



The Old BARN POST

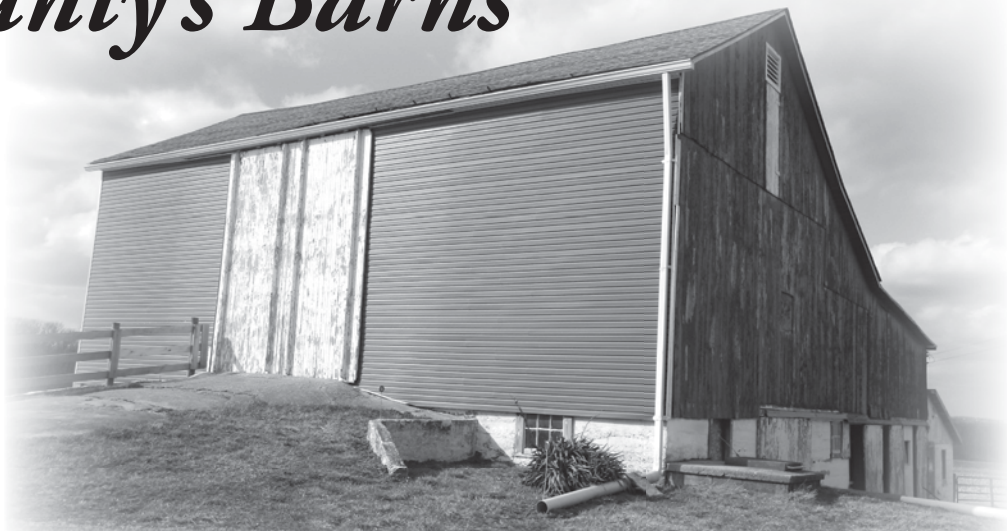
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Butler County's Barns

Ohio is well known nationally for the diversity and extent of its 19th century barns. In large part this can be attributed to the state's soil fertility, early population density, and Ohio's broad range of ethnic groups and cultural geography. Hubert Wilhelm astutely noted Ohio's strategic location along migration routes mirrored the neck of an hourglass placed on its side. All of these factors combined to produce a rich laboratory of building types. In 1880, the value of Ohio's farms, including land, fences, and buildings, ranked first in the nation, followed by New York, Illinois and Pennsylvania. At that time, Ohio was strategically positioned at the eastern edge of the nation's grain belt where corn and wheat dominated much of the farm economy. Hay and dairy production, while certainly important to the farm economy in southwest Ohio, was not as dominant as it was in northeast Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania.

The Miami Valleys in southwest Ohio were, for much of the 19th century, among the nation's leading centers of corn and hog production. Deep alluvial soils in the river valleys, along with canal, railroad and turnpike access to the burgeoning Cincinnati market made it an ideal location for crop and livestock production. The region became widely known for its hog breeding, notably development of the Poland-China hog, which originated during the second quarter of the 19th century in Butler

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All photos by Steve Gordon
**Sayer – Stander barn, built ca. 1824
and raised onto a basement in 1911.**



**Left: Three
pegged
seated swing
beam in Sayer
– Stander
barn.**



**Right: Hand
hewn timbers in
Sayer – Stander
barn are sup-
ported by sawn
bracing, includ-
ing this one with
irregular sides.**



**Swing beam in Sayer – Stander barn
measures 10" X 17". Canted queenpost
with a strut supports purlin.**

Random Thoughts

By the time you are reading this, fall will be well under way – or over. The cooler temps, falling leaves and longer nights usually give me pause for reflection.

I am looking back this year and thinking of all the folks in Ohio that have done great things with their barns. I'm grateful for meeting so many dedicated owners and preservationists and I revel in how they are caring for some of our wonderful agricultural cathedrals. I think back to our splendid spring conference in Findlay and the energetic and engaged farm community that is Hancock County. I continue to be surprised at the traffic that our website and Facebook page get each week, and I think that maybe, just maybe, Ohio Barns are surviving after all. I'm also very excited about the upcoming documentary "The Barn Raisers" from the Rundles. They've received some well-deserved awards this summer for other works, and I expect great things from this film.

But there is some "reflecting" in the back of my mind that gives me cause for concern...it's for our organization and its longevity. While I do see younger men and women becoming more involved with barns, smaller farming practices, and barn stewardship, I don't see it translating to

membership in the organization. Granted, our membership has remained steady for the last few years, but younger folks haven't jumped on our bandwagon like we'd hoped.

