

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In the years prior to the Great Rebellion "The War Department mainly relied, for its rifles, on the Government arsenals at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Springfield could turn out only a few thousand rifles a year"¹ and Harpers Ferry was destroyed in 1861.

Prior to the war, Remington engaged in the manufacture of some Harpers Ferry rifle conversions. These arms were, however, the design innovation of the U. S. arsenals at Harpers Ferry and Springfield, and they are listed as follows:

- (1) U. S. Model 1842, 69 caliber, with seven grooves, (2) U. S. Model 1857, 69 caliber, 3 groove Remington conversion, (3) U. S. Model 1855, 58 caliber, 3 groove Harpers Ferry rifle, and (4) U. S. Model 1855, 58 caliber, 3 groove Springfield Rifled Musket.

A key to these Harpers Ferry, Springfield, and Remington firearms was the innovation of the cylindro-conical Minié type projectile. America experimented with Captain Minié's conical type projectile and in circa 1850 settled for a Minié type. The American Minié type was a 58 caliber conical projectile, weighing five hundred grains; this proved successful enough to become the standard army projectile. The Civil War was fought almost entirely with the Minié type projectile, as the rifle was adopted as the sole arm of the American troops. The Harpers Ferry Model 1855 and Remington Model 1863 (Zouave) both employed this Minié type projectile.

Truly Remington's

The Remington Model 1863 (Zouave) rifle was a complete new product being produced with the Remington innovation of the first cast steel barrel. This newly developed barrel was the product of advanced manufacturing. The total rifle was manufactured at the Ilion plant, whereas the U. S. Models 1855 Harpers Ferry and Remington conversion of the U. S. Model 1842 were mere Remington conversions in ignition systems and barrel grooving of otherwise non-Remington manufactured firearms.

¹ Remington Arms In American History, Rinehart & Company, Inc. (N. Y. - Trontal), 1956., P. 76