FRANCO-MANITOBAN FARM BUILDINGS

An Architectural History Theme Study

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On the Cover:
Illustration of the Benjamin Bohemier House, ca. 1880,
now at the St. Norbert Heritage Park.

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PREFACE

This overview of Franco-Manitoban farm buildings has been derived from a review of various reports and research projects developed by the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, or by research consultants working on behalf of the branch.

The areas from which information has been derived include the Rural Municipality of De Salaberry and Town of St. Pierre, the Rural Municipality of Tache, the Rural Municipality of Ste. Anne, the Rural Municipality of Ritchot, the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie, the Rural Municipality of St. Francois-Xavier, the Rural Municipality of Alexander (where the community of St. Georges contains some rare examples of early Franco Manitoba farm buildings), and the Rural Municipality of Morris, where there are also still some extant examples of Franco-Manitoban farm architecture.

Many historic Franco-Manitoban communities are located near Winnipeg, and thus have suffered losses to their heritage stock because of modern suburban and recently exurban development, and growth of farm sizes that have rendered older buildings obsolete more quickly than in other areas of the province. At the same time, there are still rural areas in the communities and districts noted above that have sustained some older farm buildings, and it is certainly possible to explore those places in order to piece together the various themes and trends that define the architectural history of Franco-Manitoba farm buildings.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Franco-Manitoban farm buildings (Figure 1), including houses, barns and outbuildings, have their roots in the French region of Normandy, and of course in Quebec. It was in Quebec, were most of the French-speaking immigrants to Manitoba originated, that basic vernacular farm building types and forms were developed over the course of nearly 200 years, from the late 17th century and into the 1800s. These traditions are presented in the next section, Historical Context, as a background to developments in Manitoba. Additional information about another vital physical quality that defined pioneer Franco-Manitoban farm life—the actual layout of many farms—is also examined in this section.

Settlement

The following information has been adapted from an entry on the Manitoba Historical Society website: *The French Presence in the West, 1734-1874*, by Cornelius J. Jaenen.

The French were the first Europeans to penetrate the western region of Canada and to extend their sovereignty and their institutions onto the Prairies. As early as 1717, Zacharie Robutel de La Noue was assigned the mission of establishing posts west of Lake Superior in the interests of the fur trade and scientific speculation about a water route through the continent to the Western Sea. He got no farther than Thunder Bay, where he established the post of Kaministiquia, of which Pierre Gaultier de La Vérendrye became commandant in 1728. Six years later two members of La Vérendrye's party reached the forks of the Red and Assiniboine, the first recorded Europeans to visit this site, well-known and utilized by the original Aboriginal peoples. La Vérendrye himself arrived here on 24 September 1738 and pressed on up the Assiniboine River hoping to discover the route to the Western Sea in the upper reaches of the Mississippi-Missouri system. Meanwhile, one of his lieutenants built Fort Rouge at the Forks, but it seems to have been little more than a storage depot and

Figure 1.
A Franco-Manitoban Métis Farmsite (get photo credit). – this from St. Norbert pamphlet

was reported abandoned by 1749. Forts La Reine, Bourbon, Dauphin and Paskoyac, on the other hand, assured a flow of Western peltries to New France.

Following the cession of New France to the British Crown, the fur trade resumed in 1764, still dominated by the Montreal merchants and Canadian voyageurs. The American Revolution and loss of the territory south of the Great Lakes stimulated new activity in the Far West, especially the Athabasca country. The North-West Company, for example, had at least 900 employees at the beginning of the 19th century, most of them French-Canadians.

Métis from the upper Great Lakes region, often portrayed as francophone and Catholic, began to settle in the vicinity of the Forks. They quickly became associated with the North-West Company trade, notably as suppliers of the indispensable pemmican, and so opposed to the Hudson's Bay Company and the Selkirk settlement.

The francophones consisted of Métis and voyageurs connected with the Montreal-based fur trade. The Selkirk settlers found a heroic friend in one of these Canadien voyageurs – Jean-Baptiste Lagimodiere. Around 1805 he had married an adventurous young woman of good family and education, Marie Anne Gaboury, in her native Quebec village of Maskinonge. She followed him to the Forks, then often accompanied him on his journeys on the plains from the Missouri to the North Saskatchewan and as far west as the foothills of the Rockies. She is believed to have been the first non-Aboriginal woman to have lived here.

When Lord Selkirk arrived at Red River in July 1817, he was greeted by many of his settlers, some of the two hundred or so French and Métis settled on the east bank of the Red River who came out of neighbourly feeling, retired servants of the fur companies, some curious Aboriginals, and about one hundred de Meurons and de Watteville soldiers who settled mostly among the French along the Seine river. Catholic missionaries began arriving in 1818. By 1823 the francophones numbered about 350 in the vicinity of St. Boniface, and another 450 (mostly Métis) in the

neighbourhood of Pembina who moved north that same year. As a result the population around St. Boniface nearly doubled.

The troubles of 1869-70 [the Red River Resistance, led by Louis Riel] seem to have created some sense of cohesion, of belonging to a French Catholic community, where before French Canadians and Métis were generally perceived as different "races." The "founders" were made up of 445 families, thirty-three of them from Quebec living in St. Boniface being its social and cultural elite. Most lived in the woods of St. Vital, both banks of the river Sale westwards from St. Norbert, at Ste. Anne on the Seine, at Ste. Agathe on the Pembina trail, on the Saskatchewan trail on the north bank of the

Assiniboine around St. Charles, St. Francois-Xavier and Baie St. Paul, and at the fishing stations of St. Laurent on Lake Manitoba and Grand Marais on Lake Winnipeg.

The demographic weight of the community and its institutional development seemed to assure its role in the new province. An ethnic balance was adhered to in both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, in the delineation of electoral districts, in the composition of a non-partisan cabinet, and in the parish system of local government. In 1871, the provincial legislature created a dual confessional system of Protestant and Catholic public schools. St. Boniface College was incorporated to provide advanced education in French. Captain Villiers of the Quebec Regiment was given the task of organizing a provincial police force.

Unfortunately, the course of provincial history did not follow along the route sketched out at its inception. Archbishop Taché used his persuasive powers to attract a number of Quebecois to St. Boniface – men such as Joseph Royal who founded the paper *Le Metis*, Joseph Dubuc who was an effective legislator, and Marc-Amable Girard who sat on the Executive Council and was Provincial Treasurer. Among Colonel Wolseley's soldiers who came in 1870 were volunteers such as Taillefer, Taschereau, Gagnier, Martineau, Magot, Tetu, d'Eschambault and Simard who

decided to settle in the province. Taché prevailed on the Quebec bishops to send a circular letter to all parish clergy urging settlers to come West to reinforce the French presence. Only fifteen persons came in 1871. The federal government, concerned about emigration from Quebec to the United States, gave its support to a plan to repatriate Franco-Americans in Manitoba. The Société de Colonisation du Manitoba enjoyed a modest success, attracting 441 families from New England and 991 families from Quebec.

