

## **Dating Barns in Holland Township New Jersey with Dendrochronology Part 1**

by Carla Cielo

Dendrochronology which is commonly known as tree ring dating, derives the felling date of the trees that were used to build a structure. At \$2,000 a barn, few can afford the luxury of dating barns by this method. So why undertake such an expense? If an approximate date would suffice, the Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission (HTHPC) would be content with the dates assigned to each of the 88 barns that were surveyed and studied in Holland Township, New Jersey and were based on a visual analysis of the timbers, saw and auger marks, nails, framing methodology, and plan. But the commission is after a lot more...

When viewed as a collection of barns in a defined region, the barns reveal a history of agricultural settlement to which dendrochronology can enhance. Holland Township, which borders the Delaware River and the state of Pennsylvania in northern Hunterdon County, was associated with the 1727 Durham Iron Furnace early on, and, as such, supported easterly migration from Pennsylvania. The HTHPC received two grants from the NJ Historical Commission to dendro date 10 of the oldest barns in the township and hopes to answer the following questions from the precise dates:

- When did the Pennsylvania Forebay bank barn form migrate from Pennsylvania into Holland Township, New Jersey?
- Does the earlier ground-level, three-bay, swing beam barn type predate German migration from Pennsylvania?
- Was the ground-level, three-bay, swing beam barn type built during the 1750-90 tenant period?
- Did a much lighter style of timber framing migrate from Pennsylvania along with the forebay barn form?

The results of the first 10 dendro dated barns will be published this fall along with the first ever dendro dated barn tour.