

THE "KENTUCKY" LONGRIFLE

This uniquely American art form was developed by the 1750's by immigrant German, English, Swiss and Scotch-Irish settlers who brought firearms from Europe that were not particularly suited for life on the frontier. In response to demand, local gunsmiths adapted European designs into a firearm for everyday use that was extremely accurate, easy and quick to load and utilized less powder and lead. An important innovation was the use of a greased cloth patch wrapped around the lead ball. This patch served as a gas seal gripping the ball in the barrel which had spiral grooves and put a "twist" on the projectile when fired thereby increasing its accuracy and distance. Lengthening the barrel, reducing the size of the bore and employing slow twist rifling were all American developments.

The use of a greased cloth patch necessitated a convenient receptacle on the rifle to store both grease and pre-cut cloth patches. Early "patchboxes" had sliding wooden covers which soon gave way to hinged brass lids and became the focal point of decoration on the rifle. Elaborate pierced designs, masterful engraving and figural forms became the hallmark of many gunsmiths. A broad array of other artistic embellishments such as silver inlays, relief and incise stock carving and unique brass furniture are often found. Finally, the use of figured maple for the stocks made for a pleasing and warm striped surface upon which the gunsmith could apply his art.

THE NAME

There is no definitive answer as to how the "Kentucky" Rifle got its name. Many believe it originated with a victory song called *The Hunters of Kentucky*. This song was written in 1821 in celebration of the American victory at the Battle of New Orleans in 1814 and is the first documentable use of the name:

But Jackson he was wide awake,

And was not scar'd at trifles,

For well he knew what aim we take,

With our Kentucky rifles

SCHOOLS OF GUNSMITHING IN THE MARYLAND

The term "school" refers to a collective style prevalent within a geographical area. The concept was fostered by the apprentice system, where a boy from age 12 to 16 was legally bound to a master to learn a trade for the term of 4 to 8 years. After completing his apprenticeship the young craftsman could work for other masters or set up his own business. If he stayed in the same locale his first rifles would resemble those of his master. If he moved away he would assume the general style of rifles built in that region or school and incorporate his technique of engraving and carving retaining a degree of individuality. If he moved to an area far from other gunsmiths he could use his creativity to establish his own style, train apprentices and another school evolves. This was a common occurrence during the mid-1700's.

THE MARYLAND SCHOOL includes geographically areas from Carroll County, west to Cumberland. The rifles of this region share design details like the 4-petal flower patchbox finial, oval cheekpiece inlay with engraved eagle, the bell flower motif, gadrooning, and tendril-like carving. The Maryland School designs were influenced by early gunsmiths moving to Frederick, Emmitsburg, Hagerstown, and Cumberland from Lancaster, PA, Hanover, PA, Winchester, VA, and Martinsburg, WV.

The benefit of this exhibit is the opportunity to compare designs within the school, appreciate the artistic styles, and to realize that an unsigned rifle can be attributed to a school and sometimes to an individual gunsmith based on these designs. Rifles are arranged in the cases geographically from northeast to west. Take time to compare early rifles (late 1700's) to later ones (1800's); there are contrasts in butt stock size, content of decoration, and stock carving. Notice also, how the earliest gunsmith from a location (like Emmitsburg) can influence the designs of later gunsmiths in that center.

Visit the KRF website www.kentuckyriflefoundation.org and click on "suggested reading" for more information about Kentucky rifles of all areas.



EXHIBITION GUIDE

Maryland to the Frontier an exhibition of Maryland Longrifles

AT THE
B & O RAILROAD MUSEUM
Ellicott City, MD

BY THE
KENTUCKY RIFLE FOUNDATION

APRIL 20th THRU OCTOBER 20th
TWO THOUSAND THIRTEEN

PICTURE CD AVAILABLE FROM KRF
www.kentuckyriflefoundation.org

EXHIBITION COMMITTEE
R. MAC SPENCER, LANDENBURG, PA
COURTNEY WILSON, MD
FRANK KOBILIS, EDINBURG, VA
TIM HODGES, WINCHESTER, VA

