No. 31. THE EARLY AGRICULTURE OF KALAMAZOO COUNTY

(1828-1840), with an account of agricultural societies through 1849.

By

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January 1950
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FOREWORD

The author wishes to express his thanks and appreciation for the cooperation received from the staffs of the Minnie Mandelle Library of Kalamazoo College, the Western Michigan College Library, and the Kalamazoo Public Library; also, to Dr. Ivor D. Spencer for his many fine suggestions and assistance through the months of preparation; to Allen B. Harbach for his work on the map; and to Ruth McCravy for typing the final draft.

James L. Vincent

February 2, 1950
Kalamazoo, Michigan.
EARLY AGRICULTURE IN KALAMAZOO COUNTY

CHAPTER I

THE LAY OF THE LAND

A. Topography

The settlers of Kalamazoo County colonized one of the most fertile areas for all-around farming that was to be found in this state. The land was well drained by the watersheds of the Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Rivers, with the Kalamazoo River taking care of 5/8 of the drainage and the St. Joseph River taking care of 3/8. The land was described as consisting of timbered lands, oak-openings, prairies, river bluffs and marshes.

As for the timber, there was a large variety, consisting mostly of oak and hickory, with smaller amounts of elm, beech, maple, basswood, black walnut, butternut, black cherry, ash, tulip, sycamore, sour gum, birch and larch, and with a very thin scattering of cedar and pine. Many times the oaks would be found covered by the wild rose and/or numerous climbing vines.

The oak-openings were preferred by many settlers, not only because the presence of trees nearby seemed to be proof of the fertility of the soil, but because of the beauty of these groves in winter as well as summer.

1 Durant, Samuel, History of Kalamazoo County, Everts and Abbott, Philadelphia, 1880, p. 57.
2 Ibid, p. 51.
3 Log. Cit.
4 Kalamazoo Gazette, Kalamazoo, Michigan, March 12, 1905.
Based on the Soil Map of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Soils; Michigan Agricultural Experimental Station.

Kalamazoo County

Growth Line- 170 Days

**Prairies**

- **A. Climax**
- **B. Dry**
- **C. Genesee**
- **D. Gourdneck**
- **E. Grand**
- **F. Gull**
- **G. Prairie Ronde**
- **H. Toland**

1. Settled by Bazil Harrison, 1828.
2. Settled by Enoch Harris, 1829.
4. Location of Captain Howland's grist mill, 1830.
5. Location of the farm of H. Moore where he tested his "Harvester", 1837-38.
6. Location of the Alphadelphian farm.
It was these same oak-groves that separated some of the prairies while hills served as barriers between others. There were eight prairies, which were slightly rolling that promoted the colonization of this area. Of these, Prairie Ronde was the largest with 13,000 acres. The others ranged as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prairie</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gull Prairie</td>
<td>2,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gourd-Neck Prairie</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climax Prairie</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Prairie</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galesburg (Toland) Prairie</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesee Prairie</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Prairie</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This made a total of 21,100 acres that was ready to be tilled without the settler making a strenuous effort to clear the land of trees, stumps, and an excess of large stones.

The highest plateau in the county is in the area surrounding Oshtemo, which is 200 feet above the river level in Kalamazoo and 350 feet above Lake Michigan. The soil was a sandy loam in most level areas, with a tendency towards a clay loam in the uplands and the bottom lands were alluvial or muck.

The Prairie Ronde and Galesburg (Toland) Prairie were noted for their rich, black loam that had a vegetable mold, a foot in depth.

B. Fauna

The settlers found a variety of wild birds that could be used on
the dinner table. The most popular were the quail and wild goose. Prairie chickens were also found in good quantity. Another bird that was found in this area but not used nearly as much at mealtime was the sandhill crane.\(^{10}\)

Wild animals were a source of danger as well as a source of meat. The most troublesome in this county were bears and wolves. Not so dangerous were the black and grey squirrels,\(^{11}\) but they would make a tasty meal for a family that had a hunter who was marksman enough to down a few of these evasive animals.

