

# PART OF THE PAST

## Harrisburg Area Museum

Issue 2019-5

### HAYING

I suppose man started putting up hay for the Winter about the time he domesticated his first cow!



*Haying in the 1500's. Note scythes and forked stick rakes.*

And that has been a long time ago. Maybe 6-10,000 years ago! The picture above is from AD 1510. So, for something like 8000 years man used really primitive tools. Only modest evolution in design and material. Then, in 1830 the powered reaper was invented. Four hundred generations with only slight evolution. Then, in less than 10 generations we have high speed nearly labor free hay harvests!

That transition will be the subject of this essay. It will deal mostly with the last 200 years since very little is known about the first 8000 years! Partly because there is very little to say about that period. But it was labor intensive.

When I was a kid we did some haying, but it was never a primary money maker. The Spring weather with the frequent rains did not encourage much haying. One was apt to end up with wet, moldy bedding rather than hay!

We would mow the hay with a horse drawn mower and dump rake it into winnrows. Then the hard part, shocking the winnrow into individual shocks. I was never able to 'get the knack' of shocking hay! Maybe it was the way I held the fork...I don't know but

I remember I turned my head to the left and after a few hours my neck and shoulders would hurt. Not my favorite job!

The Museum has a very old wooden hay fork. We have lost or never knew the history of the fork. It may be 'home made'. But if so, it is very well done. The picture shows Lee Heckart with the old fork. It appears to have a broken tine that has been re-sharpened. The joints are fastened together with heavy wire that goes over and through. If anyone knows the history we would appreciate your informing us for the record.



*Lee with old fork*

In researching forks I found that there are quite a number of different designs created for rather specific purposes. For instance, there is the loose hay fork shown at right. (Four tines) It would be used to shock hay in the field, load hay on the wagon, move hay in the barn and such jobs. Below left is a 3 tine bundle fork. It would be used both by the pitcher and the wagon master in handling bundles. The pitcher would use a longer



*Jeff Juenemann with a 4 tine hay fork.*



*Bundle Fork*

handle than the wagon master.

There are several other types. See the 'Spade Fork' (next page) It was used to dig potato's as well as other jobs.

The one we had when I was a kid was also used to 'swamp out' the horse stall. I think I may have been the same fork we used to dig the spuds and carrots! The internet also lists a

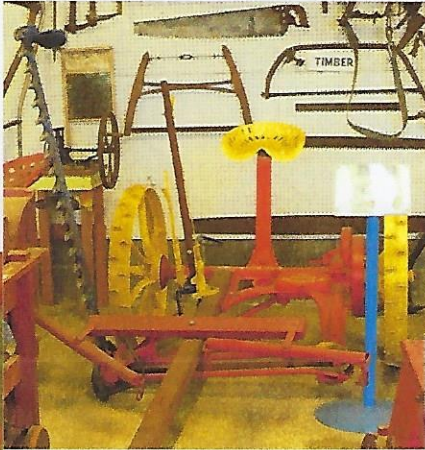


*Jeff with a spade fork*

'manure fork'. It is generally a short handled fork with more of a basket shape. I don't remember that we had one. Amazon lists pages of forks for sale...some costing more than \$100! I doubt that such are used much in commercial farming today. I am not sorry to see them replaced. Lots of work!

The hay was cut with a horse drawn mower such as seen at the below. Notice the 'double tree' and the 'single trees that allowed a team of

horses to hitch to the mower. The cutter bar is shown in transport position, near vertical. The sickle was driven via



*Horse drawn mower*



*Pitman Crank*

the ground drive wheel and from a crank near the left side of the machine. After the hay was cut it was raked into winnrows, in our case with a dump rake shown below.

This one has been converted to tractor power but other wise is like to ones used for years. Notice that there are no arm rests or side rail guards for the operator. A foot pedal would trip it to raise the tines and dump the accumulated hay in a winnrow. After curing a bit it would be shocked and then loaded on a wagon...or, in later years, a flat bed truck. Then hauled in loose and moved into the barn hay mow (Mow rhymes with now). Several types of hay forks were used in this



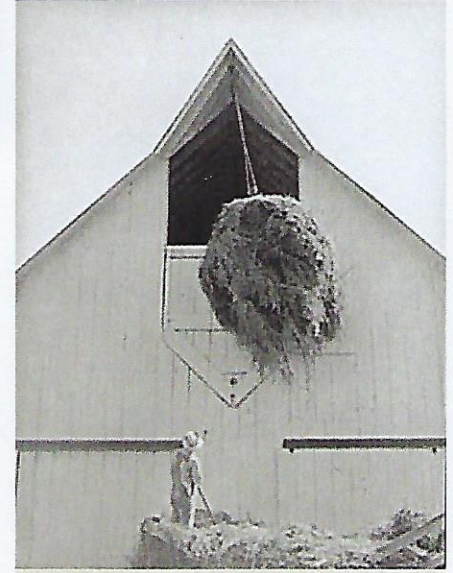
process. We used a double tine fork like the one below. The handle folds down and a trip mechanism



lets the dogs at the bottom end fold down straight to dump the load in the hay mow. Below is a load being raised and conveyed to the hay mow. A trolley system allows the load to roll into the barn where the man tending the placement will holler and the wagon man pulls the trip rope to

drop the hay where it is wanted. It works...but is a LOT of work!

The trolley system used either a inverted "T" steel track or a 4X4 wooden one. The trolley had a mechanism that held it in place over the wagon of hay. The wagonmaster would set the forks then call for the hay driver to pull the load up. When the load reached the top it would simultaneously lock onto the trolley and release the trolley so it could be pulled back into the barn and over the hay mow. When it reached the proper place the hay mow guy would holler and the wagonmaster would jerk the trip rope and drop the load of hay. Then the hay driver would return to the start position and the wagonmaster would use the trip rope to pull the trolley back and drop the hay forks in preparation for another load. The main rope was maybe 1-1.25 inches in diameter. The rip rope was much smaller.



Loading hay into barn. Maxwell farm, Jasper County, Iowa. FSA.

*Moving hay into the barn*

We are planning an interactive display to show how that works. But it must wait as other jobs come first.

Next issue: More on loose hay handling and then baling and current compressing. Imagine the process.

*Charlie Kizer, editor*