



# Beech Glen Historic Barn Tour

*A 75-minute drive around Beech Glen Township, NC*

*A project of the Appalachian Barn Alliance*

Driving through the country roads, the barns dotting the hills serve as a reminder of times past. Their design can tell the story of their use—both historic and current. More than that, though, the agricultural heritage of Madison County can be traced through its barn architecture. These reminders of the hard work of the farmers in the past are a testament to the resourcefulness of the previous generations and dedication to the land. The older 19th century barns functioned as multi-purpose livestock barns until they were adapted to burley tobacco, introduced in the 1920s. This important cash crop provided the livelihood for many families until 2004 when the federal support program ended. Tobacco determined the shape and design of most 20th century barns, while many of the older barns remained full of memories of warm animals, sweet smelling haylofts, and secret playhouses.

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1

**Oscar Anderson, Sr Barn  
Burley Tobacco (1951)**  
*19 Hamburg Rd  
Mars Hill 28754*

One of the three barns in the Anderson family on this tour, this one was built specifically for burley tobacco—by Robert Maney. Maney, who had only one arm (the other lost in an accident) built other barns in the area. The year built was the year Oscar Anderson, Jr. married. It is sited at the edge of a large creek bottom area where the burley tobacco was grown. The first barn on the tour is part of the Anderson family (D. Nelson—the father —and then, Oscar, Sr. —his son) and provides a scope of what a farmstead might have been in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In order to view the other Anderson barns in the safest and best view, the other two will come up later as 5a and 5b.



Barn is lost to the weather

2

**Dolph Robinson Barn  
Livestock (late 1800s)**  
*Near 2799 Hamburg Rd  
Mars Hill 28754*

Set in a relatively narrow valley with little tillable land compared to farms owned by a more affluent family, this barn represents a lower skill level of log hewing and V-notching. Each element, including the lattice work, board and batten siding, and log construction appears to have been completed with less skill



and commitment to the standard of quality of this period and type of barn. This illustrates the wide range of income of the area farmers.

3

**Wiley Metcalf Barn  
Livestock (late 1800s)**  
*2676 Upper Metcalf Creek Loop Rd  
Mars Hill 2854*

An example of high quality log hewing and notching, with very tight half dovetail notches, this barn was used originally for livestock and hay and later adapted to burley tobacco. The outside shows extensive, carefully applied lattice-work in a thoughtful arrangement with lapped siding.



For more information on the barns of the area, go to  
<http://www.appalachianbarns.org>  
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For information on Madison County, go to  
<http://www.visitmadisoncounty.com/>

# 4 is intentionally left off

5a

**D. Nelson Anderson Barn**  
**Livestock Barn (circa 1890)**  
*2687 Paint Fork Rd*  
*Mars Hill 28754*

This barn was built as a livestock barn and adapted to burley tobacco, likely in the 1920's and used for tobacco until 2004. The original roofing would have been split oak shingles. The current roofing is the uncommon 3-U metal with three U-shaped channels rather than the standard V-channels.



5b

**D. Nelson Anderson Barn**  
**Bull Face Tobacco Barn (early 1900s)**  
*2687 Paint Fork Rd*  
*Mars Hill 28754*

Its unusual placement bridging a steep swale is not the only unique feature of this barn. It was once used for Bull Face tobacco which was raised for chewing tobacco marketed in twists. This type of tobacco, with dark green curly leaves, was also called dark tobacco and was smoke-cured by building a fire on the dirt floor of the barn composed of green branches that smoked heavily but never ignited. Apple culls or cherry bark was often added to the smoke to flavor the tobacco.



6

**Jim Carter Barn**  
**Livestock (late 19th century)**  
*3616 Beech Glen Rd*  
*Mars Hill 28754*

The farm was purchased during the Civil War with Confederate money, causing a feud once the war had ended. The barn was added later. Beech Glen Road was the Burnsville Highway at the time of this barn's early life and travelers would stop at this property and were allowed to stay in the barn overnight. The original steep oak shingle roof slope was altered to the existing slope to accommodate a greater volume of space for hanging burley tobacco, and shows as a very slight gambrel roof profile. Since the gambrel shape in this example has no actual structural or space benefit, it is likely that it was a popular style decision.



7

**Oscar Young Barn**  
**Livestock (circa 1915)**  
*255 Oscar Young Rd*  
*Mars Hill 28754*

This barn is situated at the entrance to a relatively large cove of land that once included a large dairy operation. The barn was originally built as a livestock barn to house their animals and later adapted to burley tobacco. The gambrel roof is original and is likely one of the earliest known gambrel roofs in the county.



