



GORE PLACE

THE AGRARIAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF GORE PLACE | SPRING 2023 | ISSUE NUMBER 14

IN THIS ISSUE

Daniel Webster, Theodore Lyman, and the Trial of the Decade

Letter from the President

Supporter Spotlight

Our New Barns

A December Evening

Noteworthy

SOCIAL MEDIA MOMENT



Ruth Chu

Scene from the Farm at Gore Place, fall 2022.

Share your memories and photos with us. Tag @goreplace on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

IN MEMORIAM

With sadness we note the passing of four friends of Gore Place:

Bill Crozier

Francis de Marneffe

Reggie Lownes

wife of David Lownes,
former governor of Gore Place

David Powell

husband of Betsy Powell,
former governor of Gore Place

Bill, Francis, Reggie, and David were loyal supporters of Gore Place. They will be missed.



Webster's Reply to Hayne, by George P. A. Healy (1851). From the Collection of the Boston Art Commission of the City of Boston.

Webster's Reply to Hayne by George P. A. Healy hangs front and center inside Faneuil Hall today in Boston, MA.

Daniel Webster, Theodore Lyman, and the Trial of the Decade

How a feud between Daniel Webster (Christopher Gore's protégé) and Theodore Lyman, Jr. (Gore's successor at the Estate) made national headlines.

By Donnie Weisse, Farm Historian and Educator

The news had spread nearly a thousand miles away: "Gen. Theodore Lyman, Jr. was arraigned on an indictment for a libel against Hon. Daniel Webster," an Ohio newspaper read on December 2, 1828. "The defendant pleaded not guilty, and... stated it would be necessary to have the testimony of several gentlemen in different states—among them, his Excellency John Q. Adams, President of the United States..."

Theodore Lyman stood before the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court as a bitter presidential election drew to a close. The candidate he supported, Andrew Jackson, would soon be announced president-elect, but his own fate still hung in the balance. A feud with Daniel Webster was intensifying, and the resulting lawsuit was drawing several prominent figures—including the current president and a former one—into its crosshairs. The charge was libel: Lyman had accused Webster of being a traitor, and of conspiring with other New England Federalists to secede from the Union in 1808.

The Embargo

The case had its roots in the controversial Embargo Act of 1807, which banned American ships from leaving for European ports and crippled New England's mercantile economy. It was a response to similar decrees issued by the warring French and British, who sought to prevent foreign goods from reaching their opponent and force the U.S. into picking a side. Seeking to assert the country's sovereignty in the face of European aggression, President Thomas Jefferson advocated for an embargo, and the Democratic-Republicans—a largely southern, agrarian party not so sympathetic to New England merchants, who were typically Federalists—secured its passage. But the move backfired.

Economically, the Embargo was a disaster: the ban on foreign trade caused a depression, and led to widespread unemployment and shortages of goods for the next several years. Hit hardest was coastal New England, with its trade-dependent economy and specialized workforce: "The people of our country are suffering extremely & must soon be reduced to

Daniel Webster, Theodore Lyman, and the Trial of the Decade
is continued on page 4



GORE PLACE

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thomas Thaler, *President*
William Diercks, *Vice President*
Pamela Swain, *Secretary*
George Kimball, *Treasurer*
Deborah Dobbins, *Assistant Treasurer*
Virginia White, *At-Large*

GOVERNORS

Kimberly Amsden—Colonial Dames
Greer Candler
Michael Carter
Jennifer Drayton
Deborah Gates
Elizabeth Hagopian
James F. Hunnewell, Jr.
Lydia Kimball—Historic New England
Thomas Kohler
Rick Olney
Beatrice Porter—The Trustees
Elizabeth Reece
Stewart Woodward

HONORARY GOVERNOR FOR LIFE

Charlotte Patten

STAFF

Susan Robertson, *Executive Director*
Scott Clarke, *Director of Farm and Landscape Operations*
Jack Ordway, *Farmer's Assistant*
Thom Roach, *Director of Interpretation*
Donnie Weisse, *Farm Historian and Educator*
Meg Stockton, *Family Educator*
Diana Roberts, *Director of Institutional Advancement*
Tammi Kibler, *Business Development Manager*
Linda DeFranco, *Private Events Rentals Manager*
Alyssa Pelletier, *Digital Marketing Manager*
Emily Robertson, *Marketing Consultant*
Gail Wiegner, *Volunteer Coordinator*
Diann Ralph Strausberg, *Historian*
Fiona Howard, *Bookkeeper*

GUIDES

Miriam Boucher, Prentice Crosier,
Mike Dudal, Lorna Keith, Stu Rubinow



Letter from Our Board President

Dear Friends of Gore Place,

In *The Agrarian*, we seek to bring to life the stories of the people living in the Gores' era. This spring, we share an episode involving Theodore Lyman and Daniel Webster.

