

Meet the Directors

BY JOHN REINBOLT

The AOLRC had some new faces at Directors meeting: Allen Corbett, John Reinbolt, Robert Statler, and the newest director Liza Kindig. In this newsletter, I introduce myself, John Reinbolt.

Hello, my name is John Reinbolt, I have been a director for two years and in December 2017 was appointed Treasurer. I replaced Ron Yerian as he resigned after a long run as Treasurer.

I live in Northwest Ohio by the little town of McCutchenville. I have installed roofing and siding on residential homes for 40 years. The last 20 years I've run my own business.

I grew up on a small farm and hunting and fishing was a part of my life. My interest in muzzleloaders started early. As a late member of the Baby Boomer Generation, I was exposed to Disney's Daniel Boone. As soon as I heard the distinct crack of muzzleloaders and saw the coonskin cap, I was hooked. I bought my first muzzleloader in 1976 at the age of 16. A T/C .45 cal Hawkins, that I still own.

I spent a semester at Marietta College in the fall 1979 but I found myself in West Virginia; visiting a muzzleloader shop in Williamstown, twice a week. After that semester I decided college wasn't for me. On one last trip to Williamstown I bought my second muzzleloader and headed home. I also joined the NMLRA that year. In 1981, I was introduced to a local gun builder who studied under Jack Haugh. I built my first rifle -- a Tennessee squirrel rifle, flintlock. I visited the Marietta show in the late 80's and started collecting in the mid-90's. After some encouragement from Keith Metcalf and James Claggett and the realization I had collected mainly Ohio guns. I joined the AOLRC. I also collect powder flasks, do a little scrimshawing on powder horns, and do some tinsmithing.

Some of you may know me from the Marietta show and Newark shows (as I am a table holder), and also from the Old Barn Auction in Findlay, Ohio. Since I am not a social butterfly I have not met most of you. However, I do not want that to inhibit me in serving as director and treasurer. I always felt as a member I

was in the dark on the workings of the AOLRC. I take most of the blame for not getting involved and asking. However, I was never asked or told of issues concerning the AOLRC.

My plan is to reach out by calling and emailing members to talk about any issues concerning the association. I'd like to get members' input and learn what ideas they may have. I sent out 67 emails after the Marietta show and heard back from eight members. From those that did respond the feedback was very good. I thank you!

SOME OF THE ISSUES ON THE TABLE

- Get new book in print
- Trade mark our logo
- Fundraiser ideas
- How to attract new members

MARIETTA EXHIBIT

- Keeping exhibit or going to buy and sell
- Changing to two days
- Setup Friday
- Exhibit and banquet Saturday

I am not Donald Trump and going to tell you what needs to be done to "make us great again." I'm more of a give me a job and I will do my best to get it done. As treasure and director I am working for you and need your input to keep AOLRC going strong for many years.

*Thank you,
John Reinbolt, AOLRC*



About the Author

The Art of the English Trade Gun in North America McFarland & Co., Inc, Publishers, 2018

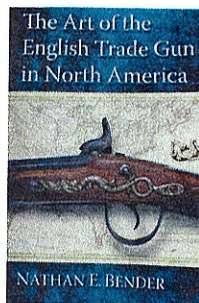
BY NATHAN E. BENDER

Interest in European trade guns for the Native American fur trade began for me back in the 1970s, when I was first learning about shooting and building muzzle-loading guns. As a native Buckeye living in Woodsfield, Ohio, getting a muzzle-loader pretty much meant building your own from a kit for my brother Mark and myself. The affordable .45 caliber percussion kit guns of the time, obtained from the local Henning's Barbershop, allowed us to learn the basics of black powder shooting, hunting, and rendezvous culture, inspired by movies such as Jeremiah Johnson and by the nation's Bicentennial celebration. Later, in East Sparta, my brother came back from college with a flintlock Northwest gun handmade by Mark Bokenkamp, blacksmith at Ohio Village, who had spent a good bit of time researching originals. This gun taught us how to shoot a flintlock smoothbore, and led to our own research on the Ohio frontier wars during French and Indian, Revolutionary, and War of 1812 times. Attending the annual shoots of the National Muzzleloading Rifle Association at Friendship, Indiana allowed me to trade for a replica .58 Enfield percussion musket which had been cut down and brass-tacked into a late 19th century western frontier style gun. This became my go-to black powder deer hunting rifle for the next several decades, in both Ohio/West Virginia and out west in the northern Rocky Mountains.

Several decades later, at the University of Idaho where I was managing the Special Collections & Archives of the University Library, I came across a rare natural history book from the mid-17th century, which contained illustrations of dragons that reminded me of the dragon/serpent sideplates of the English Northwest guns of the 18th and 19th centuries. This led me to research the art history of dragons of the 17th and 18th centuries, and to try to figure out the artistic context within which the Northwest gun sideplate had been originally designed. This eventually led to an article in the *The Rocky Mountain Fur Trade Journal*, Museum of the Mountain Man, entitled "St.

