“Those who seek the spirit of America might do well to look first in the countryside,” wrote historian Eric Sloane in his book, *An Age of Barns*. Our pioneer forefathers had a deep and enduring relationship with the land, and Ohio’s rural landscapes are filled with examples of finely crafted structures of wood, brick, iron, and stone they built to meet the needs of the farming communities around the Buckeye State. Many of these structures—barns, grist-mills, and bridges—are still used, and in a few areas of Ohio, notably the Amish Country centered in Holmes County, the rural landscape has remained remarkably unchanged for more than a century.

Many old barns remain standing in America, a testament to our agrarian roots and the construction skills of our pioneer ancestors, and they are irresistible subjects for artists and photographers. Perhaps it’s the way they stand tall,
defying the elements for a century or more. Perhaps it’s the varied patterns of
the weathered wooden boards or the intricate framing of the huge oak beams
that support the barn. Or perhaps it’s the small army of creatures, great and
small—horses, cows, goats, dogs, cats, rats and mice, barn owls, songbirds, bats,
and insects—that inhabit the barn. “Barns,” wrote Eric Sloane, “are the shrines
of a good life, and ought to be remembered.”

Ohio has as varied an assortment of barns as most states, and although doz-
zens of them succumb to the ravages of time each year, thousands of barns
more than a century old still exist throughout the state, many of them still in
use. Some are Pennsylvania bank barns, built on a slope or with a ramp en-
trance, with an overhanging roof, called a forebay, on the opposite side. Others
are Dutch barns, Appalachian crib barns, Wisconsin dairy barns, English
barns, ramp-shed barns, and even round and polygonal barns. Especially com-
mon in the Buckeye State are Mail Pouch barns, reminders of a time when
tobacco was king and chewing tobacco had not lost its social respectability.

Just as the barn was the focal point for many farming activities, the grist-
mill was often the centerpiece of the rural village, and the miller was one of
the most important people in the community. Most gristmills incorporated a
waterwheel to provide power to turn the millstones used to grind grain into
flour and meal, which required that they be located on rivers, streams, or
lakes. In the mid-1800s, Ohio was home to hundreds of working mills, but
today there are fewer than a dozen operating gristmills in the state. Several
are featured in this chapter.

Few scenes evoke America’s pioneer past as vividly as a freshly painted
covered bridge spanning a river or stream. Many country roads followed water-
ways, and geographers have estimated that as many as 12,000 covered bridges
once existed in the United States. Today only about 800 remain, mostly in the
Northeast and Midwest. Pennsylvania has the most, with about 230 covered
bridges, and Ohio is second, with about 140.

Why were the bridges covered? One fanciful explanation was that the cover
made the bridge look like a barn, which made it less threatening to horses and
cattle passing over the bridge. A more likely reason was to protect the wooden
structure of the bridge so that it wouldn’t rot, or as one old bridge builder re-
marked, “Our bridges were covered, my dear sir, for the same reason that
belles wore hoop skirts and crinolines—to protect the structural beauty that
was seldom seen but nevertheless appreciated!”
No two covered bridges are identical. Of special interest is the design of the sides of the bridge, which support the roof and transfer the weight of the moving vehicle to the bridge abutments. This part of the bridge is called the truss, and covered bridges in the United States feature eighteen distinct truss designs, many of which can be found in Ohio. Some trusses, like the Howe and multiple kingpost, are common. Other designs, such as Wernwag, Haupt, and Bowstring trusses, have only a few remaining examples.

In addition to covered bridges, Ohio has dozens of historic iron, steel, and concrete bridges, as well as a few sandstone bridges that are more than two hundred years old. Several of these interesting and photogenic old bridges are featured in this chapter.

Although Ohio has lost more than a third of its farmland in the past century, there are still 76,000 farms in Ohio, occupying 14 million acres, or more than 50 percent of the total land area of the state. Corn, soybeans, dairy products, chickens, eggs, and hogs are the main products of Ohio farms, but you can also find orchards, berry farms, mushroom farms, vegetable farms, and tobacco farms, as well as ranches that raise beef cattle, sheep, bison, llamas, and alpacas. Some areas of the state, including north-central and western Ohio, are largely rural, and farms of more than a thousand acres are not uncommon. In eastern and southern Ohio, where the terrain is more rugged and soils are thin and poor, smaller hill farms dominate the countryside.

Ohio is also home to the world’s largest group of Amish-Mennonite farmers, with more than 55,000 Amish concentrated in and around Holmes County in north-central Ohio and Geauga County in northeast Ohio. The Amish practice traditional farming methods little changed from those of their sixteenth-century German and Swiss ancestors. They avoid electricity and modern farming technology in favor of horse-drawn machinery and manual labor, and they can be seen driving their horse-drawn black buggies through pastoral countryside that in some parts of Ohio is reminiscent of a Currier and Ives print. Although many visitors view the Amish as “quaint,” their lifestyle is family-centered, efficient, and profitable. In 2001, I attended an Amish barn raising near Mount Hope in Holmes County, during which several hundred Amish carpenters erected a huge dairy barn in little more than half a day. An Amish friend noted that if the “English” (non-Amish) were faced with the same task, it would take at least a month to figure out who should be on the planning committee that would decide how to build the barn.
TIPS ON PHOTOGRAPHING BARRNS, BRIDGES, AND MILLS

Though serendipity will occasionally present you with unexpected photo opportunities, it is no substitute for research and planning. I have included numerous references at the end of this chapter that will help you locate many of Ohio’s most picturesque barns, bridges, and gristmills; use these resources as an aid to planning your rural photo trips.

In addition to a high-quality Ohio gazetteer, such as the DeLorme, and perhaps a copy of this book, a good pair of binoculars is an excellent investment for the rural photographer. They are invaluable for spotting and examining barns and other structures from a distance, as well as for birding and general nature study. In a pinch, you can use your camera and a telephoto lens, but they are not as comfortable or convenient for prolonged use as a good pair of binoculars.

