

Continued from page 1... The Model 1873 *Starin* guns were all charged to the New York Department. To the best of our knowledge, the New York Department was a division of Winchester located in New York. Some Winchester scholarship mentions the New York Sales Depot.

A quick online search unearthed some of the story. The wreck of the *John H. Starin*, a wooden side-wheel steamer, was reported in the February 20, 1909, *New York Times*. The *Starin*, loaded with general cargo, ran aground on the Bridgeport, Connecticut breakwater sometime after 11 p.m. on February 19 while battling reported sixty mile gales. All those aboard were rescued.

Staff and volunteers have since located one Model 1885 "Lost on Starin Boat and shipment duplicated on new ticket" on order number 195169a and one Model

1905 from order number 195178 noted as "Goods lost on Starin boat and duplicated on new ticket." The differences in the wording of the notations do not help clarify what happened. Were the guns damaged or destroyed and remanufactured? Was it the paperwork that was lost?

A total of twenty-seven Starin gun records have been found to date. It is likely there are more, but the Winchester warehouse records for many models end before 1909. We may also stumble across a few more as we go about our daily work here in the Records Office.

So, what happened to the Winchester shipment? A good question... The only thing we do know for certain is that two rifles with "Starin" serial numbers are still out there. ■

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### BUFFALO BILL HISTORICAL CENTER

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# CODY FIREARMS RECORD

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## ON TARGET! AT THE CODY FIREARMS MUSEUM

— By Warren Newman, Curator —

So many things have been pursued and accomplished since the April 2010 issue of the Cody Firearms Record that it seems to have been much more than a five-month interval. I want to share an overview of these activities with you, so it seems the thing to do is just hold the same sight picture we had then and see if it will keep us ON TARGET.

Our prevailing priority at the CFM across these months has remained the Expanded Firearms Display System. During this time period, we completed the stabeArte test case with its ten vertical sliding display racks filled with eighty vintage American shotguns, and eight of its ten horizontal sliding drawers filled with seventy-five symmetrically arranged pistols. These pistols constitute one of the world's finest collections of target pistols designed and built for use in top international shooting competitions. Many of them are in "free pistol" configurations, featuring grip panels molded or carved to fit the shooting hand of an individual competitor. I, personally, have never seen a collection of target pistols anywhere that compares with this one, and that seems to be true for virtually all of our visitors as well. For those of you with an eye for details, it has been determined that the remaining two drawers, which are on the bottom of each of the rows of drawers, are too low to the floor to be used comfortably by most of our visitors. We are looking into modifying the case or finding an alternate use for these drawers.

## GEM HUNTING – THE STARIN GUNS

— By Jesi Bennett, Records Specialist —

Every day we look at hundreds of firearms records. Our customers often come to us with a story they hope to prove true but it is uncommon to find a story within the records. The majority of the firearms we look up have few special features or extra tidbits but it is always a little thrilling to come across famous names, familiar places, or extremely rare features when paging through

We have received 600 plus responses to our visitor survey concerning favorable and unfavorable reactions to this expanded display system. These responses are overwhelmingly favorable, with 79 percent of respondents liking the system "Very Much" and 11 percent liking it "Not At All." The results for several other important questions are now being tabulated. We have also received a substantial number of suggestions for improving the system from the survey responses. Once again, we are profoundly grateful to the Gretchen Swanson Family Foundation for the primary grant, and to Steve and Dulcie Schalk for a supplementary gift, to make this very important experiment possible.

Since we have a number of other articles for this issue of the *Cody Firearms Record*, I will save a review of the several most important recent firearms acquisitions for another time. I feel compelled, however, to mention a very significant public relations occurrence. A film crew from television's Outdoor Channel was here on April 21 and 22. The curator was on camera for four hours of narration about a selection of firearms. Film crew assistance was provided by Curatorial Assistant Bob White and Public Relations Director Lee Haines. Producer Michael Bane was highly pleased with the shoot and began using filmed segments on his programs on July 1. An increasing number of our visitors have mentioned seeing this excellent exposure of the Cody Firearms Museum and the Historical Center, especially on the *Cowboys* program on Wednesday evenings. This is just one more example of our holding a steady sight picture, shooting well, and remaining ON TARGET. My deep appreciation to each and all of you who have helped make our endeavors effective! ■

the records. I am sure that you get a little boost as well.

