



SCANTLINGS

NEWSLETTER OF THE TIMBER FRAMERS GUILD
NUMBER 198 NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2015

Crane raised at Maine meeting

MICHAEL CUBA

On September 26–28, Ellen Gibson hosted the second Northeast regional meeting at the Vaughan Homestead in Hallowell, Maine. About 40 people gathered for a weekend of camping, swapping stories, great food, and exploration of the local sites. Most people arrived on Friday evening to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and enjoy the views of the Kennebec River on a perfect early autumn night.

The events of the weekend began Saturday morning with a talk by Arron Sturgis of Preservation Timber Framing in Berwick, Maine. Arron talked of his experience creating a successful timber framing business in the historic preservation field. Afterward, the group split into four parts so we wouldn't overcrowd the structures on the tour. The morning portion of the tour was largely within walking distance of the homestead and included:

- The 1794 Vaughan Homestead, an impressive two story hip roofed house with additions and outbuildings.
- Elm Hill Farm, designed in 1799 and built soon after. The house is an unusual Cape with a large entry hall with 11-ft. high vaulted ceilings and an apse-like dining room supported by trusses.
- The 1829 Hallowell fire house.
- The Karasopolous farmstead, in Farmingdale, which features a barn dating to the early 1800s and a rambling farmhouse with a Federal-era core.

We were on our own for lunch, and there was no shortage of tasty food options. The afternoon tour, arranged by Otis Carroll of Pownalborough Restorations LLC, included some unexpected excursions to early barns. Seeing the extra buildings led some of us to finish the tour on Sunday, as there was hardly time to take it all in and make it back for Saturday's dinner. It was well worth every minute! The sites in nearby Dresden and Wiscasset included:

- The Pownalborough Courthouse (1761). This massive three story, hip roofed building on the banks of the Kennebec River is the only pre-revolutionary courthouse in Maine.
- The Old Lincoln County Jail (1811) and jailer's house (1839), one of the oldest remaining jails in New England.
- The Alna Meetinghouse (1789), a great example of an eaves entry meetinghouse with an original porch. The building has both Georgian and Federal details, box pews, raised pulpit, and an impressive sounding board.

Just before dinner, we met back at the Vaughan Homestead for some hands-on activities. People helped raise a 1:5 scale replica of a scribe-ruled English threshing barn brought by Jim Derby of Waldoboro, Maine. Others assembled and raised a small crane that had been used to build the granite bridges throughout the Vaughan Woods. The crane is essentially a gin pole with a jib. The gin pole has pins at the top and bottom that allow it to fully rotate. The crane has built-in sheaves, gears and a handbrake for both raising and lowering the load and the jib. Jim Rogers also set up a number of old tools in Ellen's shop for people to browse and buy.



Michael Cuba

Hall at Elm Hill with vaulted ceilings and wide paneled entry hall that are unusual for an otherwise austere Cape.

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Scantlings, the member newsletter of the Timber Framers Guild, is published in January, February, April, May, July, August, October, and November. **Next deadline: Dec. 5.**

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Regional meetings: Well worth planning effort

ELLEN GIBSON

Each of the events that the Guild has planned over the years—conferences, projects, and meetings—brings together people who are interested in the craft and all that it involves. The big projects and full conferences are wonderful energy boosters: full of information, activities, and professional connections. The smaller conferences, projects, and gatherings are also opportunities to get together, learn something new, and share information. After attending a regional gathering at the Southworths' Garland Mill in Lancaster, N.H., several years ago, I thought of holding one in the small town of Hallowell, Maine, on the grounds of the non-profit that I manage. This happened first in 2013.

Events are successful due to the hard work and organization that go on beforehand and behind the scenes. When I hosted the first New England regional meeting two years ago, I had very sketchy plans and kept few records of the actual time spent organizing the event. It all worked out, and I heard from the participants that these small regionals were very important. Potential Guild members and framers felt comfortable mingling with long time framers, and local homeowners and historians became involved. There was a lot of socializing, some looking at old structures, music, informational talks, good food—pretty basic, but very engaging. And the price was right. But I didn't feel I had an accurate understanding of what went into planning and organizing the weekend. It was a roller coaster of activity.



