

Confederate Rifles & Muskets

Infantry Small Arms Manufactured
in the Southern Confederacy 1861-1865

A black and white photograph featuring a Confederate battle flag as the background. In the foreground, a long-barreled rifle, likely a Springfield Model 1862, is positioned diagonally. To the right of the rifle is a bronze bust of Jefferson Davis. In the lower-left foreground, a sword with a ribbed hilt is visible. The overall composition is dramatic and historical.

John M. Murphy, M.D.

XIII.

Davis & Bozeman Rifles and Carbines Cut-Down from Rifles

THE FIRM OF HENRY J. DAVIS AND DAVID W. Bozeman was located three miles west of Central and twelve miles north of Wetumpka, both of which towns are in Elmore County, Alabama, a short distance north of Montgomery.¹ However, a cast-iron plaque in the collections of the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, Alabama indicates that this firm was actually located in Equality, Alabama, which is in Coosa County at the intersection of present-day state routes 9 and 259. *Plate 1* is a photograph of this plaque.

Prior to the Civil War this partnership was engaged in making cotton gins, and the gin house belonging to Henry J. Davis became the factory in the production of arms. A wartime item from the *Legislative Journal of the State of Alabama* indicates that, in addition to the manufacture of new arms, the firm was employed in the repair and altering of old arms.²

After the onset of the war the firm obtained a contract with the State of Alabama for the manufacture of 1,000 U.S. Model 1841 "Mississippi"-type rifles. The first eighty rifles were delivered on 1 October 1863 and thirty were rejected. On 20 October 1863, fifty-two rifles were rejected and eight passed inspection, even though the price paid was raised from \$27.50 to \$35.00. The firm submitted sixty more rifles on 10 November with a price change to \$42.50, but only twenty-seven of those passed inspection. Efforts were made to improve the quality of the barrels and to strengthen the mainsprings, and on 2 December 1863, eighty rifles were submitted at \$45.00 each, only to have twenty-four rejected.³

Later, new terms were worked out in the contract,

and the price per rifle was increased to \$60.00, with the privilege of making carbines, some of which were made from rejected rifle barrels. On 16 September 1864, 680 rifles were submitted and only fifty-two were rejected. Subsequent deliveries on the 5th, 14th, and 26th of October and 7th of November, of 120 rifles and 100 carbines, were made with but twenty-four rejections. The state terminated the contract in November, but still received forty rifles and twenty carbines on 29 November 1864. According to a report of Duff C. Green, Quartermaster General of Alabama, up to 1 November 1864 the firm had delivered on their contract with the State of Alabama 882 Mississippi rifles and eighty-nine carbines. Following termination of the contract the firm was paid \$58,362.50 in inflated Confederate currency, and the workmen at the plant were turned over to the enrolling officer.⁴

Plates 2 through 4 illustrate a Davis & Bozeman rifle. The overall length is 49 inches and the barrel length 33 inches. The caliber is .59 (probably originally .577), and the barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. The front sight is a small brass blade $1\frac{3}{16}$ inch back from the muzzle. The iron rear sight is fixed and notched, and is positioned $2\frac{15}{16}$ inches forward of the breech. A bayonet lug $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in length is located $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches back from the muzzle. The distance from the muzzle to the front of the nosecap is $6\frac{3}{16}$ inches. The top left side of the barrel is stamped with the Alabama acceptance markings, "ALA 1864", in one line. The top of the barrel at the breech and the adjacent top of the barrel tang are stamped with "84". The underside of the barrel near the breech is marked with "L", and the underside of the barrel tang also is marked

with "L". A large "L" is penciled in the wood of the barrel channel. The lockplate is stamped "1864" vertically to the rear of the hammer. Forward of the hammer is stamped "D&B" over "Ala", in two lines. "274" is stamped on the inner surface of the lockplate, and "274" also is stamped on the inner or left side of the top portion of the hammer. The furniture is of brass. The nosecap and spring-retained barrel bands are of the U.S. Model 1855 style. The trigger is of iron and is unmarked. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction. Iron sling swivels are attached to the front of the triggerguard bow and beneath the front barrel band. The iron ramrod has a swelled tip $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in length. Small brass washers are about the heads of the bolts securing the lock.

