

*Making You, Your Land and Livestock's  
History Part of Agri-tourism*

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By

Ronald R. Seagrave

# Bio

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A Colonial Farmer Patriot descendant, founder of the Seagrave-Williams Farm, LLC., Virginia's Veterans Healing Farm, and former teacher, researcher & historian, award winning author, publisher and veteran.

**Member of:** The Livestock Conservancy & official fiber provider for their *Shave 'Em to Save 'Em* program; Veteran Farmer Coalition and their *Homegrown by Heroes* program, American Poultry Assoc., Society for the Preservation of Poultry Antiquities; Nankins Breeders Assoc., La Fleche Breeders Assoc., Leicester Longwool Sheep Assoc. and the founder of the Hog Island Sheep Assoc..

# You ?

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- A 2019 testament to the immense complexity of nature, ***The Biggest Little Farm*** follows two dreamers and a dog on an odyssey to bring harmony to both their lives and the land. When the barking of their beloved dog Todd leads to an eviction notice from their tiny LA apartment, John and Molly Chester make a choice that takes them out of the city and onto 200 acres in the foothills of Ventura County, naively endeavoring to build one of the most diverse farms of its kind in complete coexistence with nature. The land they've chosen, however, is utterly depleted of nutrients and suffering from a brutal drought.
- The film chronicles eight years of daunting work and outsize idealism as they attempt to create the utopia they seek, planting 10,000 orchard trees and over 200 different crops, and bringing in animals of every kind— including an unforgettable pig named Emma and her best friend, Greasy the rooster. When the farm's ecosystem finally begins to reawaken, so does the Chesters' hope – but as their plan to create perfect harmony takes a series of wild turns, they realize that to survive they will have to reach a far greater understanding of the intricacies and wisdom of nature, and of life itself.
- Winner of a dozen plus awards and heralded as “Utterly joyful, inspiring....” – *The New York Times*, *The Biggest Little Farm* is sure to inspire you
- <https://neon.app.box.com/s/pikdt2zav35j2fs5tgculusnpty9a42/file/419565154271>



In the 1600's,  
both  
husbands and  
wives in  
families of  
recently-freed  
indentured  
servants grew  
tobacco  
without any  
enslaved  
workers.

They were  
planters.

Source: National Park Service,  
by Sidney E. King)



# Farmers

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*“Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most **vigorous**, the most **independent**, the most **virtuous**, and they are **tied to their country** and **wedded to its liberty and interests** by the most lasting bonds.”*

**Thomas Jefferson**



# Jefferson's Shetland Ram

- By the spring of 1808, there were almost forty presidential sheep grazing on the square in front of the President's House. If it had been the year 2019, there would also have been a flock of lawsuits. Several unsuspecting pedestrians tried to take a short cut across the square, met the Shetland ram, and were vanquished in their encounter.
- One **William Keough** wrote Jefferson that "in Passing through the President's Square [I] was attacked and severely wounded and bruised by your excellency's ram—of which [I] lay ill for five or six weeks."
- Another of the ram's unfortunate victims, as we learn from the diary of Jefferson's friend **Anna Maria Thornton**, was "a fine little boy killed by the Ram that the president has."
- 1812 January 21. (Jefferson to John Adams). "[W]e consider a sheep for every person in the family as sufficient to clothe it."



Appamattuck  
Cheroenhaka (Nottoway)  
Cheroenhaka (Nottoway)

How does your farm highlight 250 years of Virginia's agricultural heritage, remembering the Indians were here before 1606, growing corn, plants, as well as, harvesting wild livestock and fish

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You **cannot** find a corner of Virginia that does not hold ancient history, Indigenous value, and pre-colonial place names and stories.

And every place we occupy was once the homeland for other people, most of whom didn't leave willingly.

Whose land are you on?

Start with a visit to [native-land.ca](http://native-land.ca)

I'm on the land of: [Appamattuck](#) & [Cheroenhaka \(Nottoway\)](#)

# How To Research your Historic Virginia Property

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[https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf\\_files/HowtoResearchHistoricProperty\\_2013.pdf](https://www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/HowtoResearchHistoricProperty_2013.pdf)

A 32-page publication of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources

THE PRINCIPAL REPOSITORIES: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES (DHR), LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA (LVA), VALENTINE MUSEUM, RICHMOND HISTORY CENTER (VM), VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY and LOCAL REPOSITORIES



**When was it built, and for whom?**

**What was on the site before the building was constructed?**

Aerial Photographs • Architectural Survey Files • Business Records • Census Records • Chancery Records • City and Business Directories • Deeds • Family Histories • Historical Photographs and Illustrations • Land Tax Books • Local and State Histories • Maps; Plats; Atlases • Mutual Assurance Society of Virginia • Newspapers • Organization Records • Patents and Grants • Personal Papers • Religious Institution Records • Student Research Papers • Tax Assessor's Office • DHR's V-CRIS Public Portal • Wills, Inventories, and Estate Divisions • and the Virginia Historical Inventory Project.

# \_(Your farm's)\_ Heritage Harvest Festival 2020 ?

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A model, Monticello's Heritage Harvest Festival...

[www.heritageharvestfestival.com](http://www.heritageharvestfestival.com) (Sept. 21, 2019)

## **Preserving Our Roots: Saving Seeds and Farm Heritage**

Seed Savers Exchange [www.seedsavers.org](http://www.seedsavers.org)

Southern Exposure Seed Exchange <https://www.southernexposure.com/>

# Your Farm vs. Food Lion

- **Garden Sunshine Pepper, *Capsicum annuum***

- Red-purple skin
- Yellow-orange interior
- Exceptionally sweet, almost spicy
- 90 days



- **Rainbow Bell Peppers**
- **MVP \$3.79 EA **HOT SALE!****
- **Valid August 21, 2019**
- 3ct Pkg



Golden Peach  
Heirloom Tomato



Indeterminate  
like a peach—perfectly  
yellow skin

Green Zebra  
Heirloom Tomato



- 75 days to maturity
- Fresh but firm
- Brightens up salads and other tomato dishes

Yellow Brandywine

Tomato tasting &

open house on our farm

Sat, Aug 24th!

- 76 days to maturity
- Smooth, firm
- Rich-tasting, creamy texture and delicious flavor

Black  
Heirloom



- The only true black cherry
- Sweet, rich, and compact
- Unique variety

More info on our events page





# Tomato Tasting

Sample dozens of open-pollinated heirloom tomatoes—including favorites and rare varieties from SSE's seed bank—at their, annual FREE Tomato Tasting event at Heritage Farm, Decorah, In. Attend demonstrations, judge a salsa contest, and celebrate fall in our beautiful gardens.

# A little paint & some plywood





# Your Harvest Festival at Your Heritage Farm

Have a soup cook-off, pumpkin carving, garlic workshop, cider pressing and more: it's time for Harvest Festival at Your Heritage Farm. Vote for your favorite soup, have a workshop, take a hayride, and make your very own corn husk doll. This family-friendly event is one of everyone's favorites.



*In the mid-1970s, during preparation for the American Bicentennial Celebration, Old Sturbridge Village & Plymouth Plantation attempted to upgrade the authenticity of their agricultural interpretation by exhibiting appropriate breeds documented in their respective archives. The historic documentation indicated that Milking Devon cattle should be one of the centerpiece breeds. The difficulty in finding this once popular breed was the inspiration for the creation of the first North American livestock conservation organization, which was to become The Livestock Conservancy.*

*The Pilgrims brought Devon cattle with them to New England beginning in 1623. Devon's were readily available near the ports of departure from England, and the hardiness and practicality of the breed made them an obvious choice for immigrants to the Americas. The breed became well established in New England during the 1600s and spread down the coast as far as Florida during the 1700s & 1800s. Cattle also went west, as Devon oxen were among the draft animals of choice on the Oregon Trail. Herd books for the breed have been published since 1855. **TODAY THEIR EXISTANCE IS CRITICAL!***

American Milking Devon Cattle Association <https://www.milkingdevons.org/> oversees these 2,000lbs animals... A clip from Colonial Williamsburg's documentary on **Heritage Breed animals**. This interview is with my friend, Elaine Shirley, the Manager of Rare Breeds at Colonial Williamsburg.

<https://youtu.be/itPPiBT7jeY>





In the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> Century Chattel/livestock were absent of pedigrees, until the mid-1700s when horse racing became popular, general livestock was like poultry is generally today. At Food Lion you don't pick out a breed of chicken, or egg, its just chicken, and an egg. Fish have a higher ranking!

The **American Poultry Association** publishes a breed standard book, the ***APA Standard of Perfection***, for heritage poultry breeders. It is a book that describes all the breeds and colors recognized by the organization, and the standards or guidelines by which all poultry is judged.

All poultry lack pedigrees.

Heritage breeds are generally offered for sale with a reg. pedigree, by their breeders. Non-reg. livestock are likely mixed breed.

**< A ultra-rare La Fleche chicken!**

The words “la fleche” translates in French as “the arrow.” It has been said that the La Flèche chicken gets its name from the arrow-like shape of its v-shaped comb, but the name was derived from its geographic origin. La Flèche is a town in France. The village lies east of Paris near Le Mans. This breed of chicken is said to have first been produced in Le Mans during the fifth century.

