

## FREE ACRES 100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Bolton Halls, through his "Deed-of-Gift," back in 1910, started this community they called "Free Acres". For the past one hundred years folks have come and folks have gone. But as each leasehold, each home and each owner has changed, the community has stayed the course. Along the way, some folks in the community have always assumed the leadership and the work that kept Free Acres a strong, vibrant community.

The trees have been saved, the roads improved, the old swimming hole has changed from a muddy pond made by a dammed up stream to a real chlorinated pool, but just as cold. Sewers, not septic, have surely improved the air. The old Farmhouse has heat, a telephone, and a bathroom now. The old platform has not been made of wood for many years. The summer meetings still go on there. The winter community meetings are held on a Monday night each month in Frank Steven's Hall.

How much of Henry George's theories of Single Tax still abound, and how many homes are still just used as a summer getaway, I can't say. Yet Free Acres still holds its memories for many of the old time leaseholders as well as the new folks.

The old timers of the 1920's and thirties and even the 1940's, will always remember Uncle Bill's archery group, his log cabin in the woods, and his wonderful carved signs. Do you remember Newt Murdoch with his old Model-T Ford and Sunda go-to meetin' necktie without a shirt? What about James Cagney's occasional visits and Thorne Smith's fabulous stories. I was just a kid but I remember so vividly the two world- renowned marionette theater groups, the Berkeley Marionettes and the Marionette Guild. The Gitnick's group let us kids see their rehearsals of the newest shows in their garage, before they went on the road. Then there was Ronald Hotson's shows, performed on the Farmhouse Lawn. Do you remember the plays at the Open Air Theater on Apple Tree Row? I still remember the words to "Trial By Jury" which David Randolph conducted with Walter Scheff, Tommy Thopson, and Janet Hotson, the leads. How about the fun, the crafts, and the songs, at Camp Wanoga, with directors Tony DeBlanco and Elsa Fuchs. Then there were the costume parades, Fritz Schade's exercise classes, and the Folk and Square dancing at the Farmhouse. What about the Friday night Forums in the Library, or the rumors of the nudist colony, and oh yes, the late night skinny dips, and Mr. Sankowski's flashlight. How can we forget? Then there was the politics, from one end of the spectrum to the other; Free Acres had it all.

Over the one hundred years that Free Acres has been around, with its vast diversity of people, their occupations, education, politics, interests, hobbies, you name it, Free Acres has survived. Good old Boltin Hall could never have envisioned it. Free acres, is still here and flourishing in the year 2010. Changed? OH yes! For better, for worse, who's to say?

COME JOIN US !

MAKE YOUR PLANS WELL IN ADVANCE AND BE SURE TO JOIN US FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE FREE ACRES 100th ANNIVERSARY IN JULY OF 2010!

Harold Breene