

Vassar Farm Timeline

1865-1966 Vassar College Catalogue describes the college's 200 acres as one third "college and park" and two thirds "farm and gardens."

1895 The college constructed a sewage treatment system on the Vassar Farm consisting of a pipeline across Hooker Avenue, from which the sewage was poured onto a settling field and two beds with a total of 1.03 acres. The corn yield in subsequent years made record highs from the sewage nutrients in the soil, and water tests downstream showed a clean discharge.

1898-1899 Vassar College property includes over 400 acres.

1918-1919 Vassar College acreage reported at over 700 acres including a "675 acre tract, utilized for both grazing and cultivation. The equipment includes a model dairy and poultry farm, greenhouses, stables, storage barns and farm houses.

"The Vassar Farm produces vegetables for the college table and grain and fodder for the cattle and poultry. The dairy supplies milk and cream for the college, from a tested herd of Holstein cattle."(VC Catalogue '18-'19)

1927-1928 Vassar College reports 1,000 total acres, including 600 acres on the Vassar Farm.

1932-1933 Vassar Farm acreage is reduced to 500 acres.

1957 It is no longer economical for Vassar College to run the Farm. Dairy cattle were sold and cultivation of fields was discontinued.

1973 Vassar biologists propose a Center for Ecological Study on the farm, possibly to include a Nature Center for the college and the community.

1973-1974 Margaret Wright visits college-related nature centers in the Northeastern United States.

1974 The Audubon Society conducts a land use study of the farm as a "natural reserve."

1975 The Sasaki Associates conduct a more comprehensive assessment of potential uses.

1976 The Sasaki Mixed-Use Plan is accepted by President Smith and the Board of Trustees. 275 acres (approximately half of the farm) are designated for conservation and research.

1976-1977 Vassar confronted and resolved two major obstacles to the preservation of the farm: the proposed use of the Vassar Farm as a dump site and maintenance of the Vassar Farm parcel's tax-free status. The defense of the Vassar Farm was based on use of the farm for education and proposed plans for future construction for educational purposes.

1977 President Smith granted a budget of \$2,000 for "supplies" for the farm. Barbara Swain contributed an additional \$1,000.

1978 President Smith grants \$35,000 for the '78-'79 academic year for the establishment of the Field Station, the trail systems and the observation tower. Barbara Swain contributed \$3,000 to be used for plantings.

1978-1979 Robert Suter appointed to oversee preparation of the Field Station site and

road construction. Field laboratory (a converted mobile home) installed.

1980 Robert Suter negotiated mowing of select areas of the Ecological Preserve. Town of Poughkeepsie requests to drill test wells on the Farm. Test borings are made, but search for water was unsuccessful. Vassar biologists are concerned about impacts to the Ecological Preserve.

1981 Robert Suter proposed the use of the Field Station and surrounding land for elementary education programs in natural history. Barbara Swain contributed \$12,000 towards the development of Robert Suter's natural history program. Suter also proposed summer student internships at the Field Station. Helen Johnson Woodworth memorial trail is established.

1983 First natural history program offered to area elementary schools. In its first 3 semesters of operation, the program served 1,226 second and third graders from 18 Poughkeepsie area schools.

Mid 1980s City and Town were allotted 3 acres to compost leaves on the farm. Previously, the college had used that area for leaf dumping.

1995 Construction of permanent Field Station building.

1999 Poughkeepsie Farm Project begins cultivation of 3 acres leased from Vassar College.

2002 The City of Poughkeepsie brought in Greenway Environmental to the Vassar Farm at the site of their composting leaf dump.

2005 Greenway and Vassar establish a formal contract.

2009 Controversial deer culling.