

JACOBSBURG
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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The Jacobsburg Record

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Jacobsburg — Where History Lives!

Museum Season Opens with Special Project: *Arms & Crafts: Fine and Folk Arts of the Pennsylvania Longrifle*

The 2009 season opened this May with new faces, new museum hours, new exhibits, and new programs. In order to extend the open hours of the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum from Sunday afternoons to Saturdays and Sundays from 11am to 4pm, the Society hired historical interpreter, Tom Varenchick, to assist our museum volunteers.

Meet Historic Interpreter Tom Varenchick

Dressed in his blue Rev-War era coat, Tom Varenchick is a dead-ringer for his alter ego, Benjamin Franklin. Delighted JHS visitors quickly discovered that Tom is eager to open his haversack for a bit of impromptu show-and-tell: hand-forged strikers, a tuft of flax, an elegant pocket sundial and compass, bullet mold, quill pen, powder horn and measure, bone-handled fork, round balls, and other curious historical gadgets, odds, and ends for visitors to touch and try. With a little encouragement, Tom reveals how he is able to light his pipe in the Colonial-era way, without match or lighter. Whether discussing historical architecture with JJ House visitors or how to load a longrifle with those at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Tom is an outstanding addition to the JHS staff.

Tom comes to JHS as an experienced museum professional, with over 30 years in the field. Early in his career he served as a park ranger at Valley Forge National Park and Independence National Historic Park, as well as Dobbin House Museum in Gettysburg. Though a native of Pennsylvania, Tom attended the University of Tennessee and spent much



JHS Historic Interpreter, Tom Varenchick.

of his professional career at various museums in that state, including Belle Meade Plantation (Nashville), Carnton Plantation (Franklin), and Traveller's Rest Plantation (Nashville). Most recently he directed Historic Rock Castle (Henderson, TN), the magnificent circa 1790 hand-hewn limestone home of Daniel Smith, who was a surveyor of the Tennessee territory and U.S. Senator.

Last year Tom moved back to his home in Pennsylvania with the plans of semi-retirement and some volunteer work in local historical societies. After successful stints as a volunteer at some of JHS's

Continued on Page 2

major events, Tom accepted the seasonal position of site manager and historic interpreter for the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. At the close of the season in October, Tom will continue as a volunteer to assist with planning and execution of the Society's public programming.

Arms & Crafts

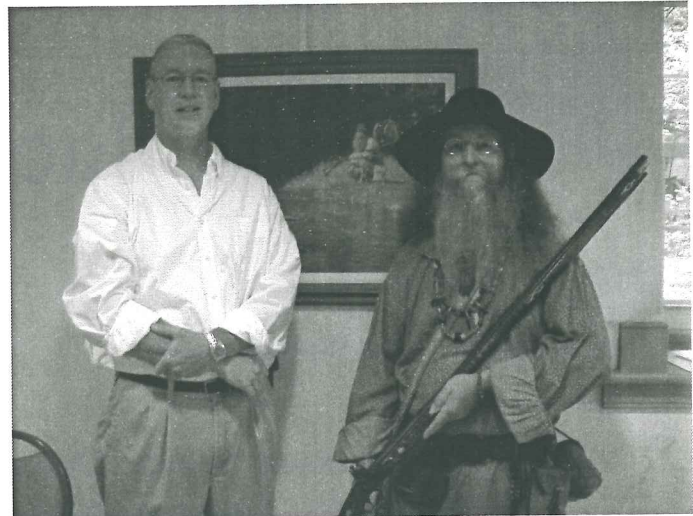
The Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum opened the season with the museum's first changing exhibit, *Arms & Crafts: Fine and Folk Arts of the Pennsylvania Longrifle*. The exhibit and coordinated programming was a joint project of the Jacobsburg Historical Society and the Honourable Company of Horners, with funding provided by the Pennsylvania Humanities Council (\$500 for programs) and the Contemporary Longrifle Association (\$500 for the exhibit). The purpose of the project was to highlight the art and artisans of early American longrifles and accoutrements, such as powder horns and hunting bags, and to encourage interest in learning the handcrafting techniques and history of these unique early American art forms.



