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Weir Farm Artist's Photography Exhibition Memorializes Slaves of Connecticut's William Floyd

Xiomáro (SEE-oh-MAH-ro), an artist at Weir Farm National Historic Site in Wilton/Ridgefield, presents *The Other Side* – Charles, Caesar, Harry, Sam, Pompey, Lon and Isaac from January 11 to March 29, 2015 at Oyster Bay Historical Society in New York.



The collection of twenty-nine photographs presents General William Floyd (1734-1821), who fled to Middletown after the British occupation of his plantation on Long Island. During his period of exile, his wife Hannah died and remains buried at Middletown's Mortimer Cemetery. Floyd, a slave owner, served in the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia where he set his signature to the Declaration of Independence in July 1776. His plantation is now a National Park unit of Fire Island National Seashore, which commissioned Xiomáro after seeing his photographic work for Weir Farm. Xiomáro was an Artist-in-Residence at Weir Farm in 2010 and, since 2011, continues his relationship with the park as a Visiting Artist.

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At the heart of the collection are photographs of undated wooden crosses bearing generic slave names, set apart on the other side of a fence from the elaborate individualized stones of the Floyd family cemetery. The photographs serve as spiritual memorials to the laborers—both enslaved persons and paid house servants of color—who worked on the estate. These plain wooden crosses, put in place sometime in the 1870s, represent in part the Floyd family's evolution from slave ownership to active military service in the Union army during the American Civil War.



Xiomáro is a nationally exhibited artist whose work has been covered by The New York Times, News 12 and The Huffington Post. On January 5, The Other Side will be featured in the prestigious Aspect Ratio, a London-based photography magazine. His other National Park Service commissions include President Theodore Roosevelt's Sagamore Hill mansion, which was exhibited at Harvard University. At present, Xiomáro is photographing the home of poet and abolitionist Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in Massachusetts and will be living in a Florida swamp for a month documenting the fragile ecosystem that feeds into the Everglades.

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The Other Side is on view January 11 to March 29, 2015 at the Oyster Bay Historical Society, 20 Summit Street, Oyster Bay, NY 11771, (516) 922-5032, oysterbayhistorical.org. A free opening reception and lectures by Xiomáro are scheduled. A free limited edition photo e-book can be downloaded at www.xiomaro.com.