

The Barn Door



From Mining to Farming: Park City, Utah's Iconic McPolin Barn

By Ayna Grahn, Preservation Planner, Park City, UT

While dairy barns are a fairly common feature of the rural landscape in many parts of the country, they are less prevalent in the Wasatch mountains of Utah where settlements largely sprang up in response to mining claims and cattle ranching was more suitable to the short growing seasons and rugged terrain. The large white McPolin Barn, with its tall gambrel roof and neatly painted outbuildings, has become a symbol of Park City, Utah, the focal point of the City's entry corridor along SR 224, and one of the most photographed sites in the region.

Located approximately 32 miles southeast of Salt Lake City, Park City is known today as the home of two world-class ski resorts; however, it had much humbler beginnings a century ago. Colonel Patrick Conner's troops were sent to Utah to suppress the Mormon Rebellion in 1858, but began prospecting in 1862 with the intent of attracting newcomers to Utah and diluting the Mormon population. In October 1868, their prospecting paid off when they crossed over Big Cottonwood Canyon and discovered silver in the Park City area. A bandana on a stake marked the silver vein that was renamed the Flagstaff Mine upon their return in the spring; it was the first mine to ship silver from Park City, but in time, over 300 mine claims would be established.

Patrick McPolin was among the miners that would seek their fortune in Park City's mining industry. Born ca. 1861 in Cork County, Ireland, McPolin's career as a miner was short-lived. After a mining accident in 1890 injured his hands and face, Dan and his wife Isabelle McPolin became successful entrepreneurs, owning and operating a number of Park City businesses including the Bank Saloon, a hotel, restaurant, Park City bottling Works, a confectionary, lumberyard, coal yard, and boarding house. In 1896, Dan McPolin also managed a meat market on Main Street, which may have prompted him to purchase land from the old Harris P. McLane homestead to raise livestock.

The end of the settlement period, Park City's growing population, and increased demands for dairy products likely influenced McPolin's transition from cattle ranching to dairying in the early 1920s.



McPolin Barn -- elevation of the barn as it exists today.

Park City, Utah's Iconic McPolin Barn (Continued on Page 3)

Winter follows the Barn Alliance to Belmont College for 2016 Spring Meeting in Ohio

After battling with the weather over the past few years, the NBA Board decided to move our “winter” meeting – an open board meeting that we have been holding in conjunction with an institute of higher preservation learning since 2012 - into spring. For 2016, we visited Belmont College in St. Clairsville, Ohio, and worked with Dave Mertz, director of the Building Preservation/ Restoration (BPR) program. And on Saturday morning, April 8th, it snowed! But we were nice and warm inside as attendees discussed several important initiatives, including the Barn Stamp effort, forthcoming Barns of Distinction program, and our website!

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Following all that work, Dave showed us around the program’s facilities and took us sight-seeing, including a private tour of the Quaker Yearly Meeting House in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio. “Designed by Rev. Jacob Ong and completed in 1814, it served as a gathering place for Quakers from a large region and was the center of...[this] largely Quaker community that was important in the antislavery movement” (Ohio History Connection website). We accomplished several organizational goals, had a blast, and learned about the work Belmont students are doing to preserve our built environment. Thanks to all who made the journey and to the BPR program at Belmont College!

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Looking Ahead: September 9-11, 2016!

NBA Annual Meeting & Barn Tour in Northwest VA

We couldn’t be more excited about our upcoming collaboration with the Preservation Trades Network (PTN) and their 20th annual International Preservation Trades Workshop being held in Berryville, Virginia, the weekend of September 9-11, 2016. NBA will lead a barn tour on Friday, September 9th, and will have our Dutch barn model on hand to raise routinely throughout the weekend. We are also arranging for a few barn-preservation-focused sessions to discuss issues specifically related to saving historic barns. NBA also has a new t-shirt campaign ahead, so stay tuned!

