Doug Delsemme

Supporting the Arts of the Longrifle Culture

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Front Cover:
A collection of powder horns made by contemporary artists graces our cover. To learn more about carved and decorated powder horns, from both the antique and contemporary perspective, see the article by Tom Grinslade on page 28.
PHOTOGRAPH BY RUSSELL YOUNG
On this 15th anniversary of the Contemporary Longrifle Association, I proudly present Volume 2, Issue 2, of American Tradition, The Journal of the Contemporary Longrifle Association. This issue marks the completion of the first phase of our project. Two years ago, after the very successful House Brothers An American Tradition fundraising rifle project, it was decided to publish a full color magazine devoted to the education of the Longrifle Culture and to showcase CLA artists’ works as a way of giving back to the CLA membership for their generous support.

It has been exciting to be part of the production of these four issues and you can start looking forward to next year. We already have three engaging articles slated for Volume 3, No. 1. Tim Albert, author of “Recreating the 18th Century Hunting Pouch” has completed an in-depth article entitled, “The Art and Evolution of the American Hunting Pouch.” Bill Reynolds, curator of the Campus Martius Museum in Marietta, Ohio is working diligently on an article featuring the Folk Artists of the CLA and Guy Monfort, noted student of iron mounted longrifles, is delving into the style and philosophy of those particular rifles. Since education is an ongoing purpose of our association, you will find there is much to be shared by these devoted authors.

In this issue Mark Silver finishes his discussion examining the contemporary schools of gunmaking with “Contemporary Longrifles: The New School Perspective – Allowing an Important Tradition to Evolve.” Summing up the philosophies of the late John Bivins, Mark explains that many New School contemporary arms being built today are still very much inspired by and have evolved from artistic concepts developed long ago.

Tom Grinslade author of two best-selling books, Flintlock Fowlers: The First Guns Made in America and Powder Horns: Documents of History has written “Powder Horns, A Brief History of Gunpowder Containers,” a concise, yet thorough look at the development of the powder horn. Tom Strohfeldt, formerly an Apprentice Gunsmith at Colonial Williamsburg and Assistant Curator and Gunsmith of The Ohio Historical Society, follows with “Squire Boone: His Life and Artistry ~ Carved into Stone” presenting thoughts about the artistic work of this famous man, with a goal of provoking interest and intrigue. To finish, Russ Young in his column “Sources & Resources” discusses ink and provides a recipe.

The CLA is the heart of the arts of the Longrifle Culture and now for fifteen years our organization has provided an annual venue for interaction between, artists, collectors, shooters, builders, students, museums, and organizations; in short, any entity whose actions, interest, or way of life is influenced by some aspect of the American Longrifle. From the beginning, the purpose has been to educate, promote the association, its members and their art, and historical arms and related arts. Our mission is to further growth in our organization, while encouraging our membership to focus upon the high quality of art produced.

The focus of American Tradition is articles pertaining to the art of the Longrifle Culture. Our goal is not only to educate but also to concurrently showcase the art of CLA artists to more uniformly serve our membership. We are very proud to report that the works of more than 200 CLA artists have thus far been presented.

Not to exclude any artists, we offer the opportunity to all CLA artists and/or collectors to sponsor any artisan. You will find seven artist Sponsor Pages in this issue. These sponsorships finance the addition of eight (8) pages of engrossing written material and exquisite photography in each issue. Our sincere thanks are offered to all twenty-four of our Sponsor Page supporters.

These pages are reasonably priced at $400 for an inside page, $500 for inside front or back covers, and $600 for the back cover. If you are interested in being a sponsor please contact me at 270-566-3370 or melhankla@amhiss.com. Pages are limited and will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis.

Welcome to issue four of American Tradition. Enjoy.

Mel Hankla
Finest Early American Horn Creations

Top: Documentary Copy
John Bush Horn, circa 1755
2010

Above: Relief Carved Interpretation
Early to mid 1800's style
2011

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Part three of examining the contemporary schools of gunmaking

CONTEMPORARY LONGRIFLES, THE NEW SCHOOL PERSPECTIVE

~ Allowing an Important Tradition to Evolve ~

Mark Silver

Flintlock rifle by contemporary gunmaker Keith Casteel in the Germanic style, c. 1750-1780. This elaborate piece was inspired by the work of 18th century gunmaker Wilhelm Freund among others, shown in Erhard Wolfe’s book on 18th century Jaeger rifles. This brass barrelled rifle is stocked in figured European walnut with the mounts fashioned from sterling silver. Casteel’s interpretation of formal Continental Rococo design is influenced by American form and styling of the period and leads to its presentation in the New School context.
n this final installment exploring approaches to contemporary gunmaking, we will look at what, in 1980, John Bivins termed the “New School” gunmakers. He wrote, “This group accepts the parameters and basic fundamentals of historical design yet assembles the elements of early design into combinations that are not often identifiable with the work of any single early gunmaker. Gunmakers in this category seek the general ideals of a period rather than those of a single school and in fact may develop a new school as a product of their work and those of associated gunmakers. For an artisan in this group to produce work that is within a discipline of time and general geographic regions, and not to make stylistic errors in the process, he must assimilate a relatively large amount of early design motifs to develop his own stylistic vocabulary.”

When John speaks of “works…within a discipline of time and general geographic regions” we should think seriously about what this implies and how it has been manifested in work done over the past three decades. To take any but a very broad view of the “regions” would be misleading. New School projects many times show pronounced use of European inspirations and influences when designing decoration in an American longrifle context. Probably some of the most exquisite examples of this came from the bench of John Bivins himself. His development of a carving style that blended American forms with sophisticated continental high art Rococo exemplified the best of New School design. So, “regions” has never been construed to mean limited to
American regions or “schools” as we’ve come to think of them.

While very significant differences exist between American colonial longrifle contexts and urban European firearms design of the last half of the 18th century, it is best to be careful not to draw too abrupt a line between what are in reality closely interlinked expressions of a European continuum of esthetics and technology. Eighteenth century North America was just the most distant of European provinces, not a separate culture. If we look at some of the carving motifs used in colonial American work of the third quarter of the 18th century, we sometimes see work startlingly close to good quality provincial European pieces.

For example, if we look at the recent important book, *Moravian Gunmaking of the American Revolution*, with text by Robert Leineman and Stephen D. Hench, published by the Kentucky Rifle Foundation, the carving of rifles attributed to Moravian gunmakers Andreas Albrecht, Valentine Beck, and a wender rifle (swivel breech) signed by William Antes makes clear the complexity of the situation. The design elements came straight from Germanic sources and would be quite at home on a good quality provincial German rifle; the side pieces of the tang carving of the Albrecht and Antes rifles, and the carving in front of the cheekpiece of the Valentine Beck rifle are particularly close to Germanic examples. British influence can many times be seen as well; for example, a recently reattributed rifle by John Newcomer shows not only extremely British fowler stock architecture and mounts but also a very close rendition of the typical mid-Georgian period British shell tang carving. A rifle signed by Valentine Fondersmith utilizes a tang carving design also found on mid-18th century British fowlers, but of a less common form; that of an asymmetrical leaf with its axis running across the wrist centerline. This leaf motif is also very close to the rear portion of the British form wrist escutcheon of the Newcomer rifle. Many other examples of British and Continental design exist in period rifles. Obviously, strong European influence is not something that only occurs in “New School” projects. Then, how is it possible to reliably characterize contemporary work as either Interpretive use of European design or New School use in an American rifle format?

Careful long-term study of period work develops a sense within the builder and/or collector of how period work actually looks. Although difficult to define, this sense is very real and represents the semi-tangible awareness of the subtle characteristics of the decorative art of a particular time and place. This relates back to what constitutes the “mindset of the 18th century artisan” spoken of in previous installments. This conglomeration of motifs, preferences, and working methods, as well as systems of tool use, is manifest in every finished product of a particular time and place, making the recognition of the subtle dividing line between New School and Interpretive approaches possible. We need to ask ourselves when viewing a fine contemporary piece, could this work fit comfortably within the context of existing 18th or early 19th century antique rifles?

The New School project allows the artisan to extend the evolution of 18th century design “threads” in creative directions and to extents that can be very rewarding. The “what if” scenario can be used to flesh out many interesting projects; successfully accomplishing this requires substantial creativity as well as a deep understanding of 18th century forms and context. Many times these projects are termed “fantasy rifles,” sometimes in the pejorative sense. This term need not be negative; creative well-designed pieces always add to the richness of our art. John Bivins once said he pondered a scenario where a skilled continentally trained journeyman carver and gun stocker traveled to England before immigrating to North America via Philadelphia and on to the Virginia back country, where he built a fine rifle. These influences appear to have shown up in John’s last longrifle. All artisans involved in Interpretive or New School projects
use a speculative, “what if” thought process – consciously or not. This is the imaginative force of creativity. To remain alive and vibrant, all art forms need to grow and evolve. The very creation of Interpretive and New School work throws Documentary pieces and original 18th century forms into sharper focus, highlighting their strengths, vibrancy, and enduring values.

