

THE 13 STATES IN 1790

Figure 1. The United States in 1790.

Tennessee, Some Rifles, and a Carbine

George Norton

INTRODUCTION

An anecdote states that a traveler in early Tennessee always had two items: A horse and a rifle. Before we get to the rifle part, we should become a little more familiar with the early history of the United States. From there we'll talk about Andrew Jackson and the formation of the State of Tennessee and the great changes in the United States between 1790 and 1821, the date of the Transcontinental Treaty.

South of Kentucky, a former Virginia county, and west of the 13 states, one man, Andrew Jackson, carved an empire and protected it against the colonial ambitions of Spain, France, and Britain, and large Indian tribes armed and encouraged by Britain and Spain to make war against the new states.

THE UNITED STATES AT THE TIME OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

In 1790, after the Revolutionary War, (Figure 1) the US was bordered by Canada, the St. Lawrence River, the Great Lakes, and the Mississippi on the west. Spain controlled all land from the west bank of the Mississippi to California. South of the States were Indian lands, but Spain controlled all lands south of the 31st parallel, roughly the southern border of Georgia. The 31st parallel line extended due west across the Mississippi and into Louisiana. All of the Gulf Coast belonged to Spain. Spain had been given the Louisiana Territory at the conclusion of the French and Indian War when Spain was an ally of the British. Spain's territory extended from the Atlantic Coast, as described above, to the Pacific Ocean south of California's northern border and it extended south to Cape Horn in South America. However, a powerful Spain did not recognize this boundary and claimed Natchez and other cities north of the 31st parallel.

When North Carolina ratified the Constitution, it ceded all territory south of Kentucky to the United States. On May 26, 1790, when North Carolina ratified the Constitution, the country between Kentucky and the present states of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi was designated



Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio. William Blount of North Carolina was appointed governor.

ANDREW JACKSON

The State of Tennessee can be proud of its riflemen, gunsmiths, and its leader, Andrew Jackson, who worked to protect its Statehood during its very early days.

Jackson's parents, Andrew and Elizabeth Jackson emigrated from Ireland to Waxhaw, North Carolina. Elizabeth's sister's family lived just across the border in South Carolina, which was considered part of Waxhaw. Andrew Jackson Sr. died a few days before young Andrew was born. Elizabeth packed up her two sons and belongings and moved into her sister's home where Andrew was born and raised.¹ He was educated by a Presbyterian minister.

At age 13, young Andrew was a member of the Waxhaw Militia. His oldest brother died in action with the Militia; his younger brother was wounded when he and Andrew were captured and held as prisoners by the British at Camden, SC. He and Andrew contracted smallpox and were freed in a prisoner exchange, but the brother died after reaching home. Jackson was 15 by the end of the Revolutionary War and was an orphan.

His mother contracted cholera while volunteering as a nurse treating wounded US soldiers in prison ships in Charleston Harbor.² He stayed with his mother's family, the



Figure 2. A portrait of Andrew Jackson by permission of the Kentucky Rifle Association.

Crawfords, and learned the saddler's craft. He completed his education and in late 1784, he left Waxhaw for Salisbury, North Carolina to study law.³ In September 1787, he was examined by two judges of the Superior Court of Law and was authorized to practice law. He also tended store in Martensille, North Carolina.⁴ A friend and fellow law school student, John McNair, was appointed Superior Court Judge of the Western District of North Carolina.⁵ McNair offered Jackson an appointment as public prosecutor. They both started west in 1788, but decided to spend some time in Jonesborough, Washington County, Tennessee Territory, where Jackson obtained a license to practice law. Jackson engaged in various duels, gun fights, quarrels, etc. during his early years in Tennessee which affected his reputation.

NASHVILLE

When McNair and Jackson reached Nashville in late 1788, Jackson and McNair boarded with the Widow Donelson's family, pioneers in the Cumberland Valley, who lived in a blockhouse. Also residing there was Rachel Donelson Robards, daughter of the Widow Donelson. Rachel was there after leaving her violent and abusive husband in Kentucky.

A short time later, Robards, in an attempt to reconcile with his wife returned to Fort Donelson and purchased property nearby. He quickly became jealous of Jackson who in turn intimidated and bullied Robards. Robards said the marriage was over and returned to Kentucky, but in the fall of

1790, he threatened to return and bring his wife back to Kentucky. Upon hearing this news, Rachel quickly arranged a visit to family in Natchez. She was to be accompanied by Colonel Stark and because it was a perilous journey, the Starks requested Jackson to accompany them as an escort. In the spring of 1791, the party floated to Natchez. Jackson had family approval from the Donelsons to marry Rachel after she won her freedom.

