

M·W·C·A

MINNESOTA WEAPONS COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

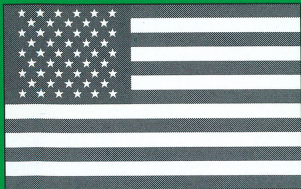
VOLUME NO. 19

ISSUE NO. 1

JANUARY 2006



Smith & Wesson
New Model Number 3 .44 Single Action Revolver



SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Staff.....Dale H. Peterson, Stan Nelson, Lynn Kvam and Joel Hankinson

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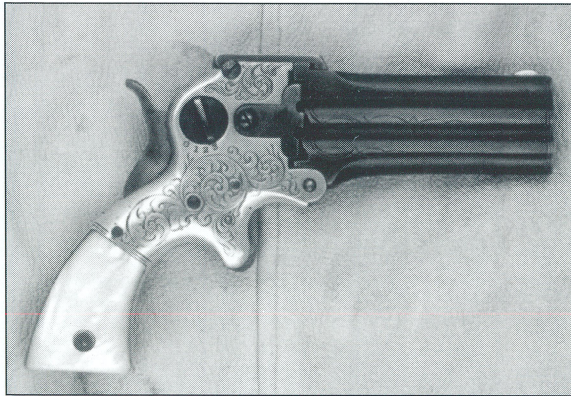
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GUESS THE GUN!

Win A **FREE** business card size ad (\$25 value).
First five correct entries win!
Call Dale at 763-753-1663



Letters to the Staff

I wish to thank Mr. Stan Nelson for his article on the 1871 Remington pistol in the last issue on the MWCA Bulletin. To have the facts and figures on a subject is one thing, but to put them into story form that seeks not only to educate but to entertain is another characteristic that Stan Nelson has shown that he possesses many time before.

Thank You,

Jeff Stricker

From Alvin Olson’s Scrapbook

All of his life Ole had heard stories of an amazing family tradition. It seems that his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been able to walk on water on their 21st birthday. On that day, they’d walk across the lake to the boat club for their first legal drink. So when Ole’s 21st birthday came around, he and his pal Sven took a boat out to the middle of the lake. Ole stepped out of the boat and nearly drowned! Sven just managed to pull him to safety. Furious and confused, Ole went to see his grandmother. “Grandma, it’s my 21st birthday, so why can’t I walk across the lake like my father, and his father before him?” Granny looked into Ole’s eyes and said, “Because, you dumb ass, your father, grandfather and great grandfather were born in January, you were born in July.”

THE PRESIDENT'S SHOT

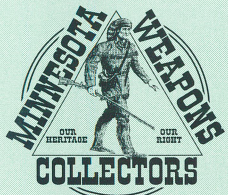
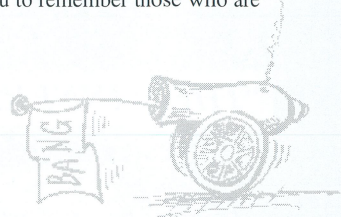
Hello Members,

I would like to wish everyone a very healthy and safe 2006. I have been coming to the MWCA shows since I was 8 years old and am now 53. It has been a long time in which I have enjoyed a lot of great times and friendships in those years. In that time so many of our good friends have left us. Friends recently like Mike Stanton, Larry Radake, Charlie Peterson, Dennis Johnson and many others. Which brings me to the reality that we are just caretakers of what we collect and when we are gone others will continue. A lot of people in the past have made this group a strong and healthy organization. I remember as a young boy, Charlie Sutton as the MWCA president. I didn't really know him well but I knew those cigars he smoked. How about Woody Hawkins, the way his pants would hang down. I always wanted to stand on his pant leg just as he walked away. I will remember the last time I hugged him in Souix Falls Show for the last time. There were people I hugged and shook hands with for I knew that what was to be the very last time. I was not able to do that with my own father. Remember that what we do as our group will continue others will pick up our places. So please donate some time to this group and get involved. Get the young people involved so that they will continue in our places and have fun as much as we did.

The MWCA continues to contribute to the young shooting groups. This is vital to all gun enthusiasts and hunters that we give and support as much as we can. We will be embarking on letting VINTAGE Sporting Collectibles at our shows. We ask that you use common sense on this matter. The term Vintage will be the key word.

I would like to thank the MWCA Board for all of its hard work and donated time. Though sometimes our discussions are heated, we always come to an agreement. I would like to thank Gail Foster for all of her work. I would like to thank Dale Peterson and his effort on putting out this publication. Dale was one of the other many characters I remember as a boy but you know he still looks the same to me. I would like for you to remember those who are gone and how we can make a difference and give of ourselves.

God Bless
Tony Schwab
2005 Past President



2006 Show Dates

Minnesota Weapons Collectors Association

Post Office Box 662, Hopkins MN 55343 • Phone/Fax 612/721-8976 • www.mwca.org

100% Arms and Accessories

****We are expanding our displays to include Vintage/Out of Production Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Sporting Collectibles!****

Remaining Shows For 2006:

January 14-15	— Rochester Mayo Civic Center
February 18-19	— Minneapolis Convention Center <i>Annual Trophy Show!</i>
March 25-26	— MN State Fair Grounds Coliseum
April 22-23	— MN State Fair Education Building
August 12-13	— St. Paul RiverCenter
September 9-10	— Duluth MN Ent. & Conv. Center
Sept. 30-Oct. 1	— MN State Fair Education Building
October 28-29	— Rochester Mayo Civic Center
December 9-10	— St. Paul RiverCenter

All fees & set-up hours are the same for 2006 as 2005 • In the unlikely event a date or location is changed, watch for Red Show Card for permanent schedule.

Admission \$5.00

Under 18 not admitted
without parent

Show Hours: Saturday 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sunday 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

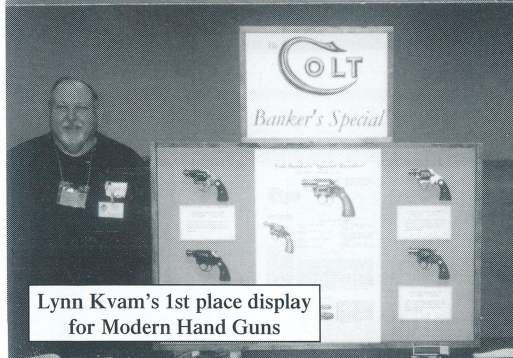
MWCA Annual Trophy Show 2005 *by Dale H. Peterson*

We had over a dozen fine displays for our annual trophy show and they were all winners in my book. Any member who takes the time to do the research, make the individual placards, build and set up the display is a winner. It is a lot of work and these individuals should be applauded for their efforts. Our 2006 Trophy Show is right around the corner so let's see what you can come up with this year. I have participated in a number of displays over the past 30 years and have not always won, but the effort was always rewarding.

