



MODEL 1808 NAVY PISTOL

## A SURVEY OF MODEL 1808 S. NORTH NAVAL PISTOLS

by Frank Martin and Lew Southard

At the May 2013 meeting of the American Society of Arms Collectors (ASAC) held in Sturbridge, MA, members and guests brought 33 examples of the 1808 North Naval pistol for a joint display. Background information and the results of comparisons of these examples are the subject of this manuscript.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The declaration of war between France and Britain on February 1, 1793, strained relationships with the United States as both countries restricted maritime commerce.<sup>1</sup> In an effort to avoid getting dragged into the conflict, President Washington issued the Proclamation of Neutrality (April 22, 1793) insisting that the US remain “friendly and impartial towards belligerent powers.” However, events continued to unfold that increasingly placed the US in conflict with both nations. Charles Genet, the French ambassador to the United States in 1793, felt that the Treaty of Commerce of 1778 allowed France to use American ports as a base of operations for the French Navy and privateers, as well as prohibit British ships from operating out of American ports. The French Navy was also ordered to seize neutral ships carrying British goods. In turn, the British Royal Navy was stopping American ships and impressing their seaman. Maritime commerce was also restricted with the British classifying food as contraband and stopping shipments to France. The order in council of November 6, 1793, expanded the conflict with the United States as it allowed seizure by the Royal Navy of American vessels sailing into French ports or carrying French goods (which led to the loss of over 300 vessels in the Caribbean alone).

While the ratification of the Jay Treaty with Britain in 1796 addressed some of the points of conflict between the two nations (one that was not addressed was impressments of American seamen), it increased tensions with France, which viewed it as a rapprochement between Britain and the US. In response, a decree was issued in July, 1796, authorizing the French Navy and privateers to seize and confiscate neutral vessels using the same parameters as the British. This was followed with another decree in March of 1797 permitting the capture of neutral ships

carrying British goods and any American seaman serving aboard an enemy flag would be treated as a pirate and hung. Furthermore, if an American ship was not able to provide an accurate listing of crew and passengers it was an acceptable prize for confiscation. Between October 1796 and June 1797, 316 American vessels were seized by the French. In one of the more brazen attacks, on February 1798 the French privateer *Veritude* burned a British ship in the harbor of Charleston, SC, and captured two American ships. Thus began the Quasi-War with France.

During this time American shipping was also being disrupted by the Barbary States, leading Congress to pass the Naval Act of 1794 authorizing the construction of four 44- and two 36-gun frigates. The signing of a treaty with Algiers in 1795 led to the Naval Act of 1796 that allowed construction, but not outfitting or manning, of only three of these ships (*Constitution*, *Constellation*, and *United States*). Amid the increasing tensions with France in 1797, Congress passed the Act Providing a Naval Armament that supported the outfitting, manning, and deployment of these vessels. In April of 1798, President John Adams signed legislation authorizing the creation of the Navy Department. In July, Congress passed the Evaluation Act authorizing a tax on landholdings, houses, and slaves and followed shortly thereafter with appropriation of funds to complete the three ships authorized by the Naval Act of 1794 (*Chesapeake*, *Congress*, and *President*). As the conflict with France escalated, the navy was instructed to seize any armed ship of France, all treaties with France were nullified, French ships were prohibited from entering American ports, and a shipping embargo was placed on all French ports. It wasn't until congressional ratification of the Convention of Mortefontaine in February of 1801 that hostilities with France ended. However, conflict with the Barbary states intensified and United States naval presence in the Mediterranean was increased from 1801 until this was resolved in 1805.

Although the war between Britain and France ended on November 24, 1801, it started again in May of 1803 as Napoleon sought to conquer Britain. Once again the United States was caught between the warring nations and maritime trade was disrupted as before. Of particular





Irwin John Bevan, *Chesapeake vs. Leopard, June 21, 1807.*  
The Mariners Museum, Newport News, Virginia

concern was the Royal Navy's impressment of American sailors and their insistence on the right to board American vessels and search for British seamen. This issue came to a head on June 22, 1807, when the frigate *Chesapeake*, sailing from Norfolk, VA, was hailed by the British 50-gun warship *Leopard* with a message for Commodore Barron. When the British Lieutenant came aboard he informed Barron of the intention of searching the *Chesapeake* for British deserters. Barron denied there were British seamen aboard and declined the inspection. Shortly after the British party returned to their ship, the *Leopard* fired a single warning shot followed by three broadsides. Taken by surprise and ill prepared for combat, the *Chesapeake* struck her colors and was boarded. Four seamen were taken as British deserters (three of these were Americans) and the *Chesapeake* was left to return to port.

After the attack on the *Chesapeake*, tensions were further escalated by both Britain and France restricting neutral maritime trade; Britain insisted all neutral trade to Europe had to pass through a British port to obtain a license to continue, whereas France declared that any neutral vessel that had first visited a British port would be subject to seizure. In response, the United States passed the Embargo Act of 1807 restricting trade with Britain or France, which instead of having an impact on the intended economies had a serious impact on the economy of the US.

### GENESIS OF THE 1808 CONTRACT FOR A NAVAL PISTOL

Under this backdrop there was an increased interest to rebuild the navy after significant cuts at the end of the Adams' presidential term and under Thomas Jefferson. In an effort to obtain arms for the ships, chief clerk of the Navy Department, Charles Goldsborough, worked through Massachusetts congressman Samuel Dana to solicit interest from arms manufacturers. Through this contact with Dana, Simeon North, who had a government contract in 1799 for production of North & Cheney pistols for the Army, submitted a letter to Robert Smith, Secretary of the Navy, indicating he could provide the ships pistols needed. Secretary Smith then contacted Joseph Hull, the Navy agent in Connecticut, and requested he provide a pattern pistol to North for his examination (letter dated May 6, 1808).<sup>2</sup> Exactly what the pattern pistol was is unknown to collectors today, although a letter North sent to the Secretary of the Navy provides some insight as there were several suggestions for modification.<sup>3</sup>

- ⦿ The addition of an iron back strap running from the breech to the butt cap to provide additional support for the stock
- ⦿ Use a brass rather than an iron pan

- Barrel thicker at the breech. Additional comments were made about several other minor unspecified modifications

Based on this information, it is believed that the 1797 Assembled Navy pistol was the pattern pistol (these pistols were assembled by private gunsmiths using government supplied lock, stock, barrel, and mounts), it is of similar size, caliber, and has the features described in North's letter. It should be noted that Jeska suggested the bag-gripped T. French Naval pistol could have been the pattern pistol and the bag-gripped 1808 examples (the grip on these examples is thicker, see Figure 5) represent the first deliveries of this model.<sup>4</sup> No records have been located that provide any information establishing when the T. French Naval pistols were made; but the first contract recorded for T. French was for the 1808 contract musket. He was listed as a lock maker at the Virginia Manufactory in 1802.<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, the butt cap and trigger guard of the T. French pistols look to be the same used in the 1797 Assembled Naval pistols; the barrel proofs are the same for both pistols as well. Whether or not the T. French pistols were assembled after the 1797 contracts using some of the same parts is unknown. However, as discussed in greater detail below, it is believed the 1808 examples with a stock shape similar to the T. French examples ("bag grip") represent restocks and not early delivery pistols. Thus, although there is a similarity between the T. French pistols and the pattern pistol noted by North in his May 6, 1808, letter,<sup>3</sup> it appears unlikely it was the pattern pistol for the 1808 North.

### FIRST CONTRACT

The first contract for 1808 naval pistols was signed June 30, 1808, for 2,000 pistols at \$11.75 per pair to be delivered in 18 months.<sup>6</sup> Modifications from the pattern pistol included adding an iron back strap, brass pan, and making the barrel "thicker at the bottom" but the same caliber. Browning of the barrels and "bluing of the locks" (case hardening) was agreed upon between North and Isaac Chauncey, which raised the payment to \$12.00 per pair (indicated in a letter from Chauncey to Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, dated August 20, 1809).<sup>7</sup> North received an advance of \$4,000 to help finish his manufacturing facilities at Spruce Brook, Berlin, CT, as well as purchase of materials and supplies. Rather than approach production by completing one pistol at a time, North used a more mass-production method for which

all the individual parts (screws, barrel, etc) needed were completed by a dedicated workman prior to assembling the final pistol. The thought was that if one workman specialized in a single part, his consistency of manufacture would improve. This change in manufacturing efficiency was undoubtedly influenced by North's prior experience with his 1799 pistol contract as well as his visits to the Springfield Armory and the likely knowledge of the manufacturing approach of Eli Whitney in New Haven, CT. The extent this approach was followed by North was exemplified in an August 20, 1809, letter from Isaac Chauncey to Secretary Hamilton concerning his visit to North's factory where he indicates North has "700 barrels ready for proving and the iron for the remained drawn out and ready for welding... different limbs for about 15 or 1600 locks are forged, and the holes in many plates drilled (but the locks not finished) ... nearly all the screws are made and the threads cut, but the heads are yet to be filed and the slits cut."<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that at this time there had been no pistol deliveries for this contract.

