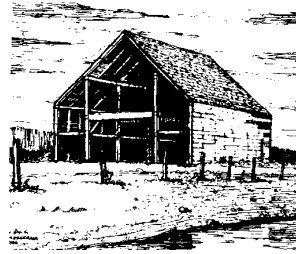


DUTCH BARN PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



FALL 2005

VOL. 18, ISSUE 2

An 1843 Contract Evidencing Continuation of New World Dutch Building Techniques

Walter Richard Wheeler

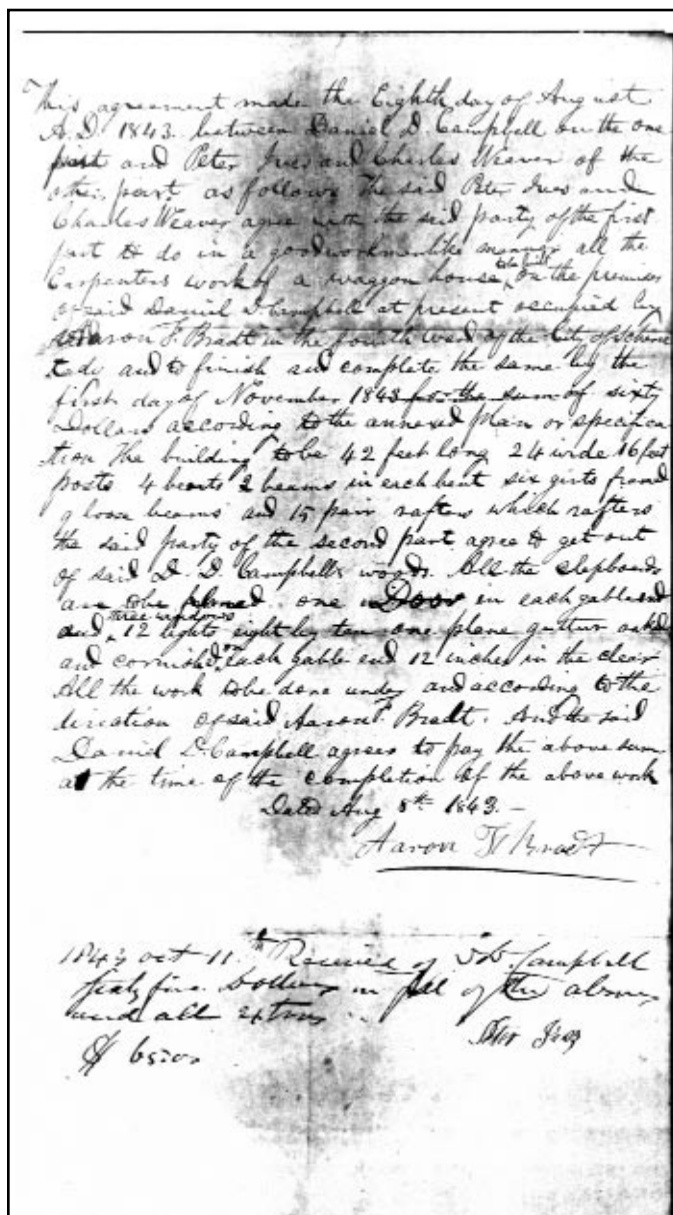


Fig. 1

Among sundry legal papers and building contracts preserved in the Campbell Papers at the New York State Library is a contract for the construction of a “wagon house”, to be built during the late summer of 1843 (Fig. 1). The contract is interesting on several counts. As a rare survivor documenting an agreement between owner/tenant and builders for an outbuilding it deserves notice. But it’s the references to the use of framing techniques adapted from those of New World Dutch barns that merits our attention here. In proportion the structure would have been similar to a New World Dutch barn, with the exception of its lack of side aisles. The “six girls” were presumably placed along the side walls, and served to stabilize the bents.

