

Photo 1
Flintlock Rifle, Botetourt County, Virginia, ca. 1760. Maker unknown. Relief-carved plain maple stock. Engraved brass mounts. Overall length, 55 $\frac{1}{4}$ "; barrel length, 41 $\frac{1}{4}$ "; caliber, .60; rifled with 8 grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by Delmore A. Wenzel.

Early Rifles of the Shenandoah Valley

Wallace B. Gusler

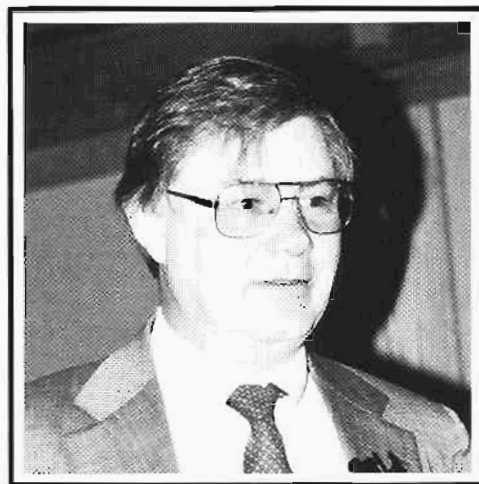
Rifled firearms appear in Virginia in the late 17th century; however, it is not until the 1730s and 1740s that significant numbers are recorded.¹ The court records of the counties on the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Shenandoah Valley reveal a steady increase in the use of rifles during the second quarter of the 18th century. Clearly, the rifle was an important component of the 18th-century Virginia frontier.

The western settlements were largely composed of Scots-Irish, with a small percentage of English and Germans. The Valley of Virginia's German population was small; however, it is clear that they introduced the use of rifles and riflemaking. The Scots-Irish majority was quick to use the rifle and they became the largest group of skilled riflemen in the world by the time of the American Revolution.

The American long rifle evolved by combining the slender lines and barrel length of the English fowling piece with the German rifle. In some areas the English "Brown Bess" infantry musket also influenced the evolution of the American rifle.

The earliest publications on the "Kentucky rifle" propose that the evolution of the German rifle to the American form occurred in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The earliest settlers arrived in 1710, presumably bringing a German rifle tradition, and by about 1750 the American rifle had evolved.² This theory appears simplistic and unrealistic in light of evidence now available. Surviving rifles and more thorough documentation on the riflemakers point to a series of evolutions in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Valley of Virginia. Eighteenth-century documentation makes a strong case in piedmont North Carolina, but early rifles have yet to be identified. The survival of very strong 19th-century Carolina production indicates an early evolution of the trade existed.³

At least five schools of production that had evolved distinct style rifles by the American Revolution can be isolated in Pennsylvania. Lancaster was the largest in numbers of riflemakers, and most influential in dissemination of style.⁴ Eight schools in the Shenandoah Valley are the focus of this work. Documentation indicates that the largest and most influential was the town of Winchester, at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley, while more early rifles survive in the lower Shenandoah Counties of Rockbridge and Botetourt.



Both Pennsylvania and Virginia schools are identified as having separate European riflemaking traditions transplanted to America. As an example, the contrasts between the step-toe group (Photo 2) and the side-plate finial group (Photo 1) of Botetourt County, Virginia, strongly indicates separate origins of the two riflemaking traditions. In fact, other than being American long rifles, they have almost nothing in common. Their stocks are shaped differently, their brass hardware shows a different approach to form and detail, and the relief carving of the two rifles is divergent in design and methods of execution. The side-plate finial rifle shows extensive engraving coverage on most brass mounts, while the step-toe rifle has only an engraved single line border on the patch box lid and finial. The differences in these two craft traditions have their roots in provincial European developments; one German (step-toe) and the other more Dutch (Netherlandish) in background (side-plate finial).

This discussion and analysis of style can be applied to the many other regional variations of rifles made in Germanic settlements in the back country. In evaluating each school, the earliest surviving example (or several examples) is studied for traits that established the bench mark or "mother" school for comparison. The schools tended to transform over time, sometimes becoming several new, more regionally defined schools, or blending and melding into new schools. This process is the natural outcome of isolated gunsmiths working in small early settlements training apprentices and journeymen who move to new markets and establish new areas of production.

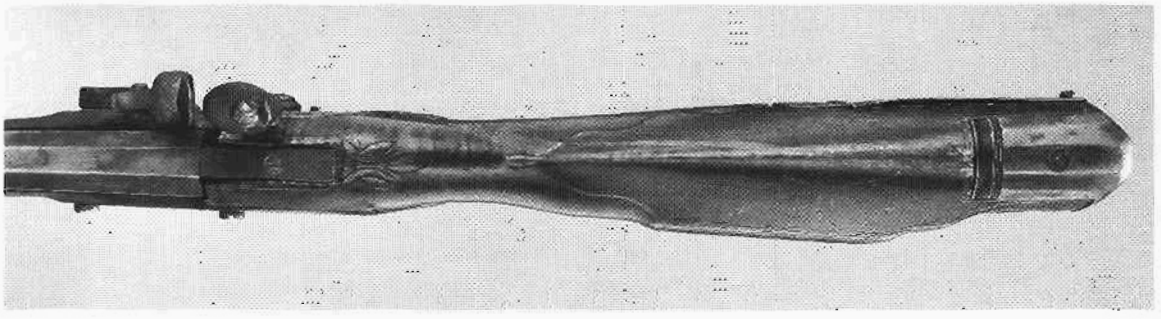
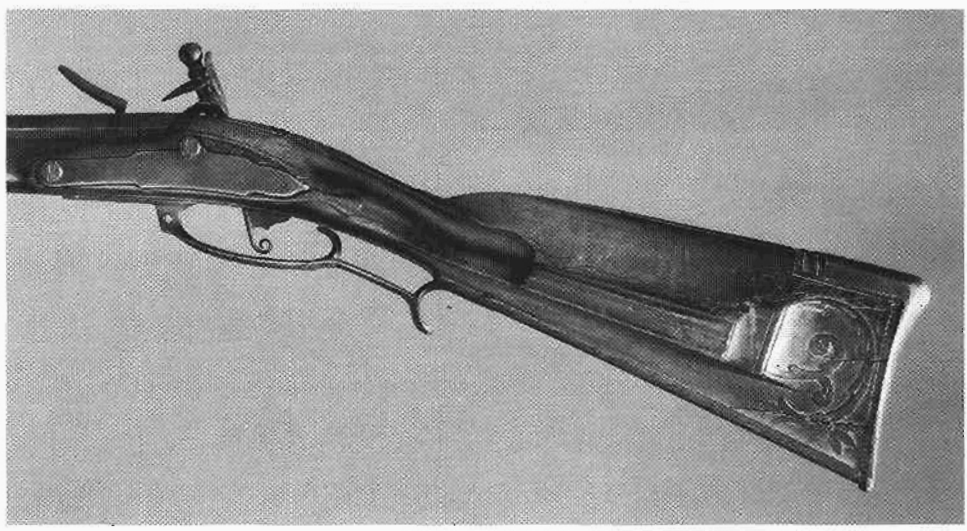
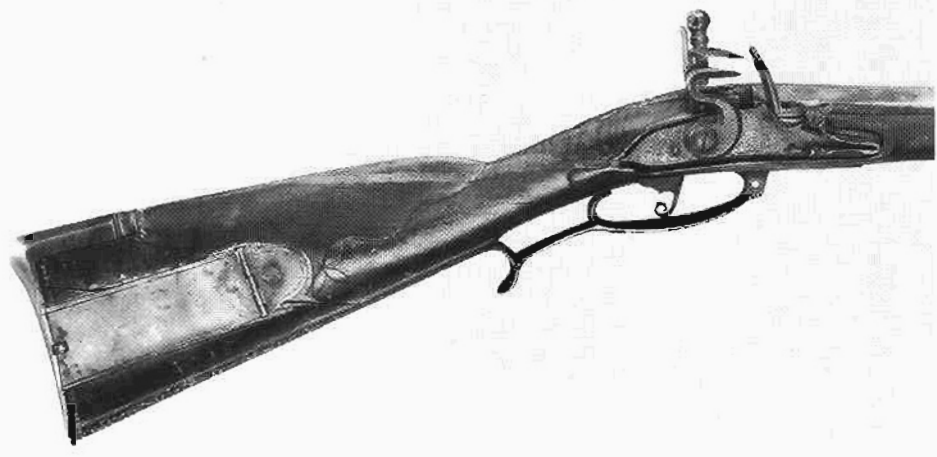


Photo 2
Flintlock Rifle. Botetourt County, Virginia. Dated 1771. Maker unknown. Relief carved curly maple stock, brass mountings. Overall length, 60 $\frac{3}{4}$ "; brass barrel length, 45 $\frac{5}{16}$ "; caliber, unknown; bored smooth in later period. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (on loan from Joe Kindig III Collection), Acc. No. I.1976-12. Photographs by Hans E. Lorenz.

Parallel development of riflemaking schools scattered over four hundred miles of back country makes it clear that the evolution of American rifles was not a continuum or a centralized event. The French and Indian War and the American Revolution appear to have played major roles in homogenizing the long rifle style and form. These events forced militia companies to serve with companies from areas outside the immediate vicinity, sometimes in or with companies from other colonies or states. These melting pot experiences brought together riflemen and some gunsmiths, producing communication regarding functional aspects as well as the style of rifles. The role of the patron is an important force in all artistry, and this is especially true in long rifles. Therefore, the users of the rifle must be included in any serious consideration of the rifle's development.

