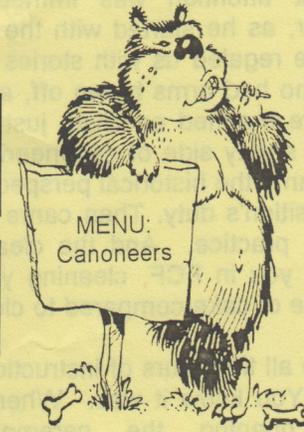


The
BACKYARD
FCF NATIONAL RENDEZVOUS

July 18, 1996



Our FCF Cannon

by Jack Lorence, national FCF scribe

5:31 a.m.

Tendrils of smoke waft skyward, from the night fires in the Frontiersmen Camping Fellowship village. The only sounds heard are the heavy breathing and a hearty snort and snore from the neighboring lodge.

Quietly I pull on my white muslin shirt, knee breeches, moccasins, and flat crown hat. Then silently I make my way out of the village to join the other eight canoneers.

5:40 a.m.

Battery Sergeant Fred Deaver gives the command to prepare the artillery piece, and the canoneers wheel the 8-pounder field gun into position. The half pound black powder charge is made ready, the primer piece is positioned, and the gun crew stands at the ready. "Canoneers, prepare to fire," the command is barked by Battery Sergeant Deaver, and the canoneers "step to the canoneer shuffle." The number-7 man took the half-pound charge from the limber chest and showed it to the sergeant, verifying it's proper charge. The number-7 man then handed the charge to the number-6 canoneer, who carried the charge to the rear of the artillery piece where he handed it over the wheel to the number-2 canoneer. The number-2 canoneer held the charge in front of the muzzle of the artillery piece, while the number-1 canoneer, placing the rod against the charge firmly rammed home the half-pound black powder to the butt of the barrel.

The number-3 canoneer then vented the charge with his priming wire, and set the cap and lanyard pin. The

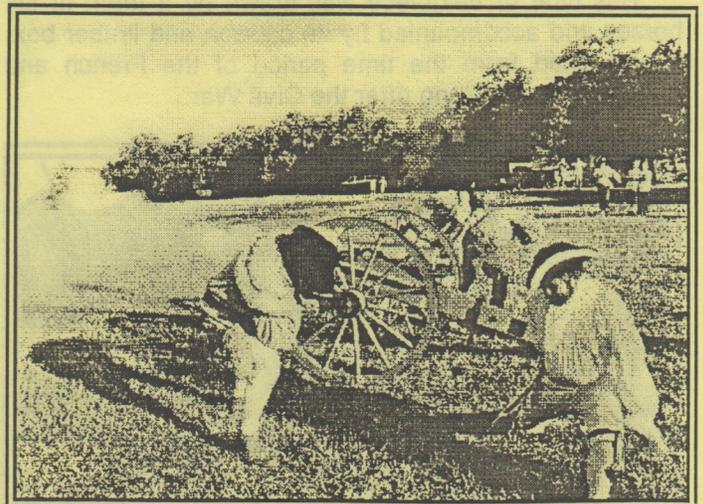
eight-pounder artillery piece and all canoneers stand at the ready.

6:00 a.m.

Sergeant Deaver barks the command, "Ready, aim, fire." The lanyard is pulled and then, a blinding flash as flames stab out of the barrel for 30 feet, the thunder-like roar, the concussion of the charge, and reverberation from the very top of Hawkeye Mountain is heard among the shouts of alarm from the awakening camp.

What a wake-up call! This was given the very first time Wharton Battery was fired.

The life of a canoneer does indeed sound like one of excitement, prestige, pomp, and circumstance. Indeed, it was a thrill to be included in the first canoneer battery, but believe me, before the glory came the work.



canoneers at work

When we first saw our FCF canon, the excitement level climbed five degrees, and we could hardly wait to

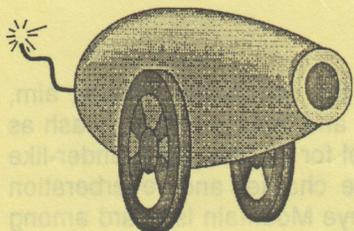
Life is like a box of chocolate then you turn 25 I mean 52 Happy Birthday Frank Pettis

"fire the piece." Then the classroom session started.... Our rapt attention was immediately turned to our instructor, as he started with the serious portion of the class. He regaled us with stories of modern day canon crews who had arms blown off, and entire canon crews who were maimed or killed, just because they did not take the safety side of canoneering seriously. After the safety came the historical perspective, and then learning each position's duty. Then came the practice, practice, practice, practice. And the cleaning of the piece—for those of you in FCF, cleaning your muzzleloader is a real piece of cake compared to cleaning a 3,000-lb. field canon.

