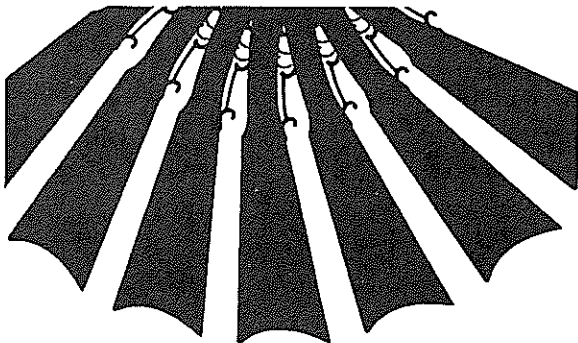

THE
ASSOCIATION
OF OHIO
LONGRIFLE
COLLECTORS



FOR THE STUDY AND PRESERVATION
OF THE OHIO MUZZLELOADING RIFLE

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42nd Annual
AOLRC

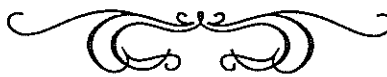
ANTIQUÉ GUN
AND ARMS SHOW

Saturday, April 1-2

9:00 am - 5:00 pm

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Lafayette Hotel
Marietta, Ohio



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A Word from the President

Ah, April in Marietta. A slight breeze ripples the water on the Ohio River while redbud trees, crocus and daffodils show off their colors.

Speaking of colors, inside, there will be shades of gold, rust brown and matte textured patina. Yes, it's time for our annual meeting again. Just doesn't seem possible that another year has gone by. Set up will be March 31th. Don't forget to call Jim Claggett or Rod Frazer to reserve your display tables. Due to no fault of ours, last year we lost our website domain or address. Our new address is **aolrc.com** and is being rebuilt by one of our directors, Allen Corbett.

Also, thanks to Mark Herman, we will have Mel Hankla back this year for our Saturday evening banquet. Several years ago, Mel did a first-person Simon Kenton for us. This year we can look forward to George Rogers Clark.

As president it is my duty to report the passing of Joe Irvin. Joe, along with his wife Joyce, collected many fine pieces of Wayne Co. craftsmanship, authored a book and helped form several historical societies in Wayne County.

Renita and I hope to see you all in Marietta

Sincerely, Tom





A Note from the Editor

Let me begin with a word of thanks to Ron Yerian who for many years has served as the editor of this newsletter.

Ron did a great job keeping members informed of upcoming events, reflecting on past events, and supplying readers with interesting articles on our shared passions concerning old Ohio long rifles. Ron himself is a descendant of a family of Ohio gun makers and he brought to each issue his own expertise, knowledge, and perspectives, supported by his wonderful wife, Judy. On behalf of our readers I would like to give Ron an appreciative “thank you!” I look forward to working with Ron in his enduring capacity as a board member.

With this issue I am for the time being assuming the editing of the newsletter. My interest in old Ohio long rifles goes back to the early 1970s when I saw my first Ohio long rifles in a basement barbershop in downtown Woodsfield, located in hilly Monroe County. I was in high school and was being instructed by the local barber/gunsmith in building a long rifle out of a kit the shop was handling. As I was learning to chisel and file, I can remember old muzzleloaders being carried into the shop, which was hung with old guns, powder horns, and antlers. Some came in whole, some came in parts – I remember one busted up curly maple stock and brass hardware entering in a cigar box. Another day, an old

fowling piece was walked in with a load consisting of hand-dropped lead buckshot, fine-grained old black powder, and a wad made from a page of Daniel in the Bible. The first Vincent rifle I saw, brought in for lock work, arrived with a full foot of the barrel freshly sawed off – as the new owner felt the gun had been too heavy.

