

# TMA JOURNAL

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## Editorial-

Well, as most of you know, the TMA's first great raffle is now history. The four prizes were all new and donated by members. The winner of the Great Plains flintlock rifle kit went to Al Bateman (Two-Steps), The custom horn by Griz to Bill Nobles (Butler Ford), the David Wright print to Jon Bertolet (Jon in MI) and the customized TMA engraved Turkey Call to John Keegan (Snake eyes).

It seems that through some "traditional" trading, a couple of items changed hands among the winners rather quickly.

To me, it was fun just waiting to find out who would beat me out...I **never** win anything so that part of the results was a foregone conclusion!

I would like to thank the Donors of the prizes, Ohio Joe (who conducted the drawing), and Talking Hands (who kept track of all the entries and the raffle money) for your confidence in the TMA and your tireless efforts to bring something exciting and different to our members and guests.

We can't guarantee that our next raffle will have the quality of prizes this one had, but our hope is to have at least one raffle a year....dependant upon donations from our members.

The most logical question some of you may have is, " Where will the money raised be applied?" Several things are being considered: prices are being sought for TMA pins, awards of some kind for our National Championship Postal matches, more extensive advertising etc.

Please notice I said "pins" and not patches. TMA Patches would be great for those who do not shoot in period attire. However, those of us who do, could not wear a modern made sewn on patch to a HC event. Thus, pins or medals are being considered. This item could be used by both groups in our membership. This is still in the thought stage and as soon as I have more information, it will be presented to the BOD for a detailed discussion.

Also, please keep in mind that we are still operating on a tight budget. Website costs, postage, printing of membership items and certificates, bank fees, advertising in Muzzleloader Magazine etc. can eat a hole in our check book pretty quick. Some money also has to be kept in reserve for the "unforeseen".

I apologize for getting into finances here, but you as members, gave good hard-earned dollars to the raffle and deserve to know where your money goes. Along that line, For information purposes: some of you new members may read an occasional post that refers to the officers or the BOD getting paid for their services, or "making the big bucks". This is all in jest! **No one** gets paid for anything they do for the TMA. We all are "volunteers" with our time and efforts.

I guess that's about all I wanted to say other than congratulations to those who were winners in the First TMA raffle. We all hope you enjoy your "loot" and hopefully, some of us losers will do better next year!

