

Porter Perrin was 15 years old the year he kept this diary. He lived on his parents' farm in Berlin, Vermont, just south of what is now the Barre-Montpelier Airport. In addition to his father and mother, Porter's family included his twin brother Elisha ("Lish"), his sister Mary, his brother Newton ("Nuty" or "Newt"), and his sister Inda. In this diary, Porter told of the chores he did on the farm, and about some of the fun he had. Porter Perrin died in 1946 at the age of 88.



- January 1, 1874 Moderately cold. No school . . . I sawed wood in the forenoon . . .
- January 4 Thawy. Father, Alice, Mary, Nuty, and Elisha went to meeting. I stayed at home and did the Chores. Father, Elisha, Mary, and I went to **meeting** in the Evening.
- February 5 Cold. Went to school . . . went to **singing school** in the evening.
- February 19 Cold. Went to school. School was done . . .
- February 27 Cold and windy. . . My cow **Calved**.
- March 11 Cold and Windy. . . Father and Newt went to Barre to get the Buggy fixed. . . Singing school in the evening.

DIARY OF A VERMONT FARMBOY

- March 19 Cloudy . . . Elisha and I tapped 80 trees in the afternoon.. Lish skinned two calves and I did the chores in the forenoon . . .
- March 28 Mild . . . Caught a woodchuck . . .
- March 30 Cloudy . . . Father and I went to Montpelier. We carried 2 Tubbs of Butter, 4 tubs of Sugar and 4 bags of wheat . . . to Uncle John.
- April 15 Pleasant. Lish and Newt gathered sap all day (5 gathering tubs full). I did chores and helped gather sap. Father boiled all day. Mother and Addie canned 29 cans of Syrup, made 23 sugar cakes. [Father taps 612 sugar trees.]



April 26 Snowy. Addie, Mary, Alice, Nuty, Elisha, and I went to church in the double sleigh. Had about as big a snow storm as we have had this Winter (snow 1 foot deep).

May 6 Pleasant. I did chores in the forenoon. Father finished Boiling sap & Sugared off. Newt and I gathered all the sap-tubs in the afternoon. Lish put the tubs beside the roads and pulled all the spikes & Spouts . . . [Father Made about 18 Hundred Pounds of Sugar this year.]

May 15 Pleasant. Robberts [hired hand] and Lish finished spreading manure on the hill in the forenoon. I did chores and fixed fence in the forenoon. Lish and I planted Potatoes in the afternoon . . .

May 20 Cloudy and Pleasant . . . Robberts, Lish and I **harrowing, furrowing,** and planting in the afternoon. Father went to Montpelier (bought all of us boys straw hats)



May 25 Cloudy and Rainy. School commenced. (Newt goes this term). . .

July 4 Pleasant and cloudy. Lish and I went to Grotton to a Picnic in Cars. Lish and I went up on Owls Head Mountain . . . Went on the Wells River Railroad.

July 8 Cloudy and pleasant. Haying. Father went to Montpelier and bought two new scythes and 4 hand rakes.

August 13 Cloudy . . . Lish and I went fishing . . . caught 50 fish

August 26 Cloudy and pleasant. Eddie [hired hand] and I mowed oats and thistles on the hill all day. Lish cut bushes and raked **rowen**. Father, Mary, and Newton went blackberrying over in West Berlin all day. They picked 12 quarts.

September 5 Cloudy and pleasant. Uncle Edwards finished **cradling** wheat . . . Father, Eddie, Lish, and I were bundling wheat and got in two loads of rowen in the afternoon.

September 23 Cloudy and pleasant. Mary, Elisha, and I went to the Washington County Fair at East Montpelier . . .

October 13 Cloudy . . . **FINISHED DIGGING POTATOES**. Father went to the Legislature [Father is a member of the Legislature]

October 19 Cloudy and chilly. I husked Corn for Mr. Dustin at 5 cents a bushel (\$1.10 cents). Lish went to Barre with Mary, and helped draw rails on the hill. Eddie got the Horses shod and got our **trap** fixed in the forenoon . . .

October 26 Warm and pleasant. Eddie and Lish finished **picking stone**, and spread manure on the hill in the forenoon. Ed plowed on the hill in the afternoon. Lish chopped wood in the woods in the afternoon. I did chores, finished getting in the vegetables. Father went to the Legislature. (Caught a Skunk.)

November 1 Pleasant. Elisha's and my Birthday. (16 years old.) Had . . . a game of Birds and a Comb between us and a lead pencil, a Bible, a Cream pie, and some Candy . . .



November 6 Pleasant. (Had a thunder shower.) Eddie and Lish helped Uncle Edwards **thresh**. I did the chores and went down to the State House . . . Our Chimney burnt out. Father went to the Legislature.

November 13 Cold. Lish did the chores and cleaned out the shop. Eddie and I **banked up** the house in the forenoon . . .

November 18 Cloudy and pleasant. Turned the cows to pasture. [Father keeps 36 head of

Cattle.] Lish and I did the chores and churned in the forenoon. Lish set one **light of glass** in the afternoon . . .

November 24 Snowy. Lish and I did the chores, made a sledge hammer handle, killed three hens, and put lumber wagons in the lower barn . . .

December 15 Cold. Went to school. Butchered two Hogs . . . Father found our four-tined dung fork that had been lost 2 Years

December 21 Mild and pleasant. Went to school. Father did the chores and ground sausages. Lish and I ground sausages in the Evening.

December 31 GOOD BYE, 1874



Vocabulary

meeting - worship-service at church

singing school - lessons in reading music, hymn-singing and harmony

calved - gave birth to a calf

harrowing - evening off the ground after plowing it

furrowing - making grooves in the field to plant seeds in

rowen - second crop of hay

cradling - cutting grain with a special tool to catch it as it was cut

trap - buggy

picking stone - taking the stones out of a field to make planting and harvesting easier

thresh - separate grain from straw

banked up - piled brush, hay, or other insulation around the house to help keep it warm in winter

light of glass - window-pane