

Cattle Ear Marks of Long Ago

by Frank Overton, M. D. (Long Island Forum, online)

Pasturing cattle on unoccupied lands, especially the meadows and town properties, was a common practice during Colonial days and even as late as 1880. The cattle were driven to the public pasture lands in the Spring, and were taken home in the Fall. During the pasturing months the cattle were left in charge of a keeper who watched over them and received a fee for his services. He rounded up the strays and rescued those which were mired in the marsh or were injured. During severe storms or extremely high water he herded them into enclosures, and gathered in the strays. He also kept the watering holes clean and accessible.

Each owner identified his cattle by means of ear-marks which had the same legal significance as the brands on the flanks of cattle on the Western prairies. These ear-marks were registered in the offices of the town clerks as evidence of private ownership. In the town clerk's office, each earmark was recorded by means of a written description, and also by a diagram. In some of the smaller towns, only the diagram was recorded.

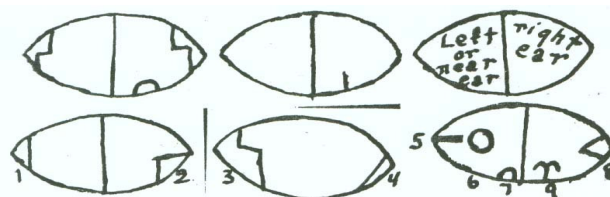
Olmsted Township, Ohio Record Book 1827-1886

Cattle ear marks registered at Olmsted Twp.- "following entered his ear marks for cattle, sheep and hogs" this date:

<p>20 July 1827 Harry Shutts 20 Feb 1828 Alden Thompson 25 Feb 1828 Elliott Stearns 27 Feb 1828 Otis Briggs 27 Feb 1828 Vespusian Stearns 28 Feb 1828 Nobb Hotchkiss 28 Feb 1828 Burt Peck 29 Feb 1828 Alvah Stearns 3 March 1828 Harry Barnum 3 March 1828 David Ross 3 March 1828 Daniel Bumell 15 March 1828 John Adams 21 March 1828 Thomas Briggs 25 March 1828 Amos Briggs 7 April 1828 Joel B. Lawrence 7 April 1828 Elias C. Frost 7 April 1828 Elliott Smith 8 April 1828 Sheldon Webster 6 Feb 1829 Jonatham Oaks 14 Feb 1829 Peter Romp 15 Oct 1829 Jonathan Thompson 23 Mar 1831 Jonas Clisbes 4 Apr 1834 Warren Fullen 18 Jun 1836 Jarvis Frost 18 Jun 1836 Anson Spencer 26 Jul 1837 Thomas Kilpatrick 17 Mar 1838 Hiram Gleason</p>	<p>30 Mar 1838 Chester Phillip 15 May 1840 Elisha Fitch 8 Apr 1842 Horace Phillip 7 May 1842 George Gage 11 Apr 1843 Josiah Spencer 15 Apr 1843 John Romp 24 Apr 1843 John Rubbin 5 May 1843 Barbow G. Carpenter 23 May 1843 Wm. W. McKenzie 27 May 1843 Silas A. Rockwell 25 Mar 1844 Hiram Kellogg 13 May 1844 Philo Bradford 8 April 1845 Samuel Spafford 10 April 1845 Calvin Spafford 11 June 1847 Smith W. Fitch 16 June 1847 Daniel Bunwell 23 June 1847 Charles C. Fitch 21 April 1848 Edwin J. Hyde 22 May 1848 Rodney C. Webster 21 June 1850 Jonathan Thompson 29 June 1850 Thomas Busby 14 April 1851 Silas A. Rockwell 5 May 1852 Orson Spencer 11 Nov 1858 Asapp W. Sabin ** (1) 10 Apr 1854 Lester Bradford 11 Oct 1858 Samuel Donalds ** (2) 29 Sep 1859 John Green</p>
---	--

** (1) 'Whereas Peter Romp is deceased, mark is transferred to Asapp W. Sabin
 ** (2) "Whereas H. B. Gleason is deceased, mark is transferred to Samuel Donalds

Note: The original Olmsted Township Record Book is in the archives at Western Reserve Historical Society Library.



Six Forms Explained in Accompanying Article