

Data initially based on September 21, 2009 discussions of Old Lyme Farm Histories with James Noyes (principal source), and expanded by John Stratton, Jennifer Griswold Hillhouse, Carolyn Huntley Wakeman --jps

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## ***Some Farms in Old Lyme in the Early and Mid-20th Century***

In 1928 there were at least 12 farms active in Old Lyme -- and they were remnants of many more that grew out of the origins of the town. Their lands, forests, and barns are still scattered throughout present landholdings. It is helpful to remember that the railroad is an artifact of the 1850's, and that many old town roads -- some now mere tracks in the woods -- were simply well-used wagon paths on the edges of pastures and woodlots that connected clusters of homes throughout the town. Indeed, most roadways were not paved until well into the 1920's when increasing numbers of people had access to automobiles. The major state road improvement programs -- straightening and widening, bridges, guardrails, improved surfacing, etc. -- took place starting in 1928 with the systematic application of numbers to state-maintained routes and extending into the Depression-era WPA Projects. Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated at the time that "We must get the farmers out of the mud," and farm-to-market roadways were apart of that national effort. Close examination of the Impressionist artists' nostalgic works of a century ago will reveal the transition from the agrarian foundations of the town to today's technological and service economy based on mobility and communications.

### **Boston Post Road South and West from the East Side of Old Lyme**

On the northeast side of the road nearing the rocky ledges of the East Lyme border is the farm owned by Jimmy Riddle, father in law of Cliff Howard, who owned a farm on Library Lane. Cliff's wife, Nellie Bump, was the first wife of Earl Huntley. Mr. Riddle's helper was Dick Picken (Perkins?).

On the east side of the road, in a red house and barn on a slight rise near the present Lymewood Elderly Housing, stood the Earl Davy Farm. Lymewood and the associated pond and meadow was part of the farm; Elizabeth Davy was Earl's daughter and married Bill Ogle.

On the northeast side at Old Post Road (probably set off from a straightened Route 1 about 1928) was Eugene Caulkins Farm and quarry, which contributed the massive stonework for the face and steps in front of Center School (1934).

Further south and on the west side of the road opposite James Graybill's Pro-Auto was the farm of Carl Lymer (Limer?) and his family in the 1920's. The Lymer house was taken apart and moved in pieces to the Florence Griswold property.

Just south, on the southwest corner of North Sill Lane and Boston Post Road, was the expansive acreage of the Joseph Ely Farm, whose main house is still present on the corner.

Farm Westward on Sill Lane across the Upper Millpond and north to Town Woods Road??? Town Woods Road farms/woodlands; MacCurdy-Salisbury lands?

Judge Walter Noyes Farm was further south on the east side of the road, occupying the Rose Lane area and the "Mile of Roses" to Worman's Hill (a rocky, roadcut outcrop on the Post Road near Boggy Hole Road). Worman's Hill (Woe-Man's Hill?) was named, said the late Charles Kiernan, former selectman and resident of that corner), for a man who was hanged there.

Parson's Farm-Parson's Farm Lane?

The William Ely Farm was on eight to ten acres west across the street from the judge's farm and reputed to contain the oldest barn in Old Lyme. The Federal period home is set off by a green fence. Further south, flanking the Lieutenant River, are the lands and buildings associated with the what is now the Florence Griswold Museum and the Bee and Thistle Inn.

Route 1 from the 1911 Connecticut River bridge to Lyme Street/Boston Post Road -- notably the old and oft-limned "Bow Bridge" roadway -- was flanked by farmland west of the Florence Griswold House and the Lyme Art Association along the upper Lieutenant River. Most paintings in the early 1900's show the roadway as a rustic track through these farmlands. The western component adjoining Route 156 was Nat Hall's Dairy Farm, housing Jersey cows used to provide milk and ice cream for Hall-Mark Chocolates and Ice Cream store on the southeast corner of Route 1 and Route 156. That section of road was named "Hall's Road" at a 1970's(?) town meeting. The large barn that once stood just north of the present Essex Savings Bank branch was built from remnants of a much larger barn damaged in the 1938 hurricane.