Upon Jackson's return, a rumor reached Nashville that Robards had obtained his divorce in Virginia, the governing body of Kentucky. However, there was no divorce. Robards had obtained an enabling act "to bring suit against his wife in the Supreme Court of the District of Kentucky." Upon hearing the rumor, Jackson returned to Natchez and married Rachel.⁶ After Robards' divorce decree, the Jacksons remarried in 1794.

Tennessee applied for Statehood in 1795 and held a Constitutional Convention in January-February 1796. Jackson and McNair were two of the five representatives from Davidson County and were also appointed to hand write the state's constitution. Tennessee was the first territory to achieve statehood. (The act was approved by President Washington June 1, 1796.) Jackson was elected as a Representative to Congress in the fall of 1796.⁷ He ran for the Senate in 1797 and won but resigned a year later. In 1798, he was elected judge of the Superior Court of Tennessee; in 1802, he was elected by Militia Officers to the rank of Major General of Tennessee Militia. In 1804, he resigned as Judge and purchased the Hermitage property. (Mansion not built until 1819.)⁸

THE WAR OF 1812

In February 1812, Congress authorized 50,000 volunteers and declared war against the British in June 1812.⁹

In October 1812, Territorial Governor Blunt was asked to provide 15,000 troops to defend New Orleans and two divisions were organized. Troops were ordered to take boats to Natchez, cavalry would come by land. Jackson was made Major General of US Volunteers and put in command of those two divisions. The command in New Orleans directed Jackson to stay in Natchez. In March 1813, the Army in Washington dismissed Jackson's army at Natchez. Jackson led the troops 500 miles via Natchez Trace Road back to Nashville. One hundred fifty men were on sick list, 56 bedridden with only 11 wagons available. During this time, Jackson was given the name "Old Hickory". Jackson's troops were later reimbursed, for their duty and expenses, by Congress.¹⁰

Among Jackson's troops and officers in these war years were Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, and Thomas Hart Benton, who later became a US Senator and advocate of "Manifest Destiny" for expansion of the United States.

THE CREEK WAR

Creek Indian territory ranged from the Atlantic Ocean to Central Alabama, occupying parts of what are Georgia, North Florida, and Alabama (Figure 3).

Tecumseh visited Chief Red Eagle (William Weatherford) in 1811 and tried to unite tribes into rebellion to take back the land from the encroaching whites. A group of Burnt Corns Indians attacked Red Eagle's men then fled to Samuel Mim's Fort, about 40 miles north of Mobile. Mim's Fort had about 120 militia and about 300 civilians, white and slaves. The Creeks attacked Fort Mims August 1, 1813 and killed about 250 people.

Jackson, who had been wounded in a gun fight with Thomas Hart Benton and his brother Jesse¹¹ in Nashville, although not fully recovered, took command of his troops and marched south October 1, 1813. He built Fort Deposit south of what is now Huntsville. Proceeding south, in one skirmish, he killed 186 braves. In a big victory November 3, he killed 300 Indians at Talladega but 700 escaped.

