

# THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Newsletter



July 2020

## HAYING

### HAYING –

Yes haying – you know – the ritual of cutting the fields and storing the hay to feed the animals in winter. Sounds simple; you cut the grass and then store it for winter use. But haying today is a far cry from what it entailed back in our ancestors' time. The **Francestown Heritage Museum** is fortunate to have a number of the tools needed to accomplish this back in those early days before mechanization. So let's take a look at haying in the 1700's and 1800's. By the end of this article you should have a sense of wonder at the strength and endurance of our fore-fathers.

So it is 17???. Spring is turning to summer and soon you will have to undertake one of the most dreaded chores on the farm – haying. The original settlers had no prepared fields and relied on the swamps and marshes to provide coarse heavy hay for the winter.



It was not uncommon for these marshes to provide insufficient hay and animals sometimes starved to death.

From the 1750's on, Timothy and Red Clover from Europe was introduced for hay and pasture.

When the hay was ready for cutting our ancestors set out into the fields with scythes to cut the hay by hand. Arduous and backbreaking work but a good

worker could cut up to an acre a day. The scythe is an agricultural hand tool for mowing grass or reaping crops. It was largely replaced by horse-drawn and then tractor machinery.



It was one of the most important of all agricultural hand tools, consisting of a curved metal blade fitted at an angle to a long, curved handle and used for cutting grass or grain. The projecting grips that are grasped help to control the swinging motion when cutting grass and grain.



Once the hay was cut (or "down") it had to be raked into rows to make it easier to gather. This raking was done with a wooden haywainer hay rake.

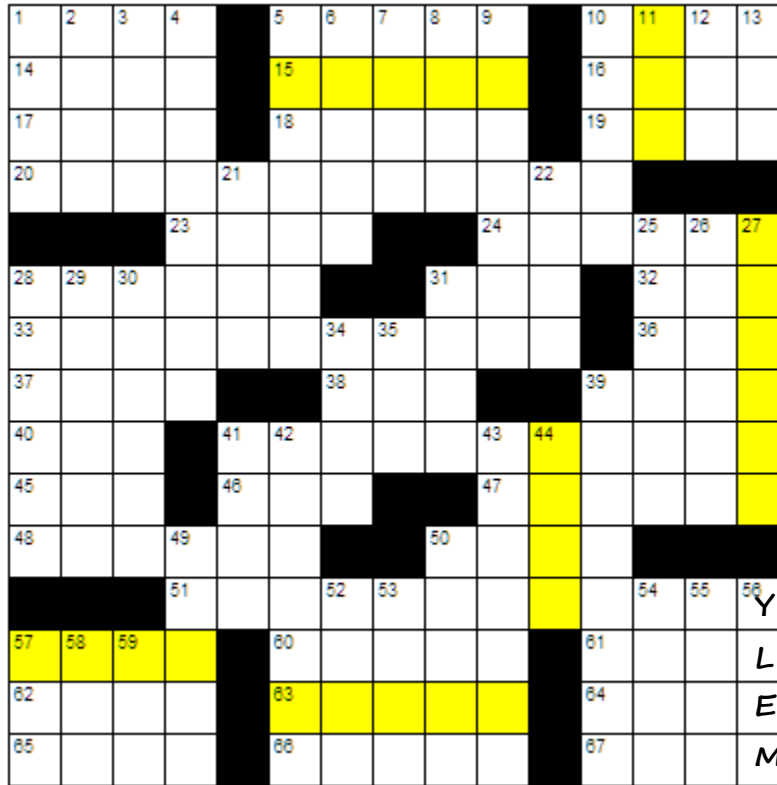


The wooden rake is based on the traditional haywainer's pattern, with a wide head and long reach for gathering or turning straw, hay or grass.

CONTINUED ON PAGE #5

## JULY THEME CROSSWORD

This month's theme is "Haying" and the theme words all come from the text in this newsletter. This is a standard American format crossword. One freebee for a farfetched word. The solution is found on Page #6. Enjoy!



### Across

1. Barrel
5. Old Jewish scholars
10. "\_\_\_-Team"
14. Eastern royal
15. SETTLERS' HAYFIELD
16. Thousand \_\_\_, Calif.
17. Not "fer"
18. Expensive
19. Bakery selections
20. Animal stuffers
23. In need of resupply
24. Walks heavily
28. Look up to
31. Romanian money
32. Rainbow shape
33. Famous Bard
36. Utter
37. Camp sight
38. Babysitter's handful

### 39. Type type

40. "... \_\_\_ he drove out of sight"
41. dpi
45. Australian bird
46. Alias
47. India religious sect
48. Egyptian papers
50. Mountain \_\_\_
51. In an imperceptible manner
57. TOOL FOR PITCHING HAY
60. Came to light
61. Aggravate
62. Farm call
63. A HAY TRANSPORT
64. Bog
65. Latitude
66. Companionless
67. Bridge feat

