

HOOOSIER BARN

C H R O N I C L E

Preserving Indiana's Heritage, One Barn at a Time

A PUBLICATION OF



**INDIANA BARN
FOUNDATION**

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The Thompson Barn redefined

What's your barn's purpose? BY D. MICHAEL THOMPSON

For twenty-six years, my barn was nothing more than miscellaneous storage, a place to keep things out of the weather, and then that all changed. Built in the early 1900s, my transverse-style barn was the focal point of the farm, housing horses, feeding cattle, storing hay and grain, and a corn crib. When I purchased the homestead, the barn was last used for farming in the 1960's. I tried my best to give the barn a solid foundation, a weather-

tight roof, and exterior siding repairs as needed. Over the years, it became a daunting task given the size of the barn and required repairs to the siding and doors. It came to the point where everything else was a priority because of the time, manpower, and money needed for repairs.

In late 2022, my son and future daughter-in-law approached our family about using the barn for their wedding in the fall of 2023. With much

thought, we established a plan that involved friends, family, and neighbors and started in June for the October wedding. Our focus was to redefine areas of the barn and determine what each space would be and what needed to be done to serve that purpose. Safety was a concern with over 130 people attending; uneven floors, creating no access to the hay loft, and electrical issues topped our list. Once we had a purpose for each space and we

continued

What's your barn's purpose? *continued*

addressed the need for flooring. The existing floors were dirt, and with little to spend on flooring, we chose ag lime. When spread, leveled, compacted, and sprayed with water, they create an excellent semi-solid surface like sand on a beach. Because areas of the hay loft had no railing, we hung pictures/ mirrors over the ladders to keep people and kids from climbing. With a greater need for additional lighting, we updated our electrical service and replaced many fixtures/switches from the 1950's.

I share this story to inspire readers in similar situations to find their motivation, identify their barn's issues, set a timeline, and take action.

Giving your barn purpose will keep you on track to completing its transformation. Volunteers want a sense of accomplishment and knowing that by helping you, they made a difference.

Do your best to preserve and protect your barn for future generations, you can do a more detailed restoration in the future.

TO MAKE A TRANSFORMATION, REDISCOVER YOUR BARN BY:

- ❑ **Removing the clutter**, determine if items have value
- ❑ **Identify the space** and give it purpose
- ❑ **Set timelines** to complete work, ask for help, and hold yourself accountable
- ❑ **Understand the skill level** of the people helping you



DURING RENOVATION



AFTER RENOVATION

THE THOMPSON BARN
THEN & NOW

Photos courtesy of Amy Burton and Mike Thompson

LETTER FROM THE

President of the Indiana Barn Foundation

Thank you for being a member of the only organization in Indiana whose mission is to support the preservation of history Indiana barns. Your membership made it possible for IBF to have the following among our accomplishments in 2023:

- ★ Celebrated **IBF'S 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY**
- ★ Awarded **FOUR BARN PRESERVATION GRANTS** (a \$10,000 commitment)
- ★ Held two Zoom meetings to **ENGAGE AND SUPPORT COUNTY REPS**
- ★ **HELPED TO SECURE AN INDIANA LANDMARKS GRANT** for a detailed assessment of tornado damage to the Littleton/Kingen Round Barn (Indiana's largest)
- ★ **PURCHASED IBF'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL DISPLAY** thanks to a Mishler Brown Grant
- ★ **HELD 2023 IBF ANNUAL MEETING IN WABASH COUNTY** at The Rustic Barn at Hopewell, speaker was Trillium Dell Timberworks owner Rick Collins
- ★ Developed a **NEW MEMBERSHIP BROCHURE**
- ★ Continued to **INCREASE MEMBERSHIP**
- ★ Launched an **IBF BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**
- ★ Organized **IBF'S ANNUAL BARN TOUR IN MIAMI COUNTY**, based at the International Circus Hall of Fame
- ★ Secured a governor's proclamation recognizing **HOOSIER HERITAGE BARN WEEK**
- ★ A record number of barn assessment requests led to **MANY MORE BARN ASSESSMENTS THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS.**

Thank you,
Kent



KENT YEAGER
FOUNDING BOARD
MEMBER AND
PRESIDENT OF THE
INDIANA BARN
FOUNDATION



ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Indiana Barn Foundation's Preservation Grant

The Indiana Barn Foundation understands that one of the most challenging aspects about owning a historic barn can be the cost of repairs and maintenance, especially for major restoration projects. Since 2018, IBF has been helping owners with these challenges through our Preservation Grant Fund. The fund and its grant program are intended to give owners financial assistance to start a project, keep up their momentum as they tackle complex restoration problems, or approach the finish line of a project in order to preserve Indiana's remaining historic barns.

IBF is happy to announce that we are now accepting applications for the 2024 Barn Preservation Grant. Indiana barn owners can apply for a matching grant

up to \$2,500 to complete repairs on their historic barns. Qualifying barns must be located in Indiana, have been originally constructed for agricultural use, be at least 50 years old, retain their historic character and materials, and be in need of substantial repairs. The grant award amount must be matched by the owner's own funds, additional grants or loans, or in-kind value. This is a competitive grant program, and the applications are evaluated by a committee and the final grant awards are voted on by the board of directors. A minimum of \$5,000 is awarded each grant cycle.

More information about eligible projects, the application and instructions, and past grant winners can be found on the IBF website at <https://www.indianabarns.org/grants>.

