

Living History

A Quarterly Journal of Historical Preservation

Volume 2, Number 1

Save seeds now

No matter how you perceive the passage of time, you can understand why saving heirloom seeds sends historians and gardeners scurrying. Seeds contain the basic building blocks of our food supply, obviously. What is less obvious is that these very same seeds contain the storehouse of genetic information upon which future development depends. Who is to say that a variety of bean—which had lost favor because its tough string overmatched the cannery's machinery—has no other redeeming qualities?

Within this new age of environmentalism and planetary awareness there is an emerging interest in plant history. This interest is not a branch of natural history. It is not simply the quantification and nomenclature of plants and their relationships to one another. It is more. The history of plants has more to do with their relationships to human culture. How were these plants used? Why was one seed preferred over another of the same variety? Who made the choice; and was it influenced by factors like gender, age, class or some other determinant of status?

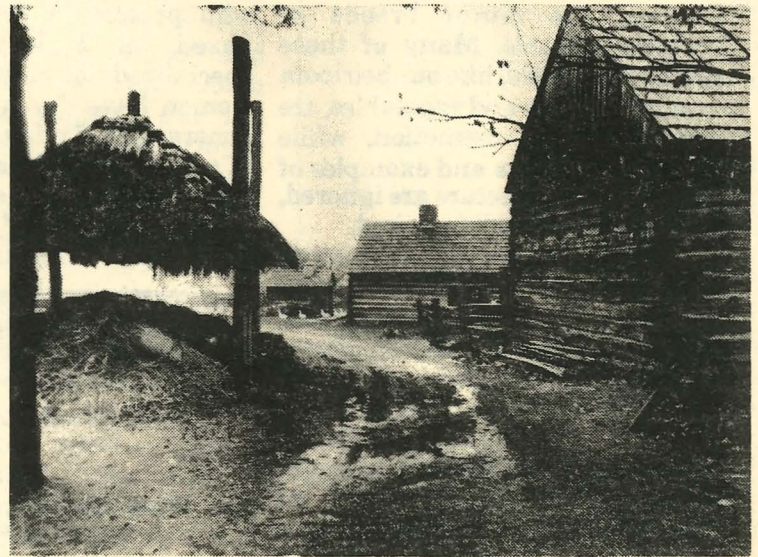
In 1903 the United States Department of Agriculture surveyed available sources of apple trees from nursery catalogs. Of the 7,000 varieties known at the time, over 6,000 are missing with the number steadily decreasing until the late 1980s. A similar survey in 1983 showed 87% of our vegetable choices missing. Even allowing for the certainty that one variety sometimes bore multiple names, this is evidence for serious genetic and cultural erosion.

The Heirloom Seed Project at Landis Valley Museum is one of the organizations dedicated to stemming the tide of erosion. The core purpose of the Landis program is to identify varieties of vegetables, herbs, flowers, forage crops and fruit that has a written or an oral history pre-dating 1940 and was grown by the project's founders, who believe that defining an era, a region and an ethnic group focuses their intention and matches the available resources with the goal. Annually, they produce a catalog with at least 60 seed varieties which meet their self-declared parameters. If you would like to participate in this living history project by obtaining a catalog and ordering seed please send a check for \$2 to:

Landis Valley Associates—HP
2451 Kissel Hill Road
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17601

Steve Miller, Preparator
at Landis Valley

Pennsylvania Farm Museum of Landis Valley



Settler's Farm (1750), Landis Valley Museum, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Illustrated left to right, Four Pole Barrack, Bake Oven, Log House, and Log Barn. PHOTO BY PETER SINCLAIR.

The future is often influenced by the past. By studying the relics of the past, one better understands the tendencies of the present. It is with these ideas in mind that we should view the Landis Valley collection. The Museum is not a university shop, but its collections represent the arts and crafts of a limited section. Historical societies deal with biographies, political history, local improvements, etc. Metropolitan museums revel in far-distant discoveries relating to ancient peoples. Curio collectors feature freaks, art for art's sake, and such things as are glorified by the touch of once-famous men. Not so the Landis Valley Museum. Here we find tools, artifacts, implements, vehicles, things actually made and used by the early inhabitants, presented for study rather than entertainment. Although there is much to amaze and surprise the novice, study and research is preferred."

Henry K. Landis

The American-German Review

1941

Continued on Page Four

EDITOR'S LETTER:

This issue of Living History completes its first year of publication. It has been a year of exploring the widespread activity and interest in the world of living history. In the coming year, we hope to visit and report on more of the many farms and museums which preserve and re-create local historic and cultural traditions. *Living History* will continue to promote heirloom gardening, old time power and timber framing. It plans soon to look at what is being done to preserve the minor breeds of domestic animals. Many of these traditional breeds, like our heirloom varieties of fruits and vegetables, are threatened with extinction, while important artifacts and examples of vernacular architecture are ignored, undocumented, and exploited.

Much of the living history movement and its work to recover and make available the forgotten past has developed recently. (These developments include open air museums, heirloom gardens, the professional curator and the trained interpreter.) While these ideas might seem new, the practice of preservation and re-enactment have always been a natural part of traditional society and remain alive in rural America where local history is recalled not as a tale of heroic individual achievements, but as the memory of a conservative, resource full and interdependent community gradually adopting the advances in technology and bending with the changing markets.

