My Grandfather's Barn

By
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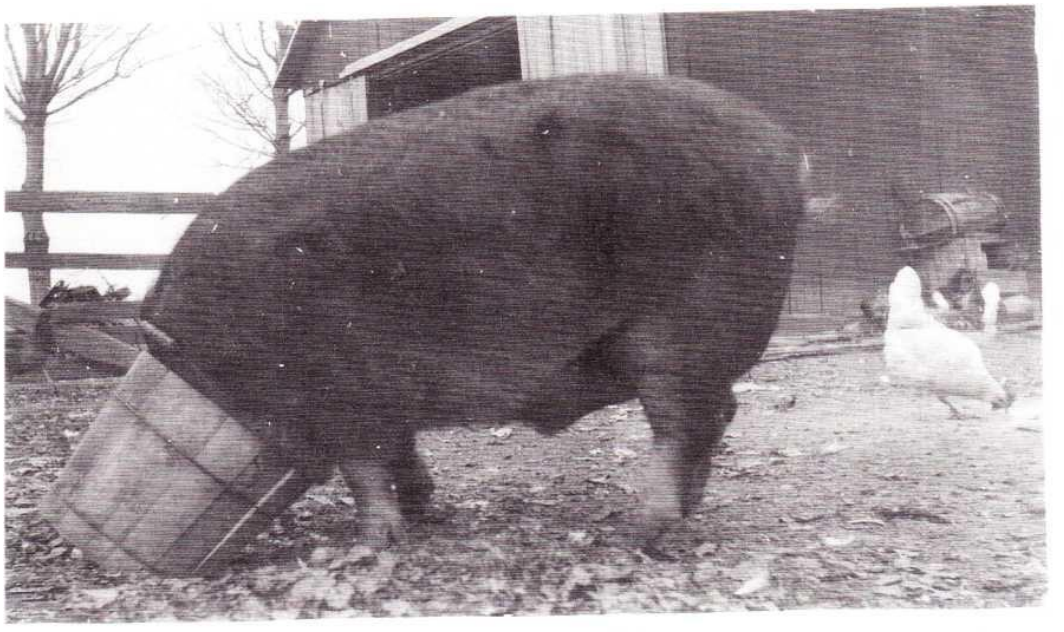
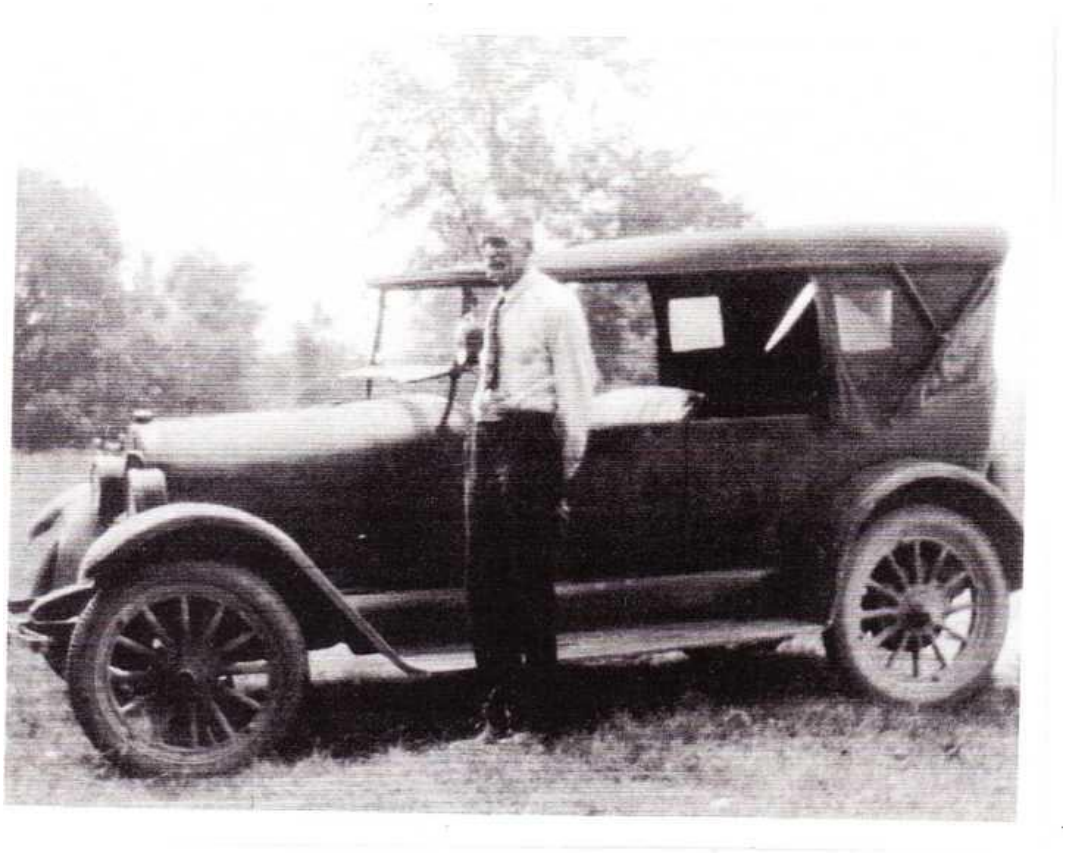
Walker Barn which was owned by Jacob Walker and
known as "German Stock Farm"

