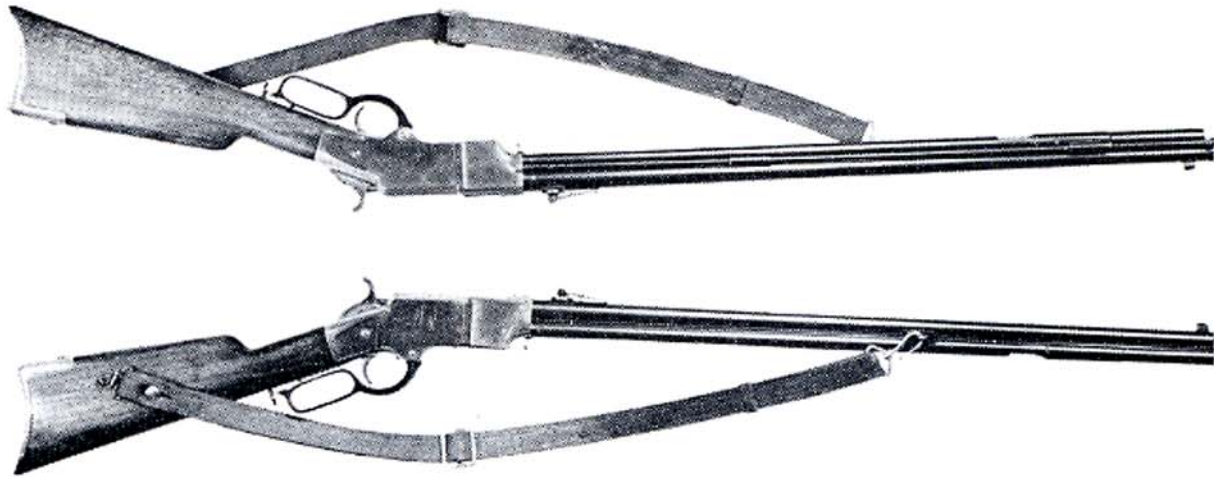


FOREIGN TRIALS AND MARKETS

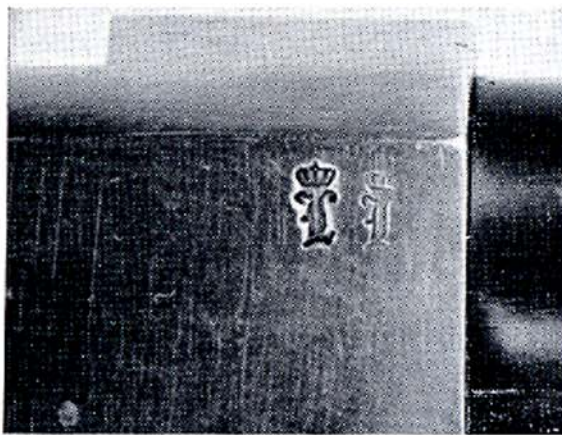
OLIVER F. WINCHESTER, perhaps again following the example of Samuel Colt, sought to develop foreign markets for his arm as soon as its success in this country seemed assured. In 1863 he patented the Henry rifle in England,¹ but this did not altogether preclude infringement. A few examples are known of a rifle patterned very closely after the Henry, but with a loading aperture closed by a sliding cover toward the forward end of the magazine. The magazine tube is slotted in the usual way but is round like the barrel, there being no turning sleeve. Another peculiarity is a ramrod mounted on the left side of the barrel, between it and the magazine, displacing the usual sling fitting, which is instead placed on the right.

These copies of the Henry are well finished, showing a large amount of hand work, and many parts bear serial numbers, even the heads of screws. Numbers 181, 212 and 331 are known to the author, the first and last being respectively in the Winchester Museum and the Tower of London. They carry various

unidentified proofmarks on the barrels, but all have in common the Gothic letter **L** surmounted by a crown stamped twice on the right side of the brass frame. This has been



European Copy of the Henry Rifle
Note Loading Aperture Forward



Royal Bavarian Armory Mark

Courtesy of Winchester Repeating Arms Company

identified by one European authority as the mark of the Royal Bavarian Armory. One of the arms, No. 212, is stamped on the barrel forward of the sight: ^{B. J. STACEY}
LONDON. Yet Stacey did not become an English gunmaker until 1887.² Just when and where these unusual copies were made has not been established, although the author has consulted various authorities abroad. It is apparent, however, that they are not factory

products, and the workmanship suggests an individual gun-maker perhaps in Belgium or Germany where Henry copies are said to have been made.

As already noted, the 1863 New Haven Arms Company catalog was reprinted in German and French, and orders from Prussia followed. In the fall of 1866 Oliver F. Winchester entered a rifle in a Swiss trial at Aarau, the findings of which were translated and published in the 1867 and later Winchester catalogs. A contemporary German book on breechloaders³ establishes that the rifle submitted was a King's improvement, .44 calibre. From the same book we learn that this experimental rifle was entered under the name "Winchester." The Swiss board recommended adoption for sharpshooters, but no purchases of arms came of it.

A British trial at Woolwich followed the Swiss one, with like results. The first arm examined by the Special Parliamentary Subcommittee on Breechloading Rifles was a standard .44 Henry. It was tested against the Ball and Lamson repeater and the Spencer. For rapidity the Henry outperformed the others, and in sand it "stood the test very well, and worked satisfactorily." The report⁴ went on to say:

After a careful consideration of the results of these trials, and an examination of the breech arrangements of the three arms, the Committee decided that the Henry system was on the whole most suitable for a military weapon. But they were also of opinion that a repeating arm, in order to be adapted for the requirements of the service, should be capable of being employed as a single loader, the magazine being kept in reserve for use in case of need.

Having understood that this improvement had been embodied in the Winchester rifle, which was on the same principle as the Henry repeating arm, the Committee communicated with the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, in America, requesting them to furnish two specimen arms with suitable ammunition.