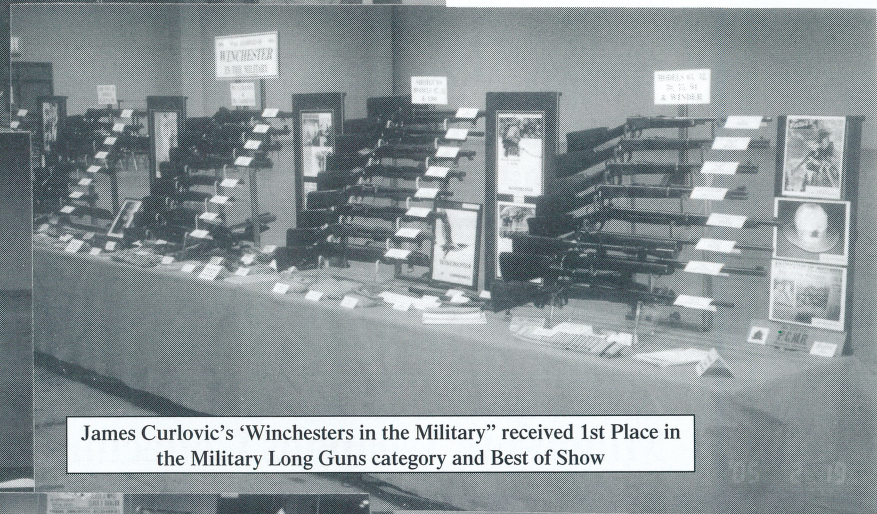


"THE WINNERS"

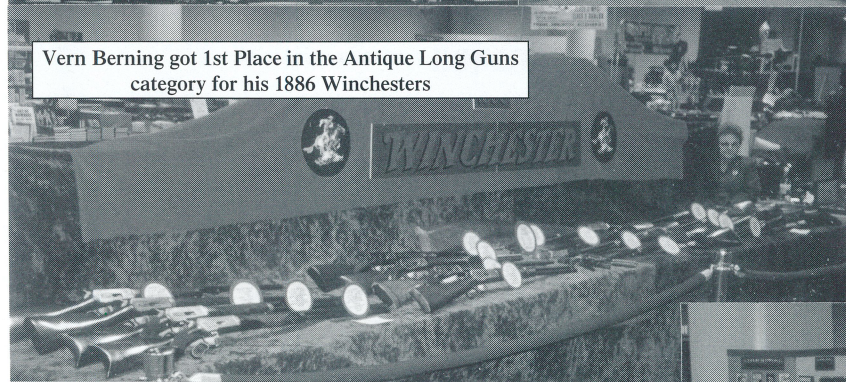
**Annual Trophy Show
February 18th & 19th, 2006**



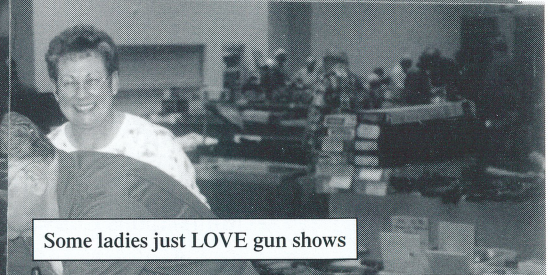
Lynn Kvam's 1st place display for Modern Hand Guns



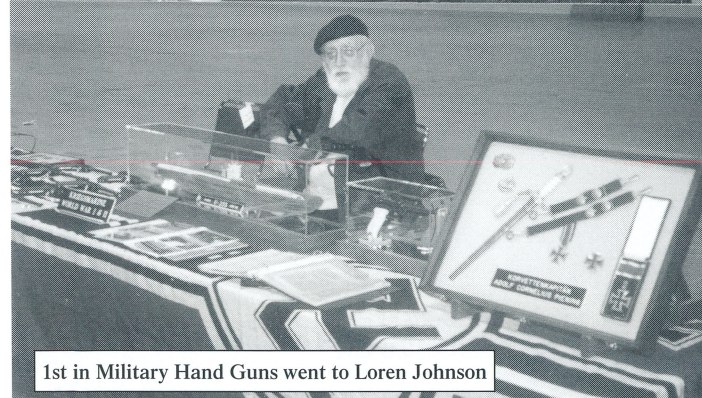
James Curlovic's 'Winchesters in the Military' received 1st Place in the Military Long Guns category and Best of Show



Vern Berning got 1st Place in the Antique Long Guns category for his 1886 Winchesters



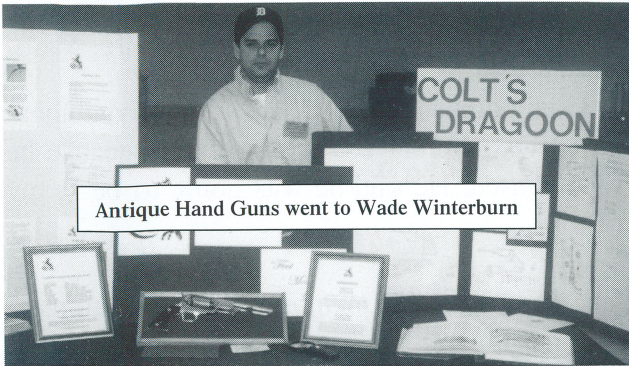
Some ladies just LOVE gun shows



1st in Military Hand Guns went to Loren Johnson



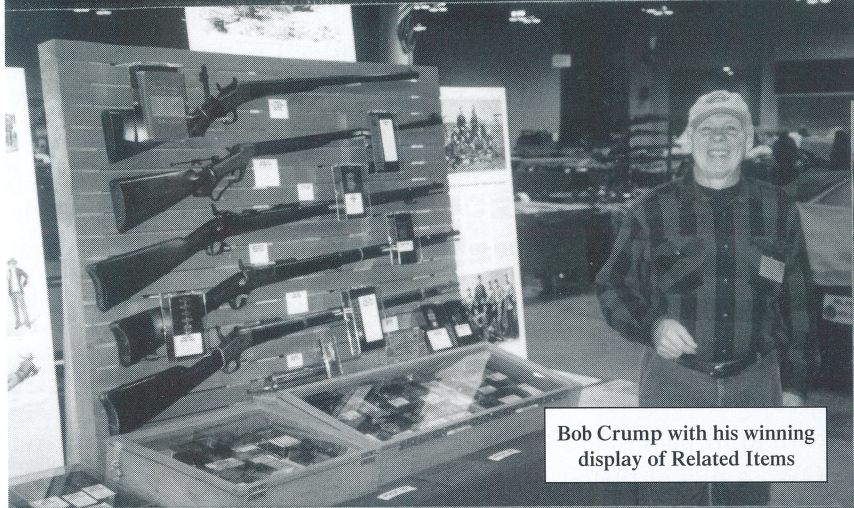
Ron Lough's display of Winchesters got 1st Place for Modern Rifles and his display also received the "People's Choice" award



