

SPRING 2019 • VOLUME 25 • NO. 1

# IOWA BARN FOUNDATION MAGAZINE







Iowa Barn Foundation Magazine  
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The magazine, as well as the  
foundation, is an all-state,  
effort founded in 1997.

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Cover Photo Credit:

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*Smith Barn*

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[http://www.iowabarnfoundation.org/about\\_ibf.htm#reps](http://www.iowabarnfoundation.org/about_ibf.htm#reps)

# HENRY COUNTY TREASURE



It is believed that this barn was built in the 1860s. The upper part of the barn contains the remnants of grain bins which were built on the northeast corner where the floor was enforced with additional joists and beams. The beams in the barn are hand-hewn and pegged. Most appear to be oak, with some sycamore. Insects have damaged the beams through the years.

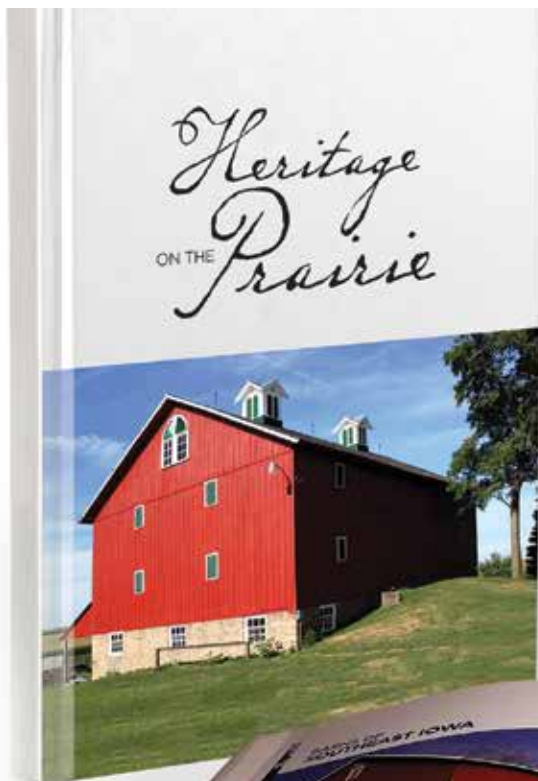
Large doors on the east side of the barn hang on their original iron hinges. A closer inspection shows holes where window shutters had been hinged.

The ramp on the west side of the barn was filled in with dirt until the 1950s.

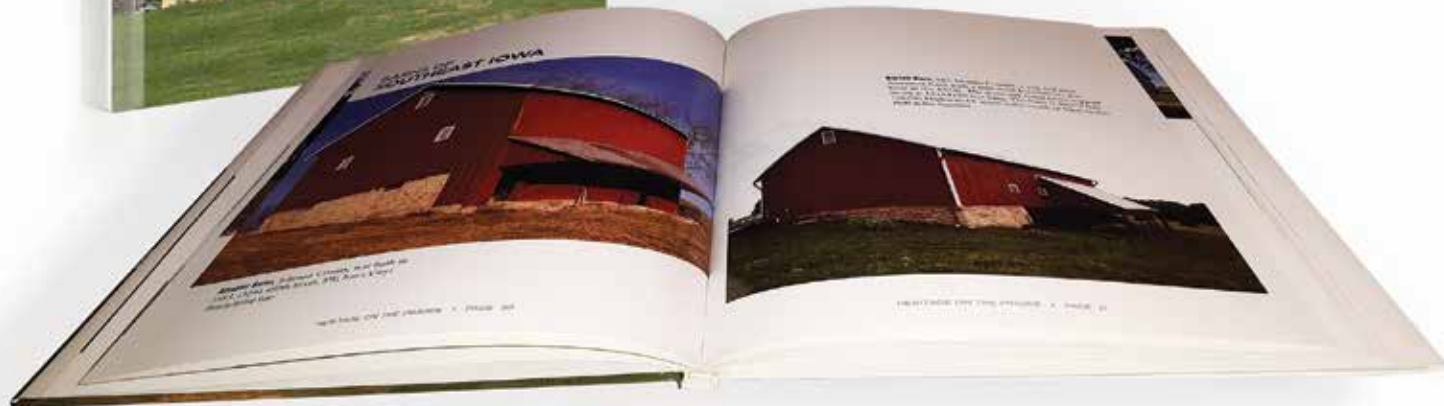
Said Cammack, "I wish I could have seen this barn built by master stone masons and woodworkers who put together such a prized piece of history."