Opening reception for the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit

The Exhibit Part 1: The Art of Kevin McDonald

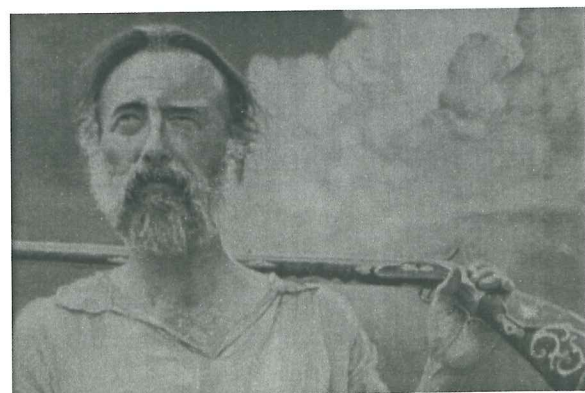
JHS members are already well acquainted with the art of Kevin McDonald, either through his work as graphic designer of the Society's website (www.jacobsburg.org) or as the painter of *On New Headwaters*, which depicts a fur trader with his J.J. Henry longrifle and which is on permanent display in the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. Kevin gen-



Kevin McDonald with the model for *On New Headwaters*.

erously volunteers his time and talent as a first-rate graphic artist to JHS on a regular basis, creating brochures and other publications as needed by the Society. The Society was proud to offer Kevin his first solo art show as part of the *Arms & Crafts* project.

Kevin's formal art education was at Du Cret School of Art in Plainfield, NJ, where he graduated in 1981. His mentor was Peter Caras, who studied under Norman Rockwell, James Bama, and James Reilly. Kevin's art career spans 28 years and includes working as the in-house illustrator for a publishing company, as art director for a Fortune 500 finance company, as a web designer, and now as an art director for a large non-profit health-care company. Throughout his career, however, his real passion has remained illustrating historical scenes and characters. He has traveled from Arizona

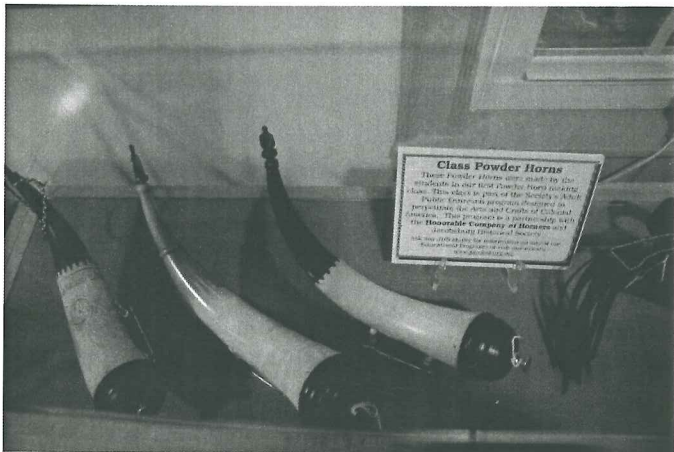


Detail from one of Kevin's paintings, which was used in the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit poster that he also designed.

Continued next page

and Colorado to Montana, Wyoming and South Dakota, to take reference photos for his paintings. Recent travels in search of inspiration reference materials have found him exploring his home state of Pennsylvania. Kevin lives in Nazareth and feels fortunate to live only miles away from Jacobsburg State Park and the Museum of the Pennsylvania Longrifle.

For the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit the first floor of the Rifle Museum was transformed into a fine art gallery



Powder horns built by JHS apprentices.

featuring 20 works depicting frontiersmen, fur traders, and Native Americans. To mark the opening of the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit, a special reception was held for Kevin on June 13, during which he sold three of his paintings. Although a water disaster at the museum in late July forced an early closure of the fine art part of the exhibit, numerous museum visitors had the opportunity to view and reflect upon these works. Several of the displayed paintings, such as Kevin's most recent work, *American Graffiti*, highlight the longrifle in its historical context. Limited edition prints of *American Graffiti*, as well as *On New Headwaters*, are available through the JHS museum store.

