Barn Keepers Barn Tour McLean County Saturday, Sept. 14, 2019

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lexington, Money Creek Townships

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14th Annual Barn Keepers Barn Tour

For map see pages 18-19.

- Although the map in this booklet offers a suggested Barn Tour route, you're encouraged to start your tour at any site and continue in any order.
- Interested in becoming an advertising sponsor for next year's Barn Tour? Email Barn Keepers board member Pat Huth at psh85po@gmail.com. You can also email Pat with other questions and comments about this event or other Barn Keepers' activities.

Barn Keepers: Dedicated to Barn Education and Preservation

We're a small but dedicated group of area residents—rural and urban—committed to the promotion, documentation, preservation, and restoration of area barns. As a McLean County-based not-for-profit organization, we depend on the support of folks like you so we can offer programs such as this one, our fourteenth annual Barn Tour.

Become a member today by stopping by our table at the Welcome Center—a one-year membership is only $25! With that donation, you'll receive advance notice on upcoming programs, and discounts on our bus trips and tours. More importantly, you'll know you're helping to save a part of our invaluable Corn Belt heritage.

Membership forms are also available in this booklet or at www.barnkeepers.org.

Tour Etiquette

Enjoy some of the most beautiful countryside in Central Illinois—if not in all the Land of Lincoln—as you make your way from barn to barn. Yet no matter what route you take, please be aware of your surroundings. The Mackinaw River runs through Lexington and Money Creek townships, so there are a fair number of rolling, sharply curved county roads—some of which are even graveled—that demand slower speeds. With the coming

harvest, expect to find yourself sharing the road with extra-large, slow-going farm machinery. Be alert as well to high-standing corn at rural intersections, as it's often hard to see oncoming traffic.

Most importantly, let us be extra courteous to our tour hosts. Always be mindful that you are on private property. As such, drive slowly and carefully into and out of places. Be on the lookout for children and pets. Do not touch livestock or other animals, or wander the wider grounds, without permission. Each and every host on this year's tour deserves our special thanks!

Barns — A Fast-Disappearing Icon of the Corn Belt

Wood barns built in the nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth century are fast disappearing from the Corn Belt. Various factors have played a role in this loss, from mechanization to the interrelated decline in diversified farming. Sadly, wood barns are viewed as obsolete and ill-suited to the demands of today's agribusiness efficiencies.

The loss of area barns in the latter half of the twentieth century can be measured with some degree of accuracy. In 1955, the Loree Co. published a reference work titled *This Is McLean County*, which featured more than 700 pages of aerial views of most every farmstead in the county. Twenty some years ago, barn enthusiasts led an effort to count the number of barns shown in this book, leaving out corn cribs, silos, chicken coops, tool sheds and all other outbuildings. They identified something like 4,500 barns in the 1955 book.

In 2002, as a follow-up, volunteers traveled to every corner of McLean County in order to count and photograph each and every barn in the county. They found only 1,200

barns left in the county, a decline of almost three-quarters in less than a half-century. The staggering losses were countywide. In Lexington and Money Creek townships, for instance, there were something like 265 barns in 1955. By 2002, that number had fallen to 81—a loss of 70 percent. Since completion of the survey seventeen years ago, the loss of old wood barns continues apace—if not quickens.

Although the need is great, there is little public or private money available to help farmers and others save their barns. Given that the price tag for restoring a single barn can easily reach into the tens of thousands of dollars, many barn owners are resigned to the inevitable fate awaiting their old barns. Farming is a tough business with thin operating margins, so there are not many farmers with the wherewithal to devote to barn restoration.

Happily, on today's tour you will meet barn owners who have devoted resources—from blood, sweat, and tears to cold, hard cash—saving their barns. The reasons for doing so vary from owner to owner, though more often than not it's done partly out of a sense of obligation to the past—to the history of the place. Every barn tells a story, and thanks to the barn owners on this tour, those stories remain alive in the present.

What's with these strange addresses?

City folk on our Barn Tour might find themselves baffled by rural addresses, asking themselves, "What's with all those numbers?" and, "Why all the references to north and east?"

Good questions! McLean County adopted what's known as the Rural Reference Sign System in the 1980s, and a decade later, spurred by a countywide enhanced 911 system, all rural residences were assigned numerical addresses.

It works this way: Addresses begin in the southwest corner of the county and increase by 1000 for every mile north and east of that corner. Let's use an example from today's Barn Tour. Richard and Eloyce Slown live at 27524 E. 2200 North Rd., in Lexington Township. From that address, we know they live approximately 27.52 miles east and 22 miles north of the southwest corner of McLean County. Got it? We

hope so!

By the way, there are 102 counties in Illinois, and McLean County is the largest county in Illinois by land area—1,186 square miles. In fact, McLean County is larger than the state of Rhode Island!

Lexington and Money Creek Townships

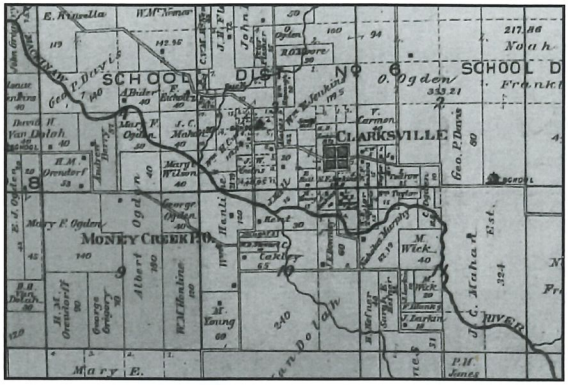
This year's Barn Tour includes stops in two adjacent townships in north-central McLean County—Lexington and Money Creek. The Mackinaw River, the largest watercourse in McLean County, wends its way westward through both townships. The 130-mile tributary of the Illinois River begins in Ford County, near Sibley, and reaches the Illinois River south of Pekin. Today, it is one of the healthier rivers in Central Illinois, home as it is to some 60 to 70 native fish species and another 25 to 30 species of mussels.

Euro-American (white) settlers began arriving in this area in the 1820s, attracted to the timber along the Mackinaw River. At the time, Kickapoo and Delaware people called this area home.

The community of Lexington dates to 1836. In its early years it competed with two Mackinaw River settlements that are now "ghost towns"—Pleasant Hill, located several miles upstream (or to the east), and Clarksville, situated several miles downstream (west), in Money Creek Township.

