

Spanning the Gap

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Barns: Survival of the Fittest



Older structures were built to last. They also possess timeless aesthetics.

Take barns, for example. The recreation area is blessed with many barns which have lasted for well over a century. A number of them are actively used and maintained; some are in a state of ruin, the victims of neglect and long deferred maintenance. Their pending downfall stirs something in all of us. And while Eric Sloane's classic book, *An Age of Barns*, asks us to appreciate the beauty of weathered wood in the state of "pleasing decay" as one of nature's special masterpieces, our Northeastern climate has little mercy for wooden ruins. Moisture and insects together with freeze and thaw cycles inevitably take their toll.

We intervene, then, to delay their demise. If they are put to use again, perhaps we may even entertain the possibility of their continued survival. The interest in doing so is gaining popularity. Across the nation, good folks are enthusiastically recycling and adaptively reusing barns for new purposes such as office space, antique galleries, and even dance or concert halls.

From a historical perspective, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, in its program *Barn Again!*, would like to focus this enthusiasm upon preserving



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RELOCATED BARN AT MILLBROOK VILLAGE:



The Blacksmith Shop was relocated to Millbrook Village in the 1970s from the Dimmick Farm, where it was used for drying and storing tobacco.



Van Campen Barn (Welter or Silvie barn), shown here at Millbrook Days, was relocated to Millbrook Village in 1985 from 1/2 mile away in 1985.

barns *in situ* (where they are) for agricultural use. This is a noble policy which gives due respect to the importance that historic setting, context and landscape play in the appreciation of the nation's farms. Yet there are times when relocation represents the best possible means of preserving and protecting a particular farm building.

(Above) Hay hoist at a barn, Zimmermann Farm. (See below)



The Woodworking Shop was relocated to Millbrook Village in 1986 from the Knight Farm.

Here at Delaware Water Gap such has been the case with four barns (*all pictured at right*) relocated to Millbrook Village, New Jersey, a part-historic and part-museum village. Elsewhere in the recreation area, as funds permit, a rich assortment of barns and outbuildings is being stabilized and preserved where they sit. Most often you will find the best preserved specimens on the properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



The Wagon Shop, relocated to Millbrook Village in 1988, was the smaller of two barns at the Boehme Farm several miles south of Millbrook.

WHAT STYLE IS IT?

The diversity of barn styles makes "barn watching" an interesting activity.

Dutch barns

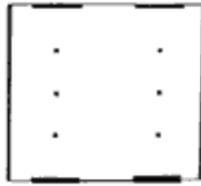
One of the earliest types, dating to the 18th century, is the **Dutch barn**. Distinguishing characteristics are a squarish floor plan, wagon doors centered on the end or *gable* wall, a steeply pitched roof, *horizontal* siding, and rows of hand-hewn interior columns held together by massive overhead anchor beams. A good example of a 19th-century Dutch-style barn stands along Old Mine Road at the Black Farm in New Jersey.

DUTCH:



The barn at the Black Farm along Old Mine Road NJ, built in the late 18th century. It has siding from later dates.

Dutch barns



(Far left) A Dutch barn.

(Left) Floor plan of a Dutch barn approximately 50 x 50 feet.

English barns

More common to the recreation area is the **English barn**.

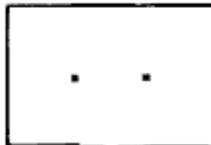
This style can be recognized by wagon doors centered on the long side, *vertical* board siding and a three-bay rectangular configuration inside with three compartments, or *bays*, usually divided from another bay by vertical posts and a horizontal beam.

ENGLISH:



The Garis barn at Millbrook Village, built at Millbrook in the 1850s.

English barns



(Far left) An English barn.

(Left) Floor plan of an English barn approximately 24 x 16 feet.

Pennsylvania bank barns

The ubiquitous **Pennsylvania bank barns** were built into a slope, or "bank", allowing entry to the upper floor from the uphill side, and lower floor from the downhill side. Usually the lower level held livestock stalls and the upper level a threshing floor; thus stabling the animals and preparing the grain were amply separated for sanitary reasons, yet

PENNSYLVANIA BANK:

(Below) A barn at Zimmermann Farm in Milford PA, probably built around 1890. The concrete silo was added after 1945.

harmoniously accommodated in a single structure. Bank construction was also common in early residential structures.

(Below) A barn, probably built around 1925, between NPS 615 and Old Mine Road at Peters Valley Craft Education Center within the recreation area in Layton NJ. Though small and on only a gentle slope, it nonetheless allows access on two levels.



(Above) A grassy road climbs the hill and cricles behind the silo to reach the back of this barn. Note the trees through the open front "door", which is actually a loft door at the level of the second floor.

(Below) The barn seen from the main roadway. The open loft door is on the second floor.



(Left) A partly dismantled barn in Wind Gap PA opens its stable level, surrounded on 3 sides by stone walls, to a field sloping down off the roadway. The front of the barn opens its second level onto the road in the background.

(More photos of this barn below)



Pennsylvania bank barns



(Far left) A Pennsylvania Bank barn.

(Left, top) Upper floor plan of a Pennsylvania Bank barn approximately 50 x 30 feet. At the top is the door to the outside, at the top of the slope.

