

# Francis Squires Diary - Town of Volney

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**Francis W. Squires** was born on October 22, 1820 in Madison County to Pierce Squire and Eunice Warriner. Francis moved to North Volney, Oswego County, in April 1853 with his wife, Sarah R. Rice (born 1829), to start their own farm. Francis came from a farming family. Francis' father, Pierce Squires, was a farmer in Madison County as well as Lewis County and New Haven, Oswego County.

According the 1855 New York State Census, Francis and Sarah had two children, Clarence (2 years old) and Harriet (1 year old).

During his time in North Volney, Francis was a teacher, postmaster, and justice of the peace. He enlisted in Co. A, 184th N.Y. Vols. and served as clerk of the company during the Civil War.

Francis Squires kept a diary for many decades. The following entries are just a few examples of his diary and contains his record of what he found important to his daily life, as a farmer, public servant, and soldier. These diaries are part of the **Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library**.



**Francis W. Squires**  
**1820-1897**

1844 snow 8 in. Oct Nov 12 in. snow; 10th 24th

October 29th snow fell 4 inches to day. rained 2 or 3 hours A.M. & then snowed fast rest of day. took young cattle from River. cushed(?) cheese.

30 6 inches snow new. cloudy & cold for season, Father been on hill with (?) (?).

31 pleasant day. & snow melts a litle Father started for Rome with 4 (?) (?).

Nov 1st clear & pleasant & (?) (?). I have been on hill with S.D. Hubbard.

2 Father returned form Rome & W. with him. snow going off quite fast Mother staid to Alfreds last night & Lucinda & Joseph & I here alone.

3 continuous warm & thaws fast. rains at night. Dr. Adams (?) (?)

4 warm & snow almost off. Joseph left off work here. went to (?) at night

5 been to Election & voted for Henry Clay for President & Millard

6 Fillmore for Governor. 6 (?) cold & cloudy. Took Buggy to Syracuse to get (?)

7 froze ice 1/2 inch thick last night. drew hog manure. cold A.M. & snow P.M.

8 Father been ploughing stalk ground I have been patching stable. snow off (?) (?)

9 I ploughed A.M & Father P.M. warm. I went on hill P.M.

10 W & Eveline Wolley. Lucinda & I visited to Atwoods last night. froze hard.

11 Father finished ploughing stalk ground, warm but cloudy. Lucinda went to Alfreds to work

12 warm & rains a little P.M. get buggy (?). warm for the season.

13 Father & W. Been to Lowville & bought cloth for coats, snow squalls today (?)

....melts as fast as it falls. 14in began feeding cows. W. & I been on hill & flats

14 got measured for coats. snow covered ground this morning but went off (?) (?)

15 chilly wind. carried apples down cellar. 11in (?) warm snow all off.

17 Father & I been to church. Barnes & Wightman changed. warm & cloudy.

18 Bullard married E. Bingham & Lucinda went to Thompsons, colder to day.

19 Froze 1 inch think last night. been chopping in swamp. I been on hill at night

20 cold & dry. F. Burke began chopping for us. been threshing oats. split rails

21 W. & I threshed 48 bundles wheat. (?) day & Father & Mother been to church.

22 warmer & cloudy. carried new wheat to mill. 23d did not freeze last night.

23 drew wood from swamp. Oler Merrills & son been here. pleasant.

24 very clear last night at 9oclock but at at 7 o'clock this morning snow 10 inches

....deep. W. & I been on hill in cutter. & a terrible day it is. blustery.

25 River froze over last night above Beaver creek. Father drewed wood. cold day

26 a terrible blustering day & snow fast P.M. W. & I drewed wood from River

27 clear & cold. Father threshed Barley & I cheesed. Father & Rachel been on hill to night

28 a little warmer, snows about all day. 2 inches. 29th drewed 13 loads manure.

