

The Georgia Pistol Contract . . . but for the Exigencies of Service

By Lewis F. Southard

INTRODUCTION

As with many inquiries this one began with a simple question from fellow collector Phil Leveque, whom with new purchase in hand inquired, “Why do some Model 1836 pistols have only a single inspection cartouche when normally there should be two present?” After a few years of observation and research there is a clearer answer to this question. However, the search opened an avenue of information that allows the placement of some of those “single cartouche pistols” in an interesting period of history and allows their direct association with the Seminole War. And perhaps a few pistols can even be specifically attributed to part of the conflict that took place in the State of Georgia in the Okefenokee Swamp.

BACKGROUND

During the first half of the 19th century the United States arms industry was moving toward a system of manufacturing that would eventually lead to interchangeable parts and significantly contribute to what would become known worldwide as the American System of Manufacturing. The improvement of the inspection process was a major step forward, in addition to the development of specialized machinery. These improvements began in the early 1830s with the reorganization of the Ordnance Department under the Act of April 5, 1832, the appointment of an Ordnance Officer as Superintendent of Inspection, and the publishing of the *Ordnance Regulations of 1834*.

The new organization and procedures were hardly in place before the eruption of the conflict known in history as the Second Seminole War (1835-1842). By the terms of the Treaty of Payne’s Landing in May of 1832 the Seminole Indians were to migrate west of the Mississippi by the end of three years. The Army arrived in early 1835 to enforce the treaty. Outbreak into a full scale conflict occurred on December 28, 1835 when a military expedition under Major Francis Dade was ambushed and defeated by the Seminoles near current day Ocala, Florida. The Seminoles, led by Osceola,¹ employed guerilla tactics against the combined U.S. regular military forces and state militia. The Seminoles fought desperately for more than seven years. This would be the most expensive “Indian War” in U.S. history by the time it ended in 1842 (Figure 1).



The State of Georgia was geographically and politically in the middle of three Indian problems. Following the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the discovery of gold on Cherokee land in north Georgia, the State militia began moving the Cherokee to Oklahoma. Also displacing the Seminole, the same Act began causing problems in swamps of northern Florida and southern Georgia. The Seminoles, whose name means “runaway,” were actually members of the Creek tribe that had migrated into Florida from Georgia. There they



Figure 1. Osceola.

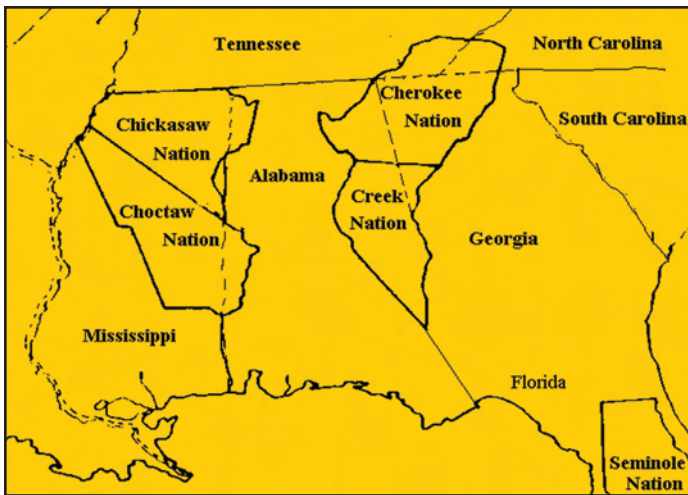


Figure 2A. Georgia map.

were joined in the swamps by runaway slaves. The removal treaties and acts also spread the conflict into Creek nations of Georgia and Alabama (Figure 2A).

The pressing and sudden need for military supplies by United States troops deployed to Florida and federally activated state militias in adjoining states put a strain on the ordnance supply system. This sudden need for arms for mounted units, especially pistols, began in earnest at a time when the new Model 1836 pistols were in the final stages of development. Pistols were in short supply following a decade-long production hiatus. This sudden demand compelled the rapid advance of the Model 1836 pistol into production.

The Second Seminole War was not the only conflict occurring during the same period that demanded an increase in arms. Due to the uncertainty of these regional conflicts, other states not directly engaged were also demanding arms as a precaution. The sudden demand for arms put the Ordnance Department at a disadvantage in complying with the new *Ordnance Regulations of 1834*. Inevitable problems began to plague the system when Major Henry Knox Craig, Superintendent of Inspection could not be everywhere at the same time personally inspecting contract arms and accoutrements, all of which were in high demand. Anomalies began to creep into the inspection process. Circumstances caused by these “exigencies of service”² provide today’s collectors and students of arms with a unique opportunity to identify a few of the pistols used in the conflicts with the Indians known as the Seminole Wars. Certain anomalies occurring in the inspection process, coupled with documentation discovered in the National Archives, allow a few groups of pistols to be attributed even more directly to the conflicts.

THE NEW MODEL PISTOL

The design and construction of the new model pistol developed outside the normal approval process for arms.

The usual process was to have the pattern models fabricated at one of the national armories. However, in this instance the pattern pistols were actually fabricated by Robert Johnson in Middletown, Connecticut with the assistance of Major Craig, the Superintendent of Inspection and Colonel



Col. George Bomford

George Bomford, Chief of Ordnance.³ The final approved pattern, which became the Model 1836 Pistol, was rapidly put into production just as the Second Seminole War was escalating. The new Model 1836 pistols were the first to be produced since the last deliveries of the Model 1819, made by Simeon North, were completed in 1823. The military may have felt that the large contracts of 20,000 each for the Model 1816 and 1819 pistols were sufficient to last a number of years. However, another reason for the lack of pistols may be explained in a letter from Bomford to Nathan Starr on January 24, 1828:

... The supply of small arms, under the appropriation for arming the militia must be diminished; for there is an increasing desire on the part of the state authorities to receive field artillery in lieu of small arms; to meet which a portion of the funds must be diverted from small arms to artillery . . .⁴

Accordingly, requests for small arms for mounted troops declined in favor of the preferred substitution of artillery pieces. Deficiencies in the stocks of pistols were pointed out by Major Rufus Baker in a letter to Colonel Bomford, dated January 29, 1834, reporting on the supply of pistols at the Allegheny Arsenal:

I have received your order for the issue of 750 pistols and sabers to the Dragoons at Fort Gibson and Jefferson Barracks. The Department is doubtless aware that this issue will have to be made from pistols of the old pattern there being only sixty of the swivel ramrod pattern on hand at this arsenal.⁵

The old pattern referred to in the letter was likely the Model 1816, which was supplied with a wooden ramrod while the Model 1819 was equipped with the iron swivel ramrod.

The development of the Model 1836 pistol began with a response to a circular from the Ordnance Department soliciting bids for fabrication of pistols, Robert Johnson wrote to Bomford on January 17, 1835:

... I will agree to manufacture the 2,500 pistols named in the circular at eight dollars each pistol if the time

can be extended into the year 1836 as the time named is too short to get stocks this year to fit the work.⁶

However, it was early June 1836 before the Ordnance Department and Robert Johnson settled on the Pattern pistol.⁷ As Robert Johnson prepared to deliver the first group of the new pistols, conflicting demands increased from both U.S. troops and the states. When their needs were not being met fast enough some states chose to directly approach the arms contractors (Figure 3).

THE VIRGINIA PRECEDENT

In Virginia the Nat Turner rebellion in Southampton County in 1832 emptied the State's arsenals of small arms due to the fear of a larger scale rebellion. Virginia rejecting the proffered arms from the federal government under the Militia Act of 1808 made it own arms at the Virginia Manufactory until 1823. With Virginia arsenals empty, the state began requesting the arrears in small arms due under the Militia Act, including pistols, from Ordnance Department. In addition, Virginia inquired about direct purchase from northern contract suppliers.

The direct purchase was authorized by the Virginia General Assembly when it passed a law in the 1831-1832 session authorizing the Governor to contract for military equipment. Based on that legislation, Bernard Peyton, the Virginia Adjutant General, began pressing for arms. In the following letter to Colonel George Bomford, on June 6, 1832, Peyton requested assistance to purchase or independently contract for accoutrements and arms:

At the last session of our legislature, a law passed requiring the Governor to contract for military equipments of



Figure 3. Johnson factory.

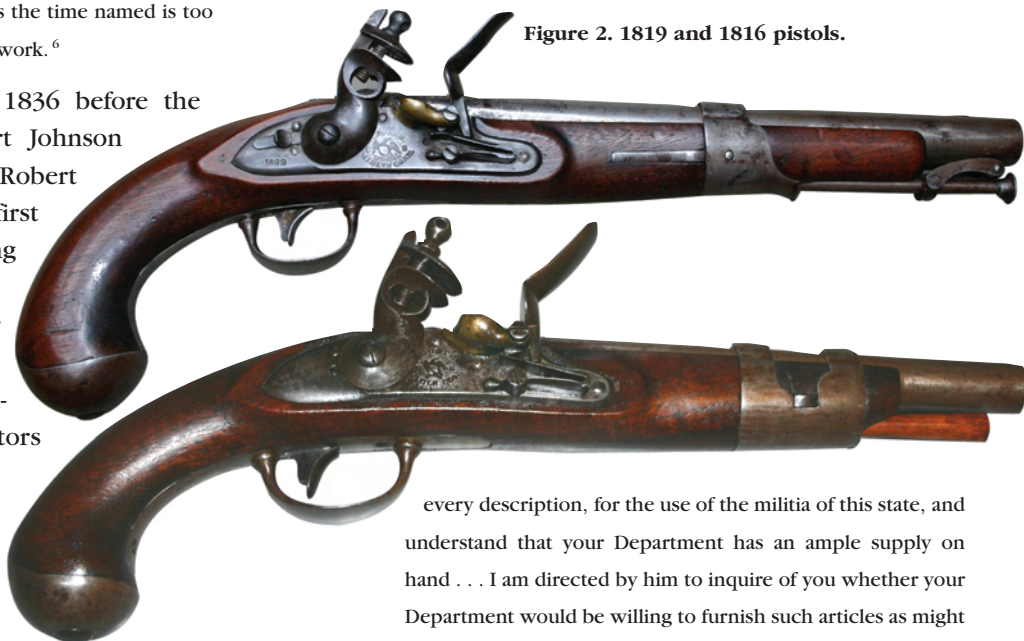


Figure 2. 1819 and 1816 pistols.

every description, for the use of the militia of this state, and understand that your Department has an ample supply on hand . . . I am directed by him to inquire of you whether your Department would be willing to furnish such articles as might be required, at the prices they respectively cost, not what they are valued at when given in lieu to arms to the several states. The cash being paid for them on delivery. If that cannot be done, would you oblige so far as to acquaint me with the contract prices for these articles to govern me in making a contract for them . . .⁸

On July 9, 1832, Colonel Bomford informed Major Craig, Inspector of Contract Arms, that the Secretary of War Lewis Cass had approved Virginia's request for assistance in contracting.⁹ Five years would pass before the pistols requested by Virginia under the Militia Act were actually delivered. Finally, Adjutant General Peyton received a letter from Colonel Bomford dated June 9, 1836 concerning the protracted delays:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 6th inst. and in answer, I regret to have to state that owing to the very heavy pressing demands in consequence to the Indian hostilities, for every species of arms and accoutrements, the manufacture of those due the state under The Act of 1808, had under the circumstances of the call, to be adjusted.¹⁰

Rejected, Virginia tried to appeal directly to Robert Johnson for pistols but he was not inclined to risk his agreement with the Ordnance Department. The hostilities in Florida and Georgia had temporarily spoiled Virginia's request for arms. This exchange of letters suggests the setting of an unusual precedent involving the Ordnance Department directly assisting a state in contracting with private vendors for arms and accoutrements. This "precedent" would later be called into question by Secretary of War Joel Poinsett who replaced Lewis Cass in 1837.

