



**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.

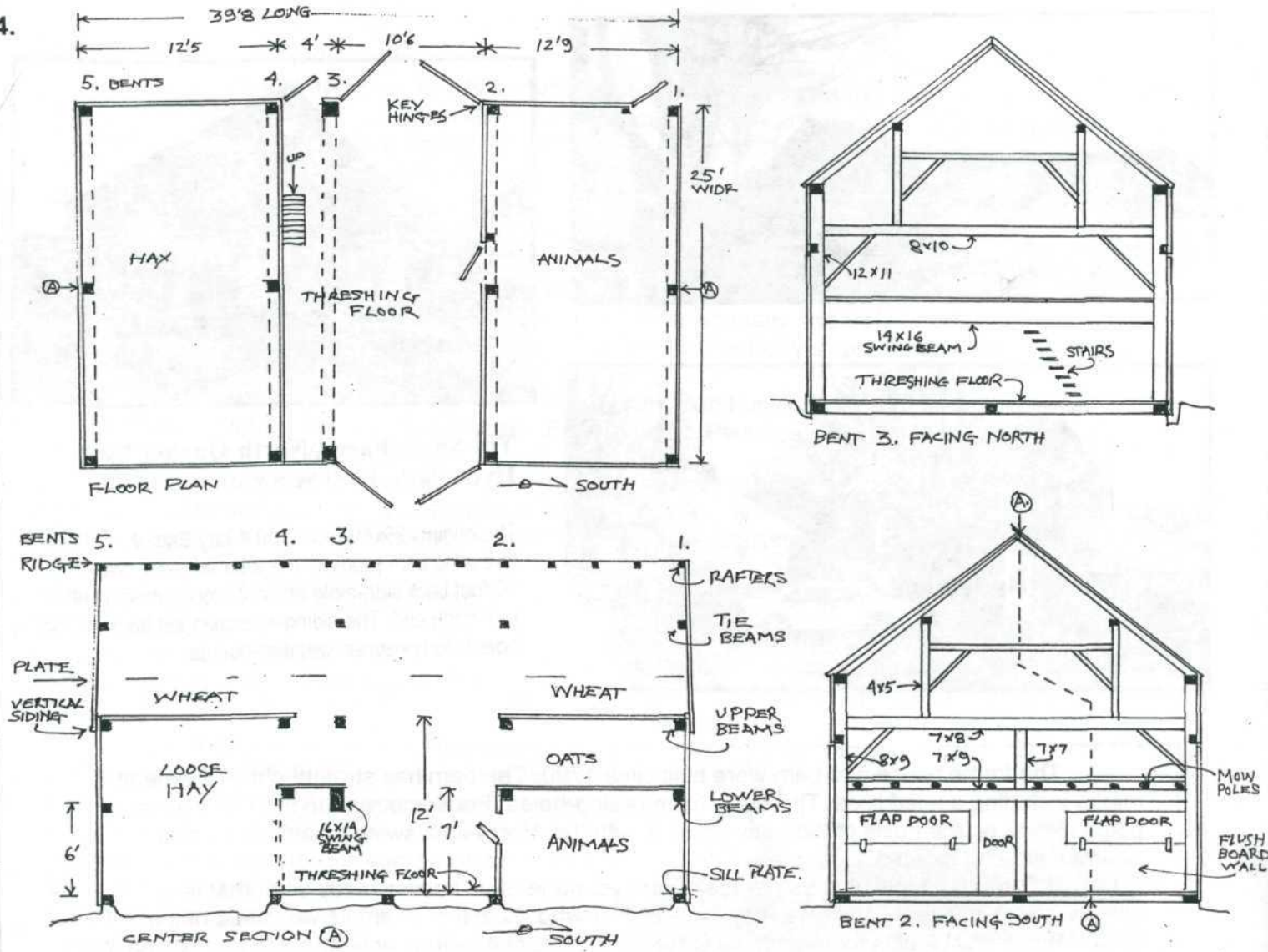
Wednesday, March 1 I returned again, met the owner, Jim Smith, and learned something about the area's past. His mother had been a local historian. The Briggs family who pioneered the farm were Quakers, their wood frame meeting house has been preserved, just up the lane. They were an expansion of the 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.



**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.