
THE
ASSOCIATION
OF OHIO
LONGRIFLE
COLLECTORS



FOR THE STUDY AND PRESERVATION
OF THE OHIO MUZZLELOADING RIFLE

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**40th A.O.L.R.C.
Marietta Exhibit
March 27, 28, 2015**



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A Note from the President

Well folks, it's time for Marietta again. We can set up at the Lafayette Friday, March 27th, starting at 3 p.m. At 6 p.m. we will have our buffet and birthday party. We are planning a short business meeting for around 7:30 p.m. on Friday. Saturday will be the show as usual but we will not have the banquet because we cannot have the room for Sunday. This is because of a scheduling conflict that will not happen again. 2016 will be our weekend meeting as usual. Don't forget to make your room reservations and call Jim Claggett or Rod Frazer for display tables.

As president, regrettably, it is my duty to inform you of the passing of Neal Statler. Neal enjoyed collecting Ashland and surrounding counties' rifles and researching their makers. He is missed and our condolences go to his family. Also, I have just been informed of the passing of Ron Kemp. Ron enjoyed collecting Ohio longrifles, and shared his collection with us by exhibiting at both Marietta and Newark. He too will be sorely missed. Hope to see you soon, Tom.

From the Editor – I apologize for not having pictures from the Newark show. The September 2014 show was the first – and hopefully last – Newark show that I have missed. From all accounts it was an excellent show for both the table holders and the attending public. The Newark show generates income for us that we sorely need, and is an excellent venue for recycling some of our collectibles to either those just starting to collect or to those who are upgrading their collections.

I must confess that I originally started putting pictures of our events in the Newsletter as a way to add a page or two. Many of you, however, have commented that it is nice to see pictures of our members doing what they enjoy, and that the pictures serve as a reminder of the good times that we enjoy as members of this organization.



40th Marietta Exhibit

As in the past we are inviting anyone who has documented Ohio made rifles produced prior to 1900 to display them. In order to avoid any confusion as far as space allotment is concerned, we are asking interested parties to please let us know how many tables they will need. In doing this the association will be able to provide adequate table accommodations on a first come basis. So, please be prompt. Mail table requests to Rod Frazer, 11815 Streamside Drive, Pickerington, OH 43147.

Remember the major portion of your display must consist of antique Ohio made rifles and accessories. Ohio made contemporary rifles must not exceed more than 10% of your total display. This rule will be strictly enforced and all contemporary rifles must be so marked.

Set up of exhibits will begin on Friday, March 27.

Banquet

Our annual membership meeting and banquet will regrettably not be held this year. Copies of the Treasurer's Report will be available at the Exhibit, and all pertinent information will be announced during the

show hours. Exhibitors and AOLRC members and guests are encouraged to attend the Reception on Friday evening to view any rifles that may be on the tables and to renew old friendships. A cash bar will be available, and hors d'oeuvres will be provided.

Lodging and accommodations

The LaFayette Motor Hotel has been generous enough to provide exhibit space for our show. They have also offered our membership a generous discount on their room accommodations. We strongly urge our membership to take advantage of this special rate and the fact that the show, the banquet, and the membership meeting will be held in the same location. For reservations, telephone 740/373-5522. Be sure to mention that you are coming to the AOLRC Exhibit.

For security reasons, no rifles may be brought into the exhibit hall after 9:00 a.m. Saturday, or leave before 3:00 p.m., unless prior arrangements have been made with the sergeant-at-arms.

Also, no rifle(s) may be brought into the exhibit hall by a non-member without first signing in with the sergeant-at-arms during public hours.

