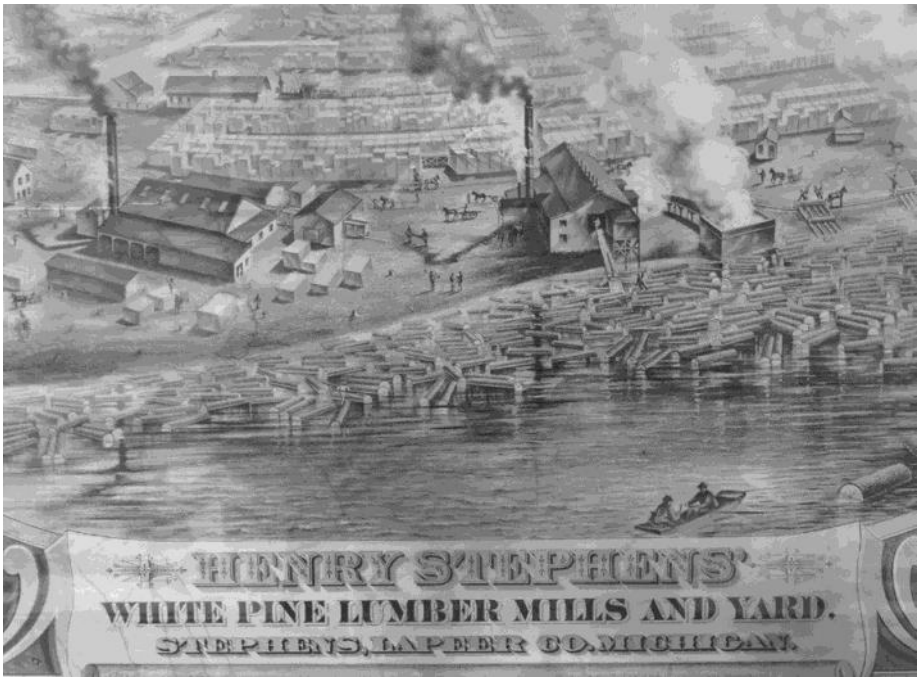
MICHIGAN BARN PRESERVATION NETWORK

NW Lapeer County (+) Barn Tour October 10 2025

Loggers in Front of a Barn - DPL - Burton Historical Collection

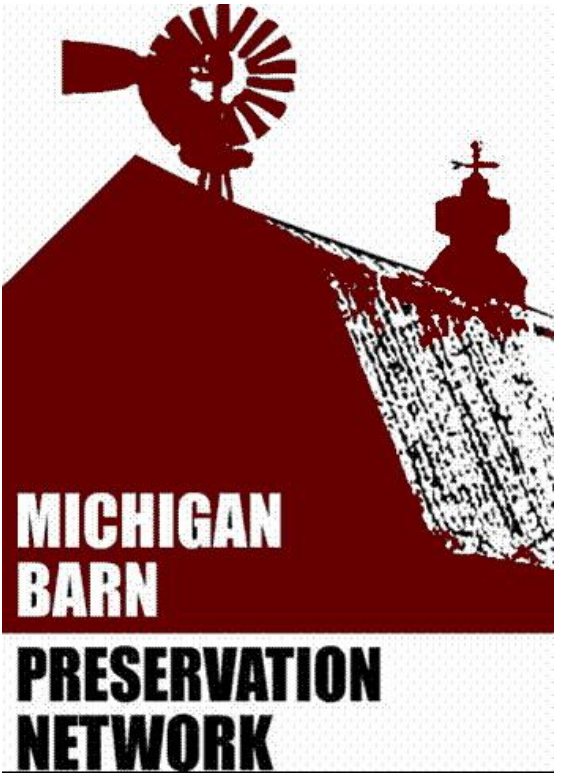
WWW.MIBARN.NET



Lumbering Brought Short Lived Towns

Bordered by Eastern Michigan University's Fish Lake Environmental Education Center on the north and Vernor and Five Lakes roads on the other sides, Fish Lake is a small and serene jewel set in the landscape on the edge of the Lapeer State Game Area. It's difficult to imagine this setting once held a railway spur and a huge lumber mill. After Henry Stephens, an Almont merchant and owner of Stephens, Currier and Townsend Lumber Company, built his lumber mill on the lake in 1870, a community known variably as Stephens, Stephens Mill, or Fish Lake came to be. The post office opened in 1872, and a year later Stephens helped bring a branch of the Detroit and Bay City Railway from Lapeer's depot on Nepessing Street to the mill. In the 13 years of operation of the mill, Stephens's 400 men cut 270 million feet of pine. After pine was depleted, Stephens turned to lumbering oak, and the mill closed in late 1883. The extravagant Stephens Hotel at Fish Lake had boasted 105 rooms, a ballroom, and a dining room that seated 200. The barn once housed 300 horses. Yet by 1886, the hotel was empty, and the railway was removed a few years later.*

