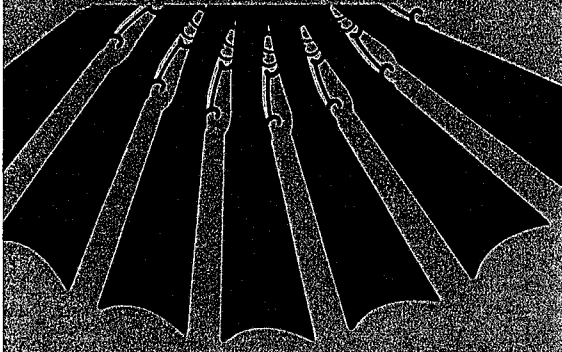


THE
ASSOCIATION
OF OHIO
LONGRIFLE
COLLECTORS



FOR THE STUDY AND PRESERVATION
OF THE OHIO MUZZLELOADING RIFLE

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Vol. XL Number 2, September 2017

19th Annual
Newark Show
AOLRC

ANTIQUÉ GUN
AND ARMS SHOW

Saturday,
September 30, 2017
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Community Wesleyan Church
161 Myrtle Avenue
Newark, Ohio 43055

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President's Letter



Well folks, I hope wherever you have been this year you have been dry. Or at least able to dry out. Have you visited our new website lately? Allen Corbett has been putting a lot of time into it. Also, thanks to Rod Frazer for rounding up the files for the old newsletters. Good job guys.

The website address is: <http://www.aolrc.com/>
Be sure to check out the new Facebook link displayed on the homepage.

Jim Claggett has been working hard on the Newark Show. Don't forget Saturday September 30th. Check the website for details or call Jim.

Also, mark your calendars for April 7th and 8th, 2018. Our 43rd Annual Marietta AOLRC Exhibit will be held in the Lafayette Hotel before you know it.

Finally, I'd also like to report the passing of a longtime member, John L. Herstine, Jr., of Magnolia, Ohio. On behalf of the AOLRC I would like to offer condolences to his family. He will be missed.
Sincerely, Tom

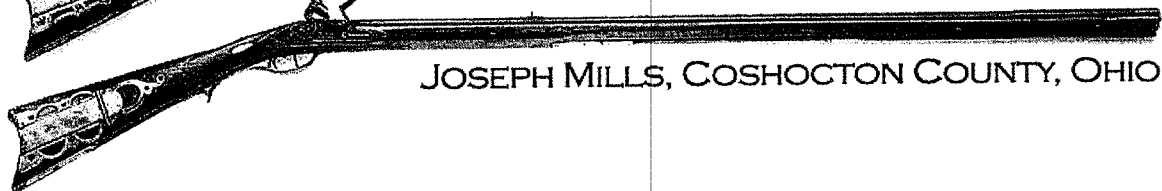
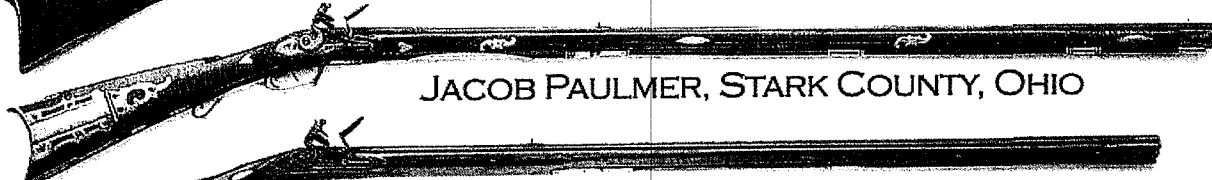
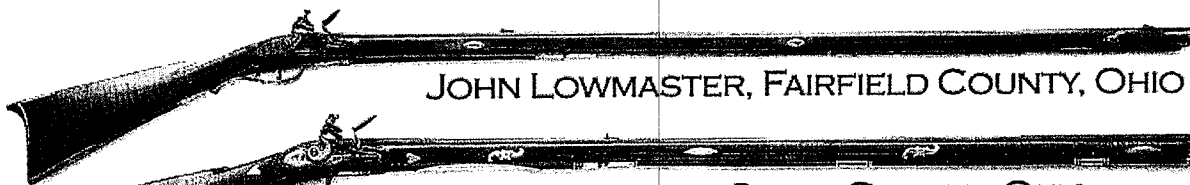
AOLRC PATCHES!!!

AOLRC Embroidered Patches for Sale: Fred Donley has made up a batch of nicely embroidered patches featuring the AOLRC initials and long rifle logo. The color is yellow and black. Cost is \$10.00 each. Once the production costs have been met, proceeds will go to the AOLRC. If you want patches for your shirt, hat, tablecloth, or whatever, please contact Fred Donley at: 330-264-0250 or janis_ld@yahoo.com



Updated AOLRC Website and Facebook Link

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter Allen Corbett has done a fantastic job updating the AOLRC website. Visit the site to find dates of upcoming shows, articles, and even items for sale. These images from the site can be found at: <http://www.aolrc.com/>



Please check out the new Facebook link. This promises to be an exciting place to post current news and photos.

Both the AOLRC website and Facebook page make communication much faster and more convenient to access than the newsletter you are holding. Find them online and enhance your AOLRC experience.