Schedule

Friday, March 27

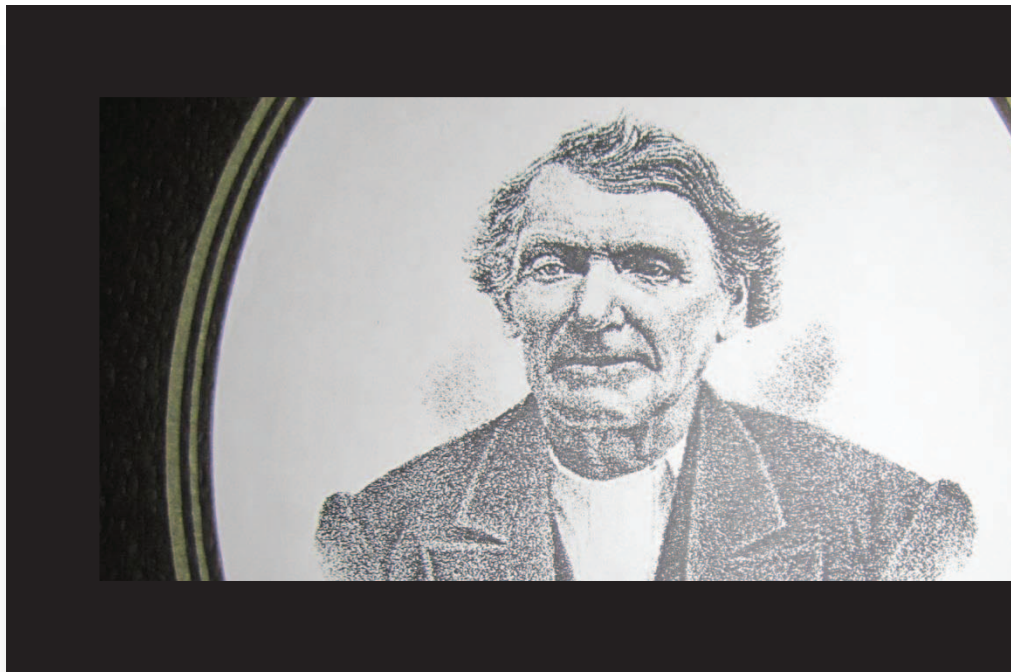
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Set up for exhibit
6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.	Reception for all exhibitors and members. Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres.

Saturday, March 28

8:00 a.m.	Exhibit hall opens to exhibitors and members only.
9:00 a.m.	Show opens to public.
5:00 p.m.	Exhibit closes.

PLEASE NOTE

We will not have a "Featured Gunsmith" this year due to the one day Exhibit. Please contact any Board Member to make suggestions for a Featured Gunsmith for 2016.



JOHN EARNHART

Gunsmith

February, 2015

"A PERSON'S EYES FLOW FROM ONE END OF THE RIFLE TO THE OTHER. THE STOCK, CARVINGS AND INLAYS ALL PROFESSIONALLY WORK TOGETHER." -SITE WHO

1811-1887

The Story Of John Earnhart, Gunsmith

By: N. Fay Earnhart

Ancestry Tracing Back 400 Years

The earliest known information on The Earnhart Family, spelled Ehrenhart, originated from a Lutheran Church in the Ilbesheim, Pfalz, Germany in the Palatinate Region of Germany in 1630. The Palatinate Region is located in the Southwest part of Germany. The climate and topography is similar to that of Pennsylvania, where the John Earnhart family originally settled.

Ship records document that John's Great Great Grandfather and his Grandfather came to the United States on separate ships. Johan Ehrenhardt, John's Great Great Grandfather, settled in what is now Emmaus, Pennsylvania. Johan Jacob was a blacksmith and Church Elder in the Moravian Church. Johan Jacob eventually gave land for the founding of Emmaus, Pennsylvania. The Moravian Church followed strict rules such a male could not bear arms, Political discussions, travel, meetings after dark, unauthorized marriages, and rowdy bar behavior was strictly forbidden. The first Ehrenhardt house, a handsome Federal-style home has been preserved and maintained by the Friends of the 1803 House. Johan Jacob Jr. was the first Ehrenhardt male to serve in the Continental Army and served in the