Often New School pieces are built as highly finished longrifles, built to standards of fit and finish not seen in 18th and 19th century contexts. It is only relatively recently that the variation in the levels of fit and finish quality seen in American colonial work has become obvious to many of us. A careful look at the best of American 18th century work shows it to be on a par with high quality provincial European work. The striving to improve one’s work by finishing to the standards of the Victorian or modern periods is understandable and a legitimate approach. However, it is just as possible and highly desirable to build within the New School format using 100% period correct standards, tools, and techniques. This makes sense when done within the context of high quality colonial work or the higher standards characteristic of the best urban European period antiques. The existence of this possibility says much about the progress our trade has made in the understanding and dissemination of 18th and early 19th century techniques common to period work. Much of the credit for this goes to Colonial Williamsburg and its dedicated gun makers who, along with a number of other independent makers, redeveloped so much 18th century technology over the past four decades. It no longer is necessary to improve the standard of finish of one’s work only by making edges sharper and sanding with finer grits. We can improve our work by exploring and extending where period work might have gone within the context of 18th century methods and standards, as well as working to the higher standards seen on some urban European pieces that remain consistent with period methods.

Several times in past articles we have spoken of using iron or steel mounts on contemporary projects. These remain popular and very common on New School rifles. Iron mounts have always been very popular on rifles from the very beginning of their development and use in central Europe. This is no doubt because of the functional advantages of lighter weight, greater strength and durability, as well as the greater desirability the higher skill level required to forge and file up one of a kind mounts. It is difficult to understand why we today see a presumed total lack of surviving examples of 18th and early 19th century iron mounted rifles except for the relatively scarce pieces from the southern back country. It is not surprising that we would see a large majority of brass mounted rifles from the Pennsylvania and Maryland gunmaking centers – they are much easier and quicker to build, but why do we see no iron mounted pieces among the many fine rifles from these areas? That question will have to remain unanswered, for now. Previously we discussed the greater time and labor needed to mount a rifle in hand forged and filed iron; this is as true in New School work as in others. However, because such a piece allows for much greater latitude in the use of applied decoration, a whole new area for expression is available. The finishing of an iron mounted American rifle offers the choice of browning (although not period...
correct for most of the 18th century), charcoal bluing in its smoky mottled American form, express or rust bluing, (close in appearance but not quite period correct), and the glossy highly burnished urban European form of charcoal bluing seen on Spanish form barrels (the correct term for all octagon to round barrels), and of course bright. The use of the urban high gloss charcoal blue opens up a whole new realm of overall appearance for a New School American format rifle—that of the forms seen in Europe’s urban centers.

Throughout this article we have referred to the longrifle and even mentioned the European rifle going back to the beginning of its development—what seems most obvious is our neglect in mentioning fowlers. Even more than leaving out smooth rifles, since they many times follow themes that developed concurrently with rifle forms, the failure to talk about fowlers would be very unfortunate. The recent book on American forms of the fowler, *Flintlock Fowlers: The First Guns Made in America,* by author Tom Grinslade, has brought into sharp focus this very interesting manifestation of the 18th century gunmakers’ art. Hudson Valley pieces show a fascinating evolution in stock architecture and wonderful variety in carving and engraving motif. The British form pieces show similarly varied use of sophisticated moldings around guards as well as along forestocks, with a wealth of carving worth studying and emulating. The New England pieces show equally rich decoration and a use of rakish French stock architecture seen nowhere else in American work. Many pieces show very interesting locks that deserve further serious study to determine their origin, while the section on Kentucky style pieces extends our view of the longrifle genre of esthetics. Obviously, European fowlers also offer a vast array of sources to expand on and “reverse engineer” into American formats and more importantly aid our understanding of the fowler form in America. The esthetic and architectural world of the 18th century fowling piece offers ground equally as fertile as the longrifle for the contemporary gunmaker, whether Documentarian, Interpreter, or New School.

In the early preparation for this article the question came up of a contemporary rifle built as if it were an antique piece. The rifle starting out as a flintlock, being converted to percussion, serving through multiple
generations and showing all the signs of hard and honorable service, with numerous repairs and severe patination; would this fit into the New School category? No, our discussion of the importance of stylistic aspects of rifle design should make this clear. This does bring up the interesting question of patination; how might this be dealt with in the New School project? Although we typically see such rifles built as highly finished pieces or at least finished as though they had just left the makers shop, it is certainly a valid approach to complete a rifle with a patinated finish. One interesting piece comes to mind in which the maker used a patination technique that made an unusually bold statement in its own right, only slightly resembling actual age patination. Once again we must reiterate the philosophical objection many of us have to aging contemporary longrifles.

In the last issue, the suggestion was made to add a fourth category to John’s scheme—Derived. I described this as a subset of the New School form because it operates within the historical framework of American colonial work but “well beyond the capability of an early gunmaker.” John Bivins and I had a chance to briefly discuss this possibility during the preparation of the “Three Centuries of Tradition…” exhibition held at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, before his untimely death in 2001, and he agreed with my assessment. These pieces maintain a very close link with period work through motifs and overall design context. They do not draw more heavily on European sources or techniques than fits appropriately into actual 18th century American longrifle contexts, yet the techniques of executing the interpretive motifs is so new that it constitutes new territory. In recent memory a number of pieces by various makers have shown very innovative and technically difficult wire inlay forms while staying relatively close to actual 18th century American forms. Pieces such as these should be seen as significantly separate from both the Interpretive and usual New School formats. It is conceivable that analogous innovations in carving or other decorative techniques could require a similar decision. Additionally, a European piece might show enough American influence or new technique to require being understood as a Derived or New School piece.

In the first installment of this series I asked the question: is it really important that we seriously consider and use a scheme such as John Bivins and Lynn Fichter came up with over thirty years ago? I still believe their thoughtful formulation of three (perhaps four) categories of approaches to the building of contemporary longrifles makes sense. It is not important that we as enthusiasts agree on where a particular rifle might fit in this scheme, but it can be a way for gunmakers and collectors to discuss contemporary work. Even more importantly, it needs to be a tool for analyzing how contemporary work relates to the antique rifles that have inspired their creation. A potentially negative consequence of our current revival of the art of the longrifle and the creativity that fuels its continued exploration and evolution as a living and vital art form, is that it might fail to communicate the true relationship our work has to those few surviving examples of the fabulous and important rifles built during the last half of the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries for use along our American frontier. This series is in no way the final word on this most complex subject—only the beginning of a continuing discussion that no doubt will be informed by future research, undiscovered antique rifles, and serious thought, of the many people who love this most unusual of our American cultural arts.

2Robert Weil, Contemporary Makers of Muzzleloading Firearms, 1980, Robert Weil Publisher, pg. 11.
3Kentucky Rifle Foundation, Moravian Gunmaking of the American Revolution, 2010, pp. 53, 61, 81, 82.
Top: New School longrifle by Jud Brennan with its side hinged wooden patchbox lid and elaborately pierced silver surround. Above: The hand forged iron buttplate is profusely inlaid with gold and silver highlighted by an etched finish. The inlay and engraving design is a style beyond the understanding shown in period American longrifles, but does not stray into full blown European rococo. Notice the architecture of the wrist and its carving.

COURTESY OF THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS
Close-up of the lock area of the Brennan rifle, showing the labor-intensive handmade lock of British styling, c. 1790. The hand chiseled, quarter round borders on the lock plate and cock, and elaborate engraving on a matte background, are significant. A small number of period American longrifles show high quality locks executed in the British form; some were made in America while others appear to be high quality imports, but none show this level of sophistication. The highly decorative set triggers are unlike any seen on period longrifles.