Haying, ca. 1915
John Trant and Lewis William Walker on hay wagon
Jacob Walker driving tractor

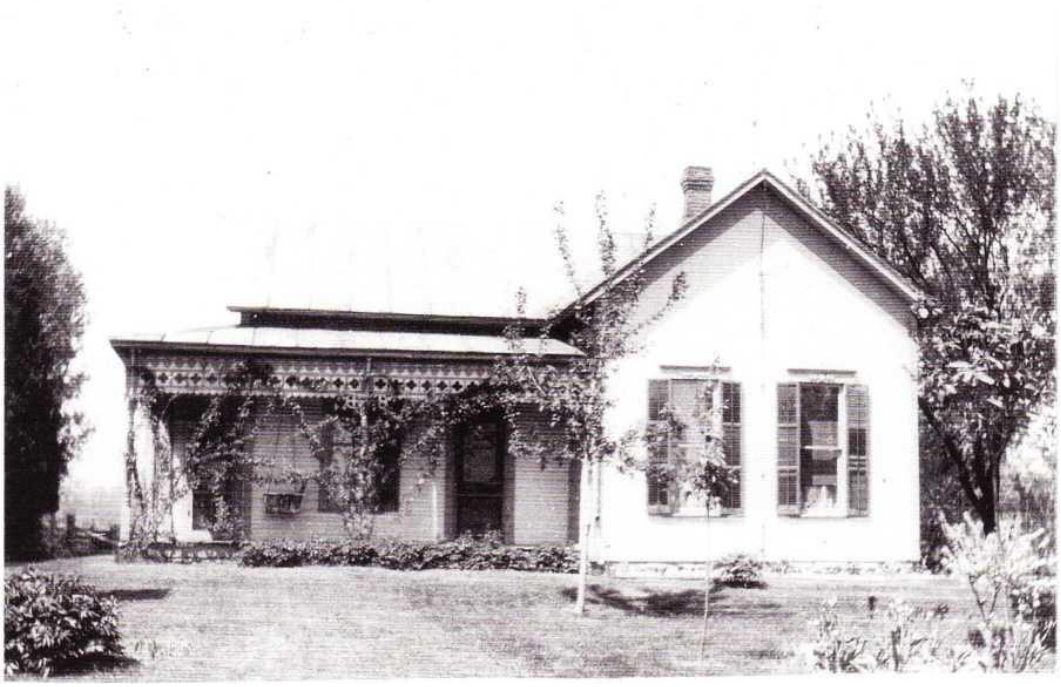


Good to the Very Last Drop



Jacob Walker with 1916 or 1917 Buick

Jacob Walker, Lester Walker, John Trant, Lewis William Walker
Ida Rogers Walker (Mrs. L.W.), Rose Walker Trant, Mary Dean Walker (Mrs. Lester)
Mary Trant



Walker House ca. 1915

Elizabeth Hiser Walker
and her chickens ca. 1915

Last summer I visited my great-grandfather's barn for the first time. My father had often talked about his grandfather but I did not know too much about him or his brother Fred, whose farm I also visited. As I stood in the barn I wondered why this barn was so open and so different from any other barn I had seen. The more I asked the more I realized that there were family stories here, revolving around the farms and in particular their barns, that should be written down.

As I began to explore barns, their history, their styles, and their purposes I began to see how the architecture of barns is closely tied to function, ethnic background, geology, and the changing technology of farming. Barns are also tied to the business acumen of their farmers. In a reversal of what we might expect my great grandfather had the more modern barn and my grandfather's barns were more traditional.

The Walker brothers were considered to be very progressive farmers who had immigrated from Germany and established themselves in Blackford County, Indiana, around 1880. At one time they were among the wealthiest farmers in the county and today both farms remain in the Walker family and are beautiful examples of modern farming. But there is another farm important to my family history and that is the farm of my grandfather, just two miles away, which I remember from my childhood and where my father grew up. My grandfather was Irish, very conservative and traditional, and always struggled to make ends meet. Cousin Peg Barnes says he "never made a dime." Both were hard-working men, but in an ironic twist of fate, it was my progressive great grandfather who lost his farm and my traditional grandfather who hung onto his. Together they tell much of the history of the North American Barn.

The barn is deeply entrenched in our cultural symbolism and language, though it is fading. Most of us today know the meaning of such terms like "can't hit the broad side of a barn," or big as a barn." When I was a schoolgirl it was considered more polite to hint that someone's barn door was open rather than say that his pants were unzipped and "barnyard humor" was forbidden in our house. Expressions such as barnstorming or giving a barn-burning speech are not so well-known, although I did hear both terms used in the recent elections. And I wonder if our children and grandchildren will understand what a barn raising is let alone see one? Noble and Cleek suggest that it may not be long before our children and grandchildren know these things only from experience at farming museums (Old Barn Book

14). One last expression, commonly heard in relation to University of Iowa sports, is that hay is never in the barn. It means that there is always work to be done.

