

THE AMERICAN SHARPS SHOOTERS

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"C. Sharps Arms Co., Inc.



My Favorite Rifle
Page 21

Manufacturers of A WORLD-FAMOUS SERIES of Classic Metallic Cartridge Rifles

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2026

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2026

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, 2025

Thunder Hole Range North Zulch, Texas

October 17-20, 2024

By Garry Laxton

Mid-October rolled around again, and it was time for the 2nd Annual Smoke-Out long-range match at the Thunder Hole Long Range Facility of the Willow Hole Cowboys. As you may recall, we're located about 100 miles north of Houston and about 20 miles east of Bryan in the Republic of Texas.



Campers on the Range



Jerry Caraway and Bill Johnson Prepare the Firing Line

We expanded our match format a bit this year, making it a 3-day extravaganza of various long range matches.

- Friday was a warm-up day with several side matches. These included
 - a 40-round rimfire match to 200 yards,
 - a 25-round pistol caliber lever action match with ranges to 150 yards
 - a 25-round rifle caliber lever action match with ranges to 300 yards
 - an offhand buffalo rifle match at 400 yards
- Saturday was a “gong” match, with 5 targets from 200 to 600 yards.
- Sunday was a silhouette match with 5 targets from 200 to 500 yards. We threw in our own special “silhouette” of a warthog to provide the 5th target.
 - Each of these matches was scored and awarded separately, and then the overall winners awarded.

We were fortunate again this year and had beautiful weather all three days. Temperatures ranged from the 50's at night to the 80's during the day, with clear skies. We had 11 men and 2 women shoot the main match.

DAY 1

During Side Match Day, the first up was the **Rimfire match**. This consisted of regulation rimfire silhouette targets at 50, 100, 150 and 200 yards for iron sighted rifles. For scope sighted rifles, we had a set of smaller silhouettes. The match consisted of 10 rounds at each distance, with rifles rested on cross-sticks. Conditions

were pretty windy, so this match was challenging with the light rimfire bullets pushed around quite a bit by the wind. While the scores showed the wind effect, it was still very competitive, with little separating the top shooters.

For men's iron sight division, placement was:

- Brian Bench 1st with 32 of 40
- Joe Spearman 2nd with 31 of 40
- Leslie Hines 3rd with 30 of 40
- Charles Thomason 4th with 29 of 40 (tie breaker)
- Jerry Caraway 5th with 29 of 40
- Dave Campbell 6th with 23 of 40
- Grady Whiddon 7th with 20 of 40

For men's scoped division, placement was:

- John Simpson placed 1st with 28 of 40
- Tim Hewett was 2nd with 24 of 40

In the women's division, we had: Janet Simpson 1st with 30 of 40.

Next was **Pistol Caliber Lever**. This consisted of targets at 50, 75, 100, 125 and 150 yards. This match was shot offhand, with 5 rounds at each distance. This turned out to be a very difficult course of fire, as scores indicate. We'll probably rethink how this match is done next year. Placement was.

- Joe Spearman 1st with 10 of 25 (tie breaker)
- John Simpson 2nd with 10 of 25
- Leslie Hines 3rd with 9 of 25
- Brian Bench 4th with 7 of 25
- Garry Laxton 5th with 6 of 25
- Dave Campbell 6th with 5 of 25
- Tim Hewett 7th with 4 of 25

And then came the **Rifle Caliber Lever Action**. It consisted of 5 rounds each at 5 targets ranging from 100 to 300 yards. Rifles were rested on cross sticks.

In the Men's Open Sight Division, placement was:

- Don Richard 1st with 19 of 25
- John Simpson 2nd with 18 of 25 (tie breaker)
- Leslie Hines 3rd with 18 of 25
- Tim Hewett 4th with 17 of 25 (tie breaker)
- Joe Spearman 5th with 17 of 25
- Grady Whiddon 6th with 13 of 25

In the Women's Open Sight Division, Janet Simpson was 1st with 21 of 25.

You may note that in the rifle caliber lever side match, Janet was the top overall shooter. That means all of the guys were ***BEAT BY A GIRL!!***

Finally, to round out the side match day, we had the 400-yard offhand with the big bore single shots. In this match, every competitor puts \$10 in the pot, and the winner gets it all. Every person gets 5 chances to hit the 400-yard gong target. Once those folks are determined, it becomes a sudden death shootout. Last year's champion John Simpson and Brian Bench were the last two standing. This year it took 4 rounds of sudden

death, but John Simpson successfully defended his title. John seems to really come alive in this match. Maybe it comes from all those years of successful elk hunts!



