

SELF-GUIDED TOUR

*The*  
**DUDLEY**  
**FARM**  
*Museum*

*A Walking Tour of Our  
Late 19<sup>th</sup> - Century Farm*

*Come explore The Dudley Farm Museum  
grounds, where the barns, outbuildings,  
and farm animals will give you a glimpse  
into the life and work on a family farm  
in New England circa  
1870 to 1910.*



# Introducing the farm activities

ESSAY BY NATHAN DUDLEY AGED 16 YEARS,  
WRITTEN SEPTEMBER 1897: (EDITED)

## *A Day's Farming*

*When I speak of a day's farming, there is always a variety of work and perhaps this makes the work more attractive than the routine of the city laborer. There are so many things to be done that it seems as if they would never end.*

*We do not consider 4 o'clock too early in the morning to begin the "chores": milk and turn the cows to pasture, feed and curry the horses. There is always some odd job left over from the day before that can easily be done before breakfast about 6 o'clock.*

*After breakfast we are given the work for the day. Someone is sent to harness the horses and plow the ground for next year's grain. This means weary miles of walking in the freshly moved soil, guiding the plow and horses, and also keeping your temper for by no means is this pleasant work.*

*There are the meadows which have to be mowed. The scythes must be sharpened and then we "start in."*

*As we work we are not surprised to scare out snakes and turtles of different kinds. Frequently a howl is heard from some unlucky person whose scythe or boot has demolished a hornet's nest and is now the subject of a vigorous attack by the enraged insects.*

*After dinner there are acres and acres of corn to be cut and stacked, or to be picked and carted to the barns.*

*We clear the stones from the fresh-plowed ground, a never-ending job. There are pumpkins to gather and take to the barn, or apples to pick, or ... there is always something to do.*

*By 7 o'clock we are ready for supper. In the evening we find plenty to do, running the corn sheller, mending harnesses, making axe handles or, if nothing else, sorting apples and other fruit.*

*We generally leave off work at about 10 o'clock because we must be rested for the next day's labor.*

**Welcome** to The Dudley Farm Museum where many of the barns, outbuildings, pastures, gardens, and woods have changed little over the last 175 years. The buildings and landscapes of today's museum serve to illustrate the farm's late 19<sup>th</sup>-century activities which included dairying, maple syrup production, and the planting of needed crops as well as producing apples, ice, flowers, eggs, and charcoal for sale.

While you are invited to tour on your own, staff are available to answer any questions you may have. So please, explore our grounds and enjoy your visit "down on the Farm."

## **FARMHOUSE**

**1**

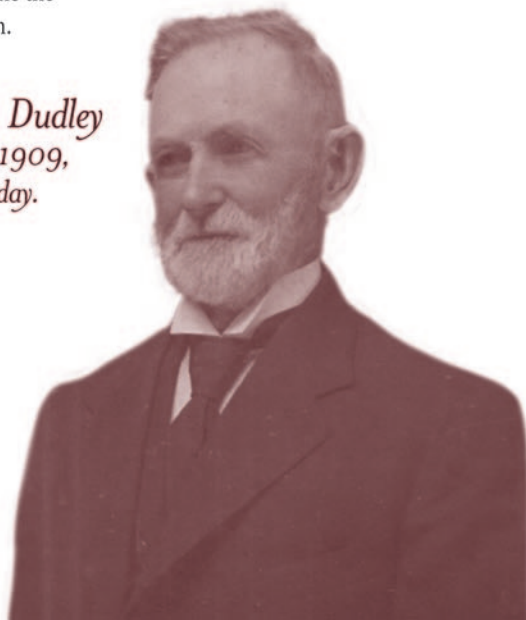
Nathan Chidsey Dudley began building this Greek Revival style house in 1844 as a showpiece displaying his entrepreneurial success in North Guilford. It went on to become home to the next five generations of the Dudley family. In 1880, Nathan's grandson, another Nathan, and his wife Sophronia Dudley added Victorian porches and the north wing, thus allowing three generations of Dudley's to reside in this stately farmhouse.

**2**

## **THE WORK SHED**

Located behind the farmhouse, the work shed—now a workshop for the museum staff—housed the winter laundry and a cistern for the catching and storage of rainwater. There were huge changes in domestic life between 1800 and 1900. Soap, starch, and other aids to washing at home became more abundant and more varied. A simple wooden wringer, such as the one on display here, was the most common piece of home laundry machinery in 1900. Washing once a week on Monday or "washday" became the established norm.