Editor's Notes

An Attic Rifle

I didn't have the money in my pocket – but there it was a half stock percussion rifle laying amidst piles of once treasured “junk” on a flea market vendor's table in central Ohio. Managing to get a verbal estimate of asking price from the busy seller, I took off in search of an ATM. Returning in twenty-five minutes, I found the rifle was still there. After a bit of haggling, the already agreeable price begrudgingly dropped by twenty bucks and I took possession of the artifact of mid-19th century Ohio. As the seller was again besieged by other buyers, I noted the county on his license plate and made my way home. The bright light on my back porch, a tape measure, and a large goggle-eyed magnifying glass, brought my find into full relief.

The gun was virtually untouched, in so called “attic” condition – that is, it had not been cleaned, taken apart, refinished, “restored,” given replacement parts, cut down or elongated (at least not in recent decades), had its period repairs (if any) disappear in the “restoration” process, had a patch box or side plate added (because it “should have one”), or any of the various other modifications that most old guns seem to experience during their

material existence in the hands of collectors or aficionados. The fact is, as others have pointed out, untouched guns from the muzzleloading age are increasingly rare – and there is a value in keeping some guns “untouched” so we know what a two hundred year old gun looks like with that much age and experience on it, and so that we really understand how these guns were repaired in an era before superglue and arc welding, and other cosmetic enhancers. I personally love seeing honest wear – and wonder how it got there, or marvel at how a frontier gunsmith or needy gun-owner made do with a few scraps of brass kettle or snare wire to fix a broken stock, a blacksmith forged hammer for a percussion conversion, or a fore stock worn through so the ramrod shows. And then the varying shades of yellows, oranges, and black and brown that show you how a gun was carried, the hidden dovetails on the underside of barrels, that hint at period restocking and the eaten away metal of hammers and burned out wood that show both use and abuse on the frontier or in barely settled rural areas – as well as the exciting discovery of hidden signatures or proof marks. And so it stands in a corner today. In all its untouched glory awaiting another owner who will have to make similar decisions. –Mark Bender

How to Submit an Article

Note to readers: We are in dire need of articles. Please take a look at these guidelines and contact me at mabgogo@yahoo.com if interested.

Guidelines for article submission:

1) The preferred format for articles is a Word document. Please use size 12 font, single or double space, 1 inch margins. Email to the above address.

2) Printed photographs, drawings, or other illustrations not in electronic format can be mailed to:

Mark Bender
139 W. Old Powell Rd
Shawnee Hills, Ohio
43065 USA

3) Please put “AOLRCfile” in the subject line of the email.

4) Please run a spelling and grammar check on your e-files and otherwise proofread them.

5) Please put the title and author's name at the top of the article; use the same font size for the whole article.

6) Photographs can be color or black and white. If you are not a professional, good results can be obtained by taking photos of objects in soft, outdoor light. Lay the object on a non-reflective black background (blanket, etc.) with no

background clutter. Please keep in mind how a color image might look if presented in black and white. Photos should be clear and sharp. (Professionals will, of course, have their own protocols.)

7) Use past issues as a guideline to content. Ideas for articles include: local or family histories of pre-1900 Ohio gunsmiths and the use of muzzle-loading arms; detailed descriptions of representative or unique rifles (such as rifles with unique features or level of craftsmanship); accoutrements (powder horns, hunting bags, etc.); short interviews with AOLRC members relating to collecting and appreciation of the Ohio long rifle as a folk art; accounts of early shooting clubs, shoots, tales, etc. See the new AOLRC website for examples of some fine articles:

<http://www.aolrc.com/>

9) The newsletter is normally published twice a year in late March and early September. Submissions are always welcome, however timely notices or material concerning the Spring or Fall shows need to be received at least 6 weeks in advance.

10) For information on e-submissions contact me at: mabgogo@yahoo.com



Notes on Jerman Jordan, Ross County Gunsmith

by
James Whisker

Note: This is the first in a series of factual notes on Ohio gunsmiths provided by Dr. Whisker.

Jordan, Jermin (1790-1865). gunsmith. 1823-58, Chillicothe, Ross County. 1830, Chillicothe. 1850, Jerman Jordan, gunsmith, 57, value \$5000; Bertha, 53; R. W. Denning, merchant, 33, value \$7000, all born in PA; M. C. Denning, 33; R. H. Jordan, clerk, 20; Maria Reed, 15, all born in OH; Mina Rumph, 18, born in Germany; Calvin Margis, clerk, 20, born in OH; John Harper, clerk, 24; born in Scotland. 1860, Sherman Jordan, gunsmith, 68, born in PA, \$5000 property; \$250 personal value; Maria Denning, 40; Franklin Carroll, 13; Hercules Carroll, 10, all born in OH [Ancestry;

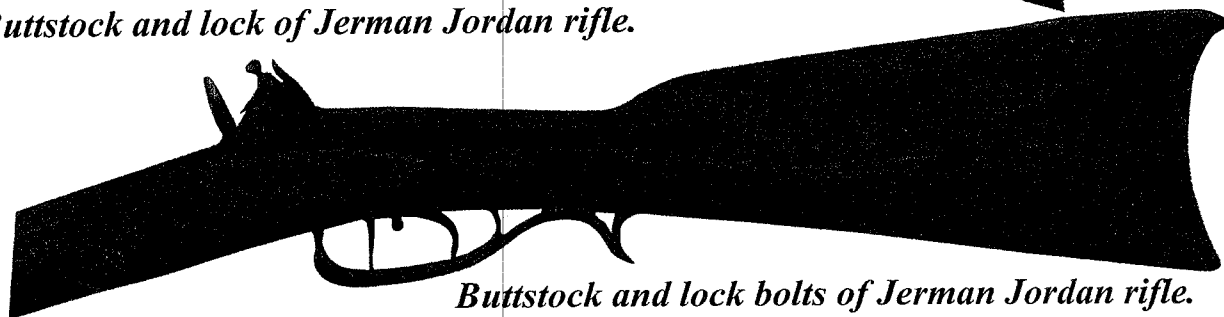
Census]. Jerman Jordan was born in 1790. His wife's name was Bethia (1793-1854) and they had a daughter Maria Jordan Denning (1814-1905). Jerman died on 9 February 1865 and was buried at Grandview Cemetery, Ross County. He shares a memorial with John M Jordan, died at age 6 years; and his wife Bethia [Find A Grave Memorial # 30293489].

