

Remingtons — the Long, Not the Short, of It

by: Jack Appel

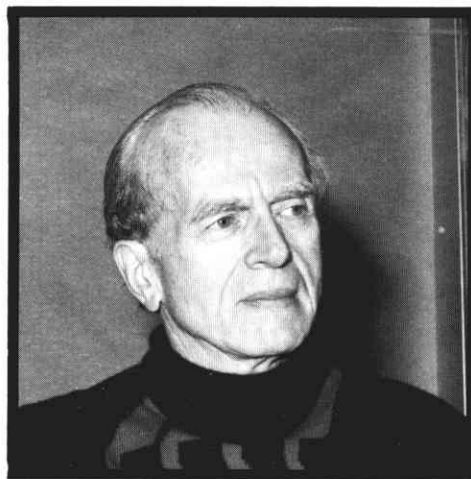
My talk will primarily be about some of the rare, engraved, and not too well known long Remingtons. Remingtons to many collectors are pistols, revolvers, military rolling blocks and boy's rifles. I will talk about some of the developmental rifles, the engraved rifles, and superb sporting and target rifles.

I will omit most of the percussion period Remingtons, the military rolling blocks made for our country and 9 foreign countries, and the Remington pistols. Most of us have seen the superb pistol collection of our accordion-playing former president, Karl Moldenhauer, to which very little can be added.

To this day available factory data on rare Remington long guns is basically non-existent and, when found, is often inaccurate. Publications of the period, as well as old Remington catalogs have been helpful; in many cases, the back of the catalogs, where extra items and testimonials were printed, helped fill in voids. L.D. Satterlee's book, *Catalog of Firearms for the Collector*, privately printed in 1927, and reprinted in 1939, was once the collector's bible. This collector's bible was so well thought of that many authors plagiarized complete chapters without a credit line of any sort to Satterlee. This book, or its plagiarized sections, has helped me in my searches through the years.

There has always been a wide divergence of opinion regarding the development of the rolling block mechanism: it is usually attributed to Leonard Geiger of Hudson, N.Y., with improvements by J. Rider of Newark, Ohio. I don't think we will ever know for sure. The evidence is often difficult and ambiguous, like the sequence of the chicken and the egg. I have my own opinion, and I will now present some of the material I have accumulated on the Geiger-Rider rolling block.

Aside from showing some of my pretty rolling blocks,



I will go into the Remington-Hepburn and Hepburn-Walker variations in some detail. I believe the data on Hepburns to be fairly conclusive.

Looking through our directory, I have seen that only a comparatively few members indicate a single shot rifle specialty, and that I am apparently the only member who specializes in Remington long guns. Is this because the legend of the superb Remington-Creedmores that gave this country its shooting reputation by winning at the International Matches of 1875 and 1876 at Creedmore, Long Island and Wimbleton, England, have been forgotten? Or is it because the superb Remingtons have been languishing in the background, while the bright lights have been on Sharps, Winchester, and Colts? It now seems as if the Remington picture is changing; recognition has arrived. Prices ranging from medium 3 figures to high 4 figures are being offered for rare Remington long guns.

Now let us look at some pictures, until we come to the Hepburn-Walker story.



"J. Rider Patent Jan. 3, 1865". Patent no. 45,797. Engraved. Exterior left hand hammer similar to silver print in Karr's book, page 53, of 1865 prototype army pistol. Two barrels: 32 and 38 rimfire.

Reprinted from the American Society of Arms Collectors Bulletin 38:33-44

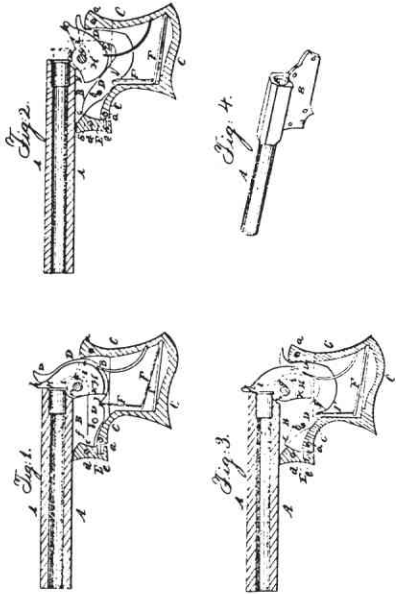
Additional articles available at <http://americansocietyofarmscollectors.org/resources/articles/>

J. RIDER.

Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 40,887.

