

CONTINUING THE TRADITION

Cincinnati Literary Club

Joe Moran 2/22/16

Cincinnati, Ohio has no shortage of fine art collections – local art museum's benefactor's names would be widely recognized by this august audience; Emerys, Tafts, Fleischmann's... However, it may not be a well known fact, but Cincinnati is a treasure trove of fine antique firearms collections as well. The Peters Cartridge Company of Kings Mills, Ohio, was one of the world's largest suppliers of ammunition. Benjamin Kittredge & Co., a dealer in firearms, military and sporting goods, was one of the biggest national distributors of firearms in the mid 19th century. Several of the charter members of the premiere gun collecting group, The American Society of Antique Arms Collectors, resided here in our hometown.

The William M. Locke (1894-1972) collection of Cincinnati, Ohio is the finest antique American handgun collection ever assembled in the world and was located 10 miles from our club. As an insurance man who lived in a modest home in East Hyde Park on Ault Park Avenue, he had an advantage of knowing who had the great collections. His ultimate advantage was that he was one of the first to

know when a major firearms collector had passed away. Bill would occasionally pay trashmen from the deceased individual's neighborhoods for leads on where the waste collectors dumped guns that were disposed of the previous day by the widows. He successfully dumpster dived for guns and was able to retrieve some very historical carelessly discarded objects.

Bill grew up in North Dakota and then moved to Nebraska. By putting ads in local farm journals he was able to start a profitable side business in addition to his Stutz car dealership. The guns that he found in the Plains region were generally well-worn from high use. Eventually he joined the Travelers Insurance Group in Omaha, Nebraska, but relocated to the company's Cincinnati branch. The main reason for his relocation was to be nearer to the New England region where many of the antique guns were in excellent condition due to lack of hard use by frontiersmen. Firearms inventor Samuel Colt only made 15 presentation grade revolvers with gold inlay, Locke owned five of these guns. In the early 1960's there was a gathering at America's oldest museum, the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut to showcase the finest presentation Colt Revolvers in

existence. Many of these firearms were made for royalty. Of the 225 guns on display 25%+ were owned by Mr. Locke.

Immediately after the death of Mr. Locke in 1972 four police guards were placed on duty at his home on round the clock shifts to protect this valuable collection. From out of this collection came the Sultan of Brunei's Colt revolver. Today this revolver is in the Arms and Armour collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and is insured for \$3 million. Conservatively the current value of his collection would be estimated at \$100 million if it were to be publically auctioned. Guns that came out of the Locke collection are highly sought after at antique gun shows throughout the country.

For over ten years I have been attending various types of gun shows across the United States. Most of the shows are events that I highly anticipate as I schedule my calendar for the new year. The gun shows that I attend and enjoy the most are the ones that are related to sporting guns, Kentucky rifles and the classically embellished antique firearms. Perhaps even to a greater extent I enjoy the camaraderie at the shows and the passion that true collectors exude. The gun

collecting fraternity is the most tightly knit group of collectors known. It is absolutely true that if a gun dealer writes a bad check in California that within two hours fellow firearms dealers in New York will be informed.

Gun shows and gun collectors seem to have a stigma placed upon them by society. The majority of Americans would be very quick to jump on the anti-gun bandwagon and qualify this group of collectors as degenerates. There are many easy talking points of why gun trading is a nefarious activity to engage in. I would likely agree with many of the arguments that one would make when he is quick to stereotype this segment of the collecting fraternity.

The overwhelming number of seedy “ammo and cammo” shows which are so prevalent today have little appeal to me as a collector. Additionally the mass-produced firearms that involve no level of craftsmanship and are made of cheap synthetic materials would not meet my standard as a genuine collectable. The guns that I do feel are truly collectable are the specimens demonstrating high art and craftsmanship. Many of the current gun show promoters are encouraging the

sale of modern guns with high round capacity. Again, I question these types of firearms as falling into the category of a “work of high art.”

Tonight in the next forty minutes, I will try to persuade you that there are many gun and hunting shows that I feel are respectable and that are important for our culture. I would even argue that antique firearms collectors are the most knowledgeable of all antique collectors. Believe me, there are a lot of extremely well-informed and lifetime students in this collection field circulating at these shows. Secondly, I will briefly explain the historical premise of the founding of the National Rifle Association in 1871 and why young Americans today should be encouraged to discover the true purpose of why it was created. It is peculiar that about 150 years later that history is repeating itself again. In the last decade there has been a major downturn in the number of young collectors with interest in firearms or much less any other antiques.

