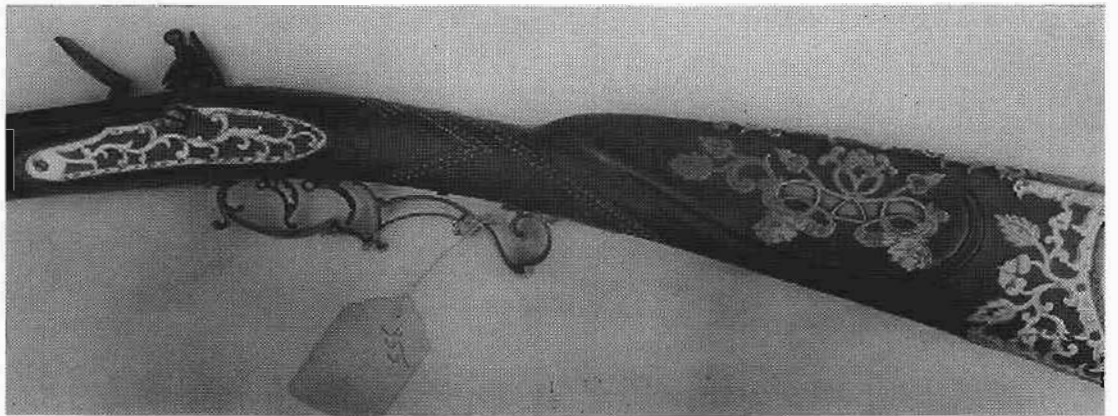
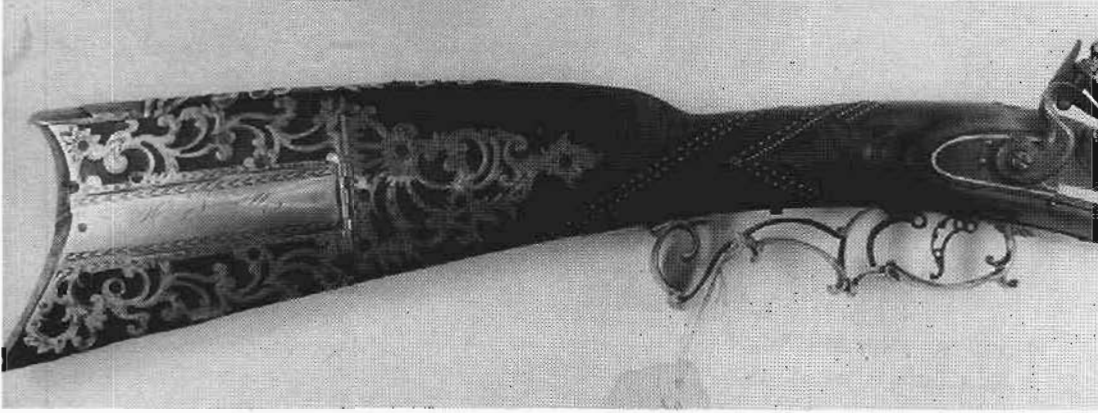
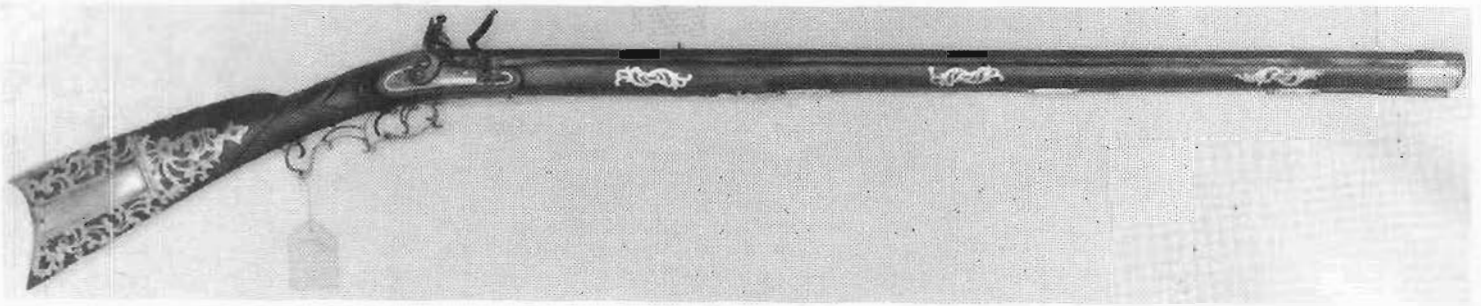


The Bulletin of the
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ARMS
COLLECTORS

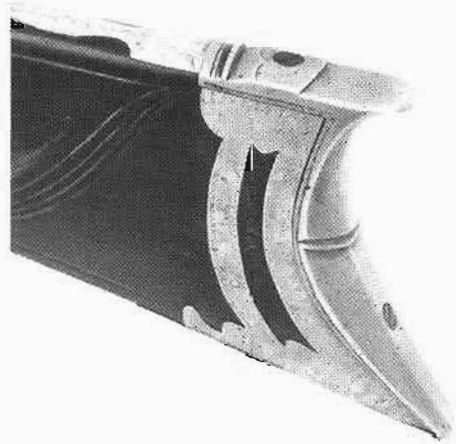
Official Publication of the Society

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The "Kindig" collection longrifle. The patchbox lid is engraved in script, "Wiley G. Higgins M.A." A gold inset in the lockplate is also engraved in script, "Dr. Joe A. Davis". Full stack of curly maple, OA length, 52", octagonal 36" barrel of .43 caliber, rifled, weight 9 1/2 lbs. All mounts and inlays are silver except the trigger guard and buttplate, which are brass; there are over 100 piercings in the mounts and inlays on this rifle. Photos courtesy of Bluford Muir, © George Shumway.



Panelled buttplates on the Mc Lendon rifle (No.8) and the Gamecock rifle (No.2)

The Panelled Buttplate School of Southern Kentuckies

J. A. (Amie) Dowd II

"All or most Southern Kentuckies are just plain Appalachian Mountain Rifles with crude (forged) iron hardware, if any; usually stocked in walnut with perhaps a grease hole in lieu of a patchbox and considered normally to have little or no artistic merit." (author's definition)

Fortunately, this platitude is not only not factual but also no longer reflects the opinion of most knowledgeable gun collectors. One only has to look at the products of such recognized gunsmiths as the Voglers of North Carolina, Reese Fitzpatrick and Stephen O'Dell of Mississippi, the Beans of Tennessee or Simon Lauck and M. Sheetz of Virginia to realize that many outstanding Kentucky rifles and pistols were manufactured in the South during the first half of the 19th century.

The purpose of this article is to introduce you to another group of Southern Kentucky-type rifle and pistol gunsmiths who produced an extremely artistic and stylized product and who also deserve recognition within the gun collecting fraternity, especially by those interested in the American Longrifle.

The "Panelled Buttplate" School was born in the Carolinas, but matured in north central Georgia during this same period, reaching its peak circa 1820-1840.

By my definition, "a Panelled Buttplate has three tapered vertical panels or facets (flat surfaces) which are cast or more likely fitted³ into the lower, two-thirds of the exterior surface of the curve of the buttplate." Likewise, the buttcaps on the pistols have vertical sides (flat panels), often in a hexagonal or octagonal shape.

In addition to the "panelled" buttcaps and buttplates, other distinctive characteristics most frequently found include:

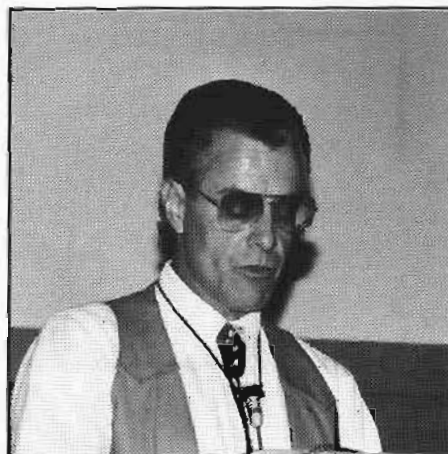
1) The silver facing around the edge of the lockplate mortise or the silver band inlaid directly into the perimeter of the face of the lockplate.

2) The use, normally, of a saddle or beavertail style check rest.

3) The frequent use of a silver or brass overlay on the upper five flats of the breech of the barrel, usually with a diagonal forward edge which is sometimes bordered with a gold band.

