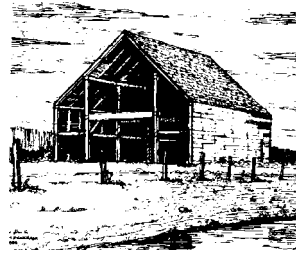


# DUTCH BARN PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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## The Dockstader-Bergen Barn: Journal of a New World Dutch Barn Conversion in 1889

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Photo 1. View of the Dockstader-Bergen barn, looking northwest. The smokehouse can be seen in the foreground; a small barn used for horses and chickens to the right (all photos taken by the author in April 2010).

This article presents a transcription of a journal or diary written by Matilda Bergen in 1889, recording the progress of alterations of the Dockstader New World Dutch barn.<sup>1</sup> It provides a fascinating window into the alteration of a New World Dutch barn into a bank barn. Fortunately the structure still exists (Photo 1). Enough of the original barn was reused in the reconfigured structure to allow for a description of its original appearance to be generated; this will be presented at the end of this article.

### **Background**

Georg Dachstätter, progenitor of the family in America, settled in the

Mohawk valley in 1709 along with many other Palatine emigrants.<sup>2</sup> In probably the last decade of the eighteenth century one of his descendants established a farmstead on a property located northwest of the Village of Fonda, in the Town of Mohawk, not far from the Montgomery-Fulton County line on Stone Arabia Road (Photos 2 and 3 [See page 6]). The frame of the house consists of H-bents, and the plan features two parlors with a central chimney and a kitchen wing. The anchorbeams at the west end of the house were installed at a higher elevation than those in other parts of the dwelling in order to facilitate the installation of a

plaster ceiling, the height of which matches that of the underside of the second floor floorboards elsewhere in the house. This led to the unusual solution of stacking two anchorbeams within one bent, to allow for the change in elevation.

The construction of the house also incorporated a detail frequently associated with (but not limited to) settlers of Palatine ancestry—solid wood laths wedged between the posts as a support for mud and grass, itself a support for interior plaster. Early examples of this detail utilize saplings whose ends are cut down to the diameter of pegs, and which are let into the sides of wall posts or set into V-shaped grooves cut into their sides. Later examples, such as at the Dockstader house, made use of sawn boards or squared lumber set between two nailing strips attached to the sides of the posts. These were removed when the house was renovated c.1990, but examples of the components were retained (Photo 4 [See page 7]).

The New World Dutch barn which is the subject of this article was built at about the same time as the house. Other outbuildings on the property include a wagon shed, apparently dating to c.1840, a smoke house, and a horse and chicken barn.

### **The Journal**

The typescript of the journal is accompanied by a brief family history, written by an unidentified sibling (possibly Peter Bergen) of Matilda Bergen. Both are reproduced here as written, without corrections.

*(continued on page 2)*

## The Jeremiah Bergen Family

Jeremiah Bergen came to America with his family in the year 1847 from Ireland, but from what part we are not sure. Some of the family think it was a place called "Abbey Lace in County Clare." The family consisted of his father, John Bergen, his mother, Mary Bulger Bergen, the children in order of their age as follows: James Bergen, Jeremiah Bergen, Katheryn Bergen, John and Thomas Bergen, twins. They also had two children born in America, Anna Bergen and Joseph Bergen.

It is our understanding that shortly after reaching America the family came to Berryville to live. Later the family moved to Amsterdam about the year 1857, all except Jeremiah, who at that time was working for a farmer by the name of Barney Wemple who lived on what is now known as the Persse Road.

Jeremiah Bergen was born February 10, 1843. At about 13 or 14 years of age he went to work for Barney Wemple and worked there until about 1867 when he went to work in a cheese factory near Sammonsville, New York. On February 6, 1868 he was married to Harriet Sammons. They lived in the cheese factory where their first child Matilda Bergen was born April 12, 1869, and continued to live there until 1871 when they moved to the Lon Schuyler farm which lies to the right or northeast of what is now known as Persse Road. They lived on this farm for six years and worked it on shares. While living on this farm three more children were born, Ida Bergen, born June 1, 1871, Elizabeth Bergen, born December 28, 1873, and Davis Bergen, born November 24, 1875.

In the spring of 1877 he moved with his family to "Hillcrest Farm" on the Stone Arabia Road. On this farm two more children were born, James T., born June 23, 1879 and Kathryn, born May 7, 1885. We have no papers but he evidently arranged to rent the farm for five years with the privilege of buying at the end of that time, for those papers show the date of purchase 1882. "Hillcrest Farm" is the place where we as children are most interested in for it was here we all more or less grew up, married and then left to go our several ways. Some day we may write more about the members of the family, but now we are more interested in the farm.

When we moved to "Hillcrest" it was in a very poor state of repair. Father bought it from two brothers, Jerome and John Yates, who had obtained it from their uncle, John Dockstader. The buildings, especially the house and barn, the oldest, were in very poor shape. The main part of the house is built like houses built in the late 1700s or early 1800 period. Two large rooms with a large double fireplace between on the first floor. It also had rooms above. Some of the rooms also have large beams typical of that early period. Later there had been additions; this is also easy to tell by the different construction.

