



# TMA Journal

## Remembering Longknife

*We lost a leader and a dear friend. The TMA remembers Longknife*



“We are not a thread-counting, primitive organization. We don’t care if you shoot your traditional rifle wearing a t-shirt, blue jeans, and Nikes! The TMA is all about traditional weapons and associated subjects...not what you wear. We are not the largest forum in the cyber frontier, nor do we want to be. To be the largest may mean compromise and we will not compromise our traditional stand. I hope you like what you see and will help us preserve our muzzleloading heritage.”

-- the late Dave Poss, aka Longknife, first president of the TMA





## WELCOME TO THE TMA JOURNAL!

For over six hundred years, Muzzleloading weapons have played an integral part of societies all around the world. Wars have been won, wilderness has been tamed and generation after generation of human life has been sustained. From cannons to matchlocks, smoothbores to rifles, the muzzleloading firearm has become an image synonymous with the freedom of an American Nation.

The TMA is dedicated to preserving the rich and fascinating heritage of the traditional muzzleloading firearms of early America. Whether your interest is in rendezvous, re-enactments, historical clothing, camps, trapping, weapons, accoutrements or American history, all historical topics in relation to the muzzleloading firearms prior to 1900 are welcomed.

## FROM THE EDITOR



Well, here we are with another TMA Journal. I think this is one heck of an issue. A lot of fine work by our members. I knew we could make this Journal work with a little effort. Do you know this Journal is almost a year old and we are

on the fourth issue? How do you like the new format? The format is done by my new Journal production partner, Lucas Kuntz. It's been hard getting going on this at times and it takes the work of a lot of folks. We have a great deal of talent and knowledge in our organization. I think we can make this a bigger and better publication some day. It will take time, patience and work. It's not going to happen overnight. The Journal was a dream of mine, something I could contribute. I approached the board with it and was given the nod to proceed. What you see

is the result of my small part in bringing this together, Lucas' computer genius and the largest part given to us all by the members who contribute their time and fantastic skills to give us the TMA Journal.

—Bob McMahon—aka Firewalker

## IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of the TMA Journal is full of great articles. We have the first installment in a series of excerpts from the Dapper Manuscripts presented by Mike Rumping. We will start with the 'Simon Kenton Papers' by Judge John James. Then, Mario discusses the ins and outs of carrying the smoothbore. Next, Firewalker reviews the Edward

Louis Henry book "Backbone of the World", a story of an eastern frontier young man who finds his way. Then, Gobbler shows us how to make a really nice slate turkey call with a turtle shell. Finally, Otakay takes us through all the steps for making smoked braintan buckskin.





## From The President's Desk

Greetings All...

Here we are with another Journal already. I reckon it's true, time does fly when you're having fun!! Firewalker & Otakay must be having a BALL. With the mild weather here in the NC. Sandhills, I've been having a bit of fun myself at the range. I hope the weather is starting to ease up on those of you who had such a hard winter. With spring moving in and daylight savings time here early, we'll all have some time after work to enjoy our sport. I hope this will give everyone time to get out and join in on the fun of shooting in Ohio Joe's Monthly Postal Shoots. To help Joe out and make the targets easier to score, you may want to follow my example of putting as few holes as possible in the actual scoring area!

We have had two positions on the Board of Directors, including the V.P. position, become open. Ohio Joe and Butler Ford have had to step down from the BoD due to growing workloads taking up more and more of their time. Joe will still be our National Match Director and Butler Ford is still heading up the Kentucky Rifle Frolic. Bigsmoke and Jon in MI have been elected to fill those open positions, and BoD member Beaverman was selected by the BoD to take the V.P.'s job. All three are already off and running, doing a bang up job. Many thanks to Ohio Joe and Butler Ford for all of their work on the BOD, and Huzzahs to Beaverman, bigsmoke and Jon in MI for stepping up to take over these positions.

Our 2007 raffle is set to take off very soon now, and I hope to have pictures of the prizes posted on the forum soon. Please support the TMA by supporting the raffle. This years raffle will be open to TMA members only, so pay your money and take your chances.

As spring turkey season nears, I hope to take my first turkey with a smooth bore..all previous turkey's have been taken with a dinner fork. To those with a spring season, I wish you a good hunt. I'd like to ask everyone to join another spring hunt...the hunt for TMA members. They're out there...you can find 'em..and ya don't have ta clean 'em.

Ok...That's enough from me...Let The Spring Begin!

—Two Steps, TMA President





## DRAPER MANUSCRIPTS

The following are excerpts from the "Draper Manuscripts" owned by the Wisconsin Historical Society. These and many more manuscripts are available from them through many local libraries and online. -Firewalker

**'Simon Kenton Papers' by Judge John James - Volume 5, pp. 100-126**

Part One – Presented by Mike Rumping

Conversations with Simon Kenton 13th of February, 1832 at his house in Logan Co. Ohio 4 1/2 miles north of Zanesfield, taken by the honorable John H. James of Urbana, Ohio.

"He first saw the Ohio river in 1771 and went down it as far as the mouth of Kentucky river. In 1774 I was a Brittoner, & took an oath of allegiance in Fort Pitt when the Shawnee war broke out in '74 I got alarmed and turned up to the settlements and when I got to Fish creek with Henry Castleman the settlement there had broke. We crossed to 10 mile.

