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The Evergreen Barn

A "Pennsylvania Colonial" Style Barn

Barns represent the most iconic images of America's rural landscape. The structures uniquely capture traditions, customs, and a way of life like no other images in our collective memories. In recent decades changing agricultural practices have left many barns abandoned, neglected, and even subject to dismantling. Fortunately, not all barns have suffered sad endings. Nestled in the mountains of Western Maryland is a unique barn that has managed to escape agricultural trends and the ravages of time, while maintaining its historic character.

The Evergreen barn, located on the grounds of the Evergreen Heritage Center (EHC) near Frostburg, Maryland, represents one of the best examples of an 18th century structure to be found in Western Maryland. The barn has been dated to the 1700s by historical consultants who also describe its style as "Pennsylvania Colonial." According to Janice Keene, President of the Evergreen Heritage Center Foundation that is overseeing the barn's preservation, the Evergreen property was listed on the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) in 1976, but not until recently has the building been closely studied.



Consultants are currently documenting and recording the structure's architectural features, artifacts, and construction techniques to assist future restoration efforts. During the investigative process fascinating discoveries have been made by the researchers. "We found a wooden Dutch door underneath 200 year-old hay. From marks on the stable frame, we know the door was originally used here. The Dutch door will be installed on the stable and additional matching ones will be recreated for the adjacent stalls. Various farm implements were found in the old hay and hand-written markings on the joists. We also have saddles and bridles covered in antique dust. Our work is exciting and similar to finding clues in a mystery novel," stated Janice. The additional documentation made possible the barn's inclusion on the National Registry in April 2015.

Plans call for the artifacts and hay to be part of a ground level display, while the upper barn level will be adapted to an educational multi-purpose room. The exterior will also receive treatment. Janice notes, “We are going to keep the cupola even though it was not on the original roof. Our plans are to preserve the barn not to one time period, but to include features from 150 years and earlier. It is important to be pragmatic when practicing conservation and sustainability.”

The historic building will be integrated into the already existing educational facilities at the Evergreen Heritage Center where formal on site studies have been held since 2009. According to Janice, a key to EHC’s continued success is partnerships. “Through partnerships with members of the academic, business, and public service community, as well as science and environmental partners, we are able to serve students and teachers across Western Maryland.”

The Evergreen Heritage Center is dedicated to best practices programming for students while also being a model for conservation and preservation. “We serve 5,000 children and adults with grade level programming. All classes are hands-on, utilizing small group interaction, and linked to state curricula. We also constantly evaluate the effectiveness of our work through pre and

post testing. Field trips, on site environmental projects, and accredited professional development for the staff at local schools are part of what we do,” stated Janice.

EHC hosts students from Head Start through college making it one of the most diverse educational centers in Allegany County. This year kindergarten students from Allegany County are also included in the schedule.

A range of academic disciplines, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math), art, environmental science, and forestry technology are directed under the supervision of professional educators. And utilization of the Evergreen barn will open an exciting new chapter for EHC because the upper level will be large enough to hold major events. As Janice notes, “After restoration of the barn, we can be a spring through fall facility for visitors and students. It is exciting to know that we are performing a useful purpose and practicing sustainability in the historic structure.”

Evergreen Estate, located on 130 acres at “Federal Hill” is about 10 minutes from Frostburg and 25 minutes from Cumberland. In addition to the barn and mansion (now a museum) are landscaped grounds, gardens, trails, streams, a timbered land, and close proximity to the Great Allegheny Passage bike trail.

Visitors are welcome to explore the Evergreen Museum and EHC facilities. See www.evergreenheritagecenter.org.



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