Although the story of the Underground Railroad is often muddled by well-intentioned though easily verifiable falsehoods (most local stories are little more than cartoonish legend), we know from the diaries of Rev. Levi Spencer, a

Congregationalist minister from Bloomington in the 1840s, that a group of Pleasant Hill citizens were abolitionists. At times, they assisted enslaved African Americans making the perilous journey further north—often to Canada—in search of freedom. Pleasant Hill was also known by its U.S. Postal Service designation as Selma.



At one time Clarksville, located in Money Creek Township and platted the same year as Lexington, had several residences, a church, school, store, and sawmill. Yet once the Chicago-to-St. Louis railroad reached Lexington, both Pleasant Hill and Clarksville died out. "There is not even a post office within the present limits of [Money Creek] township," noted an 1879 McLean County history, "and very little remains of Clarksville, the only place that has ever assumed the dignity of even a hamlet." Pleasant Hill, though, survives as a cluster of several homes and a few streets.

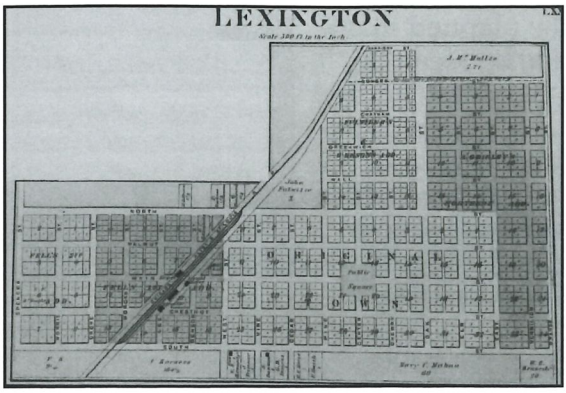
No one seems to know the origin of the name Money Creek. Naturally, one story holds that an early settler buried a treasure of some sort along its banks. Never let the truth get in the way of a good story. Ha! The first United Brethren Church in Illinois was established in the southwest corner of Money Creek Township. The church building is gone, though there's now a stone marker at the location.

Today, the eastern half of Money Creek is part of the Lexington Community Unit School District, while the western half is part of the sprawling urban-rural McLean County Unit 5 District (which includes two high schools in Normal). The era of the one-room school ended in McLean County after World War II, when nearly 200 such schools were consolidated into township-level or larger districts. Money Creek Township's seven one-room schools (including the

delightfully named Frog Alley and Olive Branch schools) were closed in 1947-1948, and their students sent to Lexington or Normal schools.

City of Lexington

It was 183 years ago—in early 1836—that James Brown and Bloomington attorney Ashael Gridley laid out the original 36 blocks of Lexington. The community owes its location partly to the Mackinaw River, situated as it is on high ground just north of the river's wooded valley. There are two competing origin stories as to the city's name. One holds it's named for Brown's hometown of Lexington, Kentucky, while the other says it's because Gridley's father fought at the 1775 Battle of Lexington.



The early history of Illinois settlement is one of rampant land speculation and real estate bubbles, and in the mid-1830s, town founding was all the rage. The McLean County communities of Danvers, Hudson, and LeRoy also date to 1836, as do the ghost towns of Lytleville, Mt. Hope, and Wilksborough.

The Panic of 1837 (as economic downturns were known back then) was a major setback to Lexington's early prospects. Fortunately, the struggling community became a stop on the Chicago Trail, an early route connecting Springfield to Chicago (and eventually St Louis as well). Jacob Spawr built a double log cabin in Lexington, which served as not only the family residence and community post office, but also a tavern and wayside for travelers. To this day, the community remains inextricably linked with this transportation corridor, though the days of the old Chicago Trail are long past.

One could make the case that the single most important event in Lexington history was the arrival of the Chicago & Mississippi Railroad (later known as the Chicago & Alton, or C&A) on July 4, 1854. The then-struggling, landlocked Corn Belt town (the Mackinaw River was never navigable to steam traffic) was now a stop on the planned mainline between St. Louis and Chicago. Lexington's population boomed from a dozen or so families to more than 1,200 residents by 1880.

When the automobile era arrived, Illinois Route 4, the main paved road linking St. Louis and Chicago, ran parallel to the C&A. U.S. Route 66 was born in 1926 with the creation of Cyrus Avery's U.S. Highway System. The original Route 66 alignment followed Route 4, as six- to ten-inch slabs of concrete nine-feet wide were laid across the two-lane road. As traffic increased, the road was enlarged to a four-lane highway. Local businesses sprouted up along this stretch of Route 66, some of which are fondly recalled by older residents, including the Oasis Drive-In with its Luigi burgers and orange freezes. Interstate 55 came in 1978, which followed Route 66 and the old C&A rail line (today owned by Union Pacific and also used by Amtrak).

Lexington, unlike most small communities its size, maintains its own school district, which helps give the city its strong sense of community pride. Support of the purple-and-white Minutemen runs deep!

Today, Lexington is home to a little more than 2,000 residents, and its fine homes and local businesses make it one of the more vibrant small towns in Central Illinois.

Abraham Lincoln and Lexington

From the time he became an attorney in the late 1830s until he left for Washington, D.C. in early 1861 to become the nation's sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln spent more time in the McLean County seat of Bloomington than anywhere else, excepting, of course, his hometown of Springfield. Not surprisingly, then, Lincoln was no stranger to Lexington.

From 1839 to 1847, the years Livingston County was on the Eighth Judicial Circuit, Lincoln and other attorneys would stop at the Jacob Spawr Tavern on their way north to the county seat of Pontiac. Spawr was said to be a "first-class tavern keeper." Three of his six daughters, Elizabeth, Sarah, and Emily, had fond memories of Lincoln and his visits. "I remember one day when a strong wind and rain storm came up that my sisters and I had to go out and drive a lot of geese and ducks to shelter," recalled Elizabeth later in life. "Lincoln happened to be staying with us and volunteered to come along and help ... It was hard not to laugh at the way he ran around and waved his long arms at the quacking and cackling ducks and geese."

