



# The Old BARN POST

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## Preble County Hosts 2020 Ohio Barn Tour

Preble County, formed in 1808, was named in honor of Edward Preble, a naval officer who fought in the American Revolutionary War and against the Barbary Pirates operating from North Africa in the Mediterranean Sea.

The county was created from the Congress Lands between the Great Miami River and the First Principle Meridian, the survey line established to run due north from the junction of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers. This meridian ran north through the Greenville Treaty Line which

became the southern boundary of Native American lands in 1795 after the Battle of Fallen Timbers the previous year along the Maumee River. This Principle Meridian Line now serves as the western border of Preble County and as the border between Ohio and Indiana. The survey commenced in 1798 and the land was to be systematically surveyed into square townships.

The landscape of Preble County is soft-ly rolling but relatively level. Upon settle-ment it was considered incomparable for farming. It is located on Ohio's glacial till

plain with rich drift deposits atop lime-stone sediments and some of the oldest bedrock in Ohio. Early reports of the gla-cial till deposits refer to buried trees whose tops were encountered at depths of 30 feet when digging wells.

Another unique feature of the Preble County landscape is the boulder belt. Reports from early histories describe this as a remarkable boulder belt traversing the cen-tral and eastern regions of the county —

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A Preble County barn exhibiting significant German influence with the posted forebay, cupolas, and numerous windows, likely louvered. The wind doors above the forebay are evident.

*Principal Land Subdivisions Imposed on Present Map of Ohio*



Major Ohio land subdivisions created after the American Revolution. Preble County is located in the Congress Lands between the Great Miami River and the Indiana border. This subdivision reaches from the Ohio River north to the Greenville Treaty Line. Most Ohio barns influenced by German construction techniques are found in areas designated as Congress lands.

# CALEB'S CORNER

This past weekend I found myself in a funeral home, standing next to a seven year old girl and sharing the same dark view the large window in front of us provided. As she tightly clutched her pink blanket, I thought about her father's closed casket in the adjacent room and his unexpected death a few days prior, and I realized I had absolutely no idea what could be racing through her young mind or the emotional confusion she must be feeling. The perspective this young girl unknowingly provided was an instant impact. Who am I to wallow in my own misery that when this could be my reality?

So, for the first time in my life I'm going to embrace the ethos of Thanksgiving! Please don't expect me to eat any turkey or watch the Macy's parade (because I won't do either), but I am going to be overt in my expressions of thankfulness this season- because it's just right.

I'm so thankful for my two children who are healthy and full of life, my parents and their spouses who are wonderful examples, and my brother and sister who are my keepers. There's a family that's spawned from the business we created that includes mentors, employees, children, and associates. All these people have enriched my life more than I could ever imagine. I must continue to be conscious that my actions and decisions show enough reciprocity to these people in order to continue these amazing relationships.

The thread that ties most of us here are barns, but it's also our humanity. With that humanity I urge you to acknowledge those people who make that difference for you. Maybe I'm behind the curve here and just coming around to embracing this part of the holiday, but I will forever be grateful for the perspective a little girl showed me. I leave you with the words of the great Elwood Blues.

Hold, squeeze, and please that person, give 'em all your love.

By: Caleb Miller

## Quotable quote

"I stood in the loneliness of an abandoned New England barn and felt the presence of the great American past."

-Eric Sloane (born - Everard Jean Hinrichs) 1905-1985

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"Show me a healthy community with a healthy economy and I will show you a community that has its green infrastructure in order and understands the relationship between the built and the unbuilt environment."

-Will Rogers, Trust for Public Land

# Can't Beat This for a Good Start in Ohio

Preble County, if it has no scenery which realizes the grand or approaches the massively sublime, certainly presents to the eye a rare combination of those gentler elements of nature's beauty which atones for the absence of the ruggedly picturesque. Nature everywhere wears an appearance which indicates her favor to man and adaptability to his good. The landscape everywhere is of that nature which most harmoniously holds and surrounds the scenes of harvest and the husbandman's home. The rural residences and the tangible evidences of thrift and plenty which cluster around them seem appropriately placed in the pictures which a ride through Preble County presents to the eye. They are the natural outcome — the crystallizations of the richness of the soil — and, although reared by the industry of man, they have not been wrought with such stress of force, such slow and difficult toil, as in some less favored regions. Not stubbornly or grudgingly has nature here yielded to man, but gladly with glorious generosity of harvest from the largest of her riches. A benison of beauty seems to rest upon the land and to have as its counterpart and complement the blessing of plenty.