*The County Press, October 28, 2018 by Krystal Moralee – Contributing Writer

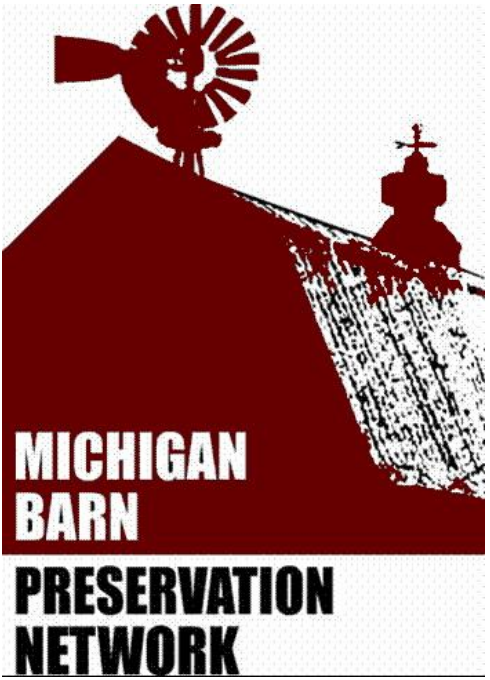


Who We Are:

Established in 1995, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network (MBPN) is an active, statewide 501©3 nonprofit organization of barn owners and enthusiasts. We believe barns are important economic and cultural resources in our communities and are symbols of our nation's rich agricultural heritage.

What we believe:

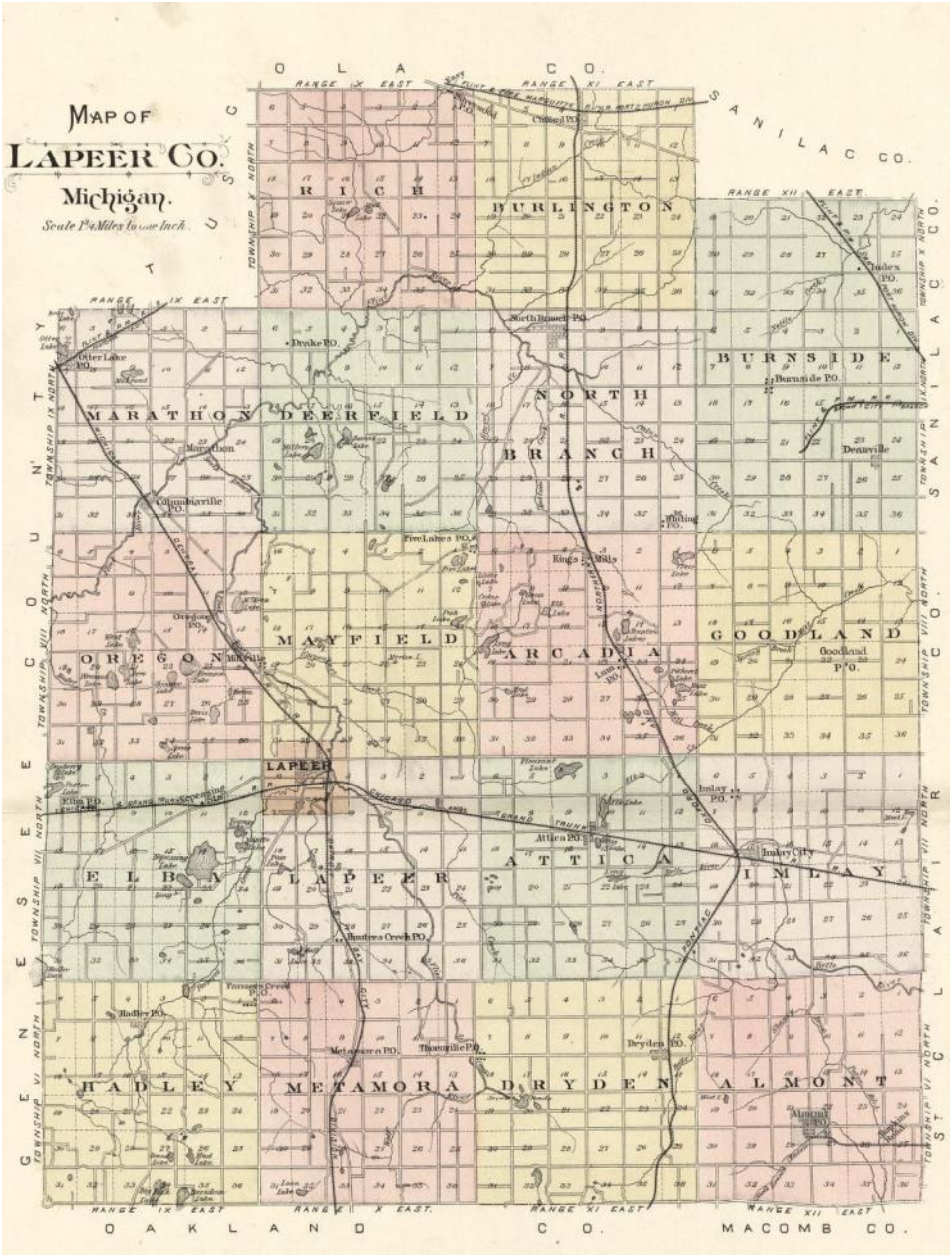
Barns symbolize positive qualities of American character: strength, honesty, endurance, security, and family stability. They remind us of our heritage and help tell the story of rural life. They serve as landmarks while fulfilling the purpose for which they were originally designed, housing agricultural products and animals. With maintenance and some adaptations, they can serve us well for many years to come.

