



Folk Art On A Kentucky/Ohio (?) Rifle

Collection of: Arnie Dowd

This very rare, left-handed, "Kentucky" Longrifle is a classic example of a utilitarian object being used to convey various ideologies through symbolism in the form of American Folk Art during the Federal Period. Several sociopolitical and religious theories are represented by the various silver inlays, as well as the images engraved along the length of the top flat of the barrel.

Following consideration of various designs (including the Phoenix as well as the Turkey) which were presented to Congress between 1776 and the spring of 1782, the "Federal" Eagle with the shield on its breast (as represented here by the silver inlay mounted directly above the patchbox finial) was adopted June 20th, 1782 as the official seal of the United States. It is patriotically symbolic of all the principles our country embodies ie: freedom, independence, democracy, equality and justice for all.

The classic, early style, high-arch winged and war-like, Eagle conquering and devouring the Serpent (the Devil) is much more specifically representative of America's responsibility toward "Righteousness" which may be defined as the United States's ability to always (hopefully) be triumphant over evil and injustice.

The "sly" fox inlay is believed to represent both intelligence and cunning, while the silver Heart inlays remind us of morality and love which leads to emotional and moral-self or courage.

The Urns displaying the Federal shield, found engraved on both the bow of the trigger guard, and on the top barrel flat, are particularly representative of freedom; while the Distelfink (Goldfinch) birds and flowers (thistle plants?) seen engraved both on the small inlays and also again on the top barrel flat may be associated traditionally with Motherly Love.

The three outstanding inlays of the Man-in-the-Moon, the Sunburst face, and the Star which are found behind the cheekrest represent Astrology or the divinization of the supposed influence of the stars and planets on human affairs, while the Fish engraved on the oval inlays located on either side of the wrist section represent the contemporary religious theory of Christianity.

The Tools (the large hammer, tongs, anvil and small hammer), as well as the rifling-cutter guide (?) which are engraved on the top barrel flat near the muzzle, are assumed to be representative of the career of a blacksmith or perhaps the blacksmith-riflesmith who made this



rifle or that of the career of the owner.

The meaning of the "hex" sign of a man's left forearm and hand with the index finger extended, which is engraved on the top barrel flat immediately behind the front sight, may be as simplistic as "may the flight of this shot be true to its mark" or as complex and superstitious as "a wound caused by a ball from this rifle (barrel) will never heal and so result in death!"

This rifle is signed "H. Risingson" on the silver plate inlaid into the top of the barrel. Previously, rifles with this particular style of patchbox were thought to have come from southwestern Virginia; but recent research by Shelby Gallien allows it to be, more likely, attributed to the Kentucky "Blue Grass" country circa 1825. The graceful stock architecture, especially the long wrist area and the saddle-type cheekrest, the trigger guard with its reinforced (lobe) front bow-post, and especially the distinctive design of the patchbox are all characteristics of some "Kentucky" Longrifles manufactured in the Lexington area of Fayette County, Kentucky as well as both north and west into Scott and Woodford counties, during this period. Physically this rifle is 54" long overall and weighs 10½ pounds. The 38" barrel is .38 caliber rifled and is equipped with a hooked patent-breech. It is fullstocked in curly maple with brass hardware and coin silver inlays except the "Sunburst" face and the curved plate below the cheekrest which are brass. It has been reconverted to flintlock utilizing the original lock which shows strong English influence both externally and internally.

I have documented a "Henry Risingson" in the 1820 Ohio census as being located in Ward 4 of Cincinnati in Hamilton County. This is less than 60 miles north of Lexington, Kentucky. He is listed as a "free white male, head of household" within the age bracket of "26 - 45 years of age" and as being engaged in the profession of "manufacturing". In the same household is also listed a free white female in the same age bracket, however no children or slaves are listed. More importantly he is also listed in the 1819 Cincinnati Business Directory, published by Oliver Farnsworth, as a "black and white smith" located at the corner of Front and Elm Streets. It is easy to understand the use of a "u" rather than an "o" in the spelling of "Risingson" when the lack of education and use of phonetic spelling by these early day census-takers is considered.

