THE FARM CONSERVANCY: THE HELMS FARM
County Representatives

County representatives promote the preservation of barns in their area and encourage membership in the Iowa Barn Foundation. Working with members of the board they will also help to oversee tours and other activities. We welcome volunteers for other counties.

Adams: Kathy West, (641) 335-2334
Allamakee: Marlene Feistemann (563) 382-3439, Willard Vanderlinde (641) 856-2152
Audubon: Paul Walther (712) 485-3133
Blackhawk: Keith Ottoglio (329) 994-5299
Boone: Jim Jordan (515) 432-6749
Bremer: Keith Ottoglio (319) 896-5292
Brook: Michael Keop (641) 855-2555
Calhoun: Joel Roade (712) 297-7708
Cass: Gary and Pam Wolfe (712) 764-7778
Carroll: Dale and Donna Grogger (712) 424-1197
Clayton: Michael McConnell (620) 406-9390; Brian Larson, (635) 245-1716
Clinton: Robert Johnson (650) 675-2316
Coffey: Tony and Terry Wicks (712) 635-4009
Davis: Maggie O'Boat (515) 796-2878
DeKalb: Judy Cumby (641) 668-3726; Sharon and Bill Hardly (712) 722-5224
Dwight: Jack Van Leu (712) 686-5862
Delaware: Richard Heffernan (563) 927-4604
Davi Muscat: Dale and Julie Statman (319) 394-3031
Dubuque: Rachel Schollman (517) 351-9913
Emmet: Gail Mullen (712) 866-2020; David Koval (712) 362-2011
Fayette: Vernon Oakland (641) 832-422
Floyd: Roger Rachael (641) 228-4894; Joan and John Seiber (641) 228-2654
Franklin: Joe and Shirley Pliner (641) 456-3994 and the Franklin County Historical Society
Greene: Mary and Larry Richards (515) 386-4750
 Grundy: Rebecca Engler (641) 366-3136
Hamlin: Ken Stearns (641) 847-3088
Humboldt: Kurt Weimer (515) 332-4467
Iowa: Doug Pottage (712) 364-346
Iowa: Bill and Ron Rable (712) 378-2163
Jackson: Lari Evler (641) 694-2247
Jasper: John and Kathryn Van Zee (505) 994-3032; Tim Schmidt (641) 473-3277
Johnson: Paul and Jo Ann Neuhold (180) 879-2486
Jones: Roman Weiler (191) 465-4336
Kossuth: Everett Brodersen (712) 295-7587
Lee: Tom Jope (319) 693-5658
Linn: Gary Webster, (515) 694-7801
Linn: Dennis and Marylee Schmidt (563) 462-6081
Linn: Charles Olbrich (641) 909-4722
Linn: Rob Lo (626-8396
Linn: William and William Stone (641) 755-8994; Charles and Eleanor Ward (61) 752-4714
Linn: Mike Allen (712) 822-7814
Lincoln: Dean Watson (712) 413-5613
Montgomery: Josephine Mitchell (620) 623-3210
Muscatine: Antonio Vancio (563) 204-2940
O'Brien: Pamela Bagula (712) 727-3512
Osceola: George Brumatter (722) 754-2023
Page: Dave Williams (641) 826-8852
Palo Alto: Kate Johnson (712) 848-3455
Plymouth: Ken and Kathy Kriner (563) 255-2613
Puches: Terry Ferguson (712) 845-4978
Polk: Oliver Andrews (515) 964-9094
Polk: Don Jardine (515) 274-1137
Potawatomi: Kathryn Whitlow (712) 506-2060; Jim Amend (712) 326-0774
Poweshiek: Eugene and Dolores Lang (641) 236-4779
Raintown: Phil Burren (641) 464-3000
Sac: Jack and June Hope (712) 466-8663
Scott: Joy Luep Meiners (653) 289-3384
Shelby: Linda Haffar (712) 344-3160
Summit: Danne Bower (712) 726-2460
Story: Roxanne Mietz (641) 487-5000; Norma Johnson (515) 685-2800
Van Buren: Darcey and Don McDowell (39) 237-2340
Wapello: Dave Bracken (563) 964-6737
Washington: Paul and Jo Ann Neuhol (39) 670-2486
Wayne: Glenn Schenkel (411) 706-3169
Webster: John Sarnardum (515) 534-5339
Winneshiek: Jim Armbruster (641) 576-3399
Wimicah: Marlene Feistemann (563) 382-3439
Woodbury: Winston and Shirley Bufffle (712) 945-1104
Worth: Richard Stedfeld (641) 845-2209
Wright: Mel Sampson (515) 446-5056

State Representatives:
California: Linda Duttonhow, Redondo Beach

Iowa Barn Foundation Magazine
Fall 2005, Vol. 9, No. 2
Copyright Iowa Barn Foundation, 2005

The Iowa Barn Foundation is grateful to Michael Lanning, a graphic artist living in Ames, who has generously donated his time and talents to the magazines. The magazine, as well as the foundation, is the effort of volunteers.

Editor: Jacqueline Andre Schmeel
Assistant editor: Michael McConnell

Contributors: Jake Becker, Norm Engstrom, Don Geiger, Gene Koranda, Steve Lekwa, Joe Pitsor, Hugh Sidey

Lists and Organization: Ann Harvey, Sherry Griddle, Roxanne Mehlisch, Elizabeth McDorman, Mary Richards.

Visit us on the Web: http://www.iowabarnfoundation.org

By Jacqueline Andre Schmeel

One of the initiatives of the Iowa Barn Foundation is the Farm Conservancy Program. The effort provides an opportunity for owners of farms to make a gift of farmland to the foundation during life or to leave farmland to the foundation at death by will or trust.

Russell Helms recently made a gift of his farmstead and 86 acres on which it is situated. The farm will be operated and maintained according to a plan jointly developed by Russell and the foundation to carry out his wishes. Special attention will be given to soil conservation, preservation of designated buildings, and maintenance of soil fertility—all in accordance with the farm plan.

The farm will periodically be opened to the public. Because of his generosity, people will be able to experience the Helms family’s heritage close up. And, in studying the Helms family’s story, people will know the saga of early 20th century Iowa family farm.

By Jacqueline Andre Schmeel

One of the initiatives of the Iowa Barn Foundation is the Farm Conservancy Program. The effort provides an opportunity for owners of farms to make a gift of farmland to the foundation during life or to leave farmland to the foundation at death by will or trust.

Russell Helms recently made a gift of his farmstead and 86 acres on which it is situated. The farm will be operated and maintained according to a plan jointly developed by Russell and the foundation to carry out his wishes. Special attention will be given to soil conservation, preservation of designated buildings, and maintenance of soil fertility—all in accordance with the farm plan.

The farm will periodically be opened to the public. Because of his generosity, people will be able to experience the Helms family’s heritage close up. And, in studying the Helms family’s story, people will know the saga of early 20th century Iowa family farm.

Russell Helms on his tractor

The destiny of the Helms Farm, a mile south of Madrid, Iowa, was determined on a bitterly cold January day in 1928. Russell Helms, 4, stood with his family in the snow, waiting for the belt feeding up from a McCormick-Deering tractor, located on the basement floor, to accelerate to operating speed for a grain grinder on the second level. 

