

THE AMERICAN SHARPS SHOOTERS

Edition 2025-1

Published by
C. Sharps Arms Co., Inc.



Janet Simpson at the Smoke Out – page 3

Manufacturers of A WORLD-FAMOUS SERIES of Classic Metallic Cartridge Rifles and Classic Sights
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2025

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2025

THE AMERICAN SHARPS SHOOTERS

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WARNING!

To Would-be Sharps Shooters, Frontiersmen, Buffalo Hunters, or Just Plain Black Powder Cartridge Shooters

Before you take delivery of a Sharps, High Wall, Remington, Ballard, or any other turn-of-the-century hammer gun, talk to your dealer or Firearms Instructor about the proper handling of these antique rifles. If they are not knowledgeable concerning antique weapons, then find someone who is. Find a Certified Firearms Instructor who is qualified in the older style rifles, and listen to him. For safety's sake, study the Instruction Manual that came with the rifle. **NEVER LOAD OR FIRE THE RIFLE BEFORE READING THE MANUAL OR GETTING PROPER INSTRUCTION.**

What redblooded American EVER needed a manual to know how to load and fire a rifle? You're talkin' the land of the free, the home of the world's best shots! Alvin York, Davy Crockett, Sam Houston, "Matthew Quigley"! Did they ever read a manual? Hell no! A Manual! I don't need no stinkin' manual!

Oh yes you do. The first-time purchaser of ANY firearm needs a manual, and they need to read it. Notice that's "need", not "should have" a manual. A manual comes with your new C. Sharps rifle. If you

have lost yours, call or write the company for another. Study that manual until you really understand it.

Our shooting generation is not used to the hammer out there on the side of the rifle. We are not accustomed to pulling a hammer back to half cock for loading and reloading, nor to cocking the hammer to fire the piece. As twenty-first century shooters, we're just not used to hammers.

We have forgotten that, should the hammer slip while being pulled to the full cock position, the piece could fire. Bingo! An "accidental" discharge. "Accidental" nothing. Simple carelessness, coupled with ignorance of the firearm being used.

You do NOT dry-fire hammer guns. Dry firing any hammer gun will sooner or later break the firing pin. Or the hammer. Don't do it.

Another significant difference between modern rifles and the New Model Sharps and High Walls, is the manner in which the cartridge is fed into the chamber and held there. In the Sharps, the shooter manually puts the cartridge into the cham-

ber, then raises the breechblock to lock it in. The breechblock is forced across the back of the cartridge case, which makes it absolutely necessary that primers be seated flush with or below the head of the case. If they protrude, it is remotely possible that the piece could fire before the action is closed.

We all know that a "safety" isn't "safe". Most of today's shooters have gone through Hunter Safety Courses in which that fact was emphasized again and again. "DON'T DEPEND ON THE SAFETY!" the instructors tell us. Of course, they are absolutely right. The New Model Sharps and High Walls don't have a "safety", as such. They do have a "half-cock" notch which performs a similar function. The hammer must always be in the half cock or "safety" position before loading and remain there until ready to fire.

Learn your rifle, pay attention to what you're doing, and the enjoyment you will receive from shooting a piece of American history, and learning to shoot it well, will more than offset the minor inconveniences involved in the learning process. That's the bottom line.

A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed, Amendment II, Bill of Rights

SMOKE OUT AT THE THUNDER HOLE RANGE

By Garry Laxton

The Thunder Hole Long Range group is part of the Willow Hole Cowboy club in North Zulch, Texas. For those few of you that have never heard of North Zulch, it's about 100 miles northwest of Houston and about 20 miles east of Bryan, Texas. We shoot a monthly match with single shot BPCR rifles out to 600 yards, and lever rifles to 300 yards. We all love the old single shots, and virtually all of us shoot black powder ammunition. While we enjoy traveling to out-of-state matches for these long-range events, we decided we'd like to try and establish one in Texas for those folks not able to travel as far – and to give people from those other states a good reason to visit us in Texas. So, we just hosted the first annual Smoke-Out at the Thunder Hole range.



The range is on a beautiful piece of property, whose owner (Charles Thomason) is an active participant in both the cowboy and long-range matches – and he normally beats us all! We do, however, love to challenge him as much as possible. He's a good sport, and even occasionally lets us win.

A significant group from our Thunder Hole Long Range club travels every summer to the Sagebrush match in Alliance, Nebraska. While it's a great match, it's a long way from the southern part of the Republic of Texas. We decided to emulate its format in our part of the world and hopefully establish a match that people “down south” could more easily attend. The Smoke-Out match we came up with consists of several events:

- The first day was a “gong” match, with 5 targets from 200 to 600 yards.
- The second day was a silhouette match with 5 targets from 200 to 500 yards. We threw in our own special “silhouette” of a warhog to provide the 5th target.
 - Each of these matches was scored and awarded separately, and then the overall winners awarded.
- A lever gun match with 5 targets from 100 to 300 yards
- A rimfire side match from 50 to 200 yards, with both scoped and open sight categories.
- An offhand side match at 400 yards.

We were fortunate and had absolutely beautiful weather both days. Temperatures ranged from the 50's at night to the low 80's during the day, with clear skies. We had 12 men and 3 women in the single shot category and 4 men in the lever rifle category. Actually, 4 of the men who shot single shots *also* shot lever-guns, so they put a lot of lead downrange and were always on the firing line.

DAY 1

Saturday saw us start off with the Gong Match, which consisted of 5 targets, with 6 shots per target. Targets were all 7 to 8 MOA at the respective distances of 200, 300, 400, 500 and 600 yards. This provided a chance for everyone to get comfortable with the range and get well sighted in before the more challenging silhouette match on Sunday.

