

## **Birdsfoot Farm Records**

MSS Coll. #158

7.5 linear feet

### **History**

Birdsfoot Farm is a consensus-based agricultural community founded in 1972 and located in Canton, St Lawrence County, NY. The 73-acre farm consists of “a large community house, three comfortable homes, a schoolhouse, two barns, and some funky seasonal housing.” The land and buildings are owned by the community. Members share monthly living expenses, purchase equity in the property, and participate in community work projects.

“We care a lot about each other and find time for many kinds of sharing--such as communal meals, rituals, parties, etc. Each person follows his or her own spiritual path. Individuals are active in social and environmental issues. The new-member process includes a one-year trial period. We welcome new members, including children and elders.”

Birdsfoot operates two businesses: A vegetable business grows two acres of certified organic vegetables for the community, wholesale, CSA, and farmers market using low-input techniques, intensive spacing and cover cropping.

**Little River Community School** was started in 1998. In 2009 the school served 23 students in grades K-12 with three full-time teachers. The school is founded on the belief that children are inherently motivated to learn about their world and should be allowed to proceed at their own rate. The farm and school provide income to some of the community members and others work off the farm. Each year the veggie business and school seek interns.

Address: 1263 County Rte 25, Canton, New York 13617-6538 tel. 315-386-4852

Little River Community School: <http://www.littleriverschool.org>. tel. 315-379-9474

### **Scope & Content**

This collection contains records and papers pertaining to Birdsfoot Farm. Box 1 contains a brief history of the beginnings of Birdsfoot from 1972-1975. Within the collection, are meeting minutes, financial records, and land trust agreements (1988-2007) pertaining to the Birdsfoot community. While Birdsfoot was founded in 1972, this collection mostly documents the activities from 1987 through 2007. The disposition of records for the period 1972-1986 is currently unknown.

### **Provenance**

Gift of the community, November, 2009.

### **Series**

1. Early History, Land Use, Deeds, and Agreements
2. Correspondence
3. Minutes
4. Financials
5. Birdsfoot Farm Veggie Partners
6. Little River Community School
7. Hugging House Construction Plans

**Box     Series 1. Early History, Land Use, Deeds, and Agreements**

- 1     Letter[ND] to Stearns From unknown outlining the early history of Birds Foot Farm
- “Muddy”-- contains Real Property Agreement (Dec. 1982) and assorted drafts and conditions of agreement
- Early photos (from 1980s) from David Katz
- Old Agreements contains 3 drafts of the Birdsfoot Community Agreement (1990,1993, 2006), letter of legal advising (1990)
- Birdsfoot Agreements, signed Sept. 1993 contains the Birdsfoot Community Agreement with member signatures, 3 photocopies 2 w/ proof of receipt by the St. Lawrence County Clerk’s Office (Nov. 23, 1993)
- Birdsfoot Agreements Sept. 1993 contains original Birdsfoot Community Agreement document, letter of legal advising (February 1993), and procedure for adjusting the deed & side agreement (for members joining or departing)
- Land Use, contains multiple drafts of the land use policy and sketches
- Property Tax, contains blank copy of General Information and Filing Requirements for Complaints on Real Property Assessments, Preliminary Assessment Notice (March 1997), Agricultural Value Assessment Application (2006), AG Value Assessment (May 2006), notice of changed assessment (2006)
- Inheritance 1991, contains community discussion notes regarding the handling of the deed and inheritance after the death of a member
- Approved Policy Proposals, contains notes on Birdsfoot Policy Decisions, Housing Agreement, Retreat information, 2 copies of the Legal Committee Update (Sept. 1990)
- Main House: Floorplan, contains a letter to the Tri-County Arts Council (April 1989), and floor plan of the Main House
- Proposals undated, contains proposals for community projects or any action that would require the use of community funds
- 1989, Proposals
- 1990, Proposals
- 1992, Proposals
- Birdsfoot Deed, 2 copies (September 1993)
- Student Research Projects, “Organic Farmers of New York State Ethnographic Report” by Jan McDonald (2000), “Intentional Communities of the Back-to-the-Land Movement: Case Study on Birdsfoot Farm, St. Lawrence County” by Lisa Lind (1994)
- Documents of Intent, Statement of intention (undated), outline of the integration community work responsibilities/structure, hour/wage payment discussion notes

Press, assorted press related to/involving Birdsfoot Farm (1988, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1999, 2007, 2008)

Birdsfoot Publications, informational pamphlets for community/internship seekers (1997-2004), "Internships in Sustainable Farming: A Handbook for Farmers" by Doug Jones (1999), transportation information to Birdsfoot Farm

