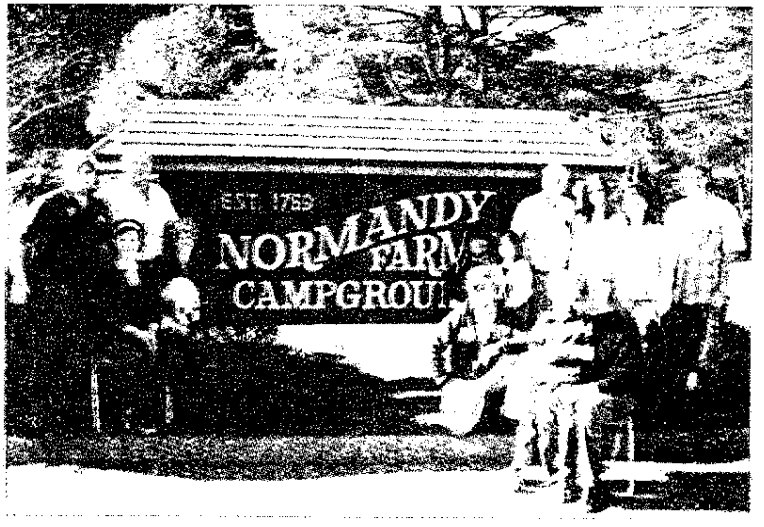
Normandy Farms marks 250th year in Foxboro

A commemorative section
1759-2009

One family's legacy

IT WAS IN 1759 that a young French Army officer, who had been brought to these shores in chains as a prize of war, was able to purchase 53 acres of land on what later became West Street in Foxborough. Francis Daniels would name his new home Normandy Farm, a reminder of his birthplace in the Normandy region of France that he would never see again. The farm prospered and grew to more than 200 acres, passed down through years and generations.

250 YEARS LATER. Daniels family members are still working on the land laid out by their ancestors, and will celebrate their proud heritage on June 13. Seventh generation members Albert (Dan), Robert and Janis (right) are joined by eighth and ninth generation members running the Normandy Farms Campground on West Street while seventh generation member Scott Daniels resides in the original homestead with his family and raises Christmas trees. This is their story, one family's legacy that started even before America was born.



About this section:

Proud of their heritage and conscious of their role in the legacy of Francis Daniels, members of the seventh, eighth and ninth generations of the Daniels family turned to Town Historian Jack Authelet to create a lasting tribute to the family on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Normandy Farm. Working with photos from the family archives provided by Kristine Daniels, Jack shares the history of a family determined to work the land as a means of remaining upon it, generation to generation, as one family's legacy continues.

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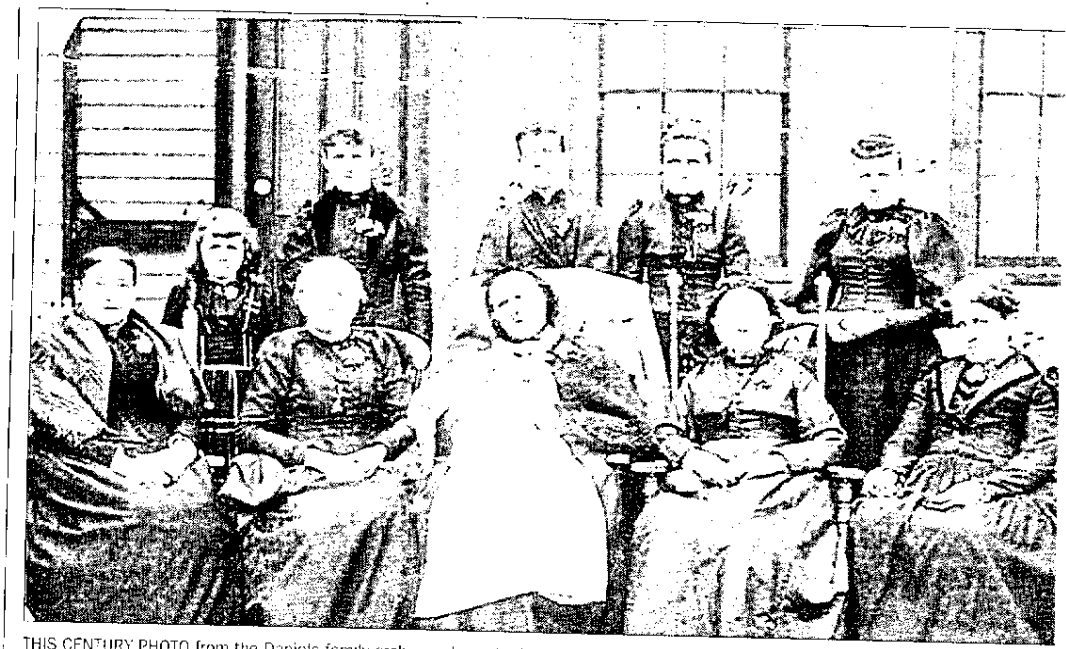
Index:



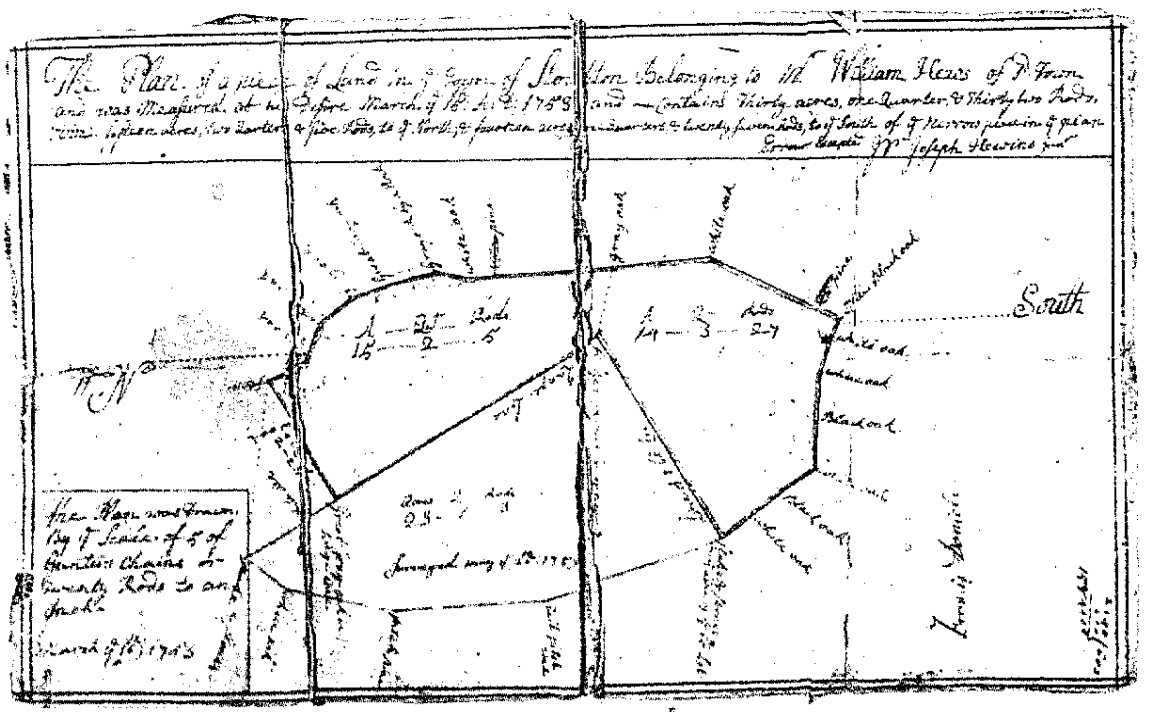
THIS CENTURY PHOTO from the Daniels family archives shows in the center a 100-year-old woman holding an infant. The five women in back are stated to be age 10, 30, 50, 40 and 20. The women to the left of the center figures are 75 and 80 and to the right, 90 and 60.

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

Misfortune smiled on French officer

Arriving in shackles, Francois Guideau put down roots to plant the Daniels' legacy here in Foxborough

BY JACK AUTHELET



Plot plan dated 1753 outlines land comprising the Dorchester School Farm and precedes the 1759 sale of 59 acres to Francis and Kezian Daniels.

The young Frenchman, an Army officer, was serving in the West Indies when he was stricken ill, spending months in the hospital. His return to duty proved premature, and he fell ill once again. It was decided he should return home but King George's War had broken out between British and French colonies, and a ship carrying a French officer would not be welcome in some ports. His presence would have to be concealed in unfriendly territory.

But that was not the only danger at sea. Shipping companies along the eastern seaboard of North America and Canada were lacking in protection by the British Navy on the open sea. To protect their own interests and gain an advantage in international waters, they commissioned privateers -- private vessels sailing under license from the Colonial government -- to disrupt shipping and commerce by nations not friendly to their cause.

They were subsequently allowed to sell any seized assets at auction to help offset the cost of the voyage. Ships under French colors were of particular interest, and many vessels and valuable cargoes were seized for bounty by the privateers.

A Colonial privateer, intercepting the vessel bound for France, found itself with more than cargo to sell off once back in port. The crew discovered a true prize of war, a young French Army officer who, at that moment, asked nothing more than to be able to go home to regain his health and resume his life. But it was not to be. In that moment of discovery, his life was irrevocably changed: he would never see his beloved Normandy again.

