

# MASTER HORNER PROFILE

## HENRY BOWMAN

BY RICK SHEETS, MASTER HORNER, HCH EDITOR

### Master Horner Profiles

This is the 17th article in a series on those members of the Honourable Company of Horners who have achieved the status of *Master Horner*.

Featured in this article is Henry Bowman, Master Horner, whose profile will also be added to the Guild's website at [hornguild.org](http://hornguild.org) along with the other Master Horners.

Currently there are 17 members who have attained this status and each one's contributions has been integral to the growth and development of our Guild.

The 17 *Master Horners* include:

<b>John Proud</b>	<b>John Kiselica</b>
<b>Art DeCamp</b>	<b>Ed Long</b>
<b>Carl Dumke</b>	<b>Rick Sheets</b>
<b>Rex Reddick</b>	<b>Roland Cadle</b>
<b>Lee Larkin</b>	<b>Joe Becker</b>
<b>Erv Tschanz</b>	<b>Walter Mabry</b>
<b>John DeWald</b>	<b>Clinton Byers</b>
<b>Tim Sanner</b>	<b>Henry Bowman</b>
<b>Willy Frankfort</b>	

In accordance with the Guild's Standing Rules, for anyone to become a Master Horner, an individual must "demonstrate a superlative level of ability in carving, heating and pressing, turning, engraving, and integrating woods and metals with cow horn by presenting three horn objects that demonstrate his or her ability to the Awards Committee for evaluation," plus give "an original written and oral presentation to the HCH at an annual meeting or to another accredited organization on some aspect of horn working or its history." Needless to say, this is a high standard that has been met by less than 4% of the Guild's membership. Each one has played a vital role through their demonstrated artisan skills and leadership abilities in making the HCH what it is today.

### Introducing Henry Bowman Master Horner

Henry Bowman brings to the ranks of the Masters a determination rarely seen. He is an artisan, a natural educator, and excels in multiple aspects of horn work. He exudes enthusiasm for history and the art of hornwork. Henry's interest in horn work began with a powder horn building class held at Gunstocks Plus in Oxford, Ohio – the shop of master woodworker Virgil Otto. He intended to build "just one" nice powder horn to accoutre the flintlock rifle he'd just built. Things changed that day when he encountered the teacher of the class – Roland Cadle.



■ Curled mull made as a special gift for his friend and mentor Roland Cadle.

Within one month, Henry had asked Roland to mentor him and joined the Honourable Company of Horners (HCH) at the advice of Roland. Two months later, he had built and equipped a dedicated horn shop in the garage, purchased a bag of horns and books by Jay Hopkins and Art DeCamp, and began a generous part-time (3-day/30-hour week) arrangement with his employer. Five months after the class, Henry was fully retired and putting full-time efforts into horn work and its relative pursuits. A little over 5 years after meeting Roland, Henry became the 18th Master Horner in the HCH.

The skills Henry brought along when he entered the field included formal art training and work experience, woodworking experience, machining experience, teaching training and experience, a lifelong love of history, and a tenacious thirst for learning and improvement.

After a few years working as a musician, his eclectic career included work as a technical illustrator (with international awards), heading the defense and federal products strategic business unit at a leading technical publications house, Director of Sales Operations at a medium-sized IT business, and finally work as a program



■ Master Horner and Founder Roland Cadle pictured with newly advanced Master Horner Henry Bowman and his wife, Dianna Bowman.

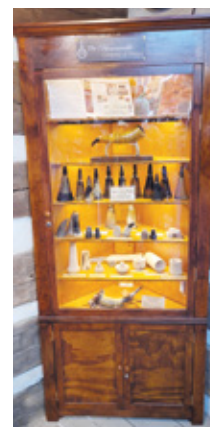
manager at an engineering and manufacturing company producing radio frequency and microwave communication devices for military and space applications. His lifetime of teaching includes drums, martial arts, Sunday School, motorcycle safety, and various business softwares and skills.

Henry and his wife Dianna live outside Middletown, Ohio, only 6 miles from where he grew up in the rural farm community outside tiny West Elkton, Ohio. They have three sons and, so far, one grandson. Together they enjoy family time, motorcycle trips, fishing, historic sites and events, music, and visiting small diners.

Henry believes the key factors to reaching the milestone of becoming a Master Horner were his loving wife Dianna, who fully supported his efforts, and his mentor Roland who relentlessly pressed him toward a level far beyond his own vision for his work. The impact of the kindness of Mel Hankla, Jay Hopkins, Art DeCamp, and others, who shared their collections and knowledge of early horns cannot be overlooked either.

His ever-growing collection of antique horn items includes powder horns, snuff mulls, horn cups, horn spoons, ink horns and horn penners, glasses, razors, whistles, calling horns, buttons, oval boxes, round boxes, and even an 18th century baby bottle. His extensive horn-related library includes books about early powder horns and other horn work, 18th century writings about period craftsmanship, and other relative historical information. Two copies of several books are held: one for the shelf and one for the shop (replete with annotation.) He has an extensive digital horn-based library of photographs collected online and thousands that he's taken at museums and shows.

Henry is an active member of the National Muzzleloading Rifle Association (NMLRA). In addition to his booth on Commercial Row, he teaches annual powder horn classes, with assistance from leather worker Jeff Luke teaches an annual powder horn & rifle pouch class that is free for 12-15 year olds,



and gives the Sunday evening Back Porch Talk at Gunmaker's Hall during the national events. In 2022, Henry built for the NMLRA a local-historic-looking display cabinet that sets in the corner of Gunmaker's Hall in Friendship, Indiana. The cabinet is dedicated to the HCH. Henry creates a new themed exhibit for each of the week-long national competitions held each June and September. Thousands of visitors get a peek into the pursuits of the HCH through this display.

An active member of the Contemporary Longrifle Association, Henry donates at least one item to the annual auction. For several years, he teamed with much younger artists, such as Jonah Cain, to create accouterment sets for the fundraiser. Working with the younger artists is important to him.

A lifelong "history nerd", he's been invited to represent horn work at Sons of the American Revolution and the Jonesborough Historical Society in Tennessee.



His work has received awards such as Judges Choice and Most Historic at the Gunmakers Fair at Kempton, and several First Place ribbons at the HCH Horn Fair. However, his most precious awards come in the form of replicating family heirlooms, creating new family heirlooms, and making things that people will treasure. Henry's work has brought tears to the eyes of at least two tough guys.

The future of his horn journey includes: continued investigation of historical horn technology and characteristics, continued teaching of traditional/orthodox horn work, the onerous study of Ohio-made powder horns, and increasing the quality and artistry of his work.

*Congratulations – Well Done!!*