### 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)** Good Hill Farm Preserve & Airport **Record No. 5158**

**Building Name (Historic)** Tyler, Asahel, Farmstead / Holmes Ranch / Pond's Farm / Good Hill Farm

**Street Address or Location** 478 Good Hill Road (Route 317)

**Town/City** Woodbury and Roxbury **Village** ______________________ **County** Litchfield

**Owner(s)** Roxbury Land Trust, Good Hill Farm LLC (see page 2 for addresses)  ○ 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 English, ground level stable barns, vernacular style

**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, horizontal wood siding**

**Structural System**

- **✓** Wood Frame
- **✓** Post & Beam
- **✓** Balloon
- **✓** Load bearing masonry
- **✓** Structural iron or steel

- **☐** Other ______________

**Roof (Type)**

- **✓** Gambrel
- **✓** Shed
- **☐** Hip
- **☐** Round
- **☐** Other ______________

**Material**

- **☐** Wood Shingle
- **✓** Roll Asphalt
- **☐** Tin
- **☐** Slate
- **✓** Asphalt Shingle

- **☐** Built up
- **☐** Tile
- **✓** Other Metal panels

**Number of Stories:** 1 1/2, 2 **Approximate Dimensions** See continuation sheets.

**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: Barn III partially converted to retail.

#### FOR OFFICE USE:

- **Town #_______**  Site #_________  UTM ______________________

- **District:**  ○ S  ○ NR  If NR, Specify: ○ Actual  ○ Potential

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*FOR OFFICE USE:

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- **Town #_______**  Site #_________  UTM ______________________

- **District:**  ○ S  ○ NR  If NR, Specify: ○ Actual  ○ Potential

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PROPERTY INFORMATION (CONT’D)

Related outbuildings or landscape features:
- ☑ Barn
- ☑ Shed
- ☐ Garage
- ☐ Carriage House
- ☑ Shop
- ☑ Garden
- ☑ Other landscape features or buildings: Grass airfield with Quonset hut hangar, hiking trails

Surrounding Environment:
- ☑ Open land
- ☑ Woodland
- ☐ Residential
- ☐ Commercial
- ☐ Industrial
- ☑ Rural
- ☐ High building density
- ☑ Scattered buildings visible from site

• Interrelationship of building and surroundings:
  Owner addresses continued:
  Roxbury Land Trust, P.O. Box 51, Roxbury CT 06783
  Good Hill Farm LLC, P.O. Box 579, Bethlehem CT 06751
  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:

See continuation sheet.

Photographer ___________________________ Date 2012, 2007

View ___________________________ Negative on File CTHP

Name ___________________________ Date 3/31/2014

Organization ___________________________

Address ___________________________

• Subsequent field evaluations:
  Latitude, Longitude: Main barn - 41.556901, -73.257199
  Good Hill Airport - 41.557029, -73.261758

Threats to the building or site:
- ☑ None known
- ☐ Highways
- ☐ Vandalism
- ☐ Developers
- ☐ Renewal
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Deterioration
- ☐ Zoning
- ☐ Other__________________________
- ☐ Explanation____________________
Interrelationship of building and surroundings:

This historic agricultural landscape is located along the border of Woodbury and Roxbury at the top of Good Hill. Other farms, forest, and land surround it. Except as noted, the property is owned by the Roxbury Land Trust. The farmstead, known as Good Hill Farm, today is 467 acres, although historically it was 512. The site includes fields, forest, an air strip, domestic and work buildings, and wetlands. Buildings located in Woodbury include the main farmhouse, two gambrel-roofed barns, milk room, silo, a barn/retail structure, a shed, and the bull barn. A Quonset hut is located west of Upper Grassy Hill Road and south of Good Hill Road at the Good Hill Farm Airport, in Roxbury (owned by Good Hill Farm LLC). A non-contributing modern telecommunications tower is located north of the barns. A c. 1930 gable-roofed house to the south of the road at 483 Good Hill Road was built as worker housing and is now privately owned by a Pond family member.

The intersection of Tophet Road, Upper Grassy Hill Road, and Good Hill Road marks the town line, with Roxbury to the west and Woodbury to the east. Good Hill Brook runs southeasterly through a wooded area along the eastern edge of the farm. Other historic resources in Woodbury include the Woodbury Historic Districts No. 1 & 2 which are located along Main Street (US Route 6) approximately 3.5 miles east. The Hotchkissville Historic District is to the northwest of the center of town and several sites are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Other agricultural sites included in the current thematic nomination of Agricultural Heritage resources are the Wait Minor Farmstead at 136 Sycamore Avenue and the Mitchell Farmstead at 41 Washington Road.

