



August, 2011

Mountain Man Monthly

The Authorized Publication of the
Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders Inc.

The Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders, Inc. was chartered in 1969 by a group of men and women interested in their heritage and dedicated to preserving and promoting the sport of muzzle loading and buckskinning. CSML is a family oriented club that holds a broad range of functions such as camp outs, potluck dinners, and black powder shoots. CSML is affiliated with the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association and the National Rifle Association.

Views and opinions contained within articles submitted to the Mountain Man Monthly are not necessarily those of the editor or CSML. The editor reserves the right not to publish any article submitted but encourages articles on any subject regarding shooting sports and subjects related to the fur trade era.

Monthly Meeting
September 1 @ 7:00 p.m.
Potluck & Election

CSMLA State Shoot
Sept. 2-5, Ft. Lupton

Club Primitive Shoot - Sept. 18

CSMLA Club Challenge Match
Sept. 24-25; also Board Mtg.

Oct. 2 - Club Paper Shoot
Oct. 6 - Regular Club Meeting

President

Joy Hicks

Vice President

Roy Crouse

Treasurer

Gwen Blanchard

Secretary

Lois Schainost

Membership Secretary

Ted Beaupre

Range Officer

Tom Gabor

Assistant Range Officers

Ted Beaupre

Marlin Johnson

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Primitive Exec.

Doug Davis

Assistant Primitive Exec.

Tony Hecker

Womens' Primitive Exec.

Judy Sterner

Cannon Master

Richard Stites

Legislative Liaison

Doug Davis

Mountain Man Monthly Editors

The Webb's

UPCOMING EVENTS: CSML & Statewide

WHAT	WHERE	WHEN	INFORMATION
Regular Club Meeting & Annual Elections	American Legion Colorado Springs	September 1	potluck dinner & elections; regular monthly meeting
Bell's Fort Annual Rendezvous	Bit South Park Royal Gorge South Rim	Sept. 2-5	27 th annual rendezvous; public welcome
CSMLA State Shoot	Ft. Lupton Range Ft. Lupton, CO	Sept. 2-5	new date & location for the shoot; plan to go & support them
No Paper Shoot on	September 4 th	Support other events	over the Labor Day Weekend!!!
Muzzle Loading Hunting	State-wide	Sept. 10-18	good luck hunters!!!
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	Sept. 18	range opens @ 1:00 p.m.
CSMLA Club Challenge Match	Rightmire's Ranch near Agate, CO	Sept. 24-25	lots of shooting and pig roast; potluck; board meeting @ 3:00
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	October 2	range opens at 1:00 p.m.
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion Colorado Springs	October 6; 7:00 p.m.	regular monthly meeting and frivolity
Bird & Buffalo Event	Ft. Melchert	October 15-16	shooting, potluck, auction, & fun
CSMLA 2011 Silhouette Shoot - - open to all muzzle loaders	Golden Gun Club Exit 295; 1503 South Watkins Road	October 23	no entry after 11:00 a.m.; Mike Lee (303) 422-2199; Estill Ator (303) 567-4310
Regular Club Meeting & annual Craft Show	American Legion Colorado Springs	November 3	bring your crafts to sell and be ready to buy early Christmas!!
Back to normal mountain	time; off DST	November 6	turn your clock back one hour!!
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	November 6	range opens at 1:00 p.m.
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	November 20	range opens at 1:00 p.m.
Regular Club Meeting & Annual Ornament Exchg.	American Legion Colorado Springs	December 1	bring a wrapped ornament & take home a new one!!!
Club Paper Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 4	range opens at 1:00 p.m.
Club Primitive Shoot	Ft. Melchert	December 18	pistol @ noon; range @ 1:00 pm
No Club Paper Shoot	Sunday, January 1	Celebrate the New	Year with family & friends!!!
Regular Club Meeting	American Legion Colorado Springs	January 5, 2012	wild game potluck & Tall Tales to be told; game trophies given.