Patented Dec. 8, 1863.



Witnesses.

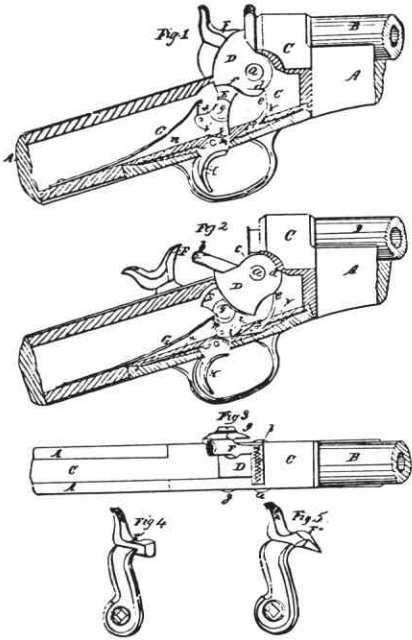
Witnesses:
Joseph B. Allen
Joseph B. Allen

J. RIDER.

Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 45,797.

Patented Jan. 3, 1865.



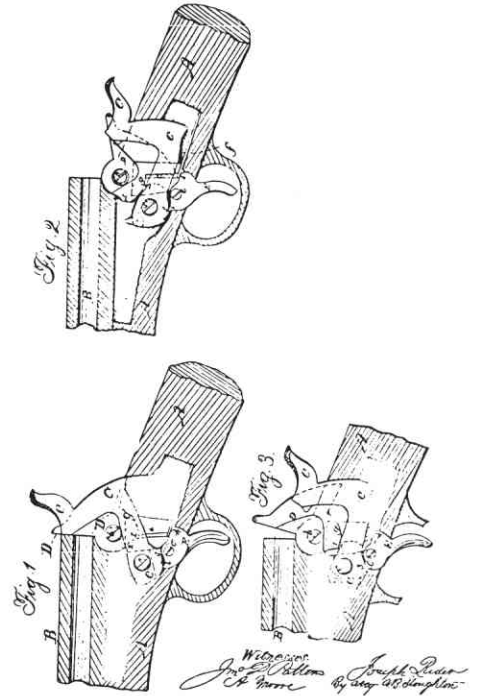
Witnesses:
Joseph B. Allen
Joseph B. Allen

J. RIDER.

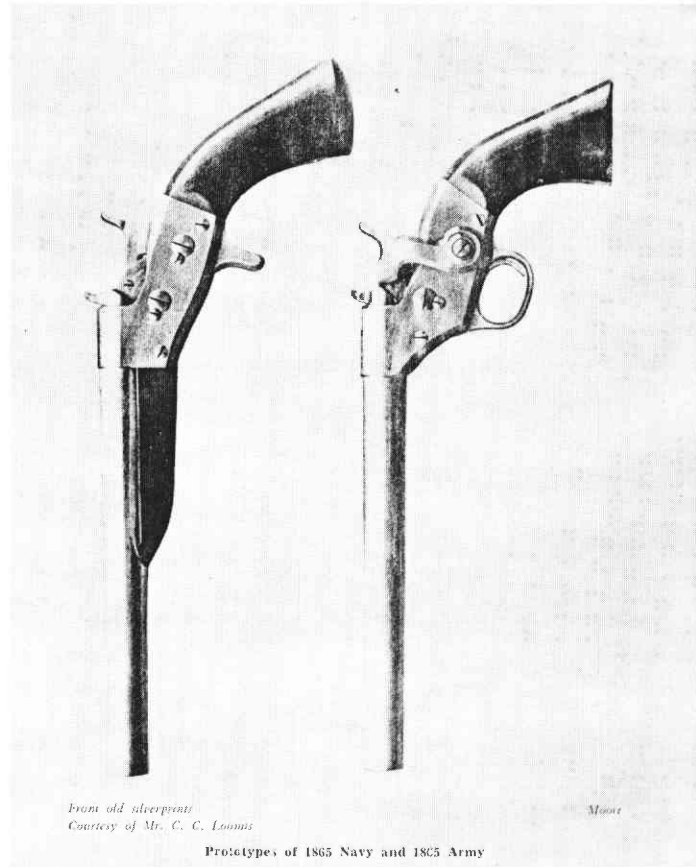
Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 46,123.

