

**Town of Hanover
Community Preservation Committee
Application for Funding**
Submit to Community Preservation Committee
c/o Community Preservation Coordinator
Hanover Town Hall, 550 Hanover Street, Hanover, MA 02339
Tel: 781-826-5000 Ext 1059 Fax: 781-826-5950
Ann.Lee@hanover-ma.gov

TOWN OF HANOVER
2020 OCT 29 AM 9:58
TOWN CLERK

Name of Applicant: Hanover Open Space Committee

Name of Co-Applicant, if Applicable: Hanover Historical Commission

Contact Name: Mary Dunn

Mailing Address: 50 Hillside Drive

City: Hanover State: MA Zip: 02339

Daytime Phone: 781 826 5315 Email: meugdunn@gmail.com

Name of Proposal: Sylvester Field Conservation Restriction

Address of Proposal (or assessor's parcel ID): 0 Washington Street; parcel 58-14

CPA Category (circle all that apply):

Open space **Historic preservation** Affordable Housing Recreation

CPA Funding Requested: \$250,000.

Total Cost of Proposed Project: \$585,000.

Expected Completion Date: _____

If project is expected to continue over more than one year or if bonding the project is anticipated detail the cost of project on the following chart (explanation may be attached on a separate sheet.)

| Fiscal Year | CPC Funds Requested | Total Cost | Other Funding Sources |
|-------------|---------------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 2021 | \$250,000. | \$585,000. | Balance: Wildlands Trust |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Total | \$250,000. | | |

¹ If the proposal is on Town-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the Town Board, Commission, or Department in control of the land.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

1. **Goals:** What are the goals of the project?
Preservation and protection of 10.15 acre field between scenic Washington Street and Third Herring Brook.
Additional preservation of directly adjacent parcels 167 Washington Street and woodlot 58-11 by Wildlands Trust anticipated, but not within the scope of this application.
2. **Community Need:** Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing Town plans? (Note: Hanover Master Plan)

This parcel was specifically identified as a "preservation priority" in the Master Plan. It was also mentioned in the Open Space Plan as a parcel of "particular concern" and as a "Scenic Resource".

It is situated along an officially designated "scenic roadway" (Washington Street in Four Corners), and provides a treasured scenic view.

It will eventually provide public walking trails on a beautiful parcel on the Third Herring Brook.

It has a long history:

It may be an important Native American site, with many cultural materials including stone tools and clay potsherds recovered on the parcel.

The field was once part of the land owned by William Barstow (1612-1668), who is believed to be the first European settler in the present bounds of Hanover. Barstow, a surveyor for the Town of Scituate, owned the land between the North River and Broadway and between Third Herring Brook and Washington Street. In 1656, Barstow was contracted to build the first bridge across the North River, which he completed in 1657, enabling more efficient passage between Boston and Plymouth. Barstow also maintained an Ordinary near the bridge and the second oldest shipyard on the North River, "Old Barstow Yard" was located nearby.

This parcel was part of a larger farm that was built by the Stockbridge family in the early 18th century. Benjamin and Martin Stockbridge were forced to sell all of their landholdings in 1815, after which the Sylvester Family took possession of it.

Most of the farm was sold to the Marden's in the 1940's, and development began. Betsey (Sylvester) Robinson purchased the parcel in 1956 to save it from development. The rest of the once open farmland is now Old Bridge Road and Old Shipyard Lane developments.

It was the site of the Red and Blue War of 1909, a "mimic war" with an encampment of over ten thousand participants, including foreign military attaches.

It included the 10th Cavalry (an African American troop) which served with Col. Roosevelt at San Juan.

It contains an historic stone wall which was built in 1913.

The Sylvester Field's open field habitat is increasingly rare and imperiled across the region. Open field habitats support the life cycles of numerous common wildlife species and many rare species, including Eastern box turtle and several species of ground nesting birds.

Sylvester Field is situated within numerous areas identified as significant by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program including:

- BioMap 2 Core habitat
- BioMap 2 Critical Natural Landscape
- NHESP Natural Communities
- Priority Habitat of Rare Species "PH892"
- Anadromous Fish Presence
- Outstanding Resource Waters, Scenic/Protected River
- Riverine Natural Community Systems, Herbaceous

Collectively, these designations attest to the Sylvester Field's wildlife habitat significance, and the importance of its extensive riparian habitat along the Third Herring Brook. The Field has 660 feet of the frontage on the brook, which is an important tributary of the North River, the only state-designated Scenic River in the Commonwealth, and one of the region's most beloved natural resources.