Antique Hand Guns went to Wade Winterburn



1st place for Modern Shotguns went to Fred Vandersnick



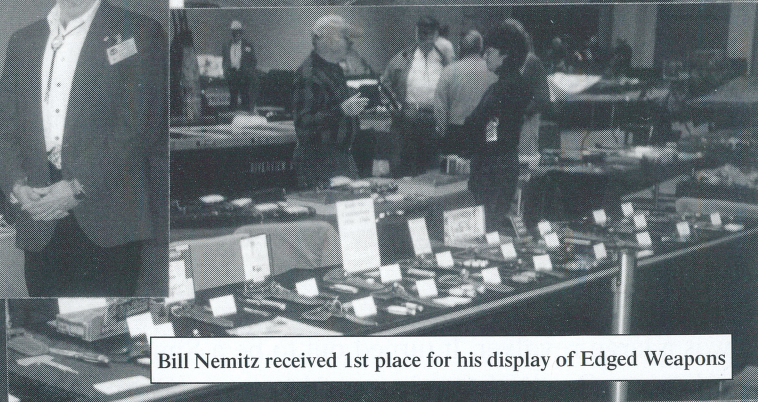
Bob Crump with his winning display of Related Items



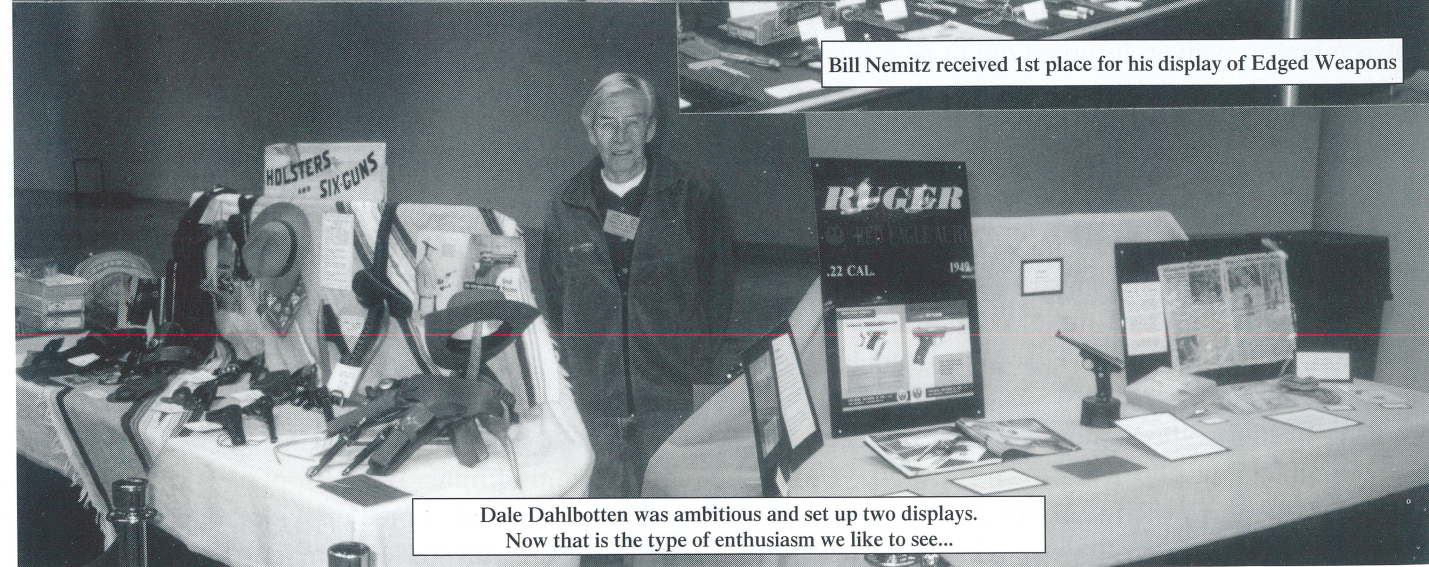
Robert Edwardson's fine "WWII The Big One" display



Alvin Olson with his display of "Military Belts"



Bill Nemitz received 1st place for his display of Edged Weapons



Dale Dahlbotten was ambitious and set up two displays. Now that is the type of enthusiasm we like to see...

“Best of the Best” *by Dale H. Peterson*

Several summers ago I received a phone call from a fella that I had purchased a small collection from about ten years earlier. He said he still had the last of the collection and was thinking of selling them because he needed to do some repairs on a lake home that he had recently purchased. He said he was going to be in my area in a couple of weeks and he would call and stop over.

About three weeks later, on a Saturday afternoon, he called and I refreshed his memory on the directions to my house. He arrived in an hour with a brown paper grocery bag and a big smile that I remembered from ten years ago. I invited him up to the porch to set down as it was a nice sunny day and we sat and talked about what we had been doing for the past ten years. We talked for about an hour and a half and in that time period I learned that his northern Minnesota home needed quite a bit of repair. For this reason he was selling the balance of a small collection left to him by his father-in-law in 1970s.

The pieces that I had purchased from him before were all collectable revolvers, 1840 to 1870 period, single shot percussion pistols, Civil War revolvers, etc. They were decent guns but nothing I kept for my personal collection.

I was getting a little anxious and finally asked what he had in the bag. He said these were the last of the collection and “The Best Of The Bunch.” He opened the bag and handed over the first brown paper wrapped revolver. They were wrapped individually in brown kraft paper similar to the type used by Smith & Wesson on their new revolvers. I opened the first one; “WOW” a nickel plated Iver Johnson hammerless model revolver; next was an 1860 Colt Army revolver which had been over buffed and brightly blued. I was thinking to myself “Best of the Bunch?” Things started looking a little brighter as we opened the third revolver, which was a fine Smith & Wesson Schofield model that had been refinished by the factory as indicated by the small star stamped near the serial number on the butt.

