Building Description
The Preston-Lafreniere Farm:

Located at the northern base of Camel's Hump State Park along the Preston Brook, and alongside the southern edge of the Winooski River, is the homestead and agricultural barn complex of the Preston-Lafreniere Farm that was worked continuously from 1810 to 1991 by five successive generations of Prestons who earned their living off the land in sheep and dairy farming and in the timber industry. The farmhouse, with its front facade facing to the north, is situated on the southern side of Duxbury Road while three barns were built across the street on an open parcel of agricultural land abutting the banks of the Winooski River. Since its construction c. 1830, the farmhouse has endured the ceaseless effects from family life and their business operations for the various agricultural enterprises at the farm. Within the farm complex are three separate, yet interconnected, barns. With its gabled end situated across the street from the farmhouse is a solitary English style barn built c. 1810-1830 (East Barn). Located to the northwest and situated perpendicularly to the East Barn is another English style barn, c. 1810-1830 (West barn) with an attached c. 1850 dairy shed, and a c. 1940 ground level, gambrel roof dairy barn with a separate milk house. Because the farm had been in continuous operation from 1810 to 1993, with little or no alterations to both the farmstead and the barns, the Preston-Lafreniere Farm retains its integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.

1. Farmhouse, c. 1830

The Preston-Lafreniere farmhouse is a five by two bay, Classic Cottage with a narrow, eaves front wing attached to the eastern elevation. The homestead rests firmly on a field stone foundation rising from a steeply graded plot of land at the building's north/west corner and tapering to a level plane on the opposite end. The exposed foundation wall is veneered with two inch granite slabs to simulate the appearance of a large, granite block foundation. The exterior of the homestead, including its soffits (perhaps a c. 1870 alteration), is completely clad in painted clapboards with a 2 1/2" exposure, and framed by corner boards which are unusually wide for the overall scale of the house. The Classic Cottage's steep roof is clad in corrugated stainless steel panels, which were applied over a cedar shingle roof. At its ridge projects two short and slender brick chimneys located on opposite ends of the main house; an interior chimney for a wood stove is located in the east parlor, and an exterior chimney on the west facade was built, c. 1940, to vent a modern, basement oil burner.

The central, entry-way details on the front (north) facade are refined and simple; the door is a six paneled wood door flanked by four paned side lights, and capped by a projecting entablature, which is supported by tapered pilasters resting upon simply molded, rectangular plinths. The fenestration, unless otherwise noted, is comprised of

six over six double hung sash framed by unarticulated casings and sill. There are a pair of three over three kneewall windows above the first floor windows on the left side of the main entrance. The fenestration on the rear (south) elevation mirrors the front except that it lacks a central door, and a window located at the southwestern corner.

The side (west) elevation is visually partitioned into two unequal sections by a c. 1940 slender, single flue brick chimney, which rises through the soffit just to the right of the roof's peak. Centered on the first floor level and adjacent to the brick chimney is a narrow one over one window, c. 1940, which lights a narrow bathroom within the interior. The first and second floors have two evenly spaced windows; the location of the second floor windows are stepped inward as the roof plane slopes toward its peak. The opposite side (east) elevation has two windows closest to the front facade and a door slightly off centered while the remaining end wall encompasses the roof line of the kitchen wing.

Kitchen Wing, c. 1870

The attached 1 1/2 story wing is articulated by four distinct, yet interconnected roof planes, which earmarks the continuous organic growth of the kitchen wing. Initially, the wing was a narrow two by one bay working kitchen with a steep pitched gable roof. Circa 1890 a garage/wood shed was built to the back of the wing with a shed roof giving the wing a saltbox look. Circa 1940 a narrow front porch was remolded (existing configuration) and sheltered by a shallow, yet steeply pitched roof projecting from the wing's frieze board and supported by simple 4"x 4" posts. Finally, circa 1950, a storage shed was attached to the back of the garage, which continued the plane of the shed roof.

Off-centered to the right on the front (north) wing elevation is a two panel and four paned kitchen door, which is flanked on either side by a window; to the far left is a solitary sash which lights a small pantry. The fenestration on the side (east) elevation of the wing contains an attic sash centered within the gabled end, and a two over two sash on the first floor located to the right. The garage has a two panel plywood door that swings to the outside, and it is sheathed with clapboards while the storage shed on the southeast corner is sheathed with 8" to 12"vertical boards.

Interior Details of the Farmhouse and Kitchen Wing

The interior of the farmstead is significant since its original floor plan was only changed to accommodate a c. 1940 modern bathroom. There are two parlors flanking a central hall and stairwell at the front, and two rooms to the back. The bathroom is sandwiched between two parlor rooms on the west side in which a second interior wall, parallel to the original partitioned wall, was built within the back (west) parlor. The second story has two large bedroom chambers. The west chamber is a large open room, and the east chamber, which is lighted by the kneewall windows, is separated by two wide, framed openings creating the appearance of three distinct sleeping quarters. The

walls and ceilings throughout the house are made of plaster with "horse hair" as its binder and wooden split-lathe for its backing. The flooring system utilizes the use of wide wooden boards of random width in both the sub and finish floors; the interior doors are flat four panel doors, and the interior trim is made up of 4 1/2" and 4" plain board headers and side casings, respectively.

The interior of the kitchen wing is divided into three spaces: a long working kitchen which once had a cast iron wood stove, and a two functional spaces along eastern wall - a small storage pantry and L-shaped stairwell leading to an attic finished with unpainted homasote wall boards.