These letters seem to imply that Virginia wanted to independently contract for arms and accoutrements, purchase

them from the Ordnance Department and/or receive their allotment in arms and accoutrements. Virginia finally settled on their allotment arrears under the Militia Act with the Ordnance Department by agreement dated October 31, 1834. The pistols Virginia finally received under this agreement will play a role later in this inquiry.

GEORGIA MILITIA FEDERALIZED

On January 24, 1836, the Secretary of War Lewis Cass authorized the Governor of Georgia William Schley to call out the State Militia to subdue the Seminoles and Creeks. A few days later on February 2, 1836, the Secretary acknowledged receipt of the Governor Schely's request for funds and authorized \$15,000 for the State to pay for supplies.

Closer to seat of conflict the State of Georgia made requests similar to those of Virginia to the Secretary of War asking for assistance in purchasing arms. Although the original letter from the Governor of Georgia on January 19, 1836 outlining the necessary arms and equipment needed for the Volunteer Georgia Cavalry could not be located, the content can be determined from the letter Bomford sent to Major Craig March 9, 1836 outlining the Governors request:

An application having been made by his Excellency William Schley, Governor of the State of Georgia wishing through the agency of the Government to purchase for the State of Georgia ten thousand dollars worth of cavalry equipment.

You will in accordance thereby at as early day as practicable contract in the names and for the State of Georgia for



Figure 4. Accoutrements.

the following stores to be paid for through the agents of that state on your application therefore to the Governor viz.

340 cavalry sabers to be obtained of Mr. Ames

680 Pistols to be obtained of Mr. R. Johnson.

340 sets of cavalry equipment's complete each to consist of the following:

One saber belt (white leather) one brass belt plate for the same, One pistol cartridge box, One Pair of holsters. (The number of pistols implies and issue of two pistols for each cavalryman.)

to be obtained from Mr. Dingee amounting in all agreeable to present prices paid for similar stores by the government \$9,720.60 falling somewhat short of \$10,000 the original sum appropriated by the State of Georgia, which difference is reserved to pay for packing transportation and to consider other incidental expenditures.

The arms and accouterments are to be subject to the usual inspection to be exactly conformable to the present established patterns, to be in no respect inferior in quality and workmanship to similar articles furnished the general government and the prices to be paid for them not to exceed those paid by the Government,

Instead of sending the contracts to this office you will transmit them to the Governor of Georgia communicating with him all in due time as to the points at which the stores are to be delivered at (Figure 4).¹¹

General Winfield Scott was ordered to Florida in February 1836 to take overall command of the Indian conflicts. Scott was ordered to pass through South Carolina and Georgia and muster the state militia. Governor Schley's request for arms occurred just three months after the outbreak of the Seminole War and coincided with General Scott's arrival in Georgia, to activate the state militia. Some Georgia units such as the Richmond Blues

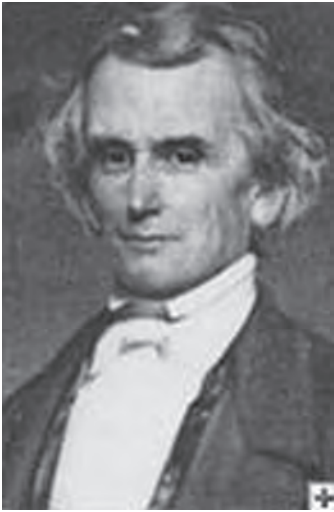


Figure 5. Photo of Georgia Governor William Schley.

and Richmond Hussars from Augusta Georgia answered the call.¹² There are numerous references in diaries and reports of Georgia mounted troops serving in Florida and Georgia.¹³

Both the Georgia and Virginia Governor were destined to be frustrated in their respective contracting efforts for arms through the Ordnance Department. The states, however, were more successful in obtaining accoutrements from Robert Dingee.

The following letters make it clear that the immediate priority in supplying arms and accoutrements was to be the U. S. forces, not the state militia (Figure 5).

THE MODEL 1836 INTO PRODUCTION

On September 2, 1836, Bomford sent Craig order number 212, which initially required 900 pistols to be issued to the 2nd Regiment

of Dragoons.¹⁴ Additional instructions followed on November 24, 1836:

The 2nd Regt. of Dragoons are organizing in the City of New York respective to Order No 212, instead of forwarding all 900 pistols to Washington Arsenal send one half only; the other half to the depot in New York. The delivery of the first 400 will be made to New York Depot.

More urgency was requested from Bomford in a letter to Craig dated November 29, 1836: "Speed completion of the pistols, deliver as many as you can obtain due to the immediate need for the number to equip the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons."¹⁵

Robert Johnson delivered the first 350 Model 1836 pistols on November 19, 1836.¹⁶ They were inspected by Thomas Warner serving as the principle sub-inspector from Springfield Armory and Major Craig. Craig had already shipped the pistols to the Washington Arsenal before receiving the revised instructions from Bomford.¹⁷ In a letter to Bomford dated December 22, 1836, Craig stated that Johnson indicated he would be able to have 600 more pistols ready by January 1837. At the end of the letter Craig states that he has informed Johnson that he expects 500 pistols ready for inspection by January 16, 1837.¹⁸ However, the next delivery of 500 pistols would not occur until March 11, 1837. It can reasonably be inferred that the first two deliveries of Model 1836 pistols were needed to complete the issue to the U.S. 2nd Dragoons (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Model 1836 pistol.

On February 13, 1837, Bomford is pressing Craig for pistols and requesting him to inform the contractors to deliver as soon as possible. Bomford closes the letter: "Urgent demand requires something should be done immediately." Bomford estimated they needed at least 10,000 pistols.¹⁹ Craig had only 850 pistols in the pipeline and they were reserved for the Dragoons. The Ordnance Department had only 7,000 pistols under contract in 1837—4,000 from Johnson and 3,000 from Asa Waters.

RULES OF THE GAME

In early 1837, the pressing need for pistols began to erode the prescribed inspection procedures and resulting anomalies began to creep into the process. Not only was Major Craig the Superintendent of Inspection for the Ordnance Department, he was also the Ordnance Officer in charge of Watertown Arsenal. Major Craig was guided in his inspection duties by his superior officer Colonel George Bomford, Chief of Ordnance and the *Regulations for the Government of the Ordnance Department 1834*. Although these regulations were new, they were in addition to the very detailed *Regulations for the Inspection of Small Arms 1823* and the more general *Regulations for the Ordnance Service September 1830*.

The *Regulations for Inspection 1823* set the rules for inspecting and marking the pistols. It provided for the letters U.S., the inspector's initials, and the letter P to be placed on the top of the barrel one inch from the breech following the proof firing of the barrels. The regulations also stated that after the examinations of the inspector are completed, the initials of his name would be stamped in the stock, opposite the lock. Until the appointment of Lieutenant Daniel Tyler in 1831, all the inspections after 1817 were completed by employees from Springfield Armory under the supervision of Roswell Lee. Springfield continued to supply the sub-inspectors but the supervision shifted to the Ordnance Department with Tyler's appointment as Superintendent of Inspection.

Supplying the military operation in Florida continued to pressure the Ordnance Department. Craig delegated some inspection duties to Captain James Andrew Jackson Bradford. The first hint that Craig was not personally supervising the inspection of goods was discovered in a series of letters beginning in early 1835. Rejecting some accoutrements fabricated by Robert Dingee, Bradford generated a series of letters between himself, Craig, and Bomford in early 1835.²⁰ Although Bradford's supporting letters have not been located it appears that Craig was having difficulties with maintaining his dual duties at the Watertown Arsenal and as Superintendent of Inspection. Bradford had been inspecting as Ordnance Officer for some time. His distinctive J.A.J.B appears on Whitney, Pomeroy and Robert Johnson Muskets delivered in 1834 as receiving officer in place of Craig.²¹ His

stamp of acceptance also appears on Hall Carbines by Simeon North dated 1836.²² Bradford was filling in for Craig on more than just accoutrements.

On March 20, 1837, Lieutenant Robert Henry Kirkwood Whiteley²³ was sent from Augusta Arsenal to assist Craig at Watertown Arsenal.²⁴ Craig continued to rely on other officers to assist in the inspection, which continued to cause problems with major accoutrement supplier Robert Dingee. Bomford wrote to Craig on April 5, 1837:

Much difficulty and embarrassment having lately been experienced in the inspection of accoutrements owing to your inability of attending to it and in the consequent necessity of assigning that duty to officers not sufficiently experienced to perform it to obviate therefore in future every difficulty of this kind you will resume the inspection of all accoutrements. This it is presumed can now be done without detriment to the operation at your post since you will have the assistance of Lieutenant Whiteley lately detailed at your arsenal . . .²⁵

This letter was prompted because 640 sets of cavalry equipments and 260 extra holsters were rejected for poor quality at Robert Dingee's establishment. The inspection was suspended by Captain Bradford because all the items submitted to him were of poor quality. The implication of this letter points out that Craig continued to allow Bradford to inspect and receive contract items in his absence.²⁶

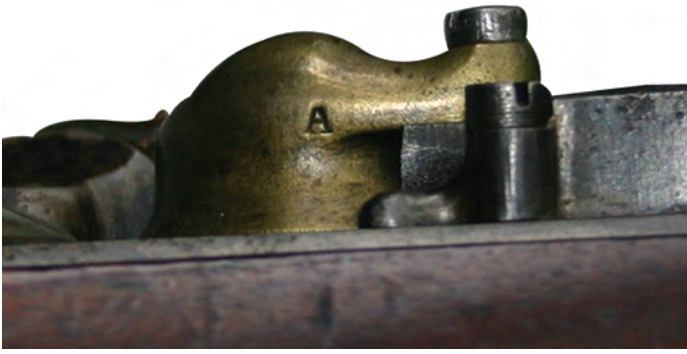
Craig wrote to Bomford on May 4, 1837 concerning the acceptance of arms into the agent's stores that had not completed inspection. This was due to Craig's inability to be at a number of musket factories to inspect arms in a timely manner. Craig had tentatively agreed to allow the arms to be placed in the agent's stores, but informed Bomford, "taking care to inform them that I had no authority to promise that the arms would be received." Bomford's reply on May 9, 1837 held Craig to the official regulations:

Your letter of the 4th inst (May 4) has been received. You are correct in your views as to the question of existing authority whether arms can be received if they have not been inspected in the presence of the Inspector of the Contract Service. The 107th paragraph of the ordnance regulations [1834] making it clearly incumbent on him to be present. He could not consistently approve the acts of the sub-inspectors without his having witnessed them.

