

Mary Fesak

Professor Spencer

HISP 471

November 15, 2013

### The Montpelier Sheep Barn

Ambrose Madison and Tomas Chew, grandfather and great-uncle, respectively, of James Madison Jr., patented the Montpelier property in 1723. The first house was constructed within three years. James Madison Sr. began construction of the core of the present house around 1760. James Madison Jr. made extensive additions and alterations from 1797 through 1800 and 1809 through 1812. The Madison family sold Montpelier in 1844. The property passed through a number of owners including Thomas J. Carson until William duPont's agent Charles King Lennig purchased it in 1901. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has owned the property since 1984.<sup>1</sup>

Although the duPonts constructed the sheep barn, James Madison Jr. was the first to keep sheep at Montpelier. As a scientific farmer, Madison dedicated himself to the improvement of his livestock breeds. According to Mary Cutts, niece of Dolly Madison, "Mr. Madison raised the Angola Sheep, so famous for their wool."<sup>2</sup> Madison also raised Merinos<sup>3</sup> and Algerine sheep along with other scientific farmers like Thomas Jefferson.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ann L. Miller, "HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT: MONTPELIER, ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA, Phase II (Revised): Documentary Evidence Regarding the Montpelier House 1723-1983," July 2002, people.virginia.edu/.../Montpelier%20Project/Miller\_HSR\_2002.doc (accessed October 18, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Ann L. Miller, "Montpelier During the duPont Ownership Historic Context and Overview," Montpelier Research Files, 2008, 11, [https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3\\_loEP5i17GOTF0aXVhN0xnZE0/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3_loEP5i17GOTF0aXVhN0xnZE0/edit?usp=drive_web) (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> James Madison, *The Writings of James Madison: 1808-1819* (Harvard Law Library, 1908), 128, also available online at [http://books.google.com/books/about/The\\_Writings\\_of\\_James\\_Madison\\_1808\\_1819.html?id=W0waAAAAYAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Writings_of_James_Madison_1808_1819.html?id=W0waAAAAYAAJ) (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 136.

William duPont began to purchase Hampshire-Down sheep shortly after he bought Montpelier and prior to construction of the sheep barn. DuPont built the sheep barn between 1910 and 1918.<sup>5</sup> He purchased three rams in 1901 and five ewes in 1902.<sup>6</sup> DuPont continued to add sheep to his flock. In 1918 he purchased ten ewe lambs weighing 886 pounds.<sup>7</sup> Once his flock was established, du Pont also sold lambs. J. P. Wood of Culpeper bought two ram lambs from duPont for \$15 each in 1918.<sup>8</sup> When dogs killed four ewes and three lambs in 1918, duPont filed claims for \$5 a head.<sup>9</sup> He sold the entire flock at auction in the 1930s.<sup>10</sup>

DuPont built the sheep barn on property he purchased in 1910 from Nancy and William Byrd Willis for \$7,935.00.<sup>11</sup> Forest covered most of the Willis tract and included white oak and American chestnut trees. Chestnuts comprised roughly 10% of the Montpelier forests until the chestnut blight reached the estate around 1915.<sup>12</sup> The duPonts logged the dead chestnuts on a large scale when the blight ended in 1930 and 1931, although the presence of an earlier sawmill indicates the use of local wood for duPont structures built prior to 1930.<sup>13</sup> William duPont also cleared an area of about 23 acres next to the sheep barn as pasture, but the sheep largely foraged

---

<sup>5</sup> Diary Kept by a Secretary [Dornan] of William duPont, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>6</sup> *The Hampshire-Down Flock Record* (Centreville, Michigan: The Observer Power Job Print, 1903), 259-287, also available online at Google Books (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> J.P. Dornan to William duPont Sr., October 27, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>8</sup> J. P. Dornan to J.P. Wood, June 28, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>9</sup> William duPont Sr. to J.P. Dornan, July 1, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel L. Druckenbrod and Herman H. Shugart, "Forest History of James Madison's Montpelier Plantation," *Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society* 131, no. 3 (July- September 2004): 215, <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/4126951?uid=3739832&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&id=21102917265921> (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>11</sup> Deed of sale from Nelly C. Willis and William Byrd Willis to William duPont, 18 August 1910 (filed 2 September 1910). Orange County, Virginia. Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas A. Dierauf, "History of the Montpelier Landmark Forest: Human Disturbance and Forest Recovery," 2011, 9, [www.montpelier.org/sites/default/files/FM-landmark\\_forest.pdf](http://www.montpelier.org/sites/default/files/FM-landmark_forest.pdf) (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Daniel L. Druckenbrod and Herman H. Shugart, "Forest History of James Madison's Montpelier Plantation," 215.

