

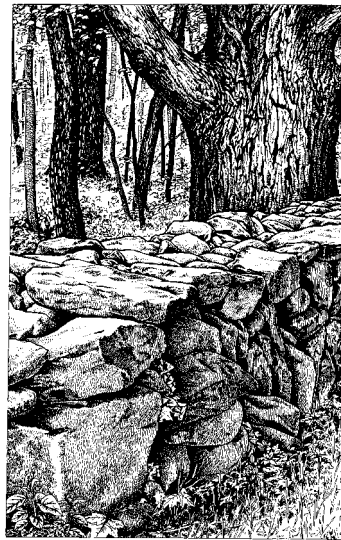
## The Story in Stone

*When you buy meat, you buy bones.  
When you buy land, you buy stones.*

New England proverb

Every spring, groups of students help us clear rocks from the upper field so that we can plant our crops of corn, potato, pumpkin, cucumber, melon, squash, and garlic. The next spring, in the very same soil, there are more rocks to remove. What's going on? Early settlers in New England experienced the same reappearance of stone in their fields. Some figured the devil was testing their faith, others were convinced that stones grew in the ground from seeds, like potatoes. They didn't yet understand what we know today — that the continual freezing and thawing of groundwater keeps pushing these stones up to the surface. Carefully plowed soil encourages this process, unlike in the forest, where tree roots, wild grasses and other rocks block frost and breaching stones.

Native Americans did not struggle much with this problem; they left the stones in the ground, tilling around them with clam shell hoes and mattocks as they prepared the soil for their corn and squash crops. Colonial farmers preferred large, open tracts of land for their ox-drawn plows, and they painstakingly cleared fields of rocks each year, often dumping them in rubble piles along the borders of their property. Large stones were sometimes rolled or hauled by rock sled to serve as foundations for barns and farmhouses. The foundation of the Moore family barn can be seen behind our basketball hoop, standing taller than most players. When wood became scarce, particularly after the Revolutionary War, New England farmers built sturdy "stone fences." Walking in the woods with Paul,



Abigail Rorer

you might step over an old stone wall that was once a boundary marker, and now has become home to lichen, chipmunks, and white-footed mice, as well as the hunting ground of snakes, birds and raccoons. On the upper ridge is a tremendous stone wall that may have included a holding pen for livestock. It is over 6 feet wide in some parts, and like generations of farmers here before us, we add to it each year.

New stones rise each spring in our fields and we continue to make use of them. With the help of hundreds of students and their teachers over the past two years, Josh has been constructing a large and beautiful stone wall that runs west from the sugar shack towards the woods. It is almost complete. The fascinating physical puzzle of working with stone and stonemason's tools, the insights into the natural history of the farm, and the joy of sharing Josh's company provoke strong memories. We've noticed that when students return to The Farm School they like to check on the stone walls. They delight in recognizing the stone they last placed in the wall, and often stand in that spot, marveling at the expanse that has been added, as if by magic, since their last visit.

### Stunning Stone Facts

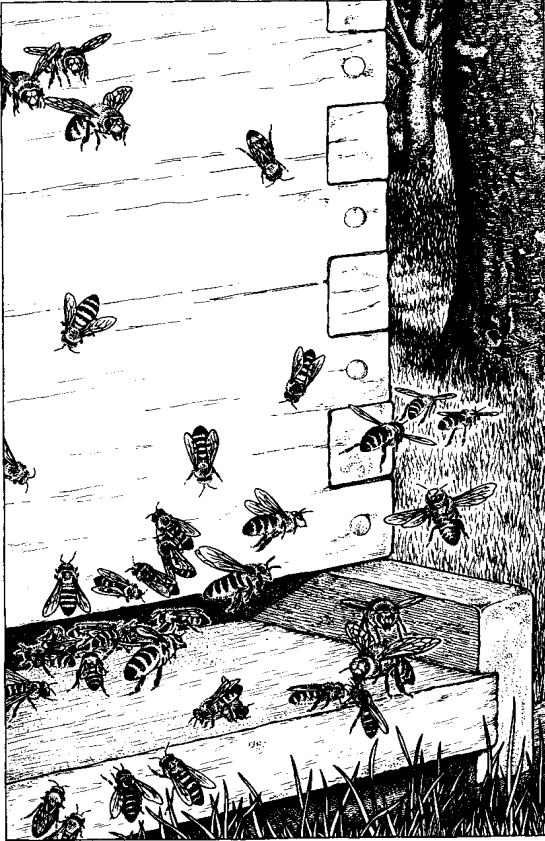
☉ *New England didn't used to be so rocky. Starting two and a half million years ago, four giant glaciers (some a mile tall!) slid south, scraping the tops off ancient mountains and depositing rock debris all over the countryside.*

