

DUTCH BARN RESEARCH MISCELLANY

VOLUME III, No. 2, 35-60, 1990

76

This publication is planned to provide more information than can be included in the NEWS LETTER if the SOCIETY. ITS content is based on the research activities, historical archives, field trips, and collections of members and others interested in DUTCH BARNs.

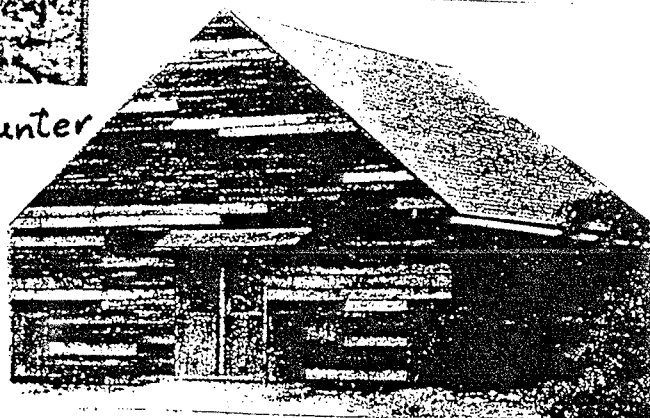
The text is presented as unedited copy. It is hoped that this information will lead to a better grasp of the chronology, the builders, the use of these unique structures and the role they played in the early settlement of Northeastern America.



The Larger Wemp Barn Ft. Hunter
1715-1990

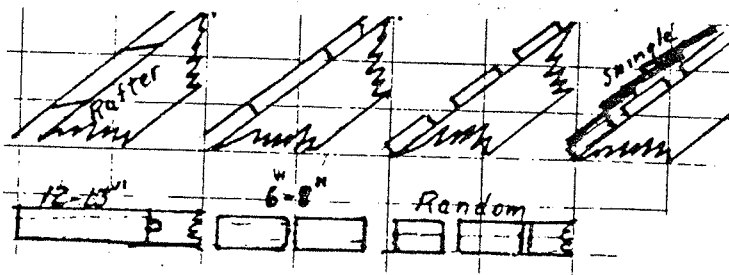
Miscellany will be issued at random times dependent on the accumulation of useful data.

Please send copy to Vincent Schaefer.



The Larger Wemp Barn. 1990---
Carl Touhey Estate, "Oriskatach"
Onesquethaw Creek Rd, Albany Co. N.Y.

The MISCELLANY is prepared by--
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Original Dutch Barn at Oriskatach.



"Oriskatach"

Wemp Barn.



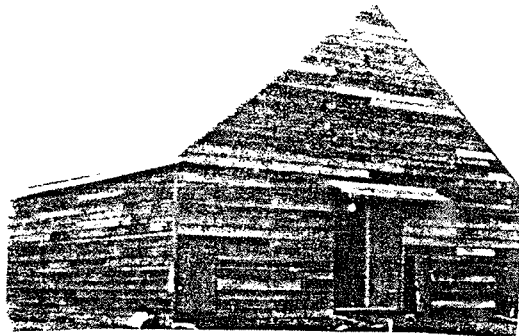
Times Union Photo.

Dedication of Vol. III No 2 of "Miscellany".

To Carl Touhey "Renaissance Man of the 1900s"

Who saved the Wemp Barn for Posterity

V.J.S. 12/1/90
Editor D.B.R.M.



V.J.S.

Wemp Barn at Oriskatach

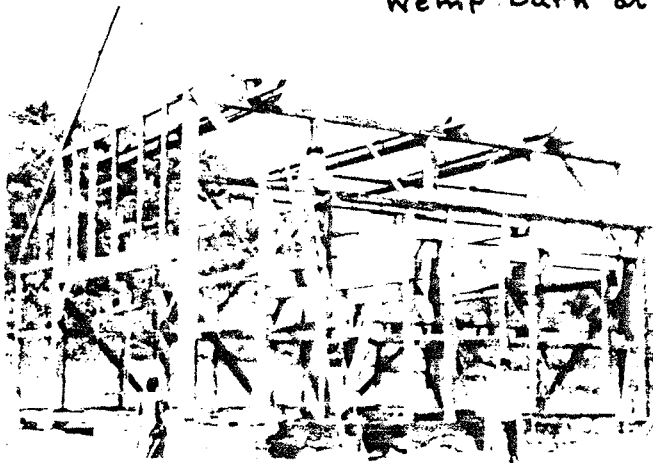


Photo by V.J.S.

Wemp Barn being assembled



V.J.S.

Wemp Barn and Pond. 10.30.90

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The History of the Larger Wemp Barn. -- 1.

The progenitor of the Wemp family in eastern New York begins with the arrival of Jan Barentse Wemp in Beaverwyck (Albany) about 1643-5. He acquired property north of Albany on the east side of the Hudson River at the mouth of a substantial stream which was subsequently called the Poestenkill. At the time Jan Wemp had an alias --- "Poest." I have recently been told that there is a possibility that "Poest" referred to the Netherland town of "Peeste" which may be the place where Jan Wemp emigrated from. It was the pronounced "Pest." In any event Jan Wemp married Maritje Myndertse. They had 6 children the oldest born in 1649 was named Myndert. He married Diewer Wendel. They had two children, the older, Johannes, was captured in 1690 during the Schenectady Massacre and taken as a captive to Canada. During the massacre his father, Myndert was killed. Jan Wemp was born in 1670.

Apparently Johannes Wemp returned from Canada some time after 1691 and in 1701 married Catalina Schermerhorn. They had 4 children before she died about 1708.

In 1709 Johannes (Jan) married again this time to Ariaantje Swits. They had 8 children between 1710 and 1726.

In 1711 Jan Wemp, being a Master Builder, was contracted to build Fort Hunter at the mouth of the Schoharie River, west of Amsterdam. From then on he was referred to as "of the Mohocks Country." It is likely he settled on the 540 acres of land he subsequently bought from the Mohawk-Iroquois Indians in 1736. It is also quite possible he built the Larger Wemp Barn shortly after his first settling of the region, about 1715.

Jan Wemp's eldest son Myndert, born in 1701 married Sarah Mills about 1730.

The History of the Larger Wemp Barn (Continued)--2

They had 3 children, a girl and 2 boys. The youngest, Andries, was born in 1735. In 1765 he married Helena Bratt. They had four children. He was the grandson of Jah Wemp the barn builder and at the start of the Revolution was apparently living on the original Wemp Grant near Fort Hunter.

At that time a notation from Prof. Jonathan Pearson of Union College and author of First Settlers of Schenectady refers to him as follows --- "Andries Wemp of Montgomery County being an adherent of the King in the Revolutionary War his property was confiscated." ---. It is likely that this confiscation occurred after the Sir John Johnsons' British, Tory and Indian Raids of May and October of 1780 when these 1000 raiders swept the Schoharie and middle Mohawk Valleys burning homes, barns and killing the rebels men, women and children, laying waste to the "Breadbasket of the Revolution." At that time Andries Wemp and his family fled to Canada.

After the war it is said that Andries attempted to recover his property. This request was denied.

Meanwhile there is some evidence that the land and buildings including the Larger Wemp Barn, which had been spared from burning in 1780 since the owner was a Tory, was acquired by Jillis Fonda a Captain in the Revolution.

When the barn was dismantled in 1990 evidence indicated that it had been moved from its original site. This site quite possibly was on the Mohawk River Flats several hundred yards north of its later location. This could have happened to avoid the annual Spring freshet when the Schoharie ice breakup would produce ice jams and severe flooding in that region. The date 1794 was found on the under surface of a sway brace above an anchor beam.

The History of the Larger Wemp Barn (Continued)--3.

At the same time the carefully carved initials J.F. were found below the anchor beam marked II on the massive post bearing that beam and the purlin plate above.

This possible relationship of the Fondas to the Wemp Barn poses some fascinating questions which should be pursued.

The Fonda family have a record very much like that of the Wemps. The son of the original Fonda, Jillis Douwese Fonda who settled in Beaverwyck in 1654, owned land on the east side of the Hudson River above Albany in 1676. His name was Douw Jillis. He and his wife Rebecca had four children. Their second son born in 1684 was named Jillis. He married Rachel Winne in 1695 and moved to Schenectady in 1700. They had eight children 4 boys and 4 girls. The eldest, Douw married Maritje Vrooman, daughter of Adam Vrooman pioneer settler of the Schoharie Valley near Middleburgh. After marriage they settled in Caughnawaga (Fonda) in 1751 where they built a large limestone house. Douw was slain by Sir John Johnson's troops during the May 1780 raid.

His brother Abraham, married Maria Mebie in 1746. They had 3 children. Maria died in 1753. He then married Susanna Glen in 1755. They had 6 children. Their eldest son, born in 1759 married Hedricus Veeder in 1783. His name was Jillis Fonda. They had seven children. During the Revolution he became a Captain and was I believe the owner of the Wemp property after it had been confiscated.

At the present day to descendants of the Fonda family are well known. They are Henry Fonda and his daughter Jane.

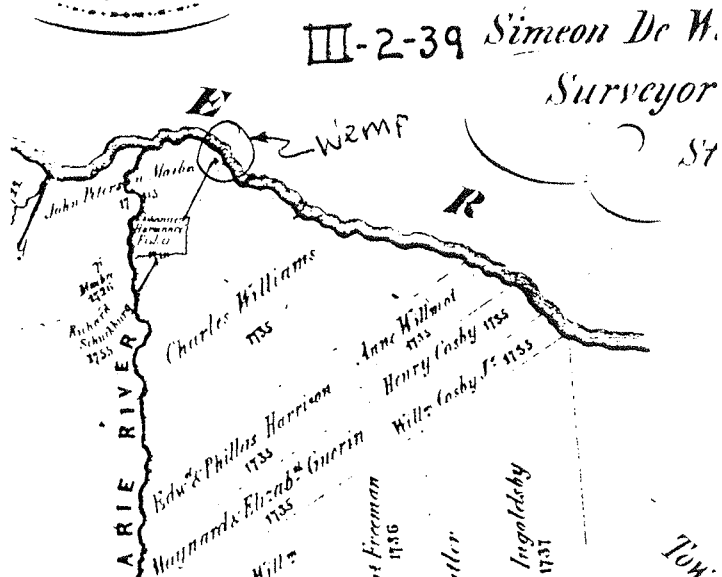
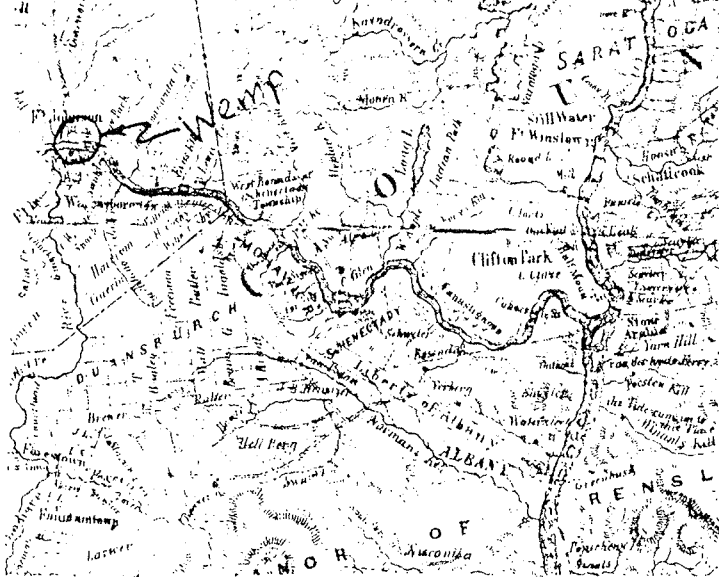
Genealogy of the Wemp Family of Fort Hunter area
1630 - 1775

1. Jan Barentse Wemp b. Ca 1630 m. Maritie Myndertse
 ch. Myndert 1649
 Grietje 1651
 Anna 1655
 Barent 1656
 Johannes
 Aeltje
2. Myndert Wemp b. 1649 m. Diewer Wendel. Killed 1690 Mass.
 ch. Johannes -- taken to Canada 1690 b. Ca 1670
 Susanna
3. Johannes Wemp b. Ca 1670 d 1749
 ch. Myndert 1706 m. Catalina Schermerhorn 1700
 Reyer 1703 m. Ariaantje Swits 1709
 Johannes 1705 (had 12 children)
 Ariaantje 1707 In 1711 moved to Montgomery County
 Debora 1710 Patent of 450 acres obtained 1737.
 Isaac Ca 1712 Willed westerly Schoharie Flats to Isaac Ephria
 Johannes Ca 1714 Willed easterly Schoharie Flats to Johannes
4. Myndert Wemp 1701 m. Sarah Mills.
 ch. Maria 1731
 Myndert Ca 1733
 Andries 1735
5. Andries Wemp b 1735 m. Helena Bratt 1765
 ch. Myndert 1766 "
 Andries 1768 [Andries Wemp of Montgomery County
 Pieter 1771 being an adherent of the King in the
 Pieter 1773 Revolutionary War his property was
 confiscated.] " After the War an effort
 was made to regain this property.

Note: It is quite possible that Johannes Wemp 1670-1749 built
 The larger Wemp Barn about 1711... when he moved from
 Schenectady to The flats at the mouth of the Schoharie
 Info from Pearson's "First Settlers of Schenectady." Vincent J. Schaefer 4/15/89

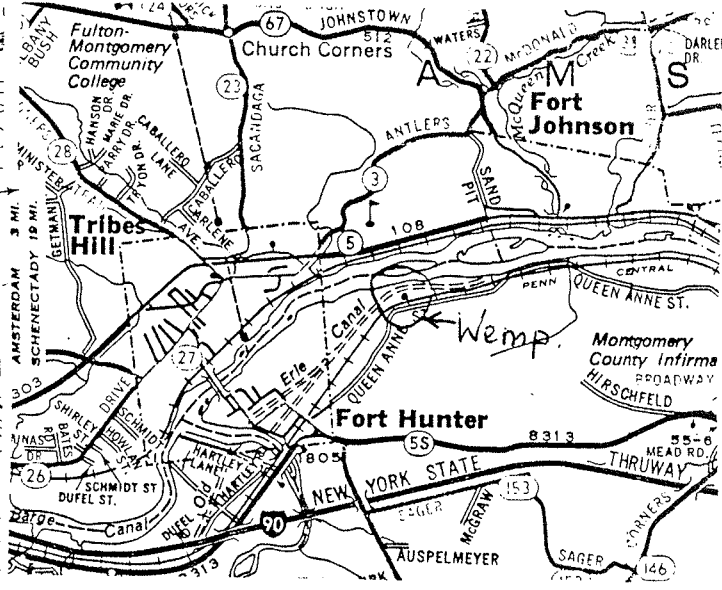
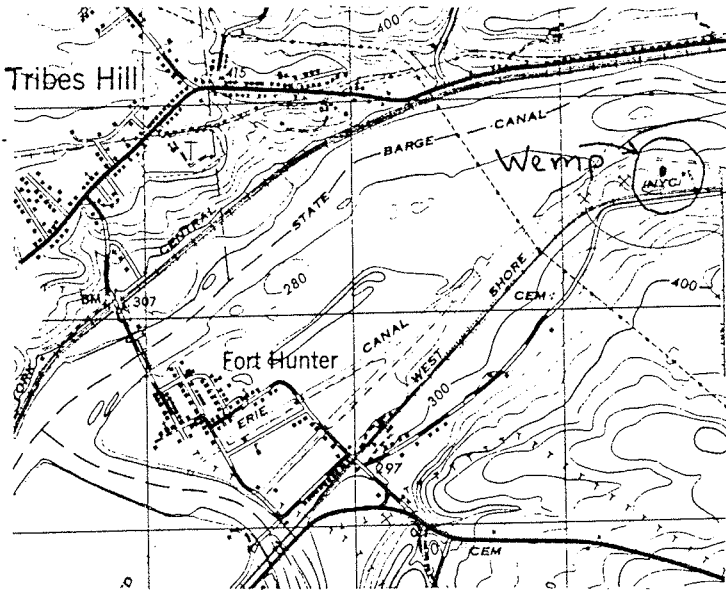
Geographic Location of Wemp Dutch Barn along the Mohawk near Old Fort Hunter.

