



The Old BARN POST

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Conference and Tour Recap 2024

Well, I would have to say that this was one of the best Friends of Ohio Barn conferences we have ever had! We were fortunate to have had beautiful blue skies and warm weather for the Friday barn tour with quite a variety of barns and a Saturday conference filled with interesting speakers and topics. A multitude of thanks go to our Local Hero Kim Jurkovic who serves as the Curator at the Tuscarawas County Historical Society and as the Local History Librarian at the Dover Public Library. Kim was indispensable as our Hero in bringing this conference together.

Many people enjoyed the Thursday program which consisted of a guided tour of the Ernest Warther Museum & Gardens followed by a self-guided tour of the Reeves Museum that concluded with a wine tasting provided by the Han's Place Winery.

Tuscarawas County did not disappoint with their variety of barns. This year we had three buses due to logistics at the last barn stop so therefore we had three Docents. I was on the bus with David Hipp and enjoyed his commentary while I expect that the other Docents, Mark McKenzie and Alan Deibel, also entertained their bus occupants. We greatly appreciate their time and expertise in all things Tuscarawas!

Our first stop was the Steam Valley Farm owned by the Steel Family. This barn was awarded the 2024 FOB Barn of the Year Award for Agricultural use. This has been a working dairy farm since 1913. Our Barn Detective, Rudy Christian, pointed out that the tight circular saw marks indicated the barn was built in the

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Above: Steam Valley Barn, built in 1913 on the footprint of an earlier barn that burned. For a time this dairy had its own bottling operation and milk route.



Left: Farm art. Wagon wheel and hay bale sculpture in a corner of the Steam Valley Barn.

Images: Photos by Gary Clower

CALEB'S CORNER

Seven years ago, we (JCM Timberworks) began a project for the Davey Tree Corporation when they bought the Kent State Golf Course which is adjacent to their corporate headquarters with the intention of turning the property into the training headquarters for their company. The first thing they had to do upon purchasing the property was remove the large barn near the entrance due to the insurance company's requirements. This moment in time was a perfect storm for us as we had just begun a relationship with Ric Beck, Rudy Christian, and Laura Saeger, with whom we still work on projects. This was the first of many projects with the burgeoning collective.

My understanding was that Davey Tree's initial intent was to demolish the barn. Somewhere along the way one of the Vice Presidents, who is a friend of Ric's, mentioned what they were doing. Ric took the opportunity to pitch the idea of saving the barn in a repurposed capacity. Once it was determined that the construction of the barn happened in close to the time of the founding of Davey Tree, it became an easy sell to convince them to integrate the behemoth of a barn into their future plans.

The footprint of the 40' x 90' barn originally had a gabled roof structure. Like many barns of its era the gabled roof was pushed up into a gambrel roof to accommodate the increasing demands for hay storage. The size and condition made of the barn made it an ideal candidate to become integrated into their projected campus for training and education.

As the years passed, just about the time we would forget about this future job of reconstruction the conversations would reach us about their status and needs for more wood and material. A year ago it became obvious that the rebuilding of this barn was going to become a reality, so we began to prepare. All the repairs and modifications were completed this winter at our shop. In May we began the process of rebuilding it on a commercial construction site.

At the time of writing this we have technically completed the building of the frame but are still doing a little troubleshooting with the company who is enclosing the frame in SIP panels. According to Davey Tree VP, Dan Joy, the space will be used as a conference space for the training center as well as corporate shareholder meetings.

Caleb Miller



Image by: Caleb Miller

Timber framed barn from the turn of the last century that is being repurposed to be a part of the Davey Tree Company for the coming century.

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1900's not the 1800's because they had bigger blades back then. This hay barn has canted purlins and a hay track. They had to install rods and cables early on as the barn roof was sagging. The Amish were hired at some point to install a bow string truss to stop the bowing of the sides. This barn also sports a fish belly tie also called a swell beam.

Stop number two was the German style forebay barn called the Christian Pershing Red Barn at the Norma Johnson Center. This is a "pieces/parts building" as it consists of a lot of parts that have empty mortise pockets which means they were most likely brought in from several other barns. Also, there are pieces that are circular sawn, sash sawn and hand hewn not to mention all the half lap joinery. Nonetheless it is a beautiful example of a large (42' x 90') barn with its sixty-four original louvers. It is fortunate that the roof of this barn is covered with Vermont slate which can last up to 400 years. It was identified as Vermont and not Pennsylvania slate by the lack of slate chips on the floor or areas of chipping on the underside of the roof that normally could easily be seen. Each of the four drive bays had a king post truss above the door. This barn had several dendrochronology dates which correlate to the pieces/parts aspect of the barn. Marsha Freeland from the center spoke about the barn's history.