The cluster of farm buildings is located in Woodbury, east of Tophet Road and on the north side of Good Hill Road. An unpaved drive enters the site from Good Hill Road at the west end of the complex and passes the west end of the barn/retail building (Barn III). The drive widens into a square area between this building and Barns I and II. Farm roads branch out from here toward the east, north, and west.

The c. 1848 vernacular Italianate-style Farmhouse is located to the west of and up-slope from the agricultural complex. It is a 1 ½-story, gable-roofed structure, 22’ x 45’, with its ridge-line oriented east-west. A cross-gabled 1 ½-story central pavilion projects forward from the south eave-side. The main façade is symmetrical and the projecting center bay contains two doors with four lights. The two flanking bays contain pass-through doors and two-over-two double-hung windows with trim and shutters. On the second floor, there are four two-over-two double-hung windows with trim and shutters. Two windows are in the center pavilion and in each of the side bays a similar window breaks through the eave-line into a gabled wall-dormer. There is a single-story hip-roofed porch wrapping around the central pavilion and supported by four unadorned square posts.

On the east gable-end, there is a bay window on the ground floor, above which is a pair of windows with trim. The house has painted clapboard siding. The roof has deep overhangs, and is roofed in asphalt shingles. At the northeast corner of the main house, there is a 1 ½-story early 20th-century gable-roofed addition, 22’ x 32’, its ridge-line running perpendicular to that of the main house. At the north end of this is an attached garage bay.

East of the Farmhouse is a small Shed measuring 15’ x 23’. It is a red, shingled building built on a slab foundation. North of this structure are the remains of the foundation of a barn which burned, probably in the 1930s.

Further east and close to the road is a 20’ x 46’ 2-story Dutch gambrel-roofed building (Barn III) which was built as a barn and later converted to retail use. This has vertical siding painted red with white trim. Some stable windows remain on the east part of the south eave-side along with a barn door on the north. Residential windows and doors have been added elsewhere. A shed addition on the north side extends the retail space. Two small attic dormers with double-hung windows are in the roof. A door in the east gable end provides second level access from a deck and stair.

North of Barn III are two large barns (Barns I and II), described below. East of these is a 1-story concrete block masonry gable-roofed shed, the Bull barn. The Silo, of corrugated concrete stave construction, is attached to the north gable-end of Barn I. This type of silo is one of the later technologies for silo construction, after 1960.
• Other notable features of building or site (Interior and/or Exterior):

Architectural description:

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmhouse</td>
<td>c. 1848</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambrel barn I</td>
<td>late 19th–20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambrel barn II</td>
<td>c. 1900</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn III/retail</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silo</td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bull barn</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quonset hut/hangar</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambrel barn II</td>
<td>c. 1900</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barn III/retail</td>
<td>mid-20th c.</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Barn I:

The main barn is a ½-story Dutch gambrel-roofed ground level stable barn with its ridge-line oriented north-south. It measures 140' by 32' with the gable-end facing south toward Good Hill Road. The horizontal shiplap siding is painted red and the sliding barn doors in the gable-end have white trim emphasizing their diagonal bracing. Roofing is modern metal panels. There are two hip-roofed cupolas on the main block, and two small dormers in the upper pitch of the roof; these have miniature gambrel roofs. At the northeast corner, an addition extends east, also with a Dutch gambrel roof.

Exterior:

The south gable-end, in addition to doors at grade, has a hay door at the loft level flanked by pairs of six-pane windows. Above this is a bottom-hinged hay door under the projecting hay hood formed by the roof. The west eave-side fenestration includes nine sets of six-pane hopper stable windows arranged in panels of four. A milk room is attached to this façade near the center. There are three sets of similar windows on the east eave-side, and three more single windows, now boarded up. The Dutch gambrel roof appears, based on its framing, to be mid-20th century. Its construction of light balloon framing contrasts with the ground-floor stable area’s heavier timbers, suggesting a remodel in mid-century.

The Milk room is a 1-story gable-roofed building offset to the west of Barn I. It is constructed of concrete block masonry with wood in the gable-end peaks. It has a pass-through door in the south gable-end and several six-pane steel-framed windows. A connecting passage leads into the barn. The exterior is painted red with white trim.

The added wing of the barn extends east measuring 74’ x 32’ feet, and was constructed in the 1930s. One matching wooden cupola sits on the roof of this wing. A concrete masonry foundation contrasts with the cobblestone foundation of the main block. The wing has an open doorway in its south eave-side, a hay door in the east gable-end, and a row of single stable windows along the north eave-side.

Interior:

The barn’s ground floor has seven bents constructed of sawn timbers held together by pegs and supported with metal braces. These timbers are whitewashed with lime. The concrete floor has its original manure cleaning gutter system still in place, and some of the stanchions remain indicating a layout for two rows of cows facing inward. The upper loft level is constructed with dimensional lumber and wood gussets at the changes in pitch. This is a lighter form of construction than the common trussed gambrel roof structure, and has required installation of tension cables as reinforcement.

