

North Country Underground Railroad Historical Association NCUGRHA

NCUGRHA Annual Meeting
Sunday, May 6, 2012
Committee/Activity Reports
Barn Committee, S.K. Smith Barn Restoration Project

ANNUAL BARN COMMITTEE REPORT – 30 APRIL 2012

1. One quarterly barn committee meeting has been held so far this year in March; others are planned for June, September, and December. The Museum is the meeting place.
2. Minutes of these meetings are available for review.
3. Over the past twelve months work at the Barn was divided into archeology, stone masonry, and structural improvements:
 - a. Collegiate archeological teams led by Andrew Black discovered set stones for posts under Bent No. 1 and Bent No. 2, a weak sub-grade tie between the north ends of the stone foundation, an unidentified metal artifact at the entrance to the “hidden place” and animal bones. The April 2011 flooding of Lake Champlain brought rising water into the “hidden place” and archeological work is complete. The water has not receded. Additional archeological work by collegians began away from the barn in two locations to discover artifacts of the Haff and Smith era (1819 – 1865): a stone foundation in the woods 100 yards north of the barn, and a grassy depression directly north of the farmhouse. The local newspaper published an article about the discovery of glass, pottery, and other interesting artifacts. A formal display is under consideration for the Museum.
 - b. A stone masonry team headed by Bill Umbreit and assisted by Glenn Erb started in early October 2011 and continued into early January 2012. They began interior repair of the east foundation by hand mixing mortar and setting in-situ stones. The wall is brought to original height for four-fifths of its exposed length and is ready for finish pointing. The northernmost section of wall was disassembled so that a more stable foundation course could be placed before rebuilding the last section of wall that has been missing for many years.
 - c. The committee purchased and installed galvanized turnbuckles and hardware for \$340.96 to fasten the top plate timbers to the cross-tie beams of Bents 1 and 2. These should help keep the timber joinery intact and help prevent the top of the walls from leaning outward and the roof from sagging downward. The turnbuckles supplement hand wrought iron braces and wire cabling from earlier repair efforts.
4. Members updated the status of tasks enumerated in the Association’s 2007 Five-Year Plan as related to this particular barn project and added detailed tasks grouped into five work phases for future incorporation with the plan.
5. This year’s theme is “Year of Revival – The Next Steps”. Members discussed four major steps to take this year:
 - a. To revive interest in the Barn soliciting volunteer work crews throughout this summer and fall to accomplish tasks identified for completion this and out-years to include

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site clean up and maintenance, structural stabilization, frame repair and replacement, roof repair and replacement, and wall siding replacement;

- b. To rebuild the east stone foundation. This will provide full-length bearing for the sill plate, which now is cantilevered several feet at its north end.
 - c. To excavate tree stumps and roots along the exterior perimeter of the foundation walls along with a relief trench for the flooded "hidden place". The committee previously discussed hiring an experienced excavator to do this work. In March 2012, the Committee welcomed Mr. Eric Duquette who expressed his interest in providing the equipment and manpower to excavate where needed including the relief trench to vacate the water from the "hidden place". Work is expected this summer and fall.
 - d. To demolish the shed on the south end of the Barn and temporarily close the resulting wall opening with siding. Recreation of the shed slated for next year.
6. Members wish to create a plan with yearly milestones to restore the S.K. Smith barn to full functional agricultural use.
7. The committee agreed that future visits to the barn would occur at the specific invitation of the property owners in concordance with the License Agreement drafted in 2010.

Respectfully submitted,

Scribe: Glenn Erb

May 1, 2012