

Part 2: Remington Hepburn Heartburn

Hepburn patent no. 220,285, Oct. 7, 1879.

Walker patent no. 354,452, Dec. 14, 1886.

Once you have the Hepburn heartburn, you start looking for the cure, and then discover that the only permanent cure is to get the epitome of all single shot rifle, the almost unobtainable "Remington Special Underlever Match Rifle."

Until you get that ultimate cure, you can try all the other various cures, such as:

1. Remington Hepburn Sporting Model
2. Remington Hepburn Match Rifle
3. Remington Hepburn Mid Range Creedmore
4. Remington Hepburn Long Range Creedmore
5. Remington Hepburn High Power Rifle
6. Remington Hepburn Long Range Military Creedmore and the ultimate,
7. Remington Hepburn Schuetzen Underlever Match Rifle.

However, before you get to 6 and 7, you have undoubtedly tried these cures:

- A. Part octagon, part round barrel; octagon barrel, round barrel, and various barrel lengths.
- B. Calibers — from .22 Short to 50-110 WCF
- C. Weights — up to 30 lbs. (20 lbs. in author's collection)
- D. Single trigger, double set triggers
- E. Plain, fancy, and deluxe woods, grades of checkering, cheekpiece, straight and pistol grips
- F. Shotgun buttplate, rifle buttplate, (two types), Swiss buttplate, schuetzen buttplate (two types)
- G. Open sights, mid-range, long range (also vernier), and spirit-level front.
- H. Serial numbers.

Perhaps you are one of the lucky ones who can be cured with a simple sporting model, or with a sporting and match rifle. However, if you have run the gamut of the lesser cures, be prepared for a lengthy hunt for the ultimate, at a cost of approximately \$5,000.

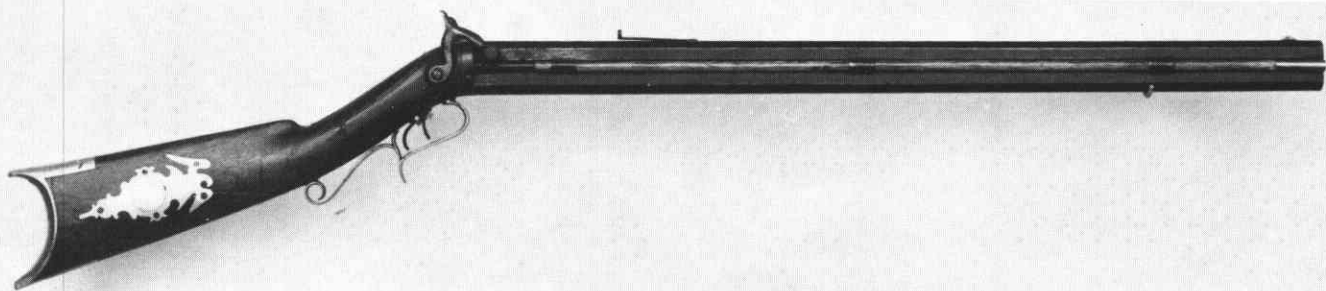
The ultimate was first cataloged in the Remington 1904-5 catalog at a cost of \$60 to \$100, then disappeared until the 1909 catalog, and then apparently was not available again. The high — but justified — cost did not help sales. The unsurpassed accuracy and low survival number of these

rifles account for the tremendous demand and price today. Hepburn serial numbers observed by the writer range from no. 75 to no. 991. The observed serial numbers of the underlever schuetzens start at NW 1 and go to NW 17, with a total known number of 11. It seems that the total Hepburn production was about 10,000, from the start of production in 1880 to its end in 1909.

Of course all of this happened after Lewis L. Hepburn left his Colton, NY shop where he had been making percussion rifles. He went to work for Remington as their top barrel maker and designer. The now-famous Hepburn action was developed by him as an improvement on the rolling block action. The Hepburn dropping block action was so simple and strong that only minor changes were needed to take it from the black powder period into the high-power smokeless era.

Also working at Remington at this time was another expert barrel and tool maker, N. L. Walker, who apparently decided that the one flaw in the Hepburn was the fact that it would not seat a cartridge that was only partly seated in the chamber. He worked with the action until he had this problem solved. He received a patent for his improvement on Dec. 14, 1886, seven years after the original Hepburn patent. It doesn't seem as if very much was done with this improved Hepburn patent. An L. N. Walker patent model rifle made to seat a partially inserted cartridge with an underlever is known. This was done with the block dropping down and back for loading. A few others were made with an underlever, without this special cartridge seating design, but with the front of the breechblock rounded off to help seat the cartridge.

