

MID-HUDSON CHAPTER of the DUTCH BARN PRESERVATION SOCIETY, April 1, 1999

The following is a list of documentation and preservation projects currently underway in the three counties of the Mid-Hudson Chapter, their status and participants:

COLUMBIA COUNTY

A Report on the Traditional Architecture of Columbia County. This report will expand on the documentation of summer kitchens, barns and houses done two years ago with the County historian, Mary Howell as well as the work of Michael Carr. This week-end I measured the (Ge-9) Lasher/Erickson/Meacher 4-bay Dutch barn in Germantown with Alvin Schaeffer, Todd Scheff, Hank Himelright and James Meacher. We plan to return to photograph the site, especially the race-knife marriage marks on the beams. The Germantown Historical group is very helpful and their 1747 stone Parsonage is a good place to work from.

DUTCHESS COUNTY

The Brush House, Pine Planes This well preserved 18th century log cabin was acquired by the local historical society. Bob Hedges has been active with the group and the site both in measuring and drawing the building and in performing emergency repairs when a fire damaged the loft and roof of the building. Niel Larson was recently hired as a consultant to study and help with the restoration of the Bush house. Local people want eventually to do a survey of early building in the town.

Four Signature Barns in the Rhinebeck Area This is a study done by Bob Hedges and me, with help from many friends, for a TTRAG (Traditional Timberframers Research and Advisory Group, of the Timber Framers Guild of North America) conference several years ago. Its presentation was not the best and we would like to re organize and add to it.

Barn Raising Bob Hedges is raising a 3-bay English barn with Dutch scribe rule frame at his place in Pine Planes. He and Roger have a Dutchess County two-bay Dutch frame, early parts, for sale.

ULSTER COUNTY

May 1, 1999, A Tour of Four Barns, Marbletown and Hurley This tour is sponsored by the Catskill Center for Conservation. It will begin with a slide show orientation at the Stone Ridge Library and is limited to 25 people.

The Architecture of Davis Corners, Town of Olive This project began with the documentation of a Dutch barn that is in a state of collapse and then its 1808 two-room stone house. It has become a neighborhood project and will eventually include the study of at least two other stone houses and two barns as well as a history of the area. Bruce Palen and Roger Scheff have been helping.

Bud Eckert, Bear Trappers of Watson Hollow, Town of Olive I first met Bud as a splint basketmaker but soon learned of his maple syrup operation and his active interest in trapping and his knowledge of local history. On a recent Catskill Center for Conservation tour Bud showed us a unique stone bear trap probably built by his great grandfather in 1820 or 30. Paul Huey contributed a good bibliography on traps and I hope to expand on the history and geography of their design. Joe Diamond and his students from SUNY New Paltz plan, sometime in April, to dig a section of the stone trap to look for evidence and get a better understanding of its construction.

3-27-99 with Alvin Schaeffer, Todd Scheff, Hank Himelright and James Meacher, 2-hours, visited and measured the (Ge-9) Lasher/Erickson/Meacher 4-bay true-form Dutch barn owned by **James & Elfreda (Erickson) Meacher, 363 Northern Blvd. Germantown, NY 12526**. The barn and farm lie within the 6,000 acre patent granted the East Camp Palatines in the 1720s. It borders Clermont where the farms were worked by Livingston tenants.