This manufacturing approach caused significant delays in delivery of the pistols. The first batch of barrels was proved in May of 1809, more than halfway through the contracted delivery time.<sup>8</sup> The first completed pistol was sent by Isaac Chauncey to Secretary Hamilton on August 24, 1809. Chauncey shipped the next six pairs of completed pistols to Secretary Hamilton for inspection on September 26, 1809<sup>9</sup> (note the contract stipulated all 2,000 were to be delivered in less than 4 months from this date). An additional 21 pairs of pistols were delivered December 9, 1809.<sup>10</sup> The records on remaining deliveries require additional research to clarify, but it is believed all pistols had been delivered by July 1811,<sup>11</sup> a full 18 months after the date stipulated in the contract. Including the single examples that North delivered to Isaac Chauncey in August 1809, the total production for the contract was 2,001 pistols.

In the contract there is no specification for caliber other than indicating it should be the same as the pattern pistol, which as previously noted is unknown (but if it was the 1797 assembly ships pistol, it would be 0.64 calibers). Insight as to what the caliber was intended to be can be gleaned from the August 12, 1809, letter from Isaac Chauncey to Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy. Chauncey had inspected barrels at the North facility and reported back that "the pistols that Mr. North has bored are too small in the caliber and are not all the same size. I shall give him orders to bore the remainder to a caliber

that will take a ball 18 to the pound .64 Cal. which I believe is the size that our muskets carry.” (It should be noted that this refers to ships muskets, which were 0.64 caliber).<sup>12</sup> In a follow-up letter to Secretary Hamilton dated August 20, 1809, Chauncey indicated North did not need to bore out the 300 barrels he had already proved,<sup>13</sup> leading one to question whether there are examples with a caliber smaller than 0.64 and if these correspond to features associated with early delivery pistols.

## SECOND CONTRACT

No formal written contract has been found, but there is a letter from Secretary Hamilton to North dated December 4, 1810, agreeing to an additional 500 pairs of pistols to be made at \$12.00/pair.<sup>14</sup> It is unclear when production of these pistols started, but it would be logical to assume it was after the completion of the first 2,000 pistols (July 8, 1811); and if a similar means of manufacture were followed as the first contract, there would be a delay in the delivery times while the individual parts were produced. A performance bond was signed by North and Josiah Savage on January 14, 1811,<sup>15</sup> after which North received an advance to purchase materials and supplies to fulfill the contract. There is a notation on this bond citing an April 3, 1814, letter from Joseph Hull indicating that 20 boxes of 42 pistols each were ready to be delivered.<sup>16</sup> On July 6, 1814, another 4 boxes of 42 pistols each was delivered, fulfilling the agreed upon production.

For the sake of consistency with the terminology that the martial pistol collector fraternity uses to describe these examples, the term “second contract” will be used throughout this manuscript even though there was no official contract. The above-noted letter<sup>14</sup> served to extend the current contract as the instrument for the additional 1,000 pistols. As discussed in greater detail below, there are minor differences between what have been classified as first- and second-contract examples. These differences were not stipulated in the letter from Secretary Hamilton authorizing the contract extension and are not significant with regards to the performance of the pistols. It is important to note that North signed a contract for the model 1811 horseman’s pistol on November 18, 1811 (the model pistol that was approved was provided by North September 30, 1811),<sup>17</sup> so there was a significant overlap in the time of production of the last 500 pairs of the 1808 naval pistols and the 1811 horseman’s pistols. It is likely the differences in what is classified as the second-contract 1808 pistols are more a reflection of harmonization of

production as changes in the rear terminus of the lock plate configuration and omitting the extra screw in the trigger guard parallels what is observed in the model 1811 horseman’s pistol. At what point during production this occurred is not known, so until there is more data on breech plug numbers in relation to these modifications it might be advisable to view this classification scheme in a relative sense rather than absolute terms.

## SPECIFICS OF MODEL

The pistols are constructed with brass furniture (trigger guard, side plate, butt cap, ramrod pipe), iron belt hook, and black walnut stocks with an overall length of approximately 16 inches. Most examples have a characteristic “hook” to the grip, although there are examples in which the grip does not have this feature and is fatter in the grip area; these are referred to as “bag-gripped” examples (Figure 5). The barrel is approximately 10 inches long and has an extended tang from the breech plug forming an iron back strap along the top of the grip. The lock plate is flat with a beveled edge and is the first example of a US martial pistol with a detachable brass pan. The standard lock plate markings include an eagle under the pan with “U. STATES.” stamped below and on the lock plate tail “S. NORTH” over “BERLIN” over “CON.”, although variations have been observed (discussed in more detail below). While assembly marks can be found on parts, there are no proof marks on the barrel or stock cartouches indicating acceptance into naval stores. There are a range of calibers for this model listed in reference books, with Smith and Bitter indicating 0.67 to 0.68<sup>18</sup> and Reilly 0.67.<sup>19</sup> At the May 2013 meeting of ASAC in Sturbridge, MA, there were 33 examples of the 1808 pistol present for examination. Based on the survey of this sampling, the average caliber was 0.652 with a range from 0.614 to 0.671 (details below).

The breech plug has been reported to be marked with a number (Figure 1) which corresponds to the same marking stamped into the back strap channel of the stock<sup>20</sup> (Figure 2). Because the barrels are fastened to the stock by two pins running transversely through the forestock, it is believed that these markings are used to match the barrel to the stock during the assembly process. Jeska<sup>21</sup> observed two bag-gripped examples on which the number was stamped with combinations of an “I” and “C” stamp rather than a number stamp, which he attributed to representing early deliveries (he concluded that these repre-



## Numbering of Breech Plug



Composite numbering done with an "I" and "C"



Number 127

FIGURE 1

sented the 12 pistols delivered to Secretary Hamilton on September 26, 1809). It should be noted that first-contract pistols marked with punch dots or slash marks have been observed (LS); however, most examples are marked with a full Arabic number stamp (Figure 1).

An early report by C. Meade Patterson<sup>22</sup> discussed two 1808 examples with a breech plug numbering of "214" or "O" over "IIII". This latter example had a lock plate 0.5 inches longer than the other example (suggesting that this was a first-contract lock plate, and that 214 was a second-contract example), and there was no marking on the lock plate tail. A recent observation of the example with "O" over "IIII" revealed that the "O" is more adjacent with the "IIII" and rather than a number the "IIII" represents slash marks (Figure 2). In 1957, Wagner<sup>23</sup> followed with a report on his survey on numbering and while the details on the number of pistols included in the survey was not provided, his results prove to be insightful on the nature of pistol numbering. Numbers ranging from 75 to 758 were observed and no examples were reported in which the numbering on the breech plug (left or right side) was not also found in the back strap channel of the stock. There was only one example that was unmarked in both locations. Interestingly, he also reported two pistols with the same number (478), one with the number on

the left flat of the breech plug and the other on the right flat; in both examples this number was also stamped in the back strap channel of the stock. Given the 2,000 first- and 1,000 second-contract pistols that were produced, it is not unexpected to see duplicate numbers; however, it is unknown if these represented pairs or if the numbering was restarted after a specific point. Lindert<sup>24</sup> reported on the markings of four 1808 examples, all of which had matching numbers on the left or right side of the breech plug and the back strap channel of the stock (471, 478, 621, and 770). For two of the examples (471 and 621) there were additional markings of "XIV" or "XIII", respectively, on the bottom of the barrel and in the lock mortise. These marks are put on the pistols when they are altered to percussion; the Roman numeral was also put on the side lug as most of these were side lug alterations. It is likely these were sold out of the Navy in 1850 when the navy decided to go to percussion 0.54 calibers. Smith and Bitter<sup>25</sup> reported that numbers above three digits had not been identified; this has also been observed by a collector who has been assembling numbering from 1808 pistols (897 was the highest recorded; B. Congdon, personal communication). See appendix 1 for a listing of known markings on the breech plug (Figure 2).

