

## FAHP News, August 3, 2015

**The Guns with which we Shot:** Dick Wells of Groton, Massachusetts, who owns and drives both White and Stanley steam cars, asked to know more about the trap guns used when I was an active shooter in the 1930s and 1940s. I will do my best to oblige.

Certain rules applied to shooting registered targets. Single-barrel guns, side-by-side doubles, over-and-unders, and pump guns were allowed but no automatic shotguns where more than two shells could be fired at one time. All these models could be used for singles or doubles (two targets at a time) shooting, except single-barrel breech-loading guns. Trap guns had large forearms and raised ribs, both to cut down on heat waves and burned fingers from the hot gun barrel. Until about 1935, "heavy loads" were allowed for handicap shooting, where shells were loaded with more than three drams of powder. After that, the maximum trap load was three drams and 1¼ ounces of shot, and after 1939 this was reduced to 1-1/8 ounces of shot. Some shooters preferred a "light load," usually 2¾ drams and 1-1/8 ounces, to reduce a gun's recoil. #7½ or #8 shot was a standard trap load (skeet shooters used #9 shot with smaller pellets and less choke in a shorter gun barrel).

Ninety-five percent of the guns used in registered trapshooting were of American manufacture. The Charles Daly guns, many of which were imported to this country from Germany both before and after World War I, accounted for most guns of foreign manufacture. Daly made side-by-side double guns, single guns, and, starting about 1930, over-and-under doubles. Almost all trap guns were 12-gauge with a nearly-full choke and had barrel lengths ranging from 30" to 34". To my knowledge, Daly never made a "pump" gun. In the 1930s, "pre-war Dalys" meant those built before World War I. I shot with one of these with a single 34" barrel for many years.

The most numerous trap guns in the 1930s and 1940s were definitely Winchesters and Remingtons. Both were reasonably priced and widely available. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Winchester Model 97 pump gun was popular. Its successor of equal popularity was the Model 12 pump. In the mid-1930s, Winchester also began the manufacture of a very popular side-by-side double called the Model 21. A lot of these guns were in use in the 1940s. General Eisenhower owned one. I borrowed one from Henry Winchester of the Hercules Powder Company (no relation to the gun manufacturer) in the 500-target "Marathon" in 1942 when my Belgian over-and-under broke down after about 200 targets. In the late 1930s, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in New Haven, Connecticut, was bought by the Olin family of East Alton, Illinois, owners of the Western Cartridge Company, and both manufactured ammunition sold under the names "Western Xpert" and "Winchester Ranger."

The Remington Arms Company in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was bought by the DuPont Company, manufacturers of gun powder, in the early 1930s. Remington also acquired the Peters Cartridge Company of Kings Mills, Ohio, and manufactured ammunition under the names "Remington Shur-Shot" and "Peters Victor." In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Remington side-by-side double guns had Damascus barrels, the safety of which has always been questioned. No Remington guns had these barrels after World War I, but my uncle Norman Mancill had such a gun, which he used for the little trapshooting he did with my father. Remington came out with a very popular over-and-under in the early 1930s, which model was widely used for many years. Walter Beaver of Berwyn, Pennsylvania, won the Grand American Handicap from 25 yards with one in 1933. Remington also made a very nice pump gun, but these never seemed to gain popularity to equal the Winchester pumps. Also in the 1930s, Remington acquired the Parker Gun Company of Meriden, Connecticut, one of the oldest and finest American gun manufacturers. Parker side-by-side doubles were beautiful guns, but they were not numerous. George Baldwin of West Chester, a Class AA shooter, shot with one for years, and my father gave away a new one as the top prize in the Yorklyn Handicap one year. By the late 1930s, however, Parker was making a very good single-barrel gun, and a lot of them were sold.

Browning guns were made by a Belgian company that had relocated in Ogden, Utah, and they gave Remington competition on their over-and-under. The Ithaca Gun Company in the New York city of that name was well

known for its single-barrel guns, the most famous of which was used by Joe Hiestand in making his long run record of 1,179 straight in 1938 and his winning of the Marshall Marathon at Yorklyn in 1935 with a score of 499 (he won the "Marathon" five times, as did Steve Crothers). L. C. Smith made a heavy, strong, side-by-side double, like its typewriters strong and serviceable but not particularly attractive, and in the early years of the century Marlin made a good pump gun. An early Class AA shooter, Mark Arie of Champaign, Illinois, shot with a Marlin pump, as did Pete Guest of Yorklyn until the barrel blew out in his hand (he was not hurt).

Apparently these guns have little resemblance to the trap guns used today, which are much more expensive and highly sophisticated. Many are of foreign manufacture.

**Work Report:** On Tuesday, July 28, 10 volunteers were on hand, as follows: Steve Bryce (in charge), Mark Russell, Dennis Dragon, Ted Kamen, Tim Ward, Dave Leon, Jerry Lucas, Tom Marshall, Paul Kratunis, and a new volunteer Mark Bodenstab.

The steam automatic for the Model 725 was packed and installed. Concern was expressed from the Ice Cream Run that the oil pump on the Model 87 was not working properly, so the line was disconnected at the tiny check near the steam pipe. The check was found to be defective, and there was a crust of oil entering the steam pipe at the loop. The line was cleared but only a smaller check was available as a replacement, requiring the delivery line to be re-flared for a smaller nut. This was postponed until the next work night.

A slight re-routing of the copper line from the firing-up valve was checked for leaks, and it was necessary to tighten one of the 1/8" pipe threads. Testing revealed this to be a successful repair. A new left-hand-thread 1/4"-20 bolt was made for a crank on the Cretors popper. The temporary phone line to the ticket office was repaired. Two short guard rails were installed on the "bridge" in the basement of the shop, which hopefully solved the derailment problem when pushing our "Diesel" in and out of its engine house.

On Thursday, July 30, eight volunteers answered the call, viz: Mark Russell (in charge), John Bacino, Steve Bryce, Richard Bernard, Emil Christofano, Tom Marshall, Bob Stransky, and Kelly Williams. The Cretors chassis was disassembled, and several pieces were prepared for final painting. The king pins on the Model 87 were adjusted slightly, after reports of minor shimmies on the 7/23 Ice Cream Run. The new oil check was installed on this car and the line was re-flared and connected.

New registration cards and license plate stickers were affixed to about six of our cars. The Model 740 was cleaned from its Ice Cream Run. On the Model 735, the brakes left much to be desired on the Ice Cream Run, so the left rear wheel was pulled to inspect the wheel cylinder and brake shoes. Other than being dirty from cylinder oil residue, nothing appeared to be out of order, so all was well cleaned and put back together. The right wheel needs to have the same treatment. All the wheel hubs from the Model 607 were inspected again, and it was decided that they are "good to go" to the wheel manufacturer for the making of four new wheels. Before this is done, however, the rims need to be sand-blasted and cleaned up.

During the week, Jay Williams and Mac Taylor retrieved five Lionel locomotives from the home of the late Ken Ricketts, and brought them back for repair. We thank Ken's daughter for helping us retrieve our engines that Ken had taken to his shop for rebuilding.