

The Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation committed to maintaining the 145-acre farm in agriculture in perpetuity, preserving and protecting the historic landscape and natural habitat, providing educational programs, and offering public access to the farm.

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**Jaime Nielsen**  
**Carl O'Neil**

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The Autumn Avenue trailhead parking lot is open dawn to dusk.

**Your Support Is Needed for a Potential Hall's Brook Protection Project**

Every year the Directors of the Historical O'Neil Farm identify a project for our Annual Fund and this year we are embarking on a big one that will represent a significant change at the farm. Those who know the farm and who walk along the Avery Trail know that Halls Brook bisects the property effectively separating fields along Autumn Avenue from fields closer to the barnyard. We are considering a project with National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) that would isolate Halls Brook from the fields. Our Annual Fund drive seeks to raise money to help with the design services associated with this project and, if there are sufficient funds, to kickstart the project.

For many years Halls Brook has served as a source of water for the cows who, in the summer, can drink from the continuously flowing stream. In decades past, the brook was also used to cool milk. Carl and his ancestors placed metal milk containers in a granite block sump within the brook and let the water naturally cool the milk. An earthen bridge traverses the brook. As originally constructed the bridge allowed the farmer to access the back fields with a tractor and allowed the cows to cross the stream safely. That bridge has fallen into disrepair and is no longer safe for a heavy tractor or cow traffic. Currently if Carl wants to access the northern fields he has to drive his tractor around on Autumn Avenue. If the cows want to access the fields they wander through the brook.

NRCS approached the Board with the idea of isolating Halls Brook. NRCS is concerned about the addition of unwanted nutrients entering the water and flowing downstream. The solution, in their view, is to keep the cows out of the water and create a natural buffer between the pastures and Halls Brook. Such a project would improve the quality of Halls Brook.

The Board is very interested in improving the quality of the brook and in environmental stewardship in general but there are a lot of questions and factors to consider.

- How would cows access the northern fields?
- How would the cows get water to drink ?
- Would we be able to repair the bridge?

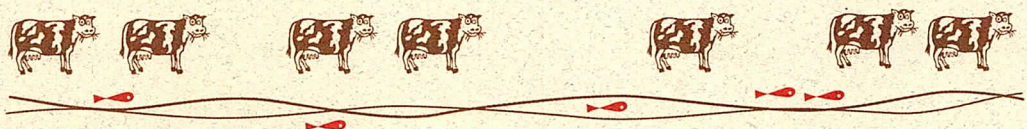
The list goes on.

NRCS has money available to support elements of the project that include fencing, a water well, and crossing improvements, Historic O'Neil Farm needs to research, plan for , and fund what would work for the current and future farmers.

Which leads us to our Annual Fund request. The Board seeks \$10,000 through our Annual Fund to support design and grant-writing phase of this project. Isolation of Halls Brook would improve the quality of the brook and it might provide an opportunity to create a walking path connecting the Avery Trail to the former Trout Farm. Both would be positive elements. But we have to remember that the farm is just that, a farm. We cannot ignore the need for the farmer (current and future) to be able to farm with adequate security and grazing area for livestock and adequate water for their needs.

This will be a project that represents a big change for the farm and we want to get it right.

**Will you help us raise money so we can design a project we can all be proud of?**





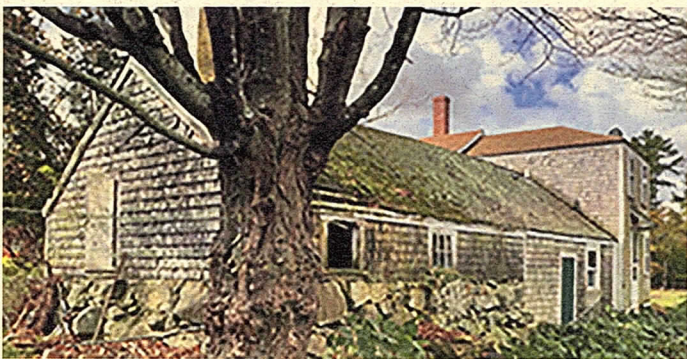
## The O'Neil Farm Summer Kitchen

Summer kitchens were historically used to provide families with an area for cooking, preserving, and cleaning that allowed for relief from the heat during the summer months. Common tasks included vegetable and fruit canning, as well as meat processing.