in the woods. By 1937, the forest started to reclaim the pasture area.<sup>14</sup>

George Ficklen designed many of the duPont buildings on the property including the Montpelier schooling barn. He began working for duPont as a subcontractor in 1901 and served as the foreman and designer until his sudden death in 1917. He likely designed the sheep barn because of his large role in the construction of the agricultural buildings during the time frame of the sheep barn's construction. Ficklen's drawings are believed to have been lost when his office was destroyed in a fire.<sup>15</sup> Mitchell Jackson succeeded Ficklen as duPont's contractor.<sup>16</sup> According to a diary entry by William duPont's secretary, J. P. Dornan, the sheep barn had been built by 1918.<sup>17</sup>

The sheep barn is thirty feet by fifty-one and a half feet. The interior is approximately 1,545 square feet, which could accommodate up to 150 sheep according to period estimates from Henry Stewart's *The Domestic Sheep: Its Culture and General Management*.<sup>18</sup> It is built into the eastern slope of a hill and is one story with a hay loft. The floor is packed clay, and the foundations are poured concrete, likely Portland Cement.<sup>19</sup> The barn has a plank-framed structural system with bridging and vertical wooden board-and-batten siding. The wood is circular-sawn. Because there are several different types of wood in the barn including an American chestnut stud, a Virginia cedar post, and a white oak corner post, the wood likely came from the Montpelier property. The duPonts imported the yellow pine siding by train. The barn has wire nails. There are three small windows on the western elevation. The entrance is on the

---

<sup>14</sup> 1937 Aerial, Demonstration Forest, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>15</sup> Miller, "Historic Structure Report: Montpelier, Orange County, Virginia," 146.

<sup>16</sup> Miller, "During the duPont Ownership Historic Context and Overview," 45.

<sup>17</sup> Diary Kept by a Secretary [Dornan] of William duPont, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

<sup>18</sup> Henry Stewart, *The Domestic Sheep: Its Culture and General Management* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1900), 204, also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=2726990> (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Virginia Portland Cement Company Receipt, February 3, 1916, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

eastern elevation, and the structure lacks doors. The roof is end-gabled and is clad with slate.

The Montpelier sheep barn differs considerably from many other period sheep barns. Some early-twentieth century books recommend square sheep barns because they maximize interior space for farmers with limited financial means. Pattern books advocate round, octagonal, and hexagonal sheep barns because such plans provide more interior space than square barns.<sup>20</sup> Other books recommend L-shaped, three-sided, or center aisle sheep barns.<sup>21</sup> According to the books, it is common practice to orient the sheep barn from east to west with as many Dutch doors on the southern elevation as possible.<sup>22</sup> The Montpelier barn is oriented from north to south with a large entrance on the eastern elevation. While the barn follows the literary recommendations for wide entrances to prevent injury among the sheep, it does not provide a well lit space for the sheep.<sup>23</sup> According to *Sheep-farming in North America*, “there should be at least two square feet of glass windows, through which the sun can shine at some time upon the floor, for each one hundred square feet of floor space, and twice that amount would be better.”<sup>24</sup>

*Productive Sheep Husbandry* contains suggestions for sheep barn construction that are the most similar to the Montpelier sheep barn. *Productive Sheep Husbandry* advises locating the barn close to the pasture in a dry location. Unlike other books, it advocates a rectangular barn because it is easier to erect temporary dividers for breeding purposes than in square and round

---

<sup>20</sup> Henry Stewart, *The Domestic Sheep: Its Culture and General Management*, 201-202.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Shaw, *Sheep Husbandry in Minnesota* (Ithaca New York: Cornell University, 1900), 80-94, also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=2707544> (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>22</sup> Alfred Hopkins, *Modern Farm Buildings: Being Suggestions for the Most Approved Ways of Designing the Cow Barn, Dairy, Horse Barn, Hay Barn, Sheepcote, Piggery, Manure Pit, Chicken House, Root Cellar, Ice House, and Other Buildings in the Farm Group, on Practical, Sanitary and Artistic Lines* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1913), 191, also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=3130142> (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Frank Kleinheinz, *Sheep Management: A Handbook for the Shepherd and Student* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1912), 37, also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=3080750> (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> John Alexander Craig, F. R. Marshall, and H. P. Miller, *Sheep-farming in North America* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1913), 15, also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=2909812> (accessed November 11, 2013).

