

BY ELIOT LOTHROP

Salvaging a Hero's Home

Last summer, I joined a team of local design professionals and volunteers tasked with salvaging and relocating a historic home in Milton, Vt. The small, unassuming farmhouse (built circa 1840) was once owned by Civil War hero and Vermont native George Jerrison Stannard (1).

Stannard, a general in the Union army, is renowned for helping to blunt Pickett's Charge at the battle of Gettysburg. On July 3, 1863, he ordered a series of pivot maneuvers and provided withering flanking fire to repulse the Confederate assault. Later in the war, he was wounded and had his right arm amputated. He resigned from the Army in 1866 and purchased the Milton farmhouse. Stannard later moved to Washington, D.C., where he lived until his death in 1886.

Documenting, dismantling, and storing. Despite years of neglect, much of the home was worth preserving. Starting last April, we began the process of salvaging as much of the original house as possible, which was tricky given that it had been heavily remodeled twice, once in the 1890s and again in the 1930s. We tagged all the timber framing with coded "hand-punched" tin discs (2), nailing them to beams, posts, studs, and rafters (we later documented their locations on a set of drawings). Then, with the help of a telehandler and personnel lift, we started dismantling the building (3).

The home's wide board sheathing was salvageable (4). The doors and windows, though not all original, were also saved. The discovery of a buried casing from an original fan light and visible ghost lines of original bed molding trim were pleasant surprises (5).

The salvaged pieces have been stored and are waiting to be incorporated into the home's restoration on a new site. Visit generalstannardhouse.org for more information about the project.

Eliot Lothrop operates Building Heritage, specializing in historic preservation and timber-frame restoration, in Huntington, Vt.



Photos: 1, courtesy Milton Historical Society; 2-5, Tim Healey