

PLATE 174

Reaves Goehring

Rifle with flint lock, full stock of maple, brass mountings, octagonal barrel 42 inches long marked J. Dickert on the top facet of the barrel.

This rifle is one of the earliest products of Dickert. The butt plate is almost flat and is about two inches thick. The patch box with a daisy finial is engraved but not as profusely as those made in the late eighteenth century by Lancaster gunsmiths.

DICKERT, JACOB

Gunsmiths have achieved positions of importance in the history of firearm manufacture for a variety of reasons. Some lived in critical times such as the Revolution or the War of 1812; others produced large quantities of guns; some made guns of outstanding quality; and a few made guns over a long span of years. It is interesting to note that Jacob Dickert qualifies for recognition in all of these ways, and therefore must be regarded as one of the most important gunsmiths to have worked in Pennsylvania.

Dickert was born at Maintz, Germany, in 1740 and came to America with his parents in 1748. In 1756 the family moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and it is likely that the sixteen-year-old youth was immediately apprenticed to a gunsmith. An apprentice period of seven years would then have terminated for him at the age of twenty-three, instead of at twenty-one, as was customary in Europe and America at that time.

In 1764 he married Johanetta Hofer of York, Pennsylvania; and the following year he became a citizen of His Majesty's Colony in America. That same year a son, named Johannes, was born to the young couple; and in 1765 their daughter Maria was born.

In 1774 Dickert and John Henry bought a plot of land in Manheim Township, on the edge of the borough of Lancaster, and built on it a boring mill to bore gun barrels. This purchase may be regarded as a shrewd move because such equipment would be very useful in supplying barrels for the impending war. The mill was doubtless successful, for when John Henry died in 1779, his half-interest was bought

by Dickert. Mrs. Henry was forced to sell her interest in the boring mill so that she could meet the responsibility of educating her children as her husband had directed in his will. Dickert apparently owned and operated the mill until late in the eighteenth century, when he sold it to the person from whom the land had originally been bought.

In 1787 Dickert's daughter married James Gill, a Lancaster dry goods merchant, and for a number of years the names of Dickert and Gill were involved in selling dry goods and guns. Some Dickert and Gill guns are known to exist. When in 1796, Gill died, Dickert advertised in the local newspaper that all outstanding claims against this partnership would be settled.

It is obvious that Dickert was an outstanding and active citizen of his adopted country. He supported the construction of the great turnpike from Lancaster to Philadelphia and was an active member of the Moravian Church, where some of the data about him has been fortunately preserved for posterity to read.

Dickert died in 1822 after a very long and productive career in Lancaster. He was called a gunsmith at his death, which usually implies that a man was active in his trade until the time of his death, although such a conclusion is not entirely safe to make at all times.

