

Robert Frost Farm Friends Newsletter

(Robert Frost Homestead Foundation)

The
Robert Frost Farm



P.O. Box 1075 Derry, New Hampshire 03038
A National and New Hampshire Historic Site

Issue 4

Fall 2003

GIGGLES, SQUEALS, AND SMILES

and lots of questions abounded as students from the Nutfield Cooperative School in East Derry arrived with their teachers for a fun-filled summer's day at the Frost Farm.

Hand-in-hand, these delightful four, five, and six-year olds eagerly explored the nature trail that Frost and his children wandered a hundred years earlier, observing the plants, birds, and various little creatures that make their home there. They learned about white birches, pointing almost in unison when they spotted a stand in the woods, the stone walls that marked the property's boundaries in Frost's era and more importantly, how Frost felt about them.

After picnicking under trees on the side lawn, they were ready to venture into the barn to watch a video portrayal of several of Frost's best-loved poems. They all agreed that the little calf in "The Pasture" was their favorite. They listened intently to a reading of "Carol's New Shoes" from Lesley Frost's *New Hampshire's Child* and laughed at the description of how his old shoe was all wrinkled by the time the Frost's discovered it burning in the oven.

During a tour of the sheds, laundry room, and kitchen, little hands flew up as questions were posed about what life was like in the early 1900's. The children seemed utterly amazed to learn that the Frosts and their children lived without the luxuries of electricity, indoor plumbing, and especially with no television to keep them entertained.

In the late afternoon, the children waved goodbye and headed back to school, still giggling, squealing, and smiling, but this time in anticipation of telling their parents about everything they had learned during their daylong adventure at the Robert Frost Farm.



In the Farm's kitchen, Trustees Chair Laura Burnham explains 1900's living conditions to the children..

FARM HOURS CHANGED

As a cost-cutting measure, New Hampshire's Division of Parks and Recreation has requested that the Robert Frost Farm be closed on Monday beginning in 2004, with the exception of holidays. Hours remain the same. Sunday-12 noon to 5:00 P. M., weekdays, 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Visitors are urged to call ahead for confirmation and/or change in schedule.

2003 NEW HAMPSHIRE STATEWIDE YOUTH POET AWARD GOES TO PATRICK CHURCH.

CHANGES OVER THE YEARS

*Olden days
And newer ways,
Winter times
and summer shines.*

*From Concord Coach
To hunters that poach,
From the things we say
To the things we play.*

*From the population
To the transportation,
From farming potatoes
To canning tomatoes.*

*From burning coal
To fixing potholes,
From milking cows
To pop gun pows.*

*From digging with spades
To costume parades,
From hunting with need
To hunting with greed.*

*From one room schools
To mechanical tools,
From building a house
To hunting ruffed grouse.*

*From tobacco and barley
To riding a Harley.
From being ruled by a king
To new ideas a governor can bring.*

*From runaway slaves
To treehouses and caves,
From the servant's quarters
To shopping at Borders.*

*Those are the changes
In New Hampshire.*



Shown reading his poem from Lancaster, NH, is Patrick Church while David Watters, Vice Chairman of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation looks on.

In ceremonies held in the 'barn' Saturday, June 21, 2003 nineteen young New Hampshire poets were recognized for their contributions to the statewide, Fourth-Grade competition. This year the theme was "*Changes Over The Years.*"

More than six hundred students participated, with a winner and an honorable mention runner-up in each county. The contestants poems were judged by the NH Poetry Society.

Patrick's teacher at Lancaster School is Mrs. Kleinschrodt.

Other poetry winners were;

Belnap County Poet	Samuel Emmit Carpenter
Carroll County Poet	Ceci Mancuso
Carroll County Honorable Mention	Brittini Desrosiers
Cheshire County Poet	Sean Hennigan
Cheshire County Honorable Mention	Matt Pro
Coos County Poet	Stockton Hicks
Coos County Honorable Mention	Jacob Moyer
Grafton County Poet	Alexandra Cox
Grafton County Honorable Mention	Claire Weaver
Hillsborough County Poet	Nathaniel Welton
Hillsborough County Honorable Mention	Reed Van Dyck
Merrimack County Poet	Kelsey Martel
Merrimack County Honorable Mention	Chrisinda Lynch
Rockingham Poet	Jessica Goudreault
Strafford County Poet	Cameron Durgin
Strafford County Honorable Mention	Emilee Merrihew
Sullivan County Poet	Sean Plummer
Sullivan County Honorable Mention	Molly Fontaine



SECOND LIFE FOR OLD SUGAR MAPLE

Since poems about trees that hark back to the Derry years figure prominently in Frost's work, it was a painful decision for the Homestead's Trustees to give Bartlett Tree Service the go-ahead several years ago to cut down the diseased and dying, century-old, tall sugar Maple. The tree estimated to be between 110 and 120 years old, had adorned the front lawn of the Farm for many years.