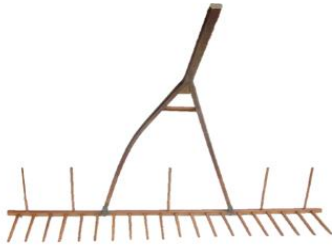
### Down

1. "Dang!"
2. Eastern music
3. Alternative to Windows
4. Small cycle
5. Current measures
6. Wilkes-\_\_\_, Pa.
7. Cup part
8. Fungal spore sacs
9. Unscrupulous person
10. Bit of statuary
11. Cow chow
12. Barely get, with "out"
13. Balaam's mount
21. Challenge
22. "How \_\_\_!"
25. Secret society members
26. Move proudly
27. TOOL TO CUT HAY

### 28. Not alert

29. TV's "\_\_\_ and Greg"
30. Reconcile
31. Reindeer herder
34. \_\_\_ bread
35. Dash lengths
39. Weapons
41. "Fudge!"
42. WWII battle site
43. Lacking vigor
44. Haying tool
49. Disgusting
50. Buffalo
52. Face-to-face exam
53. Like some orders
54. Be hopping mad
55. 100 krus
56. Primordial matter
57. Coxcomb
58. Black gold
59. Carries genetic info

Next the raked hay had to be pulled into piles so as to be easier to pick up. Another specialty agricultural tool was the Bull Rake.



The user would walk with this rake slightly above the ground (enough so the tines would only catch the grass and not dig into the ground). When the rake was full you just lifted it leaving the hay behind. You would do this at each row meaning that you raked in a direction perpendicular to the rows.



So the hay is down and it is raked into manageable rows and piles. Time to hitch the horses to the wagon and pick up the hay.



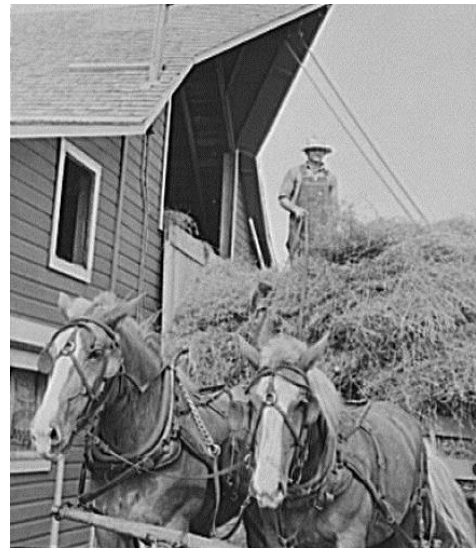
Which is done using a wooden hay fork.



These hand-carved wooden hay forks had three prongs split out of the original handle. In England these were referred to as a prong and in Ireland, if there were four tines it was known as a sprong. Regardless they were all used to scoop up loose hay and “pitch” it to where it was wanted such as into the hay wagon.



By this time most workers would have had it for the day and be more than ready to take this load back to the barn. As a reward for their efforts, once back at the barn, they can take this wagon load of hay that they have cut, raked and pitched into the wagon and now pitch it up into the loft of the barn.



You are not done yet. Once the hay is in the barn it is surely time to milk the cows and then ends another typical day on the farm in the 1700's. One that will be repeated the next day and the next. . . .

When you go to use the hay there is another myriad of specialized agricultural tools to use such as hay trollies, hay saws, and hay knives which can also be seen at the Heritage Museum.

This summer as you drive through the countryside notice the large round white plastic wrapped bales that contain the recent cutting of hay – all of which was done by tractors and other mechanized equipment. It no longer even has to be stored in the barn as it can stay stacked in the field in these water proof bale wraps until needed.



So Covid-19 aside, is life really that bad these days compared to our ancestors?

All the haying tools depicted in this article are available for viewing at the **Francestown Heritage Museum**, including the hay wagon (sometimes referred to as a hay wain) itself.



Many of the photos in this article are also part of the Museum collection and can be seen there in framed large format.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR –

More correctly in this case, a conversation with the editor. A reader of the Second New Hampshire Turnpike Book recently made available by the museum (see March issue of the Newsletter) questioned the hazard posed by descending the Lempster Mountain portion of the turnpike.

*Now surely there are very few who have not yet obtained a copy of this 150-page, comb-bound book with over 100 full page photos. But for those few, a reminder that your own personal copy is available for a donation to the museum. See page six of this Newsletter.*

But back to the Lempster question - an excerpt from the book in reference to this hill states “. . . when you descend the other side of Lempster Mountain Road you are going to drop some 500 feet (the equivalent of a 50 story building) in the space of less than 1 mile. Couple that with this short stretch being one of the few on the turnpike which is not straight (having numerous sharp bends) and you will be faced with an experience similar to that faced by riders of today’s modern-day roller coasters. Try not to think about the only thing saving you from disaster is those four horses pulling your coach who are probably more terrified than you.” So picture yourself in a coach such as this –



It is the 1800’S and you are crammed into a lightweight wooden box on four wheels being pulled (and stopped) by those four terrified horses. You are looking down a steep, winding snow covered dirt road with a hairpin turn 500 feet below. Surely it is obvious that there is a chance for a less than favorable outcome possible here.

