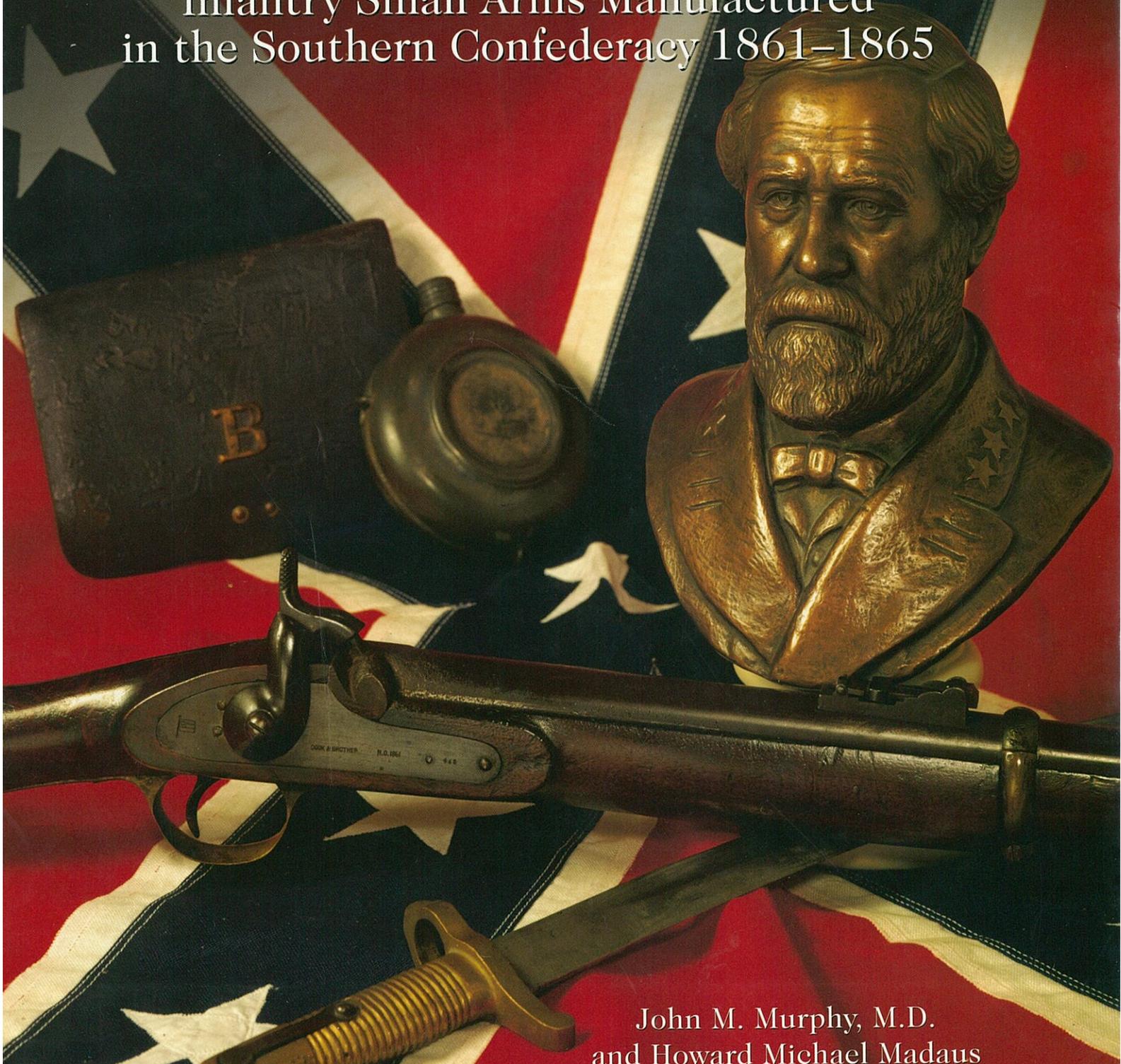


Confederate Rifles & Muskets

Infantry Small Arms Manufactured
in the Southern Confederacy 1861–1865



John M. Murphy, M.D.
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XXII.

