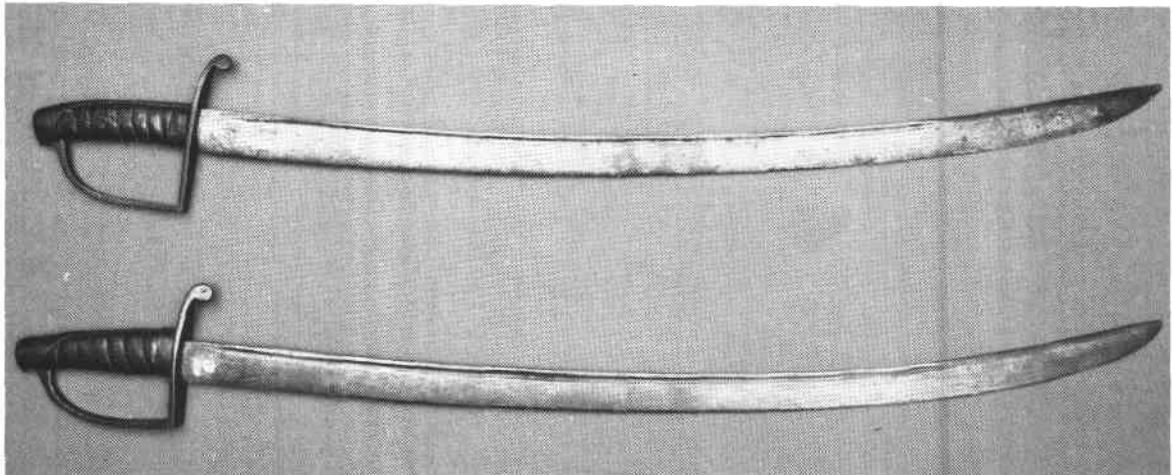
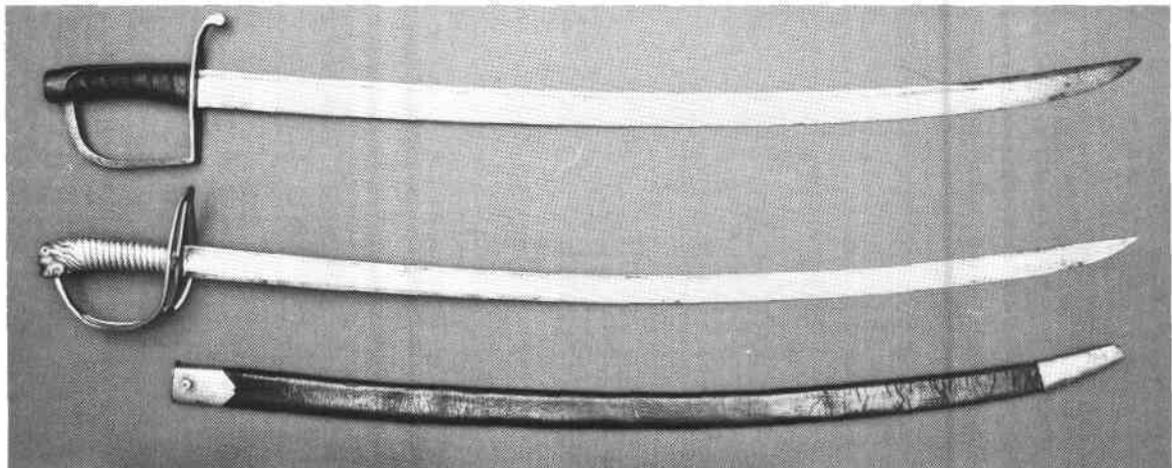


1775-1790 (top to bottom), Dragoon of Virginia, stirrup hilt with cherry grip, lion's head pommel, "POTTER" made in New York City



1798 contract (top to bottom), N. Starr & Co., Buel & Greenleaf



1794-1800 (top to bottom), Virginia contract, John Miles; American Light Horse, Wilhelm Tesche Peters Sohn

U.S. CAVALRY SABERS

by Richard Johnson

I am limiting this presentation to sabers used by the dragoon or cavalryman, and will not cover officers' models, which in many instances were purchased privately and not always consistent as to pattern. As a practical matter many officers used the issue saber. Where known I will mention the number procured for issue to U.S. regular cavalry or to state militia. I will not give detailed measurements but will mention markings.

The term sword is generic, referring to a whole classification of edged weapons. A saber is a sword with a single cutting edge. The cavalry or dragoon saber can usually be identified by its long 32 to 37 inch curved blade. However, some early Revolutionary period dragoon blades were straight as was the blade on the last U.S. cavalry sword.

In 1777 Congress authorized the formation of four regiments of light dragoons. Each regiment was composed of six troops with a total authorized regimental strength of 280 officers and men. These regiments are often referred to by the name of the commander: 1st Regiment or Bland's was from Virginia, 2nd Regiment or Sheldon's from Connecticut, 3rd Regiment or Baylor's from Virginia with some men from Pennsylvania and Maryland, and the 4th Regiment or Moylan's from Pennsylvania. Other Continental mounted units included the South Carolina Mounted Rangers, Pulaski's Legion, Lee's Legion, and Armand's Legion. From 1776 through the end of the war various states raised mounted militia units generally referred to as light horse or light dragoons.

In the northern campaigns the cavalry was used to a large part as couriers and escorts. In the south, where the fighting was more partisan in nature, the cavalry gave its most effective service. After Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in October, 1781, the cavalry gradually faded away.

Revolutionary period sabers were diverse and a surprising number have survived. As late as the Civil War the Confederates used Revolutionary sabers or rehilted blades dating from the 1776-1800 period. Except in rare instances, the Revolutionary sabers are unmarked. James Potter made swords in New York City during the Revolution, including the British occupation of the city. A typical Potter saber has a flat 35½ inch blade marked "POTTER" on the ricasso. The iron hilt has a spiral carved wood grip covered with leather and surmounted by a large globular pommel. The iron stirrup guard is pierced at the counter guard with four rectangular slots, a feature fairly



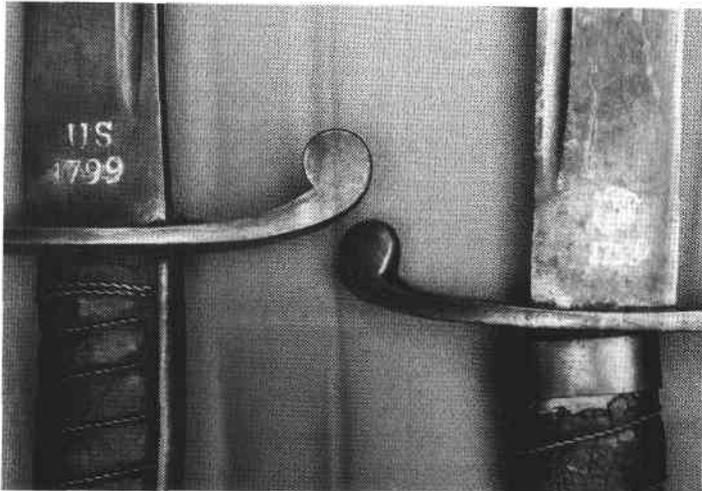
common in swords of the period. The scabbard is black leather with an iron tip and throat with a stud.

Another type of Revolutionary period saber was that with the lion's head pommel. A typical example has a 34¼ inch blade with three fullers. This style blade is found on many period sabers and was undoubtedly imported from Europe, possibly Germany or Spain. The cast lion's head pommel is crude, with details added by punched dots and engraved lines. The cut brass D guard has one triangular opening in the knuckle bow and four rectangular openings in the counter guard. The grip is plain wood.

Virginia imported blades and completed swords from France either in the latter years of the Revolution or the years immediately thereafter. A rare example of a Virginia saber, hilted in America with an imported blade is marked on the back "Klingenthal," the French sword making center. The flat 36 inch blade is inscribed "Dragoon of Virginia" on one side and "Victory or Death" on the other. It has a high iron pommel, D guard, and four cutout sections in the counter guard. The grip is spiral carved wood.