Gong Match

Men's Single Shot

Most folks shot very well, with 4 people clustered very tightly in the men's division, fighting for the lead on Day 1. For single shot rifles, the placement was:

- Garry Laxton in 1st with 29 of 30 shooting a C. Sharps Arms 1874 in .45-70
- Charles Thomason in 1st with 29 of 30 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in .45-70
 - The tie-breaking rule didn't work in this case, as the lone miss by each was on the same target.
- Dan Cravens in 2nd with 28 of 30 shooting a Pedersoli 1874 Sharps in .45-70
- John Simpson in 3rd with 27 of 30 shooting a C. Sharps Arms Highwall in .45-70

Women's Single Shot

In the women's single shot division, we had

- Janet Simpson in 1st with 28 of 30 shooting a C. Sharps Arms Highwall in .40-65
- Amanda Slomchinski in 2nd with 20 of 30 shooting a Uberti Highwall in .38-55
- Barbara Campbell in 3rd with 19 of 30 shooting a Browning 1885 BPCR in .45-70

Lever Rifles

For lever rifles, the placement was:

- Leslie Hines in 1st with 26 of 30 shooting a Browning 1886 in .45-70 (won by tie breaking rule)
- Dan Cravens in 2nd with 26 of 30 shooting a Browning 1886 in .45-70
- Joe Spearman in 3rd with 23 of 30 shooting a Marlin 336 Cowboy in .38-55.



Firing Line During Main Match

Rimfire Side Match

After completing the Gong Match and a lunch break, we had a rimfire side match. This consisted of regulation rimfire silhouette targets at 50, 100, 150 and 200 yards for open sighted rifles. For scope sighted rifles, we had a set of smaller silhouettes. The match consisted of 5 rounds at each distance. The wind was rather gusty in the afternoon and made this very challenging.

For men's open sight division, placement was:

Brian Bench 1st with 17 of 20

-
- Charles Thomason 2nd with 15 of 20, and
- John Simpson 3rd with 13 of 20.

For men's scoped division, placement was:

- Dan Cravens with 15 of 20
- Leslie Hines with 6 of 20

In the women's division, we had:

- Janet Simpson 1st with 10 of 20.

Offhand 400 Yards

To finish the day, we had a 400-yard offhand competition. In this match, anyone that wanted to compete put \$10 in the pot, and the winner got the pot. Competitors got 5 shots to try to get a hit on the 400-yard gong target off hand. Those that succeeded then went into sudden death elimination. Six people decided to test their abilities (John Simpson, Charles Thomason, Brian Bench, Joe Spearman, Garry Laxton and Dan Cravens). All six got their initial hit on the target. In sudden death, all six missed their first shot, so everyone shot again. At that point, only John Simpson and Dan Cravens got a hit and continued. After 5 rounds of sudden death, John Simpson emerged victorious.



Garry Laxton with his Sharps



John Simpson After Offhand Victory

DAY 2

Sunday brought us to the Silhouette Match. This utilized standard NRA silhouettes (plus our own special Warthog silhouette) at ranges of 200, 300, 400, 485 (warthog) and 500 yards. These targets are considerably smaller than the gong targets of Day 1, so presented quite a bit more challenge to competitors.

Men's Single Shot

This was another hard-fought match, with a tight cluster of scores at the end. The final standings were:

- Garry Laxton in 1st with 19 of 30 shooting a C. Sharps Arms 1874 in .45-70.
- Jerry Caraway in 2nd with 18 of 30 (won tie breaker with Charles Thomason) shooting an original Winchester Highwall in .45-70.
- Charles Thomason in 3rd with 18 of 30 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in .45-70
- Don Richard in 4th with 16 of 30 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in .45-70
- Dave Campbell in 5th with 15 of 30 shooting a C Sharps Arms Highwall in .45-70 (won tie-breaker with Brian Bench)
- Brian Bench in 6th with 15 of 30 shooting a Pedersoli 1874 Sharps in .45-70.

Women's Single Shot

Amanda Slomchinski was on fire in the silhouette match, beating all competitors! It's not often someone shoots better on the silhouettes than on the gong targets. With shooting like this on the first day, she'd have easily won the entire match.

- Amanda Slomchinski in 1st with 25 of 30 shooting a Uberti Highwall in .38-55
- Janet Simpson in 2nd with 11 of 30, shooting a C Sharps Arms Highwall in .40-65
- Barbara Campbell in 3rd with 5 of 30, shooting a Browning Highwall in .45-70

OVERALL MATCH STANDINGS

After all the smoke cleared (literally!) the overall combined match standings were as follows:

Men's Single Shot Open Sight – Garry Laxton with 48 of 60

Women's Single Shot Open Sight – Amanda Slomchinski with 45 of 60

Men's Lever Rifle Open Sight – Leslie Hines with 51 of 60

Everyone attending the match had a great time and is ready to do it again next year. Our plans are to expand this to a 3-day match. A separate side match day will include the lever rifle side matches (both rifle and pistol caliber), expanded rimfire matches, offhand, etc. We'll then have Saturday and Sunday solely for single shots, probably with more rounds per target.

If this sounds interesting, please keep a watch on our website (www.willowholecowboys.com) for information. The match will be held on October 17-19, 2025.

If you live close enough, or happen to be passing through, please join us at our monthly match, which is the Sunday of the first weekend of each month.

