

EDITOR'S NOTES

I am writing this in July 1, 2020—over three months since I picked up my handcrafted .54 cal smoothrifle from Larry Cordray—way up on a ridge in Morrow County—one week before the state lockdown for COVID-19 (see Figure 1). Under Larry's direction, I completed putting on the finish that accented the tightly striped maple stock—the wood purchased at a lumber shop in Holmes County. Even though the style was early Virginia, such guns were certainly used within the frontiers of Ohio in the late 18th century. And I have to hand it to Larry for employing good old Appalachian make-do by cutting the side plate out of the fender of an old Harley motorcycle and the simple steel patchbox and ramrod pipes out of the shelf of an old safe. Hefting the unfired smoothrifle each day has helped pass the weeks of confinement.

In this issue an article written by Nathan E. Bender (Ohio raised, present resident of Cody, Wyoming, and

author of "The Art of the English Trade Gun in North America") traces the relationships between different members of the Hawken clans in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri. Ohio was certainly a place where guns that ended up "out West" were made. For instance, Vincent rifles had a following in Iowa. I have two repatriated rifles by Mesheck Moxley—one that was taken to North Dakota by a Swedish immigrant and used to shoot rabbits and ducks, and another from Texas. I am sure other members have made such finds. Online auction sites often reveal Ohio guns as far away as California, along with guns from New York, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere that went West on flatboats, covered wagons, trains, horseback, on foot, and other means for use by a whole spectrum of peoples of various backgrounds. Taking a quick look at the Hawken connection can help us better understand where Ohio fit into the national gun-making and distribution picture that was unfolding throughout the 19th century.

In this issue we also get to learn a little about how Bob Statler, one of our Board of Directors, developed an interest in antique Ohio rifles. I have also included a photo from the archives of a nicely carved full-stock rifle by Levi Biddle of Shanesville, Ohio, an article on what may be a restock of a Biddle rifle by another well-known make in the area, and a short piece on three small axes recovered in Holmes county.

I would also encourage you to send me an article—with nice pictures—detailing any of the interesting rifles you own. Or articles on history of a particular gunsmith—or group of gunsmiths. Personal anecdotes and family memories of the old time rifles are also interesting, as are accounts of current shoots, displays, museum exhibits, or shows (such as they are yet held). I would love to see articles on contemporary makers in Ohio, who will someday be the subject of future generations interest as the story of Ohio antique guns continues. Leafing through our back issues on the aolrc .com website will give you some ideas. Details for submitting an article (don't be shy) are explained in the box below.

Yours truly, Mark Bender
mabgogo@yahoo.com, 614-736-3783



AOLRC Vice-president cradles .54 cal. smooth-rifle completed just before the COVID-19 lockdown, March 2020.

MEET THE DIRECTORS

BY ROBERT STATLER

My name is Bob Statler. I was appointed to the Board of Directors in 2016 to finish Mark Herman's term at that time, as Mark decided to step down for a while. I live close to the border of Richland and Morrow counties near Johnsville, Ohio. I have been married to my wife Debbie for 28 years. We have one daughter, Katie. I drive truck for a wholesale lumber and building materials distribution company, delivering or picking up loads in six states. I am a life member of the NRA and member of OGCA.

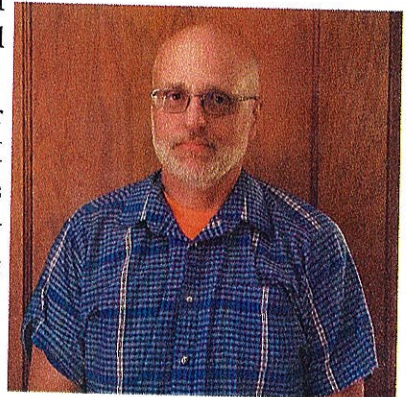
I grew up in Loudonville, Ashland County, Ohio. My grandfather, Frank Sharp, amassed a large gun collection over several decades and was fortunate to acquire five original Ohio muzzleloaders. In the house I grew up in, I saw three of those guns setting in a gun cabinet most every day. I guess that is what planted the seed. My dad, Neal, and I joined the P.A. Reinhard Muzzleloading Rifle Club in the 1980s, which sparked our interest in original Ohio guns.

As our collection grew, Dad and I would display some of our guns at Malabar Farms State Park in

Richland County during their Heritage Days Festival and at Pioneer Days at the Wolf Creek/Pine Run Grist Mill next to Mohican State Park in Ashland County. We both joined the AOLRC in 2007 after talking to Tom Oakes at an OGCA Show in Wilmington, Ohio.

In recent years, my interest has come to include researching the genealogy and history of Ohio gunsmiths. I'm not sure which is more rewarding -- finding a rifle you've been hoping to run across or uncovering a missing piece of history that helps fill in the puzzle.

As a member of the board, I welcome any ideas or input from fellow members regarding any issues you feel are important to the future of the AOLRC.



Bob Statler

GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLE SUBMISSION

1. The preferred format for articles is a Word document. Please use size 12 font, single or double space, 1 inch margins.
2. Printed photographs, drawings, and typed or handwritten manuscripts can be mailed to:
Mark Bender
139 W. Old Powell Rd, Shawnee Hills, Ohio 43065
USA
3. Articles in Word (or compatible system), photos (j-pegs or other formats), and correspondence can be emailed to this address: mabgogo@yahoo.com
4. Please put "AOLRCfile" in the subject line of the email.
5. Please run a spelling and grammar check on your e-files and otherwise proofread them.
6. Please put the **title and author's name** at the top of the article; use the same font size for the whole article.
7. **Photographs** can be color or black and white. If you are not a professional, good results can be obtained by taking photos of objects in soft, outdoor light. Lay the object on a non-reflective black background (blanket, etc.) with no background clutter. Please keep in mind how a color image might look if presented in black and white. Photos should be clear and sharp. (Professionals will, of course, have their own protocols.)
8. Use **past issues as a guideline** to content. Ideas for articles include local or family histories of pre-1900 Ohio gunsmiths and the use of muzzle-loading arms; detailed descriptions of representative or unique rifles (in terms of features or level of craftsmanship); accoutrements; short interviews with AOLRC members relating to collecting and appreciation of the Ohio long rifle as a folk art; accounts of early shooting clubs, shoots, tales, etc.
9. The newsletter is normally published twice a year. Submissions are always welcome, however timely notices for the Spring or Fall shows need to be received **at least 6 weeks** in advance.