

SELECTED
U. S.
SMALL ARMS

ROCK ISLAND
ARSENAL MUSEUM



Rock Island Arsenal Museum
Rock Island Arsenal
Rock Island, IL 61299-5000
(309) 782-5021

Open Tuesday - Saturday, noon - 4:00 pm.
Closed all Federal Holidays, the day after
Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve.



RIA 6758
 Model 1903 rifle
 Rock Island Arsenal, 1904
 Serial number 1
 .30 caliber

The Model 1903 rifle was based on the design of the German Mauser, a bolt action, military rifle. Because it was designed and first produced by Springfield Armory, it is commonly called the *Springfield*. Beginning in 1904, Rock Island Arsenal produced the Model 1903 rifle. The first 18,000 examples were the rod-bayonet type, seen here. Production of the rod-bayonet was halted under orders of President Theodore Roosevelt on January 4, 1905. He requested that a knife-bayonet replace the rod-bayonet.

Although this is serial number 1 and all records indicate that it was immediately sent to the museum after its fabrication on December 20, 1904, its stock is dated 1905. The stock is marked with a "CN/1905" cartouche indicating that the rifle was inspected in fiscal year 1905 and that the inspector was Conrad Nelson.

Located in the Model 1903 rifle exhibit



RIA 6768
 Model 1903 Mark 1 rifle
 Springfield Armory, 1919-1920
 Serial number 1107423
 .30 caliber

RIA 6771
 Pedersen Device
 Company, 1918
 Serial number 62871

The Pedersen Device was officially called the "Automatic Pistol, Caliber .30 Model of 1918," to keep its design and manufacture a secret. It was developed to convert the Model 1903 rifle from a bolt action to a semi-automatic rifle. It used a 40-round magazine of .30 caliber, pistol cartridges. The bolt and the Pedersen Device could be used interchangeably. The Model 1903 was slightly modified to fit the Pedersen Device, so it was redesignated the Model 1903 Mark 1.

This particular rifle was overhauled by Rock Island Arsenal during the Second World War. It is stamped "RIA" on the left side of the stock and is stamped with the inspector's initials of "FK," Frank Krack. The barrel was replaced at that time, because it is dated November 1944.

Located on the ledge of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 6797
 M1 rifle
 Springfield Armory, 1938
 Serial number 2
 .30 caliber

The M1 is known as the *Garand*, because John C. Garand of Springfield Armory developed it. In 1932, several semi-automatic rifle designs were under consideration by the War Department Board at Springfield Armory. Eighty samples of the T1E1 submitted by John C. Garand were manufactured and tested. The first 2,902 M1 rifles were manufactured by Springfield Armory in 1938. It was the standard weapon used during the Second World War. Although manufacturing ceased in the 1950s, it was still in use in Vietnam as late as 1963.

The M1 was primarily produced by Springfield Armory and by the Winchester Repeating Arms Company. This early example of the M1 was manufactured before the gas port was moved back into the barrel. Its gas port is in an adapter ahead of the muzzle.

Located on panel 39 of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 6886
 M14 National Match rifle
 Harrington & Richardson Arms Company, 1960
 Rock Island Arsenal, 1967
 Serial number 273919
 7.62mm

Officially adopted in 1957, the M14 rifle was the first U.S. weapon to use the standardized 7.62mm NATO round. The M14 was a modernized and improved version of the M1 Garand rifle.

Harrington & Richardson Arms Company was one of the four companies that manufactured the M14 rifle. This rifle was produced during the second batch of rifles ordered by the U. S. government.

This M14 rifle was rebuilt to National Match specifications by Rock Island Arsenal in 1967. Rock Island Arsenal had the mission for rebuilding M1911A1 pistols and M14 rifles to National Match specifications from 1966 through the mid 1980s.

Located on panel 42 of the small arms wall exhibit

RIA 5742
General Officers M15 pistol
Rock Island Arsenal, 1972
Serial Number GO 178
.45 caliber



Only 1,004 General Officers M15 pistols were produced at Rock Island Arsenal from 1972 to 1974. The M15 was designed at Rodman Laboratories at Rock Island Arsenal and was standardized on October 12, 1972. It was designed to replace the Colt "Model M," .32 and .380 caliber, pocket pistols that had been issued to General Officers since 1941.

The M15 was very similar to National Match pistols. In fact, both were rebuilt Model 1911A1 pistols that were produced by the same armorers at Rock Island Arsenal. The distinctive features of the M15 included a shortened barrel and slide, distinctive horizontal grooves on the back grip, checkering on the front grip strap, a high-profile, fixed type rear sight, and checkered walnut grips.

