

## Miles Greenwood and Ohio weaponry

When the Civil War broke out in April 1861, the problem wasn't raising an army. It was providing adequate arms for the young enlistees.

In 1861 the Ohio armory contained very few weapons. The situation was dire. So dire, in fact, that Governor William Dennison Jr.\* sent his judge advocate general Christopher P. Wolcott as the state's agent to New York to buy arms and other equipment. Wolcott acquired 1,000 Sharps carbines (\$30 each), 2,000 Enfield rifled muskets (\$22.50 each), and 320 U.S. rifles (\$25 each). Wolcott also enlisted the aid of a Massachusetts agent to buy weapons in Europe. By the end of 1861 Wolcott and other agents had delivered to Ohio some 86,000 arms and equipment, including 7,500 French rifles, 7,500 cavalry sabers, 4,000 non-commissioned officer swords, 3,665 revolvers and four complete artillery batteries.

But the story that Phil Spaugy and Jim Brenner, weapons collectors and Civil War experts, told at the roundtable meeting in May was largely about renowned metals manufacturer Miles Greenwood of Cincinnati (March 19, 1807 - November 6, 1885). Greenwood opened Eagle Ironworks in 1832 at the junction of the Miami and Erie Canal and Ohio River. The ironworks quickly became the largest in the region, turning out all manner of metal devices and pieces. Greenwood served on the Cincinnati city council and established himself as a formidable local citizen.

When fire damaged the Eagle works in 1852, Greenwood did not sit by idly. With a locksmith and locomotive builder, Greenwood commenced the design and construction of what would become the first practical steam-powered fire engine. The city accepted the first one on New Year's Day 1853, then a second one. The city organized the first professional and fully-paid fire department in the U.S. on April 1, 1853. Greenwood was the department's first chief, and his legacy in the annals of fire fighting is still celebrated today.

When war erupted, Greenwood was ready. His works was highly efficient and innovative. He produced 12 iron anchors for pontoon bridges for General John C. Fremont in 24 hours. His works also manufactured turrets for Union ironclads, products that no other ironworks could produce. As the war proceeded, Eagle could turn out some 3,000 smoothbore muskets per day.

Greenwood was scrupulous in his dealings, producing only implements for the Union. This raised the ire of Southern sympathizers, who set fire to his

works three times during the war. So, Greenwood's fire fighting interest proved valuable.

In addition to manufacturing rifles, Greenwood was very adept at altering smoothbore arms. From July to November 1861 the Eagle works rifled the barrels and installed sights on some 27,000 rifles.

In addition to making small arms and altering existing weapons, Greenwood's works undertook the daunting task of manufacturing an ironclad, named the "Tippecanoe." This undertaking proved to be the ultimate undoing of the works as the ironclad was not finished until June 1865 after a series of cost overruns.

After the war Eagle ironworks faded, and Greenwood's children were unable to revive it.

\* Dennison, a Whig and later Republican, served as Ohio's 24th governor and as Lincoln's postmaster general during the Civil War.