

Firearms were known in England as early as the fourteenth century and from the beginning London was the centre of the gun trade. The very first guns which appear in the illustration to Walter de Milemete's manuscripts of 1326/7 were probably made there. The handgun as such makes its appearance in the second half of the century, but it is not until the reign of Henry VIII (1509-47) that this weapon takes on any significance as a military arm. The king made a policy of inviting technicians, craftsmen and inventors from all over Europe to his capital. As a result, many of the early gunmakers of London were of French, German, Dutch and Italian origin. They were somewhat cautiously allowed to join the London guilds or companies of the Armourers or the Blacksmiths, the Gunmakers Company not then being in existence. It is obvious that to start with these gunmakers were not able to produce handguns in the quantity which Henry demanded and the State Papers of his reign contain many references to the importation of Italian, Flemish and German firearms. The man in charge of these arrangements, the Master General of the Ordnance, was an official of the royal household and a courtier rather than an administrator. There was little organisation behind the supply of weapons to the British forces. Orders were placed with individual gunmakers but there appears to have been little control over the quality even the size of the guns produced or imported. Certainly it is impossible to identify any British handgun of this period.

But in the last quarter of the sixteenth century the situation began to change. The Office of the Ordnance, with its headquarters in the Tower of London, set up storehouses in the Minories, an adjacent area, and gave every encouragement to gunmakers to work in the neighbouring parish of East Smithfield. The Ordnance officers now kept proper books, checking receipts and deliveries and conducting periodical surveys of their stores. One of these, an inventory of 1599, reveals the motley collection of firearms which had been accumulated under Tudor management. There were muskets, some inlaid with bone; calivers with straight and 'croked' stocks; breechloading arquebuses, some with 'matchcocks' and others with wheellocks or 'firelocks' as they were called; wheellocks pistols or 'dagges' with their cases; and 'petronells with snaphances'.

What were these English matchlocks, wheellocks and snaphances like? Those matchlocks muskets which have been identified as English by makers' marks or by provenance have heavy octagonal barrels about 4 ft. long (Fig. 1). The earlier barrels, often dated in the 1580's, have tubular backsights. The stocks have fishtail butts and are generally of crude finish; the majority of the locks are trigger locks with a long rectangular plate. These characteristics were, of course, shared by the matchlock guns of other countries, so that one cannot say that this or that gun is an English matchlock. There is little evidence of the snap matchlock which is found on many continental sporting guns being used in England. The ordinary matchlock gun went on being made throughout the seventeenth century its lockplate taking on the shape of the rival flintlock in the closing years of its existence. As many of these later matchlocks which bear English marks on the barrel were imported from Holland, again it is not possible to define with certainty an English matchlock.

Although the wheellock is known to have been made in London in 1640, for instance, sixteen London gunmakers shared an Ordnance contract for wheellock carbines and pistols—it is very difficult to identify an English specimen, especially a plain military one. In Belchamp Hall, Essex, there is a fine decorated wheellock pistol, which can be identified as English by the style of its decoration; several fine portraits of English noblemen of the late sixteenth century show the sitters with wheellock pistols which could well have been English. None of these, however, conform to any particular shape, size or pattern which one can assert is essentially an English one. Undoubtedly the wheellock was never popular in England.



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British Military Firearms in Colonial America

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All the evidence points to a very early adoption by the English of the snaphance mechanism in preference to either the wheellock or the matchlock. This is confirmed by the letter written by the Venetian Council in 1613 to their ambassador in London instructing him to buy some of the fusils (*fucili*) which they understood had taken the place of the wheellocks as they were 'easier to use, quicker and of less hindrance to the user, as well as being cheaper'. In the Palazzo Ducale, Venice, there is a group of snaphance pistols believed to have been captured from an English ship in 1628. These have sliding pan covers, circular fences, separate steels, and ball-butted stocks. A pair of pistols, dated 1601, at Levens Hall, Westmoreland, England, have similar locks but lemon-shaped pommels. These are all plain pistols of a kind which no doubt found their way to the new colonies in America. In Pilgrim Hall, Plymouth is the brass-barrelled snaphance pistol with a lemon-shaped butt of John Thomson who settled in that county in 1622. This particular pistol is fitted with a catch or dog behind the cock to hold the latter safely when primed.

Many English snaphances, of course, were of magnificent quality belying the tale that the early London gunmakers were incapable of producing fine weapons. In the Kremlin, Moscow are three pairs of English snaphance pistols of similar design, all handsomely decorated with gold damascening and inlaid with bone and mother-of-pearl. They presumably came to Russia as part of a gift sent by James I to the Tsar. Another pair of English snaphance pistols of equally handsome appearance but with down-drooping ball butts like those of wheellock pistols is in Schloss Konopiste, Czechoslovakia. A feature of all these pistols is the placing of the safety catch on the other side of the stock behind the belt hook.

English snaphance long guns have just as wide a distribution. In the Kremlin also is a gun presented by the English agent Fabian Smith to Tsar Mikhail Feodorovitch in 1625. Part of a gift from James I of England to Philip III of Spain (1598-1621) now in the Royal Armoury, Madrid includes a magnificent gold-inlaid snaphance lock, all that remains of a beautiful fowling piece. In the Tjhusmuseum, Copenhagen

there is an English snaphance petronel dated 1584; in the Livrustkammars, Stockholm are two snaphance sporting guns which could be English. All these were personal weapons or presentation pieces, and I mention them as examples of the widespread use of the snaphance gun by the English. Guns of plain quality were produced in large quantities for the army and navy and for export. Many found their way to such places as North Africa where the native gunmakers continued to copy this style of lock up to recent times. By the 1630's the English army was also being supplied with regular batches of snaphance muskets and calivers by the London gunmakers. The original design of lock with a separate steel was soon superseded by a simpler design in which the steel was combined with the pan cover, thus cutting out the internal sliding mechanism. The sear, however, still had a horizontal action, a lug protruding through the plate to engage the tail of the cock. For want of a better term this design is now known as the English lock. A curious thing about some of these 'English' locks is that the plate has a circular middle portion, almost as

Figure 1
English Civil War Matchlock
Muskets. Littlecote, Berkshire.

