

Society for the Preservation of
HUDSON VALLEY
VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE



March 2006

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, No.3

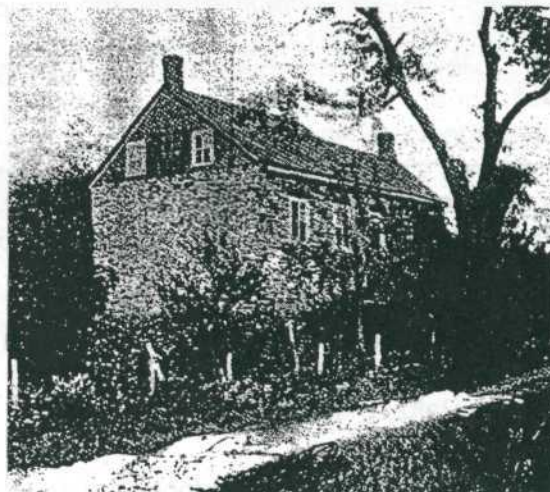
HVVA MEETING.....Maggie MacDowell, Secretary

Saturday, February 18, 2006, The HVVA meeting held at the Germantown Parsonage, Columbia County, was called to order at 10:20 AM by President Jim Decker. He called on members to help with Peter Sinclair's load, publishing the newsletter and distributing books. Jim Decker has been handling the tax forms. Rob Sweeney offered to help with the distribution and said that Karen Markisenis would help with the newsletter.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, March 18 at 10AM at the Ulster County Historical Society where John Stevens will be giving a talk and sign books. We had intended to document the Lem Boice House in the afternoon but have since learned that Hartgen Associates, and others, will be doing a presentation about the archaeology and restoration work that is presently underway at the Van Allen House Museum. (see Coming Events)

Bob Hedges and Peter will be attending the TTRAG meeting in Lenox, Massachusetts, May 12-14. Peter said that the Barn Repair Workshop being planned for May 22-26 at the Palatine Farmstead Museum will cost \$3,000 and \$1,500 is being requested from HVVA. Jim thought it should not come from the Book Fund. There was no official treasury report.

(continued next page)



The 1746-1767 Parsonage "Pfarrhaus"
Germantown, Columbia County, NY
(NY/Col/Ger/04) photograph about 1900

This stone side-hall bank-house was built in 1746 for the parsonage of the Germantown Reformed Church. (see, HVVA Newsletter March, 2004)

FROM THE JOURNAL

Saturday, February 18, After their monthly meeting in Germantown, a group of HVVA members were given a tour of the 1766 Conyn/Van Rensselaer House, nearby in Claverack. This two-story brick house with gambrel roof has been going through a long process of interpretation by its owner Nancy Ginsberg. A number of students of New World Dutch architecture have examined and documented the building. Nancy has done a dramatic restoration in replacing six massive beams that had been destroyed when they were reduced in size to accommodate a plaster ceiling. It has finally been concluded by Bill McMillan that the original two-room center hall house had a Dutch jambless fireplace at one end and an English jambed fireplace at the other. This was hard to determine as the framing and the hearth support for both seemed Dutch.

(continued, next page)



1766 Newel-Post, Hand-Rail and Stairs
Conyn/Van Rensselaer House
Claverack, Dutchess County, NY
(NY/Col/Cla/06)

(HVVA Meeting, continued)

There was talk about our needs for better publicity for HVVA and the book, several suggestions and a number of organizations and publications were suggested. Jonathan Nedbor, a blacksmith from High Falls, Eddyville, told of his coming trip to The Netherlands, in an area near Amsterdam and east of Appledorn, near the German boarder, where he will be teaching blacksmithing for several days. He is not teaching restoration but more contemporary work. He says the Dutch look down on the reproduction work, but he will speak and demonstrate the way smithing was probably done and is currently accomplished. Our early Hudson Valley settlements were into survival and not specialization, he says. Johnathan is always interested in early records and what they can tell. He will also be going on to Germany and Italy.

