

An Ancient Gun

A Report on the Dominicus Jordan Flintlock Fowler

Collection #AF20 - Maine State Historical Society

By:
Steven W. Deitemeyer

Many families in this country took the opportunity during the 1876 Centennial Celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States to honor their founding families by donating personal items to historical societies and museums (Goldstein, 2009). On March 30, 1876, William Goold, author of "Portland in the Past with Historical Notes of Old Falmouth" wrote a letter on behalf of Samuel Jordan of Deering, Maine presenting "an ancient gun" to the Maine Historical Society (MHS' Collection# AF20).

William Goold's letter reviews the early and certainly traumatic history of the Reverend Robert Jordan family during the early Indian wars in the Spurwink River area of Maine. He traces the owners of the "ancient gun" from Captain Dominicus Jordan through Major Dominicus Jordan, to Lieutenant Dominicus Jordan, to William Maxwell Jordan to Captain Samuel Jordan. The letter established that the firearm was known to have been in the family for 187 years at the time of donation. (See the attached transcript of the Goold letter at the end of this report.) By family tradition and oral history, this means that Captain Dominicus Jordan would have acquired the gun in 1689. The following chart details the family line cited by Goold, and this author adds Lt. Col. Nathaniel Jordan, father of Lt. Dominicus Jordan, who should have also been in the list of descendants if the "father – son" inheritance pattern was indeed maintained.

A Historical Chart of the Dominicus Jordan Family Line

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth and Death Dates</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Wars in Maine</u>	
Rev. Robert Jordan	1610-July 28, 1679	68	King Philip's	1675-1678
Capt. Dominicus Jordan	1647-August 10, 1703 Killed by Indians at Spurwink	56	King William's Queen Anne's	1688*-1697 1702-1713
Maj. Dominicus Jordan	1683-May 20, 1749	66	King George's	1744-1748
Lt.Col. Nathaniel Jordan	Dec. 24, 1718-Aug.16, 1795	77	French and Indian	1754-1763
Lt. Dominicus Jordan	1746-Mar. 23, 1823	77	Revolutionary	1775-1783
William Maxwell Jordan	1767-Jan. 4, 1820	53		
Samuel Jordan	July 6, 1805-Dec. 1, 1880	75	(Donates gun to MHS 1876)	

* Gun presumably acquired by Dominicus Jordan in 1689 at age 42 at start of King William's War. He was encouraged by Col. Benjamin Church to stay and defend the garrison at Spurwink.

Goold's letter of presentation includes the details of the murder of Captain Dominicus Jordan quoted from the Rev. William White's *"Early History of New England"*, 1841. White's history of Captain Jordan starts in 1689 with the defense of his garrison house at Spurwink. He goes on to tell the story where an Indian attempted to intimidate Dominicus by calling out that, "we were ten hundred in number", and Dominicus' follow-up response, "I don't care if you are ten thousand." White's history concludes with the story of the death of Dominicus, August 10, 1703. The story documents that several Indians visiting his house, in a time of peace, were received with familiarity when one of them inflicted a mortal blow upon his head exclaiming "there Dominicus, now killem ten thousand Indians!" Goold's letter goes on to document the 1703 attacks at Purpooduck and Spurwink, and that twenty-two Jordans were killed and taken as prisoners by the Indians in that attack and massacre.

The Jordan Family has many traditions to celebrate. William Goold's 1876 letter donating the ancient firearm helps the Jordans celebrate the "traditions of its original owner's prowess and valor in the defense of his garrison."

The gun has now been in possession of the Maine Historical since 1876, hence, as of this edit (2013), and Goold's cited history, it is 324 years old. It is known as item AF20 in the Maine Historical Society collection. Images maybe seen by going on-line to the Maine State Historical Society Museum web site, and "clicking" on the "searching the collections data base", and typing in "Dominicus Jordan" or "AF20." There is an up-dated set of pictures and information based on research by the author and others at the Maine Historical Society prepared during the years, 2008-2010.