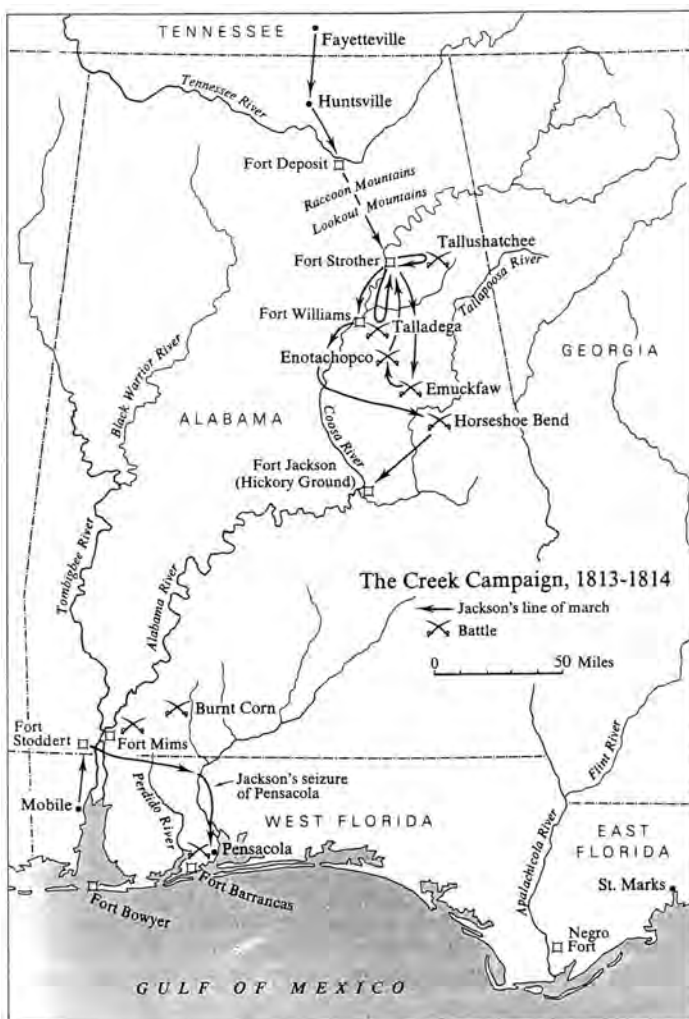


Figure 3. The Creek War by permission from *Andrew Jackson and the Course of the American Empire 1767-1821*; Robert Remini, Harper Collins Publisher, 1977.

Jackson had no supplies sent to him and the troops threatened rebellion, but were quieted by Jackson's threats. Because most of Jackson's troops enlistments expired at the end of 1813, they returned to Tennessee.

Governor Blount of the Southwest Territory then ordered a new level of 2500 troops, Jackson had 800 troops by January 14 and returned to the south. He skirmished but was driven back toward Fort Strother. By March, Jackson had 5000 troops, and, in early April 1814 defeated the Indian fighters at the battle of Horseshoe Bend (900 Indians killed), one of the few US victories during the war of 1812. He then proceeded south to Hickory Ground, then called Fort Jackson. He met with Red Eagle (William Weatherford) and dictated the terms of peace to end the war with the Creek Indians and to establish their relocation west of the Mississippi River.¹²

On August 14, 1814 Jackson headed south to Mobile. Although this was in Spanish territory, he repaired and manned Fort Bowyer which commanded the entrance to Mobile Bay. During this time, the British had sent a large fleet to the West Indies. The war with Napoleon was over, and the British prepared to attack the US through the Gulf. Their plan was to seize Mobile Bay, then march across to Natchez and seize New Orleans. At this time, part of the British fleet was in Pensacola and New Orleans was totally unprotected. On September 5, the British attacked the Port of Mobile by sea, where they lost one ship, and had two ships damaged; the British then withdrew.

In late October Jackson made a choice between New Orleans and returning to Florida. He left Mobile on the 25th and invaded Florida. On November 6, Jackson reached Pensacola.¹³ The Spanish governor surrendered to Jackson, the British left, and Jackson destroyed Fort Barrancas. He learned of the British plan to attack New Orleans and set off for New Orleans on November 26. Jackson still ill sent for Rachel and his adopted children.

Secretary of War Monroe had warned Jackson of the attack and on November 27-28 the British Armada of 60 ships left Jamaica. Jackson arrived in New Orleans December 1. On December 16 he proclaimed marshal law in New Orleans. (Figure 4) He did not know where the British would attack. All roads were monitored and ships sent patrols into the likely areas. Ships from the British fleet were reportedly seen in the region of Pea Island and Barataria Bay. (Figure 5) The British landed at Fisherman's Village and proceeded along Bayou Mazani toward the Mississippi River. At Villere's Plantation, they surprised the owner and locked him up. However the owner escaped and revealed the position of the British to troops who informed Jackson. On December 23, Jackson sent two armed river boats, *Louisiana* and the *Carolina*, downstream; Jackson led the night attack against the British. The