Now 83, Russell, his intense blue eyes dimming when the ill-fated day was mentioned, stalled momentarily while pulling up the dim memory. “We were waiting for my father to rev the tractor up to provide grinding speed. It idled and idled. I remember Mother, on her knees, looking over the edge of the hay chute opening in the floor to see what was happening in the basement. She saw… and ran to the road screaming for help.

“She worked day and night,” Russell recalled. “She was faithful and religious and never expressed regrets.” But, through the years, Russell, forced to mature before his time, quickly carried his share of the burdens and work of the farm along with studies. This may explain his deep intellect, varied interests, no-nonsense seriousness, and genuine thoughtfulness. He fed the pigs, milked the cows, cleaned the barn, and helped with seeding, haying and threshing. What time did he awaken?”

“For thirty is not a bad time to suggest,” he admitted.

Frequently, in the evenings, Russell walked a mile and a half to the Madrid Library, checked out meaningful books, walked home, and read. “I was a rough and determined type,” he said when divulging...
Russell Helms continued... 

that he often got only two or three hours of sleep a night. “Mother never told me to turn off the light. I’d sit down on the floor by the stove and read by light from the Delco battery generator.”

After graduating from Madrid High School in 1941, he enrolled in engineering classes at Iowa State. But, for years, he had had his sights set on attending the U.S. Naval Academy. One of two selected from his engineering class for an appointment, he proudly traveled to Annapolis for training. A doctor—perhaps mistakenly—diagnosed him as having a malfunctioning heart. He was sent home.

“I hope my obituary will record that I have helped in preserving the spirit of the traditional grain and livestock spread which had its beginning around the start of the twentieth century.” – Russell Helms

Just as in the past, he dealt with the disappointment and moved on. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946 in the Western Pacific, returned to Iowa State and received degrees in civil and in aeronautical engineering in 1947 and 1948. All of this time, he made working visits to the farm. “Mom had much to be done,” he remembered. “She took great pride in the entire farmstead.”

Russell headed Public Works Departments in Independence, Missouri, and in Oklahoma City. He was offered a position in Miami. “I had this feeling she (his mother) didn’t want me to do it.” He returned to Iowa and spent several years in Des Moines, much of it as vice president and general manager of Mid-America Development Company, a group that built industrial parks throughout the city. Weekends were spent on the farm; in 1985 he moved to the farm. His mother had died in 1974.

“There was a lot of work around the farmstead that doesn’t fall in the responsibility of the contract farm operator. Three buildings wouldn’t be there if I hadn’t rebuilt them,” he acknowledged with humility. Through the years, Russell also acquired parts of the estate from other heirs.

With a bit of probing, Russell will admit, “I’ve tried to help with what Dad couldn’t.” Russell talked to his mother at length about hard work and struggle and putting together from limited beginning resources.

The story of the Helms family is deep-rooted in the buildings that remain on the well-preserved Helms Farm. Russell’s father bought the original property in 1901 and 1902. There were no buildings so he built a chicken house which the couple and their oldest two children lived in until 1905 when the existing large Prairie-style frame house was completed.

Living in the plastered chicken house was “taken for granted.” “It’s where the family lived,” Russell remarked. He does not know how it was heated. His father also built the carefully preserved bank barn, unusual for central Iowa, two equipment sheds, and a tool house. Mary Ellen built the hog house, a second barn, cattle shed,crib, and several cribs.

The farmstead describes the story, not only of the Helms family, but also of Iowa agriculture—the ups and downs, tragedies, hardships, and successes in the reach for the American dream. Russell contemplated what to do with the farm. “Over time I concluded that far greater value to generations to come lies in preserving some evidences of the way of life that prevailed before World War II when we were not mechanized.

“So from then on, it was like standing at the well. It kept flowing. The farm should be permanently preserved. I have the same fierce love for the farmstead and cropland that my mother did.”

“I was at wit’s end trying to decide how to go.”

Helms became aware of the Iowa Barn Foundation’s work dedicated to saving vestiges of Iowa’s rural buildings and farms. He felt he and the foundation had the same purpose and reservation of the family farm concept. He discussed the plan with his children and his wife, Patricia.

“I hope my obituary will record that I have helped in preserving the spirit of the traditional grain and livestock spread which had its beginning around the start of the twentieth century.”

(For information about the Iowa Barn Foundation’s Farm Conservancy initiative, call Neil Hart at (515) 222-0487 or Kelly Tobin at (712) 585-3369.)

MORE GRANTS AWARDED

The Iowa Barn Foundation has awarded 18 matching grants and one adopt-a-barn award to property owners to restore their barns during 2005. The total awarded—all funds raised from private donations—was $100,825. With the matching grants this means $201,650 went into restoring Iowa’s barns.

The following folks received matching grants:

- Ron Melburn and Ginnie Hargis, Winterset (Madison County)
- John Dyas, Maquoketa (Jackson County)
- Russell Helms, Madrid (Polk County)
- Howard and Pamela Kuhl, New Hartford (Butler County)
- Roger Maaghey, Mount Ayr (Ringgold County)
- Richard Blazek, Lawler (Chickasaw County)
- Courtesy of Roger Maaghey
- Merrill and Joyce Kruse, Shenandoah (Page County)
- Dave Dighton, Coggon (Delaware County) received an adopt-a-barn matching grant for the restoration of his round barn.
Hackebart Barn: This historic bank barn reflects the influence of Pennsylvania Dutch architecture. It was constructed about 1870. Large beams were installed to support the front of the barn; wood peg construction is used throughout. The barn was originally used for hay and grain storage, along with shelter for dairy cows and horses. The barn is owned by the Hackebart-Knoll family and was built by their great, great grandfather. (The barn is north of Ackley at 779 Franklin Avenue.)

Borcherding Barn: Beautiful barn was built in 1921 by Carl Borcherding, who dreamed of giving his sons, Carl and Ed, a place to live after they were married. They lived on the farm with their families until they died. Ivan Borcherding, great grandson of Carl Sr., bought the farm back in December, 2004, in order to keep their heritage alive. Ivan, his son, Rex, and granddaughter, Lacey, are working to keep the heritage alive. (Barn is located west of Hampton at 1034 Highway 3.)

Rodemeyer Barn: This barn was built in 1915 by the father of present owners, Marvin and Patty Rodemeyer. The all block barn has unique steel rafters, permitting a post free hay mow. The barn, which received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant, is owned by Gary and Diane Bennett. (The barn is at 1664 Eagle Avenue, northwest of Latimer.)

Artley Barn: Amos Artley built this barn, originally used for horses and hay storage, in the early 1900s. Bob Artley, rural artist and writer, grew up on this farm and has featured the barn in his books and cartoons. It is on the cover of his book, Once upon a Farm. The barn is owned by Mr. and Mrs. David Artley and received an Iowa Barn Foundation Award of Distinction. (Barn is located northeast of Hampton at 1766 165th Street.)

Klousia Barn: This barn, built in 1950, has original stanchions, water drinking cups, calf manure carrier, and calf pens. Henning Construction, Latimer, built the barn using a unique laminated rafter permitting a post free hay mow. The barn, which received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant, is owned by Gary and Diane Bennett. (The barn is at 1664 Eagle Avenue, northwest of Latimer.)