The Exhibit Part 2: Longrifle Art

The longrifle and its associated accoutrements have a rich history as tools of the early American soldier, frontiersman, and settler. However, rather than highlighting their practical function, this exhibit focused specifically on the artistry of these pieces and the artisans who created them. The exhibit featured both original antique artifacts, as well as historically accurate replicas produced by contemporary craftsman.

One case featured a display of Kentucky rifles made in the Pennsylvania tradition by the finest contemporary artisans. Among them were rifles produced in the 1970s and 1980s by William Buchele and George Seisler, who were pioneers of contemporary gunsmithing. Rifles made in the 1980s and 1990s were represented by the work of George Dech and Richard Hujsa; and Hershel House, Mark Whelan and Alan Martin represented the most recent master gunsmiths. The high level of craftsmanship evident in the displayed rifles, from the use of handsome woods to the beautifully detailed carvings, inlays, and engravings, makes it clear why art historians consider the Kentucky longrifle to be one of our country's first forms of fine art.

Powder horns, shooting bags and other items exhibited the artistry of accoutrements. Examples of finely sculpted and engraved original powder horns were displayed alongside exacting historical replicas by several of our country's most noted



Longrifle patchbox with ivory inlay on display at the

horn workers, including Art DeCamp, Frank Willis, Bob Albrecht, and Roland Cadle. Also on exhibit were the powder horns built in January 2009 by the first class of horn apprentices at JHS, in conjunction with the Honourable Company of Horners. (For more about HCH, see article on page 8).

Last Sundays Program

This museum season, JHS piloted the "Last Sundays" program. On the last Sunday of each month, June through October, all the Society's facilities were



Frank Willis talks to visitors about horn working during the Last Sunday's program.

opened and staffed by our dedicated volunteers, as well as by historical interpreters and artisans. In addition to the special exhibit at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, the elegant 1832 John Joseph Henry House museum was open for tours. There were classes and demonstrations of open hearth cooking in the summer kitchen; and the newly restored Nicholas Hawk gun shop featured contemporary craftsmen giving demonstrations and discussing the history of the art of longrifle and powder horn building.

The summer kitchen cooking classes were taught by Connie Unangst, Sally Shutler, and Sarah White. In the open hearth basics course, students cooked a full meal, which they enjoyed together over a bottle of wine in the old JJ House kitchen. They made historic specialty dishes, such as syllabubs and a mushroom savory; and they explored the JJ House herb garden with Carolyn Flemish. Carolyn recently authored a new JHS publication, "John Joseph Henry House Herb Garden 1832-2009: The Old and the New." In her booklet, Carolyn gives the folklore and uses of each of the 50

herbs in the museum garden. The booklet is available in the museum store for \$3.00.

The Hawk Shop was staffed on "Last Sundays" by gunsmiths Rocky Shrek, Jim Correl, and Richie Hujsa, all of who have served as gunsmith instructors for JHS courses, as well as demonstrators at our encampment events. The Hawk Shop also featured the husband and wife gunsmithing team of Bob and Gerri Rollo, who are field representatives of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association. "Last Sunday" horn-working artisans were represented by Bob Albrecht, Frank Willis, and Ed Long, who is the guild master-elect of the Honourable Company of Horners (HCH). In addition to showing antique and contemporary pieces, demonstrating artisans encouraged visitors to try their hand at filing a horn.

We greatly appreciate the support of the Contemporary Longrifle Association, the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, and the Honourable Company of Horners; as well as the numerous JHS volunteers who contributed so generously of their time and abilities to make the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit and associated programs and tours such a success.



Bob and Gerri Rollo use a hands-on approach to help visitors discover gunsmithing.

