

FIREARM INFORMATION SHEET

COLLECTION NUMBER: 9204

TYPE: Kentucky Rifle

IGNITION SYSTEM: Flint

LOCK MARKINGS/DECORATIONS: Engraved decorations on lockplate, hammer, and bridle.

DATE OF MANUFACTURE: 1925-30

PLACE OF MANUFACTURE: Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

MAKER: Jacob Ernst

LENGTH OVERALL: 56 1/2"

BARREL LENGTH: 40 1/2", swamped

CALIBER: .45

WOOD TYPE: Curly Maple - of outstanding quality

MOUNTINGS: Brass and silver. Beautifully engraved patchbox, lock bolt plate, and toe plate.

BARREL MARKINGS/DECORATION: J. Ernst (difficult to read)

STOCK MARKINGS/DECORATION: Beautifully relief carved behind and forward of the cheekpiece. Outstanding brass and silver cheekpiece inlay as well as finely engraved silver wrist escutcheon.

REPAIRS/RESTORATION:

HISTORICAL/ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE: This rifle's outstanding architecture, relief carving (the equal to Armstrong) and engraving show that in the waning years of the "Golden Age" outstanding guns were still being made by some gunsmiths.

PROVENANCE: Michael D'Ambra

PUBLICATIONS:

1) "Gunsmiths of Western Pennsylvania" Volume I, by Thomas J. Metzgar and James B. Whisker, page 90-91.

2) "Arms Makers of Western Pennsylvania", by James Biser Whisker, page 95.

COST:

ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE AND DATE:

GUNSMITHS OF WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

**Volume I
Thomas J. Metzgar
and
James B. Whisker**

Bedford, Pa., Old Bedford Village Press, 1988
second edition

Jacob Earnest [1805-1884]

Jacob Earnest was a grandson of "Indian Eve" Ernst of Bedford County, Pennsylvania. Her story merits repetition here. A few years before the Revolution Eve's husband was murdered by a roving band of Indians. She was taken into captivity and was kept until 1780, having been a captive about 12 years. While a captive she had a son Henry by one of the Indians. She was kept near Ft. Detroit and sold eventually to the British. After the Revolution she was exchanged, walking back to Pennsylvania to try to pick up the pieces of her shattered life. Henry was adapted to the Indian way of life and would have preferred to remain with them. One son, George, had escaped the massacre and was married to Elizabeth Samuels. Eve remarried, to her son's father-in-law. Henry moved to Westmoreland County, married and, on 2 January 1805, his son Jacob was born. {Emma Replogle, *Indian Eve and Her Descendants*, Bedford: privately printed, c.1905} Henry married Margaret Miller of Bedford County. {Jordan's *History of Westmoreland County*, 1906, III, 483}

It has been reported that Jacob Earnest's sister, Elizabeth, born in 1799, married gunsmith George Kettering. The latter had been an apprentice to George Biddle in Bull Skin Township, Fayette County, Pennsylvania and ran away. On 20

March 1821 Biddle placed an advertisement in the Uniontown *Genius of Liberty* stating that Biddle would pay a \$5 reward for the return of Kettering, his runaway apprentice. Kettering was not far away, living in Hempfield Township, Westmoreland County.

It is probable that Earnest learned the gunsmithing trade from Kettering. The association may have introduced Kettering to his wife; or Jacob Earnest to George Kettering. The geographical location was correct and the family connection emphasizes the probability of association. Their work is similar.

Jacob Earnest married Magdalena Shaffer, probably in 1826, since their first child was born on 23 April 1827. In 1830 or 1831, according to tax records, Jacob moved to Salem Cross Roads [or New Salem], Salem Township, Westmoreland County. He owned a lot, a house and a shop.

Jordan (I, 92) reported that Earnest was a wagon maker, undertaker and gunsmith. Jacob had a brother Peter, who had a son Simon Peter Earnest. The nephew was a gunsmith, probably serving an apprenticeship with the uncle.

Jacob Earnest had issue: John; Mary, wife of Andrew Baker; Sarah, wife of Henry Ridenour; Lydia, wife of William Walters; Margaret, married to John Wallace; Jacob, jr; Hettie, wife of Obediah

Blöse; Albert; and William; and two children which died in infancy. A son, Albert A. Earnest, lived with Jacob toward the end of Jacob's life and was a moritician. Jordan's history suggested that it was Jacob's influence that may have led Albert toward his career choice.

Jacob Earnest was one of the pioneer settlers in Salem Township, as clearly seen in the small size of early tax lists.

Jacob Earnest's grand-nephew, Simon Peter Earnest II became a physician and dentist and was the subject of a long sketch in Jordan's history, as was common for physicians in these 19th Century histories. Dr Earnest married Jacob's grand-daughter Louise Earnest.

