

Normandy Farms can grow on you

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Everybody who has been to Normandy Farms Campground, off Route 1 in Foxboro, should give thanks to a band of Colonial privateers who sailed the coast of Massachusetts during the 1700s.

Those pirates captured a French vessel and took prisoner, Francis Daniels, a young French officer from the province of Normandy, and brought him to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in Boston. Daniels three-month imprisonment was ended when he was taken to the William Hewes farm in Wrentham to work off his indebtedness.

Finally, on June 6, 1759, Francis Daniels, age 36, was able to purchase from Hewes 53 acres of land for seven pounds, 18 shillings.

Normandy Farms Campground was built on those 53 acres, and since then, has expanded to 140 acres. This expansion happened neither overnight, nor by design.

Through the years, each generation of Daniels farmed the land that Francis had suffered to obtain. It wasn't until two centuries later that Norman and Jeannette Daniels tried something other than farming to earn a living.

Since farming wasn't a lucrative occupation, Norman took to truck driving to help subsidize the farm-

Camping

ing business. Norman enjoyed his traveling, and soon thereafter, he and Jeannette began camping.

Meanwhile, their son Dan finished college while continuing to work the farm raising poultry and sheep. He also began working for an uncle installing swimming pools to help keep the farm alive.

Finally, the Daniels family decided to build a campground to try to make the land become more profitable. They incorporated ideas from other campgrounds into their own design.

"Things just clicked after that," said Dan Daniels. "We did some things right just when people were really beginning to camp in the '70s."

One of the things they did right was to build modern restroom facilities.

"Modern restrooms weren't that common 15-18 years ago," explained Daniels, "and it caught the attention of the women in the family."

Today those original facilities have been updated to include heat, music and skylights which allow for proper ventilation. The one thing that hasn't changed is the care the restrooms receive. They-

re as clean as when Norman checked on them himself when he was alive.

A large recreation hall and an indoor swimming pool were two other ideas that also helped draw campers from all over New England.

The hall has been put to good use by daughter-in-law, Doris, who has used that building to develop a year 'round activities program that sandwiches a host of seasonal activities between a New Year's Eve catered dinner dance and a Christmas party.

A Halloween party, St. Patrick's Day dinner, July 4th, Mother and Father's Day, and a complete turkey dinner on Thanksgiving are a few of the more popular social events.

Daily activities, grouped according to age, include ping-pong, washer tosser, horseshoes, softball, exercise classes, soccer, bingo cribbage, darts, movies and shows, and marshmallow roasts.

The swimming areas have multiplied about as fast as the rabbits on the Daniels farm. Now three outdoor pools and a whirlpool join the indoor pool to form an outstanding swimming complex.

The Daniels clan has worked hard to develop a campground that is known as being customer service oriented.

"I tell our employees that the person who is their boss is the customer; he pays our bills," stated Daniels, who is also president of the National Campground Owners Association.

The first contact a camper has with any campground is the registration staff, and Normandy Farms has a well-staffed, friendly and efficient crew to help your vacation get off to a good start.

You and your wife won't even have to argue about how to find your way to your site because a young Normandy Farms ranger will guide you to your destination in a golf cart where he'll also inspect the site for any problems.

All 350 sites have water and electric (30-50 amp), and about a third have sewage hookups. The roads through the grounds are wide enough to allow you to easily back in that 30-foot Coachman trailer.

For years Normandy Farms has been considered one of New England's best campgrounds. Since its beginning, its reputation as a quality facility has spread, and in 1985 was named campground of the year by *Trailer Life Magazine*.

Today, young Francis Daniels would be proud of the new-found farming success of his present day relatives in growing families' memories instead of livestock.