



# THE VIGILANTE



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Editor: Nasty Newt SASS # 7365

November 2015

## The Monthly Chronicle of the Robbers Roost Vigilantes

### From The President

#### Lots of Lead Downrange in November

When Thanksgiving rolls around, and I start counting the many things for which I am thankful, I would be remiss if I didn't include the fact that we have our own Cowboy Action Shooting club and our very own dedicated range, right here at home. My first ever match was at 5 Dogs in 1995, and for the next two years I shot monthlies and annuals at Cajon, West End, and RRBar, and annuals in Nevada, Arizona, and Wyoming. It was all great, but for me, there's no place like home.

In November we took full advantage of our good fortune and put on three matches in our own backyard. The "Weak One" gang put on a great match on the 7<sup>th</sup> and nine Vigilantes turned out to shoot it. A good time was had by all, and somehow or other, Bad Bascomb managed to win it. He must be really lucky or something. Cowboy Earl, M. C. Ryder, Goode Bascomb, and Buckhorn Bud also finished in the top five. *Goode Bascomb shot the match clean.*

The 14<sup>th</sup> was Side Match Day. It started out right with some of Death Valley Rose's brownies. Eight shooters turned out. We shot sixteen events, and it could have been eighteen, but nobody brought a '87 for speed shotgun, and we didn't put any teams together to chop wood. Rum Runner had come from Tehachapi prepared for an evening pot luck, but nobody else was camping, so we decided to have lunch after we were done shooting on Saturday. M.C. Ryder brought a sub sandwich and macaroni salad, Desert Willow made potato salad, Rum Runner made tortilla soup and Mexican chip and dip, and we had brownies for dessert. It was one fine throw-together.

On the 21<sup>st</sup>, eleven shooters came out for six more stages of fun and frolic. Rusty Dover and Belle E. Button came up from Lancaster, and it was great to see them. It's been a while! Bad Bascomb got lucky again, followed by Cowboy Earl, Ozark Lawdog, yours truly, and Rusty Dover. *Buckhorn Bud cleaned it.* All of the scores from all three matches are posted elsewhere on this web site (Thanks, M.C. Ryder).

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### 1873: A Good Year for Guns

by

Nasty Newt, SASS # 7365

In the years between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the century, many firearms made an impact out west. These guns found their way into the hands of soldiers during the Indian Wars and civilians on both sides of the law. Interestingly enough, three of the most storied and influential weapons of the era were introduced in a single year, 1873. Along with each gun came a new cartridge developed for it.

The Colt Single Action Army Revolver was developed in pursuit of a government contract, and the goal was realized. In 1873, it was adopted as the official sidearm of the U.S. military. Colt beat out several competitors, most notably Smith & Wesson. Many people believed the top break Smith and Wesson was a superior weapon, mainly because of the relative ease of loading and unloading when compared to the Colt. However, the Ordnance Board thought the Colt's solid frame would prove stronger and more reliable in the field, and they very much preferred the more powerful .45 Colt cartridge to the shorter .45 Smith and Wesson.

It's ironic that the Colt cartridge was a major factor in the selection of the Colt revolver, and here's why. Some Smith & Wessons were later bought by the army, and they promptly began sending Colt ammunition to units armed with Smith & Wessons, and vice versa. This was no problem for the fellows carrying Colts, because the Smith & Wesson cartridge would chamber and fire just fine in their pistols, but the Colt cartridge was too long for the Smith & Wesson revolver. This one-way interchangeability, combined with the fact that the heavy-recoiling .45 Colt cartridge was really almost too powerful for the average cavalryman, prompted many a quartermaster to avoid the problem and buy Smith & Wesson ammunition for everyone.

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In December we are **NOT SHOOTING on the 5<sup>th</sup>**. The Bolt Action Military Match will be on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and our regular third Saturday SASS match will be on the 19<sup>th</sup>. This match will be a Turkey Shoot like last year, except the winner will get a gift card instead of a turkey. We're now on **Winter Hours**, so we'll start sign ups at 8:00, and have the meeting at 8:45

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Cajon Cowboys** shoot on the: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday at the Gem Ranch in the Cajon Pass on old route 66. Contact Luke Warmwater at (909) 987-7017. [www.cajoncowboys.com](http://www.cajoncowboys.com).

**Five Dogs Creek Cowboys** in Bakersfield shoot on the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of each month. Call Utah Blaine, (661) 203-4238. [www.5dogscreek.com](http://www.5dogscreek.com)

**High Desert Cowboys** shoot in Acton on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday. Contact Doc Silverhawks, (661) 948-2543, or Lumpy Grits or Ima Schofield at (661)265-1923.

**Double R Bar Regulators**, Lucerne Valley, shoot the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. [www.rbar.com](http://www.rbar.com). Contact Little Jersey Jo, 1-760-247-5012, [joed56676@gmail.com](mailto:joed56676@gmail.com).

**El Dorado Cowboys**, Boulder City, NV, shoot the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend (Sat & Sun). They host the SASS Nevada State Championship, *El Dorado*, October 1 – 4. Contact Creeker at 702-328-4867. [www.eldoradocowboys.com](http://www.eldoradocowboys.com).

**Chorro Valley Regulators** shoot the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday and most 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays at Morro Bay. [www.chorrovalleyregulators.org](http://www.chorrovalleyregulators.org).

### Cowboy Turkey Shoot Dec 19th

Like last year, our Christmas match is a Turkey Shoot. It's six regular Cowboy stages. You'll get a ticket in the drawing when you sign up, with several chances during the day to win additional tickets. Last year the winner got a turkey. This time it will be a gift card. **It's gonna be FUN!**

1873 continued from page 1

So, in the end, Smith & Wesson's .45 caliber cartridge, deemed not powerful enough by the Ordnance Board, wound up being used in great quantities by soldiers armed with Colts. The civilian population apparently wasn't all that concerned about recoil. In spite of the fact that the Colt revolver was eventually offered in a dizzying array of chamberings, .45 Colt was among the most popular.

Also adopted by the U.S. military in 1873 was the Springfield single-shot "trapdoor" rifle in caliber .45-70. The carbine version of the Springfield, in .45-55, became the standard arm of the cavalry, in some regiments replacing the Spencer repeater. Spencers were used to good effect during the Civil War, and later out west during the Indian Wars. Custer's Seventh Cavalry was armed with Spencers at the fight with the Cheyenne along the Washita River in Indian Territory in 1868. But the army couldn't wait to get rid of the Spencers, because they felt a repeating carbine encouraged soldiers to waste ammunition. So Custer's men eventually traded in their Spencers for Springfield carbines, and carried the single-shots to the Little Big Horn, along with their single action Colts. Their carbines were prone to extraction problems, and this may have contributed to the defeat, but it's unlikely that any amount of firepower would have helped the Seventh on that day. The problems with the Springfield were eventually fixed, and the 1873 and succeeding models served the nation well for more than two decades before being replaced by the short-lived Krag Jorgensen bolt action.

The third firearm to make its debut in 1873 was—you guessed it, the iron framed Winchester Model 1873. It was a stronger weapon than the brass framed rim fire Model 66, and was chambered *Continued on page 3*

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### How to Join the Robbers Roost Vigilantes...

Come out to a RRV match, held the third (and sometimes first) Saturday of every month, or call Nasty Newt at 760-375-7618, or MC Ryder at 760-384-2321, or mail it in. Our membership application is here [RRV Membership Application](#) Annual membership dues for the RRV are: single membership \$25, member and spouse \$30, family membership (including children under 18 living at home) \$35. First time shooters will be able to take their FIRST (1) NEW SHOOTERS CLASS for \$10, any subsequent new shooters class or RRV match shoot will be \$10 members, \$15 nonmembers. Donations for shooting regular monthly RRV matches will be \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Memberships run from September 1 - August 31. New memberships purchased after September will be prorated depending on the number of months remaining and the type of membership. **RRV members are encouraged to become Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) members.** Please call SASS at 877-411-SASS. SASS membership information can be found here:

<http://www.sassnet.com/Membership-Main-001A.php>

SASS membership is not required for membership in RRV, or participation in RRV regular monthly matches. **RRV encourages all shooters to join and support the NRA and the NRA Foundation, and Ridgecrest Gun Range Association.** For further information visit our website at [www.robbersroostvigilantes.com](http://www.robbersroostvigilantes.com).

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### Schedule of Monthly Matches

#### RRV Match Dates:

December 5, 2015: NO MATCH

December 12, 2015: BAMB

December 19, 2015: COWBOY  
TURKEY SHOOT

Winter Hours: Sign up starting ~ 8:00,  
Safety Meeting ~ 8:45.

1873 continued from page 2 for a more powerful cartridge, the .44 Winchester Central Fire (WCF), or 44-40. It was no match for cartridges like the .45-70, but at the time those big boys were pretty much limited to use in single-shot rifles. In 1873, the 44-40 was pretty potent medicine for a lever action repeater. Winchester tried with no luck to interest the US military in the Model 73, but the general public was not such a hard sell. The gun sold like hotcakes, and became a favorite of lawman and lawbreaker alike. When Colt started chambering the Single Action Army in 44-40, the Winchester/Colt combo in .44-40 went on to become an old west staple.

Thanks in no small part to cowboy action shooting, these firearm designs and their original chamberings are still going strong 142 years later. 1873 was a very good year for guns, and cartridges, too.

Editor's note: This article was originally published in the *Vigilante* in 2000. The exact month is lost to history. ☺