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Maine's Connected Farm Buildings

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MAINE'S CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS*

Part I

New England farmers do not often talk about aesthetics or beauty. When asked about the beauty and careful organization of their farms, they usually answer in terms of efficiency and practicality. A farmer's tough idea of beauty is seldom mentioned in conversation; it is revealed in the everyday work of the farm. In endless daily chores, New England farmers have revealed a keen sensitivity to the visual and temporal order of the farmstead which goes beyond practical considerations. A freshly plowed field, for example, with arrow-straight furrows might be called efficient, but it is an unnecessarily beautiful thing. To see beauty as a farmer does, one must always see it through work – the hard work of many generations extended in time and enmeshed in the rhythms of the everyday life of the farm. The product of farm work well done, like hay in the barn or fattened cattle, might happen to be called beautiful by city folk, but it is always the source of beauty for the farmer.

In the middle of the nineteenth century hardworking Maine farmers modified their traditional organization of farm buildings and created a formal arrangement of buildings that resulted in the connection of house and barn. Today this organization stands for the old ways of the Maine countryside, but for the farmers who built them, these buildings symbolized new ideas and

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progressive farming methods. With a tough eye for beauty, these farmers arranged their buildings to be efficient, functional and organizationally balanced. But above all, they connected their buildings to fulfill their image of what a farm was supposed to look like, and how it was supposed to work.

Farmers in other areas of the country, responding to similar progressive ideas, did not choose to build their farmsteads in this way. In small but very significant ways, Maine farmers and those throughout northern New England were different. The reasons for these differences will help to explain the origin of connected farm buildings.

A question often asked about the connected farm buildings of Maine is, "Why were they ever connected?" Most present owners will tell you that their buildings were connected long ago by wise old farmers to make it easier to feed their livestock during the heavy snows of long New England winters. It is an often repeated story, with a very compelling logic. One wise old Maine farmer, however, thought about this explanation awhile and said that he never walked to his barn through the sheds very often, even in the deepest snows, because there was too much junk in the sheds, and, "Besides, 'shortest route's out the kitchen door."

This article is an attempt to answer the question, "Why were they ever connected?", as well as to document one of the most common, yet uncommonly beautiful, forms of Maine architecture.

CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS

The terms "connected farm building" and "connected farmstead" are used in this article to denote a typical grouping of Maine agricultural buildings in which house and barn are connected by a range of structures to form a continuously connected complex (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Two typical connected farm buildings in Denmark, Maine.

Connected farm buildings are found throughout northern New England and parts of southern Canada (Fig. 2). Although they are very common in rural Maine, there seems to be no indigenous name for these buildings.[1] Most farmers simply refer to their structures as farms or farm buildings, or imply that there is no term for so common and pervasive a building tradition.

An analysis of connected farm buildings is not an easy task. Unlike the study of a particular type of house, like the Cape Cod house, or a particular architectural style, like the Greek Revival style, connected farmsteads were composed of several building types (houses, barns, stables, sheds, etc.), many architectural styles (Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, etc.), and were usually built over a long period, with frequent remodeling during the history of the farmstead. Furthermore, the study of connected farm buildings is more than a history of structures; it is the living record of the people who settled and farmed Maine. It is a complex and now obscure history, but it rewards the observor with one of the finest accounts of everyday life in Maine before 1900. Unfortunately, there is little information available about connected farm buildings because substantial investigation of these buildings has not been attempted.[2]

The results of this study are based primarily upon the documentation of existing farmsteads in an area surrounding Bridgton, Maine, with additional explorations throughout a large portion of southwestern Maine; Topsfield and Sturbridge, Massachusetts; Eaton, New Hampshire; and Veazie, Maine (Fig. 2).

More than one hundred and fifty building groups were visited and examined for this study. Detailed documentation, including measurements, slides, interviews, and historical investigation, was made of sixty structures. The hypotheses in this article are primarily generated from data for southwestern Maine, and, except for minor

Fig. 2 Connected farm buildings in northern New England and the survey area for this study. The area in light gray marks the limits of connected farm buildings (source, Wilbur Zelinksky, "The New England Connecting Barn," *Geographical Review* 47 [October 1958]). The dark areas are the study areas for this study, with Bridgton, Maine, near the geographic center of the major area.

regional variations, these theories seem to hold for most of northern New England where connected farms are located.

HYPOTHESES

The practice of building connected farmsteads seems to have been adopted by northern New England farmers in the middle of the nineteenth century. Although most pre-1850 Maine building traditions can be traced to English sources adapted to conditions of the new world,[3] the making of connected farm buildings in northern New England seems to be a distinctive American development of the mid-1800s.[4] This reorganization of farm building practices was symptomatic of fundamental changes in the rural farm culture of northern New England as progressive ideas of the early nineteenth century vied with the New World vestiges of a medieval English agrarian culture.[5]

Popular opinion, local histories, and existing research suggest a pre-revolutionary date for the making of connected farm buildings. In most cases, this practice is attributed to early colonial or English building precedent. The connection of house and barn was, however, a development of the mid-nineteenth century with a majority of fully connected farm buildings occuring after 1860. In the survey area of southwestern Maine no fully connected house-to-barn structure could be assigned a date earlier than 1850, although a date of twenty years earlier is possible.