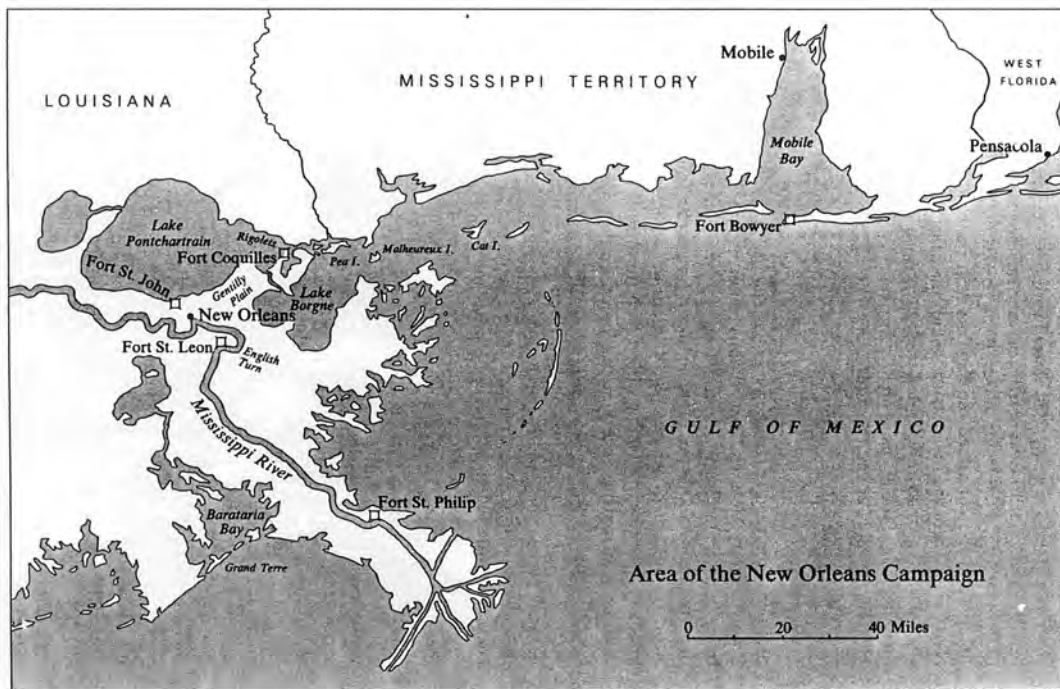


Figure 4. The New Orleans Campaign.

British were taken by surprise and suffered losses from the ship's cannon. The fog closed in, the ships withdrew upstream, and Jackson withdrew his troops. On December 24, the British and American ministers signed the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812. Jackson moved his troops one mile upstream with the two ships protecting his flank (Figure 6). On December 25, Lt. General Pakenham arrived to take command and the British brought up artillery and destroyed the *Carolina*. On December 26, a general advance by the British was thrown back. December 31, British use the fleet's heavy ship artillery brought ashore for the battle. Jackson's artillery responded and silenced several batteries. January 4, 2000 Kentucky militia arrived, approximately one-third with-

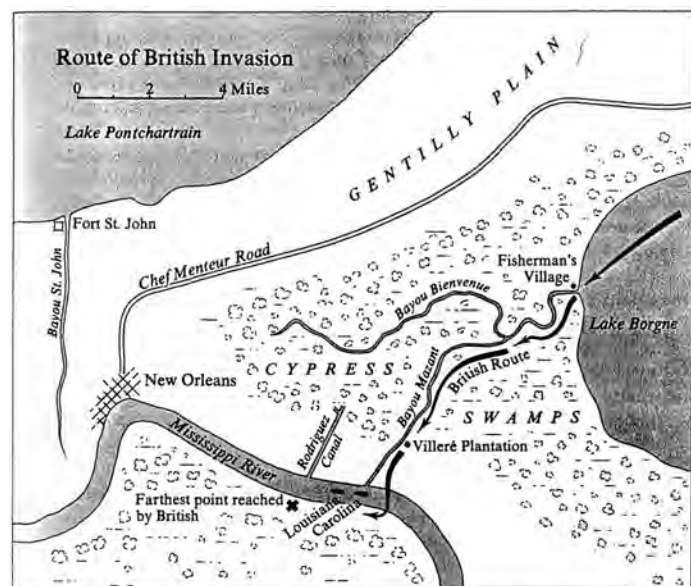


Figure 5. The Route of the British Invasion.

out arms. Jackson continued to improve his fortifications on both sides of the river. By January 8, General Pakenham brought his reinforcements onto the line and started his attack. He planned a frontal attack and had a force with cannons ready to cross the Mississippi River and attack Jackson's troops on the south side of the river. By 4:00 a.m., the 44th Regiment started toward the American lines. They had been instructed to bring fascines and ladders with them for the assault on the rampart. They forgot to bring the assault equipment so they retreated to retrieve the equip-

ment, but by the time they returned, the battle had begun.

Gibbs' troops moved forward. The 44th had not arrived, so Jackson's forces withheld fire until the enemy was within small arms range. The fire from the Jackson fortification was a combination of musket, rifle, and cannon. When the 44th did arrive they dropped their fascines and ladders and returned fire. The British pressed the attack time after time, but were thrown back. General Pakenham led the charge but was killed in action. Gibbs was also fatally wounded.

Jackson did not counterattack. Colonel Rennie attacked along the levee on Jackson's right flank and was almost successful but Colonel Rennie was killed by rifle fire. Keen's troops were ordered to support Gibbs.