Don Pfliegel, president of the Old Time Power Association (see pages six and seven), feels lucky that he has lived to see so many changes. A youth in the days of water, horse and steam power, he matured with the internal combustion engine and experienced the arrival of a centralized electric service. It is a history he and his friends enjoy demonstrating and sharing.

As part of the heirloom seed focus of this issue, *Living History* includes an article on a rain forest people of West Africa (page three), who practice a farming tradition based on a large number of specialized rice varieties which their women have developed over many generations. Today these traditions of self-sufficiency and shared labor are threatened not only by war, but by the inability of an "advanced" industrial civilization to fully

understand and value the history and the achievements of an indigenous people whose way of life is of another time.

Living History is an independent publication which is being distributed to individuals and organizations active and interested in historic preservation and living history. It is dependent on the subscriptions of its readers and the contributions of its advertisers. It hopes to serve them both and welcomes their suggestions and information.

Sincerely,
Peter Sinclair
Editor and Publisher

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you very much for your letter of 25 October 1991 agreeing to my proposal for exchange subscriptions of *Living History* for the *Windmillers' Gazette*.

In your letter you asked if I would send along some back issues of the *Windmillers' Gazette*, which I am mailing with this letter. Through its medium I am able to reach the hundreds of private individuals throughout the United States who collect and restore historic wind machines. The articles in the *Gazette* hopefully shape the practice of the hobby, resulting in the historic preservation of these machines and associated artifacts.

The editorial focus of the *Windmillers' Gazette* is on the 19th- and 20th-century windmills mass produced for pumping water and producing small amounts of mechanical power. These machines were used in virtually every corner of the country in amazing numbers.

One of the most famous of the American windmill manufacturers had his offices in New York and factory in Jersey City, Andrew J. Corcoran. A future issue of the *Gazette* will feature Corcoran, his mills, and his spectacular enclosed windmill towers which once dotted Long Island and the upper Atlantic coast.

T. Lindsay Baker, Editor
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Liberia's agriculture is a casualty of war

Gordon C. Thomasson, writing in the Summer 1991 issue of *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, warns that as an aftermath of the recent civil war in the West African nation of Liberia, great damage has been done to traditional farming and there has been a great loss of many varieties of local rice. Thomasson, who teaches anthropology in the World Studies Program at Marlboro College in Vermont, has studied and worked with the Kpelle, a people who 400 years ago moved from the grassland savanna of Guinea into Liberia's rain forest where they originated and perfected methods for the upland cultivation of rice (*Oryza sativa*) and other plants.

The Kpelle came into Liberia with the seeds of African rice and through contacts with coastal people they obtained varieties of Asian Rice which the Portuguese traders had introduced. Through selective breeding of these rices the women adapted them to their new environment and created a farming system based on the biodeversity of the rain forest. In one of the villages which Thomasson studied, the women had maintained more than 112 varieties of rice. In one field he crossed he counted 14 varieties of rice, each planted to return optimal yield. Each type matched to the degree of slope, amount of insolation, type of soil, and so forth.

Thomasson said that he experienced working with the men clearing farm sites. Arranged in a line they placed him on the end where the untrained swing of his machete was not a danger to them. They work together to the rhythms of their songs.

One song was about Bachelor Rice. The Kpelle have a great respect for the varieties and special uses of their rices. Bachelor Rice is a fast sprouting variety. A bachelor has no children to guard the newly sown seed from the hungry birds waiting in the tall trees until the people are gone. A married has sons and he

shows them how to make and use a sling shot and how to guard the seeds until they sprout and no longer tempt the birds.

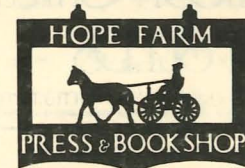
"No crops have been sown or harvested in some areas since 1989," Thomasson writes, "when entire villages were driven from their lands by the war. Since no crops were sown in many areas in 1990 and people facing starvation have eaten seed rice that soldiers did not confiscate or burn, many rural areas face worse than short-term starvation. Irreplaceable agricultural resources upon which self-sufficiency depends, including a highly diversified genetic pool of ecologically adapted staple crop varieties... will be lost within the coming year unless immediate efforts are made to save them."

The Kpelle came to Liberia with an ancient knowledge of working iron. In their new environment they discovered new types of ores and through experimentation the blacksmiths developed a complex metallurgy capable of creating excellent steels for the farming tools they forged. Thomasson considers the traditional knowledge of metals as well as the knowledge of breeding, selecting, and maintaining seed as essential for the survival of the Kpelle as self-sufficient farmers and thus of value to the peaceful recovery of Liberia.

For the people of Liberia to recover and reconstruct their nation, Thomasson writes, urban Liberians and outsiders must learn to value and respect the intellectual and cultural achievements of Liberia's precolonial peoples. "If in the aftermath of war, all concerned parties recognize that past "development" programs there as elsewhere, have done as much damage as good, there is some hope. But the loss of irreplaceable... indigenous knowledge systems will be a national tragedy." It will result in the destruction of the Kpelle

culture, "and the depopulation of rural Liberia."

