

Trap Guns Revisited: Since most of our readers have little interest in trapshooting, I beg your indulgence in writing more of what you don't need to know. Years ago, last week would have been the big trapshooting week at Yorklyn, and in 2015, 65 years after the final tournament, the "shoot" would have had excellent weather. Of especial fondness to me was twilight on Wednesday and Friday, after which shooting under the lights occurred. Many local shooters took part only in the 50-target night shoots, and they arrived in great numbers between 7:00 and 8:00 P.M., many enjoyed Breyers' Peach Ice Cream from the store at the end of the long porch, and signed up with their friends for the night's program (the entry fee was \$1.50, which did not include ammunition). As the lights came on, the six traps used at night were set so the flying clay targets would be properly illuminated by the 1,000 candlepower floodlights, one on each side of each traphouse. Starting about 1940, 175 shooters often took part in a single evening.

Last week, I omitted Baker, one of the well-known manufacturers of American trap guns. When my father began serious shooting in 1914, his first gun was a Baker single with a 32" barrel. Some years later he sold this gun to Mike Connor of Avondale, a good shot who stopped shooting by 1930. About 1940, my father bought back his old gun, but he found it was no longer his favorite. However, he bought another Baker with a 34" barrel that he shot with until he retired from the sport in 1950. The 32" Baker is still at Auburn Heights.

"Flinching" was a problem experienced by many trapshooters, almost always caused by anticipating the recoil as the gun discharged its load. There were two kinds of flinches. One was when the shooter couldn't pull the trigger when he wanted to. In this case, the gun hadn't fired, so the flincher would take aim again, this time as the clay target was falling toward the ground far in front of the traphouse. While most of these second aims resulted in missing the target, a few shooters, including our friend Clarence Walker of Wilmington, got quite good at breaking the target just before it hit the ground. The second type of flinch was pulling the hand holding the gun away from the intended position just before the gun went off, causing the target to be missed.

All kinds of remedies were tried to prevent flinching. George Baldwin of West Chester tried calling "pull" over an interval of time until his gun was fired (pull-l-l-l-l). Many had release triggers affixed to their guns. To use this feature, the shooter would pull the trigger back as he got ready to shoot and release it to fire the gun -- it seemed to help many flinchers.

Doubles shooting provided challenges not experienced in shooting singles (from 16 yards) or handicap (usually from 17 to 25 yards). To shoot doubles, most shooters used a side-by-side double or an over-and-under and almost always had these trap guns equipped with a single trigger. Although it could be swapped if desired, the first trigger pull usually fired the left barrel or the bottom barrel and the second pull fired the right barrel or the top barrel. Elmer Miller of Millersburg, Pennsylvania, invented one of the first successful single triggers, and he equipped many trapshooters' guns with them. By the late 1930s, Remington, Winchester, Browning, and Daly guns could be ordered with factory-installed single triggers.

Probably 30% of trapshooters preferred pump guns, as compared with the more common breach loaders. Instead of inserting the shell at the breach where the barrel hinged away from the stock, the shell went in a little door at the side of the gun and the barrel did not hinge. The horizontal mechanism for the "pump" to work was about 4" long between the front of the stock and the back of the barrel, which added to the overall length of the gun. A pump gun with a 30" barrel was about the same length as a breach-loader with a 34" barrel. Most pump guns stuck with 30" barrels. Immediately after a pump gun fired, the shooter pulled back on the forearm which ejected the used shell. This also opened the "door" to insert the loaded one. Ned Lilly from Michigan, a Class AA shooter from the time he was 14 years old, handled a pump gun so fast the shell seemed to eject itself with his left hand at his side. A few shooters used a pump gun for shooting doubles, but they were at a disadvantage. They had to load the gun with two shells and pump between shots. Mark Arie of Illinois and Russell Elliott of Kansas City got very good at it, but most used another gun for their doubles shooting. Lela Hall, the best female shot of the 1930s, always used a pump gun (for shooting singles). She looked awkward but obviously shot very

well and became a member of Arthur Cuscaden's World Championship Squad when Bill Eldred dropped out in 1937.

Work Report: On Tuesday, August 4, seven volunteers were working in addition to several more who attended the "Evening at the Museum" program. Ted Kamen was in charge, and Tom Marshall, Jerry Lucas, Brent McDougall, Edwin Paschall, Mac Taylor, and Tim Ward took part.

Locomotive 401 was cleaned from its runs on August 2. The steam automatic was changed on the Model 87 in an attempt to reduce the fumes from the burner when it shuts off. This project was not completed, as the new automatic has slightly different dimensions that required bracket and piping alterations. The electric trains were worked on, and another standard gauge locomotive is now operating.

The grease rack room was partially cleaned up, and painting materials were moved back into the carriage house.

Jared Cohen displayed his beautiful '41 Buick Limited limousine before an audience composed of interested visitors and work night volunteers. Jesse Gagnon opened the program, and Jerry Novak questioned the owner on many things about his car. It is a very unusual limousine in that the glass divider is not flat, nor does it have jump seats. Jared told us that Buick built only about 250 cars of this configuration in 1941. The car will be featured as one of the limousines on display at our Invitational Car Show on August 30. Tickets for this great show are now available -- pick them up in the office and sell some to your friends who would enjoy a great day at Auburn Heights.

On Thursday, August 6, the following 12 volunteers answered the call: Bill Schwoebel (in charge), Tom Marshall, Steve Bryce, Dave Leon, Kelly Williams, Jared Schoenly, Ted Kamen, Tim Ward, Mark Russell, Mark Bodensstab, Jim Personti, and Geoff Fallows.

The Model 725, with its rebuilt steam automatic, was fired up and tested. The car ran well, but the automatic is still not shutting off. A small leak was detected in the piping for the firing-up valve. The right rear wheel was pulled on the Model 735, and, as expected, everything around the brake mechanism was oil-soaked. It was thoroughly cleaned, a new grease seal fabricated for the wheel bearing, and the wheel put back in place.

On the Model 87, the mounting bracket was modified, and some new piping installed to hook up the new steam automatic. The water line to the dash glass from the 3-tube indicator was damaged in the process, so it was removed for annealing and re-flaring at one end. (This was done and everything put back together on 8/7). The car is ready for testing.

Locomotive 401 was gone over, and the whistle valve handle was reconfigured for easier operation (this was affected by the cab brace recently added). The whistle valve was re-packed. On the Cretors project, the top lid above the popping compartment was installed and the lifting linkage connected. The telephone line to the front ticket office was studied in order to make a permanent repair.