With an unusually wide variety of Revolutionary period sabers, one distinct type was the predecessor of the first U.S. contract sabers. In general design it was similar to French and German sabers of the period. A typical example has a 32½ inch three fuller blade. The grip is smooth cherry wood. The flat iron pommel extends down the back of the grip to form a backstrap. The iron guard is stirrup-shaped with a comparatively narrow flat counter guard and quillon with disc finial.

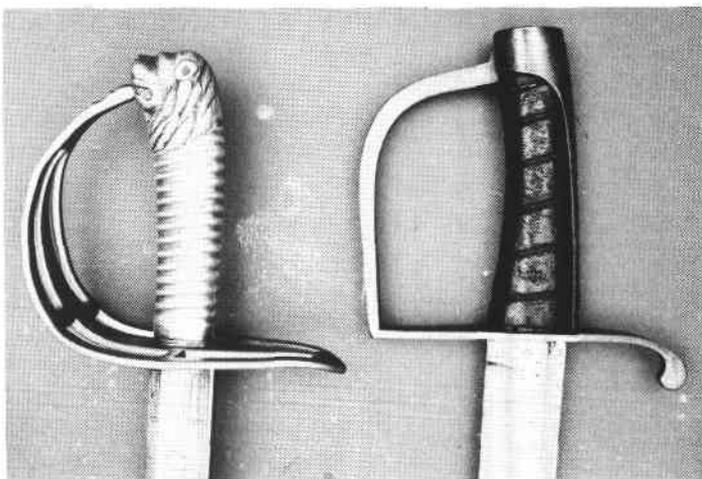
The Revolutionary period sabers usually had leather scabbards with iron mountings. The scabbard throat had a stud for use with a wide leather shoulder sword sling.



1798 contract markings (left to right), N. Starr & Co., Buel & Greenleaf



1775-1790 (left to right), Dragoon of Virginia, stirrup hilt with cherry grip, lion's head pommel, "POTTER" made in New York City



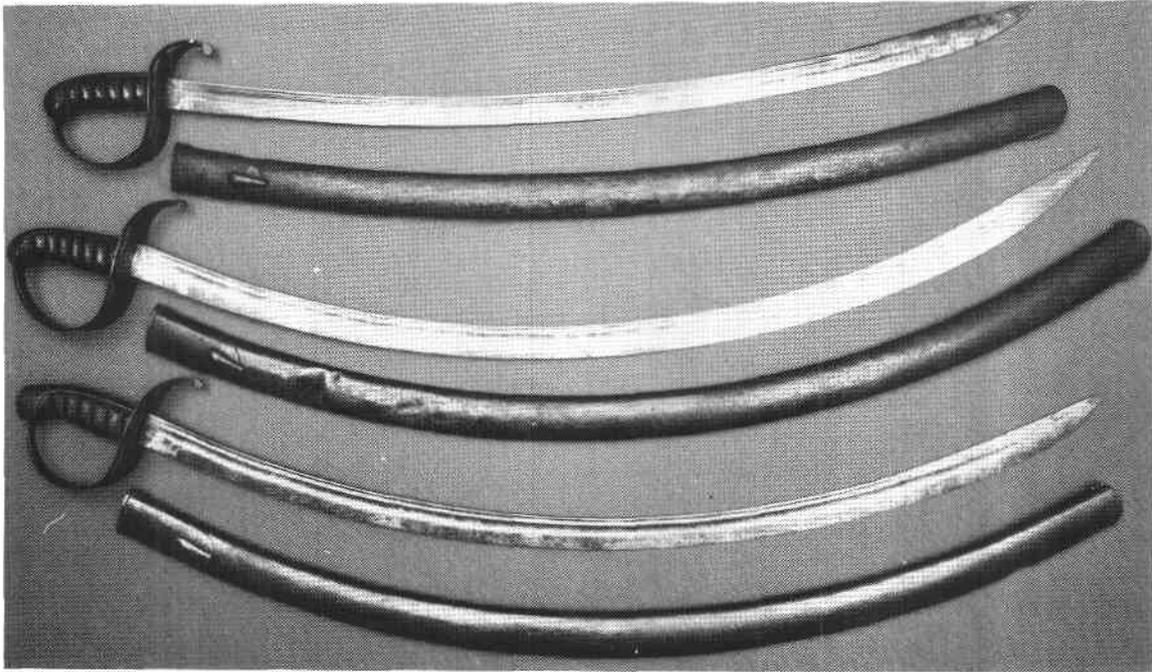
1794-1800 (left to right), American Light Horse, Wilhelm Tesche Peters Sohn; Virginia contract, John Miles

The Continental Army regular troops reached a maximum strength of 46,900 officers and men in 1776; by the end of 1781 it was down to 13,300. While the final peace was agreed to in April, it was December of 1783 before the last British troops left New York. By January, 1784, only 700 men remained in the army. In June, 1784, Congress reduced the army to about 100 officers and men to guard the stores at West Point and Fort Pitt. For a short period Congress attempted to provide for frontier defense with 12 month state levies to man the forts which were to be abandoned by the British. It took Congress more than two years to realize this method would not provide an effective military force. In 1786 Congress authorized an army of slightly over 2,000 men, but less than 1,000 were enrolled. It was 1792 before Indian depredations in the Ohio valley forced Congress to increase the strength of the army to 5,000 men organized into four sublegions each of which included a troop of dragoons. These were the first regular mounted troops in the new United States Army.

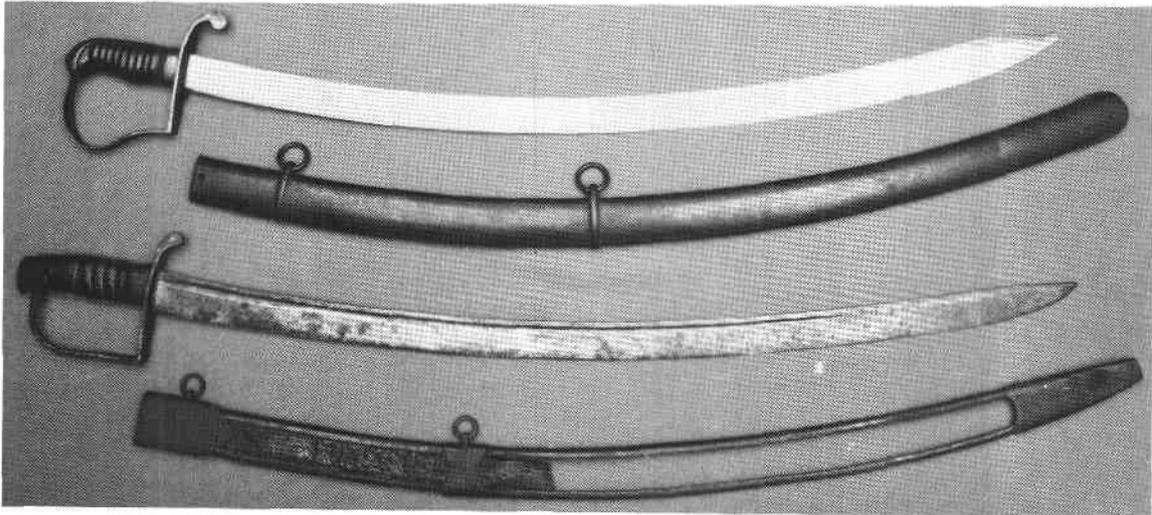
Bill Guthman in his excellent books, *March to Massacre* and *U.S. Army Weapons 1784-1791*, details the use and final depletion of the stores of arms left over from the Revolutionary War. By 1792 the government was procuring rifles to arm the riflemen authorized for each sublegion. Henry Knox, the Secretary of War, in a return of ordinance addressed to Congress in December, 1793, reported a total of 1,344 swords in store, presumably fit for issue, of which 478 can be identified as horsemen's sabers.