Consistent with its centuries-long use as agricultural land, the Field contains areas of "Farmland of Unique Importance" and "Farmland of State Importance" as designated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

3. **Community Support:** What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and any petitions.

The application is a joint initiative of both the Hanover Open Space Committee and the Hanover Historical Commission. It also has strong neighborhood support in Four Corners. It is also supported by the larger South Shore community, as shown by the large financial commitment of Wildlands Trust.

4. **Timeline:** What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones?

A draft Purchase and Sale Agreement is under review by the respective legal counsels for the Robinson estate and Wildlands Trust. It is expected to be executed by year-end.

It is anticipated that Wildlands Trust will purchase Sylvester Field no later than June 29, 2021. We anticipate that the Conservation Restriction would be recorded as part of a simultaneous transaction.

Trail maintenance efforts by Wildlands Trust will begin immediately following their taking title to the Field, with emphasis on keeping the field-edge walking trails open. An informational kiosk will be designed and installed as soon as possible following acquisition.

5. **Credentials:** How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?

The Hanover Open Space Committee develops and maintains trails on all Hanover conservation properties.

The Hanover Historical Commission is the town's agency responsible for identifying, evaluating and protecting the historic and archaeological assets within the town, maintains the inventory of the town's historic assets and administers specific statutes that protect historic properties.

Wildlands Trust, a conservation non-profit formed in 1973, holds property interests in 37 towns across Southeastern Massachusetts, and owns and manages over 5,000 acres of preserves. Their experienced Property Manager capably leads its stewardship staff in managing its preserves across the region, providing high-quality public access. Wildlands Trust has extensive experience in stewarding properties with open-field habitats like Sylvester Field, and its stewardship ethos balances habitat preservation, aesthetic considerations and public access. It will ensure that the Field is maintained in an open condition by an annual mowing regimen. It will also continue the long-established practice of frequent mowing of the field's perimeter in order to maintain walking paths.

6. **Success Factors:** How will the success of this project be measured?

Continued preservation of the scenic open field, with public access to walking trails on the property.

7. **Budget:** What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.)

The entire request, \$250,000., will be used to purchase a M.G.L. ch. 184, s.31-33 Conservation Restriction that will prevent development of the property in perpetuity.

8. **Other Funding:** What additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.

Wildlands Trust will be financing the balance of the purchase price, \$585,000., with funds raised through donations/private fundraising.

9. **Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?

Wildlands Trust will maintain the property as one of its Preserves, using additional funds raised at the time

of purchase for ongoing trail work, mowing, and maintenance.

There will be no maintenance required from the Town of Hanover, and the Town's only obligation/responsibility will be to conduct annual CR "monitoring" visits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

10. Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed.
Will be available later this year. See Question 4.
11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal.
N/A
12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the town for zoning review.
N/A
13. Evidence that the appropriate Town Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Committee)
Hanover Open Space Committee, Hanover Historical Commission and Hanover Conservation Commission support this project.
14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place.
There is no indication of the presence of any hazardous materials or illegal or illicit dumping. However, in keeping with its standard practice, Wildlands Trust will commission an Environmental Records Check Report for the Field and share the report with the Town prior to the anticipated closing date. Note that the ownership of the land will pass to Wildlands Trust, not the Town of Hanover.
15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed. All historic resources rehabilitation projects must comply with the Standards for Rehabilitation stated in the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
N/A
16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.
Trail walks will be organized by both Wildlands Trust and the Hanover Open Space Committee. Educational opportunities for students and others on the ecological and historical features of the property may be arranged by the Hanover Historical Commission and Wildlands Trust.

NOTE: If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required which the applicant will be required to fund. No funding decisions will be made without an independent appraisal.

The application deadline is Friday, October 30, 2020 at 12 noon.

