

# American Patriotic Swords and Dirks: Arms Celebrating the New Republic

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During the Federal period, about 1790 to 1840, an outburst of national pride and patriotism swept the country, leaving visible marks on many aspects of American daily life. Among these was a profound impact on the nation's decorative arts, the household articles made or acquired for American domestic use. Within that brief, 50-year span, American furnishings and personal items began displaying national and patriotic emblems that proudly and enthusiastically celebrated the young United States.

From the outset of that period, the emblem most closely associated with the United States was the American bald eagle, the central device in the Great Seal approved by Congress in 1782, near the close of the Revolutionary War (Fig. 1).

The first published version of the Great Seal appeared in 1786 (Fig. 2), and emblems derived from its basic design became popular ornaments on furniture, clocks, ceramics, silver, glassware, textiles, and other domestic items.<sup>1</sup> On military and naval goods, the Seal was informally adopted as the national arms, appearing on belt plates, hat plates, insignia, horse equipment, miscellaneous accoutrements, and some American arms.

On American swords and dirks during this period, the eagle's head often was the preferred shape for pommels, the most prominent part of the hilt (Fig. 3). Hilt of this emblematic style remained popular in the uniformed services



throughout the Federal period, eventually disappearing due to changing fashions and new uniform regulations by the mid-19th century.

The eaglehead hilt, of course, was not the only means of displaying the new American emblem. To boost the appeal of swords and dirks aimed at the American market, designers in England, France, Prussia, and elsewhere added American eagles to other areas of these weapons as well.

Perhaps second to the eagle in symbolic importance was the Federal shield, the "escutcheon" in the blazon



Figure 1. America's first Great Seal, 1782.



Figure 2. The Great Seal first published in 1786.



Figure 3. Eaglehead pommel on #18.

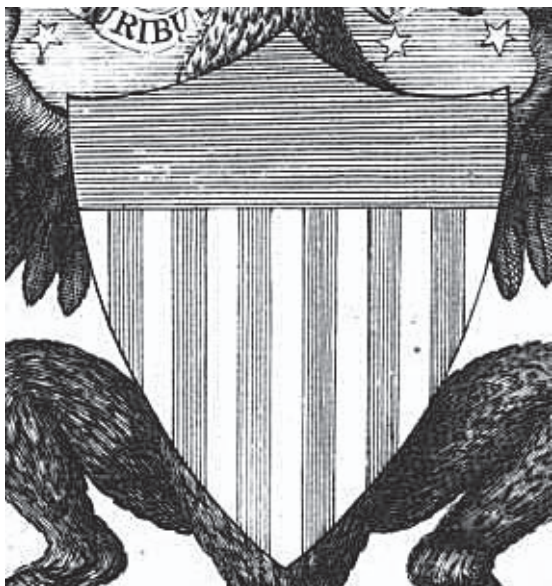


Figure 4. Federal shield from Figure 2.

(heraldic description) of the Great Seal (Fig. 4). On a hilt or blade, this venerable American emblem always symbolized national unity and strength.

Other symbols on American swords and dirks recalled America's unique origins, independence, and personal freedoms. Among such emblems were the Native American (or American Indian), in either male or female form; images of George Washington; circles of stars representing the original colonies; the Liberty cap; and Neoclassical symbols such as the laurel wreath borrowed from the great empires of ancient Greece and Rome.

In addition to national emblems, patriotic mottoes also expressed American pride and allegiance. Best known of these, of course, was *E PLURIBUS UNUM*, our national motto in Latin meaning "Out of many, one." Less common at this time were mottoes such as the stirring *HONOUR AND*



Figure 6. Silver pommel of #1.



Figure 5. Infantry Officers' Silver-Mounted Saber, c. 1790.

*MY COUNTRY*, and the enigmatic *PARTA TUERI*, the latter dealt with later in more detail.