I understand the time constraints all people have in their lives, and I've read that volunteerism is down nationwide, so what do we need to do as an organization to entice the younger set to sign up and help carry on the stewardship mantle? Our Facebook posts are read by a diverse audience, but that hasn't produced a membership bump. We always get a dozen or so local folks join us at conference time, but retaining their membership remains somewhat elusive.

Why is it important to get young people involved with Friends of Ohio Barns? To help others learn of our important agricultural history and the barns that made Ohio great. To understand the value of these barns for future generations and for uses such that our imagination can conjure up for them. To help young people understand that joining a vibrant organization such as FOB will allow them to help give back to Ohio communities interested in preserving these amazing icons of hewn Ohio timber.

Why else? Quite frankly, because our current membership is getting older! And

we're having all the fun. Young people need to have fun too! The demographics of FOB show us that a majority of wonderful folks are above the age of 50, myself included. If we cannot win the hearts of more youth and enlist their involvement, ten years from now FOB will be challenged just to survive as an organization let alone be able to help barns and farmsteads to survive.

We are trying to reach out more through social media and our website. We recruited a fine young woman to join the board this year. We review our strategic plan and discuss ways to get more members actively engaged. We've tried to more clearly define what members get for their money, and we are trying hard to get some community barn preservation projects off the ground.

What else can we do? I, for one, would love to hear from you! Please share your ideas on how we can continue to grow Friends of Ohio Barns; how we can get more youth to carry on the tremendous work that we have done to date.

Please consider asking friends and neighbors to join us and help keep our organization vital and Ohio barns standing strong!

— Ric Beck



Aldo Leopold, conservationist and one of the fathers of the Wilderness System in the United States at his farm in the Sand Counties of Wisconsin.

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm.

One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace."

*~Aldo Leopold, 1887-1949
A Sand County Almanac*

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Interior of Elliot – Smiley barn with remnant waste wall, hay track, and sawn framing.

Left: Elliot – Smiley barn with a posted forebay and limestone basement, circa 11850's, is constructed entirely of sawn timber from a mill that formerly stood on the property.

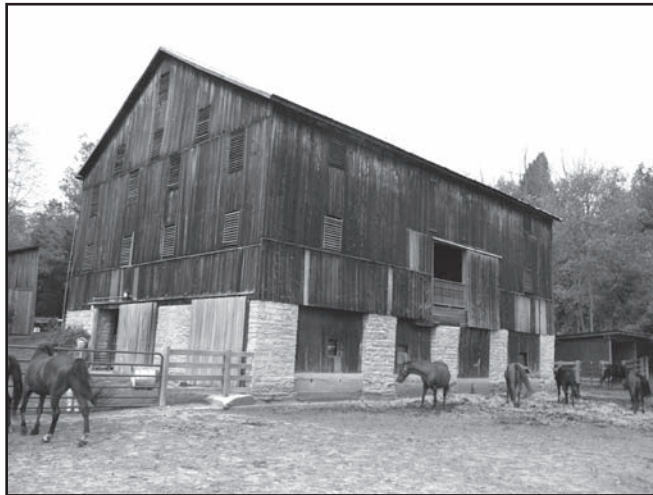
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and Warren Counties. Oxford's Lorenzo Bonham was known as the inventor of a portable hog pen.

Henry Howe, Ohio's foremost chronicler of the state's early history, noted Butler County was described as "The Garden of Ohio." According to Howe, "The uplands are beautifully undulating, forming charming scenes of pastoral beauty. A large proportion of its population is of German descent." Population schedules for 1850 indicate few New Englanders lived in the county, whereas most of the migrants were natives of the Middle Atlantic states, notably Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Lesser numbers of southern settlers were enumerated, most of them coming from Virginia.

In 1880, the value of Butler County's farms, including land, fences and buildings, ranked ninth in the state. An early barn in western Butler County is the Sayers – Stander Barn. Believed to have been built ca. 1824 and raised into a dairy barn in 1911, the English Barn features hewn braces, a 10in. x 17in. seated swing beam, and 50ft. beech wood top plates. In 1850, Elias Sayers was assessed for 100 acres of improved land, 100 unimproved acres, 5 horses, 3 milch [milk] cows, 3 other cattle and one hog. The farm produced 150 bushels of wheat, 760 bushels of corn, 300 pounds of butter and 5 tons of hay. The farm has been owned by the Stander Family for over a century.