Up to this point it kind of felt like Christmas, opening one present at a time and there were four more to go. Next was near new Colt Single Action Army that was made in 1908, and following that was a 1911 Colt “Navy” with plenty of original finish remaining on the piece. The “Best of the Bunch” was starting to look better: two more to go. Next to the last package contained a fine engraved 1849 Colt Pocket Model, cased with all the accessories. WOW!

Then the prize, or the “Best of the Bunch,” the final package was handed over; I felt the shape of it and knew it was a large revolver. It turned out to be a Smith & Wesson New Model Number 3, masterfully engraved with pearl grips. On the left grip was the word “Chicago” and the remnants of a name half-mooned above that.

I told my friend that I was indeed interested in buying the “Best of the Bunch” and asked what he wanted for the lot; he just smiled. After another hour of conversation I made an offer and got a sinking feeling as he started to pack up the guns. He said he would get back to me and promised to give me first chance if he sold them. He was a pretty straight guy and I felt he would keep his promise and give me the first opportunity to purchase them. It was a long two months but finally the call came from him and we consummated the deal and I was the proud owner of the “Best of the Bunch.”

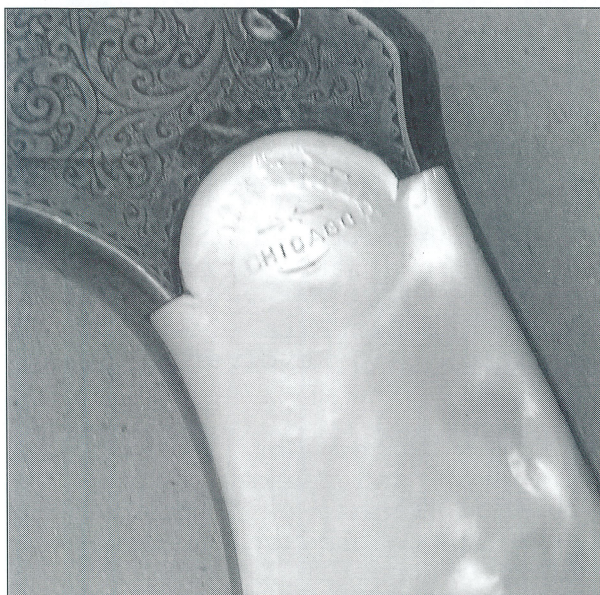
I surmised that the Smith & Wesson had been awarded as a prize at a target shoot in Chicago but I could not make out the name above the word Chicago. With the help of of friend of mine, Dave Ripplinger who operates the “Track of the Wolf” in Elk River, he was able to photograph the name and come up with a portion of it but not the complete name: ___ ___ Felton. I next sent a letter off with the serial number 1655 to Mr. Roy

Jenks, the Smith & Wesson Historian and received the following information: Serial number 1655 was shipped to J.T. Lower in Denver, Colorado and was engraved by Master Engraver, Gaustav Young.

Wow, what a great gun! Then the rusty old wheels started going around in my head, “Why would a gun marked Chicago go to Denver”??? So I put my glasses back on and checked the serial number again and it turned out to be 1653. Most of the old S & W revolvers are stamped in several areas so I double checked them. The butt, the cylinder, the barrel and the barrel latch; they were all stamped 1653.

I sent another letter with an apology, plus another check for \$30.00, to Mr. Jenks and got the following response:

It appears to have been engraved by Gustav Young but as the letter states that is not listed. With further research I may come up with the name on the grip and find out a little more history on one of the “Best of the Bunch.” Anyone having information on Chicago shooting clubs I would be glad to hear from them.



Close-up of the Pearl Grip showing the word “Chicago”



Close up of the engraving

— See copy of the S & W letter on page 8 —



Springfield Mass

January 12, 2005

Mr. Dale H. Peterson
6150 189th Lane NW Peterson Rd.
Anoka, MN 55303

Dear Mr. Peterson:

The revolver you inquired about recently is a New Model No. 3. It was introduced by the factory in 1878 and manufactured until 1898, but continued to be sold until 1912. A total of 35,796 revolvers were produced in either blue or nickel finish with barrel lengths of 3 1/2", 4", 5", 6", 6 1/2", 7", 7 1/2" and 8". The original grips on the gun were checkered walnut or checkered hard rubber. It used .44 S&W Russian ammunition.

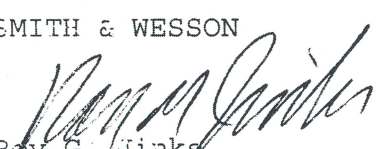
During the thirty-four years the revolver was produced, it was manufactured in both target and fixed-sight variations in the following calibers: .32 S&W, .32-44 S&W, .320 S&W Revolving Rifle, .38 S&W, .38-44 S&W, .41 S&W, .44 Henry Rim Fire, .44 S&W American, .44 S&W Russian, .45 S&W Schofield, .450 Revolver, .45 Webley, .455 Mark I, and .455 Mark II.

Many other countries purchased the New Model No. 3, but significant orders were received from Japan and Turkey. The Japanese government through their agent, Takata & Company, purchased approximately one third of the total production, and the revolver was so popular with the Japanese that in 1902 Smith & Wesson featured an advertisement showing the New Model No. 3 as the choice of the Japanese Navy.

We have researched your Smith & Wesson New Model NO. 3 .44 Single Action, Rack & Gear Extractor Variation, caliber .44 S&W Russian, in company records which indicate that your handgun, with serial number 1653, was shipped from our factory on September 6, 1878, and delivered to Paddock & Fowler Co., New York City, NY. We have been unable to find an invoice for this shipment therefore we can not provide any additional information on this handgun.

Sincerely,

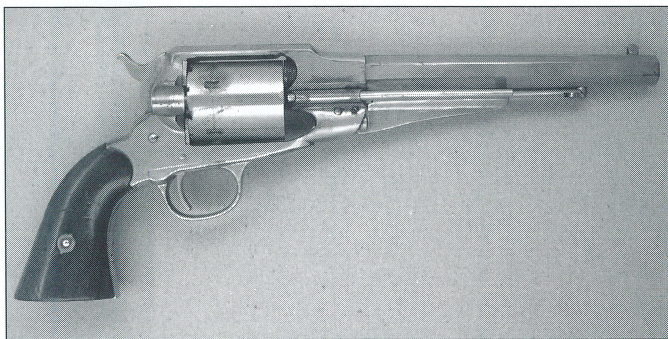
SMITH & WESSON


Roy G. Jinks
Historian

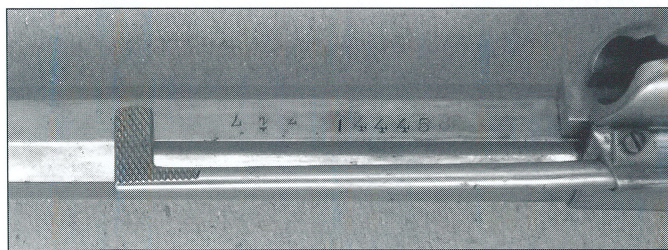
Factory Repaired or Refinished Guns *by Dale Peterson*

We sometimes wonder if an old gun showing little wear has been refinished. Two major Arms manufacturers were kind enough to give us a few clues by marking those that were returned to them for repair or refinishing, these being Colt and Smith & Wesson. It is not known whether Remington marked guns returned for refinish or repair but they did mark those revolvers converted from percussion to cartridge, usually on the underside of the barrel and on the back of the cylinder on the Army and Navy models or on the back of the cylinder plate on the smaller revolvers.