Instead, he was put in chains and brought to the Massachusetts Bay Colony at Boston, where he was turned over to authorities who paid a bounty to the privateer for his capture.

And so it was that one Francois Guideau, whose name would later be changed to Francis Daniels, arrived in what would become his adopted country. Remanded to prison for three months, he was held responsible for the cost of his passage, which had to be repaid. His circumstances were overwhelming, alone in a strange and alien land, penniless and friendless - or so he thought -- until one man stepped forward with extended hand and changed the course of history that would lead to the 250th anniversary celebration of Normandy Farms in Foxborough, Massachusetts in June of 2009.

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Francois Guideau was born June 22, 1723 near Rouen in the Province of Normandy in France. His father had died when he was quite young, leaving him with his grandfather and an uncle. When forced to the shore of this foreign land and imprisoned in Boston, everything of value was taken from him except his silver knee buckles and his sword (both still in the possession of his descendants).

He knew that once he was released from jail, he would have to find room and board for himself while he earned sufficient funds to pay his captors for the cost of his passage to Boston. It would take years to pay off the debt before he could even consider the possibility of earning sufficient money or offering his services in exchange for passage back to his homeland.

His future was bleak and foreboding. But there was a glimmer of hope offered by one of the keepers at the jail, one George Hewes, who spoke French and befriended the young captive whom he found "a likely fellow." George spoke about his brother, William Hewes, a wealthy landowner with a large farm in Wrentham who was in need of hired hands. Arrangements were made for Francois to go to Wrentham following his release from prison; he could live on the farm and be paid wages that could be used to offset his debt.

The farm that William Hewes was operating was the so-called Dorchester School Farm, a large tract of land owned by Dorchester that was leased out for farming. Proceeds from the lease were used to fund the first public school in the Colonies which was located in Dorchester. Francois was taken into the Hewes family and lived at the farm for a number of years.

A Frenchman in the neighborhood was an oddity. It was also an awkward time for anyone of French descent in the Colonies as tensions increased between the British and French nations. The name of the young Frenchman was changed to an English pronunciation of Francis Daniels, thus establishing a family name that would be prominent in local affairs for a remarkable two and a half centuries.

(Continued on page 4)

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

Daniels family occupied Pew 17 in Foxboro's first meeting house

(Continued from page 3)

The soldier-turned-farmer settled into the routine of working the land and many years would pass as he labored to repay his debt. He was obviously valued as a worker and learned important skills related to farming and the raising of crops.

Francis Daniels was welcomed into the broader community and, apparently while still living at the Hewes farm, married one Keziah Rockwood, daughter of Benjamin Rockwood of Franklin. Both town and family records are silent on the date of their marriage, but do record the birth of the first of their six children when daughter Margaret was born March 4, 1758.

Landowner

In a remarkable turn of events, the young French soldier -- who had been brought to this country in chains -- not only paid off his debt, married and started a family but accomplished what many more firmly established residents had failed to do. On June 4, 1759, Francis and Keziah Daniels purchased 53 acres of land from William Hewes, a realization of what many would have called the American Dream.

The purchase price of the land was 67 Pounds, 18 Shillings and records indicate it was tendered in cash at the time of the sale. The transaction was recorded in the town of Wrentham in Suffolk County, said records being transferred to Foxborough and Norfolk County once those entities were created.

There was much to do, as Francis had to build a home for his young family while planting crops, acquiring livestock and developing a market for the fruits of his labors. He also had to provide for his own family as well, which by September included their second child, Mary, born Sept. 27, 1759

Family life

Life on the farm was demanding, the days long, the work hard. Cows had to be milked morning and night, hens and livestock to be fed, hay to harvest as well as store for winter use, food to preserve, the wood box to fill, and food could be stored in summer months only if there was a sufficient harvest of ice in winter.

Keziah would have total responsibility for the household, building a fire for cooking as well as heating water for doing the laundry, preparing food for consumption as well as preserving, baking all her own bread, making puddings and pies. Even while raising young children, she would spin her own yarn from wool sheared from their sheep, make all the family clothes, and be totally self-sufficient out of necessity.

While focused on their own needs, and there were many which had come to include the birth of a third child and only son, James, born Aug. 10, 1761, there were also reminders of being members of a broader community, one that had come to include 70 families living in the area.

An awareness grew among the families living here that they had much more in common as friends and neighbors than as residents of the distant towns of Wrentham, Walpole, Stoughton and Stoughtonham to which they belonged. They lamented the distance they had to travel on the Sabbath for worship, and there were no provisions nearby for educating their children.

In a bold move, they decided to petition for incorporation as a separate town, but first they had to erect the requisite Meeting House. Land was made available in 1763 (now the Common in the center of town) and residents donated time and materials to build a Meeting House. The Daniels family would occupy Pew 17.

The carryall used to transport the family to worship on Sunday morning was getting a bit more crowded with the birth of their fourth child, Anna, on March 21, 1764. But families in the area were beginning to feel the strain of taxes and charges imposed upon them when the British imposed the Sugar Act of 1764, dealing a fatal blow to the Colony's lumber and shipping industries by crippling trade with the West Indies.

This was followed quickly by the Stamp Act of 1765, a far more grievous transgression -- as its intent was not to regulate trade but to raise revenue. Even more troubling, the revenue was not for the Colony itself, but to help England offset the cost of the French and Indian War.

Petition to incorporate

Into this politically charged atmosphere, those living here submitted a petition to the Legislature on Jan. 30, 1766, stating they had in fact built their Meeting House and were petitioning for relief from the rigors of travel to worship. It must have seemed like a minor distraction to the Legislature at the time, but the last thing the British wanted was another community to be recognized. The petition was denied.

The political situation worsened as Francis and Keziah welcomed Junia, their fifth child, into the family Aug. 17, 1767. The Townshend Act placed import duties on tea, lead, glass, oil and paper. Many Colonials refused to purchase such goods, but they were not deterred in their efforts to incorporate, bringing a new petition before the General Court June 10, 1768.

Suffering defeat once again, they resumed their efforts to clear land, plant crops and set aside sufficient food supplies to last the winter. The following spring, they would welcome their daughter Susanna into the world on April 1, 1769, their sixth and final child.

Anxious to enjoy the amenities of community life that had been denied, residents acted once again on their own behalf, building a small schoolhouse on Chestnut Street and hiring a teacher to instruct their children. It was 1770, the year that tensions in Boston erupted into a confrontation known around the world as the Boston Massacre.

(Continued on facing page)

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

Town's first public road ran through Daniels' farm

(Continued from page 4)

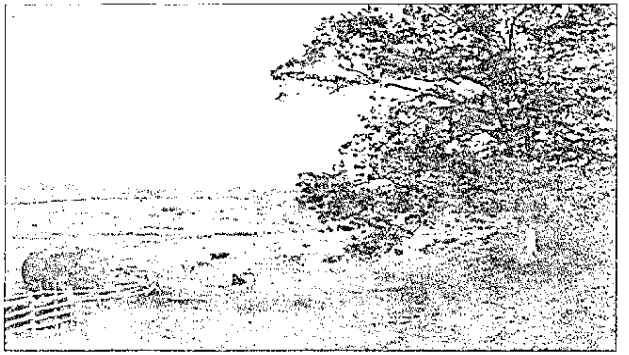
Incorporation and Independence were companion issues for the Colonists, who resubmitted their petition in 1771. Being denied, they pressed forward with their dream, erecting a second school in East Foxboro, certain that one day there would be a town government to support it.

Francis Daniels was becoming caught up in the effort, and added his name to the list of petitioners for yet another plea for incorporation in 1773. There was a vote to accept it, but no action was taken given the rise in tensions which led to the most open opposition to British rule, the Boston Tea Party.

Courageous Colonial leaders committed their grievances against the government to writing in the Suffolk Resolves and quickly dispatched Paul Revere to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia where the content of the Resolves greatly influenced the writing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Ezra Carpenter, who later became the son-in-law of Francis and Keziah, marched to the call at Concord and Lexington, serving in the Revolution under General Washington. A tactical maneuver by the Colonials in placing cannon atop Dorchester Heights under cover of darkness led to the British evacuation of Boston and a subsequent change in government.

With a Colonial government seated in Boston, a more favorable political climate prevailed, and members reconsidered the petition of 1773 and on June 10, 1778 the document signed by Francis Daniels and others became the law of the land.



Cows graze in rolling meadows established by Francis Daniels off West Steet.

The new community would be called Foxborough and as part of establishing its government, the road that ran through the farm of one Francis Daniels -- West Street -- was officially accepted as the first public road in the new community where the street, the farm and the family remain part of the fabric of the community to this day.

