

Barn yarns

Author tells stories of family, faith, hope

By **JOHN G. WHITACRE**
The Review

Paul Whipple's barn book gestated for a quarter-century, starting as a busy minister's idea and finally reaching the printing press in May, when Whipple was 82.

"You told me you were going to do this 25 years ago," Whipple said, quoting his friend, the Rev. Richard Burns.

Each two-page spread in "Barn Stories — Mostly True Stories Told By Barns" shows a photo of a barn on

the left and a story written by Whipple on the right.

"Almost everything in the book is true, but I had to put barns in locations they never existed so they could tell a story," said Whipple, a resident of Copeland Oaks and now age 83. "It took me about a year and a half to get it finished." Many of the stories are drawn from Whipple's memories of growing up on a farm.

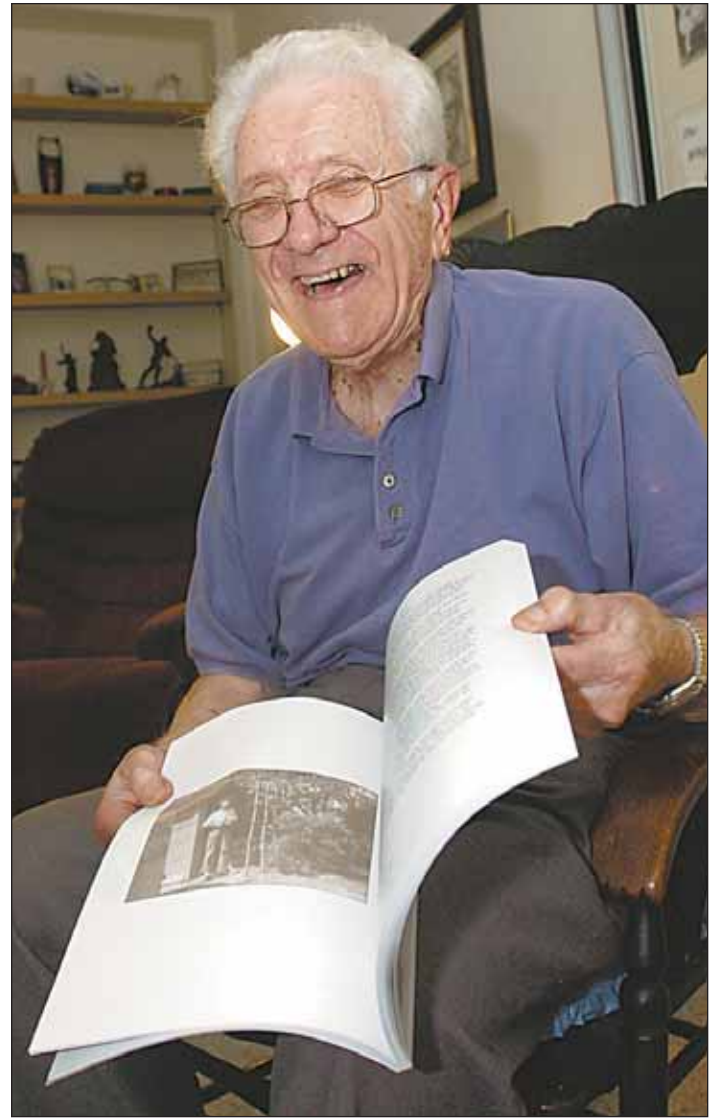
The idea arose "out of my love of my own home and farm; my personal experiences growing up on a farm" and from the television

show "Little House on the Prairie" — "If a house can talk, then a barn can talk," said Whipple.

"Some of these stories are philosophical and some are about faith and hope," he said. All but two barns are Ohio barns — the exceptions are Civil War Survivor in Hagerstown, Md., and Heino Lato in Finland.

Talking barns include a boat storage barn, with a door for mules and another for boats and boat storage on the second floor; a story provided by Oaks resident Al Kreuger about runaway horses pulling a wagon that veered off the road and ran on either side of a tree, the driver being thrown into the

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Review Photo/Kevin Graff

Paul Whipple shows a photo of his 16-year-old self in front of the family outhouse. The outhouse speaks in "Barn Stories."