Thank you all for your support.  
Dave Poss (Longknife)  
TMA President

## Coming Events- .

### History-

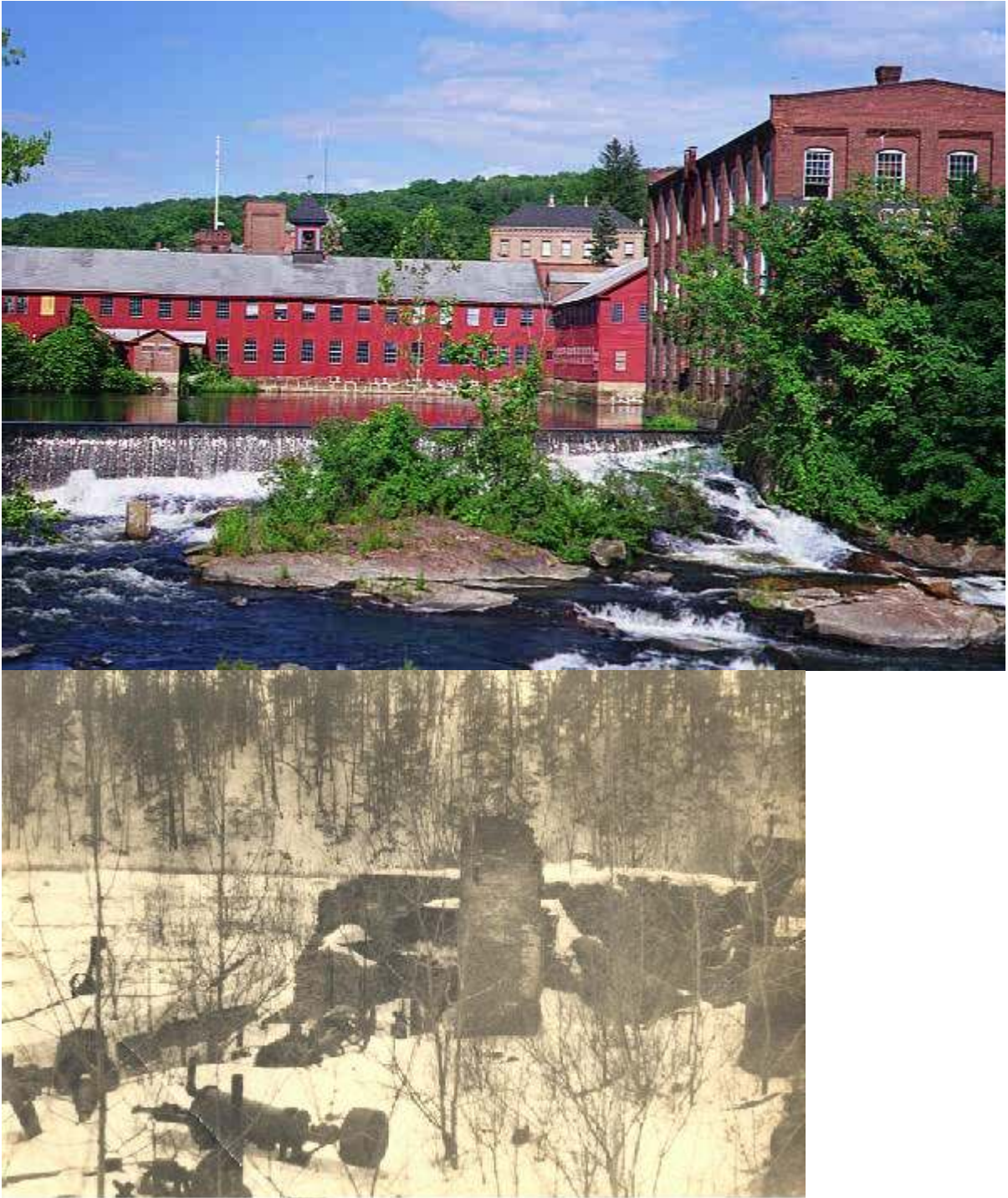
Kemps Korner of History  
by Gordon Kemp

Once again its time for another issue of the TMA Journal. I hope all that read it, find it as interesting as the first issue.

In the last article, a brief and general history concerning the importance of the muzzle-loader in the growth of what was to become the United States of America., Was the central theme. Because there will always be different viewpoints on exact time dates and the material this information came from, I choose to stay away from this type of history. Instead, I feel it best to write in general terms.

At the end of the last article, I mentioned that the axe would be the central theme of this article. It is my opinion that the various type of axes and hatchets used in North America during the period of 1600 to 1900, were second in importance only to the muzzle-loading firearm. When the first axe made its appearance is only conjecture.. There have been many examples of primitive stone axe found that were several thousand years old. When the first stone was tied to a stick will never be known. When metal was discovered, striking tools were most likely among the first applications. Bronze axes more than 3500 years old were found in ancient Ur in present day Iraq. A double-bitted axe found in Crete dates back to 2000 BC. The fact that axes became weapons was only a natural progression. The early axe served as a weapon and was also a useful tool for the gathering of wood for fires and structures to live in chopping and digging roots for food etc.





*This is part of the I. Blood Axe and Scythe works that was located near Ballston Spa, N.Y. It burned down in 1902. As kids we used to find many axe heads in the gravel bars of the creek.*

Some early classical art work depicts warriors with battle axes trimmed in gold and silver. As army's grew in size, there were large formations of axe men. The development of the sword in its many forms did not entirely do away with the axe as a weapon. Harold 11 of Saxon England carried a large two-handed Axe into battle. The big axe wasn't enough, and England fell to William the Conqueror, and the Normans. The Axe was a

tool of necessity for the settlers in America. As was said before, the axe was nearly as important as the gun. The coast of America, except for small areas, was covered with forest. In order to have land enough to plant crops, the forest had to be pushed back. The early settlers did their best to destroy this primeval forest for "the betterment" of mankind. They had no idea that what they were doing would be regretted one day. Billions of board feet of lumber was burned to get rid of it. What amount of timber used for houses, barns and fencing was but a fraction of that destroyed. Commercially, charcoal and ship-building used the largest amount.