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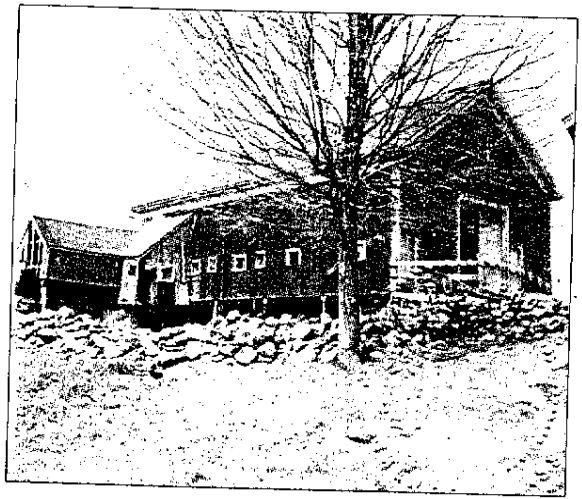
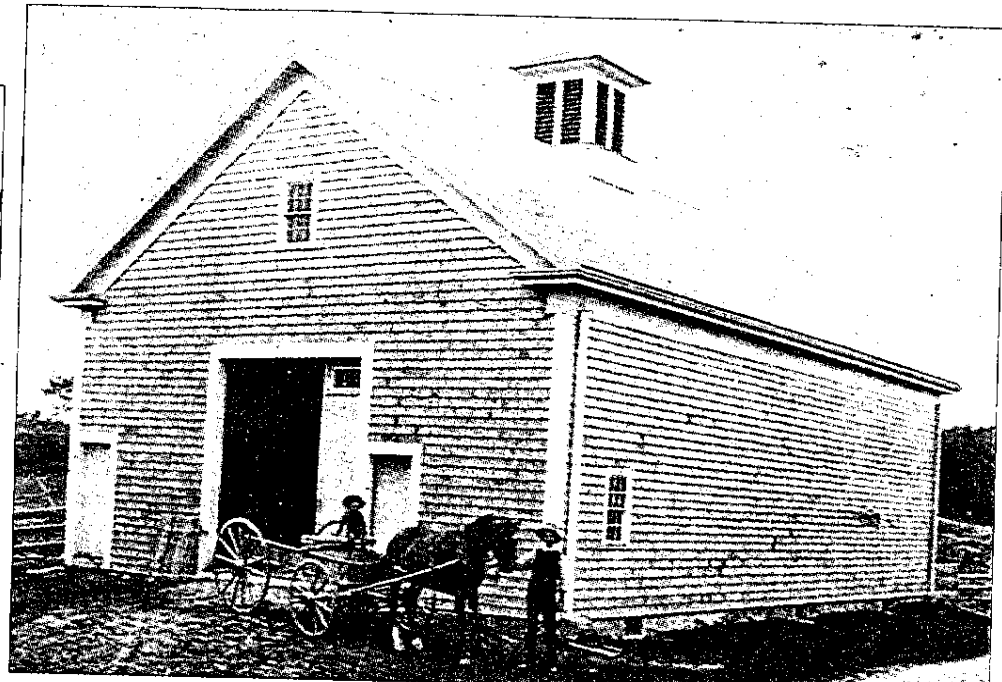
Brought to Boston in chains, it is unlikely that Francois Guideau had any thoughts of remaining on this distant shore where he would not only make a new life for himself but where he would witness the birth of a new nation and help guide the founding of a new community. His roots run deep, and not a single day has passed since that moment he signed the deed and became a landowner that his property has not been occupied by his descendents.

And so it has come to pass, nearly 250 years to the day, that family members would gather at his beloved Normandy Farms in celebration of the life of a young Frenchmen who so many years later would write an epitaph that would give thanks "to the Lord whose sovereign hand, that brought me to this Gospel land; that I in port might hear and know, and taste the joys while here below."

NEW & IMPROVED





A NEW BARN was built in 1890 to replace the original, struck by lightning. In photo at right, Francis Daniels is seen in the wagon while his father, Albert, holds the horse. The barn provided stalls for animals, storage for hay, and space for heavy equipment underneath.

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

Did Francis Daniels face the music?

Francis Daniels was a French Huguenot (Protestant), a devout man who appreciated music. His grandson, Albert Daniels, would later describe him as very musical. His granddaughter, Keziah Comey, wrote in 1879 that her grandfather used to take her on his knees and sing the tune of the "Seven Bells" in French. Keziah lived with the family since infancy until she was 21, information she offered in support of her claims of intimate knowledge of her grandfather's musical preferences.

The family members had come forward to counter suggestions that there seemed to be another side of Francis Daniels, one that took exception to a bass viol being played during worship in the old Meeting House on the Common back in 1801. It took a formal vote of the town on April 6 to allow music in a worship service and the instrument was purchased for $3.00

When hearing the music, the story went, Francis would get up and walk out of the service until the music stopped.

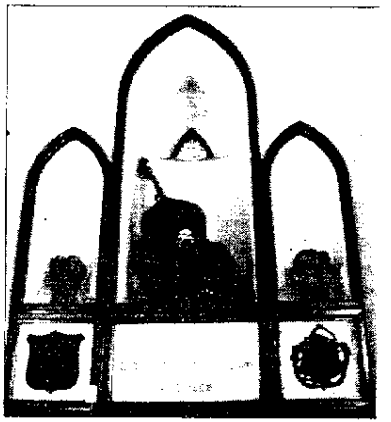
There seemed to be a major disconnect in the portrayals of just where Francis stood (or did he remain seated?) when music was played during worship. After a while, there was no one left to give a first-person account about, but the story persisted. In fact, when Bethany Church celebrated its 175th anniversary in 1954 and noted the Centennial of its present building on Rockhill Street, the bass viol was prominently displayed and the story repeated yet again, this time by Bertha Daniels, chairman of the Anniversary Committee and great-great-great granddaughter of said Francis.

The story could -- or should -- have been put to rest long ago with the publishing of the Paine family genealogy. It makes reference to a William Paine, born in Malden on June 26, 1720, who married Mary Bull in 1743 while she was living in what would later become Foxborough. Mr. Paine was portrayed as a man of society who, when the bass viol was introduced into the choir of the church, he would go out as he "would not sit still and hear the fiddle scraped in the house of God."

But what about published statements that in 1801, two elders of the church, trying to resolve differences about the bass viol, visited Francis and quoted scripture about instruments used in praise of the Lord? Francis purportedly said he would continue to go to church as he always had, and all that like that instrument could enjoy it and all could enjoy their own opinion. That being said, he reaffirmed his intent to leave the house of worship and stay out until the end of the singing.

Could it have been that Francis appreciated music, just as family members had said, but objected to the introduction of instrumental music during worship? Or has Francis has been unfairly portrayed for more than 200 years if, as the Paine genealogy states, it was William Paine who walked out at the scraping of the bow?

We may never know for sure, but in the interim the bass viol is on permanent exhibit at Memorial Hall, the town archives and museum in Foxborough, where it is displayed for its historical significance - the first musical instrument played in a worship service in the village.



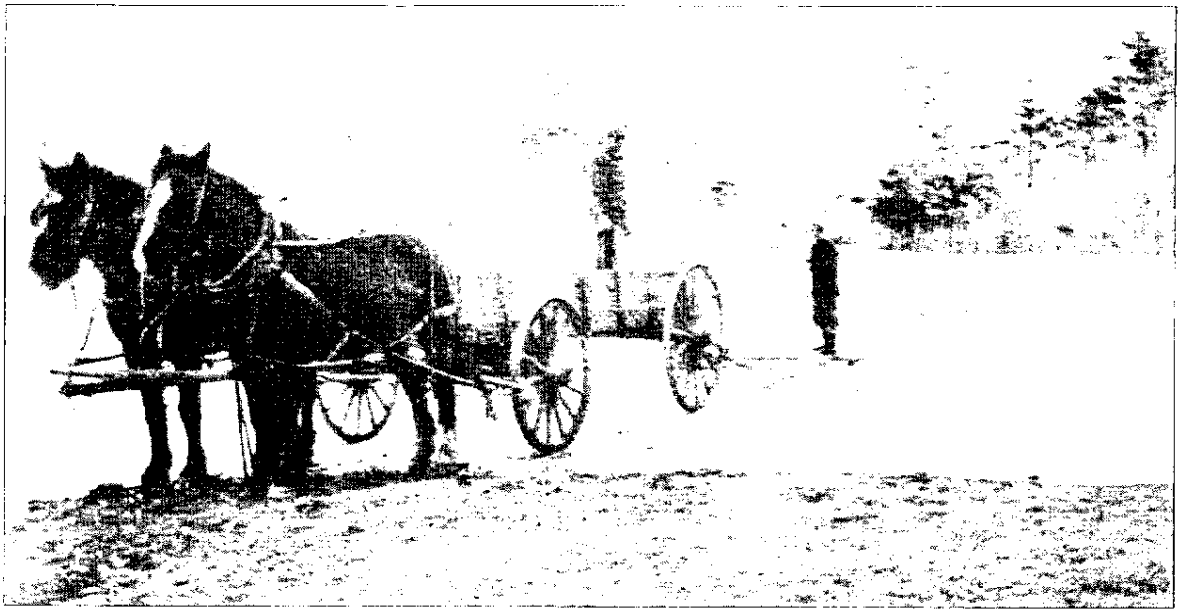
THE BASS VIOL purchased by the town following a vote by the people to allow music in the worship service is now on display over the entrance to Memorial Hall, the town archives and museum. Did Francis Daniels get up and leave the service each time the instrument was played, or was that someone else? The question lingers.

