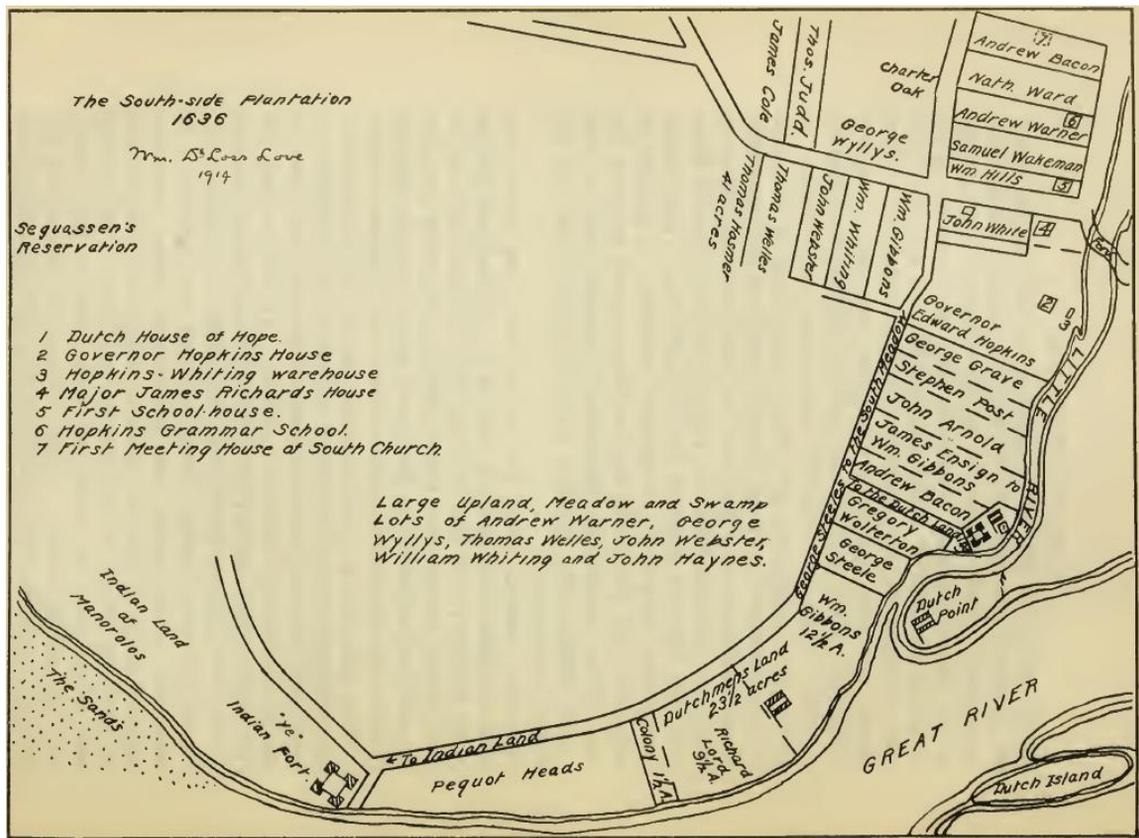




History Reclaimed:

Authentic American Vintage Lumber
from the John Watson 1770's
Revolution Barn in Canaan, CT



Hartford's South-side Plantation, 1636, showing the lands of the Dutch and Indians, with the house-lots of their English neighbors.

Hartford

Dutch explorers arrived at the confluence of the Connecticut and Park Rivers in 1614, finding rich forests and the native inhabitants, the Podunk. Over the next 20 years Dutch traders built a small settlement that included a fort and trading post.

The Dutch were soon followed by the Puritans who in the early 1600's, in an attempt to escape the scrutiny of the Church of England, arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The settlers quickly found however, the local authoritarian government undesirable to their values, so seeking new, freer lands, the Puritans moved to the less settled Connecticut.

In June 1636, 100 Puritans led by Thomas Hooker arrived near the Dutch settlement and officially named the location Hartford after Hertford, England. A visionary of modern democracy, Hooker laid out his desired style of government in the new land, where "the foundation of authority is laid, firstly, in the free consent of the people..." He expressed that the people should have the power to appoint officers and also "...set the bounds and limitations of the power and the place unto which they call them."