**Nathan C. Dudley**  
February 28, 1909,  
his 88th birthday.



3

### HERB GARDEN

Planted close to the kitchen door for convenience, the herb garden was an essential part of a farm family's life. Not only fragrant, it also provided herbs for cooking and medicine. Some of the more familiar herbs grown here include rosemary, thyme, and sage used for both cooking and medicinal purposes, as well as feverfew, often used to treat migraine, and yarrow used to help coagulate blood from wounds.

4

### THE ORCHARD

Next to the farmhouse is the apple orchard. In 1880, this was a one-acre orchard producing 50 bushels of apples a year. Apples were dried, preserved, and made into cider (hard and soft) for the family's use. Our heritage orchard contains apple trees familiar to 19<sup>th</sup>-century farmers: Cox Orange Pippin, Pound Sweet, Dudley, Northern Spy, Golden Russet, and Sheep's Nose.

5

### WINDMILL

In the early 1890s, the Dudleys installed a then recently patented Aermotor windmill on this site to draw water from the well underneath for the farm, saving the family from relying only on their ability to catch sufficient rain water. The Aermotor windmill could be purchased from Chicago for \$60 plus freight, installed. In 1888, Aermotor sold 24 windmills; four years later, it sold more than 20,000. At that time a loaf of bread cost 7 cents; a dozen eggs 34 cents, a quart of milk 9 cents, and a pound of steak was 26 cents.

A system for bringing water up to the farm from the West River using an electric pump was later made possible when electricity started to become available in North Guilford in 1928.

6

### THE HERITAGE GARDEN

Located on the original site of the farm's vegetable garden, the Heritage Garden today showcases varieties of plants grown during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Amy Dudley's (1878-1964) many home-grown flowers were sold at her small farm stand. She was particularly noted for her gladiolas.

7

### CHICKENS ON THE FARM

Across the meadow, this newly constructed chicken coop replaces the original structure which was closer to the farmhouse and barns.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries, the Dudley's, like all Connecticut farming families, kept chickens for eggs, meat and feathers, and sold any excess. Chickens were fed food scraps from the Dudley table or pecked the ground for bugs and seeds. Heritage chickens, including the barred Plymouth Rocks or Rhode Island Reds we have here today, could lay an egg daily most of the year and were large enough to harvest for meat at three months old.

8

## THE BUNKHOUSE AND WAGON SHED

Located just south of the chicken coop, museum volunteers built this two-part building in 2002 using measured drawings and the remnants of the original building. The older, early-1800's lower section once functioned as a wagon shed and blacksmith's shop. A taller section was added after 1900 as a small bunkroom for workers tending to maple syrup making or other farm chores. There were two horse stalls behind the bunkroom. The upper part of this building is now used for Dudley Foundation storage.

9

## BLACKSMITH SHOP

While there was a blacksmith shop on the property, the current building was placed up the hill from the Munger Barn in the early 2000s. With a team of workhorses in need of shoeing and the need for specialized farm equipment, blacksmithing was a valuable skill.

10

## SUGARHOUSE

Early New England farms often included a sugar house, producing maple syrup for the family—a more economical supply of sweetener than cane sugar. Rebuilt in 1995, our sugar house is tucked into the woods of the south-east corner of the Farm grounds. Volunteers from the Guilford Rotary Club based this replica on the remnants of the old building; measurements were based on the foundation and the original stone cooker. A ramp along one side of the building allowed sap to gravity feed from an ox-drawn sled into the cooking pans inside.

Erastus and Nathan Dudley often entered samples of their prize-winning syrup in the Guilford Fair. Dudley Farm volunteers continue to make syrup here each spring (usually in February and early March) and welcome visitors to see how it's done.

11

## THE MUNGER BARN

This 1½ story, three-bay English bank barn was originally constructed in 1890 on the Munger Farm in Madison, Connecticut, where it was used for hay and cows. In 2002, it was dismantled and moved here. Five years later a crew of 100 volunteers raised the frame on the site of an earlier Dudley barn and installed new siding and roof.

Erastus Dudley's 1875 marriage to Martha Munger provides a family context for the preservation of the Munger barn at The Dudley Farm.

## ICE HOUSE

**12** The Dudley family used a small wooden building similar to this one to store ice harvested from a nearby pond. Each winter ice was cut into 22 X 22 X 12 inch blocks and stacked in sawdust insulation for use through much of the summer. The three stacked doors allowed ice blocks to be taken from the top, minimizing melting by only opening the door at the top level of the stack.

