

Chapter II The Formative Years

March 1998 - March 1999

President
Roland Cadle

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Vice President  
Clay Smith

Secretary  
Russ Young

Treasurer  
Russ Young

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1999 Horn Fair: Colonial Williamsburg
Williamsburg, Virginia

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### Introduction

As the Honourable Company of Horners entered its third year, it had reason to feel optimistic as its membership continued to increase along with a sound financial basis. Plus, its officers Roland Cadle, Clay Smith and Russ Young had agreed to serving a second year. With their knowledge and experience, they were the perfect fit for the Guild during this formative period.

It became evident that an unofficial relationship between the Guild and the Gunmakers' Fair at Dixon's was beginning to form. In less than three years, the ties between the two began to develop and strengthen. Several Guild members were set up in the accouterments tent, many submitted horn and bag items for judging, a few gave presentations and Tom Ames (head accouterment judge) recruited three Guild members as judges for the accouterments program.

As noted in preceding years, the Guildmaster's primary responsibility was the planning and organizing the upcoming Horn Fair; however, as the Guild grew, more reliance was placed on members to assist in organizing the event. Such was the case with the upcoming 1999 Horn Fair at Colonial Williamsburg which tasked Jim Leach with the overall coordination of the event. Perhaps this was a sign indicating a need for establishing various committees to meet the growing needs of the Guild.

### Key Highlights

~Planning for the Third Annual Horn Fair - Planning was well underway in the Spring of 1998 for the upcoming annual Horn Fair less than a year away. The primary organizer was Jim Leach,<sup>1</sup> who was assisted by Byron Smith, Clay Smith and George Suiter, all Colonial Williamsburg artisans.<sup>2</sup> Anticipation was running high and Russ Young noted four months prior to the Horn Fair that: "Every year the conference eclipses all previous meetings, but this will form the standard for years to come."<sup>3</sup> A bold statement that would ultimately prove true.

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<sup>1</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, May 1999: pg 1.

<sup>2</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, November 1998: pg 1.

<sup>3</sup> Young, pg 1.

~The Horn Book - During this year, *The Horn Book* continued to average approximately 8 pages, not counting the pages containing membership data. And, as in 1996 and 1997, Russ continued to plea for articles from the membership. As both Secretary and Treasurer, Russ still had the additional Horn Book editor and membership responsibilities - no small task!

~Financial/Membership Status - The Guild had a balance of \$2,871.86 after paying all the expenses for the 1999 Horn Fair. This put the Guild in excellent position for the 2000 Horn Fair and provided the officers needed flexibility in decision making on a multitude of issues. Dues remained at \$15.

-Renewal problems were a constant problem as reflected by Russ in the *The Horn Book* which stated: "PLEASE NOTE: IF THERE IS A RED "X" NEXT TO YOUR MAILING LABEL, I have not received your 1999 renewal and this is the last issue that you will receive!!!!"<sup>4</sup> As delayed dues payments adversely affected the budgeting process and posed an annual problem, it is no wonder why frustration eventually occurs.

Membership remained constant at 132 members as reflected in the Membership Roster attached to *The Horn Book's* May 1999 issue.

~Members in the News:

- Ron Ehler was chosen to make a powder horn for the outgoing President of the National Rifle Association and it was noted that the NRA was quite pleased. Ron had won several awards in the horn competition at Dixon's.<sup>5</sup>

-John Proud donated a priming horn engraved with his "rising sun" motif as one of the items to be raffled off to benefit the Primitive Range at Friendship. It was photographed along with other handmade pieces and pictured on the cover of *Muzzle Blasts* magazine. In the write up, John mentioned that he was a member of the Guild causing Russ to write: "Thanks for the plug, John! If you are also a 'Proud' member of the Guild, be sure to note it in any press releases!"<sup>6</sup>

-What made *The Horn Book* so unique was its personable quality of keeping members informed, whether the subject was horn related or not. As Russ wrote in the June 1998 issue: "Guild Brother Byron Smith became a father for the first time on May 21st. Congratulations to the Smith family - may she be a healthy & happy daughter - and a first class horn worker."

~Horn Exhibit at the Johnson-Humrick House Museum in Coshocton, Ohio: Held from September 12th through November 22nd, 1998. The exhibit consists of vintage and contemporary horn work. Although this was not an official Guild activity, Russ Young, who was in charge of the event, wrote that "We have a golden opportunity to educate the public about the things we love so much."<sup>7</sup>

It was to be a balanced exhibit of the history of horn work and items requested were not only powder horns, but cups, shoe horns, horn books, spectacles, penners, buttons, spoons, combs, etc.

As noted in the November issue of *The Horn Book*: "The largest exhibit of American horns work ever shown will continue to be on display until November 22nd. The exhibit, drawn almost

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<sup>4</sup> Young pg 3.

