

MARC WOODMANSEE'S LETTER TO HORACE KEPHART

January 26, 1919



Figure 1. Horace Kephart with snake

Melissa Habit
ENGL 618
Dr. Gastle
7 December 2015

INTRODUCTION

This edition is created from the manuscript of Marc Woodmansee's letter to Horace Kephart on January 26, 1919. Within this letter, Marc Woodmansee discusses a few of Kephart's articles that he was reading at the time. In addition, he informs Kephart of Harry B. Harmer's weapon collection, which includes various Colt Company rifles and other revolvers. He also encourages him to come and visit as well as to get in touch with Harmer if he goes north. Other letters from Woodmansee to Kephart continue to discuss weapon collections, prices of various weapons, and the magazines, *All Outdoors* and *Our Southern Highlands* (while still a periodical, *The Southern Highlands*, in *Outing* magazine). Woodmansee and Kephart have a professional friendship due to their mutual interest in weaponry. Through observation of other letters, it is apparent that Woodmansee and Kephart's relationship is more personal than this letter leads on. Woodmansee discusses his romantic life, personal interests, and Kephart's children. Marc Woodmansee was born on Dec 11, 1873 in Lee, Iowa. At the time of his letter to Horace Kephart, he was working for the Standard Oil Office as a manager in Des Moines, Iowa and was living with his mother, Mary Woodmansee. According to "Out-of-Doors," Woodmansee is one of the top collectors of Kentucky rifles in the nation; in 1919, his collection totaled over fifty rifles.

The letter's recipient, Horace Kephart, was born in 1862 in Pennsylvania, although he grew up in Iowa where he was an avid adventurer. In 1875, when he was thirteen, Kephart attended Western College and then in 1876, he enrolled at Lebanon Valley College. Later, he went to Boston University where he spent much of his time studying in the Boston Public Library. This experience initiated his interest in working as a librarian. After a year, he moved to New York and received a position at Cornell University as a supervisor of the library's resources. There, he also enrolled in graduate classes, which mainly pertained to history and political science. Due to his close mentorship with the Cornell's first librarian, Willard Fiske, he was invited to work with him in Florence, Italy when Fiske moved there to seek other employment. In the mid-1880s, Kephart returned to the states and worked in a temporary position at Rutgers College. Kephart's skills made him quite competitive in the job market and he received many job offers; he eventually accepted an offer to be an assistant in Yale College's library. By 1990, Kephart's extensive experience landed him a job as the director of the Mercantile Library in St. Louis, Missouri for over a decade. Due to "ill health," Kephart resigned from his position as director and began to focus on his literary work, which was routed in his interests of American outdoor life.

In 1904, Kephart moved to North Carolina to continue his life's interest in nature and wrote about his outdoor adventures that were then published in magazines including *Forest and Stream*, *Outing*, "The Southern Highlander" in *Outing Magazine*, and *All Outdoors*. He published a number of books as well—the most well-known, *Our Southern Highlanders* and *The Book of Camping and Woodcraft; A Guidebook for Those Who Travel in the Wilderness*, which were regionally influenced. He was an effective advocate for environmental conservation and partook in the institution of the Appalachian Trail. His time spent in western North Carolina and his dedicated literature of the area became one of the largest motivators for the creation of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Presently, Kephart continues to remain one of the most influential regional writers.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This edition of Marc Woodmansee's letter to Horace Kephart uses the combined features of the facsimile and diplomatic formats. Next to the transcribed section of the letter, a digital scan of the page is provided so a comparison is accessible to the reader. As mandated by a diplomatic edition, the text is transcribed to recreate the appearance and presentation of Woodmansee's original document and to retain its authenticity. Within this letter specifically, this style of transcription does not interfere with the

manuscript's readability, which is the primary reason for using a diplomatic edition. This edition utilizes page breaks to signal the end of each page and paragraph indents are kept in the same position. The placement of the heading and greeting also attempt to replicate those from the manuscript. The transcription follows the original letter page by page in order to minimize confusion and to easily allow the reader to follow the narrative, enhancing the reader's experience. Footnotes are used rather than endnotes in combination with the page-by-page format so the reader can quickly access background information without losing the context or the place in the letter. The single-spaced layout of the edition is for aesthetic purposes and allows for more information in a smaller amount of space.

