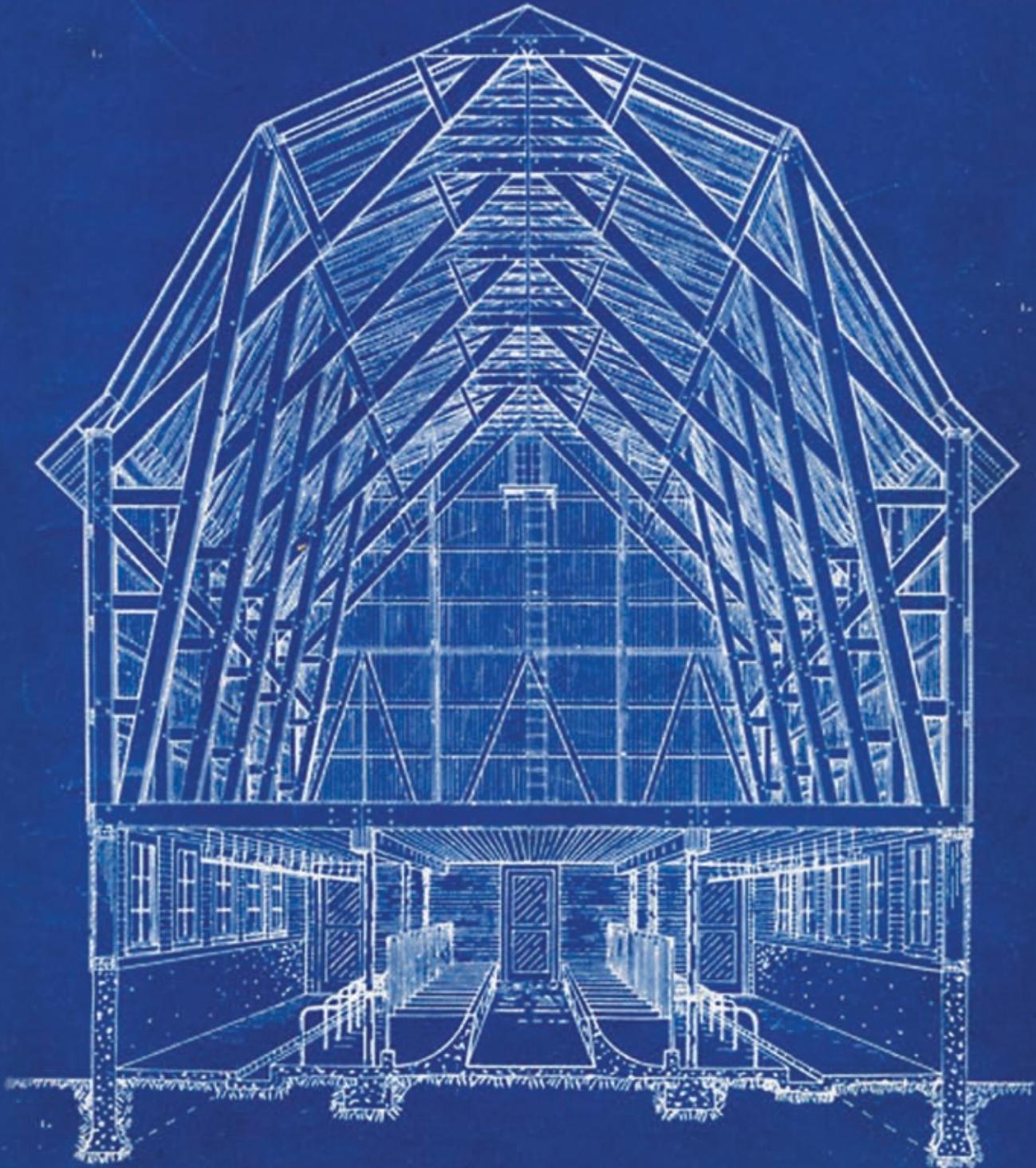


Plank Frame Construction

706 Board Feet per Truss at \$47.00 per thousand \$ 33.18
9 Trusses for 100 ft. Barn \$298.64

Two or Three Men can Erect It

Note handiness of open Construction for use of Hay Carrier



Ground Covers Unlimited 2013



What we did on our summer vacation

We seldom do what other people would do, and instead, rebuilding a barn was this summer's fun. But not just any barn, but a plank and frame barn. To understand why we did this, you may want to learn some agricultural history first.

Plank framing was the technical alternative to heavy timber framing, especially as the supply of large timber across most of North America dwindled towards the end of the 1800's. Plank framing was a very progressive and modern building method and in fact, used half or less wood than heavy timber construction. As well, the total labour to construct what was really a pre-fab truss building was as much as one quarter to one third that of timber framing. So when the barn that stood previous caught fire and burnt sometime in the late 1930's, the decision was made to rebuild something that was as modern and progressive as it could be. And what a barn they built!

It looks the same as any hip-roofed barn, but inside it feels like an airplane hanger. Built on the old foundation, it measures 40' wide by 98' long and is 36' from mow floor to peak with no structural members obstructing the use of the hay mow. This feature alone set these buildings apart from what came before. Hay storage was now significantly more efficient than it had ever been.

The barn we fixed this summer was very likely manufactured by one of two companies that existed at the time. The Loudon Manufacturing Co. and Beatty Bros. were two significant sources of pre-fab plank frame buildings at the time our barn was erected. W.H. Loudon was a U.S. company which, after a number of years in business opened its second manufacturing location in Guelph, Ontario in 1900. Beatty Bros. began in Fergus Ontario in 1874 by George and Matthew Beatty.

