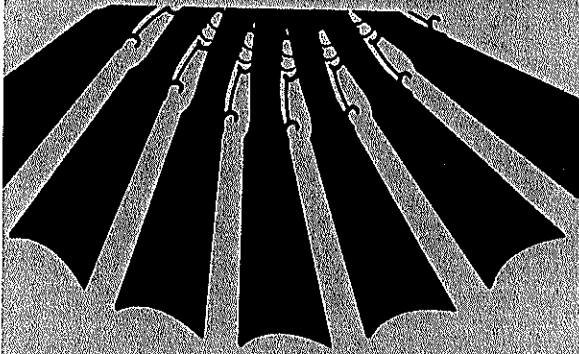


THE  
ASSOCIATION  
OF OHIO  
LONGRIFLE  
COLLECTORS



FOR THE STUDY AND PRESERVATION  
OF THE OHIO MUZZLELOADING RIFLE

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[www.aolrc.org](http://www.aolrc.org)

Vol. XLII Number 1, February 2018

43<sup>rd</sup> Annual  
AOLRC

ANTIQUÉ GUN  
AND ARMS SHOW  
April 7-8

(Exhibitors set up April 6)

April 7

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

April 8

9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Lafayette Hotel  
Marietta, Ohio

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# President's Message

Marietta in the spring. How many times have we arrived on Friday to rain, watched the sun come out on Saturday to open the red bud blossoms and roll up our sleeves and leave on Sunday with white caps breaking across the Ohio River and snowflakes drifting down? But, we always have a good time. Your board has been busy this year. Jim Claggett and many behind the scene helpers put on the best ever Newark show. Bob Statler has been filling in as meeting secretary. Jim Ogden has been doing an excellent job as secretary. He puts up with my many calls to find things in past minutes. Alan Corbett has completely rebuilt our website from scratch. Rod Frazer who was responsible for our first site, came thru with "lost files" and advice. Bob Poch will once again be heading up our featured gunsmith display.

This year's theme is multi-generation family gunsmiths. Call Bob to put your prize rifles on display. Mark Herman has once again negotiated with the Lafayette to help hold down our meal and room costs.

Jim Claggett and Rod Frazer will be in charge of tables at Marietta. Call them with your needs. Barb Harwood and Alice Wagner are heading up the ladies' tour again this year. There is talk of restarting the August Shoot/Picnic on August 11. Watch for further details. Following in the tradition of Warren Offenberger and Ron Yerian, is our newsletter editor Mark Bender. Mark is multi-lingual and a world traveler. I'm sure he cringes when he opens my hand printed president's message composed using skills I acquired in third grade.

Sadly, it is my duty to report the passing of Gail Phillips and Marilyn Johnson. Our sympathies go out to their families, they will be missed.

Renita and I hope to see you in Marietta,  
Tom



## Updated AOLRC Website and Facebook Link

As noted elsewhere in this newsletter Allen Corbett has done a fantastic job updating the AOLRC website. Visit the site to find dates of upcoming shows, articles, and even items for sale. These images from the site can be found at: <http://www.aolrc.com/>



Please check out the new Facebook link. This promises to be an exciting place to post current news and photos.

Both the AOLRC website and Facebook page make communication much faster and more convenient to access than the newsletter you are holding. Find them online and enhance your AOLRC experience.



# Editor's Notes

I'm writing this just after the week of snow in mid-January. Took a walk in the woods by the Olentangy River yesterday off trail. A big blowdown tree had a line of fox prints running along its spine, the prints already disappearing in the warm afternoon sun. A few steps farther in the snow I came upon a shelter of sorts made of fallen branches, reminding me of shelters made by hunters for hundreds or thousands of years in the Ohio lands. Lingered inside a few moments I imagined a fine buck walking into the sights of my flintlock rifle. That scene must have been played over and over with guns brought into the state in the late 18<sup>th</sup>

century, then made here throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the state developed and game eventually became scarce. There is an old family story of Uncle Jake sitting with a muzzleloader by a spring not far from the family log house, then shooting a buck ... Maybe many of our readers have similar stories from the past, or even last deer season. In any case, our collecting passions intertwine handcrafted folk objects with memories and tradition in many ways and we are the care-takers of these objects and memories.

