

# Red Acre Farm

## The First Hundred Years

***A hundred years ago, horsepower was provided by horses.*** They were instrumental in simple transportation and commerce, bearing humans and goods through the streets of cities and towns everywhere. Policemen responded to crimes on them, and firemen were borne to fires by them. Every aspect of daily life involved horses; they were the engines of our society before motorized engines were common.

Like our modern-day engines, horses were subject to neglect, overwork, abuse, and various breakdowns. They were worked beyond their usefulness, then often repeatedly doctored and sold by unscrupulous dealers until they were so weak and ill that they could not stand. In 1903, a young woman small in stature but big of heart and strong of will committed her land and her energy to help as many horses as she could reach. As it turned out, her reach was surprisingly long.



Children of John Quincy Bird, 1898.  
Gertrude second from left

Harriet Gertrude Bird was born on September 12, 1873 at Red Acre Farm in Stow, Massachusetts. Her father, John Quincy Bird, had bought the farm from Mr. Noyes three years earlier. While the family lived in Newton, summers were spent in Stow, and Miss Bird grew to love it there. When her father died in 1902, she came into possession of the farm and quickly determined to transform it into a charitable home for horses. Her dream became a reality the next year, when she opened the farm on May 8 with one black horse and \$8 in the treasury. She was 29 years old.

On June 3, 1903, the American Humane Education Society and Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals President George T. Angell responded to a request from Miss Bird for horses:

My Dear Miss Bird:-

In answer to your kind favor received I have, this morning, told our officers that they must find you some horses. The great trouble is that while it requires about fourteen hundred policemen to take charge of Boston, we have only eight paid [Prosecuting] Agents to protect the dumb animals of the whole Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and, of course, they are tremendously busy, but shall hope very soon to be able to find some horses for you.

With kindest wishes, I am,  
Very grateful for your good work,  
Geo. T. Angell

Seventy-two horses were listed in the 1903 annual report. Forty-three were purchased and 38 were mercifully killed. Of the horses taken to the farm for care, 11 were loaned out to local residents. At the time the report was written, nine horses lived at the farm. Two were pensioned at \$3.00 per week.



Peaceful Retirement

People were invited to become Red Acre Friends, for which they paid \$5 per year in dues. Miss Bird received \$805.09 in contributions that year, and another \$240 in other gifts. She got \$300 for "free stalls", box stalls endowed at \$100 each. Total receipts were \$1,445.90 and expenditures were \$1,373.19.

Early on, Miss Bird kept records of all the horses she helped. The following is an excerpt from a hand-written 1903 record of horses acquired:

**Caesar** -- Bay horse, Littleton - 1200 lbs. 11 yrs old.  
Very tired and thin -  
Treatment - rest - plenty to eat -  
Sold to Mr. Marple - Bolton.  
Killed Nov. 1903.

**John St. George** : Sorrel horse, Stow. July. 900 lbs. 15 yrs. old.  
Thin - abused. Old track horse - teeth worn down -  
Treatment - rest - meal - fine feed, pastured until Oct. 1  
Liniment - rubbed on limbs daily  
Sold Oct 30 - Fred C. Whittier, Brunswick (Me.) \$29.00  
Died Nov., 10 - ?

**King Sorrel** pony. Aug. 21 03, Maynard. 800 lbs - 14 yrs. old  
Broken wind - lame -  
Treatment - rest - wet feed - teeth filed -  
Sold Oct 27 to Chas Dutton, Westminster, Mass.

**Lucinda - Maynard**  
Bay mare - 975 lbs. 13 yrs. old  
Three ribs cracked - starved - internal injuries  
Killed Oct, 26 1903 - by Mr. Davis -

**Misery 1st White horse** - 1100 lbs, Maynard, Nov. 17 - 1903  
Starved, frozen - painful swelling on hind leg

Cost \$5.00 Purchased to rescue from ill treatment

Put to sleep Nov. 21 -

The second annual report, dated May, 1905, listed Mr. George T. Angell, Mr. Franklin H. Beebe, Dr. Edward W. Emerson and Mr. Henry C. Merwin as members of the Red Acre Farm advisory board. The report offered a concise history of the enterprise to date, and listed the objects of the farm.

Red Acre Farm, a Charitable Home for Horses, opened on May 8, 1903, with one old black horse. Others were soon added, until on June 24th there were fourteen horses at the Farm. During the present year the average has been twelve.

Of the one hundred and eighty horses received at the Farm, seventy-eight were incurable sufferers and have been killed.



Rescued Horse

The remainder have been restored by rest and treatment to a good condition. Some have been returned to their owners; some have been loaned. No horses are sold by the Farm [change of policy].

The following is a list of the ailments treated: -- Spavin, goitre, splint, curb, mange, ring-bone, thrush, spinal complaint, navicular disease, heaves, broken rib, founder, dropped sole, shoulder out, broken knees, side-bones, and quitter.

An agent of the Farm will, upon request, be sent to Boston to take charge of any horse which is to be shipped to the Farm. A freight train starts for South Acton every week-day at 11 A.M.

The farm at this time had 87 acres, half in pasture and paddocks. There was a small building used as a hospital, also used as a quarantine station before horses were stabled in the barn.

Objects of the Farm.

1. To provide shelter, food and treatment, or release by death, for such cases of abuse and over-work and injury as come within the reach of its charity.
2. To provide at a small cost or free of expense, periods of country rest and pasturage for cab-horses and other work-horses whose owners, through poverty or lack of opportunity, have no means of giving such relief from over-work upon city pavements to their faithful four-footed servants.
3. To provide a home for old favorites where they may be pensioned and cared for during their well-earned rest and leisurely old age.

4. To find trustworthy homes and kind masters for such horses as are fit for light work and whose best condition is ensured by such exercise.
5. To assist poor and ignorant owners to understand their horses and the care of them in case of illness, unsoundness or accident.
6. Through its friends and agents, to do everything possible to lessen the traffic in old and broken-down horses, with its attendant drugging, "doctoring", "nerving", and other forms of cruelty.

The Farm and stables are under the daily oversight of the owner, who has the advice and support of the following persons and associations, and to them reference may be had:

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 19 Milk Street, Boston, Mr. George T. Angell, President; The Boston Work Horse Parade Association, 14 Beacon Street, Boston, Mr. R. A. Lawrence, President; Dr. Edward W. Emerson, Concord, Massachusetts; and Dr. Charles P. Lyman,, Proprietor of the Newbury Street Hospital for Animals, who has kindly offered to act as Visiting and Consulting Veterinary-Surgeon for the Farm.

The 1905 report included an extract from the Boston Transcript of January 9, 1905. The activities and conditions described are difficult to imagine today, all the more so because of their prevalence at the time.

There is a large traffic in broken-down, worn-out, diseased and suffering horses, and jockeys of the most degraded character make a precarious living from it. Recently, in one day, at Lowell, fourteen horses were sold by auction, the highest price for any one of them being ten dollars. In one day, at one auction stable in Boston, ten horses were purchased at prices ranging from three to seven dollars. If a horse can walk to the knacker's he may be worth three dollars, and the wretched animal is often bought for one dollar upon the chance that he may be able to make the journey without dropping dead on the way. On Wednesdays and Saturdays (the sale days) a collection of feeble and dead-lame horses may sometimes be seen, after dark, slowly and painfully making their way to a certain rendering establishment situated in the woods, some six or seven miles from Boston, the last part of the road being so steep and stony as to tax the energies of a sound horse. Sometimes they drop dead before the journey is completed.

Often the men who deal in these horses are able to put them off on ignorant purchasers at a price ten times their value, and for this purpose they are doctored, dosed, stimulated and disguised in all the ways which rapacity and cruelty can suggest. Not infrequently glandered horses are sold in this manner. To buy them of a dealer is to encourage traffic in them; the place to buy them is in the owner's hands, before they gravitate to a jockey, and, if possible, in the country, where the opportunities for cruelty are vastly greater than they are in the city. This work has been undertaken by Red Acre Farm, so far as its means allow, and that the work has been done economically is proved by the fact that the price paid seldom, if ever, goes above five dollars, and is usually only two or three dollars.

On January 20, 1906, Red Acre Farm was incorporated as a Massachusetts Public Charity. For the next 94 years, it was known as Red Acre Farm, Inc. Its work rescuing horses continued to grow through the early years of the twentieth century, and the impact Miss Bird made was noticed.



Old Blind Tom

In a Nashua Telegraph article from October 19, 1907, the writer related the story of Blind Tom. This unfortunate animal was seen to fall in the street from exhaustion and was described as being extremely weak and thin, suffering from abscess and covered with scars and bruises. He was "purchased for a small sum by two charitable women" and sent to Red Acre Farm. Over the next five months he gained over 200 pounds and became sound and sleek. He was used for a variety of work on the farm.

The writer also described Bonnie Belle, a former high stepper with delicate little limbs and noble head found attached to an express cart half fed and worked to death, her only reward a beating with heart aching pulling her heavy load until like Blind Tom [she] dropped in the traces to die.

According to the Telegraph, the average price paid for horses was \$5.39. The writer made a trip to the farm and reported that, "Not a whip was seen about the premises, no cursing, no clubbing [sic] but a peaceful happy air of general content and happiness is felt all about the stables at this charity home for horses. The farm has no resources only the voluntary contributions of generous friends. Seven box stalls have been endowed the past year at \$100 a stall".

The 1908 annual report stated that 40 old and suffering horses were rescued and cured, 290 were bought and mercifully killed, 39 partly worn-out horses were found easy places to earn their keep, 19 were received as paying pensioners and 11 as partly paying, and 110 were helped or treated as out-patients. Miss Bird had come a long way in five years, but her work had just begun.

Red Acre Farm was making an impact, and an impression. Chapter 133 of the Acts of 1908 provided for cities and towns to transfer disabled or diseased horses used by fire, police, street or sanitary departments "to Red Acre Farm, Incorporated, or to any other charitable society incorporated in this commonwealth for the prevention of cruelty to animals, or for the care and protection of dumb animals", rather than selling them.

The 1909 annual report stated that, to date, 700 horses had been cared for by Red Acre. The following is an excerpt from that report:

The Farm is a home for horses, and especially for friendless horses. Poor men's horses are given a rest here, free of charge and accompanied by such medical or surgical treatment as may be necessary. Any person who rescues a suffering horse from bad hands may have him sent here at the expense of the Farm, and he will be looked after. Family favorites or other horses past work may be pensioned at the Farm, the charge being \$3.00 per week.

"They have come to us", the Manager writes, "from all directions, and are of all sorts and conditions, from the worn-out peddler's horse to the dignified old family favorite, sent here to end his days in comfort as a pensioner. There are weary cab horses from the city dozing in the warm sun in the paddock; there are blind horses listening for the sound of our footsteps; and there are the very sick horses lying on the floor of the hospital, their eyes wistful, as though still trusting in our power to aid them. This is the saddest sight at the Farm, for the suffering animals seem to ask what they have done to deserve such punishment. In the summer the apple orchard is the favorite paddock. During the day the trees



Rescued, starved, abused horse

provide a cool shade, and at night the dew makes the grass soft and moist and cooling for feverish limbs and feet, worn out by city pavements."



Nursed back to health

The Farm makes a specialty of diseases of the feet and legs, in respect to which the Manager has had much experience. Some cases given up as hopeless elsewhere have been cured here. We are always glad to give free advice and treatment for sick or injured horses in the neighborhood, and many cases come to us in that way.

The farm had an ambulance that was sent to South Acton, Waltham, Boston or elsewhere for horses that were unable to walk.

It had become so difficult to find good homes for horses that the practice of lending them out was practically given up by 1909, according to the annual report. Some did continue to be loaned out, however, and for them Miss Bird hosted 'Field Days' at least twice per year. In order to encourage participation, prizes were awarded in a number of creative categories. If a horse did not make it to Field Day, Miss Bird would pay him a visit to ensure that he was receiving good care.

# RED ACRE FARM STOW

## ANNUAL FIELD DAY

MAY 26, 1917 at 2 P.M.

Prizes, open to all persons except dealers in horses, are offered as follows:

**For Pairs of Work-Horses**

- 1st Prize, \$5. and a blue ribbon
- 2nd Prize, \$4. and a red ribbon
- 3rd Prize, \$3. and a yellow ribbon
- 4th Prize, \$2. and a white ribbon

**For Single Work-Horses**

- 1st Prize, \$5. and a blue ribbon
- 2nd Prize, \$4. and a red ribbon
- 3rd Prize, \$3. and a yellow ribbon
- 4th Prize, \$2. and a white ribbon

No entry fee required.

These prizes will be awarded mainly on the condition, grooming, and general appearance of the horses. A new harness or new wagon will count for nothing, but the cleanness, suppleness, and fitting of the harness will be considered, and also the cleanness and running of the wagon. Prizes not deserved will be withheld. Entries may be made on the spot. The Judges will be furnished by the Boston Work-Horse Relief Association.

### Annual Field Day Notice

In addition to her work at the farm, Miss Bird also served as secretary of "Mayor Curley's Committee for Making Streets Safe for Horses in Winter". To this end, she would oversee the collection of ashes from office and apartment building boiler rooms; they were taken into the city and spread on Beacon Hill streets and other slippery spots.

