

Hands-On Guide

What is it made of?
What was it used for?
Who used it? Why?



INTRODUCTION

The Wyckoff House Museum's collection of hands-on objects are not historical artifacts themselves, but they are examples of the kinds of tools and objects that the family and descendants of **Pieter Claesen Wyckoff** and **Grietje van Ness** once owned.

Pieter, Grietje, and their family farmed the land surrounding this house for eight generations, from c. 1652 to 1901. As recently as 100 years ago, most of the land surrounding this house was farmland.

What more can you learn about the lives of colonial farmers like the Wyckoff family by looking at, touching, and examining these objects?



Buckets and Yoke

In the 17th Century, boys would have helped the father with a lot of the field work on the farm. Women and girls would have fetched water from the well or pond for **cooking, cleaning, and laundry**.

Ask yourself...

- The wooden part that fits over the shoulders is called a **yoke**. *Yoke* means a *pair*, like a pair of socks. Why do you think they call it a yoke?
- What else could you carry with this yoke and bucket?
- Can you find other yokes in the house? Yokes could be used by children, adults and even animals could wear a yoke and help carry the buckets!



Fire Starting Kit

Hit the **flint stone** on the **steel** to make a spark which would be caught on the **wool** to start a flame.

Ask yourself...

- What would you do with a fire once you've started it?
- What would you put in a modern-day fire starting kit?



Beaver Fur

The Native Americans that lived in this area before the **Dutch** came were called the **Canarsie**. They hunted beavers that lived in the streams of New York. They used the **pelts** to keep warm and traded them with the Dutch who made **fur coats** and **hats**. Furs were traded back to Europe by the Dutch West India Company.

Ask yourself...

- Why did people think beaver furs were a good material for making hats?
- If you were going to make hat out of this fur, what would your hat look like?



Animal Jaw Bone

The Native Americans that lived in this area before the **Dutch** came were called the **Canarsie**. They did not have metal, but used bones and natural materials like tools. They might have cut or shucked corn with the jaw bone.

Ask yourself...

- How can you tell that the bone is a jaw bone? What clues do you find?
- What other natural materials can be used to make tools? Do we still use any of those materials for tools today?



Quill Pens & Ink Well

Pieter Claesen Wyckoff never learned to read or write, but his wife Grietje van Ness was **literate** and taught all 11 of her children how to read and write. People used **quill pens** like this for many generations.

Ask yourself...

- How did you learn to read and write?
- What do you use to draw and write with today? How is a quill pen different?
- Why is a feather a good material to make a pen from?



Dutch Oven

The **Dutch oven** was used for baking in the **hearth**. Notice the three legs that raise it up from the fire and the deep lid. These features allowed cooks to put hot **coals** underneath and above the pot so it could bake the contents much like an oven.

Ask yourself...

- What features are unique about this pot?
- How is the pot designed so that you can fit the coals on top and underneath it?
- What do you think they would bake in a Dutch oven?



Tin Lantern

The **lantern** held candles to provide light outdoors at night. Everyone in the family would use the lantern. They would use it to go to the **bathroom** outdoors at night, **check on the animals**, or **milk the cows** early in the morning. Children's chores would include making the candles from animal fat, called **tallow**. Since there was no electricity they needed to make a lot of candles!

Ask yourself...

- Why do you think they used animal fat to make the candles? Where did they get the animal fat from?
- Why do you think there are different sized holes in the lantern?
- What materials and tools could you use to make your own lantern like this?



Butter Churn

The **butter churn** was an important tool for **preserving** milk from the cows on the farm. **Cream**, drawn from the top of the milk, is mixed by the churn so that the solid fat separates from the liquid. The solids are **butter**, and the liquid left over is **buttermilk**. To make the butter last longer, salt was added.

Ask yourself...

- What are other ways that milk and cream are used in cooking?
- How else can you preserve milk to make it last longer? What if you do not have a refrigerator?



Iron

The **iron** is a tool that we still use today to press our clothes. Today's irons are heated with electricity, but that was not an option in colonial days. Notice that the iron has a matching stand, also made of metal.

Ask yourself...

- Where could you place the iron and iron stand to heat it?
- Why is the iron so heavy?
- How would you change the iron if you wanted to improve it?



Klompen / Dutch Clogs

Klompen, or clogs, are wooden work shoes. Each is made from a single piece of wood. They come in many sizes, because everyone in the family would wear klompen when working around the **farm** and **kitchen garden**. They are often painted yellow, with black and red geometric designs on the top.

Ask yourself...

- Why would you want to wear a wooden shoe when working on the farm or in the garden?
- What other materials could you use to make a shoe that protects your feet while working? How would a shoe made from those materials be different?
- Where are some places you *wouldn't* want to wear klompen?



Rug Beater

A **rug beater** is a tool used to **clean rugs, bedding, and clothes**. The rug or other cloth being cleaned would be hung outdoors and hit with the **flexible but strong** rug beater.

Ask yourself...

- What is this rug beater made out of? What other materials would make a good rug beater?
- What tools do we use today that have the same purpose as a rug beater?
- What other tools have a similar shape and size? How are those tools different?



Horseshoes

Much like **klompen**, or wooden clogs, were worn to protect farmers' and gardeners' feet while working in the field, horses would have **horseshoes** like this attached to their hooves to protect them.

Ask yourself...

- What is this horseshoe made from? What other materials would make a good horseshoe?
- How could you attach horseshoes to the horse's hooves?