



The Old BARN POST

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Corncrib Restoration in Southwest Ohio

The corncrib barn on my property was constructed in the 1850s on what was once the farm of James W. Cochran, eldest son of William and Rebecca (Morrow) Cochran, who migrated to Ohio from Gettysburg, PA. in 1814. The barn is a 22' x 26' hand hewn timber frame structure built west of the main 1843 era house. The original farm also had a nice, large bank barn, now part of my neighbor's property, plus a stone smokehouse and brick privy. The corncrib barn has a 12' x 26' center threshing floor and two 5' x 26' side cribs with horizontal internal slats and vertical external slats. The 10' x 10' barn doors on front and back, allow wagons to be pulled through for unloading after being weighed on the ground-level weigh scale that was located 50 feet in front of the barn. The barn was built on 16 limestone piers and originally had a wood shake roof.

The barn was expanded at some point over the years. The main roof was raised 3' and dual 10' wide covered side bays were added. The expansion would serve as additional storage for farm equipment to support the cattle and swine herds. The granddaughter of James, Rebecca Cochran, told me that a horse drawn buggy was stored for years suspended above the main center hall of the building. In the 1990s the second owner of the property, Gerry Morris, reported that the barn was racked as result of a severe windstorm. At the time of the repair, two upper lofts were added, constructed of modern materials to provide expanded storage.

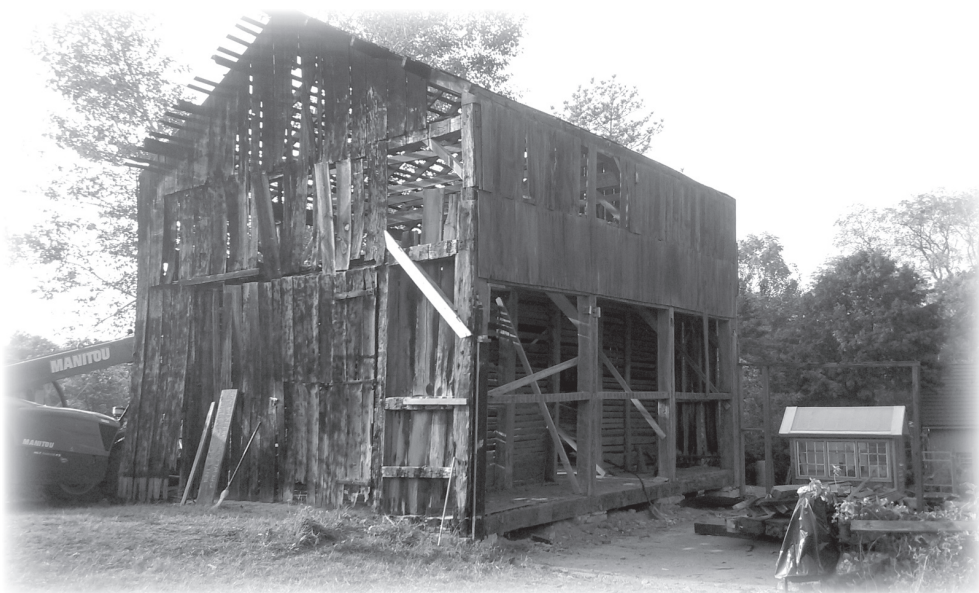
When I purchased the property in 2003, the condition of the barn was of

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Images: By Doug Fraits

Barn as it looked waiting for restoration to begin.



Shed additions removed revealing original corncrib slats and frame.

The Fall Picnic is Back !!!

Saturday, October 2, 2021

Gather at Noon Eat at 12:30 pm

Friends of Ohio Barns at Sonnenberg Village

13497 Hackett Road, Kidron, Ohio 44606

Light lunch provided by the Friends of Ohio Barns.

Reconnect with long-lost FOB friends, Lunch,

Members' Meeting, Village Tour (6 buildings).

Check out the construction of the "new" old barn.

Questions? Call Dave Hamblin

419.947.1360

Reservations needed by September 15.

Watch the website for 'how to' RSVP.