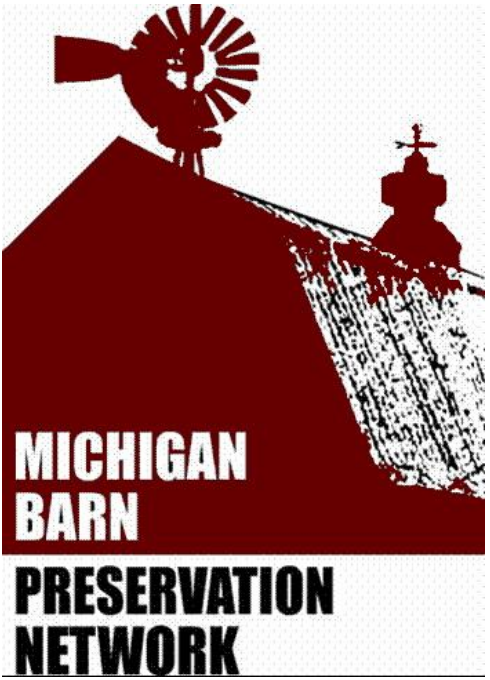


What we do:

- Annual conference
- Quarterly Newsletter
- Email blasts
- Annual barn tour
- Barn of the Year awards
- Founders awards
- Website
- Facebook page
- Barn calendar
- Workshops
- Teamwork and Timbers
- Exhibits
- Volunteer opportunities
- Membership
- Membership
- Ask one of our MBPN board members for more information

Early Michigan barn construction relied on hand-hewn timber frames, often small, 3-bay structures on grade with gable roofs. As farming needs evolved, barns grew in size and complexity, incorporating basements, shed-roof lean-tos, and increasing bay sizes. The late 1800s saw a transition to braced frame construction using sawn lumber, enabling larger, more versatile structures with improved ventilation. Plank frame barns, built from 2” thick planks nailed together, also gained popularity, along with the Shawver truss system for supporting roofs, according to the Michigan Barn Preservation Network. Gambrel roofs emerged in the early 20th century, offering more usable space for hay storage. AI Overview


MAP OF
LAPEER CO.
Michigan.
Scale 1 Inch = 1 Miles
O L A C O.
S A N I L A C CO.
RANGE IX EAST
RANGE XI EAST
RANGE XII EAST
TOWNSHIP X NORTH
TOWNSHIP IX NORTH
TOWNSHIP VIII NORTH
TOWNSHIP VII NORTH
TOWNSHIP VI NORTH
RICH
BURLINGTON
BURNSIDE
MARATHON
DEERFIELD
NORTH BRANCH
MAYFIELD
ARCADIA
GOODLAND
OREGON
LAPEER
ELBY
ATTICA
IMLAY
HADLEY
METAMORA
DRYDEN
ALMONT
Otter Lake P.O.
Dryke P.O.
North Branch P.O.
Burnside P.O.
Deanville
Marathon
Columbiaville P.O.
Whiting P.O.
Kings Mills
Oregon P.O.
Goodland P.O.
Imlay P.O.
Attica P.O.
Imlay City
Hunters Creek P.O.
Hadley P.O.
Metamora P.O.
Dryden P.O.
Almont P.O.
O A K L A N D C O.
MACOMB CO.



What You Can Do:

- Attend the annual conference
- Join the MBPN and get:
  - Quarterly Newsletter
  - Email blasts
  - Receive MBPN barn calendar
- Attend the annual barn tour
- Submit an application to the Barn of the Year (BOY) awards
- Visit our Website
- Visit our Facebook page
- Join a workshop
- Volunteer opportunities
  - Teamwork & Timbers program
  - Lots of other opportunities;
  - **Ask us!**

MBPN 2025 Lapeer County Barn tour headquarters at Columbiaville Historical Society

<u>Columbiaville Mill's in 1898</u>
Stave Mill
Flour Mill
Planing Mill
Cider Mill
Woolen Mill

MICHIGAN REGISTERED HISTORIC SITE

THE WILLIAM PETER MANSION

This structure, completed in 1896, was the home of William Peter (1824-1899). Peter, a prominent Columbiaville businessman, was a rags-to-riches character. Around 1847 he came to the area from Germany via New York State, a penniless immigrant. Immediately he began working in a local sawmill. He invested his earnings in large tracts of land and platted the village of Columbiaville in 1871. From 1879 to 1899, Peter developed the community. He built a gristmill, a woolen mill, houses for his workmen, a school, a church and several commercial buildings. Most of Columbiaville was owned and dominated by him. His wife, Roxanna, planned this Italianate residence, which still displays its original hardwood floors and decorative woodwork in oak, mahogany, walnut, cherry and maple.

