



*Trigger and sideplate of script-signed, D. T. Hawken rifle.
(Photograph by Mark Bender)*



*Full-length profile of stamped, D. T. Hawken rifle.
(Photograph by Mark Bender)*



Name stamp of D. T. Hawken rifle. (Photograph by Mark Bender)

A CLUTZ AND STULL CONNECTION: HARD PROOF?

BY THOMAS OAKES

This rifle came into the shop in the fall of 2020. As soon as I saw the signature stamp on the barrel, I knew it was unusual (Figure 1). This rifle will never win an award for the prettiest Ohio rifle, but it shows a relationship between an established Ohio maker and his apprentice. Josiah Edward Clutz was born in Adams County, Pennsylvania in 1831. We first find him in Ohio in the 1850 census living with the Sam Stull family listed as Josiah "Glutz" age 19 gunsmith. He was not listed in the 1860 census with the Stull family and we don't officially find him again until a 1866 directory in Massillon, Ohio: His obituary of April 18th, 1902 sheds some light on the missing years. In 1858 he married Mrs. Eliza Kelly in Muscatine, Iowa where he was in business from 1855-1861. They traveled to Massillon Ohio in 1861 by wagon the entire distance. In addition to being a well-known local gunsmith, Josiah held several government jobs including Stark county commissioner, board of director for the Canton workhouse, city councilman, deputy auditor and sewer inspector. He is sometimes found referred to as "captain" as he had once been captain of a local gun club.

This rifle arrived almost completely disassembled. The owner had plans to make it a shooter, but a quick look at the bore (rough) and the need to make a complete new breech plug changed the plan to one of "clean and preserve." In looking at the individual parts, it's easy to see that Josiah hand-forged everything, with the possible exception of barrel. The barrel is 26 inches long, 1 9/16 inch across the flats at the breech and 1 1/2 inches (almost) at the muzzle. The barrel is oval (rather than round) at the muzzle, possibly from hand filing or forging. The bore is 45 cal. with 7 lands and grooves and a 1-48 inch rate of twist. The breech plug is a common "flint" style plug with a long top tang. Under the age-blackened varnish is a beautiful crotch walnut stock which has a 1 3/4 in. trigger pull. The buttplate is hand forged sheet iron; one piece formed and brazed together much like the famous Hawken rifles.

This rifle can only be assembled in a certain order: With the breech plug installed in the barrel, slide the buttstock up under the long tang and against the

back of the barrel. Install the two tang bolts (different lengths) into their respective holes. Then, bring the single lever double set triggers in from the bottom; use a machine screw to attach the front of the trigger bar to the bottom of the breech of the barrel; and screw the rear tang bolt into the rear of the trigger bar. Now bring the trigger guard up to the trigger bar and push the front tang bolt thru the trigger bar (no threads) and thread it into the trigger guard.

A simple wood screw holds the trigger guard to the stock. The bow of the trigger guard has Stull-style engraving (figure 2). All parts in the lock are hand-made (figure 3). The front of the lock plate has a dovetail that mates to a matching recess in the side of the barrel and is attached with another machine screw. Note also the Stull-style engraving on the lock plate (figure 4). A matching side plate (figure 5) is attached using the same style dovetail and screw as the lock and a bolt and goes from the side plate to a threaded hole in the tail of the lock to complete assembly. Because the barrel is so large, a recess was cut into the barrel so the nipple could be threaded into this ledge, so it would line up with the hammer nose. Then, a flash hole was drilled in from the right side of the barrel, under the nipple and into the bore. The flash hole was then plugged at the outside of the barrel. The barrel is topped with a (very) oversized set of open sights, obviously hand forged and filed. There is also a nut forge welded to the top of the tang where a lollipop sight was once mounted. The overall length of this rifle is 42 inches, with an assembled weight of 15 lbs.

Sam Stull was known to be an excellent blacksmith and built some unusual rifles that survive today. It appears that with this rifle that those same lessons were being instilled into the young apprentice, Josiah Clutz.

Additional reading:

Hustlar, Donald A. (n.d.).a. *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen, 1750-1950*, Vol III. State College, Pennsylvania: Josten's Printing (for the Association of Ohio Long Rifle Collectors).

_____. (n.d.).b *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen, 1750-1950*, Vol IV. State College, Pennsylvania: Josten's