

WHICH CHRISTIAN BECK IS IT?

“CHRISTIAN BECK THE EARLIER OR CHRISTIAN BECK THE LATER” ... WHO BUILT WHICH GUN?

BY VAN PITMAN, KRA

That is the question I will begin to answer in this article, the first of a two part series. Part one will investigate Christian Beck the Earlier. You can pick up a rifle signed “C. Beck” and ask the owner which Christian Beck built it and you will normally hear the response, “Christian Beck the Earlier”, or “Christian Beck the Later”, which sounds more like a question than an answer. The determination being made based upon the definitions that Joe Kindig Jr. outlined in his book *Thoughts on the Kentucky Rifle in its Golden Age*¹. The next definitive work presented to the collecting community is Sam Dyke’s KRA article in the Fall 1981 issue entitled *The Beck Family of Gunsmiths, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania*. Using these sources as a foundation, I have begun a study to attempt to sort out the various Becks and which rifles they signed.

John Christian Beck III, or as Joe Kindig Jr. labeled him, Christian Beck the Earlier, was born in Lebanon, Dauphin County (now Lebanon), Pennsylvania on September 12th, 1787², as the second son of John Christian Beck Jr. and his wife Eva Margaret (Ritter). John Christian Beck Jr.’s first son was named John Christian Beck II, but died on September 2nd, 1781 at the age of 1 ½ of smallpox³. They had four other sons together: Tobias, George, David and Wilhelm, none have been identified as gunsmiths. The family genealogy is provided at the end of the article to help understand the family relationships discussed in this article.

John Christian Beck III, called in this article Christian Beck III, was raised in Lebanon while his father worked as a joiner, a powder maker and possibly as a gunsmith with his brother, J. P. Beck. When Christian III became of age to serve as an apprentice, the occupation chosen for him was gunsmithing.

APPRENTICESHIP YEARS (1800-1801 THRU 1807 - 1808)

There are no records of Christian III serving as an apprentice, but he should have started about 1800 to 1801. I believe, as did Joe Kindig Jr., Christian III apprenticeship was served in the Bonewitz shop in Womelsdorf, Berks county. This was during the same time that Leonard Reedy was working in Womelsdorf with John Bonewitz⁴. If you review some of Christian III's earlier signed rifles in the following photos, you can identify the characteristics directly linking him to Bonewitz shop. Review the photograph, Figure No. 1, of an earlier signed Christian Beck III rifle that still resides in the Kindig collection and compare it to the Reedy rifle show in Figure No. 3. The influence of Reedy's carving style and design is apparent in Christian III's rifle. One distinguishing difference between Reedy and Christian III is Reedy normally used, but not exclusively, a series of parallel lines in the infilling of his designs while Christian III used cross hatching.



Figure 1 Kindig's Beck Rifle #107 showing cheekpiece side carving.



Figure 2 Kindig #107 showing crosshatching detail.



Figure 3 Reedy's rifle showing cheekpiece side carving.



Figure 4 Reedy's rifle showing parallel lines detail.



Figure 5 Kindig's Beck Rifle #105 Butt Plate Extension Molding and Double Rivets In Patchbox Lid.



Figure 6 Reedy's Butt Plate Extension Molding and Double Rivets in Patchbox Lid.



Figure 7 Kindig Beck Rifle #105 showing Trigger Guard With Raised Platforms.

Another Womelsdorf feature that identifies Christian III with the Bonewitz shop is the use of a double rivet in the patchbox lid and the decorative feature of having a butt plate extension molding commonly referred to as a wedding band. These features can be seen in the next two comparisons of a signed Christian III rifle and a Reedy rifle, Figures # 5 and # 6.

The trigger guard, with its three raised half octagon platforms, one at the front base of the bow, another at the junction of the bow and rail, and the final one at the base of the rear spur, is another feature common in the Bonewitz/Reedy shop that was used by Christian III. This feature was used on Christian III's early rifles and also his later rifles made while in Franklin County. The comparisons between a signed Christian III and Bonewitz/Reedy trigger guards are shown in the next two photographs, Figures #7 and #8.



Figure 8 Two Bonewitz (Left) and Reedy (Right) with Raised Platforms.

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The final comparison is seen when reviewing the lock side plate. Bonewitz developed his own pattern of lock side plate and used it through his career, with Reedy following his teaching. The Bonewitz lock plate had a flat ledge and raised molding on the lock side plate forward bolt. The lock side plates of a signed Christian III and signed Bonewitz can be seen in Figure #9 and #10.

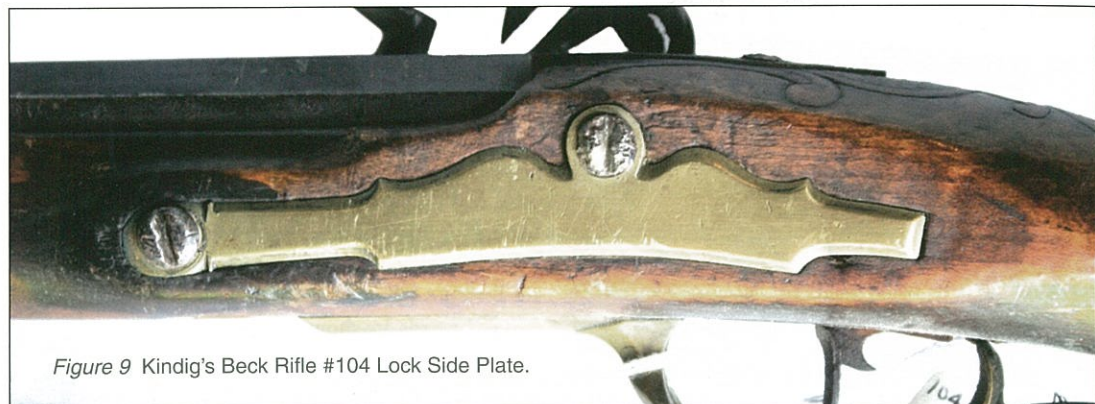


Figure 9 Kindig's Beck Rifle #104 Lock Side Plate.



Figure 10 Bonewitz Lock Side Plate.

I believe, using these features shown in the above series of photographs, it is clearly demonstrated that Christian Beck III was taught in the Bonewitz shop in Womelsdorf and his work can be singled out from other rifles signed "C. Beck". Christian III learned his trade so well there are times his unsigned work is difficult to distinguish from that of Leonard Reedy without close examination of the engraving and carving techniques.

STARTING A FAMILY AND A CAREER

Christian Beck III's apprenticeship was over in Womelsdorf no later than 1808. It was during this time that Bonewitz and Reedy were planning to move their shop to Pine Grove, PA. While Bonewitz and Reedy were headed northwest, Christian III decided to go southwest toward Franklin County. He didn't go, as once thought, to Jonestown, Bethel Township, Pa. There is a Christian Beck listed in the 1807 - 1811 tax roles for Jonestown but I don't believe it was Christian III.

Christian III's first order of business was finding a wife. In early 1809, at 21 years old, he married Magdaline Ahl, born February 6th, 1790 in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, daughter of Dr. John Peter Ahl, a surgeon in the Continental Army during the Revolution. Their first son, Samuel was born on December 13th, 1809 in Adamstown, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania⁵. I have been unable to locate any records indicating Christian III set up a shop or worked with other gunsmiths in Adamstown. However, there was a gunsmith by the name of John Hagí (Haga) who worked in Adamstown from 1800 thru 1809, as noted on the tax rolls⁶. At this time, it is impossible to say if Christian III worked with John Hagí during his short stay there.

Christian III's next move was to Roxbury, Lurgan Township, Franklin County, Pa., sometime in 1810, as their next child, Elizabeth, was born in Roxbury on January 22nd, 1811⁷. Christian III doesn't

show up on the Tax Records until 1813⁸. He is listed in 1813 and 1814, not reported in 1815, and continuously from 1816 thru 1821, occupation always listed as a gunsmith. During their time in Roxbury, Christian III and his wife Magdaline had seven more children, as outlined on the genealogy page⁹. He did not appear in the 1810 Federal Census but is present in the 1820 Federal Census in Lurgan Township¹⁰. Another reference to Christian III living in Roxbury, Pa is in the Pennsylvania Septennial Census taken in September, 1921 for Franklin County, Lurgan Township that also has him listed as a gunsmith¹¹. The Septennial Census, taken every seven years from 1779 to 1863, by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania enumerated potential taxpayers for the purpose of determining representation in the General Assembly. Unfortunately, only about eleven percent of these records survive today. They provide a valuable reference as the Census listed the taxpayers name and occupation.

Roxbury is a small town that sits at the base of the Blue Mountains below McAlister's Gap in the northern part of Franklin County. The village of Roxbury is situated on Condoguinet Creek and was laid out in 1778 by William Leepher who built a grist mill there in 1783. The town also had its own forge, called Sound Well Forge, built in 1798, followed by an iron furnace in 1815¹².

Roxbury was, in its early day, an important center for transportation, as many packhorses used the natural gap in the Blue Mountains as an access point to shorten the journey while traveling the Forbes Road to the west, toward Fort Bedford., or over the mountain to Path Valley. Path Valley was the area of Franklin County that developed a large iron making industry, established in 1783. The iron making industry was very labor intensive, requiring workers to harvest the hardwood



Figure 11 Kindig's Beck Rifle #104 Cheekpiece Side View.

forests for the making of charcoal, excavating the limestone and, of course, mining the iron ore. The Mont Also Furnace, built in 1807, had over 500 workers. Franklin County had over eight large furnaces¹³. This abundance of industry brought a large influx of workers to the area, all potential customers for a gunsmith. The furnace and forge provided a close source for the materials that were needed to make the rifles that Christian III built. It was, looking back in time, as good a place as any to start in business.

Christian Beck III's earlier rifles exhibiting his Womelsdorf training could have been made after he set up shop in Roxbury, or perhaps during the time he was migrating to Franklin County. The following rifles, all from the Joe Kindig Jr.'s collection, show his Womelsdorf training, and begin to exhibit his independent flair for carving, engraving and patchbox selection. I have included photos of his signature on the barrels to give an idea how it changed during his early years. The first two photos, Figures #11 and #12 are Kindig's rifle # 104, a signed Christian III rifle.

During his time in Franklin County, Christian III had to transition his design from the Womelsdorf School into building a rifle that was similar to the Chambersburg School, the style of choice for the area in which he now lived. When completed, he made some rifles that merged the styles very nicely. A signed Christian III rifle, from Kindig's collection #108, is a rifle that exemplifies this type of transition, shown in Figures #18 and #19. The architecture has completely changed but the Womelsdorf influence in his carving is still apparent. He has added checkering in the wrist, still continues to infill his carvings with crosshatching, and has developed his engraving skill in the nicely done bird finial on the patchbox.

Christian III lived in Roxbury, Pa. a little over a decade, and during

that time frame he must have made a large number of rifles. You see more of his Chambersburg style of rifle than any other. He didn't always make fancy rifles, as his later style was more utilitarian than his earlier work. The following signed rifle, from John Maiké's collection, is an example of such a rifle. It conforms nicely to Christian III later style of guns, and has the more common patchbox design you normally see in the Chambersburg area.