As you now have the assistance of an officer it is presumed that you will be able to attend to the periodical inspections without causing any material delay to the contractors.²⁷

The paragraph that Bomford refers to is found in the *Regulations for the Government of the Ordnance Department 1834*. Specifically, paragraph 107 states:

The inspecting officers of contract arms shall, in all cases, before receiving such arms for the United States cause



them to be taken to pieces in their presence, and the several parts to be closely examined by the sub-inspectors. When arms have been received by the inspecting officer for the use of the United States at private armories, the principal inspector will cause them immediately to be boxed for transportation in his presence, and will secure each box by fixing his seals thereon.²⁸

From 1834 on, two sets of inspection initials should be present on firearms and certainly on all accepted Model 1836 pistols; one set for the sub-inspector and one for the Ordnance Officer receiving the arms (Figure 7).

INSPECTIONS

Craig's absence at some pistol inspections is evident due to the lack of his final HKC inspection cartouche appearing on the stock of some Model 1836 pistols. Although he signed all the official inspection certificates, the lack of his HKC stamp suggests that he may not have been physically present at a few of the inspections. It appears from the physical evidence, which is connected with supply pressure points, that he was not present on at least two occasions in 1837.

The inspection process of the era began when enough components of at least 500 pistols were ready to assemble. A skilled and experienced employee from Springfield Armory, appointed as "sub-inspector," would be dispatched to the private manufactory of Robert Johnson or Asa Waters. They would often remain for several days until a group of a few hundred pistols had been assembled and inspected. As the pistol components were completed the principle sub-inspector placed the letter of his last name on the bottom of the brass pan, on the flat of the barrel opposite the touch hole and on the tail of stock flat. Thus the three major components of the pistol—the lock, stock, and barrel—were approved. When the entire pistol was completely and properly assembled he placed his scripted initials enclosed in a cartouche on the stock flat near the rear side screw. The Superintendent of Inspection, an Ordnance Officer, was summoned to the manufactory when the proffered pistols were ready to be delivered to the United States. The Ordnance Officer personally inspected the work of the sub-inspectors



Figure 7. Double cartouche example.

and often took select pistols apart. On completing his inspection he stamped his cartouche initials on the stock next to those of the sub-inspector. Under his direct supervision the pistols were boxed, sealed and shipped from the manufactory as prescribed. The dated final inspection certificate, signed by both men, was then sent to the Treasury Department for payment. Today these certificates are scattered in the hundreds of boxes of the records of the Second Auditor located in the National Archives (Figure 8).

On a properly inspected Model 1836 pistol the stock should clearly show both inspector cartouches and if original flintlock, the initials on the pan, stock, and barrel flat should be the same. There are exceptions to identical letters on the component parts when two sub-inspectors are working at the same manufactory. However, this is more prevalent on Waters than Johnson pistols due to continual problems with inspections at the Waters manufactory.

THE FIRST ANOMALY

Only a few pistols dated 1836 are known to have survived issue to the 2nd Dragoons and their subsequent use in Florida. Beginning with the first 350 pistols dated 1836, the TW cartouche of Principle Inspector Thomas Warner appears on the stock with the barrels proofed by Nahum W. Patch (NWP). The second cartouche of the Superintendent of Inspection Henry Knox Craig (HKC) should also be present on the first 350 pistols since this was the first production delivery of a new model. However, additional pistols dated 1836 have also been observed with only a single cartouche of Thomas Warner. This might be explained because Johnson had intended to deliver at least 600 more pistols before January 1837. In fact the next delivery of pistols did not occur until March 11, 1837. Two pistols have been observed in original flintlock condition with only the TW sub-inspection cartouche and three others have been noted that have been altered to percussion. The pistols with only the TW inspection may be those that were delivered in March using

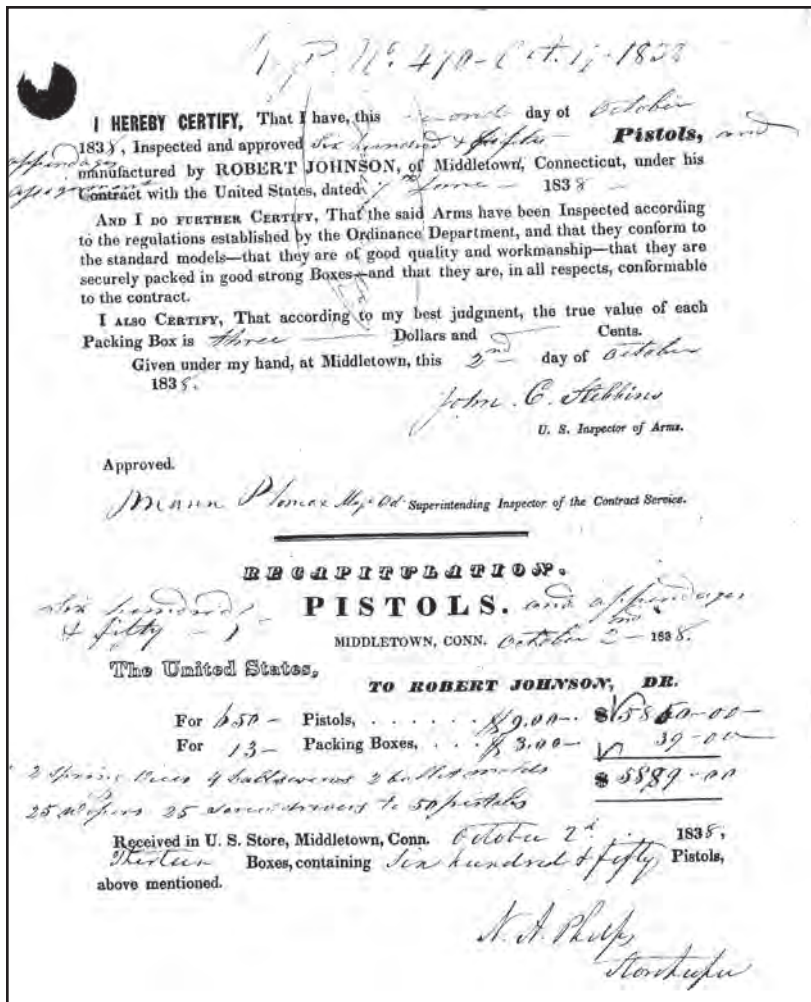


Figure 8. Scanned copy of inspection sheet.

locks dated 1836. Subsequent inspection records combined with observations indicate that locks dated in the previous year were often carried forward into the subsequent year. Thomas Warner inspected five deliveries totaling 2,650 pistols from March 11 to August 4, 1837. Both the TW and the HKC cartouche have been observed on 1837-dated pistols so Craig was physically present for some of the inspections.²⁹ The 500 pistols delivered on March 11 were directed to be delivered to New York for the 2nd Regiment of Dragoons. An adjusted total of 720 pistols were needed to complete the order. The first two deliveries provided 850 pistols, which were more than enough.³⁰

The partial answer to this question of the “single cartouche pistols” is that these anomalies occurred at the pressure points where Craig was physically unable to attend the inspections. The most likely occurrence for the single TW cartouche of Thomas Warner was the March 11 inspection. One bit of evidence supporting the March inspection is that Lt. Whiteley arrived at Watertown after the March 11 inspection but before the next April 4 inspection. Also, Bomford’s letter to Craig on April 5, 1837 clearly shows he is certainly



Figure 9. TW cartouche.

not at Robert Dingees! Most of the surviving pistols with the 1836 dates and TW cartouches exhibit hard use (Figure 9).

CRAIG’S MOUNTING PROBLEMS

Major Craig’s inspection duties continued to mount in the summer of 1837. Following Bomford’s letter of May 9, 1837, which clarified the role of the Superintendent of Inspection, Craig personally attended the next pistol inspections at Johnson’s factory. This is verified in letters to Bomford that directly address the inspections. On May 30, 1837 Craig writes to Bomford: “On the 25th inst. I inspected at the factory of R. Johnson 450 pistols, which I directed to be immediately forwarded to the N.Y. Depot.”

In addition, on July 18, 1837, Craig communicated “On the 10th I inspected at R. Johnson and S. North 700 pistols and 860 carbines.” The remainder of the July 18 letter is quoted because it gives an insight into Craig’s impossible schedule in a ten day period from June 8–18, 1837:

On July 8 I inspected at the factory of N.P. Ames 1000 art. swords and 20 Dragoon sabers small size and caused them to be delivered to the Military Storekeeper at Springfield Armory. On the 10th I inspected at R. Johnson and S. North 700 pistols and 860 carbines. I then visited N. York and inspected 2500 infantry and 100 cavalry accoutrements, which along with the pistols and the carbines were delivered to L.L Van Kleeck Esq. MSK at the N.Y. Depot.

Your letters of 13 and 14th were received since my return³¹

Craig’s situation eroded further following the August 4 pistol inspection when Principle Inspector Thomas Warner left the inspection service to go to work for Asa Waters at Millbury. Adding to Craig’s problems, Lt. Whiteley was ordered back to Florida after only four months service to the Ordnance Department. On July 28, 1837, Whiteley was

preparing his receipts so he could depart Watertown.³² It is likely he was still at Watertown on August 4, allowing Craig to make the inspection with Warner for 500 pistols at the Robert Johnson factory.

On August 17, 1837, Craig asked Bomford for help:

I do not know how I can get along with the inspections without the appointment of two or three additional inspectors of fire arms besides one for swords. The pistol factories when fairly in operation will give employment to take a great amount of time and the time of one is in great measure engrossed by the carbines. We have now only two inspectors one of whose services I will be glad to dispense with as soon as others can be got. The greater difficulty in the way of getting suitable persons arises from the fact that I cannot learn there are any such amongst the inspectors if the armory who are willing to serve. I understand that Mr. Weatherhead, the former master armorer, could be willing to become an armory and contract inspector; he would be a valuable acquisition to both establishments if he could be secured against the effects of the machinations of his old nemesis.

