

PF North Branford
History



guide map
and
general information

NORTHFORD OPEN-HOUSE TOUR

Saturday, June 3, 1967

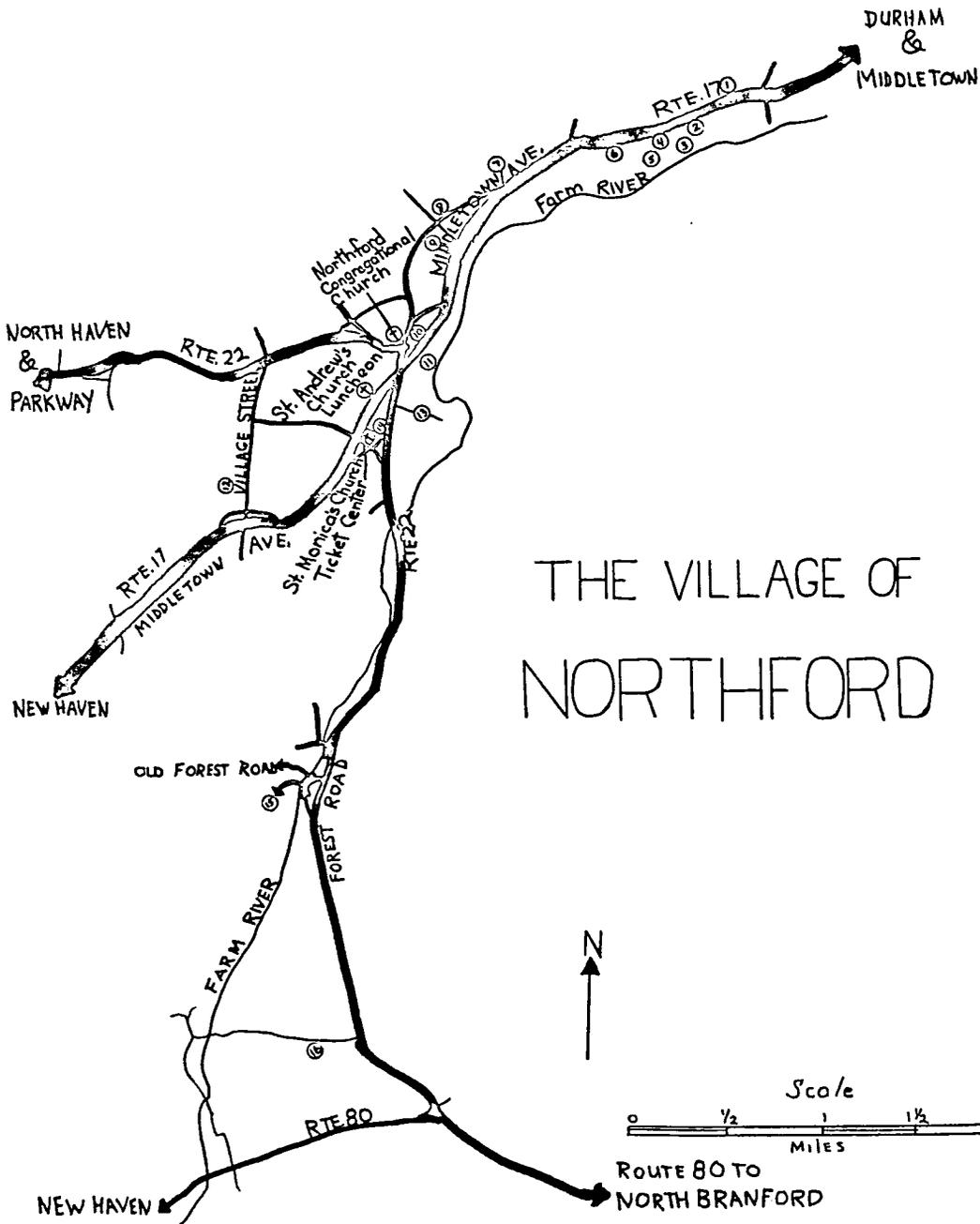
10a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sponsored by

- St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
- St. Monica's Roman Catholic Church
- Northford Congregation Church



Donation \$2.00



THE VILLAGE OF NORTHFORD

TICKETS and GUIDE INFORMATION may be purchased in the Croft
Room at St. Monica's R. C. Church.

