

WHEAT & BUCKWHEAT:

Wheat remained important as a staple to feed the family and as a cash crop. By the late 1800s, farmers could choose from many varieties of wheat to plant, but large growers in the West now dominated the market.

Somerset farmers recalled 1859 as "The Great Buckwheat Year." A late frost on June 9 killed orchard fruit and all the crops already in the ground. Farmers planted all the buckwheat they could so they would have something to feed their families and livestock.



FIG. 32. SPRING BALD WHEAT. FIG. 33. WINTER BALD WHEAT. FIG. 34. WINTER BEARDED WHEAT.

Wheat

From *The American Farm Book, or Compendium of American Agriculture* by R.L. Allen, 1858.

Courtesy of the Science, Industry, and Business Library, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

Buckwheat

Artwork by Mary Mullard Young, courtesy of Birkett Mills, Penn Yan, NY



HAY & OATS:

Hay and oats fed the farmer's own livestock but they were also valuable as cash crops. Livery stables, taverns, and tradesmen's families in town needed feed if they owned a milk cow and horses.



A haying scene

June, from *Ballou's Pictorial*, June 17, 1854.

Courtesy the Picture Collection, The Branch Libraries,
New York Public Library



Oats

From *The American Farm Book, or Compendium of
American Agriculture* by R.L. Allen, 1858.

Courtesy of the Science, Industry, and Business Library,
New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

10 Wednesday. I, John &
James cut off corn.

Francis Cable, Shade Township, 1877

CORN:

A dramatic rise in corn production after 1850 was probably due to selective breeding. Hardier strains of corn resisted the early frosts that were common at higher elevations. In 1850, fewer than ten percent of farmers in Somerset township raised corn and their yield amounted to 3,000 bushels. By 1870, 40% raised corn in the township and the yield was 92,000 bushels!



Indian Corn (*Zea mays*)

From *The American Farm Book, or Compendium of American Agriculture* by R.L. Allen, 1858.

Courtesy of the Science, Industry, and Business Library, New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations

POTATOES! POTATOES!

A lot of good Potatoes are wanted for which highest cash prices will be paid.
Inquire at the office of the Herald & Whig.

A market for potatoes

From the *Somerset Herald & Whig*,
December 7, 1864

POTATOES:

In 1865, H.D. Coleman of Somerset sold at least four types of seed potatoes:

"Goodrich Seedlings, Chila Garnet, Cuzco, and Pink Eye Rusty Coats, 'warranted not to rot'".

The price was \$2.50 per bushel in the fall, "from 50 cts to \$1 less than they can be bought for in the spring."

From the *Somerset Herald & Whig*, September 27, 1865.



Peeling potatoes, 1800s

From *Sauerkraut Yankees, Pennsylvania-German Foods and Foodways* by
William Woys Weaver, 1983.

Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Press

**GRAFTED
Apple Trees.**

THE subscriber, residing in Franklin township, Fayette county, 4 miles below Connellsville, on the Youghiogeny river, informs the public, that he has on hand a large quantity of grafted Apple Trees, such as *Rambos*, *Wendewers*, *Newtown Pippins*, *Red streaks* & other sorts, large and fine for transplanting, all grafted from the best winter apples, except the *Rambo*, which is a fall apple. Purchasers may be sure of from 100 to 1000, if they apply in November or March next. November is the best time for transplanting, as the scions thrive better than when transplanted in spring. Several neighbors with a light two horse wagon, may carry from three to four hundred.

Philip Golley.

October 21, 1828.

Apple varieties

An advertisement from a Fayette County nursery demonstrates that many varieties of apples were already available by the early 1800s. From the *Somerset Herald*, November 5, 1828.

ORCHARD FRUITS:

Apples, peaches, and cherries fed the family and brought in cash.

Farmers made cider from some of their apples and vinegar from the cider.

They also made apple butter by boiling cider,

sugar, and sliced apples down to a thick paste. Stored in kegs or crocks, this delicious, thick jam could be preserved through the winter.

Apple butter was valuable enough to be listed as an asset in estate inventories. It was so popular that some soldiers wrote home during the Civil War, asking their families to send them some.



