

**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) Gambino, Robert and Kathy, Farmstead/Red Tobacco Barn Record No. 10160  
 Building Name (Historic) Morehouse, Seymour / Reynolds, Susan / Benedict, Jennie and William, Farmstead  
 Street Address or Location 4 Old Mill Road  
 Town/City New Milford Village Northville County Litchfield  
 Owner(s) Robert & Kathy Gambino, 4 Old Mill Road, New Milford CT 06776  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 Tobacco shed bank barn, Vernacular style Date of Construction c. 1880

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

- |  |   |   |                                       |  |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clapboard             | <input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding        | <input type="checkbox"/> Brick  | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle | <input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone | <input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten         | <input type="checkbox"/> Stucco                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone  | <input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete (Type _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cut Stone (Type _____) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Vertical wood siding</u> |                                       |  |

**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, B Approximate Dimensions 24' x 60'

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: Conversion to livery stable in early 20th c.

**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: Cottage, stone dam, river, scenic road

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

• Historical or Architectural importance:

See continuation sheet.

• Sources:

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

See continuation sheet.

Photographer Charlotte Hitchcock Date 1/18/2013

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name Charlotte Hitchcock Date 2/12/2013

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

• Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude:  
41.640419, -73.388323

**Threats to the building or site:**

- None known     Highways     Vandalism     Developers     Renewal     Private
- Deterioration     Zoning     Other \_\_\_\_\_     Explanation \_\_\_\_\_

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The site is located in the village of Northville in the northern part of New Milford. The property consists of three parcels totaling almost 2 ½ acres, spanning Old Mill Road, a narrow unpaved designated Local Scenic Road. The road runs roughly north-south, meandering along the course of the East Aspetuck River, which runs southward to the Housatonic River. This site is at the corner of Old Mill Road and Upland Road. Old Mill Road and is on the east bank of the river. To the west Upland Road crosses the river and intersects Litchfield Road (US Route 202) a more direct main road along the west bank, dating from the mid-1930s, which replaced Old Mill Road as the “front road” from New Milford to Litchfield. Today’s Old Mill Road was known as the “back road.” The level interval along the river has been historically the site of small tobacco-growing plots.

The c. 1860 farmhouse at 4 Old Mill Lane is on the east side of the road, with its ridge-line oriented east-west and its west gable-end facing the road. The house is a 2 ½-story three-bay side-hall plan structure with its entry door in the right (south) bay. The doorway has a Greek Revival-style surround with pilasters, lintel, and a projecting cornice. Windows at the first and second floor levels are six-over-six double-hung; a rectangular attic window appears to be of Greek Revival style but has an air conditioner unit in the opening. The roof has overhangs at the rake and eaves with closed soffits, short cornice returns on the west façade, and simple molded trim and frieze boards. Siding is wood clapboards with corner board trim. There is a 1-story late 19<sup>th</sup>-century porch along the south eave-side and a 1-story ell projecting southward off the southeast corner. Roofing is asphalt shingles.

To the south is an open field and a 1 ½-story two-bay gable-roofed barn, 22’ x 24’, known as the “Yellow Barn” (now faded) which is thought by the owner to have been built on the foundation of an earlier house. This barn has its ridge-line oriented north-south, a pair of sliding doors in the north gable-end, and is used for equipment storage. Three-unit panels of six-pane windows in the ground floor and attic of the south gable-end indicate a former use for poultry. There is a two-bay shed-roofed addition attached on the east side with sliding doors in the east eave-side. The barn interior has some elements of post and beam framing, mixed with sawn lumber elements including rafters and balloon-framed partitions. A small chicken coop and an outhouse are located to the northeast of the barn and a modern hoop-house-style greenhouse is at the southeast corner of the property.

On the west side of the road, across from the farmhouse, is a 1 ½-story gable-roofed Cottage with its ridge-line oriented north-south parallel to the road and its entry in the east eave-side. The cottage is a rental unit.

North of the cottage the remains of an old stone mill dam can be seen along the river bank. On the opposite bank are several neighboring historic structures including a brandy distillery and a cider mill/general store, now re-used as residences. Further to the north along the west side of the road, and close to the river bank, is the Tobacco shed. The Cottage and Tobacco shed are located on a parcel with the address of 5 Old Mill Road, but for the purposes of the nomination will be considered together with the principal residence as 4 Old Mill Road.

