
THE
ASSOCIATION
OF OHIO
LONGRIFLE
COLLECTORS



FOR THE STUDY AND PRESERVATION
OF THE OHIO MUZZLELOADING RIFLE

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Arthur G. Hock
1941-2006



32nd A.O.L.R.C.
Marietta Show
March 31, April 1, 2007



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32nd Marietta Show

As in the past we are inviting anyone who has documented Ohio made rifles produced between 1788-1900 to display them. In order to avoid any confusion as far as space allotment is concerned, we are asking interested parties to please let us know how many tables you will need. In doing this the association will be able to provide adequate table accommodations on a first come basis. So, please be prompt. Mail table requests to Jim Claggett, 672 West Wood Dr., Newark, Ohio 43055.

Remember the major portion of your display must consist of antique Ohio made rifles and accessories. Ohio made contemporary rifles shall not exceed more than 10% of your total display. This rule will be strictly enforced and all contemporary rifles must be so marked.

Set up of exhibits will begin at 5:00 p.m.
Friday, March 30.

Banquet

Our annual membership meeting and banquet will be held March 31st at 8:00 p.m. in the LaFayette Hotel. This meeting will be preceded by hospitality hour at 6:00 p.m. and a banquet at 7:00 p.m. Dinner will consist of prime rib, stuffed chicken breast or maple glazed pork loin and all the trimmings with tickets costing \$20.00 each payable to the secretary no later than March 25. Because we are expecting larger crowds than normal, banquet space will be limited and will be on a first come first serve basis. Please get your reservation in early.

Lodging and accommodations

The LaFayette Motor Hotel has been generous enough to provide exhibit space for our show. They have also offered our membership a generous discount on their room accommodations. We strongly urge our membership to take advantage of this special rate and the fact that the show, the banquet, and the membership meeting will be in the same location. For reservations telephone 740-373-5522. Be sure to mention that you are coming to the A.O.L.R.C. Exhibit.

For security reasons, no rifles may be brought into the exhibit hall after 9:00 a.m. Saturday, or leave before 3:00 p.m. Sunday, unless prior arrangements have been made with the sergeant-at-arms.

Also, no rifles may be brought into the exhibit hall without first getting permission from the Sergeant-at-arms.

Friday, March 30

5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Set up for exhibit.
7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.	Reception for all exhibitors and members. Cash bar and hors d'oeuvres.

Saturday, March 31

8:00 a.m.	Exhibit hall opens to exhibitors and members only.
9:00 a.m.	Show opens to public.
5:00 p.m.	Exhibit closes
6:00 p.m.	Hospitality hour
7:00 p.m.	Banquet
8:00 p.m.	Membership meeting Mel Hankla's Presentation on Simon Kenton

Sunday, April 1

9:00 a.m.	Exhibit hall opens to the public.
3:00 p.m.	Exhibit closes



PLEASE NOTE

Our featured gunsmith this year will be the work of the Shuler family, John, Daniel and Valentine who worked in Ohio. As per last year the hotel will be providing glass cases for this exhibit. We will fill these on a first come basis. Please bring your Shuler rifles this year for the public and the membership to see.

