

Agriculture in Seneca County in the Mid-1800s

by
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Introduction

This compilation of articles, some of which are very short, will hopefully give the reader some real insight into what agriculture was like in Seneca County in the 1800s up through the Civil War.

VIEW OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OF THE COUNTY OF SENECA.

	Covert.	Fayette.	Junius.	Lodi.	Ovid.	Romulus.	Seneca Falls.	Tyre.	Varick	Waterloo	Total.
Improved acres,	15,171	21,886	9,089	16,311	12,927	17,438	8,800	7,776	14,150	5,142	128,700
Unimproved acres,	4,040	6,343	3,040	4,516	4,097	5,057	2,485	3,698	4,384	1,707	39,367
Horses,	655	1,096	488	767	539	682	358	405	661	229	5,880
Cows,	700	1,001	521	775	585	650	427	477	651	259	6,046
Oxen,	148	101	90	125	124	150	69	56	72	55	990
Other cattle,	805	1,135	582	894	595	891	549	592	572	298	6,648
Sheep,	4,919	4,499	2,527	3,735	3,803	5,005	2,511	2,241	2,827	2,289	34,356
Swine,	1,159	2,761	1,246	1,023	708	1,017	1,000	1,044	1,081	484	11,523
Wheat,	65,913	112,847	27,023	75,937	63,409	60,951	27,394	22,669	61,931	11,298	529,370 bush.
Rye, .....	.....	1,834	150	201	.....	.....	263	55	80	1,345	3,828 do
Corn,	37,327	55,798	21,330	20,789	25,605	35,289	14,345	20,062	32,354	14,330	277,249 do
Oats,	34,065	50,069	18,861	32,009	31,804	57,419	27,066	18,146	40,374	8,552	318,365 do
Barley,	10,235	15,009	8,011	10,017	8,618	8,837	5,886	5,477	7,419	2,735	82,274 do
Buckwheat,	3,183	1,344	1,484	4,048	.....	.....	1,263	2,211	.....	1,174	14,707 do
Flax seed,	98	135	19	100	65	580	.....	.....	489	.....	1,486 do
Clover seed,	846	1,419	251	538	872	1,089	510	462	941	101	7,029 do
Other grass seed,	164	738	65	386	227	655	256	56	469	50	3,066 do
Hay,	3,496	5,440	2,062	3,631	2,693	3,454	2,654	2,448	2,612	1,470	29,960 tons.
Peas and Beans,	215	201	92	153	4	1	198	58	47	14	1,083 bush.
Potatoes,	7,095	8,626	13,248	7,637	5,474	3,799	4,915	10,866	3,554	14,645	79,859 do
Butter,	59,710	91,729	43,705	63,320	51,785	56,765	36,630	43,705	56,160	18,445	521,974 lbs.
Cheese,	1,780	958	5,283	1,274	980	168	2,485	2,450	2,565	1,720	19,665 do
Wool,	17,853	14,328	8,079	15,687	12,282	16,593	8,924	7,338	10,816	6,778	118,859 do
Maple sugar,	6,096	.....	700	3,378	1,535	.....	.....	240	120	.....	11,979 do
Honey and Wax,	910	1,907	1,131	3,264	1,670	1,721	850	450	1,920	760	17,956 do
Domestic fabrics, value,	910	806	273	894	219	259	183	355	579	110	\$4,288
Value of animals slaughtered,	\$13,517	24,074	10,612	12,826	12,065	12,443	9,333	9,571	10,693	6,582	\$121,716
Farms visited, giving foregoing results,	\$204	247	109	201	162	185	93	114	185	57	1,657
Number of farms containing 26 acres and upwards, as per assessment rolls,	184	319	161	190	152	190	125	156	186	122	1,785
No. inhabitants per census return, 1850,	2,256	3,784	1,517	2,276	2,258	2,040	4,297	1,356	1,872	3,797	25,433
Value of Real Estate,	1,212,435	1,455,134	529,558	1,221,051	1,204,876	1,160,828	898,026	459,196	1,069,928	534,907	\$10,745,943

(source: John Delafield's 1850 Agricultural Survey of Seneca County)

Droves of Animals on the Roads

There used to be great droves of cattle, sheep, and swine, turkeys, geese, and even horses sometimes, driven along the old roads to Eastern markets. Some of these droves would fill the road from fence to fence and would be a half mile or more in length. The farmers depended on these droves to dispose of their surplus hay and corn. These droves continued until nearly 1850.