Greenwood & Gray and J.P. Murray Rifles

ELDRIDGE S. GREENWOOD AND WILLIAM C. Gray operated a cotton warehouse in the South prior to the Civil War. On 17 January 1862 they purchased a sword manufactory from A.H. DeWitt in Columbus, Georgia, and at that location set up a rifle and carbine factory. John P. Murray, a skilled English gunsmith and mechanic, was appointed superintendent and master armorer of the plant.¹

At least a portion of the firm's longarm production was made under contract with the State of Alabama. Greenwood & Gray's deliveries of 262 "Mississippi"-type rifles and 73 carbines to the State of Alabama, during the period of 1 October 1863 until 1 November 1864, are documented in the 1864 report of the Quartermaster General of Alabama, Duff C. Green.² These rifles and carbines are distinguished by the state acceptance stamp found on the upper left surface of the barrel near the breech. This stamping consists of "ALA" and the date of receipt, usually "1864".

Less is known about John D. Gray, reported to have been a brother of William C. Gray, and who was in the furniture business prior to the war. With the outbreak of hostilities he also became a supplier to the Confederate Ordnance Department, and apparently established a plant at Graysville in northern Georgia very close to the Tennessee line, as well as participated in operations at an armory in Columbus, Georgia. It seems likely that this armory was closely associated, or in fact was one and the same, with the rifle and carbine factory in Columbus formed by his brother and Eldridge S. Greenwood.

In a 26 May 1862 letter to Colonel Josiah Gorgas, Chief of Confederate Ordnance, John Gray stated:³

I have in operation a manufactory of small arms at Columbus in this State and am now turning out about six guns per day— after the Harpers Ferry or Mississippi rifle pattern and will have two hundred stand on hand in a few days. I have commenced making guns without any contract with any party for the purpose of testing the practicability and cost of making guns at this time— and likewise to ascertain the number I could turn out in a given time. I am now prepared to make a contract for the delivery of guns either after the pattern of the Mississippi or Enfield rifle or English carbine, and by increasing my machinery and force I can turn out from five to six hundred per month, provided I can obtain a contract of sufficient magnitude to warrant my taking the risk and making the outlay, say, for the delivery of twenty or twenty-five thousand stand of arms. If your department is disposed to contract with me and will notify me, I will either visit or correspond with you on the matter.³

On 30 May 1862, in a letter to Captain Richard M. Cuyler commanding the Macon Arsenal, Gray provided a list of employees at his Graysville plant who he considered should be exempted from the conscription act, and indicated others at his armory at Columbus that he felt should be exempted as well. The reason for Gray's requesting exempt status for those employees was as follows:⁴ "I have a contract with the Ordnance Department at Knoxville— approved by the department at Richmond, for making two hundred rifles and one thousand carbines. This contract is to be completed in eight or nine months."

The two hundred rifles evidently were those referred to in Gray's letter of 26 May 1862. With regard to the carbine contract Colonel Gorgas initially had some hesitation; in a letter on 21 August 1862 he expressed those reservations to Captain Cuyler but gave his permission to close the contract. In further reference to that contract, Captain Edward B. Smith, assistant to the chief of ordnance in Richmond, on 1 October 1862 instructed Captain Cuyler as follows: "You will please send without delay to Captain F.C. Humphreys, Columbus, Ga. the contract entered into with John D. Gray with such information as may be necessary to enable him to attend to carrying out our said contract. You will send a duplicate of the contract to this office."⁵ Captain (later Major) Humphreys (also spelled *Humphries*) was the officer in command of the Confederate Ordnance Department and Arsenal at Columbus, Georgia. His inspection proofmark and initials, "PRO" over "FCH", appear on the barrels of the two hundred open-market purchase rifles and on the carbines of the Confederate contract. The name "J.P. Murray" also appears on the lockplates of many of the longarms produced by Greenwood and W.C. Gray, and by J.D. Gray. It also is known that Nathaniel D. Cross, an inspector at the Selma Arsenal in Alabama, was detached to inspect barrels produced at Columbus. His unique "windmill" or "Maltese cross" mark is stamped on the underside of many of the barrels produced in the Columbus area.