An Act of Congress of April 2, 1794, approved the purchase of arms and resulted in the procurement of arms from England and Germany. By the same Act of Congress, George Washington sponsored and Congress approved legislation for erecting and repairing arsenals and magazines. Springfield, Massachusetts, was selected as the site for the first national armory. Passing up the storage points for Revolutionary arms at Philadelphia, Cadd, West Point, New York, and New London, Virginia, Washington selected Harpers Ferry as the site for a new armory.

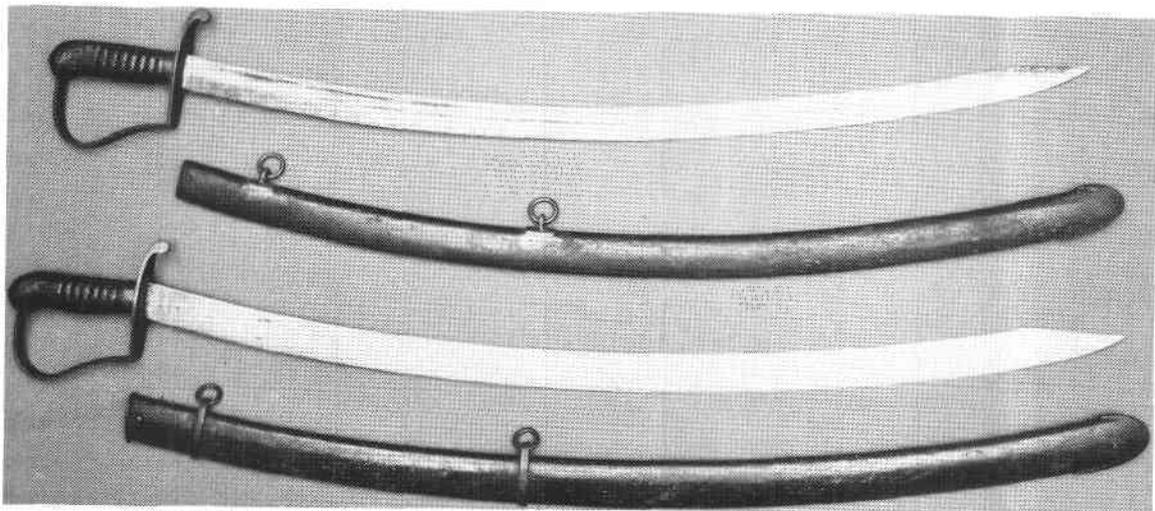
In anticipation of trouble with France, Congress in 1798 increased the size of the army to include a full regiment of light dragoons. It is not known how many dragoons were actually organized, but arsenal stocks of sabers were either exhausted or unfit for issue, as in 1798 the government contracted for 2,000 cavalry sabers with Nathan Starr, Sr., of Middleton, Connecticut. With this order for the first U.S. sabers, Nathan Starr was to become the prime government contractor for swords until 1821. The 1798 Starr contract saber is similar to a type developed during



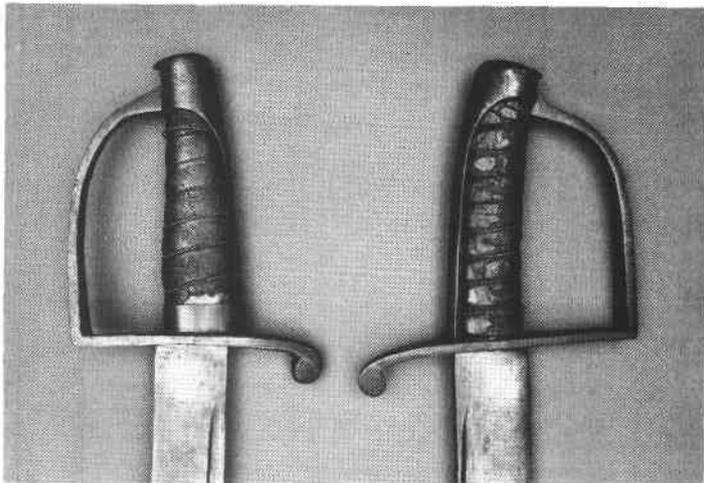
1804-1814 (top to bottom), 3rd Model Virginia Manufactory, 2nd Model Virginia Manufactory, 1st Model Virginia Manufactory



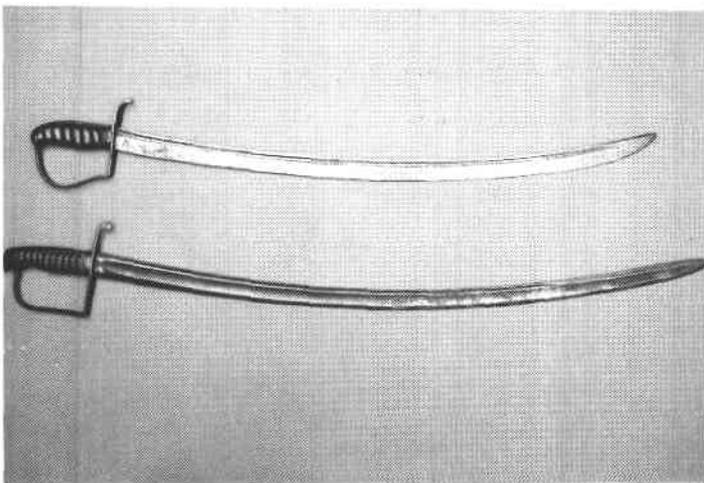
1807-1812 (top to bottom), 1812 contract William Rose & Sons, 1807 contract William Rose



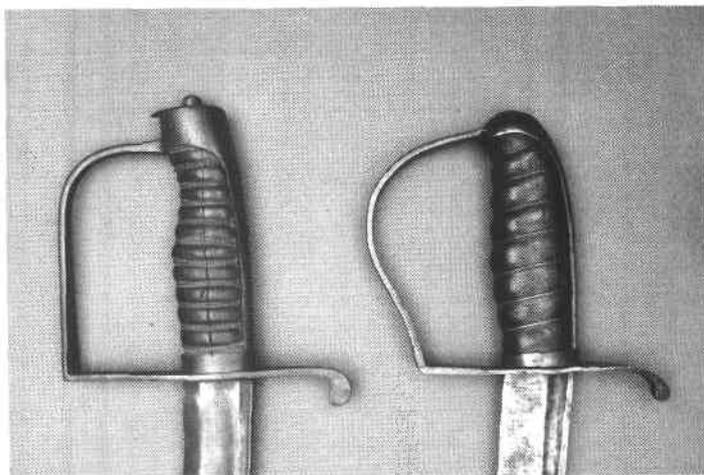
1812-1818 (top to bottom), 1818 contract N. Starr & Co., 1812-13 contract N. Starr & Co.



1798 contract (left to right), Buel & Greenleaf, N. Starr & Co.



1800-1810 (top to bottom), N. Starr militia saber, Joseph Rose militia saber



1800-1810 (left to right), Joseph Rose militia saber, N. Starr militia saber

the Revolution. The 33½ inch blade has a single narrow fuller and is marked "N. STARR & CO." on one blade face and on the other "US" over "1799." The grip is wood, covered with leather, and wound with twisted brass wire. The iron hilt has a flat pommel, backstrap, stirrup guard, flat counter guard and disc finial. The scabbard was leather with iron mounts.

In my resources at the National Archives, I found reference to a heretofore unpublished saber contract with Buel and Greenleaf for 1,000 "calvary swords" with scabbards and belts. The contract for these sabers was completed early in 1799. They were inspected by Robert Orr and shipped in May, 1799, in ten boxes to Mr. John Harris, Military Storekeeper at the U.S. Arsenal in Philadelphia. The government paid \$7.67 for each saber with belt and eventually rejected seven on final inspection by Mr. Harris.