The fall season is a much anticipated time of the year for firearms collectors. Autumn is the season for hunting and the shows cater to this theme. Sporting guns, vintage gun powder cans, and duck decoys are prevalent on exhibitor’s

tables at these events. Two years ago upon the advice of Literary Club president, Jack McDonough, I decided to attend the premiere duck hunting festival in the United States, the Waterfowl Festival. I honestly was surprised by the high caliber of sportsmen that attended this event – especially with my pre-conceived perception of rough-cut duck hunters. A general stereotype of duck hunters can be summarized in this quote. *Duck hunters expect and almost welcome musty beds, lumpy oatmeal and muddy coffee. If the evening meal comprises anything more epicurean than meat, beans and canned fruit, they decide that they have been deposited in a nest of sissy sports.* I assume that the gentlemen that I met at this festival have encountered both extremes of the duck hunting experience.

Every year in mid-November, duck hunting sportsmen convene on the eastern shore of Maryland in the charming town of Easton for the annual Waterfowl Festival. Thursday night is opening night and there are numerous rotating cocktail parties and previews of the sporting collectables at homes and exhibition halls. The downtown streets are blocked off and people circulate to examine the wildlife paintings and sculptures. Eventually the crowd migrates late in the

evening to the town's central landmark, the Tidewater Inn, to close out the evening with a fine Brandy nightcap.

The following day there are several events located at the numerous satellite locations throughout town. The best ride in the park is the "shop and swap" events for the sale and trade of decoys and vintage shotguns. Additionally the local antique stores are well-stocked for this event with duck decoys, firearms and sporting art. Other events in conjunction with the festival include fishing demonstrations and seminars on various sporting topics relating to duck hunting.

Maryland has a higher concentration of ducks during seasonal migrations than anywhere else in America. Fellow Literary Club member Gibby Carey and his family were members of the Wroten Duck Club in Maryland and is familiar with this region. The National Duck Decoy Museum is located an hour north of Baltimore in Havre De Grace, Maryland in the heart of the Atlantic Flyway on the Susquehanna River. Another noteworthy duck decoy museum, the Ward Museum, is located on the eastern shore of Maryland in nearby Salisbury. Guyette and Deters, the world's largest auctioneer of duck decoys, is

headquartered in nearby St. Michaels, Maryland. St. Michaels is the next town west of Easton and is home of the renown hotel, The Inn at Perry Cabin, on the Eastern Shore where many of the Waterfowl Festival attendees choose to stay.

There are numerous duck hunting clubs on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. These clubs are well represented at the festival with impressive displays of artifacts and club memorabilia from the “Golden Age” of duck hunting. My host for the weekend was John Sullivan, a Duck Decoy Hall of Fame member who took me around the show during the opening night festivities. The following day he introduced me to historical exhibits on duck hunting clubs of the early 20th century. Mr. Sullivan has written numerous books on Duck Hunting Clubs in the Maryland and Virginia region.

Six months later and a little closer to home in late April is the Midwest Duck Decoy Collector’s Association Show in St. Charles, Illinois. This event takes place at Pheasant Run Resort Hotel about an hour west of Chicago. Although this hotel has likely seen better days, it is enormous and is the perfect venue for this show. It

has large convention rooms and entertainment areas in addition to its proximity to the Mississippi flyway along the Illinois River.

This region along the Illinois River near Peoria, Illinois, has long been a haven for duck hunters. The Mississippi Flyway is also another major hub for seasonal duck migrations. In April ducks are returning from warmer winter climates, so the timing of this event is ripe for sportsmen.

An expert in duck decoys can easily identify the maker of the object by the individual maker's carving style. Styles can also vary widely from region to region. For instance, the Illinois duck decoys have different nuances from their Maryland counterparts. This particular region in Illinois is home to the Perdew family of decoy makers. Charles and Edna Perdew worked as a team creating decoys; Charlie carved and Edna painted. The Charles Perdew museum in nearby Henry, Illinois is solely dedicated to preserving the carved sculptures of these two sporting artists.

The most sought after decoy maker in today's market is Elmer Crowell from East Harwich, Massachusetts. His decoys have realized over a million dollars at auction for a single carved specimen. Other names duck decoy collectors seek out would be Mason Factory Duck Decoys made in Detroit, Michigan, the Ward Brothers decoys carved in Maryland and individual artist's names such as Charles 'Shang' Wheeler and Albert Laing.