EXPLORING NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Whether it was the result of the general economic times caused by the Great Panic of 1819, or a local turndown in the iron industry, Christian III filed

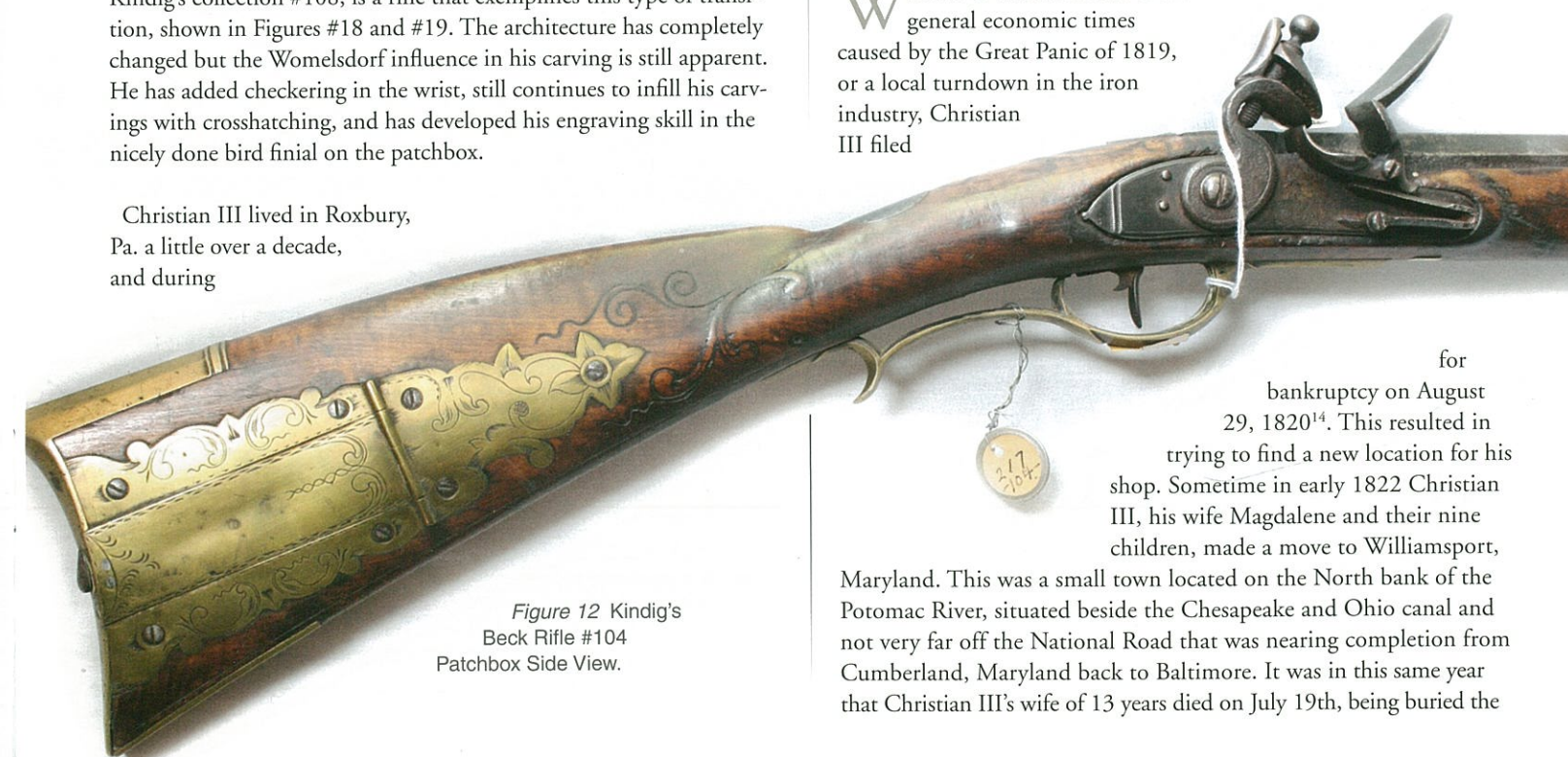


Figure 12 Kindig's Beck Rifle #104 Patchbox Side View.

for bankruptcy on August 29, 1820¹⁴. This resulted in trying to find a new location for his shop. Sometime in early 1822 Christian III, his wife Magdalene and their nine children, made a move to Williamsport, Maryland. This was a small town located on the North bank of the Potomac River, situated beside the Chesapeake and Ohio canal and not very far off the National Road that was nearing completion from Cumberland, Maryland back to Baltimore. It was in this same year that Christian III's wife of 13 years died on July 19th, being buried the

following day at Williamsport¹⁵. Two years later, on June 27th, 1824 Christian III married Mrs. Elizabeth Ensminger, a widow with four sons; John, George, Ludwig, and Philip. Elizabeth's first husband was Philip Ensminger, who died in 1820¹⁶. Christian III and Elizabeth stayed in

Figure 13 Kindig's Beck Rifle #105
Cheekpiece Side View.

The following three photographs, Figures #15, #16, and #17, are of the signatures of Kindig's rifles #104, #105, and #107. These represent Christian III's earlier work.



Figure 15 Kindig's #104 Signed On Barrel "C Beck".



Figure 16 Kindig's #105 Signed On Barrel "Christian Beck".

Gun Making Business

The suscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he has established himself in Martinsburg and has opened his shop in Henry Hatherday's house, on Market Street., where he is prepared, to carry on the GUN MAKING BUSINESS in all its branches. He will warrant his work to be substantial and his prices shall be agreeable to the times. He solicits a share of the public patronage.

Williamsport until 1827, adding two more children to their family, one dying before they moved again.

The next known location of Christian III is Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia). On April 27, 1827 he ran an advertisement in the Martinsburg Gazette and Public Advertiser¹⁷.

The above two rifle profile photographs, Figures #13 and #14, are a signed Christian III from Kindig's collection #105.



Figure 17 Kindig's #107 Signed On Barrel "Christian Beck".

Figure 14 Kindig's Beck Rifle #105
Patchbox Side View.

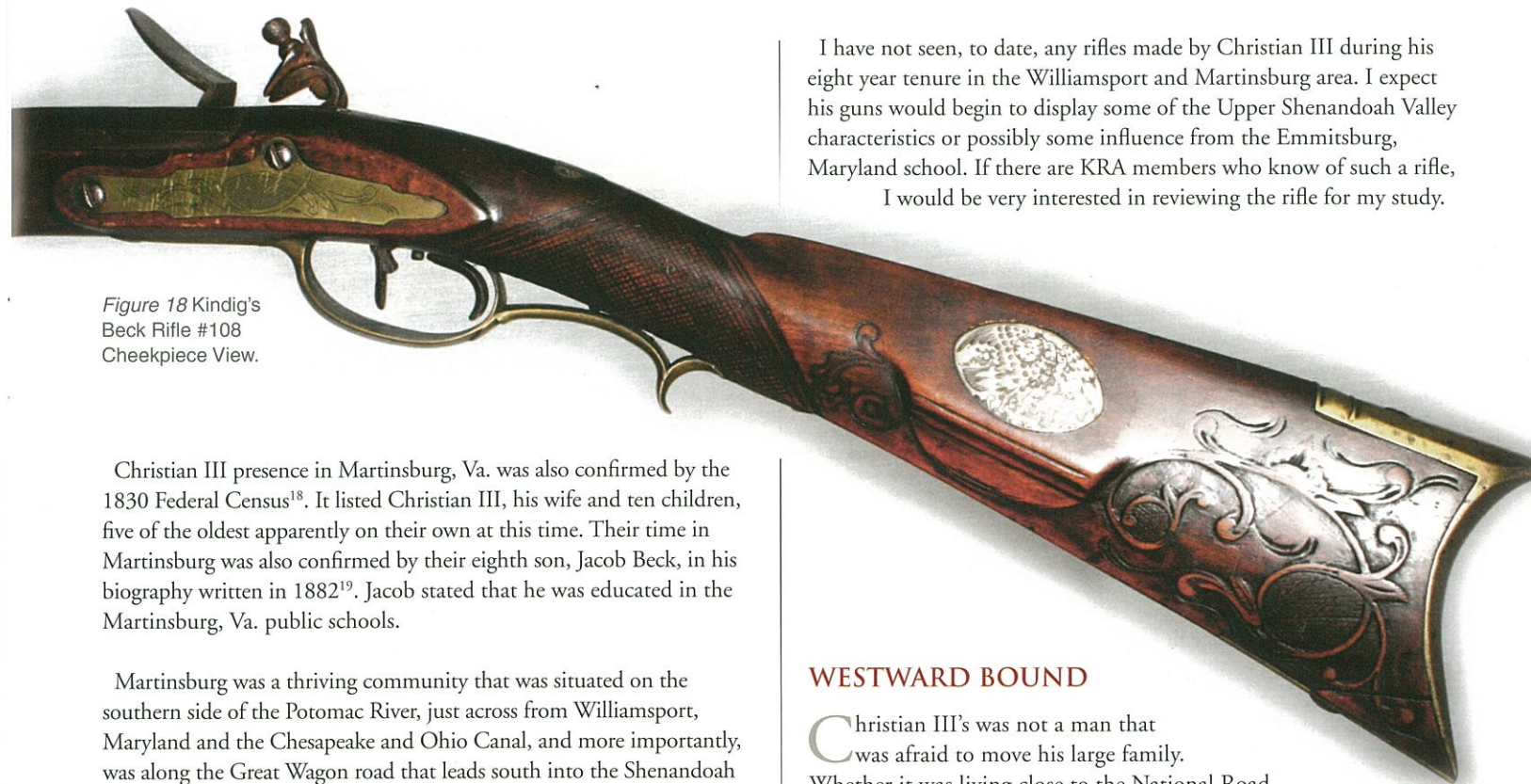


Figure 18 Kindig's Beck Rifle #108
Cheekpiece View.

I have not seen, to date, any rifles made by Christian III during his eight year tenure in the Williamsport and Martinsburg area. I expect his guns would begin to display some of the Upper Shenandoah Valley characteristics or possibly some influence from the Emmitsburg, Maryland school. If there are KRA members who know of such a rifle, I would be very interested in reviewing the rifle for my study.

Christian III presence in Martinsburg, Va. was also confirmed by the 1830 Federal Census¹⁸. It listed Christian III, his wife and ten children, five of the oldest apparently on their own at this time. Their time in Martinsburg was also confirmed by their eighth son, Jacob Beck, in his biography written in 1882¹⁹. Jacob stated that he was educated in the Martinsburg, Va. public schools.

Martinsburg was a thriving community that was situated on the southern side of the Potomac River, just across from Williamsport, Maryland and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and more importantly, was along the Great Wagon road that leads south into the Shenandoah Valley. This road carried a lot of commerce and travelers through the town. Using the address in the 1827 advertisement, I was able to locate the original house where Christian III set up shop, shown in Figure #24. It was here that he and Elizabeth had their third child.