## Assembly Markings on Breech Plug and Stock



Breech plug marked on left side and backstrap channel of stock marked with "OIII"



Breech plug marked on left side and backstrap channel of stock marked with "430". The additional "II" on the stock is often associated with markings for percussion conversion.

**FIGURE 2**

As collectors familiar with more uniform production of the mechanized age, we may tend to view characteristics associated with a specific model in more absolute terms rather than as a continuum with variation. When reviewing examples of 1808 pistols it is important to keep in mind that they are made by hand to pattern and as such, variation will be observed.

Examples from the second contract are similar in many ways to those from the first contract with a few exceptions (Figure 3). The first-contract examples have a lock plate that is longer (average of 5.70 vs 5.44 inches, respectively) with a more pointed rear terminus compared to second-contract examples. The bevel along the edge of the lock plate also tends to be continuous along the bottom edge of a first-contract lock plate, whereas for most second-contract examples it stops where the frizzen spring screw is attached (this appears to be due to the screw being placed closer to the edge of the lock plate in second-contract examples; omitting the bevel provides more stable support for attachment of the frizzen spring). Variation in this feature has been observed. In some sec-

ond-contract examples it is more pronounced as seen in Figure 3, whereas in others it is very slight and has to be looked for closely. Interestingly, of the five examples with the smaller print font on the lock plate (discussed below), four had a very slight disruption of the bevel. Of the 17 second-contract pistols examined at the ASAC Sturbridge meeting, this lack of the bevel around the frizzen spring screw was observed in all but two of them. The trigger guard in the first-contract examples also has an additional screw attaching it to the stock behind the trigger guard bow and the rear terminus of the belt hook differs (Figure 3). With some second-contract examples the assembly marks used on external parts are also stamped on the trigger plate (Figure 4; 8 of 16 examples at the Sturbridge ASAC meeting had the markings, 2 could not be determined, and the markings were absent with the remaining). Lastly, there are several features that are generally associated with the different contracts, but due to replacement parts the correlation is not absolute. In many first-contract examples the lock plate screws heads are squared off, sticking above the side plate, whereas many second-contract examples have counter sunk screws (es-



## Differences in First vs Second Contract



First Contract



Second Contract

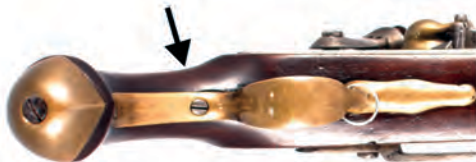


Lock plate edge  
bevel uninterrupted



Lock plate edge  
bevel stops around  
fizzle screw

### Trigger guard



First Contract  
Extra screw



Second Contract

### Belt hook finial



First Contract



Second Contract

FIGURE 3



## Trigger Plate Assembly Mark



Match other external assembly marks on hardware. Observed on second contract only

**FIGURE 4**

pecially the forward lock plate screw). Also, the frizzen spring in many first-contract examples extends further forward (in many cases covering the end of the forward lock plate screw) and has a longer finial than second-contract examples (Figures 3 and 4).

## PRIVATE PURCHASE

There are examples that lack “U. STATES.” on the lock plate (the eagle is present below the pan as in the standard configuration, but the “U. STATES.” stamping below it is missing; Figure 14); it is believed that these represent private purchases that North sold “out the back door.” In the example that was examined at the ASAC meeting in Sturbridge, the barrel was shorter than the standard length (8.8 vs 10 inches); based on the appearance of the forestock it did not appear to be a later reduction in length (example 23).

## BAG GRIP EXAMPLES

There are a limited number of examples in which the grip is much fatter in the grip than typical 1808 pistols; these are referred to as bag-gripped pistols (Figure 5). Because examples he examined had features consistent with first-contract examples (lock plate shape, extra screw in the trigger guard) and the numbering on the breech plug was made with an “l” and “c” rather than a single num-

### Bag Grip Examples



1808 North First Contract



1808 North Second Contract

### Pattern Pistols?



1797 Assembled Ships Pistol



T. French Ships Pistol

**FIGURE 5**

ber stamp, Jeska suggested that these may represent the first 12 delivered to Secretary of the Navy Hamilton in 1809.<sup>26</sup> This was based on the similarity to the T. French naval pistol (which Jeska has suggested may be the pattern pistol) and the 1797 Assembled ships contract pistols (Figure 5) because they have some of the same features as the pattern pistol described by North in his letter to Secretary of the Navy Robert Smith (letter dated May 30, 1808).<sup>3</sup> Jeska acknowledged some examples represented restocks but felt that these had thinner grips compared to the pictured bag grip example (Figure 5).

There are several inconsistencies with this conclusion that suggest that these examples represent restocks. Six bag-grip examples have been examined, five of which had first-contract lock plates and trigger guards and one that had second-contract components. Four of these were disassembled to observe the assembly markings. Two of the

first-contract examples (one reconverted and one percussion) had the number “5VII” or “cc7” stamped into the breech plug with the numbers a composite of using an “I” and “C” stamp (Figure 6); Jeska concluded that this was an early approach of numbering components and hence would be in line with his suggestion these may represent the initial delivery of pistols. However, there is another first-contract example (reconversion) that had both sides of the breech plug unmarked (this example also has a lock plate with only “BERLIN” on the tail). In all three of these examples there is an inconsistency in the breech and stock markings. The example with “5VII” has three additional assembly marks: “VI...” in the lock mortise and shaft of the lock plate screws, “II” on the bottom of the barrel and back strap channel, and “X” in the lock mortise and bottom of the barrel. It is likely the “X” or “II” were the markings associated with conversion to percussion. The example with “cc7” on the breech has “IIV” on the bot-

## Assembly Marks on Bag Grip Examples

### First contract examples, breech number composite of “I” and “C”



“5 VII” on breech      Underside barrel has “II”, “X” and “VI...”  
 Inside lock mortise is “X” and “VI...”      “II” in back strap channel of stock  
 Assembly mark on lock screws is “VI...”

In this example there are four different assembly marks; the only agreement is with “VI...” on the stock and lock plate screws. “X” or “II” may be associated with conversion to percussion.



“cc 7” on breech      “IIV” on bottom of barrel and in back strap channel of the stock

No markings inside the lock plate mortise. Not sure if “IIV” is a reversed Roman numeral of 7 (VII) or a separate mark

### Second contract example



“127” on breech      “VIII” on barrel bottom, “VII” on the bottom of the breech plug      “VIII” in back strap channel of stock

The back strap channel of the stock should be stamped with “127”, so believe this is a restock

FIGURE 6



tom of the barrel and in the back strap channel; whether this is reflective of an error in applying the Roman numeral for “7” (VII) or is a different marking is not known. For the example with no markings on the breech, the only markings on the barrel and stock are a “XI” on the bottom of the barrel and in the back strap channel (believed to be associated with percussion conversion). The authors are aware of another first-contract bag-grip example converted to percussion with a breech number of “689,” but this number is not stamped anywhere on the stock. However, there is a Roman numeral that is stamped in the back strap channel of the stock, in the lock mortise, the percussion drum, and on inside the percussion hammer indicating this number is associated with the percussion conversion. One of the first-contract bag-grip examples in Figure 4 (upper left, example 3 in the appendix 2) was examined by the owner and has “615” on the breech plug but nowhere else on the stock.

