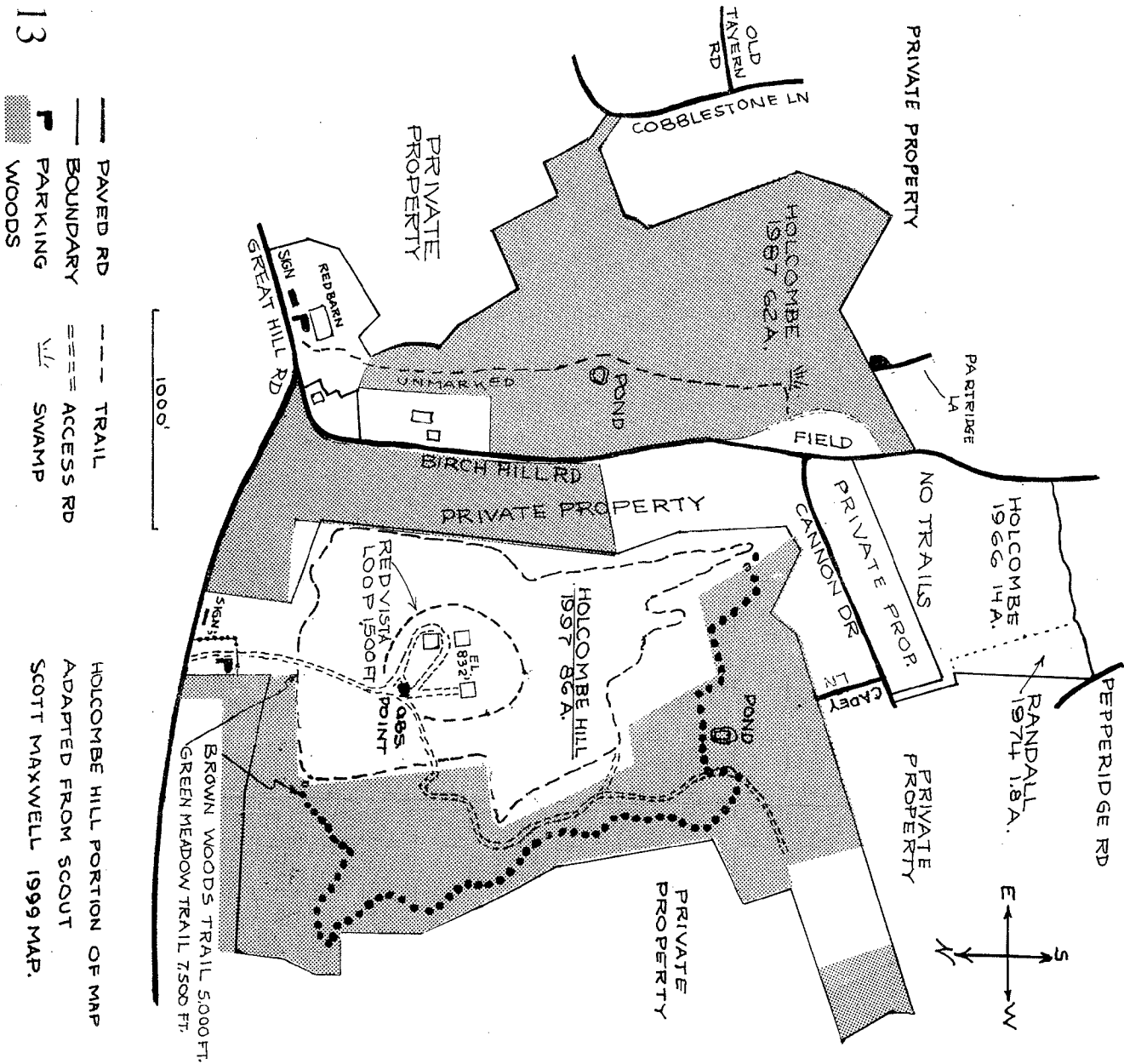


LOCATED IN A3



Ownership: Newtown Forest Association      **HOLCOMBE PRESERVE**  
 Acreage: 86

1997 was a banner year for the Newtown Forest Association. At last, after 75 years of nomadic existence in the homes of succeeding presidents, an enthusiastic member, Josephine H. Holcombe, gave it a home base. When she died 19 January 1997 at age 92, she left the N.F.A. 86 acres of superb open space on Great Hill Road in Taunton, plus her dwelling and a guesthouse. These buildings became their offices and a meetingplace. During her lifetime, in 1966 and 1987, she had given the NFA a 14-acre parcel to the north, and another of 64 acres with a barn and a pond on the east side of Birch Hill Road. In each case she made the gifts out of a conviction that the preservation of open space was essential to retain Newtown's rural character.

With an elevation of 832' above sea level, the highest in Newtown, the dome-like tract on Great Hill Road, was once the Henry Fairchild Grazing Farm, Taunton's most outstanding property in the nineteenth century. If sheep enjoyed it long ago, Newtowners today find its treeless summit ideal for crosscountry skiing and sledding and enjoy the trails in the woods.

She loved exercise and being outdoors. For over 60 years, Mrs. Holcombe walked her dogs, a German Shepherd, a Jack Russell, and a Chihuahua, (as of the 90s) 3 to 5 miles daily until a year before her death. On all three tracts, Mrs. Holcombe had Andy Sedor cut and maintain the trails. An elegant little lady - a friend says she wore Size O - she was resilient and sturdy. A confirmed stoic, she resisted any effort to pamper her. Faced with an eye operation, for instance, she refused an anesthetic, and endured ensuing surgery without complaint. She always wore a large-brimmed hat to protect her face.

