

## MADISON COUNTY BARN DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

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Common Identity of Barn: John Baird McDevitt  
barn, Johnnie McDevitt barn  
Address of Barn: 691 Upper Brush Creek Rd.,  
Marshall, NC 28753  
GPS Location: N35 50.755 / W82 42.583  
Elevation: 1931'  
Township: Walnut  
Vicinity: Upper Brush Creek, Walnut  
Approx date/decade built: 1935 to 1940

Current Owner: Helen Cole  
803 Upper Brush Creek, Marshall, NC 28753, 828-  
649-3451  
Historic Owner(s): John Baird McDevitt, Johnnie  
McDevitt  
Current Use: equipment storage  
Historic Use: burley tobacco, equipmt., later  
livestock  
Permission to visit property by: Helen Cole

### ORIGINAL BARN characteristics

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#### Integrity

- High
- Medium
- Low

#### Condition

- Good
- Fair
- Deteriorated
- Ruin

Add. Info.:

#### Function of original barn

- general purpose
- livestock/hay
- flue-cured tobacco
- burley tobacco
- bull face tobacco
- dairy
- other

Add. Info.:

#### Type Construction of original barn

- Post and Beam
- timber frame
- mortise and tenon
- sawn lumber
- hewn timbers
- notched logs
- stud frame

Add. Info.: This barn is an early burley tobacco barn built exclusively for burley tobacco, with additional uses as needed. It is the largest known burley barn in Madison County, at this writing, and measures 80' x 40', and 7 tier pole levels high.

Original siding materials

- milled boards
- lattice
- exposed logs
- board and batten
- metal
- shingles
- other

Add. Info.: many of the siding boards are large, exceeding 12" wide, and many are chestnut.

Orientation of siding

- angled on diagonal
- vertical
- horizontal

Add. Info.:

Roof pitch or slope of original barn: 7.5 / 12

Roof type of original barn

- gable
- broken gable
- gambrel
- shed
- monitor
- cupola
- other

Add. Info.:

Roofing materials of original barn

- split wood shingles
- 3-V metal
- 3-u metal
- 5-V metal
- stamped metal shingle
- tar paper
- unknown
- other

Add. Info.:

#### Roof framing of original barn

- round pole rafters
- milled rafters
- gambrel shallow trusses
- gambrel with post and beam support
- round purlins

Add. Info.: 2x6 sawn rafters

#### Foundation of original barn

- Dry laid stone
- wood sills on rock piers
- mortared stone
- concrete
- concrete block
- columns/wood piers
- posts on concrete footings

Add. Info.: this is an example of an extensive use on poured concrete, unusual for a barn

#### Flooring of original barn

- dirt floor
- wood flooring
- concrete slab

Add. Info.:

#### Species of wood used in original barn

- chestnut
- other, list known species

Add. Info.: oak, poplar, pine, hemlock; siding appears to be predominantly chestnut

#### Hinges

- leather
- wooden
- wrought iron
- commercial metal
- rubber
- other

Add. Info.:

#### Fasteners

- wire nails
- cut nails
- wrought spikes
- wood pegs
- other

Add. Info.:

Tobacco tier poles vertical spacing

+/- 2 feet

+/- 3 feet

+/- 4 feet

other, list

Add. Info.: 42" average

Additional traditional features, list:

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS characteristics

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Has the original barn been altered or added to? Yes

Description of alterations and additions: a large shed roof addition was built in the mid-1900's to expand the area for hanging burley, 20' wide by 72' long. Also, a corn crib, built soon after the original barn was built.

Condition of alterations

good

fair

poor

ruin

Add. Info.:

Function of barn alterations and additions

general purpose

livestock/hay

flue-cured tobacco

burley tobacco

bull face tobacco

dairy

other

Add. Info.: equipment storage, silage storage

Type Construction alterations and additions

Post and Beam

timber frame

mortise and tenon

sawn lumber

hewn timbers

notched logs

stud frame

Add. Info.:

Siding materials of alterations and additions

- milled boards
- lattice
- exposed logs
- board and batten
- metal
- shingles
- other

Add. Info.:

Orientation of siding

- angled on diagonal
- vertical
- horizontal

Add. Info.:

Roof pitch or slope of alterations and additions: 2.3 / 12

Roof type of barn alterations and additions

- gable
- broken gable
- gambrel
- shed
- monitor
- cupola
- other

Add. Info.:

Roofing materials of alterations and additions

- split wood shingles
- 3-V metal
- 3-u metal
- 5-V metal
- stamped metal shingle
- tar paper
- unknown
- other

Add. Info.:

Roof framing of alterations and additions

- round pole rafters
- milled rafters

- gambrel shallow trusses
  - gambrel with post and beam support
  - round purlins
- Add. Info.:

Foundation of alterations and additions

- Dry laid stone
  - wood sills on rock piers
  - mortared stone
  - concrete
  - concrete block
  - columns/wood piers
  - posts on concrete footings
- Add. Info.:

Flooring of alterations and additions

- dirt floor
  - wood flooring
  - concrete slab
- Add. Info.:

Species of wood used in alterations and additions

- chestnut
  - other, list known species
- Add. Info.: locust, pine, oak, hemlock

Hinges/ alterations and additions

- leather
  - wooden
  - wrought iron
  - commercial metal
  - rubber
  - other
- Add. Info.: NA

Fasteners/ alterations and additions

- wire nails
  - cut nails
  - wrought spikes
  - wood pegs
  - other
- Add. Info.:

Tobacco tier poles vertical spacing/ alterations and additions

+/- 2 feet  
 +/- 3 feet  
 +/- 4 feet  
 other, list  
Add. Info.:

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Outbuildings: utility building across the driveway, gable roof

**Setting and/or Surrounding Land Use:** This is a large farm that was once part of a farm of many hundreds of acres, in a broad bottomland valley of upper Brush Creek.

**Historic Information:** Mrs. Helen Cole, born 1940, remembers that the barn has been there her entire life. It was built by her grandfather, John Baird McDevitt, who died in 1953. (buried at Red Hill Church) The addition was built later for silage storage and burley tobacco curing. Seen across the broad bottomland of Upper Brush Creek, the John Baird McDevitt barn is the largest, and one of the earliest barns in Madison County built for air-curing burley tobacco as its primary use. Prior to the 1930's, burley tobacco was cured in the lofts of livestock barns or in tall log barns that were adapted from flue-cured tobacco barn types. John Baird McDevitt, known as "Beard" to his friends, along with his brother Roy McDevitt, accumulated much of the land in the Upper Brush Creek valley during their lives, and grew or leased many acres of tobacco. The barn is a full 80 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 37 feet high, with a large burley and equipment shed addition. The height allows for at least seven tier pole levels, higher than most other burley barns in the county. An unusual characteristic is the lack of ventilation for air flow, necessary for effective air curing of the tobacco, perhaps indicating that the need for air flow was not yet fully understood for this new type of barn. Another feature of this barn is the well-constructed concrete foundation.

Date Photos Taken: Aug 17, 2015

Submitted By

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