

H. Gordon Frost



Gentlemen, it is, indeed, a true pleasure to have the opportunity of addressing you once more. I thought I had my "Thirteen Days to Glory" at the San Antonio meeting three years ago, but, thanks to you, it looks as if I'm going to have a fourteenth with this speech.

I have called my speech "Wild and Wackie Woolie Weapons" for one main reason-- as you know, my specialty field is collecting so-called "oddity" weapons, although for the past year I have been strongly attracted to Bowie knives and have been gathering these rather avidly in hopes that I may someday have a collection as fine and extensive as my good friend, Bob Abels. As an "oddity" collector, I have constantly encountered situations in which, what I may classify as an "oddity," is rather commonplace to the specialist in that field.



H. GORDON FROST

improvement of thermonuclear devices and bacteriological warfare, I realize that my bomb shelter will, in actuality, turn into a glorified frying pan should "The Bomb" fall. Consequently, this coming summer, I'm going to have the roof of the shelter ---all 36 inches thick of steel reinforced concrete---torn out, and turned into a swimming pool.

The previously mentioned "confession" was made to illustrate a point . . . in my own way, I was doing my best to protect, or have an adequate defense, against a powerful weapon. In a way, I suppose one might state the old military axiom that, "for every offense there is a defense; conversely, for every defense there is an offense." This, then gentlemen, is what I collect . . . improvements in weapons of all kinds, whether defensive or for offense; and believe me, it's a most fascinating collecting field.

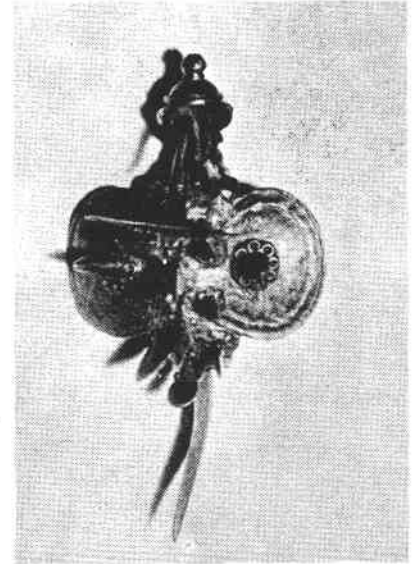
You have with you today man's oldest weapons, namely, your hands. With your hands, you can hit, grasp, choke, gouge, or throw in such a manner as to kill your adversary. As a matter of fact, those of you who, like I, have either studied or taught Judo or Karate, know only too well that it is quite possible to kill a man by using but one of your thumbs. Let's study the improvements in this most basic of all weapons: first, there was

On the other hand, what I may accept as "ordinary" in my field, such as an Osgood "Duplex" revolver, may seem to be most certainly an "oddity" to, say, a Colt collector. So you see, the term, "oddity," is rather ambiguous, and no two people can agree on an exact definition, hence for this speech, "Wild and Wackie Woolie Weapons."

In my talk to you today, I shall purposely avoid attempting to present the weapons chronologically as to separate weapons into individual ignition systems, etc., but shall present them as "style," or "type" groups.

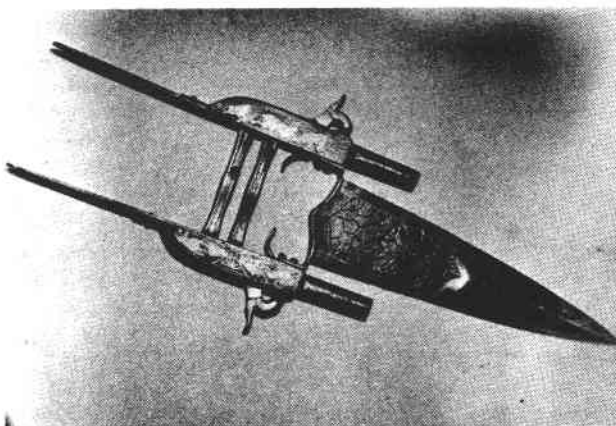
I have a confession to make . . . I have a bomb shelter. Yes, some four or five years ago I succumbed to the nationwide concern over a fast-approaching nuclear war with Russia, so had a \$5,000 hole dug in the ground, 14 feet deep with a 1,000 P.S.I. overpressure rating, to protect my family should "N Day" come. Now what with relations somewhat improved with Moscow, coupled with the awesome fact that with the im-

