

The Model 1833 North/Hall Carbine, Type III

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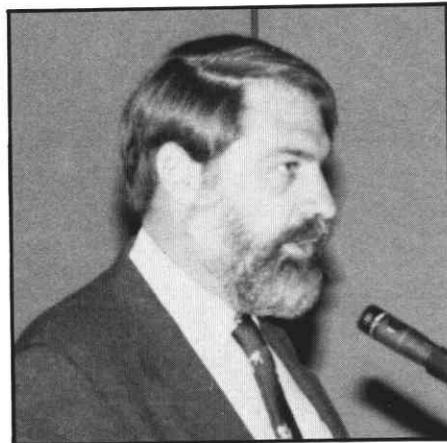
The purpose of this paper is to review the known types of North/Hall Model 1833 Carbines and to show, through documented evidence, that a third type was produced under Government contract before the Model 1840 "Fishtail Lever" was approved.

The Model 1833 Hall Carbine began its existence with Congressional approval, in 1833, of a Bill to raise a Regiment of Dragoons to keep peace with the Indians on the Frontier. For a number of years, the only mounted forces in the United States were Militia: armed differently, trained independently, and used only for limited duty.¹ Simeon North was directed to design a carbine, based on the Hall action, to use a percussion cap. By May, 1833, he was working on a pattern carbine in .52 caliber smoothbore and shortly thereafter took the gun to Washington for tests. The carbine was accepted with one improvement offered by Major Richard Mason, an Officer who had transferred from the infantry to the newly raised regiment of Dragoons. Major Mason suggested that the bore be increased to carry 24 balls to the pound so the arm could fire buckshot more effectively.² On June 4, 1833, North proposed to manufacture 1,000 carbines in caliber .577 at \$20.00 each.³ After receiving permission to start producing the carbines, he was pushed hard by Colonel George Bomford, Chief of Ordnance, as the Dragoon Regiment was being raised and arms were needed for issue to the troops.

On October 22, 1833, North indicated that two to three hundred carbines would soon be ready for inspection. Major Henry Knox Craig reported on December 10, "there are none completed and put together; on the 18th inst he (North) states he will have 200 ready for inspection, and I think he will be able to accomplish it."⁴ On December 30, 1833, Major Craig inspected and accepted 300 Carbines with their accessories.⁵ Following are the deliveries by North under this assignment:

January 1, 1834	302
January 28,	200
March 27,	250
May 6,	26
May 21,	250

A total of 1,028 Carbines⁶, caliber .577 smoothbore, were delivered by April, 1834; 750 of these were shipped to Fort Gibson for issue to the Dragoons. North resumed his efforts to complete his 1828 Hall Rifle contract, and as a result more carbine work was not



forthcoming until February, 1836, when he was asked to make up some replacement carbine parts, as the carbines had seen hard service in the hands of the troops.⁷

The second type of North/Hall Model 1833 Carbines were ordered on November 14, 1835. North received an order for 1,630 carbines at \$18.00 each. These were specified to be of 32 balls to the pound or .52 caliber. It is believed that a return to the same size ammunition as used in the rifle and pistol would help the ammunition supply problems on the Frontier⁸.

In 1836, a second Regiment of Dragoons was raised for service in southern Georgia, where the Seminole Indians resisted removal to the west. John Hall, working at the Harpers Ferry Armoury, was asked by Colonel Bomford to develop a 23 inch barrel carbine in percussion to arm the second regiment. Hall reported problems in changing over his machinery from flintlock rifle production, so consequently North's order was increased from 1,630 to 1,715 with Bomford again pushing North for carbines, as the regiment was awaiting arms. On May 25, 1836, another order was given to North for 2,500, .52 caliber carbines. The deliveries of Type II carbines are shown in the box on page 26.

North's deliveries of Type II carbines totals 6,135 with the only difference the .52 inch caliber. The dates on Type II carbines range from 1835 to 1839. All Type I carbines appear to be dated 1834. Both types carried a hinged implement box behind the trigger guard, and all were originally made with smooth bores.

