

HEMP AND HOP GROWING IN LANCASTER COUNTY IN 1775.

The most proper Land for raising Hemp is a rich and light soil, free from Ponds and stagnated Waters. This should be broken up in the Fall of the year, which will greatly contribute to meliorate ye soil, and to render ye Spring Tillage more effectual. It should be twice plow'd in the Spring; the second Time, just before the seed is to be sow'd, which seeding should be done betwixt ye Beginning & Middle of May, though perhaps that season may prove rather too early to the Eastward or Northward of this Province, as the young Hemp cannot bear Frost, if any should happen after it appears above ground; neither should it be sown while the land is very moist, but with us it is generally sufficiently dried by that Time. To every Acre of Land we allow one Bushel and one peck of good, clean seed, of ye last year's growth; for seed that has been kept longer, however good in its kind, will never yield a Crop. We then harrow it in Smooth & well. We have observed, if heavy Rain fall a Day or two after Seeding, they sodden the Ground, and injure the future growth of ye Plant; if that should happen, we run the Harrow again lightly over it, as soon as it is sufficiently dry, provided we can be certain by examining some of the seed in the Ground, that it has not begun to sprout; but if we find that to be ye case we let it lie as ye Rain has left

it. Nothing more is to be done, 'till the Hemp becomes fit for pulling. There are what appear to be two Sorts of Hemp, growing promiscuously together in ye same Field; one (improperly perhaps) distinguished by the Name of the Male & the other of Female Hemp. The first produces the Hemp we sow, the other bears a Blossom, & afterwards a Farina, that flies like a Dust over the Whole Field, after which it turns Yellow, and begins to shed its Leaves. At this Time we pull it altogether & beat ye soil clean from ye Roots of every Armful before it is laid down, taking care, in doing this, not to break ye Stalks, which would greatly injure it. Then spread it as thin over ye Ground on which it grew as the Space of Ground will admit of, every man taking a Breadth of Land to pull, equal to the Length of his Hemp, and laying it Length-Ways across the Ground he has pull'd it from. We are told, it is usual, in some neighbouring Provinces, to cut their Hemp with Instruments close to Ye Root, instead of pulling it; but this Method we disapprove, & is never practis'd with us. It should lie in this Manner a week, or a longer or shorter space, Till we find it dry, When we gather it up straight, & bind it with a few stalks of ye short Hemp in small Sheaves as thick as a Man's Thigh, striking ye Bottom of ye Roots against ye Ground to straighten them still more, and pushing the Band downwards, to tighten them.

We then set 15 or 20 of these Sheaves with their Heads pointing together, so as to support each other, in kind of Shocks, & let them stand a Day or two, except we are satisfied that they were very dry when we took them up, & then the Trouble of Shocking may be omitted. In either of these Cases, we House the Hemp, if we

have Convenience, or build it up in long Stacks or Ricks, with ye Butts or Roots all outward, taking Care from ye Bottom to keep the Middle of the Stacks or Ricks the highest, & building them so as they shall widen gradually from the Bottom to the Top. The Stacks or Ricks are then to be thatch'd or covered to a considerable Thickness with straight Rye Straw, well secur'd upon them. Great care must be taken in covering these Ricks, so as there be no Danger of taking in Rain, as that would extremely damage ye Hemp. It is to stand in these Stacks or Ricks 'till ye Beginning or Middle of November, except it should have lain Abroad in a rainy season before it was first gathered up; and in that Case we let it stand in Stack a Week longer. We then spread it in even Rows upon any sort of Grass-Ground, which is not subject to be overflowed in the Winter; the thinner it is spread the better, as by that means it waters more equally. Not any kind of Creatures should be suffer'd to enter ye Fields where it lies, to tread and tangle it, & there it must lie 'till it shall be sufficiently Water'd, which generally is about the Beginning of March. But this can only be ascertained by setting up a few Handfuls against a Fence, to have it thoroughly dry, & trying it in a Break. And this Trial should be made from Time to Time, when the Watering is nearly completed, At which Time the Stalk or Hex will shake clean out, & the Rind or Harl remain strong. Great Care should be taken in breaking, to keep the Hemp straight, & not ruffle it, as by that Means it cleans with more ease & to greater Perfection, so as to be fit for a Market, for we never use any Swingle, or other Means of that kind, but twist it up from ye Break in Hand-

fuls, & pack it in tight Bundles or Bales of 100 or 150 Pounds each.