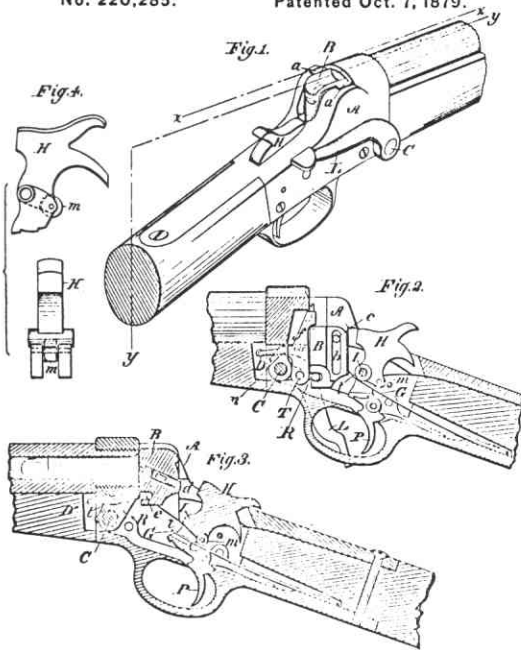
The Hepburn rifles were very popular with offhand and long range rifle shooters. Around the turn of the Century, Dr. W. G. Hudson, who was one of the best offhand shots of his day, worked with Remington, Walker, and possibly Hepburn in developing the "Special Underlever Match Rifle". Remember if you will that this rifle was sold with a guarantee that it would shoot into 2¼ inches at 200 yards. The Pope rifle was guaranteed to shoot within 2½" at the same range. In the famous schuetzen match on Election Day, 1903, Dr. Hudson beat Harry Pope and everyone else, using the Remington rifle of his design. This set a record that was to last 75 years, still isn't broken.



Hepburn percussion over-under, cal. .38 rifled barrel over smoothbore barrel.

L. L. HEPBURN.
Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 220,285. Patented Oct. 7, 1879.



Witnesses:
Dowd & Tuttle
William N. Dodge

Inventor:
L. L. Hepburn
By his Atty
H. W. Dodge

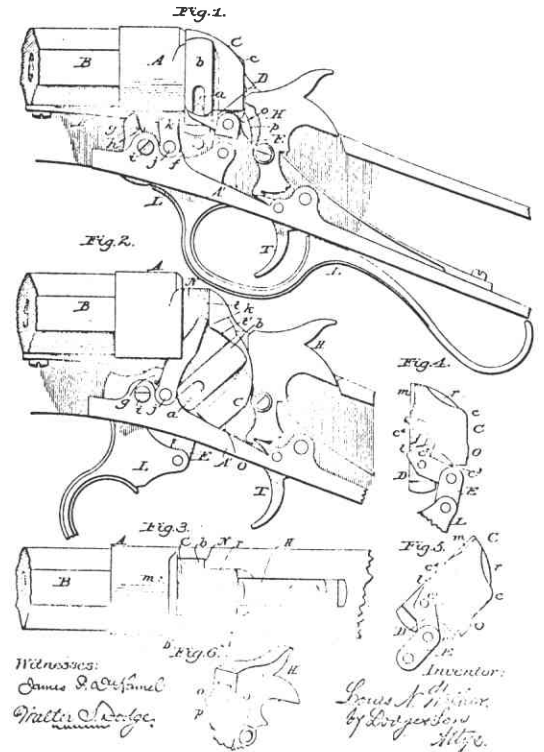
Illustrations from Hepburn patent papers.

(No Model.)

L. N. WALKER.
BREECH-LOADING GUN.

No. 354,452.

Patented Dec. 14, 1886.



