

To Raise a Barn

On the opposite page, you can see some of the major steps in barn raising. The foundation was most often made without mortar (dry-wall construction), and the main girder—about twelve to eighteen inches thick—was the heart of the barn. The flooring in dwellings was usually left loose for a year or so before it was nailed down, but many barn floors were *never* permanently fastened.

The main framed and braced sections—usually four or five—were called “bents,” and they were fashioned by the framer on the ground (as shown to the right) in preparation for raising day.

Neighbors for miles around came to help in a raising, which consisted of putting up only the framing. The siding and roofing work—which required much more time—was done by the owner and his helpers. At a barn raising, men came equipped with their own pikes and other tools. The framer—if one was hired to do the job—was seldom paid until after the raising, for if any corrections were necessary, he was expected to make them. This, of course, would delay the work of the raising crew, but any interruption from work was welcome, for there was always food, drink, and entertainment on hand.