The British West Indian troops failed in an attack on the left flank of Jackson's line through the swamp. On the west side of the river, the British barges carrying the cannons landed three miles below their expected destination.

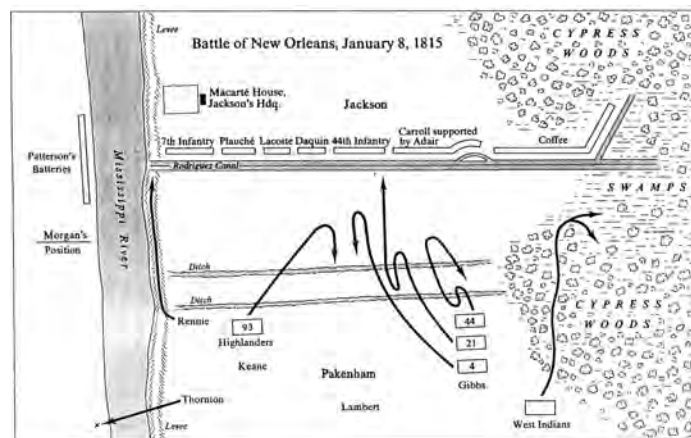


Figure 6. The Battle of New Orleans, January 8, 1815.



Figure 7. Indian Land Cessions negotiated by Jackson, 1814–1820.



Figure 8. First Seminole War, 1818.

To prevent landing on the west bank 120 Louisiana militiamen were sent forward. Three miles below Morgan's main position, Colonel Thornton, who led the initial invasion of Louisiana, landed with 600 men and three gun barges manned by 10 sailors, about a mile from the militia. The militia was routed and Thornton prepared for a general assault. The assault drove the American troops back; some of the men escaped on the *Louisiana*.

Thornton was about to turn his cannon and captured cannon on Jackson's flank when the news of the British disaster reached Thornton. Thornton retreated back to base. Jackson reported 13 killed, 39 wounded and 19 missing. British reported 291 killed, 1,262 wounded and 484 captured or missing.

Mark R. Wenger wrote in his article in the Kentucky Rifle Association Bulletin that it was the riflemen who made the victory possible.¹⁴ He wrote, "The return of British casualties submitted by General Lambert after the battle is more specific. Among those killed, wounded or missing, this document enumerates three major generals, four lieutenant colonels, four majors, 28 captains and 52 lieutenants—a staggering loss." The loss of officers Mr. Wenger attributes to

the marksmanship of the riflemen. The British fleet left the area and eventually was ordered home after news of the Treaty of Ghent and the end of the war was received.

There was a great celebration in New Orleans, but Jackson kept marshal law in force through January, February, and early March, even though there were rumors of the Peace Treaty. He received official notice of the Treaty on March 13, 1815 and ceased marshal law.

From the time of the Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814, when the Creek Indians were resettled to the west, until 1820, the majority of Indians in the southwest were resettled to the west, across the Mississippi. The land cessions were negotiated by Jackson (Figure 7).

In 1817–1818 Jackson again attacked the Indians, the Seminoles in Georgia and Florida, after they attacked a boat at Apalachicola. Jackson destroyed Indian towns and arrested, tried and hanged two British traders who supplied arms to the Indians (Figure 8).

When Jackson heard that the Spanish were selling arms to the Indians, he went to Pensacola, forced the surrender of the governor, and had the Spanish troops sent back to Cuba. Washington was upset by his action, where he arrived on January 23, 1819 to defend himself against censure. The US government negotiated the purchase of Florida from Spain. The British did not protest the execution of the traders and Washington again welcomed and praised Jackson. He was appointed governor of Florida, but resigned and returned to Nashville.

In 1821, the Transcontinental Treaty was signed and the United States continued its expansion. Jackson ran for President in 1824 and lost, but was elected in 1828 and 1832.

Now we'll look at a few rifles.

Rifle No. 1 Figures 10, A, B, C, D. This is a long, flintlock Tennessee rifle of the Soddy-Daisy style. Soddy-Daisy, the center of many competitive shooting contests in the 19th century, was located across the Tennessee River from Chattanooga. Rifles from this area had many distinctive features.

1. The butt plate is cut deep into the stock.



Figure 9. Transcontinental Treaty, 1821.



Figure 10. Flintlock Tennessee Rifle—Soddy-Daisy style (author's collection).

2. The long tang runs from the breach to the stock comb.
3. The fore stock has a V shape.
4. The lock plate has a tombstone shape.
5. The sides of the top of the butt plate extend deep into the stock.