The Dominicus Jordan Gun, AF20, Maine Historical Society Collection

Description of the Dominicus Jordan Gun, Item “AF20”

Maine State Historical Society

General Description: A rebuilt and repaired, common, early colonial smoothbore flintlock musket. It is also classified as a “fowler” because of its barrel length and light weight, sporting gun configuration. This rebuilt .69 caliber gun of French origin is of a traditional type used during Maine’s frontier period, 1680-1770’s, and used for hunting, personal, family and community defense. This type of gun, carried from home, would have been typical of the arms used by militia members during the early Indian Wars in New England. According to Grinslade (2005), by 1675 nearly every colony required its militiamen to own flintlocks. In addition, George Sheldon in his writings on “The Flintlock Used in Philip’s War” states that Massachusetts colonists obtained their flintlocks largely from New France.

Gun length total: 64 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Bore and barrel: .69 caliber smooth bore

49 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches long from end of tang to muzzle.

Octagon to round with a “wedding ring” band at 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and 1 inch diameter at the breech.

Tang is flared (spreading) and typical of a late 1600’s style from northern France or Holland, possibly from Charleville or Liege (Gladysz, 2008).

There is a small blade front sight, and no rear sight except for a filed sighting groove on the tang.

There are no apparent external stamps or marks on visible part of the barrel.

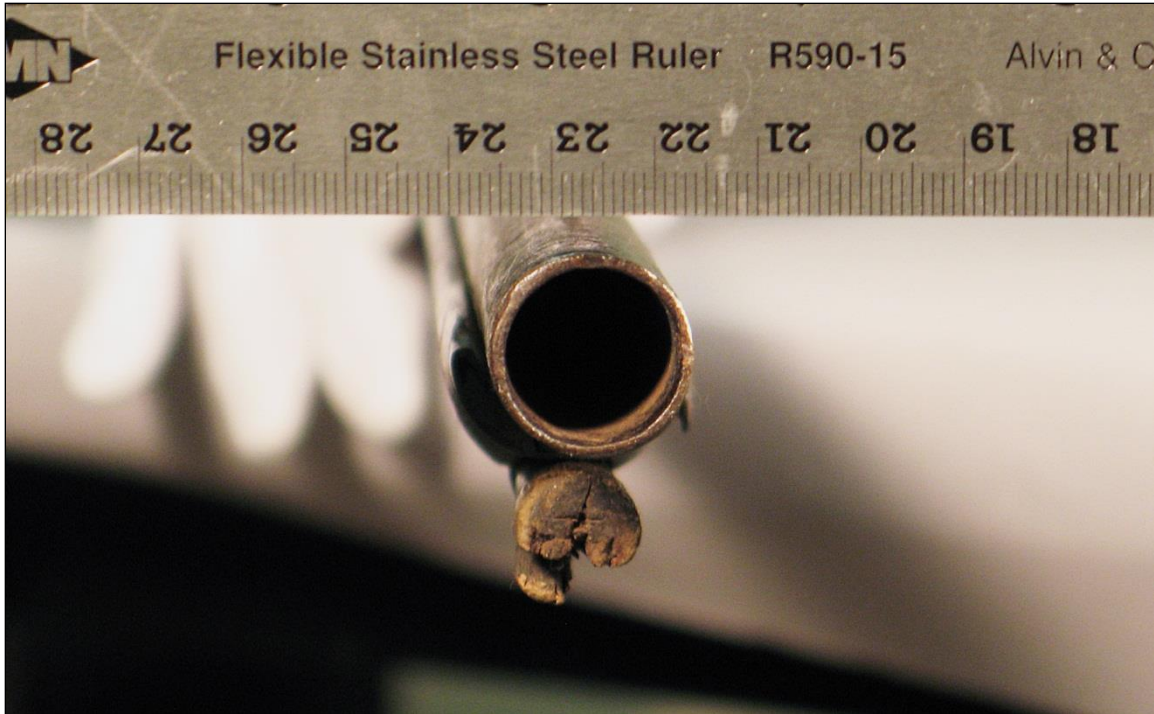
Note: Family history, with some written documentation, says 18 inches of the barrel were cut and removed from the gun. This would have been done sometime after the original purchase of a 67-inch barreled musket – not an unusual barrel length for this period of time for a fowling gun (Merlot 2009). The muzzle end does show some sign of filing or cutting marks under close examination (West, 2009).