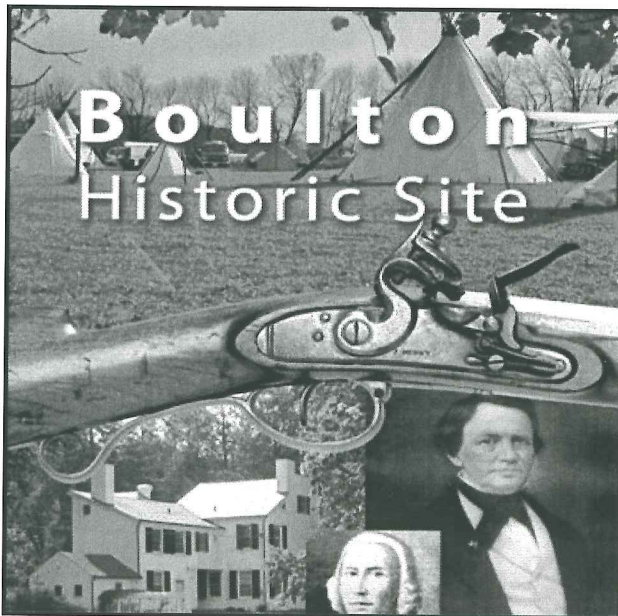
The JHS Season in Pictures

Jacobsburg Historical Society comes alive every May through October, with programs, events, and exhibits both at home in Nazareth and on the road. Following, on pages 6 and 7 of this issue, we document the season in photographs by Dave Ehrig, Matt Ehrig, Sarah White and Jan Ballard.

Boulton images include encampment scenes, such as the young girls who donned capes against the rains that fell during both events; and an engraver at the gunsmithing class. Women and girls in hats, Daisy the dog in her finery, and Jan Posh at the reigns of her miniature horse carriage offer memorable images from the *Hats and Horses* garden event in September. The "Last Sundays" program gave us pictures of tomahawk throwing, powder horn building demonstrations, and cooking classes. Our volunteers, such as Phil Schroeder and Earl Van Norman, were on hand for group tours; and Bill Atherton and others gave a special tour to Senator Pat Browne and Representative Craig Dally. The fly-fishing girl is Kevin McDonald's daughter, and the painting was exhibited at *Arms & Crafts*.

Our "road shows" produced images of Dave Ehrig at an IronPigs game at CocaCola Park; scenes from the Blue Ridge Rifles Rendezvous and the Lehigh Valley Hunting and Fishing Extravaganza; a picture of Matt Ehrig demonstrating longrifle fire at Kutztown Folklife Festival, as well as a photo of forever young lovers, Joe & Carolyn Flemish, at the Fair; and a shot of Bob Newall with an exhibit at the Easton Heritage Days. The little girl sporting the skunk skin hat discovered JHS in September at CareFair Day at Air Products, Inc.

Jacobsburg Historical Society Proudly Presents



Boulton Historic Site Documentary DVD \$15.00

(30 min., K&L Productions, Easton)

