

History of the Old West Revolver



Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum, Bozeman, Montana. Will Abbot Photo

1849 Pocket Model Colt



From the D. Cappa Family on display at the Frontier Montana Museum, Powell County Museum & Arts Foundation, Inc., Deer Lodge, Montana. Will Abbot photo.

1872 Open Top Colt

Samuel Colt

Born in 1814

Showed an interest in science and mechanics by age 7

At the age of 16, took a job on the brig Corvo and set sail from Boston to Calcutta, India

While aboard the ship, 1830-1831, carved a model of his idea to produce a multi-shot firearm with a revolving cylinder

Invention may have been inspired by the motion of the ship's windlass.



Photo courtesy of www.famousamericans.net

Samuel Colt



Courtesy of Colt's
Manufacturing Company L.C.C.



Photo Courtesy of Colt Black Powder Arms Catalog 1999

1842 Colt Paterson
Produced by Patent Arms Manufacturing
Company in Paterson, N.J.

Paterson Colt's

No. 1 - Pocket or Baby
Paterson 1837-1838
.28 Caliber

No. 2 - Belt Model
1838-1840 .31 Caliber
Straight Grip

No. 3 - Belt Model
1838-1840 .31 Caliber
Flared Grip

No. 5 Holster or Texas
Paterson 1838 - 1842 .36
Caliber

All 5-Chambered Cylinders



Private Collection. Will Abbot Photo

No. 5 Paterson Reproduction

Trigger Exposed
Only When the
Hammer is Cocked





Smoothbore four shot flintlock revolver in .52 caliber. Unknown maker in Bresica, Italy around 1690 and was converted to percussion in the 1820s or 1830s. *Courtesy of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; accession number 1986.9.1*



Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum Collection, Bozeman, Montana. Will Abbot Photo.

Allen and Thurber Pepperbox Pistol;
Worcester, MA

Pepperbox Pistol

Solid Piece with Revolving
Barrels of Varying Number
and Caliber

Double Action Mechanism



Museum of the Rockies Collection, Bozeman, Montana . Will Abbot Photo

Colt Walker Model 1847



Private Collection. Will Abbot Photo

9 Inch Barrel .44 Caliber

4 Pd, 9 Ounces 6 Shot

Usually Carried in Pommel Holsters

Production of 1100 by Eli Whitney, Jr.

By 1842, Sam Colt was in financial ruin and began working on underwater mines until contacted by Capt. Walker of the Texas Rangers

“The pistols (No. 5 Paterson's) which you made for the Texas Navy have been in use by the Rangers for three years, and I can say with confidence that it is the only good improvement that I have seen”

- Cpt. Samuel Walker, 1846

Colt Dragoons



1st Model Dragoon



3^d Model Dragoon

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Transition Walker and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Model Dragoon

Manufactured 1847-1861

.44 Caliber 6 Shot

7 ½ Barrel

1st Model: Oval Cylinder Stops, Square Backed Trigger Guard

2nd Model: Rectangular Cylinder Stops with Guide Groove, Square Backed Trigger Guard

3rd Model: Rectangular Cylinder Stops with Guide Groove, Rounded Trigger Guard

Offered in Pocket Model “Baby Dragoon” and Later 1849 Pocket Model

1851 Colt Navy



Gallatin Historic Society Pioneer Museum Collection, Bozeman, MT. Will Abbot Photo

.36 Caliber

7 ½ Inch Barrel

6 Shot

Sidearm of Wild Bill Hickok

1849 Pocket Model

.31 Caliber

5 of 6 Shot

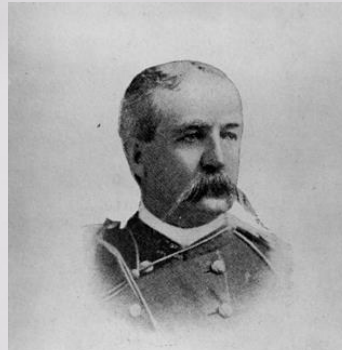


Museum of the Rockies Collection, Bozeman, MT. Will Abbot Photo

1858 Remington



Courtesy of the Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum, Bozeman, MT. Will Abbot Photo



LIEUT. GUSTAVUS C. DOANE.

Photo courtesy of the Yellowstone Gateway Museum of Park County, Montana

Remington New Model Army

Recovered from Little Bighorn Battlefield 2-3 days after the fight by Lt. Gustavus Doane of Fort Ellis in Bozeman, M.T. Probably belonged to Indian Warrior or was a backup gun of a cavalryman.

6 Shot

.44 Caliber

Easily Removed Cylinder with “Top Strap” of Steel

Starr Revolver

Third Most Used Sidearm of the
Union during the Civil War

.44 Caliber

Double Action

6 Shot



Courtesy of the Museum of the Rockies, Bozeman, MT. Will Abbot Photos

Later Models were Manufactured
as Single Actions at the Request of
the Army.



1860 Colt Army



.44 Caliber

6 Shot

8 Inch Barrel

Sleek, Rounded Contours

1861 Navy Model was .36 Caliber

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Colt Conversions



Private Collection. Will Abbot Photo



Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum Collection, Bozeman, MT. Will Abbot Photo.

Left Top: Colt 1860 Army Richards Conversion
(Note flat hammer, rear sight, and ejector housing)

Left Bottom: 1861 Navy Richards-Mason Conversion
(Note firing pin on hammer, rear sight on hammer, and complete ejector housing)

Above: 1861 Navy Conversion from rear with loading gate open

Smith and Wesson and Remington

1875 Remington: Identified by web under barrel, short grip, and low thumb spur

Single Action

6 Shot

.45 Caliber



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Smith and Wesson No. 3 Variations: Break Top

Top: Smith and Wesson American

Center: Smith and Wesson Russian

Bottom: Smith and Wesson Schofield



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1873 Colt Single Action Army



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Peacemaker:

Barrel Length Originally 7 1/2"

Later 5 1/2 and 4 3/4 , others by special order

Caliber: .45 Colt, others offered later

Colt Bisley:

Introduced in 1894 as a target gun

Essentially the same as the SAA, with curved grip and lower hammer spur

Found favor in the late period Old West



From the D. Cappa Family Collection on display at the Frontier Montana Museum
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