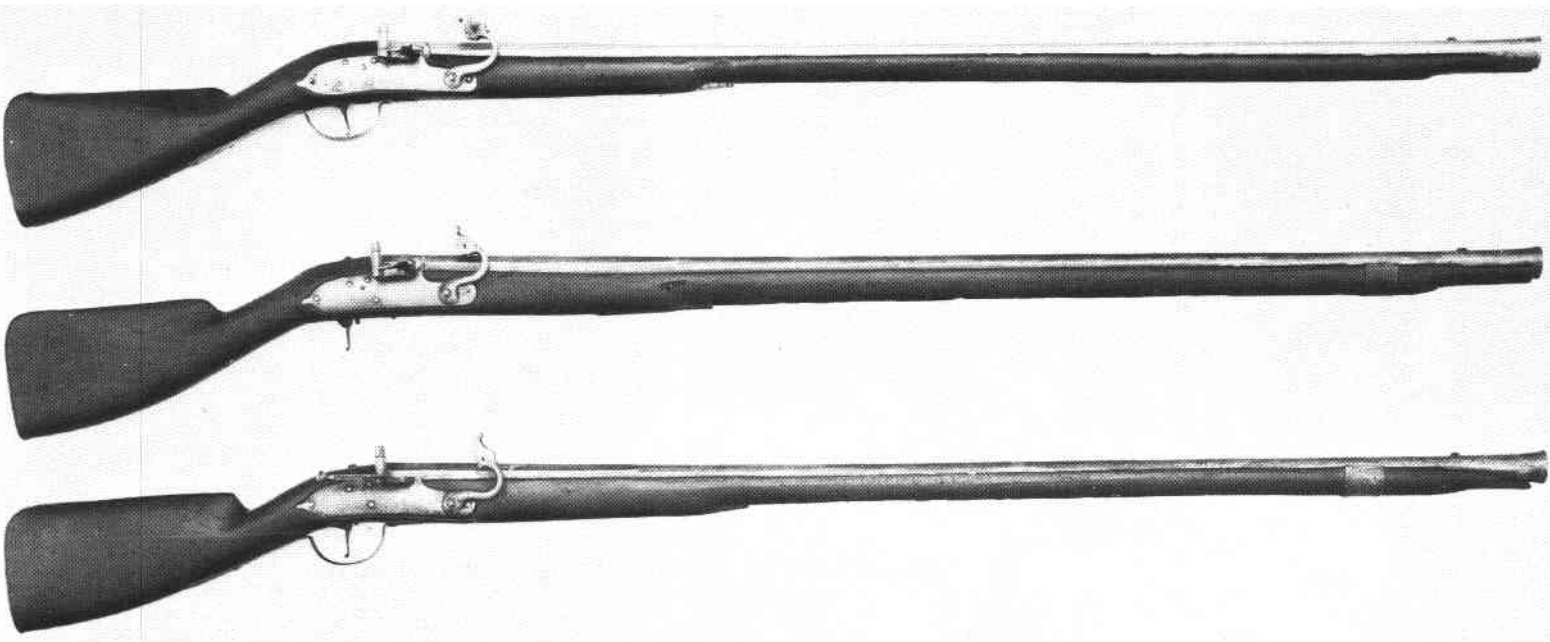


Figure 2
Dutch made Wil-
liam III Matchlocks,
circa 1680.

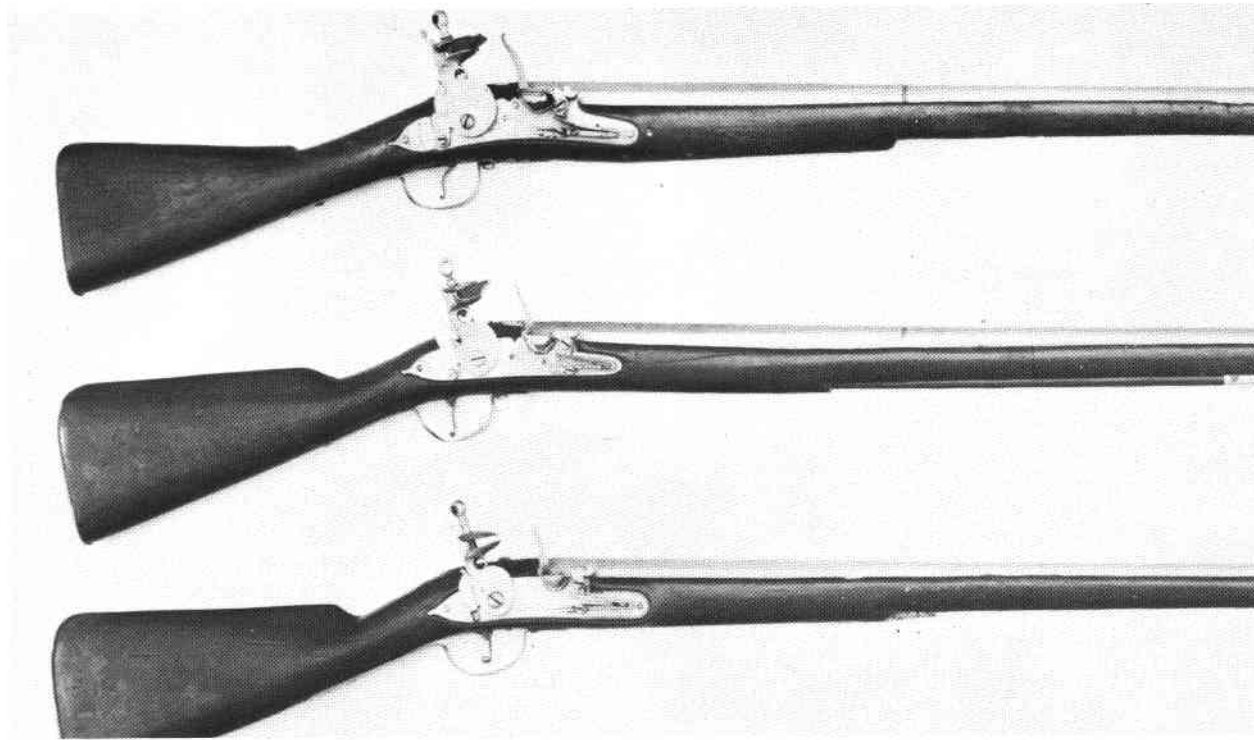


Figure 3
Doglock Muskets
1. James II
2. William III Matchlock with
doglock fitted