With salubrious climate, fertile soil, capable of bearing as full a variety of crops as any tract of country in its latitude, bountiful and constant water supply, undulating but not rough surface, insuring good drainage, and yet having no lands that are untillable, Preble county lacks no elements which the farmer needs. It has more than these — an inexhaustible supply of limestone of great economic value, and a greater available abundance of good timber than any other section of the State equal in area.

From: History of Preble County, Ohio  
- H.Z. Williams & Bro. - 1881

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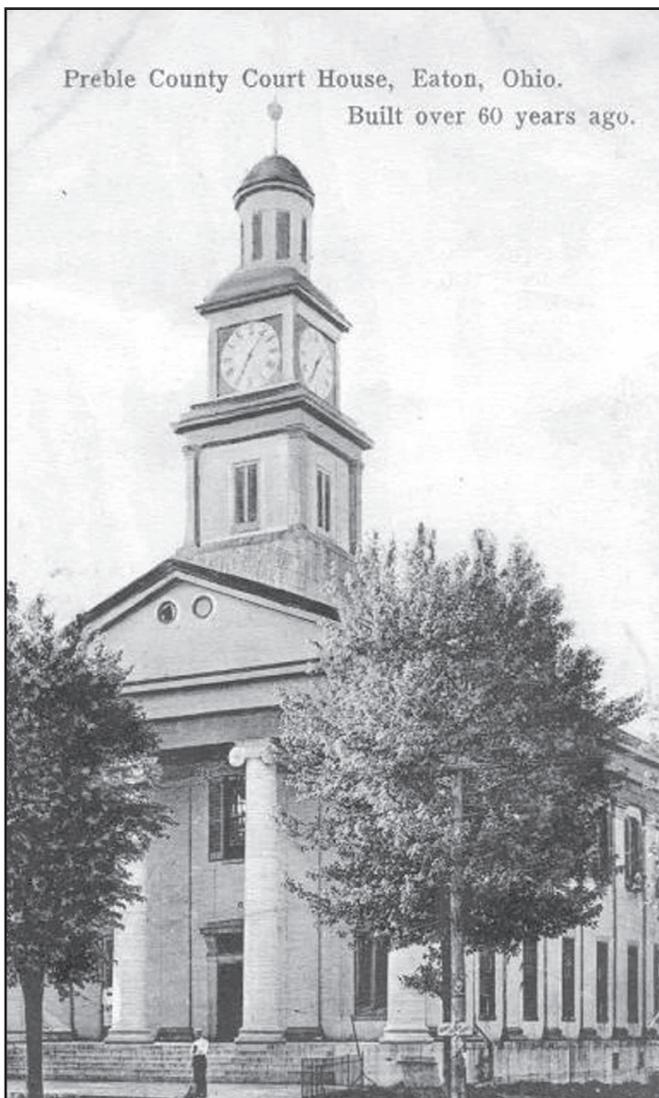
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# Preble County Courthouses



Left: Preble County government began while housed in its first courthouse, built in the Federal style like most early county courthouses in Ohio. The courthouse was likely built within the first decade of the county's existence.



Left: A second Preble County courthouse supplanted the first in 1851. The courthouse had features of Greek revival including four Corinthian stone columns supporting the portico of the church. A three story clock tower rose above the roof. The clock tower was surmounted by a louvered cupola possibly housing a church bell.

Below: The third Preble County courthouse, still in use today, was built between 1915 and 1918 when it opened for services. A native of Preble County, Harvey Hiestand, designed the courthouse to have early central vacuuming and air conditioning and left outlets for hose attachments throughout the building. The courthouse exterior features Beaux-Arts style architecture.