SYLVESTER FIELD

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

October 19, 2020

To Whom It May Concern

Please add Dan and Karen Jones of 37 Washington Street to the list of people in support of the effort to preserve Robinson's Field for future generations. We have had the privilege of walking the field down to the pine grove on the banks of Third Herring Brook for many years and enjoyed it at any time of day throughout all the seasons. It has been a wonderful open space to have just a few steps from historic Four Corners and busy route 53 where you never quite know what sort of wildlife you might see. Owls, hawks and turkeys along with waterfowl on the brook are constantly passing through, along with foxes, coyotes and deer. It would be a wonderful resource for the Town of Hanover to preserve and treasure.

Sincerely,
Dan and Karen Jones

October 20, 2020

To Whom It May Concern -

While house hunting in Hanover more than 5 years ago, we were drawn to the Four Corners area of town because of it's beautiful landscapes, antique houses, rich history and its quaint, neighborhood feel. The drive or walk down Washington Street in particular, is one that can be enjoyed and appreciated during every season of the year.

The rock wall that spans a large majority of the road brings you back to a time when houses were sparse and the landscape would have looked so much different than today. Our family has enjoyed countless walks around Robinson's/Sylvester's Field and through the wooded area along Third Herring Brook. The field is the last piece of untouched land in this area of town and we owe it to Hanover's history to maintain it as conservation land. We fully support the article that would guarantee preservation of this plot of land so that it can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Thank you.

Sarah & Matt Thibault
77 Old Bridge Road
Hanover, MA 02339

October 20, 2020

RE: Robinson's Field on Washington St

To Whom it may concern,

We would like to express our full support of the proposal to fund the conservation restriction by the Town of Hanover, to guarantee the preservation. Along with the purchase of the property by Wildlands Preservation Trust, we will ensure this property will be used as an open space for citizens to enjoy the beauty and history of this land. The Town of Hanover is extremely fortunate to have the opportunity to do what is right for this very special parcel of Land.

We are requesting that you vote in favor of the \$250,000 at next spring's Town Meeting to secure and preserve the Robinson Field property.

Thank you for all you do to help the Town of Hanover set aside open space for all to enjoy and embrace.

Sincerely,

John and Nancy Ferraro

18 Green Hill Road

Hanover, MA

781 826 9012

To whom it may concern,
Virtually every day since we moved to Hanover and Old Bridge Road in 1975, we have driven or walked past tranquil Sylvester's Field (better known to locals as Robinson's Field) and its open space. Depending on the season, we've watched Canada Geese alight, deer forage, pheasants, rabbits, coyotes, and many other animals enjoying the safety, harvest and shelter of the field. Thanks to the kindness of the caretakers, a path has been maintained around the field continually since we have lived here. One neighbor was inspired to reintroduce Bobwhites. Others have kept the brush and grass trimmed along the stone wall to ensure the area remains attractive for all passing. We imagine that there is no one who drives past on Washington Street who doesn't look to see what the latest "action" is in the field or to admire the scenery no matter what the time of year.

Neighbors visiting in the field have reported finding Native-American artifacts in or near Third Herring Brook, and watching the alewives migrate upstream. We ourselves have floated with the tide up the brook from the North River and alighted in the grove at the base of the field. In 1976, we and other townspeople joined together in the field to watch a reenactment of a battle between the colonists and British. Over the past few years, the history of the Hanover shipyards, which includes Four Corners, the North River, and the field have been publicized, giving Hanover a renewed sense of pride in its history. When we have given direction to friends coming to visit us, we usually tell them, "It's the street right after the big open field."

Sylvester's/Robinson's Field has long been a resource and source of pride for the community. We look forward to the continuation, improvement, and protection of its usage.

Sincerely,
Bob and Ava Sigsby
61 Old Bridge Road
Hanover MA

October 16, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing as a neighbor in support of the Town of Hanover, in conjunction with Wildlands Trust, purchasing the Sylvester Field. Many neighbors, including myself and my family, walk the fields on a regular basis. We walk there once a week, if not twice, and usually see at least one other group there. We enjoy running into and catching up with our neighbors.

We have been ever so appreciative of the Robinson family for letting us use this space. The field itself is beautiful, but it also holds a very unique ecosystem and abuts the stream. We often wade in the stream, enjoy watching its tidal patterns, and have used it as a kayak entry point during high tide.

While there are many open space trails in Hanover, there are none within walking distance from the Four Corners area, and none quite so beautiful that abut an essential river tributary.