#### PATRIOTIC SWORDS FOR AMERICAN MILITARY OFFICERS

During the Federal period, swords were regularly worn by U.S. Army and state militia officers of Infantry, Cavalry, Dragoons, Artillery, and Staff. That a preference existed for eaglehead hilts is apparent from the numerous examples surviving from that time. It would be fair to speculate, therefore, that eaglehead hilts and national emblems reflected military pride in the New Republic, a conclusion that will become evident from the following examples.

##### 1. *Infantry Officers' Silver-Mounted Saber, c. 1790 (Fig. 5)*<sup>2</sup>

This saber from the beginning years of the United States was fashioned by an unknown American silversmith.

Its primitive but patriotic eaglehead pommel has an almost chicken-like appearance (Fig. 6), as did the Federal eagle with 13 stars surrounded by Neoclassical laurel wreath deeply etched on its blade (Fig. 7). This emblem was the earliest of American eagles appearing on sword blades, dating around 1790 or slightly before. In the eyes of many, it remains unequalled as an expression of American patriotic pride.



Figure 7. Federal eagle emblem on blade of #1.

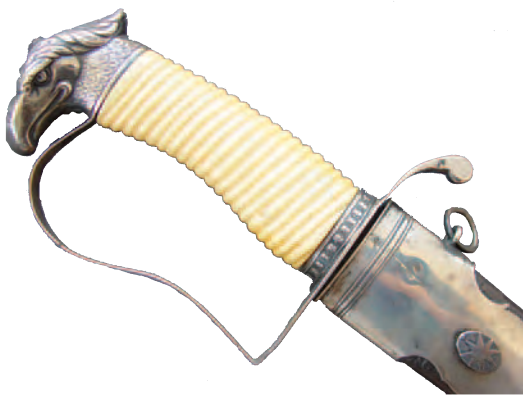


Figure 8. Infantry Officers' Silver-Mounted Saber, Philadelphia, c. 1805.



Figure 9. Philadelphia silver pommel on #2.

2. *Infantry Officers' Silver-Mounted Saber, Philadelphia, c. 1805 (Fig. 8)*<sup>3</sup>

The eaglehead hilt on this saber also was fashioned by an unknown American silversmith, probably working in the Philadelphia area. Similar hilts were made in gilt brass. The regional popularity of the crested eaglehead pommel during the early Federal period suggests that many officers viewed it as a patriotic emblem.

Pommels by Philadelphia artisans are often distinguished by the pronounced tuft of feathers flowing from the eagle's head (Fig. 9). Other eaglehead styles were developed in Baltimore, New York, and New England, indicating that regional preferences in those areas similarly reflected pride in America's national emblem.

3. *Mounted Officers' Silver-Mounted Saber by I. & G. Hutton, c. 1810 (Fig. 10)*<sup>4</sup>

This large saber by Isaac & George Hutton, leading silversmiths of Albany, NY, was inspired by imported English designs and fashioned for a prominent New York militia officer.

The pommel (Fig. 11) chosen for this custom-made and costly American saber, and others like it, provides further

evidence that the eaglehead hilt was firmly associated with national pride and patriotism.



Figure 10. Mounted Officers' Silver-Mounted Saber by I. & G. Hutton, c. 1810.



Figure 11. Hutton silver pommel of #3.

4. *Mounted Officers' Saber, c. 1805-1812 (Fig. 12)*<sup>5</sup>

This distinctive American saber is notable for its highly stylized eaglehead hilt in gilt brass. Another is known in silver, and both are unmarked. Two more closely related hilts in silver, however, bear the touchmark of Thomas and Andrew Ellicott Warner of Baltimore.<sup>6</sup>

Whether originated by these renowned Maryland silversmiths, this idiosyncratic hilt nevertheless was a unique interpretation of the eaglehead as an American patriotic symbol (Fig. 13).



Figure 12. Mounted Officers' Saber, c. 1805-1812.



Figure 13. Pommel of #4.