A smokehouse was situated near the icehouse, and there are plans for its reconstruction in the future. While wood from fruit and nut-bearing trees—apple, cherry, hickory, oak—provide the best results, any hardwood is fine for smoking. Softwood such as fir or pine are avoided as they contain a lot of resin. Smoking can also be done with maple syrup and a fire of corn cobs, which produces a sweet, delicate flavor that's not as pungent as hardwood.

## FARM SHED

**13** As you continue to circle back to the Farmhouse you will see a small farm shed. The Dudley's built this small post-and-beam shed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, using it for farm mechanical work and distinguishing it with a sign painted "operations central." Later the shed was enlarged to shelter a car. More recently, volunteers found parts of a Moon Motor Company (1905-1930) car inside the shed.

## THE OUTHOUSE

**14** A little way from the farmhouse door sits the outhouse. Our "three-seater" was in use well into the twentieth century. With two adult-sized seats, and a lower seat for a young child, this somewhat unusual arrangement saved a child from the terror of sitting on an over-sized seat, all too aware that below him foul odors were rising and spiders were crawling.

Our outhouse even has an early toilet-paper holder patented in 1891. The submitted patent drawing of the time shows that the toilet paper should go up and over. (And that should end any arguments!)

## THE BARN COMPLEX

**15** Today's "Big Barn" complex is made up of three separate barn buildings with additions assembled during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The first, an embankment barn, was built just before the house, around 1840. Facing south, it has a traditional hayloft on the west side, with a threshing floor on the east and two animal stalls below.

The second (east) barn was built to house larger farm animals below and tools above. A little sleigh shed was added at about the same time to store the sleigh used for transportation in the winter. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the east barn was lengthened to include a granary.

The third and largest barn was likely built after 1860 to house the Holstein milk cows that Erastus Dudley was breeding. It may have been made of recycled wood from the Dudley's mill site when those buildings were dismantled after 1850, and is referred to as a "Connecticut" or "Yankee" barn. The barn was expanded in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with a shed on the south to shelter more cows.

Today our barn complex houses sheep which are often seen in the pasture to the north of the barn. With the growth of the textile industry and a rise in wool prices, most 19<sup>th</sup> century farmers began to favor breeds that yielded finer wool, and by the 1830s most sheep in New England had some Merino blood. A typical farm might have between 6 and 30 sheep. The sheep on The Dudley Farm today are Corriedale, a dual-purpose breed used in the production of both wool and meat. The Corriedale is the oldest of all the crossbred breeds first brought to the United States in 1914.

## **MILK HOUSE**

16

The small structure sitting in front of the barn complex replicates the original milk house. Used expressly to isolate fresh milk from the smells, dust, and microbes of the barn environment, the milk from the Dudley's Holsteins as well as from other local farms was kept here. Milk houses provided a place to store and cool fluid milk before being transported to market; to store milk cans not in use; and to wash and dry containers and other equipment like separators. The milk house was located conveniently near the roadside for easy pickup by the processing dairy.

## **MILL SITE**

17

Located across Route 77 from the farmhouse was the mill site. Contributing mightily to the financial success of the Dudley family, this mill was strategically located alongside the Menunketuck River (West River). From about 1820 until almost 1860, Erastus Dudley and his sons harnessed the power of this river to convert corn to meal (via a gristmill), a bark mill for their leather tanning operation, a bone mill to turn cattle and hog bones into fertilizer, and make plugs and blanks for cutlery, combs, buttons, piano keys—the plastic of the 19th century. Little remains now other than the stone foundations of the buildings and a broken dam. On our grounds are two millstones from that site as well as others from the mouth of the West River.

*Want to learn more about*  
**The DUDLEY FARM**  
*Museum and the family*  
*that lived there?*



You are welcomed to take a tour of the 1844 Farmhouse during regular Museum hours, June through October:

Thursday and Friday 10 AM to 2 PM

Saturday 9 AM to 2 PM

Sunday 1 PM to 4 PM

Special hours or group tours by arrangement.

Call 203-457-0770

Adults Suggested Donation \$5.00


Children under 16 admitted free of charge.

Members are admitted free of charge.

Located in Historic Guilford, Connecticut,  
at the intersection of Route 80 and Route 77.  
2351 Durham Road, Guilford, CT 06437

*For more information about the Farm and membership:*  
**dudleyfarm.com**

*To access an aerial map of the Farm keyed to the tour,*  
go to **dudleyfarm.com/blog-news-events/**

 **Facebook.com/dudleyfarmmuseum/**

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