

Hunter Arms Co.
FULTON, N.Y.



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L.C. SMITH

Collectors Association

L.C. SMITH SPEAKS FOR ITSELF

L.C. Smith Guns

THE
HUNTER ARMS CO.
FULTON • • • N.Y.

The Journal of the
L.C. SMITH
Collectors Association

Summer 2010

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Special Points of Interest:


- Executive Director article.
- Current Events
- Skeet Shotguns
- Turkey Hunting
- Hunt to Remember
- Future Events

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Ready, Aim, Fire

By Frank J. Finch, Jr.

“Ready, Aim, Fire”, the headline and featured article of The Sunday Herald, the local Sanford, NC newspaper on April 25, 2010, described the “Deep River Shootout”. But there is more to this event than shooting! Many of us attend annually to this clay shooting spring event enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship. The Southern Side by Side draws double gun enthusiasts from Europe, USA and Canada. Besides shooting, 75 vendors made available fine double guns, fine art, custom sporting clothes, engravings, antique duck decoys, shooting adventures, along with Southern hospitality.

The great shooting venue for the side by side shooter was the “L.C. Smith vs. Parker Challenge Cup Charity Shoot”. In this year’s, 7th Annual Challenge Cup, L.C.S.C.A. fielded 60 shooters and bested P.G.C.A. by the score of 234 to 219 out of 300. In the Hammer Gun Challenge, L.C.S.C.A. had 27 shooters who successfully defended the trophy by a score of 210 to 204. (See Team L.C. Captain Steve Arnett’s article in this edition.) This year’s event was particularly sweet to have Team L.C. Smith again sweep Team Parker in both Challenge Cup Events (proving that last years’ sweep over Team Parker was not a “fluke” as described by some. Prior to last year, Team Parker had bettered the Smith Team in the Challenge Cup for four consecutive years, although Team Smith had won all of the Hammer Gun Challenges since the inception of the award).

The Challenge Cup has metamorphosed into something much greater than a mere shooting event; it has taken on every semblance of a “family” reunion as members of both organizations have become friends. Activities such as socializing at tailgate parties, attending offsite dinners, joining in double gun discussion groups or chatting with “Chick’s Chiclets” abound. It was with great pleasure that I watched our respective clubs renew these friendships once again; and then witnessed difficult shots made by shooters vigorously cheered regardless of team. The original purposes envisioned for this great Southern Side by Side venue were the promotion of fellowship between our organizations, to raise revenues for a worthy charity (Team LC along with the Parker shooters donated over a \$1000 this year) and to foster public goodwill. Over the last 7 years, these original goals have been met.

For the benefit of members not present at the Annual Meeting, I summarize the status of our organization. I am happy to report

that our club continues to maintain an active membership between 500 to 600 members and remains financially solvent.

In 2009, the club participated in 10 club sponsored events around the country.


Since 2008 when we acquired a copy of the Hunter Arms Records, Dr. Jim Stubbendieck has been producing Research Letters which helps to offset the cost of publishing our Journal. Jim has been able to synthesize the record data to establish previously unavailable knowledge on selected gauges/grades of L.C. Smith guns for articles in DGJ and our Journal.

In 2009, we designed and manufactured a club pin. Currently, these pins are being sold at club events and mail order. Also, Mike Harris has designed and donated some decals to be used as a fund raiser and are being sold at all club events.

Our website continues to be well accessed and setting new records with over 15.5 million hits since its inception in April 2004. The Forum remains a great medium to exchange information on Smith Guns and club activities. I reemphasize that the “Forum” is made available to disseminate information on Smith guns in a “gentlemanly” manner.

On January 1, 2010, we welcomed Skip Dunlap as a new member to the BOD replacing Bob Trefry, who after serving many years on the BOD indicated he wished to step down. The club honored Bob with a Resolution of Appreciation and a beautiful signed Smith gun print donated by Skip Dunlap. Dean Rasmussen was re-elected to the BOD for a three year term.

Please remember that our Journal is published from what is submitted by our members. Thanks to Jim who submits an article for each issue derived from his research of the factory records. Thank you to members, Tom Archer, Rev. Drew, John Bleimaier, James Fincannon, Chick Chandler, Dennis Abbott, Mark Effle, Tom Salzer, Max Powell, David Williamson and Rev. Charlie who have contributed! Now I call upon you to submit an article of interest for sharing with our membership on collecting, shooting or hunting with your Smith. We need your input.

The growth of our organization is in the hands of this membership. We need a Journal Editor. We need an Advertising Manager. We need Journal articles! We need your participation! Let’s talk! Ready, Aim, Fire! 



From the Records


Premier Skeet Production

by Jim Stubbendieck

The L.C. Smith Gun Company produced 515 Premier Skeet shotguns during a period of only 16 months. Col. William Brophy reported production of Premier Skeet shotguns to be 507, but eight additional entries were located in the LCSCA records during a recent summary. The Premier Skeet grade succeeded the Skeet Special which was discontinued in 1945 when the Hunter Arms Company was purchased by the Marlin Firearms Company. The first Premier Skeet (Serial Number 45818) was completed in April 1949, and only 33 were made that year. The remaining 482 were made in 1950. Most (319) were finished in May 1950. The last Premier Skeet (Serial Number 55124) was completed in July 1950, although some with higher serial numbers were finished earlier.