All J.P. Murray longarms are .58 caliber, and the barrels are rifled with three broad, shallow lands and grooves. The front sights are small brass blades, and the low-profile rear sights are fixed-and-notched. The overall lengths of these rifles varies between 48½ inches and 49 inches. The barrel lengths usually are around 33 inches, but there is considerable variation between pieces. The upper left side of the barrels near the breech (of virtually all carbines and rifles) is stamped "PRO" over "FCH", using moderately large die letters. These stampings are positioned parallel to the long axis of the barrel, and are upright when viewed from the left. Some rifles and carbines have brass triggers; others have triggers made of iron. The brass triggerguards are of two-piece construction. The rear of the brass buttplates of both rifles and carbines is straight. All brass furniture is of fairly heavy construction. Iron carrying swivels are attached to the front of the triggerguard bow, and beneath the front barrel band. However, on some carbines which have been made from cut-back rifle barrels, the carrying swivels were eliminated.

All of the carbines examined in this survey that were made from cut-back rifles had their front sights eliminated. The stocks are of walnut, and the inletting of the wood generally is crude and often shows the marks of the tools

used. The lockplates of rifles and carbines are found both marked and unmarked. Those marked are stamped forward of the hammer, "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA" in two lines, using very small die letters. Each line of the stamping is a unit, e.g., the letters are not individually applied. There are no other markings on the external surface of the lockplates. The internal surfaces of the lockplates are stamped with a number, which usually is repeated on the inner surface of the hammer, on the heads of the bolts securing the lockplate and the barrel tang, sometimes on the under surface of the barrel near the breech, and occasionally in the wood of the barrel channel. These numbers probably are the serial number of the arm, but may be assembly numbers. Both rifles and carbines have ramrods with simple swell tips, usually with cupping.

Rifles and carbines initially produced under the 1862 contract with the Confederate government have essentially similar characteristics. Both have brass barrel bands of the U.S. Model 1841 "Mississippi" pattern, spring-retained. The front barrel band is the double-strap type, with an iron carrying swivel attached to its underside. The flat rear barrel band has a forward-projecting lip on its underside. The brass sideplate also is of the U.S. Model 1841 pattern. The remainder of the furniture is brass.

The rifles usually are found having a Boyle, Gamble and MacFee bayonet adaptor, positioned 3½ inches from the muzzle. On the upper surface of the rifle barrels, about the same distance back from the muzzle, is found a number stamping which may have been intended to match the number of the associated bayonet. Rifles and carbines displaying these characteristics are designated Type I arms.

Later in the production of rifles and carbines under the Confederate contract, a change in the format of the barrel bands and sideplates was made. These rifles and carbines have a U.S. Model 1855-style, screw-fastened brass noscap and two flat brass, Model 1855-style barrel bands, without the forward-projecting lip on their undersides. They also have Model 1855-style, round brass washers about the heads of the bolts securing the lockplate. Otherwise, the general features and markings of these arms are much the same as described for the Type Is. Rifles and carbines having the above-described changes in characteristics are designated as Type II arms.

It must be noted, however, that occasionally Type II rifles and carbines are seen having early, Type I sideplates. Apparently, parts on hand were used until the supply of such parts was exhausted. These arms are considered transitional or "hybrid" types.

Still-later rifles and carbines, produced under contract with the State of Alabama, have barrels stamped with the Alabama acceptance markings. Stampings of "ALA"



Plate 1. J.P. Murray Type I rifle serial number "42", having marked lockplate; right side. (Courtesy Fuller Gun Collection, Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park)