Webster, who had clerked for Christopher Gore, brought suit against Bostonian Theodore Lyman, who lived at the Gore estate from 1834 to 1838. Lyman had left the Federalists to become a Democratic-Republican and, in the election of 1828, was a vocal supporter of Andrew Jackson. This infuriated the Federalist Webster, who

supported incumbent John Quincy Adams. Webster sued Lyman for his disloyalty.

For a time, the previous warm relationship between Webster and Lyman was interrupted but they reconciled. Much like many familiar stories on Capitol Hill today!

Since Gore Place Society's founding in 1935, we have celebrated 88 years of preserving and promoting the Gores' "farm at Waltham." Our signature social event of the season, Spring into Summer, returns on June 14 with dinner and dancing under the stars. But as we like to say, spring doesn't begin until the Sheepshearing Festival, taking place this year on April 22. We hope you will celebrate with us at both events.

We appreciate your ongoing support of Gore Place.

With very best wishes for the welcome of spring.

Thomas W. Thaler

Join Our Flock!

We rely on our members to keep our open space accessible and thriving.

Your membership helps us

- Preserve and maintain our historical collections
- Care for our rare farm animals
- Offer an outdoor respite on our grounds
- Provide free and discounted admission for our community

**To join
or renew**

Visit goreplace.org
(781) 894-2798



SAVE THE DATE: Spring into Summer | June 14

Supporter Spotlight: Doug Harding

Although a resident of Lincoln, Doug Harding has a long family history in Waltham, going back more than a century. Doug met his wife Susan, a native Kentuckian, while he was attending Harvard and she was a student at Radcliffe.

A Colonial Dame with an art history major and a keen interest in colonial properties, Susan introduced Doug to Gore Place many years ago. Together they were long-time supporters of Gore Place. With Susan's recent death, Doug is continuing that support, making a capital commitment to the Campaign to Raise the Barn in her memory.

Doug says, "Gore Place is more than just a historical treasure. It's a complete magical package. By day, it is a magnificent park with open green spaces, animals, and barns.

By night, with the walkways in candlelight, you can be taken back to an elegant colonial country manor house with its own furniture and family stories. It doesn't get much better than that!"

Asked what he would like to see Gore Place develop in the future, Doug said, "The Robert Roberts story—a free Black man with entrepreneurial instincts working in an important service job in a prominent Boston household—is a small but important window into our understanding of Gore Place's role in our country's evolving social history."



Doug Harding with his sister, Merry Harding

TMP Images | Eric Workman

Project Update: Raise the Barns at Gore Place



The hard-working crew from Hardwick Post and Beam stand near the threshing barn's frame in December 2022.

Over the winter, we raised two new barns at our Farm: a reproduction, early 19th-century threshing barn and a pole barn sheep shelter to house our heritage Leicester Longwool sheep. The buildings' timbers were prepared and installed by Hardwick Post and Beam, a multigenerational company of craftspeople specializing in traditional construction techniques.

Based on historical designs, the threshing and pole barns bring a sight from rural 19th-century Massachusetts to the present day. Long a fixture on family farms, the threshing barn was an important building where farmers removed grains like wheat and corn from their stalks. The pole barn was another traditional farm building, with high ceilings and open-air space. Both barns will play a variety of important roles on our Farm today, from storing tools and equipment to providing shelter for our animals.

Years in the works, this project will be completed in early summer 2023 thanks to the efforts of Gore Place staff, Board of Governors, and membership, and the generosity of the many contributors to the \$1.25 million Raise the Barn

Campaign. Our donors have already pushed the Campaign over the \$1 million mark. We welcome your support as we "sprint" to the finish line.