Hungry participants enjoyed a delicious lunch that was served at the Dutch Valley Restaurant which was our number three stop.

The Barn at Dayton Woods, stop number four, is the winner of the 2024 FOB Barn of the Year Award for Stewardship. This barn originally was a small barn, maybe even a carriage house. However, it does have a thick splined floor so it could have been built as a threshing barn. It had been built in many stages with the last stage creating two outshot sheds. It has quite a history in its transition to the current form and it is great that it has been in the family for several generations. There were double ties, but the top ties were removed for the wooden hay track to work. This barn had the first bale spear or harpoon that I have seen hanging off a hay track. There was a large floor tie and when asked by Rudy as to what it was Mike Wengler offered "a tripping hazard". I am not sure we heard a feasible answer. One of the cut sandstone foundation rocks has the initials F E for Fred Eckert, the great, great, great grandfather of Scott Dayton's wife, Heather, plus the date of 1853 which makes it one of the earliest barns in the county. What a great story.

Stop number 5 was the Youngen Family barn. This was the first barn that we saw on the tour that had straight purlins and not canted purlins. It is also the first barn that we saw pole rafters that are most likely 100 years old and possibly the heaviest timbers in the barn according to Rudy.



John Steel, owner of the Steam Valley Barn accepts the Barn of the Year Award for Agricultural Use.

He determined that this barn was added on to because of the tear drop rafters on the door side of the barn and a shed off the front that had different widths of rafters. This Sweitzer barn is a beauty with twenty-eight 40' floor joists of massive proportions and huge pegs. Built in the 1840s by a pioneer family that lived on the second floor of the lath and plaster finished spring house while they built the barn and their house. Another fabulous example of a historic farm and homestead.

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Group photo of 2024 Ohio Barn Tour attendees at the Christian Pershing Barn at the Norma Johnson Center, a 300 acre Conservation and ecology education facility.

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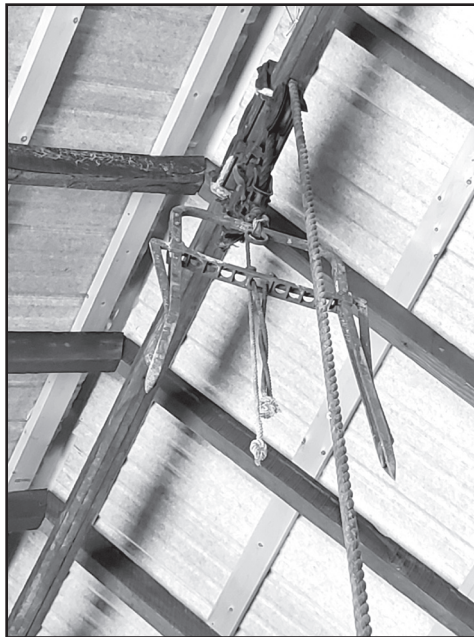
Where were you Doug Reed? We had a double-crib log barn on this tour. Stop number 6 is a barn you would have loved! This “crudely built log structure” was a gem. There was no intention to put clinking or dabbing in this barn when it was built as air flow was desirable for curing the hay. This Sweitzer barn had an extremely low-pitched roof that had started to spread after the tie beams were cut for the hay track to work. This was the only metal hay track on this year’s tour. Original pole rafters, wire nails, and saddle notches are some of the unique features of this barn. Dendrochronology results for the east and west cribs were 1846 and, if I heard correctly, the oldest ring on the east end was noted as 1647. Maybe it was 1847. Someone might know which year it was. The Hisrich Hills Houses & ArtFarm barn was the winner of the 2024 FOB Barn of the Year Award for Adaptive Re-use.