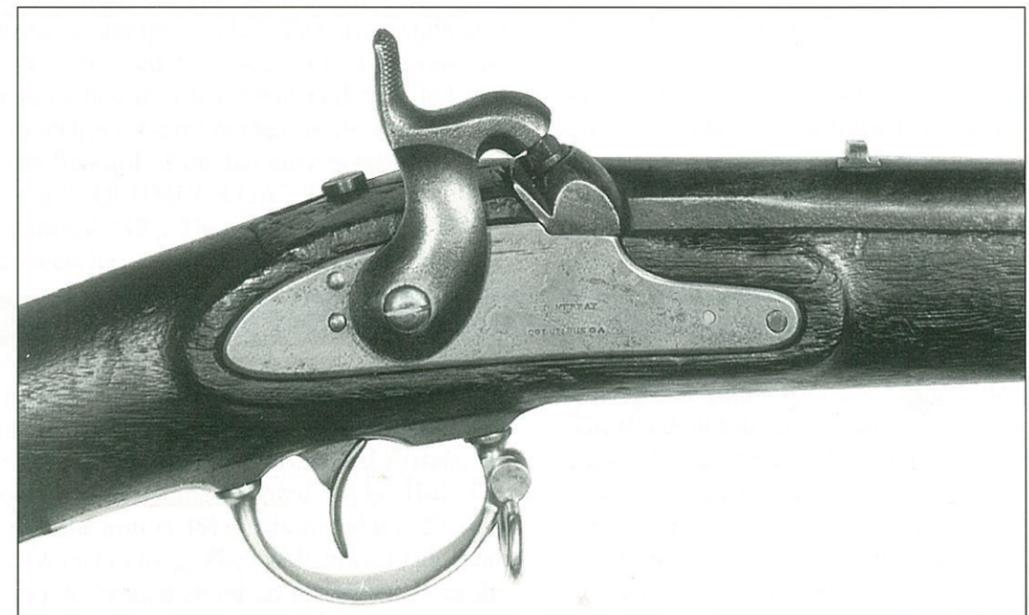


Plate 2. Close-up of lockplate area of the rifle shown in Plate 1. (Courtesy Fuller Gun Collection, Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park)



Plate 3. J.P. Murray Type II rifle serial number "87", having Boyle, Gamble & MacFee bayonet adapter at muzzle; right side. (Courtesy Charles L. Foster)

