



Jerman Jordan Ross Co., Ohio

By William Reynolds

The first check list of Ohio gunsmiths appearing in print, "Early Ohio Gunsmiths, A Partical Checklist," by Rhea Mansfield Knittle and Stuart Martin, published in, The Magazine Antiques, May 1943, lists, "Jerman Jordan, Chillicothe, Ross, early."

After nearly fifty years of study by scholars of the Ohio rifle, Jerman Jordan being an "early" maker is fairly well substantiated. Jerman was born in 1793 in Pennsylvania with his name first appearing in Ohio while assisting in the inventory of the estate of James Ross, gunsmith, of Steubenville. This was on Sept. 19, 1816. The sale of Ross' estate occurred on the following day and Jerman Jordan purchased, "pair of old pistols, \$1, grindstone, 87¢, stakes wedge and dirk, \$1.25." It's also interesting to note at the same sale James Teaff Sr. purchased a considerable number of gunsmithing tools.

Jordan's name next appears in the 1820 Ohio census in Chillicothe, Ross county. In the 1855 Chillicothe Business Directory, Jerman is listed as having his residence on the North Side of 4th St. West of Point. Speculating for a moment, Jerman was 19 years old when he helped with James Ross' estate inventory. A perfect age for a Journeyman or Apprentice gunsmith. This could be backed up by the fact that he only had financial resources to purchase a few items and couldn't compete with James Teaff's buying power. James Teaff Sr. was already well established as a gunsmith in Jefferson County and purchased the bulk of Ross' estate.

Comparing styles of workmanship and overall architecture of Jerman Jordan and James Teaff we can find many similarities.

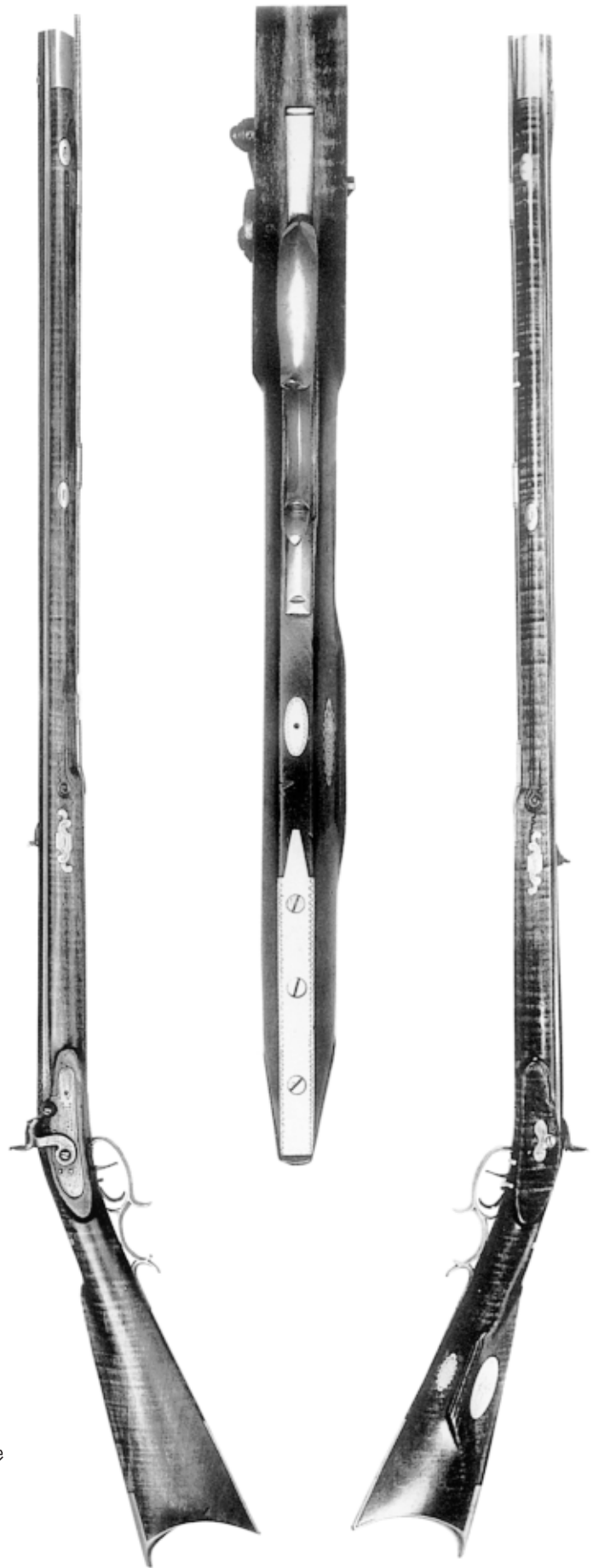
Surely if a James Ross rifle existed there would be many similarities also. His grandson



