

## Dawes workshop planned July 9-10

The Summer Barn Repair Workshop will be held the weekend of July 9 at Dawes Arboretum in Licking County. This workshop is a continuation of an earlier project, and will allow participants to be involved in hands-on training as they participate in the structural repairs of this historic building.

In a previous workshop, participants removed the slate roof, removed the siding, cleaned everything, and stacked it neatly inside the barn for future use. They also began repairs to the barn's framework.

The July workshop will focus on sills, post repairs, tie beams, wall girts, and slate roof repair.

A barn tour will follow dinner Saturday evening.

For more information on the workshop and tour, or to fill out the registration form for the workshop, please see page 7 of this newsletter, or visit the Friends of Ohio Barns website.

**Background photo: The Dawes barn, with slate from the additions stacked on pallets in the foreground. Siding and slate were removed from the barn addition by volunteers and skilled craftsmen.**



FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNs

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# The Old BARN POST

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## The midwestern farmer's little village

It looks like a small town sitting on the rise above a meandering stream that courses through the rolling landscape. Large shade trees tower over nearly a dozen buildings nestled safely out of the floodplain and flanked by overgrown crop fields, a small orchard, and cattle grazing on sloping pastures. An extensive stand of trees covers the steepest slopes in the distance.

But a town it is not. It is a family farmstead and its community of outbuildings that create such an illusion. A modest farmhouse and two large barns dominate the compound. These are interspersed with a variety of smaller buildings, some made of wood, some of clay tile. Foundations are a mixture of cut stone, brick, and more ceramic tile. Some roofs are slate, others rusting steel. A dull, silver standing seam metal roof covers the house.

The largest building, a three-bay English threshing barn built into the hillside, is accessible from the basement and from above the bank by a small ramp. Nearby stands another barn. Entering, one finds a crib log structure covered with hardwood siding, now home to unused and outdated farm equipment. Another fairly large building is the old granary with a drive-through corn crib.

An old summer kitchen stands atop the root cellar.