Bennett Barn: This round barn, 122 feet in diameter, was built in 1916. It was built of clay tile with a 20-foot silo in the center. Originally the flat roof was suspended by cables from the silo without interior posts.

Schermer Barn: The original construction cost of this 61x45-foot wood peg barn was $747 for material and $400 for labor—with the help of 10 neighbors. The barn’s horse stalls are still in use; hay and grain are still stored in the barn. There is a unique wooden elevator used to fill the overhead grain bins. The owners, Brian and Bill Schermer, received an Award of Distinction from the Iowa Barn Foundation. (The barn is located north of Latimer at 1922 Grouse Avenue.)

Rodemeyer Barn: This barn, built in 1915, by the father of present owners, Marvin and Patty Rodemeyer. The all block barn has unique steel window and door frames. Originally there were stanchions for 12 cows, stalls for four horses, a steer pen, calf pen, feed bin and milk separating room. The barn is located southwest of Hampton at 1205 Luck Avenue.}

Hackbarth Barn: Historic bank barn reflects the influence of Pennsylvania Dutch architecture. It was constructed about 1870. Large beams were installed to support the front of the barn; wood peg construction is used throughout. The barn was originally used for hay and grain storage, along with shelter for dairy cows and horses. The barn is owned by the Hackebart-Knoll family and was built by their great, great grandfather. (The barn is north of Ackley at 779 Franklin Avenue.)

Borcherding Barn: Beautiful barn was built in 1921 by Carl Borcherding, who dreamed of giving his sons, Carl and Ed, a place to live after they were married. They lived on the farm with their families until they died. Ivan Borcherding, great grandson of Carl Sr., bought the farm back in December, 2004, in order to keep their heritage alive. Ivan, his son, Rex, and granddaughter, Lacey, are working to keep the heritage alive. (Barn is located west of Hampton at 1034 Highway 3.)

Rodemeyer Barn: This barn was built in 1915 by the father of present owners, Marvin and Patty Rodemeyer. The all block barn has unique steel window and door frames. Originally there were stanchions for 12 cows, stalls for four horses, a steer pen, calf pen, feed bin and milk separating room. (The barn is located southwest of Hampton at 1205 Luck Avenue.)

Klousia Barn: This barn, built in 1950, has original stanchions, water drinking cups, calf manure carrier, and calf pens. Henning Construction, Latimer, built the barn using a unique laminated rafter permitting a post free hay mow. The barn, which received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant, is owned by Gary and Diane Bennett. (The barn is at 1664 Eagle Avenue, northwest of Latimer.)

Artley Barn: Amos Artley built this barn, originally used for horses and hay storage, in the early 1900s. Bob Artley, rural artist and writer, grew up on this farm and has featured the barn in his books and cartoons. It is on the cover of his book, Once upon a Farm. The barn is owned by Mr. and Mrs. David Artley and received an Iowa Barn Foundation Award of Distinction. (Barn is located northeast of Hampton at 1766 165th Street.)

Klousia Barn: This bank barn was built in 1888 by ancestors of owner, John Klousia. This barn is on a limestone foundation with wood peg construction. The lower level is a walkout basement to the east. The middle section had stanchions for milk cows and the north side held three calf pens. The upper level was used for hay and grain storage with some machinery storage in the two drive-in areas. The barn received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant for restoration. (The barn is northeast of Hampton at 1766 165th Street.)

Ranken Barn: This round barn, 122 feet in diameter, was built in 1916. It was built of clay tile with a 20-foot silo in the center. Originally the flat roof was suspended by cables from the silo without interior posts.

Schermer Barn: The original construction cost of this 61x45-foot wood peg barn was $747 for material and $400 for labor—with the help of 10 neighbors. The barn’s horse stalls are still in use; hay and grain are still stored in the barn. There is a unique wooden elevator used to fill the overhead grain bins. The owners, Brian and Bill Schermer, received an Award of Distinction from the Iowa Barn Foundation. (The barn is located north of Latimer at 1922 Grouse Avenue.)

Rodemeyer Barn: This barn, built in 1915, has original stanchions, water drinking cups, calf manure carrier, and calf pens. Henning Construction, Latimer, built the barn using a unique laminated rafter permitting a post free hay mow. The barn, which received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant, is owned by Gary and Diane Bennett. (The barn is at 1664 Eagle Avenue, northwest of Latimer.)

Artley Barn: Amos Artley built this barn, originally used for horses and hay storage, in the early 1900s. Bob Artley, rural artist and writer, grew up on this farm and has featured the barn in his books and cartoons. It is on the cover of his book, Once upon a Farm. The barn is owned by Mr. and Mrs. David Artley and received an Iowa Barn Foundation Award of Distinction. (Barn is located northeast of Hampton at 1766 165th Street.)

Klousia Barn: This barn, built in 1950, has original stanchions, water drinking cups, calf manure carrier, and calf pens. Henning Construction, Latimer, built the barn using a unique laminated rafter permitting a post free hay mow. The barn, which received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant, is owned by Gary and Diane Bennett. (The barn is at 1664 Eagle Avenue, northwest of Latimer.)

Artley Barn: Amos Artley built this barn, originally used for horses and hay storage, in the early 1900s. Bob Artley, rural artist and writer, grew up on this farm and has featured the barn in his books and cartoons. It is on the cover of his book, Once upon a Farm. The barn is owned by Mr. and Mrs. David Artley and received an Iowa Barn Foundation Award of Distinction. (Barn is located northeast of Hampton at 1766 165th Street.)

Klousia Barn: This barn, built in 1888 by ancestors of owner, John Klousia. This barn is on a limestone foundation with wood peg construction. The lower level is a walkout basement to the east. The middle section had stanchions for milk cows and the north side held three calf pens. The upper level was used for hay and grain storage with some machinery storage in the two drive-in areas. The barn received an Iowa Barn Foundation matching grant for restoration. (The barn is northeast of Hampton at 1766 165th Street.)

Ranken Barn: This round barn, 122 feet in diameter, was built in 1916. It was built of clay tile with a 20-foot silo in the center. Originally the flat roof was suspended by cables from the silo without interior posts.
Counting Iowa’s Barns

Norm Engstrom of Paw Paw, Illinois, participated in Iowa’s RAGBRAI in 1987. Eventually he watched our barns disappearing and began documenting the condition of Iowa’s buildings as he rode his bicycle from one end of the state to the other. Here he describes his “research.” Norm, native of DeKalb, Illinois, graduated from Cornell College, Iowa, is the pre-medical director at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. He and his wife, Chris, have a barn on their acreage.

“One of the reasons we bought the place in 1985 was because of the large cedar shingles on the barn’s gambrel roof were letting in a thousand points of light and the barn needed a friend in a hurry.” The barn was built in 1916—the house in the 1890’s.

The Round Barns of Iowa, and John’s maps of township roads along the route, we determined the approximate location of eight round barns close to the route. We missed crowds of RAGBRAI bike riders that year as we logged miles on gravel roads a few miles from the official route. We found four of the eight round barns and the sites of all the others, including the fresh outline of the foundation of one that, according to neighbors, had blown down implode toward a central pile. Perhaps the floor of a loft full of hay or straw under a leaking roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades. A roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades. A roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades. A roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades. A roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades. A roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades. A roof has fallen and knocked out one whole wall. Barns can take anywhere from 30 seconds to 30 years to collapse but, without help, they usually take decades.