“This agreement made the Eighth day of August A. D. 1843, between Daniel D. Campbell on the one part and Peter Ives and Charles Weaver of the other part as follows. The said Peter Ives and Charles Weaver agree with the said party of the first part to do in a good workmanlike manner all the Carpenters work of a wagon house to be built on the premises of said Daniel D. Campbell at present occupied by Aaron F. Bradt in the fourth ward of the City of Schenectady and to finish and complete the same by the first day of November 1843 for the sum of sixty Dollars according to the annexed plan or specification. The building to be 42 feet long 24 wide 16 feet posts 4 bents 2 beams in each bent six girls framed 9 loose beams and 15 pair rafters which rafters the said party of the second part agree to get out of said D. D. Campbell’s woods. All the clapboards are to be planed. One Door in each gable end and three windows 12 lights eight by ten one plane gutters raked and corniced on each gable end 12 inches in the clear. All the work to be done under and according to the direction of said Aaron F. Bradt. And the said Daniel D. Campbell agrees to pay the above sum at the time of the completion of the above work.

Dated Aug 8th 1843 -
Aaron F. Bradt

1843 Oct 11. Received of D. D. Campbell
fifty five Dollars in full of the above
and all interest
\$ 65.00
Peter Ives

New World Dutch Building Techniques

(continued from page 1)



Fig. 2

Daniel D. Campbell agrees to pay the above sum at the time of the completion of the above work.

Dated Aug 8th 1843
Aaron F. Bradt

1843 Oct 11th Received of D. D. Campbell sixty five Dollars in full of the above and all extras.

Peter Ives
\$65.00"¹

The description in the contract indicates that the building was to have cornice gutters and a raking cornice at each end, suggestive of the building having had some architectural pretensions. The house it was associated with (Fig. 2) and its out-buildings were built with Greek Revival details, and so the barn likely was intended to be aesthetically compatible with them.

Although not entirely made clear in the contract, the phrase "to be built on the premises of said Daniel D. Campbell at present occupied by Aaron F. Bradt" suggests that Bradt was then occupying Campbell's house in Rotterdam. The house had been constructed in 1831-32 from designs by Albany architect Henry Rector in place of a mid-18th century farmhouse formerly occupied by the Vedder family.² One source claims the site as that occupied by the "hofstede" of Albertse Vedder, built in 1672.³ The house, and possibly its out-buildings, stood until c.1987 when the site was cleared for the construction of the Rotterdam Square Mall.

Aaron F. Bradt was born circa 1793, and is recorded as living in the Town of Rotterdam in the

1840 census of New York State. He had a household of 11 persons, three of which were engaged in agriculture in 1840.⁴ Bradt was a veteran of the War of 1812, and married Catherine Sitterley at the First Presbyterian Church in Troy on 9 October 1824.⁵ Bradt and Daniel David (Schermerhorn) Campbell (1803-1891) were related by both blood and marriage. Campbell had married Julia Sitterley, and was the son of Jacob S. Schermerhorn and Engeltie Bradt. Campbell was the heir of his great aunt Ariantje Bradt Campbell and Daniel Campbell—who died in 1802, and who had become wealthy through his friendship with William Johnson and his close ties to the Indian trade—and took the latter's name as a stipulation of his inheritance from his aunt.⁶

A preliminary examination of census records was undertaken to further identify the builders and where they lived. Campbell is known (by virtue of an extensive collection of family papers) to have most frequently used builders from Schenectady or its immediate surroundings, but on occasion he worked with carpenters and masons from Albany and other locales. Little is known today about the work patterns and territories of the people who actually constructed the agricultural buildings that we study; the results presented here reach no conclusions, but are offered in support of further work in this area.

Charles Weaver does not appear in the 1840 census, but is listed as a resident of Rotterdam in the 1850 census, aged 27 and working as a farmer.⁷ Charles may have been the son of Frederick Weaver of Guilderland, who is listed as having a son aged between 15 and 20 in 1840. The Weavers were neighbors of Peter Ives, who also lived in Guilderland.

