

BARN RAISING

Once a Sort of Social Function Necessitating the Preparation of Much Food

It would be interesting to know how many pairs of long boots were worn at that old-fashioned barn raising up the state recently.

A barn raising was once a function preceded by a whole week of baking and planning not only on the part of the housewife but of the women folk of the neighborhood, none of whom would think of going empty handed to help wait on the men after the frame of the barn had been set up. A barn raising outranked in importance a plowing or a chopping bee. It was invariably followed by a dance, in which the white pine floors were tested by the nimble feet of the farmers, the heels and soles of whose dancing boots were inlaid with nails in heart, diamond and other designs, the variety of which was a token of the skill of the custom shoemaker of that day. The tighter the boots the more satisfactory the fit, and many a veteran whose thatch is gray tells of having to go sockless to don a new pair of dancing boots.

An old-fashioned barn raising meant the hoisting into place of the frame of a structure whose units were to be fastened together with wooden pins that are still to be seen in every old building. When the framers—men who fashioned the timbers out of rough logs and fitted them together—had completed their work the owner issued his invitations. Captains were selected and teams chosen. At signal the skeleton of the barn was elevated by long pikes while agile youngsters in stockinged feet ran along the plates driving home the tree-nails that were to hold the frame in place. The quickest workers won the victory. If a pike slipped and the framework fell it meant a serious accident.

Many of the barns built under these neighborly conditions are still standing, the admiration of all who examine their construction. Their splendid hand hewn plates and sills of oak and elm are as sound as the day they were cut in forests that are now only a memory.—New York Herald.