



BARN

The word *barn* comes from the [Old English](#) *bere*, for barley (or grain in general), and *aern*, for a storage place—thus, a storehouse for barley.^[4] “Another word for 'barn' in Old English was *beretun*, "barley enclosure" (from *tun*: 'enclosure,' 'house',^[5] or *beretun* (barton), also meaning a threshing floor.^[6] In historical times, the barn was to be distinguished from the [granary](#), which was used to store threshed grain or cut off ears. Now, however, the common English name for a grain storage building is [granary](#).

Modern barns may include a [stable](#), from Latin *stabulum* ‘stall, fold, aviary’ (literally "a standing place"),^[7] *byre* (‘cow shed’, from *bower* which is from Old English *bur*— "room, hut, dwelling, chamber," from Proto-Germanic **buraz* (cf. Old Norse *bur* "chamber," Swedish *bur* "cage," Old High German *bur* "dwelling, chamber," German Bauer "birdcage")...”,^[8] or [stall](#), “...place in a stable for animals," from Old English *steall* "place where cattle are kept, place, position," and Proto-Germanic **stallaz* (cf. Old Norse *stallr* "pedestal for idols, altar," Old Frisian *stal*, Old High German *stall* "stand, place, stable, stall," German *Stall* "stable," Stelle "place").^[9]

History

The modern barn largely developed from the three [aisled](#) medieval barn, commonly known as [tithe barn](#) or monastic barn. This, in turn, originated in a 12th-century building tradition, also applied in [halls](#) and ecclesiastical buildings. In the 15th century several thousands of these huge barns were to be found in Western-Europe. In the course of time, its construction method was adopted by normal farms and it gradually spread to simpler buildings and other rural areas.

Whenever stone walls were applied, the aisled [timber frame](#) often gave way to single-naved buildings. A special type were [byre-dwellings](#), which included living quarters, byres and stables, such as the [Frisian farmhouse](#) or [Gulf house](#) and the [Black Forest house](#). Not all, however, evolved from the medieval barn. Other types descended from the prehistoric [longhouse](#) or other building traditions. One of the latter was the [Low German \(hall\) house](#), in which the harvest was stored in the attic.^[11] In many cases, the New World colonial barn evolved from the Low German house, which was transformed to a real barn by first generation colonists from the Netherlands and Germany.^[12]

In the U.S., older barns were built from [timbers](#) hewn from trees on the farm and built as a [log crib barn](#) or [timber frame](#), although stone barns were sometimes built in areas where stone was a cheaper building material. In the mid to late 19th century in the U.S. barn framing methods began to shift away from traditional timber framing to "truss framed" or "plank framed" buildings. Truss or plank framed barns reduced the number of timbers instead using dimensional lumber for the rafters, joists, and sometimes the trusses.^[13] The joints began to become bolted or nailed instead of being mortised and tenoned. The inventor and patentee of the Jennings Barn claimed his design used less lumber, less work, less time, and less cost to build and were durable and provided more room for hay storage.^[14] Mechanization on the farm, better transportation infrastructure, and new technology like a hay fork mounted on a track contributed to a need for larger, more open barns, sawmills using steam power could produce smaller pieces of lumber affordably, and machine cut nails were much less expensive than hand-made (wrought) nails. Concrete block began to be used for barns in the early 20th century in the U.S.^[15]

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