The application can be completed entirely online, or copies of the form can be downloaded and submitted via regular mail. If you are interested in applying for the 2024 grant cycle, completed applications are due by January 31, 2024. If you have questions about the grant program or the application after reading the instructions online, please contact IBF.

2024
GRANT APPLICATION
DEADLINE
JANUARY 31, 2024



McCain-Mears Barn near Delphi in Carroll County

Barns on the Indiana Landscape:

PENNSYLVANIA BARN

The Pennsylvania barn is a two-level bank barn that features a cantilevered overhang located above the basement wall on the downslope or barnyard side. Referred to as a forebay, foreshoot or overshoot, the feature is unique to Pennsylvania barns and adds floor space above and provides shelter for livestock housed in the basement level. As with all bank barns, the upper level can be accessed by being built into the bank, or by the construction of an earthen ramp or a sloped bridge.

Variants of this barn appear in southeastern Pennsylvania by the late 17th century and are well established by the late 18th. Its earliest presence in the Mid-Atlantic region of southeast Pennsylvania that was primarily settled by Pennsylvania Germans (Pennsylvania Dutch), suggests a strong link to Central Europe, although the exact

form described above, and the one we see in the Indiana landscape, was not known there. Like many barn styles in the United States, this style is likely an amalgam of the diverse influences of bank barn traditions, and as such can be considered an American form. The Pennsylvania barn is more often seen in north central and northeastern Indiana than elsewhere in the state, a cultural legacy of migrants of Pennsylvania Dutch ancestry from the Mid-Atlantic region.

The barns are rectangular in plan with symmetrical gabled roofs. The upper level is usually composed of a central threshing area flanked by bays for grain and equipment storage, and the lower basement level is for animals. Like most bank barns, the lower level is usually of masonry construction. There can be several forebay variations in the standard Pennsylvania barn, but the two primary variations are the supported and unsupported types.

The above text is excerpted from the newly published, *Indiana Heritage Barns: Their History, Uses, and Preservation*. Visit www.indianabarns.org for a PDF version or a list of locations with hard copies available.

INTRODUCING THE INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION'S

ONLINE STORE

The Indiana Barn Foundation Online Store offers customized T-shirts, hats, tumblers and more.

www.indianabarns.org/store



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Restoration as a Treatment

Restoration is perhaps the most misunderstood word in the historic preservation dictionary. It has become a generic term for “renovation,” “remodel,” or “repair,” and is commonly misused to describe fire and flood cleanups, or the projects of house-flippers and TV remodeling gurus. But just as Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction treatments have specific protocols, Restoration is a specific strategy for repairing historic buildings, and requires careful consideration of several issues.

The goal of a Restoration strategy is to accurately depict the historic building, its form and features, as it appeared at a particular period of time — when first constructed, after grandpa added the milking parlor, before the loft was enlarged or the garage was added. The choice of a Restoration Period should be influenced by considerations of significance — when the first generation settled the farm, the year Abe Lincoln stopped by for a campaign speech, before the fire. Restoration often involves the removal of material or additions (as well as inappropriate repairs) that came along subsequent to the chosen period. And if there are materials or features once present in the chosen restoration period that are now missing — let’s say a wooden silo — they will need to be accurately reconstructed. Simply put, return the barn to the way it was at a specific time in its history.

Restoration is typically undertaken when it is important to interpret the significance of the building(s) at a particular moment in time, for instance when an entire farmstead is being interpreted to the settlement period, or when owned by a notable person. Often such sites are open to the public and serve as park features or historic sites — think Colonial Williamsburg (18th century) or Sturbridge Village, an 1830’s living history museum. Because these structures are often being interpreted

to the public, it is acceptable to discretely install mechanical, electrical, and plumbing upgrades to enhance functionality.

Once the Restoration Period is determined, all extant features, materials, construction techniques, and interior arrangements from the period need to be preserved and carefully repaired, or if missing or deteriorated beyond repair, replaced with like materials. Stabilization, or necessary construction remedies should be visually compatible with original work, and the replacement of missing features that date to the Restoration Period should be substantiated by documentary or physical evidence. As with all preservation work, conjectural features or materials and features from other historic properties or periods should not be used, for fear of causing a false sense of history. Similarly, materials dating to the Restoration Period should never be altered or removed.

The easiest Restorations to accomplish occur when the proposed use of the building is the same as it was during the chosen Restoration Period — the barn is to remain a barn, not a commercial restaurant. But even if the use does not change, the determination of a single period of significance can be challenging. Two key considerations can help in determining the most appropriate Restoration Period. First, is there enough physical evidence from the chosen period to provide for an adequate historical interpretation of the period — have subsequent alterations been too radical? And second, is the material to be removed historically significant enough in its own right that its removal would represent an irretrievable loss? It can be difficult to justify the removal of one historic material to preserve another. As an example, during the development of Colonial Williamsburg in the 1930’s, hundreds of historic buildings were destroyed to imagine an 18th century village.



DUNCAN CAMPBELL
FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER OF
INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

For these and other considerations, unless one is creating a historic site that needs to be period specific, Restoration is rarely the most appropriate treatment. Considering that most barn owners seek to continue using their barns as barns, or hope to convert them to new — often commercial — uses, restoring barns to a specific historic moment seems impractical, especially given that most barns have undergone many alterations along the way, and may well require more in the future.



**REQUEST TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE**

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- Send a check to: Indiana Barn Foundation
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