Travel accounts for the last quarter of 1837 show that in addition to Principal Inspector Thomas Warner, also present at Johnson's were inspectors Asabel Hubbard and Justin Murphy—both old hands at the inspection business. It is unknown which one most displeased Craig, but neither one continued in the inspection service.

THE SECOND ANOMALY

A series of events around the October 5, 1837 pistol inspection at Johnson's factory make this the most likely candidate for the second anomaly. A grouping of pistols dated 1837 exhibits only the single cartouche inspection mark of Joseph Hannis (JH). The October inspection for 500 pistols was the first inspection by Hannis, who replaced Warner as Principle Inspector. Since it is almost inconceivable that Craig would ignore the May 9 written instructions of the Chief of Ordnance, and absence himself from yet another inspection, perhaps an alternate explanation is in order. Craig's good standing and competence may be affirmed because he was promoted to Alleghany Arsenal and eventually became Chief of Ordnance himself in 1851 (Figure 10)!

On September 15, 1837, Bomford sent Craig a long letter relating to equipment needs. The letter stressed that 600 Tennessee volunteers were being sent to Florida all in need of pistols and even more pistols were needed for New Jersey. Bomford took the opportunity in this communication to express his exasperation with arms supply problems. Although Bomford stated that he did not attach any blame to Craig and that his intent was that the letter should be used to serve as an



Figure 10. JH cartouche.

admonishment to the contractors, his further instruction to Craig is quite clear beginning with the line "you will:"

. . . You will take all measures necessary to hasten the completion and inspection of 1500 pistols, 600 sent immediately to N.J. (the word and is underlined in the original letter)

I take this occasion to state that the difficulties which are constantly encountered by this Department in consequence of the scanty and slow supplies of pistols and carbines are truly embarrassing and perplexing and will result in the censure of this Department

To say nothing of the present demand in Florida large numbers of pistols and carbines still remain to be delivered under the militia act of 1808 under orders given to you almost two years since . . .

Bomford closes the letter by ordering that all pistols and carbines from the contractors be shipped directly from the contractors to the New York Depot.³³

Perhaps the most convincing document to support the presence of the JH single occurring during the October 5 inspection is a letter from Craig's dated October 7. In it he clearly states he is at Cabotsville on October 5. In addition Craig's letters during this period indicate pistols are being sent directly from the Johnson factory to New York in small batches as they are completed. It seems that Craig bundled small shipments of pistols into one inspection certificate for 500 pistols dated October 5, 1837. The wording in Craig's letter is also interesting, note the use of "I directed" instead of "I inspected" in relation to the pistols:

On the 4th inst. I directed 100 pistols and 300 carbines to be immediately shipped from the Middletown depot to L.L. Van Kleeck at New York and on the 5th I inspected 400 flasks at Cabotsville, which I directed to be forwarded to same destination. . . . I hope to get off 600 flasks and 200 pistols more in a short time.

It is in a great deal of mortification that I have so often to report delay in meeting requisitions; last I wish you to be

assured that no efforts have been spared by me in carrying into effect the business of the Department.³⁴

Apparently Bomford's last letter carried considerably more weight than previous communications in stating "You will take all measures necessary to hasten the completion and inspection." Only a few days later the continuing pressure on Craig to fill orders is captured in his letter to Bomford on October 18, 1837:

Mr. Dingee has about 3,000 Infantry accoutrements ready for inspection but in consequence of the removal of Lt. Whiteley from this post I will be unable to attend to that inspection. More flasks are reported in readiness by Mr. Ames. I requested the sword inspector (William Smith) to make the necessary inspections and turn them over for transportation to the Alleghany Arsenal. They have been no doubt sent off before this time. Two hundred more pistols have been inspected and sent off from the factory of R. Johnson to the New York Depot. Inspections of pistols are now in progress at the factories of both R. Johnson and A. Waters; the latter expects to be able to turn out 300 per week. I think that number high but that he may deliver 150-200.

Bomford penned a reply directly on Craig's letter and sent it immediately forward to the Honorable Secretary of War supporting Craig's request for assistance.³⁵

The unusual shipments of small batches of pistols around the October inspection make it even more likely to be the source of the JH single cartouche. In fact it was one of these pistols that prompted Mr. Leveque's question in the first place. Oddly, some of the surveying pistols of this group are often found in very good condition. Supporting evidence for the October inspection may also be found on the barrel proof inspection. Some of the barrels on the single cartouche pistols bear the proof firing mark of Thomas Warner. The "Warner barrels" were likely left over from his last proof-

ing inspection in August. Joseph Hannis made the next pistol inspection at Johnson's factory in December, but things had improved in the Ordnance Department by then.

In the late fall of 1837 Craig received some relief. Lt. John Fitzgerald Lee was appointed to command the New York Depot and assigned accoutrement inspection duties. William Smith from the Springfield Armory began inspecting at the Ames factory. Mr. John A. Webber, a former officer and West Point graduate was appointed Military Storekeeper at Watertown. In addition, Nahum Patch, Craig's most competent inspector was assigned to inspecting carbines at North's. Joseph Hannis, also a competent inspector, was assigned to pistols. In addition Bomford arranged for John Avis of Harpers Ferry Armory to assist with pistol inspections beginning in early 1838 (Figure 11).³⁶

VIRGINIA AND NEW JERSEY PISTOLS

The next inspection of 1000 pistols at Robert Johnson's was made on December 6, 1837 by Joseph Hannis (as Principle Inspector) and Craig. In a letter to Bomford the next day, Craig provides a clue to the disposition of this group of pistols:

Your letter of the 29th ulto. has been received. On the 2nd last I reported that in a few days 800 pistols and 300 carbines would be forwarded from the Middletown factories to the N. York depot and that about 500 pistols would be received at this post from Millbury: if these arms are permitted to be issued to the state of Virginia and the complement to be made up from the next parcel manufactured the issue to that state under order 187 of 1835 can be completed in pistols before the 15th of January and I think in carbines about the 15th of May.³⁷

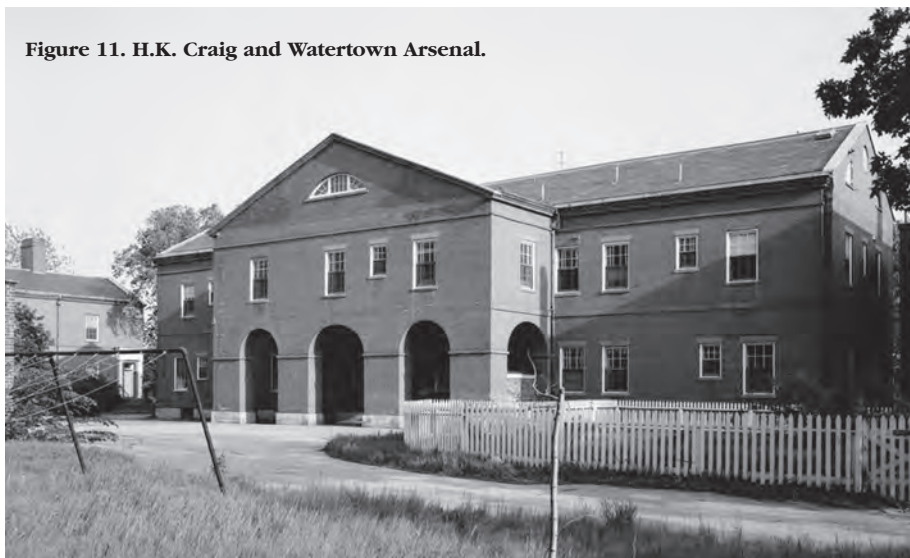
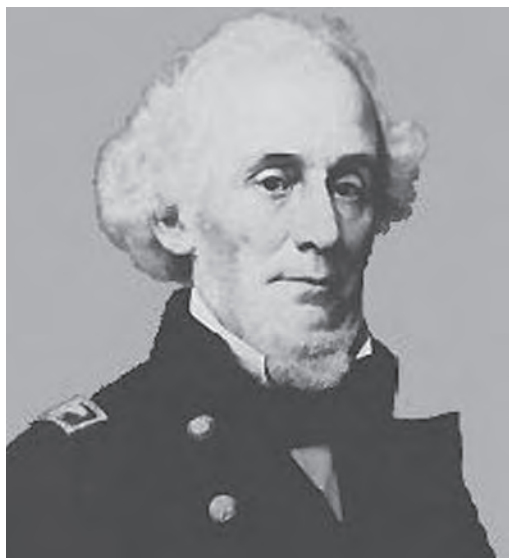


Figure 11. H.K. Craig and Watertown Arsenal.

In late November, Bernard Peyton, Adjutant General for Virginia, began pushing anew for the promised quota of 1507 pistols due to the State. He had been requesting pistols since 1832. Bomford promised Peyton that he would ship the pistols about the first of April 1838. Meantime the order for the State of New Jersey was also seriously in arrears. Bomford made the decision to fill the Virginia order first followed by the New Jersey order.³⁸

Although Virginia did not mark the Model 1836 pistols it received with state identification, New Jersey did. Both states altered the Model 1836 pistols to percussion at the beginning of the Civil War. Some of the Virginia pistols were altered by Thomas Adams of Richmond. The Adams bolster alteration is distinctive. New Jersey alterations are also distinctive and marked with an 'NJ' on the barrel flat and with an additional 'NJ' script cartouche. Oddly these are the only pistols with three cartouches. Numerous examples of both these state alterations effected on Johnson pistols dated 1837 exhibit the JH and HKC script cartouches. It appears that some of the December 6, 1837 inspection of 1000 pistols, which found their way to New Jersey and Virginia, were inspected according to the rules. The question may be raised, could the 1837 dated locks have continued into 1838? The answer is certainly, but the first inspection in 1838 was completed by Principle Inspector Joseph Weatherhead, which was his only inspection

on this model pistol and his last. Perhaps the "machinations of his old nemesis" caught up with him? The physical evidence, inspection records and the specific state issues allow the discounting of this December inspection of pistols as the source of single cartouche leaving only the October 5, 1837 inspection as the likely group of pistols with the single JH cartouche (Figure 12).

The presence of Craig's HKC cartouche is consistent until the fall of the year 1838 when he was assigned command of Alleghany Arsenal. It is the last two inspections of 1838 that are the most interesting, relating as they do to the Georgia effort to obtain pistols directly from Robert Johnson. It is at this point in history that the Georgia Contract, the single cartouche pistols, the inspection process and the Second Seminole War all interweave.