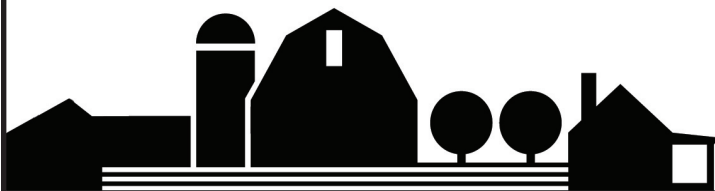
Re-construction of the barn was to begin June 1, 2021.

Bring your 'barn raising tools' and be a part of the
crew.

OR stop by and spectate!



*If anyone has seen a
rectangular stone barn
in Ohio please contact
Bob Kroeger, author of
Historic Barns of Ohio at
info@robertkroeger.com*



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major concern. Many of the beams were compromised by extensive termite and water damage. The barn had also developed a lean. Diagonal internal straps were installed to stabilize the building. It was only used for selective storage until more comprehensive repairs could be completed. The aluminum-paneled roofing installed in the 1970s remained intact but was a concern during windstorms, suffering more with each event. Within a few years, this historical Ohio barn was barely standing and in sad shape.

Early in the spring of 2020 a severe windstorm further ravaged the barn when the upper branches of a poplar tree near the northwest corner were blown onto the building damaging the roof and structure of the left side bay. If the barn was to be rescued, now was the time. Working with Mike Wengler of Timber Frame Reclaim, a plan was developed to disassemble the barn and build it back in its original form. This meant the upper structure, lofts, and right-side bay would be eliminated. A new free-standing two-car garage would be built off the right side of the barn.

Work commenced in September 2020, first to stabilize then deconstruct the barn. Once removal of the roof structure began, it was discovered that the rafters were not original. They were sagging badly and were deemed unsuitable for use in the restoration. Siding was removed and stored along with the vertical slats of the outer crib walls. While the frame had many problems, it was mostly still intact and usable. All timbers were tagged, pins pulled, and systematic disassembly followed. Timbers were relocated to Mike's yard for inspection, repair, or replacement. Upon inspection the corner posts were deemed structurally unsound. We were fortunate to find and purchase four old reclaimed hand-hewed 10" x 12" corner posts to replace the original posts.

The foundation stone piers were undermined over the years with extensive groundhog tunnels. We figured we would find a large groundhog house under the foundation but instead found what one worker said looked more like a resort. (One groundhog was still in residence at the start of this project, at least part time; he would show up occasionally and seem sadly perplexed, circling the site trying to figure it out. We hope he found nice digs somewhere in our woods). We replaced



Left: Repaired barn frame reassembled ready for a new roof.

Right: Barn frame and roof structure with composite shake roof installed.



the front and center stone piers with concrete. The left side and rear original stone piers were repaired to keep the original look. Large limestone trap rock was placed on the ground under the building to keep wildlife from moving back in.

The corncrib barn frame reconstruction began in November 2020 and was completed the last week of December 2020. The end goal is to preserve and rebuild the barn to reflect the original structure, retaining the corn cribs but making the building weather- and rodent-tight. New white oak beams were cut to replace some of the sill beams as needed. Large metal plates were used, but hidden, to secure the frame to the base as appropriate. New poplar 3" x 5" rafters were procured from the local sawmill. They replicate the size of the original roof rafters as determined by the size of the rafter pockets on the barn's original upper sill beams. White oak roof strapping was cut and installed as required

for roof shakes. All the roof structure was built with green lumber; the roof will only get stronger in the two years it takes for it to dry completely.

The project continues. The original crib slats are being reinstalled on the outer side walls. Composite polymer weathered roof shake (Enviroshake) was installed in March 2021. The floor will be replaced with 2" thick white oak rough cut boards. Siding is shiplap poplar to be installed front and back on the frame and on the sides over the crib slats. This preserves the original look from the inside. New mortise and tenon joint door frames covered with original weathered siding will replace the barn doors. Yes, and, old, blacksmith-forged hinges and door latches will be used to complete the look.

I will provide updates with final commentary and photos once the project is completed.

By: Doug Fraits

Barn Conservation Grants extended to three recipients

Despite the fact that Friends of Ohio Barns members haven't been together for a few years, the organization is still very active... and spending money!

