

The Bullard Memorial Farm Association Newsletter

The Bullard Homestead
7 Bullard Lane
Holliston, MA 01746
Since 1658



Happy New Year!

In every issue of the newsletter I exclaim how quickly time passes between them. Here I am again, stunned at the rapid passage of time and that 2015 is here already! I hope you all had a joyful Christmas and a happy New Year's celebration.

The photo of the barn, above, was taken last February. I love the peacefulness of the image, and the waning light as the sun falls behind the trees in the back of the photo. Looking at this photo I am wondering where all the snow is this winter? We certainly didn't have a white Christmas—far from it! I think it was 55 degrees here in Maine. Personally, I would really like to see some snow soon—it makes me nervous that we have hardly seen any of it yet this year!

The holidays can be a stressful time in one's life, but hopefully we can all take some moments to reflect on our blessings...one of which is the Bullard Memorial Farm. With the 2015 membership and donation drive under way, please consider an extra gift to the farm as you renew your membership this year.

Here's to a safe, healthy, and happy 2015!

October 4 Meeting Highlights

From the Clerk's Meeting Minutes

The BMFA fall meeting was held on October 4, at 1:20pm, following a pot luck lunch. 48 members 28 members were present at the lunch, and a quorum was met at the meeting between members and proxies.

Clerk Suzanne McFarland reported:

Two births:

- Wesley Philip Jensen, born September 23, 2014 to Philip and Tiffany Jensen
- Nora Grace Hachim, born September 28, 2013 to Virginia Hoekenga Hachim and Ahmed Hachim;

Two marriages (reported by Marion Poett Howard Hoekenga):

- Barbara Christine Hoekenga to Aaron Lien, June 13, 2009
- Virginia Anne Hoekenga to Ahmed Hachim, July 5, 2013

One death:

- Elizabeth Gayle Ferencz, born June 20, 1953, and married to John P. Ferencz, Jr., after a long illness in May, 2014. A moment of silence was observed.

New Member:

- Eliza Maria Hood was voted into the BMFA membership. She was vouched for by Steve and Susan Hood.

George Bollenbacher recognized and thanked Suzanne McFarland for her 30 years as Director and her 10 years as Clerk. Thank you, Suzanne, for your years of dedicated service—you've done so much for the BMFA! *[Editor's note: don't think Suzanne will retreat from the BMFA just because she is no longer the Clerk! She's already signed up for a few projects/committees, which is no surprise!]*

Suzanne McFarland reported that a **Barn Improvement Project** is under way. She, **Peter Hood, Jennifer Parramore** and **Jack Hathaway** met with an architect to discuss additions/improvements to the barn such as bathrooms,

storage space for tables and chairs, and a small kitchenette. **Scott Hills** volunteered to help.

During the Directors' Meeting on October 4, the **Artifacts and Collections Committee** was formed, chaired by **Suzanne McFarland**, with committee members **Daphne Stevens** and **Chip Thurlow**. The committee's purpose is to obtain a baseline inventory of artifacts, have experts view and assess them, and determine their worth. After Suzanne asking members to consider joining the committee, **Karen Leenhouts** joined. Anyone else interested in joining, please reach out to Suzanne McFarland at suzjaymcf@aol.com.

George Bollenbacher unveiled the BMFA logo, designed by Vanessa Wheeler:



George and Betsy have produced branded baseball caps which will be for sale for \$15. Farm caretakers were given shirts with the logo, and Betsy also had aprons produced. George will be letting the membership know how items may be ordered.

Meredith Flynn: New BMFA Clerk!!



We have a new clerk of the BMFA! As noted in the announcement sent by her predecessor, Suzanne McFarland, Meredith lives in Franklin, MA with her husband Brian and her two-year-old son, Rory. Her full time job is raising Rory and together they love playing at home with their black lab puppy, Dexter, as well as going on adventures to the library, museum, park and more! Outside of her family, Meredith

enjoys being manager/player of a women's soccer team, assistant-coaching high school track and field, and competing in the occasional road race. Meredith grew up with cherished memories of time spent at the Bullard Farm and looks forward to creating more with her family in her new role as director and Clerk.