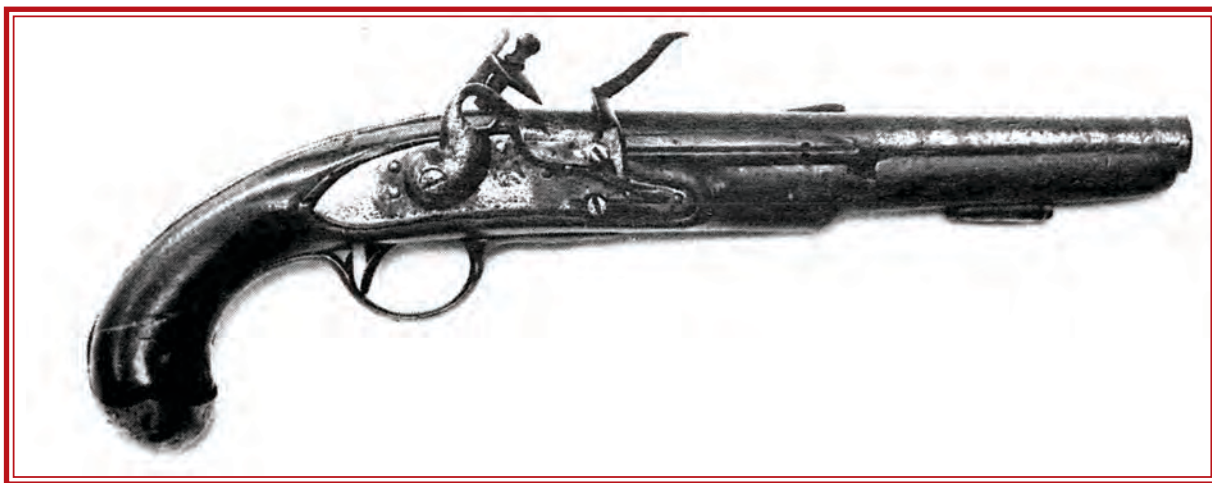
The final example (reconverted) that was disassembled had a second-contract lock plate and trigger guard with “127” stamped on the breech but “VIII” was on the bottom of the barrel and the back strap channel of the stock (Figure 6). Another bag-grip example with second-contract components and numbered “335” was reported in Smith and Bitter<sup>27</sup>; this example also had the small font in the lock plate stampings illustrated in Figure 12. The fact that second-contract components were encountered with the observed breech numbers indicates that these examples represented restocks and not first-delivery examples.

It is important to note that all the examples that were disassembled had been converted to percussion, which will account for additional markings associated with this

conversion. The lack of consistency in observing the same numbers on the breech plug and back strap channel of the stock for the bag-grip examples, as well as observing second-contract examples with a bag grip, indicates that these likely represent restocks rather than first-delivery examples. Furthermore, because the majority of breech plugs numbers recorded (and all second-contract examples) are made with Arabic numbers (in contrast to composite numbers or symbols which are believed to represent early markings), it would be logical to conclude that these bag-grip examples with Arabic numbers would not represent first-delivery examples.

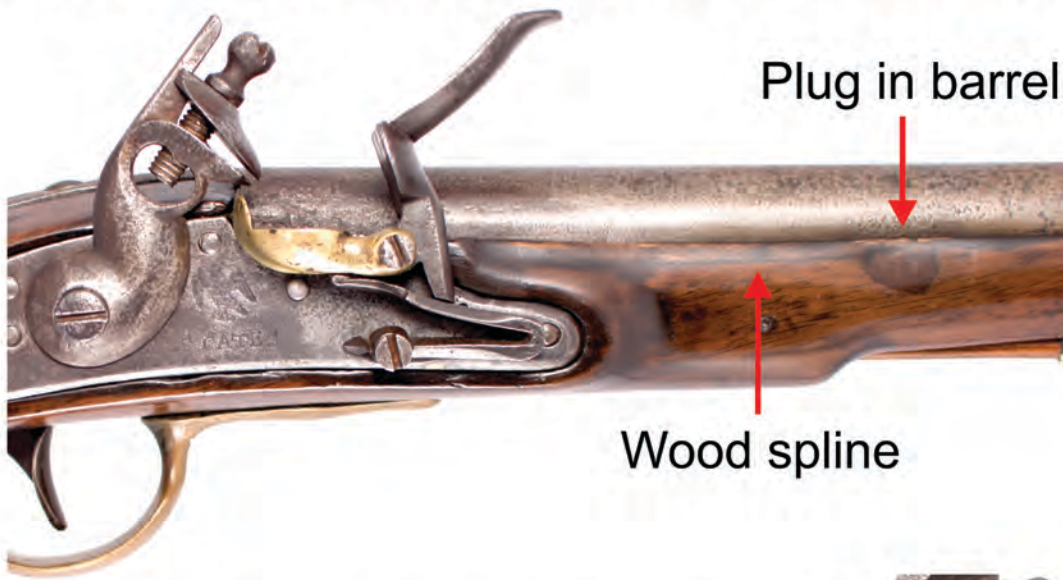
### **CHAMBERS CONVERSION**

There were several efforts to develop a multishot firearm for naval use, including guns with multiple barrels and a Roman candle ignition system championed by Joseph Chambers. In this latter system the loads are superimposed with the topmost load discharged via a tube that runs from the pan alongside the barrel; after the first discharge, a fuse running through the projectile of the next charge ignites the charge below. A contract was eventually given to J. Henry on April 16, 1814, to manufacture 100 pistols incorporating the Chambers ignition system,<sup>28</sup> but there are also examples of this type of Chambers conversion on pistols manufactured by others (Henry, French, North, and Harpers Ferry) which were likely for experimental or developmental purposes. Although an intact example of a Chambers conversion has not been found, there was a picture of an 1808 North with a priming tube attached alongside the barrel in front of the lock that Jim Wertenberger found in an auction catalog (Figure 7, see also Gilkerson<sup>29</sup>).



**FIGURE 7**  
**1808 North with intact Chambers conversion (courtesy J. Wertenberger)**

# 1808 Chambers Conversion



Lock plate cut out for priming tube



J. Henry-Chambers note cut out where frizzen screw enters lockplate so priming tube can connect to the pan.

1808 North (right), note seam of replacement piece attached to support frizzen screw.

Plug in the pan

## Example of what the priming tube alongside the barrel would look like



1805 Harpers Ferry pistol with brass tube along barrel. Note how gate at end opens up for loading and cleaning (Baltimore Show, 2009)

FIGURE 8



# First Contract Examples



FIGURE 9

# Second Contract Examples



FIGURE 10



An example of an 1808 North in percussion in which the Chambers conversion parts have been removed was present at the ASAC Sturbridge meeting (example 34 shown in Figure 8). Note the spline of wood along the top edge of the stock alongside the barrel just forward of the lock plate; this is to replace the stock that was removed to accommodate the Chambers priming tube that was soldered to the barrel. One end of the tube was attached to the pan (note the plug in the brass pan) whereas the other end was soldered to a hole in the side of the barrel (plugged after the removal of the tube; in this example the plug was observed internally using a borescope [FM, picture not shown]). The internal section of the lock plate forward of the pan is normally cut away to accommodate the priming tube connecting to the pan (Figure 8; see example for J. Henry Chambers conversion). However, in this 1808 example this has been repaired by welding on additional support. The only intact example of an attached priming tube the authors have seen is on an 1805 Harpers Ferry pistol lacking a lock plate (Figure 8). An interesting feature was a gate at the end of the priming tube where it entered the barrel that would be used to prime and clean out the tube. For additional information on the Chambers ignition system see Gilkerson.<sup>29</sup>

### **RESULTS FROM SURVEY**

At the ASAC meeting in Sturbridge, members and guests brought two examples of the T. French naval pistol and 33 examples of 1808 North pistols. Of these, 16 were first-contract (3 with no markings on the lock plate tail, 2 with only “BERLIN” stamped in different orientations, and 17 were second-contract (5 with smaller print font on the lock plates). Comparisons were made among the examples and measurements taken for a number of features. Calibrated pictures were taken with a length reference in the picture to enable collecting of measurements on the computer at a later time. A detailed account of features and measurements from each example may be found in appendix 2.

### **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE STOCKS**

The fact that these pistols were made by hand to pattern are readily apparent when looking at some of the details of the stock. For example, in the earlier first-contract pistols there is some variation in the distance between the front of the lock and position of the ramrod channel in the stock (Figure 9). Note also differences in the curva-

ture and length of the grip. These minor differences are present, but less apparent in second-contract examples (Figure 10). The stock was made of walnut for all examples except one (example 5), which was made of cherry. It is the opinion of one of the authors (LS) that due to the detail of its manufacture and similarity to the standard walnut stocks that this is an original stock (although another participant felt it was a restock; LS is aware of another cherry-stocked example). It is interesting to note that example 5 also has a lock plate tail that appears to have “BERLIN” stamped lengthwise along the bottom edge (the lock plate was evenly pitted, making it difficult to see clearly).

### **LOCK PLATE CONFIGURATION**

Several differences were observed in the configuration of the first- and second-contract lock plates, as were differences among examples of each contract.