For more on Jermin Jordan, see the article by William Reynolds, "Jerman Jordan, Ross Co., Ohio," in *AOLRC Newsletter*, Vol. XII, No. 2, 1990.

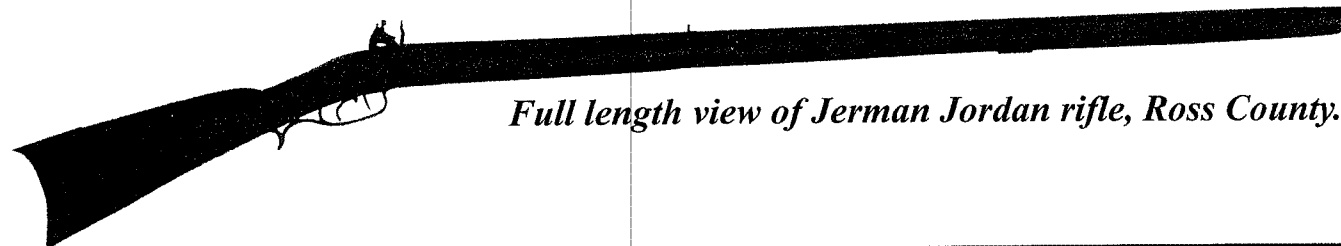
The photos show both sides of the lock area of a plain Jordan rifle and a full-length view. (Courtesy Dr. James Whisker and the AOLRC Archives.)



Buttstock and lock of Jerman Jordan rifle.



Buttstock and lock bolts of Jerman Jordan rifle.



Full length view of Jerman Jordan rifle, Ross County.



Fish of the Seas: Folk Art of D. Newlin Rifles



by
Mark Bender

Handmade rifles produced by individual gunsmiths or small shops are a hall mark of mid-19th century Ohio material culture and folk art. Small fish and distinctly carved cheek pieces are outstanding features common to a pair of D. Newlin rifles examined here. In discussing two examples of Newlin's work this short article seeks to establish some basic stylistic features of Newlin's rifles and suggest similarities with the work of a contemporary gunsmith in Newland's area. Like many products of gunsmiths of the period both rifles exhibit a range of basic attributes as well as a more fluid range of secondary features – which are drawn from a pool of features used by 19th century gunsmiths. This situation of similarity and variation is in accord with other items of folk culture, such as the handmade chairs documented by Michael Owen Jones in *The Handmade Object and its Maker* (University of California Press, 1975).

Newlin is listed in Donald Hustlar's landmark work *Gunsmiths of Ohio: 18th and 19th Centuries* on Ohio rifles as living in New Liberty, Logan county, Ohio, and being part of a local community of persons freed from bondage who "moved to Jefferson Twp., Logan County, ca. 1849" (George Shumway, 1973:238) and similarly in Spiker and Whisker's *Arms Makers of Ohio* (p. 167). The only written sources seem to be a local trade directory dated 1870 and a county history. Newlin is thought to be of African-American ethnicity, and a contemporary of the well-known Mesheck Moxley of Bellefontaine, Logan county, whose work I

described in the issue of this newsletter in an article entitled, "Mesheck Moxley, An African-American Gunsmith in Nineteenth Century Ohio" (Vol. XVIII, No. 1, 1996). Both gunsmiths seem to have had good local followings and may have been part of a small community of African-American gunsmiths in the greater Bellefontaine area in the mid-19th century and elsewhere in the state. Some of these artisans, such as John Brown (Athens county), Selwyn Peters (Lawrence county), and Samuel Sharp (Wyandot county), are introduced in an article entitled "African-American Gunsmiths," by James B. Whisker (AOLRC Newsletter, Vol. XIV, No.1, 1992). Spiker and Whisker also list Littleberry Stewart of Gallia county, who later lived in Cass county, Michigan (p. 227).

The configurations of the rifles are similar and wholly in accord to many half-stock all-purpose hunting and target shooting rifles of the era. Both are made of curly maple, though Rifle B has a tighter grain. Both have decorative nose caps of cast tin. Each also has silver or nickel silver barrel key inlays, and Rifle B has a silver inlay of four joined commas. The side plates are common patterns seen on guns of the period in Ohio: Rifle B has a brass comma-shaped design, and Rifle A has a reduced version of earlier Pennsylvania rifle side plates with stepped rectangular finials. Barrel lengths and width and caliber are all typical. What is more unique to Newlin's style – at least exhibited by these two rifles – are the fish motifs of the inlays, the cheek piece designs, and the basic stock architecture.



Artistic Features and Possible Influences



As noted, each rifle has either inlays or a casting with fish motifs. While fish sometimes have Christian symbolism in early American folk art it is impossible to say why Newlin used the fish designs. Fish, however, are among the designs encountered on Golden Age rifles from Pennsylvania and appear on other rifles from Ohio and elsewhere. Fish are thus not unique to Newlin, though they seem to constitute an important aspect of his artistic vision. On Rifle B the fish is cast as part of the tin nose cap, which also has two decorative “wings,” one on each side that project back from the body of the nose piece – which could be water drops or waves. This feature, in a somewhat different form is also found on the nose cap of Rifle A, though without the fish. It is interesting that on both rifles the fish heads point towards the muzzle, an orientation seen on many old muzzleloaders with fish designs.