Many settlers were bothered by rattlesnakes because these reptiles would attack cattle as well as men. Blue racers were plentiful but not dangerous.\(^{12}\) Mosquitoes were as bothersome as any disease to the settlers of this region.\(^{13}\)

\(^{10}\) Ibid, March 12, 1905
\(^{11}\) Loc. Cit.
\(^{12}\) Ibid
\(^{13}\) Durant, Op. Cit., p. 93.
CHAPTER II
A. The Home (Cabin)

Those who established their homes in this area in the early days built their cabins of logs from the abundant trees. "The inside walls were the round sides of the logs that were hewn smooth and "chinked," nearly even, with plaster." The cabin usually had two windows, each having twelve 7" x 9" panes of glass. In the corner, there would be a cupboard which contained the crockery and table utensils. The furniture of the typical pioneer cabin consisted of a table, which was used in preparing meals, eating meals, as a work table, and as a writing table; an armchair, usually used by the man of the family; a few straight-back chairs or no-back stools for the rest of the family; and often as not, a small bookcase could be found "hung against the wall." There would be a single or double deck bunk on the main floor, with additional places in the loft for the children or visitors, who would have to share the space in the loft with various non-perishable commodities that were stored there. A good sized fireplace served as a cook-stove and as a furnace. There was a swinging arm on the side of the fireplace on which the kettle was placed and swung over flames to cook the meal.

Animal shelters were also constructed of logs. Sometimes the interiors were divided to separate the stock.

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
B. Agricultural Practices

The early settlers depended on the woods and groves as pasturage for the stock. The readily accessible wild grass proved to be the best pasturage for the cows, for those that fed upon it, produced a rich milk from which a creamy butter was made. The settlers did not like the cattle eating acorns because it would cause the cattle to fail in producing milk and put on fat. The farmers would put a cow bell on the lead cow for the purpose of being able to find the cattle in the dark, early mornings. Generally, the bells of the neighbors' cows were of a slightly different note to distinguish each herd, also most farmers had among their stock hogs, horses, and oxen.

It was the rule rather than the exception for the early arrivals to make harnesses and clothing from tanned hides of cattle and deer. Those that had sheep were able to make woolen garments.

The winter time would be utilized in making replacement parts of wood in order to have the tools ready for spring. Soap and tallow for candles was also made by the resourceful pioneers.

The favorite job in February and March, following the first thaws, was the collection of maple sap and the making of maple syrup and maple sugar.

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5 Loc. Cit.
6 Loc. Cit.
7 Joseph Schafer, The Social History of American Agriculture, p. 49, Macmillan Co., New York, 1938. (The information garnered from Schafer and Sanford was based on the frontier in general, but the author has applied this specifically to Kalamazoo County.)
8 Ibid., p. 50.
10 Loc. Cit.
In the spring of 1837, the desire for orchards was strong among the rural residents of the county and quite a number of fruit trees were planted. The most popular types planted were apple, peach, and plum. A sizeable amount of apricot, pear, and cherry trees were also planted, along with a few grape arbors. The Gazette printed some advice suggesting that the above could be set out as soon as the frost was out of the ground.

The vegetable garden supplied the table in good fashion during the summer. Broccoli, peas, beans, cucumbers, squash, carrots, beets, onions, rutabagas and melons were planted in the spring. Cabbage and lettuce were started in a hot-bed in early March and then transplanted after the ground had been thoroughly thawed. Cauliflower had to be sowed in the fall, placed in a hot-bed during the winter months, and then transplanted at the same time as cabbage and lettuce. White celery was grown to a small extent at this time.

Salt pork and smoked hams were to be found at practically every farm, along with home-made cider.

An enjoyable and exciting time was had by many settlers when they went in search of honey during the summer. They would walk through the woods, seeking hollow trees where bees were quite active. The hunters would smoke the bees out and drive them away and then collect the honey.

