



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY HOSEY

**WHAT A MESS!** - The interior of a landmark Lehman Township barn is open to the sky after the slate roof collapsed from the weight of the snow.

## Snow claims century old landmark

By GRACE R. DOVE  
Post Staff

When Willard Garey's century-old barn in Lehman Center collapsed January 28, next-door neighbor Mary Hosey was stunned.

She had been inside it barely two hours before.

"I heard a loud boom-boom-boom and thought that the snow had finally fallen off the barn roof," she said. "Then I looked outside and saw that the roof was gone. Thank goodness that I didn't have a horse in there."

Hosey, who has rented the barn from Garey for 23 years, had housed her horses there until the last one died a year ago.

She still stored a horse trailer, tractor, camper, snowmobile and snowmobile trailer there.

A venerable 12 by 12-inch beam and several smaller ones were snapped from the weight of the snow, while five more beams were held up by a telephone wire inside the barn, Hosey said.

The barn had been built around 1889 and was once owned by Albert H. Hay, a former Luzerne County commissioner.

An addition was built around 1914 by Clyde Veitch. Garey bought the farm in 1964.

"It was a big farm," he said. "The land where the Lake-Lehman High School and the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School stand was once part of it, all the way up to Mountain View Drive."

In the old days, the barn also had a silo, corner, chicken coop, blacksmith's shop and a pig sty.

*"It sure was a nice barn, but time takes its toll."*

**Willard Garey**  
Barn owner

Garey said.

"One time the Department of Agriculture came out to test the soil and couldn't get their auger into the dirt," he recalled. "I told them that they couldn't drill there because the pigs had eaten all the dirt and left them just stones."

He reminisced about another wisecrack which he had made to a woman who had sold a nearby house but later found radon gas in its basement.

"I told her that they had raised pigs near there for 75 years and that's what made the radon gas," he joked.

"The barn had always had a very homey atmosphere for both people and horses," Hosey said. "When I went back to get my tack boxes, there was such an eerie silence, like the barn was telling you, 'I'm done.' The weight of the snow was just too much for it."

Clearing the debris to get to her tack boxes and equipment was a massive rescue mission.

Hosey and three friends worked for three hours to clear slate roof tiles, beams and snow from the top floor to unearth the horse trailer, which had eight beams sticking out of its top. A small refrigerator and the trailer's air conditioning unit were destroyed.

Although she was able to pull the horse trailer out with her pickup truck, some of her other equipment is still buried.

Hosey said that the barn was known as a peg barn, completely made from hand-hewn beams, held together by wooden pegs and topped by a slate roof with shingles laid in a decorative pattern.

Although the slate roof had wrought iron devices designed to break up the snow and prevent it from accumulating, three feet of the heavy white stuff had piled up from two months' storms.

Another addition in front of the barn, known as the wagon house, is also beginning to buckle and is being held together with chains and a block and tackle.

Garey said that he will probably tear the barn down and sell the wood. Rebuilding it would be too expensive - replacing the slate roof would cost more than \$70,000, he said.

He thinks that the wagon house will survive.

"It sure was a nice barn, but time takes its toll," he said.

## Insurance

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policies cover. They think that things like this will never happen to them," he said.

The most basic and most common homeowners' policies, known as a Form 2 or HO-2, only covers damage from specific perils: fires, lightning strikes, theft, windstorms, hail, smoke and riots, Hartman said. They cover damage from ice dams only if the outside roof has collapsed.

A policy covering ice dam seepage adds at least \$40 a year to a basic homeowner's policy, Hartman said.

Mobile home owners face similar problems, especially if their homes are older.

While policies for newer mobile homes may cover seepage damage, mobile homes more than 10 years old aren't covered, Hartman said.

*"The damage isn't impressive to look at, but the repair costs really add up."*

**Bart Slocum**  
Dallas insurance agent

Damage to a home's contents are another story.

"Damaged carpets are covered because they're considered part of the structure," said Chuck Garnett. "But wet curtains or furniture usually aren't. I advise my customers to clean their curtains or belongings before they dry so that they won't develop water stains."

Bart Slocum of Slocum Insurance, said that his firm has re-

ceived "hundreds" of calls about seepage damage since January.

"About 80 percent of our customers are covered for seepage," he said. "The rest will have to pay for repairs themselves."

The cost of repairing ice dam seepage can range from about \$200 to \$30,000, depending on the extent of the damage, he said.

Alternately thawing and freezing ice dams can push up roof shingles, drip down inside walls and across joists and accumulate between inside and outside windows. If the seepage runs down the outside of the walls, it can stain siding with residue from the shingles.

"The damage isn't impressive to look at, but the repair costs really add up," Slocum said. "This winter, approximately \$1 billion in ice dam seepage claims have been filed on the entire East Coast."



POSTPHOTOGRACER.DOVE

**CLEARING THE AIR** - Lehman Township firefighters leave the scene of a gas leak at the Lehman-Jackson Elementary School after closing Market Street to traffic for an hour March 4.

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