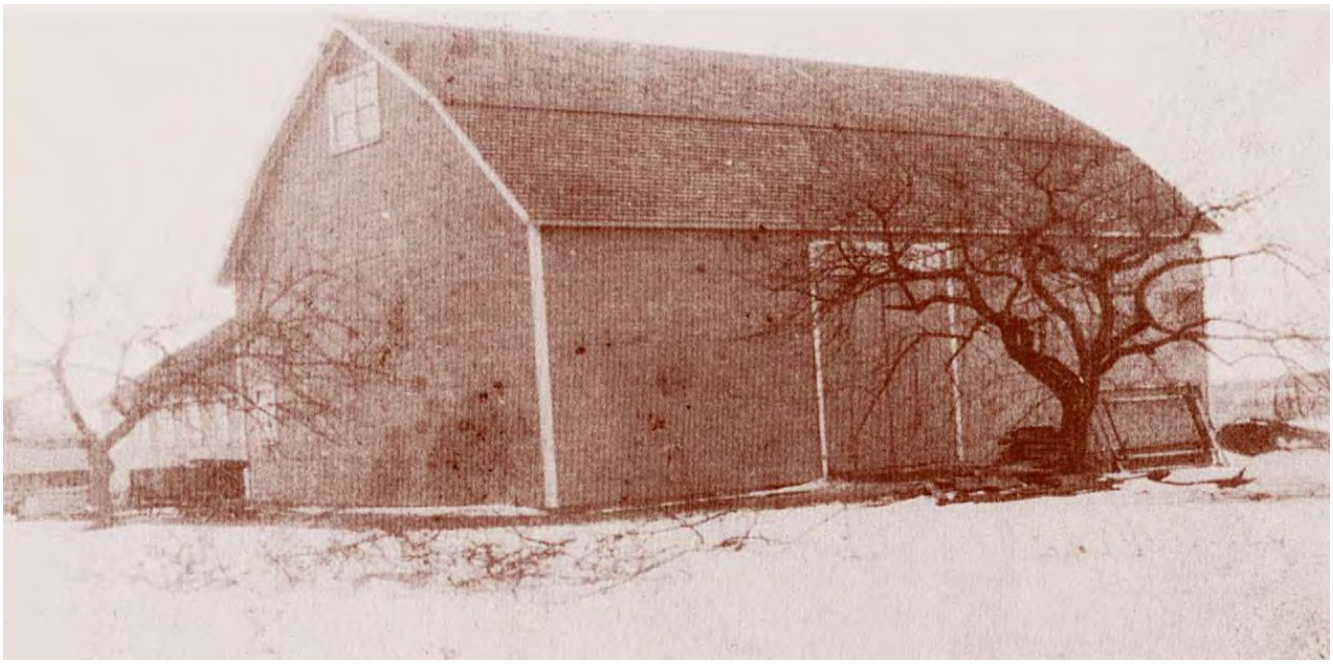
23. Interior view close up of the east gable-end of the barn. Camera facing east.

24. Interior view of the southeast corner of the barn, note the tall knee walls. Camera facing southeast.

25. Interior view of the center aisle of Addition I. Note the concrete flooring, and the cow stanchions on either side of the aisle. Camera facing south.

26. Interior view of the east side of Addition I. Note the cow stanchions on the right side, and the manure gutter to the left of the stanchions. Camera facing south.

27. Historic picture of the south and east sides of the house c. 1890. Camera facing northwest. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.



28. Historic picture of the east gable-end and north eave-side of the barn in 1917, right after it was completed. Camera facing southwest. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.

29. Historic picture of the east eave-side of Addition I, south eave-side and east gable-end of the barn after its completion in 1917. Note the roof of the silo behind Addition I. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.

30. West gable-end and south eave-side of the barn, the silo, the west eave-side and south gable-end of Addition I. This was taken right after the barn was completed in 1917. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.

31. A historic aerial view of the property. Note the two silos on the west side of Addition I, and the lack of the shed that is now located on the east side of the garage. Picture taken sometime during the 1950s. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.

32. Historic picture taken during the 1950s of the Strong Farm in the winter. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.

33. Historic picture of the farm after the second silo was removed. Courtesy of Nancy Strong.