

*Agricultural Heritage Multiple Property Submission - State Register*

## 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) Sessions Farmstead Record No. 12207  
Building Name (Historic) Sessions, Abijah and William Pitt, Farmstead  
Street Address or Location 15 Rindge Road  
Town/City Union Village \_\_\_\_\_ County Tolland  
Owner(s) Gary and Susan Wirth, 15 Rindge Road, Union, CT 06076 ☐ Public ☒ Private

### PROPERTY INFORMATION

Present Use: Domestic:secondary structure; 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 Connected New England barn/shed, Vernacular style Date of Construction c. 1805, 1900

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 \_\_\_\_\_) ☐ Cut Stone (Type \_\_\_\_\_) ☒ Other vertical board 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 Barn: 24' x 20', Shed: 12' x 20'

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: cupola, stone walls

**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 Kristen Young Date 12/14/2012

View Multiple Views Negative on File CTHP

Name Kristen Young and Todd Levine Date 12/20/2012

Organization Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Address 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden CT 06517

- Subsequent field evaluations:

Latitude, Longitude:

41.974727, -72.110277

**Threats to the building or site:**

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

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• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

The William Pitt Sessions house and barn sit on three acres on the north side of Rindge Road in Union. A driveway extends to the north off Rindge Road and leads to the south side of the barn. A second driveway, located to the east of the house and barn, extends to the north off the road and leads to a wood shop. The house is attached to the east side of the barn by a connecting shed. The wood shop is located further to the east of the house and barn. A fieldstone foundation is found just to the northwest of the wood shop and indicates there was once another barn on the property. Stone walls are found along the west and south borders of the property, and a partial stone wall is located near the east border. An open field is along the west side of the barn and house, extending to the north. A few old apple trees are located in the northwest of the field.

The William Pitt Sessions Farmhouse was built c. 1805, set back slightly from Rindge Road. The main façade faces south, and the main entry is found on the south eave-side of the house.

15 Rindge Road is a nicely preserved, single-storey [sic, actually 1 ½- stories], Cape Cod-type dwelling with a gable-roof, oriented with the long elevation to the street. The structure rests on a stone foundation and is sheathed with clapboards. The building incorporates a central entry with five-light transom. Window sash is of 12/12 configuration arranged in a four-bay façade. Additional architectural and decorative features include a central chimney, slight hewn overhang in the gable ends, and attached wing/woodshed/barn on the left.

During the colonial and early national eras much of Union's population lived in modest, single-storey [sic], Cape Cod-style dwellings characterized by timber-frame construction, gable roofs, central entries and chimneys, balanced facades, and double-hung small-pane sash. Such homes reflected the accumulated experience of several generations of New England's vernacular building tradition. (Rossano)

Rindge Road extends to the east off Bigelow Hollow Road (Rte. 171) and leads east to the Town of Woodstock. The William Pitt Sessions property is located within a mile of the Woodstock town line. This property is situated in the southeast corner of the Town of Union, only a few miles to the north of the Town of Eastford. To the west is what used to be Abijah Sessions house, located on the corner of Bigelow Hollow Road and Rindge Road. To the northwest of the property are Bigelow Hollow State Park, the Nipmuck State Forest, and the Yale-Myers Forest belonging to Yale University – these forested lands occupy a substantial portion of Union. Forested land, a few open fields and residential properties are along Rindge Road, surrounding the property. Approximately four miles to the west at the town center of Union is the Union Green National Register Historic District.

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

**Architectural description:**

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

Farmhouse	c. 1805	C
Barn	c. 1900	C
Shed	c. 1805	C
Wood shop	19 <sup>th</sup> c.	C

**Barn and Shed:**

The 20' x 24' 1 ½-story gable-entry gable-roofed connected barn is attached to the house by a 1-story gable-roofed shed. The barn has its ridge-line oriented north-south and the shed has its ridge-line east-west, aligned with the house. The barn and shed are clad in vertical board siding and have asphalt shingle roofs. The barn has an unmortared fieldstone foundation. A hip-roofed cupola is centered atop the barn, each side with a louvered vent.

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**Exterior:**

The main entry is found on the south gable-end of the barn and consists of a pair of exterior-hung sliding doors. No other features are found on this side. The un-mortared fieldstone foundation is visible along the west eave-side of the barn. A side-hinged pass-through door with two panels in the top half of the leaf, with X bracing below is found near the north corner of the west eave-side. Two side-hinged pass-through doors are along the north gable-end. The easternmost door has Z bracing. No other features are found on this side. The shed is attached to the east eave-side of the barn, extending to the east and attaching to a gable-roofed addition on the west gable-end of the house.

The shed has a side-hinged pass-through door found on the north eave-side. On the south side of the shed is a six-pane window near the west corner. A pass-through door and a six-pane window are located near the east corner.