The next year, Dave and his brother, John, a surveyor, came up with a plan for us to visit every round barn within eight miles of the Ragbrai route. With the help of Lowell Solkie’s Without Right Angles: just a year earlier. Between 1983, when the book was published, and 1997, four had disappeared.

Three of the four survivors were in desperate need of new roofs. The next year I added counters to my bike. I had been riding Ragbrai since 1985 and was increasingly aware of the deterioration of so many of the majestic icons of Iowa’s fading farming heritage. I decided to document the phenomenon. I designated four categories of barns: excellent, fair to good, poor, and collapsing. These categories are precise enough to be useful; yet crude enough to be judged reasonably accurately from the seat of a bicycle. To be in the excellent category, a barn has to have a good sound roof with no holes or gaps. It also must have straight lines and square corners (except of course for round barns) indicating a solid frame with no sags, curves, or tilting. The walls must be complete and intact. A barn may have to have a brand new roof or a fresh paint job, but it must not reveal any fundamental structural defects.

To be in the excellent category a barn has to have a good sound roof with no holes or gaps. It also must have straight lines and square corners (except of course for round barns) indicating a solid frame with no sags, curves, or tilting. The walls must be complete and intact. A barn may have to have a brand new roof or a fresh paint job, but it must not reveal any fundamental structural defects.

The next day of Ragbrai in 1998, I started out from Hawarden to Cherokee with four metal road counters—one for each category—which securely taped with electrician’s tape to the top tube of my mountain bike. I had left out the fifth and most important category of ‘Decay’—time only. If an abandoned barn was in fact a—the one essential farm building. So, if I saw only a house or corn crib or silo or windmill, then I assumed the barn was gone.

That second day’s count: 37 barns gone, 34 excellent, 32 fair to good, 22 poor, and three collapsing. Even today it was generally the same; “barn gone” headed the list. For 1998: 299 (40.0%) barns gone; 155 (20.7%) excellent barns; 163 (21.2%) fair to good barns; 115 (15.4%) barns in poor condition; and 13 (1.7%) collapsing. This is a total of 747 total along 428 miles of roads (1.75 barns per mile).

The table shows the tallies for six years between 1998 and 2004. The year 2001 I did not participate in Ragbrai, and 1998 and 2002 include only six days each.

So, what do the numbers tell us? In 1998 and 1999, about 35 to 40% of the barns were gone. In 2002, over half the barns along the Ragbrai route were gone. The number “collapsing” has remained steady at about one to two per cent each year, and the proportion in “poor” condition has remained 10-15%. But, in the “gone”, “excellent”, and “fair to good” categories, there have been changes. For example, in 1998-2000, 1001 out of 2395 barns—41.8 percent—were gone. For the last three years (2002-2004), 1182 of 2334 barns are gone, or 51.5%.

The next year the same barns were gone. In 2002, over half the barns along the Ragbrai route were gone. The number “collapsing” has remained steady at about one to two per cent each year, and the proportion in “poor” condition has remained 10-15%. But, in the “gone”, “excellent”, and “fair to good” categories, there have been changes. For example, in 1998-2000, 1001 out of 2395 barns—41.8 percent—were gone. For the last three years (2002-2004), 1182 of 2334 barns are gone, or 51.5%.

The round barns are prime movers in tilting the balance toward repair instead of destruction of these noble buildings.

A few more notes might be of interest. First, what are those excellent barns and how are they being used? Some are still in use as farm/agricultural buildings for dairying, feeder cattle, or other livestock such as horses. Many are used for storage, but a great many have been fixed up and converted to other uses such as florist shops or nurseries, restaurants, real estate offices, antique shops, farm machinery dealerships, independent repair shops, hybrid seed dealerships, or golf course clubhouses.

One interesting detail comes from two successive days in 1999 in the northwest part of Iowa. On the first day of Ragbrai in 1999, the pig confinement operations and the following day we left those behind. On the day dominated by swine production facilities, 52.3% of the barns were gone, but only 4.8% were excellent.

As a study of decay the process has been fascinating. It doesn’t seem to be irreversible. Barns are repaired or destroyed; few actually sag their ways toward collapse. There seem to be two main forces, financial and social. Owners pay taxes on buildings that are boarded up. Barns in good condition are not. The following year, 1999, 40.5% of the barns were fair to good. Most of those excellent barns on the earlier day were serving as administrative offices for the hog confinement operations. They had been renovated at obviously considerable expense. This is likely an example of that process described earlier of barns being either repaired or destroyed. It is also true that within about 15 miles of cities or prosperous towns, there are beautiful gentrified barns on “farmettes” that most likely have been repaired by exurbanite commuters.

When Ragbrai passed through southeast Iowa near Drakesville and Bloomfield, where there are substantial Amish populations, I expected most of the surviving barns to be in excellent condition. Instead they predominately fell into the good end of the fair to good category. I think that is because many of the Amish living in that region were either recently and, the slow process of renovation and repair is proceeding even as the barns are being given heavy daily wear and tear during genuine agricultural use. It is encouraging to see that even though Iowa’s barns continue to disappear, more of those that remain are being repaired. I am convinced that all the efforts of the Iowa Barn Foundation are prime movers in tilting the balance toward repair instead of destruction of these noble buildings.

To be in the excellent category a barn has to have a good sound roof with no holes or gaps. It also must have straight lines and square corners (except of course for round barns) indicating a solid frame with no sags, curves, or tilting. The walls must be complete and intact. A barn may have to have a brand new roof or a fresh paint job, but it must not reveal any fundamental structural defects.

A few more notes might be of interest. First, what are those excellent barns and how are they being used? Some are still in use as farm/agricultural buildings for dairying, feeder cattle, or other livestock such as horses. Many are used for storage, but a great many have been fixed up and converted to other uses such as florist shops or nurseries, restaurants, real estate offices, antique shops, farm machinery dealerships, independent repair shops, hybrid seed dealerships, or golf course clubhouses.

One interesting detail comes from two successive days in 1999 in the northwest part of Iowa. One day 86.1% of the barns were either gone or excellent or fair to good, and the next day an identical 86.1% fell into those three categories. But the breakdown is very different. The first day of Ragbrai in 1998, I started out from Hawarden to Cherokee with four metal road counters—one for each category—securely taped with electrician’s tape to the top tube of my mountain bike. I had left out the fifth and most important category of ‘Decay’—time only. If an abandoned barn is in fair condition drifting slowly to-ward, poor, the owner is likely to reason, “I’m not using that barn anymore, and if I did decide to store some machinery in it I’d have to cut bigger doors, rebuild some of the framing, put on a new roof, and put steel siding on the walls. For all that money I could buy a new steel building twice the size. It doesn’t make sense to keep this use-sesores, and pay taxes on it besides. I’ll just push it down with my front loader and burn it.” A dollars and cents decision.

The social part: “It is embarrassing to own buildings that look worse every year, right out the door for everyone to see.” The table shows the tallies for six years between 1998 and 2004. The year 2001 I did not participate in Ragbrai, and 1998 and 2002 include only six days each.

The round barns are prime movers in tilting the balance toward repair instead of destruction of these noble buildings.