Apple Gathering (detail)

1853, oil on canvas painting by Jerome Thompson
 Courtesy of The Brooklyn Museum. Dick S. Ramsay Fund and funds from Laura L. Barnes Bequest. 67.61

GARDEN PRODUCE:

Families planted gardens for home use, though they undoubtedly sold some vegetables at local markets, too. They stored root crops in cellars. Many people preserved cabbage for winter use by making sauerkraut.

Making sauerkraut in the 1800s

The woman at center is using a cabbage cutter placed over a cooper-made tub. The girl on the left packs the cut cabbage down in a kraut tub.

From *Sauerkraut Yankees, Pennsylvania-German Foods and Foodways* by William Woys Weaver, 1983.

Courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Press



TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

A meeting of the "Stoystown Temperance Society" was to have been held in Stoystown School house on the 31st ult. But was unavoidably postponed until *Thursday evening next the 26th September*. All persons, of all characters, whether friendly or unfriendly to the cause of Temperance are invited to attend on the above evening, as an address, exhibiting the evils of Intemperance and showing the benefits to be derived from the formation of Temperance Societies; will be delivered by a member. Stoystown, Sept 26, 1833.

Temperance Society Meeting

From the *Somerset Whig*,
September 25, 1833.

RYE:

Farmers across the nation grew less rye, for the Temperance movement reduced the demand for whiskey. In 1840, Somerset County had only half the whiskey stills that it did in 1810.

Somerset County farmers still raised an astounding 48 bushels of rye per farm in 1840, while some adjacent counties raised only six. Somerset County farmers probably milled the rye into flour. They used the rye straw to stuff mattresses and horse collars, and to make strong storage baskets.

A rye-straw basket

Snitz, or dried apple slices, were sometimes stored in large rye-straw hampers

Photograph by H. Winslow Fegley,
Berks County area, early 1900s.
Courtesy of the Schwenkfelder Library &
Heritage Center, Pennsburg, PA.



Natural Resources

LIMESTONE:

Limestone outcrops occur on many Somerset County farms. Lime, used to reduce the acidity of soil in crop fields, is made by burning limestone. There were a few commercial lime kilns in the county in the 1800s, but some farmers made their own lime. They quarried the stone and burned it in a large outdoor pile in a field. They used wood or coal as the fuel and sold surplus lime for extra income.

Conrad Stoy's lime oven

From *Somerset Farmers and Mechanics Register*, September 14, 1847.

LIME KILN.

THE undersigned give notice that they have lately erected on the land of Samuel Boger, in Brothersvalley township, 3 miles south of Berlin, a large

Lime Oven,

which is now in successful operation. — The oven is conveniently to a coal bank, which will enable them to burn and furnish any quantity of lime on short notice, and at the low price of

8 cents per bushel.

They are assured that they can furnish as good a quality of lime as can be had at any other Kiln in this county or elsewhere. All persons are invited to give them a call, and if they are not satisfied with the quality and prices, they need not purchase.

CONRAD STOY & CO.

Sept 7-'47-41

THE Keystone LIME COMPANY,

Having completed their
LIME KILNS,
Are now prepared to

Fill all orders for
L I M E :

Their Lime is of the
MOUNTAIN LIME STONE
Formation, favorably known in other parts of
the county as the Peck and Findlay
Lime Stones. Its quality is not
surpassed, either for

Building or Agricultural Purposes.

Address all orders to
KEYSTONE JUNCTION, SOMERSET COUNTY, PENN'A.,

KEYSTONE LIME CO.

Jan. 12-6ms.

Keystone Lime Company

From *Somerset Democrat*,
January 12, 1876.

Natural Resources

COAL:

Until the 1870s, there were few commercial coal mines in the county. The lack of railroads made large-scale mining unprofitable. Farmers with outcroppings of coal in their fields or along stream banks dug their own coal to fuel cook stoves and the fireboxes in their sugar camps. They sometimes sold digging rights to their neighbors.



Coal Tipple

1854, oil on canvas, by Jasper H. Lawman

Courtesy of The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown OH