Since no sabers marked Buel and Greenleaf are known to collectors, it is my opinion that these sabers, when found, are classified as unmarked 1798 Starr contract sabers. The Buel and Greenleaf saber in style and dimensions is almost identical to the 1798 Starr and was no doubt made in accordance with the same pattern saber. The description of a 1798 Starr applies to the Buel and Greenleaf with one exception, the blade is marked on one face only with an intertwined "US" over "1799."

As the possibility of war with France faded, Congress reorganized the army in 1800 and again in 1802, eliminating the light dragoons. A militia return for 1803 indicates 12,231 sabers on hand in the states (three states not reporting) for a strength of over 18,000 dragoons.

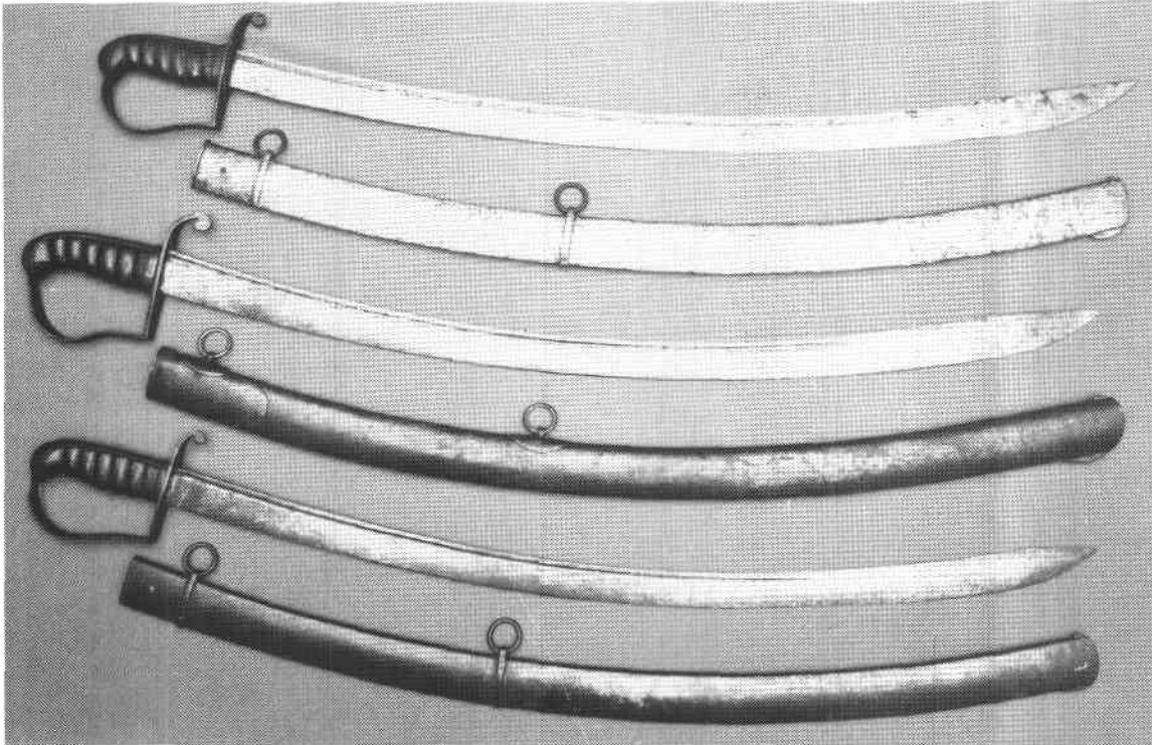
The Federal government had run short of arms by 1794, and apparently the same was true of the states as a number of states are known to have procured arms, including swords, from American and European manufacturers. One such saber has a 35 inch blade marked on each side "AMERICAN LIGHT HORSE" with a Federal period eagle. The back of the blade is marked "WILHELM TESCHE PETERS SOHN IN SOLINGEN FECIT," indicating the manufacturer and that it was made in Solingen, Germany. The grip and pommel are cast brass with the pommel in the shape of a lion's head and the grip grooved in a spiral pattern. The brass D guard and counter guard are divided with a branch and three cut out sections on each side. The scabbard is black leather with a brass tip and throat with a stud. A number of variations of this sword are known, one with an iron hilt and wire wrapped fish skin grips, and blades have been observed marked "PENNSILVANIA LIGHT DRAGOONS". A number of state militia units used

this type of saber, one of which was the First City Troop of Philadelphia.

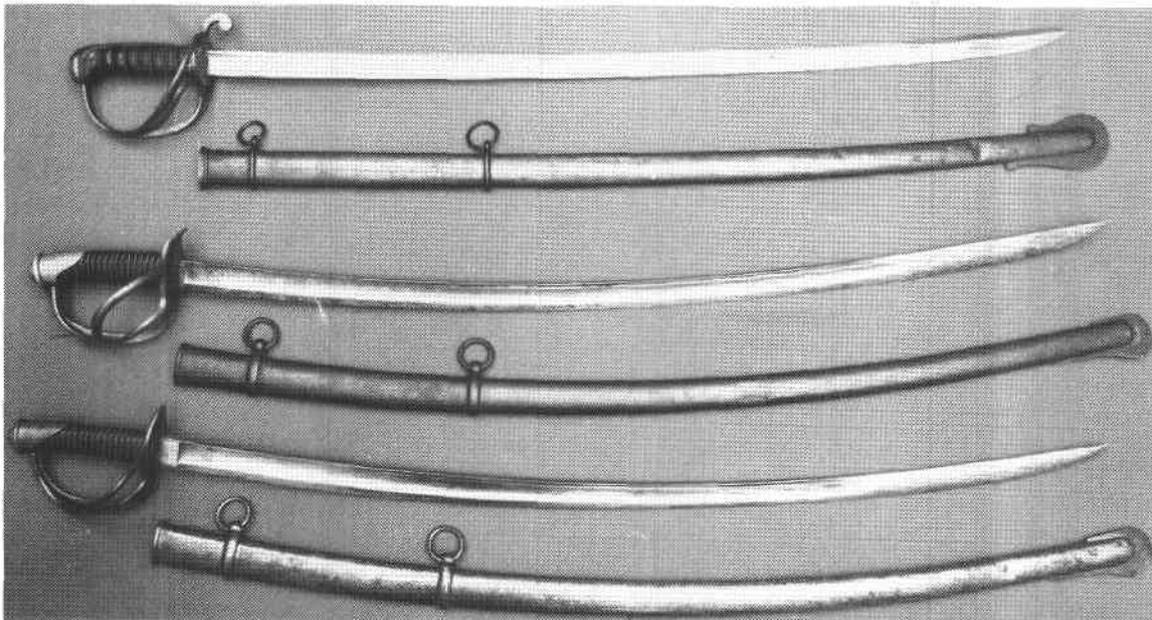
In 1801 and 1802 Virginia obtained about 1,000 horsemen's sabers from John Miles, Sr. of Globe Mills, Pennsylvania. John Miles had previously been employed at the New London, Virginia, arsenal in the repair of government arms. He moved to Pennsylvania in 1795, where he manufactured muskets, pistols, and swords. The sabers he made for Virginia were very similar to the 1798

Starr. The 35½ inch blade has a single narrow fuller and is marked on the face near the hilt in three lines "I REGT VIRGA / CAVALRY / DINWIDDIE," the latter referring to the county militia to which the saber was issued. The iron mounted hilt has a stirrup guard, flat pommel, backstrap, and spiral carved wood grip which is leather covered and wound with twisted wire. The scabbard was no doubt leather with iron mounts.