11 Kalamazoo Gazette, Kalamazoo, Michigan, May 6, 1837.
12 Ibid., March 19, 1837.
13 Ibid.
15 Sanford, Op. Cit., p. 121
Wheat was the big crop and the cash or bartering crop of this region in early times and preparing the ground for the first crop was one of the biggest jobs confronting the settler. From five to eight pair of oxen were used to break the land. It was preferable to use a team of horses as the lead pair, for they were better guides than oxen. However, if it was necessary, the most active team of oxen were used as the lead team. The heaviest team was placed on the beam of plow because their strength was needed to guide the plow past trees, stumps and large stones. The overall length, if eight teams were used, was ninety-six feet (twelve feet per team). The plow in general use was a wood No. 20, which would cut a furrow of approximately twenty inches wide and six inches deep. After one day's use it was necessary to take the plowshare to the nearest blacksmith for sharpening. Sometimes the plow would run into covered stones or extended tree roots and the plowshare would have to be taken to the blacksmith two or three times in one day. If the plowman was able to complete two acres in one day, it was considered a good day's work. The breaking was usually done by a hired laborer who would furnish all the required equipment. He was paid from $4.00 to $7.00 per acre, depending upon the condition of the land.\[13\]

The plowing was usually completed before the end of June. Nothing more was done to the land until the end of August, when the harrowing begin. This work consisted of preparing the land for sowing (including the removing of roots, grubs, and burning off the stumps). A triangular harrow was the implement usually used in making the final

\[16\] Kalamazoo Gazette, Co. Cit., March 12, 1905.
preparations before sowing the seed. Between the first and fifteenth of September was considered the best time to plant the wheat. It took about five pecks of seed to plant an acre. The farmer would carry the seed in a sack slung over his shoulder. He would take a handful of seed and toss it. He covered about 20 acres on a good day. The most bothersome thing at sowing time were the pigeons, which would come and eat the seed before it had a chance to work into the ground.

Other important cash crops grown in this region were corn, oats, barley, and buckwheat.

The harvesting of wheat was done in two different manners in the county. In 1837, the Moore-Hascall "Harvester" was tested; it started a trend toward machine farming. But at this time, practically all the harvesting was done by a crew of men with two-handed sickles.

After harvesting, a part of the wheat would be taken to the grist mill to be ground into flour. A typical grist mill was that of Captain Howland, who built his mill in 1830 at Howlandsburg, a small community north and east of Galesburg. The building was a two-story frame affair built on the banks of the Gull Lake Outlet. He went to Detroit to obtain the machinery and hauled it back by horse and wagon. He used the then familiar stone grinders with an overshot waterwheel as the power supply.

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20 See below, p. 18.
21 Loc. Cit.
Another grist mill was run by Tom Cooley, east of Dry Prairie, while in Kalamazoo, Mr. Walbridge, ran a mill which was later known as the Cold Stream Mills when owned by Mr. Merrill. 22 Flour and other produce was run down the river by flatboat to St. Joseph. From there it would be sent by ship to Chicago or around the peninsula to Detroit.

C. Early Beginnings

It had been generally recognised that Judge Bazil Harrison 23 was the first settler in the county when he settled on the banks of Harrison Lake in Prairie Ronde in November of 1828. But it remained for Enoch Harris, a free negro, to be the man who gave agriculture its beginning. Harris settled in Oshtemo in 1829 and raised his first crop in 1830. 24 But Durant 25 disputes this fact by stating that Mr. George Drake was the first and Mr. Drake told him that he, Mr. Drake had helped Enoch Harris put up his cabin a few weeks after he had completed his own.

By the land law of 1820, a settler could purchase 80 acres or more for $1.25 per acre in cash. This aided the new-comers by enabling them to start life anew with less cash than had been necessary heretofore. 26

By 1830, there were three colonies in the county. There were two

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23 Judge Harrison was a cousin of President William Henry Harrison, 9th President of the United States.
in southern Prairie Ronde and one on Gull Prairie, started by Col. Isaac Barnes in May. The Galesburg Prairie was settled in the fall of 1829 by William Toland, hence the use of two names for the same area.\(^27\) Between 1830 and 1831, the Genesee Prairie was settled.