Figure 14. American Light Dragoon Officers' Saber with Eagle Guard, c. 1815.

5. *American Light Dragoon Officers' Saber with Eagle Guard, c. 1810 (Fig. 14)*<sup>7</sup>

Few swords of the Federal period can equal the display of American patriotic emblems on this remarkable saber. Its fierce eaglehead pommel is overshadowed by the swirling guard pierced with a Federal eagle and the initials of the American Light Dragoons, an early mounted militia unit with a name reminiscent of the American Revolutionary War (Fig. 15).<sup>8</sup>

The etched and fire-gilt designs on the blade include an American eagle and national motto (Fig. 16), as well as the Liberty cap. By the 1800s, blade decoration on officers' swords usually consisted of etched and fire-gilt designs that brilliantly contrasted with the fire-blued areas of the blade.



Figure 16. Eagle on blade of #5.



Figure 17. Native American warrior on blade of #5.

Other blade designs on this saber include the Native American warrior, an allegorical figure symbolizing America in the New World (Fig. 17). After 1813, such figures could represent the fallen Shawnee leader Tecumseh, whose defeat

that year was a major victory for U.S. forces during the War of 1812.

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Figure 15. Guard of #5.

6. *Artillery Officers' Saber with Horsehead Hilt, Eagle Langets, c. 1810-1820 (Fig. 18)*<sup>9</sup>

Horsehead sabers with American patriotic motifs were uncommon during the Federal period and may have been associated with mounted Artillery. The langets on this



Figure 18. Artillery Officers' Saber with Horsehead Hilt, Eagle Langets, c. 1810-1820.

associated with mounted Artillery. The langets on this saber present a striking exhibition of the national arms (Fig. 19), undoubtedly a reflection of the patriotic sentiments of the saber's owner. National emblems on the blade include an etched and fire-gilt American eagle and Native American warrior.



Figure 19. Langet design on #6.



Figure 20. Mounted Officers' Saber with Horsehead Hilt, Eagle Knucklebow, c. 1810-1820.



Figure 21. Eagle-decorated knucklebow on #7.

*7. Mounted Officers' Saber with Horsehead Hilt, Eagle Knucklebow, c. 1815-1820 (Fig. 20)<sup>10</sup>*

The profusion of American motifs on this striking saber almost places it in a category by itself. While its horsehead pommel resembles that on the previous example, its greater

(Fig. 22). On the other is a Native American warrior-princess, or Indian Queen, an exotic symbol of America in the New World (Fig. 23).

Again present is the Liberty cap, a frequent emblem on American sword blades of this period (Fig. 24). Sometimes called the Phrygian cap, it was depicted atop a



Figure 22. Eagle on blade of #7.



Figure 23. Native American emblem on blade of #7.

overall length, added ornament, and superior quality made it a costlier but more appropriate choice for mounted officers of field-grade or higher rank.

Cast into the knucklebow is a large Federal eagle perched on a rocky pinnacle with wings uplifted (Fig. 21). Above it, a Federal shield protectively overlooks the scene below, adding its symbolic presence to the patriotic guard. On the blade are etched and fire-gilt national emblems that include a large American eagle on one side

pole and symbolized freedom from slavery, a traditional meaning that accounted for its popularity in America and revolutionary France.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 24. Liberty cap emblem on blade of #7.

During the early Federal period, officers' swords usually were accompanied by leather scabbards having simple, undecorated metal mounts. This example, however, suggests that was not always the case. The large American eagle prominently engraved on the middle mount of the scabbard

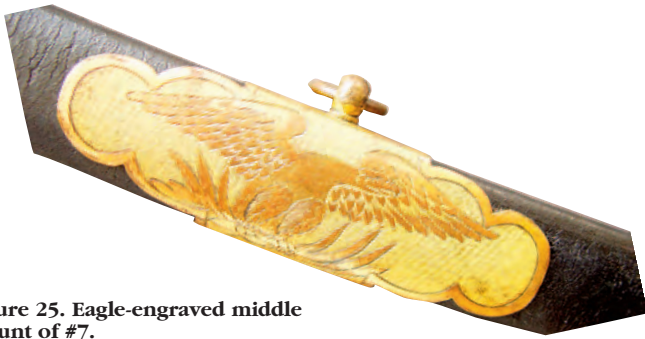


Figure 25. Eagle-engraved middle mount of #7.

left little doubt about the national allegiance of its owner (Fig. 25).