Patented Nov. 15, 1864.



Witnesses:
Joseph B. Allen
Joseph B. Allen



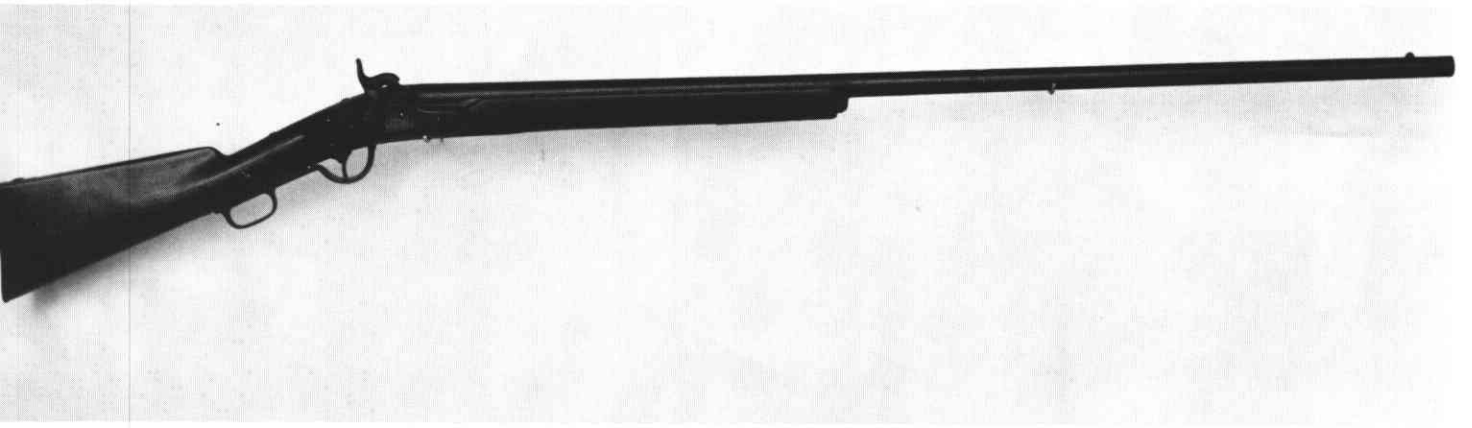
From old stereopics
 Courtesy of Mr. C. C. Loomis

Moore

Prototypes of 1865 Navy and 1865 Army

Illustration from J. Rider patent papers.

Print of prototype 1865 Army pistol, from Karr's book, *Remington Handguns*.



Remington percussion SS Breechloader, marked "Remington's, Herkimer, N.Y." .58 calibre. Loop lever lowers to slide barrel forward to tilt up for loading. No rear sight. O.a. 57". bbl. 40". wt. 10 lbs.