Left side view of the New School rifle by Brennan, shows the elaborate relief carving in an arabesque form of intertwining scroll headed strands. The ivory headed awl continues the flow of the carving of the cheekpiece architecture. The relief chiseled silver sideplate carries through the spiral flower leaf and scroll motif that also forms the patchbox surround and extends to the inlays above and below the cheekpiece molding. Elaborate gold inlay adorns the barrel breech.
The Germanic stock architecture of this rifle is Casteel’s own and not closely related to the Paris influenced form of the Freund pieces with their more rounded comb lines. The melding of American styling with formal Continental/Germanic makes for a more accessible presentation of the elaborate decoration, form of the mounts and stock architecture. Casteel’s interest in hunting is clearly portrayed through the extensively relief-chiseled mounts with their “scenes of the chase,” featuring “St. Hubert and the Holy stag” and “Diana—Goddess of the Hunt.” The backgrounds of the mounts, inlayed with 24K gold—“parcel gilt”—are finished with a stippling punch providing an effective contrast in color, texture and material. The relief carving is designed in unity with the metal work and shows the influence of Freund in the carving behind the cheekpiece, with its “diaper work” background of silver wire and dot inlay highlighting the foliage. The wooden patchbox’s elaborate surround is also a Freund feature used both in inlay as here and relief carving.
Full length view of the Mark Silver New School rifle in a Shenandoah Valley style, c. 1765-70. This piece is an example of the "Derived" type of work that tends to remain within a period American framework of design while expanding the sophistication of the execution and presentation. The long comb running up the wrist is a feature found on a number of 18th century rifles.

An American vernacular design based on existing 18th century pieces with wire inlay used to emphasize relief carved moldings as well as decorative foliage. Brass wire was chosen for the more architectural details, while silver wire highlights the decorative detail.

In this approach to integrating relief carving and wire inlay, the wire is the actual relief edge of the carving as well as being worked into other detail lines. A large amount of the relief work exhibits several distinct levels of wood making up the design, which complicates the inlaying of the wire. The overall intent is to have the design "read" well at normal viewing distance.

RIC LAMBERT
The late John Bivins’ work (1940–2001), in the minds of many, is the epitome of the New School approach to contemporary gunmaking. His artistic excellence, instantly recognizable style of carving and attention to detail in all things, come through in this elegant rifle.

Above: Close-up of the wrist and sideplate area showing John’s classic version of a layered-leaf motif derived from Baroque-era Paris design plates. The relief silver sideplate and wrist escutcheons were cast from hand-carved pear wood patterns then meticulously hand-chased and polished to preserve the detail.

Left: John thought of himself primarily as a carver and gunstocker but this photo of his superbly designed and executed rococo patchbox engraving shows his talent extended well beyond his primary interests.
The Art of Detail

Master gunmaker Wallace Gusler artistically executes relief carving and silver wire inlay which demonstrates the high art form of gunmaking.
New School rifle in the Virginia style, c. 1785. This most elaborate rifle fits the definition of a “Derived” work staying within an American vernacular framework of motif but with elaborated execution never seen in the 18th century.

WALLACE GUSLER

Facing page: Close-up of the relief carving and wire inlay behind the cheekpiece of the Gusler rifle pictured above. Wallace achieved his aim of integrating relief carving and wire inlay in a way that produces shading detail similar to that of metal engraving. His use of strands of brass and silver wire graduated in size and meticulously tapered by hammering, transcends the normal boundaries of metal and wood producing a significant unity of design. Gusler’s technique exceeds the highest standards of both European and American work of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Above: This close up of the left side of the butt shows Wallace’s design capabilities by combining overall relief carving with the extensive use of silver wire.

COURTESY OF THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS
Above: On this left handed New School longrifle by the late Frank Bartlett (1934-2006), his expertise and extensive use of wire inlay is well displayed. The lack of a patchbox allows for the use of elaborate silver wire inlay—a direct redrawing of a design from a Mark Silver British style fowler. Bartlett made some interesting changes in the shading and form of certain elements. Silver derived his design from the work of William Bailes of London, c. 1762, and a relief chiseled sideplate from another British mid-18th century maker. No creative work is ever done without the awareness and influence of our peers of both the 18th and 21st centuries.

Below: This view of the Bartlett rifle shows the effective use of major elements from the other side redrawn to work with the architecture of the cheekpiece. Note also the Americanization of the shell form at the tang and cartouche with initial at the wrist. The cheekpiece inlay combines an American form spiral flower and scroll and leaf motif.

Top quartering view of silver-mounted rifle by the late Fred Riley (1910-1997) showing the pierced and relief-chiseled silver patchbox, comb inlay and relief carving at the barrel tang, which includes a relief-carved ivory inlay, a feature used on many Riley pieces. A fine example of Riley’s bold and highly individualistic New School work.
The left side of the rifle with its ivory cheekpiece inlay and silver wire surround, faceted silver vent pick holder, and relief carving. The carving shows some influence from the Reading area as does the stock profile. The well-filed guard has a profile reminiscent of rifles from the Honaker family of Southwest Virginia.

Close-up of the patchbox of a Fred Riley North Carolina style New School rifle. The form of the box is a close derivation of early 19th century Salem School rifles by the Vogler family. In this rifle, carved antler plaques form the guilloche side pieces. The rifle’s comb shows the bold and distinctive incised line that transitions to a relief tab at the comb’s junction with wrist, so characteristic of Salem work.
New School rifle by Jim Chambers. The butt stock architecture with its sharp comb line is reminiscent of the work of 18th century maker Isaac Haines of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and John Blivins. Chambers was one of John’s early journeymen. The elaborate patchbox, very American in overall feel with its silver spiral flower inlay, also shows extensive use of Paris-inspired acanthus leaf design.

Full length view of a New School longrifle by Bob Harn featuring hand forged steel mounts and darkly stained patinated maple stock.

The form of the steel patchbox with its domed lid, sideplates, and finial relate to those found on Lancaster pieces by Isaac Haines of the 1770 period, while the use of silver for the spiral flower relates more closely to Virginia and North Carolina work. Note also the use of silver wire inlay technique that is beyond the scope of 18th century American vernacular in its use of “thick and thin” strands as well as sophistication of design.

The architecture of the buttstock with its bold stepped toe, extensive lower molding, buttpate profile and sharp edged comb line reminiscent of the work of 18th century German gunmaker Johann Wagner. Harn’s carving shows some relation in detail design to the work of Haines.
This unique rifle is an artistic concept that exemplifies the culture of the Creek Indians in northeastern Alabama. An interpretation of historical fact through historical fiction, it is the maker’s concept of what a rifle might look like as made by John Bull for Chief Menawa. John Bull, known to have made rifles for the Creeks, lived at Warrior Mountain, Alabama, and would have been working during the lifetime of Menawa. The original handforged barrel was from the Sipsey River area which is near Warrior Mountain.

The elaborate use of silver inlay, the cheekpiece inlay with its brass ruffle surround and attendant silver wire inlay reveals a portrait of Menewa done in an appropriate period style.

A fine iron-mounted and maple-stocked New School rifle by the late Bobby Thompson (1937–2005). The wooden box with its fluted tobacco leaves sets within an extensive surround that flows from a relief-carved grotesque mask finial. The bright finished lock shows extensive customizing including a pan filed to round form and a handmade frizzen spring with bent curve in the upper leaf and an inside screw-fastened bolster—London details of the 1770s.

Left side view of the Thompson rifle. The stock architecture utilizes extensive moldings at the cheekpiece and lower buttstock that work well with the gadroon like carving ahead of the lock panels. The relief-chiseled silver sideplate is accented with strands of silver wire inlay as is the relief carving in front of and behind the cheek piece.
Larry Gardner’s application of silver wire and inlay embodies the New School approach to today’s gun making.

It is only upon close inspection one realizes that the rifle has no butt piece, only an antler heel at the rear termination of the comb. The ornate inlay around the tallow hole gives the feel of a very intricate patchbox surround.

Brass and silver inlay incorporated into relief and incised carving radiates an ambiance of sophistication. This along with the simplicity of basic architectural design makes a bold artistic statement.
Gardner’s approach to an iron mounted, southern style rifle is rather radical. Made with no butt piece and a tallow hole instead of a patchbox, he has overshadowed these simplistic utilitarian features with silver wire and bi-metal inlays.

Following suit, the one bolt sideplate is made of both brass and silver and the whole panel is filled with flowing silver wire decoration.

Full length view of extensively inlaid New School rifle with octagon-to-round barrel, by Larry Gardner.

Right: Close-up of the elaborate brass patchbox with its extensive silver inlay, and the butterfly motif that is utilized throughout the rifle. The patchbox shows much influence in engraving design of Simon Lauck of Winchester, Virginia, c. 1790. The opposed spiral flower detail at the hinge and the bright cut form of border engraving are typical of Winchester styling.

Below: Forestock and rear ramrod area of the Gardner rifle, showing the silver bi-metal tang of the pipe and the extensive silver butterfly inlays worked into the flow of silver wire from the pipe tang. The relief carving ahead of the lock panel is in a leaf and gadroon-like form.
Full length view of a brass mounted, maple stock New School-Germanic style rifle by Larry Spisak. The wooden box is constructed with substantial pieces of ebony at the front and back, pieces that form the scrolled capitals of columns that border the box edges and support the prominently fluted nose section.

