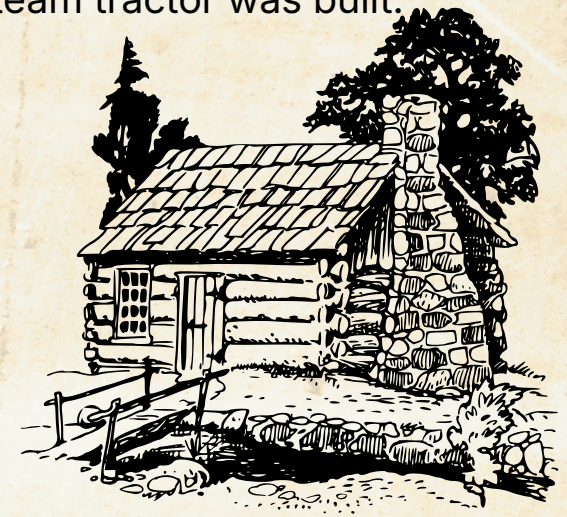
Agriculture Back in Time

Agriculture would rely on handheld and horse-powered tools for farming, resulting in less bulk crops and many individual family farms. These families would work and produce crops based on seasons, as Ontario's harsh winter often provided challenges. With ideal flat lands and rich soil, Essex County and the surrounding area became known as a farming community.

Evolution of Agricultural Equipment in the 1800s in Canada

By the mid 1800s, cast iron had become popular in pioneer homes. This allowed farm equipment to be made sturdier, and a two-handled cast-iron walking plow made it possible to break up tough soil efficiently. Mechanical reapers and horse-drawn mowers were soon introduced, drastically reducing the labor required to harvest small grain. It wasn't until 1881 that the first Canadian steam tractor was built.



Crops and Livestock

Farms grew wheat, barley, corn, oats, and beans because they could be harvested and sold to make a living, or easily used in meals. Summer weather would allow vegetables and crops to grow such as cabbage, carrots, peas, and onions. These would be harvested and kept preserved by canning, cellar storage, and drying in order to make them last through the winter.

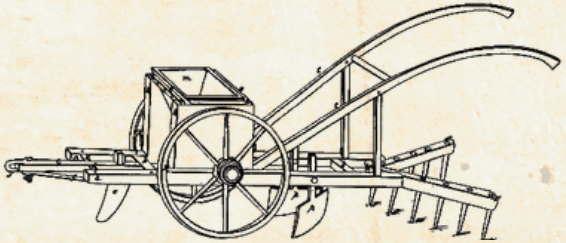


Most families with land would have animals such as sheep for wool. They would also have oxen or horses to move equipment, farm the land, and for transportation. This would help with building and farming practices. Cows were used for both meat and dairy. These animals would be kept in simple shelters and be fed grain or grass.

Farm Tools and Methods

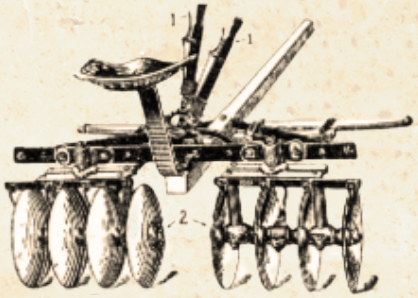
Seeder

A hopper, sometimes carried, strapped to a person, pushed by wheelbarrow, or drawn by horse to drop seeds evenly and uniformly. Various versions have been widely used since the 1800s.



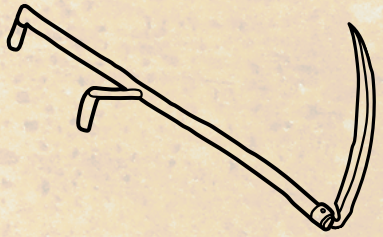
Harrow

Used to till and smooth soil that was disturbed by tractors or horses when plowing.



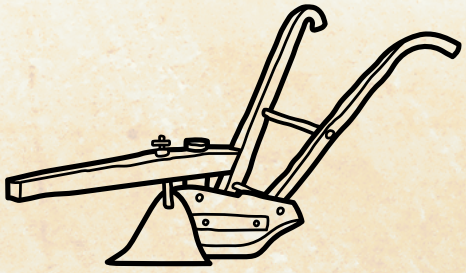
Scythe

Used for cutting grass, clearing areas of brush, and harvesting crops. They have been used by various groups of people as early as 7000 BCE.



Plow

Used to loosen and prepare soil before planting by digging down 12cm-25cm and turning the soil over. They were used both by hand, and drawn by horses or oxen.



Sickle

Used to harvest grains such as wheat, barley, and other tall grasses by hand. The earliest evidence of use of a sickle is 18,000 BCE.