If you have any questions about our club and matches, please contact me at garry@laxtontx.com

“A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody ought not be trusted by anybody,” Thomas Paine



THE BLACK RIVER BUFFALO RUNNERS

OLD WEST CENTERFIRES



By Jerry Mayo

As the Black River Buffalo Runners came together for the first match of the new aggregate season, there was a lot more than excitement in the air. Fifteen shooters braved a morning with temperatures in the 20's, I might add on a ridge and facing north, to begin the 2025 aggregate chase. Bob DeLisle stopped at the woodshed to grab some logs for our firing line heating source only to arrive at the range and find Curt Lokovsek had done the same. We



were set for fuel. Now, I am all for the ways of the Old West and life on the prairie in those times, but let's face it, when the temperatures are in the 20's the flint and steel can stay at home. I stepped into the present and contributed a "Duro Flame" type log. Then we had a roaring fire in the stove just after the strike of the match.

With registration, setup and safety briefing complete, we gazed downrange to find the fog so thick that the 100-yard targets were barely visible. The 200-yard targets were lost in the cloud. For those familiar with the byproduct of black powder shooting, you can appreciate that insult was added to

injury when we realize there was zero wind. Not a breeze, nothing. The lingering smoke from the black powder would create a blackout, or whiteout.

So, we waited. After about fifteen minutes past our starting time, we evaluate our chances of having a fair competition and it was not going to happen until the fog lifted. In one of those "Brilliant!" moments, Allen Cuniff casually uttered, "Why don't we shoot the after-match first? I repeat, brilliant! Off to the adjoining pistol range we go, all the while hoping the sun will do its job in our absence.

Our after-match, which at this point just became our warmup match, was with Black Powder Revolvers. We had eleven of our shooters take to the firing line for ten shots at our usual target for this event. The target was a bullseye with the largest scoring ring at eleven inches and the black at five-and-one-half inches with a one-and-three-quarter-inch X ring. The target was posted at ten yards. Only single action revolvers using black powder and lead cast bullets were used. Among us were a couple of cap-and-ball shooters, and percussion revolvers meet our requirements. Loading a second cylinder takes extra time beyond that of the cartridge shooters. It



makes you wonder about the struggles those old timers experienced while under fire. It must have been nerve wracking to measure powder and cap cylinder's nipples to get back into the fray as bullets flew all around you. The winner this time was a .36 Navy cap-and-ball shooter, with an impressive score of 99-6X, Mike Nesbitt took the purse plus the copper token which depicted a Colt .45. Good shooting Mike.

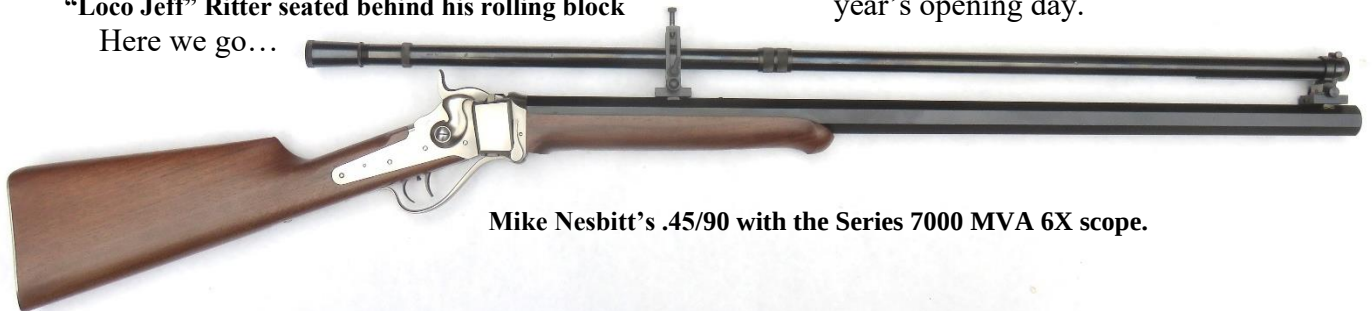
With a feeling that the fun was over and it was time to get serious, we headed back to the High-Power range. As if by divine intervention, or just a good idea from Allen Cunniff, the range was clear of fog and ready for our match. Even a little breeze had kicked up to clear the smoke.

For this match we had two shooters needing to submit scores from targets fired in advance, on a day previous to the match. The targets were shot in the presence of approved witnesses. Scores were verified prior to leaving the range and maintained by the Match Director until the day of the shoot.

Thanks go out to all who assisted in making this match run smoothly. The course of fire for this match was our standard aggregate setup which consists of ten shots at 100 yards at a single-bullseye target, ten more shots at a 200 yards single bullseye target. Those targets may be shot in any order the shooter chooses. Cartridges must be loaded with black powder and lead cast bullets. Shooting is done from the seated position with cross-sticks. The match is shot in thirty-minute relays in which all twenty scoring shots must be fired. Fouling shots are allowed. So, let us look at how our Buffalo Runners did on this year's opening day.



"Loco Jeff" Ritter seated behind his rolling block
Here we go...



Mike Nesbitt's .45/90 with the Series 7000 MVA 6X scope.

