

# Barn Types

## FORM



**English**  
This barn was the main type used throughout the colonial era in Connecticut. It is characterized by a rectangular three-bay plan, a gable roof, and entry through a large door in the center of the long side. Traditionally, hay was stored on one side, animals on the other, with wagon access and grain threshing taking place in the central bay.



**New England**  
The successor to the English barn, this type relies on a gable entry. This arrangement allows for easy expansion by adding bays along the axis of the ridge. Although it was seen by many as an improvement over the earlier side entry English Barn, the New England barn did not replace its predecessor but rather both continued to be built.



**Bank**  
This type is characterized by the location of its main floor at a higher level, either through building on a hillside or by raising the building on a foundation and ramping up. There are two advantages to this arrangement. Originally it provided a place under the barn for the collection and storage of precious manure generated over the winter by livestock on the main floor. Later, with the addition of windows for better light and ventilation, animals were housed in the lowest level, leaving more hay capacity above.



**Gambrel**  
The introduction of gambrel roofs — and their later counterparts, the “gothic roof” and “round roof” — to barns allowed for greater volumes of hay storage in the loft spaces. Most gambrel barns are New England type, though some English barns have gambrel roofs.



**Polygonal/Round**  
These are characterized by a plan other than the traditional rectangle. While one of the earliest polygonal barns is associated with our first president (and dated 1796), neither polygonal or round barns ever captured the imagination of American farmers, even though they were repeatedly touted as being most efficient.

## PURPOSE



**Tobacco Shed**  
This type of barn, or shed as they are called in the Connecticut River Valley, is one of the most distinctive of the single-crop barns. It is characterized often by great length and by vented sides to regulate air flow and allow harvested tobacco to cure at the appropriate rate.



**Onion**  
In response to the specialization of local farmers in growing onions, a barn type appeared in Fairfield County and the Windsor area. While English onion sheds use a system of louvers to encourage even drying (not unlike our tobacco barns) the examples of onion barns so far located in Connecticut have not used this feature. Instead, they are called onion barns simply because they were used to store the crop.



**Dairy**  
The term is used as early as the 18th century (along with “cow house”). Modern dairy barns are characterized by their interior arrangements of stanchions and gutters to facilitate milking and the removal of manure. The iconic dairy barn is a large gambrel-roofed structure dedicated to the milking cows. Ever more stringent sanitary regulations resulted in specialized technologies such as manure trolleys, silos, and milk rooms or creameries.