The normal procedure was to girdle the bark on a stand of timber, and let nature take its course. The trees would die and the leaves would no longer shade the ground, and crops would be planted amongst the stumps. Eventually the limbs would rot and fall off.

Millions of acres of forest were cleared in this manner. Today we cringe at the waste, but to the settlers of the time, only open fields produced food. All this progress (destruction), was accomplished with 2 to 5 pounds of iron hung on a stick. This clearing process took years to turn forest into field. Only the Pennsylvania Dutch turned forest into root free cropland in a single year, by cutting down all the trees and grubbing out the roots all at once.

Although the toothed saw had been invented, there is no record of timber saws being used until well into the 19th century. One of the reasons being that iron was in short supply, in early America. To make a timber cutting saw to be used on 3 to 5 foot trees, took much good metal and had to be maintained at peak sharpness and set to be effective. The axe would work even if less than perfectly sharpened. It just took more muscle.

The axe could be maintained and sharpened with the raw materials on hand. It was nearly indestructible, the weakest point being the handle, and that could be made using the blade.

Contrary to what many people think, the tomahawk was not the first style of axe traded with the Native Americans. Trade axes were used to barter with Indians for many years before the one handed tomahawk became the common tool/weapon among the Indians of North America. As long ago as 1540 the explorer De Soto found Indians of the southeast interior of America in possession of trade axes. All European countries that made contact with the Indians, found the axe to be highly valued by them. All the European trade axes were close in design and structure. The axe most commonly found early on, being of French manufacture. None of the European trade axes had a poll; the blades were long and thin. This did not make for a good cutting axe. John Smith found the trade axe among the Indians near Jamestown Va. in 1607. This shows that the trade axe was in the hands of the Native Americans soon after Columbus. Some of the very first being Portuguese, followed by French, Spanish and German specimens. This spread of the trade axe throughout the Eastern seaboard into the interior, shows that the trade axe continued to be a desired item of barter with the Natives.



Later, when the English traders in the James Bay, Hudson Bay, region used the axe for barter .It became known as the “Hudson Bay Pattern”. Over a period of years, this pattern of trade axe evolved into the tomahawk. The first tomahawk was the same basic pattern as the trade axe, but smaller and with a short handle. It seems, the natives were more interested in the axe as a weapon rather than a tool. By all accounts the hawk made a formidable weapon. During this transition from tool to weapon, it was found that dressing up the blade with pierced designs, adding a spike at the poll, and even making it into a pipe, made it even more desirable to the natives.. The natives added their own decorations of color and feathers etc. to give the hawk stronger medicine. The Indians did use the hawk as a tool, but they didn’t need to cut the large timbers that the settlers needed for house barn and boat construction.

From the materials and information I’ve studied over the years, it’s my thought the term tomahawk became a generic term applied to any short handled axe that could be worn at the waist by hunters trappers and frontiersmen. It’s unfortunate that our friends in Hollywood, show all natives and frontiersmen only wearing the Hawk.

I don’t know if any reading this article, have much experience with axes.. I learned to use many types over the years. This training started at around 10 years of age.

Compared to those that would be classed as expert, I might rate a journeyman status.. On a scale of 1 to 10, I might get a 6. The axe is a very personal tool, not unlike the gun, for similar reasons. You can put the same lock, trigger and barrel on different stocks, one will balance and shoot nearly perfect. .Hang the parts on a different stock with improper cast off/on different drop at comb and heel, longer/shorter length of pull, and it will feel like a club. Why? Because the chunk of wood we call a stock made the difference. With the axe it’s the same. The axe head can be forged and tempered properly and of a weight that is best controlled by the chopper using it. A good quality head needs a properly fitted handle to perform it’s best . Where maple walnut and cherry make good gunstocks, hickory is the best for Axe handles. Other woods will work, but not as well as hickory.

