

Early Land Titles at Stillman Hill

1791, March 3rd. Enos North bought from Elijah Andrus Jr., 7 acres of land for \$140.00. It was bounded east on the Waterbury River Turnpike, west on Seth Lucas, south on Thomas Fikes.

David Fairchild of Colebrook sold to Rufus North of Winchester, 22 acres for £37 located in the 2nd division, 3rd tier, part of lot #14. It is bounded west on the highway leading from Norfolk to the Winchester line; north on land of Isaac Kneeland, south partly on Isaac Pinney's land, partly on Judah Roberts' land, east on part of the same lot. It being the whole of the lot I bought from David Pinney excepting 8 acres I sold to Judah Roberts. This excludes the crop of English grain now on said premises, and the use of the house and old garden spot for one year from the date hereof.

Town records, Vol. 1, p. 404

1792, March 3rd. Ebenezer North of Torrington bought from Roger Newberry a tract of land having 136 acres. The east part of lot #17, 3rd tier, originally laid out to Roger Wolcott and Elizabeth Newberry, south on a highway, north on land laid out to Samuel Whitelsey, west partly on Bacon, partly on Kirkum premises – with appurtenances.

Town records, Vol. 1, p. 508

1796, June 3rd. Ebenezer North bought 2 pieces of land on the 3rd and 4th tiers beginning at a point on the 10-rod highway near the Norfolk Road running north to the north line of the Reverend Jonathan Edwards' land. It is 5 rods in width [82.5 feet] on the west side of said 10-rod highway, then north the whole width of said highway.

Town records, Vol. 2, p. 209

1797, June 30th. Ebenezer North bought from Philmon Kirkum, a piece of highway land, so called, lying between the 3rd and 4th tiers, located 150 rods [2,475 feet] south of the meeting house.

Town records, Vol. 1, p. 270

1797 Ebenezer North, the first in his family to live in Colebrook, sold ½ of his farm to his son Enos in 1797 for £250. It was described as being bounded westerly partly by Moses Wright Jr., and partly by Abner Cook, north by Solomon Rockwell & Brothers, south by Elijah Andrus Jr. Enos sold the farm to his son David Pinney North in 1817 for \$225.00. At that time the bordering landowners were Peter Corbin on the south, Ira Whiting on the east and north, west on lands of the grantor.

The land use of this property began at the end of the French and Indian Wars (1754 – 1760 with the signing of the peace treaty in 1763). The British Colonies of New England and New York felt threatened by the presence of the French and their Indian allies in Canada. Military expediency demanded routes suitable for troops to march over, which led from the populous Connecticut River Valley, to the region considered to be the most likely invasion route. There were several such routes; one of which was named the Greenwoods Road, and was to run from Simsbury (now part of the Town of Canton) to Canaan. The colonial legislature ordered

the committee responsible for its construction to have it passable by team and horse by the 20th of November, 1761. Presently, this is the north end of the Old Colebrook Road as it intersects Conn. Rt. 183 and continues across Rt. 183 and up Stillman Hill Road, also known as Conn. Rt. 182.

What we refer to today as the Colebrook Road, or Conn. Rt. 183, was most likely laid out and made passable by September 1764; thus the intersection was established.

The present buildings consist of the house, located at the southwest corner, and a barn on the northeast corner. The house, which was originally a long, two-story tavern, burned down and was replaced with the present structure around 1900; the barn, constructed in 1797, is original. At an early date, we're not certain when, a smaller barn with a lean-to attached for storing farm equipment was built in the middle of the southwest quadrant of the crossroad. This was an interesting barn, as it was of a type more common to the southern Appalachians than to New England. Sadly, arsonists burned this structure on December 15, 1986.

The definition of the term "original", when referring to an historic building, needs to be understood; usually it means that the frame is original, with the siding and roof having been replaced one or more times. We know this to be the case with this particular barn, as well as the present Colebrook Town Hall, commonly referred to as "the Gray Barn", which was built in 1843 as a dairy barn. The type of construction and the exterior materials used locally, particularly in the case of barns and other outbuildings seldom last longer than a century, primarily because of a lack of paint and other maintenance.

The Colebrook Land Conservancy, the owner of the Hale Barn, had a new roof consisting of cedar shingles installed during the summer of 2009. At that time it was determined that the board sheathing on the roof was original, as the nails used are hand-forged wrought iron of a type used locally in 1797.