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Gates come in all different shapes, sizes

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Our photo, taken around 1910, shows several men standing by a gate. The man to the right is Orin Wyman of Shelby who is proudly showing off the advantages of his unique gate for which he received a patent. It appears the gate is being displayed at perhaps an agricultural fair, as a Ferris wheel appears in the distance.

So what's so unusual about this particular gate? Patented as the O.K. Farm Gate it not only would swing to open and close but also slide up and down. So you ask what's the advantage of that? Well obviously the gate opens and closes to let

animals and farm equipment pass through. But the up and down sliding part had its own advantages. For example, the gate could be raised up so that shorter animals could pass under such as sheep while keeping cows and horses from going through. Hence sheep could go out to pasture yet the

cows and horses were where you could get at them. Because all farms years ago had an array of animals, fences and gates were a far more prominent feature of our rural landscape. And what an assortment there were: including rail fences, dry laid stone fences (walls) picked from the fields, board

fences, stick and stump fences, hedge fences, cast iron fences and a host of wire fences that included all sorts of patents on woven wire and barbed wire.

Needless to say gates were aplenty except for a occasional style which was a series of steps built up and over a fence that allowed

people to traverse a course that many animals would not climb.

In the early 19th century fences and gates were often put up to keep animals out as people often let their stock roam at will, seeking sustenance perhaps even at a neighbor's expense. How times have changed.



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