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Revolutionary War Ribbons surface after 193 years

Solomon Smith fought at Concord and Bunker Hill



Boston, MA – Period Americana, New England’s fastest growing merchant of historical artifacts, images and documents, has recently acquired three Revolutionary War ribbons, two of which appear to be previously unknown.

The three ribbons date to the 1820s, most likely 1825 when the country was celebrating the 50th anniversary of the War, and were owned by Revolutionary War Minute Man Solomon Smith of Acton, Massachusetts.

One ribbon commemorates those that served in the Army of the Revolutionary, the second commemorates the Battle at Concord Bridge on April 19, 1775, and the third depicts General Lafayette and the Bunker Hill Monument. This last ribbon was likely issued in June 1825 when Lafayette laid the cornerstone of the Monument.

“These are a rare find from the Revolutionary War as only one of the three ribbons has surfaced at auction, and that was nearly 10 years ago,” said Kenneth J. Olson, president of Period Americana. “None appear to be in the collections of the major museums,” referring to the Smithsonian Institute and Library of Congress.

The ribbons were handed down through the generations until the last family members divested of them.

“Solomon Smith was Patriot and a Minute Man who, on the very first alarm on the first day of the War, grabbed his musket and took part in the fight for independence. It is an honor to hold the same ribbons that he once wore,” said Olson.

Solomon Smith is noted as firing one of the “shots heard ‘round the world” on April 19, 1775 while fighting the British at the Battle of Old North Bridge in Concord, Massachusetts. The Minute Man served in Captain Isaac Davis’ company. Following Davis’ death at the Battle, Smith was attached to Captain William Smith’s company and marched to fight at the Battle of Bunker Hill. He was later present at General Burgoyne’ surrender at Saratoga, NY. In 1825, at the age of 72, he marched 24 miles to see General Lafayette lay the corner stone for the Bunker Hill Monument.

Solomon is the father is Luke Smith, who had the distinction of serving in the 6th Massachusetts Regiment and participating in the Baltimore Riots on the first day of fighting during the Civil War, April 19, 1861.

The ribbons will remain part of Period Americana’s collection which it makes available for research and for school presentations. The collection is comprised of several artifacts of American turning points such as John Hancock’s copies of George Washington’s letters to General Howe, one of the few known Revolutionary War medical diaries, a Civil War prison diary, and hundreds of documents and artifacts.

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