During an ongoing survey of U.S. martial arms inspectors initials, a Hall/North Model 1833 carbine was discovered with the following characteristics, which differ

from the two known types: first, the breechblock is dated 1840; second, no implement box is present in the butt stock, and third, the breech opening device is the "L" or "elbow lever" rather than the proper spur latch. The carbine was inspected by Nahum W. Patch and Mann Page Lomax, is proper in the barrel length of 26¼ inches, and has a ramrod bayonet. This gun was formerly owned by one of our members, Jack DuBlon. An identical specimen was purchased a few years later at an Ohio Gun Collectors meeting by another one of our members, Lee Bull. In 1978, a third Hall/North Model 1833 elbow lever carbine was seen at an Ohio Gun Collectors show. It was under the arm of the buyer who was headed for the door when it was discovered. The characteristics were: dated 1840, elbow lever device, and no patchbox. This gun was in the poorest condition of any noted to date. The left side of the stock under the breechblock was blown out and the inspector's marks were no longer visible.

A similar gun, figure 32, page 230 in R.T. Huntington's book *Hall's Breechloader* is cited as being unmarked and probably a trial arm made in 1839. In 1984, two more Hall/North Model 1833 carbines with elbow levers were found in almost the same condition as the first two. Five guns in a ten-year period suggests more than a trial arm: rather, the delivery of at least a parcel⁹.

Since the last delivery of Model 1833 Hall/North carbines was on November 21, 1839, we can conclude that these were delivered under a later assignment. Further evidence is contained in the correspondence of

Simeon North, George Bomford (Colonel of Ordnance), Nahum W. Patch (Inspector of Arms), George Talcott (Colonel of Ordnance), and Benjamin Huger (Captain of Ordnance). It is possible to rediscover the development of this third type of Model 1833 carbine by following both the deliveries of carbines from Simeon North and the available correspondence from January, 1839, through March, 1840. On January 21, 1839, 400 carbines were delivered and on March 22, 1839, another 400 were delivered.

Ordnance Office
Washington,
March 27, 1839

Mr. N.W. Patch
Middleton, Conn.
Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 23rd inst. I have to state that you are quite right in supposing that a modification of the patent Rifle & Carbine which would advantageously dispense with the present receiver catch, without injury to any other part of the arm is desirable. You are therefore requested to prepare and forward to this Office a carbine in the manner you propose, when the merits of your invention will be duly considered.

GEO. BOMFORD Col. of Ordnance

This is the first mention of Patch's elbow lever. Although the correspondence above mentions "Rifle & Carbine," the catch was to be tried first on carbines; its life was short lived and possibly never went beyond one parcel of carbines before the fishtail opening device was accepted.

On May 28, 1839, and September 16, 1839, 400 and 432 Carbines were delivered.

Ordnance Office
Washington,
September 27, 1839

Col. S. North
Middleton, Conn.
Sir,

It is desirable that we should have at this office, as soon as you can find an opportunity to forward it, a carbine of the new pattern as arranged by Mr. Patch. The lever that unhooks the catch should be made a little wider than the guard bow where it rests, in order to its being conveniently raised from its position, by thumb and finger when it is to be thrown forward.

G. TALCOTT Lt. Col. of Ord.

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Middleton, Conn.
Oct. 7, 1839

Col. Geo. Talcott
Ord. Department
Sir,

Your letter of the 27th Ult has been received and in reply I would respectfully remark that I omitted making those pattern carbines of the new pattern as arranged by Mr. Patch, for the purpose of completing the assignment for five hundred carbines of the old pattern, dated March

Deliveries of Model 1833 Type II North Carbines

July 25, 1836	100
September 21,	201
October 14,	200
February 28, 1837	250
April 19,	300
July 11,	360
August 4, & September 15,	372
December 7,	300
January 20, 1838	380
February 28,	300
April 14,	240
August 1,	640
November 10,	360
January 21, 1839	400
March 22,	400
May 28,	400
September 16,	432
November 21,	500
	<hr/>
	6,135

8, 1839, before I altered my machinery for the new model. I am now making those new patterns and will forward one or more of them to your office as soon as they are finished.

I would remark still further that if I make the lever that unhooks the catch wider than it now is, it will not enter the mortise of the catch plate, but it can be so made as to be conveniently raised from its position by the thumb and finger without being any wider than it now is, and I will pay particular attention to that part of the carbine.

Simeon North

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Ordnance Office
Washington, 18th Nov 1839

Col. S. North
Middleton, Conn.

Sir,

It is intended to suppress the patch or implement Box in the stock of the Carbine and also to have the ends of the chock screws slightly rivetted, so that they cannot be easily taken out. These alterations with the others suggested in your contract will be laid before the Ordnance Board to be sanctioned by the requisite authority. In the meantime you will keep these changes in view in your preparations for manufacturing these arms in future.