Octagonal to round barrel, .69 caliber smooth bore, 49 3/8 inches long with wedding ring detail at 15 1/2 inches from the breech.



Top barrel and lock view. Note flared tang with filed sighting groove, miss-matched side plate screws, and poor breech to stock fit. This might indicate a replacement breech plug project (West, 2009) or using an old barrel in a relocked/restocked project.



Apparent file marks and a slightly un-square muzzle suggest barrel may have been cutoff. Brass-capped stock fore-end may have been added to help protect exposed wood grain. Early fowlers were not traditionally capped (Grinslade, 2005). Note heavily used ramrod end. There is no evidence of this gun being modified for use with a military bayonet.

Stock: Full length wood, probably French walnut, with brass pipes. Shape is similar to an early French Infantry style. End cap may have been placed after barrel and stock were cut off to protect end grain. Ram rod is wood, appears hand-carved and was well used.



Wood stock of French design, probably French Walnut, full length, but lighter than military versions to facilitate sporting and hunting uses, and as a fowling piece.

Lock: The flintlock can be dated as it is stamped with the makers mark of “I·F Crown C” known to be Jean Baptiste Fournier, a contract locksmith at the Charleville Armory in France from 1716-1733 (Gladysz, 2008 and Carrick, 2010). The lock is also stamped with what appears to be a “fleur-de-lis F”, a French armory mark. The configuration of the lock best matches samples of the large 1728 French Rampart lock (Fusil de Rempart) found in French gun history references (Merlot 2009, Carrick 2010). Of particular note is the length of the lock at 7 ¼ inches, the stepped tail, and the bridle between the frizzen screw and pan in a horizontal manner.



Wood to metal fit in above picture shows that perhaps the lock and stock have always been together and parts of an earlier gun were used to make up a completed piece.



Reverse side of Model 1728 French Rampart lock. Note the bridled tumbler, and short limb of main spring is forged to accept a screw but only rests against bottom of bolster. A stamped “D” type initial is visible just above the lower-center of the main spring long limb. There is also a cursive-styled “M” punched into the plate just left and slightly lower than the “D” stamp.

Early French lock measurements vary between the 1728 French Military models. The Infantry model is shorter than the 1728 Rampart lock model (6.8 inches for the infantry model and 7.25 inches for the Rampart model). (Merlot 2010) (Carrick 2010). Rampart models were initially designed to work with larger guns (mortars) and heavier loads but were commonly used on other guns to help meet factory order time schedules. It is known that 1728 type models were bought by the French Ministry of Marine as late as 1740's.

Tom Grinslade documents in his book, *“Flintlock Fowlers”* that “thousands of muskets accompanied French troops to North America, providing military locks that were later recycled on American Fowlers. One of the most frequently observed locks is the 1728 pattern”.

Trigger: Iron and curled at the tip, and typical of early fowlers and perhaps of an earlier era than the stock and lock. Curled tips were used on fowlers from the mid 1600's until Revolutionary War times (Grinslade, 2005 and Gladysz, 2008).

Butt plate and trigger guard: Iron, and of a style and configuration that more closely resemble late 1600's construction and design in France (Gladysz, 2008).



Butt plate tang detail, typical of late 1600's French construction



Trigger guard showing a late 1600's French style and manufacture, popular with French militias who customized their own furniture for unit pride (Merlot 2009).