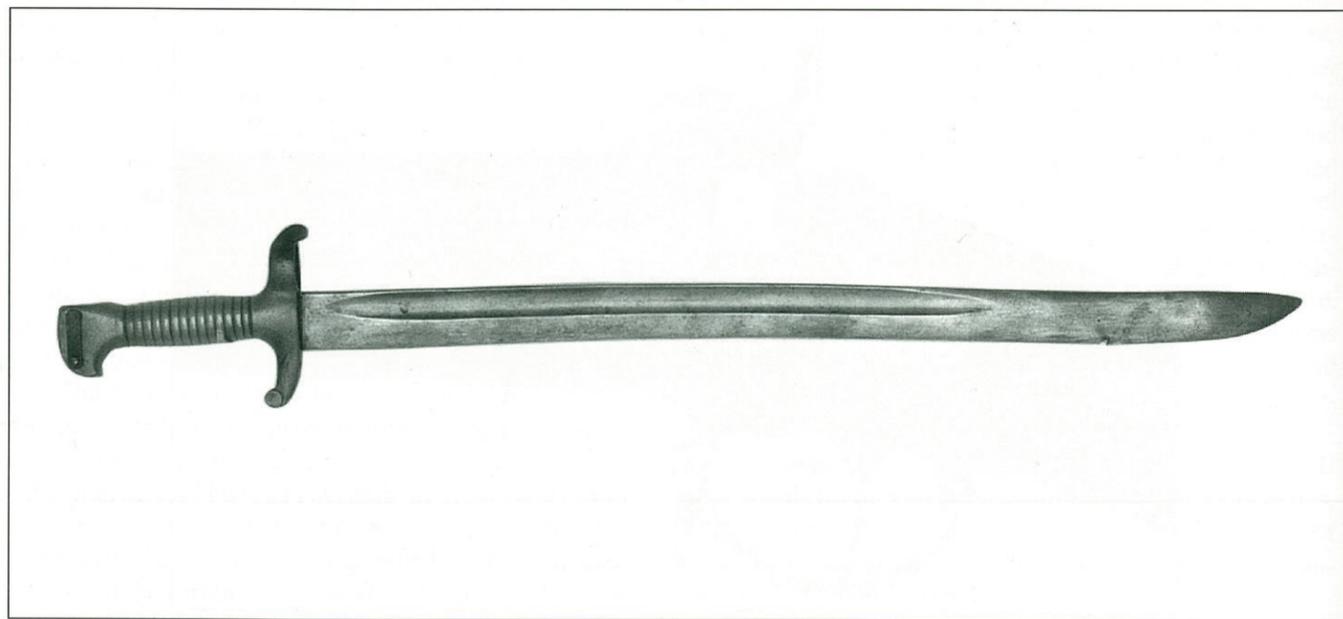


Plate 4. Boyle, Gamble & MacFee saber bayonet; right side. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)

and a date, usually "1864", appear on the upper left surface of the barrel near the breech, positioned above the previously-noted "PRO" and "FCH" markings. In the opinion of the authors, these later J.P. Murray rifles were not equipped from the factory with Boyle, Gamble & MacFee bayonet adaptors, and no numbers were stamped on the tops of the barrels such as are found on Type I and Type II rifles. Occasionally, a later rifle is found with a BG&M adaptor in place; it may represent the original use of a part on hand, or perhaps more likely, a later addition. Otherwise, the general characteristics of these later arms are much the same as Type IIs. Rifles and carbines having these characteristics are designated as Type III arms.

It is to be noted that similar Alabama acceptance stampings are found in the same location on the barrels of Davis & Bozeman longarms, and on a Dickson, Nelson & Co. carbine. It also is noted that these acceptance markings are made with smaller dies than the "PRO" and "FCH" stampings, and that the letters and numbers appear to have been individually stamped.

Plates 1 and 2 illustrate a J.P. Murray Type I rifle. The overall length is 48 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and the barrel length is 32 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. The .58 caliber barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. The furniture is brass and is of the U.S. Model 1841 pattern. The brass barrel bands are spring-retained; the front band is of the double-strap type and is located 5 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches from the muzzle. There is no bayonet adaptor with this rifle; however, scratch marks on the barrel 4 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches to the rear of the muzzle indicate where one originally was attached. The top of the barrel 3 inches from the muzzle is stamped "572". The front sight is a small, brass blade, located 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ inch back of the muzzle. The fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is dovetailed into the barrel 2 $\frac{15}{16}$ inches forward of the breech. The exterior of the lockplate forward of the hammer is stamped "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA". The interior of the lockplate is stamped "42". The upper left surface of the barrel near the breech is stamped "PRO" over "FCH". The under surface of the barrel near the breech is marked with a windmill-shaped armorer's mark, forward of "IV". The bolt heads are unmarked, and there are no marks either in the lock cavity or in the barrel channel of the stock.

Another J. P. Murray Type I rifle is pictured on pages 152 and 153 of *Confederate Longarms and Pistols*, by William Edward Anthony and Richard Taylor Hill. The overall length of the arm is 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the .58 caliber barrel is 29 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches long. The small, brass blade front sight appears to be located about an inch back from the muzzle. The fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is located approximately 3 inches forward of the barrel breech. A Boyle, Gamble & MacFee bayonet adaptor is attached

about 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches to the rear of the muzzle. The upper left surface of the barrel near the breech is stamped "PRO" over "FCH", but other markings, if any, are unknown to the present authors. The brass furniture is of the U.S. Model 1841 pattern. The front barrel band is the double-strap type, with an iron sling swivel attached to its underside. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction, with an iron carrying swivel attached to the front of its bow. The exterior surface of the lockplate forward of the hammer bears the typical stampings of "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA". The wood of the stock is walnut. The ramrod is a simple swell-tip type.

