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The Masters Three: The Probable Possibles of Nicholas Hawk



So, you've purchased several raffle tickets to win a handcrafted, custom-made reproduction longrifle by master gunsmith, Wayne Watson. Now you need equally fine accoutrements. This spring, contemporary blackpowder master craftsmen Roland Cadle, Art DeCamp, and Mark Wheland—"The Masters Three"—have generously donated accoutrements specifically custom-made for another raffle to benefit the reconstruction of the Nicholas Hawk Gun Shop at Boulton. For just \$10, you can purchase a chance to win the accoutrements that 18th-century master gunsmith, Nicholas Hawk, himself might have carried. These "probable possibles" include:

- ◆ Screw-tip banded Allentown *Powder Horn*, mounted with a sterling silver Nicholas Hawk hunter's star, and decorated with the ferrous oxide in the Allentown horn tradition
- ◆ *Rifleman's Hunting Bag*, with sterling silver, brass and copper mountings and featuring Allentown Indian motif.
- ◆ Lathe-turned *Bullet Bag*, *Bag Axe*,

Bullet Mold and *Loading Block* with the Allentown Indian motif.

- ◆ *Folding Fork* and hand-forged *Hunting Knife* mounted with engraved horn handles and a powder measure.

The estimated value of these accoutrements is over \$3500. For information about how to obtain raffle tickets for either the Probable Possibles of Nicholas Hawk (\$10 per chance) or the Andrew Verner longrifle reproduction by Wayne Watson (\$20 per chance), call the JHS office at 610-759-9029 or email jacobsburg@rcn.net.

For more pictures of raffle items and additional information about the Nicholas Hawk Gun Shop reconstruction at Boulton, visit the JHS website at www.jacobsburg.org.

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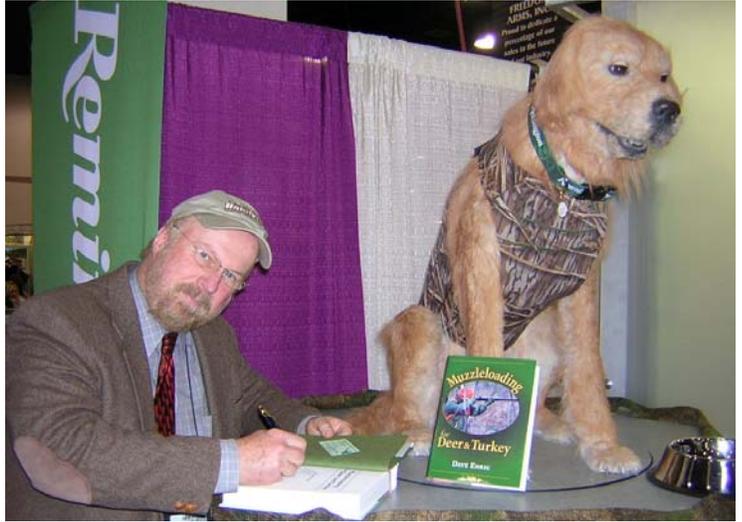
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The *Jacobsburg Historical Society* is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting the art and industry of making early American firearms, and the character of the individuals and community that created and sustained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

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Message from the President

Late winter usually finds Boulton gently covered with a patchwork quilt of brown leaves, shadowy green sentinels of hemlock and pine, and historic Henry structures dusted with the purity of white snow. It is a time for rest and reflection, but it is also a time to refresh spirits and look forward to the promise of spring. We are in a new year, but have old challenges remaining. While new members join the JHS Board of Directors and a new president takes the helm, we welcome and need the support of those who founded and sustained this wonderful historic site and society.



New JHS President Dave Ehrig at a book signing event.

For those who do not know me, I would like to take a moment and introduce myself. I was born into a U.S. Army family whose roots came from and were firmly anchored in the Lehigh Valley. My maternal Pennsylvania Dutch grandfather, Harvey Diefenderfer, farmed the Shady Lane dairy farm, where Macy's and the Lehigh Valley Mall are now located. My paternal side settled in the Saucon Valley and were professional people. I met my wife, Bettina, at Kutztown University where she and I graduated. Together, we earned both baccalaureate and masters degrees in education from this beautiful institution. I taught both physical and environmental science for 35 years in the Whitehall-Coplay Middle School, taking home honors from both Who's Who in Education, as well as the blue vest declaring Wal-Mart's "Teacher of the Year."

While married, teaching, raising a daughter and son, maintaining a horse farm and attending graduate school, I somehow managed an outdoor writing career that continues on for some 30+ years. An author of six books, host for six outdoors videos, and editor and writer of thousands of newspaper and magazine articles (Allentown Morning Call, Reading Eagle, Shamrock Syndicate, PA Game News, Outdoor Life, PA Sportsman, and so many others), I am the past president of the Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association. A frequent lecturer and seminar speaker, I have had the wonderful opportunity to share my passion for the outdoors with others.

My association with Boulton started in 1982 when George Dech asked me to help him run a muzzleloading event on the grounds where the Benade House prominently stands. I met Joe and Bobbie DiGerlando and other fine JHS people who would later found and direct the Society. Rich and Bob Hjusa have had important influences on me as a longrifle builder and reenactor. But a hiatus of time and distance (I live near Top-ton, Berks County) prevented a more intimate relationship until a phone call from Earl Van Norman asked for my involvement with the Board of Directors. Little did I know just how involved I would eventually become . . . and how challenged by every minute of association!

