



King George's War style horn, dated 1746, William Smith. (Coll. Conn. Hist. Soc.)



Shrewsbury style horn, dated 1748, Samuel Crosby - break from European tradition.

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Powder Horns Carved in the Provincial Manner, 1744-1777

By William H. Guthman

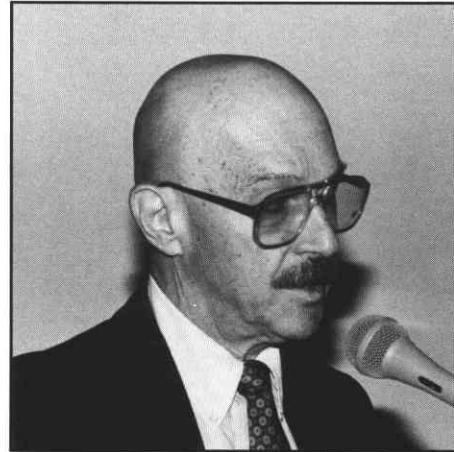
A unique art form began to emerge in North America during King George's War (1744-1748), reached the peak of perfection during the French and Indian War (1755-1763), carried over into the early years of the Revolution (1774-1777), and finally, except in isolated instances, dissipated by the end of the Revolution. The purpose of this talk is to introduce that previously unrecognized art form that is indigenous to North America: powder horns carved in the Provincial manner. Fewer than twenty percent of the powder horns carved during this period qualify for inclusion in this study. Those selected were created by several different groups of extremely talented craftsmen who employed distinct calligraphic and design styles that today enable us to identify various schools of carvers.

Material folk culture is rapidly disappearing in the northeastern section of the United States. Carved powder horns are an interesting and visually appealing facet of New England material culture that was, until recently, totally ignored by both academics and collectors. Such horns were considered merely military accoutrements with historical associations, not art objects that were influenced by the social and political environment in which they were conceived. They were, instead, collected and exhibited as mementos of historically important battles and events, never for their artistic qualities.

Some of the influences that effected the carvers' choices of designs and rhymes were the rigors of frontier living, the brutal effect of frontier warfare, the Indians that the soldiers had to face in combat and the homesickness that each soldier felt while serving at some remote frontier fort. Other influences might have been the insecurity of being away from a wife or girl friend for a long period of time and the worry of being away from the farm (since most of the soldiers were farmers) during the prime farming season (when most campaigns were fought.)

The horns that are the object of this study are decorated with intaglio designs and verse. We can identify about eighty to ninety percent (rough estimate) of the New England soldiers who carried them and at least eight New England carvers who made them and whose distinctive styles others copied. The selection of decorative motifs, rhymes, formats, and themes of the horns we've chosen is indisputably characteristic of the Lake George/Lake Champlain/Shrewsbury, Massachusetts/Connecticut River regions during the period of King George's War (1744-1748), the French and Indian War (1755-1763), the Pre-Siege of Boston period (1765-1774 when anti-British sentiment was strong), Siege of Boston period (1774-1776) and the Revolutionary War (1776-1781).

During the years just before the American Revolution, horn decoration and format continued to incorporate earlier ingredients but also introduced new rhymes and decorations expressive of New England's anti-British sentiments. In the early stages of the Revolution themes reflected events and cir-



cumstances in and around the military camps outside Boston. As a result, a new and final set of horn-carving criteria evolved.

I began a preliminary study of carved horns more than a dozen years ago, when I acquired several French and Indian War examples that were almost identical in style and design. Further searching led to other similar horns, all dated within a one-to-five-year period and located in the Lake George region. Eventually I discovered enough horns to document a group of carvers working at the French and Indian War forts in the Mohawk River/Hudson River/Connecticut River/Lake George region between 1755 and 1761. I concluded that there was a definable school of horn carvers working for the New England troops during the French and Indian War.

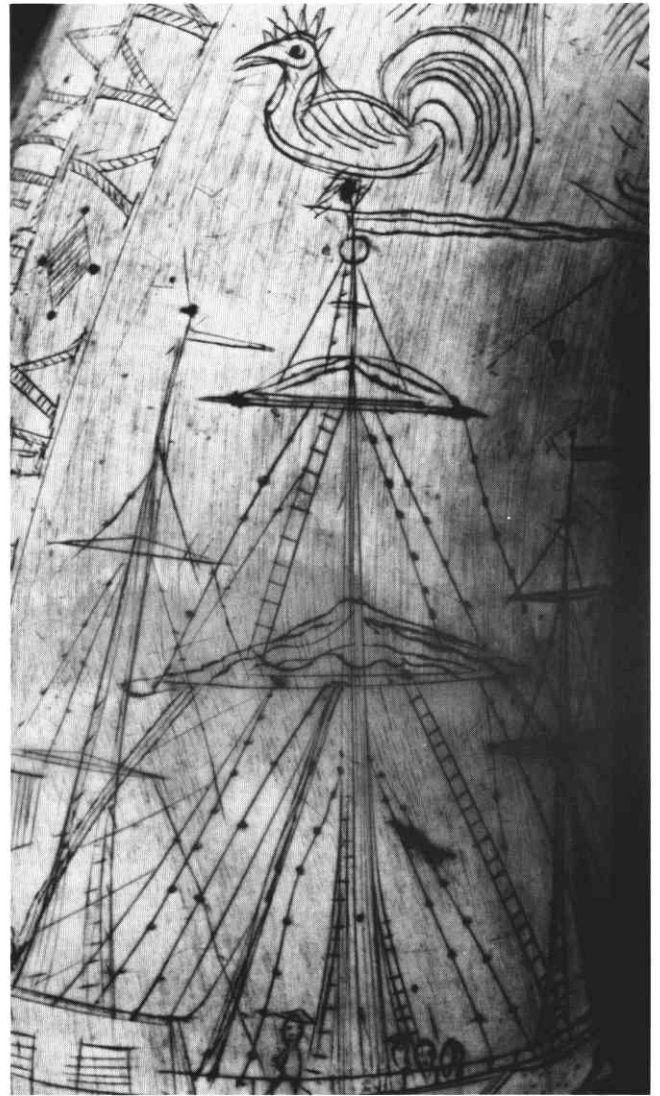
Subsequent study and searching led to the discovery of a definite school of carvers working between the end of the French and Indian War and the beginning of the Revolution (1763-1774) and still another school of carvers working during the American Revolution at the time of the Siege of Boston (1775-1777); their influence carried through on a few horns until the end of the Revolution.

