



The Old BARN POST

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Barnstorming: An American Tradition

Somewhere over the past decade the process of putting together the annual Ohio Barn Tour has been labeled barnstorming. That, in a way, is what happens. A team of board members and other helpers identify possible candidates for the tour and then knock on doors and, when permission is granted, as it usually is, the barn infiltrated, investigated, and evaluated. Once inside the barn the team begins the estimating, postulating and guesstimating, and gesticulating.

All this is not very different from the early tradition of barnstorming during political campaigns. Barnstorming's meaning was derived from the campaign practice of using barns as settings for spirited campaign speeches meant to invigorate political supporters. This phenomenon temporarily turned the nation's barns into farmyard pulpits. While there may have been considerably less investigating and evaluating no doubt plenty of placating, speculating, fabricating, prevaricating, predicating and prognosticating, occurred in those barns followed by some amount of ruminating and regurgitating.

Another early form of barnstorming was a popular form of entertainment in the United States in the 1920s, in which stunt pilots would perform tricks with airplanes, either individually or in groups called a flying circus. Barnstorming was the first major form of civil aviation in the history of flight. The term barnstormer was also applied to pilots who flew throughout the country selling airplane rides, usually operating from a farmer's field for a day

or two before moving on. The barnstorming season ran from early spring until after the harvest and county fairs in the fall.

Barnstorming in Ohio today is the process used by Friends of Ohio Barns whereby a team scouts for barns in the area of the upcoming conference and makes an effort to string a half dozen of them together for the upcoming barn tour. The use of a plane in our barnstorming process to plan the annual barn tour seems like it might help us find a few otherwise overlooked gems. Since we do much of our barnstorming after the harvest maybe we can get one of these idle pilots to help us in the planning of our annual Ohio Barn Tour.

Tom O'Grady

Pictured: This Southern barn, with gable end entry, owned by Mitch and Cathe Blower has a mixture of sawn and hewn framing timbers. There appeared to be an inordinately large amount of wood and bracing in an otherwise relatively small barn on this circa 1853 farm.

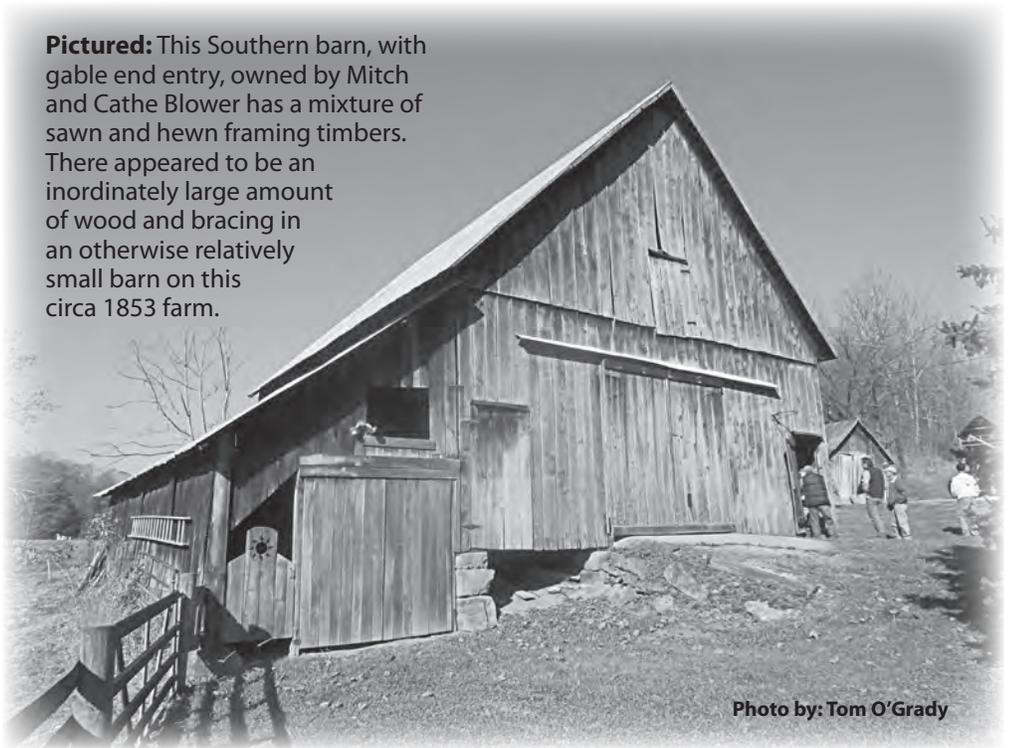


Photo by: Tom O'Grady

Tis the season for giving thanks!

