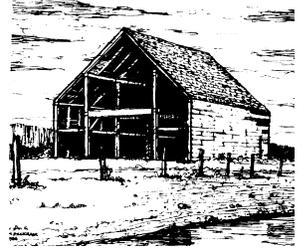


DUTCH BARN PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



FALL 2006

VOL. 19, ISSUE 2

The Fry-Grattan Barn

Historic Context

Paul R. Huey

The old barn on the Grattan farm in the Town of Waterford, Saratoga County, New York, stands high above the Mohawk River overlooking scenic, rolling grassland northwest of the junction of that river with the Hudson River. More than 340 years ago, in 1664, with increasing threats by the English against the Dutch colony of New Netherland, two Beverwyck merchants, Philip Pietersen Schuyler and Goose Gerritsen van Schaick, shrewdly recognized the strategic value of this area for trade with the Indians. They requested and received permission in 1664 to purchase land in the area, called the Half Moon, from the Indians.¹

In 1665, only after the English had taken New Netherland and renamed it New York, Schuyler and Van Schaick finally received a grant from the English governor of the islands at the mouth of the Mohawk River as well as land north of the Mohawk and west of the Hudson. This parcel extended northward to include the *Creupelbos*, which was a small inland thicket or marsh near the head of a stream flowing into the Hudson. Still more lands extending northward up the Hudson River and westward up the Mohawk River was granted to Schuyler and Van Schaick in 1668. In 1681, Schuyler relinquished his half-interest in the lands to Annatje, the widow of Goose Gerritsen van Schaick, and in 1687 Annatje van Schaick sold to Roelof Gerritsen Vanderwerken the southern parcel that included the *Creupelbos*.²

The Grattan farm lies within the original northern parcel of the Half Moon patent of 1668 on a terrace a quarter of a mile west of the original *Creupelbos*, part of which today is still a brushy wetland area and part of which is occupied by a large basin of the modern Barge Canal. The entire Van Schaick Patent was combined and confirmed in 1672, and a map of the patent showing the individual lots was drawn in September 1767 by Nanning Vischer and Philip van Rensselaer.³ This map shows that the Grattan farm is on Lot 43 of the original Van Schaick Patent. Noted on the lot is "Fry Lot" and "BTE." "BTE" is also noted on the adjoining smaller lot, Lot 42, immediately to the south (Figure 1).

The initials B.T.E. undoubtedly represented Barent Ten Eyck. Barent Ten Eyck, born in 1714, was a son of Coenradt Ten Eyck and Geertje van Schaick. Geertje van Schaick was a grand daughter of Goose Gerritsen van Schaick, and it was evidently through his mother that Barent inherited this interest in the Van Schaick Patent. Barent Ten Eyck married Elsie Gansevoort in 1752, but she died in 1753. Her nephew Peter became Brigadier General

(continued on page 2)



Fig. 1. Detail from the 1767 Van Schaick Patent map by Nanning Vischer and Philip van Rensselaer, copied and retraced in 1955 for Col. Sydney E. Hammersley's *The History of Waterford, New York*, published privately by Sydney E. Hammersley, Waterford, N.Y., 1957. North is to the right.

Peter Gansevoort, the defender of Fort Stanwix in 1777.⁴ Barent's father was a well-documented Albany silversmith whose products included items made for the Indian trade. Barent's brother Jacob was also a silversmith, and his brother Tobias was a gunsmith. Barent Ten Eyck was especially active in the Indian trade, and by 1756 if not earlier, as a silversmith himself, he was also producing silver trade goods. Silver trade goods with his B.T.E. mark, such as silver crosses, hair ornaments, and gorgets, have been found at sites as distant as North Carolina and Michigan (Figure 2). Barent Ten Eyck died in 1795.⁵

The notation "Fry Lot" on the 1767 map refers to Michael Fry. He was an inhabitant of "the Half Moon" as early as February 1762, when he married Engeltje Vanderkarr. Engeltje was a daughter of Dirck Vanderkarr and was born in 1726 probably in Kinderhook. Her baptism was witnessed by Anthony van Schaick and by Feytje Vanderkarr, her grandmother. This and other records suggest an early family connection with the Van Schaicks,

which could explain how Engeltje's future husband acquired the farm in the Van Schaick Patent in the Half Moon. Her grandmother Feytje, moreover, was originally Feytje van Schaick (or van Schaack, apparently a different family).⁶

Thus, either through marriage or by purchase or lease from Barent Ten Eyck, Michael Fry had probably settled on the Grattan farm between 1760 and 1762, because prior to 1760 the area was often under threat of raids by the French and Indians, and rural areas were too dangerous to occupy. By the time of his marriage in 1762, he had most likely built a house and the barn that is still standing on the original Fry farm. Michael Fry's origins and background unfortunately remain a mystery. It seems unlikely that he was of the Mohawk Valley Palatine German Frey family. He may have come from New England, or he may have been a British soldier of the French and Indian War.