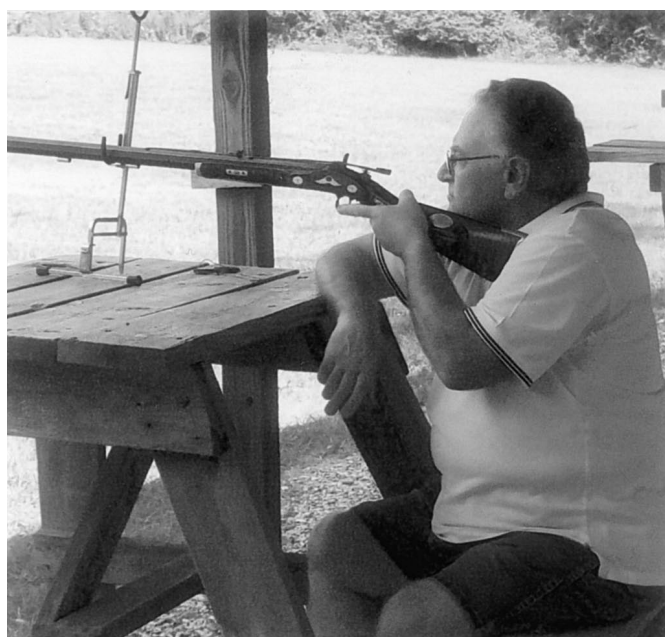
A Message From The President

Over the years, the Women of AOLRC have developed a long history getting together for a wide range of events such as tours, dinner, antiques and etc. during the Marietta show. The board sponsored a women's luncheon this year at Marietta to give our women an opportunity to get together to discuss how they might become more organized and involved in AOLRC. Representatives from the luncheon came to our board meeting to present their ideas, which were later presented to the total membership present at the banquet by Judy Yerian. An outgrowth of their high energy and planning resulted in our first AOLRC picnic and shoot on August 13th at the Centerburg Conservation Club. The Centerburg facility proved to be a perfect setting for eating, shooting and comradery. Sandy Frazer, Judy Herman, and Judy Yerian did a great job of orchestrating the event and providing a great spread of food, which was augmented by delicious desserts and covered dishes brought by the many members attending. Before lunch, many members spent time on the range trying out their favorite Ohio rifles. Ken Netting graciously let me shoot one of his finely crafted flintlocks; it is clear to me the Buffalo targets should be about three times larger and a bit closer. However, I did notice later in the afternoon, in an elimination match organized by





Tom Oakes, our members had little problems hitting the Buffalo at even longer distances; perhaps, the lighting was better in the afternoon. A blanket shoot was held with a number of nice prizes awarded to the victors. The winners of the blanket shoot were: 1st – Randy Brown; 2nd – Mark Herman; 3rd – Jerry Wilson; 4th – Bob Qualk; 5th – Ike Dahlin; 6th – Charles Ebright; 7th – Dick Harwood; 8th – Ron Yerian; and 9th – Bill Hoover. Also, Charles Ebright presented a walnut bullet box he handcrafted out of a 200 year old barn beam to Tom Oakes for having the oldest original Ohio rifle in the shoot. While we were unable to get a complete listing of all of the shooters and their rifles, it was great to see some of these old familiar makers' guns being heard from again.



Shooter

Rifle

Jerry Wilson	S. Small – P. A. Reinhard
Mark Herman	Stilgenbauer – C. Siebert
Dave Staley	A. Stilgenbauer
Bill Hoover	Hoover, Ash Bragg
Bob Qualk	Kutz
Dick Harwood	P. Kane
Rod Frazer	S. Ralph
Charles Ebright	A. Stilgenbauer
Ron Yerian	F. Yerian – T. M. Yerian
Mark Barnhill	P. A. Reinhard
Randy Brown	Old Ohio Style 40 Cal
Dick Schwartz	Mich 38 Cal Bench Gun
Tom Oakes	P. A. Reinhard



After the last shoot was held, members, family and friends returned to the meeting hall for more food before departing for home around 7:00 pm. The entire day was enjoyed by all. Those who weren't shooting had a great time supporting and heckling the guys on the range. We had a great turnout for this event and many voiced their hope that we would provide similar events in the future.





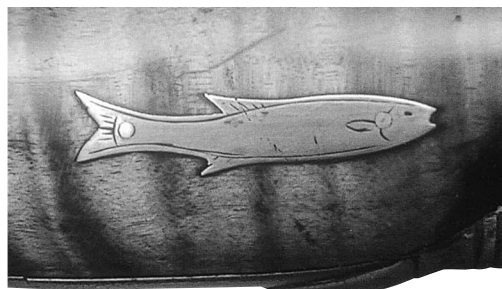


Elias Bird Ohio Gunsmith

Elias Bird learned the gunsmith trade in Virginia and migrated to Springfield twp., Muskingum County Ohio prior to 1845. A few of his long, slim fullstock percussion rifles have survived along with one flintlock. The rifle illustrated is the finest rifle by this maker that we have seen. It is a fullstock percussion rifle with excellent architecture mounted in brass and coin silver. The "fighting cock" inlay behind the cheekpiece is identical to the design used by Samuel Forker, Jacob and James McCamant and James Teaff. This same design was also used in relief carving by Jonathan Brelsford. This is a wonderful Ohio made rifle by a master craftsman.

Warren Offenberger







Sudden Death of Gunsmith John Blatter

Our community was shocked last Wednesday evening to hear of the sudden death of Mr. John Blatter. That morning he was around as usual in his gunshop and later went up on Fourth Street to eat dinner with his son Fred and family, coming down home in the afternoon. About 5 o'clock he complained of not feeling well and laid down on a sofa. His daughter Lucy went out of the room to get his eye medicine and when she returned was unable to rouse her father. She ran over to the barber shop for her brother Ed and when they got back their father was just breathing his last. Two of Mr. Blatter's brothers passed away in the same manner.

John Blatter was born in Switzerland May 17, 1828, and died at Ripley, Ohio, Jan. 14, 1914, at the age of 85 years, 7 months and 27 days. He was married to Katherine Tiese when about 35 years of age. To this union were born two daughters, Lucy and Mrs. Wm. Ladenburger, and two sons Frederick and Edward, all of whom with their mother are living to mourn the loss of a father and husband.