## PREBLE, Continued from Page 1

more remarkable than any similar belt in the state. In some areas the boulders are so thick as to render tillage of the fields difficult. The length of the belt exceeds ten miles while the breadth in some areas is as much as three miles. The boulders range in size from one thousand cubic feet and smaller. On one farm 1200 boulders exceeding two feet in diameter were counted to the acre. There are places where they occur in larger numbers than this and the value of the land is diminished where it is so thickly covered.

A number of Native American earthworks survive in Preble County. The valley of Twin Creek contains four enclosures, which is the majority of the prehistoric sites in the county. Mound Hill Cemetery, in Eaton, was named for the prehistoric Indian mound which lies within. The mound now also holds the remains of 15 soldiers of General Anthony Wayne's army, killed in an Indian attack on October 17, 1793. The remains were moved from burial sites at nearby Fort St. Clair and re-interred in the mound in October 1847. At that time, a 10ft. monument was erected by the community and placed atop the mound to honor the fallen soldiers.

By the time of the 1850 Census Preble County had nearly 22,000 residents. While more than 8,000 of them were born somewhere in Ohio, the majority were migrants from the east, west, and south. A much smaller number were immigrants. The majority of newcomers came from Mid-Atlantic States with more than 1,500 arriving from Pennsylvania. Almost as many came from the south with Virginia contributing more than 1,600. Nearly 600 migrants came east from Indiana and 50 from Illinois. Handfuls of others came from a half dozen other states in the west and southwest.

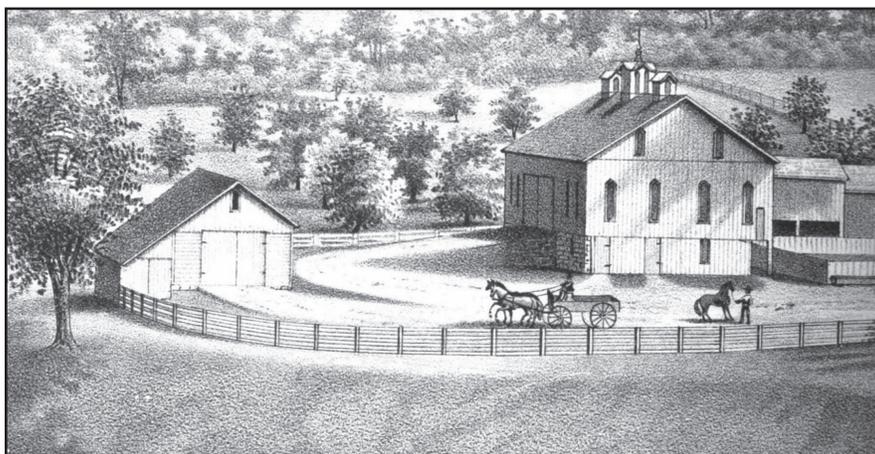
Nearly 350 of the immigrants settling in Preble County came from Ireland. Another 250 immigrants arrived from Germany and fewer than 10 from England.

Because the Congress lands were not set aside for designated groups as were the Virginia Military District, the Connecticut Western Reserve, or the U.S. Military District, lands could be purchased by anyone. Many pioneers of German descent refrained from participating in the American Revolutionary War because of their pacifist attitudes and religion. Therefore it is extremely rare to find German bank barn influences in any of those subdivisions where land was set aside for veterans. But German influenced barns are commonly found in areas designated Congress Lands in Ohio. All lands west of the Great Miami River and north of the Greenville Treaty Line are so designated and the German influence has been commonly detected there. There are always exceptions because persons granted land in the other settlement districts were free to sell property to any willing buyer. However, culture groups tended to

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Preble County farmstead with another barn influenced by German craftsmen with a forebay facing, many windows, and a couple cupolas. The barn presents a somewhat different arrangement of wind doors possibly indicating two threshing bays.



German barn with a posted forebay in Preble County, built on flat ground, requires an earthen ramp to access the threshing floor and hay storage. Numerous louvered windows, and three cupolas provide the needed air exchange in the upper barn.