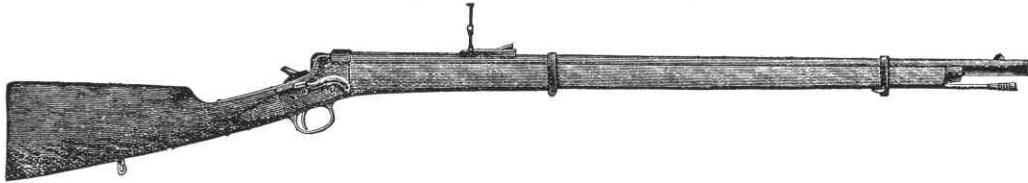
Witnesses:
James D. C. Samuel
Walter C. Dodge

Inventor:
Louis N. Walker
by his Atty

Illustrations from L. N. Walker patent papers

THE New Remington Long Range Military Rifle.

(Hepburn Patent.)



This rifle has been pronounced after long and exhaustive tests by the most expert riflemen in the country, as the most perfect Military Rifle under all conditions yet produced. It has also been adopted by the National Rifle Association of America, who recommend it to competitors for the American Team. It has a heavy barrel, with our new system of rifling, chambered for a 26-10 straight shell, using 75 grs. of quick, clean, moist powder, hard bullet, 520 grs., with our new thick Waterproof patch. This rifle is now used by all the leading riflemen, who pronounce it unequalled.

E. REMINGTON & SONS,

P. O. Box 2987.

281 and 283 Broadway, N. Y.

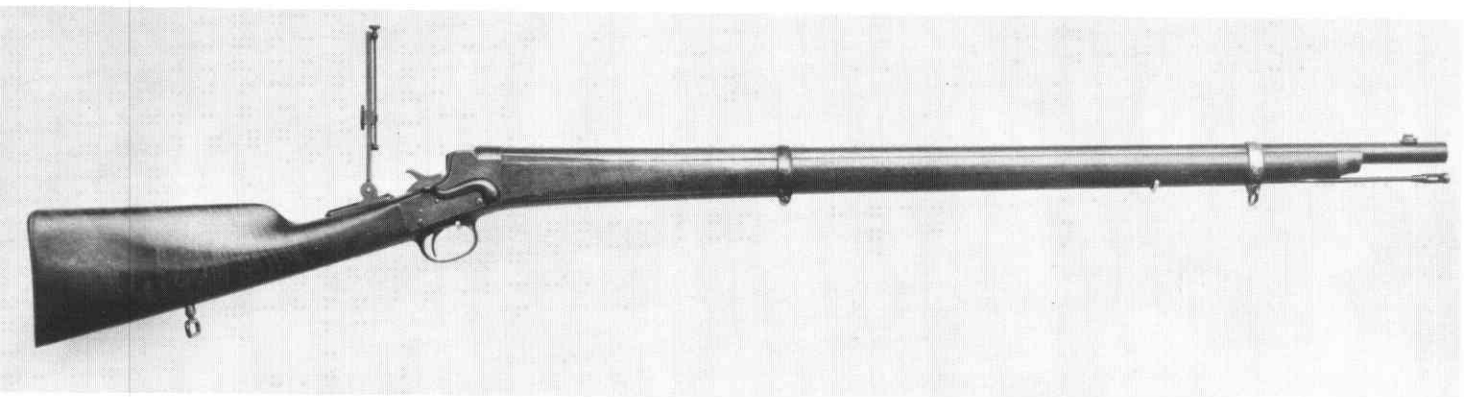
The Dolan Long Range and Military Score Book now ready for delivery. Price 75 cents.



Remington plus Hepburn cross of rolling block and dropping block. Hammer rolls under dropping block — extra long side lever. Calibre .45.



Hepburn 45-70 Experimental carbine. Extra large side lever with big thumbpiece. Barrel not drilled or tapped for second rear sight screw.



Hepburn military straight grip Creedmoor. Rare: grooved trigger and checkered buttplate.



"N. L. Walker Patent". This has the mechanism as shown in the Walker patent no. 354,452 of Dec. 14, 1886, that was an improvement on the Hepburn, as it forced a partially inserted cartridge into the chamber! This feature was used in their advertising but not in any of the rifles.



Close up of the action of Remington shown at right top of page 43.



"Medicus Skinner" no. 12. "Medicus" was the nom de plume of Dr. S. A. Skinner, friend and researcher of Dr. Mann, author of "The Bullet's Flight". Has operational lever as shown on patent drawing, but regular Hepburn action. Cal. 32-40 breech & muzzle loading.



Two views of the Walker schuetzen which was owned by Dr. Hudson, and with which he outshot Harry Fope. Ownership passed to Rowland, Donalson, and now myself.