The meeting was adjourned, and the group drove to the Conyn/Van Rensselare House in Claverack.

The following 10 members attended: Jim Decker, Bob Eurick, Conrad Fingado, Maggie MacDowell, Jonathan Nedbor, Alvin Sheffer, Peter Sinclair, Paul Spencer, Rob Sweeney, Denis Tierney and guest Jim Aneshasley.

Tuesday, January 31 I went to see two barns today, the first at 107 Main Street, New Paltz, Ulster County, NY, owned by Ken Verney (845) 255-9718. I registered it:

4-bay two-and-a-half story, side entrance barn with partial basement
 ___/Bloomer/Verney (NY/Uls/NP/15)
 Village of New Paltz, Ulster County, NY

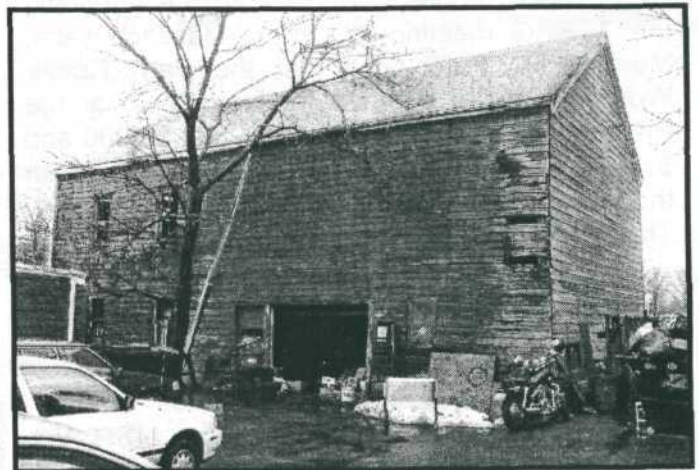
Repair of this tall 30 by 40-foot barn was estimated at \$150,000. The owner wants to sell the frame. The stone foundation is failing and the sill plates have rotted away. There is water damage to the bottoms of some posts but the barn above this is in good condition and would be worth dismantling and putting back up as a house or workshop. It is a two-and-a-half-story frame with 30-foot beams that span its width and support queen posts and purlins. All the timbers are hewn.

Next I went to see a farm in Hyde Park on the Fallkill (Valkill). It is owned by Jim Smith and is on North Quaker Lane. The complex of buildings maintains a little-altered historic farm setting. It received a NY State Barn Repair Grant last year. Bob Hedges, his son Nathaniel and John Copell, have begun the repairs. I registered it:

4-bay swing-beam, side-entrance, scribe-rule barn with double beams, added side-aisle and extension, also outbuildings and contemporary frame house, circa 1790
 Briggs/Hatfield/Smith (NY/Dut/HP/07)
 North Quaker Lane, Hyde Park, Dutchess County, NY
 N 41'48.566 - W 073'52.097 - elevation 308'

from the floor and were scarfing (joining) it to the 24-foot long upper-beam of bent 3.. They used lap dovetailed-tenons to join the ends. The center of the original beam had been cut out when a hay track was installed. Cutting tie-beams out of bents for hay tracks was a common practice in the late 19th century and often lead to the spread and distortion of the frame.

An inscription on a stone in the back of the foundation wall reads "SSE March 10, 1851", probably the construction date. An official yellow notice, nailed to the siding nearby reads, "Unsafe Building - Vacate Immediately - May, 2005".



Verney Barn with Addition
Village of New Paltz, Ulster County, NY
 for information call:
 Ken Verney (845) 255-9718; 107 Main Street

When I arrived the carpenters had erected scaffolding in the center bay and had raised a 14-foot long, 8x10-inch white-oak timber 12 feet



**The Smith Farm, North Quaker Lane
Hyde Park, Dutchess County, NY**

The original 25x40-foot 1790 4-bay English threshing barn (above) was later added to with a 10-foot back side-aisle and a 24-foot extension on the north end. The siding was changed from vertical boards to horizontal weather-boards.