Colt stamped guns returned for minor repair with a small star on the rear of the trigger guard, for major repair and refinish a number is stamped on the side of the backstrap and trigger guard strap under the grips.



Remington 1858 Army model converted to cartridge in the late 1860s to the early 1870s



Underside of the Remington barrel showing extra serial number



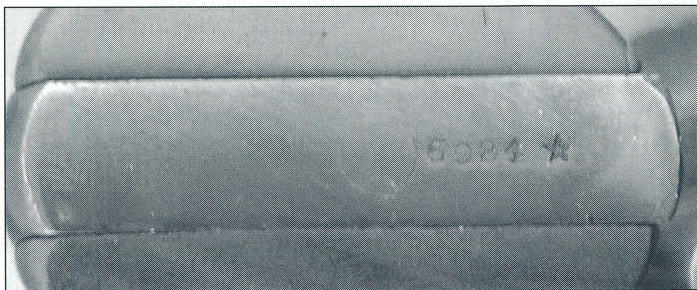
Colt "Lightning" model made in 1902; there are no dates under the grip on this revolver but a factory letter may reveal when it was refinished.

(See Colt Peacemaker Encyclopedia, By Keith Cochran.)

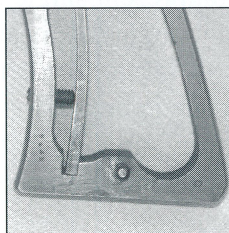
Smith & Wesson stamped guns returned for repair with a small star on the butt near the serial number, for complete refinish with the date stamped on the grip frame under the grips. (See Supica and Nahas, The Standard Catalog of Smith & Wesson.)

Check your old shooting iron and if it looks too good to be true, look for the clues, maybe it was factory refinished. I don't recommend refinishing old guns; with just traces of blue, or no finish at all, leave it alone, the patina of the past gives it character.

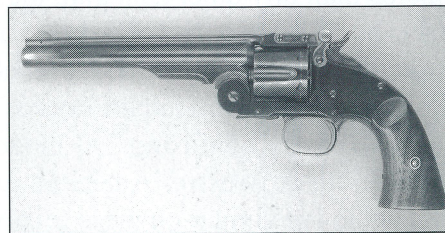
The following are three examples of the type of markings that Colt, Smith & Wesson, and Remington stamped upon firearms returned to them for repair or refinishing.



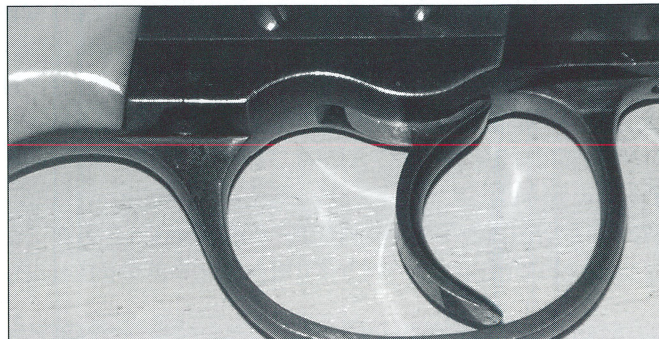
Schofield with star on the butt



Schofield frame showing stamped date



Smith & Wesson Schofield model made in 1876 with the date stamped under the grip which is "5-45" for May of 1945



Colt Lightning trigger bow with small star

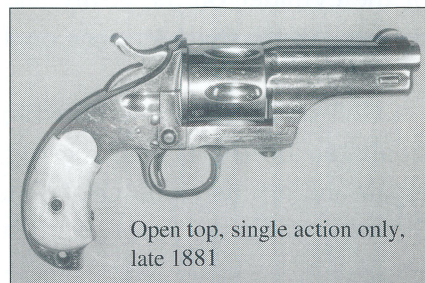
A Matter of Choice *by Stan Nelson*

Fifty years ago little was known about .44 caliber Merwin-Hulbert revolvers except that they were made by the Hopkins & Allen Manufacturing Co. and had been tested by the U.S. Ordnance Dept. in late 1877; they also were quite inexpensive. Despite difficulties in researching a manufactured item with no available factory or production records, we now know something about their development and production. Though the Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army revolver is and has been my favorite 19th century handgun since the 1950's, it was not just because they were cheaper than Colts and Smith & Wessons. I burned a lot of black powder in mine and never had a bit of trouble with them; no extraction problems, or as with the Colt S.A., no broken springs. This led me to wonder how many 19th century pistol-packers may have had similar notions about .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolvers, so I began looking for specific mention of side-arms. This has not been too rewarding as most lawmen, miners, cowboys, and other fiddle-footed wanderers usually refer to their firearms as sixshooters or repeaters. I supposed if these ambitious American adventurers had been able to imagine the reverence and money that would be lavished upon their own personal firearms a century or so later, they might have given us the make model and serial number of their weapons on humanitarian grounds alone.

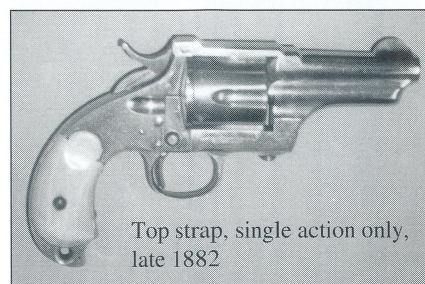
A more reliable source of information on who carried what in those days may be found in the recorded evidence of the camera. For those interested in this approach, a good place to start is with the two volume set, *Firearms of the American West*, by Louis A. Garavaglia and Charles G. Worman. As the authors demonstrate, in a good photograph of someone "packing iron", if enough gun is visible identification can be made by anyone familiar with the firearms of the period. In this article my intent has been to provide evidence of competent individuals using .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolvers during the closing years of the Frontier West, and I have found a few. Seen in more photos than any other handgun, the omnipresent single action Colt is easy to spot, but other Colt revolvers, at certain angles, can cause problems. I have more than once strained my eyeballs trying to turn an 1878 double action Colt into a Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army. Poor picture quality can also lead to mistakes in confusing 3rd model (top strap) Merwin-Hulbert revolvers with Smith & Wesson American and Schofield models, for the grip shape and angle are similar on these revolvers.