MICHIGAN REGISTERED HISTORIC SITE

COLUMBIAVILLE DEPOT

In the nineteenth century, railroads provided the prime transportation link between small villages and the rest of the country. The first Columbiaville depot was built near this site in 1872. In 1893 William Peter (1824-1899) replaced that structure with this small Romanesque inspired depot with its rounded-arch, beveled-glass windows. Peter, Columbiaville's dominant merchant and a millionaire lumber baron, built the new depot in an effort to spur the development of the village and assure the continued growth of his many businesses. By prior agreement, he gave the building to the Detroit-Bay City Railroad Company in exchange for having a line run through the community. The property was deeded to the company for one dollar in 1893. It served as a train station until 1964. The depot now houses the Columbiaville Rotary Club and a public library.

COMMON MIDWESTERN BARN TYPES

Indiana Barn Types

SIDE DRIVE GROUND BARN OR "YANKEE" BARN

END DRIVE GROUND BARN OR "TRANSVERSE" BARN

RAISED OR "BANK" BARN

FORE BAY BANK BARN PENNSYLVANIA BARN

FORE BAY BANK BARN SWEITZER BARN

FORE BAY BANK BARN DOUBLE OVERHANG

Indiana Barn "Shed" Types

TRANSVERSE BARN WITH SIDE SHED

YANKEE BARN WITH GABLE END SHED

TRANSVERSE BARN WITH "FLANKING" SHEDS

YANKEE BARN WITH "T" OR STRAW SHED

FORE BAY BANK BARN WITH "OUTSHOT" SHEDS

"RAISED" OR BANK BARN WITH "T" STRAW SHED

COMMON MIDWESTERN GROUND PLANS & ROOF TYPES

"L"

ROUND

GABLE

HALF MONITOR

MONITOR

SHED

POLYGON

SQUARE

GAMBREL

HIP

OGEE

RECTANGLE

"T"

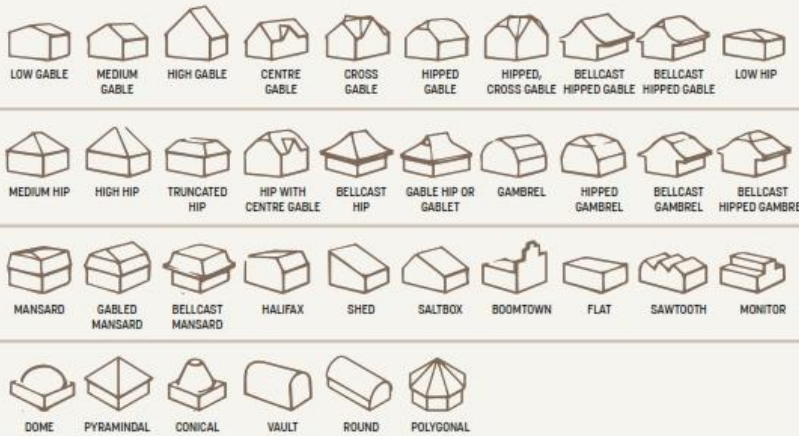
GOTHIC

MANSARD

ROUND

TYPICAL FOUNDATION CONFIGURATIONS

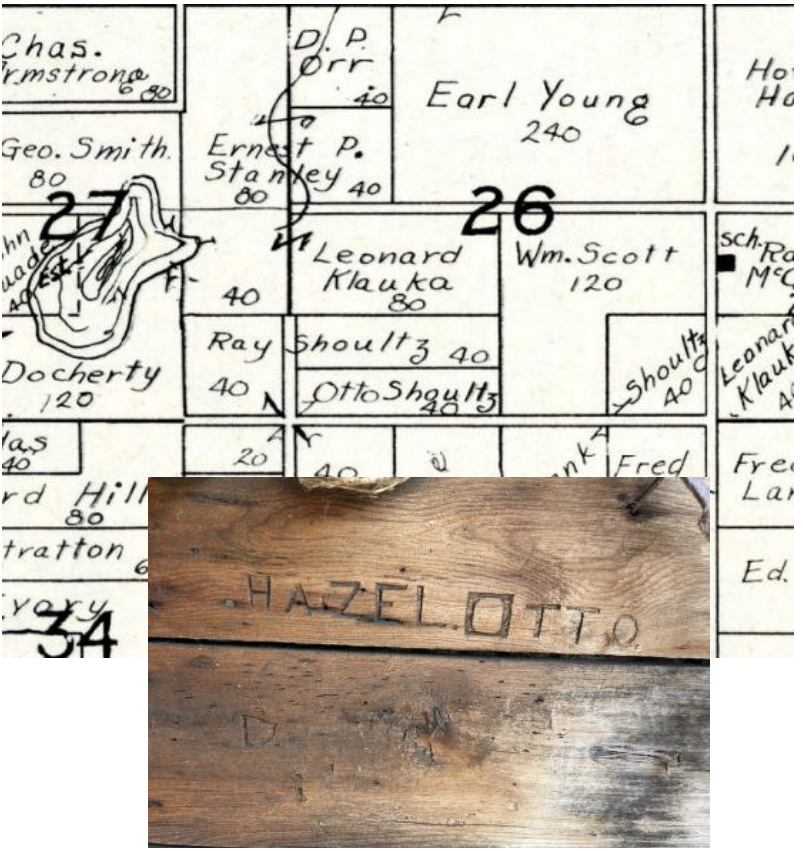
TYPICAL AMERICAN BARN ROOF STYLES



Hay carriers and tracks
Forks, slings, and mechanical hay carriers that moved along a track mounted inside the roof. They began to be developed in the mid-1800s and evolved over time.