The surname "Risingson" may be an anglicized spelling of a German name or it may be indicative of possibly an American Indian lineage or heritage, perhaps Cherokee or Creek. This is quite possible and may explain the bow and arrow which is engraved on the top barrel flat between the silver signature panel and the patent breech.

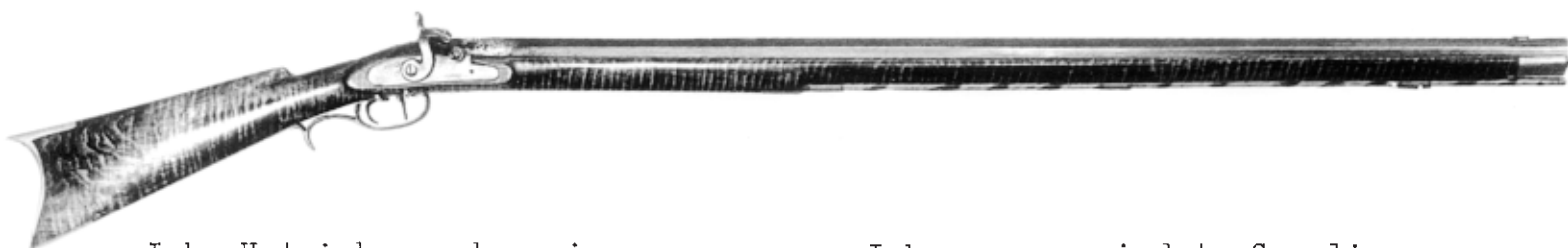


John Hetrick 1829-1919



By

Paul L. Zeiher



John Hetrick was born in Perry County. He came to Newark (Licking County) when he was 21 years old.

It is possible that he knew Joshua Zartman before he came to Newark since they were both from Perry County. Hutslars Gunsmiths of Ohio 18th and 19th Centuries has him working with Zartman as an apprentice around 1850. The 1850 census has him living in the Zartman household.

After he served his apprenticeship, he chose to go into business for himself. His first place of business was at the corner of Third Street and the Ohio Canal. Sometime in 1883 or 1884 he moved to 29½ North Fourth Street. He stayed at this location until his retirement in 1915 or 1916. There are two reasons why he may have moved. With the coming of the railroad, traffic on the Ohio Canal had dropped. This meant less people coming and going in that area. Also, old timers told me 30-40 years ago that with no boats moving on the canal, the water became stagnate and foul smelling. Along with that, the rats became plentiful and in the summer the mosquitoes became unbearable.

John was married to Caroline Mechling. They had three sons. Alva, who died at the age of three months, Frank and Elmer.

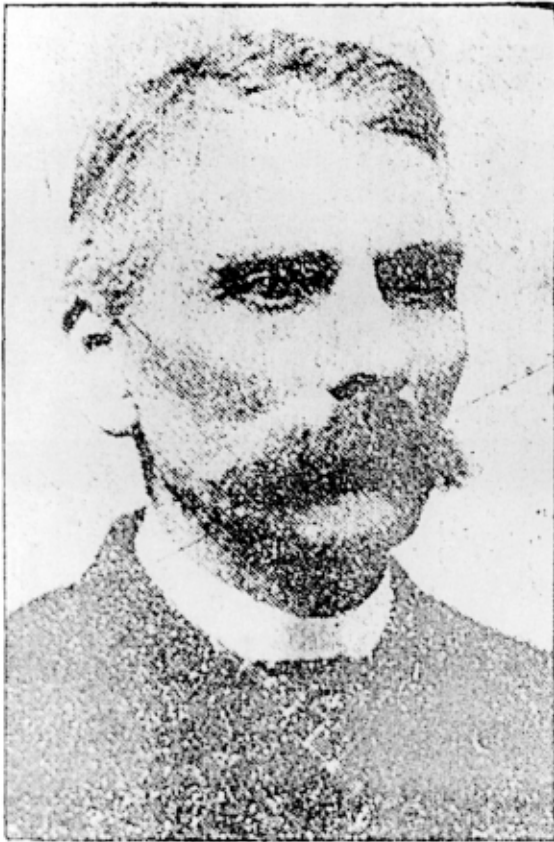
On January 12, 1855, John purchased property from Edward and Maria Louisa Beeney on South Fourth Street (Deed Book 68, p.517). He lived at this location until his death. The home is still standing today.