D. Social Gatherings

One of the most popular amusements of the time was the quilting frolic. The girls would come in the afternoon, working on their quilts and blankets. In the evening the boys came, the quilts were put away and the party would be under way. They usually started by playing the game "Snap and Catch 'em." Other games would soon follow, but all the games gave the young people a chance to express or declare themselves to one another. Young and old alike participated in the parties, but sometimes, the liberal-minded folks had to wait for their elders and the more conservative-minded folks to go home, as some like music and did not like "dancing," while others regarded the violin with horror. Ox-teams usually took the merry-makers to the party.

Settlers would offer to have prayer-meetings in their homes. Many of the same people, who had played "Snap and Catch 'em" one night and had danced and frolicked, would come to the prayer-meetings the next night to sing hymns. House raising and logging-bees were other reasons for get-togethers. But the oddest social affair was the

\(^{28}\) Durant, \textit{Op. Cit.}, p. 90, (Letters of A. D. P. Van Buren, Esq."")
husking-bee. It was not done in the manner in which we are used to hearing about it today. Only the men and boys took part in the husking bees and they were the only ones present. The usual procedure was for them to divide into two groups and each group take a pile of corn. The result more often than not, was a close and spirited contest. The contestants would pass away the time by singing and telling stories.
CHAPTER III
A. 1837

The outlook was bright for a good crop of wheat in June, 1837. The papers were optimistic about both grains and grass. Reports came in from all over the state with the same story—good prospects.

"Our farmers have been unusually industrious in putting in their seed—and we congratulate them on their prospects of being richly rewarded for their labors."2

A report a week later3 added corn and fruits to the list of good crop prospects.

"Dame nature has bountifully supplied us with strawberries; of these we shall have a plenty. Our openings and prairies are literally covered with them of as large a kind and as rich a flavor as any to be found in the east."4

Commodity prices were quite high towards the end of July, as reported in the Gazette.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>$4.00 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>$2.00 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>$1.00 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>$20.00 per bbl.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These were the earliest years to which the author could find any specific reference.
2 Loc. Cit.
3 Ibid., June 24, 1837.
4 Loc. Cit.
5 Ibid., July 29, 1837.
The censor of Prairie Ronde reported in October the following yield:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Yield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>16,502 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>15,340 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye</td>
<td>170 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>37,915 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckwheat</td>
<td>1,195 bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Neat stock</td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Horses</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Sheep</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Hogs</td>
<td>1,113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prices on the commodity market at the same time were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>$8.00 per bbl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>$6.50 - $8.00 per bbl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>$.75 - $1.00 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>$.82 - $.88 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>$.31 - $.37 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>$.32 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>$.30 - $.31 per lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>$.16 per lb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Obviously, the grave national business depression which had started, had made a great difference to prices.

The year closed with the county having a population of 6,487.

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6 Ibid., Oct. 28, 1837.
7 Ibid., Dec. 30, 1837.
In the year 1838, sugar beets came into the news, when George H. O'Brien, reported that he had processed some molasses from the beets, with a yield of 8%.  

A boon to the distribution of knowledge concerning all phases of agriculture arrived when The Michigan Farmer announced its plan for operation. Subscriptions were accepted on the basis of $3.00 paid in advance. Henceforth, new methods and ideas would be able to be put into practice quite rapidly, depending upon the concentration of subscribers in an area.

The growing of tomatoes was encouraged by the Gazette when it printed.

"Few vegetables are so little known through this country. None are more readily raised - none better repay the cultivator."

As an additional incentive, the Gazette reprinted an article from the Southern Agriculturist in which various ways were suggested for using the tomato. The five ways mentioned were:

1. Eat them raw
2. Stew them for a sauce.
3. Fry them.
4. Make them into pickles.
5. Make catsup from them.

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9 Ibid., Feb. 3, 1838.
10 Ibid., March 31, 1838.
11 Ibid., May 5, 1838.
12 Loc. Cit.
The same issue of the *Gazette* also carried the articles "Culture of Rhubarb," "Ruta-baga Culture," and a third article gave instructions for making Summer Beer from either sugar, spruce or pea shells.

