

Master Horner

PROFILES

This is our second in a series of articles on those members of the Honourable Company of Horners who have achieved the status of Master Horner.

As mentioned, this is a special group of individuals, as there are only six, and each one has made major contributions to our guild, not only through their artisan skills, but serving in leadership positions, and being very active in the future growth and development of the Honourable Company of Horners.

In accordance with the Guild's Standing Rules, for anyone to become a Master Horner, an individual must "demonstrate a superlative level of ability in carving, heating and pressing, turning, engraving, and integrating woods and metals with cow horn by presenting three horn objects that demonstrate his or her ability to the Awards Committee for evaluation," plus give "an original written and oral presentation to the HCH at an annual meeting or to another accredited organization on some aspect of horn working or its history." Needless to say this is a high standard that has been met by only a few members and each has played a vital role in making the HCH what it is today.

This issue's "Master Horner Profiles" will focus on Lee Larkin, a key figure in helping to build the guild's foundation, promoting its growth, and giving unselfishly of his time and talent to its success. ❖

Lee Larkin: Master Horner

It is always interesting to talk with guild members who have achieved Master Horner status, as one learns things totally unexpected, and talking with Lee and going through his questionnaire, was no exception.

Lee was born in Valdosta, Georgia and although he currently resides in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, he took a rather circuitous route getting there. The reason, he was a "military brat" whose father was a pilot in the U.S. Air Force and lived in many places growing up. He not only called Georgia home, but Texas, Missouri, Germany, Washington, Florida, California, and Pennsylvania. As such he went to ten different schools before he even graduated from high school in California! In college he graduated with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Philosophy and History and went on to get his Master's degree in Historical Theology and has completed all his Ph.D. requirements, with the exception of his dissertation, in the same course of study. He initially became interested in horn making in 1989, while living in San



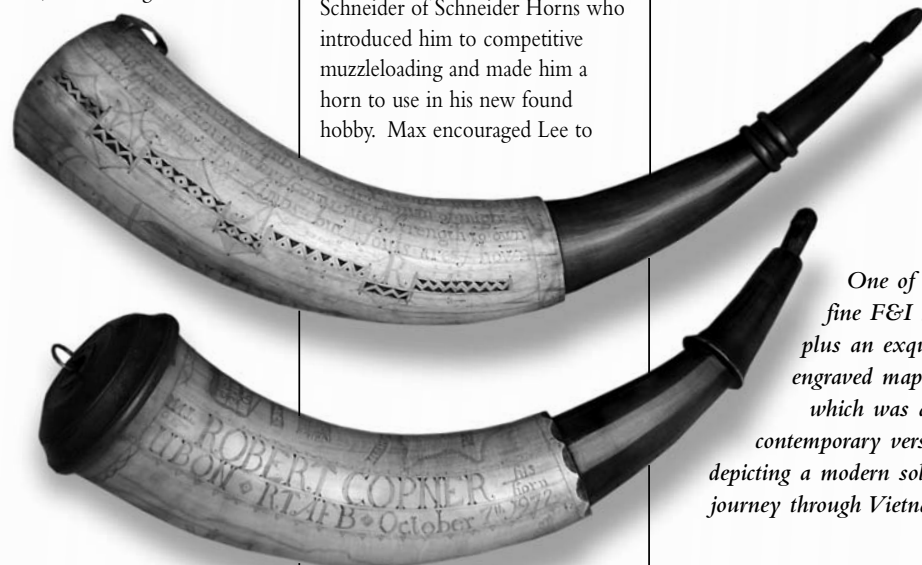
His work has not gone unnoticed as he has won numerous awards, particularly at Dixon's Gunmakers Fair. In addition, Lee's work has been featured in Muzzleloader, Muzzle Blasts, and On the Trail Magazines as well as Smoke and Fire News.

Antonio, Texas, and met Max Schneider of Schneider Horns who introduced him to competitive muzzleloading and made him a horn to use in his new found hobby. Max encouraged Lee to

make a couple of horns and introduced him to a book entitled American Engraved Powder Horns, the golden age / 1755 to 1783, by John S. duMont. As a self-professed "history buff," Lee said, 'the old powder horns resonated with my interest in Colonial and Early American history.' Needless to say, with Lee's academic background, coupled with a new found interest in horn work, his research and artisan skills in horn working rapidly grew.

