

Remembrance of barns past and present

Gindler crew shares camaraderie & connection to living history

THE GINDLER barn project in July was a typical Guild success story. Three parties had been at work for a few years before a team of Guild framers showed up in Collinsville, Ill. The local group, Collinsville Area Recreation District had a dream of recreating an early Euro-American farmstead. They raised money and organized themselves to make it happen, contracting Trillium Dell Timberworks (Rick Collins), to help through the logistics of dismantling, storing, raising more money, and ultimately putting the barn together on site. The Guild backed the project inviting members to participate.

I decided to join in, curious about the Midwest, white oak, humidity, bugs, and St. Louis, the east end of the Oregon trail. I live in Dayton, Wash., near the west end of that trail, and have been curious for some time about the timber framing practices of the pioneers and farmers who traveled west along the trail 150 years earlier. I also felt a desire and a duty to be active in our Guild. I knew from the Salem workshop in 2006 the deep sense of enrichment that comes out of Guild experiences.

Not disappointed, I came back from Gindler with several ways to work more efficiently and comfortably, and a renewed confidence about my work and my small-sized enterprise. I also came back with a host of great memories, new friends, and a wish list of Mafell tools.

When the workshop started the foundation and sill were already in place, thanks in part to Curtis Milton, Tom Haanen, and Kevin Brennan. The original timbers had been stored and recorded on site next to a pile of freshly sawn white oak. Much to my delight there was plenty of work for our crew of about 15 timber framers. Work was assigned: layout, cutting, assembly, and raising.

As this unique group and its abilities started to unfold, we shuffled between tasks and priorities. We were loosely controlled, which allowed us to easily follow our natural inclinations. The four Heartwood apprentices put to use their layout skills from the get-go. Brandon Woll who showed interest in scarf joints got the green light to layout as many as he wanted until it became less intimidating and more familiar. He and his companion apprentices cut and laid out timber, and checked each other's work. They also learned about scaffolding set up, and participated in all aspects of the proj-



Denis Buet

Sorting the sows ears. Brian Malone, Rocco Bellebuono, Isaac McCoy-Sulentic, and Marvion Criddle sprint to stay ahead of the cutting shop.

Gindler haiku

the cards beat the cubs
heap big barn goes up on time
the arch smiles on us

—Tom Haanen

ect. While hands-on learning occupied these new comers to our trade, the more experienced framers set the pace to complete the work on time. Matt Jenkins of Trillium Dell and Isaac McCoy-Sulentic took care of most of the lay out, while Tom Haanen directed the cutting. Kevin Brennan took on the roof system with help from Henry Wallace of Colorado.

Somewhere in the midst of this, Rocco Bellebuono, Isaac McCoy-Sulentic, and the Trillium Dell crew were busy sewing up the many loose ends. A few professional Guild volunteers took charge of less flashy but necessary work, the parts nobody notices but that are just as important: recutting braces, sawing a hundred birds-mouths, and on and on. I am thinking of Don Seela, Allan Peoples, Dennis Hambruch, and Joel McCarty.

As it goes with projects like this, bottlenecks show up in the first few days. “Stay ahead of the cutting crew,” was the motto of the layout crew. Once that was solved, the next strangling spot was the eight scarf joints that needed to be made before the layout of the tie beams. Long July days helped us to keep on schedule as each hurdle was recognized and overcome.

Meanwhile, the local volunteer crew painted and

installed siding and flooring. The second floor, which had been dismantled in large panels, was flown into place. Scaffolding was then brought up to install wall and purlin plates safely. Rick and Rocco kept all materials delivered on time and also kept track of the larger picture. We finished the first week with a great sense of accomplishment. Early in the second week, as we could feel the time pressure ease up, our morning meetings switched from detailed and personal instructions to more creative talks. Rocco philosophized on the right attitude to have regarding restoration work — a dilemma worth thinking about when we find ourselves using modern tools while matching square rule work that was done over 150 years ago.

A few days later, he expressed his appreciation and gratitude for what we were accomplishing. I came to appreciate Rick Collins' way of quickly trusting his crew and Rocco's way of remaining positive, cautious, and calm. I really enjoyed these leaders' laid-back style, which allowed many of us to move from job to job freely until the barn was finished. In that way, experienced workers, apprentices, and volunteers all contributed equally to the goal, and the overall atmosphere was one of common suffering and joy.

It was hot at times (no irritating bugs by the way), but we were all there to raise one more bent before the end of the day. Some bents went up effortlessly, while others taught us not to cut corners. Most bents were raised using a grip hoist, a manual cranking device that tips the bent



Denis Buet

Gindler progress accreting towards Bent Eight. Sills alone at Bent Eight. Roof and trim complete at Bent One.

up. The repetition gave us the opportunity to improve as we went, a chance to practice different roles with each raising, and to work with different people observing the qualities in each other. The team was strengthening daily out of the pure quantity of work and with each mini-raising. Strengthening but also weakening.