While barns are familiar and common artifacts in the American landscape they are rapidly disappearing. Some estimate that a thousand barns are destroyed each month in Iowa alone. And so it becomes increasingly important to understand this common element of our past before they all disappear.

"A barn is not just a simple, white, rectangular building with a gabled-roof. Instead, it is a farm building with a complex material culture-history, conditioned by agricultural land use and economy, and above all, by scientific principles and modern technology" (Noble and Wilhelm 286). They are first of all functional. "A barn is the real headquarters of the farm" wrote the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher in 1869. "The dwelling-house represents the people; the barn, the work" (Soike 81). Each farm is a reflection of a farmer's style of farming and there are as many different kinds of barns as there are farmers.

Ethnicity can account for some style variations in North America, according to authors Allen G. Noble and Richard K. Cleek, but only in part. Crops and animals dictate a farmers need for a barn as well as time and place (Noble and Cleek 14), A farmer does not choose a barn style because he happens to like that particular style. On the contrary, he builds a barn to suit his style of farming. The form of the barn reflects the function of the farm and as such each barn is a personal reflection of its owner.

As modern technology was introduced into agriculture, work on the farm changed. The barn reflected that change. The inventions of hay balers, threshers, and silos increased the production of grain and in turn led to bigger herds of cattle on farms. When overhead hay carriers and hay forks were shown to be labor saving, the hay hood and structure of the barn rafters changed to accommodate them. Steam power and the gasoline engine reduced the need for draft horses and all the hay that they required, but farm machinery still needed to be stored and protected, although it required a different kind storage space than horses. Electricity introduced specialized equipment and influenced growth, particularly in the dairy industry, It also lengthened the farmer's day (Noble and Cleek 14).

"When we understand the purposes of a barn, and how it is laid out and used, we have gained an insight into the Operation of the farm itself, for the barn is the heart of the farm" (Brick-end Barns). What we call New World or North American Barns are structures that

have evolved over time from Old World traditions coupled with the influences of climate, geography, and changing technology.

A key to understanding barns is in the word itself. The word barn comes from two Anglo-Saxon words: bere, meaning barley, and ern, meaning place or closet. The word "barn" then is a barley place and it implies grain farming (Arthur and Witney18). According to authors Charles Caulkins and Martin Perkins "no self- respecting farmer would keep animals in his threshing barn." Other, specialized structures were intended for housing animals. In England and other European countries, stables were for horses, byres for cattle, and styes for pigs (Calkins and Perkins 40-41). As settlement was made in the New World, the Old World concepts adapted and evolved to meet the challenges of North America.

Some of the oldest examples of barns in North America are three bay threshing barns, often called the English barn, followed by the German bank barns, and the Dutch barns (Noble and Wilhelm 8). Dutch barns, while distinctive with their cathedral-like arrangement, are rare outside of the state of New York and the style has not had as much impact on modern barns as have the English and Pennsylvania styles.

Prior to 1800 the most common form of the barn in the United States was the three bay or English threshing barn. Brought to this country by the earliest English settlers, it's construction was widespread throughout New England. It was a small single-story rectangular structure, approx. 30' x 40', which was divided into three sections called bays: a threshing floor in the center bay, a bay for storing un-threshed grain on one side, and a storage bay for threshed barley or wheat as well as straw for bedding the animals on the other. A large double-door was centered on the long side for access by the wagons as well as for providing a breeze used in the winnowing of the grain and the roof was almost always a gable. It was a single-function structure, not originally intended for housing animals, but solely for storing grains. But here in the New England States the winters were harsher and there was a need for sheltering the animals and the threshing barn was adaptable to these new needs. One bay could easily be used for stalls and mangers and a second floor could be added for storing hay. As long as wheat, or other grains, was grown, there would be a need for the three-bay threshing barn and so this type of barn continued to be built even into the twentieth Century.

As settlement moved westward into the Old Northwest in the nineteenth Century, the cultivation of wheat and the English threshing barn moved westward into Ohio, northern

Indiana, and then northward into Michigan, northern Illinois and Wisconsin. As settlement pushed westward the threshing barn style appeared in Midwestern States in a larger but only slightly altered form. As grain harvests became larger and the farmers need for storage increased, threshing barns were lengthened by adding a fourth or fifth bay and sometimes by adding a shed to one side. This increased the hay storage overhead as well as providing more shelter for farm animals. A basement dug underneath the original structure could also provide additional storage space or space for Stalls, pens, and stanchions. A ramp was sometimes built to the upper bays to provide for more efficient transference of hay (Calkins and Perkins 56-57).