The house has been remodeled, renovated and modernized from time to time, such as putting in running water, furnace in the cellar, also the kitchen has been modernized, etc., outside re-clapboarded and re-roofed, chimneys relaid, and the whole house has been painted outside several times. And although it is old, yes, very old, in fact, perhaps one of the oldest houses in the town, it is still today in fairly good repair.

There were several other buildings on the farm. One of the most interesting to me always was the one we used for a woodshed on the ground floor and for storing grain on the upper floor. It is said that this building was used for slave quarters by the original owners and from observation this might well be so, for in the upper part there are many windows as would be in a house, also the railing around the stairway and the floors show special finish, and the ground floor could have been used as a shed for tying up horses as was customary in those early days. Some of the original buildings have been torn down, some remodeled and some new ones built.

The old barn was one of those that had to be torn down. It was far too small to hold the crops (hay, straw, cornstalks, etc. had to be stacked outdoors) that could be raised on the farm, in very poor repair, and with no possibilities of making additions. So it was decided that someday we would build a new and modern basement barn. That came about in the year 1889, but before we start telling about building the new barn I would like to tell something that might make it more clear why these buildings were so old when we moved to "Hillcrest" in the year 1877.

It is rumored that the original owners who no doubt were the Dockstaders were friendly with the Indians and that when a number of buildings were burned in some of the Indian raids of that early date when buildings were burned in this section of the country because of this friendship these buildings were saved and as a token of friendship they left one of their Indian blankets on a large boulder which lies in the gully northwest of the buildings. This boulder is still lying up there in the gully and can be seen today.

Although the farm together with the buildings consisted of about one hundred and twenty-five acres of land, to this there was added later two fields which were formerly a part of the Cole farm. These fields contained about fifteen acres.

Much work was needed to put the farm in better shape. Brush along the fences had to be cut, several large boulders on different fields blasted and built into stone walls for fences, ditches dug to drain wet fields, etc.

But it was not all bad by any means. There were many advantages, one of which and perhaps the main one, was the land; most of it was of a rich

black loam and with good cultivating and fertilizing would raise good crops. Also there were many apple trees. They were very old, very large trees, but the apples were of the best varieties—Greenings, old-fashioned Spitzenbergs and Fall Pippins, also a sweet Harvest apple. There were also many hickory and butternut trees, and we as children could not wait for fall to come to gather them by the bushel, and during the winter it went whack, whack, whack on the flatiron face the hickorynuts to crack.

The following is a brief record and diary of events and activities while building the new barn at Hillcrest Farm during the spring and summer of the year 1889, although much of the work of accumulating most of the materials had been done the fall and winter before. One reason for keeping the diary was to show how much work there was to do so this is one reason for telling how many men we had each day, and to those mentioned we must add nine members of our own family. Beside these there would often be a neighbor or a peddler drop in as was the custom in those old days. So it is easy to see we fed from fifteen to twenty people each meal. Also some of the men sometimes stayed all night. The masons lived in Fonda and it was easier to feed [them] than to take them to Fonda and go bring them back in the morning in those horse and buggy days.

Most of the material for the new barn was accumulated the fall and winter before. The lumber most of it was drawn by sleigh from Caroga Lake during the winter. This was piled up across the road to the south and most of the carpenter work getting it ready for assembly was done there later. Also we bought a strawshed from a papermill in Sammonsville. This was taken down and the framework used for the cowshed of the new barn. Also most of the stone for the foundation was dug out from a ledge in Yallowville and drawn and piled up in the yard ready for use in the spring when building would begin.

There was very little of the old barn that could be used but there were some of the main timbers that had been used for the uprights and crossbeams. These had originally been hewn, not sawed but hewn by hand from virgin pine, very large trees, and the hew marks can easily be seen on them above the barn floor in the new barn today.

It might be interesting to make a note of the men who worked at building the new barn. The carpenters were John Ferguson, the head carpenter and doing the planning, assisted by Benjamin Dockstader, Robert Smith, George Chapins & George Getman. The masons were John Simmons, Philip Looman, and John Conroy with James Philips who mixed the mortar, etc.

The following is a diary written by our sister Matilda Bergen of day to day events.

- May 2 Commenced tearing down the old barn. Had seven men working.
- May 3 Had eleven men working.
- May 4 Today they finished tearing down the old barn. Had ten men working. In the evening Ida, Peter and I drove to Fonda.
- May 5 Sunday and a beautiful day. It was the first Sunday of Sabbath school at Berryville schoolhouse. Mame Carr and Ed Daley were here from Amsterdam.
- May 6 Commenced digging out for the basement and foundation walls. Seven men working.
- May 7 Two carpenters came and commenced work of framing the timber for the new barn. This timber had mostly been drawn in from up near Caroga Lake during the winter months and placed in the field across from the house to the south where most of the work was done preparing it for assembling. All told we had seven men today.
- May 8 A very warm day today. All told had seven men working.
- May 9 Had seven men again today, some working excavating for the basement and foundation others working on the timber.
- May 10 Our neighbor, Mr. Lue Cole, came with his team of oxen to give a hand digging out the basement. Today had eight men.
- May 11 In addition to other work pa drew a load of lime today, ten barrils, this for making mortar for the foundation wall. Seven men again today.
- May 13 This forenoon the men finished digging out the basement. Then in the afternoon the family helped the Leonardson family plant corn. They planted our corn this year on shares as the family was too busy working on the new barn.
- May 14 Today one of the masons, John Simmons, came and commenced laying the foundation for the barn. It rained about three o'clock in the afternoon and all hands quit and went home. Had eight men working today.
- May 15 Another of the masons, Philip Looman, came to work today but Mr. Simmons did not come to work. Nine men working today.
- May 16 Dick Schuyler came to help. Had nine men.
- May 17 Will and Seymour Leonardson were here helping. John Conroy came to lay wall.