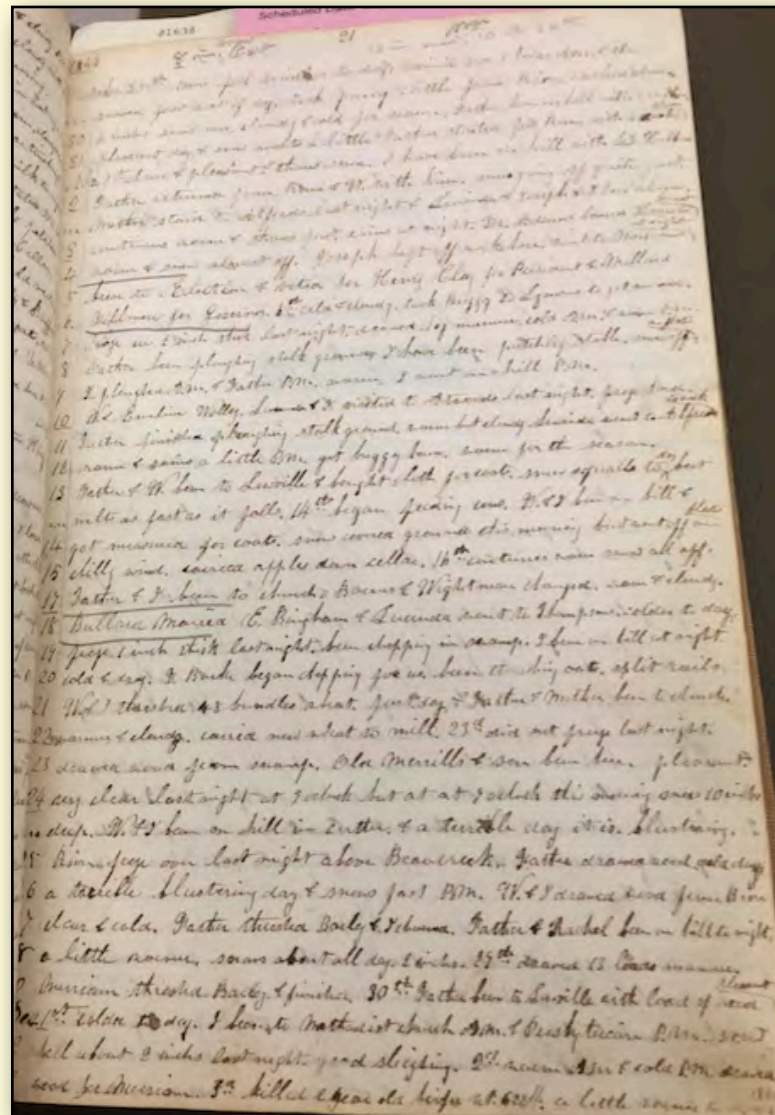
30 Merriam threshed Barley & finished 30th Father been to Lowville with load of wood pleasant

Dec. 1st colder to day. I been to Methodist church A.M. & Presbyterian P.M snow

....fell about 2 inches last night. good sleighing. 2nd warm A.M. & cold P.M. drewed

....wood for Muriam 3rd killed 2 year old heifer at 622 lb a little warmer to day 1844

## Francis Squires Diary October 29 to December 1, 1844



1852

Oct. 11th clear & pleasant. Father & I been gathering apples & W. been making barrels. Mr. Griswold & J. G. Dunham here from Volney to sell farm. W. & wife went after carpet just at night & Father to Williams to see about getting money. 54. 58. 48

12 cloudy & rains between 12 & 2 o'clock. Father & I gathered apples till 10 o'clock & then we stopped to talk about logging farm rest of A.M. went to Mexico P.M. & made bargain for farm by paying J. G. Dunham \$94 3/4 & \$150. old mortgage one year from this time & \$400. mortgage to Dunham which he sells to Mr. Stone of Mexico to be paid in 4 years from this date for 37 acres

13 cloudy & rains some A.M. Father & I husked corn in barn. A.M. gathered (?) apples P.M. 9 bushels. Cornelia here P.M. 45. 54. 40 W. been to work at shop. apples are very wormy this year.

14 partly clear & pleasant. Father been husking corn in barn & W. & I gathered apples; 24 bushels (?) 3 pecks (?) 3 pecks seek.no.further 1 bushel Harvey finished getting all except Rupets. I been to Gridleys with 23 1/2 bushels apples just at night

15 partly cloudy with a strong N.W. wind. picked Russets last night & to day; about 3 barrels in all 1 1/2 of them being wormy. 46.43.42 turned out 10 sheep to (?); 7 of them lambs; taken 5 years ago. drew a load of pumpkins from (?) A.M. no frost to kill vines yet but (?) some like it to night Sarah made 8 lbs quince preserves 1/2 apples & pareing apples to day.

16 partly cloudy with a cold N.W. wind so that is cold digging potatoes with a coat on. finished digging potatoes at home below (?) yard to day & just in cellar; 17 bushels merinoes, 4 1/2 of pink-eyes, 4 of Foxites & 1 1/2 of early blues. drew a load of pumpkins from Rices just at night. Our well fails & (?) brought note from Robinson today 37.46.43

17 cloudy & rains some between 10 & 2 o'clock. Father W. & wife been to church & rest staid at home. a cold rain but don't rain much. 38.42.44 baby is sorrysome & acts like cutting teeth. he has a cold which is one reason.

18 cloudy & a dar kay although not very thick clouds. finished digging potatoes in Rices & sold Charles Field 12 bushels. 46.58.58 Just 7 bushels in cellar & took 6 bushels out for Charles Field. got a cradle to Mr. Gee's to day for baby. cold nights lately.

19 cloudy & cold N.W. mind. Father & I drew one load of pumpkins to Rices & one load home A.M. & 2 loads of corn home P.M. W. been cooping. I went on hill just at night to get horse shed. 46. 46.