On the surface, it does seem that English antecedents are the direct source of the New England connected farms.[6] Parts of England have an ancient tradition of connecting house and barn under the same roof,[7] a practice that was declining in the eighteenth century.[8] But, despite a common English heritage, northern New England's connected farm buildings were built for sub-

stantially different reasons than those of pre-nineteenth-century England whose connected arrangements stemmed from considerations of security and animal safety.[9]

One potential source for ideas about connected farm planning may have been English aristocratic farmers who were experimenting with similar ideas on a very large scale at approximately the same time.[10] In either case both American and English farmers were not reinterpreting earlier traditions but were experimenting with a new, nineteenth-century idea for farm organization and planning. Most investigators who support an early colonial date for the origin of connected farmsteads have quoted a single source for their theory. In 1649 the town of Reading, Massachusetts, prohibited the joining of barns and dwellings in order to lessen the danger of fire.[11] Most Massachusetts settlements at this time shared a compact village plan in which the joining of house and barn would have been likely, especially inasmuch as the practice was still in use in England. This nuclear town arrangement was rapidly changing, however, and by the early 1700s it was largely abandoned for a settlement pattern of isolated farms.[12] If some houses had attached barns in the early Massachusetts colony, they were rapidly replaced by detached buildings in the early 1700s.[13] When Massachusetts settlers entered the interior of northern New England after 1759, the tradition of building separated house and barn had become firmly established.

The primary reason for the discrepency between opinion and documentation perhaps arises because actual connected farm buildings have been infrequently recorded.[14] The most consistent error in interpreting these structures occurs when the date of farmstead settlement, or the construction date for one building, is assumed to be the date for building the entire connected farm group. The majority of connected farms were not built at one time but were constructed incrementally over

a long time according to well-established traditions of piecemeal growth, building movement, and remodeling (Fig. 3, 4). On the other hand, a fully connected farm which was joined in the 1860s was often built on the site of a much older settlement. Frequently, structures dating from an older period were incorporated within the newer connected building complex. The building history of many connected farmsteads is best perceived as a many-staged development in which the buildings on an existing farmstead are only the latest of several stages in the making of a connected farm. Therefore, it is almost always incorrect to assign a specific date to a group of connected farm buildings; usually there are many significant dates.

Although there are many stages in the growth of individual farms, historically, there are two distinct phases of development for connected farmsteads in southwestern Maine: (1) a loosely organized and semi-connected phase, ca. 1760-1860; and (2) a formally organized and connected phase ca. 1840-1940 (Fig. 5). The reasons prompting northern New England farmers to adopt a new organization for their farmsteads in the middle of the 1800s will be described in three parts: (1) an analysis of why Maine farmers built connected farms; (2) an organizational analysis according to building type and building group; and (3) an historical analysis of the development of connected farm buildings in Maine. (The last two elements will be discussed in Part II of this essay.)

AN EXPLANATION FOR MAKING CONNECTED FARM BUILDINGS

The problem of explaining why Maine farmers chose to build connected farmsteads is especially difficult when seen against the background of other American farm building practices of the nineteenth century. The unique aspects of connected farmsteads might easily be in-

Fig. 3 Historical development of the Nevers-Bennett farm, Sweden, Maine. Pre-1840 development is not known.

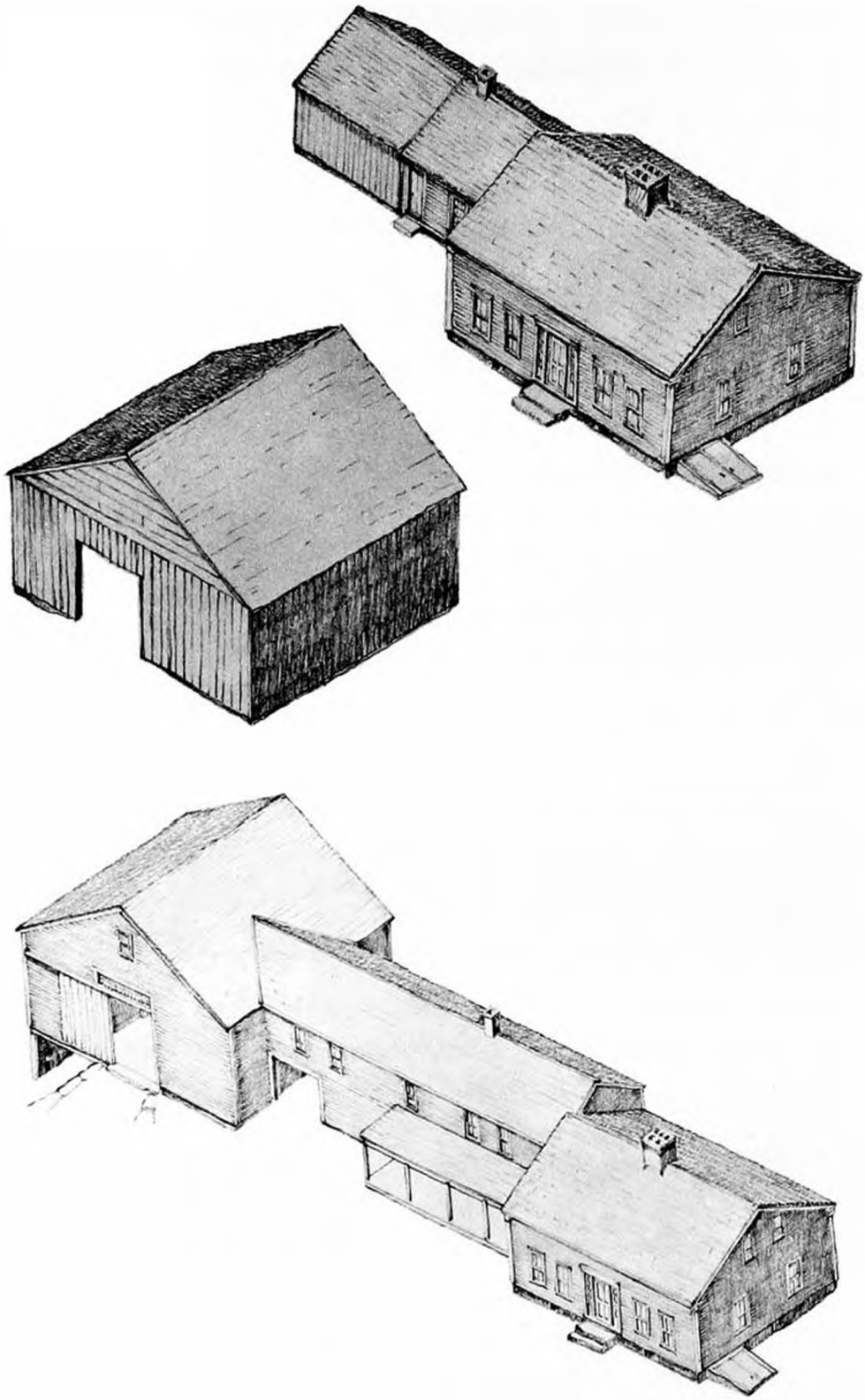

Fig. 4 The historical development of the Emerson-Ames farm, Bridgton, Maine, showing the movement of a detached barn into line with the existing house, ca. 1880.