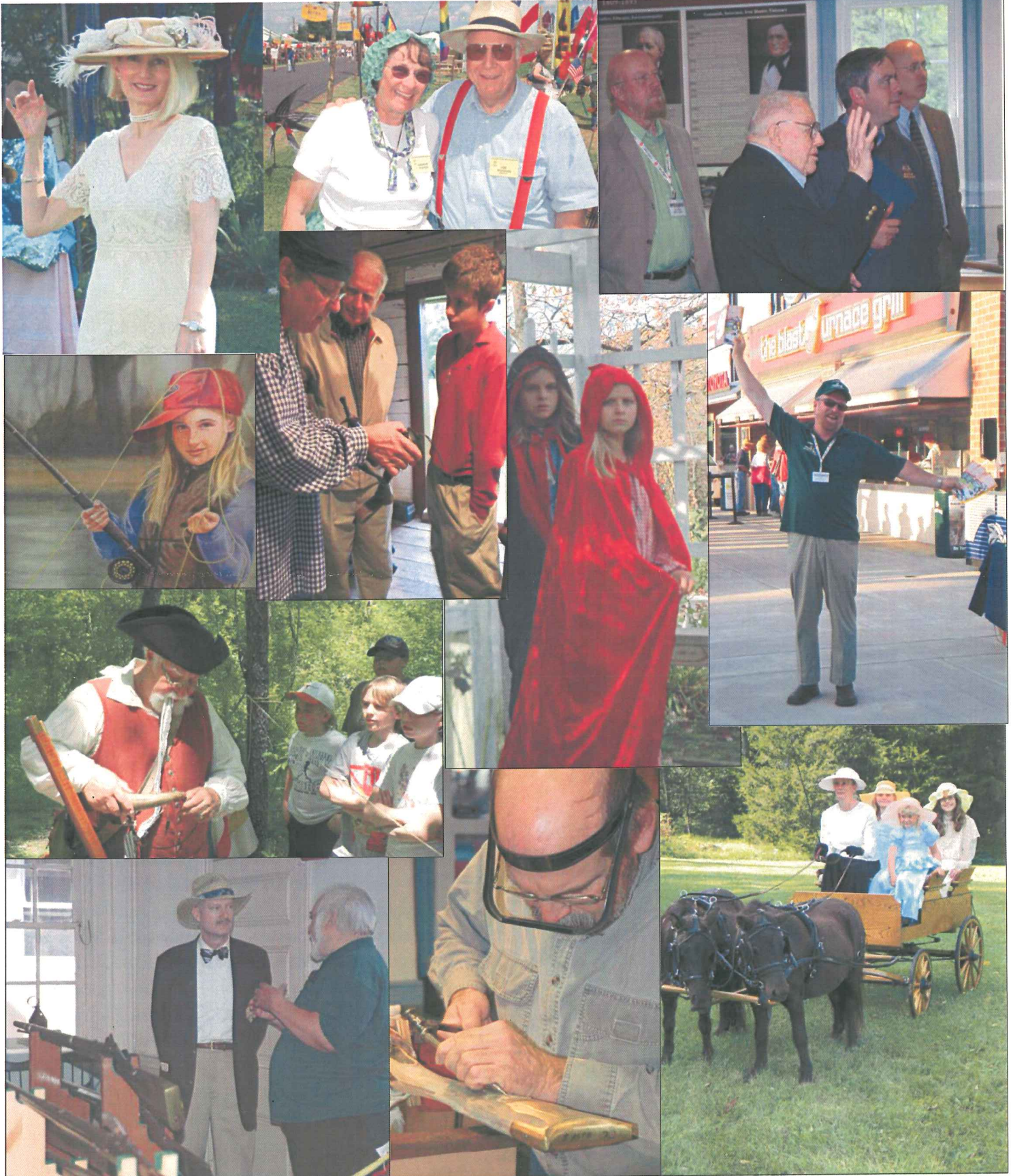
Discover five generations of the Henry family of Moravian gunsmiths and how the Jacobsburg Historical Society in Nazareth, PA, is keeping their legacy alive today.

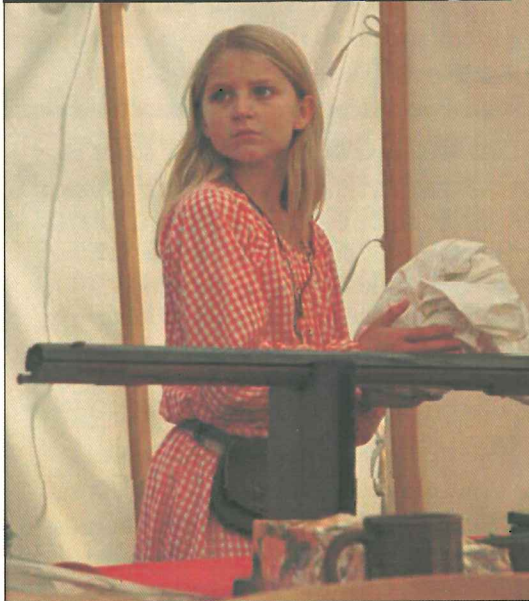
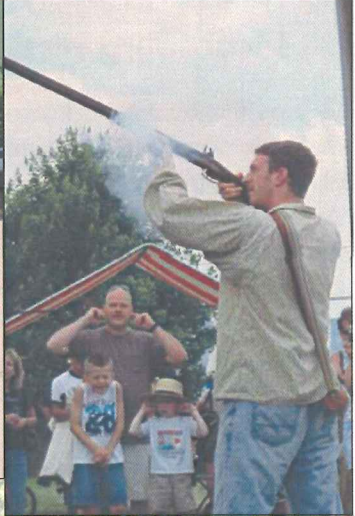
For purchase information contact the Society at 610.759-9029, email jacobsburg@rcn.com or visit us on the web at www.jacobsburg.org

A Great Stocking Stuffer!