barns. It also states that the walls of the sheep barn do not need to be thick or double-walled. While the Montpelier barn does not follow the book's suggestions on orienting the barn to admit as much sunlight as possible during the winter, it does follow the book's recommendations for ventilation. The location of the windows and door allows a cross breeze to bring fresh air into the Montpelier barn. The barn's large doorway almost creates an open side, which creates maximum ventilation according to the book. *Productive Sheep Husbandry* also recommends a packed clay floor and a concrete foundation similar to the floor and foundation in the Montpelier sheep barn.<sup>25</sup>

The Montpelier sheep barn is significant because of its uniqueness to sheep farming in twentieth century Orange County and its importance to the duPont's occupation of Montpelier. Sheep were never raised on a large scale in Orange County as they were in the Midwest. While wealthy landowners in Orange County like James Madison and James Newman spread sheep-raising in the nineteenth century, sheep were not as commonly kept during the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Only two other sheep-related structures are known to exist in Orange County's Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District besides the Montpelier sheep barn, namely the sheep-cattle barn and the sheep stable at Windholme.<sup>27</sup> The farmers who raised sheep in Virginia often kept their sheep in already available agricultural structures or they built economical sheep sheds. Only wealthy Virginians like the du Ponts were able to build specialized barns for their sheep,

---

<sup>25</sup> Walter Castella Coffey, *Productive Sheep Husbandry* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1918), 435-437, available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=3080687> (accessed November 11, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> "Madison-Barbour Rural Historic District 1991 Final Nomination," Orange County, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1991, Section 8, Page 7, [http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Orange/068-0304\\_Madison-Barbour\\_Rural\\_Historic\\_District\\_1991\\_Final\\_Nomination.pdf](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/Counties/Orange/068-0304_Madison-Barbour_Rural_Historic_District_1991_Final_Nomination.pdf) (accessed November 15, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, Section 7, Page I-58.

but they primarily followed the recommended models such as the three-sided shed barn.<sup>28</sup> The Montpelier barn does not follow any of the recommended patterns or plans. It is loosely similar to suggestions in *Productive Sheep Husbandry*. The barn is a unique manifestation of duPont agricultural architecture, sharing the same green paint and slate roofs of other outbuildings.

The Montpelier sheep barn also has integrity. It is in the same location as it was constructed in. The setting is also very similar, the only difference being the re-growth of the forest into the clearing. It also retains its duPont workmanship, design, and materials which contribute to the feeling of the duPont period. The barn and its woodland setting create a direct association to the Montpelier property under the duPonts.

---

<sup>28</sup> *Barn Plans and Outbuildings* (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1893), 80, available online at <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=iGfzAAAAMAAJ&rdid=book-iGfzAAAAMAAJ&rdot=1> (accessed November 11, 2013).