While only one rifle represents the French and Indian War period with certainty, several dated examples from the early 1770s and some documentation provides insight into the rifle's evolution during this period.⁵ The long barrel (10" to 15" longer than the average German rifle) had become popular. One estate inventory in Augusta County, Virginia, of 1753 records "*One long rifle gun*" and the same inventory lists "*One short rifle gun*."⁶ A similar estate entry from the late 1760s is found in the Frederick County, Virginia, Will Books.⁷ The earliest reliably dated (1761) long rifle is by John Schrite of Reading, Pennsylvania, with a 43 $\frac{3}{16}$ " long barrel. The second earliest dated American rifle is the brass barrel rifle (Photo 2) from Botetourt County, Virginia, (step-toe school), that has a 45" barrel. These two rifles and others, dated just prior to the beginning of the Revolution, establish the development of a rifle of a length comparable with fowling pieces and muskets of the time. The Augusta and Frederick County, Virginia, estate inventories point to the change occurring in the decades of the 1750s and 60s and that this change was commonly recognized. Court-appointed inventory and appraisers of estates were extremely curt in their descriptions, and that they felt a need to differentiate the two types is significant. The brass barrel rifle of 1771 (Photo 2) provides the earliest example of the hinged metal box replacing the more common sliding wood box used on German examples. While the American credit for the invention of the hinged metal box may be questioned, it became a standard characteristic of the American rifle, as did the curly maple stock and long barrel. This patch box is extremely simple and its date seems to indicate that the hinged box was evolving later than the long barrel. Following this example, numerous rifles and documents show that the hinged box was becoming the standard of the 1770s.

A comparison of Revolutionary War period rifles with

the examples from the 1780s and 90s illustrates clearly that after the war the American long rifle was a more homogeneous style, regardless of where it was made. Schools continued to exist, but the overall pattern of the rifle was more consistent. This Federal period emergence of the American-style rifle is at odds with the commonly-held theory of development by 1750.

Perhaps a more realistic approach is to look at the long rifle development in three major stages.

1. Settlement Period 1725-1750.

Introduction of rifles and European-trained gunsmiths. Insufficient data on this period makes statements regarding rifle evolution impractical. Rifles are introduced, but no examples are known from this period.

2. Frontier Conflict Period ca. 1750-1783.

Rifles with longer barrels are developed, use of curly maple for stocks is established, and at the end of this period hinged brass boxes of various types develop. While great variations occur and patch boxes with hinges are clearly undergoing experimentation, most rifles of this time are recognizable as an "American long rifle."

3. Federal Period 1783-1830.

Emergence of a consistent style American rifle with long barrel, hinged patch box (usually in four pieces), curly maple full stock carved and inlaid more extensively than previously. This Federal period rifle completes the long rifle evolution and gives way to shorter examples with half stocks by the mid-19th century.

The first rifle shown here (Photo 1) is stylistically the earliest example from the Valley of Virginia and comes from the headwaters of the James River in present-day Botetourt County, Virginia. The style of its side plate (Photo 1-B) and the many similar side plates that follow provide the name of the school, "Side-plate finial group." This rifle is remarkably intact. Stylistically, it is as old, if not older, than the Pennsylvania 1761 Schrite rifle discussed earlier. It probably dates to the French and Indian War; however, stylistic dating has its pitfalls. The mid-18th-century imported British lock supports the early dating, but this lock form continued in use into the Revolutionary War period.

A Dutch or Netherlandish origin of the form and style of this rifle is suggested in the stock profile and the finials of the trigger guard and butt plate. Other elements are stylized versions of those seen on English "Brown Bess" muskets. The "Brown Bess" is also strongly Dutch, making the track of this rifle's design background difficult to read. However, the



Photo 3
Flintlock Rifle. Botetourt County, Virginia, ca. 1795. Maker unknown. Relief and incised carved curly maple stock, iron mountings. Overall length, 63 $\frac{1}{4}$ " ; barrel length, 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ " ; caliber, .38; 7 grooves. Collection of The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, Winston-Salem, NC. Photographs by Wallace Gusler.

German dialect signature provides strong evidence to the maker and/or owner's origin.⁸ This rifle is a "mother school" example that originated a progeny extending from Botetourt County into western and piedmont North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky, over a span of about 50 years.

A rifle that is highly important to this study and the study of long rifle in America is the next example (Photo 2). It has the earliest dateable hinged metal box and, remarkably, has a brass barrel. While brass barrels are documented in this period, this example is the only known survivor of colonial America. The back country production of this barrel (it is in the American style and appears to have been made by this gunsmith) is a monument to the technical power of this early riflemaker. The production of such a barrel called for a core casting of 45 inches in length and of very slight dimension in relation to its length. Even with foundry improvements and innovative new materials, this task intimidates modern foundrymen.

The stock architecture of this brass barrel rifle provides the name for the large school that developed from its maker. The stock has a distinct step in its toe profile at the juncture of the rear extension of the trigger guard—thus the "step-toe" designation of the group.

The maker of the brass barrel rifle utilized an imported Germanic style lock in stocking the rifle. The heavy bulbous or inflated shaping of the stock with its long massive cheek piece shows strong German influence, if not direct training. The stock carving is of naive design featuring baroque scrolls, leaves, and chip cuts. The serpentine vine-like carving that edges the cheek piece and lower butt molding appears to be characteristic of this maker.⁹ Like the preceding example, this rifle and school extended its influence into three southern states. Botetourt County had several important crossroads and passes through the mountains, all of which played important roles in frontier migration and settlement. The riflemaking business was strong on these frontier "arteries" and the distribution of riflemaking style and technology follows more or less the migration patterns. Important frontier leaders such as Gaspar Manskar of Tennessee, William Whitley of Kentucky, and William Christian of Kentucky all owned rifles made in Botetourt County. Christian ordered his gun and a pair of pistols from "Simpson" at Botetourt Court before leaving Virginia for "Bear Grass" (now Louisville, Kentucky) in 1784.¹⁰

Dating in the 1790s, the fine rifle (Photo 3) is mounted in iron and has low relief mixed with incised carving. Its strong step-toe stock places it firmly in this group and has history into the 20th century in the upper James area, the area where it was made. The imported English lock provides

the date to a rifle that otherwise appears earlier. Iron mounted rifles appear in the two schools of Botetourt and Rockbridge counties and spread throughout the southern highlands from these areas.

The Rockbridge County rifle illustrated in Photo 4 shows a remarkably different artistic style background from the foregoing Botetourt production. Like the preceding examples, this rifle is the earliest of a large school that distributed influence into the southwestern Virginia area. The complex carving and a strongly triangular butt stock profile ties this school to the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, production. In fact, the two rifles by this hand (Photos 3 & 4) are closer to the European origin in design elements and overall style than any of the known Lancaster examples. Perhaps this maker was a first generation German gunsmith who played a primary role in establishing the Lancaster school by working there, training apprentices, and then moving to the Shenandoah Valley. Numerous design details of the rifles support this thesis. This rifle (Photo 4) and another by the same hand (Photo 5) retain several features that are very German in character and several of these are not repeated on another American rifle. A strong detail, such as the carving forward of the lock that continues to the muzzle end of the stock, is only found in its fullest detail on the Rockbridge County rifles. However, vestiges of this design are found on several Lancaster examples. Several other details show the same relationship, strongly indicating that the Lancaster-style rifle originated in this complex carved and molded stocking tradition.

This rifle, and a related group of rifles, are the most heavily carved American examples from this period. The complexity of the carving, combining baroque and Germanic rococo design, produces a strong decorative quality. This carving is strong evidence that the originator of this art was trained as a gunstocker in Europe—not as a gunsmith. To produce such carving this master used no less than nine carving gouges, five veiners, three flat carving chisels, and three scratch stocks for cutting moldings.¹¹ Compared with the carving tools (3 or 4) of the makers of the two Botetourt rifles discussed above, this is a sophisticated approach, one that we might expect from a European-trained gunstocker with an extensive tool kit. The carving of the butt stock relates to provincial Austrian work, while the design forward of the lock and fore end molding is Netherlandish in origin. A German-trained gunstocker who had worked in the arms industry of Liege or Maastricht could be responsible for such work.

The brass box of this Rockbridge rifle (Photo 4) shows none of the wonderful understanding of design seen in the