Other hardware and condition: The gun shows that it received a lot of use, reconstruction and heavy maintenance over time. Side plate screws are mismatched; a barrel pin has been replaced with a makeshift nail; the butt plate appears to have original screws but includes a large rusted-out hole; and the stock is well worn and scratched (West, 2009). Dating these repairs and replacements would be most impossible on this 300 plus year old gun (Carrick 2010). The rusted-out hole at the heel of the butt plate may indicate in part that the gun might have been stored standing in a wet or damp corner for a long period of time.

Donation plate: The donation plate affixed at the time of the Goold presentation is silver and engraved (Twiss, 2010). The inscription states: *“This gun belonged to Dominicus Jordan who was killed by Indians at Spurwink, Me. in August 1703. Presented to the Me. Hist. Society by Samuel Jordan of Deering. 1876”*.



Silver, engraved donation plate, 1876, by Samuel Jordan. Also, note heavy chipping on end of butt stock area despite butt plate protection. This might be the result of a cross-cut saw blow-out when the butt plate was added during a stock shortening modification.

Summary Findings:

This common, well-used and modified, .69 caliber smooth bore, old “fowling piece”, musket of French origin is made up of original and replacement parts from various guns and suppliers over a period of time from approximately 1680 to perhaps 1760. The barrel, butt plate, and trigger guard and trigger appear to be from a late 1600’s, French manufactured gun.

The lock dates to 1728 or later, and appears not to have been separated from the stock. This gun represents a good example of how firearms were kept maintained, updated, usable and reliable in the days of hard and hazardous use on the frontier of New England. During this era, gunsmiths, parts and new guns were at a premium, especially near frontier garrisons like Spurwink. Settlers made do with what they had and what was

available wherever they could find it. They could not afford to do otherwise from a cost point of view, and certainly not from a self-defense point of view.

This gun, modified over time, can be considered generally consistent with the history and documentation of the Goold presentation letter of 1876 to the Maine Historical Society.

Parts of the gun and their estimated ages dating to the late 17th Century, would be consistent with the history of the original gun being acquired by Dominicus in 1689, and with Dominicus at the defense of his garrison and family. It may have been with Dominicus from 1690 to 1698 while in retreat at Wells with his family during the King William's War, and at the time of his death at Spurwink, August 10, 1703, during the opening assaults of the Queen Anne's War. These were the days when Dominicus, "a man of above common size, strength and endurance", probably acquired his "Indian Killer" title.

Upon his death, Dominicus' wife, Hannah and six children, including son Dominicus, were taken captive to Canada in 1703. All returned except Mary Ann.

The big mystery is: Where was the gun and who had the gun after Dominicus was killed in 1703, and his son Dominicus' return to Spurwink in 1715 after being captive in Canada for about 8 years? As the story goes, Dominicus had the gun strapped to his back when he was killed. Surely, the Indians would have taken a working gun, as part of their plunder back to Canada or for trade later. Was it broken or partially burned in the subsequent fire and destruction of the Jordan garrison, with parts recovered later by son Dominicus when he returned in 1715 to reestablish Spurwink with his new wife, Joanna Bray of Kittery? Did son Dominicus keep track of the location of the gun by his Indian or French captives in Canada and steal it back during his escape? Or, was there some other scenario where the first gun was totally lost and replaced by a similar gun after son Dominicus returned to Kittery and eventually back to Spurwink?

Assuming the Jordan family story and Goold's letter are accurate in tracing the continuity and line of ownership, gun parts, like the lock and maybe the stock, were probably replaced by a descendent, probably Major Dominicus Jordon. This would have been necessary to keep the gun in useable condition because of excessive use, fire, or field damage.

French gun parts would have been accessible to members of an active Maine militia unit during those times. Major Dominicus led the famous Snowshoe Company and did yeoman duty in the defense of Cape Elizabeth during the King George's War 1740-1748 (Jordan, 1965), and he would have needed a dependable serviceable weapon. Likewise, his son Lt. Col. Nathaniel Jordon during the later French and Indian War in the service of the Cumberland Militia in Maine 1754-1763, would have needed an updated weapon.