#### **Length: First- versus second-contract.**

One of the primary differences between the first- and second-contract lock plates is length (measured from the pointed rear terminus to the front edge next to the forward lock plate screw) with the first contract ranging from 5.48 to 5.8 inches (15 examples, average 5.70, SD = 0.08 inches) compared with 5.375 to 5.52 inches in the second contract (17 examples, average 5.436, SD = 0.05 inches; Figure 11). Although on average there is a difference in lock plate length between contracts, this is not absolute as there was one example (#20) in which a first-contract lock plate was the same length as the average second-contract length.

#### **Lock plate shape and stampings**

In addition to the first-contract lock plates being slightly longer than the second, they also have a more sharply pointed rear terminus than the second-contract examples (Figure 12). The terminus was also located further below the centerline of the lock plate in first- compared to second-contract examples. Four different markings were observed on the lock plate tails of first-contract examples; three examples had no markings, one had only “BERLIN” stamped in a slight curve across the lock plate tail, one was heavily pitted but with portions of “BERLIN” faintly visible stamped parallel to the long axis of the lock plate along the lower edge of the lock plate tail (90 degree rotation from the prior example, this was example 5 in

## 1808 North Naval Pistol Lock Plate Length

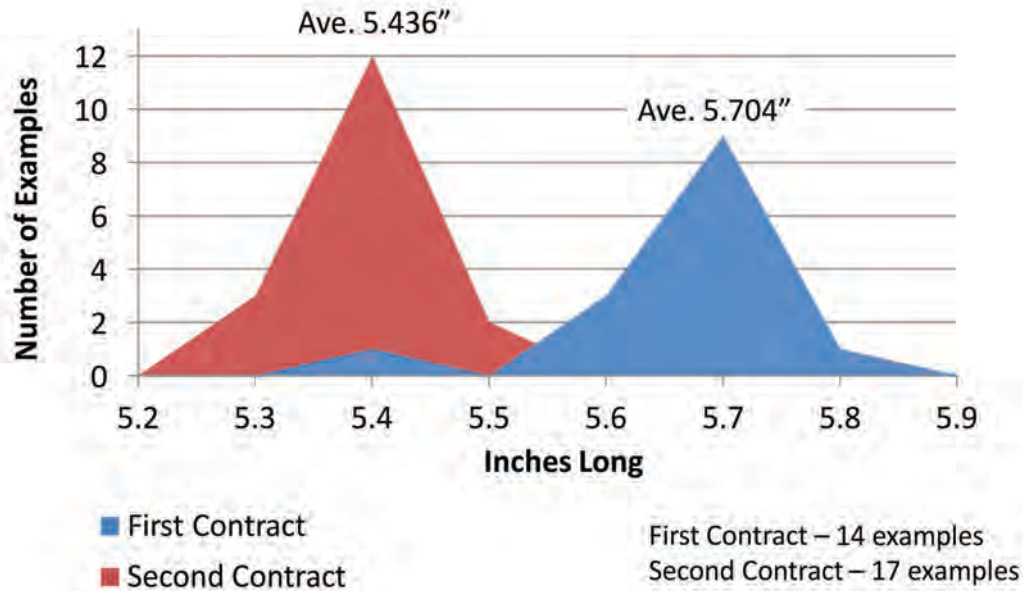


FIGURE 11

the survey and also had a cherry stock), and the remaining had the standard marking of “S. NORTH” over “BERLIN” over “CON.” The second-contract lock plates had the same information as the standard marking but with larger font letters. Five second-contract examples had a smaller font for the “U. STATES.” under the eagle; these also had smaller font on the lock plate tail (and the period after “S” misplaced). Interestingly, there is also a taper in the height of the lettering of “S. NORTH”; the “N” in North is 0.094 inches tall while the “H” is 0.080 inches (Figure 12, lower right).

### Berlin on lock plate tail

Three examples have been identified in which the only marking on the lock plate tail is “BERLIN” in a slight curve stamped crossways on the lock; one of these was at the Sturbridge meeting (example 1 in Figure 13, also has “U. STATES.” stamped on top of the barrel and is pictured in Smith and Bitter<sup>30</sup>). Casual observation suggested similarity with the stamp used on North & Cheney pistols, as noted by Reilly<sup>19</sup> and Smith and Bitter.<sup>30</sup> A more detailed comparison using calibrated digital images confirms the same height and font style, as well as curvature

of the stamp, in example 2 (Figure 13), and although the font height in example 1 is about the same, there are differences in some of the lettering (the center of the “B” and “E” and the bottom of the “L”). Some of these differences may be explained by a broken die, depth of stamping, or corrosion/cleaning of the surface. A total of four first-contract North and Cheney pistols (189, 195, 219, and 354) and seven second-contract (4, 79, 208, 253, 1099, 1101, and 1352) were examined, and all had the same stamping for “BERLIN” as the North and Cheney example in Figure 13. The average height of the font in both 1808 examples was 0.11 inches, whereas for the North and Cheney example it was 0.097 inches, a difference that is likely due to more wear on the North and Cheney frame and within the margin of error for taking measurements. It was not possible to measure the height of the font of lot 3044 from Rock Island Auction Company, but the shape of letters was the same as in the other examples. Example 5 in which “BERLIN” appeared to be stamped parallel to the long axis of the lock plate rear terminus could not be measured due to pitting on the lock plate and only portions of the lettering being faintly visible.

### Stamping of “U. STATES.”



# Variation in Lock Plate Tail Markings

## First contract lock plate tail



No stamping



Berlin only



Standard marking

## Second contract lock plate tail



Standard marking



Smaller font  
Note S' NORTH  
U. STATES under eagle also smaller font

FIGURE 12



# Comparison of Berlin stamp 1808 North Navy vs North & Cheney

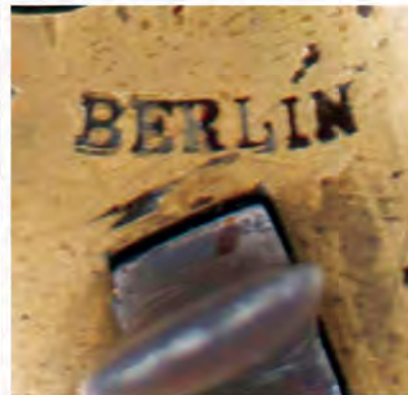
1808 North with only "BERLIN" on lock plate tail



#1- 1808 North  
"U. STATES" on barrel top



#2- 1808 Bag Grip



North & Cheney  
Second Contract 253

- Three examples have been identified, two have "U. STATES" stamped on the top of the barrel forward of the breech plug.
  - Lot 3044, Rock Island Auction, September 7, 2012 is the second example with "U. STATES" on top of the barrel.
  - The stamp on the barrel top is the same "U. STATES" as used on the lock plate under the eagle.
- #1 1808 looks similar to #2 but some differences (center of "B", end of center of "E" and end of "L" does not have the upward loop at the end) which is unexpected if the same stamp was used given the depth of the stamp in #1. It is possible that the differences are due to a broken stamp.
- The BERLIN stamping on #2 1808 looks to be the same as the stamping on the North & Cheney (curvature and font height of all examples similar as well)

FIGURE 13



# Different Lock Stampings of U.STATES.

First contract



Second contract



Large font



Small font



No U. STATES.