The Midwest Duck Decoy Show officially starts off on Thursday afternoon with a decoy and sporting collectible auction by Guyette and Deters. Other auction houses specializing in decoys are in attendance at the show as well, including Copleys auctions of Boston, Massachusetts.

There is an official convention center a short walking distance from the hotel where the uninformed public is led to believe this show begins. However the true collectors have most likely been at the hotel for the previous five days participating in the largest hotel room-to-room duck decoy swap meet known to man. This is perhaps the most intriguing part of the show. Grown men spend about 4-5 days before the event starts going from room to room in the hotel

selling and trading hunting collectibles from morning until who knows how late into the evening on the two floors reserved for this activity. Rooms are literally chock full of decoys, vintage ammunition, duck hunting watercraft, posters, punt guns, 12 gauge shotguns, and fishing equipment. During the day there is plenty of food and drink in individual's rooms to lure in fellow collectors. Each night the hotel has complimentary receptions for these patrons on the back patio after a long day of trading. Then on Friday afternoon – the Guyette and Deters auction ends, and the room-to-room trading slows down and the “real” Midwest Duck Decoy Convention takes place at the nearby facility for two days.

The only thing similar to this event that I can relate to in my lifetime of collecting is the Heart of Country antique show at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee. Although the actual antique show takes place at the Opryland Hotel, a few days in advance, the peripheral hotels have room-to-room trading and most of the good antiques are off the market by the time the actual show commences. This is actually true of most antique shows in general. I particularly recall hotel rooms in Tennessee chock full of antiques and being able to see trading activities

occurring even on the exterior hotel balconies as I drove up the entrance way.

Yes, antique collectible events such as these are highly anticipated by collectors.

Somewhat related to these duck hunting conventions are the Safari Club events that take place in the winter months. Dallas Safari Club is held at the Omni Hotel and Convention Center in January. It is what one would expect from a Dallas sponsored event – wealth, glitz and big egos. It is the largest convention of game hunters in the world. The show begins with a preview party gala on Thursday evening. This includes dinner and a silent auction where incredible prices are realized for safaris in Africa and high-end hunting equipment.

The actual convention is over the top and features everything from the best sporting guns in the world to trips to exotic hunting destinations. There are safari excursion vehicles for sale that are actually over three stories high. One can book a seven day trip on a luxury rail train safari in Africa on the spot. This is a well-heeled crowd and there is a seven year waiting list for potential new vendors to set up at the following year's convention.

My host at last year's Dallas Safari Club was Texas rancher Cletus Klein. He took me around the convention and kept me abreast on the goings on. It was a privilege to be with this hunting legend who grew up orphaned and living on the streets of Texas until his teenage years. Now, many years later, he has had the good fortune to become the owner of an exotic game ranch in the Texas Hill country which I have visited several times. In a truly philanthropic gesture he has put 34 students through Texas A&M University on full scholarships over the past 10 years.

About three weeks after the Dallas Safari Club comes the ultimate convention for sportsmen, Safari Club International. The location was the Peppermill Inn and Casino in Reno, Nevada. The event has since moved to the Las Vegas, Nevada region in the last few years. Hunters from all over the world converge at SCI to receive their recognition for hunting achievements. It may be the greatest assemblage of wealth for one show in America. Every night live entertainment such as Alabama, and The Oak Ridge Boys are on the card

I learned of this event from legendary hunter Jack Malloy. I was at the convention in 2010 the year Mr. Malloy received SCI's highest honor "The World Hunting Award Ring." This ring represents those who hunted the most challenging and dangerous game animals on earth. To date, only 83 people have received this award. Please allow me a few moments to reflect on this extraordinary man.

I met John J. Malloy through my association with Cowan's Auctions. Long before I met Mr. Malloy in 2008, I had heard Bunyonesque stories about this man. I remember the first time I met him at the Maryland Arms Show. He was seated at his table with rare cases of vintage hunting ammunition around him for sale. Of all the gun dealers I have met, Jack is most worthy of a book recounting his adventures and accomplishments.

In the 1960s, three professional young men working in New York City: Jack Malloy, Mark Aziz and Val Forget, drove down to Texas for a weekend to set up at a gun show. They did so well in one weekend that the following Monday morning they announced to their respective employers that they were immediately

stepping down from their full-time white collar jobs. In a short time, all three of these gentlemen rose to the top of the firearms trade.