WESTWARD BOUND

Christian III's was not a man that was afraid to move his large family. Whether it was living close to the National Road heading west, or the Great Wagon Road going south, the call to go west must have been strong. He was possibly being encouraged by his brother, David Beck, who had been working as a tailor in Connersville, Indiana since 1820 or Christian III's third son, Christian, who at 23 years old, opened a gunsmith shop in Connersville²⁰. Christian III decided to move his family to Connersville, Indiana sometime late in 1830 or early 1831²¹, remaining there till sometime in 1839, adding two more children to their family. There are no records of Christian III operating a gun shop in Connersville, but it is entirely possible he worked in his son's shop.



Figure 20 Kindig's #108 Signed On Barrel "C Beck".

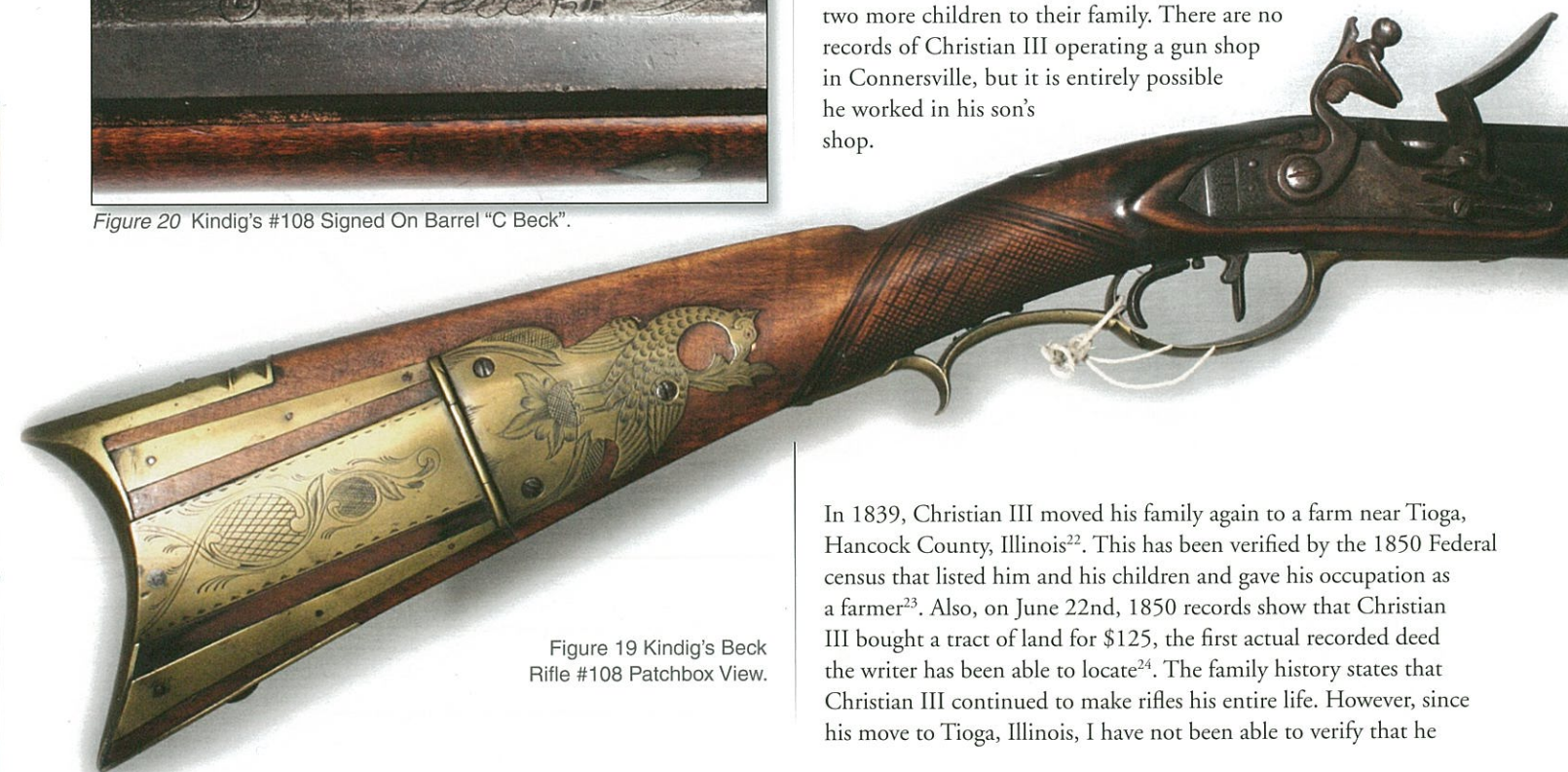


Figure 19 Kindig's Beck Rifle #108
Patchbox View.

In 1839, Christian III moved his family again to a farm near Tioga, Hancock County, Illinois²². This has been verified by the 1850 Federal census that listed him and his children and gave his occupation as a farmer²³. Also, on June 22nd, 1850 records show that Christian III bought a tract of land for \$125, the first actual recorded deed the writer has been able to locate²⁴. The family history states that Christian III continued to make rifles his entire life. However, since his move to Tioga, Illinois, I have not been able to verify that he

The following three photographs, Figures # 21, #22, and #23 are of Maike's Christian Beck III.

Figure 21 Maike's Collection Cheekpiece View.

continued in the gunsmithing trade. However his farm near Tioga would have provided a good location for a gunsmith shop. Tioga is just south of Nauvoo, an early Mormon settlement. The Mormons were forced to leave Nauvoo in 1846 and moved to Salt Lake City. Nauvoo was the beginning of one of the major routes for western migration, the infamous Mormon Trail that intersected with the Oregon Trail.

FINAL JOURNEY

Christian III wife of 38 years died September 19th, 1862. He then decided, at 75 years of age, with his children, to sell out and move to Oregon where his son, William, was now living. On April 16th, 1863, Christian III and four of his grown children headed west²⁵. After five months of travel, near the Snake River in Oregon, Christian Beck III died from reportedly eating poisoned salmon²⁶. He was buried in an unmarked grave along the trail, marking the end of a long career that

took him across the entire country. He kept working at his trade, along with farming, for over fifty years leaving a legacy of rifles for today's collectors. It is also interesting to note, on the genealogy page, that four of Christian III's sons worked as gunsmiths during their careers, following the example of their father.

Part II of this article will investigate the mystery of how many other "Christian Becks" are gunsmiths in the Dauphin and Lebanon County during the early 1800s. ❖



Figure 23 Maike's Collection Signed "C Beck".



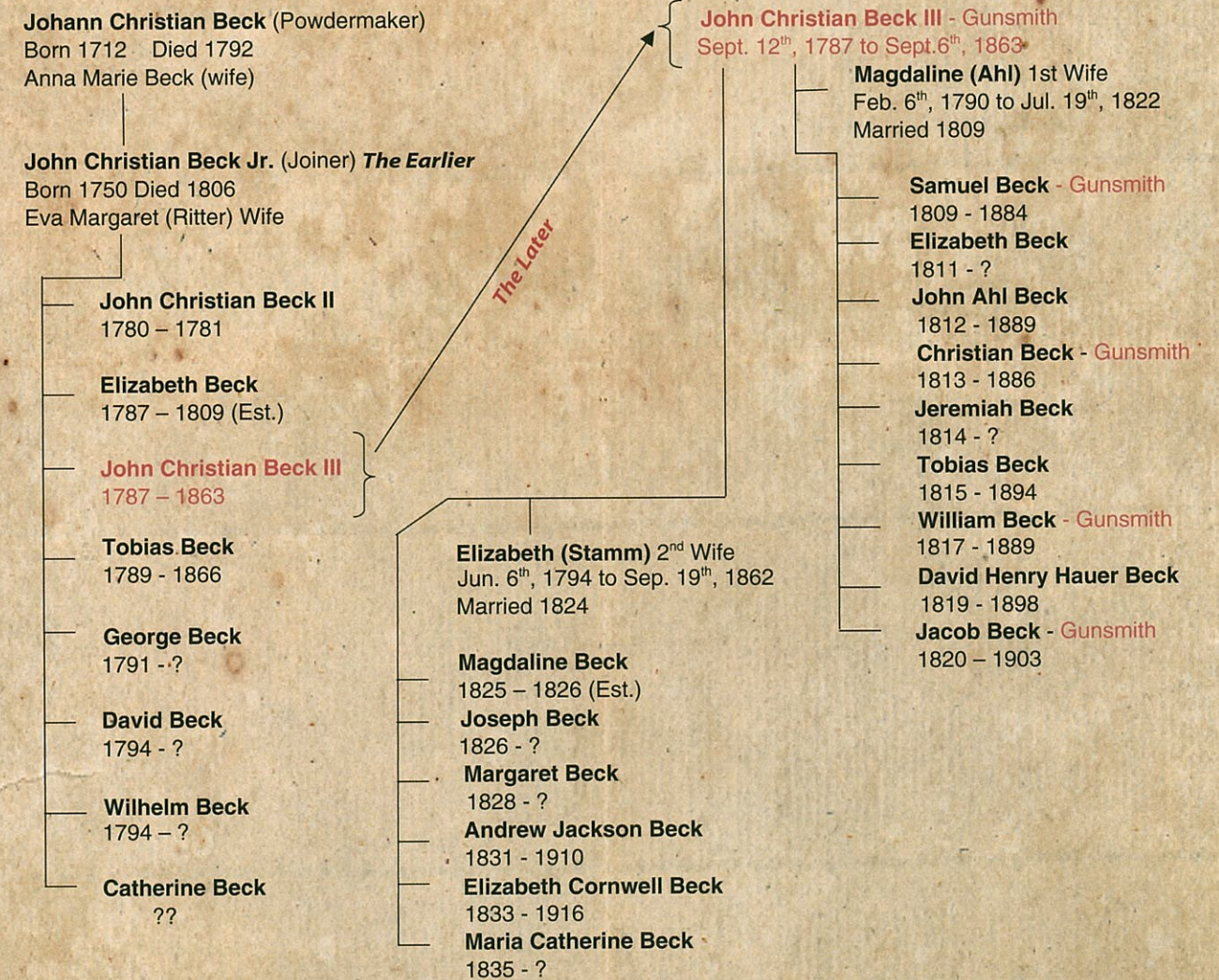
Figure 24 Christian Beck III Martinsburg, VA (now WV) In 1827.

Acknowledgements: I want to acknowledge the following people for assisting me with the research and especially for making their rifles available to photograph for study: Henry Bishop, Tim Hodges, Frank Kobilis, Tim Landers, John Maike, Bruce Moyer, Steve Potter, Fred Schry, and Mac Spencer, all of the KRA. Also, special thanks to Joe Kindig III and Jenifer Kindig for making available their time and rifles that allowed this study to be completed. It is greatly appreciated.

