

Illustration No.8: Comparison of patchbox finials. Note outline, engraving, and hinge. Above: full stock. Below: half stock.

Pennsylvania. The lid forms one 3/8 inch center segment and the finial forms a larger segment on either side. See Illustration No. 8.

Elaborate silver cheek inlay.... the beautiful large silver cheek inlays, identical on both the study rifles, appear unique to Young's work, and a key guide for identification. See Illustration No. 9.



Illustration No.9: Elaborate silver cheek inlay found on both John Young rifles and perhaps a trademark of Young's work.

Patchbox lid engraving.... all lids appear to have dashed borders running in the long direction, with a crested side of each dash pointing outward. The short edge along the butt plate is bordered with the "broken" wobble line that appears jumbled and thicker than normal wobble engraving. The lid carries a large, swirling pattern of "C" and "S" scrolls as a center decoration on the two study pieces, each different yet retaining strong similarities. See Illustration No. 10.

Patchbox lid spring contact.... the lid carries a rather long iron spring contact strip, riveted to the inside of the lid with two copper or brass rivets, one near the hinge and the other in the approximate center of the lid.

The above listed identifying characteristics are useful on decorated guns, carrying a patchbox and perhaps some inlays. If a very basic rifle without signature, patchbox or inlays were examined, the job of identification would become difficult. Perhaps the best that can be said is that if the gun had good curly maple, carried a 40 to 40½ inch barrel, had a slightly curving comb, and locked 1850'ish, then maybe it's an Ohio John Young piece.

The Different Engraving Styles On Young's Rifles: During the detailed analysis of the two signed John Young rifles, the most fascinating discovery was the two distinctly different styles of engraving on the metal mounts. Both guns are consistent in this regard, with a high quality and sophisticated style used on the patchbox and other brass mounts, and a very good quality but more provincial style used on the silver inlays. The differences in style can readily be seen when the engraving on the patchbox is compared to that on the large silver cheek inlay. See Illustrations Nos. 9 and 11. Marked differences in bright cuts, shading lines and techniques, shapes of scrolls and their terminations, and the general layout and flow of the patterns can all be seen. The fact that two different engravers apparently worked to decorate these rifles leads to the following questions:

1. Which of the engraved styles, if either, represents the work of gunsmith John Young?
2. Does the use of another engraver support the theory that, on later guns at least, gunsmiths sometimes purchased sets of standardized and engraved inlays to decorate their work?
3. Can any conclusions be drawn, or at least assumptions made, about who the "other" engraver

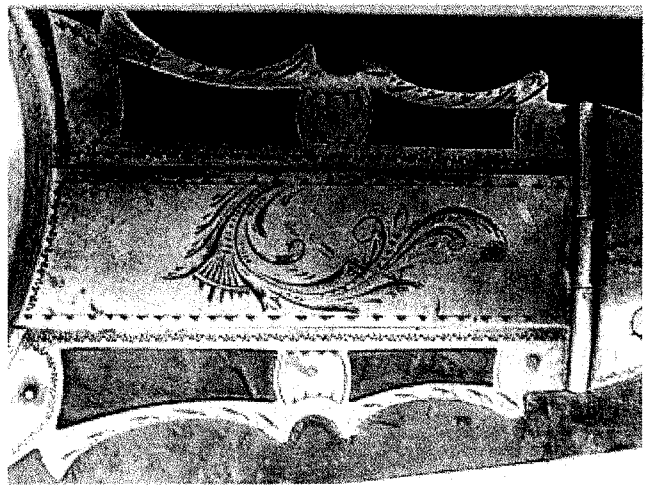


Illustration No.10: Comparison of patchbox lids. Note central engraved patterns, dashed border lines, and regular plus "broken" wiggles. Above: full stock. Below: half stock.



Illustration No.11: Silver eagle inlay from butt of full stock. Note wiggles added to wing feathers for shading.

might have been or how he was associated with John Young?