The frame house and barn were built circa 1790. The barn has straight chisel marriage-marks including angled lines. The posts have raising-holes. For some reason the holes were placed lower on the posts of the heavy bent 3. with the 16x14-inch swing-beam. The hewn rafters have bird mouths at the plate.

Bob refers to this as a swing-beam barn yet none of us know exactly what that is or exactly how it was used or where they were built or who gave that beam its well used name. One of the difficult things to understand in this barn is Bent 4. with very light posts and placed 4-feet from Bent 3.. Why didn't they put the bent nearer the center as you would expect?

Wednesday, February 15 I returned to the Smith barn. A lot of progress has been made in the repairs to beams and braces. I made more complete measurements. Hay gets in the way of some observations. The most interesting find was that the beams in bent 5. do not conform to the others implying that the 12-foot level did not extend into this bay.

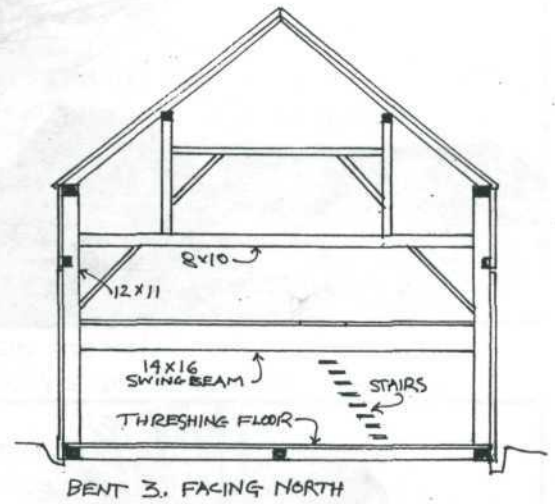
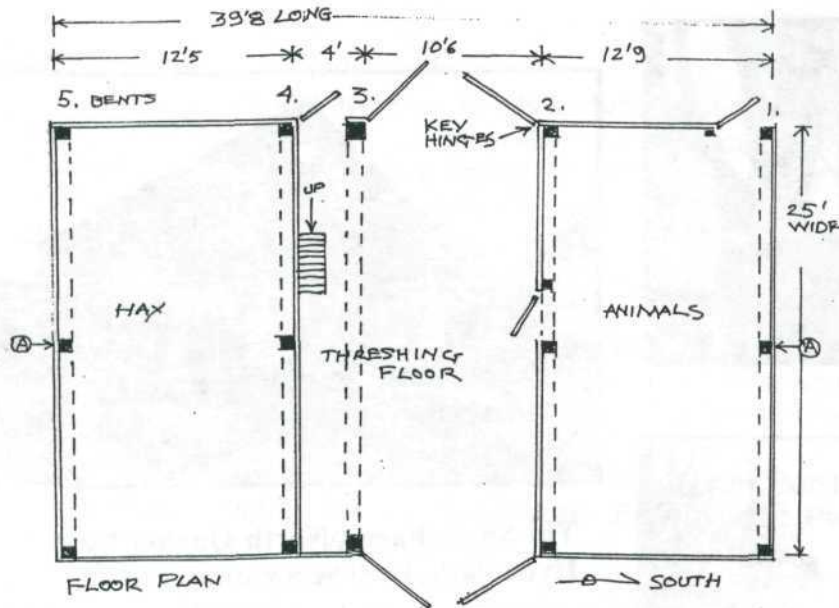
Wednesday, March 1 I returned again, met the owner, Jim Smith, and learned something about the area's past. His mother had been a local historian. The Briggs family who pioneered the farm were Quakers, their wood frame meeting house has been preserved, just up the lane. They were an expansion of the Clinton congregation that had come out of Connecticut in the 1770's. Their two-story stone meeting-house has also been preserved at Clinton Corners.

At the Smith Barn, repairs to the frame were almost complete. The carpenters were about to raise the west side-wall of the building and replace the white-oak sill-plate. Bob and I took a few more measurements and went over our ideas of the original barn before its many changes.