For CSML scheduled shoots; CALL SHOOT HOT LINE (719) 632-7690 after 9:00 a.m. on shoot day to be sure shoot is on!!!
Schedule is subject to change at any time and is based on information available at time of publication. On-line check csmlinc.org

PAST THINGS

Well, a few folks were present for the August regular monthly meeting. We quickly ran through the business portion of the meeting.

Some tales of the bear at the Grainger primitive camp out were shared. Guess that Ted and Dee will have to rename their camper as the "Bear Track" since it looks like the bear made his mark on the back side of their camper. Glad to hear that no one actually saw the bear, but there were plenty of signs that there are some in the area.

While it was sad to hear that Tom Gabor is not going to run again for the Chief Range Officer position, we also understand that his health is much more important. We wish Tom all the best in his endeavors to get better and fast!!!!

We are on a search to find someone to fill Tom's shoes. We are always open to new members stepping up and taking on the job. We'll all be here to help and you can count on us. We would even entertain the idea of having a group of guys be the Chief Range Officer and spread out the duties. Think seriously about volunteering to run for this position. It is a very necessary position for our group to survive.

Reminders given about the State Shoot which has been rescheduled for September 2-5 at the Ft. Lupton Range. It has been about 3 years since we have been able to get this shoot into a finished state and we want to go and support it as well as Tom who is still the Coordinator for this event. Many of our group are going to assist with this event and will be there to see it through. If you don't already have some plans, put this event on your calendar. There is dry camping available at the range.

We did have an August Grainger Paper Camp Out and shoot, but so far, no reports have been received. From down here in the south, it sure looked like the area was under some rain during the weekend. Those of us who were unable to attend sure hope that someone will come forward with a tale or two of the event and what went on. We love to hear about the adventures and things that were done.

Primitive Chapter News

by: Doug "Moose Milk" Davis

Due to the paper camp out for August over the third weekend, the Primitive Shoot was held on the first Sunday of the month. It was a hot one, but no wind.

Scores are as follows:

MEN:

Fred LaChance	18
Leon Basdekas	18
Ted Beaupre	16
John Udovich	15
Steve Bingham	15
Fred Barraza	12
Scott Ward	10
Brandon Colangelo	6
Steve Sterner	3

LADIES:

Petra LaChance	15
Peggy Basdekas	12
Judy Sterner	11

Please remember to attend the CSMLA State Shoot coming up over the Labor Day weekend at the range in Ft. Lupton. CSML members Joy Hicks, Fred & Petra LaChance, and others are assisting the shoot Coordinator Tom Gabor in putting the shoot on. This will be the first time in three years this shoot will be held.

**Colorado Springs Muzzle Loaders
Regular Monthly Meeting
August 4, 2011**

The CSML Membership meeting on August 4, 2011 was called to order by President Joy Hicks. Good to see Karen Emmanuelson back with us.

Due to some technical errors, there was no Secretary's report for printing in the *Mountain Man Monthly*. However, that didn't deter this group. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes when they and if they are printed. Motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's report given by Gwen Blanchard, was a full recap of the Memorial Day event for 2011. She reported that the tents have been repaired and are ready for the next event. If no one else has any bills that have not been turned in, it does appear that we may have made a little money on this event. That is a good thing! Motion made to accept the report; it was seconded and approved.

Membership report by Ted Beaupre noted that not much has changed. We did have 3 new members since our last meeting and two of those were done at the Grainger camp out.

No primitive report because of no Doug! Anyone remember when this happened last???????

Old Business: Dee Beaupre provided us with a bear story at the last Grainger camp out.

New Business: September is the election of officers. THANK YOU to Tom Gabor for the services you have done for the club!! Tom is stepping down as the Chief Range Officer.

State Shoot was moved to Labor Day weekend; September 2-5 at Ft. Lupton. Come join everyone to keep the state shoot alive since it has had to be canceled the last couple of years due to the dry conditions. Help Tom make this shoot a big one.