#### **North on Route 156 (Neck Road) from Route 1**

Nat Hall's Farm stood on the site of the present Essex Savings bank and west to the Connecticut River. A fine barn stood at the intersection of Huntley Road and Route 156 and the home once owned by Lyman Spitzer in the 1960's. The nearby Old Lyme Marina site was developed in the early 1950's by Edward Bonelli, who purchased the very old house and marine railway/coal dock inside Calves Island. The house was reportedly built in the 1690's and in addition to a residence served as a small tavern, inn, and bakery over the years. [jps lived there for some 6-1/2 years]

The **Talcott Farm** occupied lands to the west of the road on land now developed by the Talcott Farms complex of estates and homes.

Tantummaheag, the **Lord family home** overlooking Lord's Cove, had lands extending south to the William Burt Farm and north to the Coult Farm surrounding Coult Lane and Binney Road. The Burt farm included the quarry west of the Tommy Pilgrim Landing and the riverside home of Nancy Kriebel. William Burt was the grandfather of Bill Burt, the photographer and writer who lives in the Maxon-Appleby home at the beginning of Library Lane at Lyme Street.

The pleasant red house on the Cove just east of the Greek-revival Lord home was owned by Janet and Tom Bagg?

Binney Road is named for **Constance Binney**, a film actress who sold the former farmland to local developer Walter J. Zuk, who created the Binney Road Community Association. The associated Landing Road (once **Mule Dock Landing Road**), ends at a dock on the Lord's Cove estuary channel, where barges and boats were loaded with cut stone for New York streets and buildings. The two ridges of steep cliffs adjacent to the cove are still called Quarry Hill. The Zuk family has materials relating to the development and land-conservation planning for his early 1950's site planning.

### **South on Route 156 from Route 1**

South of Route 1 / Hall's Road on both sides of the Lieutenant River and extending to the Connecticut River stood the very large **Enoch Noyes Farm**. The "million-dollar mile" southern extension of Route 156 was put in place only in the early 1960's, so the land directly south of Hall's Road and Ferry Road was largely unobstructed pasture. The east side of Route 156 north of the Lieutenant River was later subdivided into the James Gould estate c.1930?, and further subdivided sold into lots for independent homes about 1980.

The Enoch Noyes Farm was inherited by Chadwicks; the farm's central house was the Mary Chadwick home on Ferry Road. Overlooking the Connecticut River ferry landing and the former Reynolds Marina, the home was owned by Daniel (Chadwick) Woodhead in the 1970's; across Ferry Road to the south was a very large barn, constructed in 1875 and torn down about 1968, and pastureland surrounding a pond behind the riverfront Bacon House / Ferry Tavern. The Noyes-Chadwick home is now owned by Herb Chambers, who purchased it from the Woodheads; he also purchased and modernized the marina, operating it as the Old Lyme Dock.

Southward from the Noyes farm was the **McCurdy farm**.

**John DeWolf's Farm** extended south from the McCurdy holdings; its homestead was the large mansard-roof building north of the **Smith Neck Road** intersection with Route 156 and extended westward to the Back River estuary including all of Smith

Neck northeast to Old Lyme Estates and Watch Rock. Bits and pieces -- like Kinner Road on the DeWolf property -- were sold as the farm broke up; the major final parcels were sold about 1971 when the main house itself was sold and greatly repaired and renovated.

East off of Bailey Road and Pine Road stood the **Brown Farm**.

The **Claude DeWolf Farm** extended eastward from Route 156 in the area of Homestead Circle and the Blackhall River and Griswold Cemetery. Much of that land became the Margaret and Art Hefflon Farm, still productive into the 1970's across Route 156 east of the relocated Hall-Mark Drive-In Ice Cream Shop. The Hall store originally was in the "factory" building on the southeast corner of Route 1 (Hall's Road) and Route 156 until the Route 156 was expanded in association with bridge accesses about 1968.

### **Lyme Street and MacCurdy Roads South of Route 1**

The **Champlain Farm** east of the intersection of Route 1 and Lyme Street (and crossing the present I-95 roadway) is largely Old Lyme Open Space now; the land was obtained by the town in the late 1990's. For years in the early 1900's it was owned by the **Innsley Riding Academy**, which used trails through and around the former pastures and woodlands. Mr. Innsley was the husband of **Elizabeth Champlain**. The large barns and outbuildings of the Old Lyme Inn are part of this landholding.

The **Sam Tooker Farm** stood across the street from the Alice Rogers Shop and included most of the land now occupied by the Middle School and High School of Regional School District 18. Sam Tooker was the grandfather of present tax collector Judith Tooker (Kerr), who resides in the family's red home on Lyme Street.