At the same time that Western development was occurring, large numbers of Germans were immigrating into the eastern United States, particularly into Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, and to a lesser degree into Missouri and Wisconsin. They, too, were cultivating wheat, but their needs for barns were distinctly different from the English, primarily because of their habit of keeping and treatment of livestock in their barns, rather than in separate stables. Where the English came from a tradition of pasturing their animals in small pastures bound by hedges and walls and developing some of our well-known breeds of cattle such as Jersey, Angus, Hereford and Guernseys, the Germans kept small herds in barns and cultivated their fields with crops such as wheat or oats, barley, flax, and root crops . German farmers, unlike the English, had always protected their animals during winter and inclement weather and the barns they built in the United States reflected this old practice. Called the Pennsylvania barn, this style has become a distinct classification of the three-bay threshing barn and the study of these German barns has become a specialized field for some historians as a result of the study of Robert Ensminger. At least fifteen types of this barn can be identified, ten of which are forebay types and many of these barns are bank barns. (Noble and Cleek 22, 84 -85. also, Wilhelm 64 -65).

The Pennsylvania Barn was a large rectangular barn with a gable roof, two stories high, with space for animals and grain storage alike. Often, but not always, these barns were built into a bank which allowed for a third, or basement, level of use. Hence, the term bank barn. The big barn which is on my grandfather's farm is a variant of the Standard Pennsylvania barn.

My grandparents, John and Rose Walker Trant, bought their farm in 1915 in Harrison Township, Blackford, County, Indiana. Pop, as my grandfather was called, came from a

strong Irish farming background that went back many generations. His grandfather had emigrated from Ireland in the 1840s and had farmed in Licking Twp., Blackford County, since 1866. His father as well as his uncles and aunts were also established farmers in the county. His uncle Maurice Trant operated a multi-function farm which was widely known as The Home of Short Horn Cattle (Shinn 23-24).

The farm that John and Rose bought had 123 acres with a large two-story house, two barns and a corn crib, and some smaller outbuildings. It was already well- established and suitable for the very traditional multi-functional kind of farming my grandparents intended to employ. On this farm my grandfather raised milk cows (Registered Shorthorns for which the Trant family were well-known), Hampshire hogs, and a herd of Registered Black Angus beef cattle. Like most farm women of that time period, my grandmother raised chickens, lots of them. Horse power was furnished by the team of Dutch and Old Nell, and much of the 123 acres produced corn, wheat, and oats. While many farmers in the county were adapting to gas-powered machinery by this time, my grandfather continued to use draft horses and many of the old methods of farming well into the 1950s. Hay was stored loose rather than baled, corn was shelled in hand-cranked shellers, and wheat winnowed by a small winnowing machine. Only after my father returned from WW2 Service in 1946 did Pop and my Uncle Russell, buy a John Deere Model A tractor to replace Old Nell and Dutch.

Pop had entered the farming business at an interesting time in terms of technological changes. Between the Civil War and 1920 many innovations in farming technology, coupled with the western movement where the geological changes provided their own influences, were changing the way farms were operated and barns were being redesigned to accommodate the new Science of agriculture. This was the age of the McCormick reaper and the grain thresher along with the grain binder as well as the steam traction engine and internal combustion motor (Williamson 38). Improvements in grain harvesting with horse drawn hay rakes had led to greater numbers of livestock and the need for more and bigger hay storage. The adoption of hay forks and the subsequent development of the horizontal hay carrier and hay elevators in the late 1860s began to change the design of the hay loft and the roof line. Gambrel and Gothic roof designs were more conducive to unimpeded hay storage than the traditional gable roof construction and these designs provided more storage area because they had no crossbeams to interfere with the loading of the hay into the loft (Noble and

Cleek 14). Labor was also reduced as the need for men to shift load and unload the hay was greatly reduced (Soike 88).

Farms Sale Ads from the local paper show that my grandfather and his neighbors had a lot of machinery available to them. Listed on some 1915 sale bills were such implements as a John Deere Cultivator, a Sulky Hay Rake, an Oliver Riding Breaking Plow, a J. I. Case Com Planter, a Moline Disc Harrow, and a one-horse power Corn Crusher, triple gear, good as new. But we must remember that the horse was still the source of power for this machinery at this time and other listings indicate this: one set of brass mounted Team Harness, two sets of Carriage Harness and one set of Wagon Harness ("Farm Sale". Telegram. Modern technology was still a few years away when John and Rose Walker Trant bought their farm.

Pop had tried factory work after a fire destroyed their first home on a rented farm in 1914. My grandmother Rose had wanted to live in town after that experience, but Pop found that it didn't suit him, and they decided to buy their own farm. Unfortunately, land was high when he and Rose bought their farm and it was difficult for them to afford some of the new machinery that might have made their work a little easier and production higher. Besides, Pop had come from a strong agricultural tradition and he held to the ways of farming that he knew best. Pop's barns reflect his way of farming.