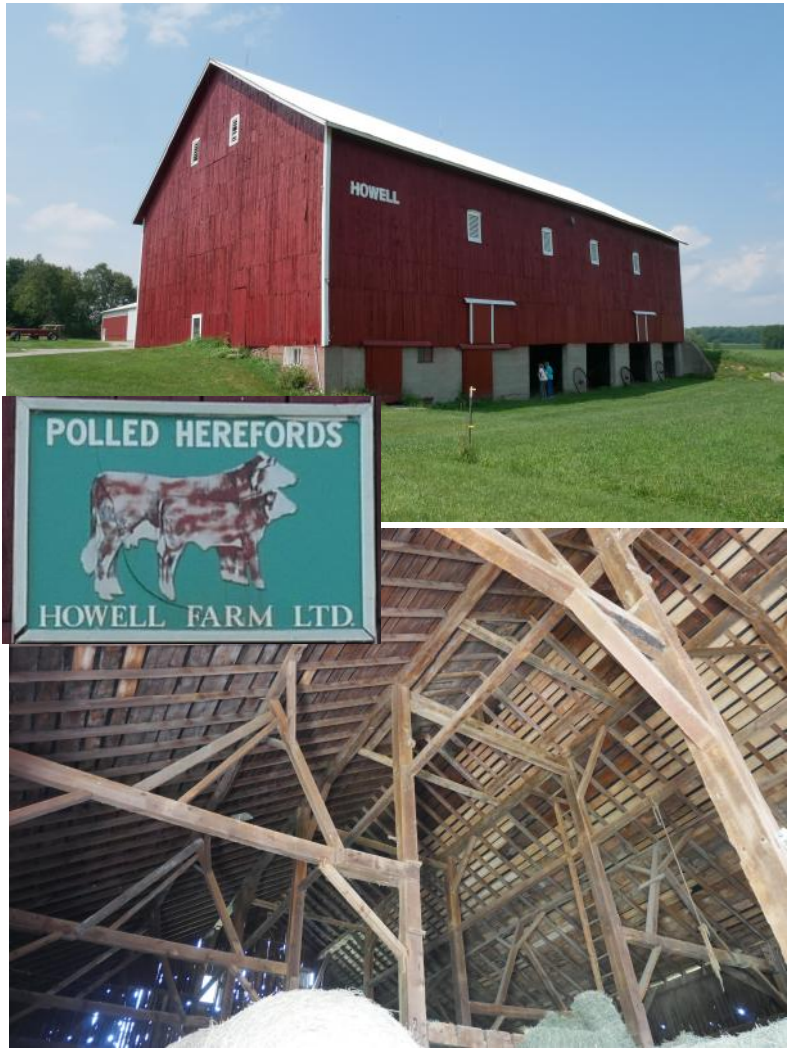
Hay press
In the mid-1800s, mule/horse-powered mechanical means of pressing hay into large bales began to be built into barns. These barns are hay press barns. By the later 1800s portable hay presses were manufactured and many hay presses were removed from barns.

Sugar Shack Farm
Bank barn; gambrel roof barn, stone foundation, and
Timber frame construction.



Hazel & Otto Shoultz between 1930-1940 plat

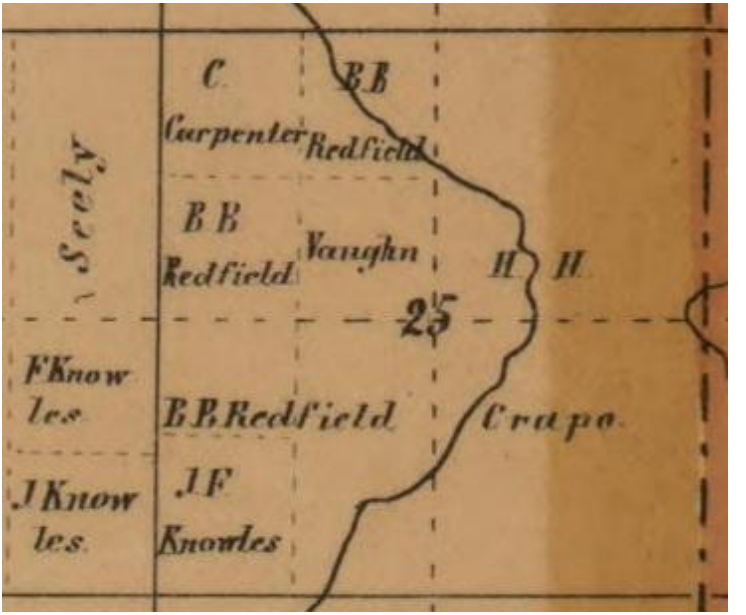
Sugar Shack
Maple syrup production



Howell's 1878 Tractor Barn
Bank Barn; gable roof, replaced foundation,
Timber frame construction.

