



Griffin Barn and Phillips Barn

New London Historical Society Historical Village



**179 Little Lake Sunapee Road
New London, NH**



www.newlondonhistoricalsociety.org



Story Map

What's Special About This Site

The New London Historical Society oversees a historical village with two barns on site, the Griffin Barn (an English-style horse barn) and the Phillips Barn (a New England-style barn). The Griffin Barn was built sometime after the 1790s by Jesse Dow, who had participated in the Revolutionary War.

Griffin Barn. Photo credit: Ryan Cutting



Barn History and Use

Jesse Dow was a blacksmith who came to New London from Manchester, Massachusetts. The barn originally resided at the corner of Old Main Street and Pleasant Street. Jesse Dow Sr. then passed his property and blacksmith business to a son, also named Jesse Dow (born 1788). Later in 1828, it was sold to Abial Burpee, a shoemaker, and thence from his estate to Daniel Bickford in 1853.

It was later bought by Dr. Nathan Griffin sometime in the early 1900s and in 1968 it was given to the then newly-founded New London Historical Society. The Phillips Barn was originally built on East Penacook Road in Concord by Zebulon Smith, or perhaps his son, Ai Smith. While under

their ownership, the farm was a dairy operation and they distributed milk in the area. The barn passed through family hands until the property transferred through marriage to the George Sanborn family. It continued to be in the hands of the Sanborn family until the descendants sold it to the New London Historical Society in 1978. The Griffin Barn most likely housed animals such as horses and oxen, but also was used to store hay and feed grains through the winter.

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Architectural Features

The Griffin Barn is an English-style horse barn, with barn doors on the east and west sides. The foundation was most likely stone, but now the foundation is on granite blocks salvaged from the construction of I-89. The barn's roof boards go vertically to the top of the barn and are fastened to large purlins, and there are rafter ties with ceiling bracing. It is built with mortise and tenon construction with bare boards on the outside and a frame constructed with hewn and sawn timbers. There's a hayloft above where the horse stalls would have originally been. There is a six-by-six sliding window at the north end of the barn. The roof is shingled and has a weathervane atop it featuring a running horse, which continues to be the logo for historical society.

The Phillips Barn is very different from the Griffin Barn. It is a New England-style barn and has a concrete foundation, but would have originally had one of stone. It has large barn doors and double transom windows at both ends. The barn's roof boards are vertical and run to the top of the barn, and it has common rafters and major purlins. There are roof ties, bracing, gunstock posts,

English tie joints with mortise and tenon construction. The barn is made from a mixture of hand-hewn and sawn timbers. It has more circular sawn timbers than would be expected, but most likely they replaced the original pieces that could not be used any more. On the left there is a hayloft and originally there would have also been one on the right. There are three-by-three pane windows on the right side of the barn, and the outside wall sheathing is bare wood. It has a modern metal roof, which originally would have been covered by wooden shingles.



Inside the Phillips Barn, Photo credit: Ryan Cutting

What You Can Do Here Now

The Historical Village is available for tours on Saturdays (check in advance to confirm schedule). The site hosts a variety of events such as their Antique Sale, Farm to Fork Dinner, and Civil War Living History Day. They also offer school field trip tours. The New London Historical Society allows selected facilities to be used for private event rentals.

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)