In July 1764, Michael and Engeltje celebrated the birth of a son who they named Dirck.⁷ In 1766, the tax list for Half Moon included Michael Fry with the lowest possible assessment, suggesting that his farm was much less valuable than the farms of most of his neighbors.⁸ By 1767, when the map of the Van Schaick Patent was drawn, family members and relatives of Engeltje Vanderkarr Fry occupied or owned many of the lots of the patent to the east, south, and west of the "Fry Lot," Lot 43. Roelof Gerritsen Vanderwerken's daughter Catharine had married Jan Devoe in 1706. Their son Jan married a younger Feytje Vanderkarr in 1735, and the 1767 map shows that Jan Devoe had Lot 34, which included the *Creupelbos* east of the Michael Fry farm.⁹ Jan and Catharine Devoe also had a daughter Geertruy, who married Peter Dox in 1736.¹⁰ The 1767 map shows Dox with Lots 83 and 90 west of the Fry lot. To the west and south of the Fry lot, other lots were owned by other Vanderkarrs and Devoes (Figure 1).

Early in 1777 Michael Fry and Feytje Devoe witnessed the baptism of a daughter of Isaac Dox and Lena Devoe, but Michael Fry was soon involved in defense against the British invasions of 1777. In October 1777 he was mustered in Colonel William Malcom's Regiment of the New York Continental Line. Otherwise, however, Michael Fry may not have ventured far from home in subsequent military campaigns of the Revolution. In Schaghticoke he and Engeltie witnessed the baptism of a daughter of Peter Tilton and Margaret Wool, born in April 1780.¹¹

The 1790 census lists the Michael Fry household in Half Moon with only one female and two grown males; it was one of the smaller households in the Town. In 1792 Dirck Fry and his wife had a daughter Engeltje who was baptized in Schaghticoke and named after his mother, Engeltje (Vanderkarr) Fry.¹² Engeltie (Vanderkarr) Fry died evidently about this time, and Michael Fry remarried (Fig. 3). His new wife was Maritje, born about 1746, and they had a daughter named Maritje. Michael Fry died probably in 1809, leaving three children: Dirck, Michael, Jr., and Dirck's half sister, Maritje. In his will he left his farm with "all the buildings thereon" to his two sons.¹³ A map dated January 1, 1820, shows "D.F." for Dirck Fry as owner of Lot 43, but the census of 1820 lists only the household of a younger Michael Fry in the Town of Half Moon.¹⁴ This Michael Fry, if not Michael, Jr., may have been a son of Dirck Fry; Dirck Fry sold a square parcel of 24 acres in the southwest corner of neighboring Lot 44 to Michael D. Fry in April 1820, but in 1823 title to that parcel reverted back to Dirck Fry.¹⁵ In 1825 Dirck Fry sold Lots 43 and 44 to Joshua Bloore of Waterford for \$450. Reserved, however, was a small burial ground "encircled by posts" on Lot 43, the original "Fry Lot."¹⁶



Fig. 2. Silver cross made by Barent Ten Eyck and bearing his mark. This cross measures 1 inch by 1.6 inches in size (Private Collection).

In the spring of 1826, Joshua Bloore sold the Fry farm on Lots 43 and 44 to Barna Vanderkarr of Waterford for \$2,400. The old burial ground was again reserved, and it was now described as located "nearly east of the dwelling house."¹⁷ An 1856 map shows that it was located east of the house and along the west side of present Fonda Road.¹⁸ Barna Vanderkarr died shortly before 1855, when Mary Vanderkarr sold the 113-acre farm "lately occupied by Barna Vanderkarr" to Abraham C. Waldron for \$8,125. An east-west road ran through the farm to the Mohawk River, and Mary Vanderkarr was required to keep in repair the fences along that road where it crossed the farm from the property line easterly "one half the distance to the Barn now standing on said premises."¹⁹ Abraham C. Waldron was baptized in 1805 in Schaghticoke, but his grandfather lived in Waterford. Abraham was the Waterford tax collector in 1830.²⁰ His first wife died in 1837, after which he married Eleanor Vanderwerken. He was a butcher.²¹ Abraham C. Waldron and his two wives are buried in the Waterford Rural Cemetery.