The extraordinary array of American emblems on this Federal-period saber transforms it into a unique expression of national pride, and a historical reminder of the intense patriotism shared by many Americans at that time.

8. Artillery Officers' Saber with Eagle Langets, c. 1815 (Fig. 26)<sup>12</sup>

During this period, the majority of American officers' swords were imported, such as this English-made saber with a



Figure 26. Artillery Officers' Saber with Eagle Langets, c. 1815.

large and finely shaped eaglehead pommel. Its patriotic effect was amplified by the Federal eagles and laurel wreaths added to the langets (Fig. 27). On the blade are more national emblems, including an etched and fire-gilt American eagle and Liberty cap.

9. Mounted Officers' Saber with PARTA TUERI Motto, c. 1815-1830 (Fig. 28)<sup>13</sup>

This handsome American saber is related to a small number of others with either eaglehead or bird's-head hilts, all bearing the same patriotic langet design with its intriguing motto.

On each langet is an oval emblem shaped "in the manner of a U.S. shield" and surrounded by the Latin motto *PARTA TUERI*, meaning "To defend what I have won, or brought about" (Fig. 29).<sup>14</sup> Little is known of the origin of these words, but when combined with the Federal shield they conveyed unmistakable American pride and patriotism.<sup>15</sup>

The blade of this example bears a distinctive etched and fire-gilt design of an American eagle conjoined with



Figure 27. Langet with eagle and laurel wreath on #8.



Figure 28. Mounted Officers' Saber with PARTA TUERI Motto, c. 1815-1830.



Figure 29. Langet on #9.

Federal shield and laurel wreath (Fig. 30). Within the wreath, an oval escutcheon repeats the *PARTA TUERI* motto (Fig. 31). Blade decoration varies among these distinctive sabers, and some examples omit the Latin motto on the blade.

*10. Mounted Officers' Saber with Eagle Langets by F.W. Widmann, c. 1825 (Fig. 32)<sup>16</sup>*

The patriotic eaglehead pomel on this unmarked saber by a renowned Philadelphia maker again was enhanced by adding Federal eagles to the guard. Each shield-shaped langet prominently displays



Figure 30. Eagle design on blade of #9.



Figure 31. Blade motto on #9.



Figure 32. Mounted Officers' Saber with Eagle Langets by F.W. Widmann, c. 1825.



Figure 34. Shield and Liberty cap on blade of #10.

the national arms framed by Neoclassical swags of drapery (Fig. 33).

The etched and fire-gilt designs on the blade include a Federal shield and Liberty cap, both popular emblems on American officers' swords during this period (Fig. 34). On many blades, the Federal shield was the sole emblem indicating national allegiance.

*11. Mounted Officers' Saber with Federal-Shield Langets, c. 1825 (Fig. 35)<sup>17</sup>*

Carrying the idea of shield-shaped langets to the limit, the hilt of this American saber presents them as Federal shields. Each shield is wreathed with laurel leaves, a Neoclassical garnish



Figure 33. Langet on #10.



Figure 35. Mounted Officers' Saber with Federal-Shield Langets, c. 1825.



Figure 36. Shield-shaped langet with wreath on #11.



Figure 37. American eagle on blade of #11.

bestowing highest honors on this revered American emblem (Fig. 36). Blade designs include a large etched and fire-gilt American eagle (Fig. 37). Ornamenting blades with national



Figure 38. Shield and Liberty cap on blade of #11.



