

31st Year of the NMLRA Gunsmithing Workshop and Seminar



2011 class participants

By H. Terry Leeper

Class and Registration Information

2012 Classes at a glance:

3-Day classes (May 30 – June 2)

- **Traditional Barrel Rifling, Loops, and Sights** – *George Suiter*
- **Wire Inlay** – *Mark Silver*
- **Making a Hunting Shirt** – *Eve Otmar*

6-Day Classes (June 3 – 8)

- **Finish What You Started** – *Bob Elka and Joe Valentin*
- **Longrifle Engraving: Beginning and Intermediate** – *Mark Silver*
- **Longrifle Relief and Incised Carving** – *Jim Kibler*

9-Day classes (May 30 – June 8)

- **Stocking an English or American Pistol** – *Jim Chambers*
- **Stocking a French and Indian War Rifle Gun** – *Wallace Gusler*
- **Stocking a Germanic-Dutch Blunderbuss** – *Ron Scott*
- **Stocking a Rifle in the Style of Andrew Verner of Bucks County, PA.** – *Jack Brooks*

This is the 31st year for the NMLRA gunsmithing workshop and seminar. The longevity of this seminar is a testament to the quality of instruction provided by nationally known practicing gunsmiths who are committed to perpetuating the art and craft of the trade. *Special recognition needs to be given to Gary Brumfield for 28 years of tireless planning and exceptional leadership in support of the workshop and seminar. Gary relinquished his responsibilities for organizing the annual seminar at the close of the 2011 workshop. He will be greatly missed!* The 2012 seminar will be held again at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, and it will conclude in June just before the Spring Shoot at Friendship, on Saturday the 9th. A variety of three-, six- and nine-day classes will be offered. Pre-registration will determine which of the proposed classes below are taught.

2012 Classes

3-Day Classes (\$350 plus materials) from 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 30th to 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 2nd.

Traditional Barrel Rifling, Loops and Sights – *George Suiter* – *New for 2012* – This class is designed to enable participants to rifle a smoothbore barrel using a rifling bench and traditional tools and materials. A standard .54 caliber swamped barrel will be selected for the project. In addition, participants will prepare barrel loops and sights and fit them to the barrel. Modifications will be made to the tang of the breech plug according to period practice found on originals. Class size will be limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost: \$250.

Silver Wire Inlay – *Mark Silver* – *New for 2012* – This class will explore a variety of types of silver and brass wire inlay appro-

priate for American longrifles and European arms. Students will make a simple set of two tools for inlaying the wire, providing a good introduction to heat treating for beginning students. Stock preparation, scraping, and finishing issues will be covered. This class is intended for both beginning and more advanced makers. Those with prior experience will, in consultation with the instructor, create a project suited to their interests. Participants will have the choice of using a “Quaker stock,” perhaps from a previous class, or inexpensive practice pieces of maple. Class size will be limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost: \$60 to cover wood and inlay- and tool making materials for the class.

Making a Hunting Shirt of the Period – *Eve Otmar* – *New for 2012* – This class covers all the steps in making a traditional open linen hunting shirt by hand. This covers measuring and creating a pattern for the hunting shirt and then cutting and assembling all the pieces. Period correct stitches will be taught as well as different techniques in making and applying fringe. Depending on the student skill levels, some may not finish their hunting shirts, but all the basic steps will be demonstrated and practiced.

The class also includes three lectures. The first is the use and techniques of natural dyes on linen fabric using period dye materials and techniques, with time spent on hunting shirt coloring. The second lecture covers the various ways in which the hunting shirt may be tied closed. We will examine finger weaving, loomed, and other methods. The third lecture will be given by Wallace Gusler, who will deal with the possible origins of the fringed hunting shirt and the evolution of riflemen's dress on the frontier and in the back country from the 1750's to the early Revolutionary War Period. Class will be limited to eight. Approximate cost \$125 for materials. All skill levels welcome.

6-Day Classes (\$680 plus materials) begin at 8:00 a.m. Sunday, June 3rd and end about 1:00 p.m. Friday, June 8th.

Finish What You Started – *Bob Elka and Joe Valentin* – Returning from 2008! This class provides former seminar students with the opportunity to have Bob and Joe help them complete, or at least make a lot of progress toward completing, any rifle, fowler, Jaeger, or pistol that was **started in any previous class at the NMLRA Gunsmithing Seminar**. We know there are projects out there collecting dust. Now there is no excuse, so dig it out of your closet and get to work! Class will be limited to eight. Material fee: none.

Engraving – Beginning and Intermediate – *Mark Silver* – *New for 2012* – This course is meant for students with little or no engraving experience who want to improve their understand-

ing of and ability to execute the styles of engraving used on American longrifles and fowlers. It is also for those who have already had at least one course in engraving and wish to work with British or Continental styles.