Thank you for your consideration,

Julia and Dave Traggorth
159 Broadway

Tyack letter on Robinson field

To whom it may concern

Our family lives in the four corners area and we are so excited by the plan for the Town of Hanover and Wildlands Trust to preserve the Robinson's field on Old Washington St. Over the past year, we have been walking to the field, down to the pine grove by Third Herring Brook and back, pretty much every day. Most days we meet someone else enjoying the walk on the field as well. My guess is that near to 100 people probably walk on the field each week, even before it has been identified as a space preserved for public use. Robinson's field is an important open space resource for our town.

When I describe where I live to Hanover residents, I often say near the large field just off of four corners. Everyone knows what I mean and usually people light up and say how much they love driving by it. The field is one of our last remaining spaces preserved as it was used for agriculture, but it has an even deeper history. I will never forget the day when I went with my kids after the field had been plowed and after a rain. In the low area halfway to the pine grove, we walked out into the plowed field. The rain had washed soil away from rocks so that the rocks stood out. Among normal rocks were arrowheads and flakes of stone that must have been made by Native Americans. We spent an hour transported to a world many centuries earlier, imagining what life must have been like for the people who lived where we live but in such a different world.

I am particularly pleased by the creative plan for the town to join forces with Wildlands Trust. We often go to the Willow Brook Farm which they manage in Pembroke. In my opinion they do a fantastic job of managing the property, balancing the need to make it as accessible as possible while making sure that it is well protected. I think that they will be excellent stewards of the property, responsive to the feelings of us neighbors.

Our entire family strongly supports the article for the town to support purchasing the conservation restriction on this land to preserve a great asset for the future.