<sup>5</sup> Russ Young. *The Horn Book*, June 1998: pg 4.

<sup>6</sup> Young pg 4.

<sup>7</sup> Young pg 5.



entirely from the collections of guild brothers, comprises 220 horn objects, ranging from dice cups to 18th century knife scales (there are also a few dandy firearms accompanying powder horns, such as a c. 1795 Irish rifle, a Leman Indian Trade rifle, etc. One case displays horn and bag combinations, from curse to superb.... And there is an entire case of the work from guild brothers. The entire special exhibits room is lined with cases of Horn work!"<sup>8</sup> Eleven guild members provided their own work or objects from their collections.<sup>9</sup>

~1998 Gunmakers' Fair at Dixon's - The Guild was now making itself known at events such as Dixon's as Guild members supported the event in several areas. It had seven Guild members set up in the accouterments tent selling their horn work: Roland Cadle, Bob Chattam, Bruce Horne, Lee Larkin, Mark Idle, John Proud and Jeff Renninger. In addition, both Roland and Bruce gave presentations in the seminar tent, while Guild members Bob Chattin, Mark Idle and Robert Coffey served as Accouterment Judges headed by Tom Ames.

Two items of note regarding Dixon's accouterment judging program were that (1) everyone who entered an item for judging received a detailed critique from the judges to assist in improving their skills and (2) the mention of a "Judges' Choice Award." This is a special recognition of superb work and acknowledges a "special quality in the item, whether it be engraving, architecture, art work or whatever." Was this the beginning of a transition from the standard 1st, 2nd and 3rd place ribbons to a new and innovative Judges' Choice Awards only? Tom Ames (Head Accouterment Judge) stated that the difference between 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards was minimal as all could be considered 1st place caliber work.<sup>10</sup> Solution: eliminate the current system and adopt the Judges Choice Award for any item reflecting 'First Place' caliber work. Will it occur and when? - Yes, it will occur but it may take another 10 years.

Of note was a comment in *The Horn Book* by Russ Young that he was often asked "Where can I meet other horners?" His response was that except for the Guild's annual Horn Fair that "Dixon's is the best place to meet, see, talk" with horners. He elaborated further about the classes, demonstrations, displays and horn goods being sold and that "It's all very low key and relaxed....you don't have to belong to any group to attend. In your editor's humble opinion, this is the best educational event there is anywhere. Go!"<sup>11</sup> The role of the HCH was becoming more prominent and would continue for years to come.

The accouterments judging program has always been a big attraction at Dixon's with many items being submitted, particularly horn related entries. Again, the vast majority of those winning awards were members of the HCH.<sup>12</sup>

#### Hunting Bags

1st-Frank Willis  
2nd-Mark Wright  
3rd-Unknown

#### Judges' Choice

Carole Proud / Jim Dell  
Best Creative  
John Salisbury

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<sup>8</sup> Russ Young. *The Horn Book*, Nov 1998: pg 3.

<sup>9</sup> Russ Young. *The Horn Book*, June 1998: pg 4.

<sup>10</sup> Tom Ames. Phonecon: February 7, 2026.

<sup>11</sup> Young pg 3.

<sup>12</sup> Russ Young. *The Horn Book*, Aug 1998: pg 2.

Hunting Bag/Horn Combinations

1st-Bruce Horne

2nd-Lee Larkin

Undecorated Horn

1st-Frank Willis

2nd-Mike Lease

3rd-John Proud

Decorated Horn

1st-Wayne Holcomb

2nd-John Proud

3rd-Mike Please

Novice

1st-Steve Schroyer

2nd-Robert Brisson (Scrim by Bill Carter)

Best Historical Representation

Bruce Horne

Best Overall Accouterment

Bruce Horne

Annual Theme Category: Delaware Valley

1st-Gary Birch

2nd-Carole Proud

3rd-Richard Franklin

~Contemporary Longrifle Association (CLA) Show - It was noted that the CLA's second annual show will take place from August 13, 1998 (Thursday) through August 15th (Saturday) at the Airport Radisson Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio; admission was 5\$ for non-members. Last year's show was highly successful, so much is expected of this year's event especially in light of the fact that all tables were sold out.

It is interesting to track both the HCH and the CLA as both evolved during the same time period, both had held their second annual meetings in 1998, there are many who are members of both organizations and each organization fully supports the 'Longrifle Culture.'

