

# Hersey Family Farm Phase 2 Fundraising Nearly Complete

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Concord Monitor staff

From October 12 Concord Monitor  
Partners looking to conserve a 55-acre portion of the Hersey Farm in Andover are hoping to raise the last \$26,000 needed before the end of the year. [As the Beacon went to press, the amount still to be raised was down to \$19,000.]

The land is owned by Roger Hersey and is next to 268 acres owned by his cousin, Jerry Hersey, that were conserved in 2007. Jerry Hersey uses both parcels to raise beef cattle and grow hay.

The Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust and Andover's conservation commission and historical society have nearly raised the \$165,000 needed for the project. In July, they received a \$57,500 grant from the federal Farm

and Ranch Lands Protection Program. The family has offered the easement for a discount. The town has allocated \$28,750 from its conservation fund and private donors have already pitched in some.

Beth McGuinn, a land protection specialist with Ausbon Sargent, said they are hoping to raise the remainder from donors in the local community.

Both parcels sit in a historic district on Route 11 and are on the National Register of Historic Places. This time of year, many passers-by stop to photograph the "quintessential New England farm," where the same family has been working the land for more than 100 years, McGuinn said.

"It's really very much the same as it was, and hopefully the easement will help keep it that way," she said.

To donate, send a check payable to ASLPT to PO Box 2040, New London 03257.

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or, in this case, probably by oxen and wagon. The barn was put back together, again board by board, on the new site.

Some of the young calves and steers were housed in this so-called new barn. Hanging on the walls are metal muzzles farmers used to put over the oxen's mouths so they couldn't stop to eat grass when they were working.

Since Grandpa used oxen to work the farm, he kept three pairs so there would always be young steers in training. Uncle James says, "When a pair of oxen got along in years, he sold them and got a good price because they could be used for meat. When a horse got along in years, there was nothing to do with it. Oxen could work until they were 10 or 11 years old, and then trainees would take over."

The new barn holds much of the old equipment and tools, many made by my grandfather. Relatives have said he was very clever at making the things he needed. There are at least eight oxen yokes in this area. One large yoke is made of elm. My Uncle James says Grandpa hewed it out with an ax and whittled it down. The curved bows to hold the oxen's heads were made of hickory wood and were bought at auctions, as were the other yokes.

Also in the new barn was a small section known as the manure shed. An opening in the wall behind the cattle in the main barn allowed the shoveling of manure to the shed. Manure was taken from the shed by dump cart to spread on the fields and gardens.

Another area of the divided new barn was a sawdust shed with sawdust still in it. Sawdust was good for soaking up moisture and was used for bedding the cattle. Yet another section of the barn was used to store wagons. A nearby enclosure was the oxen pen where they could be outdoors when not working.

From the new barn, we entered the "new shed," a building right in front of the barn and again, a building that had been moved. It was originally on Cilley Hill.

The oxen were shod in this building. Men used to travel to different farms to shoe oxen but later, when fewer folks used oxen, farmers had to shoe them themselves.

An ox was put in a contraption called a sling which my grandfather had built himself. It took two people to get an ox in the sling. Once in the sling, the ox was hauled up off the floor. After the ox was lifted, its feet were placed one at a time into a stirrup-like attachment.

Uncle James said, "They wouldn't pick up their feet like a horse would and even if they did, they wouldn't let you hold it. They just didn't take too kindly to the process." Oxen were shod every two or three months.

Here in the new shed a huge pulley, or windlass, as it was called, remains where the hogs were hoisted to be butchered. In this building also is the artesian well, many old wagon wheels, milk cans, and remnants of bygone days.

South of the new shed, heading to the pasture, is another smaller building with two sections. This building housed the blacksmith shop and the pig barn – a rather strange combination! A small hole on the side of the pig barn allowed the pigs to go in and out to the pigpen. The blacksmith shop held all the tools. The shops beams are made of hemlock, a strong wood used frequently in those early years. The grindstone used to sharpen axes and knives is still in the shop.

Up through the field and about 500 feet away from the other buildings is the summer barn next to the pasture. The summer barn is much smaller than the main barn but still large enough to hold 200 bales of hay in the loft and room for 10 stanchions on the main floor. The stanchions are made of wood, and a wooden peg fits into a hole in the side to hold each cow's head in place.

After the cows were milked, the milk was poured into milk cans and brought down to the house in a wheelbarrow. My grandfather and uncles found it easier than driving the cows down through the field to the main barn for milking and then having to drive them back again.

Retracing our steps through the field, we came back to the farmhouse and explored the two buildings standing opposite the house – one, the main woodshed still half-filled with chopped wood, and next to it a small narrow garage. The garage was built to house my Uncle Samuel's first car, a 1939 Ford.

These are the buildings that made up the Hersey Farm in the early 1900s – sentinels for the surrounding countryside. They remain there today almost as if suspended in time.

### HERSEY FAMILY FARM CONSERVATION, PHASE 2

The fertility of today's Hersey Farm makes its fields an important resource. A conservation easement on the property will ensure that the fields remain open and available to farming and will prevent subdivision and development of the property in perpetuity.

The Andover Conservation Commission, Andover Historical Society, and Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust have teamed up to raise funds to purchase a conservation easement on the Hersey Farm fields and forestland. Thanks to a discounted price from Roger Hersey, a generous contribution by the Conservation Commission, a grant from the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, and donations from individuals throughout the region, \$146,000 has been raised toward the \$165,000 purchase price.

With an additional \$19,000 this farmland will remain available, and the views from Route 11 will remain open forever. If you'd like to make a tax-deductible contribution, you may send a check to ASLPT (memo: Hersey Farm), PO Box 2040, New London 03257. If you prefer to use a credit card, call Nancy at 526-6555.

## THE 15TH!!!!

Please have everything to the Beacon by the 15th of each month!

**Mackenna's RESTAURANT**  
"TCBY" Treats  
Monday - Tuesday: 7 AM to 2:30 PM  
Wednesday - Saturday: 7 AM to 8 PM  
Sunday: 8 AM to 2 PM  
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# Help Conserve!

The Hersey Family Farm Alliance



The Andover Conservation Commission

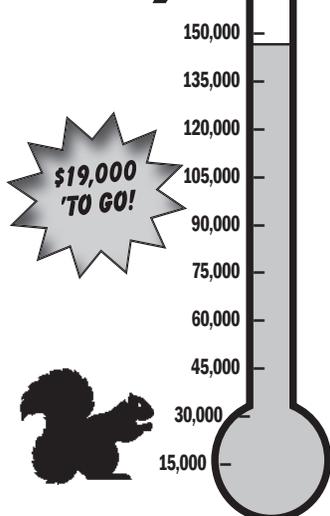
The Andover Historical Society

The Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust

## Hersey Family Farm Phase 2

- 55 acres of fields and forest adjacent to Jerry Hersey's 268 acre conserved farm.
- Highly productive farm soils.
- Locally grown agricultural products.
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Beautiful Route 11 views of hay fields and pastures.
- Maintains Andover's rural character.
- A local treasure.

**\$165,000**



To make a tax deductible contribution:

Donations by check:  
Make payable to ASLPT  
with memo: "Hersey Farm"  
and mail to:  
ASLPT, PO Box 2040  
New London, NH 03257

Credit card donations: call  
Nancy at ASLPT: 526-6555