All the axes from Europe were made without polls, the blades were longer and thinner making it harder to repeatedly strike with accuracy, any slight movement of the wrist moves the point of the blades strike quite some distance from the desired point of impact. When axes were first being forged in the colonies they were fabricated by local Blacksmiths., These axes began to take on some changes from the European axe. The main differences being the growth of a poll and a wider shorter blade. Both of these modifications increased the ease of use and how accurate they struck . There were many



other minor alterations that more subtle, but the addition of the poll and the shape of the blade being the most important.



When the American axe began to be produced in quantity some were exported and sold in Europe. As much as it must have hurt they had to admit the American version was much superior to the axes of Europe. The demand was not great much, if not all timber that was remained belonged to the State, or was controlled by a privileged few. These being the various Duke Earls and other of the elite friendly to the Governments. The elite were the only citizens privileged to own and keep firearms for other than Military purposes. This group of aristocrats, along with the European governments, dictated all trees that would be cut.

It must be remembered that ownership of any amount of land in Europe, was at best, an unlikely dream to the average family. The desire to own property was one of the biggest incentives for people to leave Europe and travel to America.. In order to claim this property for homesteads, the trees had to be removed.. The prime tool for the task being the axe. Without the axe to clear this land, everyone would have to revert to the primitive lifestyle. Not only the settlers did not want this, but the natives were not happy with this situation.

Exactly, by whom and when, the axe became Americanized is not recorded, It didn't happen overnight, but over a span of years, Until the smelting forging and mining of iron gained momentum.

In the last issue of the TMA Journal, I had mentioned there was a foundry/smelter in Three Rivers Canada,. The date was about 1730, this business lasted into the late 1800s. My great grandfather worked there for many years. His vision was affected by the heat and the intense light from the molten iron. The heat and light caused many who worked in the early smelters and foundries to suffer some loss of their vision. Even in the newer steel plants with eye protection, this was a problem. There were many others of my relatives that worked in the Three Rivers foundry. When it shut down, there was nothing they could do but seek work elsewhere. Many of my relatives and, others who lost their jobs, immigrated to Collinsville Conn. USA. This was the site of the first large scale axe and tool manufacturing operation in America. This was known as the Collins Bros. mill. It was active from the early 1800s to the 1950s.

We know that the English colonies in North America were quite separated from others, both by local customs and distance. The American axe evolved a little different in every colony. All patterns had certain traits that were unique to the area where they were made. These differences came to be called patterns. The axes used in pre revolutionary war times would have been Anglo American German, Spanish or English. When the new post revolutionary axe became the standard, they were named by the general area they came from.

The tomahawk was a version of what was known as the Hudson Bay Pattern.

The hawk was much more weapon than tool. When the English were in the James Bay Hudson Bay area, it was noted that the Indians preferred a lighter, short handled version of the Hudson Bay Pattern. The hawk was a weapon that could be employed as a tool; the trade axe was a tool that could serve as a weapon. The hawk, served the tool needs of the natives. In my opinion the trapper hunters and frontiersman would have carried the Trade Axe. It could have a long handle put in to replace the short handle for serious cutting when traveling, the short handle would serve. Both for camp chores, and as a serious weapon.

The axe did not fade away with the end of the frontiers. As the country grew and gained population, the need for timber increased,. Because the early settlers did such a good job of destroying the forest to make farms and communities, timber cutting became more and more remote from the settled areas. Timber cutting at this time evolved into a trade of its own. The Lumberjack was now a full time occupation or profession.

The axe as a prime harvesting tool lasted into the early 20th century The crosscut saw both one and two man, gradually replaced the Axe as king of the forest. Some may think that the chainsaw replaced the crosscut, this is not the case. The next was what was called the drag saw. This was a thick heavy duty crosscut blade mounted on a heavy steel reinforced wood carriage, driven with a hit & miss gas or kerosene .engine. The heavy blade could be over 12 foot in length. The blade was driven by a oak Pitman arm, The wood arm was the safety point it would shatter or break before damage to the heavy metal parts. When in operation it looked like the drive wheels on a steam locomotive. I had very little experience with the chain saw until after I left the Army.. I thought they were just a fad that wouldn't last. From what I understand Germany, seems to be the country that made the first successful chainsaw.