On November 21, 1860, president-elect Lincoln came through McLean County on the St. Louis, Alton and Chicago Railroad, heading north to Chicago to meet his vice president, Hannibal Hamlin of Maine. The last stop before Chicago was Lexington. On that day, local residents got their first look at newly bearded Lincoln, who, at the behest of 11-year-old Grace Bedell of Westfield, New York, started growing one after the election. Lincoln "came out, showed himself and made a little speech," reported the *Lexington Weekly Globe* newspaper. "Old Abe looks as though the campaign had worn lightly upon him. He is commencing to raise a beautiful pair of whiskers, and looks younger than usual. Still there is not disguising the fact that he is homely."

On May 3, 1865, the Lincoln Funeral Train passed through Lexington on its way to Springfield. In the predawn gloom, local residents lined the Chicago & Alton Railroad tracks to bid their martyred president—a man who knew Lexington and the surrounding countryside first-hand—one final farewell.

The Old 'Blacksmith Shoppe'
415 W. Main St., Lexington

This interesting two-story building dates to the 1870s, and over the many years has served many uses. In the early twentieth century, Jacob Kauth and his son William built buggies upstairs, which were lowered to the street level by block-and-tackle. The first floor was used as a blacksmith shop.

In 1991, Charles Wright, Jr. restored the old shop to its original appearance. Connie Davis later opened a craft store here. She also added the small addition to the west. After Dr. Dan Scott of Bloomington purchased the building, he sold antiques and other things.

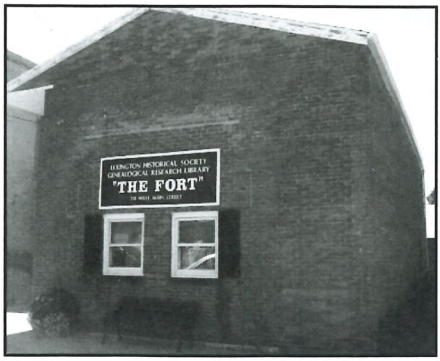
Dr. Scott then donated the shop to Church of Christ, Uniting, which rents the space. Today, the building serves as a unique venue for meetings and parties, including wedding and baby showers. For special events, such as the Route 66 "Red Carpet Corridor Festival" and Lexington's "Christmas on the Prairie," the building hosts art displays.

Lexington Genealogical and Historical Society—"The Fort"
318 W. Main St., Lexington
Open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Founded in 1965 by the indefatigable Verda Gerwick, "The Fort" is one of the most important Central Illinois centers for genealogy and local history. The society tracks more than 300 cemeteries in a four-county area of Central Illinois (McLean, Livingston, Ford, and Woodford counties), and as such has one of the larger indexed obituary collections in downstate Illinois. Verda passed away in 2003, but the society she led is still going strong.

In 1979, the society purchased its current home, which in

the late nineteenth century was the Lexington State Bank. A fire two years later destroyed the second floor. Yet thanks to the efforts of Lexington firefighters and others on the scene, most of the society's invaluable records and the building's first floor were saved from the flames.



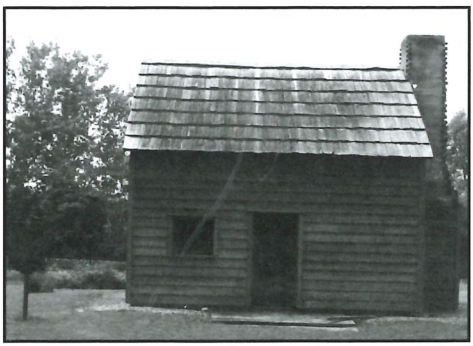
The Lexington Genealogical and Historical Society's collections also include weekly small-town newspapers on microfilm, from Chatsworth in Livingston County to Sibley in Ford County; plat books; county and family histories; and vital records, including U.S. Census, birth and death, marriage, probate, naturalization, guardianship, and land records.

The Fort's regular hours are 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The society is closed Sunday and Monday.

Please stop in and say hello to the volunteers working today. They'll show you the society's expansive genealogy and local history collections, as well as the fascinating artifacts scattered about the place. Oh, and if you're lucky, they'll tell you why the society has the interesting nickname "The Fort!"

Patton Cabin

Lexington Park
800 N. Cherry St., Lexington



Erected in the spring of 1829, the 190-year-old Patton Cabin is the oldest building in McLean County! In fact, it's older than McLean County itself, which wasn't estab-

lished until Christmas Day 1830.

On June 10, 1829, ten Euro-American (white) settlers and an undetermined number of native people—both Kickapoo and Delaware—gathered to help John Patton build a one-room log cabin near a Kickapoo settlement along the Mackinaw River. The eighteen by twenty foot, "single pen" (that is, one-room) cabin featured hand-hewn logs with half-dovetail notching, as well as a split-log floor, clay-coated log fireplace, and stick-and-clay chimney.

The cabin, situated on a knoll on the old Patton farm some three miles southeast of present-day Lexington, remained occupied throughout the nineteenth century. In September 1965, with the blessing of then-owner Ruth B. Reynolds, volunteers saved the cabin by taking it apart and moving the logs into storage. Eventually, the cabin was reassembled on park ground on Lexington's north side, where it stands today. Dedication ceremonies for the relocated and reassembled historic cabin were held on October 12, 1969.

The cabin underwent extensive restoration work in the mid-1980s, which returned the structure to more of its original appearance and configuration. Additional logs were added to raise the cabin to its original height, though these were square notched (as opposed to dovetailed), an intentional alteration so future generations could distinguish the new logs from the original ones. The settlement-period clapboard siding was added at a later date.

Volunteers with the Patton Cabin Committee—some in period costume—will be on site today during the Barn Tour. The cabin will be open for viewing and there will be activities on the grounds. Interestingly, all the Cabin Committee volunteers just so happen to be direct descendants of the Pattons!

Anvil Brand

500 S. Spencer St.
Old Route 66, Lexington
Open 9 a.m. to 12 noon only

Billed as the "World's Best Hoofcare Store," Anvil Brand Shoe Co. is one of the more intriguing business success stories in the state. Founded in 1978 by John Claudon, Anvil

Brand designs a wide-range of horseshoes, manufacturing some 1,000 a day. The company is also the only maker of horseshoe nails in all the US of A! And its anvils are the highest quality ones made in the country right now.

Anvil Brand also sells a full line of farrier tools (a farrier is someone who trims and shoes horse hooves), such as rasps, hoof knives, clinchers, creasers, nippers, and who knows what all!