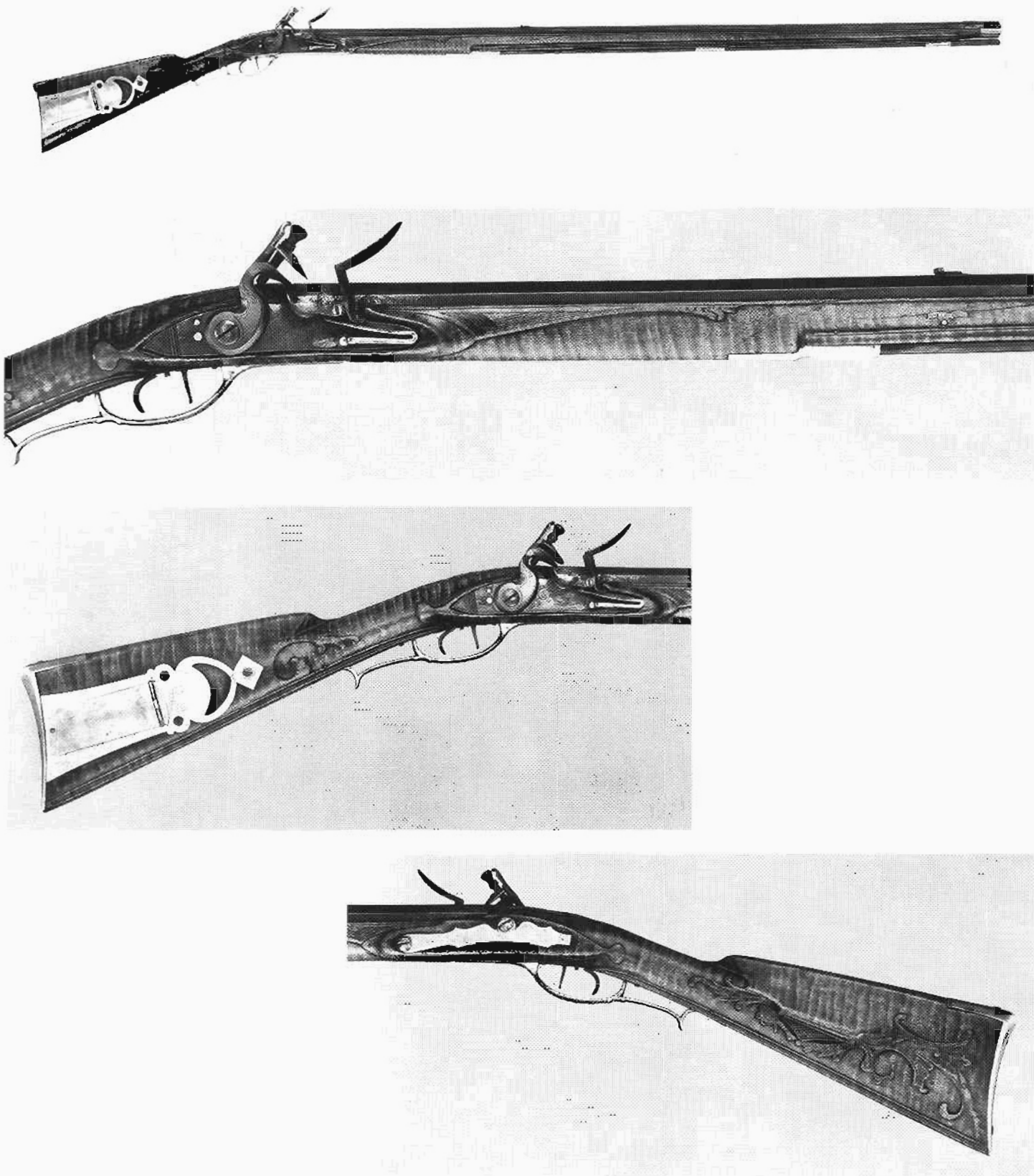


Photo 4
Flintlock Rifle. Rockbridge County, Virginia, ca. 1775. Maker unknown. Relief carved curly maple stock, brass mountings. Overall length, 59 $\frac{3}{4}$ " ; barrel length, 43 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The original caliber was approximately .50. It was bored out later to be used as a fowling piece; however, remains of 7 groove rifling survives. Private Collection. Photographs by Hans E. Lorenz.

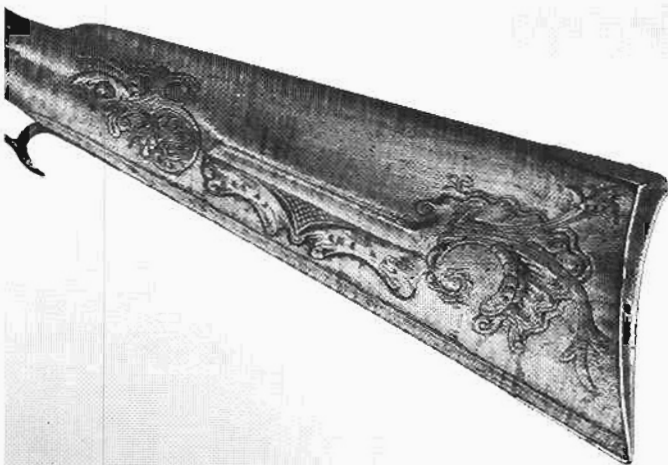
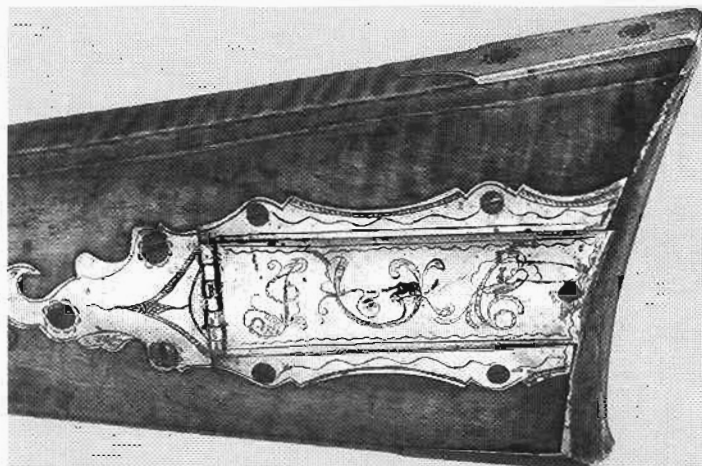
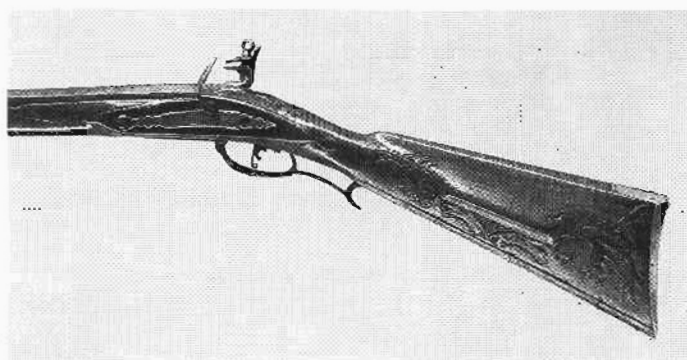
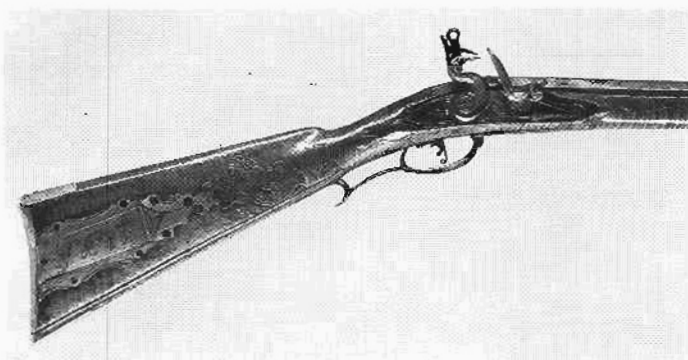
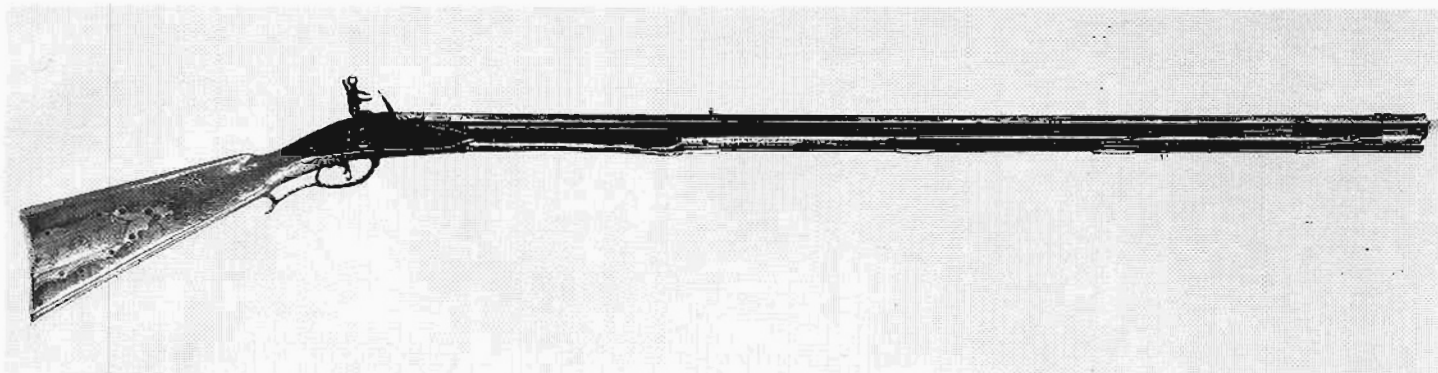


Photo 5
Flintlock Rifle. Rockbridge County, Virginia, ca. 1785. Maker unknown. Relief carved curly maple stock, brass mountings. Overall length, 59 $\frac{1}{4}$ "; barrel length, 43 $\frac{1}{2}$ "; .48 caliber; rifled with 7 grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by Hans E. Lorenz.