G. Talcott Lt. Col. of Ord.

On November 21, 1839, 500 Carbines were delivered. A portion of a letter written on January 7, 1840, from Talcott to the Secretary of War is of interest because it reveals an official decision of an Ordnance Board dated December 28, 1839:

In The Cavalry Carbine — Hall's Patent

1st. It is recommended to abolish the implement box, and to add a pouch to the cartridge box similar to that on the Musket cartridge box, for carrying the implements.

5th. The length of the barrel to be reduced to 23 ins.

Approved- but the attention of the Board is directed to the bayonet of the Carbine- is it necessary? Is it used in any other service than ours? Is it not cumbersome and calculated to injure the bore?

J.R. Poinsett

From this information, we can see that six weeks after his last deliveries for 1839, a decision has been made to dispense with the implement box in the butt, reduce the barrel length to 23 inches (something North never did), and thought was being given to abolish the bayonet. The following letter from North to Talcott explains North's position relative to his next deliveries.

Middleton, Conn.
January 28, 1840

Col. George Talcott
Ord. Department

Sir,

Yours of the 23rd inst, enclosing the decisions of the Ordnance Board of Officers respecting the Model Carbine I left at the Ordnance Office in 1839 has been received, and in reply I would respectfully remark that I now have 500 Carbines nearly ready to commence the inspection, made after the Model left at the Ordnance Office by

myself in November last. The barrels have been proved & the most of them have the supporters on including the bayonet supporters and all finished ready for browning. It would cause a delay and considerable expense now to reduce them to the length of the Cavalry Carbines, as decided by the Board of Ordnance Officers. But it can be done, and should it be your wish I will alter them with pleasure and in future make them conformable to the directions established by the Board of Ordnance Officers. Will you do me the favor to write me as soon as practicable and let me know if I shall reduce the barrels & bayonets of the 500 Carbines to the length of the Cavalry Carbines, as I shall suspend that part of business until I hear from you.

Simeon North

We must bear in mind that the barrel length the above letter refers to is 23 inches. The following letter is an extract from the Ordnance Board Reports dated March 3, 1840:

Recommend reducing dragoon carbine barrels from 23 inches, previously fixed, to 21 inches.

To substitute for the ramrod - bayonet a light steel rod like that of the Musketoon, the head to spring under a stud brazed on the upper end of the barrel, to prevent its slipping out.

Length of rod: 19½ inches. Length of wiper 3 inches.

On March 7, 1840, the Board recommended that a limited number of carbines be produced with Captain Huger's catch, known today as the fishtail lever. The following is that recommendation:

March 7, 1840

The Board recommended that a limited number of carbines be made with the arrangement for opening the receiver offered by Capt. Huger. This catch has been applied to a rifle at Fort Monroe Arsenal, & been examined by the Board. It has advantages of not projecting beyond the stock, is not likely to be opened accidentally, and in the opinion of the Board, is worthy of trial.

BENJ. HUGER Capt. Ord.
REcorder

APPROVED - J.R.P.

The following letter is the last known correspondence before North delivered the 500 carbines of the elbow lever opening device and is dated about 30 days before the delivery was completed:

Ordnance Office
Washington, 31 Mar. 1840

Col. S. North
Middleton, Conn.

Sir,

Enclosed herewith are the extracts from the proceedings of the Ordnance Board which having received the approval of the Secretary of War will be carried into effect. The changes need not be applied to such work as may be too far advanced to allow alterations without great expence - but it is desirable to introduce them as soon as practicable.

A pattern catch will be sent you shortly of the new kind last proposed, which it is believed will answer better than anything yet devised.

G. TALCOTT Lt. Col. of Ord.

In summary, we know that North delivered the last of his Model 1833 Type II carbines on November 21, 1839. In January, 1840 (approximately six weeks later) the Secretary of War agreed to reduce the barrel length from 26¼ inches to 23 inches. Two weeks later North wrote to Talcott asking if he (North) should reduce the barrels to 23 inches, stating that there are now 500 carbines nearly ready to be inspected, and that reducing the barrels would not only cause considerable expense, but a delay in making his deliveries as well. Four weeks after that (March 3, 1840) an Ordnance Board recommended reducing the barrel length from 23 inches to 21 inches and North was informed that changes need not be applied to work that is already in an advanced state.

