

## Plainfield Barn Tour Saturday, October 12



The Plainfield Historical Society is sponsoring a barn tour on Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. featuring three barns dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first barn, circa 1780, is a hand hewn, English-style barn – a centuries old style typically used by early settlers. This barn was built very low to the ground and appears never to have had a wood floor.

Barn #2 was built about 1830 by Leavitt Hallock, son of the town's beloved pastor, Moses Hallock. It is also English-style and, recently restored, it stands as a fine example of an early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century barn. The third barn, known as the Willcutt Barn, was built in the 1880s by a very prosperous Plainfield family whose primary occupation was not farming. They operated a large mill across the street that sawed and planed lumber and manufactured lumber products. The imposing, 3-level barn has an especially nice stone foundation and walls and the liberal use of lumber showcases the family business.

Leading the tour is Richard Potter who, since 1976, has built and restored timber frame barns and houses in Plainfield, the hilltowns, and surrounding communities. We will meet at the town hall at 1:00 p.m. before the tour. The \$15 per person cost benefits the Historical Society. Checks, made out to the Plainfield Historical Society, or inquiries should be directed to Judith Williams, 413-634-8099, [judithbryanwilliams@verizon.net](mailto:judithbryanwilliams@verizon.net), president of the Plainfield Historical Society. Fresh pressed cider and doughnuts will be served at the end of the tour.

Plainfield has over thirty five old, "timber framed" barns that were built in the years from 1780's through 1910. This may seem like a significant number of barns until one remembers that every family in the early settlement years (1770—1830) had a barn. The population in 1830 was at its peak of almost one thousand people. So the number of barns that existed in the 1850s could easily have been three times the number we have now or well over one hundred barns. Many of these early barns were lost due to collapse from snow, fire, but mostly from neglect. Barns, like any other structure, have a purpose and when the original purpose (to shelter animals and crops that provide for a family) was gone, the barn was neglected and was soon gone too.