Right: Close-up of the rear ramrod pipe done with a pierced pipe section and tang decorated with multiple fine fluting. The relief carving with its scrolling leaf and silver wire have some Mannerist feeling mixed with the early Baroque.

Cheekpiece side view of the Spisak rifle showing its serpent form side plate with entwined silver wire inlay. The relief carving and the most unusual chip carving, like the treatment of the cheekpiece molding, have a somewhat Mannerist feel, very appropriate for a late 17th or early 18th century piece done in a regional Germanic vernacular form.

Below: The layered-leaf tang and forestock carving of the Kibler rifle, a form derived from the Paris pattern books published by Louis XIV, c. 1660, and often used by Bivins. This is a very successful form because it flows well from the tang and fits the available space—just the way it was initially designed in mid-17th century Paris. This form was modified innumerable times by many carvers over several centuries spawning other familiar patterns.

Above: The cheekpiece side of Jim Kibler’s rifle showing the mainstream stock architecture typical of a number of styles during the 1770s. The carving is closely influenced by that of the late John Bivins.
Left side view of a New School maple-stocked rifle by Dennis Mulford. Extensively relief carved in a style much influenced by the late John Bivins—uses attendant strands of silver wire inlay—Mulford’s modeling is a bit more naturalistic than John’s. The variegated star (light and dark horn or ebony and ivory) cheekpiece inlay is a form seen on 18th century American furniture and popularized by Bivins on contemporary longrifles.

Close-up of the rear ramrod pipe area of the Mulford rifle; the tapered pipe tang carries through the Continental/Germanic feeling of the overall rifle. Notice the detailed relief carving of layered leaf form and the upper forestock molding with its carved leaf termination.

Lock side view of a brass-mounted longrifle by Mike Gahagan done as a Documentary copy of an 18th century rifle attributed to Isaac Berlin. As discussed in our first installment (American Tradition, Vol. 1 No. 2, July, 2010), Documentary work offers the challenge of working in the style of another craftsman, making your cuts look like his cuts—not an easy task.

The cheekpiece side of Gahagan’s rifle showing his accurate version of Berlin’s most interesting and sophisticated design and carving skills. The rifle’s bold Germanic architecture is clearly evident in the very pronounced stepped toe of the stock. Gahagan is also known for his fine New School work.
**The Documentary and Interpretive Schools – a Recap**

In the previous two issues, the Documentary and Interpretive Schools of muzzleloading gunmaking were covered by author Mark Silver. Below are examples of two more fine makers’ works to illustrate the earlier schools.

**Documentary School**

Gunmaker Darrin McDonal provides us with an example of Documentary work, discussed in the first installment of this series (July 2010). The top rifle is the original, the earliest known piece attributed to York, Pennsylvania, maker George Schreyer.

The bottom rifle is a bench copy by McDonal. This piece was done as part of an NMLRA seminar class taught by Wallace Gusler, even the mounts were cast from the original.

**Interpretive School**

In the last installment (January 2011), this rifle was mis-attributed to Mike Miller. Built by Lowell Haarer, it serves as an example of the Interpretive approach to rifle building. This view, of the Virginia style rifle, shows the patchbox with its silver inlay and interpretive design of the sideplate and lid engraving. Left side view of the Haarer rifle showing the interpretive design of the carving behind the cheekpiece, influenced by 18th century Reading, Pennsylvania, maker Leonard Reedy in the flow of the secondary tendril.

In the inaugural issue (Volume 1. No.1) of American Tradition we mistakenly attributed this hand made lock to Lowell Haarer. We only recently found out about our mistake and wish our readers to know that this handsome flintlock was made by Mike Miller.
With the invention of the first hand-held gun, some form of a container was required to hold the gunpowder needed for its firing. Probably starting with a small bag or box, there developed all manner of flasks along with the guns. Different types of material and various shapes using wood, metal, bone and animal horns made for a wide array of containers. A great many of these worked well and the use of cow horn is noted in early armories, continuing in use in America where it became the predominant container for carrying powder in the 18th century.

With the introduction of the matchlock musket in the middle of the 15th century, warfare became more deadly and matchlocks and wheel locks used as military weapons gained favor in Europe. Supplying powder for the matchlock required a cheap, simple container without decorations. Filling this need were several designs such as small round flasks made of wood or leather that were flattened on both sides. Also a common form was made of wood in a truncated shape reinforced on its edges with metal straps and cow horns that were flattened to be more easily carried.

During this time period, the Turks from the west made frequent invasions of Austria and Hungary making it necessary for many towns and provinces to provide weapons to the peasants for defense. For this purpose armories were erected in the center of the city in which to store the fighting supplies.
between invasions. Very few of these buildings exist today; one exception is the armory at Graz, Styria, Austria, that still contains many of the instruments of war. Notice in the accompanying picture the many cow horn containers that were available, indicating their usage at this early date.

Early in the 16th century wheel locks were invented and became competition for the matchlock. Their advantage of not having to depend on a burning match for ignition was offset by their expensive lock mechanism limiting their production. Wealthy nobles found them more suitable for sporting events and decorated some of them lavishly with silver, gold and ivory inlays picturing animals, figures and scenes. Therefore their accompanying powder flasks often reflected this opulence with carvings and engravings. Flattened cow horns also were ornamented with pictures of soldiers and various motifs setting a precedent for the engraved powder horns, which followed in 18th century America.

Another means of carrying gun powder for matchlock guns was a bandolier consisting of a leather strap worn over the shoulder with eight to twelve small round containers of wood or leather each containing an individual charge. Two centuries later soldiers often carried individual charges wrapped in paper and inserted in a wooden block covered with leather, a possible evolution from the earlier bandoliers.

The cow horns discussed so far have been flattened, but round horns as largely used in America were also in use in Europe as early as the 17th century. Evidence of horn usage in their natural round shape exists in the artifacts recovered...
from a shipwreck that occurred in 1676. In that year the flagship of the Swedish navy, the *Kramer*, exploded and sank during the battle of Oland in the Baltic Sea. The location was discovered in 1980 and salvage operations recovered such items as muskets, pistols, lead shot and a round powder horn. The qualities of cow horn being tough, waterproof, floatable and readily available led to the popularity of carrying gunpowder in them throughout four centuries. In addition to their convenient size and shape, cow horns were readily shaped with simple hand tools.

Following their use with matchlocks and wheel locks in Europe, powder containers made of cow horn became the principle powder container for soldiers and hunters in America for use with their flintlock guns in the 18th century. Although several American horns are known with dates in the late 1690s, the first known American military horn is dated both 1709 and 1711 from use at Fort Ann in those years. The military continued to find powder horns useful throughout the 1700s, but gradually issued more cartridge boxes for soldiers, in which to carry rolled paper cartridges. Hunters relied on powder horns during the flintlock period and into the first half of the 1800s and some continued to find use in the Old West where flintlocks and caplock guns continued to be carried into the middle of the 19th century. However, as early as the 1750s the use of lathes to turn out machined horns began, which allowed a greater number of horns to be made than the earlier one-of-a-kind handmade horns.

Powder horns from the early 1700s up until the time of King George’s War consisted mainly of very simply made horns often with only a raised ring on the spout and a plain flat wooden base plug fastened to the horn with wood or metal pins. Most of the conflicts during this time between the French and British forces and the fighting between the colonists and the Indians consisted of minor skirmishes where opposing forces were always on the move, leaving scant time to make or decorate powder horns. The strictly plain, utilitarian horns that were produced had at most a name or date which allows us to identify them today. The lettering in simple block style changed to a more elaborate style in the 1740s when more elegant engraving came into vogue. The lettering then changed to double lined letters and dates formed with curved lines and scrolls. Figures appeared covering the surface of the horn such as unicorns, peacocks, soldiers and various birds. The body of the horn occasionally had carving such as a reduction at the throat with an engrailed edge, which became a more popular treatment for powder horns during the French and Indian War.