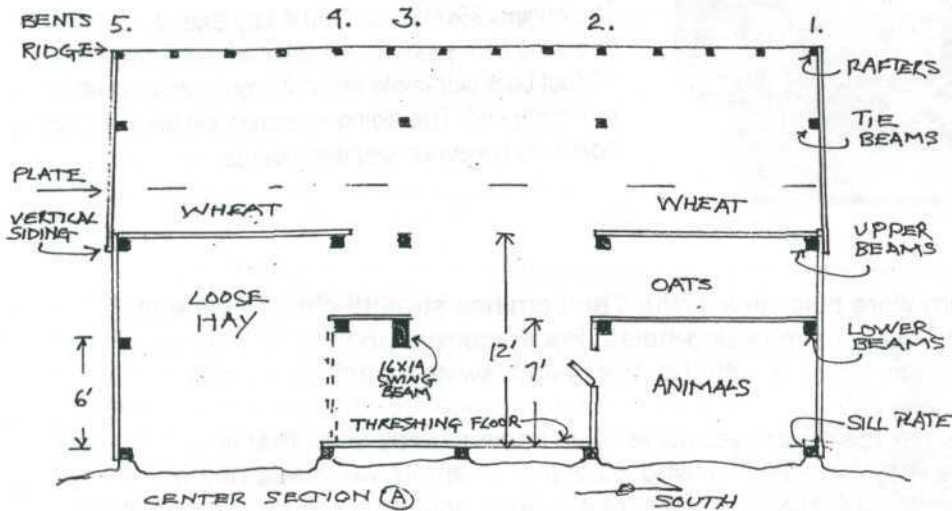
It seems to have begun as a 25'x40' four-bay drive-through threshing barn with vertical siding and pairs of key-hinged wagon doors on the side walls, perhaps held shut to horizontal removable poles. All these seem like New England features. The use of raising-holes, through-tenons and dropped-ties suggests Dutch input. The function of bent 4. was to support a ground floor wall and add 4-feet to the width of the threshing floor. The barn is filled with evidence of changes and additions some hard to interpret. Bob and John have both noted a number of carpenters mistakes and changes of mind. The animal stalls in the south bay are more recent but show evidence of early practices, like an over head hay rack.

The house and outbuildings should be documented. The farm has a rare survival of 18th century farm buildings in relatively unaltered condition.

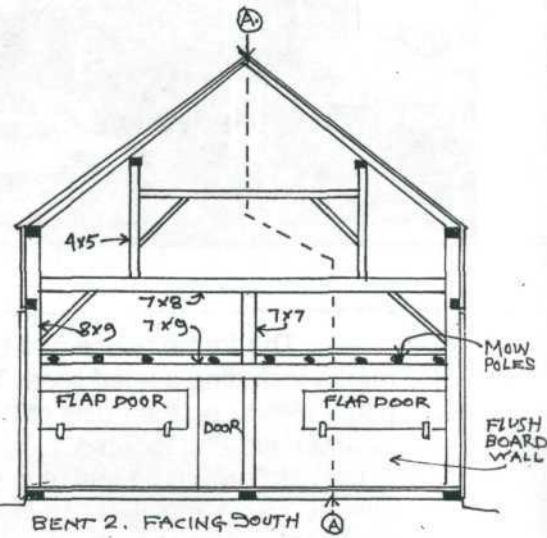
4.



BENT 3, FACING NORTH



CENTER SECTION (A)



BENT 2, FACING SOUTH

**Floor-Plan, Center Section (A), Bents 2 & 3
Briggs/Hatfield/Smith, 4-bay English threshing barn with swing-beam
circa 1790, North Quaker Lane, Hyde Park, Dutchess County, NY**

This is a conjectured reconstruction of the original form of the Briggs barn that combines hay and animal shelter with the storage and processing of grains. Wheat was still a main cash crop and was kept in sheaves (tied bundles) from the harvest, to be flailed and winnowed during the winter months to separate the grain from the straw and chaff and later sold, or taken to the mill to be ground into flour. Filling the barn with crops after the harvest was a team effort, and a four-foot platform between bents 3. and 4. may have been used in this process of getting the crop off the wagon and into the mows. Hay from the large mow on the north end could be unloaded off the top of the pile or cut with a hay-knife out of the compressed hay at the bottom of the pile.