Plate 5 illustrates another Davis & Bozeman rifle. The overall length is 49 inches and the barrel length is 33 inches. The .58 caliber barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves, and is finished in the bright. The front sight is a small brass blade located $1\frac{3}{16}$ inch back from the muzzle. The iron rear sight is fixed-and-notched, and is positioned $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches forward of the breech. A bayonet lug $\frac{9}{16}$ inch in length is located $3\frac{7}{16}$ inches back from the muzzle. The left side of the barrel near the breech is stamped with the Alabama acceptance stampings, "ALA 1864", in one line. The under surface of the barrel tang has three crude slashes or cuts, "///", and three similar cuts appear on the under surface of the barrel at the breech. Forward of these cuts appear a crude "X" and "33". A large "33" is penciled in the wood of the barrel channel. The lockplate is stamped "1864" vertically to the rear of the hammer. Forward of the hammer the lockplate is stamped "D&B" over "ALA". "406" is stamped on the inner surface of the lockplate. The flat, brass barrel bands are spring-retained. A small, crude "X" is marked on the

inner aspect of the triggerguard. The trigger is of iron. Iron sling swivels are attached at the front of the triggerguard bow and beneath the front barrel band. The heads of the bolts securing the lock are unmarked, as is the hammer, and it is believed that the hammer may be a replacement. The slender swell-tip ramrod also has a swelled area six inches back from the tip.

It is of interest to note here that Mr. William R. Williamson of Santa Barbara, California wrote the author a letter in July 1988, in which he noted that his mother's maiden name had been Bozeman. He also was in possession of an antique book that sketched the Bozeman family members, as well as the family's history. The book had been written by Mr. Williamson's great uncle, who knew David W. Bozeman very well. The narrative indicated that David Bozeman lived near Benton, Alabama, and later for many years in Coosa County. In 1853 he was beaten for the state Senate, it is said, only by the chicanery of his opponent. He became a representative in the Alabama legislature in 1861, and in 1860 he had been a delegate from Alabama to the noted Baltimore convention which had nominated John C. Breckinridge for President of the United States. After the Civil War he moved to Texas.

As previously noted, Davis & Bozeman were authorized to make carbines as well as rifles. Some of the carbines were made with tapered barrels; however, other carbines were made from rejected rifle barrels. Some such specimens have carbine characteristics in every respect except for the thickness of the barrel.

Plates 6 through 8 illustrate Davis & Bozeman carbine serial number "335". This carbine has a tapered barrel, indicating that it was originally made as a carbine, and that its barrel was not derived from a cut-down rifle barrel. This piece is shown positioned over another Davis



Plate 1. Cast metal plaque identifying the location of the Davis & Bozeman company.
(Courtesy Douglas E. Jones, from the collections of the Alabama Department of Archives and History)

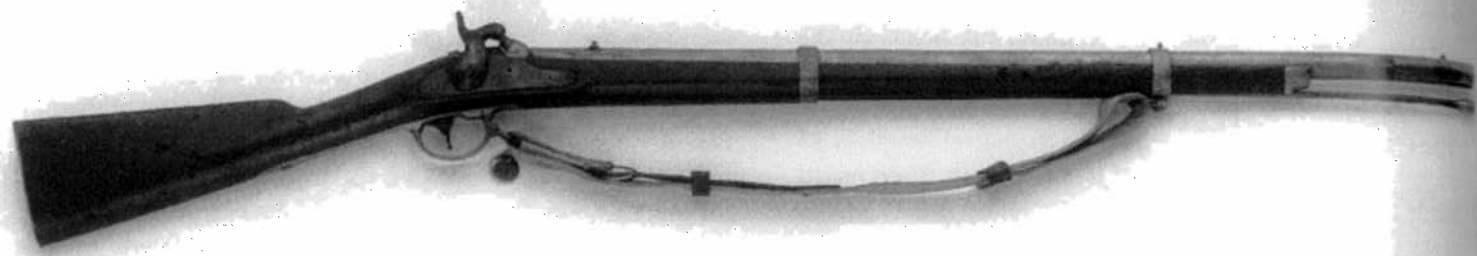


Plate 2. Davis & Bozeman rifle serial number "274"; right side.
(Courtesy Atlanta Historical Society, Beverly M. DuBose Collection)