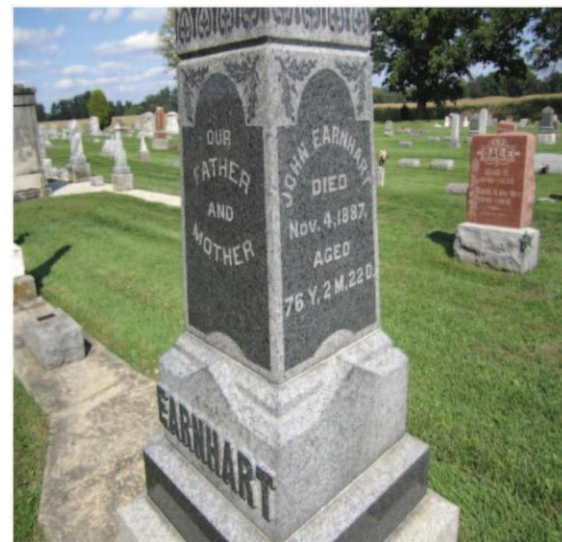
Revolutionary War. These events probably led to some family members moving west to Ohio.

The Earnhart name had different spellings through the years. The spelling transitioned from Ehrenhardt to Ehrenhard, Arnheart, Earnheart, and Earnhart. Some variations still exist with mostly Earnhardt and Earnhart being used. Sometime during the 1860's the name Earnhart was adopted. John's signed muzzleloaders had the signature of Earnhart as well as his father, William's. "The Ehrenhardt Family First through Seventh Generations," shows spelling changes. Family legal papers from John's lifetime show when the name went from Earnheart to Earnhart. This was after the Civil War.

HISTORICAL USE OF SURNAMES

In times before the 1800's most German families used Surnames.

- Johannes or Johane was the name used by the Earnhart Family Line. Johannes translates to John.
- With the use of the Surnames or first name for at least one male of each family
- It was often confusing as to which person one was referring to.



Sparta Cemetery

John Earnhart is buried in Kimmell, Indiana at Sparta Cemetery.



Palatinate Region, Germany

A New Life In The United States

John's grandfather, Johannes, first male to move from Pennsylvania, had a log Gunsmith Shop on High Street in Circleville, Ohio. ⁵ It is not known whether William had a Gunsmith Shop in Circleville or on his farm near the homestead. John Earnhart was one of ten children raised three to four miles East of Circleville on the old Adelphil Pike or current Highway 56 on the 240 acre Earnhart farm. Today all that remains of the Earnhart farm is the name Earnhart Hill Waterworks on the town's water tower. James's house, John's brother, still stands on the old Earnhart homestead.

John apprenticed with his father William besides watching his grandfather and father as a boy growing up. Conrad King, William's son-in-law, also apprenticed with John. Like John Earnhart, King learned to make muzzleloaders with beauty & craftsmanship, admired by many. Interestingly, Conrad King



had married two of William Earnhart's daughters.

A good example of John's father's work is William's muzzleloader shown in the 1992 edition of Timeline, a periodical published by the Ohio Historical Society. It is hard to tell which of John's rifles were made in Ohio versus Indiana. The only Indiana made rifle that I am aware of is the family rifle owned by myself. My rifle has no patch box, inlays

or cheek rest and the family powder horn was durable with no fancy markings. People that are familiar with John's rifles can see that John's guns ranged from plain working guns to ones with nice patch boxes, inlays, and beautiful carvings. One could say that John's rifles did not display the innate relief and incised carvings that his father, William's rifles had. Again, John's rifles exhibited excellent workmanship. John's rifles ranged from very simple working guns to showcase fancy rifles.

Family Life

On March 12, 1833, John married Mary Hitler of Circleville, Ohio. Her family had wealth that was obtained by the farm sales of grain taken by flat boats to New Orleans, Louisiana. Each trip the boats were sold and the group came back up the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers on Sternwheeler Paddle Boats. Seven of their twelve children were born in Circleville. Two of these died prior to the move to Indiana. In September of 1843, John moved his family to a 240 acre farm in Sparta Township, Noble County, Indiana. The move occurred six months after his father, William had passed away. The family farm was located between Kimmell and Cromwell and two miles South of Stones Trace Pioneer Days is held. Ironically, muzzleloader shooting is part of the festivities.

