

# Holly Hill Log Barn



Holly Hill was owned by the Dare family for most of the 19th century and the log barn was probably built in the 1840s or 1850s. The date is suggested by the type of cut nails used. Supporting circumstantial evidence comes from the history of the Dare family. After a debt default in the 1820s, ownership bounced around for a period, with the property coming to Richard S. Dare in 1838, who might then have invested in buildings and other improvements. The barn includes poles to hang tobacco as well as a feed trough for livestock.



Before the project: March 2018

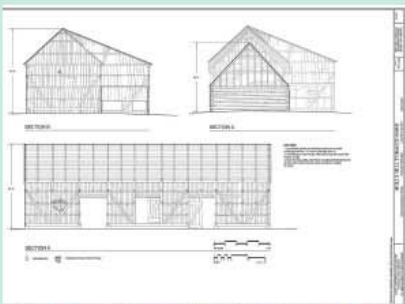


Two barns, 2002

Face-pinned cut nails

Richard Dare died in 1868 and was succeeded by his brother John, who died in 1890. A second barn—larger, frame construction, clearly focused on tobacco—was built next to the log barn, likely during John Dare's years. The frame barn was destroyed in the derecho storm of 2012.

Historic preservation specialists documented the barns in 2002 and 2008. Regarding the log barn, the Maryland historic property report describes "two pens under one continuous roof, each roughly 20 by 23 feet. . . Unlike other surviving double-pen log tobacco barns [there is] a very narrow impassable aisle between the two pens. . . The barn is also unusual in its lack of human-sized doors. Small openings, measuring two to three feet tall and four to five feet wide, are centered on both the north and south walls of each pen." Other specialists identify the wood as American chestnut.



Interior views, 2017



# Preservation Project

The ACLT began planning barn preservation in 2017. **Phase 1** was carried out in the summer of 2018 by volunteers led by Conrad Marsh. Siding was removed, stone footers repositioned, log walls were straightened and buttressed by concrete blocks and temporary framing support, and—most challenging—the tilting east gable was reattached to the main structure. Work proceeded in the face of 90-degree temperatures.



End of Project: July 2021

Far right: Jeff Klapper, Kevin Donahue, and Conrad Marsh, July 2018



Patrick Doering, Jeff Thompson, and Alan Brand, October 2020

**Phase 2** was carried out in 2019–2021 by the contractor Jeff Thompson of Colonial Woodwrights. This effort sought to preserve as much of the barn's original wood fabric as possible. New construction included protective extensions for the gable ends and a new interior framing system to support the historic log walls and the roof. Concrete footers underpinned the new construction. Thompson commented "historic buildings are not square" as his team carried out extensive custom fitting for each segment of the framing, especially the interior X-braces.

