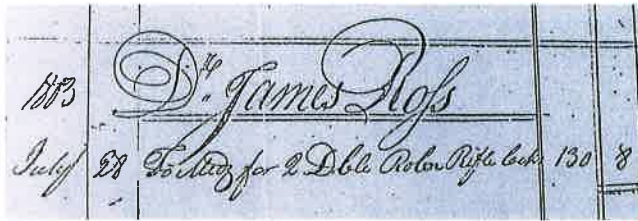




Lock of James Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



James Ross signature on document (photo by Mark Bender)



Signature on John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Sideplate of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Cheekpiece of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Triggerrguard of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Tang of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Rear ramrod pipe of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Toeplate of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Nosecap of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Buttplate of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)



Patchbox finial of John Ross signed rifle (photo by Mark Bender)

# WILLIAM STALTER, HOCKING COUNTY FULL STOCK

BY MARK BENDER

## Some Background

Hocking County is deep in the heart of the Ohio Appalachian Region, well known for its “eco-ethnic” tourism that capitalizes on the local culture and the unique geography of the Wayne National Forest, which includes caves and ravines that harbor plant life dating back to the Ice Age. The county was created in 1818 out of portions of Athens, Ross, and Fairfield counties. The name Hocking may derive from the Lenape (Delaware) language “hockhocking,” meaning “bottle.” Logan, the county seat was established in 1816 by Ohio governor Thomas Worthington, named in honor of Chief Logan, an important historical figure on the Ohio frontier whose origins and story are still debated among historians ([https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Hocking\\_County](https://ohiohistorycentral.org/w/Hocking_County)).



Chief Shekillamy (Wikipedia)

Logan was the son of Chief Shekillamy of the Oneida division of the Iroquois. His mother was of the Cayuga division and in accord with the matrilineal custom, Logan was of that clan. Later in life, after the Yellow Creek Massacre (1774) led by Daniel Greathouse in what is now West Virginia, in which many in Logan’s family were killed, he was affiliated with the Mingo of Ohio, made up of persons of several tribes who has been displaced from their homelands farther east. Logan’s retaliation is considered to be a factor in sparking Lord Dunmore’s War, which ended in the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774. Logan was likely named after John Logan, a friend of his father, who was instrumental in trade and political relations between the Iroquois and the Colonial government. Logan’s Native name is in dispute as he had several brothers and the accounts vary. He has been identified as Tah-Ga-Jute. Known as a great orator, the famous “Logan’s Lament,” in which the speaker states, “There runs not a drop of my blood in the veins of any living creature.” Though there is also dispute over the origin of the lament, it was well-known in the early Republic and is set in stone in a historical monument in Pickaway County, Ohio ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logan\\_\(Iroquois\\_leader\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logan_(Iroquois_leader))). Such stories are part of the local lore that was still fresh in living memory first or second hand among settlers in Ohio in the early 19th century.

## William Stalter and Other Hocking County Makers

The previously undocumented rifle that is the subject of this article was made by William Stalter, who was listed as a gunsmith in gazettes and trade directories between 1850 and 1875 in Logan, Hocking County (Hutslar 1996:188). According to “Find a Grave” website, a gravestone in the Old Logan Cemetery marked “William Stalter” has the dates 1815-1883, and although these dates conflict with Hutslar (which records only an 1820 birth date), I believe they are likely correct. William was said to be from Maryland and had a wife Jane (1821-1896), who was eight years his junior, and is listed in both Hutslar and “Find a Grave.” They had several children. In 1850 the household in Logan is listed as including two apprentice gunsmiths, John