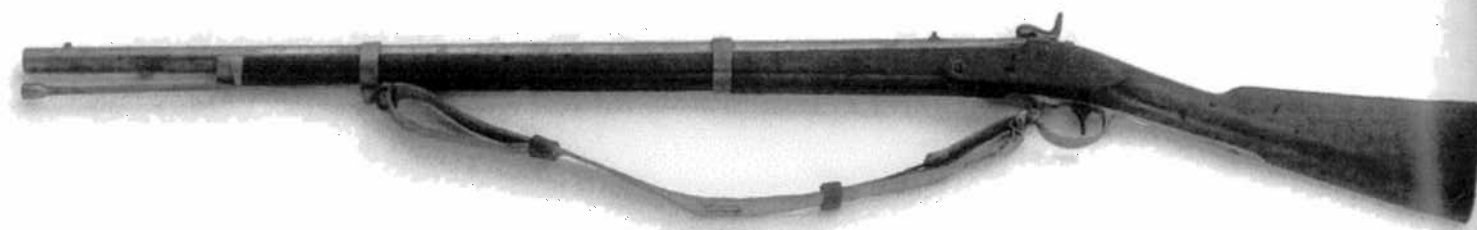


Plate 3. Left side of the rifle shown in Plate 2. (Courtesy Atlanta Historical Society, Beverly M. DuBose Collection)

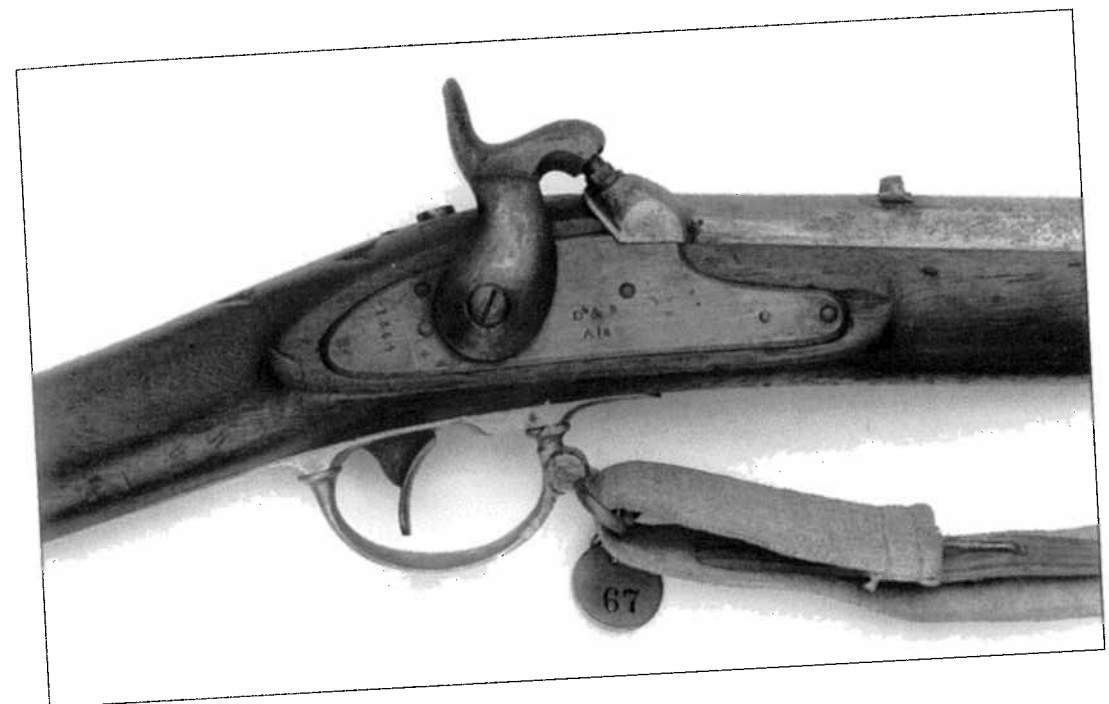


Plate 4. Close-up view of lockplate area of the rifle shown in Plate 2.
(Courtesy Atlanta Historical Society, Beverly M. DuBose Collection)



Plate 5. Davis & Bozeman rifle serial number "406"; right side. (Courtesy Virginia Historical Society)

& Bozeman carbine having virtually the same configuration and characteristics, but having its barrel derived from a cut-back rifle barrel. The lower carbine bears the serial number "15", indicating a very early production piece. From the characteristics of this piece it is felt that, even though a cut-down rifle barrel was used in its fabrication, the arm was intended to be a carbine from its inception and that it is not merely a rifle with shortened barrel.