Yours truly,  
Mark Bender

## Please Submit an Article:

As noted in the last two issues, I would like to welcome submissions from our readers on any aspect of collecting and appreciating old Ohio long rifles. Part of the goal of this newsletter and the other publications of this organization is the appreciation and protection of these objects of Ohio folk art tradition for present and future generations. Working with a younger person to help write an article is a wonderful way of creating interest and passing down the tradition. I thank you in advance for sharing your manuscripts and other materials.

Below is a short list of **submission guidelines** for potential contributors. The easiest and most efficient way to submit an article is in an electronic format by e-mail. If that is not possible I will welcome hand-typed or even handwritten manuscripts, though keep in mind it takes a lot of time to transfer them into a computer file. I will silently make changes for minor style, spelling, or grammar issues. Thank you for your understanding.

## Guidelines for article submission:

- 1) The preferred format for articles is a Word document. Please use size 12 font, single or double space, 1 inch margins.
- 2) Printed photographs, drawings, and typed or handwritten manuscripts can be mailed to:  
Mark Bender  
139 W. Old Powell Rd  
Shawnee Hills, Ohio  
43065 USA
- 3) Articles in Word (or compatible system), photos (j-pegs or other formats), and correspondence can be emailed to this address: [altanmergen@gmail.com](mailto:altanmergen@gmail.com) Please put "AOLRCfile" in the subject line of the email.
- 4) Please run a spelling and grammar check on your e-files and otherwise proofread them.
- 5) Please put the title and author's name at the top of the article; use the same font size for the whole article.
- 6) Photographs can be color or black and white. If you are not a professional, good results can be obtained by taking photos of objects in soft, outdoor light. Lay the object on a non-reflective black background (blanket, etc.) with no background clutter. Please keep in mind how a color image might look if presented in black and white. Photos should be clear and sharp. (Professionals will, of course, have their own protocols.)
- 7) Use past issues as a guideline to content. Ideas for articles include local or family histories of pre-1900 Ohio gunsmiths and the use of muzzle-loading arms; detailed descriptions of representative or unique rifles (in terms of features or level of craftsmanship); accoutrements; short interviews with AOLRC members relating to collecting and appreciation of the Ohio long rifle as a folk art; accounts of early shooting clubs, shoots, tales, etc.
- 8) The newsletter is normally published twice a year. Submissions are always welcome, however timely notices for the Spring or Fall shows need to be received at least 6 weeks in advance.

**Note:** The AOLRC Facebook page can be accessed through the AOLRC website: <http://www.aolrc.com/>



# Notes on George Hahn, Muskingum County



by  
James Whisker

*Hahn, George (1810-1879). gunsmith. Zanesville. Hahn apprenticed with Elijah Ross. On 15 August 1837 Hahn purchased 70 acres in Muskingum County. 1850, ward 4: George Hahn, engineer, 40; Martha, 37; James, 13; Alonzo, 10; Martha, 7; Estelle, 5; Charles, 1. 1860, George Hahn, gunsmith, 50; Martha, wife, 44, both born in VA; Alonzo, 20; Martha, 17; Estella, 15; Edward, 11; Frank, 8, all born in OH [Census; Ancestry; Times Signal, 22 November 1959;]. Knittle listed Hahn in Zanesville, 1804-64. Hahn was killed on the 16th of December 1879 [Licking Genealogical Society, see newspaper extract below]. Hahn may have been buried at Dresden Cemetery [Find A Grave Memorial# 111678522]. [The following is a contemporary newspaper account; ed.]*