With that last unsettling thought in mind, I would like to welcome submissions from our readers on any aspect of collecting and appreciating old Ohio long rifles. Part of the goal of this newsletter and the other publications of this organization is the appreciation and protection of these objects of Ohio folk art tradition for present and future generations. And I thank you in advance for sharing your manuscripts and other materials. Below I have created a short list of submission guidelines for potential contributors. I will note here that the easiest and most efficient way to submit an article is in an electronic format by e-mail. If that is not possible I will welcome hand-typed or even handwritten manuscripts, though keep in mind it takes a lot of time to transfer them into a computer file. (Asking young’ins to help type up an article is educational.) Thank you for your understanding.

Yours truly,
Mark Bender

A Unique Humberger Rifle

by Mark Bender

The Humbergers (sometimes written (“Humbarger”) were a well-known family of 19th century Ohio gunsmiths associated with the area of Somerset in Perry County Ohio. An article in Vol. XV (1993) of this newsletter introduces “Henry Humbarger,” one of several sons and grandsons of the family patriarch Peter Humberger, Sr. A number of Humbergers are listed in Vol. IV of *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen* (Hutslar 1998: 72-75). The rifles of this family are notable for their creative patchbox designs and Henry (born in 1811) is said to have invented some sort of a percussion (pepperbox) revolver that by unproven hearsay influenced Samuel Colt’s famous Colt revolvers (Hutslar 1998: 73).

In an antique firearms auction in Wyandot County, Ohio I recently observed a longrifle marked “H. Humberger,” engraved in script on the top flat of the barrel behind the rear sight. The rifle is worth singling out for examination because of the nicely done period wrist repair and the handmade lock with a unique mainspring. After a brief description of the specifications and artistic features of the rifle, I will discuss the repair and the unique spring, which may lend credence to the idea that Henry was a mechanical wizard. The measurements of many features of the rifle are included at the end for those interested in dimensions.

The Rifle

Hutslar reports a “full stock percussion

rifle with mark ‘H. Humberger’ finely engraved on the barrel” (1998:74). The rifle under discussion in this article is signed in an artistic script. Pictures on a major antique online auction site that recently sold a somewhat more ornate version of a Humberger rifle with nearly the same dimensions and pattern was signed with a nearly identical signature (see Sources for link). The overall dimensions of the present rifle are also similar to some other known Humberger family full stock rifles, having a total length of 58 inches. The stock is made of fairly wide-stripped curly maple with what seems to be an original dark finish. There is a decorative line etched along each side of the wood of the fore stock. The side plate, featuring bilateral symmetry, is similar to that on the rifle on p. 87 of Vol. IV of Hutslar 1998, and the rifle has the overall “look” of that gun, except for a different style of patch

The three ramrod pipes are exceptionally finely wrought, with three exposed flats on each pipe. It appears that the rear ramrod pipe may be made of two joined pieces, rather than cast whole. The three barrel keys are heavy brass wedges, with a rectangular profile on the lock side. The barrel itself is 42 1/4" in length, and is slightly narrower in width at the muzzle than the breech. The patch box is an example of the often unique designs of the Humbergers. The flat of the muzzle has 12 punched-in “witch’s marks” in the form of

“asterisks” placed somewhat irregularly around the circumference of the muzzle, which appears to have 8 rifling grooves.

The cheek piece is incised with one traverse line and inlaid with a silver half-moon, which compliments the silver wrist inlay. Both inlays have a squiggly line engraved around the borders; the only engraving on the rifle. The finely made double-set triggers are placed in a 5 1/4" iron trigger plate. The screws appear handmade and tiny brass pins help hold down parts of the patch box and side plate. An iron flash plate protects the wood on the lock side of the barrel tang, and an additional half circle of protective brass is held on by the nipple.

The Repair

One of the outstanding features of the architecture of this rifle is a modest, well-done sheet brass repair on the wrist. Countless heavy barreled rifles with delicate wrists were cracked or split clean through in the period of use in the 19th century and in sundry accidents over the ensuing 150 years. In some cases collectors remove these repairs in the process of restoration, attempting to restore the arm to the condition it left the work bench. In the present case the repair is so well done it actually lends to the aesthetic appearance of the arm and like other honest wear contributes to its overall appeal, raising questions of “what happened?” and “who fixed it?”

