



The Old BARN POST

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Annual FOB Picnic Explores Darke County

What a beautiful day Friends of Ohio Barns had for its annual picnic in Darke County. A gathering of over 30 people enjoyed the picnic area along Bear's Mill trace. First on the agenda was visiting and catching up with old friends and meeting new ones. We had a hamburger feast (of burgers specially molded in the form of the state of Ohio!) and brats expertly grilled by our VP and grill master Dan Troth. The tables were laden with a delightful selection of everything from salads to desserts. The fantastic sides provided by our members, made for a terrific noon meal...thanks to all you cooks!

After a relaxing lunch it was off to a grand tour of the mill and its workings. Lois Lane, docent from Friends of Bear's Mill, and Terry Clark, the owner, were our tour hosts. From them we learned that Bear's Mill, built in 1847, is the longest continuously running grist mill in Ohio. The mill is powered by water that runs through two turbines, manufactured in Tiffin, Ohio, under the mill.

Its gears, belts, and turbines began to turn in the year 1850, grinding gifts from nature into sustenance for man. The grain is ground by two sets of buhr stones shipped over from France in 1846 at a price of \$6,000 per set. That translates to about a total of \$300,000 in today's market. However, the deposit of fine buhr stone in France has long since been depleted. The grain is hoisted to the fourth floor by a rope and pulley system. It is poured through a trap door in the floor and travels up and down the four stories of the mill seven times, while it is cleaned, ground, and bagged, before the final product is finished.

The mill structure consists of a hickory frame, black walnut siding and hand blown glass in the six over six windows. All of the posts in the mill are chamfered. This huge four-story timber-frame structure was constructed with natural resources harvested within a two mile radius of the mill site.

Please See PICNIC, Page 2



Above: Lois Lane, docent at Bears Mill, explains operations and history of the landmark site in Darke County.



Left: Mr. Vice President, Dan Troth, keeping fans at bay as he performs duties as grill master and flips Ohio shaped burgers at annual FOB picnic.

Random Thoughts

Having just returned from my second meeting in a week with a potential workshop “client”, I am becoming more excited for the future of some Ohio Barns.

As I stated in the member meeting at our Athens County Barn Conference, FOB is venturing into a new direction. We are looking to put together a workshop, maybe multi day in nature, whereby we can restore and adaptively re-use an Ohio Barn. Both potential projects will give Ohioans the opportunity to tour a restored bit of Ohio history. It will hopefully give future generations the same chance at viewing living history, and maybe, just maybe, it will cause some other Ohioan to take up the cause of being an Ohio Barn Steward. Stay tuned...

In a similar vein, our beloved VP, Dan Troth is busy preserving some history of his own in his backyard! Dan has taken on the risky venture of saving an 1830's era hewn barn and timber framed farmhouse. As I write this Dan is busy with crews dismantling, documenting, and searching for a new home for these awesome structures. Let's hope his vision and perseverance will pay off!

Other folks around the state are doing similar things as stewards of Ohio Barns, each in their own way. It is gratifying to hear their stories and see the fruits of their labor. If you know of folks in your neck of the woods engaging in random acts of “barn kindness” let us know. We want to continue our efforts to support barn stewards in their endeavors. We want to promote their deeds on our web page and on our Facebook site. They deserve recognition for their efforts.

Our fall is rapidly filling up with preparation for next spring's conference in Knox County. Check out our webpage and Facebook page for updates!

Oh, and have a great fall!!

Respectfully submitted,
— Ric Beck

Upcoming Events

APRIL 25-26, 2014

Friends of Ohio Barns

Annual Conference XV • Knox, County

“In no other field of activity can the whole principle of Reverence for Life, which may indeed constitute the very basis of the preservation of our civilization, be so thoroughly, easily, and profoundly understood and exercised as in the field of agriculture, for it is the only profession in which man deals constantly with all the laws of the universe and life. A productive agriculture of high quality is the very foundation of our health, our vigor, even of our intelligence.”

