

Bethinking of Old Orleans

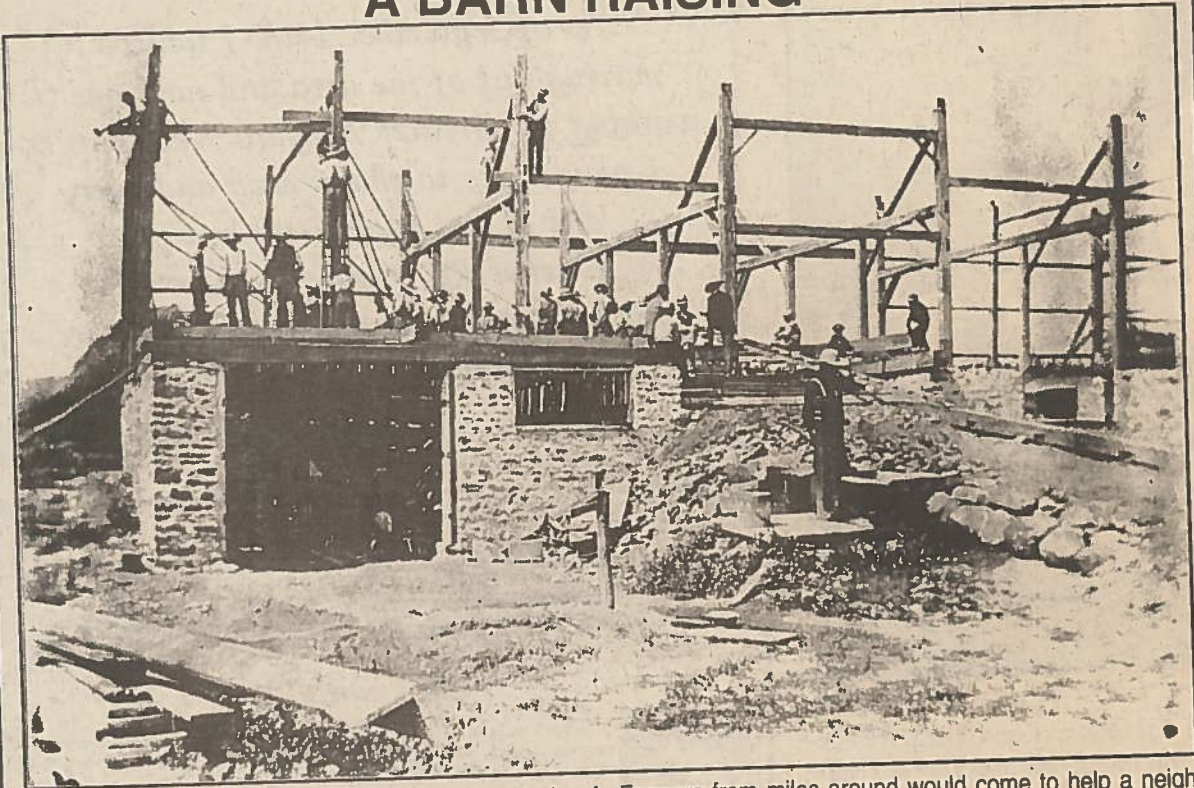
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A BARN RAISING



Often times the everyday activities or mundane tasks of the 19th Century were not documented by photographers. Our photo shown here, is certainly an exception. It was taken in the late 1880's and shows a barn raising in the process on the Arnold Gregory farm located on West County House Road in the Town of Albion. There are around thirty men in the picture plus four or five boys. In the foreground we see one man getting a drink of water from a wooden pump mounted on a well platform next to a wooden watering trough.

A man in a dark suit jacket with his back to the camera, appears to be talking to Mr. Gregory who is seated on a beam. Many other men are on hand, some with pike poles and others with ropes holding up timbers. A couple of men are shown working off the beams. These men would have fitted the tenons into the morises and driven in wooden pegs.

For such a project as this, all the timber work was precut and partially assembled on the ground or floor and then raised into position by the men with the pike poles.

Farmers from miles around would come to help a neighbor at a barn raising project such as this. Many hands were obviously needed to put up such a huge barn as the one pictured. This one on a high basement wall was probably going to be used for sheep or cattle.

Arnold Gregory bought this farm in 1853, making various improvements to it during his life time. A huge set of barns in an L formation with gambrel roofs was the focal point in his barnyard.

Like threshers mentioned in last week's article, these men all expected to be fed a noon time dinner by the wife of the farmer who was getting the barn raised.

Barns of this nature are fast becoming a thing of the past with changes in agriculture needs and building materials.

On Sunday, Sept. 13 from 1-5 p.m. the Cobblestone Museum at the intersection of Rts. 104 and 98 will present its 14th annual Old Timers Day which features many old-time skills and crafts reflective of the age when barn raisings were a common occurrence.