The Big Barn, as we still call it, is a Standard Pennsylvania barn with a posted forebay, according to Robert Ensminger, the foremost authority on Germanic barns. It illustrates the way that eastern farmers had been farming since the beginning of the nineteenth Century. This barn is a large, two-story, three-bay threshing barn with a cantilevered second floor which extends over the first level and creates a semi- enclosed shelter for cattle or hogs. The forebay in this case is supported by posts. Hence, it is called a "posted forebay". It is not built into a bank as many German threshing barns were, but supported by large limestone cornerstones as was common on the flat Indiana plains of Blackford County and has no basement level. Unlike the typical Pennsylvania barn which was painted red and often decorated with hex signs or other decorative elements the Big Barn was always left unpainted and was a beautiful old silvery grey color.

On the interior, this barn had a central aisle, called the threshing floor, where the hay and other grains were brought by horse and wagon. Old Nell and Dutch would pull the wagon filled with hay up a small ramp on the north side of the barn into the center of the wooden threshing floor. The hay was then pitched up into the second floor by hand and when

unloaded the horses pulled the wagon out the south side and around to the fields again. Storage was above the two side bays and also on the south end, making a u-shaped storage loft. The loft was ventilated by three layers of louvered openings placed all around the barn and a large round owl hole under the gable peaks. I have often wondered if owls actually roosted or nested in the barn. They would have helped to keep the rats and mice population down.

The first floor of this barn was arranged with a granary on the west side to store oats, shelled corn, and wheat. There were also small work areas where the winnowing machine and the com sheller were used and tack areas for the horse equipment. Old Nell and Dutch were housed in stalls built on the south-east side where Old Nell would drag her hooves across the wooden floor trying to get the grain that she had dropped between the floor boards. Bedding straw and an occasional pony were housed in the northeast corner. Cattle yards were on the north and south sides of the barn (Interview with cousins). With the exception of a new layer of paint the barn looks much the same today on the outside as it always has, but there have been many changes on the inside. As the farm emphasis changed to hog-raising in the fifties, the interior was remodeled and a concrete floor replaced the wooden one and other updates were made that allowed this barn to survive into the twenty-first century. Pop's other barns, however, did not survive the changes.

The small barn was primarily an early type of milking barn. It was a long narrow rectangular barn, one and a half stories tall, with a monitor-style roof. The monitor roof, which is something like a long cupola the length of the barn, replaced the gable roof in some barns around 1900 and suggests the time period when this barn was built. Not only did this style of roof provide additional Ventilation but also more storage of the hay above the main floor, although my cousin who grew up on this farm, suggests that this was not a strong hay mow (Noble and Cleek 103). The mow was simply nailed to beams which had been nailed to the walls of the barn rather than being integrally constructed with the barn structure itself (Parker email). While some monitor roofs have windows or air vents, Pop's barn does not. Only one small hay door is visible on the south side which would have provided some ventilation.

Loading the hay into the loft was done by hand, originally forking the loose hay onto the loft floor from the wagon and, later, throwing the baled hay onto the loft. Lofts in this type of barn were typically undersized and overloaded (Northwest Horse Source).

Light in the little barn was provided by windows placed at eye level on the east and west side walls. This was, according to prevailing thoughts of the early twentieth Century, the best placement for maximum beneficial light in such a barn. The north- south orientation of this barn was thought at that time to make the barn cooler in summer, taking advantage of the prevailing south and southwest winds (Voegler 104). Because of the mild winters in this part of Indiana, considerations for warmth in winter was not a factor for milk cows.

Inside, on the west side of this barn, were stalls for the bull and for cows with calves and in the center was room for storing a wagon or other farm implements. On the east side were stanchions for milking ten cows. My cousins remember that originally there were more stanchions, but some were removed to create a small creamery room where the milk was separated and the milk could be temporarily stored in milk cans (Pluimer). Although Pop did use electric milking machines after electricity came in 1937 or 1938, this was never considered strictly a dairy farm, and the dairy part of the farm business was phased out in the 1950s.

Next to the milking barn, on the west side, was a com crib barn for drying and storing com on cobs. It was a double-pen style with an open drive through the middle. Here the corn (on cobs) was loaded by hand into the cribs and left to dry. The space in the middle was used to keep the wagon. When Pop started farming corn production generally averaged 40 bushels to the acre, but in 1924 Iowa State University began experimentation with breeding of corn for seeds that would produce 100 bushels or more per acre. As the newly developed hybrids became more readily available, corn production increased and larger facilities were required for storing and drying the corn were needed. With the introduction of corn-picking machines in 1931, corn could be picked at a faster rate and this encouraged even more corn production. At some point in time the corn crib had a lean-to built onto one side that was used for parking the car and later torn down when it became obsolete.

I can find no evidence that Pop ever had a silo, even though silos had been a part of the Indiana landscape since the turn of the century, and this is consistent with his traditional methods of farming. Silos are used for storing silage, chopped corn plants including leaves, stalks, and all. With silage, a farmer could feed more cattle through the winter and it was cheaper than dry feed. Many farmers were skeptical about using Silage. According to Ingolf Voegler, some farmers feared that the cows teeth would fall out from eating silage, or that it would make calving difficult, or even worse, that it would burn the cows' stomachs and af-

fect the milk. Because silage ferments, some farmers worried that it would make their cows drunk, an argument that appealed to temperance-oriented farmers, according to Voegler (108).

