



Rock Island Arsenal Museum  
Second Oldest U.S. Army Museum  
Located in Building 60

The Rock Island Arsenal Museum was established by the Chief of Ordnance, Major General William Crozier on October 1, 1903. The office of the Chief of Ordnance sent 15 boxes of ordnance material “for the purpose of preserving it in a Military Museum to be established at the Rock Island Arsenal.” The Museum was opened to the public in Building 102 (Shop A) on July 4, 1905. During World War I, additional space was needed for manufacturing, so the museum was packed up and placed in storage. At the request of the local community, the museum reopened on July 4, 1919, as The Rock Island Arsenal Museum. In addition to the Museum’s focus on ordnance material, for the first time the history of the Arsenal was included in the interpretation.

During World War II, the museum was closed again to the public and stored away. It reopened in May of 1948 in Building 60 where it is located today. On November 4, 1986, the museum was renamed the John M. Browning Memorial Museum in “recognition of Mr. Browning’s contributions to ordnance technology and the armed forces.” During this time, the museum became known for its arms collection, an important but eclectic collection of foreign, domestic, military, and civilian weapons.

On July 1, 1986, the Museum shifted its mission to interpreting the history of Rock Island Arsenal and its commands, focusing on the people, processes and products of the Arsenal.

Today the Rock Island Arsenal Museum tells the story of Rock Island Arsenal from the founding of Fort Armstrong in 1816, to present day production. It interprets the history of the Army's Organic Industrial Base and the worldwide impact the Arsenal has on the U.S. Military and the Warfighter. Its collection highlights include: Model 1903 Springfield Rifle Serial Number 1, an American Revolution-era Rappahannock Forge Wall Gun, the saber carried by General John Buford at the Battle of Gettysburg, experimental artillery, weapons used at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and dozens of products spanning 160 years of Rock Island Arsenal history. The Museum is open to the public.