In the winter of 1846-47, a large drove of cattle was driven across Cayuga Lake on the ice to avoid paying toll on the Cayuga Bridge. The ice broke beneath their weight and about 50 cattle were drowned. Some that were pulled out, though not quite dead, were killed and barreled.

There once was a wager between two drivers—one of turkeys and the other of geese—as to which drove could be driven the longer distance in 24 hours. The turkey driver was quite sure that his long-legged quick-stepping birds would win, until as

evening came on the turkeys objected to longer hours and struck for high roosting places from which they could not be persuaded to come down. Meanwhile the slow-plodding geese could be kept moving far into the night. (source: William H. Beach, "The Old Farm and the New," 1907 Volume of *Historical Papers Read Before the Seneca Falls Historical Society*, p 25)

Monthly Work of Henry K. Dey, A Kendaia Farmer, Based on His Diaries

Month	Tasks
January	Mending items; threshing oats with a flail; slaughtering beef, pork, and chickens; cutting lumber
February	Moving buildings; same tasks as those mentioned for January
March	Splitting wood; shelling corn; cleaning timothy seed; preparing for summer's work
April	Fields plowed, rolled, and harrowed; sowing of seeds; carrying stones from fields; mending fences; pulling stumps; burning refuse from the fields; move cattle from barn to pasture
May	Finish the rest of the planting; put plaster on fields; plow fallow land; continue mending fences and picking up stones
June	Annual hauling of manure; continue plowing of fallow fields; cultivating fields; shingling the barn; digging ditches for field tiles
July & August	Mow ripened grain, then shock it and haul it to barn; continue hauling winter's cut wood; continue plowing and harrowing of the fallow land
September	Plant the next year's wheat crop; thresh the harvested crop in the barn; dig potatoes; continue fixing fence; haul what lumber remained in the woods; pick corn; do the fall plowing on the corn and oats grounds
October	Bring in the rest of the crops; thresh oats; husk corn and put in corn crib; pick apples and make cider; corn stalks and wheat and oat straw were put down for cattle bedding; sell the wheat crop and haul it to the purchaser
November	If weather permits, spread some manure on fields; split and stack wood for the winter; slaughter hogs; make sausage; prepare smokehouse for hams and bacon
December	If weather permits, spread some manure on fields; split and stack wood for the winter; slaughter poultry for sale in New York City for Christmas holiday; shell corn; cut trees for lumber; haul wood to be sold in Geneva for winter fuel

Flax for Oil and Linen

In addition to the grains that are still grown today on Seneca County farms, flax was extensively raised, also, for many years. The seed was valuable for the drying oil obtained from it, and the fiber of the plant furnished linen for clothing. The flax stalks were pulled by hand and bound in small bundles and taken to the barn. In the barn a small bolder was placed on the barn floor and upon this bolder the heads of the flax bundles were beaten. The plant was then spread out on the ground for a few weeks, until the woody part became brittle. (source: William H. Beach, "The Old Farm and the New,"

1907 Volume of *Historical Papers Read Before the Seneca Falls Historical Society*, pp 23-24)

Jethro Wood: Inventor of the Modern Cast-Iron Plow

Jethro Wood, who lived most of his adult life in the Scipio area of Cayuga County, NY, is credited as the inventor of the modern cast-iron plow. It was in 1814, he patented a cast-iron plow. In 1819, he patented improvements to his original patent. His new model showed replaceable cast-iron parts and a curved plate called a moldboard from which the shape of the modern moldboard is derived. Unfortunately, litigation over disputes as to who properly should be given patent credit for invention of the modern cast-iron plow impoverished him at the time of his death in 1834.