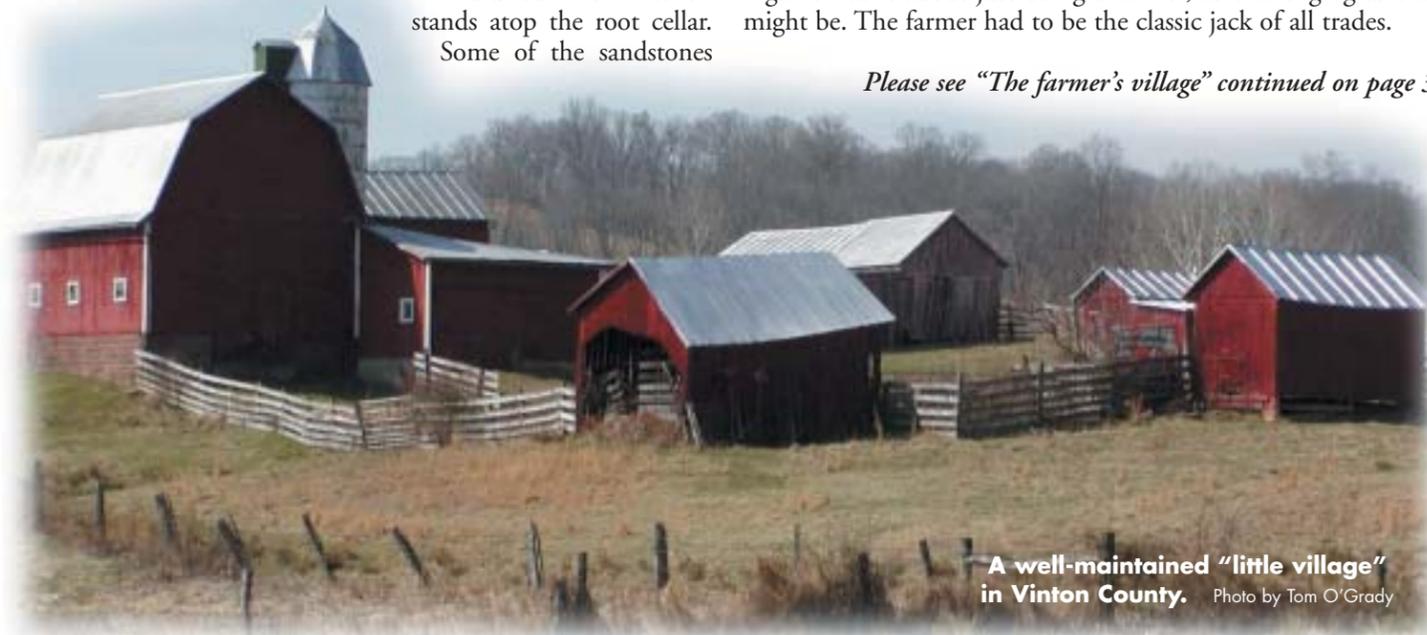
Some of the sandstones

are caving in. Small buildings and attached sheds seem to have once housed various types of livestock and equipment. A decaying chicken coop with several missing panes of glass stands somewhat apart from the cluster of buildings. Off at the base of the hill is the remains of a spring house, water still flowing cool and clear.

The rusted windmill stand is covered with trumpet creeper vine in full bloom, crawling with small insects and frequented by a pair of hummingbirds. An old, long-armed pump stands over the cistern not far from the hand-dug and stone-lined well, now covered with a large flat stone and overgrown with garlic mustard. A pair of beehives are rotting away against the old fence line. The wooden trellis on the front porch is covered with morning glories, but no one is home. Although a neighboring farmer grazes his cattle nearby, no one has been home for years.

It makes one reflect on the hard work of our ancestors. One had to be capable of clearing land, planting and harvesting crops, tending work animals and livestock, building and repairing fences, digging wells and cisterns, processing and preserving foods, and constructing and maintaining a community of buildings. It wasn't about just being a farmer, as challenging as that might be. The farmer had to be the classic jack of all trades.

*Please see "The farmer's village" continued on page 3*



**A well-maintained "little village" in Vinton County.** Photo by Tom O'Grady



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# Patchwork barns piece county's heritage

The Quilt Barns: A Patchwork Path through Athens County is a new tourism project spear-headed by a community of quilters, artists, property owners, civic and social organizations, and businesses working with the Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The goals of the project are to enhance tourism in Athens County, highlight the heritage of Appalachia, and to help bring attention to historical barns in the county. Twenty quilt blocks were selected by the committee and painted by various community groups.

Currently, the Dairy Barn Cultural Arts Center has two unique quilt blocks created specifically for this project. Passion Works of the Athens County Sheltered Workshop painted the Passion Flower for a barn in Albany. The United Seniors of Athens painted the Ohio Star for a barn on US 50. Artisans of Nelsonville will be painting the Starbrick pattern for a barn at Hocking College. And the uniquely created Pawpaw block will be put on an area barn to promote the world's largest Pawpaw Festival in Athens County.

Paint has been graciously provided for this project by a



**The quilt block at the Dairy Barn (Southeastern Ohio Cultural Arts Center) in Athens. The "Patchwork Path" project is being headed up by members of Dairy Barn, Athens County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Rural Action, and others.**

local business; however, more materials are needed to complete the remaining blocks. The committee continues to seek sponsors and barn owners for the project. The Ohio Arts Council provided a grant from the Yellow Root Funds to help jump start the project. For more information, contact the Athens County CVB at 1-800-878-9767 or e-mail Linda Hart at [lhart@athensohio.com](mailto:lhart@athensohio.com).

—Tom O'Grady

## Why barns are disappearing

By Michael Knoll, age 9

Barns across Ohio and the country are disappearing. Lots of barns are disappearing because the farmers that own them don't have enough money to spend to repair the barns. There are other reasons too, like decay, suburban sprawl, fires, and changes in farming equipment.

Also, people are tearing down the barns and taking the wood to use it in new buildings. The old wood is so valuable that salvage dealers are knocking on doors and taking out newspaper ads offering to tear down obsolete barns.