The full stock was made of walnut with a grease hole in the butt stock. The very long, silver front sight blade is held in place with two dovetails. The barrel is 50 caliber, smooth bore, and is 47 inches long.

Rifle No. 2. Figure 11, A and B. This is a flintlock target rifle, also of the Soddy-Daisy style. The barrel is 58 caliber and is 41.3 inches long. This rifle has the same characteristics noted above but the rifle is iron mounted. The patchbox is made of iron, rounded at the opening but with a sharp tip. The flintlock is an 18th Century style made without a bridle.

Both lock and barrel are signed "I. Gibson" (Ike Gibson of Sevier County, Tennessee) who probably worked from 1840–1880. Hammer marks are visible on barrel from original forging or from a barrel straightening operation. This rifle was formerly in the Robin Hale collection.

Rifle No. 3. Figure 12, A and B. This rifle, from the Bill Reisner collection, is a fine hunting or offhand Tennessee rifle from the Unicoi County area of northeastern Tennessee. A note in the patchbox indicates that it was purchased in Virginia in the late 1940s and reconverted and freshed out by Hacker Martin of Washington County, Tennessee.

The stock is walnut with a fine cheek piece with flared ribs. The iron patchbox is an oval, willow leaf pattern. It is iron mounted with a fine iron trigger guard and iron butt plate. The barrel tang is 9.5 inches long and extends over the stock comb; caliber 40, barrel length 39 inches, lock marked "Baker & Mos—".

Rifle No. 4. Figure 13 A, B, C, D. Not all Tennessee rifles have walnut stocks and iron mountings. This unusual Tennessee rifle, 36 caliber with a 47 inch long barrel, has a curly maple stock with incised carving on both sides of the butt. The trigger guard and butt plate are made of cast pewter. The rifle is signed *G. McInturff* (Gabriel McInturff) of Washington County, TN, C1830s.¹⁵ The lock is percussion and probably replaced the original flintlock.



A



B

Figure 11. Flintlock Target Rifle—Soddy-Daisy style (author's collection).



A



B

Figure 12. Tennessee Hunting Rifle (author's collection).



Figure 13. Gabriel McInturff signed Rifle.



Figure 14. Tennessee full-stock "country rifle".

THE START OF THE CIVIL WAR

In the spring of 1861, everyone in the south was concerned about the war and remembered Andrew Jackson's great victory. Confederate Secretary of War L. P. Walker wrote Governor Isham Harris of Tennessee requesting four regiments of infantry which the Confederacy would arm, and "should your Excellency desire it *and will arm four other regiments with the country rifles*, they will also be received in Confederate service."¹⁶ Governor Harris took this as a command and made this a priority for Tennessee. At the same time all armories in the state were trying to convert old surplus US military weapons, distributed from the US War Department as obsolete or unserviceable in the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, into usable weapons for the Confederate troops. Much of this work went to local gunsmiths.

Country rifles were collected, but many had worn out locks, rust, broken stocks, and calibers from 32 up to 69. Large quantities of good percussion locks were unavailable, but vast quantities of foreign flintlocks were available from

the Neopolonic wars. The armories and gunsmiths hated to work on the Country Rifles. When reworking small lots of US arms they, at least, had a source of spare parts by cannibalizing one or two guns; not so with Country Rifles. Country Rifle rework schedules fell far behind. Those "Country Rifles" that were reworked were stored in Nashville and subsequently many were issued to troops serving in the Knoxville and Chattanooga area.

Rifle No. 5. Figure 14 A and B. I have a rifle that may have been a "Country Rifle". It was found on a battlefield in eastern Tennessee and brought back to Connecticut by a Union soldier. I purchased it from Dr. Harmon Leonard who purchased it in Connecticut from the family of a Civil War soldier who picked it up on a Tennessee battle field.

The rifle is of 52 caliber, iron mounted with an iron patchbox. The style of the trigger guards, rear sight and patch box leads me to believe it came from the Tennessee-North Carolina area. The flintlock appears to be a replacement. The tumbler has no bridle and the old lock screw hole is plugged with beeswax. The brass ramrod ferrules