"We are grateful for the generosity of the many people who donated to our Raise the Barn Campaign," said Scott Clarke, Director of Farm and Landscape Operations at Gore Place. "The Leicester Longwools are a historic breed of sheep developed in the 1700s in England. Preserving these rare sheep is the highest priority to our team, and these barns are a step toward providing them with the greatest care possible."

This project was made possible through the support of the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, through its Mass Cultural Facilities Fund in partnership with MassDevelopment, and many individual donors.

**RAISE
OUR BARN!**

Help us meet our
\$1.25 million goal.

DONATE AT
goreplace.org

absolute wretchedness," Christopher Gore wrote to Rufus King in 1808. "They are obliged to depend on charity for food & fuel." This spelled a political disaster for the dominant Democratic-Republicans, and triggered a resurgence of the waning Federalist party—particularly in Massachusetts.

After losing back-to-back gubernatorial elections, Massachusetts Federalists won back the governorship with the election of Gore in 1809. The party gained seats in Congress and the state legislature as well, but still lagged behind the Democratic-Republicans on the national stage. With the Embargo still in place, tensions with Great Britain rising, and the economy in shambles, some hardline Federalists raised an idea: secession.

A Conspiracy to Secede

The plot was hatched soon after the Embargo was passed in 1807. Spearheaded by hardline Federalists like Timothy Pickering and Josiah Quincy, the discussions continued for the next six years, as New Englanders struggled with the fallout of the Embargo, the War of 1812, and declining political influence in Washington—a decline hastened by the country's westward expansion. Long discussed in private, secession was first mentioned on the Congressional floor in 1811, when Quincy gave an impassioned speech opposing Louisiana's statehood: "If this bill passes, the bonds of this Union are virtually dissolved," Quincy said. "...The States that compose it are free from their moral obligations; and... it will be the duty of some, to prepare definitely for a separation, amicably if they can, violently if they must."¹

Not all Federalists were eager to take such a drastic step. Daniel Webster, like his former mentor Gore (who had employed him as a legal clerk from 1804 to 1805), may have adamantly opposed the Embargo, but never showed support for New England's secession. As a rising figure and future leader in the Federalist party, however, Webster was friendly with those who did. And in the ugly presidential election of 1828, these ties to the conspiracy—however tenuous—came back to haunt him, thanks to an article written by a man he knew well: Theodore Lyman.

The Election of 1828

Lyman and Webster "were former political associates, and had been personal friends and

neighbors from the time Mr. Webster came to Boston," historian Josiah Benton wrote.² "They were on intimate social terms, met usually several times a week, and had for years belonged to a dinner club that met every Saturday." But they had opposing politics, and in Boston in 1828 they were some of the opposing candidates' most prominent supporters: Webster for the incumbent Adams, and Lyman for Andrew Jackson.

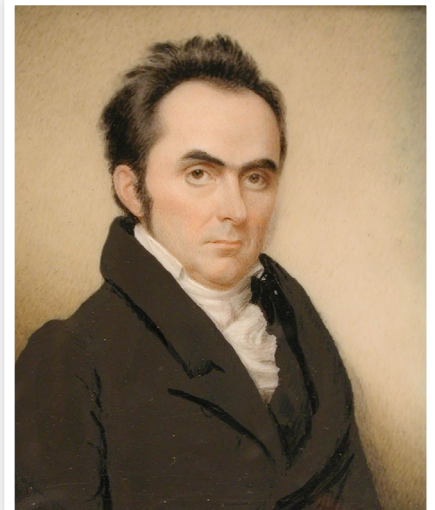
The election of 1828 was characterized by expanded suffrage, popular campaigning, and, most notably, plenty of "mudslinging." Foreshadowing American politics in centuries to come, many names were dragged through the mud in an ugly campaign season, including that of Andrew Jackson's wife, Rachel, whose marital history made national headlines after it was revealed she had failed to secure a divorce from her previous husband before marrying Jackson. "Ought a convicted adulteress and her paramour husband to be placed in the highest offices of this free and Christian land?" one newspaper read.

The media was relentless with the incumbent John Quincy Adams, who, even in his hometown of Boston, faced frequent attacks from a local newspaper called the *Jackson Republican*. While Adams would carry Massachusetts by a substantial margin, the short-lived publication—and its editor, Lyman—proved capable of causing problems.