Found in a historical book of Noble County; John Earnhart was born in Pickaway County,

Ohio on August 12, 1811. He was the son of William and Jane Patterson Earnhart. He was one of a family of ten children. His father was a gunsmith and farmer. John also followed these two professions. When he was eighteen years old, John commenced to learn the gunsmithing trade of his father, at which he continued to work in Indiana. John and Mary moved to section 22 of Sparta Township in Noble County. John had purchased 240 acres from Isaac Spencer with five acres improved. Upon this land he settled and commenced to clearing, hiring some of his chopping done, but rolled logs and built fences himself. Mr. Earnhart also worked at gunsmithing for more or less than fifteen years after coming to Indiana. They had born to them twelve children: James, Thomas, Joseph (deceased), Harriet (deceased), William, John Jr. (deceased),



Earnhart built this home in Noble County, Indiana for his youngest son Lewis.

The patchbox(above) is on one of John's finest muzzleloaders.



Regulators

The Regulators were formed out of numerous small ranch owners and farmers. William Bonney, aka Billy the Kid, would become the best known, most likely due to the notoriety of his name.

Nelson (my Great, Grandfather), Alben, Jane, Ellen, and Lewis. Mr. Earnhart was a Democrat has filled the offices of Trustee, Assessor, and Justice of the Peace. Each had a term of four years. He is a worthy citizen of the township. Though healthy, and strong himself, he had much sickness in his family as well as many setbacks.

The Works & Legacy

In his later years, he owned four hundred acres of land and had six children married. Also during that time, in the 1840's and 1850's, John Earnhart fought for justice. Noble County, Indiana was plagued with horse thieves and cattle rustlers and made most travel unsafe. A local group of mostly farmers, including Earnhart, wanted more protection from the outlaws. He joined the group known as the "Regulators", a group that was not sanctioned by the County Sheriff or other legal channels.

- *A man named McDougel was captured for murder and theft of horses and cattle in the Ligonier area. A "makeshift" trial was held in Ligonier, Indiana. Later that day McDougel was hanged at Diamond Lake. By the 1860's the "Blacklegs" were eliminated. This was due to the formation of the Regulators.*
- *The regulators was a group of law abiding citizens although not sanctioned by proper legal agencies.*



Family papers show that John had a business side used to make money. Recorded land transactions show that he dealt with the Wabash Canal Company, The Federal Government, and private land owners with land purchased. John and his father, William, purchased "Public Lands", 80 acres each from the Martin VanBuren Administration in the 1830's. The sale of these farms help with the purchase of the Noble County Farm. John was a progressive farmer as shown by Insurance policies for lightning rod and fire protection. He also signed legal papers for the installation of fencing on the farm (Patent Infringement Protection). The receipt for the purchase of a windmill from Kalamazoo, Michigan still exists along with other farm records such as property assessment papers.

One Earnhart Family rifle was passed down five generations to me, N.F. Earnhart. The generations were John, Nelson, Glenn, Owen and me, Nery F. It is safe to assume the four of John's sons had muzzleloaders passed on to them. John also started each of them with farms as witnessed through family land deeds. It is not known exactly where John's Gunsmith Shop was located but an 1840's map gives the building's location. The original farm still has twenty acres of woods, filled with hard maple, and most likely where some of his gun stocks came from.

The Earnhart Family burial plot is at Sparta Cemetery near Kimmell, Indiana. His immaculate tombstone is well over seven feet tall made of granite with intricate details. It was erected in 1887 at the time of his death. On his side of the stone it reads; Aged 76 years, 2 months, and 22 days. Other family members were laid to rest near him and his wife, Mary.

A MAN WITH A RICH & HISTORIC LEGACY

Rifle made by John Earnhart has been passed down five generations. The craftsmanship shows that John got some of his father's talents (left).

John Earnhart purchased land from President VanBuren. Pictured, left, are the papers showing the land transaction.

Rifle crafted by William Earnhart, father of John Earnhart (right).