¹ Joe Kindig, Jr. (1960) Thoughts On The Kentucky Rifle In Its Golden Age. York, Pennsylvania: George Shumway Publishers.
² Salem Evangelical Church Records, Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Located in the Lebanon County Historical Society.
³ Ibid
⁴ Bishop, H. I. (January, 2010). Master – Apprentice – Master. American Tradition – Journal of the Contemporary Longrifle Association, Page 34.
⁵ Information from a German Prayer book owned by Christian Beck III and passed down thru the family and obtained from Link York, wife of a Beck descendant. All information has been verified by various sources.
⁶ Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa., Lancaster County Tax Records, Cocalico Twp., 1751 – 1838.
⁷ Same as Note #5.
⁸ Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa., Manuscript Group 4, Franklin County, Lurgan Township 1801 – 1830.
⁹ Same as note #5
¹⁰ Ancestry.com 1820 Federal Census (on line). Provo, UT.
¹¹ Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa. RG-7 Records of the General Assembly for Franklin County in 1821.

¹² Jacob Fraise Richard, Samuel Penniman (1887) History of Franklin County Pennsylvania, Chicago, IL, Warner, Beers & Co.
¹³ Stoner, J. H. (1946) Mount Alto Furnace Days, Franklin County Historical Papers, 541.
¹⁴ Bowers, W. S. (1979). Gunsmiths of Pen-Mar-Va. Mercersburg, Pa. Mercersburg Printing
¹⁵ Ibid Same as Note 5
¹⁶ Ancestry.com, Online notes from the Ensminger family, Provo, UT.
¹⁷ Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, WV. Martinsburg Gazette and Public Advertiser, April 19th, 1827.
¹⁸ Ancestry.com 1830 Federal Census for Berkeley County, Virginia (on line). Provo, UT.
¹⁹ Perrin, W. H. (1882) History of Bond and Montgomery County Illinois, Chicago, IL. O. L. Baskin Publishers.
²⁰ Barrows, F. I. (1917) History of Fayette County, Indiana. Indianapolis, Indiana, B. F. Bowers & Co.
²¹ Ancestry.com, Biography of John Christian Beck written by Jesse Glenn Beck in 1941.
²² Ibid Same as Note 21.
²³ Ancestry.com 1850 Federal Census for Hancock County, Illinois (on line). Provo, UT.
²⁴ Ancestry.com State of Illinois, Illinois Public Land Purchase Records (on line). Provo, UT.
²⁵ Ibid Same as Note 21.
²⁶ Ibid Same as Note 21.

Genealogy of John Christian Beck III - Gunsmith



Interesting Accoutrements

A POWDER MEASURE OF NOTE

BY RICH WAGNER



The engraving is arranged (as illustrated) into four distinct panels of symbolic iconography that define the owner: the initials personify the man; the date is significant to him; the flintlock rifle and stylized deer identify him as a hunter; the anchor and fish are testaments of his Christianity.

The upper half is boldly engraved. The lower half is carved with various shaped rings.

Carved and engraved antler, 5-7/8" long, 1/2" diameter at the mouth. Capacity: 43 grains. From the collection of Rich Wagner, found 30 years ago at an auction of an early Allegheny County, Pa. estate.

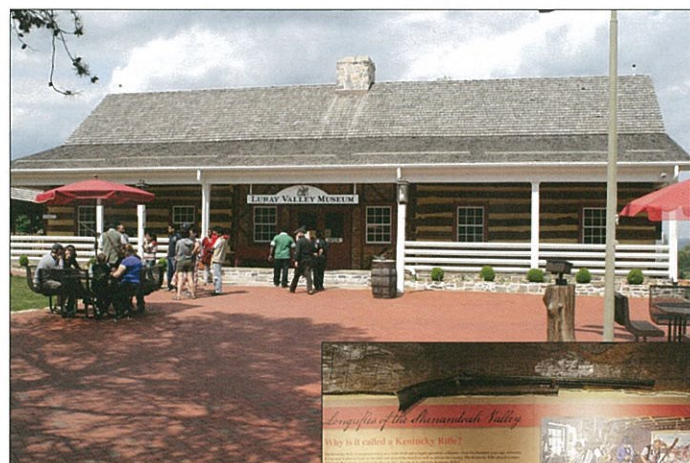


Shenandoah Valley Rifle Exhibit at Luray Caverns

BY MAC SPENCER

Your Kentucky Rifle Foundation climbed to another level in keeping true to its directive of educating the Public about the importance of the Kentucky Rifle in our American Heritage with long term exhibits.

Rod Grave's (KRA Member) family owns and operates the Luray Caverns in Luray Virginia. When the KRF Board of Directors were looking at venues for a new long term exhibit, Frank Kobilis approached Rod, and Rod did not hesitate to offer the KRF space in the Luray Caverns Museum for the Shenandoah Valley Rifle exhibit to run for six months.



KRA members and others contacted for loan of their rifles for six months.

The display opened on April 21st 2012 and will have been seen by 500,000 or more people from 60 countries that visit the Caverns annually. The exhibit closes Oct. 20th 2012, members get free admission to the Museum.

The Kentucky Rifle Foundation thanks Rod Graves and the Graves family for their support and assistance in making our first long term display a tremendous success. The Foundations next long term display featuring Maryland rifles is planned for the B & O Railroad Museum in Ellicott City MD with a National Road theme.

On very short notice Tim Hodges and Frank Kobilis started work on the project. Show cases had to be built to Foundation standards and

If you want to know what the Foundation has been doing visit our web site, www.kentuckyrifefoundation.org

Message from the President

BY BRIAN LAMASTER, KRA

The goal of your Board of Directors for the 50th Anniversary meeting was to celebrate this wonderful milestone. From the letters, comments and smiles, I believe we accomplished our mission. With a record attendance at the banquet to the great educational displays, it made for a weekend to remember. Thanks go out from me to everyone that helped make this happen.

All of you should have received a copy of the Anniversary DVD that allows us to view some of the folks that laid the foundation for the past 50 years. When you watch, this one thing is obvious, they are having fun. Every year I realize that the rifles are what bring us together in one place, but the building of friendships last year around.

The ground work is already laid for our show next year, the focus of the president's display and seminars will be on the rifles of the south. We are encouraging everyone to participate in the educational display program. These focused exhibits help expand our knowledge far beyond a photo in a book.

As we all know this is a very volatile time in the history of the world and our country. To live in a land that allows us the freedom to gather together in one location and enjoy a room full of guns is a blessing we should never take for granted. Our fore fathers that carried those remnants of history died to secure those rights for the generations to come. It is important that we all do what we can to maintain the Constitution and Bill of Rights that the KRA can celebrate its 75th Anniversary in the future.

When you look at the back of our money it still says in God We Trust, not in man.



The 2012 Educational Awards Program

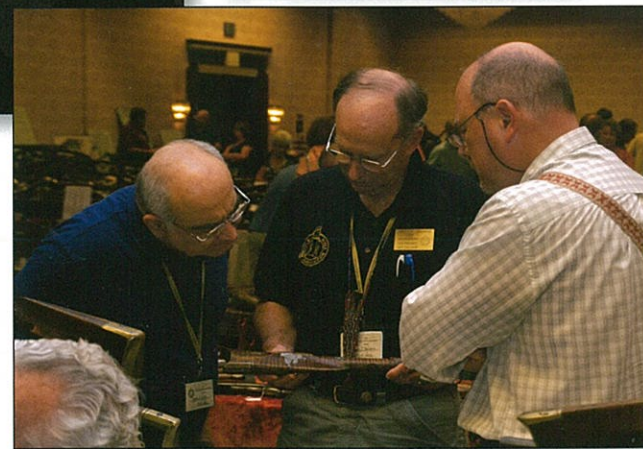
BY CARL LANDIS, KRA

The 50th anniversary Meeting of our Kentucky Rifle Association enjoyed another very successful Educational Awards Program. KRA member participation in educational displays remains at a very high level. There were a total of eleven outstanding educational displays, each of which received a very special 50th Anniversary clock award and a KRA acrylic Logo award this year. All eleven displays were treated equally as winners at this meeting. In their continuing effort to promote the Educational Display program our Kentucky Rifle Foundation once again covered the cost of one table for each display.

All display participants were honored and presented with their awards at the Saturday evening banquet. The award winners were as follows:

DISPLAY TITLE	MEMBER(s)
Lehigh/Northampton School of Gunsmithing	Ronald Gabel
Thaddeus Gardner and William Lamb and Sons	Michael Briggs
North Carolina Long rifles	Joe Byerly
Berks County Screw Tip Powder Horns	Joe Flemish and Tim Lubenesky
Samuel States Gunsmith	Lorentz Kafka
18th Century Long rifles and Associated Horns	Bill Vance
Two Becks	Howard Fundukian
Somerset County, Dunmeyer & Compton	Andrew Tisler
Bedford County	Fred Schry
Braddock's Defeat	Kenneth Hoover
Harrah the Dutchman for his decorated rifled gun	Robert Blemker

Congratulations and our sincere thanks to all these members who participated in this years Educational Awards Program. Education is the heart and soul of the KRA. Consider an educational display for our next KRA show in June of 2013.



50th Annual Meeting Agenda and Minutes

JUNE 24, 2012

Four Points by Sheraton North, Pittsburgh Pa. 17601

Meeting Called to Order@ 10:00 A.M. by President, Brian La Master with a Message of "thanks to everyone".

Pledge of Allegiance.

Moment of Silence by Brian La Master for: All of our Departed Friends.

Approval of the 2011 Annual Meeting Minutes as published in the Bulletin.

Motion was made by Gordon Barlow, Motion seconded by Lawrence Kafka. Motion passed Unanimous.

Treasurer's Report: Submitted by Ruth Collis, Administrative Assistant.

Report read by Ruth as presented to the Board Meeting.

Total balance = \$76,317.42 as of June 6, 2012. No Questions.

Motion to Accept Treasury Report by George Carroll second by T. Murphy, Vote Unanimous.

Membership Report: Submitted by Ruth Collis, Administrative Assistant.

586 members reported on record as of June 20, 2012. 25 New Members to be published in the Fall KRA Bulletin.

Detailed report on file with the Secretary and with Art DeCamp, Membership Chairman.

Motion to Accept by Rudy Gleichman, second by Denny Donharl, Vote Unanimous.

Educational Awards for the 50th Anniversary Meeting.

Carl Landis reviewed the award process and thanked the KRF for their contributions.

- Ron Gabel – Northampton - Lehigh School of Gunsmiths
- Michael Briggs – A Family of Gunsmiths, Thaddeus Gardner and William Lamb & Sons
- Joe Byerly - North Carolina Long Rifles
- Joe Flemish and Tim Lubenesky - Berks County Screw Tip Powder Horns
- Lawrence Kafka - Samuel States Gunsmith
- Bill Vance - 18th Century Pennsylvania Longrifles and Horns
- Howard Fundukian - 2 Becks
- Andrew Tisler - Somerset County
- Fred Schry – Bedford County
- Ken Hoover – Braddock's Defeat
- Bob Blemker - Hurrah for the Dutchman

Sergeant-at-Arms Report: Dave Geiger.

Dave reported that everyone was cooperative with security and security worked well this year. Roles will be more specific for next year.