Having built Pennsylvania longrifles, written and demonstrated their utility in the field, and truly being passionate about their namesake and history, I was proud to support the PA

Longrifle Museum and the five generations of Henrys whose legacy played a most important part in the longrifle's history. Boulton has a critically important story to tell about America, its people, its American art forms, evolutionary industrial achievements, and the storied names of Americans who benefited from their relationships with the Henrys.

I am proud to be a small cog in the wheel that drives, supports and shares the legacy of this wonderful group of people who proudly call themselves "members" of the Jacobsburg Historical Society. As the new President of the Board of Directors, I seek your thoughts, support and volunteerism in this noble and great American institution known simply as Boulton. I can be contacted at DEhrig@aol.com and look forward to working with you. We will strengthen the future of JHS by building on the past . . . together.

— Dave Ehrig

Jacobsburg Historical Society 2008 Calendar of Events



March 5 — Advanced Gunmakers' Class. Wednesdays through April 23, 7pm-10pm at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Boulton.

April 19 — Spring Fling Trade Blanket Event. 1-4pm, Henry Homestead, Boulton. Antique yard sale.

May 4 — Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum Open House. Sundays through October 26, 1pm-4pm, Boulton.

May 15-18 — Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association Conference.

June 14-15 — Kentucky Rifle Frolic. 10am-4pm, Boulton. Frontier living-history encampment.

June 28 — Kutztown Pennsylvania-German Festival. Daily through July 6, 9am-6pm, Kutztown Fairgrounds. JHS display and gunsmithing demonstrations.

July 18 — Evening Under the Stars. Donor recognition event. 1832 John Joseph Henry House, Boulton.

July 25-27 — Dixon's Gunmakers' Fair. Dixon's Gun Shop, Kempton, Pennsylvania. JHS longrifle display.

September 14 — Garden Gala. 1832 John Joseph Henry House, Boulton. Social event, tickets required.

September 19-21 — North Valley District Boy Scout Camporee. Hosted by JHS on the grounds of the 1832 John Joseph Henry House, Boulton.

September 24 — Beginners Gunsmithing Course. Wednesdays through November 12, 7pm-10pm. Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Boulton

October 16 — Annual Membership Dinner.

October 25-26 — American Fur Trade Rendezvous. 10am-4pm, Boulton. Frontier living history encampment.

November 23 — Holiday decorating at Boulton.

December 13 — Christmas at Boulton. A Colonial-era Christmas at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and a Victorian Christmas at the John Joseph Henry House.

JHS Collections

J. Henry War of 1812 Artillery Noncommissioned Officer's Sword

Through the generosity of a private donor the Jacobsburg Historical Society has been fortunate to obtain a J. HENRY PHILA.

War of 1812 period noncommissioned artillery officer's sword for its collection.

Due to the relatively limited quantity of swords produced before and during the war artill-

ery swords from the War of 1812 are very hard to locate and are highly prized by collectors when found. Most noncommissioned artillery swords had brass hilts and brass or brass-mounted leather scabbards (Brass did not spark when hit with another metal object).

John Joseph Henry, Philadelphia, is listed as a War of 1812 sword maker in "Swords and Sword Makers of the War of 1812" by Richard H. Bezdek, 1997.

John Joseph Henry negotiated all his US and state contracts for guns and swords for the War of 1812, and his edged weapon production included cavalry sabers, artillery noncommissioned officer sabers, bayonets and sword parts such as hilts, blades, and scabbards.

J. Henry is recorded as having sold sabers to the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware. On June 27, 1814 Maryland gave Henry a contract for 200 Artillery swords with 27-inch curved blades and quillion marked J. HENRY. The artillery swords used the same technique of insertion of the backstrap into a slot cut into the pommel cap as in the Virginia cavalry swords.

On March 2, 1816, John Joseph Henry sold 258 artillery noncommissioned swords with belts and 96 without belts to a Capt. David Moffit. The 96, however, were made for Henry by Daniel Henkels at the Virginia manufactory.

Although Henry is recorded to have received a number of contracts for swords, a great deal of the work was subcontracted. The day book from Nathan Starr's Philadelphia gun factory reveals John Joseph Henry subcontracted J. Abraham Nippes, gun and sword maker of Philadelphia, to make 396 hilts for Henry's US saber contract for up to 3000 cavalry sabers. Abraham Nippes had a long standing relationship with John Joseph Henry which can be seen in Henry documents of the period. Nippes not only was purchasing parts from Henry but also was selling cutlasses and later muskets through Henry.



When Nippes died in December 1812 the business transferred to Daniel Henkels who continued the business relationship developed with Henry. Henry day books speak of Henkel providing hilted swords with Henry furnishing most of the scabbards. We also know Henry purchased leather scabbards from Robert C. Martin in January 1813 most of which were sold to Callender Irvine the same month as replacement or extra scabbards for the cavalry sabers Henry was already making for Irvine. Daniel Henkels subcontracted 424 of a 1000 piece Henry Maryland cavalry saber contract but Henry made the scabbards. The 1000 swords were delivered to Maryland between July 17, 1813 and July 6, 1814 for which Henry was paid \$9.50 for each sword.