Some are also offering to tear down barns so they can move them to California and rebuild them for things like art galleries and wineries. People in Ohio take barns for granted. However, in California, people will pull over in their cars when they see an old barn and say, "Cool."

Some people are trying to save barns are, like "Friends of Ohio Barns" and other organizations. They are doing this because barns are history to us. We don't want to lose them. If they do disappear, our grandchildren and great grandchildren will never see barns except in books.

*Thank you again (to FOB) for your help and support regarding this project. You helped to open the eyes of my nine-year-old son and the eyes of many other people, too. Now we cheer when we are driving around and see a beautiful barn. None of us take them for granted.*

*Most Sincerely,*

*Jeff and Mary Knoll, and Michael Knoll*



**Michael Knoll made vanishing barns the focus of a school project. The Knolls live in Summit County.**

# Barn repair workshop set for July 9-10

Friends of Ohio Barns is pleased to announce the Summer Barn Repair Workshop. From the foundation to the roof, many of our historic timber-framed structures are in need of repairs. This workshop, a continuation of an earlier project at Dawes Arboretum in Licking County, will allow participants to be involved in hands-on training as they participate in the structural repairs of this historic building.

A special addition to the Summer 2005 Workshop is the inclusion of a barn tour featuring "Barn Detectives" Larry Sulzer and Rudy Christian.

The barn workshop will be held the weekend of July 9 and 10 with scheduled repairs to include sills, post repair, replacing a tie beam and wall girts as well as slate roof repair. The original barn, built around 1900, was changed by the addition of two bents in later years as the farm grew and storage needs increased. This addition fell into disrepair, caused in part by alteration to the frame, a change needed to accommodate yet more changing agricultural practices. If nothing had been done to correct the failing frame, this agricultural icon would have joined hundreds like it, becoming a pile of rotting rubble.

Workshop participants are encouraged to bring their framing tools, slate roofing tools and a desire to learn some of the recommended techniques necessary to repair these magnificent structures. If you are a beginner and don't have all the tools necessary, this will be a great time to learn what tools are needed and how to correctly use them to do your own repairs.

Several professional timber framing experts will be involved in this hands-on workshop.



Photo by Tom O'Grady

**The Dawes Barn the day after the first workshop. The slate roof and hardwood siding have been removed, cleaned and stored in the barn for reuse.**

The barn tour will follow dinner Saturday evening. We will tour a large bank barn with a unique vent system as described by Steve Gordon of the Ohio Historical Society at the Barn Again! workshop in Westerville. Other barns include a barn utilized as a nursery on an early 1900s dairy farm, a 25-by-40-foot barn used to house sheep, and a large gambrel roof barn used in a cow/calf operation.

The evening meal and barn tour is included with the workshop fee, and is open to non-workshop participants for a reduced fee.

Those not wishing to attend the entire workshop may want to spend the afternoon touring the adjacent arboretum's expansive woody plant collections including trees and shrubs from throughout the

world. A narrated wagon tour of the grounds will be held on Saturday, boarding at the Visitors Center at 2 p.m. Following the wagon tour, visitors may wish to tour the Daweswood House Museum prior to joining workshop participants for dinner and the barn tour.

Cost for workshop participants is \$75 and includes hands-on instruction, lunch, dinner, the barn tour on Saturday and lunch on Sunday. Cost of the Saturday evening meal and barn tour for non-workshop participants is \$25.

This workshop offers an excellent opportunity for both the hands-on person and those who want to understand how to hire the work to be done on their barn.

—Tim Mason

## Registration for Friends of Ohio Barns Summer Workshop

(Registration forms are also available on the FOB website.)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

### Workshop, meals, and barn tour:

Number of participants \_\_\_\_ x \$75 = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Saturday evening meal and barn tour only:

Number of participants \_\_\_\_ x \$25 = Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Send completed form with check to: Friends of Ohio Barns, PO Box 203, Burbank, Ohio 44214. For more information on this workshop please visit Friends website: <http://ohiobarns.osu.edu>. For information and directions to The Dawes Arboretum visit their website at <http://www.dawesarb.org> or phone 1-800-44DAWES.

