

BLACK IRON WORK

Repository:	Crandall Public Library. Folklife Center Glens Falls, NY.
Creator:	Mike Kowalski
Title:	Black Iron Work
Dates:	ca. 2002
Abstract:	Eleven pieces of 18 th century-type iron work made by blacksmith Mike Kowalski.
Quantity:	11 pieces of ironwork and 2 flint stones
Identification:	Folk Art & Artists

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mike Kowalski got started in living history in the late 1980s with black powder hunting. When he couldn't find the items he needed for his hobby (or use left-handed), he began making things on his own. Work in leather, horn, iron – Kowalski tried them all, reading books and perfecting through experimentation.

Others wanted his work, fellow re-enactors swapping their own work for his. He remembers selling S hooks to tourists before they could cool. This “blanket trade” and barter grew into a fulltime business in 1993, *Twisted and Bent*, specializing in black iron, hornwork, used clothing, and other items needed by re-enactors and tourists alike.

Kowalski also has an 18th century traveling forge, built as a three-quarters scale working copy found in the 1780 *Treatise on Artillery* (for the British Crown). He often demonstrates this craft, hauling the 1500 pounds on 9 X 5 trailer to local 18th century events. In addition Kowalski has organized the *sutlers* (tradespersons) area for the 225th Anniversary event in Fort Edward, Columbus Day weekend 2002. He also serves with the 84th Regiment of Foot, a Scottish re-enactment group from the Mohawk Valley.

INDEX TERMS

Places:	Fort Edward, Washington, New York
Subjects:	Blacksmithing Re-enactors Battle of Saratoga

American Revolutionary War
84th Regiment of Foot
Folk art
Folk Artists

Important People: Mike Kowalski

Form/Genre: realia

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Preferred Citation: Black Iron Work
The Folklife Center at
Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

Accession Information: The Folklife Center acquired these pieces from blacksmith Mike Kowalski, and used them in the exhibition, *Crafts of the Rev War Community*, as part of the project, *Revolutionary Lives: To Commemorate the 225th Anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga*, 2002.

Processing Information: Arranged and described by Erica Gonyea, March 2019.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE RECORDS

Fire kit – flint and strike to create sparks

Tent peg

Tent pole hook

“S” hooks (3)

Wall hook

Door latch (2 pieces)

Belt buckle

Pot holder