Peter Ives was between 20 and 30 years of age in 1840, and lived in Guilderland with his wife and three children all less than five years old.⁸ From the above it appears that Weaver, aged 20 in 1843, assisted Ives as either a journeyman carpenter or laborer in the construction of the Bradt "wagon house." Nothing else is known of Ives' professional life; he does not appear in the 1850 census.

Rotterdam and Guilderland are adjacent towns. The author of the contract—whether Bradt or Ives—remains unclear, so we can't currently assign a source for the use of the framing techniques described in the contract. However, other examples of this type of construction are known, including



Fig. 3

an addition to the Best barn (see the other article in this issue), constructed at roughly the same time (Fig. 3). This structure is 18'-0" x 32'-6" in plan, and has a floor thrown over its lower tier of anchor beams. The picture presented here depicts the second floor interior, looking south. Although not clear in the photograph, the top of the plate is something over a foot above the top of the top anchor beam. The larger structural elements are hewn, while the smaller ones are sawn and bear parallel kerf marks.

Unfortunately my time in this building was very brief, and so I was unable to collect more complete measurements, and cannot offer a more thorough comparison between the two buildings. I hope to be able to present more information on this type of structure which incorporates elements of New World Dutch and English construction techniques in the future.

Drawings of New World Dutch Agricultural Buildings in the Robert R. Livingston Papers

Walter Richard Wheeler

During the process of collecting materials for a monograph on architect Philip Hooker, I stumbled upon a group of drawings in the Robert R. Livingston (1746-1813) papers at the New-York Historical Society.⁹ The drawings included a sheet with perspective sketches of hay ricks, or barracks, one of which dates to before 1810 based upon a note on the back (Fig. 4), and a second sheet, entitled "A Barn 52 by 46" which is a framing elevation of the gable end of a New World Dutch Barn (Fig. 5). The latter drawing is undated, but may be from the same period. It is likely that the brief note on the back that reads "Brother Walter's Papers" dates to a later period.

The barracks drawings are preserved with a group of documents including contracts and sketches for other agricultural buildings. This supports their interpretation as construction drawings, or at least, drawings generated to assist in the clarification of construction details. As such, they may constitute our only contemporary sketches for the construction of this building type in the New World.

The framing drawing is interesting in several respects. For one, it is a rare survivor of the type of drawing that would have frequently been executed by carpenters contracting for such buildings. It is notable for its simplicity; many of the dimensions have been left off; it is reduced to a line drawing.

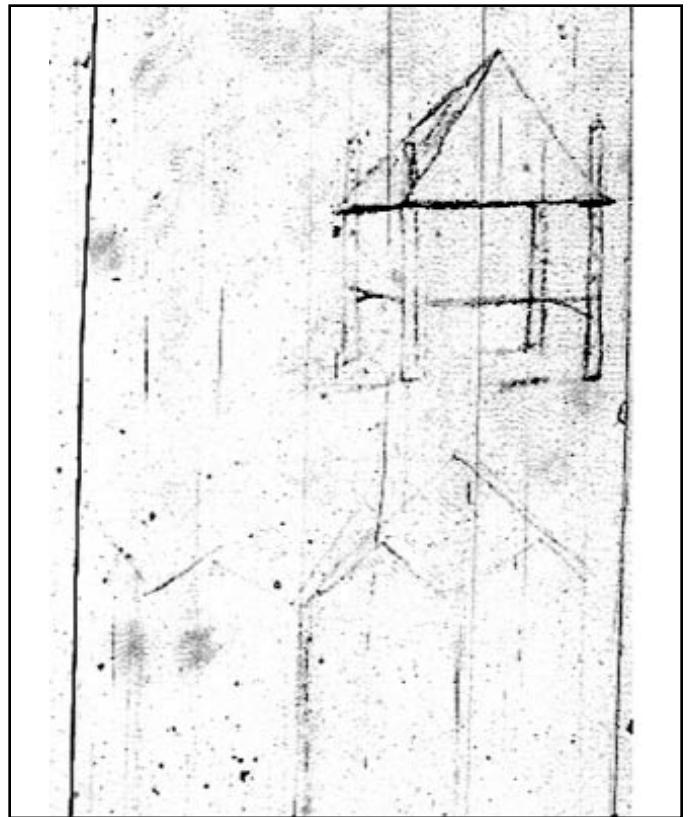


Fig. 4

The dimensions of the plan, length of rafters, dimensions of doors, width of the center aisle and