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20



Figure 21

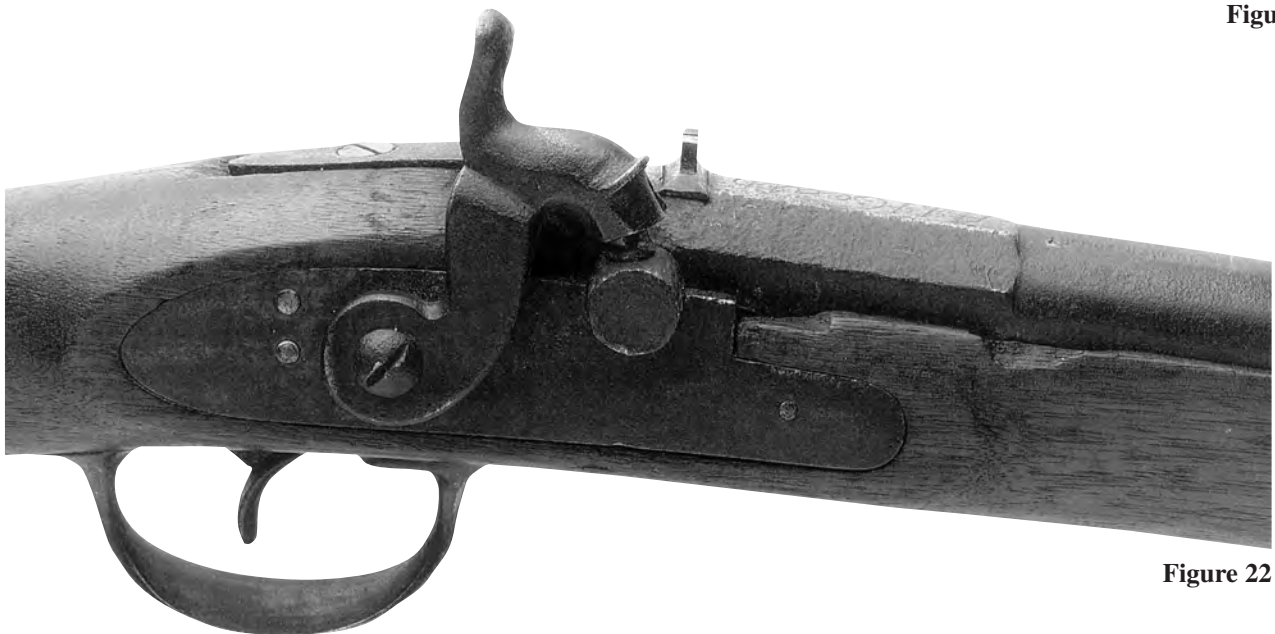


Figure 22

Figure 15–22. Heath/Sumner Carbine (Author's collection).

appear to have been replaced. The rifle came without a ramrod, which probably was iron, so Dr. Leonard made the wooden ramrod replacement. I believe the lock to be European and of 18th Century style since it was made without the bridge.

The Carbine. Two years ago I attended the Las Vegas fall show. Friend Ray McKnight wanted me to see a long gun offered for sale. It was a percussion carbine with a Mississippi rifle type of patchbox. The barrel was marked "Sumner Armory/Tenn." and "A. I. Heath." From several friends at the show I borrowed reference books through which I discovered that Heath and the Sumner Armory were both in Gallatin, Tennessee in the 1860s. Later I found a reference in (William Albaugh and Edward N. Simmons) *Confederate Arms*¹⁷ showing A. I. Heath converted rifles at the Sumner Armory. The Armory ceased operation on February 23, 1862 when Gallatin was occupied by the Union Army.

Figure 15. The carbine is a full stock, Kentucky style firearm, percussion, brass mounted with a Mississippi rifle styled patchbox and two pins holding the barrel in place. The patchbox is unique to this firearm, not a copy of a known US military patchbox. Below the carbine is a hand carved, hickory cleaning rod. This did not come with the carbine but was obtained in trade. It originally came with a Maynard Rifle and is of carbine caliber. Figure 16 is the obverse side of the carbine. The barrel is 36 3/16 inches long, 52 caliber with a front and rear sight. Because of the unique barrel length, I identified it as a North-Hall, US Carbine, Model 1833 barrel. This barrel was then converted into a Kentucky muzzle loader. Figure 17 shows the underside of the carbine and the brass trigger guard, possibly cast from a Model 1817 Common Rifle guard, but the pattern was made thinner for this purpose. Figure 18. This is a view of the breach and barrel markings. The original barrel was held in place by two barrel bands. Wear from the rear band can be seen. Since this barrel is pinned to the stock, the bands were discarded. The breach was modified by adding a threaded breach plug, possibly from a Common Rifle. The top flat of the barrel was filed flush with the breach plug and a new rear sight location was chosen. The barrel round is stamped *SUMNER ARMORY/TENN.* and the flat is engraved *A I Heath* ahead of the sight. Figure 19 is an enlargement of the markings.