# Ask the BARN DETECTIVES

By Larry Sulzer

**Q.** Why is the foundation wall bowing in the area around and below the earthen ramp on my bank barn?

**A.** Usually this condition is caused by earth pressure and water. These two major factors account for approximately 85 percent of the problems. It was very common during the 1800s and into the early 1900s to push dirt up to the barn for a ramp and/or build it into a hillside. The compaction of the soil from animals and machinery in conjunction with poor drainage along the exterior face of the foundation wall over time will lead to its demise.

A common approach to correcting this condition would be to modify the earthen ramp with a concrete pad and provide for positive drainage along the buried exterior face of the foundation wall. This can be accomplished by installing six-inch perforated drainage tile at the base of the wall and backfilling a trench with gravel to within nine inches of grade. In the area directly below the new apron, backfill with gravel at a 45 degree angle from the base of the foundation wall. Then pour a new eight-inch reinforced concrete apron, nine inches below finished grade. Notch the apron five inches into

the existing wall and provide a slope of one-quarter inch per foot and then cover with soil.

**Q.** My gutters/downspouts are old and in disrepair. Should they be replaced even if I have a large overhang?

**A.** YES! Most barns do not have adequate foundation drainage and water has a tendency to collect along the exterior face of the wall. Saturated soil is susceptible to the freeze and thaw cycles that impact foundations. Also, we find that the grade around the barn will change over time and therefore might not provide for positive drainage away from the structure. So always make sure the grade falls away from the barn.

Gutters, downspouts and the associated hardware should be part of your regular maintenance and checked on a yearly basis for damage, blockage and proper alignment. If one wants to explore another option to remove water, a "French drainage system" can be installed. This system consists of perforated pipe in a gravel bed below grade and underneath the drip-line of the roof overhang. It is then either tied into a dry well and/or drained to daylight.

## Dessert bar inspires those with a taste for barns

The Ashland County Barns and Rural Heritage Society recently invited the public to a photo display of the 1,400-plus barns that have been surveyed and documented in our local Ashland County Historical Society. Approximately 200 guests enjoyed a dessert bar, partaking in a silent auction of donated items, registering for door prizes, and entering a raffle for a chance to win a barn dating and assessment by Rudy Christian.

The importance of the event was demonstrated by the many questions that were asked, the corrections that were given, and several people giving us photos and information on barns that were missed in our survey. Also, seeing many people spending an hour or more intently viewing and studying the photos one by one was very satisfying to our organization.

Possibly the biggest highlight of the day was having a number of retired area farmers spend several hours talking to each other as well as the many "eavesdroppers" that would pause to listen about our local rural heritage (and who knows what else). To see young and old alike show that much interest was very satisfying. (We wish we could have recorded all of those conversations.)

— Bob and Nancy Rowland

## National Barn Alliance comes to Ohio

The National Barn Alliance is made up of representatives of organizations located nationwide that are concerned for the future of America's historic barns. The group meets once a year to network and share information from the states that participate and hold conference calls each month. For the past four years, the annual meeting has been held in Chicago and included only those representatives. Rudy Christian, Ann Christy, Steve Gordon and Laura Saeger have been representing our state and Friends of Ohio Barns during that time.

In 2005 the NBA came to Westerville, Ohio and for the first time the meeting was open to anyone who cared enough about barns to come. The workshop was appropriately held at the rehabilitated Everal Barn, which is an inspiring venue for barn presentations. The workshop and barn tour took place on Monday with presentations by Christina Wilkinson, Steve Gordon, Rudy Christian, Mike Woodford and Ann Christy. Displays included Michigan's Barn of the Year awards, Friends of Ohio Barns and its workshops, the Ashland County barn photos, artist Linda McFarlin and book sales.