**Mark Cammack, who grew up on this Henry County farm, sent this photo and a brief history of the barn which still stands east of Salem.**





# ABOUT OUR BARNs



The introduction to “Heritage on the Prairie”, a new coffee table book published by the the Iowa Barn Foundation, emphasizes how the publication is the result of a volunteer effort in keeping with the tone of the group since its beginning. So many folks, oh so quietly, have contributed hours of work and expertise to the foundation.

Board member and barn expert, Ober Anderson is frequently called on to give lectures on barns. They can be far-reaching. Recently Scott Rains, pastor of Hope Lutheran Church, Ankeny, attended one of his programs and said he had an idea for a sermon. “Little did I know that it would be our Easter sermon—eight different services and some 4-5,000 people in attendance,” said Ober. “He tied the restoration of barns to the rebuilding of our

lives which have developed problems along the way. The first two or three minutes of his sermon referred to barns. In the background, he had pictures of barns and a sped up sequence of Amish builders constructing a barn.”

One of those hard-working folks is “retiring” soon. Don Geiger, Ames native, has been the treasurer of the organization since its beginning. He graduated from Iowa State and then spent a career as partner at Deloitte and Touche in Des Moines. As a volunteer at IBF for 20 plus years, he zealously has overseen the group’s finances and personally sent out tax receipts to donors every year. He never made an error. Beyond the finances, he guided the group with good advice. We are all grateful for his huge contribution to the group.



# **“HERITAGE ON THE PRAIRIE”, A BOOK ON IOWA BARNS, NOW AVAILABLE**

“Heritage on the Prairie”, a colorful coffee table book featuring photographs and brief histories of Iowa barns, has been published by the Iowa Barn Foundation, and is now available.

Dedicated to barn preservation—photographers, writers, editor, and assistants volunteered their expertise to the creating the book, in addition to several professional photographers and writers.

The foundation raises money and gives grants to property owners throughout the state. The book features photographs of some of these barns. Some are on the foundation’s annual fall tour, featuring barns that have received grants or been restored by the owner.

The cost of the book is \$29, plus \$5 if it is shipped. Books can be purchased by calling Roxanne Mehlich, Iowa Barn Foundation board member, at 641-487-7690.

Any income from the sale of books will go into the foundation’s barn preservation fund.

Another unheralded volunteer is Ray McFarland, Boxholm native. Ray still lives on the family farm where he grew up. He raises some cattle and enjoys the beauty of the nature around him. He owns All Cuts, a barber shop on Lincoln Way in Campustown. For years, he has generously shared that space with the Iowa Barn Foundation. He keeps stacks of Iowa Barn Foundation magazines in one room and frequently goes to the post office to mail some. Now he is “housing” copies of “Heritage on the Prairie”. He is storing our books. When some were unloaded, he called Wayne Rimathe, who drove up from Slater to help him.

Sadly, we are still losing our rural treasures. We lost the historic Galloway barn, Keosauqua, to a thunderstorm late last year. And very recently, a storm took the historic and renowned Jefferson Highway barn near Hubbard. This is a barn that stood on the remnants of the Old Jefferson Highway that went from New Orleans to Canada. Folks used to picnic on the barn’s grounds.

But, we have pluses too. Mike Boyle, treasurer of the historic society in Tipton, recently wrote to tell us his aunt, Norma Buckley, had passed away. A widow, Norma was determined to get her big red barn saved.

She worked with the Iowa Barn Foundation to do this and proudly showed her barn off during tours through the years. Said Boyle, “The Iowa Barn Foundation brought joy to her heart working with the foundation in preserving the Buckley barn.”

James and Sharon Omvig, Des Moines, are interested in learning if anyone knows of any barns built by Jim’s grandfather, John Omvig, a craftsman who immigrated from Norway in 1885 and settled in the Roland area. The barns would have been built between 1905 and 1928. He built furniture including memorable spinning wheels. Jim’s phone number is 515-657-3155.

This is an example of how important it is to learn the builder of a barn. That is an important piece in the history of the barn.