Most bridges on public roads are easily accessible, but barns and mills are usually on private property and you should always get permission before taking photographs. If you think the photographs may have potential as stock images, try to obtain a property release from the owner or his or her representative.

When you first visit a barn, bridge, or gristmill, take time to walk around the structure and examine it from all directions, previewing different angles with a handheld camera, preferably equipped with a wide-angle zoom lens such as the 16–85mm (DX) or 24–70mm (FX) Nikkors. If you own a GPS unit, use it to record the location of the structure for future reference.

Take along a full complement of lenses for rural photography; I have used everything from a 12mm wide-angle to a 600mm telephoto lens to photograph barns, bridges, and rural scenes. A polarizing filter can also be quite useful for suppressing unwanted reflections and intensifying colors.

Perspective control is an important aspect of photographing structures such as barns and mills. Whenever you tilt your camera away from an axis that is perpendicular to the building, you create perspective distortion to some extent, and the edges of the building will converge. The more you tilt the camera up or down, the more convergence will occur. You can use this convergence to deliberately distort the planes of the barn, bridge, or mill to create a desired effect in your photograph. Or, you can ensure that your camera is positioned at ninety degrees to the plane of the wall, so that vertical surfaces will remain vertical in the photograph. The choice is yours.
Sometimes you must photograph from above or below the structure, and some degree of convergence is unavoidable. If you have deep pockets, you can purchase a “tilt-shift” lens, such as the Nikon 24mm, 45mm, and 85mm PC-E, or the Canon 17mm, 24mm, and 90mm TSE lenses. These amazing lenses allow you to raise or lower the lens relative to the direction the camera is pointing, which corrects perspective convergence, and you can also tilt the lens to help maximize (or minimize) depth-of-field. Tilt-shift lenses are useful if you plan to do a great deal of architectural photography, but they are expensive ($2,000 or more).

Another approach is to use the “Crop” command in Photoshop, together with the “Transform” option, to correct the perspective digitally on your computer. Because you will lose part of the image on the left and right when applying this technique, make sure you use a wider-angle lens setting or step back a little to be sure you have extra coverage at the perimeter of the barn or bridge to compensate for the edge cropping that results when you adjust the digital image in this manner.

Rural photographers are always chasing the best light, which usually occurs during the first and last hours of the day. I live about an hour’s drive from the world’s largest Amish population in Holmes County, Ohio, and my photographic forays into this pastoral domain are invariably timed so that I arrive at least a half hour before dawn. I’m hoping for a beautiful sunrise or a calm morning when layers of fog fill the hollows. Great light is capricious and fleeting, especially on clear days in summer, when the finest lighting is often gone by an hour after sunrise and won’t return until late in the evening.

When photographing rural scenes, I generally avoid white skies, though overcast weather can be great for close-ups of details of barns and bridges, as well as for portraits of farmers and their livestock. In winter, when farmland is snow covered, a white sky may impart a quiet mood to the scene. Overcast lighting is also fitting for barns or bridges that are surrounded by heavy foliage, which on bright clear days produces a checkerboard of harsh highlights and shadows.

On sunny days, try to avoid photography from midmorning to midafternoon, when glare and stark lighting will prevail. By all means, take record shots, and scout the scene for good angles and compositions, but if possible plan to return when the light is more conducive to expressive photography. Frontal lighting is flat, creating a “picture postcard” look, and most rural structures favor sidelight, in which shadows add depth. I also favor farm vistas that are
backlit, a lighting that emphasizes the lay of the land and can impart a magical mood to the scene. When shooting directly into the light, be sure to use a lens hood and shade the lens with your hand to avoid getting flare spots in the picture.

16-Sided Barn, Freeport, Harrison County

Location: 75540 Skull Fork Road, Freeport, OH 42973. Tel: (740) 658-3891
Website: www.visitharrisoncounty.org/PointsOfInterest.htm
GPS Coordinates: 40.192728N 81.271377W

About a mile and a half south of Freeport along Skull Fork Road in rural Harrison County stands one of only three 16-sided barns in America. The barn was built in 1924 and received a new roof and a bright red paint job in 2008. This is one of the most distinctive barns in Ohio and well worth a visit if you are in the Freeport area.

There is often a jumble of odds and ends stacked outside the barn, and to my eye this barn is best photographed from the lane about a hundred feet south, where a pasture and old fence make good foreground elements and help hide some of the clutter around the barn entrance.

Early morning or late afternoon are good times to photograph this unusual barn, which looks good against a blue sky. If you enjoy covered bridges, you may want to visit the Skull Fork Bridge, about a mile south of the 16-sided barn, near Skull Fork Road.

Amish Country

Location: Holmes and Geauga Counties (mostly)
Website: http://www.visitamishcountry.com
GPS Coordinates: Multiple sites

The epicenter of Ohio’s Amish population is Holmes County; smaller numbers of Amish also live in Stark, Wayne, Tuscarawas, Coshocton, and Knox Counties. This is hilly terrain, with a few major roads, mainly State Route 39, State Route 241, and State Route 62, along with many smaller paved roads and hundreds of narrow unpaved dirt roads that can be tricky to drive in snowy winter weather. The major towns along State Route 39 in
Holmes County are Millersburg, Berlin, Walnut Creek, and Sugarcreek, and these towns are usually crowded with tourists from midmorning through late afternoon during summer, especially on weekends. From a photographic viewpoint, you will do well to avoid these tourist traps and spend your time exploring the quieter areas and dirt roads around Charm, New Bedford, Fredericktown, Mount Hope, and Kidron. The hilly country around Charm and New Bedford is especially scenic, and a morning or afternoon photographing in this area, followed by a hearty lunch or dinner at an Amish restaurant, is one of Ohio photography’s finest experiences. When you drive the narrow dirt roads, always be on the lookout for Amish buggies, and adjust your speed accordingly.