Jake Drennon and I was requested to raise a company. We did so but afterwards acted as spies. Mc Mahon, the father-in-law of Samuel McCullough had been out with some traders into Ohio to get some horses he had lost. He gave me the word of war breaking out & we went back to Thomas's fort together.

1776 we all met together at Harrodsburg & elected George Rogers Clark to go to Virginia for succor. He came out with lawyer Jones & 500 pounds of powder. I met them crossing the country heading to Harrodsburg, thus powder was got safe in. Helped to burn Blue Jacket's town which was at the site of Bellfontaine.

In '80 he went to Cartwright's creek to see Phil Waters to go as a guide for Clark, and when Waters got to the towns on the Miami he knew all the places. 11 November 1782 a return of the army the troops were drawn up in a hollow square and at request of Clark all the troops about 1500 agreed to meet at same spot, Newport, that day 50 years. In april( 1792) Maj. Kenton, Capt. Calvin & 37 men

attacked Tecumseh in the night on the Little Miami where Williamsburg now is, Tecumseh was stationed on an island of woods surrounded by low prairie & swamp fight there 3 hours and about daybreak Kenton drew off. 2 men killed. This was the first instance of Tecumseh being any way known as a leader. In the spring of 93 Kenton & General Massie had another fight with Tecumseh on Paint creek. Drove him, burned his camp, and all his skins & furs. John Ward was killed on Paint creek, he had been clever to me. His daughter Sutawnee told me her father would 'friend me. I did not then know his brother ( Col. Wm. Ward who was afterwards a partner of Kenton & settled at Urbana.) In 1778 I met with Logan at a little winter (camp)town used for hunting on the east side of Scioto. " Young man you have been stealing these people's horses and they are very mad at you." Yes, they seem very mad." Well, I am a chief I will send 2 men to Sandusky to speak good for you." Next morning he brought me some bread & meat & told me I must go with these 2 men, but did not tell me what was to await me on my way. I began to meet troops of boys painted black & mounted on fine horses, 20 or more, who would ride round me and dart off with most terrific shouts & screams.

Peter Drewyer had been sent from Detroit as a kind of spy to watch McIntosh's army but not succeeding in learning any thing, he prevailed on the Indians to let me go to Detroit to tell the commander the number of troops, etc. It was agreed that I should be brought back to be burned, though I did not then know it. One of the chiefs accompanied us, & waited at Detroit claiming a restoration of me, but finally had to go away disappointed. It was on the June, '79 Mrs. Edgar had given me a rifle, a pouch of musket balls, & a horn full of powder, when I got the gun & went back to a swamp to hide it, the officers on horseback were shooting ducks & their servants picking them up, so I had to be very cautious. We set off & traveled 14 nights, laying by all day until we got somewhere near where Ft. Wayne now is. We lived on coons & often had as high as 3 of a night. We then traveled by day . Says most emphatically that Cresap did not kill Logan's family. I knew Cresap well. That family was killed by Baker & Greathouse."



Conversations with Simon Kenton 13th of February, 1832 at his house in Logan Co. Ohio 4 1/2 miles north of Zanesfield, taken by the honorable John H. James of Urbana, Ohio.

"Mr. James, I've had some people in my time that were very fond of me. I had a good deal of property & maybe they saw my weak parts enough to know how to use me. ( this was said with a good deal of quiet bitterness).

At Boone's station the Indians & French came near undermining from the river. Boone had a box fixed with ropes to haul up to the pickets so that they could see the works. He commenced digging in the blockhouse and dug out the whole floor to the depth of 4 feet. We could have killed any number of men who could have entered from a mine. Drewyer & the Indians also told me that their plan was broken in by wet weather & they quit on that account & not because Boone was digging. After Boone had treated with them and it was agreed to have amity the chief said it was usual to shake hands in friendship but when they made a long peace & a lasting one they caught by the shoulders and brought their hearts together. 3 Indians were, as if by accident, near each white man and the design was to capture them forcibly. Then Boone gave orders to the nearest basteens to fire into the whole crowd. They did so & many were killed. He told me it was his pointed orders to the men he had stationed in the two basteens to shoot without one moment's delay with well directed aim at the enemy. It was wisdom in him to do so. It tended to keep the Indians in negotiations for he expected succor. A table was taken out & a clerk brought forth. Writing's drawn, etc. Mc Clung makes me say Sir a dozen times to Blackfish. Now, I never stirred an Indian. Blackfish came to me and said, "Young man did Captain Boone send you to steal horses? No he did not, but I stole them because you steal our horses. An Indian came to me & held a long conversation with me. "Young man didn't you know it was wrong to steal the Indian horses?" No, I did not, for you come & steal horses. Don't you know the great spirit don't love people who steal? No Did you ever know it? Yes, 20 years ago. Indians have got no cattle about their doors

like white people. The buffalo are our cattle but you come here and kill them. You have no business to kill Indian's cattle. Did you know that? No I did not. He then whipped me pretty smartly & told me it was for stealing Indian's horses.

In Logan's campaign in 1786 when the Mackachak town was taken, Kenton placed Moluntha & his family under a guard, with orders that no men should go to them until he came. Mc Gary claimed to go in, & being an officer was admitted. If I had been there when he struck Moluntha, I would have struck him. Mc Gary was an out-breaking man. He was shy of me, for he knew I could handle him.

