

## Dutch Barn Preservation Society

### Barn Tour, Knox, Albany County, 22 October 2011

We toured 4 Dutch Barns in Knox, one of the hill towns in the Helderberg Mountains in western Albany County. [The towns are Berne, Knox, Westerlo, and Rensselaerville.] The tour was organized and led by DBPS board Member Allan Deitz, and it was cosponsored by the Knox Historical society. It was an overcast and chilly day; we had no rain, and a few glimpses of sun.

#### Barn # 1, Kenneth Saddlemire Farm, 1984 Becker Road, Knox

We began with the Saddlemire Farm, which has two Dutch Barns; the farm is on Becker Road, just south of the Hamlet of Knox. We looked at the Dutch barn to the east, which is on the South side of Becker Road.



There are two barns on the south side of the road just east of the farmhouse, shown in the left and center pictures. The one in the center, with the ramp, is the Dutch Barn; the third view shows both from the east, with the Dutch Barn on the left.

We had a good turnout, about 21 or 22 to start, closer to 30 later on.



Left, Ken Saddlemire discusses the barn with Tom Lanni; center, Ev Rau exploring one of the barns; right, Al with his daughter Karen.

This is a three bay Dutch barn with a ramp to the second level on the north side. Here are two interior shots-first, as we all stand on the center section, after coming in on the ramp; At the second level, the westerly bay is a large open space extending from ground level up to the roof. Clearly, this large volume was designed for hay storage.



The second view, below, is from the first level in the NW corner, showing this large open bay. The side of the ramp is clearly visible, with first floor walls, and an open center section where you can see one of our group looking out.



On many of the later Dutch Barns a ramp was added to make it easier to get the hay into the barn- and I note that hay storage is much more important in later barns, because after 1800 the farms placed more emphasis on dairy, and cows need lots of hay. There is also a hay track up in the peak of the gable, and some of the ropes and pulleys used to move it around the barn and drop the hay.

A question here is whether the ramp was original or a later addition. Arguments can be made both ways. There is a sign over the ramp which says 1873. Although the frame is clearly a Dutch barn, the ramp is perhaps more English. The frame is a timber frame, but all the smaller studs and uprights around the

perimeter of the barn are sawn, and most seem circular sawn, as noted by Bill McMillen. This likely places the barn after 1840, and a date of 1850-1873 is a good guess. The 1873 date could refer to the ramp, or to the barn itself; both are plausible, though a date of 1873 for the barn would make it one of the newest of the historic Dutch Barns.

On the first/ground floor, there are stables a granary, and various storage rooms on the eastern 2/3, and the western third is a large open space extending to the roof, as noted above.

As Al was talking about the threshing floor and the use of flails, Ken Saddle mire brought out an old flail he had found in the barn. Here is a picture of Al demonstrating its use, and another of Bruce Nelson with the flail. The connection at the end allows it to spin around.



After exploring the next barn, we headed off to our next stop, the Whipple farm on the Bern-Altamont road. There's a sign out front saying Malachi Farm, and there was a farm stand with a lot of pumpkins out front.





This barn was built partly into the side of the hill, suggesting it and the ramp may have been built at the same time. It is also a three bay barn, and the Upper level seemed remarkably similar to the first barn we saw. However, here all the smaller members and the uprights are sawn, but with an up and down saw, suggesting this is earlier than the Saddlemire barn.

The upstairs was pretty full of hay, so it required a bit of climbing up and over the bales to get inside.



Downstairs the structure was curious- it looked as if the entire ground floor had been rebuilt and strengthened. Notice in the front view looking through the barn doors that the floor of the upper level is about 2/3 of the way up the doorway.



Our next stop was **Gerd Remmers' barn and farm at 106 West Road**. As we drove up we passed a wonderful old hop house, which is mostly intact. There is a large Greek Revival farmhouse, in good shape except for a porch knocked down in the recent storms. That is Gerd out front- born in Northern Germany, he came to the US at an early age and bought this farm in 1947. He also has another farm farther along the road with a similar Dutch Barn, though it is in poor shape.



The Barn is another late, tall, three bay Dutch Barn with a ramp on the road [uphill side.] My pictures inside didn't turn out that well; I was more fascinated by Gerd's collections of just about everything, stored in the barn and the various sheds.





As we were getting ready to leave for the Malcolm Barn, much of our group seemed to line up to chat along the road, while a few kept exploring the hop house.



Our last barn of the day was the Shultes-Malcolm farm in West Berne [actually just over the line in Knox.] Ken and Pam Malcolm have hosted our group before, and the barn is wonderfully maintained, and mostly cleared out, except for a few boats, etc.

This barn was covered in detail in our Fall 2008 Newsletter, and we passed out copies of this edition during the tour.



It is a 5 or 6 bay Dutch Barn- timber frame square rule barn; there are 4 regular bays and a double bay, plus an English barn added at the rear at a 90 degree angle. The original barn is about 40x60 feet, and each of the purlins is an unspliced 60 foot timber. It was built about 1820-1840. Below left, Pam & Ken.



After our tour, we went to the Highland Restaurant for lunch-nearly 30 people came to lunch, where Al took a few pictures. Here are two of them.



Notes by Ned Pratt