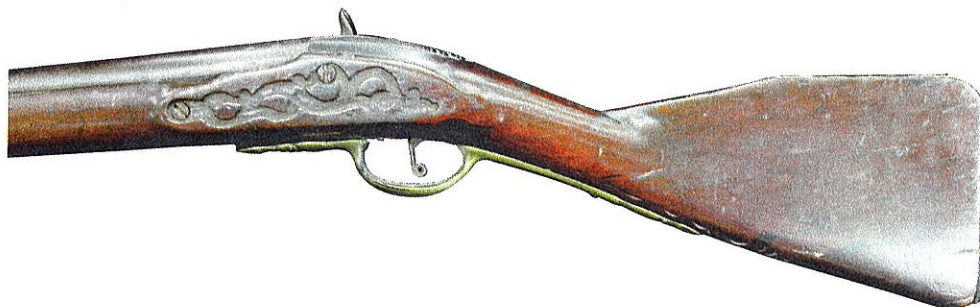


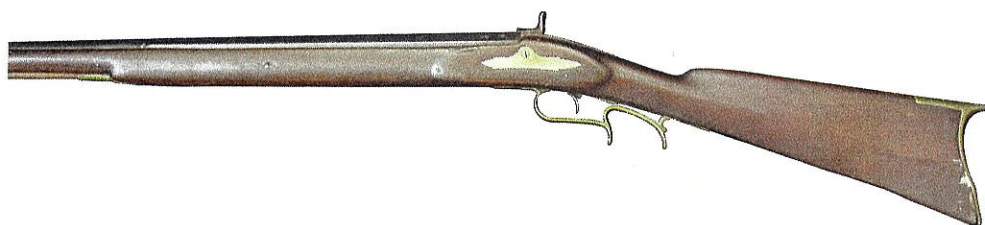


A cut-down 18th century Hudson Valley fowling piece with decorative carving that was collected from a family in Northeast Ohio.

Photo by Mark Bender



The ornate sideplate of the 18th century Hudson Valley fowling piece was lost sometime in its history.



A "make do" 19th century smoothbore fowler made of recycled parts from different eras. The proof and view marks on the barrel are pre-1813.

Photo by Mark Bender



Late Hudson Bay trade musket, dated 1884, by Barnett. It retains some features found on Tecumseh's trade musket dating to the War of 1812 era, including a dragon side plate.

Photo by Mark Bender)

Daniel Marker Redux: Musings on His Rifle Art

BY MARK BENDER

According to Hutslar, Dan (or Daniel) Marker was one of several gunsmiths named Marker, all related, who were active in Darke county in the mid-19th century (1973:101; Spiker and Whisker 2013: 151-153). The surviving work of Daniel suggests that he was well-trained in the art of gun making and decoration and made flintlock and percussion rifles. Volume I of *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen* identifies both Daniel Marker Senior (1774-1853), and Daniel Marker Junior (1810-1891) as father and son (Hutslar: n.d.:183-184). The other Markers were named George, James, and Paul. The elder Marker was the son of German immigrants and spent his early years in Sharpsburg, Maryland, and had a gun shop at "Marker's Delight, in Middleton Valley, near Hagerstown" (Hutslar: n.d.:183).

Captain Marker served as a leader of the Mountain Rangers at the Battle of Bladensburg during the war of 1812. Around 1822 he had a gun shop in Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia), where he seems to have moved sometime after separating with the first of four wives (Hutslar n.d.:183; Gewirz 1989:3). After a short stay back in Sharpsburg, he moved to Montgomery county, Ohio, in 1825, ultimately settling in Adams township, Darke county where "oral tradition" says he lived about 5 miles from Versailles.

Patch box designs, engraving, and stock carving shown on photos of the Marker guns speak of influences from back east. Marker's earlier experience near Hagerstown, Maryland and eastern Virginia no doubt provided the essential aspects of his art. The rifle on p. 194 of Hutslar (n.d.), for instance, has design affinities (patch box piercings, inlays, side plate, and overall stock design) with certain rifles of the "Emmitsburg" Maryland school, especially the work of John Armstrong. Joe Kindig suggested that Marker "learned the gunmaking trade" from Armstrong (1960:457). There are also similarities with rifles from Hampshire county in present-day eastern West Virginia. The

following paragraphs will comment briefly on photos of three fullstock Marker rifles in the AOLRC archives (which I attribute to Dr. James Whisker) and a remnant of a stock in the author's collection.

Rifle 1 is a flintlock that exhibits a carving, small tear-drop and shell pattern inlays at the front and back of the lock moulding, and engraved patch box, side plate, and cheek piece inlay. (fig. 1) The cheek piece is curved and rests within a flowing pattern of American rococo-style carved leaves and stems (Heckscher and Bowman 1992:12-13).

