

Guenter Barn

Middleville, Michigan



The Past: The barn was built in 1898 by Barnhardt "Barney" Guenter. In 1880, Barney had immigrated from the Black Forest region of Germany to America. His occupation in Germany was that of a shoemaker. Coming to America, he turned to agriculture. Barney had purchased 40 acres of farmland in 1895, and by 1913 he owned 80 acres. The barn was a hay storage barn. Barney and his wife Catherine raised five children. The Guenter's livestock included 4 horses and 10 cows. It is surmised that with that many cows that they sold milk as well as hay. Barnhardt Guenter died in 1950

A Unique feature-The Hay Rack Elevator:

In order to store hay or grain in the upper lofts, a hay rack elevator was used. This device was patented in 1888 by William Fitchit of Pinnebog, Michigan. When a wagon was driven into the barn, ropes or cables were attached to the wagon; a second set of ropes was attached to the wagon's team of horses. The team of horses were unhitched from the wagon and directed to move forward; thus, hoisting the wagon to the upper loft levels for offloading. Wooden pegs, called "paws", were part of the design to prevent unwanted reverse movement.

Barn Facts:

- Built in 1898
- 5 separate bays
- Hand hewn and rough sawn beams
- Stone foundation
- Patented hay elevator and track lifted hay wagons to upper lofts
- Primary use was hay storage
- Dismantled in 2014