Since all of the above is not conclusive, it is prudent to say that no barrels were reduced on finished carbines. This is apparent because the ramrod bayonet required a "T" shaped slot for the rod to lay in and to convert to a round rod would have left excess wood missing, giving the forend an unworkmanship like appearance. Apparently, whatever number of carbines that North had the bayonet supporters on were left with a barrel length of 26¼ inches.

Previously published material led collectors to believe that all 500 elbow lever carbines had 21 inch barrels without ramrod bayonets. This information has unintentionally proven to be misleading. Since seven

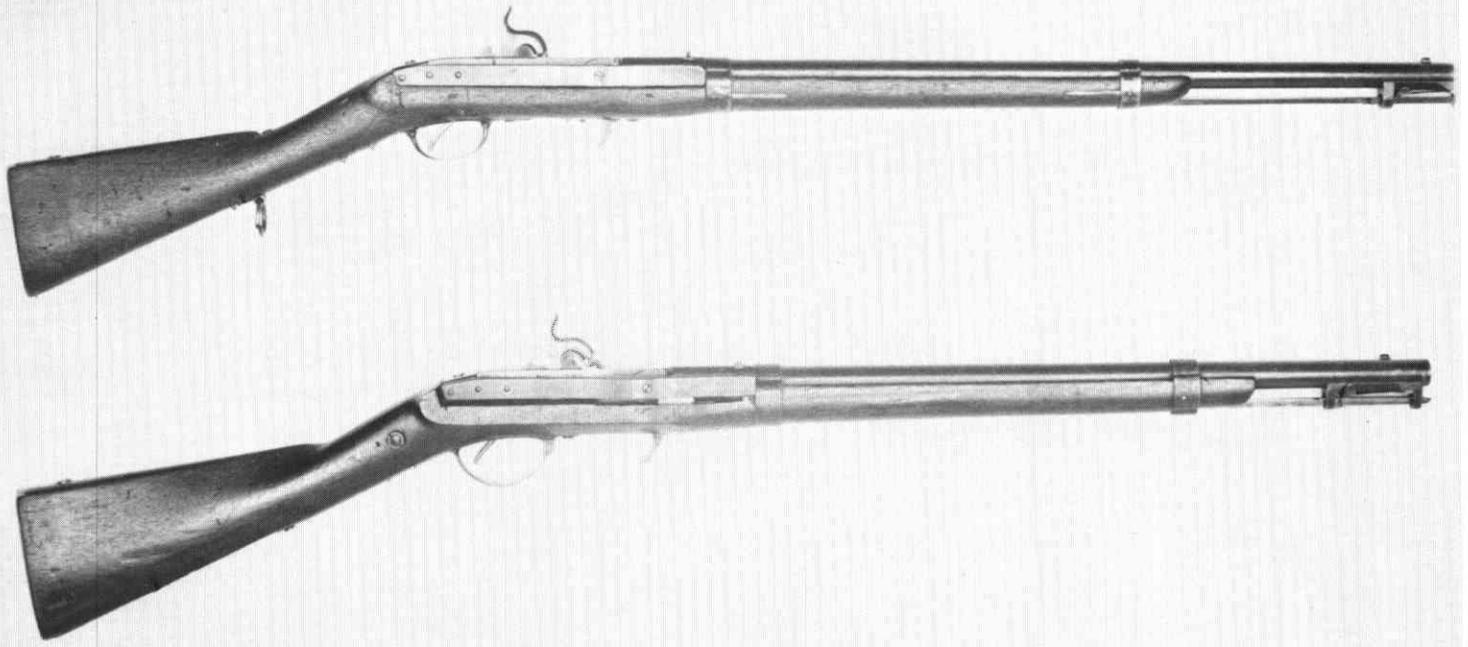
elbow lever Model 1833 carbines have been examined with ramrod bayonets in a ten year period, we can safely believe that at least a large portion of the 500 guns delivered on May 2, 1840, were equipped with ramrod bayonets. How many of each type is open for future analysis of surviving specimens. We may still use the terminology, "Model 1840, Type I" for those 21 inch barrel carbines without the ramrod bayonet. Certainly there is enough evidence here to designate a Model 1833 Type III Hall/North Carbine.

