

## Department of Historic Resources

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STATE HISTORICAL HIGHWAY MARKER  
"BRIGHT-LEAF TOBACCO BARN"  
TO BE DEDICATED IN PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

*—Marker highlights the log barns where bright-leaf tobacco was cured from the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century through to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century—*

*—The marker's text is reproduced below—*

RICHMOND – A state historical marker issued by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources that recalls the numerous bright-leaf tobacco barns that once dotted Pittsylvania and other Southside Virginia counties will be dedicated Friday.

The unveiling and dedication ceremony begins at 11 a.m., April 15, at the marker's location at 10452 U.S. Highway 29 North, near Blairs in Pittsylvania County. The ceremony is open to the public.

Speakers at the event will include C.D. Bryant, a farmer and bright-leaf tobacco barn owner; Jesse Barksdale, chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors; Brenda Bowman, a former county supervisor and local preservationist; Sonja Ingram of Preservation Virginia, which initiated a Tobacco Barns Project to preserve these unique agricultural buildings; and Jim Hare of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources.

Bright-leaf tobacco barns emerged in Southside Virginia during "the latter decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century," according to the marker. The barns were typically constructed of hand-hewn logs and "outfitted with wood-burning stoves." Tobacco leaves were hung on sticks that rested "on

horizontal tier-poles” and exposed to heat distributed by flues (or ducts) that allowed the tobacco to cure while protecting it from the smoke of fires.

Once a commonly seen building type in Pittsylvania and Southside, “Flue-cure tobacco barns were retrofitted with oil and gas burners after World War II and fell into disuse with the introduction of bulk-curing barns in the 1970s,” the marker reads.

The marker is sponsored by Preservation Virginia, which has led efforts in Southside Virginia to repair tobacco barns and raise awareness of the region's tobacco heritage.

After the marker unveiling, the public will be invited to enjoy refreshments and a tour of a repaired flue-cure barn owned by Mr. Bryant.

Virginia’s historical highway marker program, which began in 1927 with the installation of the first historical markers along U.S. Route 1, is considered the oldest such program in the nation. Currently there are more than 2,500 official state markers, most maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation, as well as by local partners in jurisdictions outside of VDOT’s authority.

**Text of the marker:**

**Bright-Leaf Tobacco Barns**

By the latter decades of the 19th century, bright-leaf tobacco harvested across Southside Virginia was typically cured in hand-hewn log barns outfitted with wood-burning stoves. Inside these barns, tobacco leaves were hung from sticks that rested on horizontal tier-poles. Flues (or ducts) distributed heat, which cured the leaves while protecting them from smoke. The leaves were then stored in pack barns, graded for quality, and sent to auction. Flue-cure tobacco barns were retrofitted with oil and gas burners after World War II and fell into disuse with the introduction of bulk-curing barns in the 1970s.

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