The greatest number of American powder horns produced during the 1750s, were made in 1757 and 1758 when soldiers stationed at various forts and camps while waiting for battle had spare time to make and decorate them. For instance, at Fort Edward located strategically on the east bank of the Hudson River where the portage from the river to Lake Champlain began, as many as 15,000 to 16,000 people gathered in the summer of 1757 with that number carrying over to 1758 and

This contemporary high-art, musketeer-style powder flask made by John Kiselica is based on ones in use from 1630–1650 in France. This officer’s version is constructed of a French walnut body with a red velvet backing behind a hand pierced silver frame. The frame is held in place with carved ivory washers and 18KT yellow gold screws. The attachment points for the cord are also hand made from 18KT gold.
1759. Following the fall of Fort William Henry in 1757 the French commanders were unable to control their Indian allies, which resulted in the killing of British and Colonial troops and the Indians taking many captives that had been guaranteed safe parole to Fort Edward. When news of the killing of the British soldiers and the treatment of those who had surrendered reached New England, the emotions ran so high that all the northern colonies sent troops to Fort Edward to help fight the French and the Indians. The effect of this propaganda caused the population to expand at the fort to the extent that it became the principle British base in the colony of New York during the following three years.

One of the soldiers involved in the massacre at Fort William Henry in August of 1757 was named John Bush who was reported, “to be a mulatto fellow about 30 years of age.” It was recorded that he was captured and led off by the Indians. A subsequent document indicated that he possibly died on a prisoner of war ship bound for France. Because of his skill as an engraver, Bush is often admired as the father of the Lake George School of engraved powder horns. His importance in influencing those around him, such as Samuel Lounsbury and the carver known as “J W,” is shown in the designs of flowers and lettering. Their flowing lines created floral designs and beautiful calligraphy, and was a dramatic change from the plain horns with only a name and date produced at the start of the century. Powder horns with artistic designs and figures forming interesting folk-art were exemplified in many horns of the French and Indian War. The architectural details of horns during the time of this war included the reduction of the horn at the throat making a step from the body of the horn to the neck, which was often decorated with an engrailed edge. Another feature sometimes used on horns of this period was a rounded lobe projecting from the butt end of the horn past the base plug with two
holes in it to attach a carrying strap. The decorative names engraved with fancy lettering along with flowers and figures plus the changes in form such as the engrailed edges and carrying strap lobes marked the continuing evolution in powder horn design and decoration of the horns made in America during the French and Indian War period.

The next large production of powder horns occurred during the Revolutionary War because troops again were idle for months surrounding Boston in 1775 and 1776. Skilled soldiers often made horns known as “Siege of Boston” horns for those less adept at carving and were often paid in coin, with favors or food. Several characteristics stand out from this period. First, most horns had a ring or staple in the base plug rather than the lobe for attaching the carrying strap. Second, the stepped down throat section was more frequently omitted reducing the work and making the horn more economical for the immediate purpose of using it for war or for hunting. The distinction is not always clear-cut whether the horn was created with the intention of
Intricate carving found on many horns is often extensively used. Many fall between these extremes and both types are equally important whether they are admired for their artistic excellence or appreciated for their historic significance as historical documents. The extremely talented carvers of the French and Indian War such as Bush, Lounsbery and J. W. had their counterparts in the Revolutionary War. Horns exist signed by Andrew Clark, others by the “Folky Artist” whose work spanned both wars, as well as those by unknown carvers of several “Siege of Boston” horns exhibiting an unusual style of lettering in parallel lines that changes direction at distinct angles. The production of Andrew Clark was limited as only seven of his horns


Below: A total of six members of the Millerd family served together in the Massachusetts Militia during the Revolutionary War. The folk art on this horn depicts animals and a soldier with a sword in one hand and a halberd in the other.

Only seven of the Revolutionary War powder horns made by the outstanding carver from Maine, Andrew Clark, are known today. This horn made for John Gatchel shows Clark’s ability at depicting scenes; in this case taken from Paul Revere’s print of the “1770 Boston Massacre.”

On this horn made for Shubal Bragg, Andrew Clark copied a scene from the 1774 issue of the Royal American Magazine titled “The Able Doctor or America Swallowing the Bitter Draught”
Intricate carving found on many horns is often accomplished using figures considered folk art...

David Wright, known for his talent as a fine artist, made and inscribed this contemporary folk art powder horn using whimsical animals, bold lettering and flowing designs.

A bold example of a contemporary southern double powder horn, complete with horn/antler band and turned bone applied tips, was made by John Barrett. It is fully covered with folk art designs commemorating the Battle of Kings Mountain, North Carolina, October 7, 1780.

David Wright, known for his talent as a fine artist, made and inscribed this contemporary folk art powder horn using whimsical animals, bold lettering and flowing designs.

A bold example of a contemporary southern double powder horn, complete with horn/antler band and turned bone applied tips, was made by John Barrett. It is fully covered with folk art designs commemorating the Battle of Kings Mountain, North Carolina, October 7, 1780.
Powder horn maps served not only as maps but as forms of self-expression, each created by the individual and representing his personal story, thus a perfect example of American folk art.

Contemporary powder horn by Gerald Dukes, showing his artistic approach to a map horn.

Right: The Rebben Smith horn, an original French and Indian War powder horn with illustrations of the Mohawk River, Lake Champlain and Lake George.

Below: A contemporary French and Indian War period powder horn by Tom Bowen, showing elements of design commonly found on original pieces.
are extant today. His talent for reproducing scenes from political cartoons and completely covering the surface of his horns was unmatched in his day. Horns by the Folk Artist (so named by Walter O’Connor because of their folk-art appearance) are numerous with over fifty of them known. Quite a few of the “Siege of Boston” horns, with the parallel lines for lettering that change course abruptly, are well known, but they are not attributable to a specific maker. In fact there are numerous examples of groups of two or more horns that exhibit the hand of some unknown artist.

A few carvers whose work encompassed both eras included Jacob Gay, a very talented carver, and an unknown maker of map horns who is referred to today as the “Pointed Tree Carver.”

Tracing the changes in powder horn design leads one from the early individually handmade American horns of the first part of the 18th century to the horns produced in greater quantity with the help of machines later in the 18th century. By the turn of the century machines were becoming more numerous and shops with more than one worker grew in the larger cities. Surprisingly, Philadelphia, as early as 1750, had shops turning out items made of horn such as cups, combs and powder horns. Researcher Roland Cadle found information about three horn shops on the waterfront in Philadelphia in the early 1750s. Some of the powder horns were produced by a lathe with turned base plugs, a turned collar at the tip fastened by a staple to the plain body. Added to this was an extension of a lathe turned piece of horn, resembling a pawn from a chess set. This piece had the extra work of being threaded which enabled it to be screwed into the threaded spout of the horn. This was a particular early example of machine made horns whose production grew in numbers in many workshops in Pennsylvania in the 1800s.

However, simple, plain, powder horns were being made in large quantities as early as the middle of the 18th century, which is illustrated by the large number of horns that were procured for the military expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758. The army needed powder horns to equip the troops enlisted to march against the French forces at Fort Duquesne and their progress through the forests of Pennsylvania required the building of a roadway that was referred to as Forbes’ Road. One of the British officers involved in the expedition was Henry Bouquet whose papers record that forty-eight dozen powder horns were purchased to be dispensed to the troops near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Also in one account from Washington to Bouquet in July of 1758, there is a record of the acquisition of 330 powder horns for Virginia soldiers to be distributed near Cumberland. These large quantities of powder horns available on short notice could only have been found in a metropolitan area like Philadelphia. The comments at the time by Bouquet are revealing as
This grand powder horn proves that the 18th century hornor, dubbed the “Folky Artist,” could indeed do excellent work. Many of his horns are very folksy in nature perhaps suggesting that he was producing in the field. This horn is very professionally wrought integrating directional cuts that produce a pleasing texture and polychrome color to accent his designs. It is dated 1764.

Color, Curve & Patina...
to the importance of powder horns for the freshly enrolled troops as compared with paper cartridges carried in cartridge boxes. Bouquet noted that the unskilled militiamen were neither handy in rolling paper cartridges nor had the paper, place, or patience to roll them.

From 1800, with the westward movement of the population, there was a greater need of powder horns for civilian use and a decrease in decorated horns for military purposes. This demand was met with the aid of lathes to help turn cow horn and wood into a new form of screw tip powder container. The screw tip horn became available from shops across Pennsylvania to be purchased by farmers and the settlers heading west. Machinery helped make a powder horn with a dome shape base plug that could have turned rings on it and a threaded tip that could be attached to the horn by screwing into it. The decorative appearance of the various turnings and bands took the place of applied engraving to make an interesting and decorative powder horn. The lack of engraving means there is rarely an owner’s name to help identify the horn and it is more difficult to know where it was produced. However, powder horns made in a town or area often can be identified by common characteristics, which help to place the community where the horn originated. Today horn makers who have specialized in working with early 19th century powder horns are able to identify the characteristics of a dozen or more localities where a given horn might have been made. The counties and cities in Pennsylvania that are identified as probable centers for the production of these groups of powder horns progress westward from Philadelphia following the population shift to the west. Some of the sites would include horns made in Philadelphia, Bucks County, Lehigh County, Berks County, Lebanon County, Lancaster, York, Franklin County, Adams County and Center County.

