

Robert Frost Farm Friends Newsletter

Robert Frost Homestead Foundation



Issue 1

Spring, 2002

DERRY FARM ATTRACTS VISITORS WORLDWIDE

Farm Manager Claire Ternan reported that approximately five thousand people visited The Frost Farm during Centennial Year 2001. The largest number came from New Hampshire and the New England states, with visitors from all fifty states and fifteen foreign countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and Mexico; figures that affirm the global popularity of Frost and his poetry.



Robert Frost at Derry, New Hampshire, 1911

POET, FARMER, TEACHER

Robert Frost's years at the Derry Farm were spent as Poet, Farmer, and Teacher. It was during this time that his life experiences shaped his style of writing, one that is rich with metaphor, clarity of diction, and colloquial rhythms. Poetry, he wrote was "one step backward taken,"— "a momentary stay against confusion."

HONORARY TRUSTEE APPOINTED

At their September meeting the Trustees of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation unanimously approved the appointment of Robert Frost's granddaughter, Robin Hudnut of Tiburon, California to serve as an Honorary Trustee. Robin is an accomplished artist who has done illustrations for two children's books written by her Aunt Lesley Frost Ballantine, (Frost's oldest daughter). She is a devoted student of her grandfather's work with a life-long interest and commitment to his poetry and legacy.

DERRY'S MAPLE AND APPLE TREES PHOTOGRAPHED

In late summer, pictures were taken of the Farm's historic Maple and apple trees by commercial photographer, Jeff Krueger of St. Paul, Minnesota. Part of an artistic project, Krueger has been working with grants from the State of Minnesota. He has traveled throughout the United States recording on film trees that have historic significance, either for their age or specific location, and especially trees that were nurtured or grown by celebrated Americans such as Frost.

The venerable old Maple that shades and cools summer visitors to the Farm, and some of the apple trees growing in the wood, are destined to become part of a unique display of tree photographs that Krueger plans to exhibit sometime this summer in St. Paul.

The Farm has been promised prints of the Derry pictures and looks forward to viewing in particular the apple trees that photographed extremely well against a vivid blue sky; trees reminiscent of those immortalized by Frost in the opening lines of his poem, "After Apple Picking."

*"...My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still..."*

2001 ROBERT FROST YOUTH POET PROGRAM

The Robert Frost Youth Poet Program for Fourth Grade New Hampshire students took place on Saturday, June 23, 2001 bringing over two-hundred and fifty New Hampshire residents to the Farm who came to hear these young poets read their winning poems.

Held annually, the competition is sponsored jointly by an endowment from the Finisterre Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, together with Trustees of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation, the University of New Hampshire Library, State of New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development - Division of Parks and Recreation, and the Poetry Society of New Hampshire. Each poem required the theme of **100 Years Ago** as reflected in fourth grader Addie Moreno's First Prize winning poem:

Child's Song of Tragedy

Times Past
When waters surround me,
Begging me, watching me, catching me.
Winds catch my hair.
Musty smells of earth fill my nose.

Times Past
When dirt roads come alive with clatter of hooves.
Buggies rushing and splatters of mud catch the wheels
Screams of rage and fearsome growls,
Made from both wind and sea.

Times Past
When I've made solemn vows never be found on the
docks.
My heart carries me farther from land,
Until murkiness of water steals my feet.
Tides fill my soul with promises of return.

Future times
When I will be found,
For my past lies on the shore of New Castle.
My body clings to powdery sand, where my heart and
soul
Will only be found.
Then will my secrets be revealed.

By Addie Moreno, Strafford School, Center Strafford
Jennifer Edgerly, Teacher

The 2002 Youth Poetry Awards Ceremony will be held on Saturday, June 22, 2002 at 12 noon at the Robert Frost Farm in Derry. Poems this year will reflect the theme of "**New Hampshire: Our Land**", inspired by Frost's "The Gift Outright."

SUMMER 2002 LITERARY SERIES

Inviting guest speakers to Derry to celebrate the work of America's foremost poet is a tradition at the farm. Lectures which are held in the Farm's barn theater begin at 2:00 P.M., and are open to the public.

