

# BARNNS

There is a traditional aspect of historic French and Quebec farming operations that distinguished Manitoba Franco-Manitoba barns in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century at least: the distinct separation of functions in different buildings (Figures 27 and 28). Where British or Mennonite barns for example combined animals and hay and feed into one building—the British vertically with a stable below and a loft above and Mennonites longitudinally with animals and hay and grain at one end and a house at the other—traditional French farmsites had one barn for hay and another barn (or stable) for horses and/or cattle.

Where British and Mennonite barns are easily distinguished by their size and form (both types are large and with distinct roof shapes and details), Franco-Manitoban barns (for hay or for horses usually) are slightly harder to “read” (Figure 29). They are typically smaller, with vertical board and batten siding. Inside they often have distinct configurations of the large timbers that were used in their construction – for hay barns especially, where open space was required for the movement of equipment and the storage of great piles of hay.



**Figure 27.**

A Quebec farm outbuilding – simple in form and detail.



**Figure 28.**

Matanaka, Quebec area granaries.



**Figure 29.**

The basic, elemental form of a Franco Manitoban barn – either for hay or horses. This example is in the Dufresne area. One tell-tale sign of its French character is in the use of vertical board and batten siding.

## Hay Barns

A hay barn in the St. Georges area near the Winnipeg River in the R.M. of Alexander (Figures 30 and 31) is a rare surviving example of a traditional Franco-Manitoba hay barn. A detailed exploration of the barn, shown via drawings on three following pages, gives a vivid sense of the simplicity of the overall form, and the complexity of the structure and details.

Built for the Dupont family, the barn was put up around 1890. The most elemental of forms are present here: a squarish plan (Figure 32), a gable roof with medium pitch (Figure 33), and walls of vertical siding (Figure 34).

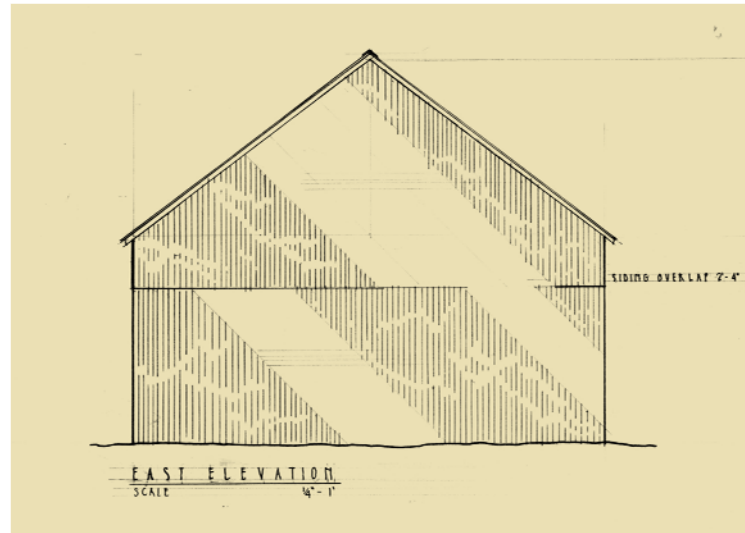
A key attribute of such barns was the distinctive “bent” configuration of the internal arrangement of large timbers that gave the building structural stability (Figures 35, 36 and 37). The Dupont Hay Barn exhibits this to a tee – with diagonal bracing timbers formed into a wide “Y” rising from posts and beams to support purlins that run the full length of the barn. Inside, the effect is dramatic, with the rhythmic march of the elements suggesting strength and elegance.