Marc Woodmansee has distinguishing features of his penmanship, syntax, and grammar, which are included in a list below as a reference for future readings of Woodmansee's letters to Kephart:

- Letters at the beginning of sentences vary between appearing capitalized or lowercase
- Periods and commas are often used interchangeably or omitted altogether
- Sentence fragments occur frequently
- The letter *t* is crossed in some places but not others, yet in most cases (even if crossed), Woodmansee places an additional cross bar a few spaces to the right
- The letter *e* is sometimes capitalized in the middle of a word
- The letter *k* is often disconnected between the ascender and the angled bars
- Numbers are both spelled out and written numerically

All spelling errors, shorthand, inconsistencies, and grammatical features remain the same with the exception of words that are hyphenated on the right end of the page, which are rewritten in normal fashion within the transcription. A few editorial decisions were made that may be different from the original manuscript due to indistinguishable features of Woodmansee's handwriting. These include attempting to determine capital versus lowercase letters and stray marks (possibly pauses of the writing utensil) versus commas and periods. These decisions were made on a case by case basis after careful and close examinations. Underlined words in the transcription are replicated and do not indicate italicization. Bracketed information indicates editorial notes. Proper names, significant places, subject terms, and referenced literature are all annotated using footnotes to provide additional information. Sources for the information within the footnotes can be found in the annotated bibliography at the end of the edition. The overall decision to format the edition accordingly was for accessible comprehension, simple comparison, and quick access to background information through the placement of the footnotes.

MANUSCRIPT DESCRIPTION

Woodmansee's letter is written on the front and back sides of white stationary, which measure 11 (height) by 7 (width) inches. The paper is thicker than standard paper weight, and its durability suggests that the material is fiber-based. It has faded to a light yellow from age and is creased horizontally in thirds. Circled numbers are penciled in at the top, center of each page. The handwriting of the numbers differs from Woodmansee's, so it is possible that the scanner marked the pages to keep track of the page order during the process of digitization. The ink has faded brown in the strokes of the letters. There are smeared ink marks on the seventeenth and twenty-eight lines of the third letter. The fourth page has two words marked out and the left side of the letter was cut off during the scanning process. The lost words were retrieved by observing the letters in person at Western Carolina University's Hunter Library Special Collections in Cullowhee, North Carolina.

The following digital images that accompany the transcription are made possible by the efforts of Western Carolina University's Hunter Library Special Collections.

TRANSCRIPTION

Mr Horace Kephart ^① Des Moines Ia 1/26-19
Bryson City
N.C.

My dear Sir.
Beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of a few weeks ago. I've been laid up with a severe cold and sore throat. Have not been really ill. but have not cared to risk contracting pneumonia, so have been in doors for ten days. And have been going thro all the Outing Magazines, since 1906. And have reread much of your "writings" among them. "Our Southern Highlanders". And have thought of you now being among these people helping the doctors out.

Referring again to the subject of "Kentucky" rifles. I will have a large photo made of them. will do this next Spring as soon as the weather gets so we can take them out doors. Have not room enough in doors. And you shall have a pair of the photos. will have both sides taken.

And I'm hoping that you will some day make it a point to come and see them. They are well worth the while. and especially to a gun lover, or one who understands fire arms generally. You will learn from them. fire arm facts which your
(over)

①

Mr Horace Kephart Des Moines Ia 1/26-19
Bryson City
N. C.¹

My dear Sir.

Beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of a few weeks ago..

I've been laid up with a severe cold and sore throat. Have not been really ill. but have not cared to risk contracting pneumonia, so have been in doors for ten days. And have been going thro all the Outing Magazines² since 1906. And have reread much of your "writings" among them. "Our Southern Highlands,"³ And have thought of you now being among these people

Referring again to the subject of "Kentucky" rifles.⁴ I will have a large photo made of them.⁵ will do this next Spring as soon as the weather gets so we can take them out doors, Have not room enough in doors. And you shall have a pair of the photos. will have both sides taken.