The provenance that surrounds this gun suggests that the original gun would have been use by the first Dominicus, and the same gun, modified to include a 1728 French military lock and stock conversion, could have also been used by his descendants during the

militia and home defense days of the King George's, French and Indian, Revolutionary, and 1812 Wars, from 1740-1815. Also, it most certainly would have been used for hunting food for family tables during those time periods.

There is no evidence of how or where Dominicus first acquired the gun. Earlier models of similar guns, powder and shot were on property inventories at Richmond's Island and Spurwink as indicated in family wills and estate settlements (Jordan, 1882). Some of those were of probable English origin because of the Lord Trelawney-Winters business and trading at Richmond's Island. Earlier gun designs including matchlocks and wheellocks were also on early property inventory lists. The property records of other Jordan family members show, not surprisingly, ownership of many guns.

To date, there is no evidence to connect this flintlock gun or its previous ownership to Dominicus' father, the Reverend Robert Jordan (1610-1679) as suggested by Goold. It is assumable that the Rev. Robert Jordan did not bring this gun from England as it is of French design and has been modified with a newer French lock.

However, after Robert Trelawny's death in England and John Winters death, an inventory of property was taken on Richmond's Island and at Spurwink in October of 1648. Among the many items inventoried were: "3 pieces of ordnance with a small number of shot, their sponges, worm and ladles, £50. 4 muskets, 3 halberts, 5 long pikes, 3 old fowling-pieces *out of all order*, and 4 old swords, £3 10s." Items at Spurwink on the same date included: "1 harquebus, 1 fowling piece". At this time of the Trelawny-Winters estate settlement, the Reverend Robert Jordan would have been 31 years old and Dominicus Jordan, his son, about one year old. If the Dominicus Jordan gun resulted somehow from this estate settlement, Goold would probably have said the gun was known to have been in the Jordan family for 222 years instead of the 187 years referenced in his March 30, 1876 donation letter to the Maine Historical Society.

Follow-up Discussion and Recommendations:

A basic research concern for the author, the Jordan Family, and the Maine State Historical Society has been to try and resolve the difference between the family's traditional knowledge as documented by the William Goold letter of 1876, and the obvious later dates of the reconstructed gun parts of the AF20 gun in the Historical Society collection. The primary issue was that the gun had parts that dated later than the death of Dominicus Jordan in 1703, so it could not be his gun.

Much more has been learned about this ancient and important gun in Maine's history. The historic files can now be updated to reflect the relationship of the Jordan family history, and the condition and age of the modified Dominicus Jordan gun in the Maine State Historical collection.

This investigation could not have been completed except for the dedicated staff at the Maine State Historical Society. A special thanks go to Holly Hurd-Forsyth, Registrar, Alissa Lane, Image Specialist and Dana Twiss, Inventory Manager at the Society for their

efforts to photograph, measure, describe, catalog, curate and personally care about this old Dominicus Jordan fowling piece. A special thanks of appreciation also to the author's wife, Patricia Ann Wakeman Deitemeyer, a descendent of the Rev. Robert Jordan and Captain Dominicus Jordan, for her knowledge and research in support of Jordan family history and genealogy.

Clues to the mystery surrounding the original construction, ownership and travels of this gun will hopefully continue to develop. The continuing research questions are:

1. Where did Dominicus Jordan acquire the original gun in 1689?
2. Was the gun and Dominicus apart of the defense of Wells, Maine after their escape and temporary relocation from Spurwink in 1689?
3. Where was the gun during the Jordan family's hostage time in Canada? Did the captors have it? Was it burned or abandoned at Spurwink? If it was in Canada, did young Dominicus escape with it upon his return?
4. Was it re-found, rebuilt and repaired with spare parts after Dominicus' son, Major Dominicus Jordan (1683-1749) returned from Canada and re-used it during his militia service during the King George's War (1740-1748)?
5. Or, is there still some thought that this is a rebuilt, complete gun that Major Dominicus Jordan acquired during his tenure and military service at Spurwink and Cape Elizabeth (1720-1749)?