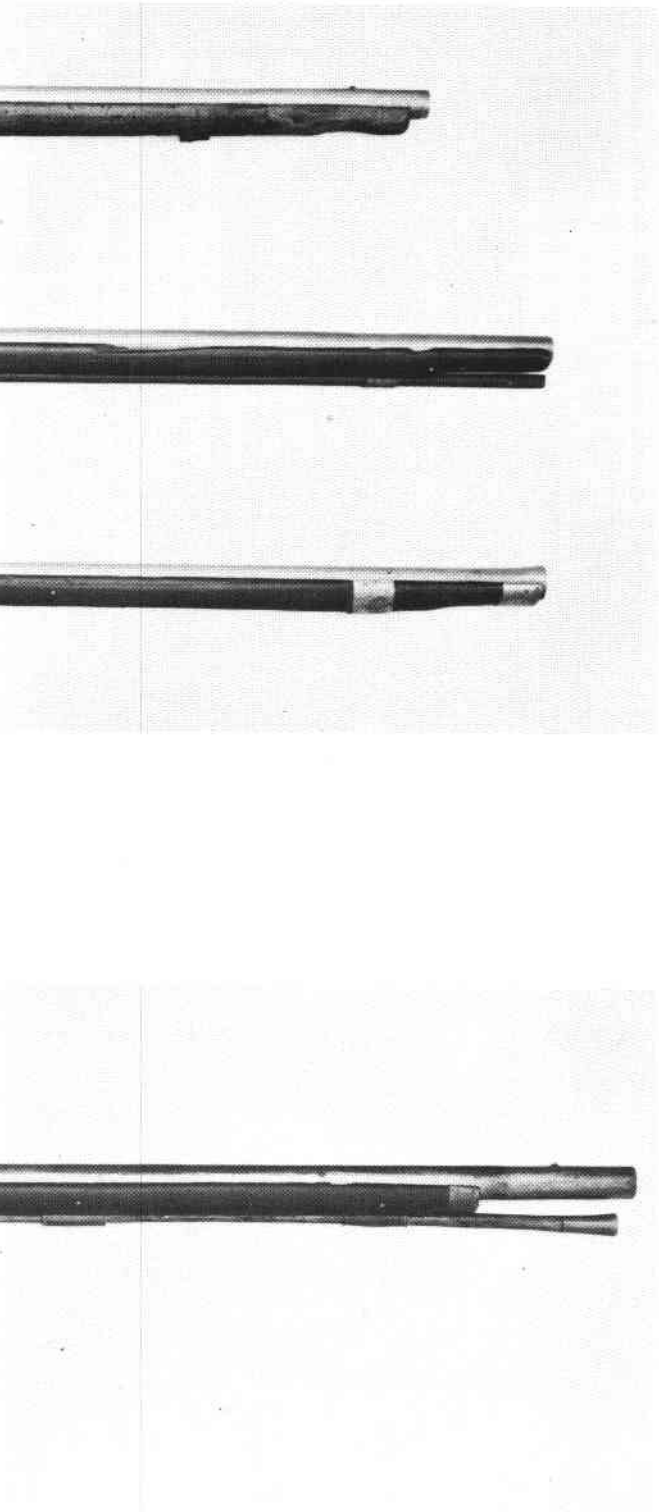


Figure 4
Big Land Musket by Farmer, 1731

though it was originally intended for a wheellock. This type of lock is usually found on pistols and carbines and some good examples are in the outstanding collection of English Civil War firearms at Littlecote in Berkshire, England. A further development in these English locks was a rearrangement of the sear mechanism. First an internal prong was made to catch in the tumbler at half-cock and then the full cock lug was replaced by another internal prong so that both full and half cock were obtained by the sear's connection with the tumbler. Although these mechanisms sound complicated they were relatively simple to make, and during the Civil War, they were turned out by country blacksmiths and whitesmiths. In 1643 the Italian gunmaker Antonio Petrini noted that the 'English locks' then being made in large quantities, were 'of rough finish and poor construction but nevertheless are excellent for giving fire.' There is no wonder that they found such appeal in the English colonies to which they were shipped for defence and trade. They have been found in significant numbers on the sites of the colonial settlements of Jamestown and Yorktown and on the Indian village sites of western New York.

Towards the middle of the seventeenth century the length of the English flintlock was reduced in size, the sears were all placed internally and on better class pistols the steel or frizzle spring was also arranged inside the lock plate so that a very neat appearance was obtained. But the gunmakers, not trusting too much to the internal arrangement, still thought it necessary to fit a dog catch as a safety measure. This feature does not disappear from pistols and carbines until after the Restoration. By the reign of James II, the rounded form of flintlock with the vertically-acting sear introduced by the French gunmakers was adopted for these two classes of arms. The carbines are very simple affairs, the stocks plain, often with no butt plate, and the minimum of furniture. The pistols are more substantial with a plain semi-spherical butt cap and a solid type of trigger perhaps originally intended to operate without the need for a guard. The barrels are 13 in. long; the stocks are plain with only one rammer pipe, and the lock is held with three screws.

The first signs of standardization can be seen on the military weapons of the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The Board of Ordnance was no longer content to put into its contracts merely the length and rough bore of a gun, it was beginning to stipulate the quality of materials, the type of finish and some details of the construction. When the first contracts for muskets was issued to the Birmingham gunmakers in 1689 two pattern guns and a proof bullet were sent in an attempt to ensure that there was some conformity in the deliveries. The locks were now bearing the King's cypher and the name of the maker. Unfortunately each maker seemed to have a different idea of how the pattern should be copied.

On these muskets the old flat dog-lock continued in operation for some time. Locks of this type bearing the cypher of James II differ only in minor detail from those of the reign of William III, Queen Anne,

and George I (Fig. 3). The first years of the eighteenth century, however, saw a great change in the design of the musket and its subsidiary weapons. Coupled with this was a much closer control over the manufacturing processes. Before these changes could be implemented, however, there was the problem of disposing of the large number of old matchlocks which had remained on issue to regiments, like the dragoons, and which now cluttered the Ordnance storehouses. These were, as far as possible, got rid of to the American colonies much to the latter's disgust. Others were converted to flintlock and issued to second-class troops. There was the problem, too, of disposing of the old plug bayonets which had been lately superseded by socket bayonets. Most of these found their last resting place as part of the decoration on the walls of Windsor Castle and other royal residences, where, incidentally, they may be seen to-day.

The way was now clear to decide on an improved design of musket for the regular army. One of the men who took a leading part in this was an official known as the Master Furbisher. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Tower of London held not only the offices and storehouses of the Board of Ordnance but it contained a series of workshops employing a number of gunmakers and sword cutlers in the work of repairing, maintaining, modifying and some-

times assembling small arms of all kinds. These men were also responsible for proving firearms in the proof house which had been built on the river wharf in front of the Tower. All these operations were under the charge of the Master Furbisher. He advised the Ordnance officials in technical matters and took a leading part in the development of new weapons. During the vital period from c. 1715 to 1740 this man was Richard Wooldridge and it is his name which appears on many of the pattern guns in the Tower.