By June, the commodity market presented a different picture than it had the previous fall. Dairy products were down, but grains, flour, and salt were up. The complete list was as follows:\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>$8.00 - $9.00 per bbl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flour</td>
<td>8.00 - 9.00 per bbl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat</td>
<td>1.00 - 1.25 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>.75 - 1.00 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>.50 - .53 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>.62(\frac{1}{2}) per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>.50 per bu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>.25 - .31 per lb.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese</td>
<td>.14 per lb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because of the failure of crops in the Middle Atlantic States that summer, the so-called "bread basket" of the seaboard, many advertisements were placed in the local paper for wheat. This aided the farmers in overcoming the effects of the Panic of 1837 and provided them with much needed ready cash.\textsuperscript{15}

C. 1839

A typical advertisement was printed in the *Gazette* late in

\textsuperscript{13} *Ibid.*
\textsuperscript{14} *Ibid.*, June 9, 1838.
\textsuperscript{15} *Ibid.*, Oct. 27, 1838.
January. It read:

"NOTICE--The subscriber has now on hand and offers for sale a number of new milch cows, that have calved during this month. The cows have been fed on English hay and are in first rate condition; also, a number to have calves during the spring months.

Daniel R. Eldred

Climax, June 16, 1839."

In 1839 wheat was still scarce in some parts of the country. Britain, Hanger and Company of St. Joseph advertised for 50,000 bu. of wheat.17

The Detroit Free Press estimated in June that 70,000 barrels of flour worth $500,000 had been shipped down the St. Joseph, Kalamazoo and Grand Rivers since the previous harvest. The Gazette followed with an estimate of 50,000 barrels for the county alone.

Notice was given in the Gazette that a special meeting of the "Big Marsh Draining Association" would be held on July 23rd at 7:00 p.m. at the Kalamazoo House.

During early August a few editors and writers of the Detroit Free Press took a trip through the western counties of the state. They reported that there were many fields of wheat that would run over 25 bushels to the acre.21
In this year, Phineas Cook advertised that he had a new type of wheat, called China Tea Wheat, in limited amounts for sale.22

Starting with the January 4, 1840 issue, the Gazette carried articles, for the farmer, that were taken from the Genesee Farmer and Yankee Farmer, in addition to some hints and suggestions of their own.23

The wheat fly invaded this part of the country and damaged a considerable part of the crop. Some farmers ploughed up their fields. The Gazette estimated about two-thirds of the crop would be lost.24

By December, the population of the county had risen to 7,138.25

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22 Ibid., January 4, 1840.
23 Loc. Cit.
24 Ibid., June 13, 1840.
25 Ibid., December 4, 1840, reprinted from Detroit Free Press.
CHAPTER IV
The Moore-Hascall "Machine"

Hiram Moore, inventor and builder of the first "harvester" ma-
chine, was born in Massachusetts on July 19, 1801. He came to Kala-
mazoo County in 1830 and stayed in Comstock until joined by his bro-
thers, Lovell and John, in 1831. Hiram had made selections of land
on Climax Prairie, Toland's Prairie; and in Comstock in 1830. With
Lovell, he constructed a saw mill in Comstock in 1831. Following this,
he began improvement of his farm on Climax Prairie. In 1834, Hiram
was united in marriage with Mrs. Harriet W. Fogg.

His early work on the "harvester" was done while "he lived at the
greek, Schoolcraft." The perfection of the machine was accomplished
in his farm in Climax Prairie. His assistants in the construction
were A. J. Van Buren, Luther Olds, and Isaac Smith.

The first report of the use of the machine comes in August, 1837.
The article said that the Moore-Hascall machine "can reap, thresh, and
clean 25 acres of wheat per day with perfect ease."