Even though the Axe has long been replaced as king of the forest, most anyone that works in the woods has their favorite axe that is always with them .

## **Firearms/accouterments-**

### Accouterments for the Wall Gun

Here is a sequence of photos forging a gun worm for my Wall Gun. Yes , I lost an oiled patch down the bore and had to build one.





Hot splitting the 1/2" round stock



Hot split opened to forge out the tines



Finished hand forged gun worm for the Wall Gun the small one is a cast (from The Rifle Shoppe) that I finished up, for .40-.50 cal.

The gun worm was the trickiest of the accoutrements to build, but you still need a cleaning jag and bottom scraper to wipe and clean. A ball puller is an item of necessity if you happen to “dry ball”. I think I’d rather try to load some powder through the vent hole then try to pull a 4 ga. ball. I silver soldered a bottom and a handle on a 2 inch length of  $\frac{3}{4}$ ” copper pipe for a 300gr. powder measure. I also made a round patch cutter from a 2.5 inch hole saw, used a bench grinder to remove the teeth and filed the edge to sharp. Since the lock is 9 inch long and the main spring is so large, I had to make a mainspring clamp. Made it out of a railroad spike, a chunk of brass and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 20 bolt. Simple mechanism, just like a bench vice. The other little L shaped piece and the short bolt is a main spring stay or clip. If you don’t need to completely remove the main spring, you insert the bolt in the lock bolt hole and the L clip holds the main spring in compression so you can remove the bridle, tumbler and such. Very simple and handy. My loading rod is a  $\frac{31}{32}$  inch heavy broom handle 64” long with a tapered iron ferrule to hold the tools with  $\frac{1}{4}$  x 20 threads.



Wall Gun (4 bore) accoutrements and .50 cal. For comparison



300 gr. Copper Powder Measure, Priming Horn, Patches, and Instruments of sight adjustment. Note: .024" pillow ticking was not heavy enough and yield the totally blown out and burnt patches. Heavy jean was the proper weight cloth and a shot patch verified that.

Early on in the construction, shortly after receiving the barrel (from Vern C. Davis) I made a tompion for it. The dictionary defines a tompion as a plug or cover for the muzzle. The old Dixie Gun Works cat. shows 6 slightly different. They were meant to keep dirt and foreign debris from the bore.



Wood Tompion (bore plug), it is amazing what will crawl down the un-plugged gun barrel. Yes this barrel is rifled, and the slight bend in the wood fore stock is because the barrel is a round swamped barrel (or tapered and flared). The 3 ft. yard stick only goes back as far as the entrance thimble, 5 inch shy of the swivel bolt.

## Trivia-

While driving home from a recent Rendezvous, my wife's first, she casually mentioned that next time I go to the shooting range she would like to go with me and learn to shoot. Well you can imagine how that hit me. I almost had to stop the truck and catch my breath. Wow.

You can also imagine my thoughts of new rifles and accouterments for her. Wow. It's like Christmas in July.

This brings me to the reason for this article. The new shooter.

Anyone new to muzzleloaders is in for a different experience then they had with previous shooting. The new, never-fired-a-gun-before person is in for a real experience. They have a lot to learn.

I like to start by showing them the rifle and pointing out all the parts and what they do. Next I take an index card and cut a notch like a rear site. Then cut one to look like a front site. I take both of these and superimpose them over a target as though you are looking down the barrel. This gives the newbie a sense of what to look for. I can then show them how to move the front site to the right or left to compensate for wind and up or down for distance. This also shows them where to hold on the target. Now is the time to go over all the things in the shooting pouch that are necessary for loading and shooting.

Then I cover basic gun safety. Only point down range. Never leave the firing line with a loaded rifle. You know the drill.

Above all, I tell them to mind their own business and keep their mouth shut! The best way to make a mistake when loading or shooting is to be distracted by a conversation. How many times have we dry-balled while chatting about a hunting trip, or the difficulty of the targets?

Those of us who have been shooting for a long time tend to take a lot of things for granted. Aiming, wind correction, distance, timing, trigger pull and hold. There is



nothing more frustrating to a new shooter than to see you hit the target and they can't, and they don't know why. Details, details, details. That's the ticket. Go over every detail. No matter how simple it might sound or seem to you, it might be an insurmountable mountain to a new person.