Occasionally a signed horn has turned up, enabling us to identify other examples by the same hand. However, since most horns are not signed, carving characteristics must serve as the basis for identifying anonymous carvers of two or more horns. Eight distinct hands are identifiable, and another dozen can be closely associated with one of the eight because of similarities of style and format. As a result of these findings, I wrote the first article on the subject, which appeared in *The Magazine Antiques* for August, 1978.

My study continued, and five years ago Robert F. Trent and I began to formulate plans for an exhibition of beautifully engraved horns of the period 1744 to 1781, to be hosted by the Connecticut Historical Society. After careful study, I selected one hundred and twenty horns. When I made a graph showing the 12 months of each year within our period and put the



Cartoon-like character on Samuel Crosby, Shrewsbury, horn.



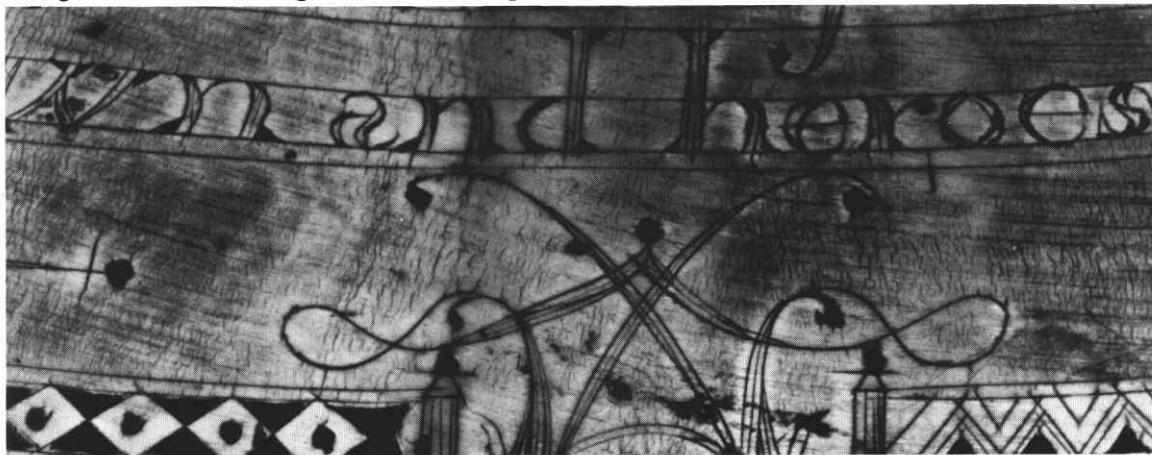
Rooster weathervane on top of ship's mast on Samuel Crosby horn. Illustrates a complete freedom of choice of design.



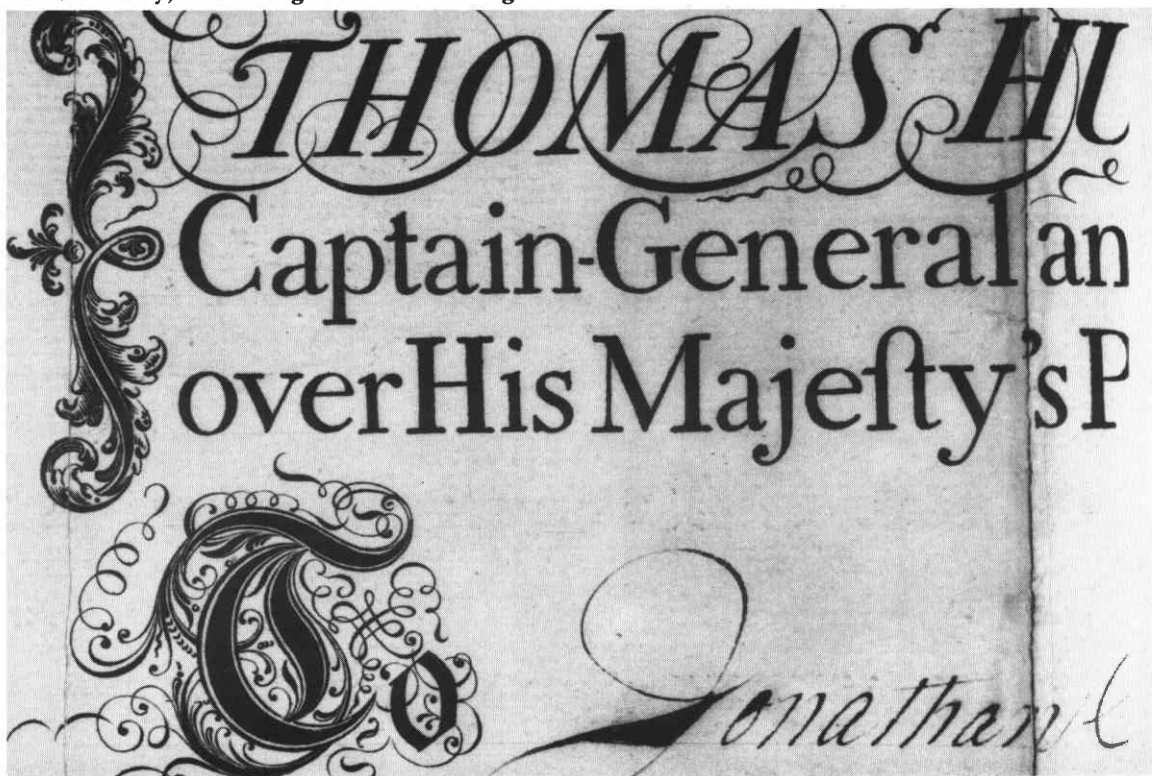
Cartoon-like figurehead staring at character in rowboat on Crosby horn.