The other outstanding feature of the rifles are the cheek pieces. Given the overall dimensions of the guns, Rifle B, with a lighter barrel and longer trigger pull has a slightly larger cheek piece. This may simply be the result of not having a set pattern, but could also indicate the gun was fitted for a somewhat larger shooter than Rifle A. The cheek pieces are overall similar in design and are both substantial in size compared to other cheek pieces of the era. Rifle A has one, rather striking, lateral flute within the cheek piece, while Rifle B has two. Rifle B has an inlay in a pattern of four comma shapes connected at their tails located at the rear of

the cheek piece. This pattern is also found in Pennsylvania German folk art and represents rain drops, which bring the essence of life. Of course, the ancient four lobed design appears in many forms world-wide with a variety of meanings. Rifle A has no inlay on the cheek piece. The barrel key inlays on rifle B are conjoined commas, with their tails pointing up and down respectively. Again, this may be a water motif. The bottom and borders of each cheek piece are decorated with incised lines and chip carving. In Rifle A, the pattern is formed by a sort of chip carved basket weave on the bottom and rear border, with only a single line on the front border. On Rifle B there is a row of small rectangular chips within two parallel lines on the front, bottom, and rear borders of the cheek piece (see illustration).

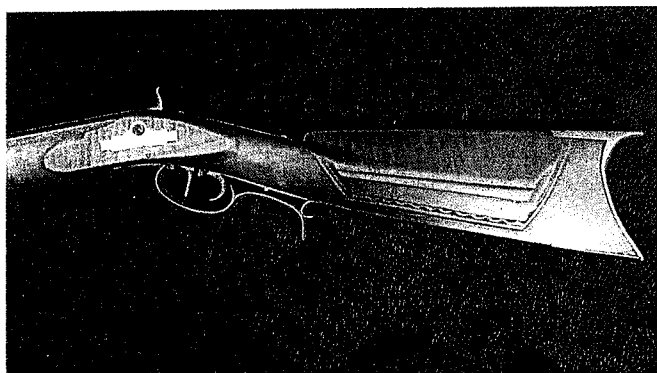
The rear edge of each cheek piece is slightly curved. This feature is reminiscent of the design of cheek pieces on several known Mesheck Moxley rifles, which suggests there was some sort of influence between these artisans. The curving underline of the stock (“fish belly”) is also a feature of many Moxley rifles that is shared by these Newlin guns. Moreover, on Rifle A the rear of the lock and side plate mortises are squared -- another common Moxley feature. Finally, the long tangs, both the square-ended one of Rifle A and the tapered and swollen and pointed end of the Rifle B tang have appeared on both signed and unsigned Moxley rifles. Another signed Newlin rifle, slim with fine lines and a slight fish belly, has a 36" x 7/8" barrel, a simple brass tab



as a side plate, and no cheek piece. The nose cap is similar to Newlin rifles A and B, but without the extensions. The tang has a diamond shaped point, similar to Rifle B. The rear of the side plate mortise is lightly squared, as often seen on Moxley rifles and Rifle A, and the ramrod pipes have incised lines on each end, also seen on some Moxley rifles. The tobacco colored finishes on the three rifles are similar to each other

Key measurements of Rifle A:

- Barrel length 32 5/16"
- Barrel width: 1"
- Caliber: .30
- Tang: 5 3/16"
- Trigger pull: 12 9/16"
- Overall length: 48" (muzzle flat to upper end of butt plate)
- Cap box: 4 1/2"
- Fish inlay: "2 "
- Cheek piece:
upper width: 7 1/2"
lower: 5 1/16"



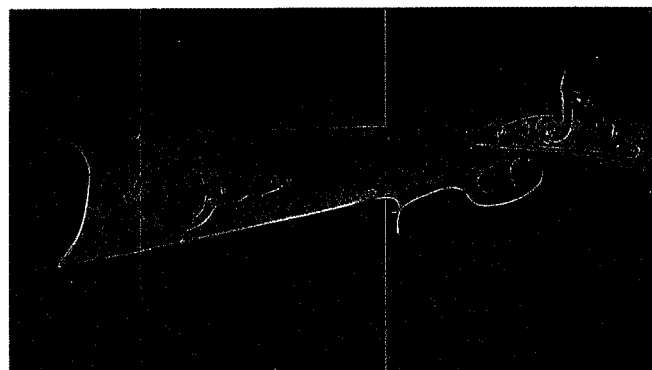
Buttstock and cheek piece of D. Newlin rifle, A.



