

## John Stelle's Diary: June 1847

June finds John Stelle involved in several interesting farm improvement projects. He hires a man to dig a "blind ditch," evidently to drain some low land. He pays another man to build two beehives. Two more men are hired to construct and install a pump in the spring. At the end of the month, Stelle thatches his "barick" (barrack), which is a farm out building used to protect farm crops such as hay. The structure is a roof supported on four posts, and the roof can be moved up and down the posts in accordance with the size of the haystack (left). It was a commonplace structure on farms in New Jersey during the 18th and 19th centuries.



Stelle and his sons are occupied with plowing and harrowing this month. Harrowing follows plowing to break up the soil into finer lumps.

Stelle works on the nearby roads, some of which may have been on his farm, but, in an era before a township public works department, he would also have been expected help maintain the public



roads. Bridges were county projects, and a bridge tender – typically someone living nearby – would have been appointed for each bridge in the township.

On the 19th, Stelle and his wife travel to Brooklyn to visit his son Jephtha. They return home two days later, departing Brooklyn at 7 a.m. and arriving home at 5 p.m. The trip would have involved a ferry across the East River, a carriage across Manhattan, another ferry across the Hudson (North) River, and either a stage from Newark to Basking Ridge or train to Plainfield,

then a carriage ride to the farm. Stelle typically refrains from recording his feelings, but he does provide a hint at his close relationship to his son when he writes "we wave at Jephtha hard" as they were leaving. Below is an image of what Newark looked like in 1843.



- HSSH

**Tuesday, June 1.**

We had a hevy Rain last night and athunder Shower this morning and Raind very hard til 7 Oc the ground is quite wet the River is Bank full I went to Feltvill with 1 Calf and one Sheap the Roads quite muddy I got home at 3 Oc it looks like Showers thunders but no Rain everything groes more

**Wednesday, 2.**

Clear and fine morning had ashower last night fine little Rain its wet enouf now for anything we worke on the roads toDay all Back of our house and yoke the hogs after we was Don on the Roads. Clear Rather Cool

**Thursday, June 3, 1847.**

Clear and fine weather we went to planting over Corn and we planted all the four noon Corn first Rait in the after noon Freeman and Michael Drawed Stone for the Blind ditch from the Spring By the Swamp I planted over Corn Mathews Hughs is digging the ditch it looks like Rain

**Friday, 4.**

Cloudy and Rains very hard and Raind til 9 Oc and then Cleard of we had aheavy Shower last night and Raisd the River high we went up to Israel Vail wood got 2 load for Cox got Dinner went to the Corner to Willm Annin and to get apair of Boots maid

**Saturday, 5.**

Clear and fine but Cool I went and Drove a Cow to Ben Alward to pastur we dra[we]d Som Stone and laid the Blind Ditch Down By the Swamp mother and I went to Runyolds with wool –  
Sundy Clear but Rather Cool went to Chirch Clarkson gon to morristown Stelle Randolph Came over and lots of Company

**Monday, June 7, 1847.**

Clear and Rather Cool I went to Seelicks and Car[ri]ed the Bags to have the Oats put up and then Came by there and got the horse feed and then went Over to the Sooky lot and Spred 100 bush of lime Came home at 3 Oc then went and Set out the Sweet potatoes Sat out 167 hills and got Som Cabbich plants at Clarkson

**Tuesday, June 8.**

Clear and fine Rather Cool I went to Sands Seelick and got 60 Bushel of Oats and went to Felt Vill Freeman harrowed in lime in Sooky lot and then Came home and plowd Corn west of the Barn Michael look Over it I got home at five Oc I went to the Swamp

**Wednesday, June 9.**

Cloudy wind Southwest and looks like Rain till 9 Oc then Cleard of quite warm we Freeman and I plowd Corn all Day plowd west of the Barn and before the Dove ground Rather wet.