III-2-39 Simeon De W.
Surveyor



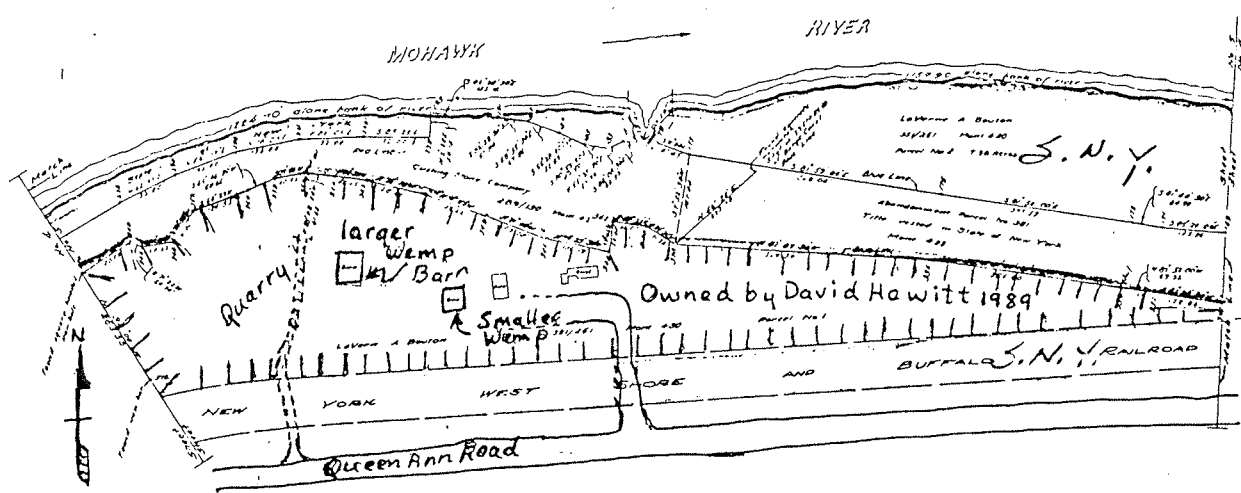
Claude Sauthier Map 1779 - London

Simeon De Witt Map 1790 - New York.



Tribes Hill 7.5 min. topographic map. U.S.G.S.

Montgomery County Road Map. 1974.



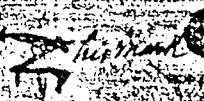

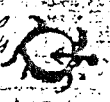

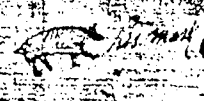

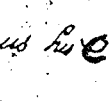


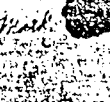


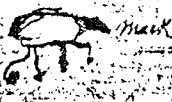
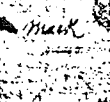


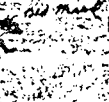

Land map showing location of Wemp Dutch Barns near Fort Hunter.

To all People To whom these Presents shall come or may Concern Wee Send III-2-40

Lucius, Cornelius, Thomas, Abraham, Abraham, Laurence and Aria
all

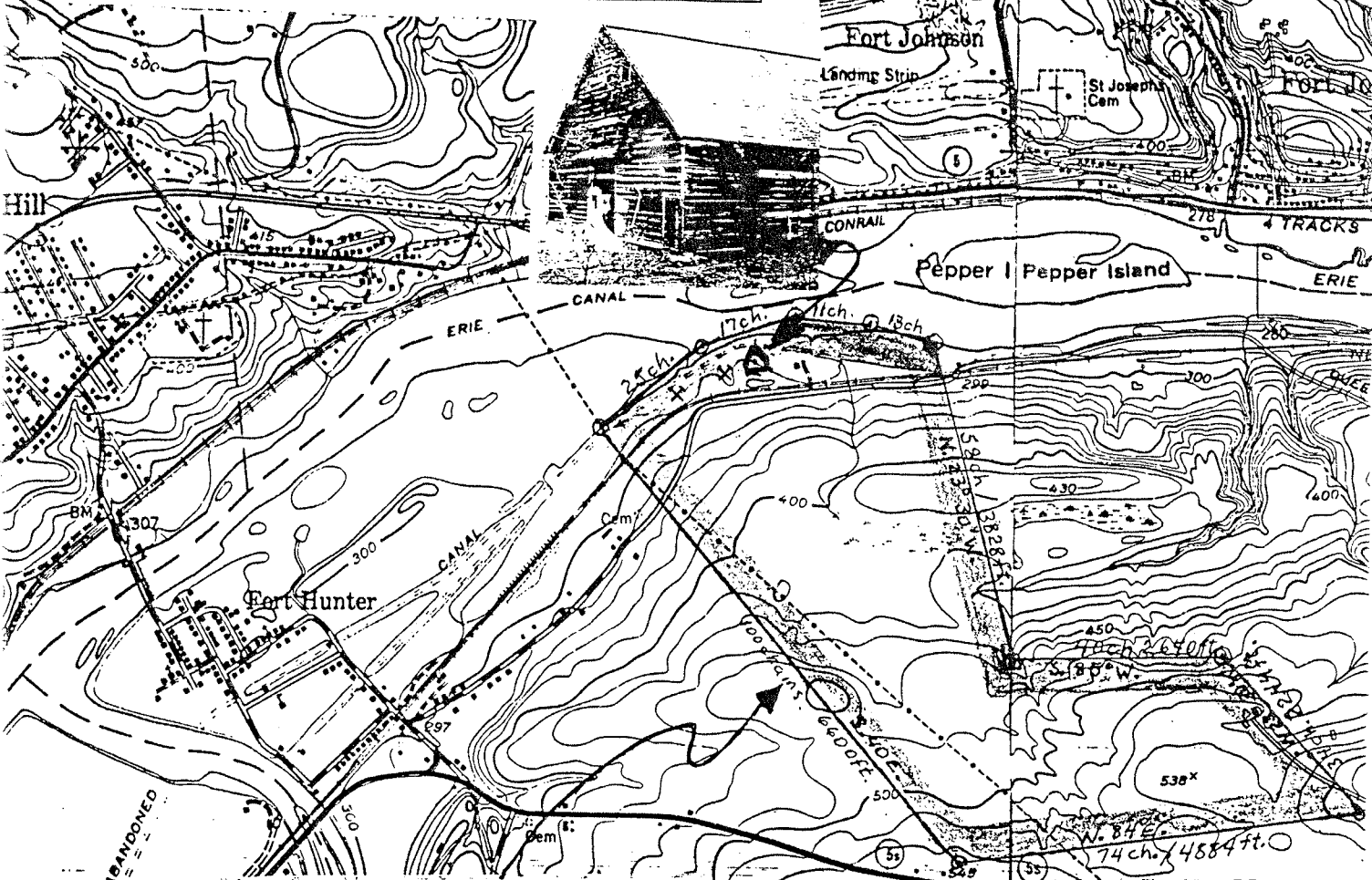
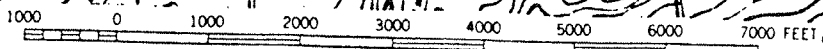
Native Indians of the Province of New York send Greeting Know ye that for and in consideration of
Eleven Hundred Dollars To us Paid and Delivered at & Before the Dealing and Delivery Hereof
By John Wemp of the Mohack Country In the County of Albany In the Colony of New York Geoman, In
The Name & Behalf of our Sovereign Lord George the Second By the Grace of God of Great Britain,
France & Ireland King Defender of the Faith &c. the Receipt whereof we do hereby acknowledge and
confess our selves to be well satisfied Contented & Paid, therein Have Bargained sold Released
And for ever quite Claimed to our most Gracious Sovereign King George the Second his heirs & Successors
all our Right Title Interest Claim Property Possession and Demand of to & in all that Tract of Land
Situate Lying and Being in the Mohack Country In the County of Albany on the South side of the
Mohack River, Begins By a certain Rock Called By the Native Indians Etayrogon, on the Branch
of s^r River and Runs from thence up ^{Thence North Eighty two Degrees west seven} Mohack River North seventy seven Degrees east Thirteen Chains
Thence North seventy three Degrees west eleven Chains, Thence South fifty six Degrees west Twenty five
Chains Thence South forty Degrees east one Hundred Chains, Thence North Eighty four Degrees East Twenty
Four Chains, Thence North Twenty three Degrees & Thirty minutes east, Thirty four Chains to the Land
Herefore Granted to Samuel Bodington, Thence along the s^r Land South eighty five Degrees west
Forty Chains, Thence North Twenty three Degrees & Thirty minutes west eight Chains to the Place where
First Began, containing in all five Hundred & forty Acres with the usual Allowance for High ways
Together also with Three small Islands in the s^r Mohack River Lying & Being opposite the Land
Now Belonging to Wouter Swart where he now Dwells containing together fourteen Acres Together
Together with all and all manner of Woods Underswoods Trees Mines Monesalls, Quarries fountains
Hereditaments and Appurtenances whatsoever and the Reservation in Remains Remainder & Remains of Rent
Rues and Profits thereof To have and to Hold all and Singular the above Bargained Promises
with its Appurtenances to our said most Gracious Sovereign his heirs Successors & Assigns to the sole
and only Proprietor Benefitt and Benefit of our s^r most Gracious Sovereign his heirs Successors and
Assigns for ever In Witness whereof we have hereunto Set our Hands and Seals this 13th Day
of Aug^r In the Tenth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King George the Second
Amogus Done in 1736

Sign'd Seal'd & Delivered
In the Presence of us
Therewith French South Eighty two
Degrees west seven Chains Bodington
The Purchase of the said Land & (1736)
Between the Mohack & English Line
In the first tract (see last indentures)
Walter Butler
Laurence Casper

Aria    
Abraham    
Abraham    
Thomas   
Abraham   

Began retaining in all five Hundred & forty with the usual vicarage from 1717
 her also with Three Small Islands in the S. West Coast River lying & Being opposite that
 Belonging to Houder Swart where he now Dwells Containing together fourteen Acres Together
 together with all and all manner of good Underwoods Trees Minerals Quarries forces & Infirmities
 & Infirmities and Appurtenances whatsoever and the Revenue & Reversions Remainder & Remains of Rents
 as and Profits thereof, To Have and to Hold all and Singular the above Bargained Premises
 & its Appurtenances to our said most Gracious Sovereign his heirs Successors & Assigns to the Sole
 and only Proprietor Benefits and Benefit of our said most Gracious Sovereign his heirs Successors and
 heirs for ever. In Witness whereof we have hereunto Set our Hands and Seals this 13th Day
 of Augt — In the Tenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord King George the Second
 Antiques Dominic 1736

Edw & Deliverd }
 Lawrence } us
 enoch }
 in the }
 of the }
 in the }
 first }
 Butler }
 open }
 the }
 Aria his most mark
 W. Cutham his most mark
 Abraham his mark
 Lawrence his 2^d mark
 Fott his mark
 Adams his mark
 Thomas his mark
 Abraham his mark
 III-2-41



Excerpts from Indian Deed of 1736.

Begins by a certain rock called by the Native Indians "ELAGROGAN" on the branch of said river (Mohock) runs from thence up stream river N. 77° W. - 13 chains

thence N. 73° W. - 11 chains

thence S. 82° W. - 17 chains

thence S. 56° W. - 25 chains

thence S. 40° E. - 100 chains

thence N. 84° E. - 74 chains

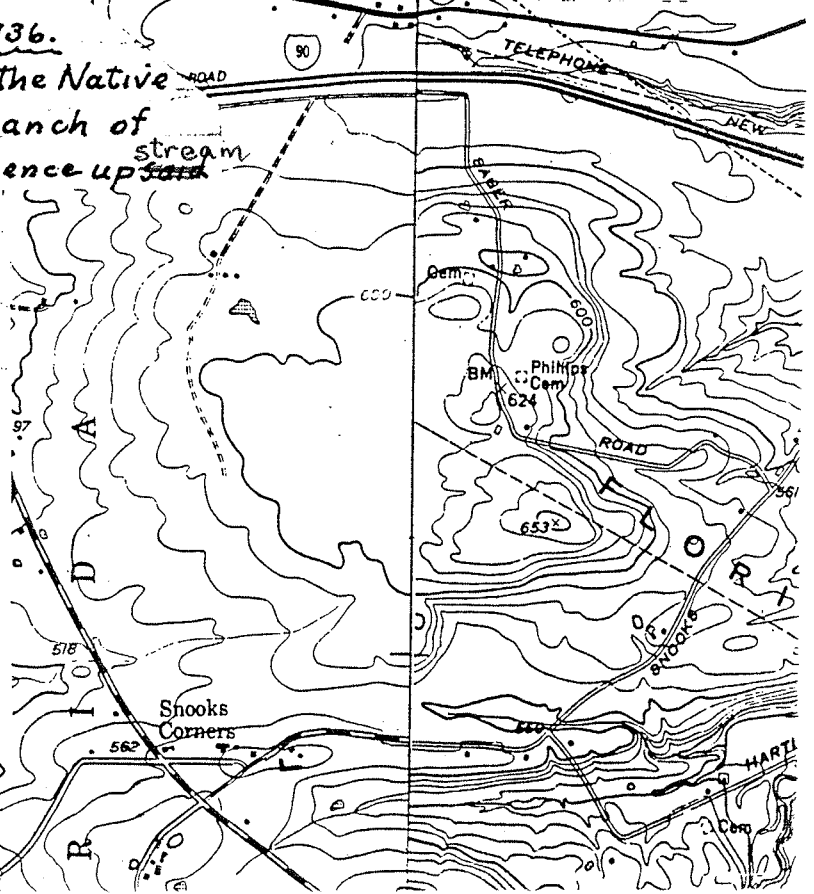
thence N. 23° 30' W. - 34 chains

thence S. 85° W. - 40 chains

thence N. 23° 30' W. - 58 chains

to place of beginning.

13th day of August 1736.



The Larger Wemp Barn of Fort Hunter. --1.

More than fifty years ago I first visited the Larger Wemp Barn and took some photographs of it. I was much impressed with its beauty and the perfection of its construction. At that time it was an integral part of a working farm.

Over the following years I visited the barn from time to time. When the farm was no longer a productive operation I became apprehensive, since many of the barns I had been studying were disappearing due to fire or neglect.

About three years ago I became quite concerned about its welfare since several holes had developed in its slate roof. Early in 1989 another visit disclosed that the barn was developing serious deterioration. The holes in the roof had become larger and water was falling into its interior; one of the large wagon doors had been ripped off by the wind or in some other way and it was obvious that it was being neglected.

Since the property where the Wemp Barns. (there is also a smaller Dutch Barn) are located is on land which constitutes a considerable inholding of the New York State Schoharie Crossing Historic Site administered by the N.Y.S. Department of Parks and Recreation I sought a meeting with key personnel of their Historic Preservation Division. On March 28, 1989 two other Trustees of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society and I spent the morning attending a meeting with them at the Fort Hunter Visitors Center.

After an active discussion lasting several hours it became quite clear that although the State's personnel were definitely interested in acquiring the lands and buildings they had little or no interest in doing anything to preserve the Larger Wemp Barn. This was a very disheartening meeting. It was obvious we would have to pursue a different direction to "save" the Barn.

The Larger Wemp Barn (continued)--2.

Two weeks later with Mr. Clarke Blair of Fonda another Trustee of the Society I had lunch with him and the current owner of the Wemp Barn David Hewitt.

We spent an hour or more discussing the future welfare of the Barn. At that time it became apparent that the Barn would be sold. The owner turned down an offer by another member of our Society to fix the holes in the roof free of charge.

I then attempted to find out if the owner would sell the Barn and several acres of land to a direct descendant of Jan Wemp the original settler and builder who was interested in building a house and studio and preserving the barn. This offer was turned down.

In the summer of 1989 the Barn owner inserted an ad in the New York Times offering to sell the Barn for \$50,000 or to the highest bidder prior to Oct 1. This deadline was extended for two weeks.

Earlier in the year I was approached by Mr. Tom Lanni, care taker of the Carl Touhey Estate located along the Oniskuehau Creek between Feura Bush and Clarksville, for advice toward obtaining a Dutch Barn to replace one that had disappeared some years ago. I knew of several which were rapidly deteriorating but was reluctant to recommend them due to their poor condition. In view of the Wemp Barn situation in the summer of 1989 I suggested to Tom that this barn might be ideal for a replacement.

In October there surfaced a rumor that there was a possibility that some one in Montana was interested in getting the barn which then would be dismantled and shipped to California! In view of the fact that the Wemp Barn was one of the finest and the only pre-Revolutionary barn remaining in the Mohawk Valley west of Amsterdam I decided to make an intensive effort to keep the Barn in our region.

The Larger Wemp Barn (continued) -- 3.

Although I knew Carl Touhey had attempted to reach a deal during the summer with the Barn's owner I had the impression that he had given up the effort. I wrote to him again telling him that it would be a great tragedy for posterity and our part of the "Dutch Country" if we lost this very important link to the early pioneer days of our countryside.

A few days before Christmas Mr. Touhey called and informed me that he had just purchased the Barn! I told him that this news was the best Christmas present I could receive!!

A few weeks after Carl Touhey purchased the Larger Wemp Barn, a friend Mrs. Violet Fallone, historian of Montgomery County, sent me a copy of an Indian Deed describing the parcel of land bought from them by Jan Wemp in 1736. It presumably was land where he had settled in 1711 when he left Schenectady to construct Fort Hunter at the mouth of the Schoharie River. This deed described a parcel of land of 540 acres for which he paid the equivalent of 1100 dollars. It was signed by eight Mohawk Indians using their Christianized names followed by a sketch depicting their clan symbolie Turtle, Wolf and Bear with two unidentifiable marks. In 1737 this land sale was approved by the authorities in Albany which then exercised jurisdiction over this region. This deed was a copy of the original made in 1888 by Rufus Grider a highly talented artist of The Mohawk Valley.

The finding of this unique deed cast a new view of the Wemp Barn. I felt more than ever that the Barn should remain at its present location. I mentioned this to Mr. Touhey and was assured by him that he would cooperate in any way possible if I could get the State to acquire the Wemp property.

The Larger Wemp Barn (Continued)--4.