New World Dutch Agricultural Buildings

(continued from page 3)

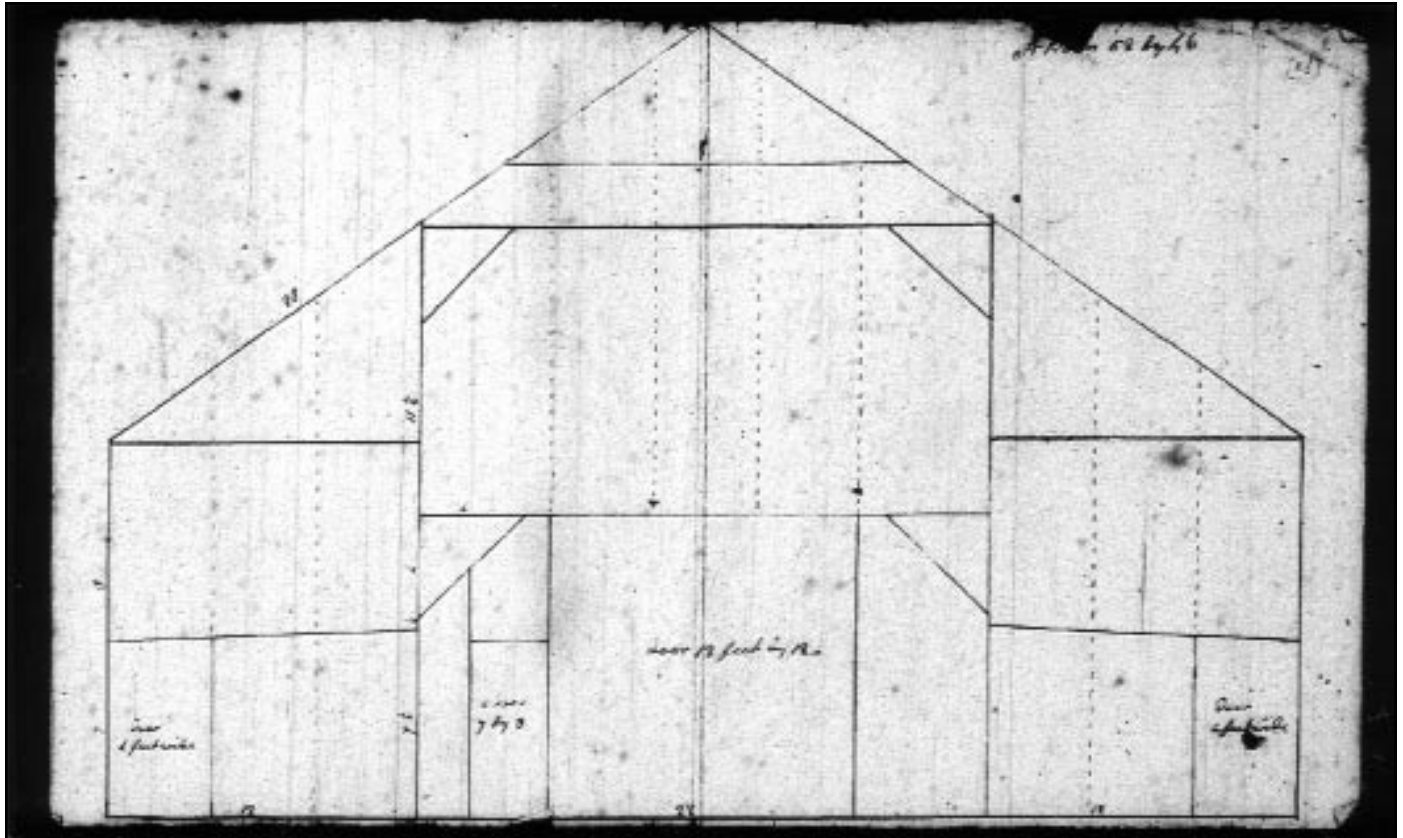


Fig. 5

flanking bays and a string of dimensions along a typical column and outside wall are the only dimensions given. Studding is indicated with dashed lines. The drawing was probably originally accompanied by a written contract, but this has not been located.