By the late 1800s and early 1900s there were thriving French-speaking communities south and east of Winnipeg (Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe, St. Jean-Baptiste, Ste. Anne, St. Pierre, St. Malo, La Broquerie), west of Winnipeg (Baie St. Paul, St. Eustache, Elie and St. Francois-Xavier), southeast of Portage la Prairie (Notre Dame-de-Lourdes, Mariapolis, Somerset, St. Alphonse) and along the Winnipeg River at places like St. Georges. And all of these small urban centres had surrounding farming communities with their own distinct characteristics.

Québec Agricultural Traditions

The following information has been adapted from *The Canadian Encyclopedia* on-line.

In 1617 Louis Hébert began to raise cattle and to clear a small plot for cultivation. Small-scale clearing ensued as settlers planted cereal grains, peas and Native corn, but only 6 hectares were under cultivation by 1625. Beginning in 1612 the French Crown granted fur monopolies to a succession of companies in exchange for commitments to establish settlers. The charter companies brought some settlers, who used oxen, asses and later horses to clear land, but agricultural self-sufficiency was realized only in the 1640s and marketing agricultural produce was always difficult during the French regime. In 1663 Louis XIV reasserted royal control and with his minister Colbert promoted settlement by families. Intendant Jean Talon reserved lots for agricultural experimentation and demonstration, introduced crops such as hops and hemp, raised

several types of livestock and advised settlers on agricultural methods. By 1721 farmers in New France were producing 99,600 hL of wheat and smaller amounts of other crops annually, and owned about 30,000 cattle, swine, sheep and horses.

After 1763 and the arrival of British traders, new markets opened for Canadian farm produce within Britain's mercantile system. Francophone Habitants predominated in the raising of crops, but they were joined by anglophone settlers. British subjects purchased some seigneuries, which they settled with Scottish, Irish and American immigrants. New Englanders also settled the Eastern Townships and other areas. Anglo-Canadians promoted some new techniques of wheat and potato culture through the press and in 1792 formed an agricultural society at Québec City.

While the focus of the government's promotional activity was in Upper Canada (Ontario) and the Maritimes, Lower Canada (Québec) enjoyed a modest growth of wheat exports before 1800. Nevertheless, Lower Canadian wheat production lagged far behind that of Upper Canada in the first half of the 19th century. The failure of Lower Canadian agriculture has been blamed by some on the relative unsuitability of the region's climate and soils for growing wheat, the only crop with significant export potential; soil exhaustion; and the growth of the province's population at a faster rate than its agricultural production in this period. Because there was little surplus for reinvestment in capital stock, Lower Canada was slow to develop an inland road system, and transport costs remained relatively high.

Later 19th-century Québec agriculture was marked by increases in cultivated area and productivity, and by a shift from wheat production to dairying and stock raising. From the 1860s government agents worked to educate farmers to the commercial possibilities of dairying, and agronomists such as Édouard Barnard organized an agricultural press and instituted government inspection of dairy products. Commercial dairies, cheese factories and butteries developed around the towns and railways, most notably in the Montréal plain and the Eastern Townships. By 1900 dairying was the leading agricultural sector in Québec. It was becoming mechanized

in field and factory and increasingly male-oriented as processing shifted from the farm to factories. By the end of the century 3.6 million kg of Québec cheese were being produced, an eight-fold increase since 1851.

The Survey System

A major determinant of Franco-Manitoban farm development, especially in the areas south and east of Winnipeg, concerns the river lot survey system (Figure 2).

Land in these areas, and in Winnipeg itself, was subdivided, according to the system that prevailed in Lower Canada (Quebec), into narrow lots a few hundred feet wide and several miles deep. These river lots were designed to allow farmers to take maximum advantage of the river. Farms were laid out in such a way that each family preserved a woodlot in the river-bottom forest. The house and barn were situated at the elevation of the bank, and fields, pasture and hay-land stretched back from the river.

Although some of the owners of these plots were aboriginal or Québécois, the vast majority were Métis. Most practiced a kind of mixed farming that blended small-scale production of field crops with raising livestock. The farm provided subsistence plus some cash income, which was often supplemented with firewood cutting, hired labour and, before 1870, the Buffalo Hunt.
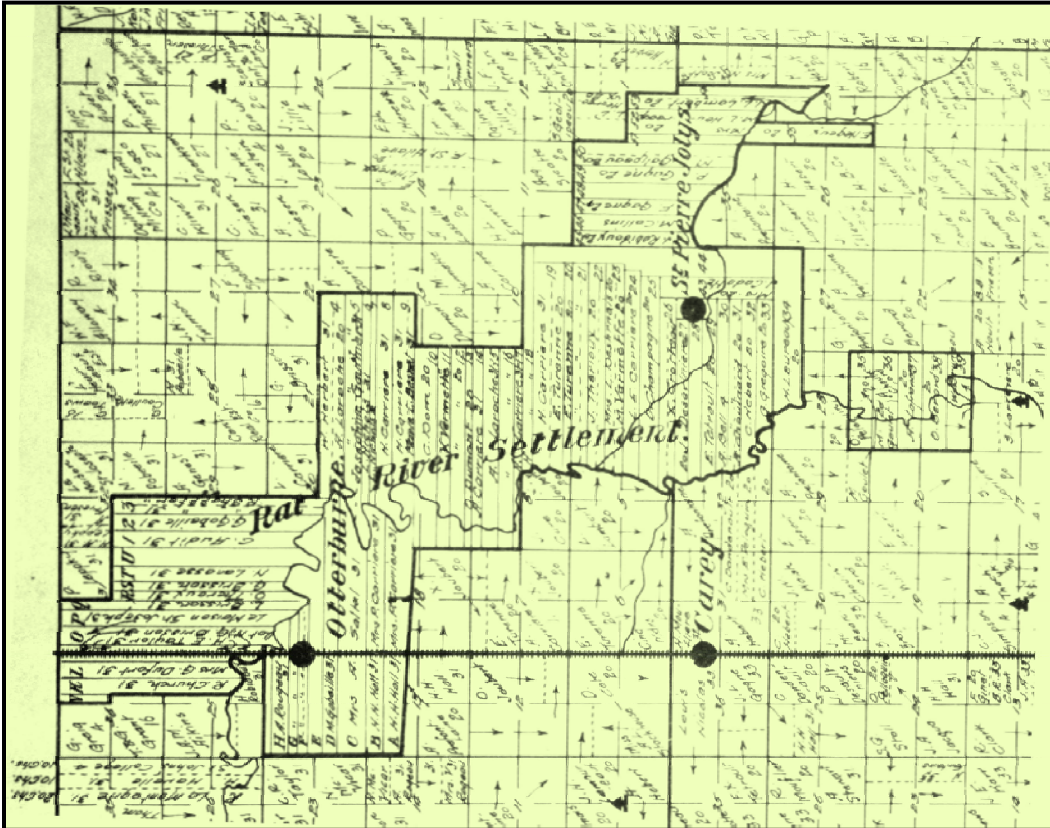
Figure 2.
The De Salaberry/St. Pierre area is one of several places in the province that possess an intersection of survey systems, including the Quebec style river-lot system and the Dominion Township survey system. Within each system, vastly different roadway and settlement patterns were formed, and the places where the two systems meet are especially notable. This map (reoriented sideways for effect, and thus with north at the left) shows how the old Quebec river lot system intersects with the more common township grid in the De Salaberry/St. Pierre area.