Miss Bird also supported other humane causes. A letter dated March 30, 1910, read,

"To Miss Harriet G. Bird.

It gives me great pleasure to inform you of your election as a Director of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the ensuing year.

Very respectfully,  
Guy Richardson  
Secretary"

The Red Acre Farm directors were always interested in cultivating useful means of support, and in January 1913 decided that in the coming summer the farm would begin a small market garden business with the directors and Red Acre Friends as customers. The annual financial report for that year stated that income from farm produce totalled \$278.03.



Tender, loving care

That year was one of many busy years at the farm. At a special meeting of the directors held on April 15, Miss Bird reported that in January, February and March, 103 horses were rescued. At that time there were 29 horses at the farm; 13 were pensioners and nine were charity patients. At a meeting held on October 3, she reported that

51 horses were currently at the farm, and that during the summer 101 horses enjoyed the pasture and care at Red Acre.

In 1913, its tenth anniversary, Red Acre Farm's total receipts were \$11,228.92. Of this amount, over \$3,000 was listed as donations while a similar amount came in for care of horses. Red Acre Friends contributed another \$565 while over \$4,000 came to the farm through bequests, free stalls and investments.

Expenditures for the year totaled \$9,816.86. This amount included general expenses of over \$7,000 for labor, provender, shoeing, veterinary costs, freight, etc. and miscellaneous expenditures of \$480.40 for Field Day, advertising, taxes, coal, etc. Special expenditures for land, auto, plumbing, a corn planter, cow, stone lifter and the like totaled over \$2,000.

By 1916 and the outbreak of war, Miss Bird set her mind to helping the hundreds of thousands of horses conscripted by the military. Both at home and abroad, horses were needed for hauling men and supplies, ambulance work and moving artillery. Miss Bird was determined to see that they received proper nutrition and care.

In a May 22, 1916 letter on War Department letterhead to Dr. William O. Stillman, president of the American Humane Association, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker wrote, "The War Department is in receipt of your communication offering the services of your Association and its five hundred allied societies in organizing and maintaining personnel and supplies available to the Government in time of war for rendering assistance to wounded animals employed by the Army, and appreciates your offer very much."

The result of this offer was the American Red Star Relief, an organization wholly devoted to aiding horses in times of war. Miss Bird was front and center, as a letter on American Red Star Animal Relief letterhead, dated November 6, 1917, indicates:

Dear Miss Bird:-

I have your very kind letter of November 4-17, stating that you will visit army camps for the RED STAR without salary, expenses to be covered by us. We shall be very glad to have your assistance and wish to go into this matter somewhat systematically. Will write you later.

Appreciating your cooperation and fine spirit, as well as competence, I am,

Cordially yours,  
W.O. Stillman  
Director General

An undated article from The Boston Globe (1918 assumed) described the organization thusly:



To relieve the sufferings of neglected horses on the battlefields, to assist the Government in caring for horses in the army camps and to conserve the horse power of the country are the principal objects of the American Red Star Animal Relief, which has established its Boston headquarters at the Animal Rescue League, 51 Carver St.



Ambulance loaned to Camp Devens, 1918

Last week it was announced that the War Branch of the Red Acre Farm, maintained by the Animal Rescue League, would combine with the Boston branch of the Red Star. As a matter of fact, work has been going on at the Animal Rescue League since last October.

Supplies were sent to the Artillery camps at Boxford last fall and during an outbreak of pneumonia among the horses at Camp Devens the league sent hoods and blankets in response to an emergency call which probably averted a serious epidemic.

The American Red Star Animal Relief was organized in June, 1916, under the auspices of the American Humane Association and at the request of Sec [sic] of War Baker, who declared that assistance for animals similar to that given wounded soldiers by the Red Cross 'would be very gratefully received by the War Department.'

The name was taken from the International Red Star Alliance, which was organized in 1914 at Geneva, Switzerland, to bring about international cooperation in [sic] behalf of sick or wounded war animals and to secure the neutralization of persons engaged in such work.

The article continued, quoting Huntington Smith saying that almost a million horses and mules had been exported for use by the Allies, and estimating that 700,000 horses would soon be in the service of the U.S. Army.

"Every regiment must have more than 100 horses for mounted officers, orderlies and baggage wagons", Smith was reported as saying.

"These horses need ambulances, hospital tents, shelter tents, bandages, medicine, veterinaries, etc", the quote continued. "The Government is not provided with them at present. At one camp where there are 800 horses, there is only one veterinarian. The Government relies on the Red Star for these things."

For his part, Stillman gave Miss Bird letters of introduction to the commanding officers of army bases throughout the United States, in which he stated that "Miss Bird is authorized to make the necessary purchases at the nearest point to your camp and secure as prompt delivery as is possible...I might add that Miss Bird's services for the Red Star are wholly volunteer and not as a salaried official".

Miss Bird visited remount stations and wrote detailed reports on each camp, describing buildings, conditions, supplies, veterinary services and surgeries, etc. She supplied detailed lists of things that could be obtained from the government and supplied the rest herself, sometimes with reimbursement and sometimes without.

The following letter to Miss Bird from the Division Veterinarian's Office, 85th Division, headquarters Camp Custer, Michigan, dated July 5, 1918, is typical:

We have recently received through the General Manager of the American Red Star Animal Relief, Albany, New York, a considerable quantity of Veterinary supplies, including a fine motorcycle with sidecar for the use of the Division Veterinarian. These reached us in time to be packed up for overseas service by the various Veterinary officers. This Division is expecting orders to go over in the very near future and should like to express our sincere thanks for your efforts in our behalf. With best wishes for the continued success of your good work and hoping that some time later we may have the pleasure of seeing you in France, I remain,

Walter Fraser,  
Major, V.C.N.A.

Documentation indicates that Miss Bird requested permission to go to France sometime in 1918 in order to do practical work, but General Pershing allowed only those volunteers associated with the American Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A. to make that trip.

Of course, during the war years, Red Acre Farm continued its mission of rescuing horses in need and expanded its realm of influence. Many letters were sent back and forth between Miss Bird and various people in Maine. Red Acre Farm gave advice and aid to the Farmington Humane Society, then a state-wide organization. The following excerpt is from a letter to Mr. Ralph W. Littlefield of Gardiner, Maine, dated November 26, 1920:

Walker the agent came down here last Tuesday and took back with him a man who has been quilty (sic) of perhaps as much cruelty as was ever inflicted on horses in Maine. This fellow bought two youngish horses last April; nearly starved them to death and kept one at least in slings until he was covered with running sores and then sold each horse for five dollars. Walker was put on the track of one of these horses by an anonymous letter and he finally succeeded in finding the other. He killed both as they were too far gone to eat. I have just heard from him that the man was fined a sum amounting with costs to \$158.54 and sentenced to jail for eight months but this part of the sentence as I understand is to be suspended provided that he pays the fine and costs.

Miss Bird documented many cases and made sure they were followed by the agents in Maine. The following is a list of "Cases Which Should Be Looked After Again" from the early 1920s:

Gardiner.-- Walter Millet, - Small Bay horse.

Augusta--Jesse Batchelder- Thin gray horse.

Winthrop.-- Geo. Crane,- Hay scales man. See the agent there,- deputy sheriff. John A. Foster

Mt. Vernon.-- Arthur Welsh. W. C. Archibald.

Vienna.-- Roscoe Moore.-(did he sign the agreement?) New Sharon,- Harry Bailey.

Allen's Mills,- Banner.said to have beaten 2 horses, so that both died or had to be killed. One given to John Jeffers of West Mills. Industry, -- Andrew Kennedy,-Gray horse. Was he killed?

Solon, - Morris Jordan, step-son of James Lobdell. How about the barn and chestnut horse?

Granville Scott Tuscan,- Poor Barn.

Athens.-- Rufie Brown, black horse, spavined. (We did not see this horse.)

Emden,-- John Endelborg, - poor barn (He was away)

North New Portland,- Reuben Morton,- 2 thin horses kept in mud-hole. (I sent him the blankets)

Fred Green, - Fish pedler. [sic]

(?) West New Portland,- Walter Berry,- Poor barn. Pigs in wet, filthy sty.

Salem, -- Horse with stiff knee.

By 1921, the farm's financial statements indicated that there was plenty of work to do, and plenty of people willing to help get it done. Total receipts for the year ending April 30, 1921 were \$21,425.38 and expenditures were \$18,075.27. As in previous years, the bulk of expenditures were for farm operations and included labor, bedding, blacksmith, veterinary, freight, telephone, etc. Receipts were primarily from direct operations and included donations, investment earnings, care of horses, etc. In 1924, the directors voted to purchase the house, 14-stall stable and approximately three acres of land adjoining the farm and currently used for its purposes. The land was owned by Walter Meredith Bird.

After the end of World War I, automobiles became more and more prevalent and the age of the horse continued on a steady decline. Throughout the 1920s, the supply of cast-off horses appeared to be limitless. Red Acre Farm actively sought donations so as to be able to rescue as many animals as possible. The need was particularly great in the fall; merchants and farmers found that the cost of maintaining their horses through the winter months was dear and many unfortunate animals found their way to auction houses or into the hands of unscrupulous dealers. The following letter to the editor was typical of those that appeared in the autumn months throughout the decade:

To the Editor of The Herald:

At this season of the year the chief work of Red Acre Farm is the rescue of old and worn-out horses. These unfortunate animals have passed through every downward stage, and are now in the hands of shiftless, degenerate farmers and the lowest class of horse-dealers. They can be bought very cheaply, because their owners cannot afford to feed them through the winter. During November the farm purchased twenty of these animals at an average price of less than \$5 and the supply is almost unlimited. Every contribution of \$5 will rescue at least one such horse. Most of them are painfully lame, all of them are half-starved. Gaunt, spectral figures covered with long, coarse hair, they are hardly recognizable as horses, and the best that can be given to them is speedy, humane death.

BOSTON WORKHORSE RELIEF ASSOCIATION

H. G. Bird, treasurer

Henry C. Merwin, secretary.

One note of general historical interest was the presence in one of Red Acre's barns of two brass plaques, memorials to two horses named Malcolm and Kenneth. The horses had belonged to Lizzie Borden. Lizzie was born in 1860 in Fall River, Massachusetts and in June, 1893 she was tried for the ax murder of her father and step-mother. The jury found her not guilty, but the murder and trial attracted national attention. She died in 1927. In an article that appeared in The Boston Globe on July 22, 1958, Ted Ashby quoted Miss Bird as saying, "They were Lizzie Borden's horses...though they never were stabled here. But she wanted the plaques installed in their memory".

Even through the Great Depression, Red Acre Farm continued to grow. In 1929, the "total amount of property reported" was \$145,662.12. In 1931, the figure was \$197,050, in 1933 it was \$209,087 and by 1935 it was \$364,306. Total receipts from 1933 were \$64,664.92, almost \$52,000 of which was capital (legacies, sale of securities, etc.). Expenditures for the year totalled \$63,048.96, nearly \$56,000 of which was for investment in savings, bonds, stocks, mortgages, permanent improvements, new equipment and real estate.

At the annual meeting held January 11, 1933, the following officers were elected: Mrs. Pritchard, president; Mrs. B.T. Morrison, vice president; Mrs. Thayer, secretary; Miss Bird, treasurer (a position she retained throughout her long life).

One of the important new directions taken by Red Acre Farm during this period was the establishment and support of the Merwin Memorial Free Clinic for Animals in Allston, Massachusetts, named for Judge Henry C. Merwin, for many years a director of the Farm. The clinic opened in 1929 and served many people with reduced finances through the depression years and for many decades to come. A note in an annual report of the clinic, assumed to be from 1936, states that "All poor persons and those in moderate circumstances are assured that for their needy animals, sick or wounded, this free treatment is intended".

At the annual meeting of Red Acre Farm, held January 30, 1935, it was reported that, "In the summer the Finance Committee agreed to buy and rent to the Merwin Memorial Clinic a new home which later on the Clinic is to buy and own when its Funds allow". Red Acre funds totaling \$9,800 were expended for the new clinic, and all work and repairs to the property were done by the farm's men and truck.

In its "Helping Others" expenditure report the same year, the following organizations were listed as recipients:

Rockport, Eden Home. Caroline Morrell.

Saco, Maine

Waltham Dog yard, paint etc

Cape Cod Branch, Mrs. Coffin

Dennison House Cat Show

Acton Fair

Morocco

It was also noted that there had been lots of summer rest cases at the farm.

At a special meeting of the directors in 1936, it was Voted, "To see if the Farm will sign the Deed giving over to the Merwin Clinic the Property it now occupies at 542 Cambridge Street, Allston., As tenant with out charge."

The clinic moved to its new quarters at 542 Cambridge St. on January 20, 1936. The space housed waiting rooms, doctors' offices, xray, directors' rooms and others for general purposes on the first and second floors. An accident room and emergency operating room, cages and temporary quarters were located in the basement.



Free clinic for animals



Merwin Memorial Veterinarians at work

The clinic saw 6,208 cases in 1936, with patients coming from 78 neighboring cities and towns. The report continued:

Chief of the animals' 'troubles' are the various types of skin disorders. Canker of the ear, and ear mites are a close second. Cases of worms are always numerous, and great is the relief to the animals which are cured of these infestations. Colds which develop into distemper and pneumonia are frequent in both dogs and cats, and only when treatment is begun in an early stage, can a long illness or loss of the animal be averted. Automobile accidents are the cause of many emergency cases - fractures being the chief injury.