Preview DVD introduction at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8cHL4h_gTg





Jacobsburg Historical Society Welcomes The Honourable Company of Horners

Part of the mission of Jacobsburg Historical Society is to preserve and present the character of the individuals and community that created and sustained the early American gunsmithing enterprise. This year, the Society had the opportunity to highlight the history of a significant community of supporting artisans, i.e., that of accoutrement craftsmen, by hosting events and programs presented by the Honourable Company of Horners (HCH).

The HCH is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to educate its members and the public about horn making and its history. This national guild was established by master horner, Roland Cadle. Roland was first introduced to JHS as a principal of Village Restorations, which reconstructed the 1802 Nicholas Hawk Gun Shop. Additionally, as one of "The Masters Three," Roland built the powder horn, which was raffled along with other accoutrements to fund the Hawk project.

In January, HCH members Frank Willis and Bob Albrecht, along with JHS members Bob Chattin, Rich Hujasa, and Tim Lubenesky, offered a 20-hour pilot course in beginning powder horn building. Instructors donated all tuition proceeds (\$250 per student) to the Society for use with the Hawk project. Five students, representing a full range of hand-tool skill and experience levels from basic to more advanced, took the course. Students learned how to choose a good cow horn, how to layout a design, how to use a variety of files and other hand tools to execute their chosen design, and how to use a wood lathe to make a decorative base plugs. Everyone completed building a horn with better-than-expected results. The class horns were displayed in the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit though out the summer and were entered into the accoutrements competition at Dixon's Gunmakers' Fair in July. The course at JHS was such a success, that another beginning horn class was scheduled for January 2010. Since several HCH members are accomplished artisans of other accoutrements in addition to horn work, JHS hopes to be able to offer such courses as beginning leather working for hunting pouches, in the near future.

In June, HCH members assisted with mounting the *Arms & Crafts* exhibit. Several members loaned fine an-

tique horns from their collections, as well as fine contemporary pieces they made themselves. Additionally, Bob Albrecht, who is a professional graphics artist, designed signage for the displays.



Class student, Hoyt Masterton, works on his powder horn.

On July 25, JHS hosted the annual membership gathering of the HCH on the JJ House grounds. JHS guides offered tours of the JJ House and PA Longrifle Museum, and in return were invited to share the Horner's pig-roast feast. During the gathering, the HCH board of directors met; and their discussions included potential partnership opportunities with JHS in the future. One possibility, for example, would be to

establish a permanent home for the HCH at JHS, perhaps in the form of a demonstration cabin like the Hawk shop. Likewise, the JHS executive committee later met to discuss the subject, and Frank Willis was asked to serve as JHS-HCH liaison in order to spearhead efforts to build a fruitful relationship between the two organizations for their mutual benefit. JHS welcomes this exciting opportunity to partner with HCH, and we encourage our membership to get to know the HCH better. Visit them on the web at: <http://www.hornguild.org>

Learn to Build a Powder Horn

Beginning Powder Horn Building Class

Saturdays, noon to 5pm, January 9-20, 2010

Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum

Taught by Frank Willis, HCH & JHS

Tuition \$250, due by Dec. 18, 2009

Class size limited to 8 students

For more information about registration, contact
Jacobsburg Historical Society at 610-759-9029 or
email jacobsburg@rcn.com

Focus on Volunteers: Spring Clean-up Days

It was truly gratifying to see so much activity happening on the Society's Boulton Historic Site during the Spring clean-up days, on April 17-19. First, THANK YOU to each and everyone who participated in the many and diverse activities going on.

Let us start with Friday evening. Eagle Scout candidate Aaron Borger his fellow scouts, and leaders from Boy Scout Troop 93 of Northampton, PA arrived at Boulton to camp in for the weekend. Their aim was to complete Aaron's Eagle Project: building a 20 foot long by four-foot deep and eight-foot high rustic woodshed for the Rendezvous camp's wood supply.

The Rendezvous campers spend two or three work days each year working at Boulton to prepare the camp site and cut a firewood supply for the events and our Summer Kitchen. With our poor wood storage setting, much of what they cut was lost annually to rot and mildew. The new shed is out of the woods, southern facing, and ideal for wood storage.