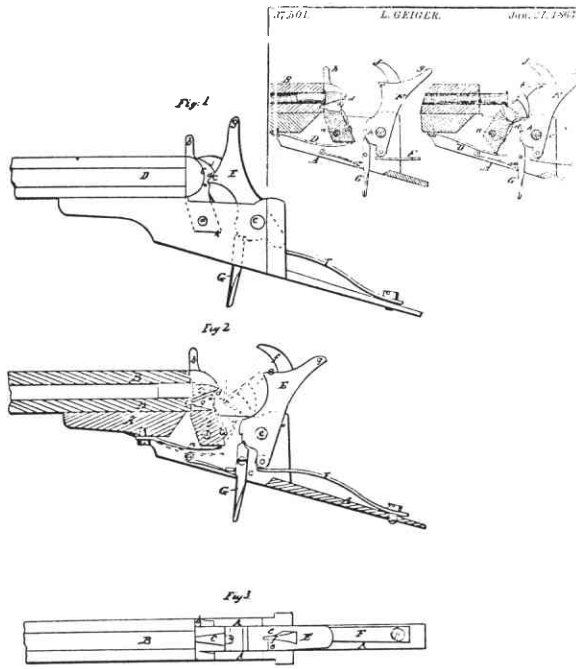
L. Geiger rifle. Calibre .58 rimfire. Made under patents no. 27,501 of Jan. 27, 1863, reissued Apr. 17, 1866 and Jan. 13, 1874.

L. GEIGER.

Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 37,501.

Patented Jan. 27, 1863.



Witnesses
J. W. Brown
C. H. Brown

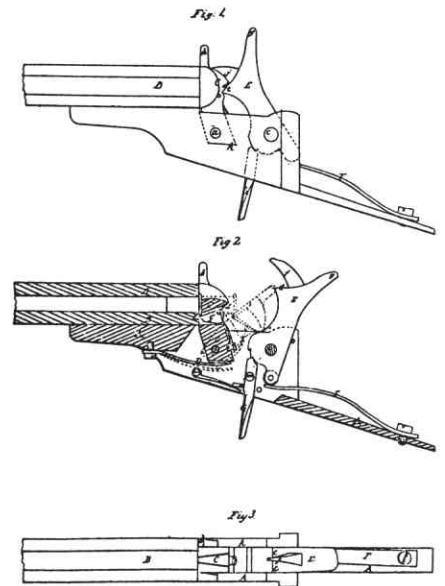
Inventor
L. Geiger
per J. W. Brown
attorney

L. GEIGER.

Breech-Loading Fire-Arm.

No. 2,231.

Reissued April 17, 1866.



Witnesses
J. W. Brown
C. H. Brown

Inventor
L. Geiger
per J. W. Brown
attorney

L. GEIGER.

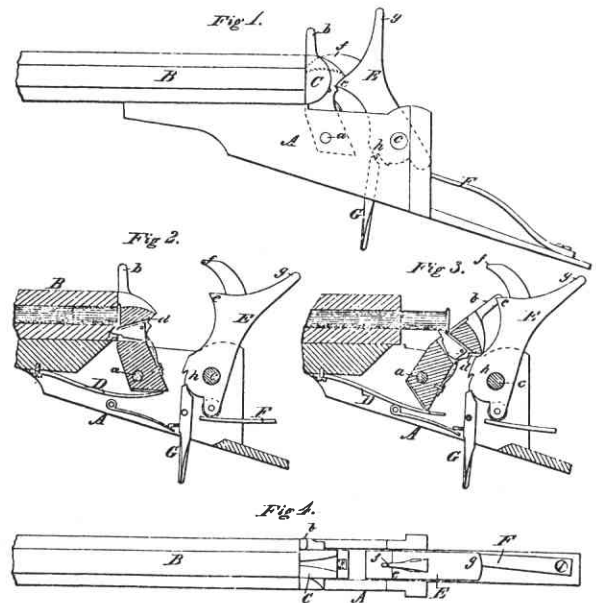
Breech-Loading Fire-Arms.

No. 5,727.

Reissued Jan. 13, 1874.



The Geiger Rifle — Remington's first cartridge rifles. Patented June 28, 1864, Jan. 30, 1866. All observed serial numbers under 1,000. .38 rimfire engraved on silver plated brass frame; .32 rimfire engraved on iron frame.