The company, owned today by brothers Steve and Stuart Hoselton, manufactures the custom-designed horseshoes for the famous Anheuser-Busch Brewing Co. Clydesdales. Production Manager Mike Roark has been with the company nearly thirty years and has vast knowledge of the design and manufacture of all Anvil Brand shoes. He's in direct contact with Budweiser and some of their other famous customers, including Disney and Sea World.

Although Anvil Brand is normally closed on Saturday, the Hoseltons were kind enough to open their doors for Barn Tour participants until 12 noon. The shipping department will be open and Anvil Brand staff or perhaps even Steve or Stuart or Mike will be on hand to answer questions. They will also have some of their wares on display.

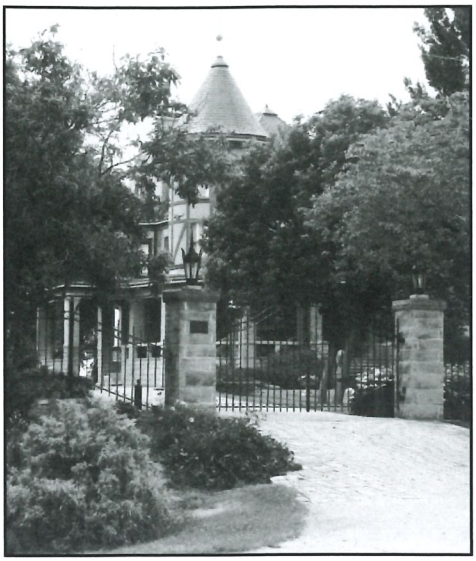
Castle Gardens

1280 P.J. Keller Hwy., Lexington
(Drive By)

This spectacular home and event venue is a "drive-by" site, so please don't pull in and knock on the door!

Known as "The Castle" by several generations of local residents, the home dates to 1898-1901 and was built for

David and Nancy Van Dolah. This Queen Ann beauty, the work of prominent Bloomington architect George H. Miller, includes a wrap-around porch, three-story turret, and five Flemish-stepped gables. Inside, there's a three-story "free-floating" staircase, four original white oak fireplaces, and circular turret rooms.



David Van Dolah imported, bred, and sold "Normans," draft horses from France (today known as Percherons). The Dillon family in Normal and other "horsemen" and breeders like Van Dolah made McLean County a vibrant center for the draft horse trade in the latter half of the nineteenth century. "Normans" were the workhorses of the Corn Belt until replaced by tractors, a process completed after World War II.

In the mid-1980s, past owners Chuck and Mary Wright began an ambitious and loving restoration of the old Van Dolah place. It was awarded National Register of Historic Places status in 2015. Today, the home is known as Castle Gardens, and private events held here include weddings, reunions, and seminars. The grounds encompass 40 acres of gardens and native prairie, and include a miniature train, an antique working carousel, and many works of the late McLean County sculptor Robert Cumpstom.

Lexington Cemetery

P.J. Keller Highway; 1/4 mile east of Interstate 55, Lexington

This picturesque "silent city" of 12 1/2 acres dates to 1866, one year after the end of the Civil War. Established by James Porteus, it was originally known as Porteus Cemetery. After two decades of financial struggles, it become Lexington Cemetery, overseen by a cemetery association. Since 1952,

Lexington Township has managed these grounds (The care of small-town and rural cemeteries is a common responsibility for townships).

Lexington Cemetery is home to one of the more eye-catching mausoleums in Central Illinois. At the cemetery's north end, on a slight rise with a view of the surroundings, sits the mausoleum for John Jackson "J. J." Kemp, a well-to-do farmer, banker, and grain dealer. Built in 1892 of Indiana limestone, the mausoleum includes four marble columns topped by two carved Newfoundland dogs, which then flank a white angel placing flowers on a cross. Granite trimmings and terra cotta detailing provide additional flourishes.

Designed and constructed by H. J. Higgins & Co. of Bloomington, it was finished eight years before J.J. Kemp's death. "That is my masterpiece," Higgins was to have said of this mausoleum. Look for the engraving "H. J. Higgins & Co., Bloomington, ILs." near the bottom of the mausoleum's door. What else catches your eye?

Historic Route 66

Ollie and Dorothy Myers Walkway

Like many small communities along Route 66, Lexington celebrates its ties to the "Mother Road." In 2004, the City of Lexington developed a 4.2-mile linear park along the abandoned southbound lane of the historic Chicago-to-Los Angeles highway. Longtime Lexington residents Ollie and Dorothy Myers then funded a 10-foot strip of

asphalt pavement running 2.2 miles on this stretch of "Old 66" through Lexington. Volunteers also pitched in to plant hardwood trees and to put up picnic tables and benches along the walkway. A pavilion was the most recent addition.

The iconic eighteen-foot neon "Lexington" sign has been located at the northwest corner of Route 66 and Main Street since the summer of 1946. How cool is that?

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Dues: $25 annually/family
(Make check to: Barn Keepers)
Mail to: Barn Keepers
P.O. Box 261
Bloomington, IL 61702-0261
Dues paid in late 2019 will include 2020.

A
Church of Christ, Uniting
108 N. Pine St., Lexington
Barn Tour Welcome Center

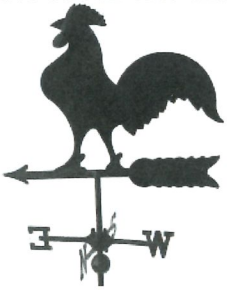
Barn Tour tickets will be on sale at the Welcome Center from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The tour lasts until 4:00 p.m.

In the morning, coffee and donuts will be available at the Welcome Center courtesy of Barn Keepers. Kelly's 66 Cafe will serve a "Barn Tour Special" beginning at 11 a.m. Please patronize local businesses as opposed to the national chains!

This architecturally fascinating house of worship first opened its doors in 1867, serving for many years as the Presbyterian Church of Lexington. It was built of locally made brick. The round door and window arches, repeating arch decoration in the gable ends, and the bell tower are typical of the Victorian Romanesque style. The tower originally featured a tall pyramidal roof. In the 1950s, the church underwent extensive remodeling and an addition.

Church of Christ, Uniting dates to 1970 and the union of First Presbyterian and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), which was located kitty-corner from this location. The many Disciples of Christ churches in McLean County are testament to Central Illinois' deep connections to the nineteenth century American clergyman Alexander Campbell and the Stone-Campbell Movement.

The Rev. Janet Proeber and her congregation have graciously agreed to serve as our hosts. For that, they have our sincere thanks.