It was this philosophy that over 100 years later led colonists like John Watson, who built the Canaan, CT barn, to rise up and seek to overthrow England's overbearing authority.

Immigration

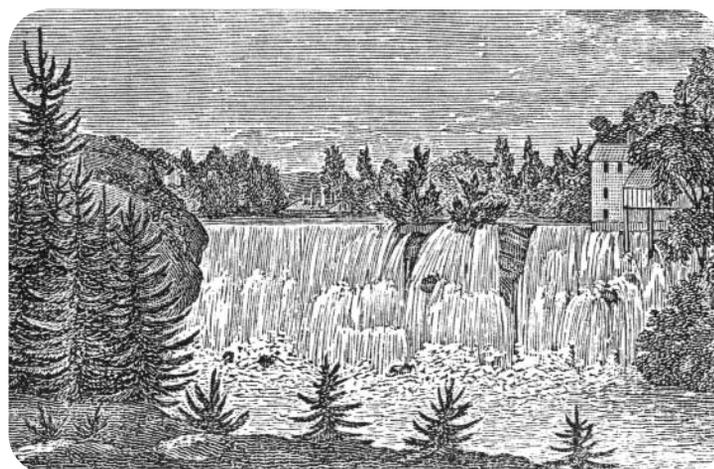
The first record of the Watson family line in the New World occurred in Hartford, CT in 1644, where John, who is believed to be a member of the original Puritan settlers, served as a juror. A family story, retold in the Watson Family Genealogy over two hundred years later, tells of when John was making the transatlantic crossing to New England and he saved the life of a young girl, Peggy Smith who had fallen overboard their ship.

John married a fellow colonist, Margaret, and settled on South Main Street in Hartford in 1646. That same year they had their first son, who they named after his father, and he was soon followed by a baby girl named Sarah. John supported his growing family working as a highway surveyor and later purchased land in the West Division, which is now known as West Hartford. John passed away in 1650, leaving his estate to Margaret and his land to son John (II) (where the Roman numeral indicates Watson family colonial generation).

Canaan

In 1730, the Colony of Connecticut had a population of 60,000 however the northwest corner, called the Western Lands, remained an unsettled wilderness. Soon after, high-grade iron ore was discovered in the region and colonist flowed in. However, this new settlement was quickly deemed “unlawful” by the Connecticut General Assembly as the lands were not paid for. After proper land surveying was completed to layout towns, the assembly agreed to auction each township to the highest bidder. On January 3, 1738, fifty “Town C” shares were sold.

With beautiful vistas, rich soils, abundant waterpower, exceptional iron ore, limestone and vast virgin timber, the town population quickly rose. And although surrounding towns took decades to incorporate, just one year after auctioning “Town C” shares the Connecticut General Assembly officially recognized the “Town C” as Canaan, CT.