First Mowing Machines

The first mowing machine in this area came about 1850. It had to be loaded in a wagon to be moved from one field to another. “It was the Ketcham, a cumberson thing—a team killer. You had to keep the team almost on a trot to get up motion enough to saw off the grass, and many mangled tufts of grass were left in its wake. The side draft was something fearful. If the outer end of the cutter bar chanced to run into the side of a furrow you had to tug and pull to the limit of your strength to get it loose and take a new start.”

Then came the lighter Kirby and somewhat heavy Manny. Then came the two-wheeled mowers of today—light running, easy to ride and cutting as perfectly as can be expected. “Many a man can remember the callous spot on his thumb from the using of the hand-rake, gathering the scythe-mown swaths into windrows. Then came the revolving wood horse-rake, soon followed by the steel spring tooth riding rake. And the hayloader and horse fork are doing much of the work that once had to be done by the pitch-fork.” (source: William H. Beach, “The Old Farm and the New,” 1907 Volume of *Historical Papers Read Before the Seneca Falls Historical Society*, p 24)

The First Reaper

The hardest work on the old farm was cradling and binding grain, especially wheat. The first reaper was made about 1840, but the grain was inclined to fall forward before the bar. Jacob Peterson of Canoga devised a contrivance that, suspended above the cutter bar and made to revolve, brought the standing grain back upon the platform. He didn't patent it but a person who saw his improvement patented it and was drawing the royalty on this invention.

The first reapers would only cut the grain. It had to be raked off the platform in gavels by hand or shoved off with a fork. Then the self-rake would lay the grain in gavels or two men could stand on the platform and bind. Finally, a machine was invented that would bind the grain with wire. After much experimentation, the Appleby twin binder was devised as an alternative to the wire binding. (source: William H. Beach, “The Old Farm and the New,” 1907 Volume of *Historical Papers Read Before the Seneca Falls Historical Society*, p 24)

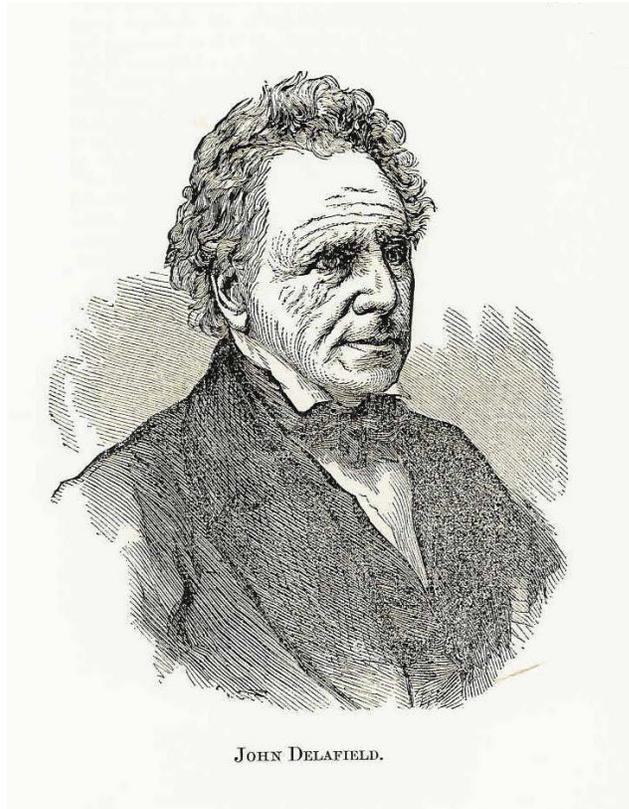
Threshing of Grain

At first grain was threshed with the flail. Two lines of opened sheaves would be spread out on the barn floor, with the heads together. Two men facing each other would beat the grain with alternate blows as they moved backward and forward. Sometimes the grain was also threshed by the treading of horses.

The first threshing machine in this area was made by David Beach in a lean-to at one end of his barn. It was stationary. A vertical shaft was made to revolve by a single span of horses at the end of a long lever. Around a large drum was a belt connecting with a cylinder about 2.5 feet long. In the cylinder were spikes for teeth that passed through a concave filled with like teeth. The machine would thresh 50 bushels a day.