the rock. With the rock, early man discovered that he could hit harder; cut, if the rock were sharpened; or he could throw it, if he was of mind to. Going along down the ages, we discover another improvement on the hands in the Cestus, used in ancient Rome by the gladiators as they went out to meet each other in mortal combat. Basically, there were two main types of cestus, or cestii, if you wish. The first was a thick leather semi-glove, studded with nails. The second, and more brutal, cestus was one that either had spikes imbedded in the leather, or was encircled with sharp metal quoits to be used for slashing the opponent. The women of the Ouled Nail, a tribe from North Africa which is Arabian, wore, and still use, a spiked bracelet for use in combat, as do the Taureg tribe. Mahrattas from India came up with the Bagh-Nakh, which were in reality simple knuckledusters with steel tiger claws for tearing. Adding a knife blade, called a Bich'wa to this terrible piece, they had invented what is known as the Bich'wa Bagh-Nakh, or scorpion tail knuckleduster, such as I have here. The Jettis of India had as their version of the knuckleduster the "Hora," which was simply a horn knuckleduster, with sharpened points on the striking side. Spanning many hundreds of years, we find iron knuckles, then brass knucks, and now, aluminum knuckledusters. Perhaps the ultimate in this type of weapon may be found in the "Apache Knuckleduster," of which there are two major variations, namely the "folding" model, made by Dolne of France, and the "square frame" model, manufactured by Delhaxe, in which only the blade folds, as opposed to the "folding" model, in which the blade and knucks fold up.

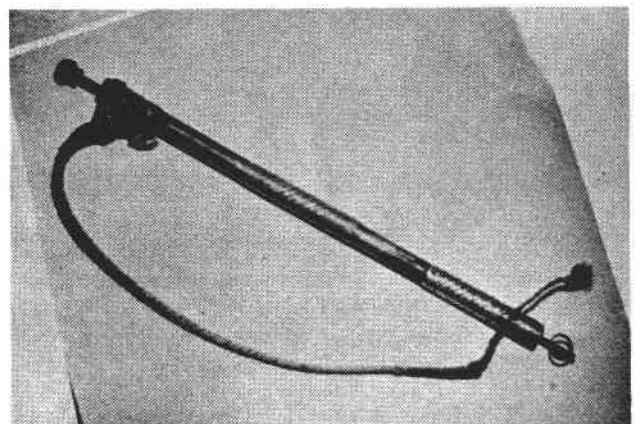


In studying this fascinating multi-purpose weapon, I have discerned 7 different variations as to caliber . . . from 5mm pinfire to .32 centerfire; to frame and knucks, including those made of brass, German silver, or iron; to cylinder . . . either plain, as in the earlier models, or full fluted; and finally, to the blade type, whether straight or wavy. The early models had straight blades. A word of caution here concerning the "wavy" blade: I have had various tests conducted on the very thin, extremely wavy blades of the Dolne knuckleduster, and found the great majority of them to be either replacements or fakes of the gently waved blade such as I have here. Incidentally, this happens to be serial #1 of the Apache knuckleduster, a "dog" for condition, but one with a pedigree . . . referring to the serial number, of course.

Now that we have investigated the improvements in man's first weapon, let's look at his second, the edged weapon. This item has seen many inovations since its early conception, and along with practical ones, we encounter many bizarre ideas, such as the "pata," or gauntlet sword; the battle hatchet and armor piercer, both with concealed daggers in the shaft; and this fakir's gravity knife, concealed in a bamboo shaft. All of these preceeding edged weapons are from India, where the Mahratta tribe is well-known for its strange and fascinating edged weapons aberrations.