And I'm hoping that you will some day make it a point to come and see them. They are well worth the while. and especially to a gun lover, or one who understands fire arms generally. You will learn from them. fire arm facts which your

(over)

¹ Bryson City is located in the Great Smoky Mountains of western North Carolina. Kephart was living there during the receipt of Marc Woodmansee letter in January of 1919.

² *Outing*, and American recreational magazine, was published through Outing Publishing Company out of New York and Chicago; 80 volumes were published during its active publishing period. Articles within the magazine deal with sports, adventure, travel, and fiction writing. Publication began in 1882 as the *Wheelman*. It went through four name changes before ceasing publication in 1923. See "The Online Books Page" for digital copies and more information.

³ *Our Southern Highlands* is a book written by Horace Kephart. Its publication first began in the *Outing* magazine as "The Southern Highlander." Kephart explores western North Carolina while keeping journals of his adventures. Included in the book are maps and photographs of his travels. See the latest edition from the U of Tennessee Press in 1976.

⁴ For more information on the "Kentucky" rifles and those in Woodmansee's collection, See *All Outdoors and All Sports*, December 1921 issue, article, "Early American Rifles De Luxe: Some Remarkable Specimens in the Collection of Marc Woodmansee."

⁵ "7 photographs of guns" from Hunter Library's Special Collections, MSS 80-24 Horace Kephart. See appendix.

past research has not brot to light, Not
only this but you would see a collection
of the master pieces of the early American
rifles. I will certainly be pleased
to have you visit me at any time,
I have a modest little home, plenty to
eat, and a little to drink. A canoe
and a river, and best of all the man
who calls me friend is welcome to
the best I have.

I have been reading your last article
in *Out. All-out Doors*. And this just
reminds me to invite you to call on
my friend Harry B Harmer, 1300 Erie ave
Philadelphia. He has the premier pistol
collection of the world, and all in new
condition. no junk, just think what it
means to find that you have reached out
and taken in your hands 3 Walker-Colts.
Then lay them down and pick up one
by our 7 Patterson-Colts. Then in turn
every other model made by the Colt Co.
almost as many as Heinz has of pickles,
Then see 9 Harpers Ferry pistols, and
13 Berlin-Norths, and a pair of North-
Cheneys, a Vally Forge, and dozens of others
that the wealthy collectors of New York
do not have. Just think there are not
over 8 or 9 Walker-Colts, known of, and
one man has the 3 which are in

②

past research has not brot to light. Not only this but
you would see a collection of the master pieces of the
early American rifles. I will certainly be pleased to
have you visit me at any time. I have a modest little
home, plenty to eat, and a little to drink. A canoe and a
river, and best of all the man who calls me friend is
welcome to the best I have.

I have been reading your last article in Feb. *All-
Out Doors*.⁶ And this just reminds me to invite you to
call on my friend Harry B Harmer.⁷ 1300 Erie ave
Philadelphia. He has the premier pistol collection of
the world. and all in new condition. no junk, just think
what it means to feel that you have reached out and
taken in your hands 3 Walker-Colts.⁸ Then lay them
down and pick up one by one by 7 Patterson-Colts.⁹
Then in turn every other model made by the Colt Co.¹⁰
almost as many as Heinz¹¹ has of pickles, Then see 9
Harpers Ferry¹² pistols, and 13 Berlin-Norths, and a
pair of North-+Cheneys,¹³ a Vally Forge,¹⁴ and dozens
of others that the wealthy collectors of New York do
not have. Just think there are not over 8 or 9 Walker-
Colts known of and our man has the 3 which are in

⁶ *All Outdoors* magazine is published by Outing Publishing Company out of New York City, 239 Fourth Avenue. It is edited by L. L. Little. The periodical is published on a monthly basis. In 1921, copies were 25¢.

⁷ Harry B. Harmer is a renowned weapon enthusiast. Henry M. Stewart, Jr. mentions Harmer as "the Dean of early collectors" at the annual meeting of the American Society of Arms Collectors on October 1, 1960. A Harry B. Harmer born in 1858 in Philadelphia who fits the age and location description was in the leather goods industry, and he is likely to be the man Woodmansee references.