B

John and Kathi Franklin
402 W. South St., Lexington

Wow, what a way to kick off our 2019 tour of Lexington area barns! Jesse Trimmer built this Italianate-style residence on the edge of Lexington in 1866, one year after the Civil War. It's likely the carriage house / barn was built at the same time. The Trimmer place appears in a lovely steel engraving in the 1874 Atlas of McLean County, and the house and barn look remarkably unchanged today.

John and Eliza Trimmer and their eight children (including eight-year-old Jesse) settled in Money Creek Township in 1826, four years before the establishment of McLean County. The Trimmers were one of the earliest white families to arrive in the area. Young Jesse eventually accumulated 2,000 or so acres, and this residence is a testament to his worldly success.

Noah and Sara Franklin purchased the Trimmer place in 1877 (Sara was a niece of Jesse), and it has remained in the Franklin family ever since. The current occupants, John and Kathi Franklin, moved here in 2000 with their five children when John's parents, Elmo, Jr. and Edith, retired to Bloomington. John, who grew up in the house, is the great-grandchild of Noah, making him the fourth successive generation to call this place home. That means that in 2027—eight years from now—the Franklins will mark the sesquicentennial (150th anniversary) of continuous occupation of this residence. Talk about deep roots!

For years, the Franklin family raised Aberdeen Angus beef on land in Money Creek Township, though Elmo, Jr. got out of the cattle business in the 1960s. This is an English style gable barn, meaning the main doors are located on the eaves side of the building, and not on the ends under the gable. Since the Trimmer place was an in-town residence, the barn has served more as a carriage house than a barn, and today the Franklins keep two horses stabled there. A lean-to added in 1915, likely to accommodate an automobile, has since been removed.

The house, which is not open to visitors on today's Barn Tour, is one of the finest homes in the county. Its Italianate elements include the low-pitched roof, narrow windows, and bracketed cornices. An attached kitchen was added in the 1890s, and the southeast porch dates to the 1920s. The Franklins added a back room in the 1970s. The old smokehouse became a tool shed and today it serves as the pool house! The verandah, wrought-iron fencing, and hitching post are all original.

C

Gary and Connie Leake
308 E. South St., Lexington

The Leakes moved here 34 years ago, in 1985. This place was originally 80 acres. Today, the Leakes have 5 acres, of which 3 1/2 are in pasture. Harold Cable was the previous owner.

The date of this New

England-style gable barn is unknown. Unlike the Franklin's English-style barn, the main doors here are under the gable. That said, both the older-style English and later-style New England barn types are also known as standard square barns. The steel roof was put on about fifteen years ago, and the siding is brand new, having been added a few weeks ago! The lean-to on the south (or back) end collapsed and was rebuilt. The big gable-side haymow door came loose and was found hanging on its lower hinges. It has since been reattached.

The Leakes keep two geldings in the barn—the palomino "Topper," and the chocolate-and-white spotted "Ranger." For you city slickers out there, geldings are castrated male horses. Unless a horse is used for breeding purposes, they're normally gelded to make them more even-tempered and easier to handle. The Leakes also use the barn for hay and grain storage.

During the Great Depression, the Roy family lived here as tenants. A son, William Robert Roy, attended Lexington schools and, in 1945, earned a bachelor's degree from Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. He received an M.D. from Northwestern four years later, and eventually settled in Topeka, Kansas, where he practiced obstetrics and gynecology. In 1970, "Bill" Roy completed a law degree at Washburn University in Topeka, and successfully ran for U.S Congress as a Democrat. He served four years in the U.S, House of Representatives, and in 1974 lost a bitter race for U.S. Senate to the powerful Republican Bob Dole. Roy was also a longtime columnist for the *Capital-Journal* newspaper in Topeka.

Before death in 2014 at the age of 88, the former doctor and congressman returned to Lexington to visit the hometown of his youth. He paid a visit to the Leakes and toured the place. In the barn, he told them about having to make an emergency delivery of a calf when his father and a local veterinarian were otherwise occupied. He was around fifteen years old at the time. As a doctor, he went on to deliver countless babies into the world, but he told the Leakes that this was his very first delivery!

D
Jennifer Roseman
25513 N. 2900 East Rd., Lexington

The Rosemans purchased this beautiful 2 1/2 acre place in the

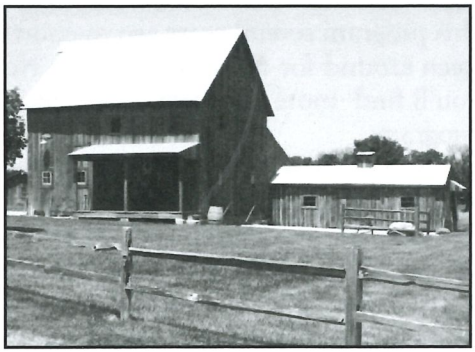
early 1970s from Edwin and Lula Jones. Jennifer and her late husband Lynn were not farmers, but they wanted to raise their children in a beautiful rural setting such as this. Lynn worked for a business that manufactured and sold machinery to the food processing industry. After retirement, he drove a McLean County Unit District 5 school bus for special needs children. Jennifer taught art in Lexington schools for thirty some years.

The English-style barn likely dates to around the turn of the last century. Over the years, the Rosemans had a few cows on the place, and their children raised goats and quail as 4-H projects. The steel roof is a few years old. The barn was painted by contractor Al Kerr. He also built a drop-down staircase to the haymow. Jennifer tells us that she feels obligated to care for the old and beautiful barn not out of monetary concerns but rather love.

An older, smaller barn was lost to fire a while back. A machine shed is also gone, and the smokehouse came down not long ago. It's said that the framing for the old chicken house came from the previous farmhouse. Today, Jennifer raises some 40 chickens and ducks. Many of the eggs go to a Bloomington bed and breakfast.

E

Jere and Virginia Payne
2050 N. 2900 East Rd., Lexington



The Paynes live in Lexington but purchased this place—200 acres in all—about 15 years ago as a rural retreat. The barn and sur-

rounding acreage are used for family gatherings and the like.

The 30 by 30 foot barn dates to the turn of the last century. The main door, large enough to accommodate wagons, was on the west gable side, making this a New England-style square barn. It originally served as an all-purpose livestock barn, as one side was devoted to cattle—with a feed bunk running down the center—while the other side included smaller pens to hold sheep or hogs. At one time there were also two or three milk stanchions. The barn includes two later additions. The east "wing" was a roughly 14 by 24 foot cattle shed. The south end of this wing was once open-ended, but Jere enclosed it using matching board. Today, this shed is used for the storage of mowing equipment and things like that. The more substantial addition on the north side of the barn once held cattle.