Plate 3 illustrates a J.P. Murray Type II rifle. The overall length is 48 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the barrel length is 32 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The caliber is .58, and the barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. A small, brass blade front sight is located 1 $\frac{3}{16}$ inch from the muzzle. The fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is located 2 $\frac{15}{16}$ inches forward of the barrel breech. The top of the barrel 3 inches back from the muzzle is stamped "513". A Boyle, Gamble & MacFee bayonet adaptor is attached 3 $\frac{11}{16}$ inches to the rear of the muzzle. The upper left surface of the barrel near the breech is stamped "PRO" over "FCH". The exterior of the lockplate forward of the hammer is stamped "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA". The interior surface of the lockplate is stamped "87" and "I"; "87" also is stamped on the inner surface of the hammer, on the under surface of the barrel near the breech, and in the wood of the lock cavity. The heads of the bolts securing the lockplate and the barrel tang are unmarked, however. The brass furniture is the U.S. Model 1855 pattern. The brass, screw-fastened noscap is located 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches back of the muzzle. The flat brass barrel bands are spring-retained. Iron carrying swivels are attached beneath the front barrel band and at the front of the brass triggerguard bow.

Plate 4 illustrates a Boyle, Gamble & MacFee brass-hilt saber bayonet.

Plates 5 through 10 illustrate a transitional J.P. Murray Type II rifle. The overall length is 49 inches, and the barrel length is 33 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches. The .58 caliber barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. A small, brass blade front sight is located $\frac{3}{4}$ inch back of the muzzle. The fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is located 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches forward of the breech. The upper left surface of the barrel near the breech is stamped "PRO" over "FCH", using fairly large die letters. The upper surface of the barrel 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches to the rear of the muzzle is stamped "640". The under surface of the barrel near the breech is stamped with the windmill or Maltese cross armorer's mark of inspector Nathaniel D. Cross. Two cryptic dots appear on the right side of the barrel at the breech. A brass Boyle, Gamble &



Plate 5. J.P. Murray Transitional Type rifle serial number "18", having marked lockplate; right side. Most of the characteristics of this rifle are Type II, but the sideplate is of the earlier Type I or U.S. Model 1841 pattern. Note BG&M bayonet adapter. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 6. Left side of the rifle shown in Plate 5. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 7. Close-up view of lockplate area of the rifle shown in Plate 5. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 8. Close-up view of interior of lockplate of the rifle illustrated in Plate 5, showing serial number "18" stamping. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 9. Close-up view of side opposite the lockplate of the rifle illustrated in Plate 5, showing markings on barrel breech and serial number stampings on bolt heads. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 10. Close-up view of underside of barrel of the rifle illustrated in Plate 5, showing "Maltese cross" marking of inspector Nathaniel D. Cross. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 11. J.P. Murray Type II rifle serial number "8"; right side. Note BG&M bayonet adaptor. (Courtesy Virginia Historical Society)

MacFee bayonet adaptor is attached to the barrel $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the muzzle. The furniture is brass, of the U.S. Model 1855 pattern. There are two, flat brass spring-retained barrel bands of fairly heavy construction. The brass noscap is located $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches to the rear of the muzzle, and is fastened to the stock by means of a screw. The rear of the brass buttplate is straight. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction, having an iron carrying swivel attached at the front of the bow. Another iron carrying swivel is affixed beneath the front barrel band. The trigger is brass. It is to be noted that the brass sideplate is of the earlier U.S. Model 1841 style, thus making this rifle a transitional or hybrid type. The lockplate forward of the hammer is stamped "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA" using typically small die letters, each line being a unitary stamping. The inner surface of the lockplate just above the mainspring is stamped "18", which is repeated on the inner surface of the hammer and on the heads of the bolts securing the lockplate and the barrel tang. The wood of the stock is walnut. A fairly large "P" is stamped into the stock beneath the rear tang of the triggerguard. A similar "P" is stamped into the stock just behind the rear tang of the triggerguard.