Superb calligraphy of engraver John Bush on Mass. Surgeon's Mate William William's horn carved at Lake George in 1755, Lake George School of carving.



An example of the masterful calligraphy of John Bush on the 1756 horn of Lt. David Baldwin carved at Fort William Henry; Lake George School of carving.



One source of inspiration for calligraphy on Lake George School horns might have been military commissions such as this one by Nathaniel Hurd.

name and age of each horn in its proper chronological position, the sequence of changes in styles and format became clearly visible.

The earliest horns, carved during King George's War, retain traditional European designs. At the same time, the work of a few carvers provides evidence of a transition. The freedom with which these few makers selected styles, designs, and subjects suggests that a new approach to powder-horn decoration was in the making. The break from tradition became increasingly distinct during the French and Indian War and eventually a unique new style emerged.

The graph proved that the majority of skillfully carved horns were produced during the French and Indian War, and that the most productive year was 1758. There were, of course, many horns carved during this period that had no artistic merit, but these were not included in the tabulation.

We can only speculate as to how much influence the frontier environment, with its constant threat of confrontation with the French and their Indian allies, had on the new style of horn carving. It seems obvious, however, that since a major change in approach occurred during this period, those trying circumstances *did* affect horn development. The French and English had been enemies in North America since the early part of the Seventeenth Century, but it wasn't until the Louisburg Expedition of 1745 that major expeditions of Provincial (and British Regular) troops were planned and carried out. And it wasn't until these expeditions took place that the carved powder horn appeared.

Constant danger from the French and Indians had been a fact of life for English colonists living on the New York and New England frontiers during the Seventeenth and first half of the Eighteenth Centuries. Both sides raided the trading posts, block houses, and settlements of the enemy, encouraging their Indian allies to do a large percentage of the damage, but neither the British nor the French royal government supervised the

military actions. In 1665, Louis XIV, as part of his ambitious expansion plans, became involved in North American colonial affairs when he sent regular troops to Nova Scotia and Canada to construct fortifications at strategic points along the rivers. In 1669, France established the Ministry of the Marine to oversee its colonies. Troops that were enlisted in France were encouraged to settle in Canada when their tour of duty expired. Officers, for the most part, were native Canadians who were well acquainted with the terrain and the type of warfare waged in North America.

In 1686, Holland, Spain, Sweden, several German states, and England formed the League of Augsburg, whose purpose was to fend off Louis' encroachments. The American phase of the League began during King Williams' War (1689-1697). Small detachments of British engineers, infantry, and artillery were sent to strengthen and man North American military posts. It wasn't until Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), that major shipments of troops recruited in England, Ireland, and Scotland reached North America. Provincial regiments, raised to augment the regular British regiments, were often forced to supply their own accoutrements and were thus not so well equipped as the regulars.

One essential item usually not available to provincial troops was the cartridge box, a container for the pre-fixed cartridges used in flintlock muskets. These were leather-covered wooden blocks with ten to thirty drilled holes to hold paper-wrapped measures of powder and one to three cast-lead balls that fit the bore of the soldier's musket. Before battle, artificers, the work force of the artillery, prepared the paper cartridges in a part of the powder magazine called the "laboratory."

Provincial soldiers relied on hollowed-out cow's-horn containers to carry the powder with which they made their own cartridges. These were the most popular powder carriers on the frontier. Horns were light, durable, waterproof when properly sealed (they would float if dropped in water), non-



Jacob Gay's "JG" initials as a signature on the Mills horn.

breakable, and, because of their contours, comfortable to wear slung over the shoulder on a strap that rested against the wearer's side.

The North American frontier provided a ready market for the horn powder container, which was a by-product of the European and South American beef and tanning industries. Every farmer, trader, and trapper on the frontier needed a musket for protection and for hunting. He would buy a horn large enough to hold at least one pound of powder, boil it and remove the pith, scrape and rub the surface, fit a wooden plug to the large open end, trim the tip, and fit a stopper to the opening. He would often seal the wooden plug end with paint or pitch. When it was finished, the horn measured from twelve to twenty inches. Beginning with King George's War, owners began to decorate the surfaces of their horns with engraved designs and slogans. Although European and Oriental precedents existed, I have never seen a North American decorated horn made prior to King George's War.

Except for a few of the earliest horns of the King George's War period, all of the examples included in this study embody the important transition away from traditional Continental and English decorative motifs and formats. Judging the value of a powder horn on the basis of its associations with famous persons and important historical events was the model of horn collecting put forward by amateur historian Rufus A. Grider in his writings and illustrations of the subject. Grider was a late nineteenth-century inhabitant of Canajoharie, New York, and one of the earliest powder-horn enthusiasts. Most collectors and curators have unquestioningly used his criteria ever since, but they were definitely not the basis of selection in this study. We chose horns solely for their artistic merit and appeal.