Someone in Iowa recently recalled the car riding game where we got 100 points for seeing a white horse. What about encouraging riders to look for barns and other out buildings... 100 points for a barn; 50 points for a corn crib, etc. This little exercise could encourage youngsters to value our rural heritage.

Thank you to Jeff Stark who gave a donation in honor of Chuck Brotherton’s retirement.

## Ken Starek Talks

# THE STATUS OF

I grew up on a livestock farm in western Iowa's Crawford County. The farmstead was part of an original 120-acre Chapman farm that included a 28x36 pegged post and beam barn. The sill rested on loose field stone. One quarter of the barn was divided into two double stalls with managers for draft horses. A corner of

the barn featured a small oats bin—fuel for horses and two small pens. Another area featured two larger pens with managers.

There were always active barn swallow nests. Swallows dive-bombed barn resident cats when they walked across the yard. Pigeons nested in the cupola and roosted on the hay rail. The mow door hinged down a system of pulleys allowing for a horse to pull loose hay up and off the rack and into the barn to be dumped into the mow.

For its small size, the barn had an elegant cupola with a cross, gable roof, and windows for light and ventilation. The cupola was topped by a pheasant in flight

weather vane. A windstorm destroyed the cupolas and damaged the barn's roof which was replaced with steel. We have the beloved vane in the entry of our house.

There is not much I can do about the barn except watch it deteriorate and remember how it was. I would like to climb up into the hay mow one more time. Will it seem as large now as then? I would like to photograph and measure the pegged beam work. Will it be the same without light streaming through cupola windows that are no longer there?

To me, barn building was for a purpose. Beginning in the 1880s, dairy, beef, and draft horses were housed in barns. Originally logs harvested from Minnesota and Wisconsin forests were floated down the Mississippi River and cut into dimension lumber at riverside city sawmills in eastern Iowa.

Prior to the 1960s, hog production was not as year-round as today. Daily cleaning, bedding,



Ken Starek, Ackley, renowned for his knowledge of barns, is dubbed a barnologist by friends and family. He believes Iowa's best barns are landmarks. One of the most important advocates of barn preservation in Iowa, he authored an article on barns in one of the first issues of the Iowa Barn Foundation magazines. Now 22 years later, he brings us up-to-date on his current barn thoughts.

# IOWA BARNs

and storage of manure until crops were harvested became an issue. Today's total confinement units with pits and ventilation for larger number of hogs have replaced barns.

Iowa's beef and dairy operations are the last to use barns fully today. In many cases the owner is of retirement age, and the farm operation is not large enough to support a family. As with swine, there will be a concentration of beef feeding and dairy operations leaving a large number of unused sites and many unused barns.

I was a 1967 high school graduate and feel that was the end of an era of three or four farms per 640 section of ground. According to the USDA, between 1950 and 1980, the number of working farms was reduced by fifty percent. Between 1980 and 2016, the number of barns was reduced by another fifty percent.

Today, it is rare to see more than one tractor per section in the field, but the size of the equipment has gone from two and four row planters in the sixties to 12, 16, and 24 today.

It is estimated that Iowa had some 250,000 barns around the 1930s. Many of the farms had more than one barn, as the owner would keep the old barn when they built a new one. It is estimated Iowa loses 1000 barns a year, one for each township in the state. For instance, the year 2018 was devastating for Hardin County's Etna Township. One farm was sold and new owners cleared the site. Another was taken down and burned because it was no longer needed. Finally, nature proved to be too much for a third barn, as given time, the forces of nature will gradually take a neglected barn down.

Barns also disappear when land is cleared, or when there is an electrical malfunction. Lightning and spontaneous combustion of hay also contribute to barns' demise. Winds and tornadoes contribute to doing barns in. The Canfield round hollow clay tile block barn, north of Dunkerton, replaced a barn that had been destroyed by a 1917 tornado. It was taken down by a tornado in 2008. The historic Galloway barn that was on the National Register, was taken by a tornado last year.

When observing a barn I have a mental check list in an attempt to date and understand the uniqueness of the barn.