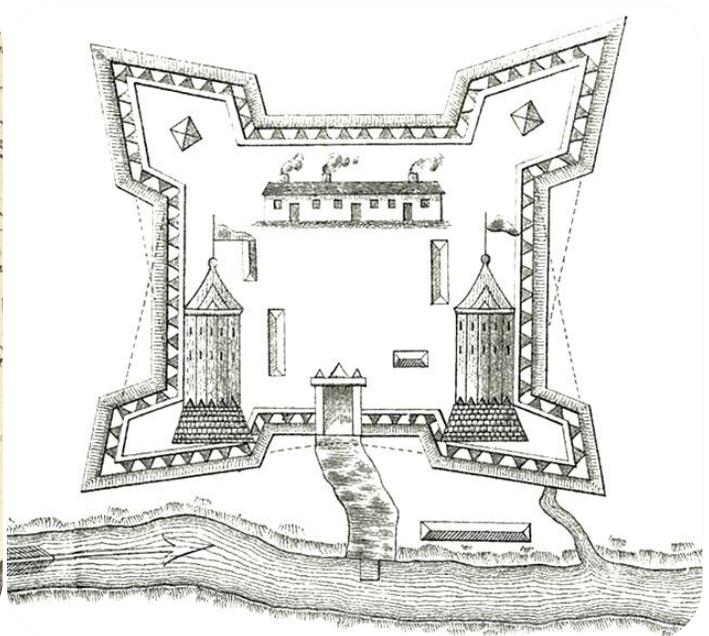
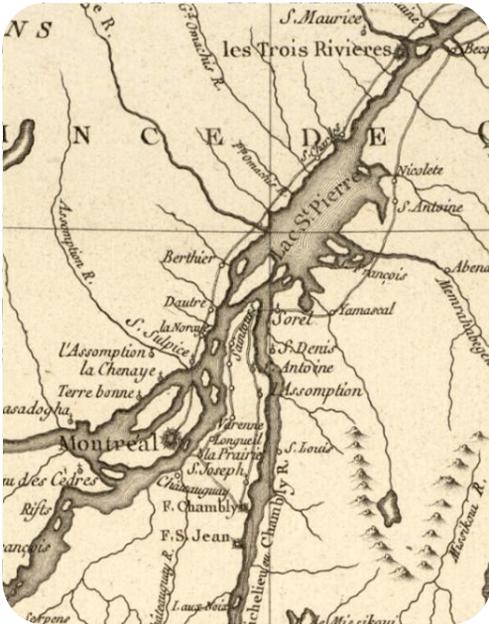


Etching of the southwest view of the Housatonic Falls, Canaan

John Watson V

After John Watson's emigration from England, five generations of Watsons lived in Connecticut and the surrounding states. John Watson (V), the great-great-grandson of the original English settler was born on the morning of December 9, 1740. On January 31, 1771 John (V) married Sarah Douglas of Canaan. The pair initially settled in Norfolk and had a son John (VI) on April 9, 1772. They soon moved to Canaan where John (V) worked in public office and purchased land just outside the center of town on a hill lush with apple trees.

Captain in the Revolution



Map and drawing of Fort St. Jean, Quebec

With the Colonists taking up of arms against the English Tyranny, John served as Captain in Burrall's Regiment lead by Colonel Charles Burrall. John (V) fought in the Siege of Fort St. John's near Montreal on September 8, 1775. The battle was led by Continental Army General Richard Montgomery and under his leadership they gained control of the Quebec territory between the recently captured Fort Ticonderoga, Montreal and Quebec City. During the battle John was shot "through his body."

John (V) survived and while recovering back in Canaan, was assigned to oversee the captured British Army Soldiers. A letter from the American Revolution Archives contains John's (V) letter to Connecticut Governor Trumbull requesting advice on how to proceed with a captured soldier's request to be allowed to stay in the Colonies:

Hartford, June 21, 1776.

SIR: I have been requested by the Committee for taking care of the prisoners, to take the charge and oversight of those stationed at Canaan; among whom one John Birchley has shown me a certificate, (signed by the commander of the Brilliant, one of the Royal Navy — his name I have forgotten,) showing that said Birchley was impressed at Quebeck, for his Majesty's service, from on board the Carolina, a merchant ship from Philadelphia, owned by Jeremiah Warder, of that place; that he was brought up to St. Johns, to man out the vessels built there, which were resigned to us with said garrison, and there made prisoner. Said Birchley appears to be a steady, sensible young man, and has behaved himself well since with us. Informs me he sailed from Philadelphia on board said ship, & that, although he is an Englishman by birth, he has been in this country from his childhood; has sailed in the employ of several merchants from that place, in particular Mr. William Morris, (in the Richard Penn,) — who he thinks is the same man who signs the Continental bills, — Mr. Warder, and others, who he thinks would give full satisfaction of his friendly disposition to the American cause, and of the manner of his coming into his Majesty's service, if he might be permitted to go to Philadelphia. Also, one John Barber as shown me a like certificate from the same officer. He appears to be well acquainted with the principal towns in this Colony, viz: Hartford, Weathersfield, Middletown, New-London, Simsbury, & is certainly acquainted with many persons of note in those places; was impressed from a fishing vessel at Quebeck; professes a desire to live in the country, as he undoubtedly has since the last war. I have heard of one or two more in like circumstances, but have not seen their certificates. Those above mentioned are dated at Albany, where they were brought from the northward; they were taken from Quebeck. Captain Somes, the officer who gave the certificate, is not in this Colony.