Witnesses
J. W. Brown
C. H. Brown

Inventor
Leonard Geiger
by Dodge & Co.
attorney

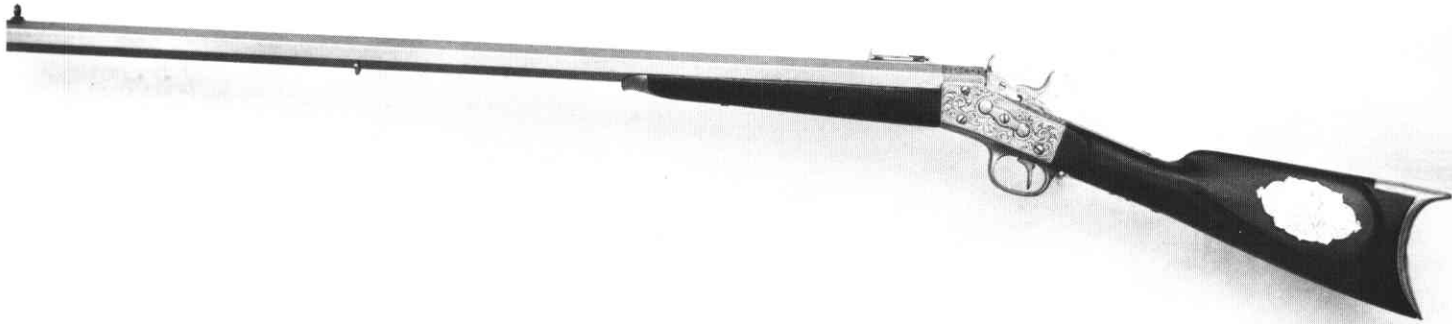
Illustrations from L. Geiger patent papers.



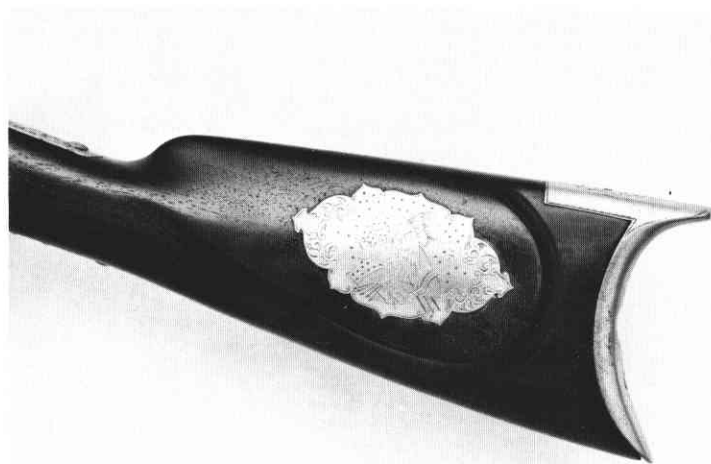
New York State Shooting Prize: engraved and nickeled. Three different N.Y. State models were engraved — all actions differently, but barrels the same — for awards in 1876. Calibre 50-70.



Engraved rolling block carbine, calibre 50-70, and Engraved No. 1 1/2 Deluxe Sporter, calibre .38-2 1/4". German silver buttplate and forend tip.



Engraved and nickeled rolling block sporter and detail views.





