

Colonial America

Fun Projects for U.S. History

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GENERAL OVERVIEW

This collection of enrichment activities was designed to complement existing curricula and expand one's understanding of what it was like to live during the past. Studies have confirmed that using one's hands helps students retain information. If you are looking for creative and simple—yet stimulating and exciting—projects to spark learning, take the next step toward a highly engaging encounter.

Regardless of a student's age, learning by doing will help maintain their interest, improve retention of information, and foster a desire to learn now and in the future.

As an educator with 18-plus years of teaching and product development experience, it is my personal goal to encourage young people to be creative. Each of the activities included in this collection is based on actual artifacts and is representative of the era. A conscious effort was made to develop projects constructed from readily available materials that result in a stunning end product.

It is my heartfelt desire that both teacher and student will find the activities in this book a wonderful journey of creativity.

Jean Henrich

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Powderhorn



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Make a Powderhorn

Powderhorns were an essential piece of equipment for colonial soldiers. Made from different types of horn (but predominantly cow horns), powderhorns were lightweight, efficient, and kept the gunpowder inside dry. Many horns were simple in style; others were works of art, with carved wooden embellishments and scrimshawed designs etched into the sides.

In this activity, you will re-create an authentic-looking powderhorn made from polymer clay. This project requires patience not because it is hard, but because creating each part of the horn will require time and precision.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- Plaid FolkArt® Acrylic Paints (burnt umber and black)
- Original Sculpey® polymer clay (shades of brown and translucent clay)
- **Oven (ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED)**
- **X-Acto® knife (ADULT SUPERVISION REQUIRED)**
- Paintbrush
- Paper towels or sponge
- Hemp cord or other twine
- Aluminum foil
- Sandpaper
- Toothpick
- Carpet tacks
- Parchment paper



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1. FORM THE HORN

- Roll sheets of aluminum foil into a horn shape until you achieve the desired thickness and size you wish for your completed powderhorn.

- Wrap the aluminum foil with parchment paper and twist the ends together.



- Cover the parchment paper with a layer of polymer clay. This just needs to be roughly done.

- **WITH ADULT SUPERVISION**, carefully cut down the length of one side of the polymer clay shape and parchment paper and sprinkle baby powder over the inside. This is necessary to help you remove the aluminum foil/parchment shape after you bake it.



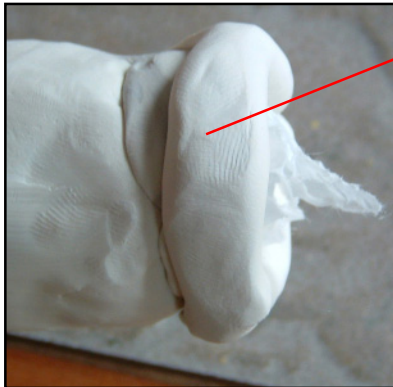
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2. ADD THE FINAL LAYER OF POLYMER CLAY

- Reseal the edges of the polymer clay around the baby-powdered aluminum foil/parchment shape.
- Use a toothpick to scratch lines onto the outside of the first layer of polymer clay.

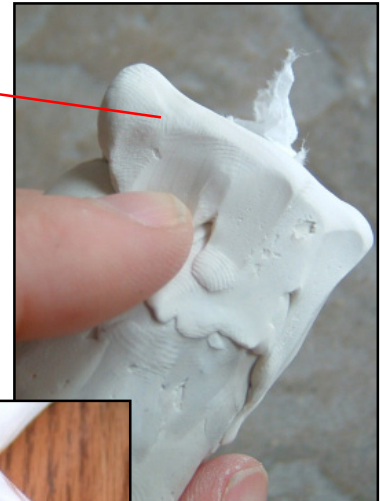
- Roll out a new, thin layer and use it to cover the first layer.



- Add "tubes" of clay around the narrow end to form the spout.



- Spread the clay with your fingertips to even out all sides of the horn.



- The following pictures illustrate how the "spout" and bottom of the horn should now appear.



"Spout" of horn



Bottom of horn

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3. ADD TRANSLUCENT DETAILS

- If you look at a cow's horn, it has translucent layers. To create this effect, take tiny bits of golden-brown clay and "streak" the surface. Use your fingertips to help blend in the golden-brown clay.
- Bake the clay according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Let the clay cool and remove the interior aluminum foil/parchment form.



4. SAND THE HORN

- Sand the surface of the baked clay horn with different grades of sandpaper to remove unwanted surface scratches. This will also help you with the next step, which involves adding more clay.

