

Discover the Enduring Legacy of One Woman

Our founder, Clara Endicott Sears



In 1914, Clara Endicott Sears' love of the New England landscape and its **rich, cultural history** came to fruition. Sears, a wealthy Bostonian, purchased a farm that was once the site of Bronson Alcott's utopian experiment, known as Fruitlands. Although only lasting seven months, she believed this **transcendental community** was worth preserving, and that its history should be shared and celebrated with others.

Over the next three decades, the museum grew to include Native American art and artifacts, a Shaker collection, as well as a gallery of American vernacular portraits and Hudson River School landscapes.

Her vision for the Fruitlands was as a museum of inspiration — to serve as a place for **education and experimentation**. Even now, more than 90 years later, Fruitlands Museum is committed to this philosophy through educational and outreach programs that serve thousands of adults, students and families each year.

CLARA ENDICOTT SEARS: 1863-1960

Our founder's pioneering role in the preservation of New England culture is quite significant. She combined historic buildings and collections in their original settings, which was not common in the beginning of the 20th century. In fact, Fruitlands itself is a cultural landmark, having been one of the few early representations of an outdoor museum in America.



A prolific author, Sears also explored the land and its history throughout her writings. Her books on utopian and religious communities included the Fruitlands utopian experiment, the Harvard Shakers and the Millerites. She was also an accomplished poet and fiction writer. At the age of 91, she received the first *Authors' Club Citation of Distinction* for her illustrious body of work.

Our commitment to preserving and sharing the unique ideas, stories, objects and landscape of New England lives on, thanks to Clara Endicott Sears.

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