

History of the Old West Rifle



Henry Rifle - Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum. Will Abbot Photo



Hunt Volitional Repeater



Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection, 1988.8.150

Direct Ancestor of Winchester Rifle

This is the only known Walter Hunt gun in existence

Magazine held 12 rocket ball bullets

Patent Granted in August of 1848

Complicated build and operate, too impractical to be produced

Jennings Rifle



Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms Collection, 1988.8.1874

Patents purchased from Hunt

Improved Hunt's model

Fired Rocket Ball Ammunition

Went into Production

Not a big seller

Oliver Fisher Winchester

Born in Boston in 1810



Clothing Manufacturer in New York City and New Haven, Connecticut

Businessman with an eye for opportunity

Followed the progress of the "Rocket Ball" ammunition and repeating rifle which began with inventor William Hunt in the mid 1840s. Improved by Lewis Jennings and eventually bought out by Horace Smith and D. B. Wesson.



Volition Repeater. Public Domain Photo.

Began as Smith and Wesson and later in 1855 the Volcanic Repeating Arms Company.

O. F. Winchester

Winchester was a stockholder in the Volcanic Repeating Arms Company.

By 1857, Winchester had acquired a majority of stock and became president of the firm.

Smith and Wesson dropped out the business to pursue cartridge revolvers.

Adopted new name of New Haven Arms Company.





Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum. Photo Courtesy of Brett Schomer, Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development

Henry Rifle #4846 Inscribed F. Hobart, Co. D, 64th Ills.
Was property of Stephen White – came to Gallatin City in 1866 from Galena, Ills.

Henry Rifle

B. Tyler Henry was the plant superintendent and was involved with the lever gun since 1857.

Invented a new rifle to fire a metallic cartridge which replaced the "Rocket Ball.

The Henry Rifle was patented in October of 1860.

Cartridge was a .44 caliber rimfire with a 216 gr conical bullet powered by 26 grains of powder and carried an H headstamp.

Held 16 Rounds

Henry Rifle

Henry Rifle was on the market by July of 1862.

Found rapid popularity with the public and militia market.

Not widely accepted by the U.S. government.

Firm was Renamed the Henry Repeating Rifle Company.

SIXTY SHOTS PER MINUTE

HENRY'S PATENT

REPEATING

RIFLE

The Most Effective Weapon in the World.

This Rifle can be discharged 16 times without loading or taking down from the shoulder, or even loosing aim. It is also slung in such a manner, that either on horse or on foot, it can be **Instantly Used**, without taking the strap from the shoulder.

For a House or Sporting Arm, it has no Equal;

IT IS ALWAYS LOADED AND ALWAYS READY.

The size now made is 44-100 inch bore, 24 inch barrel, and carries a conical ball 32 to the pound. The penetration at 100 yards is 8 inches; at 400 yards 5 inches; and it carries with force sufficient to kill at 1,000 yards.

A resolute man, armed with one of these Rifles, particularly if on horseback, CANNOT BE CAPTURED.

"We particularly commend it for ARMY USES, as the most effective arm for picket and vidette duty, and to all our citizens in secluded places, as a protection against guerilla attacks and robberies. A man armed with one of these Rifles, can load and discharge one shot every second, so that he is equal to a company every minute, a regiment every ten minutes, a brigade every half hour, and a division every hour."—*Louisville Journal*.

Address **JNO. W. BROWN,**
Gen'l Ag't., Columbus, Ohio,
At Rail Road Building, near the Depot.

