

Let's Put the *Farm* Back in Brook Farm

February 25, 2026



New Brook Farm

Brook Farm Historic Site Location



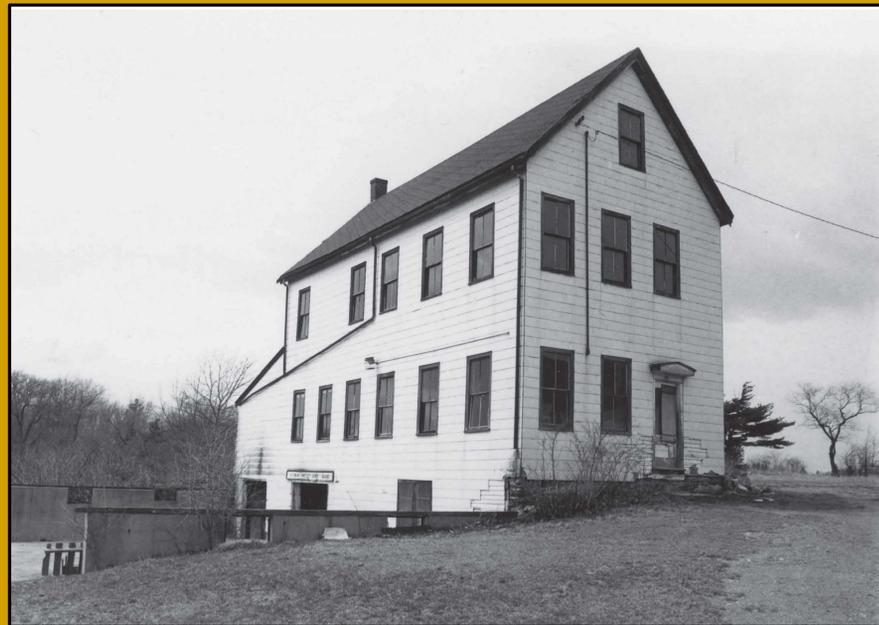
 Proposed Farm Location

Brook Farm History

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Pre-1630 | The Massachusetts people |
| 1700-1840 | Dairy Farm |
| 1841-1847 | Brook Farm Transcendentalist community |
| 1849-1855 | Roxbury Almshouse |
| Civil War | Camp Andrew Training Camp |
| 1871-1974 | Lutheran Orphanage |
| 1965 | Designated as a National Historic Landmark |
| 1973 | MA General Court authorizes State Acquisition |
| 1988 | MDC (DCR) officially acquires Brook Farm Historic Site |
| 2026 | <i>Time to Put the “Farm” Back in Brook Farm</i> |

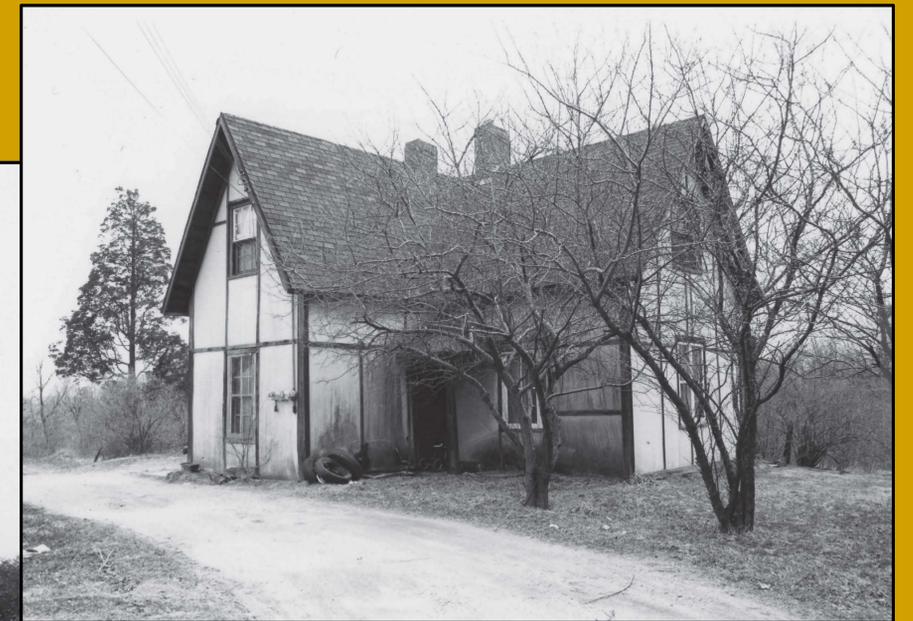
Brook Farm Historic Site

- State Historic Site comprises 148 acres
- One remaining building – the Lutheran Print Shop, 1890s