⁸ The Colt Walker is a single-action revolver invented by Colt and Samuel H. Walker from the US Army in 1845.

⁹ Designed by Sam Colt, the Colt Paterson (correct spelling) is another revolver manufactured in Paterson, New Jersey. It has a revolving cylinder and multiple chambers.

¹⁰ Woodmansee is referring to the Colt's Manufacturing Company, previously Colt's Patent Firearms Manufacturing Company, which was founded by Samuel Colt in 1855. It is an American firearms manufacturing company and one of the most well-known around the world.

¹¹ Heinz refers to the H.J. Heinz Company in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, founded in 1869. During the time period of the letter, Heinz was known as the "pickle king," thus Woodmansee's analogy of pickle and weapons.

¹² The Harpers Ferry model was the first American-made rifle. It uses a flintlock firing mechanism. For more information, see *Guns on the Early Frontiers*.

¹³ Berlin-Norths and North-Cheneys were created by Simeon North, who was born in Berlin, Connecticut. He is known as the "first official pistol maker." Many versions of the North pistol exist. See Patterson.

¹⁴ Using this spelling and a few variations, this weapon name was unable to be identified and researched at this time.

Still in the blue,³ you owe it to your-
self to see this collection, and to
mark the man who has the will
to look for them, and the willingness
to spend his money in order to
bring a collection of this kind together.
You will find him a prince
of a fellow. a man about 60 years
old. His good wife has been dead
for a number of years, and his
children are of course grown and
married. He has an apartment
where he has his collection, and
he will take pleasure in showing them
to you. So next time you are going
north drop him a line and tell
him you are coming, and where
you will be there, and that
Marc Woodmansee invited you.
That is all the passport you
will need, and you'll find his
liquor and cigars the best that
Philadelphia has. He will regale
you with long drawn out stories.
But he is one of the sort that
we like in spite of faults, and
after all, these are the real friends.
I've called on men who had (over)

③

still in the blue, you owe it to yourself to see this collection. And to meet the man who has the will to look for them. and the willingness to spend his money in order to bring a collection of this kind together.

You will find him a prince of a fellow. a man about 60 years old. His good wife has been dead for a number of years. and his children are of course grown and married.¹⁵ He has an apartment where he has his collection, and he will take pleasure in showing them to you. So next time you are going north drop him a line and tell him you are coming, and when you will be there, and that Marc Woodmansee invited you. That is all the passport you will need. and you'll find his liquor and cigars the best that Philadelphia has. He will regale you with long drawn out stories. But he is one of the sort that we like in spite of faults. and after all, these are the real friends. I've called on men who had

(over)

¹⁵ Genealogy records from the *Biographical Annals of Montgomery, Pennsylvania* note that Harmer's first marriage was to Emma Jones; together they had three children, William, Walter, and Ellen. Jones died in 1904. Presumably the same Harmer, according to Ancestry.com, remarried to Nora A. Cornell whose children are Sydney L. Cornell and Cathleen Cornell. Due to location and date similarities, it is likely that this information belongs to the Harmer that Woodmansee references.

①
collection of different kinds. and often
found them unwilling to show what
they had. and if they did so,
it was done begrudgingly. But you'll
not find Harmer in this class. He'll
say now there are ~~three~~ seven old fashion-
ed bureaus, about 5 or 6 drawers to
each. and they are filled with pistols.
Just help your self. take out a drawer
at a time. look them over. and put
them back. so I wont have it to do.
Heres the rum and cigars. So help
yourself. you really owe it to your-
self to see this collection. if for
no reason than from an education-
al standpoint. You've studied the
fire arm question to quite an extent.
but could probably call comparatively
few of the more than 700 different
American pistols. (revolvers) that have
ever been made. It is certainly an interesting
thing. Well I've been imposing
upon your time more than I
had intended. So will bring this
to a close.