Were all the hours of instruction, and work worth the effort? You know it was. When we fired off the first round, opening the ceremonies at the 1994 Camporama, and then after assembly, we watched as hundreds of boys ran to search for canonball fragments, the joy etched on their faces, and the memories that were carried home, you know were worth it all.

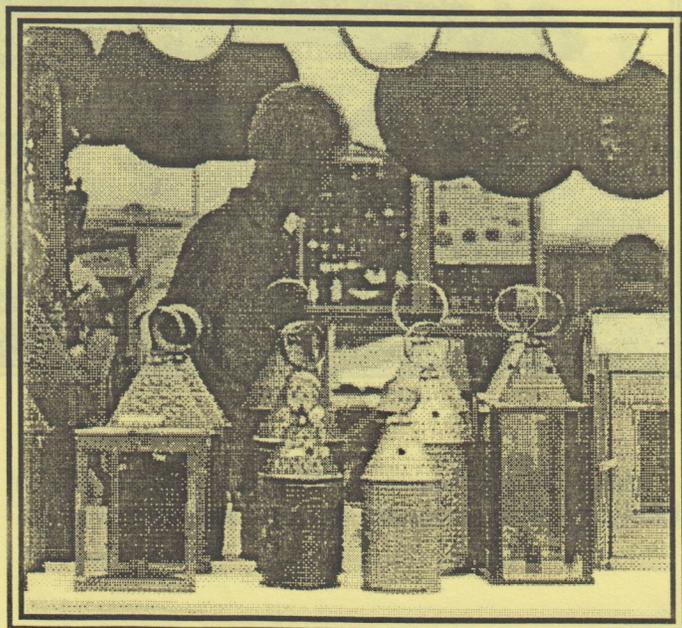
If we can just keep before us the vision of the Royal

Ranger ministry, the lives we make a difference in, the souls that will be won, and the command that God has given us "to reach, teach, and keep" boys for Jesus Christ, how can we even think about counting the cost?

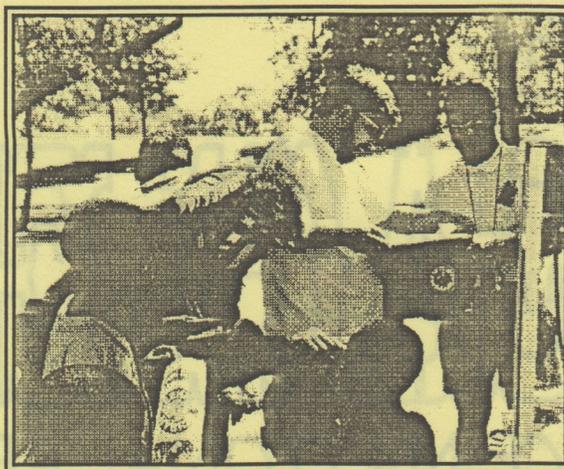


The Wharton Battery fieldpiece, named after Commander David Wharton, currently stands at Camp Eagle Rock. It is an eight-pounder howitzer style field artillery piece, weighing over 3,000 lbs. It is capable of firing a projectile well over 1 mile using a black powder charge.

This type of fieldpiece was drawn by a team of six horses and accompanied by its caisson and limber box. It was used from the time period of the French and Indian Wars until long after the Civil War.



Vintage FCF Lanterns



NRA & NMLRA Training Being Held At Rendezvous

Jerry Millhouser, Don Bixler, and Gerald Haines, all of the Southern Missouri District, are conducting two instructor training sessions during the National Rendezvous. The 12-hour NRA muzzleloading rifle instructor's certification course is being offered to leaders, plus a separate 12-hour NMLRA range officer certification course. Both courses are nationally certified.

This is the first of such training ever held at a National Rendezvous. Our special thanks to Jerry, Don, and Gerald for their volunteer service.

FCF Recognized in *Muzzle Blasts* Magazine

The Assemblies of God FCF program was highlighted in the July 1996 *Muzzle Blasts* magazine. The article, by Jerry Kerchner, notes that an FCF group sponsored a NMLRA Muzzleloading Instructor's Course in Camp Safran, Maryland, last October 11-13.

"I must tip my hat to Joe Walters and the Frontiersmen Camping Fellowship for their hospitality," writes Kerchner. "I've been involved in muzzleloading for 11 years in both competitive shooting and rendezvous, and yet I still learned more interesting and enlightening facts about the subject."

Speaking of Volunteers!

This National Rendezvous would not be possible without the help of several volunteers who have unselfishly given of their time to ensure a successful Rendezvous. A pre-Rendezvous team arrived here 1 week before the Rendezvous to lay the foundational structure of the campsite.

Thanks to all who volunteered thousands of man-hours to make our Rendezvous the best ever!