Images from 1881 History of Preble County by H.Z. Williams & Bro.

The residence of S.B. McQuiston in Preble County includes a German style barn with a posted forebay and wind doors for the elevated threshing floor. An earthen ramp likely provides access for the needs of a farmer with a non-German name.

# Light Foundation Hosts First STEM Timber Frame Camp

This past summer, FOB member Matt Light from Greenville Ohio, opened his facilities at the Light Foundation, Chenoweth Trails to the first STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) timber frame camp. The three day event invited 13 high schoolers from across the country to participate in the art of timber framing by laying out, cutting and erecting a 10'x16' oak shed that will be located at the foundation's pond.

"The shed will serve Chenoweth Trails and the Light Foundation for hopefully hundreds and hundreds of years just like the old timber frames of the past," said Light. "The cool thing is — we have examples of timber frames all over Darke County from the great barns and homes to the log cabins and everything else that were utilized from the forests right here in the area."

"Not only can young people see living examples of these incredible structures, but they also get the sense of accomplishment of crafting this incredible joinery just the way they would have done hundreds and hundreds of years ago by the early settlers that came to America from Europe," Light continued. "It's an exciting program — it's very hands on."

Several FOB member timber framers



**Matt Light overseeing a student working on a post tenon.**

Photo by Ric Beck

served as instructors for the camp. FOB President Caleb Miller and his JCM Timber Works crew worked on cutting the foundation sills the day before the camp, then assisted with the Monday session. Raymond Friend also lent a hand those first two days. Ric Beck acted as lead instructor the rest of the camp with great help from Mike Christman, Light Foundation master carpenter, and Terry Clark of nearby Bears Mill.

The young men and women in the class enthusiastically embraced all aspects of instruction at the camp, from tool use and safety, to lay out and joinery work.

They were also treated to a hand hewing demonstration from John Miller of JCM. After a hard day's work, the group retreated to the camp for meals and swimming at the pond, while Ric double checked completed work and prepped the stations for the next day's activities.

The class did so well that raising the frame actually came early!

Matt Light hopes to continue the tradition of timber frame camps at Chenoweth Trails in years to come with more projects to enhance the already impressive grounds in Greenville.

By: Ric Beck, past FOB president

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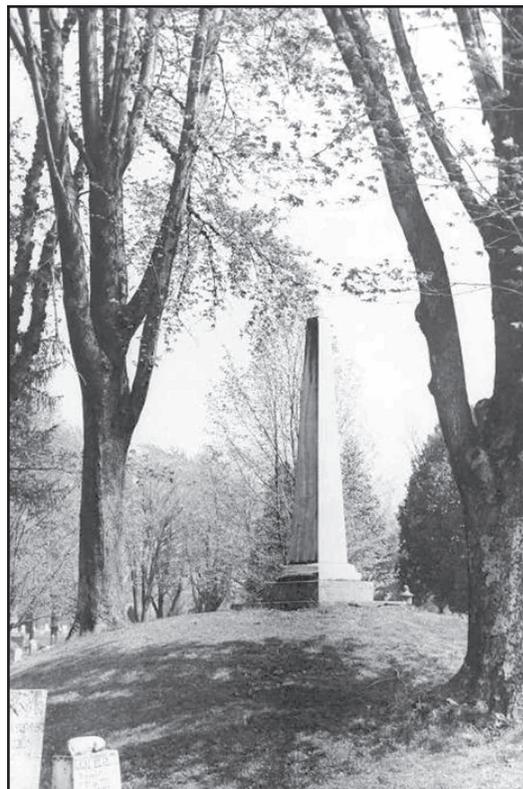
settle in areas where they found relatives, common language and customs, or other aspects of cultural affinity.

People participating on the 2020 Ohio Barn tour across Preble County can keep an eye peeled for Pennsylvania German barns with their distinctive, but possibly foreshortened forebay, and maybe some southern barns with their gable end entry and hay hood. While there were few New Englanders settling in Preble County by the time of the 1850 Census, more migrated before the turn of the century, and one might expect to find any one of the three traditional barns on the tour. Western Ohio, being the last part of the state settled, may reveal some barns exhibiting hybrid characteristics. Veteran barnbuilders from the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, and the South may have been sharing techniques and working together by then. States west of Ohio have many fewer pure examples of these traditional early American barns.