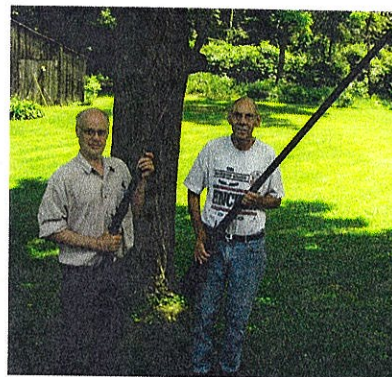
George and the Dragon Sideplate". Hooked on the art history of ornamentation of European guns designed for American Indians, I ventured to expand my inquiries to include the Chief's grade gun patterns of the English government and Hudson's Bay Company. This research was greatly facilitated by access to the fabulous collection of trade guns held by William Basco, of Hinckley, Ohio. Meeting Bill and his wife, and photographing his collection was a real turning point in my research. This allowed me to focus on many details of ornamentation in greater depth than previously, when working mainly from published photographs. I also photographed trade guns from the collection of Mark Bender of Columbus, Ohio. Many of these photographs are used in this book to illustrate ornamentations on English, French, and American made trade guns designed for the North American Indian fur trade and treaty obligations.

(Note: Details on this book can be found at: <https://mcfarlandbooks.com/product/the-art-of-the-english-trade-gun-in-north-america/>).



Cover of native Ohioan Nathan E. Bender's book the symbolism of artistic motifs on English trade muskets—some of which were part of early Ohio history.

Photo by Mark Bender



William Basco and author Nathan E. Bender holding a buccaneer smoothbore musket and an early trade musket, Hinckley, Ohio, 2018.

Photo by Rev. George E. Bender

Smoothbore Guns in Early Ohio

BY MARK BENDER

While Ohio is rightly known for its wealth of 19th century gunsmiths and related craftsmen, rifles were certainly not the only firearm used during the frontier years of the later 18th and early 19th century and on into the era of settlement, statehood and mid-century development. The range of smoothbore guns included military muskets and officer's fusils of various origins, militia muskets brought from New England and the East Coast, single barrel fowling pieces both imported and domestic, and double-barreled percussion shotguns. The latter were very popular in mid to late 19th century Ohio. Smoothbores served many practical purposes ranging from hunting, pest control, defense, and military. They were easy to learn to use and maintain, and could be aimed effectively even when eyesight was declining.

I have included three photos of smoothbores that were in use in the Ohio lands of the 19th century. The first is an 18th century Hudson Valley fowling piece that was collected from a family in Northeast Ohio, an area settled by New Englanders. (fig 1; fig. 2) These fowlers had heavy wooden stocks, large bores, and long barrels that were used for hunting waterfowl on large rivers or coastal areas of the Eastern United States. However, the pictured gun was modified during its period of use by significantly shortening the barrel and thinning the stock. At some point the original flintlock was replaced with a percussion lock. Such modifications were common on the frontier where lighter, less unwieldy guns were needed for hunting or warfare.

The second gun was obtained at a gun show in southern Ohio and is a fine example of the "make do" philosophy of the era. (fig. 3) The gun is a collection of recycled parts of different eras. The 44 inch, half octagon-half round, .69 cal. barrel (which may have had a couple inches trimmed from the muzzle) is marked at the breech with pre-1813 London proof and view marks, the brass butt-plate, sideplate, and trigger guard are mid-19th century percussion hardware commonly used by Ohio gunsmiths. The lower ramrod thimble may be earlier. The original barrel tang was replaced with a pointed Ohio style tang. The walnut stock is

rather crude, but serviceable, and styled more like a rifle than a smoothbore. The late percussion lock is marked "Trenton," a name that occasionally appears on locks of Ohio guns. These two examples are offered as a reminder that many types of firearms were in use during the heyday of the Ohio rifle.

In the early years leading up to the War of 1812 era "trade muskets" or "Northwest guns" with distinctive characteristics were marketed, traded, and gifted to Native Americans in the region by English, and later American, agents. Native peoples were suppliers of fur for the fur trade and were often sought as allies by competing European powers. Firearms were also often part of land secession treaty talks. Light weight (thus easy for hunters to carry), relatively small bore (usually .54-.62 caliber), and capable of shooting round ball (for larger game) and shot (for waterfowl and small game) the guns were useful tools and weapons that fit the needs of their users. Fancier smoothbores decorated with engravings of bows and arrows, etc. have been termed "chief's muskets" and many were gifted by the English to Native allies in the War of 1812 era.

A surviving trade musket is thought to have been owned by Tecumseh, the key Shawnee leader born in the Ohio country who sought to unite Native Americans against encroaching American settlers and ultimately allied with the British in the War of 1812. The light smoothbore musket marked by the English company Whateley, has the distinctive "dragon" side-plate of the common Northwest guns, a large iron trigger-guard, a flat butt-plate made of thin brass attached with handmade nails, and the unique crenulated ramrod thimbles. The stock bears heavy markings of the British Indian department. As the accompanying article by Nathan E. Bender suggests, much more about the artistic symbols born by these unique firearms that played a role on the Ohio frontier can be found in the just-released book by native Ohioan, Nathan E. Bender. (fig. 4)

Sources: Sage, Mark (2012). *Tecumseh's Northwest Trade Gun*. 2(2):7-11. *Contemporary Longrifle Association*. <http://portalsintimeinc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Tecumseh1.pdf>