So it is clear the Henry family of northeastern Pennsylvania not only made and sold swords but a wide range of edged weapons from 1807 until well into the 1820's with most of the edged weapon production centered around the War of 1812 (1812-1815). It is not clear to what extent much of the work was subcontracted. Henry papers in the Jacobsburg Historical Society records refer to swords being produced in some quantities at the Boulton factory and bayonets have been found on the factory grounds.

Only two Henry swords have surfaced to date that are marked J. HENRY PHILA. In two lines on the Quillion, one was pictured in an article "J. HENRY PHILA. - Sword-maker?" published in the Pennsylvania Antique Gun Collectors Assn Bugle newsletter in October 1971 and the other whose grip has been lost. The sword in the Bugle article has a curved single edged blade, 27 inches long.

The sword we have acquired has what is described as a brass Reverse P Hilt and a brass Quillion in the hilt which is proper for War of 1812 artillery sabers. It also has a 27-inch curved blade, the type ordered from Henry in the 1814 Maryland contract. The Quillion is marked PHILA. On the underside of the guard but, for some reason, the name J. HENRY has been ground off. Experts contacted speculate the Henry factory removed their name as there is no logical reason for it to have been removed by another. Perhaps the factory was not satisfied with the quality of work or the sword may have been produced in anticipation of a contract never achieved. In any case, this sword is an identified J. HENRY product and quite a scarce item.

The sword, accompanied by its original brass scabbard, was located in 1997 at the Baltimore Maryland gun show. It is logical to speculate that since only three examples of Henry marked swords have survived these, at least, were probably produced by Henry and not by his subcontractors.

—Ron Gabel, Curator

Meet Ron Gabel, JHS Curator of Collections

At its March 2008 meeting the Board of Directors of the Jacobsburg Historical Society officially appointed Mr. Ronald G. Gabel as Curator of Collections. Ron has been a member of the Society since 1990, has served on the Board of Directors since 1993, served the Society as its president in 2000-2002 and as the Society's treasurer for the past seven years.

Ron, a certified Manufacturing Engineer, started his career as a reporter and feature writer for the Call Chronicle newspapers in 1958, worked five years as a design draftsman in the Fire Department of Mack Trucks Inc, then moved on to the Bell Telephone Laboratories in Allentown PA. After thirty five years with the company Ron retired in 1997 as a Senior Engineer Metal Oxide Semiconductor Manufacturing Worldwide Methodologies Lucent Technologies.

Ron served as director, productivity chairman, treasurer and president of the American Institute of Industrial Engineers receiving the Institutes outstanding service award in 1978.

Ron was the company's Administrator for the Telephone Pioneers of America for the state of Pennsylvania for eight years overseeing the activities of over 8000 volunteers. Ron was the coordinator and instructor for the company's Industrial Engineering training classes' he developed and conducted courses for the company's section chiefs and for newly hired engineers, and conducted productivity and labor utilization classes for the companies Assistant managers, Department Chiefs and Section Chiefs. Ron taught classes in volunteerism for Telephone Pioneer Administrators across the United States and Canada in the ATT Sphere in Epcot at Disney World in Florida.

Ron has served as president of the prestigious American Society of Arms Collectors and as president of the National Kentucky Rifle Association. He received the Kentucky Rifle Association's Distinguished Service Award in 1979 and served as the first president of the Kentucky Rifle Association's Foundation from 1999-2002. Ron has served as editor of the Kentucky Rifle Association's bulletin for the past thirty-four years.

Ron has been a consulting expert to the Man-at-Arms magazine since 1983 and recently has been accepted as a consulting expert for the James D. Julia Inc. auctions in Fairfield Maine.

He has been a judge for the National Gunmaker's Fair at Dixon's muzzleloading shop in Kempton PA since 1983. Ron has been the editor of the "Bugle" newsletter for the Pennsylvania Antique Gun Collectors and the organization's secretary and treasurer since 1999.

Ron served as a member of the Lehigh County Historical Society Museum Commission from 1979 to 1981, as secretary for the Lehigh County Bicentennial Commission Development and Production committee, as captain for the Central Commercial Division of the United Fund, as president for the YMCA's Lehigh Valley Indian Guides program in 1972, and as secretary of Church Council and Luther League advisor for St. James Lutheran Church in Allentown.

Ron is an Endowment member of the National Rifle Association and a member of Slatington Masonic Lodge No. 440, Bethlehem Commandery of the Knights Templar, Bethlehem Council No. 36, the Scottish Rite Consistory, Ezra Royal Arch Chapter No 291 and Rajah Temple Shrine.

Ron has authored a number of articles for the American Society of Arms Collectors, the Kentucky Rifle Association, the Morning Call and Parkland newspapers, The Emmaus Shelter House Society, the Lehigh County Historical Society and the Pennsylvania Antique Arms Collectors Association. He is listed in Who's Who in the East, Who's Who in Finance and Industry, Who's Who in America, Who's Who in Science and Engineering and Who's Who in the World.

Ron looks forward to researching, preserving, cataloging, photographing, and properly storing the JHS collections. He believes that displayed artifacts should ultimately tell the story of the Henry family's importance to the state and country, as well as their importance to the arms industry in America. In addition to the very important story of the Henry firearms, the Society's collections should cause visitors to reflect on the family's cultural history, their personal interests and their daily lives. Items not on display must be properly stored.