Don Stoner reported that there will be a gun show on September 10th. He is always looking for help to man our club table.

Upcoming events were noted. Remember no paper shoot on September 4; join us at Ft. Lupton for the State Shoot.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Schainost

**RENDEZVOUS CLOTHING
AND
FURS FOR SALE**

Lynn and Lou Moore of Pueblo are letting go of some of their rendezvous clothing and furs. Lynn is an excellent seamstress and their clothing reflects this. Lynn and Lou have been muzzle loaders for a number of years and have many fine things to sell.

If you are interested in the items that they have, please call them at 719-544-3209.

**AUGUST PRIMITIVE
PISTOL MATCH
By: Ken "Suds" West**

The August 7th match only had two shooters; Jim Murray and I, but did have several spectators. Slight wind from directly behind which kept us cool and did not interfere with shooting. "Tennessee" missed one of the gongs which left me with the honor of putting the winnings in the range fund jar and buying Jim a Coke == wait a minute, did I miss something here?

**THINGS EVERYONE ELSE ALREADY
KNEW.....**

Hangfires and Misfires: After months of trying various things to solve the problem of hangfires and misfires with my target pistol, I noticed that the top of the nipple was rounded, reducing the area of explosive compressed between the hammer and the nipple. I replaced the nipple with one with a flat top that is 0.02 inches longer above the threads and now only get misfires when use some older, cheap percussion caps which, apparently, have been wet at some time. Changing the length of the nipple above the threads can cause the hammer to hit the nipple more squarely, thus reducing the chance of misfires.

Golf Gloves: I have discovered that golf gloves are thin enough to use for shooting without cutting off the trigger finger of the glove. They are very soft, glue the wood of the pistol to your hand, and can be bought one hand-at-a-time ---- --and if synthetic leather golf gloves were free, they would still be overpriced!

Casting Pot: There is a perfect temperature for the casting pot when casting round balls and I usually discover it about five minutes before I quit casting! Best I can figure, you set the temperature dial on a number between 0 and 10 which corresponds 100 minus the temperature in my back yard times the square of the relative humidity divided by the phase of the moon. Anyone with a better way to set the temperature of a casting pot, please speak up!

Aluminum Round-Ball Molds: The round ball always sticks in one of the cavities in my aluminum bullet mold. Looking at the top edge with a magnifier, I found that bits of aluminum have been knocked off—leaving the sprue very rough. I've applied some 600 grit sandpaper to smooth this ut. Next month, I'll let you know if I can force the resulting balls down the barrel of my pistol!!!

BIRD & BUFFALO ANNUAL EVENT

Yes, the time for our annual bird and buffalo event is fast approaching. Time to clean out your closets and junk drawers and find all that wonderful stuff to bring to the auction held on Saturday night. This is a money-maker for our group and we have a wonderful time bidding on all the treasures that find their way to this event.

October 15 and 16 are the dates for this shoot. We will have the long range buffaloes, some primitive stuff, some pistol, and probably some shotguns. Bring

all you have and join us in the fun. There is camping available at Ft. Melchert beginning on Friday night. We'll have our usual chili (or something like it) for an all-you-can-eat lunch for a nominal fee, and of course, the Saturday night potluck. Bring your best dish and share it with the rest at the potluck.

We always have a grand time at the Bird and Buffalo and invite you and all your friends to join us in this fun!!!

NOVEMBER CRAFT FAIR

All you crafty folks out there, be gathering up and finishing up your crafts for our annual November Craft Fair. No charge for the tables and this is open to all crafters of any kind; no limitations on what you can show. This is a wonderful way to display your wares and have the club members choose their favorites. It's also a time for us to begin our holiday shopping and put a real dent into the lists we have.

This is also a time when you might be able to trade some of your goods for their goods. Never know what kind of a deal you can make until you try!

