



Photo caption: The Manchester Round Barn, built in 1908 by Horace Duncan, and located at 29249 St. Rt. 385, near Lakeview, was visited in September by Members of the Mercer County Historical Society: Cheryl Naumann, Bill Vondrell, Joyce and Alvin Alig, with Tim Manchester and his daughter Susan, as hosts, standing 2nd and 3rd from the left.

OUR OLD BOOK CASE

By Joyce L. Alig, President, Mercer County Historical Society

Thanksgiving has been a **time** for families. Family homesteads and the big old barns on family farms represent a way of life in Ohio. Between 1990 and 1993, I took an interest in old barns, and I photographed over 2000 big old barns in Mercer County, and under the Mercer County Historical Society, we published the book, *“Those Magnificent Big Old Barns of Mercer County, Ohio.”* I studied books about old barns, including the books *“Round Barns of Indiana,”* and *“Round Barns of Iowa.”* I also studied Round barns in other states, including Ohio. I always wanted to visit the Manchester Barn in Auglaize County.

When I happened to have the good fortune of meeting Susan Manchester, I immediately asked her if she was related to the Manchester Family Barn of Auglaize County. Susan invited the Mercer County Historical Society Members to visit their Manchester barn in September. Standing at the foot of the bank leading to the barn, we were fascinated not only by the size of this Round Barn, but also with the fine maintenance of the historic barn. This is one of the finest Round Barns I have ever visited.

When our Mercer County Historical Society Members visited this historic barn, Tim Manchester and his daughter Susan shared the barn's history. The first land was purchased in part by their Great Great Grandfather Philander in 1858; his son Jason was born in 1853. Tim and Martha Manchester are the fifth generation of Manchesters to live on this farm. Caleb Wilson, their son-in-law, is the sixth generation of **this family to farm**. The Manchester Family Barn represents several generations working together and sharing a common bond with Midwestern Ohio.

The Manchester Round Barn has been recognized by the Magazine, "*Heart of Ohio*," in their May/June 2017 Issue, by writer Bill Smith. Smith provided positive reasons for using a round barn, in that it offered simplicity in storage as well as the handling and distribution of feed to the livestock. The round structure resisted strong winds during a storm. The round roof was self-supporting and allowed a larger area for storage of hay and straw. One challenge of using round barns was having a silo at the center of the barn which made for difficulty in filling the silo.

In the late 1990's, Tim Manchester and two partners established a company called "*Cornbelt Hybrids*," which processed soybean and wheat seeds for planting. The Cornbelt Hybrids operated out of Saint Marys, Ohio. Monsanto purchased the company in 2006. Today, this magnificent big old round barn still serves as a storage area. Writer Bill Smith recognized that this barn stands as a monument to an era when ingenuity and hard work were the trademarks of the early 20th Century Farmer.

The Manchester family ingenuity and the hard work did not end with this landmark in Auglaize County. The tradition continues with the Manchester family. Susan graduated from The Ohio State University in 2010, with Degrees in Psychology and Political Science, and earned her Masters Degree in Political Management from The George Washington University. Susan Manchester is carrying on the position of Leadership in parts of Auglaize, Shelby, and Darke Counties, and all of Mercer County as she is a Candidate for State Representative in Ohio's 84th House District.

[Mercer County Historical Society President Joyce Alig, may be contacted at 3054 Burk-St. Henry Road, Saint Henry, OH 45883, or hista1iq@bright.net or 419-678-2614]