Plates 9 through 12 illustrate a Davis & Bozeman carbine, which differs from the two previous carbines in that it actually is a cut-back rifle. The overall length of this piece is 39¾ inches and the barrel length is 24⅞ inches. The caliber is .54 and the barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. The left side of the barrel near the breech is stamped with the Alabama acceptance markings, "ALA 1864", which are partially obscured by pitting. Both front and rear sights are missing. The front sight slot is located 1¼ inch back from the muzzle, and the rear sight slot is located 3 inches forward of the barrel breech. The underside of the barrel near the breech is stamped "83", with a crude "X" forward of the number. "83" also is penciled in the wood of the barrel channeling. The barrel is quite thick at the muzzle and is derived from a cut-back rifle barrel (*see Plate 9*). The lockplate forward of the hammer is stamped "D&B" over "Ala". To the rear of the hammer the date "1864" is stamped vertically. The inner surface of the lockplate is stamped with "268", the "8" of which is considerably larger than the other digits. The upper, inner surface of the head of the hammer has a similar "268" stamping. All furniture is of brass. There are two flat, brass barrel bands. The rear band is spring-retained, but the front band is retained by friction. It is noted that the spacing of the barrel bands is similar to that seen on the longer rifles. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction. An iron carrying swivel is attached to the front of the triggerguard bow. The trigger is of iron. There is no carrying swivel beneath the front barrel band. The rear surface of the brass buttplate is straight. There is no nose cap, and the forward end of the stock is tapered beginning just ahead of the front barrel band, to terminate 2½ inches back from the muzzle.

Plates 13 through 15 illustrate another Davis & Bozeman rifle, serial number "898", that has been cut-back to make a carbine. The furniture is of brass, with rounded brass barrel bands of the clamping type, differing from the previous piece. There is no nose cap, and the front of the stock is rounded off about four inches back from the muzzle. The top left side of the barrel near the breech has Alabama acceptance markings, "ALA 1865". The serial number "898" is stamped on the inside of the lockplate and on the inner aspect of the head of the ham-

mer. This high serial number, together with the date "1865" on the lockplate and in the Alabama acceptance marking, indicate that this piece must have been made near the very end of Davis & Bozeman production.

PAYMENTS TO DAVIS & BOZEMAN BY THE STATE OF ALABAMA			
(Source: Alabama Treasurer's Records, Military Department Ledger, 1861-1864; Alabama Department of Archives & History)			
Date	Voucher	For	Amount
18 Nov. 1863	# 55	a/c of arms del'd. to Chief of Ordnance out of Ordnance Department by act approved Dec. 9th 1862.	\$ 4,857.50
29 Jan. 1864	#126	for advance on contract for arms out of Ordnance Department by act approved Dec. 7th 1863.	\$30,000.00
16 Sep. 1864	#204	in payment of their account for arms delivered out of the fund appropriated to the Quartermaster's Department by an act approved Dec. 7th 1863.	\$25,000.00
TOTAL:			\$59,857.50

FOOTNOTES

1. Albaugh, William A., III and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Arms* (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1957), p. 214.
2. Anderson, Cecil W., "Davis & Bozeman," in *North South Trader*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (Jan-Feb 1975), pp. 29-30.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Quoted in Claud E. Fuller and Richard D. Steuart, *Firearms of the Confederacy* (Huntington, WV: Standard Publications, Inc., 1944), p. 159; *see also* p. 175.