Saturday’s conference was held at the Buckeye Career Center. Entertainment with lots of history and facts seemed to be the name of the game this year. Seth Angel and John Wallace, while dressed in period clothes and accompanied by Josh Compton on guitar, started the conference off with a back-and-forth presentation of stories of the Moravian missionaries in Ohio and how these people helped shape the culture of the area. Kim, our Local Hero, followed up with a talk about the memorial stones in the Ragersville Cemetery. Kim showed many pictures of the symbols that embellish the stones such as hands, weeping willows, shields, open books as well as the Victorian era symbols of urns, obelisks, orbs and columns. Kim confessed that she is a taphophile, one that is interested in cemeteries, gravestones, and their history. That means our own Tom O’Grady is a taphophile too! Tom has been known to be late to a conference because he was inspecting a local cemetery along the way.

Next was Jon Baker. Jon has been in the newspaper business most all his adult career and has written four books on local history. He spoke about the railroad coming to town and all that came with it. Many stories were told of the area including crime stories, stories of well know actresses and stories of the Salvation Army Canteen. It was obvious that Jon knew the area well and was enthusiastic and beaming while telling stories. Talk about



Rudy Christian (at far right) in the Pershing Barn basement discussing the giant timbers that make up the floor system.



The bale spear or harpoon on the hay track in the Dayton Barn, one of the earliest barns in Tuscarawas County.

a story.... Caleb Miller told a tale, a good one at that, about a full circle family adventure. His great grandfather, Oscar Miller, was photographed working on a barn as a timber framer back in the day. The picture wound up in Caleb’s hands as well as the tools that Oscar had used. Caleb started his timber framing business



FOB board member Alan Walter, FOB Pres. Caleb Miller, and Mike Wengler taking in some shade beneath the overhanging forebay of the Pennsylvania German style bank barn at the Norma Johnson Center.

with his brother, John, in 2018 and used these tools in his first job. In 2019 Caleb found the barn in the picture that Oscar worked on. It was John Steal’s barn! The first barn on our tour this year! Caleb’s story is just one of those that make you think and reflect. According to Caleb “sometimes the coincidences in life are

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really cool.” I would agree with that statement.

After lunch the Barn Detectives did their thing and made us all laugh with their comments on the pictures from the barn tour. As usual they were very entertaining. And then there was Tom O’Grady. Do total eclipses of the sun have anything to do with barns he questioned? No. But did the audience care? No. Because listening to Tom talk about anything is simply captivating. Rapid fire presentation as usual because he confessed to me that the talk he gave us usually fits in a 90-minute slot, not 45. Nonetheless he gave us what we needed to hear and that is that a lot of time and effort has gone into recording and predicting eclipses throughout human history. We all know Tom loves the solar system as much as he loves barns!

The final speaker of the day was David Kridler, a stonemason with years of experience. Not only did David show us pictures and explained techniques, but he also gave out a lot of advice. Don’t use large stones on the bottom as it will influence the potential lean of a wall. Don’t count on the mortar as the wall should be able to stand without it. Pick marks on sandstone that are fuzzy indicate water damage. The placement of every stone is important including the backfilling of loose pieces. Most important? Make every stone count and we need more sequential thinking. Overall, it was a packed schedule of interesting speakers and none disappointed.

Of course, we had the annual member meeting during lunch at which time we heard from the 2023 Barn Conservation Grant recipients on their projects. Sherri and Jeff Bailey and Dan and Rachael Haas talked about what they have done to their barns. Spring Hill Granary was not present. FOB awarded the 2024 Barn Conservation Grant to the Hacker Farm and the whole family was there to accept the “big” check. We look forward to their presentation next year!

The big highlight of the Member Meeting was the acknowledgement of Laura Saeger for her 23 years of service to the organization. Heartfelt speeches with tears were given by Dan Troth, Ric Beck and Tom O’Grady. Laura was met with a standing ovation after her speech which was as genuine as she is. FOB has been extremely lucky to have had many hard-working board members, but Laura takes the cake in all that she has done being treasurer and so much more from day one. It would take a lot of keystrokes to type out all that she has accomplished while in office but suffice to say that Friends of Ohio Barns would not be the organization it is today without her guidance. She will be missed as a mainstay on the board, but we know that she will be close by and always available if and when needed. At least we hope so.

By: Sarah Woodall



Left: FOB Vice President, Dan Troth in the Dayton Barn explaining.



Right: FOB VP Dan Troth presents Scott and Heather Dayton with the Barn of the Year Award for Stewardship.



