

# BARN LIGHTS

Quarterly Newsletter

APPALACHIAN BARN ALLIANCE

VOL. 4 No. 3 Autumn 2017

## STATE PRESERVATION AWARD

The Appalachian Barn Alliance has been selected to receive a 2017 *Gertrude S. Carraway Award of Merit*. Board President Sandy Stevenson and Historian Researcher Taylor Barnhill will attend the Annual Conference of Preservation North Carolina on September 29 to receive the honor at the Awards Luncheon in Charlotte. Presented since 1974, a maximum of 12 awards are given each year. These Awards of Merit give “deserved recognition to individuals or organizations that have demonstrated a genuine commitment to historic preservation through extraordinary leadership, research, philanthropy, promotion, and/or significant participation in preservation.”



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## MARS HILL BARNs DOCUMENTED IN NEW TOUR BROCHURE

The Mars Hill township self-guided tour is now available. Taylor Barnhill has been working to develop the information about some of the historically significant barns in this township with a grant from the Johanna Favrot Fund of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He documented barns of several distinct architectural types—shaped by the times and the availability of materials. And, here’s a sneak peek.

The Appalachian log livestock barn had log crib enclosures for animal stalls on the ground level, and a large hay loft on the upper level, also used for threshing grain. Jim Phillips’ barn in the Mars Hill Township tour is a good example. Most Appalachian livestock barns were also “bank barns” with an embankment to access the upper loft level, represented by the John Wesley Roberts barn.

A major change in barn design began around 1915 when metal roofing became available, and the gambrel barn roof appeared. The Jeter Robinson main barn is an example of a gambrel roof. Prior to the introduction of metal roofing, the roofs of all farm buildings were covered in split oak shingles, and were very steep to shed water and snow quickly. The upper section of the new gambrel roof has a shallow pitch, requiring the use of metal roofing. Metal roofing also allowed builders to continue building the gable or “A” roof, yet with a lower roof pitch, as in the Jeter Robinson burley barn, and the Joseph Bascomb Huff barn.

Another new and distinctive barn type in this township is the monitor roof barn. While found in other areas, the Mars Hill township has many of this type. The Samuel Moore barn is one of the earliest, from the 1930s, built exclusively for air-curing burley tobacco barn. The Woods Ammons barns are good examples of monitor roof barns that became popular after WWII.



The brochures for the Mars Hill township and for four other townships are available at the Madison County Visitor Center in Mars Hill, the Welcome Center in Hot Springs and are also downloadable from the website ( <https://appalachianbarns.org/barn-tours/> ) and the Tourism website ( <https://www.visitmadisoncounty.com/historic-barn-tours> )

The Madison County Tourism Development generously supports the printing of all of these brochures.

## The President's Letter



There is nothing quite as rewarding as being recognized by an organization outside of our local circle. And that is the feeling I had when I opened the letter from Preservation North Carolina informing us that the Appalachian Barn Alliance is being recognized for our work (see story on Page 1). Of course, as with all honors and awards, there are many people to thank. First and foremost is our researcher extraordinaire Taylor Barnhill. None of our results would be possible without his amazing skillset. He has been helped by a few special volunteers in the field, but most of his assistance comes from the wonderful residents of Madison County who tell him their stories. The other individuals who are in part responsible for our success are the hard-working volunteer members of the

Board and the Advisory Council and those entertainers and professionals who contribute their time to fund-raising events so that we have the funds to keep up our research. And, finally, to all who continue to support us with membership fees and donations—our heartfelt thanks. Every one of you should share the same feeling of pride in this recognition as I felt when I read the letter. I will be thinking of each of you when I accept the

award in Charlotte at the Awards Luncheon.

*Sandy Stevenson*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tuesday, September 26**—Deadline for Historic Barns Photo Contest (County Fair)  
**Saturday, October 7** - Stop by our booth on the MHU Quad for the Festival  
**October** - Watch for an announcement of a Saturday Van Tour of Historic Barns  
**Tuesday, November 14 at 9am** - Annual Meeting at the Cooperative Extension Office

### HISTORIC BARN PHOTO CONTEST

Information and Application Forms available at Photo Contest tab of [www.appalachianbarns.org](http://www.appalachianbarns.org)  
 Youth and Adult Categories  
 Offered as part of the photography division of the Madison County Fair  
 (No cash prizes beginning this year)



2016 1st Place winner Harriette Brown

## GRAIN BIN DONATION UNCOVERS INTERESTING STORY

There are times when our researcher Taylor Barnhill happens upon a gem of a story or gem of a building. When Cecelia Roberts Ward took him to the family granary in the Petersburg community, he found both. Her cousin now owns it but agreed to donate some items to the Appalachian Barn Alliance. There were two grain bins with the roof collapsed on them. Both were damaged, but one was hand-crafted using a draw knife and mortise and tenon joints, so we decided to rescue that one. Taylor, Rob Kraft and Mike Stevenson—with the help of a track hoe—lifted the roof and dragged out the grain bin. This significant outbuilding was common on farms as grain was an important crop in Madison County until the 1950s.



Additionally, before Cecelia's father, Clyde Roberts, died, she transcribed stories from his recollections of his father and grandfather and their farms. He was a lawyer, politician and Judge; his portrait is in the Madison County courtroom. A portion of his account of the granary follows:

The granary was built by George Garfield Roberts (known by his grandchildren as "Papa George"), father of Clyde Roberts, about 1920-1930. It has a cellar for bringing tobacco into case. Tobacco was packed in there and worked. The first floor, even with the road to the barn. The first floor was filled with homemade grain bins for holding 300 cubic feet of grain—100 or more bushels of wheat. The threshing machine was horse drawn and threshed grain and stored it in the granary—oats and rye. The wheat straw was eaten by cattle. The cellar was also used for canned goods. Two sides and back surrounded by earth—no freezing. The third floor, or loft, was used to store oats in open piles when the bins were full.

The threshing machine would come—BIG DAY!! THRESHERS ARE COMING!! That meant 6 or more men came with the machine. They (the landowner/client) dreaded the threshers stayin' all night—extra meals. Lots of work, hauling wheat and stacking straw. The landowner did this. Neighbor women came to feed "threshers" and the neighbors who helped. Two to three tables to set. When they left your place, you went to one or two neighbors until you were out of your community. The grain was harvested—wheat, oats, rye. The wheat for flour and cereal, oats for horses, rye fed to livestock. Sold also to the people for seed.

Cradles were used to cut the grain—hired help. Cradle the grain and then bundle by tying. You cradled by swinging and cutting and grabbing the shafts all one way. The cradler placed these cut shafts, heads one way behind him. Another bundled these. Left in fields to cure a day or two. The bunches tied into bundles. "Shocking" was leaning the bundles tied in middle. Twelve bundles to a shock—ten upright—heads up. Two bundles fitted horizontally over these ten as a cap. Turned water. Stacked after curing for threshers. Stacks high as a house—caps here too to turn water."

## APPALACHIAN BARN ALLIANCE

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Sandy Stevenson (President), Jeannie Blethen, Christopher Brown, Ryan Cody, Janet Foster, Lesley King, Rob Kraft, Nancy Larkin, Susan McChesney, Judy Ricker, Lynn Steen, and David Wyatt-

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