The O'Neil homestead has an area to the right of the main house that is described in the historical narrative recorded by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as a "one-story shed with gabled roof that extends eastward from the north end of the rear ell. Measuring 40 feet long by 18 feet deep". Mr. O'Neil has shared that the shed contains a soapstone sink, old wood stove, walk-in ice box, and an antique milk separator. He also indicates that there was probably a work table in the center. The "kitchen area" is connected to the main portion of the house by a woodshed. The entire shed has a dirt floor and the "base of the east and part of the north wall is constructed of large fieldstone rocks."

Although we haven't dated the attached part of the house, we assume it was built much later, after the original part of the homestead, which was built between 1715 and 1727. Summer kitchens became popular in the early 19th century. Before air-conditioners, homes would be cooler in the summer by keeping the heat from the wood stove in a separate area from the house. When cooler weather came, the cooking was brought back into the house. Carl indicates he was told that the "summer kitchen" area was used by his family to bottle and separate milk up until the 1930s. It was also used to wash clothes, dry out lard, and make lye soap. Another popular activity in summer kitchens around New England was the canning of vegetables and fruits, a popular way to preserve the harvest from the gardens.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission identifies the house as a "vernacular example of early rural residential architecture" and "the diverse array of additions, ells, and sheds, both domestic and agricultural, provide a valuable record of rural life in Duxbury over the course of several centuries." What looked like a basic shed instead held valuable space for Mr. O'Neil's ancestors to work and provide for their family and the community. Presently, the area is being utilized by Mr. O'Neil as storage. We hope that in our future we can preserve the farming history of the shed to reflect the "summer kitchen".



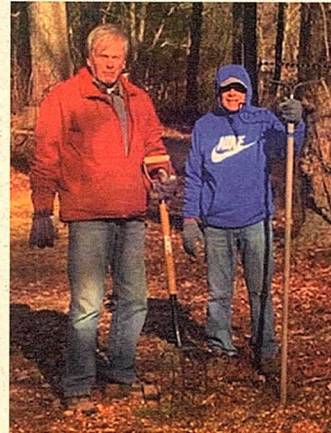
The O'Neil Shed - Kitchen House



Visit our website at:  
[www.historiconeilfarm.org](http://www.historiconeilfarm.org)  
or find us on Facebook and Instagram:  
[@historiconeil](https://www.instagram.com/historiconeil)



## O'Neil Farm Trail Improvements



Stephen Dias and Michael Arsenault

**Historic O'Neil Farm Board Members and volunteers were busy on the trail this past spring and summer.** Maintaining the trails for access is a priority as we know that lots of people, walking dogs, enjoying the wildlife or taking time to enjoy conversations with the cows are out there.

We have tried to keep up with maintaining and adding content to the kiosks. Unfortunately, they get damaged and trail maps quickly run out but we try to keep information current at the Avery and Chandler trailheads. The grants we applied for early in 2023 did not come through for us, but we are encouraged by the

volunteer effort and donation of wood chips by Colonial Tree to help us with improvements. We will continue with the grant application process next year. As you walk along the trails, you will see the addition of more "No Hunting" signs along the trails. We thank you for this cooperation.

Volunteers from Wildlands Trust (Steven Dias, Michael Arsenault, Phil Leddy) worked with our Board member Erik Boyer to put down several yards of wood chips across rooty areas along the Avery trail. There are a lot more chips to spread but we hope you notice that especially rooty areas are much more passable. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Erik Boyer at [Eboyer@wildlandstrust.org](mailto:Eboyer@wildlandstrust.org).

