

# Banana Powder Horn



Grades: 1-5

## OVERVIEW

Powder horns were both a practical tool of war and a form of folk art among British and Anglo-American soldiers during the long 18th century. Though powder horns simply carried gunpowder, the pale exterior of the hollowed-out cattle horn provided a popular medium for elaborate carvings, chronicling military campaigns and expressing their owner's identity or experience. For historians today, the scrimshawed writing and drawings on powder horns serve as primary sources in their own right, illustrating the peoples and places described in documents. In this activity, students explore these objects and primary sources from the period as they research powder horn designs in our collections database and use their creativity to create their own version.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- \* Research using a online collections database
- \* Use artifacts to research and create a physical outcome
- \* Make connections between the text and physical outcomes.

## INTRODUCTION

Many colonies had militia laws which required each enrolled militia man to have one pound of gunpowder, as part of their legal obligation to supply themselves with military equipment and ammunition. As the name implies, powder horns were made from hollowed-out cattle horns. With a stopper on one end and a plug on the other, powder horns conveniently carried this gunpowder in a water tight, convenient way.

## STUDENT STANDARDS

### COMMON CORE:

**RL.CCR.7** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

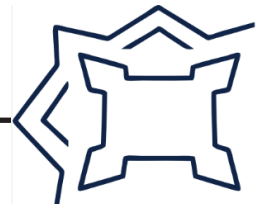
**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1.7** Use the illustrations and details in a text to describe its key ideas.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2.7** Explain how specific images (e.g., a diagram showing how a machine works) contribute to and clarify a text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.7** Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.5.4** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

# Banana Powder Horn



Though powder horns simply carried stored gun powder, the pale exterior of the hollowed-out cattle horn provided a blank space for soldier's to make elaborate carvings expressing their owner's identity or experience. The traditional art of decorating these horns continued during the American Revolution, with intricate designs, maps, symbols, and scenes of daily life.

## ACTIVITY

**Step One:** Here's your chance to practice the very artistic skills and techniques soldiers used while at Ticonderoga! Look at the ideas below to help you plan what to include on your own powder horn!

- \* Your name
- \* The year
- \* Your favorite animal
- \* A map or story
- \* Where you carved your horn or where you're from
- \* Describe who you are using words, symbols, or images
- \* A phrase you think describes yourself or a cause that's important to you

Explore our collections database to uncover what original powder horns looked like and see for yourself what is carved on them! For more information on the powder horns carried by Lieutenant John Riley and Drummer Nathan Tubbs (next page), please visit our [Online Collections Database](#).

**Step Two:** Once you've planned out your design, take a look at our [video](#) to see how it's done!

You'll need:

- \* Toothpicks
- \* Banana
- \* Food coloring
- \* Small paint brush

**Step Three:** When you're done carving, use food coloring and a brush to make your design come to life!

## STUDENT STANDARDS:

### C3 FRAMEWORK

**D2.His.2.K-2.** Compare life in the past to life today.

**D2.His.2.3-5** Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.

**D2.His.9.3-5.** Summarize how different kinds of historical sources are used to explain events in the past.

**D2.Eco.3.3-5.** Identify examples of the variety of resources (human capital, physical capital, and natural resources) that are used to produce goods and services.