4) The elaborate patchboxes, toe-plates, comb-plates and inlays which utilize similar artistic motifs, especially variations of the inverted heart.

5) The unique style of border engraving frequently



used along the edges of the patchbox or larger inlays.

6) The Carolina-influenced stock architecture, including the incised carved lines along the comb and lower edge of the buttstock, and

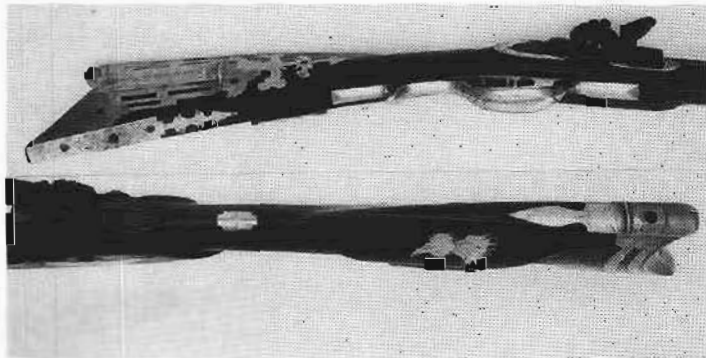
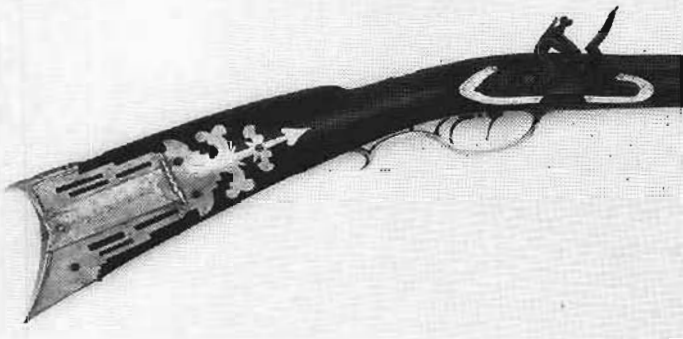
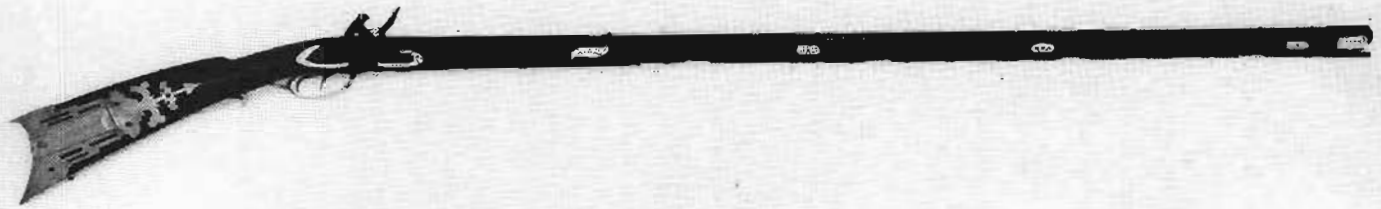
7) The applied silver overlays on the brass hardware, another classic Carolina feature.

These features, when used collectively, created a unique flavor which allows the guns produced by this school to be identified easily today.

The most recognizable piece from this school is the great rifle, formerly in the Kindig collection, which is signed "Wiley G. Higgins, M.A." on the patchbox lid. Although I had located Wiley G. Higgins in the Monroe County, Georgia, census of 1830 as well as in the Macon County, Georgia, census of 1840 & 1850, it is Mr. Dan Wallace of Tennessee who deserves primary credit for what we know today about the extensive Higgins family of gunsmiths. His exceptionally scholarly article, "The Higgins Clan" was published in the Spring, 1990, *KRA Newsletter*. A summary of this information about the Higgins family, excerpted with permission from this article, is given at the end of the article⁴.

Of the Kindig-Higgins rifle, Dan Wallace says:

The rifle pictured (on the opposite page) was made by him [Higgins] for Dr. Joe A. Davis. Joe Kindig had [sic] featured the rifle in his work and study, *Thoughts on the Kentucky Rifle in its Golden Age*. A gold inset on the lock is engraved in script, "Dr. Joe A. Davis". This same type gold inset appears on other Georgia rifles, sometimes with the maker's name. In the 1850 and 1860 Census of Putnam County, Georgia, I have found J. A. Davis was born in 1820 in North Carolina and listed as surgeon-dentist, working in the town of Eatonton. In 1860 Dr. Davis listed his estate at \$4,300. I believe this to be the Dr. Joe



The "Gamecock" longrifle, author's collection. Full stock of curly maple, brass hardware, coin silver inlays, 43" swamped barrel of .38 caliber, rifled, weight 8 3/4 lbs. The lock is marked "R. Kingsland & Co., Warranted." Photos courtesy of Charles Semmer.

A. Davis engraved on the gold inset, and the rifle to have been made for him about 1840.

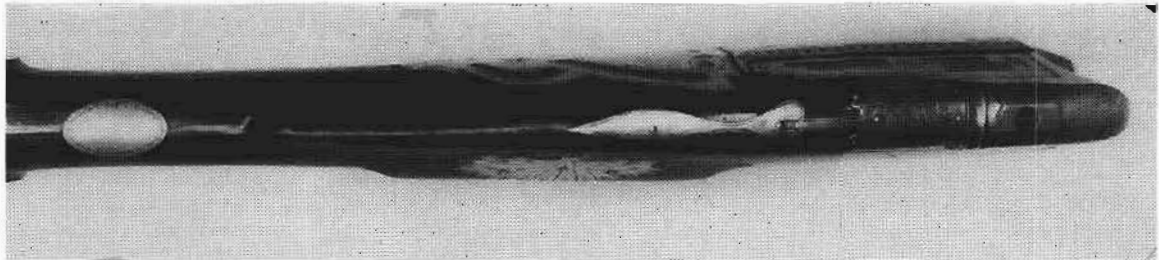
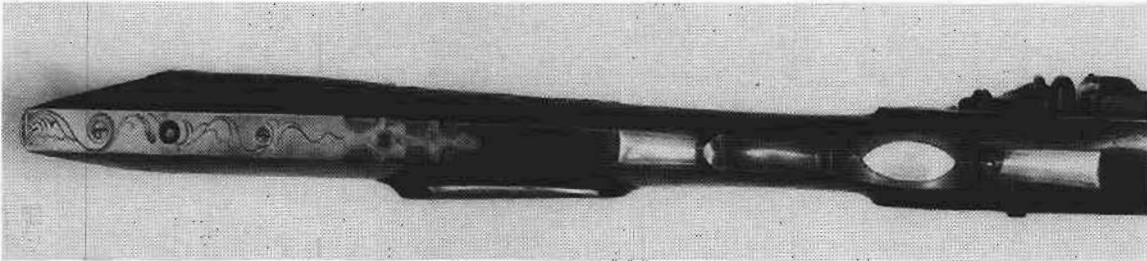
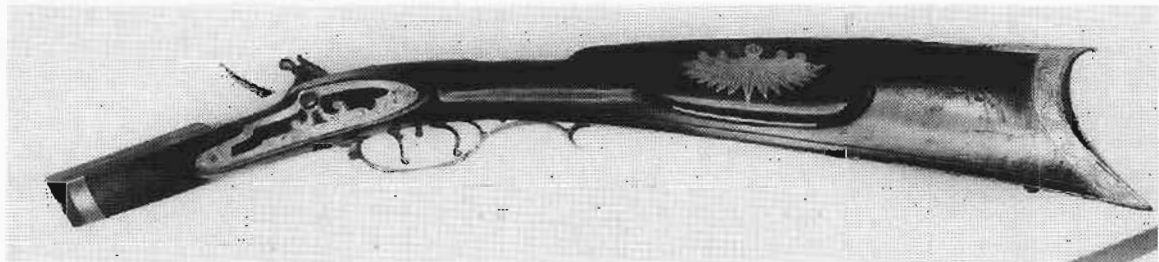
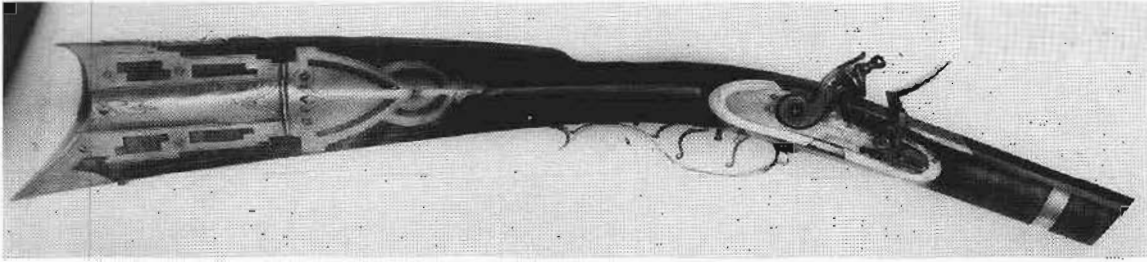
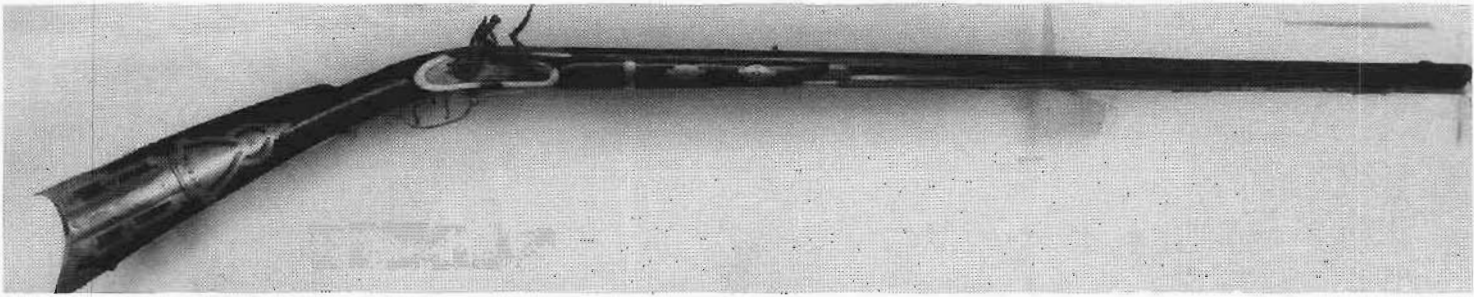
Kindig had this to say about the engraving on the rifle: "It is by an extremely masterful hand with every detail beautifully designed and beautifully executed. I consider this by far the most artistic Kentucky rifle of its period that I have ever seen", and as having "The most beautiful patchbox that I have ever seen on any Kentucky rifle". Kindig went on to say, "I am positive that the rifle was made west of the Appalachian Mountains about 1825".