Beatty Bros. originally manufactured farm machinery but ceased in 1900 to focus on barns and barn equipment. Loudon also supplied labour saving equipment to compliment the barns it designed and sold. Both companies advertised and promoted the modern sanitary features of their designs with emphasis on bright, well-ventilated, stables for the farmer and his livestock. Animal welfare and health was seen as the surest way to achieve success and guarantee the financial future of the farm.

And so, this barn stood until we purchased the farm in August of 2008. It had remained in continuous use, first for dairy and then for beef cattle but it would not have been much longer before it fell down from lack of maintenance. You see, the original fieldstone walls that held up the barn were the same ones that the newer barn was rebuilt upon. This became the weakness which would have failed. So, it seemed clear to us that all we needed was a new foundation. But to do that we needed to lift the building. There are people that can do this, so up we went. It was a tourist attraction for a while this summer because apparently you just don't see this sort of thing every day.

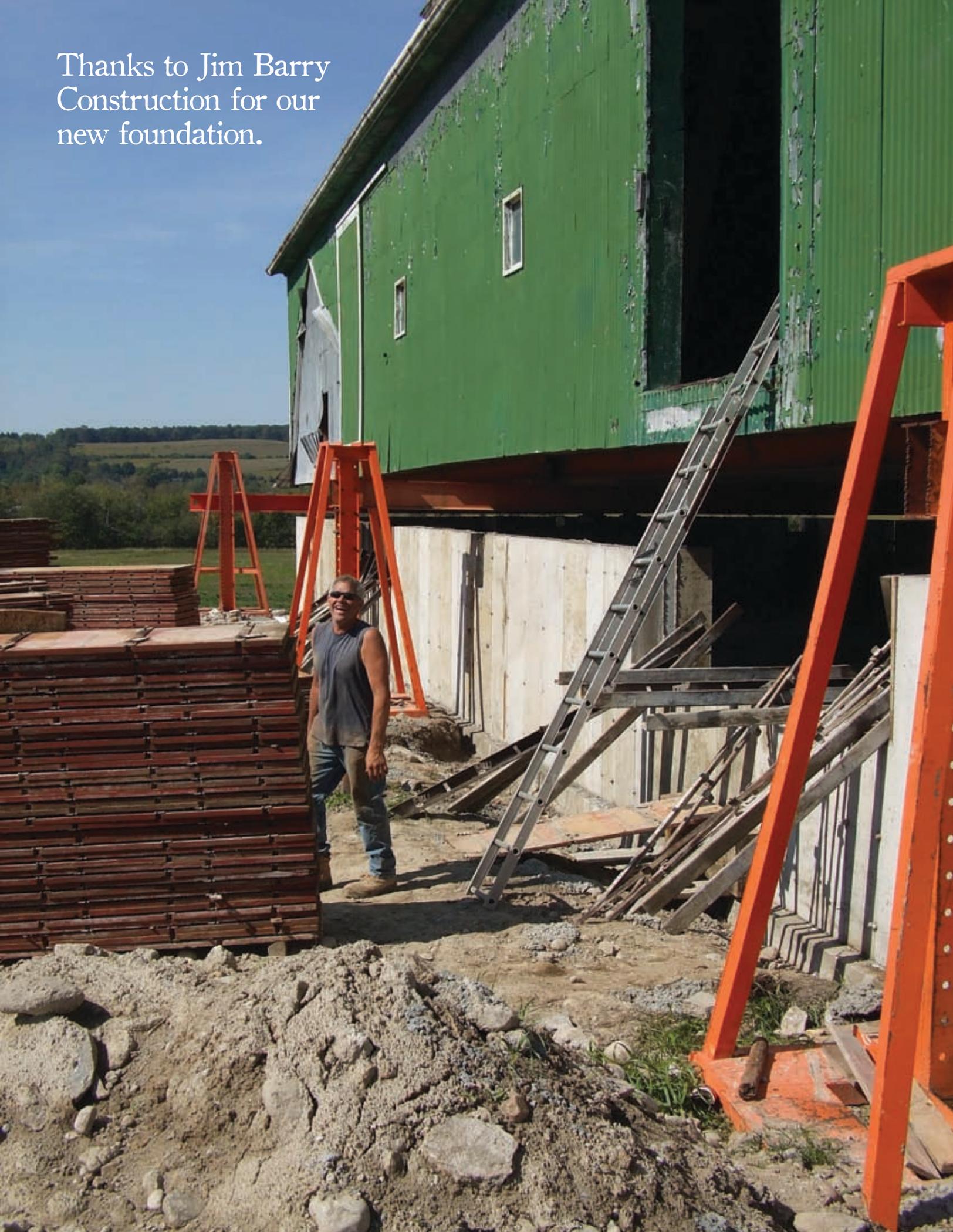
Some work on siding and doors remains for next summer but as of the writing of this letter, at least one substantial example of a plank framed barn has been solidified and preserved for future generations. We will find new uses for the building as time goes on, but even repurposed, it is still a relevant part of Ontario agriculture. And as always, a nursery can and should be more than just a nursery.

Sincerely,

The Spearings



Thanks to Jim Barry
Construction for our
new foundation.





Wide Open for Business

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