1. **Horsepower** - barn located on US 127 North behind the Subway restaurant and the cemetery.

2. **Growing Plants & Pulling Plants** - barn located about 10 miles south of Owenton on US Highway 127 South in Monterey.


4. **Cutting** - barn located about 4 miles east of Owenton on Highway 22 East.


   Please use respect when visiting these barn murals. They are on private property and should be viewed from public roads. Always use caution when slowing or stopping near a barn mural.

   If you would like to make a donation to help paint future murals, please make your tax deductible check payable to: Owen County Historical Society-AHT & mail to the attention of Joy Morgan, 515 Wilson Lane, Owenton, KY 40359 or donate online at www.myowencountyky.com. You will receive a statement for tax purposes.

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**Owen County Agricultural Heritage Trail**

Preserving our agricultural history, with murals of today on tobacco barns of yesterday!

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**Honoring Our Heritage**

The Owen County Agricultural Heritage Trail project began in 2009 as a result of the Owen County Vision Project. Our purpose is to document and preserve the rich agricultural history and traditions of farming in Owen County by recording oral histories of our farm families and painting murals on tobacco barns to tell the stories of farming.

Through a grant from the Kentucky Oral History Commission, we interviewed 34 men and women, ranging in ages from early 40s to late 80s.

The second phase of this project is to create a unique tourism opportunity by painting murals on tobacco barns. The first 8 murals will feature the many stages in the production of tobacco to form the "Tobacco Heritage Trail". Other murals will feature sheep, cattle, dairy, orchards, etc.

Tobacco was a primary crop for farmers in Owen County from the early 1900s to 2000. Regardless of the size of the farm or the quality of the land, farmers could raise tobacco and make a little money. It was hard work, very labor intensive and done mostly by hand. Families worked together and neighbors helped neighbors. Money from tobacco is what built our communities, schools, and churches. We honor these men, women, and children for their hard work and love of the land.

This brochure contains information about the five completed murals. Three additional murals will feature plowing, topping, and spraying; housing tobacco; and bulking, grading, and stripping.

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**Horsepower**

**Horsepower Mural** is the first on the Tobacco Heritage Trail because it honors the importance of horses in early farming and the wonderful invention of the tractor.

Most early farmers owned horses and/or mules that were used in farming. Family members named the horses and they were important members of the farm family. The owners of the barn with the “Cutting” mural had a bay & a grey horse when they grew up on the farm and asked they be shown in the mural.

Tractors were a great invention. Mr. Junior Grisham recalls that they bought their first tractor in 1944. It was an H Farmall and visitors came every day to see the new equipment.

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Growing Plants & Pulling Plants

Tobacco Setting

Tobacco Setting Mural is number three in the process and features four vignettes showing the progression of setting tobacco. “Setting by the season” by placing the plant in the ground with your fingers or wooden peg; “setting with hand-held jobber” required two people; one to operate the jobber and one to place the plant in the jobber; “horse drawn setter” was much improved but short on comfort as the setters were dragged along the ground; and “setting with the tractor” which is still done today usually with four or more setters instead of two. The barn owner remembers working with his father using the hand held jobber thus the reason for a teenage girl in the second vignette.

Cutting

Cutting Mural is number four in the production process and is painted on a peg barn with hand hewn logs as the base. This mural shows workers carrying tobacco sticks to the field; a field of standing tobacco; a field that has been and is being cut and loaded on a wagon for transport to the barn.

The barn owners wanted horses as they remember them being used on the farm. Also, the horses are driven by a man wearing a straw hat because their father always wore a straw hat.

To Market

To Market Mural is the final step in the tobacco production process and is certainly the day all farm families worked toward. This mural features the Tobacco Market in the glory days of the 1950s when farmers would take their stripped tobacco to market and watch it sell. It features five framed images - Unloading, Packing, Weighing, Selling and Pay-Day. Farmers took great pride in their tobacco crops and made sure the tobacco was packed neatly on the tobacco baskets.

This was the time when they would be paid for the many long hours and hard work they had done all year. This Pay-Day would ensure they could pay their creditors, pay their tithes to church and have money for Christmas. Mr. Jerry Stafford owned tobacco warehouses and he stated in his interview, “he tried to make sure farmers were taken care of because the farmers were the cream of the crop. They were great people.” Mrs. Elizabeth Prewitt recalled in her interview that when she was a child, going to the tobacco market was a family event. Her mother would dress Elizabeth in her best dress, coat, and white high-top shoes. She said, “at the market, they would sit me on top of the basket of hand-tied tobacco and I’d sit there smiling as the graders came along.”

Acknowledgements

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