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BEADWORK AND THE BUREAUCRATS

The following information is taken from the writings of James A. Hanson of the Fur Trade Museum in Chadron, Nebraska.

In May, 1878 E. A. Hayt, the commissioner of Indian Affairs, sent a directive to the various Indian agents ordering them to stop the sale of beads, paint, and shells b licensed traders to the Indians. His efforts, undoubtedly prompted by the zealous but misguided belief that these objects were an impediment to "civilizing" the only recently subdued Plains tribes, met with remarkably frank disagreement

from James Irwin, the government's agent for the Oglala Lakota at Red Cloud Agency. On June 8 he responded:

"I respectfully inquire whether at this time, when so much has been asked of my Indians and they have complied, and so much promised them, which has not yet been complied with, when there is a lively apprehension on their part that the government is not sincere and when at this season of the year the war path invites them to return to their freedom and loyalty, is it policy to attack social customs, old and inviting them, and especially where those customs neither violate our laws or Christianity. Has any Indian not as much right to paint as a white lady or as a white man has to shave, if he wishes to do so. Has he not as much right to wear shells and hair pipes as our people to wear jewelry, pendant from the ears, wound around the neck, or down the shirt bosom, or swinging from the vest pocket. The Indians put it on a little thicker than we do, to be sure, but it is not so expensive. Beadwork is one of the few arts the Indians possess and which they have brought to great perfection and which is one of their limited sources of revenue. Beads are as necessary in the brown maiden's toilet as are the laces and ribbons that flutter around their more favored sisters.

"I respectfully inquire, taking this view of the matter, if it would not be better to allow such customs to prevail until my Indians are settled down and promises made them fulfilled, and when the subject can be approached without exciting angry feelings. Under proper teachings their own good sense will point out their folly. Much feeling prevails in camp, coupled with a sense of injustice unnecessarily done them, and I respectfully request that for the present the order at least in our case be suspended." (Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Letters Received, Red Cloud Indian Agency, M234, Rolls 722-23, RG 75, National Archives and Records Administration).

Five days later, First Lieutenant Jesse M. Lee, acting agent for the Upper Brules at Spotted Tail Agency wrote the commissioner on the same matter. His approach was more pragmatic and less contentious about policy matters, but still effective. It may reflect some participation of Spotted Tail himself in its formulation:

"Referring to circular from your office of May

13 ultimo forbidding the sale of beads, etc. I have the honor to request on the half of these Indians that the sale of beads be permitted as heretofore.

"Beadwork is a great industry among these Indians and from all I have seen no injury results from such work. On the contrary, I think it is beneficial.

"At the time of the enforcement of the order here one of the traders here had a considerable stock of beads, vermillion, etc. on hand. The stock cannot be returned but is practically a dead loss to the trader.

"It seems to me that it would have been nothing more than just to have allowed the traders to dispose of their stock then on hand making the prohibition to take effect immediately thereafter." (Records of BIA, Letters Received, Spotted Tail Agency, M234, Roll 843, RG 75, NARA).

While we did not run across the complaints of other agents, or the commissioner's response to these complaints, apparently there was enough of a groundswell that the odious circular was withdrawn. The Plains tribes were permitted to continue the production of this indigenous art form that relied on traders for the raw materials. The letters also make it clear that the sale of beadwork was a significant source of income even before the tribes had been relocated to the reservations.

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## PERCUSSION FUR TRADE GUNS

*The following information is taken from the writings of James A. Hanson of the Fur Trade Museum in Chadron, Nebraska.*

### **The percussion system**

A number of scholars have investigated the invention of percussion ignition for firearms. Suffice it to say that the Reverend Alexander Forsyth secured a British patent in 1807 for the use of fulminate to fire weapons. The Forsyth "scent bottle" delivery system was too delicate and complicated for general application. When his patent expired and Joseph Egg invented the simple percussion cap, the system was an instant success with the civilian sporting population. The British army first issued percussion rifles in 1836,

and adopted the system in 1839. The American army followed suit in 1841, although complete conversion was not achieved for a decade. Meanwhile, gunsmiths were kept busy converting civilian and military flintlocks to use percussion caps by a variety of ingenious methods.