Under the careful stewardship of Trustee David Watters, cuttings from the tree have escaped being tossed into the wood pile only to be reclaimed by nature, instead much of Frost's maple has been salvaged and stored at UNH to return in various unique and creative art forms.

A large round is currently on display in the barn at the Farm while another now housed in the UNH collection has been transformed into a plaque for a Frost Farm painting that was generously donated by Trustee Natale Brown and her husband Will Brown.

One craftsman from far away New Zealand is making buttons from the scraps and some of the larger pieces have been issued to regional woodworkers including Wilmington, MA resident William "Bill" Frost, a retired engineer who has been a member of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers for over fifty years.

Bill's beautifully crafted wood art has been exhibited and sold wherever the Guild has items on display in New Hampshire. He is presently developing some creative ideas for turning his half dozen 6-foot long slabs of maple into highly collectible and treasured pieces. However, it seems no mere coincidence that Bill's talent and skill in woodworking parallels that of Frost's own father-in-law, Edwin White, a former Minister who later earned his livelihood as a woodworker.

Frost once wrote to a friend, "...A relative of mine left the agony of forced preaching in the pulpit of the Universalist Church for the comfort of turning wood...Of course wood turning is an ingenuous trade as Grimm says in one of his fairy tales...I angered him once by remarking it must be soon learned. It showed how shallow I was to say such a thing. He had been at it forty years and was still learning every day. A number of his fingers had been stubbed...He inhaled more wood dust than I could have stood."

Today, the maple's permutation into objects of lasting beauty would no doubt please Frost, whose poetry often reflects on the lessons of nature.

FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

Please Note: On the address label following your name you will find a digital entry indicating your membership expiration date. For example, an expiration of September 2003 has an entry of 09/03. For your convenience, a membership renewal form appears on the last page of this newsletter.

SATURDAY REVIEW, February 23, 1963

"Robert Frost, 1874 — 1963

THERE is a story that some years ago an interested mother wrote to a principal of a school, "Don't teach my boy poetry, he's going to run for Congress." I've never taken the view that the world of politics and the world of poetry are so far apart. I think politicians and poets share at least one thing, and that is that their greatness depends upon the courage with which they face the challenges of life. There are many kinds of courage — bravery under fire, the courage to risk reputation and friendship and career for convictions which are deeply held. But perhaps the rarest courage of all, and the skill to pursue it is given to very few men, is the courage to wage a silent battle to illuminate the nature of man and the world in which he lives.

This is Robert Frost's courage, and the towering skill and daring which are his in penetrating many of the mysteries which surround our life have brought him a well-deserved recognition which have been given to few men in our time. Robert Frost is often characterized as an American poet or a New England poet and he is, of course, all of these things. For the temper of his region and his nation has provided a good deal of the meter and the tone in which he has dealt. But he is not a poet bounded by geography, and he will live as a poet of the life of man, of the darkness and the despair, as well as the hope, which is in his case limited by a certain scepticism; and also for his wit and understatements. I asked Robert Frost to come and speak at the inauguration, not merely because I was desirous of according a recognition to his trade but also because I felt that he had something important to say to those of us who were occupied with the business of government; that he would remind us that we were dealing with life, the hopes and fears of millions of people, and also to tell us that our own deep convictions must be the ultimate guide to all of our actions. He has said it well in a poem called "Take Something Like a Star," in which he speaks of the fairest star in sight and says, "It asks a little of us here,/ It asks of us a certain height,/ So when at times the mob is swayed/ To carry praise or blame too far,/ We may take something like a star/ To stay our minds on and be staid" For that insight of Robert Frost and for all the others carved with such toil from a long life, men everywhere are grateful.

— *Transcript of comments on Robert Frost by President John F. Kennedy, originally broadcast on "Accent" February 24, 1961, and used by WCBS—TV on January 30, 1963, during memorial to the late poet.*

FORMER FARM MANAGER APPOINTED TRUSTEE

Last Spring, after fourteen seasons as Farm Manager, Claire Ternan made the difficult decision to resign her position in order to devote more time to her graduate studies. Claire, who has served as official house tour guide as well as successfully promoting the seasonal activities related to sustaining Frost's poetic legacy, was unanimously endorsed for nomination as a Trustee to the Frost Homestead Foundation at the board's April meeting. In October, she received official notification of her appointment from New Hampshire Governor Craig Benson. Claire will continue to support the ideals and goals of the Frost Farm in her new role as secretary and member of the Program Committee

NEW FARM MANAGER APPOINTED

A smooth and orderly transition was accomplished with the appointment of Park Ranger Ben Fontaine, who replaced former site manager, Claire Ternan. Familiar with the Farm's operation, Ben has worked there part-time in recent years and routinely conducted Farm tours for school groups. He has expressed his commitment to Frost, his poetry, and life at Derry, as well as to preserving the Farm's house and grounds as they were during the Frost family's years there.