Determination of which engraving style belonged to John Young takes a bit of rationalization along with some common sense to arrive at. His patchboxes are strongly tied to the work of his contemporaries from the Philadelphia area, such as the Tryon factory, in construction, outline, and high level of engraving skills demonstrated. A first reasonable guess would be that he may well have imported his boxes and brass mounts from sources in the Philadelphia area, perhaps from other Young family relatives living there who still worked as engravers, carrying on the senior John Young's traditional line of work. The logical extension of this thought would be that the beautiful but more provincial silver inlay work was actually the work of John Young himself. All this would seem to stand to reason because, if a gunsmith were to use someone else's work to decorate his gun, would he not use someone who could engrave better, adding beauty to the finished product that perhaps the gunsmith could not? Paying for someone else's work should only happen if it were a step up, not down, for the finished product. But all this seemingly consistent logic does not hold up well to further inquiry.

The brass mounts, i.e. patchbox, butt plate, trigger guard, pipes, nose cap, and toe plate are basic and necessary elements of the gun, while the silver inlays are non-functional enhancements. It seems contrary to logic that a gunsmith would purchase all his basic mounts, already finished and engraved, from another source and then make the less essential decorative mounts (inlays) himself. Normal practice was to install the brass mounts before engraving so that both they and their screw fasteners could be leveled and blended with the wood surface by hand filing. Only then were they polished and

engraved. John Young may have purchased his brass fittings elsewhere, but in all probability mounted, filed and finished (polished and engraved) them in the normal manner in his shop. Cases have been reported of guns being made by a gunsmith and then sent elsewhere for elaborate embellishment with inlays; but such cases were the exception, infrequently done, and in no way the normal procedure for a gunsmith. The common occurrence of the fine engraving style on brass mounts from both guns (plus a third gun illustrated in Roy Chandler's Kentucky Rifle Patchboxes & Barrel Marks, p. 395) indicates it is the work of the gunsmith; the less frequent occurrence of the elaborate inlays and their provincial style of engraving indicates the work of another man, perhaps a silversmith, and probably living in the near vicinity since they appear on two of the three above-mentioned Young guns.

The question of who engraved what on the John Young rifles is answered by detailed examination of the heavily decorated full stock study piece. That gun has not only its brass and silver mounts well engraved, but also the barrel and tang. The barrel carries entwined wiggle lines around the front and rear sights: whoever engraved the brass mounts also enjoyed using wiggle lines frequently. The tang is fully engraved, and carries a "C" scroll design embellished and terminated in the same manner as scrolls on the brass mounts; the tail of the tang also carries engraving cuts found in the body of engraved patterns on the brass mounts. Finding the same engraving hand on both brass mounts and iron parts, parts essential to the gun, is a good indication that it represents the work of the gunsmith. There is always the possibility that a skillful Philadelphia-trained engraver worked in close proximity to John Young, and that Young

took his guns to him for engraving of the brass mounts. But if that were true, why would Young not also use the man for his silver inlays, and retain the higher quality engraving on both types of mounts?

Records indicate that John Young came from Pennsylvania, and there are some indications that he had ties both family-wise and professionally with the earlier John Young of the Allentown-Bethlehem gunsmithing school (although much work remains to be done for proper verification). The earlier John Young was also noted as a professional engraver. These indications, plus the strong Philadelphia-area influence seen in the Ohio John Young's work, all tend to support the conclusion that the Ohio John Young was trained near Philadelphia, not only in gunmaking but also in engraving, and that he was in fact the highly accomplished engraver of the brass mounts on his guns. It may well have been that by the mid-1800's John Young was purchasing his brass mounts from Philadelphia-area sources, whose style he was familiar with and in fact preferred for his work, but the mounting, finishing and engraving are surely by his own hand.

Once the conclusion is reached that Young did his own engraving on the patchboxes and brass mounts, then it must be assumed that another man, competent in silver fabrication and engraving but slightly more provincial in style, made the beautiful and probably unique inlays found so far only on John Young's rifles. That man's work and his possible relationship to John Young are explored further in the section describing a set of unmounted gun inlays that appear intended for, or coming from, a John Young rifle. It should be noted that the full stock carries two (2) inlays that appear to have engraving by both men; one is the wear plate

and the other is the silver eagle. The silver wear plate was made by the unknown silver worker as witnessed by the finials and large "C" scrolls, but the center engraved pattern is by John Young. See Illustration No. 12. Similarly, the silver eagle butt inlay was made by the other man but given additional shading with wiggle lines by John Young. See Illustration No. 11.

