

AGARITA GAZETTE



A Chronicle of the Plum Creek Shooting Society



Agarita Ranch

October 2014

Lockhart, Texas

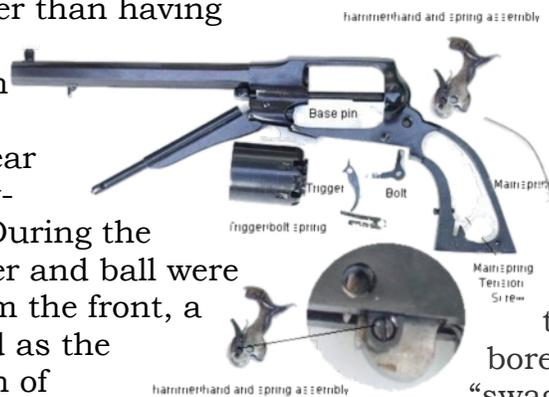
Cap & Ball Revolvers

by Long Juan

Introduction. The cap and ball or percussion revolver was the first successful repeating handgun of American design. It used a firing device known as a cap or percussion lock (cap is struck by the hammer to set off the main charge) and a revolving cylinder to hold the ammunition. The cylinder had 5 or 6 separate chambers. Rather than having bored through chambers, like cartridge revolvers, each chamber of a percussion revolver was closed at the rear and had a removable hollow-centered cone or "nipple." During the loading process, after powder and ball were loaded in each chamber from the front, a percussion cap, which acted as the primer, was pressed on each of nipple.

Percussion cap loading was the last significant development in firearms technology until introduction of cased ammunition. The revolver was the first reliable repeat-feed system. Marrying the two together gave an exponential increase in personal firepower over previous pistols, both in terms of reliability and rate of fire.

revolver was the Colt Navy. Cap and ball revolvers were replaced in the 1870s by revolvers shooting modern cartridges that had primer, gunpowder and projectile all in one. Revolvers built by Colt, Remington and their competitors are credited with winning the West and were used by both Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War.



Projectiles. A cap and ball revolver, as the name implies, fires a round lead ball. By design, the ball is several thousandths of an inch larger in diameter than the revolver's chamber and bore. As the ball is seated, it is "swaged" or sized to the same

diameter as the chamber. *Editor's Note: "Swag," rhymes with "stage" and means to compress to size.*

Styles of Cap & Ball Revolvers. Cap and ball revolvers fall under two main categories - the Colt style and the Remington style. While there were numerous other small manufacturers producing revolvers of different styles in the 1800's, these two manufacturers accounted for roughly 90% of the period revolvers and widely influenced modern revolver design. Each style can be recognized by the top strap (the portion of the frame over the cylinder) or the absence thereof. Colt cap and ball revolvers do not have a top strap; Remington revolvers do.

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The Paterson Colt was the first cap and ball revolver. The most popular cap and ball

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President's Word:

Boy, howdy did we have a good day of shooting in October! 54 shooters came out to put lead downrange and to try out our new target stands. I think the new stands performed spectacularly. Thanks **Lefty Leo** for all of your hard work making the new stands. We had 7 clean shooters: **El Sabre, Fightin' Parson, Lincoln Drifter, Nueces Ranger, Nueces Slim, Scooter, and Whiskey Kid.** Our overall winner was **Copperhead James**, nudging **Phantom** from his usual top spot. No. 3 was **Whiskey Kid**, who shot a clean match and tore up the stages. The rest of the top 10 were: **Joe Darter, Kickshot, Dragon Hill Dave, Bandera Kid, Shotgun Jim, Skyhawk Hans** and **El Sabre.** Our Cody Dixon/GAF winners were: Cody Dixon Lever - **Lars Christopherson**, Cody Dixon Single - **Boon Doggle** and GAF Repeater - **Sombrero Negro.**

Everyone who came out to shoot with us was a winner. We had wonderful weather and enjoyed great companionship. The chili afterward wasn't too bad either. Thanks to all who came out for the match and a big thanks to those who came out for the workday to get ready for the match, including **Lars Christopherson, Six Goin' South** and **Lightning McQueen.** Our shoot next month will feature a Thanksgiving-like lunch, so make sure you are ready to shoot with us on November 1 and plan to stay and eat. See ya' at the Agarita!