**Figure 30.**  
Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area of the R. M.  
of Alexander.

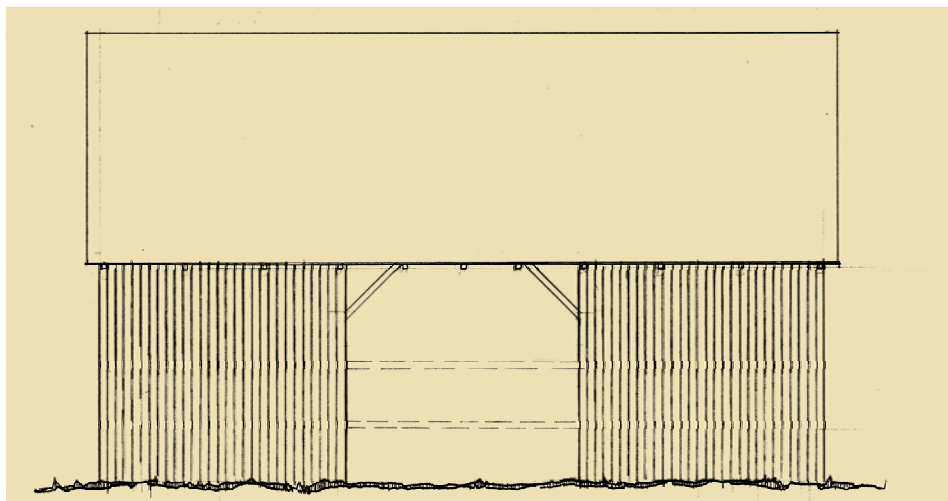


**Figure 31.**  
Timber bracing detail of the Dupont Hay Barn,  
St. Georges area.



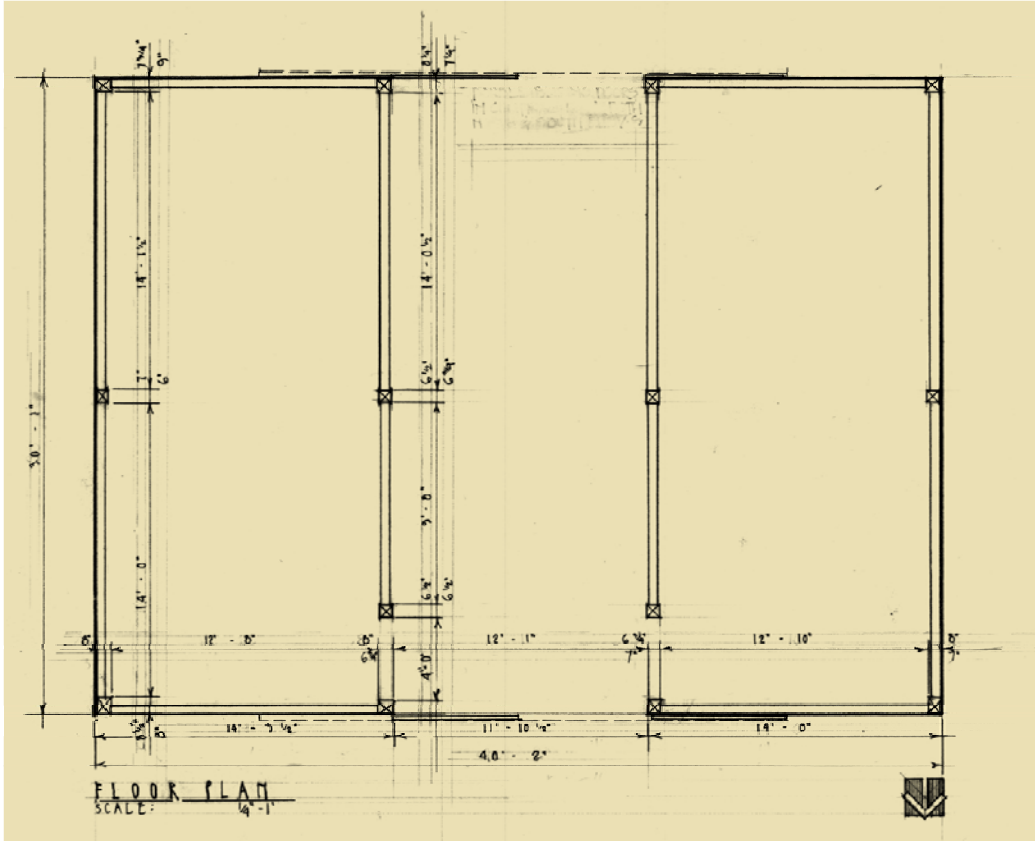
**Figure 32.**

Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Side elevation.