Lutheran Print Shop Building, 1975

“General view of farm area southwest of original house” in 1964 NPS photo



“Margaret Fuller Cottage” in 1975, since demolished due to a fire

Significance of Brook Farm

Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture & Education

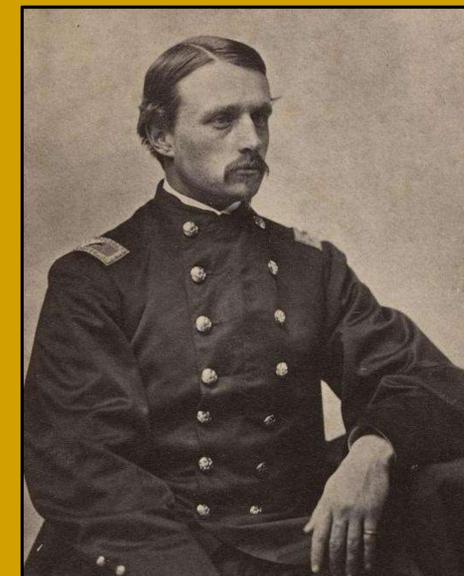
Utopian Transcendentalist Experiment

- Famous residents: George and Sophia Ripley, Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Friends and visitors: Theodore Parker, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody
- Seminal influence on social, and intellectual movements of 19th century, including women's rights, abolitionism, education reform, religion

Civil War Camp Andrew

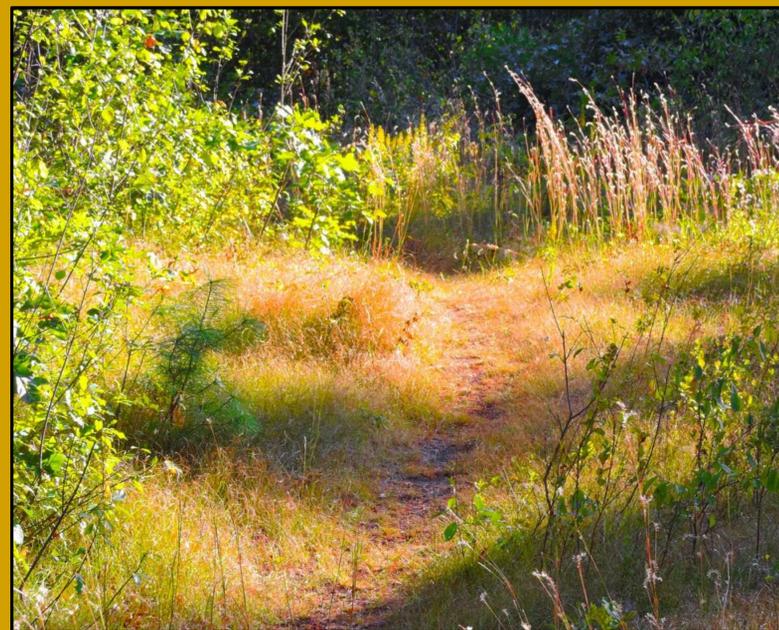
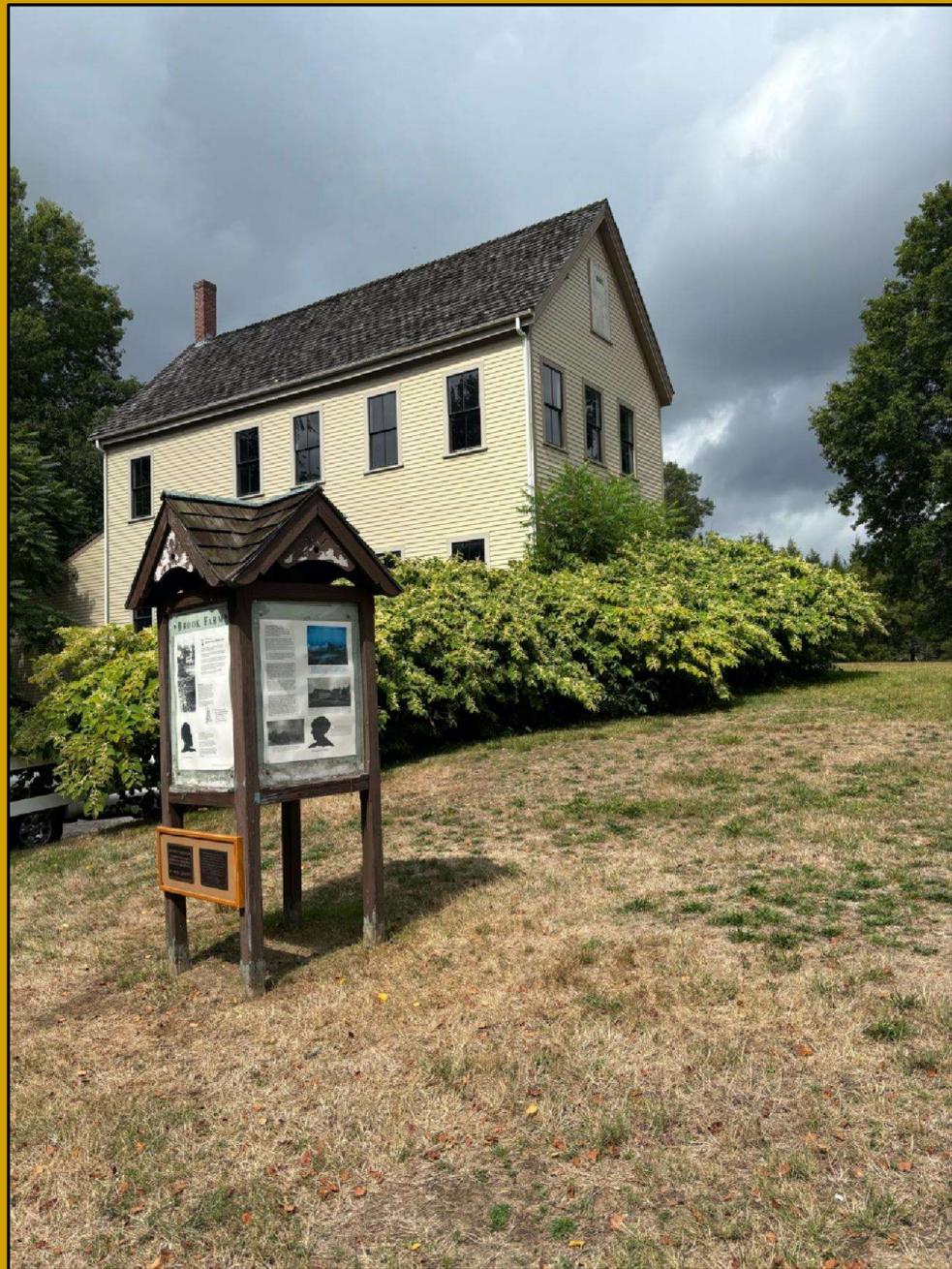