Nearer to the house were the chickens houses, other outbuildings with multi-purpose uses, and the outhouse. There was no electricity until 1934 and no indoor plumbing until 1960. In 1939 when his eldest son was married Pop built for them a small house next to the big farmhouse. Both houses had electricity and hand pumps in the kitchen but no bathroom. A well outside the big house served for their water supply and the outhouse was scrubbed down every Monday morning.

My Great grandfather, though in business much earlier than my grandfather, had a considerably different mind-set than Pop and his attitude is reflected in his barn. Anxious to fit in like an American as well as wanting to be successful in this new land, Jacob Walker was a considerably more progressive farmer. Perhaps he had learned some of the new practices while working in Ohio during his first years in America, or perhaps he associated with farmers who were employing new technology on their farms. Regardless, his barns, equipment, and farming practices are more illustrative of the advances being made in farming from the 1880s through the 1940s. He was one of the first in the county to own his own tractor (an International Harvester Mogul 8-16), to have a Delco System which provided electricity to his house and barn years before the Indiana Rural Electric Act of 1936, and to own an automobile. And he was also one of the first to lay tiles in his fields to drain the water from them. Lloyd Walker remembered Jacob coming out to the farm in 1940 to show him where the tiles had been laid (Kearns Interview).

When Jacob Walker came to the United States from Wurttemberg in 1872 he was just barely fifteen years old, but well-steeped in German farming practices. For centuries his family had lived in a typical farm house called “hausbarn” where both the family and their livestock were housed. A separate barn, for the storage of hay, was located within a hundred feet of the hausbarn. Today the Walker barn and hausbarn still stand in the village of Wankheim in Southern German state of Baden-Wurttemberg and are still in use. But the practice of the German hausbarn was never used in the United States. Instead German settlers adapted to the American methods of separating livestock from human habitation, probably because space was not at such a premium as in the homeland.

It was in Ohio where Great grandfather and his two brothers worked, adapted to their new homeland, and learned to appreciate the latest farming practices of the American farmer. Great grandfather worked as a farm laborer until he had enough money for a down payment on his own farm and went further west. About 1880 he and brother Fred settled in Blackford County, Indiana. At that time, farmers in the county were working small farms from 80 - 320 acres. Most engaged in mixed farming, cultivating a portion of their lands in corn, wheat and oats and raising small herds of milk cows, beef cattle, and swine. A few county farmers raised sheep. Butter and egg production was done at home and was a significant contribution to the farmer's economy. Many farms had small apples orchards just like the farms in their homeland. (1880 Agricultural Census). This is the kind of farm that my Great grandfather and his brother Fred were looking for.

Fred contracted with Blackford County farmers, Peter Wadel and his wife, Elizabeth, an elderly German couple who had no children. Fred bought the Wadel's 80 acre farm for $100 with the agreement that he would provide the Wadels with a "good and comfortable dwelling house for themselves, a garden on the premises, fuel for the house, all necessary clothing and food as well as any medical care and eventually a decent burial and suitable tombstones for their graves. It was a good bargain. The Wadel Farm had forty acres of improved land on which Peter Wadel had grown Indian corn and wheat during the previous year and cut five acres of hay. There were also forty acres of timber, three horses, four milch cows, and two calves. This would prove to be a good beginning for Fred who soon married and started his own family (Deed Book W 87).

Jacob settled just down the road from his brother Fred. He purchased an 80 acre tract of land from Lewis Cale, a relative to the Wadels, and later acquired other tracts increasing his farm to about 320 acres. In 1882 he married Elizabeth Hiser whose father had owned the adjoining farm. He named this farm "German Stock Farm" which he had painted in black with old German Style letters on the broad side of the barn. This was a familiar landmark until WW 1 when the local war board asked him to remove it.

Traditionally the farmer built his barn first; then came the farm house. Whether the barn came first is not certain but the barn, the granary, and the original house still stand. Built in the popular cottage style of the 1880s for his new bride, the house retains much of its original gingerbread trim and the charm of a country farmhouse. It is still well-landscaped, just as my Great-grandparents liked, with orchards and gardens near the house. Great-

grandfather once had apple, cherry, pear, Mirabellum plum and apricot trees in the orchard and a tulip tree in the front yard, but only two of the original trees remain today. The granary still has the smell of corn and oats and is the favorite hangout of the farm cats. But the barn is a wonderful study in modern technological advances of the early twentieth century.

The original barn was a two-story rectangular barn with a gable roof approximately 50 feet by 30 feet and made of sawn lumber. Rather than being painted the familiar red, it was painted an off-white or cream color that is very much the color of the hausbarns in Germany where family descendants still live. It was built with sawn lumber and designed to use less lumber than earlier barns. The rafters are unusual, constructed in such a way that the whole mow can be used to store hay without obstructions by support beams. It is not known who the designer was, but it fits into the time period when farmers and barn designers were trying to find ways to construct the hay loft in such a way as to give maximum storage with minimum obstructions. The hayhood, on the north end of the barn, is a simple board extended out from the peak of the roof from which the hay was elevated to the loft with hay fork. A track that extends the full length of the loft allowed for moving the hay to the back of the barn with little manual labor.