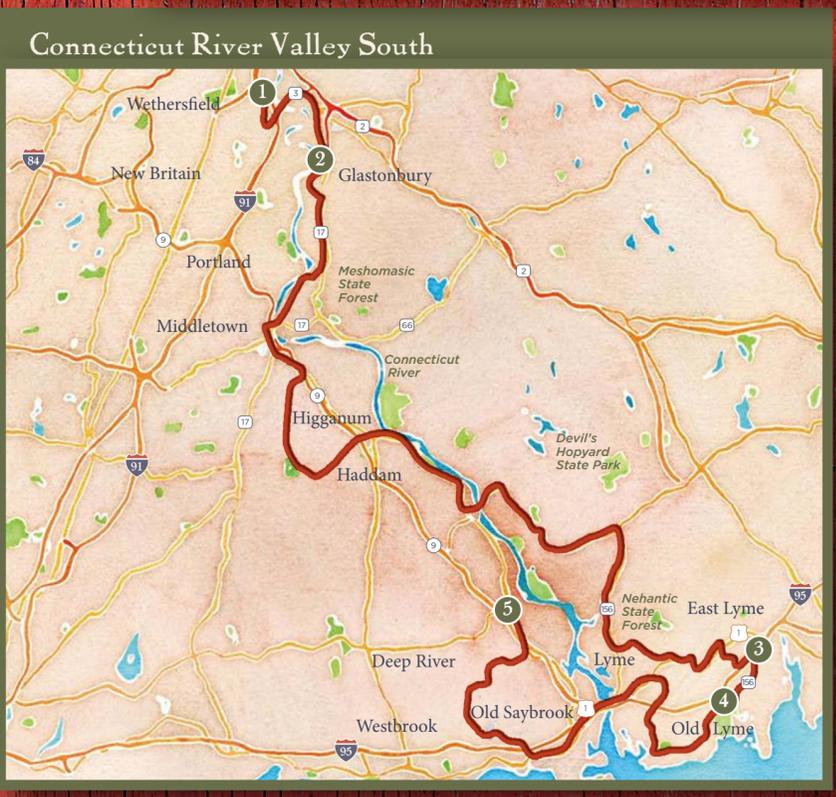
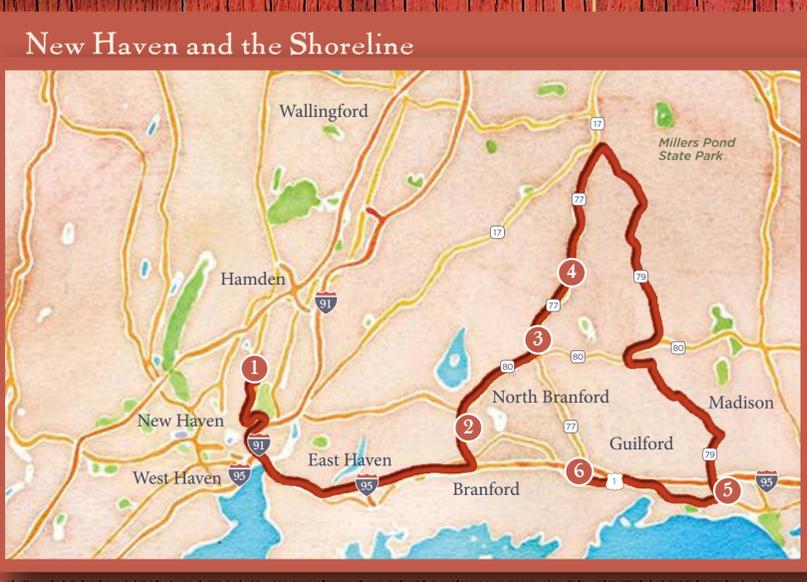
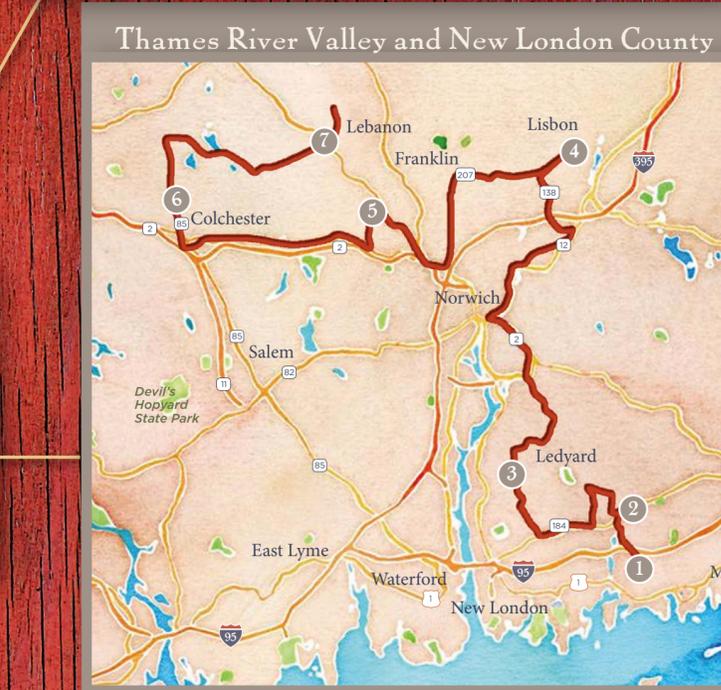
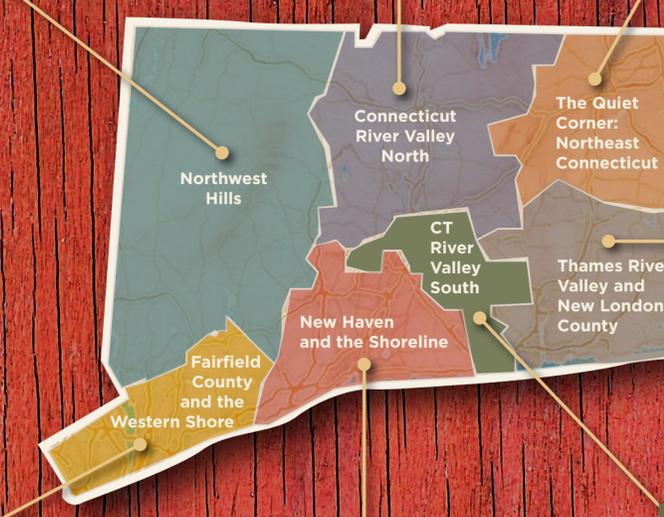
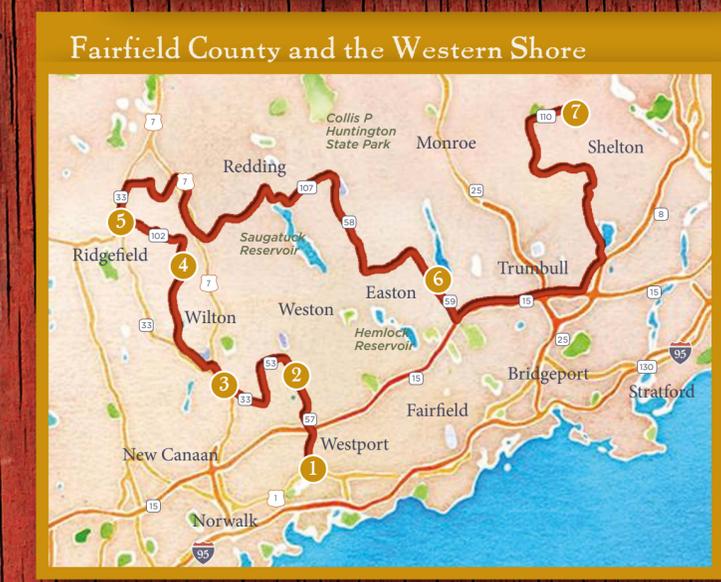
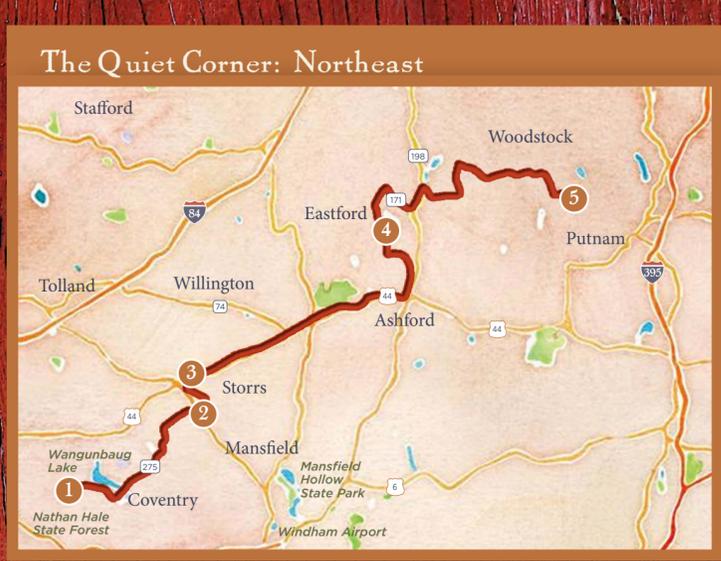
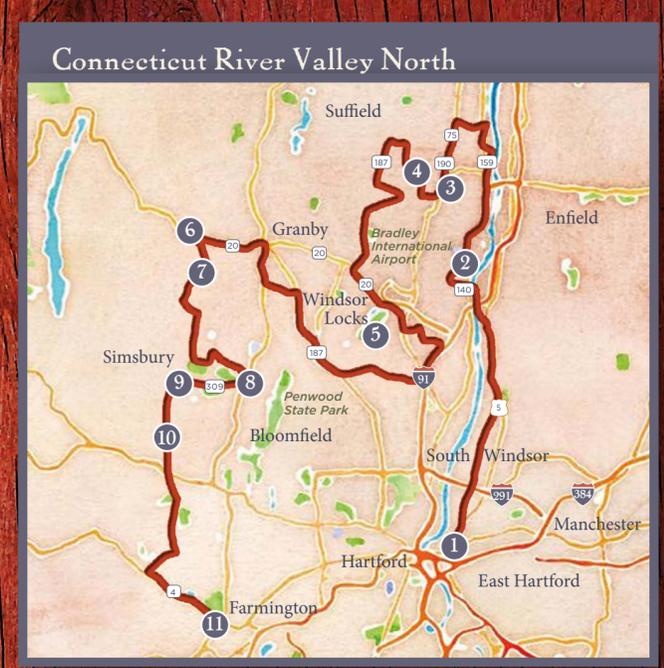
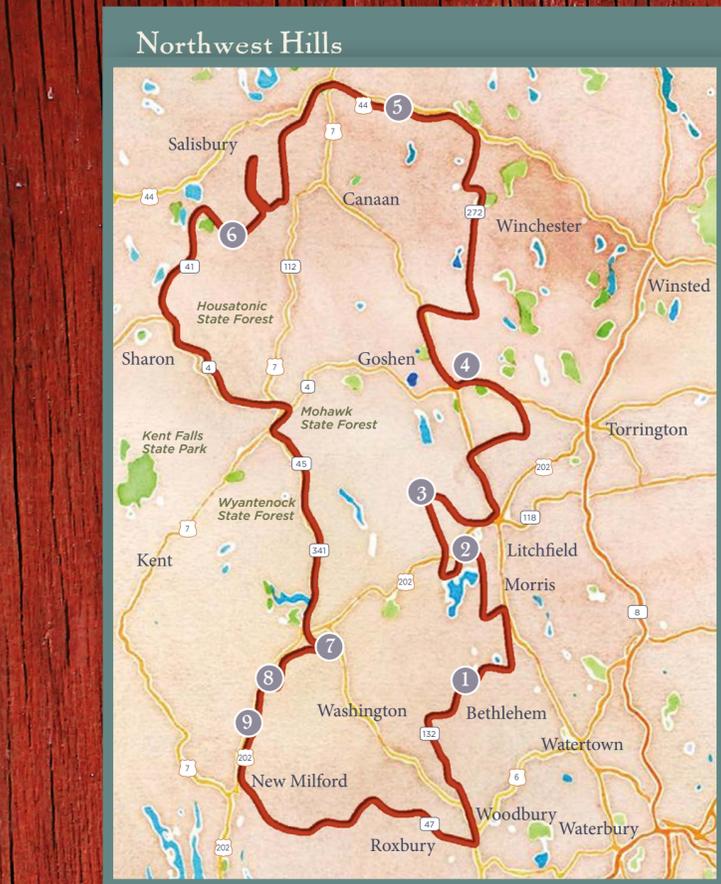
**Potato & Mushroom Barns**  
Potato houses or storage barns come in many different shapes and sizes all linked by the common goal of keeping harvested potatoes at a constant temperature and in the dark. The most traditional of these are banked into a hillside. The mushroom barn similarly needs to provide a controlled, dark environment and is likely to be built of masonry.



