

OPTIONAL SIDE TRIP—INCLUDES BARNS # 10 & 11. Details are on the *downloadable tour* on the website (appalachianbarns.org). Note: this will take you to the highest elevation farmstead (over 3700 feet) on the tour & perhaps in the county and the earliest example of the Dutch roof with diagonal siding.

FROM TRUST GENERAL STORE & THE INTERSECTION OF HWY 209 & HWY 63 (30 MINUTES ROUND TRIP)

Trust General Store and Café:
The store is open 7 days. Monday through Friday from 7am to 8pm. Saturday from 8am to 8pm. Sunday from 9am to 5pm. The Café is open Thursday through Saturday from 11am to 8pm and Sunday from 11am to 4pm.

Turn around in the next safe driveway and return to Hot Springs on Hwy 209

Continue on Hwy 63 for 0.4 miles to BARN #9 (Price) on the right side

Turn left onto Hwy 63 and drive for 1.2 miles to BARN #8 (Gardner) on the right side of the road. Note: This one is hard to see with the overgrowth.

Continue on Hwy 209 for 0.8 miles to intersection with Hwy 63 (near Trust General Store)

Continue on Hwy 209 for 0.7 miles to BARN #6 (Reeves) on the right side and BARN #7 (Askew) on the left side of the road

Continue on Hwy 209 for 1.3 miles to BARN #5 (Meadows) on the left side of the road

Continue on Hwy 209 for 3 more miles to BARN #4 (Willett) on left side of the road.

Turn right on Garenflo Gap Road for 0.6 miles to a left turn onto Bluff Mtn Road and continue for 0.2 miles to

BARN #1 (Davis Log Flue-cured) on right and #2 (Davis Log Burley & Livestock) on left

Turn around and return to Hwy 209, turn right and drive for 2.2 miles for BARNS #3 (Lusk) on left side of road

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The Spring Creek Township Barns

The historic barns of the Spring Creek, Bluff, and Meadow Fork communities quietly tell the lifestyle stories of the late 19th to early 20th century rural farms and families. The oldest barns have survived with few family descendants remaining to tell their stories. Thus, the history of these barns is limited, often qualified by the phrase “according to oral tradition” and unknown only through the recollections of community members. Many barns are referred to by a historic owner’s name, yet that barn’s history and ownership may be several generations removed. On rare occasions the name of the builders may be known, such as barn builder Arthur Gunter, or rock mason Clarence Lawson, but in general the barns were built by the owner with the help of neighbors, often influenced by “new” barn designs seen elsewhere.

While very few barns of the 1800s have survived, an important exception is the now rare, flue-cured tobacco barn. Mountain subsistence farming changed dramatically when flue-cured or “bright leaf” tobacco was introduced in the 1870s. The first commercial cash crop in the mountains, it was called flue-cured because it required a specialized wood-fire heated barn built of logs sealed with mud chinking. Several of these very old log barns are visible from the road, retrofitted later for hanging burley tobacco and other uses.

The introduction of burley tobacco in the 1920s replaced the flue-cured era and brought a major change in the function and design of local barns. Prior to this time, all barns were either general purpose livestock barns or small, square, flue-cured barns. With their large hay lofts, open log construction, and lattice siding, the livestock barns were well suited for this new air-cured tobacco and were retrofitted with horizontal tier poles to allow the hanging of the green tobacco. The flue-cured tobacco barns were also adapted by the removal of the clay chinking to allow for better air flow. Very few of today’s farmers are aware of the flue-cured tobacco history of a century ago. The Spring Creek township is unique in its other barn types. While many 19th century hewn log houses remain here, as evidence of the Appalachian hewn-log building tradition, there is a notable absence of barns built with heavily hewn log cribs supporting large timber-framed loft structures above. Instead, **(OVER)**

Historic Barn Tours Madison County, NC



SPRING CREEK TOWNSHIP

As we drive along our country roads we see the many weathered barns dotting the hills and are reminded of lifestyles past. The design, construction and use of these barns tell the history of their evolution and the agricultural heritage of Madison County. The barns remind us of the hard work of generations of farm families and are a testament to their resourcefulness and their relationship to the land. We usually think of tobacco as we pass these barns, and yet tobacco was grown only during the second half of the county’s history. The older 19th and early 20th century barns were the heart of the farm, housing the animals, tools and equipment required for subsistence farming, and represent a craftsmanship long forgotten.



The Spring Creek Township Barns

continued

unhewn, round log barn construction was the norm here and continued well into the 20th century. As in other townships, builders made appropriate use of the abundant chestnut trees dying from the chestnut blight which made its way into Madison County in the 1920s.