The original plan of the first floor has been updated, but it probably was arranged in various-sized stalls to house the pigs, sheep, horses, and a few beef cows with one stanchion for a milk cow. It was a multi-functional barn with a little of everything, according to granddaughter, Peg Barnes, who remembers that there was only one Jersey cow for milking and the rest were Black Angus beef cattle (Barnes interview). Black Angus cattle had been recently introduced into the United States when Great Grandfather began farming and the family has always been particularly proud of their association with this breed. Great grandfather may have seen this breed at the Columbian Exposition which was held in Chicago in 1893 or he may have shown his cattle there (Parker research letter). Peg Barnes recalls that there was a poster from this fair that hung in her grandparents home but at this time it is not certain whether he attended or took part in this fair.

Rather than using a part of the barn for grain storage, Great Grandfather built a separate granary. Looking like small barns, these structures were typically rectangular buildings with gable roofs and had no windows or openings which was supposed to discourage rats, mice, and other rodents from getting in. Often these were double-walled for more protection of the grain stored within and sometimes they were built on piers. According to Noble

and Cleek, these granaries were usually associated with German, Scandinavian, or eastern European immigrants, and so it is appropriate for Jacob Walker and his wife, Elizabeth, who were both German and living in a strong German community in eastern Indiana (Noble and Cleek 154). Here Great Grandfather stored his shelled com, wheat, oats, and barley on one side and unshelled com on the other. Granddaughter Peg Barnes remembers that the buggy was also housed in the middle of the granary and the chicken yard, where her Grandma's chickens, geese, and ducks were kept, was conveniently located next to the granary. Grandma Walker, Peggy says, swept the chicken yard every day. It can be seen adjacent to the granary on the east side in an rare old photo dating before 1919. Partially visible in this photo is one hen house, but Peg remembers that there was yet another chicken house further east. Pigs, she recalled, were sometimes kept down at Uncle Fred's place just a half mile away, but baby piglets rejected by their mothers were wrapped in a black blanket and kept behind the stove in Great Grandma's summer kitchen and hand-fed until they were big enough to live on their own.

During the years that Great grandfather was building his farming operations the beef cattle industry was growing and changing, too. Since the late 1880s, with the coming of railroads and refrigerated cars and improved feed, alfalfa, and surplus corn, cattle could be finished on farms and sent to market in urban centers. While some farmers raised cattle from "birth to finished beef," others bought calves from western farmers and finished them before sending them to a packing house for processing and distribution. Around 1920 Great Grandfather shifted his emphasis to feeder cattle for the beef industry and I believe that this led to the enlarged and remodeled barn which still stands on his farm. This remodeled barn is much like barns built further west about this time. In the Western States of Illinois and Iowa where lumber was scarce and expensive, farmers needed bigger and cheaper barns to store and protect the hay for their large cattle operations. The barn which answered their needs is generally called a hay barn or feeder barn.

The feeder barn was more appropriate to the conditions and landscape of the west than Indiana, but it also worked for farmers, like my Great grandfather, who came from a long tradition of protecting their livestock inside. It was a large low structure with storage of hay in the middle of the barn floor and open areas around the outer portion of the interior. Cows could roam freely around the hay and could use the barn for protection during summer storms or during the Winter (Soike 90-91).

While my Great grandfather's enlarged barn is not technically a hay barn or feeder barn as they were called in Iowa, the remodeled barn functioned in much the same way. Two sides of the original barn were removed just below the original roof line and large sheds were added to the east and south sides of the barn. The enlarged barn was then approximately 75 feet by 70 feet. On the inside the stalls were removed, creating a large open barn where the beef cattle could come and go at will at feeding time or for shade in good weather, and remain sheltered in winter and during storms. Hay was pitched down from the loft above, probably into some kind of feeding station. With the building of the railroad, Great grandfather could walk his herds to Mollie to send them to market (Mary Trant Helm).

At the north end of the barn was built a tall round concrete silo for the storage of silage, the foundation to his original silo is still visible in the ground. Historically, early silage pits were built into the interior of the barn, but whether Great grandfather had such a silage pit is not known since the original floor has been covered with concrete (Voegler 108). The silo was an object of some controversy since that is where Great grandfather's son, known as Whiskey Bill Walker, stored his still during Prohibition.

