



Laudenslager Family Gunsmiths

By
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This gunsmith's family name has been spelled in different ways including Loudenslager, Laudenslager and Lowdenslager. Laudenslager seems to be the one most used, so that is the one we will use.

John Laudenslager

There are two different dates for John April 10, 1803 – September 14, 1879. In Hutslar's book, Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen. He has the dates 1801 –1850, page 110.

John was born in Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Johan George Laudenslager. Johan George Laudenslager was a grist mill operator. John worked as a gunsmith in the Salem area until he moved to Suffield Township, Portage County, Ohio around 1830. It is clear he worked as a gunsmith in Ohio through the mid 1880's.

John had a son Jacob, who was born in 1829. He also worked as an Ohio gunsmith. In Hutslar's book, Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesman, the 1850 census has John Laudenslager, age 49, farmer (name spelled Lowdenslager) from Pennsylvania. Also Jacob, age 21, Suffield Township, Portage County, Ohio. The family seemed to have lived in Ohio between 1831 – 1835. The 1853 Suffield directory also lists John Laudenslager as a gunsmith, page 110.

Samuel Laudenslager

Born October 20, 1811, died February 15, 1891. He was born in Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Johan Henry Laudenslager who was a blacksmith.

Samuel was a gunsmith near Kratzerville in the 1820's. He later moved to Mexico in Juniata County, Pennsylvania where he continued to work as a gunsmith. It is reported

that he learned his gunsmith trade from S.H. St. Clair. This is from Early Rifle Makers of Snyder and Union Counties Pennsylvania by Dalas Ewing, Snyder County Historical Society, Number 7, Volume IV, July 1966.

A rifle by Samuel L. Laudenslager and signed S. L. has been reported and is pictured in this article. Since we can find no information on him moving to Ohio, we must assume it was made in Pennsylvania. Although he was not an Ohio gunsmith, he belonged to the Laudenslager clan.