Ohio’s second-largest Amish community is clustered around Burton, Buncyburg, Huntsburg, Mesopotamia, and Middlefield in eastern Geauga and northern Trumbull Counties. The terrain is flatter and less pastoral here than in Holmes County, from which most of the Geauga and Trumbull Amish originally came. Much smaller Amish communities can be found in a few other Ohio locations, notably Allen County in northwest Ohio and Adams County in southern Ohio.

As a landscape photographer, there are few things I enjoy more than spending a day photographing the countryside in Holmes County during spring, when the Amish are plowing and planting, or during summer and fall, when they are harvesting their crops. Many of the images I take are wide-angle views of farms or pictures of livestock in pastures, destined for use in a book project or my next Ohio Places calendar, but I also enjoy using a 70–200mm or 200–400mm image stabilized zoom lens to discretely photograph Amish people engaged in their daily lives. Occasionally, I compose an attractive view that includes a road, and wait for an Amish buggy to come along the road so I can include it in the scene. Usually, I hand-hold the camera and wait to photograph from the driver’s seat of my vehicle, rather than set up a tripod in the middle of the road.

The Amish reject “Hochmut” (pride) and value “Demut” (humility), which is at odds with the egocentric individualism that runs rampant in modern American culture. The Amish are also strong believers in the biblical commandment from Exodus 20:4, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,” and, as a result, Amish adults do not like to be photographed, though they do not usually object to visitors taking pictures of their farms, livestock, or children. I have taken photographs of the Amish farm country around Ohio for more than twenty years and have never experienced a problem, but I am
careful to respect their beliefs and never ask Amish adults to “pose” for a photograph. When photographing Amish men and women engaged in plowing, harvesting, or other farming tasks, I always photograph them from behind, or from a distance so that their faces will not be easily recognizable. Please follow these guidelines when you are photographing in Ohio’s Amish Country.

Covered Bridge Scenic Byway, Washington and Monroe Counties

Location: Along State Route 26 for 44 miles between Woodsfield and Marietta.
Website: www.byways.org/explore/byways/2321/
GPS Coordinates: Multiple sites

Tucked away in the hills of Washington and Monroe Counties in the southeast corner of Ohio is the Covered Bridge Scenic Byway, a 44-mile stretch of winding blacktop road along State Route 26 that twists and turns through the forested hills of the Wayne National Forest and along the banks of the Little Muskingum River between Woodsfield and Marietta. Along the way you’ll encounter Mail Pouch barns, farms, and five covered bridges, each painted red to delight the eye of the painter or photographer.

The northernmost bridge, the Foraker Bridge, is off the beaten track in Monroe County, about 4 miles from State Route 26. Farther south in Monroe County, the Knowlton Bridge, one of my favorites and one of the longest
covered bridges in Ohio, is in a park about 0.3 miles from State Route 26. Next in line, spanning the Little Muskingum River close to State Route 26 in Washington County, are the Rinard, Hune, and Hills-Hildreth covered bridges. During 2004, Rinard Bridge was washed off its stone base by heavy rains in the aftermath of a hurricane, but the bridge has been carefully restored and is once again open for use.

You can drive the Covered Bridge Highway in either direction, and the bridges are photogenic in every season. There are also several Mail Pouch barns, with yellow lettering painted on a black background by the late Mail Pouch barn painter Harley Warrick. Several more covered bridges can also be found west of Marietta in Washington County.

**Ashtabula County Covered Bridges**

**Location:** Various  
**GPS Coordinates:** Multiple sites

Ashtabula is Ohio’s largest county, and it has seventeen covered bridges, more than any other county in the Buckeye State. Eleven of the bridges date from the late 1800s and early 1900s, but six of the bridges have been
built since 1983, under the direction of covered-bridge enthusiast John Smolen, Ashtabula County’s former county engineer.

The latest, the new Smolen-Gulf bridge, is the longest covered bridge in the United States and features a Pratt truss design. Engineering and structural design is by John Smolen and architectural design is by Timothy Martin, who is the current county engineer. This bridge was dedicated August 26, 2008, is 613 feet long, and stands 93 feet above the Ashtabula River. With a clear width of 30 feet and height of 14 ½ feet, the bridge will support two lanes of full legal-load traffic and has a life expectancy of 100 years.

You can easily spend a full day or more visiting all of Ashtabula County’s covered bridges, and there are several websites with additional information and maps you can download to help you plan your visit. The bridges are at their most photogenic in the fall or in winter after a fresh snowfall. A covered-bridge festival is held in Ashtabula County in late October, but this event attracts thousands of visitors and the bridges are usually too crowded for good photography.

Ashtabula Harbor Lift Bridge

Location: On West Fifth Street in Ashtabula, over the Ashtabula River.
Website: http://ci.ashtabula.oh.us/
GPS Coordinates: 41.900499N 80.797525W

Ashtabula is derived from an Algonquin Indian name for the local Ashtabula River that means “river of many fish.” Spanning the river in Ashtabula harbor on State Route 531 is a bascule (French for “seesaw”) lift bridge, one of only two in the Buckeye State. The bridge has an elevated counterweight that balances the span as it rotates around a fixed axle called a trunnion. The Ashtabula harbor lift bridge was built in 1925, restored in 1986, and repaired and repainted during 2008 and 2009.

The bridge is painted light gray, which tends to blend in with a cloudy sky but stands out nicely
against a blue sky. You can walk along the edge of the Ashtabula River just south of the bridge and try out a variety of camera angles. This side of the bridge receives good light for photography from morning to evening on a sunny day. While you are in Ashtabula, explore the historic buildings that line Bridge Street, and admire the view of the bascule bridge and Ashtabula Harbor from Point Park on Walnut Street. Also worth a visit, adjacent to Point Park, is the Great Lakes Marine and Coast Guard Memorial Museum.

