

Haying on the Farm

By: Beulah Gardner



Painting by Jeanne Mellin Herrick

We all have experienced “homesickness” at one time or another. It’s those achingly raw emotions of where you are now versus those of where you would like to be. Nostalgia creeps into your soul and you look back fondly at good times in better places.

Aunt Beulah experienced profound feelings of homesickness during her freshman year at Eastern Nazarene College. The year was 1950 and Aunt Beulah and Aunt Elinor were the last two children of “The Original Gang of Ten” who were still living at home with Grandma and Grandpa Gardner at the old homestead in East Charleston, VT.

During the summer, to earn money to help finance her college education, Aunt Beulah worked in a factory that manufactured gift wrapping paper. It was while she was on the assembly line that these overwhelming feelings of homesickness overtook her. She decided to quit her job and return to the farm to help her dad with the haying season in Vermont.

Her summer job haying with her sister and her dad inspired her to write a required college term paper entitled “Haying on the Farm” which she submitted to her ENC instructor on May 9, 1950.

Reading Aunt Beulah’s vivid descriptions of the procedures involved in haying will give you wonderful insight as to how haying was accomplished during the late 19th century, 20th century, and perhaps even into the 21st century. Most certainly, there are still small farmers today throughout the country who experience “haying season” just the way that Aunt Beulah describes it here within these pages.

If you like this article, tell Aunt Beulah how much you enjoyed learning about "Haying on the Farm." Perhaps she'll tell you what grade she earned on her submission.

HAYING ON THE FARM

If you don't believe now that haying is a lot of work, I think that you will after you have read this.

About the first of July we start to check up on our machinery, making sure that everything is fit for haying.

Different types of grass have to be cut at different times. June grass should be cut quite early because it matures fast; and if it gets too mature before it is cut, it is not as good for feeding. Clover can be cut early, and it will grow enough to be cut again. Some other types of grass should be cut later.

Along in the middle of July, my Dad hitches the pair of horses to the mowing machine and prepares to begin the first step, which is cutting the hay. You probably know that hay cannot be put into the barn when wet; and, also, that to rain on dry, or partially dry, would make it dark and of a poorer quality. It is alright to cut the hay in the rain because it is green and doesn't have a chance to dry; and rain does not hurt grass that has not wilted, unless it is extensive rain.

Some farmers have tractors to hitch in front of the mowing machine instead of the horses as we have. The ground needs to be quite smooth and without too many stones in order to use a tractor, hay loader, or modern equipment. Our land is neither smooth nor without rocks, so that a tractor or other modern equipment would not be too efficient. In cutting the hay, you begin on the outside of the land piece and go around and around the piece of land until you have reached the middle.

When there is a rock in the path where you are going to mow, there is a lever that lifts the cutter bar until you have passed the rocks. Of course, you couldn't cut the grass right close to either side of the rock or around it, so this has to be done by hand. If by accident the cutter bar should hit the rock it would certainly dull the knives and perhaps it would break them. The knives have to be sharpened often, especially if you run into a rock.

The person mowing the hay gets plenty of jolts and bumps; this makes it a tiring and hard job.

In just about every phase of haying, my dad had something for Elinor and me to do. While cutting the hay, we tried to keep out of sight. In spite of our attempts to escape, occasionally he would see us and have us hold the knife of the mowing machine while he ground it on the



Horse Drawn Hay Turner



Mowing Machine



Hay Windrows



Tedder Machine

grindstone. Another job that he had us do was to take a long stick and poke back the hay every time that he went around the piece with the mowing machine so that the grass would not collect on the end of the cutter bar.

The next step in haying, as you probably know, is drying the hay. Of course if it rains, the hay does not dry. The sun may be shining bright and hot, but yet the hay does not dry fast. This probably is because there is high humidity. The best kind of a day to dry hay is a day with bright sunshine, low humidity, and a little wind. Different types of hay take different lengths of time to dry.

When the grass is fully wilted and turned to a golden brown with no water in it, it is ready to be raked. If the hay is thick, it might have to be shaken out with pitch forks or a machine called a tedder. Also, if the hay has been rained on, it would have to be shaken out. If hay is put into a barn with any water in it, it is likely to heat and eventually, by combustion, start a fire. If it is noticed that hay is warm when in the barn, salt can be sprinkled over it to stop it from heating any more.

Farmers try to get all the hay that they can in without it being rained on because the more it gets rained on, and the longer it stays out, the blacker it will get, and the poorer quality it will be. Many is the time that the hay will be cut, dried, and raked ready to go into the barn and rain falls on it. The time that the rain does the most damage is when the hay is dry and is flat on the ground just the way it was cut.