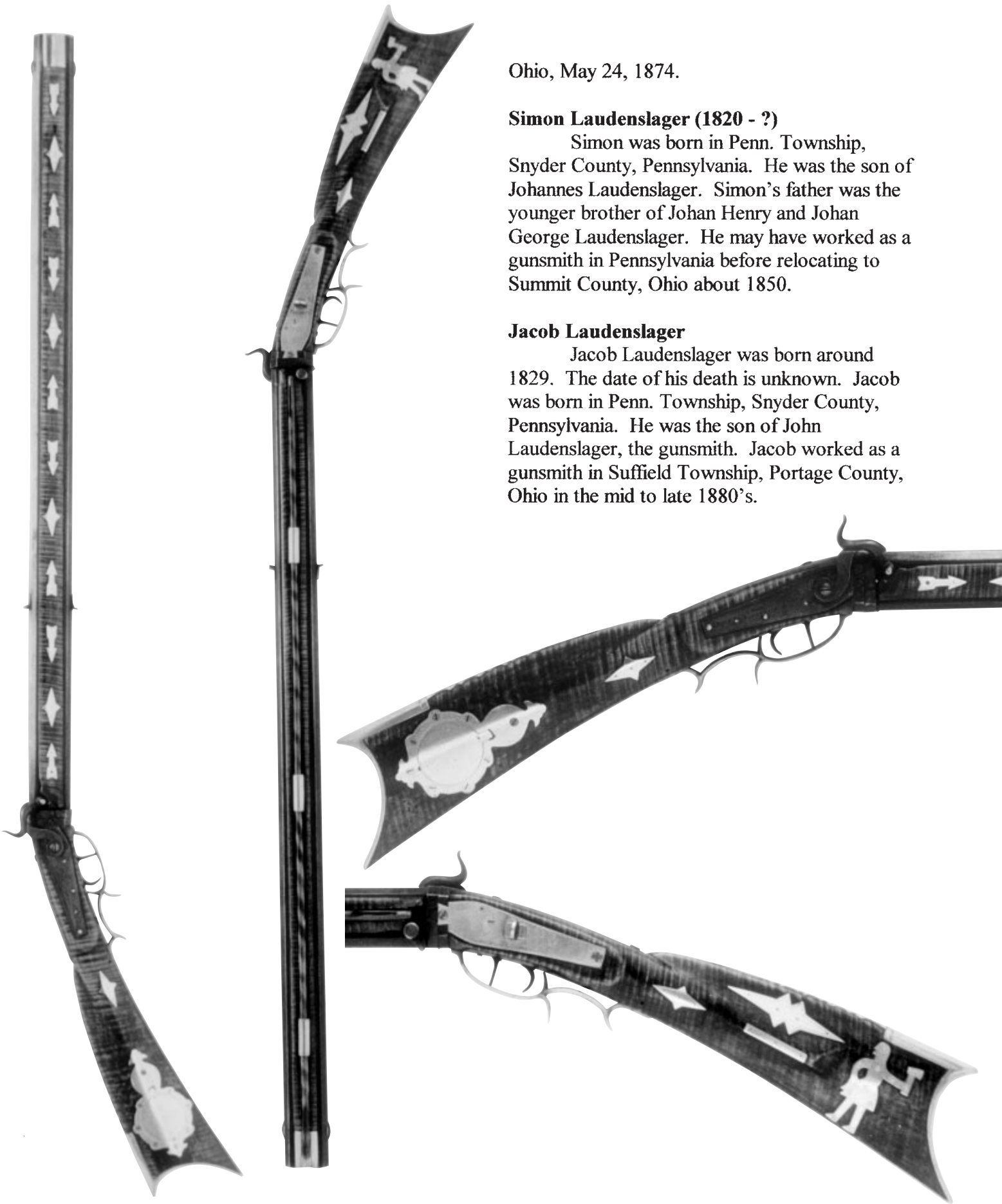
Wilhelm (William) Laudenslager

Born January 25, 1819 and died in November 1892. William was born in Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. William was also the son of John Henry Laudenslager.

The U. S. Census of 1850 lists Wihelm Laudenslager, gunsmith, age 31, Anna 34, Martin 8. All were born in Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. The family had roots near Selinsgrove in Snyder County.

William was Samuel Laudenslager's younger brother. William was a gunsmith in the Salem and New Berlin area until about 1860 when he moved to Wyandot, Hancock County, Ohio. He continued to work as a farmer and gunsmith in Ohio until his death in November 1892.

William married Anna (surname not known) who was born in 1814. They had two sons, Martin Laudenslager 1841 – 1874 who married Amanda Rowe in Hancock County, Ohio, February 8, 1874 and Charles Laudenslager (1853-?). They also had a daughter, Savilla Laudenslager (1844-?). She married Edward Ponteus in Wyandot County,



Ohio, May 24, 1874.

Simon Laudenslager (1820 - ?)

Simon was born in Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. He was the son of Johannes Laudenslager. Simon's father was the younger brother of Johan Henry and Johan George Laudenslager. He may have worked as a gunsmith in Pennsylvania before relocating to Summit County, Ohio about 1850.

Jacob Laudenslager

Jacob Laudenslager was born around 1829. The date of his death is unknown. Jacob was born in Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. He was the son of John Laudenslager, the gunsmith. Jacob worked as a gunsmith in Suffield Township, Portage County, Ohio in the mid to late 1880's.

In Gunsmiths of Ohio 18th and 19th Century by Donald Hutslar, it is reported in 1850 Census as having Jacob Laudenslager, age 20, from Pennsylvania working with John Lawdenslager (note spelling) and located in Suffield, page 322. In Hutslar's Ohio Gunsmiths and Allied Tradesmen, the 1850 Census lists Jacob Laudenslager 21 gunsmith born in Pennsylvania and living in the household of his parents, John and Tilly, in Suffield Township, Portage County, Ohio, page 110.

Henry Laudenslager

Born April 17, 1839 – died March 22, 1912. Henry was the son of Valentine (Felty) Laudenslager (farmer). Felty was the older brother of William and Simon Laudenslager. Henry was a gunsmith in the Salem area 1860 – 1900. He operated a gunsmith shop in Fair Oaks, Pennsylvania. In the census of 1900, Henry listed his occupation as farmer.

In Captain John G. Dillon's book, The Kentucky Rifle, Dillon lists Henry Laudenslager as a gunsmith in South Central Pennsylvania, page 147.