— Louis Bromfield, in *From My Experience* (1955)

PICNIC, Continued from Page 1

The Mill is packed with artifacts of the milling days gone by, and Lois did a wonderful job of pointing them out as well as their uses. The interesting history of Bear's Mill continues into the new millennium as the mill still functions to stone-grind cornmeal, whole wheat flour, and rye flour for new people in a new age, in traditional Old World style. Everyone left the mill with samples of cookies and corn meal.

Then Terry and Julie welcomed us to their barn home and pointed out the various architectural elements salvaged from other historic buildings from around the county that were incorporated into their barn home. Some said this was the highlight of the tour.

To top off the day we drove around the corner to the Lavy round barn. Kenton and Cindy Lavy described how they dismantled, moved and rebuilt this beautiful round barn from Indiana to their property. To the amazement of all it was learned they had also moved an 1850's barn from the front of the property to the rear of the house and adapted it so it would be more productive in their farming operation. Kenton and Cindy are true barn lovers...and avid collectors...of some pretty unique things. They have rescued 5 barns over the years and rebuilt them at their place.

All in all, it was a wonderful, fun-filled day shared by all. Friends of Ohio Barns thanks the Clarks and the Lavys for opening their home, mill, and barns for us to see and learn about these historical structures.

Thanks to Pam Gray for organizing the picnic, to Terry, Julie, Kent, Cindy, and Lois for educating us, and of course to Dan...where would we be without Dan?!!

— Compilation of two articles
reporting on the Darke County Picnic
submitted by Ric Beck, FOB President and
Pamela Whitney Gray, The Barn Consultant

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Photos by Pamela Whitney Gray

Images on this page are a sample of some of the shapes and sizes of things to come when one signs up for the 2014 Ohio Barn Tour in Knox County.

Knox County to host the 2014 FOB Conference and Barn Tour

Mount Vernon will be the headquarters of Friends of Ohio Barns 15th annual Barn Conference and Tour, April 24th - 26th, 2014. The conference will explore adaptive reuse of barns as a viable way to save historic barns.

Knox County is the Heart of It ALL. Within its borders lies the geographical center of Ohio and the colonial city of Mount Vernon, the county seat. In Knox County one can find brick streets, historic homes, recreational trails, camping, elegant bed and breakfast inns, two stunning college campuses, and notable museums, not to mention the flora and fauna in the rolling hills and fields.

Knox County has always been and continues to be an agricultural community. Drive any rural road and one will find numerous examples of farm life and the age old icons of an agrarian society. The Barn, the behemoth that has stood out back of the farmhouse for well over a hundred years, built with skill, adapted out of necessity,

and the center of family life and survival.

Thursday will feature an on-site afternoon workshop by the Junior Barn Detectives on moving and restoring a barn for adaptive reuse. On Friday the bus tour will include several unique barns and lunch along the way. We will take you on a trip back in time and experience the heritage of Knox County at the Knox County Agricultural Museum. It began its historic collection in 1984. Devoted almost exclusively to farm and home lifestyles of the 1800s and early 1900s, the Museum houses more than 3,000 items, each depicting how our forefathers lived and worked.

Saturday is the annual conference with a slate of outstanding speakers, vendors, and displays. Watch for further details as they develop at www.friendsofohiobarns.org. Come a day or two early or stay after and experience Knox County, the Heart of It All.

— Pamela Whitney Gray
The Barn Consultant



Rock Mill – Back From the Brink

Perched like a shipwreck on the brink of a steep Blackhand sandstone cliff it appeared poised to plunge into the gorge at the Upper Falls of the Great Hocking. Looking upon the ruins of Rock Mill, it was feared that the aged gristmill would tumble into the deep ravine or that little would be left if a hard windstorm should ever strike the historic building from the proper angle. That was the anxiety expressed in the Lancaster Eagle Gazette in March of 1928. Over a hundred years old and 100 feet tall from the base of the bluff to the top of the roof, it was said to be the one of the oldest mills in the state at that time. By 1999 and abandoned almost a century, the future of the 175 year old grain processing facility looked very grim.