Kyle Campbell is working on two benches as part of his Eagle Scout project. We expect his project to be complete in the coming month and these benches will be dedicated to Lorrie Hall and Pat Loring (see related article) when complete. In the meantime Wildlands Trust generously loaned us two benches that we have placed along the Chandler and Avery Trails. We hope you take the time to sit and enjoy the views. Thank you Kyle for your generous donation of these benches.

And while we are thanking volunteers, Mike Botzos and his son did a fantastic job cleaning up a tree that fell across the Avery Trail. The large oak was cut and taken for eventual use in his smoker. Several Board members expressed interest in learning more about Mike's smoker operation but in the meantime we appreciate his work clearing the trail.

## 4-H on the Farm

**The Farmtastic 4-H'ers enjoyed another year of fun with Carl O'Neil's heifer calves.**

Volunteers and youth members of the 4-H club come to the farm every Saturday, rain or shine, to spend time with the cows and their 4-H friends. During the meetings the club helps on the farm, learning about dairy cows, farming, responsibility, and teamwork. Year-round the club is gaining hands-on experience in preparation for the summer show season.

Each spring, the club members lease a female calf from Carl O'Neil's dairy herd. The lease program is part of the "4-H Dairy Project", which encourages youth to learn new skills and fosters character development through goal setting and record keeping. The kids help take care of their calves as they grow, teach the calves how to walk on a halter, and clean them up for competitions. Older members of the club take initiative to share their knowledge and experiences with the younger generations. Alumni and volunteers enjoy seeing new members gain understanding and self-confidence while working with the cows and their 4-H friends.



## Recognizing Lorrie Hall and Pat Loring



Lorrie Hall

Lorrie Hall and Pat Loring were recognized at the Duxbury Senior Center by Historic O'Neil Farm and other local organizations recently for their long-standing and on-going support and leadership. Two benches have been placed on our trails in their honor so that walkers can sit and enjoy some of the views that the Farm has to offer.



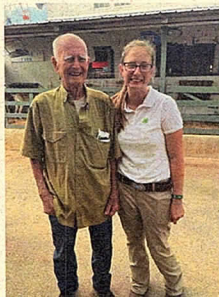
Pat Loring

Both Hall and Loring were longtime members of the HOF Board and were instrumental in seeing early projects at the farm through completion including the construction of trails and construction of the manure storage building. They were part of a team that started and ran with the annual Farm Day as well as other events. Even before the farm was a reality, Hall and Loring saw what the Farm could be and worked tirelessly to raise the funds necessary to purchase the property and get the project through town meeting.

Hall and Loring were also recognized by the Town of Duxbury for their many efforts and years of service on the Open Space Committee and working with the Conservation Commission. In addition, both women were recognized by Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts, an organization that acquires, manages and preserves open space across southeast Massachusetts.

**If you are one of the lucky folks who walks along our trails, even if you are simply someone who drives past the fields on Winter Street or Autumn Avenue, remember to thank Lorrie Hall and Pat Loring who worked so hard to give us these gifts.**

In the summer, Farmtastic 4-H'ers bring their project calves to the Barnstable County Fair and the Marshfield Fair for the dairy shows. At the Fair, the kids have an opportunity to interact with and educate the public about 4-H and farming. All the knowledge and skills they have gained at the farm are on display at the fair; the kids answer peoples' questions, care for their calves during the week, and enter the competition with their calves. To prepare for the



Madison Hogan and Carl O'Neil at Marshfield Fair, and Cooper McDonough and Will Jones at the Barnstable County Fair.



show the cows are washed clean, and their body hair is clipped to accentuate their dairy character. Hoofs are polished and tails are fluffed to make the calves look their best. In the showing, the youth walk their cows slowly in a large circle while keeping an eye on the judge. Attention to detail, patience, and lots of practice ensure the kids will succeed at the show. Even if they don't win 1st place, each kid benefits from being at the show. Farmtastic 4-H'ers had another successful show season, taking home "Fitting & Showmanship Champion" and "Best of Breed" awards from both fairs. Congratulations to all of the hardworking 4-H'ers!