A number of other historic resources in New Milford are recognized by listing on the National Register of Historic Places, including the New Milford Center Historic District, the Town Hall, Housatonic Railroad Station, and several tobacco warehouses. The town center area is located 4.5 miles to the south of this site. Approximately .25 miles to the east, the Hine-Buckingham Farms on Upland and Crossman Roads is on the National Register. New Milford farmsteads and barns included in the current thematic nomination of Agricultural Heritage resources are the Larson Barn at 388 Danbury Road, the Smyrski Barns on Merryall Road, and the Sullivan Farm at 140 Park Lane Road.

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

**Architectural description:**

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

Farmhouse	c. 1860	C	Outhouse & Chicken coop	20 <sup>th</sup> c.	C
Tobacco shed	c. 1880	C	Cottage	1929	C
Yellow barn	c. 1900	C	Greenhouse	Late 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	NC

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**Tobacco shed:**

This is a 1 ½-story eave-entry bank barn tobacco shed. The ridge-line is parallel to Old Mill Road which meanders but at this point will be considered as north-south. The shed is a 24' x 60' four-bay five-bent structure erected on a fieldstone foundation forming a shallow banked basement accessed from the south gable-end. The bays are here identified as 1 through 4, from south to north. Siding is vertical boards with a wide frieze board under the eaves. The roof overhangs have sloped soffits with simple molding trim on the fascias, typical of late 19<sup>th</sup>-century vernacular design. The location of the interior bents is identifiable by iron strap ties at the dropped girt elevations; these protrude through cut-outs in the frieze board and are visible on the exterior. Siding is faded but has remains of a red stain; trim is painted white.

**Exterior:**

The main entry in the east eave-side is a pair of exterior sliding doors in Bay 3. The left leaf has what appear to be original track hardware, while the right leaf has more modern hardware. The entry is accessed by a short ramp; the grade declines to the sides of the ramp, revealing an un-mortared fieldstone foundation. In Bay 1 is a pair of six-pane windows set near the center of the wall height. To the right of the windows and again in Bay 2 there is a top-hinged venting panel two boards wide and a rectangular side-hinged panel similar to a hay door high in the wall. In Bay 4 are two single-pane windows with beveled head trim. Between the windows are top-hinged vents two boards wide and between these a door opening which has been sealed shut.

The grade at the south gable-end of the shed declines further, revealing a basement level. In the basement level in the west half is a pair of hinged doors; the rest of the basement level is un-mortared fieldstone. The main level of the south gable-end is blank except for top-hinged vents and one side-hinged vent off-center toward the right (east). Beneath the apex of the roof is an arched louvered vent.

The grade at the west eave-side inclines slightly. The west eave-side has a sliding door at the left (north) corner and a series of top hinged vents. The north gable-end of the shed has an arched louvered vent beneath the apex of the roof and two top-hinged vents.

**Interior:**

The interior reveals a square rule post and beam frame of circular sawn timbers. Each of the five bents has a center interior post forming two aisles, and a dropped tie-girt. The sawn common rafters are butted at the ridge and have no intermediate supports. A distinctive feature is the iron straps at the tie-girts, which wrap around the outside of the vertical posts and protrude through the frieze trim at the exterior, being visible through cut-outs in the boards. Also on the tie-girts, a series of short vertical boards with notches in their upper ends provided supports for the pole on which tobacco leaves were hung to dry.

Areas of the interior appear to have been re-purposed following the end of the tobacco-growing era, as evidenced by the addition of windows which break the lines of the tobacco vent in the east wall. An area of Bay 4 has been enclosed with a partition and loft floor.

• Historical or Architectural importance:

Applicable Connecticut State Register Criteria:

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

This farm site is significant because of the exceptional integrity of the Tobacco shed, Farmhouse, and Yellow barn, which have been conserved with care by the owners over a period of more than fifty years. The Tobacco barn is a rare extant example of an early purpose-built tobacco shed in the Housatonic valley region. The river valley, road, and buildings along Old Mill Road, a designated local scenic road, have exceptional historic integrity as a landscape. The site gains significance for women's history, from its association with Susan Reynolds, owner in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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**Historical background:**

According to the owners' research, this stretch of the East Aspetuck River was utilized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for a variety of industries including sites of a saw mill, paper mill, stone cutting mill, grist mill, cider mill, brandy distillery and saw mill (with dam & race). The 1874 Beers map shows the vicinity peopled by Morehouse, Hill, Camp, and Booth family members. The present owner has traced back to Seymour Morehouse as an early owner of the property, builder of the Farmhouse, and owner of the cider mill and distillery across the river as well. He may have been responsible for building the Tobacco barn in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

