



2023 SPRING BARN TOUR

# Touring the Barns of Van Buren County

On June 24-25, a tour of Van Buren County will take participants into some of southeast Iowa's finest surviving wood barns. The county has a trove of classic barns, spanning 180 years of Iowa history. Many have fallen prey to weather, gravity, and changing farming practices, but painstaking preservation and restoration have saved some of the best for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

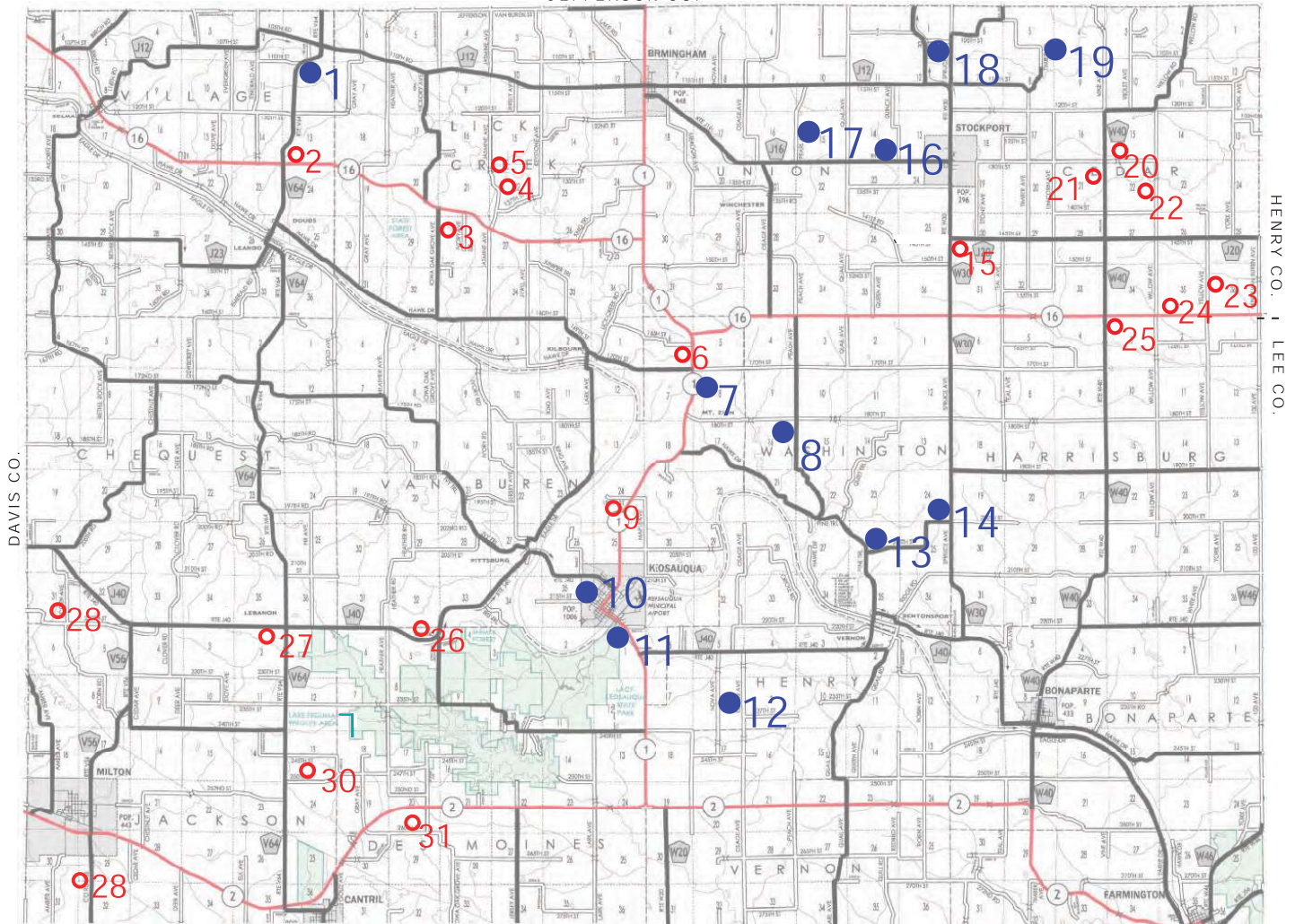
The headquarters of the tour will be Morris Park, the site of an extensive agricultural museum. Morris Park's programs are detailed in a separate article. The park and 12 barns are part of the official tour and will be open for visitors from 9 to 5 (except where noted), with an interpreter, generally the farmer himself, on site. These barns are indicated in bold face below.