~Recommended Reading: *Some Plain Thinking on Horns* by Bruce Horne. The article addresses five key principles of horn design one should consider regarding powder horns. In addition, Russ Young added some thoughts on the subject which the reader will find quite interesting.<sup>13</sup>

Another article of interest titled *A Few Notes on Southern Horns* by Russ Young is quite interesting as well. There was a plethora of information on powder horns of the northeast particularly from the French & Indian War and the Revolutionary War, but little on Southern horns which Russ addressed in this article.<sup>14</sup>

### **1999 Horn Fair**

Jim Leach was the primary organizer of the 1999 Annual Meeting with help from Byron Smith, Clay Smith and George Suiter. Things were set in motion from the very start. As described by Russ, "The business meeting was brief and to the point; a financial report was given and new officers were elected.....Clay Smith (of the gun making shop at Colonial Williamsburg) is our new President and since no good deed goes unpunished, Jim Leach (also a tradesman of Colonial Williamsburg) was elected Vice President (members paid no attention to either of their protest). Russ Young is once more secretary-treasurer-editor (but this has to be for the last time!)"<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, Aug 1998: pg 7

<sup>14</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, Jan 1999: pg 3.

<sup>15</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, May 1999: pg 1.



The program revolved around Southern powder horns and included speakers such as Jay Hopkins, Wallace Gusler and Rick Guthrie of Colonial Williamsburg. Mel Hankla presented a very moving first person performance of Simon Kenton.

The schedule of events was as follows:<sup>16</sup>

|              |              |                                                                                         |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Feb 26 (Fri) | 3:00 - 6:00  | Registration                                                                            |
|              | 6:00 - 8:00  | Set-up & Social (catered)                                                               |
| Feb 27 (Sat) | 8:00         | Commonwealth Hall opens                                                                 |
|              | 8:30 - 9:30  | Opening Remarks & Business Meeting                                                      |
|              | 9:30 - 9:40  | Quick Break                                                                             |
|              | 9:40 -10:40  | Southern Horns (Rick Guthrie, Colonial Williamsburg)                                    |
|              | 10:40-10:50  | Quick Break                                                                             |
|              | 12:00- 1:30  | Lunch on your own                                                                       |
|              | 1:30 - 4:30  | View Colonial Williamsburg Collection of horn objects<br>(Bus to site will be provided) |
|              | 5:45         | Dinner at King's Arms Tavern (by reservation only)                                      |
| Feb 28 (Sun) | 8:00         | Commonwealth Hall opens                                                                 |
|              | 9:00 -10:00  | Southern Horns (James Routh & Earl Lanning)                                             |
|              | 10:00 -12:00 | Hands on demonstrations                                                                 |
|              | 12:00 - 1:00 | Lunch on your own                                                                       |
|              | 1:00 - 1:30  | Closing Remarks                                                                         |
|              | 1:30 - 4:00  | Breakdown & fellowship                                                                  |
|              | 4:00         | Commonwealth Hall closes                                                                |

Saturday's activities concluded with dinner at the King's Tavern, no better way to close out the day!

A lot was expected of Jim Leach and his Colonial Williamsburg contingent and needless to say they delivered! As expected, the schedule was fast paced, classes superb and the private viewing of the Colonial Williamsburg horn collection all made for a memorable Horn Fair. Russ was correct when he predicted that "this will form the standard for years to come."

### Summary

Guild Year (GY) 1998-1999 proved to be another exceptional year for the HCH. As of May 1999, treasury funds increased 64% from last year and membership had increased from 117<sup>17</sup> to 132.<sup>18</sup> It was noted that most members paid '98 dues but Russ stated that "If you have not paid your dues, this is your last issue!"<sup>19</sup>

Many HCH members are also members of the CLA and actively supported the Gunmakers Fair at Dixon's. It is interesting to note that all three organizations are doing well, attracted a lot of attention and played a vital role in muzzleloading. With the formation of the HCA and CLA occurring at the same time and being relatively new organizations, it will be interesting to observe how each progresses.

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<sup>16</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, November 1998: pg 1.

<sup>17</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, June 1998: member roster.

<sup>18</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, May 1999: member roster.

<sup>19</sup> Russ Young. The Horn Book, June 1998: pg 6.

*The Horn Book* under Russ Young has been the glue that keeps Guild members informed throughout the year. However, Russ has always stressed the need for articles from the very beginning. After three years as editor, he once again requested help: "It would be a delight to receive some articles from the membership!....Please give your editor a helping hand!"<sup>20</sup>

Russ was the persona of total dedication. He apologized for the tardiness in getting the June 1998 issue out as he was in Great Britain for four weeks following the Guild's Horn Fair, his printer locked up and his mother passed away.<sup>21</sup> All Guild members are deeply indebted to Russ for everything he has done in promoting the HCH.

With dedicated members such as Russ, the HCH will continue to grow and do well in the coming years.

### **Confirmation**

#### **Chapter II: The Formative Years / March 1998 - March 1999**

Approved By: Roland Cadle Date: 5/28/26  
Roland Cadle  
President (1998-1999)

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<sup>20</sup> Russ Young. *The Horn Book*, June 1998: pg 7.

<sup>21</sup> Young pg 7.