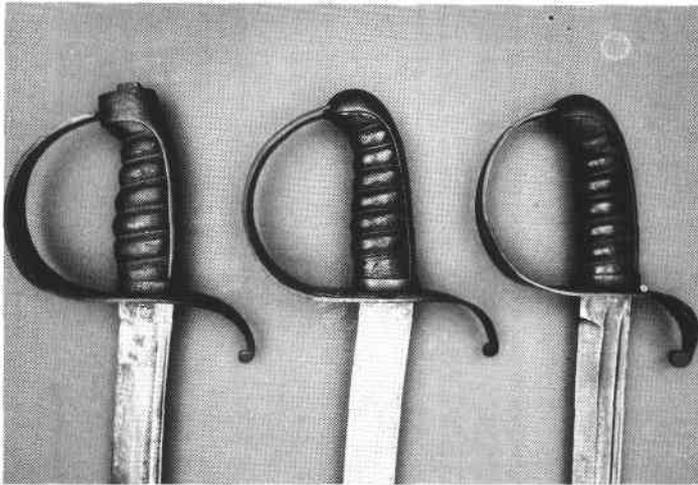
In 1802 the Virginia Manufactory began operations,



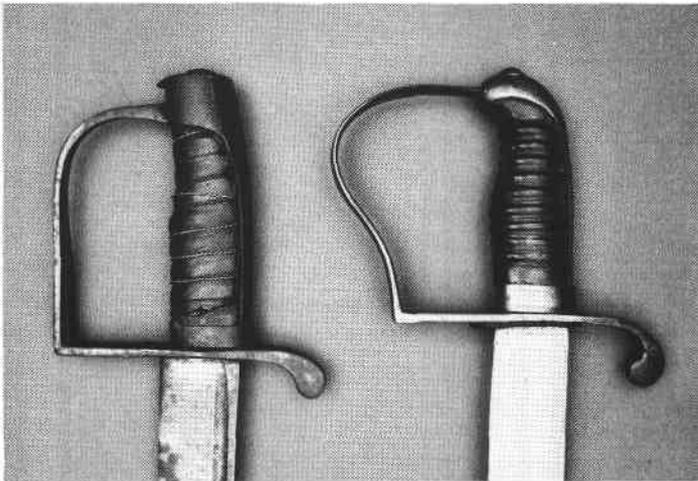
1812-1814 (top to bottom), Maryland contract (Henry Deringer, J. Joseph Henry, or agents), Unknown inspected by Wickham, Unknown unmarked



1833-1856 (top to bottom), Model 1833 Dragoon, Ames; Model 1840 Heavy Cavalry, S&K; Model 1840 Heavy Cavalry, Ames



1804-1814 (left to right), 1st Model Virginia Manufactory, 2nd Model Virginia Manufactory, 3rd Model Virginia Manufactory



1807-1812 (left to right), 1807 contract William Rose, 1812 contract William Rose & Sons



1812-1818 (left to right), 1812-13 contract N. Starr & Co., 1818 contract N. Starr & Co.

turning out the first completed arm in October that year and the first sword in 1804. Giles Cromwell in his fine book *The Virginia Manufactory of Arms* indicates that the sword was patterned after examples submitted by William Rose and a Mr. Goodman who were seeking sword contracts with Virginia. Rose was a well known sword maker but Goodman cannot be identified. It is probable that he was an agent acting for a manufacturer.

The first model Virginia Manufactory saber has an unusually long and curved 40 inch blade. The blade has two narrow fullers and is marked on the back "I VA REGT" indicating that it was issued to a milita cavalryman in the first of four geographical and numbered divisions covering the entire state. It should be noted that not all Virginia Manufactory sabers have these regimental markings. The grip is wood, spiral carved, leather covered, and wound with twisted brass wire. The saber is iron mounted with a flat pommel topped with a large square nut which screws into a blade tang holding the various grip parts and the blade together. The D guard is cut from sheet iron and is pierced with a series of seven elongated slots all on one side of the of the hilt. The scabbard is polished iron with an elongated stud. Virginia thus adopted the iron saber scabbard seven or eight years before the Federal government. A rare first model variation had a straighter blade and leather scabbard.

Production on a second model commenced in 1806. The primary difference between this saber and the first model was the rounded bird's head pommel. Due to complaints about the long curved blade, a third model was developed with production beginning in 1808. The hilt is similar to the second model but the blade is only slightly curved and reduced from 40 inches to 36 inches. The iron scabbard on this model was japanned black. As first and second models were returned to the armory, the polished iron scabbards were japanned. Approximately 8,200 cavalry sabers were produced between 1804 and 1814. An additional 60 were made in 1821 before the Manufactory closed.

By 1808 war with Great Britain was threatening and Congress authorized an increase in the army strength to include a regiment of dragoons. At the same time, to assist the states, an annual appropriation was authorized for the purchase of arms and equipment to be distributed among the states for militia use.

On December 9, 1807, the government contracted with William Rose of Blockleg Township in Philadelphia for 2,000 cavalry sabers. William Rose and his sons were important sword makers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Unfortunately no records have surfaced concerning the family or firm of William Rose and Sons. What little is known comes primarily from their government contracts for swords and observed examples of non-contract swords. The 1807 contract saber is similar in design to the 1798 Starr but lighter overall. The 34½ inch single fuller blade is marked on the back "W ROSE &

SONS." The scabbards for some of the earlier production sabers were leather, iron bound on the top and bottom edges, with carrying rings on the throat and middle band. This type scabbard was apparently not satisfactory as it was rapidly replaced by a leather scabbard. The carrying rings indicate the use of a waist belt by the dragoon, in place of a shoulder sling for the saber.

Both Nathan Starr and William Rose made militia sabers in the early 1800's. No information is available as to the numbers produced or the organizations or states purchasing these sabers. At this time the hilt design changed from the flat pommel used since the Revolution to a rounded bird's head pommel with a reverse P guard replacing the stirrup guard. A typical Joseph Rose stirrup guard retained the flat pommel, while a typical N. Starr militia saber had a bird's head pommel and reverse P guard. This change was previously observed in the 2nd model Virginia Manufactory sabers made in 1806.

War with Great Britain was declared in June, 1812. Initially two dragoon regiments were authorized; this was reduced to one regiment in 1814. If these regiments were raised, there is no evidence of their use in the war. The primary action of mounted troops took place at the Battle of the Thames in October, 1813, when the Kentucky Mounted Volunteers, a rifle regiment, broke the British line. In March, 1814, General Jackson used a force of 900 mounted Tennessee militia against the Creek Indians in Alabama.

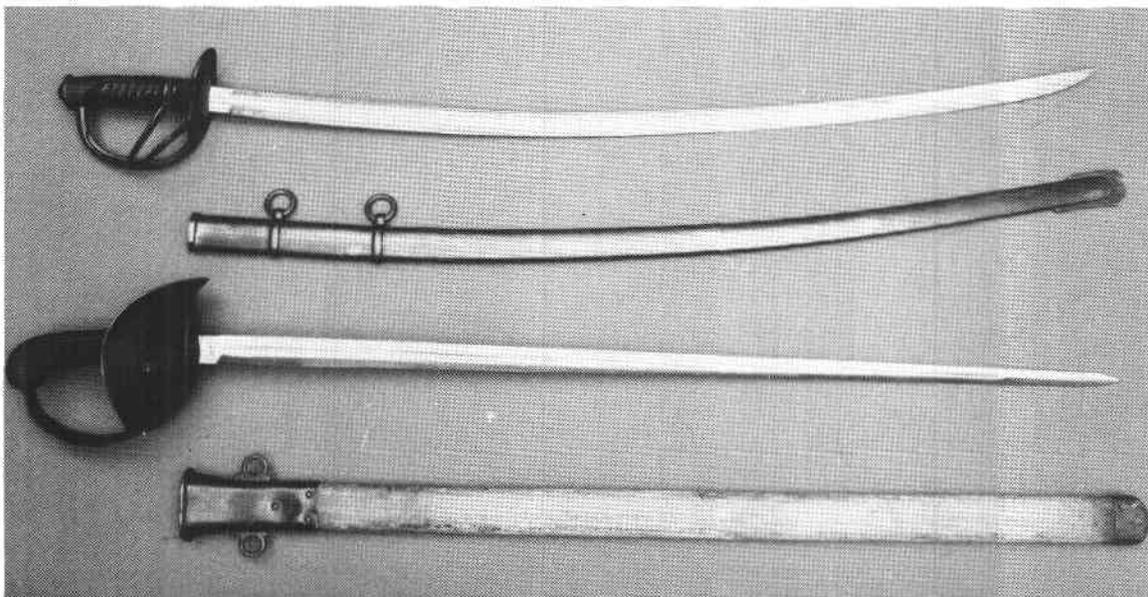
To provide sabers for the mounted regulars and militia, the government in 1812 contracted with William Rose for 500 horsemen's sabers and with Nathan Starr for 5,000. William Rose made the pattern saber for these contracts. The Rose saber was the last to be furnished to the government by that firm. It has a 34 inch flat blade marked on the back "W. ROSE," and on the face "V" over

