

The Barn Project

Some of the Valley's most significant assets reminding us of our pastoral past and gracing us with their charm and beauty are disappearing. Historian and "Our River" writer Joe Doherty wrote " In 2004, without warning, the Pleasant Valley Country Club demolished a 19th-century barn on the south side of Armsby Road, across the street from the Vaillancourt Folk Art shop.

Pleasant Valley was within its legal rights to tear it down -- the barn stood on club-owned land. Why it was deemed necessary to destroy the historic structure remains something of an open question. Nothing has been built in its stead. The stone foundations can still be seen, collecting autumn leaves."

Another loss felt recently by an entire community was the 1870 1,850-square-foot, three-story barn built by Nahum Hall, formerly located on the corner of Mendon and Grove streets, Upton. This barn was envisioned as the possible future home of the Upton Historical Society but instead, was torn down by the real estate company who claimed potential property owners of the large new house nearby were not interested in it.

We all have seen our communities change. We also realize they will continue to change, so it is time to capture as many barns as possible in digital form. We will then work to document a brief history to create a permanent legacy of our former pastoral landscapes that are imprints of our communities' past. It is also hoped that this project will awaken more awareness and delight in the lovely, and sometimes even dilapidated, though still intriguing barns that grace our surroundings.

The Barn Project is a labor of love for all of whom would like to volunteer/participate. Online and print space is being donated by Blackstone Daily News, aka BlackstoneDaily.com and Journeys specialty publication. This project wants to assure all barn owners that their privacy will be protected and no trespassing will be allowed. Photos will be taken from public property unless permission is given by the property owner. For more information, go to www.BlackstoneDaily.com and click on Barn Project or write to: BD News, Inc., 23 Fay Mt Rd, Grafton, MA 01519 to participate in gathering histories or providing photos.

Objective: Create an ongoing online catalog of the barns and their chronologies/histories within the Blackstone Valley to permanently capture our pastoral past

Procedure: Photograph the barn from a public position unless permission is granted.

Record the address for follow-up to obtain brief history by mail/personal contact.

History forms available via mail or by download at www.BlackstoneDaily.com/barn.htm

Thanks. Ellen Onorato, publisher



Photographer Richard Auger of Whitinsville: the former Armsby Barn

