

JULY 1, 2015

Restoration work continues on the house with repairs to the sill beam and siding. The plywood cover was removed from the exterior of the parlor entryway and we were surprised to find a wood storm door in good condition. The parlor door itself is also in good condition. Oddly enough a number of buttons (including shell, bone, and composite), marbles, and a Davy Crockett-like plastic toy figurine (circa 1950) were found in the sill beam below the threshold of the door. We are getting very close to point of scraping and repainting the exterior. Parts of the interior have already received a new coat of paint with period appropriate colors beginning with the dining room. We've also been moving in antique furniture including original family items. The upstairs has all original pine flooring and it now appears that much of the first floor does as well. It's been interesting to find many of the patches and repairs in the floors that were made over time.

We've managed to find additional wood samples from various areas of the house during the restoration process. Since the only wood sample from the house came back quite a bit earlier than we had originally anticipated (1841/42 vs 1855), we are going to have more samples tested to hopefully develop a chronology on the construction of the house. Some of the wood is definitely from slow growth trees. One stud made of oak appears to have nearly 80 rings in a 2" section. The samples will be analyzed by Dr. Henri Grissino-Mayer at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville this fall.

Despite many twelve hour days cleaning up the yard and house, we did manage to do some excavation recently. Two quarter units were excavated near the northwest corner of the house to install a new window well for the cellar window. Square nails, peach pits, window glass, and bottle glass were recovered. Several sherds of ceramics were also found including blue edgeware (circa 1850) and what appears to be the lip of a sugar bowl or teapot that has a blue stripe on the top edge. The recovery of the window glass has an interesting background story. According to my great uncle, Robert, a hail storm in the spring of 1930 shattered the windows on the west side of the house as well as broke lamps and shades on the interior. Electricity was installed that same year and he recalled that his oldest sister was afraid to flip any of the switches out of fear of electrocution.

One of the most important recent events, though, was held at the farm just last Sunday. We held a reunion to celebrate the farm coming back into the family. For those that don't know, Warner family get-togethers typically celebrate several events concurrently, this time an early surprise birthday party for me in addition to the reunion. I was stunned and humbled to receive from my great Aunt Maxine (who traveled all the way from Arizona) three original family portraits dating to the early 1900s that had hung in the house for decades. These portraits will remain cherished family items to be enjoyed by many people over many years as they grace the parlor and dining room. Other family members

have offered to provide other family pieces including the original dining room table. I also received an antique table top radio that still works - vacuum tubes and all. Mr. and Mrs. Holtz, family friends and neighbors for decades, brought back a steel wheel wagon that they were given when the barns were being removed. Having kept the wheels greased over the past 13 years or so, the hundred year old wagon moved and functioned surprisingly well. As has been tradition for nearly 130 years, we took a group picture of the family standing in front of the house. Despite all that was going on at the farm we were also able to learn about a few more family stories that provide much needed explanation to parts of the house and what we've recovered archaeologically. Needless to say the family is quite happy for the farm to be back and are glad for the restoration work in progress.