



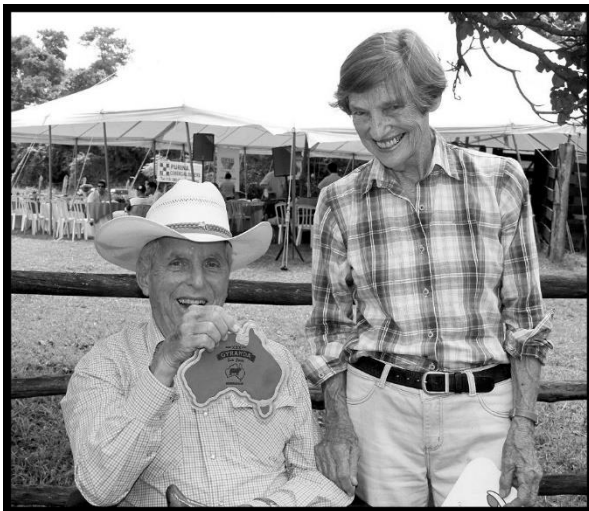
The Malabar Farm News

A publication of the
Malabar Farm Foundation

Summer
2025

Louis Bromfield's Son-In-Law Passes

On June 8, 2025, Carson Geld, 96, passed away. Carson met Ellen Bromfield, Louis Bromfield's youngest daughter, at Cornell University where they both were studying agriculture. They were married on January 6, 1951, at the Episcopal Parish Church of the Transfiguration, also known as The Little Church Around the Corner in New York City. In 1953 Carson and Ellen moved to Brazil to manage Malabar-do-Brazil, modeled after Malabar Farm in Ohio. In 1958 they left Malabar-do-Brazil and eventually established their own farm, Fazenda Pau D'Alho, in Brazil. Ellen passed away in 2019. Carson and Ellen had five children. Pau D'Alho remains in the Geld family. In 2003 Ellen published *View From The Fazenda: A tale of the Brazilian Heartlands* detailing their life in Brazil. In it she wrote, "Pau D'Alho, the fazenda that would become our way of life, was named for a handsome and exuberant tree, the bark and leaves of which emit the scent of garlic when it rains."



Carson and Ellen Bromfield Geld

On June 7, 2025 Victoria and John Cochran Celebrated Their 50th Wedding Anniversary



Victoria Cochran has played an invaluable role in the success of the Malabar Farm Foundation since joining the board in 2011. As the Special Events Coordinator, she was instrumental in organizing and managing a diverse range of events that strengthened the Foundation's work and enhanced its partnership with the state park. Her outstanding fundraising activities helped ensure the Foundation's ability to support both the park and its programs.

From 2013 to 2016, Victoria had a hand in numerous events, including theatrical productions, holiday celebrations, heritage festivals, and community engagement efforts. Her involvement spanned activities such as concessions at barn dances, coordinating volunteers, and overseeing fundraising plays and themed gatherings like "Hollywood Returns to Malabar" and "Best of the West Returns to Malabar." Whether it was the Christmas Open House, Maple Syrup Festival, or historical reenactments like "Tea with Louisa May Alcott" and "Picnic with Laura Ingalls Wilder," Victoria's dedication ensured these occasions were both successful and memorable.

Her leadership and enthusiasm have made her a cornerstone of the Foundation, driving its mission forward and enriching the community's experience at the state park. Through her tireless efforts, Victoria helps preserve the spirit of Malabar Farm and foster a deep connection between the Foundation and those who cherished its events. Congratulations Victoria and John.

Colonial Homestead Garden Grant

As part of America's 250 Celebration, the Garden at Mansfield's South Park Pioneer Village will be restored as an Educational Colonial Garden. Colonial gardens had significant social and economic impacts, shaping the lives of individuals and communities in the early American colonies. These gardens were more than just practical tools for survival; they were foundational to the social fabric and economic resilience of the early colonies, leaving an enduring legacy of resourcefulness and interdependence. This garden restoration project was made possible with a \$500 grant from the Malabar Farm Foundation and Volunteers from R.E.A.C.H.



Colonial gardens were also vital to homesteads during the Revolutionary War period, serving as essential sources of food, fiber, and medicine. With disrupted supply lines and a limited number of trained doctors, colonists relied on their gardens to support soldiers and civilians alike. Medicinal herbs, such as chamomile, mint, licorice, and lavender, were key remedies for ailments like jaundice, respiratory illnesses, and wounds. Colonists also turned to wild plants like black cohosh and sarsaparilla, while adopting Native American knowledge of the medicinal uses of numerous native species. These gardens not only sustained the population but also embodied the resourcefulness and resilience of homesteaders during challenging times. Their legacy persists as a reminder of the historical interplay between survival and nature.

Big House Security System Upgraded for Enhanced Protection

The Malabar Farm Foundation has generously funded a \$6,000 grant to upgrade and expand the security system at the historic Big House. This vital improvement includes the installation of eight high-definition cameras, sensors, fire monitoring, and secure recording access, all provided by Vector Security. With 24/7 surveillance now in place, the Big House is better protected than ever, ensuring its preservation for future generations. This marks the first significant update since the original alarm system was installed in 1993, reinforcing the Foundation's commitment to safeguarding Malabar Farm's treasured landmark.