The class will explore the elements used on patchboxes, side plates, and mounts, including types of borders, scrolls, volutes, and foliage. Most of the class time will be spent in intensive practice repeating the basic elements of these types of engraving. Intermediate students will be introduced to and practice lettering of various styles, and the engraving forms found on sporting arms from Great Britain and Europe, including, if they wish, relief chiseling of sculpted foliage and borders. Class limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost \$25.

Longrifle Relief and Incised Carving – *Jim Kibler* – Participants in this class will be introduced to processes and techniques used in creating traditional longrifle carving. Subjects covered will include tool selection and sharpening, carving design, and execution. The various techniques used in producing both incised and relief carving will be the course focus. Participants will perform carving on provided “Quaker” practice stocks, which can be kept by the student to serve as a guide for future reference and carving projects. Class limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost: \$75.

9-Day Classes (\$1,010 plus materials) from 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday May, 30th to 1:00 p.m. June 8th.

Stocking an American or English Pistol – *Jim Chambers* – *New for 2012* – In this class participants will have the choice of stocking one of several styles of pistols. I have parts available for a 13-inch swamped barrel American-style pistol that would be great for hunting, or a nine- or ten-inch octagon-to-round American or English pistol. Lock choice will be either the small Siler or the Queen Anne Pistol lock. Hardware can be either brass or steel. Wood choice can be curly maple, bird’s-eye maple, or American or English walnut. The class will include inletting the barrel, lock, and other parts, and shaping the pistol to form. Class limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost: \$350.

Stocking a French and Indian War Rifle Gun – *Wallace Gusler* – *New for 2012* – This early rifle has a curly maple stock in the form of an Indian trade gun of the mid -18th century. It is a composite rifle with salvaged Dutch lock and English trade gun mountings. It is pictured in *Shumway, Rifles of Colonial America*, Volume II, pages 606 to 609, rifle #142. Shumway wrote a very short description in 1980. Much has been learned about this rifle’s makeup since then, and it is the subject of two articles that will be published in *Muzzle Blasts* in the near future. The original will be in the class for study to insure the best detail. The barrel and lock will be removed for examination.

Students will need to purchase all the parts, of which some will require alteration in class or in advance as directed by Wallace. As in previous classes, Ed Rayl will produce the barrel from inch-by-inch measurements of the original. Wallace will provide measured drawings of loops, sights, stock profile, and mounting details two weeks after the registration deadline. Participants will need to come to class with the barrel inlet and the ramrod hole drilled. Class limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost \$900.

Stocking a Germanic-Dutch Blunderbuss – *Ronald Scott* – *New for 2012* – In this class participants will build an early Continental Blunderbuss using investment-cast mounts from an original Dutch fowler and lock from Jim Chambers’ 2010 class.

A custom profiled 21-inch barrel by Ed Rayl will be inlet into a European Walnut stock. In addition to general construction techniques, early European arms architecture will be covered. This project is somewhat less ornate than previous European flintlock courses and should be in the skill range of most participants with basic stocking experience. Class limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost: \$600. Premium-grade stock blanks are available at an additional cost.

Stocking an 18th-century Verner Rifle – *Jack Brooks* – *New for 2012* – Participants will stock a rifle in the style of Andrew Verner of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Using photographs, measured drawings, and castings from an unpublished, original Verner rifle as well as a rifle by Jack, students will learn the architecture and construction details of this old master. Stocks will be pre-inlet for the swamped barrel and the ramrod hole already drilled. Jack will teach his geometric method of stock shaping to reproduce this graceful rifle. Class limited to eight. Approximate parts and materials cost: \$900.

Meet the Instructors:

Jack Brooks has been a fulltime gun maker since 1976, dividing his time between new custom work and the restoration of antique American longrifles. A resident of Englewood, Colorado, Jack is returning for his sixteenth year as an instructor at the seminar, where he has taught a variety of stocking classes from longrifles to pistols and trade guns.

Gary Brumfield *Instructor Emeritus*, started in the *Colonial Williamsburg gunsmith shop as a summer helper in 1965 and was master gunsmith for Foundation from 1974 to 1990. He continues at the foundation in a management position and works part-time as a rifle maker in his home shop. He has been either an instructor or the seminar coordinator since 1983.*

Jim Chambers, Jr. has been involved with custom arms for forty years and has become a very important contributor to the trade by supplying a variety of high-quality locks. A resident of Candler, North Carolina, Jim has taught at the seminar for many years in carving, stocking, and lock assembly.

Bob Elka and Joe Valentin have many years of diverse gun building experience and outstanding dedication to the Seminar. Bob and Joe have agreed to provide former seminar students with the opportunity to move ahead on and perhaps complete unfinished class projects during the 2012 session as they did in 2008.

Wallace Gusler produced his first muzzleloader at age fourteen. He established the Colonial Williamsburg gunsmith shop in 1963 and was master until 1972. Retired from the gun shop, Wallace is currently completing a book on Virginia gunsmiths. He has taught at this seminar many times since helping start it in 1981.

