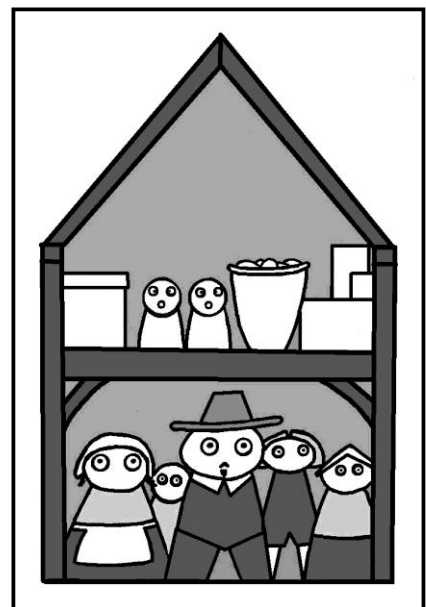


GOING DUTCH: A Day in the Life of an 18th-Century Boy and Girl

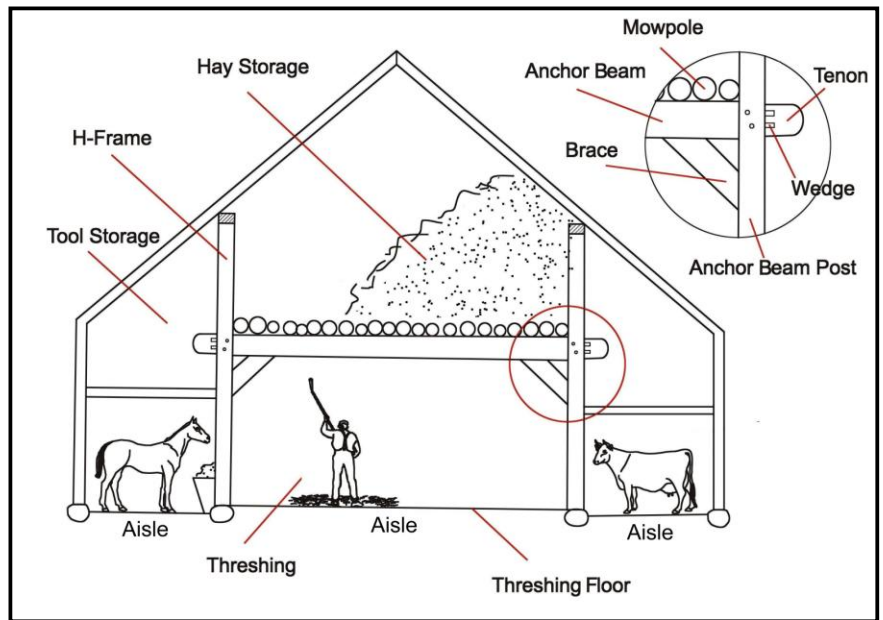
Hello and welcome to our farm! This is the year 1750. My name is Cornelius Mabee. I live on my family's farm, which sits on the bank of the Mohawk River in the British colony of New York.

I live with my father Jacob, my mother Catarina, and my sister Helena. We have a small farm of 115 **acres**. We have a house, an inn, a barn, a hay barrack, and a corn crib. My father's father built our stone house around 1700 to replace the old wood cabin. The stone house is one and a half stories high, like many of the houses we Dutch have built in America. We live on the ground floor and store things on the second floor, which has very low ceilings. Sometimes we children have to sleep up there. To get upstairs we use a closed-in stairway with doors on both ends; this is called **box stairs**.

We have just finished building a small inn for travelers to stay in when they are traveling along the Mohawk River. It is right next to our house. The inn has two rooms, one for dining on the first floor and one for sleeping on the second floor. We also just built a new barn, since our old barn burned down. This seems to happen all the time! We have many other buildings on our farm, but our most important building is the barn.



Our **Dutch barn** is built differently than the barns of our English neighbors. Their barns have only one section or **aisle**, and the posts that hold up the barn are in the walls. The typical Dutch barn has three aisles, separated by the main posts. These posts stand away from the walls right where you can see them. They are connected by a great beam called an **anchor beam**