Friday, February 3 A small group met at the 1723 Peter Winne House in Bethlehem, Albany County, presently being restored, to see the remains of another early Dutch frame house, The Johannes Radleff House, that Brian Parker has recently acquired in downtown Albany. He and his crew have emptied the building of 9 dumpsters of junk and have uncovered a great deal of its original surviving fabric. In its later years it had served as a Chinese restaurant and finally as a plumbing supply warehouse.

The house is in an area of a gigantic convention center that is being planned for the city and much of the neighborhood has been leveled. It has been Brian's persistence and hard work that have saved it. The House had been thought to date mid-to-late 18th century and there was pressure to demolish it, but evidence of the use of leaded glass seems to date it before 1730, perhaps one of the earliest surviving house in Albany. Originally it was a two room house with a gable entrance, an urban plan, something like the Pieter Winne House, a similar timber frame house with a combination of brick and weatherboard siding, except that the Albany house had a jambless fireplace on a side-wall of the first room. Side-wall fireplaces were common in Holland but almost unknown in the Hudson Valley until this discovery. Jim Decker and John Stevens measured and documented the building.

John Stevens has done measured drawings of the Radleff House and they will appear with his written description in the April HVVA Newsletter.

Saturday February 4 I went with John Stevens to visit the one-room gable-entrance Adam Vrooman House in the Stockade district of Schenectady. This small frame house is dated 1720 and presently has a side-wall jamed fireplace but evidence in the cellar shows that it originally had a Dutch end-wall hearth. Although the ceiling beams are presently hidden behind a plastered ceiling, they would have been exposed and had traditional Dutch corbels, (short curved braces). In the afternoon John gave a talk and book signing at the Schenectady Historical Society. 72 people attended.

Sunday, February 5 A small group met at the Squire Nicoll House in New Windsor, Orange County, on the north bank of the Murderer's Creek. This house was recently purchased by Richard Buckley and Gonzalo Sanchez from Manhattan. The house lies off Route 9W on a 6-acre piece of open land. The front stoop of this two-story frame house overlooks Storm King Mountain, and a large tidal estuary of the Hudson River, that is now a migratory bird sanctuary, owned by Scenic Hudson.

During The Revolution, General Washington's Headquarters was located two-miles north of here at Newburgh and the front yard of the Nicoll House served as a drop off point for supplies. The farm was first settled in 1685 by, "Colonel Patrick MacGregorie and a group of fellow Scotsmen who had been given permission by Governor Dongen to purchase land from the Indians. Cabins were soon built and a trading post established across the creek on Sloop Hill, but many troubles beset the small band. After serving as muster-general of the militia. MacGregorie lost his life during the Leisler Rebellion of 1691." (*)

The original Nicoll House is thought to have been built in the 1730's and there is evidence of this in the design of a surviving molded hand-rail in the cellar. Most of the house reflects its final major change in the late 18th century. The main house began as two-story one-room deep house that was later widened one-room. The evidence of this is in the loft, and in the changes that were necessary to the rafters. The two-large chimneys were constructed in this second phase. The original frame is a traditional English scribe-rule box-frame with flared posts. These posts project into the corners of many of the rooms, a characteristic of English flared post construction. The rafters are joined with bird's mouths to the wall-plate.

Little of the two frames are exposed but in the loft the floor on the addition side is about 8-inches lower than the older front half, indicating local carpenters had abandoned the English box-frame for a Dutch frame with a short half-story knee-wall.

The Nicoll house has been well maintained. The staircase and many of the window frames and interior trim are late 18th century. The interior doors are period with a variety of panel and hardware designs indicating some may come from other buildings or have been moved. The house has been carefully restored but typically none of the modern alterations were recorded so that evaluation is sometimes difficult. As the new owners live with their house, and probe its secrets, certainly a better understanding will come.