*(continued on page 4)*

- Lue brought a load of lime, 12 barrels. Had 11 men.
- May 18 The warmest day, 115 degrees in the kitchen. Hot work cooking for them. Had 9 men.
- May 20 Rained hard all day, no men at all.
- May 21 The carpenters did not come. Looman & Simmons were here laying wall. Ben Dockstader came. Seven men.
- May 22 Ad Wemple & Dick Schuyler were here helping, Dick had the team. Nine men.
- May 23 Ira Suits and John Schuyler drewed four load sand. Ad came with another load at at (sic) night. Had eleven men. George Chapins came to help, also Ben Dockstader. Lue brought 5 more loads [barrels] of lime.
- May 24 Rainy in the morning, did not have to work. Looman went home sick. Ten men.
- May 25 A beautiful day. Finished laying the high wall. John & Ira drawed 4 more loads of sand. Had 12 men.
- May 27 Mrs. Wemple's funeral, rained after 3 o'clock the masons went home. Had 10 men. Mr. Ferguson went home dinner time, his sister died.
- May 28 All cleared off, all the masons were here but not one of the carpenters. Froze at night. Had 7 men.
- May 29 Finished the wall. The masons went home to stay. No carpenters yet today. Beautiful weather. Had 7 men. Pete went to Amsterdam to circus.
- May 30 Decoration day. Mr. Ferguson was here in the morning and laid out work for the other carpenters, his sister was buried 2 o'clock. Mr. Chapin was here all day. Mr. Smith & Ben half a day. Had 5 men. Cloudy and windy but did not rain only a little bit.
- May 31 All the carpenters were here. Pa and Pete have been filling in the driveway. Ma and Ella took the carpet to the weaver.
- June 1 Raised the basement of the barn. Had 20 men for dinner and 23 for supper. Sprinkled a little now and then but not enough to stop work.
- June 3 The carpenters were all here in the afternoon, Mr. Ferguson & Chapins all day. Had 8 men. Cloudy.
- June 4 Commenced putting the timbers together. Had 8 men. Rained about 1 hour just tea time.
- June 5 All the carpenters were here. Had 8 men. All went to the M. V. G. I become a member. Received an invitation to Anna Carr's wedding, Emory brought the pike poles.
- June 6 Cloudy and very windy, sprinkles occasionally but not enough rain to stop work. Ben D. was not here. Had 8 men. Frankie Brummagin died. Pete drawed a load of plank from Sammonsville.
- June 7 A very busy day getting ready for the raising bee. Ella was here helping. All the carpenters were here, 9 men. Pete has been inviting all afternoon to the raising. It was lovely this morning but this evening it is all clouding over rained a little.
- June 8 We were a disappointed crowd. Rained all it could pour down all day. Had to postpone the raising bee until Monday. The carpenters were here until dinner but did not work. 6 men.
- June 9 Sunday. We attended the funeral of Frankie Brummagin. The largest display of flowers I ever saw at a funeral. It was very sad. Cloudy but did not rain.
- June 10 The raising bee came off very lucky, no one was hurt. 123 men were here, sprinkled a little bit two or three tunes but not enough to stop work. Amanda Veeder, Mary Lathers, Jennie Lenardson, Mrs. A. Wemple, Mrs. Hillabrant, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Devenburg, and Mrs. Ben Dockstader were here to help wait on the men. Am very thankful this day is over.
- June 11 Commenced raining about ten o'clock, rained nearly all day. The carpenters went home after dinner. 6 men. Put on six clapboards and finished putting up the braces.
- June 12 The carpenters were all here all day. Geo. Chap[ins?] Gale had sick headache, did not come until dinner, he stopped work at tea time. Spiked the rafters and clapboarded some. Also put up scaffolds. 8 men. Satie Wemple & Frank Wood were [m]arried half past 6 o'clock. Also Raymond Everson and Matie Chrisman were married half past 7 o'clock. Cloudy but did not rain. Cleared off nice in the evening. Ad and Ira each drawed a load of clapboards, also Mr. Rogga. Pete drawed two load.
- June 13 All the carpenters were here clapboard-ing. A beautiful day. Annie Carr was married 8 o'clock.
- June 14 The carpenters were all here, put up scaffold in the forenoon, clapboarded in the