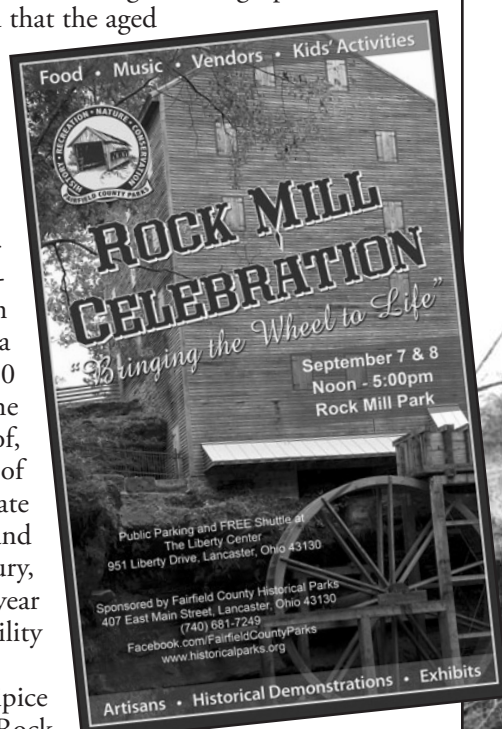
Balanced on the precipice 45 feet above the stream, Rock Mill required a mill race to be hacked through solid rock with pick and chisel for a run of 30 feet. This hand hewn chasm in the rock measures 18 feet in depth and three feet wide, almost completely segregating a block of rock 100 feet square above the waterfall.

The mill race directed the flowing water to an overshot waterwheel with a diameter of 26 feet, as large a waterwheel as was ever employed at a gristmill in America. The water power was transferred from this wheel through wooden gears and belts to a pair of millstones. The power shaft was located inside the lowest level of the building. In 1898 the old fashioned overshot waterwheel was removed and a modern turbine was substituted.

A local mill site since 1799, Rock Mill functioned as a gristmill and a flourmill in this particular building from 1824 to 1905. The mill is 5 ½ stories, two below the crest of the bluff and three and a half above. The mill is of frame construction made of white oak. A nearby covered bridge spans the gorge above the Upper Falls of the Hocking and a historic farmstead adjoins the site.

The mill had changed hands many times over the years. The lap siding was seriously deteriorated with many sections gone by the late 1980's. Rock Mill stood abandoned for nearly the entire 20th century.

A credit to the skilled craftsmen who built Rock Mill, not only did it continue to survive against all odds on the edge of the abyss, it has now been renovated by the people of Fairfield County through their support of the Fairfield County Historic Parks District. The mill has been resided, reroofed and restored at a high level of quality. Rock Mill is now a credit to modern



Poster advertising the recent rededication celebration of the 26 foot diameter waterwheel at Rock Mill



Rock Mill, abandoned for a century, holds on against the odds atop the cliff over the Upper Falls of the Great Hocking River.

craftsmen, as well, who worked to breathe new life into this important piece of Ohio and American heritage. The reinstatement of a twenty six foot diameter waterwheel is the latest improvement in this ongoing effort to preserve this local treasure.

Reflecting upon the restored Rock Mill one is reminded of the comment by John Ruskin, a leading art critic and thinker during the Victorian Era, when Rock Mill was built. He said "When we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight or present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for...and that men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them: "See! This our Fathers did for us!"

Congratulations and thank you to the people of Fairfield County who tax themselves to protect their contributions to Ohio's great heritage resources. We are all the beneficiaries of that foresight.

