

Browning guns were made by a Belgian company that had relocated in Ogden, Utah, and they gave Remington competition on their over-and-under. The Ithaca Gun Company in the New York city of that name was well known for its single-barrel guns, the most famous of which was used by Joe Hiestand in making his long run record of 1,179 straight in 1938 and his winning of the Marshall Marathon at Yorklyn in 1935 with a score of 499 (he won the "Marathon" five times, as did Steve Crothers). L. C. Smith made a heavy, strong, side-by-side double, like its typewriters strong and serviceable but not particularly attractive, and in the early years of the century Marlin made a good pump gun. An early Class AA shooter, Mark Arie of Champaign, Illinois, shot with a Marlin pump, as did Pete Guest of Yorklyn until the barrel blew out in his hand (he was not hurt).

Apparently these guns have little resemblance to the trap guns used today, which are much more expensive and highly sophisticated. Many are of foreign manufacture.

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, August 10, 2015

Trap Guns Revisited: Since most of our readers have little interest in trapshooting, I beg your indulgence in writing more of what you don't need to know. Years ago, last week would have been the big trapshooting week at Yorklyn, and in 2015, 65 years after the final tournament, the "shoot" would have had excellent weather. Of especial fondness to me was twilight on Wednesday and Friday, after which shooting under the lights occurred. Many local shooters took part only in the 50-target night shoots, and they arrived in great numbers between 7:00 and 8:00 p.m., many enjoyed Breyers' Peach Ice Cream from the store at the end of the long porch, and signed up with their friends for the night's program (the entry fee was \$1.50, which did not include ammunition). As the lights came on, the six traps used at night were set so the flying clay targets would be properly illuminated by the 1,000 candlepower floodlights, one on each side of each traphouse. Starting about 1940, 175 shooters often took part in a single evening.

Last week, I omitted Baker, one of the well-known manufacturers of American trap guns. When my father began serious shooting in 1914, his first gun was a Baker single with a 32" barrel. Some years later he sold this gun to Mike Connor of Avondale, a good shot who stopped shooting by 1930. About 1940, my father bought back his old gun, but he found it was no longer his favorite. However, he bought another Baker with a 34" barrel that he shot with until he retired from the sport in 1950. The 32" Baker is still at Auburn Heights.

"Flinching" was a problem experienced by many trapshooters, almost always caused by anticipating the recoil as the gun discharged its load. There were two kinds of flinches. One was when the shooter couldn't pull the trigger when he wanted to. In this case, the gun hadn't fired, so the flincher would take aim again, this time as the clay target was falling toward the ground far in front of the traphouse. While most of these second aims resulted in missing the target, a few shooters, including our friend Clarence Walker of Wilmington, got quite good at breaking the target just before it hit the ground. The second type of flinch was pulling the hand holding the gun away from the intended position just before the gun went off, causing the target to be missed.

All kinds of remedies were tried to prevent flinching. George Baldwin of West Chester tried calling "pull" over an interval of time until his gun was fired (pull-l-l-l-l). Many had release triggers affixed to their guns. To use this feature, the shooter would pull the trigger back as he got ready to shoot and release it to fire the gun -- it seemed to help many flinchers.

Doubles shooting provided challenges not experienced in shooting singles (from 16 yards) or handicap (usually from 17 to 25 yards). To shoot doubles, most shooters used a side-by-side double or an over-and-under and almost always had these trap guns equipped with a single trigger. Although it could be swapped if desired, the first trigger pull usually fired the left barrel or the bottom barrel and the second pull fired the right barrel or the top barrel. Elmer Miller of Millersburg, Pennsylvania, invented one of the first successful single triggers, and he equipped many trapshooters' guns with them. By the late 1930s, Remington, Winchester, Browning, and Daly guns could be ordered with factory-installed single triggers.

Probably 30% of trapshooters preferred pump guns, as compared with the more common breach loaders. Instead of inserting the shell at the breach where the barrel hinged away from the stock, the shell went in a little door at the side of the gun and the barrel did not hinge. The horizontal mechanism for the "pump" to work was about 4" long between the front of the stock and the back of the barrel, which added to the overall length of the gun. A pump gun with a 30" barrel was about the same length as a breach-loader with a 34" barrel. Most pump guns stuck with 30" barrels. Immediately after a pump gun fired, the shooter pulled back on the forearm which ejected the used shell. This also opened the "door" to insert the loaded one. Ned Lilly from Michigan, a Class AA shooter from the time he was 14 years old, handled a pump gun so fast the shell seemed to eject itself with his left hand at his side. A few shooters used a pump gun for shooting doubles, but they were at a disadvantage. They had to load the gun with two shells and pump between shots. Mark Arie of Illinois and Russell Elliott of Kansas City got very good at it, but most used another gun for their doubles shooting. Lela Hall, the best female