

# Raitt Homestead Farm Museum

Preserving Farming History for future generations and the community at large since 1996.



## Making a difference

The RHF owns the 33 acre property at 2077 State Rd in Eliot Maine. Since 1996, this 100% volunteer organization has been restoring the late 1800's

**property, maintaining the grounds, & holding fundraisers to continue educating future generations about farming history.**



## Our History:

The Raitt Homestead Farm was built in 1896 by Charles A. Raitt on State Road in Eliot, Maine. Charles was a local brick mason, manufacturing the bricks on the property. He also operated a saw mill at the farm and had a successful apple orchard whose produce was shipped as far away as England. When Charles passed away, his son Roland took over the farm. Roland sold the brick yards during the depression. When the apple orchard was destroyed by winter kill, Roland turned to dairy farming. The milk was sold to Badger Farms Dairy of Portsmouth, NH. The RHF was typical for the era and the tasks were many including milking cows, haying the fields, and cutting fire wood. The fence lines were repaired with posts sawed right on the farm. Roland passed away in 1962 and his son Gerald took over the farm. He purchased the adjacent Anderson Apple Orchard in 1967 to restore the apple business to the farm. The farm was truly a family business; Gerald's brothers worked at the farm, nieces and nephews helped with the apple orchards and sold the apples at his farm stand on the front lawn. Gerald retired from the dairy business in 1983 but he continued to raise chickens and sell eggs until 2004.

1996 started a new era for the Raitt Homestead Farm. The first Eliot Antique Tractor & Engine Show was held on the farm and the Eliot Antique Tractor & Engine Association was formed. The Association was granted non-profit status and in 2003, Gerald donated the homestead to the Association in exchange for a life interest in the property. The Eliot

Antique Tractor and Engine Association became The Raitt Homestead Farm Museum in 2006 to better reflect the Association's mission of educating the public with displays & demonstrations of antique farm implements & equipment for the purpose of keeping valuable farm heritage alive. The RHFM is an asset to the entire community. The property's open space is utilized for town & regional events, corporate picnics, weddings and more like the Hops N Hounds and NEVT car show held in June.

The Museum is able to share the fruits of its efforts through our annual event: the Eliot Antique Tractor & Engine Show, which in 2018 will be celebrating its 23rd year and attracts hundreds of exhibitors & thousands of spectators each year and has become known as the largest and friendliest event for tractor and engine enthusiasts in New England. .

Yearly over 17,000 visited the Farm Museum during the seasons events. The success of these events is vital for the realization of the Museum's vision and has already been paying dividends.

The RHFM in 2010 was able to restore the chimneys on the shop and the ones on the Homestead. The Homestead and attached shed now have a new roof and a new utility building is in the process of being built. In the spring of 2011 the Shingle Mill pad was poured in addition to the Blacksmith Shop pad. Throughout the years a new entrance road has been put in, shade trees have been planted, a Nature Trail was implemented and the restoration of the Apple Barn is continuing. In 2013 the Shingle Mill building was erected, the Milk House Restoration was started, a roof was built over the Woodsplitter and more. In 2014 the museum continued the work on the Apple Barn, finish the woodsplitter roof, complete the Milk House Restoration and establish it as exhibit space. 2015 saw the Blacksmith shop come to life by using the bricks that were from the barn, and lumber from the trees. This project will continue into this year and hopefully be finished in 2018. The Back of the Homestead had new clapboards put on it in 2017 and lots of volunteers helped plant and harvest the garden grown with the Seed Savers Grant. A brick walkway was built in the garden by Timberland with repurposed bricks from the Raitt Brickyard that were originally part of the Barn. Future plans include re-building the Saw Mill and restoration of the farm's other structures. With these continuing efforts, the RHFM will allow children and adults alike to experience the history of farming in the Seacoast region for generations to come. Located at 2077 State Rd in Eliot Maine 03903 fmi- visit [www.raittfarmmuseum.org](http://www.raittfarmmuseum.org), call 207-748-3303 or email [info@raittfarmmuseum.org](mailto:info@raittfarmmuseum.org).