By the end of the first week, the heat and long hours had taken their toll. We all needed a break. On Sunday morning, a few of us had a yoga session with Laura Collins on site for the weekend. After breakfast we worked a little. After lunch we left to see one of the wonders of the area, the Cahokia Mounds. The earth mounds, each a dif-

Custom Manufacturer of High Grade Inland Timbers

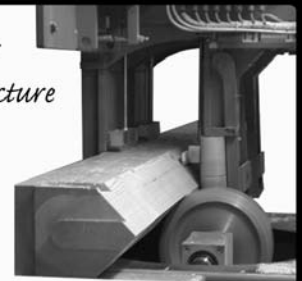


32859 E. Canyon Road
P.O. Box 179
Cataldo, Idaho 83810
Office 208-682-4602



Please visit our website
www.whitemanlumber.com
We provide kiln dried timber.
FSC certified.

*High quality BC Douglas fir
Garden to commercial structure
Kiln dry in RF or HV
Willing to challenge
CNC and hand craft
Ship nation wide
Wholesale*



Custom cut for professionals



Daizen Joinery Ltd.

British Columbia, Canada
Contact: Dai Yoshito Ona
P 250.679.2750 F 604.677.5264
email dai@daizen.com www.daizen.com

ferent size and shape, are the remains of a Native American culture, the Mississippian, that vanished in the 1400s. At their peak, they inhabited a city of 130,000 people. I remember that day with pleasure and wonder as we stuck together in an unusual and unplanned way. Instead of trying to act as a group, we moved about freely, with ease the whole afternoon.

I expect that we all needed some alone time, to rest from the close quarters we shared all week. We walked to the tallest mound, a sort of Native American Great Pyramid of the Mississippian, and hung out, looking at the long view of St. Louis, the Gateway Arch and the surrounding forest, sharing stories. I watched for unusual birds and saw my first Blue Grosbeak and many species of hardwood trees unknown to me.

The barn project must have been going well, as there was no mention of it. We were loosely together, tourists with no worries. A group of good men out in the world doing good work. We were settling nicely into this Midwest furnace, and leisure had replaced work as the bond between us.

I also attribute the success of this workshop to the unusual presence of a videographer, Richard Kuenneke of Oak View Road Media. Guild members across the country were treated to online video reportage of the barn going up on YouTube (<http://tinyurl.com/gindlervideo>). A mutual respect grew between us as we worked our trade and Richard worked his. Much fun was had as each per-

sonality came out for the pictures taken. Joel's gentle and fun interviewing (the search for life's meaning) made us all think and articulate our thoughts about the Guild and what we get out of it. The interview experience was about going inward, while the physical work was an expression of what could not be said. We were the actors in a movie: The Restoration of the Gindler Barn. It was a new experience for all of us.

This project represents well what our Guild can contribute to its members and to communities that take advantage of the opportunities offered. Apprentices practiced their new skills with the support of many experienced companions, and Collinsville got a rebuilt barn that will be part of a living history farmstead for many generations to come. Guild projects can be a few days or a few weeks long, and each time a new adventure waits to unfold. Different places and wood, different people, different size projects, all sharing our mission: to educate through the giving of what we love to do. In this particular project, our leaders created the space for each of us to find our place and experience, to discover what we wanted or needed to practice more. And that has been my experience of how the Guild operates, whether it is a conference or a workshop. Our future holds many more workshops and opportunities to grow. As members, we need to raise our dreams knowing that our Guild can build them.

—Denis Buet

NEHIL • SIVAK
CONSULTING STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

Structural Engineering
New Construction
Restoration

Registered in
AL, CO, GA, IN,
MI, MN, MO,
NY, WI

414 S. Burdick Ste. 300
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Ph. 269-383-3111
tnehil@nehilsivak.com

Standing Dead Old Growth Douglas Fir Timbers

Port Orford & Western Red Cedar Timbers

EAST FORK LUMBER COMPANY
MYRTLE POINT, OREGON

PHONE: (541)572-5732 FAX: (541)572-2727
eflc@ucinet.com

FOREST PRODUCTS SOCIETY
Facilitating technical information exchange for the international forest products research and industry network

Great books by Borg Madsen

Structural Behaviour of Timber

This 436-page hardcover book examines the structural behavior of timber when subjected to different forces (tension, bending, shear, etc.) and the effects of load duration, moisture content, and size. Suggestions as to how an understanding of these effects can be incorporated into the design procedure are provided.
Order # 7241 \$30 FPS Member, \$40 nonmember

Behaviour of Timber Connectors

This 434-page hardcover book takes a comprehensive look at the attributes a "perfect" timber connection must possess in order to meet today's stringent performance criteria for strength and deformation. This book is intended to be a companion to *Structural Behaviour of Timber*.
Order # 7227 \$30 FPS member, \$40 nonmember

Order Both Books and Save!
Order# 7227-7241 \$50 FPS member, \$60 nonmember

For detailed descriptions and additional must-haves, visit: www.forestprod.org/mycart/

Forest Products Society, 2801 Marshall Ct., Madison, WI 53705
phone: 800-354-7163, ext. 202