

IRON WORK FARM in ACTON, Inc.

P.O. Box 1111, Acton, MA 01720

Summer Newsletter 2009

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PATRIOTS' DAY 2009: Spirit of Acton – 1775 and 1861

This year the Iron Work Farm again joined forces with the Acton Historical Society to commemorate the two events on which the Patriots' Day Holiday was founded: the start of the Revolutionary War on April 19, 1775 and the beginning of the Civil War on the same date in 1861. While the Historical Society presented activities based on April 1775, the two properties owned by the Iron Work Farm, Jones Tavern and the Faulkner Homestead, were the site of Civil War re-enactments and the performance of music of the war and the mid-19th-century era.



Folk musicians Dan and Faith Sennie performed at the Tavern, and Dennis Ahern returned to the Faulkner Homestead to explain Acton's involvement in the Civil War, including the roles played by Col. Winthrop E. Faulkner and his son W. Harrison Faulkner, who served with the 7th Kansas Cavalry. Again, both the Union Army and the Confederate forces were represented.

Re-enactors from the 28th Massachusetts Infantry, part of Meagher's Irish Brigade, were encamped at the Tavern, and Company F of the 12th Georgia Volunteer Infantry set up their tents and campfires on the Faulkner grounds. Quilting, spinning, weaving, and 19th-century farm animals rounded out the day, and we thank our many volunteers who were on hand to provide a great experience for all our visitors: Fran Arsenault, Frank Braman, Bonnie Broders, Jake Evans, Karen Gray, Jean James, Brittany Hallet, William Long, Jade Moran, Andie Ordnung, Denise Pageot-Beecy, Barbara Provest, and Ed Rumsey.

TWO BROTHERS, 1863

- by Thomas Bailey, 12th Georgia Volunteers

The Confederate troops encamped at the Faulkner Homestead were a reminder to all of us that many complexities and personal conflicts underlay the allegiances of the time. Even in Massachusetts, some families experienced the heartbreak of having loved ones who fought for different sides. Tom Bailey, of the present-day 12th Georgia Volunteers, wrote the following article about a recent rededication of graves in Fitchburg's Laurel Hill Cemetery:

At the top of the hill stands a tall obelisk commemorating victory and the fallen. The monument was dedicated to the Massachusetts 53rd Regiment Volunteer Militia USA. A list of names adorns one face of the stone. One name caught my eye. Capt. George Henry Bailey, born 1833-died 1863. He was a local boy, educated in the town, who had answered the call when it came in 1861. History records that his service was exemplary, until his tragic death at Port Hudson in 1863. He had a younger brother.

Half way down the slope of the hill, to the left, under the shade of a maple tree, is the family plot containing the resting places of his mother, his father, a sister and her husband. The stones are old and worn, and are smaller than most of the stones in adjoining plots. They stand in a

line two and two with a larger stone centered in a prominent position. This stone stands as a marker for the lost life of Charles Prescott Bailey born 1835-died 1863.

The boys, so alike in temperament, had spent their youth here in the north playing in the town, They had sat at the same dinner table, sung the songs of the same holidays. After schooling was at an end they pursued separate careers, George stayed in the north while Charlie went to seek opportunity in the south. When the call came he too answered.

The stone reads "Charles Prescott Bailey 1835-1863." Charlie had served in Company 5, Slocomb's Battery Washington Artillery, CSA. He fell in a field nestled between two large hills called Glass Mills near Chickamauga.

Two brothers, local boys, who walked the same streets as I. Studied the same subjects as I, Who had dreamed as I have dreamed of home, of family, of friends, of a life lived to a time of reflection and satisfaction. Two brothers, two sides called to conflict, two Americans fighting over two views of history. They died in an attempt to answer the question "Can Americans who once fought side by side to achieve independence, now fight each other to prevent independence?" In death they found union in one soil.

FAULKNER HOMESTEAD UPDATE

After all the excitement of Patriots' Day, our focus turned to the project for which we were awarded a \$22,000 matching grant. (The Faulkner Homestead property, which is listed in the National and State Register of Historic Places, has received a matching grant from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin, Chairman.) Architect Karle Packard of Red Hawk Studios in Concord has led a team in developing a long-term plan for the preservation and interpretation of the entire property, both the building and the landscape. Team members have included landscape architect and historian Martha Lyon and historic preservation consultant Greg Farmer. Once we received their recommendations, Public Archaeology Laboratory (PAL – the same company that did the archaeological work at Acton's "Pine Hawk" site) performed a brief archaeological study of the farmstead area.

Results of the overall study and plans for its implementation will be available later this year. We are anxious to move on to the next steps: improving parking and circulation on the grounds, performing much-needed maintenance to the building, and renovating the living quarters for our tenant/caretaker. The Steinberg-Lalli Foundation has pledged \$5,000 to the cause, provided we raise the same amount in donations. Many of you have already targeted your contributions to the Steinberg-Lalli match, and we are most grateful. If you have already made a pledge toward the Faulkner Homestead Capital Campaign you will receive a reminder later in the year. And remember, donations to the campaign can be spread over three years, and the Foundation will match contributions made in each year up through December 31, 2010. Thank you for your pledges and donations so far. We are already close to the Steinberg-Lalli matching goal, and we look forward to replenishing the capital funds that were used to match the MPPF grant!