The use of sheet brass for repairs was, like wrapping with tight coils of brass or iron wire, a common repair strategy in the era before modern adhesives. In the present case the thin brass (which could have come

from a kettle or other recycled source) was attached with handmade iron screws. The brass collar is formed fitted over the wrist and shaped to the comb with a minimal impact to the wood. Though no doubt made with service in mind, the contrast between the mellow brass patina and the dark striped wood is a pleasing dimension of the aesthetic of this folk object.

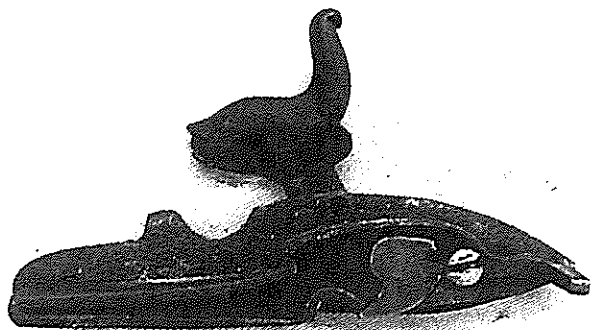
The Lock

The lock is very similar to that on the gun illustrated on the auction site, which describes the engraved floral patterns as “acanthus leaves,” a common motif on early European firearms. Although the lock profile, with its extended and pointed anterior could have originally been a flintlock converted to percussion (as the auction site suggests), I feel that the lock may actually have been handmade by the Humbergers. Lending some support to this idea is the lock plate itself, which is very unlike the common percussion locks of the mid-19th century and not suggestive of any particular flintlock commercial pattern (such as Ketland marked locks on fowling pieces).

What really seems different is the internal mainspring. The shape of the mainspring is an elongated “v” -- the top of which extends forward in the shape of an asymmetric half-oval (see photos). Dan Aubhil, a traditional craftsman and blacksmith from Wyandot County who repairs both muzzleloaders and vintage shotguns, suggests that the lock spring is an innovation ahead of its time. In a personal communication he observed that certain features of the lock mechanism, “Seem to

continued on page 6

foreshadow some of the lock developments of late 1800's side-by-side shotgun locks.”



As the picture above illustrates, the lock is otherwise structured as a conventional “front action” percussion lock, which evolved in the 1820s. This is not to suggest that Humberger’s ideas directly or even indirectly effected later lock developments, but the innovativeness of the spring configuration in the H. Humberger rifle lends credence to the legend that Henry Humberger was a gifted inventor, credited by oral and written sources with the above-mentioned revolver design. I have not examined the “guts” of other Humberger locks. If anyone has additional information on this style of Humberger mainspring locks (or variant springs in rifles by other makers), please let the author know.

Sources:

Gallien, Shelby (1993). Henry Humberger. *Association of Ohio Longrifle Collectors Newsletter*. Vol. XV (Number II) August.
Hutslar, Donald A. (1998). *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Craftsmen, 1750-1950, Volume IV*. State College, Pa.: Josten’s Inc. A publication of the *Association of Ohio Long Rifle Collectors*.

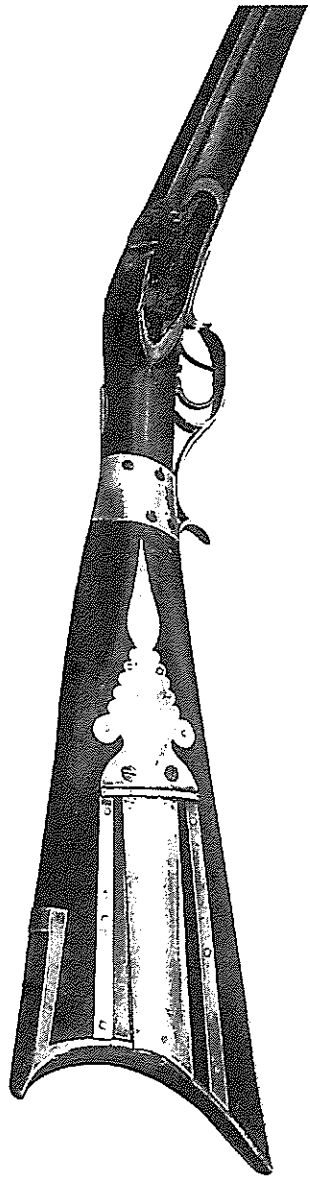
<http://jamesdjulia.com/item/lot-1705-henry-humberger-thorn-township-perry-county-ohio-percussion-kentucky-rifle-45423/>