FIGURE 14

## 1808 North Naval Pistol Barrel Caliber

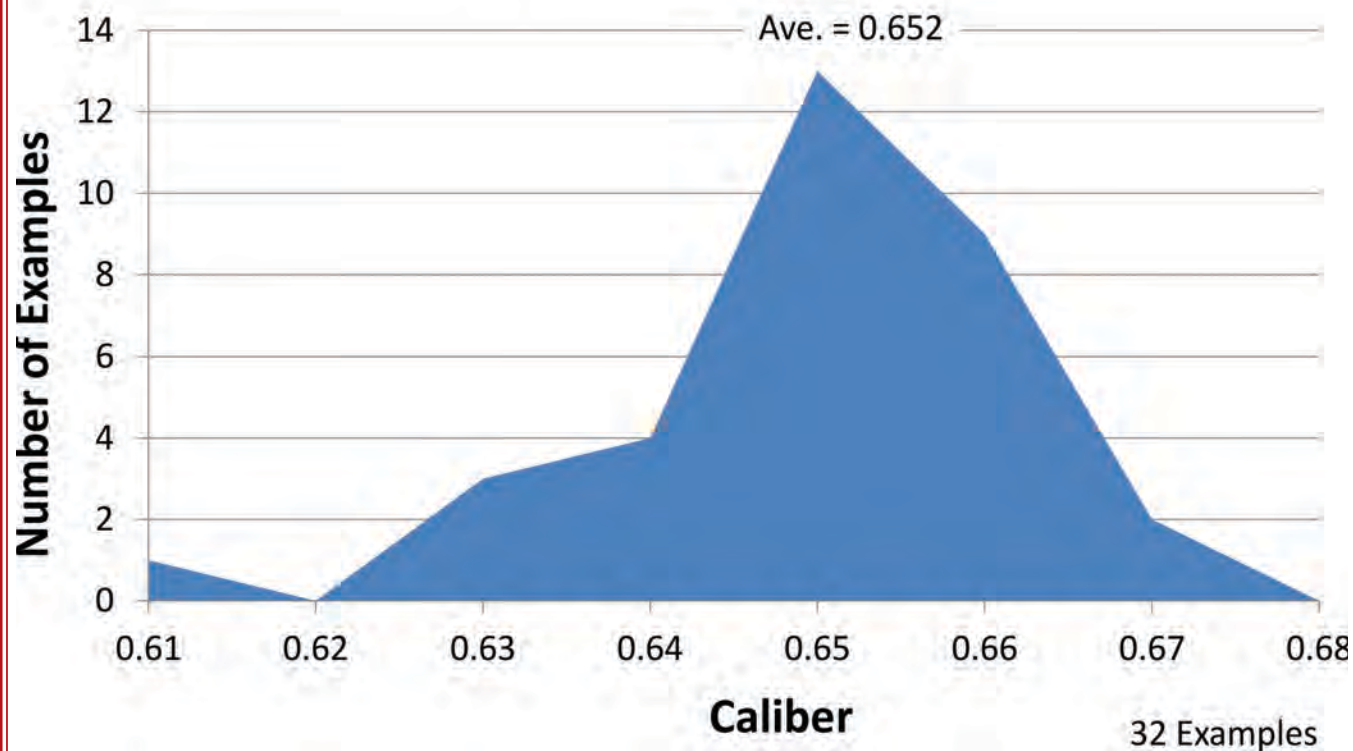


FIGURE 15

Several variations in the stamping of “U. STATES.” under the eagle on the lock plate have also been observed (Figure 14). All first-contract examples had the same stamping (averaging 0.105 inches in height), which was a little smaller than the most common second-contract stamping. Of the 17 second-contract examples, 11 had a larger font averaging 0.118 inches high, 5 had a smaller font averaging 0.086 inches high, and 1 lacked the stamping. With the 5 small-font examples it is interesting to note that they all also had smaller font on the lock plate tail (same height as “U. STATES.”) as well as the period (“.”) after “S” of “S. NORTH” at the top of the “S” rather than the base (Figure 12). Stampings on the tail of the lock were the same height as the “U. STATES.”

### **BARREL**

**Length** - The average barrel length was 10 inches (SD = 0.181) with a range of 9.313 to 10.250 inches. The one exception to this range was the example in which “U. STATES.” was not stamped on the lock plate under the eagle (number 23, the private purchase example); for this

example the barrel length was 8.8 inches.

**Caliber** - Measurements from 32 examples gave an average caliber of 0.652 (SD = 0.012) with a range of 0.614 to 0.671 (Figure 15). The highest and lowest calibers measured were observed in first-contract examples (all of these examples did not have stamping on the tail of the lock plate) and there were no consistent differences in caliber between first- and second-contract examples. Subsequent measurement of another second-contract example not present at the meeting (LS) identified a barrel that was the largest caliber found to date (0.68 caliber).

**Barrel wall thickness** - As noted in an August 12, 1809, letter from Isaac Chauncey to Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, in regard to his inspection of the North facility,<sup>13</sup> North had some barrels that were too small and Chauncey ordered that they be bored out to 0.64 calibers. This may have led to some barrel walls being thinner than others due to the removal of additional metal. With the samples examined, the average barrel thickness at the muzzle (taken approximately 0.25 inches from the end) was 0.124 inches (SD = 0.016) with a range of

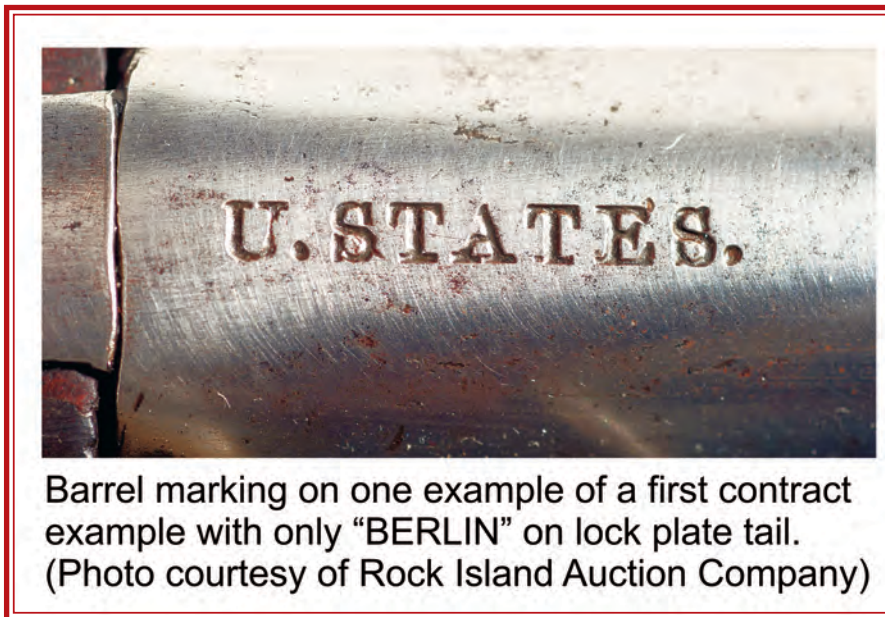


# First Contract

U. STATES. stamped in stock



FIGURE 16



**FIGURE 17**

0.082 to 0.145 inches. The two thinnest examples (0.082 and 0.092) were both first-contract examples and had a bore of 0.661 calibers. Could these represent early barrels which had been rebored?

### **BELT HOOK**

As noted above, there are differences in the belt hook finials between first- and second-contract examples with the first-contract examples having an upturned projection similar to the finial of the brass side plate and the second-contract examples having a rounded off terminus (Figure 3). The average total length of first-contract examples was 6.6 inches (range, 6.35 to 6.78 inches) with an average inside length (from the bevel where it contacts the stock to the tip) of 4.8 inches (range, 4.69 to 4.84 inches). The size of the second-contract examples were the same with an average total length of 6.5 inches (range, 6.37 to 6.8 inches) and average inside length of 4.67 inches (range, 4.49 to 4.85 inches).

### **EXCEPTIONS**

There were two variations to the above-noted standard characteristics of the 33 pistols examined. In both cases, the pistols were first-contract examples that were believed to be earlier production examples based on lock plate characteristics (sharply pointed terminus, nonstandard marking on the lock plate tail).

### **STOCK STAMPING**

In one first-contract example that did not have any stampings on the lock plate tail (example 27), "U.STATES" was stamped in the stock just below the belt hook using what looked to be the same stamp that was used on the lock plate (Figure 16).

### **BARREL STAMPING**

In the example that had only "BERLIN" stamped on the lock plate tail (example 7), on the top of the barrel just forward of the breech "U. STATES." was stamped with what looked like the same stamp that was used on the lock plate. This example is also pictured in Smith and Bitter<sup>30</sup> and is reported to have a number "60" stamped on the breach plug. A second example of this configuration was reported for lot 3044 in the September 7, 2012, auction at Rock Island Auctions (Figure 17).