INDIAN PERCUSSION "KATAR" PISTOL

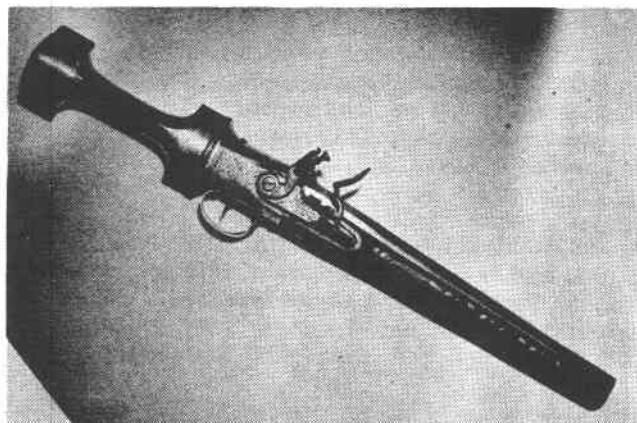


PERCUSSION WHIP-PISTOL FROM INDIA

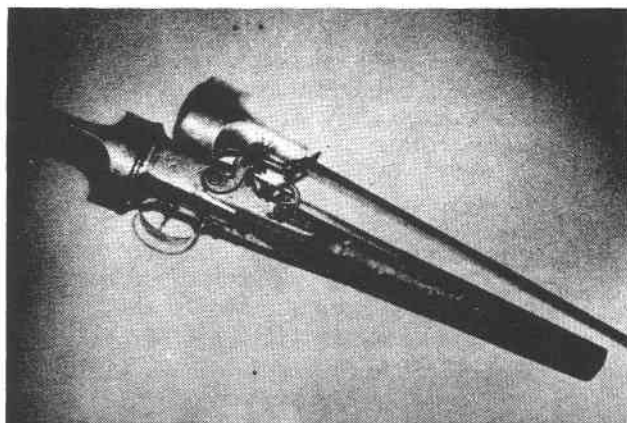
The Indians were not the only ones who came up with oddball edged weapon ideas, as is evidenced by this umbrella sword cane and this dagger cane, both from France; a Moroccan whip with concealed dirk in the shaft; a Philippine riding crop with weighted hilt for use as a "sap," along with a dirk in its shaft; and this large Confederate knife, with both edges deeply barbed. As you can see, with the barbs arranged in the manner they are, this knife is strictly a "stick-and-run" piece, as it would be almost impossible to withdraw this most impractical fighting knife once it was stuck in the opponent's body.

With the introduction of gunpowder and the subsequent firearm, man's ability to come up with wierd "improvements" really blossomed. One can find combinations of edged weapons and firearm in virtually every type of ignition system, "from hand cannon to automatic," if I might borrow a phrase from our esteemed member, Herschel Logan.

A few examples of this weapon which I'd like to show you are:



FLINTLOCK CAUCASIAN KNIFE PISTOL (Closed)



FLINTLOCK CAUCASIAN KNIFE PISTOL (Open)

This Caucasian knife-pistol. As you can see, it is flintlock, in very fine condition, and has a silver wire inlay ebony forestock. The barrel and lockplate are gold inlaid, and the hilt is gold washed. In the butt are many "mine cut," or inferior grade diamonds. To expose the blade, one has only to pull back on the rear of the hilt, and the blade slides out. This type pistol is usually found with two barrels, over and under . . . as a matter of fact, this is the only single barrel version of this type I've encountered, and if any of you either have, or know of another one in existence, please let me know, as I'd like to compare my piece with others.

Skipping from the flintlock to the percussion era, we find many outstanding combinations. An American example of this is the R. W. Andrews cutlass-pistol, U. S. patent #328, issued July, 1836. The piece has two triggers: one for firing, the other to release a catch which holds the pistol barrel to the knife part. When the second trigger is pulled, the knife slides out, to be used as a weapon, while the barrel section can be used to ward off enemy blows. This piece was made in Stafford, Connecticut.