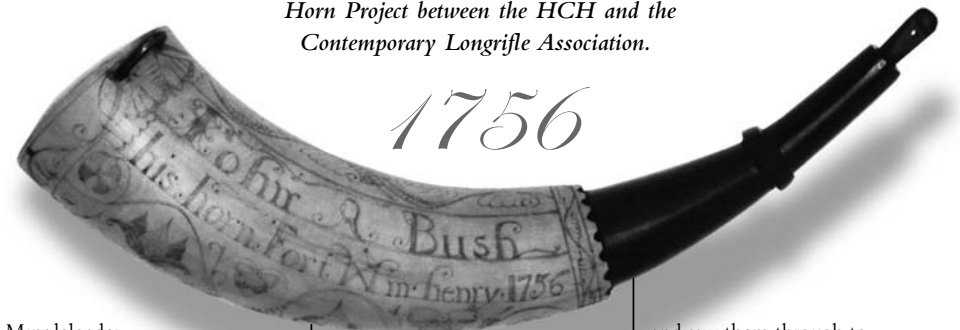
Not surprisingly, Lee is most interested in carved and engraved French & Indian and Revolutionary War powder horns. More specifically three F&I War carvers have captured his interest the most: John Bush for his beautifully executed floral designs, Jacob Gay for his busy creativity, and Samuel Lounsbury for his flowing copperplate lettering.

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One of Lee's fine F&I horns plus an exquisitely engraved map horn which was a contemporary version depicting a modern soldier's journey through Vietnam.

Lee did this stunning 1756 horn in the style of John Bush for the French and Indian War Commemorative Horn Project between the HCH and the Contemporary Longrifle Association.



Muzzleloader, Muzzle Blasts, and On the Trail Magazines as well as Smoke and Fire News. As a matter of fact, he has had several horns on the cover of Muzzle Blasts over the years and written various articles in both magazines. He also had a horn in the color center spread for the F&I Commemorative Project in Muzzleloader. Not surprisingly, his favorite publications include both Muzzle Blasts and Muzzleloader Magazines. His work is exemplary and when you see one of Lee's horns, you know it has been well researched, expertly crafted, and historically correct.

In conducting his research, Lee has been able to access many significant private collections as well as seeing the collections at Fort Ticonderoga, Historic Deerfield, and Fort Johnson which are among his favorites.

Fortunately, Lee's talents didn't stop with his horn

working, but spread out into other areas. He is a HCH Founding Member, achieved Journeyman and Master Horner status, former Guildmaster,



chaired the Nominations, Awards, Meetings, and Publications Committees, and is the former editor of The Horn Book. In addition, he drafted the HCH By-laws and Standing Rule #1

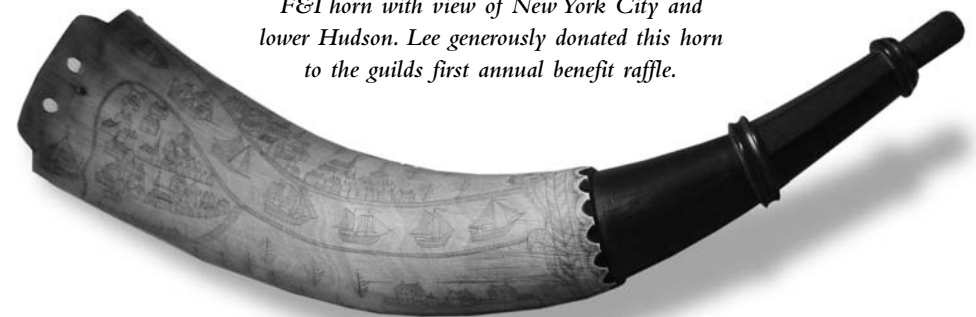
and saw them through to adoption. Lee is also a member of the NRA, NMLRA, and CLA.

As an author, Lee has two published works: A Sketchbook of Colonial and Early American Powder Horn Engraving Designs: 1740-1800 and A Case for Mistaken Attribution: Or, Findings of a Study of the Engraving on the Powder Horns Attributed to John Bush.

When asked about any horn related projects that had special meaning to him, the one that stood out was the French and Indian War Commemorative Horn Project between the HCH and the Contemporary Longrifle Association. He worked closely with Roland Cadle and David Wright, writing numerous articles and most of the copy for the auction catalog.

As you can see, Lee has accomplished a lot and has made many contributions to our guild over the years, for which we owe him a debt of gratitude. ❖

F&I horn with view of New York City and lower Hudson. Lee generously donated this horn to the guilds first annual benefit raffle.



Check out the color center spread (pages 8-9) for Lee's latest award winning F&I horn