

inSTALLations



July 2010

Animals Down on the Farm

The Homestead Farm here at the Chippewa Nature Center represents a Midland County farm in 1870. Farmers would have had a variety of animals on their farm to meet the needs of their family or to provide income.

Chickens were a very common animal to find on the farm. Hens lay an egg every day or two providing an excellent source of protein. Of course the chickens themselves also provided meat for the table.



Some farmers also raised **sheep**. The wool was sheared from the sheep, washed, carded, spun into wool and dyed before being used to create clothing, blankets, hats, and mittens.

Most farmers had **horses** or **oxen** to help with the work around the farm. They could be used to help clear stumps from fields, plow, and pull the wagon.



Pigs were a staple on many farms providing lard and pork while **milk cows** provided a regular supply of milk and butter.

Each of these animals had an important role to play in the life of 1870 farm families in Midland County. Stop by the farm any time this summer to visit with the sheep, cattle, pigs, and chickens. On Sundays from 1:30-5pm, volunteers will be available to answer questions, help you do chores and teach lessons at the Schoolhouse.



In the Garden

If you visit the Homestead Farm, you may notice that some of the plants in the garden look a little different than those in your garden or at your local supermarket. We're growing *heirloom*, or antique varieties of vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

For years small family farmers developed varieties that were resistant to local diseases and adapted well to the local climate and soil conditions.

These varieties often don't have a long shelf life and may not be durable enough to be bounced around in a truck on a cross-country trip, so they have become rare, and in fact, many heirloom varieties have gone extinct.

Heirloom varieties are being re-discovered and are treasured for their rich flavors, unusual colors, and other unique characteristics.

If you're interested in heirloom varieties of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers, check out seed catalogues online.

Visit the Temporary Visitor Center for program information.

This inSTALLation is available online at www.chippewanaturecenter.org under the Naturalist Section.