Figure 39. Eagle-engraved scabbard of #11.

symbols was a popular custom at this time in Europe, as evidenced by numerous royal cyphers and other state emblems. American blade eagles, therefore, continued a tradition well known to American officers.

On the blade reverse are an etched and fire-gilt Federal shield and Liberty cap, both in brilliant contrast against the fire-blued blade (Fig. 38). By the 1820s, gilt designs on blued blades were sometimes



Figure 40. Artillery or Staff Officers' Sword with Folding Counter-guards, c. 1825.



Figure 41. Folding guard of #12.

interspersed with bright-etched panels. By the 1830s, bright-etched designs sometimes became the only blade decoration.

The final emblem of national pride on this saber was an eagle prominently engraved on its brass scabbard (Fig. 39). Whether in silvered or gilt brass, metal scabbards invited engraved patriotic emblems and ornamental Neoclassical designs fashionable at this time.

*12. Artillery or Staff Officers' Sword with Folding Counter-guards, c. 1825 (Fig. 40)<sup>18</sup>*

Another exceptional display of American patriotic emblems is presented by this sword, its finely styled eagle-head pommel overshadowed by two large, folding counter-guards. Prominently filling each guard is a large, spread-winged American eagle and Federal shield, all backed by a "glory" of sunrays and panoply of arms (Fig. 41). When fully opened, the counter-guards



sword's patriotic ornament is an eagle engraved on the scabbard tip (Fig. 44).

*13. Infantry or Staff Officers' Sword with Washington Guard, c. 1800-1815 (Fig. 45)<sup>19</sup>*

George Washington's death in 1799 launched a period of national mourning for America's great loss, as well as a celebration of his unique contributions to the nation. Many of the decorative arts in America—including drawer pulls, whiskey flasks, even swords—honored his memory by their designs, such as adding Washington's profile to an American patriotic sword guard.

*14. Infantry Officers' Sword with Indian Princess Pommel, c. 1825-1850 (Fig. 46)<sup>20</sup>*

Toward the end of the Federal period, the bust of a Native American princess sometimes formed the pommel on American swords. As previously noted, images of Native Americans were used earlier as national emblems on American blades. Pommels of this form, therefore, would have served as even more visible reminders of America's unique origins and proud position among the nations of the world.

PATRIOTIC SWORDS AND DIRKS FOR AMERICAN NAVAL OFFICERS

The swords and dirks carried by American naval officers during the Federal period were no less patriotic than those worn by the military services. The eaglehead hilt remained popular throughout this time, ultimately becoming regulation for naval officers' swords and remaining standard



Figure 42. Counterguards of #12 in open position.



Figures 43a and b. Blade designs on #12.



Figure 44. Scabbard ornament on #12.



Figure 45. Infantry or Staff Officers' Sword with Washington Guard, c. 1800-1815.

formed an impressive display of American pride and patriotism (Fig. 42).

Other national emblems appear on the blade, including an etched and fire-gilt American eagle and Liberty cap (Figs. 43a and b). Three additional emblems of the Liberty cap adorn this blade, making a total of four. Completing this



Figure 46. Infantry Officers' Sword with Indian Princess Pommel, c. 1825-1850.

until the middle of the 19th century. Despite the scarcity of American naval swords and dirks due to the small size of this service, surviving examples provide ample proof that they were often regarded as expressions of national pride and patriotism, as will become evident from the following examples.

*15. Naval Officers' Small Sword with Eagle Guard, c. 1815 (Fig. 47)<sup>21</sup>*

After the War of 1812, American naval officers frequently wore eaglehead swords with large, shell-shaped counterguards. These usually bore national and naval designs, such as the bold American eagle and anchor of this example, perhaps the most attractive of its type (Fig. 48). These patriotic designs undoubtedly expressed the pride then held by



Figure 47. Naval Officers' Small Sword with Eagle Guard, c. 1815.