Aullwood's Farm, Dayton

Location: 9101 Frederick Pike, Dayton, OH 45414. Tel: (937) 890-7360  
Website: http://aullwoodcenter.audubon.org  
GPS Coordinates: 39.880722N 84.271301W

Aullwood Audubon Center was created in 1957 by Mrs. John Aull as a place for children to learn about natural history. Mrs. Aull donated 70 acres of land to the Audubon Society, creating one of the first nature centers in the Midwest. In 1962, a nearby farm became Aullwood Children's Farm. Today, there are 5 miles of trails and 350 acres of prairies, woodlands, meadows, wetlands, and farm pastures. More than 80,000 visitors, including many school-children, visit Aullwood each year.

There are acres of spring wildflowers along the woodland trails, and prairie plants bloom in midsummer. A menagerie of farm animals can be photographed at the farm, which practices sustainable farming and is a certified organic farm. This is a great place to combine nature and rural photography during a single visit.

Bear's Mill, Greenville, Darke County

Location: 6450 Arcanum-Bear's Mill Road, Greenville, OH 45331.  
Tel: (937) 548-5112  
Website: http://www.bearsmill.com  
GPS Coordinates: 40.106775N 84.541974W

A few miles east of Greenville in Darke County, near where sharpshooter Annie Oakley was born in 1860, stands one of Ohio's few remaining water-powered gristmills. Pennsylvania miller Gabriel Baer moved here in 1848, and in 1849, construction of Bear's Mill was completed. Today the mill is still in use, grinding cornmeal and whole-wheat and rye flour. Water from Greenville Creek powers the two turbines that turn the buhrstone wheels used for grind-
ing. Bear’s Mill was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977, and the millrace and nearby Greenville Creek are also a wildlife sanctuary. You can buy flour and tour the interior of the mill, which is sheathed in weathered American black walnut siding. While you are there, admire the beautiful raku pottery made by mill co-owner Julie Clark.

The entrance and front of the mill face east, so morning light is preferable for shots of the front of the mill from across the road. South of the mill is an attractive millrace, lined with tall trees and redbud that blooms in early spring. Good angles to include the millrace in your photos can be found in morning and afternoon. You may also want to take some photos of the interior of the mill, which is supported by hand-hewn timber frames up to 50 feet long.

**Blaine Hill Bridge on National Road, Belmont County**

*Location:* In Blaine, over Wheeling Creek, 8 miles west of Wheeling, West Virginia.

*Tel:* (937) 324-7752


*GPS Coordinates:* 40.066777N 80.820753W

The Blaine Hill Bridge in Belmont County, 8 miles west of Wheeling, West Virginia, is Ohio’s oldest stone bridge. The three-arch sandstone S-bridge over Wheeling Creek was built in 1828 along the Historic National Road, the first interstate road funded by the federal government. It was much easier to build a stone bridge at a 90-degree angle to a stream or creek than at a more acute angle. Two curved ramps were then added on each side of the bridge, generating the shallow “S” shape. Several S-bridges were built along the eastern section of the National Road in Ohio, and the 345-foot Blaine Hill Bridge is the longest.

By the early 1930s, the old S-bridge was no longer able to handle the 2,700 vehicles that used the National Road daily, and a much larger steel and concrete arched bridge, which today carries U.S. Route 40, was built next to the Blaine Hill Bridge. During the 1990s, the Blaine Hill Bridge began to crumble, but it has been painstakingly restored and was designated as Ohio’s official Bicentennial Bridge in 2003.

Early morning or late afternoon are my preferred times to photograph this historic bridge, which is in the shadow of the Route 40 bridge during much of the day. Be sure to walk out onto the bridge to view the inscriptions in the bricks used to pave the surface of the bridge. Photograph the Blaine Hill Bridge on its own with hills in the background from the south side, or shoot...
from the north side and include part of the larger Route 40 bridge to highlight the two eras of bridge construction in Ohio.

Bob Evans Farm, Rio Grande

Location: 791 Farmview Road, Bidwell, OH 45614.
Tel: (800) 994-3276
Website: http://www.bobevans.com/ourfarms/bobevansfarm
GPS Coordinates: 38.882158N 82.367765W

The late Bob Evans, famed restaurateur and sausage maker, lived for twenty years with his wife, Jewel, and their six children in an 1825 brick house called The Homestead, near Rio Grande in Gallia County. I had the pleasure of meeting Evans a few years ago with Amish farmer David Kline, when the subject was grass-fed dairy farming, a practice much espoused by Evans and the Amish. A restaurant was built near The Homestead in 1961, and today the property is maintained by Bob Evans Farms, Inc., as an active farm and history center. Be sure not to miss the windmill, given to Bob Evans Farms by its original owner, bourbon entrepreneur Jim Beam. Also on the farm are a gristmill, sorghum mill, Ohio bicentennial barn, and a log cabin village. A farm festival is held every year in October, with farm and craft demonstrations, hayrides, entertainment, and many other activities you may wish to photograph. Visit at other, quieter times of year to shoot the farm fields and buildings without crowds of visitors.

Carriage Hill Farm and Park, near Dayton

Location: 7800 Shull Road, Huber Heights, OH 45424. Tel: (937) 278-2609
Website: http://www.metroparks.org/Parks/CarriageHill/
GPS Coordinates: 39.87449N 84.09364W

Daniel and Catherine Arnold and their five children moved to the Huber Heights area north of Dayton in 1830 from Rockingham County, Virginia, and the family moved into a new house in 1836. The Arnold’s youngest son Henry built a bank barn near the house in 1878. Dayton (now Five Rivers) Metroparks acquired the farm in 1968 from Ernest Foreman, who had renamed the property Carriage Hill Farm. Today Carriage Hill Farm operates
as a living farm, surrounded by several hundred acres of woodlands and prairies, featuring a lake and a pond. The park is open from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and the farm’s hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Both the Arnold House and the large red bank barn are best photographed in the morning, but you can find interesting photographs at Carriage Hill Farm at any time of day. In addition to the house, barn, and several other farm buildings, there are horses, dairy cows, sheep, goats, pigs, and farm cats galore. Various educational programs are held each month at Carriage Hill Farm, including a re-created 1880s county fair in late September, featuring agricultural demonstrations, sorghum processing, and a pie baking competition.

Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River Bridges
Location: West and south of downtown Cleveland along the Cuyahoga River
Website: http://ech.cwru.edu/ech-cgi/article.pl?id=B19
GPS Coordinates: 41.490234N 81.693571W (Hope Memorial Bridge)

The Cuyahoga River slices through Cleveland about midway between the high bluffs on the west side and the plateau of the east side, making the city highly dependent on bridges that span the “Crooked River.” You can take a boat ride along the Cuyahoga on the Goodtime III, Cleveland’s largest

CARRIAGE HILL FARM, NEAR DAYTON
excursion boat, which claims to show passengers more kinds of bridges in a two-hour cruise than any other place in America.

Many of the most interesting bridges are in the Cleveland Flats on the west side and south side of the city, and a drive through this area will reveal more than twenty bridges along the twists and turns of the Cuyahoga River between Lake Erie and Interstate 490 just north of the Industrial Flats. There are huge concrete and steel arch bridges, several types of lift bridges, and a swing bridge.

Try to photograph these bridges on a sunny or partly sunny day, which creates interesting shadows of the bridges that you may want to include in your compositions. The bridges look good against a blue sky, but not against a white, overcast sky. If you are photographing the bridges from land, use a sturdy tripod to ensure stability, maximum flexibility, and image quality. If you are on a boat, leave your tripod behind, because the vibrations on deck from the boat's engines will make the tripod ineffective. Make sure image stabilization is turned on if your camera or lens provides it, and shoot at the
lowest ISO value that will still produce a sharp photograph. Try some wide-angle photos that show the entire bridge, perhaps with some of the city skyscrapers in the background, or some telephoto views of sections of the bridge that are more abstract.

Clifton Mill, Greene County

Location: 75 Water Street, Clifton, OH 45316. Tel: (937) 767-5501
Website: http://www.cliftonmill.com
GPS Coordinates: 39.794175N 83.825851W

Thirty miles east of Dayton, in the village of Clifton in Greene County, stands the 190-year-old Clifton Mill, one of the largest and most scenic old gristmills in the United States. Rising six stories above the gorge of the Little Miami State Scenic River, the 1820s Clifton Mill is today the only operating gristmill in Greene County, which had as many as seventy mills during the 1800s. The mill’s siding is painted an attractive deep red color, and an authentic covered bridge, also painted red, spans the gorge nearby and provides a great view of the mill. Also on the grounds is a 1940s Gas Station Museum, decorated with many signs from yesteryear.

As if those attractions aren’t enough to draw the artist or photographer, Clifton Mill also hosts an incredible Christmas lighting display from Thanksgiving Day to January 3, when an astounding 3.5 million lights festoon the mill, covered bridge, riverbanks, and gorge. There is also a Christmas village and a Santa Claus museum with a collection of more than three thousand Santas, some dating back to 1850. Nearby is Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve, which offers one of Ohio’s finest displays of spring wildflowers.

A visit to Clifton Mill is a must for photographers and Americana fans. The classic shot is a wide-angle morning view from the covered bridge, looking west to the mill with the rocky gorge in the foreground and a blue sky to complement the red mill. There is another view from a bridge farther west over the Little Miami Gorge, but in summer a tangle of foliage tends to block
the view of the mill from this vantage point. Another great angle is from the south side of the river, but you will need to get permission to go there from the staff at the mill. The Christmas lighting display attracts hordes of visitors on weekends, so visit during the evening on a weekday if possible, preferably on a clear day that will provide a dark blue sky just after sunset. You will need long, multisecond time exposures when shooting the Christmas lights, so be sure to bring a sturdy tripod.

**Dickinson Cattle Company, Belmont County**

Location: 35500 Muskrat Road, Barnesville, OH 43713. Tel: (740) 758-5050  
Website: [http://www.texaslonghorn.com](http://www.texaslonghorn.com)  
GPS Coordinates: 40.044N 81.178W

“If Texas Longhorns become a bore, or they eat too much, you can eat them. This is something you can’t do with a boat, dog, or a hamster,” wrote cattle breeder Darol Dickinson in his book *Fillet of Horn*.

As you’re driving east along Interstate 70 in eastern Ohio, at mile marker 200 a giant blue billboard shaped like a long-horned cow appears on the brow of a hill to the south, announcing the Dickinson Cattle Company, which raises up to 1,600 Texas Longhorn, African Watusi, and Dutch Buelingo cattle on 5,000 acres of land that was once strip-mined for coal. Founded by Darol Dickinson and his wife, Linda, in the 1960s, the company is now run...
ECHO DELL BRIDGE, BEAVER CREEK

by their children Joel, Kirk, Chad, and Dela. The Dickinson Cattle Company is one of the world’s largest producers of Texas Longhorn breeding stock, herd sires, and lean, range-fed beef.

Photographers are welcome, and you can take a 75-minute tour to learn some of the finer points of cattle ranching. Or simply drive along Muskrat Road and admire the herds of cattle from the roadside. If you’re a meat lover, be sure to visit the Longhorns Head to Tail store and check out their beef products.

Echo Dell Iron Bridge, Beaver Creek State Park, Columbiana County

Location: In Beaver Creek State Park, on Echo Dell Road, over Little Beaver Creek.
Tel: (330) 385-3091
Website: www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/714/Default.aspx
GPS Coordinates: 40.7278N 80.6161W

The Echo Dell Bridge spans Little Beaver Creek in Beaver Creek State Park, located north of East Liverpool in Columbiana County, Ohio. The 129-foot iron bridge was built in 1910 and is based on a Pratt truss design, originally patented by Thomas and Caleb Pratt in 1844. The Pratt truss is identified by its diagonal members which, except for the end ones, all slant down and in toward the center of the bridge. The diagonal members are in tension, and the vertical members are in compression. The Pratt truss is an efficient design,
and many Pratt truss bridges built more than a century ago are still in daily use today. The Echo Dell Bridge was repaired and repainted in 2008, and a new roadway was installed.