Another distinctive barn type here is the small, Dutch gambrel roof barn with flared eaves. The gambrel roof itself is found throughout the county, but the purer Dutch style is represented by a dozen or so barns here, the earliest being the C. J. Justice barn built in 1947, and was likely an influence for subsequent builders. These barns also demonstrate the distinctive prevalence of diagonal board siding, predating diagonal siding use in other townships.

Similar to other townships in Madison County, these farms enjoyed a surge in the construction of burley tobacco barns following WWII, and many of the barns of that period were built exclusively for burley tobacco, with no accommodation for livestock.

The early 20th century use of concrete is another distinctive trait of barn construction here. Sand and lime was typically hauled fifteen miles or more from Hot Springs, by wagon or early truck, and used in a tedious process to form concrete foundations, stone walls and silos.

These beautiful and distinctive barns now stand sentinel as reminders of the hard work and resourcefulness of the previous generations, and their dedication to the land.

OPTIONAL TOUR INFORMATION

is downloadable from the website

For more information on the barns, go to <http://appalachianbarns.org>

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Madison County Tourism Development Authority

- 1 Henry Davis Barn
Log flue-cured tobacco
(late 1800s & before 1924)**
*Near 310 Bluff Mt. Road (on right be-
fore Indian Trails Rd. on left)*
N35-50.504 / W82-52.124



This type of log barn is now extremely rare in Madison County, an example of a log barn used to heat cure “bright leaf” or “flue-cured” tobacco, the first commercial tobacco type introduced to mountain farmers in the 1870s. The spaces between *the* logs were originally filled or “chinked” with clay and rocks to keep the heat from the rock “flue” fire inside, to quickly cure the hanging tobacco leaves. The current owner recalls many years ago removing the clay chinking and adapting it to the air curing of burley tobacco. Many of the chestnut logs, cut before the chestnut blight, still have their original chestnut bark, the only example of mature chestnut bark that people of our generation will likely ever see. These flue-cured tobacco barns consistently measured 21 feet square by 21 feet to the top log, with only slight variations. By 1882 the estimated value of flue-cured tobacco was \$200 per acre, with the average production per household of 4 ½ acres, providing a windfall of cash for mountain families.

- 2 Henry Davis Log Barn
Livestock & burley tobacco
(early 1900s)**
*Near 310 Bluff Mt. Road (on the left be-
fore Indian Trails Rd. on the left)*
N35-50.504 / W82-52.124



This livestock barn represents the typical early 20th century chestnut log livestock barns built during the first half of the 20th century in the Spring Creek township. The log corner notching is the simpler saddle notch that requires less time and skill than the earlier half dovetail notch or V-notch, and represents the later generation of log building in Madison County. This barn includes some logs that have scarring from the chestnut blight disease, indicating that those trees were cut after the chestnut blight infected the chestnut trees of the region, around 1924. Typical of most early 20th century log barns, this one has been adapted for use in the air curing of burley tobacco which became the primary cash crop in the early 1920s, as flue-cured tobacco was being phased out.

NOTE: There are two **OPTIONAL TOURS** which include **BARNS # 10 & 11** and **BARNS #12 & 13**. See the **Map**. The driving directions and information about those two tours are available in **download form from our website—appalachianbarns.org**

- 3 Bonnie Winston Lusk barns
Large round-log burley tobacco
barn & Dutch roof livestock barn
(1942 & 1954)**
8661 NC Highway 209

N35 – 49.064 / W82 – 51.528

This farmstead was first established up the hollow northeast of the house and barns where Joe Lusk built a log house. The large round-log barn was built around 1942, a late example of log barns in the county, built to air cure burley tobacco. The builders ran out of metal roofing because of the WWII metal scarcity and had to roof



one side with the traditional split oak shingles, using chestnut oak. The hewn log smokehouse was moved from the earlier homestead, the poplar logs licked smooth over the years by cows after the salt in the wood. The well-built large gambrel roof livestock barn was built beginning in 1954 and is an excellent example of the purer Dutch gambrel roof and diagonal siding that are a signature feature in this township. Construction of the house was begun in 1890 and finished in 1904.

- 4 Furman Willett log barn
Log barn adapted as livestock
and burley tobacco barn
(late 1800s/1953)**
11461 NC Highway 209
N35-47.520 / W82-52.197



The Furman Willett log barn represents a very common practice in the log barn building history of this and other townships, where an older log barn has been relocated to its current site. The original is thought to have been built in the late 1800s on the mountain across the road and was moved to this site in 1953 and adapted as a livestock and burley tobacco barn. The logs are predominantly chestnut, some with the bark remaining. There are also logs with scars from the 1920s chestnut blight which would indicate that those logs may have been added when the barn was moved, as its function was also changed. The adjacent livestock barn with the gambrel roof was built in the late 1940s. Furman Willet’s father was known to have also grown the earlier flue-cured tobacco until the early ’20’s, and Bull Face chewing tobacco, that was smoke-cured

