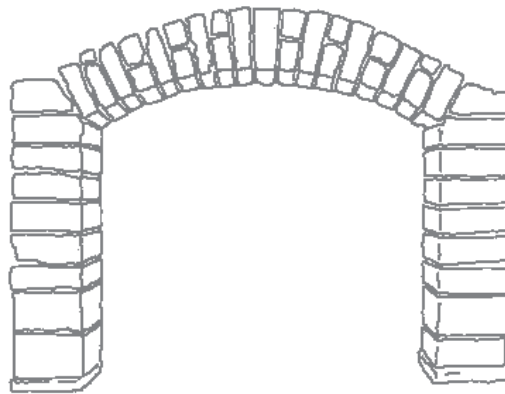


*The William Henry farm near Lecompton, Douglas County, Kansas. This aerial photograph, ca. 1988, depicts the extant buildings of the Henry home place, with the family's modified Pennsylvania barn dominant at the far left.*

# A Pennsylvania Family Brings Its Barn to Kansas



by Cathy Ambler and Judy M. Sweets

**I**n eastern Kansas the bounty of barns that once peppered the countryside is slowly dwindling. Contemporary farming practices largely rebuff old barns as irrelevant tools; even gentlemen farmers who leave suburbia looking for an idyllic rural life find them expensive to maintain. Nevertheless, the state's remaining barns punctuate the landscape, reminding their beholders of the state's ties to a once robust agricultural economy and the farm families that made it possible.

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One great barn near Lecompton belonged to William Henry, a Pennsylvania farmer who moved his family to Kansas in 1868. The Henry family experienced success, hard times, and personal loss in its new state as did many other immigrants, but few family stories can make the connection as well between Kansas settlement-era farming patterns and regional barn-building traditions from an eastern home state. When the Henry family built a new barn, it chose a great, Pennsylvania banked timber-frame barn that became the heart of the family's farming enterprise.

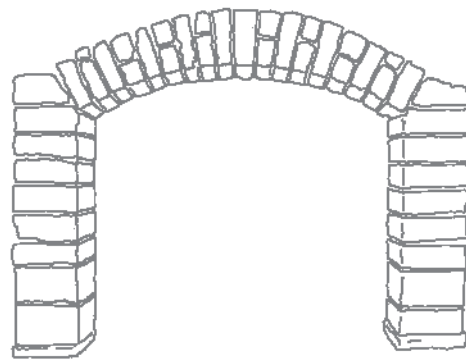
The presence of this beautifully crafted barn in Kansas raises many questions, however, for those interested in barn construction, function, and classification systems. Did a transplanted Pennsylvania barn form adequately serve late nineteenth-century Kansas farming needs? This barn form traditionally has been linked to Germanic building traditions; does its Pennsylvania regional history support such an ethnic connection? Since barns of this magnitude and craftsmanship are uncommon in Kansas, could local builders have raised such a barn and, if not, where would a skilled work crew have come from? As this barn sits silently watching over the eastern Kansas farm that once belonged to the Henrys, it raises questions about the process and results of cultural transplantation for both the family and the barn. These questions cannot be addressed, however, without a brief history of this barn form.

The "Pennsylvania barn," a forefather to the William Henry barn, is well known because researchers have recorded its diffusion to other states and regions as a means to trace the spread of cultural values. As people move from one location to another, they usually take traditions or patterns of behavior with them from their home

places; therefore, barns have been used much like road maps to trace the movement of people and ideas. They have often been easier to track than house types, for example, because as tools necessary to a family's economic survival and well being, farmers tended to change them less often or dramatically as they moved. Farmers usually made modifications to barn designs in response to changes within the agricultural economy.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers have traced this predecessor of Henry's barn because it has a character-defining trait called a forebay, which is a projection or cantilever that overhangs the barn's lower-level foundation (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> This large rectangular, timber-framed barn almost always was built into the side of a hill, or banked, so that it had two levels with openings in both of the longer sides.<sup>3</sup> The lower level had several separate doors for horses, cows, mules, pigs, or sheep, and it opened under the forebay into the barnyard (Fig. 2). Farmers used the upper level of the barn to store feed, grains,

hay, and straw, and it had four sections, or bays, that functioned as storage areas with granaries or threshing floors (Fig. 3). The barn's evolutionary roots began in Switzerland, but in the eighteenth century



*This barn that sits silently watching over the eastern Kansas farm raises questions about cultural transplantation.*

1. The point is strongly argued in Thomas C. Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1984). The book's cause-and-effect conclusions are somewhat controversial; nevertheless, they have stimulated other researchers to document how changes in agriculture and the market economy affected the design and modification of barns.

2. Robert F. Ensminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 55, reviews Ensminger's work and other published research on the Pennsylvania barn, its origins, and diffusion, and claims that the forebay is the Pennsylvania barn's diagnostic feature.

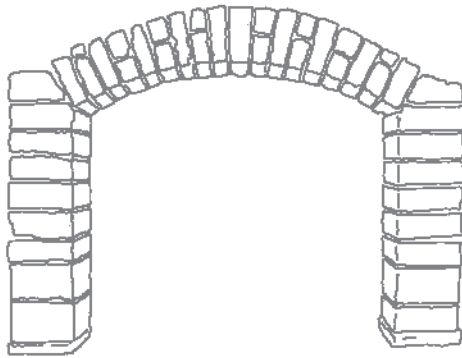
3. In the northeastern corner of Kansas a few forebay barns have been surveyed in Doniphan County. A forebay barn in Douglas County, Eudora Township (section 17, township 13, range 21), belonged to the Otto Rosneau family. Although the barn is no longer extant, photographs document the forebay and the lower level's multiple barnyard doors. See Rosneau House and Barn file, Watkins Community Museum of History, Lawrence, Kans.



*Fig. 1: This barn in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, clearly depicts the forebay projecting over the barn's lower-level foundation.*

ethnic Germans and other Europeans carried its form to the southeastern area of Pennsylvania from European source regions.<sup>4</sup>

The barn William Henry built in Kansas is similar to the Pennsylvania barn but without the distinctive forebay.<sup>5</sup> The reasons the barn changed in appearance are not yet fully proven, but researchers believe that farmers began to change the Pennsylvania barn as they increased dairy production and moved more fully into a market economy. Between 1780 and 1850, while farmers used their agricultural production to meet their own family's needs for food and fiber, many engaged in some production for market as well. As farmers' marketing activities increased during this seventy-year period, especially in dairying, the Pennsylvania barn with a forebay increased in size and the forebay began to disappear. In dairying, a farmer managed more cattle in his barn and less mixed livestock. With mainly dairy cows in the Pennsylvania barn's lower level, there was little need for many separate divisions. Farmers maximized open space by clearing away small divisions, and they gained even more room by enclosing the area under the forebay and eliminating the many doors into the barnyard. To manage a herd going in



*The barn William Henry built in Kansas is similar to the Pennsylvania barn but without the distinctive forebay.*

and out, farmers made the openings in the lower level larger by running a central aisle from gable end to gable end, or lengthwise, through the barn.<sup>6</sup>

Henry Glassie, one of many researchers who has studied the spread of barn forms, observed the transition of the Pennsylvania barn in the western part of that state. Glassie's comments about the significance of both the changing form and its dominance in western Pennsylvania should not be underestimated. His observations relate directly to the county that neighbored the Rossiter area—the location of the Henry home place. Glassie stated that:

As the Pennsylvania barn moved westward it was evolved into a new type which had become predominant by Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania; it has two levels, but lacks the forebay and has the main doors of the basement [lower level] on the end rather than on the rear.<sup>7</sup>

Within the context of Pennsylvania farming patterns in the nineteenth century, the connection between changes in the Pennsylvania barn and

increased dairying is supported by E. Willard Miller, geographer at Pennsylvania State University. Miller has observed that a typical crop rotation pattern on Pennsylvania farms consisted of corn, oats, wheat, and grass during this era. Miller further notes that the dairy industry came into existence during the 1830s, and over the next seventy years it was transformed from a home industry to a highly organized commercial enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

4. Ensminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn*, 50–53.

5. According to Ensminger's definition, the Henry barn would not be a Pennsylvania barn since it lacks a forebay. It is a banked four-bay barn that evolved from the forebay type. See Robert Ensminger, "A Comparative Study of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin Forebay Barns," *Pennsylvania Folklife* 32 (Spring 1983): 104. Henry's barn was a common form in parts of Pennsylvania. See Henry Glassie, "The Pennsylvania Barn in the South," *Pennsylvania Folklife* 15 (Winter 1965-66): 8–9.

Terry Jordan-Bychkov, "Transverse-Crib Barns, The Upland South, and Pennsylvania Extended," *Material Culture* 30 (Spring 1998): 7, noted that defining a barn type is not simple because some traits receive more emphasis than others in classification systems. Transitional or modified barn forms can be difficult to classify since they do not fit well into neat categories. This case study generally supports Glassie's observations that the Henry barn is a "new type" of Pennsylvania barn in the western part of the state that was reinforced by forebay-less, two-level barns from New York.