"M.T.W." (indicating inspection by Marine T. Wickham). The grip is wood, ribbed, and leather covered. The iron hilt has a backstrap, bird's head pommel with a rounded nut secured to the blade tang, reverse P guard, flat counter guard and quillon terminating in a disc finial. The scabbard is iron with two carrying rings and is japanned black.

Joseph Rose apparently made sergeants' swords on government contract in 1813, but after that date the Roses disappeared from the scene, and for the next 20 years, as far as is known, Nathan Starr and his son Nathan Starr, Jr., were the sole suppliers of swords to the government.

After the first thousand 1812 contract Starr sabers were delivered with leather scabbards, the contract was revised specifying iron scabbards and minor design changes in the saber. In January, 1813, the number of sabers contracted for was increased to 10,000. The Starr saber is very similar to the Rose, with an iron hilt, bird's head pommel, and japanned iron scabbard. The 33¾ inch flat blade on a specimen produced after the design change, is marked in three lines "P/HHP/N STARR." The inspector in this instance was Henry H. Perkin. The first 1,000 sabers were inspected by Charles Williams and are otherwise identified by the comparatively narrow space between the reverse P knuckle bow and the hilt. Another unusual variation noted in these 1812-1813 Starr sabers is the angle of the blade to the hilt, which was probably due more to the individual workmen making the sabers than to any deliberate design change.

At the October, 1980, Society meeting, Jim Wertenberger spoke on the procurement of arms, including swords, by the State of Maryland from Henry Deringer and J. Joseph Henry. These swords were similar to the 1812 Rose and Starr sabers and are marked on the back of the blade with an "M." It is my belief that these cavalry sabers,



1906-1918 (top to bottom), Model 1906 Light Cavalry, Ames Sword Co.; Model 1913 contract, L. F. & C.

numbering approximately 1,350, which were delivered between 1812 and 1814, were probably manufactured by one of the sword makers in the Philadelphia area on a subcontract from Henry and Deringer. A number of unmarked sabers similar to the 1812 Rose, Starr, and Maryland sabers are known. Some of these bear inspector's marks such as a "V" over "W" which indicate government purchase. To date these sabers cannot be identified.

The Secretary of War, in complying with a March, 1815, Act of Congress, reorganized the army and eliminated the regiment of light dragoons. It would be 18 years before Indian troubles forced Congress in March, 1833, to authorize a regiment of dragoons for frontier defense, replacing a battalion of mounted rangers authorized in 1832. The country was not without a cavalry during the 1815-1832 period: the militia return for 1821, with four states not reporting, included 26,731 cavalry; Virginia alone reported 7,603 cavalry officers and men.

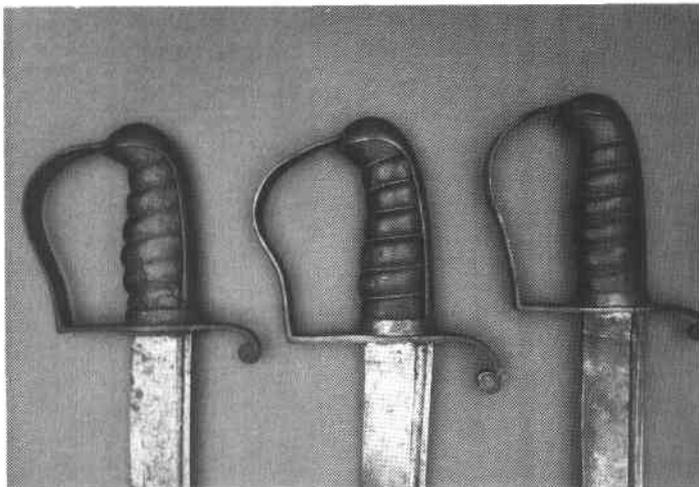
To continue to equip the militia cavalry, the government in December, 1818, contracted with Nathan Starr for 10,000 sabers which were delivered between 1820 and 1822. These sabers are similar to the 1812-13 contract but were lighter overall. A typical 1818 contract saber has a 32 inch single fuller blade marked on the face in four lines "US/P/LS/N. STARR." Other than Luther Sage, inspectors were Joseph Weatherhead and John Newbury. The grip is wood, ribbed, and leather covered. The iron hilt has a bird's head pommel and a rounded nut secured to the blade tang. The reverse P knuckle bow is marked "1821." The quillon terminates in a disc finial. Not all of the sabers delivered on this contract are dated on the knuckle bow. The scabbard is iron, japanned black, with two carrying rings.

Nathan Starr manufactured a Navy cutlass for the government in 1826, but prior to that date had decided to manufacture firearms, beginning with a contract in 1823

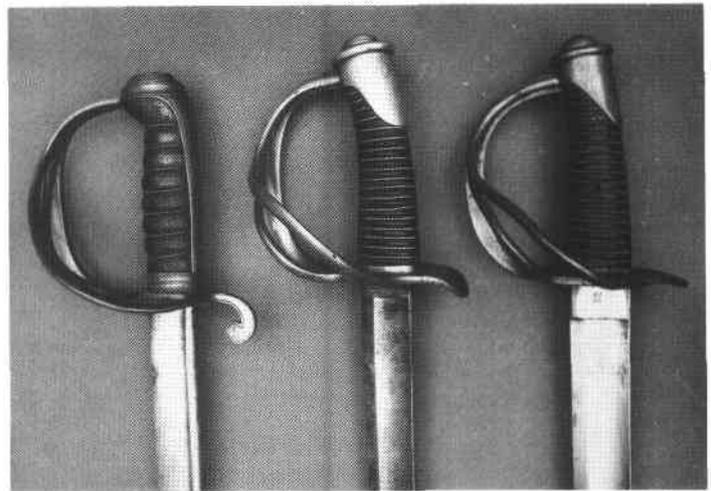
for 4,000 model 1817 common rifles.

With Starr thereafter engaged in firearms manufacture, Nathan Ames was able to become the primary sword contractor to the government until the Civil War required numbers of swords beyond the capabilities of any one manufacturer. Ames received his first government contract in 1832 for foot artillery swords. In February, 1834, he received a contract for sabers to equip the regiment of dragoons. The saber was developed by the Ordinance Department and closely followed the model 1822 British light cavalry saber. A typical example has a slightly curved 33¾ inch quill back (rounded) blade. It is etched on one face "United States" in script over a floral spray. Near the hilt it is etched in four lines "N.P. Ames/Cutler/Springfield/1835" and is stamped "J M," the inspector — probably Justin Murphy. The wood grip is ribbed, leather covered, and wound with an unusual twisted brass wire. The metal parts of the hilt are brass with a half-basket guard with two branches. The distinctive bird's head pommel has a recessed nut securing the blade tang and is ornamented with concentric rings. The top of the quillon on a typical example is stamped in two lines "ORD/HKC." Henry Knox Crag, an Ordinance Major, was the inspector. The steel scabbard with two carrying rings is browned and has a large drag stamped "HKC/ORD" and "JM."