Constructing the graph enabled me to pinpoint schools of carvers whose styles of design, calligraphy, and verse revealed when and where they worked. This, in turn, equipped me to compare similar horns within the same school — to note varying degrees of skill in decoration and to conclude that less talented carvers in each style must have adopted the better carvers' most popular designs. I was then able to document the dominance of certain ideas within each school. This led to the conclusion that innovative carving traditions had been established in North America that were different from the European traditions that preceded them.

The next step was to isolate specific characteristics of the few carvers who signed their work. Even if an individual maker signed only a couple of examples, his hand can be recognized in other, unsigned horns. Because of this, I felt it was important to include as many horns from identified carvers as possible.

Where did carvers acquire their designs? The evidence suggests that there was no single source. Europeans had been decorating metal powder flasks and cow- or stag-horn powder containers since the sixteenth century. Designs that accomplished craftsmen at European courts carved or chased on horn or metal probably originated in the workrooms of French master gun designers, particularly those who worked for Louis XIII and Louis XIV between 1630 and 1710. It is highly unlikely,

however, that any of these royal treasures ever reached North American frontier forts. By 1700 Continental and English craftsmen were producing simpler incised powder horns, but their designs were still based on traditional European themes and were thus very different from North American horn designs. The decorative style that emerged in New England and New York during King George's War represented a distinct break from this traditional background and acquired a freedom of expression that reflected the frontier environment. And as we have seen, the widespread use of powder horns was itself a distinctly American practice.

By the time of the French and Indian War, distinctive frontier powder horns reflected the fantasies and feelings of both officers and soldiers. This tradition persisted into the Revolution and isolated schools of carvers carried the style far into the nineteenth century. But the high point of artistic accomplishment in horn carving passed halfway through the Revolution, when powder horns were superseded by cartridge boxes. Horns carved after that time were more souvenirs than necessary pieces of equipment.

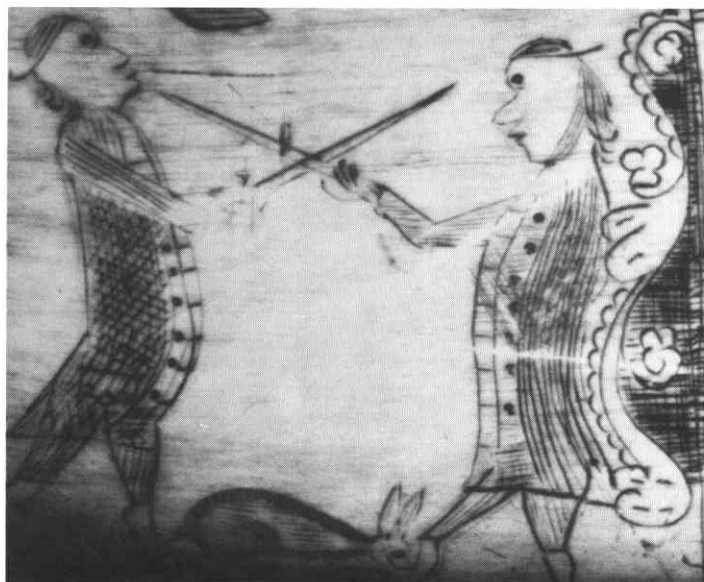
King George's War (1744-1748)

Suddenly, in 1746, a definite style of carved powder horn appeared in several examples made at North American frontier forts: talented carvers working during King George's War developed a recognizable manner that combined traditional European designs with innovative new motifs and compositional strategies.

The initial style, which formed the basics for the great developments of the 1750s, had the following index features:

A) Calligraphy that is a composite of Gothic and German Renaissance lettering. Stylized, double-line letters are rigidly incised and accented with diagonal dashes or dots between the lines. A sharp "V" is formed at the junction of branches of letters, as well as at the ends of letters and of most date numerals.

B) Elaborate scrolled decorations of foliate or geometric types that are applied to the branches of many letters.



A decorative detail on the Hamilton Davidson horn.



Woodcuts from magazines, such as this one from the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September, 1773, published in London, showing a New Zealand war canoe from Capt. Cook's voyages.



John Parker's 1775 powder horn used the New Zealand canoe woodcut, changing it to American Indians in an Indian war canoe!



A Lake George carver who signed some of his horns "JW" engraved this signature, "JW his Pene" on a 1758 Fort Edward horn.



Another detail from the "JW" Fort Edward horn carved for Robert Baird.



Zebulon Waterman's 1758 Lake George school horn attributed to the "Selkrig-Page" carver has this mounted soldier.



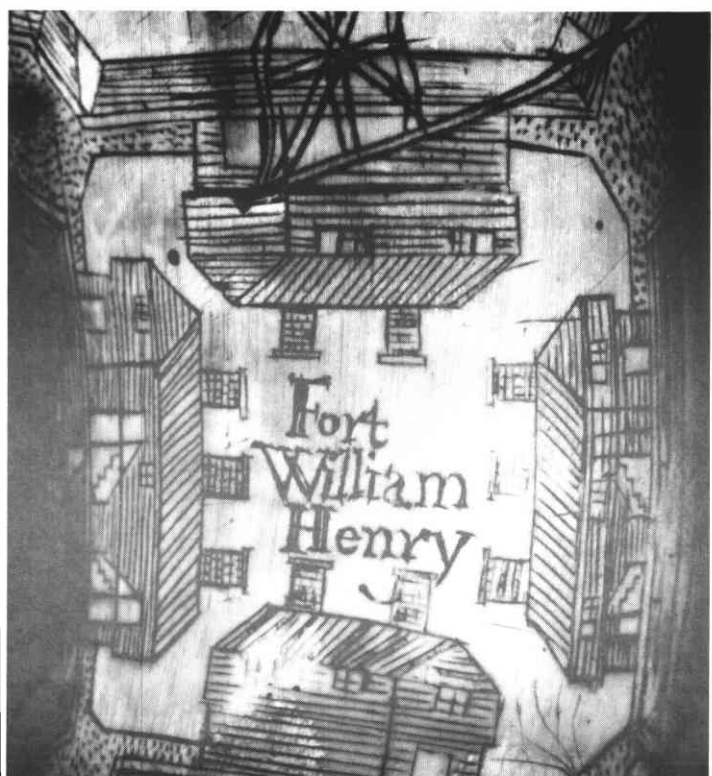
Another vignette on the Waterman horn shows this formation of cartoon-like soldiers in firing position.