Approximate Dimensions

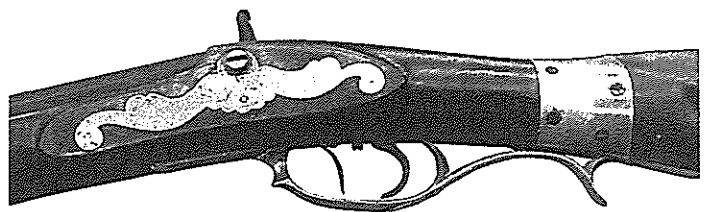
The following dimensions are provided for artisans, collectors, and educators. The rifle was measured to the 32nd of an inch by Marston Bender, yielding the following:
Overall length: 58 inches (butt plate toe to muzzle)
Length of pull (front trigger to middle of butt plate): 13 1/4"
Length and width of barrel: 42 1/4"; 1" (breech) and 30/32" (muzzle)
Spear-pointed barrel tang: 7/16" x 2 7/32"
Signature: 4 12/32" total length, including engraved motif
Caliber (seven rifling grooves): 14/32"
Caliber 2 inches down the barrel: unknown, but slightly smaller
Ramrod channel (muzzle to middle of rear pipe: 9/32" x 29 26/32"
Drop of stock (barrel plane to butt plate): 4" (top of butt plate), 8 1/2" (bottom end)
Lock plate: 30/32" x 4 1/4"
Lock panel (wood), anterior and posterior: 30/32" and 29/32"
Flash plate (to protect stock wood): 3/4" x 1 26/32"
Wrist circumference: 4 1/4"
Trigger plate: 3/8" x 5"
Length of comb: 10 1/2"
Side plate: 1" x 4 12/32"
Trigger guard: 8 1/4" length; 21/32" width at bow
Butt plate: top width 3/4"; top length 2 3/4"; center width 1 4/32", height between top and bottom points 4 12/32"; toe width
Patch box (and cover): total from anterior point to end of lower panel 9 20/32"; box lid 2" x 4 12/32"
Rear ramrod pipe (may be two-piece style): 1 3/4" upper (pipe) portion, 5/8" x 1 1/2" skirt
Forward ramrod pipes: 1 3/4"
Barrel keys: 22/32" x 6/32"

Incised double line along barrel channel (from endcap to just before rear pipe): 26 2/4"
 Endcap: 2 1/4"
 Wrist inlay: 14/32" x 1 3/32"
 Wrist repair: 1 12/32" width, 4 1/16" length (wrapped around stock, except gap for trigger plate)
 Cheek piece (with one decorative traverse line: 5 22/32" total length; anterior curve width 28/32"; posterior curve, 2 12/32"; width at posterior, 2 4/32"
 Half-moon inlay on cheek piece (engraved

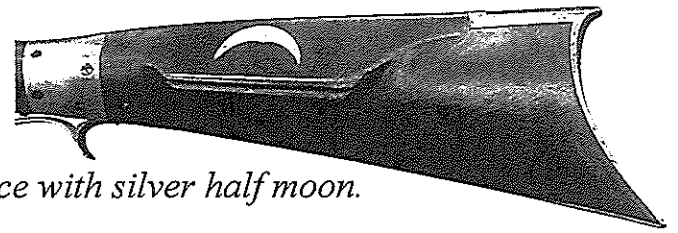
wavy-line border): 28/32" height, 1 18/32" length
 Toe plate: 18/32" x 2 1/4"
 Rear sight: 12 9/16" inches from rear of barrel; very low sight
 Front sight: front of sight base 1 26/32" from muzzle
 Weight: n/a
Note: Please contact author if other measurements are needed.



