

Introduction



2014

Iowa's barns. Have you seen them all? Have you a desire to see hundreds of them? This book will take you on a journey around Iowa, examining barns in all 99 counties, as well as some that are gone. There are large ones, small ones, restored ones and some that are now homes and businesses, plus corncribs and silos.

This volume is not simply a photo book or a catalog of barn facts. In many cases the lives of the owners make the barns' stories come alive.

Family lore includes stories of both farm buildings and their owners which provide a vivid picture of the history of agriculture in Iowa. Their history lives on, although every year some barns disappear due to fire, storms, or just old age. Some are carefully dismantled to save the lumber, and others are maintained to be used for livestock or just to preserve them.



Hardin County

2010

Iowa Territory (1838-1846) marked the beginning of the pioneer movement across Iowa as early settlers immigrated from many countries in Europe. Ideas from their native lands often resulted in barns and homes similar to those they left behind. After becoming established on their farms, some returned to Europe and brought back their favorite breeds of horses and other livestock. There are barns today that are over 150 years old, still owned by descendants of these early pioneers.

After the pioneers crossed the Mississippi River they found prairies, native timber, and potholes. They settled, built homes and barns, plowed the prairie sod, cut trees, and drained the marshes.

Some families came with considerable funds, some with ideas bigger than their pocketbooks, and others built simple, practical structures which fit their needs for shelter for their livestock.

Technological advances have resulted in drastic changes in farming. The life of today's farmer is highly automated and easier in many ways, although the size of today's farms and the necessity for expensive equipment are daunting and more demanding than ever. Fewer barns are needed or are being used, but wonderful ones still exist and are being saved/used by descendants of original owners or enthusiastic new owners.

From the old to the new, from the simple to the complex, barns have shaped our rural past. Although modernization has been the death knell for the traditional barn, farms scattered throughout the state are still able to make use of a barn built decades ago.

Take a tour today to see many that still remain as well as some that are gone.



Union County

1979