Mr. Blatter was a member of the Lutheran Church from early life. He came to New York when about 18 years of age. Later he removed to Cincinnati where he spent several years. Then he came to Ripley where he has spent the greater part of his life.

He enlisted in Paulsen's Independent Battery during Civil War and was honorably discharged from service, Sept. 22, 1864.

Mr. Blatter was one of the oldest citizens of Ripley and leaves a record of an honest, industrious and well spent life.

RIPLEY, OHIO, WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 21, 1914



John Blatter in front of his Gunshop (Circa 1907). Note the large wood muzzleloading rifle hanging vertically on the left side of the building.

The MLAIC 5th Long Range Muzzle Loading World Championships



Ever do any target shooting? Long range, out to 1000 yards target shooting? High Power-Black Powder Cartridge-Muzzle Loading? Well, I have and I have had a blast (no pun intended) doing it and I would admire to share a recent experience I had, with you.

Early in 2005, I was asked by Donald "Bucky" Malson, Secretary General of the Muzzle Loaders Associations International Committee and Chairman of the U.S. International Muzzle Loading Committee, to act as USIMLT (LR) lieutenant and organize the United States International Muzzle Loading Team (LR) to represent the United States in the 5th Long Range World Championships, to be held at Bisley Camp, Surrey, United Kingdom, under the auspices of the MLAIC. Hosted by the Muzzle Loading Association of Great Britain, these matches scheduled for 12-17 September, 2005 are a revival of the long range, muzzle loading competitions held in Great Britain during the 1860's to 1880's. Shot at ranges of 300-500-600-900-1000 yards with either original and/or replica percussion Long Range Match Rifles. The matches duplicate the environment and spirit of those times. After organizing the Team, I was asked to be acting Captain, as well.

Rules are rather straight forward – the rifles must be in the spirit of the times, black powder and lead bullets, iron sights (peep rear and post/aperture front), sling only for mid-ranges and sling or wrist rest for long range, weight not over 15 lbs.

Beginning in March of last year, I began publishing requests for shooters interested in joining the USIMLT (LR) for the 5th World Championships. No special funding is available for the Team members, though we did receive donations from kind and interested parties. So, for the most part, all Team members funded

themselves. The USIMLT (LR) finally consisted of thirteen members from all over the USA – Dave Gullo, Idaho; Ray Hopkins, Ohio; Howard Markham, California; Joe Martinez, New Mexico; Tom Matpack, Ohio; David Munch, Ohio; Mike Pifer, Connecticut; Al Roberts, Alabama; Al Schings, Connecticut; Lee Shaver, Missouri; Richard Vrooman, Washington; Mon Yee, Jr., Kansas and yours truly, Ohio.

We flew over individually and met up at Bisley Camp a couple of days before the matches. For those of you interested in learning more, I write a more or less blow by blow accounting, as follows:

Total outlay by each USIMLT (LR) member was approximately \$3,000.00. This included air fare, transport to and from London Heathrow or London Gatwick and Bisley Camp, lodgings, meals, individual entry fees (the USIMLT paid the team match fees), powder, caps and UK Visitor's Firearms Permits. Since the USIMLT (LR) members were representing the USA and the USIMLT is a 501c3 organization, most of these expenses are tax deductible.

Traveling to and from the UK with firearms proved to be no problems, but one must have the Visitor's Firearms Permit (cost about \$30.00) or it would be. I and three other Team members flew out of Cincinnati to Gatwick via Delta Air Lines. We were asked to show our permits both at Cincinnati and at Gatwick. The officials treated us with the utmost courtesy here in the USA and in the UK, both going and coming back. The flight of about 8 hours was uneventful and right on time. Upon arrival, the four of us had the good fortune of being met at the airport by my very good friend and assistant British Team Captain, Len Jackson who went out of his way in plain good hearted kindness to

assist us. The other members of the Team either rented (hired) autos or used the services of a cab. Bisley is about 30 miles from Gatwick and a bit closer from Heathrow. Car rentals are comparable to those here in the States, cab fare runs around 40.00 GBP (almost \$80.00 USD with September, 2005 exchange rates of \$1.91 to the pound). For those interested, gasoline (petrol) cost were about \$7.00 per gallon - our gallon, not the Imperial gallon, either - all petrol in liters over there, of course.

Bisley Camp is the British National Shooting Center, home of the NRA of Great Britain. It has every conceivable shooting discipline available and has one of the great 1000 yard ranges in the world. The NRA (GB) moved to Bisley in 1890, after the shooting on Wimbledon common proved too dangerous to the surrounding homesteads. Over the years, about 20 or so shooting clubs have moved to Bisley and have constructed clubhouses to use as their headquarters. These give Bisley a feeling of a Victorian time capsule. Each clubhouse is of different, but charming architecture and many contain accommodations, a restaurant and bar facilities.