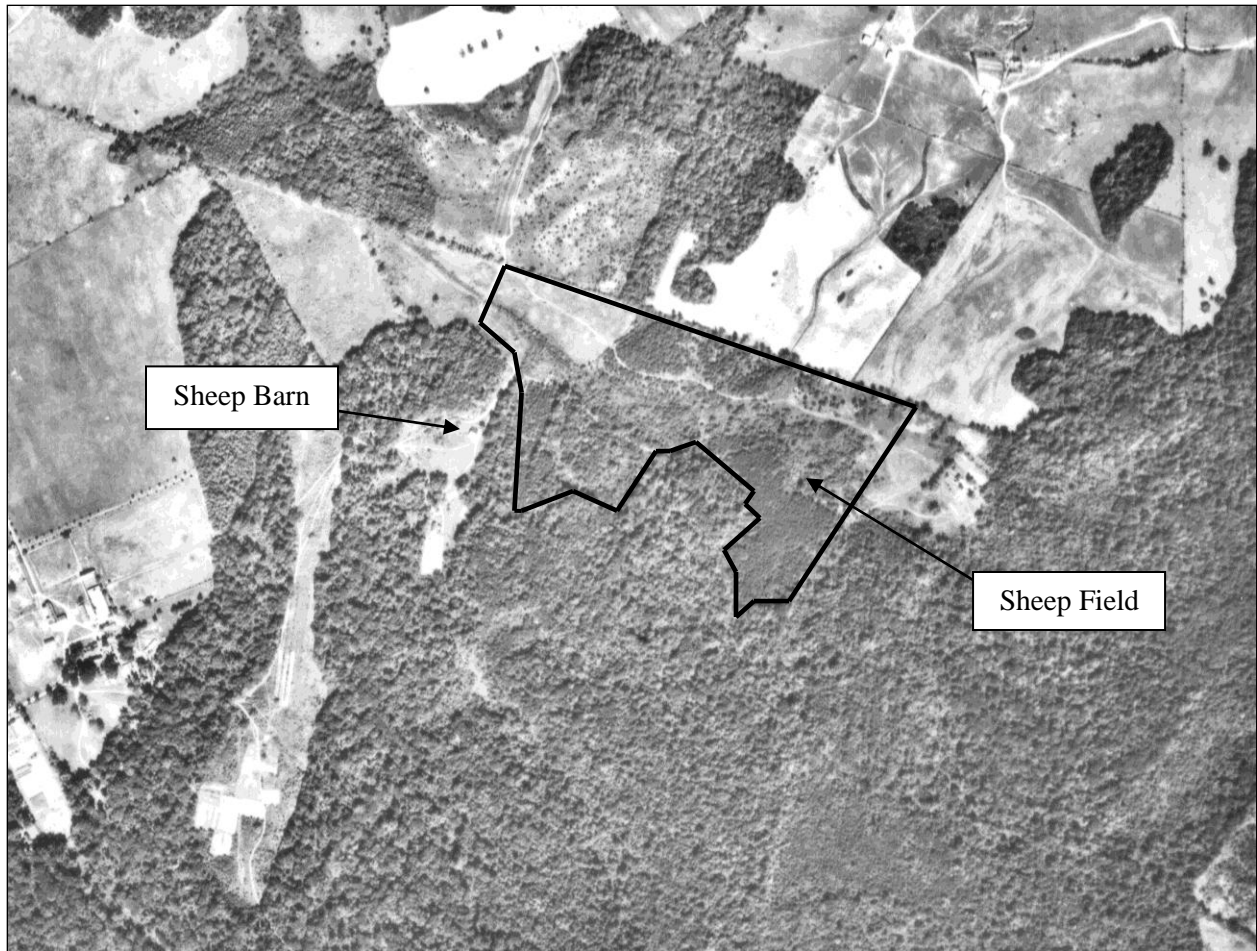


Sheep, duPont Scrapbook 3, page 13, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier



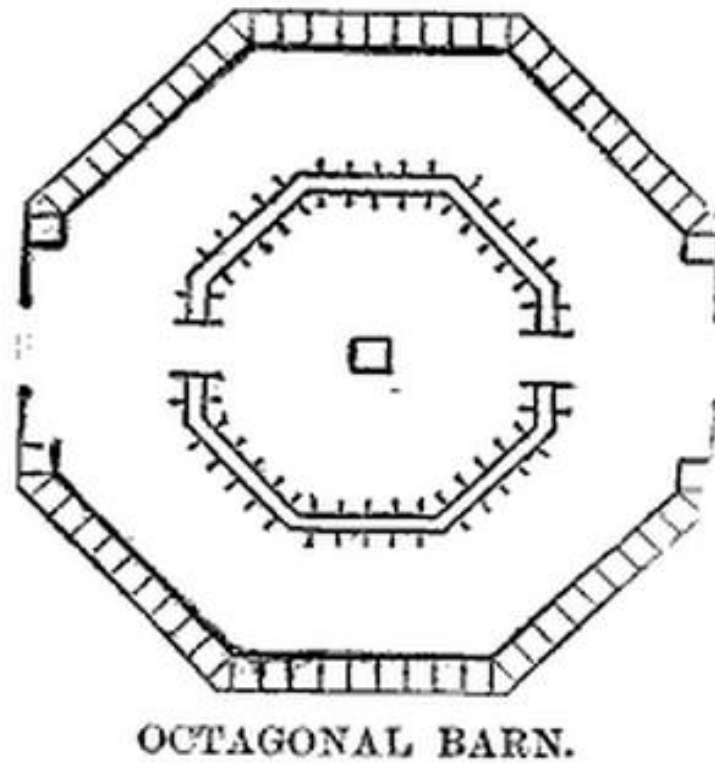
Willie and Marion duPont with sheep, Dupont Scrapbook 2, page 21, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier

“



1937 Aerial, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier





Octagonal Barn, *The Domestic Sheep: Its Culture and General Management*, By Henry Stewart, Page 202.