One of the most unusual barns in Butler County is the Elliott Barn. Located in the picturesque Four Mile Creek valley, the barn recently has been renovated



Lewis barn in Reilly Township raised on a limestone basement was built ca. 1850's.



Hinges on the door of the Lewis barn were wrought by H. Garner, a Reilly blacksmith.

by Toby and Cheryl Forte. The Posted Forebay barn (ca. 1853-1854) is unique in that all of the principal timbers, joists and scantling were sawn in the sawmill that formerly stood on the property. In 1850, Elliott operated a large stone grist mill on his 223 acre property. The farm produced 250 bushels of wheat, 2,000 bushels of corn, 200 bushels of oats and six tons of hay. Along with 7 horses and 12 cows were 37 hogs that likely were sheltered in the small area under the haymow and next to the basement.

Among the more picturesque farms on the tour is the Lewis Farmstead in Reilly Township. The bottomland along Indian Creek was originally settled by Andrew and Martha Lewis, natives of Ireland. One of the children, James Lewis, expanded the farm operations and by 1860 the farm was valued at a significantly high amount of \$50,000. The Raised Basement barn with limestone foundation was built ca. 1856-1859 and features hinges wrought by a lo-

cal blacksmith. Today the barn is used to house Morgan horses lovingly cared for by the owners, Ed and Kathy Creighton.

While traditional barn types abound in Butler County, one is always struck by those farmers who do not follow convention. The John Scott barn, located near Shandon in Morgan Township, truly is a singularly unique barn. Listed on the National Register, the livestock barn features three massive square concrete silos that are incorporated into the barn structure. A contemporary observer wrote,

John Scott has a number of men at work quarrying stone, sawing lumber, and digging the foundation for the largest and most convenient barn in this valley. It will be 70' x 100' with stalls for 20 horses and 100 head of cattle. Suitable buildings for packing and storing 'ensilage' for feeding 100 head of cattle a year, are being provided for. The cost of the building is estimated at \$5,000." (Hamilton Intelligencer April 10, 1884)

— Steve Gordon



Photos by: Sarah Sisser

The Gressley-Cupples Barn in Hancock County was one of seven barns on the Historic Barn Tour. The impressive ground barn dates to the 1860s.



Representatives from FOB spoke with guests on the Historic Barn Tour about the significance of the barns and preservation efforts across the state. Ric Beck and Pamela Whitney Gray of FOB, in the foreground, help visitors interpret the history of the barn and some of the changes it appears to have gone through during its tenure of service.

Hancock Historical Museum's Historic Barn Tour

On September 12th, the Hancock Historical Museum hosted its annual Historic Barn Tour in western Hancock County. It was the third such tour presented by the Museum and the event has moved around the county to showcase a different slate of unique old barns each year. The tour has grown in size and popularity since its inception in 2013, and its success has generated additional agricultural heritage programming and outreach opportunities for the Museum and the county. Friends of Ohio Barns has been instrumental in the development of this outreach event, working with Museum staff on an annual basis to research and document the barns on the tour prior to the event. Representatives from FOB have also connected with guests on the day of the tour, discussing and demonstrating timber-framing techniques and raising awareness about the preservation of Ohio barns.

The Museum was inspired to organize the Historic Barn Tour as a means to reconnect both young and old with the rich agricultural heritage of the region. When former Hancock County Extension educator and seventh generation farmer, Gary Wilson, joined the Museum's Board of Trustees in 2012, he championed the idea of an organized tour of some of the county's impressive stock of old barns. The event was modeled after similar self-guided tours of grand Victorian-era homes the Museum had sponsored in the past. Volunteering his own 1905 ground



Guests of all ages enjoyed the Historic Barn Tour on Sept. 12th. The annual event is free for children. More than 600 people participated in the tour.

barn for the tour, Wilson worked with the Museum's Executive Director, Sarah Sisser, to solicit commitments from five additional barn owners in the area and sponsorships from the local ag industry. In July 2013, the Museum reached out to FOB to learn more about the vernacular architectural history of barns. FOB Board members, Ric Beck and Pam Gray, offered their assistance and visited each of the six barns selected for the initial tour, providing valuable information about style and type, as well as estimated dates of construction. Museum volunteer, Patricia Bauman, also researched the deed histories of the properties and the genealogies of many of the families.