Simon Peter Earnest sr, the gunsmith was twice married. His first wife was Mary Klingenschmidt, who died c.1869. His second union was with Mary's sister Hannah. Dr Earnest was born of the first union. {*The Old and New Westmoreland*, 1918, III, 237}

The Census of Industry of 1860 showed that Jacob Earnest employed one man at \$30 per month in his gun-making business. He had invested \$500 in his enterprise and in the preceeding twelve months had made or repaired guns and had grossed \$600. His raw materials included wood and iron and steel.

Jacob Earnest served two terms as a member of the town council, elected in 1839 and in 1842. He was elected to council again in 1870. In 1878 Simon Peter Earnest served on council.. [G.D. Albert, *History of Westmoreland County*, p.626)

Three death notices for Jacob Earnest appeared in the Greensburg *Evening Press*.

Mr Jacob Earnest sr of Salem died Thursday last. Mr Earnest was an aged and respected citizen.

[10 March 1884]

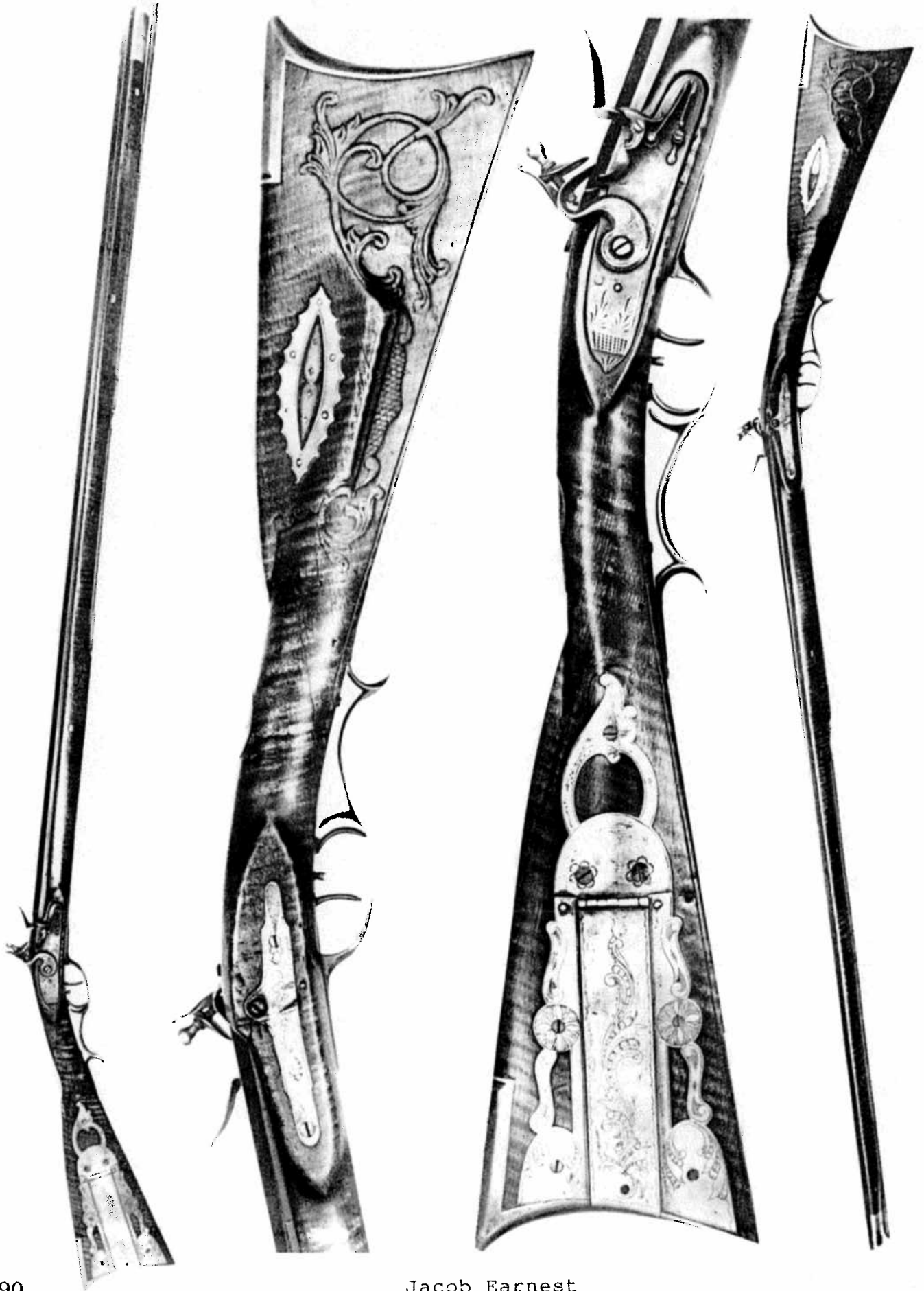
Delmont Doings: The death of Mr Jacob Earnest has taken from us an old and venerable citizen. Mr Earnest leaves many warm friends to mourn his demise.