William Demott of Seneca Falls and General Ayers of Romulus had the first portable threshing machines. One wagon carried the whole thing. (source: William H. Beach, "The Old Farm and the New," 1907 Volume of *Historical Papers Read Before the Seneca Falls Historical Society*, p 25)

John Delafield (1786-1853)



John Delafield is the visionary person who succeeded in getting the New York State Legislature to charter a state agricultural college on April 15, 1853. This may well have been the first chartered agricultural college in the entire United States. Without doubt it is the first chartered state agricultural college in New York State.

John Delafield graduated from Columbia College in 1805. Working for a wholesale dry-goods firm, he was at least twice put into serious jeopardy while on a ship transporting goods for the company. Later he started his own commission merchant business. Still later he became president of the Phoenix Bank in New York City. He was an early promoter of the Hudson River

Railroad, a director of the University of New York, and an organizer of the Philharmonic Musical Society.

In 1841, he retired from the banking business and decided to relocate. In 1843, he purchased a 352-acre farm at Rose Hill in Seneca County. He named his farm Oaklands. Devoting his energies to the development of this farm, he quickly made use of new farm technology such as tile drainage.

In 1850 he published a History and Survey of the County of Seneca, which was the most elaborate and accurate history of the county which up to that time had been published.

He was elected president of the Seneca County Agricultural Society in 1846. In 1851, he was elected president of the New York State Agricultural Society.

His crowning achievement as president of this state agricultural society was getting the New York State Legislature on April 15, 1853, to pass “An Act to Incorporate The New-York State Agricultural College.” John Delafield was the president of the board of trustees and the college was to be located at his Oaklands farm.

Tragically, John Delafield died suddenly on October 22, 1853, and the work on the college at Oaklands never progressed further. The *Syracuse Daily Journal* on October 26, 1853, published an article on the death of John Delafield. The article included these comments:

There was probably no man in the State more deeply interested in the progress of Agricultural science and reform than Mr. Delafield, and his labors to urge it forward were arduous and incessant. The farmers of the State of New York are greatly indebted to him for the advancement which has been made in their noble profession....Such men as John Delafield are the true benefactors of our race. They do more toward enlightening, Christianizing, and enriching a people, than the combined efforts of rulers and statesmen. They not only teach how to enrich the soil but the mind with it.

(Source: *New York State Agricultural College: A History* compiled by Wayne E. Morrison, Sr.)

The New York State College of Agriculture at Ovid (Willard)

The first chartered state agricultural college in New York State was at Ovid on a site that later became the Willard Asylum for the Insane. As President of the New York State Agricultural Society, John Delafield of Fayette successfully lobbied the New York State to charter this college on April 1, 1853. The agricultural college was to be located on Delafield’s Oaklands farm in Fayette, but the sudden death of Delafield that October kept this from happening.



In 1855, Amos Brown, the principal of the Seneca Collegiate Institute in Ovid, led a local fundraising effort to locate the college west of Ovid village. The New York State Agricultural College opened on December 5, 1860. For \$200 a year students would receive classroom instruction and practical on-the-farm experience to become familiar with “the principles and practice of the methods of clearing and cleaning land,

nourishment of plants and grasses, restoration and exhaustion of the soil, rotation of crops and their adaptation to the season, gathering hay and grain, management of the dairy, gardening, fattening, rearing and breeding stock, training colts, the disease of animals and veterinary practice, preparation of timber for fences, surveying, landscape gardening, and book-keeping as applied to farming.”

The timing for the opening of this college was bad. The outbreak of the Civil War led to the departure of staff and students to go help in the war effort. The college trustees temporarily closed the college, but it never reopened. The state acquired the properties due to bankruptcy of the college. In October 1969, the state opened the new Willard Asylum for the Insane on the property of the former agricultural college.

The First Use of Drainage Tile in Seneca County, NY

One very important agricultural advancement of 19th century America that can be traced directly to Seneca County, New York is the first use of drainage tile in farm fields. It is John Johnston who deserves the credit for this accomplishment.

John Johnston emigrated from Scotland and in 1822 purchased a farm in Fayette, overlooking Seneca Lake, which he called “Viewfields.” Due to abundant springs in the area, Johnston’s farmland retained a great deal of moisture. Familiar with the use of tile drainage in Scotland, he knew of its ability to increase the yield of heavy, wet soils like his. He sent to Scotland for two pattern tiles in 1835. He took these tiles to Benjamin F. Wahrtenby, a maker of crockery, in Waterloo. Whartenby used these pattern tiles to make 3,000 tiles that Johnston laid down on his farm in 1838.