From the 1850s to the 1930s, tobacco was a significant crop in the Housatonic Valley (see also nominations for the Sullivan Farm at 140 Park Lane Road, Larson Farm at 288 Danbury Road, and Smyrski Barn at 228 Merryll Road). Several tobacco warehouses in New Milford have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In this vicinity, the typical tobacco farm was a 2-acre plot. This barn on its continuous foundation and basement level is atypical of the later mass-produced tobacco sheds which were built on a series of foundation piers. Some tobacco shed basements were utilized for stripping the leaves during the winter, but this basement has none of the finishes that would indicate such a use. The eave-entry arrangement and lack of the more typical drive-through access into the gable-end elevations, also make this an unusual tobacco shed (see also the nomination for 589 Forbes Street, East Hartford for another atypical tobacco shed).

In the 1930s the market for small growers' tobacco crops dwindled, and many barns were repurposed as dairy barns. In this case, new uses were found as a stable for livery horses and oxen, hence the interior renovations as evidenced by the window openings found on the east eave-side. A sliding door now found on the west side, was formerly on the east at the boarded-up opening in Bay 4, as part of the livery operation.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as listed in the 1900 census, residents included the owner, Susan Reynolds (b. 1841), a single head of household who took in boarders, and nearby the Hill and Hendryx families, who farmed. The house was "given" to Jennie Benedict in 1919 by Susan Reynolds.

The Yellow barn is on the old foundation of the home of "Miss Booth." It appears to have been the original home site of the owner/operator of the Cider & Brandy mills. The home is indicated on the 1880s New Milford map but became dilapidated by the 1890s. The Gambinos' research indicates it was removed around the time Miss Reynolds took possession of 4 Old Mill Road. Miss Reynolds likely took possession of the property and built this barn.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the property was owned by members of the Benedict family. In the 1930 and 1940 census, William and Jennie Benedict, in their 70s, and son Frank, age 48, lived adjacent to Irwin Platt, age 64. The occupant of the Cottage (built in 1929) was Platt, who ran a livery and trucking business, using the Tobacco shed as a stable for his teams. Frank Benedict's mother, Jennie, was a Hendryx. Her brother Sheldon Hendryx lived in the c. 1812 home to the north, now 12 Old Mill Road.

Present owner Robert Gambino purchased the site at 4 Old Mill Road from Frank Benedict (then in his mid-80s) in 1965. Robert passed by the area frequently to visit his father's cousin, who taught music in New York but worked as a summer caretaker for property in New Preston. Frank Benedict had moved out of the house at 4 Old Mill Road, in the early 1960s due to its deteriorated and un-modernized condition. He moved into his Uncle Sheldon's home at 12 Old Mill Road. Robert Gambino bought the property initially for the barn, in order to store his boat, but acquired an old house, car, and tools in the bargain. At the time, the outhouse had an 1898 calendar pinned on the wall.

Subsequently, Bob and Kathy Gambino renovated the house. They purchased the 5 Old Mill Road parcel containing the Tobacco shed and Cottage in 1974. Bob taught for three decades at Housatonic Valley Regional High School as an Agricultural Educator, served as Mayor of New Milford from 2001 until 2003, and has continued to run a horticulture business on the property. Bob and Kathy are charter members of the Northville Residents' Association, Inc, established in 1989 to maintain, improve and protect the rural, residential and historic character of the Northville community in the Town of New Milford, CT. Bob currently serves as its President.

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**Architectural significance:**

This barn and its farm site are significant because of the exceptional integrity of the Tobacco shed, Farmhouse, and Yellow barn, which have been conserved with care by their owners over a period of more than fifty years. The Tobacco barn is a rare extant example of its type in the Housatonic valley tobacco region. It appears to be a relatively early purpose-built tobacco shed, as it exhibits the two-aisle framing and top-hinged wall venting that were to become standard, yet it has features including the eave-entry and full foundation, that would not continue as characteristic of the tobacco shed building type. The association of this site with a designated scenic road and with other historic structures of the local industrial community of Northville, adds to its significance as an intact landscape. The current owner is a prominent civic figure in the New Milford community, adding to the potential future historic significance of the site.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Photographs and field notes by Charlotte Hitchcock 1/18/2013.

Interview with Robert and Kathy Gambino 1/18/2013, at the site; title search and historic research by R. Gambino.

**Map resources:**

Town of New Milford Assessor's Records and GIS Viewer: <http://hosting.tigebond.com/newmilfordct/main.htm>  
Parcel ID: 73/38, 72/43, 72/44.

Aerial views from:

<http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 7/04/2012.