We esteem those Winters most favourable to our Hemp, when the Snowfalls soon after it is spread, & lies till near the Time of taking it up, as the Hemp is more equally watered, and better colored, than in variable Weather, and much Rain, when the Watering is often compleated at a season of the year when the Weather is too precarious for either drying, if wet, or cleaning it. But when it is fit for the Break, about the Beginning of March, & ye Weather favourable, we take it up & set it in large shocks, without Binding, & break it in the Field without even housing; and this, where there are a sufficient Number of Hands, is the most expeditious Method. Where the crop is large, there should be 15 or 20 Hands at Work in ye Field at once, in order to get it out of the way when the Ricks are broke, before bad Weather comes on. Each man is to have his Break, which is no great Expense, as those Machines may be made for about 5s. apiece, & will last 5 years, if taken Care of. But if a sufficient Number of Hands cannot be got, we bind it in large Sheaves. With Bands of Rye-Straw, and house or stack it, taking great care to secure it from Rain, 'till we have Leisure to clean it. The Land with us, while it is fresh, or old Fields that have lain long untill'd & old Upland Meadows, sufficiently broken up by repeated Plowings, will yield from 6 to 700 Weight an acre, & sometimes much more; thinner or poorer Land made very rich with Manure, will often produce from 900 lb to 1000 lb weight. Upon the last mentioned sort of Land, 2 Bushels of seed may be allowed to an Acre, and the Hemp Will grow up regularly & mostly to an equal Height; if that

Quantity of seed was sown upon Land naturally rich. Part of ye Crop would push up a great Height & Strength, overtop & smother all the rest. Planting the seed, or sowing it with a Drill-Plow; can only be of Service Where seeds is not readily to be procured, & by this Method (of which we prefer planting in Hills 3 feet apart) the Hemp will branch out, & become a little Tree, which affords a large Quantity of seed. One of these Trees will often Yield a Peck. When the seed is ripe, cut ye Stalk, or pull it, and when it is dry, thresh it upon a Winnow-Sheet, spread on the Grass, as threshing on a Barn Floor would bruise & injure the seed. We formerly procured seed by planting, but now we leave straggling on large Stalks standing near Fences, or single, and find sufficient seed from them for our Use. When this is threshed out it must be cleaned in such a Manner as the light white seed may be blown away with ye Chaff, & then laid thin, where it may have Air, or it will heat & become of no value.

Several Methods have been tried in these Parts for expeditiously breaking & cleaning Hemp both by Machines of the Mill Kind, & coarse & fine Breaks, But after many accurate Trials, and by a large Experience, they have all given Way to one simple Break of a particular Construction, which is now everywhere adopted in this Province, & in general Use. This Machine was first invented & made Use of in this county. By this one Man does what he calls rough break or crackle in the Hinder Part of it, & cleans and finishes ye Working in ye Fore Part, and all Without laying the Hemp out of his Hand. With this Break a New Beginner will clean about 50 Pounds of Hemp in one Day, but those who are acquainted with

this Employment will clean, fit for the market, above 100 Pounds every day.

Method of Growing Hops in Lancaster County 130 Years Ago.

The best Soil for Hops is that which is light, deep, rich & a little Sandy. The Ground is to be broke up in ye Fall, that it may be meliorated by the Winter Snows. In the Month of March it is to be well plow'd again, & cleared of all Grass, Weeds & Roots, and every lump, or Clod, broke fine with a heavy Harrow or Spade. In this Month we begin to plant, marking out where each Hillock or Plantation is to be. We generally plant in Squares, Checquer-Wise, for ye Convenience of Plowing between the Hills. When ye Ground is Marked out we then begin to make a large Square Hole at each Mark at ye Distance of 10 Feet from each other; and having chosen the largest and best roots or Sets, with 3 or 4 Joints to each Set, we plant a set in each Corner of ye Hole, that is, 4 Sets in each Hole, throwing in a fine Compost of rotten Dung & Mould mixed together & prepared on purpose, & then raising ye Earth 2 or 3 Inches high about them. When the Hop Ground begins to get old, & to lose its Fertility, we dig about ye Roots, claw away ye old Soil, & supply them with New Hills of fresher and fatter Earth. When the Roots branch out luxuriantly & become to thick and crowded in the Hill, they must be laid bare in ye Fall, & all the Fibres & small young Roots prun'd away. As soon as the Hops begin to appear above Ground they are to be Poled. Two poles to a Hill are enough. Let them be strong, & about 12 Feet high. To prevent ye Hops from what they call Housling, the Poles are to be set