2. East English Barn, c. 1810-1830

The East Barn (30' x 42' 6"), situated on a north/south orientation with the side entrance to the west, is a standard 3 bay barn built in 5 bents with an off centered main drive. The post and girts, approximately 10"x10" square, are hand hewn by a broad axe and smoothed with an adze connected together by using a square rule system of assemblage. The cross girts are dropped a foot below the side plate, and the roof structure is a system of tapered log rafters notched on either end to connect to the top plate and a ridgepole. The barn originally had one side entrance with two hinged doors opening the outside to the main drive. Within the main drive remains a raised platform built of log joist and wide, thick planks used for a threshing floor. In the adjacent end bay are two rooms reserved for grain and farming equipment storage, over which is a hay loft. To the other side of the main drive, beyond a waist high partitioning wall dividing the barn into half, is a ground level stable.

The exterior of the barn's east and west sides are sheathed with original, natural plank siding, single in length from the ground to the top girt, and the planks in the northern and southern gable ends overlap the vertical siding boards below. The roof is clad in corrugated stainless steel panels which were applied over a cedar shingle roof. A sliding door on east facade is a later addition, c. 1940, as a post and two girts were cut to accommodate the door's opening. Remaining on the west side of the barn is the original center bay two panel hinged door.

3. West English Barn, c. 1810-1830

The West Barn (30'6" x 41') is of similar construction to its neighboring East Barn within the farmyard. It is a 3 bay, 5 bent barn with an off centered main drive. The barn is on an east/west orientation with a sliding side door, c. 1960, on the south side. The post and girts are a random mix of 8"x9", 9'x10", or 12"x12" hand hewn beams connected together by a square rule system of assemblage. The cross girts are dropped a foot below the side plate, and the roof structure is composed of purlins, strengthened by diagonal braces, and tapered log rafters half lapped and pegged with horizontal roof boards as its sheathing. A shed roof addition, c. 1850, was built to accommodate the dairy operations on the farm. The original wooden stanchions rubbed smooth by years

of exposure to cows, and the planked platform floor sloped toward the manure gutter remain in this back shed. The exterior of the barn is sheathed with original, natural plank siding, and where worn, are a series of short pieces of unpainted, weathered clapboards. The roof is clad in corrugated metal panels, which were applied over a cedar shingle roof.

4. Ground Level Dairy Barn, c.1940

In the 1940s a ground level gambrel-roofed dairy barn with its milk house was built and attached to the eastern gable end of the West Barn (#3). The dairy barn is a balloon framed structure, which contains two rows of the original metal stanchions upon a concrete ground level floor in which the interior woodwork is whitewashed for a sanitary milking operation. The hay loft on the second level is one large open space for the storage of hay bales. On the south facade are four paired, six-paned windows, and a gabled roof milk house perpendicularly attached to the right side. On the north facade are five paired, six-paned windows and a wooden planked hinged door located on the east corner. The exterior of the dairy barn is sheathed in clapboards and the gambrel roof is clad in corrugated metal panels.

5. Site

The site of the Preston-Lafreniere Farm contains many natural and man-made elements, which made it a prime piece of farming property. Alongside the southern banks of the Winooski River is a prime piece of farming property. Alongside the southern banks of the Winooski River is a large tract of open meadows (+/- 40 acres), rich in natural nutrients from river flooding, for the use of pasture, hay fields, and cropland for wheat, corn, oats, beans, peas, and potatoes. The open farm land meets the barns and the farmhouse at the junction of Duxbury Road and the Preston Brook where the land begins a rugged climb up Camel's Hump Mountain to the south. Here the forests provided wood for potash, lumber, and fire wood, while the brook became the location for the c.1870 Preston saw mill. Remains of the saw mill's foundation can be found along the western edge of Preston Brook. A approximately 30' x 50' U-shaped field stone and mortar foundation rises from the brook's edge, turns perpendicularly along a deep gorge in a northerly direction, and is attached to a c.1920 concrete wall as the foundation returns to the steep embankment. Looking to the north from the cluster of buildings is the Central Vermont Railroad, which runs along the Winooski River with Interstate 89 and the foothills of Mount Mansfield located beyond.

Statement of Significance

The Preston-Lafreniere Farm, a working farm for five successive generations in the Preston family, located upon a quintessentially Vermont picturesque setting of open agricultural land and timber lots at the north base of Camel's Hump Mountain and along the southern banks of the Winooski River, is a well preserved farmstead that has withstood the tests of time and the hardships of farming life from 1810-1948. The Preston-Lafreniere Farm is significant under criterion A for its contribution to the cadence of Vermont's agricultural history, and under criterion C for its preserved architectural styles of agricultural buildings and a farmstead type. John Preston, one of the original settlers in the town of Bolton, Vermont, built the side gabled, English style barn c. 1810-30, and subsequently a Classic Cottage, circa 1830, for the family homestead, establishing a firm beginning to a successful family farm. As agricultural trends and ecological conditions transformed the farm type throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, additional barns and outbuildings were built to accommodate the changes in crop production and animal husbandry, according to "contemporary" architectural styles and mandated agricultural laws. The Preston-Lafreniere Farm, a significant property type being nominated under the Multiple Property Listing for Agricultural Resources in Vermont, is affiliated with the Historic Context of Sheep Farming 1810-1910, and Dairying from 1850-1941, and meets the registration requirements for the farmstead property type.

The Preston-Lafreniere Farm is a significant cultural resource because of its continuous ties to the agricultural exploits of five successive generations of the Preston family working the land. The farm is a well preserved time capsule showing how each generation was able to cultivate their fields, adapt their farming techniques, and concentrate their herding stocks to continuously yield a sustainable living off the same plot of land from 1790 to 1993. By reading the changes in the details of the barns and the farmstead, the cultural histories of the Preston-Lafreniere Farm, the Town of Bolton, and that of the State of Vermont can be told.

