



## A. A. CARLETON INTERVIEW

Oxen was better for breakin' out than horses for when they'd come to a snag on a stump or a root they'd ease off. Horses that got hold up like that would throw into the collars and heave like to snap somethin'. Oxen was better all round farm animals and they still be, if folks warnt in such a dumbbed

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hurry. You take a pair yoked steers and they could move anythin' under the sun. If they couldn't you could always git enough so's could. They'd eat pretty good, take about the same as horses to feed 'em, but when they got along about five-six years old and past their prime, they could be turned into beef. If any accident came to one, breakin' a leg or the like, you could always dress 'em off. Twarn't a loss. Can't do that if it's a horse.

"Oh, we always had a pair o' young bulls comin' along. Wean 'em, break 'em, pasture 'em, castrate 'em, pasture 'em another year, train 'em some more and by the time they was up, the pair you had could be sold or dressed off. Look here, that's my grandsir's picture. Now he was a tall man come nigh to six feet - look at them oxen - stand well up with him, don't they? Well, that was a pair. They'd each measure a good three feet between the horns. Grandsir could drive now, too.

"In those days when they wanted to move a building they'd hitch the three-four yoke oxen on each corner, put the thing on rollers and away they'd go slow but stiddy. The first yoke that come was the lead team, the ones between was the swing teams and the one on the pole was the pole team. When they first rolled the roads in winter they'd hitch six-seven yoke on to the roller. Then oxen got too slow and they took to horses and have six pair on...

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"When Will Carleton (Grandsir) bought this place, that meadow piece was all pine timber. He cut and cleared it, pulled the stump with oxen and made a fine meadow piece of it. Down there in the odd corners where we don't mow there are stumps of that old pine just as red and full of pitch now, three-four foot across. His first mowing machine was a wooden frame Buckeye with a three foot cut, then he had a Granite State with a big drive wheel. Sometimes he'd hitch a pair of oxen onto the mowing machine....

Person Interviewed: A. A. Carleton, West Newbury, Vermont

Interviewer: Rebecca M. Halley

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*American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project,  
1936 - 1940.*

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