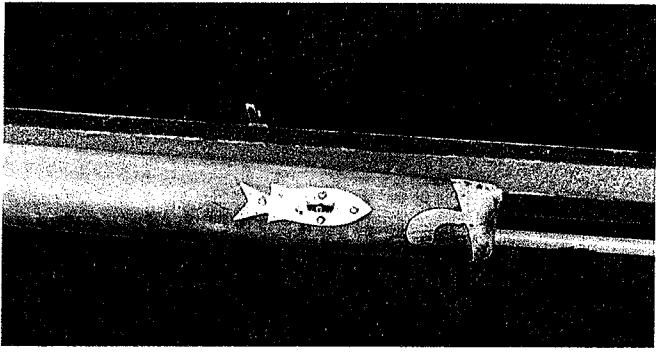
and to several Moxley rifles the author has handled. Patterns, parts, techniques, and influences circulated among the gunsmiths of early Ohio. These rifles under discussion, with their unique and shared features, are expressions of folk art created within a circle of African-American gunsmiths and families in mid-19th century Logan county, Ohio. (Copyright 2017 Mark Bender)

Key measurements of Rifle B:

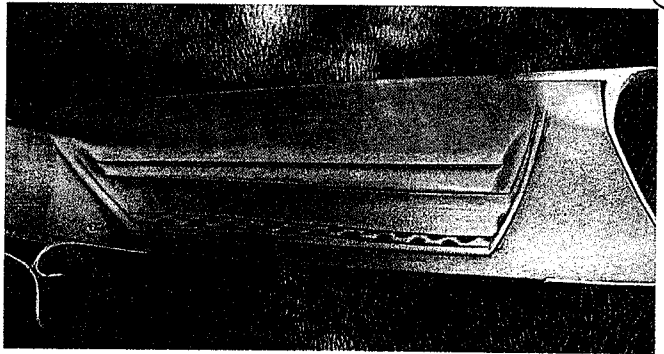
- Barrel length 32 1/4"
- Barrel width: 7/8"
- Caliber: .32
- Tang: 6 1/16" (hooked breech)
- Trigger pull: 13 5/8"
- Overall length: 48" (muzzle flat to upper end of butt plate)
- Cap box: 5 3/4"
- Fish in nose cap: 1 9/16"
- Four-lobed inlay: 1 1/2" across
- Cheek piece:
upper width: 7"
lower: 4 11/16"



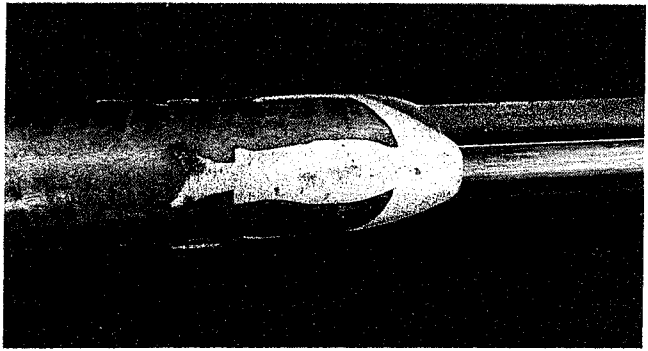
Patch box of D. Newlin rifle, A



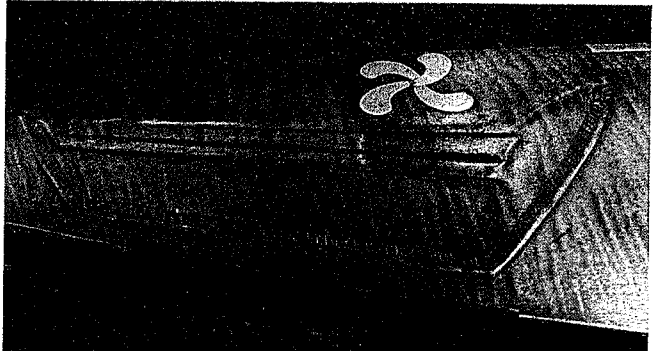
Fish inlay of D. Newlin rifle, A.



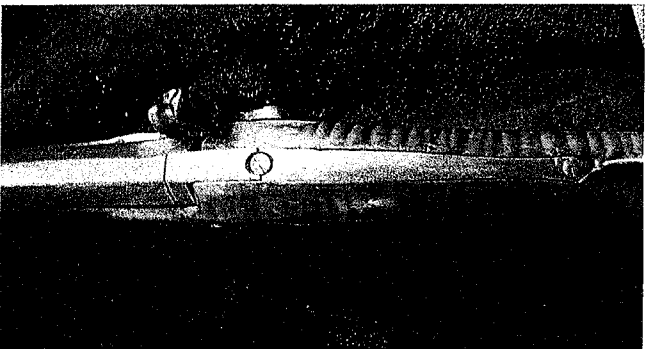
Close-up of cheek piece D. Newlin rifle, A.



Cast fish end cap of D. Newlin rifle, B.



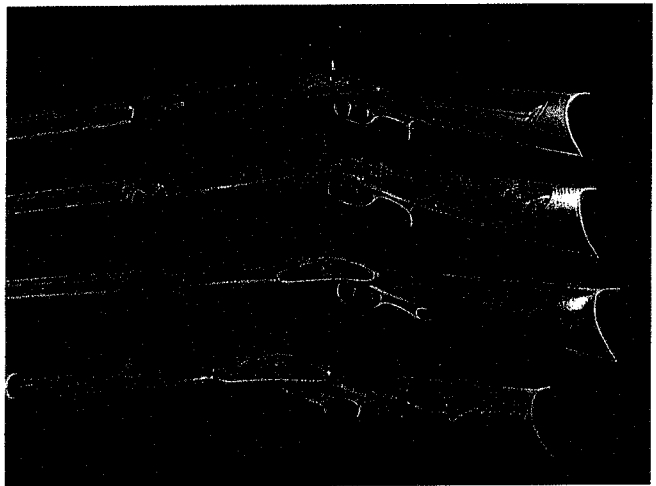
Cheek piece on D. Newlin rifle, B.



Shaped tang of D. Newlin rifle, B.