In the campaign of 91, I accompanied Edwards of Bourbon, who was but a homespun commander. He did nothing. I came upon an Indian concealed in the grass near where Jake Petty lives. He raised his gun & one of the three with me shot at him & the ball grazed the back of his neck & he fell. I sprang on him & Col. - riding up handed me a tomahawk & I killed him. This weighs heavy on me at times & is the only thing in my campaigns I much regret, for he was in my power & I need not have done it. He was a young king & had just been promoted. After him, & this circumstance, King's creek took his name.

Peter Drewyer became unfortunate & came to Kentucky & lived with me 14 years. He got to drinking."

p. 106

"1771 he 1st saw the Ohio river in 1771 & went down it as far as the mouth of the Kentucky River. The Mingoes had a town at the Mingo bottoms. No town on the banks of the Ohio in sight of a voyage down it. Logan called himself a Mingo.

1774- In 1774 I was a Brittoner & took an oath of allegiance in Ft. Pitt. When the Shawnee war broke out in 1774 I got alarmed & turned up to the settlements & when I got to Fish Creek, with Henry Castleman, the settlement there had broke. We crossed at 10 mile. Jake Drennon & I were requested to raise a company. We did so, but afterwards acted as spies. Mc mahon, the father-in law of Samuel McCullough had been out with some traders into Ohio to get some horses he had lost. He gave me the news of war breaking out & we went back to Thomas's fort together. McMahon



got a commission I raised a comp. Simon Girty was taken prisoner at the little cove at 6 yrs. old and in 1764 he was brought back under Bouquet's treaty when he was 19. The father & mother were killed. 5 sons: Jack, Thomas, Simon George, & James, the last 3 were prisoner's & all raised as Indians. James more of an Indian than Simon. I first knew Girty in 1774. He had been about the fort. Had seen him passing about before. Simon lived with Crawford sometimes at Pitt & wherever he could get a living. Simon & McKee both joined us in the Dunmore war.

1776 we all met at Harrodsburg & elected G.R. Clark to go to Virginia for succor. He came out with lawyer Jones & 500 lbs. of powder. I met them crossing the country hunting Harrodsburg. That powder was got safe.

There was a Chillicothe town wherever the Chillicothe tribe lived. After the expeditions of Dunmore, etc. & the attack on Scioto, they moved to Miami. There was an old Chillicothe at the mouth of Massie's creek, & Piqua on Mad river (New Boston) This last was the place taken by Clark in 1780. Towns taken in 1782 were on Big Miami. There was 7 of them, large & small. The Mackachck tribe lived where Piatt lives, Wapatomica so-called from many tribes living together was founded or so-called in 1777 after the sack of the Wapatomica on Muskingum taken. Taken by McDonald they moved from that to this. McKee lived near - had hewed log house, brick chimney, an orchard, a trader. This house was burned down in 1786. Girty lived at Malden, became blind before his death & died about the time of Harrison & Shelby's expedition. Helped to burn Blue Jacket's town, which was on the site of Bellafontaine. Perhaps John Reed married widow of a frenchman. He settled at a large spring near McKee's house Mad River we called the Pickaway fork of Miami in 1780 & Kenton had heard of no other name until Symmes. In 1780 Kenton went to Cartwright's creek to see Philip Waters to go as a guide to Clark, & when Waters got to the towns on the Miami he knew all the places. From him, he was satisfied that the Indians here & those who had lived on Scioto were the same.

Capt. McKee's laced cocked hat...rared from old town to boston to zanesfield & sandusky 1782 4th of Nov. On return of the army the troops were

drawn into a hollow square & at the request of Clark all the troops about 1500 agreed to meet on the same spot (Newport) that day 50 years.

In April 1782 Maj. Kenton, Capt. Calvin, & 37 men attacked Tecumseh in the night on the Little Miami near where Williamsburg now is. Tecumseh was stationed on an island of wood, surrounded by low prairie & swamp. Fight 3 hours & about daybreak Kenton drew off 2 men killed, this was the first instance of Tecumseh being any way known as a leader.

In the spring of 1793 Kenton & Gen. Massie had another fight with Tecumseh on Paint creek. Drove him, burned his camp, tents, & all the skins & furs. Well acquainted with Tecumseh had seen him often in Champaign Co. & at Springfield treaty in - the Indians had been required to leave their tomahawks at McBeth's. Tecumseh wanted his pipe to smoke. Pinchard made him a cob pipe & presented. Gave Pinchard a look & tossed the pipe over his head & did not afterwards deign to see him. Tecumseh was very gay & playful with other Indians. Wrestle & exercise in the snow at Jarboe's."

To be continued next issue.





## WHY CARRY A SMOOTHBORE?

**A simple treatise on the flintlock fusil -  
By Mario Doreste**

"You don't own a rifle?" That is where many of my muzzleloader conversations lead. And, no, I do not own a muzzleloading rifle. Why? Simply put, because I can't justify one. Let me clarify that a bit...

As far as re-enacting, I portray a few different characters. For the Revolutionary War, I am either a Patriot militiaman in the Mohawk Valley of NY or a Loyalist (who was kicked out of said valley) working as a ranger in the employ of the Six Nations Indian Department. For the French and Indian War, I portray a lowly French-Canadian militiaman (milicien) fighting on the NY frontier. My third time period is that of the late 17th and early 18th century where I again portray a milicien. The last two personas have a background in the Indian/Fur Trade. What do these characters have in common? Flintlock, smoothbore muzzle-loading guns.