I trouble your Honour with this, at their earnest request, and desire your advice and direction.

I am your Honour's most obedient, humble servant,

JOHN WATSON.

To the Honourable Jonathan Trumbull, Esq.

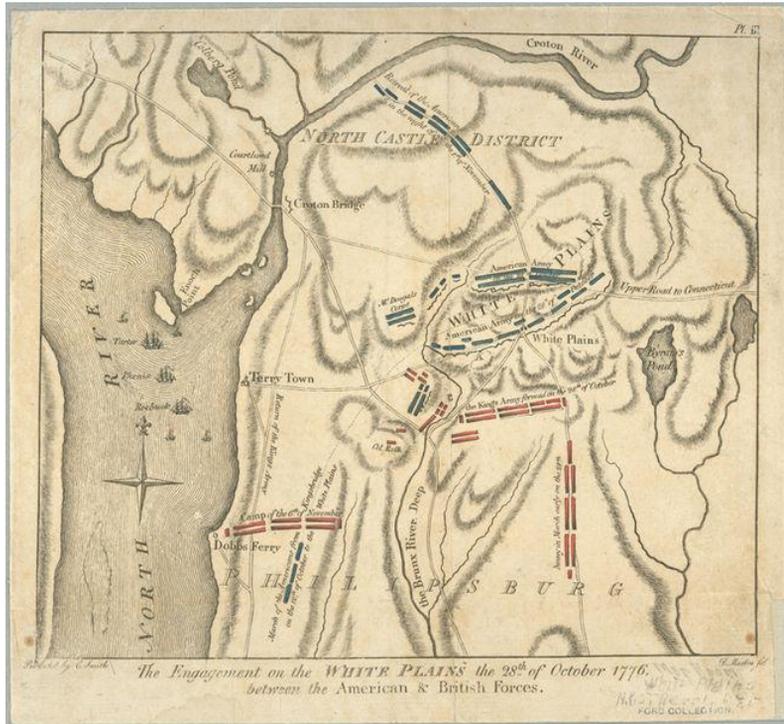


J. Trumbull

Governor Jonathan Trumbull

White Plains

John (V), having fully recovered from his wounds, proceeded to White Plains, NY with his fellow soldiers. Following the call of General George Washington he took part in the Battle of White Plains on Oct. 26, 1776, just 3 months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.



Map of Engagements in the Battle of White Plains on October 28· 1776

The Revolution Barn

The Revolutionary War would rage on for 7 more years after the Battle of White Plains up and down the eastern colonies. It is unknown if John (V) engaged in any battles after White Plains, however it is unlikely as he and his wife Sarah had 4 more children during the remaining revolution fight: Sarah, Welthy, George, Maria and William, all of whom were born in Canaan. John (V) and his family grew in Canaan, and it is during this time that he built what StoriedBoards calls the John Watson Revolution Barn.



The John Watson 1770's Revolution Barn in Canaan, CT

Constructed from the oak and chestnut trees from the cleared surrounding lands, the barn was built in the earliest style of American barns with Scribe Rule and Gunstock Posts.

In Scribe Rule Framing, each connection between timbers is unique. The framers married beams by first completing the tenon on one beam, and then used "scribe" marks to transfer the irregularities of that beam's joint to its mate to construct the mortise. This ensured an exacting joint, but required that the frame be assembled in precisely the way that it had been laid out, since joining two parts that hadn't been scribed to match each other would not fit. To keep track and assemble the barn correctly each beam was marked with a matching roman numeral.

Gunstock Posts are named because of the flare of the vertical support beams that are likened to a gun's stock. All beams of this era were hand cut by axe and adze to hewn timbers with the larger end on the top of the vertical beams. This flare often means the top is 4 or 5 inches wider than the bottom. The Colonist builders understood that the joint at the top was the most complicated and carried a large load – supporting the roof structure while joining the rafter top plate. Therefore, having a larger area to work from made their job easier and the barn stronger.