Liberia's Seeds of Knowledge, Gordon C. Thomasson, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Summer 1991, Volume 15, Number 3... write: *Cultural Survival*, 53A Church Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

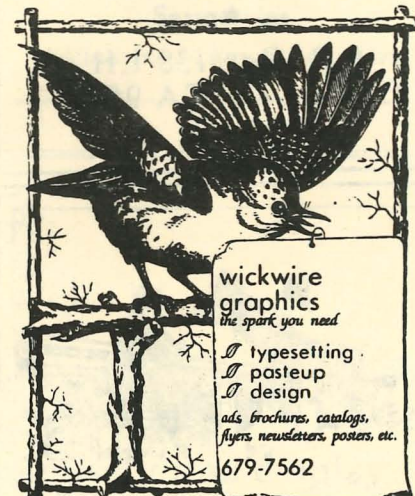


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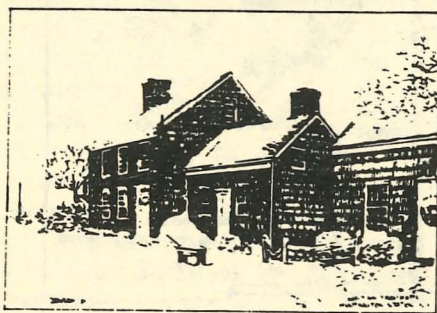
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LANDIS VALLEY CONTINUED ...

The broad rolling landscape of Lancaster County is in the heartland of the Pennsylvania German country, a people of many nationalities and beliefs who pioneered the rich agricultural land here in the 18th century. Today, Lancaster County is the fastest growing county in Pennsylvania and the pressures of urban-industrial development are apparent everywhere in the growing enclaves of modern condominiums, factories and shopping malls that are replacing the old farms.

The modern turnpike driver who travels the numbered highways of the Northeast corridor connecting the expanding populations of New York, Philadelphia and Washington, glides on a ribbon of concrete past many prosperous farms in northern Lancaster County. Broad open fields and clusters of buildings painted white, these old farms still dominate the landscape in places, survivors of traditions and values that continue to resist the urbanized population that encroaches.

The survival of local architecture and landscape and the living culture itself remain an attraction for the tourist coming to Lancaster County. They are also a valuable heritage for many local people active in its preservation and interpretation. Fourteen historic sites and museums present aspects of its early history. The largest and most comprehensive of these is Landis Valley Museum just north of Lancaster. It is a 100 acre site with over 30 structures, "dedicated to the preservation of rural life and Pennsylvania German folk culture."

The Landis Valley Museum originated from the lifelong interests of George and Henry Landis, two brothers born and raised in this Lancaster valley which their Mennonite ancestors had settled in 1730 and, like their neighbors had over the generations, contributed their share to William Penn's idealistic concept of "commonwealth."

Born just after the Civil War, the Landis boys began their collecting early, saving birds eggs and Indian relics they found. Their

mother encouraged them to get an education and during their years at Lehigh University where they studied engineering they began to think seriously about the need to preserve tools and products of Pennsylvania's agricultural and rural heritage.

Soon after retiring from separate careers George and Henry returned to their Lancaster County home and began to realize their dream. In 1925 they opened their extensive collections to the public. By 1941 the brothers were older and financially unable to sustain their museum. It was then that the Carl Schurz Foundation came to their assistance adding needed buildings to the original site and hiring a professional curator to catalogue and display the collection of tools, guns, and wagons.

In 1953, after liquidation of the fund which supported the museum, Landis Valley was deeded to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and long range plans were made to build a farming community which would accurately portray rural lifestyles in Pennsylvania during Colonial, Federal, and Victorian periods.

Twelve new buildings were to be built and six original historic buildings moved to the site. In 1971 work began on the Settler's Farm representing a 1730 to 1750 newly established homestead. It is a cluster of log buildings surrounded by garden, fields and fruit orchard. Horses and sheep graze in an open field and a flock of white geese patrol the dirt road and muddy paths. Its weedy hedges and split rail fences preserve the texture and look of a living farm. Cooking on the 18th century open hearth is a popular demonstration here.

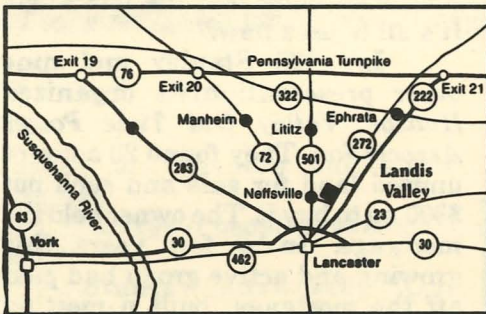
By 1977 fifty-two full time and part time staff constructed, maintained and interpreted the workshops, farms, and schoolhouse at the Landis Valley Museum. Today thirteen full time staff and 18 seasonal workers continue its important work from January 1 to December 31. They are assisted by many interested local people. In the heirloom seed project alone 26 volunteers contribute 3,500 hours a year.

Landis Valley Museum has

had a long history of living history and was one of ten charter members who in 1970 founded ALHFAM (Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums) a volunteer organization which today includes over 3,000 individual members and 200 historic farms and museums from throughout North America, England, South Africa, and Japan.