For the shooters without wives, I had made arrangements for their accommodation with the North London Rifle Club, right at Bisley Camp. This was also the Club the Brits had selected for the after matches Team banquet. For those Team members traveling with their wives and/or wishing a bit less austere rooms (i.e. one with bath), I made arrangements at the Premier Travel Inn, Woking, which is about 6 miles from Bisley Camp. I rented a car, as did Dave Gullo, Lee Shaver and Dick Vrooman - all of us staying at Woking - so we had plenty of transportation. Driving on the left side of the road certainly demands one's constant attention, but we all accomplished the driving without incident. I will say this was partly due to the members of the MLAGB who explained to us the correct etiquette when entering, using and exiting roundabouts. Of course, by the time all of us had learned the way from Woking to Bisley and back again, it was time to go Home!

Most of us arrived with a least a day to relax, before having to enter into the festivities. A couple of the Team arrived in a rush, I am sorry to say, due to missed airline connections and such. As rather an old hand at traveling, I like to arrive early and relax. All in all, the USIMLT (LR) arrived on time and in good repair.

The host country must follow MLAIC rules, but does have the option of setting the match venue. In the 2005 Bisley Championships, the MLAGB wanted to have as many shooters as they could and set the program (programme) to allow for not only Team shooting, but individual competition as well. So, we all were able to shoot first as individuals and then as a Team. I, being Captain picked our four man Teams (one for mid-range and one for long range) from the individual scores recorded. Shooting was done at 300, 500 and 600 yards and then at 900 and 1000 yards. This allowed for all members of a country's participants to shoot and to win prizes, either for their individual scores and/or for their Team scores, as the case may be. The countries participating were Britain, France, Germany, Sweden (with members from Denmark and Norway), Switzerland and the United States of America. All together, the shooters came from, Britain, France, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA.

As to equipment, a number of participants shot original rifles, including Al Roberts and Howard Markham of the USIMLT (LR). The most popular replica rifle proved to be the Pedersoli Gibbs .451 LRML Match rifle. Most shooters used bullets of 530-550 grains in weight with enough powder to achieve a muzzle velocity of 1300fps. Fortunately, the international airline regulations allow a person to have two checked in bags of 70lbs each. For all the matches, including practices, each shooter needed about 23lbs of bullets!

All of these matches are shot using the British "V" targets. Each range has its own target dimensions, but all have the bulls eye

counting 5 and all have a tie breaking area within the bulls eye, designated the "V" bull.

Accordingly the targets can score from 1 (termed a hit), 2 (outer), 3 (magpie), 4 (inner), 5 (bull) and 5 (vee bull). Takes a bit of getting used to, but after a while it makes sense. Too, with the continental participants, one has to get used to indicating a two, not with the index and middle fingers, but with the thumb and index finger. And, whilst indicating a V-Bull, with the index and middle fingers, it is impolite to have the palm inwards towards yourself.

We started on Saturday with practice at 600 yards and I, with the kind assistance of the British Team's Adjutant, Martin Tebbs, made arrangements for the said practice. This allowed us to check the Swiss No.4 (our 1-1/2) and No.3 (our 2Fg) powder we had obtained and test out our rifles.

On Sunday, we presented ourselves as a Team at the MLAGB Clubhouse for rifle inspection (scrutiny), making certain our rifles were within specifications. I might comment, though the rules are straight forward, you cannot rebores, relines or rebarrel an original rifle and shoot it as an original, this would be against the rules. Such a rifle must be shot in the replica class.

We, on Sunday, again had an opportunity to practice at 600 yards. On Monday, the programmed matches began and we were squadded to practice at 300, 500 and 600 yards. On the full day of Tuesday and on Wednesday morning we shot as individuals for score at 300, 500 and 600. On Wednesday afternoon, we began the Team matches at 300 and 500 yards with the USIMLT Mid-Range consisting of Ray Hopkins, Dave Gullo, Lee Shaver and myself, based upon scores shot in the individual Mid-range phase. On Thursday, we completed the Team matches with the 600 yard team match. The conditions varied from good to fair to rain and I regret to say, the USIMLT did not win the Mid-Range Team matches. We came 5th. Germany was 1st 496-21V, Switzerland 2nd 480-12V, Sweden 3rd 479-13V, France 4th 459-16V,

USA 5th 445-17V and Britain 6th 445-15V. We had tied the score with Britain, but beat them out by two V's for 5th place. As an overall comment, we (The USIMLT) needed to take stock of our shooting, of the Bisley conditions and to improve our Team interactions.