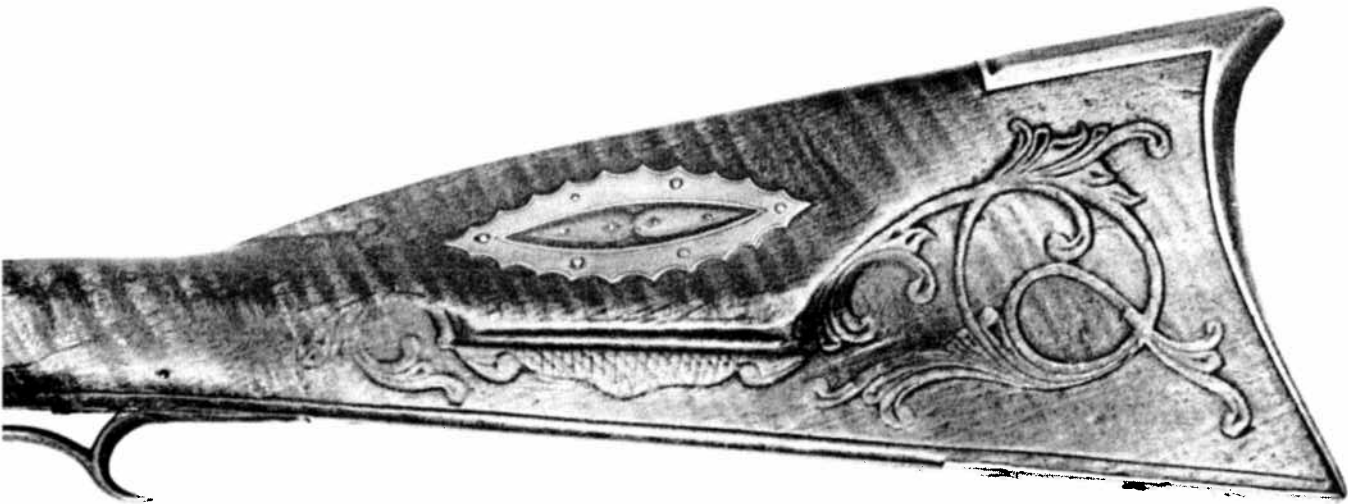
[11 March 1884]

Mr Jacob Earnest, one of our oldest citizens, died Thursday evening. Mr Earnest was in his usual good health until within a day or two. The Funeral will be held on Saturday at 10 o'clock. Mr Albert Earnest, son of Jacob Earnest, deceased, is lying very low with that fell destroyer of the human family - consumption.

[7 March 1884]

Jacob's will was dated 4 March 1881. He gave half of his brick house to his wife Magdalena and the other half to his son, Albert. He was buried at a cost of \$55. There were miscellaneous tools in the estate, but no gunsmithing tools. These may have been given to Simon Earnest while Jacob still lived.





FIREARM INFORMATION SHEET

COLLECTION NUMBER:

9204

TYPE:

Kentucky rifle

IGNITION SYSTEM:

flint engraved decoration on lock plate + hammer + breech

DATE OF MANUFACTURE: 1825-30

PLACE OF MANUFACTURE: Westmoreland Co. Pa.

MAKER: Jacob Ernst

LENGTH OVERALL:

56 1/2

BARREL LENGTH:

40 1/2" swamped

CALIBER:

45 cal

WOOD TYPE:

Curley maple - of outstanding quality

MOUNTINGS:

Brass and silver. Beautifully engraved patchbox, lock bolt plate and toe plate

BARREL MARKINGS/DECORATION:

J. Ernst (difficult to read)

STOCK MARKINGS/DECORATION:

Beautifully relief carved behind and forward of the cheekpiece. Outstanding brass and silver cheekpiece inlay as well as finely engraved silver wrist excitation

REPAIRS/RESTORATION:

silver wrist

HISTORICAL/ARTISTIC SIGNIFICANCE:

This rifle, outstanding architecture, relief carving (the equal to Armstrong) and engraving show that in the waning years of the "golden age" outstanding guns were still being made by

PROVENANCE:

some gunsmiths

PUBLICATIONS:

Gunsmiths of Western Pa. Vol I by Metzger + Whitten p 90-91
2 Arms Makers of Western Pennsylvania, by James Biser W. Fisher, p 95

COST:

ESTIMATED MARKET VALUE AND DATE:

