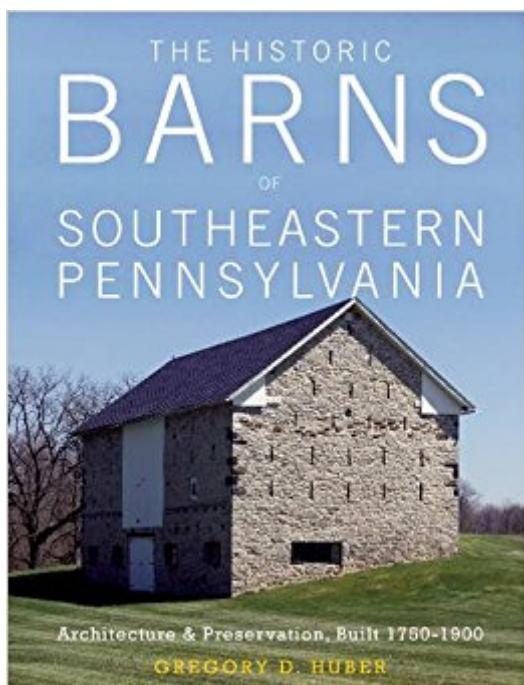


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The Historic Barns Of Southeastern Pennsylvania: Architecture & Preservation, Built 1750–1900



Synopsis

For anyone who has ever admired a barn on an old country lane, this is the story of that barn and many others in Southeastern Pennsylvania, or, specifically, "the hearth," the area east of the Susquehanna River and South of the Blue Mountains. One of the earliest-settled areas in North America, this region of the Keystone State, which includes Lehigh, Bucks, and Lancaster Counties, is home to an astounding 20,000 standing barns, in various states of repair, built from the early 1800s on. Discussed in this text are the primary factors that have determined the fundamental structures and appearances of the six great barn classifications, including forest resources. Other featured topics are architectural aspects and regionalisms, dates of construction, survival of 18th-century examples, mysterious decorations, and barn preservation. Completing this treatise are representative color photographs, building plan sketches, charts conveying the prevalence of types, and a glossary of barn terms.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Schiffer; 1 edition (July 28, 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0764353195

ISBN-13: 978-0764353192

Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 1 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #201,340 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Vernacular #628 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Architecture #2788 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

Customer Reviews

Greg Huber is a barn and house historian, consultant and owner of Past Perspectives and Eastern Barn Consultants, a historical resource company. He has authored more than 210 articles on house and barn architecture and is co-author of two books.

An old barn invokes a feeling of comfort. It's a nostalgic place with numerous possibilities. It can be used to house animals, store equipment, as a workshop, or you can convert it into a home. Walking through it, you begin to think of the people who were there before and wonder

about their thoughts, opinions, and desires. Much of the beginning of the book sounded like an academic thesis. Most of the points made referenced other books and included quoted sections from those books. It made for tedious evening reading prior to retiring. These references might have been better handled with a numbered reference subheader or a numbered reference index at the end of the book. The book really became interesting when the author got into the different barn styles. Each such section was generously exemplified with pictures of barns in the eastern Pennsylvania area. Also included at the end of each barn style section were the actual locations of several barns that typified the style being discussed. This was a handy addition for those that want to see these barns for themselves. After extensive chapters on barn styles, the author got into barn construction. Different joinery and roofing systems were used on different style barns. After explaining the techniques, the author went into the purpose of these construction practices. Many of them were simply preferences stemming from ideas passed on from farmer to farmer, or barn builder to barn builder, in a geographical area. These old barns have a history that can't be overtly seen by looking at them; it can only be insinuated based on the details of their construction and the uses they were put to. But time is running out. As the weather continues to take its toll, more of these structures will deteriorate beyond their owners' financial means to maintain them. Southeastern Pennsylvania barns were originally constructed as income producing structures for the original owners. For them, barn maintenance assured that their barns would be around to produce future income for themselves and their heirs. That is no longer true. In many cases today, it's cheaper to build a new barn that precisely meets the needs of today's farmer and today's farm equipment versus fixing an old outdated barn. Non-farmers who now own these old farmsteads must have the necessary disposable income to support their nostalgic interest in the barns in order to finance repairs and maintenance. In the end, maintaining old barns may not make economic sense for anyone. An owner can probably make more money selling the old barn boards and beams than can be gotten for the property with the dilapidated barn included as part of the sale. If you like reading about American history, *The Historic Barns of Southeastern Pennsylvania* is a book that will add depth to your study. From the influence of different ethnic groups on barn styles to decisions on the materials and the joinery used in their construction, these choices were made by some of the same kinds of people who wrote our Constitution. Farmers were a large part of the economic landscape when this country was formed and greatly influenced the laws and trading decisions of the times. *The Historic Barns of Southeastern Pennsylvania* is a well-researched book. It is a very interesting read that will serve as a reference source well into the future.

I live in Florida now. I had lived in PA before and around the area you were writing. I have been to quite a few of the areas you wrote of. I like barns . Especially the decorated barns. I was a bit sad you didn't give us the Star Barn near Lancaster. It was going to be demolished. But the people got to get together.and numbered the boards so they could put it together again. There will be a Festival for it in June. I was surprised how many barns were in such good condition. I hope they will live on. I never knew how many kinds of building the barns there are. Thank you for showing the barns to people who see them, without seeing them. I hope you keep showing more barns! I volunteered to read and review this book.

This is a beautifully illustrated well researched book on barns in Pennsylvania. There is a lot information in this book. The book is well organized with the different styles of barns, types of construction, terms, and a review of other books for further reading. The author does offer a lot of numbers and statistics but I preferred the history of the styles and the photographs. Reading this book is like taking an armchair trip through the countryside. Anyone with an interest in regional history and agriculture will enjoy this book.

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