John's picture was taken from the Noble County History Book. One can see that he was a man of high standards, hard worker, family man, and seen rough times in life. His personal signature demonstrates a man of creativity and orderliness.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Earnhart Family History, 4th Edition, Clarence Earnhart
- 2 They Came to Emmaus by Preston A. Barba
- 3 The 1803 House, Historical Society of Emmaus
- 4 Ehenhardt - Earnheart First through Seventh Generations by Warren Offenberger
- 5 Arms Makers of Ohio by Spiker and Whisker
- 6 Timeline Periodical by the Ohio Historical Society 1992
- 7 Hitler-Ludwig Cemetery, Circleville, Ohio
- 8 Noble County History, Weston A. Goodspeed
- 9 Land Deeds, The United States of America, General Land Office, Martin VanBuren
- 10 Personal Insurance and other papers of John Earnhart
- 11 Sparta Cemetery Book, Noble County Historical Society



John Earnhart



Michael Sells



Editor's Note: *The following paragraphs are excerpted from an article entitled "The Sells' Kentucky Long Rifles" by Caroline Miller which was published in Vol. XXI, No. 1 of the periodical Northern Kentucky Heritage. Back issues may be ordered from the Kenton County Historical Society, P. O. Box 641, Covington, KY 41012, or from their website at www.kentoncountyhistoricalsociety.org. The article contains much information on the Sells family and other gunsmiths who worked both sides of the Ohio River in the vicinity of Brown and Clermont Counties in Ohio and Bracken County in Kentucky. This excerpt is by permission of the author.*

The most reputable sources giving the history of Sells family ancestors are: Bucks County Genealogies (Pennsylvania); Benjamin Sells, Sr. Will, Brown County (Ohio); and Millennium File – Heritage Counseling. The most recognized gunsmith in northern Kentucky was Michael Sells, who was born in Brown County, Ohio, on August 11, 1802. Michael's father was Benjamin Sells, Sr., born April 12, 1768 or 1783 (both are listed as birth dates in several references) in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. His mother was Catherine Baum, born on October 19, 1775, in Springfield, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and died in November 1840 in Brown County. Catherine was the daughter of Charles (Carl) Ludwig Baum and Barbara Youngken. Legal records note Michael's parents married on January 11, 1802, in what became Clermont County, Ohio, and paid property taxes in that county from 1806-1810. Beers' Brown County History does state the Mt. Zion Methodist Church was organized on Benjamin Sells, Sr.' property in 1820 in Lewis Township.

Benjamin, Sr.'s second marriage was to Sarah Catherine Plummer, who was born circa 1794. Benjamin died on July 21, 1859, and his will was recorded on July 29, 1859, in Brown County, revealing he bequeathed his wife Sarah one-third of his estate as well as money for her benefit. The remainder of his estate was left to his children: Michael Sells, Mary Sells (wife of Thomas Davis), Samuel Sells, Barbara Sells (widow of Benjamin Plummer), Susan Sells (wife of John Woods), Catherine Sells (wife of Casper Johnston), Joseph D. Sells, Sarah Sells (wife of ____ Willis, John Sells (deceased), and Benjamin Sells, Jr. His sons, Samuel and Benjamin, served as executors and were ordered to schedule a public sale for the remainder of his real estate.

Michael and Mary Hannah (Dillman) Sells' children were: Christine Sells and Sarah Tandrum Sells; Michael and his second wife, Catherine Black, were the parents of Francis Marion Sells, William Kendrie Sells, and Michael Sells, Jr.

The most notable Bracken County long rifle maker, Michael Sells, manufactured his rifles for several decades in Augusta and marketed them on both sides of the Ohio River. He advertised as a gunsmith in the Ripley, Ohio, newspaper, *The Castigator*, in early 1832; he also publicized for an apprentice, a boy, between 14 and 18 years old. This apprentice was to come well recommended for "industrious habit and good moral

continued on p 8



Michael Sells

continued



character.” In April 1835, Michael continued to advertise in *The Castigator*, “Guns!” Guns!” was the heading for the notice which reported he could furnish rifles on short terms. Saw mill irons were also listed for sale either for sale or in exchange for gun stocks. This advertisement reported Michael’s business in Lewis Township, Brown County; the location was most likely in the area where Bullskin Creek forks into east and west branches. The advertisement located in column next to Michael’s notice belonged to future President Ulysses Grant’s father, Jesse R. Grant, listing his business in Georgetown – agent for Columbus Insurance Company.