Gary Howell wrote a informative article for the MBPN. See the white paper on our website. Www.mibarn.net/resources

County Press quote:
The 96-by-54 English bank barn was built in 1878 by Benjamin Redfield, who had purchased the property in 1854 and lumbered it off. The lumbering is likely what saved the Redfield's property—including the massive barn built from local white pine—from the Great Fire of 1881.



Mystical Farm by Melissa.
Bank barn, arched roof, stone foundation, timber frame construction.

Lunch event
At Melissa's
Farm

Arched roof barn tour. Milk the goats, bees and honey demonstration. Meet Melissa's horses. Plus Lunch!

Johnson's Shingle Saw Mill noted on map as SSM

Johnson Mill/Elm Creek

If you stand at the intersections of Laur and Johnson Mill roads, it's hard to imagine a settlement where there is now nothing more than a farm and fields. But in 1874, much of Deerfield Township was still owned by logging companies and the only organized settlement was Elm Creek, later called Johnson Mill, possibly after Alex Johnson or Johnston, who had a shingle mill here.

There were shingle and sawmills, a school and a post office here among the farms and homes. The post office operated from 1873 to 1875 and reopened around 1882 for a short time. The location of the school moved and possibly changed in structure from shanty to frame style. The school burned after being struck by lightning in August of 1959.

Krystal Moralee – Contributing Writer—County Press

Fish Lake lumber mill & Otter Lake loggers

Opperman Farm—Quilt Barn
Grade barn; arch roof built in 1914.
Three bay timber frame construction.

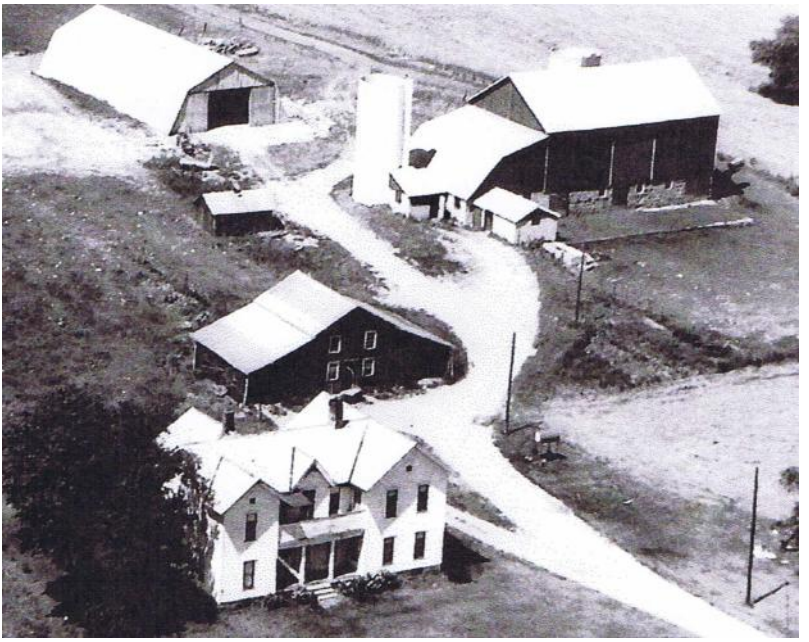
Opperman Farm

Cowbells & Horsetails LLC

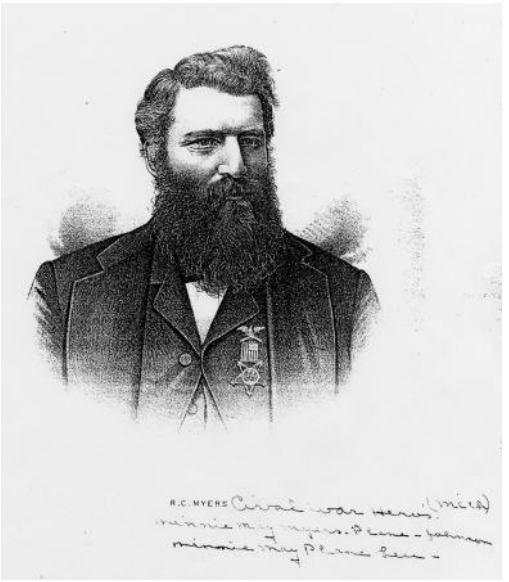
Certified Organic Since 2016

Fostoria Michigan

Bank barn;
Gable roof, timber frame construction, replaced foundation.
Working farm.



1954



R.C. MYERS

Ranson Meyers
1842—1897
Original owner
Civil War
veteran

Historical barn / farmstead pictures from Columbiaville Historical Society

Animals you will meet on the tour!

A BARN'S
STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS

BENT
the combination of posts, tie beam, rafters and other members that establishes the shape of the building.

BAY
the area between the bents, spaced as needed or engineered. Often placed 8' to 20' on center.