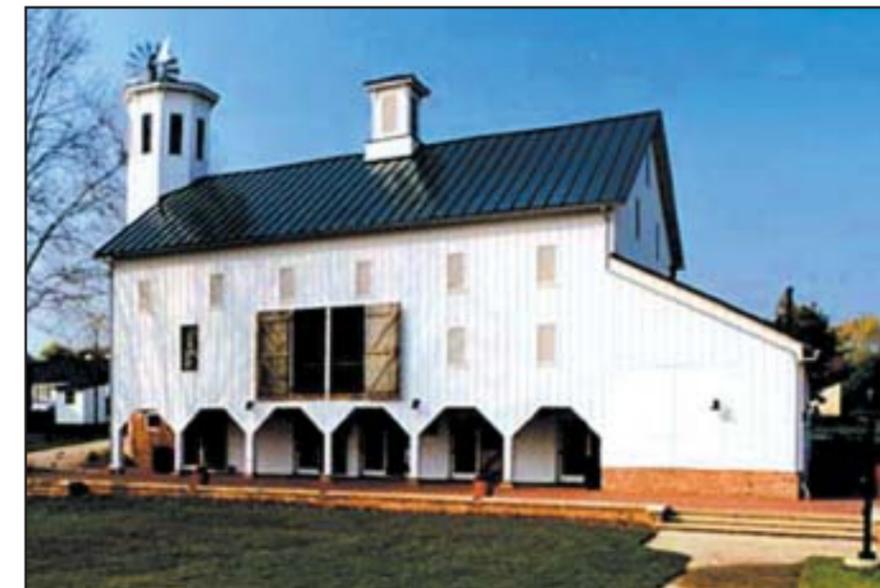
The annual meeting took place the following day and one very interesting topic discussed was the effort of John Olson, who is the Barn Again! program director for the National Trust, and Rod Scott of Iowa to make a barn survey form available online. This data compiled on a nationwide level could really give us a better picture of the health of our barns and be useful in our fight to help save more barns. We have our friends in the Michigan Barn Preservation Network to thank for sharing their survey process to help get the Ohio county surveys started. We are very proud that the Ashland County survey efforts were instrumental in contributing to the online form.

In addition to the online survey news, Rod Scott reported that the Iowa State Historical Society is creating an exhibit honoring barns and family farms as well as using a timber frame model similar to the one raised at the 2004 Ohio Barn Conference as a traveling exhibit.

Our connection with and support of the National Barn Alliance creates many opportunities to network with other states and their programs to save barns.

— Laura Saeger

*Note: To learn more about the National Barn Alliance and their mission statement visit [www.uwex.edu/lgc/barns/nbahome.htm](http://www.uwex.edu/lgc/barns/nbahome.htm).*



The Everal Barn

## The farmer's village (Continued from page 1)

The barn is an important icon worth preserving. But the farmstead is a larger story with many more chapters. Each building has its own story. The tools within have sagas of their own.

Weathered and worn leather harnesses, twine from long gone hay bales, rusting milk cans, and the broken grindstone are all characters in the story of the farmstead.

The half dozen empty Mason jars hanging on the jar tree and those lying on the floor of the root cellar all represent seasons of activity in which earlier Ohioans put by their harvest stores. We would do well to do a bit more preserving ourselves, starting with Ohio farmsteads and the culture of farming, for the future of Ohio. Such is the challenge of Friends of Ohio Barns and its supporters.

— Tom O'Grady

*"I built those stalls and that shed there; I am barber, leech and doctor. I am a weaver, a shoemaker, farrier, wheelwright, farmer, gardener, and when it can't be helped, a soldier."*

— *Travels in the Confederation, 1783*

## New members welcome!

Would you like to help preserve Ohio's rural heritage? You can, by becoming a member of Friends of Ohio Barns!

Membership fees:

Individual	\$40
Family	\$60
Seniors and students	\$35
Lifetime	\$400

All members receive this quarterly newsletter, as well as discounts for the annual conference and barn tour.

## Help wanted!

Reliable, experienced and practicing contractors, artisans, craftsmen and consultants — we need you!

Friends of Ohio Barns wants to expand our resource list of people throughout the state to help our great barn stewards.

If you know of anyone in your area who would qualify with experience as a timber framer, roofer, stonemason, barn repair specialist, backhoe operator, barn lifting and bracing expert, barn dismantler or mover, or restoration specialist, please contact Friends of Ohio Barns, and we will add them to our list.

If you would be interested in being a part of this resource list, let us know, and welcome aboard!

