

Battle of the Little Bighorn Weapons

New Model 1859 Sharps Carbine



New Model 1869 Sharps Carbine



Model 1870 Springfield Carbine – transferred to the National Museum of the US Army



Model 1870 Springfield Rifle



Model 1873 Winchester Rifle



The Little Bighorn National Monument in Crow Agency, Montana, was excavated in 1983 after a brush fire removed the undergrowth from the battlefield. During the excavation, a thorough archeological survey was conducted to uncover all remaining objects related to the Battle of the Little Bighorn. Among the objects found during the survey were cartridge cases that were fired from weapons used by the Sioux and Cheyenne or by the Seventh Cavalry.

The archeologists located surviving weapons with known Native American provenance. Cartridge cases were dry fired in these weapons to capture their firing pin marks to compare against those collected on the battlefield. The dry firing of weapons in the Rock Island Arsenal Museum's collection yielded five positive matches. This is the largest known collection of weapons used by Sioux or Cheyenne at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The weapons were part of the original collection of the Ordnance Museum at Rock Island Arsenal and appear in the 1909 catalog.