John and Brian in Sudden Death



John Successfully Defends His Title

DAY 2

Saturday saw us start off with the Gong Match, which consisted of 5 targets, with 8 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 in a close battle for the lead in the mens division. For single shot rifles, the placement was:

- Garry Laxton 1st with 39 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 38-55.
- Charles Thomason 2nd with 37 of 40 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in 45-70
- Jerry Caraway 2nd with 37 of 40 shooting a C Sharps 1874 in 45-70
 - The tie-breaking rule didn't work in this case, as the misses by each was on the same targets.
- Don Richard 3rd with 35 of 40 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in 45-70
- Dave Campbell 4th with 32 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 45-70
- Brian Bench 5th with 31 of 40 shooting a Pedersoli 1874 Sharps in 45-70
- John Simpson 6th with 30 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 45-70
- Grady Whiddon 7th with 29 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 40-65 (tie breaker)
- Joe Spearman 8th with 29 of 40 shooting a Uberti Highwall in 38-55
- Tim Hewett 9th with 23 of 40 shooting a Pedersoli Rolling Block in 45-70
- Leslie Hines 10th with 21 of 40 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in 45-70

Women's Single Shot

In the women's single shot division, we had

- Barbara Campbell in 1st with 30 of 40 shooting a Browning Highwall BPCR in 45-70
- Janet Simpson in 2nd with 29 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 40-65



Sending Lead Downrange

DAY 3

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. As predicted, the smaller and more challenging targets were a test for everyone. The final standings were:

- Garry Laxton 1st with 26 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 38-55
- Jerry Caraway 2nd with 24 of 40 shooting a C Sharps 1874 in 45-70
- Charles Thomason 3rd with 20 of 40 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in 45-70 (tie breaker)
- Brian Bench 4th with 20 of 40 shooting a Pedersoli 1874 Sharps in 45-70
- John Simpson 5th with 17 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 45-70
- Dave Campbell 6th with 13 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 45-70 (tie breaker)
- Don Richard in 7th with 13 of 40 shooting a Shiloh Sharps 1874 in 45-70
- Grady Whiddon in 8th with 12 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 40-65
- Joe Spearman in 9th with 10 of 40 shooting a Uberti 1885 Highwall in 38-55

Don Richard Making Smoke



Women's Single Shot

Barbara and Janet continued their battle Sunday, with Barbara coming out on top. She's steadily improved the last couple of years and is now a serious competitor for everyone. Their scores were:

- Barbara Campbell 1st with 18 of 40, shooting a Browning Highwall in 45-70
- Janet Simpson 2nd with 14 of 40 shooting a C Sharps Highwall in 40-65



**Janet (l) and Barbara (r)
Focused on Business**

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 65 of 80

Women's Single Shot Open Sight – Barbara Campbell with 48 of 80

Detailed match scores along with rifles and load data are included below.

Just a couple of fun facts about the match:

- C Sharps Arms was the most popular rifle manufacturer
 - C Sharps = 6
 - Shiloh Sharps = 3
 - Pedersoli = 2
 - Browning = 1
 - Uberti = 1
- 10 of the 13 shooters in the big bore match shot black powder
- And just because I find it amusing - 2nd place overall man was Jerry Caraway. Due to a mechanical failure, he had to borrow my spare rifle and ammo – a C Sharps 1874 in 45-70. So, my rifles placed both 1st and 2nd! Obviously, the placements were completely due to the rifles, and not the nuts behind the butts...



Match Winners (l to r) Garry Laxton, Janet Simpson, John Simpson, Don Richard, Barbara Campbell and Brian Bench

Everyone attending seemed to enjoy the match format this year, with the 3rd day providing more time for side matches. We'll plan to do it again next year.

If this sounds interesting, please keep a watch on our website (www.willowholecowboys.com) for information. To eliminate conflicts with area matches in the Fall, **the next Smoke-Out match will be held on May 1 – 3, 2026**

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 vote is like a rifle: its usefulness depends upon the character of the user,” Teddy Roosevelt.

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

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*Early-In Passes Can Be
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Discover & buy rare & historic arms, armor, & militaria from throughout history, from the Middle Ages to the Cold War.

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CGCA Special Rate Hotel Greeley 2026 Show

All the area's hotels are listed under "Gun Show" on
the CGCA website. For more information, contact
CGCA at 781-432-0167 or info@cgca.com.
For additional information, contact
CGCA at info@cgca.com.
Phone: 781-432-0167
Email: info@cgca.com





THE BLACK RIVER BUFFALO RUNNERS

OLD WEST CENTERFIRES



By Jerry Mayo

It was a Happy New Year as our Black River Buffalo Runners came together for the first match of the 2026 aggregate season. We had new faces, high scores, good conditions (for the season), great attendance and a new wood stove to stave off temperatures in the 20s. Even with a whole month off for these Buffalo Runners, they came back very ready to go. There were no major changes of rules or procedures for the new season but despite a month off for the holidays, I was still amazed at how the event flowed like a well-oiled machine; to coin a phrase.

We had a new shooter join us on this day. Jeremiah Mueller stepped up to our firing line for the first time. Jeremiah is the grandson of Phil Wiebe who has been with us for years. He quickly settled into the routine and shot rather well. We hope to see more of him throughout the year.

We needed our rules right off the bat, to settle some tied scores in this first shoot of the year. The difference between fourth and fifth place was settled not by high score nor number of X's, but by highest score at the furthest distance. A tie between sixth and seventh place was settled with a single X and eighth and ninth by just a single point. It's great to see the season open with such tight and strong competition.