The **Library Lane Farm** east of the Duck River and south of the lane and extending westward north of the Duck River Cemetery may have been owned by Clifford R. Howard. His house and barn stand immediately westward of a large ledge on the lane before the Duck River. It was owned for a time in the 1960's by **Deke Cooksley** of the E.R. Champion Agency. The land northward and east included part of the school fields and the neighboring Duck River meadows. The farm was first operated by Jimmy Riddle.

To the east and south along the Duck River, was the **Jack Appleby Farm**. Jack was a resident of the home on the southeast corner of Library Lane and Lyme Street built by the Maxon family in 1790 and subsequently occupied by Nelson Appleby, giving the road its early name, Appleby Lane. Another branch of the Appleby family lived in the house on the south of the corner of Elm Street (a late 1930's-1940's development by John Roche) and Library Lane. That house and its new barn are now owned by Judy and Bill Archer.

The Boxwood Farm associated with the 1848 home of Richard Sill Griswold was west of the Duck River and east of Lyme Street; the home and later hotel-apartment owners grew much of their food there.

The McCurdy Farm, associated with the McCurdy-Ames house on 1 Lyme Street opposite the Congregational Church, extended southward from the church corner to south of the present railroad tracks and including much of the present Old Lyme Country Club. The McCurdy-Ames house has an extensive barn which reflects this role.

The Ludington Farm extended south from the Ludington house on MacCurdy Road to Route 156 and included the "green barn" of years past.

**Mile Creek Road East, Whipoorwill Road, Brown's Lane,  
Flat Rock Hill, Rowland Road, Short Hills Road**

One of the Chadwick family farms was based in the Chadwick house on the south side of Mile Creek Road before Brown's Lane. The home was owned by John Melvin Woody and Susan Woody in the mid-1960's. The substantial Chadwick Drive development ("Chadwick of Old Lyme") is named for this farm.

The Greek Revival home owned by Alison Broatch family in the 1930's on Brown's Lane (owned by Quentin and Robin Wald 1960's to 1980's) was the farmhouse for the lands making up the 1950's-1960's development of Wychwood and other homes along and diverging from Brown's Lane. In the 1930's the large home with expansive wings was a sanatorium with older people, closed down (Broatch family did not run the business). The farmland extended west all the way to Mile Creek Road. Quentin Wald sold the house -- which his family had named Toad Hall and owned from about 1960 -- and six remaining acres to developers about 1986.

North of the railroad tracks on Mile Creek road there were some small farms that have been subdivided into many residential lots. The present Mile Creek Apartments, built about 1955 by Walter J. Zuk, are on land that once were Blackhall Manor cornfields that extended east to the river; further north, Robbie Robbins farmed on similar land adjacent to the Blackhall River. A graduate of Connecticut Agricultural Technical College (the University of Connecticut), he was the author of many hundreds of poems on traditional themes. His Victorian-era home was torn down shortly after his death about 1986 and a new, stone house was built in its place.

North on Whipoorwill Road from its intersection with Mile Creek Road were the Nathan Green chicken farm -- later owned by Doug and Marian Green whose house and chicken farm barn stands at the intersection of the two roads -- along the northern reaches of the Blackhall River. "Babe" Green hosted a winter-flooded skating rink for many years until the early 1970's behind and alongside their Blackhall River house. Nathan Green was said to have had ten children. Later, the

large barn of the Muller farm on the Blackhall River opposite the house on the north side of Mile Creek Road housed the boatbuilding business of John Little, a master builder of small rowing and sailing craft and flintlock rifle-reproductions. Before they moved to Maine in the early 1980's, John and his wife lived in the house immediately east of the barn. The barn itself was converted to a private home. The Little's son, John David Little, contributed a chapbook insert to the Town Report of 1975 on the early history of Lyme-Old Lyme.

The John Miller? Farm on Mile Creek Road, now mostly overgrown, had milking cows near Whippoorwill Road. The area has, perhaps, the foundations of the Town Poor Farm on the west side of the road.

Further northward on Whippoorwill approaching Jericho Hill is the present McCulloch Farm, home of working Morgan horses and an active small community of family and friends.

Eastward from Whippoorwill, on the south side of Mile Creek Road across the Blackhall River, stands "Pioneer Farm" operated by Edward Lea Marsh (known as Lea), which raised prize Jersey Cattle and lines of prize poultry. It's perhaps most famous for "Elsie the Borden Cow."