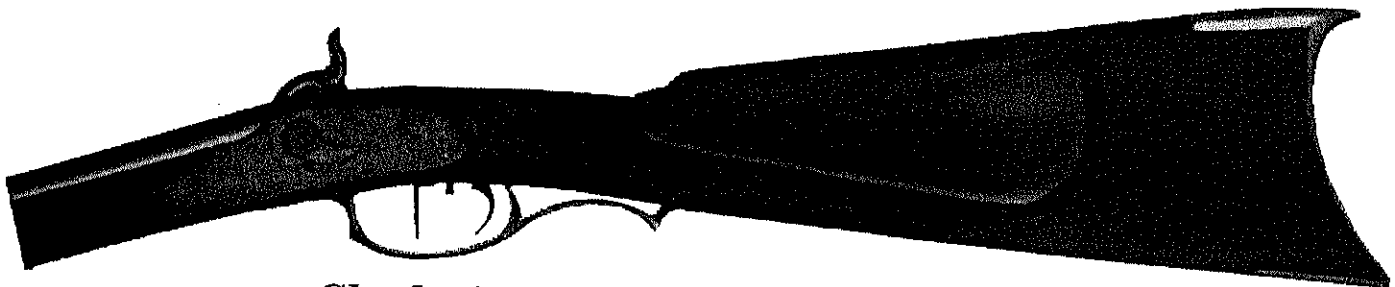
## **In the First Degree.**

The Muskingum county grand jury which finished its labors Thursday, returned an indictment against Ewing Coulter for murder in the first degree, for killing George Hahn the 16th of last December. Hahn, it will be remembered, was Coulter's nephew, and Coulter deliberately went into a saloon kept by Hahn at Dresden, in the daytime, and shot him dead where he stood with an old shotgun. He was immediately arrested and confined in jail. Coulter is the same man who killed Christmas D. Evans in this county some 12 years ago and was tried for manslaughter and acquitted on the theory of self defense. It does not now look as if he would get off so easily this time.

(Editor's note: The accompanying text was written in note form by Dr. James Whisker, a leading authority on American antique rifles and the author of many books on the subject. The photo of the G. Hahn rifle was found in AOLRC files. The photos also appear in Donald Hutslar's *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen*, Vol IV., p. 46.)



*A rifle attributed to George Hahn, of Zanesville, Muskingum County.*



*Cheek piece of the George Hahn rifle.*

# A Southwestern Ohio Rifle

## by Henry C. Burns

by  
Mark Bender

The top flat of the barrel on the rifle in this article is engraved "H. Burns" in engraved script and stamped J. W?? and Co., Dayton, Ohio. Going on that information, and the sources listed below, I am attributing the rifle to Henry C. Burns of Preble County, Ohio. It is a slim, relatively light-weight piece stocked in tight curly maple that still retains much of its original varnish finish.

### An Object of Utilitarian Folk Art from Southwest Ohio

Like many similar half-stock rifles from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Ohio this rifle was likely an all-purpose implement. Such guns were used for target shooting, hunting what remained of the game animal populations, varmint control, and administering the coup de grace in butchering livestock. Collectors find them in a range of conditions, from nearly used up to almost pristine condition. While some guns come with a story (some of which can actually be verified!), many must stand solely on their own merits. Tastes differ, as they must have in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and reactions to these objects is subjective. That said, a major element of interest for many is the aesthetic appeal. As handcrafted examples of folk art, rifles range from simply clad guns that depend solely on form (the "lines") and craftsmanship, to exquisitely decked out pieces with finely figured stocks decorated with thin pieces of silver, barrels inlays, fancy patch-boxes, and other ornate features.

The H. Burns signed rifle falls towards the end of the plainer end of the spectrum, but has several features of stock architecture that make it "work" as an object pleasing to hold and look at. It is also equipped with a back-action lock, a contraption that became popular along with the percussion cap in the early 1830s. While huge numbers of flintlocks were converted to the percussion ignition system, guns

with percussion locks built on flintlock-style lock-plates ("side locks") were popularized for use with the percussion cap. Guns such as these could retain earlier flintlock stock patterns and lines, but with the appearance of back-action locks, new styles of stock architecture developed, along with the increasingly common half-stock style, which had already been popular among some European smoothbore hunting guns. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, back-action locks were also very popular on single-barrel, and especially double-barrel, percussion shotguns, many of which were imported from England and Belgium for US markets, including Ohio.

While it seems that the side-lock style remained more popular throughout the percussion era, a significant number of Ohio rifles used back-action locks. Some makers of sporting and target guns seemed to have preferred the authoritative striking force of the back-action system. One example is Christian Siebert of Columbus, who made many stout rifles with back-action locks that survive today. Many makers seem to have used both lock styles, which may have been due in part to customer preference. In discussing the merits of "bar action" (a form of side lock used on some target rifles) and back-action locks, Ned H. Roberts notes in the classic *The Muzzle-loading Cap Lock Rifle* observes that, "It is probable that one form of these locks was equally as good as the other when correctly and skillfully made, and the method of stocking the arm determined the type of lock to be used" (1952:25). Whatever the case, rifles with back-action locks presented gunsmiths with new challenges and opportunities in their craftsmanship and sense of artistic design.