This M15 pistol, serial number GO 178, was built on a M1911A1 pistol manufactured by Ithaca Gun Company in 1943. The modification was completed by Rock Island Arsenal in 1972.

Located on panel 4 of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 6223
Model 1855 rifle
Harpers Ferry Armory, 1860
.58 caliber

A total of 7,317 Model 1855 percussion rifles were made at Harpers Ferry Armory from 1857 to 1861. Most of the existing rifles were damaged or destroyed during the Confederate takeover of the armory in April of 1861.

The distinctive feature of this weapon is the Maynard tape priming system, which was an automatic ignition system. Cocking the hammer fed a roll of fulminate-studded tape over the nipple on the bolster. When the trigger was pulled, the hammer struck the fulminate patch and fired the gun.

Harpers Ferry Armory and Springfield Armory also manufactured another variation of this weapon, known as the Model 1855 rifle musket. The rifle musket was 7 inches longer and had three barrel bands. A total of 59,273 rifle muskets were made during the same time frame as the rifle.

This particular weapon appears in the 1909 *Catalogue of the Ordnance Museum, Rock Island Arsenal, Ill.*, which indicates it is one of the original artifacts in the collection.

Located on panel 27 of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 5941
Model 1873 Winchester rifle
Winchester Repeating Arms, 1873
Serial number 1958
.44/40 caliber

This Model 1873 Winchester rifle has been identified as an Indian weapon used at the Battle of Little Bighorn and at the Reno-Benteen defense site on June 25 and 26, 1876. At the southern end of the main battlefield, cases fired from this weapon were found south of the position held by Lieutenant James Calhoun and Company L of the 7th Cavalry. A case was found at the northern end of the main battlefield behind a knoll used by the Indians to fire at Last Stand Hill. Cases were also found on Wooden Leg Hill or Sharpshooter Ridge at the Reno-Benteen defense site. Captured from Sioux or Cheyenne in the ensuing years, this weapon was part of the original collection of the Ordnance Museum at Rock Island Arsenal in 1909

According to the records of the Winchester Arms Museum, this rifle with 24-inch round barrel was received from the factory by the shipping department on September 1, 1874. It was shipped to the purchaser the same day. Today the barrel length is 20 1/8 inches, so the rifle has been cut down to carbine length.

Located in the warehousing exhibit



RIA 5982
Kentucky Leman rifle
Henry E. Leman, 1840
.54 caliber

The Kentucky Leman rifle was designed by Henry E. Leman. Leman's rifle production took place in Lancaster, PA, where he was known to be one of the greatest gunsmiths of the time. The Kentucky Leman rifles were primarily manufactured for Indian trade use, as was this rifle, produced in 1840.

This rifle was captured from Indians in the years following the Battle of Little Bighorn. The essence of Indian possession can still be found on the war weapon when noticing the repairs that had been made to the once damaged rifle. Using a stitching method and green rawhide as a wrap, the Indians were able to bind together the damaged areas of the stock. This method has proven effective for it still holds today.

Located on the ledge of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 6951
M16 rifle
Colt's Patent Firearms, 1965
Serial Number 064054
5.56mm

The M16 was the most important weapon of the infantryman during the Vietnam War. The M16 provided U.S. soldiers with an advantage over the enemy for the rifle was light in weight, easy to use, and provided rapid gun fire up to 650-700 rounds per minute. Armalite produced the rifle originally known as the AR-15. Eugene Stoner designed the weapon after small arms research collected during the First and Second World Wars suggested that infantrymen would greatly benefit from a rifle that is lighter in weight and higher in capacity. The rifle became the standard for the U.S. Air Force and was named the M16 after military modifications had been made. It was the 16th firearm produced by Armalite, giving the weapon its name, Model 16. The M16 still remains the standard small arms weapon for the Air Force today.

The rifle displayed was manufactured in 1965 at Colt's Patent Firearms. It was acquired a year later in 1966 by the Rock Island Arsenal. Attached to the firearm is a 40mm XM148 grenade launcher.

Located on panel 47 of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 10487
Wall gun
Rappahannock Forge, 1775-1780
1 3/16-inch bore diameter

Wall guns filled the tactical gap between hand-held firearms and cannon. They were mounted on the tops of fortification walls by means of the yoke attached to the stock. The guns were then easily aimed in all directions despite their considerable weight. This example weighs 50 pounds.

This wall gun was made between 1775 and 1780 at the Rappahannock Forge, established in Falmouth, Virginia, by James Hunter. Besides wall guns, Hunter manufactured muskets, pistols, bayonets, and swords.

Only five Rappahannock Forge wall guns are known to exist. Two are in our collection; one is located at the West Point Museum, another at the Smithsonian Institution, and another at Springfield Armory. Firearm conservators at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in Virginia restored this wall gun in 1990.