Figure 20 shows details of the patchbox release on the butt plate.

Figure 21 shows the front sight, front cap and the ramrod tip.

Figure 22 the nonmilitary percussion lock and drum. The carbine was made with no sling provisions.



Figure 23. A.I. Thornburg Heath portrait.

I contacted the Sumner County Library who in turn notified John T. Heath (AI's great-grandson) who had done work on the Heath Family genealogy. We corresponded and he sent me A. I. Thornburg Heath's personal history.

Figure 23 is a portrait of A.I. Thornburg Heath. A. I. Thornburg Heath was born 29 January 1837 in Jefferson County, Tennessee. (1860 Census, Sumner County, Tennessee, A. I. Heath, 23, M. Gunsmith.) In 1862, September 1, he enlisted in the 9th Tennessee Cavalry, Co. E., Confederate Army from Sumner County, Tennessee where he was furnished with a horse. In the Battle of Hartsville, Tennessee his horse fell injuring Heath's spine while charging the enemy, on 7 December 1862. Heath was left on Caney Fork River unable to ride and was captured and carried to prison at Bowling Green, Kentucky.

The following family story of AI's escape was told to John T. Heath by A. I.'s grandson:

"A.I. was captured and with 20 other prisoners were taken to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and housed in the upper level of a two-story building being used as a prison. A.I., being a skilled carpenter and gunsmith, carefully removed the barred window from its setting and he and the 20 men went out the second-story window, climbed onto the roof and went across other roofs until they were far enough away to climb down and make their escape."



Figure 24. Historic Marker.

A.I.'s CO was Colonel James D. Bennett of the 9th Tennessee Cavalry, Colonel John Hunt Morgan's Brigade. In 1863, Morgan and the 9th made a daring raid through Kentucky, across the Ohio River into Indiana, east through Ohio with a plan to ford the Ohio River and return to Kentucky or Virginia. The Ohio River was swollen with summer rain so Morgan continued east, and lost many troopers at Buffington before attempting to recross the Ohio on 8 July 1863, into Virginia near Parkersburg. The surviving troopers, about 300, crossed

by way of Bienner Hassett's Island where they again sustained heavy casualties. They marched to Calhoun, GA for reassignment. Morgan and the 700 remaining troopers proceeded east and were captured in Ohio near Wheeling, VA.

The Confederate Service record of A. I. Heath tells a different story. On the final page he is listed as a deserter. However, no company clerk in a cavalry unit would dare write " . . . the trooper, injured and unable to ride, was left behind when the retreat call was sounded."

A.I. died in 1923. The historic marker (Figure 24 A and B) memorializes his blacksmith shop and gunmaking skills as well as his service record. His rifling machine mandrel and groove cutter and several of his long rifles are on display in the nearby Sumner County Historical Museum. John T. Heath owns several of his rifles, one of which is shown in Figure 25.

THE 20TH CENTURY

The fame of the Tennessee riflemen and makers continued into the 20th Century. Sergeant Alvin York, born 1887, was a Medal of Honor winner in World War I. In the Battle of Argonne, October 8, 1918, after most of his platoon had been killed or wounded, he and the survivors of his patrol circled the machine guns and surprised their command post. The Germans were eating with their arms stacked. The German machine gunners turned their guns on their own troops. Corporal York was armed with a Model 1917 Enfield, but in this action he killed many of 2 dozen Germans with his 45 automatic. The German CO told York if he would cease fire he would call for a surrender.

He and his 6 surviving troops then sent the prisoners forward. Other machine gun nests refused to fire on the German prisoners and surrendered. They brought in



Figure 25. Half-stock rifle by A.I. Heath now owned by John T. Heath, grandson.



Figure 26. Postage stamp honoring Alvin York, 1998.

132 prisoners.¹⁸ In year 2000 York was honored with this United States postage stamp showing him in uniform. The AA patch stands for the 82nd Infantry *All American Division*.

York continued his interest in muzzle loading shooting which is how he learned his shooting skills. In Figure 27 is a

picture of a “Beef Shoot at Jimtown” (Jamestown, Fentress County, Tennessee) July 4,¹⁹ 1942. Alvin York won the right-hind-quarter (first prize), as you would expect. Alvin York died in 1964.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank a few friends who taught me so much about Southern firearms: The late Robin Hale, Arnie Dowd, Ray McKnight, the late Dan Wallace, and Jerry Noble, who published much of Wallace’s research work.

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Figure 27. Alvin York and his guests.

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