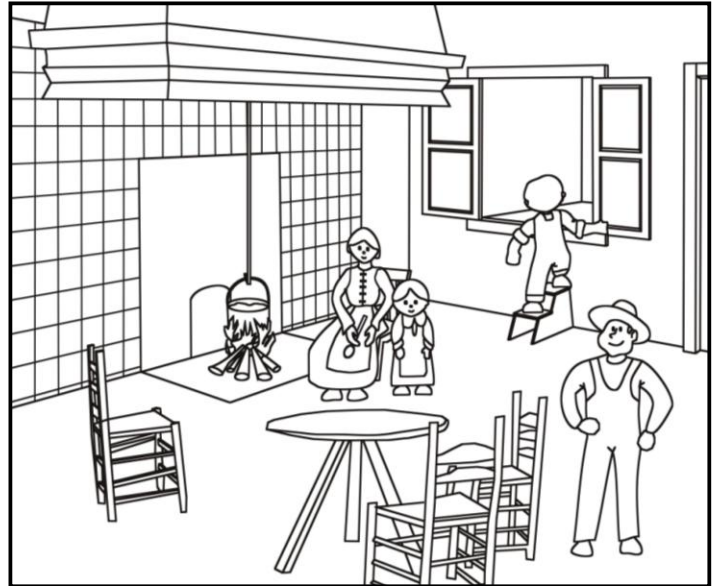
because it anchors the posts together. The posts and anchor beam make a capital “H” in the middle of the barn, so we call them an **H-frame**. Dutch barns usually have four or five H-frames, lined up from one **gable wall** to the other. The H-frames are connected to each other along their tops by **purlins**, which are beams that stretch from one gable wall to the other. The **rafters** of the roof sit on top of the purlins; this means that the roof is held up by the H-frames, not by the barn's walls!

On top of the anchor beams we lay **mow poles**, which make a loose floor on which we can store our hay. The side walls of the barn are attached to the H-frames by smaller beams that make lower ceilings on top of which we store more grain or hay or other things like tools. Sometimes in the summer, my sister and I sleep up here, where it is cooler than in the house. When it is cold we all sleep in the house.



We wake up every morning around 5 a.m. and begin our chores. Helena and I climb down from our **box bed** and begin our day. I help my father bring in wood from the shed to make a fire to cook our food and heat the house. While I help Father, Helena helps Mother milk the cows. The cows live in the barn in one of the barn's side aisles. The cows face the center aisle, so they can eat the hay that is left on the floor. After I have fed the cows, I feed the horses who live in the other side aisle. I have to pull hay down from the loft, and also get grain from the **granary**. The grain is put in feeding cages called **mangers**. While I feed the cows and

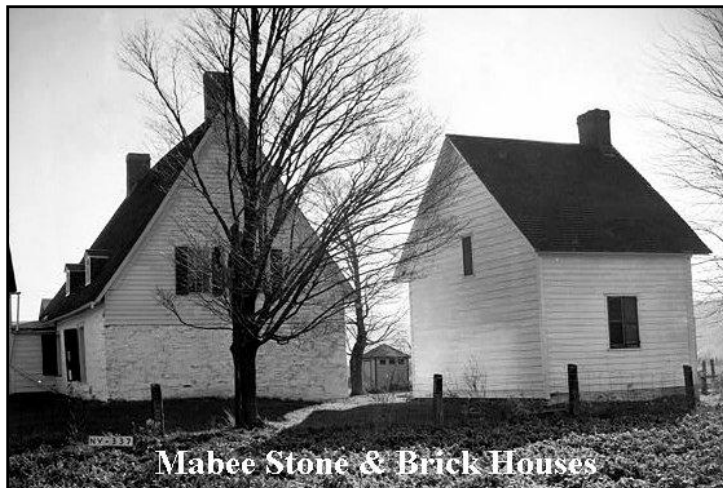
horses, my sister feeds the chickens and collects the eggs and helps Mother prepare breakfast. I work in the barn feeding the animals until we eat breakfast at 7 a.m. We have sausage from our pigs and eggs from our chickens and bread with fresh buttermilk.



When I have finished eating breakfast I go out to the fields with Father. Father and I work several fields so we can raise extra crops to trade for goods we do not raise and cannot make. We trade for cloth, hinges, locks, nails, glass, and lumber that other people have already sawn into shape. We also trade for tools to farm better.

Helena helps Mother with the housekeeping. One part of her household chores is cleaning the house and inn. Mother and Helena sweep with brooms made from our own corn stalks. Also they wash our clothes. In addition, Helena helps Mother **churn** butter, make cheese, and bake bread. During the holidays they make **speculaas**, a kind of gingerbread cookie. Most of our food is made from the things we raise.