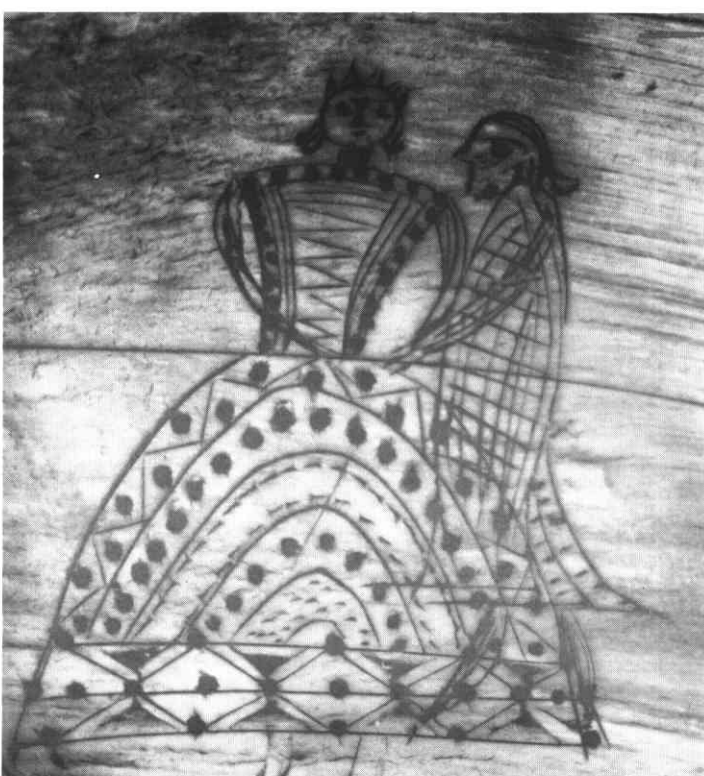
A formation of soldiers firing on the 1758 Aaron Page horn by the Selkrig-Page carver at Lake George.



The Hamilton Davidson horn by Jacob Gay in 1772 is a fine example of the transition from the French and Indian War to the Revolution. This "between-the-wars" period retains the Lake George School features with an added dimension of patriotism.



1756 Lake George School horn with an accurate diagram of Fort William Henry. Thomas Diamond-Smith horn.



A dancing couple on Sgt. Ichabod French's 1757 Lake George School horn by an unknown carver.

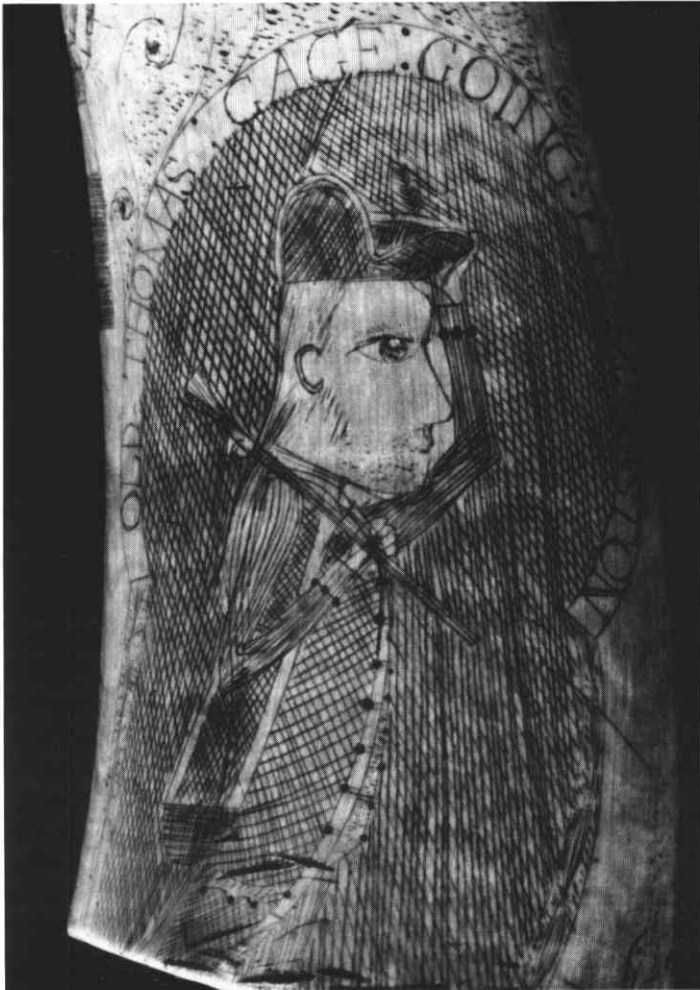
C) Geometric designs that are often incised between words or between the letters of one word.

D) Elaborate geometric or foliate borders that are placed above and below inscriptions.

Relatively few horns survive from this formative period. In contrast to horns from the two later wars, those from King George's War lack campaign locations and the owner's military rank. Some owners can be traced in enlistment records but existing rosters are incomplete and many owners' identities remain unknown. It is obvious, however, that the unidentified horns are not random efforts but are closely related to examples that can be traced to specific military encampments.