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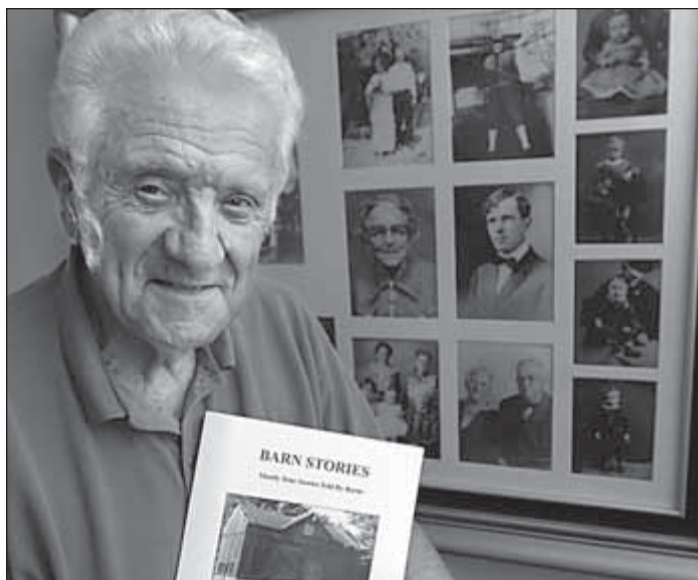


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Review Photo/Kevin Graff

Paul Whipple holds his new book, "Barn Stories," in front of a collage of family portraits.

Yarns

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ditch unhurt; and a story provided by yet another Copeland Oaks resident, Don Rupert, about an L-shaped groundhog threshers barn.

"Before they used power drive off the tractor to run threshers, a team of horses walked round and round

inside the building; they had to have space to throw chaff away from the grain; that's why it's L-shaped," said Whipple.

Whipple writes about an ice house that stored lake ice for the summer months. A ladder to the top window was used to stack ice when the building was almost full, and the ice was insulated by sawdust.

"You'd lie up there and you'd think you'd gone to heaven; oh, what a wonderful experience that was," said Whipple.

Whipple gives 45-minute presentations at which he reads excerpts. "I have slide-shows that I do at historical societies or any other group that would like it," he said.

The photo accompanying the Risley-Whipple out-house story shows Whipple at age 16 in front of the out-house built by his maternal grandfather. "I've sold more books reading that story," he said.

Whipple sells his books at the Carnation Festival, the Copeland Oaks gift shop, Stahl's Market in Ravenna, two shops in Salem and through individual requests.

"When people pick it up and start looking at barns, they have a grin on their face and have joyful memories of barns," he said.

Whipple is a United Methodist pastor, having retired in 1989 after serving seven congregations in Northeast Ohio. He moved to Copeland Oaks in 2003.

"I'm working on a second book, 'And Sundry Things,' which means I can throw in everything in my experience. ... It will have pictures of my childhood home, parsonages, churches served; all tell stories. Biblical characters I used to portray will be in the book." The book will also include three sermons and "A Dog's 23rd Psalm."

Whipple donated 100 books to Scribing to Soldiers, a recent letter campaign in which more than 1,000 letters and Whipple's books are being sent to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan. He sent 50 books to Liberia for United Methodist mission projects, organized by Dean Williams of Copeland Oaks, who arranged for shipment of a cargo container filled with building supplies and hospital supplies.

People interested in buying "Barn Stories" may contact Whipple at Copeland Oaks, 800 S. 15th St., No. 1025, Sebring, Ohio 44672, (330) 938-1057 or pauldwhipple@yahoo.com.

johnw@alliancelink.com

A Dog's 23rd Psalm

My master is my loving caregiver, I shall not want.

He takes me for long, pleasant walks where I am safe and content.

He fills me with unbelievable joy each time he comes home.

Even though I were to experience illness, accident, or even death, I will not fear

For he is with me, his loving touch and soft words comfort me.

Daily he provides me with a fabulous meal for which I am satisfied.

My drinking bowl is always filled with refreshing water to fulfill my thirst.

His goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life

And I will be with his spirit throughout eternity.

— Paul Whipple

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