Possible Connections With Other Gunsmiths Named Young: A review of the many available Kentucky Rifle reference books show a number of different gunsmiths named Young, and practicing their art in most if not all the states where Kentucky rifles were made. Census indexes show the Young name to be very common in the early days, with "J.Young" or "John Young" so frequent that it takes time and effort to find the gunsmiths by that name. The writer therefore chose not to do original research into the various "Young" gunsmiths, but rather to scan the available information in the various reference books and draw conclusions from the data and illustrations already made available by others. For the sake of keeping this study to a reasonable size, it was probably a wise decision.

In Gunsmiths of Ohio 18th & 19th Century, Vol. I, by Donald Hutslar, on page 370 John Young is briefly mentioned as living and working in Stark County, in the upper east central area of Ohio. Specific references to him include the 1850 Census data stating "John Young, gunsmith, age 25 years, from Pennsylvania, located in Sugar Creek Twp. in Stark Co." A second reference states "John Young, located in village of Milton, post office at Freose's store." While meager, the information implies a birth date of 1825 along with being raised in Pennsylvania, both significant factors in establishing possible connections with/to other gunsmiths.



Illustration No.12: Silver wear plate inlay from full stock. Note differences in engraved styles between fine central pattern and more provincial terminals.

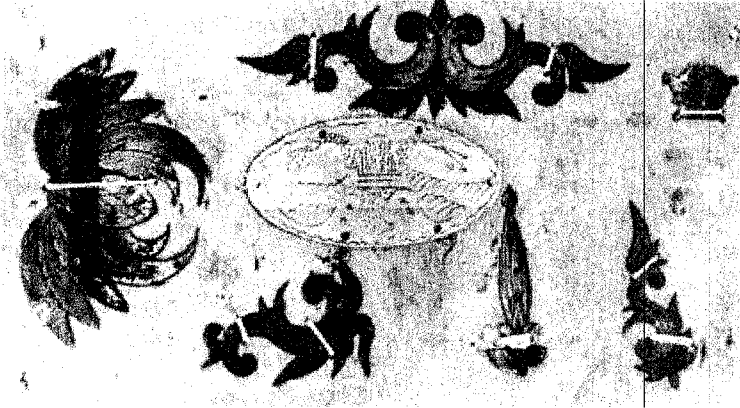


Illustration No. 13: Suite of silver gun inlays by same maker as those on John Young's rifles. Center German silver inlay doesn't belong. Note unique cheek inlay at top.



Illustration No. 14: Elaborate comb inlay and engraved barrel tang on full stock rifle.



Illustration No.15: Toe plate and trigger guard of full stock showing Young's finely detailed engraving and repeated central pattern.

In reviewing patchboxes similar to those used by John Young, Roy Chandler's Kentucky Rifle Patchboxes & Barrel Marks is a valuable source. Of note are the several very similar patchboxes on "Tryon" guns from Philadelphia shown on pages 376-377. While minor outline differences exist, the boxes and key hole finials are almost identical. Engraved patterns differ substantially, but both Tryon pieces and Young's work carried very high quality, professional engraving. Similar three (3) segment patchbox hinges are present, also. A reasonable conclusion would be that the Ohio John Young either ordered his brass mounts from around Philadelphia, or that he was trained in that area and carried those particular design factors west with him to Ohio.

Chandler's book illustrates a third Ohio John Young rifle on page 395, also illustrated in other books but not attributed specifically to the Ohio maker. This third gun has patchbox finial, side leaves, and engraving similar if not identical to the two study pieces discussed here. A larger but less clear photo of the gun is in Henry Kauffman's The Pennsylvania-Kentucky Rifle on page 366. Two patchboxes by gunsmith "D. Young" are illustrated by Chandler on pages 394 and 395, and appear to be related to John Young's work based on the side leaves of one and the finial outline of the other. No "D. Young" is known to have worked in Ohio, so he was probably an eastern Pennsylvania relative, working in an overlapping time period, although perhaps a little earlier based on the calibers and butt plate curvatures shown.

