

An unfortunate happening eased by a little Amish girl's touch

It was toward evening a few days ago when my Amish friend Emanuel's barn was burning.

When this happens it is a shock to all involved. Stone Arabia has known the destructive effect of fire from long ago. On October 19, 1780 the settlement was laid waste by British troops, Loyalists and Native Americans. The revolutionary war had struck Stone Arabia. In only a few years the destroyed buildings were re-built.

The writer of this story managed a town insurance company in the 1960s. It was founded as the Farmers Insurance Co. of the Town of Palatine in 1854. That was an era that much resembled the everyday life of our present Amish neighbors. Local folks gathered together to re-build the lost structures. The small insurance company helped to some extent financially.

The Stone Arabia Amish do not have insurance except that which their group provides in the case of emergencies and the support of relatives and friends. But they do have the remarkable sense of cooperation that makes re-building possible.

As I put the last words of this story on paper a new barn has miraculously risen from the ashes of the old. Something else possibly even more important presents itself. That is the knowledge that a little girl took the hand of an old man after the new barn was started. Her name is Elizabeth. As we walked together to look over the new foundation I became very aware that this moment in time is not just the story of a barn, but the hope for a brighter future for us all. A most enjoyable future—bridging yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, April 28, 2016

(A day that would have been my grandfather's 139<sup>th</sup> birthday)