### Part 3

In 1940, Red Acre established a second free clinic, this time in Monrovia, California. Miss Bird's mother and sister lived there, and during her frequent visits Miss Bird had determined there was a need for veterinary care.

An undated article from a California newspaper stated that for many years the city of Monrovia donated use of a portion of the city property on which the free clinic was built. It said that, during its first year, the Memorial Free Clinic of Monrovia gave treatment to about 1,000 animals from the region.

"One of the outstanding services of the Clinic, is the examination and treatment of the guide dogs from the Hazel Hurst Foundation, where these dogs are trained and furnished without cost, to blind people throughout the country", the newspaper reported.

In April 1941, both the president and vice-president of Red Acre Farm, Inc., died. Elected in their places were Mrs. Ezra (Ethel) Thayer as president and Mrs. Daniel (Fanny) Staniford as vice president. Mrs. Thayer had been secretary of Red Acre for many years. Miss Bird was now elected as both secretary and treasurer.

This roster of officers continued, and records show that they were reelected to office at the January 20, 1943 annual meeting of the Board of Directors. An undated record from that year indicates that this was a "quiet year," perhaps because of America's involvement in World War II. Actions listed included a vote that the treasurer invest and reinvest a

sum that was to go later to the Animal Rescue League of Boston, "to help add to the amount \$20,000 for building Fund". The directors upheld and approved a plan suggested by members at the annual convention of the Humane Societies of Massachusetts that officers visit as many small animal protection groups in the state as possible during the following spring.

"Helping Others" contributions for that year were sent to Mrs. Rockwell Coffin, Cape Cod; Miss Foote, Martha's Vineyard shelter; Melrose Humane Society; Portland shelter by Miss Leighton; Taunton Animal Welfare; Wiscasset Animal Welfare; Augusta society; Waltham shelter; Emily Palmer Stearns, Virginia; Fitchburg Animal Rescue League; Red Star; Horses Christmas; Morocco, Fondouk Fez; and National Humane [Society?].

The record noted that there was no building or sales. The farm raised vegetables, with over \$285 sold. Red Acre helped the Waltham shelter keep going after its president died.

Red Acre purchased \$6,100 in bonds in 1943. Red Star work was planned but there was no Civilian Defense activity. "Did War work well in California. Organized. Got equipment, Shelters Held Pet Show in Theatre open auditorium [sic] Places many more Stocks with St. St.[State Street Trust Co.] now over \$70,000 there," the record noted.

In February, Red Acre contributed \$1,000 to the Animal Rescue League Building Fund. New business included the notation to "Expand the Title of PURPOSES to include animals other than Horses in our Incorporation Papers".



In the annual report of the Monrovia Memorial Free Clinic for Animals, March 1944, it was reported that 442 cases were treated at the clinic between January 1943 and January 1944. Of this number, 384 were dogs, 54 were cats, two were rabbits and two were goats. In connection with Civil Defense, the clinic had organized emergency shelters in neighboring localities- five individuals "kindly consented to use their homes as emergency headquarters for Pets in the event of Raids or Bombing". A "most successful" pet show was held, with circulars furnished by Red Star -- describing proper care and feeding of pets -- distributed amongst the children. On August 1, 1943, a new schedule was established for the clinic,

eliminating Tuesday and Thursday hours and retaining Monday, Wednesday and Friday hours. The clinic had two \$500 war bonds toward incorporation. A lawn mower was purchased.

A reference in an undated record included with 1944 material reads as follows: "National Convention held in Albany las [sic] Septem [sic] Very interesting. Medals were given to Workers in the Humane field for over 40 years Charles Lund of Red Acre Received one, also a certificate of Merit for the 43 years at the Farm without a break.

At present he is ill with a heart Ailment..."

At the annual meeting of the Board of Directors on January 24, 1944, "IT WAS VOTED;- To add to the PURPOSES OF THE RED ACRE FARM, INCORPORATED, the following sentence

"ALSO HUMANE WORK FOR OTHER ANIMALS AS OCCASION MAY ARISE".

The above-mentioned undated record gives the first hint of Miss Bird's next project: "On the 10 Acre Lot, field on way to Village, we are building 2 cottages for G.I. to have homes. Our men are doing two thirds of all the work. Hire just one Carpenter. One cottage will be finished in March, the other in June".

The reduced population of horses at the farm had made the 10-acre lot unnecessary as a source for hay. But Miss Bird had a new crop in mind, one that would benefit several young families as well as the farm and the town of Stow. Royal Barry Wills was the architect and designed mostly small Cape Cod-style homes with unfinished second stories. They were priced so that young returning veterans could afford them. The area became known as "Red Acre Village."

Miss Bird invited prospective home-buyers to the farm for Sunday tea. If she approved of them, they bought houses. Some of the lucky ones included George Shultz, then a Ph.D. candidate at M.I.T. and later to become Secretary of State under President Reagan; John Coleman, later to become president of the Philadelphia Federal Reserve Bank and president of Haverford College; and George "Jim" Baldwin (dubbed Jim because of the duplication of Georges in the neighborhood) another Ph.D. candidate at M.I.T. who later served with the World Bank.

The 1947 secretary's report from the annual meeting reads, in part, "We have sold two small building lots from the pasture. Also have started a new Cottage by first building the Garage. At the Farm all has gone smoothly. there [sic] have been 12 horses but an average of 5. The California Clinic is doing good work The expenses are about \$1800.00 a year and it is now half self supporting".

Another reference states that, "As the four houses owned in the past have been sold, we started a cottage on the ten Acre Lot. The Government Priorities were sd [sic] stiff, the building of house could not go on, so the RA men built a cottage Garage of our own lumber, to be ready, at the back of the proposed house".

"During the year there was no donation or money received for Board of Horses. The Farm was supported by Income from Investments and gains from Sale of Securities".

A document dated August 25, 1948 stated that, "It was voted that the Red Acre Farm, Inc. sell to George P Shelty[Shultz] and Helena [typed over Margaret Shelty[Shultz] his wife of Cambridge, Mass. the land and buildings in Stow, Mass. shown as lot 5 on a plan by Horace F. Tuttle dated 1948 of the Ten Acre Field subdivision. "Lot containing about 20,000 square feet located on the road from So. Acton to Stow Lower Village".

"And that the Treasurer is authorized to sign the deed and do all other acts necessary in behalf of this Corporation relating to the Sale."

From a page titled "News of 1948" comes the following update:

Two cottages finished and sold to nice G.I.s Officers in Navy. Two now Prof. at M.I.T.

Two more cottages partly finished, eagerly awaited by other G.I.s

Have sold building Lots in the upper pasture to five young men, One house is finished and two others started...

Having been elected President of the Massachusetts Federation of Humane Societies, your Treasurer [Miss Bird] is now in closer touch with the Humane Societies and their Needs

Want to establish a Scholarship at Vet. School 1,000 a year for worthy Young man.



Employee Bill Ferguson with "Captain"

At the January 26, 1950 annual meeting of the Merwin Memorial Free Clinic, the following statistics were reported: cases cared for at the clinic, 4,765; cases handled outside and by telephone, 4,447; xray cases, 67; tests, 247; total receipts, \$10,869.46; expenditures, \$10,379.35; bank balance Dec. 31, 1949, \$1,595.29.

The secretary's report for the Red Acre Farm, Inc. annual meeting, also held January 26, 1950, included the following notations:

There has been an average of 8 horses at the Farm, At present there are 6 and 2 goats.

Barns have been painted, fences mended. Small needy humane groups have been visited and helped.

The Red Acre Cottages being built on the 10 Acre Lot have met with much approval. Royal Barry Wills is the Architect and the Cottages are sold before being wholly finished. All young couples, G.I. Officers in the Pacifi [sic] College graduates, also the wives.

Two more cottages are in the process of construction.

One of our Directors died in October, W.M. Bird, a great loss to the Farm. as [sic] he was 12 years younger than I and had promised to take over the farm after I had gone. Mrs. Jane Lohse, his daughter will take his place.

The Animal research Bill will come up again this year at the State House. We must straighten it out. take [sic] a sensible middle path Medical research but not Surgical vivisection.

We are helping Melrose, Cape Cod, Taunton, Waltham, Portland, Wiscasset, Augusta, Fitchburg and Kennebunkport.

The Scholarship Fund has started. It can be arranged to have part of our Income from Estabrook Co. sent to the selected College each fall without further call upon the Farm. \$900 a year for 4 is \$3,600 a year. Natalie Knowles of Everett is the



first for next year. She is taking pre med. now at BostonUniversity, and helping the Reading Vet. during summer vacation.

California Free Clinic going smoothly. is [sic] two thirds self supporting.

Red Acre employees were also listed, along with their terms of service. They included Charlie Lund, 47 years; Peter Lund, 32 years; Viola Starbird, 25 years; Raymond Phalon, 18 years; and "Blimp" Hyden, 1 year.

By early 1951, seven cottages had been built and sold. Two more houses were sold in the summer of 1952 and Miss Bird was supervising the construction of another. An interesting note in the annual meeting minutes from January, 1952 is a small but potent sign of the times; Miss Bird suggested that in the event of an enemy attack on Boston, the farm could provide ways to help care for and shelter animals.

On May 7, 1953, a gala event was held at the farm in celebration of Red Acre's fiftieth anniversary. Miss Bird opened her home for the event, and the "Village" wives helped by serving refreshments. The farm in its first 50 years sheltered more than 6,000 horses; on this day there were six horses at the farm as compared to 42 in 1917.

A newspaper clipping from the time reported that Miss Bird had resigned as a member of the Board of Directors of the Animal Rescue League of Boston. She had been elected vice president in March, 1937, and in November, 1941 was elected a director. She served as secretary in 1948. Upon her resignation from the board she was elected an honorary vice president.

The "Helping Others" list in the minutes from the January, 1954 annual meeting (for 1953) included the following 21 organizations:

Waltham Shelter, Gifford Home; Melrose; Taunton, Shelter, Ambulance; Dodge, Animals taken in; Texas, New Society; Kennebunkport, Just Gormed, Agent; Wiscasset, call Officer, pay for medicines; Dedham and all County; The Clinic Allston; The Clinic Monrovia; Helen Leighton, Portland; Animal Rescue League; Mass. Federation of Humane Societies; Harvard Heart Bank Invention; Red Star; American Canine Foundation; Los Angeles, Shooting Wild Mules; NH Animal Society; Boston Animal Rescue League, Cape Branch; Cape Cod Branch, Mrs. Coffin; Unwanted dogs in Randolph[sic].

A projects list from the same time cited ideas such as encouraging the advertisement of "Found Dogs" so they could be returned to owners; working to have moving "Picture Films" taken of animals under ether where research was being done, so the film could be shown on the screen to succeeding classes so there would be fewer animals used; doing extension work at the State House and visiting college presidents of the state agricultural colleges; and guarding against the use of animals in painful research.

Over the course of the year three students were helped with small scholarships. "We need a Veterinary School in New England", Miss Bird wrote. "The Mass and the Conn State Colleges are interested in the project. I have contacted both."

Nine new houses were occupied by nine couples and a tenth house was over half finished; there was an average of seven horses at the farm all the time, and often many more in the summer; three men were employed.

"We regret losing two of our Directors the past year. Mrs. Fannie Staniford Mrs. Kittie Burden," the minutes read.

Running expenses and income for 1953 were receipts, \$21,674.81; expenses, \$14,728.81.

In 1954 Miss Bird received the Outstanding Humanitarian Award of the American Humane Association. Over the years she had been an officer or director of the Animal Rescue League of Boston, the American Humane Association and the Massachusetts and New England Federation of Humane Societies, in addition to her 51 years of work at the farm.

In this year, Red Acre Farm, Inc. started on a new path that it would follow for the next two and a half decades. According to an unpublished article written by Barbara Breasted in 1972, Miss Bird was a "self-appointed investigator of the condition of laboratory animals in all Massachusetts medical schools". Throughout the 1950s the state legislature struggled with the topic of animals needed for medical research. Finally, in 1959, it passed the Animal Seizure Bill, allowing research facilities to take dogs and cats that were unclaimed from municipal pounds. The bill did not differentiate between pounds and humane organizations.

But once again, Miss Bird was thinking ahead of the curve. The following passage comes from the minutes of a Board of Directors meeting held at the farm on May 10, 1954:

Miss Bird gave an interesting account of several projects which are receiving support from Red Acre Farm, Inc. and reported in detail regarding conferences with Dean Faulkner of Boston University Medical School, relative to the research work being done by Dr. Joseph Serondo, [sic] Jr.



Miss Bird receives American Humane's Outstanding Humanitarian Award, 1954



Miss Bird offered suggestions for assisting Dr. Serondo [sic] by establishing a laboratory at or on the Farm property, the same to be used in the research work to be done by said Dr. Joseph Serondo, [sic] Jr.

It was voted unanimously that the Treasurer, Miss Harriet G. Bird, be authorized to establish a Laboratory at or on the Farm property, and to assist in such manner, financial or otherwise, as in her judgment is deemed advisable, in the medical research work by Dr. Joseph Serondo, [sic] Jr.