The barns on the property are an unwritten history of outdated building techniques, and agricultural and economic patterns that forced change upon the farming techniques of each successive generation of Prestons working the land. The farm house is a well-preserved piece of architectural history of a conservative farming family whose energies went into the operation of the farm, rather than into the continual modernizations of their home. With both change and stasis, the architectural history and agricultural heritage of the Preston farm unfolds an unique, yet archetypal, tale of a farming family in New England.

The landscape upon a farm with its physical beauty - the variety of shapes, colors and textures of its buildings, machinery, fields, and forests - provides a sense of place that is unique in its venue, yet paramount in its relationship to Vermont's agricultural

heritage. The farm, when viewed from afar, yields images of pastoral and bucolic serenity, and when viewed from close by, fosters a feeling of hardship of old worn hands working from sunrise to sunset, only to repeat the pattern again the following morning. It is these images of our agricultural and architectural histories that give Vermont its sense of place and identity in the larger context of our nation's cultural history. Providing a record of the past of a farming family, which worked the land for five successive generations, maintains this unique sense of place, identity and character of Vermont's Agricultural and Architectural Heritage.

George Kennedy, Esq. noted, circa 1860, that the town of Bolton, in which the Preston-Lafreniere farm is located, is, "all unnoted for distinguished institutions of human invention, has nevertheless so fine a mountain landscape, it becomes self-evident in a physical point of view, Vermont could not have been finished without Bolton." Despite cultural differences of perceptions in beauty and human convention between the 19th Century and the late 20th Century, Mr. Kennedy could be not more close and yet further from the truth about Bolton, Vermont. Granted, Bolton and the Preston-Lafreniere Farm are located at the foot of one of Vermont's noted scenic mountain peaks, Camel's Hump, along which runs one of America's oldest maintained forest trails, the Long Trail. The picturesque setting of the Preston-Lafreniere Farm on the banks of the Winooski River cast in morning shadow by Camel's Hump Peak, is a pleasurable scene rich in the natural beauty of the sublime. Nevertheless, Mr. Kennedy is far from understanding the industrious soul of a Preston farmers who for generations successfully maintained a prosperous existence through their own human invention to till the soil, cut lumber, herd sheep, and milk their dairy cattle. It is this human invention registered in their agricultural exploits etched within the mortise and tenons of the two English Style Barns which speaks of distinction.

The exact date and order of construction of the English style barns is circumspect. Physical and archival evidence yields muddled information; when a barn is mentioned it is unclear which barn is being discussed. While the West Barn is more irregular in its construction than the East Barn, they are of the same barn type from the same era. Based on existing information, two legitimate theories can be drawn. To maximize exposure to sunlight, most barns were built on a east/west orientation where the barn door opened to the south. Since the West Barn was built according to this principle, it seems plausible that it was the original barn for the Preston Farm. As the farm grew and more space was needed for grain and hay storage, the building of the East barn on an axis perpendicular to the other seems logical in the creation of a well-defined barnyard.

The location of the Preston log cabin helps to formulate another theory about the construction of the barn. It could be possible that the log cabin was situated where the West Barn is now located. Thus, building the East Barn perpendicular to the cabin was

advantageous in that it was close enough for ease of access, yet far enough away to create a barnyard defined by two structures. As the farm prospered with the building of the c. 1830 Classic Cottage, the logs from the cabin may have been reused for the building of the West Barn, indicated by the irregular post and beams. Regardless of the order of construction and location of the barns, they were built along an orientation most common for creating a barnyard or dooryard for farming operations.

The East Barn (30′ x 42′ 6″), c. 1810-30, is a standard 3 bay barn built in 5 bents with an off centered main drive. Although the barn is showing signs of age from weather, over use and misuse, the barn is an excellent example of an English style barn. The posts and girts, approximately 10″x10″ square, are hand hewn by a broad axe and smoothed with an adze connected together by using a dropped girt, square rule system of assemblage. The roof structure is a system of tapered log rafters notched on either end to connect to each top plate and the ridgepole. The barn originally had one side entrance with two hinged doors opening the outside to the main drive. Within the main drive remains a raised platform built of log joists and wide, thick planks used for a threshing floor. In the adjacent end bay are two rooms reserved for grain and farming equipment storage, over which is a hay loft. To the other side of the main drive, beyond a waist high partitioning wall dividing the barn into halves, is a ground level stable. The specific functions to each section of the barn, threshing floor, grain storage, hay loft have withstood the test of time. Each utilized for its original function, and then subtly changed to accommodate new needs of each successive generation which worked the land.

The West Barn (30′6″ x 41′), c. 1810-30, is similarly a 3 bay, 5 bent barn with an off centered main drive. The post and girts are a random mix of 8″x9″, 9′x10″, or 12″x12″ hand hewned beams connected together by a dropped girt, square rule system of assemblage with a roof structure that is composed of purlins, diagonal braces, and tapered log rafters half lapped and pegged at the ridge. Since a c. 1850 shed roof addition was built to accommodate the dairy operations on the farm, this west barn was used primarily as a hay loft throughout the entire history of the farming operations. Significant to the agricultural history of the Preston-Lafreniere Barns is the presence of the original wooden stanchions, planked platform floor and manure gutter located in this back shed. The wooden stanchions, rubbed smooth by years of exposure to milking cows, would pivot from a treenail on the bottom as a cow would insert their head toward the haymow, and the stanchion would then be pulled upright and fastened at the top. The plank floor is still sloped toward the manure gutter for the ease of drainage and cleanup. The presence of wooden stanchions is extremely rare as many farms modernized their operations around the turn of the century as local and federal statutory laws mandated stricter hygienic conditions in the dairy industry establishing the need to build ground-level stable barns with an above hayloft, and separate milk house.