Our top shooter for the day was Mike Nesbitt and it has been a while since he scored so well. Mike used his heavy scoped-sighted '74 Bridgeport Model by C. Sharps Arms in .45/90 to post a score of 189-2X. Our next three shooters had identical scores, however there were differences. Tiebreakers are, first; most X's and next; the highest score at the longest distance, and we had to use them both. In second place was Curt Lokovsek with his 1874 Shiloh chambered in .45/90. Curt scored a 187-5X. In third place was Ken Kurfurst with his 187-5X. Ken was shooting a .45/90 Remington Hepburn and he has done better with his Sharps Borchardt. In fourth place was Allen Cunniff shooting a score of 187-2X with his C. Sharps Arms '74 in .40/65 caliber. And rounding out the top five was Bob Delisle. With his Pedersoli Sharps in .45/70, Bob posted a 172-5X and he also had the high-scoring target at 200 yards,



Bob DeLisle's 200-yard target

a 98-4X. All very impressive shooting and this completes the top five shooters.

Taking sixth place was Jerry Johnson who scored 171-2X shooting a recently rebuilt Remington rolling block in .40/65 caliber. Mike Holeman was our seventh-place shooter, scoring a 168-2X using a C. Sharps Arms in .45/70. Eighth place goes to Dick Elliot shooting a '74 Shiloh "Creedmoor" in .45/70. Dick started his match with his usually high level of accuracy posting a 97-3X at 100 yards for the highest 100-yard score of the day. However, while on the 200-yard target he experienced a malfunction with his rear sight and finished the match with a 167-4. In ninth place was Phil Wiebe using a Model 1877 by C. Sharps Arms in .40/65 and posting a 162. In tenth place was "Loco Jeff" Ritter shooting his rebuilt Remington rolling block in .45-90, shooting loads with 1F GOEX powder, scoring a 160-3X for the day.



Curt Lokovsek touches-off his .45-90



Dick Elliott with his 100-yard 10-shot target.

put up a score of 151. In fourteenth place was Mike Moran. Mike had shot earlier and used his heavy-barreled '74 Hartford by C. Sharps Arms in .50/70 to score 131-X. Our fifteenth shooter was Larry Litten. Larry was using a '74 Shiloh .45/70 and finished with a 123-X.

That was a real good start for the new year of shooting.



Mark Davis firing his .45-70

Tom Witt leads the next group of five shooters with a score of 157-X using his '74 Hartford Model by C. Sharps Arms in .50/70 to land in eleventh place. (Tom brought a Public Address system to the range for the first time since I have been involved with Old West Centerfires. It worked really well and was welcomed by those of us, like myself, who can use all of the hearing assistance they can get.) In twelfth place was me, Jerry Mayo. I shot a 153-2X with my 1874 Hartford by C. Sharps Arms .45/70. To take thirteenth place Mark Davis, seen in the picture below, used a '74 Shiloh .45/70 to



Mike Moran's '74 Hartford Model in .50/70 with the 1 ¾ Heavy-barrel

Scores for this Match

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rifle/Cartridge</u>	<u>100 yd.</u>	<u>200 yds.</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 st Mike Nesbitt	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/90	95-X	94-X	189-2X
2 nd Curt Lokovsek	'74 Shiloh .45/90	91-2X	96-3X	187-5X
3 rd Ken Kurfurst	Rem Hepburn .45/90	92-2X	95-3X	187-5X
4 th Allen Cunniff	C. Sharps Arms .40/65	90	97-2X	187-2X
5 th Bob DeLisle	1874 Pedersoli .45/70	74-X	98-4X	172-5X
6 th Jerry Johnson	Rem Rolling Block .40/65	81-2X	90	171-2X
7 th Mike Holeman	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/70	83	85-X	168-2X
8 th Dick Elliott	'74 Shiloh .45/70	97-3X	70-X	167-4X
9 th Phil Wiebe	'77 C. Sharps Arms .40/65	77	85	162
10 th "Loco" Jeff Ritter	Rem Rolling Block .45/90	93-2X	67-X	160-3X
11 th Tom Witt	'74 C. Sharps Arms .50/70	73-X	84	157-X
12 th Jerry Mayo	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/70	76-X	77-X	153-2X
13 th Mark Davis	'74 Shiloh .45/70	65	86	151
14 th Mike Moran	'74 C. Sharps Arms .50/70	53-X	78	131-X
15 th Larry Litten	'74 Shiloh .45/70	65	58-X	123-X

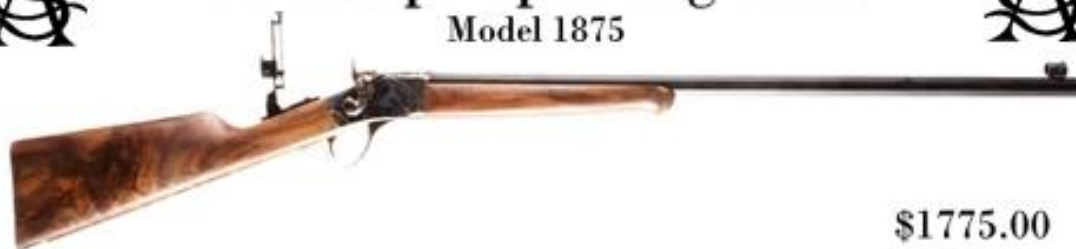


The Buffalo Runners, photo taken in between the shooting relays



C. Sharps Sporting Rifle

Model 1875



\$1775.00

The 1875 Sporting Rifle combines all of the attributes of a fine single-shot hunting rifle, great balance, maneuverability, reliability, and the ability to chamber cartridges for any type of game.

The base price now includes a color case hardened receiver, single trigger, blued barrel, 24"-34" standard or #1 Heavyweight barrel, tapered octagon or round, straight grip with shotgun buttplate, Schnabel style forend, buckhorn and blade sight combination.

Additional options available.

C. Sharps Target Rifle

Model 1875



\$1775.00

The 1875 Target Rifle has proven to be a formidable contender in the world of long-range black powder cartridge rifle competition.