HAMMER BEAM TRUSS
a more ornate truss that can have either curved or straight timber members.

HAND HEWN
cut using a combination of a broad axe and adze.

HAY MOW
a space inside a barn to hold hay

HOUSED JOINTS
timbers held in place by mortise and tenon and secured in a housing to prevent rotation.

KING POST
a vertical post that supports the center of a roof.

KING POST TRUSS
often used when a clear span is desired. The timber member that connects at the peak of the building is the King Post. The other members of the truss are joined into the King Post.

KNEE BRACE
typically set into the frame at an angle to the posts and plates to strengthen it and hold it from racking.

LOFT JOIST
structural members that support loft flooring and are commonly joined to the frame at the loft level.

MORTISE
the recessed cut in the timber that receives the tenon to connect the joints. A trunnel is then used to secure the joint.

PLANED TIMBER
each side is smooth and even.

POST
vertical timber that forms a wall or an interior structural member.

PRINCIPLE RAFTER
the primary roof structure that forms the roof pitch and supports the lesser structural roof members, such as purlins.

PURLIN
also called a sub-rafter, a lesser member connected to and supported by the principle rafters. The roof sheathing is commonly attached to the purlins.

QUEEN POST
a vertical post, placed off-center to support the roof structure.

QUEEN POST TRUSS
the combination of posts, tie beam, rafters and other members that provides a clear span area such as a drive through area of a barn.

SILL
the structural member that sits on the foundation and supports the floor framing.

SCISSOR TRUSS
allows various clear spans through diagonal bracing crossing the rafter members, attaching to the top of the rafters.

STRUT
roof member that sits on the tie beam and gives additional support to the principle rafter, canted purlin, principle purlin or other roof bearing member.

TENON
the protrusion on the timber, made for insertion into the mortise.

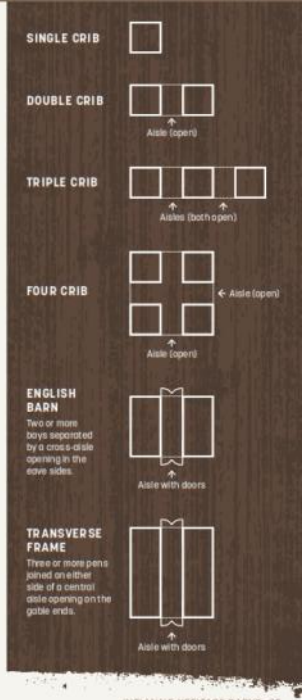
TRUNNEL
aka, tree nail, the peg that secures the tenon into a mortise.

TIE BEAM
a horizontal timber that spans the width of a structure and ties the two opposing walls together

WIND BRACE
similar to a knee brace although typically placed in the roof frame to resist racking and movement due to wind pressure on the building.

[https://www.houseandbarn.com/timber-framing-101/]

BARN EVOLUTION



Assembly Diagram of the
Teamwork and Timber Barn

Vegetation circa 1800 of Lapeer County, Michigan

An Interpretation of the General Land Office Surveys

By P. J. Comer and D. A. Albert
Michigan Natural Features Inventory
1997

SOURCE: Comer, P.J., D.A. Albert, H.A. Wells, B.L. Hart, J.B. Raab, D.L. Price, D.M. Kashian, R.A. Corner, D.W. Schuen (Map Interpretation); M.S. Austin, T.R. Leibfried, K.M. Korroch, L. Prange-Gregory, J.G. Sotzley, C.J. DeLain, L.J. Scrimger (Digital Map Production). 1995. Michigan's Presettlement Vegetation, as Interpreted from the General Land Office Surveys 1816-1856. Michigan Natural Features Inventory, Lansing, MI. Digital Map.

Michigan DNR
Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Division

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Michigan Natural Features Inventory

