



## NEWPORT RESTORATION FOUNDATION

*Founded by Doris Duke*

### **BACKGROUND ON PRESCOTT FARM**

Doris Duke, founder of the Newport Restoration Foundation, purchased 40-acre Prescott Farm in 1969 with the idea of preserving open space as well as creating a setting for rural buildings in imminent danger of being lost through demolition. The Overing House, a historic building associated with Revolutionary War history has been on the site since it was built there circa 1730. Today Prescott Farm is open to the public, showcasing several buildings, including an 1812 windmill, historic gardens, several walking trails, and a pond usually home to hungry geese and ducks. Prescott Farm offers a glimpse of early New England through buildings and landscape.

The land at Prescott Farm is typical of Aquidneck Island farms of the 18th and 19th centuries, gently sloping land, good soil, fields lined with stonewalls, and areas of scrub trees and brush. The Overing House, the oldest of the buildings, is original to the site, and was used as the quarters for Aquidneck Island's British Commander General Prescott during the American Revolution. It was at this site that he was captured by American troops in July of 1777. This important Rhode Island moment in the Revolutionary War is how the rural estate owned by such prominent families as the Nichols and Overings became known, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as "Prescott" Farm.

The Robert Sherman Windmill, originally built in 1812, held residence in Warren, Portsmouth, and Fall River, Massachusetts before being acquired by the Newport Restoration Foundation in 1969. After decades of deterioration, it was fully restored in 1971 with additional work done in the 1980s and a new shaft installed in 1998. It is now a popular stop where visitors learn the process of grist milling up close. The mill has four vanes for sails and somewhat uniquely, two sets of grinding stones.

Unique features of Prescott Farm are the historic kitchen and herb gardens on the premises. The URI Master Gardeners care for the gardens, which provide participatory learning opportunities both for the Master Gardeners and the general public. The plant varieties in the Prescott Farm gardens are representative of the type used by many Aquidneck Islanders for food, medicine and other utilitarian purposes in the colonial era.

Prescott Farm is open year-round for visitation, with tours running from June to September. Various events take place throughout the season, ranging from hands-on experiences building and repairing traditional stone walls to re-enactments of battles from the American Revolution. More than 200 years after its founding, Prescott Farm blends traditional New England culture with Aquidneck Island's historic landscape, making it a wonderful destination for any visitors to the Newport area.

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