One year later, minutes from a Board of Directors meeting reference the erection of the laboratory during the previous year, and its recent completion.

In an article from "The Beacon," dated August 23, 1956, reporter Beverlie Tuttle wrote about the new Laboratory of Comparative Pathology (LCP). Dr. Joseph Seronde, Jr. conducted research in the biology of disease. He "...explains that in a basic study of the nature of infectious disease, valuable insight often can be obtained concerning the everyday workings of a living body", Tuttle wrote.

Seronde worked with pantothenic acid (a member of the Vitamin B complex). Before coming to Stow, he taught pathology at Columbia University, where he worked with nutritional biochemists Drs. Theodore and Lois Zucker.

Tuttle wrote that Seronde's work at the LCP supplemented the work done by the Zuckers. While at Columbia, one of the experimental rats purposely lacking pantothenic acid developed an unfamiliar infection. It turned out to be a member of the diphtheria family and, when injected into healthy rats, it did not produce disease. But it did result in disease when injected into PA-deficient rats. They lost their natural resistance; deficiencies of other B vitamins did not yield the same results. Seronde spent his entire professional life studying the relationship between nutrition and disease.

During the period from 1955 through 1978, he authored or coauthored 19 studies, primarily on pantothenate deficiency and its relationship to duodenal ulcer disease and the influence of Vitamin B6 in cardiac disease.

Another departure for Red Acre Farm, Inc., involved the purchase of Lawrence Island, near Cataumet, from the Baxendale Estate. The five-acre island was maintained as a wildlife refuge. Food was set out for migratory birds.

In 1955, another of Miss Bird's dreams touched reality. At its May 10 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to give the University of Massachusetts \$50,000 for the construction of a veterinary hospital for research work connected with ailments of large animals. According to the minutes of that meeting,

Two years ago Miss Bird reported to the Annual Meeting regarding her interest and effort to have legislation enacted favoring a college in Massachusetts for the education and training of veterinary students. It was later learned that it was advisable to suspend any effort in connection with such a project at that time. The matter of training students and research work with respect to disease in animals, has however, still held a place in our Treasurer's plans, and has found an outlet in the proposed building to be erected on the grounds of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, to be used for the investigation of disease of large animals. The building will be known as the 'Thayer Building'.

The building was named in memory of Miss Eleanor Thayer, daughter of longtime Red Acre Farm, Inc. officer Ethel Thayer. The project was funded through the sale of shares of stock.

Now in her eighties, Miss Bird was concerned about the future leadership of her 52-year-old brainchild. Ethel Thayer was failing, and there was no one in line to fill the president's position. In November, 1955, two months after her eighty-second birthday, Miss Bird drafted a letter to her niece, Jane Bird Lohse, and her husband Bob. Jane was on the Board of Directors, and the couple lived in Texas. Miss Bird offered her niece a \$7,000 salary and a house in the "village," but gave Jane the option of naming her own salary.

There is no record of a response, but in June 1956, Jane's younger brother, Walter M. Bird, Jr., -- known as "Tad" -- became assistant manager of Red Acre Farm, Inc. Earlier that year, annual meeting attendees had voted the LCP's Dr. Joseph Seronde, the Merwin Memorial Free Clinic's Dr. Terrence Burke, and George Curtis, M.D. as new directors.

At a special meeting held October 29, the directors approved the signing of an agreement between Red Acre Farm and Dr. Seronde whereby he would continue to direct the activities of the lab for another 10 years. This agreement, in which Red Acre also agreed to pay him \$9,000 per year for a portion of the costs of the lab and to amend the charter to remove any impediments to ownership of the lab, laid the foundation for Seronde to seek gifts and grants for funding.

The amended charter read as follows:

Providing a home for old worn-out or disabled horses. To care for and treat sick and injured horses at the Farm and elsewhere. Also to engage in humane work for other needy animals as the occasion may arise. To assist financially or otherwise, qualified persons or organizations in the study of animal health, nutrition and disease. To maintain as a part of the Red Acre Farm Extension Services, a place where such study can be made, which will be supported in part by Red Acre Farm, Inc. and by gifts and grants from other sources. To further the conservation of wild birds and mammals. To maintain sanctuaries. To exercise any and all other powers which may be exercised by a corporation formed for any educational, charitable, benevolent or medical service under General laws, Chapter 180, or any amendment thereof, or addition thereto.

From the minutes of a meeting held May 20, 1957, "It was announced that the 'Animal Seizure' Bill passed the State Legislature and was signed by the governor in spite of the efforts of Red Acre Farm".

Tad Bird was appointed assistant treasurer. His arrangement with Red Acre Farm was formalized and set forth in a letter dated May 17. His duties included supervision of keeping of records and books of account for the farm and the lab; purchasing; supervision of personnel; supervision of maintenance of equipment, buildings and grounds; assisting with the investment program; liaison with other humane societies; development of education programs. It was understood that his responsibilities would increase over time. His remuneration included salary, use of a house in the "Village" and a car at no cost (with availability to the farm at all times), insurance and pension, and consideration of life tenure.

The Thayer Building at UMass was dedicated on June 5. The isolation building would be used for the study of infectious diseases of large domestic animals. According to a news clipping dated May 31, the "Isolation units are equipped with air locks, observation windows, individual ventilation and exhaust fans, and steel doors sealed by rubber gaskets. The Thayer Building will supplement present diagnostic and research facilities in the department of veterinary science at the university".

In November of that year, the directors voted to take steps to enlarge the LCP.

At their meeting held May 24, 1958, they voted that Drs. Theodore and Lois Zucker be appointed biochemists at the lab for a period of 10 years. They also voted that a letter of agreement with Dr. Seronde dated October 2, 1956 be amended to provide life tenure in order to insure continuance of the lab.

The Zucker's main focus was the study of obesity. In 1959, the first genetically obese "Zucker fatty rats" were discovered at the lab. Over the next 20 years, rats from this strain were used extensively in research at the lab and were shipped to researchers in more than eight foreign countries and more than 55 U.S. cities.

During the period from 1960 through 1975, Theodore and/or Lois Zucker authored or coauthored 16 studies ranging from body size in the rat to a variety of biochemical relationships with obesity -- high serum fat and cholesterol, insulin, lactescence and triglyceride content of the blood of the rat.

On October 22, 1959, Ethel Thayer died from complications following a fall six months earlier. She had been president of Red Acre Farm, Inc. for 18 years -- since 1941.

In January of 1960, Raymond Emerson was voted president.

Also in 1960, the time of the annual meeting was changed from January to June. At the annual meeting of June 22, 1962, Miss Bird reported that she had recently attended a directors meeting at the Memorial Free Clinic for Animals in Monrovia, California Red Acre had supported the spaying clinic there for many years. The Monrovia directors had voted to incorporate their organization under California laws -- the farm would no longer contribute to the spay program.

In 1963, Dr. Theodore Zucker died. Lois stayed on at the lab and continued her studies on the fatty rats.



At their annual meeting in April, the directors discussed the necessity of revising the bylaws in order to conform to current state and federal laws. The result was that meetings were formalized, with annual membership meetings electing members to the Board of Directors, who in turn voted for the officers and appointed an executive committee made up of the officers. The executive committee met monthly throughout the year, reporting to the Board of Directors at its annual meeting.

Prior to the directors' and members' meetings held on June 12, Rosamund Galacar of Ipswich resigned from the Board of Directors (stating her age and distance from Boston). In part, Mrs. Galacar's letter stated, "There are no words to describe my deep admiration for the wonderful dedicated work that has been accomplished by Miss Bird -- for my memories take me back well over 50 years, when in spite of my feeble attempts to be useful, I became a member of her-then-very small committee and many times visited Red Acre Farm, -- and each time to realize how in behalf of ill-treated and old horses, -- she herself alone handled problem after problem".

At the special members' meeting, it was voted to accept the amended bylaws. The number of directors on the board was fixed at 12, and those duly elected were James W. Adams, Harriet G. Bird, Walter M. Bird, Jr., Terrence J. Burke, George W. Curtis, Edward M. Dickson, Mrs. Mary Emerson, Ruth Richardson, Frank E. Sanderson, Joseph Seronde, Jr., Gordon B. Wheeler and Mary (Bird) Wheeler. At the annual directors' meeting, Miss Bird was elected president, Edward M. Dickson treasurer and Walter M. Bird, Jr., clerk. Terrence J. Burke was elected assistant clerk and Walter M. Bird Jr. and Miss Bird were elected assistant treasurers.

The next two years were challenging. After spending 60 years nurturing Red Acre Farm, Miss Bird appeared to have difficulty handing the reins over to her nephew. Important mail and other documents often did not make it into his hands and he found it increasingly hard to fulfill his duties. Tad's wife, Carolyn, worked as bookkeeper for the farm and encountered her own problems. Carolyn submitted a letter of resignation-citing personal reasons- to the executive committee in May 1964, but was rehired at a later date.

One interesting note appears in the minutes of the executive committee meeting held February 15, 1965: "Miss Bird announced that the Burro which was loaned to the Democrats in November was going to be a mother".

And then, midyear, the unexpected happened. From the minutes of the June 21 executive committee meeting comes the following: "Grief was expressed over the death of Miss Bird, founder, director and manager of Red Acre Farm, Inc., for more than 60 years. Her passing will be deeply felt by the humane movement".

One day in early June, Joe Seronde's young son had paid Miss Bird a visit. She went into the house to get him a snack and on her return, she fell on the porch, breaking her hip. Over the course of the next couple of weeks she contracted pneumonia. She died June 12.

Miss Bird had given birth to an idea, had nourished it and watched it grow. As a direct result of her vision and energy, Red Acre Farm maintained a large presence not only in the humane movement, but in health and medical research, in veterinary science, in her own neighborhood and in the lives of myriad individuals and small organizations it had helped and educated. It was now up to Tad and the other directors to see that Miss Bird's legacy continued. Time has shown that they were equal to the task.

In one of many gestures of honor and respect, at a meeting of the membership held on September 25, 1965 Dr. Seronde moved to have the name of the Laboratory of Comparative Pathology changed to the Harriet G. Bird Memorial Laboratories. The following year, the executive committee voted to give \$5,000 to the American Humane Association for a room in its new Denver headquarters to be dedicated in memory of Miss Bird.

From the autumn of 1965 until the following autumn, Tad Bird negotiated with the Warren family of the nearby Pilot Grove Farm for 167 acres of land between Red Acre and South Acton Roads. In early September, 1966, he informed the executive committee that the Warrens had accepted an offer of \$26,600.

Work at the laboratories continued apace. At the September 24, 1966 committee meeting, members discussed a planned addition at the lab. The working drawings were almost ready for approval but the National Institutes of Health did not approve the grants that would have provided funds for use of the addition. But the Department of Agriculture was very interested in studies being done on aging at the lab and was taking preliminary steps to seek funds. Meanwhile, Dr. Seronde was working in Fryeburg, Maine, studying the effect of Vitamin B6 on students with reading difficulties.

In early 1967, the directors of the Monrovia Memorial Free Clinic informed the officers of Red Acre Farm that they were considering closing the veterinary hospital and questioned if they should return any of its funds to Red Acre. At its March 13 meeting, the executive committee voted that \$25,000 to \$30,000 should be returned and the remaining balance used to support scholarships for the study of veterinary medicine. But in a March 19 letter to the clinic the figure was increased to \$30,000 to \$35,000 and it was explained that Red Acre Farm "has reached a point where expenses for its humane activities and research programs greatly exceed its current income. Any funds that can be obtained will be put to use in its continuing program".

The executive committee received final word of the Monrovia clinic at its meeting of January 13, 1969. The clinic was disbanding; of \$43,000 in funds, \$10,000 would be used to establish a scholarship at the University of California at Davis, and the balance would be returned to Red Acre. However, the October 6 committee minutes give the balance figure as "about \$25,000" to be returned.

Dr. Seronde was looking for ways to improve and update his research techniques, and in a letter dated October 2, he explained to the executive committee that he would be commuting between Stow and Columbia University in order to study electron microscopy there. "In effect I am being given the freedom of their electron-microscopy laboratories, to work on my own problems at my own pace", he wrote.

As always, funding continued to be a primary concern at the labs. In 1968, Dr. Zucker had received an N.I.H. grant of \$12,800 annually for the next five years in order to breed her strains of obese rats. Her funding would run out entirely by 1973. Her current grants included \$48,201 from the Department of Agriculture (ending June 1971) that supported a study of aging in rats as affected by constitutional type (fat, large, small) and by level of protein intake; one N.I.H. grant for \$16,000 to \$17,000 (ending December 1971) from the Institute of Arthritis and Metabolic Diseases for the study of

problems of obesity; and one N.I.H. grant for \$15,000 to \$16,000 (ending April 1973) from Research Resources for the support of her several special rat strains, provided for their sale to interested investigators and also supported some research on their special properties and constitutional differences. The DOA grant was not renewable and the future of the other two was unknown.

Dr. Zucker expressed concern over her eventual retirement. She was 57 years old, and had virtually no savings and no way to support herself other than through the grants on which she had depended for the last 12 years. At its meeting on May 7, 1970, the executive committee voted that Red Acre Farm would guarantee a basic salary for Dr. Zucker as the government grants phased out.