**View from The Squire Nicoll House
Storm King Mountain and the Tidal
Estuary fed by Murders Creek**



Back of The Squire Nicoll House

(*) for a good historic account of the Nicoll House see: 18th Century Homes in New Windsor and its Vicinity, by Marion M. Mailler and Janet Dempsey, The National Temple Hill Assoc., 1968.

From the Van Hoesen House

Claverack, Columbia County, NY=====

Dear Peter, The following should provide a brief synopsis for your members regarding this Dutch brick house and the state of our efforts to organize and preserve it:

The Jan Van Hoesen house, located on Rt. 66 in the Town of Claverack near Hudson, NY, is unquestionably the finest surviving example of un-restored second-quarter of the eighteenth century Dutch-American architecture remaining in the Hudson Valley. Abandoned and empty since the 1950's, the house boasts an embarrassment of riches in 18th century detail both inside and out. Even the carpet of litter and household debris now covering the floors in the rooms dates back to the mid-twentieth century.

Since early summer 2005, in conjunction with the present owner, a group of concerned individuals have been working through the process of forming a NFP (not-for-profit) to acquire, stabilize, study, and restore this incredible structure. Our efforts were rewarded this past December when the Van Hoesen House Historical Foundation was recognized and accorded NFP status by the NYS Department of State.

Having moved past the busy holiday season, the founding board of directors will be meeting at the end of February to select corporation officers and get on to the next stage in our agenda: raising of the funds necessary to acquire the property. With a treasurer installed, we will be issuing a general appeal for donations to the acquisition fund while following up on the various funding leads we have already developed over the past 8 months. Also, we will finally be in a position to offer membership in the Foundation to all interested parties.

Once acquired, the board envisions an open forum to be an important part of the restoration process, in which all serious students of Dutch architecture will be welcome to study the house, and to submit their observations and interpretations to the Building Committee. The potential for the success of this critical project, at a very high level of execution, is enormous.



For more information at this time, please contact:

Ed Klingler at klingler57@yahoo.com, or call 518-929-0971 any evening between 7 and 10 PM.

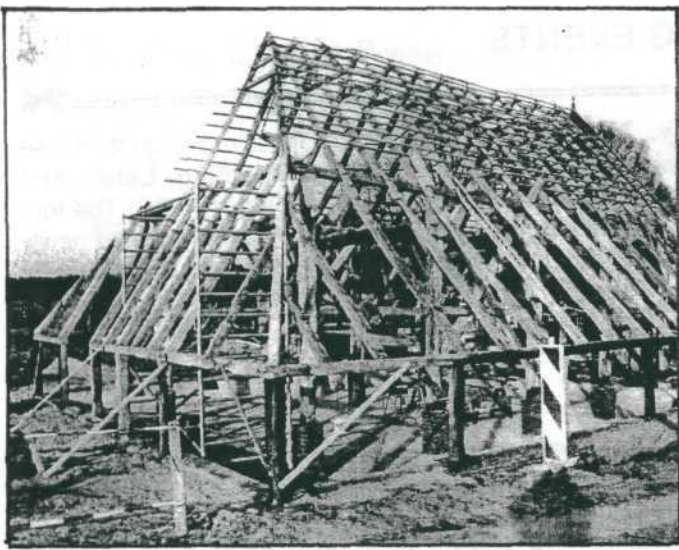
Regards, Ed

From Holland.....