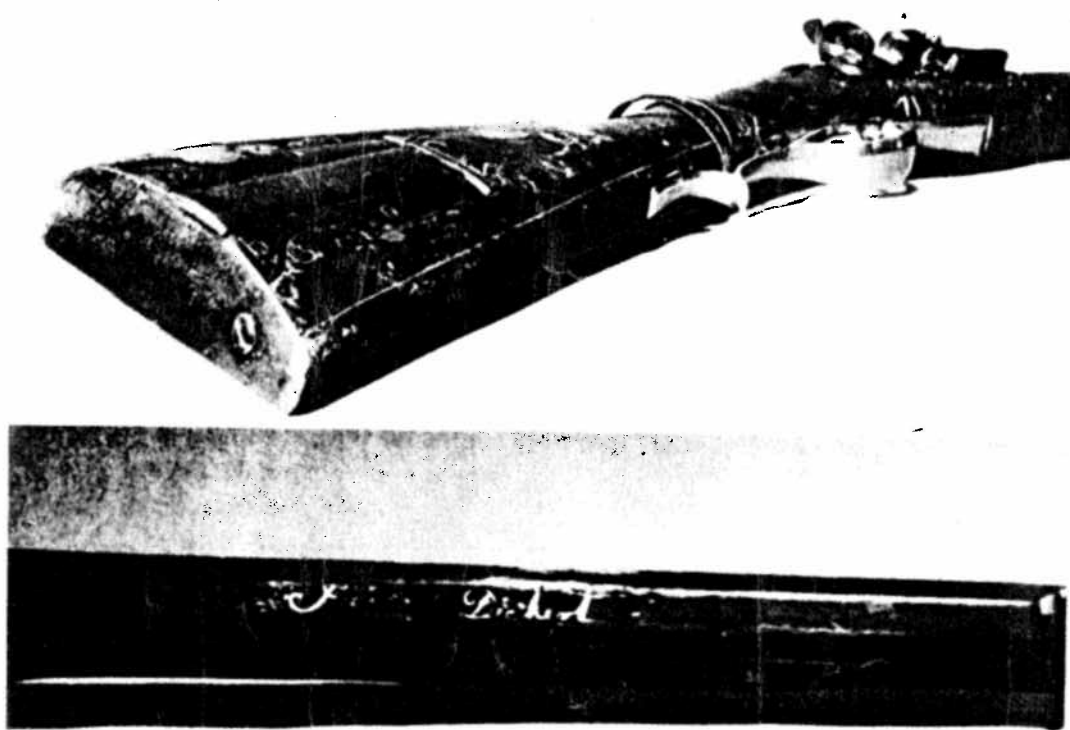


PLATE 175

Reaves Coehring

Rifle with flint lock, brass mountings, and octagonal barrel with J. Dickert on the top facet of the barrel.

This rifle has a four-piece patch box with a daisy finial and a very thick butt. All of these features suggest that the rifle was made by Dickert about the time of the American Revolution.

Bill:

X notice for me
to take to auction
X Fiddle Antiques
Very important
for Pennsylvania
6 min.

Debate
Com #3 May 1. 02

I looked at a rifle recently that had a patchbox almost identical to yours. Your drawing laid right over it, with the exception of the two middle screws, (they were about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch off) was a match. The engraving on this gun was very worn but could have been done by the same hand.

Fortunately the barrel cipher on this gun was intact "C * Gump". This is the signature of Christian Gump of Lancaster Pennsylvania who produced rifles between 1800 and 1830.

Your rifle, judging from the trigger guard, trigger, and buttplate was one of Gump's first guns and probably was made before 1800.

OR

Because of the early style of your gun it could have been made by Storpel Gumph, Christian's father, who made guns in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1792 (from tax records). Perhaps they both used the same patchbox pattern. I have never seen a gun by Storpel Gumph so I can only guess. Obviously more research is needed.

While looking at some collector cartridges I found an empty .256 NEWTON box made by Western Cartridge Company in the early 1930s. It is in terrible condition, flaps missing, taped etc. Much of the printing is OK and it will probably do until a better one comes along. It will be at the shop, it's yours.

I will be in Hendersonville on Memorial Day weekend and will have several nice guns for you to look at. A partial

listing includes:

Revolutionary War Items

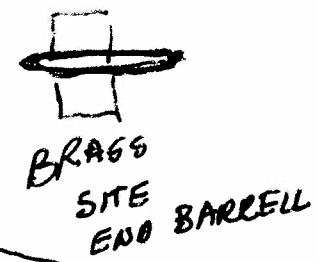
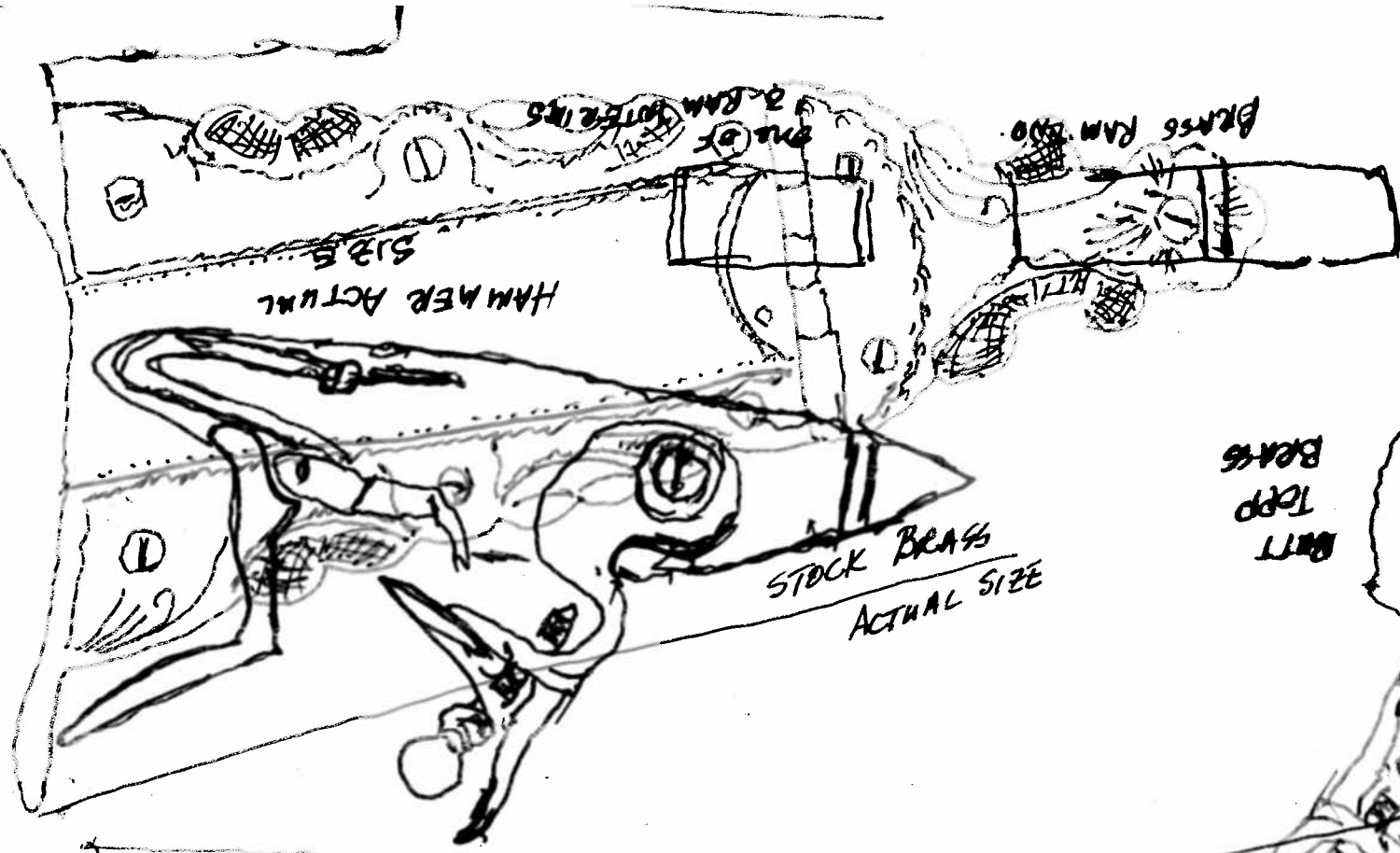
Civil War

U.S. Martial pistols

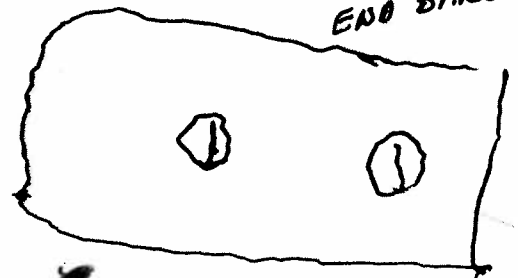
Colt revolvers

Look forward to seeing you

Carl



BRASS
TOPP
LUG



STOCK BRASS
ACTUAL SIZE

BUTT
TOPP
BRASS

STOCK BRASS
ACTUAL SIZE