An eastside section of the haymow floor suffered water damage, so Jere tore it out to create an open, vaulted space. He even added a loft above the existing west end mow to create a distinctive three-tiered interior. Wow, what a space! Jere loves the look of weather-worn barn boards, and for all the renovation work and recycled wood in this barn, he admits to painting just one single plank!

Note the reflective, bright-red Barn Keepers Centennial Barn sign under the eaves of the built-on porch. Barn Keepers developed this program several years ago to commemorate area barns that have been around for 100 or more years. Near the end of this booklet you'll find more information on this preservation and education program.

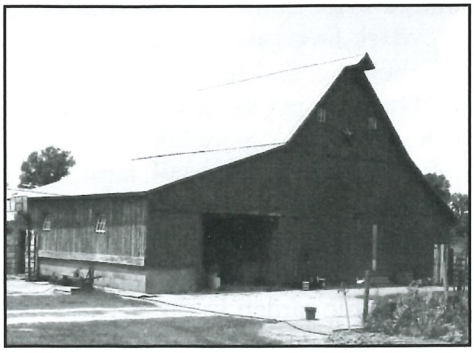
The covered bridge, carriage house, and cabin are not original to this place. They were designed by Jere using repurposed barn and crib framing and siding, as well as house doors and other architectural odds and ends, all salvaged from various locations. The wood for the covered bridge, for instance, came from a barn about 1 1/2 miles west of here. The outhouse came intact from a place about

two miles north of El Paso, IL. It's an original "three-holer," Jere tells us, built to accommodate two adults and one child. Yes, years from now, we know exactly the one thing all of us will remember from this Barn Tour! Ha.

Jere has also planted around 25 trees, mostly Norway maples, on the property. This stunning place is truly a labor of love.

F

Brian and Mandy Wiltz
27554 E. 2100 North Rd., Lexington



As far back as the Wiltz family knows, the barn and the surrounding land were part of the Grace Woodard Family Estate. As such, the farm couldn't be sold until the death of the last direct descendant. That happened about twenty years ago with the passing of Grace's daughter Thelda. At that time, the farm—originally 137 acres, half tillable—was sold to farmer Mark Freed, Mandy Wiltz's father.

The standard square barn has an extended gable on one end and a broken extended gable on the other. "Broken" in this instance simply means the angle of the extension's roofline doesn't match that of the barn. The date of the barn is unknown, though it's likely nineteenth century. Inside you'll see whole logs—with bark still intact—serving as load-bearing support.

Beginning in 1946, Frank and Virginia Hardt farmed this place as tenants. This was when it was still in the Woodard estate. They first raised Guernseys, milking about ten to twelve a day. A decade later, they converted to beef production, raising 100 to 150 Herford. The Hardts also kept hogs, sheep, chickens, and five to ten horses. The eastside lean-to dates to 1955, and the machine shed to 1963. The small, still-standing oat shed was relocated here from Lexington in 1970. "A five-legged sheep was born on the farm in 1973 named Swinger," Brian tells us. He was sold off to become a circus side-show attraction.

The Hardts were killed in an automobile accident in 1982, and Les Miller and his son became the tenants, using the barn to house Angus cattle. The farmhouse, which by that time was abandoned

and in disrepair (the Millers lived elsewhere), was taken down in a controlled burn for training purposes by the Lexington Fire Department.

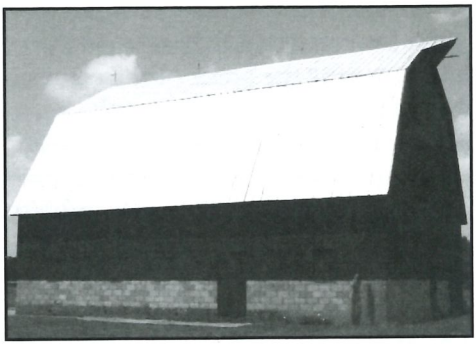
After Mark Freed purchased the property, two of his daughters married and built homes on this rolling, picturesque tract, which borders the Mackinaw River. In addition to Brian and Mandy Wiltz, Mandy's sister Emily and her husband Eric Jenkins have a house here. Mark Freed also dug three ponds on the property for swimming, boating, and fishing.

"The barn got its first major 'cleanout and repaint' in 2008," Brian says. Mark's granchildren raised show pigs (Berkshires), horses, donkeys, chickens, quail, fainting goats, rabbits, and ducks in the barn. They have also boarded horses in the barn, turning a grainery into a tack room. Brian teaches agriculture at Lexington Community High School, which might help explain why the family even had a hydroponic garden in the machine shed. This place has offered invaluable "work-and-learn" life lessons for the Wiltz children. Talk about a real world education!

At one point, the Wiltzs converted what they thought was a tool shed into a chicken coop, not knowing the outbuilding had originally been a chicken coop before being converted into a tool shed!

G

Charles and Roberta Derr
21275 N. 2700 East Rd., Lexington



Is this year's Barn Tour not one jaw-dropping beautiful place after another? Wow! Who says Central Illinois is flat and boring? Not the Barn Keepers, that's for sure!

The Derrs purchased this 9 1/2-acre site 25 years ago. Their house was built in 1997. The older two-story farmhouse was razed in a controlled burn by the Lexington Fire Department, as was the old house on the Wiltz place (stop "F"). Such a fate is a common one for many old farmhouses in Central Illinois.

If you're following the route suggested in our booklet, this is the first gambrel-style barn on the tour. "Gambrel" is a type of barn

with a symmetrical roof with two slopes on each side. The shallow angle of the upper slope and the steeper angle of the lower slope allow maximum space for a cavernous haymow. With the arrival of commercially available plank framing at the turn of the last century, methods of bracing (or trussing) were developed which eliminated the transverse beams used in heavy timber-frame construction. This allowed for the unobstructed movement of overhead hay carriers fast becoming standard equipment in new Corn Belt barns.