Mr. John Hascall (Haskell, Haskell) came to Kalamazoo county in
1830, and began to practice law, and to do some farming. As law
practice was not too promising at this time, he put in some wheat.
But as there were no men to hire, he was unable to harvest the crop.
Hascall related a dream of his wife's to Moore, concerning a machine

3 Kalamazoo Gazette, Op. Cit., August 24, 1837. Reprinted from the
4 Poughkeepsie Telegraph.
5 Some references spell the name as in the parenthesis.
that was horse-drawn, and would harvest, clean and bag the wheat.7

Moore did nothing about the idea for about 6 months, but the idea and the possibility of such a machine intrigued him. He made a model of the proposed machine and took it to Washington, D. C., to the patent office, in 1834. The patent was issued, but the official grant did not come until 1836.

In July of 1835, Moore had a temporary machine ready for cutting purposes only. It had cut almost two rods when something broke.

With Abner and A. Y. Moore (no relation) as assistants, a machine was constructed for use in the harvest of 1836. A. Y. Moore consented to the use of 3 acres of wheat in testing the machine. The wheat was allowed to stand beyond the regular harvesting time. The machine was tried this time with the thresher attachment. It cut and threshed the three acres in good fashion, with 6 teams of horses used as motivation. For the time involved and the work accomplished the cost per acre was only 82 cents, while the cost, if done in the regular way by hand, was $3.12½ per acre.

During the winter of 1836-37, Hiram Moore went to Rochester, New York and employed Mr. W. A. Langworthy to assist him in the construction of the "harvester." In some way, the machine was brought back to Michigan in time for the harvest.8

In 1837, the cleaning attachment was added. Hiram Moore was still not satisfied with the machine's operation, after observing

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8 Testimony of William A. Langworthy in the trial of McCormick vs. Talcotts et al., U. S. Supreme Court, 1854 - 1858.
its performance of handling 20 acres. 9

John Hascull financially aided Moore during the early development of the "harvester." Lucius Lyons stepped in with some money and took over Hascull's interest when he wanted to drop out.

The first public showing of the machine was on July 12, 1838. Moore had many of his friends come as personal guests and many farmers from miles around came to the field about ½ mile north of Climax. 10 Many were unable to believe what they saw, but when they left, Moore was the subject of the respect of all. With 10 teams of horses providing the power, the gathering saw the "harvester" cut, thresh, clean and bag 1,100 bushels of wheat from 30 acres from sun-up to sun-down. The yield was placed in an old log granary. It had required two wagons in constant use to remove the grain as it was bagged. 11

A description of its operation is given in the last few pages of James Fenimore Cooper's, The Oak Openings. 12

"This machine is drawn by 16 or 18 horses, attached to it laterally so as to work clear of the standing grain, and who move the whole fabric on a moderate but steady walk. A path is first cut with a cradle on one side of the field, when the machine is dragged into the open place. Here it enters the standing grain, cutting off its heads with the utmost accuracy as it moves. Forks beneath prepare the

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10 Memorial boulder at the field ½ mile north of Climax.
way and a rapid vibratory motion of a great number of
two-edged knives, effect the object...

"The impelling power which causes the great fabric to
advance, also sets in motion the machinery within it.
As soon as the heads of the grain are severed from the
stalks, they pass into a receptacle where... the kernals
are separated from the husks. Thence all goes into a fann-
ing machine, where the chaff is blown away. The clean
grain falls into a small bin, whence it is raised by a
screw elevator to a height that enables it to pass out
at an opening to which the bag is attached..."

The machine required 4 operators, one to handle the horses, one
to regulate the height of the sickle (cutter), one to tie the bags,
and one to carry the bags to the wagon. The machine was pulled by
the horses at a speed of 2 3/4 m.p.h. and it cut a swath of 10 feet.

In Court in 1855, Moore thought that one or more of his ma-
chines had been used every season since 1835. A total of 5 machines
were built through the years and used on Prairie Ronde and Climax
Prairie. One machine was transported to California by ship around
Cape Horn in 1853.