Although some of his neighbors mocked Johnston for “burying crockery” in the ground, his experiment proved very successful. His 10-acre plot produced 50 bushels per acre compared to the previous 5 bushels per acre.

Johnson eventually had 72 miles of tile drains on his 320 acre farm. Robert Swan, the son-in-law of Johnston, had over 72,500 drain tiles placed on his Rose Hill Farm. John Delafield, another neighbor of Johnston, imported a Scraggs Patent Tile machine from England, the first in this country.) Other farmers were also making use of tile drainage. Whartenby produced 840,000 drainage tiles in 1849, and Waterloo was home to 10 tile drainage factories by 1871.

The Johnston Farm House today houses the Mike Weaver Drain Tile Museum. The address is 3523 East Lake Road, Geneva, NY, and is located near the junction of Route 96A with East Lake Road. The Johnston House is open Saturdays and Sundays from May 1 to October 31. (source: Geneva Historical Society website)

The Seneca County Fair Before 1920

The first Seneca County fair was held at Ovid on October 21-22, 1841. Until 1870 the county fair was held at various places in the county, including Ovid, Waterloo, Seneca Falls, and Farmerville (Interlaken). Since 1870 the fair has always been held in Waterloo. The fair society rented from the property owner of the race track and nearby property. On October 27, 1882, the agricultural society purchased the fairgrounds property from William H. Burton for \$6,000. To raise the purchase price, the society sold 600 shares at \$10 a share.

In 1883, the Seneca County Agricultural Society erected a new permanent exhibition building and named it Floral Hall. Over 6,000 people attend the fair that first

year and \$1,900 was taken in from admissions at 15 cents a person and 25 cents per vehicle. On Friday during fair week, there were several trotting races.

The popularity of the fair induced the society in 1887 to schedule two fairs, one in the summer and one in late September. In 1895, special events included donkey rides, Aztec mummies on display, one mile bicycle races. School children were allowed a half-day holiday to go to the fair. Local stores had exhibits.

Given the immense popularity of the fair, it is not surprising that the agricultural society by 1899 had paid off its original purchase price plus \$7,500 for buildings, plus having spent over \$20,000 on property improvements.

The county fair was the biggest event of the year. Top class acts appeared that each year. In 1908 the star attraction was the Wild West Indian Congress and American Hippodrome which included 70 people of which 30 were Sioux Indians. In 1910, the society scheduled free band concerts and open air vaudeville during fair days.

On May 17, 1916, the grandstand, horse sheds and a portion of the cattle pens were totally destroyed by fire. William Youngs had started a fire under the grandstand to dry his clothing and to keep warm. The loss to the society was between three and four thousand dollars. By July 25, a new grandstand was built. It was east of the former grandstand and could seat 1,500 people. Horse stables were built under the grandstand.

These were the good years for the Seneca County fair.

Seneca County Farming During the Civil War Era, Based on the Diaries of Henry K. Dey

Henry K. Dey operated a farm on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake where present-day Sampson State Park is located. The detailed information in his diaries gives us great insight into what farming was like in Seneca County during the Civil War years.

On his 150-acre farm, Henry Dey, like most area farmers, raised wheat as his basic cash crop. He also grew oats, barley, corn and sometimes rye. Other agricultural products that he sold were potatoes, corn, apples (normally for cider or vinegar), hay, butter, poultry, salt beef, pork, hides, timothy and clover seed, lumber and fuel woods.

Wheat as the main cash crop

The wheat that was grown was both white (White Flint) and red (Old Red Chief) as well as some Mediterranean strains. All was winter wheat planted in September, with timothy or clover seed sown on the wheat field in April, and the crop harvested in late July.