THE SUMMER 2002 SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS:

SATURDAY, JULY 13 – ELIZABETH SMITH BROWNSTEIN

A graduate of Wellesley College and the London School of Economics, Ms. Brownstein is a researcher, writer and producer of cultural documents and public affairs programs. She is the author of *If this House Could Talk, Extraordinary Americans*. Using the house as a metaphor, her slide/lecture explores the lives and times of extraordinary Americans who have shaped our culture and our history. The result of her intensive national search opens the doors to some of America's most significant houses, including the simple Derry Farm of beloved poet, Robert Frost.

SUNDAY, JULY 21 – MEKEEL McBRIDE

Professor McBride is a teacher and poet whose poems, *Wind of the White Dresses, No Ordinary World, A Change in the Weather, The Going Under of the Evening Land, and Red Letter Days*, have appeared in publications such as *The Nation, The Georgia Review, The Iowa Review* and *The American Review*. Presently on the faculty of the University of New Hampshire she has taught at Wheaton, Harvard, and Princeton. A Radcliffe Fellow in 1976 she has had residency at the MacDowell Colony. Ms. McBride has also received two National Endowment for the Arts grants.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 – WALLY SWIST

Poet, author, and teacher affiliated with Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut. A recipient of a 1978 Connecticut Commission on the Arts Grant in poetry, Mr. Swist's most recent book *Veils of the Divine* which contains sixty-nine of his poems has been published by Hanover Press. Critics have called his poetry "beautifully perceptive reading of both the natural world and ourselves as its necessary testament and witness." Last summer he taught poetry at the Hill-stead Museum in Farmington, Connecticut, site of the prestigious Sunken Garden Poetry Festival. As a writer-in-residence in 1998 at the Amherst home of long-time Frost friend, Poet Robert Francis, Mr. Swist speaks cogently with respect to both similarities and differences between Frost and Francis.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24 – LINDA HART

Researcher, university teacher, and author, Ms. Hart is an acknowledged expert on the English years of Robert Frost. In the early 1990s she moved west of London to the small market town of Ledbury in Herefordshire where she now lives. Her interest in Frost's English years began after she discovered she was now living two miles from *Little Iddens* a cottage near Gloucestershire where Frost lived during 1914-1915. Shortly thereafter she was instrumental in organizing in 1993 the *Friends of the Dymock Poets*, a new literary society to commemorate Frost and the other Dymock poets. Her book *Once They Lived in Gloucestershire – A Dymock Poets Anthology* focuses on what former FDP President Sean Street describes as "a dynamic fellowship that played a crucial and still undervalued part in literary history."

This will be Linda's second appearance at Derry. As part of the summer 1998 "British Extravaganza", her slide show/lecture was a resounding success. She promises to bring new and fresh insights into Robert Frost's English years. The discovery that she had moved close to Dymock/Ryton where "two roads diverged in a yellow wood" is a coincidence that she says, "has literally changed her life."

PLAQUE COMMEMORATES FROST



Beaconsfield mayor and Kimberly Murphy from the US Embassy, unveiling a plaque to commemorate Robert Frost.

By Linda Hart

Photo by Jane Skinner.

On September 17th a plaque commemorating Robert Frost was unveiled at 26a Reynolds Road at the site of his home in Beaconsfield from September 1912 to March 1914. The official unveiling was carried out by Beaconsfield's mayor, Nico Sachetti, and Kimberly Murphy, Assistant Cultural Attaché from the US Embassy (pictured left). On the same day, Beaconsfield Library displayed a new permanent Robert Frost Collection, containing books and articles about Frost and focusing in particular on his time in England.