Well the election is over, the holiday season is upon us and it's time for reflection and giving thanks. I would like to start by saying thanks to the hard working board of directors who give their all to ensure our members are happy with this organization.

Thanks to the volunteers that helped us make it another successful year. Thanks to those terrific folks who donated money to our cause, so that we can do more to help you.

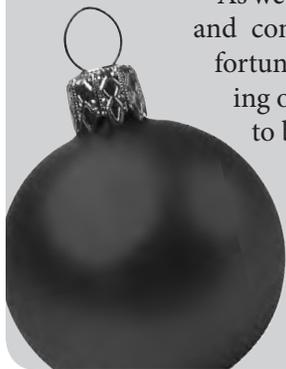
We are already at work on this spring's conference in Athens County. We hope to have a few new wrinkles to the program, and are sure you will be a happy visitor to south east Ohio!

Plans for the endowment funds continue to take shape and we hope to have news of that soon. We are also hoping to utilize the new tabletop barn model more in presentations to groups, so if you know of organizations, schools, clubs, etc that might enjoy learning more about barns, please contact us.

As we get set to begin a new year with hope and confidence, let's remember those less fortunate than us, work to be more forgiving of ourselves and others, and continue to be good stewards of our Ohio Barns!

Stay warm and think spring!

Ric Beck
President, Friends of Ohio Barns



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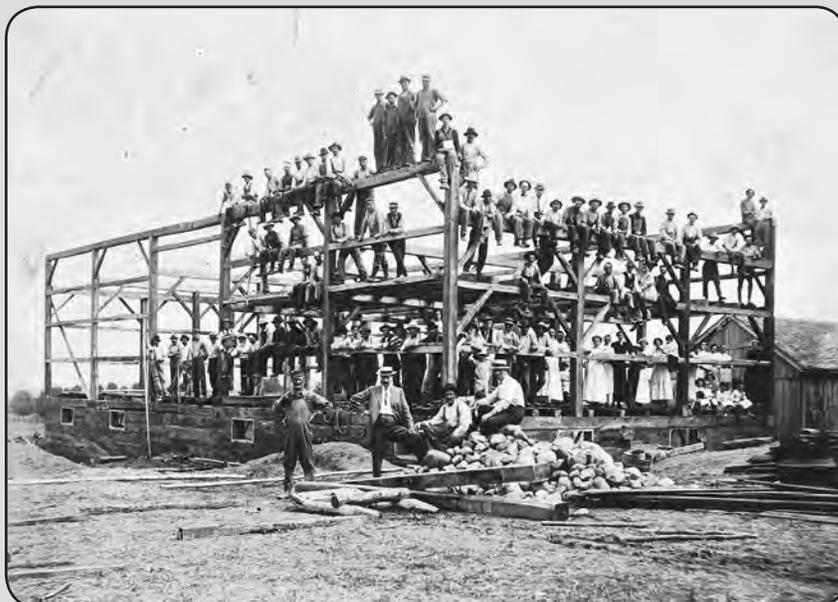
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"Early American farm life has influenced many of our present-day customs. No one was more aware of the connection that the barn has with Christmas than the farmer. Christ, of course, was born in a barn. the children were told that on Christmas night the cattle spoke and kneeled in honor of the Saviour. Gifts were left in the barn for the children to find in the morning, and to keep them away from the barn while the presents were being prepared, the legend was that misfortune would befall anyone who listened to the cattle "speak" on Christmas Eve."

—ERIC SLOANE

Right: Mr. Vice President, Dan Troth, will be giving a talk about barn raisings and presenting a number of vintage images at the 2013 Ohio Barn Conference in Athens County. This image appears to be of a barn raising around the turn of the last century. Several of the barn raisers must have been ready for the photo op as they wore ties.