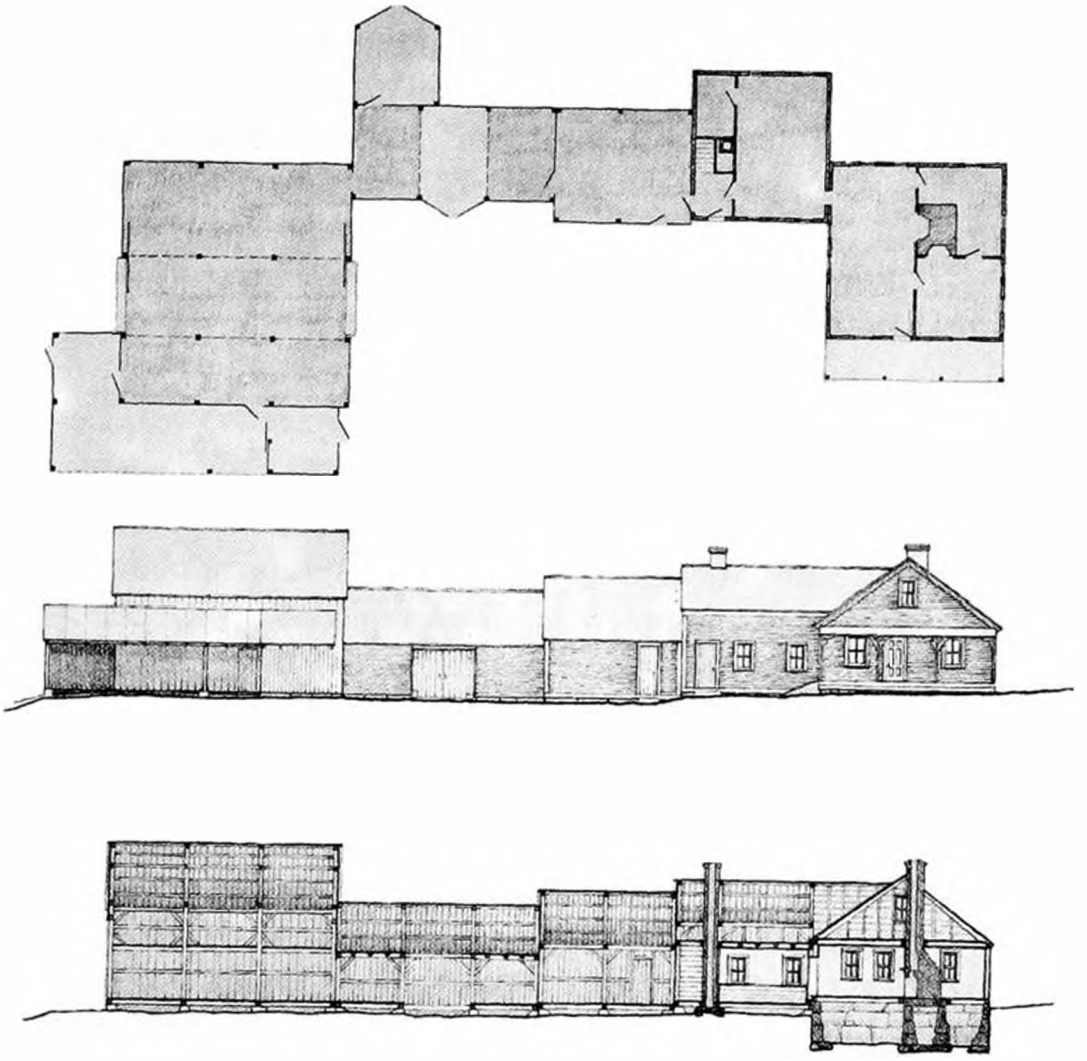

Fig. 5 Phineas Bagley farm, Bridgton, Maine, ca. 1890.

terpreted if northern New England farmers were cutoff from contact with the rest of America. As a group, however, they were surprisingly well informed of agricultural developments.[15] Yet they consistently chose a course of development slightly different from the mainstream of American agriculture.

The reasons for this choice will be outlined in three parts: (1) an analysis of the environmental and agrarian context of northern New England farmers; (2) a description of the traditional farm building construction practices; and (3) an analysis of the juxtaposition of progressive and conservative ideas which combined to produce the building compromise which we know today as the connected farmstead.

The Environmental and Agrarian Context

The history of northern New England farmers is similar to other northern farming regions such as upper New York State and Michigan, yet the connected farm building concept was not adopted in those regions.[16] The popular explanation for connected farms attributes building linkage to the need for a house-to-barn connection in heavy snows. But the snows are far deeper and the winters more severe in areas where the connected farm concept was never adopted. Furthermore, if the hypotheses of this article are correct, the popular explanation cannot explain why northern New England farmers waited almost a century after their initial settlement in Maine (and over two hundred years in Massachusetts) to adopt the now common practice of connecting house and barn.