We can only agree with Joe Kindig that this is the most artistic of these rifles. Let us now look at eleven more of the thirteen known pieces in the school.

RIFLE NO. 2 "The Gamecock Longrifle" (From the author's collection) is where my participation in this project began in 1985. It is unsigned, but, as Dan Wallace has said, "It literally bleeds its Carolina roots" and is probably the earliest currently known piece. Initially I believed this rifle was from North Carolina, or perhaps as far south as the Spartanburg area of South Carolina. Indeed, the stock

architecture and carving are typical of that attributed to Rowan County, N.C., and the engraving detail on the bow of the trigger guard is identical to that on the trigger guard, rear ramrod pipe finial, rear sight base and lockbolt plate of the two outstanding Carolina Longrifles marked "W.B.", pictured on pages 90-95 in the book, *Longrifles of North Carolina*, by John Bivins, Jr., while the engraving on the patchbox lid is reminiscent of the work of the Eagle and Ribelin families of gunsmiths. However, we now believe that it was made by a member of the Higgins Clan, perhaps Wiley G. himself, most likely during their early Georgia period circa 1820-1825. The lockplate is marked "R. Kingsland & Co., Warranted". We assume this to be either the manufacturer or, more likely, the American importer/dealer or retailer. A similar flintlock of the same period with identical marking is known on another classic iron-mounted, Southern Kentucky rifle.

Obviously, the most uniquely artistic and romantically Southern (of the period) feature on this rifle is the fierce, yet regal, silver bust of the fighting gamecock inlaid on the cheekrest (inside cover). Since cockfighting was a very popular sport, openly enjoyed and morally accepted by virtually all classes at that time (especially in the South), this inlay indicates the owner of this rifle, which would have been very expensive at that time, was a Southern gentleman, perhaps a wealthy Carolina or Georgia planter who participated actively in this ancient Sport of Kings. One person who exemplifies the status this sport sustained during that period is the immortal "Cocker", Nick Arrington of Nash County, North Carolina, who in the 1830s travelled by invitation to Mexico to pit his Cripple Tonys in a derby against the Spanish Blues of General Santa Anna, and, winning, was afforded safety by an armed escort back to the Mississippi River.



The "F.H. Heard" longrifle, Tom Wilson collection. Half-stock of curly maple, brass hardware, coin silver inlays and overlays, 42" barrel of .40 caliber, rifled. Photos courtesy of Dr. James B. Whisker.

RIFLE NO. 3 (From the collection of Tom Wilson) is signed in script on a silver plate inlet into the top barrel flat, "F. H. Heard". F. H. (Hugh) Heard was born in 1810 and from 1830 to 1850 resided in Butts County, Georgia, where he was a member of the Sandy Creek Baptist Church, as were several members of the Higgins family, including William Higgins (most likely Wiley's father) who was elected a Deacon in 1824. By 1860 he is found living in Newton County. At this

time we believe that Heard was the owner of this rifle as we have, as yet, found no evidence that he worked in the gunsmithing trade. This fine rifle exhibits all of the features we would expect to find, plus the protective as well as decorative silver overlay at the breech of the barrel and on the bow of the trigger guard. Like the Gamecock Rifle, it is brass mounted with coin silver inlays.

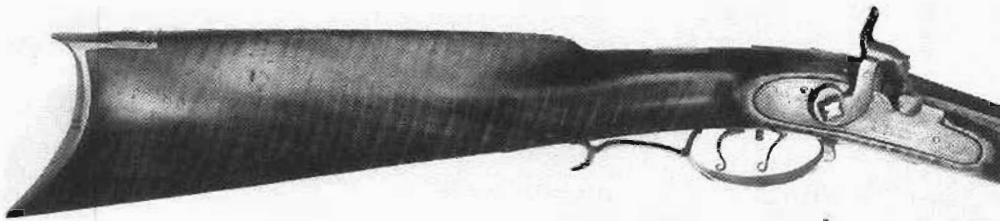


The "Pistol-Grip" longrifle. Ray McKnight collection. Half-stock of walnut, brass hardware, silver inlays, 38" barrel. Photos courtesy of Charles Semmer.

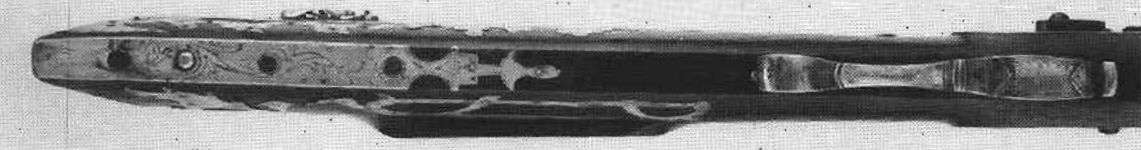
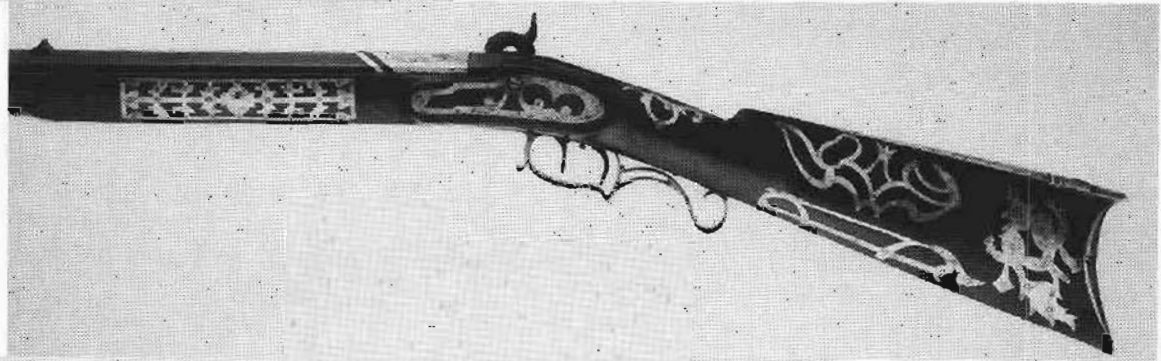
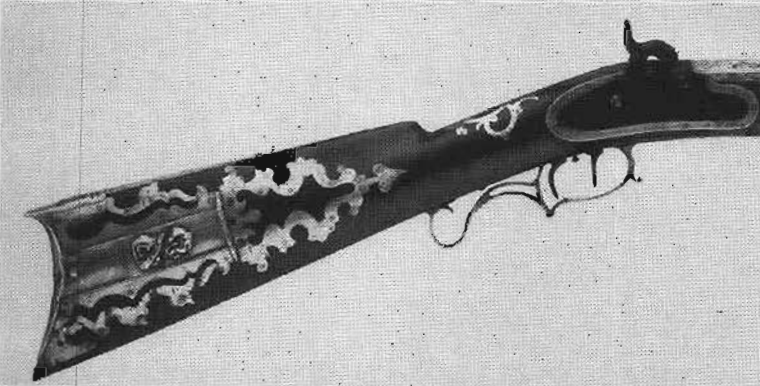
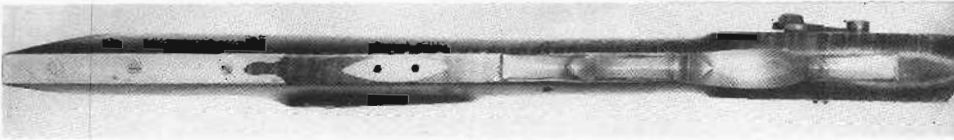
RIFLE NO. 4. (From the collection of Ray McKnight) With its unique, non-detachable pistol-grip stock, this is another example of the creative imagination of this group of riflemiths. This gun, like a couple of the other rifles, may have originally been a fullstock. Interestingly, the brass mounts and silver inlays show no sign of having been engraved and, although well worn, the rifle still clearly shows the strong Carolina influence, including the incised carved lines of the upper and lower buttstock. Please note