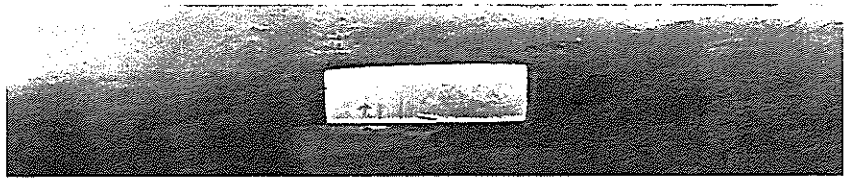
Patch box on the H. Humberger rifle.



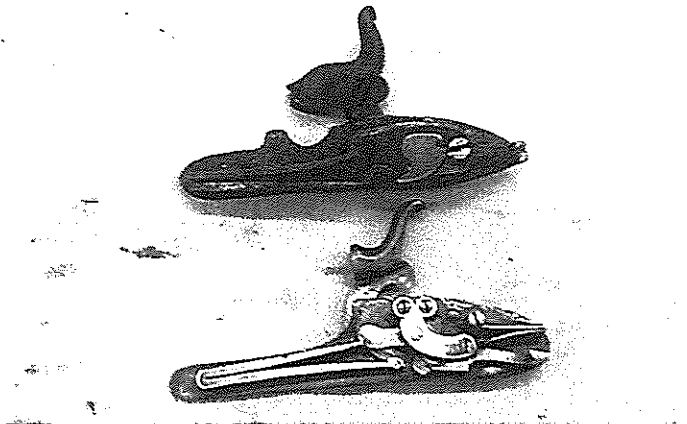
View of rear stock and lock area H. Humberger rifle.



Cheek piece with silver half moon.



Close up of a distinct barrel key of the Hamberger rifle.



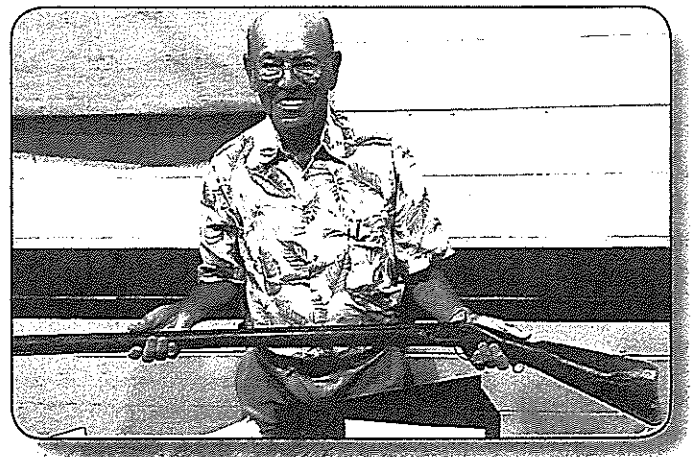
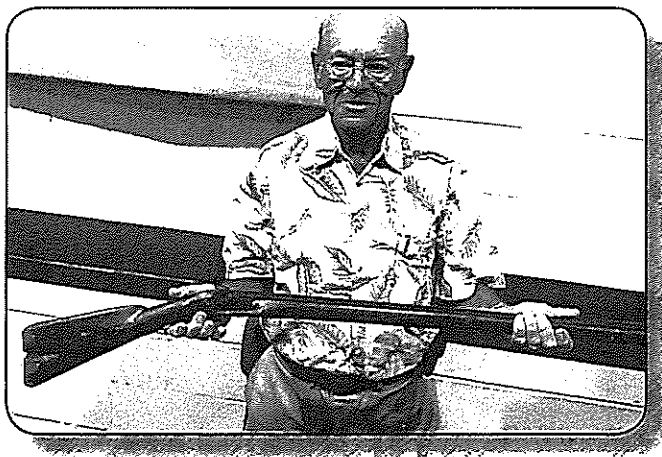
Inside of a later 19th century shotgun lock.