THE GEORGIA CONTRACT (ANOMALY 3 & 4)

On January 22, 1838 Governor George Rockingham Gilmer, who had replaced William Schley as Governor of Georgia, wrote Secretary of War Joel Poinsett requesting the status of 742 rifles and accouterments assigned to the State of Georgia as its quota of public arms through the Militia Act of 1808. Gilmer writes, ". . . Most of the public arms of this State have been either lost or rendered unfit for use in the Creek and Seminole Campaigns so that they are wanted for the troops that may be ordered into the Cherokee Country."³⁹

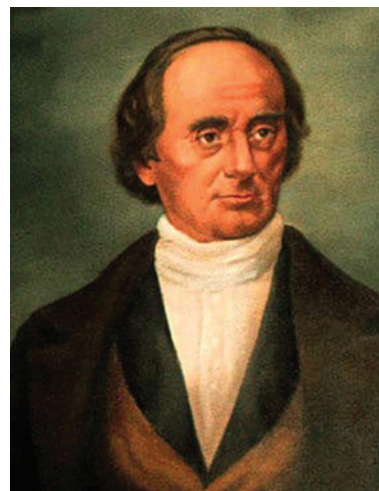
On February 20 he requested two brass six pound cannon for City of Augusta and the remaining apportionment in muskets and accoutrements. The Governor further requests that they may be sent as soon as possible "They are wanted for the troops which are about to be called into service for the U. States for the defense of the Cherokee Country"⁴⁰ (Figure 13).

George R. Gilmer was first elected Governor of Georgia in 1829-1831 and re-elected 1837-1839. Gilmer is most noted for ordering the State Militia to subdue the Cherokees. He served as first lieutenant in the Forty-third Regiment, United States Infantry, from 1813 to

Figure 13. George R. Gilmer Governor of Georgia, 1837-1839.



Figure 12. JH and HKC cartouche on New Jersey and Virginia alterations.



1815 in the campaign against the Creek Indians and built a fort on the Chattahoochee River near the present city of Atlanta. Gilmer had been a member of Congress and once chaired the Committee on Indian Affairs. It was during his administration as Governor that the tragic "Trail of Tears" took place.⁴¹

By early spring of 1838 Major Craig thought there were sufficient pistols in the process of completion and inspection to consider beginning to supply the states under the obligations of the Militia Act of 1808. In a letter to Bomford on March 7, 1838 he states that "500 pistols are in store at Watertown and expects to receive 500 more from Asa Waters on the 10th of March." Craig points out that, "two inspectors are busy at Johnson's in Middletown and he expects to receive an additional 1000 pistols." Craig proposed furnishing the pistols due the State of Virginia from these upcoming deliveries.⁴²

Exhibiting the same optimism Craig wrote to Governor George Gilmer at Milledgeville Georgia on March 3, 1838:

In the month of March 1836 I was instructed by the Colonel of Ordnance (Bomford) to procure for the State of Georgia certain cavalry equipment's, a portion of which has been delivered, but circumstances have delayed the fabrication of the pistols. They can now be furnished at a very short notice and if it is your Excellency's desire, I will order them to be manufactured and have them forwarded.⁴³

Governor Gilmer answered Craig on March 16, 1838:

Your communication of the 3rd inst. upon the subject of the purchase of certain cavalry equipment for the State of Georgia has just been received. You are requested to have completed the arrangement entered into between Governor Schley and the Ordnance Department for the purchase of cavalry arms for the State and have them forwarded to the care of Egbert B. Beall, Augusta, Georgia.

In a letter to Bomford on June 14, 1838 Robert Johnson states that he prefers to complete most of his assignment of pistols for the year 1838 in the first half of the year. He says in all probability he will have 1000 pistols ready in July. He proposes to then finish the rest of the pistols he should have delivered in 1837 and "likewise the 680 for the State of Georgia" by the end of 1838. The letter confirms that the Georgia contract pistols had not yet been completed when 1000 pistols were delivered by Johnson on July 6, 1838.⁴⁴ Johnson, however, apparently allocated the next group of pistols to be fabricated for the Georgia contract. The agreement with Georgia required them to be inspected the same as those for the United States. The next inspection took place on August 18, 1838 when Lewis Foster inspected 600 pistols and applied his LF cartouche (Figure 14).



Figure 14. LF single cartouche on flintlock.

The assistance provided by the Ordnance Department in acting as agent for a state may seem strange with today's procurement rules but it was not uncommon in this era. The agreement described previously with Virginia may have set the precedent. During this same era a number of Model 1833 sabers were purchased by the states. Some of the five states purchasing sabers required them to be inspected to the U.S. standard. The states requiring inspection may have been aware of the practice of passing along rejected U.S. contract goods to the states. Examples of these sabers have only the mark of the sub-inspector. Similar inspections were also made for sabers made for the Republic of Texas.⁴⁵ It is likely a similar process was envisioned for the Georgia contract pistols. Therefore similar to the sabers, the pistols for the Georgia contract would bare only the certification and mark of the sub-inspector Lewis Foster. In this case the missing cartouche mark of the Superintendent of Inspection was not due to his absence, but rather that the pistols were not slated for acceptance of payment by the United States and therefore the requirement for an ordnance officer inspection was unnecessary.

With the pistols ready to be shipped to Georgia in August a problem developed concerning who was to pay for the shipping charges. Apparently the instruction from Bomford's letter to Craig in 1836, which reserved funds for packing and transportation, was forgotten! On September 4, 1838 Craig writes to Governor Gilmer:

I enclose herewith a contract enacted in behalf of the State of Georgia for 680 pistols. These arms are hereby ready for delivery but the manufacturer Mr. R Johnson of Middletown has expressed an unwillingness to undertake the transport and deliver them in Georgia. He says it was his expectation that they would be received and paid for in New York or some other shipping place. The pistols manufactured for the United States are delivered by him in the city of Middletown hence his expectation that he would not be called on to send those made for the State of Georgia to a

distance. If an arrangement can be made for the reception in the city of New York it will relieve Mr. Johnson from much embarrassment.

Please address Major M.P. Lomax who is my successor as Superintendent of Inspection. He will be stationed at this post.⁴⁶

It is clear from these letters that the pistols intended to fulfill the Georgia Contract were the 600 inspected by Lewis Foster on August 18, 1838. The inspection, however, was 80 pistols short of the total needed.

MANN PAGE LOMAX, SUPERINTENDENT OF INSPECTION

In late September 1838 Major Mann Page Lomax took over command of the Watertown Arsenal replacing Craig as Superintendent of Inspection. Craig had been assigned command of Alleghany Arsenal. In a letter to Bomford on September 21, 1838, Lomax states he is at Watertown and has taken over from Craig.⁴⁷ The Georgia pistol contract problems were passed to Lomax by Craig but apparently he forgot to tell him!

On September 8, 1838 Governor Gilmer wrote to Joel Poinsett, Secretary of War:

“ . . . Enclosed is a copy of an agreement made by Major Craig on behalf of the State of Georgia and Robert Johnson of Middletown for the manufacture of 680 pistols for the state.” My object is to procure the delivery of the pistols in this state in time to be used by the companies who may be disposed to volunteer in the service against the Seminole Indians. The state having at present no pistols for its cavalry. I did not know the terms of Major Craig’s contract until the receipt of his letter. I would like to require sometime to agree upon the manner of payment and delivery with Mr. Johnson. I would therefore request that the Secretary of War will through the offices of his department pay Mr. Johnson out of the money which will be due the state for advances made for the United States in the Campaigns of 1836 against the Seminole and Creek Indians and charge the same to the state of Georgia and that he will cause them to be shipped to the care of Francis M. Stone, keeper of the arsenal at Savannah and that the transpiration be aid for and charged to the state in the same manner.⁴⁸

This suggested payment scenario put things on hold. Meanwhile Robert Johnson was preparing another group of pistols for inspection. There were only 600 pistols in the Lewis Foster inspection of August 18, 1838. The next group of 650 pistols was inspected by John. C. Stebbins on October 2, 1838. These pistols also bear only the single cartouche JCS.

The Georgia Pistol delivery was interrupted by yet another problem, besides who was going to pay for the

shipment. Between the August and October Johnson inspections William Maynadier, Captain of Ordnance wrote to Lomax at Watertown Arsenal on September 26, 1838. As the letter will show, while the Governor of Georgia is trying to buy arms for the militia, the Ordnance Department is trying to ship pistols to the State of Georgia for their militia:

Urgent necessity existing for the immediate issue of 1000 pistols to Charleston for the use of the militia force to be called into service in the State of Georgia you will immediately cause to be forwarded to the N.Y. Depot any pistols which may be on hand at your post or which may have been inspected and received for the service of the U. States at the armories of messers Waters and Johnson. Should there be none on hand you will to the greatest possible dispatch inspect from 600 to 800 and forward them to the New York Depot, they being requested at Charleston.

The pistols herein referred to and required at the New York Depot to fill orders already issued and are such as are to be delivered under existing contracts and agreements between the private armories and the U. States and for no other account. You will by return mail report to this office on the subject stating the number sent and the date of their transmission.⁴⁹

The problem with the “urgent necessity” letter is that Major Lomax was not at Watertown! The same day that John C. Stebbins inspected the Johnson pistols, some perhaps slated to fill the remaining Georgia order, Military Storekeeper John A. Webber on reading the letter intended for Lomax seized on behalf of the United States all the pistols in stores. He immediately wrote directly to Bomford on October 2, 1838 explaining what he had done:

Major Lomax being absent from this post. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ulto., and to state to you for your information that on the 26 ulto. [September 26, 1838] I forwarded 600 pistols of Waters Manufacture to the New York Depot and that 700 pistols of Johnson’s manufacture reported inspected by Mr. Stebbins a few days since are now in store at Middletown awaiting the inspection of Maj. Lomax.

As the ceremony of an inspection by the Superintendent of Inspection of contract arms appears to have been dispensed with in several cases where the exigencies of service have called for the immediate issue of arms and as your letter impressed me with a belief that such an emergency now exists. I shall take the responsibility of using the name of Major Lomax to direct Mr. Phelps my storekeeper at Middletown to forward the 700 pistols to the New York depot without delay. If necessary Major Lomax can inspect them at the latter place more speedily and conveniently than at the former.

If in this doing I transcend the authority confided in me by Maj. Lomax during this temporary absence I trust you



Figure 15. JCS single cartouche.

will place the action to its true account, Viz. an earnest desire that the Department may be distinguished for its promptness and efficiency.

Mr. Waters will probably have 600 more pistols ready for inspection by the time Major Lomax can visit his armory.⁵⁰

Military Storekeeper John Alexander Webber was a West Point graduate, class of 1815. Following graduation he was appointed a Lieutenant of Artillery. He resigned in 1825. He was appointed Military Storekeeper of Ordnance at Watertown Arsenal and reported for duty in late December 1837. He died at Watertown May 6, 1855 at age 56.⁵¹ It is not clear if Webber knew that the 600 Lewis Foster inspected pistols placed in stores on August 23, were slated to go to Georgia, but probably not. Those pistols likely remained in stores until swept up with the remaining available stock. Webber's actions would brew up a storm from the Governor of Georgia (Figure 15).