Saturday morning's sun brought a flurry of activity at Boulton. This was the JHS annual property cleanup day. With many JHS members on site, the work was fast and furious to remove all the debris and leaf litter from a long winter. Spearheaded by Jeff Marsh, (property manager) the Boulton site and gardens were raked, mowed and preened in preparation for our spring programs.

Out near the JJ House barn a large debris pile, which was an eyesore for many years, was removed, graded, and planted with grass seed with the help of a backhoe, dump truck and six volunteers. Carl Landis professionally pruned all the trees and bushes in the JJ House barn grove. No one could believe that the grove could look that beautiful. It will now be a place to sit in the shade and enjoy the programs or just relax with nature. The logs in front of the JJ House, from recent dead tree removal, were transported to the new woodshed area to be split into firewood. The soil along side the JJ House garage area was regraded, and crushed stone installed around the building as

camp and brought 18 new volunteers to Boulton. Half of this group removed the last of the logs from in front of the JJ House and began splitting it for firewood with a hydraulic wood-splitter.



Troop 93 builds a wood shed for JHS.

The second group attacked the 80 foot tall walnut tree near the entrance to the program area. This tree was hit by lightning two years ago and was completely dead. In only a few minutes they had the tree down and four Stihl chainsaws were turning it into firewood. They removed the stump to a foot below grade, covered it with topsoil, raked, and planted grass seed.

Carl Landis continued his pruning on the PA Longifle Museum side of Henry Road with the help of his wife, Sharon and Terri Lubenesky. When the pruning was completed they cleaned all the windows in the museum, as well as the bathroom and kitchen.

The Boy Scouts were quickly approaching completion of the new woodshed. Finishing the roof and installing crushed stone and pallets on the floor, the shed was now ready for wood. The Rendezvous crew wasted no time in trying to fill the shed. The end of another very long day saw the woodshed Eagle Project completed and half full with fresh cut wood. The property was cleaner and neater than we could have ever hoped for, a true tribute to our wonderful core of volunteers!

With so much work going on it is difficult to thank everyone individually, but a few people made this weekend special. First is Aaron Borger and Troop 93 for their fine work in building the new woodshed; Jeff Male for the use of his heavy equipment; and to Mike Jones and Carl Landis, two of our unsung volunteers and work party leaders, who were the first there in the morning and the last to leave at night, both days. Many, Many Thanks.

—Tim Lubenesky

PA HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA LONGRIFLE

On October 2, 2009, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives signed a resolution recognizing the significance of the Pennsylvania-made longrifle, to the history of industry and fine art in America. The resolution was first referred to Pennsylvania's General Assembly on March 17, 2009, as House Bill No. 952, to designate the Pennsylvania Rifle as the official firearm of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Craig Dally, 138th District representing Northampton County, introduced the bill after extensive consultation

with one of his constituents, William Henry Atherton. Mr. Atherton is on the board of directors of the Jacobsburg Historical Society and is a great grandson of iron industrialist and gunsmith, William Henry III, who in 1812 erected the Boulton Gun Works near Nazareth, PA. Today, the Boulton Historic Site is part of the Jacobsburg National Historic District and is maintained and interpreted by the Jacobsburg Historical Society, whose mission in part is to preserve and present the art and industry of early American gunsmithing.

Together with several longrifle historians, Representative Dally and Mr. Atherton built a strong case for the Commonwealth to officially recognize and promote the longrifle as an important Pennsylvania product. Upon passage of the resolution, Representative Dally noted, "Future generations should appreciate the heritage of the long-barreled rifle and the craftsmanship of gunsmiths who made them. I urge anyone with an interest in the early history of Pennsylvania, in general, and gunsmithing, in particular, to visit the Jacobsburg Historical Society."