As a milicien I carry a French-style fusil. My present one is a fusil de traite (trade gun) commonly called the "Type C". It is slim, wears a 28 gauge (.54 caliber)/44" barrel and is a fine piece of workmanship. I currently carry the same fusil for my RevWar gatherings because I am still deciding on the most appropriate firelock for that period. So far I'm looking at a club butt fowler, English fowler, a doglock musket or perhaps a Hudson Valley fowler. What about rifles, you ask? Wouldn't they fit for the RevWar at least? In a word, no. That is not to say they didn't exist, but that they were not common to the type of man I am portraying. Why? That leads us to the next part.

If you were restricted to one firearm in the 17th & 18th century or were a person of modest means, a smoothbore was your best choice. Much like a modern shotgun, it can be used for game large and small as well as defense against two-legged predators. You could, as the saying goes, "load it for mice or moose". Smoothbore guns were much less labor intensive and therefore could be inexpensively had by those of lesser means. The smoothbore gun served well into the 20th century.

"Although repeating Henry rifles had been available from the trading station at Fortymile (AK) in the 1880s, smoothbore muzzleloading guns were the arms of choice up until about 1914-15..."<sup>1</sup>

Athabaskan Elder Moses Cruikshank of Alaska remembers:

"And I remember that he [his grandfather] had some that I think they call them flintlocks. Those were the first guns that I remember that my grandfather had and all the old-time Natives there.

"Oh, sometimes you couldn't help, you know, like when a gun fall out of the sled like the one he gave me.

"That was an old muzzleloader that somehow or another got out of the toboggan and it hit a snag or a tree or something and bent. The barrel got bent and that's how come I got that. He filed it off just above where it bent. Then that work all right. He gave me that one. I had that one for years, yeah.

"That was my first gun, a muzzleloader, a smoothbore."

## Another account from 1938:

"Around Trout Lake, Hay Lake and Bistcho Lake there were said to be many "bad Indians"- hard customers who practiced witchcraft and were seldom seen but who made "long tracks [treks]" by which they were identified. The traders confirmed that there were a few conservative folks back in the bush who had never come in for treaty money and who used cap-and-ball muskets. Some of the Bay posts stocked the smooth-bores still made in England, the same "Tower" musket that was traded for slaves on Africa's Bight of Benin."<sup>2</sup>

S. A. Keighly, an employee of the Hudson's Bay Company recalls:

"The men all carried single-barrel muzzleloading shotguns which we sold at the post. These old-styled muzzleloaders had to be ordered from England especially for these people because they would not give up their old ways."<sup>3</sup>



The smoothbore's versatility cannot be overlooked.

"Uncle Joe is very proud of his old smoothbore muzzleloader which he reaches down from the gun rack between the beams of the living room ceiling. He explains that for a hunter in the country it has the advantage over any modern weapon. You can use shot of any size, or bullet, so that in this one light gun you have everything you need. Nowadays you always wish you had your rifle when you had your shotgun, and vice versa, thereby losing a good many skins of fur."<sup>4</sup>

"If one will put himself in the Indian's moccasins, so to speak, some of the reasons for the fusil's popularity become evident. The gun was cheap compared with the rifles and muskets of the period.

The fusil used the lightest ball which was effective on big game and was large enough to make a serviceable shotgun. Since it was a smoothbore, makeshift projectiles could be used in emergencies and the flintlock ignition eliminated the need for caps or primers of any sort."<sup>5</sup>

This seems almost unimportant to modern hunters as we are usually seeking a specific game animal. If you are deer hunting, it is almost taboo to shoot at a rabbit or squirrel. You might scare off a deer. That was not always the case back then. You needed meat. If meat presented itself, you shot it.

If you are fortunate enough to live in a place where hunting seasons overlap, you too can take advantage of this feature. I load my piece with a paper cartridge of powder only (basically like a blank used for re-enacting) and tap the paper down on the powder charge with my rod. If I spot small game like squirrel, I load a paper cartridge of shot on top of the powder charge and take my shot. If I spot deer, moose, etc. a ball goes down the pipe. Some I knew in Alaska would drop a ball down the barrel over a charge of shot if they came across a pile of steaming bear scat while small game hunting.

Now, there were many types of smoothbores available to 18th century folks, just like the hunter/shooter of today. Those heading out for the Indian trade bought light guns. The semi-nomadic tribes, as well as others, preferred light fusils. Sir William Johnson of New York was aware of this:

"The best Indian Guns are slight..."<sup>6</sup>  
"Light & Good fowling pieces"<sup>7</sup>  
"light guns"<sup>8</sup>  
"3000 Fuzils.....30s"<sup>9</sup>

Now, the Johnson Papers do mention rifles on occasion, namely in lists of expenses (repairs, etc.), and exclusively in Indian hands with the exception of the 2 rifles listed in Sir William's estate after his death in 1774.<sup>10</sup>

"The Indian lived by hunting and he demanded a gun just large enough to kill big game at close range and still light enough to carry all day with comfort."<sup>11</sup>

Those in the military made do with issued arms. Some officers purchased light fusils from private contractors, but by and large the military man carried a musket of .69-.80 caliber with a 42-46" barrel and a weight of 9-12 pounds. Compare that to the fowlers carried by militiamen that weighed as little as 7 pounds. Also compare ammo weights. 100 rounds for a 28 bore (.54 cal) fusil like mine weighs about 3 1/2 pounds. 100 rounds for a .75 caliber (11 bore) Brown Bess weighs over 10 pounds. Heck of a difference for a man on the move.

