



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

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**SECRETARY GALVIN PRESENTS 2015 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD TO
CLAPP FAMILY BARN, BOSTON (DORCHESTER)**

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, announces the selection of the Clapp Family Barn, Boston, to receive a 2015 Massachusetts Historical Commission Historic Preservation Award.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is proud to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of this year’s awardees,” said Secretary Galvin. “The projects the Commission is recognizing this year are particularly diverse and represent the many creative ways that significant historic resources are being preserved across the Commonwealth. This seven-year-long rehabilitation and restoration project ensures the preservation of a rare barn within the city of Boston, and its use as an exhibit space related to Dorchester’s agricultural history.”

Secretary Galvin presented the award recently at the Massachusetts Archives Building, Dorchester. The Clapp Family Barn, Boston, is one of 11 projects, individuals, and organizations to be honored.

One of only a few remaining in Boston, the L-shaped barn located to the north of the William Clapp House in Dorchester consists of two parts, a main barn and a south shed, both thought to date from around 1850. Though attached, the barn and shed are individually timber framed. Major timbers in both buildings are hand hewn. The detached English barn is three bays long, with a carpenter’s shop, wagon aisle, and tack room/animal stalls, with a hayloft above the end bays and part of the middle. The shed was probably built to serve as an early wagon shed, and also has an overhead loft accessed by an open hatch. There is also a full basement beneath the barn and shed.

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The Clapp family immigrated to Dorchester in 1630 and continuously based their farming, orchard, and finally nursery operations there through the 19th century. This location remained a Clapp family home until the 1940s, when the Dorchester Historical Society acquired the property. The famous Clapp pear was first cultivated here, and an unusual artifact remaining in the Clapp Family Barn is the built-in ladder case for preserving and securing fruit tree ladders, a reminder of Dorchester's history of fruit farming. Prior to the substantial rehabilitation of the barn, it had been used over the years for storage and was full of old lawn equipment, display cases, furniture, and odds and ends, as well as stray animals.

The Dorchester Historical Society, recently finding that the barn had massive structural problems, set out to stabilize the structure and save the horse stalls, hayloft, early 19th-century farm implements, Clapp family horse-drawn trap, and many other artifacts of Dorchester's agricultural heritage. The historical society held fundraising events to support the barn's restoration, including a comedy show, the development of pear and apple wine with the Boston Winery, and a gala fundraiser. Prior to rehabilitation, the roof was leaking, barn doors were falling off, and the sill and many beams were rotted.

The team carefully re-stabilized the barn by repairing rotted elements, reconstructing doors and windows, repairing framing, and replacing shingles and siding where necessary. The existing asphalt-shingled roof was replaced, as were some sheathing boards. The first choice for replacement boards was the collection that the Society had stored in the basement of the barn, of a weathered color similar to the existing sheathing boards. Some of the sheathing boards are of new wood. The new barn doors were built of cedar in 2013, and new cedar shingles were installed on the barn's exterior that same year. All materials were replaced in kind. The basement was cleared of debris and its completely deteriorated plaster ceiling was removed.

This Society plans to use the restored space as new exhibit galleries that will celebrate Dorchester's history, including barn-framing and timber-framing construction techniques, agricultural tools, carriages, and sleds, Dorchester geography, and its changing coastline, and early industries – such as milling and tanning – that supported the agricultural economy.

This is the 37th year of MHC's Preservation Awards program. Projects are considered annually for awards in the categories of Rehabilitation and Restoration, Adaptive Reuse, Education and Outreach, Archaeology, Stewardship, and Landscape Preservation. Individuals are considered in the categories of Individual Lifetime Achievement and Local Preservationist. Secretary Galvin serves as the chair of the 17-member Massachusetts Historical Commission.



(left to right) John Wathne, Structures North; Earl Taylor, Dorchester Historical Society; Secretary William F. Galvin; Vicki Rugo, Board Member, Dorchester Historical Society; Kit Binns, Board Member, Dorchester Historical Society. (photo by Wyeth Lilley)

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