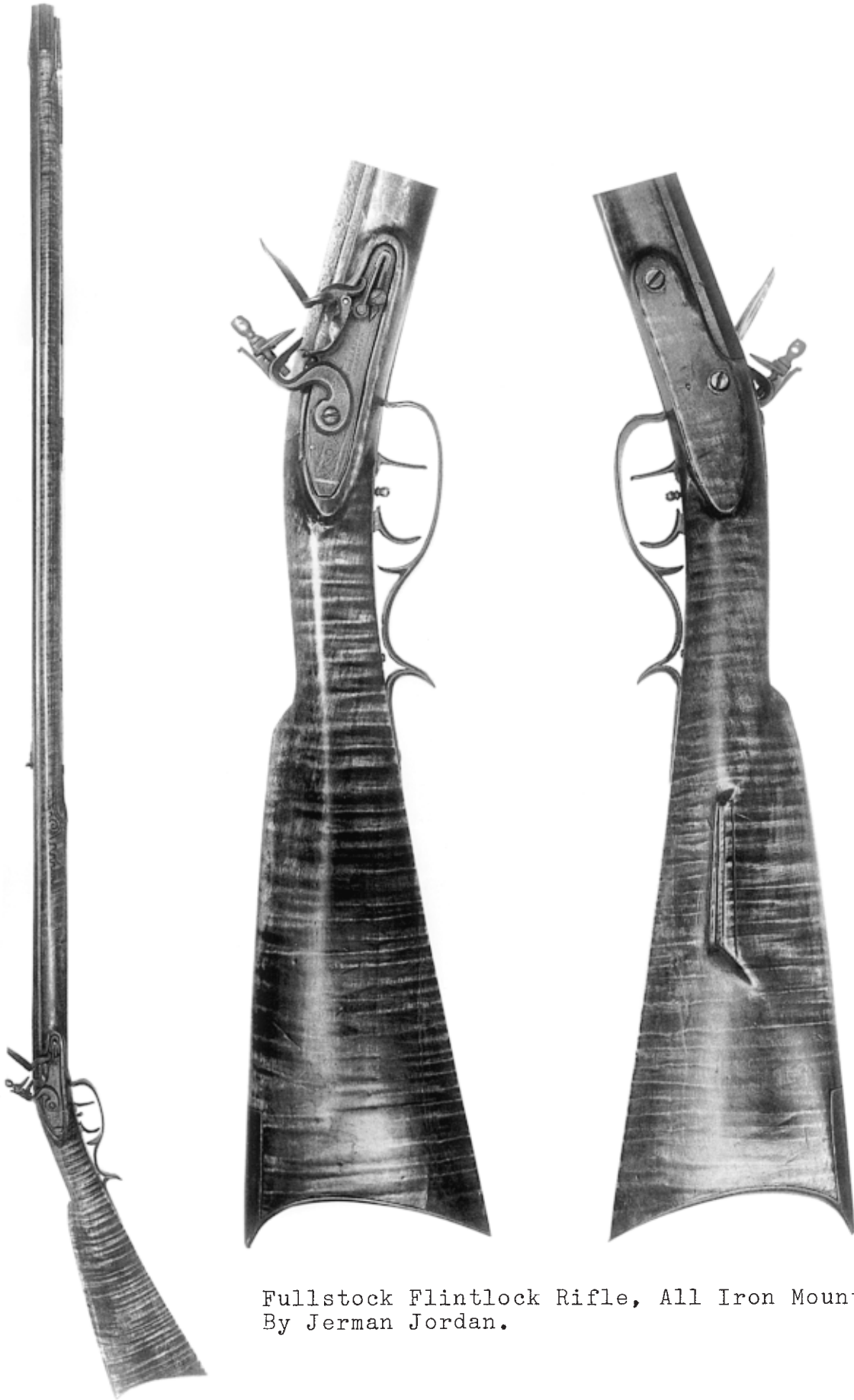
Elijah Coffin Ross style is also very similar to Teaff Sr. and Jordans architecture. So it could be speculated that both James Teaff Sr. and Jordon may have been students of James Ross.

All four makers used the national road patch box, simular stock profiles, and in many cases identical inlays complete with the same engraving patterns.

