

James Ross

According to Don Hutslar, Gunsmiths of Ohio (York: Shumway, 1973, 1, 219) James Ross was a gunsmith in Steubenville, Jefferson County, Ohio, as early as 1803. The Western Herald of 24 August 1816, carried a notice that James Ross, gunsmith, had died in Steubenville.

The tax lists of East Bethlehem Township, Washington County, Pa., show that James Ross had been a gunsmith in that county between 1799 and

1802. We do not know where Ross was before 1799. The Census of 1800 showed a James Ross Jr. in Washington County.

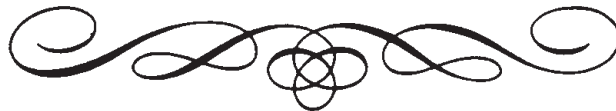
The inventory and appraisal of Ross' estate was made on September 19, 1816 by Arthur M. Phillips, Robert Carrell and gunsmith Jerman Jordan here spelled Jorden. The sale of Ross' goods was held on 20 September. Many of the purchasers were gunsmiths.

Isaac Johnson, 1 gun barrel, \$5.50	James Teaff, 1 lot stocking tools, \$2.60
William Ross, 3 files \$1.25	James Teaff, 3 small drawing knives \$1.50
Adam Wise, 1 file, \$.40	James Teaff, 9 plains, \$2.00
James Teaff, 1 pistol barrel, \$2.25	James Teaff, 1 lot files no. 2, \$6.00
James Teaff, 1 box gun iron, \$1.12	James Teaff, 1 same do no. 3, \$8.25
James Teaff, braces, cherries, bitts \$3.25	James Teaff, 9 rat tail files \$1.68
James Teaff, 2 lots of old iron, \$1.00	James Teaff, 39 flat files, all \$13.37
James Teaff, 21 lbs iron, \$2.00	James Teaff, 1 old vize, \$7.00
Garman Jordan, 1 pair old pistols, \$1.00	James Teaff, 4+ lbs old zinc \$1.87
William Ross, 1 lot gun lock tools, \$5.00	James Teaff, lot old saws, \$2.00
James Teaff, 1 iron anvil, \$30.25	James Teaff, 2 soldering irons \$1.25
Robert Roberts, 1 vize, \$12.00	James Teaff, 1 cast anvil, \$4.25
Adam Wise, 1 small vize, \$3.00	James Teaff, 2 sets screw cutting tools \$18.00
James Teaff, 1 lot gunsmith tools, \$1.50	James Teaff, shears, anvil etc. \$7.00
Arthur M. Phillips, 1 large turning lathe \$31.00	James Teaff, brace, bits & chisels \$6.50
German Jordan, 1 large grindstone \$.87	James Teaff, 1 wooden vize, \$3.00
James Teaff, 1 pair of bellows, \$25.00	James Teaff, 39 gun stocks \$9.75
James Teaff, 11 crimbles (thimbles?) \$3.25	James Teaff, 1 lot gear mounting pattern \$7.00
James Teaff, 2 gun barrels, \$11.00	James Teaff, 10 reding combs and wire, \$.37
James Teaff, 4 unfinished barrels \$16.00	James Teaff, 27 boaring bits & (?) \$8.00
James Teaff, 1 lot flasks & clamps, \$5.00	James Teaff, 1 gun barrel & (?) \$2.00
James Teaff, 14 sheets brass, \$17.50	James Teaff, 105 lbs of smith tools, \$27.60
James Teaff, 5+ lbs old brass, \$4.25	James Teaff, 1 grindstone \$7.00
James Teaff, 1 guide and rod, \$6.00	James Teaff, 70 lbs old copper \$21.1
James Teaff, 17 chisels & gouges, \$4.25	James Teaff, 9+ lbs old brass, \$4.87



Joshua W. Stackhouse

by
Dale Beresford, Brent Crawford
and Jim Whisker



The 1984 History of Marshall County, West Virginia, contains a biographical sketch of Joshua W. Stackhouse written by his grandson Charles R. Stackhouse. According to this entry, Joshua (or J. W., as he was customarily known) was probably a son of Thomas Stackhouse, who had moved to Hanover Twp., Columbiana Co., Ohio, by the time the U.S. Census of 1830 was taken. Thomas may have come to Columbiana Co. from the area of Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Charles Stackhouse gave the date of January 9, 1823, as the correct time of J. W.'s birth in Hanover Twp. on February 8, 1849, J. W. married Mary Jane McFarland in Belmont Co., Ohio. She was born on December 31, 1829, according to her tombstone, and died on April 11, 1907. While the tombstone confirms the date of J. W.'s birth, his date of death is not inscribed on the stone. Charles Stackhouse gave the date of death as March 16, 1912, but a death certificate says that he died in 1918, at the approximate age of 84. We need not be concerned with the medical examiner's estimate of his age at the time of death, but we do find a substantial difference of six(6) years in the date of death.