### H. Burns

Donald A. Hutslar, in his monumental work *Gunsmiths of Ohio, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, lists a





few facts and speculations concerning "Henry C. Burns" (1973: 325-326). Burns dates are listed as 1825-1890. According to Hutslar's *Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen, Vol. IV*, he may have been born in Maryland and brought to Preble County at an early age (1998:119). The 1850 U.S. census records list him as a gunsmith born in 1825, located in Lewisburg, Harrison Township. The town, founded in 1818, has approximately 1,820 residents according to the 2010 U.S. Census. Burns is listed in county directories in various years between 1853 and 1888. Thus, his work, and the dating of any existing rifles should be considered as falling from mid to latter 19<sup>th</sup> century. Henry C. Burns had a wife Catherine (born in Pennsylvania) and at least three children.

### Artistic Merits

As an artistic whole, the rifle holds together well. The slim barrel, long and low brass front sight, the sweeping curves of the butt, the placement and lines of the brass hardware and nicely-cast pewter nose-cap, pointed barrel tang, and the elongated, "lozenge" style cheek-piece, and panels in back of the lock, work together for a pleasing effect. An elongated lozenge style cheek-piece appears on a heavier rifle with more straightforward, less-flowing lines in Hutslar (1998:123). Similar cheek-pieces are seen on rifles from gunsmiths listed in Preble County, including Silas Fleming and Levi Ginger (Hutslar 1998: 124-125).

Such cheek-pieces have been found on other guns from the Southwest Ohio and Indiana border area. The author once owned an unsigned full-stock said to have been found in Beavercreek, Ohio that had brass hardware from an earlier rifle. The lozenge style cheek-piece looked remarkably similar to the Fleming rifle just mentioned, as well as the rifle under examination in this article. That said, the style appears on guns made by makers in other parts of Ohio and the US. For instance, some Hawken rifles made in St. Louis, Missouri feature a lozenge style cheekpiece (Woodfill 2018:28-29).

Variations of the rounded/curved style of cheek piece are actually quite old dating to at least the

early-18<sup>th</sup> century. Rounded cheek pieces of several styles are found on Continental jaeger rifles, smoothbore single-barreled boar guns, English sporting rifles, etc. from mid-18<sup>th</sup> into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Lenk 2007:117). These guns influenced American gun stocking practices, including the unknown chain of influences that impacted the work of Henry C. Burns. George Shumway's *Rifles of Colonial America, Vol. II* shows several examples of 18<sup>th</sup> century American flintlocks with several styles of rounded cheek pieces (1980:420; 478; 492; 530;554).

On the Burns rifle, the cheek-piece is finely executed. Visually it lies neatly along the side of the stock. A line begins at the posterior end and rounds down to split into two lines that separate to form the top and bottom planes of the cheek-piece, then rejoin into one line that loops over the nose of the stock. The cheek-piece is ergonomic and must have enhanced the steadiness of the shooter to whose face it conformed. The black stripes, dark auburn tones, and mellow yellow wear patterns that show beneath the original varnish finish of the tiger-striped maple enhance the look of the cheek-piece and gun as a whole.

Among the other features of interest is the handling of the panels sculpted in the stock in front of the lock. The lines curve down the anterior end of the trigger-guard (see illustration). Hutslar lists one rifle, described as a "half stock rifle with back action lock and possibly an original patch box, engraved "H. Burns," indicating that Burns may have included patch-boxes on some rifles (1972:325; 1998:119). The script engraving on the present rifle mimics common penmanship styles of the era.

### Dimensions:

Barrel: 36" by 7/8"; 3125 caliber (5/16")  
Barrel tang: 3 1/4"; held in place by two screws  
Brass front sight: 31/32" in length; base, 1/2" wide; 5/16" length  
Iron back sight: upper width, 21/32"; lower edge widest width (slopes in toward muzzle), 17/32"; length 15/32"; height of sight, 1/8". Rear of site is 8 1/16" from rear of barrel