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Lea was an interesting fellow, not without a sense of humor and love for the town. Here is some background. --j

[http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1996-04-24/news/1996115103\\_1\\_borden-cow-elsie-cattle](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/1996-04-24/news/1996115103_1_borden-cow-elsie-cattle)

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<http://sanduskyhistory.blogspot.com/2010/05/edward-lea-marsh-and-elizabeth-dg-moss.html>

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Edward Lea Marsh Jr. Legislator and Livestock Breeder. 86

Published: April 28, 1996 NY TIMES

Edward Lea Marsh Jr., a country lawyer, civic leader, legislator and breeder of show-quality cattle and poultry, died last Sunday at his home in Old Lyme, Conn., where his ancestors settled in the 1600's. He was 86.

Mr. Marsh, known as Lea, was in general practice in Deep River, Conn., from 1933, when he graduated from Yale Law School, until the end of last year.

A Republican, he represented Old Lyme in the state Legislature from 1937 to 1946, and he served as his party's majority leader and as Speaker of the House. There was hardly a local commission or board on which he did not serve.

But closer to his heart was agriculture, particularly the breeding of the livestock he exhibited all over the United States and Canada. His 100-acre Pioneer Farm bred prize-winning Jersey cattle, and he was equally adept at breeding chickens, including white single-comb Leghorn bantams and silkies, a Japanese species.

Mr. Marsh is survived by his wife, Sylvia Davis Marsh; a son, Edward G., of Old Lyme; three daughters, Jane R. and Elizabeth L., of Old Lyme, and Caroline McCord of Port Washington, L.I.; a sister, Elizabeth Griswold of Old Lyme; two stepsons, Dr. Peter Beardsley of New Haven and Timothy Beardsley of Haddam, Conn.; 10 grandchildren, and one great-granddaughter.

### **Shore Road Route 156 from the Blackhall River South, North, and West**

The Griswold Farms still include most of the land south of the Blackhall River west to Buttonball Road and along the shore to the present beach communities to Brighton (Beach) Road.

The Frank Howard Farm included lands west of Brighton Road. Charles Howard's father, Alf, sold the White Sand Beach area for development to Jas. J. Smith for \$50,000 about 1920. Another Howard owned the lands of the Black Hall Club (established 1965) west and south on Mile Creek Road including the Marsh Farm on Buttonball Road to the 1950's developments off Brown's Lane and Mile Creek Road.

The (Bernard?) Finnegan Farm and its house east of Brighton Road was part of the farm of Griswold grandfather, xxx Champion. The Champion Farm herdsman, Ira Krupp, lived on the hill that became the site of the Sylvia and Lea Marsh home; Mr. Krupp was the uncle of E. Lea Marsh, and Mr. Finnegan was the herdsman for Lea Marsh. The father of construction and excavation company owner, Bill McGowan, rented the Krupp Farm. Bill and Millie McGowan lived at the end of Library Lane for many years.

The 100 Acres Farm, site of the present Cherrystones (née 100 Acres) Restaurant and golf driving range extended from Route 156 north to the railroad tracks and included ten seasonal cottages, moved from Treckmann's service station on the Boston Post Road to that site in 1958.

The John Tucker Farm extended up along Buttonball Road, and became the site of the present Black Hall Club. He was said, when moving his farm from Old Lyme to greener Stonington pastures, to have walked his herd the whole distance...including arranging to ferry them across the major rivers -- particularly the Thames -- on the way.

...Hatchett's Point Farms have an early relationship to the Champion family.