6. Ensminger, "A Comparative Study of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin Forebay Barns," 104. Ensminger linked barns in Wisconsin to the Pennsylvania barn and also attributed barn modifications to dairy farming.

7. Glassie, "The Pennsylvania Barn in the South," 8–9.

8. E. Willard Miller, "Agriculture," in *A Geography of Pennsylvania*, ed. E. Willard Miller (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 185. Many changes in agricultural patterns also address the evolution of technology in farming machinery, transportation, and refrigeration. These helped change what farmers produced and their markets.

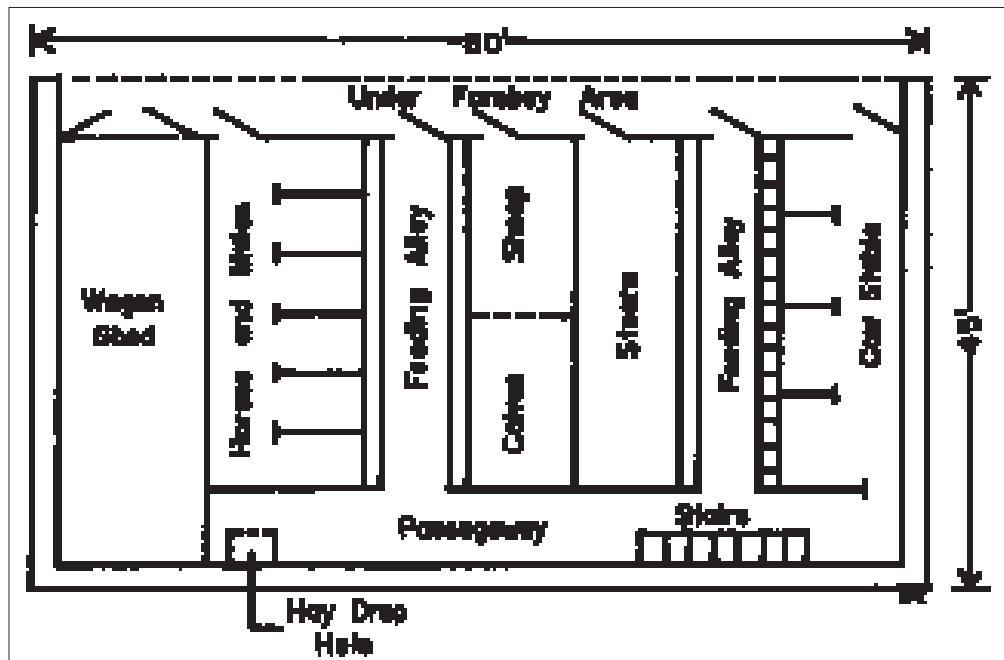


Fig. 2: Representative basement plan for the Pennsylvania barn.

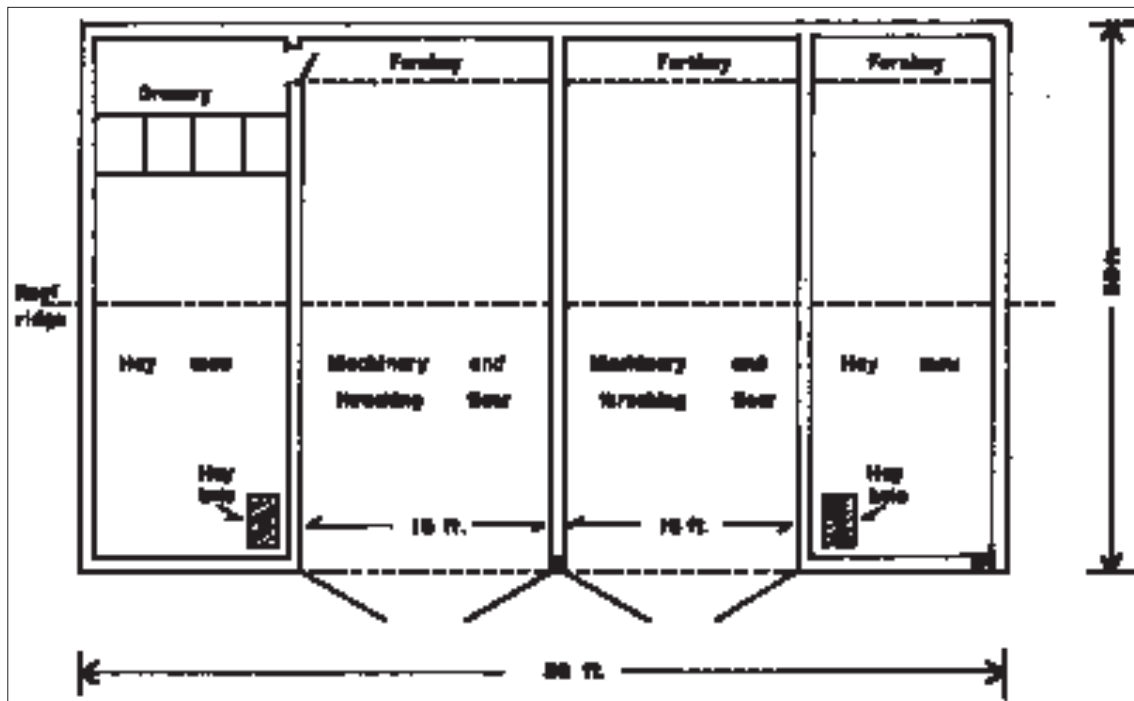


Fig. 3: Representative upper level plan for the Pennsylvania barn.

William Henry transplanted this new type of Pennsylvania barn to Kansas. Compare the Pennsylvania barn's upper floor plan with Henry's (Figs. 3, 4) and with Glassie's description of the western Pennsylvania barn form. They are both large and have four bays: two-bay threshing/storage floors or runways in the center of the barn, and two haymows on the sides. However, the Henry barn's granaries are now in the haymows whereas the Pennsylvania barn had them in the forebay area. In both barn forms, openings or drops helped a farmer move hay, grain, and bedding from the upper to the lower level. The function of the barn remains much the same on the upper level although the arrangement is somewhat different. Compare the lower level of Henry's barn with the Pennsylvania barn (Figs. 2, 5). It is evident that Henry's barn was more open to feed similar types of livestock, whereas the Pennsylvania barn plan shows stabling for mixed livestock. Glassie's observations about the new type of Pennsylvania barn appear in William Henry's Kansas barn.

Considering Miller's overview of Pennsylvania agricultural production patterns, when William Henry left the state in 1868 his family's home place was producing a variety of crops, animals, and dairy products such as cream and butter. The new type of Pennsylvania barn, so prevalent near Henry's home place, would have met the needs for increased production of dairy products and yet served farmers engaging in mixed agricultural production that included grains and grasses.<sup>9</sup> But who was William Henry and did this new type of Pennsylvania barn work well for Kansas farming patterns?

9. Although built after William Henry left Pennsylvania, a barn of nearly identical form to his Kansas barn stood on the Henry home place in 1989.

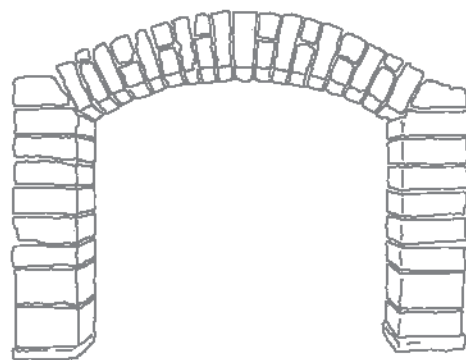
William Henry was born in Banks Township, Indiana County, in western Pennsylvania in 1836, the son of William Henry and Rachel Warner Henry (Fig. 6).<sup>10</sup> He grew up on the family's 490-acre farm close to Rossiter (Fig. 7), where a small family cemetery still remains across the road from his home place.<sup>11</sup> During the Civil War, Henry served as a quartermaster in the Union army. He also was in command of the ammunition corps at the Battle of Vicksburg (Mississippi) and supervised

an ambulance train at the Battle of Winchester (Virginia). Henry married Jane Clarke Kirk, also from Indiana County, in 1858.<sup>12</sup>

In November 1868 the Henry family moved to Lecompton, Douglas County, Kansas, and by May 1869 had purchased land (Fig. 8).<sup>13</sup> It seems likely the family knew someone in the area since immi-

grants frequently moved to locations where they had acquaintances or where other family members already had settled.<sup>14</sup> The countryside, similar to that around Rossiter, would have made the Henrys feel at home. The

rolling landscape near Lecompton is covered with woods and streams and frequently is interrupted by



*But who was William Henry and did this new type of Pennsylvania barn work well for Kansas farming patterns?*

10. "Wm. Henry Buried," *Lecompton Sun*, March 28, 1913; see also Irvin Dale States to Judy Sweets, November 29, 1988, Henry Family Subject file and Henry House and Barn Site file, Watkins Community Museum of History, hereafter cited as Henry Family and Site files. Rachel's parents were Peter Warner and Judith Schumaker Warner. Peter Warner fought in the Revolutionary War as a private in the Twelfth Virginia Regiment. The Warners moved later from Virginia to Pennsylvania.