The Ladies trip to the Cathedral of Learning Nationality Rooms and special Redware help and design for the gifts.

Brian La Master thanked Hank Nowak, Ruth Collis, Sharon DeCamp and Rose Donharl as well as Terri and Katherine Murphy for their help with these programs. He suggests e-mailing any ideas for next year to the KRA Board of Directors.



Kentucky Rifle Foundation Report: Mac Spencer Acknowledged Board members in attendance and summarized the KRF activity.

- Published "Horns of the Trade" by Art DeCamp
- 2 new books are in the pipeline with delivery in a year or two.
- The Kentucky Rifle Foundation is sponsoring a permanent historic exhibition of Virginia made Longrifles at the Luray Valley Museum, on the grounds of Luray Caverns.
- The KRF is working on an exhibit at the American History Museum, part of the Smithsonian in Washington D.C.
- New KRF Website is up and any suggestions should be sent to the Board. The Sale of CD's helps pay the way.
- Pre-Recorded Presentation available for computer thumb drive. Call the Board.
- The Wes White family has turned over all his research documents to the foundation.



Mac thanks all who contributed to this year's Presidents Display. Mac announced the 2013 Annual Meeting President's Display will be Southern Rifles.

Regional Show Report:

- 35th Tennessee Kentucky Rifle Show – Wayne Elliot - Will be held Friday and Saturday April 19-20, 2013, at the Museum of Appalachia in Norris, Tennessee (just north of Knoxville).
- 28th Annual Virginia Kentucky Rifle Show –Tim Hodges- Winchester, VA Hampton Inn October 26 & 27, 2012.
- Harrisonburg Virginia – Sam Koontz- 2nd week February 2013. Closed Show.
- 8th Annual Harmony Pa. Show – Rick Rosenberger – August 10th & 11th 2012.
- 15th Annual Bushy Run Show – Bill Vance – January 26th, 2013 New Location Colton Hall – Claridge, PA
- 6th Annual 18th Century Artisan Show – Art DeCamp – February 1st & 2nd. 2013, Lewisburg, Pa.
- 16th Annual Contemporary Longrifle Association Show and Meeting - Gordon Barlow – August 17th & 18th, Lexington Ky.
- 3rd Annual Eastern Pennsylvania Longrifle Show – Mac Spencer – September 14th & 15, 2012 Myerstown, Pa. 17067
- Rudy Gleichman took the opportunity to bring to the membership's attention the planned dedication by the The Historical and Museum Commission of a marker that will commemorate the Revolutionary War arms factory that operated at Hummelstown from 1777 to 1779. All members invited and the marker to be unveiled at 226 W. Main St., Hummelstown, at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, July 20, 2012.

Brian LaMaster Parting Words:

Brian thanked Ruth Collis and Helen Hodges for all of their hard work to support the show, organize and print the new membership directory, send the annual package and other activities during the year. Brian also thanked the Ladies who manned the show desk and thanked the members of the Security Company who did a fine job.

Comments from the Floor:

- Rudy Gleichman commented on the 50th Anniversary Banquet and Rudy request that all members give Brian La Master a "round of applause for a tough job" this year. All applauded.
- Brian asked for additional nominations for the 2 board members who are up for term renewal.
- No new nominations and the nominations are closed.
- Motion to accept; Stan Hollenbaugh second everyone; passed.

Brian La Master accepted motion to adjourn:

Motion Rudy Gleichman, second Gordon Barlow, pass unanimous. Meeting adjourned 10:58 A.M.

Mark your calendar now for the 51st KRA meeting to again be held in Pittsburgh, PA on June 21, 22 & 23, 2013.

Necrology

We are sorry to report the passing of several of our KRA members and friends. Jack Muhlenberg from Morgantown PA who joined in 1972, Dick Seelinger from Cuyahoga Falls OH who joined in 1969, David McEntire from Knox PA who joined in 1998, and Philip Cravener from Latrobe PA who joined in 2000. We offer our sincere condolences to all of their friends and families.



Buy, Sell, Trade

In answer to a number of requests from our members we have added this BUY, SELL, TRADE column to our bulletin. Until the volume of these items becomes a problem, we will include them free of charge. This column can not accept ads for items you would not be allowed to display or trade at our Annual Meeting.

FOR SALE: Kentucky Rifle sock type 76 inch padded gun cases for \$ 20.00. Heavy gun cases 72 inches long, padded with nylon liner, full zipper and luggage handle for \$ 50.00. Bore Lites, small LED size. Contact Sam Koontz.

Welcome New Members

The following candidates for membership were listed in a previous newsletter. No adverse comments having been received from the membership-at-large, they have been invited, and have accepted our invitation to join. We extend our congratulations and a hearty welcome to these, our new KRA members.

Candidate	State
Michael Henry Boyd	Georgia
David L. Donharl	Pennsylvania
Gregory E. Allard	Florida
Bill Hixon	Maryland
Steve Granitz	California
Helen H. Hodges	Virginia
Donald P. Cook	Virginia
Scott P. Gordon	Pennsylvania
Hilary Stanhope	Maryland
Ronald A. Campbell	Virginia

Prospective New Members

In accordance with our membership requirements, names of prospective members must be circulated via the newsletter to the membership-at-large for comments.

If no adverse comment is received within 30 days after their circulation, the secretary will automatically send the candidates an invitation to join our association.

Potential members who have been invited to join shall have 30 days to accept, after which time the invitation will be considered withdrawn.

I am pleased to list the following new candidates for membership along with the names of their sponsors.

Candidate	Sponsor
Jimmie B. Bowers	Tim Hodges
Roger Fleisher	Allen Martin
Eric Fleisher	Don Getz
Timothy D. Frederick	Sam Nolt
James D. Gordon	Milton VonDamm
Steven J. Hilberg	Kevin McDonald
John Kiselica	Rick Rosenberger
Ian Pratt	Frank House
J. Rex Reddick	H. David Wright
Linda Q. Ross	Tom Bucher
Joseph E. Seabolt	Frank House
Tim Williams	Steve Hench
Larry Young	Charles Heistand

With the Regional Shows

The Kentucky Rifle Association is not affiliated in any way with the planning or presentation of any regional longrifle gun show. Neither the name Kentucky Rifle Association nor any of that association's logos may be used in any form in connection with any regional show.

20th ANNUAL VIRGINIA, MARYLAND, WEST VIRGINIA KENTUCKY RIFLE SHOW – Will be held at the Holiday Inn at Harrisonburg, VA Friday and Saturday February 15th and 16th, 2013. The show will be held in the Grand Ballroom. All KRA and CLA members and guests are invited to attend. Contact Sam Koontz at 540-828-2971 for details.

PRARIE STATE LONGRIFLE SHOW – will be held at the Days Inn, Princeton Illinois on February 22nd and 23rd, 2013. Kentuckies in all their various forms and related articles of the period are permitted. Modern hand crafted Kentuckies are welcome if signed by their maker. If you have a musical instrument you are, as always, invited to bring it along for some pickin 'n' grinning sessions. Call Curt Johnson 1-815-699-7790 for details.

ANNUAL TENNESSEE KENTUCKY RIFLE SHOW – will be held April 19th and 20th, 2013 at the Museum of Appalachia in Clinton, Tennessee. Muzzleloaders and related Accouterments only. Contact Wayne Elliott 1-770-823-2970 or welaw@mindspring.com for details..

6th ANNUAL SOUTHERN ARMS & CRAFTS SHOW – will be held March 22nd and 23rd, 2013 at the Holiday Inn Patriot Hotel in Williamsburg Virginia. Contact Dennis Glazener at 1-804-794-4863 or tdg23113@verizon.net for details.

THE 15th ANNUAL BUSHY RUN SHOW – will be held at the Claridge PA Volunteer Firemen's "Colton Hall" January 26th with set up Friday the 25th, 2012. Colton Hall is a short distance from Bushy Run Park off Route 993 in downtown Claridge. Snow dates are February 8th and 9th 2012. For additional information contact Bill Vance at his address in the KRA directory.

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Membership	Art DeCamp
Bulletin Editor	Ronald G. Gabel
Bulletin Layout/Design	Kevin J. McDonald
Archivist	Ronald G. Gabel
Administrative Assistant	Ruth Collis
Gunroom Security	David Geiger
Awards	Carl Landis
KRA Foundation President	Mac Spencer

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WHICH CHRISTIAN BECK IS IT?

PART II

BY VAN PITMAN, KRA

In Part I, the Fall 2012 KRA Bulletin, I examined the life of Christian Beck III, or as Kindig called this gunsmith¹, Christian Beck the Later. His career path started with his apprenticeship in Womelsdorf, Pennsylvania, continued as a master gunsmith in

Roxbury,
Franklin County, PA,
Williamsport, MD, Martinsburg,
VA, and finally the Western frontier. His
journey did not take him to Jonestown, Dauphin
County, Pennsylvania where another Christian Beck is listed
as a gunsmith in the 1807 and 1811 Triennial Assessments
of Dauphin County².

This article, Part II, will investigate this Christian Beck of
Jonestown and the rifles he made then conclude this series
by examining Christian Beck Jr., also known as Christian
Beck the Earlier³.

THE DISCOVERY

A closer examination of all the Dauphin County
(established 1785) tax rolls reveals that Christian Beck of
Jonestown was listed continuously from 1807 thru 1813 in
the Bethel Township Returns⁴. In 1813 Lebanon County

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*Christian Beck of Jonestown from
Bruce Moyer's collection*



was created from Dauphin County, which included this area of study. Unfortunately, the tax rolls of Lebanon County were lost from its date of creation until the early 1840's. While working at the Lebanon County Historical Society a single tax record for the year 1825 for the Jonestown area was uncovered revealing that Christian Beck was still working in Jonestown. A search of the local church records was initiated to find more evidence of his stay at Jonestown.

The records of the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jonestown did reveal that Christian Beck's wife was Ann (Mason) Beck and they produced eight children whose births were recorded in the church records spanning from 1810 thru 1827⁵. The exciting part of discovering Christian's wife name was that while researching for the first article, Part I, I found in the Salem Lutheran Church of Lebanon records John Philip Beck, the famous gunsmith of Lebanon, Pa, had a son, Christian, who married Anna Mason on July 20th, 1806⁶. This evidence now firmly linked Christian Beck of Jonestown as the son of J. P. Beck.

THE EVIDENCE

Christian Beck of Jonestown's father, John Philip Beck, known as J. P. Beck, is the second son of Johann Christian Beck Sr. a powder maker. J. P. Beck was born in 1751 and died in October, 1811. He worked as a gunsmith in Lebanon, Pa. from the Revolutionary War until his death in 1811. He had eight children by his first wife, Anna Maria (Lauk) of which four were sons. Two of the sons, Samuel and Emanuel, births are recorded in the Salem church records⁷. John Philip Beck Jr., the eldest son, is recorded in the burials section of the church records. Christian is referenced, as stated above, in the marriage records, having John Philip Beck as his witness to Christian's marriage. The family genealogy is provided at the end of the article to help the reader understand the family relationships discussed.