HOUSES

First Log Farm Houses

The first farm houses of Franco-Manitoban settlers were log, like those of other settlement groups. These first Franco-Manitoban buildings were often built using a log-connecting technique distinct to the Red River Settlement, known as Red River frame (Figure 3). This technique, used by the Hudson's Bay Company and then by settlers until about 1870, involved the placement of short squared and mortised logs set into upright log posts. The resulting buildings were straightforward in appearance, modest in size, with simple gable roofs and small window openings, sometime with shutters (Figure 4).

Figure 3.
Red River frame construction details,: 1 is the

tongue and 2 is the tenon.

Figure 4.
Pierre Delorme House, St. Adolphe area, 1857.

Another log-connecting technique used in many early Franco-Manitoban buildings is known as dovetail notching. In this procedure, which was actually more sturdy than Red River frame, complex notches (shaped like a dove's tail) were cut at the ends of logs and interlocked to form solid joins, especially at corners (Figure 5). This technique can be seen in images of early Franco-Manitoban houses (Figure 6).

Figure 5.
Detail of a dovetail notch, commonly employed in pioneer French buildings.

Figure 6.
Illustration of Jean-Baptiste Charette House, built in 1811 and demolished in 1952. Dovetail notches are visible at the corners on this early house. The illustration also shows the typical simple form, gable roof and basic window openings that characterized such buildings.
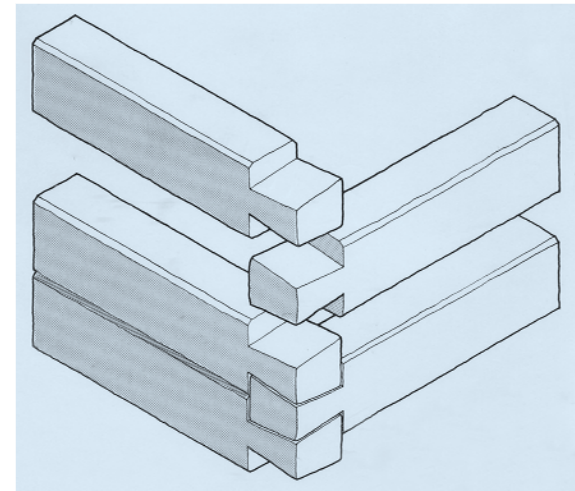
Log houses were still being built in the late 1800s, as Franco-Manitoba pioneers opened new areas for farming. One especially good example still stands in the R.M. of De Salaberry (Figure 7). Built in 1872, the La Fournaise House is one of the oldest extant buildings in the area, and a rare surviving connection to that area's pioneer roots. Its construction of oak logs, locally cut, reveals early architectural forms and building technologies. And its construction by Gabriel La Fournaise, who married a local Cree woman, is a vital expression of Métis culture in the area. In recent times, the house was carefully dismantled, the logs marked, and then in 1978 reassembled and set it in an oak stand on the property. The structure contains its original finishes and many period furnishings. In addition to the log house, the site contains numerous other modest wooden structures including a shed, bake oven and a small structure used to shelter an artesian well.

Figure 7.
La Fournaise Log House,
R.M. of De Salaberry, 1872.

A detailed investigation of the Dupont Farm House, in the St. Georges area of the R.M. of Alexander, provides a clear sense of these kind of buildings at the micro level. Built in the late 1880s, this small and modest farm house was built on a squarish plan (17 feet by 20 feet, to a total floor area of only 340 square feet) (Figure 8). A steep staircase in one corner led to the attic level. Elevations and a cross section of the house (Figures 9, 10 and 11) show a similar modesty of form and detail.
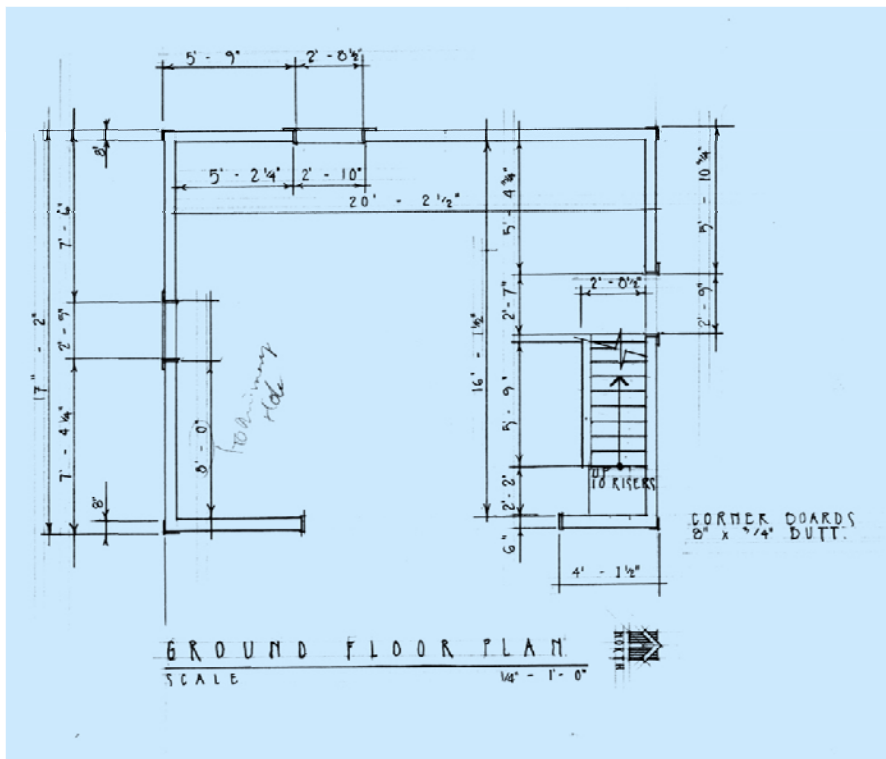

