

Page 26 - Walter Dugas Revisited: Oxen & Wood

ISSUE: Issue 67

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1994/8/1

don't know if I didn't cry when I got rid of it. (Now, first of all, you make them an ox yourself. Do you castrate them yourself?) No, there was an old fellow, he used to have a pair of pincers--a machine espe? cially for that. When they'd be about a year-and-a-half, two years old, call him over. He used to charge two or three dol? lars, I don't remember. Just pinch them and--he used to, as they called them, press them. Press them, and that's it. They were changed from a bull to an ox. (Just like that.) Just like that. (And would that make them stronger or would it make them--what would it do to them?) I think it would make them (tamer)--because the bull sometimes--! know a couple of guys here in West Arichat that almost got killed here with a bull. You know? Turned against them. They're not easy to handle when they're like that. But an ox will never do that. Once he's an ox, you know. He's just like any other small animal. Just like a kid, you might as well say, if they could talk, you know. You serve them right, they'll serve you right. (And so you would raise this creature up. And you say it would almost hurt you to get rid of them. Okay. How do you make the decision that it's time to get rid of the ox?) Well, I don't know. In this case I think, the last one I had, I was working, and probably worked with my father, and doing some work with the plowing--potatoes. He used to have turnips, garden--everything plowed with the (ox). Haul manure. Haul hay. All the hay we needed. (Would you make hay with the ox?) Well, we made hay by hand, you know. But once it was cut and ready to load, we used to have a truck and an ox attached to the truck. (So you didn't use the ox to pull the mower.) No, no, not to mow. Be? cause I never could afford a mower. Outside of that you could have mowed, I think, with the ox, but I couldn't afford a mower. (How did you mow your hay?) By hand. With a scythe. (Did you have a lot of hay?) Oh my God, the two barns full like we had here--I don't know how many tons that would be. It was quite a bit. (And you cut all of that with the scythe.) That's right. My father and I, we two. Sometimes we'd take a help? er, you know, in the summer, for a couple of days. But very seldom. I don't remember