The severity of the northern New England environment is, however, a major contextual factor supporting the making of connected farm buildings.[17] Farming in northern New England has always been hampered by a variety of unfavorable environmental conditions tending to restrict the growth and expansion of farming, especially

in comparison to more favorably endowed areas of the country.[18] The soils are generally a poor, sandy loam, and endless miles of stone walls attest to the region's extreme rockiness. Many farming areas are hilly and the growing season is short and often unpredictable. These conditions, never a factor in the initial phase of largely self-sufficient pioneer settlement, do not discourage the operation of small, semicommercial, diversified-crop family farms, but taken together, they tend to retard or discourage the introduction of modern, large-scale, single crop, commercial farming methods. Therefore, the severe environmental conditions tended to stabilize and prolong an older farming tradition which was rapidly being phased out in areas more adaptive to modern, technological, commercial farming methods.

The generally unfavorable agricultural conditions of northern New England restricted the introduction of modern agricultural methods, but it might also be argued that the English cultural traditions of northern New Englanders, reinforced by a degree of isolation, tended to support a more conservative position in the face of rapid nineteenth-century change. In either case, most northern New England farmers never fully adopted modern farming methods and continued well into the present century the traditional methods of a small family farm — traditions absolutely essential to the making of the connected farm buildings arrangement.

The history of northern New England farming after the early 1800s is the record of a constant struggle to readapt to overwhelming competition from other agricultural areas of the United States.[19] One major agricultural product after another was tried, but could not be profitably produced. The farm history of this region records the successive failure of wheat, beef, sheep, apples, sweet corn, cheese and butter, milk and eggs, each of which was once the leading product in many areas.[20]

Most farm buildings in the survey area show traces of several major readjustments to changing markets. The alteration and movement of agricultural buildings can frequently be attributed to the introduction of new agricultural products and to changing farm methods, and should be seen as a contextual factor supporting the making of connected farm buildings.

Maine farmers have always supported themselves through other incomes besides their principle farm products. They have a long history of diversified-crop farming and home industry production; they have also seldom chosen to concentrate on a one-crop farm production. Various occupations connected with lumbering have been the most consistent source of outside income for Maine farmers. Other seasonal work has often included fishing, maple sugar making, and, more recently, vacation related activities. Home industry and garden production have always supplemented farm incomes. This work, including textiles and clothing, cheese, eggs, butter, leather goods, basket making, and a variety of handicraft products for the home, is frequently associated with the women of the farm.[21]

The connected farmstead arrangement is ideally suited for a diversified-crop, home industry, New England family farm. This arrangement of buildings encourages an overlap of diverse work activities between house and barn and supports a certain amount of teamwork and cooperation among family members. Although frequently overlooked, a major reason for the widespread popularity of the connected farm arrangement in northern New England was simply that it worked exceptionally well for the diversified farming practices of the farmers who made them. But a diversified-crop, home industry, semi-self-sufficient farming practice was a mixed blessing to Maine farmers; it preserved their independence and their traditions, but it ultimately made them poor. Maine

farmers increasingly found that their way meant slow financial ruin in an agricultural world shaped by science and technology.

A puzzling aspect of connected farmsteads is their wide popularity in northern New England and their absence in other areas of the country. It cannot be explained away as a minor, eccentric flowering of a few local farmers because it was the dominant farmstead arrangement for a wide area of northern New England for more than one hundred years. In some respects, it is easier to explain why the idea did not spread beyond New England than to explain why it spread within New England. The principle reason this idea was not accepted elsewhere is that in 1860 small, diversified family farms, the essential structure of the connected farms, were not central to the developing direction of American agriculture. In the second half of the nineteenth century, American farming had begun to commit itself, in principle at least, to a higher level of commercial, technological farming which, in many ways, is the antithesis of the connected farm arrangement. In addition, the building conditions for making connected farms require a particular set of sustained building traditions that were not established in other areas of the country.

Local residents and researchers have been surprised that New Englanders abandoned the connected farmstead plan when moving to western New York and to the Midwest. Emigration from northern New England began on a large scale after 1816 and continued until the twentieth century.[22] In fact, New Englanders did help to establish their farm building system in many areas of the Midwest,[23] but between 1800 and 1860, the idea of a unified connection of house and barn was not one of the ideas they brought with them to the new western territories; they simply did not have that tradition at that time. After 1860 settlers from New England probably

could have established a connected farm building organization, but since many left to avoid the hardships of New England farming, they were unlikely to continue a style of building then associated with the unprofitable ways of New England farming.

A more difficult problem is to explain why the concept of connected farm buildings was not adopted in southern New England (Rhode Island, Connecticut, and southern Massachusetts), a region which shares environmental, historic, and cultural similarities, especially a dominantly English influence. The critical difference between northern and southern New England farming regions is generally the age of settlement. Many farms in the southern area had been settled more than a hundred years earlier and had reached a peak of farming and building expansion before the mid-nineteenth century, and were declining in agricultural production at this time.[24] Generally speaking, the farming regions in northern New England which were active and expanding in the mid-to-late 1800s have greater percentages of connected farms than areas which were declining in farm building and agricultural production.

Southern New England farmers were probably more influenced by ideas from adjacent agricultural areas, such as Long Island and eastern New York, and were generally far less isolated geographically and culturally than their neighbors in northern New England. Massachusetts appears to have lower percentages of fully connected house-to-barn structures than the rest of northern New England, and the idea of connected farmsteads seems to have diffused as it reached southern New England. The full account of why the connected farm concept was not selected in southern New England awaits further research.

The history of New England is dominated by its seacoast and its commercial and industrial centers, particularly Boston. New England's farming interior has been an

embarrassment to progressive-minded historians because it never seemed to live up to its potential in the America of progress and expansion. Consequently, its history has not received the attention it warrants. When compared with the intense cosmopolitan development of the commercial centers, interior New England is a surprisingly isolated, culturally homogeneous region. Few areas of America, except isolated farming regions in the upland South, have sustained such a long, uninterrupted contact with English cultural traditions while absorbing so few farming and building traditions from other European cultures. When compared with agricultural hearth regions, like the Genessee Valley in upper New York or the German and Scotch farming areas of southeastern Pennsylvania, the cultural isolation of northern New England farmers is particularly evident. In this context, it is not surprising that a uniquely isolated group of tough-minded men and women developed a different farming and building tradition.