To comply with the law, the Prestons built a ground level, gambrel roof stable barn (circa 1940) with an attached milk house in between the two older English style barns. Leo Lafreniere, who married Bertha Preston, built the modern dairy barn from the similar convention as earlier Prestons - utilizing the natural resources upon the land to cut, mill and build a "modern" agricultural structure by hand. Rather than utilizing the square rule mortise and tenon building techniques, Leo Lafreniere adopted the modern balloon framing techniques for the ground level dairy barn. The style of the barn is not based on any architectural drawings, but was formulated by agricultural trade magazines featuring modern barn styles. The ground level barn is attached to the eastern end of the c.1830 English style barn. In design the barn is accommodating to the establishes codes: series of casement windows to adequately ventilate the dairy operations; a concrete floor with gutters and metal stanchions for the efficiency of the dairy business; the white washing of the entire interior, and the building of a separate milk house for the protection of the milk from disease. The modern gambrel roofed hayloft enclosed a greater volume of storage space than the gable roofs of the English barns. The gambrel shape and design employed a truss system without cross braces that eliminated any interference with the haying operations.

The simple Classic Cottage with typical Greek Revival features is a good example of 19th century vernacular farmsteads. Results from a review of the Vermont Historic Sites and Structures Survey for Bolton and the neighboring towns of Duxbury and Richmond, indicate that there were similar Classic Cottages built along the Winooski River Valley. In Duxbury the Crossett-Lipskey House (1206-45), the Kellog-Kilby House (1206-55), and the Ralph Davis Farmhouse (1206-71) are similar in scale and style to the architectural features upon the Preston-Lafreniere house. In Richmond there are two Classic Cottages that are connected to the Preston family, the William Preston Residence (0411-23), and the Preston Residence (0411-24). In Bolton there are two other Classic Cottages, yet their architectural features vary considerably from the Preston-Lafreniere house. Although the Preston-Lafreniere homestead may not be elegant in its classical forms, its association with the unique barn types enhances its significance as a dynamic property type under Vermont's MPDF for Agricultural Resources. Thus, because of its modest origins, the house is both significant for the organic nature of a farmhouse being continually expanded, and also for the deferment of maintenance which limited any significant alterations to the historic fabric and layout of the building. This dichotomous history is typical of the property type, for most of the money earned off the farm was put back into the maintenance of the agricultural buildings while the farmhouse incurred expansion for more elbowroom rather than the maintenance of its existing spaces.

Documentary evidence suggests, John Preston built a cabin c. 1790, upon a stone foundation for the family's temporary residence as the forest were cleared for agricultural use. As the property may contain historic archeological resources, such as

Indian wares and the remains of the c. 1870 Preston saw mill, it should be mentioned that pre-historic resources may also be found. Because of the property's location within a river valley and adjacent to a tributary, the Preston-Lafreniere farm may yield significant archeological resources across time.

Agricultural History of the Preston Family

In 1763, King George III authorized the Province of New Hampshire to settle Northern Territories (Vermont) by establishing communities 6 miles square and 10 miles apart, and Bennington Wentworth, Commander in Chief, issued land grants as a speculative venture in which the Town of Huntington was established (the town of Bolton was originally defined within New Huntington). On May 10, 1770, the first reference of Bolton was recorded in a meeting of land speculators held by Samuel Averill in New Milford, Connecticut at the home of Samuel Canfield. It wasn't until the conclusion of the Revolutionary War that the original speculators seized the opportunity to lay claim to their land. In 1794, John Preston, from Bradford, Vermont, acquired land totaling 40 acres from Jonathan Pinkney and Benjamin Cornell, two of many original grantees from the 1763 land grant. At the turn of the nineteenth century, John Preston and his family embarked on a agricultural venture of taming a land full of abundant resources. It was through their spirit, drive, and raw fortitude, in short their human invention, which helped the family prosper.

As more families began to settle the land, the abundant resources of the forest brought them their first crop - potash. Once the trees had been cleared, the first crop of wheat would help the farmer pay for their initial investment of clearing the land, building fences and planting the first crops. From 1800-1820, it was a "hay day" for farmers who yielded significant profits from wheat since the great wheat fields of the Midwest and Canada had not been settled. By 1813 the value of lands, lots and dwellings in Vermont reached a total of $34,747,290, which was more than double from 15 years earlier. John Preston is often distinguished for building the town's first grist mill, c.1802, at Huntington Gorge along the Huntington River, which operated continuously for a century until the Richmond Light and Power Company converted the mill to generate electricity. It was also during the early decades of the nineteenth century that the Preston Family built their farm house, and the first English barn. Since the family grew in numbers, it can be inferred that the farm prospered to sustain the needs and demands of a large family. The growth of the family is evident in the 1800 Bolton Census. John Preston and wife were over 45 years of age; 1 male was under the age of 10, 1 male was of the age of 10-15, 2 females were of the age of 15-20; John Preston Jr. had a family of 1 male and 1 female age 15-20. The total population of the town of Bolton tallied 219 residents. As the family grew, larger quantities of wheat, potatoes, corn, oats, and alfalfa and clover hays were harvested, yielding an increase in profits

and land values.

During the first two decades of the 19th century, Mother Nature began to unravel the prosperity of the family farm with floods, droughts, and insect blight plaguing the northeast and forestalling the cultivation of wheat. As communities and farmers in the mid-west stabilized their settlements, farming operations cultivated a boundless supply of wheat in which...

> western competition brought an end to large-scale wheat raising in Vermont, and farmers began to look for alternative operations. While wheat, corn, and oats continued to be raised on a small scale, it was evident that a fundamental shift in land use from crop raising to pasturage for animal husbandry was a necessary step if farming in Vermont was to continue to be economically viable.