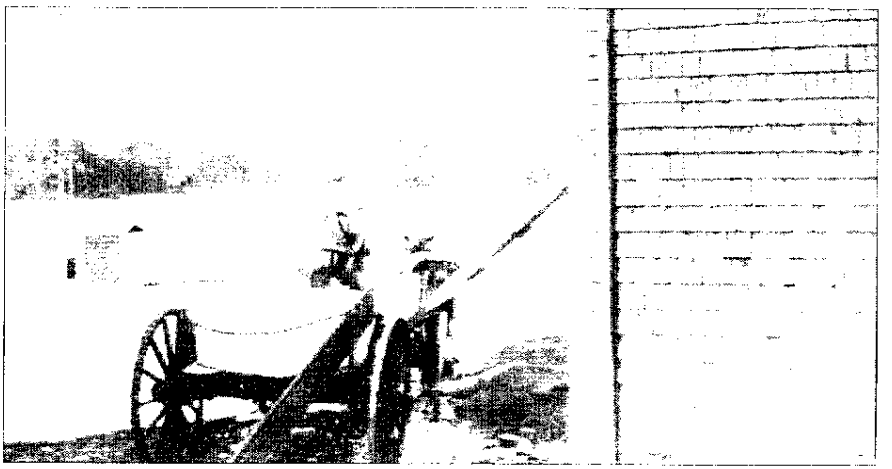
Life at Normandy Farm was never easy

A farmer's life was not an easy one, with the constant need to perform daily chores, tend the crops in season, put sufficient food aside to last the winter and be as self-sufficient as possible, both in providing for the family as well as the animals. It was a challenge of monumental proportions easily affected by bad weather, illness or a drop in egg, milk or vegetable production.

Milking the cows was a daily chore, starting about 5 a.m. The animals had to be cleaned, milked, and then the milk placed in large metal containers to be kept cool until it could be bottled for sale or sold wholesale. The cows could graze in open pastures during warmer weather, while the farmer could cut hay in the field, turning it over in the sun until it was completely dried, then store it in the barn in sufficient quantities to feed the livestock throughout the winter.

If, as a farmer's hay lay drying in the fields, a storm should approach, a sense of concern spread through the neighborhood. Getting the hay wet could spoil the crop, leaving the farmer unable to feed the cattle throughout the winter without having to purchase hay from commercial sources. The added expense could be catastrophic, resulting in lean times for the family. All available friends and neighbors would pitch in, getting the hay under cover as quickly as possible to help the family avoid an extremely difficult winter.





ABOVE: A good ice harvest was a necessity on the farm. Huge blocks would be cut from the farm pond and stored for use in warmer months to preserve the family food supply as well as cool the milk produced on the farm that would be sold to customers. A poor ice harvest would place a financial burden on the family as it sought to purchase supplies during the summer.

AT LEFT: The blocks of ice would be hauled up into the shed, where they would be covered with a heavy layer of sawdust from the sawmill that would insulate the ice during the summer heat. Note the windmill in the background, used to draw water from the well and pump it to storage areas in the house.

Household chores

While there was a daily rhythm to caring for the animals as well as feeding the family, household chores were usually performed on designated days.

■ Monday was wash day, and it started very early in the morning with the building of a fire and heating large quantities of water, one tub for washing, another for the rinse. The clothes, including heavy shirts and overalls, would be scrubbed on the washboard, put in a kettle of hot water on the stove, then rinsed and hung outside on the clothesline to dry. A concession to severe winter weather was a wooden rack near the stove.

■ Tuesday was for ironing, which also required a fire in the stove to heat the iron. If the iron was too cold, the wrinkles persisted. Too hot and the clothing was scorched. It was a delicate balance but a skill quickly learned.

■ Wednesday and Thursday were for churning as well as food preparation and preservation. The heavy cream, skimmed from the milk when first set aside to cool, was brought from the cool cellar and patiently churned into rich, creamy butter. Tomatoes, carrots, peppers and peas would be preserved in glass jars, sealed away for enjoyment long after the growing season had passed.

■ Friday was cleaning day, no small task at Normandy which had grown to include 13 rooms. Beds to strip and make up clean, floors to scrub, furniture to clean and polish went along with clearing the ashes out of the fireplaces, cleaning the stove and washing windows.

■ Saturdays were demanding, but a favorite with many family members. It was baking day. Again, it started with a fire in the oven, but this time it would be lit the night before for a nice even temperature. The aroma of beans, bread and pies would linger throughout the day and often there would be tarts to fill with jelly or cinnamon twists as special treats for the family.

(Continued on facing page)

The chores never ended for town's early farmers

(Continued from page 8)

Different delicacies were placed on separate shelves in the oven, depending on the required temperature, and the women took great pride in their baking as evidenced by the competition in the Grange Fair each year. Winning a ribbon earned the proud honoree bragging rights for a full year.

Saturday night was no less intensive: it was bath night, and that meant heating large quantities of water to fill the tub set in the kitchen near the stove during the colder weather. Bath time only came once each week, so it was incumbent upon everyone to be present when their turn was called.

But the work week was over. The cows still had to be milked and the other animals fed, but Saturday was a time to gather around the long table in the dining room to play games, read and just plain relax.

Sunday still brought chores morning and night, together with meals to provide, but the primary focus of the day was hitching up the carryall and transporting the family to worship. The family had pew 17 in the original Meeting House. When it was torn down in 1822 and the first denominational structures built, members worshiped at the Congregational Church in the center of town and later at the Union Church in South Foxboro.

Seasonal focus

Springtime came as a welcome relief from the more confining days of winter. The earth was coming to life, the chickens were hatching, the gardens would be plowed and planted and there was an excitement to the sense of renewal. Stoves could be removed from the hen houses, runners removed from the wagons and wheels replaced and screens put in the windows in anticipation of warmer days ahead.

Summer was time to cultivate the gardens to insure bountiful crops. There was hay to cut and stack in the barn and the cranberry beds were fertilized to stimulate growth. There was squash to pick, beans to snap, and vegetables to preserve as soon as they were harvested.

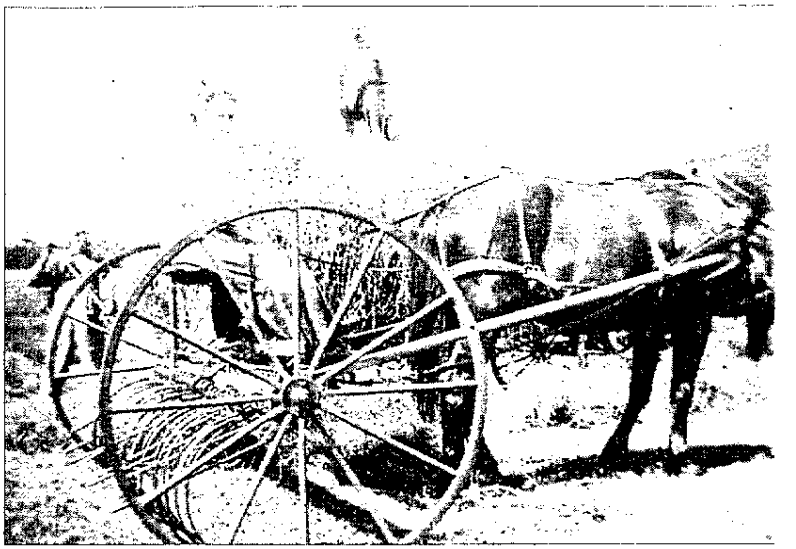
Fall was harvest time, with ample food to enjoy as well as to preserve. Canning followed the seasons: whatever was ripe was served as well as preserved. Carrots and turnips were stored in boxes of sand, potatoes put in the cool vegetable cellar, while pumpkins were buried in the hay mow. Squash went to the attic near the chimney, and parsnips left in the ground to freeze. Apples to pick, cider and vinegar to make, and ears of corn to put through the sheller. Wood to cut, pine needles to pack for starting fires, the preparation for winter was seemingly endless. Soapstone slabs were brought into the house to be heated on cold nights and placed in a flannel bag to slip into the bed to warm it prior to bedtime.

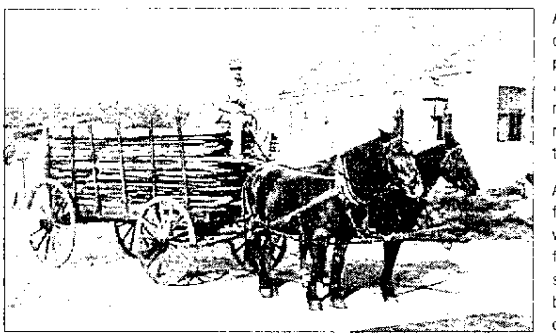
Winter brought its own mix of challenges and rewards. The wood box had to be filled daily to heat the house and to burn in the stove. Once the weather was cold enough to keep meat, the hogs were killed and taken to the carpenter shop to be butchered. The fat would be brought back to the kitchen for rendering to make lard. There was pork to salt in crocks and sausage to make.

The harvesting of ice was most important. Large blocks of ice would be cut once the pond had frozen to a depth of several inches. The men would wear creepers to keep from slipping on the ice. The large blocks would be loaded onto a wagon and brought to a shed behind the house. Covered in sawdust to act as insulation, the blocks would be removed one at a time through spring, summer and fall to keep perishables cool in the ice box. Failure to store adequate ice would improve hardships during warm weather.

Winter was also a preparation time, getting tools ready for spring, cleaning the harnesses, mending screens. They would spend hours at the grindstone, sharpening tools. The men would cut trees in the woodlots, bringing them back to eventually cut into boards, some for use on the farm, others for sale.