Barn II:

To the east is another barn measuring 61’ x 26’ with vertical board siding and a Dutch gambrel, asphalt shingled roof with its ridge-line oriented east-west. This barn forms a three-sided barnyard along with the L-shape of Barn I. This is thought to have been built around 1900. Inside is a toolshed and work area for equipment maintenance. Siding is painted red with white trim; roofing is asphalt shingles.
The barn has an un-mortared fieldstone foundation. The five bays have doors in the south eave-side, three pairs of hinged doors toward the east, and sliding doors on overhead track toward the west. The east gable-end has the type of siding divide at the eaves indicating post and beam construction, which is indeed visible at the ground level of the interior; the connections are nailed. The west gable-end has two panels of four six-pane stable windows.

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.

Good Hill Farm is historically significant for its role in the agricultural and recreational development of rural lands in Connecticut. As one of the largest, oldest, and last remaining active farms in Woodbury and Roxbury, Good Hill Farm is essential to the history of these towns. The small number of different owners of the Good Hill property, maintains a high degree of historical integrity. Furthermore, persons significant in Woodbury history have included Walter Holmes, Barnum and Bailey circus performers, and Sebastian Pond. The farmstead reflects the changes in agricultural technology since the 19th century as commercial dairy farming replaced the subsistence farmstead. The addition of an air strip in the 1930s has significance in the evolving use of rural farmland for recreation, and illustrates the gentleman farmer lifestyle. The gambrel dairy barn complex is an excellent example of the gentleman farm and of large-scale dairy operation in the peak period of commercial farming of the mid-20th century.

Historical background:

When Woodbury was settled in the 17th century, it was one of the largest towns in Connecticut. Woodbury encompassed Roxbury and Bethlehem. The center of town has always been on the rising east side of the Pomperaug River valley with hills on all sides. The Puritan founders of the town of Woodbury left Stratford over religious differences. They purchased land from the Pootatuck Native American tribe. As told in the Woodbury history, this tribe used the land for hunting and fur trade. Coming from Stratford, the settlers followed the Pootatuck – now the Housatonic – River until they came to the hills of what is now lower Litchfield County. They reached Mine Hill in Roxbury first but continued to head east to Good Hill. It is from this vista the settlers saw the valley, which would become Woodbury. Later, in 1743, the southwestern section of the town was incorporated as the town of Roxbury, exactly down the middle of Good Hill Farm.

The “Good Hill Division” was settled by the Hurd family starting around 1712, when the center core of the town began expanding outward. This property appears in a historical map from 1853, when the house was identified as belonging to Asahel Tyler. The property changed hands several times, belonging to prominent people in Woodbury history such as Seth Hollister, a deacon, and then to Benjamin Seeley, a well-known farmer in the Litchfield area.

During the mid- to late-19th century, New England farmers had to confront competition with large Midwest farms. Industrializing cities presented a demand for dairy products, and in response, milk cows in the state increased from 85,000 in 1850 to 141,000 in 1923, illustrating the statewide movement towards commercial dairy farming at the turn of the 20th century.

In the early 1900s the owner of of the farm was Walter Holmes. The “Holmes Ranch” was a significant place in town, especially during the winter months. At this time, the main barn, and the former identical barn, were home to the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus horses in winter. In the Woodbury Reporter, there are several mentions of the horses and staff of the circus staying at the farm during the cold weather. For example, on April 1, 1926, the newspaper mentioned that Ronald Diller and his wife of the “Ringling Circus” stayed at the Holmes Ranch and left in time for the opening of the circus in New York. The circus performers living nearby for winter housing, would have been extraordinary for the small towns of Woodbury and Roxbury.

Sebastian “Batch” Pond, an aspiring farmer, bought the property in 1929 from Walter Holmes. He was an avid pilot who flew mainly for fun until World War II when he volunteered as a pilot and later received the Distinguished Flying Cross. He had made an emergency landing on an adjacent farm but noticed the nearby land was for sale. During World War II, his wife ran the farm business. After the war, Pond went back to flying for recreation and
expanded the use of his agricultural land to include recreation. The property served as a private airport – Pond installed the army surplus Quonset hut as a hangar and created an air strip in 1949. In 1956, the first parachute club was established called “Parachutes Incorporated.” In the parachuting milieu, this farm is known as the “birthplace of skydiving in America.” The first stabilized free fall in North America took place at Good Hill Farm. There, the members used Pond’s Cessna 170 plane to parachute from. In 1959, the club moved to Orange, Massachusetts.