Sixteen of our Buffalo Runners gathered on this day, and our thanks go out to the range director for cartridges replacing the wood stove. With my Duro flame log, plus Curt Lokovsek and Mike Holeman



Jeremiah Mueller, new to black powder

with their baskets of firewood, we got the heat going quickly. If the constant gathering of folks around the stove was any indication, the new stove's break-in period was a success.

Also, thanks go to the usual suspects who keep this event rolling. Bob DeLisle called the first relay; I called the second. Mike Holeman and others helped with the scoring table. Mike Nesbitt, of course, handled the prize table.

The course of fire on this day 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. The targets may be shot in the order that the shooter chooses. Cartridges must be loaded with black powder and cast or swaged lead bullets. Shooting is



Jerry Mayo, waiting to fire

done from the sitting 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 opening day. Here we go...

Our top shooter for the day was Dick Elliott. Dick used his Browning Highwall in .40/65 to

post a very impressive score of 196-7X. That man showed up to shoot! He had the high scoring targets at both distances; 98-3X at 100 yards and 98-4X at 200 yards. In second place was Curt Lokovsek with his 1874 Shiloh chambered in .45/90. Curt scored 191-5X. In third place was Mike Nesbitt scoring 186-6X. Mike was shooting his scoped 1874 by C. Sharps Arms in .45/90 caliber. In fourth place was Jerry Johnson shooting a score of 182-2X with a Remington rolling block in .40/65 from his own shop. And rounding out the top five and tied with Jerry was Allen Cuniff, with his C. Sharps Arms Model 1874 rifle chambered in .40/65 caliber. Allen posted another score of 182-2X.

Sixth place and seventh place were separated by just one "X". In sixth place was Ken Kurfurst using a Winchester Highwall in .40-82 posting a 177-2X. And hot on his heels was Mike Holeman who scored ... you guessed it ... a 177-X. Mike was using his Model 1874 Bridgeport by C. Sharps Arms in .45/70. Eighth and ninth place were also hotly contested. In eighth place was Bob DeLisle using his Pedersoli Sharps in .45/70, scoring a 173-X. In ninth was me, Jerry Mayo. I scored one point behind Bob with a 172-2X using the Old Reliable, an 1874 by C. Sharps Arms in .45/70. In tenth place was Jeff "Loco" Ritter with his 1874 C. Sharps Arms .45/70 posting a 160-X.



Kelle Davis, checking her aim

Kelle Davis scored 159 using her still new 1874 C. Sharps Arms in .45/70 to land in eleventh



Here's the Buffalo Runners gang

place. In twelfth place was Phil Wiebe. Phil shot a 155-2X with his special Model 1877 by C. Sharps Arms in .40/65 caliber. Thirteenth place was taken by Mark Davis who used an 1874 Shiloh .45/70 and scored 143. In fourteenth place was Jeremiah Mueller. He used a Model 1874 by C. Sharps Arms in .45/70, borrowed from his grandfather, and scored 130. Our fifteenth shooter was "Doc" Jeff Ritter. Doc used a Remington Rolling Block in .45/90 to post a 108. Completing the list this day was Dan Johnson, doing his shooting with an 1885 Highwall in .44/40 and scoring 85.

Scores for this Match

Name	Rifle/Cartridge	100 yd.	200 yds.	Total
1 st Dick Elliott	Highwall .40/65	98-3X	98-4X	196-7X
2 nd Curt Lokovsek	'74 Shiloh .45/90	94-3X	97-2X	191-5X
3 rd Mike Nesbitt	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/90	97-5X	89-X	186-6X
4 th Jerry Johnson	Rem Rolling Block .40/65	88-X	94-X	182-2X
5 th Allen Cunniff	'74 C. Sharps Arms .40/65	91-2X	91	182-2X
6 th Ken Kurfurst	Highwall .40/82	92-X	85-X	177-2X
7 th Mike Holeman	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/70	91	86-X	177-X
8 th Bob DeLisle	1874 Pedersoli .45/70	84	89-3X	173-3X
9 th Jerry Mayo	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/70	85-X	87-X	172-2X
10 th "Loco" Jeff Ritter	'74 C. Sharps Arms .40/65	91-X	69	160-X
11 th Kelle Davis	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/70	74	85	159
12 th Phil Wiebe	'77 C. Sharps Arms .40/65	96-2X	59	155-2X
13 th Mark Davis	'74 Shiloh .45/70	71	72	143
14 th Jeremiah Mueller	'74 C. Sharps Arms .45/70	77	53	130
15 th "Doc" Jeff Ritter	Rem Rolling Block .45/90	66	42	108
16 th Dan Johnson	1885 Highwall .44/40	21	64	85

Even though cap and ball revolvers have recently become all the rage around here, on this day our after-match was with metallic cartridge black powder revolvers. In the future we will incorporate cap and ball revolvers into the Old West Centerfires program; it should be fun. We had twelve shooters step to the line at the pistol range for ten shots at our usual target for this event. The target was posted at ten yards. Only black powder and lead bullets were used. Today it was Mike Nesbitt that got the job done. Mike's score was 100-5X