The Pennsylvania Kentucky Rifle by Henry Kauffman has Henry Laudenslager being a gunsmith in Fair Oaks, Penn. Township, Snyder County, Pennsylvania. Born 1839 died 1912, page 280.

Frank Sellers in American Gunsmith lists Laudenslager, Henry (1839-1912) Fair Oaks, Pennsylvania 1860-1912, page 180.

With 4 Laudenslagers working in Ohio, it's odd that more Laudenslager rifles have not shown up. Perhaps they did not sign them, who knows.



Additional Information On Ohio Gunsmiths

Submitted By James Whisker

Burns, Daniel (1825-). gunsmith. 1850, Concord Twp., Miami Co., born in MD, Conrad Leatherman (13); Hannah (21, wife), Henry (2), all born in Ohio. I suspect that Conrad was Hannah's brother. Several high quality rifles by Daniel Burns are known.

Calpetser [Kolpitzer], George. (1790-). gunsmith. 1814-20, New Berlin, Union County; 1826, Union Township, Union County; 1829-35, Buffalo Township, Union County [tax]. 1850. George Culpetzer, age 60, born in PA, value \$100, Guilford Twp., Medina Co. also in household Sarah Wardwell, 49, born PA. (who was she? Too old to be daughter).

Castle, Willard (1828-). 1860, Plymouth Twp., Ashtabula Co. (This is a correction – Hutslar

was looking for a "W Castle" – see his book – man he found had, by his account, had no stated occupation). Try: Willard Castle, gunsmith, age 62, and Joseph Darrow, 24, farm laborer, and his wife Mary (22).

Clark Hiram (1820-). gunsmith. 1850, Napoleon Twp., Henry Co., age 30, born in PA, Emma, 19, Henry (1), both born in Ohio. This man is neither a son of James Clark of Lebanon, Ohio, nor his brother, based on age and place of birth. James Clark's brother Hiram was in Hancock, MD, in 1850.

Fisher, John [sic] (1811-). Johns Fisher, 39, gunsmith, value \$600, born in Oh; Rachel (40), born in PA; kids 6-16 born in Ohio. also in household #31 **Annain Ropp**. 19, gunsmith born

in Ohio.

Hosick, Ebenezer(1830-).1860 addition to Hutslar entry: gunsmith, value \$300 land, \$1000 personal, born in Ohio; Elizabeth (22), Arabella (6), Ruhanna (3) all born in Ohio.

Housington, Orrin (1823-). gunsmith. 1870, Guilford Twp., Medina Co., age 47, value \$700 land, \$650 personal, born in Vermont; Lucy, 57, born in NY.

Marin, Rowland L., gunsmith, 1900, Brunswick Twp., Medina Co., born 10-1841 in Ohio.

Messenger, William (1835-). gunsmith. 1860, Dorset Twp., Ashtabula Co., age 25, born in Connecticut, value \$50; Elizabeth (25), Warren (1), born in Ohio.

Mossman, William (1814-) gunsmith, 1850, Auglaize Twp., Allen Co., age 36; Nancy (28), both born in Ohio.

Nye, Alonzo (1808-). gunsmith. 1870, Guilford Twp., Medina Co., \$300 land and \$275 personal, born in NY; Anna, born in NY; Leland (son), 22, blacksmith, born in Ohio.

Parson, Isaac (1811-). gunsmith. 1850, Guilford Twp., age 39, born in PA; wife Mary 26 born in PA; William, 6 born in Ohio.

Pierce, Henry (1812-). 1870, Liverpool, Medina Co., gunsmith, age 58, born in PA. Value \$1700 in land, \$900 personal.

Powers, Thomas. 1900, gunsmith, 5th ward, Cleveland, born 12-1832 in Ireland.

Shaw, Jacob (1799-). gunsmith. Listed by Hutslar in 1850. 1870 data: Jacob Shaw, age 71, gunsmith; Roena (wife, 71), both born in Massachusetts, Hinckley Twp., Medina Co.

Smock, Isaac (1825-). gunsmith. 1850, Lost Creek Twp., Miami Co., born in NJ, in household of George and Maria Sanderson. George was a farmer, born in PA, value \$18000 & Maria born in Ohio.