The Jacobsburg Historical Society is pleased Ron has accepted our invitation to serve as our organization's Curator of Collections.



Research

The Henrys and the West: Moses Henry, Gunsmith and Indian Agent

We think of the Henrys as a family of Pennsylvania gunmakers, beginning with William Henry (1729-1786) in the 1750s in Lancaster on the Susquehanna and then, when his son William (1757-1821) moved east in 1777, established at Nazareth and Boulton near the Delaware. But the life of another family member—the largely forgotten Moses Henry (1746-1789), William of Lancaster’s youngest brother—illuminates a different facet of the family’s interests. Gun historians may have heard of Moses Henry, who is mentioned in Henry J. Kauffman’s *The Pennsylvania-Kentucky Rifle* (1960) and in James Biser Whisker’s *Arms Makers of Colonial America* (1993), but these brief notices reveal little about the man. While it will never be possible to flesh out fully Henry’s life, enough information survives in scattered sources to reconstruct a skeleton that permits us to see Moses Henry for what he was: a gunsmith, Indian trader, diplomat, and western pioneer.

Moses Henry was born in 1746. Within a year, his father was dead. His mother moved to Lancaster where her eldest son, William, then eighteen, had likely just finished his apprenticeship with the gunsmith Matthew Roesser. Moses Henry surely apprenticed in his brother’s gun workshop when he reached the proper age. William’s own apprenticeship to Roesser seems to have begun when he was about fifteen, and William apprenticed his two eldest sons to gunsmiths at the age of thirteen or fourteen. By the late 1750s or early 1760s, then, Moses was probably an apprentice in the family business. During these years William Henry supplied and repaired guns for Pennsylvania and Virginia troops in the French and Indian War, and at times he accompanied the troops to keep their arms in working order. The few records that preserve traces of Henry during these years—Captain Joseph Shippen’s letter, for instance, which notes that upon leaving Lancaster in 1756 with his regiment to build forts on the Susquehanna he took “Wm Henry with us to repair” guns¹—remind us that, before the Revolutionary War, American gunsmiths were largely gun *repairers* rather than gun *makers*. If any guns were “were made in the British colonies,” they “were largely assembled from parts purchased in Europe.” The primary labor of a gunsmith involved cleaning and repairing guns.² Moses must have learned this craft well. By 1766, when he was barely twenty, he was at Fort Pitt, repairing guns for the firm of Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, a trading house that had been established in 1757 in Philadelphia. The firm had extensive trade networks to Detroit, Quebec, and Indian country. Highly prized in these

frontier outposts, gunsmiths were necessary to sustain the lives not just of traders and soldiers but also of Indians, who had come to rely on the guns they obtained from the British. In 1767, for instance, a Miami chief complained that the British government had ordered away the local blacksmith, “a person so Necessary amongst them.” How did the British, the Miami asked, expect them “to Support their Families and Hunt, if their Guns and Tomahawks are not kept in Repair”?³ Records in the Fort Pitt Day Book trace a series of payments from March 1766 to December 1767 to Moses Henry for “Repairing 1 Rifle & Smooth Bored Gun,” for “cleaning 2 Fuzees & 1 Pair of Pistols,” for “Moulds,” for “3 Rifle Guns,” for “Stocking & Repairing Sundry Guns for the use of the Trading Store,” and for “a Rifle Gun Rcd. of him for the use of the Crown.”⁴ He preserved ties to the east, however, with his family in Lancaster. A letter written in 1766 from Joseph Dobson to his employers, Baynton and Wharton, was either carried by Henry or sent to Henry’s family in Lancaster: Morgan notes that he “rec^d the [letter] by M^r Henry of this Place” [Lancaster].⁵ On 17 July 1768, Moses Henry received permission to “occupy and build upon a Lott of Ground in the new Town of Pittsburgh.” (On 2 October 1773, by which time he had left Pittsburgh, Henry assigned this “Lott of Ground” to John Campbell and Joseph Simon.)⁶

Moses Henry did not stay long at Fort Pitt. By late 1769, he moved west and settled in a Shawnee Indian village named Chillicathee (about fifty miles south of present-day Columbus, Ohio). The town had only about “twenty white people.” Henry had married a white woman “who was captivated” by Indians “so young that she speaks the [native] language as well as any Indian.”⁷ Henry was inserting himself into Simon’s extensive trading network. Henry had positioned himself well to trade with the native population, having secured an in-house translator and still possessing extensive connections with merchants back east. Throughout the mid and late 1760s, Moses Henry had been dealing with Joseph Simon—well known, of course, as William Henry’s partner in a Lancaster hardware store. Simon had many other business partners and, a central figure in the western fur trade, funded countless ventures that sent goods and food west and received in turn the furs in Lancaster that were then sent to partners in New York, Philadelphia, and London. When Virginians began to turn west in 1750, contracting Christopher Gist

to map lands for settlement in the Ohio Valley, Joseph Simon's network of Lancaster-based fur traders were already there: Simon's Lancaster store was "the distributing center for beaver and other furs from the Ohio Valley."⁸ The few surviving receipts that document trade between Moses Henry and Joseph Simon suggest that, by settling in Chillicothe in the late 1760s, Henry was inserting himself into Simon's extensive trading network.