Michael Cuba

Ellen Gibson and Arron Sturgis speak to 40 participants gathered at September regional meeting.

I decided to hold another gathering in September 2015, and I planned to keep better track of the labor involved, volunteers, co-hosts and sponsors, the cost of hosting, and the revenue brought in. At the April TTRAG symposium, Otis Carroll of Pownalborough, Maine, offered to help, and we met later in the spring to start planning for the fall gathering. We decided it could include tours of buildings in Pownalborough and Alna, Maine, as well as in my community of Hallowell, several miles to the west. The event would be based at the Vaughan Homestead in Hallowell, and all food, camping, and directional information would be there. Because of the travel distance for a lot of people, I decided to make it a weekend event, with people coming in Friday afternoon and staying until Sunday morning.

Otis and I spoke or emailed a few times during the spring, setting up the general idea of the two tour areas, but most of the planning came in late August after the Guild began promoting the event. I brought Guild literature to several individuals and organizations who owned interesting old structures and who might be willing to have visitors. All said yes. Otis spoke with the historical association in his community about the buildings that they ran and their hours and tour schedules. Arron Sturgis of Preservation Timberframing said he would give a presentation and two local musicians agreed to play Saturday night.

Two weeks before the gathering, 20 people had signed up to come. As with any event, it's hard to make final plans until you know how many will be attending, but I started putting menus together at this time. I asked a few staff and friends for food donations and help with general planning and setup. Once the weekend started, other people would have to help out and be aware of what was needed next. The schedule for the weekend was mostly arranged at this point: tours set up, hosts briefed, breakfasts and dinners being worked on, slide projector set up, and some hands-on play planned. Jim Derby offered to bring his 1:5 scale barn model to assemble, and an old derrick crane stored in the Homestead's barn needed raising. The weekend was coming together. The last people signed up the night before the gathering started. With attendance now doubled to about 40, pasta was featured on the menu.

People started arriving Friday afternoon to set up camp, yak with friends, and have dinner. Jim's small barn was raised, prompting conversations on structural problems and solutions. The derrick crane rigging was discussed and solved thanks to Curtis Milton, and the crane was raised. The evening continued with music, dinner, slides, conversation, camp fire—fun. Sunday morning breakfast ended the gathering, but people stayed to talk and share stories. Everyone helped to clean up. The weekend was a success.

Organizing a regional gathering isn't complicated. The planning for the event requires both forethought and last minute flexibility. The structure varies, depending on the host and the area; there is no prescribed format. It is important to reach out to the community for help and participation, and include individuals, historical associations, schools, and libraries in the gathering, passing on information about the Guild, and gathering information from these groups. Keep the plans simple and communicate with all the volunteers involved right up to the end. The food doesn't have to be fancy, but it's important to have dishes that can be quickly added to or easily prepared on the fly. Have someone from the local historical society give a talk or have craftspeople give a tour of their shops.

Plan housing, porta-potties, food, utensils, seating, and activities in advance. Ask volunteers, sponsors, and hosts, clue them in to the plans, and thank them afterwards. But the best part of the gathering—the camaraderie, conversations, sharing of information, problem solving, yakking about projects—that just happens on its own.

These regionals are an opportunity for people to get involved in and learn about framing and the Guild in a low key, very informal setting. This is inviting to new framers, local people and those who prefer smaller events.

After expenses, the proceeds of the 2015 Northeast regional meeting will be divided between the Vaughan Homestead and the Timber Framers Guild.

Please host a regional gathering in your local community. It isn't difficult, it's not expensive, and it's very rewarding to all involved.

Specifics

Food

Breakfasts: Bagels, yogurt, fruit, peanut butter, coffee, tea.

Dinners: Pasta, sauce, salad, sausages, bread, fruit, brownies, drinks.

Snacks: Chips, dips, popcorn, fruit, drinks.

Labor

Vaughan Homestead staff: Plan, set up, take down, about 40 hours.

Volunteers: Food prep, clean up, host, about 25 hours.

Participation fee

Adults—\$50, kids—\$10 for entire weekend.
\$20 for Saturday only.