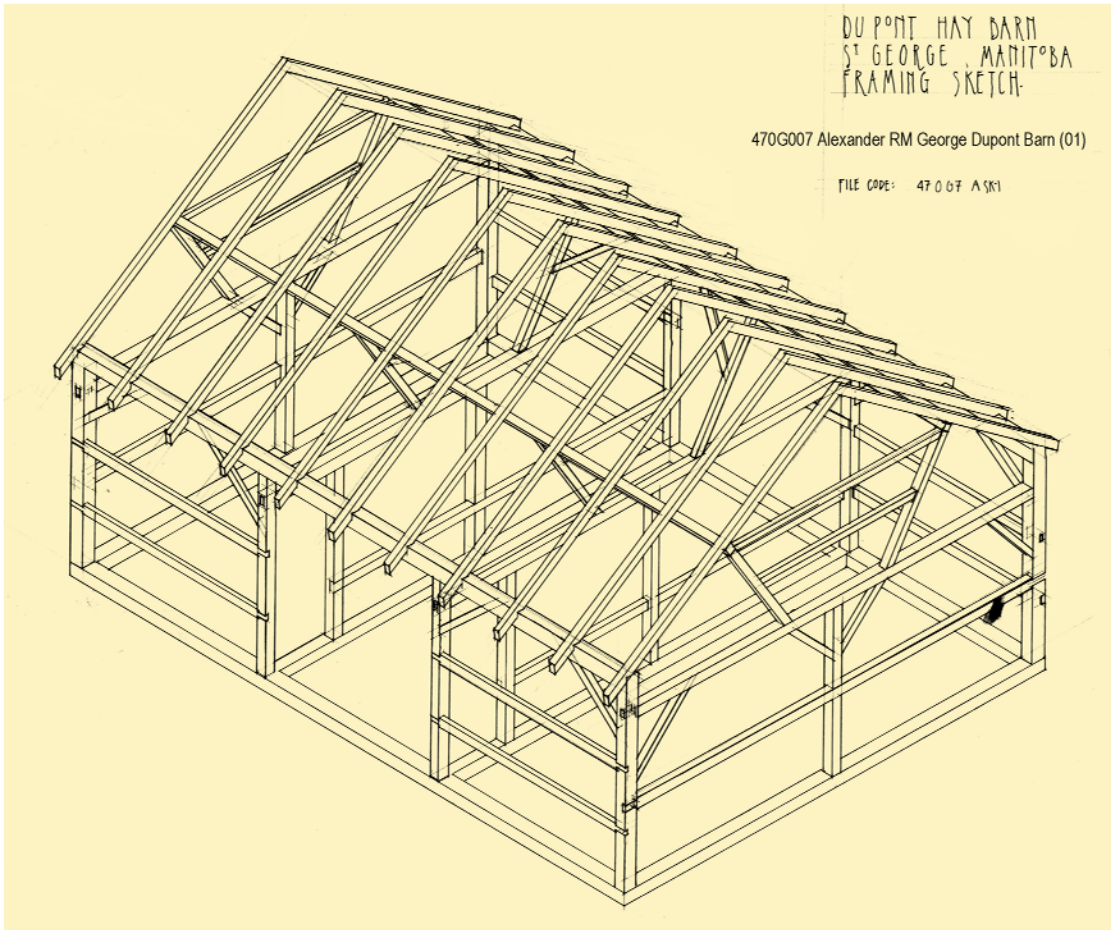
**Figure 33.**

Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Main elevation. The basic and elemental forms are clear in these renderings.



**Figure 34.**

Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Floor plan. The hay barn floor was divided into three sections – a central one for a driveway in which wagons could be pulled and two side sections where the contents of the wagons could be placed.

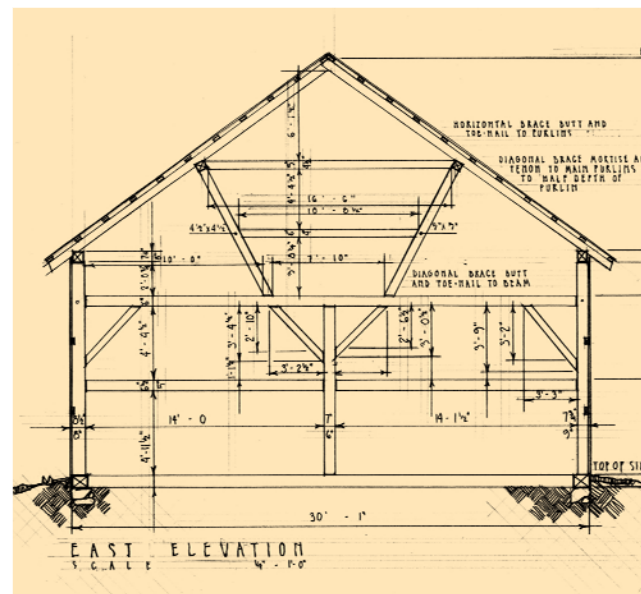


**Figure 35.**

Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. This isometric drawing shows the elaborate timber framing employed in the traditional French fashion in which a "Y" braced section was used for stability.