The most important Young family connection would be to gunsmith John Young of the Allentown-Bethlehem School who worked earlier and was noted as an engraver. The senior John Young was most frequently listed from Easton in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. One fine early gun by him, ca. 1800,

is illustrated in Jim Johnston's Kentucky Rifles & Pistols 1750-1850 on page 7, and a second gun attributed to him is on pages 22-23. The question then becomes whether there is sufficient similarities in the work to assume a relationship between the two John Youngs, since research has not yet established a definite connection. The answer is difficult but several factors seem to support a connection. First, there are the obvious similarities between the Ohio John Young's work and designs used in a near Philadelphia, and the fact that he may well have grown up and learned gunsmithing near that area. That area is close to where the senior John Young worked. Second, there is the knowledge that the older John Young was a professional engraver; the Ohio John Young's brass mounts are engraved in a high quality, professional style showing distinct ties to the Philadelphia school in layout and some details, such as the pineapple finials on the wear plate of his heavily inlaid full stock. The junior Young either had close connections to an accomplished Philadelphia engraver and used him regularly on all his guns, or else he himself had skills comparable to the senior Young's. The odds of sending each and every gun to another man for decoration seems remote, if not absurd. The logical conclusion is that Ohio's John Young was a very accomplished engraver in addition to gunsmith, that he learned his skills back in Pennsylvania from a fine engraver and gunsmith, and that it was in the Philadelphia area. The older John Young fits these criteria very well.

A direct comparison of design details in both men's work shows at least one similarity that strongly suggests a connection between the two men professionally. That similarity is seen in the swirling rococo scroll pattern found in the patchbox finial of the

older Young's fine signed gun, and the somewhat similar and beautiful done engraved pattern occurring as the predominant motif on the Ohio John Young's patchbox lid, toe plate, trigger guard, and forestock wear plate on the heavily inlaid full stock, and on the patchbox lid of the half stock rifle. See Illustrations Nos. 10, 12, and 15. The feeling of both men is very similar....an elaborate "C" scroll as the primary member, almost closing on itself, and then relieved at its termination by "S" scroll ends flowing off gently in the opposite direction. And as the basic "C" and "S" scrolls gracefully diverge, both Youngs use small cross lines or "bridges" to tie the diverging scroll stems and ends together, giving a feeling of solidness and unity to the pattern.

Several other weaker and more prone-to-question vestiges of the earlier Allentown-Bethlehem School seem to live on in the Ohio John Young's work, tying him in additional manner to the earlier gunsmith. These vestiges include the Ohio Young's consistently low and slightly curved comb line, his rather small and slightly low/weak cheek pieces, and the trigger guard of his half stock study piece, with its heavy front post and tight, small radius of its rear spur. These lesser points are open to criticism, but to some degree still give support to where Ohio's John Young received his training. Yet the larger facts still remain: Ohio's Young had Pennsylvania roots; his engraving style was highly developed and in the Philadelphia School tradition much like that of the senior Young; the similarities in the complex rococo patterns of swirling "C" and "S" scrolls is very apparent in the two men's work; and finally, there appears to be vestiges of the Allentown-Bethlehem style in the later Ohio John Young's work. These facts and indications, some

admittedly weak, tend together to support a connection between the two John Youngs, perhaps Senior and Junior. And then there's always the old logic bantered around about gunsmiths when direct relationships are hard to establish; often the same name and same profession in itself indicates some family connections.

Comparative Dating, or Sequencing, Of The Two John Young Rifles:

The two Young rifles illustrated in this study were probably made in the decade between the late 1840's to the late 1850's, and as with any two objects, one must always be older than the other. Kentucky rifle enthusiasts invariably are fascinated with the age of their pieces, or the determination of age, and the question of "Who's got the oldest?" is often heard when two collectors compare pieces by the same maker. The two Young pieces present an interesting exercise in trying to determine relative ages of pieces, and which may be the older. Depending on the individual factors that any one collector may be prone to focus on first, either gun could be claimed as the oldest... and the position supported by details from that particular gun. The real challenge presented by Young's Ohio work stems from the fact that he mixed styles and design characteristics, in particular some of those elements often used to establish relative age between two pieces by the same maker. A systematic effort to establish the most probable sequence of manufacture for Young's works may therefore prove enlightening, and give some thought to others for when they encounter similar situations with other makers works.

There are many attributes of longrifle design and construction that changed or evolved over time, leaving numerous factors for possible help in determining the date of manufacture, or in Young's case

the sequence of manufacture. However, schools of design differed appreciably as to which factors were the most significant, and how rapidly they changed. And then there is always the confusion added by the awareness that many of the finer pieces are built to order for the owner, incorporating at least some of the owner's whims and desires rather than just the natural design progression of the gunsmith himself. The primary difficulty caused by owners' whims is probably the frequent use of "older" details on later guns.... they had seen it on older guns, liked it, and therefore wanted it on their newer pieces. But while it may confuse dating a little at times, it did help preserve some of the better design elements in various areas for longer than they may have otherwise existed.