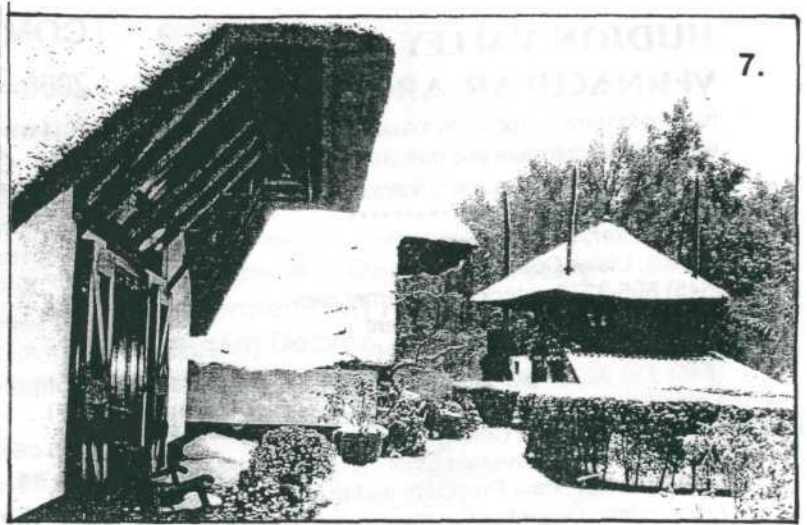
Wim Lanphen sent us some photographs from the Netherlands, of an old barn being restored in Markelo, a village in the Achterhek region, near the German border, a poor agricultural area where he was told, "that the walls in early times in Markelo were made of wood branches set in the ground with no foundation."

Wim thinks the Markelo barn is not a *los-hues* where animals shared the space with people, but when he goes back, later this month, he will find out more about it and let us know. The photographs appear to show the back-end of an H-bent barn with side-aisles and a back-aisle. The purlin-plates and side-walls extend out from the end bent to support an angled gable end roof. Sometimes this is referred to as a docked (cut off) gable. I asked Wim if this Marcelo barn roof might be a kind of roof called a "wolfs roof" a term found in a translation of an early Ulster County barn contract. He E-mailed me back, "yes, we call it *wolfsdak*, and I am sending you another beautiful picture with a house, a barn, a hayshed (*steltenberg*, shed-barrack) and two *wolfsdaken*." The Dutch word *dak* is defined as, "roof; to give shelter to". What is the meaning of *wolf*?

Wim has a Markelo report on his hay-barrack site <www.hooiberg.info>.



Old Thatched Barn Being Restored
Markelo, The Netherlands



House and Barn with *Wolfsdaken*
and Five-Pole *Steltenberg*
Markelo, The Netherlands

FROM..... **GEORGE VANSICKLE**.....MARBLETOWN

George found the following 1685 Ulster County barn contract in the Ulster County Genealogical Society Library. It is reproduced here as typed in the Zimm manuscript. The contract is for a much larger building but seems to describe the form of the Markilo barn, with two side-aisles and one back aisle.

From its dimension 72-feet it implies eight, nine-foot bays long. If aisle are figured at the usual 10-feet, the overall dimensions of the barn were 50-feet wide by 82-feet long.

See also page 178 in John Stevens' Dutch Vernacular Architecture book for an interpretation of a los-hues from a 1642 New Jersey contract. See John's book also, page 216-217 for measured drawing and early photograph of the Van Hoesen House.

EARLIEST ENGLISH DEEDS OF ULSTER COUNTY, NEW YORK

Mr. niclolaese de meyer of the citty of new york merh. of the one side and peter winne and henry Ariensen of Kingsten. Articles of Agreement. peter winne & henry Ariens shall deliver all the wood that belongeth to a barne of twe and 70 foot long and 30 foot broad with 3 leantos All the sparrs for laths And shingles All the wood for the Aforementioned to witt two of the leantos shall be the length of the barn And third on the End. All As it ought to be According As it shall be Judged by A carpenter that hath Good Skill And that will speake between man And man without favour and Affection. the said wood must be cutt in a fitting place that it may conveniently be carried Away either with wagons or sleds And likewise to make the same barne as it ought to be only the decking Excepted for which mr niklaue de meyer must take care for and not they... Item nikolaes de meyer doth promise that he shall finde All Ironwork Expedient and when the work shall be fully completed shall pay 115 sch. winter wheat According to their demand And 5 schepels Above their demand As a free gift not a bond. Mr de meyer is to find them sufficient dyet while they Are in the same work. Signed 7 December 1685, N d meyer. peter winne. hendrick ariensen. Wits: Robt Bickerstaff, Arent teunisse.