**Figure 36.**  
Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. View of interior timber framework.



**Figure 37.**  
Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Cross section drawing showing the “Y” shaped timber framing employed to support the roof and to create open spaces for movement of hay and equipment.



## Horse Barns

Like the hay barn, a Franco Manitoba horse barn was invariably built as a separate structure on the farmsite. Like the hay barn, the horse barn (or stable) was simple and straightforward in form and detail. The Landry Horse Barn in the Dufresne area is a good example of the type (Figure 38), with its boxy form, gable roof and vertical board and batten siding. Inside, the arrangement of spaces was more elaborate than in a hay barn, given the need in a stable to control horses in mangers.



**Figure 38.**

Landry Horse Barn in the Dufresne area.

## Large Wood Frame Barns

By the early 1900s, barns in Franco-Manitoba areas of Manitoba were undergoing the same kind of attention as houses – thus getting larger and more complex. And like their farm houses, these new barns were also adopting prevailing North American barn forms and appointments. At the same time it is interesting to note that a common roof feature of North American barn design from the late 1890s and even to today—the gambrel roof (discussed earlier with farm houses)—has its roots in French architecture. And thus the gambrel-roofed barns of French areas of Manitoba seem right at home (Figure 39).

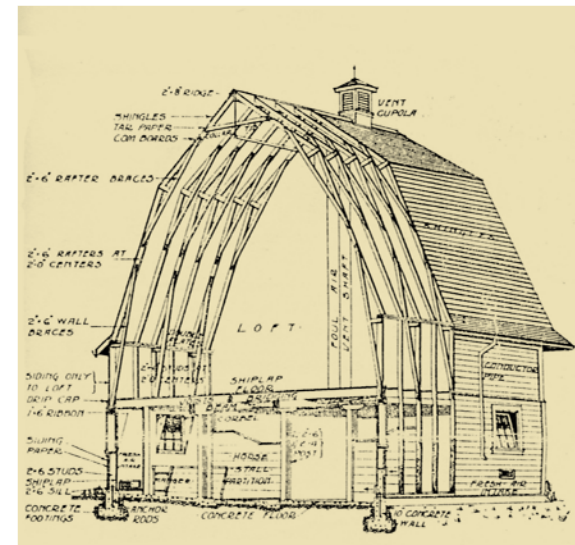


**Figure 39.**

The Roger Dandenault Barn on Rat River Drive in the R.M. of De Salaberry, shows the traditional gable-roofed barn and in the background the new gambrel-roofed barn so popular with farmers in the early decades of the 1900s. On the right of the image is a large grain and corn silo.

By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the introduction of new farm machinery, innovative construction techniques and scientific planning greatly altered the appearance of barns. The hay sling and the grain auger provided easier, more economical ways to move hay and feed, while the introduction of tractors around 1900 led to the decline of the horse as the principal source of farm power. All of these developments allowed for new barn design options. Mail-order and lumber companies offered a variety of barn designs and kits which included all materials. Engineered truss rafters were used to create huge unobstructed loft spaces. And thus besides the gambrel, the vault shape was also developed, to create even greater loft capacity (Figure 40).

Given the rise of dairy farming as a major agricultural force in certain Franco Manitoban areas, especially in the southeast, it is no surprise that large dairy barns are still abundant in that area. Samples of this kind of barn are featured on following pages (Figures 41 – 45).



**Figure 40.** Pattern book design showing placement of engineered trusses in a large gambrel-roofed barn.



**Figure 41.**

A large majestic barn in the St. Jean-Baptiste area. In this case, the intersection of two sections of a very large barn emphasize the pleasing form of the gambrel roof.



**Figure 42.**

Comte Barn, Notre Dame-de-Lourdes area, ca. 1900. This and other barns in the Notre Dame-de-Lourdes area were built by French masons who were brought to the area to build barns.



**Figure 43.**

A typical vault-roofed barn in the Fannystelle area.



**Figure 44.**  
Notre Dame de Lourdes-area dairy barn.



**Figure 45.**  
Ste. Anne-area barn, once used for dairy cattle and now for dances. The distinctive gambrel form used for the barn is reinforced in the section over the main doors (top) and then also in the junction of two sections (bottom) where the complexity of the form gains more prominence.