**Thursday, June 10, 1847.**

Clear wind South west Blew hard all Day Freeman went for lime got home at 3 Oc I helpt the Ditcher Down by the Swamp Michael put ashes and plaster on the Corn out west of the Barn Freeman and I went and plowd Corn Down by the Spring –

**Friday, 11.**

Cloudy and looks like Rain and has Raind little all Day but we have plowd Corn we have got once threw with the plow – the wind has Been in the Southwest and Blew hard hard all Day Ephraim Sold his lam[b]s to Gordener for 20 S.- apeas Freeman Sat out Sweet potatoes

**Saturday, 12.**

Clear and fine weather we plowd the Corn Before the the 2d time I went to the Corner and got my Boots it quite [quiet?] tonight/  
Sundy wind in the Southwest Blew hard look alittle like Rain we went to Chirch Raind alittle at Sun Down

**Monday, June 14, 1847.**

Cloudy wind South west the Sun Ros Clear and Shind Brite and there was abrite Rainbow in the Southwest the Sun Soon went in to acloud and thicken up and look like Rain and at 10 Oc it thundered and 11 Oc Raind hard and had 3 or 4 Showers before 3 Oc wind in the Southwest cold

**Tuesday, June 15.**

Clear and Cold wind Northwest and Blew very hard all Day and Cold I went to Turkey with aload of grain I Carried 44 bush Corn ry[e] wheat Oats and Barley the load Brought me \$50.38 tot the boys maid lane fence from one Swamp to the Other ground very wet -

**Wednesday, 16.**

Clear and fine Rather Cool the fore part of the Day in the after noon warmer we plowd the Corn west of the Barn and finish the peas and went Down by the Spring Harison and Lewis Willit was hear wanted work

**Thursday, June 17, 1847.**

Clear and fine we plowd the Corn by the Spring and harrowd this before the Dove Mich turnd the manure in the little yard harison Willet maid 2 bee hives/ the wind is in the North East this Afternoon but Clear Rath Cool this Evening

**Friday, June 18.**

Clear but alittle foggy this morning hevy Dew we plasterd the Corn before the Dove then Freeman and I harrowed the Corn west of the Barn, the wind got Round in the South East and Blows like Rain Freeman planted Som Cucumbers in the pumckin pach [pumpkin patch]

**Saturday, 19.**

Cloudy wind East and looks like Rain Mother and I Started for New York at 7 Oc got to Jephtha at 4 Oc Raind at 5 Oc and Raind all night Sunday 20 Raind most all Day and was quite Cool we staid all Day at Jephtha I went to Chirch

**Monday, June 21, 1847.**

Cloudy wind East and Raind all the morning we wave at Jephtha hard it Stopt Raining just at the time we started for home that was 1 qtr before 7 Oc we Crost the East River 7 Oc we Crost the North River at 8 Oc we got to Newark Half past 9 Oc and got home at 5 Oc had 1 Swarm of Bees

**Tuesday, June 22.**

Cloudy wind East and foggy thick heavy, and Shelling Som Corn went to work on the Roads began hear at the house and worked Down to the Crosway quite warm Son Came out at 9 Oc and warm every thing groes, it thunderd in the west at 5 Oc, but the Cloud Scaterd and no Rain, Sold Now [New] haven Cow

**Wednesday, 23.**

Clear and fine weather we workt on the Roads til noon then Cut astick for the pump I went to Ephraim Freeman went to plowing Corn and Mich and I ho[we]d freeman went and Drove Now havn [New Haven cow] to Squire Parots its fine groing weather

**Thursday, June 24, 1847.**

Clear and fine groing weather we have been plowing Corn and ho[e]ing out west of the Barn we had Mr. Freeman and Isra wooden to Com and make the Pump for the Spring the weather is fine and groing Corn looks well we are going [?] time

**Friday, June 25.**

Clear and fine wind west and very warm and growing we plowd and ho[e]d Corn west of the Barn in the four noon in the after noon we put in the pump in the Spring and freeman went and Caried Wooden and freeman home to plainfield

**Saturday, 26.**

Clear and Very warm I went to Turkey with Corn and ry at \$1-30 per bush and to Felt Vill with meat, Came back and bought aheifer at Turkey began to mow/

**Sundy** Clear and Very hot I went to Chirch afoot went to Harcots in the afternoon

**Monday, June 28, 1847.**

Clear and fine groing weather we harrod the Corn down by the Spring in the four noon Stird Som hay and Raike it up and went and plowd the pach in the low lot and ho[e]d Sweet potatoes and it Came on to Rain alittle at Sundown not much Rain -

**Tuesday, June 29.**

Rather Cloudy this morning we went Down and ho[e]d the potatoes in the low lot then we went plowing and hoeing Corn by the Spring we Drawd in 3 loads of hay in the afternoon and ho[e]d Corn and the wind got Round E and Raind jest at night and look like astorm it Rains

**Wednesday, 30.**

Cloudy wind East and Raind it has Raind all night the ground quite wet I went to the Corner and got the horses Shod in the afternoon thatch the Barick I went over the River and got the Cow from Bj Allwood that had a Calf