On Thursday afternoon, we practiced at 900 and 1000 yards in anticipation of the 900-1000 yard individual matches. The individual matches were held Friday and as a result of these, our USIMLT for Long Range consisted of Dave Gullo, Ray Hopkins, Dave Munch and Al Roberts.

The Long Range Team matches were held on Saturday and I am very pleased to inform you, the USIMLT Long Range Team won these matches and in view of the excellent performance of the USIMLT Long Range Team, the USA won the 5th World Matches! In the long range, the USA was 1st with 409-10V (new world's record), Britain 2nd with 361-06V, Switzerland 3rd 343-08V, Sweden 4th 322-05V, Germany 5th 313-04V and France 6th 310-3V.

The Aggregates of the Team Scores (Mid and Long Range) are as follows: USA 1st 854-27V, Switzerland 2nd 823-20V, Germany 3rd 809-25V, Britain 4th 806-21V, Sweden 5th 801-18V and France 6th 769-19V.

At 5pm on Saturday, the Awards Ceremony was held on the green between the MLAGB Clubhouse and the North London RC Clubhouse. I am most pleased to report, the USIMLT Team won nine gold, three silver and one bronze medal, setting a new world's record in the process. Ray (Hoppy) Hopkins, Newark, Ohio police officer set a new world's record with muzzle loader at 900 yards with his Pedersoli Gibbs .451 Match Rifle and also received gold medals for winning the replica rifle Long Range Aggregate and Grand Aggregate. In total, Hoppy won 4 gold medals, including a gold for the long range Team event and one bronze for the 1000 yard individual in the replica class. Al Roberts won three gold medals shooting with an

original BSA Whitworth .451 rifle, including the Long Range and Grand Aggregate for original rifles and a gold as a member of the long range Team. Al won an additional two silvers at 900 and 1000 yards in the original class, individual matches. Dave Gullo won a gold medal for his long range Team shooting and Dave Munch won a gold for the Team and a silver in the replica class, individual matches at 900 yards. As a personal note, I did not shoot particularly well. I told the Team it was due to the heavy load of responsibility on my shoulders as Captain (of course, I was fast to comment – should that excuse not fly, I have many, many more!!).....

USIMLT (LR) members winning individual awards are as follows:

900 Yards – Ray Hopkins 1st (Replica), Al Roberts 2nd (Original), Dave Munch 2nd (Replica).

1000 Yards – Al Roberts 2nd (Original), Ray Hopkins 3rd (Replica).

AGGREGATE - Long Range: Al Roberts (Original), Ray Hopkins (Replica).

GRAND AGGREGATE – Al Roberts (Original), Ray Hopkins (Replica).

After the Awards Ceremony, we all gathered in the MLAGB Clubhouse for a well deserved drink and then, for the Match Banquet, we were piped over to the North London Rifle Club by a Scots Pipe Major for a grand and glorious meal and get-together.

There was time during all of the above to do some sightseeing, including a personal tour of the marvelous NRA (GB) museum by curator Bill Curtis (whose family were the Curtis of Curtis and Harvey Powders), to socialize with all the other country's Team members, to exchange information, to make new friends and to renew old friendships. I have been a long range shooter for over 45 years, but must admit, for absolute pleasure and enjoyment, the long range muzzle loading discipline is the best of the best. The match as done by the MLAGB and its members was superb and beyond reproach. Thanks to them from not only myself, but from all of the

USIMLT (LR) members. It is my understanding, one of the Swedish Team Said “is it possible to hold these championships at Bisley every time?”

The USIMLT (LR), in addition to having some Team members stay at the North London Rifle Club, also used it, more or less as our headquarters. Those of us staying in Woking would arrive around 7am, have a great breakfast, shoot, have lunch there, shoot in the afternoon and then repair to its bar (after the ranges closed, of course) for a well deserved pick-me-up. The NLRC Steward, Ron Coventry and his charming wife Rose went out of their way to make all of us feel welcome and at home, which we certainly did. They and the Club could not have treated us better. They also were responsible for arranging and cooking the Banquet meal – no small undertaking with over 90 participants!! I received a kind note from Rose in October saying how much she and Ron enjoyed having the USIMLT (LR) and that we were so much like family, the NLRC seemed very empty without us.

These Long Range Championships with muzzle loaders were revived by Britain in 1999 and have been shot ever since. In 1999 and 2000 they were held at Bisley and now are held in the odd numbered years at various world shooting ranges. In 2003 we hosted them in the USA at Camp Butner, North Carolina. I was on the USIMLT in 2003 for the 4th World Championships and we came in second, the Germans won, Britain was third, Sweden was fourth and France was fifth.

