



Colt Army Model 1860 Revolver

.44 caliber, six shot percussion revolver
On loan from the Paul Hill Collection, Santa Rosa

The Colt Army Model 1860 was a muzzle-loaded cap & ball .44-caliber revolver used during the American Civil War. It was favored as a side arm by cavalry, infantry, and artillery troops. More than 200,000 were manufactured from 1860 through 1873. Colt's biggest customer was the US Government with over 127,000 units being purchased and issued to the troops. The weapon was a single-action, six-shot weapon accurate up to 75 to 100 yards, where the fixed sights were typically set when manufactured. The rear sight was a notch in the hammer, clearly visible only when the revolver was cocked.

The Colt .44-caliber "Army" Model was one of the most widely used revolvers of the Civil War. It was the revolver of choice for officers, artillerymen, and cavalrymen. The Colt .44 had a six-shot, rotating cylinder. It fired a 0.454-inch diameter round lead ball, or a conical projectile, that was propelled by a 30 grain charge of black powder ignited by a brass percussion cap that was struck by the hammer. When fired, balls had a muzzle velocity of about 750 feet per second.

This example shows extensive use.



Surgical Bone Saw

from the personal surgical kit of J.K. Towle, M.D.
Codman & Shurtleff Surgical & Dental Instruments, 13 Tremont Street, Boston, MA
On loan from the Paul Hill Collection, Santa Rosa

In 1838, a mechanic in Roxbury, Massachusetts, designed a Pocket Cupping instrument for the application of Ether. The enthusiastic response of the Boston medical community encouraged Thomas Codman to apply his talents to crafting a number of medical and surgical items. Thomas' son Benjamin, graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1845. After purchasing the entire stock of dental supplies from druggist Joseph Burnett, Dr. Codman opened his Dental Depot on Tremont Street. By 1857, he was joined in partnership by Shurtleff and F.O. Whitney, and Codman & Shurtleff was established. Its line of medical, surgical, dental and veterinary instruments and supplies became more extensive; ear, nose, and throat instruments became a major portion of the business.

In 1860 the Company introduced its General Surgery and Amputation Set, designed to be used on the battlefield by Army surgeons during the Civil War. As a result, the Company prospered and its reputation grew significantly. This saw was from such a kit being used primarily to saw through bone when an appendage needed to be amputated. Interestingly the company was owned by Codman's and Shurtleff's until 1938 when it was purchased by Frank Ruggles, the sales manager. Prospering today as Codman & Shurtleff, Inc. (a Johnson & Johnson company) the company specializes in neuroscience instruments.



Pedal Car and Metal Toy Cars

On loan from the collection of Guy Smith, Sebastopol

The automobile (or motor car) revolutionized transportation in the late 1890s. Pedal cars were not far behind, as play things for wealthy children, based upon the real cars on the road at the time.

Pedal cars reached the peak of popularity in the late 1920s and early 1930s. No pedal cars were produced in the mid-1940s when all metal production was directed to the World War II effort. With postwar prosperity in the 1950s, pedal cars grew more popular and were available in all major stores. Later pedal toy manufacturers recognized that there was a huge market for these pedal car ride-on toys and extended their business strategies to include manufacturing of other pedal toy products like planes, trains, trucks and tricycles.

Eventually die cast model cars became available (and popular) for those who just wanted a model of the models. However small the die cast cars were, they still had working parts, pedals that would move as the toy was pushed across a flat surface. They also represented something almost everyone could afford, unlike their expensive and larger counterparts.

In the 1960's, a fascination with space and air travel, the ubiquity of plastics, and new safety standards for toys brought an end to widespread metal pedal car production. By the 1970's the plastic car was introduced and the traditional steel pedal cars almost faded out of existence. The pedal car is again enjoying a resurgence in popularity. Today replicas of earlier pedal cars are available and their popularity is growing for a new generation of children and adults.



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