The base price now includes a color case hardened receiver, single trigger, blued barrel, 28"-30" tapered round #1 Heavyweight barrel, pistol grip with Bridgeport plastic buttplate, Schnabel style forend, buckhorn and blade sight combination.

Additional options available.



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JAMES HENRY McNANEY, Part 1

Submitted By Leo J. Remiger



James Henry McNaney

Before we get started on this series let me say this: This will be an extremely long series of articles (nine total) describing James McNaney's experiences during the second 1886 Smithsonian Expedition to obtain specimens of plains buffalo for the museum. I have published the complete series of "newspaper letters" in *Black Powder Cartridge News* in 2012. W.T. Hornaday refined these letters and published them in his monograph titled "*The Extinction of the American Bison.*" This series is just an extraction from both those sources, so if you have already read them and prefer something new, please let me know via Mike. I chose this series because it is so interesting to see the part James McNaney played – his hide hunting background was instrumental to the overall success of the hunt. Leo....

James Henry McNaney was born June 22, 1860, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He worked for the U.S. Government as a teamster and came to Montana in 1877 the year after the Custer battle at the Little Big Horn River.¹

By 1880-1881, McNaney was a buffalo hunter and guide operating out of Miles City, Montana Territory. In the early 1880s, he bought the first ferry boat and operated it at the site of present-day 7th Street Bridge across the Yellowstone River in Miles City... "Jim McNaney also 'captained' the boat that was operated just below the present site [1961] of the Fort Keogh bridge, which [was] possibly the site of the first government ferry..."²

In 1882, James McNaney, along with his older brother Tom, and two helpers, which had been hired at \$50 per month, departed on a buffalo hunt. The outfit consisted of:

2	Wagons,	600	Brass shells,
2	Four-horse teams,	4	Sheets patch paper,
2	Saddle horses	60	Wilson skinning knives,
2	Wall tents	3	Butcher's steels,
1	Cook stove with pipe	1	Portable grindstone,
3	Sharps rifles:		
	1 in .40-90 (BN), 1 in .45-75 (.45-2 1/10"), and 1 in .45-120 (.45-2 7/8")		
50	Pounds of gunpowder,		
550	Pounds of lead,		
4500	Primers,		
Plus: Foodstuffs including flour, bacon, baking-powder, sugar, molasses, dried apples, canned vegetables, beans, etc., in quantity.			

This outfit cost them \$1400 in Miles City. Equipment bought at Fort Buford the following year, which involved eight wagons, cost between \$8000 and \$10,000. In camp the McNaney outfit would usually set their tents end to end with the stove at the junction in the middle, cooking and eating in one and sleeping in the other.

Around the first of December, 1882, McNaney's outfit was hunting in the vicinity of Beaver Creek, approximately 100 miles south of Glendive, Montana. One evening, about 10 o'clock, the hunters were sitting in their tents, loading cartridges and cleaning rifles when they discerned a low rumble. This rumble gradually increased to a "*thundering noise*" and one of the hunters exclaimed, "*There ! That's a big herd of buffalo coming in !*" Immediately they all ran out and hallooed and discharged rifles to keep the buffaloes from running over their tents. The entire herd arrived at a trot and moved quite rapidly. In the morning the whole country was black with buffalo.

Three weeks later the vicinity of McNaney's camp had been entirely deserted by buffalo, not even one remaining. Then one morning about daybreak a great herd, which was traveling south, began to pass their camp. A long line of moving forms was seen advancing from the northwest, coming in the direction of the hunter's camp. It disappeared in the creek valley for a few moments, and presently the leaders came in sight again at the top of a rise, a few hundred yards away. They continued down the intervening slope at full speed, within 50 yards of the two tents. After them came a living stream of followers, all going at a long lope, from four to ten buffalo abreast. Sometimes there would be a break in the column of a minute's duration, then more buffalo would appear at the brow of the hill, and the column went rushing by as before. This migration continued for four hours, a column of buffaloes galloping past the hunter's tents over a course no wider than a village street.

The hunters poured a continuous fire into the column as it galloped past, killing about 50 buffalo.⁴

W.T. Hornaday published a series of articles, often called "*newspaper letters*," about the Smithsonian Expedition to acquire buffalo specimens from Montana in 1886. These letters were published in a series of eight weekly installments, from March 6, 1887 to April 24, 1887 inclusive. They were published in the *New York Sun*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Philadelphia Press*, the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, the *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, the *Detroit Tribune*, the *Indianapolis Journal*, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, the *Washington Star*, the *St. Paul Pioneer-Press*, the *Omaha Herald*, and finally the *Portland Oregonian*.

Remember, these are basically informal descriptions of the same events detailed in Hornaday's monograph titled "*The Extermination of the American Bison*." As such, they were simply a rough draft that he later fleshed out with details in his monograph.

James McNaney served as one of three guides and hunters for the Hornaday Smithsonian expedition in 1886. He was chosen because of his knowledge of the country and his previous buffalo hunting experience.

W.T. Hornaday brought James McNaney alive with the following descriptions from his third article which was titled; *The Last Buffalo Hunt - The Buffalo Begin To Fall*, Part III:

"Jim McNaney here is the old buffalo hunter of the party. Although only 26, he has spent four winters on the buffalo range and killed about 3,200 head. A buffalo would need wings to ever get away from Jim after he had once spotted it. He is not only the best shot of the party, but he understands the habits of the animal most thoroughly. From first to last on our whole trip Jim never let a buffalo get away after once starting for it. I believe he would chase one to Hudson's Bay before he would give up and let it escape him. And what is more, he would ride his favorite horse to death after a buffalo if the occasion required.