Best Wishes
Marc Woodmansee

④

collections of different kinds and often found them unwilling to show that they had. and if they did so ~~so~~ [word marked out] it was done begrudgingly. But you'll not find Harmer in this class. He'll say now there are ~~three~~ [word marked out] seven old fashioned bureaus, about 5 or 6 drawers to each. and they are filled with pistols. Just help your self. take out a drawer at a time. look them over. and put them back. so I wont have it to do. Heres the rum and cigars. So help yourself, you really owe it to yourself to see this collection. if for no reason than from an educational standpoint. You've studied the fire arm question to quite an extent. but could probably call comparatively few of the more than 700 different American pistols (revolvers) that have been made. It is certainly an interesting study. Well I've been imposing upon your time more than I had intended. So will bring this to a close.

Best Wishes

Marc Woodmansee

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

American Society of Arms Collectors. *Proceedings of a Round Table Discussion of American Revolving Long Arms Given at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Arms Collectors*. 1 Oct. 1960. Deauville Hotel, Miami Beach, FL. Web. 22 Nov. 2015.

These conference proceedings detail the discussion of prominent leaders in arms collecting. This source was used to gather information about Harry B. Harmer.

Bridges, Anne, and Russell Clement. *Terra Incognita: An Annotated Bibliography of the Great Smoky Mountains, 1544-1934*. Knoxville: U of Tennessee, 2014. v-439. Print.

Terra Incognita is a bibliographical resource pertaining to the Great Smoky Mountains. Within this source, I gathered information about Horace Kephart's publications and life.

Colt's Manufacturing Company. "History." *Colt*. Colt's Manufacturing Company. 2015. Web. 3 Dec. 2015.

Colt's Manufacturing Company's website provided history about the company and specific weapons manufactured by Samuel Colt during the late 1800s. The information was used to give background on Walker Colts and Paterson Colts.

Ellison, George. Introduction. *Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life Among the Mountaineers*. By Horace Kephart. Rev. ed. Knoxville: U of Tennessee, 1976. ix-xlvi. Print.

Our Southern Highlanders is a novel by Kephart detailing his adventures and observations in the Smoky Mountains as well as a portrayal of life in western North Carolina. Ellison's introduction to Kephart's book provided vital information on the life of Kephart and his mission in western North Carolina. This information was used to compile the introduction to this edition.

"Horace Kephart: Bibliography of Kephart Writings." *Horace Kephart: Revealing an Enigma*. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, 2015. Web. 22 Nov. 2015.

This Western Carolina University's Special Collections digital resource on Horace Kephart was used to access biographies, images, bibliographies, and additional information.

Hosley, William N. *Colt: The Making of An American Legend*. Amherst: U of Massachusetts, 1996. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*. Web. 6 Dec. 2015.

In addition to the Colt's Manufacturing website, the eBook included additional information on Samuel Colt and the manufacturing of the company's revolvers. I used the source to describe the revolvers that Marc Woodmansee refers to in his letter.

Iowa. US Census Department. "Des Moines Ward 1, Polk, Iowa." *Fourteenth Census of the United States*. Des Moines, IA: Records of the Bureau of the Census, 1920. Microfilm. Record Group 29. *Ancestry.com*. Web. 4 Dec. 2015.

This census record provided information about Marc Woodmansee including his date of birth, residence and occupation at the time of his letter to Kephart, and his familial material.

Kephart, Horace. "Early American Rifles De Luxe: Some Remarkable Specimens in the Collection of Marc Woodmansee." *All Outdoors and All Sports*. December 1921: 96 & 105. Print.

Kephart's article features information about Woodmansee's rifle collection. This source was used to gather publication data of the *All Outdoors* magazine.

Kephart, Horace, George Ellison, and Janet McCue. *Camping and Woodcraft: A Handbook for Vacation Campers and for Travelers in the Wilderness*. Special ed. Vol. 1-2. Gatlinburg: Great Smoky Mountains Association, 2011. vii-lxxiv. Print.
Camping and Woodcraft is a manual for travelers who adventure off-road. Kephart's book was used to gather his biographical information.

Kephart, Horace. "The Southern Highlander." *Outing Magazine*. Ed. Outing. vol. lxi. New York: Outing, 1912-1913. 259-70, 703-14. Print.

This source is an article that Kephart wrote for "The Southern Highlander" when it was still published in *Outing*. I gathered the publication information for background information in the footnotes of the edition.

