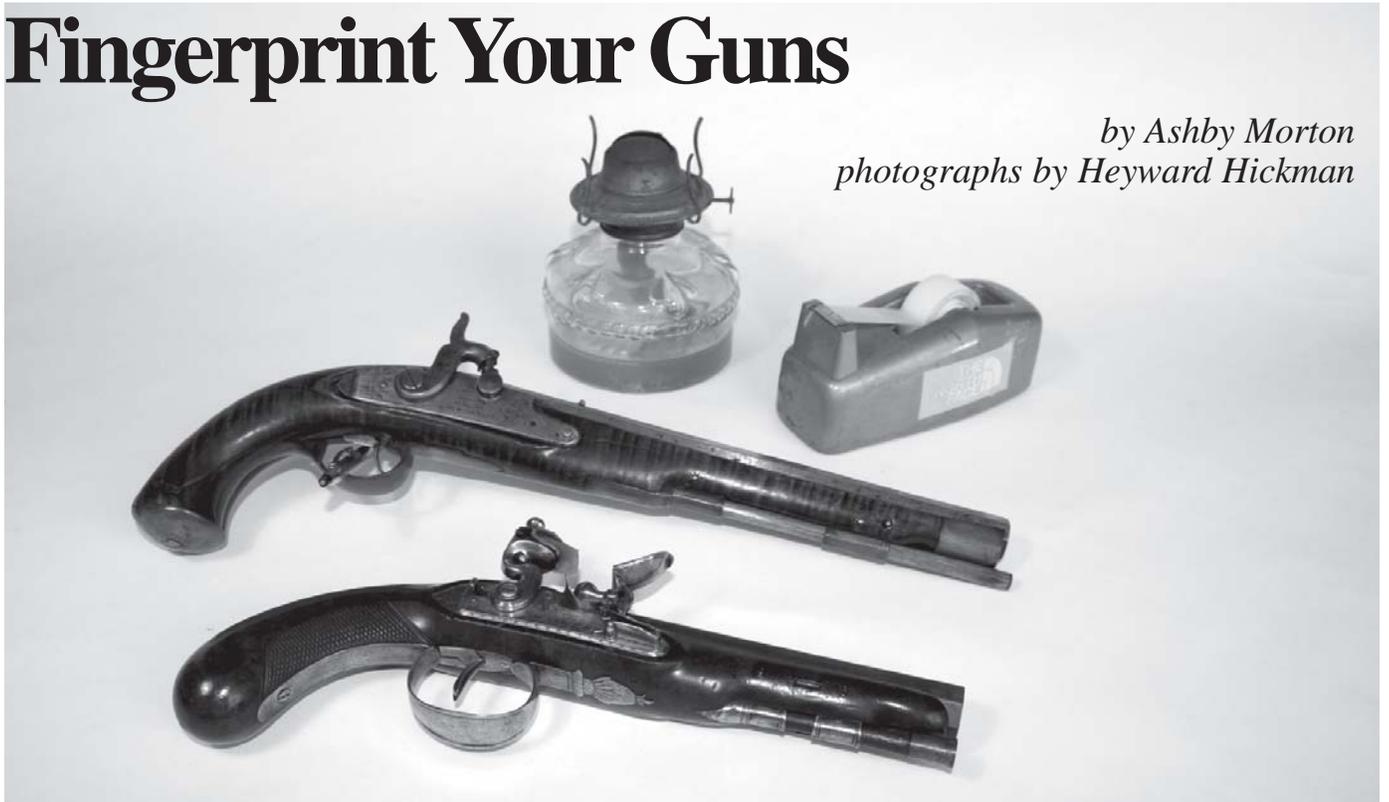


Fingerprint Your Guns

by Ashby Morton
photographs by Heyward Hickman



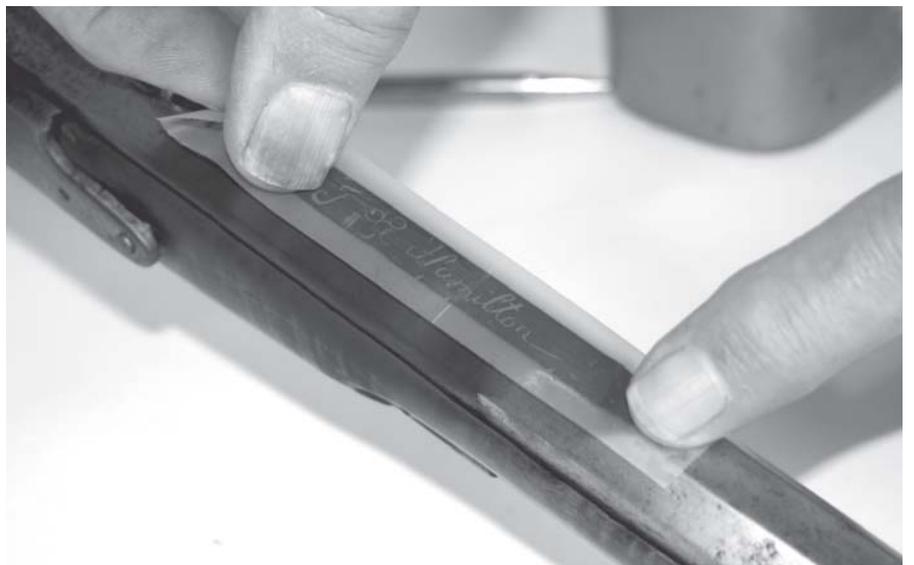
How can you reclaim a stolen gun from the police who recovered it? The police will want a serial number to prove that it is yours. But what if your gun is an antique and has no serial number? Here is a solution I learned from a museum curator: fingerprint your guns.

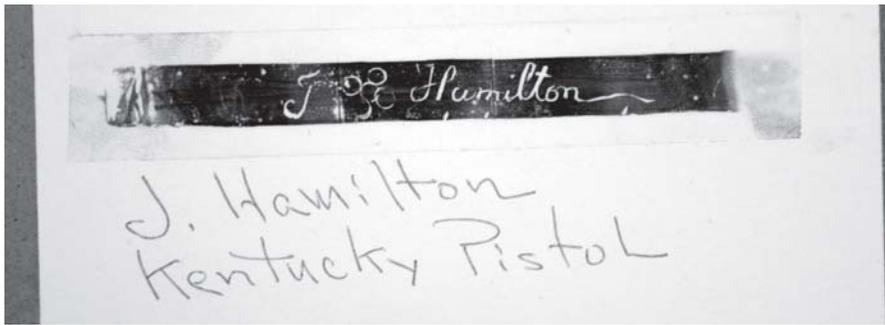
The police record fingerprints from crime scenes by dusting them and lifting the dust pattern with transparent tape. We can do the same thing with lampblack (or candle soot) and Scotch® tape.

First, smoke a metal part such as a barrel or lock plate where there is a distinctive mark, or even a pattern of deep scratches, a maker's name, an engraved decoration; whatever. Be sure the

smoke is far enough from the flame to avoid any damage to the gun.

Carefully apply a piece of transparent tape to the soot-covered mark. Then lift the tape straight up without smear-





ing it. The tape will pick up the soot surrounding the mark or design.

Carefully affix the tape on a card so you will have a permanent and exact print for your records.

This method works well for any valuable metal items such as silver spoons, swords, knives, etc. A thief might erase inked-on and lacquered marks, but your gun fingerprint is exact and unknown to him. **MB**

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