John was very active in the Presbyterian Church. It is possible he was involved in the split of the church over slavery. He was an active elder in the 2nd Presbyterian Church until two years before his death.

The following add appeared in the 1893 Newark City Directory.

John Hetrick
Dealer In
Gun and Repairer
Keys Made to Order. All Orders
Will Receive Prompt Attention
29 1/2 N. Fourth St. Newark, O.

John's son Elmer worked in Newark as a telegraph operator for Western Union. He later moved to Kansas City, Mo.

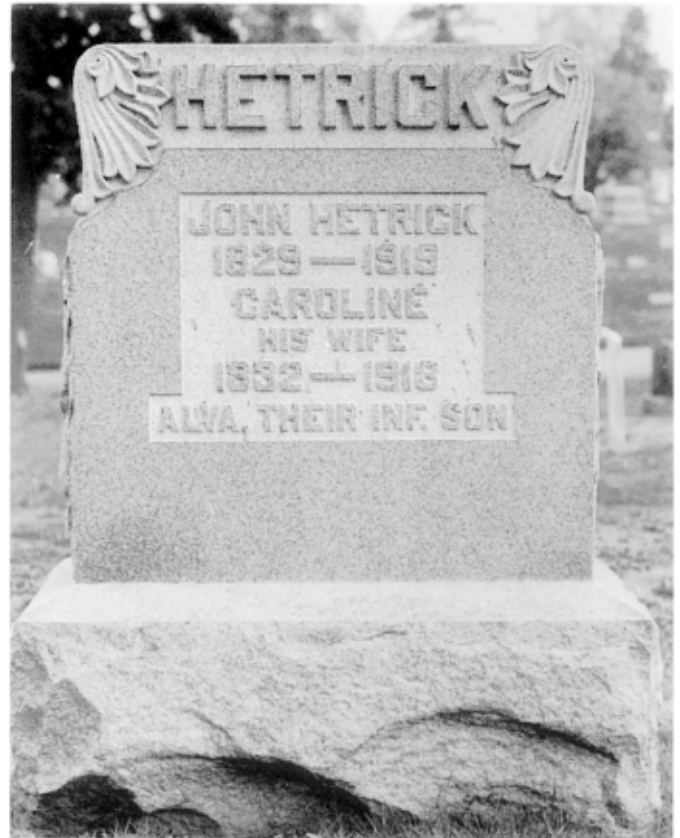


John Hetrick

The Newark City Directory of 1876-1877 has his son Frank living with him and working as a gunsmith. According to Sellers American Gunsmiths, there was a gunsmith listed as L. (Levi?) Hetrick in Warsaw, Indiana. There must have been some family relationship since Frank moved to Warsaw between 1877 and 1883. Why Frank gave up the gunsmith trade remains a mystery. The Warsaw City Directory of 1888-1889 has him working for Conrads as a carriage trimmer and living at Ten East Center Street.

There were a lot of Hetricks in the Central Ohio area in the late 19th century. I have been unable to connect John with any of them. Even the connection with L. Hetrick of Warsaw, Indiana is pure speculation.

John was one of Newark's oldest and best known citizens at the time of his death on May 25th, 1919. His wife Caroline preceed



him in death by one year. They are both buried at Cedar Hill Cemetery along with their infant son in Section No. 4, South 1/2.

John made full and 1/2 stock rifles. I have seen them signed J. Hetrick in script, J. Hetrick stamped and J. Hetrick and Co. in script.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

In the name of the Benevolent Father of all, I, John Hetrick, a resident of the city of Newark, Ohio, being of sound mind and memory, do make, publish and declare this to be my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills heretofore made.

Item 1st. It is my will that my executors hereinafter named shall pay as soon as convenient after the time of my decease, all my just debts.

Item 2nd. I hereby give to my

wife, Caroline Hetrick, all of my property of every kind and description for and during her natural life.

