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Visit the Starke Round Barn! We offer group tours by appointment. Please schedule at least two weeks in advance. Learn more at www.starke-roundbarn.com or

THE WORLD'S LARGEST ROUND BARN

VISIT THE HISTORIC STARKE ROUND BARN NEAR RED CLOUD, NEBRASKA

America's most famous small town



Located 4.5 miles east of Red Cloud, Nebraska on Highway 136. Turn south at the railroad crossing.

The Beginning of the Barn

The spring of 1870 Gottleib, Christian and William Rasser left Milwaukee and came to Nebraska to homestead after serving in the Civil War. They settled near Elm Creek along the Republican River in the south central part of the state. Ten years later Conrad Starke Sr., their brother-in-law, purchased land adjacent to the Rassers after hearing how productive and fertile the land was. The Rasser brothers then managed the property for a number of years.

The Building of the Barn

Construction of the barn began in 1902, and was not completed until 1905. At that time they were feeding cattle and hogs on over 400 acres of river bottom ground along the Republican River. Around 1915 they turned to dairy farming. The barn was modified to fit this change. After building a highly reputable dairy farm, their herd contracted tuberculosis and was destroyed. Sadly, this led to end of the dairy, as they went into foreclosure and the property was sold at a Special Master sale on the steps of the Webster County Courthouse in Red Cloud. The property was purchased by Walter and William Rasser, nephews of Conrad and Veronica (Rasser) Starke.

Photos courtesy www.starkefoundbarn.com

How Big is the Barn?

The dimensions of the barn are impressive. The circumference of the barn is 400 feet, giving it a diameter of 127 feet. It includes three floors with a brick silo in the middle. This silo is 28 feet in diameter and 65 feet tall. The unique style of the building boasts a massive 12 x 12 framework of timbers and cross beams held together not with nails or pegs, but with balance and the stress of the building's weight. The top floor was for hay, the middle level for machinery and tools, and grain storage. The lowest level was for livestock. When the barn was converted for the dairy, the south half was given a cement floor including a drainage system and two rows of stanchions able to handle over 70 cows. Electricity and a pasteurization shed were also added at this time, powered by their own generator in the basement of one of the five residences on the farm. A row of windows was added to completely encircle the lower level. The barn was in use on the farm until the mid 1980's. In the spring of 2018 the barn property once again includes a small herd of stock cows and calves.

Maintaining the Barn

In 1972 the barn was placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. Donations are always appreciated but are not tax deductible. Tours and special events are held to help care for the barn. Another source of raising funds for maintenance is our Floriani corn. This ancient open pollinated red flint corn is more nutritious than modern varieties, and also has a much more defined corn flavor. Availability is seasonal.