Accepting the King George's school as the source of later schools, we can detect in several examples characteristics remarkably similar to those of the Lake George school of the 1750s. Their elaborate calligraphy, geometric devices, and animated depictions of people, animals, birds, and fish clearly influenced later horn decoration.

The 1748 Samuel Crosby horn exhibits the most radical departure from the restrained King George's War style. This example is inscribed "Shrewsbury," birthplace of probably the most important horn carver during the French and Indian War, whose biography will appear in more detail later



Style of the Siege of Boston School is shown in two views of this horn by an unknown carver. This obverse side shows "Old Thomas Gage Going From Boston": the British Governor of Massachusetts Bay evacuated Boston with his troops in 1776.

in this paper. Above and below the Crosby horn's inscription is an elaborate scrolled border executed with great freedom, as is the whimsical character in period garb.

Fully rigged sailing ships sport cartoonlike figureheads, and one ship has a rooster weathervane atop the mainmast. A variety of geometric devices separates the words of inscriptions. Stylized lunettes form borders at both the spout (narrow end) and plug (large end with wooden insertion). A second Shrewsbury horn, in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is engraved "SHREWSBURY * NOVEMBER * THE * 9 * 1749 * ASA * HAPGOOD * HIS HORN *." The asterisks stand for a diamond-shaped device that Lake George School carvers of the 1750s often used. Other forward-looking features are the neat and simple foliate and geometric borders and the shaded double-line block lettering.

A third Shrewsbury horn is engraved "SHREWSBURY * JANUARY * 14 * A DOMINI/LEUT * WHITNEY/HIS HORN /1750." Family tradition holds that this example descended from Lieutenant Samuel Whitney of Stratford, Connecticut. Existing records do not confirm this history, but there *is* a Whitney of this name who was born in Westminister, Massachusetts, in 1719. He served in the Massachusetts Militia, and held the commission of lieutenant in that province. In light of the Shrewsbury inscription, this Whitney is obviously a reasonable candidate as the horn's owner.

The calligraphy of the Whitney horn is almost identical to that of the Crosby horn, with simpler diamond devices between words. A snake labeled "BRAZEN/SERPENT" runs the length of the horn. Schools of fish and flocks of birds surround a grotesque creature labeled "Divel." Other motifs include weedlike borders beneath the snake and a geometric design composed of shadow scrolls and three sunbursts. This is the earliest horn I know of that gives the owner's rank.

These three horns demonstrate that many important features of the Lake George School almost certainly had their inception in Shrewsbury, a relatively isolated frontier town about twenty miles northwest of Boston. Companies of troops raised for the King George's and French and Indian Wars marched through Shrewsbury on their way to forts closer to Canada. The carver who appears to have set the standard for Lake George style engraving was born in Shrewsbury.

His name was John Bush, son of Georges Bush (his mother's name is unknown), a prosperous farmer from the North Parish of Shrewsbury (now Boyleston). Georges, a free black, was born in South America or the Caribbean and emigrated to Massachusetts Bay early in the eighteenth century. He died in 1767 at the age of eighty, leaving personal property and land to five surviving children. Three of his sons had died while serving in the Massachusetts militia during the French and Indian War: Georges Bush, Jr., died at Lake George September 25, 1755, Joseph Bush died during the 1756 campaign (April 8, 1756), and John, the youngest and the carver, was captured by the French and Indians at the fall of Fort William Henry August 9, 1757. He was never heard from again.

On September 14, 1758, Georges Bush wrote to Governor Pownall of Massachusetts, asking for help in locating his

son John, whom he described as "a mulatto Fellow, about 30 years of age." He explained that his son was taken prisoner by the Indians serving with the French under General Montcalm at the surrender of Fort William Henry and had last been seen alive as a prisoner. Bush asked that the governor inquire if his son was still alive in a prison outside Quebec and that he help in securing his son's release.

John Bush is listed as a clerk in a Shrewsbury company during some of the campaigns he enlisted in, beginning in 1747 and including 1757, indicating that he could keep accounts and had a legible hand. If his horns are any indication, he probably wrote an excellent copperplate script.

Unanswered questions about John Bush are many. Where and when did he start to carve horns? Did he originate the Shrewsbury carving style, or did he learn it from an older man? The crudity of Shrewsbury horns of the late 1740s is in complete contrast to Bush's excellent work of the mid-1750s. At the same time, at least two of his 1756 horns are of lesser quality. Did severe weather conditions or physical illness inhibit him sometimes?

Bush's calligraphic styles, his formats, and his decorative motifs became the basis for the Lake George School during the French and Indian War. Known to have followed in Bush's engraving tradition are the Selkrig-Page carver, the J.W. carver, and the Memento Mori carver, all at work during the campaigns of 1757 through those of 1761. A number of unsigned horns carved by hands of which only a single example is extant also follows the Bush tradition. Thus, it appears that an obscure black farmer can be regarded as one of the founders of an entire tradition of American folk art.

The Lake George School (1755-1763)

Most Lake George School horns were engraved at a string of forts from Albany to Lake Champlain and up the Mohawk River to Lake Ontario, where the most important battles for control of North America were fought between English and French forces and their Indian allies. Only about one-quarter of the hundreds of surviving horns from this period received the spectacular carving now identified with the small group of artists whom we have been discussing.

Inspiration for the calligraphy of the Lake George School and that of the earlier King George's War School could go back to ecclesiastical and civil manuscript writing on official documents of the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries. Calligraphy manuals, like John de Beauchesne's and John Baidon's *A Booke Containing Divers Sortes of Handes* (London, 1571), John Seddon's *Penman's Paradise* (London, 1695), or George Bickham's *Penmanship in its utmost Beauty* (London, 1731) were obvious sources, although it is difficult to substantiate their use by New England writing masters. A more logical source would seem to be engraved trade cards, labels on trunks, and engraving on official military and civil commissions, bonds, currency, deeds, prints, and book title pages. A fairly consistent style was adopted in the 1750s after the initial experimentation with the simple calligraphy of the King George's War period. Imitation in the camps and forts throughout the Lake George region undoubtedly made this style standard.