The sloping of the transverse ties in each aisle is curious. Stated dimensions indicate that over a twelve foot length that it decreased in elevation from 7'-6" at the post to 7'-0" at each outside wall. The rationale for the slope is not apparent in the drawing.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

No other information accompanies the framing drawing, and it is impossible to determine the intended location of the building, but either Columbia or Dutchess counties, where the Livingstons had extensive landholdings, are a possibility.

Although not indicated on the drawing, the upper anchor beam, the top of which is in line with the top of the posts, appears to be of similar dimensions as its lower cousin. The braces also appear to have been of the same dimensions. The Livingston drawing dates to c.1810-1830, based upon the drafting style and paper.

A barn of similar construction (identified as the "J. Best, Jr." farm on mid- 19th century landowners maps) stands in Pine Plains, Dutchess County (Figs. 6 and 7). The Best barn is a modified New World Dutch Barn, constructed c.1830-1850, and possibly incorporates elements from an earlier structure. It is 40'-6" by 51'-6" in plan, and has four bents. A curious feature of the Best barn is the extension of the lower anchor beam across the entire width of the building to form a transverse tie (Fig. 8). While it does not appear to be continuous, the beam is pegged in the same manner on both sides of the column, with a total of four pegs securing the two parts of the beam to each column and the tie is of the same dimensions as the anchor beam. Unfortunately the barn is used for storage and so doesn't provide a good opportunity for measuring or photographs.

The barn was in active use until approximately 20 years ago, and faces an uncertain future as the site of its associated farm is developed. Early 20th century stick-framed additions have already col-



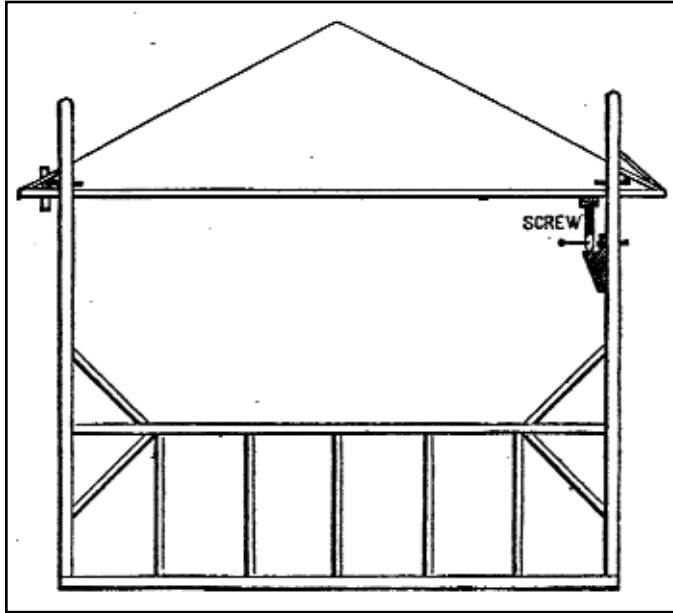
Fig. 8

lapsed, leaving portions of the earlier structure exposed to the elements.

Walter Richard Wheeler is a trustee of the Dutch Barn Preservation Society and he works as a restoration architect for the Hartgen Archeological Associates.