Expenses

Food, drinks—\$560

Music—\$200

Donation—\$50 to historical association

Other considerations

Upcoming Guild events

Local attractions

Weather

Volunteer, staff time

Space, equipment needs



New building and restoration work make built environment “right”

RICK COLLINS

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.—Aldo Leopold

Last night I slept in a small bedroom in a typical saddle notch cabin built in the mid-20s in Missouri. There are lots of those still around—cabins constructed around the time of the first re-growth of timber in the Midwest. Built mostly of oak and some short-leaf pine, this one has been maintained well. On the same property is a very large lodge that we are restoring, and with the work we are doing replacing and replicating the sill logs, it should easily last another 100 years before repair work of this level could be needed again.

Restoration work always infuses me with hope in way that doing new work does not. It gives me a sense that people really do care about our built heritage, and it invigorates the carpenter in me who also wants to build new. It takes skill to do restoration work well, and skill requires training; training requires teachers and people who want to learn. This is a cycle we are all aware of, and many of us never want to stop raising the bar of our work: more skill, more training, better work, cooler projects. All of that means that we can build better and better, and building better means what we build will last longer. This is really a cycle we want to be a part of.

American author and early environmentalist Aldo Leopold refers to the biotic community; I read biotic as our whole community, the community of the planet earth. As humans, we build shelters, and our shelters too must be “right” to be long lasting and sustainable, buildings that come from and fit the landscape. If they don’t, they are indeed wrong, are a waste of resources,

and are not well maintained. They may be poorly maintained because the owners don’t see beauty in what they dwell in. This may reflect on their own happiness as well. For an example of a type of dwelling that may not fit the Leopold paradigm, think of poorly constructed mobile home trailers or many American pre-fabricated homes. These are structures that I believe are made with low quality materials and without a design that has the beauty of the biotic community in mind.

Recently I have been involved in a couple of urban projects that I believe embody Aldo Leopold’s message about how a thing can be right. Our most recent project was next to the Shedd Aquarium on the Chicago lakefront. The designers call it a kiosk and it’s meant to reflect not only the built environment, but also the lakefront and the park that was originally the campus for the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893 (the Columbian Exposition).

This kiosk was an award winner for the new Chicago Architectural Biennial. Its design incorporates the largest known flat cross laminated timber (CLT) roof in North America. A CLT is an engineered wood panel typically consisting of three, five, or seven layers of dimensional lumber oriented at right angles to one another and then glued to form structural panels with exceptional strength, dimensional stability, and rigidity. The roof is supported by 13 posts with top moment connections and is not anchored down. All told, this 53-ft. square roof weighs 75,000 pounds. We know, because to meet OSHA 6-ft. working height requirements, we built the entire roof system at ground level and jacked it into position. This allowed us to do all the work without having to use fall protection and tie in.

The entire structure is made of spruce CLT from a plant in Quebec. It’s a great use of material as it allows for shorter lengths and weaker woods to be used than in solid timber applications. There is an abundance of structurally lower quality timber available all over the world right now, and CLTs are a great answer to this available supply. Not only is the structure built from these sustainably harvested materials, but also its design blends with the park, lakefront, and Chicago skyline in a way that harmonizes both the natural and built environment.

North of downtown Chicago, we were involved in the testing, fabrication, and installation of a 380-ft. plus walkway around a modern theatre. This project involved the use of up to 12-in. x 24-in. x 86-ft. Port Orford cedar glulams. It pushed our conventional thinking of joinery and involved the use of a never before tested joint. A joint now called the “cat’s-paw” required the kerfing, steaming, clamping, and finally routing of



Trusses of Kaskaskia Hotel and Conference Center.



Chicago lakefront kiosk.

the ends of timber tension members. The result was a beautiful little joint that exceeded engineering expectations and was pleasing to the eye to boot.

Not too far away, in Ottawa, Ill., we are in the midst of fabricating two replacement lattice-type bowstring trusses. Built around 110 years ago, they only failed due to some rather poor ideas about where roof water should be funneled. A poorly built scupper and the decision to place it right next to the truss itself, hastened the failure of the drainage system that did the trusses in. I think both of these trusses are pleasing to the eye and accent the built and natural environment around them. In the case of the cat's-paw truss, the owner was so excited by the design that they were willing to put forth the effort and expense to design and engineer totally new joinery. For the bowstring trusses, the investor sees so much harmony and beauty in these 53-ft. trusses that he's asking us to fabricate two replacements.