"It was a raw, cold morning, and the clouds looked like snow. Shortly after sunrise we found the trail of our seven buffaloes at the head of Calf Creek, and began to follow it due south. We left the rugged butte country behind us, and entered a tract of country the like of which I never saw before and hope never to see again. It was composed of a succession of rolling hills and deep hollows, smooth enough on the surface to look at, but like a desert of sand hills to get over. The soil was loose and crumbly, like so much ashes, and the horse's hoofs sank in it half way to the fetlocks at every step. But there was something worse. The whole surface was cracked and seamed with a perfect network of great cracks, from two to four inches wide. Into which the horses stepped every yard or two, and sank down still farther, with many a tiresome wrench to the joints. It was terrible ground. To make matters as bad as possible a thick growth of sage brush, or grease wood, was everywhere present for the horses to struggle through, and when it came to dragging a loaded wagon across that twelve-mile tract of "bad ground," "gumbo ground," or "hell's bottom," as we sometimes called it in our anger, it was killing work.

“We followed the trail closely, as fast as our horses could go through that awful ground and by noon we had crossed the head of Taylor Creek, a tributary of the Musselshell. Immediately south of it was a two-mile tract of smooth ground with standing grass upon it, backed by a stretch of ragged, high, and wild-looking butte country. We had very difficult work to carry the trail through that standing grass, and when it finally led into the bad lands, where the ground was hard as iron and only buffalo grass grew, we had to give it up entirely.

“At high noon Jim and Boyd halted on top of a lofty ridge to look the country over with the glass for about the fiftieth time that day, and Russell and I unsaddled at a point a mile from there, to rest our horses and let them graze while we ate our lunch. We had scanned the whole country with our glass again and again, and there was not a living thing in sight.

“Presently we saw Boyd and Jim mount their horses and come trotting swiftly along the ridge toward us.

“We’ve spotted the buffaloes!” cried Boyd, as they rode up.

We continue the McNaney story in the next issue.⁵

Sources:

1. Dawson County Review, Glendive, Montana, McNaney Obituary, April 29, 1926. Courtesy Jack McRae, Jordan, Montana via Sharon Cunningham.
2. Hoopes, L.L.Dr., *This Last West*, SkyHouse Publishers, Falcon Press Publishing Co., Inc., Helena, Montana, 1990, p. 232. Courtesy Kenneth Vail, Santa Clarita, California via Sharon Cunningham.
3. *The Frontier Years*, Mark H. Brown, and W.R. Felton, Bramhall House, New York, 1955, Page 68-69
4. *The Extermination of the American Bison*, Report of the United States National Museum – Part II, Washington Government Printing Office, Washington, 1889, Page 421
5. *The Last Buffalo Hunt-The Buffalo Begin to Fall – Part III*, William Temple Hornaday, *The Sun*, New York, March 20, 1887, Page 4

***“With malice toward none, with charity for all...let us bind up the wounds of this nation.”
Abraham Lincoln, from his 2nd Inaugural Address, 1865***



C. Sharps Bridgeport Rifle

Model 1874



\$2699.00

The Bridgeport Sporting Rifle is an 1874 Rifle with some of the common features found on Sharps Rifles manufactured after the Sharps Rifle Company relocated to Bridgeport Connecticut in 1875.

The base price now includes a color case hardened receiver, double set triggers, blued barrel, 26"-34" standard or #1 Heavyweight barrel, tapered octagon or round, straight grip with shotgun buttplate, Schnabel style forend, buckhorn & blade sight combination. *Additional options available.*

C. Sharps Hartford Rifle

Model 1874



\$2999.00

The Hartford Sporting Rifle depicts an 1874 Rifle with some of the more common features found on rifles manufactured at the Sharps Rifle Company in Hartford Connecticut prior to 1875.

The base price now includes a color case hardened receiver, double set triggers, blued barrel, 26"-34" standard or #1 Heavyweight barrel, tapered octagon or round, straight grip with Hartford Military style buttplate, Hartford Silver Nosecap or Schnabel style forend, buckhorn and blade sight combination. *Additional options available.*



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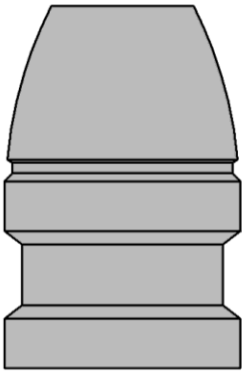
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"The fact that government would even consider repealing the 2nd Amendment is the very reason for which it was written," William DeBurgh

OUTSTANDING PRODUCTS by Mike Nesbitt

ACCURATE MOLDS' #43-215C



After Allen Cuniff's story about Accurate Molds came out in the last issue, Dick Savage wrote to use just to applaud Allen's story and to add his kind words about the products from this highly and often endorsed bullet mold maker. Dick said, "Mike, good read. Back some 15 years ago I teamed up with John Kort to find the best shooting bullet in the 44-40. There was another fellow that joined us and we each took some of the Accurate designs and ran them through the paces with both smokeless and BP loads. For smokeless we settled on the 43-220C. Same design as the 43-205C that Allen used but the heavier bullet shot better for all of us. Then we simply eliminated the center band and got the 43-215C for BP and dang if that wasn't a spectacular performer also...others have agreed as when you look at the number of those molds that have been sold since we added it to the catalogue all those years ago. I still have my 3-cavity gang aluminum 43-215C mold and sold my 43-220 when

I had him make me a dual version in iron for my Magma Cast Master... Man, that sucker can turn out some fine bullets quickly...2 bullets every 6 seconds. I normally only cast those bullets every two years as I make up 5000 and then I am good to go loading up my 1000 brass in my Dillon 550 twice a year."