The next reference linking Christian Beck of Jonestown to J. P. Beck can be found in a book written by R. H. Koch, a grandson of Emanuel Beck. In the book Mr. Koch was discussing his interview with Emanuel Beck, J. P. Beck's youngest son, the family lineage and history. During the discussion in 1874 Emanuel stated he had a brother named Christian⁸.

The last family references are after J. P. Beck's death in 1811. In 1813, Leonard Greenawalt and Henry Kelker, executors, filed with the Orphan's Court of Dauphin County the initial settlement of J. P. Beck's estate⁹. The settlement listed those that owed money to the estate. Christian Beck was listed as a debtor for 75 pounds. Perhaps this large sum of money was for helping his son set up his gun shop and for materials used to build rifles, as no explanation for the debt was offered in the filing papers. Then in 1824, Greenawalt, now lone surviving executor, filed with the Orphan's Court the final settlement of J. P. Beck's estate and Christian was listed again as owing an additional 17 pounds, 18 schillings and 5 pence¹⁰.

The final reference will be found when studying the rifles Christian Beck of Jonestown built, to be discussed later in the article.

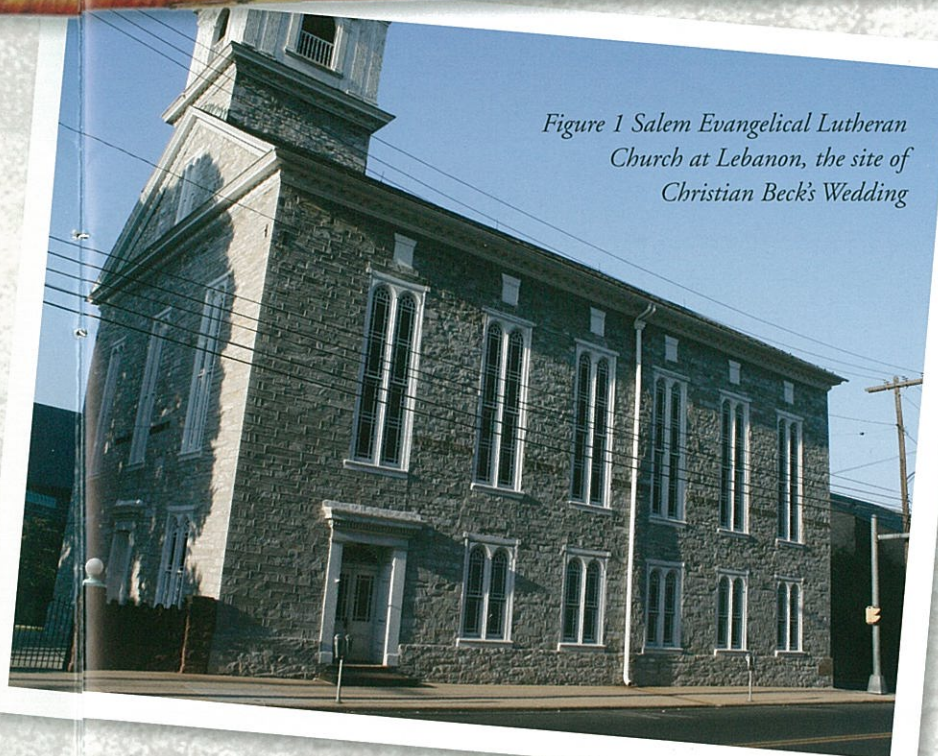


Figure 1 Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church at Lebanon, the site of Christian Beck's Wedding

the third child and second son of J. P. Beck¹¹. He was chosen to learn the trade of gunsmithing and the evidence will show he served his apprenticeship in his father's shop. His apprenticeship years should have been from 1795 or 1796 thru 1802 or 1803. I believe he continued to work with his father after his apprenticeship until his marriage.

As stated earlier, the records of the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church, shown in Figure #1, indicated that Christian Beck married Anna Mason on July 20th, 1806. He was 24 and she was 18. After their wedding they moved only seven miles from Lebanon to Jonestown where Christian appears for the first time as a gunsmith in the 1807 Dauphin County tax roles. He continues to be taxed as a gunsmith each year until 1813. As mentioned above, Jonestown became part of the newly formed Lebanon County in 1813 and,

unfortunately, the missing tax records make tracking him yearly difficult. We know, however, he was still in Jonestown in 1825 as a result of the discovered single year Lebanon tax reference. Other records placing him in Jonestown include the 1810, 1820 and 1830 Federal Census. In addition, the Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jonestown records, as mentioned earlier, record the birth of his children from 1810 thru 1827 and finally show Ann, his wife, died June 12th, 1834.



Figure 2 Signed J. P. Beck Rifle from the Kindig Collection

LIFE'S STORY

It is easy to understand why Christian Beck of Jonestown has remained hidden from researchers as there isn't a lot of information available on his life. He was born in Lebanon, Lancaster County (first Dauphin County, now Lebanon County) on February, 18th, 1782 as



Figure 3 Signed C. Beck Rifle from the H. Bishop Collection

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Figure 4 Signed J. P. Beck #99 from the Kindig Collection



Figure 5 Signed C. Beck from the F. Schry Collection



Figure 6 Signed J. P. Beck from the Kindig Collection

The tax records for Lebanon County come back into play starting in 1842. Christian Beck is listed as living with his daughter, Maria, and son-in-law, Cyrus Mason. The 1840 Federal Census supports this finding as it lists one male of the right age group for Christian in Mason's household. Christian Beck continues to be listed in the tax records but moves from household to household, with an occupation of laborer and even a whip stock maker.

The final defining point in his life is a listing in the Zion Evangelical Lutheran church records that indicates his death as July 25th, 1861 and his age of 79 years, 5 months, and 7 days¹². I believe Christian Beck of Jonestown lived and worked as a gunsmith in Jonestown for 30+ years.

CHRISTIAN BECK OF JONESTOWN RIFLES

From serving an apprenticeship in his father's shop and establishing his own gunsmithing business only seven miles from Lebanon,

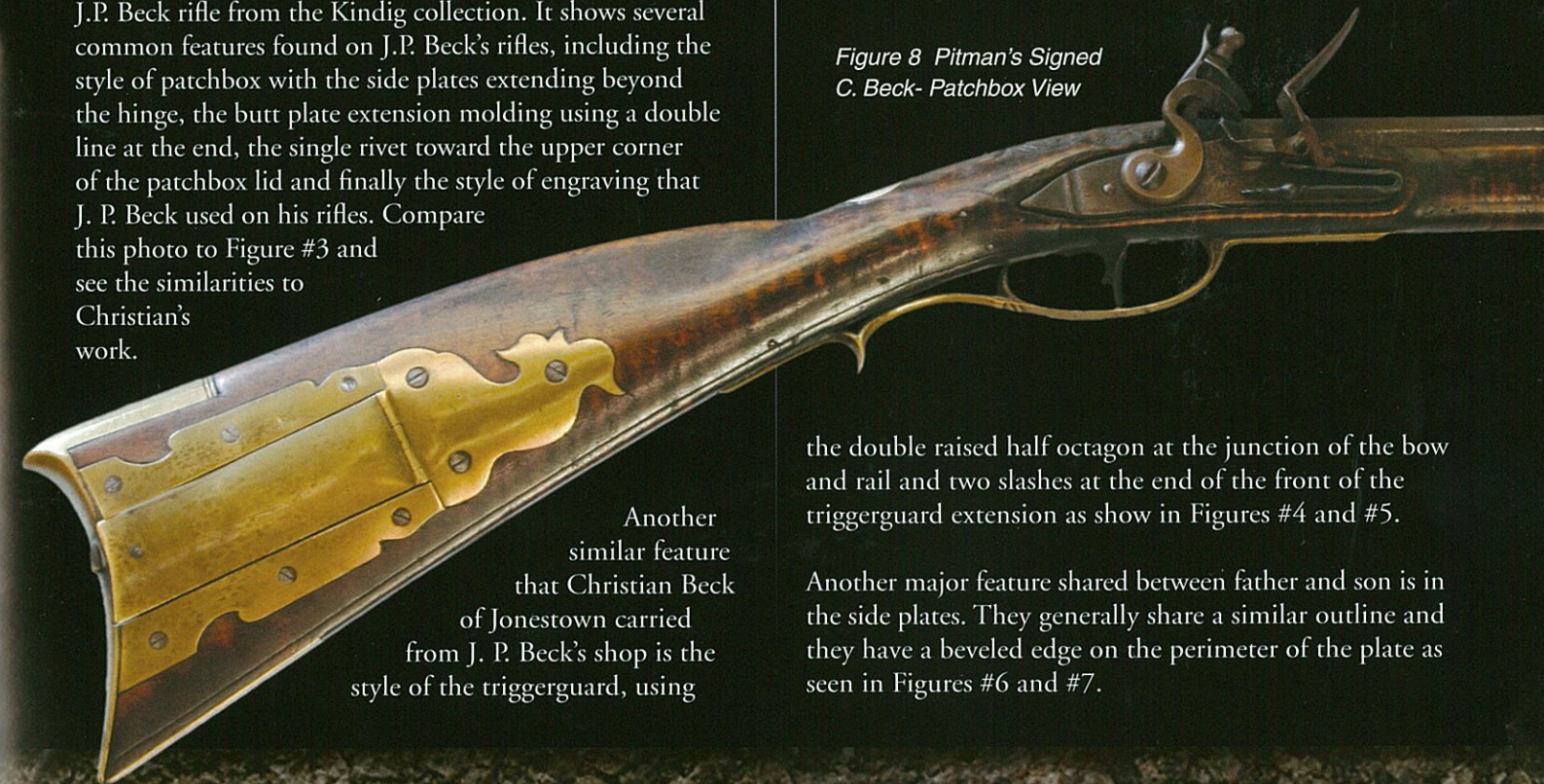
the rifles of Christian Beck retained the characteristics of his father's, J. P. Beck, rifles. He used the same hardware as his father, utilizing the butt plates, side plates, triggerguards and ramrod ferrules. This may account for part of the large debt that Christian Beck of Jonestown owed his father.

The photo in Figure #2 is a signed J.P. Beck rifle from the Kindig collection. It shows several common features found on J.P. Beck's rifles, including the style of patchbox with the side plates extending beyond the hinge, the butt plate extension molding using a double line at the end, the single rivet toward the upper corner of the patchbox lid and finally the style of engraving that J. P. Beck used on his rifles. Compare this photo to Figure #3 and see the similarities to Christian's work.