SASS Regulator & PCSS President
Dragon Hill Dave



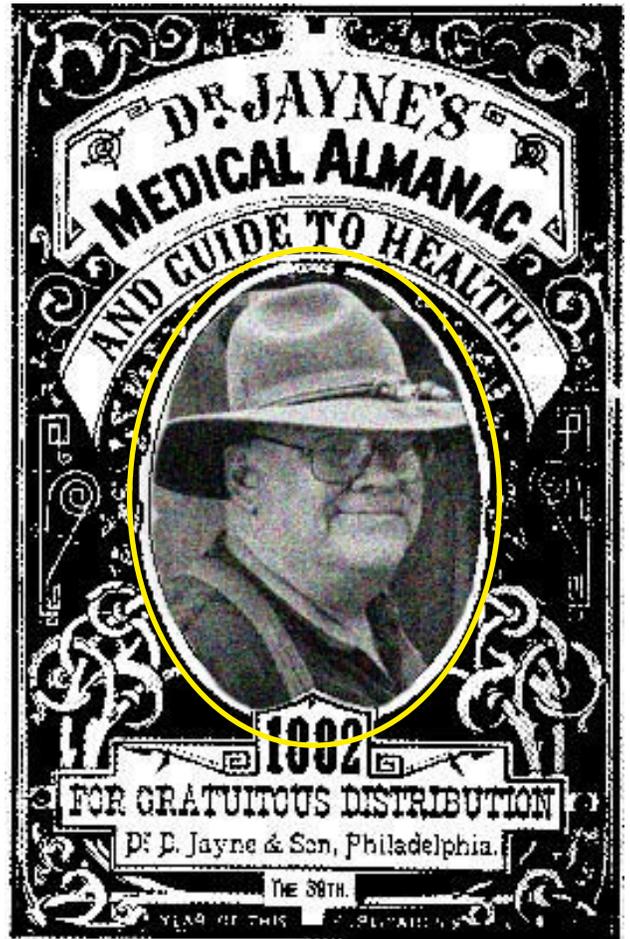
Long Juan Here:

I missed the October match, my first in several years. I was in Ireland for two weeks with my wife, **Powderkeg Patty**, and friends. See some photos from our trip on page 11.

www.pccss.org

FIND DELTA RAIDER

We had another good month for finding **Delta Raider**. Hereby mentioned in the dispatches for finding him on the Medical Almanac are Let's see who can find Delta Raider this month are **El Sabre, Shooting Iron Miller, Manassas Jack, Six Wire, Lefty Leo, Artiman, Big John Mesquite, Lincoln Drifter, Preacher Man Lee, Meadow Biscuit Slim, Marshal John Henry, Delta Raider, Agarita Annie and Meadow Biscuit Slim**. Good luck to all finding him this month.



Stories from Jake (Paladin that is):

The feature article this month is about cap and ball revolvers. **Long Juan** mentioned there are advantages loading the Remington versus the Colt. Who knows the name of the actor and the film in which the Remington advantage was demonstrated? If you know, email **Long Juan** and you will be mentioned in the dispatches in the November issue of the *Gazette*.



Because of this difference, disassembly and loading is slightly different for each.



Loading. Many



people shy away from cap and ball revolvers

because they appear difficult to load. Although time consuming, loading a cap and ball revolver is not difficult. The first step is to place a percussion cap on each nipple and discharge in a safe direction to clean the flash hole and the chamber of any powder residue and/or oil from the last cleaning. The next step is to remove the spent caps and then to pour measured loads of powder in each chamber from the front. Percussion revolvers were designed and first used during the black powder era. Today's percussion revolvers use black powder or a black powder substitute, like Pyrodex. After the powder, a ball is placed on the mouth of each chamber and a hinged loading lever hanging beneath the barrel is



used to seat each ball. Capping the nipples is the last step in loading before the revolver is ready to shoot.