Have them shoot a rifle that you know will shoot well. If they have a new untried rifle, shoot it yourself to make sure it hits where it's supposed to.

Demonstrate how to load the rifle using the components previously discussed. The new person can load the rifle for you when you test fire it a couple of times. I test fire it exactly the way I will have them begin to shoot. That way there is no confusion about "you do it this way because you're new, I do it that way because I'm an old-timer". To a new shooter this may imply they are just plain too stupid to do it your way.

Wear earplugs! We don't need to scare the new shooter with a lot of loud noise on top of "shooting a gun". To a new shooter, just having a firearm is an intimidating event. We need to make it fun, not scary.

I like new shooters, and even veteran modern shooters, to start off at the shooting bench with sand bags. Some people will argue that they need to be taught to shoot offhand. Well, that's true, but not yet. We want to minimize the frustration and maximize the confidence and fun. The best way to do that is for them to shoot some good targets.

How to see the sights is another thing. Some people like to see the target and blur the sights or vice versa. I prefer to see my front sight clearly. This is individual and they will have to find their own comfort spot.

I have them sit at a bench with an unloaded rifle and get into a good shooting position that they are comfortable with. Take a good site picture on the target and squeeze the trigger a few times. Set triggers work well for this.

By now our novice has loaded the rifle a couple of times so we can watch them load it for their first shot. Using the large pistol targets at 25 yards is a good starting point. Tell them the goal is to get all the shots within the 7 ring which is about 7 in. in diameter on my targets.

For the ladies and kids I would start with a small caliber, 45 or less, and a light load. We don't want to scare them.

Have them load the rifle, sit comfortably at the bench, with the rifle on sand bags. Get their good site picture defined, cap/prime and fire. With luck they should hit the target.

One of the most important things is encouragement. Criticism doesn't help matters, encouragement does. We all know how good it feels to blow the ten ring out of a target or even have a good day at the range. We also know how bad it feels to have a "bad day" out there. If the new shooter has a "good day" they will be back. If they have a "bad day" they won't. We need to make this a lot of fun. After they get to the point where they can put their shots on paper where they want them we can move on to novelty targets. Balloons, clays, gongs, all things that are fun to break and encourage practice.

Once they have the basics down and feel comfortable and confident in their abilities we can move to the offhand shooting. By this time the new shooter has the confidence in the rifle and knows that it hits where pointed. Now they have to practice and do their part.

Another one of the things that I tell new shooters is that when they shoot at a Rendezvous or a match of any kind, the range master is the boss. What he/she says is the

rule of the day, no argument. When the range master marks or scores your target, you don't argue. You may politely question, but don't argue. If you want the prize bad enough to make a stink about it, just buy one. There is always next time. A bad way to start out is to get a reputation as a "problem shooter".

I have probably missed some points here, but I hope I have touched on all the important ones. This is just my way of doing it and I'm sure others have their own way. The key point I would like to make is this, Make It Fun.

I want my wife to go shooting with me and have a good time doing it. The best way to ensure this is to make it fun and enjoyable. Only one person wins every shoot, but everybody has a good time. That's what I'm there for, the fun. Plus, there is always the grudge match and side bets. Those are usually more important then the main shoot.

## Other Stuff-



### Around The Campfire

One of the greatest things about being an outdoorsman and a part of the traditional muzzleloading community is the downtime spent around the campfire. Whether after a hunt, trek, competition, or reenactment or just hanging out with family and friends at rendezvous or camping, some of my greatest times have been around the campfire. Cooking, making round balls, sewing clothing, creating crafts, leatherwork, playing music, story telling, history discussion, and many other topics are all intended to be shared in this column. The purpose of this column is to provide insight into many

different things to do around the campfire with specific attention paid toward providing photographs, and plenty of them, to help the reader get a better understanding of how to do exactly what I am describing. Some folks will find these topics elementary and there are several different ways to do most of the things I will describe here but everything I will show in this column absolutely work and have worked well for me. I welcome any tips for improving my own processes as there is always room for improvement.