The Premier Skeet grade was made in 12 gauge (438) and 20 gauge (77). All of the 20 gauge Premier Skeet grades were made in 1950. All 77 of the 20 gauge shotguns had 26-inch barrels, while 264 of the 12 gauges were manufactured with this barrel length. Of the remaining 12 gauge Premier Skeet shotguns, 171 had 28-inch barrels and only three had 30-inch barrels. Most are choked Skeet

1 and Skeet 2, but tighter chokes are not uncommon. The right barrel usually was roll-stamped L.C. SMITH-12 Ga.-Premier Skeet-Fulton, N.Y. U.S.A., but many of the last 200 were not stamped. Standard dimensions of the checkered walnut stocks were 14-inch length of pull, 1½-inch drop at the comb, and 2½-inch drop at the heel.

According to a catalog, all were “Equipped with Selective Single Trigger, Straight Grip, Automatic Ejectors, Streamline Beavertail Forend, Checkered Butt and Ivory Sights.” Although not mentioned, the single sighting plane rib was standard. The retail price of a Premier Skeet was \$251.50. The only options the shooter could select were a Monte Carlo stock (\$16.00), engraving on the trigger guard (\$6.00 or \$12.00 in gold), and a gold oval engraved and inletted into the stock (\$12.50). A few Premier Skeets have been reported with recoil pads, pistol grip stocks, and alternate ribs, but it is not known if they were shipped in these configurations from the factory. Only gauge and barrel length were entered into the records. 

L.C. Smith Premier Skeet production by gauge and barrel length.

Gauge	Barrel Length			Total
	26 inches	28 inches	30 inches	
12	264	171	3	438
20	77	0	0	77
Total	341	171	3	515

Membership Renewals

By Chris Baumohl

For those of you receiving a renewal notice with this issue of the Journal, the cut off for the **NEXT** mailing list (and your renewal to stay current) will be **July 20th**. I will need to have **RECEIVED** your renewal by that time so we can prepare the list and submit it to the printer. Failure to do so will result in the fact that you will not be on our latest membership list and therefore will not receive the next Journal. I process the renewals almost daily so if you get it to me in time, I will get it processed!





L.C. Smith & Parker Brothers, Forever!

By John Kuhn Bleimaier

The northern mills are silent now, the gears and belts gone slack
At Fulton in old New York and in Meridan on the bank of the Quinnipiac.
Overgrown and cold the forges, idle the ingenious Yankee tooling
That once built the double gun that had the whole world adrooling.

Eternally at peace the men whose muscle and whose brain
Conjoined to craft the finest works of art gunsmiths can e'er attain.
Burnished Damascus steel and well cured walnut burl if I have my druthers
The foremost were made by L.C. Smith and also Parker Brothers.

Those legendary rivals have long been laid to rest,
Side by side in the history books among America's best.

But down in Old Catawba, south o' the Dixon line
You'll hear a very special sound, a music oh so fine.

The ghosts they do come out to play in April every year
Spirits of sport and comradeship not ones you need to fear.

That rivalry of L.C. Smith and Parker from bygone days
It plays out now in the cool pinewoods in a round of sporting clays.
A gallant band of siblings, aficionados of the fleet smoothbore
Gather for good fellowship, to break targets and keep score.
And to maintain the memory of the greatness of our workers and of our nation
From the fine old glory days before financiers, financiers and globalization.

April 25, 2010

An L. C. Smith Grand Slam...



Have you ever acquired an addiction? I've never really had such a thing; at least one that I would admit too! I've enjoyed the outdoors and hunting since I was a kid. Growing up in Iowa back in the forty's and fifty's, we always had pheasant, quail and deer on the farm. I just thought hunting them was part of life; not an addiction. Then in my golden years, I think those start at about age 60-65 don't they, I picked up this thing about "turkey hunting". Actually, I was introduced to it in 2004 by my good friend John Thomas. He is absolutely an expert when it comes to taking Ol' Tom. I had never really turkey hunted and John invited me to participate in The Lieutenant Governor's Turkey Hunt in Oklahoma in 2005. Believe me, after this trip, I was hooked!

to a
Su
Sl

By Carl B. Beers

John called in two birds for me on that outing. A beautiful Rio Grande and an Eastern. Got'em both and the hook was set. He then said, "there, you've got half of your slam and the rest is up to you." I worked at getting the Osceola and Merriam birds and the wall hanging was complete. What next? Perhaps a trip to Mexico for the Gould? Hasn't happened yet but certainly on my Bucket List, which by the way is quite long.

Back in December of 2006 I got hung up in Des Moines, Iowa in a bad ice storm when attending a retirement party for an industry colleague. Sitting in a hotel for two days just isn't my thing. I needed to get on down to St. Joe for a business meeting but the storm had closed all travel; the Interstate was even shut down. Sitting in my room my mind wandered from back to hunting outings as a young man in southern Iowa chasing quail, then to South Dakota

where great memories are embedded in the old hard drive about chasing pheasant and grouse; wishing I had some of my old books with me from my hunting library, (liking and collecting old hunting books isn't an addiction, is it?) wishing I had an old Side by Side with me to clean and fondle, what do you do when you're held captive by an ice storm? Oh, by the way, is having and liking old SxS's an addiction? My wife thinks it is. Hmmmmmmmmm.

Then turkey hunting came to mind and what I might do in the upcoming season; I recalled reading in a Double Gun Journal the article by Dr. Dave Rozier about him taking a turkey in one year with most Parker gauges. I'd had the privilege of meeting Dave and sharing a table with him at a SxS outing when I lived in

A large turkey with its tail feathers fanned out, lying on the ground next to a shotgun. The turkey is the central focus, with its head facing the viewer. The background is a natural, outdoor setting with grass and fallen leaves. The text 'per am' is overlaid on the left side of the image.

per
am

What a Fun and Exhilarating Journey!