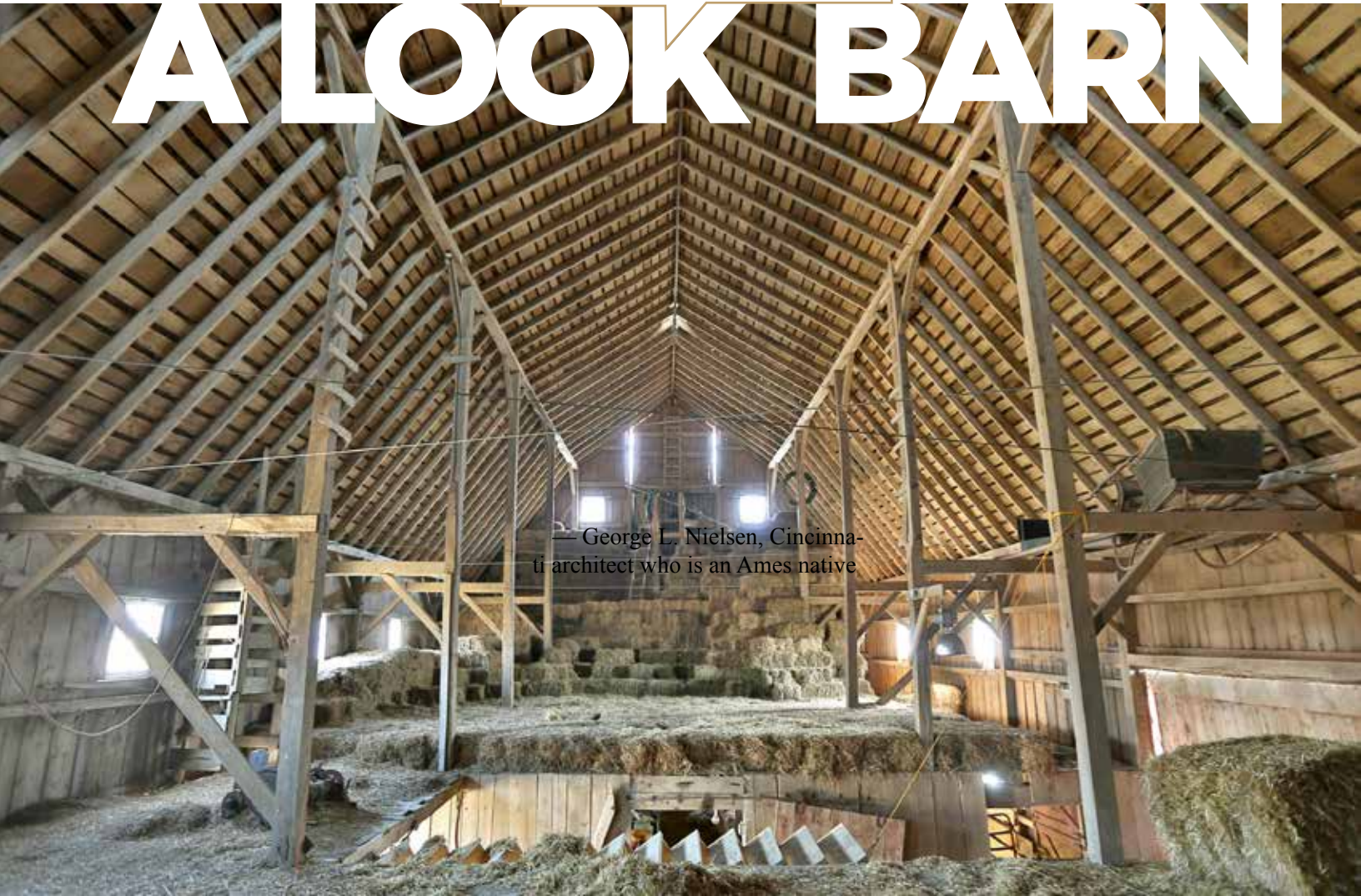
- The cupola: Original and replaced
- The roof and side shape: (English gable, prairie, gambrel, Gothic arch, round, multi-sided)
- Metal ventilators
- Wind vane
- Lightning rods
- Color: Red, white, faded gray
- Roof style and shape: prairie, English, gambrel, Gothic arch. wood shingle, asphalt clay tile, slate, steel, wood, (log, vertical 1 /1/12 with bat boards, horizontal ship lap)
- Sidewall Masonry: (brick, hollow clay tile block, concrete block, poured concrete; stone: limestone, fieldstone); steel
- Method used to deliver hay to haymow: drive, off by hand, rail and hay fork