Other barns of special interest for windshield view are also listed in the "drive-by barns" section. Some are along the way of the main barn tour, and others are in a scattered cluster near tour headquarters in Morris Park. For the ambitious driver, a handful of the county's most remarkable barns, located in the southwest part of the country and out of the way of the main tour, are also highlighted. A more comprehensive self-guided tour can be found in the brochure *The Barns of Van Buren County*, available on-line on the Iowa Barn Foundation website. An earlier edition is available in hard copy at the Cramlet Barn and in Morris Park during the tour.

The tour map includes both the official spring tour barns and the supplemental windshield tour drive-by barns.

*Special thanks to Paul Clifford Larson for organizing the tour and gathering all the barn history.*





Solid blue dots indicate barns open for viewing. Hollow red hollow dots indicate drive-bys of special interest.



**1 • Frank and Katie Cramlet Barn,  
11256 V64, 3 miles north of Douds**

One of the rare round barns designed and built by Loudon Machinery Company of Fairfield, a manufacturer with a nationwide market in farm machinery and equipment. Constructed in 1921, it has lost its tall cupola but has otherwise been meticulously restored. Initially lauded by schools of agriculture for their efficiency, round barns enjoyed a decade of popularity before difficulties and expenses in construction brought the fashion to an end. Close by the barn are two buildings that preceded it: a large farmhouse built in 1915, and a poultry house of 1918.



**7 • Charles and Bess Bogle Barn,  
17248 Hwy 1, 5 miles north of  
Keosauqua (OPEN SUNDAY ONLY)**

A turn-of-the-century bank barn which was recently moved to a new foundation, restored, and returned to its original red color. In typical English bank barn fashion, the animals entered through doorways in the rear basement, with grain stored on either side of the threshing floor above. In lieu of a cupola, the threshing floor and hay loft both vent through louvered windows at the ends. The associated house dates from the same period. Open on Sunday only.



**8 • Barker Barns, Peach Ave. at 170th  
St, 1 mile north of 17388 Peach, 5  
miles northeast of Keosauqua  
(UPDATE - DRIVE-BY ONLY)**

A pair of English barns built by father and son in 1860 and 1870. Both barns have their peculiarities, the older for a massive central silo, the newer for a basement partially open to the rear, edging it toward the Pennsylvania type. The skewed relationship between the barns is also unusual, though it contributes to the picturesqueness of the site. By 1900, the Barker clan held almost 1500 acres of farmland in the north-west corner of Washington Township. The farmhouse once stood to the west on 170th.





**10 • Marshall and Mary Myers Barn, 807 Country Lane Road, Keosauqua**

A magnificently sited bank barn at the northern edge of town. Built in the 1880s, it is said to have functioned as a stagecoach stop for a time, with travelers put up on the main floor. The interior has been altered by successive owners, with milled lumber adjoined to the old hewn timbers. Once associated with other farm buildings, it is now a solitary sentinel of the former farmyard.



**11 • Rigsby Hill Barn, 22053 Hwy. 1, immediately south of Keosauqua (SATURDAY ONLY)**

Built by the Walker brothers around 1870, but now more familiarly known as the Parsons barn for the three generations of Parsons that ensued. It is a classic Pennsylvania barn, with an open forebay for sheltering animals. Because the forebay extends the building to the rear, the barn also has the form of a saltbox. It recently underwent a meticulous scraping and repainting of its exterior.



