

Donation of the Month

Remington Revolver



Revolver 1991.32.2
Donor: H. Samuel Burks

Many historic objects take long journeys through decades and places; such is the case with this nineteenth-century revolver.

This gun, manufactured by Remington, is a New Model Army 44 caliber revolver patented in 1858. Manufactured between 1863 and 1875, Remington New Model Army revolvers were popular handguns used during the later part of the American Civil War. This model was loaded with prepared combustible cartridges. The cartridge contained the bullet as well as charge of powder wrapped in paper. This paper would ignite with a spark provided by a percussion cap. This cap was placed on a nipple at the rear of each chamber in the cylinder of the gun.

According to the Burks family history, this revolver belonged to Samuel Burks. Samuel Burks came to Benton County in Arkansas around 1830 from Illinois and was one of the early settlers on Pea Ridge. He married Julia Ruddick, daughter of William Ruddick, who built the inn now known as Elkhorn Tavern. The Ruddicks called the building "Ruddick Inn." In 1852, after the deaths of William and his wife, Betsey, the inn passed to their son-in-law Samuel. In 1858, Samuel sold the property to his cousin Jesse Cox who gave it the name "Elkhorn Tavern." Samuel's son, Samuel Burks, Junior, was born at the Elkhorn Tavern in 1837. The Burks family was living in the area during the Civil War and the Battle of Pea Ridge, which occurred near the Elkhorn Tavern in March 1862.

After the war, Samuel Burks, Junior, took the gun with him when he moved to War Eagle, Arkansas. There he married Sylvanus Blackburn's daughter Louisa and stayed in the War Eagle area where the couple's eight children were born. Following Louisa's death in 1888, he married Celia Roberts of War Eagle. After Samuel Junior's death in 1915, the gun passed to his son Lester Garland Burks, who took the gun from War Eagle to Rogers, Arkansas in 1920.

In 1923, Lester and his wife, Edna Ledbetter, moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, taking the gun with them. There the gun stayed until 1975 when it passed to Lester's son H. Samuel Burks, (the great grandson of Samuel Burks, Senior), who took it to Bartlesville, Oklahoma. In 1991, H. Samuel Burks brought the gun back to Benton County, Arkansas, where it found a permanent home in the Rogers Historical Museum. /

Credits: Donor file, H. Samuel Burks; McCoy, Patrick and Sharolyn, Elkhorn Tavern 1860, The Pea Ridge Community, 2005. Benton County Heritage Committee, History of Benton County, 1991; Jay Huber, Remington Society of America, <http://www.remingtonsociety.com/>; Rogers Historical Museum Research Library and Collections files. Photo courtesy of the Rogers Historical

