

# Malabar Farm News

The Malabar Farm Foundation

8/1/2017

Edition 5, Volume 2

*The adventure at Malabar is by no means finished ... The land came to us out of eternity and when the youngest of us associated with it dies, it will still be here. – Louis Bromfield, Pleasant Valley 1945*

## In The Spotlight

**The Restoration of Mrs. Bromfield's Reading Chair**  
by Siera D. Marth, Assistant Park Manager



Earlier this year, a serendipitous conversation turned into a wonderful collaboration to restore a piece of furniture from Mary Bromfield's bedroom in the Big House. The framework of the chaise lounge had become fragile after years of use, the fabric was faded and the seams were fraying.

Tom and Julie McCready, owners of "McCready Interiors/ Norwalk The Furniture Idea" were in attendance at the *Evening with Just Jazz Live* event in February when their conversation with volunteer, Chris McQuillen, turned into an offer from them to donate the material and labor to have the chair restored. The McCreadys understood the importance of maintaining the chair's historical value and how it fit with the room where it resided. Based on their experience and knowledge, a material was selected and a proposal for the project was set in place.

On April 18, 2017 the fragile chair was loaded into a truck and began its journey towards revitalization. The frailness of the structure was addressed, the cushions plumped, the material replaced and the original fringe reattached. After just over seven weeks of restoration, the chair returned to its place in the Big House. Foundation members and park staff are more than pleased with the piece and cannot thank the McCreadys enough for their generosity. While those of us used to seeing the chaise lounge on a regular basis know how different the chair looks, it is also easy to imagine Mary Bromfield relaxing on the cushions, reading a novel and peering out the windows into the garden.

### Join ~ Donate ~ Volunteer!

The Louis Bromfield Society is the membership program established to raise funds in support of Malabar Farm State Park's mission. Your membership dues help the Malabar Farm Foundation, an independent, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization, continue to make education, development, and preservation projects possible at Malabar Farm State Park. All contributions are tax deductible, as provided by law. **Member \$50.00 / Friend \$100.00**

## LOOKING BACK

By Tom Bachelder, Board Member & Volunteer

*The fourth issue of the Louis Bromfield Malabar Farm Newsletter was published in July of 1959. The following was excerpted from that newsletter and will continue the story of Malabar Farm following the death of Louis Bromfield.*

### July, 1959 (No. 4)

Although it got off to a late start, the Malabar vegetable garden looks exceptionally good. Cabbage is ready for the market and the first three heads were sold to a lady visitor from South Africa. Gardener Bill Voss promises to open the produce stand at the Niman spring on July 10. Sweet corn is in tassel and should be ready within two weeks.

*The produce stand and the Niman spring written of above are the big spring and produce stand next to the Malabar Farm Restaurant on Pleasant Valley Road. Louis Bromfield had purchased the Niman property in 1942. This land had been first settled by David Schrack in 1819. It was the last farm to be added to Malabar. The produce stand was constructed by Bromfield in the early 1950s.*

The wheat looks fine and will be ready to combine in a few days. Field corn was not merely "knee high" by July 4th but was actually shoulder high. Hay making has been in progress for several weeks; like last year, rain has often interfered with this task.

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## The Malabar Farm Foundation

Contact us @

Website: [www.malabarfarm.org](http://www.malabarfarm.org)

Call: 419-892-2784

E-mail: [mffspecialevents@yahoo.com](mailto:mffspecialevents@yahoo.com)

Address: 4050 Bromfield Rd., Lucas, Oh 44843

### Looking Back (From page 1)

About a thousand bales of good hay are in the big dairy barn, which has been shored up and strengthened with new steel beams. Tough, wiry orchard-grass in several fields was chopped up and left to lie on the ground. These fields are due for liming and reseeded to alfalfa.

The first section of the Malabar Nature trail, opened last summer, was used extensively during the month. Forty-five day-camp children from the Marion YMCA walked the trail and enjoyed a tour of the Big House under John Clark's direction on June 29. A new trail was begun in the romantic spot at Malabar which Louis Bromfield called "The Jungle". It was here that he found the runaway boy, Kenny, who became the central figure in a book by the same name. It was to a secluded pool in the jungle that Louis and the farm boys often went for a cool, refreshing swim on hot summer days. The new trail runs for some distance through the flood-plain forest along Switzer Creek, skirting patches of horsetails or "scouring rushes" and acres of skunk-cabbage, then terminating near the "cow cemetery", where Indian pipe and shinleaf wintergreen blossom among the bleached bones of long-dead cows.