Further there are hints in the official correspondence that indicate there may have been some friction between Webber and Lomax. In a long letter to Lt. Colonel George Talcott, Ordnance Department on June 4, 1839 Webber states that "Major Lomax four weeks prior verbally ordered him not to exercise any authority at the post during his absence." Webber stated that he had "performed the duty of a subaltern at the post during the frequent absences of Major Lomax."⁵² Perhaps the friction related to fact that Webber was a West Point graduate and Lomax graduated from William and Mary in Virginia. However, Lomax was a battle tested veteran having served in Florida from 1835-1838. Lomax, at his request, met with Talcott in late May to discuss his duties. In June the accouterment inspection was assigned to Mr. Hugh Alexander the master accoutrement maker at Alleghany Arsenal, thus removing this continuing problem from Lomax while handing it back to Craig's staff. On July 16, 1839 in a rather cryptic letter to Lomax from Talcott concerning Webber states, "as regard to instructions nothing definite can be stated further than your wishes shall be consulted as far as practical." Webber

was subsequently appointed the Disbursement Officer on August 3, 1839 and continued under Lomax's command until Lomax's death March 31, 1842.⁵³

Regardless of the propriety of Webber's actions, his letter is the key to the identity of the pistols selected to go to Georgia for the Seminole War, which are in fact the very same pistols slated to go to the Governor in the first place. While it is not clear what combination of pistols were eventually sent from the New York Depot those likely immediately available were the 600 pistols inspected by Lewis Foster, which were held for the Georgia contract, the 650 pistols inspected by John C. Stebbins and seized by Webber and the last inspection group of Asa Waters manufacture, which was 600 pistols inspected by Joseph Hannis and Major Lomax on September 10.

Webber's letter also alludes to the "ceremony of an inspection" having been "dispensed with in several cases" which supports the existence of the other groups of single cartouche pistols in 1837. Webber's letter is the key that ties both groups of the single cartouche pistols together and identifies the pistols actually sent to Georgia (Figure 16).

ONE ANGRY GOVERNOR

Meanwhile on October 21, 1838 Samuel Cooper, Acting Secretary of War finally responded to the September 8, 1838 letter from the Governor of Georgia:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th ultimo (September 8, 1838) and its enclosure.

In this communication you asked the Department to pay (out of the sum the which may be due on the account of the State of Georgia transmitted sometime since for advances during the Creek and Seminole Wars in 1836 and 7) to R. Johnson of Middletown Conn. the amount due him under contract with the State of Georgia for furnishing the state with six hundred and eighty (680) pistols. The principle reason for this application seems to be that the pistols are wanted for the troops to be employed against the Indians in the Okefenokee Swamp and that as it would take the State sometime to arrange with Mr. Johnson the manner of payment and delivery, they could not be had in season for that object unless the Department would take the course which you request.

The Department has every disposition to comply with the wishes of the Executive of Georgia on all occasions within its legitimate functions and even further than this when absolute necessity would seem to demand it. But it does not consider that a compliance with your request now alluded to would form a part of its proper duties nor that it is demanded by necessity. It would not be consistent with any law, regulation or usage governing the Department and the only consideration of necessity mentioned by your Excellency has already

a Water-tight Arsenal,
Oct 24 1838

Colonel:

Major Lomax being absent from this post, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ult., and to state to you for your information, that on the 26th ult. I forwarded 600 pistols of Waters manufacture to the New York depot and that 700 pistols of Johnsons manufacture, reported inspected by Mr. Stokes a few days since, are now in store at this station, awaiting the inspection of Major Lomax. He the ceremony of an inspection by the Superintendent of inspection of Contract arms appears to have been dispensed with in several cases where the exigencies of service have called for the immediate issue of arms, and as your letter impresses me with a belief that such an emergency now exists, I shall take the responsibility of using the name of Major Lomax, to direct Mr. Stokes, my St. Inspector at this station, to forward the 700 pistols, to the New York depot without delay. If necessary, Major Lomax can inspect them at the latter place more expeditiously and conveniently than at the former.

If in thus doing I transgress the authority confided to me by Major Lomax during his temporary absence, I trust you will plead the actual to its true account, viz: an earnest desire that the Department may be distinguished for its promptness & efficiency.

Mr. Waters will probably have 600 more pistols ready for inspection by the time Major Lomax has with his authority.

I am, respect
 Yr. Obedt
 S. Webber
 My St. Insp.

Col. Geo. B. Balford
 Comdg. Ordn. Dept.
 Washington
 D. C.

Figure 16. Webber letter.

been met by sending to Charleston 1000 pistols out of which the number required for the troops embodied to operate against the Indians can be furnished at an earlier period than that when those to be supplied to the state by Mr., Johnson could be sent to a proper point for that purpose.

The accounts of the State against the U. States already mentioned and in course of settlement but which in consequence of the press of business in the accounting office is not yet sufficiently advanced to show what would be the result.⁵⁴

It looks like the Governor is going to receive his pistols courtesy of the Ordnance Department. And some of the very pistols scheduled to be sent to him under his contract! The letter also questions the practice of the Ordnance Department procuring contracts from private armories for the States by stating “compliance with your request now alluded too would not form a part of its proper duties nor that it is demanded by necessity.” The letter also firmly places these pistols in the specific action planned against the Seminoles in the Okefenokee Swamp (Figure 17).

Likely before Acting Secretary Cooper’s letter arrived Governor Gilmer wrote to Major Lomax on October 26, 1838 responding to Craig’s letter of September 4, 1838 which enclosed the contract with Robert Johnson. As letters and pistols passed in shipment, the governor pressed his case directly with Major Lomax who was now the Superintendent of Inspection. According to the following

letter the Governor had completed the necessary arrangements to pay Robert Johnson for the pistols:

I received from Major Craig sometime ago [September 4, 1838] a letter upon the subject of a contract which he had made in behalf of this State and Mr. Robert Johnson of Middletown for the manufacture of 680 pistols. I send you a copy of this letter and the contract that you may be in position of the facts. You are requested to have the pistols proven and inspected. Arrangements have been made with the mercantile house of L.M. Wiley & Co. New York to receive, pay for and forward the pistols to this state. Will you inform Mr. Johnson of these arrangements and request him to



Figure 17. Swamp photo.

forward the pistols to New York accordingly with your certificate that the arms have been proven and inspected.⁵⁵

On receipt of the governor's letter Lomax writes to Bomford. The content of Lomax's letter shows he has no knowledge of the arrangement that Craig made with the State of Georgia and Robert Johnson. Lomax had not been present when Webber, acting in his absence, sized the pistols and sent them to New York for shipment to Charleston. Lomax in a quandary writes to Bomford on November 7, 1838 for direction:

I have received a communication from his Excellency the Governor of Georgia accompanied by a copy of a contract made by Major Craig on the part of the that State with Mr. Johnson for the manufacturing and delivery for the service of the State of Georgia six hundred and eighty [680] pistols. His Excellency had requested that the pistols may be sent to the mercantile house of L.M. Wiley and Co. New York with whom arrangements have been made to receive, pay and forward them to the State of Georgia.

I am of the opinion that Mr. Johnson has manufactured no other pistols but those required by the assignment made to him by this Department to complete, which one thousand and fifty remain to be manufactured and are now undergoing inspection. [December 6, 1838 delivery 500 pistols the "final" 1050 not delivered until March 21 1839] In the event of Mr. Johnson not having any other pistols is it your intention Sir, that the State of Georgia should be supplied from these manufactured under the assignment made on account of the United States?⁵⁶

On November 12, 1838 Captain Alfred Mordecai Ordnance Department answered Lomax's inquiry:

Your letter of the 7th inst. has been received. The demand for pistols has been very urgent. It is important that those now due by Mr. Johnson under his agreement with the U. States be delivered as soon as possible, but for this the delivery of the pistols to the State of Georgia should have taken precedence.⁵⁷

Lomax sent a letter to Robert Johnson on November 13, 1838 inquiring about the Georgia contract. Johnson responded on November 20, 1838 and his letter clearly shows that it was the Lewis Foster inspection of pistols on August 18, 1838 that were slated for Georgia. These pistols are marked with only the LF Single Cartouche. Lomax responds to Governor Gilmer on November 27, 1838 and enclosed a copy of Johnson's letter:

Your letter of the 26 of October was not received until the 7 of November. I wrote immediately to Mr. Johnson to know if the 680 pistols which he had contracted to make for the State of Georgia were ready for inspection and if not at

what time they would be ready. I did not receive an answer, a copy of which I have enclosed *, until today which will explain why I have so long delayed to reply to your Excellencies letter.

Previously to hearing from Mr. Johnson being apprehensive that he had not fulfilled his contract made with Major Craig on the part of the State of Georgia I wrote to the Chief of Ordnance Department proposing to substitute a portion of the pistols manufactured for the U. States in lieu of those which Mr. Johnson ought to have fabricated for State of Georgia and was informed that so urgent was the demand for pistols for the service of the U. States, that no part of Johnson's assignment could be applied to any other purpose and but for this that the State of Georgia should have precedence. I will thank your Excellency to inform me whether you will receive the pistols which Mr. Johnson proposes to have ready for inspection by the last of next month or will authorize me to make a contract with another armorer whose work will be at least as good at that done by Mr. Johnson and from whom more punctually may be expected. Any comments with which your Excellency may be pleased to honor me will receive the most prompt and particular attention.

*November 20, 1838 Robert Johnson to Major M.P. Lomax , Johnson's letter copy enclosed: I received your letter of the 13th Instant saying you had received a communication with a contract made between myself and Major Craig on the part of the State of Georgia from his Excellency the Governor of Georgia for 680 pistols to be delivered on or before the 15th of September 1838. Sir, I beg leave to state the pistols were all ready for inspection on the 25th day of August on which day I wrote to Major Craig. As there were no satisfactory arrangements made for the payment and delivery, the pistols were turned over to the United States. All the pistols I have to make for this years assignment from the Ordnance Department will be ready for inspection next week [inspection by Joseph Hannis December 6, 1838 500 pistols] and the 680 will be ready for inspection the last of the month so that the whole if they can be inspected be completed by about the first of January 1839. I should rather have the 1500, which is the number I have to deliver on this years assignment, completed by inspection before those for the State of Georgia; but if it should be preferred to have the pistols for Georgia inspected before the above number is completed for the U. States I will leave for the Ordnance Department to decide.⁵⁸

The Governor of Georgia was not pleased with the most recent letters. He wrote directly to the Secretary of War Joel Poinsett on December 13, 1838:

I send you a copy of a letter just received from Major Lomax of the Ordnance Department upon the subject of the failure of Robert Johnson of Middletown Connecticut to perform on a contract made with him by Major Craig in behalf of the State of Georgia for the fabrication of Six hundred and



Figure 18. Georgia contract.

eighty [680] pistols together with a copy of the correspondence of this department with Major Craig and Major Lomax in relation to that contact. You will find that Mr. Johnson has turned over to the U. States the pistols made for the State and that the U. States has accepted them (Figure 18).