- 5 Burgin Cemore and Molly Higgs
Meadows Barn
Livestock and general purpose
barn (early 1920s)**
*12815 NC Hwy 209 (across from
junction with Caldwell Mt. Road)*
N35-46.350 / W82-52.418



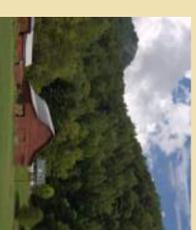
The barn of Burgin and Mollie Meadows represents that of a successful farm and business family. Molly Meadows ran a boarding house for traveling salesmen and schoolteachers, including a hostel during the 1930s. The barn’s stalls housed riding horses belonging to the boarders, as well as the farm animals. This barn features many early 20th century innovations including the use of a continuous poured concrete footing, the unusual use of diagonal siding as sub-sheathing under the horizontal lapped siding, and two storage rooms raised above ground level to avoid flooding from the adjacent creek. It also demonstrates the early use of a gambrel roof including the earliest metal roofing, known as 3-V metal. The loft was retrofitted with tier poles for hanging the newly introduced burley tobacco. While the roof form is gambrel, this is not a true gambrel roof but is supported by interior posts in the loft.

- 6 Homer Reeves Barn
Livestock barn (1953)**
13691 NC Highway 209
N35 – 45.620 / W82 – 52.588



A modern and classic 20th century American livestock barn, this barn was begun in July, 1953 and completed on October 21, as written in the concrete footings, and signed by the builder, Arthur Gunter. Homer Reeves and his son Clyde, who was 26 at the time, designed and drew the plans for this barn, but did not agree on the roof vents at the time. The lumber was milled at the family sawmill from timber cut on the mountain across the valley, owned by their Askew relatives. The concrete silo was built before the barn, and used sand hauled by pick-up truck sixteen miles from the sand pits on the French Broad River bank in Hot Springs. Like most livestock barns, this one was also used for burley tobacco when needed. Loose hay was still in use in 1953 but baled hay replaced it early in this barn’s history. The farmstead also has a massive stone wall that was built early in the settlement period of this valley.

- 7 Eulas “Billy” Askew barn
Gambrel roof livestock barn
(c. 1925)**
13581 NC Highway 209
N35 – 45.626 / W82 – 52.493



The C. C. Askew family was one of the first to settle in this valley in 1820. This classic gambrel roof livestock barn is one of the earliest of its type and sits at the south end of the large “upper flats” bottom land of Spring Creek. It has a true gambrel roof structure in which the roof rafters form a shallow roof truss, allowing the loft area to be free of vertical posts and thus better accommodating the moving and storage of hay. Another innovation of the times in this barn is a vertical pipe that houses the pulley rope for the hay fork mounted on the ridgeline rail. A horse would be stationed in the ground level hallway and walk forward, pulling the loaded hay fork into the large loft area in the floor above. The animal stalls were built to house the large draft horses that Billy Askew used in all aspects of the farm operation, and much of the original draft horse gear is present.

- 8 John Gardner barn
Livestock and general purpose
barn (early 20th century)**
1181 Highway NC 63
N35-44.466 / W82-51.259



Jasper and Tilitha Plemmmons Edds were successful farmers and store owners here on Friezeland Creek in the upper end of this township. Married in 1877, they built the two-story frame house onto an existing two-room log house. Jasper, and later his son-in-law John Gardner, ran the Trust community store and post office down the valley at the junction with NC 209. This large barn was likely built by John Gardner. A large livestock barn, it is over 52 feet across, built of sawn lumber, with a massive rock retaining wall forming the bank at the south end. Large hand-hewn wood sills are placed on rock piers, with hewn plate beams across the tops of the framed walls. Like most livestock barns, it was later adapted for hanging burley tobacco. It is notable for its unusual standing seam metal roofing, some of the earliest metal roofing to be used in this township, and the only standing seam type roofing found to date.

- 9 Josiah Henry Price barn
Burley Tobacco barn (1930s)**
Up the road from 1616 NC Hwy 63
N35 - 44.327 / W82 - 50.928



This is one of Spring Creek’s earliest barns built exclusively for the air curing of burley tobacco. The owner’s mother recalls watching the family harvest tobacco for this barn in the 1930s. The crop of tobacco was grown high on the steep hill, now covered in forest, across the road from the barn. Josiah Price and son David, builders of the barn, installed an ingenious cable zip line to carry the harvested tobacco from the mountain side, down to the barn to be hung. This is a very large burley tobacco barn, measuring sixty feet long, thirty-one feet wide, and twenty-eight feet high. Sawn posts of 4 x 4 inch hemlock sit on large hand-hewn sills on concrete and rock foundation walls. Later burley barn construction used round poles instead of sawn posts. The Price farm includes many older farmstead buildings, including a late 19th century livestock barn with log crib stalls, a rare surviving type in the Spring Creek township.