Perhaps 20 times I have been a guest at the Malloy home in the Catskills in New York. The home is situated right on the Beaverkill River, the birthplace of American Fly Fishing. Coincidentally their second home in Wye Mills, MD was located within 10 miles of Easton, Maryland, home of the Waterfowl Festival which I spoke about a few moments ago.

Prior to each of my visits with Mr. Malloy I would stop at the coffee shop in nearby fly fishing town of Roscoe, NY for a large cup of coffee before I would arrive at their home around 6:00pm. Once there his wife Helen would have dinner waiting on the table and Mr. Malloy would recount tales of his Safari adventures. I would listen intently and occasionally look over his shoulder at a commanding view of the Beaverkill River from the kitchen table. After dinner we would move into the game room, sit in the lounge chairs, surrounded by his prized hunting trophies, and continue listening intently to his stories late into the night.

Mr. Malloy has hunted with royalty all over the world. This is a man who spent several weeks in India every year advising the Maharajas which “London’s Best” shotgun they should use for their hunting expeditions. Mr. Malloy recounted a tale about a dangerous lion in a village nearby in India which he was paid by the Maharajahs to hunt down. The local hunters from India had all failed at shooting the lion, but Jack Malloy was the hunter who was flown in to accomplish the deed. Amazingly all of his stories were 100% true – even the one about the Cape Buffalo that rammed into their Toyota Safari vehicle during a hunting excursion the Okavanga swamp in Africa. True to form, Mr. Malloy quickly shot this animal thereby saving the other passengers in the car.

Mr. Malloy is the only firearms dealer who stood by a lifetime guarantee to personally buy back any gun he sold to an individual at the price one paid for it. Few took him up on this offer because buyers knew they were getting the best when they purchased firearms from him.

I always looked forward to my visits with Mr. Malloy and was saddened by his passing away in 2013. I attended his funeral at Lew Beach, in the Catskill Mountains in New York alongside the Beaverkill River. Afterwards at the wake at the local Rockland House restaurant the fellow hunters in attendance had stories to relate about this legendary man. 2008 was the year I made his Christmas card list, which were always signed "Good Shooting" I have kept every one of these cards since.

Another fine firearms show that appeals to the upland game hunter is the Vintagers. The Vintagers Edwardian Royal Order of Gun Shooters takes place in Wye Mills, Maryland in the fall. This is yet another show that often takes place on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The vendors and attendees are dressed in proper Edwardian attire similar to the style of clothes in the movie Gosford Park, which depicts an Edwardian era shooting party.

Beautiful cased wood double barrel shotguns are for sale. This group considers any type of automatic firearm manufactured later than the 1920s unsporting. The kickoff dinner party on Friday night is hosted by the Shooting Sportsman

magazine. All guests congregate in the clubhouse in their Edwardian attire and one feels as if he were transplanted to a shooting party in the Scottish Highlands.

This event is for true sportsmen and it is an incredible experience to hear cocktail party conversation recounting tales of private hunting preserves in South Africa or the latest dove hunt in Argentina. Of all the shows I attend, this is usually the smallest populated since the show promoters are strict on the dress code – even the non-shooting female attendees are expected to be in proper Edwardian period attire.

Numerous vendors supplying tailor made Edwardian hunting clothes and other hunting accessories from the Golden Age of shooting set up under large white tents. There are several target ranges on the grounds and participants are in serious competition for the prestigious Vintage Cup award. This event is segregated into loyal gun collector groups. There is virtually no interaction between the German Gun Collectors, the Parker Gun Collectors, or the L.C. Smith gun collector's groups. Each of these organizations has booths for their loyal collector's societies and their annual meetings take place during the event.

This show has moved around to several locations in the past few years including Millbrook, New York and Dover Plains, New York both in Dutchess County. It has since taken place at East Farms in Mapleville, Rhode Island. The Vintager's rapidly growing counterpart, The Southern Side-By-Side, takes place twice a year in Georgetown, South Carolina in the spring and fall.

There are three true annual gun shows which are considered by collectors and gun dealers as the "Big Three". These shows are Las Vegas Arms Show in Las Vegas, Nevada in January, The Maryland Arms Collectors Association Show in Timonium, Maryland in March and the Colorado Gun Collectors Association Show in Denver, Colorado in May. There are many other gun shows that I enjoy – especially the Civil War shows, but please allow me to focus just on these three for tonight.