JONES TAVERN UPDATE

At the Tavern, thanks largely to the hard work and leadership of Board member Nan Towle Millett, the landscape is gradually taking on a more authentic appearance. Nan has planted spring bulbs, feverfew and lemon balm at the southeast corner of the lawn, and with the help of other volunteers is gradually taming the overgrowth of some of the 20th-century plantings. Belle Choate has donated a root from an old Acton hop vine to both the Faulkner grounds and the Tavern. (Hops were a common plant in 18th- and 19th-century Acton. People grew them for use in brewing ale and beer, and later for decoration as well.)



We are grateful to the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council for funding a portion of the new lighting that will enhance the interior exhibits at the Tavern. Lighting designer Denise Pageot-Becy is presently putting the final touches on the lighting design. The lighting project is supported in part by a grant from the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

2009 UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

South Acton Paint-Out/Art-Out and Sale

2009 marks the third year of the Iron Work Farm's **South Acton Paint-Out/Art-Out and Sale**. This summer you may again notice artists setting up their easels in the area. This year their territory has expanded to include all of the section of Acton that was once part of the original Iron Work Farm that belonged to the 17th-century Concord Iron Works. The finished artwork will be exhibited and offered for sale at Jones Tavern in the fall, including at the Annual Meeting/Open Taproom on October 3 and at the open house on October 25, with a portion of the proceeds going to benefit the Iron Work Farm. Last year's raffle prize, a painting by Wayne Geehan, was won by Bob O'Neill.

Congratulations, Bob!



Open houses at Jones Tavern and the Faulkner Homestead

Both the Tavern and the Faulkner Homestead will be open to the public on the last Sundays of August and October from 3 to 5 p.m. On September 27, only the Faulkner Homestead will be open to visitors. And keep in mind that walking the loop trail in the Faulkner woods is one of the coolest activities on a hot day!

As always, volunteer open-house hosts are needed, and we provide the training. If you are interested in hosting or in any other volunteer tasks, please contact Nan Towle Millett at 978-621-9201 or email her at director1@ironworkfarm.org.

Annual Meeting and Jones Tavern Open Taproom, Saturday October 3

Over 175 people attended last year's Jones Tavern Open Taproom. For the fourth year in a row this fall fund-raising event will coincide with the Iron Work Farm Annual Meeting, and will again feature a variety of home brews made by IWF volunteers. (Remember the one called Jennie Townsend's Brown Wedding Dress Ale?) A new collection of mugs and tankards from the pottery and kiln at Old Sturbridge Village will be available for purchase, and there will again be music by some of the best musicians in the Acton area.

Muskets in South Acton!

If you have noticed tri-corn hats or heard muskets at Jones Tavern on select Mondays, it is because the **Acton Minutemen** now call the tavern home. For most of the past year the Isaac Davis Company have held their monthly meetings in the 1732 parlor, and on occasion have met in the tavern dining room. This seems only fitting, since the original Acton Militia is believed to have met there, and the Tavern was also the birthplace of Revolutionary War veterans Samuel and Aaron Jones. Stay tuned for news of an upcoming skirmish in the Faulkner woods, as well. You may even see some redcoats!



Mothertown Quilt Project

IWF is honored to have received a unique fund-raising opportunity, thanks to the members of the Mothertown Quilters. This group, who gave a quilting

demonstration at the Faulkner Homestead on Patriots' Day, has offered to make a queen-size quilt in a Civil War-era design using reproduction fabrics, to be raffled for the benefit of the Iron Work Farm. Raffle tickets will be sold through early 2010. More information on the quilt and the raffle will be available in the fall. To find out about the Mothertown Quilters, check out their website at <http://mothertownquilters.com>.



Winthrop Harrison Faulkner (1841-1885)



At Jones Tavern and the Faulkner Homestead we observe many anniversaries. Some are milestones, like the 300th anniversary of the Faulkner House two years ago. Others are more obscure. This year we are reminded that 150 years ago one of the lesser-known residents of the homestead, Winthrop Harrison (“Harry”) Faulkner, left Acton in the company of two young friends to seek fortune and adventure in the west. The occasion was the Pike’s Peak Gold Rush, also known as the second American gold rush, when people staked claims and panned for gold in the Rocky Mountains.

The Iron Work Farm is fortunate to have a collection of letters that Harry sent home to his parents. They describe both his search for gold and the unsettled life of a young man on the western frontier just before the Civil War. Both the letters and a summary of Harry’s life, which was all too short, are on display at the Faulkner House. To learn more about Harry Faulkner’s story, please ask to see them when you visit!

We thank Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage of Acton for their contribution to the printing of this newsletter.

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Mark this Date on your Fall Calendar!

Iron Work Farm in Acton

Annual Meeting, Art Show and Open Tap Room

Saturday, October 3, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Visit www.ironworkfarm.org