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
Letter 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


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


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)


Documents of Intent, Statement of intention (undated), outline of the integration community work responsibilities/structure, hour/wage payment discussion notes


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


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
1993, Receipts
1993, Annual Report
1994, Receipts
1994, Annual Report
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2001, Annual Report
2002, Receipts
2002, Annual Report
2003, Receipts
2003, Annual Report
2004, Receipts
2004, Annual Report
2005, Receipts
2005, Annual Report
2006, Receipts
2006, Annual Report
2007, Receipts
2007, Annual Report
2008, Receipts missing
2009, Receipts
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.

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

2002, Notes
2002, Publications
2002, Seed Lists
2002, Sales
2002, Expenditures (2 folders)
2002, Cashbook
2002, Harvest Records

7 Veggie Business
2003, Publications
2003, Seed Lists
2003, Expenditures

2004, Notes
2004, Publications

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 installation 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

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**

   2002 Tax Returns & W2 Statements
   2003 Tax Forms, Returns, W4’s, W2’s
   Duplicate Check Stubs
   Misc.Papers

**Double Oversized Holdings (Reading Room)**

   Poster—“The Veggie Business”
   Poster—“The Community”