After my Great grandmother died in 1919, Jacob Walker relinquished the management of his farm to his son-in-law, Roll Walker, who had married Jacob's youngest daughter, Ella. He then began to invest in a variety of projects during the boom times of the 1920s. He bought citrus groves in McAllen, Texas, but the groves were too young to produce much income and he never made any profit from them. He purchased an apartment building in Indianapolis and then went into partnership with Adam Rittenauer to drain parts of the Kankakee Swamp in western Indiana and eastern Illinois. The swamp drainage project was a Corps of Engineer's idea designed to reclaim farm land and to prevent flooding. In 1927, after continuous flooding problems in the area, the Corps began to encourage private businesses to engage in the monstrous task of draining these swamps, a project which eventually was abandoned as futile and today the Kankakee Swamp is a protected environmental habitat. In 1930 Jacob Walker mortgaged his farm land to pay for a dredge, but he was unable to repay the mortgage and the bank foreclosed on his farm in 1932. After several years of being rented, it was purchased in 1940 by Great grandfather's nephew, William Walker, and today remains in the Walker family.

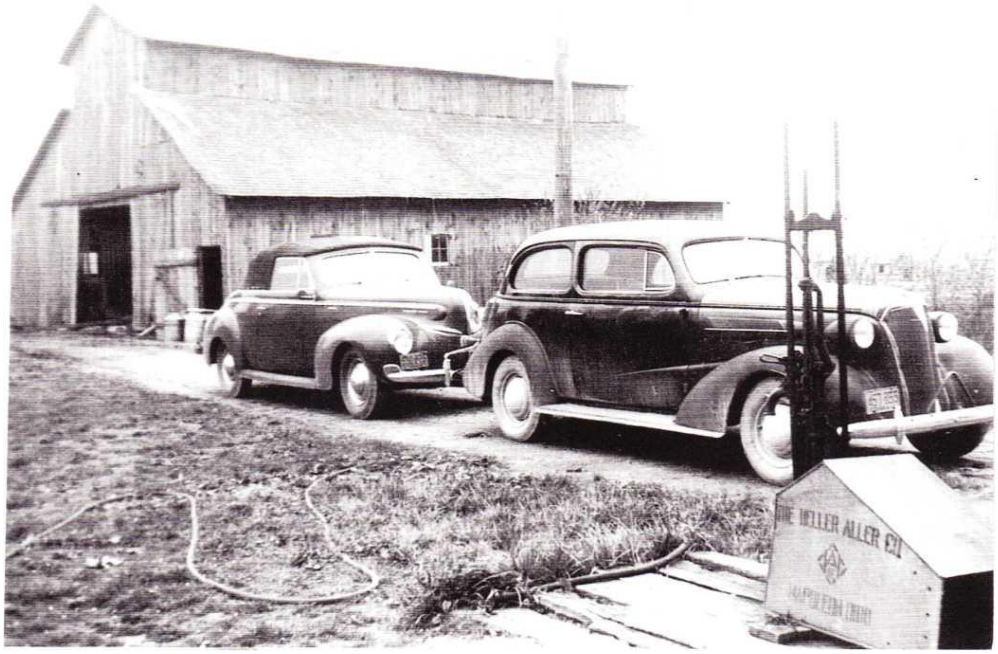
Changes in farming and the decline in the barn began after WW2. More and more farmers turned to gasoline powered machinery which eliminated the work horse and in turn

reduced the need for growing oats. Mechanical com pickers increased the need for grain storage businesses. Large dairy operations and greater emphasis on health conditions in barns convinced many small farmers to phase out their dairy herds. The promotion of soy products in the 1950s introduced the production of soybeans. In the 1960s machines which could pick corn and shell it in the field were introduced, again changed the way corn was handled and stored. The corn crib, which was never designed to store shelled corn, was out-dated and useless in a span of just forty years and granaries were supplanted by commercial grain elevators.

Today farming has changed noticeably since the days of my Grandfathers, but the barn remains as a Symbol of our agricultural heritage.

Regena Trant Schantz
Davenport, Iowa

Mary Trant Helm with Trant Barn in background, 1951



Milking Barn on the Trant Farm, 1942

Short Horn Cows, Pop Trant Farm, 1943

Russell Trant with Short Horn Bull, 1943

Three sons of Adam and Catherine (Schettler) Walker emigrated to America in the 1870s.
They came first to Bucyrus, Ohio, where their uncle, George Walker was farming.

John Frederick
b. 23 Apr 1851
To Ohio 1872
To Blackford Co., Indiana
m. Mary A. Walker
(B. Wankheim 24 Aug 1853 to Casper and Mary Schwartzkoph Walker)
d. 22 July 1939
Buried I.O.O.F. Cemetery,
Hartford City, Indiana 8 Children:
- John A.
- Katherine
- Emma
- Daniel
- William
- Samuel H.
- Alice
- Walter Carl

George
b. 5 Jan 1854
To Springfield, Ohio
Married and had children

Jacob
b. 4 Feb 1859
To Ohio c. 1875
To Blackford Co. Indiana 1878
Farmed 240 acres
M. Elizabeth Hiser
16 November 1882
Zion Lutheran Church,
Hartford City, Indiana
D. 30 October 1942
Buried: I.O.O.F. Cemetery,
Hartford City, Indiana
4 Children:
- Anna, b. 1882
- Lewis William, b. 1884
- Rose Catherine, b. 1887
  - m. John Trant
- Ella May, b. Oct 1898

Prepared by Regena Trant Schantz, great-granddaughter of Jacob Walker
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