deep, taking Care not to injure ye Roots in setting them; and leaning outward towards ye South, to give the Plants ye full Warmth of the Sun. When they have sprung up 2 or 3 Feet above ye Ground, they are then to be gently conducted by the Hand to ye Pole, & tied with a soft straw or woolen yarn, but not close, which would prevent their Climbing. In ye Month of May, after a little Rain, the Ground is to be plow'd between ye Hills, in order to render it kind & mellow & to destroy ye weeds; the Hills at ye same Time are to be dress'd with a Hoe. If the Season should prove too dry, let them be Watered 2 or 3 times. About ye Middle of August the Hops are fit for gathering. Their Ripeness is known by their strong Fragrance, by being easily pull'd, by their changing their Hue to a Yellowish Cast, & by ye Seed turning a little brownish. At this Time they are to be gathered when they are neither Wet by Dew or Rain. They are to be cut close to ye Hill, the Poles pulled up carefully, & carried, with their Load of Vines about them, to ye Place of picking. Here a Frame is made by laying 4 short Poles on 4 Forks driven into ye Ground, so as to represent a Square. To These Poles a large Winnow-Sheet, Blanket or Hair Cloth is to be tacked by the Edges, so as to bag down like a Hammock. On the Edge of this Frame ye Poles, with the Hops on them, are to be laid. The Pickers are to stand at each side & pick ye Hops into ye Cloth put on ye Frame in its Place. As fast as they are picked they must be dried, which is done in a Hair-Cloth on a common Malt-Kiln, with Char-Coal made of Hickory, Care being taken to prevent the Smoke from passing through them, by conveyances made for it at ye Corners

& Sides of ye Kiln. The Hops must be carefully turn'd with a kind of Shovels made of Tin, which, if handled well, will not bruise or injure them. When they are sufficiently dry, spread them about a Foot thick on a dry Board Floor, & there let them remain 3 or 4 weeks to toughen.

Take Care that no Cats, Rats, Mice or any other vermin get among them, which will soon damage them. After they have lain thus to toughen, the next thing is to bagg them, which is done in this Manner: Cut a Hole in an upper Floor large enough for a Man to pass thro' with Ease; Then tack a strong Hoop about ye Mouth of the Hop-Bag, which is generally made of strong Oznabrigs, & something like a Wool-Pack. Let this Bag down through ye Hole, so that it may be supported by the Hoop above, well-fasten'd to it with Pack thread. Throw in a few Hops, which are to be tied at each lower Corner, with a Piece of Pack thread, to make as it were a Kind of Tassel, which serves as a Handle to life or remove ye Bag when full. A man is then to go into ye Bag & tread ye Hops on every side, another still throwing in as fast as requir'd it be full. When that is ye Case, let ye Bag dow by ripping off ye Hoop. Then sow up ye Mouth of ye Bag & tie some Hops in ye upper corner, as you did in the lower.

The Hops are now fit for Market & have been generally sold at Philadelphia at one shilling per Pound, or £5 per Hundred. An Acre of Hops in this County, if well attended, will produce from 15 to 20 cwt., which is near £100 raised from One Acre of Ground. What an immense Profit would rich Land in America yield to ye Planter of Hops, were he permitted to send them to Ireland, where they are often sold at 216 Sterling per

Author: Wright, James.

Title: Hemp and hop growing in Lancaster County in 1775 / by James Wright.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Agriculture--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.
Hemp--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society,
1904/1905

Description: [285]-293 ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 9,
no. 9

Notes: Written in 1776.

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.9

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

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