Figure 8.
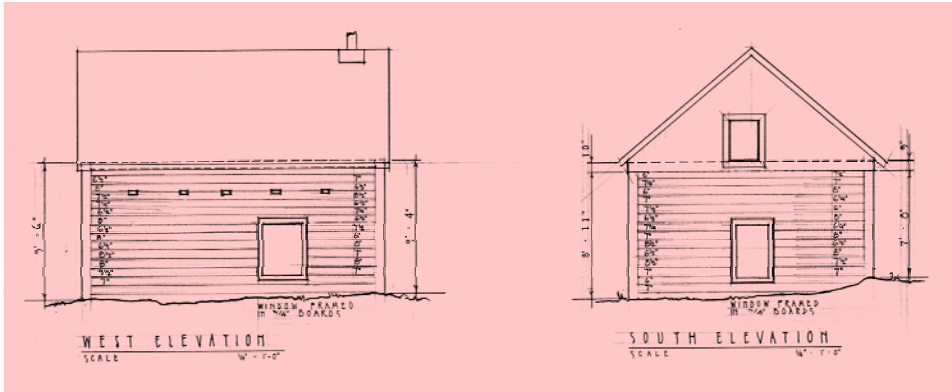Dupont Farm House, St. Georges area, floor plan.

Figure 9.
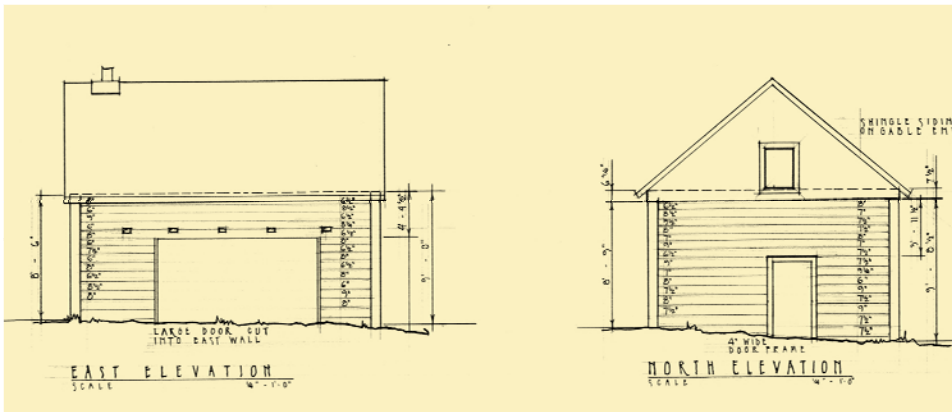Dupont Farm House, St. Georges area, west and south elevations.

Figure 10.
Dupont Farm House, St. Georges area, east and north elevations.

CROSS BRACING OF RAFTERS OF RAFTERS

FINISHED CEILING AND WALLS OF ATTIC

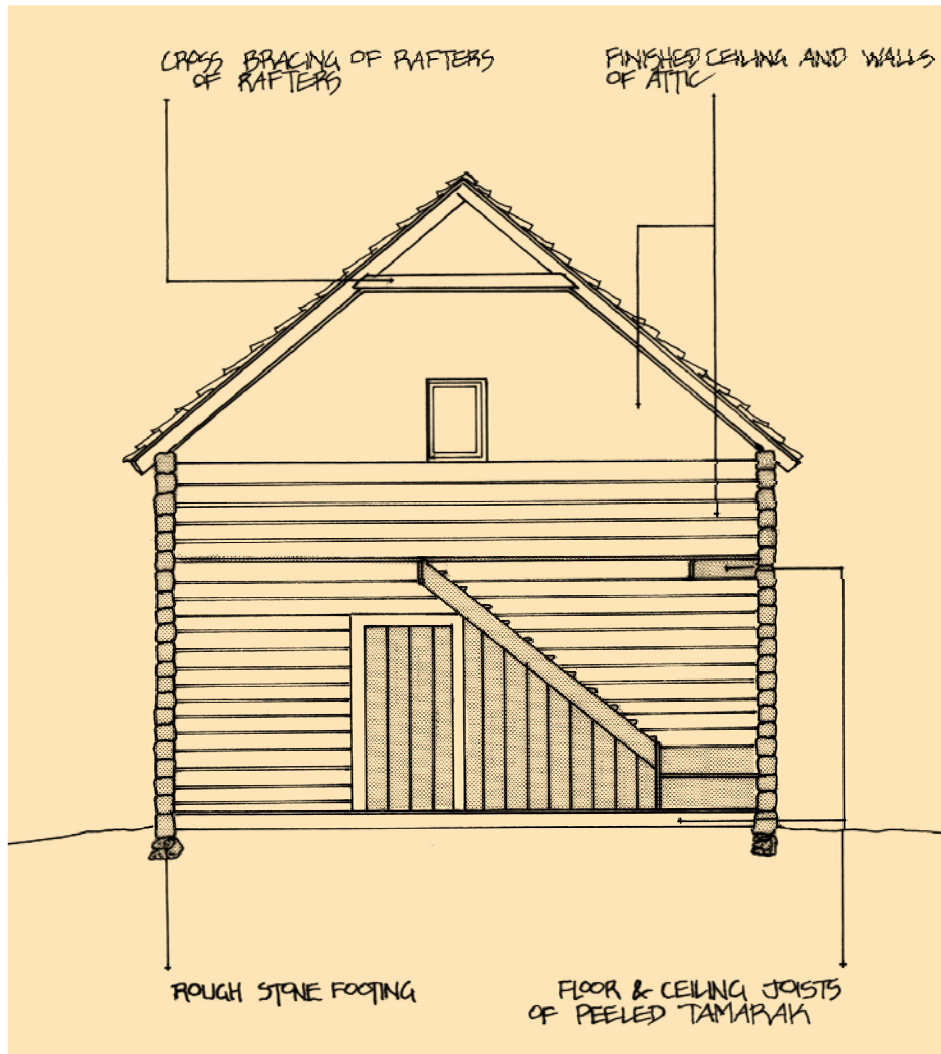ROUGH STONE FOOTING

FLOOR & CEILING JOISTS OF PEELED TAMARAK

Figure 11.
Dupont Farm House, St. Georges area. Cross section showing wall and roof materials and configuration, as well as stairs to attic.