As I have previously demonstrated, India is the place to go for bizarre edged weapons . . . the same, to a lesser extent, in combination weapons, such as this percussion katar-pistol. The katar in itself is not rare, as it is an armor piercing dagger, but with the pistols added, it does become rather unique. Bob Abels had one of these advertised quite some time ago in one of his catalogs at \$55! Oh, for the good old days! This type weapon was also made in flintlock.

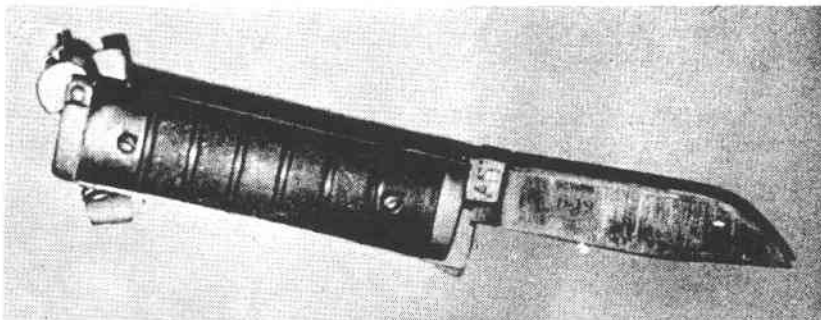
A real "sneaky Pete" sort of combination is this knife-pistol, made in 1849 by Martin Gomez in Eibar, Spain. I am sure that all of you, when young impressionable boys, read that, when in the olden days, a man had been defeated in combat, he would surrender his sword or knife thusly, offering it butt first, over his arm. Well, not so did the owner of this piece. I imagine you could call him a sore loser, for when he did surrender this piece in the prescribed fashion, he kept the action concealed with his hand, unscrewed the pommel, and fired the pommel-ramrod into his victor's stomach.

I'm quite proud of these next two pieces. They are two 7mm Lefauchaux sword-revolvers, beautifully made and engraved. On close examination of the larger, you can see the words etched on the blade: "Alfredo Herouard, Lima." Quite naturally, when I first got this piece, I assumed that this was a dealer's name. Herein lies an interesting story . . . Red Jackson and I were returning in my car to Dallas from the Memphis A.S.A.C. meeting, and I had to stop off in Ft. Smith, Arkansas to do a bit of research into a document I had regarding the

Now let's return to the United States and see what they were coming up with in this line. I have here four dagger-derringers, made by Frank Wesson, of whom little is known about. In my research on these pistols, I found that the .32 rimfire was the first he made incorporating the dagger, then the .41 rimfire, the .38 rimfire, and a few in .22 rimfire. Now, the Frank Wesson over/under derringer in itself is not rare, but the dagger version is rather hard to find, especially in the .32, .38, and .22 calibers. As all of you are aware, people are faking practically everything that will bring a fast buck, and they haven't left poor F. Wesson alone. What they are doing is to take a \$50 Wesson, cutting a groove in the middle "barrel," making a dagger and then selling it for \$200 and up. This is quite prevalent, I have found, in the tiny .22 "Vest Pocket" model. Please be careful when you buy one of these. The quickest way to spot a fake of this nature is to take the blade out and examine the groove. It should be arrow-straight. I have seen many examples in which the faker was quite careless, cutting a crooked groove. Another way is by the serial number. I am still researching this, but feel I do have the majority of the dagger-derringer serial numbers in all but the most common, the .41 rimfire. If any of you have any information at all on Frank Wesson, please let me know, as I intend to publish his story at some future date.

In the early 1920's, pocket knife-pistols of .22 caliber were quite popular, and many were sold through the mails until Federal restrictions stopped this traffic. The most popular of these was the American Arms Co. "Huntsman," and the smaller "Defender," which you see here, and are prevalent at practically every gun show in the country. They are not rare, but this one is unique. It is a pilot model, extremely well made, of a "Case" knife-pistol. The barrel is rifled, and the piece may be fired with the blade either open or closed. The reason this particular piece did not go into production was that the production cost was too great . . . \$27 . . . to compete with the cheaper and inferior American Arms Co. knife-pistols.