## Francis Squires Diary October 11 to 19, 1852

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1870

48. 52. 50

- April 30th clear & pleasant. I have been down to C. Coes A.M. & to McDougalls & Davis P.M. I made out mortgage for James McDougall yo Davis. John & Willie drew two loads Pine lumber from vermillion Cyrus Coe carries the mail. Roads are good I made out search warrant & (?) Warrant for (?) (?); average temp at 7 A.M 44, lunch 32, night 42 Snow 4 inches
- May 1st clear & pleasant. We have all been to the Sunday School & had a long time of it. I have a time with my head P.M. & evening 44.60 62
- 2 clear & warm. Willie been to Oswego with a load of hemlock wood to sell at \$4.00 for cord 44.60.63
- 3 clear to warmer. I went to Fulton yesterday on boat & met with (?) (?) & staid at Lewis Porters last night & came home today noon & rode with Nelson's teams from (?) Willie. been to Oswego again with wood. 54.70.69I made out (?) of mortgage for Timothy Peatt yesterday & deed for George (?) Beardly P.M today
- 4 clear & dry. Getting quite dusty. 60. 64. 62 John drawing lumber from Vermillion and Willie worked out in woods. Tree tops begin to look quite green. A fine time for farmers to do spring work. (?) help Willie some.
- 5 clear & warm again. I came to Volney center yesterday P.M. with W.H. Bowen & staid at Porter Keyes last night. Made out F. D. Johnston resignation A.M. & took dinner at Keyes & then went to Fulton P.M. 55.60.62
- 6 clear & hot. I came to Lamsons on cars last night & then back on (?) car to South Granby & then to C. Fullers. I staid to C. Fullers last night & came to Johns A.M & staid to dinner (?) (?) A. B. (?) (?) (?) to tea. I then came to Geo. & Fullers to night making me a very busy day. 53. 66. 60

Francis Squires Diary April 30 to May 6, 1870

49

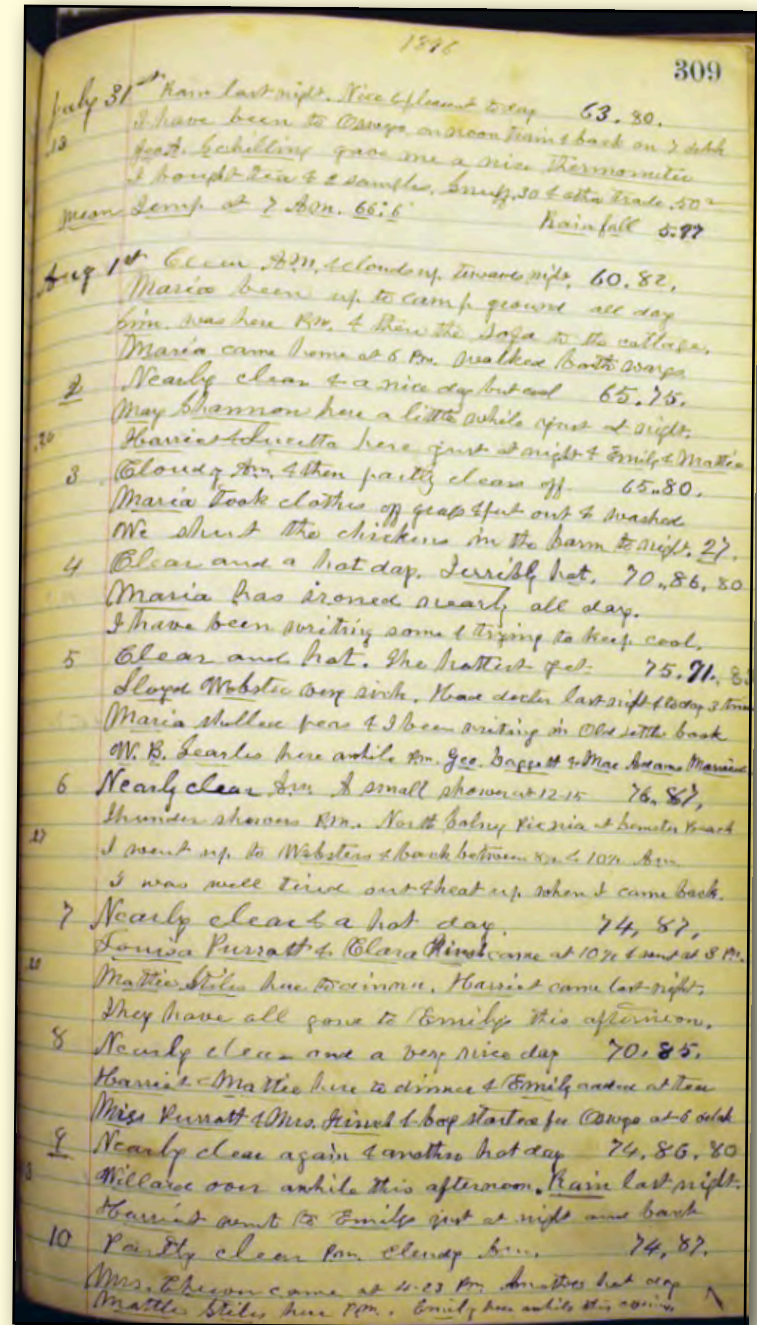
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May 1<sup>st</sup> clear & pleasant. We have all been to the Sunday School & had a long time of it. I have a time with my head P.M. & evening clear to warmer. Willie been to Oswego with a load of hemlock wood to sell at \$4.00 for cord clear to warmer. I went to Fulton yesterday on boat to meet with Nelson's teams from Oswego again with wood. I made out release of mortgage for Timothy Peatt yesterday to deed for George B. Beardly P.M. today clear to dry. Getting quite dusty. John drawing lumber from Vermillion and Willie worked out in woods. Tree tops begin to look quite green. A fine time for farmers to do spring work. I came to Volney center yesterday P.M. with W.H. Bowen & staid to Porter Keyes last night. Made out F.D. Johnston's resignation A.M. & took dinner to Keyes & then went to Fulton clear to hot. I came to Lamsons on cars last night & then back on car to South Granby & then to C. Fullers. I staid to C. Fullers last night & came to John's A.M. & staid to dinner & then to A.B. Fullers P.M. & to tea. I then came to Geo. & Fullers to night making me a very busy day