- afternoon. A warm day. Had strawberries for the first time for tea. Pete drew a load of boards. 7 men.
- June 15 The carpenters were all here all day clapboarding. Ad & Pete traded work. Pete went to hoe corn. Ad was here helping. Very warm, about 6 o'clock had a hard shower. 8 men.
- June 16 Children's day, we all went to church but James. Very warm. Could not go to Sabbath school as we had another shower, rained a good share of the afternoon.
- June 17 Rainy all forenoon. Mr. Ferguson was here in the morning and filed the saws and put in a new doorstep, went home. After dinner he came back, also Mr. Smith was here half a day clapboarding. 4 men. Pete drew a load of boards in the forenoon, in the afternoon took Mr. Fredericks pike pole home; brought back a load of plank.
- June 18 The carpenters were all here except Ben Dockstader, his father was sick. Put the roof boards on the barn. We went strawberrying, got 10 quarts. Had 6 men.
- June 19 Mr. Ferguson had to go away 10 o'clock, he was juryman. Ben & George Chapins was not here. Mr. Smith & pa commenced to shingle. Grandpa and grandma Sammons were here. Cloudy but did not rain until evening when it rained a very little. All went to the grange. Only 4 men. Mr. Ferguson came tea time again, work till dark.
- June 20 Mr. Smith & George Chapins was here, Mr. Ferguson came tea time. Shingled some & clapboarded. 4 men. A beautiful day only windy.
- June 21 B. H. Smith, Geo. Chapins were here. Lue Cole came about 8 o'clock to help shingle. Hard shower tea time, did not work. 5 men.
- June 22 Cool and windy but did not rain. Ad, Lue and Jake were here in the afternoon to help shingle. Finished the west side of the barn, and commenced the shed. Mr. Smith & Geo Chapins were here. 8 men.
- June 24 Pleasant today. Geo Getman came to help. Mr. Ferguson was here half a day. Smith & Chapins all day. 7 men. Shingled on the shed and clapboarded.
- June 25 Geo Getman, Geo Chapins and Mr. Smith were here all day. Mr. Ferguson came up after tea. Commenced shingling the east side of barn. Did not rain but was cloudy all day. 6 men.
- June 26 Rained all day long, nobody was here. Pa drew a load of shingles in the afternoon.
- June 27 A pleasant day. Mr. Ferguson was here all day, the first time since the 19th. Geo Chapins came dinner time, Geo Getman about 9 o'clock. Mr. Smith was here all day. Shingled, had 8 men.
- June 28 The carpenters were all here all day. Put up the track in the barn. 7 men. Nice day but warm.
- June 29 All here, finished the roof, painted the gutters, clapboarded. Very warm day. 7 men. Ma & I went to Amsterdam.
- July 1 Ben Dockstader came about 9 o'clock the first since the 15th of June. Mr. Smith, Mr. Ferguson here all day also. Mr. Phillips were here. Laid half of the barn floor also foundation of the cowstable floor. Fair weather. 7 men. Made 3 doors on the shed.
- July 2 All the carpenters here except Geo Chapins. Put the window in the south gable end. Made the door in the end of [the] shed also the east barn door. Took down scaffolding. 8 men. Laid some barn floor.
- July 3 Pa drew the boards for the west barn door, also the rope and pulleys for the track. The carpenters were all here except Mr. Smith. Laid floor in cowstable, foundation for the horsetable floor. Rained very hard in the afternoon. 7 men.
- July 4 Rained hard nearly all the forenoon. 3 of the carpenters were here. Laid floor in the barn and horsetable, put up the rope and fork in the barn. 6 men. Mr. Chrischance was buried, pa was bearer. Put up the cow stanchions.
- July 5 All the carpenters were [here] except Mr. Smith. Put in the windows and made the mangers in the horse stable, also the west barn doors. 7 men. A lovely day. Geo Getman went home.
- July 6 The carpenters were all here until dinner. Finished all up. Put up mowpoles and c. went away to stay. Very warm. We swept up all the floors and pa and Pete filled in slate by the barn doors and horsetable door. 6 men.

## Dockstader-Bergen Barn

(continued from page 6))

### Analysis

From the above it is clear that it took just over two months of site work to affect the conversion of the barn. Preparations for this work had begun in the previous autumn however, with selection and felling of timber. The newly-fabricated materials were transported from Caroga Lake—about 17 miles distant to the north—via sled, during the winter of 1888-89. In addition, the frame (and presumably siding and floorboards) of a “strawshed” in Sammonsville—four or five miles distant—was purchased, disassembled, and brought to the site. The materials from this structure were largely used to construct a wing on the barn.

Disassembly of the New World Dutch barn took a total of 28 man-days, the work being accomplished in three days in early May. Work on the foundation of the new barn began immediately after the frame of the old barn was down. The masons included John Simmons, who may have been the master mason, and Philip Looman. John Conroy and Simmons are both described as responsible for laying the masonry foundation wall. All three masons have eluded further identification thru the census. A team of oxen were used to aid in the excavation of the new banked cellar hole. These were brought to the site by Lue Cole, a neighbor. Excavation of the foundation began on 6 May and continued for one week. Stone for the walls of the foundation had been brought to the site the previous au-



Photo 2. View of the Dockstader house, looking north-northwest.

turn, from a quarry in Yellowville (called “Yallowville” in the diary), a short distance to the north. At the same time, carpenters began hewing the raw materials brought to the site the previous winter, and the owner carted lime for mortar to the site. The foundation was laid during the course of 13 work days, beginning on 14 May.

John Ferguson appears to have been the master carpenter, and is described as laying out the work for the other carpenters. He may have been the John H. Ferguson who was a carpenter living in Greenbush, Rensselaer County in the late 1880s; however the distance involved makes this unlikely.<sup>3</sup> His name is too common to allow



Photo 3. Assembled panoramic view looking from the northeast to the southeast, showing the relationship of the barn and outbuildings to the house.