MA 2nd Regiment
Officers training
at Camp Andrew



Colonel Robert Gould Shaw led the MA 54th Regiment in the Civil War and attended school at Brook Farm

Brook Farm Historic Site Today



New Brook Farm

- Non-profit, tax exempt 501(c)(3) founded in 2011 by West Roxbury and Roslindale residents
- Organized more than 50 on- and off-site programs about Brook Farm, including nature and history walks, bird watching, author talks, reenactors, author lectures, and & photo events
- Secured \$20,000 Community Preservation Act grant from the City of Boston for an archaeological management plan as a precursor to putting the “Farm” back in Brook Farm
- Collaborated with DCR as a Community Partner on site survey, archaeological assessment and invasive removals



New Brook Farm Programs



The Women of Brook Farm

Presented by New Brook Farm and the Boston Women's Heritage Trail

Sunday, October 18, 2015
at Brook Farm Historic Site, West Roxbury, Mass.

Today you will meet seven of the women who were frequent visitors to or members of the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education, a utopian Transcendentalist commune here in West Roxbury from 1841 to 1847.

New Brook Farm and the Boston Women's Heritage Trail have created today's event to raise awareness of the important role of women — famous and forgotten — who contributed so much to the Brook Farm experiment.

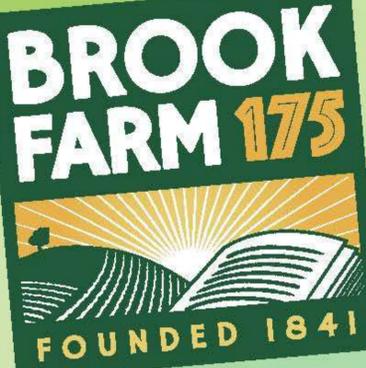
Our cast includes actress Jessa Piaia and members of the boards of NBF and BWHT. In order of appearance, they are:

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Guide..... | Gretchen O'Neill (NBF) |
| Margaret Fuller | Jessa Piaia |
| Elizabeth Palmer Peabody..... | Charlotte Fleetwood (NBF) |
| Sophia Willard Dana Ripley..... | Jessica Mink (NBF) |
| Amelia Russell | Maureen Layden (NBF) |
| Georgiana Bruce Kirby..... | Linda Stern (BWHT) |
| Kate Sloan Gaskill | Mary Smoyer (BWHT) |
| Mary Ann Dwight Orvis..... | Laura Pattison (BWHT) |