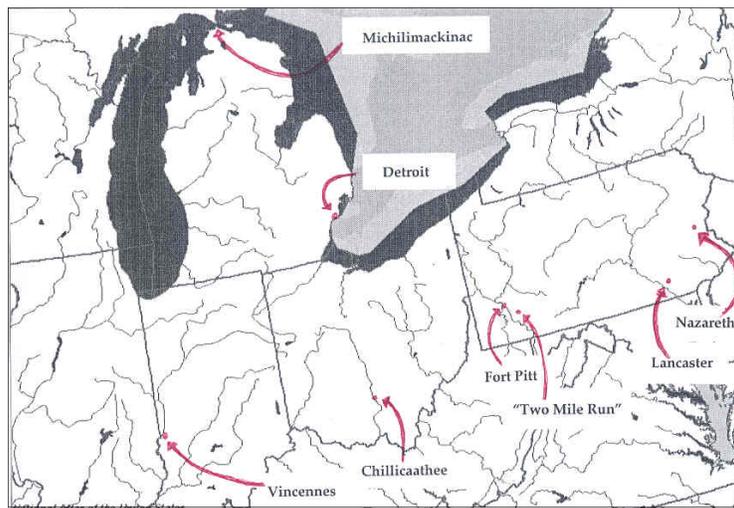
At Chillicothe Henry was encountered by David Jones, a Baptist minister from New Jersey who hoped to begin a mission there. Jones was disgusted by the Indians (he described them as "lawless savages...who have no conscience about shedding innocent blood") and the Indians, unsurprisingly, did little to accommodate Jones. They forbade him from "preaching on the Lord's day." Indeed, one of their chiefs, Yellow Hawk, told Jones that he "did not desire to hear me on the subject of religion," since "God...allowed white people to live one way, and Indians another way." The Indians, Yellow Hawk insisted, "had lived a long time as they now do, and liked it very well, and he and his people would live as they had done." There is no way of knowing whether Moses Henry shared Jones's cultural prejudice, but it is certain that, unlike Jones, he and his wife, Ann, managed to live and thrive among the Indians. (The Henry family, after all, had a history of good relations with Indians ever since William of Lancaster saved the life of Gelelemend, or John Killbuck, in the early years of the French and Indian War.) On 22 January 1773, Jones met Moses Henry, "a gunsmith and trader from Lancaster," who had "lived for some years" in "a comfortable manner" at Chillicothe, "having plenty of good beef, pork, milk, &c." Henry's house seems to have functioned as a quasi-public space where contact between white and Indian was possible. Yellow Hawk, for instance, "came with some others to Mr. Henry's to converse" with Jones. When an Indian threatens Jones at knifepoint, he "walked off pretty fast" the hundred yards "to Mr. Henry's" where he evidently expected to be kept safe. The Henry household repeatedly comes to Jones's aid. When he learns that the "interpreter" promised him "was hunting beavers, and would not be in till spring," he was able to "mak[e] a *Vocabulary* of the Shawannee language"

with the assistance of "Mrs. Henry."⁹ Jones's anecdotes repeatedly reveal that Moses Henry's familiarity with the

Indian culture and with individuals enabled him to function successfully in what Jones considers a "savage" community. Among other things, Henry knew which Indians to fear and which to deal with. When one, "called *Old Will*," comes looking for Jones, Henry hides the minister in the "cabin-loft" under some blankets. Jones marvels at Henry's "calmness of mind" in such circumstances; he "did not appear the least disturbed" in conversing with the an-

gry Indian and spoke "with an air of indifference." *Old Will* leaves, but another Indian, whose voice, "the most terrible that ever saluted my ears," seemed "the very harbinger of death itself, so that every moment an engagement for life was expected," arrives to threaten Jones. He is saved by Mrs. Henry, who was entertaining three Indian women, including one who had been her "foster-mother...in the time of her captivity." These women quarrel with the threatening Indian, who is then "very glad to find the door."¹⁰ Jones credits God with his escape, but the Henrys are its immediate agents: their deep involvement in the Indian community enables the subtle improvisations and negotiations that preserve Jones's life.

Henry's primary reason for being at Chillicothe may have been to trade with the Indians. But Jones's narrative shows that the occupation of trader required Henry to contribute to Chillicothe a range of skills or activities—repairing guns, supplying food and goods, maintaining communication with eastern cities, facilitating conversations between individuals from different cultures who met in the Indian village. He even served as host to visitors who needed a place to lodge. From Henry's own perspective, these activities may have been ancillary to his primary aim of enriching himself and his partners through trade. But to others such as Jones, and probably to the Indians among whom Henry lived, these ostensibly auxiliary activities were the crucial contributions.



Pennsylvania and the Ohio River Valley The arrows point to places where Moses Henry (or other Henrys) settled.