Although Seneca County wheat farmers were having increasing difficulty competing with the prairie farms of the Great Plains, the Civil War created a great demand for whatever amount of wheat could be produced for market. The *Geneva Courier* carried this editorial:

Farmers—At this crisis in our country's history let not the farmer forget to make ample provisions for food for the thousands now rallying to hold up untarnished and cause forever to float that Star Spangled Banner—the pride of the world....The farmers should double the amount of ground heretofore used for the various seeds and permit not a foot of soil to become accountless....We entreat every farmer in the town(s) of Seneca and old Ontario to feel that they have an individual responsibility resting upon them.

The demand for wheat is reflected in the selling price of wheat. In 1862, Mr. Dey received about \$1.00 for his wheat. In 1863, he sold his white wheat for \$1.30 and his red wheat for \$1.18. In 1864 the selling price was \$2.00 a bushel, and it was \$2.50 in 1866. His total crop on his 32 acres planted that year was 564 bushels, for an average yield per acre just under 18 bushels. That average yield was somewhat over the New York State average.

Dey had two barns, so he could house quite a lot of livestock. He raised cattle, both for milk and beef, hogs, and poultry. Among the items which Dey sold during the Civil War years were a pair of black oxen (\$140), a beef hide (\$2.40), a pig (\$3.75 a cwt. or \$14.85), a horse (\$145), two bags of pigeon weed seed (40 cents a bag), a heifer (\$10), another yoke of oxen (\$127.50), and 2 barrels of walnuts (\$2 a barrel). Hay in 1863 sold for \$8 a ton and in 1864 for \$20. He sold about 150 dozen eggs in 1866 with prices fluctuating between 16 and 22 cents a dozen. He sold walnut logs at 23 cents a running foot, and walnut lumber for \$25 the thousand board feet.

Hired help

Dey had hired help all these years. A hired girl received at first \$1.00 per week and later \$1.25 per week, and went home every other Saturday for a half-day holiday. Her work was entirely within the house, except for the occasional emergency when she was

asked to help with harvest, or more frequently to milk cows, for which she was paid extra.

Hired men came mostly from the farms in the area, and often were the children of men with whom Dey was exchanging labor. Their wages were usually quite low. In 1862, for example, his hired man worked from April 1 to December 1 for \$75. He was expected to do anything and everything on the farm: split wood, plow, harrow, help in harvest time, go to Geneva with goods to sell, pick stone, haul manure, and build fence. If he went fishing, to an auction or something similar, he “lost the day,” and Dey kept a careful record of his work. In 1862, Dey in addition used one man for 4.75 days drawing in the wheat, 3 men to work on corn and oats, and a fifth man during haying time. One time when Dey was laid up with a hand problem, he paid one man \$1.25 a day to help with threshing, and another \$2.25 for cradling wheat, drawing oats and threshing them. He also paid for 4 days of labor husking corn at \$1 per day, and he hired another man for the month of August at \$18 for the month to do general farm work.

It was more usual, however, for Dey to hire just one man, with others to help during harvest. In 1863, his hired man worked for \$8 a month, and he did use another man for 33 days. This other man was paid 75 cents a day to haul manure, \$1.25 to hay, and \$1.50 in the wheat harvest. The somewhat more affluent Dey in 1866 hired a man for \$20 a month for 6 months, provided him a house, and cow pasturage. That man’s son was paid \$100 for 6 months.

Declining self-sufficiency

Another interesting phenomenon revealed by the Dey diaries is the vast amount of work which farmers exchanged. At harvest time, neighbors and their hired men came and aided in the work. In the following weeks, the crops of each cooperating farmer were successively harvested.

There were several types of “specialists” that provided Dey and other similar farmers valuable assistance with their farm work. One obvious such specialist was the blacksmith. Dey paid blacksmiths between \$30 and \$40 a year for their work, with a trip to the blacksmith an almost weekly occurrence. The blacksmith was paid 20 cents a shoe for horses, 25 cents for fixing a reaper knife, and 30 cents for mending a chain.

During these years, Dey hired other specialists. He hired a man to build a sleigh at a cost of \$7.50 for the wood work, and \$16.50 for the iron work. He hired a carpenter at \$2 a day to work on a shingling job. Digging and stoning the well cost \$30. Ditching for field tiles cost Dey 18 cents a rod, or \$24.48 for 136 rods.