If you or anyone you know would just like to volunteer their time with this organization, please contact Friends of Ohio Barns at PO Box 203, Burbank, Ohio 44214 or e-mail [friendsohiobarns@aol.com](mailto:friendsohiobarns@aol.com).

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# Sixth Ohio Barn Conference proves best yet

Ohio Barn Conference VI, held at Salt Fork State Park, was the best yet. Co-sponsored by the Timber Framers' Guild, there was no down time.

The conference began with the popular tour of barns and historic structures including a covered bridge, an S-bridge on the old National Road, a log home in New Concord, a brick home in Cambridge and a farm with an old stone house. The tour packed a lot of Ohio's built heritage into one day.

OBC VI was attended by people involved in historic preservation and barn and bridge restoration from several states including New York, Massachusetts, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and others. Presentations by guild members, local historians, the Barn Detectives, and others went well into the evening with many stories and impressive photos of restoration efforts of barns, covered bridges, churches, houses and other structures.

Attendees had a demonstration on log hewing by Michael Burry from Massachusetts and a review of log construction in the Ohio country and the history of water pow-

ered saw mills by author Donald Hutslar. Other presentations included Rudy Christian on the restoration and rehabilitation of the Malabar Farm working barn in Mansfield,



**FOB members take part in a log hewing demonstration at the sixth annual Ohio Barn Conference. The conference, held this year at Salt Fork State Park in Guernsey County, offers a combination of seminars, workshops, and activities to allow members to learn more about historic structures and their histories, construction and preservation.**

Ohio; Larry Sulzer on the one-of-a-kind built-in hay press barn along the Ohio River; Brian Mulcahy on locating and documenting barns with the use of global positioning systems; Jan Lewandoski on the repair and restoration of covered bridges in New England; Jack Sobon on appropriate repair and joinery techniques; Arnold Graton on the St. Helena's Church Project in South

Carolina; Aaron Sturgis with a case study on barn repair; and Russell Booth on local history in Guernsey County. Steve Gordon, from the Ohio Historical Society, gave a review of the history of barns in Ohio.

It was refreshing to see that so much good work is being done to restore and protect historic structures in spite of widespread sprawl, development and the neglect of the heritage of America's built environment.

With the help of the Timber Framers' Guild, Friends of Ohio Barns set a new bar for the annual barn conference.

— Tom O'Grady



**Members offload the tour buses at the Oliver Farm, the second stop on the barn tour.**

## Ringers glean bits of barn history by sharing their farm

It was a warm February morning and two men who introduced themselves as Ric and Tim stopped at our house. We sat on our enclosed back porch and talked and within minutes the conversation turned to a discussion of barns and to an organization called Friends of Ohio Barns. I was not familiar with the group but within a few minutes I certainly was. Two more enthusiastic spokesmen for any organization would be hard to find.

There is on Twin Sisters Farm a barn which, according to family legend, was built circa 1894, give or take a year or two. Ric and Tim asked if they might go in for a closer look, explaining that there was soon to be a conference of people interested in old barns at Salt Fork State Park and that they were looking for barns which might be of interest to attendees at the conference. The barn is sitting pretty much vacant, not a good thing, but making it easy to examine the construction. I knew only that timber frame construction methods were used when it was built, but after a half hour of

intensive tutoring I must say that I knew more of its history than anyone except the builders. The barn is actually owned by Ha Ringer, my brother, and I suggested that they should contact him for permission to put it on the tour. A deal was struck and it was placed on the 2005 barn tour.

March 18 arrived, and with it two tour buses carrying 92 people. The buses themselves were enough to create quite a stir in our rural neighborhood, but having 92 people descend upon our farmstead at one time and having them go in and out and about the buildings and the barn was a special event for us. Other than the occasional footprint, we would never have known that there had been visitors on the property.

The group was kind enough to invite us to lunch at the conference on Saturday and our only regret is that we were not able to meet more people and become better acquainted with them. Hopefully our visitors enjoyed the tour of our farm. From the comments of some that we met, they did. I remember telling someone that if they come back to visit next summer we will sit on the front porch, drink iced tea and bore them to distraction with local history and family legend. Who says history is not interesting?