- 1 Campbell Family Papers, SC 11062, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, New York.
- 2 Campbell Family Papers, SC 11062, New York State Library, Manuscripts and Special Collections, Albany, New York.
- 3 Schenectady Gazette, 13 October 1941, p. 18.
- 4 Population Schedules of the Sixth Census of the United States. Roll 337, New York Volume 34 (241-401) Schenectady County. (Washington, D. C.: The National Archives, 1967), p. 340. Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Roll 594, New York, Schenectady County. (Washington, D. C.: The National Archives, 1963), p. 200.
- 5 Holice and Debbie. Index of Award on Claims of the Soldiers of the War of 1812. www.usgennet.org/usa/ny/state/1812/a-ea/bowers-bragaw.html . Accessed on 17 August 2005. Barbara Jeffries, comp. Marriages 1st Presbyterian Church of Troy, N. Y. www.members.tripod.com/~JeffriesB/index-28.html . Accessed on 17 August 2005.
- 6 Richard Schermerhorn, Jr. Schermerhorn Genealogy and Family Chronicles. (New York: Tobias A. Wright, 1914), p. 120.
- 7 Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850. Roll 594, New York, Schenectady County. (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, 1963), p. 61.
- 8 Population Schedules of the Sixth Census of the United States, Roll 263, New York, Volume 1 (1-198), Albany County (pt.) (Excluding City of Albany). (Washington, D.C.: The National Archives, 1967), p. 84.
- 9 Robert Livingston Papers, New-York Historical Society, New York, New York. Microfilm edition at the New York State Library, Albany, New York. Series 4, Reel 52: 210, 211, 216, and 217.

Construction of Hay Barracks



The Old Fashioned Barrack, as it is called, is built twenty feet square. Four posts of durable timber, twenty-two feet long, four feet to be inserted in the ground. The stick should be sufficiently large to square eight inches – the corners hewn off, making it partly octagon in shape – one and a half inch holes should be bored through the corners of each of these posts, one foot apart, for the bolts that sup-

port the roof. They should be made of one and a half iron, one foot in length, the outer four inches to be squared and turned up one inch, on which is laid a piece of joist, three feet long, to support the roof. The roof should run to a point from each side, and may be covered with shingle, tin, or thatched with straw.

There are four plates framed together, and braced. The posts pass up through the roof on the inside corners of the plates. The roof is elevated and lowered with a small screw of wood or iron, about two feet long. A wooden screw three inches in diameter will answer. This is used on the inside of the post. One man can raise and lower the roof if it is done as fast as the hay is put in or taken out. Raise each corner of the roof one foot at a time, going regularly around the barrack. The roof will not be likely to blow off, if the above directions are followed in building. The posts, as far as they enter the ground, may be left the full size of the stick.

The best way to build a barrack, is with sills and girts seven feet from the sills, and braced. You can fill it from the ground or hay-poles on the girts, and have shelter under for sheep or cattle. I make a rough sketch of a frame barrack, side view, which is given above. – *F. D. K. in Co. Gent.*

This illustration and text comes from the Illustrated Annual Register of Rural Affairs for 1868 (Albany, NY: Luther Tucker & Son, 1869), p. 189. It had previously been published in the County Gentleman.

DUTCH BARN PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is printed by the Dutch Barn Preservation Society, a non-profit organization incorporated by the Regents of the State of New York.

President, Keith Cramer; Vice President, Ned Pratt; Secretary, Amelia Andersen; Treasurer, Thomas Lanni; Trustees, the preceding and: Robert Andersen, Michael Barberi, Brandt Bolding, Hubert Deleew, Paul Huey, Neil Larson, Everett W. Rau, J. Schlanger, Alvin W. Sheffer, Peter Sinclair, Henry Vanderwerken, R. Vivenzio, Walter Wheeler, Harold Zoch.

Editor: Robert J. Andersen,
(518) 797-3466
polyphase200@juno.com

Design & Printing: The Albany Letter Shop
The Dutch Barn Preservation Society
P.O. Box 76, Altamont, NY 12009
www.dutchbarns.org

All memberships run from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

Membership: \$ 5. (student)
\$10. (regular)
\$20. (contributing); or
\$25. (sustaining).

Organization Membership: \$20.00

Individual Copies of Newsletter: \$ 2.00

Set of Five Copies: \$ 6.95