



America's Gunmaker and the John M. Browning Firearms Museum

The world's most prolific firearms designer is John Moses Browning. Born in Ogden, Utah on January 23, 1855 it appears the ability to create something revolutionary in your head and build it with your hands was genetic to the Browning family. His father Johnathan was a gunsmith with many original designs including the "Harmonica" chambered percussion rifle and a revolving cylinder rifle. Obviously John paid attention as he made his first firearm at age 13 in his father's shop, and was awarded his first of 128 patents on October 7, 1879 at the age of 24. John's son Val did much of the early design on the superposed shotgun and grandson Bruce is an inventor and designer of more recent firearms.

- Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammerless (.32 ACP)
- Colt Model 1905
- FN Model 1906 Vest Pocket (.25 ACP)
- Remington Model 8 (1906), a long recoil semi-automatic rifle
- Colt Model 1908 Vest Pocket (.25 ACP)
- Colt Model 1908 Pocket Hammerless (.32 ACP)
- FN Model 1910
- U.S. M1911 pistol (.45 ACP)
- Colt Woodsman pistol
- Browning Auto-5 long recoil semi-automatic shotgun
- Browning 22 Semi-Auto rifle
- U.S. M1895 Colt-Browning machine gun (The Potato Digger)
- U.S. M1917 water-cooled machine gun
- U.S. M1919 air-cooled machine gun
- U.S. M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)
- U.S. M2 .50-caliber heavy machine gun of 1921 nicknamed "Ma-Deuce"
- U.S. M4 37mm Autocannon
- Remington Model 8 semi-auto rifle
- Remington Model 24 semi-auto rifle (.22) Also produced by Browning Firearms as the SA-22.
- Browning Hi-Power pistol. On November 26, 1926, while working at the bench on this 9mm pistol design for Fabrique Nationale de Herstal (FN) in Belgium, he died of heart failure. The design was completed in 1935, by Belgian designer Dieudonne Saive and put into production to become one of the most popular handguns of all time.
- The Browning Superposed over/under shotgun was designed by John Browning in 1922 and entered production in 1931
- Ithaca Model 37 pump-action repeating shotgun

Winchester manufactured millions of guns designed by John M. Browning. Browning's earlier licensing agreements with manufacturers had been for a one time buyout. With his design of the Auto-5 shotgun he decided it was time for a continuous royalty fee based on sales. Winchester turned him down. What they apparently did not pay attention to was the fact that old John had already cut some deals with



The first Model 1894.

Fabrique Nationale in Belgium. FN went for the royalty proposal and would up with the Auto-5 (Humpback), the superlative Superposed over/under and the Hi-Power. Oops!

Now the really good part for by taking a short lovely drive north from Salt Lake City, Utah to Ogden, you can visit the John M. Browning Firearms Museum. The museum is located in the Union Station at 2501 Wall Avenue. This is the old depot for the Union Pacific Railroad which originally opened in 1924. The station has not only been beautifully restored, it is still functioning for passenger traffic. The building and grounds host three different museums. The Utah State Railroad Museum takes up space inside and out. The outside collection hosts several of the largest and fastest locomotives to ever ride the rails. Of note is that the Golden Spike national historic Site at Promontory Summit is just up the road holding the spot where the nation's first transcontinental railroad was completed. The famous golden spike driven at the completion ceremony is displayed in a safe in the Union Station Museum. Is it real or a copy? When I asked that question I just got a wink. Also, the building



The "Holy Grail" of the Model 1911.



Many "Firsts."

holds the Browning – Kimball Classic Car Museum and with the Browning Firearms Museum on the 2nd floor. There is an art gallery with both permanent and rotating displays and the Union Grill is a tasty stop for lunch or dinner.

The Browning Firearms museum is home to hundreds of rifles, pistols, and machine guns, including some of the original prototypes and early production models such as Serial #1 of the Browning Auto-5 shotgun, the original models of the 1894 Winchester, 1895 machine gun, M1819 .30 water-cooled machinegun, and the 1921 M-2 .50 caliber machine gun. On permanent display is the Holy Grail for fans of the Model 1911 .45ACP. There lies the original prototype for the 1911 .45

plus the prototype for a 1910 hammerless .45 that never saw production.

Also on display are over-sized scale models of the Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR), and the .50 caliber M-2, which were used by the military for training purposes. One display case has miniature guns, including machine guns, built to scale that are fully functional with the exception of being able to fire. John Browning's workshop is now housed here and you can feel the genius in the room. Finally, you can take a short break and enjoy the short movie which highlights the life of John Moses Browning, America's Gunmaker.

Find information and directions to the John M. Browning Firearms Museum visit www.theunionstation.org. TAJ



Home of the Browning Firearms Museum.



John Browning's workshop.

A few of Browning's creations included the following models.

- Winchester Model 1885 falling-block single shot rifle
- Winchester Model 1886 lever-action repeating rifle
- Winchester Model 1887 lever-action repeating shotgun
- Winchester Model 1890 slide-action repeating rifle (.22)
- Winchester Model 1892 lever-action repeating rifle
- Winchester Model 1894 lever-action repeating rifle
- Winchester Model 1895 lever-action repeating rifle
- Winchester Model 1897 pump-action repeating shotgun
- Colt Model 1900
- Colt Model 1902
- Colt Model 1903 Pocket Hammer (.38 ACP)