After drying, the hay has to be raked so that it can be loaded onto a truck or wagon. If the hay is going to be pitched onto a wagon, a dump rake is used. It is Elinor's and my job to do the raking. The dump rake is pulled by a horse; and when there is full load in the rake, it has to be dumped. We now call this a windrow. It can either be pitched onto the wagon from the windrow, or cocked up into piles that are the right size to pitch on. Hay that is cut by hand around rocks has to be raked by hand also. If the hay is going to be loaded onto the wagon or truck with a hay loader, a special kind of rake, a side delivery, has to be used. This rakes the hay in smaller and continuous windrows.

Raking is quite a difficult job, especially, if you have a fast horse, and rough ground to rake over. Because our land is hilly rough and rocky, I have a hard time



Hay Raker



Getting Ready to Load the Hay into the "High Drive"

DON'T FORGET TO MAKE
PLANS TO VISIT VERMONT DURING
THE MONTH OF JULY 2022

WATCH FOR PATTY AMES' ANNOUNCE-
MENT ON THE GARDNER NEWSLETTER
FACEBOOK PAGE.



Hay Barn with Ramp to Unload the Hay Wagon into the High Drive

staying on the seat of the rake. If the hay is heavy, It is difficult to dump the rake often enough to have the windrows as small as they should be.

Many times, during the course of raking a field, you ride over a stone and you really have to hang on. After the hay has been loaded and taken to the barn, the scatterings of the hay are raked up and taken to the barn also.

Now the horses are hitched to a wagon, or a tractor is hitched to a wagon, or a truck is taken to the hayfield where the hay is dry, raked, and ready to go into the barn. For this job, we need a crew of at least three, but four would be better.

One person is needed to load the hay, or in other words, to place the forksful on the wagon; and another person is needed to pitch it from the ground to the wagon. It would be a great advantage to have another person to pitch on from the other side of the wagon. Also, you could use a person to do hand raking after the other person has pitched the hay on. If this was done, raking the scatterings would not be necessary. Elinor and I took turns between

WE ARE PLANNING TO
CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF COUSIN
TERRY AMES THIS SUMMER

STAY TUNED BY CHECKING THE GARDNER
NEWS GROUP ON FACEBOOK



Hay Loader

driving and loading.

The driver drives the horses until the hay is conveniently near the wagon. As the hay is pitched on, the driver drives on to more hay. Now the man pitching on takes a forkful of hay from the windrow and puts it on the wagon. The loader, which was either Elinor or me almost all the time, placed the forkful on, either the back corner, or the front corner. Then the man pitching on from the other side puts his forkful on the other front corner. Then the next forkful goes in between the two to bind them on.

The next forkful goes in back of the corner on the side and a corresponding forkful is put on the other side. The next forkful goes in the middle to bind. The load is built in this manner until you reach the back end of the wagon. Then you begin from the back and build another round on top of the first one. At about the third round the load should be built wider; and, thus, more forksful have to be put in the middle to bind the sides. The top of the load narrows down again to three forksful wide. A good-sized load would have five rounds. It is

necessary to be very careful about building the load, because if it is not built right, it might fall off the wagon.

I remember one time that we had a load all on the wagon, about six rounds high. We were taking it to the barn and it all fell off because it was not built right. There was only one thing to do and that was to pitch it all back on.

If you have the more modern equipment such as a truck, tractor, and a hay loader, the process is different, quicker, and easier. Either a truck, or a tractor and wagon could be used for carting the hay. The hay loader is hitched on the backs of the truck or wagon. The driver has to drive the truck or wagon very slowly to enable the loader, who is on the wagon, or on the back of the truck, to place the hay on the wagon. The man loading has to load at a steady pace, because the hay is carried up from the ground on the hay loader at a continuous rate.

Loading is a hot and tiring job, because you have to keep up with the ones pitching on. It is especially hard to load if the ground is rough. If the wagon is on a side hill, naturally one side is lower than the other, and it is very difficult to place the forksful in the same place on each side of the wagon. If one side sticks out farther than the other side, there will be more hay on the wider side, thus making that side heavier than the other. This lack of balance is apt to tip the load over. This has happened many times. We would be loading on a side hill; and when we drove onto the level again, we discovered that the side was much heavier than the other. Everyone that was on the load had to stay on the light side, and usually we got to the barn with the load.

Sometimes as we were loading on the hay, dark clouds would come up, - a sure sign of rain. Realizing that it might rain any minute, we hurried to get all the hay that we possibly could on the load and into the barn. Many times, the storm blew over; but at least we accomplished more in a shorter time. Other times the rain would catch us, and we had to leave the hay field. There might be several loads of hay left out that would get wet. This hay, now, has to be shaken out and dried again. Also, this hay is not as good in quality as the hay we got in without being rained on

The next step after loading the hay is to drive it to the barn. The barn is usually in the center with all the hayfields around it.