—T. O'Grady

FOB Vice Pres Diverts Farmstead Buildings From Rubble Heap

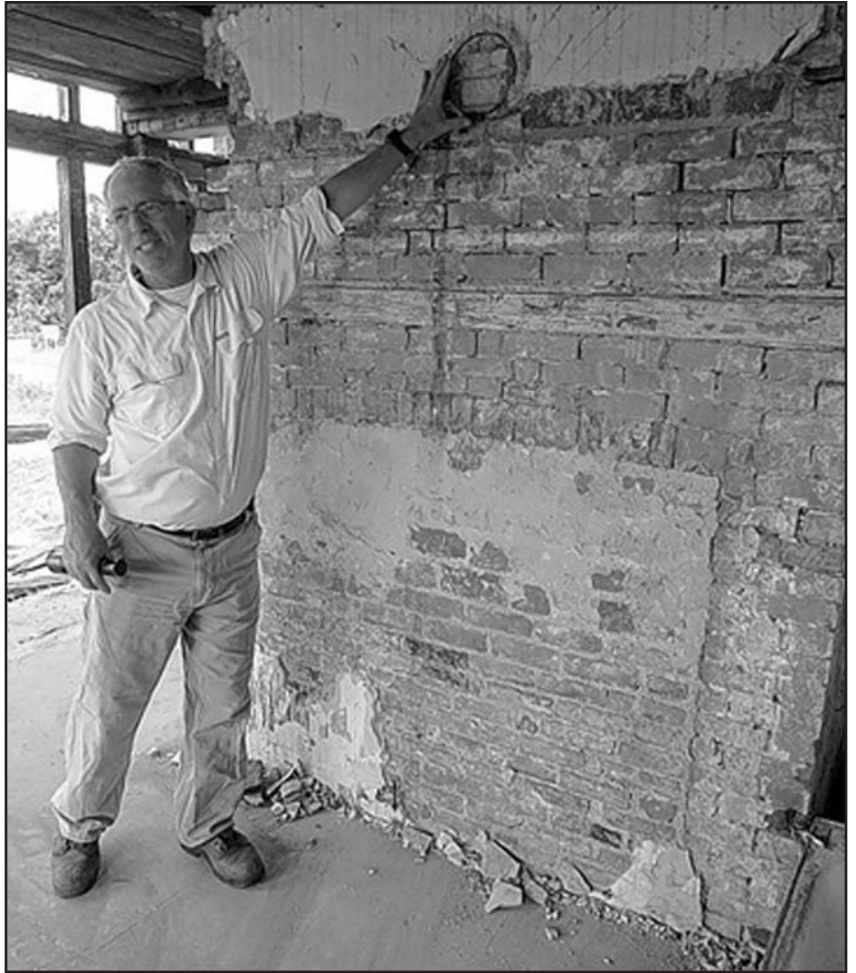
The barn and house and the fields and woodlots of the farmstead along the river, across from the church and graveyard and the overhead truss bridge crossing the Olentangy River are part of what has defined this intersection of Ohio and a sense of place for the people who have lived in the region for most of the last century. Across the road from the site of the first Ohio Barn Conference in Liberty Township in Delaware County a piece of Americana and an Ohio story will be written into a new chapter as the farm is disassembled and the fields begin to sprout new homes and driveways and basketball hoops.

Such are the dynamics of modern America with the advance of urban sprawl as it remakes the landscape and culture in its path. The old Cellar farm has been tied to the land and the local farming economy for nearly two centuries. It will be unrecognizable as a part of Ohio's cultural heritage that was hewn from the native resources of that place once it takes shape as another of the myriad wavy road subdivisions spreading across Ohio. The productive farmlands will be replaced with the maze of cul de sacs and modern homes filled with electronic gadgets that tend to keep neighbors from knowing each other.