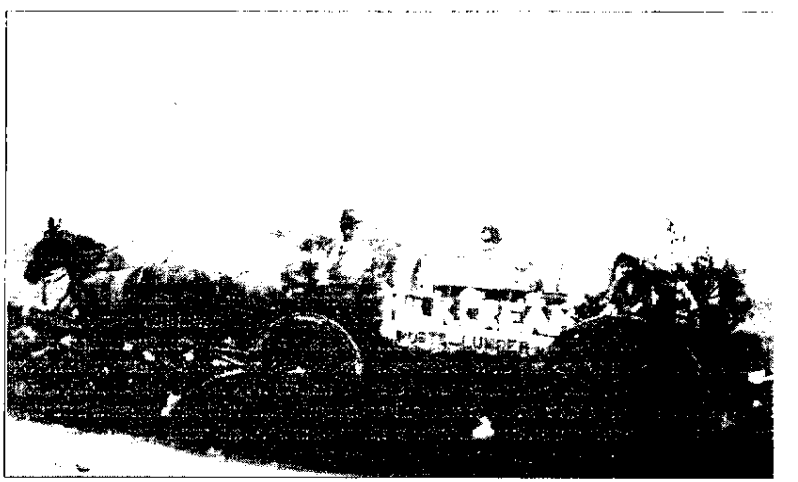
Farm life was demanding, but everyone had their own specific chores to do. Children weeded gardens, fed hens and collected eggs while the elders helped preserve food and make clothing. No large farm could make it without hired hands, and Normandy was no exception.





ABOVE: Harvesting hay, Francis "Grampa" Daniels is seen pitching hay onto the wagon in the early 1900s while Laura Daniels operates the trip raker. A hired hand is on top treading the load.

AT LEFT: Wood lots were carefully managed to produce wood for use at the farm and for sale. Francis Daniels is seen with a full load of cut boards from the saw mill, c1900.



THE DANIELS FAMILY with its float for the annual Firemen's Parade in 1928, promoting the eggs, milk and cream produced at Normandy Farm.

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

'Portion accounts' and provisions for daughters

Early bequests demonstrate patriarch's determination to care for his daughters

At the time of his daughter Margaret's marriage to Ezra Carpenter in 1779, Francis Daniels prepared a list of "indoor moveables" that he gave his daughter. Hand-written with many variations in spelling, each item carried a monetary value and listed such things as 30 yards of sheeting cloth, 20 yards of bed ticking cloth and 12 yards of diaper cloth.

There was also seven yards of cloth for curtains, a woolen cloth for a coverlet, two bed blankets and 20 pounds of feathers. Francis included two bedsteads, two bed cords, a fire pail and tongs together with an iron pot, a dish kettle and a tea kettle which was usually spelled "kittle."

Quite useful for someone about to set up housekeeping, Margaret also received a square table, cedar tub and pail and five chairs as well as a great wheel, two basins, a covered earthen ware, three knives and forks and a cow.

Margaret died at age 32, and her sister Mary -- or Polly as she was called -- became the new wife of Ezra Carpenter. Her portion account was limited to four sheep at three shillings, six pence. In 1792, she was also given a cow and in 1797 a mother cow.

Daughter Anna received her portion account in April of 1783 at 19 years of age. Anna received a great wheel, great tub, two bedsteads, a pot and dish kettle and a tea kettle.

Consistent with the needs of someone setting up housekeeping, she also received a comforter and bed blankets, a case of knives, bed ticking, 12 yards of diaper cloth and a bag of foul (fowl) feathers.

In August of the following year, Anna was the recipient of five pounds of goose feathers, some water foul feathers and dunghill foul feathers, a cow, a fire shovel and tongs. Also noted was the value of keeping her heifer for 39 weeks from August of 1786 to May of 1787 and for keeping a cow for 27 weeks.

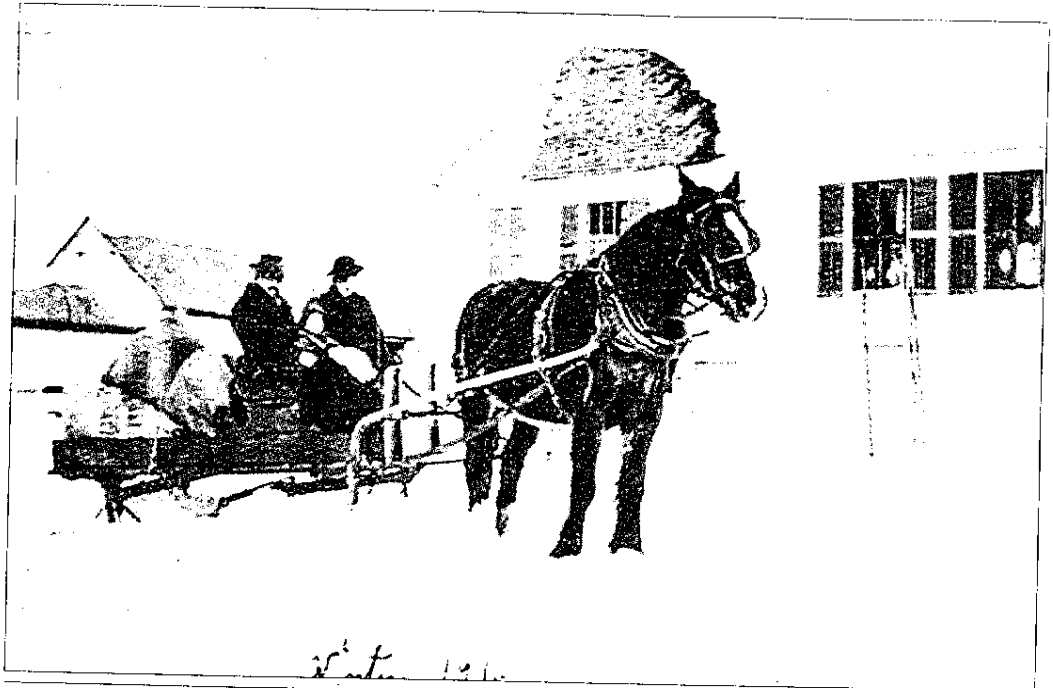
Equally interesting was the distribution of the estate of Francis Daniels, planned long before his death.

To his daughter Polly Carpenter, "$68.34 cents to be paid her in three years after my decease by Executor and to be upon interest in two years after my decease, which with what I have heretofore given her is all that I bequeath to her out of my estate."

To his unmarried daughter, Susanna Daniels: "Item: $120.00, all my household furniture that I shall die possessed of. Item: "two last daughters Junia and Susanna, the use and improvement of all the original or old part of my dwelling house; one cow, weaving shop with loom and weaving (unintelligible), with a privilege in the well and cellar under the house; with a privilege in the door yard to lay their firewood and a privilege in the orchard for all the apples they want, privilege to cut as much firewood on the ten acre lot purchased from John Guild as will be sufficient for their fire. Likewise ordering my Executor to keep for them one cow summer and winter; supplying them with a horse to ride to meetings and elsewhere free of cost, supply four sheep - all to continue during their natural life unless they marry; if one marries the other shall have the whole privilege except two sheep."

James Daniels had to care for his two unmarried sisters the remainder of their lives.

The Executor of the estate of Francis Daniels was his son James and the message was clear. He had to care for his two unmarried sisters the remainder of their lives



ON THE MOVE....

ABOVE: Farming was always labor intensive, but the load got lighter with this Range Master Feeder (being operated by Uncle Pete in 1953) invented and designed by Norman Daniels to feed chickens on the range.

AT LEFT: The Daniels family by the main farmhouse for a winter outing in 1916 that required harnessing the horse and hitching the wagon. Wheels on wagons were removed in winter and replaced with runners. Roads here in Foxborough were rolled, not plowed, to facilitate travel on runners. Heavy drifts had to be shoveled by hand.

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

The fifth generation was born to serve

From the battlefields to the classroom, these four siblings rose to a challenge

Fifth-generation members of the Daniels family were the four children of Albert J. Daniels and his wife, Eliza Morse, whom he married Nov. 29, 1883.

Albert was a direct descendant of Francis Daniels, and was born at the family homestead at Normandy Farms. His wife, Eliza, was sister of Deacon Charles Morse who, together with his wife, started Rock Lawn Farm on Mill Street to provide education and training in a residential setting for inner-city youth in hopes that they might be able to care for themselves in the future.

The camp was later taken over by the Cowley Fathers which they operated as Saint Augustine Camp as a summer experience for city children. The area is now operated by the Recreation Department of the Town of Foxborough.

The oldest and only son of the four children of Albert and Eliza was Francis Newell Daniels, born Dec. 9, 1884, destined by birth to inherit leadership responsibilities for the operation of Normandy Farms.

A graduate of local schools, he married Elva M. Pratt and was a member of the Foxboro Cemetery Corporation, Bethany Congregational Church, and was active in the original Foxboro Grange. He was a highly respected citizen, and guided Normandy Farms through the challenging growth years of raising chickens and selling eggs.

He died of injuries received at the farm on April 30, 1948 while removing the harness from a horse which bolted and threw him to the ground. He underwent emergency surgery following which he appeared to rally but he never fully regained consciousness before his death. . . . .

Marion Winnifred Daniels was born March 13, 1887 and following graduation from local schools, pursued studies in nursing. She then joined a medical unit organized by Harvard Medical School during World War I to provide medical services for the British Expeditionary Forces, and served in France from December, 1916 through March of 1918.