Sometime just after 1715 the design of a musket with a 46 in. barrel which we now call the Brown Bess was decided upon. I do not think that I need describe it in detail. There is no clear indication as to when it was officially adopted and its designer is unknown although much of the credit probably lies with Wooldridge. The earliest specimen in the Tower is one dated 1718 but this has iron mounts instead of the standard brass ones. In fact there was no large scale adoption of the new musket and for at least ten years experiments continued with other designs. Muskets were reported being made with 'Jamaican' locks; there were muskets of the 'Irish Pattern', 'East India guns', and so on.

Efforts were made to use up the old-style flat locks. There is a musket in the Tower with one of these

Figure 5
Muskets 1 and 2,
Short Land post
1768. Muskets 3
and 4, Light In-
fantry Fusile,
1757 - examples
circa 1780.

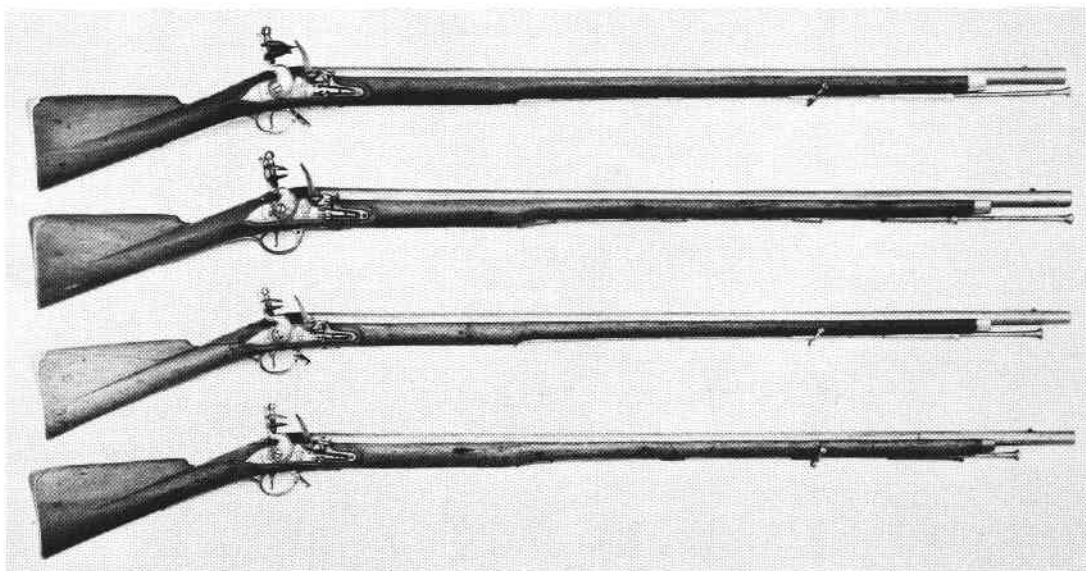
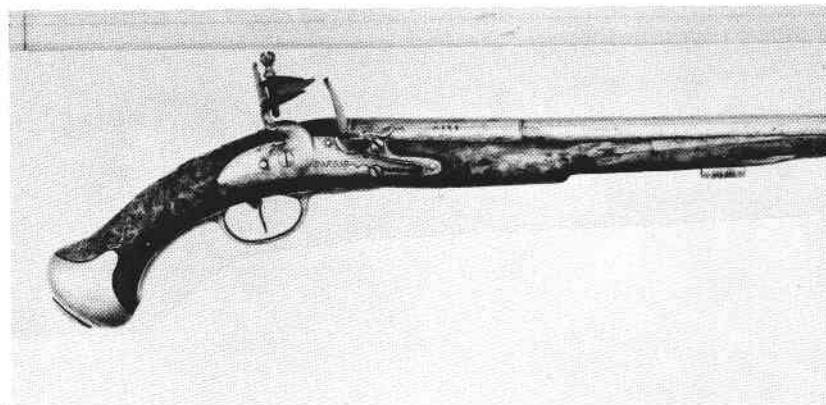


Figure 7
Cavalry Pistol by
Barbar, 12-inch
barrel, circa 1720.



locks, a sealed pattern dated 1720, probably intended for sea service or some second-class army unit. Wooldridge, who made several pattern muskets during this time, also produced one with a 42 in. barrel. His sealed pattern with this barrel in the Tower is dated 1722 and has iron mounts of Brown Bess pattern except for the buttplate which is of ornamental design. It may be noted in passing that there were usually several sealed patterns made of each gun. One or two acted as a permanent record of the weapon finally chosen for a particular purpose and these were preserved in a pattern room in the Tower. Others were issued to the gunmakers or contractors concerned with the manufacture. The seals consisted of the arms of the Board of Ordnance and those of the Master General or Lieut. General. Sometimes when a purely regimental firearm was involved it was the arms of the regiment's Colonel. In c.1720-25 a number of curious muskets were made, each with some resemblance to the regular pattern but with some flamboyant feature which marks it out from the others. Some Dutch or Hanoverian muskets which bear the royal cypher on the locks have projections carved on the butts, perhaps to give a better grip in bayonet fighting. A musket by Joseph Clarkson made for Colonel Kane of the 9th Regt. as a pattern for the arming of that regiment is in this category.

The ordering of special arms by Colonels for their regiments was one of the bugbears of the Ordnance at this time, and, in 1722, they took the opportunity to issue an order discouraging the practice. It is doubtful whether it had any immediate effect.

Nevertheless by 1730 the manufacture of the Long Land pattern musket was firmly under way. It was a well-made musket, for the Ordnance was now insisting on gauging a number of parts, viewing all the processes of manufacturing with severity and subjecting the barrels to a decisive proof (Fig. 4). It was a good-looking musket with rounded, graceful furniture and a pleasing, well-engraved lock. In a very short while a shortened version of this musket with a 42 in. barrel, known as the Short Land Musket, was also put into production. It appears to have been used at first mainly as a dragoon carbine. The advantages of a shorter barrel began to be realised and, in 1757, it was decided to make a cheaper version of the musket for the use of the Marines and the Militia, both regiments for which a first-class weapon of full length was not essential. The finish of this pattern musket was inferior, the escutcheon plate was removed, a flat sideplate was substituted for the rounded one, and the buttplate tang was shortened and screwed to the wood.