The expansion of the population to the sparsely settled western frontier was accompanied by migration of families and trade to the south following the Shenandoah Valley. The states of Virginia and North Carolina in particular developed their own distinguishing characteristics in the production of powder horns. The horns from Virginia are noted for pinned tips of antler and bone, plain base plugs, and occasionally an applied band. The horns from North Carolina are more varied, usually having a bulbous base plug with a knob, applied bands and a turned tip of Art DeCamp produced this contemporary example of an early banded Philadelphia screw tip horn.
that are common, making them readily recognizable as being a part of an individual group. The initial member of the family was Francis Tansel, who emigrated from France in 1785, and subsequently traveled from Virginia in 1798 over the Appalachian Mountains into Kentucky. Being on the frontier must have made carving powder horns more difficult, but they succeeded in making every horn different although using similar designs. Francis Tansel’s sons John, Stark, Timothy, Peyton, Knotly and family members repeated their familiar figures making horns in Kentucky. John and Stark moved to Indiana in 1829 along with the youngest brother and most prolific maker Timothy. They made powder horns until about 1850. Among the figures on their horns were running deer, hunting hounds, snakes, lions and frequently a federal eagle with the banner of “E PLURIBUS UNUM” attached to its beak. One of the interesting features of these figures is that they may have been traced from a common picture book of animals as they are so similar on each horn. Art DeCamp, well known student of the American powder horn, author and horn smith, has even found pinprick marks outlining deer on some horns that may have been used to help copy the figures. Carving on the throat of the horn often had a fish-mouth design with a serrated edge, a slightly domed base plug, and raised bands turned at the tip.

Our examination of powder containers started in Europe with plain and flattened cow horns for the simple matchlock guns and very fancy flasks for the highly decorated wheel lock guns of the nobility. Transferring the attention to America found that the availability and usefulness of cow horn for powder containers outweighed any other material for nearly four hundred years. From plain horns of the 16th century to the engraved powder horns of the French and Indian War and then to screw tip horns, the continuing
J. R. Robinson made this horn with large flowing folk art vines and flowers.

Jeff Bottiger specializes in making Southern banded powder horns, with this one falling into the category of a North Carolina style, complete with pinned antler tip.

Band decorated powder horns with applied tips of antler, horn, bone, wood or pewter seem to be particularly concentrated in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. However, as research continues, others are being found having origins in Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee.
The evolution of powder horns culminated in Tansel horns during the first part of the 19th century. The continued use of cow horns lasted until the advent of cartridge guns that no longer required powder to be carried separately. The use of cow horn for powder containers fortunately provided a surface that sometimes was decorated with names, dates and occasionally engraved by highly skilled artisans. This information makes them highly collectable both for their historical significance and their desirable folk-art appearance. Today, contemporary artists and craftsmen are producing these horns in their various styles and techniques, celebrating these timeless treasures with modern works of art.

Tom Grinslade is the author of two best-selling books, Flintlock Fowlers: The First Guns Made in America and Powder Horns: Documents of History. Having a passion for 18th century history transcended to an interest in inscribed powder horns of that period. Particularly, those horns that are identified with a name, date or fort on them have led him to visit 156 forts, battlefields and historic sites in America.
Three great artists allowed me to be the subject of their works, and Tina and I would like to thank them for this honor—Steve White, Doug Hall, and Andrew Knez, Jr.

Neah ne-kah-noh.
(Shawnee—“Thank you, my friends”)

Donald and Tina Shaver
360 North Murphy St.
Pahrump, NV 89060
Squire Boone
His life and Artistry

~ Carved into Stone ~
Tom Strohfeldt
The enigmatic Squire Boone is the first traditionally trained rifle maker known to have worked in the district of Kentucky.

Squire, the younger brother of Daniel Boone, was born in Oley Township of Berks County, Pennsylvania, October 5, 1744. Stated in a deposition given by his son Isaiah, Squire harbored a great fondness for guns and wanted to learn how to build them. In 1759, when Squire’s mother visited by horseback among her Pennsylvania friends (camping the whole six months’ journey), she took her fifteen-year-old son along. Squire was left apprenticed and indentured for five years in Philadelphia to a third cousin, Samuel Boone, to learn the trade of gunsmithing.

The quality of workmanship in Philadelphia during this period is unsurpassed in American decorative arts, allowing Squire the opportunity of walking into the shops of cabinetmaker Benjamin Randolph, silversmith Joseph Richardson and other artisans of contemporary renown. Squire bought out the last year of his term in 1763 and rejoined his family on the Yadkin River of North Carolina. There, the following year the twenty-year-old married Jane Van Cleve.

Squire Boone first entered Kentucky in 1769 during a twelve month journey with four other explorers. In 1770 he made another brief trip into Kentucky territory to bring supplies for his brother Daniel, and in 1775, was involved in cutting the Wilderness Road and building the fort at what would become Boonesboro. About this time he was observed by Nathaniel Hart at Boonesboro “stocking a gun”. Squire Boone moved his family to Kentucky in 1776 and being a sometime preacher of the Calvinistic Baptist Church, records show he performed the first marriage in Kentucky that year. In 1777 he founded a station on Clear Creek in Shelby County, Kentucky, where, according to his son’s deposition, he practiced the trade of gunsmithing.

That same year he was wounded in “the corn crib affair,” an engagement at James Harrod’s Station, where he is also said to have worked as a gunsmith. The encounter, described by Lyman P. Draper, illustrates his love of weapons as well as his character: “Boone ran him through with his small three edged sword, a silver hilt, which he carried by his side, and killed the Indian, Bryan says. He had forgotten about the sword being broken or Boone being cut on the forehead; but well recollects he did have a scar on his forehead. Boone always said it was the best little Indian fight he ever was in—both parties stood and fought so well—Indians finally had to give way. Boone subsequently lost his favorite short sword with a silver hilt in the mouth of Bear Grass Creek while crossing on a fleet of flat boats laying there. He had carried that sword for many years by his side and regretted its loss, and made great efforts to recover it without success.”

Boone had a gunsmith shop within the stockade walls at Boonesboro. It is important to note that Draper writes, “which contained a bellows.” This indicates that iron parts and perhaps gun barrels were being produced at the time of the famous siege. “Prior to the battle, Squire Boone made a wooden cannon of tough black gum and banded it with iron; it was fired and cracked. He made another, fired it twice and it answered a very good purpose. About the second or third
day of the attack, it [wooden cannon] was brought [up to the stockade] and fired [at the attackers; it] sent a swivel ball over 200 yards out of the big gate...”15 Squire Boone also fought and was wounded in this battle.

In 1780, Boone established Painted Stone Station on Brashear’s Creek in present day Shelby County, Kentucky. In 1781, he was severely wounded in an ambush led by Simon Girty.16 Squire’s wounds were so severe that he was “rendered incapable of labor” for some time and was not expected to live.17 After several months of suffering he finally recovered although his arm was so badly shattered it was an inch and a half shorter than his other arm and was partly crippled. Pieces of bone continued to work their way out through the skin for many years.

Boone left New Orleans and worked for a considerable time in the Choctaw Nation then in the Chickasaw Nation “making and repairing and ornamenting guns, making pipe tomahawks and ornamenting them with silver, making silver trinkets, etc.”21 He returned to Kentucky to find his affairs in disorder and himself impoverished, and then went across Georgia and South Carolina to Fort Frederica, St. Simons Island, Georgia, at the mouth of the Altamaha.22

Both Squire and Samuel returned to Berks County, Pennsylvania at this time (1792), where Squire remained for three years.23 He returned to Shelby County, Kentucky in 1795, and left again in 1799, this time for Missouri.24 His sons persuaded him to return to Kentucky, however, where, in 1804 at the age of 60, he was imprisoned in the Louisville jail for debt. In 1806, Squire moved to Harrison County, Indiana, where he lived with his sons until his death in August of 1815.25

Clarifying Squire Boone’s story woven from the words of Lyman P. Draper, written from interviews with many individuals, his pension application describes his life in his own words. It is printed in toto as readable and written. Dots indicate illegible words or phrases.

To the honorable President of the United States and the rest of the members of Congress Assembled.

