

Octagonal barn rebuilt for Agricultural Museum

By Olga Darcovich
An octagonal barn, a building of architectural and historic interest, is being reconstructed on the grounds of the Ontario Agricultural Museum in Milton.

The Troyer-Fraser barn, which comes from Vaughan Township, Lot 1, Concession 3, is believed to date to about 1885. (Vaughan Township is located immediately north of Metro Toronto.) The barn was disassembled, the pieces carefully labelled and transported to Milton.

Like all buildings at the museum, the barn has a hyphenated name. The first, Troyer, is the name of the original owner and the second, Fraser, the name of the last owner.

The octagonal shape for barns was promoted in the latter part of the 19th century as a more efficient use of space than the standard buildings in use at the time, explains William Tolten, director of research for the museum. The practice had been to build three separate barns next to each other — one for grain, one for hay and one for cattle.

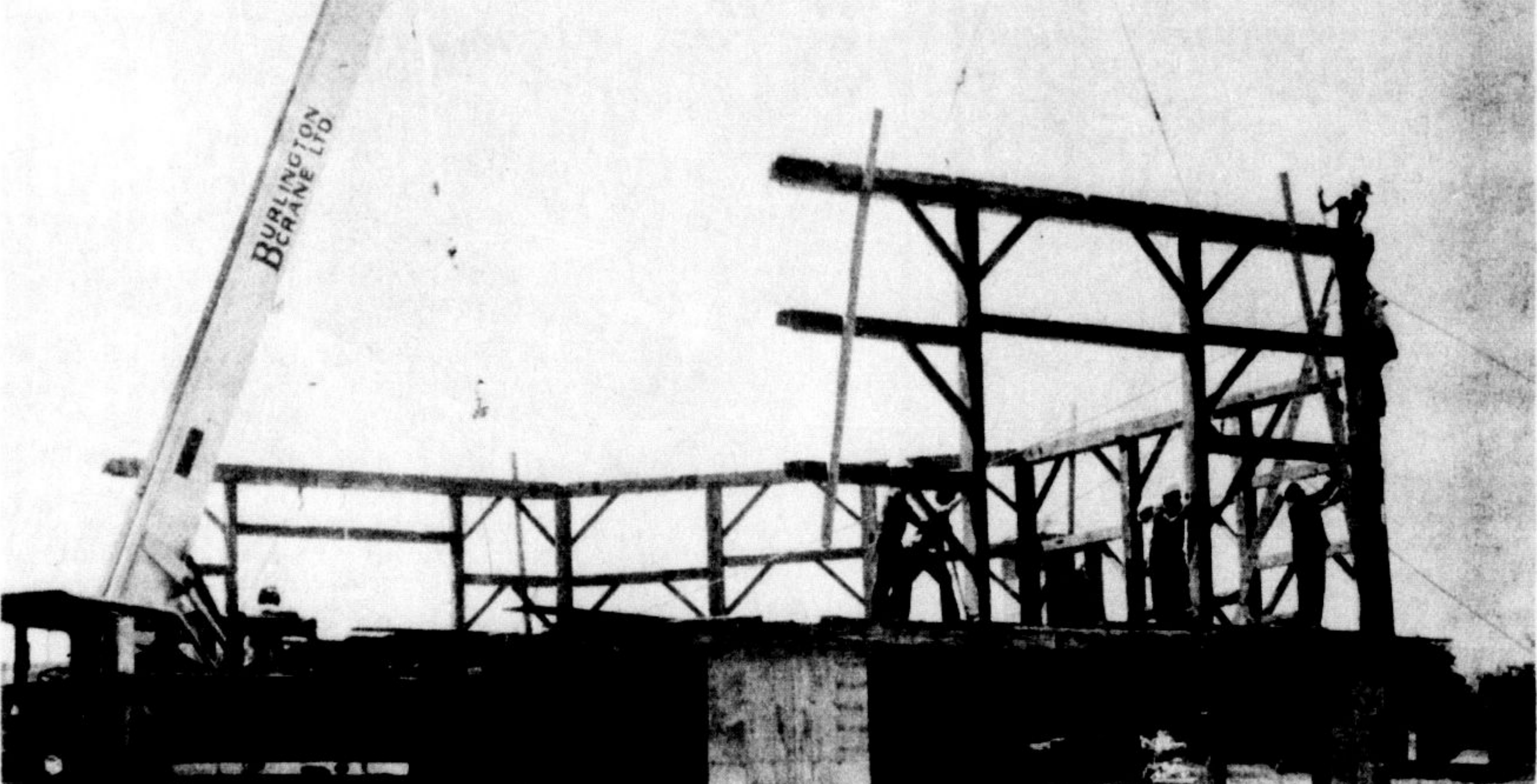
In the two-storey octagonal barn cattle were stabled on the ground floor, facing inward so they could be fed all at once with feed stored on the second floor.

But it was harder to load hay and grain into the second storey of the octagonal barn than it was to fill the traditional barn. Octagonal barns probably never became really popular for this reason, Mr. Tolten speculates.

Moreover, the unusual and delicate frame required an experienced carpenter to build. The local framer refused to tackle the job for Samuel Troyer and the task fell to a young itinerant carpenter, Issac Hafenbrack.

The Troyer-Fraser barn is a free-standing structure with no internal framing. Posts and beams are hand hewn. The beams are not original to the building. They likely came from another barn and could well be over 100 years old.

The cupola, principle and jack rafters and the purline plate were all cut by a mule saw, a primitive saw similar to a cross-cut saw, except that it moved up and down and was wheel-driven.



CRANE lifts frame of one of eight sides of octagonal barn being reconstructed on grounds of the Ontario Agricultural Museum. The Troyer-Fraser barn was originally located in Vaughan



ORIGINAL feature retained in the reconstruction of octagonal barn is the wooden peg used to join joists and beams. Charlotte Waterston is working at the museum for the summer on an Experience '78 grant.

Township. Advocated as an efficient use of space, octagonal barns housed cattle on the lower floor and feed on the second.



WIELDING THE BEADLE or persuader to hammer in pegs used in reconstruction of octagonal barn is John Graham of Guelph, while Scott Murray of Owen Sound stands by, ready to assist. The barn is believed to date to 1885, although some of the timbers are even older.

Inter-county

Soil judging contest

By Mark J. Leahy
Bob and Mary Merry's farm was the site of an Inter-County 4-H Soil Judging Competition on Friday, July 28. 4-H Members from York, Peel, Dufferin, South Simcoe, North Niagara, and Halton spent the morning evaluating various types of soils.

Four soil profiles had been dug in a cross-section of areas. Each 4-H member scored these sites for slope, flooding, stoniness, erosion, texture and drainage. From these scores the 4-H'ers were asked to assess land classes for each profile. They also had to decide on one of wheat, corn, alfalfa and trefoil to be most suitable on each soil type.

Eighteen young people from Halton took part. John Reid from Georgetown tied for high score with Richard Stanley of Rockwood among the Halton competitors. Ross McClure was one point less in third. Tied for fourth was Tom Wilson, Elaine White and Paul Bousfield. Other competitors included Dale Wickson, Stuart McPhail, Gerhard Treviranus, David Wilson, Keith Middlebrook, Bob Wilson, Judy Brown, Brian Wingfield, Susan Bousfield, John McPhail, Hans Treviranus, Andy Baschkowski, Ian White and Kim Peddie.

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