11. Irvin Dale States to Judy Sweets. Buried in this cemetery are William Henry's parents, William and Rachel Henry; his grandfather, Peter Warner; and his sister Susannah and her husband, Jonathan Sherman.

12. "Wm. Henry Buried."

13. *Atlas of Douglas County, Kansas* (New York: F. W. Beers, 1873), indicates Henry owned 240 acres.

14. In an 1855 memorandum book Henry writes about his contact with G. W. Zinn. See private collection of Helen Henry, Lawrence, Kans. Although this book predates his move to Kansas by thirteen years, a G.W. Zinn also was Henry's neighbor near Lecompton. Zinn possibly was Henry's Kansas contact. Locals still pass along in oral history that Henry acquired his property in a trade for guns.

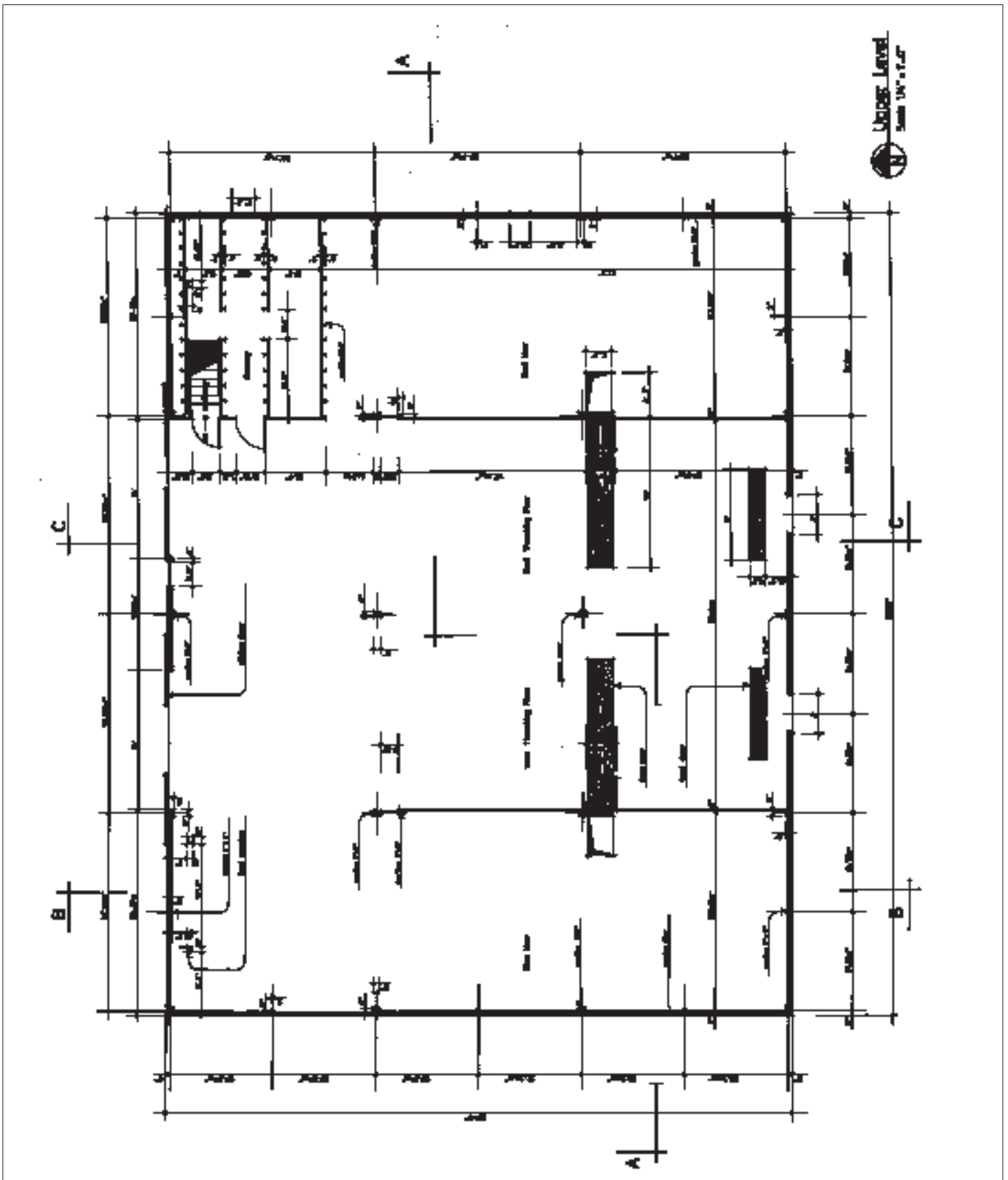


Fig. 4: Upper level plan of the William Henry barn.



rich, open, agricultural land and bottom areas near the Kansas River.

The Henrys arranged for the construction of their barn almost immediately since the large sixty-two-by-eighty-foot barn was completed before the end of 1869. Where the family lived during the building of the barn is unknown, but they may have spent their early days in a dugout or a log cabin, a pattern common among those who moved to tree-covered, hilly eastern Kansas. The barn probably was raised within

six weeks so perhaps the family moved into a portion of the new barn as they waited to build a new home.<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, Jane Henry died in 1872 at the age of thirty-five, leaving her husband with two young children, twelve-year-old David and seven-year-old Leni. The family finally finished its new limestone house just east of the barn the year after Jane's death.<sup>16</sup>

In 1874 William Henry remarried and at the same time reinforced ties to Pennsylvania through his new wife, Rachel Katherine "Kate" Hickox. Kate also was originally from Indiana County, but her family had come to Kansas in 1874 after first moving to Freeport, Illinois. William and Kate had two sons, John Pearl "Pearly," born in 1875, and William "Willie," born in 1879.<sup>17</sup>

Kansas agricultural census records make it possible to reconstruct some of the Henrys' farming experiences and compare them with Pennsylvania pat-

terns. Such records also make it possible to compare the Henrys' agricultural records over several decades and the family's success with their neighbors' in the rest of the township (Table 1).

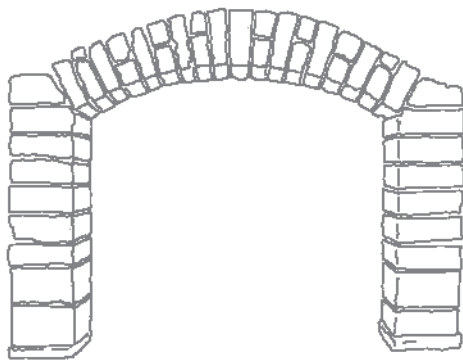
The farm economy of Kansas in the early 1870s was based on mixed-crop patterns and livestock production although many farmers produced for the market as Pennsylvania farmers did. In 1872 Douglas County farmers planted mostly corn, wheat, and oats, a pattern also similar within Pennsylvania, but

many harvested native prairie grasses for hay, as well as grasses such as Timothy.

The Henry family faced a harsh winter in 1872–1873, which was followed by a grasshopper invasion during 1874. Grasshoppers appeared late in the summer, eating everything organic as they swept across the state. Despite

these poor crop years that ruined many farmers, the Henrys' real estate value was three thousand dollars in 1875. Although property value is only one indicator of the Henrys' prosperity during the difficult years of the early 1870s, cen-

sus records show the value of their personal property at seven hundred dollars. Perhaps more indicative of the family's financial state, however, was its ability to purchase farm equipment despite the difficult times. When the family worth is compared with that of the neighbors, the Henrys were doing well. Since their farm was probably just beginning to produce steadily, they had only part-time help living with them and paid out a small amount for hired labor during the year. They planted a nursery of fruit trees that later would produce apples, peaches, and cherries. As Pennsylvania farms usually had nurseries or orchards to produce fruit for home consumption, one would expect the family to plant an orchard any place they moved.<sup>18</sup>



*The Henrys' barn was constructed almost immediately since it was completed before the end of 1869.*

15. J. E. Bauman, interview by author (Ambler). Bauman is a twentieth-century barn builder who built in the Rossiter area and lived on the Henry home place in May 1989. Based on his experience, Bauman predicted a large barn like the Henrys' could be finished within a month to six weeks. (Author's note: the amount of time obviously would vary depending on the size of the crew, the preparation of materials, and the weather.) See also J.E. Bauman to Cathy Ambler, May 29, 1989, Henry Family and Site files.

16. Henry Family and Site files.

17. "Obituary—[Rachel Kathryn "Kate"] Henry," *Lecompton Sun*, August 2, 1934; "Pearl Henry Drowned," *ibid.*, March 25, 1904; "The Funeral of Willie Henry," *ibid.*, June 23, 1892.