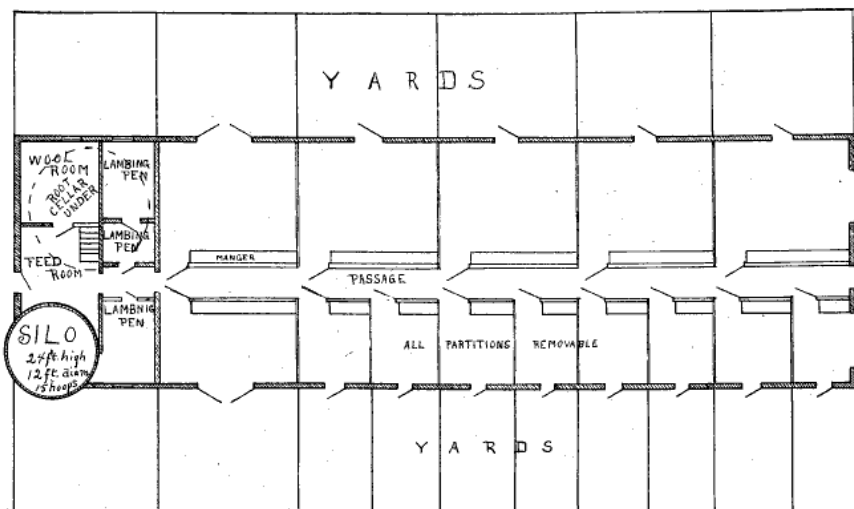
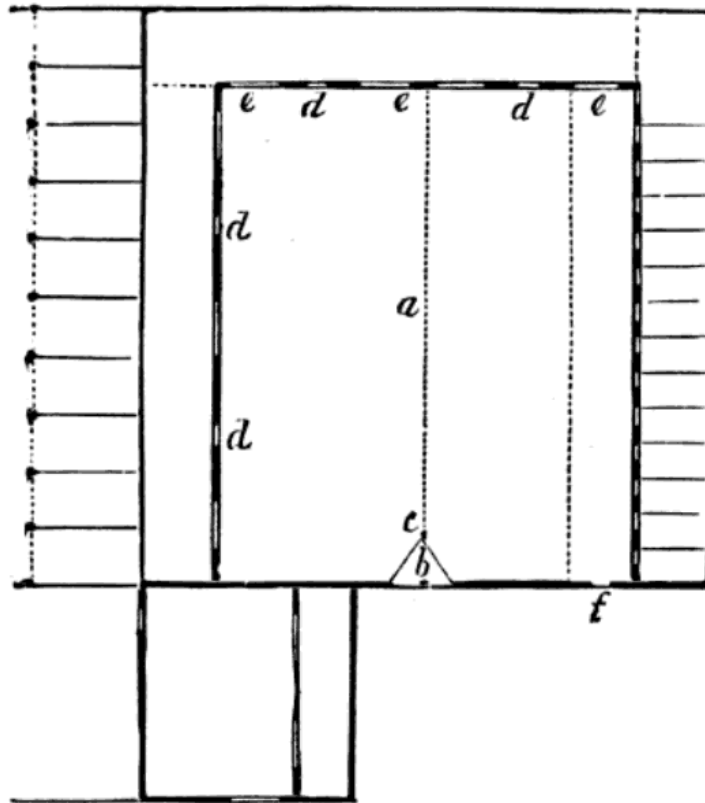
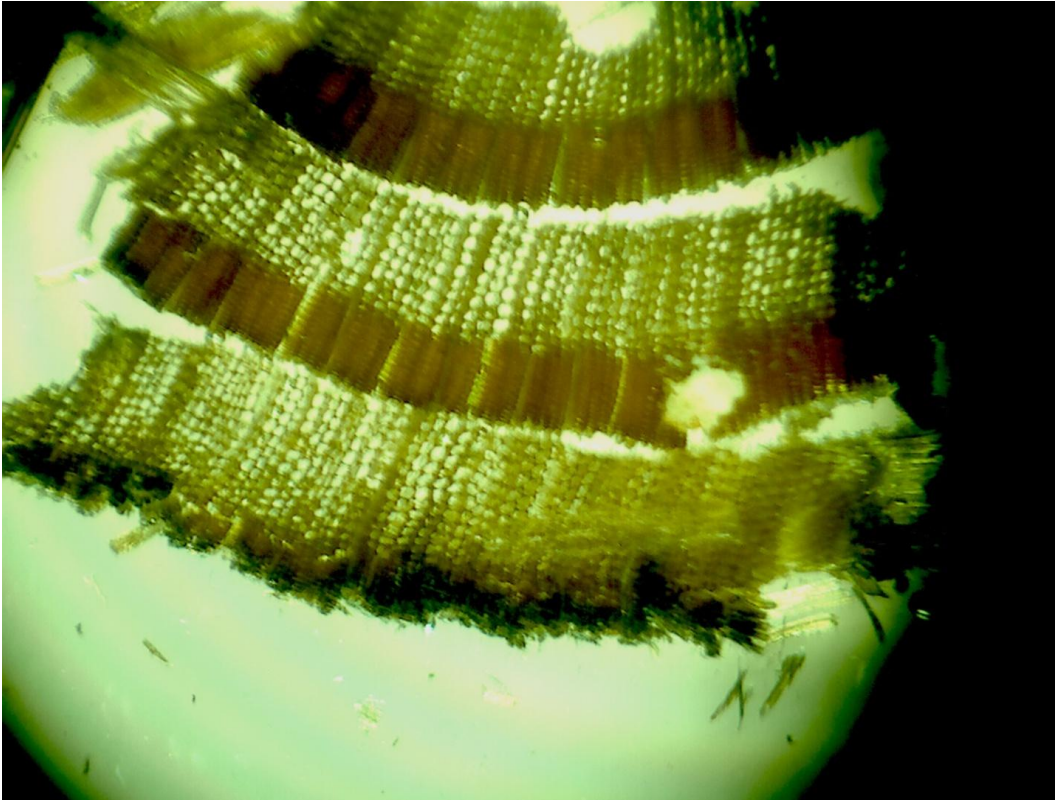