Abraham C. Waldron and his wife sold the entire farm in 1859 for \$7,700 to Garry Hardick, a 60-year-old farmer in Waterford. The old burial ground continued to be reserved, and Hardick was required to maintain the fences along the road.²² The 1860 census valued his real estate at \$7,000.²³ Hardick died in 1861, just two years after he purchased the farm, and he

(continued on page 4)

is buried in the Waterford Rural Cemetery. His wife Susan, and Moses Bedell an executor, settled his estate by selling the farm to Hugh White of Waterford for \$8,000. Bedell also held an original Barna Vanderkarr mortgage of 1853 for the property of which \$1,600 remained unpaid.²⁴

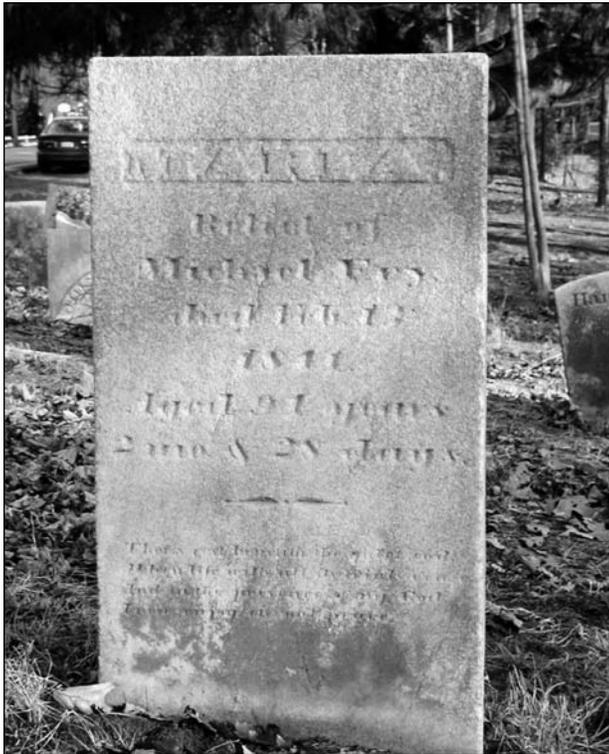


Fig. 3. Gravestone of Maria, or Maritje, the second wife of Michael Fry. She was born about 1746 and died in 1841. The Fry family in the 1820s moved to the Town of Clifton Park, where this gravestone is in the old Dutch Reformed Church cemetery on Clifton Park Center Road east of Moe Road (Photo by Paul R. Huey, January 2007).

It is not entirely clear how the farm next passed from Hugh White to James Anderson of Waterford, who owned it by 1866. Anderson, however, in 1864 purchased 38 acres of other land nearby and east of Fonda Road for \$4,800 from Moses Bedell, and Anderson became the next occupant of the farm.²⁵ James Anderson was born in Ireland in 1812, and he and his wife Arabella (Trimble) Anderson left Belfast, Ireland, for Waterford, New York, about 1847. He was a gardener by occupation.²⁶ As a farmer, James Anderson in 1870 owned real estate valued at \$12,000 and personal estate valued at \$2,500. This was comparable to the property values of his neighbors' farms. He and Arabella had a family of one grown son and three younger daughters.²⁷ After having had many owners since Dirck Fry sold it in 1825, the farm still included the old burial ground. In 1878 the burial ground was described as having burials of "the families of Vandekar and Frye on the present Anderson place."²⁸ The 1880 census lists the household of James and Arabella Anderson with their son Richard, age 32, daughter Mary, age 28, and a 20-

year-old male farm hand.²⁹ James Anderson died in 1882, and Arabella died in 1895. Both are buried in the Waterford Rural Cemetery.

The old barn on the farm still stands and has been changed relatively little except for repairs. The house, however, has been remodeled considerably, but it may stand on or near the site of the original Fry house which, along with the barn, may have been built about 1762 when Michael Fry married Engeltie Vanderkarr. Although Michael Fry might have been of English origin, and his neighbor and relative Peter Dox also was perhaps English, the barn evidently reflects the cultural traditions of his other neighbors and relatives of the Vanderkarr, Vanderwerken, Devoe, and Van Schaick families. A grandson son of Michael Fry, Jr., recalled "that the Frys were free men and Low Dutch was spoken in their home."³⁰

Acknowledgements

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The Fry-Grattan Barn: An Architectural Description

Waterford, Saratoga County, New York

(N. 42-48.458, W. 73-41.965)

Ned Pratt



Fig. 1. View looking southeast of the Grattan-Fray barn (Ned Pratt, October 2006).