To be in the excellent category a barn has to have a good sound roof with no holes or gaps. It also must have straight lines and square corners (except of course for round barns) indicating a solid frame with no sags, curves, or tilting. The walls must be complete and intact. A barn may have to have a brand new roof or a fresh paint job, but it must not reveal any fundamental structural defects.

I always assumed that barns disapp-
Hugh Sidey, a native of Greenfield, Iowa, and distinguished long-time White House correspondent for Time Magazine, has generously shared some memories and photographs from the summer of 1950 when he worked as a reporter on the family newspaper.

“I recall the moment of this picture when the boy trotted by on his pony, an age-old tableau of the water boy during harvest. I called to him and got this beautiful grin. I surely made a note of who he was and where he was working, but it has been swallowed up in my voluminous files. He must have been around 10 years-old, utterly happy in the sun and on his pony with the fancy saddle and hurrying the battered water jug to the thirsty crews. He would be in his 60s now, and I dare say, if he thinks back to those days, he probably can, as I do, recall the sheer joy of being alive and in Iowa.

Jimmy Hall had worked on Adair County farms his entire life. He never asked for more, loved the land and the animals and the people. In this picture in July, 1950, I had found him on Howard Augustine’s farm. On that day I did preserve his marvelous quote: “These tractors are all right, but I don’t know much about them. I can handle horses.”

This Iowa crew stands in front of Howard Augustine’s improvised barn made of two box car bodies with a roof put over them and a hinged front, an idea hatched up by Ray Kurtz, another Adair County farmer of delightful originality whose poetry often appeared in the Adair County Free Press. Perhaps the structure was not as grand as most of the barns in the area, but on that day Augustine told me they had piled away 20 acres of cut hay by picking it up with a fork life in the fields about a quarter of a mile distant and driving into the open barn. Left to right: George Hoadley, Junior Klingston, Jimmy Hall, Howard Augustine.

A little closer look at the old thresher, a vital machine in those weeks when I followed the oat harvest through Adair County. If I made a note of the location, it long ago disappeared. But, certainly it was within a few miles of Greenfield. I was intrigued with the long belt linked to the tractor which drove the threshers and oddy, I thought, never came off the drive wheel.

I found profound nostalgia in these pictures which straddled the horse/tractor transition and felt that others might too. I did follow some of the harvest back to, at least, one rather unusual barn was as you will note. I should have a little more thorough in my reporting, but I was fresh out of Iowa State and jobless and trying to help my Dad and Mother get the first vacation they had had in 25 years. I was hurrying around the landscape for pictures and stories to fill the pages of the Adair County Free Press; the family weekly which had been left in my inexperienced hands. I did everything and loved it all and that was the fulfillment of that summer. I sold ads, took pictures, wrote stories, made the castings for ads, helped set type (linotype and in the hand stick), made the photo engravings, made up the pages, fed the old flat-bed press, and took the bundled papers to the post office. I can’t say I did any of it very well, but the challenge of the weekly paper was to be the jack of about a dozen trades and make it come out every week. I have to confess, looking back, it was probably the best, most concentrated bit of education I ever got.

“But, the real reward was roaming over the fields in that summer and feeling the earth under my feet and the endless sky above, the brush of sun, and prairie wind. On the ridges I saw good men with good machines and heard the sounds of their deeply gratifying work and felt the natural rhythms of harvest. I think for the first time in my 22 years, I began to understand farming and to cherish the land where I had been born and nourished. The big barns still anchored that world, dozens of them harboring livestock and reshaped to make way for the huge new machines and all of it mixed with hay and grain and a few chickens. It was a good time, but I could see and feel the rush of a new farm civilization.”

Floyd Beck drives a combine up a hill on the Howard Lane farm two miles east of Fontanelle in Adair County in mid-July, 1950. Someday I intend to research the weather of that summer because so many of the pictures in my archives show this incredible spectacle of sky and clouds. God did some spectacular things when he created this world, but I doubt there is anything better in his portfolio of peace and plenty reaching to every horizon.

A beautiful Iowa drama in the summer of 1950 along the hilltops of Adair County. I did not record the exact location, but it was somewhere southeast of Greenfield. Men and machines and the land were all in harmony in that moment and the oat harvest—probably in June or July—was in full swing. The spectacle was repeated as the crews moved form farm to farm and almost anywhere I roamed back then there was another picture waiting to be taken.

I found profound nostalgia in the pictures which straddled the horse/tractor transition and felt that others might too. I did follow some of the harvest back to, at least, one rather unusual barn was as you will note. I should have a little more thorough in my reporting, but I was fresh out of Iowa State and jobless and trying to help my Dad and Mother get the first vacation they had had in 25 years. I was hurrying around the landscape for pictures and stories to fill the pages of the Adair County Free Press; the family weekly which had been left in my inexperienced hands. I did everything and loved it all and that was the fulfillment of that summer. I sold ads, took pictures, wrote stories, made the castings for ads, helped set type (linotype and in the hand stick), made the photo engravings, made up the pages, fed the old flat-bed press, and took the bundled papers to the post office. I can’t say I did any of it very well, but the challenge of the weekly paper was to be the jack of about a dozen trades and make it come out every week. I have to confess, looking back, it was probably the best, most concentrated bit of education I ever got.

“But, the real reward was roaming over the fields in that summer and feeling the earth under my feet and the endless sky above, the brush of sun, and prairie wind. On the ridges I saw good men with good machines and heard the sounds of their deeply gratifying work and felt the natural rhythms of harvest. I think for the first time in my 22 years, I began to understand farming and to cherish the land where I had been born and nourished. The big barns still anchored that world, dozens of them harboring livestock and reshaped to make way for the huge new machines and all of it mixed with hay and grain and a few chickens. It was a good time, but I could see and feel the rush of a new farm civilization.”

A little closer look at the old thresher, a vital machine in those weeks when I followed the oat harvest through Adair County. If I made a note of the location, it long ago disappeared. But, certainly it was within a few miles of Greenfield. I was intrigued with the long belt linked to the tractor which drove the threshers and oddy, I thought, never came off the drive wheel.

This Iowa crew stands in front of Howard Augustine’s improvised barn made of two box car bodies with a roof put over them and a hinged front, an idea hatched up by Ray Kurtz, another Adair County farmer of delightful originality whose poetry often appeared in the Adair County Free Press. Perhaps the structure was not as grand as most of the barns in the area, but on that day Augustine told me they had piled away 20 acres of cut hay by picking it up with a fork life in the fields about a quarter of a mile distant and driving into the open barn. Left to right: George Hoadley, Junior Kingston, Jimmy Hall, Howard Augustine.

The view from inside the improvised barn on the Howard Augustine farm in July, 1950, as a load of hay is lifted up to be forked into place by Junior Kingston, left, and Jimmy Hall, right.
Proud Farmer... and Mayor

From the see-everything-for-miles seats of their mammoth tractors, farmers monitor gauges, check machinery, and even follow crop prices. Grain farmer Craig Pfantz, does all of this and also runs State Center, a town of 1500, where he is mayor.

Craig has some big dreams and big city tasks. He has been a force behind the revitalization of the historic central Iowa town on Highway 10. “I do a tremendous amount of city business from the cab of a tractor or combine with my cell phone,” he admitted. “...so much so that my father continually comments that we would get some work done if I would ever get off that phone.”