South Carolina. What a delightful person he was; and has some fine Parkers as well. That's it I thought. Do a Grand Slam with L.C. Smiths; get a turkey in one year with an L. C. Smith .410, 20 ga., 16 ga., 12 ga., and 10 ga. To my knowledge it hadn't been done or at least written about. And gee, I had most of the gauges; what a neat goal that would be. I didn't know at the time that Hunter Arms made an 8 ga. L.C. Smith; more on that later. That's it, get started with the planning as it would certainly need to be well thought out.

Since I've hunted with only vintage guns now for many years, handling them and shooting them has become a real passion. The very first turkey I shot with John in Oklahoma was taken with an L.C. Smith Specialty grade 12 ga. I must admit, the second bird was taken the following day with a Parker. And, I used vintage ammunition for both birds courtesy of Destry Hoffard whose name

is familiar to many. When old, reliable ammunition is not available I use RST and Poly Wad ammo. I used to do a lot of reloading but that's in the past.

Well, when I finally got on the road after the ice storm and in the days and months following, my mind was consumed with bringing the L.C. Smith Grand Slam to fruition. Working out the details took some time because my now home state of Wisconsin has a really messed up Turkey season. I know that sounds harsh but I stand by my words. Especially compared to South Carolina where I had lived for the previous eight years. In SC Turkey season opens April 1, closes April 30 and you can take 5 birds if you possess the skill. Wisconsin you get a 5 day season with one license for one bird. After a certain date you can attempt to purchase an additional license if any happen to be available. Chances of getting the five day period you want is quite iffy. So in the planning, I factored

Wisconsin in for one bird, Florida in for 1-2 birds, SC in for 1-3 birds, more if I was lucky and then Nebraska, South Dakota and Kansas for additional birds if needed.

Another thing, I needed to purchase a 16 gauge L.C. Smith as that's the one gauge I didn't have. And, it had to meet certain criteria, ie: have 32" barrels and be original; not all reworked. I put the word out and after several months a friend at Church who also likes to hunt told me he had seen just what I was looking for at a gun shop down in Missouri. I made the call, confirmed the information he provided, made the deal and the gun was shipped on approval. It was exactly what I was looking for. Now the arsenal was complete. Planning could move forward. Make it happen in 2007. A project such as this

isn't something you go out and broadcast to the world. I kept it pretty much between my wife, my son and myself. That way if it didn't all come together I wouldn't have a bunch of explaining to do to a large number of people.

The PLAN: I essentially put together an operations order that I learned many years ago as an Infantry Officer making sure that I had all bases covered. We would start in Florida, then go to South Carolina where I still had a hunting lease and a Life Time hunting license that residents receive at the young age of 65. Then back to Wisconsin to put the finish on things. Had all the ammunition laid in, an outfitter/guide lined up in Florida and things looked promising.

Upon arriving in Crystal River, Florida in March of '07, things immediately started falling a part. The outfitter had little understanding of turkey hunting, he was a computer guy and he brought another fellow in as a guide. The supposed guide told me he knew little about hunting turkey and within 15 minutes upon entering the blind the first morning he was sound asleep snoring. It went down hill from there and after two days we not only hadn't seen a turkey, we hadn't even heard one. It's a sad story and I won't go into it further. Note, things to remember in the "Lessons Learned" column. We left Florida with no Turkey and not feeling very good about things. However, I felt all would be better when we got to South Carolina.

April first came in South Carolina and I departed the campground and headed for the timber knowing I had the woods all to myself. I soon had a couple birds working but just couldn't close the deal. They seemed to hang up at about 50 yards. Day two; back to the lease and to my favorite strutting zone. Heard gobbles near and far and after a short time one came in view, approached my hen decoy which was at 25 yards and one shot put him to the ground. I was on a high. Soon down to a low as I didn't get another bird to decoy for the next seven days and then we had to head to Wisconsin. I was really bummed out. I headed back to Wisconsin with five days of hunting before me. Believe it or not, I got totally skunked, wiped out the entire five days. Absolutely unreal! So, I threw in the towel. The game was over for '07. A long wait for season 2008 but still a worthy goal; planning and preparation would surely bring it to accomplishment. Time for an intense "Lessons Learned" Session.

A review of the original plan was conducted and it still appeared to be sound. I just needed to find a better Florida connection to insure success from the get go. After doing a little research I felt we found what I thought to be the right connection; an outfitter in the Polk City, Florida area. He sounded good on the telephone, said all

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the right things. We were set! We booked the hunt and started waiting on the clock to tick the days and weeks away.

When March of 2008 rolled around my wife and I had the camper ready, guns and ammo on board, camo in the bin and life was getting better with each passing mile. We arrived at our destination outside of Polk City, Florida March 23 ready to hunt. It was then we found that guides were not a part of the program. We'll just take you into an area we know there's birds and then it's up to you. Ugh!! Certainly not what we'd bargained for nor what we thought we'd purchased. Well, we got the first dump the next morning while it was still pitch dark. An area that we had no idea what it looked like, topography, foliage coverage, etc. It was most discouraging. We set up in some palms, heard gobbles very distant, responded and sat there until our designated pick up at 11:00 a.m. We went in for a bite of lunch and were dumped back out late that afternoon. Similar situation, a bit better in that at least we could see the type terrain we were in. But again, no gobbles or sighting of birds. However, we were picked up right on time though, at 7:00 p.m.