Figure 7 Signed C. Beck from the F. Schry Collection

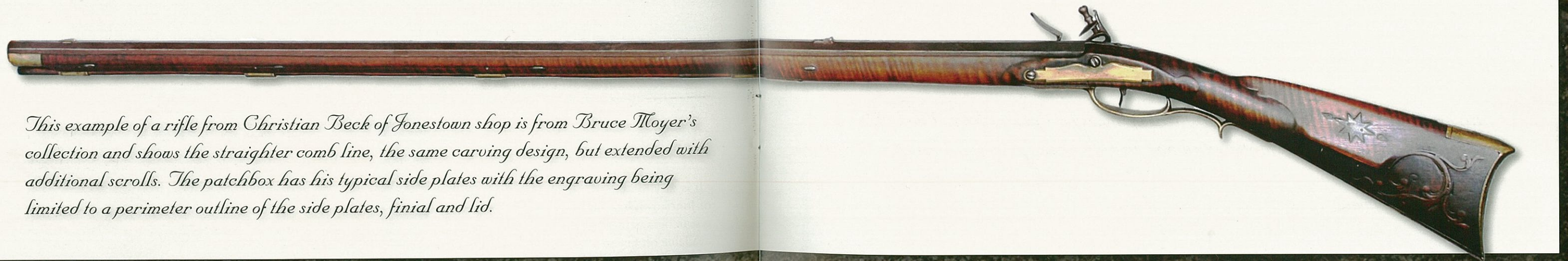
Figure 8 Pitman's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox View



the double raised half octagon at the junction of the bow and rail and two slashes at the end of the front of the triggerguard extension as show in Figures #4 and #5.

Another similar feature that Christian Beck of Jonestown carried from J. P. Beck's shop is the style of the triggerguard, using

Another major feature shared between father and son is in the side plates. They generally share a similar outline and they have a beveled edge on the perimeter of the plate as seen in Figures #6 and #7.



This example of a rifle from Christian Beck of Jonestown shop is from Bruce Moyer's collection and shows the straighter comb line, the same carving design, but extended with additional scrolls. The patchbox has his typical side plates with the engraving being limited to a perimeter outline of the side plates, finial and lid.

Figure 9 Pitman's Signed C. Beck- Carving View



Figure 10 Pitman's C. Beck -Signature

Figure 11 Maike's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox View



Figure 12 Maike's Signed C. Beck- Carving View



Figure 13 Maike's C. Beck- Signature

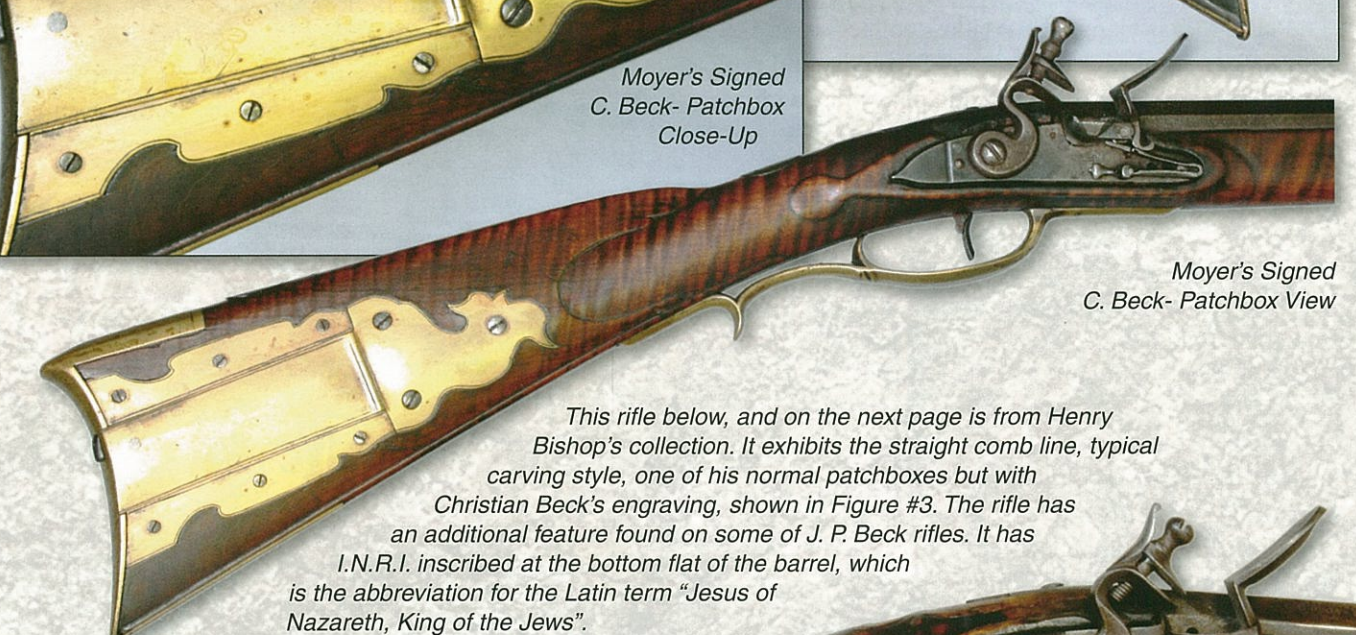


Moyer's Signed C. Beck- Carving View

Moyer's C. Beck- Signature



Moyer's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox Close-Up



Moyer's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox View

This rifle below, and on the next page is from Henry Bishop's collection. It exhibits the straight comb line, typical carving style, one of his normal patchboxes but with Christian Beck's engraving, shown in Figure #3. The rifle has an additional feature found on some of J. P. Beck rifles. It has I.N.R.I. inscribed at the bottom flat of the barrel, which is the abbreviation for the Latin term "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews".

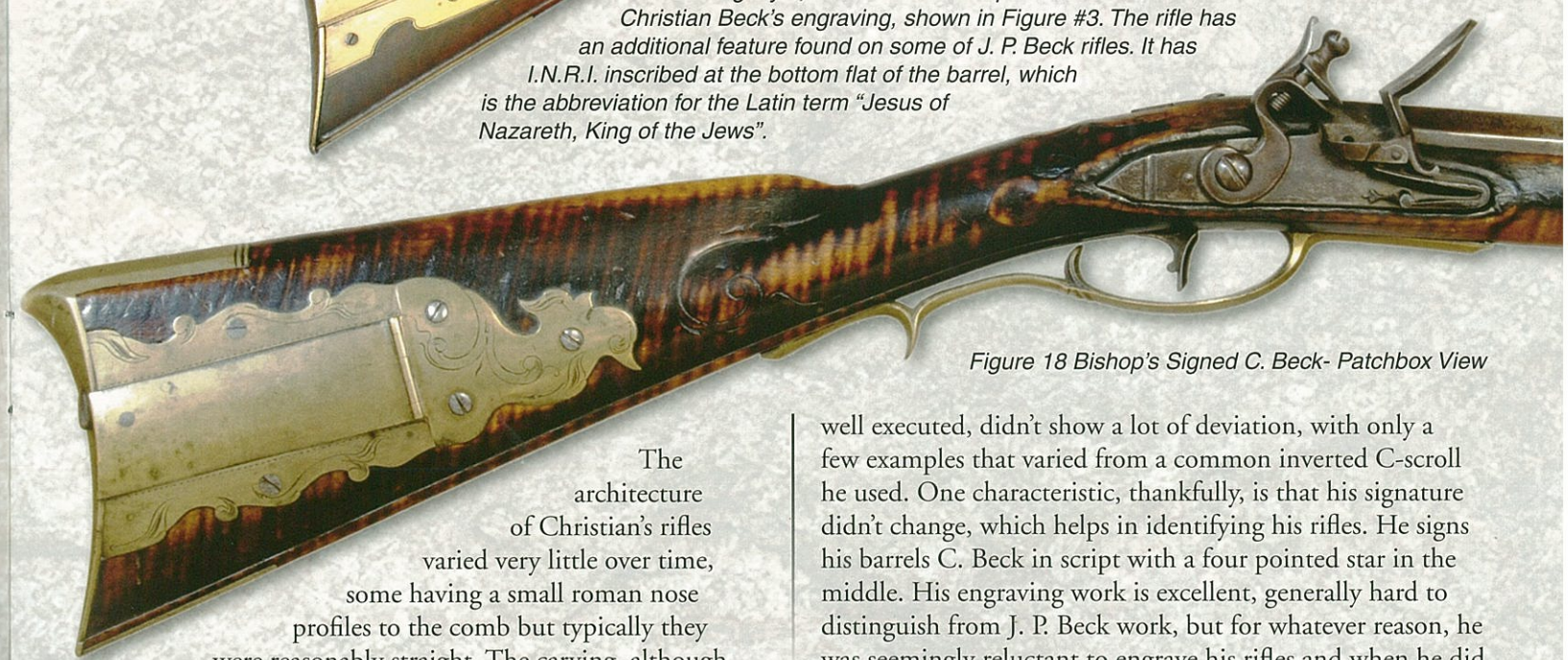
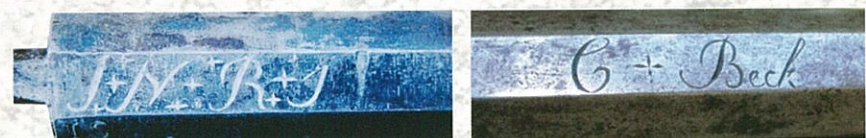
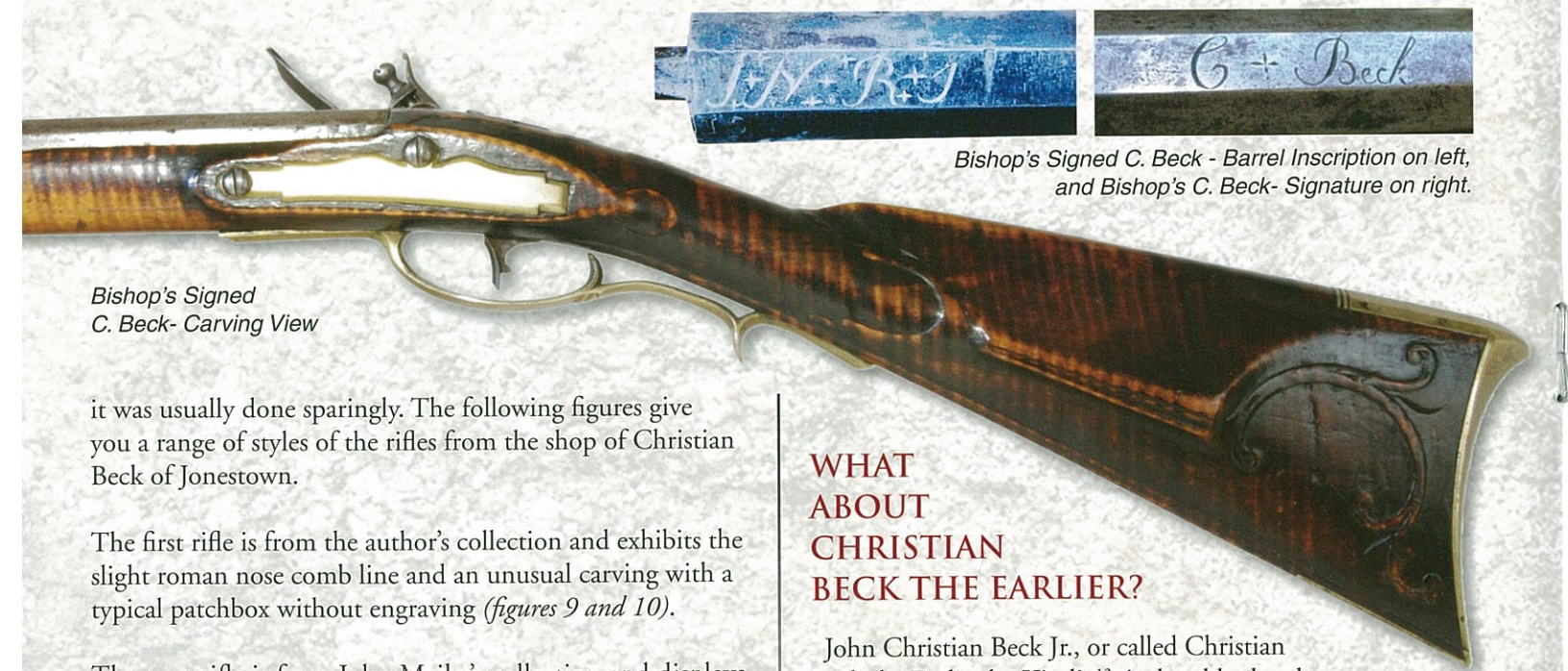