Something drew Henry west again, this time to Vincennes, Indiana, another multicultural community—French, British, colonial, Indian—centered on a trading post on the Wabash River. In 1770, the community included about 250 residents, largely French, and perhaps another 170 “Strangers” or traders; a group of about 400 Piankashaw Indians lived close by. Baynton, Wharton, and Morgan, for whom Henry had worked at Fort Pitt, carried on trade there, so it may be that he continued his association with this firm. Henry was one of the few Americans that Hamilton found there. Suspecting (rightly) Henry’s disloyalty to the crown, Hamilton imprisoned him. During this imprisonment, his wife “under the pretense of carrying him provisions,” entered the fort and “whispered him...news” about the approaching Americans. Henry “conveyed” this news “to the rest of his fellow-prisoners, which gave them much pleasure.”¹²

The Moravian minister, John Heckewelder, heard this news at Coshocking, the chief village of the Delawares. On 19 March 1779, some visiting Shawnees told Heckewelder that the British had “taken a Fort, which...lies between the Falls of the Ohio and Detroit” and that “Moses Henry is taken with his wife prisoner by the Shawanese, and robbed of every thing he had.”¹³ Heckewelder’s easy reference to Henry reveals that he and his wife were familiar figures to the minister—and to his recipient, John Gibson, a Lancaster native who, along with William Henry, had participated in the Forbes expedition in 1758. Gibson remained at Fort Pitt as an Indian trader, and was there in the mid-1760s when Moses Henry was there repairing guns. (In 1766 Gibson and other traders complained that Baynton and Wharton, Moses Henry’s employers, were improperly intercepting Indians before they reached the fort with their skins and furs.)¹⁴ The skills that enabled Gibson to succeed as an Indian trader prepared him for later military and diplomatic service, when he commanded Fort Pitt and Fort Laurens during the Revolutionary War and served as Thomas Jefferson’s secretary of the Indiana Territory in 1800. Nor is it surprising that Heckewelder had heard of Moses Henry, whose brother William had traded with Pennsylvania’s Moravian mission communities in 1754 (he traveled with a Jewish silversmith) and joined the Moravian church by 1765. The primary chief at Coshocking after 1778 was Gelel-mend, who would take his friend William Henry’s name when he was baptized at the Moravian mission in Salem in 1788.

The relationships—personal, religious, financial—between those who lived and worked in the vast western lands are extraordinarily complex and difficult to map. At times it seems that everybody knows—and, often, is related to—everybody else. Such complexly intertwined relationships, however, were not coincidental. The western trade depended on an endless series of extremely risky credit transactions, and “the tremendous possibilities of fraud,” writes Walter S. Dunn, “made the buyer, the producer, and the agent extremely wary.” It is unsurprising, then, that “direct, personal relationships...established over a long period of time were essential.”¹⁵ To lack such relationships would have guaranteed failure, and so the men and women who traveled west to trade did so precisely because they possessed, and could count on, pre-established business or familial relationships. All were involved in constructing and maintaining peaceful and “profitable”—whether spiritual or financial “profit”—relations between whites and Indians. Men like Moses Henry, who could move easily between cultures, were crucial cogs in this emergent machine.

Heckewelder’s information about Henry’s capture was accurate—but out of date. Clark had already retaken the fort at Vincennes in February 1779, renaming it Fort Patrick Henry. Clark immediately appointed Henry an “Indian agent,” which reveals that Clark understood how to secure the cooperation of native populations. Extensive records survive among the George Rogers Clark Papers (Virginia State Library and Archives) that detail Henry’s activities from early 1779 to mid 1782. In April 1783, commissioners approved payment Henry for services as “Indian Agent” since 1779. Henry’s trade with the Indians now served directly the new United States government, which supplied him with the goods that he delivered: flour, horses, rum, salt, powder, balls, tobacco, pork, meal, beef, corn, lead, paint, whiskey. These gifts were crucial efforts toward retaining the friendship of the surrounding Indian nations, many of whom the records name by tribe: Delaware, Ottawas, Piankashaws, Kickapoos. The records indicate that Henry continued, too, to repair guns.¹⁶

Vincennes was not a safe place in the 1780s. In occupying the town in 1779, the Virginians disrupted settled distributions of economic and social power. The French residents, who had sided with the Americans against the British, came to so regret that decision that, in 1781, they sent a remonstrance (signed by Moses Henry) to the Governor of Virginia, begging him discipline the unruly Americans.¹⁷ Matters only got worse when, in the wake of the Treaty of Paris (1783) that ceded the entire Northwest Territory to the United States, many settlers headed west and squatted—

illegally, mostly—on Indian land. Violence between settlers and Indians escalated, despite treaties that Clark helped negotiate. The community at Vincennes, hearing of Indian atrocities to their west, expected the worst. Henry joined several other residents to implore George Rogers Clark to return to Vincennes to restore order. “We shudder at the daily expectation of horrid murders and ... total depopulation of the Americans by imperious savages,” a letter of March 1786 declared. “This place once trembled at your victorious arms, and these savages [were] overawed by your superior power.” Residents feared the collapsing frontier: “a number of inhabitants that settled in the country have retreated to town for fear of the Indians, & and it is possible in a few days we shall behold savage hands imbrued in the blood of our brethren.” Three months later, when the situation hadn’t improved, Henry wrote again to Clark, noting that the inhabitants “are daily informed of their hostile intentions & weekly experience some melancholy affair amongst us”: “one man was killed barbarously and another,” he reported, “was taken and burned about Seven miles from town.” This letter predicted “destruction” unless “assistance comes soon.”¹⁸ Clark’s campaigns against Indian towns on the Wabash River were unsuccessful, and in 1787 the Confederation Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance to bring order to the settlement on the Wabash River. The United States built a new fort in Vincennes, naming it Fort Knox, and in 1788 General Josiah Harmar arrived to end the confused and dangerous conflicts between Indians, French, and Virginians, at Vincennes.

