



Franklin Pierce Barn

New Hampshire State Parks



**301 2nd NH Turnpike
Hillsborough, NH**



www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/franklin-pierce-homestead-historic-site/

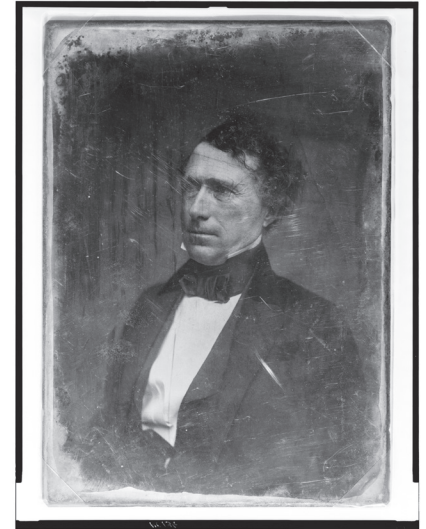


Story Map

What's Special About This Site

The Franklin Pierce Homestead Historic Site is the childhood home of the 14th president of the United States. Franklin's father, Benjamin, bought the farm in 1802 and built the main part of the house two years later, where Franklin lived for the first half of his life.

It is thought that the barn was built between 1804 when the homestead was built, and 1839, when Benjamin died. The barn and homestead remained in the family's hands until 1869.



Daguerreotype portrait of Franklin Pierce taken between 1851-1860 by Mathew B. Brady

Barn History and Use

The 200 acre farm was a working farm that raised sheep, cattle, and other livestock. The farm also produced corn, potatoes, hay, and cheese. The Pierce family kept deer and peacocks as pets.

The barn was originally built across the street, and a carriage barn once occupied the location where the barn sits today. The homestead and barn went through various hands until it was purchased by Franklin Pierce Carpenter in 1916. The following

year, a committee was formed to oversee the homestead's preservation. In 1923 Kendall Hayward took possession of the property, and donated it to the state of New Hampshire in 1925. The Homestead was leased to the town of Hillsboro in 1983 and was operated by the Hillsboro Historical Society until 2013. The site is now managed by New Hampshire State Parks.



Exterior entrance of the Franklin Pierce Barn courtesy of Ryan Cutting

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Architectural Features

The Franklin Pierce Barn is a New England style barn with English style barn elements. Its foundation is made of granite boulders encasing a dirt floor basement. The first floor is now supported by stone blocks, but most likely, it was originally supported by granite posts. The exterior is covered with clapboards, and it has a double transom over where the original barn door would have been. Inside is a hayloft.

The barn is framed by a mix of sawn and hand-hewn timbers using mortise and tenon construction. Major purlins and

large rafter ties support the roof. The roof boards are oriented vertically and run to the top ridge of the barn. The roof currently has shingles.

The barn is architecturally unique, as there are elements from both New England style and English barn style construction as indicated by the direction of the roof boards, and the fact that there were exterior doorways situated on the long sides of the barn. The barn has mixed building styles, indicating that Benjamin Pierce incorporated different architectural styles that he liked.



Exterior rear photo courtesy of Ryan Cutting

What You Can Do Here Now

Today, the NH State Parks operates a museum at the Franklin Pierce Homestead State Historic Site. Guided tours are offered regularly during their operating season, and a schedule of tour dates is published on their website. The museum hosts exhibits from the Hillsboro Historic Society, the state of New Hampshire, and the New

Hampshire Historical Society. The site is a Blue Star Museum, and all active-duty personnel and their families can enter for free between Armed Forces Day and Labor Day.

Outside, there is a picnic area available for anyone to use. It offers visitors a serene setting to relax, reflect upon the rich history, and enjoy the views.



Interior photo courtesy of Ryan Cutting.

For Further Reading

Franklin Pierce Homestead Historic Site, <https://www.nhstateparks.org/find-parks-trails/franklin-pierce-homestead-historic-site>

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). Brady, Mathew B., Approximately.

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