

Ohio Barn Conference III

March 15 and 16

Sauder Village, Archbold, Ohio

Inside this issue of *The Old Barn Post*, find out details about the upcoming Ohio Barn Conference.

Also, register for the conference and for membership in the newly-formed Friends of Ohio Barns!



Front photo: Barns built a century ago along dirt roads are now threatened by more and faster traffic and widening highways. Farm life and activity are increasingly at risk as Americans become more mobile. Above photo: Double barns such as this one, located across the road from Sauder Village, are common in Northwest Ohio. This particular barn features one gambrel roof and one gable roof. Photos by Tom O'Grady



Friends of Ohio Barns

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The Old Barn Post

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Sprawl threatens American barns

The future of the American barn is threatened in many ways. Barns find themselves in harm's way in many areas because of urban sprawl and its consumption of land for housing, industrial parks, shopping centers and all of the space needed for the cars and trucks associated with that kind of development. The ever-expanding interstate highway system and its voracious appetite for land puts little value on barns or other parts of our natural and cultural heritage that have the misfortune of being in the chosen pathways.

Benign neglect in some regions due to marginal or low agricultural opportunities is a threat to barns in the relative safety of the backyard. The cost of maintenance and the challenge of finding a qualified contractor to give the barn the attention it needs hinder even the best-intentioned owner.

Other barns face an imminent threat along many state routes simply because they were built a few feet across the road from the house a century ago when the occasional passerby was on foot or in a horse-drawn wagon or carriage. Now,

many farmers have a steady flow of high-speed semi trucks rolling in both directions along the two lane thoroughfare between the front porch and the barn.

Notwithstanding the numerous daily crossings the farmer must make with equipment and livestock against the 'time is money' rate of truck traffic, it is only a matter of time until he will be forced to consider the issue of road widening. Either the barn and farmstead will have to go or the road will 'by-pass' the structures and consume the farmland. In either case, the future use of the barn is brought into question.

A quick glance at the average real estate tax assessment indicates how low a value our society assigns to barns and other farm buildings. The likelihood of compensation to the farmer or to society for the decline of the barn's condition or status due to factors beyond the farmer's control is minimal.

Undertaking the effort to protect and preserve Ohio's barn heritage is no small task.

One might say that it is a lost cause. It's been said, however, that lost causes are the only ones worth fighting for. Other causes have their own inherent momentum and don't require the same level of struggle and commitment as those facing impending decline.

The barn, an architectural masterpiece and historical artifact, is a useful structure that has served Ohio and can continue to do so in various ways in the future. The barn represents a societal and cultural value far exceeding its mere appearance and hulk along the roadside, viewed or not, by the swiftly passing motorist. If we have any respect for our own heritage and culture, we should have no difficulty recognizing the need to refocus some of our financial and material resources and some good old community spirit into the effort to keep these structures useful and functional parts of our daily lives.

— Tom O'Grady



Register for Ohio Barn Conference III

Registrations are coming in fast for the best Ohio Barn Conference ever. Register soon so you can be included!

This year's conference will be held at beautiful historic Sauder Village in Fulton County on March 15 and 16. If you've never been there, you are in for a treat.

Ohio Barn Conference III will once again offer a full slate of great presenters including specialists from the New York State Barn Alliance, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network and of course our own home state.

On Saturday there will be hands-on demonstrations of barn repair techniques and free time to tour Sauder Village and see the local artisans and historic sawmill at work. The village is full of historic buildings including a beautiful barn that is still in use and a fantastic scribe rule timber frame barn, moved to the village over frozen ground by founder Erie Sauder, that now houses the famous Barn Restaurant. Plan on enjoying Friday supper, Saturday breakfast or both at the Barn. There will also be a barn tour which will include the unique "triple jetty out-shot" barn at Goll Woods Preserve and an inside look at the "double" and "triple" barns that make northwest Ohio such a treat to travel through.

Friday's and Saturday's agendas will include a book and trade fair featuring barn repair specialists and suppliers from Ohio and nearby states. There will also be photo and art displays featuring barns of Michigan, Ohio and New York and John Rodak's wonderful hand-drawn illustrations of some of Ohio's sadly neglected barns.

A list of local accommodations offering special conference rates is also included. Please take a minute to fill out your registration form and mail it in with your

check made out to Friends of Ohio Barns today so you will receive your confirmation packet in time for the conference. Registration is also available online at www.ohiobarns.osu.edu. If you aren't already a member of Friends of Ohio Barns, join now and enjoy your member's discount. A buffet-style continental breakfast and hot lunch on Friday are included

in your conference fee.