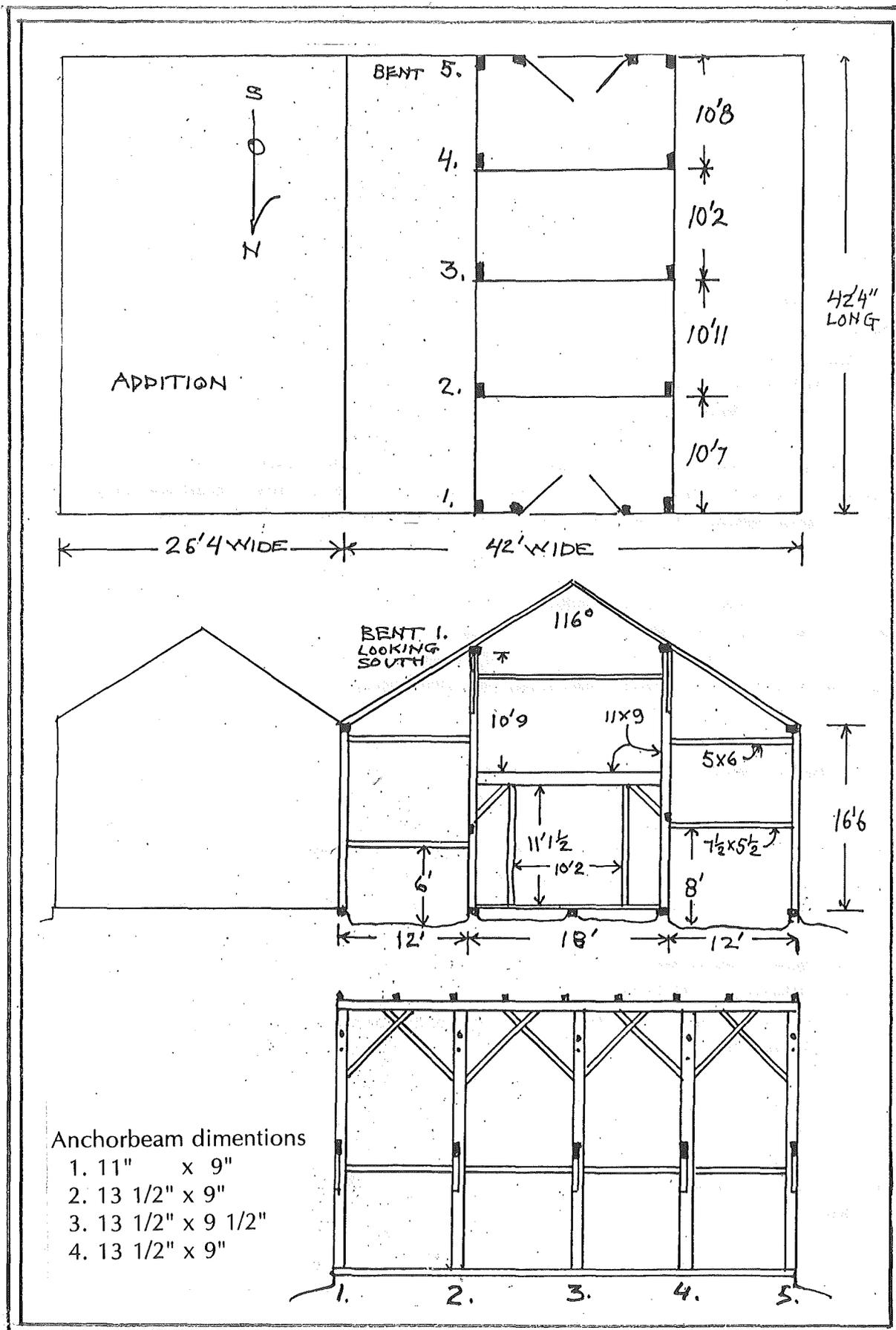
The frame is of hard wood, oak and chestnut. All the mortise shoulders are diminished which is often a sign of an early scribe-rule frame, yet the tenons do not extend and the anchorbeam braces are light and sawed.

The proportions of the bents, with a narrow 18-foot central threshing floor and wide 12-foot side aisles, indicates that grain farming was less important and more room desired for animals. Perhaps the sizes of cattle and horses were increasing. There is a 1- or 2-inch hole on the soffit (underside) of the central anchorbeam. It might have been intended for some kind of threshing device but it shows no wear.

The carpenter's scribe marks are made with a race knife. Circles and half-circles designate left and right. No two-foot anchorbeam lines were found. The scribe marks and the inverted initials on the anchorbeam of the 4th bent should be documented and photographed.

The raising holes on the columns are centered and set 32-inches below the purlin soffit except on bent 4 where they are set at 45-inches. There are longitudinal raising holes in the corner posts which is common in Columbia County and indicates the side walls were raised as a frame.

The present strap hinges on the north end 2-part wagon doors are locally made. The eyes are welded and the finials pointed. They are 19th-century and I would guess the present doors and door posts replace the original ones with typical grooves for 4-part wooden hinged doors. The anchorbeam braces have been removed in both external bents (1. & 5.) adding to the feeling that the door posts have been replaced. All original longitudinal struts on both sides of the center aisle are missing.



Four-bay Dutch True-form Barn circa 1780-1810
 (Ge-9) Lasher/Erickson/Meacher Farm, Germantown, Columbia County, NY

The Five-Plate Wall Stove in Early New York Houses, Skip Barshide of Palatine Bridge, who has a lifelong interest in the barns and houses of the Mohawk Valley, has offered to combine his knowledge of the use of the five-plate stove in his area with my research in the Mid-Hudson Valley published last year as Chimneys, Stoves and Slaves. We hope to begin work when the weather is nice. Skip has one of the only complete examples of the wall stove set up in his house museum.

Barn Raising Bob Hedges and Roger Scheff with help from John Sherringer will be raising a 3-bay Dutch barn at the Wyncoop/Lonsbery house in Stone Ridge this spring. The frame came from Otsego County.

The following is a list of sites that have special value in the study of Dutch vernacular architecture. None of them have been well documented and they are all in danger of destruction and alteration:

COLUMBIA

the VanHuesen brick house in Hudson
the Rockefeller stone house
the Glenco Mills frame house
the VanAllen homestead, corn crib, barn, and brick gambrel house

DUTCHESS

the Storm frame house in Hopewell Junction, circa 1748

ULSTER

the Bier/Wood stone & frame house, West Saugerties, house in a state of collapse.
the Kierstead stone & frame house, Saugerties, measured drawings.
the Schoonmaker stone summer kitchen with jambless fireplace, Saugerties

The following are ideas for workshops:

Splint Basketmaking, Bud Eckert
Raised Seam Metal Roof Construction, John Kaufman
Lime Mortar Masonry
Brooms
Rush and Splint Chair Seats
Timber Frame Construction

The following are things needed by the Mid-Hudson DBPS chapter:

a list of the DBPS membership
a computer set-up to store names and addresses and to selectively print out labels
a site for workshops and activities

Peter Sinclair
Spillway Farm
(914) 338-0257