The double-duty job began a few years ago when State Center was picked as a backdrop for a movie. Curious, Craig asked the movie’s director, “Why did you choose State Center?”

The director explained that they wanted a town with “a depressed look.”

This comment came after the superintendent of schools, who was hired in the mid 1990’s, almost backed out after driving down the town’s Main Street. “If the residents aren’t proud of the town, why should I take a job here?” he was heard to remark.

Craig, a young husband and fa- ther of three, who was already overworked, heard this. “When you drive by something everyday, you don’t notice...When you have someone smack you.—We better get working on...or nothing will be here in 10 years.”

Craig’s State Center heritage is deep on both sides of his family. The Piantzes settled on the south side of 120th Street, Craig and his wife, Mary, bought back and re- stored the magnificent Victorian house, on the edge of town, built by Craig’s maternal great grandfather, August Riemenschneider, a businessman and leader, in 1904.

From childhood on, Craig helped his father, Vern, on the northeast State Center. Always doing double-duty, Craig worked so hard that it took him six years to get his degree in agriculture at Iowa State because he attended two quarters at a time so he could help with the farming. Today Craig, with his father, owns 700 acres, and farms a total of 1800 acres. “After graduation, I came back to the farm. I always wanted to,” he said matter-of-factly.

In 1997, Craig met Mary Kenkel, Council Bluffs native, at Iowa State. They settled in State Center in 1977. He served on the city council from 1980 to 1984, took a break, and returned to the council in 1995 about the same time that the mayor resigned. Craig accepted the job ($1.10 per day). “I had more experience,” he said. But, he added as that as mayor both he and his wife have to revive State Center, there have been some arguments, “You never know what it’s like to be mayor until you become one,” he noted.

Jeff Merrill, who grew up in State Center and was living in Boston, was con- cerned about the plight of his hometown. He kept sending Craig information about Main Street Iowa, an off shoot of Iowa Department of Economic Development group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig.

The information led to a staff person. Façade improvements were made with funds from a trust established and a group dedicated to energizing our towns by restoring Iowa’s Main Streets. “We didn’t know anything about it,” said Craig. Craig enjoys his double life. He acknowledges that farming has changed during his lifetime. “It’s volume and dog eat dog.” And, certainly it’s business as usual from the headquarters in the cab of the tractor.

Jacqueline Andre Schmeal

beautiful and historic barns throughout Iowa will be open to the public during the free, two-day, self-guided, all-state barn tour Saturday and Sunday, September 17 and 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Most of the barns have been restored with matching grants from the Iowa Barn Foundation. Other property owners received awards of distinction from the Iowa Barn Founda- tion for restorations they undertook them- selves.

The purpose of the tour is to en- courage barn preservation in the state, to teach young people about Iowa’s rich agri- cultural heritage, and to renew pride in this unique heritage. Owners will discuss the barns at many stops. Visitors are expected from all over the country.

For more information, contact Roxanne Mehlisch, (641) 487 7690.

northeast Iowa barns

now you know what it’s like to be mayor until you become one,” he noted.

Craig gets up at 5:30 a.m. and is in bed by 10 p.m. Besides farming and may- oral duties, Craig has served on the Iowa Corn Promotion Board and the Iowa State ... civic involvement has become a hobby—“to survive.” The three Pfantz children include Ryan, 23; Ashley, 21; and Brett, 15.

Craig enjoys his double life. He acknowledges that farming has changed during his lifetime. “It’s volume and dog eat dog.” And, certainly it’s business as usual from the headquarters in the cab of the tractor.

Of Rolfe, and 290th Street. Go seven miles north to 400th (510th) Avenue. Go west one-half mile to 525th Avenue. Then north and go one-fourth mile. This barn was built in 1950 by twins, Lovell and Rodell Long, for Fritz Johnson’s cow and pig operation. Barn has laminated rafters constructed in eight layers. Rafters are set on two-foot foundation to allow for haymow.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.

The farm has been in the family for 100 years. The barn was built in 1929. Farm on postcard idyllic.
The Iowa Barn Foundation

Ditmars barn, 4680 McKinley, Granville (O'Brien/Stout Counties)-From Granville, go one mile east on Highway 10 and a half mile south on gravel. Barn is on east side of road. This 1860 landmark barn was built in 1914 by Mr. Buce from Germanot.

Conover barn, 5315 190th Street, Holstein (Ida County)-From Holstein travel 1.5 miles west on US 20. Turn south on L67 and go three miles. Turn left on 190th. It is the first place on north side of road. Barn was built around 1900 and used by C.B. Conover and his son, C.B., Jr., for their outstanding Belgian draft horses. Harry Linn, Iowa’s secretary of agriculture, gave draft horse demonstrations here.

Belfrage barn, 2410 PortNeal Road, Ser-
gart Bluff (Woodbury County)-Off I-29 at the Port Neal exit and go south two miles to the first intersection. Then go north two miles. Farm is on the right. Owner Win-
non Beifel’s great-grandfather, John Beifelarge, bought the land on which this barn stands in 1875 after serving in the Civil War.

Ferguson barn, 4041 130th Avenue, Pocahontas (Pocahontas County)-Barn is 1/2 miles southeast of the intersection of 130th Avenue and 130th Street. Barn and unique landmark “conehead” crib were built in 1922. Eleva-
tor stall works.

Central Iowa Barns

Hansdakner barn, 65627 200th, Fernald (Story County)-Barn is immediately southeast of Fernald which is off E 29 west of U.S. 65, north of Cole. Large, unique 1875 square barn is on farm purchased by Hansdakner in 1853. Family gave land for Fernald.

Hanson barn, 11590 N. 87th Av. W, Mingo (Jasper County)-At the junctions of High-
ways 65, 330, and 117, continue northeast on 330. Go one mile to F 17 and turn east for 4 of a mile to W 122nd St. N., and turn right. Go 4 of a mile to 87th Av. W and turn left. The barn is a little over 7/8 a mile from the left side of the road. Barn was built in 1907 with wood from barn older demol-
dished by a tornado. Pegged barn was built by Elmer Haley and the Hansons.

North Central Iowa Barns

McBurney barn, 2550 Gotch Park Road, Humboldt (Humboldt County)-At the Westside elevator, turn right. Go to Gotch Park Road and take the black top 2.5 miles. Stephen Taft, who founded Springvale which became Humboldt, owned the land on which this barn stands. In 1874 he sold the land to Lorbeers who built the house and barn, both still in use. The barn was built in 1890.

Bennett barn, 1664 Eagle Avenue, Latimer (Franklin County)-Take I-35 to Highway 3. Turn west on 3 and go one mile to Eagle Avenue. Turn north and go 2.5 miles. This handsome clay tile barn, with round laminated rafter roof, was built in 1950 by Henning Construction Company, Latimer, for a dairy herd. The cow stanchions had drinking cups; there is a chain lift manure carrier.

Ramsey barn, 1766 163rd St. Hampton (Franklin County)-At the intersection of Highways 65 and 3 in Hampton, turn east for two miles. Then travel north for two miles and finally west a fourth mile to the barn. The barn of pig construction is on a hill on a gorgeous farmland. The owner copied a Wisconsin dairy barn when he built it in 1888. The barn was proudly placed on the most prominent position on the farm.