Item 3rd. At the death of my wife, Caroline Hetrick, I give all of my property of every kind and description absolutely share and share alike, to my two sons, Frank M. Hetrick, and Elmer Hetrick.

Item 4th. In the event that my son, Frank M. Hetrick, should die before the time of my decease, that it is my will that his share shall go absolutely to his wife, Rose C. Hetrick; and in the event

that my son, Elmer Hetrick, should die before the time of my decease, then it is my will that his share go absolutely to his wife Leila C. Hetrick.

Item 5th. I hereby nominate and appoint my two sons, Frank M. Hetrick and Elmer Hetrick, the executors of this my last will and testament and direct that they so set without bond.

In witness whereof, I have here unto signed this instrument as my last will and testament this 7th day of March, A.D., 1917.

The inventory of Hetrick's estate could not be found at Licking County Probate Court. However, the expenses for settling his estate are listed below.

Account Heard November 29, 1919

Apr. 5	Mary Roberts	Labor	75.00
Apr. 5	Erma Hollor	Labor	72.00
Apr. 9	Pat Seary	Labor	6.00
Apr. 12	Pat Seary	Labor	6.00
Apr. 19	Pat Seary	Labor	6.00
Apr. 19	Mary Roberts	House Maintenance	20.00
May 10	Pat Seary	Labor	18.00
May 10	Mary Roberts	House Maintenance	25.00
June 3	Pat Seary	Labor	16.35
Aug. 2	Mary Roberts	Labor	127.20
Sept. 6	Willard C. Rank	Medical Attention	97.50
Oct. 18	L.N. Bradley	Funeral Expenses	288.20
Oct. 18	Robbins Hunter	Court Costs	16.85
Oct. 18	Jos. Horner	This Account	5.00
Oct. 18	Robbins Hunter	This Account	5.00
Oct. 18	Jos. Horner	Attorneys Fees	26.00
Oct. 18	Ernest T. Johnson	Bond	6.00
			<u>814.10</u>

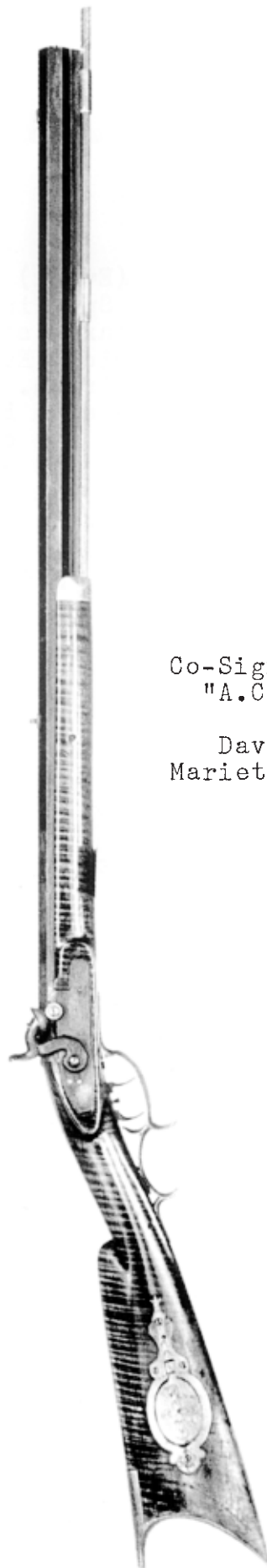
Saturday, November 29, 1919

The court having carefully examined the foregoing account finds the same to be correct.