More information on the event will be available on our website and that of the PTN (www.ptn.org). The IPTW is a great learning experience for anyone involved in the building preservation trades as well as those interested in building hands-on skills!

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www.barnalliance.org

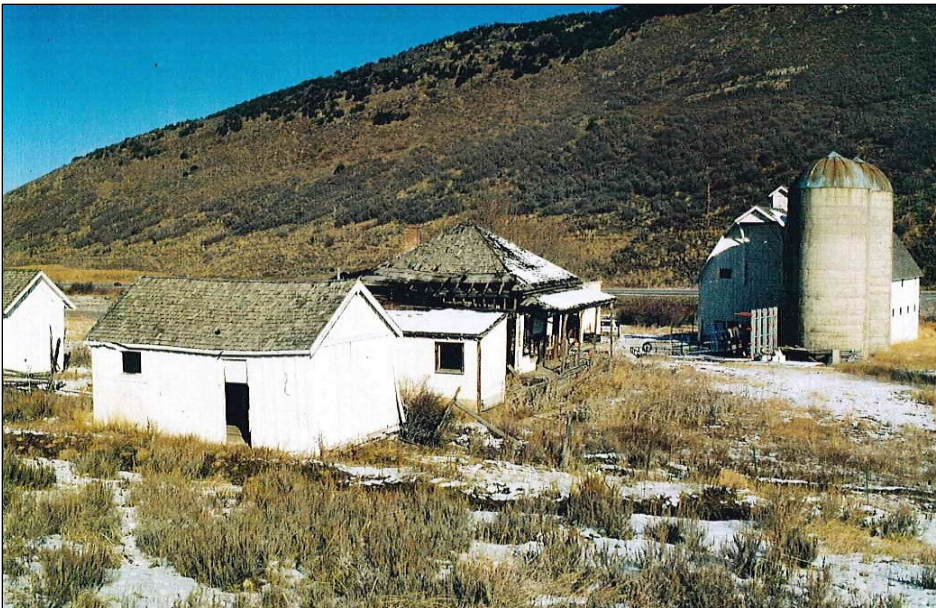


Park City, Utah's Iconic McPolin Barn (Continued from Front Page)

The short growing season, limited arable land, and variable stream flows made dairying difficult for farmers, yet the McPolins built one of the largest dairy barns in Summit County, Utah. The barn was completed in 1922 and reflected the latest Improvement Era (c. 1910-1940) scientific methods such as combined hay storage, livestock, and dairy operations.

It was not uncommon for mines to sell their assets as technology advanced, mines consolidated, or mine claims were abandoned altogether, and the McPolins made use of the availability of second-hand materials. The 7,468 square foot barn and c.1930 milk house were constructed of salvaged mine timbers, in addition to lumber from the Briggs Mill and McPolin's own lumberyard. Similarly, the farmhouse's originated as the main office for the Grasselli Mill, but was cut into two pieces and moved by wagon to the McPolin Farm in 1923.

Dan McPolin died of gastrointestinal cancer in 1922, however, his son Patrick continued to operate the dairy farm for over twenty years. In 1947, Patrick sold the farm and its twenty-two dairy cows to Salt Lake veterinarian Dr. D.A. Osguthorpe for \$35,000. Osguthorpe continued to expand operations and improve the farm's efficiency. Demands of the growing dairy herd led to the construction of two new forty-foot tall concrete silos on the southwest side of the barn in 1953. Osguthorpe also constructed a second milk house and milking parlor, totaling 1,500 square feet, on the northeast side of McPolin's Barn in 1954. Following a fire in 1955 that severely damaged and destroyed the farmhouse, Osguthorpe abandoned the McPolin Farm site and built a new farm site.



McPolin Farm, c. 1990 – The farm was in poor condition when the City purchased it in 1990. The farmhouse was fire-damaged, outbuildings suffered from deferred maintenance, and the barn was in need of stabilization.