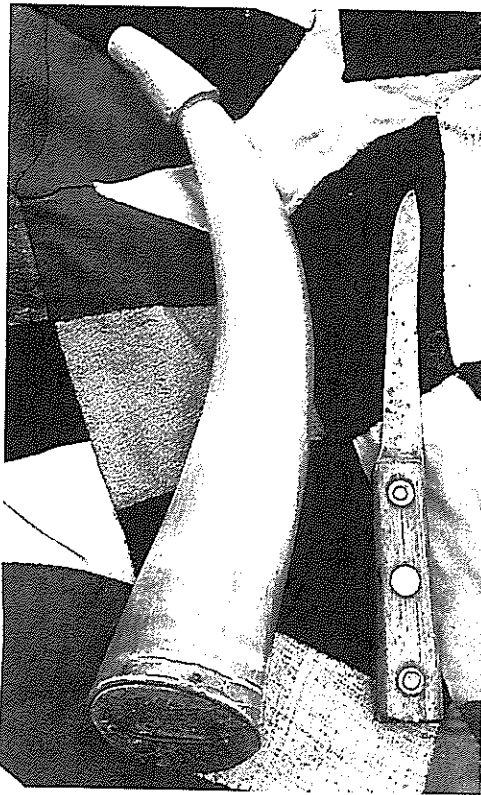
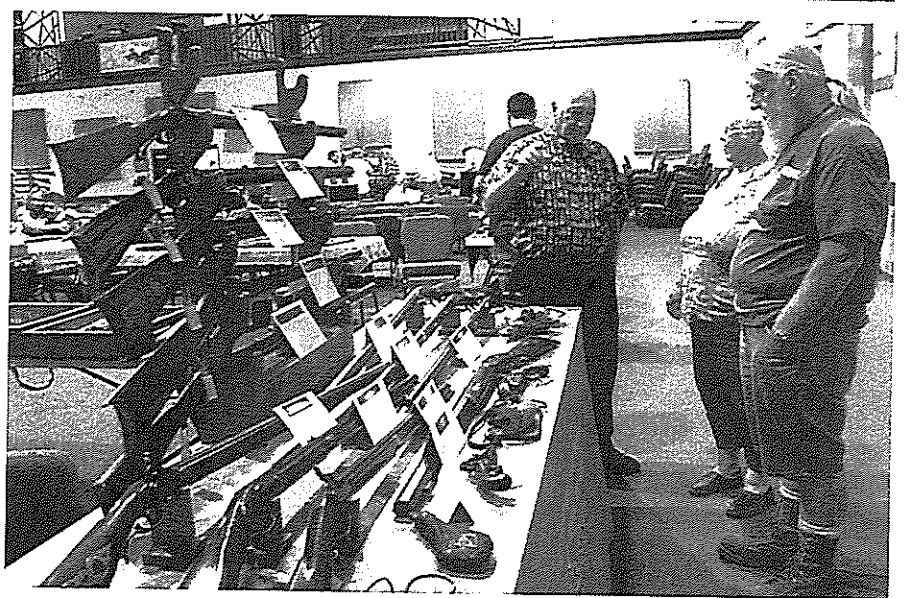
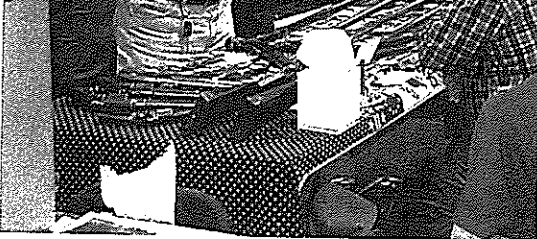
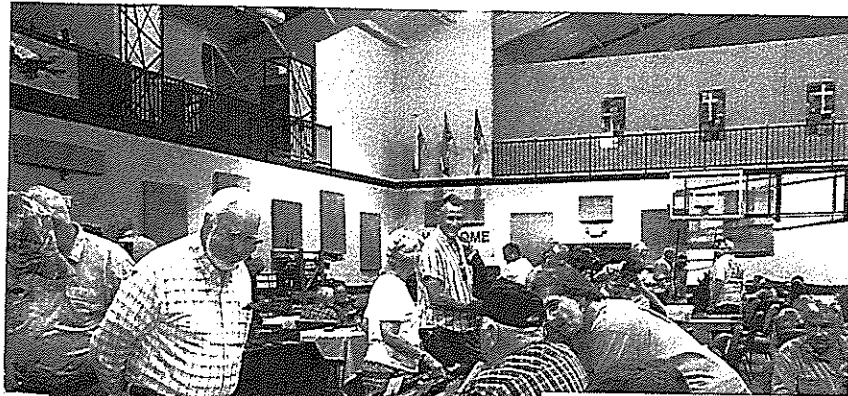
Davy Crockett's "First Rifle"