La Flèche hens lay very large white eggs and lay well from March through October. La Flèche chicks grow slowly. However, the breed was famous for producing magnificent capons (castrated cockerels) and poulardes (fattened pullets) that were much celebrated in the Paris and Anjou markets. Today in the farmers market of La Fleche, these birds are sometimes sold as the “Fowl of Le Mans.”

Of all the French breeds of chicken, it is said that the La Flèche stands at the head for table qualities. They have thin white skin with tender, juicy, delicate, short-grained flesh. Their breasts are meaty and full in shape. The breed fattens well, with the fat distributed across the breasts, legs, thighs, and even the back.

La Flèche chickens made their way to America in the 1850s. They were found by producers to be delicate in constitution, especially so in the eastern and middle States, and were soon abandoned for hardier newly arriving breeds.

La Flèche chickens were recognized by the *American Poultry Association* as a standard breed in 1874. The breed comes in only one variety – Black. Males weigh **8 lbs.** and females weigh **6.5 lbs.**



The **Dominique chicken** is recognized as **America's first chicken breed**. The exact origin of the breed is unknown, although their initial creation may have involved European chicken breeds and later in its refinement, some Asian varieties. The name of "Dominique" may have come from birds that were imported from the French colony of Saint-Domingue (today known as Haiti) and which are thought to have been used as part of the development of the Dominique breed.

Barred chickens with both rose combs and single combs were somewhat common in the eastern United States as early as 1750. In 1874 the Dominique breed was officially admitted to the American Poultry Association's *Standard of Perfection*.

The Dominique enjoyed popularity until the 1920's at which time interest in the breed waned due to the passing of aged, long-time Dominique enthusiasts and breeders. The breed managed to survive during the Great Depression of the 1930's due to its hardiness and ease of up-keep. By the end of World War II as industrial poultry operations began to take a foothold in the U.S., the Dominique once again experienced decline.

By 1970 only 4 known flocks remained, held by: Henry Miller, Edward Uber, Robert Henderson, and Carl Gallaher.

From 1983, following published reports on the breed by *The Livestock Conservancy*, until 2006, Dominiques steadily rose in numbers. As of 2007, it has been observed by the breed's enthusiasts that numbers are once again beginning to decline, as old-time breeders of Dominique age and are no longer involved with keeping and promoting the breed.

The Dominique is a medium-sized black and white barred (otherwise known as "cuckoo" patterned) bird. The barred plumage coloration is also referred to as hawk-colored and serves the Dominique in making the bird less conspicuous to predators. The Dominique sports a rose comb with a short upward curving spike that is characteristic to this breed. The males average seven pounds and the females five pounds. The Dominique's tightly arranged plumage, combined with the low profile of the rose comb, make this breed more resistant to frostbite than many other breeds of fowl. Dominiques are also known to adapt well to hot and humid climates. Historically the close feathering of this breed not only protected the birds in cold weather, but also provided ample material for the pillows and featherbeds of their owners.

Dominiques carry their heads high up on well-arched necks. The males of the breed have an almost "u" shaped back outline. Their body is broad and with full long & tail feathers that are held the highest of the American breeds. Females have back outlines that slope from head to tail.

Categorized as a dual-purpose breed, these birds are first & foremost egg producers with hens historically averaging 250 medium brown eggs.



## Introduction to North America

Angora goats were first introduced in the United States in 1849 by Dr. James P. Davis. Seven adult goats were a gift from Sultan Abdülmeçid in appreciation for his services and advice on the raising of cotton. More goats were imported over time, until the Civil War destroyed most of the large flocks in the south.

Eventually, Angora goats began to thrive in the southwest, particularly in Texas, wherever there are sufficient grasses and shrubs to sustain them.

Texas to this day remains the largest mohair producer in the U.S., and third largest in the world.

The fleece taken from an Angora goat is called mohair.

The Angora goat has been regarded as a direct descendant of the Central Asian Markhor (*Capra falconeri*).

They have been in that region since around the Paleolithic.