All of this work—the log cabin, the kiosk, the cat's-paw truss, to the lattice bowstring truss—is happening at least in part because it meets Aldo Leopold's tenets about being "right" with the biotic community. When things do work well it is because they fit with some basic underlying tenet of the natural world. And when we do good work, it doesn't always have to be with the best materials as in the case of CLT,



Writers Theater.

but we need to do it well, and with careful thought. As with the bowstring truss project, the failure was not with wood but with a cheap solution for water mitigation, or perhaps just poor maintenance. But when what we build is truly good, and truly right, and built with integrity and stability, it is worth preserving. By far the most sustainable things we can do are to preserve, restore, or build new so that continued maintenance is possible later. We are only limited by our knowledge of the trade or the questions we ask of those who know.




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Our Timbers

Low-tech marketing pays off for a small company

STEPHEN MORRISON

As someone who has been making the transition from timber framer to timber frame company manager for a long time now, one of my biggest struggles has been marketing. I can cut a nice joint and lead a good raising, but I have no background in marketing. So how do I find more work, especially on a shoestring budget? I've read about it, I've gone to conferences and seminars, and it's all a bit overwhelming and intimidating, not to mention potentially expensive. I've tried all kind of things: website (we struggle with this), print marketing (we struggle to afford this) home shows, (we struggle with proper follow up) and the list goes on.

I am good at being excited about what we do. So after all this time and some ups and downs, some successes and failures, I have not abandoned all the things listed above, but what I find works really well for us is face to face marketing. I have joined every group I can find: chambers of commerce, home builders associations, TFG, TFBC, local green building clubs, and even our local community club. I have run for boards, joined committees, taught workshops, and hosted home school groups. I attend every function I can manage—HBA meetings, fundraiser dinners, local festivals etc. You name it, I'm there, and when I can, I take some of my crew, my wife, and my kids.

We try to take this idea to our jobsites. When on site,

we make an effort to engage everyone: the homeowner, the builder, the electrician, the framer . . . everyone. My crew has standing orders to offer help to everyone on site. If the masons need help moving something, we drive our forklift over and move it; if the trim crew needs something, we will do our best to find it, mill it, make it, or perhaps bring it from the shop the next day. We get to know everyone.

Now, in our area, we are the timber framers. That is not to say we get all the work, but everyone knows us, and we get lots of opportunities.

Some of this may sound silly, and perhaps too time consuming, but it is working well. We get referral work from homeowners, builders, electricians, roofers, salesmen at the lumber yard, you name it, even our building inspectors and my kids' teachers, and just because we are involved and engaged. Just a quick example: a tile guy we have worked around before gets a set of plans from a builder who has never used us. Because we worked well before and my crew helped him unload a truck, he mentions us to the builder for the timber work in the new job. Boom, we get the work! I could tell dozens of stories like that.

To us it's like getting work just from keeping the ethic and ideal we learn as Guild members. It's low tech, but it works and helps build community.

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Assessment at Cascade Joinery in February

CURTIS MILTON

The Apprentice Training Program of the Timber Framers Guild is pleased to announce that Cascade Joinery of Ferndale, Washington, has stepped up to host the annual Assessment and Training event February 26–28, 2016. The broad topic for this event is “Site work specific”: SAFE planning, assembling, and installing. This means we could deliver presentations including, but not limited to: lift planning, forklift specification and operation, setting out (locating your product on work prepared by others), raising, rigging, and connections (mechanical and adhesive joinery). Topics will continue to evolve. Past events have featured third party presenters in addition to sessions created and delivered by ATP members.