Photo 4. Some of the components of the wall infill. Mud and grass was packed around each of the horizontals which spanned between the bent posts of the house.

for conclusive identification. Ferguson was infrequently on site, and usually only for part of a day. His tasks included laying out work for the carpenters, and seeing that the tools were kept in good repair. Other men who were likely carpenters include B. H. Smith, Ben Dockstader (Jr., a “laborer” living in the Town of Mohawk in the 1880 census, aged 27 in 1889), George Chapins, and George Getman. Smith may have been Benjamin F. Smith, a carpenter living in Saratoga Springs in 1880 and aged 56 in 1889, although this seems somewhat unlikely. Chapins remains unidentified. Getman may be the same as the carpenter of that name living in Johnstown, Fulton County in 1880. If so, he was 54 years old at the time of the raising.<sup>4</sup>

Immediately after the completion of the foundation, Ferguson visited the site and laid out the work for the carpenters to do, on 30 May. This likely included a discussion with the carpenters on the form of the building and a review of the work to be done. A small raising bee was held two days later, with more than 20 men on hand. The diary says that the “basement” was raised; this likely means the framing components of the barn that are below the sill were put in place on that day.

For the next several days timbers were hewn and on 4 June the carpenters “commenced putting the timbers together” in anticipation of the raising while the owner’s son, Peter, went about inviting neighbors to the raising

bee, scheduled for Saturday the 8th. Bad weather forced postponement, and so the bee was rescheduled for the following Monday. A total of 123 men participated, and eight women from neighboring farms assisted the women of the Bergen family in the preparation of food for them. The bee “came off very lucky” with no injuries.

The 11th saw the installation of the remaining braces and the beginning of nailing on the clapboards. Clapboarding continued until 29 June, while plank and other materials were delivered to the site. The roof boards were installed on the 18th, and shingling was finished the same day the clapboarding was completed. Doors and windows were installed, and flooring placed in the barn during the first week of July. Finally, mowpoles were laid in the hay mow. Work was done on all days of the week except Sundays. The barn was completed on Saturday 6 July 1889.

Several individuals—apparently neighbors and/or relatives—are identified in the diary. All who can be positively identified were residents of the town of Mohawk. Will Leonardson (22 at the time), Seymour Leonardson (27, a laborer and possibly his cousin), Richard W. (Dick) Schuyler (30, a farmer), Lucius (Lue) Cole (35, a farmer) who brought his team of oxen, as previously noted. Cole probably grew up in the Town of Root.<sup>5</sup> Other Town of Mohawk neighbors who helped included Adam (Ad



Photo 5. Interior of the Dockstader-Bergen barn, looking southwest showing bents 1 and 2.