Before you drive, please remember that this is a DRIVING tour. The barn owners graciously participate but the public is NOT invited to venture onto PRIVATE PROPERTY, including drive-ways. While observing the barns, please pull off, stop, or slow down ONLY where you know it is safe. Use your safety flashers to alert other drivers that you are stopped or driving slowly. Thank you, enjoy these wonderful barns, and be safe!

# 8

## **Thurman Briggs Barn** **Livestock (circa 1954-56)** *2501 Old Mars Hill Highway* *Mars Hill 28754*

This site is a classic early twentieth century family commercial and living setting — where the family lived in the same building as the gas station and store. They also maintained basic farm activities with chickens, draft horses, garden and some crops. The gas station was built for Briggs by Esso Oil Co. and is a good example of the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century rural highway gas station and country store. The barn is a strong example of more contemporary materials and typical elements of the late 1940s, early 1950s barn construction. When approached by neighbors to allow them to hang their burley tobacco in this barn, the owner agreed to allow them to alter the barn for burley tobacco.

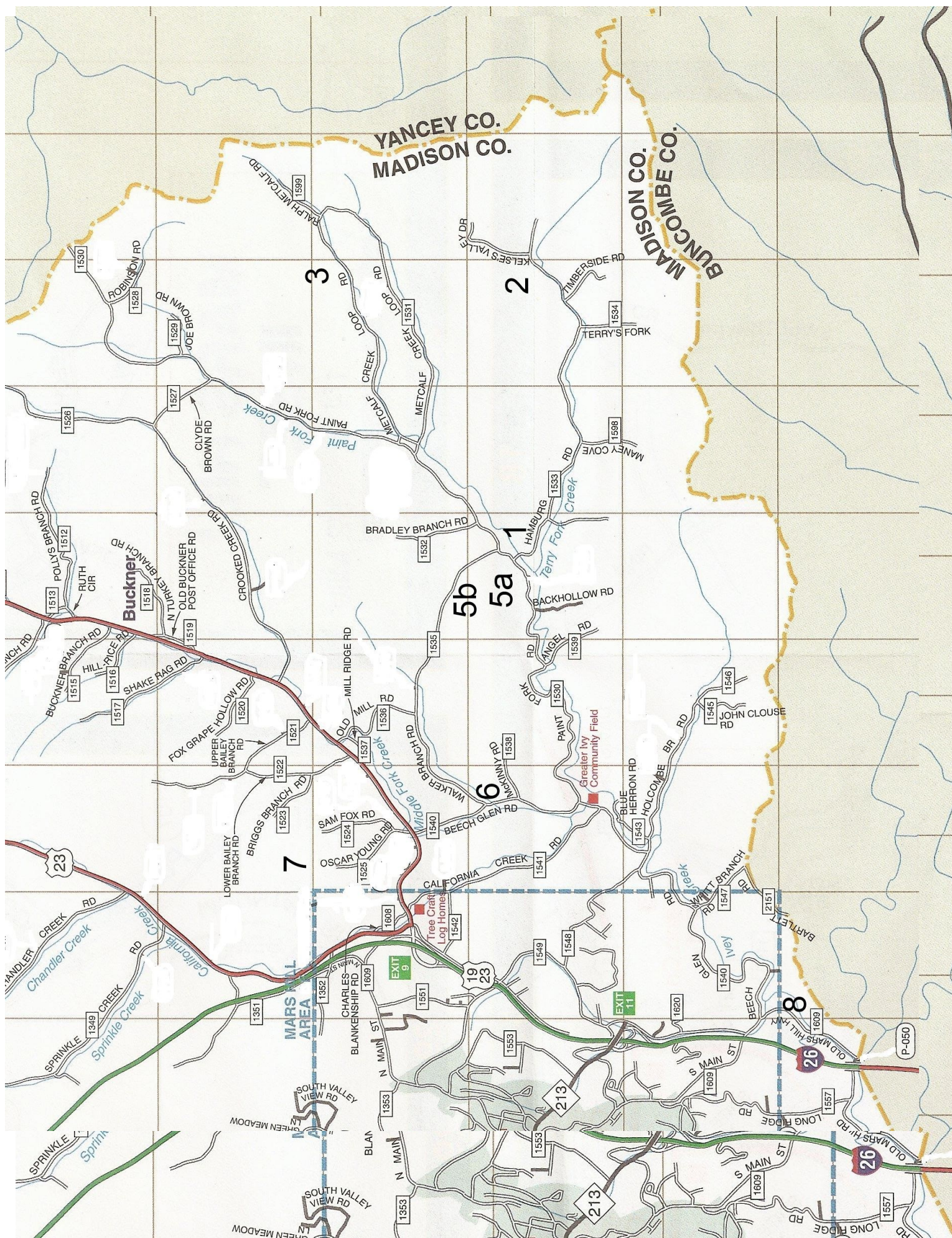


For more information on the barns of this area and on the Appalachian Barn Alliance's projects, please visit