With my determination to make a final attempt to get the State to acquire the Wemp Barn and associated property as part of the Schoharie Crossing Historic Site, I sought help from friends in The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. At the same time I approached our local Assemblyman hoping that some help could be furnished by the State legislature. Both of these efforts proved fruitless and I resigned myself to having the Barn moved and erected in Albany County.

During this period I extracted the deed data from the Indian Deed to determine the location of the land and the shape of the property. I found the deed information and the surveyors measurements so well done that there was no problem whatever to delineate the boundaries and to effect a closure of the plot without any difficulty. Then using a portion of the modern U.S. Geological Survey's $7\frac{1}{2}$ minute map of the region I found it possible to fit it onto the area where the Barn had been located. The plotted land followed the curve of the river while the southernmost reach of the land boundary reached within a few hundred yards of present highway designated N.Y. State 55.

An intriguing feature possibly related to the Indian Deed has surfaced. A 10,000 acre grant of land including the area where the Wemp Barn has been reerected is said to have been signed by eight Indians in 1750! I am now anxious to determine whether these are the same ones who signed the Wemp grant in 1736. Such is the fun of our research activity.

III-2-47
The Larger Wemp Barn near Fort Hunter, Montgomery Co.

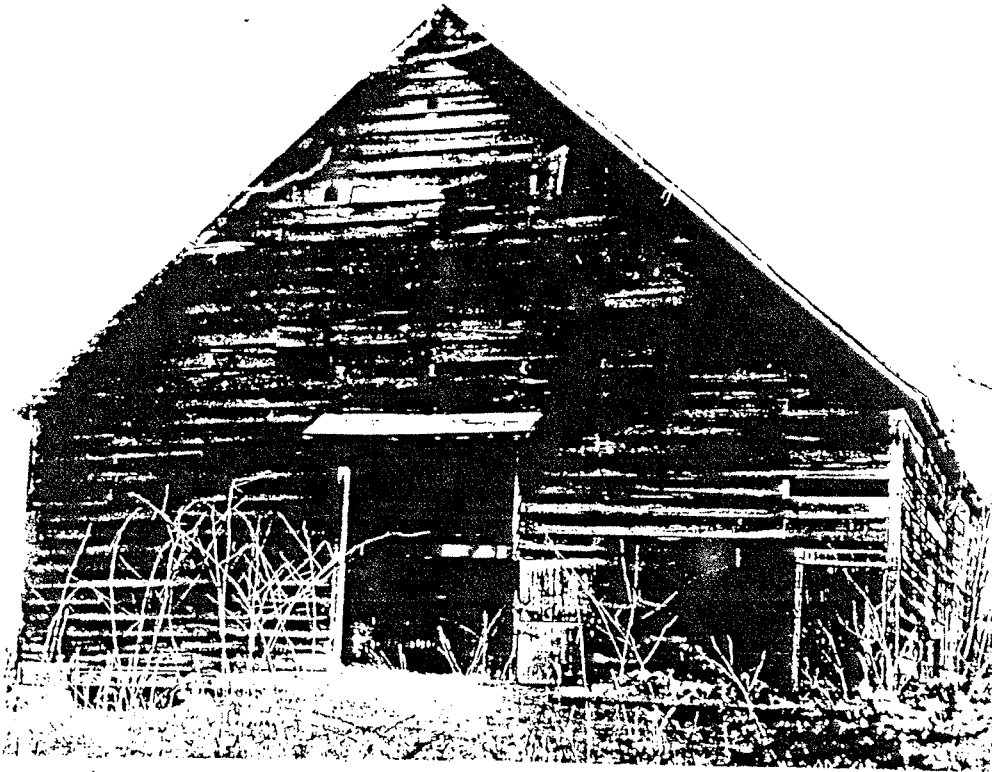


Photo by John Fitchen

North end of Larger Wemp Barn Ca. 1960

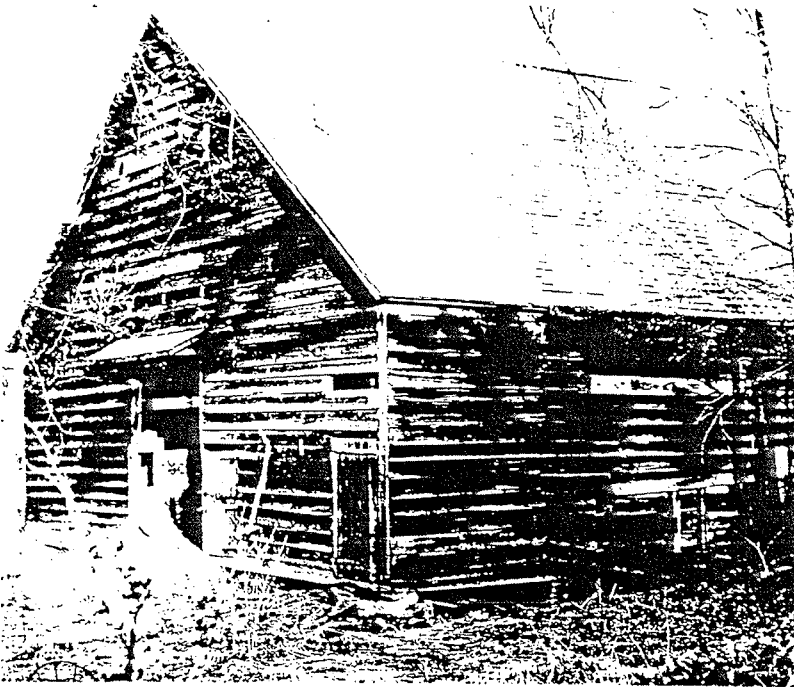


Photo by John Fitchen

Northwest view of Larger Wemp Barn.

Ca. 1960

III-2-48

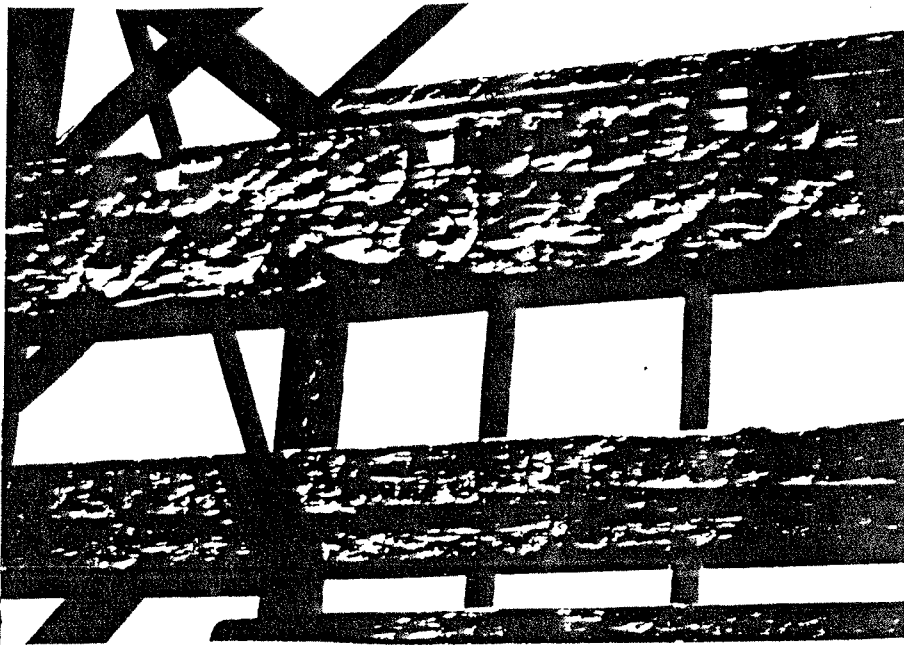


PHOTO BY V.J.S.

Adze marks on the anchor beams of the Wemp Barn. These were only visible with a glancing angle of the sun. Ordinarily they are quite invisible. The surfaces of the massive anchor beam appear so smooth as to suggest they came from a plane

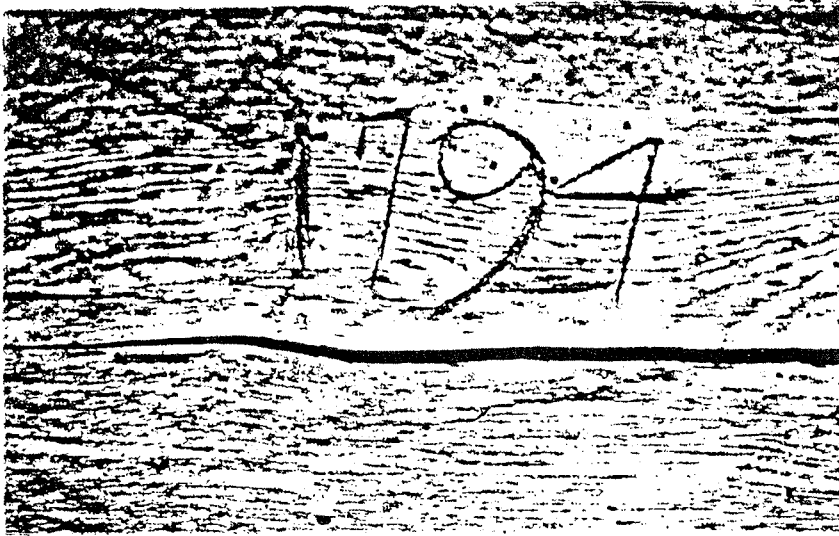


Photo by V.J.S.

The carved date on one of the smaller hewn timbers of the Wemp Barn. It is possibly the date when the barn was moved from the river flats to a higher site free of annual Spring floods



Photo by V.J.S.

A classic "Dutch" Hinge of the type used to hang the animal doors of early Dutch Barns. They are also found on the Dutch doors

of early Dutch houses in The Hudson, Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys of eastern New York.

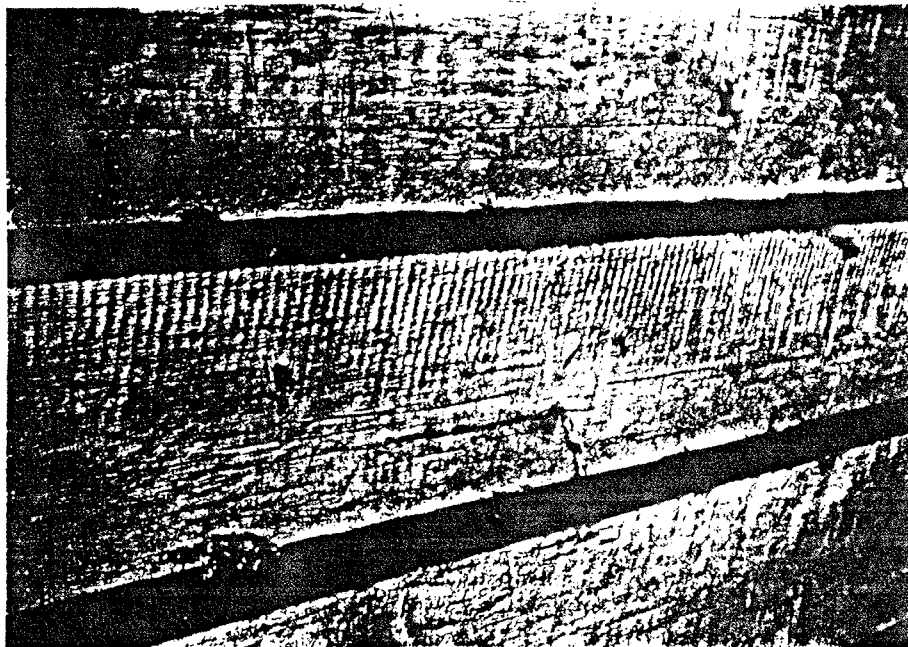
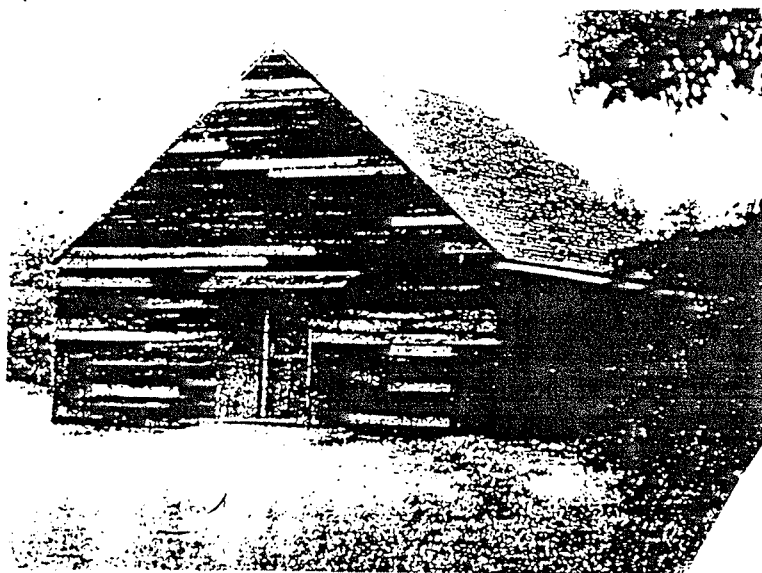


Photo by V.J.S.

The walls of the Larger Wemp Barn consisted of pine planks 1 inches thick 14 inches wide and of roughly uniform thickness. Slight variations in thickness were due to the fact that they were cut with a pit saw. The saw marks on the center plank mark each stroke.

The lack of weathering of these planks resulted from protection from snow and rain afforded by the two bay addition built on the south gable end of the barn which must have occurred shortly after the barn was built. When the barn was put up at Oriskatach these protected planks were not kept together resulting in the peculiar appearance in the present color on the North gable end of the barn.



This view of the reconstructed Wemp Barn at Oriskatach shows where the protected barn siding referred to above was placed on the north gable end of the Barn. In time these boards will darken. However they will continue to show that the barn has been moved.



PHOTO BY V.J.S.

These are two boards which were a part of the Wemp Barn Granary. Some one used a nail or other sharp pointed object to tally something.

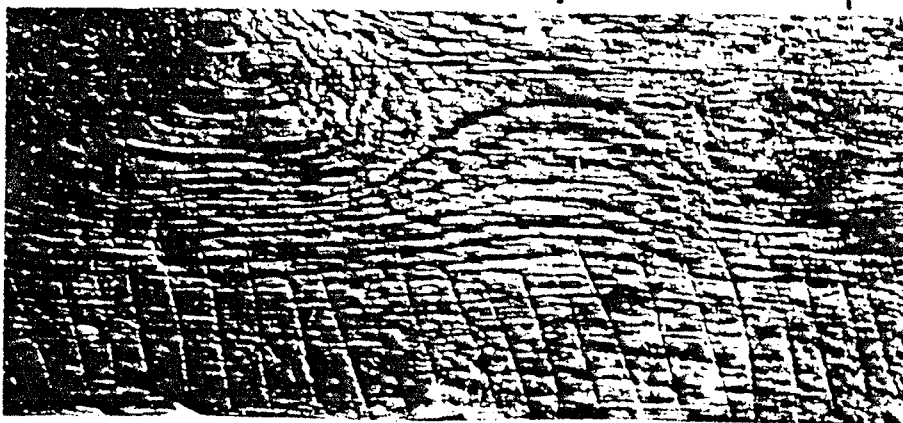
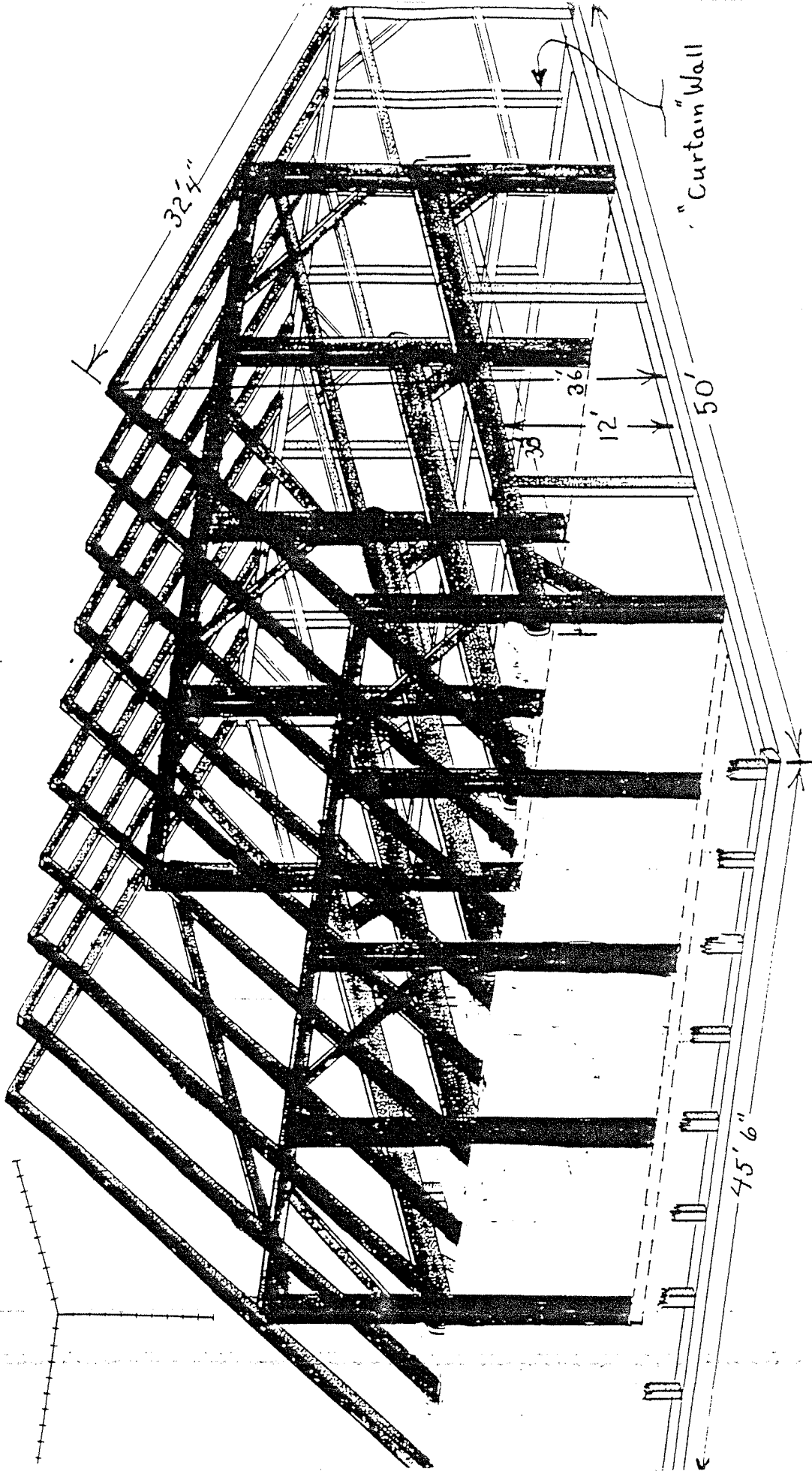


PHOTO by V.J.S.