*(continued on page 8)*

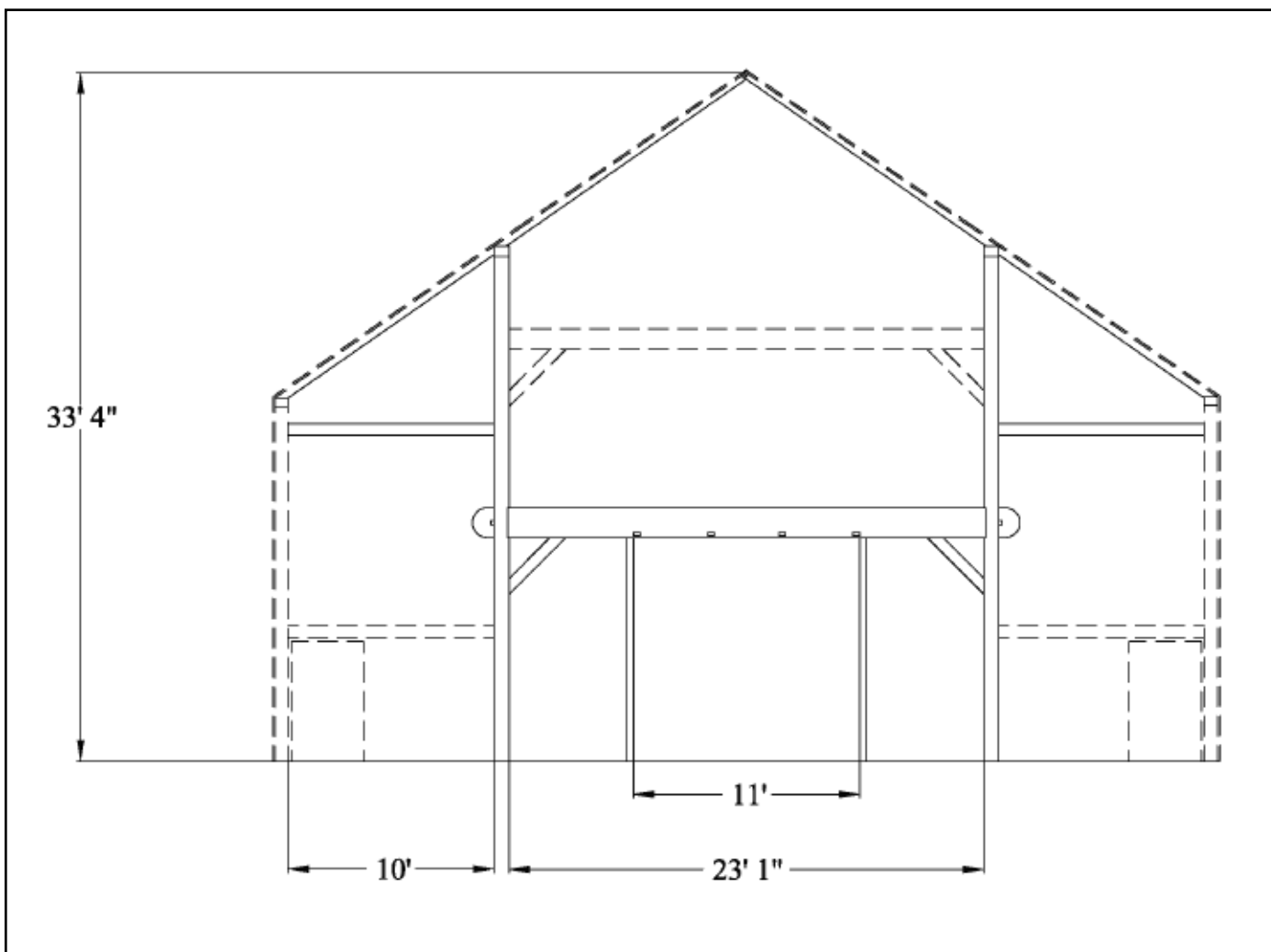


Figure 1. Conjectural section of the Dockstader barn as it existed before 1889.

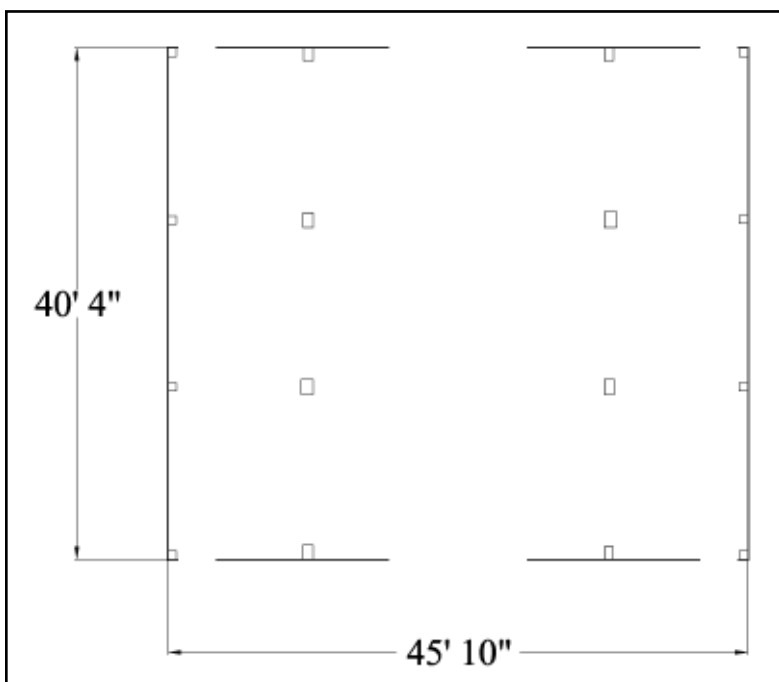


Figure 2. Diagrammatic plan of the Dockstader barn as it existed before 1889.

Wemple (37, a farmer), Ira Suits (22), and John Schuyler (20). It has proven impossible to identify "Mr. Gale" and "Mr. Philips".

The owner Jeremiah Bergen and his son Peter also helped, participating in less-skilled tasks which included "filling in the driveway"—presumably related to site preparation—transporting plank from Sammonsville, spreading the word about the raising bee, transporting other building materials, tools and hardware, helping with the shingling of the roof, and finally "fill[ing] in slate by the barn doors and horsestable door", which likely related to raising the level of the driveway to the sills of the doors.

***Description of the Dockstader Barn as Originally Constructed***

Enough of the components of the original New World Dutch barn constructed by the Dockstader family exist, incorporated into the



present barn constructed as described above in 1889, to allow for a conjectural reconstruction of its original appearance and principal measurements.<sup>6</sup> (Photo 5; Figures 1 and 2)

The components of each bent are marked with chiseled marriage marks, numbered from south to north, I, II, III and IIII, suggesting that they are in their original arrangement relative to one another. The topography of the present site of the barn makes it likely that it originally stood elsewhere on the property, perhaps closer to the road to the west of the house where there is a broad flat area adjacent to a hill.

The overall width of the barn—here estimated to have been 45'-10", is based upon the presumption that the width of the side aisles was 10'-0", since only one of the outside posts was identified and it is not in its original relationship to the H-bents.<sup>7</sup> This width generates a height of 33'-4" for the barn. The original length is believed to have been 40'-4", however there is some estimating involved in arriving at this figure as well. Both of the purlin plates survived, but only in part; this dimension is thus based upon a presumption that the central bay was similar in width to the outer two. All of the principal components of the four H-bents survive; anchorbeams range in size from 1'-2½" by 10½" to 1'-8¾" by 1'-0" in size, with the two interior anchorbeams being larger than those of the exterior bents.