It was Beaconsfield resident Kari Dorne who first had the idea for the plaque, when she was Beaconsfield's librarian in the late 1980s and helped John Walsh with inquiries for his book on Frost's English years. Linda Hart* proposed the idea of a plaque to a large audience when she lectured on Frost's English years at Beaconsfield library in September 2000. As local support for the idea grew, Kari Dorne was able to team up with FDP member Jean Jackson, a former Beaconsfield teacher. The two of them went to discuss the idea with the occupants of 26a Reynolds Road, and were delighted to find an Anglo-American couple who were happy to co-operate with the idea. Kari and Jean then financed the design and production of the plaque. The result is an attractive plaque on the wall in front of the house that replaced Frost's bungalow in 1992.

After the unveiling, about 60 invited guests had refreshments at the library and heard actress Anne Harvey, Ed Bishop (an expat American actor with a wonderful New England accent), Linda Hart, and Beaconsfield student Simon Dutton read poems Frost wrote when living in Beaconsfield as well as letters that he and his wife Elinor wrote home.

* Organizer and former Chair of Friends of the Dymock Poets (FDP).

VERMONT'S STONE HOUSE FUTURE SITE OF FROST MUSEUM

The Friends of Robert Frost of Bennington, Vermont recently signed a contract to buy the Shaftsbury home that Robert Frost owned from 1920 to 1929 and where he wrote "Stopping By Woods On a Snowy Evening." They plan to make it a museum where visitors can learn about Frost's life and art.

Organized in February, 2000, the FoRF is presently conducting a major fund drive to acquire the property located just fifteen minutes away from Frost's gravesite in Old Bennington.

The Friends mission in buying and converting this lovely old residence into a museum is twofold: first, to preserve for future generations the legacy of one of America's greatest literary figures, and, secondly, to educate Frost's popular audience by encouraging their appreciation of his poetry and life.

Log on to FoRF <www.frostfriends.org>

UNH HOSTS FROST EVENTS

In June, as part of the New Hampshire Humanities Council Teachers Institute, the University of New Hampshire (UNH), held a five-day teaching course for New Hampshire secondary school teachers called *ROBERT FROST: Yesterday and Today*. The course took place June 24-29 and was funded by the New Hampshire Humanities Council with support from the Center for Humanities, (UNH).

As part of the many educational events in this week-long seminar, the participants were given a tour of Pinkerton Academy's Pinkerton Building including Room 21 (Frost's classroom), and the Chapel where Frost's plays were performed. Pinkerton faculty members, Laura Burnham, Chair of the Frost Homestead Foundation Board and Ian Veitenhiemer, the Board's Treasurer, lectured on Frost's Pinkerton years and their special influence on the poet's life and work.

The group then visited the Frost Farm where they were given an extensive and informative tour of the house and grounds, examining the literary and social context of Frost's works that were influenced and inspired by his experiences there.

Following the Farm tours, David Watters, Vice Chair of the Frost Homestead Foundation Board and faculty member at UNH, who was instrumental in developing and presiding over the teaching course, presented a very interesting seminar that featured innovative and creative ideas for teaching Frost.



The well was dry beside the door,
And so we went with pail and can
Across the fields behind the house
To seek the brook if it still ran...

"Going for water"

On Friday, September 21, UNH hosted a one-day conference celebrating the centennial of the Frost family's residence in Derry, New Hampshire. Organized and moderated by David Watters, the conference entitled *ROBERT FROST: From Derry to the World*, drew participants from all over the country that included Frost scholars, published authors, and members of The Robert Frost

Society. The latter group is an organization that publishes *The Robert Frost Review* promoting the study of Frost's life and work.

The following day, Saturday, September 22, Lesley Lee Francis, Frost's granddaughter and Honorary Trustee of the Robert Frost Homestead Foundation, met with a group of scholars and friends of the poet for a day of informal discussion at the Farm. Ms. Francis is the author of *The Frost Family's Adventure in Poetry - Sheer Morning Gladness at the Brim* that chronicles the Frost family's idyllic early years.

The conference was funded by the James H. Hayes and Claire Short Hayes Chair in the Humanities, with support provided by the Center to the Humanities, UNH, and the UNH Library, Milne Special Collections and Archives.

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 --- Please tell a friend.

DIRECTIONS FROM ROUTE I-93

Rte. I 93, 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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