Transcribed in condensed form
from Deed Books in the County Clerk's
Office, Kingston, N. Y. by

Louise Hasbrouck Zimm,
Woodstock,
New York.

HUDSON VALLEY VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

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Hudson Valley Vernacular Architecture Newsletter

is available with a
\$20 membership.
\$15 for students and the poor
Mail to: **HVVA**
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(845) 338-0257
<hvvernar@netstep.net>
<<http://www.hvva.org>>

COMING EVENTS

2006=====

Saturday, March 11, 10AM at the Douw Fonda House 1727, Cohoes, 154 Western Ave. **Annual Meeting, Lunch and Tour of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society (DBPS)** The tour will include the seldom seen Van Schaick Mansion and the newly discovered Grattan Dutch barn. *To reserve space at restaurant call: Keith Cramer (518) 438-8352; e-mail< www.dutchbarns.org >*

Sunday, March 12, 3PM at the Marbletown Community Center, Route 209 Stone Ridge, Ulster County **A talk by Peter Kenny, Curator, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, on Dutch Architecture in the Hudson Valley**

for information call: Ben Shor (845) 687-9004 <benshor@earthlink.net>

Saturday, March 18, 10AM and 1PM 10AM at the Bevier House, Ulster County Historical Society, Route 209 Marbletown **HVVA Meeting and John Stevens, talk and book signing.** This will be followed, after lunch, by a trip to **The Columbia County Historical Society**, 5 Albany Ave., Kinderhook, for a 1PM presentation by Harten Archaeology Associates and others on recent work at the Van Allen House that is undergoing extensive restoration.

for information on about Columbia Co., call: (518) 758-9265

Sunday, March 19, 2PM at the Colonie Town Hall, Route 9 in Newtonville, NY, across from Siena College **A talk by Walter Wheeler, Eighteenth Century Vernacular Architecture in the Town of Watervleit,**

for information call (518) 283-0534 <wally@hartgen.com>

March 24-26 at Philipsburg Manor, Sleepy Hollow, NY **Association for Living History, Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM) Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting** The conference will focus on how living history museums in the 21st-century can address sensitive or controversial subject matter to recapture the public imagination, increase attendance and provide quality education.

Conference registration fee, \$125.00.

Contact: Philipsburg Manor (914) 631-3992 ex. 12

Sunday, April 2, 12, 3PM at the Marbletown Community Center, Route 209 Stone Ridge, Ulster County. **Preservation of historic Structures, a panel discussion led by Harry Hanson and Anthony DiGuissepe**

for information call: Ben Shor (845) 687-9004 <benshor@earthlink.net>

Saturday, April 15, 1:30 PM at The Albany Institute of History and Art, Key Conference Center, **John Stevens, Lecture and Book Signing.**

(518) 463-4478 or <information@albanyinstitute.org>

April 26-29 at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, **Annual Meeting of Early American Industries Association (EAIA)** This event is jam-packed with historic trades, behind-the-scenes tours, new interpretive programs and a tour of the Jamestown Settlement. *for information:*

e-mail, judytb@aol.com, or phone Judith McMillan (518) 462-1264

May 12-14, 2006 at the Eastover Resort, Lenox, Mass. **Annual Meeting of the Traditional Timberframers Research and Advisory Group (TTRAG)**

Contact: Will Beemer, <will@tfguild.org> (413) 623-9926

May 22-26, 2006 at the Palatine Farmstead, Route 9, Rhinebeck, Dutchess County, NY. **A 5-Day Barn Restoration Workshop** will be held.

This will continue last year's work of restoring the frame of the 1770 Dutch barn and rebuilding the foundation. We will also be shaving shingles, making doors and hope to have a blacksmith making nails and hardware. Lunch will be provided and fun is guaranteed. The project will be developed over the next two months. If you have suggestions or are interested in participating or supporting the workshop please contact HVVA and we will keep you informed.

June 1-3 in New York City **Annual Conference on New York State History**

For information contact: <conference@nyhistory.net>