The John Young guns probably date to around the mid 1850's, but which piece is older? That question can be approached by examining a number of differences found on the guns, and for each characteristic where a difference is found, determining which gun carries the "older" characteristic or style. Some design characteristics considered significant for age determination are too similar on the two Young pieces and therefore not considered here; only characteristics where visible differences existed were evaluated, with one gun picked as the "older" of the two for that factor. Obviously, this approach involves some degree of "art and mystery" and can be questioned in areas, but for the overall objective of determining which piece is older, it's a reasonable method. The "older" piece is indicated by an "X" in the comparison chart.

The TOTALS immediately raise the question of whether they are representative, or should some factors carry more significance, or weight, because

they are more reliable factors of early vs. late. Reviewing the twenty five above factors for reliability, certain ones probably are more significant, and these might be selected as: a.1,3,4; b.3,5; c.1; d.1; e.1; f.2; h.2.3. If the weighted value is doubled for those attributes, the count for each gun becomes 12 to 24 in favor of the half stock as probably being older.

When the two rifles are first looked at, the viewer is immediately drawn to the full stock, attracted by its stock length, more elaborate patchbox, and very high quality silver inlays. But eventually the back action lock and almost nonexistent side facings are noticed. And then on second glance it's seen that the half stock was originally a full stock also; it has neat and pronounced side facings and a front action lock; it's more slender and graceful and has a decorated wrist, lower butt moulding, and in particular an older style trigger guard and triggers. So which is really the earlier gun, and does the numeric analysis help at all? While both guns are from the same general time period, the writer would tend to agree with the analytical results, and opt for the gun that's currently a half stock.

The Set Of Unmounted Silver Gun Inlays: The elaborate set of silver gun inlays that turned up at the 1988 Ohio Longrifle Collectors Show in Marietta, Ohio was made by the same man who made the silver inlays on the two John Young rifles discussed in this study. The large and very elaborate cheek inlay is immediately recognizable as his work. The set of inlays were stitched to an old piece of cardboard for years and had oxidized to almost black, obscuring some of the engraving details and making photography difficult, as seen in Illustration No. 13. The German silver oval



<u>Age Difference Characteristics</u>		<u>Full Stock</u>	<u>Half Stock</u>
a. Butt	1) thickness	X	
	2) drop		X
	3) height	X	
	4) crescent shape		X
b. Stock	1) quality of wood	X	
	2) moulding lines		X
	3) side facings		X
	4) wrist treatment		X
	5) slimness		X
c. Patchbox	1) side leaves style	X	
	2) lid engraved pattern		X
	3) shape of patch cavity		X
d. Barrel	1) caliber		X
	2) tang style		X
e. Lock	1) style		X
	2) engraving style	X	
f. Inlays	1) number	X	
	2) elaborateness	X	
	3) engraving qual./quant.	X	
g. Trigger	1) style of rear set		X
	2) width of trigger plate		X
h. Tr.Guard	1) thickness of front post		X
	2) spurs		X
	3) round vs. faceted bow		X
	4) ovalness of opening		X
TOTALS FOR OLDER CHARACTERISTICS		8	17

cheek inlay in the center of the illustration is not part of the suite of more elaborate inlays related to John Young's work. Starting with the easily recognizable top center inlay, which is John Young's characteristic cheek decoration, and numbering it as No.1, if one moves in a clockwise circular direction there are five additional related silver inlays, or six in total. Close inspection of the various inlays reveals where they were intended to be located on a rifle.

Inlay No. 3 (based on the clockwise circular numbering) is

probably intended as a comb inlay (or part of a composite inlay) since it's the same as the outer half of the comb inlay on the full stock Young rifle except for being the mirror image, i.e. engraved on the opposite side. See Illustration No. 14. It may have been used in conjunction with inlay No. 5, whose use isn't immediately obvious but may have been the base section of a two piece intended comb inlay. As previously mentioned, examination of inlay No. 1 shows it to be virtually identical to the cheek inlays on the two Young study rifles, and inlay No. 2 is curved to fit behind the rear pipe,

probably in connection with inlay No. 4 as its finial, or termination. The large inlay No. 6 is of such a size that its use is limited, and the most probable would be to decorate the large area of the butt immediately behind the cheek piece, similar to the eagle inlay on the full stock rifle. However, the pattern is somewhat unusual for use in that, or any, area of a gun. Perhaps additional inlays existed with this set at one time that, if present, would help explain better the intended use of each inlay. Undoubtedly they are silver gun inlays, and by the same craftsman who made the silver inlays on the two study guns.