Some people have high-drives in the barn and some have just a barn floor. The high- drive is just what it sounds like. It is an elevated barn floor with large bays on either side. The wagon or truck is driven up on it, and the hay is pitched off into the bays.

In our barn we have an ordinary barn floor and a hay fork. The load of hay is backed into the barn, then the hay is taken off with a hay fork. The hay fork is a steel implement with four tongs on it that stick into the hay and lifts it from the wagon to the scaffold. The hay fork runs on rope pulleys and the rope is pulled by the horses. The hay fork takes about six ordinary forksful, and it saves much manual labor.

The next job is to move the hay away. The hay fork can go way to the end of the barn, but it drops the hay in the middle so that it has to be pitched back into the sides and corners by hand. This is hard work, especially since the hay fork takes several forksful, and only a portion can be taken out by hand. Since it has all gone up in one lump, it is bound together and has to be torn apart. I mentioned that the hay fork cut down much labor. If the pitching off and



Another Hay Mowing Machine



Hay Fork with Rope and Pulleys to Unload the Hay from the Wagon to the High Drive



Making Hay Windrows with More Modern Machinery

moving away is done by hand, there are several steps requiring several hands.

First, someone has to pitch the hay off from the load to the man standing on the scaffold, and then he, in turn, has to pitch it back to another person, and so on until it is back to the end of the barn. The last person has to put it in the corners and sides and tread it down. We fill the back first and work up to the front until it is full and no more can go in.

Do you think that handling the hay is over now? Well, it isn't because in the winter-time it has to be pitched down into the

barn floor again to be fed to the cattle and horses.



As you can see, haying is no easy thing. There is a lot of hard work put into getting food for the stock for the winter.

Although haying is a hot and hard job, there are several good points about it. To go out and work in the open field is a wonderful way to get a good suntan. It is thrilling to see how many loads of

hay you can get in a day. It gives a person a deep satisfaction to see his fields clean and green and to know that all that hay is stored away for winter.

In our Summer 2021 issue, several of our *Gardner News* subscribers described how they are coping with COVID-19. It appears that this pandemic is ongoing and continues with the Omicron variant becoming the dominant strain affecting the world. Here are some more stories you have sent in about living in these dangerous times.

We begin with Bunny Maria's message to the newsletter. Bunny is a first cousin of the Original Gang of Ten on Grandma Gardner's side of the family – the French's.

Gardner News has published several articles over the years about Bunny and her family – most notably, her 50th wedding anniversary. Bunny is

Aunt Beulah's cousin and they are almost the same age. Here is what she has to say about the pandemic:

"This has been the hardest period



Bunny Maria and her daughter, Charlene Baker

of my life since my husband, Tony, passed in October of 2016. I live in a nursing home and all the residents were in lockdown. This was for our

safety and the staff taking care of us.

It was hard not being able to see family members for over a year. We did Facetime when able; otherwise, I spoke to them on my old flip phone. At least I could talk on the phone, unlike many residents who live here.

Many of my friends passed away due to COVID. Luckily, all my prayers and those of my family and friends were answered.

In March of 2021, we could have family visit again, but with restrictions. Only once a week for a half an hour, then 45 minutes. Now they can visit me in my room every day.

I thank God every day for my blessings!"

A Message from Grace Frizzell, President of the Charleston Historical Society

The year 2020 will forever be remembered as a historical year.

Following the recommendations of Governor Scott, The Charleston Museum did not open. We never even took the covers off the displays! It was difficult when a researcher would ask for help to tell them the Museum was unavailable, but volunteers did what they could to help.

It turned out to be a sort of “blessing in disguise” that we were dormant for the year 2020 because we knew it would be a difficult year after the death of our beloved historian, Richard Colburn, Sr.

Membership letters and newsletters were still sent out to friends and members; and, even with the current economy, people were generous in their support. Their contributions helped to offset the income from not having a yard sale and helped to repair the Museum roof.

For the remainder of 2021, out of an abundance of caution, the Museum is open by appointment only, and there will not be a yard sale. Volunteers are reorganizing displays and preparing the bathroom for renovation.

The plan includes a storage area to house the CHS records, reports, and the cemetery catalogs, as well as news clipping volumes and research binders that the Museum has for sale. (Many of these items were compiled by and previously stored in Richard’s spare room – Oh! How we all miss him!)

God willing, the 2022 Museum season will be back to normal!

Grace Frizzell



Grace Frizzell

PLEASE DONATE
TO THE CHARLESTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sharon Gardner Deals with COVID-19 AND a Brain Tumor

Sorry I missed your deadline. I have long and short-term memory loss, so tracking dates and deadlines and due dates, etc. is a pain.

I did a lot better with COVID than I normally do, as a lot less was expected of me! Living with a brain tumor apparently causes a lot of “overtime work” for a brain just to cope with everyday life. By the evening, I can tell I don’t think as clearly.