### **Flint versus Percussion**

There has been a lot of heated but perhaps pointless conversations about the relative merits of percussion and flintlock weapons. I have often been told that, in the wilderness, one could lose or run out of caps. That is true, but I have not encountered a written account of anyone having done so. Rather, I have read of flint guns being converted to percussion because the powder had been weakened by wetting, thus not being adequate to prime the pan. And, properly-shaped, quality flints are not to be found indiscriminately. That's why even Indians preferred to purchase European flints rather than make their own. The flintlock has several more points of weakness than does the percussion lock, but its latter-day defenders will not soon accept nipples and caps.

Perhaps the data collected by the East India Company will put the reasons for conversion in perspective. In 1811 EIC troops fired 13,711 rounds under test conditions from 1,387 pistols, carbines, and muskets. Any weapon that failed to fire, including a flash in the pan, was recorded as a misfire. The total misfires were 1,834, a misfire rate of 13.37 percent. Among the principal causes were: flash in the pan (433); bad frizzen (433); bad spring (323); burned powder residue on flint and frizzen (205); and plugged vent (140). The EIC conducted other, less extensive firing tests and discovered that, out of a total of 19,916 shots, 15.79 percent were misfires.

Smaller scale tests were subsequently conducted by the EIC with the newly issued percussion arms. Of 1,080 shots recorded, there were misfires of just 1.57 percent, a tenth as many with flint guns. The two principal causes for failures were determined to be the soldier not having rammed the powder charge down tightly, so no powder was in or near the nipple, and his failure to have properly seated the cap on the nipple.

Favorable comments were also heard from soldiers no longer subjected to the dangerous and unnerving spray of gas from the vent of the musket to

one's left during volley fire. A related discovery made by the British government's Ordnance Committee was that, because no gas escaped through the nipple, percussion weapons needed less gunpowder to produce the same projectile velocity as a comparable flintlock. The conversion to percussion resulted in a 13 percent savings in gunpowder for the military.

### **The fur trade**

Even though such improvements seem obvious, flint guns remained standard for the Indian trade and government treaty payments until the 1850s, with a few notable exceptions. A few flint guns were still being used by Plains warriors at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, and the Hudson's Bay Company ordered its last flintlock Northwest guns in 1887.

### **Pistols**

The first reference I have found connecting the percussion lock to Indians is the "Armstrong" pistol made by Philadelphia gunmaker Henry Deringer, supposedly in 1825. Maj. Francis W. Armstrong, a veteran of the War of 1812, was appointed agent for the Choctaw Indians in 1831, during the period of their removal to Indian Territory. According to Deringer, Armstrong induced him to make a pair, suitable for either belt or pocket. (The advantage of withdrawing a percussion pistol as opposed to a flint one seems obvious.) "He was much pleased with the weapons and [later] introduced them among the Indian Chiefs . . . and they soon acquired a high reputation. Major Armstrong gave the pistols the name of the 'Deringer Pistol,' and by it they have ever since been known.

These Armstrong pistols were distinctive, with a short butt, 4-1/2 to 5-1/2 inch barrel, and less than .50 caliber. They are not to be confused with Deringer's later, big duelers, or the still later small pistols that came to bear his name as a generic type of easily concealable weapon.

Several mountain men are known to have carried percussion pistols. Jedediah Smith's pair of percussion dueling or holster pistols, which he was carrying at the time of his death in 1831, were recovered in Santa Fe. One was photographed before disappearing again. Alfred Jacob Miller's paintings show Joseph Walker and Antoine Clement with

percussion pistols; the latter's is clear enough to indicate it was a boxlock. A similar boxlock pistol, marked "NEW YORK 1854" was found at the site of the Bordeaux Post near where the museum now stands. Assumedly it was lost or discarded by one of the post's employees. The hammer and one panel of the frame is gone. Or, perhaps a Lakota warrior tossed it away.