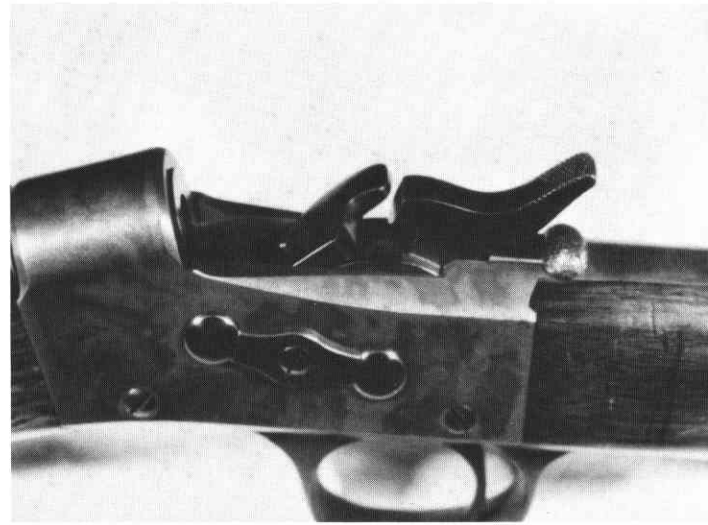
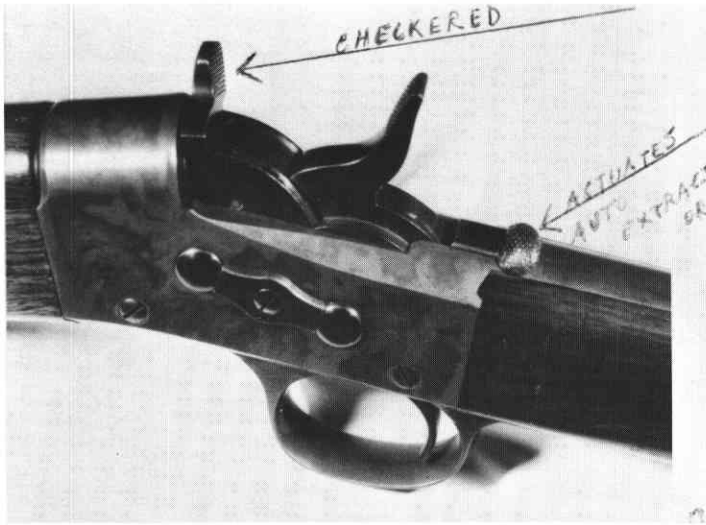
Engraved rolling block sporter, with animal scenes. .38 calibre.



Engraved No. 4 rolling block with silver plate. Some one loved this little boy's rifle, to have it engraved, silver plated, and fitted with fancy wood.



Engraved Brevet rolling block with Moorish type rear sight. Calibre 50-70. Gold inlays on barrel.



Rolling block automatic ejector. If operated in normal manner, after cocking action, breech snaps back automatically ejecting cartridge. For action to operate normally, knurled slide must be pushed forward on half cock.



Double barrelled engraved rolling block shotgun with 7 gold inlays. "Remington London and New York" in gold on barrel rib. One block, two hammers, two triggers.



No. 2 action, engraved, pistol grip schuetzen rifle. A retirement award to a factory foreman. Rare with pistol grip.

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.

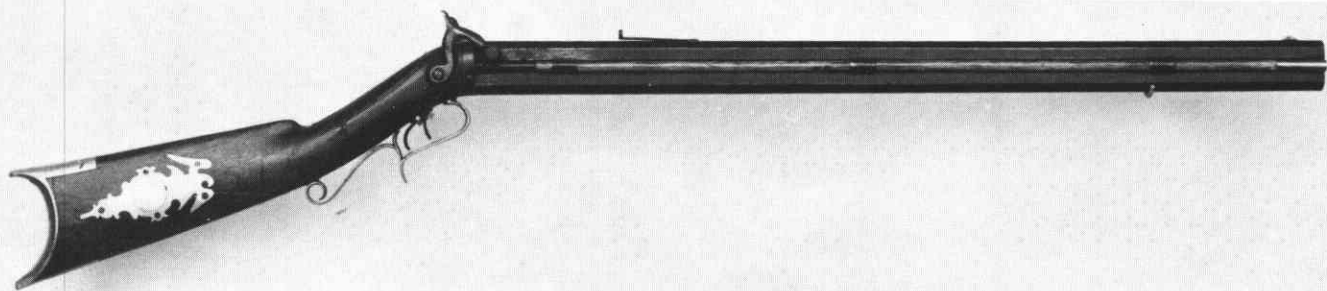
The ultimate was first cataloged in the Remington 1904-5 catalog at a cost of \$60 to \$100, then disappeared until the 1909 catalog, and then apparently was not available again. The high — but justified — cost did not help sales. The unsurpassed accuracy and low survival number of these

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.

