Preserving Pennsylvania’s Decorated Barns

Techniques for Restoring and Exploring These Community Resources

Patrick Donmoyer,
Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center, Kutztown University
“Schtanne” (Stars) & “Blumme” (Flowers)
Die Schtanne

Die Blumme
Berks County Farmscape
A Relationship with the Land
An Expression of Community
“Star Painter” Milton Hill (1887-1972)
An Old Weathered Ghost
Eric Claypoole
Leiby-Sunday Farm in 2010
Hex Tour Association
Kutztown Folk Festival
Kutztown University Foundation
Heritage Center, KU
LINKING LEHIGH AND NORTHERN BERKS COUNTIES
HEX HIGHWAY
OLD U.S. ROUTE
22
The Gay Dutch Homestead

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Tourist & Convention Bureau
(A division of the Chamber of Commerce)
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in cooperation with Dutch Hex Tour Assoc.

HEX BARN ART TOUR
Take a Ride for a spell & tickle your fancy!

GREATER READING
Convention & Visitors Bureau
Take a Ride

"Enjoy a self-driving tour through northern
Berks County & discover the
unique American art form known as
Hex Signs!"

Pennsylvania
Dutch
HEX SIGN TOUR

Map and Tour Guide
to the
HEX SIGN BARNs
RESTAURANTS
HOTELS, MOTELS
CAMPGROUNDS
FESTIVALS
ATTRACTIONS
along the
HEX HIGHWAY

Old Route 22, Bethel to Allentown
Berks County, Pennsylvania
1-800-HEXTOUR
PA Dutch Hex Tour Association
Pennsylvania Dutch Hex Tour: A Tour Map of Northern Berks County Along the Hex Highway

“Standing wonderfully proud and tall, the majestic barns of the Pennsylvania Dutch Country are decorated in a unique manner quite unlike anywhere else in America. Images of stars painted in brilliant colors serve as focal points in the farmscapes of southeastern Pennsylvania. Large enough to be seen from great distances, these so-called hex signs, or barn stars accent an otherwise ordinary agricultural building, elevating it beyond mere utility to a level of folk art. Many of these designs are celestial, depicting sunbursts and geometric stars with varying numbers of points. Other designs are floral, featuring radial bursts of petals in organic patterns. In a not-so-distant past, these barn decorations saturated the rural landscape of southeastern Pennsylvania, and only a fraction of those historical examples have survived to the present day. In the 1950’s, with the rise of regional tourism, the art form changed from the strictly geometric designs found on barns to include other folk art motifs such as hearts, flowers, and birds. It also became popular to assign meanings to each of these modern designs. Although no one quite knows what the first barn painter had in mind when they painted stars on the barn, it is easy to recognize an interest and reverence for the heavens and the forces of nature in folk art.”

From HEX SIGNS: Myth and Meaning in Pennsylvania Dutch Barn Stars, by Patrick Donnoyer. Available online at www.kutztown.edu/pgchc

The Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center
Kutztown University
22 Luckenbill Road, Kutztown, PA 19530
610-683-1389 • www.kutztown.edu/pgchc

The Dutch Hex Tour Association, Inc. • P.O. Box 306, Kutztown, PA 19530 • 610-683-1597 • www.hexsigntour.com
Hex Barn Art Tour

A Self-driving Tour of Fancy Dutch Country Folk Barn Art

We recommend starting early, as the tour will take much of the day, if you choose to enjoy the attractions along the way.

Miles to Location

1.6 PA German Cultural Heritage Center, 22 Luckenbill Road, Kutztown PA 19530, www.kutztown.edu/community/pspnc
0.0 Kutztown Road and Crystal Cave Road TO TOUR START — zero your odometer.
0.6 On right
0.9 On right — facing Sharadin Road
1.7 Bear right onto Crystal Cave Road
1.8 On right
3.3 Crystal Cave www.crystalcavepa.com
5.0 Stuttmann Farm (on right)
5.4 Dreibleib's Farm (on left, rear)
6.0 Turn left on Rt. 143 S
6.6 On left, rear
7.1 On right
8.3 Turn right on Rt. 662 N
8.6 On right, facing Gift Road
9.7 On left
12.4 On left
12.5 Turn right onto Windsor Castle Road
12.6 Christian Farm (on right and left)
14.2 On right onto Virginville Road
14.2 On left at intersection
14.4 Estling Farm (on left)
14.5 Adam Farm (on left)
15.1 Adam Farm (on left)
15.3 Miller Farm (on left)
15.5 Miller Farm (on left)
17.0 Turn left onto Rt. 143 N
17.0 Sunday Farm (on left)
17.8 Leiby Farm (on left)
19.0 Dreibleib's Covered Bridge (on left)
20.5 Turn left onto Old Rt 22 (Hex Highway)
20.8 Dietrich Eck Restaurant (at corner)
20.8 Turn right onto Rt. 143 N
21.0 On left, continue on Rt 143, past Rt 78
21.8 Killy Rocks—glacier boulder deposit. Follow signs to the Blue Rocks Family Campground, 618-759-6166
www.bluerocksfamilycampground.com — continue tour by returning to Rt. 143 N
22.1 Kislar/Snyder Farm (on left)
23.7 Ida Bond/Shank Farm (on left)
24.0 Turn left onto Pine Creek Road
24.9 Hawk Valley Farm (on left)
25.8 Schaefer Farm (on left)
26.0 Turn right onto Hawk Mountain Road
26.2 Turn left onto New Bethel Church Road
26.5 Wessner Farm (on right)
26.9 Turn left onto Old Philadelphia Pike
27.0 Loobenauer/Countryside Inn (on right)
Make a turn to return to New Bethel Church