LUNCHEON may be purchased at St. Andrew's Parish Hall, between
12 noon and 2 p.m.

<u>Menu:</u>	Turkey Salad	75cents.
	Sliced Turkey Sandwich with Chips, Pickles and Cranberries	75cents.
	Plain Turkey Sandwich	50cents.
	Juice, Coffee, Tea	each 10cents.
	Dessert	20cents.

Restrooms are available at nearby Service Stations.

It would be appreciated if visitors to the old homes would wear low heeled shoes, as high heels are apt to cause damage to floors, and also to refrain from smoking while in the homes.

Visitors may start the tour at any point on the route.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NORTHFORD.

The name Northford officially dates from 1750 when the Third (Church) Society of Branford was voted by the General Assembly. Prior to that, this area was referred to as the "farme lotts", Pissetapague, Paug, "beyond the farther Great Hill", and generally as "up the Stoney River". The name Northford probably was chosen as a contraction of North North Branford. A part of the Town of Branford until 1831, and since then of North Branford, this northern area was opened up at the time of the 3rd. and 4th. Divisions of lands. With a Puritan sense of equality, these lands were divided on the basis of the "Estates of the Planters in Branford" on the list of 1676, one acre for 20 shillings value. The 3rd. Division was laid out in 1685, going north almost to Northford village. The 4th. Division followed in 1704 extending to the Wallingford, Durham and Guilford lines, and the lots were crudely mapped. The actual surveys of the Proprietors' lots were recorded for years afterwards as "rights" were bought, sold and consolidated. Rights in undivided or "common" land were also frequently sold.

There is one unusual tract in town of 200 acres lying in the northwest corner (roughly from the intersection of Village Street and Clintonville Road) which was granted to Thomas Mullineer whose father had been living as a squatter at Branford Point before the settlement of Branford. Previously (1687), a square mile in that corner had been given to seven men, but they apparently did not "build a tenantable house upon the land or improve it within three years" and so forfeited their grant. Perhaps there is a connection with the fact that the area was called "Littleworth" later in the 18th. century.

Originally an agricultural area, primitive industry soon followed. Between 1705 and 1825, evidence has been found of eight sawmills, five grist and four fulling mills, as well as cider mills (very important to the early settler, as cider and beer would have been his chief beverages).

The surprising 18th. century fad for growing silkworms swept the area, and according to the "Connecticut Courant" of May 9th, 1791, enough thread for 400 yards of silk cloth was produced in Northford - a prodigious feat, when Ezra Stiles with three thousand worms, achieved only 1 pound's worth of silk. The white mulberry, imported from China for its leaves to feed the worms, was planted, and some descendants, spread by birds, yet survive.

Between the 1830's and 90's, industry based on water power from the Farm River flourished. The Maltbys and Fowlers seem to have been the instigators of this industrialization with important inventions for horse-drawn rakes, and for mass-producing straight pins and horseshoe nails. D. S. Stevens made spoons, and some of the Bartholomews also had factories. A tin shop, card shop, coconut processing plant and a brush shop have all gone. With the railroad by-passing Northford, the shops withered or moved away, and the agrarian character returned until the recent suburbanization. The "Society" still retains much of its rural atmosphere, and the quite numerous early houses yet standing are typical of the unpretentious but charming country architecture characteristic of this part of Connecticut.

1.

THE HENRY MALTBY BARN - 1865. (Remodelled 1939)
Middletown Turnpike.

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon S. Miller.

Henry Maltby and his wife, Sophia Elizabeth Linsley, were married in 1860. About 1865 their home and adjacent barn was built, but in 1875, the former was totally destroyed by fire. In the early 1900's the property was purchased by Mary Maltby Alling and her husband, Herbert C. Miller, who operated and leased the farm land. In 1939 the Millers converted the large barn, retaining its original size and shape into a spacious house with ample room for sons and grandchildren.