The Fry-Grattan Barn is a 4-bay New World Dutch Barn, nearly square but actually wider than it is long, measuring 42'-8" wide by 36'-10½" long (Figure 1). It is a classic form Dutch Barn, that is, it has a central nave and two side aisles. The center aisle, measuring from the outside faces of the posts, varies between 23'-0¼" and 23'-2" wide, and the aisles are 9'-6¾" and 9'-9¼" wide (Figure 2). The barn is 38'-8" high to the peak of the gable, measured inside at the south end. There is no ridge beam, and the rafters meet in a pegged open-tenon joint. Numerous rafters have been replaced but one pair we thought original measured 5"x 5" near where it is supported by the purlin.

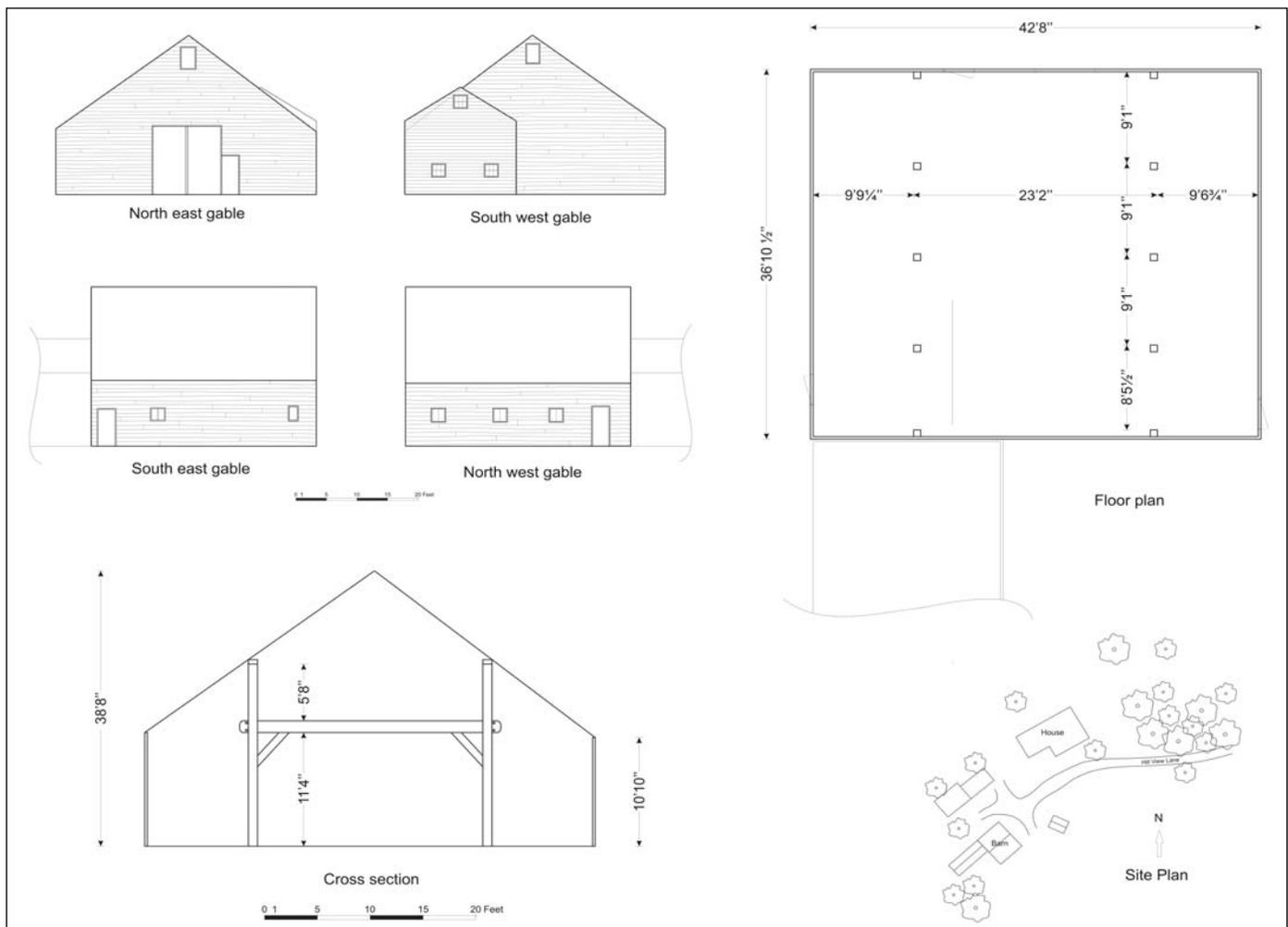


Fig. 2. Measured drawings of the Fry-Grattan barn (Marieke Leeveerink, February 2007).