NOTES

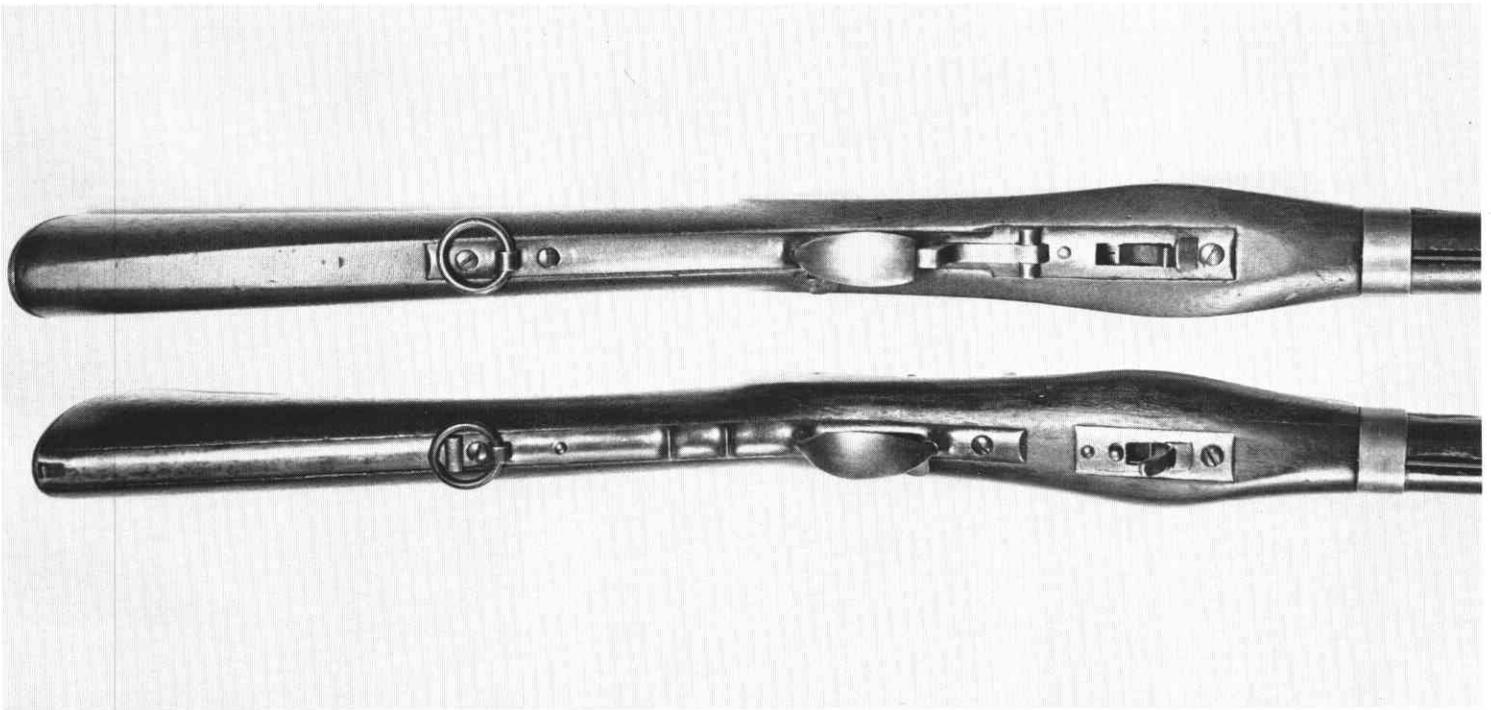
1. Huntington, R.T., *Hall's Breechloaders* (York, Pennsylvania, George Shumway, 1972) p. 123.
2. Hicks, Captain James E., *Notes on United States Ordnance: Volume I Small Arms, 1776 to 1940*, (Mount Vernon, James E. Hicks, 1940), p. 62.
3. Huntington, *loc. cit.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 125
5. *Ibid.*, p. 126
6. Bomford to North, June 9, 1834, states that in addition to the 1,000 carbines, North was asked to make 26 more; of these six were to be 32 balls to the pound. No reason was given (possibly for testing) *Ibid.*, p. 127
7. *Ibid.*, p. 128
8. *Ibid.*
9. Since the writing of this paper, two more of these carbines have been found. One is in a collection in Arizona, the other in a collection in Michigan.