M. Moxley cheek piece.

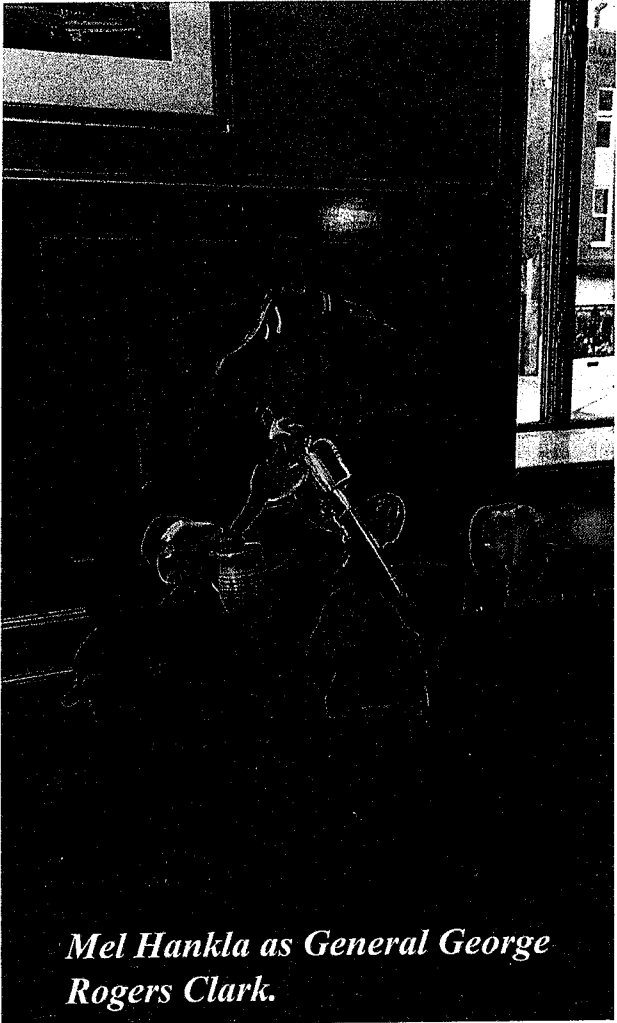


Three D. Newlin rifles one M. Moxley rifle (bottom).



A dainty 8" 19th century powder horn collected in Delaware County, Ohio. (Courtesy of Mark Bender)