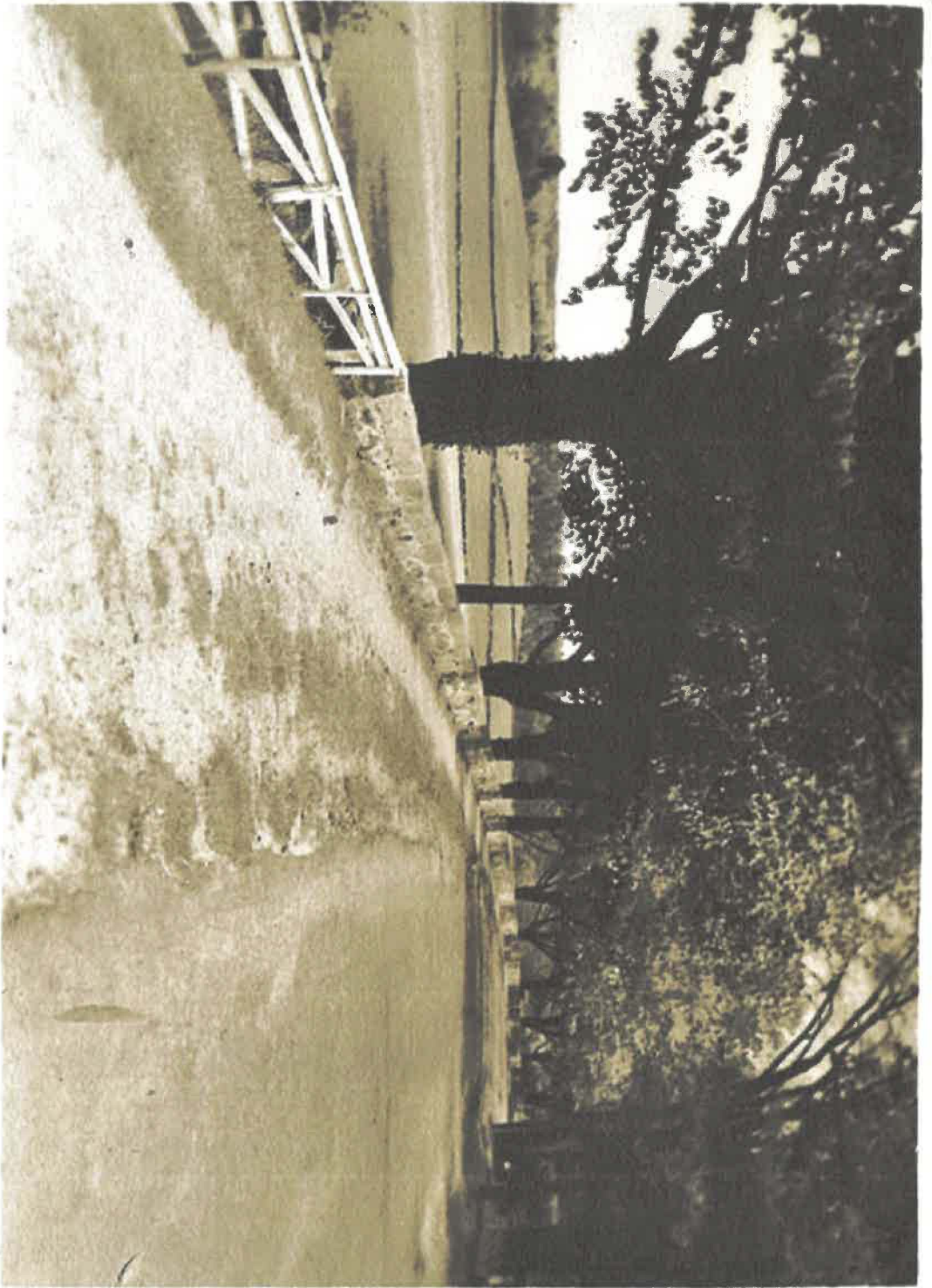
Sincerely

Peter L. Tyack

Peter Tyack
88 Old Bridge Road

SYLVESTER FIELD

HISTORICAL



**SYLVESTER'S
FIELDS**

**HANOVER,
MASS.**

Phot. 1913
M. H. H. H.



MOTOR
DANGER
RUN ON LOW SPEED
←
SEE SIGN FOR SPEED
LIMIT

We moved to Hanover Four Corners in 1945. My mother's father financed the purchase of the property at 120 Broadway from the Carroll family a.k.a. Carroll the Mover, who had parked the moving vans in the back yard. The ruts were still there after the Carrolls decamped for Quincy. My father was returning from his wartime service as a Navy communications officer. We had briefly lived in Norwell with my mother's friend, Marion Robinson.

The house at 120 Broadway stands almost directly across the street from the Phoenix Lodge which then housed the post office, Barca's barber shop and the telephone company on the first floor. The mail box in front of the post office was painted Army green. The telephone operators plugged wires into a switch board and asked "number please?" because there were either party lines or private lines, but no dial phones. I well remember the early morning sound of various motor vehicles as their owners came to pick up their mail, including the very distinctive sound of one Model A Ford.

In addition to the lodge building, Hanover Four Corners then included a music shop, a pharmacy, a butcher shop, a First National store, Henniger's market and a beauty shop, all in the the strip center that still exists. The First National was a classic of the early to mid-20th century with canned goods on wall shelves, fresh fish on ice beds, fresh vegetables in season, and sawdust on the floor. There was no supermarket on Route 3 (now 53), just a marsh. The square also included a Mobil service station later moved wholesale to Route 3 and the venerable Scotts Store.

I was 2 years old when we arrived, but within a few short years I had escaped from the back yard into a maze of trails that ultimately led to property owned by Clayton Robinson. That property was the first of the fields that formed the vista seen from Washington Street, and it abutted the then Sylvester farm. This part of the town was ancient in its history, long inhabited by Indians before the earliest English colonies, land acquisitions, and the arrival of William Barstow in this area. (*Consult Archeological Investigations of the Hanover Marketplace and Dwelley and Simmons 1910 History of the Town of Hanover for more on the subject of the Indians and early settlers.*)

Every child, and there were many in the neighborhood, played in those woods and fields, searched for arrowheads, fished in the Third Herring Brook, watched the annual herring migration, and swam in the river. There were two swimming holes. One was partly dug out at the edge of the stream where it defined the end of the Robinson property. It was just about where the fresh water joined the tidal flow, meandering through the marshes before emptying into the North River downstream by a half mile or so.

This swimming hole was called "Little Rainbow." It was where the younger children swam. A little farther downstream was a large silver beech tree that hung out over the brook. The brook was too shallow for jumping from the tree, but it served nicely as a place where teenaged lovers carved their initials of which there was an abundance. The meandering brook eventually undermined the beech tree, which fell into the river, an ignominious and tragic end to the history of whose initials those were. The area just above the tree was a pine grove—then called Little Pine Grove and now very old.

