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News

Waterloo founder's barn will live on as oak flooring

by DAVID L. SHAW/dshaw@fltimes.com
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WATERLOO — A piece of Waterloo's history has been torn down.

An 1829 barn built and owned by village founder Samuel Bear on East River Street was dismantled over the weekend.

But a part of the barn will live on.

The main oak timbers will be salvaged and made into oak flooring by Doug Holland of Levanna Restoration Lumber of Auburn. Holland's company dismantled the barn, located on the south side of East River Street, across from Distillery Street.



SPENCER TULIS/Finger Lakes Times An 1829 barn built and owned by village founder Samuel Bear on east River Street in Waterloo is being dismantled.

"It's a pretty unique barn, being 180 years old and owned by one of the village's founders. It's a three-bay English barn," said Holland, who's taken down and saved some 40 barns since 2002, saving what he can for flooring and other uses. "It's a green project in that no new trees will be cut down to make the flooring. Instead, I'll use these old oak timbers and recycle them for a new use," he said.

The barn is owned by William Stinson of Moravia, who has owned several old barns over the years, many of which he's preserved.

But when plans to find a reuse for the barn failed to materialize and the cost of moving it to property he owns near Skaneateles proved too costly, he was reluctantly forced to have it salvaged.

"It was part of the original Ward estate, built in 1829 by Samuel Bear. I purchased it in 2000 from Patricia Shultz Lambiase of Rochester, the daughter of Gladys Schultz, who inherited the farm when her parents died," Stinson said.

His purchase came about by coincidence. Both Stinson and Lambiase were at a barn convention in Amherst in 2000. Stinson said that as they were leaving the conference, he held the door for Lambiase and casually asked her how she liked the conference.

"She said it was nice, but she didn't achieve her goal of selling her barn. I said I didn't achieve my goal either. I wanted to buy a barn. That prompted discussion that led to me buying her barn," he said.

The 36-by-52-foot barn, with a relatively rare swing beam, has deteriorated over the past nine years to the point where Stinson felt he had no choice but to remove it. Rather than tear it down into rubble, he hooked up with Holland to salvage what he could.

"The site will be cleared and seeded. You'll never know a barn was there," Stinson said, with mixed emotion.

Oops!

Please read the following e-mail

For the Correct history of the old barn and farm on River Rd., Waterloo

from **Tanyalee458@aol.com**
to dshaw@fltimes.com

cc terwilliger10@fltg.net,
info@levannarl.com,
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date Thu, Jul 16, 2009 at 12:49 PM
subject Correct history of the old barn and farm on River Rd. Waterloo

Hi David,

I consulted with Richard T. Schreck after we talked this morning (wanted to be sure it's right this time!) and he has supplied me with the following information:

The land may have indeed belonged to the Bear estate at a very early date, **but the founder of Waterloo, Samuel Bear, died in 1807.** The Bear descendants never built any structures on this lot and sold it immediately after the death of Samuel Bear to Hon. John Chamberlain

The lot was purchased by the Hon. John Chamberlain (1784-1831), in 1807 and he proceeded to build a federal style house and shortly after- a barn as well. Therefore the barn was built by the Hon. John Chamberlain sometime between 1807 and circa 1830.

This John Chamberlain (1784-1831) was the son of Col. John Chamberlain, (Revolutionary War veteran, Massachusetts State Senator and surveyor & Civil Engineer by trade; born in Dudley MA 1757 - died Waterloo 1821), and a brother of Jacob P. Chamberlain (supporter of the 1848 Woman's Right's Convention in Seneca Falls).

The Hon. John Chamberlain (1784-1831) served several terms as Justice of the Peace, and during the administration of Gov. DeWitt Clinton, was appointed one of the associate judges of the Court of Common Pleas for Seneca County.

His daughter, Mary Adelia Chamberlain, married Hon. Hamilton Ward (see bio. below) and it was they who owned the house for many decades, using it as a summer retreat from their busy political lives. They were both well-known and well-loved in Waterloo.

The farm was always known as the "Ward Farm" but technically should be called the Chamberlain/Ward Farm. After the Wards passed away in 1898 and 1903, a succession of owners followed, until it fell into a state of disrepair and was eventually torn down in 1971, with only the barn remaining. Richard T. Schreck managed to save the entire front entryway of the home's exterior from the wrecking ball and re-built it onto his west-facing porch at 75 Washington St. in S. Waterloo.

Bio from <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=W000133>

Hamilton Ward: a Representative from New York; born in Salisbury, Herkimer County, N.Y., July 3, 1829; attended the common schools and was privately tutored; studied law; was admitted to the bar and commenced practice in Phillipsville (now Belmont), N.Y., in 1851; district attorney of Allegany County 1856-1859 and 1862-1865; appointed in 1862 by the Governor as commissioner to raise and equip troops for the Civil War; elected as a Republican to the Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, and Forty-first Congresses (March 4, 1865-March 3, 1871); chairman, Committee on Revolutionary Claims (Fortieth Congress); was not a candidate for renomination in 1870; delegate to nearly all State conventions from 1858 to 1890; attorney general of New York in 1880 and 1881; member of the State constitutional commission in 1890; appointed and subsequently elected justice of the State supreme court and served from 1891 until his death in Belmont, Allegany County, N.Y., December 28, 1898; interment in Forest Hill Cemetery.

Hope this helps-and thank you!

Tanya Warren
Waterloo Historical Society