Home Sweet Home, Rehoboth
Former Moses Brown Headmaster
Renovated Fox Farm
by Leslie Patterson

Fox Farm on River Street got its name from the original owner, Frank Fox, a lawyer in Taunton who was quite an athlete at Harvard in his day. Moses Brown School bought the house and surrounding property in 1981 to double the size of its athletic fields in Rehoboth. The private school in Providence increased its enrollment when it went co-ed in 1976.

David Burnham and his wife Anne bought the house from the school and have lived there for about 12 years now, building on to the original house. Before that the house was rented to Moses Brown teachers and staff members. David was headmaster at Moses Brown School from 1978 to 1994, when he retired. Anne is retired from teaching math at Lincoln School in Providence.

While they are not certain exactly when the house was built, the first thing you see upon entering the Burnhams’ home is a huge stone fireplace in the living room, with 1912 carved into the stone. David believes the one-story house was originally used as a summer cottage since there is no basement. The house came with an old-fashioned pool in the yard; there are photos of the Fox family and their friends gathered around it in the summer long ago. A water tank was used to pump water into the pool but the tank has since been torn down and the pool is no longer used.

The Burnhams met when David was teacher at Mt. Hermon School and Anne was teaching at Northfield School for Girls. The two private schools, located in northwestern Massachusetts, merged in 1972. David and Anne are the proud parents of four children, three sons and a daughter, John, Paul, Stephen, and Louise, all of whom live in southern New England. They now have ten grandchildren too. The Burnhams have begun a tradition of enjoying a big family gathering of 35 to 40 people at the River Street house around Thanksgiving.

David has always enjoyed sailing and both he and Anne are still active in various pursuits. He has been on the board of the Paul Cuffee Charter School in Providence and will soon become director emeritus of the board. Anne has served as treasurer of the Community Church of Providence on the East Side. The year after David’s retirement from Moses Brown, they spent a year teaching at a school in Numazo, Japan, near Mt. Fuji, and they have a Japanese print or two among interesting old family photographs lining the wall of their study.

The Burnhams had previously lived in the Moses Brown headmaster’s house on the East Side of Providence before moving to Fox Farm. “We like Rehoboth a lot,” they said. Although snow still covered the ground during our recent visit, in the spring the Burnhams refer to their home as “Daffodil Hill”.

David said that while his immediate family has no connection to Rehoboth, in going over family genealogy, he found that an ancestor named John Burnham was given property in Rehoboth for his military service in the French and Indian War. He said that the name Burnham originally meant home by the river, “and here we are, by the river.”