Today you have seen a sword-cane; you have seen a knife-cane; but I feel the epitome in cane-weapons is found in these two . . . a 5mm pinfire French combination cane, dirk, and six-shot revolver, and the same combination in a .22 rimfire, made in Germany. The pinfire is hard to come by, as Frank Horner will attest, but the German version is almost impossible to find. I feel fortunate in having both versions in my collection.



.22 CAL. RF CASE KNIFE PISTOL
INVENTOR'S MODEL

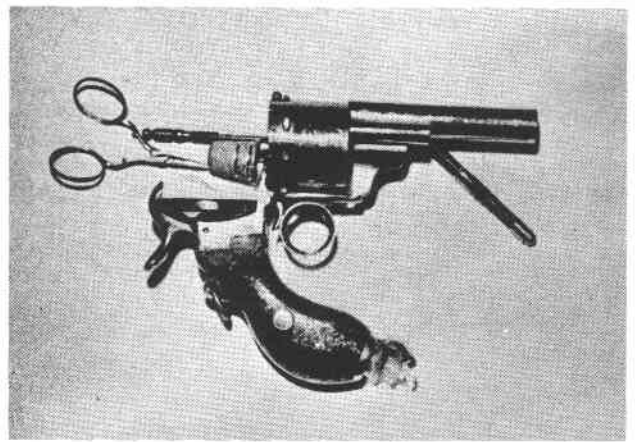
There are a multitude of other "oddity" variations which I could tell you about, but the time prevents me from mentioning but a few, which are: the Rook scarer. The Rook is the English version of our Blackbird, and does countless damage to crops. Some enterprising Englishman came up with this idea of a mechanical scarecrow which used 16 gauge pinfire blanks to keep the birds away. The device uses a metronome system to time the firing of the blanks, and by using various trigger arms, and by varying the weight on the pendulum itself, the shots may be fired at intervals from five minutes apart to three hours. There have been more modern improvements in this idea, shown by U. S. patent #1,056,602, utilizing a windmill and a 12-gauge M97 Winchester shotgun; and most recently, a .30 caliber M1 carbine with a 60-round homemade magazine using a metronome firing system in a cherry orchard in Cloudcroft, New Mexico, practically in my own back yard!

As my speech comes to a close, I'd like to end with a particularly fascinating category of "weapons curiosa," namely, "Guns-Which-Ain't," a term which I've given to those items which are either made to look like real guns or look like something else, utilizing gun mechanisms, which do not kill humans; are not toys, but serve a definite purpose, as you shall see.

First in this category are the "Scare Pistols." In the late 1880's, there occurred in Paris a wave of muggings and assaults on the fairer sex. Women were urged to carry pistols with them to discourage these actions, but some of these ladies could not stomach the shooting of another person. Observing this, some French and Belgian armsmakers came up with the idea of making a pistol which could fire, but would "scare the yell" out of some mugger. I show you this common Le Fauchaux revolver, to contrast with the two following examples of scare guns. Here is one that is made of brass, gold-plated, and beautifully enameled. As you can see, it is an exact copy of the real revolver, but with one main exception . . . the lanyard ring is the only thing that works, or moves. Even the trigger is screwed on.



SEWING KIT "SCARE" PISTOL

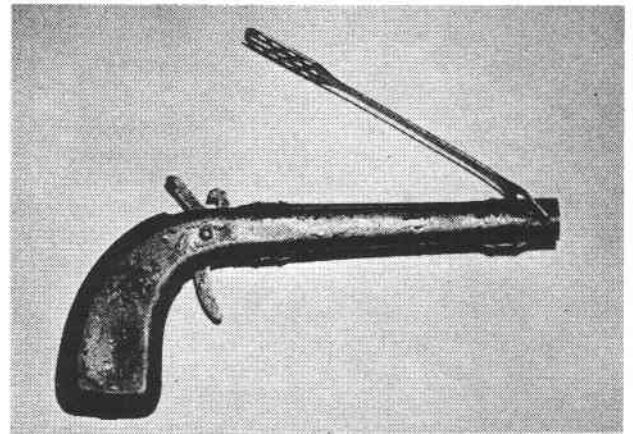


SEWING KIT PISTOL, (Open)