Dodd barn, 1854 35th Street, Ackley (Franklin County)-Travel four miles west of Ackley on Highway 57. Turn north on S 55 for two miles to 40th Street. Go 1/2 mile west. Barn was built by Ernest Aldinger, one of three Aldinger brothers who built farms within a mile of each other.

Yezek barn, 22881 Vine Avenue, Plymouth (Cerro Gordo County)-From Rock Falls, go one mile north on the county blacktop. Barn is on the east side of the road west of Vine Avenue. Turn north and drive .32x52 miles with metal cupola was built in 1930 and is one of the only barns standing in the area. The barn was in vulnerable condition when the Yezeks started the restoration project.

Blake barn, 11670 200th Street, Mason City (Cerro Gordo County)-Travel on Highway 65 north of Mason City two miles. Take a left on County Road B20. Go four miles west (3 1/2 miles). Turn east on the gravel road. This barn, typical of those of the De-
pression era, was lovingly restored.

Rosenburg barn, 10176 142nd Street, Mason City (Cerro Gordo County)-Travel on Highway 65 north of Mason City two miles. Take a left on County Road B20. Go four miles west (3 1/2 miles). Turn east on the gravel road. This barn, typical of those of the Depression era, was lovingly restored.

West Central Iowa Barns

Wooster barn, 2435 210th Street, Man-
ning (Shelby County)-From Irwin, take the highway east five miles; turn north on gravel for one mile and turn east for 1/2 mile. From Manning, go seven miles south on Airport Road on the west side of town. Turn west for 1/4 miles. Mr. Wooster’s grandfather built this barn in 1896. It has always been used for the family farming operation and is still.

Hedlin barn, 837 Orange Road, Harlan (Shelby County)-From the intersection of US 59 and State 44, go four miles east on 44 to Orange Road. Then go one and a half miles south. Barn was built in 1916 and has been owned by two different families.

Kochsperger barn, 64094 US 59, four miles south of Emerson (Mills County). Jacob Kochsperger farm has been in the family since 1870. Barn was built in 1941.

Dimars barn, 19638 237th Street, Council Bluffs (Pottawattamie County)-Take Iowa Western exit off of I-80 onto Highway 6. Go east one-half mile on Highway 6. Turn north onto Hart Avenue and follow signs to Dimars’ Orchard. This barn was built in 1950 and was part of a dairy operation.

Barry barn, 3041 Easton Trail, Woodbine (Harrison County)-Go west on Easton Trail (F32) from Woodbine one mile. Charles and Anna Nicely owned the farm when their barn was built. Barry barn is in 1936. This barn illustrates how a simple, small structure can be restored to a landmark.

Anstey barn, 7317 117th Street, Massena (Cass County)-Four miles south of Mas-
sta farm. Two barns have been restored on this lovely farmstead. A piece of limestone in one barn’s footing reveals it was built in 1905. The second barn, built in 1938, has unique trusses.

Central Iowa Barns

Hansdakner barn, 65627 200th, Fernald (Story County)-Barn is immediately southeast of Fernald which is off E 29 west of U.S. 65, north of Cole. Large, unique 1875 square barn is on farm purchased by Hansdakner in 1853. Family gave land for Fernald.

Hanson barn, 11590 N. 87th Av. W, Mingo (Jasper County)-At the junctions of High-
ways 65, 330, and 117, continue northeast on 330. Go one mile to F 17 and turn east for 4 of a mile to W 122nd St. N., and turn right. Go 4 of a mile to 87th Av. W and turn left. The barn is a little over 7/8 a mile from the left side of the road. Barn was built in 1907 with wood from barn older demol-
dished by a tornado. Pegged barn was built by Elmer Haley and the Hansons.
The June tour of sights along southern Iowa’s Highway 2, highlighted by a picnic at the Ramsey Farm at Lesanville, was enjoyed by people from Iowa and beyond. The Ramsey Farm at Lesanville is one of America’s must-see sights. The project was launched after the Iowa Barn Foundation awarded native Iowa, Paul Ramsey, New York. Grinding the corn and the butter, pasture the sculptor at the State Fair. We’re also grateful to the Iowa State University for including the Iowa Barn Foundation in their “Imagine Art”, at the Des Moines Art Festival. Lois Warme, an associate professor and extension specialist, College of Design, and Bertha Shaw, retired Hamilton County Extension director, designed a barn banner. Bertha of Eagle Grove, Iowa, is one of Iowa’s barn experts and gives talks on barns.

About Our Barns

A conference focusing on the preservation of Iowa’s one and two-room rural schools will be held at Hotel Pattee, Perry, on Saturday, September 3. On Saturday, October 1, there will be a tour of country schools in Dallas, Guthrie, and Caroline Counties. For information: 1-800-434-2037 or wilschman@mchsi.com

The Iowa Barn Foundation’s “area’s picnic will be held on Sunday, June 11, at the majestic and historic Cook farm south of City’s foundation. The conference is grateful to new owners, Michael and Sue Harrigan, for opening the unique limestone farmedstead to us. Other barns in the area will also be on tour. Helping with the organization are Floyd County representatives, Jean and John Sebern and Roger Ramthun.

State Center, described as “depressed” not too many years ago, is a must stop on Highway 30. Residents and civic leaders have worked together to bring back the early grandeur of the town. The Iowa Barn Foundation, Main Street Association and Highway 30 Association share a historic building where information on the area and barns are available.

Mark your calendars. The Iowa Barn Foundation’s annual picnic will be held on Sunday, June 11, at the majestic and historic Cook farm south of City’s foundation. The conference is grateful to new owners, Michael and Sue Harrigan, for opening the unique limestone farmedstead to us. Other barns in the area will also be on tour. Helping with the organization are Floyd County representatives, Jean and John Sebern and Roger Ramthun.

If you have questions, telephone Maggie O’Rourke (515) 758-2878 or Roxanne Meldrich (641) 487-7690.


Herbert Schneckloth, prominent Iowa farmer, whose family emigrated from Germany in 1854, built the landmark round crib in 1926. Work on the 50-feet in diameter structure was done with hand tools. The foundation was dug and poured using a shovel and one-third of a bag of home mix at a time. Handmade forms were used to pour the concrete. The ventilation block tile and matching solid tile were brought from Adel by train and truck-drawn wagons.

Strobahal barn, 930 299 Street, Washington (Washington County)-From Washington 299 south on Highway 1 for five and a half miles to 299 street. Turn west on 299 and travel one-half mile. The barn is a “butter barn”. This large barn was built in the 1920’s by distinguished United States Senator Smith Brookhart while he was in office. Barn is important to Iowa and America.

Florence Albright, Ossian Bill & LaDonna Allen, Ames Jessica Alexander, Iowa City Frank and LaDonna Allen, Ames Marvin Allen, Mediapolis Edwin Bartine II, Marshalltown Pamela Battaglioli, Granville Marion Beatty, Decorah Virginia Becker, Plainfield

The June tour of sights along southern Iowa’s Highway 2, highlighted by a picnic at the Ramsey Farm at Lesanville, was enjoyed by people from Iowa and beyond. The Ramsey Farm at Lesanville is one of America’s must-see sights. The project was launched after the Iowa Barn Foundation awarded native Iowa, Paul Ramsey, New York, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Des Moines. The Iowa Barn Foundation has also been involved in the restoration of several local barns, including the Strabala barn, located near State Center in Mahaska County. The barn was restored in the 1920’s by distinguished United States Senator Smith Brookhart while he was in office. Barn is important to Iowa and America.