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed at UConn MAGIC:

[http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash\\_up/1934.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/mash_up/1934.html)

[http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical\\_maps\\_connecticut\\_towns.html](http://magic.lib.uconn.edu/historical_maps_connecticut_towns.html) .

USGS Historical Maps accessed 12/22/2012 at <http://historical.mytopo.com/> .

UTM coordinates: <http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html> .

**Print and internet resources:**

Connecticut State Library online: [iconn.org](http://www.cslib.org/iconnitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories) or <http://www.cslib.org/iconnitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories>

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, Historic Barns of Connecticut Resource Inventory, 2010,  
<http://www.connecticutbarns.org/10160> .

Devlin, William E., E.A. Wildman Co. Tobacco Warehouse National Register Nomination No. 88000731, National Park Service, 1988.

Gilchrist, Alison, Carl F. Schoverling Tobacco Warehouse National Register Nomination No. 82004446, National Park Service, 1982.

Housatonic Council of Elected Officials Scenic Road Inventory, HCEO web site,  
[http://www.hvceo.org/transport/transport\\_allscenicrd.php](http://www.hvceo.org/transport/transport_allscenicrd.php) accessed 2/12/2013.

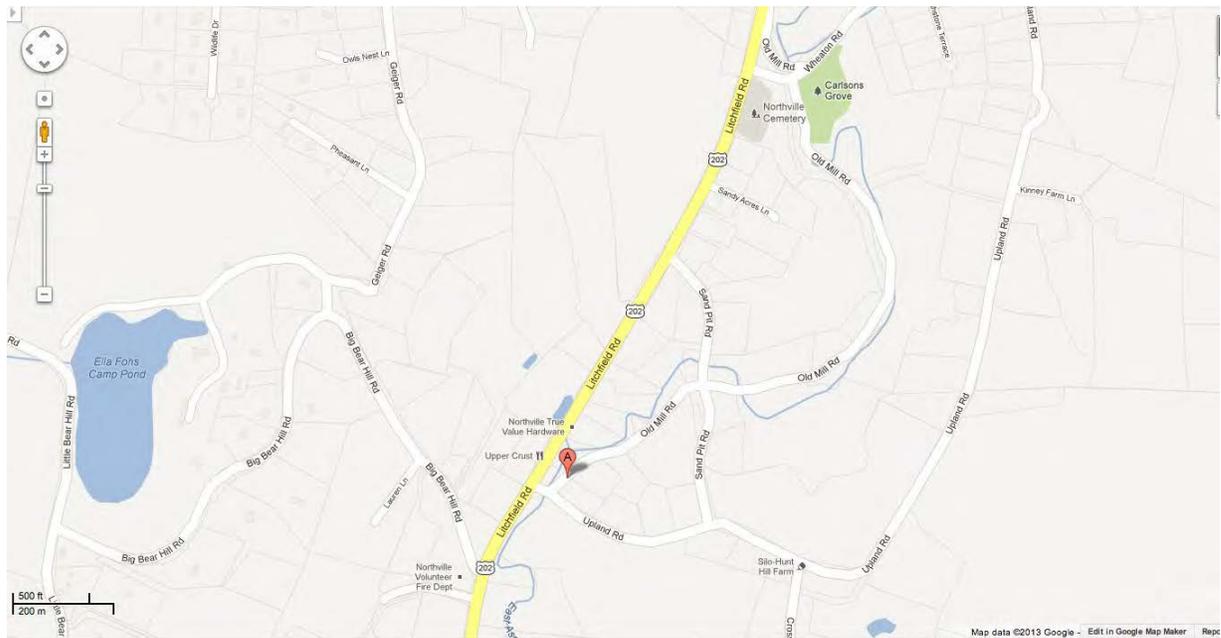
Kurumi.com, Route 25 and Route 202 history, <http://kurumi.com/roads/ct/us202.html> ,  
<http://kurumi.com/roads/ct/ct25.html> , accessed 2/12/2013.

O’Gorman, James F., Connecticut Valley Vernacular: the Vanishing Landscape and Architecture of the New England Tobacco Fields, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, 144 pages.

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

U.S. Federal Census, accessed 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 4 Old Mill Road, New Milford CT – from <http://maps.google.com/> accessed 2/11/2013.



2. South view – aerial “bird’s-eye” map of 4 Old Mill Road, New Milford CT – <http://www.bing.com/maps> accessed 2/11/2013.