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Relationship Between Lock Plate Dimensions and Production/delivery Dates**

Lock plates associated with the first-contract range in shape from those with a sharp pointed rear terminus to a more rounded terminus, as well as those without markings on the rear of the lock plate, just having "BERLIN" with the same stamp used on the North & Cheney, to the standard three-line configuration. Given that most examples have the three-line stamping (different font, but same text as the second-contract examples) and the less pointed rear terminus, these likely represent later production



examples. As for which of the remaining configurations represent the initial production, arguments can be made either way. It is logical to expect that North would want to see some form of identification on the first examples he submitted for payment and since he already had the "BERLIN" stamp from his prior 1799 contract perhaps he decided to use this to mark the locks (he also had the "NORTH" stamp, which begs the question as to why he wouldn't use this instead). Example 1 in Figure 13 is the only one present in Sturbridge, and according to Smith and Bitter<sup>30</sup> is numbered "60" on the breech, which given earlier forms of marking (numbers with a composite of "I" and "C" as well as punch dots or slashes) would argue against being the first production examples. Example 2 with the "BERLIN" stamping in Figure 13 is in a private collection and is believed to be a restocked bag-grip example, so correlation between the lack of a breech marking and lock plate stamping should not be made as there is the possibility that the components were not originally from the same pistol. Some of the examples lacking markings on the rear of the lock plate have what appear to be the sharpest rear terminus and as such may represent the initial production. However, it would be logical to assume that North might want to have some identifying marking on the initial delivery of the pistols to remind the purchasers who manufactured it. Before firm conclusions on what represents an early delivery example may be drawn, additional data on breech numbers is needed so a statistically based correlation with lock configuration can be drawn.

Based on similarity in shape and configuration between 1808 lock plates with a more rounded terminus and the model 1811 lock plate it is logical to conclude this style of 1808 lock plate came later in the production cycle and represent second-contract examples. It is unclear where examples with the smaller font on the lock plate stampings fit into this progression. Only 5 were observed out of the 33 in the survey (an additional 2 have been recently identified) and there are no other outstanding characteristics that delineate these examples from the others. One smaller font example in the survey had a breech number of "430" (example 19), and the example in Smith and Bitter<sup>26</sup> was reported as "335," but this is likely a restocked bag grip example. This suggests that these pistols are intermediate in the production cycle of the second-contract examples, but more data is needed to determine if additional examples are in the same breech plug number range.

## Caliber

Correspondence between Isaac Chauncey and Secretary of the Navy Hamilton<sup>12</sup> confirmed the caliber of the pistols should be "...ball (of) 18 to the pound 0.64 Cal ..."; based on measurements of bullet molds this should represent 0.649 calibers (LS). This ball diameter is close to the average caliber of the pistols measured (0.652 caliber) but is larger than 24% of the examples examined (8 of 33 examples). This comparison would not account for the use of a patch for the bullet, so it is likely that a larger percentage of the examples would not take a 0.649 caliber ball. This inconsistency in bore diameter must have led to modification of the caliber of bullets eventually used in the field just to ensure uniformity and the ability to load all examples. However, with a range of 0.614 to 0.671 calibers this must have been a challenge for the ship's armorer. In the survey no correlation was observed between smaller bore diameters and pistols having characteristics associated with early delivery examples (first-contract examples with either "BERLIN" or no markings on the lock plate tail).

## Breech plug numbering

From examples studied, it is clear there is a correlation between the numbering on the breech plug and the back strap channel of the stock, matching the two parts together since the barrels were custom fitted to the stocks so the pins fastening them together would align. Unfortunately, the difficulty of removing the pins and damaging the stock has prevented a more detailed examination of examples to see if there is a correlation between specific features and numbering, thereby providing a means to help clarify where in the production cycle a specific pistol was made. For example, there is limited information on breech numbering of early first-contract examples ("BERLIN" on the lock tail or unmarked); having a larger sample size for comparison should elucidate which might represent the first production examples. This of course assumes the marking of the breech plug corresponded with the order of manufacture and the first barrels produced were the first mounted on a stock. Given the manufacturing approach that North used (manufacture of all parts first with assembly commencing at a later time), there is no guarantee this would be the case.

## Bag grip examples

From the data on breech plug numbering and stampings

in the back strap channel of the stock it is likely these represent restocks and not the first delivery of this contract as suggested by Jeska.<sup>4</sup>

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## APPENDIX 1: BREECH PLUG MARKINGS REPORTED FOR MODEL 1808 S. NORTH NAVAL PISTOLS

**Appendix 1. Breech plug markings reported for model 1808 S. North naval pistols**

First Contract Examples		Second Contract Examples	
xxxxx - percussion (survey # 12) .... O IIII (L) <sup>a</sup> - tail lock plate clean <sup>22</sup> 5VII (R) - Bag grip, percussion cc7 (R) - Bag grip, reversion c93 (R) - stocked in cherry (survey #5) 60 - BERLIN only lock plate tail (survey #7) <sup>18</sup> 214 - reconverted 615 - bag grip (survey #3) 621 (L) - XIV on barrel and lock mortise, reconverted? <sup>24</sup> 689 (R) - bag grip, percussion 800 - tail of lock plate clean, reconverted (survey #8) 897 - reconverted		10 127 (L) - bag grip, reconverted (survey #29) 214 (L) - M. Patterson <sup>22</sup> 335 - Bag grip, Smith and Bitter <sup>27</sup> 430 - survey #19 471 (L) - XIII on barrel bottom, lock mortise - reconverted? <sup>24</sup> 622 - survey #28 788 - reconverted (survey #13)	
Breech plug markings without knowledge of which contract they represent <sup>b</sup>			
c75	177 (L)	475 (L)	638
XX IIIV	179 (L)	478 (L) <sup>23</sup>	667 (L)
7 WITH VII IN BACK STRAP	186 (L)	478 (R) <sup>23</sup>	689 (R)
16 (R)	212 (L)	511 (R)	694 (L)
75 (R) <sup>23</sup>	216	561 (L)	758 (L) <sup>23</sup>
90	221 (L)	568	770 (R) <sup>24</sup>
93 (R)	309 (L)	576	791 (L)
119	371	622 (L)	827 (L)
127 (R)	455 (L)	637 (L)	897 (L)
	465 (R) <sup>28</sup>		

<sup>a</sup> L = left flat of breech plug and R= right

<sup>b</sup> The authors are grateful to Bruce Congdon for sharing breech numbers he has collected from colleagues, gun shows, publications and auction houses.

## APPENDIX 2: NUMERICAL ORDER

Number	contract	status	bore caliber	Barrel thickness	barrel length (inch)	trigger guard	lock plate	lock plate length (inch)	lock tail marking	lock font	no bevel frizzen screw	lock assembly	furniture assembly	trigger plate asem mark	breech number	belt hook	Notes
1	T French	percussion															no backstrap, markings rear stock flat (MARSH over MA over V), eagle over P sunken barrel proof, WNY small font on barrel
2	T French	recon															full backstrap, markings rear stock flat (MARSH over MA – both upside down – over V), no barrel proof, WNY small font on barrel
3	Bag grip	flint?	0.65	0.12	10 1/8			5.800	standard	normal		na	na		615	good first	
4	1st		0.65	0.12	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.741	standard	normal	no	I	na	no		good first	cock replaced
5	1st		0.671	0.13	10 1/4	1st	1st	5.748	BERLIN? longitudinal, faint	normal	no	na	na	no	C 93	good first	stocked in Cherry
6	1st	flint?	0.647	0.1	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.723	standard	normal	no	na	na square punch	no		good first	his #4 U STATES on barrel top near breech
7	1st	recon	0.655	0.12	9 11/16	1st	1st	5.694	Berlin, across	normal	no	I		no	60	good first	
8	1st		0.638	0.136	9 15/16	1st	1st	5.747	nothing	normal	no			no	800	replaced	
9	1st		0.656	0.122	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.766	standard	normal	no	o		no		replaced with second contract	his #3 but wood repair large trigger guard
10	1st	percussion	0.644	0.105	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.706	standard	normal	no	na	na	no		na	
11	1st		0.661	0.092	10 1/8	1st	1st		standard	normal	no			no			steel side plate, drum altered not the "standard type" backstrap channel marked xxxxxx
12	1st		0.662	0.108	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.650	standard	normal	no	na	na	no	xxxxxx	replaced	
13	2d	recon	0.66	0.136	10.0625	2d	2d	5.446	standard	normal	yes	na	na	yes	788	replaced	
14	2d		0.66	0.139	10.125	2d	2d	5.498	standard	normal	yes	..	na	not sure		good second	his #6
15	2d		0.655	0.11	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.372	standard	small	yes	o	IV	no		replaced	
16	2d	percussion	0.645	0.107	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.406	standard	normal	yes	na	2 cross	yes (faint)		good second?	has lock hump not the "standard alteration"
17	2d		0.655	0.144	9 5/16	2d	2d	5.454	standard	normal	yes	II	VI VI	not sure		good second	
18	2d		0.652	0.134	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.414	standard	normal	yes	na	..	yes		good second	
19	2d		0.655	0.16	10	2d	2d	5.437	standard	small	no	na	filled in "D"	no	430	good second	
20	1st		0.661	0.082	9 7/8	1st	1st	5.476	standard	normal	no	na	na			good first	
21	2d		0.657	0.132	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.375	standard	small	yes	II	IV IV	yes		good second	Wertenberger #8, looks like "889" stamped in stock in front of trigger guard
22	2d		0.652	0.134	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.441	standard	normal	no	2 fry pan	2 fry pan	yes		replaced	his #3
23	2d					2d	2d	5.420	standard	normal	slight	I		no		replaced	no U. STATES on lock plate
24	2d		0.656	0.128	10.25	2d	2d	5.522	standard	normal	no	na	I	yes		replaced	M2 his tag, lock plate markings refreshed
25	1st	percussion	0.634	0.14	10	1st	1st	5.725	standard	normal	no	na	na			na	standard percussion alteration
26	1st		0.67	0.13	9 15/16	1st	1st	5.759	nothing	normal	no	VI	VI			good first	
27	1st	flint?	0.614	0.125	9 7/8	1st	1st	5.719	nothing	normal	no	cross	na			replaced	U. STATES on stock flat below belt hook tail (same stamp lockplate)
28	2d		0.631	0.141	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.415	standard	small	yes	can't read	stylized E (filled K?)	yes	622	good second	CMP 12
29	Bag grip	recon	0.65	0.139	9 7/8	2d	2d	5.526	standard	normal	no	na	filled in "D"			good second?	"V" at tail stock flat
30	2d		0.64	0.145	10 1/16	2d	2d	5.448	standard	small	yes	I	II (stylized E? punch?)	yes		not sure	
31	1st		0.667	0.12	10 1/16	1st	1st	5.599	standard	normal	no	na	na			replaced?	replaced side plate, top jaw
32	2d		0.665	0.132	10 1/16	2d	2d	5.402	standard	normal	yes	t cross	t cross	no			
33	2d					2d	2d	5.467	standard	normal	yes	o and V	na	no		good second	
34		percussion	0.65	0.127	9 7/8	1st	1st	5.365	standard	normal	yes	X	ooo	yes		good second	Chambers conversion "V" at tail stock flat, CMP auction no 19 CMP number 161
35	Bag grip	percussion	0.65	0.131	10 3/16	1st	1st	5.620	standard	normal	yes	na	na			na	