H. NEVIN'S Steam Printing Establishment, No's 26, 28 and 40 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio.

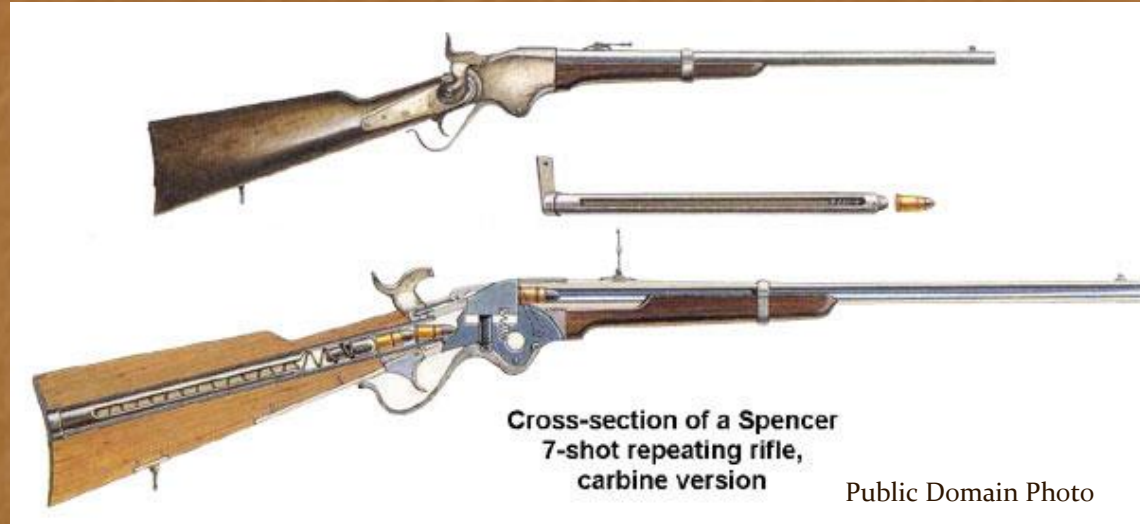
"..as for these guns that they could wind up on Sunday, and shoot all the week, it was useless to fight against them."
- Col. John Singleton Mosby,
Virginia Cavalry

Spencer Rifle



Public Domain Photo

Gallatin Historic
Society Pioneer
Museum
Bozeman, MT



Cross-section of a Spencer
7-shot repeating rifle,
carbine version

Public Domain Photo

Designed in 1860 by Christopher Spencer.

7 Shot Tubular Magazine inserted through the stock.

.52 Caliber (Labeled .56-56 which at the time meant the diameter of the case at head and mouth)

Also Available in .56-52, .56-50, .56-46.

Various Barrel Lengths

Rimfire Cartridge with 45 gr. of Powder.

Trigger Guard Lever

Manually Cock the Hammer

Colt Revolving Rifle



Various Calibers

About 1,000 Sold to US
Military

Also Available as
Shotgun

Cylinders Held 4-6
Shots

Considerable Blast on
Hand if Forward of
Cylinder

Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming; Gift of Olin Corporation, Winchester Arms
Collection, 1988.8.669

1866 Winchester

Firm Renamed the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in 1866-67

First Rifle to be Called a Winchester

Reached the Market in 1867

Known as the "Yellow Boy" because of the Brass Frame. Aka – Improved Henry

King's Improvement – Loading Gate on Side of Receiver and Enclosed Tubal Magazine.

170,000 Built Through 1898



Gallatin County Historical Society Pioneer
Museum, Bozeman, MT

.44 Rimfire

1866 Winchester



Missouri River Interpretive Center,
Fort Benton, MT. Will Abbot Photo



Public Domain Photo

It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are, perhaps freezing to death. I want time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.

-Chief Joseph
Speech to the Nez Perce tribe before an interpreter just before surrendering to Colonel Nelson A. Miles after the Battle of the Bear's Paw, October 5, 1877.

1873 Winchester



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

1873 Winchester

Arguably the most famous Winchester Lever Action

.44-40 Centerfire (.44 caliber bullet, 40 grs. Powder)

Sliding Breach Cover

Reloading Tool Available in 1875 Catalog

Manufactured Until 1924

Soon Available in 38-40 and 32-20. Later in .22 short and long rimfire.

Over 700,000 Made



Gallatin Historical Society Pioneer Museum. Photo Courtesy of Brett Schomer, Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development
1873 Winchester, 44-40 WCF Manufactured 1875 First Issue

1876 Winchester

Became Known as the "Centennial Rifle".

