

Normandy Farms marking 260 years

By JURI LOVE FOR THE FOXBORO REPORTER 13 hrs ago



On the left side of the Normandy Farms sign: Seventh generation family members Bobby Janis Pendergast and Doris Daniels. To the right, Marcia Galvin and Kristine Daniels, eight Bobby Harrison, 19, who represents the ninth generation at the farm.

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Normandy Farms is marking 260 years of operation, and while it is not having a formal ceremony, it has shared the date, story, and history with their team and guests.

The exact anniversary date is June 6, 2019.

According to Kristine Daniels, 43, eighth-generation manager/owner, Normandy Farms began as a dairy farm and her family has worked the land since it was first cleared from the wilderness since 1759.



Francis Daniels who was born on June 22, 1723, in the Province of Normandy, France was the first generation.

While still a young man, Daniels joined the French Army and was assigned to the West Indies where he became an officer. Taken sick, he spent months in the hospital before returning to duty. The move proved premature, as he became ill once again, he decided to return to France.

The ship was captured by a colonial privateer and brought to Massachusetts Bay Colony in Boston, where Daniels imprisoned for three months. George Hewes, the keeper of the jail, spoke French and took a liking to Daniels. He made him aware of his brother in Wrentham, a wealthy landowner in need of hired help.

With the promise of being paid wages for his services, Daniels went to Wrentham and lived with the Hewes family. He was indebted for the cost of his passage and was 36 years old before it was paid off and he was able to purchase property himself. The Suffolk Registry of Deeds

shows that on June 6, 1759, "William Hewes of Wrentham deeded to Francis Daniels 53 acres of land for seven pounds, 18 shillings."

In 1971, the farm was turned into a campground by Kristine Daniels' grandparents, Norman and Jeannette Daniels, her father, Al Daniels, and his two siblings, Robert and Janis. Her grandparents have passed, but her father and his siblings are still actively involved with the business as is her sister, Marcia Galvin, human resource director at Normandy, and two of her children, Cassie and Bobby.

Today, Normandy Farms employs about 140 workers and has 400 campsites, including deluxe cabins, yurts, and safari tents on about 100 wooded acres. Over the years, it has been recognized for being a leader in the RV industry. It won the RV Park of the Year award four times from the Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds, and was recognized by the Travel Channel as One of the Top Campgrounds in the World and by Yankee magazine as Best Luxury RV Park.

"We are always reinvesting in the park to ensure that our guests have something to look forward to each season," said Daniels. "With four swimming pools, one that is heated indoors, two playgrounds, basketball, tennis, pickleball, a wellness center for massages, a fishing pond, there is truly something for everyone to enjoy."

She noted that the campground also has a daily activity programs, from morning yoga and toddler time to evening paint night and cribbage tournaments.

Daniels has lived in Foxboro most of her life. After earning an undergraduate degree at Bentley, she volunteered for a year to work with children in Portland, Oregon.

"I fell in love with that part of the country and stayed in Oregon for a couple of years, but returned to Foxboro to become involved in the family business," she said, adding that growing up at the campground was an ideal childhood.

"We had acres of land to play with new friends that would come camping year after year. Now, many of the friends that I grew up with are now camping with their families. Creating a safe and fun environment for families has been our goal and it's great to see generations of families return year after year," Daniels said.

Over the years, Normandy Farms has donated over \$350,000 to the Jimmy Fund, supports many Foxboro organizations and local charities and funds a scholarship program at Foxboro High School in the name of Daniels' grandparents and a brother named Marc, who passed away 10 years ago.

"We are proud to be members of the Foxboro community and look forward to many more years of welcoming guests to the area. Many of our 140 team members are from Foxboro and it's often their first job experience," said Daniels.

Town Historian Jack Authalet said Francis Daniels could have been just

another casualty of a distant war but, incredibly, he was brought to a place that would become the United States of America and he would sign the papers to incorporate the town of Foxboro.

“To think, that first simple purchase of a small tract of land would be the start of a continual family commitment to work that land, create schools, share the bounty and writing their own unique chapter in the American dream. And to think they created records, preserved photographs and added so much to local history. We are blessed,” said Authelet.