The north side of the barn floor is dirt, while the south side is poured concrete. Note the concrete block foundation. Corn Belt farmers embraced the introduction of Portland cement in the early twentieth century, and used it in innumerable ways—from water troughs to whole buildings. Many early gambrel-style barns date to the first decades of the twentieth century and were associated with the boom in dairy farming. Yet in McLean County, these barns were also built with beef cattle in mind. The age of the Derr's barn is unknown, though the date "10/15/38," along with several initials, are etched into the poured concrete inside the barn.

A while ago, Jon Ropp, who lives outside of Normal and had a successful barn restoration business for years, repaired the storm-damaged haymow door and patched the roof. The windows were also removed and replaced with shutters in an effort to keep the rain, snow, and elements out of the barn.

That's an antique hay rake in the drive of the corn crib. It's kept there by the neighboring farmer, who works the adjacent land and still uses the rake! The Derrs also use the corn crib for storing fencing and posts for their garden. They are currently protecting dozens of young shagbark hickory trees from the local deer population (the saplings were "planted" by the numerous forgetful squirrels that roam the property).

City folk often mistake corn cribs for barns. Cribs were an essential part of Corn Belt farms during the first half of the twentieth century, but they were never designed for livestock or machinery. No, they were used to store and dry ear corn before the development of combines that mechanically pick, husk, and shell corn right in the field. The distinctive slatted sides of corn cribs promoted natural air circulation and thus hastened the drying process.

H
Richard and Eloyce Slown
27524 E. 2200 North Rd., Lexington
Open until 2 p.m.

Dick and Eloyce are hosting a big get-together later today, so this site will be not be open after 2 p.m.

Okay, how many half barn / half converted corn crib combos have you seen? Not many, we're sure, because this is a rare find indeed! The age of this 60-foot long, English-style barn is unknown, but over the years it housed dairy cows, beef cattle, and hogs. Dick Slown believes the barn was converted to a half-crib before Walter Morrison farmed this place from 1932 to 1946.

That's Dick and Eloyce's home across the road. They also own several other buildings and nearly two acres of land here, but not the half-barn / half-crib. The owner lives in the Chicago area, and Dick maintains and looks after it, which is now used primarily for storage. Another odd thing about the barn / crib is that unlike most large farm buildings, it's not situated on an east-west or north-south axis, but is slightly angled. Just why that is, Dick does not know! The concrete block foundation on the barn side was likely added sometime around 1960 to replace rotting wood siding.

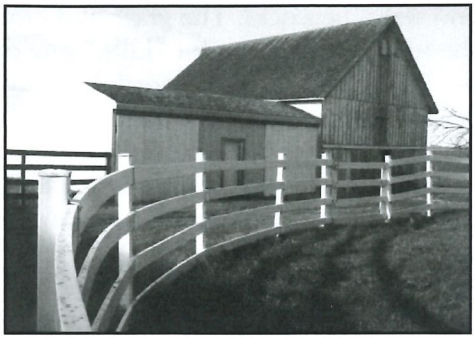
Dick began tenant farming here in 1965. After removing the milk stanchions in the barn, he farrowed some forty sows a season for six to eight years, and raised feeder calves for a while. He later bought the farmhouse and several other outbuildings, and still has forty acres of land just down the road from the buildings.

Dick retired from farming in 1991, but still runs Slown Construction, Inc., which he started in 1966. His son Mike Slown joined the company in 1984, and he was followed by a grandson, Jacob Slown. They do all types of residential and agricultural build-

ing construction, including new and remodeling.

The original part of the house dates to 1864, which means it was built during the Civil War. Dick has extensively remodeled and enlarged the old farmhouse. The enclosed room on the south side was once an open porch. On the north side, a summer kitchen was pulled up to and attached to the house. The problem was that this addition was located over the old cistern, so Dick had to come up with imaginative solutions to halt the uneven settling. The TV room and garage on the east were added in 1976. He has even made use of fallen trees from his nearby timber to build cabinets and other projects for the house.

I
Judy Sullivan
24172 E. 2650 North Rd., Lexington



This farmstead must be one of the most beautiful and peaceful stops in all Central Illinois! Judy Sullivan bought this place—seven acres in all—some thirty-five years ago to raise horses. Her first priority, she told us, was "putting the barns back together."

One of the first things Judy did was replace the shake roofs, which were in bad shape. The last thing a barn owner wants is water getting inside, rotting the haymow floor and causing other hard-to-fix problems. You rarely see a barn today with an "old-time" shake roof of wooden shingles made from split logs. Dick Slown (stop "H" on the Barn Tour) has done some

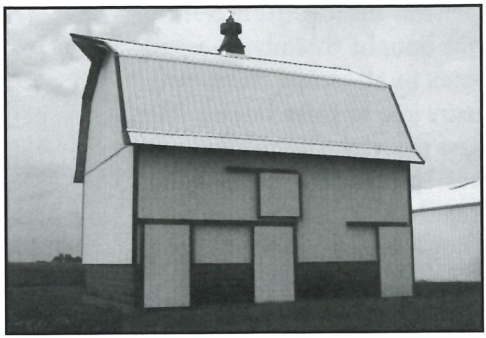
shake roof repair work for Judy. "He's a contractor who knows what to do with an old barn," Judy tells us. "There are not a lot of those guys left." The metal shed addition on the north barn didn't have a shake roof, so Judy had one added to match the barn. Over the years, she has replaced rotting board and batten siding with matching sections salvaged off-site.

At one time, the south barn housed dairy cows, but it was later converted for horses with the addition of two foaling stalls and an enclosed viewing area, among other changes

Judy is now semi-retired, but cares for a stable of aging equines, including two standard size horses, two donkeys, and a small herd of "minis," or miniature horses. She also has four Nigerian dwarf goats and seven peacocks. The grave and cross near the north barn mark the final resting place for "Lilly," one of Judy's beloved goats.

Today, Judy uses the north barn to shelter the horses in cold or severe weather, while the south barn houses her goats and peacocks. The big Morton building serves as an indoor arena for raising and training horses. Judy added the 72-foot extension to store her collection of antique carriages and wagons.

J
Jim Whitwood
1900 E. 2200 North Rd., Towanda

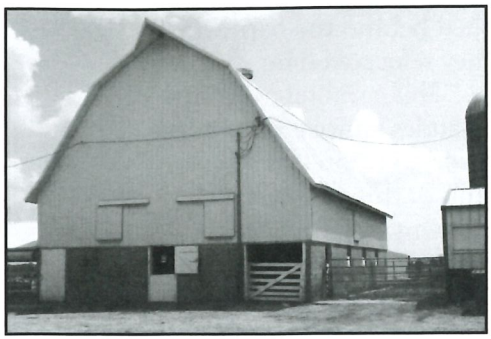


Owner Jim Whitwood lives one-half mile to the east. His father purchased this place—150 acres in all—about fifteen years ago. Jim's retired, and a nephew now farms the acreage.