Returning home at the end of her tour to assist American forces that had entered the war, she joined the American Red Cross, assigned to Fort Devens during the flu epidemic. Once the Armistice was signed ending World War I, she became a night supervisor at Norwood Hospital for two years.

Marion then served as Public Health Nurse in Wrentham, where she met and married John Warren and the couple had two sons. In 1925, she was named chairman of the Red Cross in Wrentham, serving until the beginning of World War II. She then devoted her attention to the Home Service Committee for the duration of the war, serving until 1950.

Laura Antoinette Daniels was born May 18, 1888, was educated in local schools and graduated from Framingham State Teachers College. Early in her career, she held positions in Grafton and Hopedale, Mass. before moving to the Lincoln School in Springfield in 1914 where she would spend the next 40 years, primarily as principal of the Tapley School.

A devoted teacher, who was obliged to remain single at that time, she was known to devote many summer vacation periods to graduate study, taking refresher courses at Syracuse, Columbia, University of California and Harvard. Upon her retirement, she returned to the family home on Rockhill Street in Foxborough.

THREE GENERATIONS of Daniels family members are represented here by fourth generation members Albert Daniels (seated left) and his wife Eliza (seated right), fifth generation members (standing) Marion Daniels Warren, Laura, Francis N. and Bertha Daniels, and sixth generation members Evelyn Daniels Grigsby (being held by Albert) and Norman Daniels (center, being held by his mother Elva, wife of Francis) who changed the focus at Normandy from farming to camping.

From 1962 through 1965, Laura Daniels served on Foxboro's Library Facilities Planning Committee that was seeking solutions to the growing needs of the town and the crowded library facilities which were then located in Memorial Hall (now the town archives and museum). In 1966 and '67, she broadened her influence by serving on the building committee for the present Boyden Public Library, which was dedicated in 1968.

Bertha A. Daniels was born March 7, 1892 and, like her sisters, followed one of the two major career paths open to women at that time -- nursing and teaching. She followed her sister, Laura, into teaching, knowing full well the career choice limited personal choices. Ultimately, Bertha would devote her life to families and their offspring, knowing she would never have one of her own.

She taught with distinction and was honored for it. She would then join her sister, Laura, at the family homestead on Rockhill Street to spend her remaining years, during which time she took employment at the Foxboro Company as an assembler.

Each in their own way, the four children of Albert and Eliza were called to serve. And all four rose to the challenge with distinction, and in so doing kept alive a family legacy.

Francis and Elva Daniels going to church, early 1900s

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

Family members contributed to public service in Foxboro

Francis Daniels, who founded Normandy Farm in 1759, was the first family member to step forward in public service. He signed the petition to the Legislature in 1773 asking that portions of Wrentham, Walpole, Stoughton and Stoughtonham would be set aside as a separate town. Initially rejected, the petition was revived and acted upon in 1778, with the new town called Foxborough.

In 1779, Francis was named Surveyor of Highways and a Town Agent in 1781. He stepped forward again in 1789 when the new town wanted to establish school districts throughout the community for the purpose of educating the children. Francis was a member of the committee for District Three in South Foxboro where the Quaker Hill School would eventually be built at the corner of West and South Streets.

Other family members called to public service:

■ Benjamin: Surveyors of Highways, 1779.

■ James: Surveyors of Highways, 1786; Hog Reeve 1794, 1807; Surveyors of lumber, 1838; Tythingmen, 1805, 09, 13.

■ James Jr.: Hog Reeve, 1824; Surveyor of Lumber, '41.

■ Lewis G.: Surveyor of Highway, 1850, 1856; Committee to settle accounts with school districts, 1858, '60, '65: Committee to take possession of schools, 1869; Committee to revise school district, 1857.

■ John P.: Field driver, 1869.

■ Norman: Advisory Committee, 1962; Industrial Development Commission, 1963-64.

■ Laura: Library Facilities Planning Committee, 1962-65; Library Building Committee, 1966-67.

■ Albert (Dan): Dog Officer and Pound Keeper, 1968-70.

IT WASN'T ALL WORK and no play at Normandy Farms. The various family members occasionally had a little time for themselves. Norman and Jeannette are seen here enjoying a vacation at the seashore with sons Dan and Bob.

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

When change came to Normandy Farm

The sixth generation shifted focus, with a future vision tied to the land

The untimely death of Francis N. Daniels at Normandy Farms in 1948, when he never recovered from injuries sustained when thrown to the ground when a horse bolted, hastened the inevitable change that would come to farm life.

The farm had grown over the years to nearly five times its original size. Large hen houses had been erected to accommodate a change in focus relative to use of the land but now, with the death of Francis, there would be -- for the first time -- a sharing of ownership. The land would be divided between the two sons of Francis Daniels, Norman and Douglas, and their sister, Evelyn.

Norman Daniels, campground founder, at age 1

West Street had always cut through the farm, separating the original homestead from the enormous barn that accommodated cows and the vast amount of hay requiring storage through the winter to feed farm animals. New lot lines, however, would reflect land use.

The Daniels homestead, still occupied by the widow of Francis, and all of the land behind it would go to Douglas Daniels, youngest child of Francis. But Doug would also retain title to a large triangle of land on the far side of West Street that would include the barn and adjacent pasture.

Immediately beyond the barn were the enormous hen houses, numerous outbuildings, and vast acreage of pasture and woodlot spreading from the pond and up over the hills. That portion of the property would be owned by Norman Daniels, oldest child of Francis.

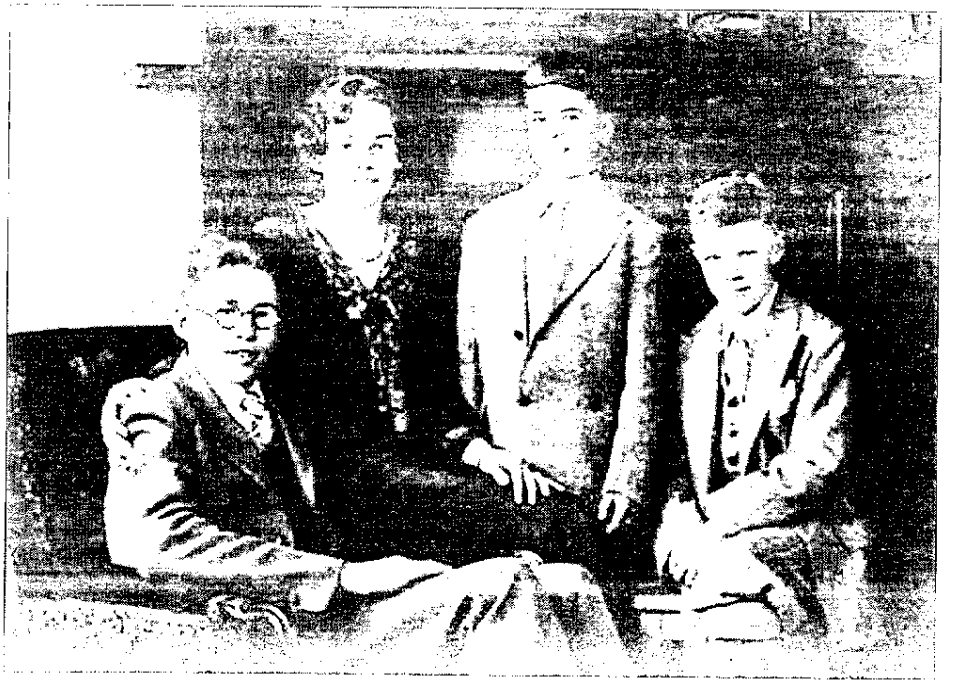
Norman and Douglas were very conscious of their place in history as sixth generation members of the Daniels family, but they weren't farmers. Norman was a long-distance trucker while Douglas more mechanically inclined and had interests that drew him to California.

Doug's mother, the late Marion Daniels, had sold a portion of the farm land to the town for the creation of what became Cocasset River Park, a new town-owned swimming and recreation area -- on Mill Street. The town gained a key piece of property and she had help with taxes and other expenses.

The Town of Foxborough had also taken a parcel of land and a right of way to the rear of the property by eminent domain for additional water wells. The area included the sand pits which had been a source of income over the years providing sand for the foundry on Mill Street where sections of the Common fence had been cast in 1857.

When Doug returned from California and resumed residence in the family homestead, he devoted the vast area behind the house to the planting of Christmas trees. Some land on the far side of the road below the barn would also be cultivated for trees.

Meanwhile, Norman Daniels had built a homestead at the top of the hill on his side of the now divided land where he and his wife Jeannette would raise three children: Albert (Dan), Robert (Bob) and a daughter Janis (Prendergast).



SIXTH GENERATION members: Norman Daniels, Evelyn Daniels Grigsby, Douglas Daniels and adopted brother Carruth Steeves

Young Dan was active in 4-H with a focus on chickens and sheep which were central to a continuation of some farm activity while his father was on the road. Owners of small farms in New England faced many challenges in a changing economy. Many farmers sold off frontage to a burgeoning housing market but the Daniels family stood firm in preserving Normandy Farm.

The family turned to the federal Farm and Home Administration for loans to subsidize activities that would preserve agricultural land

Snowmobiles had become a popular wintertime activity for many families, and they recognized an opportunity at Normandy. They opened up trails through the woodland and across the meadows but alas, they were still dependent upon the weather and the outreach produced mixed results.