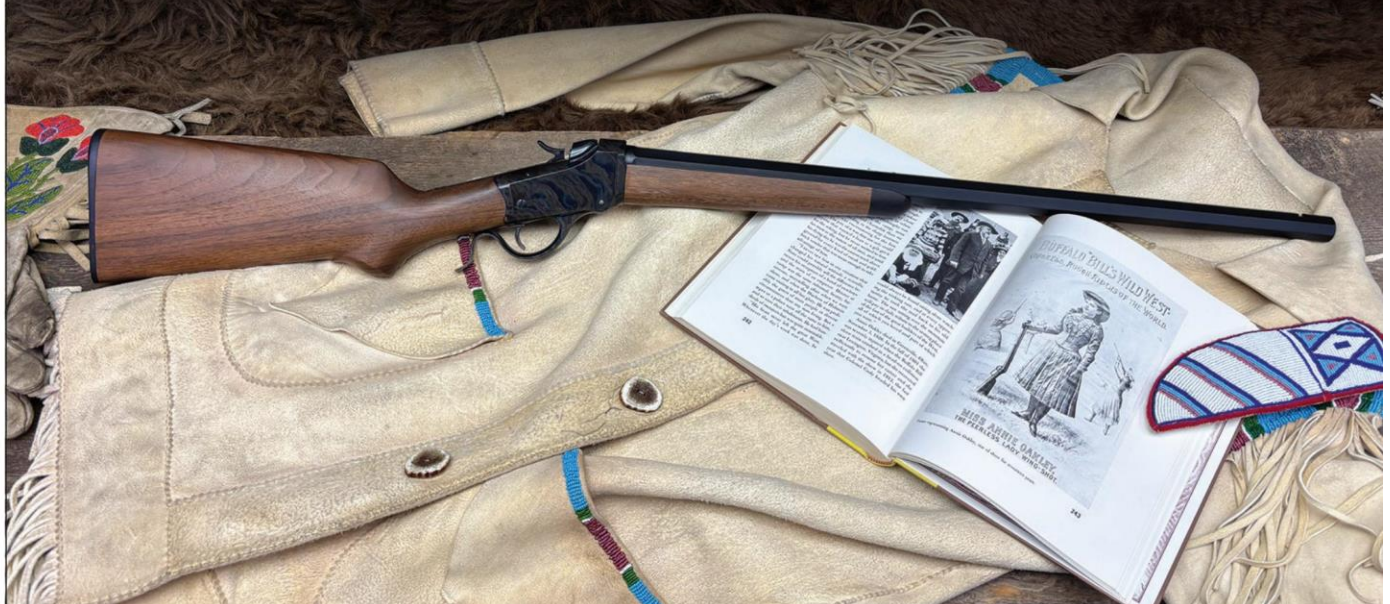


Mike Nesbitt's .44 revolver and target

C. SHARPS ARMS COMPANY

csharpсарms.com

The Model 1885 Oakley Target Rifle pays homage to the shooting prowess and small stature of the renowned marksman Annie Oakley. Built on the proven C. Sharps Arms Co. Model 1885, this Low Wall rifle is chambered in .22 Long Rifle, has a 24-inch octagon barrel, and is set up for optional front sight and tang peep sights or traditional Winchester- or Malcolm-style tube scopes. The walnut stocks are shortened 1.5 inches to a 13-inch length of pull, and have a narrower profile than their standard rifle stocks. Check out the C. Sharps Arms website to outfit your small shooter with a classic American single-shot that will impress for generations.





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.



C. Sharps Arms
P.O. Box 885
Big Timber, MT 59011

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JAMES HENRY McNANEY, Part V

By Leo J. Remiger



Camp at Dry House Spring, 30 Miles North of Miles City, Montana (not this particular hunting trip).

Courtesy Montana Historical Association

In the seventh article titled; *The Last Buffalo Hunt, Death of the Twentieth Buffalo, Part VII* Hornaday described McNaney's exploits as follows:

“On the 18th of November, two days after our return from the Musselshell, Jim McNaney and Ira Boyd rode over to the buffalo buttes, fell in with four buffalo cows, and killed them all. They also nearly killed their horses in the chase. The cows were strung out all the way from Dan to Boersheba, and three miles beyond, and the gathering of the skins involved over sixty miles of hauling with the wagon. The day after the kill we started over to the buffalo buttes where the furthest cow lay, but on the way Brown and I drove to one of the others and took both her skin and skeleton. While we were at this task and I was piloting the wagon after its completion, Boyd and Jim fell foul of another cow, and killed her also.

“Up to that time I had by no means covered myself with glory as a buffalo hunter. Eleven buffalos had been killed by the cowboys, while I was either working on skins or skeletons or piloting the wagon, and both Jim and Boyd were ahead of me on the score sheet. Jim had killed so many that I could not hope to come up with him, but I certainly did want to come in second. So when we broke camp that morning and prepared for a start I said:

“Now, boys, I'm going to let some of the rest of you pilot the wagon today, while I take a little hunt, for a change. I want to kill another old bull before this thing is over.”