**Poultry House/Chicken Coop**  
Originally, poultry was raised on a small scale because of its vulnerability to cold weather and disease. In the middle of the 19th century rearing poultry became a more popular pursuit. With the increased popularity came a new building type of chicken coop. While these originally started out as relatively small buildings, by the mid-1900s large multi-story poultry barns could be found in a number of areas.



**Corn Crib**  
In the middle of the 19th century, growing “Indian” corn became popular. Storing the corn on the cob in well-ventilated corn cribs allowed the kernels to dry without spoiling. The



distinctly shaped corn crib, with slanted side walls built of spaced wooden slats, became common by the 1860s. The overhanging eaves and slanted walls helped prevent rain from splashing inside. Vertical side walls are also common. Corn cribs are typically set high above the ground on wooden or stone posts.



**Carriage Barn**  
By the 1850s, some New England farmers built horse stables and carriage barns separated from the other livestock. The precursor to the twentieth-century garage, these outbuildings are distinguished by their large hinged doors, often a wall dormer with a hay door into the loft, and proximity to the farmhouse. Elaborate carriage barns were also associated with gentlemen farms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and also with the larger homes in urban areas.



**Gentleman's Barn**  
The 19th century saw the introduction of the Gentleman's barn. These barns were frequently designed by famous architects and were part of estates that combined the luxury of a country retreat with the grit of a working farm. The farm supplied dairy products for the estate and often for the owner's city home. These farms often demonstrated the latest inventions and techniques for scientific farming.