After a year of preparation and research, the Museum's inaugural Historic Barn Tour was held in September 2013.

The event was an overwhelming success, with more than 700 visitors in attendance. In addition to learning about the history of the barns, guests enjoyed the sights, tastes, and sounds of Hancock County's agricultural heritage, with antique machinery demonstrations, a quilt show, live music, and local food vendors. The tour has continued to see attendance of more than 500 people each year, with guests now traveling from as far away as Kentucky and Pennsylvania to enjoy the annual event. In 2015, the tour included several new vendors, local artists, and additional research with an area soil scientist about the prehistoric development of the area and its influence on agriculture.

In the last three years, the Hancock Historical Museum's Historic Barn Tour

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Barns on the Battlefield of Gettysburg

The barn enthusiasts gathered on the battlefield at Gettysburg soon realized they had been invaded by Buckeyes as Beryl Beckett and Pam Gray arrived all decked out in their Friends of Ohio Barns finery. Bill Walker of Athens spied the FOB logo and introduced himself by asking if they knew Tom O'Grady. Small world.

The group settled in for a morning talk by Curt Musselman, Historic Gettysburg Adams County Preservation committee chair. He talked about the 19 barns owned by the National Park Service and the Gettysburg National Military Park that sit on preservation easements. Of the 19 barns 10 are pre-war, surviving the Battle at Gettysburg. The remaining 8 barns were built post-war to replace barns that were destroyed during the battle.

The oldest barn is believed to be built in 1798 and is a log crib barn. The other barn styles are classic Sweitzer, standard Pennsylvania, extended Pennsylvania, and standard Pennsylvania with basement drive-through. Most of the early barns are constructed with Chestnut. Oak came into use later.

During the afternoon bus tour the group toured five of the barns. All of the barns are beautiful and well kept on the



Left: Brick end Sweitzer barn with overhanging forebay at Gettysburg National Battlefield historic barn tour.

Photo by: Pamela Whitney Gray

Below: Beryl Beckett and Pamela Whitney Gray with a stone end Pennsylvania German barn with overhanging forebay at Gettysburg National Battlefield.

Photo by: Bill Walker

outside. Of course the stone and brick end barns are spectacular. It was a surprise to see that the repairs on the inside were not historically correct as metal I-beams and bracing were used. This is due to the fact that the interiors are not intended to be viewed by the public but are reinforced for use by the National Park Service to store equipment and supplies. It was noticed that all barns have fire protection sprinkler systems.

It was a wonderful day spent with great people.

By: Pamela Whitney Gray



McDonald Barn Burns in Hancock County

On September 1st, at approximately 10:30pm, Kevin McDonald found the 160-year-old barn on his western Hancock County farm engulfed in flames. When firemen arrived, the barn was fully involved. Despite the best efforts of firefighters from Mt. Cory and Blanchard Township, the barn was a total loss. A nearby outbuilding also sustained minor damage. Fortunately, the McDonald's animals, including six horses, all survived the fire. The cause of the blaze was undetermined.

Ironically, the McDonald Barn was slated to be on the Hancock Historical Museum's Historic Barn Tour just one week later. Kevin and Debra McDonald had been involved in planning efforts for the tour for nearly a year leading up to the disaster. Friends of Ohio Barns board members, Ric Beck and Pam Gray, evaluated the barn in April and Hancock Historical Museum volunteers researched the chain of title in preparation for the tour.



Photo by: Vincent Whitehead

Slated to be on the Hancock County Historic Barn Tour, the McDonald Barn, dating back to the 1850's was lost in a blaze in early September.

The ground barn was originally built for hay storage in the 1850's. The majority of the frame was beech and much of the material was hand-hewn. The roof system was not original to the barn, and was probably replaced in the 1880s with a particularly tall and steep pitch to make room for ad-

ditional hay storage. The McDonalds discovered the date of 1884 painted on the barn, which probably indicated the date of the new roof.

Despite the very recent loss, the McDonalds remained involved with the Historic Barn Tour on September 12th, and allowed visitors to view the property and several other historic outbuildings on the farm. Photographs of the barn that were taken just a week prior to the fire by artist and FOB member, Vincent Whitehead, were displayed at the property for visitors to view. As evidenced by the photographs on the tour, and the care and attention to detail displayed in the rest of their outbuildings and 1870s farmhouse, the McDonalds care deeply about the history of their property. Having invested much time, effort and money into its preservation, the fire that destroyed the barn was a profound loss for the family. As Kevin and Debra will tell you, "it was the heart of the farm."