In my mind, military muskets are too heavy, their ammo weighs too much and many of them are difficult to shoot well because of their stock design. Guns like the Brown Bess and Charleville were meant to be used in volley firing, where aiming wasn't a priority and had to be sturdy enough to carry a bayonet. Some folks remedied that by modifying their guns. In the collection of Herkimer Home State Historic Site in Little Falls, NY there are two such guns. The first is a Long Land (1st model) Brown Bess that has been re-



stocked in curly maple. The new stock has a pronounced drop so that you get a proper cheek weld when sighting the gun. The other gun is a mix of various French muskets (1728, 1754, etc.). The comb of the stock has been lowered by about an inch to give your cheek room when sighting the gun. Even though, these two firelocks weigh upward of 9 ½ pounds.

No, give me a slim fowler or trade fusil, light in the hand, long of barrel, bore of 28-20 balls to the pound (.54-.62 cal.) and I'm a happy man...

- 1 Rifles, Blankets and Beads by W.E. Simone page 30
- 2 Down North to the Sea by Alden C. Hayes
- 3 Trader, Tripper, Trapper: The Life of a Bay Man by Sydney Agustus Keighly
- 4 True North by Elliot Merrick
- 5 The Northwest Gun Charles E. Hanson, Jr. page 2-3
- 6 Letter to Jeffery Amherst, 22 Feb. 1759
- 7 A List of Indian Goods Sir William Johnson Papers Volume 3, pg.334
- 8 A Memorandum of what goods are most requisite for the Indian Service Sir William Johnson Papers Volume 1, page 110
- 9 Indian Goods Sir William Johnson Papers Volume 4, page 559
- 10 Sir William Johnson Papers Volume 11, 2 August 1774
- 11 The Northwest Gun by Charles E Hanson, Jr. page 1

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#### BOOK REVIEW

***Backbone of the World- by Edward Louis Henry***  
**Review by Firewalker**

It is the story of an eastern frontier young man who finds his way, through a series of situations, to the Rockies in the early 1800's. It brings to life many of the historic individuals we've read about in other works; Jim Bridger, Hugh Glass, Mike Fink and many more. Very interesting and well written, it is the first in a two book series. I plan to get the next one as well. Printed by Publish America and available through online sources.

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#### HOW TO

##### **Making a slate turkey call - by Gobbler**

This is a very simple slate Turkey call made from very little, which may just add a touch of tradition to your hunt. It requires an afternoon and some patience. I have said I was going to do this since the end of Turkey season last year but you know how things go heck I already have a slate call so why hurry right? Now that I have completed one it makes me feel better about the things I say to people about how I try to hunt as Traditional as I can. Not to say you can't hunt Turkey with the modern ways. It's all good times. I started this as an idea for myself, but decided as much as I'm involved teaching kids more about the pre-1840's this might be a fun project for a group of Scouts, Royal Rangers or any other activity organization. Anyway lets get into it.

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Here's what you'll need to get going:

1. A Turtle shell – Source [www.crazycrow.com](http://www.crazycrow.com)
2. A thin piece of slate – Source [www.americanslate.com](http://www.americanslate.com)
3. A hacksaw blade
4. A small fine file (optional)
5. A small piece of 80 grit sandpaper
6. A small amount of Gorilla Glue
7. A pair of side cutters (optional)
8. A Sharpie permanent marker
9. A sharp knife
10. 2 zip ties

Remember It's real simple anyone can do this so give it a try.

First you need a turtle shell. You can obtain one from numerous sources such as a rendezvous, many of the online re-enactment suppliers such as Crazy Crow, which is where, mine came from. I picked a small one as I will carry the call in my hunting bag, but they come in all sizes.



Then you'll need to cut the belly of the shell off right at the backside of the belly piece with the hacksaw blade. Do not cut it flush with the main part of the shell, as this will give no place for the slate to mount. It should look something like this.



It will leave you with a flat belly piece and a shell with a slightly higher tab on each side of the main shell than the rest of the shell. This is what will create that space to allow the sound to echo and resonate from. Oh by the way don't throw away the belly piece they make a great center attraction for a necklace.

Now comes the slate. The key is get it as thin as you can. A thick piece doesn't create the sound you need. I had thick pieces and ended up having them sliced real thin about  $1/16$ " maybe and  $1/8$ " but no more. That is the toughest part obtaining the slate no way that I found other than thick stuff that has to sliced thin.

The piece I started with was about 3" x 6" and looked like this. Don't be afraid to have it sliced a little thick it sands down real easy. Now you can take turtle shell and slate and rough fit the two together and decide your size and shape for the piece of slate. File the tabs on the shell until the slate has a flat surface to sit on. Rough mark the slate with the sharpie and begin to break little pieces of slate with the side cutters until you have created the rough shape of the slate. Be careful sometimes the slate doesn't always break where you want it to so go easy and a little at a time.