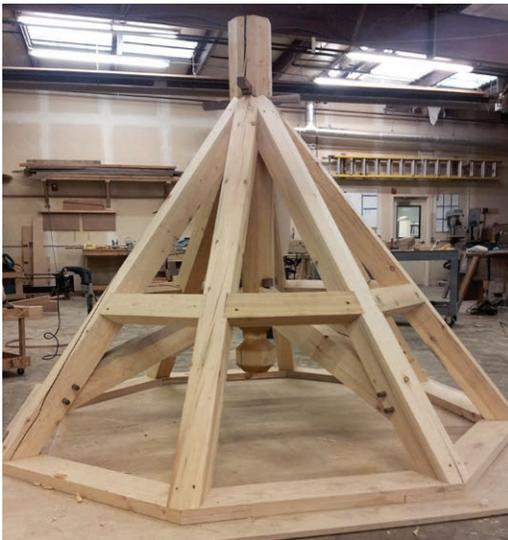
This professional development event is the annual gathering of supervising journeyworkers and apprentices of the Apprentice Training Program. Registered

journeyworkers (who support the program through annual fees) may attend for the cost of meals. The hosting company employees (who are not registered in the ATP) are also invited to attend for the cost of meals.

The ATP also welcomes a limited number of attendees to participate in this training for a fee (includes the event and meals). In addition to educational programming, the event also allows us to welcome new apprentices in person and to graduate apprentices to journeyworkers.

Because the event is so short, the Training Committee prepares assessment exercises that are delivered to participants electronically from November to January. These exercises are discussed in a dedicated time slot during the event.

For more information please reach Curtis Milton at 603/387-6770 or atc@tfguild.org.



This octagonal roof, created during the 2013 ATP assessment training in Fort Collins, was sold at this year's TFG conference auction.



Isaac McCoy-Sulentic Adam Riley of Teton Timberframe is using developed drawing techniques to lay out at full scale the angles necessary to cut an octagonal roof that was the basis of the training in 2013.



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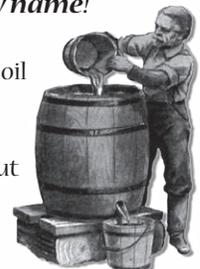
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EVENTS

These listings are for Guild workshops and meetings, were submitted by Guild members, or announce other relevant events. See www.tfguild.org/events. To submit info on a Guild event or project, reach Susan Witter, 360/647-0310.

Guild events

2016 Apprentice training and assessment Feb 26,
Cascade Joinery, Ferndale, Wash
Curtis Milton, atc@tfguild.org, 603/387-6770.

other events

Rancho Mastatal Sustainable Living Center
Natural building project apprenticeship Aug 1–Nov 30, 2016
Mastatal, Costa Rica.
Ali Ostergard, www.ranchomastatal.com/pages/links/page.php?Grouping=Apprenticeship&PageName=internship.

Whippetree Timber Framing
Joinery Dec 5–6
Otanobee–South Monaghan, Ontario.
Mark Davidson. www.wpltree.ca/classes.html, 705/875-7906.
Fox Maple (2016 workshops)
In Nosara, Costa Rica—

Timber framing Feb 22–Mar 5
Natural building Mar 7–11
Intensive apprenticeship Feb 15–Mar 19
At Fox Maple, in Brownfield, Maine—
Clay building May 27–29
Introductory timber framing May 30–Jun 4
Advanced timber framing Jun 6–11
Foxmaple, 207/935-3720.

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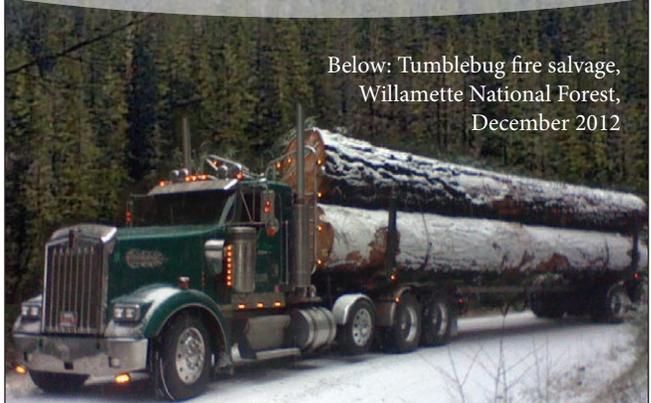


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Below: Tumblebug fire salvage,
Willamette National Forest,
December 2012



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for sale

Layout square

A new layout square is on the market! It will increase your accuracy and decrease your layout time. This square incorporates the features of a framing square, try square, and a protractor all wrapped into one. The square has 1/16-in. scale with laser etched markings for easy reading. Pivot off one corner of the base to get the plumb cut angles, seat cut, and any angles for compound joinery. Flip it over and get the opposing angles. It also makes peg layout a snap. Visit our site to learn more at timberframehq.com/layout or email us at info@timberframehq.com.

help wanted

Designer–draftsperson.