Living History is an idea occurring in many communities. Historic farms and museums like Landis Valley serve as successful models of what is possible. For information on this museum and 13 other historic sites in Lancaster County write or phone...

LANDIS VALLEY MUSEUM
2451 Kissel Hill Road
Lancaster, PA 17601
(707) 569-0401



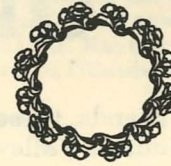
ALFAM has just published a *Guidebook to Institutional Members 1991*, which includes names and addresses of 233 member institutions as well as descriptions of 158 museums and living history farms. For information write...

Debra Reid
The Farmer's Museum
P.O. Box 800
Cooperstown, NY 13326

The barrack shown in the photograph of the Landis Valley settlers farm was a type of structure whose use was once common and widespread for storing surplus hay and grain on farms. It is a part of our historic landscape that is almost forgotten. This pole structure

with a roof that can be raised and lowered to accommodate the situation are reappearing on a number of living history farms. In Pennsylvania by the mid 19th century their use was abandoned as larger timber frame barns became available.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE for the next issue of *Living History* is MARCH 27. Call 914-338-0257 for information.



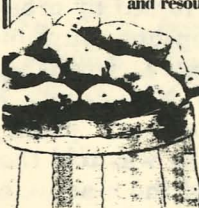
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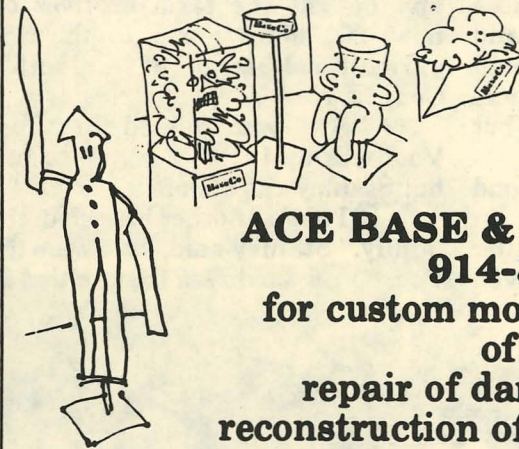
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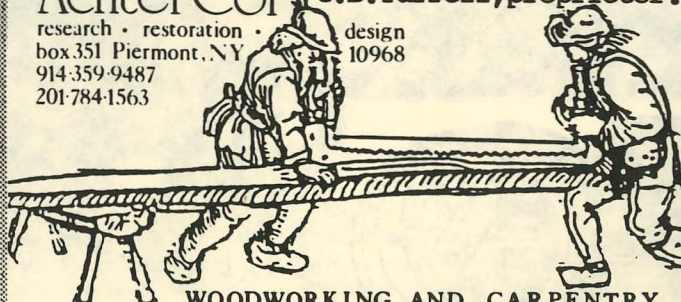


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WOODWORKING AND CARPENTRY

Old Time Power

Neighbors and friends, these 72 year old retired Hudson Valley farmers share an interest in preserving early tools and equipment used on American farms in the early decades of this century, a time they both still remember.

When they get together in Stanley's workshop it's to tinker with Stanley's collection of old motors, machines and early tractors. If it's cold Stanley throws some dry corn cobs in the stove and starts a fire. There are well over a hundred machines and motors and fifteen tractors stored in his unheated modern metal barn. The variety of their breeds and sizes is astounding and there are so many it is hard to find a path between them. Old hand tools hang on the rafter trusses above.

"They used a lot of motors on farms before the electric came in." Stanley said, explaining his diverse collection of small motors. "These all work, the feed grinders, saws and butter churns," he assured me and spun the fly wheel on a mechanical washing machine that did a noisy but graceful dance.

Every Labor Day weekend Stanley and his friends pull an awesome black monster on a trailer to the Chatam Fair. It's a belt driven

mechanical log splitter built in Maine in about 1915. They demonstrate it and an antique shingle mill.

"I wanted to show the younger generation what the older generation had to work with." Stanley said, "Did you see these pegs?" he asked, pointing to the display of about eight corn husking pegs, "I used some of them." Five were metal full-hand, manufactured models and three were handmade of wood, a leather strap for one finger.

Stanley began collecting at a critical period of his life during the time he was being forced by urban development to stop operating his farm in Montgomery Township, Sommerset County, New Jersey. It was a small dairy and poultry operation. In 1962 he was told that he could not spread the manure of his dairy herd on his fields and so he sold his family farm in New Jersey and bought the farm he lives on now, 200 miles north in the rich agricultural land of Columbia County, New York.

"Are you related to those Voohrees up in..." I began to ask but Stanley cut me off.

"That's another branch of the family." Stanley said, "We were the Court Van Voohrees that settled in

New Jersey. (There are no less than six spellings in New Jersey alone.) They came over in a ship called the Spotted Cow."

"What was the date of that?" I asked.