We unearthed a gem of a story a few years ago. In 2008, two Winchester 1873s were called in and came back having been "Lost in Starin boat shipment, duplicated on new ticket."

I scoured the surrounding records and found twenty-five Model 1873s with the same notation. All were twenty inch rifles from order number 195163. These twenty-five rifles range from serial number 639819 to 641118.

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# FROM THE MCCrackEN RESEARCH LIBRARY.....

In our last issue, we described Winchester publications which are part of MS 20, the Winchester Repeating Arms Company Archive in the McCracken Research Library. For more information about this and other firearms-related collections, contact Mary Robinson, Housel Director, McCracken Research Library, at 307.578.4063.

The *Winchester Record* was first published in August 1918 in the final months of World War I. The masthead slogan—"A Medium of Fellowship and Cooperation among Winchester people"—signals that this was a publication for employees. Issued twice a month, the *Record* tried to instill camaraderie and a shared sense of purpose among its readers at a time of national uncertainty.

Thus the informal and folksy approach of the *Record* betrays an undercurrent of anxiety along with stout determination to achieve and exceed production quotas for firearms and ammunition destined for American soldiers fighting in the trenches. On every page, the message is clear: working for the company means working for the country. The *Record* is filled with pointed illustrations of the need for increased output and for safety on the job. The real enemy is wasted time or materials, along with Kaiser Wilhelm, to whom satiric verses are often dedicated.

For example, the Cartridge Department has its own gossip column called "Rounds of the Plant," complete with a logo showing soldiers firing rounds of ammunition. We read about male employees inducted into the service and female employees knitting socks for soldiers.

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By this time the factory was running double shifts, and the strain on the work force and management must have been great. With every issue, the *Winchester Record* tries to both divert its readers and urge them on to achieve more for the war effort.

The *Record's* striking illustrated covers reinforce this martial aim. The first issue shows a doughboy with an army rifle in his grasp going "over the top." Behind him another soldier fires a Model 1918 Browning automatic rifle. In the background, on a red-striped field suggesting the American flag, stands the Winchester factory. In another scene, sailors on board a ship load shells into a large gun. The caption reads, "Where our big shells are going!" The illustrations place employees and their work right in the thick of the action.

The tone of these issues seems characteristic of wartime America: studied cheerfulness that barely conceals anxiety; patriotic zeal mixed with mirth. Today's reader can recognize threats that were poorly understood at the time. For example, an illustration shows several women dressed in coats and mufflers gathered in a circle. The caption reads, "Fighting the 'flu.'" The cartoon makes light of what would prove to be the deadly influenza pandemic that ravaged the American population in the late fall of 1918 and killed more people worldwide than had died in the war.

The *Winchester Record* reminds us how the Winchester Repeating Arms Company stood at the center of America's preoccupation with the war effort. Its publications reflect the pervasive fears and hopes of the public at a time of national crisis. ■

the form, save it to your computer and return the completed version by email. All requests for images from the collections of the BBHC must go through this process no matter the end use.

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If you have any questions please contact Sean Campbell at [photosales@bbhc.org](mailto:photosales@bbhc.org) or at 307.578.4082.

# MEMBERSHIP MINUTE

— By Jan Jones, Membership Director —

It's 8:30 on the opening day of the Colorado Gun Collectors annual gun show. The doors don't open to the public for another half hour, but already folks are lined up at the entrance with giddy anticipation of what the show might offer them.

Okay, I admit it. As a gun show greenhorn, I didn't fully understand what the excitement was all about. I attended the show with Records Specialist Jesi Bennett to give general assistance at the Historical Center's booth. Our services include on-site information on firearms with the help of Assistant Records Specialist Connie Miller back in Cody.