Las Vegas is the earliest major gun show in the calendar year. In mid-January at the Riviera Hotel, two shows are combined into one – the Antique Arms Show and the Sporting Arms show. Antique arms are usually defined as firearms manufactured pre-1898. Sporting arms can be manufactured much later and generally relate to beautifully engraved guns made for hunting. At this show it is no surprise to see glitzy firearms with lots of pearl, ivory, platinum, silver and gold and even chrome.

Above the showroom are private boxes. Who knows what goes on in the private treatise rooms during the show. I do know there are some wholesome events up there because last year I was invited to attend the Remington Society of Arms Collectors annual meeting in one of these rooms. The Riviera hotel may not be as hip as the Bellagio hotel – but the show is going strong and celebrity attendees such as Tom Sellick never fail to miss the show.

If one were to conduct a poll amongst gun dealers of the ultimate show not to miss, the Maryland Arms Show in mid-March would hands down be the unanimous winner. It is the most regulated show on the planet in an effort to

keep up with its high standards of quality. The show ends at 3:00pm on a Sunday and if you are caught placing a gun in a sleeve at your table at 2:59pm don't bother coming back as a table holder in the future. (Yes, this did actually happen)!

Each year nine months before the upcoming show, on one's application form, the table holder puts down what will be on his table. Nine months later, the show committee compares the application form to what is actually on the table and one gets a grade for compliance. Effectively one must put down the exact percentage of knives, swords, guns and powder tins he will have on his table nine months ahead of time –a hard prediction for a dealer to make. Long established firearms dealers have been asked not to return the following year for not having met the % they had originally declared.

However, despite the heavy regulation it remains the show that is impossible to get a table for as a dealer. It has the best quality of firearms per capita of any gun show in America. The show does not open up until 2:00pm on Thursday for dealers, but despite this there are nearly a thousand anxious people in the parking lot several hours before the show opens. The pre-anticipation level is the

highest of any show that I attend. There is some gun trading going on in the parking lot and it is against the rules, but for the most part the rigid show committee looks the other way at this one violation of their rules and regulations.

This show has more educational awards and displays of any of the conventions that I attend. This is indeed a good way for the public to learn about America's military history. All firearms must be pre-1898 and the level of knowledge in the room at this event is perhaps higher than any other antique show (guns or no-guns) in the country.

Two months later comes the gun show that is on fast track to becoming America's top firearms show. The Colorado Gun Collectors Association show takes place the third week in May. This event is loaded with Winchester collectors, Colt Single Action collectors (think Wild West) and heavy-barreled rifles for long distance target shooting. The show has been around for 50 years, and it continues on its way to becoming the premiere gun show in the country.

Colorado possibly has more impressive antique gun collections and US Cavalry accoutrement collections than any other state. The local show committee is very generous in inviting table holders to their homes to see their private collections prior to the first day of the show.

The final show that I would like to talk about tonight is the meeting of the Contemporary Long Rifle Association that takes place in Lexington, Kentucky in August of every year. This is a show you can definitely bring your family to. It is basically a meeting of the old time Kentucky rifle collectors and the new Kentucky rifle makers who are "Continuing the Tradition". 25% of the vendors are selling vintage firearms, tomahawks and powder horns. The other 75% are artisans recreating contemporary Kentucky rifles, tomahawks and powder horns made in much of the same manner as our ancestors did 200 years ago. The high prices realized for these newly crafted items is stunning. The old time Kentucky Rifle collectors are my favorite constituency of the firearms trade. They respect the fine hand-made items that were created in very primitive conditions of long ago.

Four years ago a friend of mine consigned a “Golden Age” Kentucky Rifle by John F. Graef made in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. I placed it on my table at this show and it received a lot of attention. Young and old experts were giving their opinions as to the true age of the gun – was it colonial or post-colonial? Each individual defended their positions by citing certain nuances of the gun. Could this have been the rifle Daniel Boone carried through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky? A twenty year old show attendee was actually speculating as to the date the trigger was manufactured based upon the maker’s evolving style. The rifle ended up selling for nearly \$75,000 at auction.