Fig. 3. Interior looking northwest (Ned Pratt, October 2006).

barn faces north towards the main road. It has a steeply pitched roof. The original main wagon door was replaced in the 19th century by sliding barn doors which run along a track at the top. A later English barn, perhaps dating to the 1860s, has been added to the back.

The back (south) wall is partially intact; the right rear opens into the 1860s barn. There does not seem to be any evidence for a main double door in the rear end of the barn. This is unusual for barns built in this area, but is similar to a configuration often seen in the Schoharie Valley.

The anchor beams are all about 1'-2" high and 9" thick and span a distance of just over 23 feet. From the floor to the base of the first anchor beam is 11'-4", and from the top of the anchor beam to the bottom of the purlin is 5'-8" (Figure 3). It was not possible to measure the dimensions of all of the anchor beams, because of items stored in the barn. The anchor beams have slightly rounded tongues, protruding out 10" past the post faces (Figure 4). The posts measure 8³/₄" x 9¹/₂", and their braces are nearly as big, measuring 8¹/₄" x 9¹/₂". There is a diminished haunch where the anchor beam is set into the post.

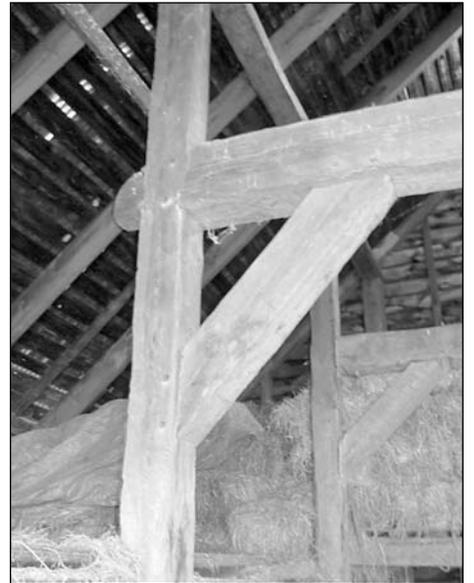


Fig. 4. Detail of typical anchor beam end (Ned Pratt, October 2006).

Construction appears to have been by the scribe rule method, and there are marriage marks visible on the posts and anchor beams. The barn is braced longitudinally by a remaining original sway brace, measuring 5³/₈" x 6" in section and tying into the adjacent column well below the anchor beam. The bottom of the brace is 7'-5" off the floor; the base of the anchor beam being almost four feet higher.

The barn has all the hallmarks of an early, pre-Revolutionary War era, barn. Its side walls are relatively low, about 10'-10" high, and the roof pitch is steep. All of the major timbers are hand hewn. The length of the posts above the anchor beam is relatively short, 5'-8", and the long sway brace extends below the anchor beam. Based on these factors and a general feel of the way the barn goes together, I would place the construction from perhaps 1750-1790.

Much of the barn's structure is intact, but the roof and siding has been replaced.

Dr. William Grattan, the barn's current owner, stores hay and various pieces of equipment in the barn. When he acquired it in 1971, the barn was in some disrepair; Dr. Grattan had the roof replaced and several of the posts reinforced. For the most part Dr. Grattan reinforced, rather than replaced, rotten or damaged structural elements. Much of the roof seems to be newer, with only a few original rafter pairs surviving.

The main wagon doors are in the center of the gable end, as we would expect, and the

From the Editor

Walter R. Wheeler

With this issue of the *Newsletter* I take over the editorial reigns from Bob Andersen, who served as editor since 2000. Many thanks to Bob for all his work, and for his continued assistance.

Starting with the next issue (Vol. 20: 1, Spring 2007), we will be incorporating changes to the format of the newsletter. We ultimately hope to include recurring features and articles. The central feature of the next two newsletters will be a two-part article by Greg Huber on the New World Dutch Barns of Bergen County, New Jersey.

As always, articles and ideas are greatly appreciated. Please send them to me at wwheeler&hartgen.com or to PO Box 1413, Troy, New York 12181-1413. Standards for submissions will soon be published on our website, and will also be available via mail.

DUTCH BARN PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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