Should start looking like this.



Take the 80 grit sandpaper and begin to form the shape around the edges that you want. Leaving the paper flat on the table and sanding by moving the slate seems to work better for me. When you finish that you're almost done.



This is the part I don't like about the project but haven't figured out a better way. The Gorilla Glue



(not very PC but hey if someone thinks of a better way let me know please.) Anyway Apply Gorilla Glue to those two tabs you left on the shell set the slate on and lightly zip tie in place (optional) allow to dry overnight. The next morning trim the excess glue (the reason I use Gorilla Glue is when dry it matches the tan color of the turtle shell) with sharp knife and you have it. Remember this is just a basic design you can decorate anyway you want, so be creative.



You will also need a striker but you can make that also from a piece of hardwood.



### **Brain Tanning - by Otaktay**

Hello Everyone. I am going to run through the process of taking a wet, stinky deer hide and transforming it into soft, beautiful braintan buckskin. This is a overview of the process for those that have never attempted it before.

Tools you will need:

Beam - wood or PVC 6"-8" O.D. If you use wood make sure it is smooth and free of knots for the first couple of feet. I use 8" PVC. Secure it by driving it into the ground and supporting it with an 'X' shaped frame. Make sure it is really rigid. Angle it so it hits you in the belly button. You will be pinching the hide between your belly and the beam to hold it in place.

Scaper - I use an old planer blade bought from braintan.com. Make sure it has a distinct but NOT sharp edge as you are separating layers not cutting them.

Buck - I use Potassium Hydroxide (KOH) flakes which can be obtained from braintan.com or from pool supply stores. You can also use wood ashes or Red Devil Lye.

Dressing - Brains, eggs, or Ivory soap and neat's foot oil

Softening Stick - An axe handle works great. Use a saw and bevel the tip. This can also double as your wringing stick

Fleshing:

Take your hide and lay it on the beam hair side (flesh) down with the neck pinched between your belly and the beam. Begin to flesh the hide. Scrape the entire hide to get all the tallow, meat, and membrane off. Make sure to get it all but you do not need to worry about the lowest level of membrane at this time. Reposition the hide so you are only using about 2 feet of the beam so you can concentrate your scraping efforts without reaching too far.

**Bucking:**

Mix up your buck solution with one of the following recipes:

**KOH flakes or Red Devil Lye:**

Put 4 gallons of water in a 5 gallon bucket. Add a little less than 2oz of KOH or Red Devil Lye and stir it up.

**Wood Ash:**

Mix 2 parts (at least 2 gallons) white wood ash with one part water. Stir it up then let it settle for 15 minutes. Place a chicken egg in the water. If the egg sinks, the solution is too weak so add more ash and retest. If it floats and tips over on its side, it is too strong. Add more water and retest. If it floats with an area the size of a quarter to a half dollar is exposed, it is perfect. When the solution is right, stir it back up and continue with the directions below.

Once your solution is made up, put your hide in it and stir it around. Let your hide soak in the buck for 2 or 3 days. Stir the hide a few times per day. After 2 or 3 days check to make sure the hide is completely swollen. It will take on a tawny color and feel really thick. If the entire hide isn't fully swollen, put it back in the buck for another day or so.

**Graining:**

Once your hide is swollen, take it out of the buck and lay it on your beam hair (grain) side up. Take your scraper and scrape really hard down the beam. The hair and the grain layer will come off. You will notice the grain layer as being a very distinct layer. It comes off hard in places like the neck but every single bit of it has to be removed or the hide will come out stiff. As long as your scraper has a distinct but not sharp edge you can scrape as hard as you can in order to get it all off. Make sure to scrape from one area right into the next. Do not jump around the hide or you will miss grain. Also do not scrape all the hair off as it is a good indicator on where you have already been. Make sure to scrape from neck to tail or from spine to side.

Don't scrape from tail to neck or you will cut the hairs off and leave black roots. Be a little more careful around holes so you do not make them larger. Also, the edges of the belly and ends of the legs can tear so scrape lighter here as well. This takes some time and it is a good workout but stick with it and you will get it. It is very important to not let the hide dry out. If it starts to get a little dry put it back in the buck for awhile. When you are absolutely sure all the grain is removed it is time to rinse.

**Rinsing:**

Now we need to rinse all the alkali out of the hide and get all the swelling down. This removes the mucous between the fibers of the hide so the brains can penetrate. The best way to rinse is in a stream or lake. Just poke a small hole on the edge of the hide and tie a rope to it and let it sink. Come back a day later and it is done. If you do not live by a stream or lake then fill a plastic garbage can with water and sink your hide in it. Leave the hose on a slow trickle and stick the end of the hose down into the can. Let it sit there for a day and it should be done. Another option is to use a bucket of water and change the water multiple times per day for a few days until it is all rinsed out. You must make sure it is 100% rinsed out or you will have stiff spots. The hide will feel limp and not swollen and go back to being a blueish white color.

**Membranizing:**

Take your hide out of the rinse water and lay it back on your beam. Scrape the membrane (flesh) side and really try to get off all the little strings and fluffs of membrane. Once you scrape the entire side your hide will be squeegeed out and mostly dry and ready for the dressing stage. Please note: do not put the hide in the dressing if it is too wet. You want the hide damp but not wet like a sponge ready to absorb the dressing.