Actually, the first encounter I had with a printed reference to someone packing a .44 Merwin-Hulbert had nothing to do with the 19th Century or the old west. Elmer Keith, a well known handgunner, twenty year contributing editor to *Guns & Ammo* magazine, and a man of strong opinions, also wrote several books on the subject of firearms. His book on handguns, *Sixguns by Keith*, was published in 1955, and on page 67 Keith writes; "During the late thirties we had dinner with an F.B.I. special agent who wore an old Hopkins & Allen, Merwin-Hulbert patent, 4" barrel 44/40 single action as his sole armament. It was slow to reload, but a very effective, accurate and fast gun for six shots." This is a pretty good description of a Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army which has a 3 1/4" barrel. I owned and was shooting a Pocket Army at the time and agreed completely with Keith's professional assessment.

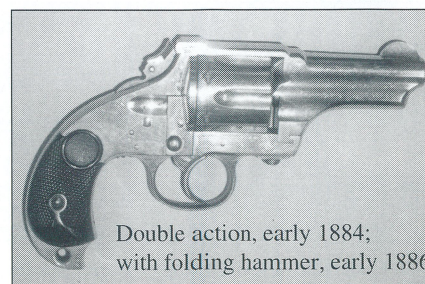
Approximate date of availability of Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army models, based primarily on magazine ads and catalogs.



Open top, single action only, late 1881



Top strap, single action only, late 1882



Double action, early 1884; with folding hammer, early 1886

Another reference to a Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army came to my attention not long after reading Keith's comments and this item appeared in the May, 1956 issue of Guns magazine. Western novelist Clarence E. Mulford, creator of Hopalong Cassidy, writes of some of his favorite guns among which is "A Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army that was used by Bill Doolin."



Oklahoma outlaw Bill Doolin owned a Pocket Army (type unknown) and appears to be carrying it in this poor quality (but scarce) photo, thought to have been taken on the bar X bar ranch in 1891.

A noted Oklahoma outlaw, Doolin was a cowboy gone wrong and had many friends, but his luck ran out in August, 1896 when he was killed by a reward seeking posse. Readers of Western history have seen an often reprinted photo of his buckshot riddled corpse. The Mulford gun collection was given to the Fryeburg, Maine Historical Society Museum, and an inventory listed a "Merwin-Hulbert Army Pocket Pistol 1873 Winchester". Correspondence with the Fryeburg Museum however indicates that there are no handguns listed or on display in the "Mulford Room." Where is the Doolin Pocket Army? Probably stolen; thieves always take firearms. In author Glenn Shirley's book *West of Hell's Fringe*, published in 1978, there is a photo of Bill Doolin on horseback on page 146, and though the photo quality is poor, to my prejudiced eye he appears to be carrying a Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army with ivory grips in a short belt holster.

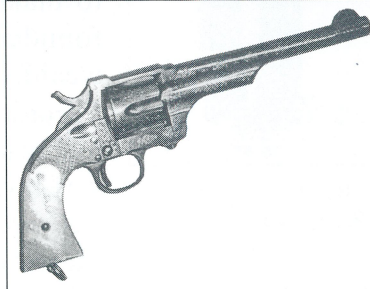
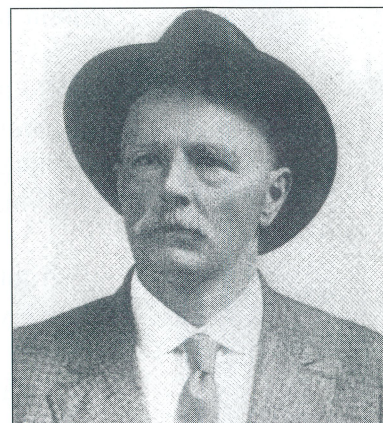
Marshal, County Sheriff, and Deputy U.S. Marshal. In a book written and published in France a few years ago titled *Frontier Pistols and Revolvers*, author Dominique Venner has some information about a .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolver owned by Bud Ledbetter. On page 106 is a nice photo of a 3rd model (top strap) single action, flat butt, long barrel Merwin-Hulbert. A quotation from the lawman's memoirs says; "I chose my gun from twenty three others, I tested them for four days. Then I decided on the Merwin-Hulbert Army, 44/40 caliber, no. 641-971, because it performed the best. Today twenty years later, I've shot thousands of shells, I've had it replated with nickel and I carry it everywhere I go." The photo credits in Venner's book attribute this Merwin-Hulbert to a French collector, and Ledbetter's memoirs must be French also for research fails to locate them in this country. Venner also dates this "Merwin-Hulbert model 1876 Army No. 2" at about 1880, but the top strap type was not available until late 1882.



Ben Raymond, noted frontier scout, with a 1st model (open top) .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolver. Photo taken in Leadville, Colorado in 1879.

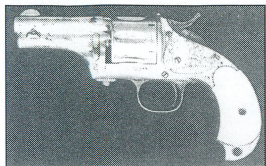
Bud Ledbetter was an efficient peace officer in Oklahoma, his long career included service as a City Marshal, County Sheriff, and Deputy U.S. Marshal. In a book written and published in France a few years ago titled *Frontier Pistols and Revolvers*, author Dominique Venner has some information about a .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolver owned by Bud Ledbetter. On page 106 is a nice photo of a 3rd model (top strap) single action, flat butt, long barrel Merwin-Hulbert. A quotation from the lawman's memoirs says; "I chose my gun from twenty three others, I tested them for four days. Then I decided on the Merwin-Hulbert Army, 44/40 caliber, no. 641-971, because it performed the best. Today twenty years later, I've shot thousands of shells, I've had it replated with nickel and I carry it everywhere I go." The photo credits in Venner's book attribute this Merwin-Hulbert to a French collector, and Ledbetter's memoirs must be French also for research fails to locate them in this country. Venner also dates this "Merwin-Hulbert model 1876 Army No. 2" at about 1880, but the top strap type was not available until late 1882.