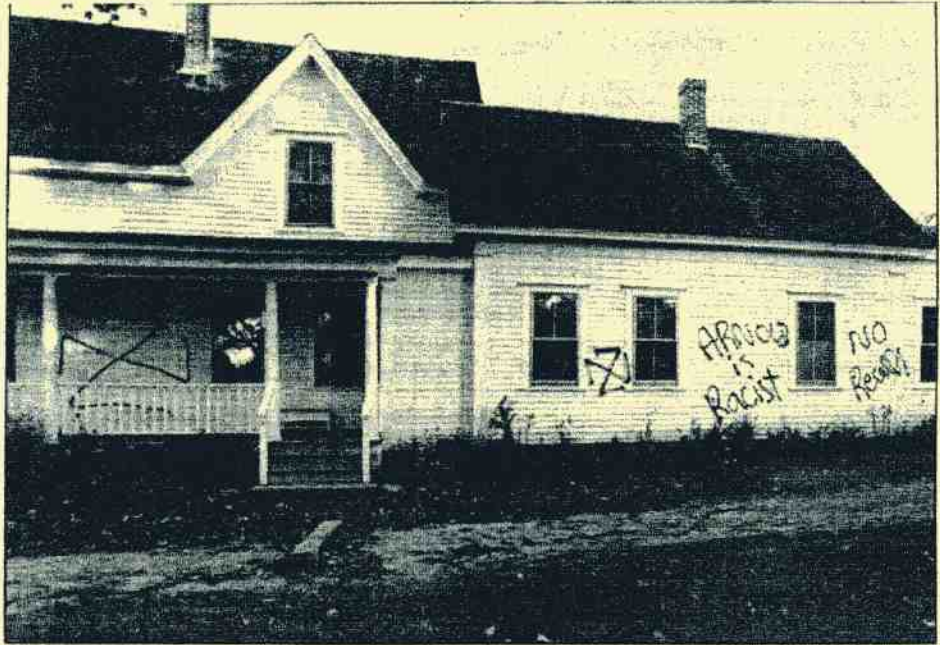
As a Master Gardener, Ben's interest and knowledge in the science of plants would likely win Frost's approval who also enjoyed a lifetime of "botanizing" that flourished during his time at Derry.

ROBERT FROST HOUSE and BARN VANDALIZED

As reported by the Union Leader October 4, 2003. From staff and Wire Service Reports. Union Leader correspondent Kimberly Houghton contributed to this report.

Vandals have defaced the Robert Frost farmhouse with spray-painted slogans about the California recall election and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"And we're about as far from California as you can get," Police Sgt. Robert Smith said.



AP PHOTO

Yesterday police found swastikas and the slogans "Arnold is racist," "no recall" and "Arnold is Nazi" along the south side of the farmhouse where Frost lived when he wrote some of his most famous poems.

Police said yesterday afternoon they doubt there is a connection between the poet and the vandals slogans. But Smith said the words were painted in an area that would be clearly visible from Route 28.

"...Police are asking for the public's help in catching the vandals who damaged the building which was erected in the late 1800's. Anyone with information about the crime is encouraged to call the local police department at 432-6111."

"...A number if motorists called authorities yesterday morning after viewing the damage on their way to work, Smith said. Workers painted over the graffiti early yesterday morning, he said.

The person or persons responsible will most likely be charged with criminal mischief, according to Smith.

**Immediately after the vandalism was reported, New Hampshire's Park Service directed by Regional Manager Tom Mattson painted over the graffiti.*

THANK-YOU, DERRY GARDEN CLUB

The children's garden, planted for the past five years by members of the Derry Garden Club with flowers, vegetables, and plants that attract butterflies, was planted this year as the first project jointly undertaken by the *Youth in Action Program* and the garden club. Healthy plants of dill, parsley, and cabbage shared space in the garden with an assortment of colorful flowers. Led by Garden Club President Michelle Mensinger, this year's "Butterfly Garden" gave those who participated an opportunity to experience different types of jobs related to community involvement.

FRIENDS of the ROBERT FROST FARM MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

STUDENT.....\$10.00 INDIVIDUAL.....\$20.00 FAMILY.....\$35.00
SPONSOR.....\$50.00 SUPPORTING....\$100.00 CORPORATE...\$250.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____

Mail to: Ian Veitenheimer, Treasurer
Friends of the Robert Frost Farm
P. O. Box 1075
Derry, NH 03038

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR MEMBERSHIP -- *Please tell a friend.*

DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE I-93

Rte. 193, Exit 4. East on Rte. 102 to Derry New Hampshire Traffic Circle. South on Rte. 28 for 1 ¼ miles to the farm. Programs are made possible by grants from the New Hampshire Humanities Council and are sponsored by the Robert Frost Homestead Trustees and the Friends of the Robert Frost Farm. Speaker Programs are free to the public.

www.nonprofitumbrella.org/frostfarm

Telephone (603) 432-3091

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