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Two Leather Caps of the War of 1812

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armorers would have made it, but cut from a sheet of rolled iron. It passes through a slot in the slender neck of the apical point and is held in place only by the pressure of a tight fit. For pierced ornaments it has daggers and diamonds. The apex bears the usual group of six holes and also a perforation shaped like a nail. The effect of the weapon is one of frail futility for any warlike purpose. We know such things were carried by minor officers as insignia of office, by attendants in courts of law, by the town watch, and occasionally by church wardens. For ceremonial use such "arms" were sturdy enough.

The Wellesley halberd (fig. D) being almost identical with that from Guilford, we must assign it approximately the same date. Its quality is a trifle better (the ferrule, for instance) and the outline of the apex more ornate. Again we have diamonds and daggers as pierced decoration, not to mention the ever present group of six holes. Whether or not there is any connection between the hearts, diamonds, commas, daggers, disks, wheels, crosses, *etc.*, that appear as brass or silver inlays on the stocks and forearms of so-called "Kentucky" rifles of the eighteenth century and the similarly shaped piercings on New England halberds, this writer is not prepared to say. Did the colonial gunsmith borrow ornaments from halberds? Were halberds made by gunsmiths?

For the roving collector who comes upon a halberd which may be of colonial New England origin it is well to check such diagnostic features as we have come to recognize:

1. Heads are made of two pieces, one passing through the other.
2. Apical points are leaf-shaped and ornamented with groups of perforations.
3. Blades are crescent-shaped, pierced in designs resembling the inlays on colonial rifles.

Should such a halberd reward your search, be duly grateful. You have found one of the rarest and most desirable treasures in all the field of military Americana, and this writer, if he hears of your good fortune, will be properly envious.

CARL O. V. KIENBUSCH

### *TWO LEATHER CAPS OF THE WAR OF 1812*

In view of the articles by Hugh Charles McBarron, Jr., on the American uniforms of the War of 1812 which have been appearing in this section, the two contributions which follow are of particular interest as illustrating the leather cap introduced, in 1813.

#### *1. Cap in the Fort Ticonderoga Museum*

This cap appears to be the type recommended in 1812 to replace the round cloth cap then in use by Infantry. Whether it was actually authorized in that

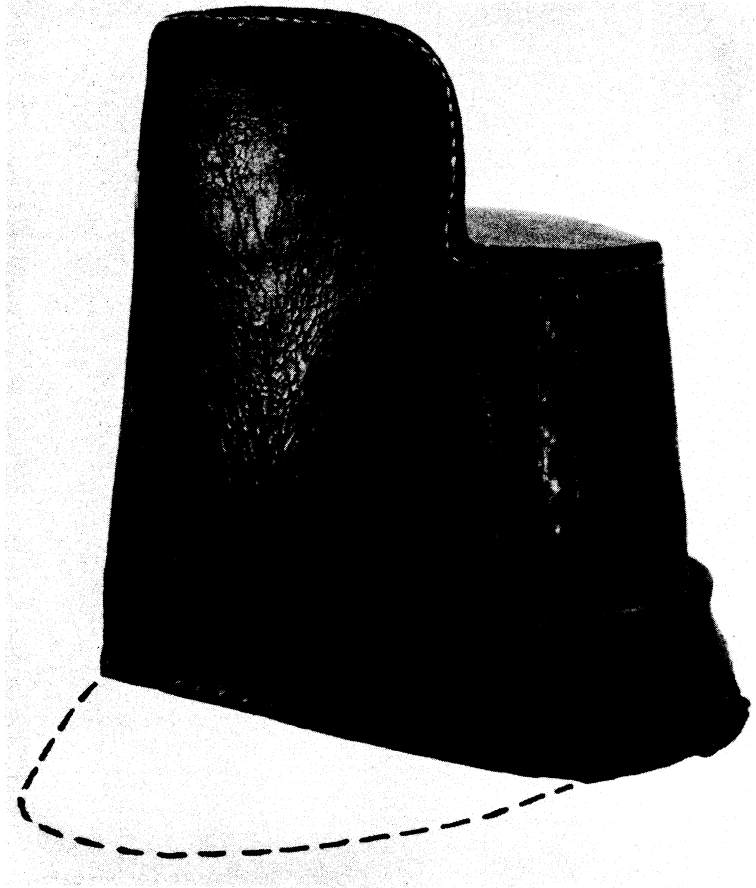


*Photograph: Courtesy of Fort  
Ticonderoga Museum*

year is not certain, but by February 1813 bids were being received for its manufacture. The leather cap was issued widely in 1813, and there is little doubt that by the end of the war it was being worn by the bulk of the Infantry and Artillery.

The specimen illustrated shows unusually careful workmanship; one is inclined to believe it may have belonged to an officer. The arrangement of the cords is unlike any other of the period and, of course, may not correspond to that originally worn. The cap plate bears a device found on belt plates of the period. This same size and shape was adopted by some state organizations which replaced the eagle with their state coat of arms.

HARRISON K. BIRD, JR.



*Photograph: Courtesy of National Park Service, Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, New Jersey*

## *2. Cap in the Morristown National Historical Park*

In the museum of this park is a cap from the de Lancey Kountze Collection, a gift of the Washington Association of New Jersey, which appears to be the type issued to foot troops of the United States Regular Army in 1813. This shako is of brown leather, which may once have been black. It is hand sewn,  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inches high in front,  $6\frac{1}{2}$  in back, and  $7\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter at the bottom edge. A folded flap at the back, approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep, could be let down to protect the neck. The visor (indicated by a dotted line in the photograph) is missing, its presence at one time is suggested by the shaped front and empty stitching. A double perforation exists near the top on the right side, and a leather socket for a pompon wire runs down the left.

**ALFRED F. HOPKINS**