Henry’s contacts with Indian settlements remained extremely valuable to the community at Vincennes. A man “of influence among the Indians,” as Clark had written in 1785, Henry routinely helped the new government gain information about their Indian neighbors.¹⁹ In April 1788 John Francis Hamtramck, the commander at Vincennes, mentioned “intelligence” that he had “some time ago received from Mr. Henery of this place who is very much connected with the Indians, particularly his wife.” Henry had told Hamtramck that “some Indians had given him to understand that we should have a war.” In August Henry “brought...two Shawnees” to offer more information to Hamtramck.²⁰ And Henry’s abilities to negotiate with Indians helped in less public ways, too. In October 1782, Israel Dodge and his wife, Nancy Hunter Dodge, were traveling from Kaskaskia, Illinois to Kentucky and stopped at the Henrys in Vincennes where Mrs. Dodge gave birth to a child. In an echo of events from nearly a decade earlier, Henry’s relations with his Indian

neighbors saved a life. Several days after the child’s birth, “a Piankeshaw chief came in, and said that it could not be allowed to live in their country, and he would dash out its brains.” When the mother’s pleas failed, “Moses Henry explained that it was the ‘papoose’ of a friend of his, whose ‘squaw’ was sojourning in his house” and that mother and child “would soon go on their journey. These expostulations prevailed.”²¹ This child—Moses Henry Dodge—would later shed his first name and, as Henry Dodge, become a congressman, a senator, and the governor of the territory of Wisconsin (1836-41, 1845-48).

In April 1788, Henry was one of five new magistrates elected in Vincennes, which then contained some 900 French residents and about 400 Americans.²² Surviving documents reveal his involvement in many civil and legal cases. Like his elder brother William, Moses Henry had gone from gunsmith and trader to public servant. In less than a year, however, Henry was dead. On 28 March 1789, while reporting to Harmar to report that nearby Indian villages “are gone to war, and that some are for this place,” Hamtramck added: “Mr. Henery of this village has made his exit.”²³ Ann, his wife, filed a claim (under the 29 August 1788 Act of Congress) to assert rights to land in Vincennes. Ann insisted that “being the widow of said Moses Henry” who “held property [in Vincennes] granted to him under the French and also under British rule,” she and her heirs “should be granted some concession of land as the old ownership documents were no longer recognized or acknowledged.” In 1790 “the heirs of Moses Henry” were granted “a lot seventy feet by twenty-five toises; one side to Bordeleau and to three streets.”²⁴

Moses Henry may have died young, not yet 45, but he established a pattern of looking west that was followed by other family members. It was only William Henry II, moving to Nazareth and producing iron there in 1808, who concentrated the family business on gunmaking. Other family members, including Moses Henry, used their skills as a gunsmith to gain entry into the extensive trade networks of the western frontier. Moses Henry was trading at Pittsburgh in the 1760s, at the Indian town of Chillicathee in the 1770s, and at Vincennes in the 1780s. His brother, John, followed him west in the summer of 1773, taking along as an apprentice his brother William’s second son, John Joseph Henry (1758-1811), not yet fifteen. They traveled to Detroit, then a trading post and small settlement with some 2500 inhabitants. John Joseph’s “stay” in Detroit, he later told his daughter, “was but short on account of scarcity of business,” and uncle

John himself soon returned to Lancaster to work as a gunsmith until his death in May 1777.²⁵

William of Lancaster's other sons copied their uncle Moses's pattern more successfully. James (1771-1812) was in business at Two Mile Run in western Pennsylvania (a spot through which his father had traveled when serving as armorer to the Forbes expedition in 1758) and at Pittsburgh in 1792. In 1796 James O'Hara, who had a government contract to provision western army posts from Niagara to the Mississippi, hired James to establish a Detroit headquarters from which to ensure that these western outposts received regular supplies. Henry was in Detroit, at work, by 1797. In addition to this work, he established his own tannery and a high-end general store in which one could purchase shoes, watches, snuff, knives and forks, salt, ivory combs, hair powder, and port. He was responsible, too, for granting licenses for the Indian trade.²⁶ Another brother, Matthew (1773-1804), about whom we know less, first joined his brother in Detroit and then moved further west in 1801 to trade at Fort Mackinac between Lake Huron and Lake Michigan.²⁷ These Henrys relied on the extensive trade networks maintained by Moravian missionaries, by Joseph Simon, and by the large merchants firms of Philadelphia—extending relationships first forged in the 1750s by William of Lancaster. The Henry family built gun factories in the east, but they always had their eyes on trade—with Indians, settlers, and soldiers—in the vast western lands beyond Pennsylvania.

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Notes

¹ Joseph Shippen Jr. to Edward Shippen, 2 June 1756, in "Military Letters of Captain Joseph Shippen of the Provincial Service, 1756-1758," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 36, nos. 3-4 (1912): 386.

² Michael A. Bellesiles, *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* (Knopf, 2000), 106-107.

³ Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 1996), 41.

⁴ Henry J. Kauffman, *The Pennsylvania-Kentucky Rifle* (Bonanza Books, 1960), 254.

⁵ See Dobson to Morgan, 5 April 1766, in Clarence Walworth Alvord and Clarence Edwin Carter, eds., *The New Regime, 1765-1767* (Springfield, Ill., 1916), 211-12, and Morgan to Baynton and Wharton, n.d., in *New Regime*, 217-18.

⁶ Sarepta Kussart, *Early History of the Fifteenth Ward of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1925), 73.

