

**Rural Heritage Development Initiative  
Case Study**

*Preservation/Restoration of Historic Rural Structures*

**T.B. Bright House and Farmstead**



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## Project Location

2826 S.R. 34

Boyle County, Kentucky 40422

Located on the south side of S.R. 34 approximately 3 miles northeast of downtown Danville, KY.

This site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Project Type

Farmstead including a two-story frame main house with a rear ell, one-story frame tenant house, mule barn, livestock scale, equipment shed, two tobacco barns, a meathouse, and a coal house

## Goal of the Project

To preserve the rural historic buildings to functional use on the current farm, by restoring their structural integrity

## Brief History of the Site

Originally a land grant given to Captain John Barbee for his service in the Revolutionary War, 100 acres was passed down to Capt. Barbee's son, Ezekiel, who constructed the initial double pen dwelling (Amos & Bradley, 1997). The property saw several owners after Ezekiel's death in 1826 until it was purchased by T.B. Bright in 1893. Bright "...added to and modified the existing double pen residence, creating the current Victorian dwelling," (Amos & Bradley, 1997). Bright was responsible for the construction of most of the buildings on the property, including the large mule barn that was built in 1897 (Chris Kubale, personal communication). The mule barn was built in response to a thriving mule business. Bright sold and sent mules to the cotton fields in the South as well as coal mines in Pennsylvania (Chris Kubale, personal communication). The property has stayed in the family since T.B. Bright's death in 1943 and has been used for various agricultural practices such as tobacco farming, and is currently owned by Bright's granddaughter, Chris Kubale, and used as pasture land to raise cattle (Chris Kubale, personal communication).

## Existing Conditions before the project started

The mule barn on the farmstead had been deteriorating for many years when Chris Kubale decided it was time to be restored. It was in "awful shape," Kubale said when asked of the condition of the barn before restoration. The metal roof was badly damaged and the resulting water damage had caused many other issues. One of the main wooden beams had split, causing the entire barn to sag. The outside of the barn was in disrepair as well: pieces of the siding had come off and had been replaced with metal sheets. Many windows were missing and/or broken as well. Much of the stone foundation supporting the barn had crumbled from underneath it.

## Work done to accomplish the project

In order to save the mule barn, Chris Kubale brought in a number of people to assist her in the restoration. Contractors placed the barn on jacks in order to shore up the remaining stone foundation and rebuild what was completely destroyed. The main beam that had split was replaced, along with a few others, which were beginning to rot. The metal that had taken the place of some of the wood siding was removed and replaced with salvaged wood; other damaged siding was removed and replaced as necessary. Kubale urged using as much of the existing building when possible, however the windows were in such bad condition that all of them had to be replaced. A new metal roof was also installed on the building and then painted along with the entire exterior of the barn.

**How the Project achieved its Goals while meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards:** In order to receive federal tax credits, the barn must be used for either agricultural purposes or for some other business. Kubale realized that the storage of cattle in her mule barn would effectively destroy the work she had done to repair it. To remedy this, she keeps the cattle away from the barn as much as possible, and uses it for other agricultural purposes such as the storage of farm equipment and to house the occasional sick animal.

### Description of completed project

Behind the main house stands the restored mule barn; the siding and roof painted black, with white trim windows, and a custom circular vent near the top of the gable that reads, "1897," painted in red. Inside, hand-hewn posts rest on newly poured concrete pier foundations; they support hand-hewn beams and floor joists for the upper loft, which no longer sags. The stone foundation is intact and visible around parts of the barn. The original grain silo is located just behind the barn. Several livestock pens surround the barn on the south and west sides. In the west pen stands a restored livestock scale with a stone ramp for loading and unloading. A renovated corn crib creates a gateway into the west pen. In front of the mule barn to the north stands the shop and coal house; both have been renovated along with the mule barn. Two tobacco barns remain on the farm farther west of the corn crib; both have yet to be restored. The total acreage of the farm is approximately 225 acres, but only the immediate farmstead on which the buildings stand is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Amos & Bradley, 1997).

### How tax credits helped the project

To help offset some of the costs of restoring these historic structures, Chris Kubale applied for Federal and State tax credits. The costs attributed to the rehabilitation of the mule barn, corn crib, livestock scale, and coal house total approximately \$47,000. She received a 20% tax credit from the Federal Government for this project equal to approximately \$9,400. The State tax credit, which depends on the total amount of people who apply for it within the year, is unknown, but could yield as much as \$9,400 as well. Assuming the State awards Chris Kubale 8%, she would receive a \$3,760 tax credit. When asked about the tax credits, Kubale said, "We don't have deep pockets. Every little bit helps." She plans on restoring the two tobacco barns when she sets aside enough money. These tax credits help Chris Kubale, along with others, see that important historic buildings, which have made a significant impact on our cultural history, are preserved.

### Sources:

Amos, C., and Bradley A. (1997, June 20). T.B. Bright house and farmstead national register of historic places nomination. Frankfort, Kentucky: Kentucky Heritage Council

Kocher, G. (2008, August 11). Noble barns: Initiative aims to preserve structures in Kentucky. *The Herald Leader*.

Kubale, Chris. (2010, April 1). Personal communication with James Calitri.