

8-1988

Archival Chronicle: Vol 7 No 2

Bowling Green State University. Center for Archival Collections

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/archival_chronicle

Recommended Citation

Bowling Green State University. Center for Archival Collections, "Archival Chronicle: Vol 7 No 2" (1988). *Archival Chronicle*. 23.
http://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/archival_chronicle/23

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Library Newsletters at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Archival Chronicle by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

Archival Chronicle

Archival Chronicle

August 1988: Volume 7, Number 2

[Archival Chronicle Index](#) | [CAC Homepage](#)

Barns as History



➤ *Although this barn has more windows than average, it is an example of typical English-style construction. George Adam Photograph Collection, (MS 482).*

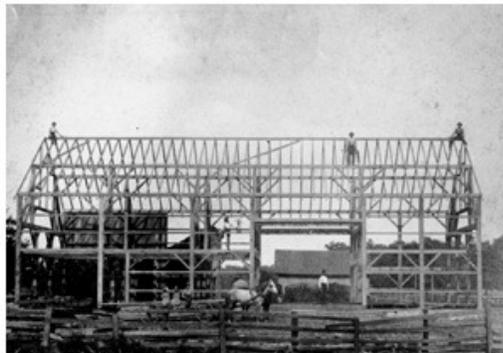
No structure is more distinctive or characteristic of the rural landscape than the farm barn. Barns are even more noticeable on the level terrain of northwest Ohio. Here they are reminders of the massive agricultural expansion of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and of the efficient agricultural technology that expansion brought with it.

The dominant barn-type in this region is the English barn, sometimes called a New England, Connecticut, Yankee, and three- or two-bay barn. The "bays" refer to the basic plan of the barn—a central floor area or runway with two roughly equal spaces on either side. The English barn is considered to have three bays if the runway is counted and two if it is not.

The central floor area was originally used for hand threshing. However, by the late nineteenth century, when most northwest Ohio barns were built, threshing was done with steam power. The threshed grain and straw were stored in the adjacent bays.

The simple frame structure of this barn is easy to see during construction. Barn-raising was also social occasions. Gift of Fred Holliger. ➤

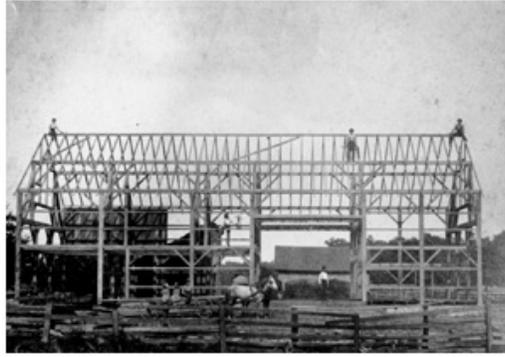
English barns are usually timber-framed. The earliest Ohio examples were built with hand-hewn timbers. However, later barn-builders took advantage of the widely-available sawmills and used sawn timbers instead. English barns are usually held together by mortise-and-tenon joints. Each upright unit (called a bent) consists of posts and beams or girts, which lie across the width of the barn. The bents are joined together by plates and sills and the roof superstructure.



The central floor area was originally used for hand threshing. However, by the late nineteenth century, when most northwest Ohio barns were built, threshing was done with steam power. The threshed grain and straw were stored in the adjacent bays.

The simple frame structure of this barn is easy to see during construction. Barn-raising was also a social occasion. Gift of Fred Holliger.

English barns are usually timber-framed. The earliest Ohio examples were built with hand-hewn timbers. However, later barn-builders took advantage of the widely-available sawmills and used sawn timbers instead. English barns are usually held together by mortise-and-tenon joints. Each upright unit (called a bent) consists of posts and beams or girts, which lie across the width of the barn. The bents are joined together by plates and sills and the roof superstructure.



Barns and other outbuildings provide clues about the livestock and crops raised in the area. John Hoverman Collection (MS 476).

Most English barns have only double front doors. Small openings or vents, high up under the ridge of the gable ends, often provide the only other fenestration. The barn frame rests on a low stone foundation (cement block or reinforced concrete after 1900) and is usually sided with vertical boards. (Noble, 1984)

The English barn style underwent remarkably few changes in its movement from the rocky hills of New England to the flat grasslands of the midwest. Settlers from New England found that this style remained an efficient structure even as technology changed farming methods. In this respect, English barns are historical as well as architectural landmarks.

—Glenn Harper



THE PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS ISSUE illustrate outstanding types of barn construction in northwest Ohio.