For instance, I can balance my checkbook just fine in the morning, but simply cannot in the evening. Often, my speech is mixed up in the evening. Words are just not there. Or, I say a different word – not related at all to what I tried to say.

During COVID, my brain hasn’t been taxed as much because I don’t have to be as social, nor do I have to keep checking dates/times, so my life is a lot easier. In spite of that, I still do have a strong desire to end this menacing virus!

I have learned that I do better without any expectations. I can’t see myself changing any of my activities, though. So, I will, in the future, try to be more forgiving of my forgetfulness. Wish me luck on that. I’ll need it!

Hope you’re well.
Sharon Gardner

08/25/21 (I just looked up the date to find out what it was ...)



Sharon Gardner

WE NEED YOUR
ARTICLES FOR THE
SPRING 2022 NEWS-
LETTER

EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY: By William H. Gardner

Aunt Beulah's article about "Haying on the Farm" is a perfect segue way into remembering the largest round barn ever built in the State of Vermont.

The round barn was the property of Bert and Amy Lang, parents of Grandpa Gardner, and had a life span of ten years. It tragically burned down on Christmas night in 1918.

Grandpa Gardner was an eyewitness to the conflagration; and if you continue reading, you can be there too as the barn and house actually burn to the ground.

Years Before the Fire

1902-Andrew Lang (Bert Lang's father) dies at age 74 after stepping on a moving saw in his mill. He had lost all the fingers on one hand in an earlier mill accident. Bert Lang and his wife Amy take over the large ownership. They have four children, including Amy's son William Henry Gardner from an earlier marriage.

1908-Round barn is built. This was considered an innovative labor and material-saving structure among farmers, and only a few dozen were built in Northern Vermont. The round barn was 100 feet in diameter.

1909-Bert and Amy Lang sell most of their holdings, including the round barn and property to the Longevain's and move to Lyndonville, VT. They retain the Lot 46 parcel south of the Ten Mile Square Road which becomes the home of the "Original Gang of Ten."

Before the Fire

July 10, 1919

I, William H. Gardner of Charleston, say that a short time before Christmas Day 1918 – probably two weeks – Elias Bemis, a deputy sheriff who lives in Island Pond, came to my house and told me that he was foreclosing a personal property mortgage on the Longevain property, and that he had been advised to put a keeper over the property. I remarked that I would hate to be the man.

I don't remember just what he replied; but he finally asked me if I would look after it, and I told him that I did not want anything to

do with it. He then asked me if I would make an errand for something else and go over to Longevain's place two or three times between then and the time the sale was advertised and count up the cattle and see if they had been fed. He said if I would do that, he would pay me for it. I told him I would.

I counted them three times; once when I went after my ladder; once when they were turned out into the field; and the last time the night of the fire. He (Elias Bemis) said nothing whatever about there being any fear of fire or about there being no insurance on the property. He only asked me to count the cattle and to see whether or not they had been fed. If I thought they had not been fed or if I found any missing, I was to notify him.

– on the same floor and right next to the cow barn. At that time, everything was all right in the barn. I know there was no fire then.

At about 5:00 a.m., his boys came over and hollered to me and said that the barn was

on fire. I looked out the window and saw fire coming out of the cupola of the barn. I dressed and went right over.

He, Longevain, was not there when I got there. Mrs.

Longevain and the children were there, except

for one boy. There was one boy there about 17 years old. They were all dressed the same, so far as I could observe, as they were when I was there selling the ice cream. I got to the place where the fire was within five or ten minutes.

When I got there, the whole inside of the barn was on fire. I opened the stable door and tried to get the cattle out, but it was just like a furnace, and I could not do a thing. The fire must have started on the west side of the barn because the fire broke out on that side first, and the wind was in the west.

Longevain came while I was there and before the fire got into the house. But he, so far as I could see, didn't do a thing to keep the fire from the house, which at that time had not caught fire. In fact, I saw him do nothing. On a later occasion, I asked him how he thought

the fire started and he simply shrugged his shoulders.

When I was in the barn that night putting up and getting my team, I noticed a large amount of hay in the feed floor. I remember this particularly, because I had never seen anything like it there before. I said to myself, "Well, I guess they have been well fed tonight."

William H. Gardner



Jacob Lang Family Home - Just the foundation remains at the NorthWoods Stewardship Center.



The largest round barn in the State of Vermont - Just the foundation remains at the NorthWoods Stewardship Center. Notice the barn's "high drive" on the right.

The Night of the Fire

I make ice cream and sell it in winter and summer. Longevain had a party at his place for his oldest girl on Christmas night. His boy wanted me to come up and sell ice cream. I got up to his place between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and left about 2:00 a.m.

When I left, he (Longevain) was in the kitchen. My team was in the barn – in the horse barn