42nd Annual Marietta Show

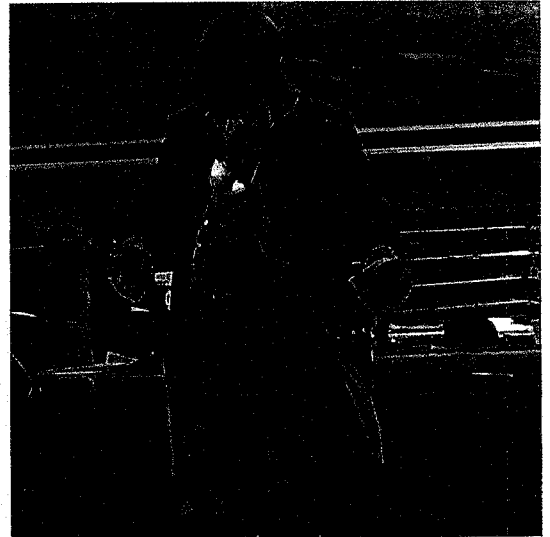


*Mel Hankla as General George
Rogers Clark.*



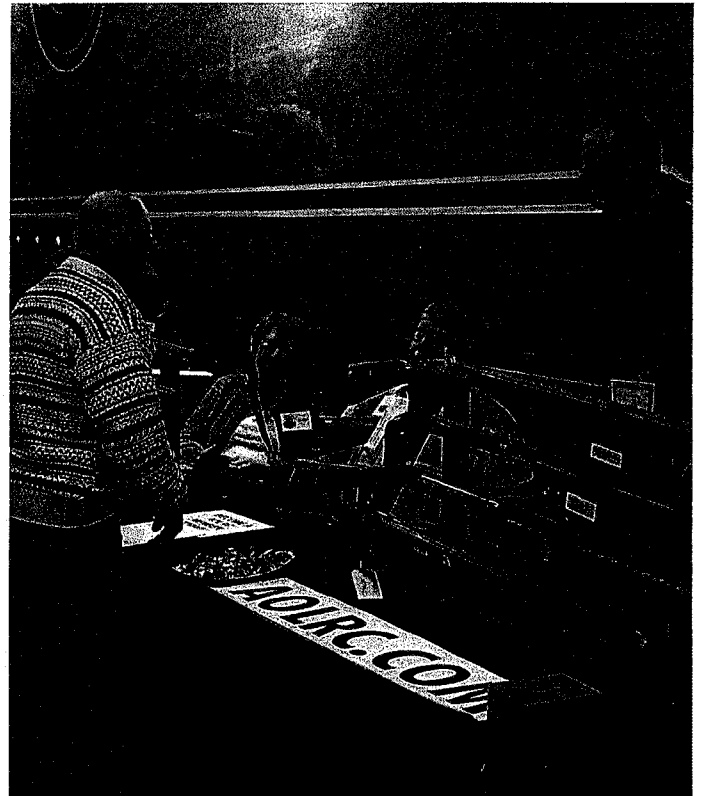
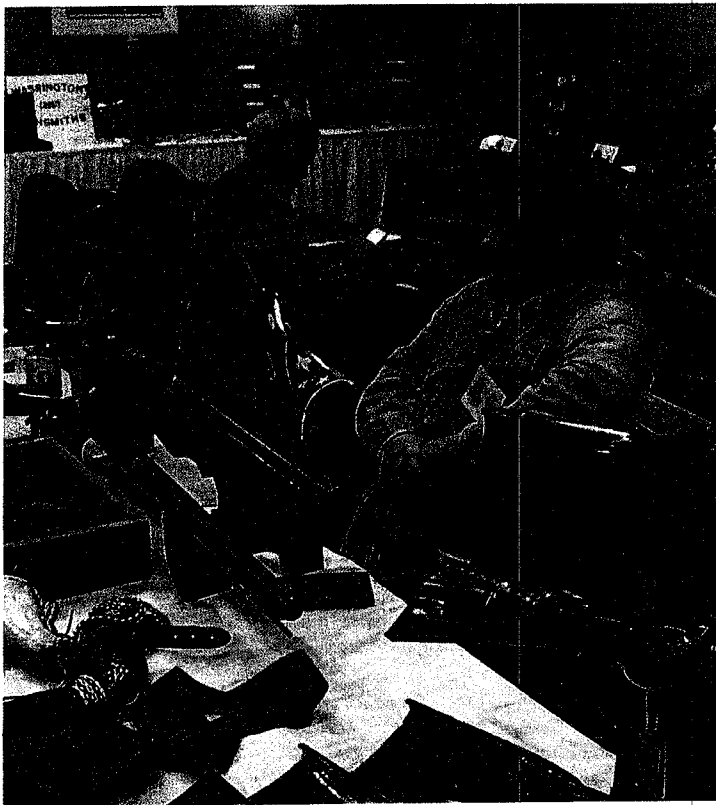
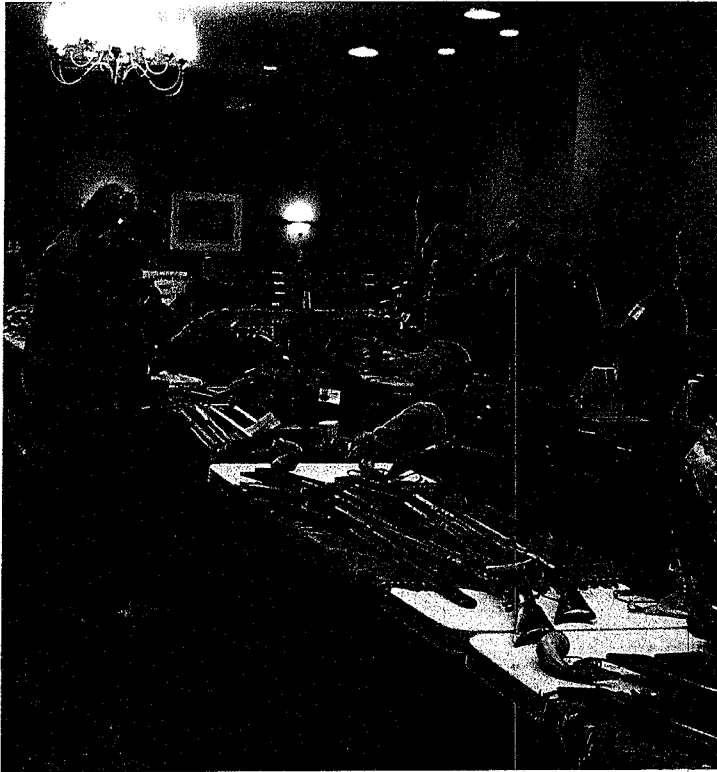
2017 AOLRC Marietta Exhibit

The 42nd AOLRC Marietta Exhibit was held April 1-2, 2017 in the historic Lafayette Hotel, Marietta. The exhibit is the major event for the public display of antique Ohio rifles and accoutrements sponsored by the AOLRC. The event serves to educate the public about a unique part of Ohio's cultural heritage by allowing access to historic items of late 18th and 19th century folk art. The rifles produced for hunting, target practice, and farm use are an important part of the historical legacy of all Ohioans. The exhibit is also a time for members and their families to socialize and share information about their collections and interests. Mel Hankla, as General George Rogers Clark, was the featured entertainment. (Photos courtesy of Judy Yenian and Barb Harwood)