Beyond the intellectual aspect – I appreciated how much the dealers cared about preserving these specimens for future generations. Several times an hour I was told not to let the new owner of my client’s rifle clean it or alter it in any manner after the auction. These men were totally engrossed with the fact that this 250 year old rifle was never altered or cleaned and wanted the potential new owner to preserve it to the highest order. I actually had some old timers insist that these restrictions be placed in Cowan’s Auctions catalogue in writing and strictly enforced upon the new owner of the rifle

I just mentioned “Continuing the Tradition” as one of the themes of the Contemporary Long Rifle Association Show. I would like to focus on this notion for the rest of my paper. CLRA founder Gordon Barlow wrote a book in 2007 entitled, Following the Tradition, Celebrating the Artisans of the Contemporary Long Rifle Association. The author graciously signed a copy of his book for me and personally thanked me for helping in “Continuing the Tradition.” I am a generation younger than Mr. Barlow and this book is a reminder to me that my generation should be generous in passing along historical information to encourage the next generation of collectors. One of the core precepts of the American Society of Arms Collectors organization is to “generously share information free of cost” with fellow collectors.

In Contemporary Long Rifle Association member’s Jim Johnston 2015 book, Accouterments IV, the preface by John Kolar states *“For all of us who have assisted on this project, it is our hope that in the future, some ten year old, who happens to be in a library and finds this book, that he or she, upon opening it will*

be awed by what they see. That what they read and see will spark in them an interest in American History. That what happened to so many of us at an early age, 'the desire to understand our heritage,' will become for them a life long quest."

There is a lack of young collectors today. This notion parallels the reason for the formation of the NRA which was founded on a similar premise. One hundred years ago youth were nearly helpless in firearms knowledge and skills. The National Rifle Association was chartered in 1871 and Union Army Civil War General Ambrose Burnside was its first president. Historical Union Army records indicate that its troops shot 1,000 rifle shots for each Confederate soldier hit. General Burnside told his recruits *"Out of ten soldiers who are perfect in drill and the manual of arms, only one knows the purpose of the sights on his gun or can hit the broad side of a barn."* As America became more industrialized the need for hunting became less essential and the target shooting skills rapidly declined. The object of the NRA was to stir up the army brass to improve the shooting of the regular army and to foster target shooting for sport among civilians. Thus, the

next time the President of the United States had to call upon volunteers for war, a reasonable amount of them would have the important ability to shoot.

General George Wood Wingate, the first secretary of the NRA, toured Europe to observe European Armies superior marksmanship programs. The Irish Rifle Team had just won the international shooting matches at Wimbledon in 1873. This same year Wingate established Creedmoor shooting range on Long Island, New York for long range shooting competitions. Wingate also published the first manual on marksmanship in America that was later to be adopted by the US Army.

In 1873 Wingate came across a challenge by the Irish Rifle Team posted as a newspaper advertisement in the New York Herald. This advertisement was issued without any knowledge of the newly formed American team. The proposed match was to take place the following year in 1874 not giving much time for the newly organized American unit. The challenge by the Irish was not in any way disrespectful to America – the Irish just had never heard of this nascent NRA

organization. However the NRA wanted to maintain its dignity so it formed the Amateur Rifle Club to take on the challenge.

From the beginning it looked suicidal for the Americans. The Irish had their world famous muzzle loading rifles made by John Rigby full of wind gauges and fancy front and rear sights. The American team requested the Remington Company and the Sharps Rifle Company to create a breech loading rifle from scratch to take on the deeply rooted Irish champions. The guns arrived in March 1874 and intense training took place for several months.

The event was a close match, but the American's defeated the Irish team by a point. It was a total shock when eight Americans won the Anglo-American International shooting competition and it made national news. In all fairness we must give the Irish a little credit, one of their teammates shot at the wrong target, otherwise the contest would have been a tie.

Once again 150 years later it is evident that today's youth are not "Carrying on the Tradition." No one under 50 collects. This is true of the Civil War collectibles markets, the duck decoy collector's markets and just about any other collecting category that one could come up with. Beyond the capacity to collect, the next generation simply has no interest in the artifacts of the past. I am sure people in this audience have their own theories on this, but it is a reality.

The role of firearms in America's history is vital irregardless of ones interest in collecting them. How many of your kids play cowboys and Indians these days? In 2009 Williamsburg, Virginia closed down its gunsmithing shop. I feel blessed that I was part of the generation that thought the gunsmith shop was the highlight of the whole Williamsburg family tour.

So I ask you to ponder the consequences of a society that is void of collectors. Are we getting to the stage where there will be no more museums and collector conventions in the next generation? Is Ikea Furniture and Deck the Walls our next generation's concept of collecting? In my 10 years of participating in these various events the age demographics of these show attendees has changed dramatically

upward. Hopefully there are still yet a handful of people out there to encourage youth in "Continuing the Tradition."