30° Chamfer.

Original board from the plank roof of the Wemp Barn. There are no nail holes on the plank showing that the roof was not protected with a shingle covering when first built.

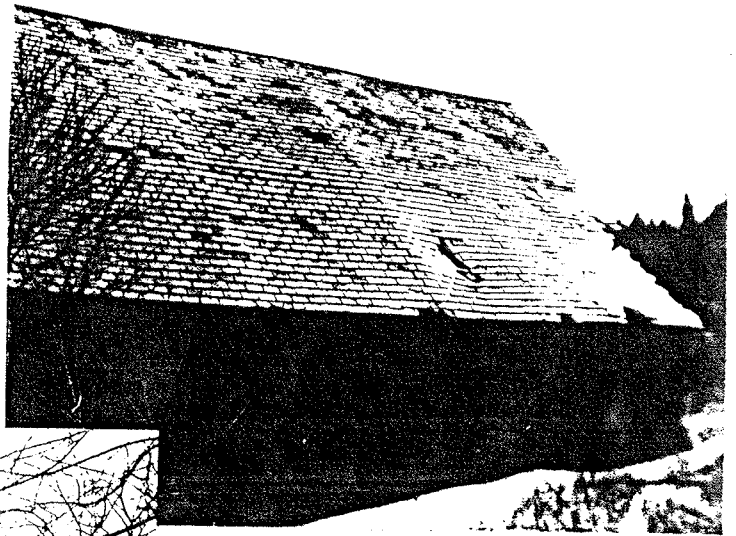


The Central Core Structure of the Wemp Barn.

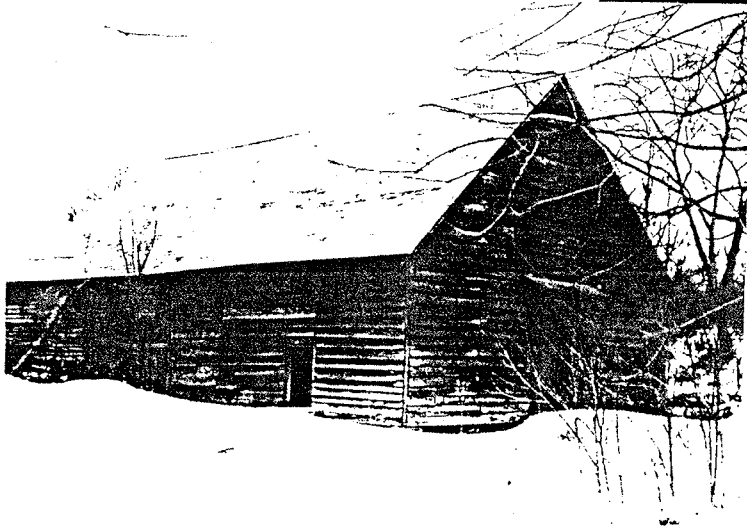
Modified drawing of fittings of larger Wemp Barn. "The New World Dutch Barn" Syracuse Univ. Press, 1968

The Jan Wemp Barn
near Fort Hunter
Winter of 1989.

Built by Jan Wemp Ca. 1715.
This Dutch Barn was built
on a grant of 540 Acres
bought from the Mohawks



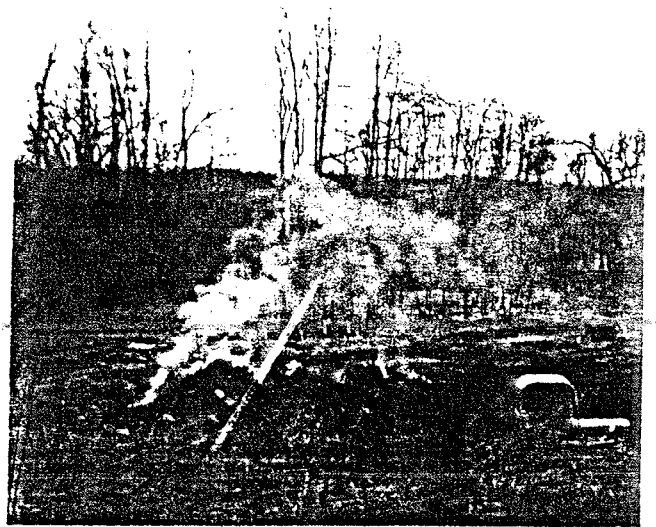
View of Larger Wemp Barn
West side Showing holes
in The slate roof and the
sagging of many slates



View of Larger Wemp Barn from
Northeast four months before
it was moved to "Oriskatach".



Anchor Beams of Wemp Barn
before they were lowered



Final view of Wemp Barn site
after barn had been taken down.

Photos by Vincent J. Schaefer

III-2-55



This photo is a copy of the framed picture now at Oriskatach This was an early barn much like its replacement by the Jan Wemp Barn from the Mohawk Valley

The Dutch Barn which originally was at the Van Zandt House This was near the site of the Wemp Barn



Forms for the footing of the concrete base used to support the peripheral sills on which the Larger Wemp Barn was reconstructed.



Repairs being made on the understructure and wall posts during the reconstructing of the Jan Wemp Barn at Oriskatach

The N.Y. State Marker
at Carl Touheys Estate

PHOTO BY SUSAN SULLIVAN.



PHOTO BY VJS

The front view of the VanZandt House located on the bank of the Onesquehaw Creek along the Onesquehaw Creek Road which runs between Rte 22 in Tarrytown and Feura Bush. It is surrounded by huge black locust trees

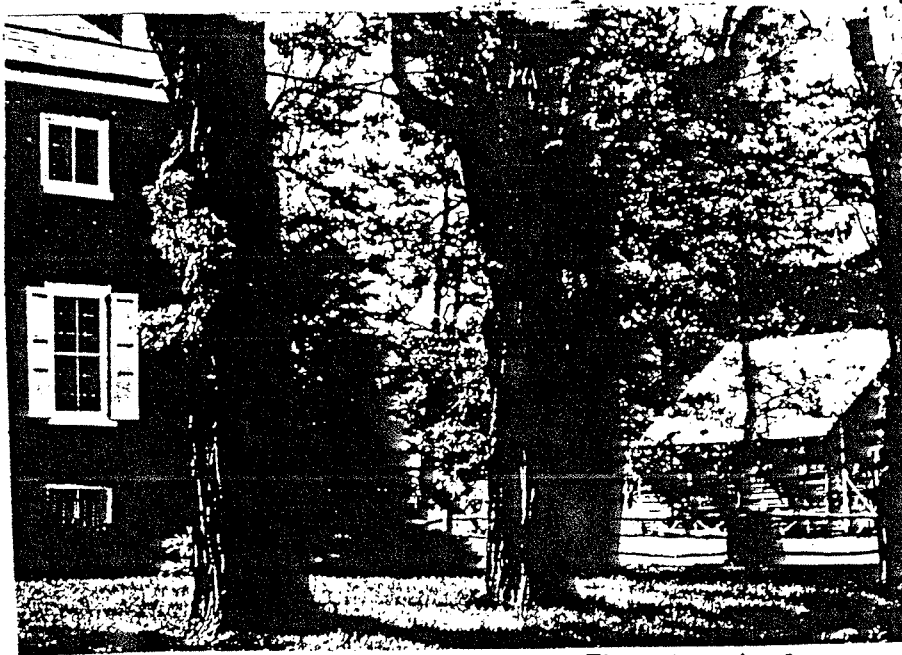
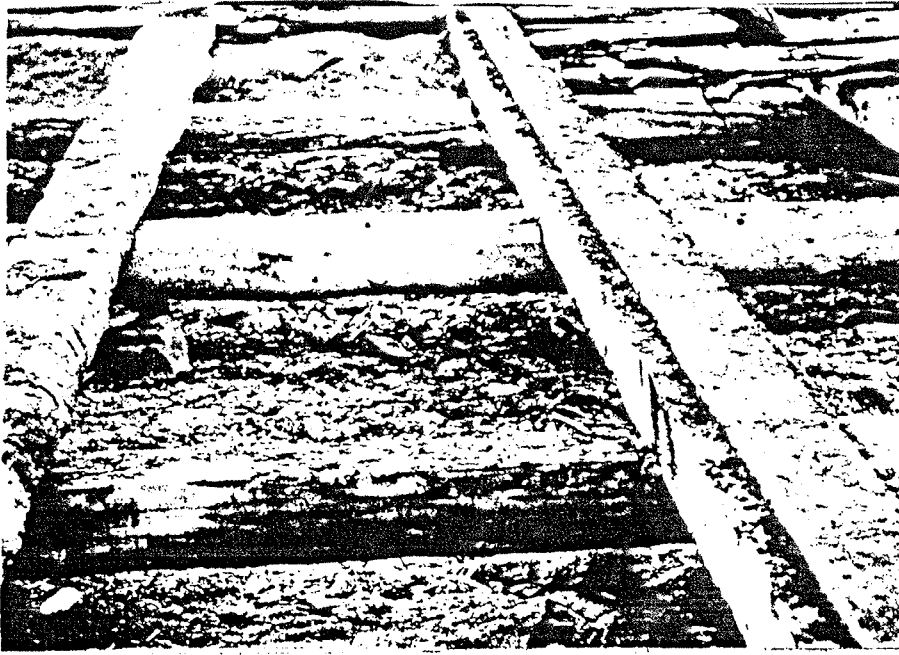


PHOTO BY V.J.S

View of the Larger Wemp Barn which was moved from Fort Hunter in the town of Florida in Montgomery County along the Mohawk River and re erected in a meadow west of "Driskatach" the massive limestone home of Carl Touhey.

The Wemp Barn in its new location is in the center of a 5 acre plot surrounded by a split rail fence. A new pond has been dug south west of the barn.



The original floor bearing timbers are shown here after the floor was removed.

The median barn length center timber was off center for some unknown reason.

Piles of flat limestone piers were placed under anchor beam posts.

The floor joists of the Larger Wemp Barn Photo by V.J.S.

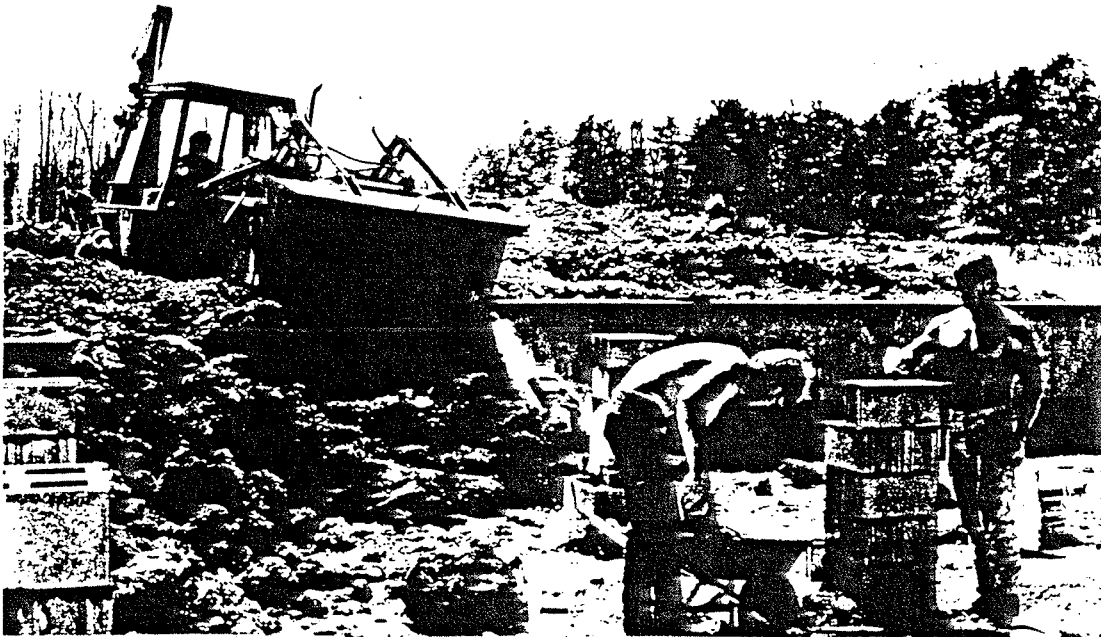


Photo by Sheila Audet

The foundation for the reerected barn along side the Carl Touhey Estate "Oriskatach" consists of an earth filled poured concrete box on which the sills rest. Concrete block piers capped with flat blocks of limestone are located under each anchor beam post. Most of the original floor bearing timbers were salvaged and used to support the floor and upper structure

V.J.S. 11/13/90.

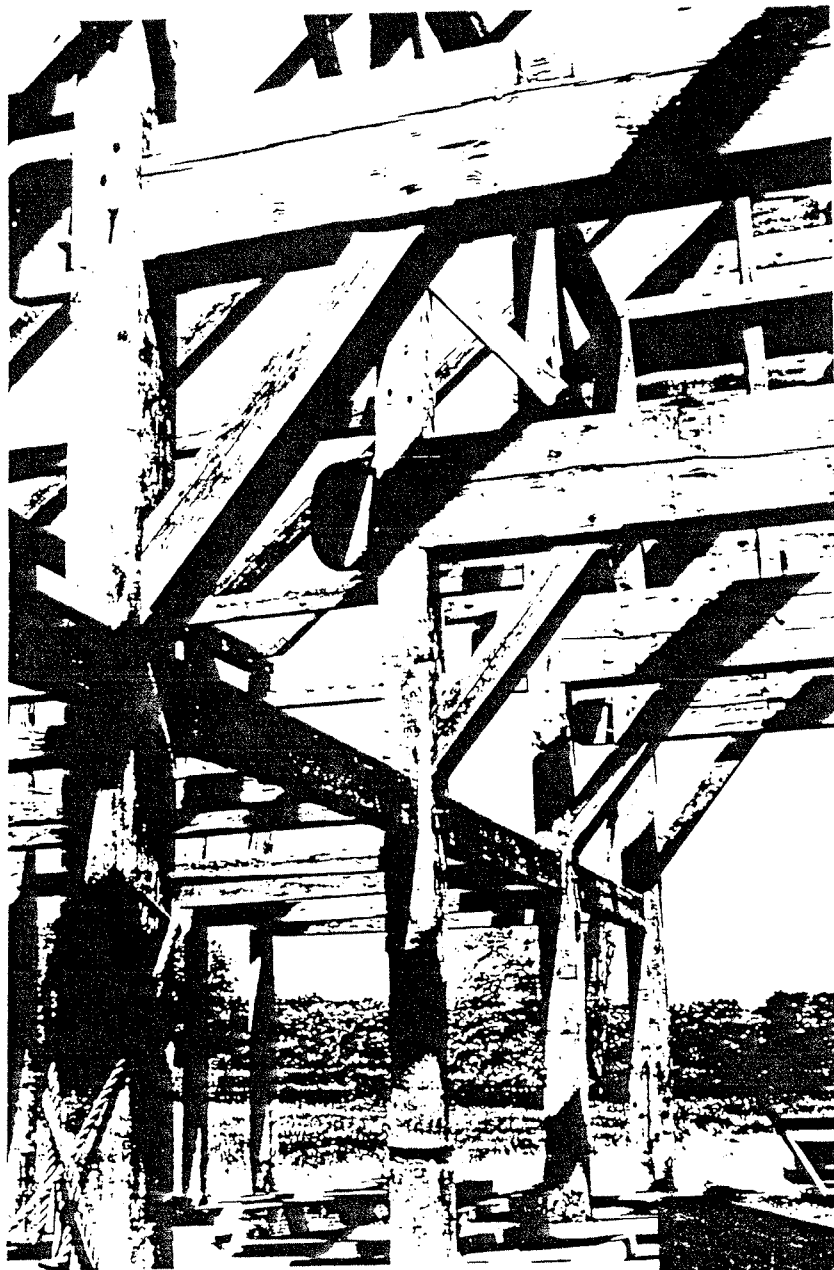


Photo by Clarke Blair.