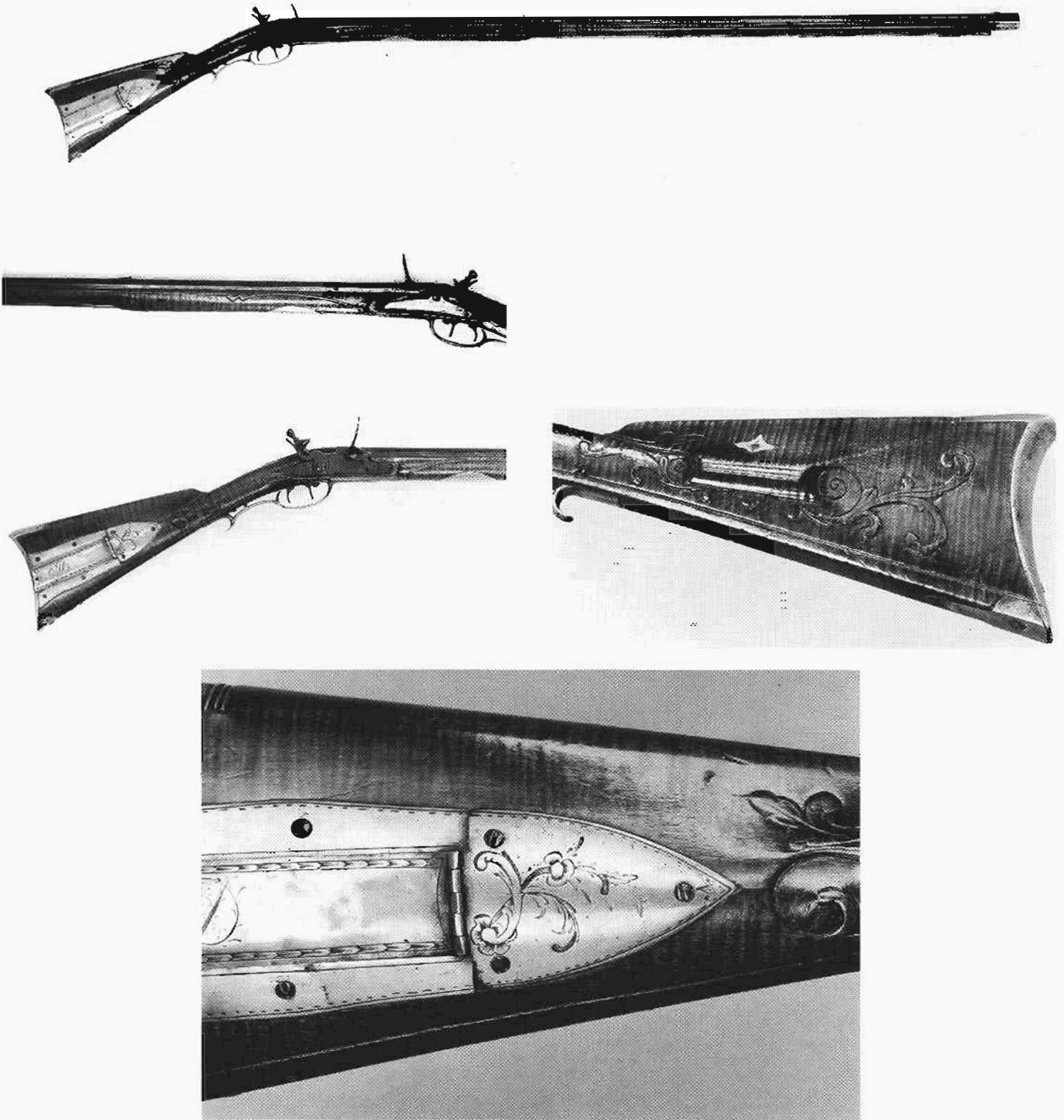


Photo 6
Flintlock Rifle. Rockbridge County, Virginia, ca. 1790. Signed "J. Davidson" (1757-1834). Relief carved silver inlay curly maple stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 61"; barrel length, 45"; caliber, .46; rifled with 7 grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by Delmore A. Wenzel and closeup of patch box by Wallace B. Gusler.

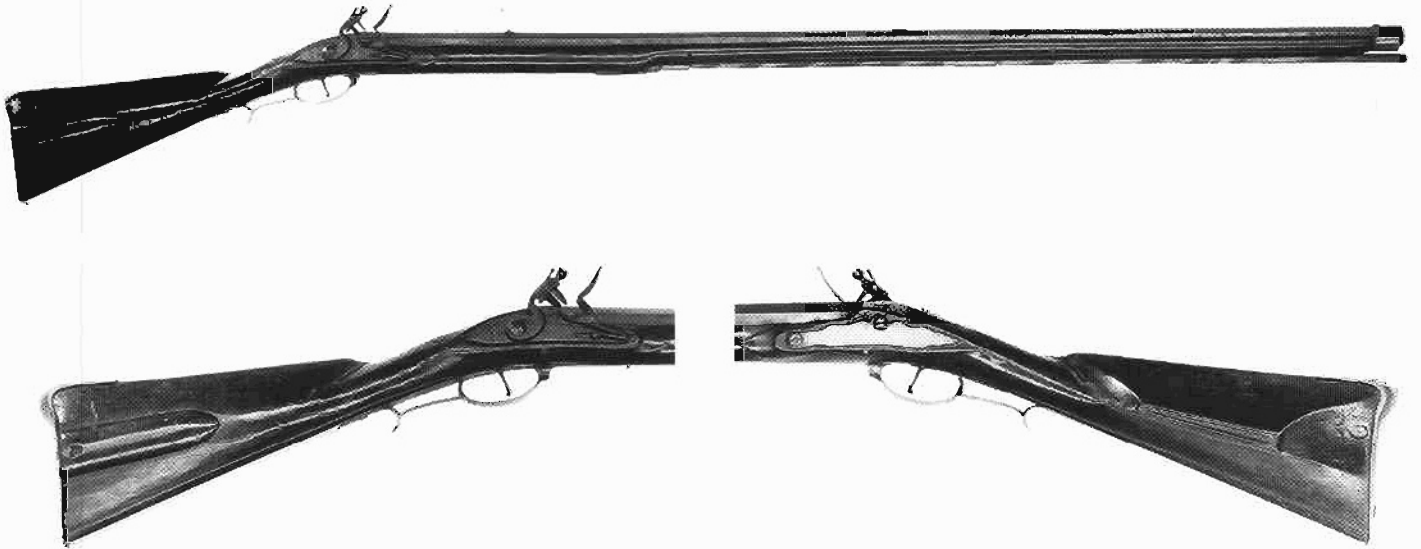


Photo 7
 Flintlock Rifle. Attributed to Augusta County, Virginia. Maker unknown. Relief and incised carved cherry stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 63 $\frac{7}{8}$ " ; octagon barrel length, 47 $\frac{3}{8}$ " ; smooth bore .65 caliber. On loan to Colonial Williamsburg Collection from Joe Kindig (L1972-402). Photographs by Hans E. Lorenz.

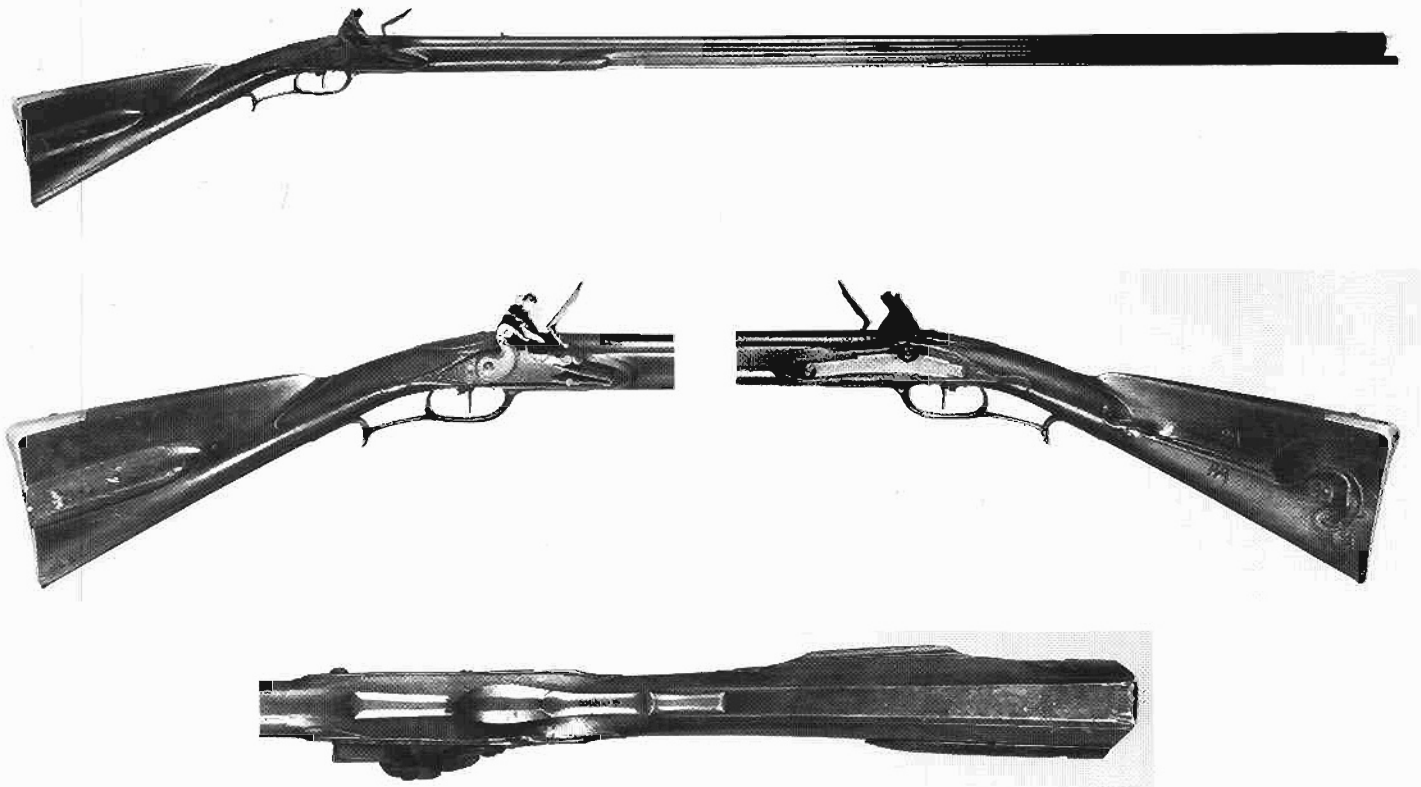


Photo 8
 Flintlock Rifle. Attributed to Augusta County, Virginia, 1775. Maker unknown. Relief carved cherry stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ " ; round smooth-bore barrel 46 $\frac{1}{8}$ " long; .51 caliber. Private Collection. Photographs by Craig MacDougall.



Photo 9
Flintlock Rifle. Attributed to Augusta County, Virginia, ca. 1795. Maker unknown. Relief carved curly maple stock, brass mounted. Dimensions unavailable. Private Collection. Photographs by Wallace B. Gusler.