I cannot perceive anything in the course perused by the authorities of this State to justify this proceeding on the part of the agents of the U. States and Mr., Johnson. Your attention is asked to the for the purpose of requesting that you will use your authority to have the contract made between Major Craig and Mr. Johnson complied with.

Funds have been placed in the hands of the agents of the State some time ago and at an expense to the State of two percent upon the money advanced with authority to receive and pay for the pistols.

ONE RED RIBBON

The source of these letters found in the National Archives is interesting. The letters pertaining to the correspondence

with the Governor of Georgia were all found bundled in one box bound with usual faded red ribbon (supposedly the origin of the term “government red tape”). The bundle was filed under W for War Department for the year 1838. A note on the outside of the cover indicates that the Georgia letters were sent the Ordnance Department from the Secretary of War’s office on December 20, 1838 for response. Because of this unusual action all the letters from Craig, Lomax, Johnson and Gilmer were discovered in a single bundle. Most of the story of the Georgia Contract tumbles out with the pull of a single red ribbon. However, it took years to track down the pistols and the supporting correspondence. The letter from storekeeper Webber anchored the story in history. The following letters are the drafts contained in the bundle written by Alfred Mordecai Captain of Ordnance for response by the Secretary of War to explain the actions of the Ordnance Department (Figure 19).

Mordecai penned his first draft on the file cover on December 21, 1838:

On the 12th Ultimo Major Lomax was informed that the demand for pistols for the U.S. being urgent those due by Mr. Johnson must be delivered as soon as possible. But for this delivery the State of Georgia should have taken precedence. It is presumed that the pistols for Georgia are by this time in the course of inspection & may be delivered by the 1st of January as stated by Mr. Johnson. By Order A. Mordecai Capt. Ordnance.

Dated December 24, 1838 his draft letter complete with strike outs prepared for the War Department to be sent

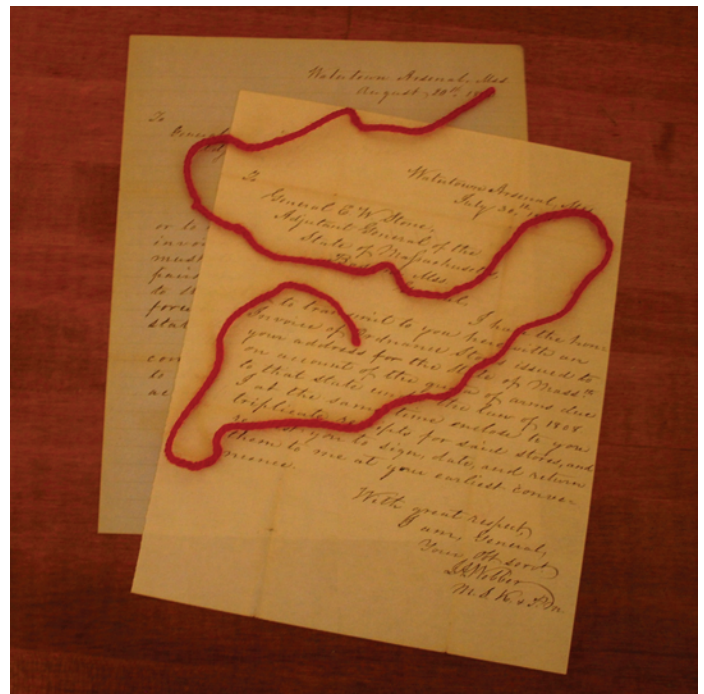


Figure 19. Red ribbon letters.

to Governor Gilmer is also located in the file. The letter is similar in content to Mordecai's notes on the file cover. The letter with corrections made was sent to Governor Gilmer by Secretary of War Poinsett on December 24, 1838. For interest the draft letter with the strike outs underlined follows:

I have the honor to receive your Excellency's letter of the 13 inst. In relation to the contract failure of Robert Johnson to perform a contract made with him by Major Craig in behalf of the State of Georgia for 680 pistols and their having been turned over to the United States. In reply I beg leave to state that the urgent wants of the United States government rendered it necessary that the pistols due by Mr. Johnson to it should be delivered as soon as possible and consequently orders were given to that effect, but for this the delivery to the State of Georgia should have taken precedence.

It is presumed that the pistols for Georgia are by this time in the course of inspection and may be delivered by the 1st of January orders having been given to expedite their delivery as much as possible.⁵⁹ The same letter with the corrections made was sent to Governor Gilmer by the Secretary of War on December 24, 1839.⁶⁰

Despite the encouraging wording in the War Department letter it does not appear that Johnson ever made the additional pistols for Georgia. His inspection records indicate that he did not make any deliveries in January. Johnson's next delivery of 1050 pistols was on March 21, 1839. The pistols were inspected by Elizur Bates and Major Lomax. No more single cartouche pistols are known, implying an additional Georgia Contract delivery. Following the inspections of Joseph C. Stebbins and Lewis Foster at Robert Johnson's factory they were assigned inspection duty at the Asa Waters Armory in Millbury in an effort to comply with the Ordnance Regulations of 1834, which required inspectors not to work consecutively at the same private armory.

The confusion expressed by the authors of these letters was because Georgia's effort to obtain arms began in March 1836 under the former administration of Governor William Schley. By the time the pistols were finally issued to the State of Georgia for use in the swamps, none of the original players that started this project, except Robert Johnson, remained in place.

PISTOLS IN THE SWAMPS

The reason for the additional push for pistols is that in October 1838 the Governor of Georgia had ordered General Charles R. Floyd into the Okefenokee Swamp to chase the Seminole's out of that stronghold. Floyd led the first foray of about 300 soldiers into the swamps in early November. During the next three months he traversed the 700 square mile area several times. By February he declared the swamp had been cleared. Floyd, who had led a colorful life, became a local hero. He returned to his home in March 1839.⁶¹ The original Georgia contract pistols with the single cartouche by Lewis Foster and those inspected by Stebbins both with single cartouches likely were slated for this conflict in the Okefenokee. As the letters were passing in the mail it is likely the 1000 pistol finally arrived (Figure 20).

Following Poinsett's Christmas Eve letter to Gilmer no further letters on the Georgia pistols have been located. Gilmer's letters in the year 1839 to the Secretary of War center on reimbursement for the Georgia Militia supplied to the United States for the Seminole, Cherokee and Creek campaigns of 1835-36. Due to the complicated issues in federalizing the militia the matter had to be resolved in Congress. This business was not concluded until the spring of 1840.⁶² A letter from Gilmer to Bomford on November 8, 1839 requested only muskets for the states apportionment under the Militia



Figure 20. General Charles R. Floyd and Georgia Militia.



Figure 21. Joel Poinsett.

Figure 22. Altered LF pistols.



Act of 1808.⁶³ On November 6, 1839 Gilmer was replaced by Governor Charles James McDonald. No additional correspondence on the subject of pistols for the State of Georgia was discovered during McDonald's administration (Figure 21).

The issue was likely dropped because the raid by General Floyd through the Okefenokee Swamp ended in February of 1839. Presumably the 1000 pistols arrived in time. Despite the Christmas Eve assurances of the Secretary of War, Robert Johnson did not deliver any pistols to Georgia in January of 1839. The line in the Secretary of Wars letter, which states "But it does not consider that a compliance with your request now alluded to would form a part of its proper duties nor that it is demanded by necessity" makes it clear that contracting on behalf of the state is not the business of the Ordnance Department. The 600 pistols intended for Georgia inspected by Lewis Foster delivered in August and the 650 pistols inspected by John C. Stebbins in October, which were sized by Webber are most likely those pistols that made up some of the 1000 pistols shipped to Charleston for the Georgia campaign. Both of these groups of pistols have only the single cartouches and can be directly associated with the Second Seminole War, the Georgia Militia and Floyd's famous raid through the swamp.

GEORGIA ALTERATIONS

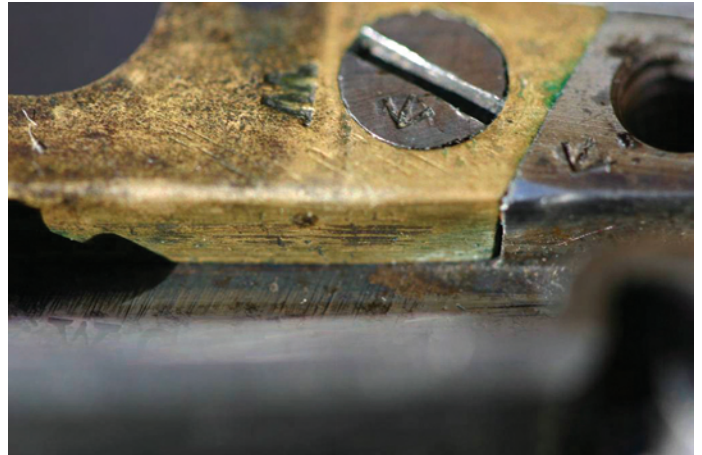
The final raid through the swamp could have been the end of the story except for the discovery of two examples of

altered Johnson's pistols dated 1838 with the single cartouche inspection of Lewis Foster. Both of these pistols exhibit a style of alteration associated with the south. Visually comparing the two pistols would initially seem to suggest they are quite different in the execution of the alteration from flint to percussion (Figure 23). However, examining the pistols in detail reveals that despite the differences, the alteration reassembly codes are very similar. Groups of pistols altered in shops for the Confederate States at the outbreak of the Civil War often exhibit a series of applied marks that allow for the correct reassembly of the pistols. Individual parts on the Model 1836 pistols do not readily exchange. The presence of similar systems of these "reassembly codes" on pistols usually indicates a number of pistols altered to percussion in the same area or shop. Both of these pistols have a unique Roman numeral mark on the underside of the remnant of the pan in a location that is unusual because it is hard to reach. The same Roman numeral mark is found on the barrel, stock and hammer. Both hammers are crudely forged and both pistols have experienced rough service (Figures 22 and 23).

It is quite likely that these are examples of pistols still in Georgia arsenals at the outbreak of the Civil War or examples of pistols that were retained in the hands of local militia following the Seminole War. These southern style alterations may provide further evidence that the Lewis Foster single cartouche inspected pistols actually ended up in Georgia. The similar assembly marking and the difference in styles at first seem to be puzzling. It may be likely that the first example was completed in a shop for militia before the war, perhaps in the 1850s, and the second with the same reassembly code completed by the same gunsmith but more crudely fabricated at the beginning of the Civil War. It too may have looked like the other sample but for the "exigencies of the service." In contrast several examples of Johnson pistols bearing only the single JCS cartouche are noted in original flintlock and in remarkably good condition. No single JCS cartouche pistol alterations have been located to date.