Cleaning. cleaning black-powder revolvers is a relatively simple task. First, make sure the gun is unloaded, including removal of spent caps.

Then remove the cylinder from the frame and remove the nipples from the cylinder. Drop the nipples in a cleaning solution to soak while the rest

of the revolver is being cleaned. Which cleaning solution is best depends on who you ask. Soap and warm water, Ballistol, Simple Green, Windex, Murphy's Oil Soap, commercial blackpowder bore cleaner and many others are mentioned often. Each chamber in the cylinder needs to be swabbed out with a patch soaked with the cleaning solution. The barrel needs to receive the same treatment. Depending upon the amount of fouling a solvent-soaked brush may also be needed. All exposed metal parts – including inside of the frame and exterior of the barrel and cylinder - need to be rubbed down with a solvent-soaked rag also. After all traces of powder residue are removed, the gun and all its parts need to be covered in a light coat of protective oil to prevent rust. The nipples should be scrubbed with a small brush and the flash holes need to be cleaned out with a pick. Finish by covering the nipples with a light coat of oil and reinsert them on the cylinder.

Percussion Revolvers of the Old West. The Colt Paterson was the first practical multiple-shot revolver using a percussion cap to ignite the powder sending the lead ball downrange. Colt obtained a patent for a repeating firearm in 1836 and began



manufacturing the revolver in 1837 in his shop in Paterson, New Jersey, hence the name of the gun. The Paterson had a folding trigger that emerged when the hammer was cocked.

The five-shot Paterson, with a 9 inch barrel in .36 caliber, was an immediate success with the Texas Rangers, who acquired it from the stores of the decommissioned

Continued next page.

Republic of Texas Navy. Prior to the use of multiple-shot revolvers, Indians had been able to draw the fire of single-shot guns and would renew an attack before the guns could be re-loaded. In 1844, fifteen Rangers led by Captain Jack Hays used the Colt Paterson to defeat a band of 80 Comanches at the battle of Walker Creek northwest of San Antonio. With the five-shot Paterson, the Texas Rangers changed forever the rules of engagement in frontier Indian fighting.

The next Colt percussion revolver was the Colt Walker. Its design was a joint venture



by Samuel Colt and former Texas Ranger Samuel H. Walker in 1847. The result was the first six-shot .44 caliber revolver.

Other Colt cap and ball revolvers followed, including the Colt Dragoon, Model 1849 Pocket, 1851 Navy and 1860 Army. The Colt 1860 Army was widely used by the Union Army during the Civil War. The Colt Paterson, Walker and 1860 Army models had two-

part frames with the barrel separating from the rest of the frame to remove the cylinder.



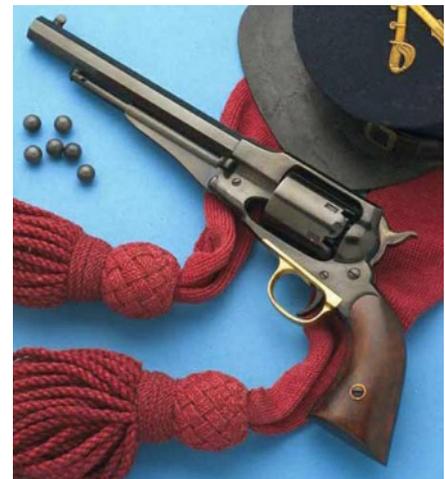
Editor's Note: For more on the Colt Walker and Dragoon, see the November 2011 and January 2012 issues of the Agarita Gazette.

For an article about Open-Top Revolvers, see the February 2011 issue of the Gazette.

Remington's New Army Model pistol, Remington provided serious competition for Colt's guns. Used by both Union and Confederate soldiers, the 1858 New Army Remington revolver had several enhancements including a more sturdy single frame construction with the steel frame enclosing the cylinder. The Remington was a single-action, six-shot, percussion revolver. The Remington Army revolver was large-framed, in .44 caliber, with an 8 inch barrel length. The Remington Navy revolver was slightly smaller framed than the Army, in .36 caliber, with a 7.5 inch barrel. There were three progressive models; the Army & Navy (1860-1862), the 1861 Army & Navy (1862-1863), and the New Model Army & Navy (1863-1875). The three models are nearly identical in size and appearance. The Remington revolver owes its durability to the "topstrap", solid-frame design. The design is stronger and less prone to frame stretching than the Colt revolvers of the same era.

