

HOOOSIER BARN

C H R O N I C L E

Preserving Indiana's Heritage, One Barn at a Time

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**INDIANA BARN
FOUNDATION**

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Tom Dull (left) with his son Lucas and his wife Dana at their farmstead at Dull's Tree Farm.

The Farmstead at Dull's Tree Farm

Dull's Tree Farm in Thorntown, Indiana, is a multigenerational, family-run, agritourism business grounded in tradition, hard work, and a common love for rural America — including heritage barns. Tom and Kerry Dull planted their first Christmas trees in 1985 as a way to diversify their grain and livestock farm. Today they sell over 5,000 Christmas trees during the four-week season leading up to the holidays.

Dull's Tree Farm resides on a historic 1800 era Boone County farmstead. The farmstead consists of three structures: their home, built in 1869, a pin frame barn, built in 1888 that is used during tree season as a wreath marketing barn, and a corn crib. The corn crib has been restored for use as their wreath production barn where folks can watch wreaths

being made. Dull says, "The barn is the heart and soul of the farmstead. There is just something about an old barn that draws one in to explore and wonder. Because of the nature of our business, we are able to utilize the old barns in ways that the modern farmer is not able to do, and we have capitalized on that

continued

The Farmstead at Dull's Tree Farm *continued*

ability while preserving the barn's integrity. We consider ourselves to be extremely fortunate to be blessed with the buildings we have."

The Dull family welcomes many loyal customers who make visiting the farm an annual tradition. "We now have a generational customer base," Dull says. "People remember coming out to the farm as a 5- or 6-year-old and then throughout their entire childhood. They have kids of their own now and visit us to buy their own family Christmas tree." Since most kids today do not have grandparents who have a haymow to play in, they have outfitted their haymow with kids' activities so they can enjoy the pleasure and wonder of playing in a haymow like previous generations.

Since the beginning of Dull's Tree Farm, the business has since expanded to include a Bed and Breakfast and diversified into a year round business. Fall attractions include pumpkin picking, a corn maze and other seasonal activities. Visitors also have enjoyed an adult Easter egg hunt, a "Christmas in July" vendor market and an escape trail. With the expanding business the Dulls have relocated an original log cabin home that now serves as the home cabin for the escape trail and combined two log cabins into one to serve as the Stone Cabin Inn Bed and Breakfast or can be used as a smaller event venue. The Dulls also moved the Haymow barn to their property to use as a larger event venue on the haymow level and a workshop area on the ground level. The Haymow barn offers a hand hewn white oak

timber frame with a preserved interior by putting the siding back on the frame to be seen from the inside. They built a 2x6 framework around the entire barn to hold insulation and put new siding on that framework. They built a 16' wide porch around the barn to be able to increase the guest capacity. There is radiant heat installed in the floor so it can be used year round.

Heritage barns are an important aspect of their agritourism business and why they are proud members of the Indiana Barn Foundation. Dull says, "If we don't take measures to preserve them and to educate the next generation why it is important to do so, there will come a day when all that will be left are the stories, and that would be a sad day indeed."





Wreath making in the heritage barn at Dull's Tree Farm.

"People remember coming out to the farm as a 5- or 6-year-old and then throughout their entire childhood. They have kids of their own now and visit us to buy their own family Christmas tree."

— TOM DULL



Tom Dull tells us about his relationship with Mauri Williamson, the founder of the Indiana Barn Foundation

Tom first met Mauri as high school graduate in the summer of 1976 at the Pioneer Village at the Indiana State Fair. Mauri asked Tom to be his intern at Purdue University and work summers at the Pioneer Village. That was the beginning of a great mentorship that developed into a lifelong friendship



MAURI WILLIAMSON
FOUNDER OF THE INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

with Mauri. Tom learned a lot under Mauri's tutelage during his college career and stayed on as a volunteer at the Pioneer Village after graduation for more than 20 years. Mauri taught Tom a lot about relationships and how to manage volunteers. Dull says, "Mauri had an unmatched respect for agriculture and farmers and wasn't afraid to show it. He had a knack for humble leadership. I was blessed to be his mentee."