Humbly sheweth to your honorable body that your petitioner, Squire Boone, set out from the State of North Carolina with four others in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty nine in search of the western world and after a long and tiresome journey through hils mountains and savage country we arrived in that furtile country called and known by the name of the Kentucky district where we tarried a considerable time viewing and exploring the country and in about twelve months returned home to my family much worn out with the long and fatiguing journey, in a short time I returned to the said country in search of my brother Daniel Boone but did not make a long stay but returned to North Carolina where... assembled March 1775 at which time I took my command Col. Richard Henderson (who then claimed the said Kentucky country) and came out and settled a place called and known by the name of Boonesboro on the Kentucky river during which time I went several express to the governor when no other person could be got to go and at several other times was out on scouts after the Indians, and after the State of Virginia had taken the country from Col. Henderson had a Captains commission General George R. Clark signed by his excellency Patrick Henry governor of the State of Virginia after which time I shortly record a wound on a small expedition at Harrisburg, shortly after that was wounded at a siege of... days at Boonesboro, from thence I moved and settled a station of my own on Brashear’s creek near the Falls of Ohio where with a great deal of difficulty... the said station and on the 2nd day of April 1781...two wounds by the Indians one of them through the other book one of my arms shortly afterward rendered me incapable of labor, but as soon as I was able to travel I was elected to represent the county of Jefferson in the General Assembly during which time my family and property were exposed to the ravages of the Indians. In 1782 I returned to my family and a great deal of my property destroyed by the Indians and my... caused many misfortunes to befall me, in endeavoring to support the country and... that your petitioner has received eight bullet holes, through him and has been in seventeen engagements with the Indians in support of his country and lost his property by unforeseen accident and Indians aforesaid and the many wound that your petitioner has received renders him incapable of labor for a support

During this period, Squire Boone was elected representative of Jefferson County to the Virginia House of Delegates in Richmond.18 At the conclusion of his term he went to Georgetown on the Potomac and brought his cousin Samuel, from whom he had learned gunsmithing, to his station in Kentucky.19

The latter part of Boone’s life included a number of expeditions taken in hopes of more successful land speculations or better situations for profitable trade. In 1787, he went first to Vicksburg, then to Natchez and finally, to New Orleans where he worked for three years, apparently as a blacksmith.20

This pipe tomahawk displayed in the Indiana State Museum is attributed to be owned and possibly made by Squire Boone. It is rather plain except for a rope-like decoration around the bowl. It measures 7 inches by 16.25 inches overall, c. 1780–1800.26

46 American Tradition • the journal of the contemporary longrifle association • January 2012
These thirteen hand carved limestone rocks are all that remain from Squire Boone's 1809 homestead. The stones attest to one man's artistic ability to create a lasting interpretation of his creative mindset.

The stones as shown are not to scale.
therefore your petitioner prays that your honorable body would take the matter into your wise consideration and make your petitioner sum allowance in that as you in your...may think right and your petitioner shall...duly bound, pray &c. 36

THE SQUIRE BOONE STONES

A group of stones, which he carved for his house built circa 1809 furnishes intriguing examples which exhibit his decorative capacities. The commingling of Rococo art and Indian pictographs epitomizes those influences on an American frontiersman. To understand the relevance of these stones to the study of the longrifle altogether, we have to come to an appreciation of the role of ornament on that weapon.

After weeks of work required to make such a firearm, carving and engraving was the frosting on the cake. The lessons learned in shaping a beautiful stock, forming the metal mounts with elegance, translate into making scrolls accelerate properly and adding beautiful tattered shells and Palmer’s shells as well as the other ornaments of Rococo carving and engraving.

The clues, the Rosetta Stone if you will, of studying the 18th century longrifle, depends upon comparing, contrasting, and identifying the elements of decoration employed by those makers. This riflemaker, central in importance, has not left a gun which we have yet found, hence the presentation of these icons of encrypted information.

The richness and strangeness of Indian head profiles with

On the above carved stone Indian head motif, note the acanthus leaf modeling of the hair-a device regularly employed on furniture of the second and third quarters of the 18th century. The suggestion of a head dress within the C and S scrolls is ornamented with intriguing symbolism. The artist’s rendition to the right shows the design more clearly.

This device, which I don’t remember ever seeing on a longrifle of the period is not that unusual on American furniture. Compare to the crest-rail of a Philadelphia chair of the period, shown on the facing page. What were Squire Boone’s capabilities?
acanthus leaf, hair, and horses composed of “C” and “S” scrolls speak to our mutual curiosity about and excitement for these motifs. This learned audience of aficionados will readily see the vine and leaf reminiscent of the famous “brass-barreled rifle,” the trefoil design characteristic of early Reading guns, the Indian profile related to the Allentown Indian and many more relationships obviously gauged by the difficulty of using limestone as a material.

It is my intention to present this multitude of clues not only for possible attribution of Squire Boone’s work in other media, but so that we may be conversant with the hybridization of artistic design on the literal frontier.

Endnotes:
1Draper manuscript I C p. 3.
2Ibid. v. 19 p. 57.
3Draper mss. v. 19, p. 159.
6Pension statement of Squire Boone; private manuscript, Filson Club.
7Ibid pension statement.
817 cc 194 a/c Draper.
9Draper v. 19, p. 43.
10Draper v. 19, p. 129; “Simon Gritty... boasted... that he had made Squire Boone’s white shirrtail fly.”
11Pension statement op. cit.
12Ibid.
13Draper mss. v. 19, p. 123.
14Draper v. 19, pp. 101-105.
15Draper v. 19, p. 106.
16Draper v. 19, p. 146.
17Draper mss. v. 19 p. 146
18Draper mss. 19 cc pp. 43-45, 107-109, 1s 188 as cited in Bakeless, John; Daniel Boone, Master of the Wilderness.
19Draper v. 19, p. 153.
20Private manuscript, Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky.

This unicorn, emerging from a forest of s-scrolls, stylized tattered shells and shells extended with dotted amplification, makes one wonder if this is a Baroque device.
“It is my intention to present this multitude of clues not only for possible attribution of Squire Boone’s work in other media, but so that we may be conversant with the hybridization of artistic design on the literal frontier.”

While the vine and leaf motif (shown above) is a common decorative detail on American furniture of the late 18th and early 19th century, its employment on American longrifles is more unusual. The display on the lower buttstock moulding of the “Brass Barreled Rifle”, shown on the facing page, shows a possible association. The termination in the stylized fleur-de-lis relates very positively to a feature so common in early Reading guns (facing page) as to be stereotypical.

The running fleur de lis also shows up as artistic embellishments on American powder horns as shown here.
The employment of the stylized vine and leaf on the “Brass Barreled Rifle” relates directly to the Boone stone shown on the facing page.

The trefoil/fleur de lis often seen on early Reading guns, as is depicted on the Boone stone shown on the facing page.

This stone which illustrates an element which I consider a thistle relates to the rather perplexing longrifle that is attributed by George Shumway, author of Rifles of Colonial America, as being built in the South. On the cheekpiece of the rifle is carved a bud and flowering of a thistle. What are we to make of this? The thistle, of course, is the emblem of Scotland.
Thomas A. Strohfeldt is a former Curator of Manuscripts of the Cincinnati Historical Society, an Apprentice gunsmith of Colonial Williamsburg, Assistant Curator and Gunsmith of The Ohio Historical Society, and Curator of Transportation of The International Museum of the Horse.

Strohfeldt has authored forty-seven articles in the field of longrifles, decorative arts, and indigenous peoples and currently lectures, illuminating the history of the Ohio River Valley.

In 1790 while fleeing from a party of hostile Indians, Squire Boone discovered a cave in which he hid and avoided detection by the Indians. Today the cave is known as Squire Boone Caverns.

In 1804 Squire and his family moved from Kentucky to Harrison County, Indiana and settled on the land that included the cave and a good spring which emerged from it. They cleared the land for farming, built a large log house overlooking the cave and a grist mill below. The mill became very successful and Squire lived out the rest of his life at this location. The mill has since been rebuilt and is in use at Squire Boone Caverns.

The historic site includes tours of the cave and the mill, plus other early log buildings with crafts.

Squire Boone Caverns and Mill are located near Corydon, Indiana at: 100 Squire Boone Rd. S.W., Mauckport, IN 47142.
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Book Reviews

Flintlock Fowlers, The First Guns Made in America: American Fowling Pieces from 1700–1820 by Tom Grinslade
Reviewed by Mark Sage

In the year 1851, Lyman C. Draper traveled to a small cabin in southwest Missouri on the headwaters of the Osage River to interview Daniel Boone’s youngest son, Nathan and his wife Olive. In recounting the Blue Licks battle of 1782, Nathan Boone relates the following:

“Father had no sword but was armed with a very long English fowling piece, which he seldom used. He took it with him on this occasion and loaded each shot with three of four rifle bullets and sixteen or eighteen buckshot.”