The minutes also note that Dr. Seronde had been invited to participate in the World Congress of Gastroenterology in Copenhagen in the summer of 1971, and was preparing a review of the literature on digestive system ulcers attributable to nutritional deficiencies.

In June, committee members voted to inform Dr. Seronde that he should proceed with the purchase of an electron microscope for the LCP. The microscope would require its own lab space; the total cost for equipment and construction was \$50,000.

Red Acre continued to make smaller contributions, as well. In a letter dated July 27 from Stow librarian Mary Warren, she thanked Red Acre Farm for the "twelve beautiful books given to the library in memory of Miss Harriet G. Bird".

Executive committee members discussed the sale of two of the four houses rented by Red Acre Farm at their meeting of April 8, 1971. They decided to hire professional appraisers to determine the properties' value. The increasing costs of taxes and insurance made the continuing ownership of these houses, as investments, uneconomical.

And life at the farm continued to change. The minutes of the September 12, 1972 executive committee meeting included the note that long time farm employee, Archie Morison, had died in August having served Red Acre for over ten years. "Herb Potter, a well-regarded Stow resident, has been hired to replace Archie. Herb will occupy the house at the Farm formerly used by Archie", the minutes read.

The next month, Arthur Trefry was engaged to work at the farm on a part-time basis; Bill Ferguson, another long time employee, had retired effective October 1 after over fifteen years of employment.



Employee Arthur Trefry holding "Captain" while  
Dr. Carlson works on the horse's hoof

In 1973, Red Acre Farm offered both of the aforementioned "Village" properties to their tenants. One sold in February for \$36,000 and the other was offered for sale in October for \$34,000.

At its April 14 meeting, the Board of Directors elected a slate of officers that included George W. Curtis as president, Edward M. Dickson as vice president and assistant treasurer, Tad Bird as treasurer and secretary, and David Emerson as assistant secretary. Two of the officers -- Tad and Ed Dickson, had been on the slate the previous decade, in 1963.

The farm continued to house horses in need of a peaceful place in which to live out their remaining years. The average equine population at the time numbered around eight. Dick LaChapelle quoted Herb Potter in an article that ran in *The Enterprise-Sun* on June 2, 1973:

First priority is given to draft horses, then race horses, and finally pleasure horses. Of course, there are nowhere near as many draft horses today as there were at the turn of the century, when police horses and draft horses used by peddlers in Boston were numerous. In those days, a peddler, or whatever, might take two or three weeks off and have his horse shipped out here for a rest. But if Miss Bird saw a horse that was being abused, she would buy it for a small sum and get it back on its feet, or just to get the horse out of the wrong hands. But this has changed nowadays, since people don't abuse horses like they used to. Basically, the farm should be recognized as a super-humane effort on the part of these people to see that these old animals are taken care of. The horses are examined twice a year by a veterinarian, and given medical attention whenever the need arises. Other than that, they just eat and sleep.

In the same article, Arthur Trefry summed it up quite nicely when he said, "..the main thing around here is the horses. They come first, then everything else falls into line".



The minutes of the January 30, 1974 executive committee meeting note that the second "Village" property had sold. Red Acre held the mortgage with the entire amount outstanding due on November 1, 1978. The "Sophie" house, formerly occupied by Hortensia L. Bird, was sold as well. Also in the minutes was the note that "Peter Lund, who worked for Red Acre Farm, Inc. most of his life, retired at age 71 in 1959 [pink smudged] and has been on a pension ever since, died during the month of November".

At the end of 1974, Lois Zucker announced her intention of retiring effective April 30, 1975 after more than 16 years at the lab -- since September 1, 1958. The N.I.H. had awarded a grant over \$16,000 for each of the years ending April 30, 1975, 1976 and 1977 -- this could be transferred to another principal investigator if an acceptable one could be found. The grant supported the fatty rat program. In addition, grants of over \$17,000 had been approved for the next three years by the National Institute of Arthritis, Metabolism and Digestive Diseases.

Dr. Zucker's health had been poor for over a year. A handwritten note on the top corner of a copy of minutes from the April 16, 1975 executive committee meeting reads, "Lois Zucker died May 23, 1975 at 3:30 am," only three weeks after the date of her retirement. She had devoted half of her adult life to the work at the Biochemistry Laboratory in Stow, at great personal sacrifice. Her earlier stated concerns about life post-retirement possess a tragic resonance".



**J.B. Woodchuck, one of an obesity study colony**

At their April 16 meeting, the Red Acre Farm officers discussed the addition of Dr. Ruth Young, Ph.D. to the laboratory. Dr. Young would come from the University of Vermont and would bring with her a colony of fat woodchucks. She had been awarded a fellowship from the N.I.H. in the amount of \$10,000 with an additional \$3,000 to the sponsoring institution, but no funds were provided. Because funds did not exist at Red Acre, Dr. Young would need the fellowship for salary, grants to maintain the colony and provide space at the proper temperature, and an affiliation with a University of Massachusetts doctor in the department of biochemistry for continued support.

In her N.I.H. application, Dr. Young wrote, "The woodchuck colony, now numbering approximately 50 animals, is the only large breeding colony of this species in the world. It could be kept at the

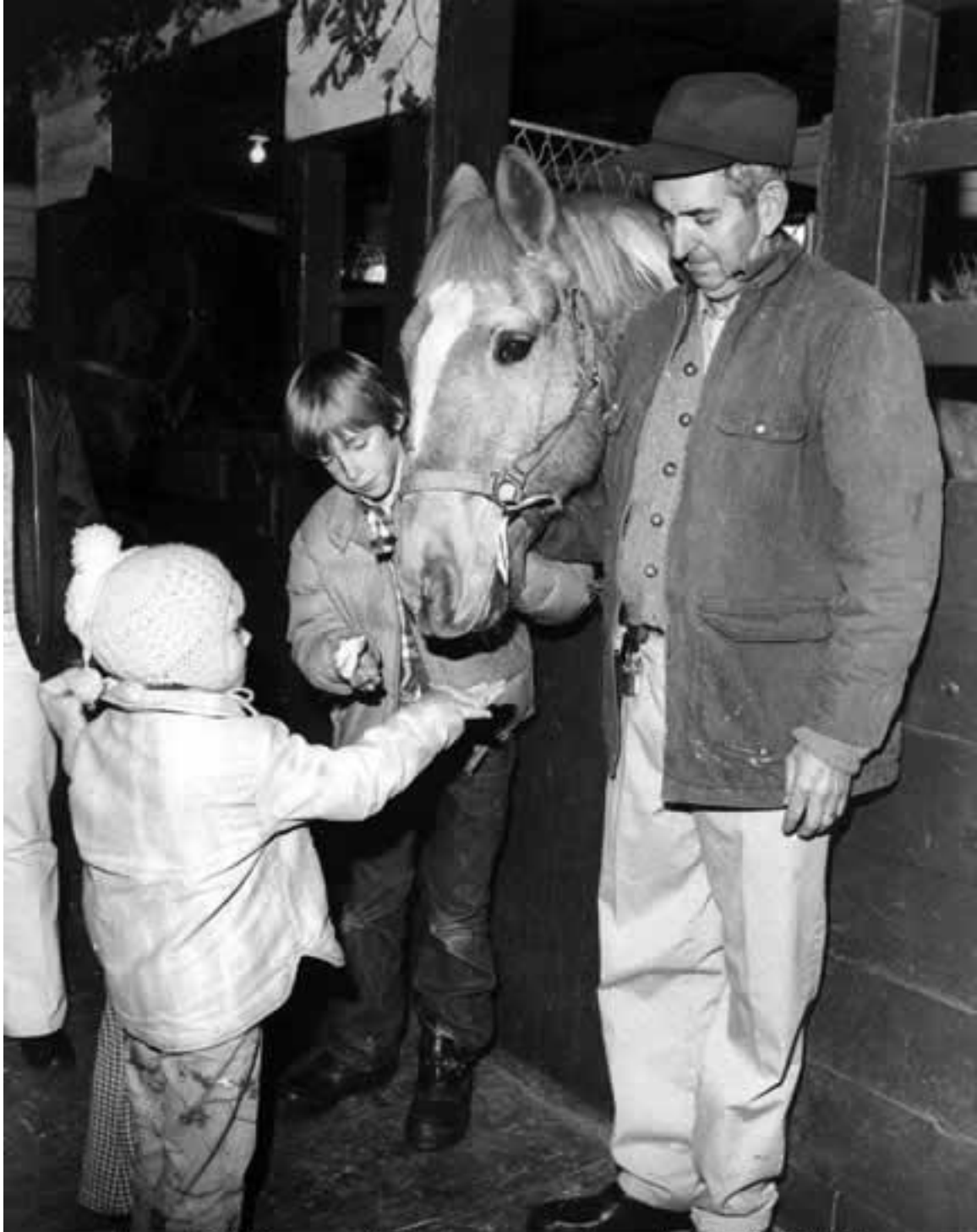
University of Vermont for a few months until a building were built in Stow as maintenance costs during the period of hibernation are low. Thereafter, if funding does not become available and I am unable to move to Stow, the colony will have to be destroyed".

Meanwhile, the farm witnessed brief surges in its horse population. On September 13, the Stow 4-H Club held a horse show there with approximately 73 entrants; the Groton Pony Club held one October 4 with even more entrants.

Some of the periodic celebrations observed at the Farm for many decades included the "Twelfth Night Burning of the Greens". Also known as Little Christmas, neighbors would take their old Christmas trees and greens to the field across from Miss Bird's house and put them on a pile. The base of the pile was usually rotten wood taken out of the woodsheds. "Liquid Boy Scout" would often be applied to make certain that the fire got off to a roaring start. Sometimes Christmas carols would be sung. After the bonfire, when it became too cold, everyone would retire to Miss Bird's house to do some eating and drinking.

Right around Christmas the "Horses Christmas" would be celebrated. Neighbors and friends would all be notified of the time and date of the occasion. They would arrive in warm clothes. The barns would be decorated with fresh greens and

red ribbons. Piles of apples and carrots would be placed around the barn. Oft times folks would arrive with all their children, their own supply of apples and carrots and cameras.



**Annual Christmas party for horses - employee Herb Potter (right)**

By mid-November, Dr. Young still had not received a decision on her fellowship or funding of her grant; the former was expected around December 1 and the latter around April 1 of the following year. In addition to the N.I.H. fellowship, she had also applied to the N.I.H. Institute of Research Resources in conjunction with the University of Vermont for the study of obesity in woodchucks, which would provide approximately \$31,000 for the work at Red Acre Farm.

When Dr. Young was still found to be without fellowship or funding at the end of the year, executive committee members agreed via telephone to award her \$10,000 for 1976, in lieu of the N.I.H. fellowship. In return, she would endeavor to assist in the maintenance of the fatty rat colony and in the ongoing research at the lab.

At its meeting of January 21, 1976, the committee voted to construct a house for the woodchucks at a cost of approximately \$25,000, and to make available to Dr. Young \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually for support of the woodchucks and her assistance with rat studies. This figure included the \$10,000 promised in lieu of the fellowship funding; fulfillment of that funding or other grants would reduce Red Acre's support. By midyear, Dr. Young had received her fellowship funds.

During the period from 1976 to 1978, she authored or coauthored 13 papers and studies on thyroid structure and function in the woodchuck, the chuck as a model for the study of obesity, and a number of the fatty rats as well. However, despite her accomplishments the years Dr. Young spent at the lab were often frustrating.

HARRIET G. BIRD MEMORIAL LABORATORY  
STOW, MASSACHUSETTS 01773

RUTH A. YOUNG, Ph.D.

April 4, 1978

The staff of this laboratory cordially invite you to attend a spontaneous celebration commemorating the birth of the first Zucker 'fatty' rats on April 10, 1959. This celebration will take place on Monday April 10, 1978, at Red Acre Farm, starting at 6PM and continuing until all have had enough to eat. Special guests will include Miss 68956, a black-haired beauty, and Miss 68957, a young and voracious dark-eyed charmer, both direct descendants of Mr. and Mrs. 23653, proud parents of the first fatty rats. Hope to see you there.



Invitation to Fat Rat Party

Because of her support of the fatty rat colony, she had little time to do her own research with her woodchucks. There appeared to be some pronounced personality conflicts between her and her fellow researcher. And while Dr. Seronde continued to receive \$9,000 per year from Red Acre Farm, after her first year Dr. Young -- like Dr. Zucker before her -- was dependent upon outside funding sources. The time she spent chasing down grants lessened her research time even further. She repeatedly expressed her frustration through poetry written to the directors; while expressed with great humor, her desperation for some personal and financial support was palpable.

Since 1957, Mrs. Caroline Herter -- Dr. Seronde's mother-in-law -- had given gifts of stock worth about \$6,000 to Red Acre for the lab. Common stock had accumulated in those years when the Herter grants were not spent due to the

receipt of N.I.H. grants, and that stock, with a value of about \$15,000, was later sold gradually to help fund the lab. The combination of the annual gifts, the accumulated stock and Red Acre's annual \$9,000 grant had covered the lab's annual expenses of approximately \$30,000.