⁷ David Jones, *A Journal of Two Visits Made to Some Nations of Indians on the West Side of the River Ohio, In the Years 1772 and 1773* (Burlington, N.J., 1774), 40, 42.

⁸ W. V. Byars, ed., *B. and M. Gratz, Merchants in Philadelphia* (Jefferson City, Mo., 1916), 34.

⁹ Jones, *Journal*, 40-44.

¹⁰ Jones, *Journal*, 50-51.

¹¹ Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 50-52.

¹² George Rogers Clark, "Memoir" in William Hayden English, *Conquest of the Country Northwest of the River Ohio 1778-1783 and the Life of Gen. George Rogers Clark* (Indianapolis, 1896), 1: 531-32.

¹³ John Heckewelder to Col. John Gibson, 19 March 1779, in Louise Phelps Kellogg, ed., *Frontier Advance on the Upper Ohio, 1778-1779* (Madison, Wis., 1916), 258-60.

¹⁴ Walter S. Dunn, Jr., *The New Imperial Economy: The British Army and the American Frontier, 1764-1768*, (Westport, CT., 2001), 135. Henry wrote to John Gibson to inquire for news of "whether my mother is yet living or not, as also my old friends and acquaintances." See Moses Henry to John Gibson, [1779], in "Letters from Canadian Archives," in H. W. Beckwith, ed., *Collections of the Illinois State Historical Library* (1903), 1: 429. Henry's mother had died in 1778.

¹⁵ Walter S. Dunn, Jr., *Frontier Profit and Loss: The British Army and the Fur Traders, 1760-1764* (Westport, CT., 1998), 16.

¹⁶ These can be found online at <http://my.execpc.com/~sril/clarkv01>

¹⁷ English, *Conquest of the Country Northwest of the River Ohio*, 2: 740.

¹⁸ These letters can be found in Leonard C. Helderman, ed., "Danger on Wabash: Vincennes Letters of 1786," *Indiana Magazine of History* 34 (1938): 456-459.

¹⁹ *Papers of the Continental Congress*, No. 150, folio 42, 297-99, quoted in "Danger on Wabash," 459.

²⁰ Gayle Thornbrough, ed., Hamtramck to Harmar, 13 April 1788, in *Outpost on the Wabash, 1787-1791* (Indianapolis, 1957), 69; Hamtramck to Harmar, 31 August 1788, in *Outpost on the Wabash*, 119.

²¹ "A Heroine of the Revolution: Nancy Ann Hunter, Grandmother of the Honorable A. C. Dodge," *Iowa Historical Record* 2, no. 2 (April 1886). Available online at <http://iagenweb.org/history/historicalrecords/apr1886.htm>

²² Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 112, 118.

²³ Gayle Thornbrough, ed., Hamtramck to Harmar, 28 March 1789, in *Outpost on the Wabash*, 162.

²⁴ Walter Lowrie, ed., *Documents Legislative and Executive of the Congress of the United States in Relation to Public Lands* (Washington, 1834), 1: 8.

²⁵ "Life of the Author," in John Joseph Henry, *An Accurate and Interesting Account of the Hardships and Sufferings of that Band of Heroes...in 1775* (Lancaster, 1812), 6. The inventory of John Henry's goods (Lancaster County Historical Society) taken after his death includes all the tools of a gunsmith, as well as a "Negro Man Sam" valued at £225. For John Henry's travels to Detroit, see Michael Gratz to Bernard Gratz, 2 June 1773, in Byars, ed., *B. and M. Gratz*, 132.

²⁶ Most known information about James Henry is collected by Louise Rau, "Detroit Biographies: James Henry," in M. M. Quaife, ed., *Burton Historical Collection Leaflet* 7, no. 5 (May 1929): 65-80.

²⁷ John W. Jordan, "John Heckewelder's Journey to the Wabash in 1792," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 12 (1888): 184; M. Agnes Burton, ed., *Proceedings of the Land Board of Detroit* (Detroit, 1915), 159-60; Milo M. Quaife, ed., *The John Askin Papers: Volume II: 1796-1820* (Detroit, 1931), 414.

A Boulton Christmas 2007



This year the 1832 John Joseph Henry House was beautifully decorated by Roberta Steiner, Sybil Marsh, and Nazareth Floral Design. Vocalist Sally Shutler led guests in singing carols. The 1832 John Joseph Henry House was a featured historical house on Governor Wolf Historical Society's 2007 Christmas House Tour.



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For Spring Cleanup Campaign

April 12, 2008, 9am-2pm

JHS buildings and grounds. Tools provided.

Pizza lunch and soft drinks included.

All JHS members and friends welcome.

AVOID THE DRAFT!

JHS Outdoors

Spring Fling Trade Blanket

April 19, 2008

Join Jacobsburg Historical
Society for a

Cabin Crazy Clean-Out of Stuff

Buy/Sell/Trade

Your Historical, Antique, and Old & Cool
Items and Collectibles

\$15 for 10-foot space

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Bring your own tables or blankets.

11:00am Set-up

4:00pm Tear down

*Special sneak preview for
New JHS Volunteers.*

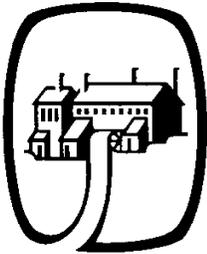
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