**12 • Henry and Elizabeth Grages Barn, 23535 Osage Ave., 4 miles southwest of Keosauqua**

An 1870s Pennsylvania bank barn with a basement open from the rear

for sheltering animals. Henry was a German immigrant and Civil War veteran, marrying and bringing his wife to Iowa in the early 1870s to raise corn, cattle, sheep, and 10 children. Still in use for sheltering a cow and a horse, the barn will undergo restoration this summer.



**13 • A. J. Zook & Yoder Barns 26318 and 26417 205th St. at Pine Trail, 1½ miles north of Bentonsport**

An eye-catching pairing of an eclectic World War I-era barn with a spacious new barn across the road, showing that the gambrel-roof form is still very much alive. The old barn needs care but retains its picturesque profile and composition. It is particularly noteworthy for combining pegged timbers with a poured concrete foundation, suggesting that it may have been moved onto its present site. The new barn has been beautifully outfitted for housing Percheron horses and the family's wagons and buggies.



**14 • Henry and Millie Westergreen Barn, 19871 W30 (Spruce Ave.) at 200th St., 3 miles northeast of Bentonsport**

A large gambrel cattle barn built during World War I at the southeast corner of what was then a 600-acre farm. The loft floor has been removed and the wagon entry greatly enlarged to allow the conversion to farm machinery storage. Framed in an unusually intricate manner to hold together the wide spread of the gable, it retains its hay track just under the ridge. At 60' x 80', it is one of the largest barns in the county.



**16 • Elm Cove (James and Anna Clark) Barn, 26581 J16, 1 mile west of Stockport**

A well-appointed and well-kept gambrel bank barn variously dated to 1903 and ca. 1914. Hand-hewn timbers and the use of square nails point to the earlier date for at least some of its materials, but it also incorporates milled lumber and horizontal siding rather than the conventional board-and-batten. It has many unusual features, including stall bars made of ax handles and stairways running from the basement to the loft. It housed dairy cattle, hogs, and horses.



**17 • Warren Brown Barn, 12698 Pearl Ave., 3 miles southwest of Birmingham**

**(Open Saturday Only)**

A small but elegant round barn built of hollow tile manufactured in nearby Stockport. Used as a milking barn, the cattle stood in stalls around the perimeter, with the hay loft above accessed via a drop-down ladder. Warren and his brother Clarence built nearly identical barns 3 miles apart in 1918 and 1921, respectively, at the height of the round barn fashion. Clarence's barn is no longer standing.





**18 • Schuyler and Isabella Morris (Morris-Clark Barn), 27882 107th St, 2 miles north of Stockport**

A fine English bank barn built in 1916, unusual for canted cupolas and interior vertical supports that run to the roof, eliminating the need for large struts. It is also known as the Morris-Clark barn because of three generations of Clark ownership and preservation. Animal stalls and stanchions and grain bins are still in place. Originally built to house Percheron horses, it converted to a cattle barn in the 1930s. The “new” hollow tile milk house close by went up in 1935.



**19 • Morris Park Farm Museum, 10938 Timber Rd., 3 miles north-east of Stockport**

A museum complex begun in 1938 by two grandchildren of the farmers who first settled there a century before. It has a replica of Henry and Jane Morris’s log cabin and early barn and numerous other buildings, centering on a vast old-style monitor barn built in 1980 and housing an extensive collection of early farm machinery as well as other historical artifacts.



The Friends of Morris Park will be hosting a lunch to fund Morris Park projects on Saturday from 11-2 and advanced reservations are recommended. Purchases made at the event will be cash only. The lunch will include a Maid-Rite sandwich, chips, side dish, dessert, and drink. Please send a donation of \$12 per person with checks made out to “Friends of Morris Park” to the following address by June 15: Dorothy Gilbert, 23916 Rte J 16, Stockport, IA 52651. Purchases can also be made online at [iowabarnfoundation.org/product/2023-spring-lunch](http://iowabarnfoundation.org/product/2023-spring-lunch)



Spectacular view looking up into the roof of the Cramlet Round Barn. The original domed roof collapsed about 1970 and was replaced with the current cone roof.”