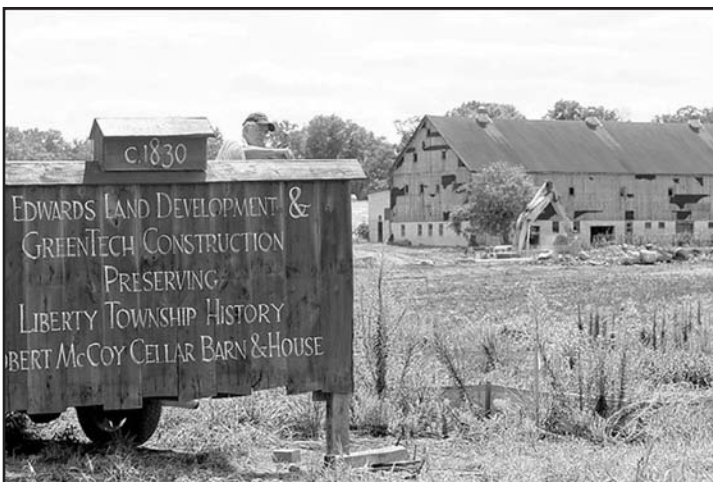
The good news in all of this change is that Friends of Ohio Barns V. P., Dan Troth, has jumped in like a caped superhero to rescue the barn and homestead. Or, as Jim Weiker, of the Columbus Dispatch put it "As vice president of Friends of Ohio Barns, Troth sniffs out troubled barns the way Lassie smelled danger."

Under significant time restraints he is making every effort to disassemble and mark all of the timbers in the old barn and the house, even numbering each of the bricks being recovered from the massive chimney.

Please See FARMSTEAD, Page 7



Mr. Vice President explaining how to prevent St. Nick from entering your home by bricking up openings in your chimney – or possibly discussing some pertinent detail about the process of recovering the bricks from this 175 year old chimney in the Cellar homestead.



Mr. Vice President, Dan Troth puts finishing touches on education and awareness sign to inform passing motorists of preservation project underway adjacent to the intersection.



Hand hewn framing on the interior of the Cellar barn, built circa 1830.



Left: The Treaty of Greenville 1795, painted by Howard Chandler Christy of Morgan County, hangs in the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus. The peace accord was marked by several Native American leaders following the defeat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers along the Maumee River in 1794.

Below: All land south and east of The Greenville Treaty Line was ceded by native tribes to the new American government.

Greenville and Darke County:

Home to More Than an FOB Picnic

Ohio has contributed much toward national and world history. It is not surprising that FOB events and activities occur in places steeped in history. The annual FOB picnic, hosted in seemingly remote Darke County, not far from Greenville, gave attendees an opportunity to visit historic farms and the noted Bear's Mill while being surrounded by a wealth of cultural history.

Greenville, Ohio is home to the famous Treaty of Greenville. Here, in 1795, Little Turtle, Blue Jacket, Tarhe, Black Hoop, Leatherlips, and others agreed to relinquish claim to two thirds of the Ohio Country following the Battle of Fallen Timbers which occurred the previous year. General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, Lieutenant William Henry Harrison, Merriweather Lewis and William Clark of later Lewis and Clark fame were all on hand to smoke the calumet and establish the Greenville Treaty Line which extended from near the Ohio-Indiana border to the Tuscarawas River Valley in eastern Ohio and thence northward to Lake Erie at the mouth of the Cuyahoga. Only Tecumseh and his followers withheld their support of that agreement.

Darke County was home to 'Little Sure Shot,' the name bestowed upon Phoebe Ann Snow by Chief Sitting Bull. Born in 1860 in a log hut some 20 miles northeast of Greenville and better known as An-

nie Oakley, the famed American sharpshooter travelled the world with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. She impressed crowds as she repeatedly split a playing card, edge-on, and peppered it with holes before it could touch the ground using a .22 caliber rifle at 90 feet.

Lieutenant Commander Zachary Landsdowne was born in Greenville in 1888. Graduating from the United States Naval Academy he contributed to the development of the Navy's first lighter-than-air craft. He later commanded the USS Shenandoah, the first rigid airship to complete a flight across North America. That famous dirigible is said to have broken up in a line storm over southeastern Ohio in September of 1925. While 29 crew members survived, 14 others, including Landsdowne were killed when the airship fell on three widely spaced farms in Noble County.