The present house, consisting of some fifteen rooms, has been designed in a colonial style. Structural features of the old barn are evidenced by boxed-in beams and low ceilings. The basement demonstrates many of the features of foundation treatment, and some remnants of having been originally a cow barn.

2.

THE PARDEE HOUSE Middletown Turnpike.

Mr. and Mrs. William D. Carter.

This house was moved by the piece by Mr. and Mrs. Carter from the North Hill District of Montowese in North Haven where it was either built or bought on 160 acres by John Pardee (1683-1760). Six direct generations of Pardees occupied the house until 1919. Mr. and Mrs. Carter purchased the house in September 1940.

J. Frederick Kelly, when supervising the dismantling of the house, set its date as "late 17th. century". A stud, found in the dismantling, proved that the house was originally of four rooms, and with casement windows of diamond panes set in lead frames.

Notable features of the house are the exterior plastered cove, "a rare occurrence in Connecticut", and the front stairs with short balusters of Jacobean flavor. There are the usual large fireplaces. In one is a brick oven, and in the "keeping room" fireplace, measuring 9' x 16", there is a stone oven. Both ovens were moved intact. Wainscot walls and exposed beamed ceilings are typical of the period.

3.

THE BARNES HOUSE - post 1675.

Middletown Turnpike.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael S. Welch.

Reconstructed on its present location in 1941, the Barnes House originally stood on Long Hill in Middletown. About 1675 eight families settled the Long Hill area among whom was the Barnes family which occupied the tract of land closest to the Durham line. Restoration of the house determined that it had been, in its earliest state, a single story structure of two rooms. In later days the lean-to and second floor were added. Interesting features attesting the age of the building are the framed overhang across the front, the $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick oak plank framing, the lack of studs in construction, and the overall crudeness of the interior. The large well-stone was moved with the house, and is now in the yard.

4.

THE RED HOUSE - C. 1680.

Middletown Turnpike.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Alling.

This very interesting example of a 17th. century house, built about 1680, has housed ten generations of the same family, and has been authentically restored. The T-shaped chimney shows that the first part of the house was just four rooms, and that a lean-to was added to the original building. The enlargement of the original structure included, in the fireplace, a built-in dutch oven, a feature not characteristic of the earlier 17th. century construction.

The corbelled girts under the front cornice are an unusual, and very early, feature, and the wide beaded clapboards are noteworthy. There are excellent examples of huge fireplaces, three on the first floor. The beaded joists, massive chamfered oak beams with lamb's tongue stops, as well as the horizontal and vertical whitewood wainscot in one of the front rooms, indicate the antiquity of the structure.

The road passing the house has been known as "Sol's Path" since the first Solomon Linsley occupied the house in the mid-eighteenth century.

5.

BENJAMIN HOWD'S BARN, c.1680.

Middletown Turnpike.

Mrs. Eunice Munger.

This building, originally a barn, is acknowledged to be the oldest building remaining in Northford, and may well have been the first raised frame construction. The location, near a large spring, and at the site of a known Indian encampment, was a natural selection for the earliest settlers.

In 1928 Mr. J. Frederick Kelly, who undertook the restoration of the Howd/Alling home, stated that Benjamin's house was a 17th. century structure, and that the barn presumably predated the house.

From 1931 to 1938 this building served as a tearoom, having been moved some 100 feet south and west of its original location. Every advantage was taken during this period to preserve and display the original beams, posts, plates and roof construction. The posts are particularly noteworthy in the use of magnificent gun stock design. The construction of the roof indicates that thatch may have been used originally.

The building was converted to a residence in 1949.

6.

THE LINSLEY-SCHANZ HOUSE - c. 1710-1720.

Middletown Turnpike.

Mr. and Mrs. William V. Schanz.

Recent research into the history of this house raises real questions about the traditional concept of its origin. It has long been believed that Lt. Joseph Linsley (1707-1786) built this house for his son, Ensign Daniel (1734-1775) even though the house was probably built about 1710-1720, or long before Daniel was born. Daniel did live in this house and farmed his father's estate, and it remained in the Linsley family until 1844 when Jacob Harrison purchased it.

An unusually deep integral saltbox, the extra space was achieved by a second rear plate about a foot above the regular one, and this supports the long rafters. The wide front cornice with the protruding girts molded to form brackets is very interesting.