After the War of 1812, the establishment of textile industries in New England and other Eastern States led to another period of agricultural prosperity for Vermonters. Sheep farming became a natural outgrowth for farmers to utilize the vast open spaces of grass land for grazing sheep while supplying woolen mills with an abundant inventory of fine wools. Further, with the building of the Vermont Central Railroad along the northern edge of the Winooski River in 1847, the time to bring crops and other animal by-products to market was reduced considerably, enhancing and diversifying the diets of New Englanders, and increasing the profit margins for Vermont farmers. In 1840, 1,681,819 sheep were on Vermont farms with a wool cut totaling 3,699,235 pounds ranking Vermont as second among states in the production of wool while being fourth in the number of sheep.

By mid century, the notion of regenerating the land with nutrients was far from the needs and minds of farmers who based their husbandry techniques on raping the land of most of its natural nutrients. Because of the short sighted practices of the timber and sheep industries, soil erosion and nutrient depletion was paramount. Thus, to counter this naive and destructive trend of farming, Vermont farmers began to see the benefits of dairy farming. If the vast amount of open land was used for grazing, then the manure could help regenerate nutrients to the depleted soil. Although this wise practice of regeneration was needed, the process was long in taking a firm hold on the conservative ways of Vermont farmers.

A comparison of the tallies recorded between the agricultural census from 1850 and 1880 on the Preston farm quantifies this slow change in Vermont agriculture from sheep to dairy farming. In 1850, Noah Preston (John Preston Jr.'s younger brother), the second generation of Prestons farming the land, owned 2 cows producing 200 lbs. of butter, 110 head of sheep generating 330 lbs. of wool, and 200 acres of land yielding 125 bushels of potatoes, and 18 tons of hay. In 1880, Noah Preston Jr., the third generation of Prestons to farm the land, owned 13 cows which produced 1950 lbs. of butter and 1800 lbs. of cheese, 20 head of sheep which generated 40 lbs. of wool, and the land of 278 acres yielded 200 bushels of potatoes, and 35 tons of hay. There is a correlation to the rise in

the number of cows to the increased production of butter and cheese. Cheese, as a farm product, was nascent to the Preston Farm and to the town of Bolton since the Prestons were the first and only farm to have cheese recorded in 1880. Hay production increased with the number of dairy cows, as the emphasis on sheep declined. It was during this transitional period from sheep to dairy cows that the shed with the wooden stanchions and wooden manure gutter was added to the west English barn. This transitional period to a dairy farming also relates to the completion of the Vermont Central Railroad and the utilization of iced box cars for the safe transportation of butter and cheese to southern markets. The railroad was instrumental to the promotion of tourism and the building of two Bolton hotels: a 30 room hotel built across from the train station in Bolton; and the Couching Lion Hotel constructed on top of Camel's Hump Mountain. Both hotels were destroyed by fire.

In 1850, Vermont had 29,763 farms comprising of 2,601,409 acres of improved land with an average value per acre of $19.09. Thirty years later in 1880, Vermont was working 3.25 million acres of land by a record number of established farms of 35,522 with an average value per acre of $26.69. Steadily the Vermont farmer was able to sustain an increasingly profitable yield even throughout the nation-wide agricultural depressions which waxed and waned from 1870 thru 1890, the years when the Farmer's Alliance, the Grange and the Populists party set its roots in agricultural centers across the country.

It wasn't until the turn of century when the dairy industry and the railroads began to work together to form a strong vertical enterprise to quickly, and efficiently move a large quantity of milk to market. Further, stricter legal regulations to improve the sanitary conditions of dairy farms forced farmers to build ground level stable barns which utilized a diversified array of farming machinery that helped make dairy operations cleaner and more time efficient. Manure trolleys were changed over to motorized gutter and conveyor belt system, metal stanchions and feeders were more durable, and milking machines offered efficient and reputable methods of milking. As the time to milk cows decreased, the herd size increased manifesting a higher production of dairy products. By 1910, Vermont, as recorded in the census, led New England in dairy production and gained ardent momentum during the war years as a leader in the dairy industry nation-wide.

It was Bertha Maria Preston, daughter of William Preston (fourth generation), and her husband, Leo Lafreniere, who brought the fifth generation of Prestons farming the land into the modern era of the 20th century. With the building of the gambrel roofed, ground level stable barn, and its attached milk house, circa 1940, Leo Lafreniere, like all other Vermont farmers, helped transfigure the Preston farm into a larger agricultural enterprise. The Preston-Lafreniere farm had transformed itself from the c. 1820 post and beams of the English style barns into a modern American machine not by circumstance, but by the ingenuity, industry, and convention of the five generations of

Prestons leading a sustainable existence upon a land full of natural resources and sublime beauty.

As the farmstead was brought into the 20th century, modern problems with the encroachment of development soon surfaced. Educated locally at Jonesville Academy, Bertha Preston Lafreniere represented the Town of Bolton from 1961-1966 in the Vermont Legislature when representation was one town one vote. She was a strong advocate for the preservation of Camel's Hump State Park and its protection against development, and in 1984 Bertha died with the wish that the farm property would never be developed. From 1984 -1996 Leo Lafreniere took up the challenge to preserve the historic integrity of the property. In 1991 Leo successfully negotiated a contract with between the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to purchase the 426 acres, more or less, with the following easement for the use of the property.

> ...no residential, commercial, industrial, or mining, activities shall be permitted, and no building or structure shall be constructed, created, erected, or moved onto the property, unless the activity furthers the public use of the property as part of Camel's Hump State Park or protects environmental systems, encourages sound utilization and conservation of agricultural and forest resources, and preserves the scenic beauty of the property.