**Interior:**

The interior of the barn is accessed through the pair of exterior-hung sliding doors found on the south gable-end of the barn. This is a two-bay, three-bent barn. In the north bay of the barn is a loft area, but the south bay is open to the roof. Plywood boards are used as flooring, covering what was probably once a dirt floor. The walls are made of wood planks. The heavy timber framing is joined together by nails, indicating this barn was built sometime during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The common rafters meet at the middle with a ridge-board, and the roof deck is made of wood planks. An open bay along the east eave-side of the barn opens to the interior of the shed.

The interior of the shed consists of plywood flooring, probably covering what was once a dirt floor, and wood plank walls. The entire room of the interior is open to the roof. Post-and-beam framing constructed of chestnut timbers are pegged together with tree nails. Hand hewn marks on the timbers indicate this shed was built sometime during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it is believed it was built during the same time as the house. The common rafters meet at the middle and are mortised into a hand hewn five-sided ridge-pole. Tie-girts are joined at the level of the rafter plates rather than dropped as would be typical of later 19<sup>th</sup>-century construction. The roof deck is constructed of wood planks. Tension cables have been installed in the interior to stabilize the structure.

• 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.

This barn is significant as an unusual example in Connecticut, of a New England barn connected to the farmhouse. The property gains significance due to its association with the Sessions Family who were prominent in the Town of Union. Both Abijah and William Pitt Sessions served as town selectmen.

**Historical background:**

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Abijah Sessions owned many acres of land from what is now Bigelow Hollow Road to the border of the Town of Woodstock. Abijah Sessions, son of Abijah Sessions and Joanna Dana, grew up without ever knowing his father as Abijah Sessions, Sr. had died at the age of 21 in 1753 a few months before his son was born. Abijah Sessions inherited this property after his mother died in 1797.

Abijah Sessions married Hannah May in 1778 and they had nine children. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century this portion of Abijah Session's land was used as an apple orchard. He and his family lived in the house located on the corner of what is now Bigelow Hollow Road and Rindge Road. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Abijah Sessions gave William Pitt Sessions (his eldest son) a portion of his land, and what is now 15 Rindge Road. Around 1805, William Pitt Sessions built the house and attached shed that is currently still situated on the property.

William Pitt Sessions was born in 1779 and married Elizabeth Rogers who died in 1840. He then married Laura Morris in 1859. William Pitt Sessions appears to have had no children. Both Abijah and William Pitt Sessions served as Town Selectmen of Union.

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Sometime around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the barn was added to the west gable-end of the shed that was attached to the house. By 2002, the Ferrin Family owned the property, who then sold it to the Mirabellas in 2005. In 2006, the Wirths purchased the property and remain the current owners. Today, the barn is used for storage. It is believed the barn was once used to house animals, store farm equipment or animal feed.

**Architectural significance:**

This is a locally rare example of a New England barn connected to the farmhouse. This early 20<sup>th</sup>-century Barn continues to sit in its original location. The adjacent Shed appears older than the barn, with characteristics of early-19<sup>th</sup>-century construction mixed with more recent sawn braces and some rafters. Although not currently in agricultural use, the barn and setting represent the traditional landscape. The connected barn arrangement is found commonly in Maine and parts of New Hampshire, but is rare in Connecticut.

The property gains significance due to its association with the Sessions Family. The Sessions Family were prominent in the Town of Union. Both Abijah and William Pitt Sessions served as town selectmen.

• Sources (*continuation*):

Photographs and field notes by Kristen Young - 12/14/2012.

Interview with Gary Wirth - 12/14/2012, 15 Rindge Road, Union, CT.

**Map resources:**

Union Tax Assessor's Records - <http://data.visionappraisal.com/UnionCT/search.asp> , Parcel ID: 24/ 28/ 023.

Aerial views from: <http://maps.google.com/> and <http://www.bing.com/maps/> accessed 12/19/2012.

Historical aerial photography and maps accessed 12/19/2012 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 12/19/2012 at <http://historical.mytopo.com/> .

UTM coordinates accessed 12/19/2012: <http://itouchmap.com/latlong.html> .

**Print and internet resources:**

Connecticut State Library online accessed 12/19/2012: [iconn.org](http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories) 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/12207>

Hammond, Charles, The History of Union, Connecticut, Press of Price, Lee & Adkins, Co., New Haven, CT, 1893.

Hubka, Thomas C., Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn, University Press of New England, Hanover, 1984.

Rossano, Geoffrey, Historic and Architectural Resource Survey of the Town of Union, Connecticut Historical Commission, 2002.

Sessions, Francis C., Materials for the Sessions Family in America: The Descendants of Alexander Sessions, Joel Munsell's Sons Publishers, Albany, NY, 1890.

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 12/19/2012 at <http://persi.heritagequestonline.com/> .