1. Signed in script "M Shroyer" Matthias Shroyer, Taneytown, MD dated 1811, flintlock, relief carved curly maple stock, silver coffin cheek piece inlay, brass mounted, 43 ¼ inch barrel, 58 ¾ inches overall.
2. Signed on brass plate "H Koons" Henry Koons, Double Pipe Creek, MD ca 1830, brass percussion lock, relief carved curly maple stock, brass mounted, horse head patchbox, 42 ½ inch barrel, 58 inches overall.
3. Signed in script on brass plate "John Armstrong", Emmitsburg, MD ca 1795, flintlock marked "J A" in script, Relief carved curly maple stock, brass mounted, silver inlays, elaborately pierced and engraved patchbox, 45 ¾ inch barrel, 61 ¾ inches overall.
4. Signed in script on a brass plate "Nathaniel Rowe", Emmitsburg, MD ca 1840, lock marked "N R" in script, relief carved curly maple stock of exceptional quality, several silver inlays, engraved brass mounts, pierced and engraved patchbox, 41 5/8 inch barrel, 57 inches overall.
5. Signed in script "N Rowe" Nathaniel Rowe, Emmitsburg, MD ca 1845, percussion, incise carved curly maple stock, silver side plate and silver inlays, brass mounted, pierced and engraved patchbox, 37 ¾ inch barrel, 53 ¾ inches overall.
6. Signed in script "Geo. Nunnemaker" George Nunnemaker, Emmitsburg, MD ca 1805, flintlock, relief carved curly maple stock, brass mounted, no patchbox (smooth rifle), 48 inch barrel, 64 ½ inches overall.
7. Signed in script "Peter White" on side plate, Emmitsburg, MD/Bedford, PA ca 1820, flintlock marked PW, incise carved curly maple stock, brass mounts, brass patchbox, 36 inch barrel, 51 inches overall.
8. Signed in script "Wickham & Mathews" Marine Tyler Wickham, Emmitsburg, MD ca 1800, flintlock marked Wickham, incise carved curly maple stock, silver inlays, pierced and engraved brass patchbox, brass mounted, 44 inch barrel, 60 inches overall.
9. Signed in script "J Christ" Jacob Christ, Graceham, MD (Moravian community) ca 1835, percussion lock marked JOSH GOLCHER, curly maple stock, brass mounted, 4-petal flower patchbox, , 40 ¾ inch barrel, 56 ½ inches overall.
10. Signed in block letters "J*M" Jacob Metzger Sr., Frederick, MD ca 1810, flintlock marked "Dreper." Incise and relief carved curly maple stock, brass mounted, engraved brass patchbox, 45 ½ inch barrel, 60 inches overall.
11. Signed "Resor" Jacob Resor, Frederick, MD/Mercersburg, PA ca 1790, flintlock, relief carved curly maple stock, brass mounted, pierced and engraved 4-petal flower patchbox, 45 ½ inch barrel, 60 ¾ inches overall.
12. Signed on a silver plate in script "Jno Stonesifer" John Stonesifer, Boonsboro, MD ca 1835, percussion lock marked JOSH GOLCHER , relief carved curly maple stock, heavily silver inlaid, brass mounted, elaborately engraved and pierced patchbox, 42 inch barrel, 57 3/8 inch overall. Pristine
13. Unsigned John Gonter, Hagerstown, MD ca 1795, flintlock, incise carved curly maple stock, forestock molding, brass mounted, sideplate markd "H.TOWN", daisy finial patchbox, 46 ½ inch barrel, 61 ¼ inches long.
14. Signed in script "Christian Hawken", Hagerstown, MD ca. 1790, flintlock, relief carved curly maple stock, silver eagle cheekpiece inlay, brass mounted, pierced and engraved 4-petal flower patchbox, 48 5/8 inch barrel, 51 ¾ inches overall
15. Signed in script "Ge Krep[s]" George Kreps, Hagerstown, MD ca 1800, flintlock , elaborately relief carved curly maple stock, forestock molding, brass mounted, pierced and engraved brass patchbox, 45 inch barrel, 60 ½ inches overall.
16. Signed in script "W Hawken" William Hawken, Hagerstown, MD ca 1820, percussion lock (converted), supreme quality curly maple stock, forestock and lower butt molding, silver inlays, brass mounted, pierced and engraved patchbox, 42 inch barrel, 57 inches overall.
17. Signed in script on a silver plate "J Grove" Jacob Grove, Middletown, MD ca 1800, flintlock, elaborately relief carved curly maple stock, several silver inlays, silver wire inlay, brass mounted, pierced and engraved patchbox, 45 ½ inch barrel, 62 inches overall.
18. Signed in script " Daniel Marker" Middletown, MD /Sharpsburg, MD ca 1825, percussion lock (converted), uncarved curly maple stock, brass mounted, silver inlays, brass patchbox, 42 inch barrel, 57 ½ inches overall.
19. Signed in script "Hiram Clark" Hancock, MD ca 1820, percussion (converted) marked T Ketland & Co, relief carved curly maple stock, silver mounted. Q-finial patchbox,41 ¼ inch barrel, 56 ½ inches overall
20. Signed in script "M Rizer" Martin Rizer, Cumberland, MD ca 1810, flintlock, relief carved curly maple stock, forestock molding, several silver inlays, brass mounted, 4-petal flower patchbox, 39 3/8 inch barrel, 54 ¼ inches overall.
21. Signed in Script "G Rizer" George Rizer Cumberland, MD ca 1815, percussion lock (converted) marked Ketland & Co, plain maple stock, brass mounted, 4-petal flower patchbox, 45 ½ inch barrel, 61 inches overall. (located in wall display case)