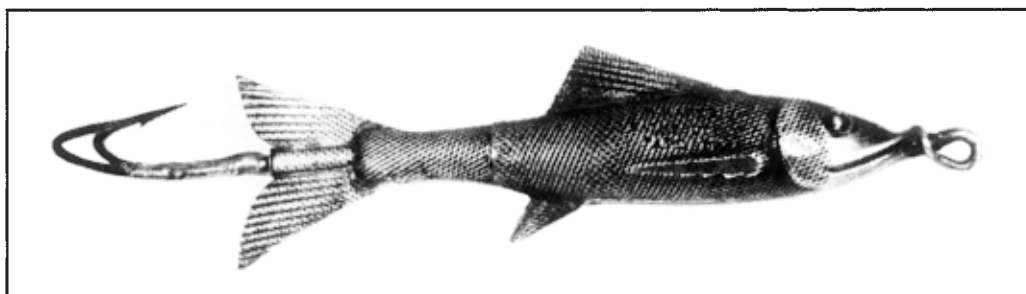
Stackhouse served briefly in the Union Army in the Civil War. He was inducted in Bellaire, Ohio, on May 13, 1864, and was mustered out on September 10, 1864. Shortly after the war J. W. Stackhouse moved from Ohio to West Virginia. By the time the U.S. Census was taken in 1870 he was living at Haynes Run, near Proctor, Wetzel Co., on the Marshall Co. line. The Census of 1850 had shown him in Monroe Co., Ohio. Stackhouse remained in Wetzel Co., West Virginia, until his death. He was buried at Haynes Run. The tombstones still stand and the inscriptions, as noted, are legible, although the stones are nearly fallen.

It has been alleged that Stackhouse apprenticed with Joe Young, another gunsmith in the Haynes Run area. The Census of 1850 did not list him as a gunsmith, which explains why he was not listed by Hutslar. Stackhouse was substantially older than his presumed mentor, for Joe Young was born in 1842 and died in 1916. The several known Stackhouse guns resemble Joe Young's work. Both generally made rather plain half-stock rifles marked by bold and unusually well-developed lines constructed on highly selected and bold-grained wood. □

Riley Haskell

Painesville, Ohio

Gunsmith and Maker of Fishing Lure



PATENTED in 1859, this minnow lure has a copper body with brass tail and fins. Made by Riley Haskell, an Ohio gunsmith, the lure sold for \$20,350 at a recent auction in Marlborough, Mass.

MARLBOROUGH, Mass. — Last July, auctioneer Richard W. Oliver of Kennebunk, Maine, sold a Haskell minnow for a record (at that time) price of \$9,240. The rarity of the minnow and the record price resulted in news stories on radio, television and in numerous magazines including Rod And Reel, Fishing World, and Forbes. With all the publicity only one other Haskell minnow has surfaced, leading authorities to believe Riley Haskell, the Painesville, Ohio, gunsmith, only made the two.

The second one sold at Oliver's High Rollers Auction of Fine Fishing Tackle and accessories held in Marlborough, on Feb. 26. This time the price more than

doubled — to \$20,350 including the 10 percent buyer's fee.

This minnow as well as the first one is very unusual in that it was handmade with a copper body with brass tail and fins. It was marked "R. Haskell, Painesville, O., Pat'd Sept. 20, 1859." It is believed this lure had a great impact on the evolution of plugs since the patent states the revolving tail section contained lead (the first belly weight) and the stationary front portion had cork. The minnow appeared to have had little or no use as the patina was in impeccable condition. This in part explains the record price. □

When Did The Percussion Cap Come Into Use?

By Jim Whisker

After fulminate of mercury was discovered to have explosive power it was simply a matter of time before it could be applied to the detonation of firearms. While Reverend Alexander Forsythe has been credited with discovering the potential of fulminate of mercury, it was Joshua Shaw, an English citizen working in America, who perfected the percussion cap. By 1814 he had created a workable cap, or, rather, pill, cased in iron. He experimented with pewter and other metals before settling on brass caps. In 1822 he was granted a patent for his invention. Thus, we might find a very few experimental arms made up for pill lock or percussion cap before 1822. But we should not expect to find production arms being made before 1823.

William Border's day book exists among descendents and parts were reproduced in Calvin Hetrick's monograph on Bedford County long rifles. It shows that conversions to percussion from flintlock began in his shop in 1832.