It would be fitting therefore that this column begins with how to start a campfire. I start my fires with flint and steel exclusively. I carry a simple fire starting kit consisting of a brass container, iron striker, flint and char cloth. Char cloth is the black cloth seen in the brass tin. Char cloth is material that has been charred or cooked to a point that it turns black as seen in the picture. Char cloth, to be effective needs to be of 100% cotton material and I cut my pieces into 2"x3" rectangles or sometimes use cleaning patches. Be



careful to not use t-shirt material as this type of material often 98% cotton and 2% otherwise even though the tag may say 100%. The purpose of char cloth is to act as a tinder. Other types of tinder are acceptable such as dried grass, dried leaves, bark shavings etc but I prefer to have char cloth on hand for a guaranteed ignition. To make char cloth you will need a tin can. A quart sized paint can works great and can be purchased from a local hardware store and is very inexpensive. You will need to do a little work with it though before it is ready to be used for making char cloth. First you will need to take a small nail such as a 6 penny finish nail, and drive it through the center of both the top and bottom centers of the can. (See picture) You want to just make a small hole, the smaller the better, to allow gas to escape from the can while you are charring your material.

After you have made your holes in the can, you need to cook off any impurities in your can. If you purchased an empty paint can, you will need to cook off the coating on the inside as this will contaminate your char cloth and it will not work as expected. (See Picture). I do this by placing the can in a fire or over a bed of hot coals. You can also use your stove top but I don't recommend it as it is very smelly and will not make the others you live with too happy. As the can cooks you will see wisps of smoke come from the hole in the can. You will know when the job is finished when the smoke is no longer visibly coming from the hole. Wait for the can to cool off for a bit then open it up and clean out the debris from the inside.



Once the debris has been removed from the can you can begin to make your char cloth. Place a clean piece of 100% cotton cloth into the clean cooled can. Place the lid on tight so that it will not come off. A tremendous amount of pressure will build inside the can and will pop off the lid incinerating your cloth if not fastened securely. With the cloth in the can and the lid securely attached, place the can in the center of the fire embers. Wisps of smoke will begin to come from the holes. You should rotate the can every couple of minutes as you are cooking the cloth. The process is complete when you no longer see smoke coming from the holes. When it is finished, slowly and carefully remove it from the fire. Let it cool for several minutes before attempting to open the can. Opening the can too quickly will result in the cloth bursting into flames. After the can has cooled, pry off the lid. If the cloth is not completely black you can put it back in the can and put it back on the fire. If it is dark brown to black it can be still usable but will have much better performance if cooked to completion. See pictures on the opposite page.



Okay, so now that we've made our char cloth, we can make a fire good and fast. Don't get me wrong, you do not need char cloth to make a fire, but it really helps to make one good and fast particularly if dry material is hard to find. There are many ways to do this



but I will describe the process I was taught and I have never failed to get a fire burning hot in less than 30 seconds.

Most people trying to start a fire for the first time with flint and steel often hold the steel with a death grip and pound away on it with the flint. From my experience it works much better if you do just the opposite. I am right handed so I hold my flint in my left hand. I place the char cloth on top of the flint. As you can see from the pictures, I hold the flint in an upward angle. I do this because the flint will remove small scrapes of iron from the striker. The scrapes come off at extremely hot temperatures and have a red glow. You want the glowing hot shards, or sparks, to catch on the cloth.



Once the glowing shards are caught on the cloth you will begin blowing on the cloth. (See pictures). You need to need to blow hard on the cloth while placing dried grass and tinder material on top of the cloth. As you blow on the cloth and grass it will be gin to get very hot. When the grass smokes, DON'T STOP blowing on it. When it reaches the needed temperature it will set afire.



After the fire is set ablaze, place twigs, sticks then logs around the fire in either a pyramid or square configuration. If you want longevity from your fire place coals into the center of the fire as coal will burn longer than wood. As I said, there are many way to start a fire but I have never had a problem using this method. Each time I start a fire it is cooking hot in less than 30 from the first strike. For comments, ideas, suggestions just lay them down on the forum, send me a PM or email me at [armyrecon@hotmail.com](mailto:armyrecon@hotmail.com).