Accidents involving horse drawn conveyance were not uncommon. Frankestown has many residents engaged in the forest products business including

logging. In winter they used horses to get the logs out of the woods using large horse drawn sleds such as shown here –



Imagine the difficulty in controlling a load such as this on a steep snow covered hill. There are numerous stories of both horses and drivers being run over by out of control log sleds.

Now we are not saying that you and your fellow passengers faced a peril of this magnitude but Lempster Mountain certainly presented its share of hazard to coach travelers and there were accidents.



## WHAT’Z IT –

This tool is solid metal and 4” long. Most prominently used in conjunction with haying and harvesting work. Due to its small size, many have been lost over the years and it has become relatively rare. As you can no doubt surmise, in spite of being rare there is one in **The Frankestown Heritage Museum** for you to view.

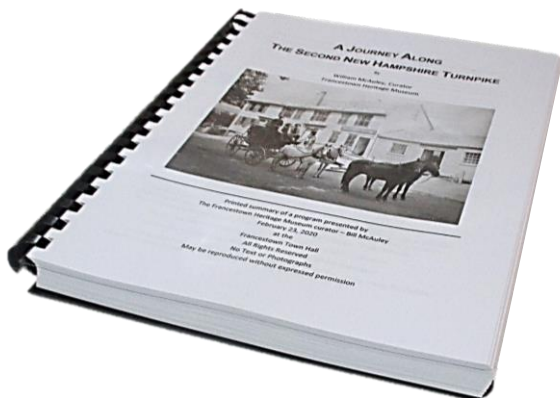


As with other What’Z its, the person who first identifies this tool and it’s use will receive one of our coveted lifetime membership passes which guarantees you free admission to the museum for life. Remember, the value of this pass is not diminished by the fact we do not charge admission to anyone.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> NH TURNPIKE book

The following is taken from page #5 “Letter to the Editor:

“There have been a number of inquiries as to whether there was written text available for the recent 2<sup>nd</sup> NH Turnpike Presentation. Well in fact there is a 150-page comb-bound book that was prepared with one copy each for the various Historical Societies who helped in the preparation of the program. This book includes the entire text (although not verbatim as I tend to ad lib a bit from the text when I do a presentation) as well as the 112 photo plates that were shown. As many of the plates were rights protected I agreed with the owners that I would not use this book for commercial gain. In revisiting this I asked if they would object to making it available to folks in exchange for a donation to the Heritage Museum and they agreed. This is the book (comb-bound with text and the photo plates).



In exchange for a donation to the **Francestown Heritage Museum** you will receive a thank you copy of the book. There is no minimum donation but please bear in mind that it cost the museum approximately \$12 each to make these up. Just e-mail me at [wfm03043@comcast.net](mailto:wfm03043@comcast.net) and mail donations, payable to the Francestown Heritage Museum Trust, to PO Box 250, Francestown, NH 03043.

There have also been several requests to present the program again but that will have to wait until after the Corona Virus issue is resolved and people can safely meet in groups again.

Thanks to all for their interest in this program.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC MUSEUM HOURS

As the governor has lifted the current stay home order, we will do a limited opening at the museum starting August 1st subject to the following:

All visits must be by prior appointment.

- Each appointment will be limited to members of a single household unit who are normally in daily contact with one another. No guests or non-members of the immediate family.
- All visitors must bring and wear their own face mask
- There will be hand sanitizer at the door and all visitors must use it prior to entry.
- Exhibits have been arranged in three rows with an aisle area between each row. Visitors will be asked to walk in a single direction up one side and back down the other. A barrier has been placed between the aisles and the exhibits and we ask visitors to respect the barriers – remain in the aisle space and do not touch any of the exhibits.
- Visits will be one floor at a time starting with the upper floor and then proceeding to the lower floor.
- Visits will be limited to one hour to ensure time for good ventilation of the building.
- Guests arriving without a prior appointment may be accommodated if there is an open time available.

Solution to July Crossword

M	A	S		E	N	A		A		Y	A	P
R	M		N	O	G	W	A		K		N	O
L	R		S	E		A	R	O	S	E	K	F
L	A	B	E	C	T	I	O	N	N	U		
			K	E	B				R	I	P	A
E	E		P	A	R	A	K	A			U	E
H	C		R	I	N	S	P	E	R	D	O	T
T	N		F			P	I	M			E	L
Y	A		S	A	R	E	S	P	E	A	R	S
C	A		R	C		L	E	U		R	E	A
S	P		O	M		T	R	O		B	A	R
			S	T	S					I	D	E
S	Y		R		C		P	R	I		N	A
S	A		K		S		H	A	R	S		R
E	A		H		T		A	B	B	A		D