Jim Kibler built his first muzzleloader at the age of 14, and others during his teenage years. Jim graduated from Ohio State University with a degree in metallurgical engineering and served as an engineer until 2009. Over the years he attended a number of NMLRA seminars at WKU and became a fulltime gunmaker in 2009. His work is exceptional, and his gunsmithing skills have been the subject of several articles. He will be a tremendous asset to the gunsmithing seminar.

Eve Otmar has been making period clothing and accessories for over twenty-five years. For the last twelve years the focus has been on the hunting shirt, which led to the study and application of natural dyes on linen. Equally important are the research and making of narrow woven goods (sashes, belts, garters etc.), which are finger woven, twined, or woven on a loom. Eve holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree and is currently working at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Ronald Scott built his first flintlock in 1975 and has pursued the art and craft professionally since 1978. In 1991 he founded the Oregon Gunmaker's Fair, an annual event dedicated to promulgating flintlock building skills through demonstration and exhibition. From a modest beginning, the Fair has grown to 50 participants, and the quality and sophistication of the firearms has increased steadily to a level of excellence.

Mark Silver started as a hobbyist in 1972, became a full-time gunmaker in 1976, and trained with John Bivins in 1978-9. Mark is a resident of Chassell, MI and has taught at this seminar since 1983 on subjects including engraving, carving, lock assembly, and stocking longrifles using traditional tools and techniques of the period.

George Suiter started building muzzleloaders by hanging around the shops of Bob Roller and Bill Large as a teenager. While attending Marshall University in West Virginia George worked in a local gunshop. He continued his gun building interest by attending Trinidad State Junior College. George later went to work for Douglas Barrels, Inc. George currently serves as Master in the Gunshop of Colonial Williamsburg and has worked in the shop for the last 34 years. He has worked in the Williamsburg Gunshop longer than any other person. George brings a wealth of information to the workshop.

General Information

Registration

For a session to be held it must have a minimum number of participants registered and with their deposits paid by the **Friday, February 17th** deadline. This early deadline is essential in allowing time to order materials and parts.

You may begin to register immediately. *Do not delay!* We ask for a first, second, and third choice, but we have, in past years, been able to place over half the students in their first choice. Telephone, fax, or mail your registration to Brenda Hooton in the NMLRA offices in Friendship. Call 800-745-1493 Ext 223. Fax to 812-667-5136. Mail to NMLRA Seminar Registration, P.O. Box 67, Friendship, IN 47021.

Registration for classes is on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration for all the classes closes February 17th and, after placing 2nd and 3rd choices in available slots, class rosters will be mailed to the instructors and students *about* March 5th.

Class Fees

One-half of the class registration fee is due as a deposit by February 17, 2012. Registration is not official until that deposit is received (credit cards may be used by telephone). Your deposit will be refunded in March if the classes you picked are not taught or are already full. The remainder of the registration fee is due by Friday, April 27th, 2012. Students who cancel after April 27th will forfeit their registration fee.

In some classes, where there are choices to be made, such as wood grade or caliber of the barrel, the instructor may require that students order the materials for themselves. In those cases the instructors will provide the information needed for ordering. For other classes the materials fees will be collected by the instructor at the seminar.

Class Schedule

Except for the first Wednesday, which starts at 1 p.m., classes usually start at 8 a.m.— take a break for lunch — and the instructors shut down the classrooms and gun display room around 7 p.m. Students who want more shop time can make arrangements to work through the lunch break or stay late. **In-**

dividual instructors may decide to alter this schedule.

Lodging and Dining

The Red Roof Inn on Scottsville Road, at I-65 exit 22, will be our primary motel and they will be holding a block of rooms. Call Ms. Sowders (270-781-6550) for a reservation and mention that you are part of this group. There are also some campgrounds in the area.

On-campus dining is limited in the summer, but Bowling Green has restaurants for every taste and budget. Inquire about a microwave and refrigerator when you make your room reservation, as well.

Picnic and Shoot

Weather permitting, there will be a fellowship picnic, and very informal shoot at Dr. Leeper's farm late in the afternoon of Saturday, June 2nd. Targets will be metal gongs at unknown ranges in a field. Traditional muzzleloading rifles and pistols only! Strict safety rules are enforced. Directions to the farm will be available from the instructors or at the front desk of the hotel. The cost of the barbeque is included in student registration. Spouses or guests will be \$15 each payable at the picnic.

Questions

Some of the instructors have sent more detailed course descriptions to Brenda Hooton at the NMLRA office in Friendship. Once registration and class assignments are finalized, questions about tools and materials will be answered by the individual instructor for each class. My email address is terry.leeper@wku.edu. If that works best for you, email me your questions. For information, photographs, and descriptions of past seminars visit Gary Brumfield's website at <http://www.flintriflesmith.com/>