Thank you to...
Alan MacKinnon, president of The Gardens, for providing seating, sound equipment, access to restrooms, the crock pot, and support of this event
Alison Bell and Karin Tuttle (NBF) for the refreshments
Adam Finelli of AdamCamera.com for the sound system



*Costume Worn by the Women of the Brook Farm Community
Collection of the West Roxbury Historical Society*



Brook Farm 175

A month of events to celebrate the quartercentennial of the founding of the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education in 1841 in West Roxbury.

All events are free, and refreshments are provided. Donations are welcome.

Presented by New Brook Farm

Walk Through History: Brook Farm and Pulpit Rock

Sunday, October 2, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.
Brook Farm Historic Site, 670 Baker Street, West Roxbury

The Brook Farm Historic Site has changed dramatically since the days of the influential transcendentalist community in the 1840s, but traces remain to be explored. New Brook Farm board member and historian Jessica Mink will lead the walk.

Brook Farm Then and Now: Reception and Exhibition

Thursday, October 6, 6:00 to 7:45 p.m.
West Roxbury Branch, Boston Public Library
1961 Centre Street, West Roxbury

Join New Brook Farm for a reception and exhibition to celebrate Brook Farm's 175th anniversary. The exhibition of paintings, prints, maps, and photos of the site will run through October during regular library hours.

The Women of Brook Farm

Sunday, October 23, 3:00 to 5:30
Theodore Parker Unitarian Universalist Church
1859 Centre Street, West Roxbury

Reception following the program

Come meet eight remarkable women who were members of or frequent visitors to Brook Farm. New Brook Farm and the Boston Women's Heritage Trail have created this reenactment to raise awareness of the important roles women played in the Brook Farm experiment. In the beautiful sanctuary of Theodore Parker Church, members of NBF and BWHT portraying the Brook Farm women will speak from the same pulpit from which Rev. Theodore Parker preached to many of the original Brook Farmers in the 1840s.

Focus on Brook Farm II: Photography & Artists' Outing

Saturday, October 15, 2:00-4:00 p.m. (Rain date October 16)
Brook Farm Historic Site

Photographers and artists of all ages, media, and skill levels: Come out to explore and capture images with camera, sketch pad, and brush. Roslindale photographer Christoph Gervais (twisted-tree.smugmug.com) will provide tips on taking outstanding photos. Brookline Bank will host an exhibition of works this winter.



New Brook Farm's programming includes the Women of Brook Farm, the 175th Brook Farm Anniversary Exhibition, bird walks with Mass Audubon, pollinator workshop, author talks, art exhibits, historic walking tours, photographic exhibits, and other educational events for all ages

Why a Farm? *New Brook Farm's Vision*

- Provide visible, active, and engaging interpretation of Brook Farm's history
- Interpret the historic, mixed agricultural landscape of Brook Farm
- Address critical food insecurity by growing fresh, healthy vegetables in an Environmental Justice area and distributing them through local food pantry
- Protect archaeological resources with a thoughtful, reversible approach
- Offer a wide range of educational and interpretive programming
- Contribute to managing invasive plant species
- Cooperate with other entities on appropriate reuse of Print Shop
- Complement trail network and create a point of interest with the farm
- Grow a community of users and stakeholders in Brook Farm

