

## The House of Industry and Industrial Farm

The House of Industry and the Bank Barn were built in 1877. The House of Industry and Refuge or "Poor House" provided a home for the "deserving poor" of Wellington County. The Barn and Industrial Farm were an important part of the House. The Farm grew produce and livestock to feed the inmates (residents) and staff at the House. The Farm also provided work or "industry" for the inmates. In the 19th century, Industrial Farms were a vital part of public institutions like hospitals, prisons, asylums and Houses of Refuge.

## Operating the Industrial Farm

Both the House of Industry and the Farm were funded and operated by the County of Wellington. In fact, the buildings and land here are still funded and operated by the County today. The County hired a Keeper and Matron (husband and wife) to live here and manage the House and Farm. The Keeper worked the Farm with the help of one hired man and male inmates. The House and Farm were in operation from 1877 to 1947. The building then became the County Home for the Aged and Infirm and the land was rented out to local farmers.



Keeper William Griffin (1884-1919) ph 9284



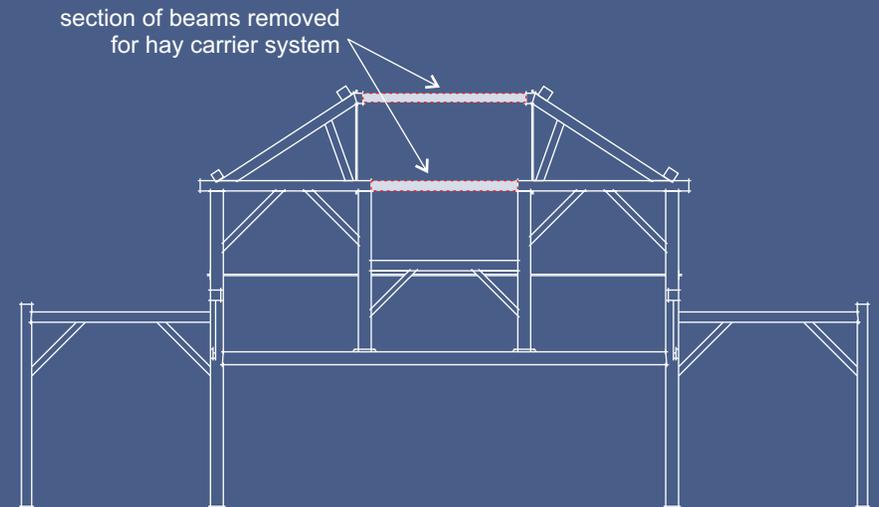
Many of these inmates had worked as farm labourers until ill health and old age left them without a living.  
Circa 1915 ph 9279

## The Evolving Barn and Farm

Agricultural practises evolved quickly in the late 19th century and the Farm adapted to modern techniques and equipment.

- ◆ Concrete floors in the stables (1909)
- ◆ Electricity installed (1900-1910)
- ◆ Silo built for grain storage (1914)
- ◆ Hen house built (1918)
- ◆ Modernized stables (1937)

In 1942, the Barn's beam structure was changed to allow a carrier system to be installed at the peak of the roof. This carried hay and straw to the lofts using pulleys.



## Produce and Livestock

The upper floor of the Barn stored hay, straw and grains. The lower floor stabled dairy cows, beef cows, and a team of workhorses. The large root cellar stored produce for both the livestock and residents of the House. Hog pens were built outside of the lower part of the Barn. Apple orchards and large gardens provided vegetables, fruit and preserves. Over the years, the County purchased additional land for the Farm: acreage across the road from the House (now the south side of Wellington Road 18) and in 1937, purchased an adjacent farm just north of the House, across from the present day location of the Terrace.



## Did you know?

- In 1877, the Farm's first year, over 30 acres were planted in oats, peas, wheat, potatoes and turnips. An orchard was planted with 100 apple trees.
- During World War II, the entire front lawn was sown with potatoes.
- In 1918, 300 bushels of oats, 16 tons of hay, 40 tons of silage, 320 bushels of turnips, and 50 bushels of carrots were just some of the crops harvested here.
- In the 1920s, nearly 1000 lbs. of butter and 400 dozen eggs were produced yearly.
- In 1941, livestock included 135 hens, 11 hogs and a herd of cows, calves, bulls, heifers.
- The parking lot located behind the Museum was once covered in strawberry fields.
- Jersey cows were kept at the Farm until new pasteurization regulations came into effect. The dairy herd was replaced with beef cattle in 1958.

House of Industry resident Jack Johnson with horse-drawn seed drill and Ben, the dog, 1945-1950. ph10420



## Learn more

Visit the Museum's award winning exhibit "If These Walls Could Speak" to learn more about the people that lived and worked here at the Industrial Farm and House of Industry and Refuge.



0536 Wellington Rd. 18  
Fergus, ON N1M 2W3  
T 519.846.0916 x 5221

**TOLL FREE:**  
**1.800.663.0750 x 5221**

[www.wellington.ca/museum](http://www.wellington.ca/museum)



ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.



# The Bank Barn and the Industrial Farm

at the Wellington County  
House of Industry and Refuge  
1877-1947