“While the wagon pulled off northeast back toward camp, Jim and I rode off west into the rugged country from which we first sighted buffalos on that memorable 14th of October. We met a big herd of antelope that came trooping over a ridge straight toward us and although we might easily have shed some innocent blood, there would have been no excuse for doing so, and we did not fire a shot. A smooth hillside off to our left was almost covered with range cattle, basking in the warm sunshine as they leisurely cropped the short grass. A little further on a jack rabbit, almost snow white, jumped up out of a patch of sage brush, furling his huge ears back upon his neck, and shot down the side of a ravine like an arrow. When far enough away that he felt certain we could not hit him with a Winchester, he stopped suddenly, sat high up on his haunches to look at us and view the landscape over, then off he went again into a coulee and out of sight.

“A perfect north-pole coolness had developed some time previously between Boyd and Russell, and as Jim and I rode leisurely along side by side, mechanically looking for buffalos all the while, we discussed it. We were riding up the bed of a grassy hollow which lay between two high ridges, and were talking about the virtues of patience and forbearance, and how much a man ought to endure before starting a fight, when just as we rode up to a rocky point that had hidden the upper end of the hollow from our view:

“Good heavens, Jim, yonder’s a big bull !”

“I saw him first, owing to my position. We pulled up instantly. The old bull was grazing with his head in our direction, and he saw us as quickly as we did him. Up went his head, he wheeled on his hind legs, and in two seconds had dashed out of sight behind a point. He was a hundred and fifty yards away when we first saw him. We spurred forward and galloped after him as hard as we could go, snatching off our thick gloves and unslinging our rifles as we dashed along. Was the old fellow all alone ? We were both very badly mounted and would we get him ?

“Two hundred yards from our point of discovery we came to the head of the hollow, and saw the buffalo just galloping over the top of the steep, rocky hill which rose from our feet. For the first twenty feet the ascent was very steep, rocky, and difficult. I had instinctively yielded the lead to Jim, as being “the boss” buffalo hunter, but when he headed his pony for the only practicable route upward, the brute shied at a yellow stone which lay at the bottom, and suddenly sheered off ten feet to one side. Jim ground his teeth, and spurred and cursed, and seeing the path thus suddenly cleared for me I spurred forward instantly. My horse responded gallantly, and we were on ground fit to gallop over long before Jim overtook us. At the earliest possible moment I gave my horse spurs and he flew forward at a gallop. He was good on a short run, but he lacked staying power, and I knew that if we did not overhaul that buffalo immediately, it would be “good evening” for me.

“As we reached the level of the ridge the bull was just disappearing in the next hollow. A few bounds further and I pulled up short, spring to the ground, jerked the reins over my horse’s head, and prepared to fire. I knew I was sure of one shot, and felt that when the old bull came up out of the hollow he would pause an instant on the opposite side to look back. I determined to take the chance.

“I had hardly reached the ground when the old monarch hove in sight, scrambling quickly and even easily up the sloping bank. It was tempting but I said to myself,

“Don’t be such a fool as to fire into that buffalo’s hindquarters yet awhile !”

“In twenty yards more he stood upon the top of the little hill, and I hope to say if he didn’t stop, wheel around and look back. I had covered him with my rifle long before that, and when he turned

I brought my sight to bear on the shoulder that was next to me, well forward, and pretty low down – “fore leg – lungs – heart.”

“Bang !

“I would have bet a thousand dollars that I had hit exactly where I held. He was a hundred and fifty yards away, the bright sun shone full upon him, he was in the very prime of life, and oh man! How fine he did look! He was a king of his kind, I shall never forget it.

I heard my ball strike his thick hide, he gave a great flinch, then wheeled and started to run. By his movements I was made sure that his fore leg was broken.

“Clickety-click !” went the lever and breech block of my Winchester, and in an instant another cartridge was ready. By that time, however, the buffalo was fast going out of sight on the opposite side of his ridge, and he was hull down, as the sailors say, before I was quite ready. All I could do was to fire for his backbone and in order to get low enough to hit it I held so close to the round on top of the hill that I held a little too close. My bullet struck the ground, kicked up a little spray of dust and whizzed off over the ravine without touching a hair of the buffalo. No matter; I didn’t care, for I know the first shot had gone where it was sent.

“Just then Jim galloped past me, rifle in hand, with a look of determination on his face.



Detail of Camp at Dry House Springs Photograph

“He’s done for, Jim ! He’s done for !” I shouted appealingly after him. I felt that I could almost die for the privilege of killing that bull without any help, and I knew he was as good as dead.

“Jim galloped on, and as quickly as I could I mounted and chased after him. We dashed into and across the intervening hollow in a way that made my pony’s joints crack, but by the time we got to the top of the next hill Jim was on the ground and kneeling to fire.

“He’s done for, Partner !” I cried out again, and in sheer desperation I dashed past him and rode right on, squarely between him and the buffalo. I know Jim must have cursed me then, for the bull was within easy range, though still running. I went for him for all my pony was worth, and in 200

yards more caught up with him. As he saw me close behind him he stopped running and fell into a despairing walk. Frequently he stopped and faced about, and then Jim cried out:

“Look out now, partner ! Don’t you go too close to him or he’ll make a lunge and kill your horse.”