Trying to answer all of the questions based on a 300+ year old, modified gun may be impossible, but it leads to great additional and exciting exploration of the associated family histories and the times they lived through in the war impacted settlements of coastal Maine.

There are a few follow-up recommendations:

1. Examine the details of the internal lock design and construction to perhaps further identify the lock's manufacture date. The lock was removed in July 2010 for inspection by Dana Twiss, Maine State Historical Society and helped confirmed the Rampart Model of the 1728 French military lock.
2. Take a small sample of wood from under the stock's butt plate to help identify the wood species and give a clue as to the origin of the stock, i.e. France, New France (St. Lawrence), or America. (Wiedenhoeft, 2008).
3. Try and document Dominicus' and his family location and involvement when they left Spurwink for Wells, Maine. Was he (and perhaps this gun) apart of the Wells Militia (1690-1698)? Did he add to his reputation as "The Indian Killer" while at Wells in the defense of that frontier community?
4. Follow-up on any evidence at the archeology digs at Spurwink of any old gun parts that survived the multiple dwelling fires.

5. Build a replica of this style gun that could be demonstrated and used at future Jordan Family reunions. (Started in December 2010 by author, Steve Deitemeyer, and completed by Master gun builder, Jack Brooks, September 2016).



Steve Deitemeyer assembling and starting the Dominicus Jordan fowling gun replica build in 2010.



Jack Brooks, Master Gun Builder, completed the Dominicus Jordan Gun Replica, September 2016.



Patsy Jordan shooting the Dominicus gun at the Pauline Weaver Rendezvous, Powder Horn Clan, Cooper Ranch, Arizona during the 2016 Jordan Family Reunion.

Attachments

**Transcription of the handwritten William Goold Letter to the Maine
Historical Society
March 30, 1876, Portland, Maine
Presenting an “Ancient Gun” on behalf of Samuel Jordan, Deering,
Maine**

An Ancient Relic.

Mr. President.

An ancient gun has been entrusted to me to present to this society, of which this is its history.

Dominicus Jordan, third son of Rev Robert Jordan, married Hannah daughter of Ralph Tristram of Saco. They lived at Spurwink on a post of the paternal estate. Their children were Dominicus born in 1683, Mary Ann, Samuel, Nathaniel, Hannah and Elizabeth.

Captain Jordan was a foremost man of the Hamlet, and had a garrison house, which he successfully defended against the Indians but was finally killed by Treachery, and his family were carried to Canada, but all finally returned except Mary Ann who received from her French master the name of Anabella – she was married and was living at Trois Reviers in 1760.

The Rev Wm Whites “Early History of New England” published in 1841, gives this account of the murder of Capt Jordan.

“In the year of 1689, the garrison house of Dominicus Jordan, Son of Robert, at Spurwink, Maine, was violently assailed by the savages, which he defended with bravery and success. To intimidate him, an Indian called to him, we are ten hundred in number. Jordan replied, ‘I don’t care if you are ten thousand’. A few years afterwards, perhaps at the commencement of the third Indian war, several Indians visiting his house, were received with familiarty common in Time of peace, when one inflicted a mortal blow upon his head exclaiming there Dominicus, now killem ten thousand Indians!”

In 1703, five hundred French and Indians came from Canada to masacre the settlers of Maine, who felt secure and were unprepared for war. Their first acts of hostility was the killing of twenty persons at Purpooduck, they then scattered in small parties along the coast Spurwink was principally occupied by the Jordan family – there were twenty two persons by the name Jordan killed and taken as prisoners by these Indians. Among them was Dominicus already named. His son Dominicus returned from captivity and settled on the old plantation in 1715. The same year he had a son for whom was named for his Grand father, Dominicus.