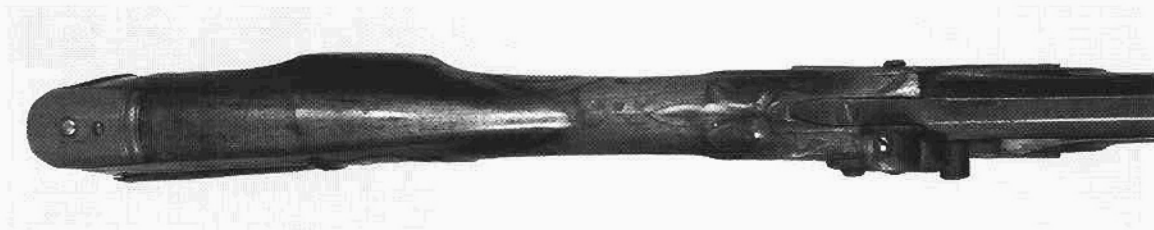
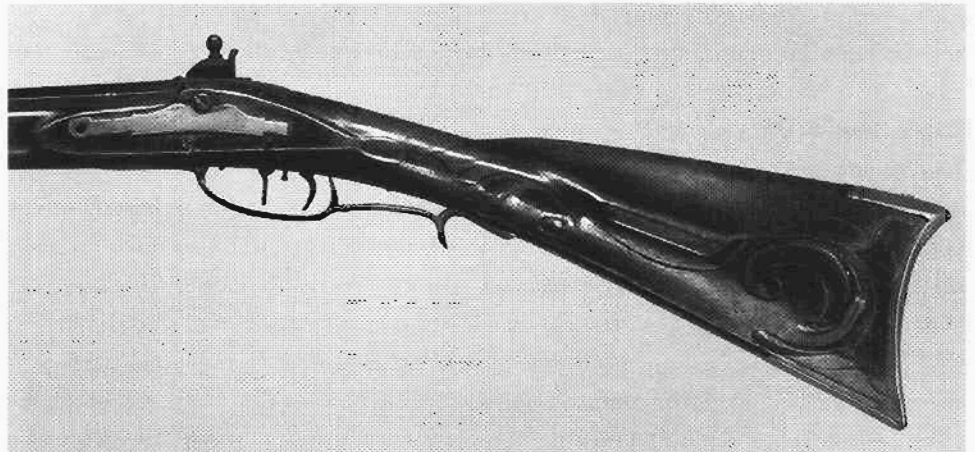
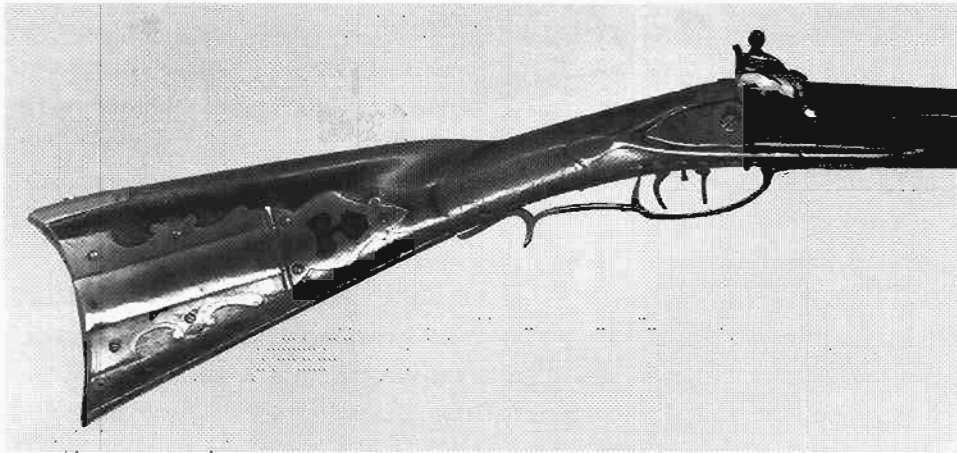


Photo 10
Flintlock Rifle converted to percussion. Attributed to George Sites, Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Virginia. Relief carved curly maple stock, brass mountings. Overall length, 60"; full octagon barrel, 44" (originally 46"); .50 caliber rifled with 7 grooves. Private Collection.
Photographs by Craig MacDougall.

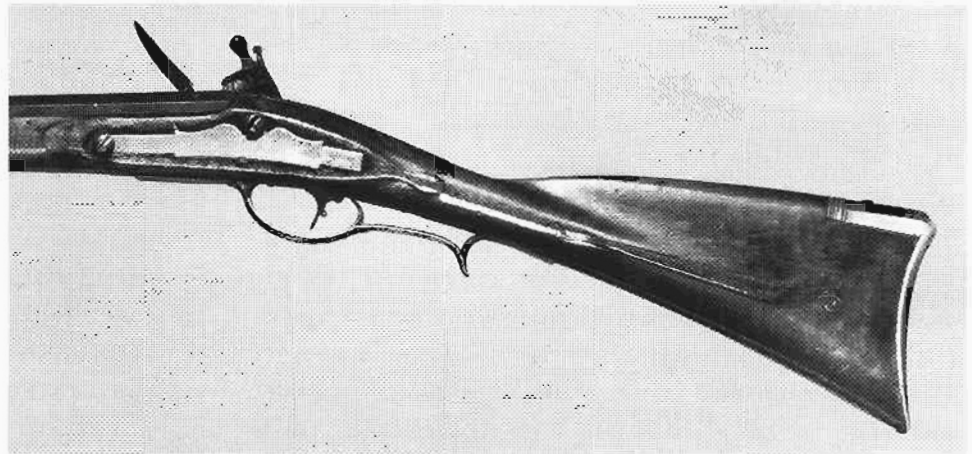
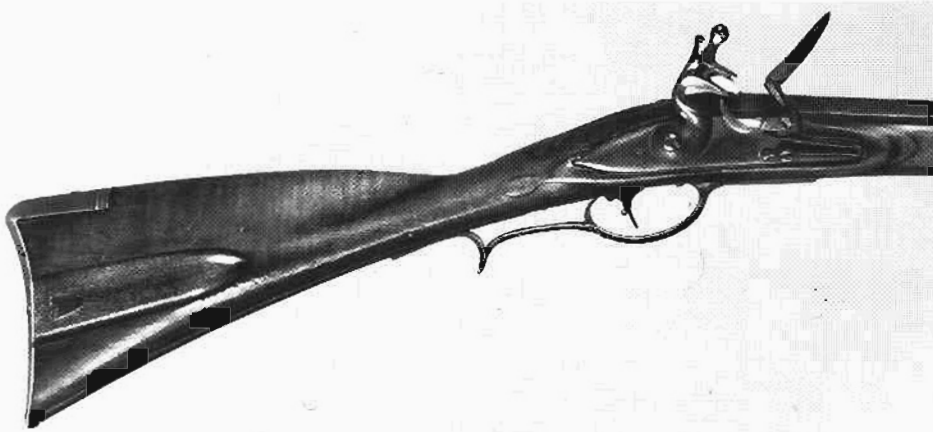


Photo 12
Flintlock Rifle. Attributed to Shenandoah County, Virginia. Maker unknown. Relief and incised carved curly maple stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 58 $\frac{1}{4}$ " ; full octagon barrel, 42 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long; .55 caliber rifled with 8 grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by Craig MacDougall.

carving. While it has a primitive massive attractiveness, it is at an early stage in the evolution of the patch box. Its heavy, rather massive, design is an intrusion into a well designed and balanced artistic composition. This awkwardness is found in many different forms of early hinged brass boxes. These various experiments show the evolution of American design that had not caught up with the well-developed design of the stocking traditions from Europe. In the Federal period, patch box design generally evolves into a strong artistic statement in harmony with the gunstocking tradition.

The fine rifle pictured in Photo 5 descended in the Wilson family of Rockbridge County and, like many others in this study, has not moved far from its origins. Here, the patch box has taken the general four-piece construction typical of late 18th-century approaches. While this maker is a fine carver, his engraving has a somewhat primitive quality. The overall effect of the box design and engraving is quite nice. Like examples 1 and 2, this example has remained in its original flintlock condition—a great rarity for early American rifles.

The next example (Photo 6) dates to about 1790 and shows that the Rockbridge school was developing great refinement in the decades following the Revolution. It is signed by John Davidson (1757-1834) and clearly shows that the origin of his apprenticeship was the unknown maker of the two rifles just discussed. Davidson's masterful engraving is apparent in the box finial; however, the overall shape of the box looks back into the time of his apprenticeship in the 1770s.¹² Clearly, Davidson is continuing the extraordinary tradition of complex and excellent carving and molding.

Augusta, the next county north of Rockbridge, was the mother county (1744) of all those covered thus far. In fact, John Davidson was born in 1757 in "Augusta that part that became Rockbridge county." A number of very early rifles can be loosely attributed to this county, although they may represent areas that were splintered off later into different counties. Precisely identifying some of this early work is very difficult, and I use the term "Old Augusta" in reference to these examples.

The first is a cherry stocked example that shows very strong influence of the Brown Bess musket (Photo 7). Its squared toe, sliding wood box (original door), cheek piece, and carving all relate to the German heritage, while the escutcheon, rear ramrod pipe, and rounded forearm and "beavertail" tang carving relate to the Brown Bess. The carving around the lock mortise, the use of an escutcheon, and the barrel pin placement relate to rifles in the preceding three schools.

Another related example (Photo 8), showing the use of

a "beavertail" carving and a fowler or musket-style round barrel, is also cherry stocked. This fine example has its original box door. The "Pa" brand was discussed by Joe Kindig, Jr., in the 1960 *Thoughts on the Kentucky Rifle in its Golden Age*. Kindig concluded the brand must represent a private owner's mark, since no Pennsylvania state mark of this type is known. I concur with his conclusion.

An early Federal period Augusta rifle is shown in Photo 9. It probably dates to the 1790s because of its heavily curved side profile of the butt plate. Otherwise, it has an earlier architecture. The design of the patch box relates to many of the Shenandoah Valley and the complex designed carving shows a general approach similar to the Rockbridge school. The carving here, while complex in design, is quite crudely executed. The overall sense of "activity" produces an attractive energy despite the lack of refinement.