Lyman, who would purchase the Gores' Waltham estate upon Rebecca Gore's death, was one of those former Federalists whose opinion of President Adams had permanently soured when he voted in favor of the Embargo as a Senator in 1807. Lyman had since joined the Democratic-Republicans, and before becoming Mayor of Boston in 1834, he was an owner, editor, and contributor to the city's most prominent Jacksonian newspaper.

Jefferson's Letter

On October 29th, 1828, Lyman's *Jackson Republican* published an article containing a letter written by Thomas Jefferson.³ Addressed to William B. Giles, the Governor of Virginia, the 1825 letter recounted a conversation between Jefferson and a concerned John Quincy Adams almost twenty years earlier: "[Adams] spoke... of the dissatisfaction of the Eastern portion of our Confederacy with the restraints of the embargo then existing, and their restlessness under it," Jefferson wrote, referring to the Embargo Act of



Daniel Webster Miniature portrait, watercolor on ivory by Sarah Goodridge, 1827. From the Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society

Daniel Webster one year before the trial. Painted by Sarah Goodridge shortly after his election to the U.S. Senate in 1827.

1807. In an attempt to preserve the Union, Adams approached the President in 1808 with "information of the most unquestionable certainty that certain citizens of the Eastern states... were in negotiation with the agents of the British government," Jefferson continued, regarding "an agreement that the New England States should... without formally declaring their separation from the Union of the States... withdraw from all aid and obedience to them... and, at the close of the war, be at liberty to rejoin the Confederacy." In other words, Adams had informed Jefferson of the New England Federalists' plan to secede.

Though Jefferson attached no names to the conspiracy in his recollection, the *Jackson Republican* writer whose commentary accompanied the letter did: "Daniel Webster... and others of the Federal party of their age and standing were engaged in a plot to dissolve the Union and to re-annex New England to Great Britain," he claimed. He then called out Adams, who had since become a close political ally of Webster: "Why for three years," the writer asked, "has [Adams] held to his bosom, as a political counselor, Daniel Webster, a man whom he called, in his midnight denunciation, a traitor in 1808?"

Webster was incensed. He hired two lawyers—Charles Curtis and Richard Fletcher, the latter a future Supreme Judicial Court Justice—and contacted the *Jackson Republican* to find the anonymous writer. Two weeks later, Theodore Lyman stood before a grand jury, indicted for libel.

An “Unfortunate Misapprehension”?

The presidential election was an ugly, vicious affair, and Webster and Lyman’s political differences were well-known. But they were friends, neighbors, and associates—so why would Lyman publicly attack Webster? And why would Webster feel the need to hire two lawyers and sue for libel? It was a curious escalation, even for two men with opposing politics.

As it turns out, the entire ordeal may have been a misunderstanding. As Benton wrote, “It would have been a very simple matter for Mr. Webster to have asked Mr. Lyman for an explanation as to whether he intended to charge him with having been engaged in a plot to break up the Union in 1808... if this had been done, a satisfactory disclaimer would doubtless have been made.”

As Lyman’s lawyer Franklin Dexter would explain before the Court a month later, Lyman had only meant to expose President Adams as a hypocrite. The same “leading Federalists” that Adams had exposed to President Jefferson as traitors in 1808, Lyman wanted to reveal, were now the President’s allies. “There was in this no malice against Mr. Webster,” Dexter explained, “but merely an attempt to hold up Mr. Adams to public ridicule.”

“[T]he prosecution originated in a mistake,” Dexter said. “The persons said to have been libeled with Mr. Webster in the article written by General Lyman are his personal friends...” Why would Lyman intentionally embarrass or antagonize them? Webster’s accusation of ill-intent stretched the truth and made little sense in this broader context.

A Political Ploy

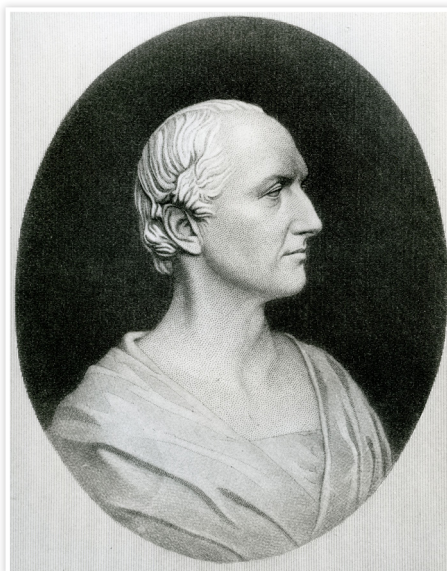
But was the prosecution really a mistake? In the midst of an election and with an opportunity to strike back at a Jackson supporter, it seems Webster’s “unfortunate misapprehension,” as the Chief Justice called it, may have been intentional: “It is difficult to believe that Mr. Webster himself thought it necessary for his personal or official vindication to institute this extraordinary prosecution,” Benton wrote. He was a U.S. Senator and an eminent constitutional lawyer, and his reputation could hardly be stained by accusations of wrongdoing stemming from decades earlier, when he was twenty-five years old and living in New Hampshire. Instead, Benton writes, Webster “was doubtless induced to [sue] only as a part

of the bitter political contest then being waged between the friends of Adams and of Jackson.”

With a majority of the city’s leading men supporting Adams, the opportunity to convict a proprietor of the leading Jacksonian newspaper of libel was too precious to pass up. Lyman had alienated himself by supporting Jackson—a southern populist and the antithesis of New England Federalist values—and had miscalculated in antagonizing someone as powerful and well-connected as Webster.

Lyman’s defense, however, was two-fold and sturdy: first, Lyman had no ill-will or intention of damaging Webster’s reputation; and second, his article was rooted in truth, since Webster was a leading Federalist in 1808 and had vocally expressed his disapproval of the Embargo. This first point was proven by several witnesses, each of whom testified that they understood Lyman’s article as an attack on Adams, and not on the Federalists they knew Lyman to be friends with. The latter point was difficult to disprove, and after lengthy testimonies and a slew of documents presented as evidence, the jury failed to agree on a verdict.

With the election over and media coverage subsiding, Webster and his attorneys agreed to drop the charges in March of 1829. Dragging out the trial in hopes of embarrassing Lyman, teaching him a lesson, or, less importantly, being vindicated of his accusation had become pointless.



Theodore Lyman Jr. was the fifth mayor of Boston, serving from 1834 to 1835 while living at the Gore estate.

Mayor Theodore Lyman, Jr., 1834-1835, undated. From the Collection of the Boston Landmarks Commission, the City of Boston Archives.

Aftermath

To misconstrue a friend’s intentions, sue him for libel, and spend the next several months in court seems excessive for a political ploy. But if Lyman and Webster’s relationship after the fact is any indication, it seems the pair understood what the case was: Lyman “considered the case as really political and not personal on the part of Mr. Webster,” Benton wrote. “Of course, the trial for the time interrupted the previous intimate social relations between Webster and Lyman, but in a year or two they became reconciled and remained warm personal friends through life.”

Still, while suing Lyman may have been a political decision, it is difficult to imagine that Webster did not take Lyman’s charge personally—the word “traitor” must have stung the man whose political career would be defined, for better or worse,⁴ by his efforts to preserve the Union. Webster proved to be a stalwart unionist, and when southern lawmakers raised debates over nullification and secession, he emerged as the Union’s leading proponent.

Webster’s Reply to Hayne

Less than a year after the Lyman trial ended, Webster and South Carolina Senator Robert Hayne engaged in a debate on the Senate floor regarding the rights and obligations of states—in other words, the very existence of the young, embattled country. Hayne, a southerner, argued that states reserved the right to “nullify” federal law, and implied that the U.S. was a loose confederation and not a unified whole: “Liberty first and Union afterwards,” Hayne said.

Webster’s reply, delivered in January of 1830, is considered by many to be the greatest speech ever given on the Senate floor. In words that Abraham Lincoln would rephrase in his Gettysburg Address, Webster said the Constitution is “the people’s government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people.” His closing lines were a refutation of Hayne, Lyman, and those colleagues who had conspired to secede decades earlier: “Liberty and Union, one and inseparable!”

1. Speech on Jan. 14, 1811. Joseph Gales, *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States...* Eleventh Congress, Session 3.

2. Joel Benton, *A Notable Libel Case* (Boston, 1904)

3. Jackson Republican, 29 Oct. 1828, p. 1. *Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers*. American Antiquarian Society.