18. Miller, "Agriculture," 185.

Table 1: HENRY FAMILY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

OVERALL PROSPERITY

Census Year	Acres Owned	Value of Farm Implements	Value of Real Estate	Value of Animals Sold for Slaughter	Value of Poultry and Egg
1875	240	\$150	\$ 3,000	\$ 5	\$ 5
1885	370	\$500	\$10,000	\$600	\$20
1895	370 (only 150 under cultivation)	\$ 90	\$ 6,000	\$600	\$20

LIVESTOCK

Census Year	Milch Cows	Horses	Swine	Other Cattle	Dogs
1875	10	3	4	40	1
1885	10	10	15	3	2
1895	7	8	30	23	1

CROPS AND DAIRY

Census Year	Winter Wheat (acres)	Corn (acres)	Irish Potatoes (acres)	Oats (acres)	Butter (lbs.)	Grasses (acres)	Prairie Hay (tons)
1875	6	40	1	7	300	50 (Timothy)	—
1885	70	100	1	30	830*		20
1895	15	40	—	22	250	40 (Prairie Meadow)	40

FENCES

Census Year	Stone (rods)	Hedge (rods)	Wire (rods)	Board (rods)	Rail (rods)
1875	25	80	—	30	500
1885	150	960	640	50	160
1895	320	600	500	—	—

ORCHARDS

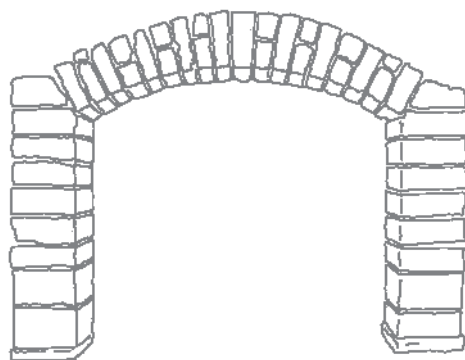
Census Year	Apple Trees	Peach Trees	Cherry Trees	Horticulture
1875	—	—	—	1 acre nursery
1885	20 bearing, 12 nonbearing	20	20	—
1895	20 bearing, 20 nonbearing	—	—	—

Source: Kansas State Censuses, 1875, 1885, 1895, Douglas County, Lecompton Township, Schedule 2–Agriculture.

\* While the records clearly note this amount of butter, it seems in error when one considers the number of dairy cattle Henry owned.

Aside from the problems they might have faced starting their farm, the Henrys had the financial resources to build a barn immediately and complete a house within the first three years. Considering the difficult farming period the family faced when they first arrived in Kansas—hot, dry summers and harsh winters, grasshoppers, and high farm debt—it seems clear that the family had enough capital to ensure a good start.

Henry's barn must have been a useful tool in his early farming endeavors. Records indicate his 1875 agricultural production was both mixed crop, livestock, and some market-place production. Henry probably felt quite at home with his great barn since it assisted him in farming patterns that were similar to those in Pennsylvania. Between 1875 and 1885 the family net worth increased as the value of its real estate climbed from three thousand to ten thousand dollars. But the Henrys were not the only farmers doing well during this decade; prosperity had returned to Kansas as a wet weather cycle began around 1878. With adequate crop production, farmers had an easier time obtaining credit from optimistic investors. Other new technologies, such as barbed wire, made it possible for farmers to fence their lands easily and further stimulated the settlement of the state.<sup>19</sup> The Henrys used this new fencing material and began to phase out the labor-intensive rail and board fencing. Rain, barbed wire, and willing investors all encouraged an escalation of real estate values, and the Henry family unquestionably benefited from better times.



*Henry probably felt at home with his barn since it assisted him in farming patterns similar to those in Pennsylvania.*

In 1885, ten years later, census data note that William Henry was calling himself a stockman and farmer. He had a variety of livestock including horses, cattle, pigs, and a dairy herd that produced more butter than many in the neighborhood. With excess butter production, Henry might have sold both butter and cream to his eldest son David. By 1885 David was married and farming eighty acres of his own (Fig. 9). He also operated a dairy in the nearby town of Big Springs.<sup>20</sup> His creamery had a reputation for

quality Longhorn cheese, which David sold in the most populous towns in northeastern Kansas.<sup>21</sup>

Besides cream and butter, the Henrys' farm again produced winter wheat, corn, oats, and Irish potatoes. These choices remained among the crops statewide that produced the greatest value in the state's farm economy. Besides serving his dairying needs, the barn, with plentiful granaries and storage areas, would have held the Henry harvest until needed during the year. Other sources of family income were the poultry and eggs. Compared with

ten years earlier, Henry was marketing animals for slaughter, which provided a substantial source of cash. The Henrys' orchard supplied the family with apples, peaches, and cherries. Dried and canned, these fruits were a welcome addition to the family's diet during months when fresh fruit was out of season.

With his eldest son managing his own family farm and business in 1885, and because sons Pearly

19. Kenneth Davis, *Kansas* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984), 123–25.

20. Kansas State Census, 1885, Douglas County, Lecompton Township, Schedule 2—Agriculture; see also "Obituary of David K. Henry," Henry collection. David K. Henry married Delia Pifer May in May 1881, and they had ten children. See Henry Family and Site files. Big Springs is in the same township as Lecompton.

21. Marcus Wilson, "A History of Big Springs, Kansas" (paper, Watkins Community Museum of History, 1974).

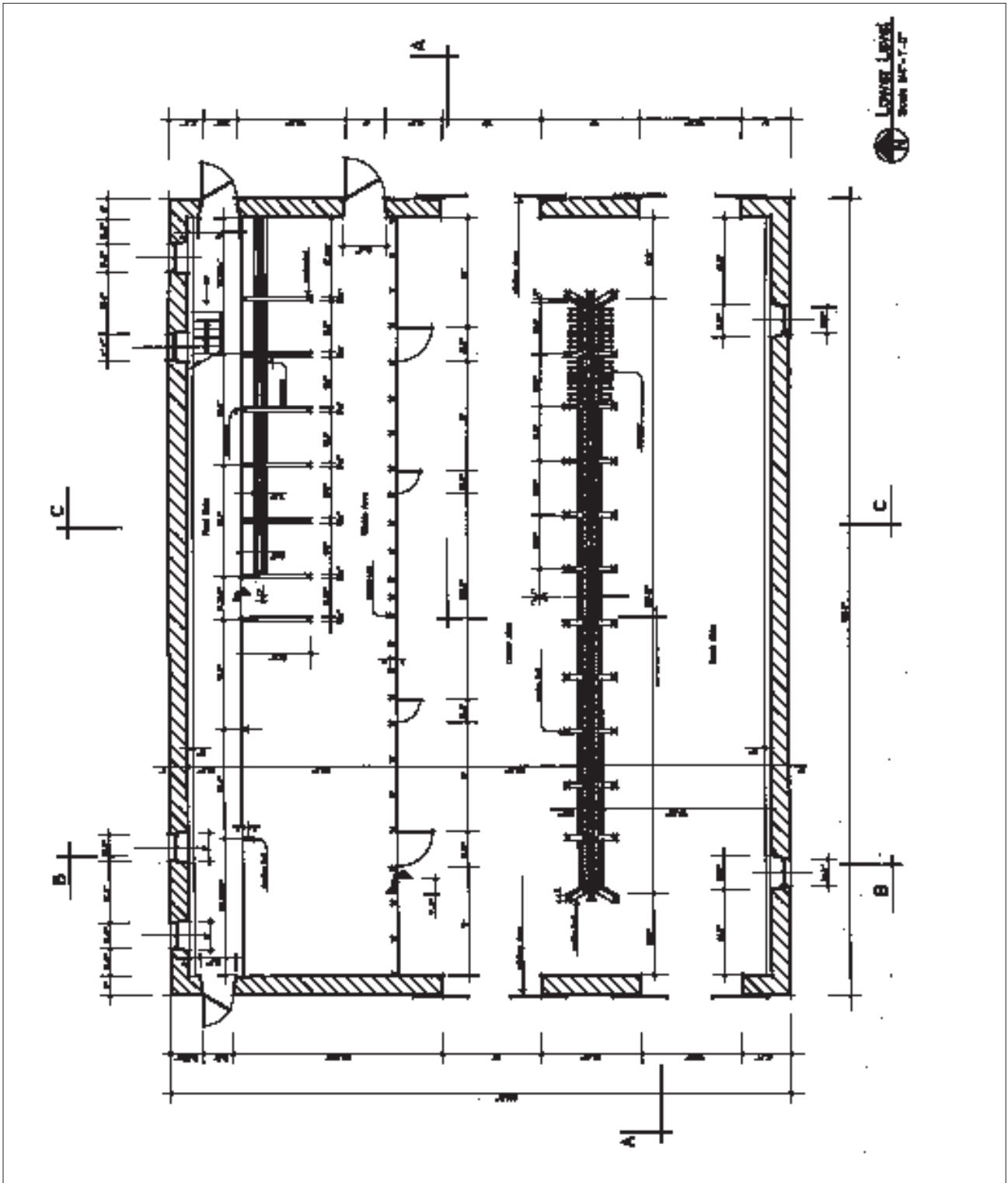


Fig. 5: Basement plan of the William Henry barn. (Note: this drawing depicts the barn as it might have looked, based on physical evidence.)

and Willie were only ten and six years old, Henry needed extra help farming. Two laborers assisted Henry in operating the farm, which had increased in size to 370 acres. It would have been difficult for Henry alone to cut the twenty tons of prairie hay to feed and bed his cattle during the winter months, store twelve hundred bushels of corn and one hundred bushels of wheat in the barn's granaries, and produce such large quantities of butter without some assistance. Hired workers often lived with farm owners who provided them room and board and paid them a small salary. In 1885 Henry paid about one thousand dollars to laborers, which indicates that he may have hired other seasonal help.<sup>22</sup>

The Henrys had entered the Kansas farm economy during a period when agriculture offered a wide variety of production. But between 1875 and 1885 this began to change. Despite the Henrys' generally improving financial status, they could not entirely escape the depression that struck the state in the late 1880s. In 1887, as rains stopped and dry winds shriveled crops, a persistent drought ended remaining investors' optimism. The boom was over, and hard times returned as banks, mortgage companies, and businesses closed their doors and went out of business. Kansas had experienced cycles of boom and bust from its earliest days, but this depression hit those farmers with mortgages especially hard. During the good times of the 1880s, many borrowed money to increase their acreage and purchase farm equipment, so when the dark days of depression arrived, it drove those in debt out of business.