Leaving Augusta, the next county north is Rockingham. A strong school of riflemaking existed here in the late 18th and early 19th centuries; however, early material from the area is scarce. The oldest example attributable to the area is shown in Photo 10. This piece is attributed to George Sites of Harrisonburg on the basis of its details that relate to a later, signed, Sites rifle. A date of 1785 or 1790 would appear sound, judging from the other examples from the school. This rifle clearly shows association with the George Schroyer (several are documented) of York County and other areas of Pennsylvania. A George Schroyer appears in a 1798 tax record in Rockingham County, and he must be the source of influence on Sites' work.

This rifle is a fine example of the well-balanced conservative art of the early post revolutionary examples. In quick order, the conservative balance gave way to elaboration and by 1800 large numbers of silver inlays are rapidly replacing carving. Barrels became heavier and straight sided, while the butt stock was lightened. The result was an ill-balanced rifle with art that could be judged gaudy, and lacked the refinement seen in this example and others shown in this study.

Dating from the middle 1780s to 1790s, the fine rifle shown in Photo 11 is signed "C. Huffman" in script on a silver plate inlaid into the top of the barrel. Christian Huffman worked in Woodstock, Shenandoah County, Virginia. He is first cited in the court records in 1782 when he married Anne Apler. In 1783 his father-in-law gave him lot 106 in Woodstock.¹³ Huffman's signed rifle identifies one earlier unsigned rifle from this school which has a wooden box and probably dates to the 1760s (Photo 12).

Here again we see a very complex craft tradition that has parallels in Germany. The profile of the Huffman rifle stock and form of the cheek piece can be found on German

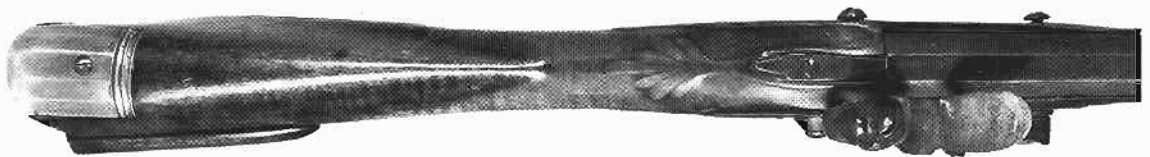
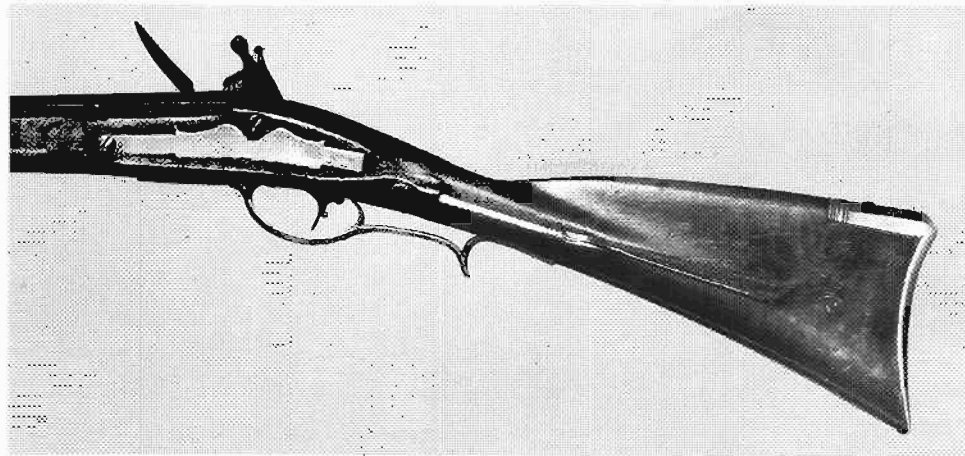
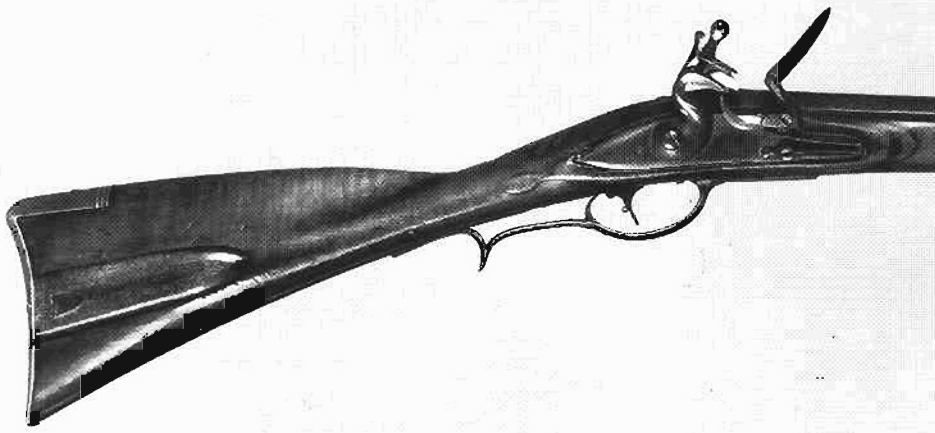


Photo 12
Flintlock Rifle. Attributed to Shenandoah County, Virginia. Maker unknown. Relief and incised carved curly maple stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 58 $\frac{1}{4}$ "; full octagon barrel, 42 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long; .55 caliber rifled with 8 grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by Craig MacDougall.

pieces. The fine graceful carving relates to baroque work of the late 17th century. Other than a slight relationship to the carving of the side plate finial group of Botetourt, this work is unlike any known American work of the time and undoubtedly represents a separate chain of development from a European prototype.

The influence of the English fowling piece style is evident in the slender fore end of the stock devoid of Germanic-style moldings and the engraved (not visible in these illustrations) border that frames the signature on the barrel is derived from London examples.

The patch box is very early in style, relating to the Revolutionary War types, but is flanked by two rococo-style inlays. This patch box shows one solution to solve the need to relieve the plain areas flanking the simple box. Apparently the flanking inlays were a short-lived approach that gave way to the standardization of the four-piece patch box with large side plate piercing.

Architecture and a wooden patch box indicate this rifle (Photo 12) dates to the 1760s or 1770s. Its comb profile and side plate associate it with the Huffman and perhaps this is the earliest rifle from Shenandoah County.

Documentation indicates that Winchester, the county seat of Frederick County, was a gunsmithing center.¹⁴ Adam Haymaker acquired his lot in Winchester in 1753, making him one of the earliest documented gunsmiths in the area.¹⁵

The fine rifle in photo 13 is attributed to him on the basis of the script initials "AH" carved behind the cheek piece and the relationship of the tang carving with that of the signed rifle made by his son, John (Photo 14). It appears to date to the 1770s, while the example by John Haymaker (Photo 14) dates about 1790.

The work of the Haymakers influenced Simon Lauck, also of Winchester, and numerous riflemakers far down the Shenandoah into North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Winchester style also moved west into Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The artistic style that extended over all this area for a span of 30 to 40 years principally originated in Haymaker's and Lauck's shops.

This rifle (Photo 15) of ca. 1795 is signed by Simon Lauck in script on a silver plate inlaid into the barrel. Lauck was a member of Daniel Morgan's Rifle Company that formed in Winchester in 1775 and marched to the siege of Boston. Lauck was fifteen years old and may not have completed the trip to Boston.¹⁶ It is probable that he stopped in Pennsylvania with relatives. He was not listed in Morgan's Company again and appears not to have gone on the disastrous Quebec

expedition. Simon Lauck is listed as a gunsmith in 1785 in a Lebanon, Pennsylvania, tax list.¹⁷ By 1787 he was back in Winchester and resided there until his death in 1815.¹⁸

This rifle shows close association with the work of the Haymaker family gunsmiths of Winchester and it appears that Lauck's production had to conform to the Winchester school rather than his Pennsylvanian style. The pressure for this conformity was coming from the patron. Apparently, they were accustomed to the local style and would not accept work that was significantly different.¹⁹ Some evidence suggests that Lauck employed John Haymaker as a foreman or in some other capacity. The close association of the signed works of the two men confirm this theory.

In Lauck's rifle and the Haymakers' examples we see the fully evolved American form. The patch box is a well developed and engraved rococo design that forms a spatial relationship of fine proportions with the mass of the stock. That proportional relationship had been a problem for gunsmiths developing the patch box in the frontier conflict-period rifles. In the federal period, the stock carving is well integrated, each element flowing with the overall form of the rifle and the various sheet silver and silver wire inlay balance and highlight the composition.

Almost simultaneously (1754) with the establishing of Adam Haymaker in Winchester, Philip Sheetz (early spelling Shatz) settled in Shepardstown in what is today Berkeley County, West Virginia.²⁰ Sheetz appears to be the first gunsmith in a family dynasty that eventually numbered over twenty riflemakers spanning numerous states and covering more than a century.

The P. Shatz rifle shown in Photo 16 is the only example of his work known to survive. It is signed in script on the barrel and may well be the earliest signed rifle from Virginia. Judging from its German lock (completely original), heavy stock and wood box, it must date to the 1760s or 1770s. The style of its carving and side plate is typical of many Shenandoah Valley rifles and illustrates that this general approach to riflemaking in the Great Valley was established very early, probably during the French and Indian War.

The eight schools of early rifles shown here illustrate a strong level of production and great artistic variety. The origins of many of these schools are from several European provincial types, both Germanic and Netherlandish. By the late 18th century the American longrifle had evolved into a national style and these arms make it clear that the riflemakers of the Shenandoah Valley contributed significantly to this process.