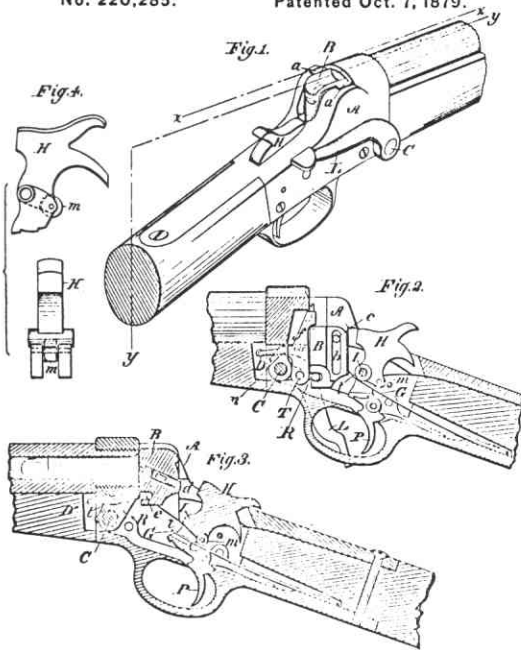
The Hepburn rifles were very popular with offhand and long range rifle shooters. Around the turn of the Century, Dr. W. G. Hudson, who was one of the best offhand shots of his day, worked with Remington, Walker, and possibly Hepburn in developing the "Special Underlever Match Rifle". Remember if you 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 S. Twitchell
William N. Dodge

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

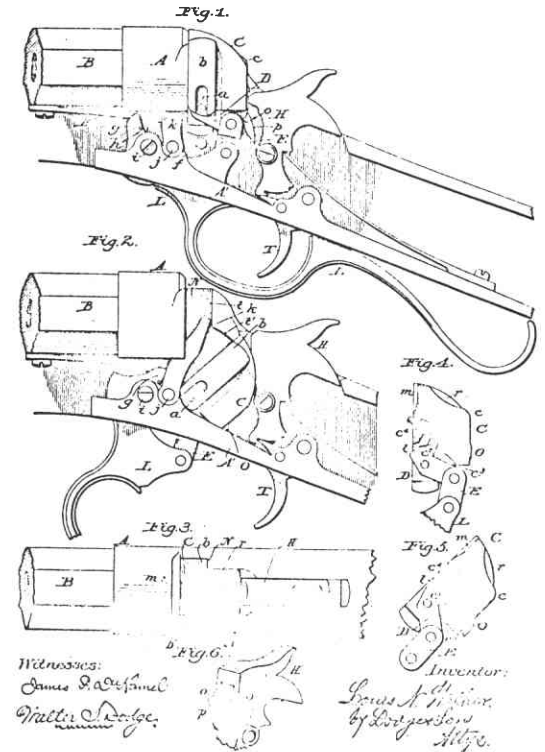
Illustrations from Hepburn patent papers.

(No Model.)

L. N. WALKER.
BREECH LOADING GUN.

No. 354,452.

Patented Dec. 14, 1886.



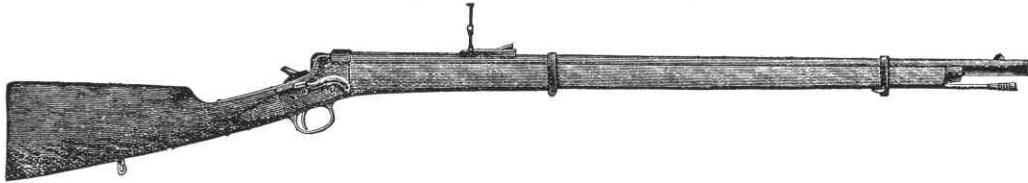
Witnesses:
James D. C. Samuel
Walter C. Dodge.

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.