In 1836 another mounted regiment, the Second Dragoons, was authorized by Congress for use in Florida against the Seminole Indians. The 1833 dragoon saber was not entirely satisfactory and an Ordinance Department Board of Officers recommended a pattern based on the 1822 French light cavalry saber. The initial contract for this saber, in addition to other new models adopted in 1840, was with the firm of Snitzer and Kirschbaum of Solingen, Prussia. Two thousand sabers were delivered in 1841 and an additional thousand in 1848. An example of this saber, referred to as the model 1840 heavy cavalry saber, has a



1812-1814 (left to right), Mary contract (Henry Deringer, J. Joseph Henry, or agents), Unknown inspected by Wickham, Unknown unmarked

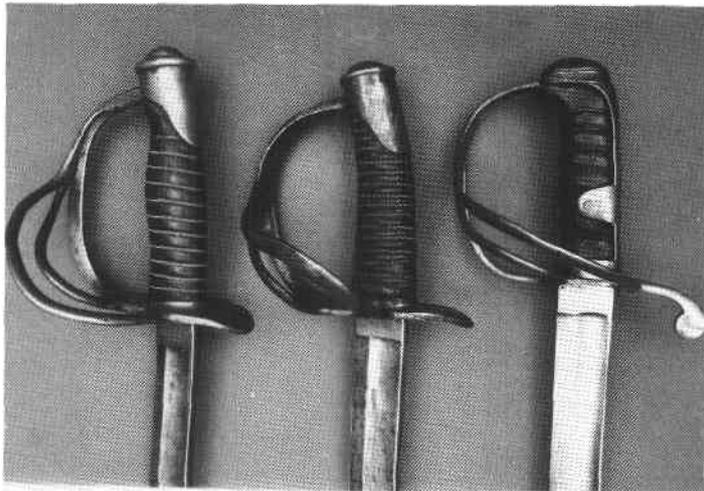


1833-1856 (left to right), Model 1833 Dragoon, Ames; Model 1840 Heavy Cavalry, S & K; Model 1840 Heavy Cavalry, Ames

35¾ inch curved blade with two fullers and is marked on the ricasso "S & K." There are no US inspector's marks as the inspection was performed at the direction of the U.S. Minister in Berlin. Both the saber and scabbard bear Prussian inspector's marks. The grip is wood, covered with leather and wound with twisted brass wire. The metal parts of the hilt are brass with a halfbasket guard which has two branches joining an oval counter guard. The scabbard is iron with two suspension rings and is stamped "S&K" on the drag in addition to Prussian inspector's stamps.

Apparently the government contracted with Snitzer and Kirschbaum as a means of applying pressure to Ames and other domestic suppliers of military goods. It was 1845 before Nathan Ames delivered the first Model 1840 sabers. The description of this saber is the same as for the S & K saber. The blade on an early specimen is marked on the ricasso in three lines "N. P. AMES/CABOTVILLE/1845" and the other side "US/JHL." The pommel is marked "WAT" and "NWP." The inspectors for this saber were James Harris (?), William A. Thornton and Nahum W. Patch.

The breech loading carbine and the revolving pistol developed during the 1830s and 1840s replaced the saber as a primary cavalry weapon, although it would continue as an official cavalry arm for another 100 years. From 1842 to 1845 the two dragoon regiments experienced a period of relative quiet. However, during the Mexican War the mounted troops were to see extensive action. Congress authorized the raising of a regiment of mounted rifles in May, 1846. The unit distinguished itself, often fighting on foot. The 1849 rifleman's knife was developed for this regiment. A third regiment of dragoons was authorized for the period of the war only, and passed out of existence after the war. In addition to the regular mounted units, organizations such as the mounted Texas Rangers and the Missouri Mounted Volunteers were to play important roles in operations.



1857-1865 (left to right), Model 1860 Light Cavalry, Ames, Circa 1861; Heavy Cavalry, Tiffany, Circa 1861; Light Cavalry, Tiffany

The Mexican War had extended the frontier to the Pacific Coast, and with the increased Indian problems Congress increased the army in 1855, including two new mounted regiments designated as the 1st and 2nd Cavalry. The model 1840 heavy cavalry saber continued in use during this period. However, complaints about the 1840 saber arose, including one from Captain George B. McClellan who stated that the weight and balance were bad when compared to a French saber. These complaints led to the development of a lighter weight new pattern saber which is known as the model 1860. Actually the government first contracted for this new pattern saber with the Ames Manufacturing Company in 1856. The first thousand were delivered in August, 1857. Examples are known dated 1858 and 1859 but an 1857 date has not been observed. A typical 1859 dated specimen has a 35 inch blade with a single wide fuller. Overall the saber is lighter than the model 1840; the most easily recognizable difference is the shape of the grip which has a swell in the center reminiscent of some early 1800s sabers. The blade is marked on the ricasso "AMES MFG CO/CHICOPEE/MASS" and on the other side "US/ADK/1859." The inspector was A. D. King. The scabbard is iron with two carrying rings.

The light cavalry saber was the primary saber used during the Civil War for both the North and South. The pattern was copied by Southern manufacturers and many captured sabers were no doubt immediately returned to use. The cavalry of the Civil War is a study unto itself which I will touch upon. The Union entered the war with six regular cavalry regiments, one being authorized after the fall of Fort Sumter. These units were renumbered in August, 1861: the 1st and 2nd Dragoons became the 1st and 2nd Cavalry; the Mounted Riflemen became the 3rd Cavalry; and the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Cavalry were redesignated as the 4th, 5th and 6th Cavalry. During the war the U.S. raised 272 cavalry regiments. By the end of the



1906-1918 (left to right), Model 1906 Light Cavalry, Ames Sword Co.; Model 1913 contract L. F. & C.

war the total strength of the cavalry was approximately 80,000 officers and men.

From 1861 to 1865 the government procured from 33 contractors or agents approximately 392,700 cavalry sabers, mostly of the model 1860, many of which were imported. The Ames Manufacturing Company supplied 76,500 sabers including 5,000 imported sabers. Of the large number of sabers purchased for the cavalrymen, those supplied by Tiffany and Company are recognized as unusual variations.

Tiffany supplied over 11,000 sabers from 1861 through 1863. Of this number approximately 5,800 were of the model 1840 with an iron hilt instead of the usual brass. A typical example is marked "TIFFANY & CO/NEW YORK" on the ricasso. Tiffany also furnished 1,000 sabers with a hilt similar to the 1833 dragoon saber except it was of iron with a reinforcing tab extending from the backstrap over both sides of the grip with a rivet connecting the two tabs. A common blade mark on Tiffany sabers is "PDL" for P. D. Luneschloss, a Solingen maker.