“But his leg was broken, sure enough, and his end was near. The bullet had broken his humerus in two in the middle, ranged back and passed completely through his lungs. It was amazing that any animal could make such a run after such a wound.



Detail of W.T. Hornaday Getting A Drink of Water From The Spring – Hmmm Tasty !!

“He stood motionless for a moment or so, and I eagerly studied his outlines with an eye to the future. Presently his huge body began to sway from side to side, and then he fell to the earth. He was game to the finish, which was not long in coming for almost immediately he fell prone upon his side and breathed his last. He was the finest bull killed up to that time, and the only one killed with a single shot. It was the 20th of November, just two months to a day from the date of our start from Washington to get twenty buffalos, and this grand old fellow was “No. 20.” Do you blame me for indulging in a few feelings of pride and congratulation to the Smithsonian Expedition for Buffalos ? If so, I will have to take it I suppose for it is too late now to go back behind the returns.

“Well,” said Jim, in a businesslike way, “I’ll go out and stop the wagon and bring it back here, so that we can take this hide right along now.” So off he went at a gallop, in true cowboy style.

“It would be hard for me to make any one realize how busy we were kept, how imperatively we were hurried, and how little spare time we had for side issues during the whole of that hunt for buffalo. Up to the time I now spoke of I had taken a hand in the skinning of fourteen buffalos out of our twenty but in every instance we had been so hurried and pressed for time that I had actually not even one opportunity to make such sketches and measurements of a dead bull as I needed and desired. True, I had measured them all as fully as circumstances would permit, but what I wanted was a good long hour with a buffalo while he was still warm. Well, while Jim was fetching the wagon, I had it at last. I made studies of the old bull to my heart’s content. I sketched him again and again, and measured him until page after page of my well-worn notebook was covered with figures and diagrams. He was a monster, even under the tape line and as handsome as he was big. After we skinned him I measured his carcass over and over, so that in building a manikin to put his skin over when it came to the last act I could make it exact at every point. Such privileges are of priceless value to the taxidermist who has the mounting of great beasts.

“When the wagon arrived emptied of its load just where Jim overtook it we heaved the huge skin into it, with the meat of the hump and hindquarters, and started it off again as quickly as possible.

“We were sorry to see that it was 1 o’clock, and we knew it would be almost impossible for the load to reach camp that day. But Brown was doing the driving with Boyd as pilot and general stand by and we knew that no matter what happened, they could be depended upon. So Jim and I bore away still further westward before swinging around toward camp.

“The weather by that time had undergone a change. A biting cold northwest wind had sprung up, the sky had assumed a peculiar dull and hazy appearance, and toward the north we saw a terrific snow storm coming. By its peculiar streaked appearance, we saw that the snow was falling heavily and as it swept along from northwest to southeast we saw the very moment, almost, that it struck our camp, near the lofty conical butte at the head of Porcupine Creek. The sight filled our minds with dread.

“We’re sure going to get it now,” said Jim, as he held his hand to his western ear. “It’s a going to turn cold as Greenland, and there’ll be snow a plenty before this storm lets up.”

“It looks bad.” I answered. “We must get in camp before it gets too dark, or we may not find it. And only look yonder ! I declare if that wagon isn’t only just across Taylor Creek. Those boys are in it for this time sure.”

“Well,” said Jim, “we can’t do anything for ‘em as I can see. They’ll have to rustle and get to camp somehow purty quick. But they know that well enough.”

“We pushed for camp, about twenty-two miles away, across those awful “bad grounds,” as fast as our horses could go, anxious enough to get there. We rode right into the track of the storm, into the blinding snow, which was driven furiously along by a bitter cold blast from the northwest.”

Sources

“*The Last Buffalo Hunt*,” William T. Hornaday, *The Sun*, New York, April 17, 1887, Page 6

“Tyranny is defined as that which is legal for the government but illegal for the citizenry,” Thomas Jefferson

“We the people are the rightful masters of both congress and the courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.” Abraham Lincoln, 1859

***“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***



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Model 1874



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C. Sharps Hartford Rifle

Model 1874



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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

Book Review: **SHARPS FIREARMS, A COLLECTOR'S GUIDE**

The excellence continues... What can be considered as a follow-up to the very fine four volume set of books on the Sharps Firearms, Roy Marcot along with Ron Paxton and Edward W. Marron Jr. have completed another very desirable book, called Sharps Firearms, a Collector's Guide.

SHARPS FIREARMS, A COLLECTOR'S GUIDE

By Roy Marcot and Ron Paxton, and Edward W. Marron, Jr.

206 pages, hardbound edition, \$60.00

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Just guessing but most of us are probably familiar with Roy Marcot and Ron Paxton's, along with Edward W. Marron, Jr, plus others, fine four-volume set of books about the Sharps Firearms. This new book, prepared by members of the same team, is not a continuation of that set, although it is certainly a welcome addition. It isn't a continuation because it treats the subject of Sharps firearms in a totally different way.