Norman and his family had been campers, and envisioned possibilities along those lines. Young Dan headed off to Dean Junior College and for one of his major college papers, he laid out a business plan for converting farmland to a campground. The family was quick to respond, and the rest -- as they say -- is history.

Another challenge

Meanwhile, the town was growing, and no outlying neighborhood was immune from the potential of an influx of growth. West Street was no exception, especially with the increase in traffic anticipated with the operation of a campground.

The Board of Selectmen asked the Norfolk County Commissioners to examine the possibility of widening West Street to accommodate more traffic. Since many of the homes had been built close to the road over the years, however, a general widening was out of the question. The commissioners then proposed a relocation.

The proposed relocation of West Street called for the road, as it came in from Route 1, to swing in behind the barn of Doug Daniels and run behind the houses along West Street with a new bridge crossing Cocasset River about 50 feet below the existing bridge. An S-curve arrangement would then link the new and old West Streets.

(Continued on facing page)

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH

A new vision, but still tied to respect for the land

(Continued from page 14)

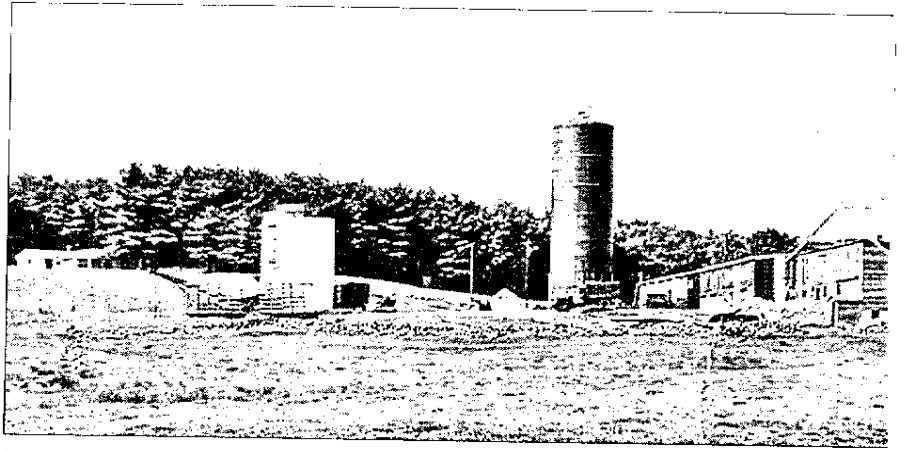
Doug Daniels argued that nearly two acres would be taken out of production, cutting into the revenue generated by selling trees, and the closeness of the road to the barn denied access to the underside of the barn with farm machinery.

Those traveling West Street today know that the road was never widened and it wraps around the trees and crosses the river much like it did when voted as the first public street in the new community of Foxborough in 1778.

The original Daniels homestead passed from Doug Daniels to his son Scott and his wife Corrinne, parents of three grown daughters. All of the land is devoted to raising Christmas trees and will never be developed under a federal agreement that provides preferential tax assessments based on forestry production.

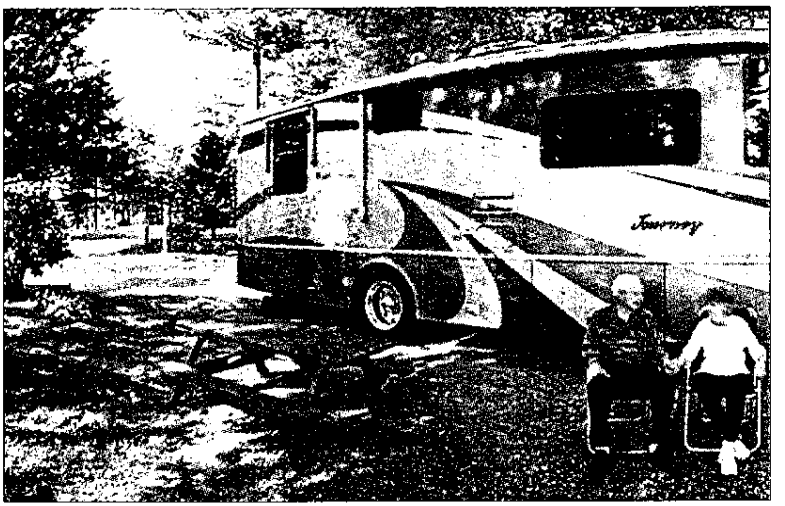
And so the legacy continues, with each generation mindful of its place in a line of succession that predates the United States of America.

And so it continues as the generation that brought change to Normandy Farm now stands by, filled with hope and promise, as their spouses, children and grandchildren take their place in the unbroken line of Francis Daniels who, once released from the chains that bound him, carved a homestead in the wilderness and expressed his thank "to the Lord whose sovereign hand, that brought me to this Gospel land; that I in port might hear and know, and taste the joys while here below."



FOUR SILOS dotted the Normandy landscape, including the large Harvester silo (1969) at right and three wooden silos for feeding the sheep. The home built by Norman and Jeanette Daniels is seen on the left at the top of the hill.

Reinventing a family livelihood



Normandy Farms Campground opened with 40 campsites in 1971. Overnight stays were $3.50.

From working farm to campground, the Daniels family kept an eye on the future

Working families with large land holdings faced a unique challenge. Small farms in New England were an endangered species, and many succumbed to the temptation to sell out. To keep the land, Norman Daniels had to put it back to work, and raising chickens or sheep would not be enough.

How about this plan developed by his oldest son, Albert (Dan) about developing a campground? It had received high praise at college. Family members were campers themselves, and could appreciate the appeal of the woodland setting upon which they would build. They also knew what campers expected, and what they needed. They knew they could deliver.

But one man couldn't do it alone: it would be a family commitment, and they decided to move ahead. Norman Daniels, his wife Jeannette, their three children -- Dan, Bob and Janis -- and in time their spouses embraced the new venture which they called Normandy Farms Campground and there would be no turning back.

The campground proved to be an ideal location from which visitors to the area could explore Cape Cod, the Rhode Island beaches and all points in between...

It would be a modest beginning, those 40 campsites opened in 1971 -- with water and electricity -- laid out among the trees near the top of the hill. The daily camping fee was $3.50 per night. By 1974 they had expanded to 65 sites and soon would be charging $5.50 per night. Facilities like rest rooms, showers and snack bars would grow proportionate to the popularity of the new camping destination, and soon a swimming pool -- then two -- was added to the list of attractions. The first Recreation Hall was built in 1976.

It was demanding. There was more than one job for everyone, and they all went to work, soon drawing upon friends, neighbors, an eager labor pool and even long-term campers themselves to fill the many tasks. Before long, tents were replaced by many campers with trailers, requiring modifications in some lots and a different concept in design for new ones but the growth continued.

Dan was assisted by his wife Doris to help plan and organize activities for campers of all ages that would include softball, arts and crafts, nature walks and playground activities, all amenities that had been built into the daily operation of the campground.

And still they grew as did the outdoor recreation industry. Before long, enormous motor homes the size of a bus would be pulling up by the office door. Quickly, the norm became spacious pull-through campsites complete with water, electricity, sewer and cable service.

The campground proved to be an ideal location from which visitors to the area could explore Cape Cod and the historic Plymouth area, Boston, Sturbridge, Rhode Island beaches and all points in between. It was also an ideal destination for those who wanted to just hide away in a woodland setting and do nothing but enjoy the serenity for a few days.

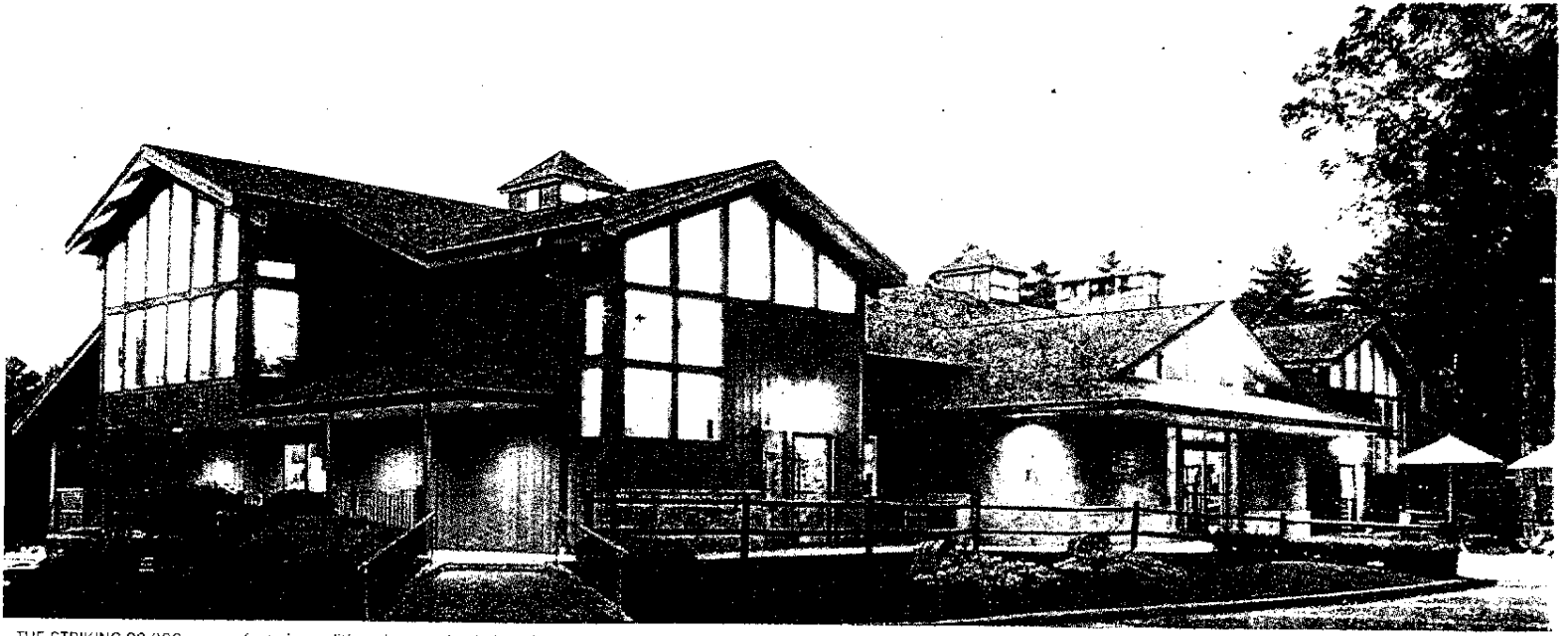
Campground staff could easily meet such diverse needs by continually seeking input from customers and preparing staff members to meet their every need. If there was a constant, it was change, but the Daniels family members had bonded with a very loyal base and occupancy rates remained high.