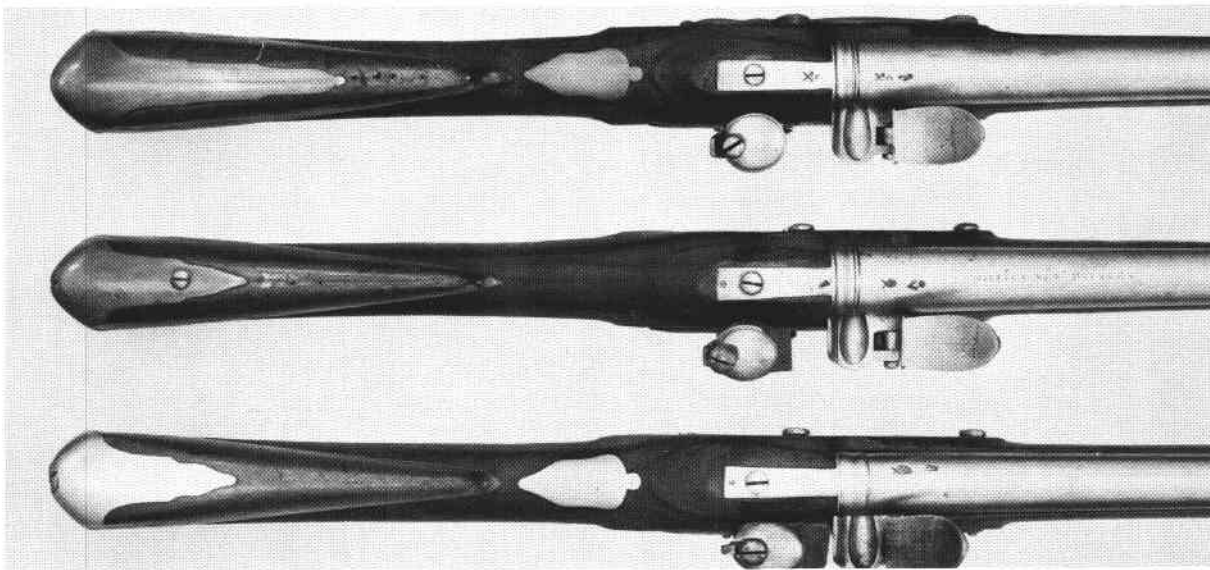


Figure 6
Musket 1, Long Land and Short Land, before 1768
Musket 2, Marine and Militia
Musket 3, Short Land, after 1768.

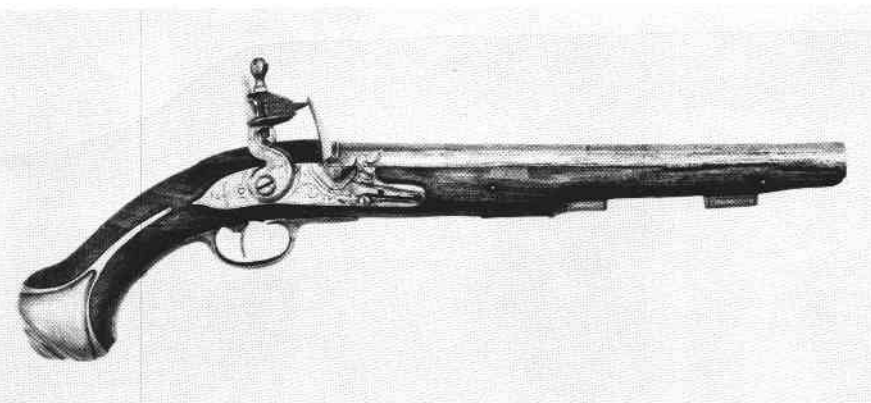


Figure 8
Cavalry Pistol by Sinckler dated 1719, 12-inch barrel.

So many troops became accustomed to the shorter pattern of musket that, in 1768, it was decided to make the Short Land musket the standard for all regiments (Fig. 5,6). The normal high standards of view and proof were brought back for the new model and the rounded sideplate and escutcheon plate were re-introduced. The shorter buttplate tang however, was retained although it was pinned to the stock instead of being screwed. It may be noted here that the form of the buttplate tang is a quick clue to the pattern of musket being examined:

- Long Land and Short Land—long pointed tang,
- Marine and Militia—short pointed tang with screw
- Short Land from 1768—ditto without screw.
- Sea Service—short rounded tang.

Between c.1720-80 there were thus four models of the Brown Bess musket which are likely to have seen service in colonial America—the Long Land, the Short Land, the Marine and Militia, and, of course, the Sea Service. During this period, however, various minor modifications were made. The lock changed its shape slightly, a bridle was fitted to the steel screw, the cock spur and upper jaw were altered; the wooden rammer was replaced by a steel one and the pipes converted accordingly; the stock was given a different nose-cap, its carving was simplified, and a different trigger-guard fitted.

Perhaps the most important change from the dating point of view was the adoption in 1775 of a flat sideplate for all the Short Land muskets. But these changes were implemented on different batches of muskets in different combinations on different dates so that it is quite wrong in my opinion to try to divide each pattern of musket into further sub-divisions. The haphazard way in which batches of parts were issued to the setters-up has resulted in some anomalies, at least from the modern collector's viewpoint. Even the dating of the locks is suspect as it appears that old unused locks already dated were fitted to later arms. Complaints from the troops who thought their weapons were out-of-date led in 1764 to the disappearance of dates from locks.

The identification of pistols is somewhat easier although in what may be called the Pre-Land pattern period, c.1700-25, a variety of models was introduced. Mention has already been made of the James II pattern with its 13 in. barrel, heavy trigger and flimsy guard. This pattern goes on being made well into Queen Anne's reign with the substitution of a normal trigger and more substantial guard. In the same reign two more patterns of 13 in. barrel pistols appear. One is of similarly plain appearance but the trigger guard is cast and the butt cap has a slight tang or ear at the sides (Fig. 7), often engraved with the AR cypher. A flat sideplate with a tail is also fitted, the lock screws being reduced to two. The other pattern is more elaborate. The butt caps have long pointed ears (Fig. 8), a tail pipe and sometimes an escutcheon plate are fitted and a certain amount of decorative detail has been allowed. Both patterns continue into George I's reign, with a small alteration in the detail.

With the introduction of the standard Land service

pattern muskets every effort was made to bring in a heavy cavalry pistol of similar standard design. This was achieved with a 12 in. barrel pistol which had a similar lock and furniture to that of the muskets (Fig. 9). With the augmentation of Light Dragoons in the 1750's a small 9 in. pistol was gradually introduced (Fig. 10). For certain crack cavalry units a better class 10 in. barrel pistol with a masket butt cap was provided.

