Dedicated to documenting the history of the American West and the history of firearms, the Buffalo Bill Center of the West’s McCracken Research library houses books, historic photographs, and archival collections stored on 4,680 linear feet of shelving. Nearly half of the archival collections, including thousands of design drawings and blueprints, relate to the manufacture and development of American firearms. The office files of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company and the Schuyler, Hartley and Graham Company are just two among many significant collections preserved here.

Also notable are the McCracken’s collections of trade publications and manufacturers’ catalogs and advertising, embracing all major and many smaller firearms and munition companies, both domestic and international, from the early 1800s to the present. These and other holdings make the McCracken truly a world-class center for research and scholarship on the history of firearms and the global firearms industry.

A Growing Archive

Increasingly, selective firearms manufacturers and scholars are entrusting their research materials to the McCracken. During 2014, for example, the McCracken has received important donations relating to the Ithaca Gun Company and the Maynard Rifle Company, among others. Donors recognize that the McCracken’s professionally-trained staff protects collections in accordance with the highest, most up-to-date standards. They also appreciate how the McCracken makes materials available for research under carefully monitored conditions.

Digitization

With generous support from the Olin Corporation, the American Society of Arms Collectors, and the Winchester Club of America, the McCracken staff is digitizing, uploading and making accessible historical materials related to the development of firearms and ammunition. Over 7,000 items having been made web-viewable, including design drawings, production and distribution records, advertisements, trade catalogs, and rarely seen company publications. These robust resources are freely available to users worldwide, offering unparalleled and unprecedented access to a veritable treasure trove of information.

Preservation

Your corporate or personal collection of historical records, correspondence and photographs belongs in the McCracken. Here it will be well-protected, preserved and accessible for generations to come. Let us know how we can assist you!