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## November Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): Interview with Roland Cadle, Site Foreman of the Neill Log House Reconstruction

*Tony Indovina, SHHS Board Member and FONLH President*

### Mission Statement for the Friends of the Neill Log House (FONLH Inc.)

*Adopted February 2022*



Friends of  
NEILL LOG HOUSE

***"We secure funds to restore and maintain the Neill Log House, foster knowledge of its historic significance, and work with interested parties to ensure the continued educational use of the structure and its site for future generations."***

*Individual support for the FONLH restoration effort will always be needed. To make online donations by credit card or PayPal, go to the SHUC website, [shuc.org](http://shuc.org), and click on the "Projects" link in the black menu bar at the top of the page. A pull-down menu will appear. Select "Friends of the Neill Log House." Alternatively, checks can be sent to SHUC (put FONLH in the memo line) at the following address: SHUC, 5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.*



In our October update I had reported that "the remaining work, from flooring to roofing and masonry repointing, should be completed before the end of October." Although our contractor, Village Restorations & Consulting, Inc., is still on schedule with their overall contract timetable, they recently indicated that they now expect to be finished by early November while they juggle work on other projects. Masonry repointing of the Neill Log House was very recently completed, and the roof work is mostly done, as can be observed by driving by. At the time of this writing, the delay on completion of the installation of the cedar shakes is due to an overdue shipment of the remainder of these by a bulk carrier. Flooring was going to be completed last, but could be worked on this week while they await the cedar shakes shipment. The floor work will be completed to accommodate heating units, along with other electrical work to be done under a separate contract now being finalized. We expect to have a photo gallery of the completed reconstruction for the next edition.

### Interview with Roland Cadle, Site Foreman

*Tony Indovina*

Roland Cadle is Village Restorations, Inc.'s site foreman for the Neill Log House reconstruction. As he worked on the house, I saw how dedicated, knowledgeable, and experienced he was. I decided to interview him for this newsletter. Our 25-minute interview took place while Roland continued pointing foundation stones and supervising his workers. I brought two chairs for us, but we agreed he was more comfortable continuing to work while I sat on some scaffolding with my notebook and pen. This is the man who never stopped talking to his audience while swinging his ax during our log-hewing demonstration in August. Roland gave me permission to tape our interview so I could review his responses, and the full recording will be archived on our FONLH Drive.



To begin, I posed one question to him: "What experiences from your early life until the present prepared you for what you now do in your restoration and life's work?" As anyone who knows Roland would expect, his responses took us in many different directions. Here, then, is an overview of these, not necessarily in the order presented to me, and in no way presenting a complete picture of this man's very productive life.

As vice-president and site foreman of Village Restorations Inc., it was 23 years ago that he formed a partnership with Pam Roub, previously Director of Old Bedford Village (there will be more about all of that in the follow-up interview with his colleague and partner, Pam, Village Restorations President).

Roland's first full-time business venture began in 1984 and lasted for twenty-some years, when he was self-employed with a restoration/reconstruction company in Greene County. His work there was mainly on privately owned log and stone historical structures. During the preceding five years, he and his wife disassembled, relocated, and reassembled a log house for themselves. I had earlier asked how he acquired his expertise with log structures, and I came to understand through the entire interview that this is ingrained in his way of life and his many life experiences.

Roland was born in Williamsburg, Pa., in 1950, and when he was 5 moved with his family 13 miles west to Brush

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Mountain, a woodlands preserve between Altoona and Hollidaysburg. He and his three younger brothers spent their youth in the log house they grew up in on Frankstown Rd., a dirt road on that mountain. Some houses of his friends there had no plumbing back then. Roland later bought this house from a brother and moved back to it in 2000 with his wife to raise his family.

When asked about his family's roots, Roland said there were two Cadle brothers who came here as British soldiers in the 1700s, served their time, and stayed to fight with the Colonists in the American Revolution. They then received land grants. He traces his mother's family here even earlier, back to 1648.

Roland's formal education beyond high school was in preparation for the ministry and, of all his life pursuits, including log house restoration work and horning, it is at the center of his life. He noted with wonder at one point that he restored his first log house at age 21, by which time he was the full-time senior pastor of his church in Hagerstown, for which he was paid thirty-five dollars a week. Today, Roland is the senior pastor of the Franklin Park Missionary Church.

Roland is also the founding member and leader of an American guild called "The Honourable Company of Horners." With over 450 members internationally, the guild's purpose is to promote and preserve the art of working with cow horns and is modeled after medieval societies from London. As one of nine master horn makers of his group, his personal body of work, including horns and other accoutrements, has been featured in such movies as *The Patriot*, *Last of the Mohicans* and *The Alamo*. The photo on the right shows one of his powder horns.



hornguild.org

Though we didn't discuss this during the interview, Roland is also a master wood turner and has begun fashioning beautiful bowls with decorative lids from base logs removed from the Neill Log House (*pictured below*).

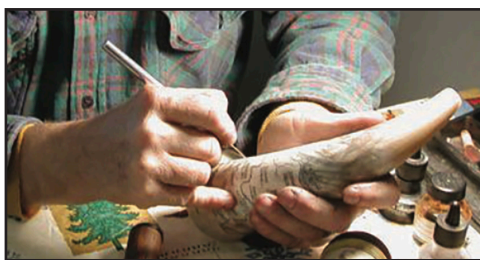
Roland talked much about his passion for history and for always reading and learning. He loves history, loves construction, and loves learning and understanding how they did things "back then." His recipe for success in business is "to keep at it, do what you say you're going to do, and charge the fair price you say you're going to charge." He also feels strongly about doing what he loves, which on any given week includes preaching, reconstruction work, and horning or other crafts work. While he talks of retiring, he admits he'll probably continue doing many of the same things that he's now doing into retirement, "only slower." And it's hard to believe he won't continue to be sought out for his many gifts. A short list of places to which he has been invited because of his reputation as a preservationist and master craftsman include Colonial Williamsburg, historic fort projects in Nashville, and the Lewis and Clark site in Illinois for that trail's bicentennial.



It was Aristotle who wrote, "The whole is more than the sum of its parts." This might be paraphrased to say that "A person is more than the sum of their work," expressing that the impact one can make through his or her life is more than just the sum of work accomplished. What, then, is the measure of a life well spent? One might justifiably say that it is in the excellence one brings to all one's work, the imprint one leaves on their accomplishments, and the lives touched through one's work. All of us are fortunate to have the handprint of Roland Cadle on this second historic reconstruction of the Neill Log House.

## What Is Horning?

*from Wikipedia*



hornguild.org

**Horning** is the art of making powder horns. A powder horn is a container for gunpowder, and was generally created from cow, ox, or buffalo horn. Typically there was a stopper at both ends, The wide mouth was used for refilling, while the powder was dispensed from the narrow point. The use of these animals' horns, along with nonferrous metal parts, ensured that the powder would not be detonated by sparks during storage and loading.

Horn was also naturally waterproof and already hollow inside. Powder horns were often decorated, most often with engraving, making a form of scrimshaw, which was sometimes supplemented with color. Many decorated examples shed light on the life and history of the individuals that used them and can be classified as folk art. Powder horns were used in the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and beyond but became obsolete by innovations in the eighteenth century. Roland Cadle and other master horners keep the craft alive.