Each of the Sharps falling block models, from the first in 1848 through to the Sharps Borchardt, and including the Sharps double-barreled shotgun and the Sharps Lee bolt action rifle, plus the Sharps single shot pistols and the "pistol-rifles" are covered in this book. The Sharps & Hankins rifles and carbines are also included as well as the Robinson "Confederate Sharps Carbines." Examples of those models are shown and given a two-page rundown giving the variations, or general options, plus the calibers made, in addition to the approximate number of the guns made.

One example is the Sharps New Model 1859 Sporting Rifle which was made in .44 or .52 calibers, firing linen cartridges. Only eleven of those rifles are known.

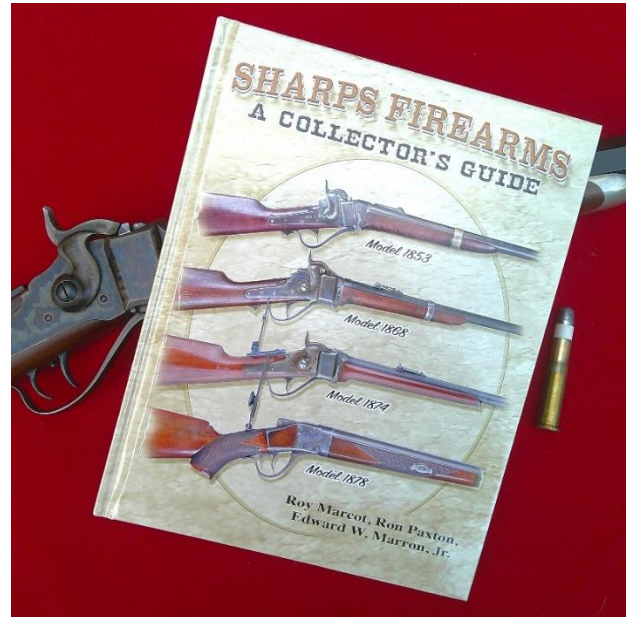
There are eighteen different versions of the Model 1874 identified and given attention. Of those, my interest is mainly in the '74 "buffalo rifles." Sharps never did identify any version of their '74 as a buffalo rifle but two pages are in this new book covering the possible buffalo rifles by indicating the features, such as barrel weight and the calibers, that the buffalo hunters preferred and selected.

Staying with the Model 1874 for just a moment, some attention is given to the differences between the Hartford and Bridgeport models. In addition to that, they include information on how many of the Sharps rifles were made in each caliber, such as the estimated total of only 320 rifles for each of the .44-90 Sharps and the "Big .50" with the 2 1/2" case. Another interesting list shows the estimated number of 1874 rifles made per year, from 1871 through to 1879.

Both the earlier and later Sharps rifles, military and civilian, are covered just as thoroughly, beginning with the Model of 1848, which was an 1841 Mississippi Rifle converted to be an under-lever breech loader, to the twelve versions of the Sharps Borchardt and the Lee bolt actions. Within that spread, the Model of 1875 is shown as well plus the varieties of the Model 1877. Sharps conversions are also mentioned in addition to the line-throwing guns used from ships.

Sharps Firearms, a Collector's Guide covers the entire list of the Sharps breechloaders. Anyone, collector or just interested, will find this book as an excellent reference, to be visited with repetition to learn the ins and outs of Sharps firearms.

Hardcover, the retail price for this book is \$60.00. Orders can be sent to Roy Marcot, 4680 Placita Casa Sevilla, Marana, Arizona 85658. Make checks out to Northwoods Heritage Press and please add \$5 for shipping. If you have any questions regarding an order, contact Roy Marcot by email at roymarcot@msn.com.



My Favorite Rifle

By Mike Moran

I'm in the market for a new truck. My current one, a red half ton I bought 8 years ago, has been a wonderful truck. I bought it with all the towing accessories for my small travel trailer. It's comfortable, gets great gas mileage, and I love the extra-large fuel tank. The technology improvements in 2018 were amazing, with cameras and navigation and other bells and whistles. I could have driven that truck forever. I loved that truck, right up to the day I started looking at new ones. I really want some of the new improvements that are out now, and all the little things I didn't like about the old truck started to amplify themselves. I'm sure many of you know what I'm going through.



Mike Moran's .50-70 Sharps, currently his favorite rifle

But this is a story about rifles. I ordered my first Sharps in 2021 after I retired. I'd been wanting one for years but didn't want to jump into black powder cartridge shooting until I had more time available. As a bunch of us sat around at breakfast one morning, Mike Nesbitt gave me some good advice. He said, "Even if you are just thinking about it, you should send a deposit into C. Sharps because they have a 12-month waiting list. We can work out the details later." So, I made a payment and started learning about all the options and features I'd have to decide on. Some 15 months later my dream gun arrived. An 1874 Hartford model sporting rifle in .45/70 with a 30-inch barrel. I'd been shooting a borrowed gun in the same caliber, so I already had ammunition figured out, and my line box contained all the necessary accessories I needed for a day on the range. I'd even managed to find my own Starline cases, which at that time were hard to come by and expensive when you did.