22. Kansas State Census, 1885, Douglas County, Lecompton Township, Schedule 2—Agriculture.

Almost every farmer faced some financial difficulties during such hard times, even those moderately well-off. While times were most difficult in western Kansas, the Henrys' decreased real estate value in 1895 indicates that financial problems struck eastern Kansas as well. The Henrys reduced their herd size and butter production declined, although comparatively the family still fared better than many. Farmers in the northeastern part of the state generally sustained themselves better than those in other areas where high mortgages and farm failures caused much personal hardship.

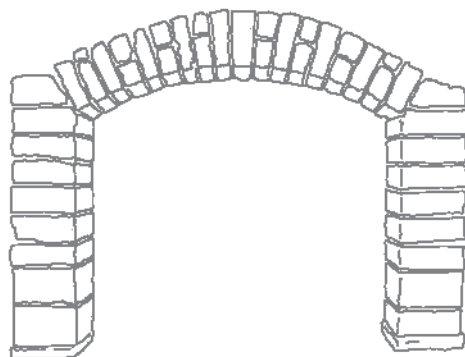
During this decade the Henrys decreased production of wheat, corn, and oats but increased hay production and numbers of swine. By 1895 the family appears to have scaled back its farming activities somewhat. While William and

Kate Henry prospered despite fluctuations in the state's agricultural economy, on a personal level their family experienced misfortune. Their youngest son Willie had suffered an illness or accident in infancy that had

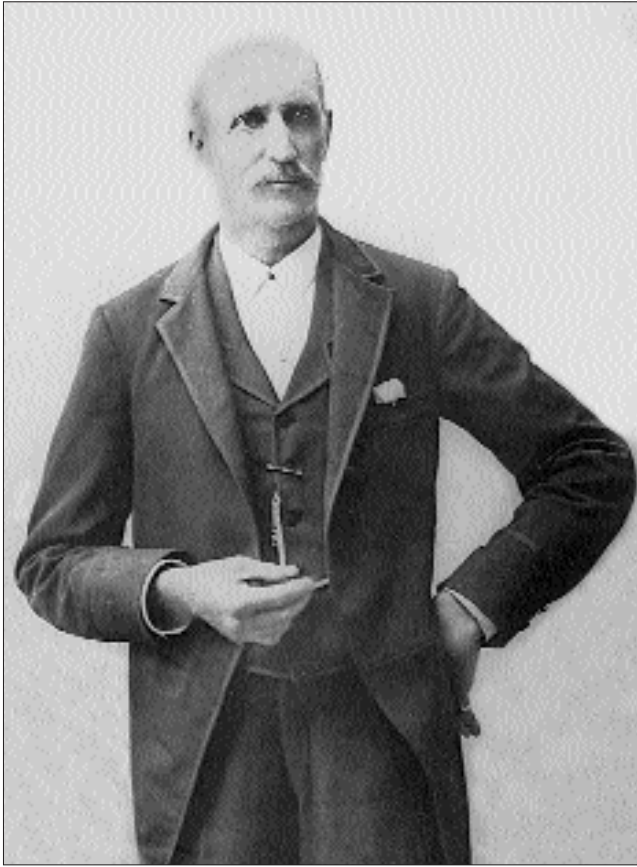
paralyzed one leg. Always in poor health, he died at thirteen in 1892.<sup>23</sup>

The family had been farming in Kansas for thirty years when son John Pearl, or "Pearly," married Sarah Katherine Moore, a local woman, in 1899 (Fig. 10). William and Kate Henry then turned over their Kansas home place to the young couple and moved to Topeka. In 1902 Pearly and Katherine bought the farm, but it did not remain in the Henry family much longer. On March 24, 1904, Pearly drowned in a flash flood as he floated logs down a creek to a saw mill. When his horse arrived home without him, Katherine alerted the neighbors who found his body.<sup>24</sup> After

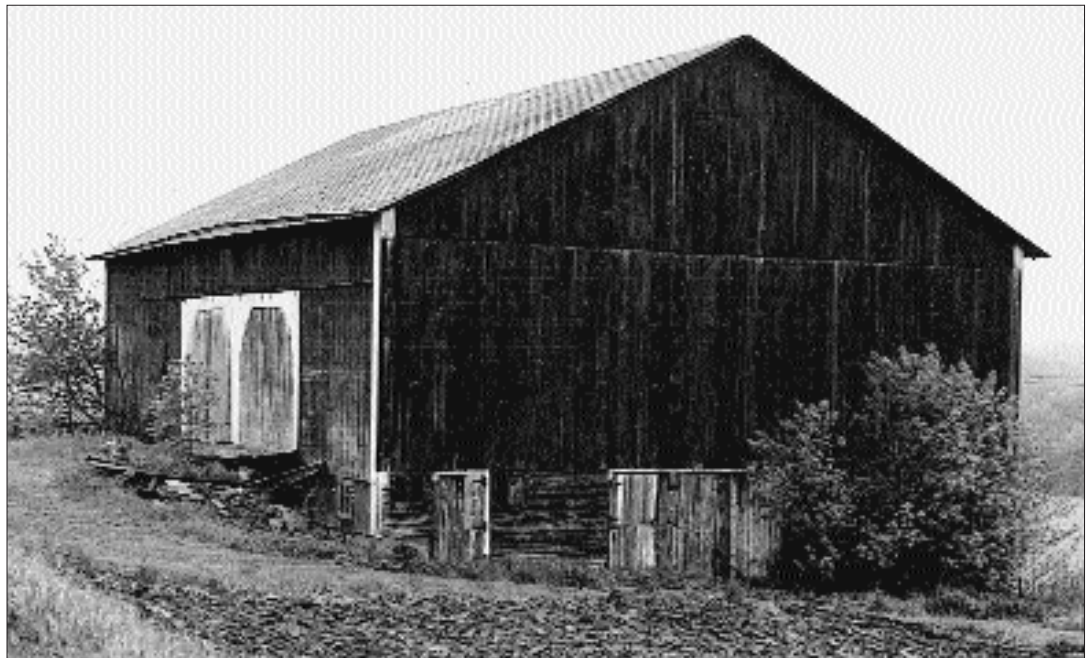
23. "The Funeral of Willie Henry."  
24. "Pearl Henry Drowned."



*The great Pennsylvania barn and limestone house still grace the Henry home place near Lecompton.*



*Fig. 6: William Henry came from Pennsylvania to Douglas County, Kansas, in 1868, bringing with him many agricultural patterns of his home state.*



*Fig. 7: Taken in 1989, this photograph shows a barn on the Henry home place near Rossiter, Pennsylvania, that resembles the one the family built in Kansas.*

Pearly's death, Katherine's family advised her to sell the farm, believing she could not manage it alone. With no extended family member available to assist her, Katherine and her two young daughters, Princess and Laura, left the farm after selling it to a family from the area.

The Henry family left a legacy in Kansas, despite the deaths of two children and the sale of the farm. David, his children, and their children remained in Kansas to raise their families, and their great Pennsylvania barn and limestone house still grace the Henry home place near Lecompton. Although the barn has been owned by others, evidence remains of the family who built it. John Pearl left his mark when he scratched his name "P Henry" onto the stairwell leading to the lower level (Fig. 11). Besides this family signature, the Henry barn still shows its working history with well-worn threshing floors and granary walls scratched with bushel counts.

Modifications to the barn began only after it passed from the Henry family, when later owners altered the barn to serve new needs. Most of these modifications were attempts to further open up the barn's lower level interior. One unfortunate alteration was a large hole punched into the solid limestone foundation for a new entry on the south barnyard side (Fig. 12). Another was the removal of most of a large lower-level manger that ran nearly the length of the barn and supported the upper story in the middle on a hefty limestone foundation (Fig. 13). Both modifications threaten the barn since the structure's weight now rests mainly on the outside foundation walls, and they have failed.

Until these alterations, the barn stood structurally sound for nearly 130 years as a tribute to its Pennsylvania barn-building heritage. From census and family records it appears that this transplanted barn

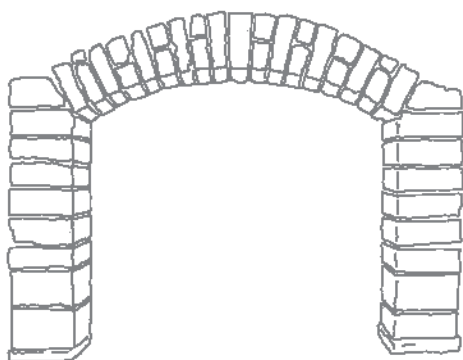
form adequately served the late nineteenth-century Kansas farming needs of the Henry family.