Given an endorsement like that, I had to get one so my order was placed with Accurate Molds right away. The mold I ordered was a double cavity for dipper casting with aluminum blocks. That order was filled on schedule and I received my new mold right around Christmas time, and a really fine thing to get at Christmas it is.



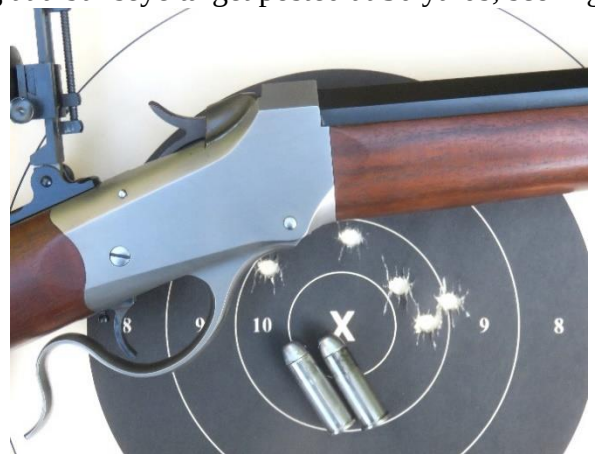
Casting, using an alloy that approximated 25-1, lead-tin, was done right away. With some of those first-run bullets to work with some loading began for my .44-40s. The load I used held 35 grains of Olde Eynsford 3F powder under the bullets. Those bullets weighed 220 grains with my "guessed at" alloy.

Those loads were used in our Lever-Gun Match in January where I placed second, behind Allen Cuniff. The bullets performed quite well. To the left is a picture of my turkey target which was shot offhand at 25-yards with my Cimarron/Uberti Model 1873. I know that isn't the best test for the bullet but let me say that it pleased me.

Next, more of the #43-215C bullets were tried in my Low-wall by C. Sharps Arms in .44-40 caliber. Allen did the shooting at a bullseye target posted at 50 yards, scoring 50 with no Xs. We both felt that a better target could be shot and most likely we'll do that as we keep using these bullets.

When compared to Accurate's #43-205C, the only difference is some added length to the bullet's nose, just .04" longer. This means the seating die must be re-adjusted for the slightly longer bullet. No real problem there, just do it. The slightly heavier #43-215C should have some advantages, and over time to come we might see more of them rather clearly. For now, I am quite pleased to have one of Accurate's most popular bullet molds.

Historically, the .44-40 was often loaded with bullets that weight a bit more than the standard 200 grains. The .44-40 Marlin load used a 217-grain bullet and so did the loads for the Colt Lightning rifle. So, certainly the 215 grain bullets fit right in for shooting with the .44-40s in rifles and revolvers. To see more about the molds from this well known maker, visit their website at accuratemolds.com.



.50-70S AGAIN

By Mike Nesbitt

The annual .50-70 Match held by the Black River Buffalo Runners (part of the Capitol City Rifle & Pistol Club near Littlerock, Washington) is something we certainly look forward to. This is a specialty match which is not part of our yearly aggregate for the Old West Centerfires matches although it is shot on the same range and at the same standard bullseye targets. Our idea, when we started putting on the .50-70 matches, was that it might be just a little more reflective of the old buffalo hunters as well as giving the .50-70s more of a good fighting chance at getting better scores. That first 50-70 match was held in 2019 and we had a rather light turnout with only three shooters using rifles in .50-70 caliber.



.50-70 loads, paper patched and naked

While this is a .50-70 match, other calibers are certainly not excluded. Those “other flavors” are more than welcome to shoot too, it’s just that they do take a secondary place when it comes to the line-up for the awards. And it is very typical that the top shooters are not those who are shooting their .50-70s but even so, the .50-70 shooters are awarded first.

Of course, it isn’t always true that the .50-70 shooters don’t do as well as the gunners using other calibers. In fact, at our first .50-70 Match, the three “runners” using .50-70s were also the top three shooters. That was the one and only time we held the .50-70 Match with our targets posted at just 50 and 100

yards. The following year, 2020, we had six .50-70 shooters and the targets were set out at 100 and 200 yards, and the top two scores were shot by .50-70 shooters. Then in 2021 we had ten shooters all using .50-70 caliber rifles, Sharps, Remington rolling blocks, or Springfield trapdoors, and that quickly shows how nicely the .50-70 match was becoming popular. Also, in 2021 we added our first after-match to the .50-70 shoots. In the match held the following year, our number of .50-70 shooters fell back to eight but there were a dozen shooters at that match. For 2023 our match was attended by just seven .50-70 shooters but last year that number climbed to ten again, not counting those who shot with us while using other calibers. This run-down simply show how these .50-70 matches are certainly a part of our annual calendar and we expect them to go on.

For this year we had a total of just eleven shooters with eight of them shooting rifles in .50-70 caliber. We hoped there’d be more but as it was, things were pretty good. By “pretty good” I mean we had just enough shooters to completely fill one relay, so all of us shot at once, other than if spotting for a partner. And, to complete that “pretty good,” the weather, while being forecast as dismal with rains, was actually in our favor. At first there wasn’t enough of a breeze to clear the smoke from the range but that seemed to get taken care of anyway. So, we had all the “makin’s” for a good enjoyable match that morning.