The McPolin farm had largely deteriorated by the time Park City Municipal Corporation (PCMC) purchased the site for \$4.4 million dollars in 1990. The City immediately demolished the newer Osguthorpe farm structures, except for an open-air shed on the east side of SR 224. In 1992, the City installed a new internal bracing system consisting of steel cables to stabilize the barn. Historic windows had been lost and the remaining window openings were boarded. Other efforts included restoring outbuildings and reconstructing the burned farmhouse, salvaging useable remains.

City staff also spent two years conducting public outreach and meeting with boards and commissions to determine uses; in the end, it was determined that the Farm would only be used by the City-sponsored Friends of the Farm volunteer group for fundraising events. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004. Today, the 123 acres of open space around the barn is safeguarded by a conservation easement the City granted to the Summit Land Conservancy in 2007, which permanently protects the land's natural, agricultural, wildlife, and recreational values while prohibiting residential and commercial development.

Park City, Utah's Iconic McPolin Barn (Continued on Page 4)

Park City, Utah's Iconic McPolin Barn (Continued from Page 3)

In January 2016, Park City Municipal Corporation and SWCA Environmental Consulting completed the McPolin Farm Historic Preservation Plan, a multidisciplinary planning tool and framework for considering short- and long-term goals for the site. With the support of the Friends of the Farm, the City is currently developing a stabilization plan for the historic McPolin barn. While the cable system installed in 1992 has stabilized the barn, it has had a negative impact on views of interior spaces and made public access impossible.

The City is currently reviewing plans to incorporate steel structural members and new seismic shear walls to ensure the future stabilization of the barn, while also allowing tours of up to 50 people through the iconic space. Additionally, new wood windows will be reconstructed based on photographic and physical evidence, allowing greater light into the barn. The Friends of the Farm currently use a reception center on-site for their annual fundraising events; however, the group is excited for additional interpretive opportunities to share the history of the farm with the public during their events. Construction is scheduled to begin in June and will be completed by August 2016.



McPolin Farm Farmyard (2 photos) –Today, the original farmyard provides a public gathering space. In 1999, Osguthorpe's open-air shed was demolished and a new event space was constructed in its location adjacent to the farmyard.

Rebuilding an Iconic Round Barn in Fulton County, IN



Photo and information supplied by Shirley Willard, Fulton County Historian

The cupola was raised onto the Fulton County Historical Society's round barn on Feb. 9. The Amish crew built the cupola inside the round barn and then used a crane to lift it into place. Donations to help pay for rebuilding the round barn are needed.

A tornado Aug. 3, 2015, took the roof off the round barn and damaged three other historic buildings: log cabin, 1912 Kewanna jail, and 1900 Athens cider mill. People wishing to donate can send checks to Fulton Co. Hist. Soc., 37 E 375 N, Rochester IN 46975. FCHS is a 501.c.3 non-profit and donations are tax deductible.



The Star Barn and Charles Leik, circa 2005, showing original location and matching outbuildings.

Pennsylvania's Star Barn

*Charles Leik, NBA Past President
& founder of The Barn Journal*

It was more than 20 years ago that I saw the spires of The Star Barn on a trip to the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania airport. There was a large banner proclaiming efforts to save the icon. Although there was no time to stop, I was smitten by what I had glimpsed and returned several months later from my home in Northern Virginia to visit the property. Fortunately, the owner lived nearby and although skeptical of yet another visitor, she allowed me to enter the barn. The barn, which I had not previously known, was everything that I imagined and more!

The Star Barn sits on land dating to William Penn in 1765 that was purchased by John Motter, a successful horse breeder, in 1872. The barn itself dates to 1877 and is monumental in its proportions - 105' long x 67' wide at the threshing floor level and approximately 80' high to the Gothic Revival cupola and spire topped by a huge *fleur-de-lis* finial. The basement has a stone wall and likewise the barnyard is surrounded by a stone enclosure; there is a vaulted root cellar below the incline to the threshing floor.