By the fall of 1835, Michael was hoping to purchase three hundred gun stocks, preferably carved from maple or sugar tree wood and to be delivered to his home (*The Castigator*). Only four months later, Michael changed his advertisement to request persons to purchase his manufactured long rifles. Before that year was over, Michael announced he had obtained a steam factory in Augusta from John A. Tomlinson, located on High (Third Street) and the southwest corner of Bracken Street, diagonal to Augusta College. He marketed his gun-smithing business as well as upcoming wool carding to be in operation by the spring of 1836. In order to handle this increased business, Michael announced openings for an apprentice and a journeyman.

In November 1835, Michael’s Kentucky Long Rifles were sought for purchase by expert marksmen and shooters of all classes. He touted his guns as inferior to none west of the Appalachian Mountains (*The Castigator*). Michael’s apprentice, Nathaniel Wood, however, must have been less than enthusiastic about his indentured apprenticeship, as a July 6, 1836, advertisement stated that he had run away the previous January. Six and one-fourth cents was offered as a reward for his apprehension. Michael’s ads by 1842 mentioned he was not only making new rifles but offered to repair older rifles and perform general blacksmithing in his shop on High (Third) Street, Augusta, first corner above the college. He also advertised for a quantity of good curled gunstocks.

Stamped on Michael Sells’ rifles are markings of “M. Sells”, “M. Sells Augusta”, and possibly “W. W. Tweed” on the stock. Michael not only manufactured rifles which were five feet in length, but also a shorter and lighter version which was barely over four feet, much more suitable for carrying longer distances. The caliber on the longer gun could be .50 as the diameter of the inner opening measures one-half inch; the shorter rifle, perhaps a .45 caliber. The “tiger stripe” stock used on most of Sells’ rifles gave it an attractive, bright look; sometimes the striping was close together and at other times was wider apart.

By 1860 Michael Sells had begun to construct stoves and listed his occupation as a tin and stove merchant; his property was valued that year at \$6,300. On October 20, 1871, Michael had passed away in August and an impressive monument marks his grave in the Augusta Hillside Cemetery; the inscription states that he was born on October 11, 1802.





John Park **(1815 -1895)**



According to information published in *Arms Makers of Ohio* by Kevin R. Spiker and James B. Whisker, John Park was born in Clark County, Ohio. Around 1831 he apprenticed under Thomas Hunt in the vicinity of the border between Brown and Clermont counties. In 1837 he opened a gunsmith shop in Williamsburg, and in 1838 he married Elizabeth Ann Wright. His rifles apparently were well accepted, but after the Civil War he expanded his business into a machine shop for the manufacture and repair of light machinery. He was a prominent local figure – a Freemason, a class leader in the Methodist Church, and was elected to council and the Board of Education.