The next day was a repeat of the first day and about as productive. We had one more morning hunt remaining and we were dumped into a new area and told, "there should be birds in this area". My wife was with me; she doesn't care to hunt but really enjoys watching the morning wake up; observing the turkeys and how they work. We stood there until first light so we could get a handle on the lay of the land. We selected a spot, I sat out two decoys and we took seats at the base of a couple large palmetto trees. We were 12 yards apart. I was carrying an L.C. Smith 10 ga. which I had yet

to harvest a bird with. It was cloudy and appeared that it could rain at any time. I heard a gobble in the distance, perhaps 150 yds and quickly responded on my box call with three yelps; immediately got a response. I sounded back and then did what Charlie Elliott says in his book. After you respond once or twice, shut up and wait. Well, we waited and waited, the gobbles kept coming closer and closer, then I got a glimpse of a tom and the hen that was with him. I yelped back a couple more times and the hen came right into the decoys; the tom hung up at about 45 yards. He just stood there and gobbled his head off. He came about five steps closer and I decided it was time to make a move. If he came one step closer I'd take him; one more step and I triggered down on him, he dropped stone cold. Those RST 10 ga. #5's did their job. It was 0830 by the time we took pictures. He was a great bird, big spurs, my first Osceola, quite a prize. Then we just had to sit and wait for our 1100 hrs pick up. He was right on time and his only comment was, "Oh, you got one of my birds, uh?" I replied, "Yeh, guess I did". Once back at camp, I couldn't get the gear loaded fast enough. Oh, and yes at his camp you clean your own bird if you're lucky enough to get one. Another bad Florida experience but at least this time we got a bird.

We headed from Florida to South Carolina for the April 1 opening of their Turkey season and were excited about prospects of continuing the mission. The campground had our place reserved, the weather was decent and our hopes were high. The night before opening day it started raining. The weather turned cold and long term it didn't look good. We hunted anyway when it wasn't raining and a long story short, we didn't get one bird in South Carolina. We had to head back to Wisconsin to get our five day season in there, so we headed north feeling very blue.

Once in Wisconsin I checked things out with other hunters to see how they had been doing. They reported things as slow, weather uncooperative and birds equally uncooperative. I was able to purchase an additional license so now I could take two Wisconsin birds but the second was the very last season which doomed my chance for taking five birds. We were successful in taking a nice Tom during our first season with a Smith 12 gauge and filled during the last season as well using the 16 gauge but, we had just ran out of time. No more licenses and no place to go. I called a friend out in Nebraska where we had held a shooting clinic a couple years earlier and asked him about chances of getting a turkey out there. He thought pretty good and licenses were still available. So I hot footed it out to Pheasant Bonanza just north of Tekamah, Nebraska and joined up with Trent Leichleiter and head guide Mike Burton. Now these guys do a class job. Mike has great woodsmen skills and really understands the wild turkey.

They had been doing some scouting and knew where the turkey were. They had blinds in place and were ready to hunt but we only had a couple days remaining and no way I could fill all the gauges from a licensing standpoint. I did a couple hunts with Mike, who



by the way, is a superb guide. Mike got me on a bird the third time out and I blew it...absolutely missed the bird and don't know why. Again, we'd have to wait for another season to try and accomplish what has become a bigger challenge than I ever thought it might be. Back to the drawing board.

Now, well ahead of the 2009 season I was reviewing the plan; is our line up of states correct; what happened that we didn't anticipate, where can we get licenses; a lot to think about. In review I decided our weakest link was still our Florida connection. We needed to be sure of success there as they are the earliest state in which we can hunt and accomplishment of the overall goal starts there.

On a cold winter evening in December of '08 I was watching the Outdoor channel. They had a great Turkey hunting program on that was taped in Florida. Praise the Lord, here's my chance at a new Florida connection I thought. The program was excellent; the guides were young, sharp and eager. It was apparent they had a solid understanding of turkey hunting. I knew I needed to contact them as an unusual thing occurred, their 800 number stayed on

the screen long enough for me to get it written down. I immediately called and got hold of Brandon Storey, owner of Storey Hunts just outside of Okeechobee, Florida. What a breath of fresh air he was to talk with. We discussed the program he offered which was basically a two day guided hunt, food, lodging and hunting in areas they had been scouting since before season opening. It sounded just like what I'd been looking for so I booked a hunt. Interestingly, Brandon called me at least twice during the winter keeping me up to date on things and on one occasion he told me another program was going to air on the Outdoor channel that had been taped with he and his guides on their ranch and that I may want to watch it. I did and then was certain I had the right Florida connection. I could hardly wait for March of 2009 to get here!

We headed for Florida in early March and visited some neat gun shops and sporting goods stores en route to Okeechobee. If you haven't been to Kevin's or Stafford's in Thomasville, Georgia, you owe it to yourself to visit these stores. You must see Kevin's Fine Gun room which is on the second level. Then on to Quail Country Plantation outside of Arlington, Georgia for a few days of quail hunting. This could be another story; suffice it to say though, the little L.C. Smith Crown 20 gauge delivers good medicine to the quail. We had a blast. The place is over run with fine side by sides and Bill Bowles and his staff just can not be beat.