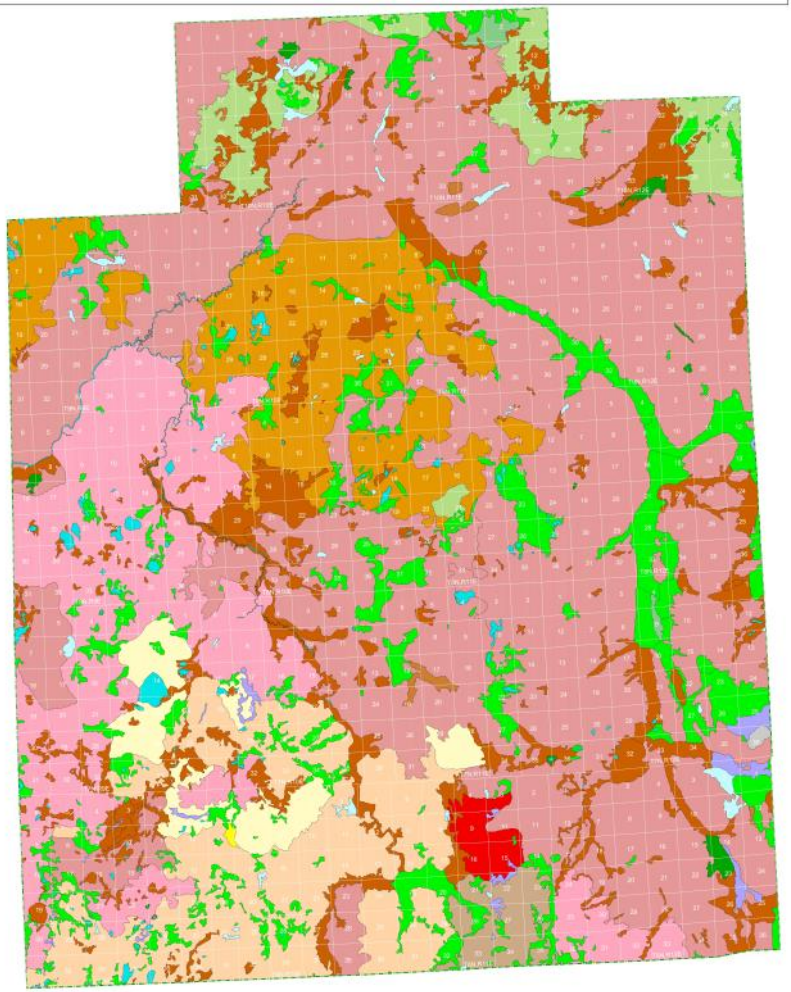
Scale 1:85,000

Map Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic

Legend

- ✓ ASPEN-BIRCH FOREST
- ✓ BEECH-SUGAR MAPLE FOREST
- ✓ BEECH-SUGAR MAPLE-HEMLOCK FOREST
- ✓ BLACK ASH SWAMP
- ✓ BLACK OAK BARREN
- ✓ CEDAR SWAMP
- ✓ GRASSLAND
- ✓ HEMLOCK-WHITE PINE FOREST
- HEMLOCK-YELLOW BIRCH FOREST
- JACK PINE-RED PINE FOREST
- ✓ LAKE/RIVER
- ✓ MIXED CONIFER SWAMP
- ✓ MIXED HARDWOOD SWAMP
- MIXED OAK FOREST
- ✓ MIXED OAK SAVANNA
- MIXED PINE-OAK FOREST
- ✓ MUSKEG/BOG
- ✓ OAK-HICKORY FOREST
- ✓ OAK-PINE BARREN
- PINE BARREN
- SAND DUNE
- ✓ SHRUB SWAMP/EMERGENT MARSH
- SPRUCE-FIR-CEDAR FOREST
- ✓ WET PRAIRIE
- ✓ WHITE PINE-MIXED HARDWOOD FOREST
- WHITE PINE-RED PINE FOREST
- WHITE PINE-WHITE OAK FOREST

✓ = LAND COVER TYPE PRESENT ON THIS MAP



Thanks:

- To the barn owners on this tour
- Columbiaville Historical Society for the 2025 Barn Tour headquarters
- Www.Facebook.com/ColumbiavilleHistoricalSociety
- Indiana Barn Foundation (info inserts)
- Stephanie White (T&T assembly drawing)
- County Press
- Lunch provided by: Ben's Supercenter
- Bison burgers by Jimmy Z's Bison Ranch
- Detroit Public Library Burton Collection
- Library of Congress Digital Collection
- Brochure Design by Tammis Donaldson
- Printing by ARC Documents

Courtesy rules:

- Please no smoking
- Please leave no trash behind
- Photography approved

Lapeer County Barn Tour Committee:

- Laurie Sisco
- Tammis Donaldson
- Melissa Jaskiewicz

MICHIGAN BARN PRESERVATION NETWORK

https://mibarn.net
https://www.facebook.com/mibarn
https://www.instagram.com/mibarnpreservation/

The Questions We're Most Often Asked…

Q. Is there any funding for barn restoration?

The Michigan Barn Preservation Network keeps tabs on funding opportunities in the form of grants, tax credits and low-interest loans. Currently there are no governmental grants in Michigan to help private owners of barns with restoration or repair of their personal property. Work on barns which are owned by municipalities, nonprofit organizations or other public entities may be eligible for consideration for grants and awards through governmental and foundation programs. Listing on the National or State Register of Historic Places is a requirement for most grants.

Maintenance is one of the first steps to preserve your barn

Q. How can I find someone to fix my barn?
There are people all across Michigan who do repair work on old barns. Some do historically accurate timber frame work. Some do structural reinforcement by using cables. Some specialize in installing steel roofing and siding. Many will repair anything from foundation to cupola.
Our website provides a Contractor's List as a place for barn owners to start looking for help.

Q. Why are barns red?
MBPN Board Member Keith Anderson offers several practical and cost-effective reasons why red became the dominant color of early barns. Article on our website.

Q. Have questions about rehabilitating or repairing your barn?
MBPN has a committee of experts to answer your inquiries. Contact the chairperson, Steve Stier.

MICHIGAN BARN PRESERVATION NETWORK

Mission:

Promoting Appreciation, Preservation and Rehabilitation of Michigan Barns, Farmsteads and Rural Communities since 1995.