Building Traditions

The building traditions which the settlers from Massachusetts and New Hampshire brought with them to the Maine interior after 1760 were essential to the establishment of connected farmsteads one hundred years later. A characteristic practice of early settlers was to save and reuse original houses and barns. The original buildings, although small, were usually saved after the completion of later, larger structures.[25] This practice differs from many later pioneer American settlements where temporary sod or log structures were soon replaced by more substantial wood frame dwellings. This simple, practical tradition of continuous reuse of older buildings provides the starting point for later connected architecture. From one perspective, this is an example of Yankee frugality, and from another view it typifies a conservative rural mentality. This tradition took many

forms: some early structures have become additions to later houses; others have become sheds, blacksmith shops, sap houses, sheep barns, and so forth. Obviously, not all structures were continuously saved, and it seems that this practice was continued longer on common or poor farms and abandoned sooner on larger or wealthier farms.

A companion idea to permanence is the idea of change and modification which seems to be engrained deeply within the New England farmer. Although buildings were frequently saved and reused, there was not much sentimentality for its original use or how it once looked. It was a common practice to convert a house to a barn, a kitchen to a shop, or a shed to a home. Massive remodeling and interior reorganization for house and barn seems to have been the norm for these so-called conservative farmers. A further extension of this idea was the common practice of reusing structural members from older buildings for new construction (undoubtably this is one of the most confusing aspects of northern New England farm architecture analysis). Connected farm buildings could not have been developed by farmers lacking these progressive, experimenting building traditions.

The practice of moving buildings seems to have been very common. The frequency of moving major existing buildings, when recorded, staggers the imagination.[26] The movement of smaller houses, barns, and agricultural buildings was even more frequent and less recorded. For more than half of the documented farms in this survey, building movement was associated with the making of at least one building in the connected complex. Larger barns were generally disassembled and moved, while houses were usually moved intact. It is often difficult to establish whether a building was moved intact or was disassembled and moved to a new site. Both practices were common in southwestern Maine.

To an outside observer, the practice of building movement might seem unusual or even astounding, but, actually, northern New England farmers were particularly well suited for this task. In their long tradition of lumbering they had perfected the art of moving heavy logs on skids and wagons with the use of oxen. Since all house and barn structures were not secured to their stone foundations or cellars, it was a relatively easy operation to adapt lumbering practices to the movement of farm structures. Building movement and readaptation seems to have been a strong early tradition which continued into the present century on many farms in southwestern Maine. This simple building tradition is absolutely essential to the widespread popularity of the connected farm concept. Most farmers did not have the resources to construct an entirely new string of buildings, but were able to move and realign their existing structures in a new organization system.

The tradition of constructing additions to both house and barn was well established before the first settlers entered the interior of Maine. Joining a small, original farmhouse to a larger, later house was an early and persistent practice in Massachusetts,[27] and was a typical pattern in early Maine settlements (the Jonathan Fairbanks house, Dedham, Massachusetts, is the earliest and most famous example). The traditional arrangement of early barns was a close cluster of buildings often connected by vehicle sheds or stables. These assemblages were located close to the farmhouse and often assumed the characteristically staggered plan arrangement of post-1860 connected farm buildings.

By 1830, a few farms were undoubtedly built with almost connecting houses and barns. Conceptually and developmentally, however, they would be different from the connected farms of the next fifty years which were

organized in a clear, formal attempt to unify house and barn in a continuous building arrangement.

These building traditions form an essential context without which connected farm buildings could not have been constructed. Still, they do not by themselves explain why northern New England farmers rearranged their traditional farm building organization to make connected farmsteads.

By the early 1800s the possibility of connecting the house and barn was physically possible, but this actualization required a set of powerful new ideas about farming and building to unify what were still two distinctly separate realms of house and barn.

The Idea of Connecting House and Barn

The idea of connecting house and barn was formulated collectively in a rural society of northern New England farmers and represents the temporary resolution of fundamental conflicts between stability and change affecting that society during the middle of the nineteenth century. Northern New England farmers reacted to the changed conditions of their traditional farming society by adopting new, progressive farming ideas while simultaneously preserving much of their traditional way of life.

The mid-nineteenth century was a time of real change in New England agriculture. Scientific and technological farming ideas which had been advocated for many years by a progressive or wealthy few began to influence the farming practices of the majority.[28] Horse-drawn agricultural machines such as the reaper, the steel plow, and the rake came into more common usage and radically changed the productive capacity of the average farmer.[29] Railroads also changed many of the fundamental farming rules of the early 1800s by opening new markets and by increasing the availability of agricultural machinery. The

result was not always beneficial because, by the mid-1800s, New England farmers were forced to seek new agricultural products. They found they could not compete successfully with midwestern farmers in once profitable areas such as wheat and cattle production, although this was hotly debated in the New England agricultural press.[30]

The emigration of New Englanders to western lands perplexed and troubled the older generation of settlers who had struggled so heroically to bring civilization and order to a harsh wilderness. The very basis of the northern New England farm economy, with its reliance upon a diversified-crop, largely self-sufficient, minimally commercial farm operation, was called sharply into question by the material successes of progressive movements in American agriculture. But every stir toward change and the adoption of new ideas was balanced by a deep-seated proclivity of the majority of northern New England farmers to cling to the old and conservative traditions of their ancestors.