Fig. 15. Ground Plan of Sheep Barn at the Minnesota University Experiment Farm.

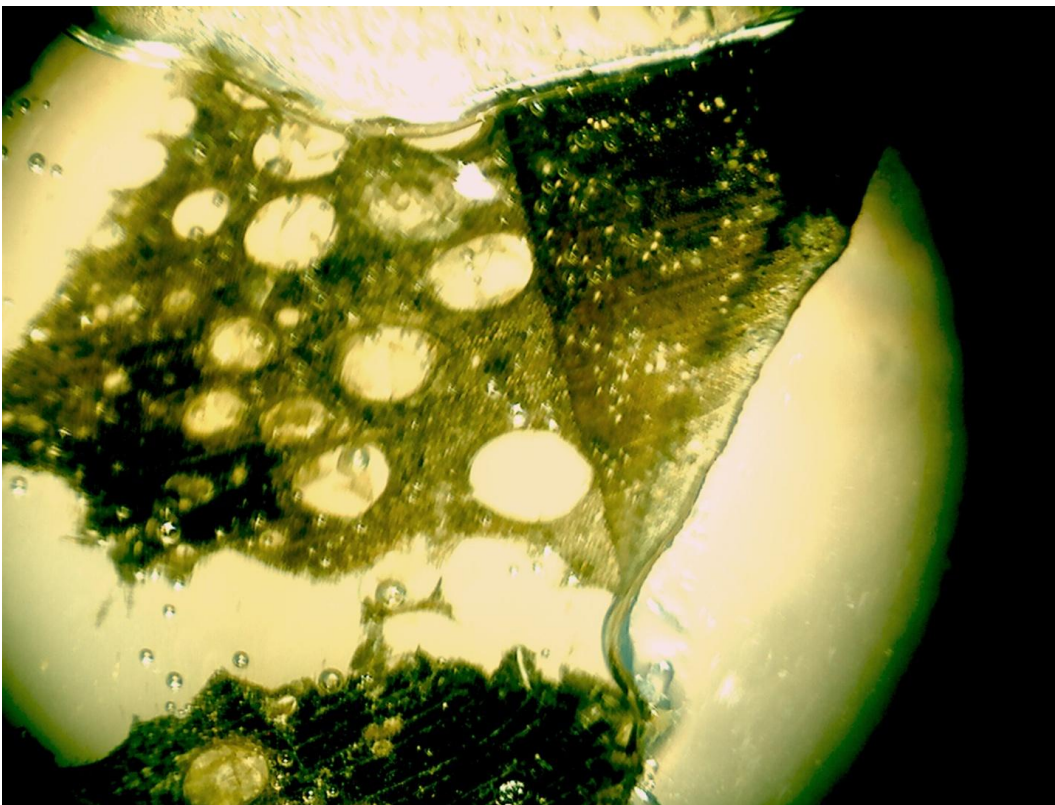
Central Aisle Barn, *Sheep Husbandry in Minnesota*, By Thomas Shaw, Page 84.