Anchor Beams as assembled
at the Jan Wemp Barn under
reconstruction at Driskatach.

Joinery assembly of
Post, Anchor Beam and
Anchor Beam Brace.

Jan Wemp Dutch Barn

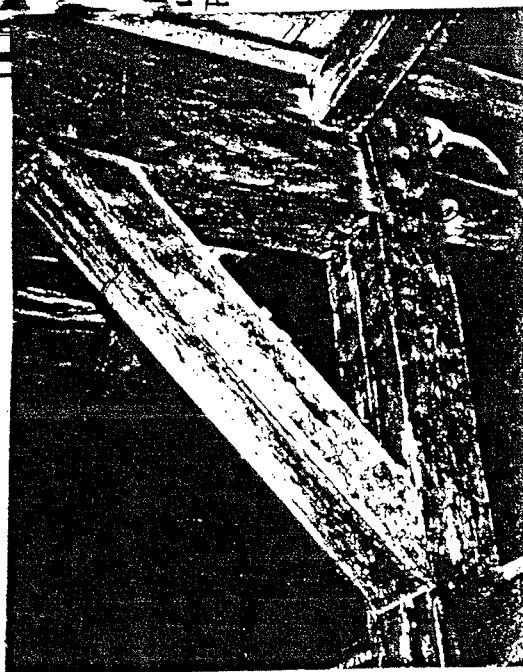
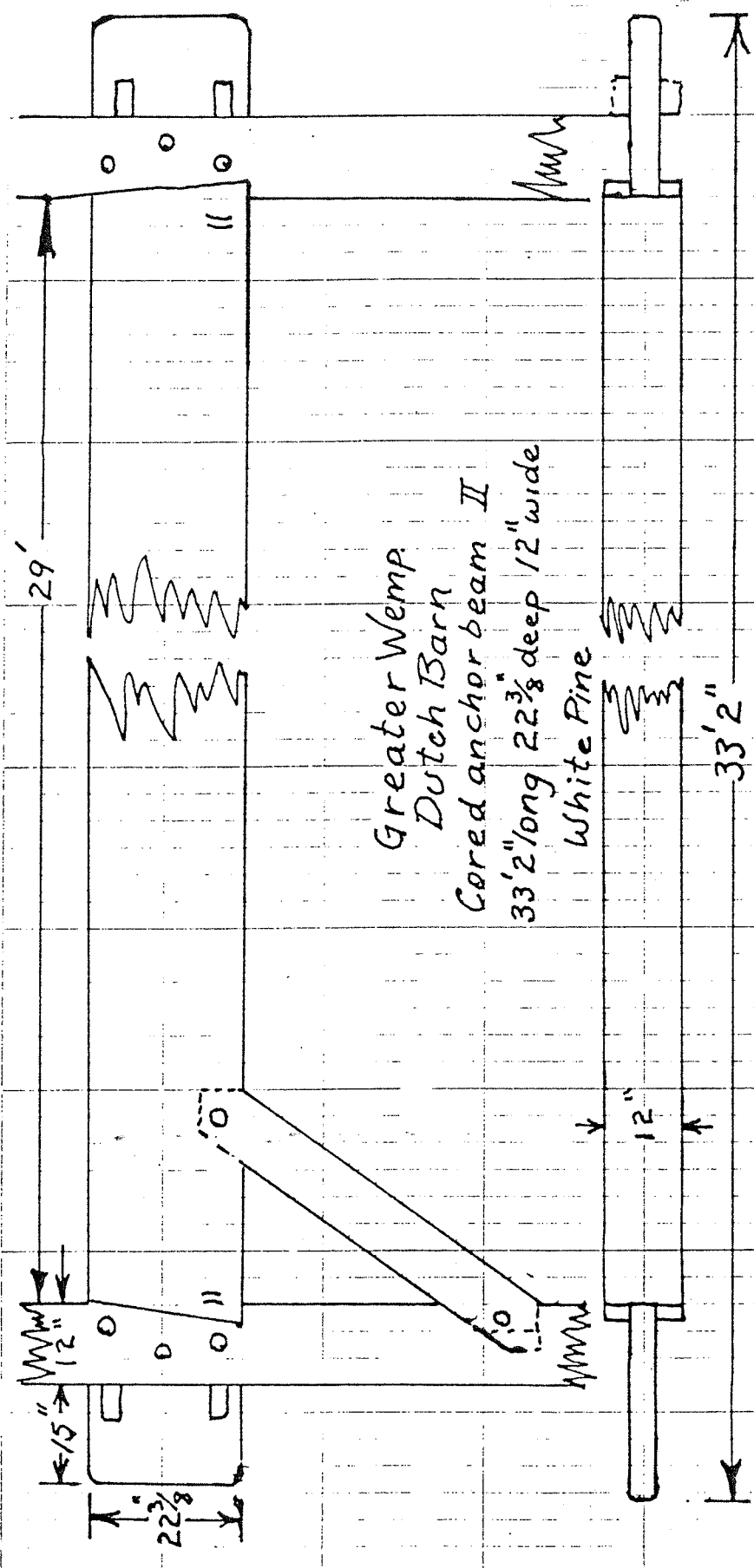
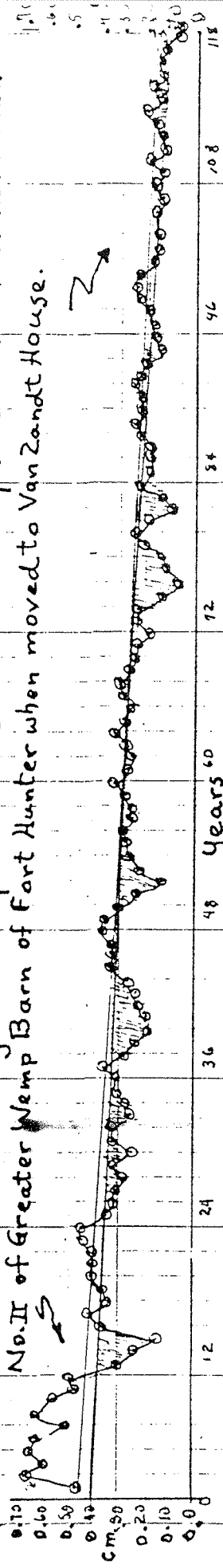


Photo by Clarke Blair.

III-2-57



Thickness of annual growth rings measured on core taken by V.J. Schaefer from Anchor Beam No. II of Greater Wemp Barn of Fort Hunter when moved to Van Zandt House.



Timber Cut 118+ Years old.

Wemp Anchor Beam II

V.J. Schaefer April 15, 1990.

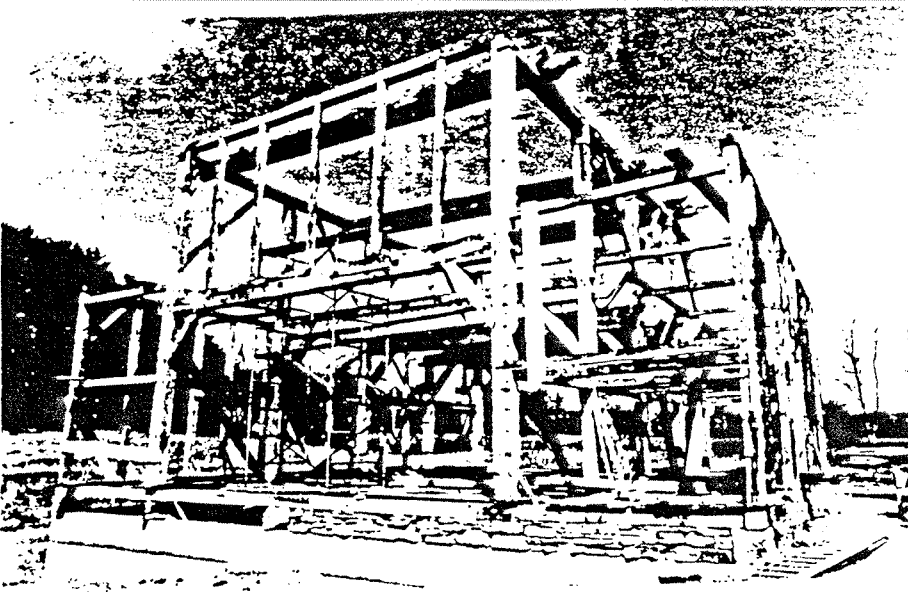


Photo by Sheila Audet.

Basic frame of Wemp Barn - Oriskatach.

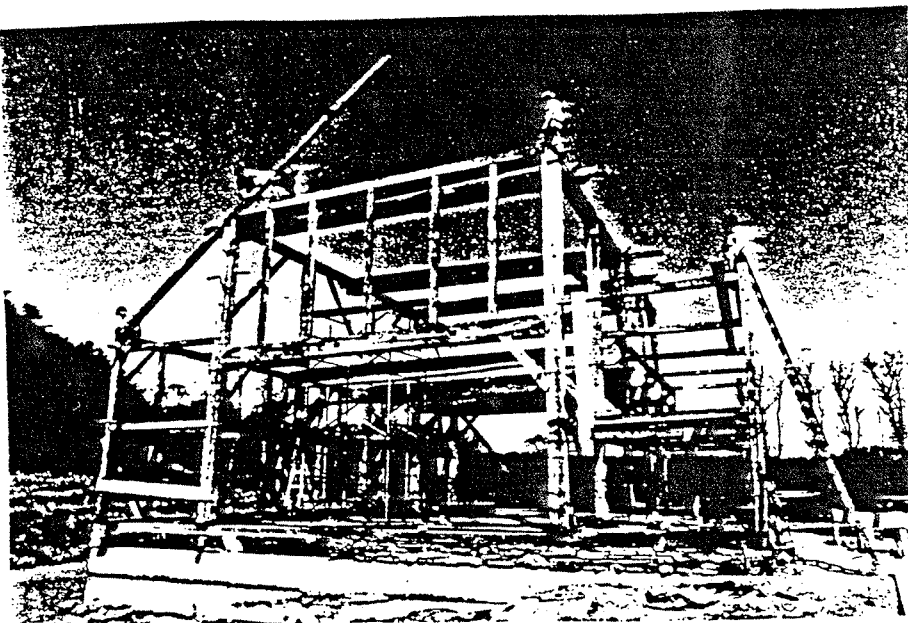


Photo by Sheila Audet

First rafter in place -- Wemp Barn Oriskatach

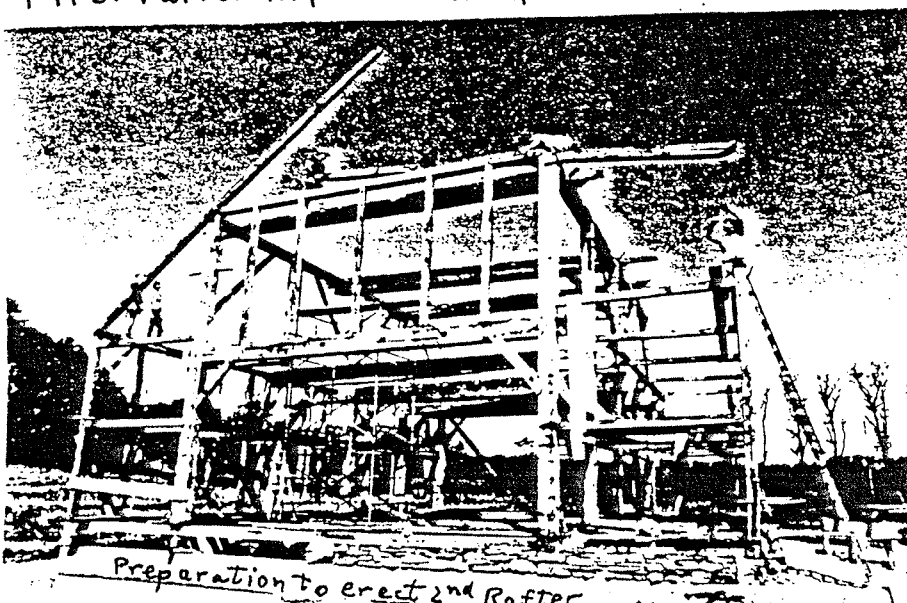
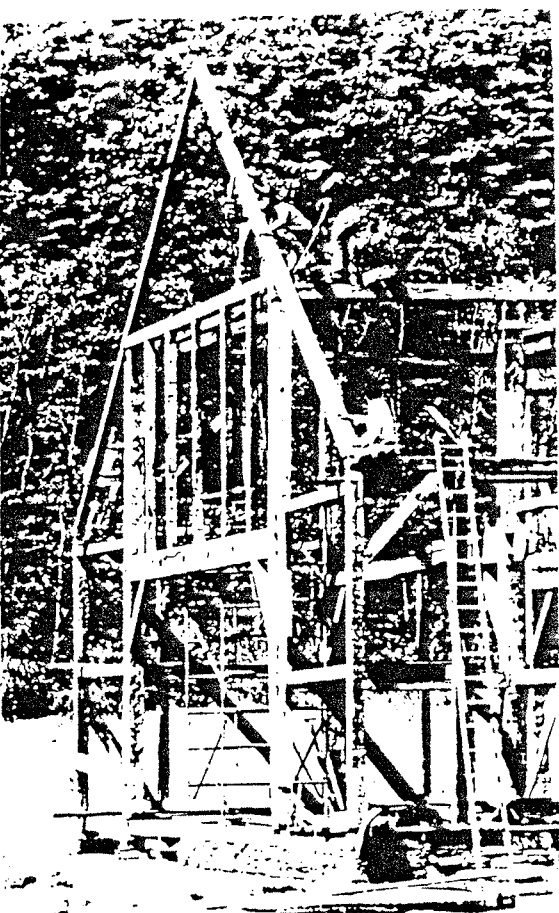


Photo by Sheila Audet

Preparation to erect 2nd Rafter.

Pr

Photo by Sheila Audet



Completion of erection of first pair of rafters. Wemp Barn "Oriskatach".

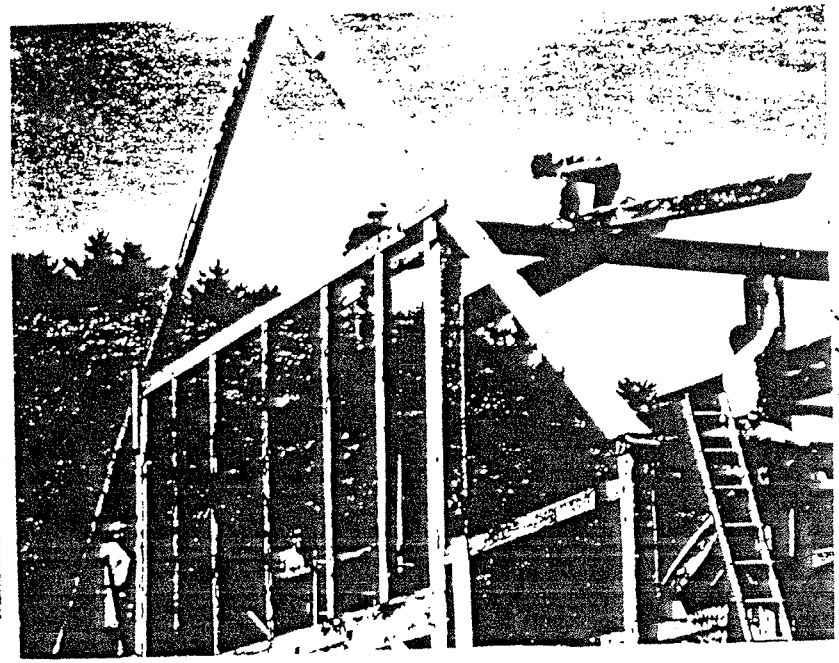


Photo by Sheila Audet

Preparation of erection of third rafter which is balanced on the purlin plate and is about to be tipped into place. Wemp Barn "Oriskatach"