Photo credit: Photo submitted by Dan Troth



2013 Barn of the Year Nominations Another Prediction

I'm going to go out on a limb here and not only predict, but personally guarantee, to all members of Friends of Ohio Barns, that the world will not end on 12-21-12! I know that there are many out there who believe, according to the Mayan Calendar, that on that day, the Winter Solstice, either a giant asteroid will smash into the Earth or a giant cloud of negative or Dark Energy will engulf and swallow our solar system. That's what I said last year around this time and as the day approaches I can assure you all that plans for our 14th conference are going smoothly.

What is not going as smoothly are efforts to preserve the daily dwindling stock of those icons of our agrarian past: Ohio's historic barns. And this, my friends, is an area where we do have some control over our future. Ohio's historic barns number roughly 125,000 (88 counties times 1,500 barns per county). Furthermore, if we consider only the barns that are still in good condition and not falling down from years of neglect, we may only be looking at 49,000 or so on our landscape. That number reflects my belief that we've probably lost a thousand this past year. It is important that we **recognize, celebrate and reward** any and all efforts made to preserve those surviving barns. We must infuse our dialogue with that sort of thinking and raise the public consciousness with those goals in mind. To that end we award the work of our neighbors in three categories: Agricultural Use, Adaptive Re-Use and Stewardship.

Agricultural Use: Barns are judged on their continued agricultural use, physical condition and the efforts made to preserve them.

Adaptive Re-Use: Barns are judged on their present day use, the completed restoration work, aesthetics, and their significance, exposure to and accessibility to their surrounding community.

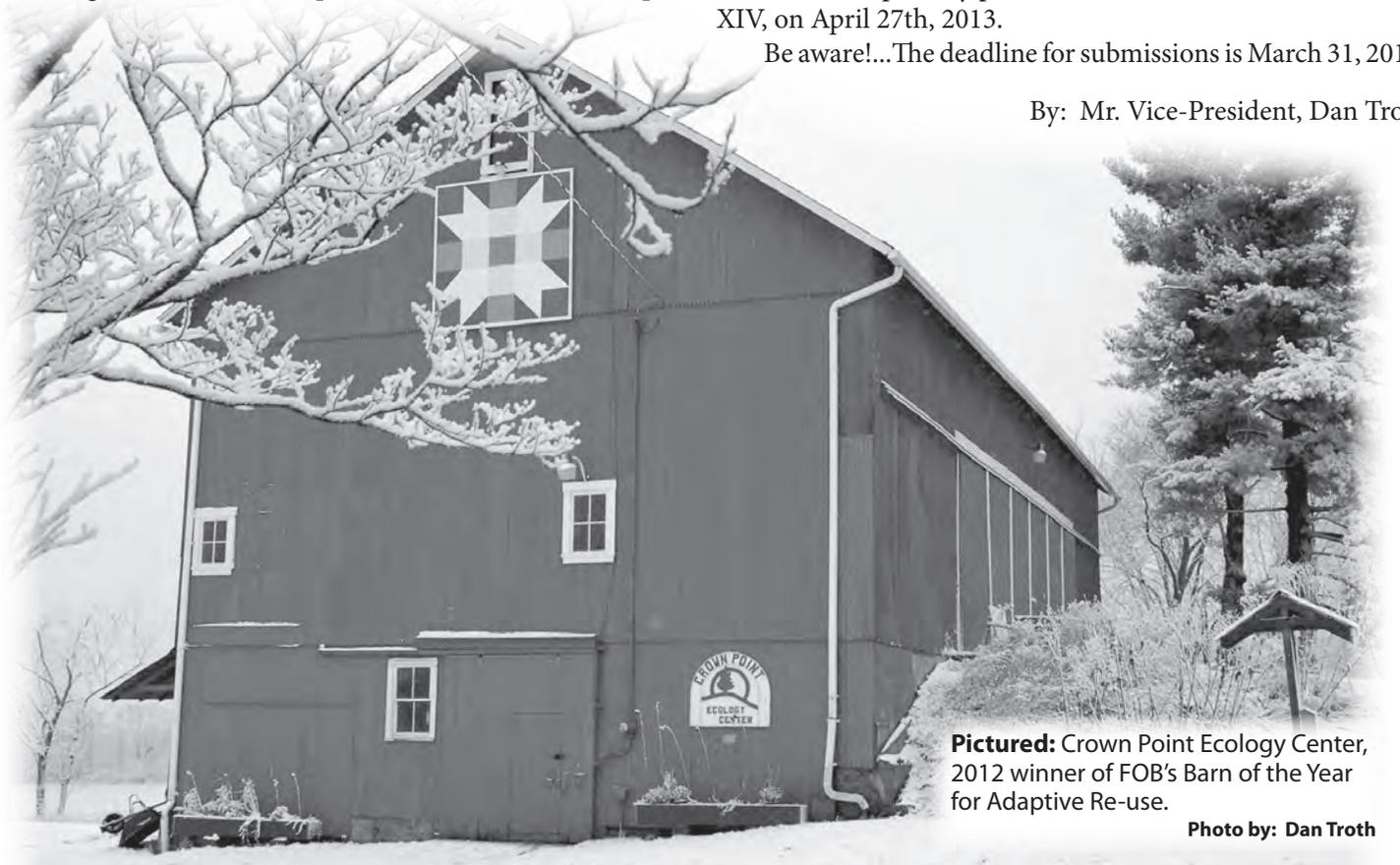
Stewardship: Well maintained barns that do not meet the above categories but serve a family function such as storage or an entertainment structure not readily accessible to the public.