Figure 48. Shell guard on #15.

American naval officers in their small but victorious sea-going service.

*16. M1830 Regulation U.S. Navy Officers' Sword, 1830-1840 (Fig. 49)<sup>22</sup>*

By 1830, the sword style worn by American naval officers was governed by explicit Navy regulations. Drawings published that year established a new sword pattern having

an eaglehead hilt, similar to the regulation example presented here. Ornamental designs specified for Navy officers' blades included an anchor and a circle of 13 stars, representing the first American colonies (Figs. 50a and b).

The same motifs were required for the leather scabbard, a circle of 13 stars on the upper scabbard mount, and a large anchor on the middle (Figs. 51a and b). These national emblems and the patriotic hilt adopted in 1830 remained virtually unchanged for Navy officers' swords until replaced by a completely new pattern in 1852.

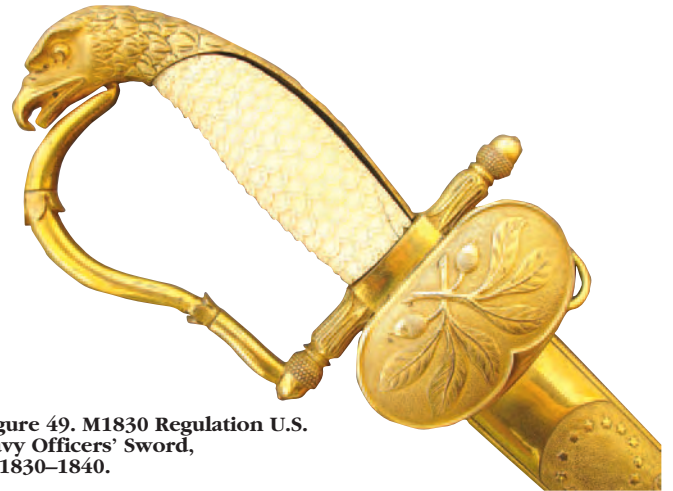


Figure 49. M1830 Regulation U.S. Navy Officers' Sword, c. 1830-1840.



Figures 50a and b. Blade designs on #16.



Figures 51a and b. Scabbard ornament on #16.

17. *U.S. Navy Officers' Dirk with American Naval Emblem, c. 1800 (Fig. 52)*<sup>23</sup>

This plain dirk could have been worn by either British or American naval officers well before the War of 1812. Its



Figure 52. U.S. Navy Officers' Dirk with American Naval Emblem, c. 1800.



Figure 53. Early naval emblem on blade of #17.



Figure 54. Early naval button design.

Decatur family provenance, however, suggests that it very likely was owned by U.S. Navy Commodore Stephen Decatur Jr.<sup>24</sup> Among the etched and fire-gilt designs on the fire-blued blade is a distinctive naval emblem providing proof of its connection to the early U.S. Navy (Fig. 53). The fire-gilt emblem consists of an oval cloud bearing a circle of 13 eight-pointed stars surrounding an American eagle, its left wing supporting an oval shield displaying a naval anchor.

This same design had been prescribed for uniform buttons in Navy Department regulations as early as 1798 (Fig. 54).<sup>25</sup> Among the early makers of American naval buttons bearing this device was George Armitage of Philadelphia, who began production in 1799.<sup>26</sup> The same design was used as an emblem on the grips of some U.S. Navy officers' swords pre-dating the War of 1812. The presence of this early naval

emblem on an American dirk may be unique, since it is the only example known to the author.

18. *Naval Officers' Dirk, c. 1825 (Fig. 55)*<sup>27</sup>

During the Federal period, and later, dirks could be worn in lieu of swords on specified occasions. Many American naval dirks at this time lacked any evidence of national or even naval connections. Some American dirks, however, combined patriotic eaglehead pommels with anchor motifs that signified naval service, such as this



Figure 55. Naval Officers' Dirk, c. 1825.

imported, French-made example. Naval and Neoclassical designs also adorn its gilt-brass sheath.