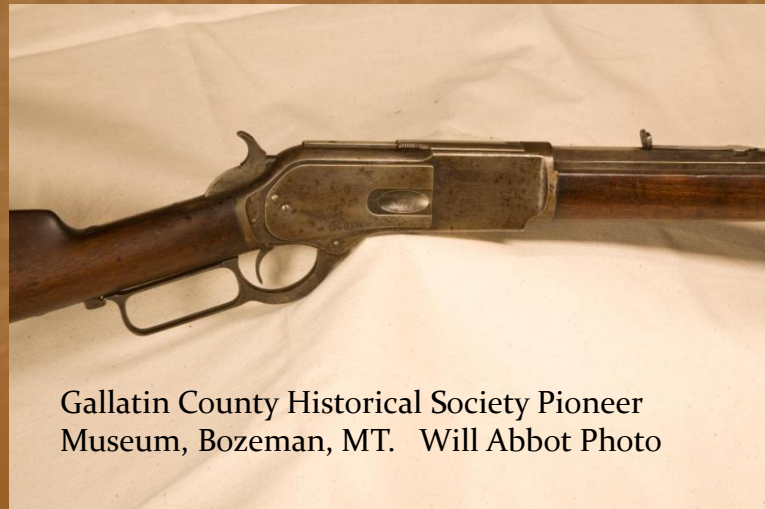
Larger Version of the 1873

Fired the .45-75 (.45 caliber bullet weighing 350 grs. and 75 grs. of powder.

Later Added .45-60, .50-90 Express, and .40-60.



1876 Winchester
45-75 WCF Manufactured 1881



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



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

Sharps Rifle



Gallatin County Historical Society Pioneer Museum,
Bozeman, MT. Photo Courtesy of Brett Schomer, Montana
4-H Center for Youth Development

Sharps Meacham Conversion 1881
45 2 7/8 Marked "Old Reliable" on Barrel Top

Invented by Christian Sharps and patented in 1848

First Successful Breech Loading Rifle

Began with Paper Cartridges

Saw Action in the Civil War

Primary Buffalo Gun of the 1860s-1870s

The Origin of the Word "Sharpshooter"?

Out of Business in 1881

Colt Burgess Lever Action Rifle



*Courtesy of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center,
Cody, Wyoming*

Offered in 1883 to compete with the Winchester Model 1873

Chambered in .44-40

Engraved Piece Presented to William F. Cody

Discontinued in 1885

Colt Lightning Slide Action Rifle

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



Manufactured from
1884 until 1904

Calibers Ranged from
.22 Rimfire to .50-95
Express

Magazine Capacity
Range from 8 to 15
Shots

Three Frame Sizes and
Nearly Unlimited
Options

.44-40, .38-40, and .32-
20 Most Popular

John Moses Browning 1886 Winchester



Developed in Ogden, Utah

Visit from Winchester Executives to take a look at the 1885 single shot.

Stronger Action 26 Inch Octagonal Barrel or 22 Inch Round Barrel

Available in .33 WCF up to .50-110 Express - .45-70 was the most popular.

True Big Bore, Powerful Lever Action

1886 Winchester



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

Marlin Model 1889



Public Domain Photo

John Marlin Worked for Colt during the Civil War Went out on his own in 1870

1881 – Big Bore to Compete with Model 1876 1889 – First Side Eject

Manufactured Deringers and Revolvers .44-40, .38-40, .32-20 and .25-20

John Moses Browning 1892 Winchester

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



Scaled Down 1886

Available in .44-40,
.38-40, .32-20, .25-
20, and .218 Bee.

Standard with 24 Inch
Octagonal Barrels.

Available in 20 Inch
Carbines and 30 Inch
Muskets

John Moses Browning 1894 Winchester



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

We believe that no repeating rifle system ever made will appeal to the eye and understanding of the rifleman as this will and that use will continue to warrant first impressions.

- Winchester Catalog
1894

Originally Manufactured in .32-40 and .38-55 Black Powder Loads

Quickly added the .25-20 and .30-30 in Smokeless Powder Loads

First Lever Action Repeater Made and Marketed for Smokeless Powder Ammunition

Offered in 26 Inch Octagonal Barrel and 20 Inch Carbine Round Barrel

Over 5.5 Million Made – More than a 100 year span.