(Left, bottom) Lower floor plan of a Pennsylvania Bank barn. At the bottom is the opening to the outside, at the bottom of the slope.

Gambrel roofs

GAMBREL:



With the 20th century came "modern" barns built to house specialized farming operations such as dairying. These newer barns are easily distinguished by the substitution of sawn

lumber for hand hewn interior support timbers, often resulting in a ridged roof with *two* slopes or angles on each side. The lower slope has a steeper pitch and the upper slope a lesser pitch. Such a roof is called a ***gambrel roof***. (The word derives through French from Latin and Greek words meaning the leg or the ankle joint, perhaps referring to the bend in the roof.)

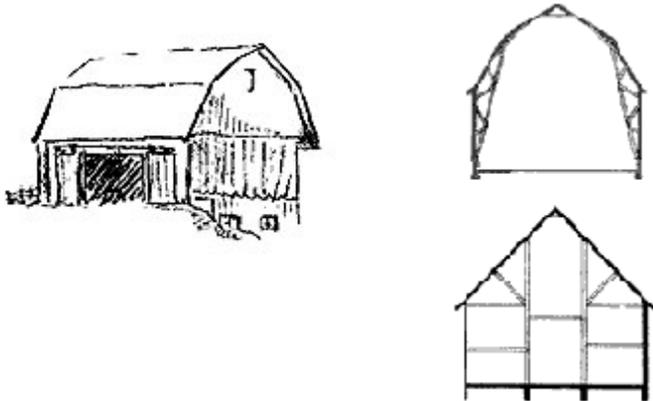
These four-surface roofs can be fabricated from shorter, more readily available lumber pieces (See *sketches below*) and have the additional benefit of providing extra usable upper-story space. The gambrel roof is also seen in Dutch Colonial houses such as *Foster Armstrong House*, in Dutch Colonial Revival houses, such as the *Zimmermann House (below)*, and even in modern and suburban homes.

(Left) The barn at the 1882 Van Auken House on Community Drive in Bushkill PA. Made of a blend of traditional (slate, lap siding) and modern (fiber board and asbestos tile) materials, and overlooking a pasture, the structure still adds interest to the landscape.



The large horse barn at Chado on Route 615 in New Jersey was built around 1920. Beginning in 1955, its owner was Frank J. Chapot, a member of several U.S. Olympic Equestrian Teams.

Gambrel roofs



(Far left) A 3-bay gambrel-roof raised barn.

(Right, top) Cross-section of gambrel-roof construction.

(Right, bottom) Cross-section of traditional pitched-roof construction.

Gambrel roofs

(Far left) Dutch Colonial Revival: Zimmermann House, off Route 209 near Milford PA, was built around 1910 in a blend of architectural styles popular in the early 20th



century.

(Left) An *inholding* (parcel of private property within the park) on NPS 615 in New Jersey shows the gambrel style to good advantage on a modest structure.

(Below) and (Right) A gambrel-style roof going up on a facility at a sports field at the southern end of River Road PA.



(Below) and (Right) Structure of a post and beam barn in Wind Gap PA revealed after partial dismantling.



(Left) *Munsch Cyr Farm PA.*

A GALLERY OF OTHER BARNs IN THE PARK



(Left) Millbrook Village NJ.
(Courtesy of Richard C. Veit III)

(Right) Zimmermann Farm Stables PA.



(Left) Van Campen Farmhouse Barn, Millbrook Village NJ.

(Right) Eshback Silo PA.



(Left) The "**Big Boehme Barn**," a fine bank barn judged too large to move to Millbrook Village, remains in the woods off Old Mine Road NJ.

(Right) The **Trauger Barn** is original to Millbrook Village NJ. (1860s)



(Left) Barns at **James Van Campen Farmstead** (Miller Farm) Old Mine Road NJ. (1812 to 1900s)

(Right) Barns at **B. B. Van Campen Farmstead** off Old Mine Road NJ. (1830 English barn)



Barn (*Left*) and silo (*Right*) at the **Layton or "1812" House** NJ. The silo is the last wooden silo in the park. (*early 1900s*)

(*Right*) The barn of **Hilltop Farm**, now a weaving center at Peters Valley NJ, preserves the *forebay* typical of Pennsylvania barns.



(*Left*) The barn of **Warner (House Family)** homestead overlook the Flatbook Valley.

(*Right*) A barn converted to a dorm for overnight educational programs.



(*Left*) In the mid 1900s **Silver Spray Farm** NJ became a dairy operation which served the guest houses and resort hotels.

(*Right*) The barn at **Smith Birchenough Farmstead** NJ was also converted to dairy use.



Both **Wheat Plains (Broadhead-Heller) Barn** (*Left*) and **Eshback Barn** (*Right*) in Pennsylvania were barns with a *forebay* typical of Pennsylvania barns, but were later modified for dairy operations. Both have fine glazed-tile silos.



(Left) The bank barn at **Michael** farm is on one of the oldest homesteads of the Pennsylvania side. *(NPS photo by Ken Sandri)*

(Right) The barns of **Schoonover Mountain House** PA served a farmhouse that was enlarged into a boarding house for resort guests.



(Left) and *(Right)* The barns at **Totts Gap** PA adjoin what was once a secluded second home and its grounds. NOT ehte overhang (forebay) on the barn at left. *(NPS photos by Ken Sandri)*