Get lost in history...

The birth of the hex signs was long believed to be in the mid-1800s when the affordability of paints gave green lights to farmers' creative sides; however, new research suggests hex signs existed in an earlier historic and have been discovered upon wooden stools and vases as far back as the late 1700s. Since the height of the hex in the early 20th century, parents and children have lost interest in the country's historic barns and the heath. Now wonder where remaining today are protected and celebrated not only as Berks County treasures but as American treasures as well.

Interpreting Hex barn art...

In the 1950s, became popular to ascribe meaning to the hex signs painted on our barns. Many of these explanations associated with the symbols are based on the interpretation and personal beliefs and practices of the 20th century. Many of the design interpretations can be directly linked to hex sign artists like Johnny Claypool, Johnny Ott and Jacob Zoeller. Popular or tourist meanings of hex barn art include:

- Pennsylvania Americana Region - Great stuff happens here!
Somerset County
Pennsylvania Barn
Stars and Decorations

The Frontier Barn Quilt Trail
Of Fulton County, Pennsylvania

Driving Tour
Map & Guide

NEW locations!
Follow the newly expanded trail through Perry, Juniata and, NOW Mifflin, counties!

Perry, Mifflin & Juniata Counties
A PCCA Arts-in-Education Program
Residency

“Thanks for taking me out of math class.”
- Quote from a student who was unwillingly using geometry to design a quilt pattern.

The Perry County Council of the Arts’ Quilt Mural Trail is a loop of 29 8’ x 8’ painted quilts that are mounted on barns and buildings along Perry, Juniata, and Mifflin County roadways. Students from each of these counties participated in this arts-residency program.

Six years in the making, the Quilt Mural Trail is a symbol of cultural identity, community pride and artistic spirit, connecting the county to its rich history and folk art tradition. Under the mentorship of quilting artist-in-residence Denise Hoke, students participated in the cross-curricular initiative to create this Central Pennsylvania community project. Combining history, geometry and art, the students researched, designed, and painted each quilt with great care and pride.

Thank You!

Quilt Barn residencies were made possible through the generosity of:

- Bella Vista Massage and Spa
- Brookmere Winery
- Cocalumus Creek Disposal Services
- Cultural Enrichment Fund
- East Juniata School District
- Greenwood School District
- Harrel Mages
- Juniata Cultural Arts Committee
- Juniata School District
- Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
- Perry County Community Foundation of Central Pennsylvania
- The Foundation for Ethnically Diverse Communities
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- Newport School District
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- Susquenita School District
- West Perry School District

And through the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) Program:

- American Sentinel Insurance Co.
- Avalon Insurance Company
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- Dumer, Inc.
- Edelbergs, Inc.
- First National Bank of PA
- Orrstown Bank
- Penn Bank
- PNC Bank
- Renew Bank
- United Concordia
- Weis Markets

The Artist

Quilting artist Denise Hoke has spent more than 35 years studying with veteran Amish, Mennonite and modern journeyman quilters. Since 1978, she has maintained her own studio in Perry County and has been a residency and teaching artist with Perry County Council of the Arts (PCCA) for more than 10 years. She regularly participates in juried art and craft shows, selling her original quilts and wall hangings, and oversees hands-on community quilting projects at the Little Buffalo Festival and the Juniata-Juniata Arts Festival.

In 1998, Denise was named PCCA Artist of the Year.
Cut-out Ventilators or Swallow Holes
Victorian Accents & Trimwork
Western PA
Barn Star
Appliqué
“The Shadow Moves, The Works Remain”