

**BUILT IN 1873 NEAR SPRING GROVE, ILL.**

## Illinois Farmer Invented World's First Upright Silo

One of the most successful farm inventions ever -- the silo -- was "born" on an Illinois dairy farm when a young college student came home from college with what sounded like far-out tales of German farmers who were making something called "silage" by burying corn plants in the ground.

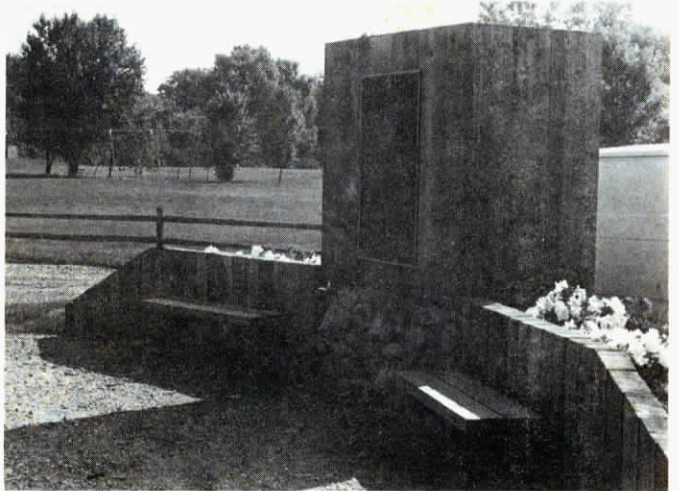
Lewis Hatch, who farmed near Spring Grove, Ill., listened to his son Fred and went along with him when he wanted to make silage on their own farm. The rest is history.

Fred Hatch had just graduated from the Illinois Industrial College, which later became the University of Illinois. Farmers in Europe, he had learned, used pits and trenches to make the "new fangled feed" called silage. He and his father decided to modify the idea by digging an 8 ft. pit inside their dairy barn that measured 10 ft. by 16 ft. They lined the pit with rocks and mortar and then built walls that reached 16 ft. above ground. The walls were made of a double thickness of boards with tarpaper between.

They used a horse-powered chopper to cut corn into small pieces and an elevator to dump it into the silo. They found that, as expected, the tower silo eliminated groundwater spoilage of silage that had been a problem in Europe and found that, so long as they removed a layer of silage on a daily basis, they had little spoilage. However, silage did spoil in the corners of the rectangular structure, which led them to later build a circular silo.

Because their herd showed so much improvement on the new feed, the Hatches built two circular silos three years later. Just 10 years after that, in 1886, there were already more than 5,000 silos in the U.S., according to a magazine report at that time.

The first Hatch silo was in continuous use until 1919. In 1984, American Society of Agricultural Engineers built a model of that first silo in a park in Spring Grove and erected a plaque commemorating its history. Fred Hatch died in 1929.



This one-third scale model is located one-half mile from the Spring Grove, Ill., farm where the "first ever" vertical silo was built.

## ABANDONED PIVOTS CUT BUILDING COSTS BY 60% OR MORE

### Farm Buildings Built With Old Center Pivots

You can save thousands of dollars -- up to 60% -- on farm buildings by building the framework out of steel pipe from abandoned center pivot irrigation systems.

Midtown Surplus Co., Scottsbluff, Neb., has built 20 farm structures, warehouses, and one-story office buildings using 40-ft. sections of 6-in. dia. steel pipe for trusses and all sidewall framing. The

company also sells steel irrigation pipe for about \$2 a running foot.

"You can cut the cost of a large farm building by at least 60% by using steel pipe for all the framework," reports Randall O'Bannon, Midtown representative. O'Bannon says they've put up buildings up to 250 ft. long with 48-ft. wide clear span area down the center. He says Midtown bought their irrigation pipe from an

irrigation company that dismantled unused center pivots. "There's an unlimited supply of unused center pivots in this area. Because of low crop prices and high operating costs, they're no longer profitable on marginal land," he notes.

Midtown sells 5, 6 and 8 in. dia. steel irrigation pipe. O'Bannon says construction is no more difficult using pipe, which they weld together, than wood.

The company sells most of its pipe to farmers who put up their own buildings.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Midtown Surplus Co., 1725 First, Scottsbluff, Neb. 69361 (ph 308 632-6300).

## "THEY'RE HOME WRECKERS"

### Family Turns Old Barns Into Picture Frames

By Dana Jennings

They're home wreckers. If you hang around, they'll frame you and nail you to the wall.

They're really cleaning up, too.

J. Alva (Al) Roberdeau, wife Irene and their four schoolboys live in Sturgis on the edge of South Dakota's beautiful Black Hills. They go out into the Great Plains and up into the Black Hills to wreck old abandoned houses, barns, claim shanties and mine shacks. They haul the rain-textured siding back to tiny Vale in northwest South Dakota to their 96-year-old blacksmith shop where they've installed some old wood-working machinery and sophisticated new framing equipment. There, they convert the stormworn boards into rustic picture frames.

The crew doesn't sand, paint or varnish the weathered wood. Instead, they leave the apple green moss and bright orange lichens right where they grew.

Occupational hazards around the old buildings include not only splinters and

rusty nails, but resident skunks and mosquitoes. The area is prime rattlesnake country but they've not seen any yet. Once they were discomfited by bullets a trigger-happy hunter sent about their ears. A buffalo herd attacked them, as did a hired man whose boss had forgotten to mention the deal he'd made.

I asked Al what he pays the landowners for the buildings he recycles. "Most of them are glad to get rid of the old eyesores, delighted to have a few pictures framed in wood from the barn that Grandpa built in '91. Ken Johnson here, for instance, had been paying taxes on this old line shack since the Twenties. He's glad to be rid of it."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rustic Woodcrafts, 1542 Fulton St., Sturgis, S. Dak. 57785.

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Al and Irene Roberdeau recycle "old eyesore" buildings into attractive new picture frames.



The Roberdeaus pry off each board with tender loving care to avoid marring or splitting.