that this is the third rifle in this group to have a tubular metal holder for a metal pricker (touch-hole cleaning device) mounted below the cheekrest.

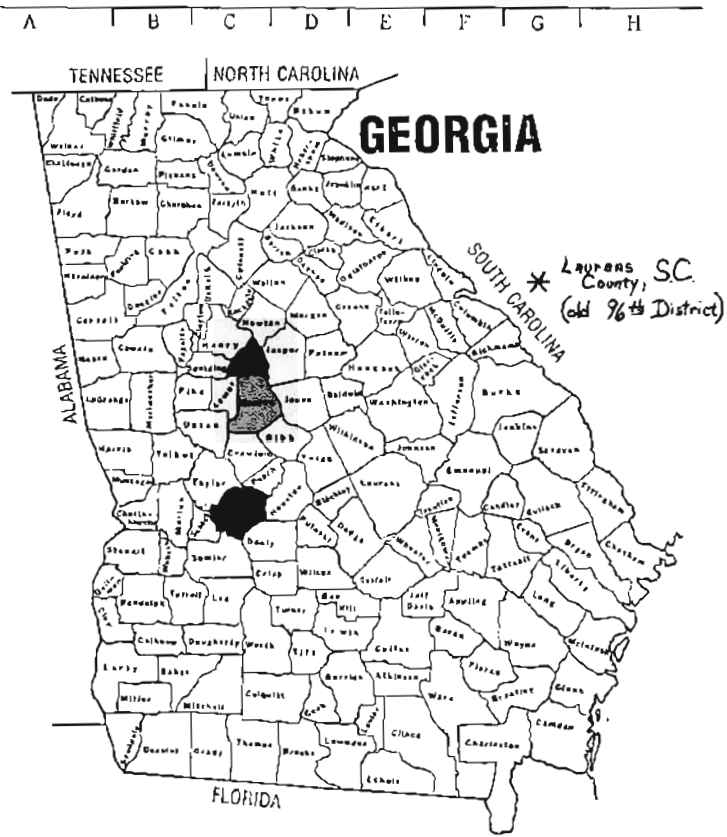
RIFLE NO. 5, opposite top. (From the collection of Jerry Noble) It is much plainer than the other pieces, but still exhibits the buttplate features which we would expect to find. It is original percussion ignition and may have been made by one of the younger or next generation members of the Higgins clan.



The percussion rifle from the Noble collection, half stock of curly maple with brass hardware. Photos courtesy of Dr. James. B. Whisker.



The "L.B. Elliott" longrifle, anonymous collection. Full-stock of walnut, all coin-silver hardware and inlays, 41 3/4" barrel. Photos courtesy of W.W. Caruth III.



Georgia and its counties, with Butts, Monroe, and Macon highlighted

RIFLE NO. 6 (Anonymous collection) is the only rifle yet discovered which is completely silver mounted. The patchbox, with its relief bust of a military officer, is so unique and artistic that it rivals that of the great rifle once in the Kindig collection. On either side of this figure is engraved "Gen. Washington". To date, we have not determined the true identity of this person. Although the likeness bears little resemblance to and is not very complimentary, it may be a commemorative or honorary recognition of General George Washington, 1st President of the United States, since he is the only person named "Washington" listed as a General of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783. By the early part of the 19th century through the duration of the patriotic Federal Period, the memory of Washington's many accomplishments and contributions to the birth of our country were immortalized in many forms, including artistic embellishment such as this patchbox. Especially in such states as Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia and Mississippi, Washington was revered as the perfect example of the Southern Gentleman whose character possessed the true essence of chivalry. Interestingly, the year 1832, the

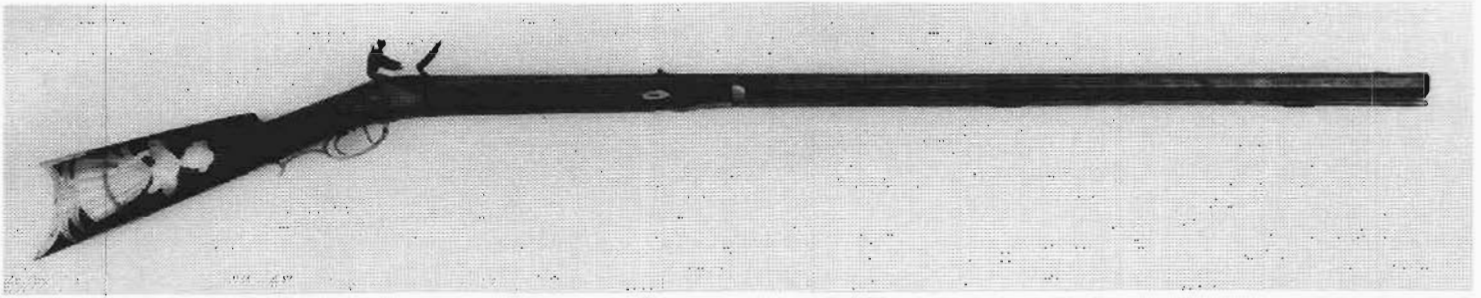
approximate period of this rifle's manufacture, marks the 100th anniversary of George Washington's birth!

On the other hand, it may represent another General Washington of the post Revolutionary War period. A search of the available military records for this period up to and including the Mexican War has revealed, in addition to several officers up through the rank of Colonel, only one other general by the name of Washington, Brigadier General William Augustine Washington. William A. Washington entered the service in his home state of Virginia as a Captain in the 3rd Virginia Troop on February 25, 1776. He was first wounded at the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776, and subsequently promoted to the rank of Major and then Lt. Colonel. Lt. Colonel W. A. Washington was awarded a silver Medal of Valor for his conduct as Commander of the 3rd Dragoons at the Battle of Cowpens², January 17, 1781. He was later wounded and taken prisoner at Eutaw Springs, September 8, 1781, and remained a prisoner on parole until the end of the war. Colonel Washington remained in the regular U.S. Army serving in South Carolina and on July 19, 1798, was commissioned a Brigadier General. He held this rank until he retired June 15, 1800. He died March 6, 1810. Obviously this rifle is too late to have belonged to this General Washington, but could have been commissioned in his memory by a descendent.

It is also remotely possible that the name engraved on the patchbox lid is that of the original owner - an unknown or, as yet unidentified General Washington.

In comparing the portrait to similar types of personal representations of the period (ie: Indian Peace Medals, coins, etc.) as well as military portraits, it more closely resembles an individual of the 1820-1835 period, such as a generic Andrew Jackson.