The kitchen and west "chamber" both have large fireplaces with ovens set into the rear walls. The kitchen joists are beaded, and in the west chamber, the summer beam, posts and girts are cased. There is nice panelling in this room. The east parlor has more elegant panelling with three simple capitals in the bed-molding below the chimney girt, giving an interesting effect. In the room above is a corner cupboard of nice design, which, if not original to that room, certainly has been there for a long time. The molding below its bottom shelf is very similar to the bold bolection around the parlor fireplace.

7.

THE JOSIAH LINSLEY HOUSE - 1790.

Old Post Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Simpson.

About 1790 Josiah Linsley (the 5th. generation of Linsleys in Connecticut) built a new house on land he had inherited in 1786 from his father, Lt. Joseph Linsley, who lived on Sol's Path. Josiah had been willed an older house which stood where Alling Road now runs, but in 1788 he remarried, and perhaps Sarah Coates Linsley wished a new residence (she also took over the care of Josiah's seven children by his first wife, Rachel Fowler).

The house has never left the family as Mrs. Simpson is Josiah's great-great-granddaughter. There are many fine pieces of family furniture throughout the house.

The central part of the house had been expanded to the west (where the present kitchen is), very early. Perhaps that wing, because it appears to have the same sandstone foundation, may have been a contemporary one-story kitchen wing. However, it would not have been as high as it is now as there is evidence in the attic of clapboard siding in the partition. To the north, a large wing was added about the turn of this century.

Showing a conservative trend in building, the house had a small overhang at first and second story levels, with the original molding showing both outside and inside the present house.

8.

THE THADDEUS MALTBY HOUSE - 1824.

Old Post Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick A. Davis.

Thaddeus Maltby (1779-1873) built this good example of a prosperous farmer's Federal style house in 1824, although it is believed the ell may have been erected before the main house. The date was found on a plank when a door was cut through to the dining room. The house has a central chimney and six fireplaces, with a typical domed brick oven in the kitchen, and a tiny fireplace in what was the small downstairs bedroom. A handsome Adam mantel adorns the dining room, originally the parlor. The house is early enough to still have cased corner posts.

Thaddeus was the older brother of Samuel who built the Greek Revival house on Middletown Turnpike around the corner. Their ancestor, William, having been the tenth richest man in Branford in 1676, was given large tracts of land in the area, but it is not known whether these houses were built on that land.

2.

THE SAMUEL MALTBY HOUSE - 1838.

Middletown Turnpike.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Bennitt.

This handsome Greek Revival house with its fluted Doric portico and plain giant order pilasters defining the corners, was built in 1838 by Samuel Maltby (1790-1881) and occupied by his descendants until 1930. Samuel was the great-great-grandson of William Maltbie, who, with his brother John, came from Yorkshire in 1667 and signed the "Plantation and Church Covenant" of Branford on January 20th. 1668.

The living room mantel and woodwork are typical of the period. The fireplace in the dining room, which presumably was originally the kitchen is of particular interest with the unusual cast-iron oven door and surround, showing a transition from the old beehive ovens of earlier eras, to stoves.

The first and second floors will be open.

10.

RED SCHOOL HOUSE - 1805.

Old Post Road.

This one-room school house is the fourth oldest still standing in Connecticut and the oldest in New Haven County. It was originally located nearly two miles south of the center of town, on Forest Road, in what was the Northford Fourth School District.

The quality of teaching and learning in this and similar Northford schools must have been superior as J. L. Rockey states in his 1892 History of New Haven County, "Few parishes in the state and perhaps none of equal population have given to the world so large a number of liberally educated men -- as Northford." Rockey refers to thirty-one graduates of Yale College who came from Northford and whose professional vocations were law, medicine, and the ministry, including several missionaries to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii), Syria, and among the Indians. The first woman to be admitted to the Connecticut Bar, Mary Foote, was a graduate of this school.

The building contains the original stone slates, benches facing the wall, the teacher's desk and some early primers. The Northford Historical Society is currently raising \$1,000 to repair structural deterioration.

11.