Nominations should include photos, the current owner's name, location of the barn, current use of the barn, history of the barn including the date you believe it was built (with supporting facts), information on repairs and who and when they were made, if known. If you feel like throwing in a check for \$10,000 to be used towards FOB's barn preservation efforts, I will personally award you a toaster!

For a registration form, call Dan Troth 740-549-0700, or copy one from the FOB website www.friendsofohiobarns.org. Nominations should be mailed to Dan Troth, 7591 Perry Road, Delaware, Ohio 43015. The award plaques, each painstakingly made from antique siding saved from barns that I have bulldozed, will be proudly presented at the Ohio Barn Conference XIV, on April 27th, 2013.

Be aware!...The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2013!

By: Mr. Vice-President, Dan Troth



Pictured: Crown Point Ecology Center, 2012 winner of FOB's Barn of the Year for Adaptive Re-use.

Photo by: Dan Troth

Stars and Barns: Partners in the Landscape

Being one who has long been distracted by both stars and barns I have not been able to help stumbling across an occasional connection between the two. They seem to have a long and storied past together in lore and legend.

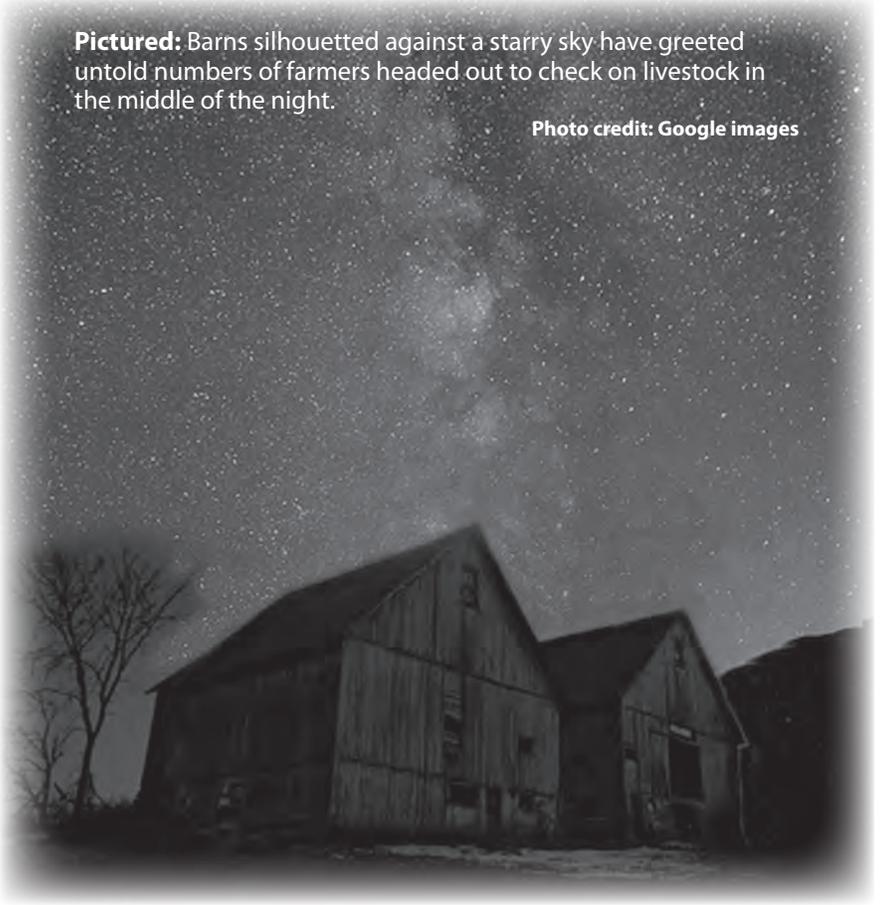
Wandering out into the barnyard at night, more than a hundred years worth of American farmers may have looked up to see the gabled roof of the barn, and other farm buildings, silhouetted against dark sky spangled with stars. In summers the Milky Way would have stretched from horizon to horizon over the nighttime sounds in and around the barn. On frigid winter evenings, as the snow squeaked beneath his feet on the way to check on a new born calf, a glance skyward would have been greeted by the shimmering glare of the brightest stars seen from Earth. Such a scene would have been a common experience that is largely lost in the modern world.