Plate 11 illustrates a J.P. Murray Type III rifle. The overall length is $48\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the barrel length is 33 inches. The .58 caliber barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves. A small, brass blade front sight is located $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the muzzle. A fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is located 3 inches forward of the barrel breech. A brass Boyle, Gamble & MacFee bayonet adaptor is attached $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches behind the muzzle. The upper left side of the barrel near the breech is stamped with the Alabama acceptance marking "ALA 1864", over "PRO". Any "FCH" mark on the barrel, if originally present, now is obscured by pitting in that area. The brass furniture is of the U.S. Model 1855 pattern. The two, spring-retained brass barrel bands are of fairly heavy construction, and their upper portions are contoured to fit the profile of the barrel. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction, having an iron carrying swivel attached at the front of the bow. Another iron carrying swivel is attached beneath the front barrel band. The lockplate forward of the hammer is typically stamped "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA". The heads of the bolts securing the lockplate and the barrel tang are stamped with the number "8", which likely also appears on the inner surface of the lockplate.



Plate 12. J.P. Murray Type III rifle serial number "24"; right side. It is believed this rifle originally had an unmarked lockplate. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)

Plates 12 through 14 illustrate another J.P. Murray Type III rifle. The overall length is 49 inches, and the length of the barrel is 33¼ inches. The .58 caliber barrel is rifled with three broad lands and grooves, and is finished in the bright. A small, iron front sight is located ¾ inch to the rear of the muzzle. A fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is located 3 inches forward of the barrel breech. The top left side of the barrel near the breech is stamped "ALA 1864" over "PRO" over "FCH", in three lines. The underside of the barrel near the breech is stamped "24", with "I" and "S" stamped at right angles to it. At the left rear of the breech "S" is stamped; "G" is stamped opposite, on the right side. The brass furniture is of the U.S. Model 1855 pattern, having a distinctive reddish tint to it. The brass nose-cap is screw-fastened. It is to be noted that the stock of this rifle is shorter than the other J.P. Murray rifles examined in this study, and that the nose-cap is located 6⅜ inches to the rear of the muzzle. There are two flat brass, spring-retained barrel bands of fairly heavy construction. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction; the rear of the brass buttplate is straight. The iron trigger is stamped "24" on the right side of the plate hidden by the stock. Iron carrying swivels are fastened beneath the front

barrel band and at the front of the triggerguard bow. On this particular specimen the lockplate forward of the hammer is marked "J. P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA" in what appears to be individually-stamped letters, unlike the usual single-line J.P. Murray stampings. It is the opinion of the authors that these markings are later additions by someone who hoped to profit by such spurious embellishment, and that the exterior of this lockplate as originally made was unmarked. Stamped on the inner surface of the lockplate and partially hidden by the mainspring is the number "24", which also is stamped on the heads of the bolts securing the lockplate and the barrel tang. It is believed to be the serial number of this rifle. The ramrod has a simple swell tip, with cupping.

It is to be noted that J. P. Murray carbines occasionally are found which actually are cut-back rifles. These arms were made that way at the factory, presumably from rifle barrels that were imperfect or otherwise unsuited for use with the longer arms.

Plates 15 through 18 illustrate two of these carbines, both of which were derived from cut-down rifles. The first piece pictured has an overall length of 40 inches, and a barrel length of 24¼ inches. The .58 caliber barrel is rifled



Plate 13. Left side of the rifle shown in Plate 12. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 14. Close-up view of interior of lockplate of the rifle illustrate in Plate 12, showing serial number "24" stamping. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)



Plate 15. J.P. Murray carbine serial number "7", made from cut-down rifle and having marked lockplate; right side. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)

with three broad lands and grooves, and is without a front sight. It originally was finished in the bright, but all exposed surfaces now are a deep brown color. The fixed-and-notched iron rear sight is positioned 3 inches forward of the barrel breech. The upper left side of the barrel near the breech is stamped "ALA 1864"; the numerals of the date appear to have been individually stamped. Below that mark appears an "H" clearly stamped, but no other markings (such as "PRO" or "FCH") can be discerned in the area. The underside of the barrel near the breech is stamped with an "S", and two slash marks "//". Both rear sides of the barrel are stamped with "S". The lockplate forward of the hammer is stamped "J.P. MURRAY" over "COLUMBUS GA", in two lines. The inner surfaces of the lockplate and the hammer, and the heads of the bolts securing the lockplate and the barrel tang, all are stamped "7", as is the iron trigger plate on its left side. The furniture is brass. The two, flat brass barrel bands are unmarked. The rear band is spring-retained and is in the same position as those on the longer rifles; the front band is held in place by friction but is located considerably lower than those on the rifles. The brass triggerguard is of two-piece construction,

