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Henry Carbine Serial Number 6850

I have examined this rare gun, inside and out, and have determined it is an original Henry Carbine or made by the New Haven Arms Company and or detailed here.

Records still in existence show this Carbine was made in 1864.

From early in production of the Henry, Oliver F. Winchester, president of the New Haven Arms Company recognized the demand for carbines in this model. While the standard Henry rifles have twenty-four inch barrels, it is recorded that some carbines were made for Army trials and or prototypes for future production.

B. Tyler Henry, for whom the rifle was named, and the New Haven Arms Company continued to experiment with cartridge improvements so shorter barrels could be furnished. In the earliest cartridges the slower burning powder and weak primers required larger barrels. By the time number 6850 was made improvements in cartridges enabled the Company to maintain velocities and accuracy with shorter barrels.

By 1864, Oliver F. Winchester was prepared to enter Henry Carbines

in the army trials. Because the U.S. Ordnance department didn't want another model of gun to maintain and furnish ammunition, the trials were biased in favor of guns already in the service.

On number 6850, towards the end of the lower tang is the letter "W", which was Oliver F. Winchester's own stamp, showing he was the inside contractor in charge of production of this carbine.

The serial number is seen on the top rear of the barrel, on the lower tang under the stock, on the stock under the upper tang and on the inside toe of the buttplate. All of these numbers match and are correct and original.

The barrel is  $19\frac{3}{16}$  inches long, and this is the original factory length.

Clamber, firing pins and bolt all remain in the original M44 Navy rifle configuration.

On the barrel, under the loading sleeve is assembly number 28182, and this number is seen on the rear face of the loading sleeve. Because of use and wear, only the first two numbers "28" are plainly visible on the loading sleeve. This is an unusually high number for an assembly number, and probably was chosen to insure the assembly number of another gun was not

used. The special nature of this carbide would indicate this.

At some time when the gun was in use the upper tong was broken and repaired, but there is obvious use after the repair and the patina of age is on this area. Some screws of the tongue have been replaced, and they are obviously old and show use and age.

All of the other parts of the gun are original and correct.

The bronze parts now have the patina of age, and remain in good condition.

All steel and iron parts show much use and have the patina of age.

When in use this Henry was "decorated" with ten notches on the receiver ahead of the elevator opening, and there are fifty-five notches on the top of the receiver behind the elevator. These notches were probably a count of game shot, but their significance is not known at this time.

On the top of the receiver ahead of the elevator is also seen a double "U"; "UU", which was the Indian sign for tracks to follow. Just behind the elevator opening is the mark "US". On the top of the receiver is the mark "TA-DO", which is reported to mean "meat-getter" in the Sioux Indian

language.

All of these markings are old and slow they were done by "dot-punching".

There is considerable wear to all of these markings, and the pattern of age covers all of them.

Straight grain walnut was used for stocking this gun. On the stock is a brass tool, surrounded by a six pointed star which in turn is surrounded by an eight-pointed star.

Between the points of the outer star is stamped "UPRR" in smaller figures is "1867".

This carving and the stamping show use after they were done. Traces of white paint are visible near the star, and this was probably a property number to identify the gun.

On the right sideplate is the letter "K", lightly inscribed. On the left sideplate is a letter, probably "J", also lightly inscribed.

There is also more dot-punching on the receiver, all showing use and age after they were done.

This Corbin was purchased from the heirs of Lute "Yellowstone" Kelly in 1963.

Kelly, in his memoirs written in 1868, recalled he purchased a Henry Corbin

and it is recorded "The trader had a few Henry Carbines and they were for the white trade. Before I left Ft. Berthold, I purchased one of these carbines, and it served me well for several years, or until I was able to secure a Winchester rifle. With the Henry and the stubby little .44 cartridge that went with it, I killed many buffalo, as well as other game, and it stood me in good hand when I was forced to defend myself in encounters with hostile Indians."

Kelly's writing that he secured a Henry Carbine, the great rarity of Carbines and the source of this Carbine leads us to believe this was "Yellowstone" Kelly's Carbine.

Kelly was a well known frontiersman, and was a scout for the U. P. Railway under General Nelson A. Miles.

Miles later wrote Kelly "was destined to prove very valuable to me."

Kelly was to remain as chief scout for General Miles for years, and is recorded as guiding Miles and his troops as late as 1877. He was chief scout for Miles in the pursuit of Sitting Bull and his tribe after the Custer massacre. Apparently Kelly knew the Sioux and many other Indian languages, and his familiarity as

Henry Carbon's Number 6850

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known to Indians and the Yellowstone area was to prove invaluable.

Research continues on Kelly and number 6850 Henry. This Henry has an outstanding history, and is one of the most important collections ever known.

Original carbon's such as this are one of the greatest of rarities in the arms field and can be considered unique.

With the great historical importance, rarity and age of well over a century, number 6850 will be a star in any collection or museum.

Henry Carbon