Left: FOB VP Dan Troth, former FOB President Rick Beck and Tom O’Grady with outgoing, retiring FOB Treasurer Laura Saeger.

Old Barn Reborn as New Barn

The Leesburg Dairy Barn recently opened in this early 1800's timber frame barn in Highland County. The original structure came from Hamerville, Ohio in central Brown County. It was saved by The Barn and Cabin Friend in 2022. It has now begun its' new life as the Leesburg Dairy Barn serving smash burgers and soft serve ice cream treats to its guests. All involved hope that it will serve the community for another 200 years in downtown Leesburg, Ohio.

Hand hewn timbers with the mortice and tenon joinery give a certain amount of character to this new eatery in Southwestern Ohio. What better way to expose the general public to this traditional building style than to serve them burgers and ice cream!



Exposed timber framing on the inside of the "new dairy barn" and outdoor seating in the "barnyard."

Photos by FOB member
Raymond Friend



The House with Nobody in It

Whenever I walk to Suffern along the Erie track
I go by a poor old farmhouse with its shingles broken and black.
I suppose I've passed it a hundred times, but I always stop for a minute
And look at the house, the tragic house, the house with nobody in it.

I never have seen a haunted house, but I hear there are such things;
That they hold the talk of spirits, their mirth and sorrowings.
I know this house isn't haunted, and I wish it were, I do;
For it wouldn't be so lonely if it had a ghost or two.

This house on the road to Suffern needs a dozen panes of glass,
And somebody ought to weed the walk and take a scythe to the grass.
It needs new paint and shingles, and the vines should be trimmed and tied;
But what it needs the most of all is some people living inside.

If I had a lot of money and all my debts were paid
I'd put a gang of men to work with brush and saw and spade.
I'd buy that place and fix it up the way it used to be
And I'd find some people who wanted a home and give it to them free.

Now, a new house standing empty, with staring window and door,
Looks idle, perhaps, and foolish, like a hat on its block in the store.
But there's nothing mournful about it; it cannot be sad and lone
For the lack of something within it that it has never known.



Mudhouse in Fairfield County. Demolished in 2015. Source: Wikipedia

But a house that has done what a house should do, a house that has sheltered life,
That has put its loving wooden arms around a man and his wife,
A house that has echoed a baby's laugh and held up his stumbling feet,
Is the saddest sight, when it's left alone, that ever your eyes could meet.

So whenever I go to Suffern along the Erie track
I never go by the empty house without stopping and looking back,
Yet it hurts me to look at the crumbling roof and the shutters fallen apart,
For I can't help thinking the poor old house is a house with a broken heart.

By: Joyce Kilmer (1886-1918)

Backward Glance at Ohio Barns



Left: Round barn on a tobacco farm near Middletown, Ohio in Butler County circa 1930. Source: George C. Crout Collection, Mid-pointe Library System, Middletown, Ohio

Right: P.Z. Blue's farm in Henry County, Ohio. Located about five miles from Hamler. A small community of out-buildings and a windmill join the old house with two front porches located where Ohio's Great Black Swamp once dominated the landscape.



Left: The old Kornmiller barn (circa 1887-1895), a Pennsylvania German bank barn with a posted forebay in Hocking County. Ohio cultural geographer, Dr. Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, identified State Route 180 in Hocking County as the southern limit of the occurrence of the Pennsylvania German barn in Ohio. This barn burned to the ground after being struck by lightning in 1970.

2024 FOB Fall Picnic in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park



Octagon Shelter at Virginia Kendall Unit of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park built by the CCC. Source: www.conservancyforcvnp

On Saturday, October 5th Friends of Ohio Barns will gather at noon and eat at 12:30pm at the Octagon Shelter in the Virginia Kendall State Park unit of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park located at 499 Truxell Road, Peninsula, Ohio 44264.

According to the National Park Service brochure the shelter was constructed of American Chestnut and locally quarried stone by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

After lunch attendees will caravan 11 miles through Cuyahoga Valley National Park to the Brecksville Nature Center at 9000 Chippewa Creek Drive,

FOB will provide the meat, condiments, place settings, and bottled water for the picnic. Please bring a dish to share.

Those planning to attend need to make reservations with Dave Hamblin by September 20 at 419-947-1360 or daveh2949@centurylink.net.

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FRIENDS OF OHIO BARNs
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