



Carriage & Pig Barn/Sawmill

Forest Society North at the Rocks



113 Glessner Lane
Bethlehem, NH



www.forestsociety.org/the-rocks/about/restoration



Story Map

What's Special About This Site

In 1882 John Glessner, founder of International Harvester, purchased a 100-acre farm and soon after started building on the site. Mr. Glessner would go on to amass 2,000 acres in and around the area where The Rocks is currently located. There are several historic barn buildings on this site, which have survived weather events and fires over the years. But on February 13, 2019 the historic Tool Building, which served as the center of operations for the Forest Society, was completely destroyed. Fortunately, firefighters were able to prevent the fire from destroying the Carriage Barn and Pig Barn/Sawmill.

The Carriage Barn frame was post and beam joined by mortise and tenon, which was anchored to a stone foundation. There were big barn doors on one end where

manure would have been stored. At the other end were big barn doors as well for ingress and egress. The roof was held by rough-sawn collar ties. It is unknown if the roof boards were laid horizontally or vertically. There are two cupolas atop the barn. Hay was stored in a loft and there were hay chutes up above the stanchions. Bead boards lined the walls where the cows' stanchions were, as well as the rooms where the fieldhands lived and slept when not on duty.

The Pig Barn/Sawmill was built in 1906 by Hermann von Holst, a famous architect. It was made with sawn timbers cut with a circular saw. The frame was post and beam held together by mortise and tendon joinery atop a stone foundation. The barn had collar ties supporting it. One odd feature of the barn is the metal beam that



*Carriage Barn
courtesy of Ryan Cutting*

goes to the top of the ceiling to support the roof and stop the walls from splaying. There are shingles on the roof.

The barn layout is odd because the middle section of the barn is cut out with natural grass and landscape. This place was meant for wood sawing and was constructed to perfectly align with the Mount Washington Presidential range, which makes for a great view.

Barn History and Use

John Glessner built the site at The Rocks as a hobby farm primarily used as his family's vacation and holiday home. Farm

hands were hired to manage agricultural production on the property. Mr. Glessner had many different types of animals

housed in several barns on the property. The livestock raised on-site included cows, pigs, chickens, sheep, and horses.

Continued on the next page

Even though Mr. Glessner's main career was with International Harvester, he still ran The Rocks as a viable business operation. As its production for agriculture and livestock exceeded what the family could use, excess was sent to the Glessner House in Chicago. His daughter, Francis Glessner Lee continued to run the farm after her father died. The property was passed down through the family until it was donated to the Forest Society in 1978. Since then, The Rocks has been open to the public.

The Carriage Barn was originally built by Isaac Elwood Scott in

1884. In 1907 Hermann Von Holst added an addition that made up the back half of the building where the manure shed was located. In 1939, local architects from Hannover named Wells, Hudson, and Granger built the central stone arch which replaced Holst's open timber entryway.

Originally the Carriage Barn housed horses. The Horses were used for both work and pleasure, as each family member had their own horse to ride. Later, in the 1940s the barn became a dairy barn after the old cow barn burned down. The barn had cow

stanchions on both sides and a covered ceiling.

The Pig Barn/Sawmill held the pigs and piglets along with the sows that Mr. Glessner owned. In the center was a functioning saw that was used to cut the firewood to heat the farm buildings.

Preservation Efforts

The Carriage Barn has recently undergone major renovations, yet some of the original beams and the structure of the barn can still be seen. Prior to these

preservation efforts, part of the original Carriage Barn was destroyed due to age and deterioration.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Cutting

What You Can Do Here Now

The Rocks has many hiking trails that visitors can enjoy. Visitors can arrange private tours, motor tours, and vacation packages. The Forest Society offers several programs to the public, including nature tours, experimental tours,

and an NH Maple Experience. During the holidays the public can harvest a tree from the Christmas Tree Farm. Sales help support the programs and conservation efforts of the Forest Society.



*Exterior photo of the Pig Barn/
Sawmill by Ryan Cutting*

For Further Reading

Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings, by Thomas Durant Visser (University Press of New England, 1997).

Barns: Their History, Preservation, and Restoration, by Charles Klamkin (Bonanza Books, 1979).

Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England, by Thomas C. Hubka (University Press of New England, 1984).

An Age of Barns, by Eric Sloane (Funk and Wagnalls, 1967).

Preserving Old Barns: Preventing the loss of a valuable resource, by John C. Porter and Francis E. Gilman (Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2019)