DAVIS & BOZEMAN RIFLES, AND CARBINES CUT-DOWN FROM RIFLES

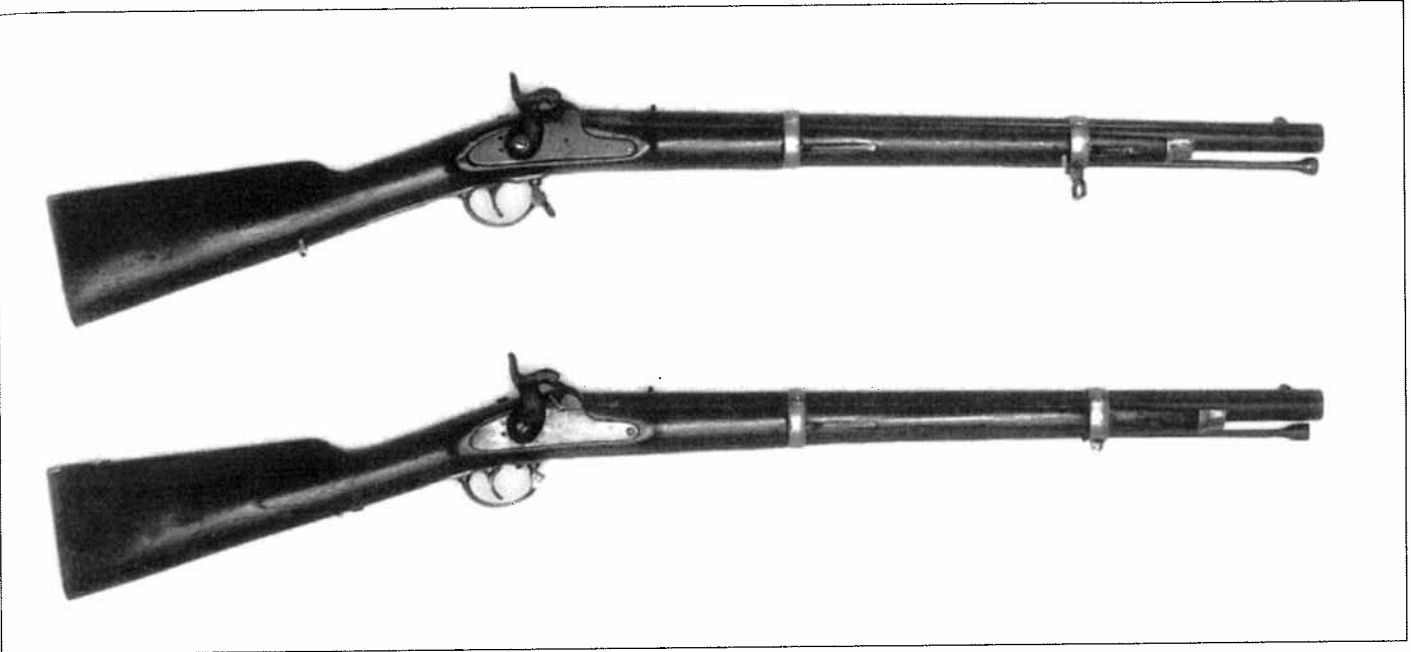


Plate 6. Davis & Bozeman carbine serial number "335", positioned over Davis & Bozeman carbine serial number "15"; right sides. (Upper, Dr. John M. Murphy Collection; lower courtesy Tommy Ritter, Jr.)

