

EDITOR'S NOTES

I am writing this the day after Groundhog Day and it looks like Spring is on its way. I would like to thank several members for their contributions to this issue. Fred Schreel spins some interesting tales and presents intricate facts about Henry Burns, a maker in southwest Ohio, who we find out was embedded in a genealogical web of gunmakers in that region, with links to other parts of the country. Bob Statler penned a piece introducing the work of Dan Humphrey from Northeast Ohio. Dr. James B. Whisker, a longtime advocate for the AOLRC and producer of thousands of photos of Ohio rifles that appear in volumes produced by the organization, contributed some details on a patent revolver by a mechanically inclined gunsmith who seems to have spent his career outside Ohio but was buried in the state. Barb Harwood and Aly Wagner have updated us on the doings of the Ladies' Auxiliary and preparations for the Spring show in Marietta.

Thanks also go to President Jim Clippinger and members of the administration that keep this organization going.

A feature article on the Belmont County maker Commodore Perry Hatcher complements a September 2015 article published by Jim Whisker in Muzzle Blasts. The present article includes detailed measurements that may be of use not only to collectors, but to anyone trying their hand at producing a robust mid-19th century Ohio half stock sporting rifle from the Tri-State area of southeast Ohio.

"The Squirrel Hunters of Ohio" article briefly introduces an historic event involving what was likely hundreds or thousands of civilian-made Ohio rifles and other arms. In the late summer of 1862 over 15,000 civilian "minute men" answered the call of Governor Todd to bring whatever

armament they had to Cincinnati in anticipation of a possible invasion by Confederate armies.

Among the armaments were certainly many Ohio made rifles and relics of previous wars and confrontations. Do our members have stories of any of these guns carried to that event? Are there rifles still in existence that were carried by the "Squirrel Hunters" or related items such as the discharge papers issued in 1863 to thousands of the participants?

Here I would like to offer an opportunity to anyone who has a family story linked to the "Squirrel Hunters of Ohio" - or other stories of a non-military issue gun carried by the Squirrel Hunters or otherwise the Civil War. What would be most interesting is having a story and an actual gun that was carried - and even more interesting one made by an Ohio maker. My idea is to publish photos and stories in a future issue of the Newsletters. (Of course, any contributors would get a couple free copies of the Newsletter.)

If you have something of interest, just send me an email at: mabgogo@yahoo.com and include the words "Squirrel Hunters Link" in the subject line.

As always, if you have an article you would like to publish, or good ideas for an article (such as a description of an especially interesting rifle, stories/facts about Ohio gunsmith or related craftsman related to the muzzleloader era, or ideas for an article about an outstanding member of the organization), please contact me by email. I also plan to attend the Spring show in Marietta, so feel free to talk with me there.

-Mark Bender

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.
2. In rare cases, handwritten materials (and/or non-digital photos, illustrations, etc.) can be submitted. Please contact the editor by email.
3. Articles in Word (or compatible system), photos (j-pegs or other formats), and correspondence can be emailed to this address: mabgogo@yahoo.com
4. Please put "AOLRCfile" in the subject line of the email.
5. Please run a spelling and grammar check on your e-files and otherwise proofread them.
6. Please put the **title and author's name** at the top of the article; use the same font size for the whole article.
7. **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.)
8. 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 (in terms of features or level of craftsmanship); accoutrements; 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.
9. The newsletter is normally published twice a year. Submissions are always welcome, however timely notices for the Spring or Fall shows need to be received at **least 6 weeks** in advance.

WHERE ARE THEY? RIFLES OF THE “SQUIRREL HUNTERS OF OHIO”

BY MARK BENDER

Back about 1972, while in high school in Woodsfield, the county seat of Monroe County, I bought my first “original” muzzleloader -- a double-barreled 12-gauge muzzleloading shotgun, missing the right hammer. The seller, a young antique dealer had scrounged the gun somewhere in the hills near the hamlet of Laings. The story was that “the family said it was carried in the Civil War.”* For some reason that attribution of “carried in the Civil War” never fully made sense to me, as the US was well into the Industrial Age by then and could produce its own weapons en masse. Over time I heard more stories of soldiers taking personal arms to the fray on both sides of the conflict (as in earlier conflicts in American history) and that many private arms were altered to percussion for the War. I have always wondered if some of these stories were wishful “George Washington slept here” tales, or in fact reflected a family legend or even a well-documented account.

some of those “carried in the “Civil War” tales. I found some references online to an event during the Civil War in which Ohio citizens were asked in the tradition of the “minute men” of the Revolution of 1776, to come to the defense of the state in 1862. In 2003 an Ohio historical marker was erected by the Ohio Bicentennial Commission, the Scotts Company (founded by a Civil war veteran), and the Ohio Historical Society in Ripley, Brown County entitled “The Squirrel Hunters 1862,” (Fig. 1). The plaque explains that in 1862, Governor David Tod issued a proclamation: “Our southern border is threatened by invasion. I therefore recommend that all the loyal men of your Counties at once form themselves into military companies. Gather up all arms in the county and furnish yourselves with ammunition for the same. The service will be but for a few days. The soil of Ohio must not be invaded by the enemies of our glorious government.” The proclamation was made in fear of an invasion by General Edward Kirby, who had “defeated a Union Force at Richmond, Kentucky on August 30” 1862. A panic ensued, and soon thousands of men, young and old, provisioned with their hunting arms or anything else that would shoot (one source says, “pitchforks, clubs, and pistols and blunderbusses of 1812 or thereabouts”), were making their ways to Cincinnati by train (government subsidized) or any means possible to fend off the ensuing threat. The state government sent a shipment of 5,000 muskets, as well.

Articles and websites online give many interesting details about the event, noting the participation of over 15,700 male volunteers from 67 counties in the state, all of whom converged on Cincinnati (HMdb.org; Donegan 2012). Residents of the city, both white and black, were organized into brigades to help build fortifications, while a curfew was employed and provisions made available to the amassing “squirrel hunters. An image from the era exists entitled “Squirrel Hunters and Militia cross the Ohio River to defend Cincinnati” shows masses of armed men marching

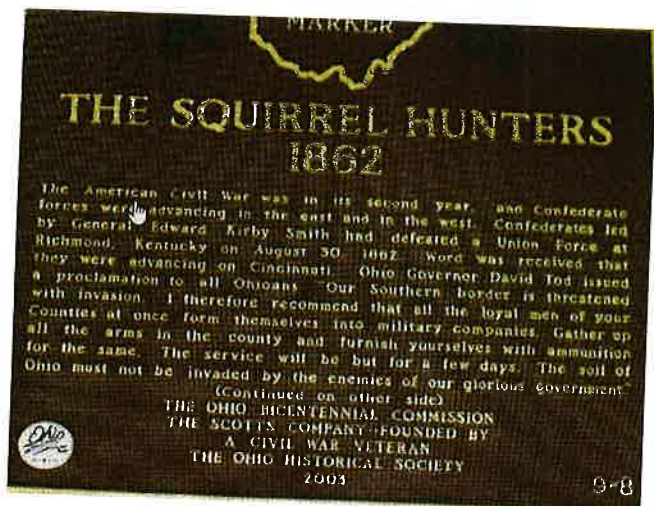


Fig. 1. Ohio Historical Marker, “The Squirrel Hunters 1862” located in Ripley, Ohio.

Squirrel Hunting Minute Men

I recently came across a reference to an event which I don't recall being part of my seventh grade Ohio history course, but which may shed some light on