The 6th World Championships are anticipated to be held in Cape Town, South Africa in April 2007. I have again been asked by the USIMLT to organize the USIMLT (LR) for these matches and I would be pleased to hear from any US shooter interested in participating. Cost will probably be in the neighborhood of \$3500.00 per member. The air fare to Cape Town is more than to London, but the exchange rate USD vs Rand is in our favor. Anyone wishing additional information may contact me by telephone (740) 345-6646 and or by e-mail

joe@jcunard.com

For additional information and complete individual and Team scoring details re the 5th World Championships, please tune into web site www.mlagb.com/bisley2005 -- For information on the MLAIC, please tune into web site www.mlaic.org

In closing, may I say being the organizer and then being appointed Captain of the 2005 Bisley USIMLT (LR) was and is my absolute pleasure. All of our Team members shot as

gentlemen and I am most proud of them and what they were able to accomplish. They truly represented the good old USA in a manner giving their Country reason to be proud. I sincerely trust we will have more participants for the 6th World Matches and those participants will continue on in the tradition so ably set by those American long range shooters preceding them, from Creedmoor to Bisley Camp.

Keep your powder dry, Yours very truly,

Joseph M. Hepsworth



Arthur G. Hock 1941-2006

It is my sad duty to report the passing of member Art Hock of Grove City, Ohio on December 5, 2006. Art was a charter member of the AOLRC and served as a director for many years and was our President in 1987-1988. He was an avid collector of Ohio made muzzleloading rifles.

Art was born in Hamilton Ohio and grew up in the Brown County area of Ohio.

Art earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in agronomy from Ohio State University. He was employed for 34 years at Land-O-Lakes and was the Agronomy Sales Manager at the time of his retirement.

A dedicated father and husband, he enjoyed spending time with family. He shared

his many interests with those he loved, which included camping, traveling, hunting and fishing. He had a great love of the outdoors and appreciated spending time in nature. Art loved the simple things in life.

He is survived by his loving wife Sheila and three daughters; Amy Hock, Lorie Hock and Marcia Hock. Also a granddaughter Allie Hock.

You may make contributions in Art's memory to the National Parkinson Foundation, Inc., Mary Ann Sprinkle, Director of Development, 1501 NW 9th Ave., Bob Hope Road, Miami, Fla. 33136-1494.

Art was a wonderful man and a friend to all who knew him. He will long be remembered.

Warren Offenberger



Thanks to the efforts of Jeff Clippinger, the AOLRC is now on the world wide web. Please visit our site at www.AOLRC.org
All of our newsletters 1979 – 2006 plus other information can be found.



Looking Back at Ohio's Past The Association of Ohio Longrifle Collectors 30th Anniversary

By Thomas R. Cross

Reprint of an article that was published in Country Living Magazine, 2005.

History comes alive when The Association of Ohio Longrifle Collectors (AOLRC) celebrates 30 years at the historic LaFayette Hotel in downtown Marietta with an annual display of antique muzzleloaders from Ohio's earliest gunsmiths. Rifles dating between the 1790's thru the 1800's that represent some of states finest works of art and craftsmanship from a storied past.

AOLRC president James Claggett says the nearly 275 strong membership is made from a spectrum of shooters, gun collectors, historians, antique buffs, family lineage and researchers that share a common interest in antique Ohio firearms and their makers. Ohio rifle's that represent the state's earliest days when the essentials for survival included a double-edged ax, a horse and a gun. While the fertile soils of Ohio fell under the plow and ax and the seemingly ever expanding settlements found new frontiers, small gun making shops sprang up to serve these early communities. Gunsmiths were an integral part of the founding and commerce of these original settlements and were found in nearly every county in the state by 1850.

Longtime AOLRC member Tom Oaks estimates that over 1200 gunsmiths had been building rifles in Ohio prior to 1900. Ohio's early gun making industry was second only to the vast Pennsylvania's gun industry that was at its height after the Revolutionary War. According to Donald Hutslar's *Ohio Gunsmith & Allied Tradesmen* in census conducted in 1850, 553 gun makers were counted in Ohio, making Ohio second only in firearm production at that time in the U.S. Ohio's gun making peaked between the 1840's and 1870's, and then after the Civil War according to Claggett, imports and mass production of firearms heralded in the final days of Ohio's gun making business.

19th century gun shops were usually small businesses with only the owner and family members employed in the gun making. A laborer or two may be hired; occasionally an apprentice might be employed. The gun maker had to be highly skilled at numerous crafts; of which blacksmithing and woodworking were essential. He had to have the touch of a jeweler for the intricate lock mechanism and any brass or silver patch box or inlays. The gun maker also had to have the hands of a fine furniture maker for the delicate and artful rococo carvings that adorned the stocks of many Ohio rifles, carvings that

would rival any of the finest home furnishing of that time and now. On some rifles it is evident that a skilled silversmith was also at work. Most if not all gun shops worked iron and melted brass, silver, and pewter, cut rifling, fitted and formed stocks of hard curly maple by hand. Each rifle was made one at a time; no two have ever been found alike. Some gun makers made a common plain rifle a tradesman or frontiersmen could afford that may have sold for \$10 to \$20 dollars, perhaps less. Other gun makers indulged a more influential client that opted for fanciful carvings and expensive ornate inlays. But regardless, according to the book *Foxfire 5*, it states "the best gunsmiths were, arguably, the best craftsmen overall in any community in which they worked."