<http://appalachianbarns.org>

## **The Beech Glen Story**

The surviving historic barns of the Beech Glen community reflect the activities and lifestyle of the latter 1800's and first half of the 1900's. No barns are known to have survived from before the Civil War. The barns of the late 1800's that survived, and are visible from a main road, are typically those of higher quality construction built by the more successful farm families. Local building technology of this era employed hand-hewn log structures supporting large hay lofts above, and were used for livestock, storage, workshops, equipment repair, and any other function to keep the farm going. The first commercial cash agriculture began in 1870; the "bright leaf" flue-cured tobacco variety, and required a specialized barn. Few of these barns have survived and none are visible from the road in this community. The next commercial crop was burley tobacco, beginning in the 1920's. The livestock barns with their voluminous lofts and lattice siding were well suited for this new air-cured tobacco, and livestock barns were retrofitted to allow the hanging of the green tobacco stalks. The 19<sup>th</sup> century barns all had split oak shingle roofs and, as that material began to deteriorate, they were reroofed with the newly available sheet metal. It was this new roof technology that allowed the barn roof to depart from the steep A-roof and progress to the gambrel roof, or "barn roof" as it's known, and later to the low-pitched-A roof found on the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century burley tobacco barns that became the standard after WWII. There was a brief period of experimentation in the early 1900's with "dark" or Bull Face tobacco. This variety was grown for chewing tobacco and is well-represented by a unique Anderson family log barn, where the tobacco was cured by smoking with smoldering green branches and culled apples added for flavor.



## **BEECH GLEN BARN TOUR DRIVING DIRECTIONS**

### **One-hour drive (plus another 15 minutes with BARN #9)**

All barn addresses are Mars Hill NC 28754

Take Exit #9 from Interstate 26 and go right at the end of the ramp onto Hwy 19.

Go 0.8 miles and turn right on Beech Glen Road and go 0.5 miles

Turn left on Walker Branch Road and go 2.4 miles to the T intersection with Paint Fork Rd

Turn right on Paint Fork for 0.1 miles

Turn left on Hamburg Rd

Continue 2.9 miles on Hamburg Rd for BARN #2 on the left (Dolph Robinson)

U turn back to Paint Fork Rd and turn right for 1.2 miles at the second Metcalf Creek Loop

Go 1.5 miles to BARN #3 on the left (Wiley Metcalf)

Follow the loop back to Paint Fork Road and turn left

Stay on Paint Fork Rd for 0.9 miles to intersection with Walker Branch Rd.

Make the right turn, *pulling off* onto the shoulder and park for BARN #5a (Anderson Livestock). Notice the white Victorian farmhouse across the road. To its left (down Paint Fork Rd) are the typical outbuildings. The larger one is the barn and to its right is an old log cabin.

Continue on Walker Branch Rd for a few hundred yards to BARN #5b in the field to the left (Anderson Bull Face)

Follow Walker Branch Rd for 2.3 miles to T intersection with Beech Glen Rd

Turn left and go 0.2 miles on Beech Glen Rd and turn left on McKinney Rd to BARN #6 (Carter) which is at that intersection facing McKinney. U turn and turn right

Travel 0.7 miles back to Hwy #19

Go through the intersection on Hwy #19 and enter Sam Fox Rd

Turn left on Oscar Young Rd and follow for 0.1 miles to BARN #7 on the left (Oscar Young)

Return to Hwy #19, turn right, enter Interstate 26 E toward Asheville and go to Exit #13 (Forks of Ivy)

At bottom of the ramp, turn left, going under the Interstate and turn left onto Old Mars Hill Highway.

Continue on Old Mars Hill Highway for 1.3 miles to BARN #8 (and gallery) on the right (Thurman Briggs). U Turn to return to Interstate.

### **Alternate scenic route to BARN #8:**

From the intersection of Main Street and Hwy 213, take South Main Street for 2.1 miles to BARN #8 on the left (Thurman Briggs). Continue south on Main Street for 1.3 miles to Forks of Ivy (Exit #13 on Interstate 26)