A large American sycamore near the southwest corner of the Echo Dell Bridge makes a nice foreground for a wide-angle photograph. Nearby are hiking trails along beautiful Little Beaver Creek, which is one of Ohio’s State Scenic Rivers. Next to the bridge is a restored lock on the Sandy and Beaver Canal and a pioneer village that includes log buildings, a blacksmith’s forge, a schoolhouse, and Gaston’s Mill, a restored 1830s gristmill with a water wheel. A few miles west of Beaver Creek State Park is Lusk Lock, featuring curved stonework, one of the most intact locks remaining from the nineteenth-century Sandy and Beaver Canal.

**Everett Road Covered Bridge, Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

**Location:** 2370 Everett Road, Peninsula, half a mile west of Riverview Road.

**Tel:** (216) 524-1497

**Website:** [http://www.nps.gov/cuva/historyculture/everett-road-covered-bridge.htm](http://www.nps.gov/cuva/historyculture/everett-road-covered-bridge.htm)

**GPS Coordinates:** 41.204083N 81.583524W

As a resident of Cuyahoga Falls, I’m blessed to live within a few miles of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, which is home to one of Ohio’s most picturesque covered bridges, located on Everett Road, south of Peninsula.

The original Everett Road Covered Bridge, which spans Furnace Run, was built in the 1870s, one of more than 2,000 covered bridges that were built in Ohio—more than in any other state. Today, Ohio has about 140 covered bridges. The original Everett Road Bridge was repaired several times, but, in 1975, a heavy flood lifted the bridge from its stone foundations and the wreckage was deposited farther downstream. The Cuyahoga Valley Association, with help from many other local organizations, raised the funds needed to rebuild the bridge, which was completed by the National Park Service in 1986. The bridge has a Smith truss design.

The bright-red bridge can be photographed from upstream in the afternoon or downstream in the morning. Winter is my favorite time, when snow-covered rocks and trees are a fine contrast with the red bridge and a blue sky. Bring your rubber boots so you can wade in the stream if necessary to explore different angles. If the light is still good when you’ve finished photographing the bridge, drive a mile south on Everett Road to explore the photo opportunities at Hale Farm and Village.
Hale Farm and Village, Bath, Summit County

Location: 2686 Oak Hill Road, Bath, OH 44210. Tel: (330) 666-3711
Website: http://www.wrhs.org/index.php/hale
GPS Coordinates: 41.193602N 81.59236W

Hale Farm and Village, a part of the Western Reserve Historical Society, offers a look at life in a 1820s Ohio pioneer settlement, complete with period buildings, livestock, and artisans. Hale Farm and Village is close to Cuyahoga Valley National Park, midway between Cleveland and Akron.

The founder of the village, Connecticut businessman Jonathan Hale, purchased the 500-acre farm for $1,250 in 1810, and in 1820 completed the elegant Federal-style brick farmhouse that still stands. His family continued to operate the farm for three generations. Today, Hale Farm and Village is a working farm and village, with costumed artisans who demonstrate glass blowing, basketry, spinning and weaving, candle making, and blacksmithing. A two-day
Civil War Reenactment takes place at Hale Farm each year in mid-August. The farm is open from late spring through fall, and an entrance fee is charged.

The Jonathan Hale House and several of the other buildings can be photographed well from Oak Hill Road, which runs through the center of Hale Farm and Village. The front of the Jonathan Hale House faces east, and is best photographed in the morning. Photography for personal use is allowed, but you may not use any of the photographs for commercial purposes without permission from the Western Reserve Historical Society. The costumed artisans provide excellent opportunities to practice your people-photography skills, and the Civil War Reenactment, which includes a “battle” between Union and Confederate forces, is a wonderful chance to photograph men and women in period and military dress, as well as genuine Civil War artifacts and armaments.

Interurban Bridge, Farnsworth Metropark, Wood County

Location: 8505 S. River Road (U.S. 24), Waterville, OH 43566. Tel: (419) 407-9700
Website: http://www.metroparkstoledo.com
GPS Coordinates: 41.486307N 83.728334W

When the Interurban railroad bridge was built over the Maumee River near Waterville in 1908, it ranked as the longest reinforced concrete bridge in the world. Its construction was controversial, however, because part of a his-
toric rock outcrop in the middle of the river, called Roche de Bout (also spelled Roche de Boeuf), was destroyed in the process. The rock had been a traditional meeting place for generations of American Indians, and the local tribes had gathered there before the battle with General “Mad” Anthony Wayne in 1794. The railroad went out of business in 1937, and the bridge was abandoned, an ambivalent monument to engineering prowess and corporate vandalism.

The Interurban Bridge runs north–south across the Maumee River, and is best photographed from the east side in the morning or the west side in the afternoon. The easiest way to approach the bridge is from South River Road on the north bank of the Maumee River, just east of U.S. Route 24 and a mile south of Waterville.

Lake Metroparks Farmpark, Lake County
Location: 8800 Euclid Chardon Road, Kirtland, OH 44094. Tel: (440) 256-2122
Website: www.lakemetroparks.com/select-park/farmpark.shtml
GPS Coordinates: 41.576565N 81.328336W

In a March 2007 article, USA Today named Farm park one of the “ten great places to dig up old dirt on farming.” Farm park is about 25 miles east of Cleveland, on 235 acres that have been used as a dairy farm, an orchard, and an Arabian horse farm. Today, Farm park operates as a rural educational facility
and science center and is visited each year by more than 200,000 people, including 45,000 schoolchildren. Farmpark is part of the Lake County Metroparks system, and is open year-round.

More than 100 farm animals, encompassing 50 livestock breeds, can be photographed, and dozens of events are scheduled each year, including maple sugaring, sheep herding, horse- and tractor-drawn wagon rides, festivals, and a Christmas lighting display. Be sure to check out the giant tomato, which is 8 feet in diameter!