Pictured in an interesting book of memoirs titled *I Buried Hickok*, edited by Wm. B. Secrest, are photos of three individuals, all armed with what appears to be the same .44 open top Merwin-Hulbert Army revolver. Whether it belonged to the author of the memoirs, "White Eye" Anderson, or one of his friends in the photos is not known. In one Photo, Ben Raymond, (a highly regarded frontier scout) holds this Merwin-Hulbert .44 in full view. Since these photographs were taken at the Leadville, Colorado studio in 1879 it does confirm the early availability of Merwin-Hulbert revolvers in Western locales other than the Mexican Border.



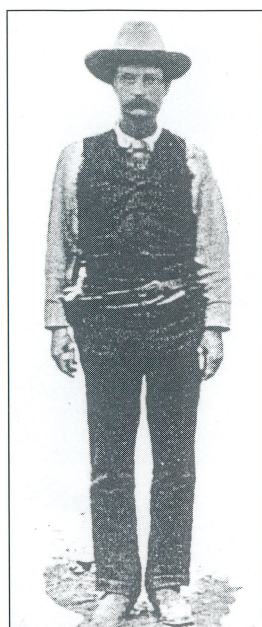
Oklahoma lawman Bud Ledbetter favored a single action 3rd model (top strap) .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolver, as shown.

Texas Ranger Curren "Kid" Rogers owned a .44 Merwin-Hulbert. In Paul Spellman's biography of Curren's older brother *Capt. John H. Rogers, Texas Ranger*, published in 2003, there is a photo of the two brothers on page 28 and "Kid" Rogers is carrying a 3rd model Merwin-Hulbert. He wears it on his left side, but forward, probably to display it better, for it appears to be engraved with carved ivory grips. Another, better known Texas



This Merwin & Hulbert 'Pocket-Army' revolver in .44/40 caliber was taken from Outlaw. This short, powerful weapon was impounded by the law.

Ranger also owned a Merwin-Hulbert revolver, an open top Pocket Army model. Bass Outlaw was something of an enigma, an efficient ranger with many friends, but even his friends avoided him when he was drinking. Ranger Captain Frank Jones considered him the best sergeant in the service but asked for his resignation after a series of drunken binges. On Oct. 15, 1892 Bass Outlaw was arrested in an El Paso saloon "for displaying a pistol in a public place", and his open top Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army, caliber 44/40, serial no. 195, nicely plated with ivory grips was confiscated by Sheriff Frank Simmons. This revolver eventually wound up in the well known gun collection of Tom Powers, owner of the Coney Island saloon in El Paso. Never one to learn from his many mistakes, Bass Outlaw made his last one on April 5, 1894 outside of an El Paso whorehouse. In a senseless shootout he killed Texas Ranger Joe McKidric and wounded Constable John Selman before being killed by Selman.

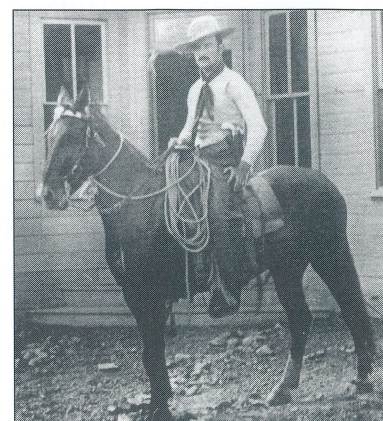


Bass Outlaw, Texas Ranger with a drinking problem.

Another Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army, also nickel plated with ivory grips, belonged to the colorful French Nobleman, the Marquis De Mores, who arrived in Western Dakota Territory in 1883 intending to make a fortune in the beef cattle industry. He founded the town of Medora, naming it after his wealthy American wife, built a meat packing plant, a church, and a chateau where Theodore Roosevelt, another badlands rancher, occasionally came to dinner. No stranger to firearms, the Marquis had survived duels in Europe, was involved in shooting incidents while in Dakota, but was assassinated in Africa in 1896. A good photo of De Mores on horseback near the chateau in 1886 clearly shows his Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army snuggled against his left side in a cross-draw holster. In the 20th century heirs of the Marquis De Mores were to deed the chateau and other property to the State of North Dakota as a museum and memorial. On an opportune visit to Medora in the early 1950's my brother Bill and I were able to help the chateau museum director properly identify a number of the Marquis De Mores firearms, recently arrived from France. Among them was a nice nickel plated, open top Pocket Army with ivory grips, and as a matter of habit I wrote down the serial and assembly number for future reference. As luck would have it, in the passing years I lost my notebook which was full of serial numbers and other Merwin-Hulbert information. In the recent past I had need for the numbers on the De Mores Pocket Army and contacted the State Historical Society of North Dakota. I was dismayed to learn that the Pocket Army and other firearms were taken during a burglary at the chateau in the 1970's. Even worse, they had no record of the serial numbers of the missing firearms. Now every time I see a nice nickel plated, open top Pocket Army with ivory grips I wonder where it has been.

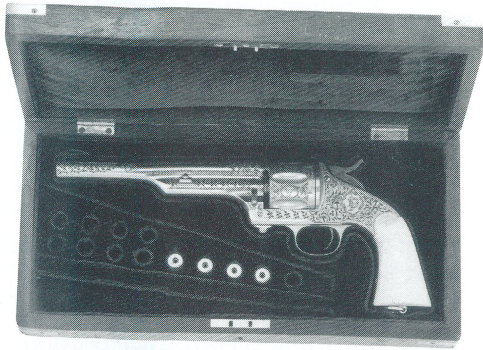


Curren "Kid" Rogers, on right, with 3rd model (top strap) .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolver. Photo taken in 1885, two years before he joined the Texas Rangers.



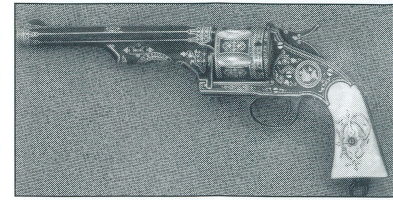
Marquis DeMores, with an ivory handled Pocket Army, Dakota Territory. Photo taken in 1886.

Original ownership of two of the most spectacular Merwin-Hulbert revolvers in existence is beyond question; they both belonged to the tyrannical President of Mexico, Porfirio Diaz, who had quite a collection of



Cased, engraved early (open top) .44 Merwin-Hulbert revolver, with monogram initials of Porfirio Diaz, President of Mexico

fancy firearms. These were mostly gifts from profit seeking American, German, and English businessmen and corporations. One is a cased, open top Army Merwin-Hulbert with ornate engraving and ivory grips, which has Porfirio Diaz' monogram initials on the side plate. The other is even more elaborately finished, with gold overlays and inlays on a blued base. It is a striking piece of Spanish style engraving, but I do not believe this revolver was made in America. The small round trigger guard and slight differences in the frame and barrel contour mark it as a copy, probably Spanish, of the open top Merwin-Hulbert revolver. This of course does



Spectacular damascene finish on a Spanish copy of the 1st model Merwin-Hulbert revolver. This also belonged to President Diaz

not detract from the artistry of the finish on this specimen. I have owned several Spanish copies of Merwin-Hulbert revolvers, one of which was nicely finished externally but crude mechanically.