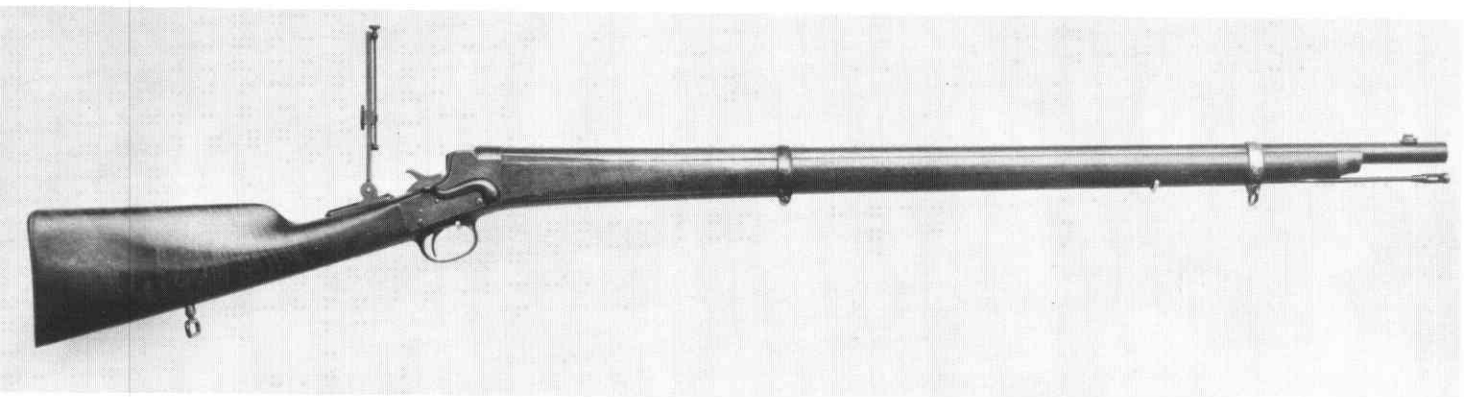
The Dolan Long Range and Military Score Book now ready for delivery. Price 75 cents.



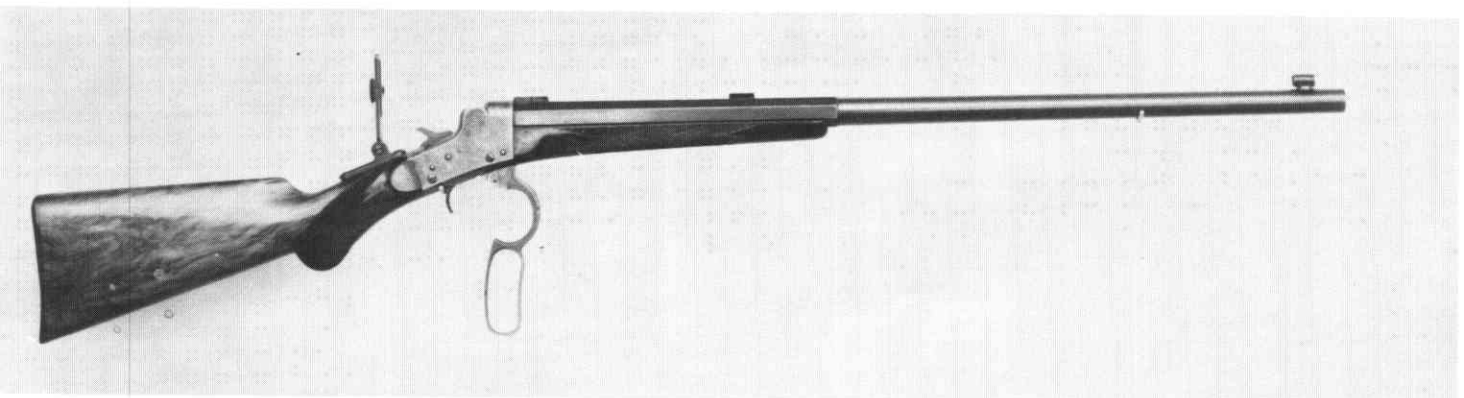
Remington plus Hepburn cross of rolling block and dropping block. Hammer rolls under dropping block — extra long side lever. Calibre .45.



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.