The index features of the Lake George school are far

more elaborate than those of the King George's War School:

A) Gothic, German Renaissance, and copperplate calligraphic styles are freely combined, sometimes augmented by block lettering, illuminated initials, and decorative devices like finials on letters. The engraving is looser and more accomplished than it was in the 1740s.

B) The inscriptions follow fairly consistent formats and can include military rank, name, place, and date; rhymes; captions on forts and animals; brief accounts of battles (rare and often suspect) and mottoes on coats-of-arms.

C) Lettering sometimes incorporates pictorial devices like animals, birds, and human and grotesque faces.

D) Detailed borders appear above and below inscriptions and at throats and plugs. Designs include chevrons, saw-tooth and zig-zag patterns, diamonds, triangular or shield-shapes, shells, and scrolls.

E) Representations of people, animals, caricatures or grotesques cover a wide range of subjects, including soldiers, unromanticized Indians, women, ship figureheads, sea monsters, mermaids, gargoyles, and cherubs. Often figures are combined in vignettes.

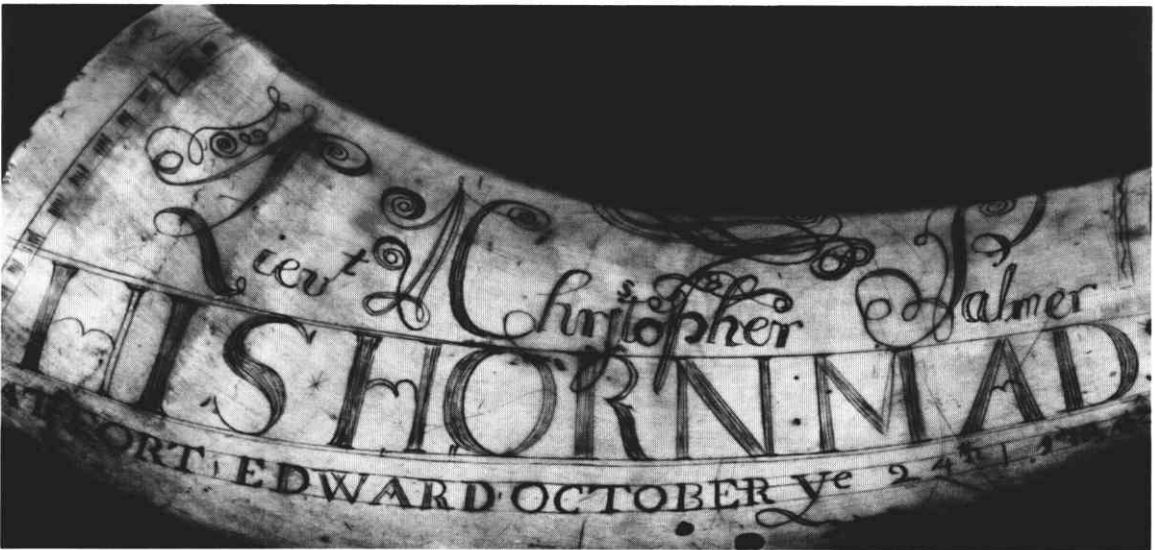
F) Soldiers are frequently depicted performing the evolutions of warfare or drill. When cavalry is portrayed, the horses often have the same expression as the riders. Indians are depicted as naked savages and



The reverse side depicts a man (probably Patrick Henry) holding a key (probably to Liberty) with a cartouche above his head: LIBERTY or DEATH.



"The Rose is Red the Vilet Blue and A fols Love Cannot be Tru" is the rhyme on the 1757 Thadeus Bennitt horn carved at Fort No. 4.



"Lieut. Christopher Palmer HIS HORN MADE at Fort Edward October ye 24th, 1758." A fine example of the Lake George School by an unknown carver.



William Patterson's horn, dated 1760, is an excellent example of abstract carving of the Lake George School period, as well as of a ship with a mystery flag of the period.



1760 Crown Point horn carved by Jacob Gay for John Mills: a wonderful example of illuminated lettering.



Jacob Gay carved a horn for Jonathan Clark Lewis in 1773 that exhibits the illuminated lettering of the Lake George School. Lewis was aide-de-camp to Brig. Gen. Olive Prescott of Massachusetts during the Revolution and this horn probably was carved when the New England militia began to arm themselves in preparation to forming the New England Army in 1775.



Connecticut soldier George Morley's horn illustrates an abstract version of the slogan, "Liberty or Death", by showing the word "Liberty" within a tombstone. A superb engraver carved this horn at Camp No. 3 in December, 1775.

not as majestic warriors.

G) Other common motifs include scenes of towns, diagrams of forts, ships under sail, birds in flight, schools of fish, and implements of war, construction, smoking, and drinking.

H) Ornament distinct from borders includes scrollwork, floral and vine designs, and baroque cartouches.

The earliest Lake George School horns appeared in 1755. They are the work of two different engravers, each of whom produced two horns dated 1755. John Bush, one of the two, signed one of his horns. The other carver did not sign his and we have assigned him the last name on each horn: the Hill-Tyler carver. Both artists employed the King George's War combination of Gothic and German Renaissance lettering but elaborated on the rigid structure of the earlier style. They introduced whimsical birds, fishes, and "funny faces," as well as beautifully executed floral and geometric designs that filled the special voids inherent in horn surfaces.