Scribe Rule, with roman numeral-like markings



Gunstock Post, with its larger top than bottom

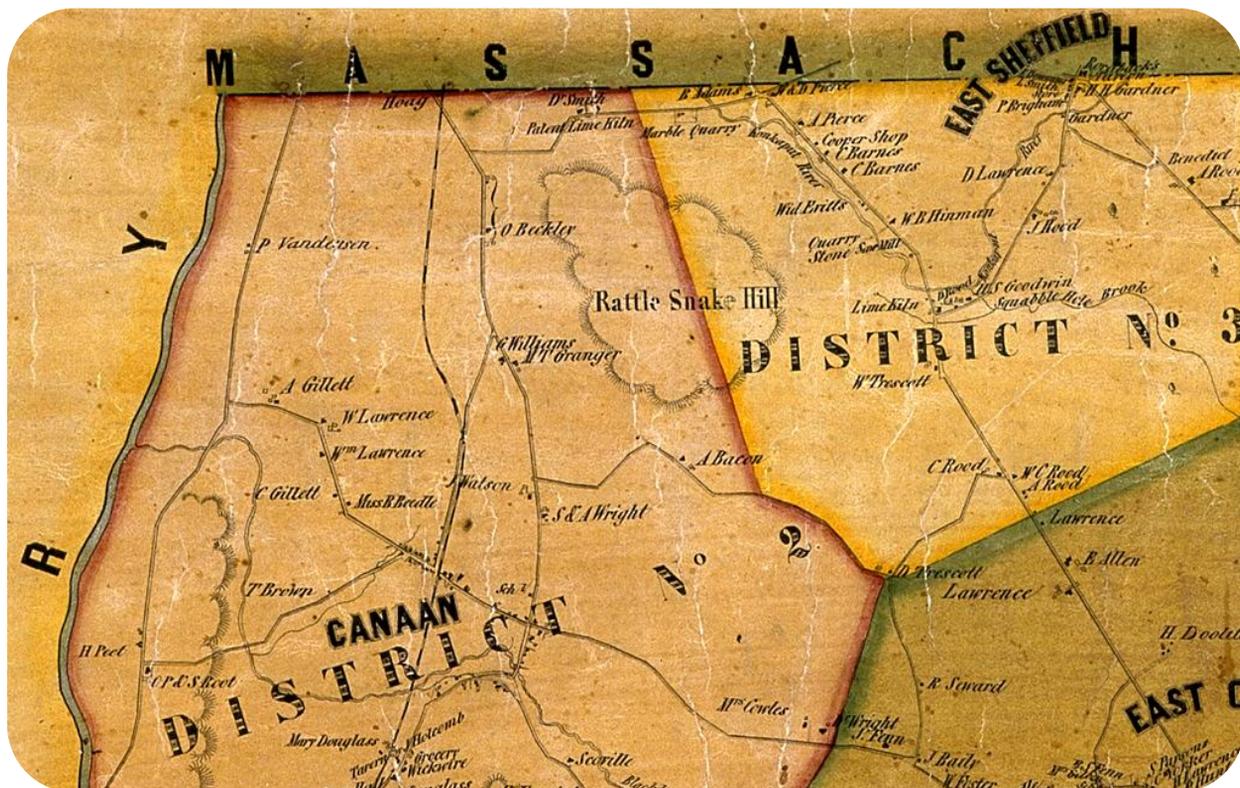
Future Generations

John Watson (V) died Oct. 4, 1795 in Canaan and his land was eventually inherited by his youngest son, William (VI). William married Julia Elmore, the daughter of John Elmore Esquire, on December 7, 1806. The property was owned in 1853 by William's oldest son John (VII) as indicated by the 1853 Fagan Canaan Map.