By the end of 1976 there was no more Herter stock left to sell so Red Acre was faced with a \$15,000 increase in expenses over income for the coming year. In April, 1977, the executive committee voted to grant an additional \$15,000 to the lab for fiscal year 1976-77 to make the total of Red Acre funding \$24,000.

However, at that time the N.I.H. had expressed concern that the laboratories' facilities for housing and care of lab animals did not meet established standards. Dr. Young devoted more of her time working with an architect to develop a proposal for renovation. The long shadow of financial difficulty was lengthening, darkening, solidifying around the labs. Yet within that shadow work continued; Dr. Young had written several papers and had been invited to present papers at conferences in New Hampshire, Jasper, Alberta, the University of California at Davis and Washington, D.C. during August and October. Dr. Seronde was preparing a manuscript on his investigation into the heart of the rat.

Down the street, the shadow was also making its presence felt. In April 1978, Tad told fellow directors that costs at the farm had increased, especially those for feed and grain and veterinary expenses. Owners sending their horses to the farm were to be informed that they must be responsible for the cost of veterinary care and medications -- and burial.

Back at the labs, two operating fund grant applications and a \$190,000 renovation grant application had been denied. The directors voted to provide Dr. Young \$2,000 per year for the biochemistry lab until April 30 of the following year.

Following a review of the financial situation of the lab and Red Acre Farm, Inc. the executive committee voted to inform Dr. Seronde that the corporation would not be able to provide any financial support to the lab for the fiscal year to end September 30, 1978. He would be told he could continue to use the facilities but would be responsible for providing funds for operations and maintenance as well as salaries for employees. The Red Acre money that was currently available would run out on or about July 31.

Dr. Seronde submitted grant applications to the N.I.H. and a private foundation in June but had not heard their status as of the end of August. The mortgage on the "Village" property that had been sold five years prior was delinquent and was turned over to an attorney for collection, since the entire amount was due and payable November 1.

In February, 1979, the situation at the lab was as follows: all grants from N.I.H. would expire April 30; the N.I.H. fellowship that paid the majority of Dr. Young's salary would expire May 31; if awarded, Dr. Seronde's N.I.H. grant would start July 1; the annual \$6,000 grant from Mrs. Herter had not yet arrived, but was expected; the financial statement for the year ended September 30, 1978 showed that Red Acre was still operating at a deficit in excess of \$9,000 per year.

At the February 28 executive committee meeting, Tad reported that Dr. Young had been offered a position at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester and could take the fatty rats and woodchucks with her. The officers decided to encourage Dr. Young to take the position, and to tell Dr. Seronde that she was leaving and that he could use the lab facilities at his expense until December 31. After that time he and/or any organizations with which he might affiliate himself could lease the facilities and the 3.9 acres on which they were situated at \$1 per year. He would pay maintenance, insurance, all operating expenses and real estate taxes, if any. If he failed to lease the facilities, he must vacate by year's end.

In April, Director David Emerson took a look at Red Acre's general financial picture and noted that real estate sales in the 1970s and income from securities left the corporation fairly well off by the end of the decade. He penned the following thoughts regarding the demise of the labs:

Joe is 65 +/- . Ruth has a chance to make good professional progress, but deserves solid financial assistance to make the transition, and preserve her woodchuck colony. Action RAF should spend or allocate up to \$50,000 to be sure transition to new situation is as smooth as possible both for J. Seronde and for Ruth Ann Young. Considering the overall financial health of R.A.F. this is a very modest amount to pay to bring down the curtain in style appropriate to Harriet G. Bird.

At their annual meeting in May, the directors "...Agreed that Dr. Young is granted custody and control of all research records and data pertaining to the Zucker fatty rats and the other Zucker strains for which she has had responsibility and custody of those rats; also responsibility for all biochemical research projects conducted under existing or future grants involving the Zucker fatty rats until further action by this Board".

Additionally, the directors voted that the sum of \$5,000 would be available to each Dr. Young and Dr. Seronde for the purpose of establishing them in their new operations. In September, Dr. Seronde reported that his two N.I.H. grant applications had been denied. A third proposal to the National Science Foundation was deferred in October.

It did not take long to find a new use for the lab property. On Friday, May 16, 1980, Arthur Slade, President of the Animal Rescue League of Boston and Richard Bryant, Director of Education, toured the lab facilities in order to determine the possibility of establishing a center for training hearing dogs to assist deaf people.

Throughout the summer of 1980, Carolyn Bird studied the feasibility of undertaking a hearing dog program, considering the need for such a program, whether adequate facilities existed, if Red Acre Farm was able to finance it and if such a program was compatible with the corporation's charter. She traveled to Denver to visit the American Humane Association's hearing dog center and sought information and advice from experts in the fields of humane work and deaf education.

Her research led her to believe the answers to all of the above questions were in the affirmative. She identified three "positive and easily identified" benefits: a hearing dog is of value both as an aid and a companion for the hearing impaired person; dogs would come from the Animal Rescue League and similar organizations and might otherwise be euthanized; a hearing dog center would be of tremendous public relations value to Red Acre; and such a program would have broad appeal because it would involve helping both animals and people.

At this time, there were only three hearing dog centers in the country. The original program had been started by the Minnesota SPCA and had been turned over to the American Humane Association in Colorado. There was a second program at the San Francisco SPCA and a brand new one in Milwaukee. Four other animal welfare organizations had expressed interest in hearing dog programs; they were located in Dallas, Los Angeles, Tacoma and Nashville. A center at Red Acre Farm would serve New England and New York.

Carolyn determined that the Biochemistry Lab would be ideal for the program, and the woodchuck house could be transformed into kennels. With appropriate staffing, the center could train and place a maximum of two dogs per month, but would plan for 12 in the first year. At the time, the cost of a trained hearing dog ran between \$5,000 and \$6,000, including recipient assistance and counseling and delivery of the dog.

American Humane Association and Animal Rescue League contacts assured her that the center could raise \$100,000 per year from industry, service clubs (Kiwanis, Rotary etc.), foundations and trusts. However, the start up costs and initial funding would have to come from Red Acre Farm. Her proposed budget, including staff, taxes and health insurance costs, dog supplies, utilities, office and publicity supplies, an annual visit by the American Humane Association, travel per dog placement and contingency -- ranged from \$64,800 to \$69,000, for a cost of \$5,400 to \$5,750 per dog. Her tentative timetable had conversion of the facilities finished by April or May 1981 and the first placement of two dogs by late August or early September.

In November, 1980, the executive committee voted unanimously to support Carolyn's proposal and approved her proposed budget. She set to work immediately. By February, Carolyn had hired Ellen Terryberry as Placement Director for the hearing dog program. Construction at the center was on track; preliminary expenses for the conversion totaled just over \$25,000 for the period of 1980 through May 1981. Startup expenses for the same time period were almost \$22,000. The new center had taken in contributions of just over \$11,500, much in the form of donated services and supplies.

Red Acre sold the electron microscope to a hospital in Methuen for \$8,000. Other lab equipment was sold or donated or discarded, depending on its age, value and usefulness. The corporation had received a gift of five acres of land abutting its 29 acre parcel on the Stow/Maynard line, thus adding to its over 200 acres.

At the May members' meeting, Red Acre Farm Director and President David Emerson tendered his resignation. He had been a director since 1964. The Board of Directors elected newcomer, Carlton Buttrick President; Edward Dickson continued in his positions as Vice President and Assistant Treasurer as did Tad Bird as Secretary-Treasurer. Leonard Johnson held the position of Assistant Secretary.



Progress at the Hearing Dog Center (HDC) was right on schedule, with the first placement occurring in the fall of 1981. The dual objectives of providing both companionship and aid to hearing impaired individuals were being met, as reported by Helen Walkup of Quincy, Mass. She wrote, "My hearing loss has been gradual and progressive. It has left me with a sense of frustration, fear and isolation. I have felt as if I was outside of the world -- looking and longing to be inside. While I'm still on the outside, the barrier is not so solid now. With my little dog 'Gypsy' who arrived July, 1982 I'm nearer the inside where loneliness and fear are less acute".

By the end of 1982, Red Acre's history was about to take another sharp turn. Miss Bird's estate, which had held title to the farm property for the last 17 years, was about to be terminated. Red Acre Farm was leasing the farm house, barns, garages, sheds and about 20 acres of land from Miss Bird's estate trust. The rent equaled the payment of real estate taxes, insurance and maintenance plus \$1 per year. In 1982, insurance was \$1,028 and taxes were \$3,849. The cost of operating the farm for nine horses during 1982 was \$60,408. Contributions for horses and general purposes totaled \$2,229 while income from the endowment was \$94,848. The cost of leasing 10 acres from the town of Stow for hay would be \$25 per acre after the first year, and the farm needed a new tractor at a cost of approximately \$38,000.

Red Acre's funding of the HDC for 1982 totaled \$45,581 and expenses were \$124,287. Lawrence Island, in Bourne near Cataumet, was carried on Red Acre's books at its original purchase price of \$9,000; the town of Bourne assessed the land at over \$59,000.

All of these financial elements caused the Board of Directors to contemplate two questions:

"Common stocks which produce dividends have been sold each of the past two years to support the Hearing Dog Center. Should Lawrence island which produces no income be sold?" "The retired horse program is expensive and archaic. Why should it be continued?"

The directors noted that the corporation never owned the farm; if the lease were not renewed and the horse program was terminated, the hay project would end before it began and a new tractor would not be needed. Their biggest concern was the shock to the community and to Red Acre's employees, but their recommendation was to terminate the program.

The board also recommended the sale of the Hammer property, across from the farmhouse, offering it first to the Hammers. This was the last of the houses held by Red Acre Farm; the barn had been used for years to store farm equipment. The third recommendation was to form a committee to study the Lawrence Island question. All three questions were voted by the directors at their December 5 meeting.

By May 31, 1983, five of the horses at the farm had been placed and three remained. The Hammers wanted to buy their house, and the trust's property had been placed on the market. In July, the executive committee reported that, "The horse operation at Red Acre has ceased. The property will be sold by the heir of the trust to Robert Anderson of Maynard on August 17, 1983". The Hammers bought their house on July 29; the tractor, truck and various pieces of farm equipment had been sold.

Red Acre Farm had been in the business of housing unwanted horses for 80 years. That chapter was now closed; the hearing dog program was now front and center. Yet, despite its humane success, the program was not attaining financial independence and continued to be carried, in large part, by Red Acre. In July, 1983, the HDC's budget summary showed a total budget of \$229,465 and projected income of \$175,175, meaning \$54,290 had to be found from other sources.

The program was certainly attracting attention. At the annual Board of Director's meeting in December, "The president Dr. Buttrick observed that the activities at the Hearing Dog Center are receiving national recognition. The Executive Director Carolyn G. Bird deserves high praise for a job well done." Ten dogs had been placed that year (with one returned): four to New York, three to Massachusetts, one to Connecticut, one to Maine and one to New Jersey.



Hearing Dog "Line-up"

Again, one of the hearing dog recipients was best able to capture the soul of the program. Jacqueline Murphy Lake of New Rochelle, N.Y. wrote, "Talk about love at first sight! The very first time I saw 'Clarabelle' in February of 1983, we knew we were meant for each other. I do not consider 'Clarabelle' as a pet or a dog. But I do think of her as part of me. She is always with me, as my shadow is, wherever I go. She responds to the front doorbell, the apartment doorbell, the telephone, the smoke alarm, and the alarm clock. 'Clarabelle' is not just my working dog; she is the best friend I've ever had!"



On December 23, 1983 Governor Michael Dukakis (future Democratic candidate for President), hailed passage of a bill protecting the rights of the deaf at a ceremonial bill signing at the Hearing Dog Center. An enthusiastic and hearty group welcomed the Governor at 8:30 A.M. on a cold and icy morning.

"The deaf population is among the most invisible of our handicapped citizens", Governor Dukakis said. "The passage of the Deaf Rights Act ensures that deaf people will enjoy their full rights as citizens; through this legislation the state is opening the doors for deaf people in the Commonwealth, enabling them to become full participants in all aspects of society."



Governor Dukakis signs Deaf Rights Bill at Hearing Dog Center, December 23, 1983. Seated (left to right): Senator Chester Atkins, Governor Dukakis, Representative Paul Cellucci (Future Governor of Massachusetts). Standing (left to right): Carolyn Bird (Executive Director of HDC), Ellen Terryberry (Director of Placement, HDC), Representative John Loring, Nancy Becker (Massachusetts State Association of the Deaf), Sandy Resnick (Massachusetts Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf), and Dr. Richard Thompson (Director of the Massachusetts office of Deafness).

The nine months between December, 1983 and August, 1984 witnessed the resignations of three board members and the addition of two new directors to the board.

Mary Emerson, a director for 20 years, Wesley Wilmot, a director "since the days of Miss Harriet G. Bird," and Aldo Napolitano all submitted their letters of resignation. In December, 1984, the membership elected new directors Caroline Collings and Mary W. Nordblom to the board. At the December 5 directors' meeting, Carolyn Bird reported that a feasibility study by the American Humane Association in September concluded that the HDC service area should be expanded. As a result, it did expand from its original seven to 28 states, primarily in the eastern United States.