The afternoon of March 20 we arrived at Brandon Storey Turkey camp at Sonny Grove Ranch; first thing was to get our camper set up and then a meeting with Brandon and the guides. These guys were impressive. I felt like they knew every turkey on the over 4,000 acres by name. There were four other hunters beside my wife and me. Each hunter had a personal guide. The guides were very sharp and not only had great woodsman skills but excellent people skills as well. First thing they wanted was for everyone to pattern or re-pattern their gun. They absolutely wanted you to know where the gun was shooting and what the killing range was. This pleased me very much as it not only showed respect for the hunter, it showed respect for the Turkey. Their goal was that everyone should get a bird, but they wanted clean kills and no lost wounded birds. They reviewed the way the hunts run, assigned us our personal guide and then we conferenced with him getting all details as to how we'd conduct the hunt. I felt better with each passing minute.

My guide was Chase Marsocci; a local fireman who had a burning passion for turkey hunting. Pardon the pun. I reviewed with him what my objective was and how I would be using an L.C. Smith Eagle grade gun with 32" barrels. I'd just patterned with some shells Destry Hoffard gave me which were Remington high brass 1 1/4 oz # 5's. The target showed we had a perfect killing shot at 35 yards, perhaps a bit further but I had decided I wanted the bird inside 35 yards. He asked if I wanted to do the calling or wanted him to; I said let's both do it and make that final decision in the blind the next morning. By now it was time for dinner; we were served a great meal featuring wild boar taken on their ranch.

It was absolutely delicious. Time now to hit the rack as Chase wanted us up and ready to go at 0400 hrs. He was okay with my wife going along as an observer.

March 21, season opener. We drove for over a half hour and finally got to where Chase said he had a hasty blind. He let us out and then hid the truck rejoining us shortly. It was a beautiful morning and the distinct Florida morning sounds were beyond description; what a joy to be out on God's front porch. We got all set up; Chase briefed me on how he thought things would unfold telling us he had seen several trophy Toms with hens come through this area the last few mornings. He had actually been out scouting. It was just beginning to break light and all of a sudden here came a pick up truck down the trail raising dust and driving within 15 yards of our blind. They went on by and stopped perhaps two hundred and fifty yards from us, were very noisy and loud and things started falling apart. Chase hot footed it over to them to see why they were there as we were to be the only ones in the area. They assured him they would leave; we remained there well past sunup and finally they did leave disrupting things immensely. Needless to say, we not only didn't see a bird, we never heard one. We went back to camp at 1000 hrs for breakfast and Chase was hot. When we got to camp we found all the other hunters there and each one had taken a nice trophy bird; we were the odd man out. When Brandon heard the story he too became very upset. Brandon and his staff had a goal that all hunters would fill the first morning out and we were the only ones who didn't. He was apologetic and said, "we'll get you on a turkey for sure this afternoon". Be ready to go at 2:00 p.m. So, we ate and went to the camper for a short nap.

We met Chase a few minutes before two and he said we were going to a transition area where birds travel through every afternoon between 2:45 and 4:00 p.m. He told me how they reviewed their field cameras and that birds had traveled through this area in that time frame each of the last five days. I'm telling you, these guys had it together. The weather was nice, cloudy, a bit windy, temp of 82. Good Florida turkey weather. We headed to the woods with a new double bull Primos blind which





would accommodate four people. I must say it was a bit crowded as one of the other guides, Jeff Hughes decided to come along on the hunt and assisted in setting up the blind. Got it all set up in the Palmettos, got inside and quieted down. It was at 1520 hrs that we

saw a big Tom off in the distance perhaps 110 yards. Jeff started calling.

He can really call. The Tom immediately looked our way and had to see the hen decoys Chase and Jeff put out. He was in no hurry though and actually hung up at 72 yards. He'd stand and look our way but just scratch around where he was and move no closer. Even in the blind we were being very quiet and keeping any moves to an absolute minimum. Then all of a sudden within 3 yards of the right of the blind comes a beautiful hen turkey meandering out to check the decoys; now we had a live decoy. Jeff did some more calling; the Tom would look our way but not come any closer. Then, around the right side of the blind within five yards came a Jake. We all froze as he walked over to the hen decoys, Jeff started calling, the Tom saw the Jake and he immediately started heading our direction. No way was he going to allow that Jake to have these hens. The Tom was coming and coming. At 40 yards Chase said, "shoot". I chose not to as he was still coming closer. He said, "shoot" again. I waited as he was still moving toward us. Finally I decided it was time as he was slowing down and becoming a bit more cautious. He stopped, stretched his head looking at the activity around the decoys and at that time I pulled the trigger. That was it, he was ours. A beautiful Osceola which I refer to as the 12 ga. bird. Now we've got our first L.C. Smith bird of the season. We're on the way. The Eagle grade dropped the bird at 28 yards and he didn't move. He was a beaut; had 1 1/2" spurs, 10 1/2" beard and weighed 15 lbs 10 oz. The spurs were actually curved and Chase said, "you got a real limb hanger", and then took the bird over and actually was able to hang him on a limb. The spurs were not only long but curved. So naturally we had to get a picture of him hanging from the limb.

After some field pictures, we headed back to camp where we shared our excitement and hunting story with the other hunters. Chase cleaned the bird and prepared it for travel. Nice having a freezer in the RV. Now the quail had a turkey to keep them company. I then decided to go after another turkey the next morning with the L.C. Smith .410. We also decided we better pattern it and see just what kind of clean killing range we might have. After shooting targets at 20, 25 and 30 yards I decided anything over 18 yards would not be a "for sure" killing shot. 18 yards, that was the shot. Nothing longer. The evening was spent in celebration of the days hunting successes; dinner was some of the most delicious wild turkey I've ever eaten. What a great day of Florida turkey hunting.

