

Hello my name is Ben Brown and I'm the director and curator of the Clarke Museum. The museum has an impressive firearm collection, which will be the centerpiece of a free talk on November 19th beginning at 11:30 by Ken Anglin, who is going to teach us about the history of firearms by utilizing the Clarke's collection, this is a free, open to the public event.

The largest firearm collection was donated by the Reinhart family in the 1930s, and includes 85 firearms. James Reinhart moved to Ferndale around 1915 and initially worked as a shoemaker, then as a machinist, later opening a sporting goods store in Eureka in the 1920s, where he performed gun repairs.

The next largest firearm collection came from the now defunct HSU gun club. The original collector who gifted the firearms to the university was James Blake who moved to Humboldt County in the early 1900s. He founded the Blake Telephone Co., the first telephone system in the Arcata area. The collection was displayed in cases in Founder's Hall from the mid-1930s until 1968, when the university passed a rule that no firearms were allowed on campus, even muzzle loading antiques, and all the firearms were placed in crates, stored in a basement, and quickly forgotten about.

In 2014, an HSU police officer contacted us and said they came across crates of firearms, which they knew nothing about, and were happy to donate them to the museum. This collection consists of 17 firearms and related items, and of particular note is a .50 caliber, octagon barreled mountain rifle made by Charles Schumacher, a gunsmith from Arcata, who may have been the region's only gun manufacturer. He and his several brothers emigrated from Prussia and arrived in Arcata no later than 1856, opening a gunsmith shop on the plaza.

Another rifle most likely made by Schumacher is a .50 caliber Plains style rifle belonging to Captain Liscom, a prominent member of the Union Company that founded Union, now known as Arcata in 1850. Liscom initially settled near present day Blue Lake on a hill that became known as Liscom Hill. However, difficulties with Native Americans caused him to move to a farm west of Arcata, where Bret Harte was employed to tutor his children.

The last rifle I'd like to talk about comes from the George Albert collection and is a Japanese Arisake Type 38 Bolt-Action Carbine, which was taken by local WWII veteran Clark Stokes as a war trophy from a Japanese sniper he killed at Guadalcanal. Mr. Stokes caught malaria soon after and was sent back to the US for the duration of the war.

The Clarke Museum always has firearms from our collection on display, with the current exhibit showcasing military firearms, plains rifles and a case with Colts, Smith and Wessons, and Remingtons. Please join us for the free presentation by Ken Anglin on Nov. 19th beginning at 11:30.