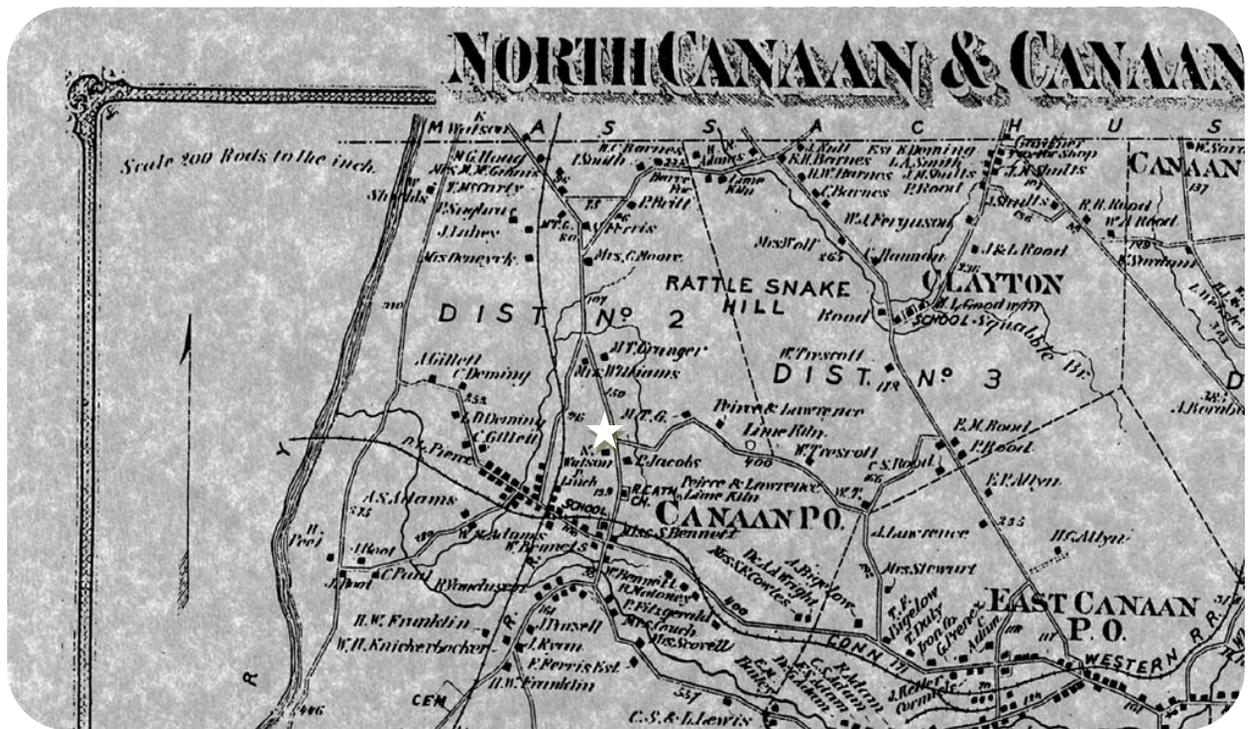


1853 Fagan Map of Canaan, CT



1853 Fagan Map of Canaan, CT Breakout, with J. Watson Property Shown

John (VII) passed away at an unknown time between 1853 and 1870, at which point the barn and land became owned by his brother Nathan (VII). Nathan W. Watson (VII) was born April 10, 1818 in Canaan and married Jane Eliza Karner. He and his family lived for a period in Olive, NY, where he was a farmer. He most likely returned to Canaan after his brothers passing. He owned the barn and surrounding property as indicated in the F. W. Beers & Co. 1874 Canaan and North Canaan map.



F. W. Beers & Co. 1874 Canaan, CT Map with N. Watson Listed as Owner

After the war ended, Jacob returned to Kingston and resumed his law career until the fall of 1867 when he purchased the law practice of Miles T. Granger in North Canaan. He married Delia in 1869 and went on to serve as town clerk, treasurer and was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1876.

Jacob and Delia's (VIII) son Nathan Watson Hardenbergh (IX), inherited the property, and it remained in the family until the mid 20th century when it was broken up into smaller parcels of land and sold off.

Reclamation

After decades of being an inactive barn, the 3 layers of 20th century asphalt roof began to fail, rotting the oak rafters and causing a significant portion of the roof to collapse. After its owners could no longer afford the repairs to save the barn, StoriedBoards reclaimed the John Watson 1770's Revolution Barn during the spring of 2012.