Spellman, John (1806-). 1850, Wadsworth Twp., Medina Co. gunsmith & farmer, born in Ohio, age 44.

Stewart, John gunsmith. Hutslar has him in 1860. 1850 data: John Stewart, 35, gunsmith, value \$4350, Spring Creek Twp., Miami Co, in household of Silas (41, a stone quarrier) and Lydia Manning.

Waltz, David (1803-). 1870, \$7000 property, \$1295 personal value. gunsmith & farmer, no one else in household.

Williams, Lorenzo (1815-). 1860, Sandusky Twp., Sandusky Co., gunsmith, age 45, value \$250 land, \$50 personal, born in VA Rebecca 35, born in Ohio.

Williams, William H. (1821-) gunsmith. 1860, Denmark Twp., Ashtabula Co., age 39, value \$2485 in property and \$120 personal. He, his wife Adaline (27) and kids 7 & 2 were all born in Ohio. Also in same household, **Williams, Dennis** (1824-). Gunsmith, age 36, Polly (68 mother?) Eliza (wife 40), value also noted as \$2485 property and \$155 personal.

Kentucky Gunsmith

Long Rifle, 1833

Blacksmith, mechanic, wood-sculptor, jeweler.
He begins in the forge, wrapping a pressed bar
Of wrought iron braced on a swage block
With ringing triple skelps of his hammer
Around a mandril rod. He sinks the lap-welded
Barrel in a ticking bed of gold and blue
Bituminous embers, letting it cool
And set before he wrests the metal free
With tongs and bears it smoking like hoarfrost
To the anvil, where he batters out the flats,
Eight sides, up and down its length.
He bores smooth the octagonal tube, then rifles it—
Hickory shims set behind steel cutting teeth
Deepen the grooves with each successive pass.

He fashions lock and plate piece by piece.
Consigning frizzen, fly, tumbler, and springs
To the crucible, he threads the breechplug
And draws the glowing tang sharp as a prong:
A forked vein pulses in his temple,
His eyes glaze and crack with blood.
Before sand-casting both muzzle-cap
And buttplate in brass, he retrieves
And quenches the parts of tempered steel.
The heat-refracted shed recedes
Like a mirage, as he walks sixteen furlongs
To the Morgan Whitehackle Inn.
The tavern host slides a tall schooner
Of amber-lit ale across the polished board.

Thoughts steeped in seasoned grains, he savors
The barley-bree, mulling texture and hue,
Chopped heartwood of curly maple
Planed smooth with a drawknife. He returns
To the shop, traces on a cured slab the rude
Template of his stock. His gouge and drill-bit
Drop ringlets and curls. He cuts the lugs,

Seats the barrel, tests the ramrod groove.
Rasp and file embalm the air, as he raises
Cheekpiece and comb on the buttstock.
He endows the wrist with a slender turn,
Chisels a rib to secure lock, cock, frizzen,
And ignition pan. He blocks out a cavity
For the springworks, assembles the hardware,

And next a pillar of blazing sawdust motes
He starts to carve in earnest. Virtuosity
In the pursuit of form lies in slickest
Evasion. Everything flows, sinuous
Lines holding plane and mass forever
In the present tense. The stock tapers
And flares all the barrel's length. He raises
In low relief a baroque C-scroll behind
The cheekpiece. Above the vent-pick eyelets,
He incises a garfish and taps the glyph
Full of relic silver. He chases
Rime-encrusted florals, stars, and sickle moons
Along the tang and breech. He files
Diamond facets into the ramrod thimbles
And redeems in linseed oil the sculptor's
Tiger-striped grain. Spurning always
The nacreous tints of fresh-water pearl,
For inlay he chooses ivory worried
From the jawbone of Pleistocene cave bear,
Ferocious canines arcing slow meteors
Either side of the forestock. Thirty months
The sun fails beautifully on beaten sheet brass,
The hinged patch box cunningly embellished
As a gilt frame in a New Orleans parlor—
Until Daniel William Cloud, 24 years old,
Bound for rebellion in the Texas province,
Puts down ten Coronet gold eagles, swings up
By the left stirrup, and boots his horse toward Bexar.