Most of the presentation Merwin-Hulbert revolvers that I know of were inscribed to various lawmen around the country, with a majority of them being from California and Arizona. Judging by the generally excellent condition of those I have seen, they were given as retirement gifts and saw little or no service thereafter. A few were specifically engraved by the factory or dealer, while some are right off a dealers shelf with an inscription probably done by a local jeweler. Typical is a new condition double action Pocket Army, which could have been factory ordered, for it is a two barrel set with pearl grips. Inscribed on the 3 1/4" barrel is the following; Jas. D. Foute/Sheriff of Loudon Co./ Loudon E. Tennessee. There is no inscription on the extra 7" barrel. I have discovered nothing further on Sheriff Foute. My first engraved Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army, a well worn



Extra barrels could be had for the Merwin-Hulbert Pocket Army, and this one also has an extra cylinder for the .44 Russian cartridge.

specimen with pearl grips, the serial number and assembly being 952, was a lawman's gun. At least that's what Jim Serven told me. I purchased this revolver from author and Colt authority James E. Serven in Santa Ana, California in 1952, and he said he had obtained this venerable piece from the daughter of an Hispanic border guard who worked out of Nogales, Mexico during the 1880's-1890's. This is hearsay evidence of course, but Serven was a man of integrity and gained nothing by his statement; I paid fifteen dollars, American money, for this Pocket Army and it remains one of my favorites.

Firearms with known association to important people bring premium prices in today's feverish auction market and authentication of these artifacts of history being offered for sale is the province of the dealers and auction houses selling them. If an item has not passed through too many hands its provenance may well be satisfactorily established. This is a large and contentious subject and since this article concerns Merwin-Hulbert revolvers only, I offer my thoughts on claims made for two of them. The first is a beat-up 3rd model revolver supposed to have belonged to Texas outlaw Sam Bass. This piece belongs to a museum and is pictured on page 108 of the second edition of Art Phelps' book on Merwin-Hulbert firearms. Wounded while trying to rob the bank at Round Rock, Texas, Sam Bass died on July 21, 1878, but research by arms scholars indicates that this 3rd model Merwin-Hulbert revolver was not available until late 1882. Claims for the second Merwin-Hulbert in



Showing hard use but still sound, this early engraved Pocket Army, serial no. 952, was used by a Border Guard out of Nogales, Mexico.

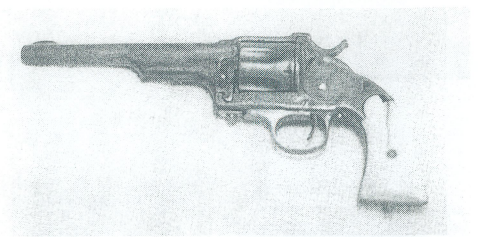
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question face the same problem, for it too is a 3rd model with the top strap. This revolver, purportedly from the personal arsenal of America's favorite outlaw Jesse James, sold at auction some time ago for more money than



Jesse James was killed on April 3, 1882, at least six months before this 3rd model (top strap) Merwin-Hulbert .44 was available.

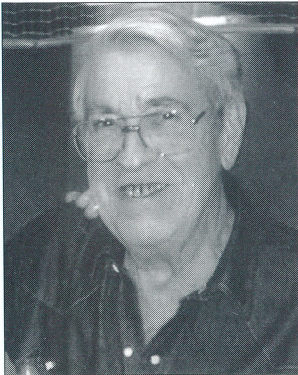
Jesse ever borrowed from a bank or railroad. As most American schoolboys used to know, Jesse James was killed "By Robert Ford, that dirty little coward" on April 3, 1882, a date that lives in infamy in Missouri even today. As previously mentioned, to the best of our knowledge, the .44 caliber Merwin-Hulbert 3rd (top strap) model revolvers were not available until late 1882, all previous advertising listing only the open top .44 caliber Army and Pocket Army model revolvers. Buyer beware is sound advice, whether looking over old guns or used cars.



Sam Bass was killed in 1878 and could not have owned this 3rd model (top strap) Merwin-Hulbert, which was not available until late 1882.

Those references not identified in the text are from my own research notes and collection of Merwin-Hulbert advertising and various other items of significance to this article.

In Memoriam



Keith Rolf, former co-owner of the "Outdoorsman" gun shop in Hopkins. Although Keith had not participated in the MCWA for many years, he was well known by many gun enthusiasts.

Larry Radeke,
was a regular exhibitor at the MWCA shows.

Guess The Gun

We had a winner in our last "Guess the Gun" contest. It was Lori Van Haugen on behalf of "Gun Show Books." It was correctly identified as a Colt 1902 Automatic in the 38 Colt A.C.P.

Bruce Rukstales



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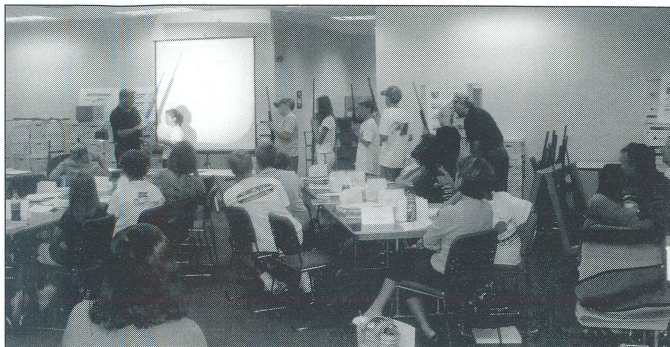
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Fall of 2005, Belle Plaine firearms safety class.



Eric Strand, MWCA director, presenting a check to the Scott County Firearms Safety Group

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- \$1,000.00 American Legion Post 435 Gun Club
- \$1,000.00 Scott County Sheriff's Youth Gun Program
- \$500.00 Minnesota Trap Shooting Association
- \$1,000.00 Owatonna Gun Club Youth Program
- \$385.00 Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance
- \$350.00 Women's Firearms Alliance of Minnesota
- \$1,000.00 National Association of Arms Shows
- \$1,000.00 National Rifle Association Museum Fund
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- \$2,000.00 NRA Foundation "ACORN FUND"

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