**Dressing:**

You can use brains, eggs, or ivory soap and neat's foot oil. Pick one of the following recipes for your dressing:

**Brains:**



You need anywhere from half a pound to a full pound of brains per hide. Put brains in a blender with a cup of hot water and liquify. If you can't use a blender, then just mash them up with your hands until they are smooth.

#### Eggs:

You need to beat a dozen eggs.

#### Soap and oil:

Grate 1/4 bar of soap and add 1/4 cup of neat's foot oil.

Mix your dressing recipe in a 5 gallon bucket with a half gallon of bath temperature water. Soak your hide in the dressing. Pull and stretch the hide in the dressing to make sure it gets soaked up. Leave the hide in the dressing for an hour or so to make sure it gets fully soaked. Then take the hide out and lay it over a horizontal pole about 2"-3" inches in diameter. Lay the tail end over the pole. Bring the neck end over the tail end to make a loop. Start on one side and roll the hide towards the center. Do this on the other side until you have a nice tightly rolled donut shape. Then take a sturdy smooth stick like an axe handle and put it in the loop and twist it as tight as you can to wring all the excess dressing out. When it stops dripping untwist it and twist it back up the other direction and do the same thing. Untwist it again and rotate the loop 1/4 turn on the horizontal pole. Twist both directions again. Repeat this process until you have rotated the hide 4 times. Unroll the donut and notice the hide is dry and tawny colored. Stretch the hide back open until it is all white again. Then put the hide back in the dressing and let it soak again. Repeat the wringing and dressing steps 3 times. After you have stretched it back open the final time you are ready to soften.

#### Softening:

You can soften your hide a couple of different ways. You can do it by hand or with a frame. To soften, you need to stretch the hide until it is dry. If you let it dry too fast without being stretched it will get stiff. So you need to work at it until it is done. You can make a frame out of 2x4's and lace it up with cordage. Use a small, sharp knife and make 1/4"

slits parallel to the edge of the hide all the way around. Run the cordage through these holes and around the frame. Make sure it is not too tight. Use slips knots so you can readjust the hide in the frame. Make sure it is hanging square and even. Use your softening stick to poke and deeply massage/stretch the hide and work it until it is totally dry. The edges and belly of the hide will dry the fastest so give them a lot of attention when you start out. Go around the edge and pluck out the side to make sure they stay soft. Then take your softening sick and methodically go through and stretch the entire hide. Keep this up until the hide is dry and bounces back when you stretch it. Areas that are still wet will keep their shape when you stretch them. Once an area is dry and bounces back when you pull on it then that part is done and you can focus on the rest of the hide. The rumps, spine, and neck take the longest. The neck is the thickest part of the hide and you really need to work it to get it soft. Once the hide is dry and totally soft you are ready for the last step...smoking.

#### Smoking:

Before you smoke your hide you need to cut off any stiff edges. Almost always you will have a thin strip along the edge that comes out stiff. This is fine, just cut it off and continue preparing it for smoking. The best way to smoke hides is to match them up and glue them together with a really thin stripe of white Elmer's glue all around the edges to make a pillow case shaped bag. Pinch them together as the glue starts to get tacky. Just a really thin strip all around is all you need. Then, take an old pair of denim jeans or heavy canvas and make a smoking skirt about 3 feet long or so. Sew it into a flared bottom tube shape. Then with any old cheap sewing thread, sew the skirt onto the neck of the hides. You smoke the hide neck down with the smoking skirt sewed to it. Next take a smudge pot, like a large terracotta flower pot or metal bucket and start about a dozen charcoal briquettes (or make a stick fire). When they are ready and burning good, cover them with punky wood. Be extra careful with oily woods like cedar and the like as they can flare up in a heartbeat and your hides will be ruined. You need about a 5 gallon bucket full of punk. Get pieces that range from popcorn to baseball size. Make sure to hang the hide really straight



by the tail end to make sure it will get smoked evenly. Once you get the smoke going really strong move the smudge pot under the hide and pull the smoking skirt down around the pot to the ground. The smoke will billow out the hide. Make sure there are no leaks (a tiny bit of smoke here and there is ok). You have to be RIGHT there the entire time because if a flare up happens it only takes a split second and your hides are ruined. You need to constantly monitor the smoke and make sure its not too hot. Keep adding more and more punk to make sure it continues to smoke and not catch a flame. To be functionally tanned it just has to take on a bit of color, but you can smoke it until you get the color you desire. Take a peak in the hide by opening a small bit of the glued edge. Once it is the color you want, take the hides down and off the fire. Cover the pot so the punk doesn't flame up. First, turn the smoking skirt inside out so you do not get sticky resin and creosote on your hide. Then, reach in and turn the "pillow case" inside out. Make sure to fuss with all the edges to ensure it is all open and free of folds etc. Then rehang and put it back over the pot and smoke that side. Once it is the color you want take it off the pot and rip off the smoking skirt and you are done! Best thing to remember is to make sure it does not get too hot. If it does, add more punk. Keep the smoke going and DO NOT LEAVE even for 2 seconds.

This is good overview of the process. It is a lot of work but it is work that feels good and you have a wonderful product at the end of it all. I highly recommend getting Matt Richard's book *Deerskins Into Buckskins*. It covers the entire process and provides good pictures. It also has patterns for clothing and also a section devoted to using ancient methods and tools. You can get it at [www.braintan.com](http://www.braintan.com).