Dey was dependent upon his neighbors. He borrowed their machinery, traded or purchased cattle, and personally lived not alone but as a part of a larger community. Dey, like his neighbors, was becoming increasingly less self-sufficient in another way. As his income increased, he was increasingly making more trips to Geneva to purchase what were becoming “necessities of life”—rice, indigo, a tea steeper, whiskey, lemons, dry goods, coconuts, etc.

Daily and monthly work

It is important to understand that Dey, like most farmers in these years, had daily chores such as milking, cleaning the stables, feeding the livestock, gathering the eggs, carrying wood for the fires, turning the cattle into the pasture in the appropriate season

and bringing them back to the barn. When Dey was ill, his diary entries often read, "Don nothing but the chores today."

In addition to these daily chores, Dey's monthly work could be summarized as follows. In January, he perhaps had the greatest amount of slack time and spent the month mending items and making plans for the year. He spent time threshing oats with a flail to feed his animals, slaughtering beef, pork and chickens. He was also cutting lumber that could be used for next winter's fuel, rails for new fences, or sold in Geneva.

His February work was similar to that of January. His diary entries indicate that in three of the four years, the men moved buildings in February. Apparently the icy smooth road made this work easier. The women seemed to make quilts in February.

In March, there was the splitting of wood, shelling corn, cleaning timothy seed to have it ready for the spring sowing, and generally to be preparing for the summer's work.

In April, the year's farm work began in earnest. The fields were plowed, rolled and harrowed. Then came the sowing of seeds. Grass seed was planted on the wheat and oats. Corn and vegetables were planted later. In between times, the farmer carried stones, repaired fences, pulled stumps, and burned refuse in the fields. He might plant some trees or trim those in his orchard. By the end of the month, the cattle were usually moved from the barn to the pasture.

In May, the tempo of worked increased. The rest of the planting took place. Plaster was put on the fields. Fallow land began to receive its almost constant plowing. Fences were mended on off days, and there were always stones to be picked up in the fields. In late May and early June came the breeding of the cattle for calves the next March.

In June came the annual hauling of manure. Dey records that 110 loads of manure were hauled in June 1862. Other June work included the continuing plowing of the fallow fields, cultivating fields, shingling the barn, and digging ditches for the tile.

July and August were the harvest months. Haying would start right after the Fourth of July. Then came the harvesting of wheat and oats. The grain was mowed, shocked and hauled to the barn. As time permitted, there was more hauling of the previous winter's cut from the wood lot, and the continued plowing and harrowing of the fallow land.

September was devoted to planting the next year's crop and threshing the one in the barn. There was also the digging of potatoes, fixing fence, hauling what lumber remained in the woods, picking the corn, and doing fall plowing on the corn and oats ground.

In October, the rest of the crops were brought in. Oats were threshed, corn husked and put in the corn crib. Late in the month, apples were picked and cider made. Some of the cider was boiled down for vinegar. Corn stalks and wheat and oat straw were put down for cattle bedding. The wheat crop was sold during this month and hauled to the purchaser.

As the cold began to intensify, November and December were marked by a diminished amount of work. If the snow held off, some manure might be spread on the fields. Wood for the winter had to be split and stacked. In November, hogs were slaughtered, sausage made, and the smoke house prepared for ham and bacon. In December, poultry were slaughtered for sale in New York City for the Christmas holiday.

Corn had to be shelled. By mid-December, the cutting of trees for lumber was begun. Fuel wood would be hauled to Geneva.

Summary

It is easy to see from the general description of a year's toil that such a life even in the best of times was arduous and difficult. It is also possible to say that it was banal in its monotony. Little occurred of importance. Occasionally the Dey family went to Geneva, or to church, but from the testimony of the diaries the general content of their life was work. It was important work, it is true, because the farmer by his work enabled others to do other things, things which today perhaps seem more important than the work of H. K. Dey....

[Note: The information for this last article above is taken directly from David C. Smith's article "Middle Range Farming in the Civil War Era: Life on a Farm in Seneca County, 1862-1866," which appeared in the October 1967 journal *New York History*. The "summary" portion above is a direct quotation from the source. Much of the other wording of this article is that of David Smith.]