"Marc Woodmansee, Des Moines, Iowa. To Horace Kephart." 1919. Photograph. MSS 80-24 Horace Kephart. Folder 621, 7 Photographs of Guns. Hunter Lib. Special Collections, Cullowhee.
This is the original photograph that was included in the letter from Marc Woodmansee to Horace Kephart and was included in the footnote where Woodmansee references sending Kephart a large photo of a section of his collection.

"Outing." *The Online Books Page*. U of Penn., n.d. Web. 2 Dec. 2015.

This resource provided digital access to many articles written by Kephart. I gathered publication information from this source.

"Out-of-Doors: Kentucky Rifles." *Saturday Evening Post* 192.9 (1919): 101-04. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 4 Dec. 2015.

This article in the *Saturday Evening Post* detailed the rifle collection of Woodmansee. The information I received confirmed that Woodmansee was a top collector in the United States.

Patterson, C. Meade. "North Pistols and Their Variations." *Bulletin Number 2*. American Society of Arms Collectors, 1956. PDF.

This PDF document from the American Society of Arms Collectors provided biographical information about Simeon North and the weapons that his company manufactured. I used the source to describe the North Cheney and Berlin North pistols.

Pennsylvania. Department of Health. "Certificate of Death, Harry B. Harmer, 29 Nov. 1931." *Records of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Death certificates, 1906-1963*. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1931. Microfilm. Record Group 11. *Ancestry.com*. Web. 4 Dec. 2015.

The death certificate of Harry B. Harmer was used to determine information to include in the footnote including his age, familial relations, occupation, and position in the world of firearms.

Russell, Carl P. *Guns on the Early Frontiers: A History of Firearms from Colonial Times Through the Years of the Western Fur Trade*. Berkeley: U of California, 1957. Print.

Guns on the Early Frontiers is a book detailing the history of firearms in America. I used the information to find out the background of Harpers Ferry pistols.

Roberts, Ellwood. *Biographical Annals of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, Containing Genealogical Records of Representative Families, Including Many of the Early Settlers and Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens*. Vol. 2. New York: T.S. Benham, 1904. 282-83. Print.

This collection of biographies provided information on Harry B. Harmer to confirm other research that I conducted. I was able to discover the names of his first wife and children and used it to write a footnote on Harmer.