The pistol was only a secondary arm of the cavalry who set most store in their carbines (Fig. 11). The subject of carbines is still one open to conjecture and the various models are difficult to sort out. Heavy dragoon carbines were originally nothing more than short muskets and with the adoption of the Brown Bess the Short Land pattern with 42 in. barrel and wooden rammer was utilised for this purpose. In c.1770 a specially designed heavy dragoon carbine was designed, still with a 42 in. barrel but with the calibre reduced to carbine bore. It was also fitted with a sling bar. For the lighter cavalry there were several patterns. For the Light Dragoons there was a 36 in. barrel model with bayonet adopted in 1756 and a 37 in. barrel model without a bayonet brought in a year later. Another 37 in. barrel carbine of better finish and with a flat lock was made specially for the Royal Horse Guards.

While the Board of Ordnance always seemed intent on standardising the infantry firearms as far as possible, it softened its heart towards the cavalry and certain Colonels were able to persuade the authorities to grant their regiments special carbines. One of these was General George Eliott commanding the 15th or King's Own Royal Light Dragoons. His carbine is easily recognisable as it has a 28 in. barrel. Originally made fully stocked it was later adapted for a bayonet and was supplied with slotted rammer which was held by a catch in the nose cap. A number of these carbines were made in Dublin for service in Ireland and they have the words DUBLIN CASTLE engraved

Figure 9
Heavy Dragoon by
Jordan, dated 1747;
12-inch barrel.

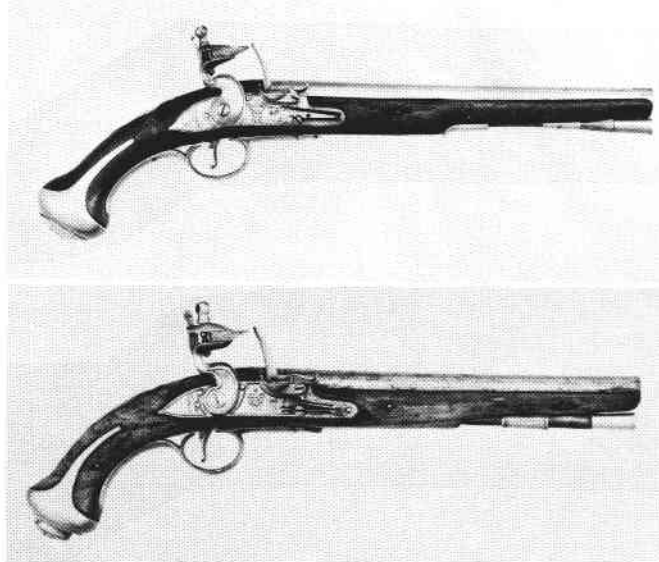


Figure 10
Light Dragoon with
10-inch barrel.

on the lock plates. There are other minor differences between the English and Irish models.

All the above mentioned carbines have sling bars and rings of different construction (Fig. 12).

Probably the most confusing of all the carbines are the non-cavalry ones. We know that carbines were used at different times by officers, sergeants, light infantry, highlanders and the Royal Artillery. The last type is easily distinguished as it has a 37 in. barrel and has sling swivels in the usual places. Sergeants carbines are referred to in the 1770's as having 39 in. barrels but whether of carbine or musket bore is not clear. There are at least two types of carbines with 42 in. barrels of carbine bore, one a lighter version of the Short Land musket and the other not only lighter but of cheaper manufacture. The latter are perhaps examples of carbines made for some colonial corps. There was a continual demand for light arms for troops serving in what English troops would regard as tropical conditions.

The British military firearm which causes most confusion to the modern collector is the sea service musket or rather any one of a group of guns of musket bore which do not fit well into any of the previous categories. From its early days the Admiralty was never concerned about the appearance of its muskets, it was enough that they were strong and worked well. Superior finish was not necessary as the barrels were usually painted black. The result was that the Board of Ordnance in complying with orders for sea service muskets took the opportunity to use up the remainders of old patterns and produced a gun with a mixture of old and new parts according to what was currently available (Fig. 14). These muskets can be found incorporating furniture of 1720, barrels of 1780 and locks of 1810. It is hard to believe that the Ordnance had an inexhaustible supply of early buttplates and trigger guards so that it is possible their contractors received instructions to continue casting these plain but very strong early-pattern parts. There

are a number of muskets with this mixture of parts which have 42 in. and even 46 in. barrels and it is now the fashion to lump them together as naval arms. As far as I know, however, there is no evidence to support this. We do not know the length of the early sea service muskets. All we can say with certainty is that from the middle of the eighteenth century the so-called Long Sea Service musket had a barrel of only 37 in. and the Short Sea musket one of 26 in. A dating point to remember is the year 1752 after which date all muskets were fitted with bayonets. There is fortunately very little doubt about sea service pistols which were apparently all fitted with belt hooks. Very few specimens exist of early models, but the characteristics of all naval pistols is their plain but strong construction.