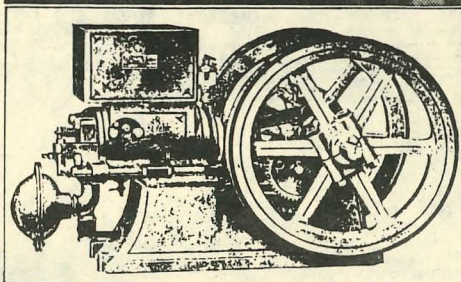
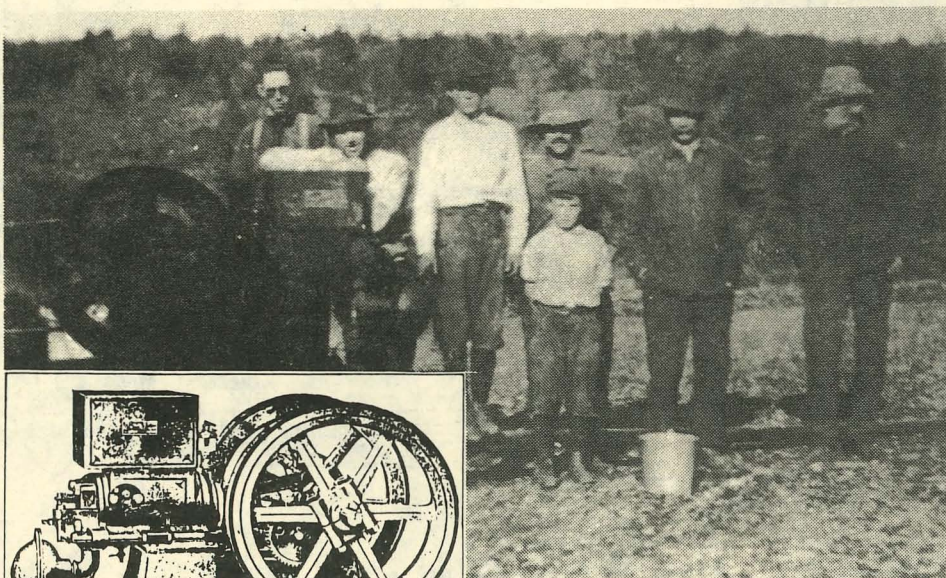
"Aw, sometime in the 1600's (1630's). I'm not good at dates. My brother, he remembers everything and there's the Voohrees Family Association. They have it all worked out. Steven Van Voohrees had 1,000 acres and he divided it up for his four sons. Gerrit was my father's great grandfather. They had slaves back then. They quartered them in the kitchen. Two of the farms were lost during the depression in the 1800's (1870's?). Ours was the last to go. It's all houses now."

In 1975 Stanley and nine other preservationists organized *Hudson Valley Old Time Power Association*. They found 20 acres of unused land for sale and each put \$300 up to buy it. The owner held the mortgage. In a few years this growing and active group had paid off the mortgage, built a meeting hall, storage shed, cook house and established three yearly events. Today these events draw people from seven or eight states.

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"Kermit and I retired from farming a few years ago," Stanley said, "me because of my health, but you always end up doing something even if it's just reading about it. Did you see these?" He asked and showed me three or four national publications dealing with belt

FROM LOIS HILL COLLECTION.



LEFT: Economy Gasoline Engine from Sears, Roebuck and Co. 1909.

PETER SINCLAIR.



Engineers and Engines Oriented to the Mid-West
 Donald D. Knowles, Editor
 1118 N. Raynor Avenue
 Joliet, Illinois 50435

LEFT: Stanley and Kermit Van Voohees. BELOW: Sunday in the Catskills, 1916, local lads and ladies pose on a thrashing machine which is perhaps of local design and construction. To the left, a sheef of metal has blown back on the roof of the barn and makeshift scaffolding has been erected so that repairs can be made. Although the two photographs come from the same Wolven family album, the barn shown here with vertical siding is not Nehemiah Wolven's barn which is still standing in West Hurley with its unpainted horizontal clapboard siding.

power, old tractors and steam engines.

"Did your people save seed?" I asked.

Stanley answered, "Our people always saved and exchanged seed. Didn't they?" and Kermit nodded.

"Do you have any?" I asked, but there was no answer.

"Some people have." I said.

"Well, that's good." Stanley said and Kermit agreed.

Peter Sinclair

For further information write:

Old Time Power
 Frank P. Pflugl
 5214 Cauterskill Creek Road
 Catskill, NY 12414

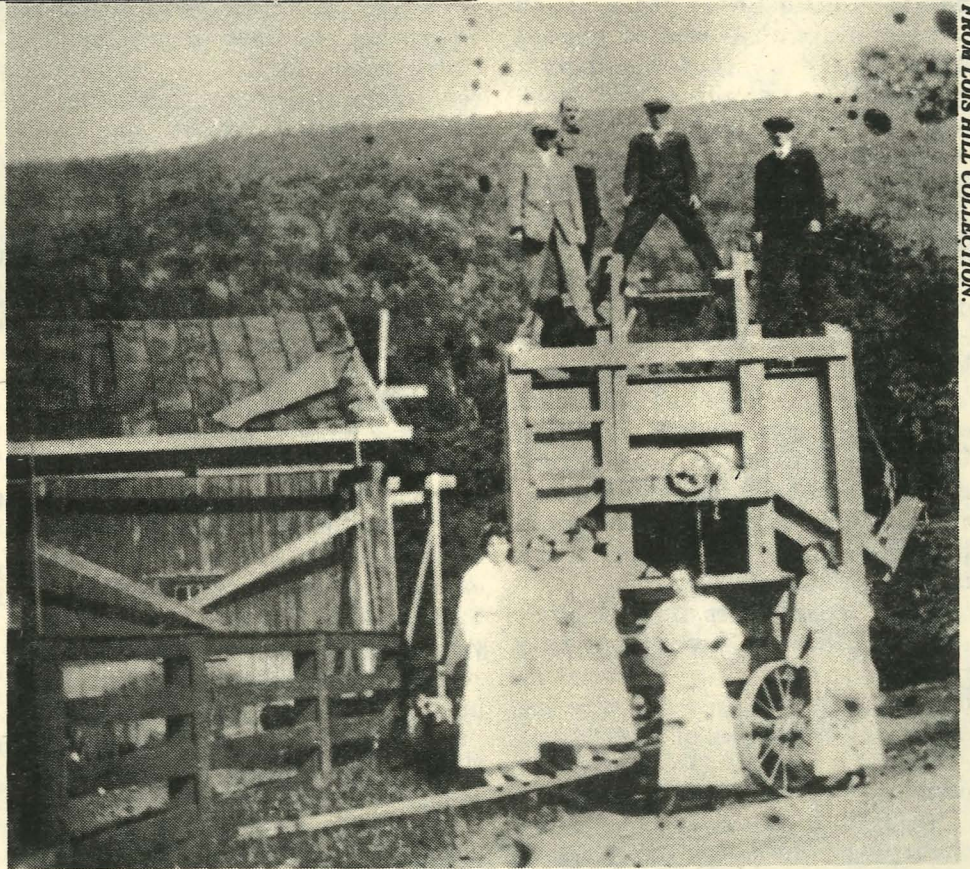
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FROM LOIS HILL COLLECTION.

FACING PAGE: Thrashing 1916, Nehemiah Wolven (far right), his neighbors and members of a threshing crew pose by a small belt power engine on the Wolven farm, Marbletown Road, West Hurley, New York. These small motors and thrashing machines (shown above) would go from farm to farm, and for a percent of the yield would thresh and winnow the farmers grain which at no monitary cost to him was a great savings in labor. Dave Brennan, a member of the Old Time Power Association from Curryville thought the gasoline motor shown in this picture was a Sears Engine. It was probably a 5 or 7 horsepoer and a little to run the large thrashing machine which both he and Stanley thought might have been designed for soy beans.

The place for heirloom vegetable varieties at living history museums

Although I work professionally with the current technology of vegetable production, I am interested in garden history and heirloom varieties. This avocation has led me to a number of interesting activities and projects, such as chairmanship of the Seeds and Plants Committee of the Association of Living Historic Farms and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM).

In my opinion, it is important that living history farms and museums, and other historic restorations, grow appropriate period plants. For years, such institutions endeavored to present historically correct buildings, furnishings, costuming and tools, but unfortunately, all too often, less attention was directed to gardens. Modern hybrid vegetable varieties were planted frequently and sometimes inappropriate vegetables were grown. For example, one might observe green borccoli growing at a restored early 19th century mill. We know that Thomas Jefferson and some other gentlemen of the period did indeed grow green, sprouting Italian broccoli; but in the early 19th century, broccoli was definitely an exotic. One doubts that it would have been planted in the garden of a common tradesman.

In recent years, living history museums have shown increasing interest in growing historically correct heirloom vegetable varieties, and today a number of institutions are doing a fine job. Obtaining seed of many old vegetable varieties is difficult, and in general, the earlier the period to be recreated, the more challenging the task. In some cases, plant material that is closely related to, or descended from, the desired variety must be used. It is, of course, important that the substitute resemble the old variety as closely as possible.

Actually, a surprising number of heirloom vegetable

varieties are still around, although they frequently exist today in an "improved" form. Some heirloom varieties can be obtained from commercial seed companies, but many are available only from a foundation, government repository, or private collection. Groups such as the Seed Savers Exchange of Decorah, Iowa have become an important force in preserving historic plant material.

Some living history farms and museums are attempting to collect and preserve heirloom fruit, vegetable, and/or ornamental plant varieties. This can be a difficult enterprise, because most institutions lack sufficient financial resources and horticulturally trained staff to carry on such projects. When maintaining heirloom varieties, great care must be exercised to make sure that individual varieties do not accidentally mutate or cross pollinate, and that each generation is carefully selected to maintain trueness to type. If the current generation of an old variety differs in one or more characteristics from the original type, it is no longer identical to the original.

The Landis Valley Museum in Lancaster, Pennsylvania is a good example of a living history farm that is collecting and maintaining varieties of local interest. This seems to me to be a useful project because, if they aren't preserved, these unique varieties could be lost. On the other hand, it makes less sense for living history museums to preserve more commonly available heirloom varieties. When a museum is considering germplasm preservation, the question of how this project will fit into the institution's educational mission must be asked. It is important that correct varieties be grown, and to do this, it may be necessary to produce seed of some individual varieties; but this does not constitute a true

germplasm preservation program, nor, in all probability, is such a program warranted.

