



Hobbs/Leavitt Barn

Gilmanton Year-Round Library

 **1385 NH Route 140**
Gilmanton, NH

 www.gyrila.org



Story Map

What's Special About This Site

Originally built in North Hampton in the 18th-century, The Hobbs/Leavitt Barn was disassembled and moved to Gilmanton in the early 2000s. It has since been re-purposed as a public library, making the historic building visible and accessible for all to enjoy.

*Photo courtesy of
Jada Lindblom*



Barn History and Use

The barn was constructed in the 1790s by Benjamin Hobbs and was originally located in North Hampton, on a farm that was settled by John Hobbs in 1728. Simon Leavitt purchased the farm around 1826. During the 19th and 20th centuries the farm was owned by multiple generations of the Leavitt family. Records show that for about 195 years the barn housed cattle, oxen, work horses, pigs, goats, chickens and sheep.

In 2004, the barn was dismantled and moved to Gilmanton where it was

reassembled to serve as the town's first year-round library. A series of barn parties and events were held to raise the funds necessary to reconstruct the barn frame and transform it into a public library. This barn has a special connection to the Hobbs Barn in North Hampton, NH, which is now occupied by the Throwback Brewery. While this barn lost its original agrarian setting when it was moved and re-purposed, its rebirth as a public library allows the public to see and appreciate this historic agricultural structure.



*Timber framing inside the barn.
Photo courtesy of Jada Lindblom*

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Architectural Features

The Gilmanton Year-Round Library barn is a New England “Yankee” style structure as indicated by the center aisle which spans the doors at both gable ends. There are transoms above the doors as well. The exterior walls are shingled. The barn is 80 feet long and 40 feet wide, using mortise and tenon construction.

The barn roof is a major rafter/minor purlin system that had roof boards that ran from the ridge down to the eaves, with rafter ties and gunstock posts. The posts and beams are hand-hewn.

The siding boards that would have originally been

on the barn were vertical, which was standard for the 18th century. There were once two interior silos, as well as eight cow stanchions and a hay mow.

The barn originally had three stories. Prior to being relocated to Gilmanton, the barn had a granite slab and fieldstone foundation. The top level had a hay pitch and was used for hay storage. The main floor had a cow tie-up section on the south side, and hay storage on the north side. The bottom floor was the cellar where the pigs lived. The cellar had large slabbed granite flooring, and granite posts supporting the main floor.

What You Can Do Here Now

As a public library, this barn offers a wide selection of books and reading materials. The library provides a variety of programs and events for children, teens, and adults, as well as spaces to hold meetings. This wonderful library is a great place to delve into a book or to simply admire the beautiful 18th-century post and beam building. The

barn doors are open to any reader young or old. Along with borrowing materials, attending programs, and using the community space, guests can explore over five miles of hiking and nature trails that wind through the surrounding woods. The library provides a detailed trail map so visitors can plan their walk or hike: www.gilmantonnh.gov/DocumentCenter/View/598/Cogswell-Map-4-2026?utm_source=copilot.com

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).

“Gilmanton Year-Round Library Has a New Home.” *Foster’s Daily Democrat*, August 19, 2005. <https://www.fosters.com/story/lifestyle/2005/08/20/gilmanton-year-round-library-has/52602999007/>.

Simon Leavitt Farm, “Barns of North Hampton, New Hampshire,” North Hampton Historical Society, <https://northhamptonhistoricalsociety.org/barns-of-north-hampton-nh-photographs-and-documents/3jy2wuvd5c4t2tn5sx861dijpp57k2>