The documentation of change is especially difficult because the adoption of new ideas varied greatly, not only between progressive and conservative farmers, but also between the ideas they chose to implement and those that they chose to ignore. For example, many farmers quickly followed the advice of the farm journals and experimented with such new agricultural products as Merino sheep, silk worm, tomatoes, and sweet corn, while they only gradually adopted suggested changes in barn construction methods, such as barn cellars and the elimination of numerous outbuildings. When agricultural writers of the present century record the introduction of new ideas and methods in New England agriculture it is often very difficult to assess the degree of acceptance and dispersion in northern New England.[31]

The agricultural journals of the mid-1800s were frequently the major champions of new ideas. Their moralistic sermons expounded the gospel of progressivism to the average farmer.[32] Collectively, the journals reinforced a moralistic, aesthetic spirit based upon efficiency, visual order, and rational scientific principles in the conduct, organization, and building of the farm. The farmers of northern New England gradually adopted these ideas—in their own way.

A reference to building practices immediately preceeding the era of connected farm buildings appears in Thomas G. Fessenden's *The Complete Farmer and Rural Economist*, published in 1834. "It is a common practice and with many a general rule," Fessenden observed, "to build a farm-house adjoining, and perhaps in contact with the sheds, barns and other outhouses."[33] While Fessenden, a leading agricultural authority in New England, goes on to cite the fire danger and sanitation disadvantages of such a practice, his comments are significant because they emphasize the popularity of closely adjoining and practically connected buildings in 1834. At the same time, he implies that a fully connected house and barn was not an established practice. Just thirty years later, an article like this would have been unlikely because the idea of formally connecting house and barn had become common. By that time journalists in northern New England had begun to publish examples of connected houses and barns.[34]

The progressive agricultural writers of the period were especially critical of traditional barn and building procedures. Most publications contained some attack on existing farming methods as in this report on Maine barns in 1857: "Much improvement is seen on every hand over the old style, consisting of a wooden frame standing on a

few wooden blocks or cobblestones, covered with single boards, with a generous crack at each joint for ventilation, rendering the inside rather the colder side."[35]

The typical New England practice of clustering small barns, criticized for its inefficiency, became a symbol of the old, unscientific farming traditions. The new progressive ideas supported a farmstead organization of fewer, larger barns with complete cellars, organized according to the latest scientific theories. In 1855 a Maine writer summarized the criticism of existing barn clusters and emphasized the advantages of a single, larger barn:

I would have a barn, not half a dozen barns, and twice as many rickety sheds of all shapes and sizes, arranged in gross confusion, as if they had been pitched together by the frolic of the elements. For shame on such barns as are seen in some parts of our country. If the cattle should get lost among them, I should not suppose they could find themselves. On the barns of many farms there must have been expended not less than fifteen hundred dollars, and yet I would rather have five hundred dollars worth of suitable material to build one good barn with, than have them all.[36]

The reformer outlined the requirements of a good, sound barn, modeled after features of the Pennsylvania German barns that were widely publicized at this time.

Similar articles reiterated the need for a unified organization of farm buildings and usually cited improved, technological farming methods in support of formal aesthetic ideas. In fact, the idea of visual order should be seen as an essential component of progressive farming practices of the mid-nineteenth century. In an 1858 article describing improved farm building practices, for example, a writer outlined the basic aesthetic ideas behind the unification of house and barn as follows:

There should be also a fitness in a set of barn buildings; a palace for a house and a hovel for a barn, or an expensive barn coupled with a diminutive, ill arranged house would be a manifest incongruity.

Nor is this all. A cultivated taste requires that all the appointments, out-buildings, ground, shade and fruit trees, flower and vegetable gardens, should be so arranged as to please the eye.[37]

The idea of fitness or balance for house and barn, and the desire to form a unified composition pleasing to the eye, is the essential thought behind the connecting of northern New England farm buildings. A Massachusetts writer summarized the changes which altered New England farming in the first half of the nineteenth century.

. . . there is now about the buildings of farmers of this State, an air of neatness, comfort, utility, taste, and beauty, which strikingly distinguishes them from those of their immediate predecessors. Whenever new buildings are erected, this change displays itself, and often in anticipating the natural decay of the inherited old ones. I assert that this improvement has already manifested itself sufficiently to change, in this respect, the general appearance of the State.[38]

The reasons why New England farmers selected a more formal, visually ordered arrangement for their farms has complex roots in the new spirit of pride and progressivism which shaped the cultural ideals of the new republic. The Greek Revival details embellishing many connected farms are an expression of the same unified, classical spirit that dominated the national taste in the early 1800s and continued to dominate in rural New England until the present century.[39]

The average farmer, however, was influenced less by a style of architecture than by the idea of order and visual formality that is essential to the classical vocabulary. Northern New England farmers interpreted this idea by reorganizing their traditional building groups and by connecting house and barn in a unified composition. It must be emphasized that preconnected farmsteads were organized according to time-tested patterns of farm building grouping, and without regard to the creation of a formally organized visual composition. The desire to create a formally organized, unified whole distinguished the connected farm buildings of northern New England

from other connected farmstead organizations worldwide, and resulted in a remarkable unification of functional and aesthetic ideas in a common vision of farming.

The visual-symbolic impact of the new arrangement must have been dramatic. Early photographs and paintings continually depict a sharp contrast between the rigid, sometimes painted, house forms and the blackened cluster of detached barns and outbuildings. The connected concept was a shockingly progressive attempt to extend unified visual order, usually reserved only for the major house, to the entire farm building arrangement. It was a radical departure from previous traditional practices, and it became popular only after most farmers accepted the idea that visual order was related to good farming practices and that the entire landscape, including traditional barns, should be rationally and visually organized. This was a remarkably progressive change, reflecting the application of the ideas of the Enlightenment to a traditional farming organization.

Although an image of organization is the fundamental reason for making connected farms, it cannot, by itself, explain this development. The connection of house and barn, with connected or closely adjoining structures stretching from house to barn, was practically completed by 1830. The northern New England farmer applied an idea of order to an asymmetrical building system of long tradition and only slightly realigned, or straightened out, the building group. The connection of house and barn, never a specific goal of this ordering process, was a consequence of both the overall organizational strategy and the existing practice of situating buildings closely together.