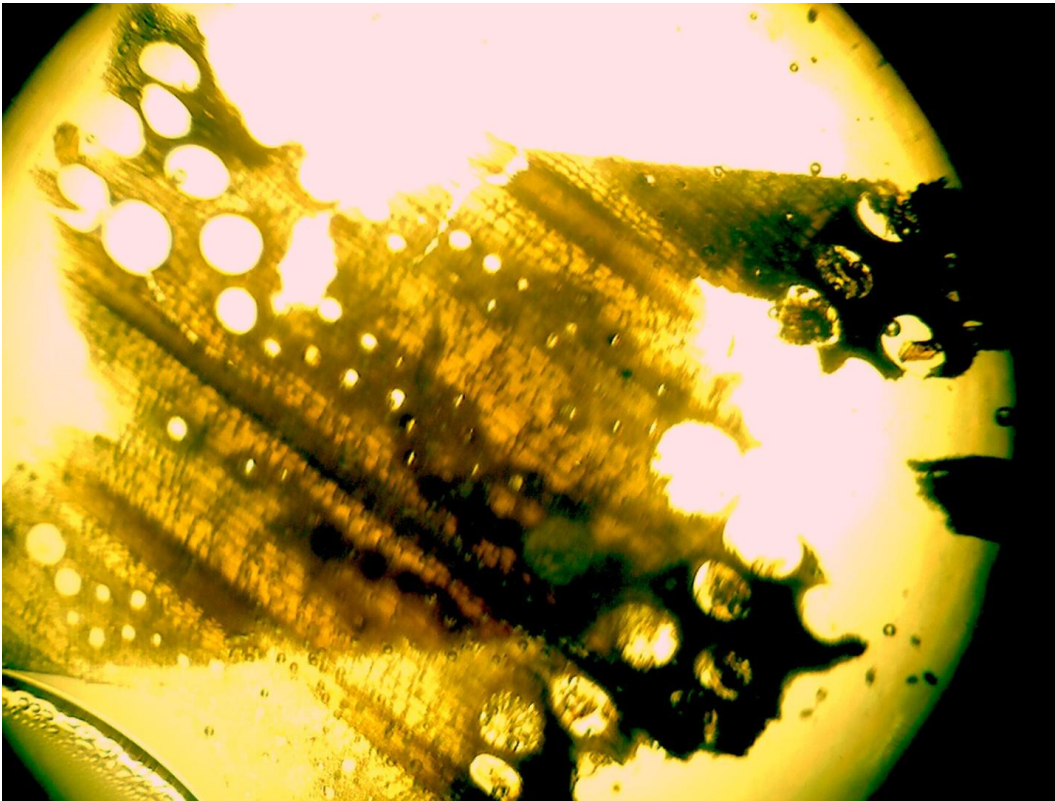
A Three-sided Virginia Sheep Barn, *Barn Plans and Outbuildings*, Page 80