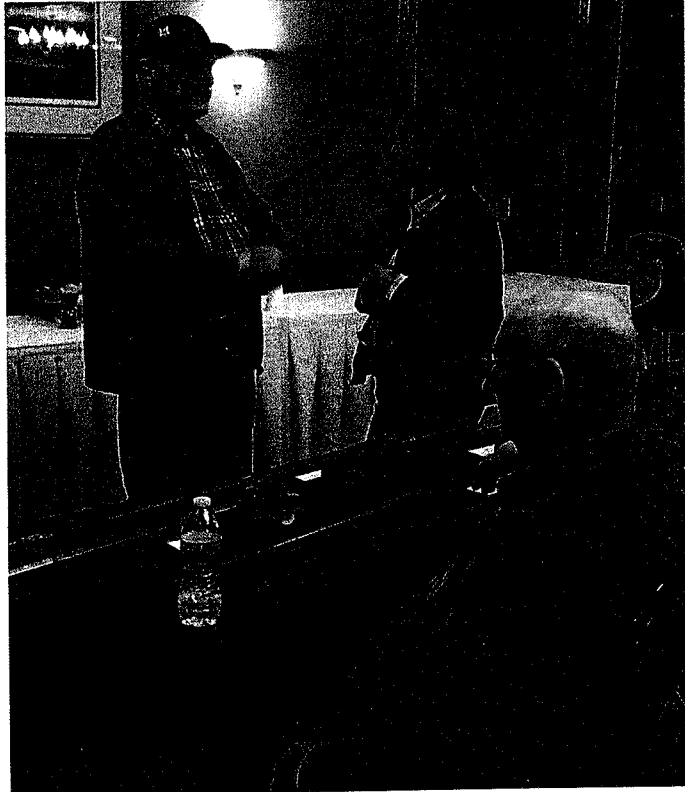
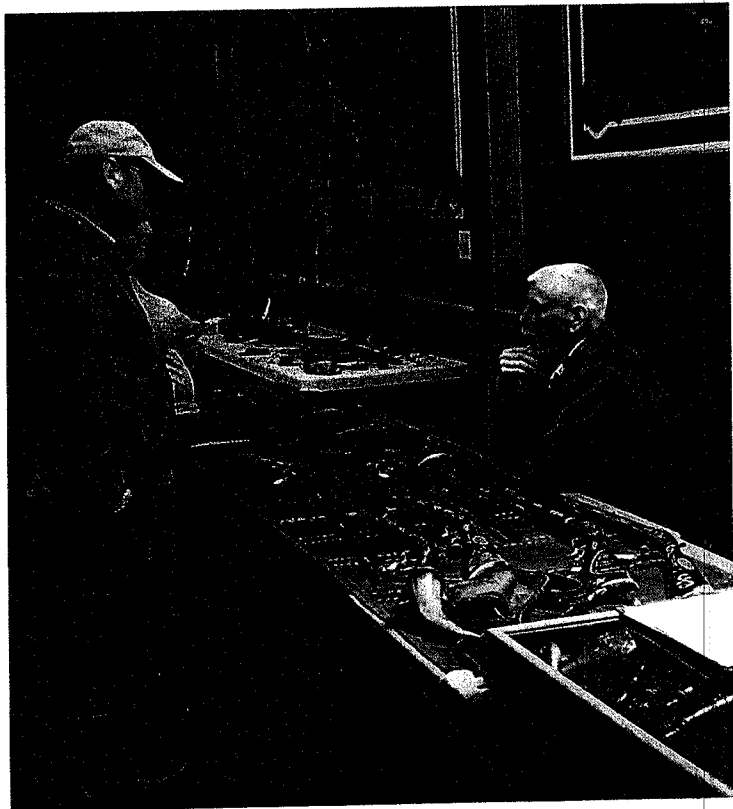
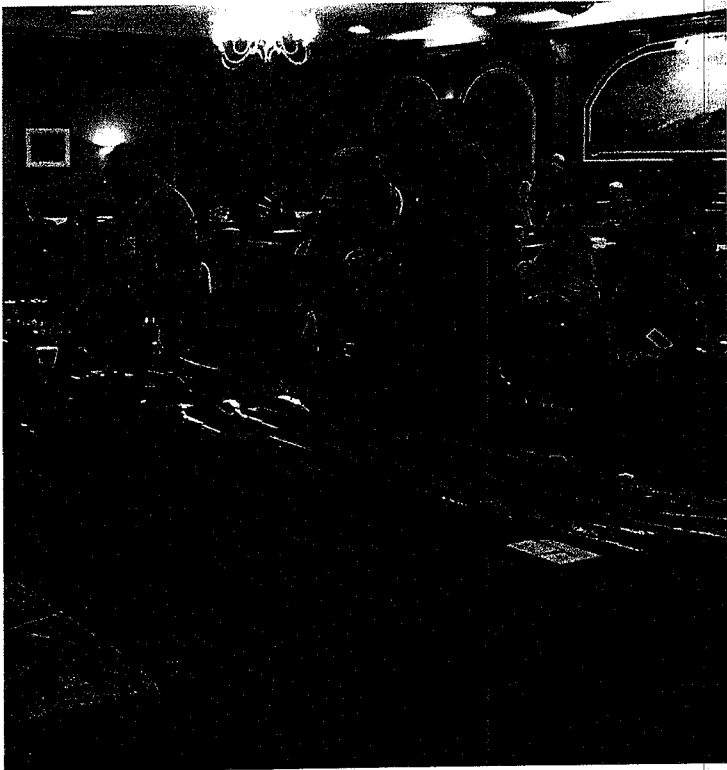




42nd Annual Marietta Exhibit



42nd Annual Marietta Exhibit





AOLRC Ladies Auxiliary



Wow, where has the summer gone? Seems like we were just enjoying our outing to the Campus Martius Museum and lunch. Now it's time to organize the 2018 Spring Ladies Luncheon and outing.

Alys and I have been thinking about it for the last few weeks. Just had a chat with her and we came up with similar ideas, so we're already on a roll. LOL Not promising, but hoping to have the trolley tour combined with a tour of some of Marietta's oldest and most beautiful churches. We drive by them every year looking at the amazing outside architecture, so hopefully we can go in and find treasures of their beautiful inner architecture, plus learn about their historical value to the community. Not sure how many we can see, but we'll try our best. If that does not work out, I am sure we'll come up with something to entertain us. LOL Alys will be checking on a place for lunch. We will try to keep that and entertainment cost to a minimum, yet, have a great time together.

More detailed information will be in the February issue, so please ask your better half to see that issue if you don't get the mail first. We plan to have everything wrapped up by January.

Any suggestions or help would be appreciated. Just give me a call or send an email. Hope to see some of you at the Newark show in the fall.

Barb Harwood
Co- President
740-332-6344 harwood@bright.net