Agrarian folk have long been attuned to the changing aspects of the Sun, Moon and stars throughout the year as these were guideposts to planting, harvesting and celebration. One of the oldest gatherings for merriment, from ancient Rome, is Saturnalia, a feast observed around the time of the Winter Solstice honoring Saturn, the god of the harvest and agriculture. This exuberance was in recognition of the return of the light, longer days and the promise of another harvest.

The Farmer's Almanac is still rife with data regarding the phases of the Moon, solstices and equinoxes, eclipses, meteor

Pictured: Barns silhouetted against a starry sky have greeted untold numbers of farmers headed out to check on livestock in the middle of the night.

Photo credit: Google images



showers and how these phenomena relate to tides, weather, gardening, hunting and other activities connected with life on the farm.

Near the Winter Solstice each year a farmer could look over the peak of the barn roof and see a faint star cluster called The Praesepe, associated with the constellation of Gemini, the Twins. The Praesepe, a manger or feeding trough, with two nearby stars symbolizing donkeys has represented this farm life image to the Greeks going back to 270 B.C. That gentle glow in the clear night sky calls to mind another star and another barn. That star of wonder is said to have lead a small group of star-watchers, the magi, in search of a little fellow who was born in a Middle Eastern barn, fulfilling an ancient prophecy. Scientists are still trying to deter-



Left: Maybe the most famous barn in the history of the world. It is said that a star lead Zoroastrian star watchers in search of a young lad born in such an animal shelter and laid in a feed trough outside of the village of Bethlehem, in the Middle East. It is not thought that they found him in the barn as he and his folks did not await their arrival.

Photo credit: Google images



Above: Stars and a date possibly serve as the signature of the barn building team or as owl holes to allow access for the bird to keep rodents to a minimum within this Athens County barn.

Photo credit: Tom O'Grady

after the Revolutionary War. According to Harlan Hatcher, an Ohio historian, when the Connecticut Western Reserve was being surveyed at the end of the 18th century stars and barns crossed paths. A party of 50 men with Moses Cleaveland included Augustus Porter of Salisbury, Connecticut, his principal surveyor and deputy, and Seth Pease, third in command and the astronomer of the party. Being four months in the unbroken wilderness of the Northwest Territory, tramping through the primeval forests along the shores of Lake Erie it was a challenge to determine the starting point for the survey of the Western Reserve. The Reserve was to begin at the western border of Pennsylvania and extend westward for 120 miles.

Pease' Journal is studded with references to the stars regarding observations he made in an effort to accurately determine his longitude, still a major ordeal in the late 18th century. Pease made observations on the North Star to check the accuracy of the compass needles, and surveyed several stars to determine the forty-first degree of latitude so they could establish the southwest corner of the Reserve.



Above: A decorative star and a metal horse graced the doorway to this barn for many years. A star and crescent moon are found beneath the eaves on the gable end of this Vinton County barn.

Photo credit: Tom O'Grady

mine what celestial phenomenon led these Zoroastrian priests on such an extensive pilgrimage to honor the young lad who was born on a dung heap in an animal shelter to begin his journey in the salvation of mankind. To this day many a farm building is decorated around the winter solstice with a Christmas star in commemoration of that event.