As a CFM member you know the Center holds the original factory records of Winchester, Marlin, and L.C. Smith. These records show the general configuration of a firearm when it left the factory years ago. This could be very important information because, as with any antique, once modified, value can be compromised. And since there's always plenty of buying, selling, and trading at a gun show, the information we provide could be of great help. During the Denver show, Jesi and Connie received over 200 serial number search and 64 factory letter requests. Our booth was one busy place, indeed!

The serial number searches were available to anyone. We only needed the make, model, and serial number of the firearm in question. Within a few hours, they returned for the information on the firearm. I quickly learned it was futile to speak to them as they first studied the report. They were completely absorbed in reading about the firearm and oblivious to absolutely everything else. You could see their anxiety as they opened the paper. Did the gun "check out"? Would it "letter"? Did the information on the form make any sense? Their reaction was one of elation, disappointment, surprise, or uncertainty. Uncertainty because as one man told to me, "sometimes, for every answer there are three more questions!"

When we did have a little downtime, I discovered it was a great place to people-watch. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing grandpas and grandsons enter the huge convention hall with Grandpa so eager to pass on his passion for firearms and all things western. I curiously observed those who were carrying signs for "Antique Winchester lever action parts" or "219 Zipper." Many times, I couldn't tell if they were buying or selling, but either way I figured the sign would be a conversation starter.

Besides people-watching, I got a chance to talk to a multitude of show attendees. Many who approached our

booth told stories about their favorite firearm or told me of their quest to solve a mystery. I was surprised how many said they were only there for fun, but if they "happened to see a \_\_\_\_\_ (just fill in the blank!)" they'd take a look at it. I especially enjoyed visiting with couples. I was impressed with the women who have, over time, come to share their husband's genuine love of firearms. As one gent proudly remarked, "When we got married she didn't drink, smoke, or shoot guns. Now she does all three!"

People of all ages from all walks of life attended the gun show but they all had a keen interest in and appreciation of history in common. Most people at the show were there to buy, sell, trade, learn, and just have fun. Naturally, both collectors and dealers were there; but each with different goals in mind. Collectors, I was told, buy on emotion and are most interested in a specific article to add to their collection. Dealers, on the other hand, have profitability first and foremost in mind when making purchases and trades. The weekend was full of friendly banter and occasionally serious negotiations.

So after spending three delightful days of listening and talking to some of the most fun, friendly, patriotic, and down-to-earth people in the West, I began to understand why people get excited about gun shows. What a wonderful place to learn more about the history of our great American West, share philosophies, and just have a good time. Congratulations to Show Chairman Les Palmer and the entire Colorado Gun Collectors club on a show well done! I already have my calendar marked for next year's show.

## Cody Firearms Museum Records Office Fee Schedule (effective October 1, 2008)

CFM Member Extended Research  
\$50/hour (one hour minimum, call Jesi for scheduling)

Winchester Lever Action and Marlin letters  
CFM members \$35  
Non-Members \$60

Model 21 and L.C. Smith letters  
CFM members \$50  
Non-Members \$75

Model 21 Order Sheet Information  
\$25 per letter or search unless previously purchased by same customer

CFM Member 5-Letter package: \$150\*

CFM Member 10-Letter package: \$250\*

\*Letter Package letters expire if membership lapses or is dropped.

Watch your mail this winter for Connie's Holiday Special!

## SATURDAY HOURS THROUGH APRIL 2011

Nov 6 Big Reno/WACA Annual West Coast Show  
Reno, NV

Nov 13 Wanenmacher's Tulsa Arms Show, Tulsa, OK

Dec 11 National Gun Day, Louisville, KY

Jan 15 Las Vegas Antique Arms Show, Las Vegas, NV  
Dallas Arms Collectors Show, Dallas, TX

Feb 26 National Gun Day, Louisville, KY

Mar 12 Big Reno Show, Reno, NV  
Ohio Gun Collectors Assoc., Wilmington, OH