trigger guard – first contract has an extra screw in the trigger guard  
 lock plate – first contract has more pointed rear terminus and is 0.5 inches longer  
 lock tail marking – Standard refers to S.NORTH/BERLIN/CON. Whereas the lockplates with nothing had no stampings  
 no bevel frizzen screw – first contract lockplates has a consistent bevel along the bottom of the lockplate while some second contract has the bevel stop at the frizzen spring screw.



## APPENDIX 2: GROUPED BY CONTRACT

Number	contract	status	bore caliber	Barrel thickness	barrel length (inch)	trigger guard	lock plate	lock plate length (inch)	lock tail marking	lock font	no bevel frizzen screw	lock assembly mark	furniture assembly mark	trigger plate asem mark	breech number	belt hook	Notes
1	T French	percussion															no backstrap, markings rear stock flat (MARSH over MA over V), eagle over P sunken barrel proof, WNY small font on barrel
2	T French	recon															full backstrap, markings rear stock flat (MARSH over MA – both upside down – over V), no barrel proof, WNY small font on barrel
3	Bag grip	flint?	0.65	0.12	10 1/8			5.800	standard	normal		na	na		615	good first	
4	1st		0.65	0.12	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.741	standard	normal	no	I	na	no		good first	cock replaced
5	1st		0.671	0.13	10 1/4	1st	1st	5.748	longitudal, faint	normal	no	na	na	no	C 93	good first	stocked in Cherry
6	1st	flint?	0.647	0.1	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.723	standard	normal	no	na	na	no		replaced?	his #4
7	1st	flint?	0.655	0.12	9 11/16	1st	1st	5.694	Berlin, across	normal	no	I	square punch	no	60	good first	U STATES on barrel top near breech
8	1st	recon	0.638	0.136	9 15/16	1st	1st	5.747	nothing	normal	no			no	800	replaced	
9	1st		0.656	0.122	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.766	standard	normal	no	o		no		with second contract	his #3 but wood repair large trigger guard
10	1st	percussion	0.644	0.105	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.706	standard	normal	no	na	na	no		na	
11	1st		0.661	0.092	10 1/8	1st	1st		standard	normal	no			no			steel side plate, drum altered not the "standard type"
12	1st		0.662	0.108	10 1/8	1st	1st	5.650	standard	normal	no	na	na	no	xxxxxx	replaced	backstrap channel marked xxxxxx
20	1st		0.661	0.082	9 7/8	1st	1st	5.476	standard	normal	no	na	na	no		good first	
25	1st	percussion	0.634	0.14	10	1st	1st	5.725	standard	normal	no	na	na	no		na	standard percussion alteration
26	1st		0.67	0.13	9 15/16	1st	1st	5.759	nothing	normal	no	VI	VI			good first	
27	1st	flint?	0.614	0.125	9 7/8	1st	1st	5.719	nothing	normal	no	cross	na			replaced	U, STATES on stock flat below belt hook tail (same stamp lockplate)
31	1st		0.667	0.12	10 1/16	1st	1st	5.599	standard	normal	no	na	na			replaced?	replaced side plate, top jaw
34	1st	percussion	0.65	0.127	9 7/8	1st	1st	5.365	standard	normal	yes	X	ooo	yes		good second?	Chambers conversion
35	Bag grip	percussion	0.65	0.131	10 3/16	1st	1st	5.620	standard	normal	yes	na	na			na	"V" at tail stock flat, CMP auction no 19 CMP number 161
13	2d	recon	0.66	0.136	10.0625	2d	2d	5.446	standard	normal	yes	na	..	yes	788	replaced	
14	2d		0.66	0.139	10.125	2d	2d	5.498	standard	normal	yes	"E"	na	not sure		good second	his #6
15	2d		0.655	0.11	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.372	standard	small	yes	o	IV	no		good second?	
16	2d	percussion	0.645	0.107	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.406	standard	normal	yes	na	2 cross	yes (faint)		good second?	has lock hump not the "standard alteration"
17	2d		0.655	0.144	9 5/16	2d	2d	5.454	standard	normal	yes	II	VI VI	not sure		good second	
18	2d		0.652	0.134	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.414	standard	normal	yes	na	..	yes		good second	
19	2d		0.655	0.16	10	2d	2d	5.437	standard	small	no	na	filled in "D"	no	430	good second	
21	2d		0.657	0.132	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.375	standard	small	yes	II	IV IV	yes		good second	Wertenberger #8, looks like "889" stamped in stock in front of trigger guard
22	2d		0.652	0.134	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.441	standard	normal	no	2 fry pan	2 fry pan	yes		replaced	his #3
23	2d					2d	2d	5.420	standard	normal	slight	I		no		replaced	no U, STATES on lock plate
24	2d		0.656	0.128	10.25	2d	2d	5.522	standard	normal	no	na	I	yes		replaced	M2 his tag, lock plate markings refreshed
28	2d		0.631	0.141	10 1/8	2d	2d	5.415	standard	small	yes	can't read	stylized E (filled K?)	yes	622	good second	CMP 12
29	Bag grip	recon	0.65	0.139	9 7/8	2d	2d	5.526	standard	normal	no	na	filled in "D"		127	good second?	"V" at tail stock flat
30	2d		0.64	0.145	10 1/16	2d	2d	5.448	standard	small	yes	I	punch?)	yes		not sure	
32	2d		0.665	0.132	10 1/16	2d	2d	5.402	standard	normal	yes	t cross	t cross	no		not sure	
33	2d					2d	2d	5.467	standard	normal	yes	o and V	na	no		good second	

trigger guard – first contract has an extra screw in the trigger guard

lock plate – first contract has more pointed rear terminus and is 0.5 inches longer

lock tail marking – Standard refers to S,NORTH/BERLIN/CON. Whereas the lockplates with nothing had no stampings

no bevel frizzen screw – first contract lockplates has a consistent bevel along the bottom of the lockplate while some second contract has the bevel stop at the frizzen spring screw.