We went out early the next morning with the .410. A gorgeous morning and all the neat morning sounds except Turkey. We could hear them but had none come in close enough. In for breakfast, a short nap and then back to the woods. Again, Brandon reviewed another set of cameras and told us birds would be coming through this particular area between 1530 hrs and 1700 hrs. Sure enough, he was correct. During that time frame we had many birds transition through. Several hens and Jakes and then two trophy Toms;

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absolutely couldn't get'em any closer than 25 yards. They just hung up out there and wouldn't budge. About 1730 hrs here came the Tom of Tom's; he too, wouldn't come in closer than 25-28 yards so, no shot. Nothing more up to dark and we headed in. I learned a lesson here; when you're hunting with a gun of limited killing range, have a bigger gun along. If I'd had the guide carrying the 20 ga. or 16 ga. for me, we could have had another bird as the three Toms that I had to let pass were all killable with a 20 ga. Oh well, live and learn. The next morning, March 23, we packed up the camper, said our good byes to Brandon, Chase and Jeff and headed up the highway to South Carolina.

We arrived at the Baker Creek Park campgrounds March 28; got things set up and then started visiting around checking on the turkey situation. Talked to the local DNR officer, Daniel Baker and he was a great source of information. I told him where I'd be hunting and he told me he had seen several nice Tom's in that area. Season opened April 1, so I had time to do a little scouting but didn't really want to disturb the woods too much. I'd had this lease for several years and pretty much knew the lay of the land.

I had made the decision to use the 16 ga. L.C. Smith; it's a Field Grade with 32" barrels, choked full and fuller. It threw a good pattern at 30 yards and delivered 14 BB's in the kill zone of the turkey target. I felt comfortable with it even slightly beyond that. I'd be using some Western #5' with 1 1/8 oz shot, paper shells. Now all I had to do was fit a camo gun sleeve to the gun. One thing that is a must when hunting with vintage guns is to cover them with one of those camo gun sleeves from Hunter's Specialties. These beautiful old guns often have some honest wear that can unknowingly give a flash of reflection and spook the bird. Author Charlie Elliott says turkey can see an old sardine can laying by the blind from a hundred yards away. My friend John Thomas said he wouldn't even take me in the woods unless I'd cover the gun with such a sleeve. They're quite inexpensive and very easy to custom fit to any gun with just a common pair of scissors. I use the little shears that are on my Leatherman tool. The sleeve's fit, the 16's ready, come on April 1. 

Next issue we will continue on with part II

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A Hunt to Remember

By James Fincannon

After a quick meeting with Greg, Todd, and Tadpole, I was handed a set of keys for the gates on the farms. I asked RC if he would like to take a ride to see where the new stands were at. Greg had already told me what section that they would be hunting in and we headed to the farm. Finding four good places to hunt was not hard to do with so many deer and bears around. Bear season didn't open until Thursday so deer hunting was on the menu 'til then.

By Thursday, my guys had at least three deer each and I just two with all the running around I had been doing helping RC, Jack, and John. Dragging their deer out and skinning and packaging them for the freezer was a team effort but I didn't mind. They would have done the same for me and did sometimes.

Thursday morning was a big day, RC and John shot their bears at day's first light. RC shot a 400 pound bear and John

had a 325 pound bear with a white diamond spot on his chest. I had seen one but he was moving too fast to get a shot at. After loading up the bears and picking up Jack we headed back to the lodge. I was 3:00 pm before Jack and I were back in the woods, with little luck that evening on bear. I did see a couple of nice deer cross in front of me.

Later that evening, we were sitting at the kitchen table with Todd and decided to bear hunt early in the morning and quail hunt after that. I asked Jack if he minded hunting in his tree stand until afternoon and he said that would be great, bears down east move on and off all day so you could see one any time of the day. Early the next morning Todd came by with his two bird dogs. Putting my rifle and shotgun behind the seat of Todd's truck, we were ready to drop Jack off at a different stand on the far end of a corn field which bordered woods where there were two good trail going into the field. After walking him to his tree stand, Todd dropped me off at the other corner of the woods at an old tree platform that I had used before which gave me a clear view of the edge of the field. "I'll pick you up at 8:30", he said as he drove off into the dark.

I had not been in my stand thirty minutes when, just as light broke, you could see two shadows that wear tearing across the field toward the woods about 150 yards away heading toward Jack. Jack was about 800 yards down from me and the bears were heading straight at him at an angle across the field. I thought to myself,

Mattamuskeet Gun Club has always been one of my most memorable places. I've hunted and part-time guided on the shores of eastern North Carolina, outside of the town of Engelhard in Hyde County. Taking a few weeks off from work had me all excited and ready to go hunting. I called Greg to let him know I was heading down to hunt and help out if he needed me to. After a short talk on the phone, he asked if I minded taking three hunters to their deer and bear stands. These were his clients that had hunted with him years before and had asked for me personally which made me feel good about helping them last year with their hunt. I'm not a real guide, just another hunter that made a few friends through the years. Todd said, "Don't forget to bring your shotgun this year. He wants to take you quail hunting a day or two. "Great", I said and told Greg I'd see him on Sunday. Todd and Tadpole are two of Greg's main guides for the season after farming is over with. Thinking hard I decided to take the new gun I picked up earlier in the year, an L.C. Smith Skeet Special, 12 gauge, with 27-inch barrels, single trigger, auto-ejectors, beavertail forearm with a Hawkens butt pad. If I can't hit anything with it, I'll look good missing I thought to myself. At one 'o' clock, Sunday, I pulled in at the lodge to get settled in. A few hunters were already there when I felt a hand on my shoulder, It was RC, one of the hunters I drove around last year and put on a nice black bear on the square-mile patch of woods. "Happy to see you", RC said.