William McKnight, in his Pioneer Outline History of Northwest Pennsylvania, stated, "It was not until about 1830 that the percussion cap rifles were first used (in his area) and they were not in general use for some time after that." (p.156)

Richard Smith Elliott's Notes Taken in 60 Years offered this observation in the Juniata

Valley of Pennsylvania, "The percussion cap and lock were invented about 1822, but new things made their way slowly into the interior, and I first heard of the new gunlock in 1826. My uncle told of a percussion lock that he had seen on a gun in Baltimore.... He was an iron master and had the Hanover Works in Old Bedford County (now Fulton County) in the cove below McConnellsburg, near the Maryland line..... Impressed with the value of the percussion lock he was quite effusive in his description of it to the hands -- and lost caste sadly. They could respect his general probity and his marksmanship, but not his heretical notions about gunlocks"

Dr. Thomas Hall to Red Farris, Muzzle Blasts, October 1942, "In the decade between 1840 and 1850, Kentuckies were made with percussion locks, and many were converted from flintlock to percussion.... Not until the decade between 1850 and 1860 did the flintlock become less common than the percussion, although it is well known many of the Southern troops were at first armed with flintlock Kentuckies and flintlock military rifles."

Dale's Ashley-Smith Explorations relates that a party of Comanches had traded percussion guns they had stolen from men they had killed and scalped cheaply because they were unfamiliar with these weapons, and had no idea how they worked. This was in 1831.

The U S Army continued to use flintlock muskets exclusively until about 1840, and the last flintlock musket was adopted in 1842. Many of the Yankee guns of the early days of the Civil War were, like their Confederate counterparts, flintlocks.

Granville Stuart in his 40 Years on the Frontier (1845) reported that percussion guns were still something of a novelty in the 1830s and early 1840s in parts of Virginia and Kentucky. Edward L. Sabin's Kit Carson Days bears out the same point. Trade muskets for natives in North America were officially flintlock even after cartridge guns had come into use. One reason for the failure of much official Indian policy was that the government was attempting to supply obsolete technology to the aborigine. They could obtain much better arms than white soldiers had from traders.

It is of more than passing interest, and certainly not in the realm of trivia, to establish some dates for the passing of the flintlock. I note the tendency of writers to date all flintlocks no later than 1830. It is obvious from the foregoing that many flintlock guns were being made in the 1830s and even 1840s.

We have seen many dated long rifles, and only one, a Westmoreland County arm, the signature of the maker of which is illegible (or undecipherable), is dated in the 1830s, and this is an obviously significant arm in that it is dated 1831. We have seen no other dated percussion (original) dated in the 1830s. Westmoreland County is on the far western Pennsylvania frontier.

Samuel Jones, Pittsburgh in the Year 1826, a directory published by Johnston & Stockton (p.76) said, "Gun-smiths - of

these there are four - they employ 6 hands and manufacture rifles generally, with or without percussion locks...." This is the earliest clear reference we have found to the use of percussion systems in western Pennsylvania. □

Jackson County Gunsmith Moses Livesay 1829-1895

By William Courtney Martin II

Moses Livesay, born in West Virginia in 1829, spent his adult life on a farm in Franklin Township, Jackson County. He was noted as a fine gunsmith, and several of his muzzle loading rifles are in the J. J. McKittrick collection, being prized for their excellent workmanship. The owner has the last two guns Livesay made; both are in beautiful condition.

The Livesay shop was situated back of his home on Route 35, the farm now occupied by Bunn Hines. A typical Livesay rifle measured 54 3/4 inches overall, carried a full length stock, double set triggers, brass butt plate, trigger guard, and rod guides. A Remington octagon barrel was used with "M. Livesay" stamped in the barrel. Some of the Livesay rifle locks are marked "G. Goulcher." The stock was usually maple. Livesay died in 1895 after a long illness, bringing to a close era of the handmade gun in Jackson County.

During the past few years, a revival of the old time "turkey shoots" has brought the old muzzle loaders with all their colorful shooting routine to the attention of gun lovers. Old shooting irons have been dug out of the attic dust and reconditioned. The demand for the accurate marksmanship of the muzzle loader has brought into existence several magazines devoted to these old rifles and annual shooting meets in which only muzzle loaders are used. Last October 18-20, nation-wide publicity was given the WLW-National shoot

at Friendship, Indiana, when E. M. Farris, Secretary of The National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association, invited Lucian Gary, gun expert and author, to participate in the three day matches. He brought with him one of the nation's foremost color photographers, Ivan Dmitri, who turned out a colorful pictorial report to accompany Mr. Gary's account appearing in the Saturday Evening Post. The early gunsmiths lived again in this article, which proves that if a man turns out a fine piece of work, it will live after him and attest his quality.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR . . .

William Courtney Martin II is a life long resident of Jackson, Ohio, and is a direct descendant of "Salt Boiler" John Martin who was the first permanent white resident of the Scioto Salt Works, which is now the city of Jackson, Ohio. John Martin located there in 1796, thus establishing the oldest family in Jackson County.