*(continued on page 14)*





# INSIDE A LOOK BARN



— George L. Nielsen, Cincinnati architect who is an Ames native



BY GEORGE L. NIELSEN, CINCINNATI  
ARCHITECT WHO IS AN AMES NATIVE

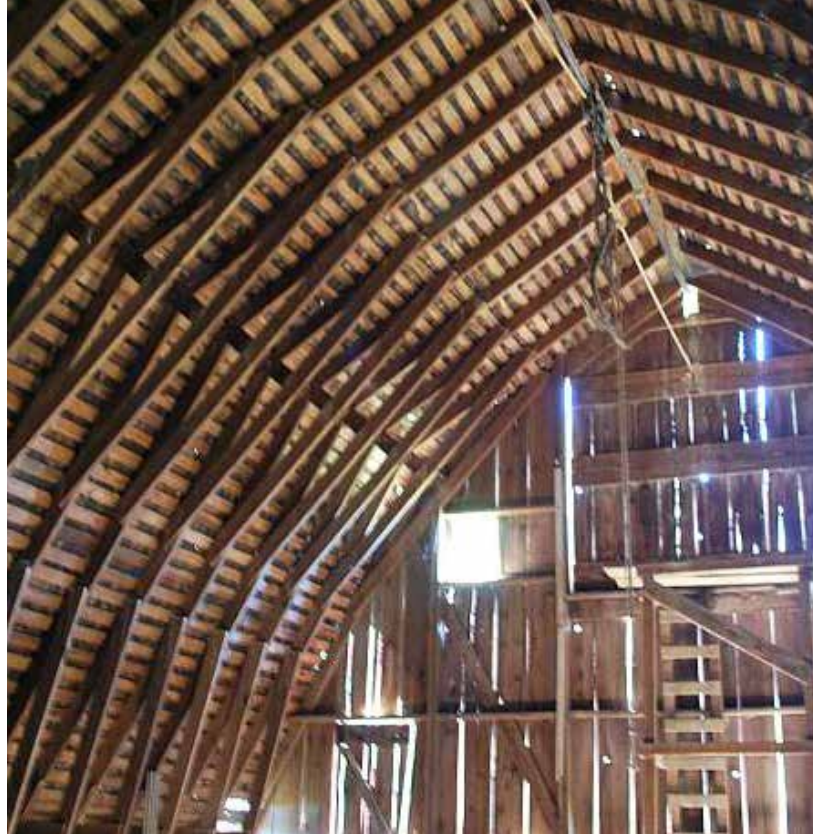
In many ways, barns are unique pieces of Architecture. They are most often created not by design professionals, but are instead the child of the farmer's imagination. He simply needs a place to house his livestock, crops and machinery and to care for them in a straight-forward efficient way. Nothing fancy, just a dry and weather-resistant enclosure. So, the farmer just builds his barn himself. You could say that these barns are, as said in the "Fine Art" world, they are "Primitive Art". They are creations of the farmers themselves and their barn builders.

Barns exhibit not just an outside image, but from the inside they tell a story. They show off the creativity and ingenuity of the farmer-builder. Inside you can see the fascinating ways the structure has been supported and the interesting functional layouts of the spaces and the sometimes curious construction details used. You see the limited materials they had to work with which give evidence of the primitive work tools they were limited to. Inside, you sense the work organization of the farmer and it becomes apparent and alive. The practicality of the spaces and the materials and details of the barn's construction reveal themselves. And they are fascinating. They show all kinds of things: the way they made, the tools used, even the number of workers that must have been needed to make them. They tell a story.

The famous Chicago Mid-century Architect, Mies Van Der Rohe said of his notable buildings that "God is in the Details". If that is so, then I think it can be said that the farmer can claim of his barn, His Soul is in the Details.

Go inside and look into the Soul of the Farmer.







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2019

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# June Area Tour to Feature Historic Barns in Eastern Iowa

Please join us

## **SATURDAY, JUNE 22 & SUNDAY, JUNE 23**

Historic barns, including round barns in Dubuque and southern Clayton Counties, and some of the most scenic countryside in Iowa, will be featured on the annual spring Iowa Barn Foundation area tour from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

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The scenic tour is free and opened to the public.  
A catered lunch, where everyone has a chance for a friendly visit, will be \$10 per person.

