

LANGWATER ESTATE

F. Thresher

If you ever have taken a walk through Easton, you would be able to find the Ames family a prominent name in our community. Among their well-known estates would be the Langwater Estate, well-known for its fine line of Guernsey cattle.

Frederick Lothrop Ames built his home where he could be close to the center of town and yet, still have privacy. When he first built his home in eighteen hundred and fifty nine, he changed the name of the pond on Main Street from "Stones Pond" to "Langwater Pond". From then on the estate was known as "Langwater".

Starting with what used to be the cow field located near "Fernandes", the estate continues along Main Street to the Langwater Pond, known to many Easton residence as "Fred's Pond". There the boundary follows alongside the pond away from the road and then swings west towards Pond Street. From this point the boundary continues along the side of the pond to Andrews Street and the rest of Pond Street. Here the boundary changes and follows the latter half of Oliver Street to the end at Elm Street. Turning east, the boundary follows along Elm Street behind a row of duplex houses and on towards Washington Street. Turning south behind the cemetery at the corner of Washington Street and Elm Street, the boundary

follows along Washington Street to the rear of "Fernandes" and back to the cow field.

Passing under an unusual archway on Elm Street, called the Gate Lodge", you will find that you have just entered the extraordinary estate of Frederick Lothrop Ames.

Up the road to the left are the greenhouses of Mr. Ames, known for his collection of fine orchids, the most complete and unsurpassed in the country. People would come from all over the country to see the many different types of ferns and tropical plants that Mr. Ames raised.

Beyond the greenhouses are the stables of Mr. Ames and from here you are unable to see the beautiful Victorian mansion behind the large and unrevealing pine trees. This home was built for Mr. Ames and his family by the architects, Snell and Gregerson, and in eighteen hundred and seventy six it was enlarged by the well-known architect, J. A. Mitchell.

About eighteen hundred and eighty four, Mr. Ames started his Guernsey herd with a few family cows, but later the herd was completely wiped out by T. B.

After Frederick Lothrop Ames' death, F. Lothrop Ames, one of Mr. Ames' sons, was encouraged to continue breeding Guernseys. Lothrop was interested in genetics and for this reason some of the finest Guernseys ever bred came from the farm at Langwater.

Of the eight hundred and sixty-three sires and one thousand and fifty-two cows that were a part of the herd since its founding, there was not one Guernsey that did not

Changed again in 1940's

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have a name. Lothrop was able to tell each and every cow from the other, even after he had not seen them for awhile.

For twenty years Lothrop worked at breeding the finest Guenseys in the world. After his sudden death June nineteenth, nineteen hundred and twenty one, John S. Ames, Lothrop's brother, took over Langwater Farms and continued breeding Guernseys.

John was also interested in genetics like his brother, but his studies were in the genetics of flowers and he was especially known for his fine collection of Azaleas.

John married Miss Nancy Filley in nineteen hundred and nine, and Mrs. Ames was very interested in her husband's herd, being more critical of the animals than John was.

One of the unusual things about Langwater Farms was the graveyard that was located on the farm. Many of the Guernseys, if not all of them, that were bred at Langwater were buried somewhere on the farm in graveyards. For example, "Steadfast", "Queen of the East", "Country Flower", and many other prize cattle were buried on a separate part of Langwater, known as the "Clock Barn", but now known as the "Clock Farm" on Washington Street.

The farm had many Guernsey cows that held world records and when the farm closed down in nineteen hundred and fifty four, many of the fine Guernseys were sold for thousands of dollars.

In nineteen hundred and fifty two, at the annual meeting of the American Guernsey Cattle Club, held in Atlantic City,

New Jersey, John S. Ames was presented a Certificate of Honor for his exceptional work with Guernsey cattle.¹

It honored John S. Ames for his devotion and work with the cattle, and how he sacrificed his time to continue the work of his brother even though he was interested in flowers.

John S. Ames died in nineteen hundred and fifty eight and after Mrs. Ames moved from Langwater, their son, Oliver Ames, took the estate over.

Mrs. Ames stayed at Langwater until her death a decade later
Oliver, a former State Senator, lives with his family in Brookline, but spends most of his weekends relaxing at Langwater.

The home on the estate is a beautiful stone mansion. There is a tower on the left side of the home, which is the casing for the circular stairway inside.

Through the front doors to the house, are a set of beautiful wooden doors, varnished until they shine. On the windows of the doors are designs made of iron, which adds to the rich beauty of the entrance.

Inside is a very long front hallway with a black and white tiled floor covered with two large oriental rugs. The white walls are decorated with several antique paintings and at the end of the hallway is a bust of one of the Ameses.

On the right of the hallway is a white carved fireplace

1. "The Langwater Story", Louis McL. Merryman. (Reprinted from Guernsey Breeders Journal)

with an antique clock in the center of the mantelpiece and on either side of the clock is a small ceramic urn. To the left of the hallway is a small, round hall where the spiral staircase leads to the second and third floors.

Going through the first door on the right of the main hallway is a family room. This room also has a white carved fireplace like the one in the hallway. The furniture in this room is antique as most of the furniture throughout the house.

The adjacent room is a sitting room and a study. It is done in dark mahogany panelling with a fireplace to match the walls. One complete wall is a bookcase with many antique books and at the other end of the room is a large set of windows overlooking the backyard.

The next room is the dining room, done in white with white carved woodwork. The table in the center of the room is made of dark wood and is probably close to twelve feet long. Like many of the other rooms, this room also has a large set of windows: this set overlooks the patio.

The last room, excluding the kitchen, is the room the Ames call the "Marble Room", which was added on after the house was built. This room is so called because of the beautiful marble floor. This was the room where the Ames would give their parties.

Two glass doors lead from the "marble Room" to the patio, which is so unbelievable that it is hard to describe. The patio is large enough to be another room and it is protected

overhead by a stone ceiling, which has three domes carved into it. The floor is designed with brown and white tiles and in the center of the patio is a set of light green iron patio furniture. On the open side of the patio are a number of stone archways overlooking the adjacent grounds.

Because the Ameses still have an eye for beauty, the surrounding land is well landscaped with large pines and birches, and many types of shrubberies.

Down the road from the house is a small stone and cement bridge, which overlooks the Langwater Pond. In the distance can be seen the busy outside life of Main Street, and it seems almost unbelievable how such a large and beautiful estate, located in the center of town, can remain so untouched and preserved from the outside world.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

1. "Memoir of Frederick Lothrop Ames", Leverett Saltonstall.
(Reprinted from the Publications of the Colonial Society
of Massachusetts Volume 1), Boston, Ma. 1894
2. "The Langwater Story", Louis McL. Merryman. (Reprinted
from Guernsey Breeders Journal.)
3. The History of Easton, Rev. William Chaffin, 1896

*You may wish
to check on
actual life of
estate, and
ownership*