Several of Ohio's early gunsmiths were of a rare talent, equal or exceeding the legendary gun makers of eastern Pennsylvania during its golden age (1770 -1800) of gun making. The majority of Ohio early gun makers migrated from Pennsylvania and had learned their trade there. The Pennsylvania influence is evident in many of Ohio's muzzleloading rifles dating before the 1830's. Early Ohio rifles, (1790 to 1830) like Pennsylvania longrifles, were long slender flintlocks, .45 to .60 caliber, with smooth or rifled barrels, stocks of fine curly maple extending the length of the gun with brass patch box and inlays, usually measuring at least 60" long. Not until the 1840's did the true Ohio style "Plains Rifle" emerge. A shorter rifle averaging 52" in length, usually a heavy rifled barrel in a .32 to .40 caliber, with a curly maple half stock approximately 29" in length, leaving almost two foot of the barrel exposed, which an under rib was soldered to and ramrod pipes fastened. Most stocks were capped with a poured pewter nosepiece, a curved brass butt plate finishing out the other end. Usually all had double set triggers, most were percussion ignition. The usual patch box and inlays were present on some, but the artful rococo carvings and detailed brass or silver inlays were out of fashion and not present on most Ohio style rifles. And by the 1840's a frontier had changed too. No longer were there hostilities with Indians or British, and rifles once used primarily as a weapon for defense and food gathering, became an object more for sport and the hunting of small game. Thus evolution in Ohio rifle design called for smaller caliber, shorter rifles.

Asked to name Ohio's *most* noted gunmakers,

AOLRC president James Claggett, and past AOLRC president Mark Herman, debatable subject they pointed out, could agree on a least four names.

*The senior Moses Wright of Freeport in Harrison County. Born in 1792 in Bedford County, Penn., where he learned gunsmithing as an apprentice from Peter White. In Kindig's book *Thoughts on the Kentucky Rifle* he quotes "Peter White was among the best engravers and designers of metal mounts. And he was just as skilled at woodworking." In 1817 Moses Wright moved to Harrison County to join his parents who had relocated there earlier. Moses was a farmer and a gunsmith. His rifles very much retaining the Bedford County, Peter White influences. In writings, Moses is mentioned as a dentist, "he did not charge for pulling teeth, he did quick work with that", made knives, scissors, razors, shovels, broad axes and drawing knives. On guns, "almost every rural householder had one of Mr. Wright's rifles and reaping sickles". He erected a "one story gunsmith shop, had a forge, hand bellows and anvil". On business it is written, "They came to the gun shop, and ordered 5 or more new guns. They were profitable customers and paid cash". Moses passed away in 1854.

The Barnhart family of Ross County, Chillicothe. Five Barnhart's were involved in the gunmaking business from the 1820's thru the 1870's. They were brothers George and William the Elder. George's sons were Matthias, Nehemiah, and Simon. William the Elder had one son, William Jr. (William the Younger). Records indicate they operated a family gunshop located near Chapel Creek in Ross County. A number of their rifles are preserved at the Ohio State Museum. It is said they learned their trade from one of Ohio's earliest gunmakers, Nathan Kile of Raccoon Creek in Jackson County, who has a rifle in the Smithsonian with the mark "N. Kile 1817" on top the barrel.

James Clark of Warren County (1784 – 1859) apprenticed under gunmakers George and Martin Rizer of Cumberland, Maryland from 1799 to 1805. The Rizers are believed from Lancaster County, Penn., where they learned their trade, thus the strong Pennsylvania influence shows in James Clark rifles. Clark is thought to have lived a short while near Cincinnati before 1811 when he moved to Lebanon opening a gunmaking shop. Clark rifles exhibit exquisite woodcarving, highly detailed brass fittings and inlays. He was also one of Ohio's first gunmakers to offer a percussion rifle in 1828. Clark closed his Lebanon gun shop in 1836.