Across the fields at the joining of the Third Herring Brook and the North River was a typical glacial sand deposit that formed a hill. The hill was also planted with pine trees—Big Pine Grove-- both forming a handy privacy screen for those who wished to jump in the other swimming hole, "Big Rainbow." Only

the older children were supposed to go to Big Rainbow because of the depth and current of the North River. That particular location is now at the end of Old Bridge Road. Everyone skinny dipped in both swimming holes, and occasionally there was trouble, but I digress.

The Sylvester farm included land on both sides of Washington Street up to the rear of the Salmond School and abutting Route 3 (53). In fact a cow tunnel, now long gone, was built under the highway so the herds could reach hilly pasture land on the other side of Route 3. Those gravelly ridges are also long gone. The farm included the main house, two barns, and several rentable houses that were likely once used as lodging for farm workers. The farm was previously described in deeds as the Stockbridge Farm, but the Sylvesters owned it in 1910 as shown in a photograph from the *History of Hanover*.

My early memory on one detail is vague, but I think the farm itself was leased to a farm operator in the 1940s. My older sister came home one afternoon and said the man had poked a bull with a pitchfork causing the bull to chase him across the fields as he tried to escape to a gate on Washington Street. The bull caught up with and gored the man as he slammed into the stone wall. Afterward we could see how the wall next to the gate had been damaged, but the story may have been exaggerated. It wasn't long after this event, apocryphal or not, that the Mardens came to town.

In 1949 Mr. and Mrs. Marden bought the farm from the Sylvester family, then living in Cohasset, for \$10,200. The Mardens had three sons: Jay, Bruce and Lee. Jay was the oldest; Lee the youngest. Mr. Marden was a Hingham real estate broker and former wartime Navy officer. (Much, much later Marden Realty became one of the first agencies to own a Xerox machine according to Jack Peckham, a Boston real estate broker.) I was in the first or second grade at the Salmond Elementary School when Lee Marden arrived. He immediately dominated the scene, forming a "gang" modeled on the favorite cowboy programs of the day, such as Hopalong Cassidy and Roy Rogers, and struggled with his rival, Dicky Coughlin.

Lee was anathema to the teachers in his inattention to scholarship and his schemes for merry mayhem. One day he tricked a very young third grade teacher into entering a coat closet after which he and his confederates closed the doors and leaped out the classroom windows. Needless to say our principal, Mrs. Lurvey, was not amused. Mrs. Lurvey was formidable and fearless. She had personally witnessed the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Anyway, all of us in the neighborhood became good buddies, typical boys and a scourge to civilized elements. Members of the ever expanding group included Lee Marden, Bert Robbins, Brian and Roger Lambert, their cousin Ben Lambert, Earl Opdyke, myself, later Bill Thompson, and sometimes Billy Thomas, who was older than us.

Engaging this group was roughly equivalent to inviting Ghengis Kahn for tea. For instance: We once blew the back door off the First National store which by then had become a Jehovah Witnesses Kingdom Hall (while a meeting was in session on a Saturday night); we used every street light on Washington Street for target practice, knocking out 100%; we dropped homemade dummies from trees into the street as motorists approached at night; we bet Ben and Brian Lambert that they couldn't crawl all the way through the ancient stone drainage tunnel under Washington Street near the Lynch home—and Brian got stuck half way through; we raided Hector Lynch's guest house in the middle of the night because his

daughter was having a sleep over, scattering in the dark when Mr. Lynch appeared brandishing a shotgun. (Lynch called all the parents, embarrassing my mother who thought I was in bed.) There's more. Fortunately the statute of limitations has expired.

But the farm was the centerpiece of our lives. I can remember running through hay that was as tall as I, the shift of the tides, the silver shimmer of ice on the frozen marshes in winter, and the big sky, sometimes punctuated by Navy planes and blimps on submarine patrol from the Squantum and South Weymouth air bases. When the tide was high we swam in the North River off a float owned by the Mardens near the old boat yard. That's where Bill Thompson broke my nose when he cannon balled just as I was coming up for air.

Essentially the fields lay in an ancient glacial basin running from the North River back to Broadway on the Hanover side of the Third Herring Brook and huge sand hills on the Norwell side up to and around Church Hill. It was a small segment of New England country wilderness at the time, but it's fully developed today. The fields were leased by Horntra Farms in the '40s and '50s. The Hornstras maintained a fairly large herd of cows, heifers, and springers who happily grazed and fertilized the land as they went along. (Never underestimate the value of cow flaps to a group of boys.)