The machine cost approximately $500.00 plus the need of 10 or
18 horses for motivation which was entirely out of reach for the av-
erage farmer of that period. A second fact which tended to limit

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13 Genesee Farmer, "Letter from the Editor" (who was in Kalamazoo).
    Moore to H. Hurlburt, Editor of Michigan Farmer.
15 United States Supreme Court Documents, Seymour and Morgan vs.
    McCormick, U. S. Supreme Court, 1855, New York.
its use in Michigan was that it was impractical in the damp climate of Michigan and from the standpoint of the limited number of extensive fields. Added to this was the fact that the reaper was coming into general use. It sold at a more reasonable price than the "Harvester" and it could be drawn by one team of horses. 17

The story of Hiram Moore and his "Harvester" in Michigan is a story of success and failure. Success in that he was able to construct a workable machine that was essentially a combine. Failure that he was not able to construct a machine that would financially compete with the reaper and in that his machine did not prove to be readily adaptable to this area, plus the fact that he failed in several patent suits in later years.

CHAPTER V

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

A. The Alphadelphians

The Alphadelphian Association was organized at Clark's Lake in Jackson County on December 14, 1843. Fifty-six men were responsible for the organization. They believed in a Utopian, i.e., primitively communist idea of the common holding of property.

A second meeting was held at Bellevue on January 3, 1844, to determine the location of the "common farm." Officers were elected also, and the results were:

President - Dr. H. R. Schetterly of Ann Arbor
Vice President - A. Darrow of Bellevue
Secretary - E. S. Camp of Marshall
Treasurer - John Curtis of Jackson

The group finally decided to settle in the southeast quarter of Comstock township. The group agreed to promote interest in their project among new settlers and the farm was to be open to those of all vocations.

Many persons in and around the "chosen land" became interested in the plan and joined the society. Some of the more prominent men were: Lyman Tubbs, Amos Wilson, Harvey Keith, and James Noyes.

Those persons who heard of the project in other regions and came to join the society were forced to stay in the homes of some of the

1 Kalamazoo Gazette, Oct. 18, 1925.
2 My own choice of words.
local settlers until the "Tabernacle" was completed in the fall of 1844. The construction was done by all able-bodied men. When completed, the building stood two stories high and was 20 x 200 feet.

Dr. Schetterly, with the aid of Reverend Richard Thornton, printed and edited the society paper, "Alphadelphian Toosin."

Each member was supposed to practice his own skill or vocation to the best of his ability. The society began to limit membership after the first year, and as a result, the group was able to control the rates of one vocation to another.

By May 1845, there were 188 males and females living within the domain. The approximate membership at that time was 300.

In March 1846, the real estate value of the society's holdings was $43,879.

A feeling soon arose among some of the members that a few were not doing their share of the work that was necessary for the success of the venture. The feeling grew until most of the members were quarreling with each other. On April 30, 1848, a little more than four years after its beginning, the movement collapsed. The property was sold to the county. The organization had 6 presidents during its short life. They were: Dr. Schetterly, Anson Delamatter, Benjamin Wright, Harvey Keith, Lyman Tubbs and James Noyes.

A few, such as Dr. Schetterly, who had faith in the principles of common holdings, moved on to other areas where such ideas were prevalent. One was at LaGrange, Indiana, called the Phalanx, and others were located in Wisconsin. Such was Kalamazoo County's share
of the national craze for Fourierism in the 1840's.

B. Short-timers

The first short-lived agrarian society was an Agricultural Society. The first meeting was held on May 27, 1837, following a notice in the Gazette requesting all those interested in forming such a society to meet at the District Schoolhouse in Kalamazoo.

The group elected Roswell Ransom, chairman and George O'Brien, secretary of the meeting. A committee was appointed to draw up a constitution and to report at the next meeting, tentatively set for July 11, 1837.