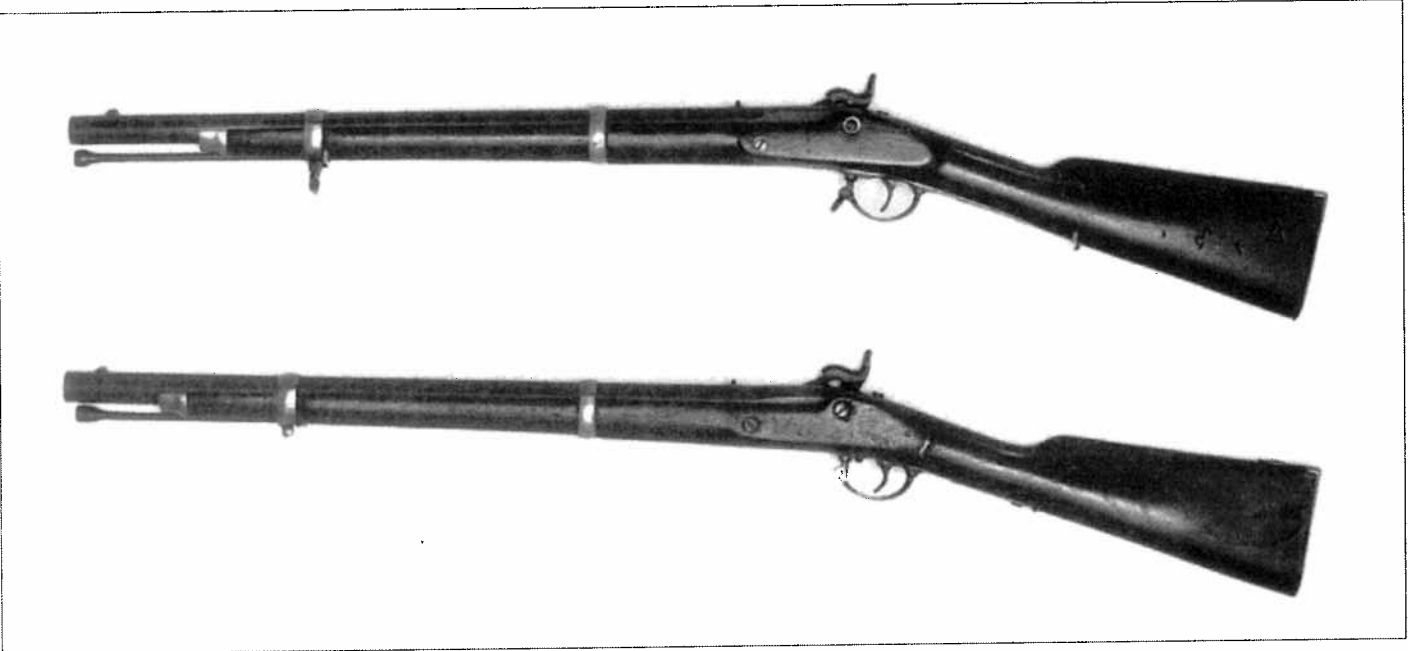


Plate 7. Left sides of the carbines shown in Plate 6. (Upper, Dr. John M. Murphy Collection; lower courtesy Tommy Ritter, Jr.)

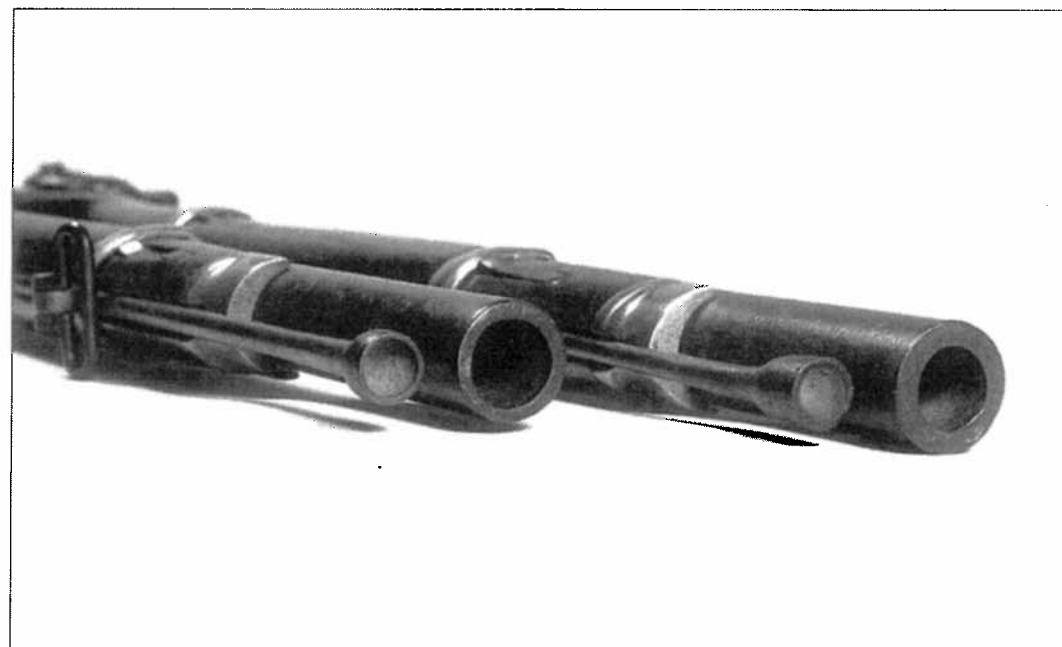


Plate 8. Close-up view of muzzle areas of the carbines illustrated in Plate 6, (serial number "335" on left, serial number "15" on right), showing relative thickness of barrel walls of carbine originally made as carbine (#335) versus that of carbine made from cut-down rifle barrel (#15). (Carbine #335, Dr. John M. Murphy Collection; #15 courtesy Tommy Ritter, Jr.)

