

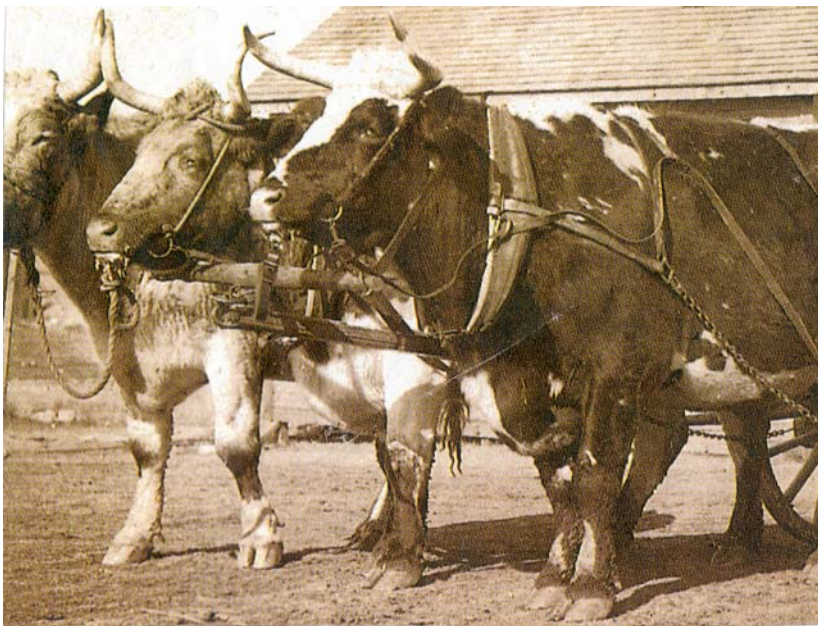
America's First All Weather and All Terrain Vehicle

If you were a pioneer in Ohio from the 1700's, what did you use to haul trees, animals, or just about anything else you had to move from one place to another? Were there large tractors and wagons? How about trucks, trains, or airplanes? No, of course not! You had to invent your own method of transportation. What pioneers invented was a utility vehicle called a mudboat, or a giant sled. They made it from fallen trees and wooden pegs, because metal nails were not available.

With this mudboat, pioneers could cross fields and streams, and could haul trees or animals across wet, muddy, or snowy land. They did this by making wooden runners to fit on the bottom of the mudboat. If the ground were dry, they could make wheels that would be added to the bottom, instead of the runners.

Pioneers even added wooden fences, or pens, to the top of the mudboat so cattle wouldn't fall off, or be able to jump off, as they were moved. Believe it or not, in the winter these mudboats were even used as school buses to get kids to and from school!

How did these mudboats move? Did they have a motors? No, of course not! Sometimes horses pulled them, but usually a team of oxen, fitted with steel shoes, much like horseshoes, were the best animals to haul a giant sled with extra heavy loads.



Mudboats lasted a long, long time, and had very little on them that could break. And many pioneers continued to use them long after the 1700's, or even the 1800's. In the Hilliard area, farmers used them up until 1945. What a simple, yet amazing, form of transportation!

Rewritten from an article found at the home of Mary W. Miller. Original Author of article is unknown.

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