Small Wood Frame Farm Houses

By the 1870s and certainly by the 1880s, Franco-Manitoba farm families were looking to more substantial and impressive buildings to replace their pioneer log structures, which by this time were seen as antiquated. It is during this period that distinct French architectural forms and features began to make their way into the farming landscape of Manitoba.

The most important feature of this generation of farm houses is reflected in the frequent adoption of a few distinct roof shapes. In one version the roof was slightly revised by the addition of flared edges to the simple gable form, giving the building a certain whimsical quality (Figure 12). In another, the use of a gambrel shape gave a building a completely new appearance. A gambrel is a two-sided roof with two slopes on each side (Figure 13). The upper slope is positioned at a shallow angle, while the lower slope is steep. This design provides the advantages of a sloped roof while maximizing headroom inside the building's upper level and shortening what would otherwise be a tall roof. The name comes from the Medieval Latin word *gamba*, meaning horse's hock or leg. The term gambrel is of North American origin, the older, European name being a curb roof.

The third roof shape that was occasionally employed on Franco-Manitoba farm houses was called the Mansard (Figure 14). This sophisticated form, difficult to build, was rarely used outside larger urban centres, where it was more often seen on large institutional buildings. Europeans historically did not distinguish between a gambrel and a Mansard, but called both types a Mansard.

Of the three French roof types noted here, it was the gambrel that appears most often in rural Manitoba (Figure 15).

Figure 12.
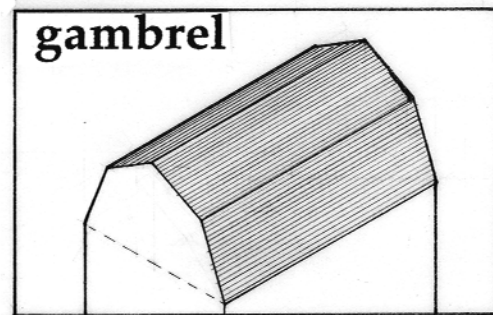Quebec farm house, showing the flared gable roof edges commonly employed on French houses.

Figure 13.
Illustration of a gambrel roof shape, common on Franco-Manitoba houses of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
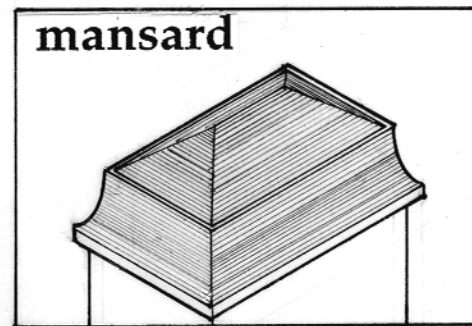

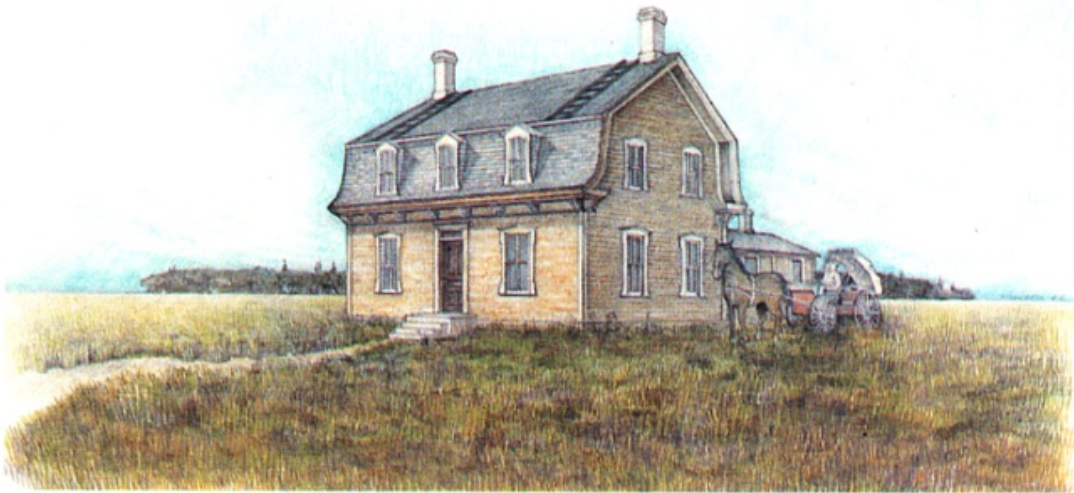**Figure 14.**
Illustration of a Mansard roof shape.

Figure 15.
Benjamin Bohémier House, 1888, now restored at the St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park.

Other good remaining examples of Franco-Manitoban farm houses that employed the distinctive gambrel roof form are in Lorette (Figure 16), St. Pierre and in the R.M. of Morris, near Aubigny.

The vernacular Goulet House (from about 1870, Figure 17) is a fine example of early French domestic architecture in Manitoba. Its Red River frame construction is masterfully exhibited in its hand-cut log walls, while its vertical board-and-batten siding and gambrel roof are typical of early Francophone structures. The family home, built by Moise Goulet, a Métis freighter who transported goods by Red River ox cart from the United States to Canada, was originally situated alongside trading routes near the Rat River and doubled as a resting place for fellow freighters. In 1985 it was moved to its current location, where it is now part of the St-Pierre-Jolys Museum, and restored.

The Robert House (Figure 18) in the R.M. of Morris is one of the oldest buildings in that municipality. The house was built in 1880 by Sevoine (also spelled Celevenne) Robert, who came with his family from Quebec to Manitoba in 1880. Still on its original river lot, it is the house roof that bespeaks its cultural origins. Set near the Red River north of Silver Plains, the house remains with Robert family descendents.

A third example, from the R.M. of De Salaberry, the Maynard House (Figure 19) shows the interesting form that can be created with the use of an L-shaped plan and thus of intersecting gambrel roofs.

Figure 16.

The distinct facade created by the use of a gambrel roof is evident on this farm house in the Lorette area. In this case the lower edge of the gambrel is also flared. The use of the gambrel form over the main door further emphasizes the French origins of the house.

Figure 17.
Goulet House, St. Pierre.

Figure 18.
Robert House, Aubigny area.

Figure 19.
Maynard House, St. Malo area.

At the same time, prevailing Manitoba vernacular farm house types were also employed by Franco-Manitobans. An example like the Turenne House, from 1871 (now standing at St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park, Figure 20), reveals the typical attributes. The house is oriented so that the primary facade contains the main entrance and flanking windows; the resulting simple symmetry gives the house a modest formality. Two chimneys pierce the basic gable roof at either end, one for the stove in the kitchen and the other for the chimney in the main living area. A close inspection of the roof's eave ends suggests a minor but distinct detail that suggests even in this simple and plain building a sense of Gallic pride – the ends are "returned" inwards, suggesting ever so slightly the flared ends of the traditional Quebecois farm house.