The largely hemlock frame has three threshing floors. The basement level is two feet higher than usual since it was designed for horse stalls; a double line of purlins support the rafters of the wide roof. Until recently, smaller outbuildings for hogs and chickens, also with Gothic Revival features, surrounded the main barn. The "Star" functioned as a dairy in the 20th century until farming ceased in 1986. In 1994, less than four acres remained with the buildings and the balance became yet another housing development, an elevated highway was "directly in the face" of the threshing floor doors, and entrance to the property was from a distant highway exit. An impossible situation!

The Star Barn Complex was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2000, but ultimately this is just an honorary title and does not provide any government funding. Sadly, a lot of time and effort went into several attempts to preserve the complex with different owners, but as the years passed and the barn deteriorated, I despaired for its future. I was certain there were no re-purposed uses for the barn in its present location and moving it meant a lot of money. I envisioned the end of the unsecured deteriorating barn as a fire set by vandals.

After 20 years of monitoring the Star's situation, I was elated when DAS Companies, Inc. and David and Tierney Abel acquired the property in October, 2014 and even more positive news followed. That was when I learned that the Abels had a record of sensitive barn preservation at their Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania Ironstone Ranch and were also saving the notable Belmont barn at Lancaster City. Several visits to their company offices and warehouse confirmed a detailed professional approach to preservation, as well as the requisite financial ability. The re-located Star Barn will continue to qualify for the National Register. The Star Barn Complex is in good hands!

Currently, most of the deconstructed outbuildings are in storage, and the cupola of The Star Barn and windows have been removed and are being restored or reconstructed. On March 18th, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at the 275-acre Ironstone Ranch property where the Star will be re-erected in the fall of 2016 and the Belmont barn in 2018. The entire complex with authentic re-creations of the limestone 12-bedroom farmhouse, a summer kitchen, smokehouse, springhouse and even a privy are slated for completion in 2018.

Star Barn Update (Continued on Page 6)

Pennsylvania’s Star Barn *(continued from page 5)*

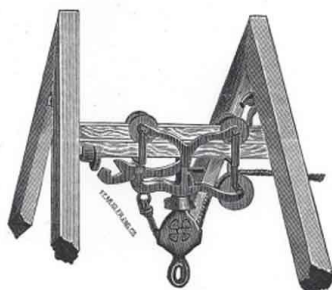
The moving of the extant buildings and recreation of others is a monumental project undertaken by a committed family, skilled staff members, and partner vendors, and I’m excited at the prospect. The new complex will be sympathetically repurposed primarily as a wedding and corporate event destination, designed to make the project economically sustainable. Trillium Dell, Knoxville, Illinois, a firm experienced in nationwide barn preservation and traditional timber framing has been engaged to de-construct and re-erect the Star.

I believe that the publicity on this project from the Eastern media will be a boon to rural vernacular (barns!) preservation and the most significant event in 2016 for those of us committed to barn preservation. Please see the video and frequent updates at www.thestarbarn.com or on Facebook. Information will also be forthcoming on this site regarding the project’s progress and date of the re-raising, slated for 2017.



Images from the DAS workshop: At top left, restored cupola for an outbuilding; at bottom right: louvered cupola from hog barn undergoing repairs; at right, original metal fleur-de-lis finial from cupola of Star Barn (note flip phone for scale). Photographs courtesy of Charles Leik.

Finding “Hay Trolley Heaven”: A Great Resource for Hay Tool Lovers!



NEY03

Ney Manufacturing Company’s “Double Plank Runner” Hay Fork (image courtesy of HTH).

A few weeks ago, an NBA member had an inquiry about preserving a beautiful early 20th century barn that included a few questions about restoring its hay trolley as well. A few emails later and we put Mark in touch with Clint, a well-informed contributor to “Hay Trolley Heaven” (HTH)—a website full of research, manufacturing history, drawings, photographs, and FAQs regarding the hay trolley industry! The website was the brainchild of two hay tool experts, Steve and Daniel, who began building what is more like an online library populated by a community of enthusiasts—and membership is open to anyone. Check it out at www.haytrolleyheaven.com!