Lanterman’s Mill, Mill Creek Park, Youngstown
Location: 980 Canfield Road, Youngstown, OH 44511.
Tel: (330) 740-7115
Website: http://www.millcreekmetroparks.com
GPS Coordinates: 41.066816N 80.682157W

Youngstown lawyer Volney Rogers was the driving force behind the founding of Ohio’s first park system in 1891, when Mill Creek Park was established in the western suburbs of Youngstown. The centerpiece of the park is Lanterman’s Mill, a gristmill built in 1845–46 by German Lanterman and Samuel Kimberly. The mill was restored from 1982 to 1985 and today grinds corn, wheat, and buckwheat. A scenic waterfall, Lanterman’s Falls, can be viewed from an observation deck, and a covered bridge spans Mill Creek a short distance upstream from the mill.
There is an excellent view of Lanterman’s Mill, the waterfall, and the covered bridge from Mill Creek Bridge, a concrete arch bridge that spans Mill Creek just north of the mill on State Route 62 (Canfield Road). You will be looking due south, so early morning or late in the afternoon will usually provide the best lighting for this vista, which needs a wide-angle lens to include the mill, waterfall, and covered bridge in the picture.

Magnolia Flouring Mills, Stark County

Location: 261 Main Street, Magnolia, OH 44643. Tel: (330) 477-3552
Website: www.starkparks.com/park.asp?park=9
GPS Coordinates: 40.652845N 81.299236W

Near the southeast border of Stark County, close to the border of Carroll County, sits the town of Magnolia, home to one of Ohio’s most picturesque old gristmills. The Magnolia Flouring Mills, also known as Elson’s Flouring Mill, was built in 1834 by Richard Elson, whose great-grandson, Mack Elson, manages the mill today. This large mill stands near the remains of a section of the 73-mile Sandy and Beaver Canal, built over the course of two decades from 1828 to 1848, which connected Bolivar on the Ohio and Erie Canal with the Ohio River at Glasgow, Pennsylvania. The canal’s middle section, east of
Magnolia, was flooded in 1852 and the canal fell into disrepair and was abandoned, but the mill remains and today operates as a feed mill.

The mill is painted a photogenic red, with white trim, and there is a parking area across from it. The front of the mill, which draws most photographers, faces due east, and early morning with a clear blue sky is my favorite time to take pictures from this angle. There is a nice view over the millrace, north of the mill along Main Street, but ugly power lines intrude into the scene. The mill is quite large, and you will need a wide-angle lens to include the entire structure in your picture.

**Malabar Farm State Park, Richland County**

Location: 4050 Bromfield Road, Lucas, OH 44843. Tel: (419) 892-2784  
Website: [http://www.malabarfarm.org/](http://www.malabarfarm.org/)  
GPS Coordinates: 40.652223N 82.399126W

Pulitzer-winning author and screenplay writer Louis Bromfield built a “Big House” in the rolling farm country of Richland County at Malabar Farm during the 1930s. “Malabar” is a corruption of the Arabic ma’bar, meaning, “a place one passes through.” Among the many Hollywood celebrities who visited Malabar were Shirley Temple, Errol Flynn, and Dorothy Lamour, as well as Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart, who married and honeymooned at Malabar in May 1945.

In his book *Pleasant Valley*, Bromfield wrote, “Every inch of it [the house] has been in hard use since it was built and will, I hope, go on being used in the same fashion so long as it stands. Perhaps one day it will belong to the state together with the hills, valleys and woods of Malabar Farm.” Bromfield’s wish was granted in August 1972, when the state of Ohio accepted the deed to Malabar and pledged to preserve the beauty and ecological value of the farm for future generations of Ohioans.

There is a wonderful vista of Malabar Farm from the top of Mount Jeez, reached by a dirt road about a mile east of the farm along Pleasant Valley Road. You’ll be looking west to the farm in the distance, and you’ll need a 200–400mm lens to isolate the Big House, barn, and other Malabar Farm buildings in your picture. This is a great spot in mid-October, when the hill-sides blaze with fall color. Down on the farm, there is a petting zoo, tours of the Big House, several miles of hiking trails, plowing demonstrations in the fields in mid-May, a fall festival, and a host of other photogenic events and activities throughout the year. Malabar receives many visitors, especially on
the weekends during warm weather, so you may want to go there during the week to avoid the crowds.

**Manchester Round Barn, Auglaize County**

*Location: 29249 State Route 385, Lakeview, OH 43331.*

*Website: N/A*

*GPS Coordinates: 40.558827N 83.891335W*

The J. H. Manchester barn in Auglaize County in northwest Ohio is one of the finest examples of round barns in America. Built by Horace Duncan in 1908, this famous domed barn has served the Manchester farm for five generations. Echoing an eighty-year-old Shaker design, hay and feed were stored in the center for livestock housed around the circumference. With a diameter of 102 feet, the barn is the largest round barn east of the Mississippi River. The entrance faces west and the barn is best photographed in the afternoon. The
Manchester family currently uses the barn for storage. In 2008, to celebrate the centennial of the barn, it was repainted bright red.

Because the barn is on private property, be sure to knock on the door of the main house to introduce yourself and obtain permission from the Manchester family to photograph their magnificent barn.

**Ohio Bicentennial Barn, Defiance County**

**Location:** 18622 Lane St., Defiance, OH 43512.
**Website:** http://www.ohiobarns.com/ohbarns/obicbardef.html
**GPS Coordinates:** 41.17N 84.3083W

The Ohio Bicentennial Committee commissioned Ohio barn painter Scott Hagan to paint the state’s bicentennial logo on a barn in each of Ohio’s eighty-eight counties. Hagan, a resident of Belmont County, obtained advice on painting barn murals from fellow Belmont County resident Harley War- rick, the legendary Mail Pouch barn painter, who bequeathed some of his barn painting equipment to Hagan prior to his death in 2000. From 1997 to September 2002, when he completed the last barn mural, Hagan traveled 65,000 miles around the Buckeye State in his pickup truck and used 100 paintbrushes and 645 gallons of paint. No two barns are alike, and Hagan had to paint a second barn in Ottawa County after the first barn was leveled by a tornado in 1998.
Many of the Ohio Bicentennial barn structures are unexceptional, but a few are striking, including the Defiance County barn, which has two logos painted on a double barn, and the Delaware County barn near Interstate 71 north of Columbus. Several books of photographs and paintings of Ohio’s eighty-eight bicentennial barns have been produced, and a website, listed at the end of this chapter, provides locations and photographs for each of the barns. Check out these references and make your own decision as to which barns you would like to visit and photograph.