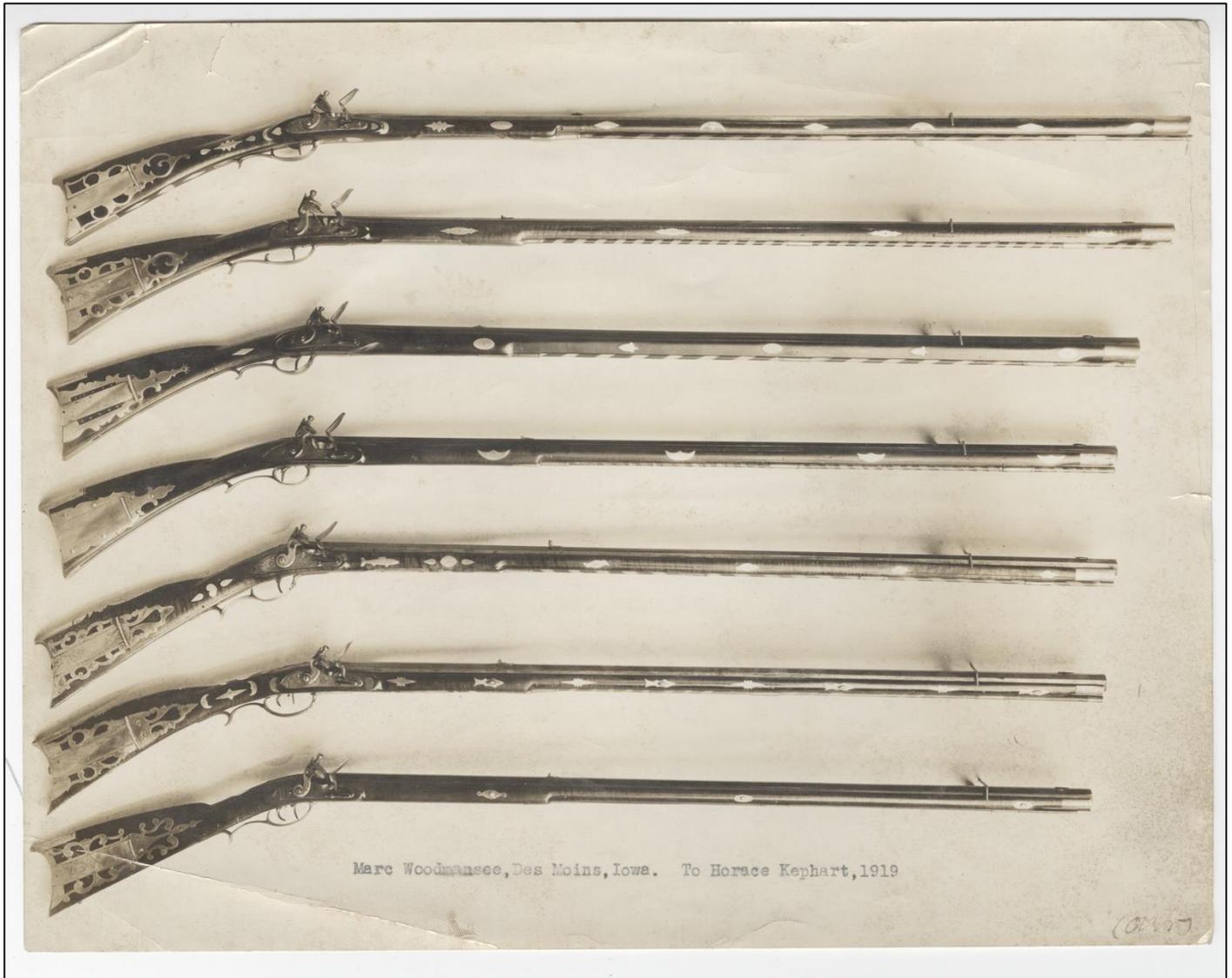
Skrabec, Quentin R. *H.J. Heinz: A Biography*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co., 2009. Print.

This book is a biography of Heinz's founder, H. J. Heinz and includes the history and growth of the company. Woodmansee made an analogy to the Heinz pickle, and Skrabec confirms Heinz to be the "pickle king."

Woodmansee, Marc. Letter to Horace Kephart. 26 Jan. 1919. MS. Horace Kephart: Revealing an Enigma Collection. Hunter Lib. Special Collections, Cullowhee.

This is the original letter from Marc Woodmansee to Horace Kephart and was used to transcribe and create the edition.

APPENDIX:
Marc Woodmansee, Des Moines, Iowa. To Horace Kephart, 1919 (front)



[next]

Marc Woodmansee, Des Moines, Iowa. To Horace Kephart, 1919 (back)
Description of seven rifles in Woodmansee's collection

No 1. ^{L-8} By Matthias Miller about 1795. 49 in smooth bore
size 50. - curly maple stock. 40 silver inlays. brass
mounted. This is said to have been old Matt's
masterpiece. # 11/10

No 2 By Simon Miller about 1810. Simon and
Matthias were brothers.

No 2 has 48 inch smooth bore bbl. size of bore
about 50. curly maple stock 12 inlays. brass
mounted.

No 3. By Geo Klein. Philadelphia about 1800
45 inch smooth bore bbl. size about 50. 16 silver
inlays. slightly curly maple stock. brass
mounted.

No 4. By Jas Golcher about 1760. Jas Golcher made
the Geo Washington rifle. (now at Valley Forge.)
Jas died 1805. This one has 44 inch bbl
smooth bore about 50 cal. fine curly maple
stock 10 silver inlays. brass mounted.

No 5. By John Workman about 1825 to 30. 45 in bbl
smooth bore about 45 cal. curly maple stock
30 silver inlays. brass mounted.

No 6. By C Bird Phila about 1820. 43 inch
rifled bbl. (very accurate) about 40 cal. curly
maple stock 40 silver inlays. brass mounted.

No 7. No makers name. 42 inch fully rifled bbl
about 36 cal. fine curly maple stock. accurate
and a 99% sure fire flint battery.