Surveyors and astronomers were among the first into the Ohio country

Their base line was the Pennsylvania border. It was already fixed, marked, and no longer subject to controversy. It had been scientifically surveyed and marked in 1786 by the best surveyors, mathematicians, and astronomers of the time. First they had projected the Mason and Dixon line between Pennsylvania and Maryland, laid out by astronomers and surveyors, Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon. From the Maryland corner they were able to then establish the southwest corner of the present state of Pennsylvania by the most careful astronomical computations. From this corner they next ran the meridian boundary north until it reached the Ohio River, creating the long, narrow panhandle of West Virginia (Virginia at the time) in the process.

A decade prior to the arrival of Moses Cleaveland and his party of surveyors, Andrew Ellicott extended this line from the north bank of the Ohio River to Lake Erie. The eastern border of the Western Reserve is still referred to as the Ellicott Line. Ellicott's crew cut a swath from twenty to thirty feet wide from the river to the lake and erected stone monuments at irregular intervals with the letter P – for Pennsylvania

– carved on the top or side. When this line was resurveyed in 1881 nineteen of the original markers were found in the vicinity of the border. Some of these stones, set in alignment with the pole star nearly a century earlier, were ultimately located in the foundations of nearby barns. Others were found beneath houses and some on exhibit as relics. Two of them were still in their original position and two were only slightly deflected by repeated frosts. The resurvey showed that the line is not quite straight; it bends a few seconds in two places. The accuracy was impressive considering the instruments used and the circumstances of the survey and their reliance on the stars.

One very early Ohio barn, wrought with hewn timbers, was built and still stands on the Hopewell earthworks west of Chillicothe. It wasn't known at the time it was built for Mordecai Hopewell but this barn, unique in its square rule construction style on a nearly square footprint, was built on earthworks that have since been determined to be laid out, a thousand years ago, in alignment with the stars.



Above: Barn owls may have used such openings beneath the eaves on the gable ends of barns as a means of ingress and egress. Fewer barns and fewer barn owls are part of today's Ohio landscape.

Photo credit: Tom O'Grady

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Above: A star design painted on the gable end of a three bay English ground barn with a straw shed attachment.

Photo credit: Google images



Left: A fancier star in the gable end of a barn in the Village of Laurelville in Hocking County. Much trickier access for owls in this barn.

Photo credit: Tom O'Grady

The barn builders made their way into the Ohio country over the next fifty years. They raised untold numbers of these arks of the nation's agricultural economy up from the soil until they dotted the expansive rural landscape of the new state. Stars were sometimes cut into the gable ends of barns or over doorways as decoration. More than one barn has had a star or three, maybe a star and a crescent moon, cut into the gable end beneath the eaves by the barn builders. It is thought by some that these stars, and many other distinctive designs, were intended as owl holes enabling ingress and egress for these nocturnal raptors to keep rodents at bay and away from the tasty morsels stored in the grain bins.

Over the years we have seen stars painted on the sides of barns. More than one star has been at the center of a hex sign painted on barns of yesteryear. Recent years have seen metal stars hung on barns and farm buildings as a sort of

Americana throwback. Another new stellar addition to barn sides in Ohio are the quilt squares, some with stylized images of a star. And the stars and stripes have been painted on the broadsides of Ohio barns or hung in the hay window.

And no doubt there has been horse, cow, pig, goat, chicken or other farm animal that has occupied a stall, a stanchion or a sty on many an Ohio farm that was the shining star of a future farmer or 4-H member that lit up an evening or two in the barn.

Don't miss an opportunity on a clear night to glance aloft at a star framed silhouette of an Ohio barn. Stars and barns go together.

By: Tom O'Grady

Right: The Stars and Stripes draped on the gable end of a Pennsylvania bank barn with overhanging forebay in Fairfield County.

Photo credit: Tom O'Grady



Barnstorming in Athens County

Soon after Marietta was established as Ohio's first organized settlement pioneers started moving into the region that would become Athens County. Some migrated overland from Marietta and others headed up the Hocking River from the Ohio. New Englanders and Southerners built barns in the Hocking Valley and on the ridges throughout the watershed. The average barns in this portion of the state are often smaller than those in other parts of Ohio.