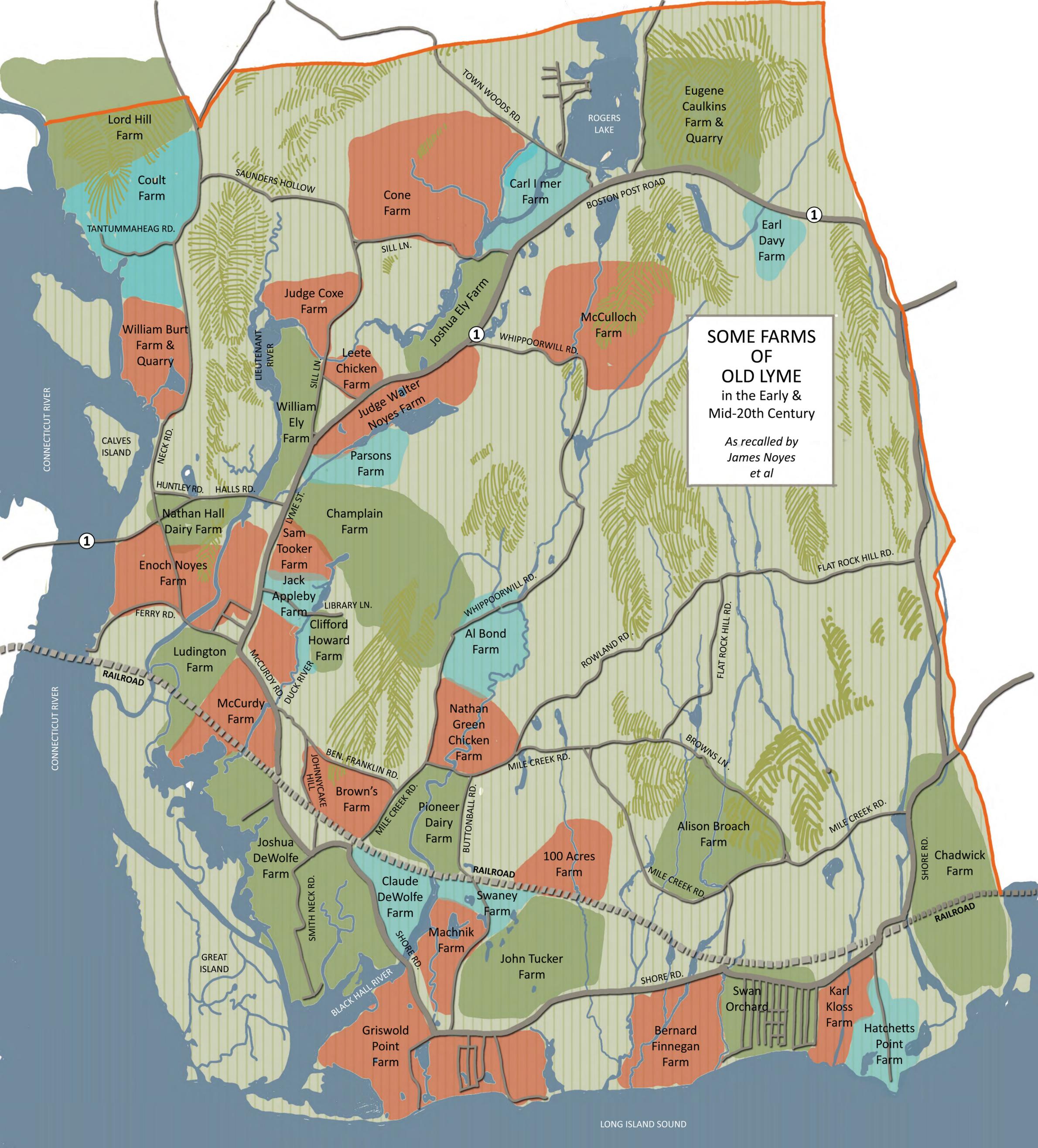
...The Swan Farm was the original Old Lyme Shores colony property.

...Risley Farm was the basis of the Point o' Woods development at the corner of Shore Road and Four Mile River Road; it is one of the first beach colonies and still the largest.

The Karl A. Kloss family farm in South Lyme was on the south side of Route 156 approaching Point o' Woods past Edge Lea and before Hatchett's Point; the farm advertised eggs, produce, and Borden's products into the 1950's. In his later life in the 1970's, Roland Kloss, the last local representative of his family, was the unofficial assistant dumpmaster to the town refuse-manager, Ralph Stanton. Mr. Kloss salvaged goods and material for later resale from his home and informal storage areas in South Lyme on the lower Four Mile River near the Four Mile River Marina. The marina was purchased by the Viceli and Asselin families in 1991.

The Chadwick Farm home, at the intersection of Four Mile River Road and Route 156 as it leaves Old Lyme, was the homestead of Charles Chadwick, a notable mariner. Assisted by the steady work and support of a strong wife, Mary, who managed their home and lands during his extended absences, he built a sizable fortune in shipping and a diversified family base in Old Lyme. A fine book captures the correspondence of Captain and Mrs. Chadwick between 1828 and 1851; it was published by the East Lyme Historical Society as "Dear and Affectionate Wife..." by Caroline Fraser Zinsser.

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**SOME FARMS  
OF  
OLD LYME**  
in the Early &  
Mid-20th Century

*As recalled by  
James Noyes  
et al*