The name "L. B. Elliott" is engraved on the silver plate in the top barrel flat, the same as "F. H. Heard", the assumed owner of rifle No. 3. To date we have not identified "Elliott" as either a gunmaker or the owner. Also, as on the "Heard" marked rifle, the breech of the barrel is overlaid in silver, this time engraved and then bordered with a diagonal line of solid gold. A gold band is also inlaid near the muzzle of the barrel. As indicated by the marking on the lock, this rifle was given a second life when, in 1858, Texas gunsmith G. Erickson of Houston restocked it in walnut, shortened the barrel, fitted it with a patent breech having a long 3-screw tang and converted it to percussion with a new lock. Then, in keeping with the original rifle, he overlaid the lock mortise facing with german silver, which was then in common use as an inexpensive substitute for coin silver. So now we have perhaps the fanciest plains rifle known!!



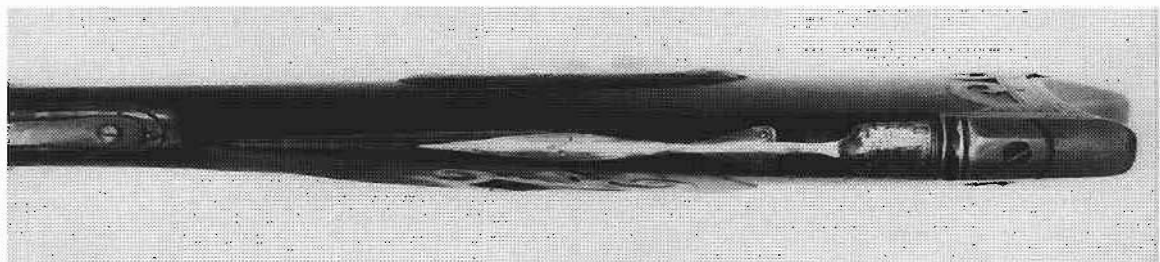
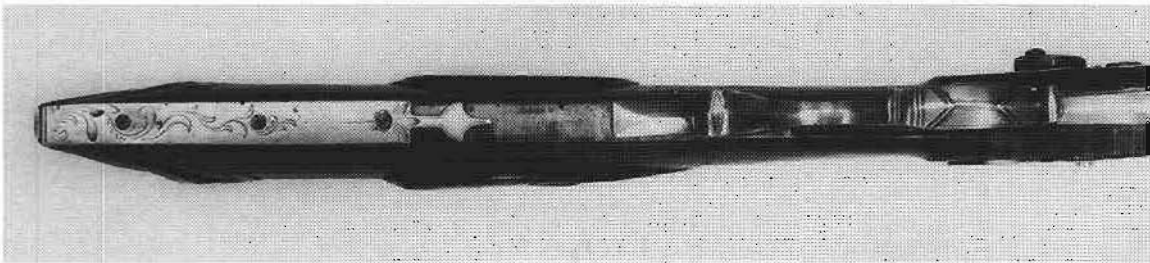
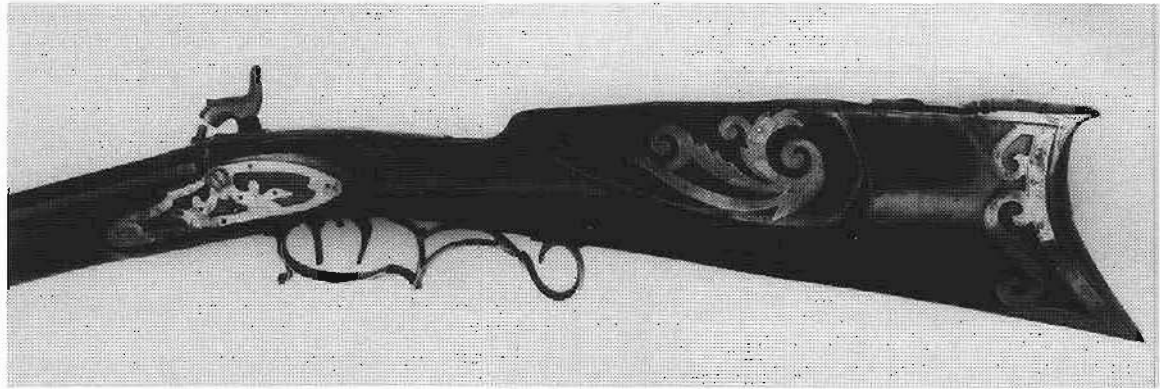
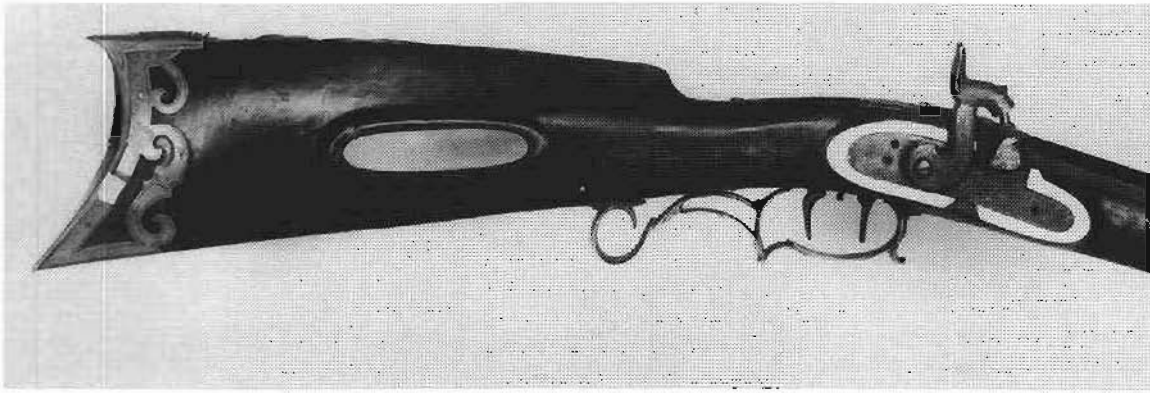
The Cody Museum longrifle. Half-stock of walnut, brass hardware, 41 1/2" barrel of .36 caliber, rifled. The large inlay of the Southern Lady on the right buttstock is made up of 3 metals: silver, brass and copper. Photos courtesy of the Cody Firearms Museum, Devendra Shrikhande - photographer.

RIFLE NO. 7 (Gift of the Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection, Cody Firearms Museum, at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center) was originally purchased by Edwin Pugsley in 1912 at the Watts hardware store in Thompsonville, Ga., where it had presumably laid since being sold or traded-in on a modern cartridge gun some time in the latter part of the 19th century. In addition to the characteristics normally associated with this school we find yet another unique and very artistic feature: in lieu of a patchbox, we have the full figure of a gracious Southern lady dressed in a style typical of the antebellum period. In order to give this inlay depth and natural color the maker has used three metals: silver, brass, and copper.

RIFLE NO. 8. (From the collection of Bob Cheel) This is yet another rifle of extraordinary quality and craftsmanship. Although not completely restored, its original outstanding design is still very evident. The ornate, pierced trigger guard is the same design as that on rifle no. 5; however, in this case it is brass with silver overlaid on both the forward and rear extensions. It is believed to have belonged to "Jo. T. McCendon" whose name is engraved on the silver plate set into the raised wood panel on the right buttstock. (Below and overpage)