Here's Mike with the .50-70, headin' for the range

That gun and I got really close over the new few years. I got her broken in and she started giving me nice groups at the 100-yard and 200-yard ranges we normally shoot in our practice sessions. I experimented with different bullet types, different powder charges, and the different apertures in the Globe sight mounted on the front. I started placing

better in our local matches. The highlight of the year was heading to Montana for the Quigley Rifle Match and meeting the folks at C. Sharps that made it. The wood grain was beautiful and the colors in the case hardening on the action captivated the eye. Like my red truck, I could have just shot that rifle for the rest of my life and been happy.

Then, as luck would have it, I was gifted with 100 rounds of .50/70 ammunition. Brass was almost non-existent at that time, so I gratefully accepted. But what to do with ammunition for which I didn't have a rifle? I had been toying with the idea of another Sharps, and I do like the historical aspect of the "Big 50" from the buffalo hunting era, but I was content to just keep shooting my .45/70. But those 100 rounds sitting on the shelf in the garage above my reloading press were just too tempting, so I sent another deposit to C. Sharps.

It would be another 1874 Harford, also with a 30" barrel, chambered for the gifted .50/70 rounds. At Mike Nesbitt's recommendation we contacted Jim Carpenter for a custom 1-3/8" heavy barrel with a 1 in 32" twist. The sights and other options were nearly identical to my previous rifle. My early introduction to the Sharps rifle was from the movie Quigley Down Under, and when I first saw heavier barrels on these guns, they just didn't look right to me. But after shooting them I began to see why heavy barrels were so popular. The barrel was sent to C. Sharps directly and some months later my second rifle arrived.

When I ordered that second Sharps, I sort of "forgot" to tell my wife, and once it arrived, it looks so much like the first one she never noticed the difference. I don't think I can get away with that with a new truck parked in the driveway.

The shiny new rifle got all the range time while I was getting used to shooting her, and she was my regular rifle for the next year or so. That #1 3/4 heavy barrel sure made the rifle more comfortable to shoot, especially when shooting the 500-grain paper patched bullets over 70 grains of powder which I enjoyed shooting and my groups became better as the loads were tweaked. That was also the rifle I took to the last two Quigley matches. That meant I had two rifles I loved to shoot.

There is one feature that makes my .50-70 Sharps somewhat outstanding in appearance. This rifle does not have either the Hartford collar or the tulip in front of the receiver. Its thick octagon barrel simply remains octagon at the breech end. At first, I missed having the Hartford collar on this gun. But after just a little while, I got used to not seeing the collar and now I like it the best just the way it is. A good number of the old buffalo rifles by Sharps, especially those with the heavier barrels, did not have the Hartford collar and that tends to make my gun look more like an old veteran. Maybe someday it will be an old veteran.



.50-70 paper patched load

Another reason I was happy to have my new gun was our local club's ".50/70 Match". Our Black River Buffalo Runners group puts on an aggregate match called the Old West Centerfires which consists of six matches with buffalo guns each year. In addition to that we have a special .50/70 match just for the

Big 50s, and a Paper Patch Match for just using that type of ammunition, regardless of caliber. My .50 fit the bill for both of those once I got my Accurate 50-490P bullet mold.

A neighboring range hosts a monthly silhouette shoot with ranges out to 500 meters. I was a little worried that the .50 caliber wouldn't perform as well at the longer distances as the .45 did, but after shooting in a few silhouette matches, I had my sight settings down and was doing just as good. Or just as poorly, depending on how you look at things. I sure was liking that Big 50 a lot, but still hadn't decided on a favorite.

One day as I was getting ready to head out to the range, I looked up on the shelf and realized I was behind in my reloading, and I was out of .50/70 cartridges. Luckily, I had some .45/70s ready to go, so it



was a simple matter of switching rifles. It would be good to knock the dust off the ol' .45 and get re-acquainted with my first love. I had to look up my sight settings and make sure I had the right accessories, then I was off to the range. I posted my targets, got my bench rest set up and slid the long, slender cartridge into the chamber.

Taking a shot from the bench with the .50-70

Damn, that rifle kicked like a mule.

The 30-inch #1 heavy barrel was no match for the 70 grains of powder I had loaded under my 463gr bullet. After a couple more shots I borrowed a shoulder pad to get through all 20 rounds that day. Suddenly, I knew for sure which gun was my favorite, but now I needed to make the .45 at least enjoyable to shoot again. I'm considering a heavier, longer barrel for the .45, or possibly some other modifications to reduce the recoil. Maybe when that happens, I'll have a new favorite again.

As I finish writing this article, my new truck is being shipped to the dealer and soon it will be parked at the house and I'll be bothering my wife with all the shiny new toy enthusiasm I can muster. Which I hope will work as a good distraction, because now I have a new problem. Over the weekend I picked up another new rifle, and I'm going to have to decide all over again which is my favorite. But that's a story for another day.



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