Keep your powder dry. We will see you further up the trail!

Otakta

### Matchlocks - by Pat Hemken

Editors Note: Pat has been shooting and building matchlock rifles for some time now and has agreed to let me include some of his pictures and comments in the Journal. I'm hoping I can talk him into a real column on them every now and again.

Here he is shooting the famous "blue gun" that he almost beat me with last spring. It's a 20ga. smoothbore, no sights and I was shooting a GPR! Here's what Pat has to say:



For those wondering if they can make one of these matchlocks, and question how much work it takes. I highly encourage them to do so. I love the guns; don't really want to build anything else. I have been spending the last couple of days at work trying to count the number that I made. Twelve or so matchlocks would be a good guess, I have now have 4 in my house (I think). The stock was cut, but it had so many problems, that I had to redo most of it. But could have just as easy cut it out perhaps faster than reworking it. I also thought about how to save that stock for a couple of months. I do most of my thinking at work, it save time when I come home. Now there is a tip for you. I built three this year, I think.

Don't worry about any skill level. Look at the early guns, a glorified club. I inleted my first barrel and lock by hand over a candle flame. Now I use an acetylene flame that works real well and is fast. Learned a lot on the way.

The average person will need help on the barrel and soldering the lugs. But that you can buy or trade services for. I have an incredible wood deal



going on right now, trading my gun work for wood. He loves the guns, I love the wood he cuts, it's a great friendship that has formed over the years. I'm tooled up and raised in a machine shop environment if it doesn't show. But really basic tools are all you need for shaping a stock. These are the simplest of guns, basically three parts. I am bringing in my milling machine in a month or so which will speed things up even more. I plan on cranking out



some locks, to keep up with my habit of building guns.

When I finished it, took a little longer to do the pan, ran out of energy and cleaned the shop, and had lots of friends come over to see and visit. Anyways, I got a chance to shoot it. Shoots just like all the other others. Had one shot of the 6 that gave me trouble, match just didn't want to ignite the prime. I had to milk it until it finally went off, but still happy with a 24 and half inch barrel at 25 yards. I also dropped a load of shot down there, and that held okay at 25 yards also.



I love the gun, it's a light one, has a little kick, but the ball goes where you want it. It would be a nice gun to bring into the woods.

My buddy Chuck actually has been working this design for awhile. Unsure if it was drawn from an earlier gun or not. But, you know what? Who cares? We're just trying to have good safe fun. That is if you can call a piece of spitting flaming rope safe.

Editor: Here is the photo of us at the spring shoot last year. Pat, is on the left holding the matchlock. He hit the target I'm holding at 50 yards, no sights. I'll be getting one of his fine matchlocks very soon. Tallwater is on the right pouting because I beat him by an inch.





## TMA EVENTS

**'How Far Have We Come'****TMA Monthly Postal Shoot**

How far have we come with our TMA Monthly Postal Shoot? I think we've came a far piece when you look at what we've accomplished as we enter our third year of holding these shoots, not to mention our third year in which we find ourselves headed for another National Postal Match Championship!

From our humble beginnings back in August of 2005 we have grown into the best place to come for a challenging postal match that offers a variety of different targets, shooting disciplines, and all out fun with the likes of our 'Mike Fink' and '1776 Handheld Shingle Target'... How much better can it get then this?

The quality of our targets and selection we have is something this organization and its members should be proud of. Again, in my opinion, no organization regardless of who they are, shoot at more challenging targets then we do! Our margin of error is minimal, yet our scores are respectful. Sure, some of us have some off days, but that's to be expected and it happens to all of

us. However, we hang in there and we keep plugging away at our TMA targets.

We offer a very challenging and competitive National Championship Postal Shoot as well. We have, Flintlock Rifle, Percussion Rifle, Smoothbore, Handgun, Cross Stick, Bench, Creedmoor Match, and a Handgun & Rifle Match on tap for 2007. That's eight Championship Aggregates and we're not done yet! Next year I hope to institute a National Chunk Gun Match into our Championship Shoot.

So...how far have we come? I'd say we've came pretty darn far from our humble beginnings in August of 2005 when we were holding Monthly "Rifle" Postal Shoots along with a periodical handgun shoot, and not to forget our 2005 National Postal Shoot Championship Match which was a Flintlock and Percussion Rifle Aggregate only. As I said above, "we're not done yet!"

I hope you are all enjoying the matches!

Joe Martin,  
Ohio Joe

**Calendar****April 12-15**

KY Frolic 2007 - KY

**March 17-19**

Kalamazoo Living History Show - MI

**May 1-6**

Bloody Lake Rendezvous - WI

**June 1-3**

GRMM Rifle Frolic - WA

For more info see the events section of the TMA forum.

**Journal Scribes****FIREWALKER**

Editor, co-publisher. aka Bob McMahon has been involved muzzleloading for about 30 years.

During that time he has been to many shoots and rendezvous' throughout Wisconsin. Charter member of the TMA since 12-05.

**OTAKTAY**

Designer, co-publisher aka Lucas Kuntz is a brain tanner, craftsman, musician and IT Consultant in Wisconsin. He has been shooting muzzleloaders with his dad since he was a youngin'.



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