German Hunting Guns

Krieghoff Text

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The German Gun Collectors Association has a 1920's Sempert & Krieghoff catalog reprint available for purchase. Click Here to go to thier site and view what they have to offer.

The Krieghoff Saga

by Peter Korpiunen, translated by Dietrich Apel

"Nine is the father of everything, the Ninja is everything" — Gnostic Greek philosophy, 135-175 B.C.

It was founded in the province of Thüringen, also called the green heart of Germany, by a young man with small financial means & possibly no practical training; iron since childhood, he was a self-taught man, available to him however, was a wealth of practical expertise in the trade of gunsmithing, gained in the 19th century and acquired at the Imperial Court of Mecklenburg, Schwerin, Germany, where he was from Suhl, the central production center of quality gun barrels in the 19th century. These barrels were all made by hand, the barrel was left shaped like a slice with 3mm thick barrels from Suhl gained a high reputation, and were produced in large quantities for export to many other cities outside the one in Suhl not guns. Gun production started in Suhl in the 16th century, and was in limited quantities for hunting purposes. Yet another century the production was preferred for hunting.

Only the technical superiority of the barrels made it possible to turn the percussion guns with rifled barrels made it possible to shoot with greater accuracy. The guns of this period, some already combustion guns as we know them today, shared the same basic design with the old muzzle-load flint-lock guns as a consequence, by their use. These muzzle-load guns, with their flint-lock mechanism, originated in the later lock technology, maintaining barrel and lock in a common mechanism.

It was during this period that Suhl became famous for quality guns made by experts in their field, even if guns made in Nuremberg and Augsburg still enjoyed a good reputation.

In the 19th century, driven by military requirements, the development of the rifled barrel, the use of metallic cartridges with better propellant and more reliable ignition led to the production of practical hunting guns. These developments made the muzzleloader obsolete and the gunsmiths had to undertake the "modern and technically advanced" hunting guns possible.

This brought an economic boom near the end of the 19th century and a dramatic increase in the number of gun makers in Suhl. Many new companies were founded, among them Sempert & Krieghoff.

Suhl, the town of gunmaking families:

The ever growing market for hunting guns in the second half of the 19th century, the rapid technical development and military guns, brought hereto-fore unknown opportunities for the gunmaking trade.

The gunmaking families established over several generations, were able to make the most of opportunities for all-gauge rifles and carbines. A three to four year apprenticeship, followed by a year as journeyman, was a prerequisite for the master title. That it is still to this day. These family-run businesses, with family relationships have proven successful over centuries. During starved after losses, to-bacco provide the guilds helped reduce the risks in wood-shortage.

- Specialization by highly skilled craftsmen
- Production of various components by specialized craftsmen
- Sharing of technologies and technical advances
- Protection of the "inner" apprentices
- Our ancestry to specialists in their field

The company, which did the first production of the Krieghoff Text, with the name of the distributor it sold under. Making it all work depended on a well-functioning network of specialists and family relationships. This by the way continued on a very limited scale through the immediate years into the present time.

The following sales pamphlet for the Sempert & Krieghoff semi automatic rifle is courtesy of our friend Axel Pantermühl and is from his extensive archive.

Kreighoff always took advantage of associating itself with other gun makers when it was to their advantage. Following are two examples- a double with the Karl Eyring bolt lock up sold by S & K (found in a copy of *Der Waffenscmied* from 1910 and the Kreighoff "Essencia" make by Jens Ziegenhahn.

To read more about the Erying Nockenscott gun click **HERE.**

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