This Third Dominicus Jordan in 1774 removed to Raymond and settled in that part of the town now Casco. He had a son William, who also settled at Raymond and died in 1823. Williams ninth child is Samuel Jordan born in 1806. He is well known, and much respected citizen of Deering. He is of the fifth generation who has owned this ancient firearm, which has come down from the first Dominicus, with many traditions of its original owners prowess & valor in the defence of his garison. For ought we know The Rev Robert Jordan may have brought it from England – it is known to have been in the Jordan family 187 years. The present owner of this gun desires me to present in his name to the Maine Historical Society that it may be preserved as a memento of his hardy ancestors.

Portland, Maine March 30th 1876. /s/ Wm Goold

Transcribed from copy of handwritten original (MSHS): Steve Deitemeyer, 12/18/2009

References and Literature Reviewed:

Annonson, Adelbert and Jordon, Roland Gene. *“The Family Jordan Vol 1-3”*. Penobscot Press. 2001.

Boudriot, Jean, *Armes a Feu. Modeles Reglementaries, 1717-1836, Book 1*.

Carrick, Michael F., Letter and personal communications, Staff Editor, The Gun Report, June 11, 2010. Letter with enclosures: Le Fusil Modele 1717, Le Fusil Modele 1728, from *Du siles au piston. La grande aventure des fusils reglementaires francais 1717-1865*, Tradition Magazine, 1997. Also, *The French Soldier in Colonial America* by Rene Chartrand, Historical Arms Series No 18, 1984.

French and Indian Wars, Wikipedia.org, 10/21/2009

Gale, Ryan. 2010. Personal e-mail note. Track of the Wolf, Inc. Elk River, Minnesota.

Gladysz, Kevin. 2008. Early French weapons expert. Personnel Communications. Lanouvelle, France via email.

Goldstein, Eric. 2010. Personal communications. Curator of Mechanical Arts and Numismatics, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Va.

Goold, William, *“Portland in the Past with Historical Notes of Old Falmouth”*, 1886, B. Thurston & Company, Portland, Maine.

Grinslade, Tom, Flintlock Fowler, The First Guns Made in America , 2005, Scurlock Publ. Co. Texarkana, Tx. 248 pp.

Hamilton, T.M., Colonial Frontier Guns , Pioneer Press, Union City, Tennessee, 1987, original by The Fur Press, Chadron, Nebraska 1980.

Hurd-Forsyth, Holly. 2008-2009. Registrar, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.

Jordan, Tristram Frost, "Family Records of the Rev. Robert Jordan and His Descendents in America". Press of David Clapp and Son, Boston, Mass. 1882.

Jordan, Jr., William B. "A History of Cape Elizabeth, Maine". House of Falmouth, Inc., Portland, Maine. 1965.

Lane, Alissa. 2008. Personal communications/emails, and photographs. Image Services Coordinator, Maine Historical Society, Portland, Maine.

Merlot, Jess, Personal communications and Reference Catalog, The Rifle Shoppe, Rt. 1, Jones, Ok. 2009-2010, with references from Boudriot.

Reilly, Robert M., United States Martial Flintlocks, A comprehensive illustrated history of the flintlock in American from the Revolutionary to the demise of the system. Andrew Mowbray Inc, Lincoln, RI., 1997, 263 pp.

Twiss, Dana. 2009-2010. Personal communication. Project Manager of Inventory and Cataloging, Maine State Historical Society.

West, Carl. 2009-2010. Senior Metals Technician, Personal communications. Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Virginia.

Wiedenhoeft, Alex C. 2008. Forest Products Laboratory US Forest Service, Wood Identification Lab. Madison, Wisconsin. Personal email communications.

Prepared and written by:

Steven W. Deitemeyer
3724 Union Ct.
Wheat Ridge, Colorado 80033
Phone: 303 456-0799

July 4, 2010, updated November 3, 2010, edited July 11, 2013, September 2016, July 2019