This article is a short preview of Wallace B. Gusler's Volume I of a two-volume work entitled *Longrifles of Virginia—The 18th Century*, and *Longrifles of Virginia—The 19th Century*, which is in progress and targeted for

publishing at the turn of this century. Mr. Gusler has been researching and documenting Virginia riflemakers and their work since the early 1960s. Gusler is Master Gunsmith for The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

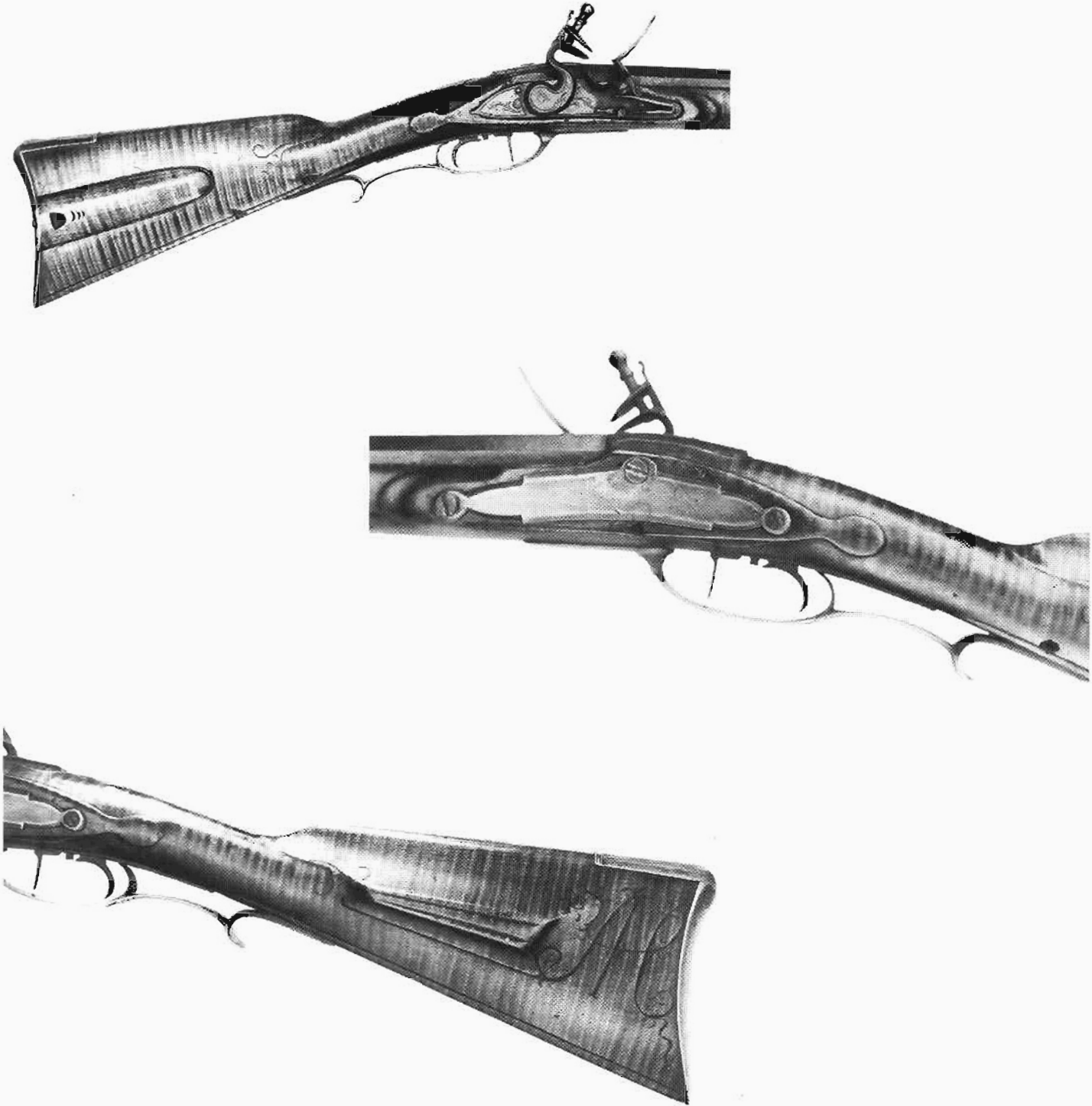


Photo 13
Flintlock Rifle. Signed "AH", attributed to Adam Haymaker (working 1753-1808), Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia, ca. 1775. Relief and incised carved curly maple stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 57 $\frac{3}{8}$ "; octagon rifled barrel, 41" long; .52 caliber; 7 grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by and courtesy of George Shumway.

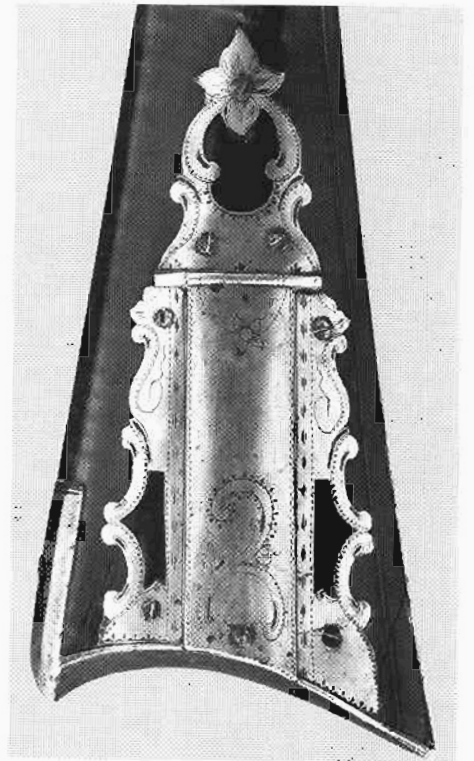
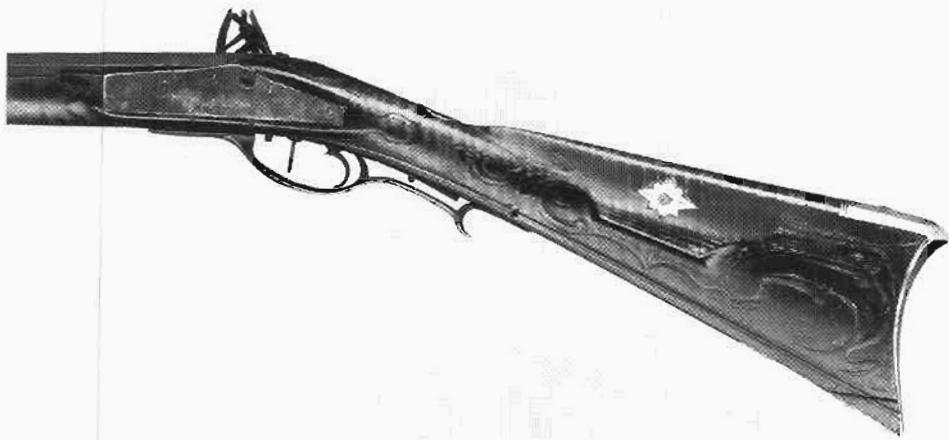
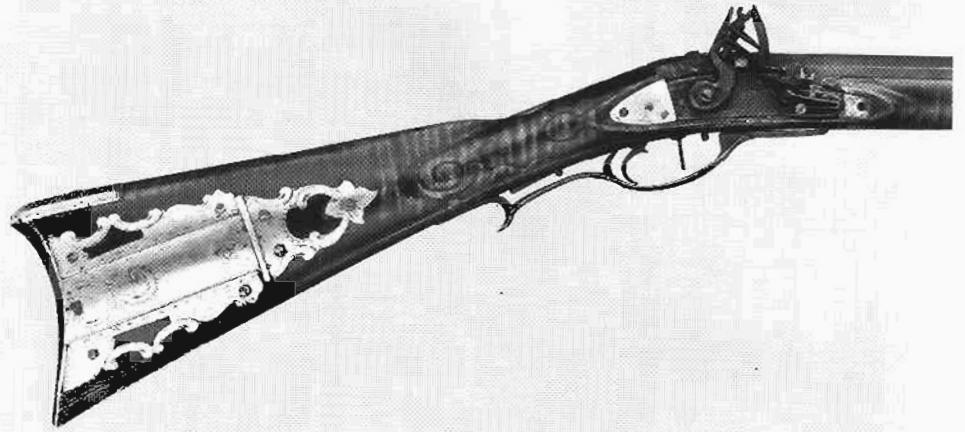


Photo 14
Flintlock Rifle (smaller lock old replacement). Signed by John Haymaker (h. ? d. 1804),
Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia. Relief carved and incised curly maple stock with
brass mountings. Overall length, 60 1/2"; full-octagon barrel, 44 1/2" long; .50 caliber with 7
grooves. Private Collection. Photographs by Craig MacDougall.