However, the meeting was held July 10 at the Kalamazoo House. The title of the society was now written as, The Kalamazoo County Agriculturist and Horticulturist Society. Officers were elected as follows:

President - E. H. Lathrop
1st Vice-President - Mitchell Hinsdell
2nd Vice-President - Roswell Ransom
3rd Vice-President - F. W. Curtenius
4th Vice-President - J. W. Willard

Corresponding and Recording Secretary - George O'Brien
Treasurer - A. G. Hammond
Trustee - H. H. Comstock
Trustee - G. Torrey

3 Ibid., April 29, 1837.
4 Ibid., July 15, 1837.
True·tee

Trustee - E. B. Anderson
Trustee - L. H. Trask
Trustee - J. H. Smith
Trustee - Caleb Eldred

The next reported meeting was on September 16, but consisted only of the trustees. H. H. Comstock was appointed chairman of a committee to draw up a set of by-laws. L. H. Trask and Eli B. Anderson were his assistants. A resolution was passed requesting all trustees to be present at the next meeting, scheduled for September 30.

The next reference to the society reported that E. H. Lathrop attended the Michigan Agriculturist and Horticulturist convention on January 10, 1838.

The Kalamazoo Jockey Club also was formed in 1837. Its goal was to "improve and train horses." General Burdick was president, and Charles E. Stuart was secretary.7

G. The Kalamazoo County Agricultural Society

This society, as a county and strictly agricultural group, was the first of its kind in the state. It was first organized in Schoolcraft on January 10, 1845, with E. H. Lathrop as chairman, and William H. Edgar as acting secretary. Its aims and objectives were embodied in a preamble, which read:8

"We, the undersigned, citizens of the county of Kalamazoo, to

5 Ibid., Sept. 23, 1837.
6 Ibid., Jan. 20, 1838.
8 Loc. Cit.
promote the more general dissemination of the true principles and
science of agriculture throughout the county; to encourage the in-
troduction of superior stock and improved modes of culture, and, by
a generous rivalry, to foster and advance that interest which is
paramount to all others in our county, -- The Farming Interest --
do hereby, by our mutual agreement, form and constitute an agricul-
ture society, and adopt a Constitution," etc.

Officers were elected and installed the same evening.

President Andrew Y. Moore
Treasurer Samuel P. Cobb
Secretary William H. Edgar
Corresponding Secretary Edmund Rice

This group sponsored the first county fair, on October 7 and 8, 1846. The displays were set up in the county court house and on the
commons surrounding the court house. Public minded individuals backed
the affair liberally and the fair officials were just as liberal with
premiums. The top award was $10.00 for cattle, with other awards
ranging from $2.00 to $5.00 for horses, sheep and pigs. Lesser amounts
were awarded for various home products.

The fruit exhibit was practically monopolized by apples and quinces.
Some good samples of wheat were on display along with many fancy pieces
of needlework. Benjamin Cooley exhibited his paintings.

An exciting plowing match resulted in a win for Jesse Karl. Sam-
uel Balch placed second and George Rix took third honors.10

10 Ibid., November 5, 1929.
The committee responsible for the general arrangements and the over-all success of the fair was composed of Epaphroditus Ransom, William C. Gibbs, F. W. Curtenius, Alfred Thomas, Samuel Balch, D. S. Walbridge and George Rice.

The excitement came to a climax at a dinner held in the Kalama-zoo House. Tickets for the banquet sold for 25 cents. N. A. Balch was the principal speaker and delivered an appropriate and well-phrased speech.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., November 5, 1929.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., May 23, 1926.
SUMMARY

From 1828 to 1840, agriculture made great strides due to two factors, the increase in population and ingenuity of the settlers. The many prairies were ideal for the growing of grains. Specie payment and the Panic of 1837 did not dampen the enthusiasm of the farmers for growing wheat, but naturally their income was somewhat decreased. Hiram Moore, more than any other man in the county, helped to make this area known throughout the country as an agricultural center of the New West by the construction of his "machine." Truly by 1840, Kalamazoo County was the agricultural leader in western Michigan.
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