

SPRINGFIELD ARMORY COMES OF AGE

By our defense correspondent

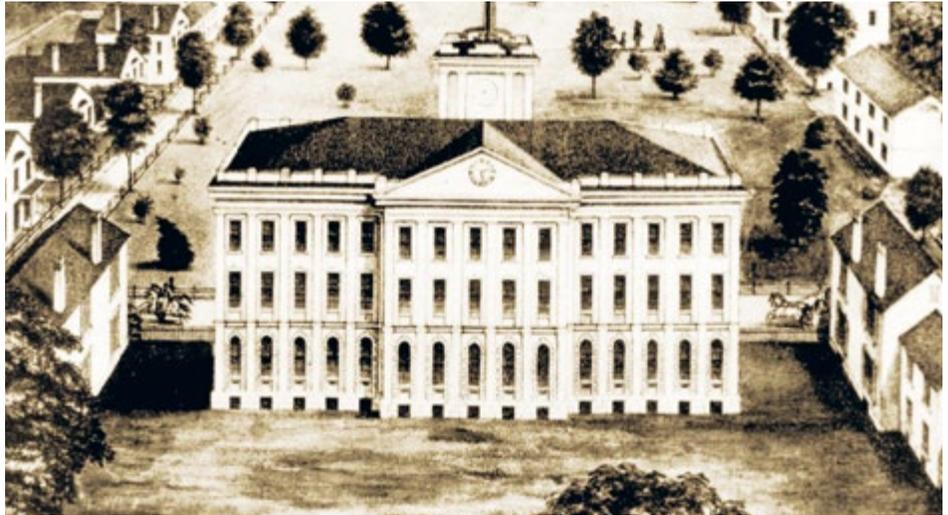
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THE U.S. ARMORY at Springfield, Massachusetts, has helped restore America's honor after the nation's latest conflict with Britain. The War of 1812 has formally ended. To the relief of citizens on both sides, a treaty has settled the northeastern border between America and British-controlled Canada.

The Springfield armory played an important role as a big provider of weapons to American forces. It made nearly 10,000 muskets last year.

They say the Springfield armory has finally come of age after a slow start. In 1795, as the nation's first government-run armory, 40 workers were expected to produce just 245 muskets in its first year of operation.

America held its own against a world power, but experts warn that without strong defenses



in the future, the nation will struggle to secure its independence and freedoms.

They predict Springfield muskets will one day be famous as the factory builds a reputation for clever engineering and manufacturing.

The armory was chosen by George Washington to serve as the main weapons arsenal during the Revolutionary War.

Toward the end of the last century, it looked as if the French might invade the U.S. even though they had previously helped the young nation defeat the British in the Revolutionary War. America decided to prepare for possible

conflict by building up its navy and rearming.

In 1798, Eli Whitney, who grew up on a farm in Massachusetts, won a contract to produce 10,000 muskets. He has been called a pioneer of the machine age after his factory helped to develop “interchangeable parts” to mass-produce weapons.

Earlier, Whitney was granted a patent after inventing the cotton gin, a device to remove seeds from cotton. The “gin”—short for “engine”—has boosted the economy of southern slave-owning states, and led some to criticize the invention for reviving slave plantations.