Located on the ledge of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 6160
Model 1819 Hall rifle
Harpers Ferry Armory, 1824
Serial Number 25
.52 caliber

The M1819 was designed by John H. Hall in the early 1800s. The rifle was introduced in 1819 as the first single shot, breech loading military rifle adopted by the U.S. military. The M1819 Hall was greatly manufactured between the years of 1820 and 1830. It took time for the breech loading method to become greatly received as soldiers were more familiar with muzzle loaded rifles. The benefits of the breech loaded weapon could not be ignored and the production of this method became widely popular after the Civil War.

The M1819 Hall that is on display was manufactured in 1824 at Harpers Ferry Armory. The rifle was acquired by the Rock Island Arsenal in 1909, which makes it one of the original artifacts of the museum collection.

Located on panel 23 of the small arms wall exhibit



RIA 5844
Prototype
Model 1919 submachine gun
Auto-Ordnance Corporation, 1919
Serial number 6
.45 caliber

Brigadier General John T. Thompson, a West Point graduate, was Director of Arsenals in charge of small arms production during the First World War. Upon his retirement, he teamed with retired Naval Commander John B. Blish to form the Auto-Ordnance Corporation. They developed a hand-held machine gun that used the Army .45 caliber pistol round.

This prototype Model 1919 submachine gun is one of the first Thompson submachine guns and is not equipped to take a shoulder stock. The Thompson submachine gun was complex and expensive to manufacture. The Auto-Ordnance Corporation had only assembly facilities, and they relied on the Colt Company and other manufacturers to provide component parts.

This submachine gun was popularly known as the Tommy Gun. Although the Navy adopted the Model 1928 and the Army adopted the Model 1928A1, it is best known for its use by gangsters and gangbusters during the Prohibition era of the 1920s.

Located on panel 7 of the small arms wall exhibit

The Ordnance Museum at Rock Island Arsenal was opened to the public on July 4, 1905. It is the second oldest U.S. Army Museum in existence. The West Point Museum was opened in 1857 at the U.S. Military Academy, and is the oldest U.S. Army Museum. The Springfield Armory Museum, Springfield, Massachusetts, was opened in 1871, and is now operated by the National Park Service.

There were three unrelated, important events that led to the founding of this museum.

On October 1, 1903, Chief of Ordnance Major General William Crozier notified Rock Island Arsenal that fifteen boxes of ordnance materiel would shortly be arriving "for the purpose of preserving it in a Military Museum to be established at the Rock Island Arsenal."

A small arms plant for manufacturing the Model 1903 rifle was established at Rock Island Arsenal in 1904. In order to make room for the manufacturing plant, the weapons and obsolete materiel that had been warehoused at Rock Island Arsenal were sold at auction in the East. Before this materiel was shipped, two examples of each gun were selected and retained for the museum.

The U.S. Government had a display at the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904. At the conclusion of this world's fair, portions of the government display were transported to the Rock Island Arsenal for its new museum.

The Catalog of the Ordnance Museum, Rock Island Arsenal was published in 1909. This published reference lists the small arms, accoutrements, and ammunition that were in the collection of the museum. At its very beginning, the museum of Rock Island Arsenal was known for its small arms collection.

The Ordnance Museum was housed in Shop A (Building 102). During the First World War, additional space was needed for manufacturing, so the museum was packed up and placed in storage.

At the request of the local community, the museum was reopened in its original location on July 4, 1919. Now called the Rock Island Arsenal Museum, the emphasis of the museum remained small arms and ordnance. Aspects of Rock Island Arsenal history were included in the museum displays for the first time.

The museum was closed to the public and stored away during the Second World War. When it reopened in May of 1948, it was housed in Building 60, its present day location.

The museum was renamed the John M. Browning Memorial Museum on November 4, 1959 in "recognition of Mr. Browning's contributions to ordnance technology and the armed forces." The museum became known for its small arms collection, which was an eclectic collection of foreign, U.S., military and civilian weapons.

When the U.S. Army Center of Military History was established in 1950, all U.S. Army Museums came under its authority. To coincide with developments in museum professional standards, each U.S. Army Museum was acknowledged as a unique organization with an approved mission. The primary mission of the museum at Rock Island Arsenal was the history of Rock Island Arsenal and Arsenal Island. Its secondary mission was the history of small arms development.

In 1987, the museum was renamed the Rock Island Arsenal Museum to reflect its primary purpose. The phrase "People, Processes, and Products," was coined to explain the important themes in the history of Rock Island Arsenal. The small arms collection remained an important, but secondary aspect of the museum collection.