Lowell Thomas, an American writer, broadcaster, and traveler, best known as the man who made Lawrence of Arabia famous, was born in Woodington, Ohio, about 6 miles northwest of Greenville.

The Lohmann Brothers emigrated from Germany about 1890, settled in Greenville and began manufacturing

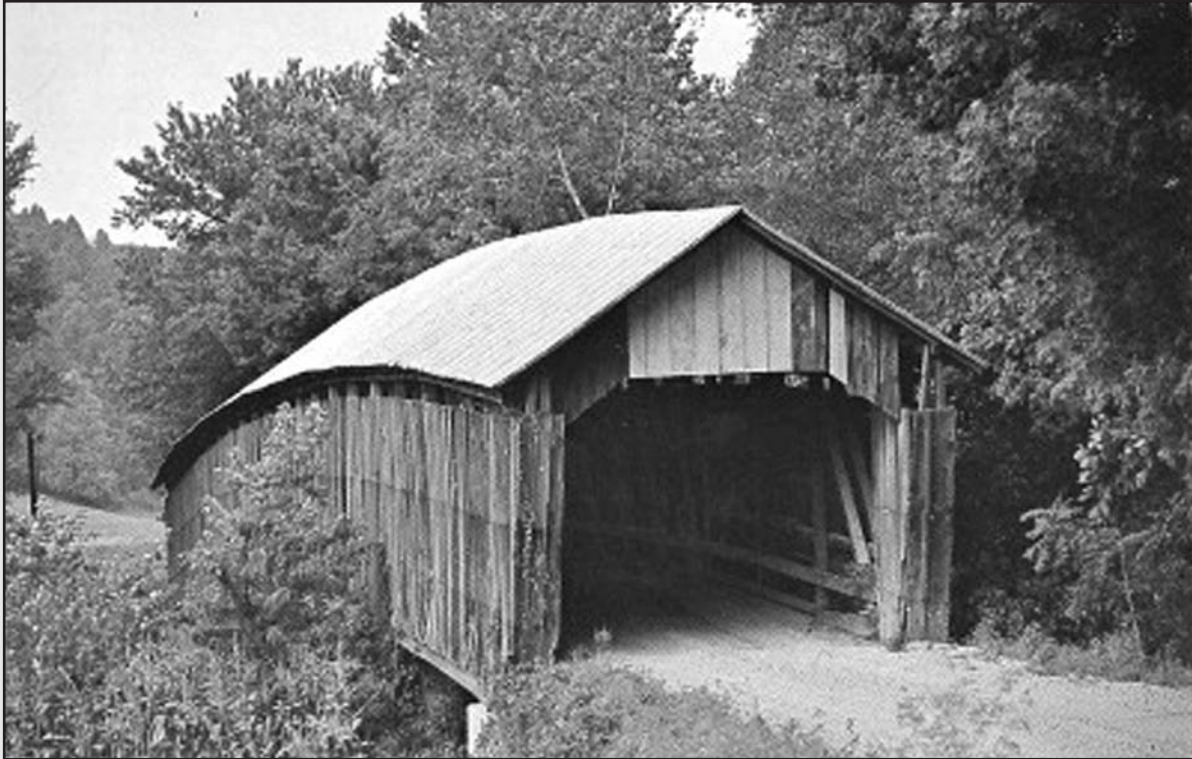


THE GREENVILLE TREATY LINE

telescopes. One of the scopes was used by Ohio comet hunter, Leslie Peltier from Delphos who discovered 16 comets and was called the 'world's greatest amateur astronomer.' The Lohmann Brothers were eventually bought out by the Cleveland firm of Warner and Swasey who were involved in manufacturing the largest telescopes in the world several times over.

Darke County has long played an important role in Ohio's first class agricultural output. A big grain producer on Ohio's glacial till plain Darke County also has a history growing tobacco producing nearly 200,000 pounds in 1889 and nearly 17 million pounds of fine cigar filler in 1909. One might even spot the occasional tobacco barn on this far western Ohio landscape amid the Pennsylvania German barns and hybrids of the same.