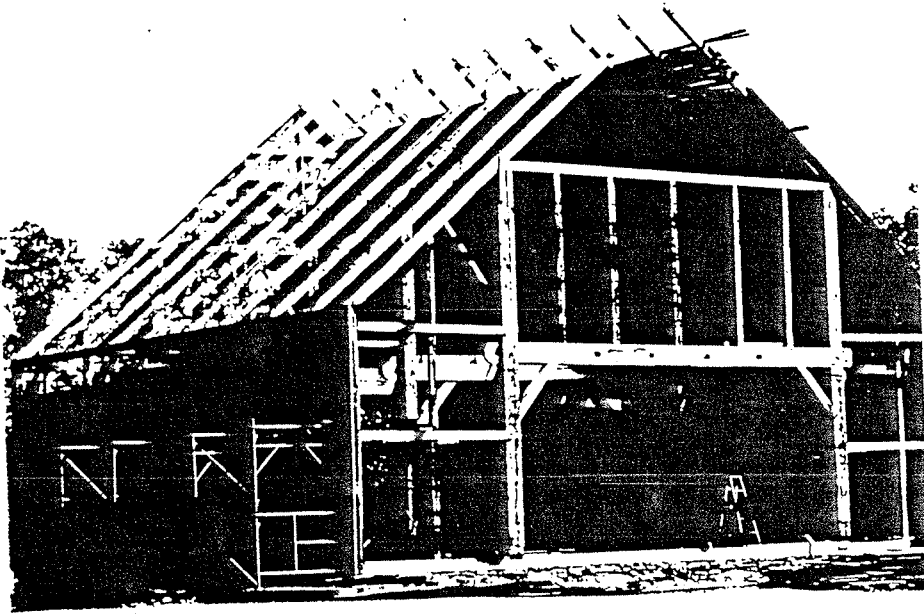
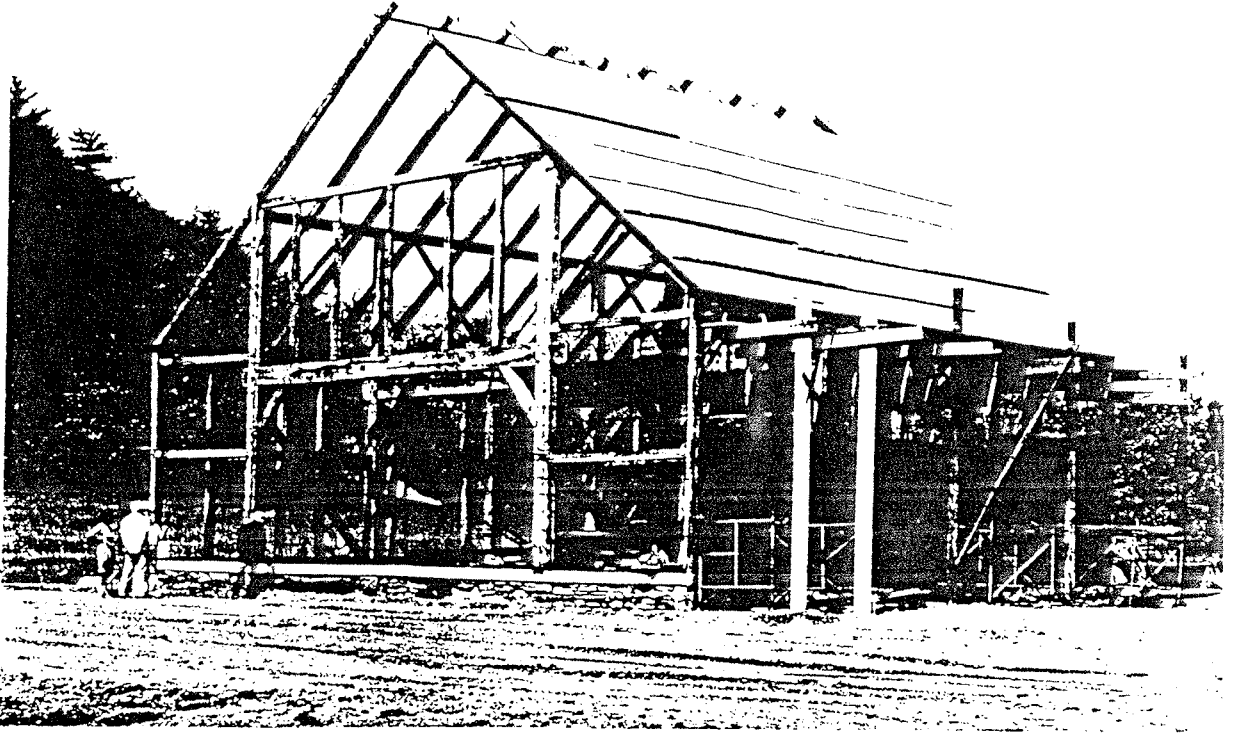


Photo by V.J. Schaefer

Wemp Barn with all of the rafters in place. Wemp Barn "Oriskatach"

Photo by Clarke Blair.



The Jan Wemp Dutch Barn under reconstruction
View from Southeast at Oriskatach.

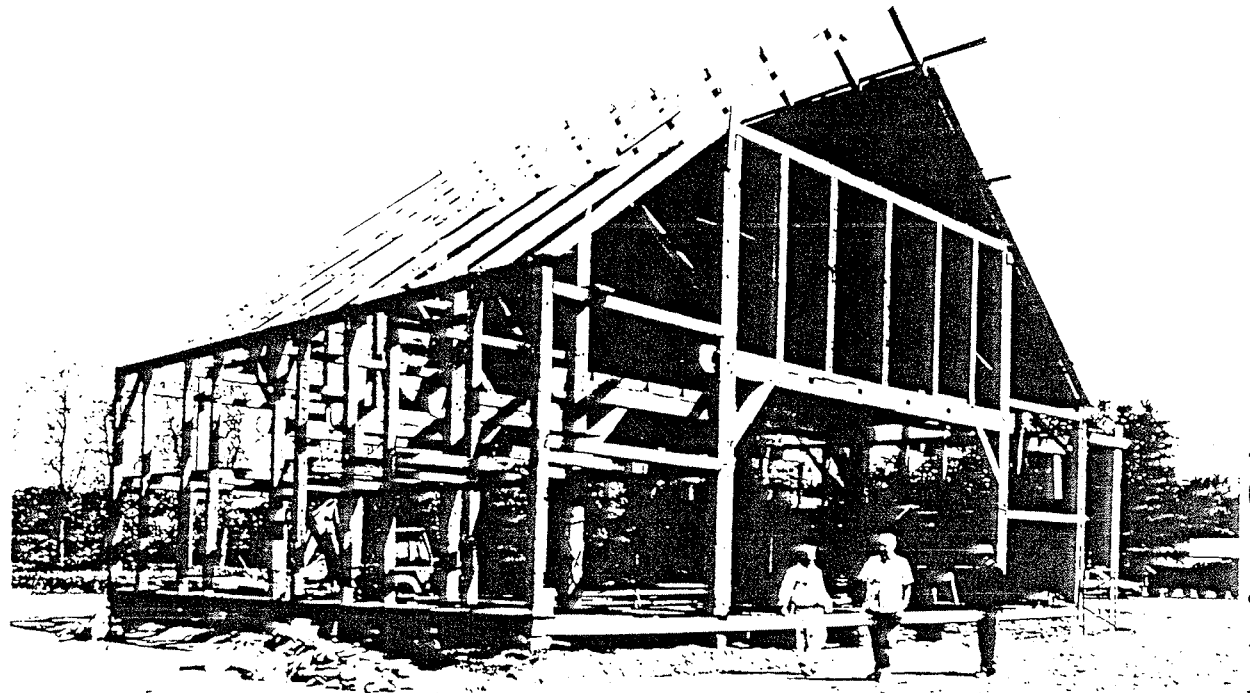


Photo by Clarke Blair

The Jan Wemp Dutch Barn under reconstruction.
View from South west at Oriskatach.

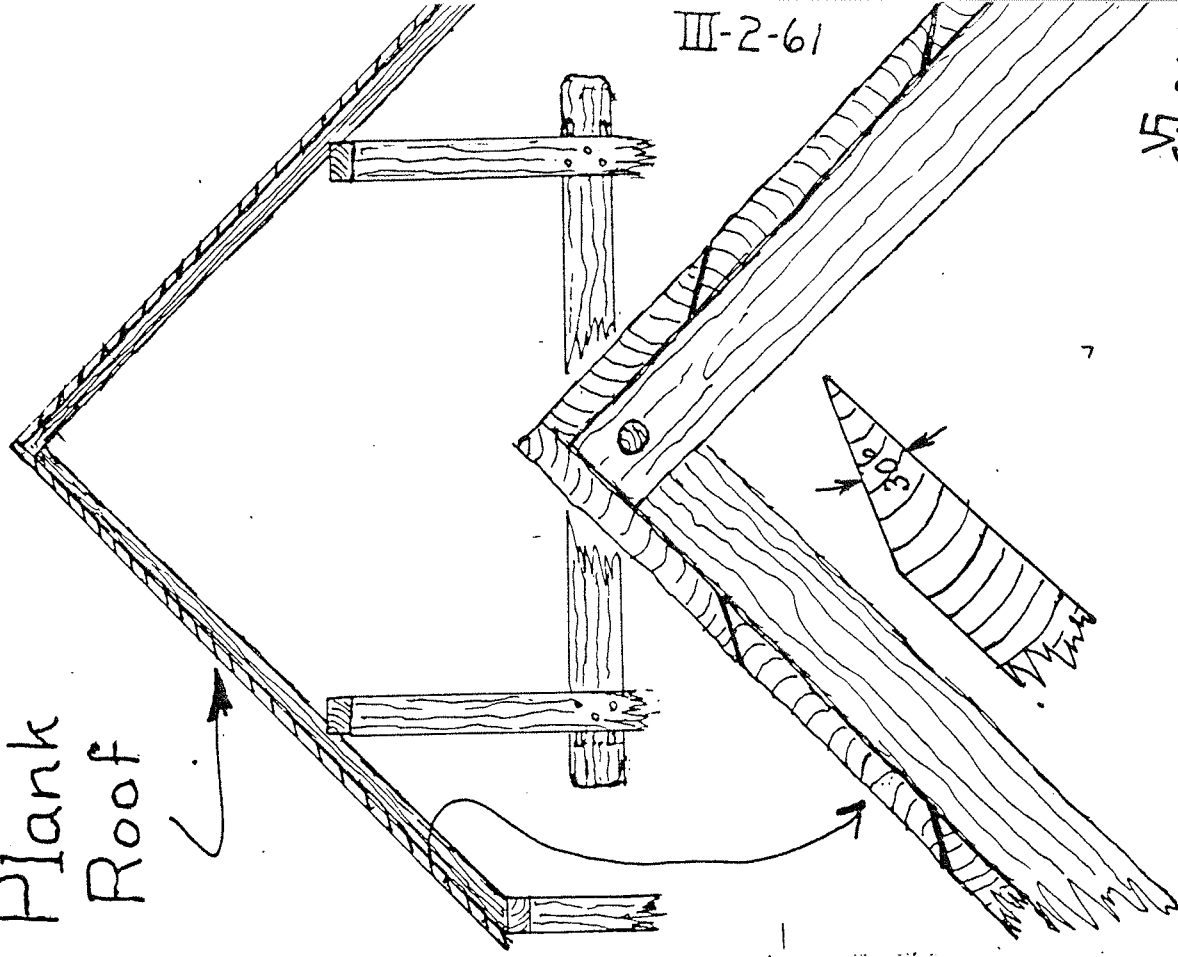
Plank Roof Board

Here is a roof plank from the original roof sheathing of this barn. It is a classic example of a board from a "plank roof", the earliest type of roof covering used by the pioneer Dutch settlers when they came to America in the early 1600s. Practically all the roofs of their barns and houses from the original settlements till the early 1700s were covered this way. Frequently they show evidence they later had a shingle covering.

The obtuse angle of the overlapping chamfers on either side of the plank prevents rain from running under the board covering.

This plank suggests it was the only covering used during the first period of the barn use since there is no evidence in the form of nail holes that it was later covered with shingles.

Plank Roof



Touhey to Preserve Structure—

Colonial-Era Dutch Barn Moved

By TIM RUMBERGER
Gazette Reporter

FEURA BUSH — A Colonial-era Dutch barn reputed to be a piece of Mohawk Valley history has been moved from its original Montgomery County home and is being rebuilt outside of Albany by its new owner.

Albany businessman Carl E. Touhey, who plans to preserve the barn as a tribute to the unique structures of the area's past, has had the Wemp barn dismantled and removed from its original location on Queen Anne Road outside of Fort Hunter. He is now in the midst of having it reconstructed adjacent to his home, an 18th-century Dutch homestead in this Albany County community.

Touhey said the project came about by coincidence, starting when Vincent Schaefer of Schenectady, a founding member of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society, informed him that someone intended to buy the historic barn and move it to California.

Rather than see upstate New York lose the barn, which some barn preservationists say dates back to the early 1700s and survived the burning of the Mohawk Valley by the British during the Revolutionary War, Touhey undertook the task of rescuing it for its native region.

"People came to me and said 'You shouldn't let this happen,'" Touhey said. "It was all coincidence — a happy coincidence, I might add."

Touhey said it is a perfect complement to the fortified homestead, which dates to 1755 and once housed troops during the French and Indian War. As expected, it even had its own barn of the same style, which in years past had fallen into disrepair and had to be razed.

"We did have a Dutch barn here, so it's fitting that we should put another one up here," he said.

Apart from a few replacement pieces substituted for some of the old members that have rotted away,

Touhey explained the barn is being put back up exactly as it was originally. Touhey would not disclose the cost of the project, saying only that it ran "in the six figures."

He added that the barn will eventually be deeded to a foundation to ensure that it will remain unchanged and kept open as a monument to the now-endangered Dutch barn. He said he will not actively promote it, but it will be open to interested members of the public.

"This is an assurance that it will remain here for future generations," he said.

Contractor Richard Babcock, who was born in Schenectady and has spent his lifetime moving and reconstructing old barns, said yesterday that Dutch barns are practically almost unique to the Mohawk, Hudson and Schoharie Valleys. They are also made unlike any other barn, with their imposing "anchor beams" — horizontal timbers that span the barn's central floor, and other idiosyncrasies developed over hundreds of years by Dutch barn builders on both sides of the Atlantic.

Those factors make any Dutch barn a significant historic and architectural find, Babcock said. But the Wemp barn is a particular treasure, he said, venturing that it may be unrivaled by any other Dutch barn still standing in terms of its history and construction.

"This has got to be one of the great Dutch barns," said Babcock, whose son, Clayton, is overseeing the reconstruction project. "The guy who built this was a craftsman of the highest order."

Not only does the barn contain ornamental carpentry work usually reserved for homes in Colonial times, there aren't many barns around that survived the British raiding parties that ravaged the Mohawk Valley, the "breadbasket of the Revolution," he said.

There is some historic debate over

the Wemp barn's origins, however. For instance, carved on an upright post near the front door are the initials "J.F.," which Babcock said were carved there by the barn's builder.

Others, such as Schaefer and fellow Preservation Society member Clarke Blair, who witnessed its dismantling this spring, say they belong to Jelles Fonda, an area Revolutionary War hero who reputedly bought and moved the barn after the war. Others say it wasn't built until 1794, after the war was over.

Because practically no documentation exists on the subject of barns, Babcock said it is nearly impossible to prove the age or history of the Wemp barn, but it didn't diminish anyone's enthusiasm for it.

Babcock, who also operates a barn museum in Hancock, Mass., and has written a book on his work, said the reconstruction project is also notable in terms of both local and national history.

He praised Touhey for his initiative in preserving the barn, adding that most Dutch barns that get moved are rebuilt as homes for people who like the their rustic feel. Those that don't get moved often decay and fall down, he said.

"This is roots America right here," he said. "When you've got a barn from the area staying in the area they came from, that's really important. This should be appreciated. It's a great thing for the area, a great thing for all Americans."

An 18th-century Dutch barn gets new home in Fuera Bush

FEURA BUSH — Blame it on that rascal Vincent Schaefer.

The grand old man of science is accustomed to having things go his way.

It's not that he's pushy. But at 83, the soft-spoken gent is a winning combination of gentle persistence and good intentions.

When Schaefer's persuasive arts failed to move two state agencies to save a valuable 18th-century Dutch barn, he turned his sights on Carl Touhey, the prominent area businessman and civic leader.

Touhey is the man who, at age 55, gave the late Erastus Corning 2nd a run for his money in the 1973 mayoral race.

An energetic man who once described himself as a "determined and aggressive Irishman," Touhey is no pushover, but he was no match for Schaefer.

Bemused, Touhey shakes his head and says it has cost him "six figures. I won't tell you any more." to move the Wemp barn from the Mohawk Valley to his home on Onesquethaw Creek Road here.

Schaefer shows no remorse. "He can afford it," he says serenely.

The 275-year-old structure had been on the market, and Schaefer had heard it was in danger of being bought and moved to the West Coast.

The rebuilding project began in March, when the barn was taken apart at its original location near Fort Hunter in Montgomery County.

The lumber is stacked in the field next to Touhey's 336-year-old Dutch house, and the barn's beams and rafters are in place.

Touhey admits to early doubts. "When we saw it the first time, you couldn't see how great it was," he says.

Schaefer himself never hesitated: "When I saw his house, I said, 'That's where it ought to be.'"

And Touhey has come around. He is full of plans to preserve the barn as a private shrine to the building genius of the region's Dutch settlers.

"This is the most exciting part. I'm delighted," he says, climbing onto the sturdy plank flooring.

Schaefer's interest in Dutch barns dates from the time he singlehandedly dismantled one in his own back yard on Schermerhorn Road in Rotterdam.

"I had this as a dream ever since I had to take down that barn of mine 60 years ago," he says.

Schaefer has been an active member of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society, providing his detailed research notes for the regional group.

The barn society was formed to rescue the rare Dutch barns built from the 1600s until about 1840 in the Hudson, Mohawk and Schoharie valleys. Many have been lost to fire, age, neglect and development.

The group's formation a few years ago fits into a national trend in barn preservation as farmland yields to the pressures of suburban growth.

