



Lawrence Barn Community Center

 **28 Depot Street
Hollis, NH**



www.hollisnh.org/lawrence-barn-community-center/pages/historical-information



Story Map

What's Special About This Site

The Lawrence Barn Community Center is comprised of several old barns from different periods. It is a great example of a barn that evolved with the growth of the agricultural industries in New Hampshire. Three barns were dismantled and made into this one structure, which is now used for community events.

Barn History and Use

The oldest barn, originally located at 163 Depot Road in Hollis, was built by Josiah Blood during the time of the American Revolution. The Blood family sold the land and farm to Ebenezer Fox in 1832. The latest addition was built in the early 20th century to house dairy cows. In 1907, Obidiah Lawrence bought the farm and planted corn, grew Baldwin apples and made apple cider vinegar. He also raised livestock including chickens and cows and sold wood to the lumber mill. In 1970 the Lawrence Farm ceased to be a working farm. Scheduled for demolition

in order to make way for a housing development, the Hollis Heritage Commission acquired this unique, antique structure in order to save it for future generations. The barn was dismantled in November of 1999 and was reconstructed on Nichols Field as a community center for use by all Hollis organizations, and to showcase an example of the history of the development of timber framing techniques from medieval times to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After years of renovations, the Center opened to the public on February 17th, 2007.



Photo courtesy of the town of Hollis



Photo courtesy of the town of Hollis

Continued on the next page

Architectural Features

The Lawrence Barn is a double English-style timber-framed barn with a third addition. The first and oldest barn was built by Josiah Blood in the 1780s, during the time of the American Revolution.

The oldest section was built using a medieval technique for timber framing called the “scribe rule,” where each joint is cut to precisely fit the abutting piece. Extensive trial assembly is required, as no parts are interchangeable. Its construction required a high level of skill and knowledge.

In addition, the roof system displays an example of the braced purlin, a term in architecture for the longitudinal timber of a roof that support

the common rafters, which may be a signature feature designed by the original joiner.

The second section is another English barn built onto the first English barn. It is estimated that this second structure dates to about 1810. This second frame is also hewn, but uses a simpler joining method known as “square rule” framing where each joint is cut to a uniform layout plane and many small parts are interchangeable. When the second barn was completed, the result was a double English barn.

The third barn, a “Yankee barn,” built to house animals, was added around the early 20th century.



Lawrence Barn gable end prior to renovation courtesy of the town of Hollis

What You Can Do Here Now

The barn is available for private events and can be reserved by Hollis residents. Other public events, dates and times can be seen on their calendar on the Hollis

town website. The barn can be viewed from the exterior any time, but special arrangements need to be made to look at the interior.



Lawrence Barn prior to renovation courtesy of the town of Hollis

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).