Researchers generally agree that while predecessors of the Pennsylvania barn evolved in Europe over a number of years, ethnic Germans built early forms in a hearth, or core, region—the Cumberland area of the Great Valley in Pennsylvania—during the 1700s.<sup>25</sup> Enlarged and modified there over many decades, the Pennsylvania barn, or barns with forebays (and later Henry's modified form), have been attributed to Ger-

manic building traditions. Pennsylvania Germans did spread the form as they immigrated to new locations, but the Scotch-Irish also dispersed the barn, especially into the southern parts of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.<sup>26</sup> Both groups are credited with spreading the barn form because many of their cultural threads intertwined in the Cumberland area.

To emphasize the problem of linking Henry's barn with an ethnic group, his family came from Indiana County, an area settled mainly by Scotch-Irish immigrants although Pennsylvania Germans also

settled in the same area. While most of the Scotch-Irish were directly from the northern region of Ireland, many others came to Indiana County from the Cumberland area. Indiana County was established in 1803 from existing Westmoreland and Lycoming Counties and was settled between 1710 and 1769, about the same time forebay barns were being built farther east in the hearth area. Because of the number of immigrants arriving in Indiana County from different places and the later presence of the new type of Pennsylvania barn, it would be difficult



*The Pennsylvania barn, or barns with forebays, have been attributed to Germanic building traditions.*

25. Ensminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn*, chapter 1, 51–52.

26. *Ibid.*, 150.

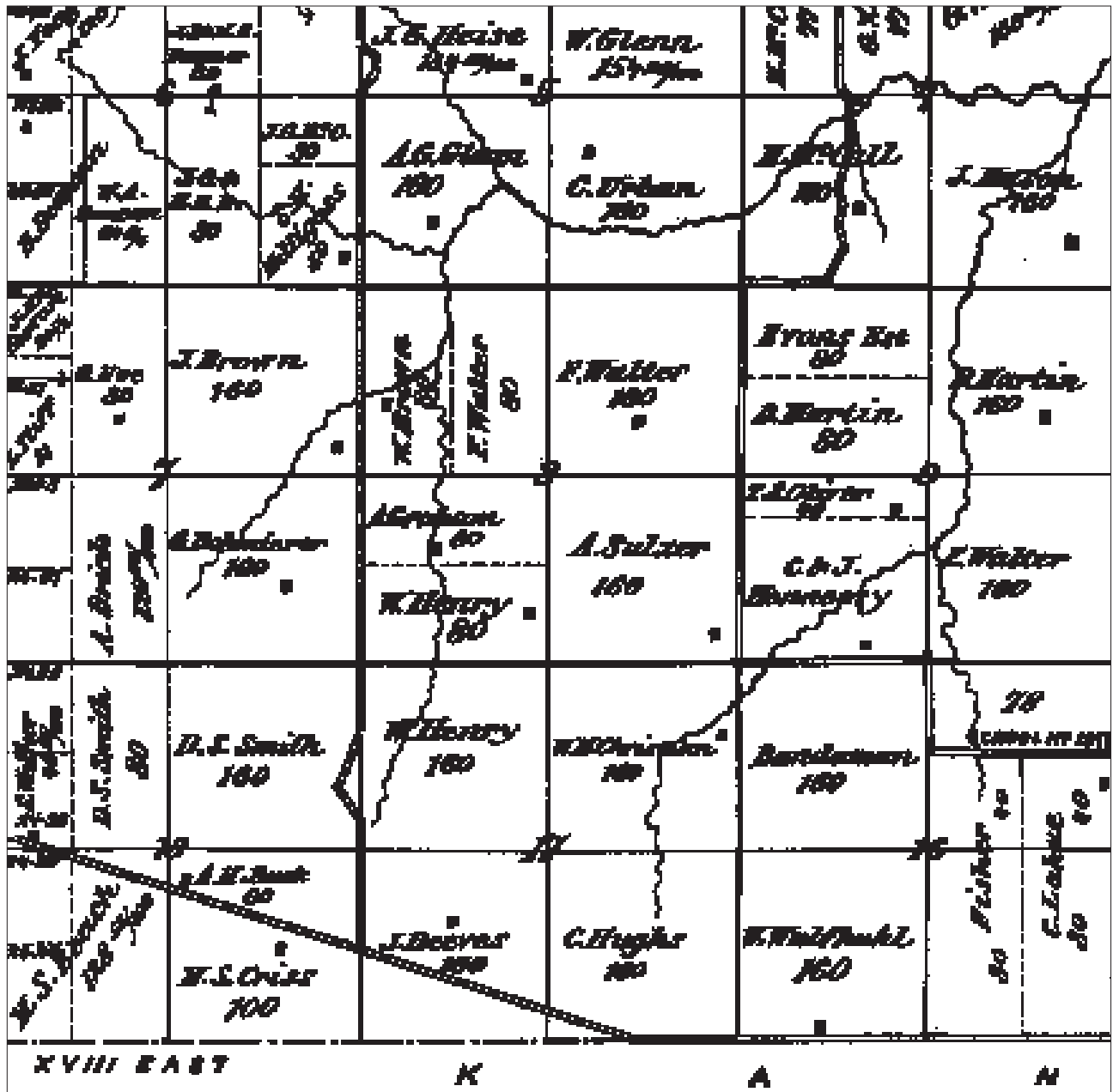


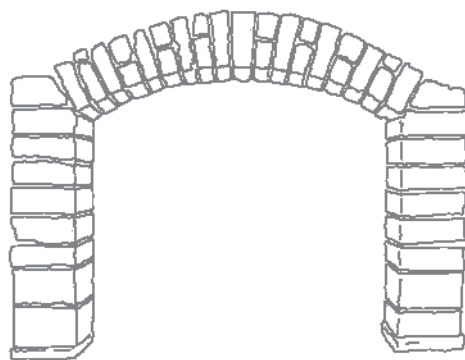
Fig. 8: Atlas of Douglas County, Kansas (New York: F. W. Beers, 1873), showing Henry property.



to connect William Henry's barn with any one European group or tradition.<sup>27</sup>

By the time the Henrys left the family's farm near Rossiter, Pennsylvania, in 1868, the form could not be distinguished by purely ethnic connections; rather, the barn had evolved and syncretized for farming needs because it served common agricultural production patterns, especially dairying. The presence of this barn form in Kansas should be studied as an economic structure, not as evidence of ties to an ethnic heritage.

The lower level of the Henry barn has much in common with so-called English basement barns. English basement barns also are described as having access in the gable ends, stanchions or feeding mangers between the access aisles, and no forebay.<sup>28</sup> But English barns more often had three bays in the upper level instead of



*The lower level of the Henry barn has much in common with so-called English basement barns.*

27. Cortland W. W. Elkin, "The Early Settlement of Indiana County, Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Magazine* 18 (December 1935): 276–77.

Other influences possibly affected the Rossiter area's barn building patterns, but they have yet to be as clearly established. Paul Roberts, editor of *Pittsburgh History*, noted that north of Rossiter many small towns resemble old farm market and lumber towns along the New York border and suggested that perhaps the Henrys had visited farms or seen barns built by New Yorkers. Paul Roberts, telephone interview by author (Amblor), 1998. Glassie's research also supports a New York connection. See Glassie, "The Pennsylvania Barn in the South," 9, where he notes that the forebay-less two-level barn was reinforced by the presence of the forebay-less, two-level barn from New York.

While the Henry barn is a case study, it poses many research questions about Kansas barns. For example, Jordan-Bychkov, "Transverse-Crib Barns," 6–7, suggests that most of the eastern half of Kansas encompasses a "Pennsylvania Extended" diffusion area called the Lower Midwest. He notes that the "Lower Midwest bears preponderantly the imprint of the Pennsylvania Dutch." This cannot be fully supported in the case study of William Henry's barn, however. Henry's barn form flourished in western Pennsylvania where both Scotch-Irish and Pennsylvania Dutch settled, and it remains unclear how the area's barn patterns evolved or which ethnic groups could claim an influence on the source area for Henry's barn form. With more research, Jordan-Bychkov's conclusions may be supported, but ethnic connections now remain difficult to sustain as a means to identify and classify Kansas barns.