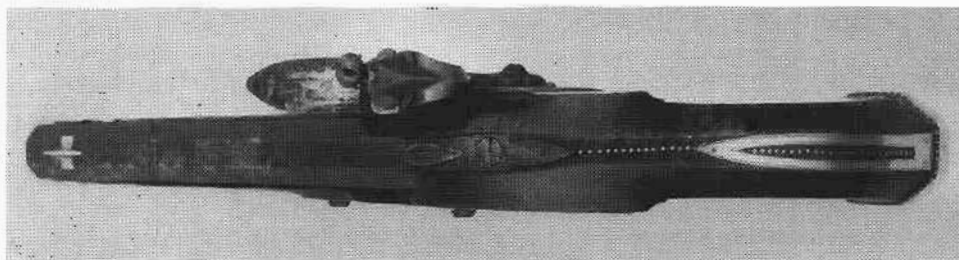
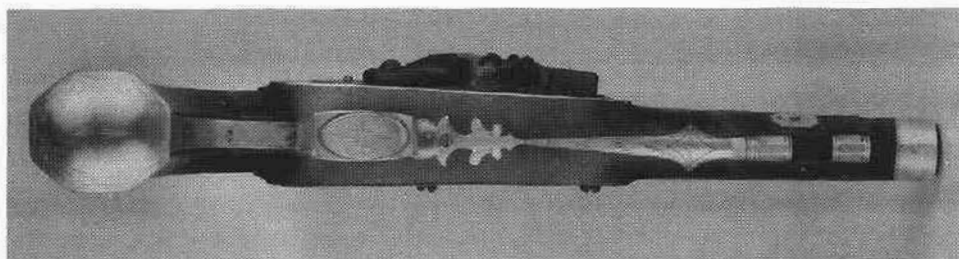
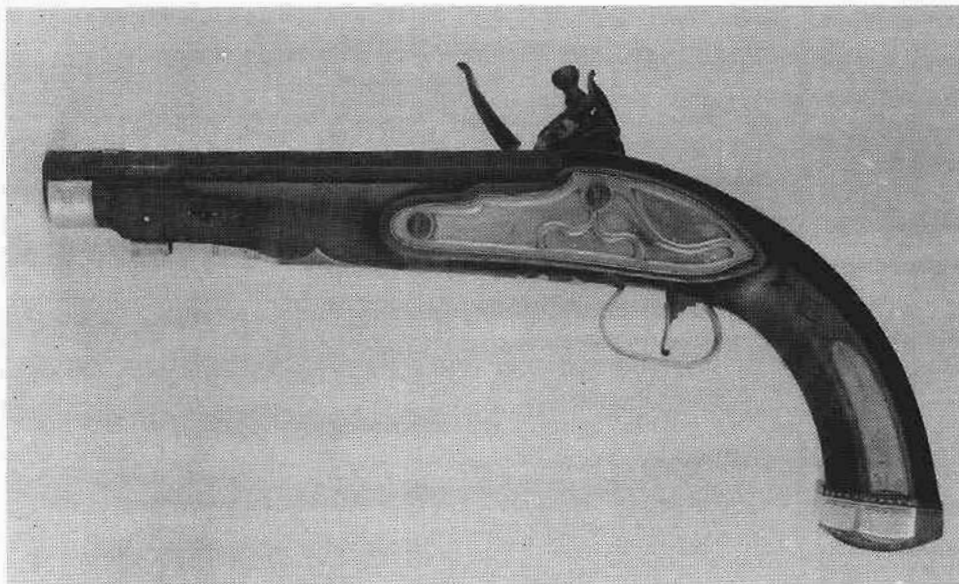
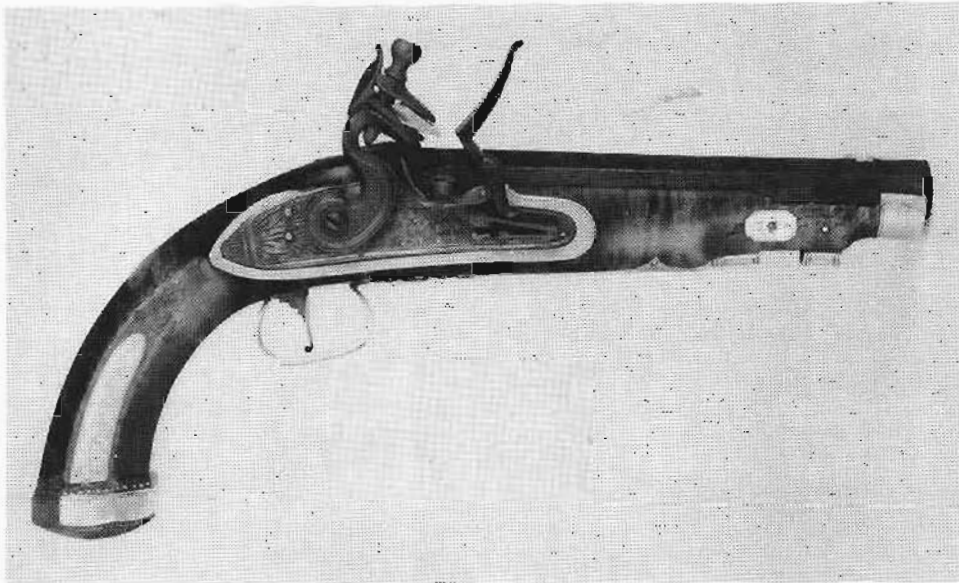


The "Jo. T. McCendon" longrifle, Bob Cheel collection. Half-stock of birds-eye and curly maple, brass hardware with coin-silver inlays and overlays, 39" barrel of .34 caliber, rifled. Photos courtesy of Dr. James B. Whisker. More photos, next page.



PISTOL NO. 1 (On display at the Hermitage Museum near Nashville, Tenn.) is thought to have belonged to Andrew Jackson, also known as "Old Hickory", hero of the Battle of New Orleans and 7th President of the United States, or so we may assume, as it was found hidden at the Hermitage during a remodeling project several years ago. It is logical to assume that Jackson acquired or was given this pistol on one of his many trips into Georgia. In his role as military leader in the campaign against the hostile Creek Indians he would have known such locally important and

prominent individuals as members of the Higgins family, as well as William McIntosh, the son of a Scotch trader and a full-blood Creek woman. McIntosh lived in a tavern which he owned at Indian Springs which was near the location of Higgin's Mill in Monroe County, and through his talent and education rose to be chief of the Lower Creeks, allies of the Americans, and was known as "White Warrior". Both he and Jackson were signers of a peace treaty at Indian Springs in 1825. It should be noted that a Col. Higgins served directly under Jackson in the Red Stick (Creek) Indian Wars. →

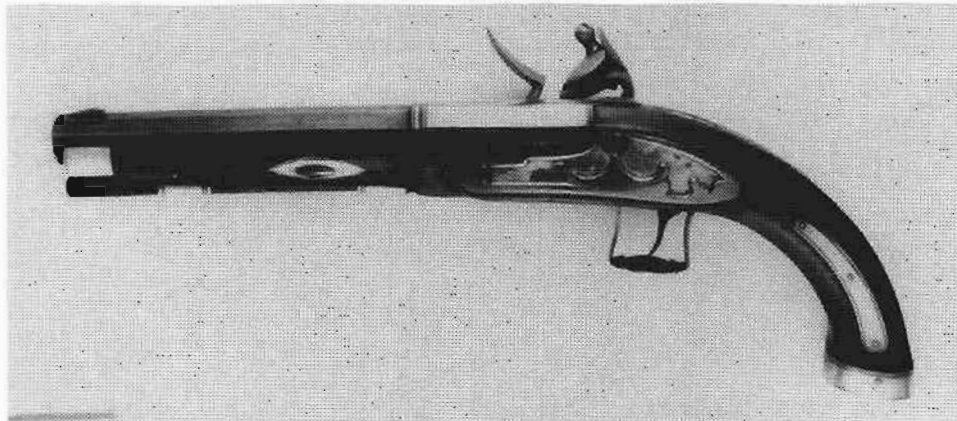
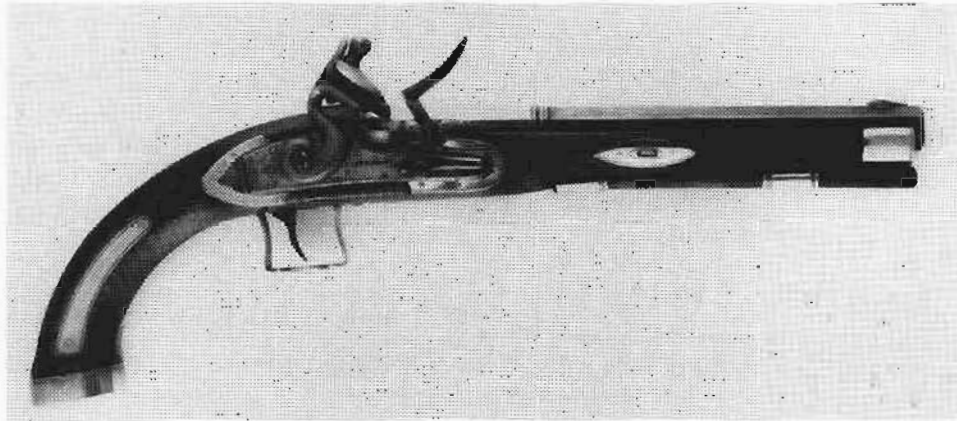


The "Andrew Jackson" pistol. Full stock of curly maple; brass trigger guard with applied silver oval on exterior surface of bow; then with lockbolt plate brass over silver, with the rest of the mountings and inlays of silver. Photos courtesy of Robin B. Hale.