Figure 20.
Joseph Turenne Farm House, 1871.

A few other farm houses are suggestive of this type, including a farm house in the Rural Municipality of St. Francois-Xavier (Figures 21 and 22) and the Chartier Farm House in the Aubigny area of the R.M. of Morris (Figure 23).

The oldest remaining building in the municipality, the Chartier House was built in 1877 by Flavien Chartier. Chartier was one of the first settlers to the Aubigny area who came from Quebec in 1877. Logs for the house are thought to have come from land further east and were brought down the river as the Chartiers moved west into the municipality. While in a slightly deteriorated state, due to its age and log construction, the house still suggests the simple effective forms—box-like form and gable roof—that defined so many pioneer farm houses from that early period. The river lot is still owned by the Chartier famil,y and has been the farm to five generations of family descendents.

Figure 21.

Farm house in the St. Francois-Xavier area.

The simple straightforward form is seen here.

Figure 22.

Farm house in the St. Francois-Xavier area.

Detail showing the roof return detail suggestive of French flared roofs.

Figure 23.

Chartier House, Aubigny area.

Large Farm Houses

By 1900 many Franco-Manitoba farmers, like their compatriots from other groups, were looking to build even bigger and better accommodations on their farm sites. But this time it was to prevailing North American forms and details, rather than ancient French traditions, that French farmers looked for inspiration. New construction techniques and materials that were commonplace at this time throughout North America were also to be found on this generation of Franco-Manitoba farm houses. Three examples of these new large houses from the De Salaberry area are included here for comparison – the Desrosier Farm House (Figure 24), the Prefontaine/Dotrement Farm House (Figure 25), and the Desaulniers Farm House (Figure 26).

The Desrosier Farm House, in the St. Malo area of the municipality, combines several of the new trends in large-house building in rural Manitoba at this time. Known as a Four Square, the house is large and commodious, with the style attribution a reflection of its square plan and box-like form. Like others of its type, the Desrosier house features a large pyramidal roof with gabled dormers that allow light into the attic storey. The construction technology employed for the walls of this house also recalls an interesting aspect of Manitoba's architectural history from this period. Built with formed concrete blocks, the walls from a distance give the appearance of a grand stone building. The use of formed concrete blocks, also called "imitation stone," was a fairly popular technology from about 1890 to 1910. Itinerant block-makers with metal forms ranged across the countryside. They set up shop in an area or community, and over the course of about 20 years erected scores of buildings. The potential for decorative surfaces permitted by the block molds made the technology very desirable.

Figure 24.
Desrosier Farm House, St. Malo area. The house is a typical Four Square type, a popular architectural expression for large farm houses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries throughout Manitoba. In this case the house also boasts concrete block walls, a novel attribute of house building from this period.

Built for the Prefontaine family in 1920, the enormous farm house show in Figure 25 is the most impressive example in the De Salaberry area, recalling how sophisticated urban architecture could be transferred to farm settings with great effect. Although not yet ascertained, the house seems to have been designed by an architect. Boasting solid walls of buff brick and limestone finishes, the house also has high levels of interior integrity, recalling the days when the house was the active centre of a thriving dairy operation, first by the Prefontaines and then the Dotrements, who also farmed hogs and beef cattle.

The Desaulniers House is important for its architecture, being the best remaining local example of a distinct Franco-Manitoban house type common in the southeastern region of the province. This kind of house is a slight variation on the popular Four Square type found in many areas of Manitoba, defined by an uncomplicated square plan, two-storey form and large hipped roof. In the southeast, Franco-Manitobans (like Josephat Desaulniers, born in 1879 in Shawinigan, Quebec, who built this house) undertook a slight variation on the theme. With a slightly taller form and a distinctively truncated roof (like a widow's walk) that usually was trimmed with metal cresting, these kinds of houses are important expressions of sophisticated local French design sensibilities.

Figure 25.
Prefontaine/Dotrement House, St. Pierre area, built in 1920. This large, grand house was likely designed by an architect.

Figure 26.
Desaulnier House, St. Pierre. This house suggests an important French revision of the popular Four Square farm house form that was common across Manitoba. Here, and seen in other Franco Manitoba farm houses of the period, the main house block is tall, and a distinctively truncated roof (usually trimmed with metal cresting), gives the house a sophisticated French sensibility.

BARNS

There is a traditional aspect of historic French and Quebec farming operations that distinguished Manitoba Franco-Manitoba barns in the late 19th 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.

26

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.
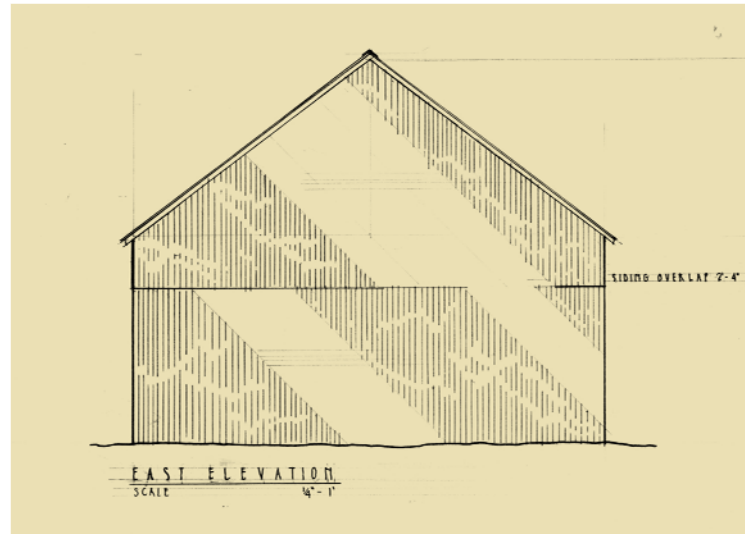
EAST ELEVATION
SCALE   ¼"- 1'

Figure 32.
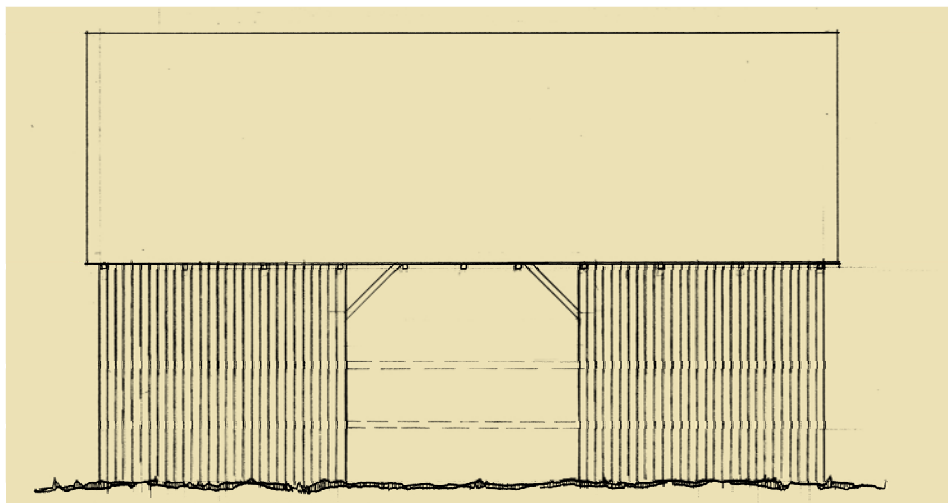Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Side elevation.