☉ *In 1871 there were 252,539 miles of stone wall in New England and New York, enough to circle the earth more than ten times. The work required to construct all those walls could have built the pyramids a hundred times over.*

## Spring and Summer on the Farm

Many, many thanks to the 820 students and their teachers who came this spring and summer to put their hands to the work of the land. In the barn, forests, fields and garden, together we bring this farm to life!

- ☺ Maple sugaring: collecting sap and boiling down syrup for the kitchen.
- ☺ Building new benches for the horse barn.



Abigail Rorer

- ☺ Cleaning the hives, building new honey frames and feeding the bees through early spring.

*The newborn calf and her mother lie peacefully in the back barn. In the sugar shack, sap boils furiously. Spring has begun.*

☺ Kate

- ☺ Seeding onions, lettuce and broccoli into trays in the greenhouse for our first garden crops.
- ☺ Readyng the milk room for the milk to come after the first spring calves are born.

- ☺ Greasing up the tractors and equipment; changing oil.

- ☺ Removing the winter mulch from the garden beds and digging deep to prepare for seeding.

- ☺ Pruning the raspberries.

- ☺ Re-handling shovel blades and rake heads with carved and sanded hickory saplings.

- ☺ Repairing the manure gutter by bolting on bracket guides for the chain and paddles.

- ☺ Digging in compost and planting peas.

*Working with fieldstone most strongly connects me with the history and creation of this farm. Immersed in the intent of those who shaped the land before me, the puzzle of the wall solves itself. I am grateful to have lived and worked on this beautiful farm.*

☺ Josh, moving on after six generous years

- ☺ Shelling the dry corn from the fall crop for spring feed for the pigs and chickens.

- ☺ Creating an amazing benefit concert for The Farm School's Capital Campaign with Jonatha Brooke, Bruce Cockburn, Patty Larkin, Chris Smither, Rob Wasserman and Bob Weir.

- ☺ Cooking lunch and dinner in the farm kitchen for everyone.

- ☺ Mucking out the goat pen and calf hutches.

- ☺ Plowing the lower garden field and lining out the beds and pathways.

- ☺ Setting posts and stretching electric fence onto the spring pastures.

- ☺ Planting potatoes, cucumbers and pumpkins in the upper field.

- ☺ Building a new storage area in the hayloft for equipment and supplies.

- ☺ Hauling and moving stone to extend the Sugar Shack stone wall down the lane.

- ☺ Firing up the outdoor oven and making bread for the evening meal.

## In The Wild

by Paul Wanta

From what seemed to be an endless wet and cold winter, an exuberant spring and summer has emerged. Wild flowers to melt your heart, and the earliest blueberries I could remember. We set track boxes to attract and record the passage of wild animals through this area, and looked everywhere for non-animal species. From coyotes to pink lady slippers, broadwing hawks to Indian cucumber root, the wilds of the farm are home to an abundant and varied life force.

Many of the returning students are beginning to remember the farm's more remote areas. The seemingly abstract nature of the woods, it's apparent randomness, has been replaced by a sense of place, with memories and real fondness.: "Oh, yeah. I remember this place. Cool."

☺ Transplanting seedlings from the greenhouse to the garden, and seeding all the vegetable crops for the kitchen and CSA.

☺ Nailing up the clapboards on the farm managers' house.

☺ Measuring, cutting and building the back barn gate and a roost for the chicken coop.