What can be said to best describe Jordans work? It's singular enough that if you have ever seen one and examined it closely all other Jordans will be easily recognized. Most all surviving examples are full stocks using curly maple. A few are flint locks built prior to 1830, but most are percussion. Many are brass mounted, a few iron. Most are plain, but one or two display decorative inlays showing excellent engraving. Almost all have an incised line up the forestock terminating in an almost perfect rendition of the Serpent Mound at the rear entry thimble. Some are signed and others not, with those being signed bearing a beautiful script signature. A few are known that are stamped. So simply, Jordan's work was neat, usually plain in a Shaker sense, and something that deserves much further study. □



Fullstock Percussion Rifle
By Jerman Jordan.



Fullstock Flintlock Rifle, All Iron Mounted,
By Jerman Jordan.

Philip Stamm

Brown County Gunsmith

By Art Hock

Accurate information about Philip Stamm is sparse at this time. The book "Ohio Gunsmiths" by Hustslar lists two Philip Stammers. The elder was born in Germany in 1797 and he moved from there to Brown County in 1842 where he was active as a gunsmith until his death in 1862. The same book also reveals another Philip Stamm that was active in Ripley, Ohio from 1862 to 1866 and who later worked in Georgetown, Ohio until 1896. Hutslar speculates that the second Philip is the son of the elder Stamm.

The "History of Brown County" by Beers And Company lists a Philip Stamm and his wife Elizabeth that moved from Germany in 1842 to Washington Township near Sardinia, Ohio. This appears to be the same Philip as the elder Stamm above since both originated in Germany and both moved to Brown County in 1842. However the elder Stamm is listed as having a son named Charles not Philip. More research is needed to unravel the origin of the younger Stamm.

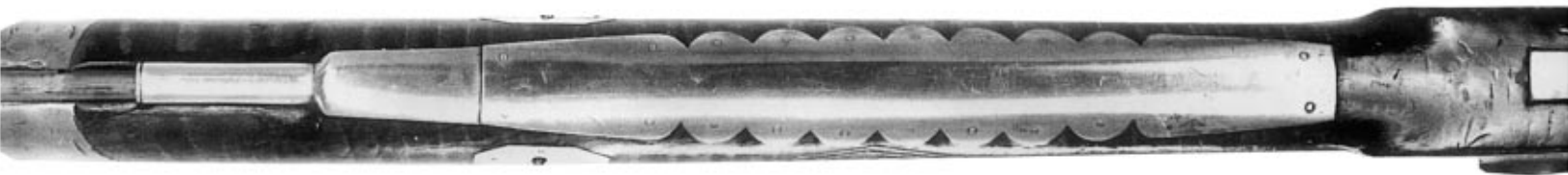
Pictured with this article are two rifles stamped Ph. Stamm. They are later rifles so I attribute them to the younger Stamm. These rifles are rather ordinary half-stocks but are of interest because of the workmanship. The wood to metal fit, the unusual snails, the way the snails are fit into the locks and the lock mortises suggest that Mr. Stamm was an excellent craftsman and he may have made some outstanding pieces. The rifles are of particular interest to me because they were made about seven miles from my boyhood home.

Both rifles have unusual snails instead of the typical drum and nipple method of ignition. These are precisely inlet into the top of the locks. One of the locks is stamped T. Davidson and Company, Cincinnati, Ohio and the other is stamped Ph. Stamm which suggests Philip may have made this lock. (Davidson and Company was listed as a business in Cincinnati until 1867.) Both locks have an unusual curl or half moon filed or cast in them immediately in front of the snail. On most locks this area is a straight vertical line.

Identical, large beavertail style cheekpieces are present on both rifles and both have a slight raised panel carved where the cheekpieces meet the stock.

One of the rifles has two narrow brass bands inlaid in the barrel about one half inch back from the muzzle just in front of the sight. The rifle with the turned area at the muzzle has a circular brass band inlaid around the bore on the very end of the barrel. Apparently this is characteristic of Mr. Stamm's work.

A large brass wear plate is on the forearm of one of the rifles. This wear plate has scalloped edges which is common on many of the larger inlays found on the old guns. Supposedly this pattern represents the rattle of a rattle snake. This same rifle has two plain silver inlays where the barrel pins pass through the stock. Just behind these inlays are five concentric diamond patterns incised into either side of the forearm. The



cheek piece has a large, oblong, eight pointed star incised in it and the wrist of this rifle is checkered.

Both pieces are signed with the same stamp that is on one of the locks, Ph. Stamm. However one is stamped on the barrel itself and the other is stamped on a brass inlay in the top flat of the barrel.

As was stated earlier, these rifles are rather ordinary Ohio half-stocks but the workmanship suggests that Mr. Stamm was an excellent craftsman or mechanic. Whether he also had the artistic talent required to make a more ornate arm we can only speculate until other pieces by him surface. □



Two Stamm rifles with the unusual lock shape.