*"Kenny", published in 1947, is sometimes referred to as a novel but it is really a novella or rather long short story of eighty-seven pages. When originally published it was one of three stories included in one volume. The book's title was taken from its first story, "Kenny". This has led some people to think of it as a full length novel.*

*There was no real-life runaway who was found by Bromfield in the Jungle. As with his earlier short story "Up Ferguson Way" (1944) Louis Bromfield wrote "Kenny" as though he was narrating a true story, when in fact it was a work of fiction. In "Up Ferguson Way" the main character, Zenobia Ferguson, has a mystical connection to animals. Kenny also exhibits the same supernatural kinship with the animal world. Both stories are set in the real-life countryside of Malabar Farm, which gives them an aura of authenticity, making it easy to confuse them with reality.*

The number of visitors during June dropped to 448 from the year's high of 572 in May. Kingwood Garden Center in Mansfield attracted many organized groups to their wonderful tulip and iris displays in May and many of these people visited Malabar Farm on the same day. Midsummer brings many long-distance vacationers to the farm from Texas, California, and other points. The Vasbinder fountain, long a landmark in Central Park, Mansfield, will soon be erected at Malabar on a spot below the Big House just west of the lake. This huge, cast-iron structure was presented to the city in 1881 by the Vasbinder family and had to be moved to permit construction of a street through the park.

*The Vasbinder fountain, costing \$2,500, was donated to the city of Mansfield by brother and sister David and Jane Vasbinder. It was dedicated on July 4, 1881. The fountain was a prominent feature of Central Park until December 17, 1958 when it was purchased by James Pugh and moved to his property adjoining Malabar Farm. Pugh later donated the fountain to Malabar Farm. Neglected for years at Malabar the fountain was finally restored and returned to Central Park in Mansfield on July 4, 1979.*

The new souvenir room across the drive from the Big House is proving to be popular with visitors this summer at Malabar. All the Bromfield books, as well as a number of titles on nutrition, health and conservation by other authors, souvenir plates, ash trays, postcards, Malabar honey and other mementos of the farm are available to visitors.

Several Mansfield men, Walter Cunning and Crist Pataky, interested in nut tree culture, and members of the Ohio Nut Growers Association, have cooperated in making a demonstration nut tree planting at Malabar. Among the varieties that we have are English or Carpathian walnut, filbert, purple-leaved filbert, and Chinese chestnut. A demonstration of tree nut grafting was held at the farm this past spring, when English walnuts were grafted onto native black walnuts.

The annual meeting of the Foundation was held at the farm on June 15. Herbert T. Cobey remains as President, and the following were re-elected as Trustees: Ralph Cobey, Chairman, Dr. Jonathan Forman, and William Locke. Fred J. Milligan serves as Secretary and Earl R. Lormor as Acting Treasurer.

### Down on the Farm Update

The corn has been planted and sprayed.

Hay has been cut and baled.

17 + calves have been born and are doing well.

The Pollinator Garden behind the Visitors Center has been planted.

The new Switzer Creek Bridge has reopened.

The Lower Pugh Cabin renovation project is underway to turn it into an overnight rental.

The ponds dredging project is almost done.

A new floating dock for the Big House pond has been ordered and the pond will be re-stocked.

Doris Bowman, the new gardener at Malabar Farm State Park has been working hard. The flower beds and plantings look great!

Planning is ongoing for upcoming events on the farm.

### Louis and the Ferguson Tractor by Jim Shade, Board Member & Volunteer



**The restored Ferguson TO-20 sits proudly in front of the Visitors Center at Malabar Farm**

Recently a gray Ferguson TO-20 replaced the red Farmall Cub Low Boy in front of the Visitors Center at Malabar Farm. This was no happenstance, but was done for a specific reason pushed by several Malabar Farm Foundation members who had actual experiences with the equipment that made Malabar Farm go in the late 1940s up to 1956.