South side of the John Watson 1770's Revolution Barn in Canaan, CT



North side of the barn, showing failure of the roof



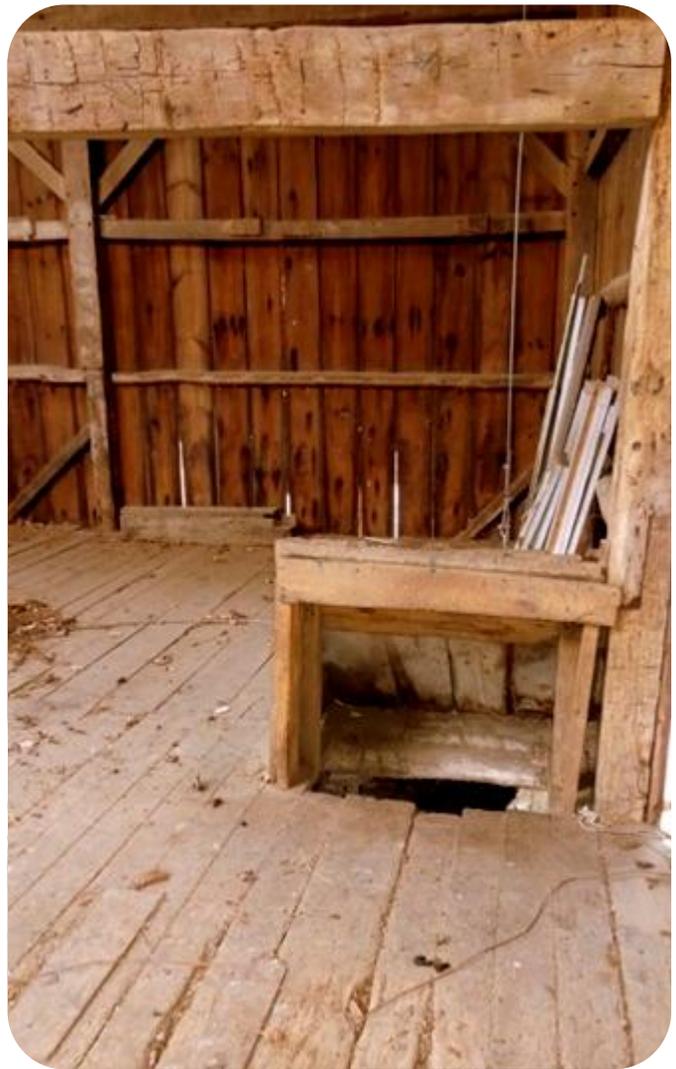
Interior of the barn, showing the hole in the roof and vast hand-hewn beams



Interior with beams and modern loft



Oak beams



Thresher floor and hay chute



East end



StoriedBoards reclamation

What We Believe

Preserver of History

StoriedBoards was founded on the simple idea that history should not be lost when materials are reclaimed from their original source.

That is why every product StoriedBoards sells is exhaustively researched, thoroughly documented and passed on to our customers.

We are dedicated to giving our products a voice, telling the stories of their past and allowing you to write the next chapter of their life.

Devoted to Green

StoriedBoards products are 100% recycled, sustainable, eco-friendly and perfect for your green or LEED certified building.

We sell only reclaimed antique lumber and timber, and do not offer any “conventional” wood products that are cut from modern forests.

StoriedBoards reclaims its materials solely via the hands of its own team. This ensures that proper care and respect is employed to both the structure and the surrounding land, while minimizing our waste, increasing the quality of reclaimed materials and returning the land to its original state.

100% Transparent

StoriedBoards lists every product we have, online and with our price clearly stated. No price ranges, no up sells and no requirement to call or write for a quote. We can't find anyone else who offers that transparency in the reclaimed market.

In addition, we promise to always:

- Work one-on-one with you to provide the highest quality customer experience
- Answer all the questions you have, any time you have them
- Provide a pressure-free sales experience



Dedicated to giving our products a voice, telling
the stories of their past and allowing you to write
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