For reservations, please mail checks made to the Iowa Barn Foundation to Roxanne Mehlich, 17590 730th Avenue, Zearing. She will take questions at 641-487-7690. Reservations should be sent to Roxanne by June 17.



A highlight will be lunch at the glorious Jack and Maria Smith barn, 20922 Asbury Road, Durango, which was built in 1917 and has remained in the same family. It is an Iowa landmark barn, is still beloved, always has been, and is still in use. The inside of the barn is pictured on the cover of this magazine. (From Bankston, go a half mile north on Park Road, then three miles east on Asbury Road.) Jack Smith, Dubuque Iowa County representative, spent months putting this special tour together. His wife, Maria, Brian and Lisa Willenbring helped.

*Jack Smith Barn, Location of Barn Tour Luncheon*



# Barns on tour include:

## Dubuque County

including the Epworth  
and Dyersville areas

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### Kennedy Barn

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Marty Kennedy barn was built in 1912. The site was a stagecoach stop on the Olde Hawkeye Foad in the late 1800s. Olde Hawkeye Foad became the route for US 20 through Dubuque county making it a historically significant part of America's longest highway. Be sure to enjoy Marty's herd of Buffalo while visiting his barn! The barn is located at, 25219 Old Highway Road or one mile east of Farley on Old Highway Road.



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### Field of Dreams Barn

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The Field of Dreams Barn, 28995 Lansing Road, Dyersville, was built by the Lansing Family in the early 1900's. They farmed there until Hollywood wanted the farm for the movie, Field of Dreams. It is part of one of the most visited movie sites in America. You will enjoy this iconic setting! (pictured top of next column.)



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### Becker Barn

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The Jude Becker farm, 15346 Becker Lane, Dyersville. Take Highway 136 north of Dyersville. Turn right on Floyd Road and left on Becker Lane. It is believed the barn was originally built about 1865 from logs taken from White Pine Hollow. The barn was built by Jude's family. The barn was used primarily for horses until 1940 then housed beef cattle. Jude's father used it as a woodworking shop and today it houses much of his impressive work.



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## Boge Barn

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Don Boge Farm, 28573 Lansing Road, a visit to this historic family farm will be a step-back in Iowa farming history with Don Boge who is dedicated to history. He has purposely kept original buildings including the barn, which was built in the 1800s. It's sort of an authentic farm museum.



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## Steger Barn

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Robert and Lillian Steger barn, 2013 332nd, Dyersville (one mile north of old US 20, west of Dyersville, then left.) Barn was built in 1908 as a horse barn and later converted to a dairy barn. Relatives of Robert built the barn and Robert and Lillian were able to purchase the farm in 1970 after renting it for 11 years.



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## McAuliffle Barn

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Joe and Sharon McAuliffle barn, 21739 Old Highway 20 Road (one mile east of Epworth) was built in the 1920s. It was previously owned by the Waechter family.



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## Lassance Barn

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The Lassance family have two barns on their farm. They were both built in the early 1900s. They are located on historic Millville Road which follows the Little Maquoketa River. Several gristmills and sawmills operated on the river in the mid to late 1800s. The Millville School district building was located west of the intersection of Gun Club and Millville roads along with a church. The barns are located at 22675 Millville Road. Take Gun Club Road north of Epworth 3 miles. The site is left on Millville Road.



