

Why a Barn Tour?

Barns are the story of America. From pioneer, pre-industrial America to the heartland of modern rural America, barns have stood witness to our tale. From tiny log pens cut into wildness to ornate castles in the middle of vast fields, they tell the story of hard work, dedication, aspiration, and creativity.

The barn is one of the most familiar features of the American rural landscape. It is the essence of the American farming tradition. Functionally, a barn is a farm building for processing and storing agricultural products, animals, and implements, but there is an emotional connection to barns that transcends their function. In *The Americanization of the Barn*, Thomas C. Hubka wrote, “Reinforced by its size and its prominent setting near open fields and pastures, the barn is indelibly etched into the collective American consciousness.” By representing tangible links to our past, barns serve as icons of our heritage.

When we preserve a barn, we join a parade of people: those who have gone before, and those who are yet to take their first breath. Barns possess intrinsic value that makes their preservation essential to the tapestry of a community. They impart identity and a sense of place and pride. Barns have a heart, a voice, a soul; the barn’s heart, voice, and soul are also the heart, voice and soul of us as a community, nation, and people.

We are fortunate that barns are recognized as an important part of the heritage of Bucks County. The barns that you will see on this tour still stand because their value has been understood. Unfortunately, many of our historic buildings are still threatened with extinction.

As a not-for-profit land conservation and historic property preservation organization, Heritage Conservancy works to save the barns in the field and the fields around the barn. If not cared for, these cultural sites will be destroyed through neglect or overwhelmed by development. Contributions of time and money help to preserve irreplaceable structures; however, the single most important act may be learning about our rich and colorful heritage. Our organization was motivated to create this barn tour for that very reason. We aim to educate while generating a connection to barns and the history that they represent. Awareness will lead to an appreciation, which will in turn ensure that our history stays on the land and is not confined to museums.

We hope that by learning about and recognizing the beauty of these barns, you will be inspired to help protect them. Please enjoy discovering the story of Bucks County through these iconic structures. Barn voyage!