As you can see, this fine pistol has all the characteristics expected including the faceted or panelled buttcap. It is completely silver mounted except the trigger guard, which is brass, but has a silver oval disc overlaid on the exterior surface of the bow and the sideplate or lock-bolt plate which is brass open-work over sheet silver. The silver pins directly above the buttcap as well as on top of the handle from the tip of the tang down to the butt are reminiscent of the silver pins or studs which decorate the checkered wrist of the Kindig collection rifle. The lock is marked "Hyde & Cleveland, Warranted" who may have been connected to the

partnership of Hyde & Goodrich of New Orleans, importers of gun parts, etc.

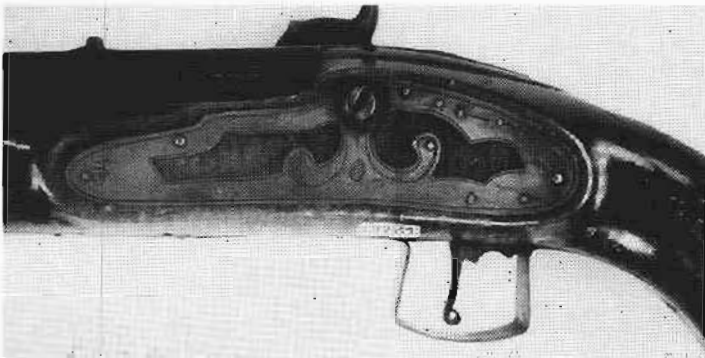
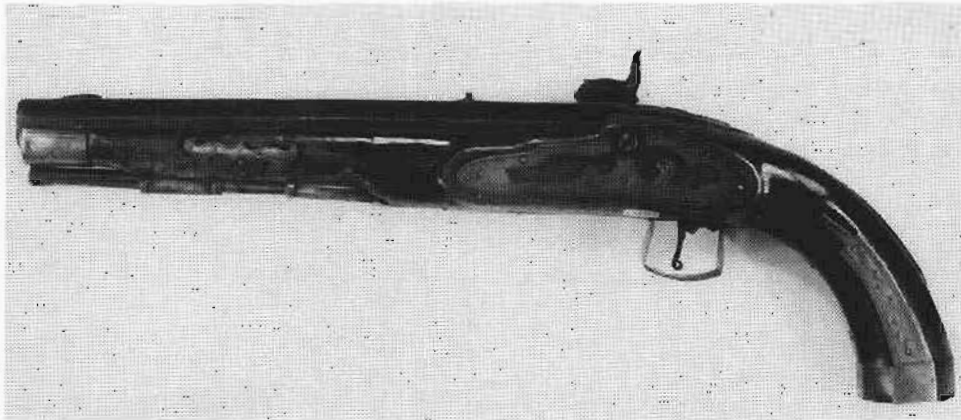
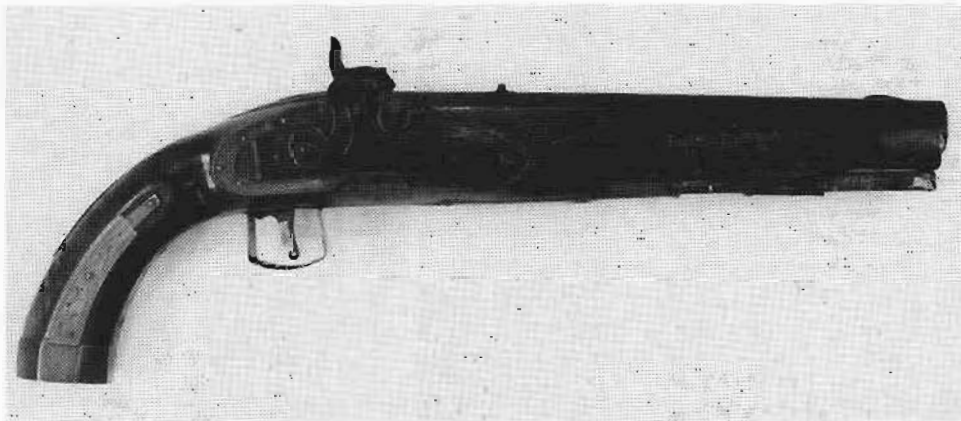
Of special (selfish) interest to the author is the fact that this pistol is engraved in a style and pattern almost identical to that of the Gamecock rifle. This fact, coupled with the knowledge that Jackson was a very active "Cocker" who even went so far as to have a pit built at the White House when he was President, leads to the romantic yet academically unacceptable thought that perhaps there might have been a relationship between these two pieces!



The "Capper & Co." pistol, John S. duMont collection. Full stock of curly maple, all coin silver hardware except for the trigger guard, which is brass with an oval silver plate applied to the exterior surface of the square shaped bow, plus a sheet brass overlay on the breech of the barrel and the lockbolt plate which is brass over silver; 14" overall, 8 1/2" barrel of .48 caliber, smoothbore. Photos courtesy of John S. duMont.

PISTOL NO. 2 (From the collection of John S. duMont) was previously owned by Bill Locke and is pictured on page 414 of the book of his collection. It is an outstanding Southern Kentucky pistol, primarily silver mounted, with the exception of the trigger guard, which is brass with an oval silver plate overlaid on the exterior of the square shaped

bow, and the two piece, lockbolt plate which is brass over silver in a style similar to the Jackson pistol. Also, as we've seen on a few of the rifles, the rear 1/3 of the barrel is overlaid, but this time in brass. The lock is marked "Capper & Co.", and here again we assume this to be either the manufacturer or importer of the lock.



The "E.B. Weed" pistol, University of Texas Memorial Museum collection, acc.# 648-159. Full stock of curly maple, 14 1/2" OA with 9" barrel of .45 caliber, rifled; primarily silver mounted. Photos courtesy of James Govro.

PISTOL NO. 3 (From the collection of the University of Texas Memorial Museum in Austin, acc.# 648-159) is a bit more folksy and less refined than the previous two pieces, although no less interesting. It is completely silver mounted and very nicely engraved; however, the engraving patterns on these three pistols show distinctive differences in style and execution. The lock is marked "E. B. Weed, Warranted", who, as before, is either the manufacturer or American importer/dealer. The bottom of the panelled buttcap is engraved with the bust of a military officer with the name "I. Clivel" and the date "1777". This is, of course, reminiscent of the great three-dimensional patchbox on the earlier, silver-mounted rifle. It is my belief that these likenesses are meant



to commemorate the military careers of the owners. Perhaps someday we will know who these early "Freedom Fighters" were and how they contributed to the foundation of the life we all enjoy and often take for granted!

In addition to these pieces, there is information regarding the existence of a second rifle very similar to the Kindig collection gun, and I have personally seen an all iron-mounted rifle (previously in the Harley Macintosh collection), the only other know piece with a checkered wrist decorated with silver studs. Unfortunately neither were available to be included in this paper.

In closing I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who helped make this study possible: to the good friends whose keen eyes helped locate several of the guns and to the collectors and museums who allowed their fine pieces to be photographed and included in this paper. In particular I am most deeply indebted to my friend, Dan Wallace, whose collaboration and unselfish sharing of his research on the Higgins family helped immeasurably to make this project as complete as it is to date.

CONTRIBUTORS

Anonymous Collection, John S. (Jack) Brooks, Robert D. Choe!, John S. duMont, John R. Ewing, Jim Govro, Robin C. Hale, Richard N. Kennedy, Jr., W.T. (Tom) Lewis, Dr. Harley R. Macintosh, Ray A. McKnight, R.L. (Bob) Moulder, Jerry Noble, Charles Semmer, Dan Wallace, Tom B. Wilson

The Cody Firearms Museum, The Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming

The University of Texas Memorial Museum, Austin, Texas

The Ladies Hermitage Association, Hermitage, Tennessee

It is hoped that anyone with further information, especially concerning the existence of additional pieces belonging to this school, will contact me c/o Walrath #T9 & a/c Co. 1520 Dudley Lakeswood, Colo. 80215, (303) 232-4343

The Higgins Clan

by Dan Wallace, KRA

The original article consists of a full five and a half pages of text and photos, including the three photos of the Wiley G. Higgins rifle shown on page 2. In those pages are details of the areas in which the Higgins families lived, how some of those areas got their names and other historical data about them whom the Higgins married and the names and dates of birth of their children, and many other details irrelevant to this study. For several reasons it was not possible to include all of this material here so the article has been edited to include all material about the Higgins Clan gunsmiths, without the extraneous material. Even so, the tremendously detailed research done by Dan Wallace is clearly evident.