This is a classic gambrel-roof barn with a concrete block foundation, one of the most common types of barns in the Corn Belt. Much like a majority of gambrel barns, this one was used to support a small dairy operation. There are still eight milk stanchions inside. Jim's mother had an interest in barns, and so played a role in making sure this one was saved. The batting was removed and steel siding added. Today, lumber is stored in the haymow.

The Morton shed is rented out to a contractor. The attractive red striping of the barn and shed match the design of the farm buildings at the Whitwood place.

K
Gary Dameron
20277 E. 2200 North Rd., Towanda



The Damerons operate one of the most successful Angus breeding operations in the nation. Gary Dameron and his family began purchasing registered Angus cattle in the mid-1960s, adding the newcomers to a small commercial herd started by his father and grandfather. Today, the herd is comprised of some 200 registered Angus cows. Gary focuses on improving the elite genetic line of these animals.

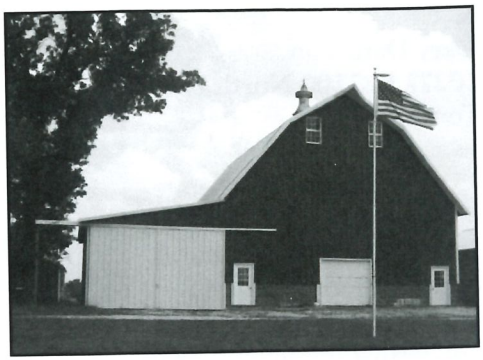
The "Dameron Program" has produced three national champion bulls, sixteen grand or reserve grand champions at the National Junior Angus Show, and more than two dozen reserve champions at the Illinois State Fair.

This barn dates to 1943 and World War II, and was built by Gary's father Stover Dameron. The barn features a metal roof, oak frame construction, and concrete block walls. The oak came from timber on this property! Gary still holds the letter from the U.S. War Department allowing his father to build a barn despite homefront restrictions on new construction. The barn was originally used to shelter and feed various animals—dairy and beef cows, sheep, and hogs. The milk stanchions were later removed and the manure gutter filled in. Today, the barn includes three large stalls and houses some twenty head of cattle, though the number can vary throughout the year. The mow is still used to store hay and straw. A new steel roof and steel siding were added around fifteen years ago. Gary's son Jay makes this place home.

L
Mike and Dawn Hacker
24405 N. 2125 East Rd., Lexington

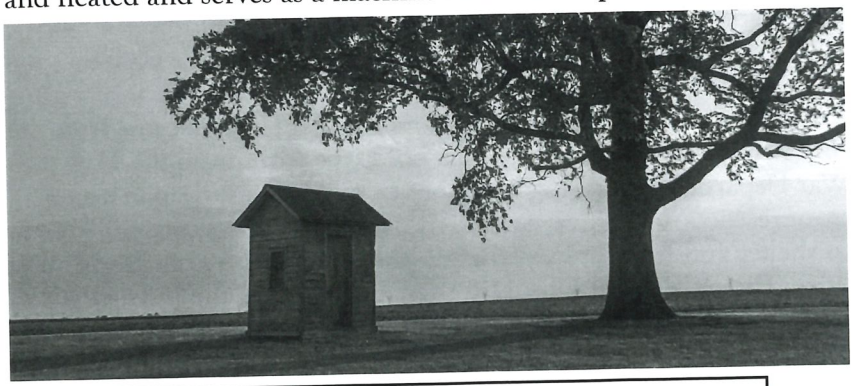
The Hackers moved to this beautiful farmstead in 1999, "refugees" from Naperville and the commercial and residential sprawl of DuPage and Will counties gobbling up prime farmland. They raise around 30 head of beef cattle on 40 acres, having added a new cattle

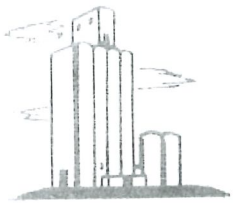
shed behind the barn when they relocated here.



This gambrel-roof barn includes a broken extended gable addition (for discussion of this architectural element, see Tour Stop "F"). This addition and the other lean-to do not appear in a 1955 aerial photograph of this farmstead, but by 1966 they were both part of the barn's current configuration. The wood-shingled roof was replaced with steel sometime around 2000, and the steel siding added about 2010. The previous owners used the barn to raise ostriches.

The Hackers also operate a small trucking business, and added the two large machine sheds. The one closest to the barn is insulated and heated and serves as a machine and tool shop.





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McLean County Centennial Barn Program

Do you own a barn that's been around 100 or more years? If so, you can commemorate it with this 20 by 20-inch reflective metal sign. Even if you don't know the exact year your barn was built or its complete history, you may still be eligible. The $50 fee includes the cost of processing your application and the sign itself. Hey, that's a real bargain! You can pick up a Centennial Barn application at the Barn Tour Welcome Center. They are also available at the Barn Keepers website, www.barnkeepers.org.

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Sept. 16, 2006 Danvers area
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Sept. 12, 2009 Funks Grove Township
Sept. 11, 2010 Randolph and southern Bloomington Townships
Sept. 10, 2011 Dawson Township
Sept. 8, 2012 Old Town Township
Sept.14, 2013 Cheney's Grove Township
Sept. 13, 2014 Yates Township
Sept. 12, 2015 Chenoa Township
Sept.10, 2016 Allin Township
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Barn Keepers thanks the following for their assistance with our 2019 tour:

- Pat Huth, Susie Sears, and Jack Miller for their hard work and many hours organizing this tour.
- Laurie Vial for putting this booklet together, and Bill Kemp for all the research and writing.
- All who purchased Barn Tour tickets today and thus helped promote the cause of barn preservation.
- Volunteers and friends of Barn Keepers who lent a helping hand.
- Barn owners and site hosts—for without their openhearted generosity, this Barn Tour would not have been possible!

We'll see everyone next year at this time for the fifteenth annual Barn Keepers Barn Tour! Where will the tour be next year? Stay tuned!

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