In 1982, a complex of two pools was opened, and the following year campers embraced an opportunity to engage in activities to benefit the Boston based Jimmy Fund which supports the fight against cancer in children and adults at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. By 1984, the daily camping rate had reached $12.00.

It would be a banner year in 1985, when a family campground and RV park tucked away on a narrow street in Foxborough, Massachusetts would be voted the RV Park of the Year.

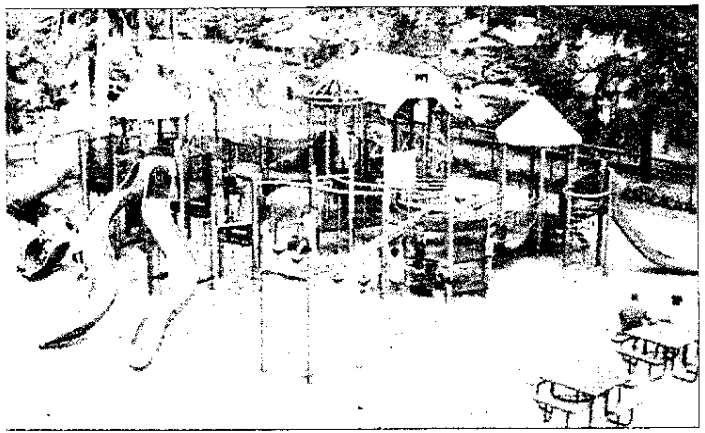
(Continued on page 19)

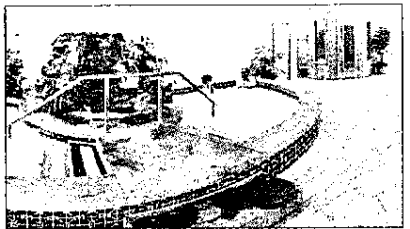
ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH



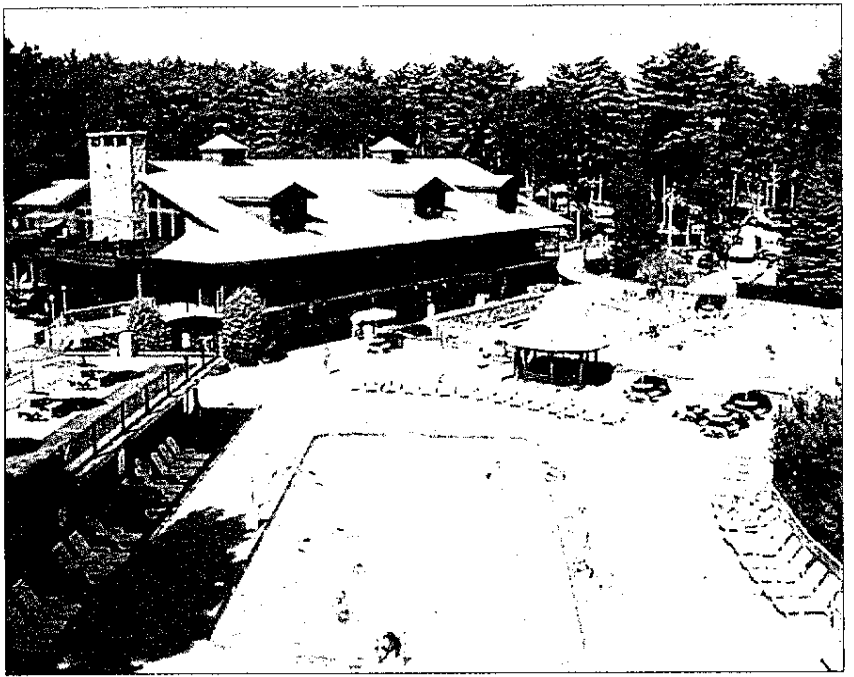
THE STRIKING 20,000 square foot air-conditioned recreation lodge with adult and activity lofts, seen here after sunset, is both the focal point and command center of the modern campground operation.

ONE FAMILY'S LEGACY ■ NORMANDY FARMS 250TH





A MULTI-POOL COMPLEX behind the main lodge (at far right) is complimented by an extensive children's play area (above), and an indoor pool and jacuzzi facility (near right) are just some of the modern conveniences which set Normandy Farms Campground apart as a destination resort.



Campground the latest page in 250-year-old family legacy

(Continued from page 16)

A richly deserved national honor, it was cause for great celebration and most timely in its presentation, coming just two years before the death of Normandy Farms Campground founder Norman Daniels in 1987.

National recognition returned to Normandy in 1987 when Dan was named president of the National Association of Campgrounds and RV parks and just a few months later, the grandest addition of them all -- the new office and registration area at Normandy -- opened to the camping public.

Once again, the highest recognition in the industry would be afforded Normandy Farms Campground when, in 1995, it was voted the national RV Park of the Year for the second time.

Each year at Normandy Farms brought a host of new activities, programs and opportunities for campers. Their birthdays and anniversaries were recognized, every holiday was celebrated in some manner, there were prizes to win, games to play, fund-raisers to support and friends to make.

Normandy would earn another Woodall's Five-Star rating, be honored for Dedication to Customers, and designated Employer of the Year by Workamper News.

Support for the Jimmy Fund, which had commenced in 1983, intensified with each passing year, and special recognition was afforded in 2001 when the Normandy Farm effort exceeded $100,000.

That same year, the program's most ardent supporter -- Normandy Farms co-founder Jeannette Daniels -- fell victim to a tragic accident at the campground.

A large photograph of Norman and Jeannette Daniels hangs over the mantle of the large fireplace in the new office and registration center, a constant reminder of two people who put so much of themselves into Normandy Farms Campground and who are so fondly recalled by all who knew them.

'It is all about remaining on the land and working together as a family to preserve the land on which we have lived for nine generations.'

Dan Daniels

In a totally unprecedented announcement, Normandy Farms Campground and RV Park was singled out yet again in 2005, voted RV Park of the Year for the third time.

The park had grown to include such five-star amenities as a 20,000 square foot air-conditioned recreation lodge with adult and activity lofts, an arcade, business center and theatre.

Facilities also include a heated indoor pool, sauna and fitness center as well as three outdoor pools, three Jacuzzis, a gift shop and camp store. Attractions feature free WiFi, a snack bar, restrooms and laundry, two playgrounds, a fishing pond and picnic area as well as horseshoes, shuffleboard, Bocce court, full-court basketball, a volleyball court, soccer field, nature trails and two softball fields.

An 18-hole disk golf course has been added as well, which offers a standard round of golf minus the clubs and balls as players throw a disc as they make their way around the course.

One of the latest additions includes the opening of Freedom Tail Park, where pets can roam free in a fully enclosed area which contains agility equipment specially designed for dogs.

Three generations of Daniels family members are presently on site providing services and various levels of support for customers. Dan Daniels is president of the corporation and serves as general operations manager. His sister Janis, vice president, is office manager and brother Bob, treasurer, is the maintenance manager.

Dan's wife Doris is recreation director and their three children are all involved with the operation. Marcia is the human resource director, Kristine the marketing director who also handles accounting, and Marc, grounds maintenance. Shaun Daniels, son of Bob, is maintenance supervisor.

Two grandchildren of Dan and Doris, Jillian and Cassidy Harrison (daughter of their daughter Marcia and her husband Dave), also lend their talents to the success of the operation and represent the ninth generation in this most remarkable story of one family in one place for 250 years.

It was a most improbable journey, that a young French Army officer brought to our shores in chains would one day find himself on a plot of land in what would become Foxborough. From generation to generation, his descendants would work that land and it would yield its bounty that their families might prosper and grow.

Time and circumstance would force them to seek new uses of the land, and they would succeed beyond their wildest expectations, but all of that was never the goal but merely the means by which they could continue the legacy.

"It is all about remaining on the land," said Dan Daniels, whose college paper provided his father a business plan for turning farmland into a campground, "and working together as a family to preserve the land on which we have lived for nine generations in hopes that this anniversary will find family members even more deeply committed to continuing the legacy of Normandy Farm."