

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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FEBRUARY, 1865.



JANUARY, 1865.



APRIL, 1865.



MARCH, 1865.



JUNE, 1865.



MAY, 1865.



The February picture is a similar one in nature. It depicts two men near a barn working on flax. One is breaking it up on a crude device outside the building. The other is refining it inside on its way to becoming linen. Note the horse and sleigh traveling by in the distance.

The activity shown for March is two men building a rail fence. One is digging a post hole while the other assembles the rails. Indeed, Spring would have been time to reconnoiter and fix fences.

The illustration for April shows the farmer plowing with a two-horse plow. Likewise the picture for May shows a girl watering plants in a garden. These two months indicate the Spring time as the planting season.

When it comes to June 1865, the picture however, is more serene. Two boys are fishing in the distance while two other people are sitting by a tree enjoying a picnic lunch. The illustration shows us that although the life and times were harder in the 1860's than now, people still took time for leisure activities when the main thrust of work was done.

Watch for next week's article Part II on the months July through December 1865.

This week's article is based on the six engravings representing the months January through June in 1865. I recently found these delightful illustrations pasted in an old scrapbook by some local person back in the 1860's.

Although these pictures are generic in our terms today, they do however, serve to show and tell us a great deal about rural life in Orleans County during the mid 19th Century. These were evidently clipped from a periodical of the time and they show us how our ancestors thought of themselves.

The January scene shows a barnyard with farm animals and two men with flails threshing grain on a barn floor. Note the open doors on both sides of the barn which created a wind tunnel for winnowing. The illustration tells us that threshing was always done in the winter months when other farm activities were dormant.