There are a number of commercial seed companies selling heirloom vegetable varieties. Many of these companies are relatively new, created to meet the growing demand from not only living history museums and other restorations, but many home gardeners, as well.

To help ALHFAM members locate heirloom varieties, Scott Kunst of Old House Gardens in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Charles Thomforde of Pennsbury Manor in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, have developed a list of historic seeds and plant sources. According to this list, the following companies or organizations specialize in heirloom vegetable seeds:

Abundant Life Seek Foundation, PO Box 772, Port Townsend, WA 98363, (206) 385-5660. New Age, \$1.

Bountiful Gardens, 19550 Walker Rd., Willits, CA 95490. John Jeavons, Chase Seeds, free.

Butterbrooke Farm, 78 Barry Rd., Oxford, CT 06483-1598, (203) 888-200. Free.

Good Seed Co., Star Rte., Box 73A, Oroville, WA 9884. \$1.

Heirloom Seeds, PO Box 245, West Elizabeth, PA 15088-0245. Some dates, 20 old tomatoes, etc. \$1.

Landis Valley Museum, 2451 Kissel Hill, Lancaster, PA 17601, (707) 569-0401. Pennsylvania-Dutch heirlooms. \$1.

Le Champion Heritage Seeds, PO Box 1602, Freedom, CA 95019-1602, (508) 724-5870. Mostly old, some dates. \$1.

Johnny's Selected Seeds, PO Box 2580, 310 Foss Hill Rd., Albion, ME 04910, (207) 437-9294. Free.

Nichols Garden Nursery, 1190 North Pacific Hwy., Albany, OR 97321, (503) 928-9280. And herbs, flowers, free.

Peace Seeds, 2385 SE Thompson St., Corvallis, OR 97333. Diverse, unusual, list \$1, catalog & research \$5.

Redwood City Seed Co., PO Box 361, Redwood City, CA 94064, (415) 325-7333. And other "useful plants." \$1.

Ronniger's Seed Potatoes, Star Route, Moyie Springs, ID 83845, (208) 267-7938. Long list, \$.52 in stamps.

Seeds Blum, Idaho City Stage, Boise, ID 83706, (208) 343-2202. One of the first to feature heirlooms. \$3.

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, PO Box 158, North Garden, VA 22959. Many old/heirloom; seed-saving supplies. \$3.

Vermont Bean Seed Co., Garden Lane, Fair Haven, VT 05743, (802) 265-4212. Many old beans, peas, free.

Robert F. Becker

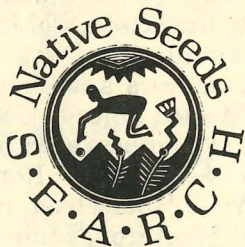
Robert F. Becker is an Associate Professor for the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Cornell University.

Additional seed catalogues suggested by Living History:

Fox Hollow Herb & Heirloom Seed Co., PO Box 148, McGrann, PA 16236. Quality seeds at affordable prices. \$1.

Fred's Plant Farm, Dresden, TN 38225. Sweet potato plants. Free.

Heirloom Garden Seeds, PO Box 138, Guerneville, CA 95446, (800) 745-0761. Historic herbs and ornamentals, good reading. \$2.50.



Native Seeds/SEARCH, 2509 N. Campbell Ave. #325, Tucson, AZ 85719, (602) 327-9123. Native seeds of the Southwest U.S. and Northwestern Mexico. \$1.

As a way for the gardener to compare heirloom varieties of tomatoes with modern hybrid types, Bob Becker has suggested the following five:

Three heirloom...

Ponderosa Pink, a large tomato, oldest of the Ponderosas;
Yellow Plum, small fruit for preserves and canning;

Red Pear, a rare variety with small fruit.

and Two hybrid...

Celebrity, high-yielding prize winner, home garden quality in a commercial hybrid;

Presto, early yield, small fruit, patio type plant, quite delicious.

Living History is making Bob's Tomato Garden Mix available along with some background and growing tips. The package containing seeds for the 5 varieties listed above, enough seed for two modest gardens, are only \$5. Write, Living History, Box 202, West Hurley, NY 12491.

And remember... If you like the heirloom varieties you can replant them forever, if you like the hybrid seed you'd have to buy it from us again next year, and the prices are going up.

CORN REPORT

The Book of Corn, by Betty Fussell, an edited chapter of which appeared in the Autumn issue of Living History, will be published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. in the Spring. An hour and a half slide lecture concerning the cultural and ecological history of corn is available by the author. Write: Betty Fussell, 143 West 13th Street, Apt. 302, New York, NY 10011.

SEED REPORT

Wolven Sweet Corn and Snow Pea. Living History began with the sale of the seeds of a local heirloom sweet corn and we will continue to maintain and offer that variety. In addition, a limited

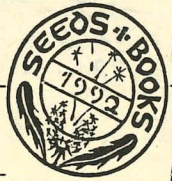
supply of a local vine snow pea is now available. This pea which develops a 6 foot vine, was grown by the Wolven family of Saugerties, New York for several generations.