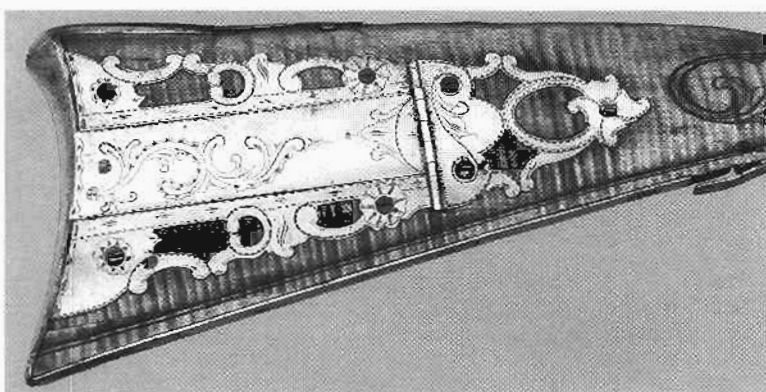
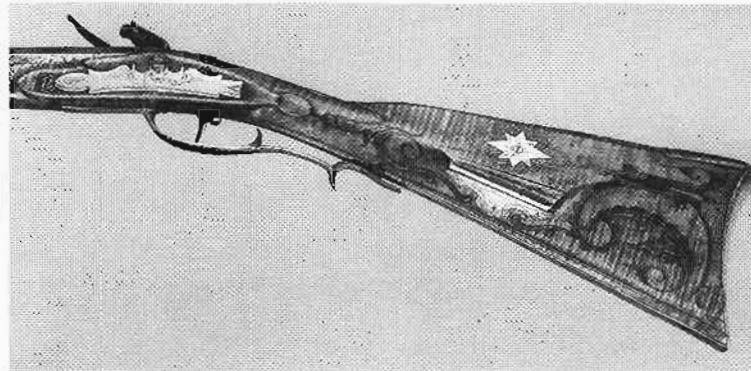
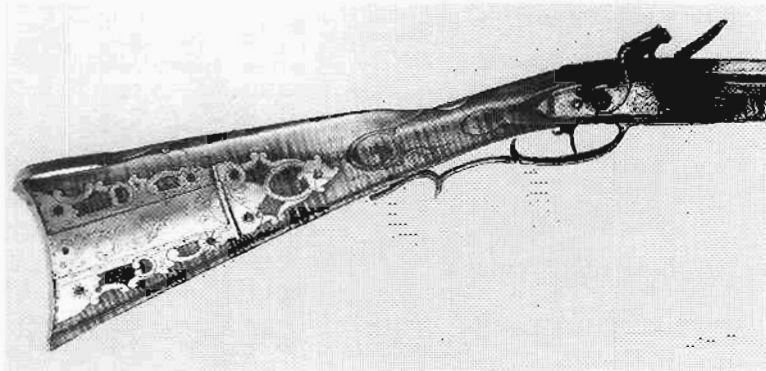
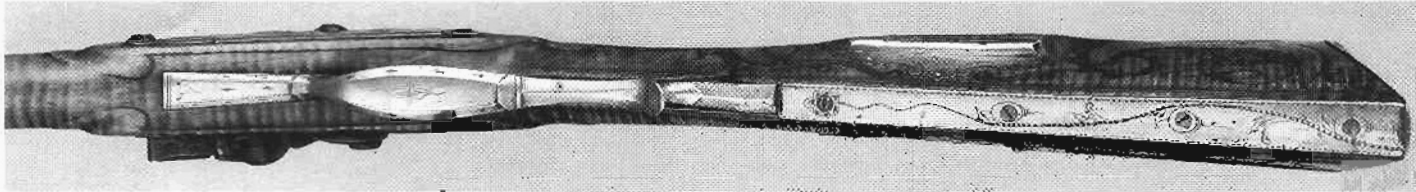
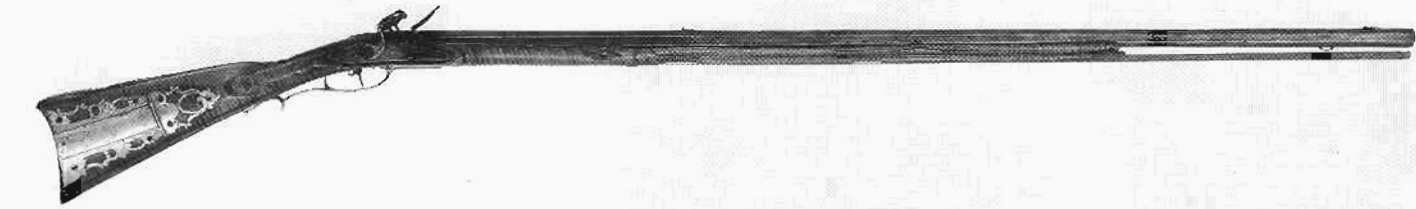


Photo 15
Flintlock Rifle. Signed by Simon Lauck (1760-1815),
Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia, ca. 1795. Relief
carved silver and silver wire and brass inlaid stock.
Engraved brass mountings. Overall length, 61"; full-octagon
45" barrel with 7 grooves; .48 caliber. Private Collection.
Photographs by Delmore A. Wenzel.

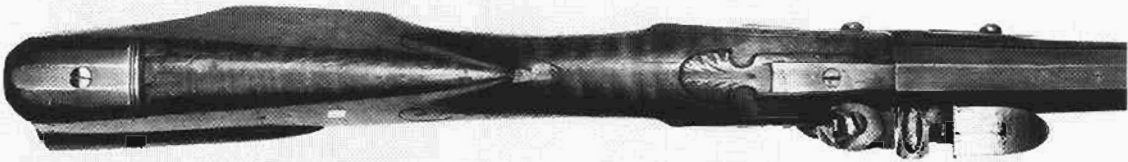


Photo 16
Flintlock Rifle. Signed by Philip Shatz (Sheets), (working 1754-d.1795), Shepardstown, Berkeley County, Virginia (now West Virginia), ca. 1775. Incised carved curly maple stock with brass mountings. Overall length, 58¹/₈" ; octagon barrel 42⁷/₁₆" ; .49 caliber rifled with 7 grooves. Private Collection. (Footnotes for this article are on the next page.)

Shenandoah Valley Rifle Notes

¹Harold B. Gill, Jr., *The Gunsmith in Colonial Virginia*. (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation; University of Virginia, 1984, pp. 19-20. Gill records the earliest use of "Rifle Gun" in Middlesex Co., Va., in 1702, and "1 Screw Gun" in a 1683 inventory. Screw gun was the 17th-century term for a rifle.

²Joe Kindig, Jr., *Thoughts on the Kentucky Rifle in its Golden Age*. (George N. Hyatt, Wilmington, DE., 1960).

³John Bivins, Jr., *Longrifles of North Carolina*. (George Shumway, publisher, York, PA, 1968).

⁴George Shumway, *Rifles of Colonial America*, Vol. I; Joe Kindig, Jr., *ibid.* pp. 72-154 and 554-555. Lancaster school and list of documented gunsmiths.

⁵George Shumway, *Rifles of Colonial America*, Volume I, illustrates and discusses a rifle by John Schrite of Reading, PA, that is dated 1761, pp. 83-89.

⁶Augusta County Wills and Inventories, May 5, 1753. Virginia State Library-microfilm records, Richmond, VA.

⁷Frederick County, Virginia, Wills and Inventories. Virginia State Library-microfilm records, Richmond, VA.

⁸Another arm (fowling piece or shotgun) by this maker survives and it also has a German dialect signature on the side plate. Since they have different names, they appear to be owners rather than the gunsmith. One later rifle (ca. 1790) from this school has the gunsmith's name on the side plate, and a ca. 1810 example by the same hand has the owner's name there. Until other examples appear, the owner/gunsmith mystery of these early examples will remain unsolved.

⁹A later rifle (ca. 1775-80) by this hand has identical serpentine carving, although the other carving of this rifle shows different designs than those of the brass barrel example. It is illustrated in *Rifles of Colonial America*, Vol. II, by George Shumway, pp. 610 and 616.

¹⁰Gaspar Manskar's rifle is in a private collection and has his name on the patch box lid, dated 1791 on a silver oval on the brass side plate. It is signed "J. Simpson Fecit" on a silver plate inlet into the top of the barrel. Simpson worked in the Cowpasture River area of Botetourt County (side-plate finial group). William Whitley's rifle is displayed at the Kentucky Museum in Frankfort. It is closely related to the Simpson rifle and was made by Jacob Young, who signed both the barrel and side plate. William Christian ordered his gun and pair of pistols and holsters from "Simpson" of Botetourt August 6, 1784, just before he moved to Kentucky. His letter concerning the order is in the Draper Manuscripts, Virginia Manuscripts 52278. Microfilm in Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, originals at University of Wisconsin.

¹¹An in-depth study by Wallace B. Gusler of the two rifles by this hand examining the tool kit via evidence presented by the object is in *The Journal of Historical Armsmaking Technology*, Vol. II, June 1987, pp. 1-26. (Published by Western Kentucky University and the National Muzzleloading Rifle Association, Friendship, IN.)

¹²John Davidson is listed as a gunsmith in 1782, 1787, 1788, 1789, and 1790 in the Rockbridge County Land Tax Records (Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA). Davidson's birth date, 1757, is given in his pension declaration for Revolutionary War service, given 8th day of August, 1832. (General Services Administration, National Archives file: John Davidson, S8304 Rev.)

¹³Huffman married Anne Apler March 24, 1782 (Shenandoah County, Virginia, Marriage Register, 1781-1850, p. 6). Gift of George Apler to Christian Huffman, Lot 106 in Woodstock, February 27, 1783 (Shenandoah County, Virginia, Deed Book-1, p. 94).

¹⁴The author's research file identifies twenty gunsmiths working in Frederick County before 1780. Adam Haymaker had several apprentices: Frederick Short, 1763; George Brinker, 1765; Jacob Sperry, 1770; his son, John; and probably his son Philip. References in sequence: Frederick County Order Book 10, 1762-1763, p. 421; Frederick County Deed Book 10, 1764-1765, p. 378; Frederick County Deed Book 10, 1767-1770, p. 672; Winchester Town Deed Book 1, p. 165.

¹⁵Adam Haymaker's deed to Lot 202 in Winchester in 1753 recorded in transaction "the twenty second day of October in the year of our lord One thousand Seven hundred and ninety Nine between Adam Haymaker of the Town of Winchester County of Frederick and state of Virginia of the one part and John Haymaker Gunsmith and of the same place and other part . . ." Winchester Town Deed Book 1, p. 165.

¹⁶William Greenway Russell, *What I Know About Winchester*, p. 62.

¹⁷Joe Kindig, Jr., *Thoughts on the Kentucky Rifle in its Golden Age*. (George N. Hyatt, publisher, Wilmington, DE, 1960, p. 554.)

¹⁸Winchester Personal Property Tax Book, 1787. Simon Lauck paid March 24, 1787. (Virginia State Library, Archives Division, Richmond, VA.)

¹⁹In addition to Simon Lauck's rifles showing change to conform to the regional style, Peter Marker of Maryland moved to Martinsburg, Virginia, and his work shows changes from Maryland's style to Virginia's style.

²⁰Harold B. Gill, Jr., *The Gunsmith in Colonial Virginia*, p. 101.