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Bauer Park
A Legacy from the Past, a Promise for the Future



Bauer Park Farmhouse

When Erwin and Anthony Bauer donated their farm to the town of Madison in 1990 they joined the company of other citizens who have made extraordinary gifts to the Town of Madison: Daniel Hand, who gave us Hand Academy, Eliza Scranton who gave us our fine library, Harold Strong of Strong Athletic Field, and others less well known such as Pauline Baldwin and Charlotte Dowd. Throughout our history the men and women of Madison have freely shared their good fortune with their fellow citizens. Much of the character of Madison reflects their contributions.

In 1909 Constantine and Louisa Bauer, recent immigrants, moved from Westchester, NY to Madison with their two sons Anthony and Erwin, purchasing a 40 acre farm on Copse Road. The farm had been previously owned by Charles Redfield who operated a dairy farm. In the summer of 1904, a year before Mr. Redfield's death at age 64, his daughter Emma took over the milk delivery route and, in the course of a year, delivered 18,000 quarts of milk to the residents of Madison making all collections herself. Not bad for a teenager!

According to the Bauer brothers, the farmhouse on the property was built in about 1850 by Amasa J. Dowd, a farmer and shoemaker. Census records confirm that Amasa J. Dowd age 49, occupation shoemaker, lived in Madison in 1850. The 1880 census lists Amasa J. Dowd age 79, retired farmer suggesting that perhaps the Redfield Family acquired the farm soon after that date.

Constantine Bauer was a stonecutter by trade and evidence of his work can be seen in the foundations of some of the outbuildings. During the years the Bauer Family owned the land they made improvements to the property adding outbuildings and remodeling the house. In 1930 the central chimney and fireplaces were removed including the smokehouse in the cellar.

Erwin and Anthony continued to operate the farm after the death of their parents. They were known as hardworking men who made their living from the land. Their strawberries and rhubarb were well-known through Madison and their fresh vegetables graced many a table.

Bauer Farm became a place of memories for several generations of Madisonians, and in 1990 with the gift of the farm, with land and buildings to the Town, it became a promise for the future as well as a legacy from the past. Land that for 150 years had echoed with lowing of cows and the voices of farmers at their daily chores fell silent. The farm passed into history and in its place Bauer Park was created being dedicated on December 18, 1992 in memory of Louise and Constantine Bauer. 64 acres of land with four ponds, meadows and woodland given to the citizens of Madison as a priceless gift by the Bauers.

After Erwin's death the 6 acres and house he had reserved for his use became town property. In 1998 a Special Town Meeting passed a resolution stating in part that Bauer Park "be used for agricultural, educational, recreational and open space pursuits...".

At the same meeting a second resolution was passed adopting the recommendation of the Bauer Park Study Committee that the Town contract with the New Haven County Soil and Water Conservation District to develop specific programs for use in Bauer Park: "Chestnut Research and Education Program; Environmental Education Programs; Forestry Stewardship Program; and Outdoor Living Classroom".