When Louis Bromfield first started Malabar Farm, he purchased a John Deere G and several Ford Ferguson 9 N tractors plus the jeep to be the main power sources on the Farm. The John Deere was used to plow and work ground while the 9Ns made hay, hauled manure, and performed many other tasks about the farm.

As Bromfield and Malabar gained national attention following World War II, Bromfield approached several farm equipment makers about getting donated equipment in exchange for advertising and promotion. Companies such as Seamen tillers, Cobey wagons and spreaders were several that participated along with Pontiac cars. Louis had approached Ford about donating tractors, but that had no interest. Then in 1947, Harry Ferguson (inventor of the 3 point draft control hitch system that made the Ford Ferguson tractors so popular), split away from Ford and started making the new Ferguson line of tractors and equipment at a plant in Detroit, Michigan.

Learning of this, Louis Bromfield went to Detroit to meet with Ferguson at his new manufacturing plant. The two got along well and worked out a deal where Louis would write a pamphlet extolling the virtues of the new Ferguson equipment and conservation farming called "the Wealth of the Soil". The pamphlet was a huge success for both parties and in no time Harry Ferguson provided an unlimited supply of Ferguson tractors and equipment. From this time on only Ferguson tractors were used at Malabar Farm. First was the Ferguson TO-20 model with 20 horse power like we have in front of the Visitors Center; then in 1951 came the TO-30 with 30 horse power. The last model, the TO-35, came along in late 1954. These were the last Fergusons to be used at Malabar Farm.

When Louis Bromfield passed away on March 18, 1956, it was only a matter of days before the Ferguson Company swooped in and hauled away all the equipment they had on loan to Malabar Farm.

So, now you know the story behind why the gray Ferguson TO-20 now sits prominently at the entrance of the Visitors Center at Malabar Farm in Lucas, Ohio.

### Restoration Update in the Big House

- The damaged countertops in the Big House kitchen and butler's pantry were restored using stainless steel panels, much like what had already been used beside the old gas stove. Thanks to project managers and Board members - Jim Reed and David Crawford.
- On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 6 restored pictures from the Big House were picked up from the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA) in Cleveland. The Foundation is currently in the process of obtaining a determination of restoration costs from the ICA for Phase Five of the ongoing restoration project. The Disney cells of Ferdinand the Bull will begin soon.

**Newsletter Deadline:** If you would like to submit an article for the Malabar Farm News or have a suggestion for a topic, please let us know by e-mail, phone or mail (see page 1). Articles and suggestions will be used according to content and space availability. The deadline for the next newsletter is September 15, 2017.

Questions or comments – contact Lorri Collins @ mffspecialevents@yahoo.com

## Support the Malabar Farm Foundation when you make Amazon purchases:

Did you know that the Malabar Farm Foundation has a unique AmazonSmile link that makes it easier for people to find and support it?

Visit: [smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1768061](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1768061) and give us your support when you shop on Amazon. You'll find the same low prices and selection with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase to your favorite charitable organization, and the Malabar Farm Foundation is one of them!

Malabar Farm Foundation  
4050 Bromfield Rd.  
Lucas, Ohio 44843

### Upcoming Event Highlights:

#### August 2017

Kids Farm Fun Day & Fishing Derby – August 5 @ 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Barn Dance – August 5 @ 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Night Haunt – August 26 @ 8:00 pm – Midnight

#### September 2017

41<sup>st</sup> Annual Ohio Heritage Days Festival & In the Spirit of Friends Antiques & Primitives Show – September 23 & 24 @ 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Heritage Barn Dance – September 23 @ 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm

#### October 2017

**SAVE THE DATE:** Richland Area Chamber “Business After Hours” – October 12 @ 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Arts in the Park – October 14 – 28

Explore and learn hands-on a variety of different arts at the park!

Activities will range from Wine & Art, Poetry Readings, Fiber Art Demonstrations, Storytelling, Landscape Art and MORE! Pricing will vary according to specific programs.

Watch for specific programming information and times @ [malabarfarm.org](http://malabarfarm.org).

Fall Hike for Health – October 21 @ 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Old Fashioned Film Festival – October 21 @ 7:00 pm

Harvest Barn Dance – October 28 @ 7:00pm – 10:00 pm