The anchorbeams of bents I and III are secured with single wedges at their ends; those of the internal bents are each secured with two wedges at each end. All four anchorbeams have protruding rounded tongues, which are about 3" thick and extend between 9" and 1'-1" from the outside face of the posts. Bent III is typical; the bottom of the anchorbeam measures 10'-6½" from the floor, the beam is 1'-8" high with paired wedges at each end measuring 1¾" by 3" (Photo 6). The posts extend about 12'-7" above the top of the anchorbeam.

The sway braces were not reinstalled when the components of the barn were re-erected, but it is clear that they extended upward from approximately 4'-9" below the top of the H-bent posts, about 6'-8" above the top of the anchorbeams, measured at bent III.

A portion of one of the rafter plates, measuring 8⅞" by 10⅞" was reused as a "longitudinal head-height strut" to use Fitchen's term. The northern three posts on the east range bear marks indicating that a board enclosure once enclosed the two northern bays on the east side. The former sites of mangers can be seen in the southern bay on the east side and the two southern bays in the west aisle. In both cases the mangers appear to have been constructed from boards, and had a sloped bottom.



Photo 6. Detail of the east end of bent 2 showing the paired wedges.

<sup>1</sup> This text is copied from an early twentieth century typescript, a copy of which is in the collection of Tom Perse, current owner of the Dockstader farmstead. Tom got his copy from the late Victor Van Wagenen, a grandson of the Bergens.

<sup>2</sup> Doris Dockstader Rooney. *The Dockstader family: descendants of Georg Dachstätter, Palatine emigrant of 1709, who settled in the Mohawk Valley of New York* (Dodge City, Kansas: High Plains Publishers, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> *Albany City Directory, 1889*. (Albany, NY: Sampson, Murdock and Co., 1889). He also appears in the 1890 and 1891 editions by the same publishers. In each of the three years checked, he is recorded as a carpenter living at 108 Third Avenue, in Greenbush, now known as the City of Rensselaer.

<sup>4</sup> Federal Census 1880. Accessed via Ancestry.com on 15 November 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Census 1870. Accessed via Ancestry.com on 16 December 2010.

<sup>6</sup> These components were measured by the author, owner Tom Perse, Russell Ley, and Roberta S. Jeracka, all DBPS members, on 12 June 2010. CADD drawings were executed by Erica Stupp, December 2010.

<sup>7</sup> This dimension reflects the width of the side aisles of the Larned Barn, on Stitt Road in the Town of Glenmont, Albany County and recorded by Mark T. Hesler in his *Dutch Barns in Guilderland, Albany County, New York*, a survey from 1987, whose center aisle was of the same width as that of the present barn. Other examples from that town recorded in that survey have similar dimensions.

# The Pindar Barn, Route 145, Town of Middleburgh, Schoharie County, New York

By Allan Deitz and Kim Balfour



Photo 1. The Pindar barn (All photographs by Al Deitz in 2008 and 2009).

Across the Schoharie Creek from the Middleburgh traffic light, routes 145 to the north and 30 to the south form the eastern border of the 300-acre Pindar family farm. Several generations of the Henry V. Pindar family occupied and operated the farm until Henry "Van" Pindar III, a fifth generation dairy farmer, died in 2004.<sup>1</sup> Four years ago the farm was purchased by Henry Ioannou.

The square rule barn on the Middleburgh Pindar farm is a large nine bay New World Dutch barn that measures 50'-7" wide by 100 feet long (Photo 1). Like the once-nearby Deertz barn, it was originally constructed as a six-bay (seven bent) barn. It was built in the first half of the nineteenth century, and as initially constructed measured 60 feet in length (Photo 2). Three bays totaling 40 feet long were added at the north gable end for hay storage, needed to accommodate a large dairy herd sometime later. The 29-foot-wide center aisle and side aisles of 10'-6" width are also similar in size to those of the Deertz barn.<sup>2</sup> The orientation of the Pindar barn is north-south, with the layout face at the south end, the front of the barn.

Bays one through five of the barn are 9'-10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" wide, including the

width of the posts. The sixth bay is 10'-9" wide. All of the anchorbeams used in the barn appear to be pine, in this original section measure 1'-7" deep and 11" wide. They are secured to the bent posts by two pegs (Photo 3).

A hole for a threshing pole is cut into the bottom face of the fourth an-

chorbeam, at the center of this section of seven bents. The threshing pole was used to guide horses in a circular path to separate grain from chaff. The nave in the newer three-bay addition is the same width as that in the original part of the barn, but the anchorbeams are not as large. Square tenons at the ends of the anchorbeams of the older portion of the barn protrude 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" to 4" and are 3" thick. The braces of each of these bents measure 9" by 7" and are secured by one peg at each end in a three-foot layout. No scribe marks were found. The upper tie at the center bent of each side aisle in the original seven-bent section measures 10" by 9". Most outside wall posts in the older part of the barn are 6" square, some are 7" square; they are five feet on center. A unique feature is the use of a brace on each wall post, pointing upward toward the center of the original portion of the barn. The braces in the first (southern) three bays point north; those in the next three bays point south (Photo 4).

Sway braces extend from the bent posts to the purlin plates and are four feet long. The bent posts measure 10" by 11". There are two raising holes



Photo 2. The original six bays of the Pindar barn, showing the join with the newer section at right.