If any gunmakers carry the name as Ohio's most noted, it would be the Vincent's of Washington County. John Vincent (1809 – 1882), and his son Caleb Vincent (1841 – 1918). It is believed John learned the gunmaking business from Amon Ford, another Washington County gunsmith, John also apprenticed under his father as a cabinetmaker. An early Vincent flintlock rifle by John shows some Pennsylvania influence, but later Vincent rifles were

purely Ohio style rifles. John opened his gun shop in 1844 at Rocky Point (east of the town of Vincent) and later Caleb, who learned the trade from his father, opened a gun shop in Vincent around 1880 and continued making and repairing firearms until 1918. AOLRC president James Claggett said, "Vincent rifles are the most recognized Ohio made rifle." It is estimated that 300 to 360 Vincent rifles were made, according to research done by William Reynolds, one of the founders of the AOLRC, but only 80 to 90 examples are thought to survive today. A stone marker honoring John and Caleb is located in the town of Vincent, near Marietta.

Other notable Ohio gunmakers Claggett mentioned would include Levi Biddle (1832-1880) of Tuscarawas County; William Earnhart (1784 - 1843) of Pickaway County; and brother Daniel Marker (1774 – 1853) and Paul Marker (1793 – 1864), both of Montgomery County.

Countless Ohio rifles have turned up in western states. John Shultz from Montezuma, Iowa, collects early Ohio rifles found in Iowa. John explained during the early 1800's the Ohio River served as a main thoroughfare in which thousands of settlers passed, purchasing rifles and provisions from river towns during their migration west. Consequently an industry was created in these towns supplying rifles to frontier bound settlers. Cincinnati was a major river port during the 1800's and according to Donald Hutslar's book, *A checklist of Ohio Gunsmiths*, "gunsmiths working there (Hamilton County) went far beyond any county total in the state." In all over 270 gunsmiths and related industries worked in Hamilton County from 1790 thru 1900.

Some of Ohio's earliest gunsmiths included the states earliest settlers. It is recorded that a blacksmith, Thomas Burney, was a gunsmith to the Miami Indians at Pickawillany in 1750. Preacher and gunsmith Moses Henry settled in Ross County in 1769. John Treber who settled in Adams County, opened an inn (Trebers Inn which still stands today) and gunsmith shop on Zanes Trace in 1798. It is written in Evans & Strivers *History of Adams County*, "Mr. Treber built a gunsmith shop where he made from raw material every part of a gun". Several gunsmiths are known to have worked in Hamilton County in the 1790's.

In many ways the old Ohio rifles have become treasured family heirlooms, perhaps once belonging to a distant grandfather or uncle. There are a few AOLRC members that are direct descendants of the gunmakers themselves. At the 2004 AOLRC Marietta show was a display of Yerian rifles by Ronald Yerian, a descendant of John Yerian and his son's, Thomas, and Frederick, who built rifles in Nobel County from 1840 to 1920. Also present was Lawrence Earnhart from Elkhart, IN., whose great-great-great grandfather was William Earnhart, who built fine Pennsylvania style longrifles in Pickaway County from 1820 until 1843.

For The Ladies

Another year has passed. The year 2007 has arrived and our spring show is quickly approaching. Our auxiliary has been idle but now it is time to kick ourselves into gear and make plans for the spring show.

We are thinking of having a band play after the dinner on Saturday. We need your input and suggestions on this. Also if any one has suggestions or information on a good band, please notify Sandy Frazer, Judy Herman, or Judy Yerian.

As usual we will have a carving station for sandwiches, chips, etc. for our Friday night gathering. We have also suggested that it might be nice to add salads of some description to that menu. We think it is a great time to not only set up tables and do a little trading and all, but it has also become a great evening of fellowship.

Alys Wagner will be arranging a visit to "Antiques in the Cottage" for our Saturday late morning and afternoon entertainment. We may be able to eat lunch there or may try to arrange a lunch on route to "Antiques in the Cottage". We will try to keep the cost to \$10 or less. If you want to attend the outing please complete the reservation form found in the newsletter and send it to me.

Our first annual AOLRC picnic and shoot was a huge success!! Everyone who attended has requested to do it again next year, so it looks as if it could be an annual event. The Centerburg location worked perfectly. The accommodations were excellent with plenty of room for all the delicious food, plenty of tables and chairs for eating and resting, and best of all the shooting range was perfect for all the muzzleloaders and shooting that was done. Next year there may even be some women shooters giving the men some competition. We are thinking of making the 2nd Sunday in August as our date for this event. Please give us your opinions.

We will be contacting those who volunteered to work on advertising for the spring show. We want to get the word out and hopefully increase attendance.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone in Marietta the end of March and first few days in April. Contact us if you have any suggestions or concerns.

Judy Yerian



PLEASE NOTE: Your dues for 2007 are due at the April Show. If you cannot attend this year, please remit your dues (still \$15.00) by April 15th, 2007 to Dan Smith, Secretary, 23003 St. Rt. 339, Beverly, Ohio 45715



See You In Marietta!