# Windshield Tour

For the enthusiastic and ambitious, you can drive by these additional barns which are not open for touring



**2 • Howard L. Ratcliff Barn, 15141 Hwy. 16, 1 mile north of Douds**

Ratcliffe operated two coal mines on his property before putting up his ca. 1920 horse barn.



**3 • Paul Stewart Barn, 14190 Iowa Oak Grove Ave. just south of Hwy. 16**

A picture-perfect ca. 1910 western barn, remarkable for its square footprint and perfect symmetry.



**4 • Boyd-Swartz Barn, 13592 Jasmine Ave., 1/2 mile north of Hwy. 16**

A rare gable-front barn, the best preserved of a remarkable cluster of pre-World War I barns, sheds, and granary.



**5 • Louis C. Elerick Barn, 13326 Jasmine Ave., 3/4 mile north of Hwy 16**

A massive 1870s bank barn built on a rubble foundation and paired with a 1940s granary.



**6 • William Barker Barn foundation, 16677 Hwy 1, 6 miles north of Keosauqua**

Only the foundation remains of a former landmark 4-story stock barn built in 1886. The associated brick Italianate house went up a decade earlier.



**9 • Edwin Manning Barn, 20007 Hwy 1, 1 mile north of Keosauqua**

Built in 1901, the year of Manning's death, the barn and its associated square corn crib were among the last things Manning built on his vast agricultural holdings.



**15 • Earle Niederhuth Farm Buildings, W30 (Spruce Ave.) & 145th St., 1 mile south of Stockport**

This remarkable complex grew up just after World War II, with a 1947 house, a 1949 barn, a 1960 gambrel-roofed machine shed, and a 1964 quonset utility building.



**20 • Tapley Taylor Barn, 31295 130th St., 3 miles east of Stockport**

A ca. 1895 barn, one of two surviving barns on Taylor's Rock Creek Stock Farm. There was a small fairgrounds in between, which Taylor likely used as a showplace for his animals.



**21 • Andrew Jacobs Barn, 13077 W40 (Vine Ave.), 3 miles east of Stockport.**

A classic English bank barn from the 1890s with its ramp and attached milk house still in place.





**22 ◦ Harold Johnson Barn, 13641 Willow Ave., 4 miles east of Stockport**

A 1918 monitor barn with high wings, one originally housing animals, the other farm equipment.



**26 ◦ Riley Thomas Barn, 17727 J40, 6 miles west of Keosauqua**

A small gambrel barn dating to 1924, with dormers added during a thorough rehabilitation in 2016.



**29 ◦ Arlie Wilson Barn, 26947 V56, 1 mile south of Milton**

The largest classic gambrel dairy barn in the county, built in the 1920s and finely detailed.



**23 ◦ George Newbold Barn, 15712 Yellow Ave., 7 miles southeast of Stockport**

A well-preserved front-gabled barn of 1911, not a common barn type in the county.



**27 ◦ John Fisher Barn, 14682 J40, 9 miles west of Keosauqua**

One of three barns built by the Fisher brothers, who used bolts instead of pegs or nails.



**30 ◦ William McBride Barn, 15785 250th St., 3 miles north of Cantril**

The oldest surviving Pennsylvania barn in the county, as stately as it is well-preserved.



**24 ◦ William Watson Barn, 32281 Hwy. 16, 6 miles southeast of Stockport**

An interesting pairing of an 1891 saltbox barn with a 1965 quonset.



**28 ◦ Maguire/Klodt Barn, 21483 Acorn Av, 5 miles north of Milton**

An 1895 gambrel barn moved in from Jefferson County and magnificently restored in 2002.



**31 ◦ Wickfield Pavilion, 17451 260th St., 3 miles northeast of Cantril**

Once one of the county's great showpieces. Its surrounding farm boasted the largest Hampshire hog production in the world.



**25 ◦ Samuel Sprott Barn, 16040 W40 (Vine St.) at Hwy 16, 5 miles southeast of Stockport**

A ca. 1894 barn with split levels and tree trunks for main posts