
Ohio Gunsmith

SAMUEL STULL

1808-1907

By F. G. Tilton



Samuel Stull, Farmer & Gunsmith began making rifles at a very early age. Reportedly he made his first rifle at the age of 12. Someone gave him a rifle barrel that was split. He took it to a blacksmith and had it re-welded and then proceeded to make himself a stock to fit and thus the first Samuel Stull rifle was made. I have examined several of his rifles and owned 2 or 3 more. His early mark was "S. Stull" in script. His later guns were stamped in block letters "S. STULL" with the word "Ohio" either after his name or directly under it, making two lines. I have observed rifles signed both ways. An unusual Stull fulstock rifle is known marked "S. Stull, Millwood. Knox Co. Ohio, Feb. 28th, 1852". The unusual feature is the Bedford Co. patchbox inletted backwards in relation to true

Bedford Co. rifles. It also has incised carving and engraving which Sam didn't bother with as a rule. Two other Stull rifles with Bedford Co. patchboxes have surfaced recently. One has incise carving.

He was reportedly a natural mechanic and possessed an ability to conceive, design and make almost any tool or devise he desired. I have personal knowledge of a quantity of his hand tools, which show a flair for ingenuity. One in particular is an apparatus, operated by hand that mills both sides of a tumbler at the same time, insuring a flat smooth surface that fits between the lockplate and the bridge plate. Perhaps at some later date I can obtain photo's of it for this publication. His early rifles were flintlock, however I have never had the opportunity to



observe one. He made both fullstock and halfstock varieties and used curly maple almost invariably. Several of his early and late rifles had hand made locks.

He spent his entire life on a farm located about one and three quarters of a mile south of Millwood, Knox Co. Ohio. Reportedly he used to walk to Canton and purchase barrel blanks which he carried home on his back. He then drilled and rifled them and made them up into rifles. He quite likely farmed in the summer and then turned to the gunsmith trade during the winter months.

A Grandson reported that Mr. Stull made a rifle the last year of his life. Sam taught the trade to Cy Clutz. Clutz moved to Massillon, started his own shop, and made fine rifles there for years.

In 1952, 125 Stull rifles were

on exhibit at the Mt. Vernon Armory sponsored by the Shooters Haven Gun Club.

The ornate watch chain draped across his vest shown in the photo was made by Mr. Stull from the handles of silver spoons. □

A Sam Stull half stock rifle with 57 silver inlays.