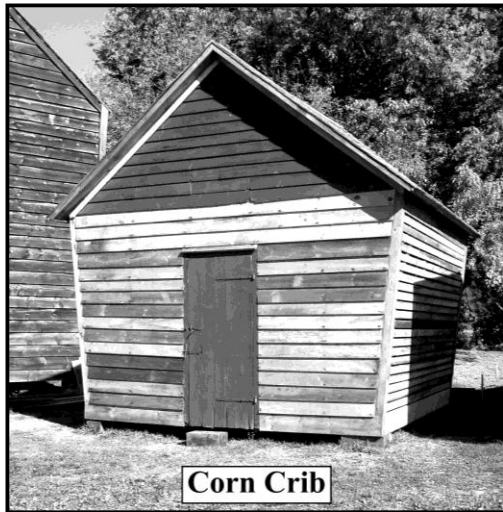
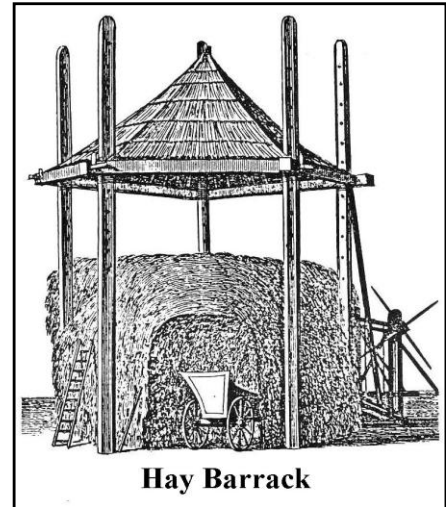
When we have worked long enough, we stop for lunch around noon. After lunch we learn our letters and numbers from Mother, and play for a bit. Then it is back to our chores. My sister and I have a lot of work to do around this farm, but there is still time for fishing and swimming for fun.



We grow maize (corn), wheat, hay, and potatoes in the fields. In the spring my father and our horse plow the fields. I walk behind Father and pick up stones pulled out by the plow, and put them on the walls around our fields. This is how we made the walls in the first place. While I am in the field, Helena helps Mother plant the vegetable and kitchen gardens. In

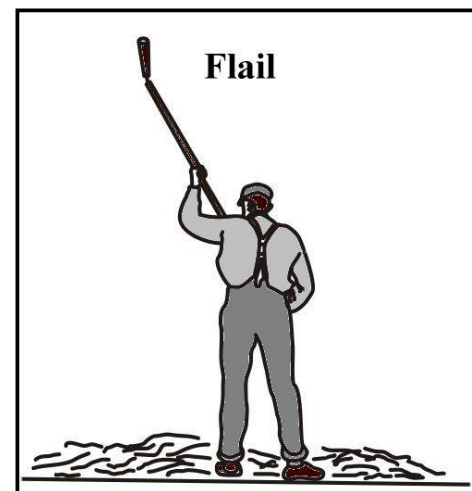
the fall we harvest the grain, potatoes, and corn. My parents' brothers and sisters come to help us harvest the fields. My father and my uncle, who lives nearby, mow down the wheat, hay, and corn. I help load the wagon to take the crops back to the barn.

We store the grain on its stalk on top of the mow poles over the anchor beams. We also store the hay in large piles under the roof of the **hay barrack** near the barn; this has a roof that moves up and down so we can put in more hay if we need to. We store the corn in the **corn crib** next to the barn; the corn crib has open slits in its walls so that the corn will dry. The potatoes and other vegetables are kept in the cellar beneath the house and above the side aisles in the barn.



To get the grain from the wheat, we must do what is called **threshing**. We thresh or break up the wheat on the center aisle of the barn, which is therefore called the **threshing floor**. Threshing is done by beating the stalks with a tool called a **flail**. Once the wheat plants are broken up, we **winnow** them. This means we toss it all up in the air in the barn and catch the grain in baskets, while the light-weight parts called **chaff** are carried away in the wind that blows between the wagon doors in the gable walls of the barn.

When we are done in the fields, and have fed the animals their evening meal, we all return to the house where we eat our own supper and relax by the fire. Father and Mother tell us stories about when the French and their Indian allies attacked the nearby town of Schenectady, and read us stories from the Bible. Then it is off to bed at 7 p.m. to sleep, so we can begin the next day well rested!





Some Things to Think About:

1. Where do the Mabees live?
2. Why did they build an inn?
3. Where do the children sleep?
4. List three chores that Cornelius does during the day around the farm.
5. List three chores that Helena does during the day.
6. What is the difference between chores for a boy and for a girl on a Dutch farm?
7. What does the family grow on the farm?
8. Where are the two places hay is stored on the farm?
9. Where does the family store potatoes and other root vegetables?
10. How is the grain separated from the chaff?
11. Where do the animals live in the barn?
12. How are the animals fed?
13. What holds up a Dutch barn?
14. How many aisles are in a Dutch barn?

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