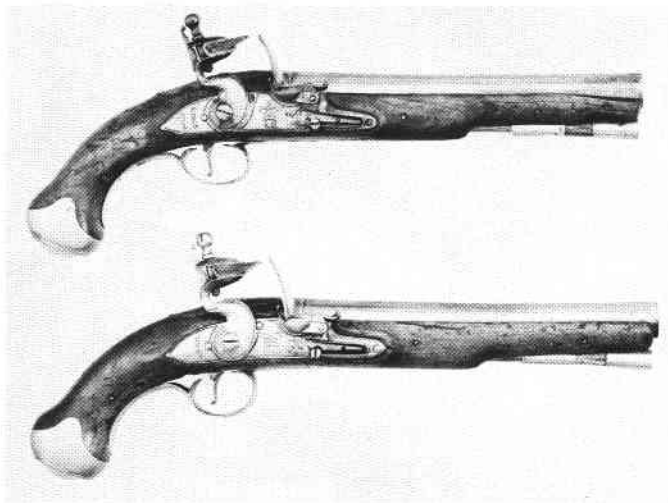
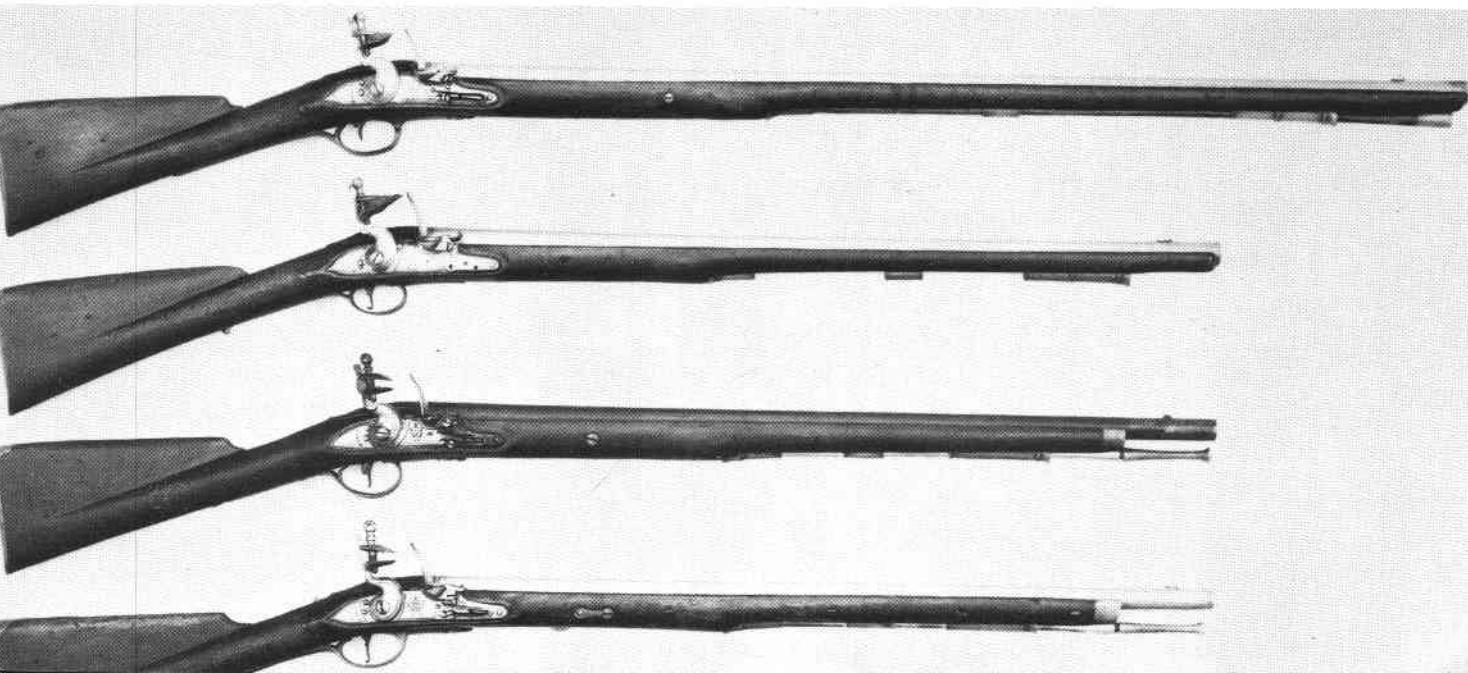


Figure 11
Light Dragoon with nine-inch barrel. The top pistol is by Edge and dated 1760.

Figure 12
Cavalry Carbines
1. 1757 Cavalry
2. Original Elliott, circa 1759
3. 1773 Elliott (post 1780 example)
4. Dublin Castle Elliott



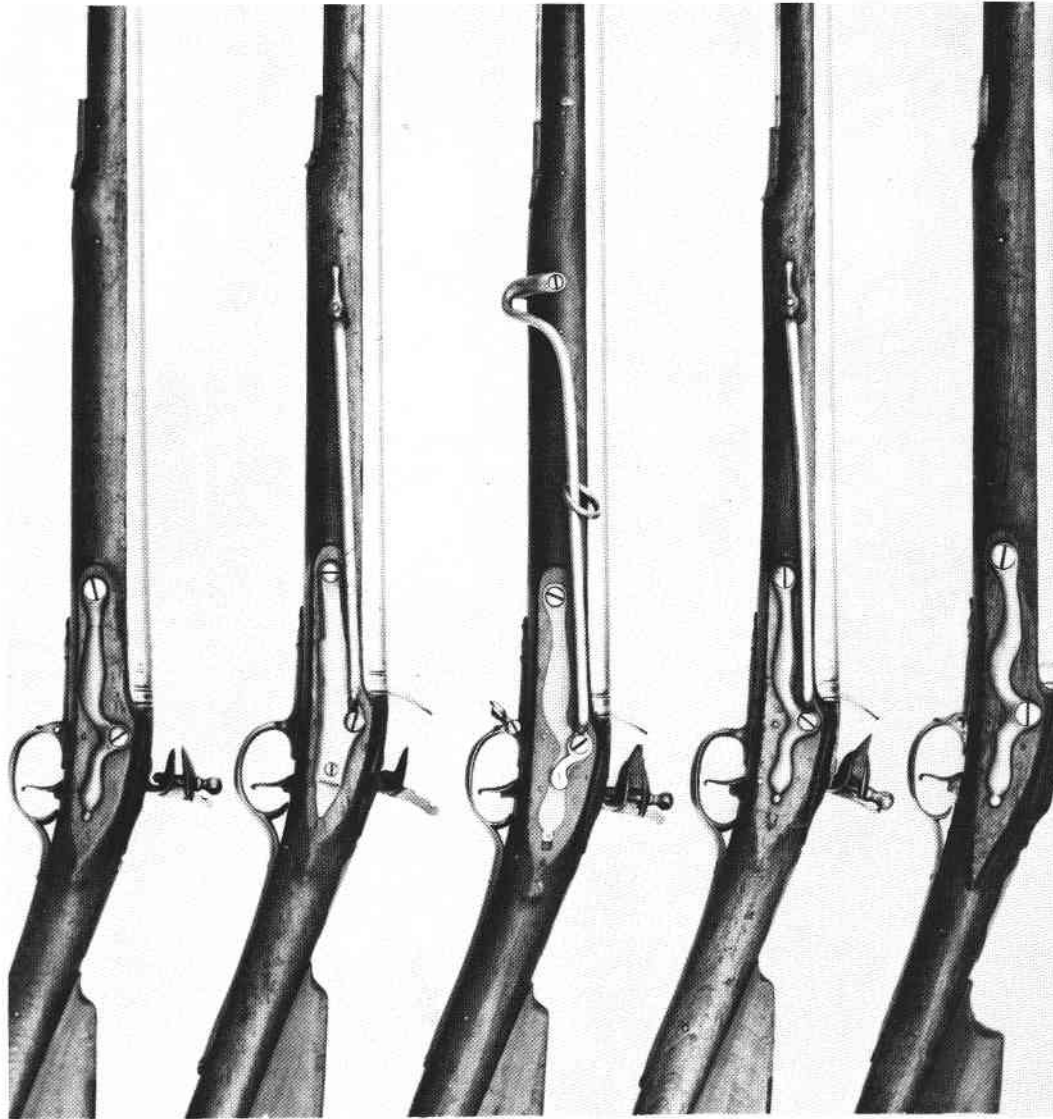
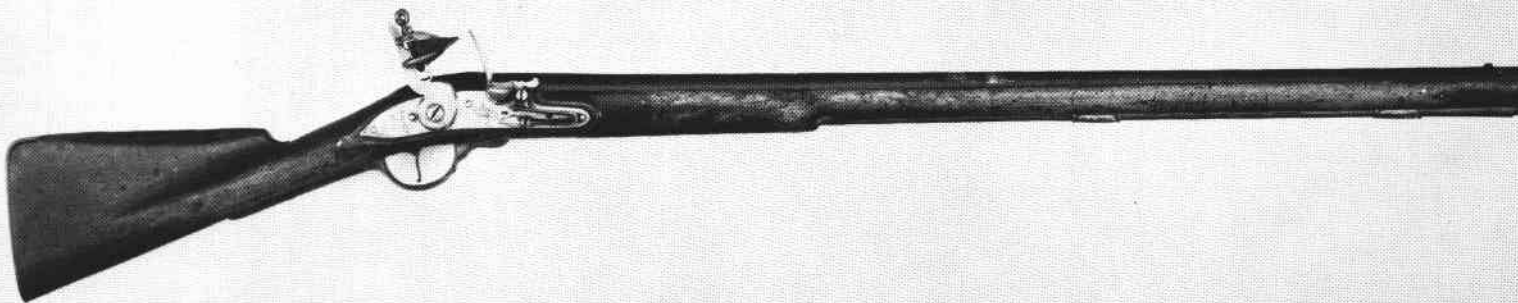