Pond made Good Hill Farm into a gentleman farm, typically a “model” for other farms. It is also typical that they oversaw the work, necessitating the hire of a farm manager. Pond updated the barns with more modern technology such as a hay bailing and convinced utility company Connecticut Light & Power to run electric lines up the hill, connecting the farm to electricity.

The farm is currently owned by the Roxbury Land Trust, established in 1970 to preserve the Town of Roxbury’s historic and natural resources. In 2000, Roxbury Land Trust launched the “Campaign to Save Our Farms,” an effort to preserve Roxbury’s agricultural heritage and rural vistas from pending development. With the help of private and public donations and grant money from the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Open Lands and Watershed Acquisition Fund, the Roxbury Land Trust succeeded in acquiring over 800 acres of farmland, including Good Hill Farm. The farm was purchased in stages, in 2001-2002. Today, the Ponds retain ownership of the airport site, while the Land Trust manages the farmland and maintains a nature preserve and public access trails.

**Architectural significance:**

The complex of large-scale gambrel dairy barns illustrates the peak period of Connecticut dairy farming in the first half of the 20th century. This well-preserved farmstead in working agriculture incorporates both the fine example of the type – the ground level stable barn, complete with cupolas and silo, and also the grit of the working farm, with its manure storage, hay wagons, and other equipment. At this site, a unique feature is the World War II Quonset hut still in use as an airplane hangar, representing the history of this site in aviation and parachuting.
Sources (continuation):

Photographs and field notes by Jordan Sorensen, 10/20/2012; Melissa Antonelli, 2/06/2008.
HRI notes by E. Reisman & Todd Levine, 2/26/2011.
Interviews with Connie Sherman, 2012 and 2014, in person at her home and by telephone.

Map resources:

Town of Woodbury's Tax Assessor Records:
Parcel ID: 066-008: 113.8, 5.35, 2.3 (Cell tower) acres: c. 1850 house, 2,931 sf: c. 1910 barn, other outbuildings
Parcel ID: 066-012A 94.18 acres; Parcel ID: 066-012B 5.12 acres
Town of Woodbury GIS viewer: http://www.cogenvgis.com/woodbury/AGS_MAP/

Town of Roxbury Assessor's Records: 246 acres.

Aerial views from:

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


Print and internet resources:

Connecticut State Library online: iconn.org or http://www.cslib.org/iconnsitemap/staff/SiteIndex.aspx#directories
Maher, Kathleen. “P.T. Barnum, 1810-1891: The Man, the Myth, the Legend” www.barnum-museum.org/
“Project PI: The Online History of Parachutes Incorporated.” http://projectpi.skydiveworld.com/

2. Detail of Roxbury Land Trust Preserve Map, showing the extent of lands belonging to Good Hill Farm (#12).

4. Detail Site Plan Sketch showing contributing resources; base image from Google Maps.
5. Southeast view of Farmhouse, camera facing northwest.

6. Southeast view of Shed, camera facing northwest.
7. South view of Barn III, camera facing north, showing cobblestone foundation and stable windows indicating the origin of the structure as a barn.

8. Northwest view of Barn III, camera facing southeast, showing windows and doors indicating current use as finished space.

10. Southwest view of Silo and west eave-side of Barn I, with telecommunication tower, camera facing northeast.
11. Southwest view of Milk room, camera facing northeast.

12. South view of Barn I, left, with Milk room and Silo at left rear; Barn II, right, camera facing northeast.
13. Southeast view of Barn I barnyard, showing the east eave-side of the main block and south eave-side of the east wing, camera facing northwest. Note the cobblestone foundation of the older main block and concrete block masonry of the addition.

14. Interior view of Barn I, showing how the east wing addition was built onto the exterior wall of the earlier main block, camera facing west.
15. Northeast view of Barn I addition, camera facing west; main block and Silo are at rear.

16. Interior detail of Barn I ground floor, showing steel angle braces supporting lateral girders.
17. Interior detail of Barn I loft level, showing hay doors at south gable-end and roof framing with lightweight gusset plates at change of pitch. Note the interior silo or grain bin at right.

18a-b. Details of Barn I exterior: dormer and cupola.
19. Southeast view of Barn II, camera facing northwest; Barn I at left rear.

20. Interior detail of Barn II ground floor, showing sawn timber post and beam framing with nailed connections, camera facing south.
21. East view of Quonset hut hangar at Good Hill Airport, camera facing west.

22. Northeast view of Quonset hut hangar at Good Hill Airport, camera facing southwest.
23. Interior view of Barn I ground floor, during the 1950s, showing the parachute club activity (“DZ” is Drop Zone), photograph from Project PI web site, http://projectpi.skydiveworld.com/.

24. Aerial photograph of Good Hill Farm, 1951; from UConn MAGIC.
24. West view of barns from the Farmhouse, camera facing east toward the Pomperaug River valley.