THE REV. WARHAM WILLIAMS HOUSE - 1750. Middletown Turnpike.

Mrs. Victor L. Schaeffer.

In 1750, recently graduated from Yale College, Warham Williams (1726-1788) was called to become the first settled minister of the "Society of Northford". About that time he built this outstanding house, which shows a strong Connecticut Valley influence. In fact, the doorway with its elegant broken-scroll pediment is a close replica of that on the house of his grandfather, the Rev. John Williams, the first minister of Deerfield, Mass. The elaborate pediment over the windows and the wide overhang on the gable ends unite to give the house strength of design remarkable for a country house. The "dwelling house and washroom adjoining" were appraised in his estate at 120 pounds.

Obviously Mr. Williams was a man of unusual taste and talents. A friend of President Ezra Stiles of Yale (who often visited him here), Mr. Williams also was a member of the Yale Corporation. The next Congregational minister, the Reverend Matthew Noyes, bought the house from his heirs, and so it served as the Parsonage for many more years. Later it was the Episcopal Rectory.

The interior of the house is as fine as the exterior, and of especial note are the two fireplaces which have Delft tiles illustrating Biblical stories, and handsome overmantel panelling. The underside, or soffit, of the summer beam in the dining room is interestingly panelled, which is quite a rare treatment. The side door is a Dutch door, also rather unusual.

12.

THE JONES HOUSE - c.1700.

Village Street.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Spencer Smith.

It is not known who built this house, but it was erected in the early 1700's (circa 1690-1710). In 1798 this house became the property of Daniel Jones, a direct descendant of Deputy Governor William Jones of the New Haven Colony, and remained in the Jones family for one hundred and thirty-eight years. The present owners acquired it in 1940.

This house is a simple saltbox, most likely the house of a farmer who did not desire elaboration of detail. The sheathed walls and panelling are of native woods -- pine, oak, whitewood and cherry. The red sandstone chimney and foundation stones were quarried on the land. The hardware throughout, the andirons, and the trammel hooks are all original to the house.

Of interest in the dining room is the fine wall cupboard in which are family heirloom china -- China Trade, luster, and Staffordshire ware by Adams and Clews, and a very fine flip glass. The cherry chest-on-chest has an interesting story, having been separated and now brought back together by the present owners. On the mantel are some Danforth pewter plates.

The original old kitchen in the rear of the house is used as the family living room. Here you will find some fine old feather-edged boards. The pine panel next to the fireplace is the widest board in the house. The back door is the original batten door, nail studded. The maple Queen Anne table and chair are examples of early 18th. century furniture. Also of interest is the Queen Anne cherry highboy, Sheraton sofa, and card table.

The house is rare in that it has never been spoiled by attempts at modernization. It is probably one of the most original houses in Northford.

13.

THE ELNATHAN STREET HOUSE - 1720.

Forest Road.

Professor and Mrs. Cleanth Brooks.

The Elnathan Street House was originally located on Pond Hill Road, Wallingford, on land granted to the Rev. Samuel Street, first parson of Wallingford, and was built by his grandson, Elnathan, in 1720. It is an integral saltbox, and its roof framing, with eight principal rafters, small horizontal purlins and vertical roofboards, looks back to the days when thatch was used.

Until 1951, when the house was moved to its present site and restored, one of the two upstairs bedrooms had never been finished; the clapboards and framing were visible from inside the room, there being no inner wall. On the other hand, the north bedroom was nicely finished with panelling and plaster. Both rooms have summer beams.

The front staircase is original. The "hall" (parlor) shows a combination of exposed framing with beaded joists, and panelling which may have been a later, though still early, addition. An oven in the fireplace of this room, as well as in the keeping room (study) is unusual, and may indicate that two generations of one family might have lived in the house, each having separate cooking arrangements.

The dining room, though built at the same time, is later in feeling. The ceiling beams (eight large joists, no summer beam) were always plastered, and the posts and beams cased.

The two small wings are modern additions.

14.

THE WILLIAM BARTHOLOMEW HOUSE - 1719.

Forest Road.

Mr. and Mrs. John B. G. Fiedler.