Davis Frame Co., a growing, busy timber frame panelized home manufacturer, seeks a designer–draftsperson. Three+ years drafting experience and strong CADWORK 3D and 2D skills required. Competitive wages, great workplace, wicked good people, and sorry, no telecommuting. Send resume to Davis Frame Co., 513 River Rd, Claremont, NH 03743. Email preferred, timber@davisframe.com.

Timber frame apprentice.

Hardwick Post & Beam is a family company with 32 years' experience designing and building custom timber frames in Mass., New England, and across the U.S. We seek an apprentice level timber framer with good woodworking skills to help fabricate and install timber frame projects from start to finish. A high standard of craftsmanship and attention to detail are essential. Also, good communication skills, the ability to collaborate on teams, strong work ethic, optimistic attitude. Curiosity and excitement at learning new things and creative interest in the aesthetic potential of timber framing are assets. The timber framer will work under the supervision of a master framer.

Compensation DOE. Full job description on our website. Please send resume and work samples to Christian Gudmand, christian@hardwickpostandbeam.com and <http://hardwickpostandbeam.com/images/uploads/TimberFrameApprentice.pdf>

Timber framer.

Gibson Timber Frames seeks a timber frame carpenter for shop and onsite work. We use white pine, Douglas fir, and reclaimed timber to manufacture timber frames in eastern Ontario. Responsibilities include: maintain an organized, safe and productive work space, adhere to the employee handbook and safety policy, follow shop drawings to complete timber frame layout, cut timber joinery using power tools and hand tools (mortise and tenons, scarf joints, spline joints), raise the timber frame on site, general carpentry. Pay rate will be based on experience. Please email jgibson@ripnet.com or call 613/2649021.

Architectural timber frame designer.

South County Post & Beam, Inc. seeks an experienced architectural /timber frame designer. Responsibilities include: residential design, 3D modeling of timber frames and structural insulated panel systems, creation of shop drawings for timber frame and structural insulated panels, and interaction with clients and contractors. Candidates should be proficient in AutoCAD Architecture (2013 and later), have a solid understanding of construction detailing, be able to learn new software quickly, and work on multiple projects at one time. Creative background a plus. Experience with SketchUp, 3D modeling software, and Microsoft Office Suite is helpful.

Full benefits. Please forward your resume and salary requirements to info@scpb.com.

PENLAND SCHOOL OF CRAFTS

Timber!

An eight-week timber-framing workshop with Raivo Vihman of Haystack Joinery

Participants will cut, join, and raise a timber-framed structure that will become a permanent part of the campus.

March 13 – May 6, 2016

Scholarship application deadline Nov. 28, 2015

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Timber Framers Guild
PO Box 60
Becket, MA 01223

Historic, from page 1

The night ended with a great dinner, live music, and the slideshow. Adam Miller gave a great presentation on the Red Mill project. Arron Sturgis showed slides of a major steeple restoration that he had worked on this past summer. Brian and Michele Zabel of Wisconsin had combined a trip in search of industrial shop equipment with the regional meeting. Brian came prepared with slides and showed the building of a fantastic barn for an antique tractor club back home. I finished up the slideshow with photos from a recent tour of 18th century barns in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Allan Peoples got the last word with his notorious joke telling for the captive audience.

The Vaughan Woods consists of almost 200 acres of woodlands that had been restored by the Vaughan family between 1890 and 1930 after being damaged by early industrial activities. The family built six stone arch bridges and a three mile trail system that is quite popular among the locals. The tour of the woods concluded the planned events of the weekend. People began to pack up and say their goodbyes around noon. The weekend had everything you could want from a regional meeting. If there haven't been any regional meetings in your area and you are interested in hosting one, please email or call the Guild office for details (info@tfguild.org or 855/598-1803)



This crane, retrieved from the barn at Vaughan Homestead, helped create the stone bridges on what are now the trails, favorites of the local walkers. Curtis Milton and other participants helped raise it.