



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A barnyard view

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Bethinking of Olde Orleans

The illustration shown here is a painting done by Heather Boyd in 1978. It depicts the barnyard from my family farm as I remember it in the early 1950s.

The large barn with a gambrel rook was around 90 feet in length. My grandfather Nahum Lattin had this barn enlarged and built over in 1903 using the basic structure of an earlier barn from the 1830s. There were hand-hewn cross beams in this barn measuring 14 inches square. As a kid playing in there you could easily run across these beams without fear of falling down to the main floor because of their extreme width.

The lean-to at left was the sheep shed. The big doors in the center opened onto the threshing floor. Next to this was a grainery and a feed room. To the far right was the cow stable.

On Sept. 6, 1956, this barn was struck by lightning. Our neighbor Ted Swierczinski discovered it about 11:45 a.m. when the fire department was called. By 12:30 p.m. the barn was totally gone, reduced to smoldering ashes. A calf and some banty chickens were lost in the blaze. Fortunately the cows were out to pasture.

My father lamented that he had just put in the summer harvest of hay and wheat. Consequently he changed his scope of farming and soon thereafter retired from this venture.

This illustration also shows a straw stack about in the middle of the

barnyard in front of the barn. It however was not just the typical straw stack as it was located over a structure made for the sole purpose of accepting straw. It was a rustic building with an adjoining pen made of rails. Likewise, poles were the only roof structure over the enclosed part. Hence when straw was blown out of the threshing machine into the pen it was heaped onto the pole roof grid. In essence this was like a thatched roof.

Under this were two rooms which housed beef cattle my dad raised. I judge this building was built in the mid-19th century. There were huge iron hinges on the outside doors measuring over five feet in length. It's the only utilitarian structure like this that I have seen. I might also point out that the straw was used for bedding in both the cow stable and the two rooms under the stack were the beef cattle were housed.

The other two little buildings in the lower right corner were a brooder house, and a hen house. A corn crib my dad built in the early 1950s appears to the far left.

Following the barn fire the rubble and straw stack building were bulldozed, graded over and planted to pine trees. Today all the buildings are gone and only this painting is a reminder of how it used to be.