

The first three volumes were published in a space of five years and were immediately popular, though the publishing costs that Johnston bore were substantial. The volumes feature color photographs by Steve Fuller of many of the finest Kentucky rifles, smoothbores, pistols, tomahawks, hunting bags, powder horns, knives, trade silver, and other associated items. Many persons allowed Johnston to use their possessions in the series or contributed in other ways.

Although Johnston always regarded writing as a challenge, the illustrations and short descriptions offer readers a treasure trove of illustrations of items difficult or impossible to access in real life. Besides his own books, Golden Age Arms, Inc. also handled books by other authors such as George Shumway, T. M. Hamilton, Charles E. Hanson, John D. Baird, Alan Eckert, etc. The back cover of catalog 5 (figure 5) features a picture



5. Back cover of Catalog 5 with advertisement for a popular Don Hutslar book.

to three of Madison Grant's books (Powder Horns and Their Architecture, The Kentucky Rifle Hunting Pouch, and The Knife in Homespun America), which was announced on the back cover of the 1991 catalog.

Over the years Johnston has owned extensive collections of some of the finest antique muzzle-loading firearms, knives, tomahawks, and powder horns in existence. The walls and cases of the shop were often laden with items from Johnston's collections and many hobbyists and professional builders benefitted from examining them. Johnston's father, LaDow Johnston, enjoyed sharing his collections with others, and his son carried on the tradition. When asked about his

philosophy of collecting, Johnston replied, "Buy the best you can afford, and collect what you like."

One outstanding piece once in Johnston's hands is a well-known (among collectors) pre-Revolutionary Moravian rifle by Andreas Albrecht that is decorated with a "lamb's head" finial on the brass patch-box and the carving a lion-like creature behind the cheek piece, valued in six figures. Johnston at one time had what was likely the best collection of pre-Revolutionary carved powder horns ever assembled. Examples of frontier knives he has owned are illustrated throughout the Accouterments series. Today, catalogs, guns, parts, and other items associated with Golden Age Arms, Inc. have also become collector's items.

For a variety of reasons, Johnston retired and ended the business around 2002, when he was 62. In his thinking, hobbies make life meaningful and the ability to supply components for a hobby or lifestyle centered on the American frontier of approximately the early 18th to mid-19th century era has been gratifying. Golden Age Arms, Inc., along with other shops and companies of the era such as Dixie Gunworks (located in Tennessee), the Log Cabin Shop (in Lodi, Ohio), Track of the Wolf (Minnesota), and several smaller outfits in Ohio and elsewhere, has helped thousands of enthusiasts enjoy life more. That is legacy enough for any enterprise.

#### Sources:

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Golden Age Arms, Co. catalogs (4, 5, 7, 18, 19)  
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# A Dainty Clutz Rifle

BY MARK BENDER

Born in Pennsylvania, Josiah Edward Clutz (1834[31]-1902) was a gunsmith and longtime resident of Massillon, in Stark County, Ohio (Hustlar 1973: 362-363; Spiker and Whisker (n.d.:47). Local directories indicate he was active between 1866 and 1886. He was known as "Captain," probably due to his position in a local gun club. Besides work as a gunsmith he held several county administrative positions including sewer inspector and county commissioner. A number of his well-crafted rifles survive and several populate the collections of AOLRC members. There is some evidence he may have learned the gun-making trade from Samuel Stull in Knox County when he was around age 19 (Hutslar n.d.:a 47)

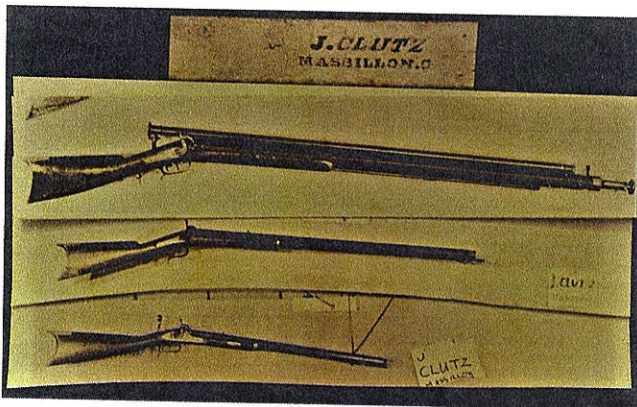
A contemporary of the renowned Peter Reinhard(t), in nearby Loudonville, Ashland County, Clutz produced half-stock civilian rifles, including target rifles mounted with heavy barrels and false-muzzles (used to precisely position bullets in the barrel while loading), sometimes mounted with full-length scopes or target sights. He made many nicely crafted half-stocks with percussion sidelocks (and some with back-action locks) and iron/brass sights, though some specialized target guns sported folding tang-mounted sights and hooded pin sights; at least one example of a heavy-barreled rifle with an under-hammer, false-muzzle or turned muzzle (to aid in properly seating bullets in the bore; though the simple turned muzzle

– in which the flats on the muzzle end of the barrel are rounded, could be for a plunger type bullet starter, or decoration in the style of the day); several have long brass telescopic sights. Rifling in some target barrels may have been designed with a gain twist for the use with picket bullets rather than the round balls usually used in the regular barrels. (See figure 1.)

Some guns are marked "J. Clutz/Massillon, O," or simply "J. Clutz." Some barrels include stamps of barrel makers, including Remington, at least one maker from Pittsburg (possibly James Bown), and other marks. In some cases wrists were checkered. Locks, some with fancy scroll and other engraving patterns, include names such as "Riddle," "Hunter," "Leman/Lancaster," "J. Clutz/Massillon, O" [which may indicate a handmade lock], and several styles of brass trigger guards were used. Engraving sometimes appears on tangs, and percussion tube screws, etc. Some engraving may be hand cut, others, especially on some locks seems machine/factory engraved.

Clutz also produced small, "dainty" half-stock rifles, very similar to some guns made by Peter A. Reinhard(t) ( Loudonville, Ashland County), Asa Stilgenbauer (Winesburg, Holmes County), and several other late 19th century gunsmiths in Ohio. These rifles are relatively gracile in form, light in weight, with short, lighter barrels, and plain sights. Such rifles have a distinctive stock profile, with the rear of the stock angled back from the lock area (see photo 1). One imagines these small rifles were used for casual target-shooting, and as all around "home" rifles for squirrel and varmint hunting, killing hogs and beef at butchering time, and security. The light weight (for a rifle) and gracile dimensions might have appealed to younger or smaller built users, though the size may have been apt for carrying in anyone's buggy or wagon or keeping in wooden chests.

Dimensions and details of one of these "dainty" J. Clutz rifles, to which the author recently gained access, are supplied for collector's and builders (see Figures 2-6). (Three of Clutz's signed rifles are pictured in volumes III and IV of Hutslar's Ohio Gunsmiths and



1. Photos of three J. Clutz rifles of various styles, with name stamp (from AOLRC archives).