

solidity but they were much steadier and less excitable in critical positions. Even after horses were procured, Mr. Smith found it safer to employ the oxen, as witness this entry of June 2nd, 1807: "Plowed with the mares and got hurt; plowed with the oxen." Oxen were also much cheaper, more easily housed and fed, and less liable to stray away when let out to forage for themselves. In case of need also they could be fattened and turned to account as food, while their hides made the very best of leather. As the beginning of the century a pair of horses were worth from £75 to £85, or \$300 to \$340, while a yoke of oxen could be had for about \$100, and cows for \$50 each. These prices, however, were high as compared with later years.

When the harvest once began, all other work was suspended until the crops were safely housed. Close on the heels of the hay crop came the rye and the fall wheat. Before 1800 the farmers of that district had already passed the stage of the sickle and had reached that of the scythe and the cradle, the latter for the grain crops which were to be bound in sheaves. Here again co-operation came in. Hired help being very limited and uncertain, farmers who had grown-up sons must assist each other with the harvest, one cutting and another binding, one loading and another building the load and the stack. As yet there were few barns large enough to house the crops. The earliest form of shelter for the crop was the "barrack" or "Dutch loft." This consisted of a durable roof of thatch or other light material and which was made either round or square in shape, supported at the edges or corners on four tall posts pierced with holes at regular intervals through which stout pins were passed and which held the barrack roof at any required distance from the ground. The roof could thus be raised or lowered according to the amount of grain to be stored under it. This permitted the grain to be removed to the barn or threshing floor in any quantity desired without exposing the remainder to the weather. These structures were, of course, made by the farmers themselves. From 1802 the diary makes frequent reference to raising or lowering the barrack and the deposit thereunder of various grains, including flax. When sawn lumber became available, large frame barns were constructed and the barracks passed out of use.