Robbins Hunter, Probate Judge

David Sink Gunsmith 1836-1910

The eldest son of William Sink, David was born in Indiana County, Pennsylvania. He accompanied his father to Marshall County, West Virginia. In the U.S. Census of 1860, David was listed as the head of the household, with \$300 in personal, and \$300 in property value. In August 1862, David enlisted in the Union Army, but was discharged in April 1863 because of his poor vision. In 1867, David moved from West Virginia to Claysville, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania. Later he moved to Marietta, Ohio, where he was briefly associated with A. C. McGirr, a local gunsmith who had suffered a crippling arm injury in a train wreck while in the Union Army. One rifle is signed jointly by McGirr and Sink. In the U. S. Census of 1870 David was enumerated in South Mahoning Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania, working as a miller, and living again with his father. In the U. S. Census of 1880 David was listed in Kittanning, Armstrong County, Pennsylvania. He remained there until 1883. He then moved to Punxsutawney, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, where he remained until his death, which occurred on 28 June 1910. "Died 28 June 1910, aged 76 years, 2 months; residence: S. Jefferson St., Punxsutawney. Born at Smicksburg. Buried at Circle Hill Cemetery. Service at Salvation Army Hall. Father: William Sink. Mother: Mary Adams." (Mrs. Walter Steel, Punxsutawney Funeral Register, p. 73)



Co-Signed Rifle
"A.C. McGirr
and
David Sink
Marietta, Ohio"



Jonathan Irick 1791-1829



By
Jim Whisker

Jonathan Erick (Evick) (1791-1829), gunsmith. Spelling variations shown in tax lists include: Emick, Emerick, Evick, Irick, Erick and Eirich. Jonathan Evick was born in Bath County, Virginia, a son of Coonrod Erick, Sr., and his wife Juliana Lauer. Coonrod married Juliana, daughter of Michael and Ann Barbara Frey Lauer on 18 February 1771 in Cocalico Township, Lancaster County, Pa. Jonathan had four older brothers: Michael (b.1774 in Berks Co., Pa.,

Coonrod or Conrad, Jr.(b.1778), and Andrew (b.1787). He was apprenticed to Archibald Rutherford, gunsmith and prominent citizen of Harrisburg, Virginia, at the age of about six years. He married Mary, daughter of Philip and Susan Walters Boston, on 24 September 1811 in Harrisonburg, before Methodist minister Daniel Stansbury. She was born on 17 December 1793 in Maryland and died on 2 January 1861 in Pleasantville, Ohio. Jonathan served as a private in the War

KNOW all men by these presents, that we *Jonathan Irick and Archibald Rutherford* are held and firmly bound unto His Excellency *G. W. Smith* Esquire, Governor of Virginia, and his successors, for the use of the Commonwealth, in the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars, to which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators jointly and severally, firmly by these presents. Scaled and dated this *24* day of *September* 1817 in the *36* year of the commonwealth.

THE condition of the above obligation is such, that whereas a marriage is shortly intended to be solemnized between the above bound *Jonathan Irick and Polly Boston* Daughter of *Philip Boston* of Rockingham county, if therefore, there shall be no lawful cause to obstruct the said marriage, then the above obligation to be void; otherwise, to remain in full force and virtue.

Signed, sealed and delivered }
in the presence of

J. S. Lewis Jr. *Jonathan Irick* *A. Rutherford*

SEAL
 SEAL
 SEAL
 SEAL
 SEAL



of 1812 in Captain Hopkins' company, 16th Virginia Militia, drafted at Harrisonburg, serving from 29 August 1814 through 8 December 1814. In 1815 he owned 1/3 acre in Harrisonburg. From 1823-35 he owned lots 3 and 11 in Harrisonburg. In the Rockingham County, Virginia, tax list of 1824, there were three whites in his household and one slave over age 16 years, and one horse. About 1825 he moved to Pleasantville, Fairfield County, Ohio. Jonathan had a nephew named after him who died in 1835 in Licking County, Ohio. Jonathan Erick, gunsmith, died on 30 July 1829 in Pleasantville. On 12 June 1855 Mary, who apparently did not remarry, applied for a government pension as the widow of a veteran.

September 30, 1796, the court ordered that Conrad Irick be summoned to appear at the next court to show cause why his children should not be bound out by the Overseers of the Poor, it being suggested to the court that he is not under circumstances to raise and educate them in a good, honest and decent manner.

November 30, 1796, ordered that Conrad Irick be summoned to next court to show cause why his children should not be bound out by the Overseers of the Poor, according to law, it being suggested that he does not raise them in that manner, as the law directs.

December 1796, Overseers of the Poor, plaintiffs; Conrad Irick, defendant. Were, upon a summons it appearing to the court that a summons in this case has not been executed, it is ordered that a new summons be awarded, returnable to the next court.