In addition to his wide-ranging interests in history, geology and art, Schaefer is credited with getting the science of experimental meteorology airborne with his landmark work in cloud seeding, as well as with launching the Atmospheric Sciences Research Center at the State University at Albany.

The Wemp barn is considered by the experts to be a fine example of an early Dutch barn.

During the Revolution, the wheat-filled barns were tactical targets for British raiding parties in the Mohawk Valley, according to Charles Gehring, director of the State Library's New Netherland Project, a translation of early Dutch records.

In the Canajoharie raid of 1780, 41 barns were burned. Later that year, another British raiding party passed close by the Wemp barn, destroying everything in sight but sparing it, probably because its owner and builder, Johannes Wemp, was a Tory.

Wemp, a master builder, put the barn up around 1715.

"It has the finest finishing of any barn," Schaefer says. "The hewing marks were removed from the bottom of the big beams. He was a real craftsman."

Unlike other early buildings, Dutch barns could be erected by a handful of people.

The builder cut, sized and numbered the planks, beams and rafters. They were then stacked until all the parts were ready for assembly.

"It was one measure of a master builder that everything had to fit, and it had to be done by three or four people," says Schaefer.

The barn also boasts an impressive pedigree — a deed dated 1736 in which eight Mohawk Indians signed over the 540 acres on which the barn had already been built, to Wemp for \$1,100.

That was a high price for the time, Schaefer thinks because it was rich, productive river-bottom land.

The eight sellers signed their English first names and turtle, bear and wolf symbols for their clans.

The reconstruction project is being handled by Clayton Babcock of Hancock, Mass., the 24-year-old son of Richard Babcock, the man who has dedicated the last 35 years of his life to collecting, preserving, restoring and giving new homes to old barns.

The work of dismantling and reassembling the barn is done by hand, using the original builder's marking system and sheer muscle power.

For both Babcocks, Touhey's barn is the realization of a dream.

"It's been Clayton's dream to do a Dutch barn, and my dream to do a Dutch barn in the Albany area," says Richard Babcock, a burly, muscular man whose eyes burn with delight at this prize.

"These Dutch barns are really the superior barns," he adds. "I think Carl has the pride of the original builder. Now everyone can appreciate it."

By Judy Shepard

Staff Writer

FEURA BUSH — The rescue of a valuable early 18th century Dutch barn will be celebrated with a dedication, barn dance and colonial meal on Saturday, Oct. 13.

The Wemp barn was dismantled in March at its original location near the Mohawk River at Schoharie Crossing and reassembled over the summer months at Carl Touhey's 336-year-old Dutch house on Unesquethaw Creek Road here.

To celebrate the barn's new lease on life, Touhey has invited the Dutch Barn Preservation Society, an Albany-based non-profit organization, to hold its annual meeting there at noon on that Saturday.

The barn dance and a meal featuring foods of the time will follow from 1 to 5 p.m. The private event is by invitation only.

Touhey adopted the six-figure barn project after he was told about the barn by Vincent Schaefter, a society member who was concerned by reports the structure would be sold and relocated in the West.

Touhey is making plans to establish the barn and its five-acre setting as a museum dedicated to the genius of the Dutch master builders, who erected the barns throughout the Mohawk, Hudson and Schoharie valleys from the 1600s until the 1840s.

Today, the barns are an endangered species. Many were destroyed by British raiding parties during the Revolution; in later years, fires, age, neglect and contractors took their toll.

The Dutch Barn Preservation Society was founded four years ago to protect those remaining through research and education efforts designed to stimulate interest in saving them.

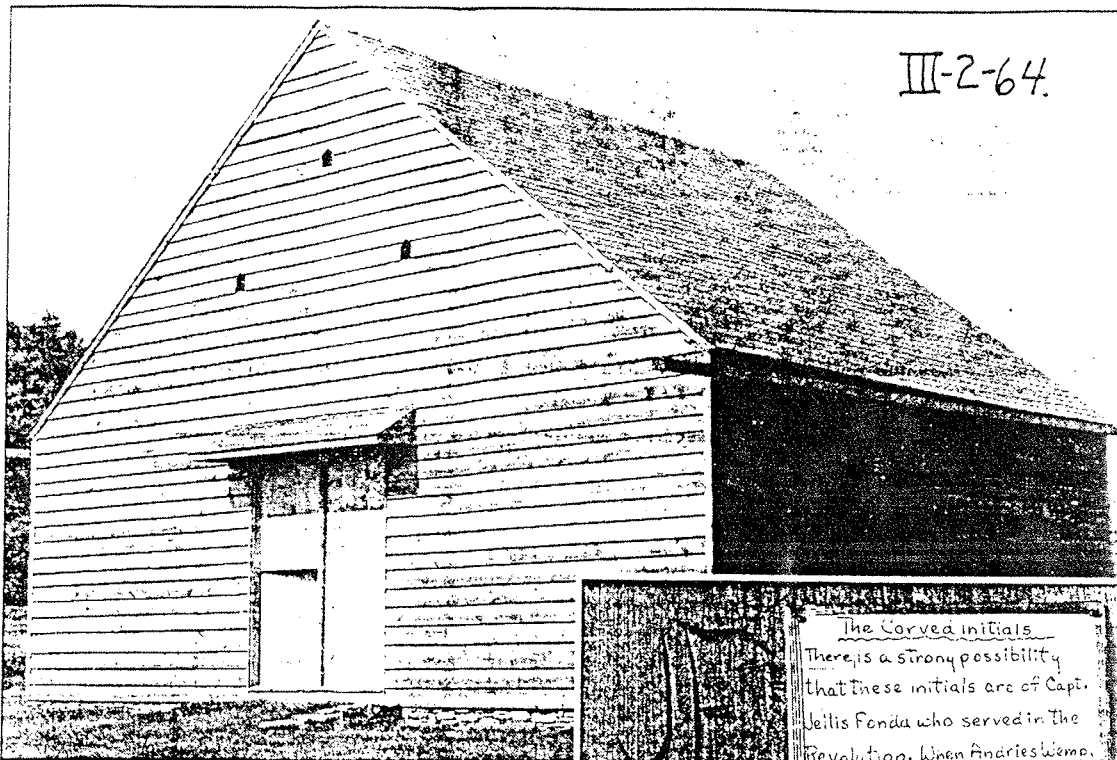
To Shirley Dunn, former society president, the Dutch barn is the perfect emblem of the social history of the region.

"Today, the emphasis is on how people lived," she explained. "In terms of that, the men spent as much time in the barn as they did in the house."

The society is limited by lack of funds for educational efforts such as an award-winning newsletter, now sold at Albany Institute of History and Art and the State Museum shop.

The group sponsors barn tours throughout the region, recently completing a two-day visit to New Jersey where they saw Dutch barns still in agricultural use.

Society members will measure



Times Union photos by Dennis J. Michalski

NEW LIFE — This 18th century Dutch barn, above, was dismantled, moved from the Mohawk Valley and rebuilt at Carl Touhey's Feura Bush estate. Vincent Schaefter, a member of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society who has studied the barn, made notes about the initials to their left.

and study the Bronck Barn at the Greene County Historical Society complex for a report to be published next spring.

The group also is working with volunteers from the Timber Framers Guild of North America on a project to repair the privately owned Wemple Barn on Wemple Road in Rotterdam, believed to be an early 18th century barn.

"We are trying to combine an educational demonstration in how to repair a barn, with the actual barn repair," Dunn said.

The society's current president, Harold Zoch of Schoharie, is chairing a project for the Schoharie County Historical Society in which the Schaefter-Ingold barn, a pre-Revolutionary structure, was dismantled and now is being rebuilt as part of

the historical society's Old Stone Fort complex in Schoharie.

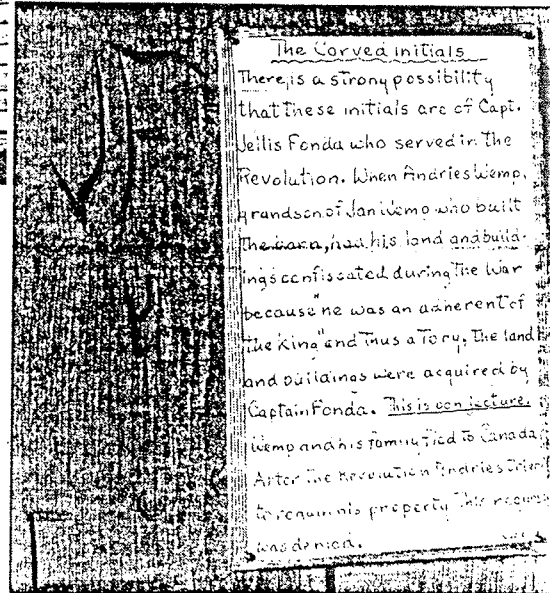
Visitors to the museum during next weekend's Burning of the Valleys military re-enactment of the British raids of 210 years ago will be able to see the open framework of the barn, which is the most distinctive aspect of their design and construction.

The society also has received a \$4,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts for a traveling exhibit.

Dunn views relocation of barns instead of on-site restoration as a last resort.

However, she said, "It seems to be more move-and-rebuild than save on site."

Because of that, the society has been exploring historic easements,



The Carved initials

There is a strong possibility that these initials are of Capt. Jellis Fonda who served in the Revolution. When Andries Wemp, grandson of Jan Wemp who built the barn, had his land and buildings confiscated during the War because he was an adherent of "the King" and thus a Tory, the land and buildings were acquired by Captain Fonda. This is conjectured by Wemp and his family tied to Canada. After the Revolution Andries tried to reclaim his property. This request was denied.

which would grant property owners tax advantages to encourage them to keep historic barns on their properties and repair them.

While she recognizes that the group has accomplished a great deal

in its first four years, Dunn said "There are some things we'd like to do but we can't. We just wish we were rich and we could give all the people money to fix their barn roofs."

Times Union - Albany, Oct 1994

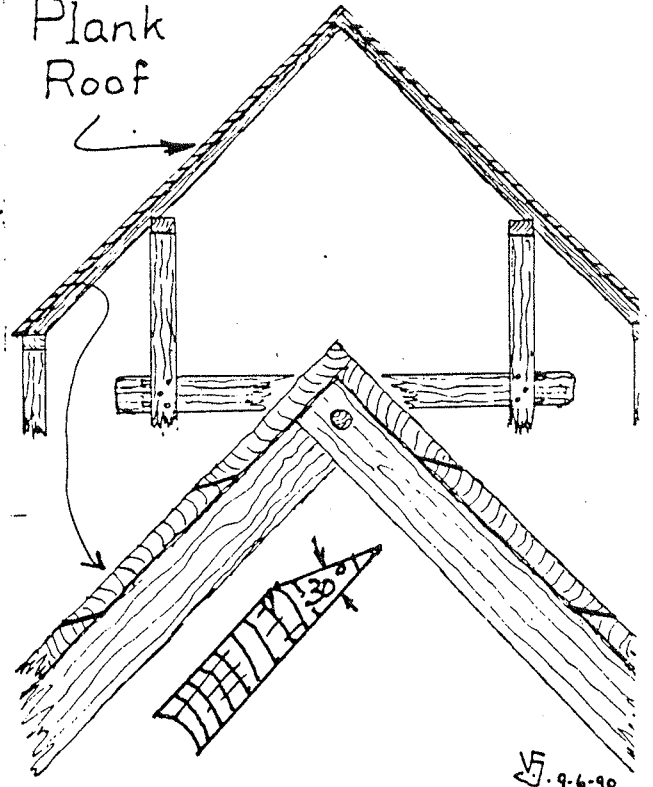
Plank Roof Board

Here is a roof plank from the original roof sheathing of this barn. It is a classic example of a board from a "plank roof", the earliest type of roof covering used by the pioneer Dutch settlers when they came to America in the early 1600s. Practically all the roofs of their barns and houses from the original settlements till the early 1700s were covered this way. Frequently they show evidence they later had a shingle covering.

The obtuse angle of the overlapping chamfers on either side of the plank prevents rain from running under the board covering.

This plank suggests it was the only covering used during the first period of the barn use since there is no evidence in the form of nail holes that it was later covered with shingles.

Plank Roof



Chronology - Greater Wemp Dutch Barn.

- 1670 - Jan Wemp born. d. 1749. Captive to Canada 1690.
- 1711 - Jan Wemp contracted to build Fort Hunter.
- 1711 - Jan Wemp leaves Schenectady to Mohawks Country.
- Ca. 1715 - Jan Wemp, Master Builder constructs his Barn.
- 1701 - Myndert Wemp born to Jan + Catalina Schermerhorn.
- 1735 - Andries Wemp born to Myndert Wemp + Sarah Mills.
- 1775 - Andries Wemp is grandson of Jan Wemp. and a Tory.
- 1780 - Wemp Barn spared from burning by Sir John Johnson.
- 1780 - Andries Wemp and family flee to Canada. Property lost.
- Ca. 1782 - Jellis Fonda obtains Wemp lands and buildings (?)
- Ca. 1783 - Andries Wemp seeks return of his property. - Denied.
- 1794 - Jellis Fonda moves barn from flood plain. (?)
- 1830 - Greater Wemp Barn used to store hay and straw for Erie Canal
- 1989 - Carl Touhey buys Wemp Barn from David Hewitt. 12-23
- 1990 - Richard Babcock Sons start dismantling barn. 3-26
- 1990 - Wemp Barn Timbers moved to Oniskethaw Creek site 4-13.
- 1990 - Wemp Barn erection completed 9-1.
- 1990 - Wemp Barn Dedicated Oct. 13 - Dutch Barn Preservation Society

Greater Wemp Barn owned by Carl Touhey along with Van Zandt House of 1754.

vjs 9-12-90

The Carved Initials

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vjs 9-11-90

The Roof Rafters

The ten roof rafters which support the roof of this barn ^{on either side} are tapered and rest on the purlin plates which rest on top of the anchor beam posts. The rafters are hewn so that the longer part of them, above the threshing floor, has the same bulk as the shorter but wider part spanning the animal aisles.

They are each 32 feet, 4½ inches long and balance at the purlin plate. In this barn the top end of the rafter has a cross section of 6¾" x 5½" while the lower end is 9" x 7". There is no roof ridge pole, the rafters are joined at the top with a tongue and slot joint.

All the support of the roof is concentrated on the two purlin plates. Thus as with modern skyscrapers, the outer walls are "curtains" and do not in any way support the roof. V.J.S. 9-20-90.

The Manger

This is fashioned after an early type of manger for feeding live stock. Hay was pulled down from aloft to the top of the slats where it was readily available to the horses, mules, cows and oxen.

At one time all three bays had mangers. V.J.S. 9-1-90

The Sway Braces

To prevent the barn from twisting when buffeted by a heavy wind, sets of sway braces were mortised into the sides of the anchor beam posts and the under surface of the purlin plates. Early barns had four long braces extending from near the anchor beam on one post to the purlin plate near the adjacent one. Later barns had shorter ones, two for each bay on either side of the threshing floor. V.J.S. 9/25/90

The Granary

This room was used for storing threshed grain. It should be rodent proof. Any gnawed holes were promptly covered with sheet metal. This threshed grain was more valuable than gold to the pioneer yeoman since it was the one product of the farm which could be readily converted to money or used for bartering. V.J.S. 9-10-90

Sam Van Orden tells me that the vertical pole placed in the center of the threshing floor had a horizontal component to which a horse was tethered. Sheaves of wheat or other grain were piled to a depth of 6 inches with the heads outward so as to be under the horses hoofs. Oxen were not used because of their smaller hoofs. A youngster had the chore of leading the horse round and round the pole.

Before the horse was harnessed it was caused to urinate by pouring a pail of water on the ground beneath it. To prevent droppings from polluting the threshed grain, a bag was suspended between the hind legs of the animal. Shovels used for gathering the the threshed grain after winnowing were frequently made of wood.

S.V.O. + V.J.S. 9-27-90.

Factors establishing the early date of
The Greater Wemp Barn

- ORIGINAL ROOF WAS A PLANK ROOF
- WAGON DOORS SWING ON WOODEN HINGE
- MASSIVE anchor beams.
- Braces of anchor beams of similar width.
- Original floor Boards of split trees.
- Original siding cut with pit saw.
- Anchor beams finished with adze.
- Long sway braces.
- Animal doors fitted with Dutch hinges.

COMMENT:- It is likely this barn was built between 1711 and 1715. Jan Wemp settled there in 1711 when involved in building FORT HUNTER. He probably settled at that time on the land he eventually bought from the Mohawk Indians in 1736.

V.J.S. 9-19-90.

Scythe Cradle

This is a scythe modified with a cradle which catches stalks of wheat or other grain so they lie flat after cutting. This permits the reaper to assemble sheaves of the grain which are piled in loose stacks in the field. These are then carried by wagon to the barn for further drying and threshing. The sheaves are stored on saplings laid loosely above the anchor beams.

V.J.S.-10-8-90

The Barn Siding

The planks which covered the sides and end of the Dutch Barn were cut in the early period (before 1750) with a pit saw or an "up and down" saw. This barn's original siding was cut with a "pit saw". One sawyer would be above, the other below. Such boards were 12" to 14" wide and one inch thick. Rose head, wrought iron nails fastened the lapped boards, but were driven only through the upper board. This permitted the under board to expand without splitting. The boards on Dutch Barns were not painted.