There is obviously a considerable difference between the formal ordering concept and its implementation in the typical existing farm building group. The resultant

mixture represents the combination of both farm and classical influences. The northern New England farmer followed the advice of the progressive press and built a larger barn with a cellar and expanded tie-up, but traditional practices necessitated the inclusion of various existing outbuildings, connected in the customary manner. An image of formal visual order supported symmetrical building alignment, but, in practice, this idea had to be reinterpreted in a building system where a variety of buildings connected in a staggered plan was already the norm. While the functional effect on the operation of the farm was slight, the visual and symbolic effect was substantial.

In an overall assessment of connected farms, it would be incorrect to overemphasize the interpretation of change. It would be inaccurate to suggest that the unification of house and barn signaled a break with the traditional methods of farm building and a sudden adoption of a modern farming orientation. It would be more accurate to say that a new conceptional order of farming and building won a precarious foothold in a conservative agrarian society, and that northern New England farmers only reinterpreted or realigned a well-established tradition of farm building grouping. Furthermore, the process was not so neat or clean as this brief outline may suggest, but was a protracted process of slow experimentation and testing that only gradually affected the mainstream of rural building.

Although the visual change is dramatic, the basic building complex maintains its traditional building characteristics: the stagger and off-set of separately made connected buildings; a grouping of buildings designed for a small, diversified, family operation; and a traditional, rural model of incremental growth.

CONCLUSION

The connected farm buildings of southwestern Maine combine eighteenth-century farm building methods with formal, classical ideas of the early nineteenth century. The farming and technological improvements that were adopted by farmers in other areas of the country were only partially embraced by the conservative farm society of northern New England. Consequently, connected farm buildings maintain a strong link to early farming traditions inside a formally, visually organized, building group.

Northern New England farmers chose this building arrangement because it symbolized progressivism and new farming methods within the context of their old-world-ordered existing farmsteads. That other American farmers responded to similar ideas by creating different building arrangements attests to the strength of tradition within the homogenous farming culture of northern New England.

The connected house-to-barn structure synthesizes two conflicting philosophies, one traditional and conservative, and the other changing and progressive. Connected farm buildings mark a high water mark of progressivism in a strongly conservative farm culture of medieval English ancestry. The new building order temporarily resolved deep conflicts within the agrarian society of northern New England between stability and change, and represents a cautious major step into a changing modern world. Connected farmsteads also mark a last progressive step for the northern New England agrarian society, for this was as far as the farmers of northern New England were willing to commit themselves to experimentation and change during that culture's last hundred years of existence.

(To be continued)

[1] No indigenous name for these structures has been recorded in the literature of New England architecture or suggested by local inhabitants. Other studies have labeled these structures: "the New England connecting barn"; "extended farmhouse groups of northern New England"; and "connected plan." See Wilbur Zelinsky, "The New England Connecting Barn," *Geographical Review* 47 (October 1958), (hereafter cited as Zelinsky, "Connecting Barn"); Russell V. Keune and James Replogle, "Two Maine Farm Houses," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 20 (March 1961), (hereafter cited as Keune and Replogle, "Two Maine Farm Houses"); and Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), p. 168 (hereafter cited as Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture*).

[2] Of the following sources, Zelinsky is the most widely cited, and it is the only investigation which offers a comprehensive analysis of connected farm buildings. Most of the hypotheses of Zelinsky's study are challenged by the findings of this study. Zelinsky, "Connecting Barn"; Eric Arthur and Dudley White, *The Barn: A Vanishing Landmark in North America* (Greenwich, Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, Ltd.), pp. 142-46; Keune and Replogle, "Two Maine Farm Houses," pp. 38-39; Eric Sloan, *An Age of Barns* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967), pages unnumbered; Robert R. Walcott, "Husbandry in New England," *New England Quarterly* 9 (June 1936): 233 (hereafter cited as Walcott, "Husbandry in New England"); H. W. Congdon, *Old Vermont Houses* (New York: N. p., 1946); Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture*, pp. 184-87; John Fraser Hart, *The Look of the Land* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1957), p. 127 (hereafter cited as Hart, *Look of the Land*).

[3] Although most sources inadequately address the buildings of rural New England farmers, there is overwhelming consensus that the building traditions which spread from Massachusetts into northern New England were dominantly English in origin, and that these practices remained influential throughout the entire colonial development. See Hugh Morrison, *Early American Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 14-97; Fiske Kimball, *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and the Early Republic* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1950), pp. 9-35; Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1955), pp. 1-10 (hereafter cited as Mumford, *Sticks and Stones*); Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture*, pp. 124-35. For Maine building sources, see Historic American

Buildings Survey, *Maine Catalog: A List of Measured Drawings, Photographs, and Written Documentation in the Survey, 1974/Historic American Buildings Survey, National Park Service, Department of the Interior; Compiled with an Introductory Essay "The Historic Architecture of Maine" by Denys Peter Myers* ([Augusta, Maine]: Maine State Museum, c1974); and Deborah Thompson, ed., *Maine Forms of Architecture* (Camden, Maine: Downeast Magazine, 1976), pp. 15-66.

[4] The connection of house and barn in either a one-building form or in a string of buildings is not unique to northern New England. Many farm cultures throughout the world have employed this building characteristic. See Hart, *Look of the Land,* pp. 126-28. What is unique about the northern connected house and barn grouping are the reasons for which they were connected and their dramatic physical form.

[5] Lewis Mumford gives an excellent summary of the medieval traditions of the early American colonists in *Sticks and Stones,* pp. 1-10.

[6] Hart, *Look of the Land,* p. 127.

[7] For information on English connected houses and barns, see R. W. Brunskill, *Vernacular Architecture of the Lake Counties* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), pp. 75-81; R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (New York: University Books, 1970), pp. 133-37 (hereafter cited as Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook);* Sidney Oldall Addy, *The Evolution of the English House* (London: Swan Somenscheim Co., 1950), pp. 60-63; Nigel Harvey, *A History of Farm Buildings in England and Wales* (Newton: Abbott, David and Charles, 1970), pp. 32-40 (hereafter cited as Harvey, *History of Farm Buildings).*

[8] Harvey, *History of Farm Buildings,* pp. 53-54.

