

IRON WORK FARM in ACTON, Inc.

P.O. Box 1111, Acton, MA 01720

www.ironworkfarm.org

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2010 at JONES TAVERN and the FAULKNER HOMESTEAD

A YEAR OF ANNIVERSARIES

Another active year has come and gone at the two historic properties owned by the Iron Work Farm. South Acton experienced a remarkable number of anniversaries in 2010 – the 150th of Exchange Hall and of the Jones family's 1860 New England Village subdivision; the 300th birthday of the home of Jonathan Knight (partner with Ephraim and Samuel Jones in the founding of South Acton); and the 350th birthday of the c. 1660 farm of the Concord Iron Works that was later divided to become most of the south part of Acton.

Here at the Iron Work Farm we quietly marked a more recent anniversary: ten years have passed since, after much restoration work, we finally reopened the Jones Tavern to visitors. It had been largely closed to the public for nearly 33 years. IWF was originally formed as a non-profit organization to own and operate the building as a historic house museum after it was narrowly saved from demolition in 1964. Then, in 1967 a fire badly damaged the Tavern's interior, and for three decades IWF's open houses were held at the Faulkner Homestead, which it acquired in 1969.

It was not until 2000 that we were able to put on a full season of activities at both buildings. At first only three rooms in the Tavern were open to visitors. The next year we scrubbed off soot and painted and papered a fourth – the northeast chamber in the c. 1818 "Aaron Jones" wing. The west part of the building, and even Samuel Jones's 1732 bedchamber, remained in a fire-damaged state, with holes in walls and ceilings, and charred and smoke-blackened woodwork. Reluctant to replace the historic surfaces with new material, we have left them that way, concluding that heavily damaged historic elements may have more to teach than even the prettiest modern surfaces.

A new step was taken this year, when we opened some of the dark, damaged rooms to the public on a regular basis. During the 2010 **Patriots' Day** Civil War re-enactment, the commander of the Union Army's 28th Massachusetts Infantry set up his recruitment desk in the blackened 1732 Tavern kitchen. A Union intelligence agent roamed the entire building, while an army engineer taught groups of eager kids and adults how to build fortifications and survey the land with links and chain. With the 28th Massachusetts mustering on the Tavern lawn, and the 12th Georgia Infantry, Civil War quilters, spinners, and farm animals at the Faulkner Homestead, IWF entertained over 650 visitors! Expanded hours let us utilize both of our historic properties to the fullest, April 19th, 2010 ushered in the spring and summer, literally, with a bang.

2010 OPEN HOUSES

The monthly open houses, planned by IWF Director Nan Towle Millett, featured a different theme each time. Visitors learned about colonial herbs in May, saw a typical day in 1735 at the Faulkner Homestead in June, and took part in a Civil War quilting bee at Jones Tavern in July. The August open house leaped ahead to the 20th century era when the Faulkner Homestead served as a summer home. September ushered in the harvest at Jones Tavern, complete with Native American foods and produce.

At the October open house we celebrated Massachusetts Archaeology Month with artifacts and an archaeology walk led by Kimberley Connors-Hughes on the Faulkner grounds. At the same time at Jones Tavern another year's **Paint-Out/Art-Out Exhibit**, themed "Acton's 275th", was on display in conjunction with Acton Open Studios

2010 SPECIAL EVENTS: FUNDRAISING AND FUN!

Although the open houses are only held during warm weather, this year the IWF season started in March. The third annual **spring egg hunt** on the Faulkner grounds was pure fun for our young South Acton neighbors. The March 20th **Equinox Dance Party**, in the Ballroom of the refurbished Exchange Hall, was just as much fun for adults, and raised funds for the Iron Work Farm through both ticket sales and a silent auction. In July, IWF Director Belle Choate generously hosted a **party for IWF's volunteers** on the shores of Fort Pond, Littleton – a place where Samuel Jones and his descendants owned land well into the 20th century. Finally, on October 2nd we held our most successful **Annual Meeting/Open Tap Room** ever. Home-brewed beer was served from the old tap room, live music filled the 1732 parlor, and the Acton Minutemen fired their muskets on the lawn. A crowd of 175 members, neighbors and friends gathered indoors and out, and generously contributed over \$4,000 to the Iron Work Farm.

Other 2010 EVENTS

In addition to our own activities, IWF collaborated with other organizations on several occasions. In April we again hosted the “Spirit of Acton” on Patriots’ Day with the Acton Historical Society. In September the Historical Society invited our members to a talk with special relevance to our properties: In celebration of the 150th anniversary of Exchange Hall, local historian Bill Klauer spoke about the Jones and Tuttle families. Their thriving 19th century South Acton businesses, eventually centered at Exchange Hall, grew out of the original store established by Samuel Jones at Jones Tavern in c. 1750.

During the summer, IWF Secretary Anne Forbes led two walking tours of “New England Village”, the 1860 subdivision that Elnathan Jones, Jr. developed on part of the old Jones Farm. Then in October, IWF was pleased to see the last surviving part of the Jones farm preserved by the town of Acton.

Throughout the year, Iron Work Farm raised its voice to speak about the proposed Train Station plan, and to support the town’s purchase of the Simeone-Cauette Farm, another jewel of South Acton. Our position as a non-profit in the heart of the Village gives us a unique position to protect the quality of the town.

IWF WELCOMES NEW DIRECTORS and the 2010 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

At the October annual meeting we welcomed two new members to the IWF Board of Directors. South Acton resident Leigh Davis Honn brings to the Board her business acumen and communications skills, spiced with the experience of living in an 18th-century house. Stan Parzych is an active Acton Minuteman who already knows our two historic properties well through the many Minutemen activities that have taken place there.

Announcing the IWF **Volunteer of the Year** has become an annual meeting tradition. This time it really should be for multiple years, for **Craig Surprise** has served as IWF Webmaster since 2009. Craig is helping us advance into the 21st century with a refurbished website featuring frequent updates, more pages, and slide shows of photos from our events.

2011 EVENTS

Please keep checking Ironworkfarm.org for updates to the Iron Work Farm calendar. The first major event of 2011 will be the second **Equinox Dance Party**, March 19 at Exchange Hall, with the Bruce Marshall Group – a local musical legend in their own right. Mark your calendars!

While our properties are closed for the winter, the work of the organization goes on. **VOLUNTEERS** make all our events and open houses possible. We thank all who have helped so much in 2010. 2011 will offer many more volunteer opportunities. Please watch for our notices (now sent by email), and think about getting involved!

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