Education Program Events Summaries submitted by Tara Hathaway, Committee Chair

Below are highlights from some of the programs held at the BMF, starting with Holliston Farms Day on September 14, and "Knitting in the 19th Century" on November 16, and Louisa May Alcott impersonator, Jan Turnquist who took attendees on a trip in time.

Holliston Farms Day 2014, September 14



September brought the annual Holliston Farms Day to Bullard Farm. It was beautiful weather, and the farm was alive and busy all day.

This year, our wonderful Farm caretakers Tim and Bridgett, fully embraced the day and joined in the fun. They were dressed in period costume and had a cooking fire set up with a wrought iron tripod. Tim was cooking a delicious chicken corn soup, along with warm corn bread made in a cast iron skillet. Bridgett was knitting and also displaying items that the Bullards likely knitted and used while they were living at the farm.



Tim was also demonstrating splitting cedar rails using a wedge and sledghammer; he

intended to use the rails for a fence around the garden.

In the barn, children were busy participating in and enjoying the period arts and crafts. Meredith Flynn and Karen Leenhouts led the yarn and clothespin doll-making station, while Melissa Audier was making tin punched art and shades. The bake table was selling homemade treats and fresh squeezed lemonade. James Hathaway and Nancy Kingsbury were busy making lots of lemonade! Nancy was also busy selling the Bullard Books and pamphlets and answering questions about the farm.



Tours of the museum were led by Phil Audier. Doug and Jack Hathaway enjoyed showing guests the chickens and Tim's new pig.

As always, visitors were intrigued with the farm and very appreciative that we participate - another successful Holliston Farms Day!

Knitting Event, November 16

The farm hosted Rebecca Bayreuther Donohue on Sunday, November 16. It was a very cold day, but we had a warm fire in the kitchen and hot cider for all.



The program was titled *"The Most Easy and Graceful Employment - Knitting in the 19th Century"*.

Rebecca is the manager of the Period Costume Workshop at Mystic Seaport: the Museum of America & the Sea, a charter member of Juleps & Viragoes, the living history

program at the 1853 Stevens-Frisbie House in Cromwell, Connecticut, and a former Confederate infantryman. She spent the past summer cleaning off her office desk in order to house even more yarn.

Rebecca has a talent for presenting an engaging program about 19th century hand-knitting. Period photographs & engravings, instruction books and period patterns joined exquisite original pieces & charming reproductions to illustrate the depth of the art as it became associated more with leisure than with necessity.



She managed to keep everyone amused and interested in the topic and included relevant, entertaining tales. It was fun to see some guests knitting away while they enjoyed the presentation.

A Visit from "Louisa May Alcott", December 4



The Farm was the perfect setting to host a visit from "Louisa May Alcott"!

"Louisa" arrived at the Bullard Farm on the evening of December 4, after one of her carriage wheels broke out on the road. We invited her into the warm house to wait for repairs.

She was thrilled to share the time with the many guests in the house. We had over 30 guests, including children and young teens. "Louisa" did a wonderful job of including the younger generation in her talk, and they certainly enjoyed interacting with her! She spoke of her childhood, and how that had influenced her characters and the story of *Little Women*.



"Louisa" shared that the sisters in the book were all based on her actual sisters, and she told many amusing tales of her family, friends, and neighbors in Concord, and how those experiences helped her write the famous story. Included were Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the Hawthorne family.

Jan Turquist acted as the historical interpreter, impersonating Louisa. She is an educator, actress, historian and the founder of InterAct Performances. She is currently the Executive Director of Orchard House, the Alcott Family home in Concord, and where "Louisa May Alcott wrote and set her beloved classic novel, *Little Women*, in 1868".