February 1797, Ordered that... Jonathan Irick, son of Conrad Irick, be bound unto Archibald Rutherford by the Overseers of the Poor, to learn the trade and mystery of a gunsmith, according to law.

Know all men by these presents that we, Jonathan Irick and Archibald Rutherford are held and firmly bound unto His Excellency, G. W. Smith, Esquire, Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, and his successors, for the use of the Commonwealth, in the sum of \$150, to which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents, sealed and dated this 24 day of September 1817 in the 36th year of the commonwealth. The condition of the above obligation is such, that whereas a marriage is shortly intended to be solemnized between the above bound Jonathan Irick and Polly Boston, Daughter of Philip Boston of Rockingham County, if therefore there shall be no lawful cause to obstruct the said marriage, then the above obligation to be void; otherwise, to remain in full force and virtue.



Reuben Yutzy, Amish Gunsmith



by Wm. H. Walker

Reuben Yutzy was one of six children born to Peter Yutzy, a German emigrant, and Elizabeth Glass. He was born on Feb. 11, 1819 in Lancaster, Pa.

He came to Ohio in 1839 and settled in Paint Twp., Holmes Co., near Winesburg.

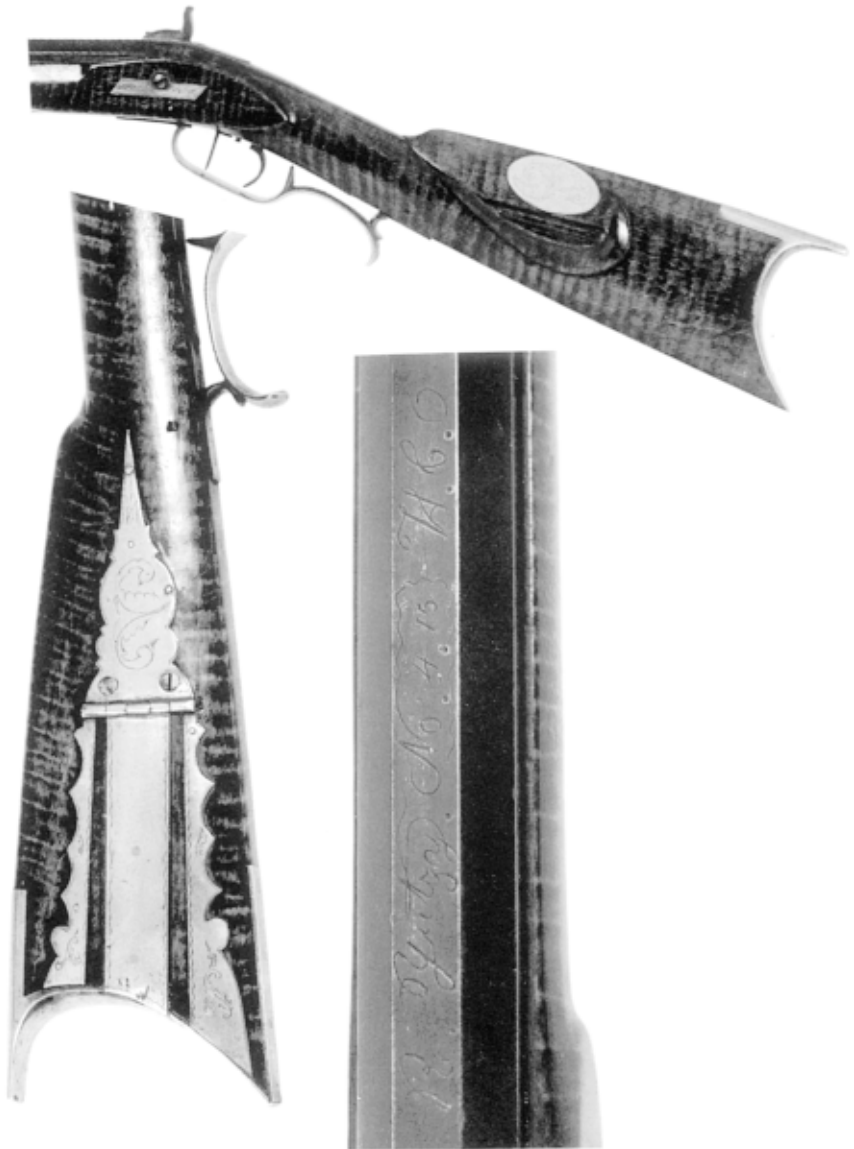
In 1844 Reuben and Susana Weaver (12/27/1824-3/1/1899) from Winesburg, were married in Walnut Creek. They had ten children, eight sons and two daughters. Isaac, Jonas, Moses, Solomon, Daniel, Benjamin, Anna, Fanny, Eli and Nicholas. Solomon and Benjamin died at a early age. All the children were born in Winesburg except one, and all were farmers except one, who was born in Millersburg and became a carpenter.