Finally, on October 21, 1996 a cooperation lease agreement between the town of Bolton (Town) and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (Department) was confirmed where the Department would acquire 412 acres of the farm and annex the property to the adjoining Camel's Hump State Park, while the Town, through its Conservation Commission, would enhance and protect the farmstead according to the above deed restrictions. Based on a 1993 Architectural Conservation Assessment of the barns by Thomas T. Visser, the Interim Director of the University of Vermont Historic Preservation Program (UVM HP), modest funding was raised including a barn grant from the Vermont State Historic Preservation Office, which helped to stabilize the two English style barns. Subsequent work by graduate students at the UVM HP provided assessment reports for the continued use of the farmstead as an agricultural resource center to promote the history of the Preston-Lafreniere Farm and its relationship to the agricultural history of the Town of Bolton and the State of Vermont.

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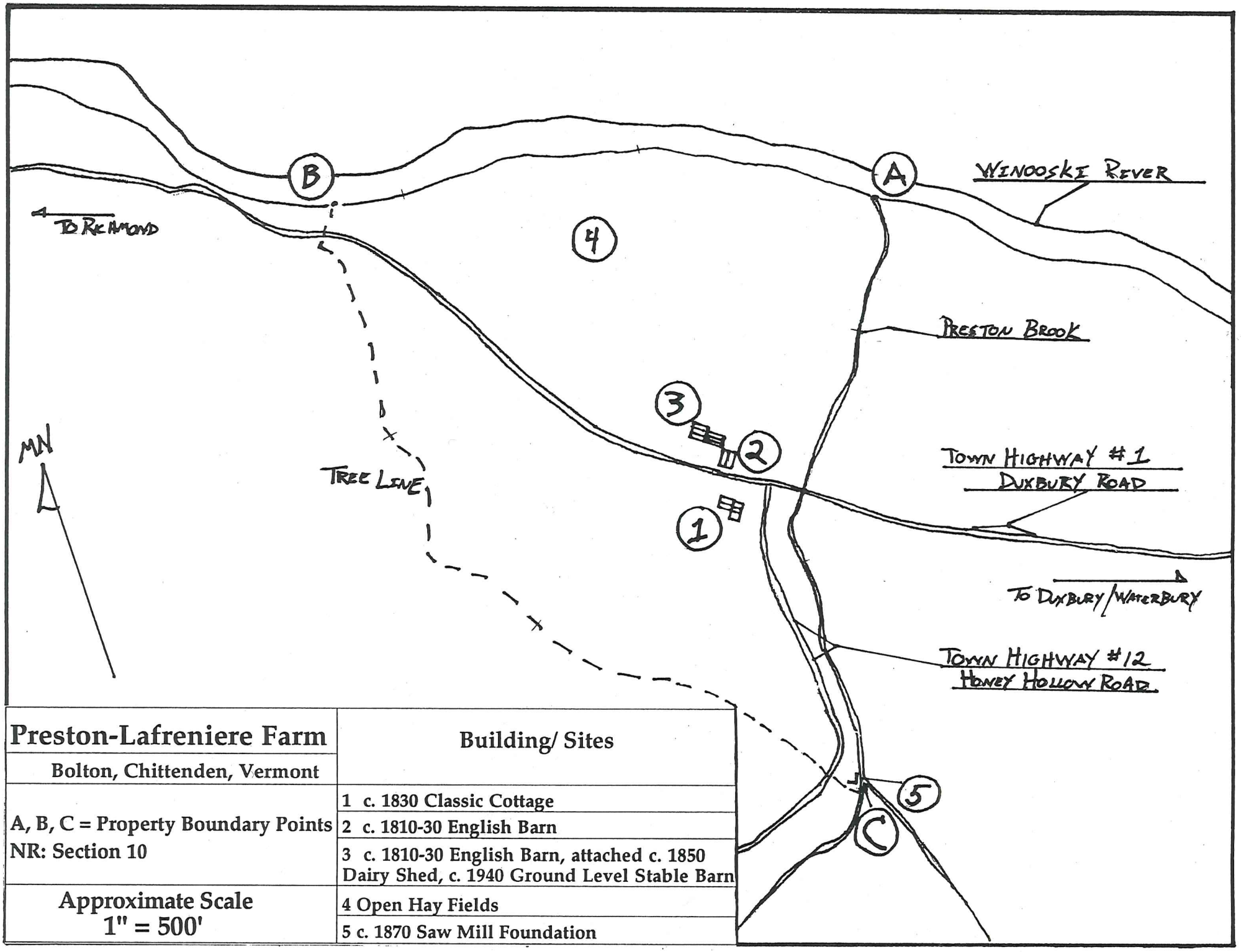
Verbal Boundary Description

The property being nominated for the Preston-Lafreniere farm, Bolton, Chittenden County, Vermont, is a +/_ 60 acre parcel of land including a c. 1830 Classic Cottage, c. 1810-30 English style barn, and a c. 1810-30 English style barn with an attached c. 1850 shed and a c. 1940 ground level stable barn surrounded by hay fields and forested hills. Since the farmstead contributes to the understanding of the development of Vermont's Agricultural History, and for its preserved architectural styles of agricultural buildings, the open farm fields and the surrounding wood lots are also significant components of the history of the farmstead. Although the farm is no longer in operation, the hay fields annually produce three cuts of hay and the barns are utilized by local farmers for hay and machinery storage. Similar to many of Vermont's rural areas, the Preston-Lafreniere property was never surveyed, so natural features and the U.S. Geological Survey Maps were utilized to define the National Registry boundaries.