Equities, the "Number Crunching Committees Report: Living Expenses and Equity Proposals" (1989)

Political Actions/Areas of Interest, news articles on torture victim and treatment (1989), correspondence with the Army regarding low level flights (1992), meeting minutes from the New York state low-level Radioactive Waste Sitting Commission (1989), editorial regarding nuclear waste (1976), ARK Community (2007)

Work records, lists of household chores and tasks, work assignments, and work hour logs (1989, 1995, undated)

Blank Record Keeping Sheets

Communities Directory Listing for 2000 Edition also survey by Cornell Researcher

Misc. Photographs

Poems and Drawings, misc. artwork presumably done by members of Birdsfoot Farm

- 1B Contains papers from the previous owner of the farm  
1929-1936 Bulk Milk Slips  
1930-1936 Personal papers: Dog License, vehicle registration papers

**Box Series 2. Correspondence**

- 2 Apprenticeship Informal Letter: generic response letter sent to those interested in apprenticeships, shares brief history of Birdsfoot and outlines expectations of apprentices  
Correspondence (Undated): assorted letters of either introductory, inquiry, interest, and conversational correspondence  
1988, Correspondence  
1989, Correspondence  
1990, Correspondence  
1992, Correspondence  
1994, Correspondence  
1995, Correspondence  
1996, Correspondence  
1997, Correspondence  
1998, Correspondence  
1999, Correspondence  
2000, Correspondence

2001, Correspondence  
2005, Correspondence  
2006, Correspondence  
2007, Correspondence  
2008, Correspondence  
2009, Correspondence

**Box    Series 3. Minutes**

3        Undated Minutes

1987, Minutes: contains minutes from various meetings including business, visions, house, retreat, and general meetings

1988, Minutes

1989, Minutes

1990, Minutes

1991, Minutes

1992, Minutes

1993, Minutes

1994, Minutes

1997, Minutes

1998, Minutes

1999, Minutes

2000, Minutes

2001, Minutes

2002, Minutes

2007, Minutes

**Box    Series 4. Financial**

4        1988, Receipts: telephone, heating, propane, electric, building supplies, hardware, waste disposal, home goods, food, municipal tax statements, personal memos, IOU's, notes, etc.

1988, Annual report

1989, Receipts

1989, Annual Report

1990, Receipts

1990, Annual Report

1991, Receipts

- 1991, Annual Report
- 1992, Receipts
- 1992, Annual Report
- 4a 1993, Receipts
- 1993, Annual Report
- 1994, Receipts
- 1994, Annual Report
- 1995, Receipts
- 1995, Annual Report
- 1996, Receipts
- 1996, Annual Report
- 1997, Receipts
- 1997, Annual Report
- 1998, Receipts
- 1998, Annual Report
- 5 1999, Receipts
- 1999, Annual Report
- 2000, Receipts
- 2000, Annual Report
- 2001, Receipts
- 2001, Annual Report
- 2002, Receipts
- 2002, Annual Report
- 5a 2003, Receipts, in-kind forms
- 2003, Annual Report
- 2004, Receipts
- 2004, Annual Report
- 2005, Receipts
- 2005, Annual Report
- 2005, In-kind forms
- 2006, Receipts
- 2006, Annual Report
- 5b 2007, Receipts
- 2007, Annual Report
- 2008, Receipts missing

2009, Receipts

Misc. papers—various dates

**Box    Series 5. Birdsfoot Farm Veggie Partners**

- 6      1989, Notes: contains meeting minutes, notes regarding vegetable care, harvest time tables, correspondence from other businesses, assorted documents and certifications  
1989, Publications: various publications regarding vegetable care, organic farming, farm equipment, vegetable pricing, etc.
- 1990, Notes
- 1991, Notes  
1991, Publications
- 1992, Notes  
1992, Publications
- 1993, Notes
- 1994, Notes  
1994, Publications  
1994, *Foodbook for Sustainable Living* By Henderson & Stern: a compilation of factual information and recipes for fruits and vegetables
- 1995, Notes
- 1996, Notes  
1996, Publications
- 1997, Notes  
1997, Publications  
1997, Seed Lists: includes farm's list of desired seeds for the given year's crops, order forms for seeds from various farms, and farm's expenditures on seeds only
- 1998, Notes  
1998, Seed Lists  
1998, Sales: receipts for vegetable sales
- 1998-1999, Sales
- 1999, Notes  
1999, Publications  
1999, Seed Lists
- 1999-2000, Sales
- 2000, Notes  
2000, Publications  
2000, Seed Lists  
2000, Sales

2000-2008 Business Ledger: includes quantities of crops, pricing, amounts ordered/sold, recording keeping notes, maintenance expenses, inventories, contact information, orders, income projections, etc.

