



# Walnut Acres Foundation News

July/August 2020

## Bucknell Interns Influenced by Paul Keene's Stewardship

Walnut Acres has enjoyed a long-standing and fruitful relationship with Bucknell University. Back when Walnut Acres was an active organic production farm, we had the benefit of Bucknell faculty working with us on soil studies. Today, we have partnerships with and support from faculty, staff, and students through Bucknell's Center for Sustainability and the Environment, the University Farm, and the department of Environmental Studies and Sciences.

This includes coordinating student involvement, as well as deeper institutional connections such as Dr. Shaunna Barnhart, Director of the Place Studies Program in the Center for Sustainability and Environment, who served on our early Steering Committee and is now on our History Committee. Additionally, for the past two years we have had eleven students focused on our project, including two senior capstone projects centered in the Environmental Studies and Sciences Department. Such connections bring new voices and perspectives to collaborating with us on achieving our vision for the new Walnut Acres.



Our most recent support came in the form of a duo of summer interns. Allow us to introduce them here for you, in their own words. We are so pleased that beyond their talents and support shared with our project this season, they have both gained insights and perspectives in organic farming and community involvement that will carry them into promising futures.

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### Sinet Kroch

I am only one week away from finishing up my internship with the Walnut Acres Foundation. Wow nine weeks went by so fast. I have learned a lot from my work, especially on how to run a successful and sustainable organic farm. First, I'm impressed with the work that Walnut Acres has done and its contribution to the communities and the nation at large. Second, reading Paul Keene's newsletters explained why the farm was standing for over 50 years. Third, as a daughter of a farming family myself, I am inspired to transform my family farm into an

organic farm and preserve traditional farming tools for a future museum. The goal is to showcase the transformation of farming as well as educating future generations about the importance of organic food.

The history of the farm taught me so much about hard work. Paul and Betty Keene started with 100 acres of farmland, but their hard work and persistence allowed them to grow the farm to five times its size. I personally see Paul Keene as a philosopher, great writer, and activist. My favorite quote from him is "You can take the boy from the farm, but you can't take the farm from

the boy.” I can relate a lot to this, especially growing up on a farm. My farming background and passion even shaped my decision on where to go to school and what to study. Thankfully, Bucknell had what I was looking for: Foundation Seminar in the Food, Farming, and Sustainability Residential College, Bucknell Farm and Community Garden, and Environmental Studies as a major and Food Science as a minor. All of this afforded me natural and refreshing experiences to appreciate farmers and animals even more, especially farmers’ hard work and dedication. Given my strong connection with organic farming, animals, and the environment as a whole, I wanted to give back, and I found that opportunity to serve with the Walnut Acres Foundation.

Due to COVID-19, instead of being physically at the Walnut Acres Farm, I worked from home. My projects included research on the historic site, historic archiving and cataloging, and interviewing. In terms of the historic site, I worked on whether a new building can be built on the historic site and how to renovate and reconstruct the historic building. While I did my research, I reviewed the National Register of Historic Places website and found very useful information, especially related to regulations and what could be done to properties on an Historic Registry site. In terms of historical archiving and cataloging, I read a lot of newspapers on Paul Keene and the Walnut Acres Farm as well as Paul Keene’s newsletters, which he mailed to his customers. These are important collections for the foundation especially when the Keene family plans to establish a learning center to create a space for education and retreat that focuses on the essence of the farm and farmer and cultivates connections with local and global communities.

This internship gives me a lot of hope and reassurance that the environmentally related work I am doing is valuable and necessary in society. While I was growing up, I was bullied and made fun of for working at the farm. That scared me and made me want to give up on trying to preserve and protect the environment and learn about environmentally friendly and healthy organic farming. However, seeing the success of Walnut Acres Farm and the impacts it has had on communities and the world at large inspires me to push through and to follow my passion. As an individual, I want to be a part of the solution, and I know what I can do to contribute, so I invite everyone to find what they are passionate about and think of ways they can positively give back to their communities and the world. Thank you, Walnut Acres Foundation, for this great opportunity and new skills.



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A jar of organic apple butter on a store shelf may not turn heads today, but during the late 1940s any organic food was new to the market. Walnut Acres' apple butter was

Charlotte Murray

beloved for its sweetness from crisp apples, but also because of farmer Paul Keene's revolutionary approach to organic farming and the food industry. Paul's devotion to Walnut Acres and his passion for organic farming reinforce the importance of dedication in order to truly create impactful work and relationships. Throughout my virtual internship with Walnut Acres, I valued the diversity of skills I built upon and experiences I learned from that will benefit me for years to come. I enjoyed working with a growing foundation as I witnessed substantial development over a few months. Account reconciliation,



marketing, and software user experience may not have been in Paul's dreams for Walnut Acres during the late 1940s, but the goals and products of my work during my internship definitely align well with Paul's stewardship which he evoked during his time on the farm and in his writings.

Walnut Acres is exceptionally grateful for each and every connection it forms with others who share a similar passion for history, organic farming, and honoring the exceptional Keene Family who were truly pioneers. I appreciated the opportunity to apply some of my accounting knowledge I learned this past semester at Bucknell to the account reconciliation work. Lauren Smith, Director of Leadership Giving, and I also collaborated well in order to ensure that the fundraising efforts for the Walnut Acres Project and the Keene Center will allow Paul's mission to be expressed more meaningfully and efficiently.

Paul's and Walnut Acres' message of stewardship for the community and environment is also conveyed through the newly established marketing and social media platforms. The

21st century platforms enable the history of Walnut Acres to extend well beyond the late 1940s and genuinely inspire similar stewards of today. Paul's writings in his book *Fear Not to Sow Because of the Birds* have also enhanced my outlook on today's life, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will be shared through the social media platforms.

Those interested in the life and legacy of Paul and Walnut Acres will also appreciate and benefit from the software program I tailored in order to help the project's community outreach. It is great that a foundation is able to professionally brand itself with a few different software programs. I had the pleasure of learning from the programs and creating instruction guides to allow for effective and practical user experiences for the Foundation.

An Excel spreadsheet, a social media page, or an application of a software system is only as beneficial as the creator's dedication to the larger message and product. An apple seed, a pea viner machine, or a commitment to publish farm newsletters is only as successful as the dedicated farmer. Dedication and a passion for a mission can truly create innovation that benefits generations for years to come. It has been a pleasure to work with Walnut Acres, which continuously impacts the larger community today. ■