

John Stelle's 1847 Diary: February

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills is pleased to share this second installment of John Stelle's diary.

During February, John Stelle is busy liming his fields; thrashing grain; slaughtering animals; and selling his farm products - always with an eye to the weather. His major and continuing complaint focuses on the muddy condition of the roads.

A frequent destination for Stelle is Feltville, which was located in the Glenside Park section of Berkeley Heights, and is now undergoing extensive archeological investigation. For more about Feltville's interesting history go to <http://www.chss.montclair.edu/archaeology/5yp2.htm>. Stelle also makes numerous trips to Peapack where he gets lime for his fields. The limekilns still exist and are located just north of Limestone Cafe on the east side of the road.

Stelle's son Jacob was married to Jane Compton, which explains why he was always coming from or going to Compton's. This month Jacob went to an unidentified fulling mill, which is where woolen cloth is shrunk and thickened by moistening, heating and passing the cloth through rollers.

In Oliver Stelle's will, written in 1829, John Stelle and his brothers Clarkson and Ephraim were each bequeathed a black servant, possibly the "boys" referred to in the diary entries. (In 1804, New Jersey passed the Gradual Abolition of Slavery Act, so in 1847 these servants would not have been slaves.)

The original spelling and punctuation (or lack thereof) have been retained. Clarifications and illegible words are marked in [brackets].

- THSSH

Monday, February 1.

Rose at 4 Oc to go for lime and wind East and Snow went Back to Bed it Snod only alittle we went to Shelling Corn Jacob Freeman and Jeremiah, Jake and I went to the Old field and got the last Stack of Oats had 2 load Daniel Ayers and Billy Randolph help came home and unloded Cloud up at Dark

Tuesday, 2.

Rose a 4 Oc for to go for lime Started at 6 Cloudy and foggy looks like Rain wind South and quite pleasant - got home at 2 Oc then went and thrash Oats thrashed 300 Sheave then Halsey Woods Came in to By Corn he oferd \$5 [. . .] Bush no Sale Jacob Cleaned up wheat 18 bush Freeman went and got Rails -

Wednesday, 3.

I Rose at five for go for lime it began to Rain at half past five and Raind hard all Day until 4 Oc and the wind Blew hard all Day we Cleand Corn and Cleand up 30 bush of Oats the frost has Comout very mutch quite muddy not mutch don

Thursday, February 4,

we had a cold Night last night the wind shifted about 9 Oc last night and is very Cold frose up Solid it has been Squaly all the forenoon we thrash 40 bush of Oats and Clean up, kild to Sheep and 1 Shote, Jacob went to Ephraim they went to Peter Cooper funerl David Lacy Came been [. . .]

Friday, 5

Clear and Cold frose hard I went to felt vill with Oats and to the plains and sold 1 load of Corn Jacob went Charley Smaleys the water is quite high bad Crosing

Saturday, 6.

Clear and fine weather i went to the plains with Corn Freeman went and got Peet Shod Jacob Came from Charley Smaley I went to Plainfield and Came home at Dark Cloudy and Snod at 8 Oc fel 2 inches Deap Cleard up in the night.

Monday, February 8, 1847.

Clear and fine this morning, had Som Snow last night 2 inches Deap warm Snow run most gon, Sold A. P[. . .] a Cow Bot John Colter heifer, had Clark Squire and an evening Visit.

Tuesday, 9.

Rather Cloudy this morning wind South and warm mud quite Deap Freeman and Jacob went for lime Jake and I went to Drawing in wheat from over the Ditch, Carle Cross Came hear and wife, the mud is quite deap -

Wednesday, 10.

Cloudy and look like astorm Freeman and Jacob drawed in that Stack of wheat in from Over the Ditch I kild 2 sheep 1 hog then kild the wild Gease -

Thursday, February 11, 1847

Clear and fine weather went felt Vill with meat Freeman went with wheat - it began to grow Cold about 3 Oc and grows fast and will frees hard to Night the Road are very Bad and got home at Dark the Roads very Bad quite Cold.

Friday, 12.

Cold wind South and Cloudy and began to Snow from the South west and quite Squally all the foure noon, But more moderate in the afternoon we thrash the Big Stack from over the Ditch Jacob and Terrell helping its Clear and fine going to frees hard tonight.

Saturday, 13.

Clear and Cold wind South west froze hard last night. the Road Rough I went Peapack Jacob and mother went to Baskingridg and Jacob to the fuling mill Freeman Cleaned up wheat.

Monday, February 15, 1847.

Clear and fine weather the weather warm wind South, I went to Peapack for lime Roads hevvy Freeman got in the Clover Stack from the hill Jacob went Mr. Comptons afoot Clarkson Drawed up his Ry Stack for to thrash, I went to John Moors the Dutchman Came to work.

Tuesday, February 16

Cloudy wind east and very Cold froze hard last night we thrash Clarksons Ry and Clean it up, then Sheld Som Corn Drawed Som wood, Jacob Came from Mr. Compton, the weath thick and at Sundown it Began to hail [sleet] and Storm on till Bed time.

Wednesday, 17.

Cloudy wind wind west but looks like Rain and did Rain alittle it Cleared of at 10 Oc quite warm the Snow and ice all Run of, I went to Peapack for lime, Jacob got horse Shod and got the Curtain on the Cariage put on and he went to Cumptains [Compton's?].

Thursday, February 18, 1847.

Cloudy wind East froze hard last night but thawed quite mutch to Day wind got round South, Freeman went for lime Dutch and I sawed wood Elias B[. . .] and A. Codington was hear I brot home Clarkson Steare and gave him 28 Dollars -

Friday, 19

Cloudy wind east and Snod last night and Snod alittle all Day we thrashed Clover of the Straw Jacob Came from Mr. Compton and he helpt we finish the Stack that was Down by the mouth of the lain [lane].

Saturday, 20.

Cloudy wind west we went to thrashing Clover out of the [. . .] and Peter DeMott came hear// Sundy wind East and Snod and hailed all Day we Staid home all Day we had no meeting none went -

Monday, February 22, 1847.

Cloudy and Snoes like fun the Snow is now a bout 7 inche Peter Demott went from hear this morning I went to John Moors the Boys Cleaned Clover Seed and Sheld Corn we had about 5 bushels, Snod till Dark Jacob went to Baskingridg and got the money for his horse -

Tuesday, 23.

Clear and Cold wind North west and good Sleighing I went to Peapack for lime Freeman went and got a lod of post from the Mountains, and got the grist at Van Dorans mill Michael and Jake Drawed Clover Chaf out

Wednesday, 24.

Clear and Cold the thermometry stood 4 above zero I went and got a load of lime on the Sled Freeman went and got Rails Jacob went to plainfield in the Stage the boys cut wood we finish thrashing first stack of Clover

Thursday, February 25, 1847.

Cloudy wind East and Snod hard all the fore noon I puld Rope yarn and the Boys Sheld Corn in the Afternoon went up in Israel Vails woods and got 2 logs Cleard of quite Cold Jacob Came from Plainfield in the Stage.

Friday, 26.

Cloudy wind North west Sun rose Clear and went Rite in a cloud I went to Peapack for lime freeman went and got a load of Rails, then we got in one Oats Stack in the Barn for to thrash the Boys Cut wood Clouded up and look like storm

Saturday, 27.

Cloudy wind East and hail, hail till 8 Oc then Rain till 4 Oc Jacob went and got Caroline Runyon

Sunday Clear wind west water high went meeting on the Sled Jacob went to Comptons we went to Isaac Randolph and Jane Terril was married Cold and windy