Montpelier\_Orange Co VA\_Sheep Barn\_Siding.jpeg



Montpelier\_Orange Co VA\_Sheep Barn\_Stud.jpeg



Montpelier\_Orange Co VA\_Sheep Barn\_Corner\_Post.jpeg





VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_0001.jpeg



VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_0002.jpeg



VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_Ladder.jpeg





VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_Post.jpeg



VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_Feed Trough.jpeg



VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_Bridging.jpeg



VA\_Orange County\_Montpelier Sheep Barn\_Gang Planking in Hay Loft.jpeg

## Bibliography

- 1937 Aerial, Demonstration Forest, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.
- Barn Plans and Outbuildings*. New York: Orange Judd Company, 1893. Also available online at <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=iGfzAAAAMAAJ&rdid=book-iGfzAAAAMAAJ&rdot=1> (accessed November 11, 2013).
- Coffey, Walter Castella. *Productive Sheep Husbandry*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1918. Also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=3080687> (accessed November 11, 2013).
- Craig, John Alexander., F. R. Marshall, and H. P. Miller, *Sheep-farming in North America* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1913. Also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=2909812> (accessed November 11, 2013).
- Deed of sale from Nelly C. Willis and William Byrd Willis to William duPont, 18 August 1910 (filed 2 September 1910). Orange County, Virginia. Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.
- Diary Kept by a Secretary [Dornan] of William duPont, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.
- Dierauf, Thomas A. "History of the Montpelier Landmark Forest: Human Disturbance and Forest Recovery." 2011. [www.montpelier.org/sites/default/files/FM-landmark\\_forest.pdf](http://www.montpelier.org/sites/default/files/FM-landmark_forest.pdf) (accessed November 11, 2013).
- Druckenbrod, Daniel L. and Herman H. Shugart. "Forest History of James Madison's Montpelier Plantation." *Journal of the Torrey Botanical Society* 131, no. 3 (July- September 2004): 215. <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/4126951?uid=3739832&uid=2134&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21102917265921> (accessed November 11, 2013).
- DuPont Scrapbook 2, page 21, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.
- DuPont Scrapbook 3, page 13, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.
- The Hampshire-Down Flock Record*. Centreville, Michigan: The Observer Power Job Print, 1903. Also available online at Google Books. Accessed November 11, 2013.
- Hopkins, Alfred. *Modern Farm Buildings: Being Suggestions for the Most Approved Ways of Designing the Cow Barn, Dairy, Horse Barn, Hay Barn, Shepcote, Piggery, Manure Pit,*

*Chicken House, Root Cellar, Ice House, and Other Buildings in the Farm Group, on Practical, Sanitary and Artistic Lines.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1913. Also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=3130142> (accessed November 11, 2013).

J. P. Dornan to J.P. Wood, June 28, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

J.P. Dornan to William duPont Sr., October 27, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

Kleinheinz, Frank. *Sheep Management: A Handbook for the Shepherd and Student.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1912. Also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=3080750> (accessed November 11, 2013).

Madison, James. *The Writings of James Madison: 1808-1819.* Harvard Law Library, 1908. Also available online at [http://books.google.com/books/about/The\\_Writings\\_of\\_James\\_Madison\\_1808\\_1819.html?id=W0waAAAAYAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Writings_of_James_Madison_1808_1819.html?id=W0waAAAAYAAJ) (accessed November 11, 2013).

Miller, Ann L. "HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT: MONTPELIER, ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA, Phase II (Revised): Documentary Evidence Regarding the Montpelier House 1723-1983." July 2002, [people.virginia.edu/.../Montpelier%20Project/Miller\\_HSR\\_2002.doc](http://people.virginia.edu/~.../Montpelier%20Project/Miller_HSR_2002.doc) (accessed October 18, 2013).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Montpelier During the duPont Ownership Historic Context and Overview." Montpelier Research Files, 2008, 11, [https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3\\_loEP5i17GOTF0aXVhN0xnZE0/edit?usp=drive\\_web](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B3_loEP5i17GOTF0aXVhN0xnZE0/edit?usp=drive_web) (accessed November 11, 2013).

Shaw, Thomas. *Sheep Husbandry in Minnesota.* Ithaca New York: Cornell University, 1900. Also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=2707544> (accessed November 11, 2013).

Stewart, Henry. *The Domestic Sheep: Its Culture and General Management.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1900. Also available online at <http://chla.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=chla;idno=2726990> (accessed November 11, 2013).

Virginia Portland Cement Company Receipt, February 3, 1916, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.

William duPont Sr. to J.P. Dornan, July 1, 1918, Montpelier Estate Records Collection, James Madison's Montpelier.