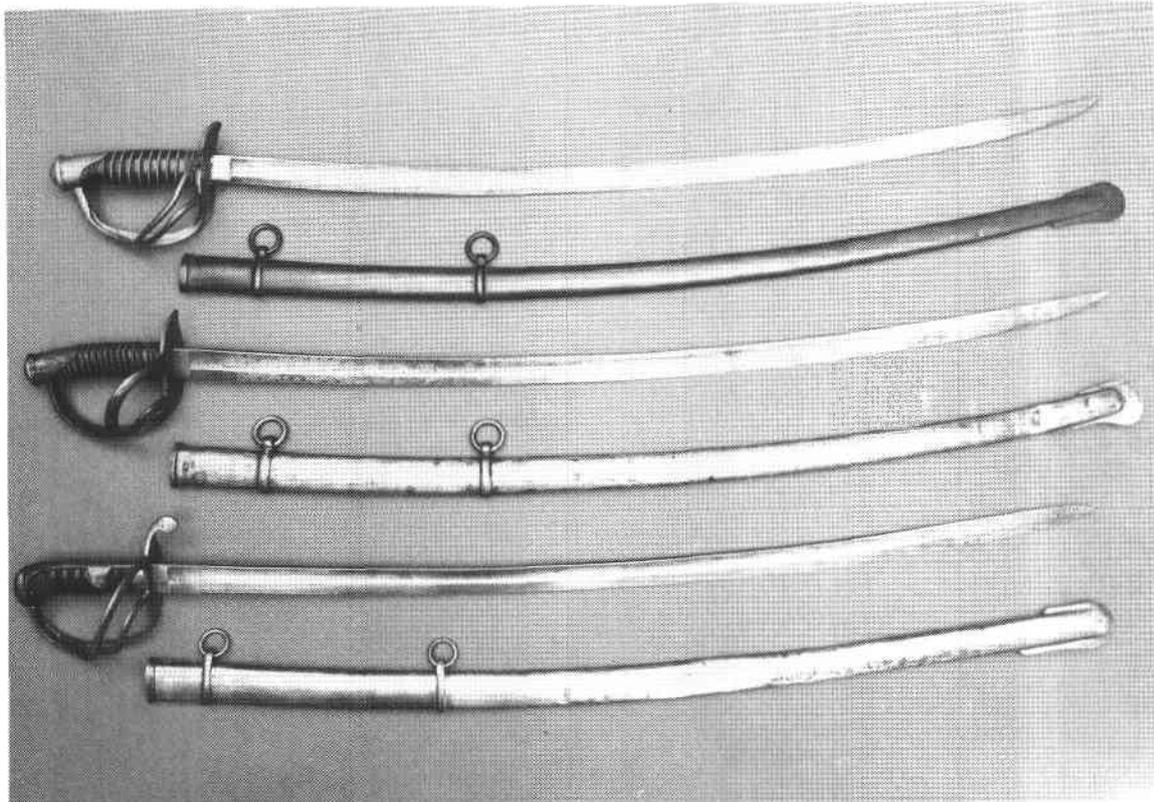
At the end of the Civil War the western frontier was in an unsettled state with Indian troubles from the Mexican to the Canadian borders. In July, 1866, Congress authorized four additional regular cavalry regiments; the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th. While the cavalry had an important role in the Indian campaigns from 1866 through 1886, the saber as a weapon had declined and in many instances was not carried when action was anticipated. However, it continued to be an item of issue to the cavalryman, and the light cavalry sabers procured during the Civil War were more than adequate to supply the army's needs. In the late 1880s and early 1890s many were sold as surplus.

The cavalry in the form of the Rough Riders received considerable publicity during the 1898 Spanish-American War. A cavalry division was formed under an old Confederate cavalryman, Major General Joseph Wheeler. It consisted of 5 regiments of regular cavalry and the 1st Regiment of U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, the Rough Riders. Most of the fighting was on foot, including the charge up San Juan Hill. The cavalry was engaged in action in the Philippines from 1899 to 1901, and two squadrons of the 6th Cavalry were in China during the Boxer Rebellion.

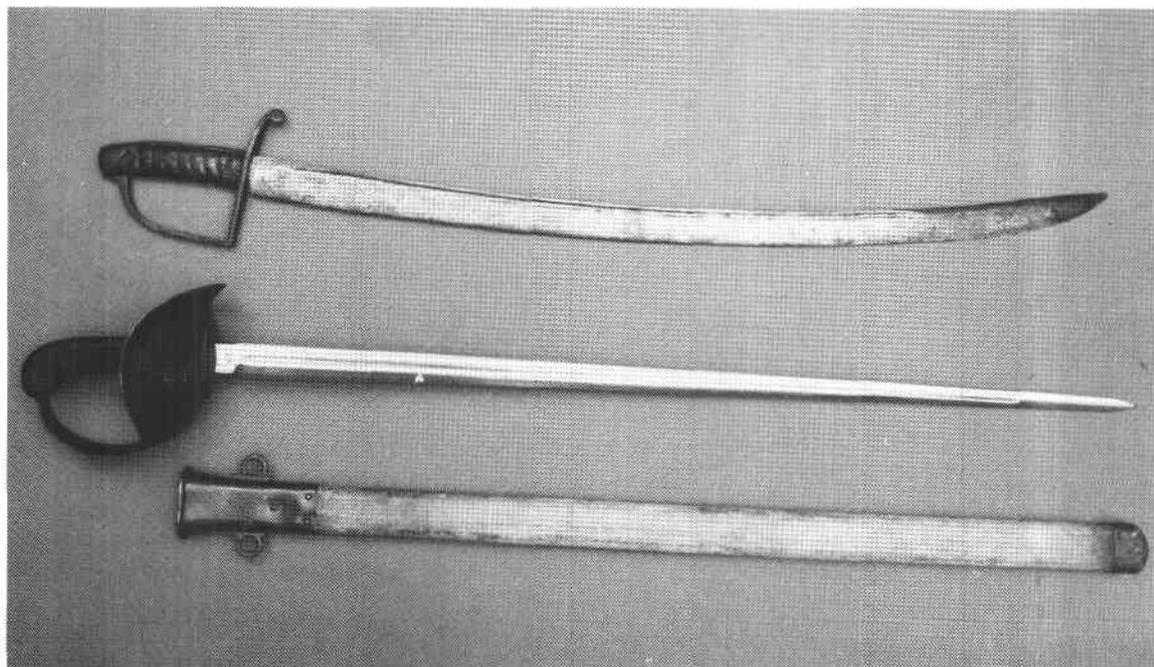
With the additional responsibilities in the Spanish possessions, Congress in 1901 authorized five additional cavalry regiments, the 11th through 15th. The Civil War stock of sabers was finally being depleted, and in 1904 the

army contracted with the Ames Sword Company for 20,000 light cavalry sabers. Part of this contract was reserved for experimental sabers and eventually 18,960 light cavalry sabers were delivered. These sabers, referred to as the Model 1906 were very close copies of the Model 1860. The major differences were the iron hilt and the carrying rings on the steel scabbard, which were four inches apart compared to eight inches on the Civil War saber. The blade is marked on the ricasso "A.S.CO/1906" with an ordinance bomb and on the other side "US/J.H.C."

The army continued to experiment with the cavalry saber and in 1913 produced a new model which George S. Patton is reported to have designed. It is known as the Patton saber or the Model 1913. The Model 1913 has a 35 inch double edged straight tapered blade. The steel grip is cut in a diamond pattern and the guard is shaped from a single piece of steel molded into a full-basket shape. Both the grip and the guard are blackened. The scabbard is wood, covered with rawhide and then khaki webbing with a blackened tip and throat. Two fixed rings on the throat provided a means of attaching the saber to the saddle. Because of its weight it was not intended to be worn on the person. These swords were made at the Springfield Armory and by a contractor, Landers, Frary and Clark. Specimens are marked on the ricasso either "S.A." or "L.F.&C." and are dated. It is rather strange that at this time the army procured large numbers of swords; the intent must have been to equip both the regular regiments and the national guard and reserve cavalry units with the model 1913 sword. The Landers, Frary and Clark contract in March, 1918, was for 15,000 swords, while the Springfield Armory had supplied 35,291 between 1913 and 1918. In the early 1930s when the saber was in its final days, the army had some 60,000 on hand, of which over 22,000 were unserviceable. From 1924 to 1931 the army continued to experiment with the sword, bringing out an experimental model in 1931—an improvement of the Model 1913. On April 18, 1934, the army directed that the saber be discontinued as an item of issue to the cavalry and that the saber be completely discarded as a cavalry weapon. Mechanization of the cavalry had begun in the early 1930s; mounted cavalry made its last appearance in strength during the winter of 1940-41 at the Louisiana maneuvers. In March, 1942, the office of the Chief of Cavalry was abolished and the remaining mounted units dismounted.



1857-1865 (top to bottom), Model 1860 Light Cavalry, Ames, Circa 1861; Heavy Cavalry, Tiffany, Circa 1861; Light Cavalry, Tiffany



The First and the Last (top to bottom), 1798 contract, N. Starr & Co.; 1918 contract, L. F. & C.