Figure 13
 Carbine sideplates and sling bars
 1. Short land with wood rammer (Dragoon)
 2. 1757 Cavalry and light Dragoon
 3. 1770 Heavy Dragoon
 4. Blues Carbine
 5. Royal Artillery

Figure 14
 Sea Service Musket by Farmer, dated 1745. Pre-1752 pattern, without bayonet



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A firearm which is rarely found and about which little is known is the grenade launcher. The first models were introduced in c.1685. These are most ingenious guns which can be fired in the normal way but which have a receptacle in the butt to take a grenade. With the arm reversed the butt is opened, a folding stand erected and, by diverting the priming channel to the grenade cup, the gun is converted in a matter of seconds from a carbine to a launcher or hand mortarpiece. In the first half of the eighteenth century a number of models with barrels ranging from two to three feet were made. The grenade cups are attached to the muzzle ends of the barrels like bayonets so that the guns could be used in the normal way if necessary. An interest feature of these grenade dischargers is the rear sight with a floating quadrant arm which is cleverly fitted to the sideplate.

So far I have mentioned only smooth-bore firearms. I do not need to tell you that the most famous, the most interesting and perhaps the most emotive of all the firearms under discussion was the Ferguson rifle. About this rifle there has probably been more misconceptions, more apochryphal stories than any other arm in colonial history. Let us try to get the facts straight. Before its advent a small number of muzzleloading British rifles had been tried in the French and Indian Wars. These had aroused little interest. At the beginning of the Revolutionary War it was another matter. The Board of Ordnance was immediately made aware of the need for rifles. The Scottish officer Patrick Ferguson, a Captain of the 70th Regt., had fortuitously chosen this moment to adapt a screw-plug breechloader of well-known design but little popularity into a superb, fighting instrument. The performance of Ferguson's rifle, judged by contemporary standards, was fantastic. It had the speed of a musket combined with the accuracy of a rifle with the additional advantage that it could be loaded easily in almost any position, lying, kneeling and standing. Its inventor demonstrated that he could fire seven shots a minute and hit a man-size target up to 200 and 300 yards. The Board of Ordnance was so impressed by the first demonstration in 1776 that it immediately cancelled all orders for muzzleloading rifles which were then in hand. As was its custom, it first decreed that a small number of the rifles should be made and given a field trial. Ferguson was put in charge of a detachment of 100 men in March 1777. These men were all recruits from Chatham Barracks, as yet indoctrinated with old-fashioned drills. They were given intensive training in the methods of using the rifle and the bayonet which formed an essential part. It is as well to remember when assessing the effectiveness of the Ferguson rifle that the American riflemen who opposed it, not being armed similarly themselves and not being able to load as fast, were caught napping by these bayonets at first.

Ferguson's men had a few months to acclimatize themselves and then they were pitchforked into the Battle of Brandywine. They and the Queen's Rangers took the brunt of the fighting. The Rangers, armed with muzzleloading, smoothbore carbines were cut to

pieces. Ferguson's Riflemen suffered but few casualties and they proved without any question the value of the new rifle. Who knows what might have happened if Ferguson had not been wounded in the arm? But this was the crux of the matter. The rifle was only effective in the hands of men properly trained and properly led.

The fate of the original Ferguson rifles was and still is a mystery. We know that Ferguson's Riflemen were disbanded as a unit. He himself was at first a man shattered in mind as well as body, but gradually his fighting spirit asserted itself. He led commando-like raids and also acted as a spy and an engineer. One has to be careful here, however, in reading the records as there were two Major Fergusons operating at the same time in the roughly the same areas. In 1779 Ferguson formed a small corps of loyalists known as the American Volunteers. Later with this or a similar unit now called Ferguson's Corps he served as part of Sir Henry Clinton's army engaged in the capture of Charleston. The returns of these campaigns show that this unit still consisted of between 150 and 160 fighting men and it was these men who formed the hard core of his small army of militia when he was eventually trapped and killed on King's Mountain in 1780. The question which still remains unanswered is, were these men equipped with the Ferguson rifle?

The only Ferguson rifle which can be said with reasonable certainty to have been one of the original one hundred is at Morristown National Park Museum. There are in existence a number of screw-plug rifles bearing the initials PF or the letters FERGUS on the breech which were probably made under Ferguson's patent for volunteer or sporting use. I notice that many of the sporting models are optimistically called officers' rifles. There is also a group of rifles of military style and markings which bear the royal cipher and the names of the makers EGG and HUNT. One of the Egg rifles is the specimen in the Smithsonian said to have belonged to Anthony de Peyster, Ferguson's second-in-command. Durs Egg, of course, took a leading part in the manufacture of the first experimental models. He made Ferguson's own rifles, one for the Prince of Wales and several other elegant sporting models. Henry Nock was another maker who made Ferguson rifles and in fact produced a cavalry model for the East India Company in 1776, the earliest of the production models. But the fact remains that nowhere in the Ordnance records is there any indication that London gunmakers were involved in the manufacture of the original government rifles. Neither is there any record of a subsequent issue of the rifles. As far as history is concerned they just disappear. It could be that Ferguson rearmed his last corps with some privately-commissioned rifles from Egg and Hunt, but equally well these Egg and Hunt rifles could have been made for volunteer companies of the Napoleonic period. At the moment we do not know.

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