Figure 33.
Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Main elevation. The basic and elemental forms are clear in these renderings.
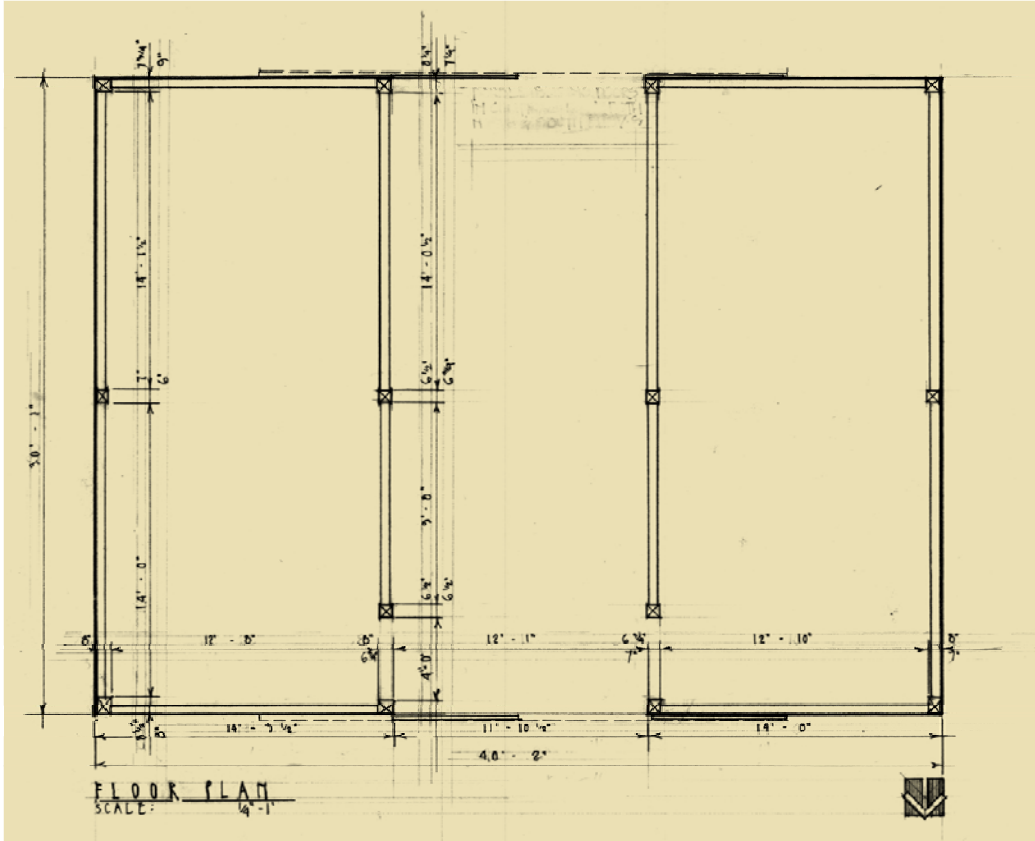
Figure 34.
Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Floor plan. The hay barn floor was divided into three sections – a central one for a driveway in which wagons could be pulled and two side sections where the contents of the wagons could be placed.
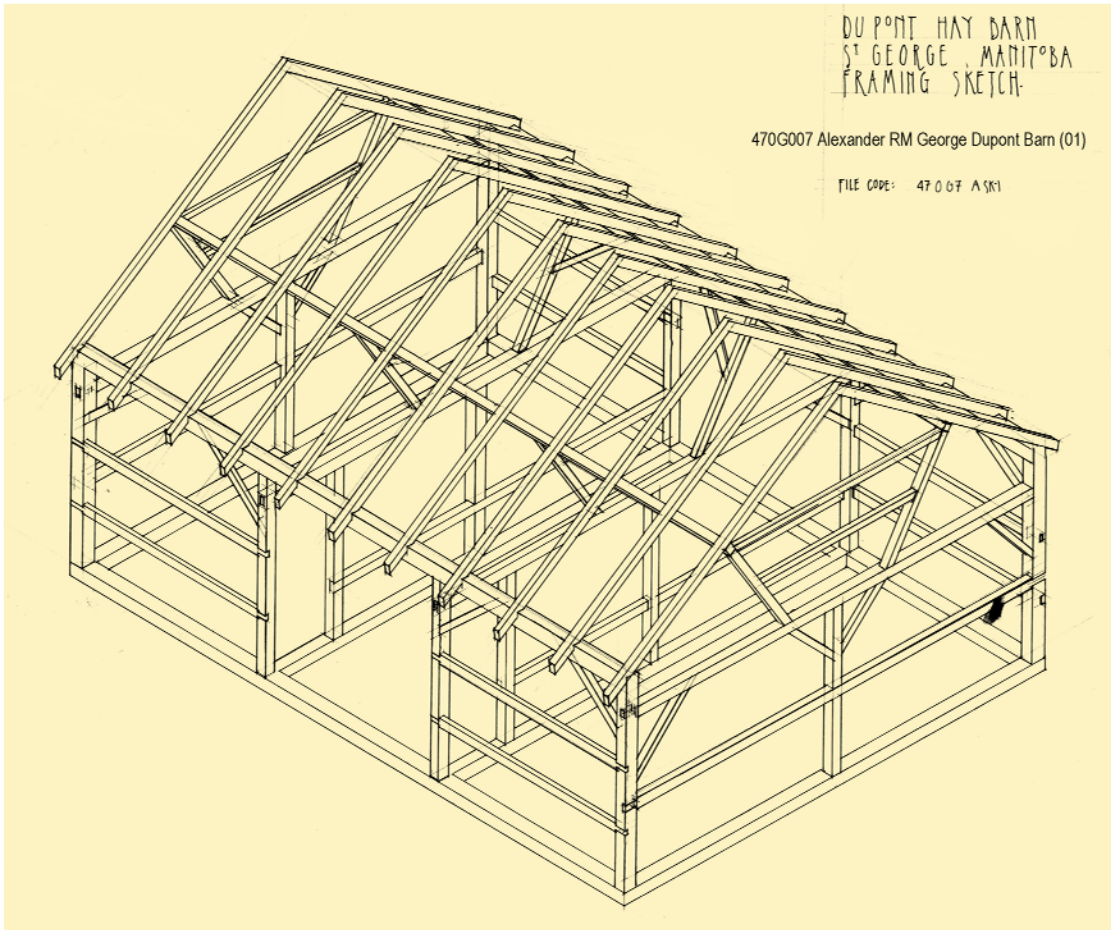
DU PONT HAY BARN
ST GEORGE , MANITOBA
FRAMING SKETCH.