In 1985, the HDC initiated a five-year plan to expand its geographical area to 42 states, with the northeast having priority. This was done because of the needs of an estimated four million severely to profoundly deaf people in 35 states that Red Acre Farm did not serve.

In August, the executive committee voted to accept an offer from the Bourne Conservation Trust for \$150,000 for Lawrence Island. The island had first been marketed to developers, but the high cost of permits and approvals from several levels of government, coupled with the high risk of failure in securing such permits and approvals, sent any interested developers packing. Lawrence Island would therefore continue as a wild place under new management.

Considering all the major changes that Red Acre Farm had undergone in recent years, the directors decided that the corporation's bylaws should be amended. In the draft approved by members at their December 5 meeting, the following purposes were listed: to engage in humane work for animals as the case may arise; to train dogs to be "ears" for deaf people and to create a public awareness of Hearing Dogs and how they help the deaf; and to further the conservation of wild birds and mammals, to maintain sanctuaries and to exercise any and all other powers that may be exercised by a corporation formed by any educational, charitable, benevolent or medical service under General Laws, Chapter 180, or any amendment thereof or addition thereto.

Changes were also made in the board's structure. It was to consist of no fewer than five and no more than 21 members. The board would be divided into three classes, each to serve three years and with no more than seven members in each class. At the meeting at which these by-laws were enacted, one class was elected to serve one year, one to serve two years and one to serve three years so as to establish a rotation.

Officers would serve for one year or until successors were chosen and qualified.

A nominating committee was appointed to present the slate of officers and directors to each annual meeting.

At the annual directors' meeting, Carolyn reported on the HDC's activities during 1984-85. Total contributions had increased \$22,202, or 25 percent. Fund raising proceeds increased \$6,792, or 118 percent. Programs and demonstrations had been presented before 111 groups. In October, 1985 and again in January, 1987, the National Theater of the Deaf performed at Concord Academy in Concord, Mass., to benefit the HDC. By all reports, these events were festive and memorable, and were enjoyed by hundreds of people.

And of course, the true barometer of the center's success continued to be set by the dogs and their recipients. A letter from Betty Smith of Watertown, Mass., related the following stories, both amazing and amusing:

"Chico is working well -- sometimes too well. We were on the bus home about two weeks ago, when he refused to sit down, whimpered and would not stop, kept turning and pawing at me. I finally decided to get off the bus, control him, and then take the next bus home. As soon as I got off I saw that the whole roof of the bus was on fire! The driver noticed, too, when he looked in the mirror before pulling out into traffic. We all stood and waited for the next bus!...We went to a play on Saturday. He was, of course, very well behaved, except when a telephone on stage rang during the last



Training for telephone alert

act -- and then "Chico" wanted to take me to the phone. He was indignant that I would not get up. I picked him up and cuddled him, and gave him a treat for being so willing to work in a new and different location."



**"Chico" with Betty Smith, winner of the 1988  
Gaines Hearing Dog of the Year award**

The following year, Chico won the 1988 Gaines Hearing Dog of the Year award. This and other Gaines service awards recognized outstanding working animals and the programs that trained them. Betty and Chico were presented with a plaque and a \$1,000 check. They shared the check with Red Acre Farm, which allowed two staff members from the HDC to attend the conference.

In June, 1987, Terrence Burke resigned from Red Acre's Board of Directors. Dr. Burke had been with the farm in one capacity or another since 1933, when he began working as the veterinarian at the Merwin Memorial Free Clinic. In accepting his resignation, the board unanimously elected Dr. Burke a director emeritus.

The year from October 1, 1987 to September 30, 1988 was another busy one for the HDC. The staff tested 37 dogs, and accepted 14 into the training program (two of these were dropped during training). The center received 47 applications for placements and approved 23 as recipients. A total of 11 dogs were placed. In addition to training and placement, the HDC hosted two open houses that attracted approximately 400 first time visitors; held 138 programs for over 11,000 people; was featured in 64 newspaper articles, 13 television appearances, seven radio interviews and 48 magazine articles/books/newsletters. Over 10,000 people received the center's newsletter, The Tell Tail News, three times per year, and over 7,000 brochures and

other handouts were distributed. An article about the HDC appeared in the Wall Street Journal and there was coverage on the "Today Show" as well as on Japanese TV.

A major fundraiser that year was the Canine Symposium, held at the Sheraton Boxborough on April 24. It netted almost \$5,000 and drew an audience of 250.

Yet there were growing problems at the HDC. After eight years, it was still not self supporting and was drawing a large portion of its funding from Red Acre Farm. In 1989, the directors focused on attracting more attention -- and more support -- for the program. In addition to the semiannual open houses held at the HDC, Red Acre hosted a "Fall Friendraiser" at the Collings' River Hill Farm in Stow to (re)introduce old and new friends to Red Acre Farm and the HDC and increase the potential donor base. The directors sent out a total of 249 invitations and received 112 paid reservations plus donations totaling \$3,005 from invitees who did not attend. The event netted over \$2,100 and some new friends.

In June of that year, the board voted a new mission statement for the HDC. It read, "The mission of the Red Acre Hearing Dog Center is to enable the deaf person to function more broadly and independently by working in partnership with dogs rescued from animal shelters."

In 1990, Red Acre's directors decided the corporation also needed a new mission statement. Tad had compiled a chronology of Red Acre Farm, and from that Director Leonard Johnson pulled several values, many of which had been personified by Miss Bird: Accountability to both animals and people; stewardship; industry; common sense; organization, entrepreneurship; risk taking, opportunism, innovation, willingness to try new ideas; demanding fair treatment for animals; orientation to the community (Stow); humanitarianism -- linking animals and people, expanding the public awareness of humanitarian issues; forward looking, changing with/ahead of the times; starting small with many projects and then letting them go on their own, support of pilot projects; recognition of the changing needs of her environment.

He summarized by noting that the mission of Red Acre Farm had always gone beyond one specific project. From his and others' ideas, the board created the new mission statement, which reads, "The Mission of Red Acre Farm is to encourage entrepreneurial efforts in humanitarian projects that benefit both people and animals." At their annual meeting in December, the board also elected a new slate of officers: Mary Nordblom, president; Edward M. Dickson, vice president and assistant treasurer; Tad Bird, treasurer and clerk; Leonard Johnson, assistant clerk.

The HDC budget summary presented to the directors back in June, 1990, had shown that individual contributions and large grants were "down considerably" while some disbursements were well over budgeted amounts. In September, the board did not accept the HDC proposed budget -- a first for Red Acre. "The Board stated that in view of the present and prospective economic conditions in New England and actual receipts and disbursements for the first ten months of this fiscal year the expense budget should be reduced to \$330,000 if possible. The Board acknowledged that salaries would have to be cut to ensure expenses will not exceed income during the coming year." But while funding the program was a continuing struggle, the program itself continued to shine. The center's one hundredth hearing dog was placed in the spring of 1990. The first HDC-trained hearing dog earned its Companion Dog obedience title from the American Kennel Club. The number of states with HDC placements increased to 19.

As usual, the recipients best expressed the importance of the center and its accomplishments. In 1991, Gwen Smith of Bangor, Me. wrote the following:

I often wonder what I did before Kayla. I don't feel the strain of trying to listen for sounds anymore. 'Kayla' and I flew to the SHHH (Self Help for the Hard of Hearing) convention...At the hotel she was great, too. After a couple of days she figured out that the little 'ding' on the elevator meant the door was going to open and she would just head for the right door when she heard it. I thought that was neat. Her ears miss NOTHING.



**Hearing Dogs are allowed on all forms of public transportation.**

The HDC celebrated its tenth anniversary on May 19, 1991, with an open house at the center. Over 600 people attended and \$2,800 was taken in. On Saturday, there was a Recipient Reunion held at the Collings' with a seminar and a fun match. The center received numerous letters and certificates in recognition of its anniversary, including those from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Governor William Weld; the Massachusetts House of Representatives; the U.S. Department of Education, Secretary Lamar Alexander; and the U.S. House of Representatives, Rep. Chester Atkins.

The center's annual report for 1990-91 states that 60 dogs were tested, 22 were accepted into the program, and 18 dogs were trained -- a record number. The HDC increased its geographic area of service to 24 states.

In 1992, an HDC-trained dog named Echo won the Delta Society Jingles Awards for Assistance Animals Hearing Dog of the Year award. The Jingles Awards recognized outstanding contributions made by social, therapy and assistance animals to people with special needs. Echo was a sheltie-shepherd mix approximately three years of age who lived in Weare, N.H. with Joan and Bill Case, both of whom were deaf.



**"Echo" (with the Case family), winner of the Delta Society Jingles award for Assistance Animals Hearing Dog of the Year - 1992**

Joan was not only deaf, but also legally blind. Echo showed unusual sensitivity by carefully positioning herself close to Joan's face where her limited vision was effective, and then slowly moving toward a sound so that Joan was able to follow her. According to the Delta Society's write-up, "Trainers say this is a 'very deliberate movement and an extra step which only an extraordinary hearing dog in touch with the special needs of her owner would think to do'".

Unfortunately, by mid-1992 the center was facing more than money problems. When she met with the Red Acre Board of Directors in May, Carolyn Bird noted that the past record of under 10 percent returned dogs had changed in the last few months.

"The success of neutering dogs is restricting the quantity and quality of dogs to choose from at the shelters", she explained. "The number of behavior problems among our dogs right now is high. Two dogs have just come back and two of the present dogs in training have problems".

"If a dog has to be taken back to a shelter it is destroyed," Carolyn added. "This makes it very difficult to make the decision whether to continue the training of a dog that is having problems."

In June, the projected estimates for the year showed that the corporation could run a \$14,000 deficit, with primary shortfalls in sponsorships, the annual appeal, and unsolicited giving. HDC statistics showed that the demand for dogs from qualified applicants was more limited than originally projected. It was a high cost program, in part because of the public awareness program. The directors questioned as to whether the HDC was the best expenditure of Red Acre funds.

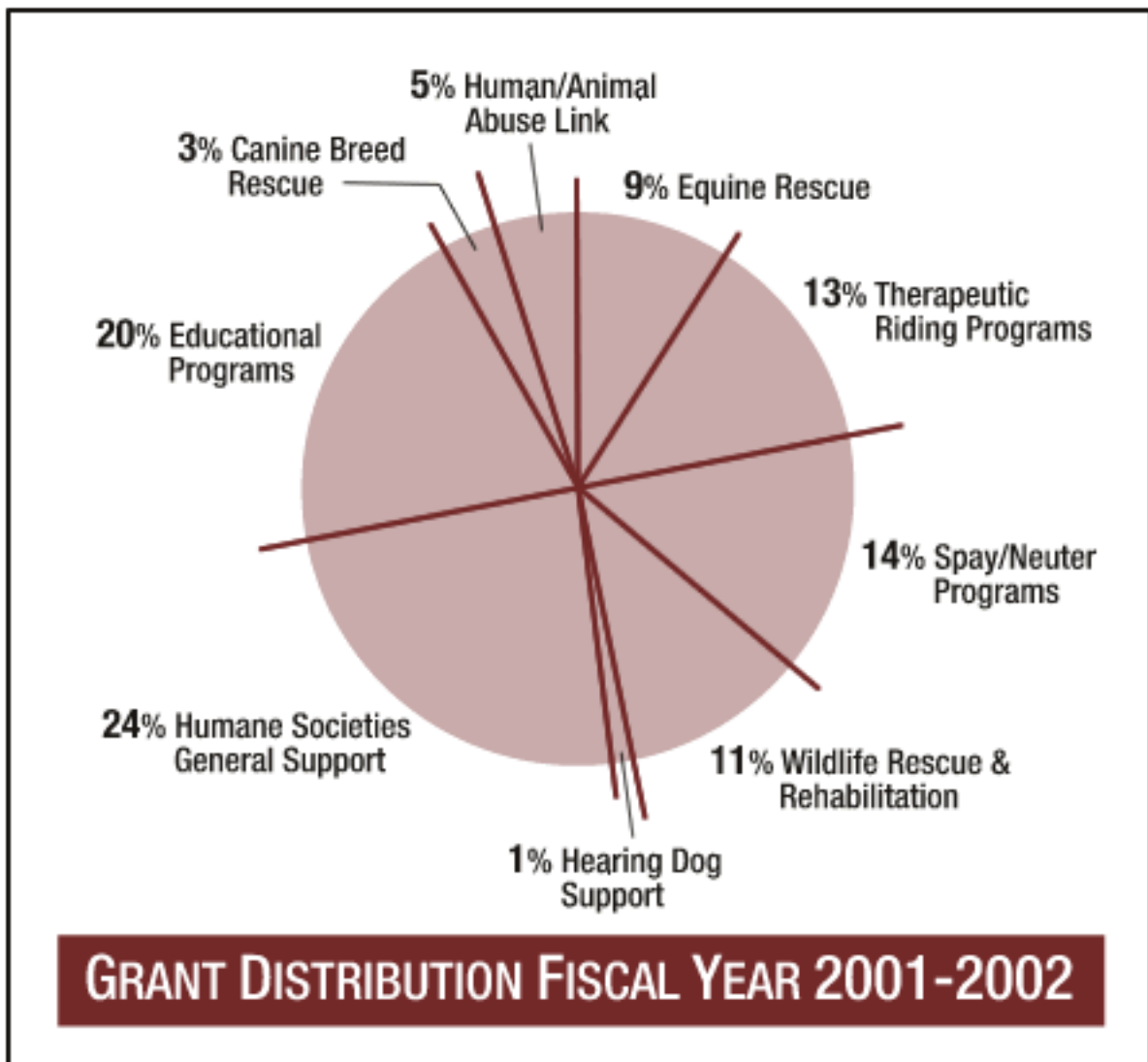
Throughout the year, they continued to debate whether Red Acre Farm and the HDC should be two separate entities, and what the ramifications would be. Discussion focused on two fundamental issues -- stewardship and leadership. Was Red Acre being a proper steward for the corporation's endowment by supporting a program that cost \$13,000 to \$15,000 per dog? Were there better efforts by which Red Acre's mission could be promoted? The directors noted that the success of the program was largely due to the vision and commitment of Carolyn Bird. It was likely that, upon her retirement, Red Acre would get less service for greater cost in her replacement.