**Ohio State and County Fairs**

*Location: Columbus and all Ohio counties*


*GPS Coordinates: Various*

Ohio held its first state fair in Cincinnati in 1850, and for the next twenty-five years the event was held in a variety of locations around the state. In 1874, the Ohio State Fair moved to its permanent site in the state capital, Columbus. Today the Ohio State Fair is one of the largest in the United States, drawing more than 800,000 visitors in 2006 and boosting the Ohio economy by
more than $250 million. The Ohio State Fair lasts almost two weeks and is held in late July and early August at the Ohio Expo Center in Columbus.

Each of Ohio’s eighty-eight counties also holds an annual fair some time between late June and late September. The primary focus is agriculture, but many fairs have expanded to include a variety of entertainment and other family activities.

Tripods attract too much attention at county fairs and are best left in your vehicle. A wide-angle to medium telephoto zoom lens, such as the 16–85mm Nikkor, plus a 70–200mm zoom lens, will cover all your photography needs at a county fair. Switch on image stabilization if your camera/lens provides it, set your ISO to 400–800, and take plenty of memory cards—there’s much to photograph at county fairs. Llamas and alpacas rub shoulders with massive Percheron and Belgian horses, mules, cows, goats, pigs, chickens, rabbits, and other farm critters. Enjoy an abundance of food offerings, including 4-H chicken dinners, corn dogs, barbecue, ice cream, pies, and lemonade. Point your camera at vintage tractors, steam engines, farm machinery, rodeo events, and hundreds of farm kids competing in the livestock competitions.

Roebling Suspension Bridge, Cincinnati

Location: Between Cincinnati, Ohio, and Covington, Kentucky, over the Ohio River
Website: www.cincinnati-transit.net/suspension.html
GPS Coordinates: 39.09337N 84.509972W

The Covington–Cincinnati Suspension Bridge across the Ohio River has been a major Cincinnati landmark since it was completed in 1866. In 1984, the bridge was renamed the John A. Roebling Suspension Bridge after the innovative engineer who designed it. To protect the city’s important river trade, an 1849 charter required that no piers be built in the river, and the technology to build the bridge did not exist prior to Roebling’s design. When the bridge was finished in December 1866, the 1,037-foot central span was the longest in the world.

The bridge can be photographed from either end, but the view from Covington includes the Cincinnati skyline and is my
favorite vantage point. The bridge runs north–south, so the eastern side receives morning light and the western side is illuminated best in the afternoon. In addition to wide-angle photos of the entire bridge and Cincinnati skyline, try using a telephoto lens to isolate some of the intricate features of the piers and cables.

**Sauder Village, Archbold, Fulton County**

*Location:* 22611 State Route 2, Archbold, OH 43502. Tel: (800) 590-9755  
*Website:* www.saudervillage.org  
*GPS Coordinates:* 41.543677N 84.299063W

Erie Sauder was raised on a small farm in the Northwest Ohio Mennonite town of Archbold, where he founded Sauder Woodworking in 1934; today the company is the world’s largest manufacturer of ready-to-assemble furniture. Sauder was also a local history buff, and during the 1970s, he began collecting cabins, tools, and farm implements used by his Amish-Mennonite ancestors to drain the Great Black Swamp, which covered much of northwest Ohio in presettlement times. His collection is housed at Historic Sauder Village, Ohio’s largest living-history farm. Today, the third generation of the Sauder family oversees the village, which includes a 350-seat restaurant, a bakery, a campground, a 98-room country inn, and an exhibit/performance center, Founder’s Hall. The farm is a great place to practice photographing dairy
cows, horses, goats, chickens, and other farm animals, as well as log cabins occupied by artisans who demonstrate glassmaking, pottery, basketry, woodwork, quilting, spinning, and weaving.

**Slate Run Living Historical Farm, Pickaway County**

Location: 1375 State Route 674 N., Canal Winchester, OH 43110. Tel: (614) 853-1880
Website: www.metroparks.net/ParksSlateRunFarm.aspx
GPS Coordinates: 39.753932N 82.849898W

Slate Run Living Historical Farm is a working reenactment of an 1880s central-Ohio farm. The gothic revival farmhouse was built in 1856 and has been restored by the Columbus Metro Parks, which operates Slate Run Farm. The handsome red multibay 1881 barn, with its octagonal cupola and monitor roof extensions, was built by Samuel Oman, the fourth owner of Slate Run Farm, and was restored by Amish carpenters. The farm staff and volunteers dress in period costumes and carry out the daily chores that were part of farm life in the 1880s. This is a wonderful place to bring children to learn about our pioneer farming history. There are miles of trails in the woodlands, fields, and wetlands that surround the farm in Slate Run Metropolitan Park. Slate Run is open throughout the year and admission is free.
Trees shade the farmhouse, and it photographs well on a cloudy day. The gable and entrance to the barn face south, and the handsome barn can be photographed at any time of the day, though morning or evening light would be my preference.

REFERENCES

**Barns:**

Dregni, M., ed. 2002. *This Old Barn: A Treasury of Family Farm Memories.* Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press. This heartwarming anthology of stories, photographs, and artwork celebrates the glorious barns of yesteryear. I’m honored to have some of my best barn photographs included in this book.


**Bridges:**

Ohio Historic Bridge Association (OHBA): http://www.oldohiobridges.com. OHBA promotes the study and preservation of Ohio’s historic bridges.


**Mills:**

Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM): http://www.spoom.org. SPOOM’s members include mill owners, old mill buffs, museum curators, writers, teachers, photographers, and mill equipment suppliers.

**Rural America:**