In the south room of this saltbox house a date of 1719 was discovered by a previous owner and appears to be a probable date for the house, although it may incorporate a small earlier house built by his father, Andrew. The north end of the house was added in the early 19th. century as a self-contained unit, with a fireplace and oven in the cellar kitchen. Certainly the main portion of the house existed pretty much as it now stands, when, in 1734, it was divided up, due to the untimely death at 35, of William Bartholomew, leaving five small children. A very interesting complete inventory of the house was taken at that time, including everything from his first wife's "chince gown tail'd with silk" at 8 pounds 5 shillings, to an "old puter chamber pot" at 3 shillings.

There is a great deal of interesting woodwork in the house; feather-edged sheathing in the south room, as well as beaded joists; more elegant raised-table panelling in the old part of the north rooms, and interesting bolection moldings around the fireplaces. The closed-string staircase in the front hall is very handsome, but a slightly later modification to the house. Mr. and Mrs. Fiedler's family furniture from Philadelphia fits beautifully into its New England setting.

15.

THE CAPTAIN JOSEPH FOOTE HOUSE - 1710. Old Post Road.

The Misses H. H. and E. A. Livingston.

Joseph Foote (1666-1751) received in 1704 half of the eighty acre lot laid out to his father, Robert, in 1692 as part of his Third Division land. Joseph was a Captain in the Trainband of Militia, sometime Surveyor for the Town, and, as well as farming, operated the sawmill across from the house. His is among the oldest gravestones in the Northford Cemetery.

One of the earliest houses on the "farme lotte", it was a one-room deep saltbox with casement windows, and a narrow lean-to at the back. Near the end of the 18th. century, the lean-to was extended and a new kitchen, fireplace and flue added. At that time the present living room fireplace was greatly reduced and the wall panelled. The old feather-edged sheathing is still on the south wall, and the massive summer beam and girts give clear evidence of the house's age. The ceiling was, as now, unplastered and the beams with the traditional lamb's tongue stops are chamfered.

The trim in the dining room and the cherry front staircase date from after the Revolution, as does the front porch and leaded fanlight with the Classic Revival symbol of hospitality, the pineapple. The unusual Dutch door survives from an earlier date.

On the second floor the south bedroom has horizontal whitewood feather-edged sheathing, patched long ago to cover where a casement window had been. Originally the opposite wall was vertically sheathed.

In the north bedroom, the sheathing on the chimney wall, the fireplace of unusual early dimensions with low bolection molding, and the raised brick hearth have never been altered. The original plaster on the north wall also shows evidence of a casement window. The small "kitchen chamber" has a smoke oven built onto the clay-laid chimney.

Across the road from the house is the site of an old sawmill, records of which have been traced to 1707. There also were fulling and "cyder" mills nearby.

THE PAGE HOMESTEAD - 1778.

Mill Road.

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard W. Labaree.

Daniel Page, a substantial landowner of the Farm River Valley, built this house about 1778. He died in 1780, but his descendants continued to occupy it until 1927. The pair of large green-tinted bulls'-eyes in the leaves of the front door are unusual. The mantels and chair rails in the two front rooms are typical of late 18th. century work. The kitchen ell, originally a separate building, was probably attached early in the 19th. century, and when the present owners restored the house in 1951, they retained some alterations which had been made by the Page family, such as the little alcove in the south room, and the double doorway into the west front room. The old kitchen hearth bench, made from a plank of sugar maple, was found in the cellar and restored to its original position. Most of the early furniture is of Connecticut origin; these pieces and many of the decorative objects in the house have belonged in the present owners' families for generations. The crewel embroideries were designed and made by Mrs. Labaree.

NORTHFORD OPEN-HOUSE TOUR.GENERAL COMMITTEE.

Congregational Church - - - - - Mrs. William D. Carter
Mrs. Harvey Babbitt.

St. Andrew Episcopal Church - - - - Mrs. DeWitt Williams
Mrs. William Gaudette.

St. Monica Roman Catholic Church - Mrs. Gabrielle S. Clapp
Mrs. Albert Bisacky
Mrs. Richard Winch.

Acknowledgements: Northford Historical Society.
Northford Garden Club.