This next piece is the only "gun" in my collection which I intentionally will point at anyone, unless I'm going to shoot them. I have given this talk 146 times in the past eight years, and the reaction is always the same, as I deliberately point the piece at the audience, tell them that something is going to happen when I pull the trigger; that it won't hurt them . . . when I perform this action, there are always several who will involuntarily flinch, or blink, when I do this. Such has happened here. You see, when I pulled back on the hammer, the "pistol" breaks at the back of the cylinder, exposing a mirror, scissors which actually work, a needle well, two spools of thread, a crochet hook, all in the cylinder; in the butt is a vial for perfume or smelling salts; the front of the chambers is a pincushion; and the shell extractor is in reality a pencil.

Next on the "Guns-Which-Ain't" list is this French percussion alarm clock-pistol. You set the alarm hand to the time you wish to wake up, turn the clock around, cock the hammer, place a percussion cap on the nipple, and go to sleep. The clock rings for 15 seconds, then releases the hammer. It is easy to imagine a man, not wanting to wake up the household, leaping out of bed at the first ring of the alarm, and trying to shut the damned thing off before it pops the cap. I call this the ideal clock for the person who wants to "wake up with a bang!"

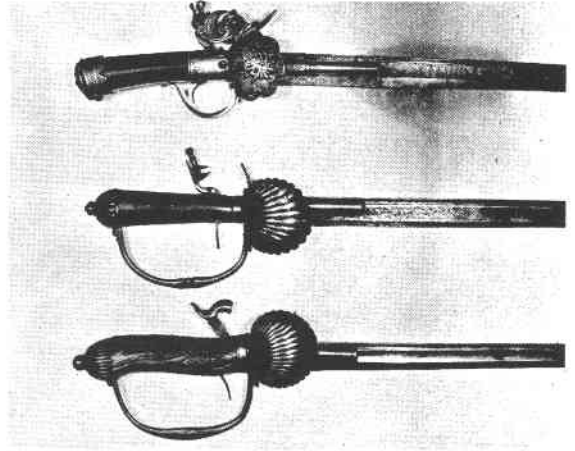
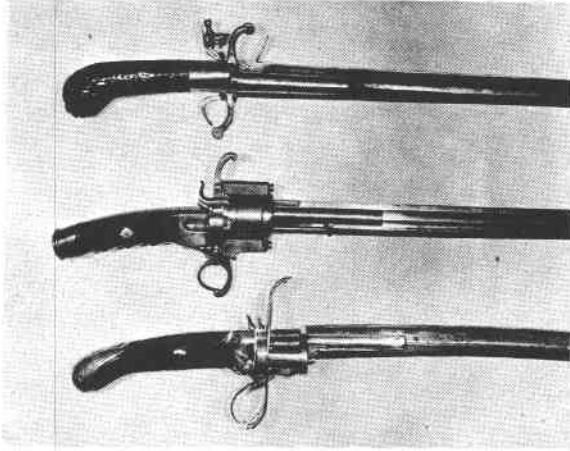
Out of the 300-odd pieces in my collection, I have two favorites . . . my R. W. Andrews, and this hunk of tin. It is a flyswatter pistol. Patented in 1918, thousands were made and sold at 5¢ apiece, but only three are known to be left in existence. The thing actually works! What you have to do is to sneak up on the lit fly, aim at 7 o'clock, and pull the trigger. Of course, it takes an average of 17 shots to bag your quarry, but it does work. I don't know whether or not it is the skill of the hunter, or if the fly just gives up, being so darned tired from trying to escape this persistent fool! Incidentally, this piece has a maximum range of 5 inches from the muzzle, and a 300 degree trajectory, but think of the ammunition you save!