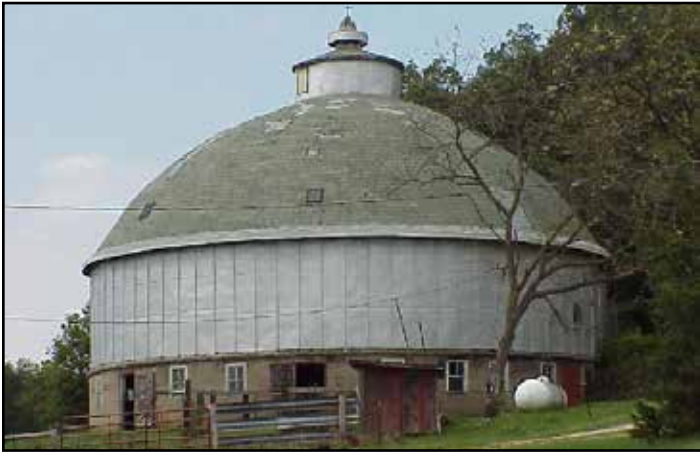


# Clayton County

Millville area

## Friedlein Barn

Larry Friedlein Round Barn, US Route 52, 0.9 miles from jct with Great River Rd., just N. of Millville on the W. side of the road. It was designed by the owner's grandfather and built in 1916. It is 72 feet in diameter and has unique metal vertical siding, an unusual dome roof, a cupola with an aerator, and a central silo. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. The barn is still in use as a cattle barn, you can drive by, stop, and take photos of the barn; but do not go inside.



## Smith Barn

Jake Smith barn, a family farm, is on the picturesque Turkey River. Jake's Grandfather, Leroy Washendorf bought the farm in 1972. He will be on hand the day of the tour to visit with. Directions: South of Millville on US 52 then watch for Cassville Ferry sign then turn left on Great River Road. First farm on right.



## Anderegg Barn

Steve and Connie Anderegg 38001 Cherry Valley Rd. 5 miles south of Luxemburg right on Cherry Valley Rd. There are two barns on site. One was moved there in 1982. There is also a Spring House at the farm. Cherry Hollow is rich in Native American history of which Steve is very knowledgeable.



## Stanton Barn

Eric Stanton barn, Eric purchased this farm 8 years ago and lives there with his wife, Harriett and children, Oliver and Hugo. The farm setting is gorgeous. The barn is located at 37395 Cherry Valley Road in the beautiful Cherry Valley. One mile east of US 52 on Cherry Valley Road.



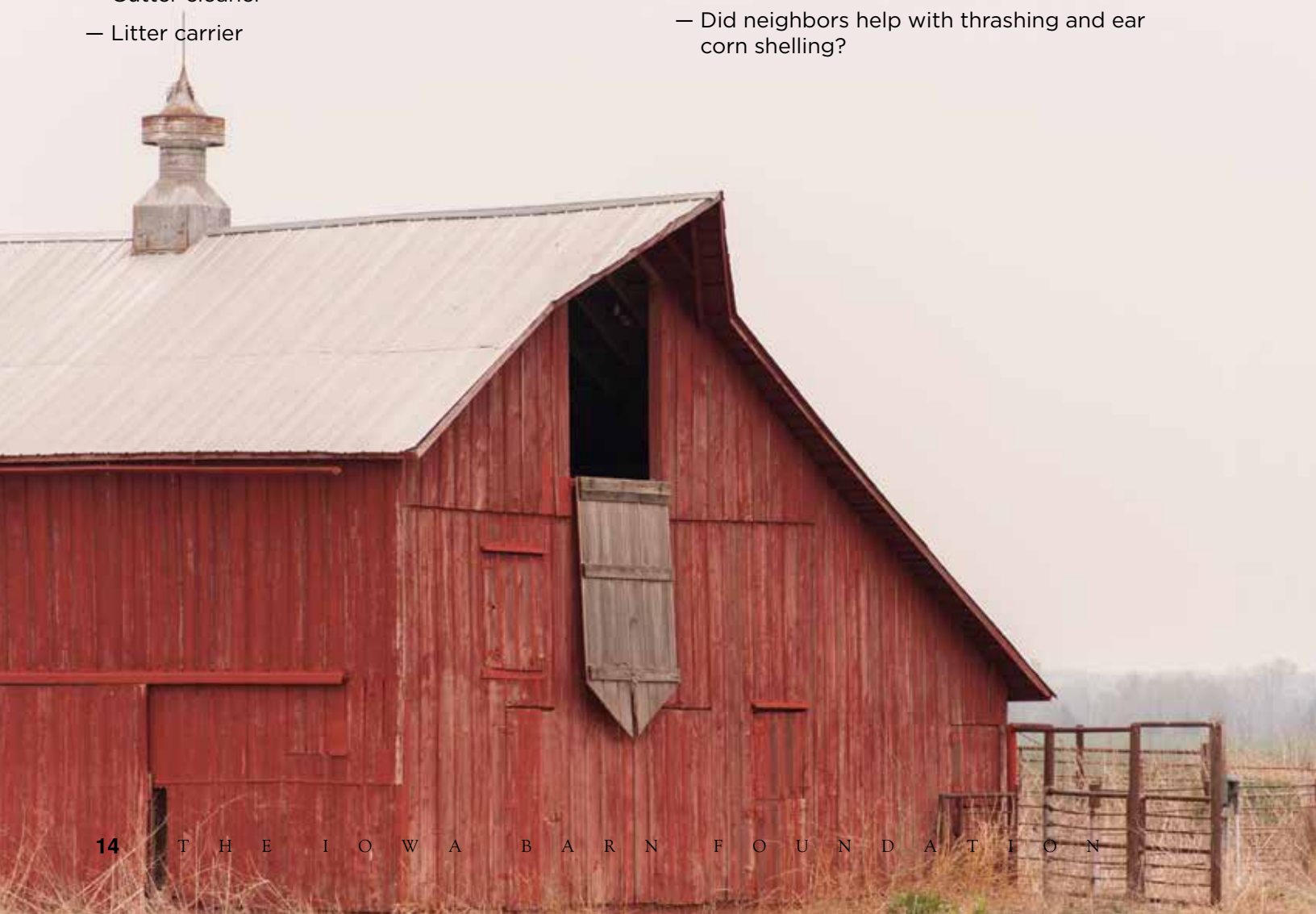
“In many cases we will not miss them until they are gone. Then you drive by where one stood and realize something is wrong, missing, of place — never to return.” — **KEN STAREK**