4. Webster infamously supported the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850.

5. “Webster-Hayne Debates, 1830.” Bill of Rights Institute. <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/activities/webster-hayne-debates-1830>

A DECEMBER EVENING *at* GORE PLACE

DECEMBER 6, 2022



Gina and Steve White



Nancy Place, Doug Harding, Tom Thaler,
Peter Coffin, and Martha King



Julie Cox and Michael Taylor



Karen McFarlan, Dick Nestle, Warren McFarlan,
and Beth Robinson



Wendy Almquist, Terry and Michael Taylor,
Greer Candler, and Thom Coder



Casey Hill and Raffi Berberian



Bill Diercks, Jack LaMothe, and Rick Olney



Debbie Gates and Juliet Turner

A DECEMBER EVENING *at* GORE PLACE

Photos by Eric Workman | TMP Images



Tom Thaler and Russ Tobias



Brent Markus, Emily Derr Markus, and Anne Ogilby



Cynthia LaMothe and Laurie Diercks



David Powell, Vicky Thaler Cabot, Tom Thaler, Nancy Place, and Betsy Powell



Vicky Thaler Cabot, Tom Thaler, Jason Slocum, Debbie Gates, and Callie Slocum



Tish McIlwraith, Jennifer Morss Drayton, and Riyad Insanally



Abby Coffin, Donna and Bob Storer, and Lydia Kimball

Noteworthy shares news about Gore Place. While the pandemic continues, our Board, staff, and volunteers continue to produce many accomplishments for Gore Place, so we devote this page to these highlights!



Our farm historian and educator Donnie Weisse and family educator Meg Stockton organized a new program about maple tree tapping.

Join us for
the 36th Annual
**Sheepshearing
Festival**

Saturday, April 22

Details at
goreplace.org

New Education Programs

Hands-on farm education continues in April! Learn about planting, weeding, and harvesting at Saturday Family Time with our farm educator, Donnie Weisse.

Details at goreplace.org

Vital Financial Support

We are pleased to announce that Gore Place has received three important grants this fiscal year from the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, including a Cultural Sector Recovery Grant for \$75,000. The Mass Cultural Council has also awarded to Gore Place a Cultural Investment Portfolio grant of \$19,900, and a Universal Participation Initiative grant of \$5,000. What a boost for the museum! The MCC's ongoing support for Gore Place is vital to our work. Gore Place's executive director, Susan Robertson, says, "We are grateful that much of the money granted by the MCC is unrestricted and thus available to help cover general operating costs, a fact much appreciated by a small institution such as ours, particularly during the Covid crisis, when many sources of revenue dried up. The Mass Cultural Council understands and responds quickly to the needs of our community and cultural institutions in a way that is quite remarkable."

Farmer Scott's Heirloom Tomato Plant Sale Spring 2023

Featuring 80+ varieties

- Heirloom and hybrid tomatoes
- Peppers, eggplants, and herbs
- Back this year: our customers' favorite marigolds!

Our plants are special!

- Locally-grown by Farmer Scott on the Farm at Gore Place
- Many hard-to-find varieties
- Ready to transplant and grow in your garden

Details at goreplace.org

Volunteer

Volunteers are an important and growing part of our organization. Our new volunteer coordinator, Gail Wiegner, is excited to welcome more volunteers as the Farm becomes a busy visitor destination. Volunteers are also needed with tours and programs in the Mansion, greeting visitors, supporting our educators during programs, and assisting our event rentals manager, Linda, during weddings and other private events. Volunteers work in groups with others and their efforts add so much to our programs. Please consider volunteering at Gore Place. Contact Gail at our website at goreplace.org.

Restoration Work in the Gore Mansion

We are very excited that the wallpaper chosen for the Southeast Guest Chamber on the Mansion's second floor is now being installed. There was no evidence of the original Gore paper for this chamber, so the Collections Committee chose a period pattern from the archives of Historic New England.

The Story Trail Gets a New Look

Our Story trail has some upgrades! New pedestals and weather-resistant panel covers showcase each book page beautifully. Read a book together from page to page as you move along the Perimeter Walk. Find the featured book starting at the Nature Playscape. Thank you to family educator Meg Stockton, farmer Scott Clarke, and crewmember Jack Ordway for design and installation.



Our Story Trail has new weather-resistant upgrades.