William Norris **(1805 -)**

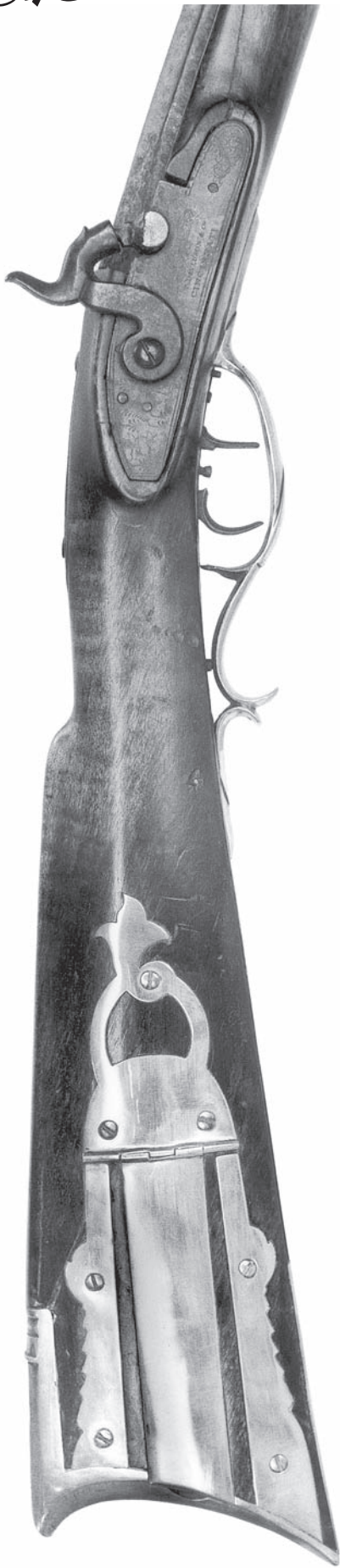


William Norris was noted as a gunsmith in Ripley, Brown County, Ohio as early as 1834 (Hutslar, *Ohio Gunsmiths & Allied Tradesmen*, Vol. I.). Hutslar also reported a rifle signed “W. Norris, 151, 1838.” The 1880 Census listed him as a gunsmith, born in Kentucky. One of his sons, Thomas Hart Benton Norris, was listed as a gunsmith as early as 1860 living with his parents and as late as 1900 in Union Township, Brown County.

Editor’s Note: I am featuring these two gunsmiths together because, while looking through our photo files for pictures of a Michael Sells rifle, I found the photos of a rifle signed by both Park and Norris. A notation on the back of the photo reads “W Norris & J Park, 1840, # 5”. A photo of the signature(s) is not available, however. The proximity of the two gunsmiths certainly makes collaboration possible. I also found photos of a William Norris rifle. The photos were taken by our old friend Dr. James B. Whisker.



Norris & Park



William Norris





LADIES' AUXILIARY NEWS

Springtime in Marietta sounds awfully good right now. Winter has reminded us this week of its presence. March 27 and 28 will hopefully warm us up and we will see the rebirth of nature.

But even if the weather does not cooperate, the warmth of friends will be our blessing. Mark your calendars and make your reservations. Remember this year because of the conflict with the hotel's schedule we will just have the Saturday show with setup as usual on Friday. The buffet and birthday cake will remain the same on Friday evening starting at 6:00. However, this year there will be a suggested donation of \$10 per person for the buffet. Also remember there will not be the banquet on Saturday evening. The show will close at 5:00 pm and we will have to pack up and clear out the room.

Our condolences go out to Nancy Statler and Vivian Kemp. They both lost their husbands recently. Neal Statler and Ron Kemp were both very active in the AOLRC. They were both collectors of Ohio rifles and had tables at the Marietta and Newark shows. Neal also participated in our August shoots. These gentlemen will be missed.

Saturday's activity for the ladies will be just the luncheon. With just one day of the show it was going to be too much to plan outings and be gone for 3 hours or so. We will be remaining at the Lafayette. We will meet at 11:30 at the Rufus Putnam Room – across from the entrance into the restaurant. We will have a short business meeting then the Lafayette will have a salad buffet set up for us complete with drink and dessert. The cost will be \$13.00 per person which includes the tax and gratuity and each of us will be given individual bills.

I am looking forward to our reunion and seeing you in Marietta. Please email me at ronjudyerian@gmail.com, or phone me at 740-746-8965 or send mail to me at 3321 West Point Rd. SE, Lancaster, OH 43130 with your reservation for the ladies' luncheon. I need to give the number attending the luncheon to the Lafayette the week of the show.

See you this SPRING! Judy Yerian

P.S. A REMINDER - Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 8, 2015. This is the date for our annual picnic and shoot. We will try to email everyone a reminder around the first of July but we will not be mailing out the pink reminders. Everyone attending is asked to bring a covered dish to start the lunch at 12:00 followed by shots and smoke on the range. It's a good time and always enjoyed by all who attend. Please plan to join us.