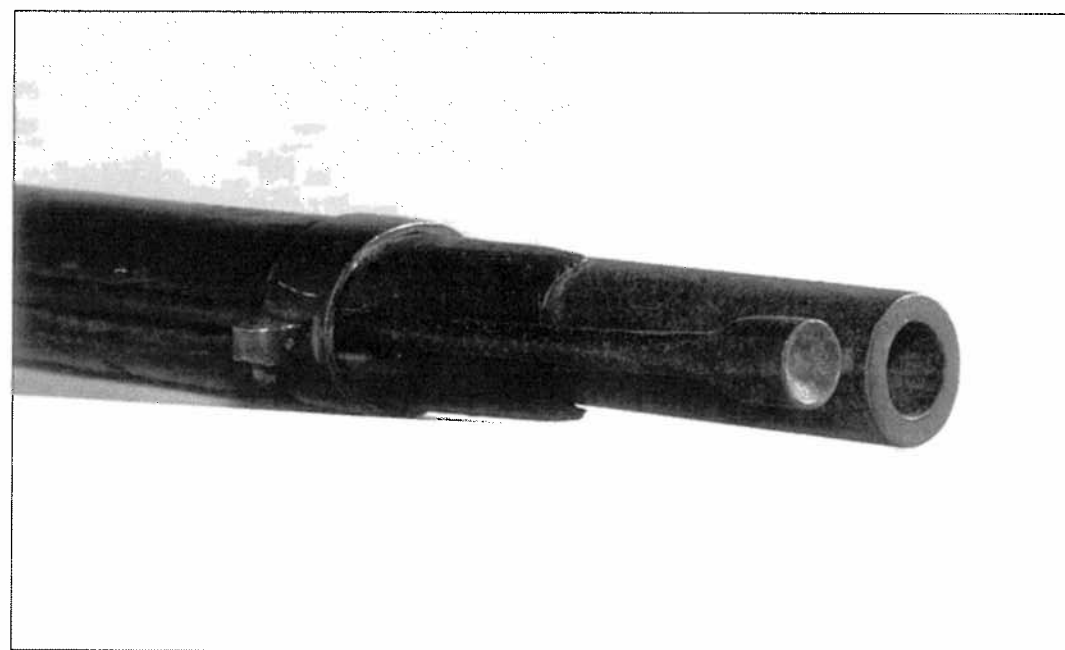


Plate 9. Close-up view of muzzle area of the carbine illustrated in Plate 10, showing thickness of barrel wall. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 10. Davis & Bozeman carbine serial number "268", with barrel derived from cut-down rifle; right side. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 11. Left side of the carbine shown in Plate 10. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 12. Interior of lockplate of the carbine shown in Plate 10. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)

