

County Barn Raising Brings Back Old Memories

83 Neighbors Turn Out to Help Construct Clark E. Miller Barn Near Lavansville

Many of the older rural people in the county have fond memories of the old-fashioned barn-raising which were major social events as well as the quicker means of constructing a barn.

Families from miles around would gather for a barn-raising—the men to do the carpentry work and the women, to help prepare the abundant feasts served to the workers. When the barn floor had been laid, a barn dance was held as a grand climax to the raising—whether the roof had been completed or not.

Practically every younger Somerset County has heard fascinating accounts about the barn-raising in which their elders have participated. And, of course, there are many who have been participants in the events.

Therefore, it was no wonder that many neighbors of the Clark E. Miller, Somerset RD 4, eagerly accepted the opportunity to participate in a barn-raising at the Miller farm last week.

News of the proposed barn-raising had reached a group of Pittsburgh photographers beforehand and camera shutters clicked frequently during Monday, the day of the actual barn-raising, as the photographers got the pictures to illustrate a story which will appear in a national magazine.

Eighty-three workmen gathered at the Miller farm early last Monday morning to begin fitting together the framework of the barn. The lumber for the structure had been sawed and notched by four carpenters of Fike's Building Service.

During the 18 days preceding the raising so that, when the time for the raising came it was a matter of fitting together the timbers

as they were marked.

The front page picture shows how the work on the framework had progressed by 3:30 Monday afternoon. Of course, the masonry work and the big concrete silo had been completed by Monday.

The farmer-carpenters who participated in the raising seemed to be having an entertaining day doing what they would otherwise regard as rather hard work.

The only break in the carpentry work was the chicken dinner which had been prepared by Mrs. Miller with the assistance of neighbors and relatives. Dinner was served on large tables on the lawn at the Miller home.

It seemed to the workmen that Mrs. Miller must have worked as hard preparing the food for the 83 men as they worked on the barn-raising.

The week before, Mrs. Miller baked 65 big loaves of bread and butchered 24 chickens which, the morning of the raising, were fried by Mrs. Miller and two relatives. Mrs. Miller had also baked 10 or 12 cakes—she does not remember the exact number—prepared three gallons of noodle with chicken broth, and made five gallons of baked beans.

To the actual barn-raising, the photographers who had prepared meals for a family of four or six, the work of preparing food for 83 workmen would seem staggering. However, Mrs. Miller did not find it too difficult since she had been cooking for from 12 to 18 men every day for three weeks prior to the raising—and she and the people who put up the silo.

After Monday, the number of workmen decreased: 40 on Tuesday, 23 on Wednesday and 20 on succeeding days. After the work

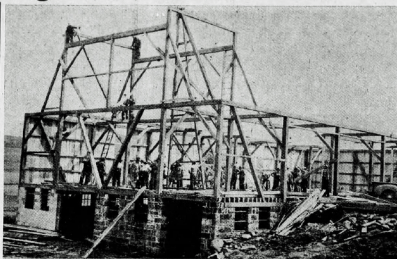
of putting up the framework of the 56 by 100-foot barn was completed, the carpenters proceeded to erect the framework for the roof which was almost completed by Thursday and started to put up the siding. The picture on this page shows the barn as it looked Thursday afternoon. The work is expected to be completed by the middle of this week.

When the barn is completed, there will be a barn dance with both round and square dancing. Jay Barclay will call figures and music will be furnished by local musicians.

The new barn will replace a 115-year-old barn which had outlived its usefulness. The new structure stands on the site of the old one, which in addition to being in poor condition was too small to fill the needs of the Millers. The old barn and wood silo were razed by hooking a tractor to them and pulling them down. All the wood that could be used in the new structure was salvaged and the remainder was burned.

The new silo, constructed of concrete blocks, is a 100-foot diameter. The cement Corporation of Marietta, Ohio, the contractor for the building of the barn was Fike's Building Service of Meyersdale.

Although there were a number of pieces of modern equipment which hastened the comple-



Under the supervision of Galen Fike of Meyersdale, 83 farmers and neighbors of the Clark E. Miller farm of Somerset RD 4 turned out to begin construction of a 56 x 100 foot barn last Monday. The pre-cut timbers were quickly assembled, and by late afternoon the framework skeleton was practically completed.

Photo by The Canadian

tion of the barn—such as the portable motor-driven winch on Fike's service truck and improved built-in the barn-raising of years ago.

Nearly half of the siding was finished by the time workers quit for the day. Mrs. Miller fed the workers 24 fried chickens, 65 loaves of bread, baked beans, noodles and cakes for dinner. A big square dance will be held on the barn floor when it is completed.

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Galen Fike only Builder of Trussed Clear-Span Roofs

One of the outstanding smaller building contractors in Somerset County is Galen A. Fike, Meyersdale RD 3, who heads Fike's Building Service.

Mr. Fike is, as far as is known, the only builder of wooden trussed or clear-span roofs in the county. Many construction authorities say that it is impossible to build clear-span roofs, up to 50 feet wide, of wood, but Mr. Fike has been building them successfully since he started his building business just after the war. Construction of a trussed roof—one which is not supported by studding so that the floor of the building is clear—requires to little engineering ability and wooden roofs are even more difficult.

Mr. Fike specializes in industrial building where the clear-span roof is an important asset. Among the industrial buildings he has built are the new hydroelectric at DiPasquale's greenhouse in Meyersdale and two vital plants built at LaVale, Md. and Meyersdale by his brother, Quinter.

He also has built a number of houses and barns—five dairy barns in the last one or two years.



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ANOTHER MIRACLE BARGAIN

83 workmen started building the 56 x 100 foot barn on Monday. By Thursday the structure was practically under roof.

Photo by The Canadian