FOB is proud to announce we've designated three barn owners/organizations to receive 2020 and 2021 Ohio Barn Conservation grant funding. In fact, we made a big deal, or rather big check out of it recently by visiting the sites of our recipients to present them with the symbolic — and real — \$2500 checks.

Board members Sarah Sisser, Lauren Etler and past president Ric Beck were on hand to present the 1st check to Pete Weir from Van Wert. Pete has been busy restoring his circa 1900's 30x48 ground barn just outside Van Wert. He has been assisted by the local vocational education school students and plans to continue that educational process with them as they complete the process. Pete plans to use FOB funds to help with gutter installation, and siding repairs. He hopes to use the space for public gathering functions.

Next the three of us traveled to Bluffton to visit Samantha Shrider at the Swiss Community Historical Society to present them with a check for work to be done to bring another barn just down the road to the center to be incorporated on their beautiful grounds. Samantha said the community has already raised \$400,000 to dismantle, move, restore, and raise the barn to be used as a Heritage Center. It will further barn education, and local history. The Center will include a children's area, archive, community room, and restroom amenities. This barn addition will add to the plank frame barn that we all got a chance to see during our tenth annual barn tour, and will be a fantastic addition to the property.

Finally, Vice President, Dan Troth will visit the Agraria farm, a part of the Arthur Morgan Institute for Community Solutions, to present Susan Jennings with a grant check for continuing work on their educational barn. This structure hosts many educational programs and community events in Yellow Springs. The Agraria serves as a field site for area researchers to



Sarah Sisser (left) and Ric Beck (right) present check for barn upgrade to Pete Weir in Van Wert County on behalf of the friends of Ohio Barns.



Ric Beck (center left) and Sarah Sisser (far right) present check to members of the Swiss Community Historical Society near Bluffton, Ohio to assist in their effort to relocate an old barn to their history center.

study soil and water health, the impact of regenerative farming on ecosystem services, the environment, the local food system and economy, and human health. Current partners include but are not limited to Antioch College, University of Dayton,

Wright State University, Soil Carbon Coalition, and Central State University.

It is exciting for Friends of Ohio Barns to award these grantee's funding in pursuance of their restoration and stewardship goals!

An Ohio Harvest

Ohioans have harvested salt, iron, timber, coal, oil, natural gas, and other resources and sold them to buyers out of state. In most cases the resources are used and depleted, the money is gone, but damage to the land and water lingers, in some cases for decades and in some cases healing will take geological time. Now we are harvesting our cultural resources and selling them to buyers out of state. Log cabins, barns, and other historic buildings are dismantled and shipped to places in New England, the Carolinas and the Rocky Mountains where they are repurposed for vacation homes.

Do people in other states value our heritage more than Ohioans?

Our history defines us as individuals, as communities, as a state and as a nation. The character of our communities and our architecture says a lot about who we are.

As a society we have been and continue to trade our attractive, durable, historic infrastructure and built environment for unattractive, short lived buildings that people will not fight to save when they are old, if they are even allowed to age before they are demolished and disposed.



Photo by Tom O'Grady

A sign of the times. You can be rid of your history at the touch of the dial.

Hocking County barn



Images: Photos by Tom O'Grady

This Hocking County barn in the Oldtown Creek valley with gambrel roof and wooden silos was likely of southern origin with its gable end entry and small hay hood.



The barn was demolished several years ago to expand parking for the nearby General Electric plant. Parking lot rarely has cars parked in it.

Unique Allen County Barn near Gomer, Ohio



Gomer's first physician and the builder and first owner of this barn, Richard E. Jones, was born in Llanbrynmair, Wales, in 1834. His father, William Jones, brought him to Gomer in 1848. Gomer is one of the significant Welsh settlements in the state of Ohio.

One who has had a look at the saw-cut wood inside the barn, it appears it may have been built as late as the 1890 — give or take a decade.

It is not a New England barn, a Pennsylvania barn or a Southern barn. While not a traditional Ohio barn, it is a unique historic Ohio barn.