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“Maybe Jack will get a shot at one.” They were too far away for me to see them now. In about five more minutes, I could see the whole corn field clearly. The sun was just tipping the trees when I heard Jack shoot twice, breaking the silence of the morning quiet. Two minutes later I could see Greg’s blue Ford coming down the canal road toward Jack’s stand. He must have been sitting down at the canal gate taking in the morning calm. Todd came by and picked me up and we headed around where Jack’s stand was.

Greg had just got through helping Jack drag a nice, thick-furred, 450 pound, black bear out of the woods. Jack was talking a mile a minute about the bear, smiling ear to ear. Helping Greg and Jack get the bear in the back of his truck was no easy task but finally, we got the job done.

Todd is an avid quail hunter that would rather hunt quail than eat and was ready to get going. Prospects of seeing another bear near here for a good while was slim to none with all of the noise we made loading up the big bruiser. We started off to one of Todd’s favorite fields, pulling over to the edge of a long, golden field; we were ready to chase some Bob White quail. Switching from the hunting coat to my bird vest, I pulled the Skeet Special out of its case while Todd was letting the dogs out of their boxes. Checking my shells, I fingered four, older than dirt shells in the shell holder slot across the flap of the pocket. At age fifteen, my uncle had told me to always carry a couple 00 buckshot or “punkin balls” just in case, I was still carrying the mix he had given me 20 years later. I had a half-box of 7 ½ shot in one pocket and a half-box of 8 shot in the other. Looking over, Todd had a big, sneaky grin on his face. He pulled out a 20 Ga. L.C. Smith 00E with 28-inch barrels. “Where’s the famous Remington 870 pump you shoot everything with”, I asked. “I got this from a local farmer this spring. After shooting your Smith last year, I had to have one”, he said. “Yeah, another convert”, I told him.

Easing down the ditch lines, watching the dogs run back and forth about 100 yards from the road, one dog locked up on some birds. Hurrying down the ditch line, we got set up for a flush. Todd gave his command and the dogs jumped into the weeds and brush. The quail burst into the blue sky with the sounds of pounding wings. I threw up on one going straight out and dropped it about 25 yards out. Swinging to my right, I pulled down on another one 40 yards out, gliding. Folding the quail up was no problem for the Smith. “Well”, I said, “Looks good and shoots good”, as Todd picked up his bird out of the field. Three birds out of a seven flush are awesome on wild birds.

A bear was standing in the trail no more than fifteen yards away. I thought to myself, “What am I going to do now?”



Working our way to the end, we start walking the wood line when the dogs start getting birdie around some downed trees that were pushed to the edge of the field. Stepping into the woods’ edge, a quail took flight down the field. Todd drops the bird easily. Four birds come up in the woods as I hammered one to the ground and chop at another one, missing. Todd hit one coming out of the brush with two shots. Following the dogs around the other side of the field where the soybeans switch to summer wheat stubble, the dogs jumped a nice covey out in the open where we got two more birds.

Todd said, “That was a big covey of about twelve or fourteen. I think we can get a couple more by the time we catch up to them in the canal.” He was right; the dogs were circling around the canal brush. Ready on each side, the birds flushed eight total.

Two were flying together with nowhere to go; I dropped both birds. Todd dropped one and made an amazing shot on the other one. I stepped 55 steps away. After covering two fields, we were only two birds shy of our limit, but it was 2:00 pm and I was getting hungry and suggested that we should head back to the truck. Todd agreed, it was a pretty good walk back to the truck. Walking down the road, we were looking at all the deer tracks and a few old bear tracks. Coming up to one of the gates, I remembered a couple tree stands down the canal road from a few years before. I told Todd to go and get the truck and put the dogs up while I went to check the old stands for signs. “I’ll come and pick you up”, Todd said.

Easing under the gate arm, I quietly moved down the old road bed. The grass was very high so I thought it best to put two punkin balls in, just in case. There was no sign around the first stand and on my way to the second stand I noticed a fresh worn trail where the grass was flattened to the dirt. It was going to an old logging trail that connected to the canal road. I could see the old tree platform I had hunted in two years ago but no one had bush hogged the canal yet. There was still corn in the field next to the canal and decided that this was a great place to hunt the next day with all the fresh bear signs.

Sneaking down the logging trail about 40 yards, I checked the area for more signs. It was a good piece of woods with the heavy tree canopy over me it looked more like 5:30 than 2:00. “I’m just going to ease down to the curve and then head back. Todd’s probably on his way by now”, I thought. I was walking to the bend thinking about a nice cypress tree in the road when I reached the bend.

HOLY CRAP! A bear was standing in the trail no more than fifteen yards away. I thought to myself, “What am I going to do




now? He's right at me." His head was looking down the trail so I threw the Smith up to my shoulder and a bead on his shoulder. I don't even remember pulling the trigger. BOOOM! The punkin ball hit the bear so hard it flipped a good ten feet. With a terrible death cry, the bear was thrashing around in the trail. With the gun still up I fired again and the bears form went limp. I quickly dropped two 00 buckshot into the Smith while my heart was pounding like a rabbit. All this happened within five seconds.