1896

- July 31st Rain last night. Nice & pleasant today. 63.80.  
 .13 I have been to Oswego on noon train & back on 7 (?) Geo A. Schilling gave me a nice thermometer. I bought tea & 2 samples, Snuff .30 & (?) (?) .50 mean temp at 7 A.M. 66 (?) 6' Rainfall 5.97
- Aug 1st Clear A.M & clouds (?) towards night, 60. 82. Maria been up to camp ground all day (?) was here P.M. & (?) the sofa to the cottage. Maria came home at 6 P.M. walked both ways.
- 2 Nearly clear & a nice day but cool 65. 75. May Shannon here a little while just at night. Harriet & Lucretta here just at night & Emily & Mattie
- 3 Cloudy A.M & then partly clears off 65. 80. Maria took clothes off (?) & (?) & washed We shut the chickens in the barn tonight. 27.
- 4 Clear and hot day. Terribly hot. 70.. 86. Maria has ironed nearly all day. I have been writing some & trying to keep cool.
- 5 Clear and hot. The hottest yet. 75. 91. Lloyd Webster very sick. (?) (?) last night & today 3 times. Maria shulled peas & I been writing in Old letter book W.B. Searles here awhile p.m. Geo. Daggett & Mae Adams married.
- 6 Nearly clear A.M A small shower at 12-15 76. 87, Thunder showers p.m. North Volney picnic at (?) Beach I went up to Webseters & back between 8 1/2 & 10 1/2 A.M.
- 7 Nearly clear & a hot day. 74, 87, Louisa Purratt & Clara (?) came at 10 1/2 & went at 3 p.m.
- .20 Mattie Stiles here to dinner. Harriet came last night. They have all gone to Emily's this afternoon.
- 8 Nearly clear and a very nice day 70.85. Harriet & Mattie here to dinner & Emily added at tea Miss Purratt & Mrs. (?) & boy started for Oswego at 6 o'clock
- 9 Nearly clear again & another hot day 74, 86, 80 Willard over awhile this afternoon. Rain last night. Harriet went to Emily's just at night and back.
- 10 Partly clear p.m. cloudy a.m. 74, 87. Mrs. Cheaver came at 4-23 p.m. Another hot day. Mattie Stiles here p.m. Emily here awhile this evening.

**Francis Squires Diary**  
**July 31 to August 10, 1896**



## Questions for Discussion and Further Research

*Use Francis Squires' diary entries to answer the following:*

1. What were some of Francis Squires' daily activities?
2. What types of crops was grown on his farm?
3. What types of animals were on his farm?
4. Research the military unit, Co. A, 184th N.Y. Vols. and compare that information to Francis Squires' entries while he served in that unit.
5. On a map, locate the places Francis Squires mentions his unit marched to while serving in the Civil War. What type of terrain exists in these locations? How is his Civil War diary entry differ from the others? How old was Francis Squires when he served in the Civil War? What was the average age of a soldier in the Civil War?
6. Research typical monthly weather conditions for the places he mentions in his diary entries and compare to his records of temperatures and weather conditions.
7. In your opinion, use the diary entries to determine what was important to Francis Squires. Explain.
8. What are you surprised about with his diary entries? What does it contain? What does it leave out?

