

# The Hawken: Missouri's Official State Rifle

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Missouri state legislators recently passed a bill making the Hawken the official Missouri state rifle. With Gov. Mike Parson's signature, Missouri becomes the seventh state to have an official rifle, joining Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Alaska and Tennessee. The state's selection of the Hawken rifle is fitting, as Samuel Hawken set up shop in St. Louis, Mo., along with his brother, Jacob, to supply arms to the many pioneers heading west in the late 1840s.

Unlike earlier American arms, Hawken rifles were shorter, handier and more powerful, with a larger-diameter bore than the Pennsylvania and Kentucky rifles of earlier generations. These single-shot, half-stocked, largely percussion-primed rifles were

suited to the harsh environment and dangerous game encountered by Americans embracing Manifest Destiny in the mid-19th century. Hawken rifles became famous not just for their ruggedness but also their accuracy and range.

In celebration of Missouri's recognition of the Hawken, renowned master gunsmith Bob Browner, a St. Louis native, undertook a project to build a faithful reproduction of an original Hawken to serve as the state's official rifle. The resulting bench copy (btm.), shown here with an original (top), includes classic Hawken features, such as the buckhorn rear sight, oval barrel key escutcheons and raised cheek comb.