The article, Moses Livesay, was written for and first published in "MUZZLE BLASTS" the official publication of the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association on June 1941, Vol. II, No. 10.

Respectfully submitted with Mr. Martin's approval,

Ralph A. White
Chillicothe, Ohio
April, 1987

Philip Knappenberger

The History of the Johann Knappenberger Freundschaft, 1749-1916 privately printed by Vinnie E. Knappenberger in Greensburg in 1916, gives the genealogy of the family. Johann Erhart Knappenberger settled in Macungie Township, Northampton County in 1749. By 1762 Johann was living in Whitehall township of the same county. He had five sons: Philip, Adam, Henry, George and Conrad. All five sons served in the Revolution. Conrad was born in Germany and came to America at age two. In 1772 he was assessed as a farmer in Macungie Township. He married Barbara Bloss about 1772 and about 1788 came to Westmoreland County. Conrad died in 1818, leaving four sons: Henry, John, William and Philip, the latter being a gunsmith.

P.M. Ruff's German Church Records of Westmoreland County (II, 34) listed a Philip Knappenberger, age 15, who was baptized at Brush Creek Lutheran Church in 1799.

Philip was named in his father's estate, settled in 1821. He was first listed as a single freeman in Franklin Township, Westmoreland County, in 1808 as a blacksmith. The same assessment was found through 1811. His name disappeared from the tax rolls in 1812 and 1813. Conrad had received a patent for land in 1800 in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, issued by President James Madison. This land he gave to

his son Henry in 1811 while he was yet alive. Henry sold it to Philip for \$348. Conrad gave Philip 222 acres in Ohio, probably in Tuscarawas County, again while yet alive. "on the second day of October 1810, the said Philip Knappenberger received from the said Conrad Knappenberger 222 acres of land in Ohio, which the said Conrad by writing dated the 13th day of May 1813 declared was in full the said Philip's share" of the estate. (from Conrad's will)

Conrad's estate was settled in 1821 in Westmoreland County court and was valued at \$1988.28 of which \$597.77 went to the widow. She resettled in Ohio where she died.

Meanwhile, Philip had resettled in Westmoreland County. His name was added to the Franklin County tax lists in 1814, as a gunsmith, value \$30. His listing was the same in 1815, but in 1816 the tax lists show that he was "gone."

Vinnie Knappenberger wrote of Philip, "Conrad's third son, Philip Knappenberger, settled in the northern part of Westmoreland County, where he had one son, John, to Martha Swanger....Later Philip married a Miss Beacon and in 1804 moved to Ohio, where he had bought his brother Henry's land. There he had five children; at the time of the death of his wife he married a Miss Fitzgerald and to her had one son Philip. Philip, Sr., thus

became the founder of the Ohio branch of the family. Philip's first dwelling in Ohio was a cabin with a blanket for a door. When he had been there sometime and accumulated some wealth, he built a house that was considered palatial in those days. It was painted with red earth and had a shingle roof. This alone was enough to give him prominence. He worked at gunsmithing and many an old arm was brought to him under the belief it was bewitched. His skill was not long in finding the difficulty and removing it. He soon acquired a reputation in his business and prospered accordingly. He built two saw-mills in Franklin Township and was the first man to make rails west of the Tuscarawas River, Ohio. Beyond three months school he received as a boy he was self-taught; but he was a great reader and thinker and was a writer of no mean ability. He taught several terms of school at his residence. He was pronounced liberal in religion and possessed ideas far in advance of his time. He wrote several books on religion and one on slavery.

"Late one evening in 1812 he received a warning to leave Ohio on account of the threatening attitude of the Indians. As the horses were pasturing in the woods and he had to find them, his wife with their little girl Margaret, hid in a dense thicket near the cabin. There she sat in fear. Wolves howled around her and the scream of the panther rose upon the air and echoed and re-echoed through the woods; but she hardly heard them. There was only one source of terror for her, the scalping knife of the blood thirsty Indian. Next morning, her husband returned with the horses and they finally reach-

ed Pennsylvania, where they stayed until quiet was restored in Ohio. While in Pennsylvania Philip made sabres for the United States Army.

"In time Philip went back to Ohio where he became quite wealthy and helped many a German friend to a home. He was the owner of 1000 acres of land and no one ever went away from his door empty handed. He lies buried in Strawsburg cemetery. Philip's children are: John, David, Jonathan, Margaret, Mary, Catherine and Philip Jr.

The Soloman Kappenberger listed by Donald Hutslar in Gunsmiths of Ohio (I,255) as a gunsmith, age 52 in the Census of 1850, in Youngstown Township, Mahoning County, was neither a brother nor a son of Philip Knappenberger, according to the Knappenberger genealogy. □