


1838

HALL'S

BREECHLOADER

OF HARPERS FERRY

MAINE INVENTOR JOHN H. HALL was to receive credit for two notable achievements in firearm history. But despite being the creator of America's first military breechloading rifles, and creator of the first American firearm made with totally interchangeable parts, it took Hall four years to complete the first 22 handmade flintlock rifles from his initial government contract of 1,000 ordered in 1819.

Moving operations south from Portland, Maine, to Harpers Ferry, Va., Hall occupied a former sawmill along the Shenandoah River and devoted several years to the construction of workshops and precision machinery to fully meet his goal of interchangeable parts. Hall's flintlock falling-block rifles were reliable arms that were used in the Mexican War, and later percussion models were used in the American Civil War. The manufacturing technology developed at the innovative Hall's Rifle Works was the groundwork for future American military arms production both at Harpers Ferry Armory and at Springfield Armory. 

Located in Fairfax, Va., the National Firearms Museum offers one of the nation's largest firearms collections on daily exhibition. Admission is free (donations appreciated), and arms enthusiasts of all ages are welcome. For more information, please call (703) 267-1600.

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