CONCLUSION

The swords and dirks presented here were proud expressions of American nationalism and patriotism that flourished during the early years of the Republic. Their ornamental American eagles, Federal shields, and other national designs openly and vigorously celebrated the new United States, setting them apart from their unadorned counterparts. Despite the passage of time, these emblems of national pride still resonate with us, inspiring us, and reminding us of an extraordinary era of American patriotism. Because they eloquently speak to us of that splendid past, American patriotic swords and dirks deserve our recognition and continuing appreciation.

NOTES

1. "Arms of the United States," engraved by James Trenchard and published in *Columbian Magazine*, Philadelphia, September 1786.
2. Silver hilt and chain guard, wooden grip wrapped

with silver band and twisted silver wire, curved 29 1/8" unmarked blade, no scabbard. Ex-collection David Kleiner. For examples of other early blade eagles, see Guthman, pp. 25, 62, Figs. 25A, 25D.

3. Silver hilt, ivory grip, curved 29 7/16" blade marked on spine *Wooley/Deakin* (Birmingham, c. 1800-1803), black-leather scabbard with silver mounts, frog stud engraved with 8-pointed star. Ex-collection William Cooper. For an identical saber owned by Richard A. Johnson, see Crouch, cover and Fig. 63; also, Peterson, no. 64, 65.

4. Silver hilt, ivory grip, curved 35" blade marked *G* (Gill of Birmingham), black-leather scabbard with silver mounts. Ex-collection Westchester County Historical Society, NY. Christie's East, 1999, Lot 1. Published in Bethune.

5. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, curved 35 3/8" unmarked blade with etched simulated-Damascus pattern, black-leather-wrapped wooden scabbard with gilt-brass mounts, the upper engraved *JMG*. Ex-collections William Cooper, Andrew Mowbray. Mowbray (1988), p. 84.

6. For the unmarked example in silver, see Hartzler, p. 239, Fig. 403. For Warner-marked examples in silver, see Butterfield & Butterfield, 1989, Lot 6011; also, *The Magazine Antiques*, September 1981, p. 629.

7. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, curved 31 3/4" blade etched *WELLS/ & Co./New York* (Lemuel & Nathaniel Wells, NYC silversmiths & merchants, c. 1790-1820) and stamped *G* (Gill of Birmingham), black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts; provenance includes descendants of Gen. Mead. Ex-collection Peter Buxtun. Butterfield & Butterfield, 1989, Lot 6131. For a related hilt, see Annis, pp. 48-49, Figs. 29, 30.

8. During the American Revolution, Major Henry "Light-Horse Harry" Lee commanded a mounted force with this name.

9. Gilt-brass hilt, bone grip, curved 29 3/4" unmarked blade, black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts (tip missing). Ex-collection Simon Handelsman. For related examples, see Peterson, no. 97; also, Crouch, p. 55, Fig. 65.

10. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, curved 33 3/8" unmarked blade, black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts. Ex-collection Robert Mandel. For a related example of this hilt, see Mowbray (1998), p. 112, pl. 52c.

11. A conical felt or cloth cap worn by the ancient Phrygians of Central Anatolia, Trojans, and others; also by emancipated slaves becoming citizens of the Roman Empire.

12. Gilt-brass hilt, bone grip, curved 30 1/4" unmarked blade, black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts. Ex-collection Ben Michel. For related examples of this langet, see Mowbray (1998), pp. 114, 120, pl. 53c, 56b.

13. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, curved 30 1/4" blade marked *G* (Gill of Birmingham) and *K* on spine, black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts. Ex-collection Peter Buxtun.

Butterfield & Butterfield, 1989, Lot 6072. For related sabers, see Belote, pl. 10-3; Peterson, no. 100; and Mowbray (1998), p. 134, pl. 63e.