Did you know 4-H is not limited to achievements in livestock shows? New this year- a Farmtastic 4-H'er won Best of Show for a different type of competition. Congratulations to Madison Hogan of Halifax, who entered her homemade focaccia bread at the Barnstable County Fair. The loaf not only won first place but was also recognized as Best of Show for her hand-crafted design on top.

Carl O'Neil has been allowing the Farmtastic 4-H'ers to continue working with his cows on the farm and traveling to local fairs since 2004. The Farmtastic 4-H'ers are sincerely grateful for all the years of memories on and off the farm and for O'Neil Farm's dedication to supporting the local 4-H program.

Aside from cows, one of the most outstanding aspects of the Farmtastic 4-H'ers and the Plymouth County 4-H program is the sense of Community; everyone is supportive and kind. Kids inspire each other to try new things, challenge themselves, and not be afraid to mess up. During difficult times or the best days of their lives, the 4-H community thrives. Interested in learning about how you can support your local 4-H program? Visit <https://plymouthcounty4h.org/>

## Thank You Board Members

Thank you to Jessica McNally and her service to the board for the past 5 plus years, especially, with her knowledge of working with Mr. O'Neil in his dairy. Her assistance was valuable in working with our invasive management project and coordinating contractors, framing our future vision, researching barn improvements, and volunteering in the many events, such as, Farm Day. We will miss Jessica's enthusiasm and efforts.

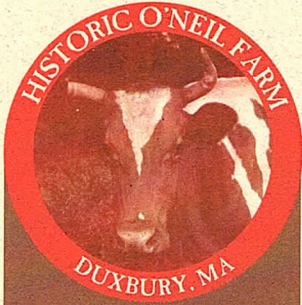
We welcome new board member and Carl's nominee Jeff Chandler, who has been involved in supporting the O'Neil farm, assisting Carl with haying and working with him on the Duxbury Agricultural Board. As director of the Marshfield Agricultural and Horticultural Society, who hosts the Marshfield Fair, Jeff has also been a supporter and often offered leadership for more than a decade to the Farmtastic 4H club who work with and show Carl's dairy cattle at the fair. Jeff also runs his own farm with cattle and horses and runs a youth equine club. His Duxbury community involvement also includes his work as a Duxbury Firefighter and Plymouth County Technical Resource team member.

We have also gained Wildland's Trust nominee, board member Scott Ford, who currently serves on the Wildland's trust board and has served on community planning boards. Scott is an attorney who specializes in business litigation. His career knowledge and experience will be a valuable asset as Historic O'Neil Board moves forward.



Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc.  
PO Box 2755  
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Address Service Requested



### See inside for:

Summer Kitchen

O'Neil Farm Trail  
Update

4H on the Farm

Recognizing  
Hall and Loring

Thank You  
Board Members

## 2023 Historic O'Neil Farm Updates

### Thank You

#### Supporting Historic O'Neil Farm for the Future

Historic O'Neil Farm continues to fund all expenses toward meeting the environmental and agricultural goals set in place when Carl O'Neil envisioned a future for his family farm through your donations. Grants fund a portion of new project expenses and awards are dependent on Historic O'Neil Farm's ability to finance the project. Thank you for your continuing financial support of Historic O'Neil Farm.

Historic O'Neil Farm is planning for its future of agricultural farming by applying for a grant to protect Halls Brook and provide a cleaner and safer water sources for livestock. Help us meet our \$10,000 fundraising goal to research, design, demonstrate support for this project and all our efforts to maintain its agricultural and conservation restrictions

We appreciate your tax-deductible contribution that can be made by filling out this form and mailing to

**Historic O'Neil Farm, P.O. Box 2755, Duxbury, MA 02331**

or donating online through

<http://www.historiconeilfarm.org/donate.html>

or scanning this QR code.

The board of directors thanks you for your generosity and continued support.

**YES, I am committed to helping Historic O'Neil Farm, Inc. move into the future. Enclosed is my contribution of:**

\$25    \$50    \$100    \$250    \$500    Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_



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