If you have questions, call one of your local board members, e-mail us at friendsohiobarns@aol, or fax us at 330-624-0501. Come enjoy the company of old friends, and make some new ones at the Ohio Barn Conference!

— Rudy R. Christian

Highlights of Friday's presentations and speakers

The New York State Barn Grant Program - Randy Nash
 Applying for National Historic Registration - Maura Johnson & Steve Gordon
 Discover Your Barn's Past with "The Barn Detectives" - Rudy Christian & Larry Sulzer
 Fix Your Barn Right, the First Time - Rick Lazarus
 Early Settlers in Ohio's Great Black Swamp - Professor Pete Wilhelm



This impressive treasure is located a short distance down the road from the conference site at the Sauder Village.

Trees and barns joined at Goll Woods

The Saturday tour at Ohio Barn Conference III will highlight a rare "jetty barn" at Goll Woods State Nature Preserve. While the barn itself is an outstanding attraction, attendees might want to schedule time on their visit to northwestern Ohio to take a walk along the trail at Goll Woods and glimpse the primeval forest that once covered Ohio.

Goll Woods is a small remnant of the vast "Black Swamp" that, for millennia,

pre-dated the farmsteads, fields and barns that are the predominant features in that region today. The Black Swamp and its tall groves hindered settlement and development of this region of Ohio for several decades longer than other parts of the state. Yet it was the very resource base from which the tremendous agricultural wealth of the area was hewn. The big trees of Goll Woods are representative of the forests used to build the barns and other

farmstead buildings along area roadways.

The great swamp was drained and the forests gave way to the fertile fields of corn, beans and other crops which made Ohio a world leader in agricultural production. Ohio Barn Conference III will give attendees a unique opportunity to make a direct connection between the natural, cultural, agricultural and architectural legacy of Ohio's rich heritage.

— Tom O'Grady

Sign up to earn your Friends of Ohio Barns C.A.P.

Members of Friends are encouraged to consider joining the list of people and companies who are signing on to the Community Action Program (C.A.P.) to help make a difference. The idea behind C.A.P. is an old one — Friends helping Friends in need.

Few if any of us can drive to town, an auction or to visit a friend without seeing a barn suffering from neglect. We may even know the family who owns the barn, but as disturbing as it is to watch this insidious loss of our heritage, we find ourselves wishing something could be done while knowing nothing will. Volunteering to become a C.A.P. worker can change that.

The C.A.P. program will allow members of Friends to team up with contractors who have an interest in barn preservation work and other community volunteers. Together they will participate in workshops focused on remedial repairs like roofing, siding, door, window and foundation maintenance. The goal of this program is to help save barns that may have been lost, while shining a spotlight on Friends members, local volunteers and barn repair specialists.

Our first C.A.P. workshop will be held at Goll Woods to repair the failed bank wall of the homestead barn. It will require some excavation work as well as resetting of some sandstone and some timber sill repair work. This very exciting workshop will set the stage for the rest of the conservation work needed to guarantee the future of this very unique barn.

Please e-mail Friends at FriendsOhioBarns@aol.com, or call your closest Friends board member and sign up to be a C.A.P. volunteer. Together we can make a difference.

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network will hold a barn conference March 9 at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing, Michigan. Contact the MBPN at P.O. Box 614, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, 48804 for more information.

"Those who would find the spirit of early America must look first in the country; ... to those who can hear it, the song sung by old barns and wooden structures is precious music. ... Beholding it is the closest thing to an intimate communion with the plain people who first kindled the American spirit and who evolved that architectural inheritance which has all but disappeared."

— Eric Sloane, *American Barns and Covered Bridges*

Tell *Farm & Dairy* readers the story of your barn

The *Farm & Dairy* newspaper (www.farmanddairy.com) in Salem has asked Friends of Ohio Barns to take over the monthly column "Behind the Barn" created by retired barn historian Chuck Whitney. This is your opportunity to tell *Farm & Dairy* readers about your barn!

If you have a story about your barn that you would like to share, or would like to tell everyone about what makes your barn or corn crib unique, please let us know. Whether you already can do your own photography or writing or not, please let us know what's special about your barn. One of your Friends can help put your barn in the Friends monthly column in *Farm & Dairy*. E-mail your ideas or photos FriendsOhioBarns@aol.com or contact us by fax at 330-624-0501.

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