Strabahal barn, 37647 Iron Bridge Road, Spragueville, Iowa (Jackson County). The large barn was built in the 1920’s by distinguished United States Senator Smith Brookhart while he was in office. Barn is important to Iowa and America.

Contributors:

A conference focusing on the preservation of Iowa’s one and two-room rural schools will be held at Hotel Pattee, Perry, on Saturday, September 3. On Saturday, October 1, there will be a tour of country schools in Dallas, Guthrie, and Caroline Counties. For information: 1-800-434-2037 or wilschman@mchsi.com

The Iowa Barn Foundation’s “area’s picnic will be held on Sunday, June 11, at the majestic and historic Cook farm south of City’s foundation. The conference is grateful to new owners, Michael and Sue Harrigan, for opening the unique limestone farmedstead to us. Other barns in the area will also be on tour. Helping with the organization are Floyd County representatives, Jean and John Sebern and Roger Ramthun.

The Iowa Barn Foundation MEMBERSHIP

Nearby, Mount Ayr, Ringgold County seat, has also been revitalized. The old buildings beam once again; new businesses have been launched.

The June tour of sights along southern Iowa’s Highway 2, highlighted by a picnic at the Ramsey Farm at Lesanville, was enjoyed by people from Iowa and beyond. The Ramsey Farm at Lesanville is one of America’s must-see sights. The project was launched after the Iowa Barn Foundation awarded native Iowa, Paul Ramsey, New York, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Des Moines. The Iowa Barn Foundation has also been involved in the restoration of several local barns, including the Strabala barn, located near State Center in Mahaska County. The barn was restored in the 1920’s by distinguished United States Senator Smith Brookhart while he was in office. Barn is important to Iowa and America.

Strabahal barn, 37647 Iron Bridge Road, Spragueville, Iowa (Jackson County). The large barn was built in the 1920’s by distinguished United States Senator Smith Brookhart while he was in office. Barn is important to Iowa and America.

Contributors:

A conference focusing on the preservation of Iowa’s one and two-room rural schools will be held at Hotel Pattee, Perry, on Saturday, September 3. On Saturday, October 1, there will be a tour of country schools in Dallas, Guthrie, and Caroline Counties. For information: 1-800-434-2037 or wilschman@mchsi.com
Buford and Bernice Garner, Des Moines
Elizabeth Garst, Coon Rapids
Gateway Foundation, San Diego, Ca.
Steve Gerdes, Houston, Tx.
Carolyn ... Hawthorne, State College, Pa.
Rod Hassler, Marshalltown
Mary Hays, Des Moines
David Hedges, Houston, Tx.
Dennis and Linda Helfin, Harlan
Mrs. George Hegstrom, Ames
John and Ann Heimberger, Dexter
Edna Heitmann, Keystone
John Helmers Family, Greenville, Texas
Kevin and Patricia Lendt, Atalissa
Joseph Lengeling
Ted Lenocker, Dexter
Ruth Liddy (in honor of her 97th birthday, Joanne Ledet)
John Lipsky and Zsuzsanna ... McFarland Murray, Syracuse, N.Y.
Peter and Margaret Moore, North Haven, Ct.
Alexander and Elizabeth Morehouse, Mansfield, Ga. (for Mr. and Mrs. James Balloun, Atlanta, in honor of Jim's 65th birthday)
Jerry and Jo Nash, St. Ansgar
Wayne Norman, Dubuque
Wayne V. and Margaret Moore, North Haven, Ct.
Lisa M. Loxton, Bettendorf
John and Mary Kemper, Audubon
Terence Jesse Jones, Ames
Philippe and Kathleen Johnson, Redcliff
Carmie Jones, Conrad
Ed Jones, Oskaloosa
Peter and Janet Kaboly, Iowa City
Mary Kahn, Elkader
Wall and Mary Kaiser, Centered
Tom and James Keller, Medicine... 86
Mike & Bill Kivadian, Cascade
John Kluesa, Green Valley, Ar
Guillard and Patricia Kinney, Blue Grass
Gene Krommen, Wellman
Loren Knese, Ankeny
Keith and Alice Kohy, Westport Springs, Il.
George and Marylynn Laid, Ames
Brian Lamson, Washington, D.C.
Ronald and Sally Lang, Grinnell
Eugenio and Dorothy Lang, Grinnell
Denny Lasseter, Jefferson
Irma M. Lawler Reversible Trust (Marcia Pete... (505) 988-5917 or e-mail: jcemalu@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 or if you would like to add friends to our mailing list, please notify us.
Ann Harvey 2002 Cessna
Ames, IA 50014 (515) 292 9104; ach2002@aol.com
The Iowa Barn Foundation is an Iowa non-profit corporation with tax-exempt status under paragraph 501 (c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.
Paul Crockett
Mary Mills Dunce
Don Geiger
West Des Moines, Iowa
Ted Oleo
Toldeo, Iowa
Ambassador Charles Manatt
Washington, D.C. (Audubon)
Paul Ramsey
Newport Beach, California (Des Moines)
Pat and David Rosenberg, Houston, Tx.
Jan Rowedder, Lake View
Steven Roy, West Des Moines
Marvin and Jean Rozensohn, New Sharon
Kathryn and John Williams, Kansas City
Maggie O'Rourke
State Center, Iowa
Robert Robinson, St. Paul, Mn.
Pamela Stinson, Muscatine
State Bank and Trust Company, Nevada
Joanne Ledet, Eugene, Or.
Robert and Annette Lepahl, Washington
Pat and David Rosenberg, Houston, Tx.
Jan Rowedder, Lake View
Steven Roy, West Des Moines
Marvin and Jean Rozensohn, New Sharon
Kathryn and John Williams, Kansas City
Maggie O'Rourke
State Center, Iowa
Robert Robinson, St. Paul, Mn.
Pamela Stinson, Muscatine
State Bank and Trust Company, Nevada
Joanne Ledet, Eugene, Or.
Robert and Annette Lepahl, Washington
Pat and David Rosenberg, Houston, Tx.
Jan Rowedder, Lake View
Steven Roy, West Des Moines
Marvin and Jean Rozensohn, New Sharon
Kathryn and John Williams, Kansas City
Maggie O'Rourke
State Center, Iowa
Robert Robinson, St. Paul, Mn.
Pamela Stinson, Muscatine
State Bank and Trust Company, Nevada
Joanne Ledet, Eugene, Or.
Robert and Annette Lepahl, Washington
Pat and David Rosenberg, Houston, Tx.
Jan Rowedder, Lake View
Steven Roy, West Des Moines
Marvin and Jean Rozensohn, New Sharon
Kathryn and John Williams, Kansas City
Maggie O'Rourke
State Center, Iowa
Robert Robinson, St. Paul, Mn.
Pamela Stinson, Muscatine
State Bank and Trust Company, Nevada
Joanne Ledet, Eugene, Or.
Robert and Annette Lepahl, Washington
Pat and David Rosenberg, Houston, Tx.