In the 1850s Plains warriors on a war footing with the US government secured some pistols. Their popularity for fighting on horseback grew after the Civil War, when large numbers of surplus military pistols came on the market. Agency traders were supplying Colt army and navy revolvers, and a lesser number of Remingtons, plus large amounts of spare parts for them. More than a fourth of the guns surrendered by the Sioux and Cheyennes in 1876-77 were these pistols. They included 69 Colts and 41 Remingtons. Significantly, none of the two hundred and more Colt 1873 army revolvers were turned in.

### Rifles

Henry Deringer had several contracts for rifles to supply Indians (Parsons found records of some 5,000), and his work for the old US Office of Indian Trade is well documented. The above-mentioned Major Armstrong may have had some responsibility for the first percussion longarm made for the Indians. In 1829 Henry Deringer submitted a bid for 1,000 rifles to equip the Choctaws of Mississippi for their forced western migration to Indian Territory. Deringer's successful bid was \$12.50 each, half to be percussion. Deringer himself wrote to the Commissary of the Army in 1833: "I can assure you that a better set of rifles the Indians never got. . . There never was a better rifle made for the Indians than those we make at present for the Indians on Major Armstrong's pattern" No other order for Deringer percussion trade rifles is known.

The Henry family was supplying the Indian trade by 1820. By the 1830s Henry was the American Fur Company's sole supplier of rifles. It was apparently 1840, the year of the last rendezvous, when James Henry received his first AFC order for percussion guns. They asked for six plain Lancaster pattern rifles at \$11 each, and six silver mounted rifles for \$16 apiece.

Henry Leman started in the gun business in

1834, and was soon shipping his very serviceable rifles to St. Louis. The first orders for percussion trade rifles appear in 1842, and they increase through the decade. In 1849, for example, the Ewing Brothers in Fort Wayne ordered equal numbers of flint and percussion rifles, half with browned and half with polished barrels. Some Chouteau Company orders specified extra engraving or double set triggers. About 1860 Leman developed a shorter, stronger percussion rifle for the Indian trade. The tribes, rearing in the face of the US Army's use of rifled guns, demanded rifles as well. Thousands of Leman's percussion rifles were purchased by the government to distribute to the Plains tribes as treaty payments. Of the 410 guns surrendered by the tribes in 1876-77, 94, about 23 percent, were Leman rifles!

It was the mountain men who brought the percussion lock to the American west, however. In 1829 Gen. William Ashley, founder of the rendezvous system, wrote that he had little experience with the percussion lock, but felt it admirably suited for use in the West, "where severe winds and rains prevail".

In 1834 Nathaniel J. Wyeth, deep in Oregon Country, recorded on December 9: "We percussioned 3 rifles our powder being so badly damaged as to render flint locks useless." A few days earlier, Wyeth had contemptuously dismissed the trappers: "Our hunters . . . are far from good shots themselves and commonly have miserable flint guns which snap continually and afford an excuse for not killing.

In his superb book, *The Hawken Rifle: Its Place in History*, Charles Hanson noted that part of the appeal of the St. Louis made products of the custom gunsmiths such as the Hawken brothers is that they incorporated the latest features, such as shorter, heavier barrels, and percussion locks. Percussion rifles were available to the mountain men by special order (and double the cost of a standard Kentucky) by 1830. The demand escalated for percussion guns so by 1841, no beaver trapper would buy a flintlock. In fact, it's worth noting that not a single example of a J&S Hawken flintlock is known (there are, of course, a few of dubious ancestry).

Percussion rifles by Hawken, Beauvais, Albright, and other makers continued to supply the "road ranche" business through the 1850s.