The cows were not milked; they were bearing calves or set to breed. They were let in and out of the barn every day and usually wandered from the river near the boat yard (now the end of Old Shipyard Lane) to Little Pine Grove and back before returning to the barn for the night. The Hornstras typically hayed the fields in June, and stored the hay in the one of the barns behind the house. My first driving experience came on a hot summer day when the hay crew needed someone to steer the Farmall tractor pulling the hay rig while they threw bales aboard it. I was 10.

One fall Mr. Marden paid me and Lee to dig out the stone drainage ditches that ran the length of the fields. We worked every afternoon in September and October shoveling the gooey muck into a tractor-drawn trailer which we then hauled up to the land across the street from the house. This land ran all the way to Route 3 and had a little skating pond on it that we built by removing brush and trees. The area was later subdivided and is now Buttonwood Lane.

One afternoon after we had dumped our load, Lee drove the tractor into the hay barn with me standing behind him on the tractor and in front of the trailer. Lee hit the brakes, and I jumped off. Lee turned around, but I was nowhere to be seen. I had plunged straight through a loose trap door into a soaking wet manure pile about 3 feet deep and as wide as the barn. He exploded into paroxysms of laughter when he realized what happened; I could not move an inch due to the suction. Eventually Lee revived, brought the tractor around to the back of the barn, and pulled me out with a rope. My mother was very displeased. I smelled really bad, and I was wearing a new pair of dungarees. (No jeans in those days.) She washed me off with a hose before she let me undress in the cellar.

Eventually the Hornstras moved their cows off the land, and Mr. Marden replaced them with a herd of ponies. They were beautiful to watch when he cried "hay up!" and they came thundering up to the fence. He had a prize pony that he kept in a stall with chains around its hooves. The chains strengthened

the pony's legs so that he would perform as a high stepper in the horse shows. Mr. Marden often brought him to the competitions at the Briggs stables in Hanover Center.

Lee left the Hanover school system for Thayer Academy, so I didn't see him much after that. He was later graduated from University of New Hampshire, and a couple of years ago someone told me he ended his career as executive director of the New Hampshire state legislature—an amusing if not ironic outcome.

The story of the Sylvester farm didn't have a happy ending in the Marden era. He was a real estate developer and investor at the peak of the post-World War II housing boom. The farm was compromised from the start. The old time gravel driveways were paved, one of the barns was converted into a dwelling, and this was just the beginning.

At 15 I was working as a concrete form worker for the summer. The boss sent us out to a job that he said was near where I lived. (We had moved to 15 Barstow Avenue by then.) My heart sank when we arrived at the farm and saw a gaping hole in the stone wall that lined Washington Street. An excavation just inside it was for the foundation of the first house in that field (first lot on the right at Old Bridge Lane). All the neighbors were very upset. One of them, Fred Saunders, had worked on the farm as a young man. His wife expressed her anger and frustration by calling the police, demanding that we be made to wear our T-shirts despite the heat. The foundation was poured and the house was built anyway. It was one of the first all-electric "too cheap to meter" homes in the area.

There was no conservation commission in those days and few if any land trusts interested in preserving the farm. The 10-acre middle field exists today thanks to the Robinson family who bought it from Mr. Marden in 1956 to save it from development. That land was saved by the Robinsons, but it missed the stewardship that the grazing cattle and other livestock brought to it in controlling invasive weeds and shrubby growth, fertilizing and conditioning the soil, and most of all maintaining the beauty of the land.

That vista across the fields, the marshes and the peaceful river valley attracted dozens of drivers every weekend. They couldn't get enough of it. I left Hanover in the early 1960s to pursue various interests and careers. I worked as a small town newspaperman, spent 15 years in higher education, and eventually became a hobby builder and real estate broker in Amherst, Massachusetts in the late 1980s. One day I was meeting with a prospective seller in Hadley when I happened to notice an interesting collection of photos on his mantel. They were black and white snap shots of Sylvester's fields. We talked for another hour about them and his deeply felt memories of that extraordinary view and the Sundays he spent enjoying it, and his disgust over its eventual loss to development.

In the lyric of Carley Simon, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone."

Peter Gluckler

6/9/2014