The sweet corn is a "Mexican" black variety, a Northeastern 8 to 10 row sweet corn which is eaten fresh in its milk stage and when mature dried and ground for a flower to thicken soup. *The Vegetables of New York*, a 1934 report of the state agricultural experiment station, says that this corn, "... has long had the reputation of being the sweetest and most tender variety that could be grown... Certain geneticists have used it in order to increase the quality of various sweet corn hybrids in their breeding projects."

Packages of 50-60 sweet corn seed and 15-20 snow peas with background and growing instructions are available from Living History for \$1.25 each plus 75¢ postage.

REPORTS CONTINUED
ON NEXT PAGE

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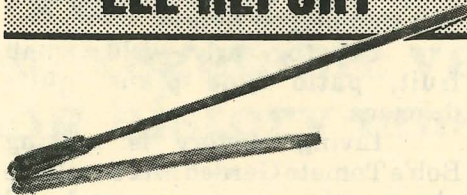


Fri., Sat., Sun., Mon. 10am - 6 pm

Directions: From Thruway exit 19 at Kingston, take Rte. 28W (towards Pine Hill) for 3 miles. At Dollhouse turn left onto 28A. Proceed 3.2 miles to Spillway Rd. Bear left onto Spillway for 1.2 miles.

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EEL REPORT



The eel have ended their seasonal run down the fresh waters of the Northeast. They have entered the salt water and are swimming southward for the place of their birth, a place unknown to us, deep in the Sargassos Sea where they will spawn and die, and their offsprings, the tinny glass eel, will return to fatten in the river estuaries.

One hundred and fifty years ago a dry eel skin or two nailed to a timber in a farmers barn was a comman thing. They were the raw hide used to tie the flail. They were spare parts for the tool which

thrashed his grain. Not long ago the strength of eel leather was rediscovered and wallets made of it have become popular, but the eel is not a creature of the contemporary world and it has been reported, but not confirmed, that eel skin wallets demagnetize credit cards. If you have need or are curious, Living History has Delaware River eel skins available.. \$4 including postage.

ALFHAM REPORT

ALFHAM Replica Source List. The Association for Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums has just published a list of about 250 sources of historical replicas. These include period clothing, tools, furniture. As an example: Alloy Foundry of Ontario, Canada offers, "Military accoutrements, cannons, and small arms." They have stock on hand and give quantity discounts. P.M. Cunningham of Madison, Wisconsin offers "footwear, tinware and brooms." They also offer quantity discounts.

The list is presently being generated by a computerized data base so that new and up to date information is always included. It will be an important tool for living history interpretive programs as well as producers and suppliers of these replicated objects. Copies are available to members at \$5, and non-members \$10. Write Ron Kley, Alonzo Wood Homestead, P.O. Box 111, East Winthrop, Maine 04343, (207) 395-4327.



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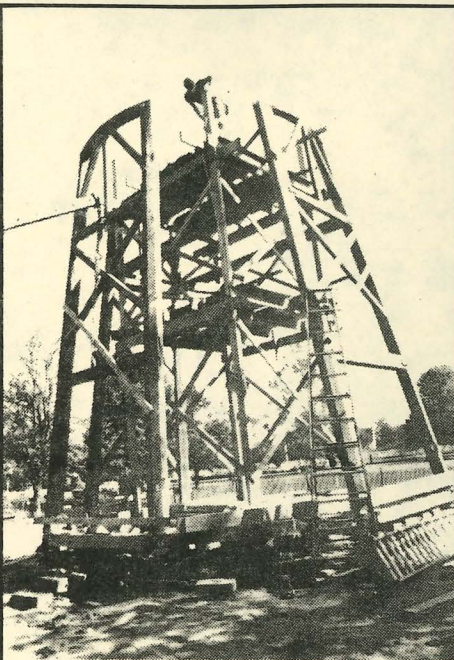
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BARN REPORT

Barn Again, an organization devoted to the restoration of old barns, has produced a guide for barn owners which encourages saving old barns. Special attention is given to the continued functioning of the barn or finding new uses. They have also done a video on barn restoration which aired on PBS recently. The guide is available for \$2 and video for \$24. Write: Barn Again, P.O. Box 8311, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501, (800) 228-4630.



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**Living History Seeds
Tomatoes, Corn, Peas**
See article on pages 8 & 9
or call 914-338-0257

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RURAL NETWORK: SINGLE PEOPLE favoring country life offer social support to each other. Send \$1. for sample newsletter. Rural Network, 6235 Borden Road-LH, Boscobel, WI 53805.

THE DUTCH BARN SOCIETY: Help preserve an architectural tradition. Write Dutch Barn Society, Box 176, Rensselaer, NY 12144.

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LEFT: Tice/Van Riper barn, Upper Saddle River, NJ. RIGHT: Hodge/Weinberg barn, Somerset City, NJ. THE NEXT ISSUE OF LIVING HISTORY will examine the problems of preserving, restoring and interpreting historic timber frame barns and houses. We will search for a wide range of opinion among museum staff, timber frame carpenters and farmers. There have been many interesting discoveries made in the last few years concerning the regional traditions and developments of NEW WORLD TIMBER FRAMING.