28. Henry Glassie, "The Variation of Concepts within Tradition: Barn Building in Otsego County New York," in *Geoscience and Man*, vol. 5, *Man and Cultural Heritage*, ed. Bob F. Perkins (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, Department of Geography and Anthropology, June 1974), 223. Glassie also believed that increased dairying explained changes in a New York barn form.

four, and these barns are small when compared with the new form of Pennsylvania barn that belonged to Henry.<sup>29</sup>

If it is difficult to attribute barn choice with one ethnic group, another approach is sometimes used to determine ethnic building patterns—interior skeleton or framing patterns. A barn's skeleton is created by connecting a series of "bents," which are

part of the heavy timber framework that provides the structure for a barn. Figure 14, which is a section of the Henry barn, shows a bent pattern comparable to that of the Pennsylvania barn in Figure 15. Bents connect to each other with large cross timbers called "girts." Once the skeleton is fully together and in place, the builder

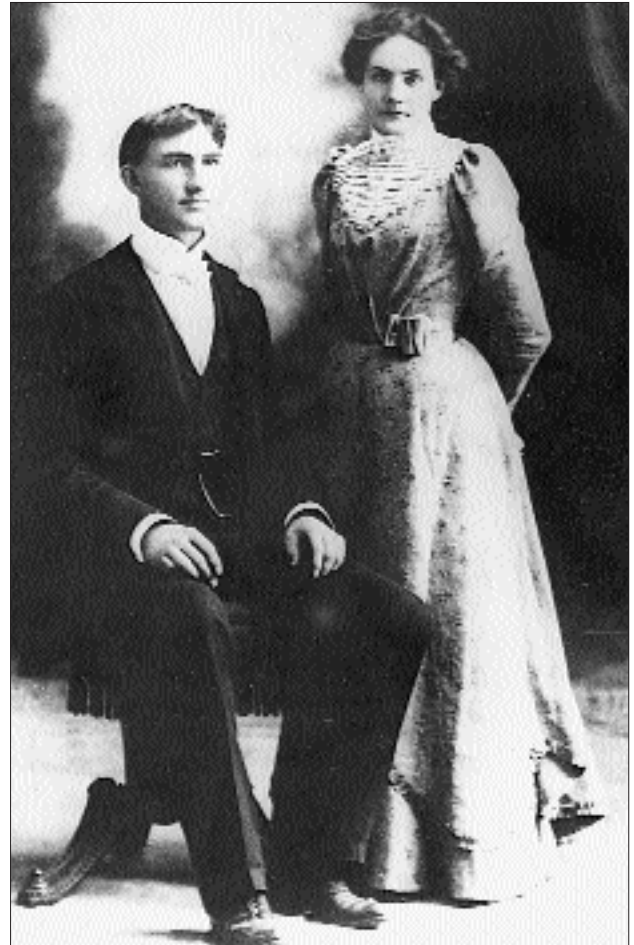
can nail or peg a wooden skin to the barn's frame. While it is difficult to trace changes in the construction of a barn's skeleton, the Henry barn shows at least some similarity to other Pennsylvania barns. For example, in early

barns, girts were typically mortised into the tops and end posts of bents. But by the mid-nineteenth century builders began to simplify this pattern as they dropped the girt down a short distance from the top so that bents could be constructed with a connecting girt in place. This eliminated the need for a secondary girt as part of the bent and somewhat simplified the construction of the frame. There is no reason to believe, however, that these changes were attributable to an ethnic tradition or particular regional barn pat-

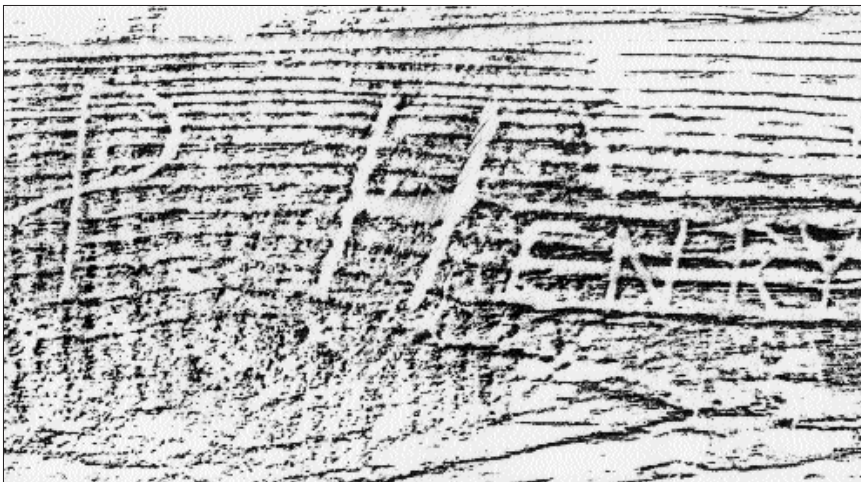
29. Susanne Ridlen, "Bank Barns in Cass County, Indiana," *Pioneer American Society* 4 (July 1972): 25–43. Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek, *The Old Barn Book: Field Guide to North American Barns and Other Farm Structures* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 79, call this an English basement barn. Ridlen's article also points out the problem with tracing the Pennsylvania barn, associating it with Germans, for example, and comparing it with similar English barns. She notes an amalgamation of these barn forms in Cass County, Indiana, which she simply calls a "bank barn," and she drops ethnic associations. See *ibid.*, 27.



*Fig. 9: David K. Henry, eldest son of William Henry and first wife, Rachel, is shown with his wife, Delia Pifer May, and two children.*



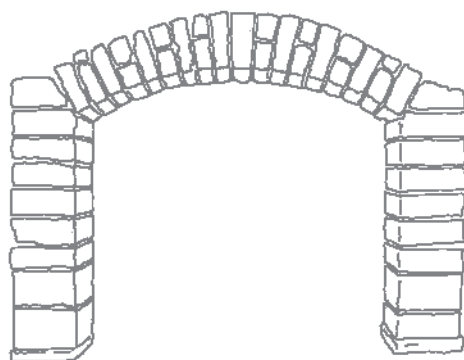
*Fig. 10: John Pearl "Pearly" Henry is shown here with his wife, Sarah Katherine Moore Henry, ca. 1890. Pearly, a son of William Henry and second wife, Kate, was the last Henry family member to own the farm.*



*Fig. 11: Pearly Henry left his mark on the family barn when he scratched his name onto the stairwell leading to the lower level.*

tern; rather, they were part of an evolution of building techniques.<sup>30</sup>

While variations are found in mortise and tenon joints, they do not necessarily reveal a barn builder's cultural or ethnic background. However, the Henry barn does show a distinctive element in the mortise and tenon joints because they are "seated-in." Seating-in a joint means a builder notched out a slot in the mortised beam so a tenon would "sit down," or seat itself within the notch. Again, Henry Glassie documented this trait for late eighteenth-century barns in New York, not in Pennsylvania. He concluded that the older the barn, the more likely the beams would be seated-in.<sup>31</sup> The Henry barn obviously is not old in comparison with those Glassie studied from the late 1700s, yet Glassie's research suggests the framing pattern for Henry's barn has perhaps as much connection to New York's barn building traditions as it does to Pennsylvania's. This tends to reconfirm a mix of ethnic groups within Indiana County during its settlement years. The Henry barn presents a very complex picture of building traditions and cultural backgrounds tied to the Rossiter region but apparently derived from multiple sources—including Pennsylvania German and Scotch-Irish, and from New York and Pennsylvania. Despite all that the Henry barn does convey in form, function, and building technique, no information has been found about this barn's construction crew.



*Only in rare instances in Kansas can barn patterns be associated with ethnic or religious groups.*

For nearly thirty years William Henry's farming patterns affirmed that his decision to build a Pennsylvania barn in Kansas, which was familiar to him, fit within agricultural production patterns that crossed regional borders. This is not to say that the barn ensured the Henry family's long-term economic success but rather that it assisted in maintaining farming patterns familiar to them. Although few other eastern Kansas farmers had such a barn, many were just as successful as the Henry family. With the multitude of factors that affected farmers' success or failure, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the barn's value other than it helped the family sustain and improve its financial status and provided a cultural link to its Pennsylvania home place. In a broader view, the history of the

Henry family helps connect farming patterns across the United States and demonstrates that immigrants who brought capital with them could survive the late nineteenth-century boom and bust economy in a settle-

ment-era state.

In Kansas, rather than identify barn forms by ethnic associations, it is usually most helpful to identify a barn's form and function and then trace it to other eastern regional barn building traditions through family histories, to agricultural production patterns, or to new technologies and popular or prescriptive forms from the building era. Only in rare instances in Kansas can barn patterns be associated with ethnic groups such as Swedes, or religious groups such as Mennonites or Amish, and even these groups built wide ranges of barn forms within the state.<sup>32</sup>

30. Ensminger, "A Comparative Study of Pennsylvania and Wisconsin Forebay Barns," 112; Glassie, "The Variation of Concepts within Tradition," 227, 228.

31. Glassie, "The Variation of Concepts Within Tradition," 199. A framing characteristic attributed to lowland areas of the Netherlands and northwestern Germany is extended pegs, or those driven through a mortise and tenon joint and left to protrude much like a bristle on a brush. See Hubert G. H. Wilhelm, "Midwestern Barns and Their Germanic Connections," in *Barns of the Midwest*, ed. Allen G. Noble and Hubert G. H. Wilhelm (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 76.

32. Greg Schultz, "Barns and Cultural Change in Central Kansas" (master's thesis, University of Kansas, 1983). Schultz noted the problems in associating barn forms with ethnic groups such as Swedes and Mennonites. Schultz found that a wide range of interrelated cultural phenomena made it difficult to indicate which factors might lead to changes in building forms. Many different events influence people to alter the basic manner in which they construct a building.