One of the most interesting exhibits at the 2016 Newark Show was a family heirloom described as Davy Crockett's "first rifle." The display included publication on the famous frontiersman's life and a number of letters and documents associating Davy Crockett (1786-1836), born in Greene County, Tennessee, with the displayer's family. The rifle has a plain, wide-butted stock with a cheek-piece and a large rectangular grease hole/patch box cavity. The present lock is percussion, but may be a replacement for a flint lock. There is no butt plate, though there is a hand-forged trigger guard, triggers, and upper ramrod pipes in place, all of iron. The style seems reminiscent of southern mountain rifles of the early half of the 19th century. The craftsmanship points towards frontier construction with basic tools. The display drew much deserved attention from the visitors.





18th Annual Newark Show



Photos from the 18th Annual Newark Show, Community Wesleyan Church, Newark. Thanks to Barb Harwood for these candid photos of the Fall Show, held for the first time in the Community Wesleyan Church, a truly amazing venue.

42nd Marietta Exhibit

As in the past we are inviting anyone who has documented Ohio made rifles produced prior to 1900 to display them. In order to avoid any confusion as far as space allotment is concerned, we are asking interested parties to please let us know how many tables they will need. In doing this the association will be able to provide adequate table accommodations on a first come basis. So, please be prompt. Mail table requests to Rod Frazer, 11815 Streamside Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147.

Remember the major portion of your display must consist of antique Ohio made rifles and accessories. Ohio made contemporary rifles must not exceed more than 10% of your total display. This rule will be strictly enforced and all contemporary rifles must be so marked.

Set up of exhibits will begin on Friday, March 31.

Banquet

Our annual membership meeting and banquet will be held April 1 at 8:00 p.m. in the LaFayette Hotel. This meeting will be preceded by a hospitality hour at 6:00 p.m. and a banquet at 7:00 p.m. Dinner will consist of prime rib, salmon, chicken parmesan and all the trimmings with tickets costing \$25.00 each, payable to the secretary no later than March 25. Banquet

space is limited and will be on a first come first serve basis. Please get your reservation in early. The Board has invited Thomas Schiffer to speak at our Banquet this year. He will entertain us this year with an overview of the early years of The National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association.

Lodging and accommodations

The LaFayette Motor Hotel has been generous enough to provide exhibit space for our show. They have also offered our membership a generous discount on their room accommodations. We strongly urge our membership to take advantage of this special rate and the fact that the show, the banquet, and the membership meeting will be held in the same location. For reservations telephone 740/373-5522. Be sure to mention that you are coming to the AOLRC Exhibit.

For security reasons, no rifles may be brought into the exhibit hall after 9:00 a.m. Saturday, or leave before 3:00 p.m. Sunday, unless prior arrangements have been made with the sergeant-at-arms.

Also, no rifle(s) may be brought into the exhibit hall by a non-member without first signing in with the sergeant-at-arms during public hours.

Schedule

Friday, March 31

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Set up for exhibit
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Reception for all exhibitors and members. Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres.

