



Fall 2009

HISTORIC BARNs OF CONNECTICUT SURVEY

Dear Barn Owner:

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation volunteers will be in your town over the next several weeks taking pictures of historic barns for inclusion in our statewide database.

The Connecticut Trust was recently awarded a grant from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism to document significant, historic barns in Connecticut for publication on our barns web site, www.connecticutbarns.org, where the data, historical narrative and analysis, images gathered and other barn related information can be retrieved by visitors, residents, scholars, and barn enthusiasts from across the country. This will be a central repository for barn surveys, research and general information, accessible to all.

Historic barns in Connecticut had been almost completely undocumented, until recently. As outbuildings, barns had rarely been included in National Register of Historic Places listings until the last decade when the total context of a historic site increasingly has been considered essential to historic significance. Barns are disappearing from the Connecticut landscape. In some cases, it takes years for a barn to slowly decay. In others, a barn may be standing one day and gone the next, razed to make way for new construction. With each barn that is lost another piece of the state's rich agricultural history disappears.

This will be the first comprehensive state wide survey of barns in the country and could well have impact on federal and state policy and funding for farms and barns. Adaptive re-use/mixed use historic tax credits will play a role in finding viable new uses for our barns while other sources of funds will help farmers retrofit older barns for modern uses. Historic preservation is our best TOOL to encourage investment in historic buildings so they remain useful while making visible the rich history and culture of Connecticut.

Thank you for your role in helping our field researchers survey historic barns!

Helen Higgins
Executive Director