I heard Todd's truck door and horn honk so I quickly walked out to the gate. "I got a bear", I told Todd. "No way", he answered. "You got a key to this gate, I don't have one for this lock", I stated. Digging around in the dash he came up with a key ring and opened the gate. This makes it a lot easier than dragging the bear all the way to the road. Backing up to the bear, we loaded him up. "Only about 250 pounds. But I'll take him", I said with a grin. He looked a lot bigger fifteen minutes ago but still a very nice bear.

Getting back to the lodge with Todd as my witness, I got to tell my story around the dinner table and show off the skeet special.

Some guy named Ray said something about coconuts with Greg ribbing me with, "Next time I'll send you out with a sharp stick." We all busted out laughing. I came back at him with, "Don't try this at home gentlemen. I'm a professional"; another round of laughter.

After a good dinner of quail and deer cube steak with all of the fixings, we went to the living room for after dinner drinks. This was a great week so far, talking about hunting and guns. I was surprised that half of the other hunters had L.C. Smiths at home that they hunted with from time to time. Todd and myself were talking about quail hunting again tomorrow when Greg asked if I'd be down to try out duck and goose hunting in late December and January. "I don't know, it depends if I survive the hunters next week. I sure want to hunt more of those wild quail though", I answered.


All in all, I had a great time. You couldn't ask for a better group of men to hunt with. Maybe I'll try duck and goose hunting on the North Carolina coast at the end of the year. I'll try anything once, but then it usually becomes an obsession. 

The A-3's of L.C. Smith

By Townsend Breeden

In early March of 2009 I became aware of an A-3 shotgun, serial number 1108, that had not been previously documented in either Brophy's or Houchins' fine reference books. After our Director of Research Jim Stubbendieck verified that 1108 was, indeed, an A-3 I reviewed the A-3 lists in Brophy and Houchins. A particular gun stood out, Serial number 204947 finished in 1915. Although a connected series of

serial numbers do not always follow yearly sequences, the date seemed odd to me as the guns before and after were finished in 1905. More consultation with Jim determined that 204947 was finished in 1905. After the emergence of Serial Number 1108 and finding the 1915 misprint I requested Jim to review the complete list of A-3's. The results are summarized in the table. It should be noted that all

entries in the records are finish dates and not shipping dates. Also the reader should note that the Houchins' discovery (S/N 204351) is listed as an A-2 in the factory records and has been dropped from the list until such time as it can be independently verified as a higher grade A-3. A more detailed article on this subject appeared in Vol. 20, Issue 4, Winter 2009 of The Double Gun Journal 

HUNTER ARMS COMPANY – A-3 Grade Hammerless Shotguns

Verified Through LC Smith Records Search in April 2009

Serial No	Gauge	Barrel	Date Finished	Serial No	Gauge	Barrel	Date Finished
1108 (1)	12	30	1894	202301	12	30	June 21, 1904
2168	12	30	Mar. 20, 1896	202348	12	30	July 14, 1904
3995	12	30	May 31, 1900	203951	12	30	May 23, 1905
4001	12	30	Dec. 27, 1899	20353	12	28	May 24, 1905
5020 (2)	12	30	Feb. 21, 1901	204029	12	30	June 1, 1905
5624 (3)	20	28	Sept. 28, 1909	204947 (5)	12	30	Dec. 13, 1905
5682 (4)	20	26	Nov 26, 1909	205157	12	30	Jan. 22. 1906
6703	12	30	Nov 4, 1901	205495	12	30	Feb. 26, 1906
202300	12	30	June 22, 1904	211603	12	30	Sept. 29, 1909

Notes

Only the year of finish is shown in the records for 1108, Shipment dates are present only for 2168 (Sept. 30, 1901) and 4001 (Jan. 30, 1901). All dates in the table are finish dates, not shipment dates as shown in Brophy and Houchins.

Only date and serial number are confirmed, grade, gauge and barrel length are unintelligible.

Brophy shows date in error as Sept 29, 1909.

(4) Extra set of barrels are 30 inches in length.

(5) Previously published date was 1915.

(6) Not listed is Serial No 204351 shown in Houchins as it is listed as an A-2 Grade in the Hunter Arms Co. records.

(7) Serial Number 5624 was inspected by "Inspector P" (M. W. Mack); Serial Numbers 5682 through 211603 were inspected by "Inspector A" (McKnight).



2010 Events

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5/28-5/30/10	Calif. Side x Side Shoot, West Coast Event	Mountain Gun Club, Coarsegold, CA	Dean Rasmussen	805-581-2275
6/4-6/6/10	Great Northeast Side x Side Classic	Hausmann's Hidden Hollow Friendsville, PA	Frank Finch & Mar	732-899-1498
7/16-7/18/10	Ohio Gun Collectors Show	Robert's Center, 123 Gano Road Wilmington, OH 45177	Len Applegate & Frank	513-243-7572
9/23-9/26/10	Vintage Cup	Pintail Point, Queenstown, MD	Skip & Chris Dunlap	540-858-9904
10/30/10	7th Annual Turkey Shoot	Prince Georges Trap & Skt Glen Dale, MD	Roger Domer	301-233-4877
11/13-11/14/10	Tulsa Gun Show	Tulsa, OK	Jim Stubbendieck	402-472-3082

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