One horn by each carver refers to the Battle of Lake George and is dated at the time of that conflict, September 8, 1755. One of the Bush horns, that of Thomas Williams (whose house still stands at Deerfield), has an engraved rhyme, and three of the four have engraved place names and dates. These four horns present the standard pattern for the Lake George horns that follow.

No other horn by the Hill-Tyler carver is known, but seven others by John Bush are extant, all dated 1756 and located, according to the inscriptions, at Fort Edward, Lake George, or Fort William Henry. The finest Bush horn, in my opinion, is the David Baldwin example carved at Fort William Henry and dated October 18, 1756. It has all the master's best characteristics, including superb illuminated lettering of the word "W A R," incised chevron borders, and scrolled floral and geometric borders, fine copperplate calligraphy with winglike serifs, a four-line rhyme, and a scalloped throat with cherubs and crosses. A year earlier, in 1755, when Bush carved Thomas Williams' horn, he also

carved one for the surgeon's nephew, William Williams. Calligraphically, this horn is superb, but it lacks the verse of the uncle's horn. It does have wonderful scroll and floral decoration as well as fish and incised chevron borders. William studied medicine under his uncle and served as surgeon's mate, also under his uncle, who was surgeon of the Massachusetts Regiment during the 1755 campaign. The inscription on the William Williams horn is one of the finest examples of illuminated lettering that Bush produced during the short period that he carved.

Bush disappeared from view after his capture on August 9, 1757, but a number of carvers perpetuated the key aspects of the Lake George School he founded. They continued the tradition through the end of the war, producing the finest examples during the "golden age" of horn carving, 1744-1763. Of this span of nearly twenty years, the most prolific occurred between 1755 and 1763, the period of the French and Indian War.

The Lake George School was subsequently incorporated into the carving style that emerged in the period between the end of the French and Indian War and the beginning of the American Revolution. During these years horns took on the additional theme of patriotism and began to drop that of loyalty to the British crown. Although American Revolutionary horns were designed with patriotic themes and slogans, they still clung to the Lake George format, maintaining calligraphic and design standards, but with somewhat less consistency than in the earlier period.

During the interval between the end of the French-Indian War and the beginning of the American Revolution (1763-1774) there was little need to raise troops except for The Siege of Havana in 1762 and Pontiac's Rebellion of 1763-1764. A few horns were produced during these campaigns, and the existing militia system was responsible for a few more, and a few other horns may have been produced for hunting purposes and, perhaps, relate to the build-up of martial spirit that accompanied New England's resistance to the Sugar and Currency Acts of 1764, The Stamp Act and the Quartering Act of 1765, The Boston Massacre of 1770, the Boston Tea Party of 1773, The Boston Port Act of 1774, the



The distinctive lions on this horn carved in 1777 for Nathaniel Sunsaman, a Connecticut soldier from Lyme who was a Mohegan Indian, are a characteristic of Siege of Boston carving by James Greenfield, also from Lyme.

seizing of Provincial powder at Charlestown, Mass. by British troops in 1774 and the establishment of Provincial governments and Minute Men.

The horns generally retain the characteristics of the Lake George School horns with, in many instances, the addition of patriotic motifs or sayings. The most prominent carver of this period was Jacob Gay from Allenstown, New Hampshire, who carved in the Lake George School during the French-Indian War and continued carving until after the Revolution. Probably the most outstanding horn of this period is the horn Gay carved for Hamilton Davidson in 1772 depicting the scene of the Boston Massacre that was produced as a print, first, by Henry Pelham, and then by Paul Revere. This horn is a prime example of the transition from the Lake George School to the Siege of Boston School because it exhibits the best of Lake George School qualities with the sensitivity of patriotism that emerged in the 1774-1777 period.

Early in 1775, when Massachusetts created minutemen organizations out of a third of their existing militia, and other colonies followed suit, many of those enlisted had to provide their own equipment. In most instances powder horns were more readily available than cartridge boxes and, when the alarm was called on April 19, 1775, after the Battles of Lexington and Concord, many of the horns were hastily inscribed for identification purposes only, just before the men marched for the siege camps around Boston.

The true Siege of Boston horns began to appear when the men who encamped around Boston at Roxbury, Charlestown, Cambridge, and other fortifications were settled in. Carvers began producing horns during the summer of 1775 with the name of the owner, the location of the encampment, the date, sometimes the name of the regiment and often topographical diagrams of the fort, the town of Boston and surrounding landscapes. Two carvers who signed their horns were Jacob Gay and James Greenfield, of Lyme, Connecticut. The characteristics of Siege of Boston horns are:

A) Neat and measured calligraphy is not as important a compositional feature (except in a few instances) as it is on Lake George School horns.

B) Topographical sketches of fortifications, encampments, waterways, town views, buildings, and ships in harbors.

C) Imaginative animals, monsters, fish, birds, mermaids and loreleis.

D) Formations of soldiers.

E) Patriotic vignettes, portraits, and slogans, sometimes satirical in nature.

G) Ambitious architectural devices to frame vignettes and slogans.

H) Weapons and accoutrements as fillers.

The decorations on period maps and prints provide a point of comparison for many of the compositional strategies and individual motifs. The maps were available in book and magazine illustrations, not on functional field maps.

As equipment became more plentiful at the end of 1776 and into 1777, horns gave way to cartridge boxes. Many horns were carved late in the war as mementos, and a good many of those were used as hunting equipment. The decoration on some of these horns could have been executed after the war and back dated to a veteran's time of service.

If horns are to be looked upon as art objects then the primary requisite is the quality of the engraving; secondly, on the content of the decoration; thirdly, on the disposition of the decoration, and lastly on historical factors like provenance and events recorded.

In other words, a horn can be an important historical document and still not be a work of art.

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The Old Byran Inn