"Jan's delightful personality, impressive communications skills, and extensive knowledge make her a hit with all who attend her programs" – we thoroughly agree!

For more information on Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House Museum, visit:

<http://www.louisamayalcott.org/>



The Minister Chairs

Submitted by Jack Kingsbury

Colonial historians and genealogists have long been aware that intermarrying (repeated marriages within a single family or among a small number of already related families) was common in the early towns of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Populations then were small and choice of suitable marriage partners strictly limited in the early years. Did any genetically harmful inbreeding result? No one really knew.

Several years ago I realized I could address that question with actual numbers. Some of my faculty colleagues in the New York State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell were using a newly developed software program to calculate coefficients of inbreeding in horses, dogs, and some lines of dairy cattle. I obtained a copy of that software and laboriously entered the marriage statistics for about a hundred of my own ancestral Bullards and Kingsburys and the families they married into. The results were clear. Despite much intermarrying, it had been done carefully. Almost no coefficients of inbreeding were greater than what is produced by the marriage of second cousins. Genetic effects of second cousin marriages are essentially negligible.

I published these results in a top genealogical periodical (*Quarterly Journal of the National Genealogical Society*) some years ago. No significant disagreement with my results has yet surfaced, but I have wondered a bit why the actual inbreeding was not greater in these numerous intermarriages. Here I now postulate two possible reasons and tell a Bullard story about the second.

First, and probably most important, the Bullards and Kingsburys were basically farmers. All of them knew and probably many of them had directly experienced the serious genetic consequences of too-close inbreeding in farm animals, and could consciously or unconsciously extend that idea to the human species.

Second was the church and its minister. As pastor of his flock, the colonial minister was expected to know his parishioner families well

and provide guidance in their lives. In this role, he was expected to visit each family in his parish periodically to listen to problems and offer sage advice. The mandatory visitation took place at least once each year or more frequently when needed. The bible contains injunctions about marrying, which a minister would set forth. That, and his own personal advice about a good marriage, probably inhibited too-close unions in the early families.

Now the Bullard story: In nearly every colonial home, one front room was furnished well and kept scrupulously in order for purposes of marriages, deaths, and the annual ministerial visit. One of the front parlors at the Bullard Farm in my childhood included two simple rush-seated chairs of the kind known as "ladderback". My father, Willis Kingsbury Jr., always called those two ladderback chairs in the Bullard southwest parlor "the minister chairs." When I once asked him why he called them that, he pointed out that someone had apparently sawed about a half inch off the bottoms of the front legs on each chair. Instead of standing straight up as it seemed, they actually tilted forward, not enough to be obvious but enough that sitting in them for any length of time was uncomfortable to the point of becoming almost impossible after a half hour or so. The idea was if one could get the minister to settle on one of them when he visited, valued though his visit was, he wouldn't stay too long.

2015 Events

The following is a list of upcoming events. Most of the dates still need to be confirmed, so please visit www.bullardmemorialfarm.org soon for more information about these events:

January 28: "Piano Charlie, The Wild Life of a Notorious Bullard", presented by Holliston Historian, Joanne Hulbert

February: Textiles speaker

March: Vernal pool walk with Marc Connelly

April: Civil War folk music performance in barn

May: Open House Tour

Calling all Bullards

Reminder: Please send any and all member news items and photos to Jean Hood. Be sure to include a date. She will include them in the BMFA scrapbooks. Jean's address is: 1 Oaknoll Court, Iowa City, Iowa 52246. *Thank you!*

BMF website

Be sure to take some time to visit our website: www.bullardmemorialfarm.org Ken Wood updates the website frequently and encourages and welcomes any feedback to improve the site.

If you have any news items, photographs, etc., please submit them directly to Ken at: woodk@norwalkps.org

Mark your calendars! 2015 Meetings

The membership voted on to accept the **2015 meetings** scheduled for **Saturday, June 6**, and **Saturday, October 3**. We hope to see you there.