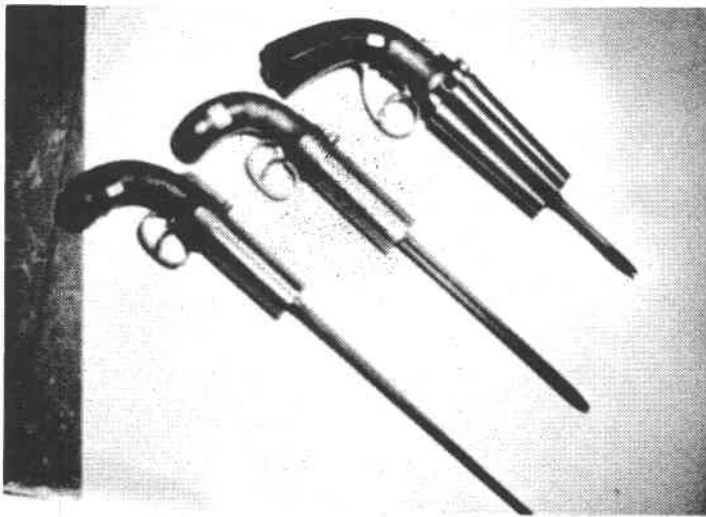
FLY SWATTER PISTOL FROM TEXAS

The final piece which I will show you is this spirometer-pistol. As the doctors in the audience know, a spirometer is a device used to measure the breathing capacity of the lungs in order to detect certain respiratory ailments, such as emphysema. Not this one, however. It was designed as a practical joke. Before using this "wierdo," powder was placed in a chamber, a .22 blank was placed in the firing end to the rear, and the side was closed. If you look at the dial in front, you can see a hole. Watch what happens if this were to be used at some long-forgotten medical convention by a young know-it-all intern. In observance of the safety rules of the Association, I have not loaded it with a blank, but it doesn't take too much imagination to hear a loud report when I blow into the mouthpiece. As you can see, the talc is blown right into the face of the victim, much to the laughter of his fellow colleagues. I am deeply indebted to Harmon Leonard for parting with this piece. It is invaluable, and a real "show stopper" whenever I demonstrate it.

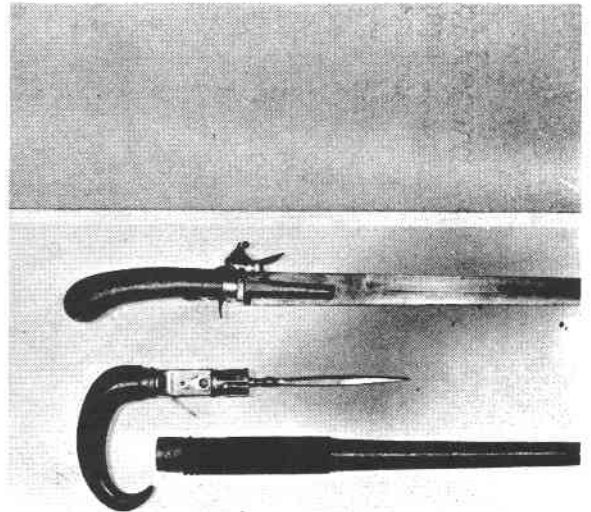
You know, I've had a lot of fun giving this speech, and I hope you have enjoyed it half as much, but I will now close on a serious note, every bit of which I say, I mean from the bottom of my heart. The great majority of the weapons I've displayed here were bought or traded from you, my fellow members. I say this proudly, for in this world of fakes of all sorts, it is truly inspiring to know that such an austere group of men exists, few as we are, who will not knowingly sell a fake, and back up their sale or trade with an unwritten guarantee as to its authenticity. This is one of the many advantages of having the privilege of being a member of the American Society of Arms Collectors. I pray that we shall continue to fight to maintain this, the highest of all standards of membership.



VARIOUS SWORD PISTOLS



PEPPERBOXES MIT STICKERS, YET



FLINTLOCK & CARTRIDGE CANES