Creating an account at HTH is just the beginning. It’s quick, easy, and free of charge. Once you are a member, you have access to a tremendous amount of information. For any fan of hay trolleys, it is, indeed, a slice of heaven!

Housebarns in the United States

by Bob Sherman, Barn Historian

This is a brief article about American “housebarns” (structures that included the house and barn under the same roof, built by new immigrants who were accustomed to this type of structure in the “old world”). There are a few such buildings still standing (or leaning) in America that were built by the different immigrant groups who settled in America. A few of these housebarns were constructed, starting with the Germanic peoples (including Moravians) who settled in Eastern Pennsylvania near Bethlehem and in North Carolina in the Old Salem area in the 1700’s.

The second big wave of immigrants who brought the housebarn idea to America, came in the early and mid 19th century. These immigrants included more people from Central Europe including Germans, Swiss, Luxembourgers, Bohemians and Czechs. A few years later Belgians, Danes, Norwegians, Swedish, and Finns settled in the upper Mid-west and Northern plains.

Near the end of the 19th Century, a small religious splinter group of French speaking Italians settled in the Piedmont area of North Carolina and built a couple of their style housebarns.



This the earliest sketch of a housebarn, or “hofhaus,” in America from the Germanic/Moravian area around Bethlehem, Pennsylvania area (The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society).

This image is of a housebarn located in Jackson County, Iowa in the Luxembourg village of St. Donatus (almost the whole village is made up of old Lux families who originally came to America circa 1840s. The house portion is to the right (North) 1/3 and the barn portion is from the big doors to the left (South) 2/3rds of the structure. The back hall was used for grain storage. The cattle and horses were located on the first level in the front, with the pigs and chickens on the same level but in the back. The house portion has 3 levels of living space with the grain storage area in the rear hallway behind the living quarters.

Image courtesy of B. Sherman.



From my and others research, some 27 such structures have been recorded or known. I wonder how many housebarns have been demolished or are hidden or modified within existing structures. It is common knowledge that just because a person or ethnic group migrates to another country, they do not forget their building ideas and cultural baggage. We have found housebarns within the ethnic groups mentioned, that there should be more still standing.

In the first part of the 20th Century, more Czechs and “Germans from Russia”, an ethnic group that fled Russia came to America. These Germans had lived in Southern Russia since Catherine the Great’s reign. They settled in the Dakotas and Manitoba, where land was still available, and built their housebarn structures familiar to them.

Dating Barns in Holland Township, NJ, with Dendrochronology

In the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016, NBA-member Carla Cielo compiled a two-part series on an effort to date several historic barns in Holland Township of Hunterdon County, New Jersey. Both articles explore a technology that helps us do what is often impossible: accurately dating the construction of a barn down to the year! As Ms. Cielo noted, “Dendrochronology which is commonly known as tree ring dating, derives the felling date of the trees that were used to build a structure. At \$2,000 a barn, few can afford the luxury of dating barns by this method.”



Dendrochronology requires core samples from the wood and must be taken from a waning edge, preferably with bark intact, of a structural member. Above is an image of a core sample being collected during this investigation. Photograph courtesy of Carla Cielo.

If you have not had the chance to read these pieces, we don’t want to spoil it (just go to our website and visit our blog, The Barn Journal)! We love this kind of research as it generates additional information about our agricultural history and the barns our predecessors left behind, and helps place that data in context with other developmental patterns in a given area. This particular study was aided by “...two grants from the NJ Historical Commission to dendro date 10 of the oldest barns in the township” to the Holland Township Historic Preservation Commission (HTHPC). At \$2,000 per barn, it is not cheap, but the data is undeniable. The results are surprising and critical to an informed analysis of historic patterns of agriculture in this area of NJ. Kudos to the HTHPC!

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