V.J.S. 9-11-90

The Threshing Floor

The initial floor of early New World Dutch Barns were made from split trees generally of white or pitch pine.

With this Greater Wamp Barn the original flooring is represented ^{by} this portion of a floor plank which was split from a very large pine tree. The under surface was left in a rough state, The thicker portion was cut away so as to rest on the floor framing which was supported by piers of flat limestone two to three feet above ground level. The upper surface was adzed so as to be level with adjoining planks. The present floor was probably made of planks cut with a pit saw or an "up and down" saw. Pine was favored since it provided a better "purchase" for animal hoofs than oak which became slippery.

LABELSThe Carved Date of 1794.

On the undersurface of the sway brace above, the number 1794 is carved with the same elegance as the JF. It is postulated that this was the time when this barn was moved from the flood prone flats, so the barn could be above the Spring flood waters.

V.J.S. 9-7-90

AGE OF THE TREE USED TO MAKE
THE ANCHOR BEAM ABOVE

A core from this anchor beam was obtained using a Swedish Increment Borer. This core is mounted here. The width and number of the tree rings were measured and counted.

The tree was 118 years old. It grew rapidly for its first ten years and grew progressively slower from then on until cut down in the early years of the 1600s.

Ox YOKE

This massive yoke was placed on the necks of a pair of oxen for use in hauling heavy loads or doing other chores such as stump pulling stone hauling or the harvesting of large trees.

It is carved of white pine and apparently saw heavy use.

10-8-90. V.J.S.

The Wrought Iron Dutch HingeLABELS

All early Dutch Barns had such hinges on the animal doors and some of the smaller doors within the barn. The most common use of such hinges was on the Dutch Doors of the houses from the early 1600s to the 1750s. In fact these were so beautifully made that they often looked like they were cast in a single mold! Actually they represent the high quality skill of a Master Blacksmith. Most such hinges were terminated with an arrow or an oval disc. Some are more decorative. The pintel end close to the spread disc often have horizontal lines chiseled in the iron.

V.J.S. 9-25-90.

A Wooden Hinged Door

This is one quarter of an ancient Dutch wagon door. Sometimes such a door has 4 parts at other times three. Wooden hinges were made of hickory or oak. They swung on hard wood dowels counter sunk in the vertical door frame posts. These doors were in the gable ends.

The Wooden Eaves Trough

The lack of a projecting roof necessitates that rain and snow melt are diverted from the sides to the end of the barn. This protects the sides and sills of the barn from excessive moisture. Eave troughs fashioned of wood were installed on all of the early barns. When these deteriorated they often were not replaced. Consequently moisture dribbling down the barn's sides led to the decay of the sills and other damage.

Martin Holes

These somewhat decorative holes in the gable ends of Dutch Barns serve several purposes. First of all they provide access to the interior of the barn for martins, swallows and other birds which feed on the many insects carried into the barn on loads of hay or grain. They also provide ventilation. Below is a variety.



LABELS

Timber Marking

A Dutch Master Builder such as Jan Wemp, used a simple method for marking timbers. Since timber framing was done while the pieces were still on the ground, as each joint was individually fitted the two components were marked with Roman numerals with a chisel. Those on one side had numerals cut with a wide chisel, those on the opposite side with a narrow one using the same number. All principal joints in the Wemp Barn were marked in this manner and were used successfully in its reassembly.

V.J.S. 9-13-90

The Threshing Floor.

A major use of the wide center aisle under the anchor beams was the threshing of wheat and other grains. At first threshing was done with flails. As the harvest increased it was done by the hoofs of live stock. They walked round and round a central vertical pole whose upper end was inserted in the bracket fastened to the central anchor beam. Its lower end rode in a forged iron cup inserted in a floor plank.

V.J.S. 9-11-90



Photo by V.J. Schaefer.

Preparation for foundation of Wemp Barn
"Oriskatach"

Carl Touhey's Onesquethaw Creek Estate
Feura Bush, New York

III-2-71



The Greater Wemp Barn Dedication

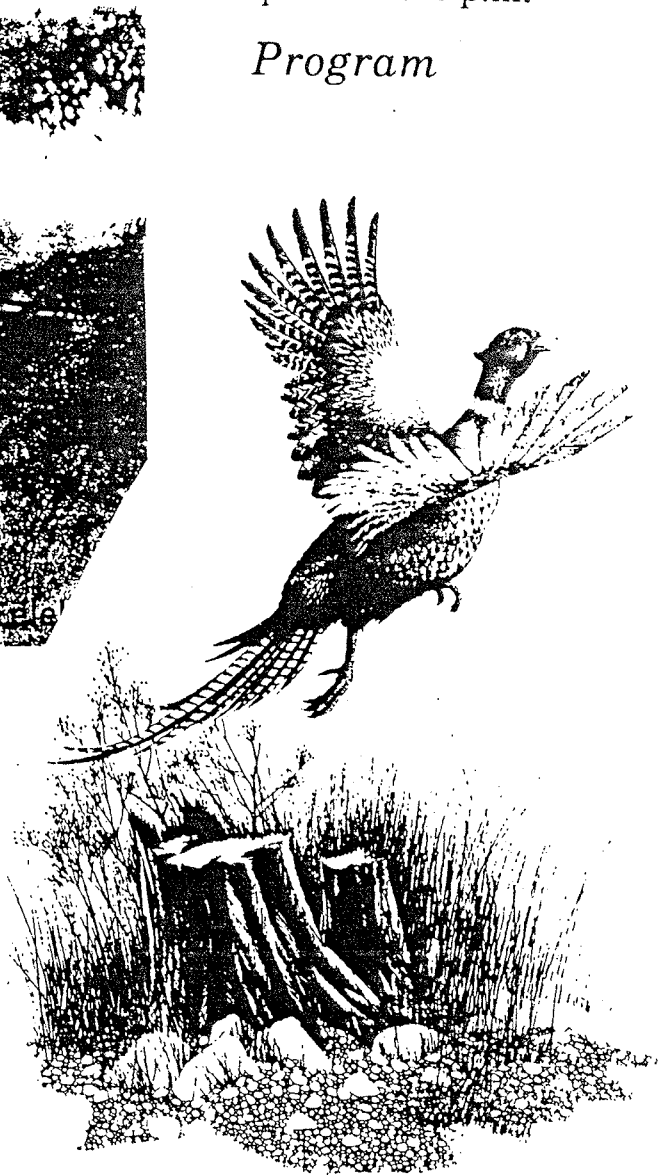
Saturday, October 13, 1990

12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Program



The Greater Wemp Barn Dedication



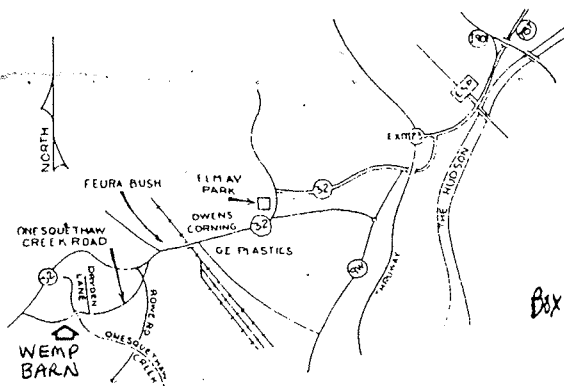
Join Us For An Authentic Colonial Feast
and Barn Dance

Saturday, October 13, 1990

1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

at

Carl Touhey's Onesquethaw Creek Estate
Feura Bush, New York



VINCENT J SCHAEFER
Box 187 SCHERNERHORN ROAD
RD 3
SCHENECTADY, NY 12306

Invitation to
Wemp Barn
Dedication

October 13, 1990.

The Annual Meeting of The Dutch Barn Preservation Society will be held at noon.

Welcome

Barn Tours, Hayrides, Craft Demonstrations
and Sale and Colonial Games

Barn Dedication Ceremony

Carl Touhey - Host

Sheila Audet - Chairperson

Vincent Schaefer - Dutch Barn Preservation
Society

Richard Babcock - Master Barn Builder

Everett Rau - Dutch Barn Preservations
Society

Traditional Feast

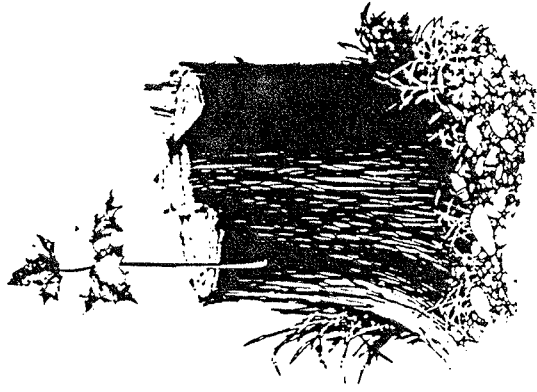
Prepared by Everett and Peg Rau, Robert and
Amelia Anderson, Irma Hoose, Greg Giorgio
and Chris Albright

Barn Dance - Country Songs & Calling by
The Zillionaires

Program at the Wemp Barn Dedication
Carl Touhey Estate -- "Oriskatach"

October, 13, 1990

*To all the friends and neighbors who
contributed in any way, we are very
grateful for your enthusiastic part-
icipation and special thanks for exhibits
and demonstrations provided by The
New Scotland Historical Association,
The Dutch Barn Preservation Society,
The Onesquethaw Preservation and
Historical Association, The Hilltown
Artisans Guild, Allison Swanson,
Gerry Boone and Joe Purcell.*





The Enterprise — Terez M. Limer

Hip, Hip, Huzzah! Everett Rau, a member of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society and one of the organizers of the celebration, leads the crowd in a cheer as the Wemp Barn historic marker is unveiled. Rau believes the spirits of the original inhabitants of the barn and the stone house nearby linger on. He asked all present to think about those early inhabitants as he released the balloons.

275 years old and still standing strong

This article is reprinted, with corrections, from last week's edition of The Enterprise, where, due to a layout error, it was unintelligible. — Ed.

By Terez M. Limer

FEURA BUSH — The rain fell in torrents. It pulled fall leaves to the ground and turned driveways and fields to mud, but on Onesquethaw Creek Road, members of the Dutch Barn Society from New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey stayed warm and dry. Seated on bales of hay, they held their annual meeting Saturday beneath the monumental structure of a newly reconstructed Dutch barn.

Built in 1715 by master builder Jan Wemp, and moved from the Fort Hunter area in April, the Wemp barn of Onesquethaw is considered one of the two finest Dutch barns in our area. It is approximately 50 feet square and 35 feet high at the peak. A core sample taken from one of the anchor beams shows that the tree it was cut from was

118 years old and was cut down in the early 1700's.

The Preservation Society's meeting began a day of celebration to mark the dedication of the barn. Along with regular business, members heard the story of the barn from the man most closely associated with it.

"I first saw this barn 60 years ago," said Vincent Schaefer, "from time to time I would go and visit it." Schaefer who has had a love affair with Dutch barns for many years has studied and photographed most of the Dutch barns left in our region. He first heard about the Wemp barn from a farmer friend. "In the beginning, it was a working barn, but after a while it was no longer used," he told the society.

In 1985, Schaefer, on one of his visits, was dismayed to find holes in the roof of the barn. It was beginning to deteriorate. "It looked to me as though its days were numbered," he said. When it was put up for sale in 1989, he determined to save it.

Early attempts met with disappointment. The State Division of Historic Preservation simply wasn't interested. The Department of Environmental Conservation was interested, but had no funds for such a project.

Schaefer learned that the barn was being advertised in the *New York Times* for \$50,000 or to the highest bidder.

He said the price was reduced to \$25,000. Hearing a rumor that a group in California was interested in purchasing the barn and moving it out west, he made one last attempt. "I had been sent the original Indian deed for the land on which the barn stood," said Schaefer. "It was signed by eight Indians. I was surer than ever that the barn should remain here. I went to Carl Touhey, an old friend, and told him he had to buy it. He called me two days before Christmas to say he had signed the papers. It was the best Christmas present I could possibly have received. I think we're extremely fortunate to have a person like him interested in the things we're interested in."

"People come to me with all sorts of ideas for investments." Touhey, a prominent Albany businessman, said later. "I knew Vincent Schaefer. As a courtesy, I went along to see the barn. The more I listened to him and saw how involved he was, the more my interest grew." Touhey hired master builder Richard Babcock and his sons for the massive project of taking the Wemp barn apart, moving it and reconstructing it at his Onesquethaw Creek Estates.

The main frame was re-assembled following markings made 275 years ago. At that time, builders marked all the principle joints while they were still on the ground. Using a system of Roman numerals, one side was marked with a wide chisel, while the opposite side was marked with the same numeral using a narrow chisel.

The project lasted from April until October. Workmen were busy right up until the day before the dedication. "You watch the timbers go up one by one and you get caught up in it," said Touhey. "It grows on you, that's it. It grows on you." Touhey's estate originally had a Dutch barn, but like so many of its kind, it was destroyed by fire. The Wemp barn stands on the site of the original barn.

Sheila Audet, primary caretaker of Oriskatah, the historic

stone house, on the estate also watched the barn go up. She became so interested, that she started researching Dutch barns and provided historic details to the workers as the reconstruction progressed. "Because of my participation in the restoring, Touhey named me chairman of the dedication," she said. "Carl wanted to do something for the preservation society and give some recognition to the builders and the people who were involved."

Audet put together a "grand event" patterned after a Dutch barn dedication she had attended at Fort Klock (Montgomery Co.) in July. People toured the barn and exhibits provided by the New Scotland Historical Association, The Dutch Barn Preservation Society, The Onesquethaw Preservation and Historical Association and watched craft demonstrations by the Hilltown Artisans Guild.

There was a traditional feast of roast turkey and venison stew and rounded out with homemade ale or hard cider. The Fourth Albany Militia staged a skirmish in the field in front of the barn and a new

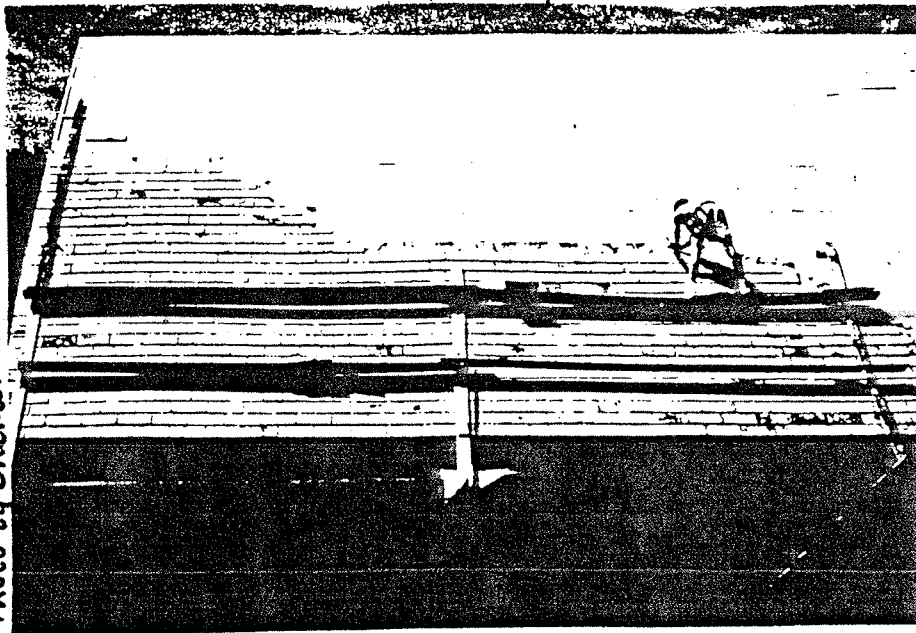
historic marker was unveiled. Nature, quixotic as always, parted the curtains of rain long enough to allow for the outdoor part of the program. Then the rain fell again harder than ever. "It's a good test," said Rick Dryden of the Onesquethaw Historic Association. The only wet spots in the barn were brought in by wet shoes and dripping umbrellas. Obviously, the builders had done their job well.

"They did an outstanding job," said Schaefer. It looks like it did originally." We're extremely lucky to have a place to bring our youngsters to have them see some of the connections with pioneer days."

The Wemp barn of Onesquethaw will be available to the public in the future. "We'll be putting a sign up by the historic marker, once we've decided on visiting hours," said Touhey.

In the meantime, if you want to see a barn 275 years old and standing strong drive down Onesquethaw Creek Road in Feura Bush. If you stop at the stone house next door and someone's home, Touhey says you're welcome to ask for a visit.

Photo by Sheila Audet



The final stage in the restoration of the Larger Wemp Dutch Barn. This slate roof was probably 100 years old when salvaged and will continue to serve as a long lasting cover.

The Preservation Award

to
Carl Touhey of Albany and Oriskatach

for
The Preservation of the Jan Wemp Dutch Barn
December 1989 to October 1990
Awarded by the Trustees
of the

Dutch Barn Preservation Society

Vincent J. Schaefer, Hans F. Zol, Gregory O. Huber, Everett W. Rau
Christina Wight, Mark T. Mesler
Shirley W. Dunn, Betty Swalen, Alicia A. Petten, Robert J. Anderson
Mark H. Clark, Clarke Blair

October 13, 1990