Being the unglaciated part of the state of Ohio this region had some of the poorest soils for long term agricultural practices. Consequently, as the nation's economy shifted from rural to urban focus, farming of the marginal soils of much of the



Above: Small English three bay threshing ground barn with hand hewn framing timbers on Dr. William and Phyllis Cuckler farm, the circa 1830. Another barn on the farm has a wooden hay track and scarf joints on all of its tie beams. A splendid house on this farm has been faithfully restored and still retains its original wavy glass windows.

Photo by: Tom O'Grady

unglaciated plateau began to revert back to woodlands. As the fields were abandoned, so too were many of the barns and they are fewer and farther between at the dawn of the 21st century.

The barnstorming team visited about nine barns on the first scouting tour. Of the nine barns four of them had a wooden hay track. While these have not been as frequently observed on tours in other parts of the state they may be more common in the southern regions but we can't be sure without further investigation of many more barns. One farm had a wooden hay track in one barn with another hay track running perpendicular to it. A horse barn beside it had two curved hay tracks.

A farm circa 1853 had a southern barn with the diagnostic gable end entry which was built of a mixture of hand hewn and sawn primary timbers. That detail led to speculation of re-used materials which was left inconclusive. This barn had a tremendous amount of wood and bracing in it for such a small structure.

An English bank barn on the old Ephraim Cutler farm has scarf joints in the center of every tie beam which were held together with 6 white oak pegs and wedges. This barn had an attached wooden silo. Nearby was the old circa 1805 Cutler houses that originally held the book collection of the famed Coonskin Library, one of the first libraries in the state of Ohio and the only one financed with furs. Cutler drafted Section 2 of Article VIII of the bill of rights of the Ohio Constitution which specifically excluded slavery or involuntary servitude in Ohio.

The barnstormers visited the Fred Beasley/Windy Hills Farm on the barn reconnaissance exercise. Fred Beasley began selling Model T Fords in Athens County in 1913 and grew to be the largest Ford dealer in the United States. In the early 1940's Beasley built a Kentucky inspired horse barn to house his growing family of American Saddlebred horses and a glazed tile Class A dairy barn for his prize dairy herd. While the horse barn still serves the needs of some Paso Fino horses the Dairy Barn has taken on a new life. It is the central nervous system of Hilferty and Associates a Museum Planning and Exhibit Design firm. Activity in this barn is having an untold impact on the heritage and legacy of American culture. Hilferty and Associates is responsible for all or much of the planning and design of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, the Kentucky Horse Park and International Museum of the Horse, the Flint Hills Discovery Center, the Kentucky Coal Museum: Portal 31 Mine Tour, the Ohio Statehouse Museum, the President James A. Garfield National Historic

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Above: The jury is still out on this barn. Appearing as a southern transverse barn it may have been an English threshing barn with side entry before modifications were made. The barn, owned by Willem Roosenberg and Kate Kelly, was originally associated with a nearby homestead that still incorporates a hewn log cabin. The plates and ties in this barn are hand hewn while the posts are circular sawn. The wooden hay track may have been added later. This barn is indicative of the changes that many Ohio barns undergo in their lifetime.

Photo by: Sarah Woodall



Left: The Windy Hills Dairy Barn, built in the early 1940's, houses the Hilferty and Associates museum planning and exhibit design firm. Museums and exhibits designed in this former dairy barn preserve the heritage and educate the public about numerous natural, cultural, industrial, and agricultural stories throughout the United States. An outstanding example of adaptive reuse of an Ohio barn.

Photo by: Tom O'Grady

Pennsylvania Military Museum, and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania among others. While this may not be a hand hewn timber frame structure of the 19th century Ohio landscape, it is surely doing its part to bring attention and appreciation to the arts and industry and culture of that era in American history.

And the old stanchions in the dairy barn that used to house cows were retained in the remake of the old barn and is where Gerry Hilferty says he keeps his interns. In the planning and design of the National Museum of the American Indian Hilferty hosted a number of the planning meetings in the conference room in the barn. It was thought by the native American consultants to the project that the site had the right karma for the undertaking at hand. What other barn is having such a positive influence on the nation's rich heritage?