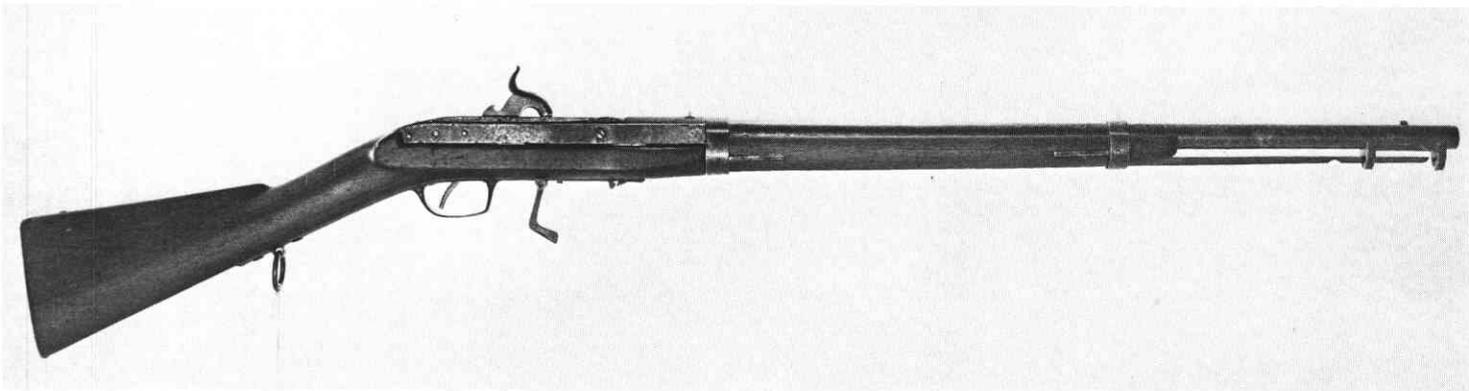
The Hall Model 1833 Type III Carbine and Other Hall Carbines . . .



The top gun is a Model 1833 Hall-North Type I/II carbine with 26 1/4 inch barrel and the spur latch. The lower gun is a Model 1836 Hall Harpers Ferry with 23 inch barrel.



A bottom view of the two different opening devices. The lower gun has the spur latch which was used on Type I and II carbines dated from 1834 to 1839. Shown are the implement box and finger ridges, which are not on the upper gun, a Model 1833 Type III carbine.



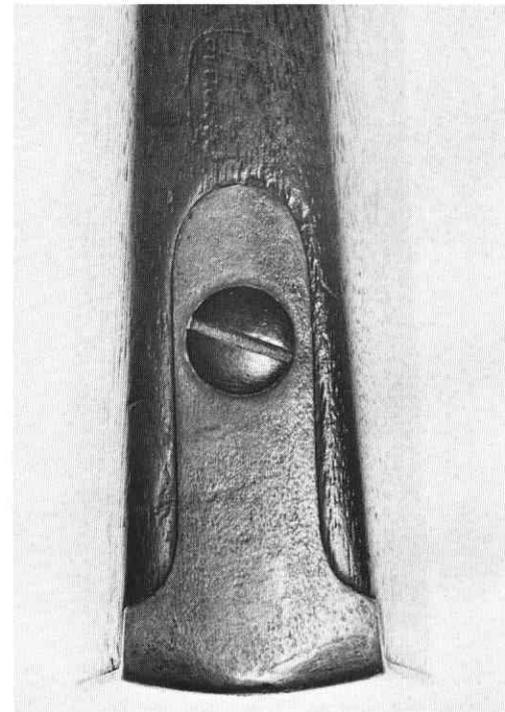
A carbine pictured on page 230 of R.T. Huntington's book, *Hall's Breechloader*, thought to be an experimental arm made in 1839. Its breechblock is unmarked.



The Model 1840 Type I Hall carbine with the elbow lever opening device. It is not known how many of either the 1833 Type III or the Model 1840 Type I carbines were delivered. It is possible that all 500 carbines delivered on May 2, 1840, had 26 1/4 inch barrels and ramrod bayonets, and that guns of the type pictured (Model 1840 Type I) were part of the August 5th deliveries of 500 guns. Whatever quantities of each were delivered, it is obvious that North was using up parts he had made, while the Ordnance Department was trying to decide what changes were to be made in small arms for the cavalry.



The acceptance mark of Nahum W. Patch, government inspector at North's army. The small "P" between the chock screws is Patch's sub-assembly mark.



Mann Page Lomax's inspection mark is in front of the butt plate. Lomax was in charge of the Watertown Arsenal from August 14, 1838, until his death on March 27, 1842.



The lower carbine shows the elbow lever unlatched and thrown forward; the breechblock is still in the firing position.



The elbow lever pushed upward and the breechblock ready for loading.

