



Dixie Gun Works U.S. Model 1795

In the world of reproduction blackpowder arms, few names carry the venerable status of Dixie Gun Works. And, in the field of American military arms, no name is more revered than that of America's first armory located in Springfield, Mass. Today, Dixie Gun Works, the company founded by Turner E. Kirkland in 1954, has once again excited collectors and shooters alike, this time with a reproduction of America's first military musket, the U.S. Model of 1795.

It was Col. Henry Knox of Gen. George Washington's staff who first thought that the area near Springfield, Mass., would make a fine place for an ordnance depot during the American Revolution. Founded in 1636, the town of Springfield offered a secure area in which to store arms and ammunition for the

Continental Army. A small depot was established on the hill east of the town center in 1776 and was named a magazine in 1782. Congress established it as a national armory in 1794, and the Springfield Armory produced arms for the United States for nearly 175 years.

The very first musket produced for the U.S. Army and manufactured by the Springfield Armory is now known as the Model of 1795. Only 40 workers were on hand the first year to turn out the 245 guns manufactured. Patterned closely after the French Charleville Models of 1763 and 1777, the 1795 Springfield musket saw service during Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery

from 1803 to 1806 and during the War of 1812. Approximately 80,000 were produced at Springfield, and another 70,000 were produced at Harpers Ferry.

Made in Italy by Davide Pederoli, the Dixie Gun Works reproduction is in the original .69 caliber and has a full-length, satin-finished European walnut stock. The bold and substantial lock is the centerpiece of the musket's fine lines. It is marked similar to the originals, with "SPRINGFIELD" on the tail of the lock and the now-famous eagle-and-shield with "us" stamped in front of the hammer. (Original guns made between 1795 and 1799 had blank or un-engraved locks). The armory

