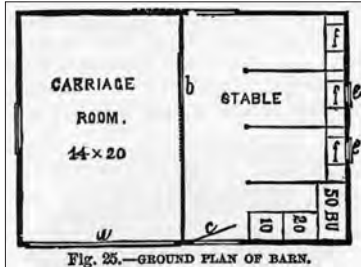


# Historic Preservation Commission

## Property of the Season – Spring 2012

### Urban Barns

The Spring 2012 Property of the Season honor goes to Oswego's collection of urban barns. Did you know that Oswego has a large collection of 19th century barns still in use today? The phrase "urban barn" was coined by Allen G. Nobel in his book *The Old Barn Book: a Field Guide to North American barns and Other Farm Structures*, in 1955, but Oswegoans of the 19th and early 20th centuries would have referred to these structures as carriage houses, barns or stables. Like a rose, a barn by any other names is still a barn. Typically these barns would have been large enough to include two to three stalls for horses with feed boxes plus room for a carriage and usually a wagon or sleigh. Most would include a tack room to hold bits, bridles, saddles and other supplies, plus a bin for hay for the horses. Variations were common regarding style and size depending on the available space and the types of tools, animals and vehicles that needed to be stored. A standard carriage house would have two or three windows for light and ventilation, a hay loft up above with a small door for delivering hay and sweeping out the loft. Sliding doors were common and were used for ease of use when bringing in horses and wagons. Potting sheds, with a small hinged door and a window, were often attached to the structure as a lean-to. Urban barns were also transportable! The Kendall County Record often recorded the moving of barns, both within town and out into the country.



the barn at the corner of Adams Street and Rose Hill (now Wilson Place) between 1858 and 1863. They held the property until 1904, when their son Joseph sold it to John Friebele. The Friebeles owned the lot briefly, selling it to the Cutter family in 1911 and in whose hands it remained until its sale in 1984 to the Schramers. The barn has had very few changes made over the years. According to a November 2000 article in the *Beacon-News*, "The hay and grain chutes are just as they were in 1878, whip holders still hang on the walls and manure can still be shoveled out the trap door." A historic greenhouse was added and the cupola was removed in 2000.



Another noteworthy example of Oswego's barn architecture is the Seeley Barn (also known as Turtle Rock), located at 2470 Route 31. The barn was raised some time in the 1840s and was built using local limestone. John S. Seeley bought the land in 1860 and continued to farm it until his death in 1899. The barn, located across from the Village Hall, was converted to a residence in 1928 by James Curry and was later a well known local tearoom. The Seeley barn is one of the best examples of stone barn construction in the area.

Oswego has several historic urban barns that are eligible for landmark status, including: 274 South Adams Street, 192 North Adams Street, 196 North Adams Street, 26 Van Buren Street, 19 North Street, 1437 Route 31 and 2470 Route 31. Other fine examples of carriage houses or stables include several along Garfield Street and "Barn Alley" between Madison and Monroe Streets. If you are interested in learning more about the Property of the Season Program, or about landmarking your property, please contact the Community Development Department.



One noteworthy barn was located on Lot 10 in the historic Black Walnut block at 274 South Adams Street. The lot itself was purchased by Sylvester W. Randall in 1851 and put into a trust cared for by Almon Ives for his 12-year-old daughter, Mary Elizabeth Randall. Mary and her family moved to Joliet, IL soon after and Mary was wed in 1855 to Buel A. Fuller. The property was eventually acquired by Thomas Wayne, a local grain merchant and cider maker, and his wife Jemima. Thomas and Jemima probably built

(All historic photos courtesy of the Little White School Museum) ❖