Photo 3. Detail of end of a typical anchorbeam-post connection at bent VI. Kim Balfour is seen at right; the owner's son sits on the anchorbeam of bent VII.

(the upper measuring 2" in diameter, the lower 1 1/2") on each bent post—except in the two posts of the middle bent which has an upper tie beam, where there is only one raising hole in each post. The higher raising hole of each bent post is located 2'-1" down from the bottom of the purlin plates. Each purlin plate in the original section consists of a single beam measuring 60 feet long and 9" by 10" in section. Joinery connecting the old and new barn sections is seen in photo 2.

The roof of the original portion of the barn has 13 pairs of square rafters, joined at the ridge by a pinned tongue and fork (open mortise) system. Scab plates were added later to stabilize the ridge as the sills began to fail. The original roof planks and shingles remain in place and are visible from the interior, having been covered with tin.

The loss of the sills to rot and similar issues with the post bottoms is presently weakening the structure, causing the barn to lean. The ground



Photo 4. View showing the wall braces.

floor of the barn has been altered to accommodate a large dairy operation. A concrete floor and metal stanchions have replaced their original wooden counterparts. This may have been done c.1910 after frequent flooding from the Schoharie Creek had weakened the wooden floor. No documentation exists for this alteration; much written history on the farm was lost in a 12-foot flood of the house which occurred sometime between 1980 and 1990. Only the bent post bottoms remain as evidence of a Dutch style barn at this level. Cattle doors are located at the sides of the south gable end.

Wagon doors are presently at the rear east side of the newer three-bay addition. They appear to have been originally located at the south and north gable ends. A common trait found in Schoharie County barns is the presence of wagon doors at only one gable end. As barn historian Greg Huber wrote to the authors this year, "almost all three-aisle barns in Schoharie County have just one end wall with a wagon door entrance. This trait is considered as an example of a regionalism...the reason for such a consistent aberration across an entire county is not known. In distinct contrast to so many other area barns the Pindar barn originally had wagon entries at each of its end or gable walls. The telltale sign...is the presence of a middle-man hole in the soffit of the wall anchor-beam. This hole received the "man in the middle" pole that allowed the two half-door sections to be brought and held together. So each end wall anchor-beam in the Pindar barn has a middleman hole. This is an extreme rarity for a classic barn in Schoharie County." The middle-man hole in the soffit of each end wall anchor-beam of the Pindar barn was observed during the June 19, 2010 Schoharie Valley Barn Tour. New red-painted clapboard siding covers the barn including many of its original door openings.

### **Pindar Brothers Hop Yard**

The Pindar farm was well known for its dairy herd and its large hop production from about 1890 to 1952. The grandfather of the first Henry V. and his brother William began growing hops at the beginning of that period. The Pindar Brothers Hop Yard

*(continued on page 12)*

## **Pindar Barn** (continued from page 11)

became the largest in the Schoharie Valley. According to newspaper accounts, the Pindar Brothers of Middleburgh had 100 acres of hops at the peak of operation; in the early 1900s, Schoharie County was number one in New York State in hops production.<sup>3</sup> The new owner's son, Peno loamnou, has learned that "just about everyone in the Valley worked at the Pindar Hop Yard in the early 1900s."<sup>4</sup> Floods of the Schoharie Creek in December 1901 and October 1903 reached the Pindar house and barns about a half mile west of the traffic

light at the Creek crossing. Nearly 50,000 hop poles were carried off the farm in the 1903 flood.<sup>5</sup> The hop houses and a carriage barn were removed by the current owner, Henry loamnou, in 2007 or 2008.<sup>6</sup> During prohibition corn was the principal crop. Photo 5 shows the hop houses and barn in about 1911.<sup>7</sup>

### **The now-razed New World Dutch Barn on Route 30: Another Pindar barn**

A four-bay New World Dutch barn on another Pindar farm was visited in 1992 by the DBPS as part of a tour of

Schoharie-Middleburgh barns. That farm, located on the east side of route 30 and the Schoharie Creek near the Reformed Church in the village of Middleburgh, was owned by a relative of the original Pindar family. The barn featured 2'-0" unwedged anchorbeam tenon extensions, the longest recorded at that time. It also had double raising holes. That Pindar barn collapsed some years later and was removed. The land on which it sat is no longer farmed.

<sup>1</sup> Obituary of Henry "Van" Pindar, from *Cobleskill Times Journal*, 2004. Obituary of Henry V. Pindar (died Nov. 24, 1965) from *Middleburgh News*, 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Zoch, "The Deertz Barn," *DBPS Newsletter* of Spring 1989.

<sup>3</sup> Article on hops in Schoharie County from the *Schoharie County Historical Review* (Fall 1967), courtesy of William Pindar.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Henry and Peno loamnou by Allan Deitz and Kim Balfour, 1 September 2009.

<sup>5</sup> This information is from local newspaper accounts found at the Middleburgh library.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Henry and Peno loamnou, 1 September 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Photo of the Henry V. Pindar Family Farm Hop Houses and Barn ca. 1911, from *New York Archives*, 6:2 (Fall 2006).

<sup>8</sup> *The DBPS Reporter* (Winter 1992).



Photo 5. View of the Pindar farm c.1911 (reproduced with permission from *New York Archives*, Fall 2006).

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