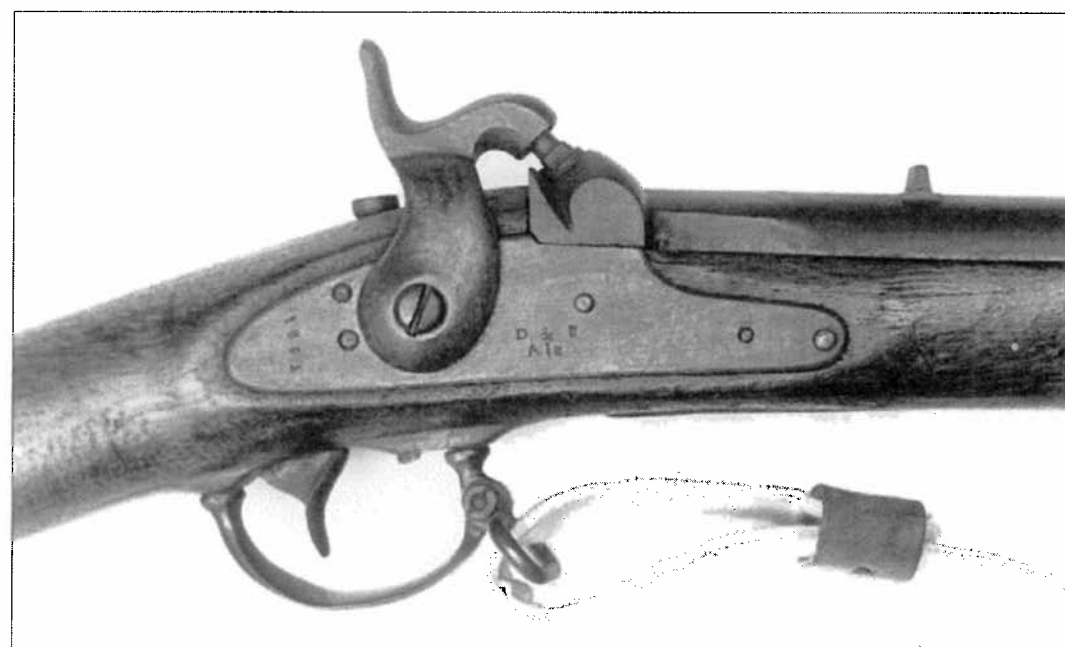


Plate 13. Close-up view of lockplate area of the carbine shown in Plate 14. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection, Richard Taylor Hill photograph)



Plate 14. Davis & Bozeman carbine serial number "898", with barrel derived from cut-down rifle; right side. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection, Richard Taylor Hill photograph)

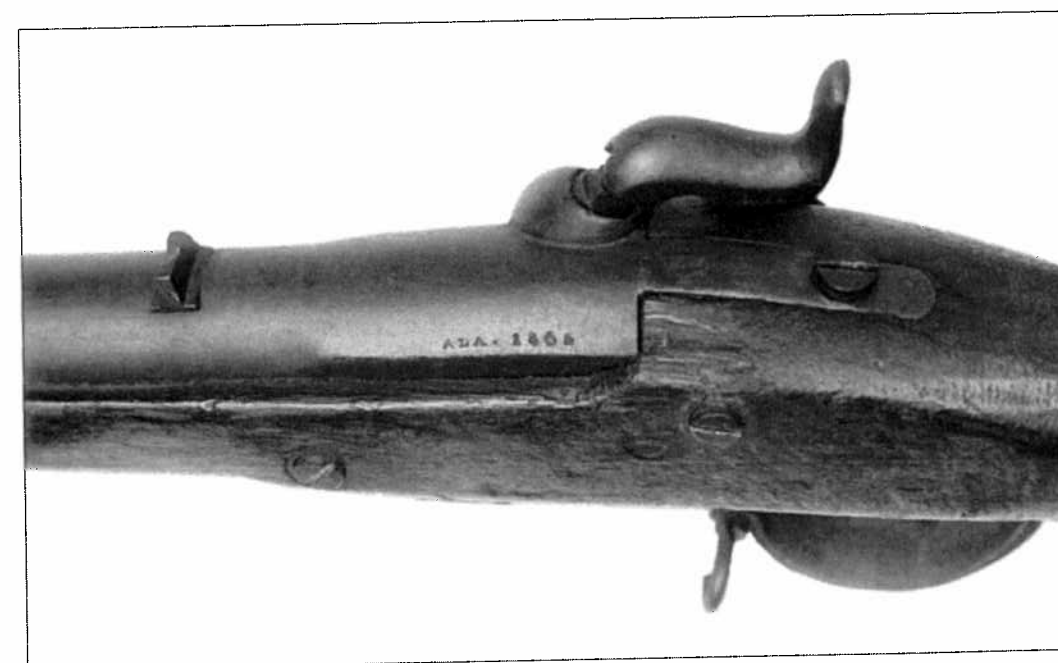


Plate 15. Close-up view of breech area of the carbine shown in Plate 14, showing Alabama acceptance stamping on barrel. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection, Richard Taylor Hill photograph)

Davis + Bozeman Carbine

SN 15

My carbine is 1 of 89 carbines made by the firm of Davis + Bozeman located in Equality, Alabama. The firm had a contract with the State of Alabama. The state's acceptance mark of "ALA. 1864" is marked on the barrel of my carbine. The carbine has an unusual barrel and is a very early production carbine. In the book Confederate Rifles & Muskets on pg 172 the authors state "The lower carbine bears the serial number "15," indicating a very early production piece. From the characteristics of this piece it is felt that, even though a cut-down rifle barrel was used in its fabrication, the arm was intended as a carbine from its inception and that it is not merely a rifle with shortened barrel." My carbine is attributed to Tommy R. Hen, Jr. in this book. My carbine is featured in Plates 6, 7 and 8 on pgs 175 and 176 in this authoritative work.

The SN 15 appears on the hammer and on the inside of the lock. Roman numeral "VI" appears on tang, barrel and tang channel.

I purchased this carbine from Don Bryan in 2000.

W. Paul D. By
12/8/16