The set of inlays is a fascinating discovery that adds to the knowledge of the silver work found on John Young rifles. When the writer discussed the inlays with the owner, he was of the opinion that they represented a set of "standard" inlays that any gunsmith could have purchased. The writer disagrees with that opinion. The elaborateness and uniqueness of these inlays suggest that they were intended for use on a particularly fine rifle: the fact that similar inlays have been found only on John Young rifles despite many other gunsmiths working in and around his time and locality, suggest that the inlays were somehow related to, or earmarked for, only John Young's work. If they were available to other gunsmiths, surely at least one other Ohio gun would have surfaced by now with one of these beautiful and distinctive cheek inlays, but another man's name on the barrel.

The inlay maker, perhaps a silversmith who periodically did custom work for John Young, may have also had background experience in or around Philadelphia, based on his flamboyant rococo style and the use of the pineapple motif in his work. The large silver wearplate inlay on the full stock

clearly shows pineapple finials at either end, and the inlays at the barrel wedges are a somewhat more abstract rendering of the same form. The unmounted set of inlays also show the pineapple motif on the large inlay No. 6, probably intended for use behind the cheek piece. A repeat note must be made about the large silver wear plate inlay; it clearly demonstrates the styles of both men involved in the gun's decoration.

The inlay was made by the maker of the other silver inlays, and his "heavy" "C" scrolls and pineapple finials are readily seen. But the central engraved design is unquestionably the work of gunsmith John Young, with its delicate "C" and "S" scroll patterns as described earlier in this article. See Illustration No. 12. And as also mentioned previously, the silver eagle inlay on the full stock also represents both men's work, with Young adding wiggle shading to the wings of the otherwise finished inlay. See Illustration No. 11.

At the current time, available information is too limited to yield any idea of who the silver worker might have been. Perhaps he was a local craftsman in Milton, Ohio, a contemporary of John Young. Perhaps, due to the Philadelphia influence in his inlay work, he was somehow related or associated with John Young both back in Pennsylvania and later in Ohio, maybe even in his shop. And then there is the highly engraved lock plate on the half stock rifle, with the worn name partially visible and appearing to be "C.L.Bar"; who's engraving was that, since it appears different from Young's work? There are still many unanswered questions; hopefully this writer's effort better defines the work of Ohio's John Young, and perhaps someday another collector will pick up a good quality "J. Young" piece,

get excited about the gun and the maker, and dig out the rest of the story on this noteworthy Ohio gunmaker. □

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF J. YOUNG RIFLES

<u>Attribute/Characteristic</u>	<u>Full Stock</u>	<u>Half Stock*</u>
1. Barrel: Length	40.25"	31.25"***
Dia. Across Flats	.97"	.97"
Taper/Swamp/Straight	Straight	Straight
Bore	.32	.36
Rifling Grooves	7	7
Markings	"J. Young"	"J. Young"
Finish	white	white
*Note: Half stock rifle was originally full stock.		
**Note: Half stock barrel cut; originally 40.0".		
2. Stock: Butt Width	1.25"	1.10"
Butt Height	4.13"	3.88"
Butt Drop	4.75"	4.00"
Trigger Pull	13.25"	13.13"
Wood Quality	Flame Curl	Tight Curl
Carving	None	Checkered Wrist
		Lower Butt Mold
Cheek Piece	Low, Mold Line	Low, Mold Line
3. Lock: Type	Back Action Pr.	Front Action Pr.
Markings	"G. Herder Cincinnati"	"C.L. Bar "
Decoration	Border, Scroll Work	Fancy Scrolls
4. Patch Finial	"Key Hole" Style	"Key Hole" Style
Box: Side Leaves	Pierced	Strips
Hinge	3 Segments	3 Segments
Closure	Spring	Spring
Cavity	Rectangular	Rounded Ends
5. Inlays Number	14	5*
Metal	Coin Silver	Coin Silver
*Note: Half stock had six more when full stock.		