Daniel Boone may have only used this English fowler sparingly, but it is noteworthy that one of the men most associated with longrifles chose this particular weapon to carry into battle. The smoothbore firearm, versatile, affordable and deadly, may not garner the same accolades as the American longrifle, but it most certainly played a very important role on the American frontier. For those interested in learning about smoothbore firearms and the part they played in our early history, CLA member Tom Grinslade has written an important book on the subject. Tom brings over forty years of gun collecting and research on the subject and believes that:

“Fowling pieces and shotguns were quite likely the most commonly owned and used of all antique American firearms. They were the type of gun every household likely held at some time or another.”

The first four chapters trace the history of fowlers from their origins in Europe and focus on how they developed and evolved in America, placing them in six distinct categories: New England, Club-butt, Hudson Valley, British, Kentucky and Unique. In subsequent chapters, the history and background of every classification is further defined, based on the author’s extensive research and augmented with high quality photos of individual firearms, including close-ups of various parts of each gun. Most of them are black and white, but there is a whole section in color that is impressive.

Provided with each firearm is a list of statistics, including barrel length, caliber, date, type of wood, etc., that really helps “flesh out” the photographs.

I highly recommend Tom’s book. It is well written, enjoyable, interesting and will be a significant resource for the builder, collector or historian. It will expand one’s understanding of smoothbore firearms and their important (but often unrecognized) contribution to American History.

To Order: Send check for $38 plus $10 shipping; Scurlock Publishing, 1293 Myrtle Springs Rd., Texarkana TX 75503.

Mark Sage is an author, public speaker, reenactor, muzzleloading hunter and CLA member who focuses on America’s early westward expansion, the people involved and the firearms they used. Mark resides in northern Minnesota, where he enjoys paddling his birch bark canoe in the numerous lakes and streams.
Firearms of the Fur Trade: The Encyclopedia of Trade Goods, Vol. 1
by James A. Hanson with Dick Harmon
Reviewed by Carolyn Gilman

If you have ever stood gazing in awe at the Museum of the Fur Trade’s incomparable collection of firearms, wishing you could have really fine photos of the best ones, this is your book. If you have ever wished you could have in one place all the articles James Hanson has written on the subject of guns, this is also your book. Despite the title, this is not an encyclopedia in the sense of a reference book with short articles on basic topics. It is, instead, a fine museum catalog that uses the Museum of the Fur Trade collection and key examples from other collections, to create a history of Indian trade guns in America from the 17th to the 20th centuries. Although not a reference, it is encyclopedic. It is the most comprehensive visual record of the development of trade guns ever attempted and is unlikely to be equaled any time soon.

The focus is on guns designed and manufactured for the Indian trade—those sold by trading companies and government-issue guns given to tribes by France, Britain and the United States as diplomatic gifts, treaty payments or to arm Indian forces in war. In fact, one of the book’s major contributions is the clear differentiation between the two, and the information that makes it possible to assign weapons to one or the other origin.

The authors have mined inventories, procurement records and correspondence from both government agencies and trading companies to identify the major specifications, models, makers and technological changes over the years. If that were all they had done, it would be a fine contribution to knowledge. But Hanson and Harmon have also matched actual examples with major changes in gun design and production whereby the reader may examine the variations described in the text. There are helpful sidebars on such topics as the fox-in-tombstone and fox-in-circle marks, which could only have been written from a voluminous knowledge of actual examples.

It is all illustrated by page after page of high-quality color photos of extraordinarily well-preserved examples. The large format of the book is well chosen for reproducing the photos large enough to show detail, and the high-quality printing does justice to the images. There are many close-ups of important details. For readers who can tear their eyes away from the photos, the text sets everything into context. This is not an introductory book; it assumes a fairly high level of expertise and technical knowledge on the part of the reader.

Some themes recur throughout; one is the ceaseless quest for high quality. The correspondence quoted here, dating from Sir William Johnson to Ramsay Crooks, demolishes the stereotype of inferior goods being foisted upon gullible savages. Trade guns had to meet exacting specifications and the inability of American manufacturers to replicate the English North West gun forced reputable American companies to rely on British gunmakers well into the 19th century.

The scope and high quality of this book guarantee it will be the go-to source on Indian trade guns for decades to come.

To Order: Send check for $135 plus $12 shipping; Museum of the Fur Trade, 6321 Hwy 20, Chadron NE 69337.

Carolyn Gilman is Special Projects Historian, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, Missouri.
About 1200 A.D., European writers began to transition from carbon based inks to ferrogallate inks. The latter had two distinct advantages: ease of manufacture and difficulty of removal. Consisting of only four ingredients (galls, ferrous sulfate, gum Arabic and water), it was so easy to make that it was usually mixed at home. In the 18th century, ferrogallate inks were used almost exclusively and were still widely used in the early 20th century because of their permanence.

Contemporary artisans might use it to sign his or her work in the patchbox, under drawers in furniture, inside the base of powder horns, keep records of one’s work, record research notes, etc. This is ink fit for the centuries unlike ballpoints and rollers.

Certain insects, especially wasps, puncture tree twigs to lay eggs. The larvae feed on the tree, secreting an irritant that prompts the tree to create the gall around the larva. In America, galls are most commonly found on oaks and tend to be from marble to golf ball sized. The insects can only lay eggs on new growth so look near the ends of small branches.

Gum Arabic is a type of tree sap. It thickens the ink so it flows properly from the quill or nib. Furthermore, it binds the ink on the paper surface, producing greater brilliance and deeper color. Lastly, it creates a sharper line and reduces feathering by controlling ink penetration into the paper fiber.

Begin ink making by crushing the galls as finely as possible. Ferment the crushed galls by soaking them in water in a warm place for about ten days; this produces more gallic acid, making a purer black whereas gallotannic acid creates a browner ink.\(^1\) When the ink has adequately fermented, filter out the mold and boil for a few minutes. Then stir in ferrous sulfate.\(^2\) An immediate darkening should appear. Finally, and very slowly, add the gum Arabic, stirring constantly,\(^3\) the quantity depends on the writing implement and the quality of the paper. It is best to add a little at a time and test it rather than adding too much and ruining the ink. When it is finished, add clove oil. Be sure the inkwell has been thoroughly cleaned (with alcohol if possible) to prevent re-introduction of mold.

**Recipe:**

3 ounces blue Aleppo galls (more if any other kind)  
2 ounces ferrous sulfate (copperas or vitriol)  
1 to 1½ ounces powdered gum Arabic  
A drop or two of clove oil (for preservative)  
32 ounces (one quart) distilled water

When newly applied to paper,\(^4\) ferrogallate inks are black or warm black and will darken further over several days. Inks that have turned brown contained too much ferrous sulfate in proportion to the gallic acid.\(^5\)

**Resources:**

www.irongallink.org  
David N. Carvalho. *Forty Centuries of Ink*, 1904, can be found on Google Books.

**Sources:**

John Neal: www.johnnealbooks.com/ excellent quality oak galls, gum Arabic powder, properly prepared quills, dip pen nibs, and ferrogallate ink for dip pens (“Old World”).  
Bostick & Sullivan: www.bostick-sullivan.com for ferrous sulfate (technical grade), gum Arabic, tannic and gallic acid (if you don’t want to make it from galls).  
Goulet Pens: www.gouletpens.com sells Diamine “Registrar’s Ink” which is a ferrogallate ink suitable for either fountain pens or dip pens.

**Endnotes:**

\(^1\) Cyntia Karnes, “How to Make Iron Gall Ink” in //web.mac.com/elandbas/papier_sem-1/inktvraat_files/ECPA 99 01 186.PDF.  
\(^2\) Ferrous Sulfate, FeSO\(_4\). Buy cheaply as the impure garden supplement “Copperas.”  
\(^3\) American recipes sometimes substituted honey or sugar for gum Arabic.  
\(^4\) Paper before about 1840 was made from rags whereas most modern paper is made of wood.  
Steve White & Joe Brannen

Steve White
“Gunrunners”
24” x 30”
oil on linen
2011

Joe Brannen
Kentucky Sugar Chest
circa 1800-1820 Cherry
Federal Southern style
2010

Steve White
American Frontier Artist
225 Market Street
Maysville, Ky. 41056
606-564-4887
www.stevewhiteart.com

Joseph Byrd Brannen & Co.
Antique Furniture Reproductions
145 West Second Street
Maysville, Ky. 41056
606-564-3642
Jud Hartmann

"Sassacus" (Pequot chief, 1637)
Height: 30"
Bronze Edition: 25

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