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Serial Number 174513 Russian Musket

A thorough inspection has been made of this fine Winchester, and I have determined it is all original and is in unusually fine condition.

In the years 1915 and 1916, orders for the Russian musket 1895 amounted to 293,816 guns. When production began, serial numbers were at 174,234. This was one of the first in production, within 279 guns of the earliest serial number of Russian muskets.

Since Winchester did not operate on a first in - first out system, this number could have been one of the very first produced.

Most Russian muskets received and reported have been in relatively poor condition and have been badly refinished. The unusually good condition of this musket could indicate a sample gun, kept at Winchester and later released for sale.

According to Winchester records, the Winchester proof marks, a "W" and "P" superimposed in an oval, was first used on Centfire guns in 1905 and was stamped on the barrel only. By 1908, the proof marks was applied to barrels and receivers.

We see this proof marks on the barrel and receiver of number 174513.

The letter "B" on the lower tong stands for a minor change in the mechanism of the bolt.

Winchester "general inspection" stamps is seen on the lever loop. This mark indicated the gun had passed on overall inspection and gauging.

Marked on the front of the receiver top is "7.62 M.M.", and this marking is also seen on the top rim of the barrel, under the handguard.

A small number 8 is seen on the receiver near the trigger. A number with a line below is the mark of the assembler who fitted the hammer and trigger, one of the most important fitting jobs on a Winchester.

Twenty-eight inch barrels were standard for these muskets, and sling loops were also standard. The front barrel band has a stacking swivel and lug for attaching a saber bayonet.

Front sights are a romps forged integral to the barrel with a steel sighting blade pivoted to the romps.

Rear sights of early guns are graduated from 15 to 32 on the adjustable leaf and 4 to 14 on the sight base.

According to Winchester sight records, early sights were graduated in 30 inch "American piece", but later were changed to the "Russian piece" of 28 inches. The record states this change

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was begun on "9/17/20". The early sight was called the "50-A" sight and the later was the "50-B".

The most unusual feature of Russian muskets are the "feeding guides" on each side of the receiver, as seen here. This is the major difference between Russian and other muskets.

Straight grain select walnut was used for standard muskets, and an oiled finish was given to the stocks, forend and handguard. Most of this original oiled finish is seen on the wood of this gun. Buttplates have a trapdoor for a pull-through cleaning tool.

Muskets such as this have a blued finish on all steel and iron parts, and on number 174513 most of the original finish remains, indicating little use, no abuse and proper storage.

With its historical importance, age and outstanding condition, this is a rare Winchester and it will be a star in any museum or fine collection.

Henry Wood