## THE STATUS OF IOWA BARNS (cont. from page 7)

- End lift: various styles of hoods that covered the end of the rail style of mow door--hinged down, split-down to the side, slide up and down
- Type of hay rail
- Type of hay fork
- Bank barn or pent roof barn
- Doors and windows
- Names or dates on the barn that tell when the barn was built and who built or owned it
- Advertising like mail pouch tobacco
- Pennsylvania Dutch hex signs
- Manure system
- Gutter cleaner
- Litter carrier

I find the interior of barns reveal lots of secrets about the construction of the barn. I am awed to look at pegged, post and beam barn construction and realize it was all done with hand tools. Getting permission to view the inside of a barn has the plus of a conversation with the owner. My questions follow:

- When was the barn build and who built it?
- How many bales would the hay mow hold?
- How many cows or draft horses were kept in the barn?
- When was the last draft horse living there?
- Was corn picked by hand?
- When was the first year of a mechanical pickers?
- Did neighbors help with thrashing and ear corn shelling?







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## Send Your Stories and Photographs

Do send us your stories. And, do you have excerpts from diaries you'd like to share? We'd like to reproduce some of them in this magazine. We're interested in photographs too. We are trying to preserve memories of barns and the people who built and worked in them.

Send to:  
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PO 111,  
New Providence, Iowa 50206

Or, if you are on Facebook share at:  
[www.Facebook.com/IowaBarnFoundation](http://www.Facebook.com/IowaBarnFoundation)

[www.iowabarnfoundation.org](http://www.iowabarnfoundation.org)

You have all contributed to making barns the stars in Iowa's crown; your help has been appreciated by everyone involved. We hope you will continue to support the effort—and tell friends about it. Because of expense, we are now sending magazines only to donors.

\_\_\_ \$10,000 \_\_\_ \$5000 \_\_\_ \$2500 \_\_\_ \$1000 \_\_\_ \$500 \_\_\_ \$100

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You can also help the Iowa Barn Foundation by volunteering. We need grant writers, helpers with all-state barn tours, the State Fair, and fund-raisers. Maybe you have skill that would help this effort. And, we want to know about old barns!

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If you would like more information, please email Jacqueline Schmeal: [jschmeal@earthlink.net](mailto:jschmeal@earthlink.net)

Please make checks payable to Iowa Barn Foundation and send:  
c/o Community Bank, Box 436, Nevada Iowa 50201.

If we have incorrect address information or if you'd like to add friends to our mailing list, please notify Ann Harvey, 3835 34th Street, Des Moines, IA 50310, 515-255-5213; [ach2002@aol.com](mailto:ach2002@aol.com)

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c/o Community Bank

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#### **New members, address information and updates:**

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Donations to the Iowa Barn Foundation should be sent to  
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