Following is the text of the Pennsylvania Rifle resolution, signed by Keith R. McCall, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Rep-



JHS president Dave Ehrig accepts Resolution from Bill Atherton on behalf of the Society.

representatives:

Whereas, Pennsylvania gunsmithing tradition has played an important role in the development of the United States of America; and

Whereas, During Pennsylvania's early history settlers placed chief reliance on their rifles for sustenance, security and survival; and

Whereas, the Pennsylvania Rifle, a unique firearm that was different in principle and outline from any other weapon in the world, was developed by skilled gunsmiths in the Moravian communities of Christian's Spring, Northampton County, as well as by artistic riflemaker Marlin Meylin in Willow Street, Lancaster Co; and

Whereas, the Pennsylvania Rifle was the first truly American firearm and due to its exceptional accuracy and range was considered the greatest achievement in the development of firearms during the 18th century; and

Whereas, Playing an important role in the early years of the Industrial Revolution in Pennsylvania and New England the Pennsylvania Rifle was also instrumental in the American fur trade and was carried west and south by frontiersmen as they set out to expand the boundaries of the nation; and

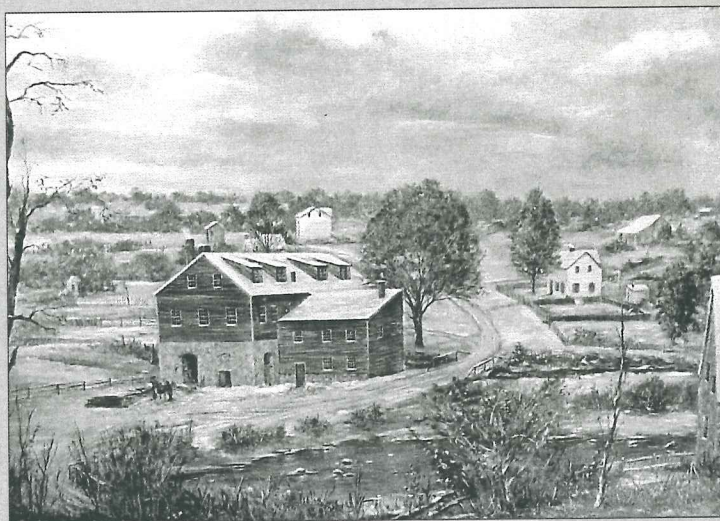
Whereas, the Pennsylvania Rifle has been lauded for its beauty and craftsmanship, as well as the ingenuity of the skilled gunsmiths who crafted it; and

Whereas, the color combinations, carvings, engravings and graceful slenderness of the Pennsylvania Rifle cause it to stand alone and remain unchallenged as a primary example of early American art; and

Whereas, Future generations should appreciate the heritage of this long-barreled rifle, born to artistic gunsmiths in the communities of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; therefore be

Resolved That the House of Representatives recognize the significance of the Pennsylvania Rifle in the history of the United States and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

*Jacobsburg Historical Society
Presents
Christmas at Boulton*



Holiday Wreath-Making, Nov 29

Start the Christmas holidays by making an all natural wreath.. The event will be held at the PA Longrifle Museum, Nov. 29, from noon to 4:30. Admission fee includes lasagna lunch, materials for a 20" wreath, and a tour of the John Joseph Henry House. Gift basket raffle, \$1 per ticket. All proceeds will be used for the JJ House. Tickets: \$40. Limited to 20 participants. Call 610-759-9029 for ticket information.

JHS Volunteers Christmas Party, Dec 11

At the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Dec. 11 at 6:30pm. Bring a sweet or savory treat to share. We'll supply the Jacobsburg Brew.

Victorian Christmas, Dec 12

At the John Joseph Henry House, Dec. 12, 12:30pm to 4:00pm. Music by Sally Shutler. Period Costumes by Lorita Musselman. Open & free to the public.

Children's Old Fashioned Christmas, Dec 12

At the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Dec. 12, 12:30pm to 4:00pm. Games and treats for the little ones. Open & free to public.

Jacobsburg Historical Society

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The Jacobsburg Historical Society is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting the art and industry of making early American firearms, and the character of the individuals and community that created and sustained that enterprise.

The Jacobsburg Record is published by the Jacobsburg Historical Society, P.O. Box 345, Nazareth, PA 18064, 610-759-9029, and is mailed to Society members and supporters.

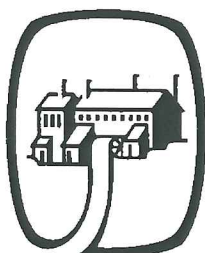
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All contributions are tax deductible as provided by law.

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