This Gothic barn sports a hipped roof cupola, a turret, two hayhoods, first and second story windows, a weather vane, a slate roof, and vertical slate siding in some of the upper half.

Another American treasure in need of a champion.

John Burroughs — Phases of Farm Life

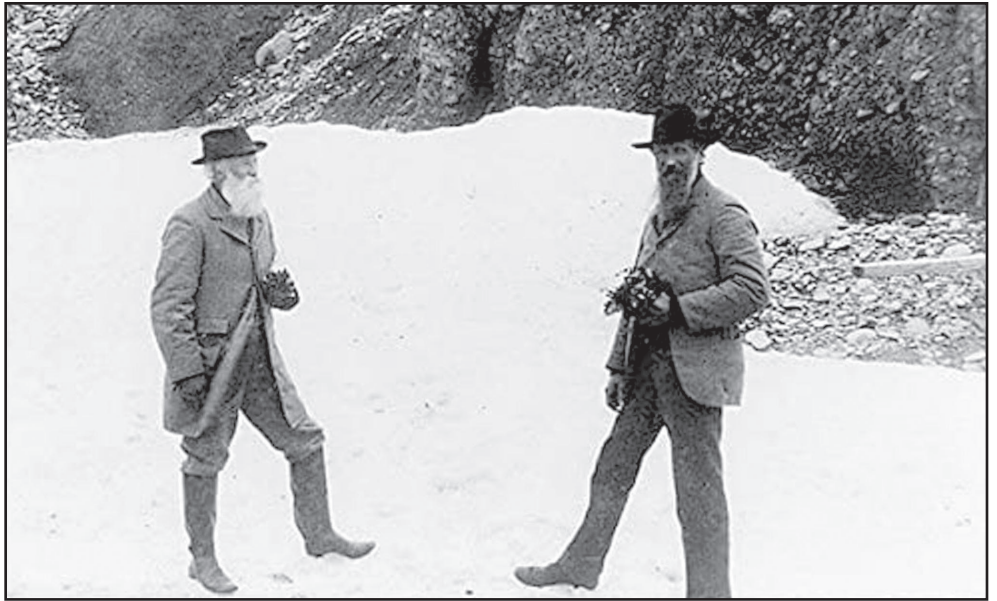
"I have thought that a good test of civilization, perhaps one of the best, is country life. Where country life is safe and enjoyable, where many of the conveniences and appliances of the towns are joined to the large freedom and large benefits of the country, a high state of civilization prevails." John Burroughs, one of America's preeminent naturalists, penned these words in 1886 in *Signs and Seasons*, one of his 30 books covering topics including botany, ornithology, geography, rural life, and civilization. The reader is struck by the keen observations he weaves into interesting tales.

Burroughs was born on a dairy farm in the Catskill Mountains in 1837. His official biographer, Clara Barrus, wrote about many of his youthful experiences as told to her by John in his later years. While life was not easy, there was plenty of time between chores, or while doing them, to behold nature. Driving the cows to pasture meant he and his dog could hunt woodchucks and he could observe the birds in the varied habitats afforded by the fields and woods. John and his brothers liked to follow bees to their nests and retrieve the honey, tolerating the stings for the sweet goodness. The boys whittled swatters out of wooden shingles. On Sunday mornings John would take a pail of coarse salt to the sheep and young cattle. He could prolong this chore and be sidetracked by all the birds to see. Retrieving a missing cow turned into another outdoor adventure.

It's easy to take for granted all of life's modern conveniences and forget that in Burroughs's youth just about everything was made by hand and on the farm. Burroughs's observations of farm life in the east were not different from life in Ohio. A few examples:

Stump burning: "The first settlers had to cut and burn the forest to make clearings for agriculture. Each spring was the time to burn the stumps that remained. The sparks burnt holes in their clothes, burning them more and more each day, till after several days at the job, they were almost past wearing ... Sometimes they found a stump with a bluebird's nest in it. They always spared that stump."

Flax-gathering and weaving: "father grew the flax and his mother spun it into thread and wove it into linen for sheets, towels, shirts, and summer trousers ... When the



Naturalist writer John Burroughs left, and conservationist John Muir, discussing glaciation aboard an Alaskan glacier while the two were guests with Harriman Expedition along with a group of 23 of the most esteemed scientists in their fields along with a cadre of artists, photographers, poets and authors. Image from Smithsonian Magazine.

flax was ripe in the fall the boys pulled it, laying it on the ground to rot. When gathered into the barn, it was broken with a crackle — a machine for breaking up the woody parts, but not the fiber ..."

Wall or fence building: The Catskill region is strewn with glacier-delivered stones and boulders and these became the materials for spring and fall wall building. The stones were dug out and carried to the stone-boat drawn by a team of horses and then hauled to the wall-building site for laying up.

House moving: The house where John was born was to be replaced with a new one on the same site. The old house got moved to the orchard for temporary living quarters during construction. Twenty farmers and their yokes of oxen each came to the moving bee. Prior to their coming, two long smooth beech trees were cut and hewn for the runners and several green beech-wood poles were used for the skids or rollers. "How queer the old house looked loosed from her mooring! She was setting out on her first journey pretty late in life." The twenty yoke of oxen got in two long lines, one at each runner, hooked with heavy log chains. "Shouting lustily, the men urge on their teams ... The oxen bend to their work; their eyes bulge; their nostrils widen; the commands from the drivers rise to a discordant Babel. The old house creaks; she groans as if alive; she starts; she moves; and,

once in motion, moves away to the orchard 'as nimbly as a boy on a hand-sled,' while the onlookers cheer mightily."

Hay-making: "Good mowers would quit their regular work, and, with scythe over shoulder, go about from farm to farm to help with the haying ... What a picturesque sight of a midsummer afternoon as the mowers move amid the ripening grain! And when, toward sundown, the smooth slopes, shaven and shorn, are dotted with haystacks!" John tells how he had to turn the grindstone while an older brother ground the worn blades. This was hard work and they hated to see their Uncle Zeke come to make hay because Zeke carried a gin bottle with him and after a few nips at the bottle was "mowing stones as readily as grass."

Threshing: John and his brothers threshed oats and rye on the floor of the barn that stood out in the field. "Laying the sheaves down with their heads together in two long rows, they set — to with the flail — the instrument for beating grain from the sheaves. It was a straight, strong, hickory hand-staff to which hung, by means of a leathern thong, a wooden swipple, two and half feet long, and about three inches in circumference, the swipple being the part with which the beating was done." Dust settled on hair and clothes and filled nostrils and the fun had left long

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before the work was done.

John Burroughs admired the old barns of his day. "...the great timbers of these barns ... hewn from maple or birch or oak trees from the primitive woods, and put in place by the combined strength of all the brawny arms in the neighborhood when the barn was raised, — timbers strong enough and heavy enough for docks and quays, and that have absorbed the odors of the hay and grain until they look ripe and mellow and full of the pleasing sentiment of the great, sturdy, bountiful interior! The 'big beam' has become smooth and polished from the hay that has been pitched over it and the sweaty, sturdy forms that have crossed it."

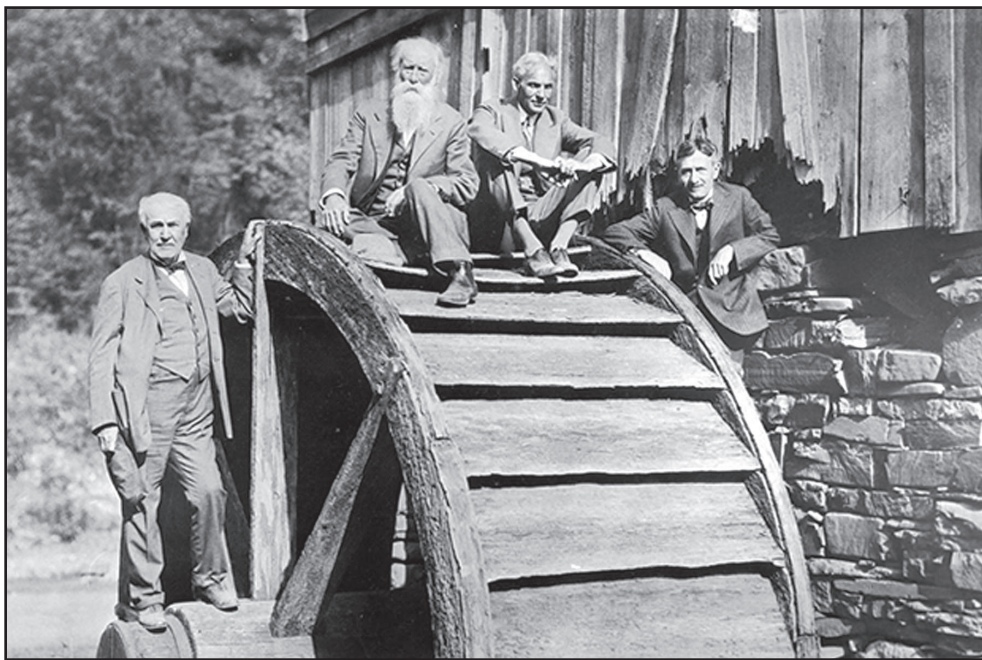
The Dutch settled in the Hudson and Mohawk valleys of New York, migrating from the south rather than from New England where John's family originated. The Dutch brought their own unique architectural style, and the saying, "as broad as a Dutch barn," left little to the imagination when applied to a man or woman. "The main feature of these barns was their enormous expansion of roof. It was a comfort to look at them, they suggested such shelter and protection." The large, unpainted, gables were cut with holes for swallows and John thought the wide barn gables looked like "a section of a respectable-sized hill, and its roof like its slope." The large wooden doors were split in halves horizontally. The upper halves could be left open for a breeze, but the heavy, cold air could be kept out with the lower half closed.

There were men especially good at barn raisings. Burroughs said they were "bold and strong and quick." They'd supervise the work and were the first ones "...up on the bent, catching a pin or a brace and putting it in place." One such man "...walked the lofty and perilous plate with the great beetle (*mallet*) in hand, put the pins in the holes, and, swinging the heavy instrument through the air, drove the pins home. He was as much at home up there as a squirrel."

One of America's greatest nature writers, Burroughs grew quite popular and had a significant following. Between 1915 and 1924 he was world's foremost naturalist and sought after camping guest of Henry Ford, Thomas Edison and Harvey Firestone, joining them around many a fire in the nation's parks. Burroughs joined John Muir and other scientists, artists, and explorers on the famed Harriman Expedition



John Burroughs with President Theodore Roosevelt in Yellowstone National Park on a camping trip in 1903. Image from American Museum of Natural History.



Thomas Edison, John Burroughs, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone pose on a waterwheel at an old mill in West Virginia in August of 1918. The group made a series of camping trips exploring the America's natural heritage between 1916 and 1924. Image from Ford Motor Company.

to Alaska in 1899. Teddy Roosevelt also paid him a visit and the two went camping in Yellowstone National Park in the spring of 1903. Burroughs also considered the poet, Walt Whitman, a good friend.

Henry Ford sent Burroughs a new car every year. Lamenting the inevitable changes that came to rural New York, he kept a bit of optimism, "Still, the essential charm of the farm remains and always will remain: the care of crops, and of cattle, and of orchards, bees, and fowls; the clearing and improving of the ground; the building

of barns and house; the direct contact with soil and with the elements; the watching of the clouds and of the weather; the privacies with nature, with bird, beast, and plant; and the close acquaintance with the heart and virtue of the world."

John Burroughs died in 1921 in Ohio on a train returning from a visit to California. He was buried on his 84th birthday next to Boyhood Rock, a large, glacial erratic that he often visited in his youth, just to get away.

By: Bob Eichenberg



Downhill Barn

This three bay New England bank barn with the main entry at left behind the small granary. A later addition removed the wind doors at the end of the threshing floor and extended the barn to the right in this image. A later addition took advantage of the continuing slope. In a 1980s Sunday Columbus Dispatch page devoted to barns of southeast Ohio, Dr. Hubert Wilhelm referred to this as the 'downhill barn.' This neglected barn melted back into the landscape over the past two decades.

Photo by: Tom O'Grady

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