Reuben was a farmer, did a little horse trading, and was the area's only Amish gunsmith.

His farm consisted of Lots 26 and 27, around two hundred acres. It is located between Berlin and Winesburg, off route 62 at the bottom of "Seven Lick Hill". There are records showing Reuben was the owner of Lot 26 as early as 1861. And the corner stone on the barn is dated "R. 1869 Y". The adjoining hundred acres (Lot 27) he bought in 1872 from Barbara Isely (widow of Christian Isely) and heirs, for the sum of eight thousand dollars.

Mrs. Alvin J. Yoder the fourth generation of Yutzy's, live on the farm today. Also, the original walls of mud and straw are still standing and in use.

Reuben Yutzy died Dec. 26, 1899 and is buried in the family



cemetery, high on a hill over looking his farm and his gunshop, pictured here as it looks today.

The Yutzy Rifle

About the time Reuben came to Ohio in 1839, there were already several Yutzy's in the area, George his uncle and George his cousin.

His uncle George was a poet and author and thought to have been a minister. He was deeply concerned about the welfare of his people. He lived in Stark Co., Ohio until the mid 1800, when he moved to Ontario, Canada, where he is buried.

His cousin George was born in Huntingdon Co., Pa. in 1790. He came to Ohio in the early 1800, and settled on Section 17, in Pike Twp., Stark Co., Wilmot Ohio. He died in 1845. It has been said that George was a gunsmith, but I have not seen or heard of any guns made by him.

The question is, where did Reuben Yutzy learn the gunsmith trade?

There is no mention of any Yutzy what so ever in the "Gunsmith of Lancaster Co., Pa. 1727-1863". He may have worked some with his cousin George from 1839 when Reuben came to Ohio and until 1845 when George died, but nothing I have researched, tells me he did.

With the information I have gathered and conversations I have had, my conclusion is that Reuben Yutzy was a very talented man and a self-taught gunsmith.

The barrels he used for his rifles came from Pittsburg, Pa. to a warehouse in Canton, Ohio. There he and Adam Stilgenbauer (a gunsmith from Winesburg)

would go together by horse and wagon to pick them up, traveling one day over and one day back.

It is known that Reuben had a rifling machine, so we can assume he did his own rifling.

The butt plates toe plates and trigger guards all seem to be standard. Most of his cheek pieces are pear shaped with two grooves running parallel to each other, and horizontal with the stock. Some have a silver inlay above the grooves, usually oval, maybe engraved.

The only patchbox that seems to follow a pattern is the full patchbox with its random sawtooth outer edge.

The sideplate is usually rectangular and angled at each end, parallel to each other.

The fore part of the stock where the pipe is, is usually elongated.

The barrels are all signed "R. Yutzy, numbered, and H.C.O." (Holmes Co. Ohio).

The engraving, if any, is simple but good.

On some of Reuben's rifles, the rib between the muzzel and the pipe had some real nice fancy work.

I have compared a number of Yutzy rifles (390-415-491-522-576) and I would say the most common characteristics would be the enlongated forestock, the rectangular sideplate (pictured), the sawtooth outer edge on the full patchbox, and the pear shaped cheek piece with the two grooves. And of course his signature "R. Yutzy. No.415 H.C.O." (pictured)