CONCLUSIONS

In final answer to Phil Leveque's question as to why some model 1836 pistols have only a single cartouche when there should be two could be summed up in three words, "exigencies of service." Storekeeper Webber's comment "As the ceremony of an inspection by the Superintendent of Inspection of contract arms appears to have been dispensed



Note: there are no alteration marks on the pan of this unaltered flintlock.

Figure 23. Details of drum alteration.

Details of bolster alteration marks.



Big Gator.

with in several cases where the exigencies of service. . . .” suggested further inquiry into the meaning of his comment beyond the immediate pistols at hand. These single cartouche pistols begin to show up in 1837, perhaps at the pressure points of ordnance supply problems when Craig or Lomax could not physically attend to the numerous inspection duties scattered across several states. There are at least four cases of inspection where only the single cartouche of the sub-inspector is present on Model 1836 pistols made by Robert Johnson. Each of these cases is related to the Seminole War and two of these cases can be directly attributed to events in Georgia.

Due to the unusual bundling of the letters the Georgia Contract story is much more complete than could have been expected. The letters from Robert Johnson are specific about which pistols were intended for Georgia. The letters from the Secretary of War are specific to the purpose of the pistols to be used in Georgia.

The existence of all these single cartouche pistols was because of the extraordinary pressure on the Ordnance Department to supply arms and equipment to the conflicts in Florida and Georgia and supplying additional nervous states under the Militia Act of 1808. Thousands of pistols were supplied by Robert Johnson and Asa Waters during the years of the Second Seminole War. But only anomalies of inspection, which produced the single cartouche pistols, can be assigned directly to a role in the conflict. This inquiry highlights the value of understanding the inspection system, the role of individual inspectors and applying that information to historical events. These single cartouche pistols would have looked like all the others produced . . . except for the “exigencies of service.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1. Osceola is probably the most recognized name for the Seminole leader. He was also called Powell.

2. Exigencies: that which is required in a particular situation, a state of affairs that makes urgent demands on a leader, demanding juncture.

3. Lewis F. Southard, *The Model 1836 Pattern Pistol*, Military Collector and Historian, Vol. 49, No. 1, Spring 1997. 12-17.

4. Brevet. Colonel George Bomford to Nathan Starr, January 24, 1828. Major James E. Hicks, Nathan Starr, *Arms Maker 1776-1845* (James E. Hicks, Mt Vernon, NY 1940: reprint The Restoration Press, Phoenix Press, Phoenix, AZ 1976), 143.

5. Major Rufus Baker to Colonel George Bomford, Chief of Ordnance, January 27, 1834, Entry 21 Letters Received, Record Group 156, Office of Chief Ordnance, National Archives and Records Administration.

6. Robert Johnson to Bomford, January 27, 1835, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

7. Col. George Bomford to Maj. Henry Knox Craig, June 6, 1836, E 3 Letter Book, vol. 26, RG 156, OCO NARA, p. 230.

8. Bernard Peyton to Bomford June 6, 1832, Adjutant General Letters and Orders, 1824-1835, RG 46, Military Affairs, Library of Virginia, Richmond Virginia.

9. Bomford to Craig July 9, 1832, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

10. Bomford to Peyton, June 9, 1836, Reports of the Adjutant General, 1836, RG 46, Military Affairs, Library of Virginia.

11. Bomford to Craig, March 9, 1836, Entry 6, Volume 26, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

12. Thomas H. Robertson Jr. “The Richmond Blues in the Second Seminole War: Letters of Capt. Francis Marion.” Robertson, MD, *Military Collector and Historian* Vol. 54, No. 2, Summer 2002: 50-63.

13. *The Florida War*, John T. Spraug University of Tampa Press, Tampa, Florida, 2000: *Amidst A Storm of Bullets 1836-1842 The Diary of Lt. Henry Prince in Florida*, Edited by Frank Laumer, University of Tampa Press, Tampa, Florida 1998.

14. Bomford to Craig, September 2, 1836, Entry 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

15. Bomford to Craig November 24 and 29, 1836, Entry 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

16. Original Inspection Certificate 2466, Settled Accounts for the Second Auditor, Box 514, Entry 523, Record Group 217, NARA.

17. Craig to Bomford November 24, 1836, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

18. Craig to Bomford December 22, 1836, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
19. Bomford to Craig February 13, 1837, Entry 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
20. Robert Dingee to Bomford, February 25, 1835: Craig to Bomford January 27, 1835, E 21, RG 156, (OCO) NARA.
21. Peter A. Schmidt. *U.S. Military Flintlock Muskets, The Later Years: 1816 through the Civil War*. Woonsocket, RI: Andrew Mowbray Incorporated Publishers, 2007. 145, 154162.
22. Peter A. Schmidt, *Halls Military Breechloaders* Lincoln RI: Andrew Mowbray Publishers, 1916. 173.
23. Robert Henry Kirkwood Whiteley, born near Cambridge, Maryland, 15 April, 1809. He was appointed from Delaware to the United States Military Academy, where he was graduated in 1830, and, being assigned to the 2d artillery, served in various arsenals and garrisons, brevetted captain, 19 July, 1836, for gallant conduct in the Florida war, and in 1838 was transferred to the Ordnance Department. He was promoted to Captain in 1842, and commanded the New York Ordnance Depot where he was Inspector of Contract Arms in 1855. Whiteley, although a friend of Lee, stayed with the Union and served at Alleghany Arsenal until he retired in 1875 with the rank of Colonel. He was brevetted brigadier-general in 1865. Famous Americans <http://famousamericans.net/roberthenrykirkwoodwhiteley/>.
24. Bomford to Craig, March 20, 1837, E 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
25. Bomford to Craig, April 1837, E 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
26. Biographical Register of the Officers of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, N. Y. from its Establishment, in 1802, to 1890 Bvt. Major General George W. Cullum, Third Edition Revised Boston and New York Houghton, Mifflin and Company 1891, page 389. Captain James A.J. Bradford was a West Point graduate class of 1827. He was assigned duty as assistant Inspector of Contract Arms 1833-35 and commanded the New York Ordnance Depot 1835-36. He had a number of Arsenal assignments and at the beginning of the Civil War commanded the North Carolina Arsenal at Fayetteville. He resigned his commission in 1861 and joined the South with his West Point friend R.E. Lee. He died at Fayetteville NC on September 6, 1863, age 59.
27. Captain W.H. Bell to Craig (by order), May 9, 1837, Entry 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
28. Regulations for the Government of the Ordnance Department, Washington 1834, paragraph 107, page 27.
29. Original Inspection Certificates, Settled Accounts for the Second Auditor, Box 513-514, E 523, RG 217, NARA.
30. Bomford to Craig March 6, 1837, E 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
31. Craig to Bomford May 30, 1837; July 18, 1837, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
32. Bomford to LT R.H.K. Whiteley March 20, 1837; July 28, 1837, E 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
33. Bomford to Craig September 25, 1837, E 3, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
34. Craig to Bomford October 7, 1837, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
35. Craig to Bomford, October 18, 1837; Bomford to the Secretary of War, October 25, 1837, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
36. Various Correspondence E3 and E21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
37. Craig to Bomford December 7, 1837, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
38. Bomford to Craig, November 29, 1837; Bomford to Peyton, November 29, 1937; December 15, 1837, Bomford to Craig, E 3; E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
39. Governor George Rockingham Gilmer to Secretary of War Joel R. Poincett, January 22, 1838, E 21, box 130, letter 25, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
40. Gilmer to Bomford February 20, 1838, E 21, box 128, letter 25, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
41. *The Governors of Georgia 1754-1995*, James F Cook, Mercer University Press, Macon, GA 1995, 105-107.
42. Craig to Bomford, March 7, 1838, E 21, box 128, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
43. Craig to Gilmer, March 3, 1838, E21, box 130, letter 90, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
44. Robert Johnson to Bomford, June 14, 1838, E21, box 128, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
45. John D Hamilton. *The Ames Sword Company 1829-1835*. Stuart Mowbray Publishing, 1996.
46. Craig to Gilmer, September 4, 1838, 21 Letters Received, box 130, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
47. Major Mann Page Lomax to Bomford, September 22, 1838, E 21, box 129, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
48. Gilmer to Poinsett, September 8, 1838. E21, Box 130, letter 160, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
49. Captain William Maynadier (by order) to Lomax, September 26, 1838, E 3 Vol. 30, RG 156, OCO, NARA.
50. John A. Webber, Storekeeper NY to George Bomford, October 2, 1838, E 21, Box 130, Letter 177. RG156, OCO NARA Note the probable Waters pistols in stores in NY are 600 inspected August 6 1838 by Joseph Hannis and Henry Knox Craig and 600 inspected September 10, 1838 by Joseph Hannis and Mann P Lomax. The next inspection at Waters mentioned in the letter was completed on October 15, 1838 by Joseph Hawkins and Mann P. Lomax for 600 pistols.

51. Register of Graduates and Former Cadets of the United States Military Academy 1802-1954. The West Point Alumni Foundation Inc. 138.

52. Webber to Lt. Colonel George Talcott, June 4, 1839, E 21, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

53. Lt. Colonel George Talcott to Lomax, May 31, 1839; June 26 1839; July 2, 1839; July 16, 1839, E 6, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

54. Samuel Cooper, Acting Secretary of War to Governor G. R. Gilmer, E 21, box 130, letter 160, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

55. Gilmer to Lomax, October 26, 1838, E21, box 130, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

56. Lomax to Bomford, November 7, 1838, E21, box 129, letter 198 & 130, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

57. Captain Alfred Mordecai to Lomax (by order) November 12, 1838, Entry 3, Volume 30, p. 175, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

58. Lomax to Gilmer November 27, 1838; Johnson to Lomax, November 20, 1838, Entry 21, letters received, box 130, RG 156, OCO, NARA.

59. Mordecai, December 21 and 24, 1838, draft letters E21, box 130 letter 91, RG 156 OCO; Poinsett to Gilmer December 24, 1838. Letters Sent By the Secretary of War RG 107 M6 Roll 20 NARA.

60. Poinsett to Gilmer December 24, 1839, RG 107, M 6 Letters Sent by the Secretary of War on military matters roll 20 NARA.

61. Charles Rinaldo Floyd 1797-1845. The New Georgia Encyclopedia, www.georgiaencyclopedia.org.

62. The State of Georgia in account with the United States, Treasury Department Second Auditors Office, certificates of various claims from 1838-1845, Box 620, E 523, Settled Accounts for the Second Auditor, RG 217, NARA.

63. Gilmer to Bomford, November 8, 1839, E 21, RG 156, OCO Box 128 NARA.

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