UPDATE

Mauri Williamson Legacy Endowment

Indiana Barn Foundation launched the Mauri Williamson Legacy Endowment September 20th, 2021. The endowment will carry on what Mauri started as the founding member of Indiana Barn Foundation.

For those that didn't know Mauri, he was an agriculture preservationist who dedicated his life to farming and educating all people on the history of agriculture. The catalyst behind IBF, his legacy of educating barn owners and preserving farm heritage will continue with this endowment. As shown in the picture, Mauri organized and founded what is now know as Pioneer Village, a step back in time held yearly during the Indiana State Fair.

Mauri was a proud alumnus of Purdue University, lifelong member of Purdue AG Alumni Association and former Executive Director.

IBF has entrusted Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF) to handle endowment gifts in Mauri's name. Donations to the endowment can be made at the IBF website: www.indianabarns.org/endowment. Checks

can also be mailed to: CICF, Attn: Operations, 615 N. Alabama St. Ste. 300, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Please note in memo IBF #4558.

Donations to the endowment can include stocks, securities, both cash and non-cash assets, including grain, property and equipment. Look for additional information on our website indianabarns.org or email Mike Thompson, IBF, Vice President, at ibf.mike@gmail.com



ASK INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

More on the Structure of Wood Barns

TIMBER FRAME REFERENCES

I previously discussed signs of deterioration in the structural frame of wood barns and offered some explanation of causes, but said little about the timber frame itself. I suggested that it can help to understand the construction of a barn's framework in order to assess its condition, but that it's not essential because I believe signs of wood deterioration (rot) and structural failure (movement) can be assessed without an understanding of timber construction technology. I hope that this empowers barn owners to feel more confident in assessing their barn's condition and encourages them to learn more.

The purpose of this column is to educate barn owners about barns and help them assess their condition, so a bit more information about the timber frame can only help. Building with heavy timbers dates to the Middle Ages — fifth to 15th centuries — and likely well before, so when Europeans colonized this land knowledge of timber framing was well established in several cultures. This history is well documented in many studies, and I am only covering the basics, but two very readable contemporary sources I recommend are *Hand Hewn*, by Jack A. Sobon, (Storey Publishing, 2019), and *Will Beemer's Learn to Timber Frame*, also Storey Publishing, 2016. Both are excellent hands-on resources with ample contextual background for those who would like to delve deeper.

A VERY OLD TECHNOLOGY

Most American heritage barns are of timber frame construction; a construction of large, widely spaced timbers put together or joined by traditional methods, most typically the pinned mortise and tenon joint. This is true of the earliest examples through the heyday of barn building in Indiana (1910-1930). Until after the Civil War, and often into the 1880's, timbers were hand hewn. As sawmills acquired

circular saws after 1845, sawn timber frames increase, although some of the largest timbers were hewn into the early 20th century, because not all sawmills could handle long timbers.

Timber frame nomenclature is really pretty simple, and many terms used to describe individual members of the frame based on their location and purposes have carried over to today's steel frame and standard house framing.

POSTS AND BEAMS

Vertical support timbers are called posts, and may be further described by location — corner post for example. Horizontal timbers are generally referred to as beams, but take more specific names by location. Thus, horizontal timbers at the periphery of the floor frame are called sills, sometimes long sills or short sills depending on location, whether on the longitudinal side or transverse side of the rectangular floor. The longitudinal horizontal timbers that rest atop the posts are called plates, but the shorter ones that tie the posts together from side to side are called tie beams, or dropped tie beams when placed below the height of the longitudinal plates. A third horizontal timber, often of smaller dimensions, is called a girt, and is found between the plate or tie beam and the sill, usually in the lower third of the wall. The girts stabilize the posts between the sills and plates, and provide a place to nail vertical siding midway between the top and bottom of the walls. Braces are 45-degree diagonals that stabilize the corners created by the junction of posts and plates, or posts and tie beams.

