

Frost House Gifted to Bennington

SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

Bennington College announced it will acquire the Robert Frost Stone House Museum in Shaftsbury, VT, thanks to a generous gift from the Friends of Robert Frost. The home represents the period when Robert Frost claimed his place among America's great poets. The Museum will complete its scheduled season for 2017, which includes a September lecture and public visiting hours through the end of October, and will reopen to the public in spring 2018.



American poet Robert Frost (1874-1963) purchased the Stone House, built c. 1769, in 1920. It was there that he wrote one of his most famous poems "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" in June 1922, and where he was living

when he won his first Pulitzer. The young apple orchard on the property was propagated from Frost's own trees. The gift to the College includes the house, seven acres of property, and two barns. It is located a five minute drive from the College's campus, and near Frost's grave in the cemetery at the Old First Church in Old Bennington.

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The property was preserved and opened as a house museum fifteen years ago, thanks to donations from Peter J. Stanlis, a grant from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and support from many

others. It has welcomed more than 50,000 visitors, scholars, and poets from all over the world in that time.

“We identified the need for a succession plan many years ago, reminding me of a line from a film: 'We're only passing through history.' This house is history. We approached Bennington College with this idea in May, and have been very pleased with their enthusiasm,” said **Friends of Robert Frost Founder and Executive Director Carole Thompson**. “I’m sure Frost would approve.”

“Building on the College’s storied literary history and our commitment to inquiry-based education, Bennington is a perfect place to explore Frost’s legacy, to ask new questions about his work, and to bring it into contemporary conversations,” said **Bennington College President Mariko Silver**.

“Frost remains one of our country's major literary figures who represented for several generations what it was to be an American poet,” said poet **Mark Wunderlich, Director of the Bennington Writing Seminars**, the College’s low-residency MFA in Writing program. “It’s time to look again at Frost’s work for what it is – tough-minded poems that are haunted, pessimistic, stately, and which belie great self-awareness on behalf of the poet who wrote them.”

Connection to the College

As a neighbor and a notable literary figure, Frost was in conversations with the founders of Bennington College at its inception. He weighed in on one of the signature elements of a Bennington education – that the heart of student assessment is a narrative evaluation – saying “they

prefer adjectives to numbers." He also made faculty recommendations to the founding president. Frost spoke at the College several times, including during the first academic year.

Frost also lived for a time in what is now known as Shingle Cottage on the College campus. Later, as faculty housing, Shingle was home to Frost's contemporaries, poets W. H. Auden and Theodore Roethke. It is currently a student residence.

Future Use

In addition to continuing as an historic house and museum, the College will use the Stone House Museum for educational purposes, incorporating it into its acclaimed literature and writing programming, which brings the nation's leading poets, academics, and students together for lectures and rigorous writing instruction. The Frost House will provide enhanced learning and event space for Bennington's literature efforts, including the Masters of Fine Arts in Writing program; The Bennington Review, the College's literary journal; and Poetry at Bennington, a residency series that brings award-winning poets to campus for readings. This fall, writer and Director of Special Programs Megan Mayhew Bergman will [lead a class](#) that explores Frost's presence in Shaftsbury – the work he made while here, his house, archives, and his agricultural intentions.

Update:

The College acquired the House officially on December 1, 2017. It will reopen to the public in spring 2018.

