

The History of the German Hausbarn

(Located in Lincoln Park, DeWitt, Iowa)



Photo of Original Hausbarn

started coming in. German volunteers dismantled the barn in 2007 – the roof structure, windows and doors, as well as household artifacts and other items were shipped to DeWitt for a total cost of \$11,541.45. The bricks were not shipped as they were in poor condition, and shipping would have been very costly.

The Hausbarn was unloaded and stored until the spring of 2008, when excavation commenced. It was determined that the building would have a full basement, even though the original one had only a partial cellar under the kitchen area. The layout of the building remained the same, with the living quarters to become the offices of the DeWitt Chamber of Commerce and DeWitt Development Company and a large community conference room. Public restrooms are placed on both sides of the building where the original entrance was located.

The original doors and windows could not be used because of their poor condition. It was determined that the building exterior would retain as much historical integrity as practicable; therefore, the brick, windows and doors were all selected to best match the originals.

A thatched roof was installed to match the original roof. The thatch is a high quality water-reed available only from northern Europe. The thatch for the DeWitt Hausbarn is from Amsterdam Holland. A thatched roof has a life span of nearly 60 years and is treated with a fire and insect retardant chemical. The thatch is laid directly on the rafters and can be seen from the Museum.

The Hausbarn Museum is unique in many ways. It has been said that Clinton County, Iowa has one of the largest migrations of Schleswig-Holstein immigrants in the entire United States. This building was re-built with over 5,000 hours of volunteer labor as well as a great deal of in-kind donations of equipment and materials. All of the labor in construction the Hausbarn was donated, with the exception of the labor for the thatched roof. Food, meals and drinks were donated for the volunteers.

The City of DeWitt received professional services from the Iowa Department of Economic Development as a Pilot Project for IDED's "Green Streets" Program, which promotes

This brick building, the Moritzen Haus, was originally built in the village of Niebull in Schleswig-Holstein, Germany in 1727. Approximately 8' was added to the stable or barn area in 1883, making the dimensions of the building 64' x 30'. In 2007, a DeWitt resident, Karl Maass, was informed the building was to be taken down and went to the City Council with the request it be re-built in DeWitt.

The wheels were set into motion and donations



Photo of Original Hausbarn

energy efficiency and using sustainable building practices. The City received funds from Iowa's CAT Grant Program (Community Attractions and Tourism) and the CCDA, Clinton County Development Association, as well as over \$50,000 in cash donations for this project.



Photo of Hausbarn in DeWitt

A Grand Opening was held in October 2009 with hundreds of visitors attending the celebration. Special Guest was Ingeborg Stoermer, who now lives in Lombard, IL, but had lived in Niebull for over 20 years and walked past this Hausbarn many times during her youth. Inga presented a marvelous book she compiled with history of the Hausbarn

that is kept in the Museum. Many other household items, photos, books and tools from Germany have been donated and are displayed in the Museum. Visit this authentic German Hausbarn Museum and discover the history of the migration of Schleswig-Holstein Germans in America.

Located at 1010 6th Avenue (in Lincoln Park)

DeWitt, IA 52742

**Open Monday-Friday 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.*

For more information or questions regarding accommodations for larger groups please contact us prior to your visit at 563-659-8500 or email us at info@dewittiowa.org.

**Tours are self-guided and museum hours may vary depending on availability of DCDC Staff.*