Tom O'Grady

Site, the Washington State Historical Museum, the Chicago Historical Society, the American Quarter Horse Heritage Center and Museum, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the Kentucky Derby Museum, the College Football Hall of Fame, the Carnegie Museum – Benedum Hall of Geology, the Great Lakes Museum of Science, Environment & Technology, the Health Museum of Cleveland, the John & Annie Glenn Exploration Center, the Maryland Science Center, and a host of other projects too numerous to list. On top of that Hilferty and his small army are currently working on the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, the Napa Valley Museum, The National Great Lakes Museum, the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, the

Table Top Barn Raising- Kids & Adults 102

Another teaching tool was recently introduced at our FOB picnic. It involves an improved method of raising and the shipment of our 1/16th scale Penna. forebay bank barn. The new procedure was field tested at three of our FOB events throughout the last two months and has been well received at each. It is now being transported and presented in a barn raising format of preassembled bents. In the past it was shipped as either an awkward fully assembled structure or as a time consuming compact pile of 197 individual timbers. Now the (4) individual bent assemblies, (2) purlin ones, a single barn floor unit, a lower level front wall panel, (3) foundation walls, and individual girts, posts, braces, etc. all fit neatly into a 7" x 26" x 34" box. The (6) layers are separated and protected by sheets of foam rubber. The robust suitcase type container is adorned with wheels and lots of handles. It even fits into a Toyota Camry trunk!

This table top model has already become a big hit not only

with audiences and participants but also with whoever has the task of transporting, setting it up and monitoring audience participation. So much so that it has been pretty much decided that we need to go forward with plans to construct more of them and distribute them out to FOB's in key locations across Ohio. However, the present one is a bit too complex to produce in numbers so a somewhat simplified version is being considered. It will probably be a Yankee ground barn with no basement and "only" 125 or so timbers so as to cut down on total weight and more importantly, manufacturing time and effort. It is easy to envision a bunch of school kids gathered around one of them on a table, each one clamoring to insert their particular piece of the puzzle. If all goes as planned, it will happen.

By: Junior Barn Detectives Team

Mini Barn Raising– Kids 101

The children who participated in and the adults who watched the traditional kid's mini-barn raisings at Malabar and Algonquin Mill Festivals this past fall were exposed to a slightly different looking frame. It now has an optional odd looking, rough and heavy oak corner post in place of one of the six original smooth and light weight ones. After 9 years and 124 raisings it was thought that the hour long procedure could benefit



Above: FOB Board member, Paul Knoebel at the far right, discusses the ups and downs of barn raisings with youth around a table top model of a barn at the Algonquin Mill Festival in Carroll County.



Above: Young barnbuilders raising the mini timber frame model at the Algonquin Mill.

from some added pizzazz. A nominal dimension 4 x 4 was cut off of an old hewn 4 x 8 timber that had been donated to the Algonquin Mill. It was then cut by the “square rule” method (with housings) to fit into the same location previously occupied by the original 3 ½ x 3 ½ typical “mill rule” (without housings) post. After the children have assembled the 3rd and last bent and prior to raising it, they are told to stop, remove the original smooth post and replace it with the “ugly”, bowed and twisted hewn one. At that point it is quite obvious to all what the purpose of the “square rule” housings are and how the two different TF methods make it possible to accommodate, without modification, all of the same mating timbers.

It then becomes much easier to explain to the audience that the square rule method is to be found in most of the old Ohio barns primarily because of the necessity to deal with the variances in configuration to be found in hewn and early sawmilled timbers. The less time consuming mill rule method that is often employed today is now possible because of the ability of newer sawmills and/or planers to make more dimensionally accurate timbers. Once in a while a really old barn will be found with hewn timbers and no significant housings. The presence of marriage marks at the juncture of timbers pretty well indicates that it was cut via the “scribe rule” method. Have not yet figured out if and how to possibly work that concept into the model display!



Left: The table top model of a barn at the Algonquin Mill used to demonstrated barn construction and barn raising to children and adults.

By: Paul Knoebel

Ohio Barn Conference and Barn Tour 2013

Athens Asylum Grounds

Athens, Ohio

April 26th and 27th, 2013

www.friendsofohiobarns.org

[email:friendsohiobarns@gmail.com](mailto:friendsohiobarns@gmail.com)

Image: Barnstormers explore Bob Cone's New England bank barn in Athens County.

Photo credit: Sarah Woodall

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