*Contra dancing in the grass follows a long day of work. Amy's sweet fiddle tune leads me down the lane to my cabin and into sleep.*

☺ David

☺ Moving the pigs down to their newly laid out spring pasture in the woodlands and field.

☺ Clearing back the brush from the fence lines and setting up electric fence for rotational grazing.

☺ Hoeing a bumper crop of little weeds and harvesting a bumper crop of plump vegetables.

*Pulling bulbs of garlic from the soft soil, a summer breeze carries to us the smell of freshly baled hay. Summer opens before us, full and hopeful.*

☺ Erik

☺ Building more moveable chicken housing.

☺ Filling the barn with 2,000 bales of hay.

## Join Us!

Call (978) 249-9944 or e-mail [ben@farmschool.org](mailto:ben@farmschool.org) to sign up for any of the following.

### *In the Fall*

Fall Family Work Day 2000

For parents, children, and friends  
Saturday, November 4th  
10 am - 3 pm

Wilderness Workshop with Paul Wanta

For 5th and 6th graders  
Friday - Sunday, November 17-19

### *In the Spring*

Spring Family Work Day 2001

For parents, children, and friends  
Saturday, April 28  
10 am - 3 pm

### *Summer on the Farm*

Summer Camp Sessions

June 25 - 29 (5th - 8th graders)

July 9 - 13 (5th - 8th graders)

July 16 - 20 (7th - 10th graders)

Five day camps that combine farm work with a generous amount of fun

Groups limited to 32

\$425/child/week (financial aid available)

CampOUT

July 23 - 27

A farm/camp experience for kids from alternative families: Ages 9 - 14

\$425/child (financial aid available)

### *On the Web*

[www.farmschool.org](http://www.farmschool.org)

The Farm School is a non-profit educational farm situated on a 130 acres in Athol, Massachusetts. We offer three- to five-day programs for middle school groups and their teachers throughout the year. The work and care of the farm in the dairy and fields, in the garden and in the forest, is the mainstay of the program. The Farm School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin in any of its school administered policies or programs.

### *Board of Directors*

Peter Agoos	John Perry Barlow
Gino Bernat	Jonathan Bush
Anne Childs Collins	Doug Curtis
Wendy Davenport	Scott Hill
Ben Holmes	Sally Holmes
Nora Huvelle	Todd Nelson
Molly Schmitt	Doug Smith
Sam Southworth	Tyler Stevens
Jay Stone	Jen Tobin
George Travis	Amy Waldman
Louise Weed	Bob Weir

Please contact Ben Holmes at (978) 249-9944 or the address below for more information:



The Farm School  
488 Moore Hill Road  
Athol, MA 01331

### *Staff*

#### Spring-Summer, 2000

Josh Buell: program director  
 Maria Fellows: builder, teacher  
 Shandi Garrison: capital campaign coordinator  
 Ben Holmes: founder, director  
 David Hull: cook, summer camp director  
 Pam Kimball-Smith: office manager  
 Chris J. Pullin: chef  
 Erik Reimanis: farm manager, teacher  
 Kate Reimanis: milker, gardener, teacher  
 Carlen A. Rigrod: associate director, teacher  
 Andy Samuelson: dairy manager  
 Paul Wanta: naturalist, teacher  
 Nat Torrens: farmer, teacher

Seasonal Staff Kate Callaghan Sarah Katz Jodie Marksamer Charlotte Sullivan John Lawson Louise Weed
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### *Spring-Summer Groups*

Atrium School (5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Beaver Country Day School (6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Brookline Vermont Grammer School (6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Cambridgeport School (6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Community Prep School (7<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Dedham Country Day School (6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Driscoll School (2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grades)  
 Fayerweather School (5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Monadnock Waldorf School (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
 Metro West School (6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Milton School (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
 Mission Hill School (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> grades)  
 Pine Hill Waldorf School (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
 Rochester School #28 (5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Shady Hill School (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> grades)  
 Ten Acre School (6<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Touchstone School (4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grades)  
 The Village School (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> grades)  
 Wheeler School (5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Winsor School (5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
 Summer Camp Sessions I & II  
 Homesteading Course  
 CampOUT