The circular cheek piece inlay features a folk style engraving of a bald eagle with what is likely meant to be an olive branch in one talon and a bundle of three arrows in the other. A shield is placed on the eagle's chest, mimicking the national symbol. (fig. 2) (A similar eagle, in the form of an inlay with rococo floral patterns, is found behind the cheekpiece of a Marker percussion rifle pictured in Hutslar [n.d.:19]). If Kindig was correct in assigning John Armstrong as Marker's mentor, then the Federal-era eagles add evidence to that claim, as three Armstrong rifles illustrated in his landmark book show eagles and shield motifs on cheekpiece inlays (Kindig 1960:449-452).

The slim side plate on Rifle 1, rounded on each end is engraved with rococo-derived floral patterns echoing the complex patterns on the patch box. The four-piece patch box is made of two parallel side plates, a finial, and a lid. (figs. 3, 4, 5) There is one large cut-out on the finial which is reminiscent of patterns found on some Maryland and eastern Virginia rifles such as John Armstrong and Jacob Sheetz.

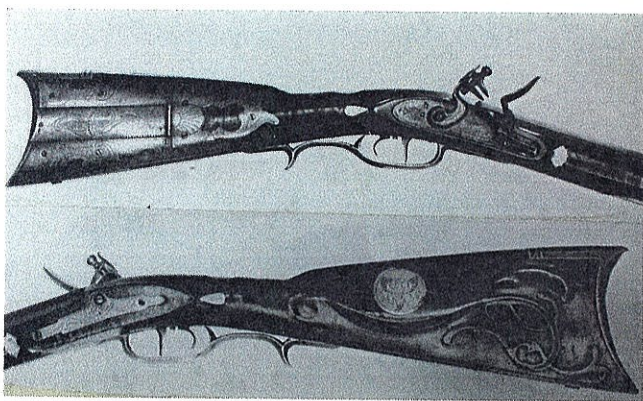
Rifle 2 is similar in design to the first, though with a percussion lock. (fig. 6) The engraving and outline of the patch box are so similar they may have been made from the same pattern. The cheekpiece, however, is quadrangular with a pronounced, elaborate c-scrolls carved behind it, and a relief carved scallop in front. (fig. 7) The rifle also has a scalloped inlay in front of the

top of the butt plate and small heart inlays fore and aft of the lock moulding.

Rifle 3 is decorated with a patch box decorated in rococo style, but with a finial (or patch box "head") in the shape of a bust of a human head. (fig. 8, 9,10) Pictures of the percussion rifle was published in Hutslar (n.a. p. 189). The image presented here is a close-up found in the AOLRC files, which I believe was taken by Dr. James Whisker. In a discussion of rifle No. 174, attributed to Jacob Sell, the elder, Kindig noted that patch box finials shaped like human heads are "extremely rare and desirable" (1960:389, 394). Like the Marker gun, the bust is of a person in a frock coat with tied up long hair, as is a bust on the patch box of rifle No. 173, also attributed to Sell.

The question is: Is the case of the Marker bust, is it a likeness of an actual person? And if so, who? The image seems to be balding, with a roman nose, and wearing what may be a military or formal frock coat with buttons. It could be a private citizen, the owner, or even a president (James Madison, James Monroe, William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk ??), legislator, or military hero. A presidential bust would fit well within the scope of patriotic symbolism represented on other Marker rifles. (Note: If any readers have ideas about the mysterious human head, please contact the Editor.)

Fig. 11 is a "study piece" found in three broken pieces at an Association of Ohio Gun Collectors show in Wilmington, Oh. The outline of the missing patch box is very similar to the boxes on guns 1 and 2, and



Rifle 1: Views of a flintlock rifle made by Daniel Marker, Senior. Photo by James Whisker, AOLRC files

echoes guns with similar lines and patch box patterns from back east. These rifles remind us that many rifles made in Ohio were products of gunsmiths who hailed from Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and elsewhere.

Note: Fig. 12 shows a signature: "D. Marker". A picture of Captain Daniel Marker's grave can be found at the Find a Grave website: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/25790804/daniel-marker>

Also, see the video "Close Up of a Daniel Marker Rifle" which also includes an American eagle cheekpiece inlay: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJbluT4pOnA>

(Thanks to Nathan E. Bender for input on the patterns and symbols.)

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Rifle 1: Cheekpiece inlay of bald eagle holding arrows and olive branch with a shield representing the American symbol, Federal Period. Photo by James Whisker, AOLRC files