There was a strong voice on the board that favored a move in which Red Acre Farm would become a grant-giving organization. The primary "Cons" in phasing out the program and turning in this new direction were obvious -- interruption of service to recipients, cessation of Red Acre's role in saving shelter dogs, release of staff. "Pros" included stopping the budget drain and increasing the corporation's options to have a broader impact. There were also many upcoming expenses for maintaining and repairing the center's facilities and training and placing the dogs (this expense had caused the American Humane Association to withdraw from the program), in addition to the difficulty in finding suitable recipients and suitable dogs.

In a memo dated January 5, 1993, Red Acre Farm, Inc. announced that the Hearing Dog Center would cease regular operations on June 30.

Red Acre President, Mary Nordblom sent a letter to HDC supporters that explained:

The original mission of Red Acre Farm was to provide start up funds for innovative projects such as the Hearing Dog Center until they could become self sustaining. When the Board of Directors voted to create the Hearing Dog Center in 1981, it was with the understanding that the commitment was for a five year period. Unfortunately, the Center has never become self supporting and it has continued to place an undue burden on the assets of Red Acre Farm.



Mrs. Nordblom asserted that Red Acre would adhere to its mission by providing grants for humane-related efforts. "We do not think of this as an ending, but as a change in direction", she wrote.

HDC staff members were given six to nine months severance pay and assistance in finding new jobs. A staff member remained on retainer with Red Acre to work with recipients and their dogs in the event any problems were to arise.

The center received hundreds of letters and post cards from government bodies, organizations and individuals -- contributors and recipients -- all of whom expressed their sorrow at the news of the closing and appreciation for what the HDC had accomplished over the last 12 years. The following letter from recipient Caroline Raby of North Carolina is typical:

Dear RAF Friends,

You have no idea how shocked and deeply saddened I am to learn that RAF is closing. I wish I could do something personally to provide the necessary funding in order to keep the center strong and solvent. To me, RAF's discontinuation is almost equivalent to the death of a close friend...

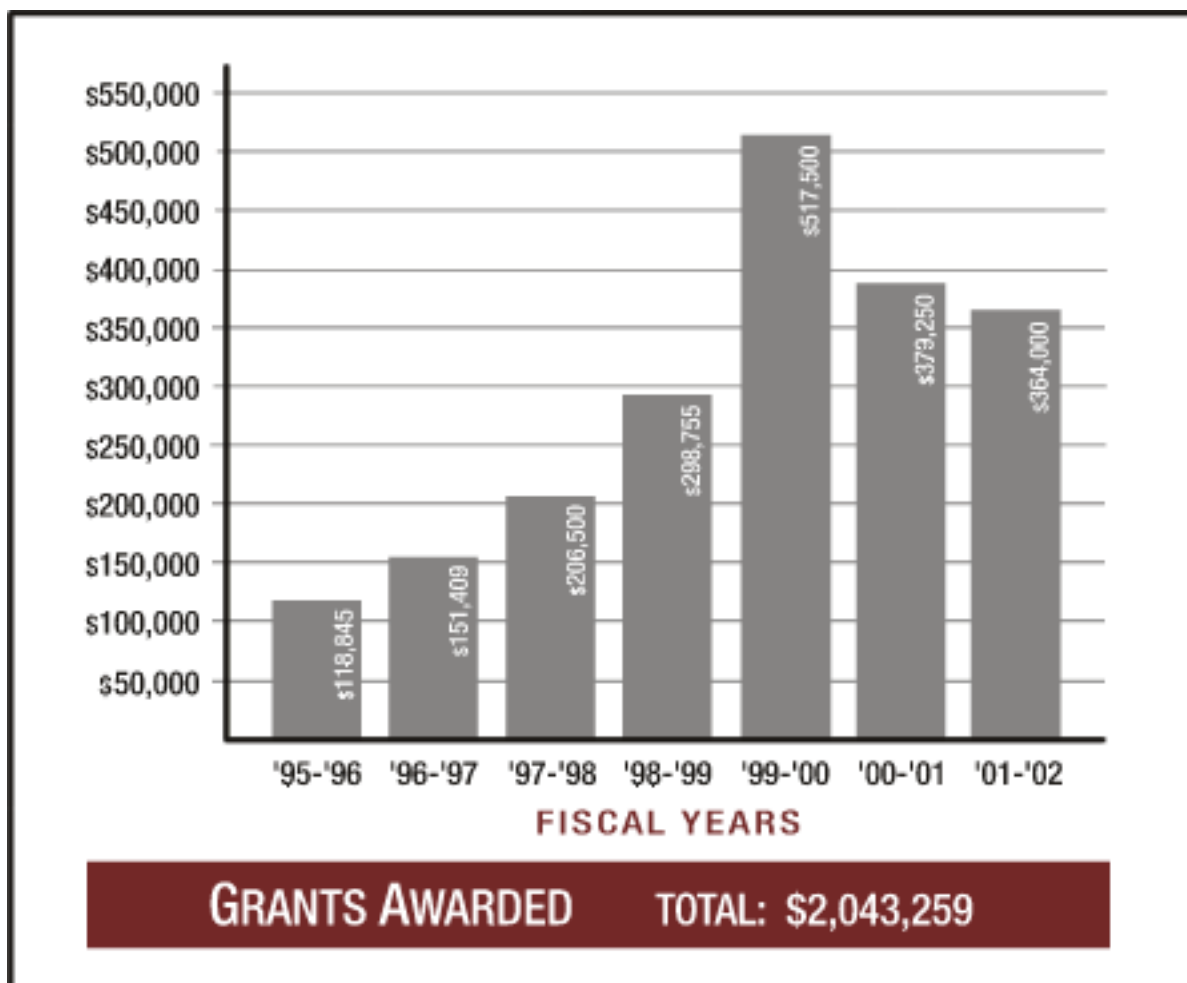
To say the least, the value of having Chi Chi in my life has been immeasurable, and you all have my profound gratitude for training the abandoned, impounded dog, subsequently enabling her to become a friend, companion, and overwhelming support for me. The affection and security she has provided - particularly in prompting me for the 'phone and door -- has been indescribably gratifying.

Though I recognize RAF's cessation will be a sad one, please remember that your efforts in training these dogs has deeply enriched the lives of all the recipients, and the quality of our lives has been extensively enhanced. Also, keep in mind always that your unselfish dedication was not in vain!

The directors spent much of 1993 and 1994 debating the exact nature of the corporation's change in direction. In addition to the HDC property, comprised of buildings and about 10 acres of land, Red Acre also owned the 167 acres across the street and another 30-plus acres at the Stow-Maynard line.

The board spent many hours trying to define the philosophy of Red Acre Farm's new role as a grant-giving organization in light of its mission. Procedures for soliciting and awarding grants would have to be determined. The directors agreed that the board would vote on grants of significant amounts but that Executive Director Carolyn Bird would have discretion in awarding amounts up to a cumulative \$5,000 per year for things such as animal emergency assistance following natural disasters.

At the annual directors' meeting in December, 1993 -- Red Acre Farm's ninetieth anniversary -- new officers were elected: Robert Thomson, president; Edward M. Dickson, vice president and assistant treasurer; Tad Bird, treasurer and assistant clerk; Walter M. (Jerry) Bird III, clerk; and Leonard M. Johnson, assistant clerk. Former director and president Carlton Buttrick had resigned in 1992 after 10 years on the board.



In May, 1994, the corporation received a proposal from Kids-A-Lot Child Development Center, which had been operating for about seven years at Stow's Center School but needed to vacate the premises by August and was interested in leasing the HDC building. At the directors' meeting that month, Carolyn reported that Rainbow, the first Red Acre Farm hearing dog, who testified on Beacon Hill for a Deaf Rights Bill, had died in April. She also suggested some tentative guidelines for awarding grants and proposed five \$5,000 awards to local, regional, national and international



organizations, in keeping with Red Acre's history of activity. She suggested awards to The Ark, a shelter in Harrington Maine; the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA); Animals' Crusaders of Tucson, Ariz., an organization that worked with Indians bringing spay/neuter, parasite control, vaccinations and food/watering stations to reservation animals in great need; the American Humane Association; and the Central Vermont Humane Society, in Barre, Vermont.

In July, Red Acre and Kids-A-Lot signed a standard commercial lease for five years with options to buy within the first year, or to extend the lease for five one-year periods following the initial five year term.

In September, the Board of Directors voted to award \$5,000 grants to each of the following: The Ark; Animals' Crusaders; Central Vermont Humane Society; the WSPA; and the Second International Conference on Equine Rescue, Southern Pines, North Carolina. The corporation's income was running ahead of budget and expenses were lower than budgeted for the first nine months of the fiscal year.

In November, the board elected Mary Wheeler director emeritus in honor of her long history with Red Acre Farm. Helen Bird Guidotti, Tad's and Carolyn's daughter, joined her father and brother on the board as a new director.

In December of 1995, many directors expressed concern over the ratio of expenses to grants. Salaries, consulting fees and employee benefits totaled over \$87,000 for the 1995-96 budget, while grants totaled \$40,000. Total expenses were \$107,044, of which grants comprised 23.5 percent. The sense of the annual directors' meeting was that this ratio must be improved with an appropriate change in the expense structure.

The grants voted that year included Greyhound Friends, Hopkinton; Massachusetts(\$5,000); the Humane Society of Greater Burlington, Vermont(\$5,000); The American Humane Association(\$7,000); Animals' Crusaders of Tucson(\$5,000); the WSPA(\$3,000); The Ark(\$6,000); New England Wildlife Center(\$7,000); and the Malden Mills Fire Relief Fund, Methuen, Massachusetts(\$2,000).

Throughout 1995 and 1996, the board deliberated in its move from an "operating" institution to a grant-making foundation. Tad noted that in making this move, Red Acre would sever its links to many humane organizations, with some of which it had a 90-year history. Included in this group were both national and international organizations.

On February 19, 1996, Carolyn and Tad wrote a memo to the executive committee that accompanied a revised budget reflecting cuts in expenses that would affect the expenses-to-grant ratio. They wrote:

Dues drop dramatically as we will no longer be supporting members of many organizations that kept us in touch with the humane movement world-wide and nation-wide. No conferences are budgeted - we sever all close communication and affiliation with national and international organizations of which we have been contributing members for the last ninety years, in some cases...This budget will involve cutting off RAF from its past and its commitment to the overall humane movement, but this seems the only way to satisfy the desire of members interested in a grants only program.

Over the course of the next few years, Red Acre Farm made the necessary changes in its structure and both the number and size of grants increased markedly. In December, 1998, Kids-A-Lot purchased the HDC property, and Red Acre realized a capital gain of \$260,700. As of September, 2000, the corporation's total assets had a book value of over \$9 million, as compared to \$1.3 million a decade earlier.

Because Red Acre Farm no longer received more than 30 percent of its support from public contributions, in October, 2000 the Internal Revenue Service determined that it was now a "private foundation". A year later, the organization became known as Red Acre Foundation.

In 2002, Red Acre sold the "Warren land," along with all other land holdings in Stow and Maynard, to the Stow Conservation Trust for \$200,000. The 167 acre Warren land had been purchased for \$26,600 in 1966. This property was appraised at \$920,000 resulting in a \$720,000 gift to the Town of Stow.

The latest available financial statements for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2002, show Red Acre's total assets as \$6.5 million. During that period, \$1.1 million went toward program services, which includes grants, sanctuaries and outreach advisory. Of that amount, the grants totaled \$364,000.

Red Acre's grant summary for the five years spanning 1998 to 2003 represents a wide variety of organizations across the region, the nation, and the world. Some of these grant recipients include equine rescue organizations, therapeutic horseback riding organizations, humane societies and animal shelters, various dog breed rescue groups, a pot bellied pig sanctuary, raptor centers, Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine, the New England Aquarium, a crippled children's clinic, and many more, for a total of 64 recipients.

One hundred years ago, Miss Harriet G. Bird started her Red Acre Farm with one black horse, \$8, and vision. Through her energy and determination, others were made to see what she foresaw, that there was a place and a need for a humane organization that not only cared, but took care. The marriage of action and funding through a century of oversight by the Bird family has resulted in a foundation that still cares, and still takes care, of as many recipients as it can reach.