

EDITOR'S NOTES

In this issue we also get to learn a little about William "Bill" Reynolds, a founding member of AOLRC who has done fantastic, often unsung, work promoting interest in and knowledge about traditional Ohio muzzle-loading rifles. As an authority on Vincent family and Washington County rifles, and a longtime secretary of the organization, Bill's recent assumption to the Board of Director's should be appreciated by all members.

A feature of this issue is a newly "discovered" signed rifle attributed to Fairfield county maker Martin Beeman. The aforementioned Bill Reynolds published an article in 1996 on Beeman and the information on this new discovery gives us more insight into the work of this relatively early Ohio maker. I have also included a few unpublished photos of other Beeman-attributed rifles and other signed rifles from Fairfield county from the AOLRC Archives (that is, photos mostly by Dr. James Whisker unused in volumes of the Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Craftsmen book series).

This issue also explores a rifle signed "J. Gatschet" which presents some mysteries concerning who Gatschet was and what was his relation to Shanesville/Sugarcreek maker Levi Biddle - whose work has graced the last couple issues of the newsletter. Of especial interest is who may have done the engraving on the rifle bearing Gatschet's name. There is an accompanying photo essay with photos from the AOLRC Archives showing several "wear plates" on Levi Biddle rifles for comparison with the "J. Gatschet" rifle. Reader's may draw their own conclusions. A letter in school master Biddle's hand is also included.

A photo feature on a large greenish powder horn with a unique faceted tip - which might involve a floral motif - are examples of beauty in the plainer utilitarian objects we

study, as is the detail of a wrist repair on a dainty unmarked full stock rifle that has an association with Plain City in Madison county.

At times it has been difficult to come up with interesting material for the newsletter. The knowledge of Ohio rifles in the individual and collective experience of the organization is as vast as the thousands of these arms still under our care. I would again encourage you to send me an article - with nice pictures - detailing any of the remarkable rifles to which you have access. 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 allowing old rifles, displays, museum exhibits, or shows (such as they are yet held). I would love to see articles on contemporary makers of old-style guns 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.

Finally, be wary of sitting or walking beneath beech trees. Several giants in a forest near my dwelling have fallen (dramatically) this summer, and a gigantic limb laden with bushels of beech nuts snapped like glass and fell 30 feet to the ground on the border of my backyard this week - falling directly on a trail I frequent. I hear tell of a beech tree leaf disease invading northeast Ohio and a beech bark disease in Michigan ...

*Yours truly,
Mark Bender*

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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.

MEET THE DIRECTORS:

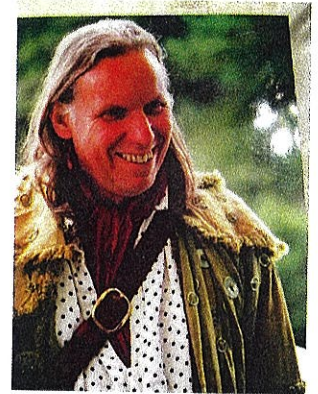
BY WILLIAM REYNOLDS

As the newest board member of our association, I have been asked to introduce myself. I must say I have been involved with the AOLRC from the very beginning. My work at Campus Martius Museum began in 1973 and one of my assignments was to find ways to bring additional visitors to the museum during the winter months. Having an interest in longrifles since childhood and using the museum's collection as a basis, I suggested having an Ohio Longrifle Exhibit weekend. With the assistance of Warren Offenberger, Cecil Brooks, Dan Augenstein, Fred Flowers and Elmer Templeton, we established the first of many Ohio Longrifle Exhibits. The first show displayed 100 excellent rifles all displayed in cases.

The following year our association was founded when I asked everyone to stay a few minutes Saturday night to discuss forming a group of likeminded people. The idea flew and Hayward Strecker and I drafted the first set of bylaws and a mission statement, and damn if I didn't find myself being secretary-treasurer. A

position I held for 18 years. The early years were tough as all correspondence was hand written, all publicity was done addressing hundreds of envelopes to as many newspapers, thousands of phone calls were made and our membership grew and attendance at the exhibit sometimes was over 1000 souls.

We are in an age now where things move much faster and the challenges to attract members and attendees at our event are more difficult. Especially with Covid-19 which has changed so many lives. However, I must say I am proud to be part of the process once again with our hard-working board members continuing the growth and interest in the Ohio Longrifle.



*Longtime board member
William Reynolds*

M. BEEMAN RIFLE BROUGHT TO LIGHT

BY MARK BENDER

Born in 1796, Martin Beeman was listed as a gunsmith in the 1831 directory of Lancaster in Fairfield county, Ohio (Hutslar n.d.:208). An in-depth article on this maker by William Reynolds appeared in the February 2000 AOLRC Newsletter, notes that Beeman was born near Lake George in eastern New York state and that the styles of his existing rifles suggest he likely apprenticed around Albany, an active gun making area along the Hudson River. Fairfield County was named after its "fair fields," part of the lands relinquished by Wyandot groups in the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The county, originally much larger than today, was created out of the Northwest Territory in 1800. In the same year its capital, Lancaster, were established on Zane's Trace by Colonel Ebenezer Zane, who was given a parcel of land there for his efforts in making the road. An illustration

(Fig. 1) in A Complete History of Fairfield County, shows a somewhat fanciful illustration of Captain Joseph Hunter, said to be the earliest settler in the Lancaster area, cradling some sort of muzzle-loading gun beside a log house on the Hocking River (Scott 1877:4-5). A Beeman family, led by patriarch John, arrived possibly by 1815 and set up a shop on Main Street, when Lancaster was already an established city with persons in multiple trades (Hutslar n.d. 208). According to Reynold's article, Martin Beeman's dates in the county are recorded as 1822 to 1842. After two or so decades, he and his large family moved to Kirksville, Missouri, located about 200 miles northwest of St. Louis. It is worth wondering why Beeman pulled up stakes and headed West to Missouri – the same state that members of the Hawken gunsmith clan chose as