6a 2000-2001, Expenditures: lists sales and amounts paid, 1 book

2001, Notes

2001, Publications

2001, Seed Lists

2001, Sales

2001, Expenditures

2001, Cashbook: details sales, expenditures, and balances

2001, Harvest Records: details quantities of crops and amounts sold

2001, Intern Agreement: contractual agreement between Birdsfoot Farm Veggie Partners and Farm Interns

2001-2002 Business Ledger

2000-2005 Carbon copy receipts books

2002, Notes

2002, Publications

6b 2002, Seed Lists

2002, Sales

2002, Expenditures (2 folders)

2002, Cashbook

2002, Harvest Records

2001-2004 Sales records (hand-written in notebooks)

7 Veggie Business

2003, Publications

2003, Seed Lists

2003, Expenditures

2003, Finger Lakes Organic Growers Cooperative

2003, Bank records

2003, Income, Beets

2004, Notes

2004, Publications

2004, Income received

2004, Finger Lakes organic receipts

2005, Publications

2005, Sales

2006, Notes

2006, Publications

2006, Cashbook

2007, Notes

2007, Publications

2007, Expenditures

2008, Notes

2009, Notes

2009, Seed Lists

2009, Sales

Undated, Notes

Undated, Publications

Undated, Expenditures

Common Sense Pest Control 1991

Organic Food Guide 2009-2010

**Box Series 6. Little River Community School**

- 8 General Information: includes informational pamphlet, tuition and donation information, intern seeking information

Press: "Littler River Community School: An Alternative to Traditional Schooling" *St. Lawrence Plaindealer* (Nov. 1999)

Teaching notes (undated) includes (3) notebooks containing observations, memos, evaluations, etc.

**Box Series 7. Hugging House Construction Plans**

- 9 Building Permit (July 1, 1991-July 1, 1992)

General Building Information, includes generic building information, product descriptions and advertisements, and price lists

"How To," includes pamphlets with instillation and usage information for specific tasks and Projects

The Shelter Institute, includes general information, itinerary for two week shelter student, product samples, and certificate of recognition

Shelter Notes, a publication of class material from the Shelter Institution (copyright 1974)

Hugging House Construction Plans, (includes 3 notebooks), ideas, drafts, measurements, etc. provides detailed explanation of the process and actual construction of the house

Formal Drafts/Floor Plans, includes a number of sketches of the house complete with Measurements

Order lists/Receipts, includes lists of materials necessary and prices as well as receipts for some purchases

**Box Series 8 Misc.**

- 10 Cook Book  
Phone Log [N.D.]  
Alternative Energy Fair House Tours [N.D.]



Various newspaper clippings [N.D.]  
 North Country This Week – October 11-17, 1989. Article on Birds Foot Community and its beginnings.  
 Article and Photos on Coal Miners in Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee  
 Greenhouse Plans  
 Peace News December 1999-February 2000  
 Peace News for nonviolent revolution December 1999-February 2000  
 Akwesasne Notes Midwinter 1991 and October/November/December 1995  
 Cards and Postcards (some blank) Dates Unknown  
 Brochures and info from various CSAs, Newsletters  
 Misc. files:  
     Lead & other heavy metals  
     Water and Irrigation  
     Tree crops—permaculture  
 3 8mm video cassettes – interview with Doug Jones  
 1 8mm video cassette – still shots of Birdsfoot  
 1 VHS tape – Environmental Studies video on Birdsfoot 1996  
 John Deere Model “L” tractor manual

**Box    Series 11**

11      Phone Scroll 2008-2009 - 5 scrolls

**Box    Series 12      Oversized**

12      2006 German Calendar  
         Photos taken by Kyle Hartman of the 2006 Artists studio Tour  
         Poster of a field and rainbow  
         2006 Poster for the Garlic Festival

**Box    Series 12      CLOSED RECORDS**

13      North Country Community Bank Statements 2002, 2004, misc. 2001 deposit slips  
         2001 Tax Forms  
         2002 Tax Returns & W2 Statements  
         2003 Tax Forms, Returns, W4's, W2's  
         North Country Savings Bank Statements 2000, 2001  
         Duplicate Check Stubs  
         Deposit Slips 2000, 2001, 2002  
         Misc. Papers  
         Employee pay records

**Double Oversized Holdings (Flat File Cabinet, drawer 18 in ODY Room 149)**

Poster—“The Veggie Business”  
 Poster—“The Community”  
 To-do list based on subject matter (on long white paper)  
 To-do list based on a yearly timeline (on long brown paper)