Figure 18 Bishop's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox View

The architecture of Christian's rifles varied very little over time, some having a small roman nose profiles to the comb but typically they were reasonably straight. The carving, although

well executed, didn't show a lot of deviation, with only a few examples that varied from a common inverted C-scroll he used. One characteristic, thankfully, is that his signature didn't change, which helps in identifying his rifles. He signs his barrels C. Beck in script with a four pointed star in the middle. His engraving work is excellent, generally hard to distinguish from J. P. Beck work, but for whatever reason, he was seemingly reluctant to engrave his rifles and when he did



Bishop's Signed C. Beck - Barrel Inscription on left, and Bishop's C. Beck- Signature on right.

Bishop's Signed C. Beck- Carving View

it was usually done sparingly. The following figures give you a range of styles of the rifles from the shop of Christian Beck of Jonestown.

The first rifle is from the author's collection and exhibits the slight roman nose comb line and an unusual carving with a typical patchbox without engraving (figures 9 and 10).

The next rifle is from John Maike's collection and displays a straighter comb line, typical carving style, and typical patchbox finial with different side plates but without engraving (figures 11, 12 and 13).

The last example of Christian Beck of Jonestown work is from the Kindig collection. It has the straight comb line, the C scrolls carving extension, and a patchbox with different side plates with engraving (figures 22 – 25).

Christian Beck of Jonestown was a first-rate gunsmith and had the capability to compete with his contemporary competition, namely Nicholas Beyer and Peter Berry, Jr. I believe the style of his rifles fit the time period in which he works and definitely exemplify the quality of his training. His ability to produce quality rifles didn't diminish over time in the rifles that I have seen.

However, I have yet to see a rifle that exemplifies the quality of work I believe he is capable of doing, particularly with his ability to engrave and carve. I hope this article will bring more of his rifles out of the closets to be studied and further clarify his working career. I look forward to the opportunity of seeing more examples of his work.

WHAT ABOUT CHRISTIAN BECK THE EARLIER?

John Christian Beck Jr., or called Christian Beck the Earlier by Kindig¹³, is the older brother to J. P. Beck. He was first noted in the 1779, 1781, and 1786 tax rolls of Lancaster County (now Lebanon County), Lebanon Township, as a joiner, or what we would call a finish carpenter¹⁴. It is assumed he continued

Figure 24 Kindig's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox Close-up



Figure 22 Kindig's Signed C. Beck- Patchbox View



Figure 25 Kindig's C. Beck- Signature

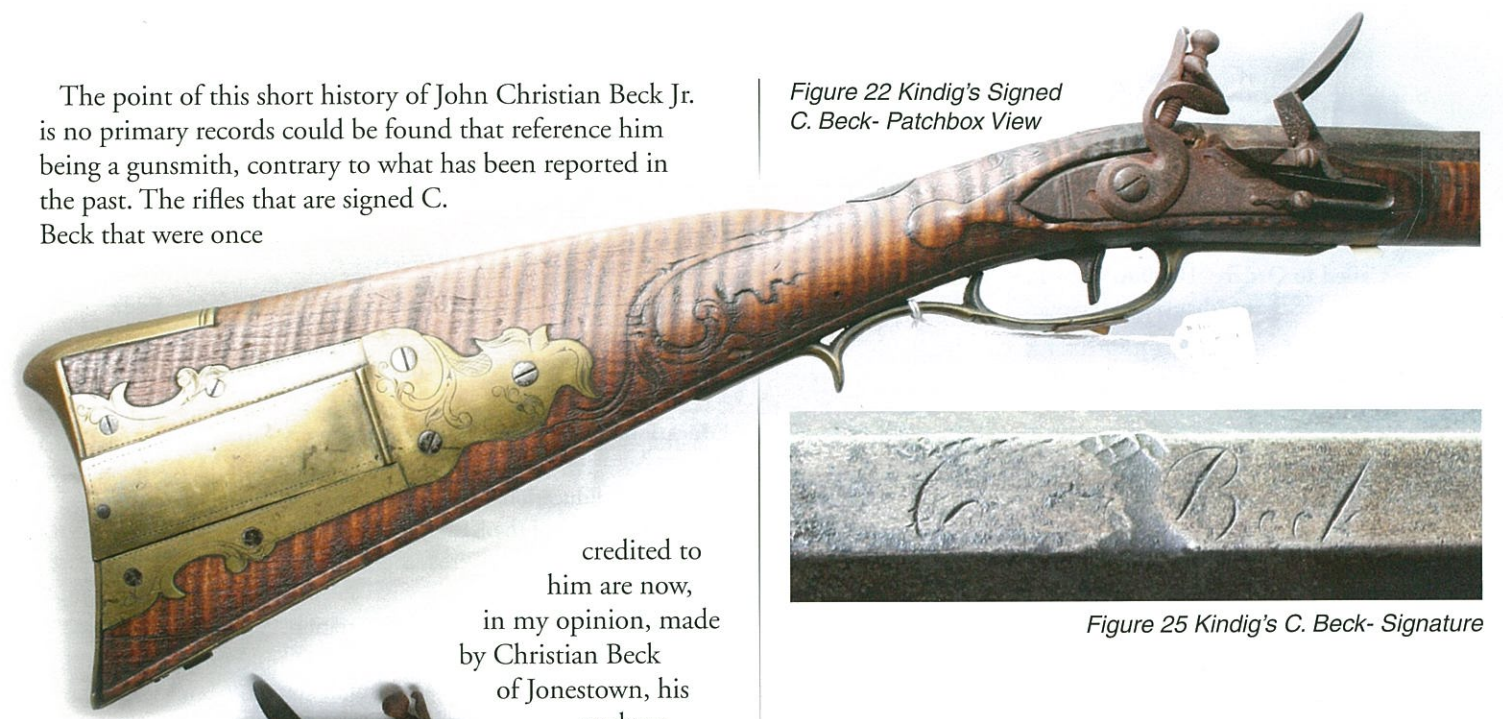


Figure 23 Kindig's Signed C. Beck-Carving View

Christian Beck Jr. died in near poverty, not having enough personnel property to even settle his estate and provide for his heirs. There was no record of an inventory from his estate that could be located.

With no rifles that I can say were built by him, no historical records that indicate he worked as a gunsmith, and no estate inventory to show he had gunsmithing tools, I have to conclude for now that he was not a gunsmith, contrary to previously published information.

credited to him are now, in my opinion, made by Christian Beck of Jonestown, his nephew.

Acknowledgements: I want to acknowledge the following people for assisting me with the research and especially for making their rifles available to photograph for study: Henry Bishop, Tim Hodges, Frank Kobilis, Tim

Landers, John Maike, Bruce Moyer, Steve Potter, Fred Schry, and Mac Spencer, all of the KRA. Also, special thanks to Joe Kindig III and Jenifer Kindig for making available their time and rifles that allowed this study to be completed. It is greatly appreciated. ♦

this career until Jan. 17th, 1787 when he sold his joiner tools¹⁵. His occupation under the tax rolls is not listed again until 1796, once again as a joiner¹⁶. In 1798 Christian Beck Jr. is mentioned in the First (Tabor) Reformed Church records for doing some gilding work on the pulpit¹⁷. He is also credited with being a powder maker in Henry Koch's book on the Beck family, thus ending his career at an explosion at a powder mill in neighboring Myerstown in June, 1806¹⁸. This story is credible as there was a powder mill in Myerstown and Christian Beck Jr. did leave the Lebanon Township tax rolls in 1801¹⁹.

1. Joe Kindig, Jr. (1960) Thoughts On The Kentucky Rifle In Its Golden Age. York, Pennsylvania: George Shumway Publishers.
 2. Salem Evangelical Church Records, Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Located in the Lebanon County Historical Society.
 3. Ibid
 4. Bishop, H. I. (January, 2010). Master – Apprentice – Master. American Tradition – Journal of the Contemporary Longrifle Association, Page 34.
 5. Information from a German Prayer book owned by Christian Beck III and passed down thru the family and obtained from Link York, wife of a Beck descendant. All information has been verified by various sources.
 6. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa., Lancaster County Tax Records, Cocalico Twp., 1751 – 1838.
 7. Same as Note #5.
 8. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa., Manuscript Group 4, Franklin County, Lurgan Township 1801 – 1830.
 9. Same as note #5
 10. Ancestry.com 1820 Federal Census (on line). Provo, UT.
 11. Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa. RG-7 Records of the General Assembly for Franklin County in 1821.

12. Jacob Fraise Richard, Samuel Penniman (1887) History of Franklin County Pennsylvania, Chicago, IL. Warner, Beers & Co.
 13. Stoner, J. H. (1946) Mount Alto Furnace Days, Franklin County Historical Papers, 541.
 14. Bowers, W. S. (1979). Gunsmiths of Pen-Mar-Va. Mercersburg, Pa. Mercersburg Printing
 15. Ibid Same as Note 5
 16. Ancestry.com, Online notes from the Ensminger family, Provo, Ut.
 17. Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, WV. Martinsburg Gazette and Public Advertiser, April 19th, 1827.
 18. Ancestry.com 1830 Federal Census for Berkeley County, Virginia (on line). Provo, UT.
 19. Perrin, W. H. (1882) History of Bond and Montgomery County Illinois, Chicago, IL. O. L. Baskin Publishers.
 20. Barrows, F. I. (1917) History of Fayette County, Indiana. Indianapolis, Indiana, B. F. Bowers & Co.
 21. Ancestry.com, Biography of John Christian Beck written by Jesse Glenn Beck in 1941.
 22. Ibid Same as Note 21.
 23. Ancestry.com 1850 Federal Census for Hancock County, Illinois (on line). Provo, UT.
 24. Ancestry.com State of Illinois, Illinois Public Land Purchase Records (on line). Provo, UT.
 25. Ibid Same as Note 21.
 26. Ibid Same as Note 21.