470G007 Alexander RM George Dupont Barn (01)

FILE CODE: 47 0 G7 A SK1

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.
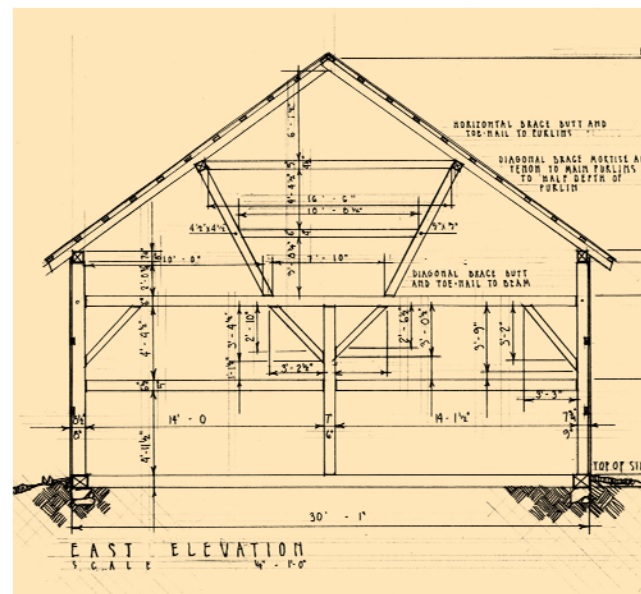

Figure 37.
Dupont Hay Barn, St. Georges area. Cross section drawing showing the "Y" shaped timber framing employed to support the roof and to create open spaces for movement of hay and equipment.

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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 20th 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 created 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).
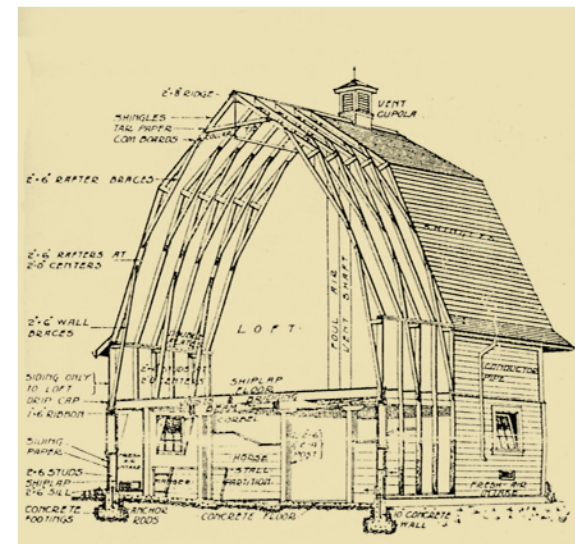

Figure 40.

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.

OTHER FARM BUILDINGS

Any working farm has besides the barn a host of other structures that fulfill distinct agricultural functions: sheds, garages, buildings for chickens and pigs, etc. In Franco-Manitoba areas of Manitoba these kinds of buildings were like those of other groups – utilitarian and often without any architectural characteristics that would link them with a certain settlement group. Because many French areas of Manitoba eventually came to be dominated by dairy operations, there are two ancillary building types that have come to be closely associated with Franco-Manitoba farms: the grain silo and the milk house.

Grain Silos

The Turenne Farm Silo (Figure 46), built in 1935, is the oldest of three remaining wooden silos in the R.M. of De Salaberry, and only one of a handful of the traditional wooden silos that still stand in Manitoba. Built for Theophile Turenne and his son Philip, this evocative farm building was used to store corn, a staple in any area of dairy farming. Like the other De Salaberry silos, the Turenne structure is a very good example of a building technology thought to have been imported from Wisconsin, the heartland of dairy and cheese production in North America. In this version, called the Scantling type, unsheathed walls are formed with overlapping 4"x4" timbers that are about six feet on each of the eight sides and which soar about 40 feet high.

The nearby Cure Farm silo, in the St. Pierre area, has a similarly interesting form and details (Figure 47).

Figure 46.

Turenne Farm Silo, R.M. of De Salaberry.

Figure 47.
Details and an interior view of the Cure Farm Silo, in the St. Pierre area of the R.M. of De Salaberry, show the visual interest created by simple materials and textures.

Milk Houses

Franco-Manitoban dairy operations invariably required a milk house as a staple part of the farm's building infrastructure. The milk house was completely separate from the barn and the house (Figure 48). All dairy utensils were stored and cleaned in this structure. Its design could range from a square to an octagonal building. Milk houses were generally built away from the house, and preferably under trees, to make the site cooler in summer. The floor was usually dirt and shelves might be hung from the roof in wire hoops so mice could not get onto them. The pioneer milk house held no cream separator, but rather the big round pans into which the milk was poured, after straining through cheese cloth or fine wire mesh. The large flat pans were left for twelve hours so the cream would rise to the top. Once cooled, the cream could be skimmed off with a saucer, or a cream skimmer, which was a flat metal spoon with holes in it to allow the milk to drip through. The cream was placed in a crock, and to be churned or sold later. The skim milk was used in cooking or fed to the animals. Once it soured, it could be used for making cottage cheese.

Figure 48.
A large and well-appointed milk house in the Ste. Anne area.

Other Farm Sheds and Outbuildings

The range of small, modest utilitarian outbuildings that would have been seen on nearly any Franco-Manitoba farmsite are illustrated here with examples from the Dufresne area (Figure 49 and 50), the La Broquerie area (Figure 51), St. Francois-Xavier area (Figure 52) and Lorette area (Figure 53).

Figure 50.
Machine shed in the Dufresne area, ca. 1910

Figure 49.
Machine shed in the Dufresne area, built ca. 1910.

Figure 51.
Machine Shed in the La Broquerie area, ca. 1910.

Figure 52.
Granary in the St. Francois-Xavier area, built
ca, 1900.

Figure 53.
Granary in the Lorette area, built ca. 1890.