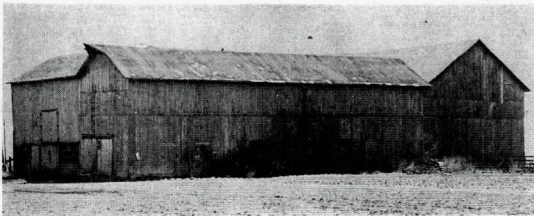


**BEFORE AND AFTER**—In 1882 all William McGuigan's neighbors gathered round for a barn-raising bee, above. After many hours' hard work the barn was finished, and it still stands today on County Rd. 10 near Erie Beach, a monument to the skill of those farmers.



# Raising the roof: Old photos recall barn-raising bee

By BLAIR McKINNON

**BLLENHEIM**—Back in the last century barn raising was both an art and a community affair, with as many as 50 men working to get the structure up in a couple of days—and as many women working to get the barn bee suppers ready.

As for lunch—they ate that on the job, so no time would be wasted.

All of which came to light when James McGuigan of Cedar Springs was given pictures of a barn-raising episode on the original McGuigan Acres near Erie Beach. This was the original settling-place of the first McGuigan, William, who was born in Ireland and came to Canada after marrying a Scottish wife, Mary McGregor, in 1837. He was 92 when he died.

The barns built by, or rather for, the original Canadian McGuigan are still standing although not owned by the present generation of the family.

They are a little weather worn, but nevertheless are still very much in service and they have withstood high winds blowing off Lake Erie, have been washed by the rains of the years, the lightning storms, the heavy ice storms, but luckily no fires.

The present generation of McGuigans (Jim and Maurice) are living on the same road as the original McGuigan, but nearer Cedar Springs.

Jim said the pictures were given him by John E. Smith, a neighbor, whose ancestors probably worked on the original barn-raising.

Jim said the frame for the barns was first laid out on the site.

Of course all the beams were hand-hewn timbers. One man "rode" the framework as

it was pushed up with long poles by the helpers at the be.

For the free ride, he had to pound the wooden pegs into place to hold the whole works together.

Friends and neighbors worked till the last light and if necessary coming back the following day after their own farm chores were done.

According to history, the meals were something else! There were whole sides of pork, beef, chicken, turkey, sausages, head cheese, four or five different kinds of pies, and all the milk, etc., they could drink.



**TEAMWORK**—Barn-raising in the 1880s was a neighborhood event—everybody gathered round to lend a hand, like these neighbors of the McGuigans.