Born in 1904 in Detroit, Mrs. Holcombe attended the University of California at Berkeley and married William W. Holcombe in Los Angeles in 1929. He had been in the shipping business and the motion picture industry with RKO. In 1934 they moved to Newtown, their first home being a rented house at the corner of Taunton Lane and Taunton Hill Road. In 1940 they bought the Fairchild Farm, tore down the two-story brick house in the German Bauhaus style on the property, and built their one-story house and a guesthouse.

During World War II the couple farmed the property, Mrs. Holcombe driving the crawler tractor and feeding the livestock. Later her husband was active in Newtown government, serving as First Selectman in 1947-48 and afterwards, as a member of the first Council. In addition, he often served as moderator for town meetings. Always a voracious reader, it was tragic that in his last years he should become almost blind. He died in 1983.

Over many years the Holcombes maintained winter homes in Cuba, St. Croix, or Humacao, Puerto Rico. The latter was their favorite, for here they could bring their dogs. When in Newtown, Mrs. Holcombe volunteered as an aide and receptionist in the Emergency room at Danbury Hospital and was a substantial contributor to its Development Fund.

Whatever her activity, though, she always loved returning to her tranquil hilltop with its views over Newtown hills and fields.

"WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT" →

WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT!  
(BINOCULARS ARE MORE FUN)

INSTRUCTIONS  
STAND AT OBSERVATION  
POINT AND POINT THIS  
ARROW TO RED ROOF

8 MILES TO RED  
AND WHITE WATER  
TOWER ON SOUTHBURY  
TRAINING SCHOOL  
CHICKEN FARM

2 MILES TO  
RED ROOF  
GRETSCH  
HOUSE

1.9 MILES TO  
RESERVOIR RD  
WATER TOWER  
(SILVER TOP)

13 MILES TO WHITE  
BUILDINGS AT  
OXFORD AIRPORT

10 MILES TO  
RADIO TOWER  
NEAR WATER BURY  
SOUTHERN BORDER

6 MILES TO  
OSBORNE  
HILL NEAR RT 34  
AND BENNETT'S BRIDGE RD

9 MILES TO CARMEN HILL  
RADIO TOWER

NORTH (TRUE)

NORTH (MAGNETIC)

OBSERVATION  
POINT

25 FT  
FENCE

TREE

BEWARE OF  
DOG SIGN

LOOKING SOUTH FROM MEMORIAL STONE:  
COMMUNICATION TOWER AND POWER LINE  
ARE BY SCUDGER RD.  
ONE ANTENNA IS AT END OF HYVUE DR