

MADISON COUNTY BARN DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

Common Identity of Barn: Richard Gahagan
Address of Barn: 3735 NC Highway 208 and
Stonefly Road
GPS Location: N35-56.311.W82-44.601
Elevation: 1707'
Township: Laurel
Vicinity: Belva area

Approx date/decade built: 1920 to 1940
Current Owner: Michael and Dixie Thomas
Historic Owner(s): Richard Gahagan
Current Use: storage/abandoned
Historic Use: early burley tobacco or Bull Face
tobacco
Permission to visit property by: Mike Gahagan

Setting and/or Surrounding Land Use: This land is part of a large tract owned by George Robert Washington Gahagan and contiguous to other tracts that run from Walnut north to the TN state line that once included 8000+ acres. The oldest Gahagan cemetery is adjacent to this property. The current owner (is) a Gahagan descendant.

Historic Information: Family members do not know the age of this barn. Being a tobacco barn, it is not older than the large Gahagan livestock barn. It has the somewhat atypical tier pole spacing.

A third and earlier type of tobacco raised in this area, called Bull Face, was raised for chewing tobacco marketed in twists. This type of tobacco, also called dark tobacco, grew only 36" +/- tall, and may account for the 39" tier pole spacing.

The Bull Face tobacco was smoke cured by building a fire on the dirt floor of the barn composed of green branches that smoke heavily but never ignite, thus slowly smoking the tobacco. Other material was added to the smoking to add flavor, such as apple culls and cherry bark.

The barn was lastly used for burley tobacco and likely has been since burley tobacco has been grown on this land, beginning in the 1920's.

ORIGINAL BARN characteristics

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 - possible
- dairy
- other

Add. Info.: Based on other similar barns, this barn may have been built as a smoking barn for Bull Face chewing tobacco. It was used for burley tobacco, with the tier poles spaced too close for burley, or spaced for early burley that was much smaller than later burley stems.

Rectangular log barn, 34 feet 2 inches X 22 feet 2 inches +/- . Spacing of tier poles is 36" to 39" ave. vertical, possibly the spacing for Bull Face or early, small burley tobacco. There are 6 tiers of tier poles to the ridge line. Log diameter ranges from 12 inches to 8 inches, the log walls being 9 to 10 logs high, and are an uncommon saddle notch. Wire nails and commercial hinges are present. Rafters are 2x4s at 3 feet O.C. +/- . Collar ties are present near the ridgeline, an uncommon feature.

Bull Face tobacco was raised for chewing tobacco marketed in twists. There was also a "factory" in Mars Hill for processing Bull Face tobacco. This type of tobacco, also called dark tobacco, grew only 36" +/- tall, using spacing of 36 to 39" tier pole spacing for hanging the sticks of drying stalks of leaves.

Type Construction of original barn

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

Add. Info.: an unusual framed structure above the large log crib that is not stud framed but uses combination of vertical, diagonal and horiz framing members on which are nailed board siding. Unusually large log barn, 9 to 10 logs high on the first level, composed of white pine logs, 34+ feet long on long side and 22+ feet long on short side, saddle-notched on truncated pyramidal cast concrete piers.

Original siding materials

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

Add. Info.:

Orientation of siding

- angled on diagonal
- vertical
- horizontal

Add. Info.: Unusually large log barn, 9 to 10 logs high on the first level, composed of white pine logs, 34+ feet long on long side and 22+ feet long on short side, saddle-notched on truncated pyramidal cast concrete piers.

Roof pitch or slope of original barn: 7.5 and 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.: original roofing looks to have been roofing tar paper on continuous 1" thick sheathing boards, unusual.

Roof framing of original barn

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

Add. Info.: 24" OC

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.: cast concrete piers, tapered, very unusual

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.: various, white pine, oak, some chestnut, black pine etc.

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: 34" to 39"
 - +/- 4 feet
 - other, list
- Add. Info.:

Additional traditional features, list:

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS characteristics: no alterations or additions except for metal roofing, assumed to have replaced asphalt tar paper roofing.

Outbuildings: none

Date Photos Taken: January 30, 2014

Setting and/or Surrounding Land Use:

Submitted By

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