Jerry Mayo was our match director and he partnered with me, spotting for my shots whenever I wasn’t spotting for him. We seem to work pretty well together and having a spotter is always a great help. Generally, Jerry shoots first and that’s the way we did it this time too. And to give both of us a slight breather, Jerry fired his ten shots at his 100-yard target, then had me shooting mine at that distance before we both gave attention to our 200-yard targets. It was just after Jerry had fired a couple of shots that I took the picture which shows how the smoke from the shots was not being “breezed” away.



We enjoy having a convenient policy for shooting in advance, with witnesses, if you can't make it to the shoot on the scheduled day. Allen Cuniff took advantage of that policy and did his shooting a couple of days early. That's why he does not appear in the group picture which was taken just after our only relay was shot. That doesn't take anything away from Allen, he was still our top .50-70 shooter, using his C. Sharps Arms '74 with the Badger barrel and firing paper patched bullets.



Allen Cuniff, taking one of his winning shots.

Next in line was Bob DeLisle, also shooting with paper patched bullets. Bob was shooting bullets cast in Accurate Molds' #50-490P and doing very well with them. It should be pointed that Bob's rifle is one of C. Sharps Arms' Hunter's Carbines with a 26-inch barrel. With that 9-pound rifle, his shooting is just as good and most often better than others using heavier guns.

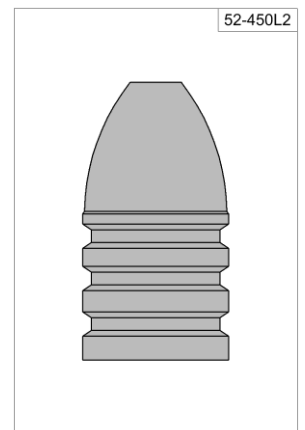


This is "Moonbeam," Mike's .50-70 with the 1 ¾ Heavy barrel.

And one of those shooters using heavier guns was me, I placed 3rd among the .50-70 shooters. The rifle I was using was "Moonbeam," my '74 from C. Sharps Arm with the 30-inch, number 1 Heavy barrel, which weighs nearly 14 pounds. Allen and Bob both simply outshot me and that's not my rifle's fault at all. I was shooting bullets from Accurate Molds' #52-450L2 over 65 grains of Olde Eynsford 2F powder, a load that has worked very well for me.

Tom Witt was just a couple of points behind me and I believe he was shooting a load very similar to mine. His rifle is also by C. Sharps Arms but with a #1 Heavy barrel, just enough lighter that you can see the difference. For some coincidental reason, the four top .50-70 shooters were all using Sharps rifles but that isn't always the case.

Our shooter number 5 was "Loco Jeff" Ritter, booming away with his heavy rolling block, stocked somewhat like a Hawken and chambered in .50-70 caliber. And just behind him was our match director, Jerry Mayo, shooting his very pretty Remington rolling block, rebuilt (by C. Sharps Arms) to a .50-70 buffalo gun. Then we come to Mike Holeman, he has a .50-70 in mind but work on it has not begun as yet so he borrowed my rolling block for his shooting. Mike might have had an unknown burr under his blanket because he did not do as well in the match as he did during practice but we've all been there.



This is the rolling block Mike Holeman borrowed for the match.

And completing the list of .50-70 shooters was “Doc” Ritter, doing his shooting with a nicely done Springfield/Gemmer, rebuilt from a Model 1868 Springfield trapdoor and looking very much like late-style plains rifle. He was our only shooter using open sights.



Here’s the gang at this match, with most of them shooting .50/70 caliber rifles.

Those not lucky enough to have a .50-70 also did very good shooting, much better in fact than the .50-70 shooters. That pack of scoundrels was led by Dick Elliott who scored a 196-3X, only four points below the possible 200 points with his .45-70 Sharps. He was followed by Ken Kurfurst, scoring 189-7X with another .45-70. Finally, Jerry Johnson shot a 172-X with his rolling block in .40-65.

Then we got to the after-match, a “miss & out” match at the “bucket” gong with our lever action rifles. Let me brag, limitedly, that I was the first one to hit the target with my ’73 in .44-40. Then I was followed by Tom Witt and Bob DeLisle. But I wasn’t good enough to make it through the second round and neither was Tom. That left Bob DeLisle winning the pot for the after-match with two good hits with his ’92 in .32-20.

Now we must wait another year before our .50-70 Match rolls around again, time for more practice!

Scores for .50/70 Match

Name	Rifle/Cartridge	100 yd.	200 yds.	Total
1 st Allen Cuniff	’74 C. Sharps Arms .50/70	88	91	179
2 nd Bob DeLisle	’74 C. Sharps Arms .50-70	81	90-X	171-X
3 rd Mike Nesbitt	’74 C. Sharps Arms .50/70	77	82	159
4 th Tom Witt	’74 C. Sharps Arms .50/70	82	71	153
5 th “Loco Jeff” Ritter	Rem. rolling block .50/70	67	67	134
6 th Jerry Mayo	Remington rolling block .50/70	63	69	132
7 th Mike Holeman	Remington rolling block .50/70	65	63-X	128-X
8 th “Doc” Jeff Ritter	Springfield/Gemmer .50/70	45-X	26	71-X

Scores for Non-.50/70 Match

Name	Rifle/Cartridge	100 yd.	200 yds.	Total
1 st Dick Elliott	’74 Shiloh Sharps .45/70	98-2X	98-X	196-3X
2 nd Ken Kurfurst	’74 Shiloh Sharps .45/70	94-3X	95-4X	189-7X
3 rd Jerry Johnson	Remington rolling block .40/65	89-X	83	172-X



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