By: Sarah Sisser

Friends of Ohio Barns Picnic October 2015

Twenty-five intrepid individuals spent part of their Saturday at High Banks Park, Columbus, for our annual fall picnic. We were greeted by gray skies, drizzle, and COLD. It was really cold. Dan Troth supplied the group with charcoal, burgers, brats, and buns which Ric Beck happily cooked, with plenty of advice from everyone crowded around the grill trying to keep warm. After enjoying all the side dishes brought by the attendees, especially Dan's favorite, "applesomething-dessert," we listened to a presentation by Gwyn and Gary Stelter, and Larry Seward on the Lucy Depp Park and Settlement.

In 1853 Abraham Depp and his family of freed slaves from Virginia purchased land from Lucas Sullivant in Columbus, Ohio. The original homestead became Depp Station on the Underground Railroad. In later years the Depp property was subdivided and sold to black families. The original Depp farm is now the location of Lucy Depp Park and Depp Settlement. After a very interesting talk on the Lucy Depp legacy, we took a group photo around the charcoal grill, and everyone tried to smile and not shiver.

Of course since this is the Friends of Ohio Barns organization, Dan found us a barn to tour. This was a later plank framed barn on the park grounds. This was a very interesting barn, I think this was the tallest barn I've been in. As my Dad would say, "Sure would store a lot of hay." The park district is seeking guidance on how to utilize this structure, maybe as an event center because of its ideal location.

After the barn tour, and with our group longing for more, Dan took the remaining dozen or so of us to the 1828 barn that he moved from Waynesville, Ohio to Delaware in 1998 and converted into his home. Fortunately for Dan and his unannounced muddy-boots group, his wife, Robin, was not at home! As Dan said, "Better to beg for forgiveness than to ask for permission."

By: Dave Hamblin



Photos by: Dan Troth

Brave souls face down the cold at Highbanks Metro Park north of Columbus.



Left: Picnickers headed toward the Highbanks plank barn built circa 1910-20.

Below: FOB members pause inside the Highbanks plank barn.



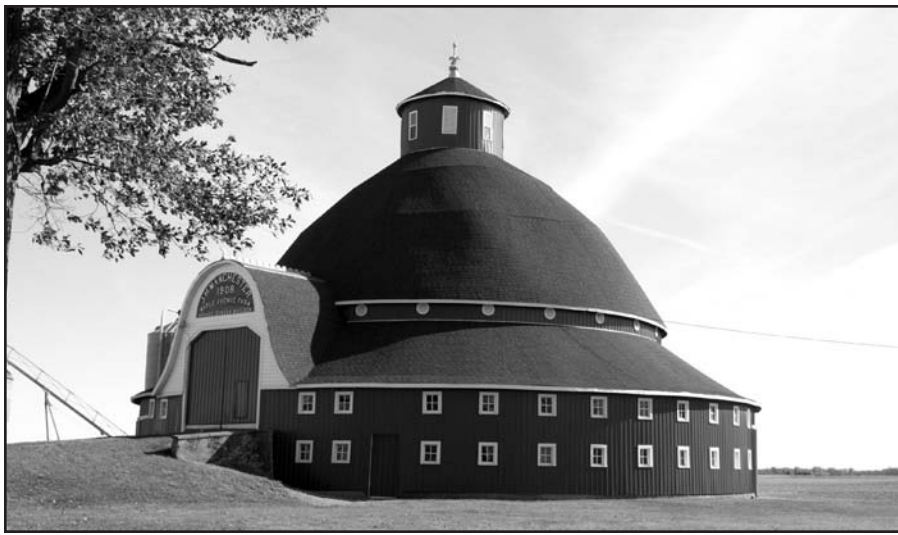


Photo by: Pamela Whitney Gray

Manchester round barn near Roundhead, Ohio, built by Horace Duncan, an Indiana barnbuilder in 1908.

The Queen of Ohio Barns

This big round barn located just west of Roundhead, Ohio is considered a national jewel, listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The huge structure is one-hundred two feet in diameter and eighty feet high. It was built by Horace Duncan, an Indiana barn builder.