*Fig. 12: In later years a hole unfortunately was punched in the limestone foundation on the south barn-yard side of the Henry barn.*



*Fig. 13: Manger on lower level. This small section is all that remains of a manger that once ran almost the length of the barn.*

An identification system for classifying barn types that works for Kansas has yet to be worked out definitively. Most published barn research has been completed on structures located in eastern states, and therefore the existing field guides that frequently cite ethnic ties are based on this work. In Kansas a mix of cultural forces, including ethnicity, regionality, agricultural economics, popular prescriptive trends in agricultural journals, technology, and tradition, affected the choice of barn forms.<sup>33</sup>

Diffusion over time and distance notably increased the interaction of such factors. The rooted influences of a cultural hearth could diminish under these conditions especially when Kansas immigration records reveal that most families moved west in a succession of times before they reached the state. As they moved, many syncretized tastes along the way with new customs and ideas.

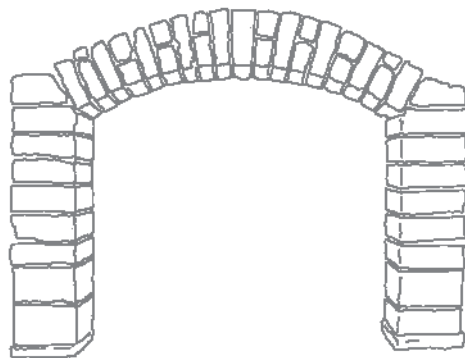
Although researchers trace barn building patterns, few draw associations between forms and the families that used them as economic structures supporting agricultural production. The richness of the Henry fami-

ly's history connects Pennsylvania family roots to Kansas and shows how this Pennsylvania barn form remained viable when the Henrys transplanted into a new setting. Census records, obituaries, histories, and tax records provide the information necessary to create a good understanding of the Henry family's farming experience and how its great barn assisted the family's transition from Pennsylvania to Kansas.

As 1868 immigrants to a state whose boom and bust economy, cycles of drought, and insect invasions forcefully challenged many farmers, the Henry family prospered. The story of this family is tied to Pennsylvania traditions but unfolds within the context of Kansas's regional agriculture. The barn reminds us that some immigrants believed their economic success was bound not

only to farming traditions but also to their barns, which they integrated seamlessly into their farm life. Today, the Henry's great Pennsylvania barn remains a testament to the immigrant family who built it, and to its successes,

hardships, and sorrows while settling into its new home state of Kansas.



*The Henry's great Pennsylvania barn remains a testament to the immigrant family who built it.*

33. See Noble and Cleek, *The Old Barn Book*; see also Noble and Cleek, "Sorting Out the Nomenclature of English Barns," *Material Culture* 26 (Spring 1994): 49–63; John Fraser Hart, "On the Classification of Barns," *Material Culture* 26 (Fall 1994): 37–46; Noble and Cleek, "Reply to Hart," *Material Culture* 27 (Spring 1995): 25–31. These articles in *Material Culture* have been a forum for continuing discussions among barn researchers

about the value of existing or proposed classification systems, diffusion patterns, and cultural hearths. This case study would argue that even in states such as Pennsylvania, mixed settlement patterns and changes in agricultural production may have had more to do with barn forms than did ethnic affiliation.

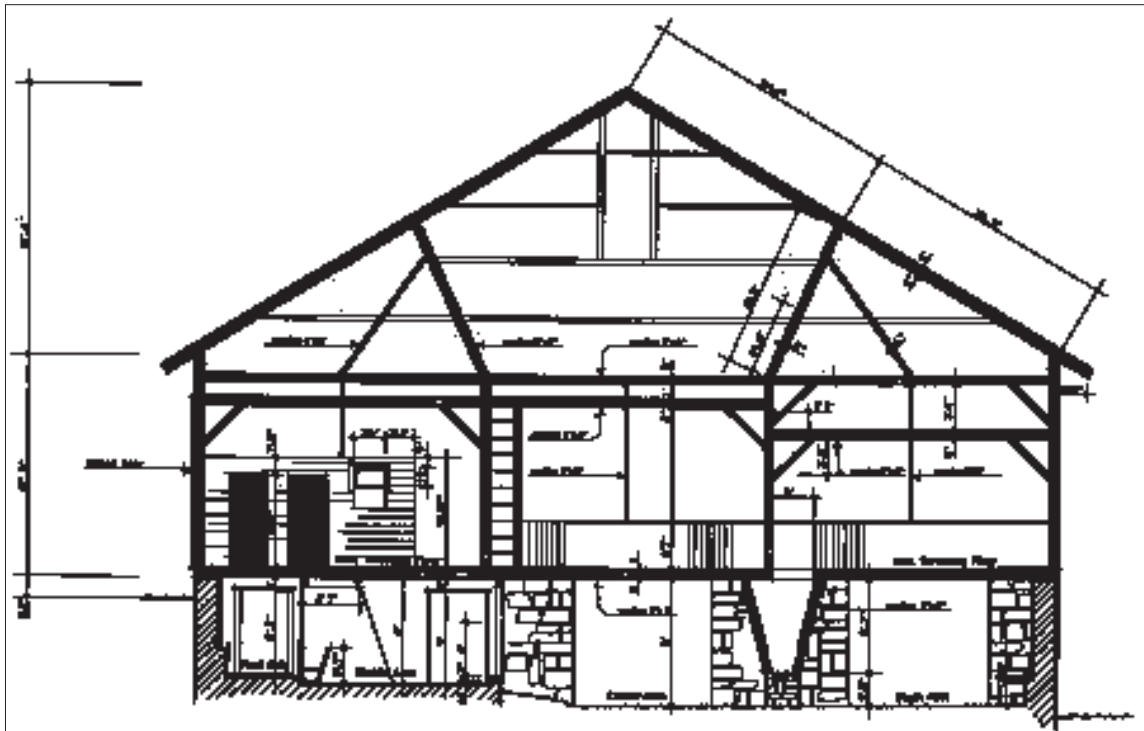


Fig. 14: This section of the Henry barn illustrates a "bent" pattern of construction comparable to that of the Pennsylvania barn in Fig. 15.

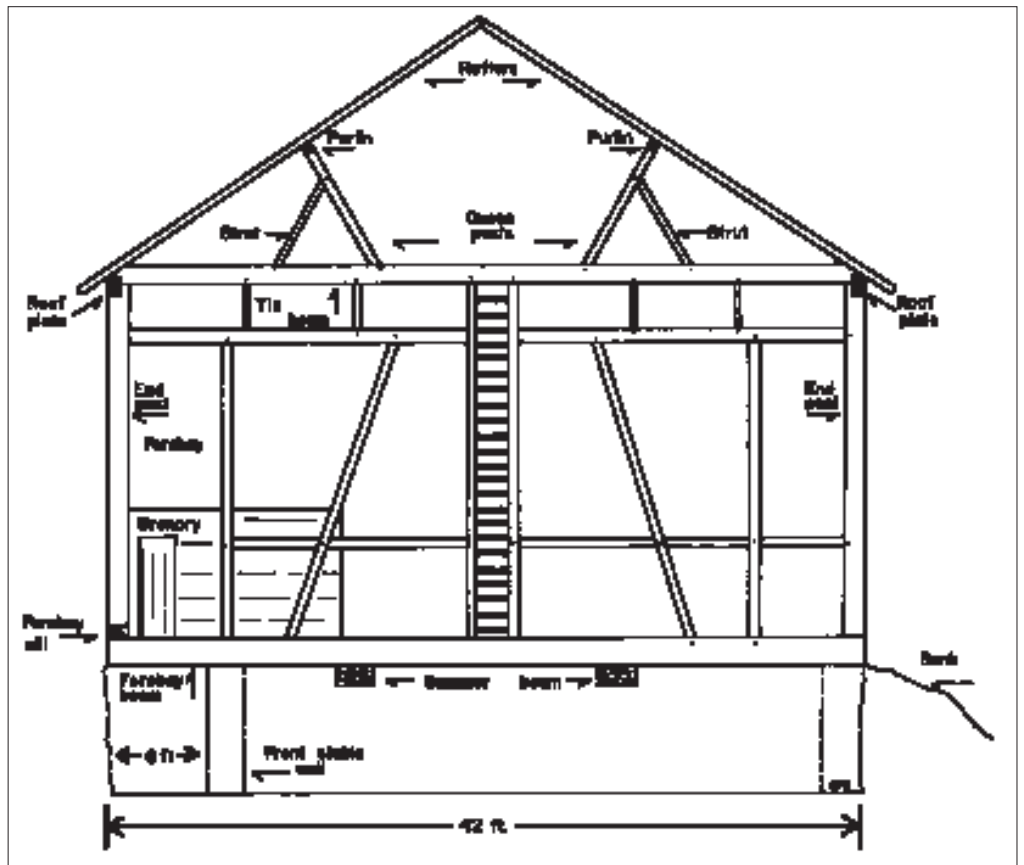


Fig. 15: Representative section of the Pennsylvania barn.