3. Site Plan Sketch showing contributing resources.



4. South context view, camera facing north. From left to right: the Cottage, Tobacco shed, and Farmhouse.



5. West view of Farmhouse, camera facing east.



6. South view of Yellow barn, camera facing north.



7. West view of Yellow barn, camera facing east.



8. Northeast view of Yellow barn, camera facing southwest.



9. Interior view of Yellow barn loft level and roof framing, camera facing south.



10. South view of Outhouse (left) and Chicken coop (right), camera facing north. Farmhouse is a far left rear.



11. Southeast view of Cottage and Tobacco shed, camera facing north.



12. Northeast view of Tobacco shed, camera facing southwest. Note faux corner boards in white trim paint.



13. Detail view of east eave-side, camera facing west at Bay 1, showing top-hinged vent above the window, side-hinged vent to the right, and iron strap protruding through the frieze board, at top above the hinges.



14. Detail view of east eave-side at Bays 2-3, camera facing west, showing vents (top- and side-hinged) and sliding door hardware. Note also the iron strap protruding through the frieze board above the sliding door hangers.



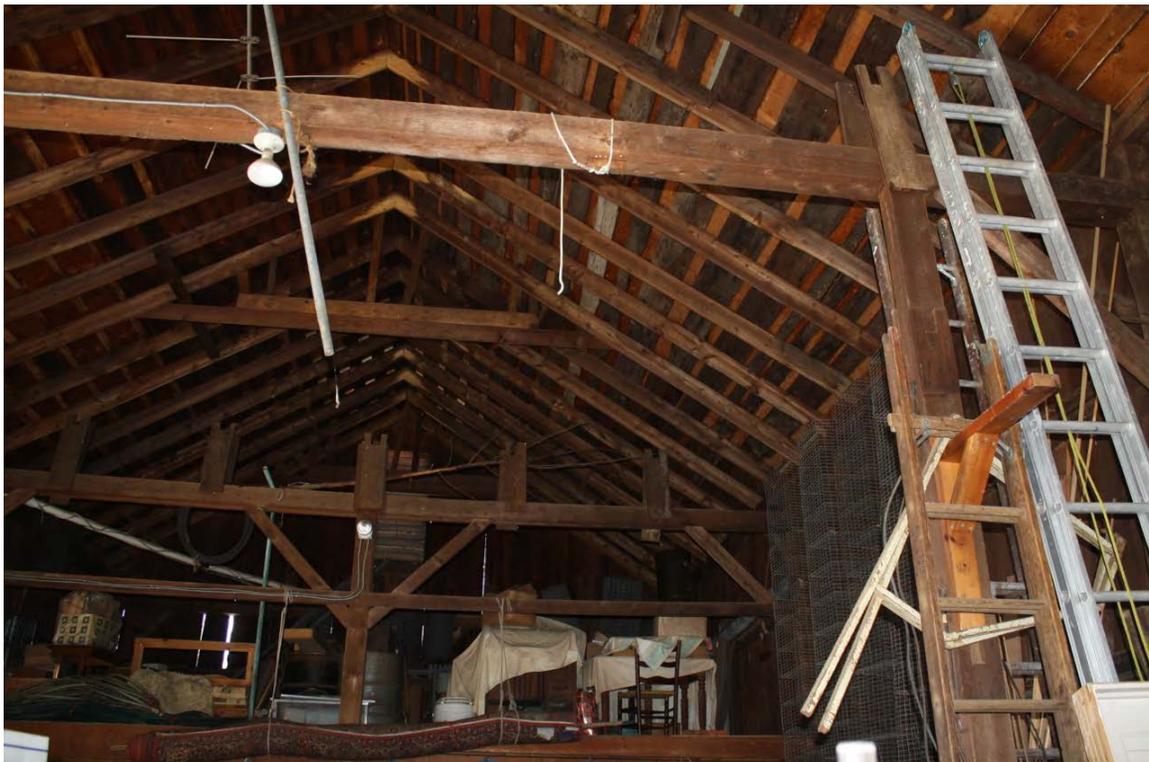
15. Southeast view of Tobacco shed, camera facing north, showing south gable-end with banked basement entry.



16. West detail view of Tobacco shed, camera facing northeast, showing top-hinged venting system.



17. Interior view of Tobacco shed basement, camera facing northwest, showing fieldstone retaining wall and joist framing of floor above.



18. Interior view of Tobacco shed, camera facing south, showing two-aisle post and beam frame.



19. Interior detail view of Tobacco shed, camera facing south, showing dropped tie-girt and plate framing. Note the typical iron strap which wraps around the outside of the vertical post and is visible on the exterior.



20. Interior detail view of Tobacco shed, camera facing north, showing dropped tie-girt and plate framing.