**A farmer milking a sheep. A rare etchings by this Italian painter engraver Jan Miel (1599-1664).**

# Hog Island Sheep

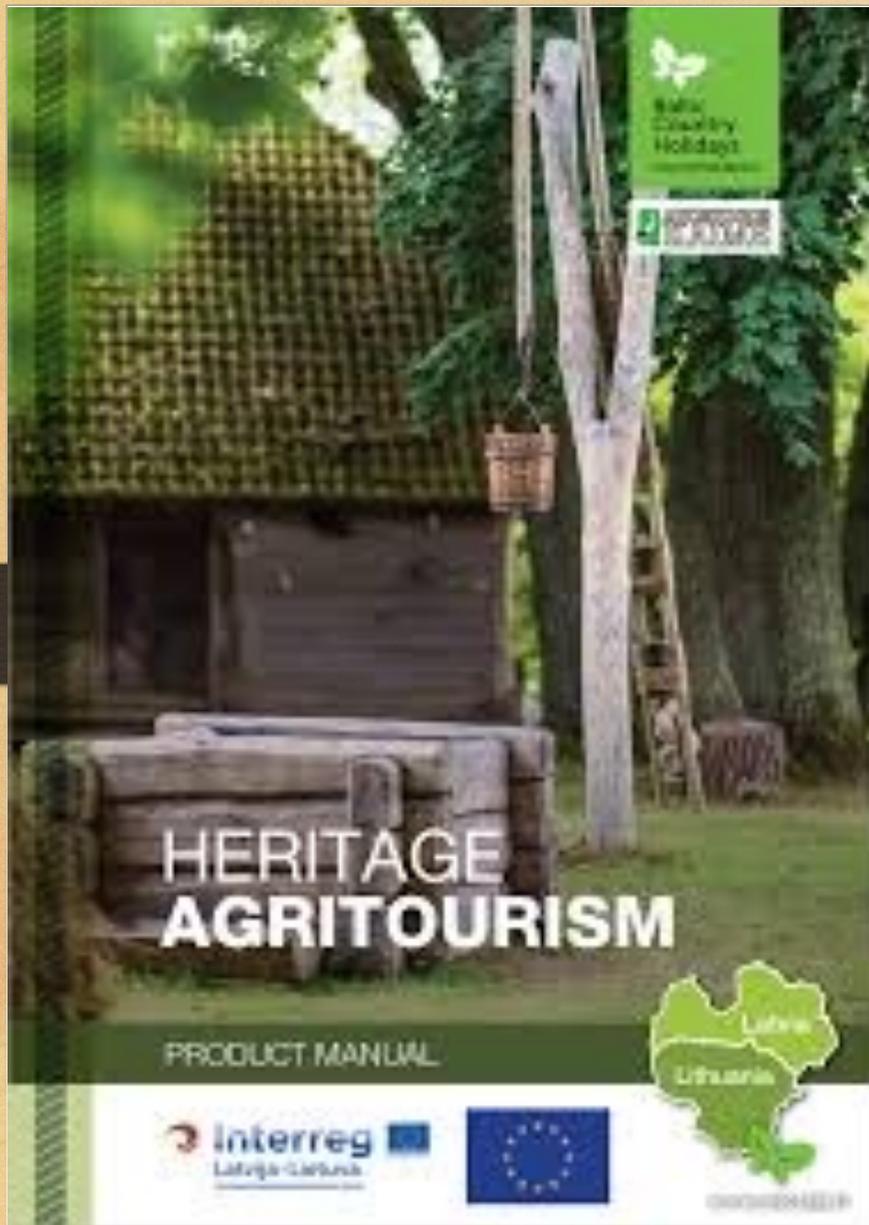


© The Livestock Conserva



# Leicester Longwool Sheep





Over-all project objective was to build and promote a sustainable cross border heritage based agritourism product covering all program area in Latvia and Lithuania. In many rural farms people maintain inherited traditions in farming, culinary, crafts, fishing, building, architecture and gardening.

The project team regards this as part of rural cultural heritage and sees high potential for a competitive cross-border heritage agritourism product.

The product represents open farms where visitors can see and experience rural heritage in attractive way through farm visits, guided excursions and master classes to demonstrate heritage in today's life, tourist accommodation, interactive museum collections, product tasting and farm shops.

Farms were linked in 10 tour itineraries to show the rich variety of regional differences, encourage group and individual travel and stay in program area.

<https://latlit.eu/heritage-based-agritourism-product-development-in-latvia-lithuania/>

## A NC, Veterans Healing Farm...

After returning from the service, John Mahshie cultivated his vision on family land in Hendersonville, NC recruiting 13 families — veterans and civilians alike — to each invest \$100 and sweat equity in exchange for a season's worth of produce. With the farm up and running, he and his supporters started to give back:

Since 2015, the farm has donated over 35,000 pounds of produce to veterans & their caregivers. Every Tuesday morning during the growing season, the VHF van unloads vegetables, fruits and flower bouquets at the Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville for a free open-air market.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDPnXavVr0c&feature=youtu.be>



Check out our developing Virginia's Veterans  
Healing Farm at...

[WWW.SWFVA.COM](http://WWW.SWFVA.COM)

**Seagrave-Williams Farm, LLC,**  
Virginia's Veterans Healing Farm

MeWe: <https://mewe.com/group/5d58bbdeb9de9e48c5cd61f1>