Saturday, April 1

8:00 a.m.	Exhibit hall opens to exhibitors and members only.
9:00 a.m.	Show opens to public.
5:00 p.m.	Exhibit closes.
6:00 p.m.	Hospitality hour.
7:00 p.m.	Banquet.
8:00 p.m.	Membership Meeting. Guest Speaker.

Sunday, April 2

9:00 a.m.	Exhibit hall opens to the public.
3:00 p.m.	Exhibit closes.

PLEASE NOTE

Featured Program: Mel Hankla will present George Rogers Clark (1752-1818), the highest-ranking American officer on the Old Northwest frontier during the Revolutionary War.

BANQUET RESERVATION

Saturday, April 1, 6:30

Meal and program: \$25.00 per person _____

(Please indicate your choice of meals. Each entree comes with mixed vegetables, buttered potatoes, salad, and dessert.)

___ Prime Rib

___ Salmon

___ Chicken Parmesan

Meal only: \$20.00 per person _____

Program only: \$5.00 per person _____

Total: _____

.....
Please send check and this form by **March 25th** to:

Jim Ogden
6734 W. Shannon Road
Hillsboro, OH 45133

Featured Program: Mel Hankla will present George Rogers Clark (1752-1818), the highest-ranking American officer on the Old Northwest frontier during the Revolutionary War.

42nd Association of Ohio Long Rifle Collectors

Spring 2017 Exhibition

Lafayette Hotel, Marietta, Ohio

April 1-2

Saturday 9AM-5PM

Sunday 9AM-3PM

Admission: \$5.00



Ladies of AOLRC News



by Barb Harwood

Are we ready for a true Spring?? Hopefully March 31, April 1-2 in Marietta we will experience that. I can't wait! Just hoping we won't have a late winter snowfall or ice at that time. We never know and one can only hope for the nicer weather. Keep your fingers crossed!

Plans have been finalized for the Friday set up and social hour that evening. We will have the carving station, salads and birthday cake. A donation jar will be provided to help defray the expense of the meal. We hope you contribute, it's nice to not have to leave the facility, being able to visit, catching up on what all has happened with each of us since the fall show while enjoying the meal. If the weather or roads are nasty, it's a blessing!

Saturday's ladies event this year was planned by myself with the help of Bill Reynolds and Martha Offenberger arranging the luncheon. We hope you can participate in the tour of Campus Martius, with the luncheon at the museum. Bill hopes to give the tour and show us some exhibits we have not seen including the newest exhibit. The group rate tour is \$6 per person. The luncheon is upstairs catered by The 3rd St. Deli. There is an elevator. We will have a box lunch with choice of Tuna or Chicken salad sandwich, cut in half and wrapped individually. If you like both, you could exchange a 1/2 sandwich of the other choice with someone that wants to trade for variety. A pasta salad, chips, cookie and drinks are included for \$11. We wanted to keep the meal light, so we have plenty of appetite for the dinner than evening. We will meet in the lobby Sat. morning at 9:30, then car pool to the museum, having the tour at 10, lunch at 11 with a brief business/planning meeting. Afterwards, you are free to tour the museum on your own to see anything you want in more detail or go on your own shopping or whatever in the Marietta area. We can make arrangements with those driving if anyone wants to go back to the hotel early.

Saturday's evening dinner will be casual dress. There will be a short business meeting after we eat. Then the speaker, **Mel Hankla**, addresses the founding of the Northwest Territory as George Rodgers Clark. He will be outstanding, enjoyed by all as Simon Kenton a few years ago.

The annual picnic that was cancelled this past Aug. will be discussed at the Board meeting. I am looking forward to seeing everyone. I do need a headcount for the caterer and museum lunch seating with payment on Friday. **Please send your check for \$17 written out to Barb Harwood, address 14660 Long Run Rd. Laurelville Ohio 43135 by March 25th.** If you are not sure by that time, please call me at 740-332-6344 or send an email to harwood@bright.net and let me know so I can adjust the numbers. Sometimes life gets in the way of pre-planning and last minute changes do occur. We want all the ladies that come to the show to be able to participate if possible.

Hope to hear from you soon! Barb