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

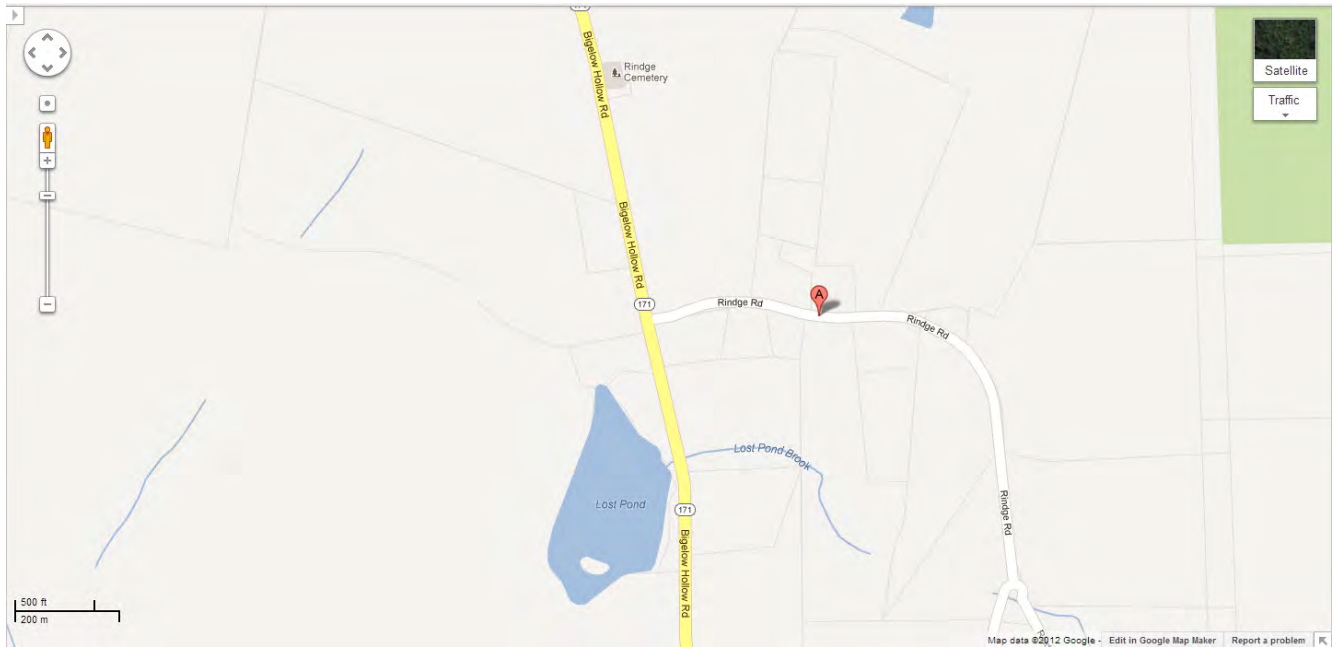


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1. Location map of 15 Rindge Road, Union, CT – from <http://maps.google.com> – accessed 12/19/2012.



2. Parcel map of 15 Rindge Road, Union, CT – base image from <http://maps.google.com>.



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3. South aerial "bird's eye" view map of 15 Rindge Road, Union, CT – from <http://www.bing.com/maps> - accessed 12/19/2012.



4. Site map of 15 Rindge Road, Union, CT – base image from <http://maps.google.com> – accessed 12/19/2012.



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5. West context view of the Barn, Shed, and Farmhouse. Camera facing east.



6. East context view of the Farmhouse and property. Photograph taken from the Wood shop. Camera facing west.



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7. Northeast context view of the stone wall surrounding the property. Camera facing southwest.



8. South eave-side (main façade) and east gable-end of the Farmhouse. Camera facing northwest.



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9. West eave-side of the Wood shop. Camera facing east.



10. Southwest view of the Barn, south eave-side of the Shed, and west gable-end of the Farmhouse. Camera facing northeast.

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11. South gable-end view of the Barn. Camera facing north.



12. West eave-side view of the Barn. Camera facing east.



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13. Northwest view of the Barn, with Farmhouse at left rear. Camera facing southeast.



14. North gable-end of the Barn; connecting Shed is at left. Camera facing south.

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15. North view showing from left to right the Farmhouse, Shed, and Barn. Camera facing south.



16. North gable-end and east eave-side of the Barn, and north eave-side of the Shed. Camera facing southwest.



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17. East eave-side of the Barn and east gable-end of the gable-roofed addition to the Farmhouse. Camera facing west.



18. Interior view of the north gable-end of the Barn. Note the nailed timber framing. Camera facing north.





19. Interior view of the southeast corner of the Barn where it attaches to the Shed. Note the heavy post-and-beam framing of the Shed (on the left) and the nailed timber framing of the Barn (on the right). Camera facing southeast.



20. Interior view of the south gable-end of the Barn. Note the sawn rafters and ridge-board. Camera facing south.



21. Interior view of the east gable-end of the Shed. Note the post-and-beam frame with the girt that joins the plate by mortise and tenon joinery; rafters and ridge-pole.



22. Interior detail view of the ridge-pole found in the Shed. Note the hand hewn faces. Some rafters are sawn, others hewn.





23. Interior detail view of the south side of the Shed. Note the post-and-beam frame with hand hewn marks. Angle braces are sawn, indicating repairs or reconstruction using the old hewn major timbers. Camera facing south.