Beginning at the southwest junction of the Preston Brook and the Winooski River (Point A), the property traverses in a westward direction along the southern edge of the Winooski River approximately 2,250 feet to a point where the bank of the Winooski River meets Bolton Town Highway 1 (Duxbury Road) (Point B). The boundary then rises from the river, across Duxbury Road and traverses along the tree line for approximately 3,750 feet in a southeast direction to a point where the c. 1870 saw mill foundation meets the Preston Brook. The boundary turns in a northerly direction at the southeast corner of the saw mill foundation and runs approximately 2,650 feet along the westerly side of Preston Brook back to point A.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes all the buildings and surrounding open fields historically associated with the Preston-Lafreniere Farm and possible (unexcavated) historic/pre-historic archeological remains.



Preston-Lafreniere Farm	Building/ Sites
Bolton, Chittenden, Vermont	
A, B, C = Property Boundary Points NR: Section 10	1 c. 1830 Classic Cottage
	2 c. 1810-30 English Barn
	3 c. 1810-30 English Barn, attached c. 1850 Dairy Shed, c. 1940 Ground Level Stable Barn
Approximate Scale 1" = 500'	4 Open Hay Fields
	5 c. 1870 Saw Mill Foundation

Photographic Labels

The following information is the same for all photographs:
Preston-Lafreniere Farm
Bolton, Chittenden, Vermont
Credit: Paul A. Graney
Date: 5/1/98
Negative Filed at Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

Photograph #1 (1 of 7)
Description: View looking southeast of the agricultural barns, buildings #2 and #3, to the left, and to the right the farmhouse, building #1, with Camel's Hump Mountain in the background.

Photograph #2 (2 of 7)
Description: View looking southwest of the front and east side of the farmhouse, building #1.

Photograph #3 (3 of 7)
Description: View looking northeast of the back and west sides of the farmhouse, building #1.

Photograph #4 (4 of 7)
Description: Interior view of the farm house's front door from the center hall, building #1.

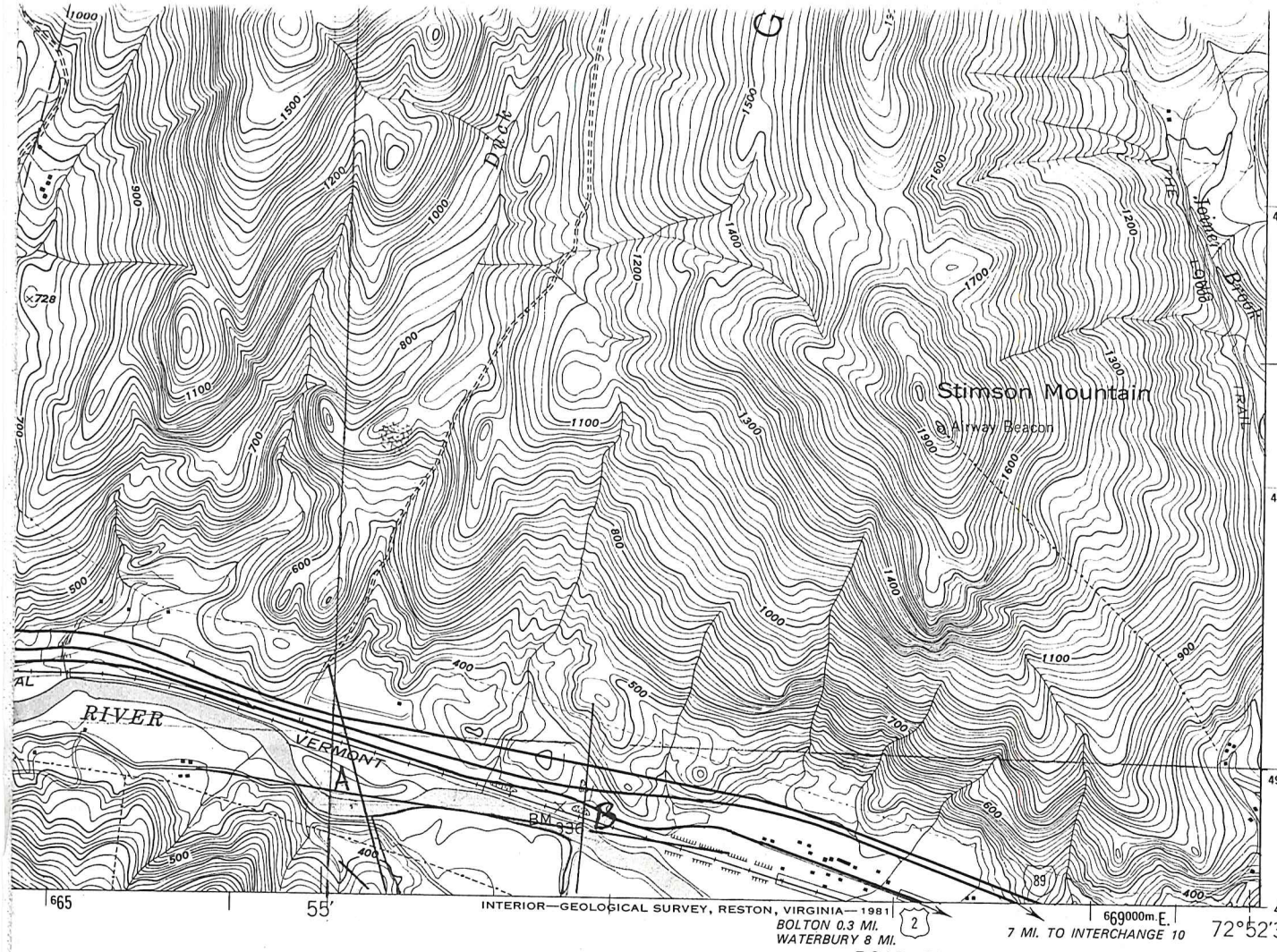
Photograph #5 (5 of 7)
Description: View looking northeast of the agricultural barns, buildings #2 and #3.