Foreword

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote in his *Dedication to Underwoods* "There are men and classes of men that stand above the common herd, the soldier, the sailor, and the shepherd not infrequently, and artist rarely."

This study will not only deal with one such artist, but an entire family of tradesmen.

I believe the Higgins Clan of gunsmiths, silver and goldsmiths, jewelers and blacksmiths to be the base from which many gunsmiths from South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama became influenced.

I know of no family with so many members fitting into one, or all of

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the above trades. Most of these men were born in old ninety-six district of South Carolina, two or three in Georgia, and one or two in Alabama.

The Higgins Clan

In the 1790 Census of South Carolina there are only eleven Higgins listed as heads of Households. All lived in Laurens County which is in old ninety-six district. According to the census all these men lived very near each other and have the following given names, two Reubin's, two John's, Jessy, James, Henry, Jennie, William, Newton, and Thomas

By 1800 this total is reduced to ten with all but three still living in Laurens County. These three are living in Spartanburg, Newberry and Landcaster, all in old ninety-six district. The given names added are Frances and Samuel.

Some of the earliest settlers in the area were William Higgins, David Higgins, Sterling T. Higgins, James Higgins and John Higgins. William Higgins built a large three story mill in what had been Monroe County some few years before 1820. This mill was on the Towaliga River and became famous, even today the area is known as Higgins Mill.

I have found no hard evidence that William was a gunsmith, but as all other Higgins males living around him were, I see no need to exclude him.

Wiley Grove Higgins was born August 24, 1799 in Laurens County, South Carolina. Wiley migrated to Indian Springs and was married there on

11 July 1821 to Miss Hannah Newton.

On September 22, 1826 Wiley was elected a Captain in the Monroe County, Georgia Militia. He remained in this appointment until elected a Colonel 2 May 1832. He served as a Colonel until 10 May 1837.

Wiley had many land transactions during the years 1828-1839. This last year Wiley and his family migrated to Macon County, Georgia.

The farm where Wiley, Hannah and their children lived was on the headwaters of Camp Creek and backed up to what became known during the Civil War, as Andersonville Prison, very near the Schley County line.

Wiley is remembered in an 1933 history of Macon County as a gunsmith, gold and silversmith, and a maker of fine furniture.

Sterling T. Higgins was born 1802 in Laurens County, South Carolina and became a gunsmith.

By 1846 Sterling had migrated to Chambers County, Alabama. The 1850 Census lists Sterling as a gunsmith. His estate is valued at \$3,000.00. His wife Harriet B. is 44 years of age and born in South Carolina. Sterling's oldest son, Robert, is 22 years old and working as a gunsmith.

Living very near Sterling T. is John Higgins, born 1807 in South Carolina. John's occupation is given as a blacksmith and his estate is valued at \$1,500.00.

Joseph Higgins is living in the same district and lists his occupation as a gunsmith. He was born 1818 in Georgia.

Joseph is also listed in the 1850 Manufacturers Census of Alabama as a gunsmith. He has \$800.00 invested in his shop and uses 225 pounds of iron annually. The shop is powered by hand with one male employed. Wages are \$30.00 per month and an annual profit of \$900.00 from rifles. Joseph is the son of William Higgins found living in Butts County, Georgia and was born after his father left South Carolina.

The other Higgins family members working in Chambers County in 1850 include James, born 1806 in South Carolina. He lists his occupation as a blacksmith and with his real estate valued at \$800.00. James migrated from Butts County, Georgia, to Alabama in 1844.

Living next door to James is John Higgins, born in 1825 in South Carolina. John lists his occupation as a blacksmith and his estate is valued at \$500.00.

Sometime prior to 1860 Joseph Higgins and family migrated to Tallapoosa County, Alabama.

In the 1860 Census of Tallapoosa, Joseph lists his occupation as a *silversmith*. His son Fleming, now 20 years old is working as a gunsmith. This is just another example of the flexibility these clan members possess in following their trades.

I also found a reference to a *Wiley C. Higgins*, marrying Minerva Davis, 27 January 1843, in Tallapoosa County. This given name suggests a family tie and another namesake of the *Master Armorer* Wiley Grover Higgins.

David Higgins was born in the year 1799 in South Carolina and by occupation was a gunsmith. The 1850 Census of Butts County, Georgia lists David in the trade as well as his oldest son, Henry. Henry was born in Georgia during the year 1828. On 29 August, 1861 David and Henry attended a meeting in Atlanta at the Georgia State Capital. This meeting was made up of interested gunsmiths and government officials to see who was prepared to manufacture arms, in what quantities and prices.

James M. Higgins, a gunsmith from Opelika, Alabama, was also present at the meeting in 1861 in Atlanta. James was a resident of Butts County at the time. This is the same James found living in Chambers County, Alabama in the 1850 Census.

The 1830 Census of Butts lists David in Butts County. David and his family lived at Iron Springs only a short distance from the famous Indian Springs.

In later years David's son, Henry, built his home at Heard Station or Floviassa as it is now known. David was also a Deacon of the Sandy Creek Primitive Baptist Church in 1824. Hugh Heard was a faithful member during

these years and very possibly worked as a gunsmith with the clan members.

Living only three households from David is Partillo Higgins, who was born 1818 in South Carolina. He lists his occupation on the 1850 Census as a gunsmith.

Just to the north of Butts County, Georgia is DeKalb County. In the 1850 Census of DeKalb County, I found these clan members. Reubin Higgins, born 1789, in South Carolina; no occupation is shown, but as he was 61 years old, this is not uncommon.

The 1879-1899 Business Directory of Jackson, Georgia, lists John J. and *Wiley M.* as *jewelers*. Jackson is in Butts County and not far from the Indian Springs Area. I'm sure this *Wiley M.* and *Wiley*, the son of John Higgins are namesakes of *Wiley Grover Higgins* the *Master Armorer*, as the M.A. on the patchbox lid implies.

Also living in DeKalb County is Joel Higgins born 1794 in South Carolina. He lists his occupation as a blacksmith. Isiah born 1823 in Georgia is also a blacksmith.

Alexander Higgins was born 2 September 1788 in old ninety-six district of South Carolina. He migrated with other members of his family in 1818 to Lauderdale County, Alabama.

Alexander Higgins early established himself as a craftsman, and is found working as a gunsmith, blacksmith, white smith and farmer. He was also associated with the Kennedy gun shop at Greenhill, Alabama. Greenhill is a small community in the northern part of Lauderdale County. The community lies along each side of "*Andrew Jackson's Military Road*". The Kennedy gun shop stood 200 yards east of this road.

Hiram Kennedy (1792-1862) a gunsmith and his family migrated from Moore County, North Carolina to the Greenhill area of Lauderdale in 1823. Here Hiram and other gunsmiths that had migrated with him soon established the Kennedy gun shop.

David Kennedy (1768-1837) the famous Moore County, North Carolina gunsmith, and his wife Joacer (1766-1857) the father and mother of Hiram, also migrated and took up residence with Hiram on his farm shortly before David's death in 1837.

After the shop was destroyed by Union troops, some of the gunsmiths worked independently, others migrated on to Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee and Texas.

Michael Higgins, Alexander's oldest son was born 1808 in old ninety-six district of South Carolina. Michael worked as a gunsmith and blacksmith during the years 1822 through 1860 when he migrated to Mississippi.

Newton Higgins was born in Henry County, Georgia, very near the old Indian Springs Area in 1821. He migrated to Lauderdale County in 1840. Newton worked as a gunsmith and farmer.

According to the 1850 Census, William Higgins was living in the household next to Newton. William was born 1837 in Alabama and his occupation was a farmer.

Josiah Higgins was born 1811 in old ninety-six district of South Carolina. He migrated with his father and other family members to Lauderdale County in 1818. He worked as a blacksmith and farmer.

The common ground these men share are their family ties and related skills and the ability to meet the requirements of each trade. I'm sure this study should not end here. We as collectors and historians can add to this as we actively pursue our interest.

Word of Appreciation

I wish to thank K.R.A. fellow members George Shumway (Shumway Publishing) for use of the photos of Wiley G. Higgins' rifle and Jerry Noble, whose sharp eye helped make this study possible.

Dan Wallace