A Job Well Done



A big thank you goes out to Dave Crawford, treasurer of the Malabar Farm Foundation, for facilitating the repair of the drop-leaf occasional table in the formal living room of the Big House. One of the unusual claw-foot legs of the table was broken several years ago, with only temporary repairs made at the time. The excellent permanent repair work was done by Craftwood LLC of Lexington, Ohio. Craftwood specializes in modern and antique furniture repair—www.craftwoodrefinishing.com.

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"Our house is a big house, well built, to be used not only by ourselves but by friends and neighbors as well, and by generations after we are dead. Already it has had hard use which has mellowed it and made it shabby. There is no parlor and no spare room kept empty with the shades drawn. Every inch of it has been in hard use since it was built and will, I hope, go on being used in the same fashion so long as it stands. Perhaps one day it will belong to the State, together with the hills, valleys and woods of Malabar Farm."

—Louis Bromfield
Pleasant Valley, 1945

Listening to the Past and Seeing the Future: A Little Fun in this World

by

Paul Sukys, Professor Emeritus, North Central State College

Louis Bromfield was a storyteller of the highest caliber. About this there can be no doubt. He wrote a series of novels and short stories and several plays with ease. In fact, he continued to produce best-selling books right up to the end, even when he had no desire to churn out stories written only to pay the bills. Yet he continued to write those novels because he knew that the public still looked forward to each new book and for good reason -- they were aware that he could tell stories and tell them well. This brings us to the point of this column -- the mythical life of Louis Bromfield.

Those people who know something about Louis Bromfield's life, probably know that some of the most marketable actors of the mid-20th century spent time at Malabar Farm. Moreover, if they know that much, they will also know that two of those actors, Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, were married at Malabar Farm and that Bromfield was best man at the wedding.

However, most folks do not know how Bogart and Bromfield met in the first place. That, however, would not be surprising because several versions of that story are still floating about. One version has Bromfield meeting Bogart while he, Bromfield, was still at Columbia. While this makes for an intriguing story, it is unlikely, because Bromfield was at Columbia in 1916 while Bogart was in high school until 1917 when he was expelled from Phillips Academy and joined the Navy in which he served until 1919.

A second story begins with Bromfield who, after being mistaken for Bogart, decided to meet the character who was going about town masquerading as his alter ego. As the story goes, after Bromfield tracked Bogart down, they shared some time together and eventually became good friends. This story is also dubious since Bogart was only 5 feet 8 inches tall, while Bromfield topped 6 feet 2 inches. With such a striking difference in height, it is difficult to believe that someone who had encountered both men would mistake one for the other. This would be like meeting Marilyn Monroe and mistaking her for Vaughn Monroe. It would make no sense.

The third New York anecdote starts with Bogart complaining to a stranger in a New York City bar about

a damning review that he had received from a theater critic. After listening patiently to Bogart, the listener finally introduced himself as Louis Bromfield, the author of the review. Legend has it that Bogart then admitted that he really had done a bad job in that play. As the story goes, that honest admission permanently sealed their friendship. Despite the appeal of this story, it is unlikely that it took place as recounted. While it is probable that both Bogart and Bromfield visited many of the speakeasies hidden throughout New York at the time, it is improbable that, in the frantic world of 1920s Manhattan, they would find themselves alone in one of those joints long enough to exchange anything more than a few passing words.



Humphrey
Bogart,
Louis
Bromfield,
and Lauren
Bacall.

Wedding
Day,
Malabar
Farm
May 21,
1945

In fact, the mystery of the Bogart-Bromfield connection probably has a much less colorful explanation. It is more likely that they met in California in the early 1930s when Bogart was breaking into films and Bromfield was making extra cash writing screenplays, along with Faulkner, Steinbeck, and Fitzgerald. In fact, it could be that, after writing screenplays all day, Bromfield decided to make up a series of narratives about that historic encounter, just for fun.

After all, as we noted at the start of this column, Bromfield was a gifted storyteller, and what better way to have a good laugh late at night in a bar than to conjure up a tall tale about your first meeting with Bogey, one of the most famous names in Hollywood? Stranger things have happened. In fact, Mark Twain may have solved this mystery years before Louis was around to contradict him. Come to think of it, late one night in a bar, I heard it said that Twain, to have a good laugh in a bar, late one night, remarked, "The chief end of man, is to have a little fun in this world." Think about it.

Did You Know?

You can help the Malabar Farm Foundation support Malabar Farm through the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Your Kroger Plus Card can be linked to a charity so that each time you shop for groceries or get gas a percentage will be credited to the charity of your choice.

If you do not already have a Kroger Plus Card one can be obtained at the Kroger Customer Service desk. Then, go online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com, create an account and link your Kroger Plus Card to the Malabar Farm Foundation from the list of charities.

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The Malabar Farm Foundation

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Tax deductible donations to the Malabar Farm Foundation can be made by cash, check, or credit card.

- ☐ **Member** - \$50 / year ☐ I would like to make an additional donation of \$ _____
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