Photograph #6 (6 of 7)
Description: View looking east of the 1820 English barn, building #2.

Photograph #7 (7 of 7)
Description: View looking northwest of the 1830 English barn and the 1940 ground level stable barn, building #3.

MAP 1 of 2

Preston-Lafreniere Farm
Bolton, Chittenden, Vermont
UTM Reference:
A. 18/666120/4915780
B. 18/666900/4915680
C. 18/666880/4914820
D. 18/666240/4913360



1 MILE
5000 6000 7000 FEET
1 KILOMETER

1929

CY STANDARDS
VIRGINIA 22092
AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Primary highway, all weather hard surface
Light-duty road, all weather, improved surface
Secondary highway, all weather hard surface
Unimproved road, fair or dry weather

Interstate Route
U. S. Route
State Route

RICHMOND, VT.

NW/4 CAMELS HUMP 15' QUADRANGLE
N4422.5—W7252.5/7.5

1948
PHOTOREVISED 1980
DMA 6472 IV NW—SERIES V813

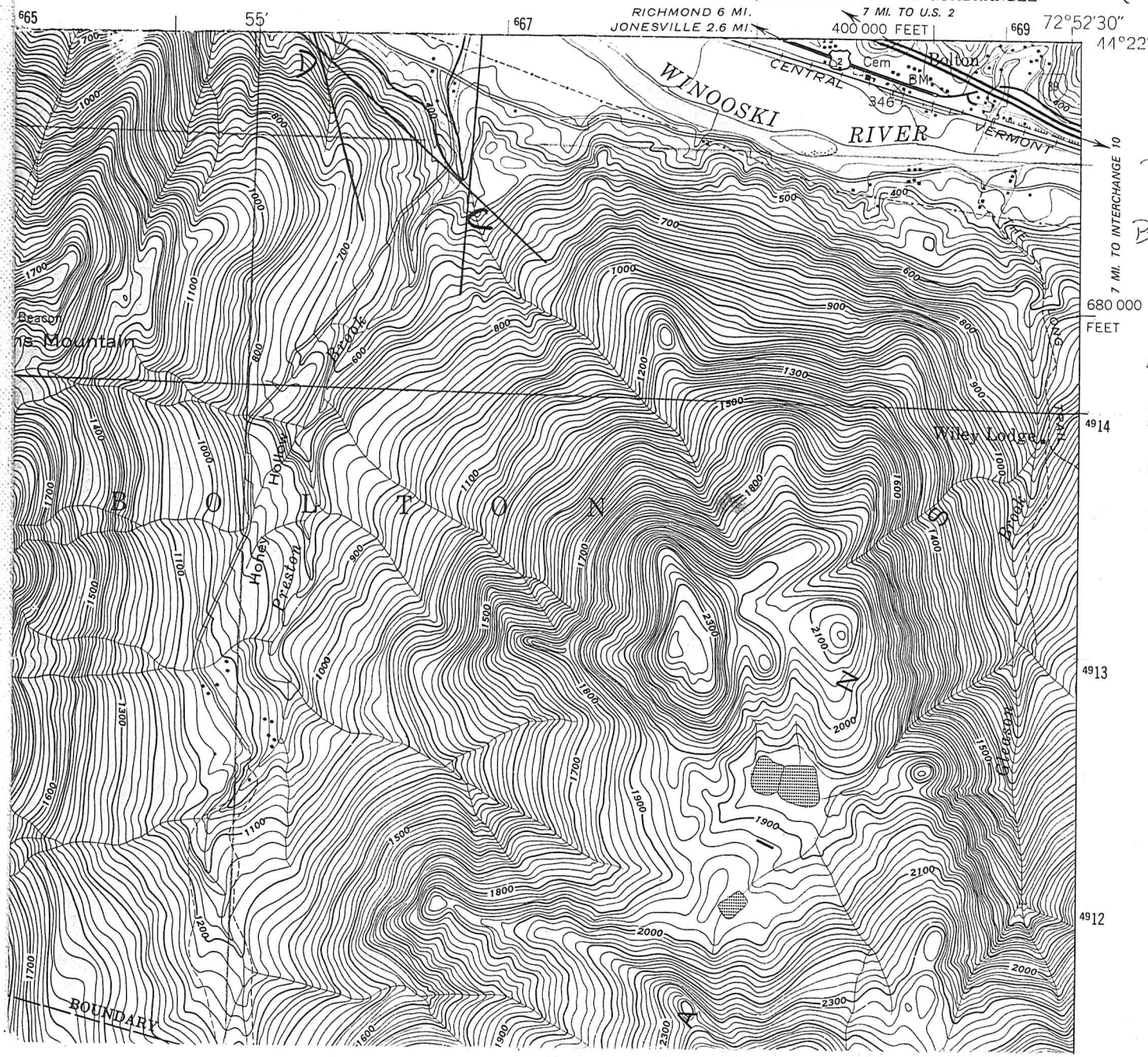
ISBN 0-607-56785-6
9 780607 567854

HUNTINGTON QUADRANGLE

VERMONT

7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

SW/4 CAMELS HUMP 15′ QUADRANGLE



MAP 2 of 2

Preston - Lafreniere Farm

Bolton, Chittenden, Vermont

UTM Reference

A. 18/666120/4915780

B. 18/666900/4915680

C 18/666880/4914820

D 18/666240/4915360