

UVM Historic Preservation Graduate Program

Vermont Barn Census: A Windshield Survey of Historic Barns

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Have you ever overlooked a barn as you roll through Vermont's scenic roadways as something that has always just *been there*? Or do barns stick out to you? Vermont's barns remain an iconic link between the agricultural heritage of its past. Many are still in current use, but how many barns does Vermont really have?

In cooperation with the Vermont Barn Census Project, a program of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, students of UVM's Historic Preservation Graduate Program surveyed thirteen towns in the state. The students each surveyed a town by conducting a reconnaissance windshield survey, documenting as many historic agricultural structures as possible. Photographs and the 911 address of each historic agricultural structure was recorded and contributed to a database maintained by the Vermont Barn Census website and the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation.

In addition, each student generated a primary source research paper on the unique agricultural history of his or her town. For example, did you know Hinesburg's claim to fame was potatoes—and that there are a significant amount of structures left that reflect that particular use? Students created individual websites for the barns of their towns, complete with an original history, historic maps, the earliest historic United States Department of Agriculture Census records available, and photographic highlights of the best barn finds.

Collectively, over 800 structures were entered into the Barn Census. The project received national attention, with a two-page spread in *Old House Journal*. Through documentation and original research, the UVM Historic Preservation Graduate Program has been proud to contribute to the evolving story of Vermont's history.