FLOOR AND ROOF SYSTEMS

There are two kinds of joists, floor joists and ceiling joists; the first span from sill to sill and support the floor, and the second span the tie beams or plates and support the loft floor.

Rafters are attached to the plates on top of the walls and meet together to form the triangle that shapes the roof



DUNCAN CAMPBELL
FOUNDING BOARD MEMBER OF
INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

and supports the roof covering. Rafters are often tied together just below the peak of the roof by shorter horizontal pieces called collars or collar ties. Horizontal purlin beams, when present, are held up by interior posts and run the length of the barn to support the rafters at mid-span.

Timber frames vary in style, as do barns, but the nomenclature is consistent. Why not go out to your barn and see what you've learned?



**FOLLOW-UP
QUESTIONS?**

Submit to
info@indianabarns.org

A Note from the Indiana Barn Foundation President

As we approach the year end, I think this is good time for some reflection on the past year. First, I want to thank you for being a member of the Indiana Barn Foundation and being a part of our mission to support the preservation of historic Indiana barns. I believe our mission is very important and we are the only organization focused this work.

This has been an extremely active year for IBF. Work that took place in 2020 and in the first few months of 2021 could be seen in the last half of this year. We continued many things IBF has become known for like barn grants, technical support for barn evaluation, repair tips, the annual meeting, and the barn tour. In 2021 we had several significant accomplishments, most noteworthy among those is our new booklet,

Indiana's Heritage Barns. This year we also introduced a beautifully restyled newsletter, sponsored the first Hoosier Heritage Barn Week, and launched the Mauri Williamson Legacy Endowment. We hope the endowment will set IBF on a path for long-term financial sustainability and ensure support to effectively fulfill our mission.

Thanks to the IBF Board for all they have done to make this year successful. It takes a lot of volunteer work by many people to keep IBF moving forward. I especially want to thank retiring board members Lou Malcomb and Gwen Gutwein. Both Lou and Gwen have made major contributions to the success of IBF.

We hope to accomplish even more in 2022. Supporting the preservation of historic Indiana barns is a huge task. You are essential to the success of



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

IBF. Your time, talent and treasure are critical to our ability to make progress on our mission. We need more people to join in our work. Please help by telling others about IBF, encourage family and friends to join, volunteer and donate.

Thank you,
Kent

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 2022 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 total 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 2022 grant cycle, completed applications are due by January 31, 2022. If you have questions about the grant program or the application after reading the instructions online, please contact IBF.

2022
GRANT APPLICATION
DEADLINE

JANUARY 31, 2022

Apply at [indianabarns.org](https://www.indianabarns.org)



INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

INDIANA BARN FOUNDATION

1201 Central Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46202

EMAIL: info@indianabarns.org

WEB: www.indianabarns.org

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Indiana's Heritage Barns: Their History, Uses, and Preservation

Education booklet now available

In September, the Indiana Barn Foundation announced publication of the new barn booklet, *Indiana's Heritage Barns: Their History, Uses, and Preservation*. The educational piece was made possible by a Historic Preservation Education Grant from Indiana Landmarks, Indiana Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, and was further assisted by sponsorship from Farm Credit Mid-America.

Over 3,000 booklets have been distributed to date and efforts to make it available to more of the public continues. The booklet is appropriate for middle/high school age on up including FFA, 4-H and other groups, as well as barn owners and enthusiasts, museums and historical society staff and visitors, architects and history

professionals, county and regional planners and other staff, and more. A PDF version of the booklet can be found on the IBF website at

www.indianabarns.org/barnbooklet and a list of locations around the state where anyone can pick up copies is also included. The list will be updated regularly. IBF County Reps and members who can help facilitate with distribution of booklets to locations in their county are welcome to contact Danielle at monroecountybarns@gmail.com