14. Peterson, no. 100.

15. For the only known study of this motto, see "National Society of Sword Collectors Weapon of the Month, American Saber Owned By Major Charles West," *The Bulletin, Society of American Sword Collectors*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (April 1950).

16. Silvered-brass hilt, bone grip, curved 29 3/4" unmarked blade, black-leather scabbard with silvered-brass mounts. For a similar unmarked example by Widmann, see Mowbray (1988), p. 192; for a Widmann-marked example, see Mowbray (1998), p. 114, pl. 53a.

17. Gilt-brass hilt, bone grip, curved 30 13/16" blade etched *AW Spies* (Adam W. Spies, NYC dealer/importer, from 1821), gilt-brass scabbard.

18. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, straight 31" unmarked blade, black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts. Ex-collection Robert Harper. For a related example, see Mowbray (1998), p. 140, pl. 66e.

19. The wreathed *W* initials above the guard honor Washington's name. For related examples of this guard, see Mowbray (1998), pp. 104, 138, pl. 48b, 65b.

20. For other swords with this pommel design, see Peterson, no. 69; also, Mowbray (1998), p. 126, pl. 59a,b,c,d.

21. Gilt-brass hilt, ebony grip, straight 32" triangular blade marked *Coulaux Freres* and references to the c. 1815-1830 Royal Manufactory, Klingenthal. Black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts, throat reverse engraved *JH 1812* (Joseph Hall, 1793-1859, of Methuen, MA & Camden, ME. Militia service, War of 1812; sheriff & postmaster, Camden, ME, 1827-1833; U.S. Congressman (ME) 1833-1837; measurer, Boston Customs House, 1838-1859; Boston naval agent, 1849; Boston mayoral candidate, 1849; farmer, 1850-1857; died Boston, 1859; buried Camden, ME). Published in Tuite, Fig. 2.41. For examples of similar shell guards, see Rankin, pp. 24-25; also, Peterson, no. 133.

22. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, very slightly curved 28 5/8" unmarked blade, black-leather scabbard with gilt-brass mounts. Published in Tuite, p. 76, Fig. 3.8. For related examples, see Tuite, pp. 68-77; also, Rankin, p. 12.

23. Gilt-brass hilt, ivory grip, straight 15 1/4" blade marked *G* (Gill of Birmingham), black-leather sheath with gilt-brass mounts, lacking top ring. Provenance: Decatur family descendants, Col. Wm. W. West III (USA), Col. Wm. T. Cooper (USA). Published in Tuite, p. 208, Fig. 5.10.

24. Stephen Decatur, Jr. (1779-1820). Appointed midshipman 1798. As an officer during the Tripolitan War (1804), he recaptured the American frigate *Philadelphia* but had to destroy her. In the War of 1812, he commanded the American frigate *United States*, capturing HMS *Macedonian*

in 1814. That same year, as Commodore aboard the USS *President*, he led an American squadron in the West Indies. After a fierce fight with the British fleet in 1815, he was forced to surrender his ship. From 1816 to 1820, he served as Navy Commissioner. In 1820, he was killed in a duel with Commodore James Barron.

25. Navy Department instructions in 1798 called for uniform buttons having “. . . an eagle, with shield on left wing, enclosing a foul anchor.” Albert, p. 85.

26. Navy buttons with his GA backmark bear designs like that shown in Fig. 54. (Bazelon and McGuinn, p. 7.) The design again was specified for Navy buttons in 1820 uniform regulations. Illustration by Barry Thompson from James C. Tily, “Uniform of the United States Navy, 1820,” *Military Collector & Historian*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 (Summer 1975), p. 75.

27. Gilt-brass hilt and chain guard, mother-of-pearl grip plaques, curved 10 1/4” unmarked genuine Damascus blade, gilt-brass sheath and suspension chain. Ex-collections Everett Partridge, David Kleiner. Butterfield & Butterfield, 1995, Lot 1089. Published in Tuite, p. 224, Fig. 5.58.

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