Little ol' Greenville, Ohio, miles from nowhere else. Who knew? And where will FOB land next?



Ponn or Humpback Covered Bridge in Vinton County near Wilkesville.

Historic Bridge Consumed By Fire

The ruins of the Ponn Bridge, better known locally as the “Humpback” Bridge choke Raccoon Creek. The historic covered bridge was destroyed by fire during the early hours of a Thursday morning in early June. The State Fire Marshal’s Office says the fire was

set and the case remains under investigation.

Built in 1874, the bridge has a “double multiple-kingpin plus arch” truss, consists of three spans totaling 165 feet, and crosses Raccoon Creek a few miles east of Wilkesville in South-

eastern Vinton County. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 (#73001545). It is also known historically as the Geer Mill Bridge.

Another piece of Ohio’s built heritage is lost to future generations.

FARMSTEAD, Continued from Page 5

After taking samples of the wood used to build the structures and having them tested through dendrochronology study based on tree ring analysis, Troth was able to determine that the barn was built about 1830 and the house was completed around 1839.

The land was owned initially by the Cellar family. They were founders of Liberty Township and some of the earliest settlers in the Ohio country. Thomas Cellar came to the area in 1801 after serving in the Revolutionary War. Records show that Cellar purchased hundreds of acres of present-day Liberty Township, which was part of the U.S. Military District land set aside for compensate war veterans. Acreage beyond the bounty set aside based on their rank in time of service could be purchased for as little as \$1.25 per acre.

Records show that cellar paid \$1.38 per acre for some portion of his land holdings and donated some of that in 1810 to the Liberty Church.

Troth, owner of Greentech Construction, is hoping that the buildings can be put back into use, preferably as public facilities so that more people can experience the unique character of such buildings and learn more about our heritage in the process. Built as sturdily as they were, such old structures lend themselves nicely to adaptive re-use such as small businesses, restaurants, museums, community centers and other public uses.

While in the process of taking the buildings down Troth has erected a sign at the highway intersection to educate passing motorists about the preservation

process being undertaken nearby.

“After so many years and so many people having lived there, I like to think of these buildings as having a soul, because they have lots of stories,” Troth said. “This is Ohio’s story. This is our story.”

The story is changing at a faster pace than ever. This quiet rural intersection began to change several years ago with increased traffic. Now it is being transformed into a relatively dense subdivision. The stones in the churchyard across the way may become the only reminders of the agricultural history and the stories of Liberty Township that are disappearing beneath the concrete and sod of this new suburban neighborhood.

— Source of information and images:
This Week Community News

Threatened Historic Bridge Given a New Lease on Life

Many a barn builder made his way into Ohio via the National Road crossing, by turns, the old stone bridges that spanned the southward trending streams. Built in the 1820's some of the bridges were designed to tackle significant engineering challenges. The Y-bridge in Zanesville, best known because it takes on two streams at once, crosses the confluence of the Licking River and the great Muskingum.

Crossing streams and rivers back then was easier at a 90-degree angle, but the road did not always meet the stream perpendicularly. An S-curve helped alleviate the skewed angle. There were four S-bridges along the historic route. One remained open to traffic into the 21st century, having been included into the county road system. It has now been closed due to threats to its longevity by the increased volume and weight of traffic from the natural gas fracking boom.

The S-bridge near Old Washington was recently closed by the foresight of the Guernsey County commissioners. With concerns about load limits and historic preservation in mind, the commissioners did not hesitate.

FOB visited another s-bridge just east of New Concord on the annual Ohio Barn Tour when it was held in Guernsey County about a decade ago. That bridge had long since been bypassed and is now part of a historic roadside park and rest along today's version of the National Road.

It is important that we preserve and protect such important parts of our heritage, whether it be agricultural, industrial or a part of our transportation history. Thanks to the Guernsey County commissioners this national historic landmark will survive in one piece for some time to come.

Background photo: The S-bridge near Old Washington

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