The basement is laid out as a stable area, all in circular fashion. Even the mangers and hay chutes are designed with curved materials. All of the supporting beams are constructed of laminated curved lumber.

The mow floor is the most interesting. Entering the driveway doors from the barn ramp you can drive in a circle around the middle structures which include a silo and a corncrib. There is a huge storage area around the perimeter of the floor for hay and/or grain. A hay-track also circles the middle structures so loose hay can be unloaded and sent to any area of the barn floor. An added oddity is a windlass used to pull the hay rope rather than having a team walk up and down the barn grade.

The original owner of the farm purchased it in 1856 after coming from Vermont in 1840. His son, Jason Manchester had the great round structure built in 1908. Today the wonderful barn supports the 1,900 acre operation where certified seed is raised. The barn floor is filled with seed cleaning and processing equipment.

So, the Queen of Ohio Barns sits on her throne, adequately protected by

loving hands of five generations who have maintained this icon for personal use and enjoyment by passers-by.

Round barns were all the rage in the late 1800s and early 1900s. They were promoted on the geometrical theory that a circle encloses the largest area with the least amount of material. They were interesting structures and new to the American farm scene.

Most were constructed of a balloon type construction with studding for the sidewalls. This procedure lacks lateral support and many round barns were inclined to twist. Different methods were employed to strengthen this type of framing. Some barns had roof slats nailed on at an angle over the rafters. Some siding was also put on at an angle. Angled bracing used in the side wall and across the roof structure seems to be the most effective method. Round barns with gambrel type roofs appear to have a tendency to sag in places as they settle in.

Many round barns had swinging doors to get around the problem of the curved sides. Some round barns like the Manchester barn had doors that were hinged in sections so they could follow a curved track. One Vermont barn had curved doors built on curved straps so the door would closely follow a curved track around the contour of the barn.

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has proven to be surprisingly effective in promoting local agricultural heritage, raising awareness about preservation efforts, and reconnecting people of all ages with their roots on the farm. In order to be considered for the tour and prepare for the event, many local farmers have invested thousands of dollars into their historic barns. The popularity of the event seems to have given rise to a renewed appreciation in the county for these impressive historic structures. Since the 2013 tour, at the request of several area farmers, the Museum has assisted with the research and application process for the Certified Ohio Century Farm registry. Four farms have been successfully added to the registry and three more applications are being completed. The number of Hancock County farms listed on the registry has increased by more than 20% since the first tour. In 2014, the Historic Barn Tour was awarded the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office's Public Education and Awareness Award and was recognized as a "model program for the state." The noteworthy success of the tour has also resulted in additional funding and demand for more agricultural heritage programming in the county. In 2014, the Hancock Historical Museum received a collaborative grant with the University of Findlay from the Ohio Humanities Council to record the oral histories of six farming families in the county. The stories have been transcribed and preserved in the Museum's archives. In April 2015, the Friends of Ohio Barns' Ohio Barn Conference was held in Hancock County as a result of the collaborative relationship forged during the Historic Barn Tour between FOB and the Hancock Historical Museum.

The Museum has plans to continue to expand its agricultural outreach. Revenue generated by ticket sales for the Historic Barn Tour is reinvested into the non-profit institution's educational programming. In May 2016, retired farmers from the county will join fifth-grade students at the Museum to share what life was like on the farm. Also in 2016, the Museum will begin remodeling its on-site agriculture building to include new interactive exhibits and additional artifacts.

As the stars of the show, the historic barns of Hancock County are gaining local and statewide attention through this successful annual event. By creating a cultural of preservation in the county, it's the Museum's hope that there will be enough beloved old barns still standing to populate the tour for many years to come!

By: Sarah Sisser

***"I would rather be on my farm,
than be emperor of the world."***

-George Washington

Highlights from Algonquin Mill Festival Days



Photo by: Anne Moffitt Johnson

Thank you for your patience in taking the time to let my son, Will help raise part of the barn model yesterday at the Algonquin Mill Festival. It was a highlight of our day. Will loves creating structures out of hot glue and popsicle sticks, and he says a barn is next on his list. (Image and comment sent to FOB via Facebook. It sure is wonderful to see young folks get excited about barns! We are so glad Mr. Will enjoyed himself!!)



Photo by: Ric Beck

Paul Knoebel, in suspenders, a Pied Piper of timber framing, is generally seen with a host of youngsters following his lead in barn raising activities.

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