having an iron carrying swivel attached at the front of the bow. Another iron carrying swivel is attached below the front barrel band. The rear of the brass buttplate is straight. There are small, round brass washers about the heads of the bolts securing the lockplate. The front of the walnut stock begins to taper just ahead of the front barrel band, and terminates without a nosecap $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches from the muzzle. The number "12" is penciled into the barrel channel.

The other carbine derived from a cut-back rifle is similar to the above piece, but it has no carrying swivels and the barrel bands are contoured to fit the barrel. The brass front barrel band has been reversed, so that the lower portion to which a carrying swivel ordinarily attaches is on the left side. As with the previous arm there is neither front sight nor nosecap, and the forepart of the stock is tapered in a similar manner. It is serial number "12".



Plate 16. Left side of the carbine shown in Plate 15. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)

FOOTNOTES:

1. Fuller, Claud E. and Richard D. Steuart, *Firearms of the Confederacy* (Huntington, WV: Standard Publications, Inc., 1944), p. 178.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 159, "Statement of Arms and Munitions of War Received from Contractors and Purchased by the Quartermaster's Department with Prices Paid for Same, from 1st October 1863, to 1st November 1864."
3. Letters Received by Richard M. Cuyler, Ordnance Office, Savannah/Macon, Apr.-June 1862, War Department Collection of Captured Confederate Records (record group no. 109), National Archives, chapter IV, vol. 36, p. 163, John D. Gray to Colonel J. Gorgas, 26 May 1862. The basis for the rifles that Gray was making is thought to have been a single sample "Harpers Ferry Rifle, 1 saber bayonet, [and] 1 frog" which were sent from the Richmond Arsenal on 10 January 1862 to Isaac J. Moses at Columbus, Georgia; see Ordnance Department, Invoice of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores Transferred by Military Store Keeper O.W. Edwards, Jan.-Mar. 1862, War Department Collection of Captured Confederate Records (record group no. 109), National Archives, chapter IV, vol. 108½, p. 27.
4. Letters Received by Richard M. Cuyler (fully cited in footnote 2), chapter IV, vol. 36, p. 136, John D. Gray to Captain R.M. Cuyler, 30 May 1862. Of the 200 contracted for, John D. Gray ultimately delivered 191. In July of 1862, 122 "Mississippi Rifles" were delivered by John D. Gray at the rate of \$45.00

each. On 12 November 1862 Gray received payment (\$5,490.00) for these, and also another (\$2,610.00 and \$135.00) respectively for "58 Miss. Rifles" and another 3 of the same, as well as 69 carbines. (In total, Greenwood & Gray would deliver 448 carbines under this contract.) See Confederate Citizens & Business File (entry no. 18), War Department Collection of Captured Confederate Records, National Archives; microcopy M346, roll 372, file of John D. Gray, vouchers nos. 41 and 42, paid 12 November 1862.

5. Circulars & Orders Received, Savannah Ord. Depot, Aug. 1861-Sept. 1862, War Department Collection of Captured Confederate Records (record group no. 109), National Archives, chapter IV, vol. 140, p. 190, Colonel J. Gorgas to Major R.M. Cuyler, 21 August 1862.

6. Orders & Circulars Received, Macon Arsenal, Sept. 1862-May 1863, War Department Collection of Captured Confederate Records (record group no. 109), National Archives, chapter IV, vol. 7, p. 10, Captain Edward B. Smith, Assistant to Chief of Ordnance, to Major R.M. Cuyler, 1 October 1862.



Plate 17. *J.P. Murray carbine serial number "12", made from cut-down rifle; right side. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)*



Plate 18. *Left side of the carbine shown in Plate 17. (Dr. John M. Murphy Collection)*