Foundations of barns in Preble County may be built of glacial erratics, the large granite boulders left behind by the most recent glacial advance, the Wisconsinan. Other foundations may be of quarried limestone. They should be altogether different from sandstone and tile foundations seen in eastern Ohio.

Depending on the locations of the barns chosen for the tour, attendees should watch for signs of the remarkable boulder belt and Native American earthworks.

By: Tom O'Grady



**Mound Hill Cemetery in Eaton was established in 1806 and named for the Native American earthwork located there. The mound now holds the remains of 15 soldiers of General Anthony Wayne's army, killed in an Indian attack on October 17, 1793. The remains were moved from burial sites at Fort St. Clair and re-interred in the mound on October 1847 where a 10ft. monument was erected by contributions from the community.**

Image: <http://ohiomemory.org>

# Barnstorming for 2020 Conference

I enjoyed being a part of this year's "barnstorming" process where a group of us drives around the county to review the candidate barns that have been pre-screened by the Local Hero (Mike Wengler, in this case, for Preble County) for potential inclusion in the Friends of Ohio Barns Conference bus tour. Since I was coming from Carrollton, it was about a 4-1/2 hour drive for me so we'd intentionally planned this to be 2 consecutive days of reviewing barns. This was my first time to visit Preble County and I was impressed by the large quantity of barns still left in the county. During our travels throughout the county it was common to be able to see 4 or 5 barns simultaneously from any given spot — of course a lot of that is because it is flat in much of the county. Since I live in hilly Carroll County, where an official passing zone on the highway is any straight stretch exceeding about 3 car lengths, Preble County was quite unusual to me. That being said, though, there was actually quite a bit of topographical variation over the course of our travels to all corners of the county. There was a lot of



Graduation marks etched onto a linear scale bar in one of the barns recently visited by barnstormers putting together the 2020 Ohio Barn Tour in Preble County.

variety in the barn architecture as well so I'm confident that the 2020 conference attendees will be well-satisfied with the slate of barns they'll see. The barnstormers sifted through about 30 candidate barns to select the cream of the crop for the conference tours. We certainly appreci-

ate Mike Wengler's enthusiasm and deep knowledge of the county's offerings! On behalf of FOB I would like to thank Mike Wengler, Pam Gray, Ric Beck, Dan Troth, and Dave Hamblin for joining me on our barnstorming travels!

By: Alan Walter



On a built-in scale for assessing wagonloads of product, barnstormers (l to r) Alan Walter, Ric Beck, Dave Hamblin, Pam Gray and Dan Troth weigh in as a group.

# Covered Bridges of Preble County



While attending the 2020 Ohio Barn Conference visitors can explore Preble County's covered bridges. One claims to be the oldest in the state of Ohio while another is one of the youngest.

**Left: The Roberts Covered Bridge, crossing Seven Mile Creek three miles south of Eaton, was built in 1829 by Orlistus Roberts, making it the oldest surviving covered bridge in Ohio. The Roberts Covered Bridge, in addition to being the oldest covered bridge in Ohio, claims also to be the second oldest covered bridge in the United States, and the oldest of the six remaining "double-barreled" covered bridges in the United States.**

Image: Preble County Historical Society Facebook Page

**Right: The Roberts Bridge was vandalized and heavily damaged by a fire in 1986. It was restored and relocated. The 90' bridge rests on stone abutments and has three trusses, one in the center and one on each side of the bridge. Each is a multiple kingpost truss encased by two Burr arches. The interior features runners on either side of the three double Burr arches. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.**

Image: <http://preblecountyhomes.com>



Image: [www.users.miamioh.edu](http://www.users.miamioh.edu)

**Above: Built in 1894, the 100 foot long Geeting Bridge spans Prices Creek. The bridge has a shake roof, handsomely gray weathered siding and has a small window on both sides. The Child's truss has a kingpost center panel and crosswise floor planking with two lengthwise runners that exhibit raised grain from so much use. Geeting Bridge is one of the remaining covered bridges in Preble County. All have the Child's truss and were constructed by Evret Sherman. Geeting Bridge has had its share of damage through the years. A windstorm tore the roof from the bridge in 1914. In 1969, a truck ripped some roofing out of the bridge. On several occasions, the floor was crushed from heavy trucks. However, each time the bridge was damaged, it was repaired and is still serving the local traffic. Geeting Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

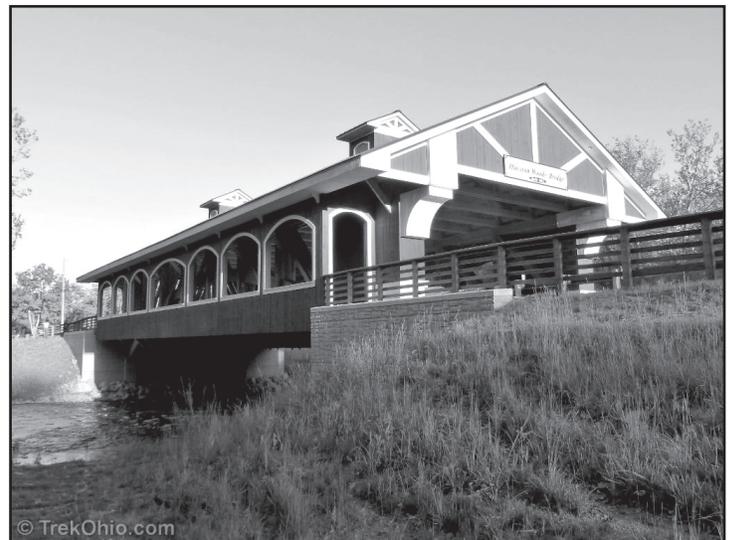


Image: [TrekOhio.com](http://TrekOhio.com)

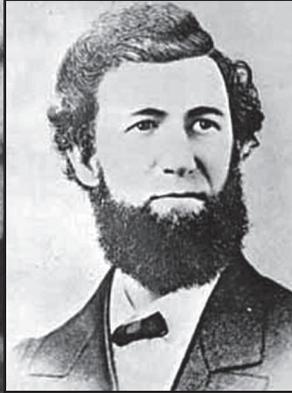
**Above: Hueston Woods Covered Bridge is Preble County's newest covered bridge, completed in 2012. The Burr arch-truss bridge crosses Four Mile Creek on Camden College Corner Road. The bridge was the vision of Preble County Engineer J. Stephen Simmons who told a large crowd at the opening that he hopes he has left families a "legacy" with the new Hueston Woods covered bridge.**

# Preble people



Left: The writer, Sherwood Anderson was born in Camden, Ohio in Preble County in 1876. Self-educated, he rose to become a successful copywriter and business owner in Cleveland. After a nervous breakdown in 1912 he quit his business to become a writer. His most enduring work is the short-story collection *Winesburg, Ohio*, which launched his career. Anderson wrote several novels, numerous short stories, poetry, and lots of non-fiction. He went a long way from Preble County in his career. In 1941, at age 64 Anderson swallowed a toothpick causing peritonitis. He died in Colon, Panama and was buried in Marion, Virginia.

Image - <https://literariness.org>



Left: Composer, Benjamin Hanby, was born in Rushville, Ohio, in Fairfield, County. He moved to Westerville, Ohio in 1849, at the age of sixteen, to enroll at Otterbein University. He was involved in the Underground Railroad with his father, Bishop William Hanby. Benjamin Hanby composed "Darling Nelly Gray" in 1856 in what is now a national historical site, the Hanby House in Westerville. In 1864, Hanby was operating a singing school in New Paris, Ohio, in Preble County, where he composed "Up On The Housetop" as a Christmas sing-along. It was originally titled Santa Claus. At age 33, Hanby died from tuberculosis in Chicago on March 16, 1867. He is buried in Otterbein Cemetery in Westerville.

Image - Wikipedia

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