[9] Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook,* pp. 133-34.

[10] For example, Joseph Gandy, *Designs for Cottages, Cottage Farms and Other Rural Buildings* (London: John Harding, 1805), and G. A. Dean, *Essays on the Construction of Farm Buildings and Labourers' Cottages* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1849).

[11] Robert R. Walcott, "Husbandry in New England," p. 233.

[12] Edna Scofield, "The Origins of Settlement Patterns in Rural New England," *Geographical Review* 28 (October 1938): 652-65.

[13] It must be emphasized that there is extremely little information about agricultural buildings in early Massachusetts settlements. See Richard Candee, "History of Plymouth Colony Architecture, 1620-1700," *Old-Time New England* 59 (Winter 1969): 66-68.

[14] Detailed measurement drawings have seldom been attempted as, for example, in Keune and Replogle, "Two Maine Farm Houses."

[15] Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States* (Washington: Carnegie Institute, 1925), pp. 193-94 (hereafter cited as Bidwell and Falconer, *History of Agriculture*).

[16] Clarence H. Danhof, *Changes in Agriculture: The Northern United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), pp. 16-26, 107-21; and Paul W. Gates, "Agricultural Change in New York State, 1850-1890," *New York History* 50 (April 1969): 115-60.

[17] John Donald Black, *The Rural Economy of New England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 36-40.

[18] Harold Fisher Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England, 1790-1930* (New York: A. M. S. Press, Inc., 1967), pp. 116-38 (hereafter cited as Wilson, *Hill Country*).

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 132-38.

[20] Clarence A. Day, *A History of Maine Agriculture, 1640-1860* (Orono, Maine: University Press, 1954).

[21] Rolla Milton Tryon, *Household Manufactures in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 188-241.

[22] Wilson, *Hill Country*, pp. 48, 56-60.

[23] Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture*, pp. 128-35.

[24] Claude M. Fuess, ed., *The Story of Essex County*, 4 vols. (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1935), 1: 399-400.

[25] Two early accounts of this practice are described in the history of the first settlers of Bridgton, Maine (Enoch Perley farm) and New Gloucester, Maine (Isaac Parson's house). In each case, the earliest house was saved and connected to the later, larger dwellings. (The Isaac Parsons' house is recorded in a photograph showing the original house connected to the later dwelling. This was substantiated in interview's with a recent owner, Thomas Moser, New Gloucester, Maine). *A History of Cumberland County, Maine* (Philadelphia: Everts and Peck, 1880), pp. 221, 327, and facing page 332.

[26] A history of the movement of houses in Fryeburg, Maine, is outlined by John S. Barrows, "Fryeburg's Roving Houses," (unpublished paper in the Fryeburg Library). The practice of moving buildings seems to have been common in Massachusetts. Of the pre-1890 farms of Topsfield, Massachusetts, over one-third contained buildings which were relocated to their present site. For pre-1850 farms, one-half contained relocated buildings, and this figure does not include the movement of barns and smaller structures which were seldom recorded. John H. Towne, "Topsfield Houses and Buildings," *Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society* 8 (1902): 11-69.

[27] Robert W. Lovett, "A House and Its Inhabitants," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 104 (January 1968): 42-52.

[28] Howard S. Russell, *A Long Deep Furrow: Three Centuries of Farming in New England* (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1976), pp. 204-5.

[29] Bidwell and Falconer, *History of Agriculture*, pp. 207-16.

[30] *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Maine Board of Agriculture for the Year 1869* (Augusta, Maine: Sprague, Owen and Nash, 1870), pp. 357-60.

[31] Concealed beneath the progressive-minded articles of most agricultural literature of the mid-1900s are references to the conservative body of farmers who only gradually modified their traditional farming methods. In an article on Massachusetts farm buildings, a writer begins by claiming that great attention is shown in building barn cellars, but later admits that there is an unfortunate neglect of these matters. Henry Colman, *First Report of the Agriculture of Massachusetts, County of Essex, 1837* (Boston: Dutton and Wadsworth), p. 66.

[32] For example, see "A Bright and Instructive Example," *Eastern Farmer and Journal of News*, April 14, 1842.

[33] Thomas G. Fessenden, *The Complete Farmer and Rural Economist* (Boston: Otis Broadere and Company, 1840), p. 71.

[34] Although New England publishers, aware of the agricultural trends in the rest of the country, never gave wholehearted endorsement to the practice of connecting house and barn, they did publish accounts of connected farms. Two complete accounts can be found in *Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Maine Board of Agriculture, 1857* (Augusta, Maine: Stevens and Sayward, 1858), pp. 36-38 (hereafter cited as *Second Annual Report*), and *Third Annual Report of the Secretary of the Maine Board of Agriculture, 1858* (Augusta, Maine: Stevens and Sayward, 1859), pp. 52-55 (hereafter cited as *Third Annual Report*).

[35] *Second Annual Report*, p. 164.

[36] *Report of the Secretary of the Maine State Agricultural Society, and Transactions of the Several County Agricultural Societies, for the Year 1855* (Augusta, Maine: Stevens and Sayward, 1859), p. 28.

[37] *Third Annual Report*, p. 52.

[38] Charles T. Russell, *An Address Delivered Before the Agricultural Society of Westborough and Vicinity, September 25, 1850* (Boston: Charles Moody, 1850), p. 10.

[39] The Classical Revival in America reached an early perfection in the works of Jefferson and L'Enfant. By 1820, the classical spirit dominated the arts of the early republic, but it took much longer for these ideals to filter into the interior of northern New England. See Mumford, *Sticks and Stones*, pp. 21-30, and Talbot Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 159-86.