Because of a fire at the Colt factory, the popular 1860 Army was not available for some time. As a result, large numbers of the Remington revolver were ordered by the U.S. government. It cost 50¢ more than the Colt, but its durability and ability to reload quickly by switching to another pre-loaded cylinder made it popular.

Final Chapter. The final chapter in guns of the old west came with the production of the



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metallic cartridge and breech loading revolver which eliminated the need for placing caps on the cylinder and packing powder and lead balls into the cylinder. Many cap and ball revolvers, including the Colt 1860 Army and the Remington New Model Army, were converted to handle metallic cartridges.

Editor's Note: As often seems the case, I pick a topic for an article in the Gazette. I spend time over a period of several weeks, researching and writing the article. Then, just as I am putting the finishing touches on the article, I receive a magazine in the mail with an article on the same topic. This month is no different. In the November/December issue of the "American Handgunner," there is a great article by Mike "Duke" Venturino entitled "Col. Colt's Cap & Ball Revolvers." In my experience, anything written by Mike is always a good read. His latest article is no exception. I recommend it to anyone who wants to read what a professional has to say on the subject.



October Match Photos

Thanks to **Dutch Van Horn**, **Dragon Hill Dave** and **Six Goin' South** for the photos this month.



Lightning McQueen painting targets on workday



Texas Two Step, LaDonna (Chisos) & Six Goin' South just before hammers down



Big John Mesquite keeping score for his posse during the October match.



Handsome Joe Darter



The Nueces Boys - Slim & Ranger



Scooter, Sombrero Negro & Texas Sarge



Skyhawk Hans, Hopalong Herbert,
Bandera Kid & Kickshot



Creek Johnson



Dutch Van Horn



Dragon Hill Dave says, "Say
what, Jake (Paladin)?"



Plum Creek President and SASS Regulator, Dragon Hill



Phantom & Bison Jim try to figure out the stage for Hopalong Herbert and others



Phantom showing his 49r championship form while Handsome Joe runs the timer



Nice lookn' weapons!



Hopalong Herbert shows good form with his '73



Texas Trinity Kid, Texas Two Step, Boosey Babe & The Adobe Kid with Lincoln Drifter in the background



True Blue Cachoo & Six Goin' South



Lars Christopherson struttin' his stuff at workday



Frank Longshot



Skyhawk Hans puttin' lead downrange with Joe Darter timing

Long Juan Goes to Ireland

(and has a great time)



Powderkeg Patty and friend, Libby, teeing off at Royal County Down



Dunluce Castle ruins and ubiquitous sheep on the Antrim Coast in Northern Ireland



Kylemore Abbey in Connemara, County Galway, Ireland



Cliffs of Moher, County Clare, west coast of Ireland



Tower at Glendalough Abbey near Wicklow, Ireland. The Irish had different forts than we had in the U.S. Everyone went into the tower, climbed and pulled the ladder up behind them. That worked fine until they ran out of food or water.

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Caliber	Weight	Config.	Price/500	Price/1000
.38	100	RNFP	32	64
	105	FP	33	66
	125	RNFP	35	70
	125	FP	35	70
	130	RNFP	36	72
	158	RNFP	39	77
	158	FP	39	77
	158	SWC	39	77
.380	100	RNFP	33	65
.38-55	245	RNFP	59	117
.41	215	SWC	49	98
.44	180	RNFP	41	81
	240	SWC	52	104
.44-40	200	RNFP	45	90
.45 COLT	160	RNFP	46	92
	180	RNFP	41	81
	200	RNFP	45	90
	250	RNFP	53	106
9MM	124	RN	35	70
	125	CN	35	70
40 S&W	180	FP	41	81
.45ACP	200	SWC	45	90
	200	RN	45	90
	230	RN	51	101
45-70	405	FPT	111	222

*Price increase because of higher cost of lead. Sorry for any inconvenience.