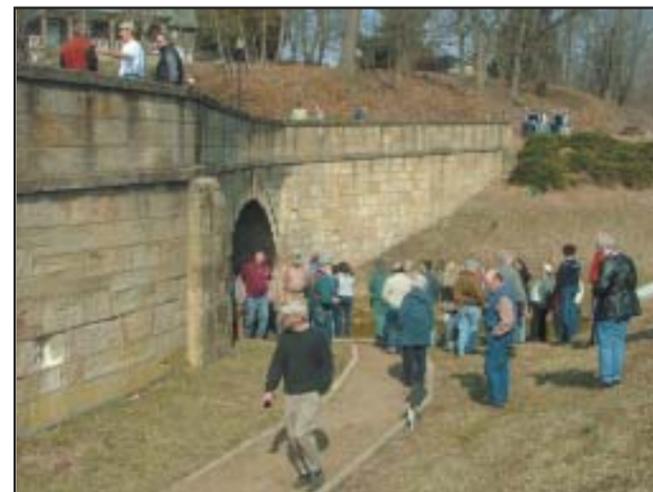
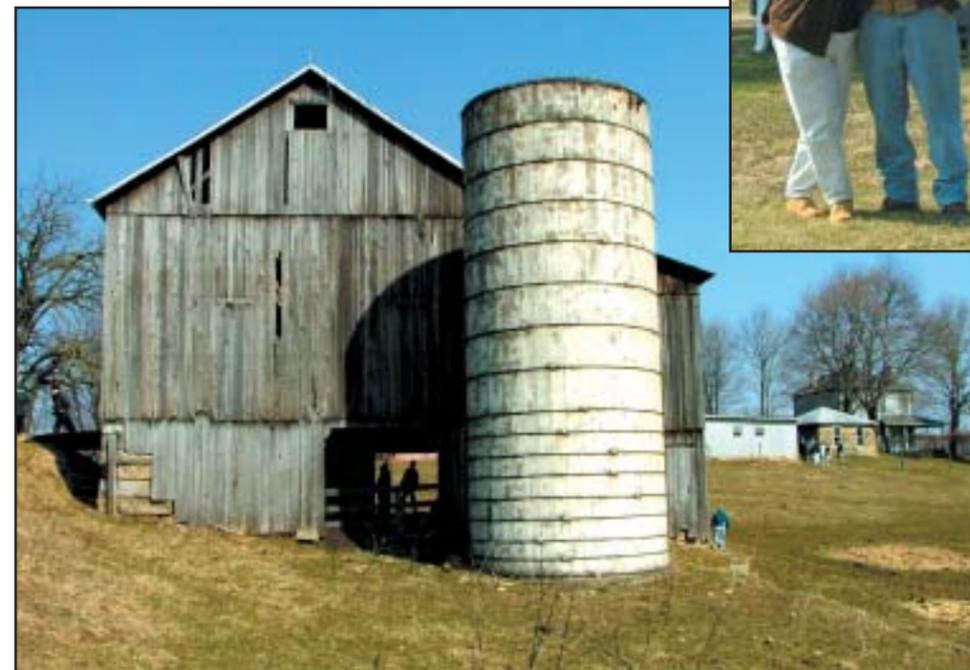
— Don Ringer

*Note: Don and his wife Mary Lou were very gracious hosts who also shared information on local history complete with photos that added more interest to the tour. We'd like to thank them once again along with our other tour hosts in Guernsey County — Tom and Georgia Mosser, Ralph and Gerri Oliver, Russell Booth and George St. Clair — for contributing to a really great barn tour!*



**Left — Barn tour group members stroll around the pasture and inspect the three-bay Yankee bank barn at the Ringer farmstead.**

**Insert — Don and Mary Lou Ringer graciously hosted two busloads of people for an hour or so on their farm and in their barns.**



**Above — During the barn tour, FOB members inspect one of the three remaining S bridges on the old National Road in Guernsey County.**

**Left — Barn tour members visit the Indian Camp covered bridge during one of the stops on the Guernsey County barn tour.**

All photos by Tom O'Grady