Our Proposal

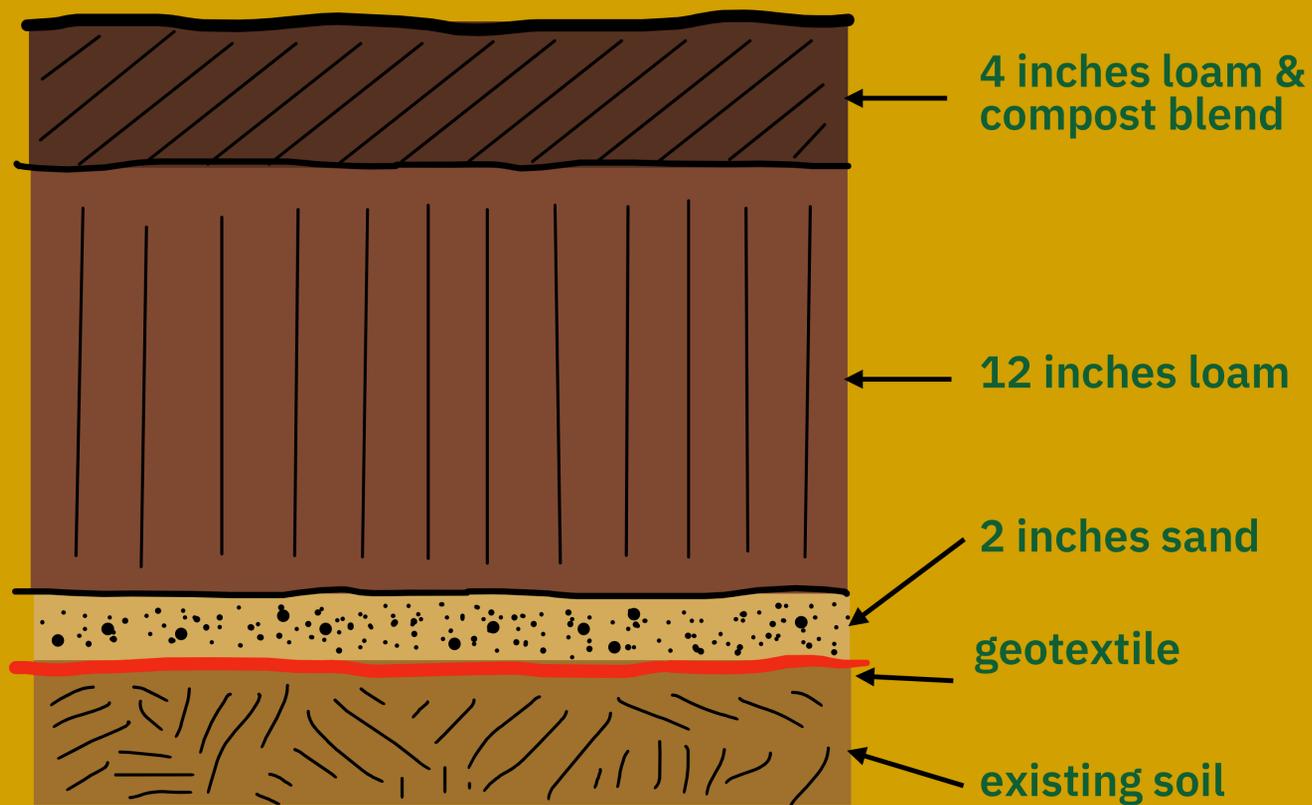
- Low-till, organic farm with professional farm manager & community volunteers
- Approximately one acre of uplands in the northern corner of Brook Farm Historic Site – less than 1% of total land area
- Elements to help interpret Brook Farm history
- Food to be donated to Rose's Bounty to address food security
- Archaeological resources protected by added soil
- Public access to all areas and historic sites maintained
- NBF to continue history and nature programming



Protecting Cultural & Natural Resources

Archaeological Resources

Entire farm area to be covered with geotextile and 18 inches of sand, loam, and compost



Natural Resources

Proposed farm area located beyond flood plain and priority habitat area



Successful Models



Newton Community Farm, Newton

Fowler Clark Epstein Historic Farm, Dorchester



New Brook Farm

Mack Park Farm, Salem



DCR Process

- DCR is in the midst of preparing a “Resource Management Plan” (RMP) for Brook Farm. The RMP will recommend uses and goals. It will *not* provide for funds or implementation.
- The RMP will lead to a “Conceptual Design” (CD) that is also now underway.
- With help from our legislators, DCR has acknowledged that the RMP *will* include agricultural uses.
- DCR is considering two alternatives:
 - A larger farm similar to what NBF has proposed; or
 - A much smaller decorative garden at the far edge of the site.
- DCR will present these alternatives at a public Zoom meeting tentatively scheduled for Wednesday evening, March 4.
- DCR will be presenting the RMP to its Stewardship Council in April 2026.
- Following adoption of the RMP and CD, DCR will prepare and issue a Request for Proposals in Summer or Fall 2026 to find an entity to reintroduce active agriculture at Brook Farm.

What We're Asking

- Attend the DCR Zoom meeting on March 4 and speak in favor of a farm – *not* a small garden – at Brook Farm
- Send letters, emails, and make phone calls of support for a farm and for New Brook Farm to:
 - Sen. Rush
 - Rep. MacGregor
 - Gov. Healey and Lt. Gov. Driscoll
 - Mayor Wu
 - City Council members
 - The *Bulletin* and other news outlets
- Sign up for our mailing list so we can keep you up to date on Brook Farm progress.
- Join our team; we need all the help we can get at this critical stage.
- Find out more:
 - NewBrookFarm.org
 - info@NewBrookFarm.org

