



The Antique Arms Gazette

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Old Guns Canada Acquires Eugene Heer's "Der Neue Stoeckel"

Collectors around the world will recognize the words "Der Neue Stoeckel". It is the single most famous, and sought-after, antique gun reference in the world. Originally written in 1938 by the curator of a museum in Denmark, Johann Stoeckel, it was re-organized and re-published by the Swiss Institute for Weapons Technology at Granson Castle under the leadership of one Eugene Heer in 1979. The massive work spans three volumes and contains information on over 33,000 gun and crossbow makers from the years 1400 to 1900, from 32 countries. The book became an instant best seller but was only ever published in one printing and is today one of the rarest gun references on the planet. Needless to say, it sells for an exorbitant amount of money...

Now, this is not a book you curl up in front of a cozy fire place with; in fact, it makes for pretty boring reading. It is, however an amazing reference on the most obscure – and common – gun makers known to scientists, historians, and collectors, and if there is any doubt as to the origin or identification of an antique gun, the "Stoeckel" is the "last word", the definitive answer to settle any argument. I am happy to announce that I have been able to acquire the first two volumes (the important ones – anyone have the third??) which will help me identify and date most of the antiques which I come across. I am also offering anyone in need of a "look-up" the opportunity to consult the books as well. All you need to do is ask...

The South American "Gaucho"

During the early years of pin fire manufacture, there was a great need in the colonies of Europe to provide cheap, reliable side arms to settlers, adventurers and explorers. The Americas in particular were a rapidly expanding frontier. Europeans, mostly from Spain and Portugal flocked to the pampas of South America

to find their fortune and prosperity in ranching, farming, mining and the lumber trade. With the influx of Europeans looking for a quick buck came the usual assortment of shady characters - gamblers, cheats, pimps and prostitutes – and with them the need for protection of one's person and property. The firearms trade was at a premium, with all sorts of small arms – rifles, shotguns, pistols, swords and knives – trading at premium prices. It is not surprising that the gun makers of Spain, around the cities of Eibar and Erma in the Basque region would capitalize on this demand and churn out as many pieces, as quickly - and often as cheaply – as possible. After all, who would complain to the maker about a shoddy gun from half a world away? There are literally hundreds of examples of "export models" from Spain on the market today, many of a frightfully bad quality by any standard. Although there were many excellent and famous Spanish gun makers, the infamous "Eibar" is still synonymous with a cheap hand gun, often copied from a well-known Colt or Browning design.

Among the more famous – or infamous – of these was the "Gaucho", so named after the South American cowboys who carried these intimidating pistols hooked on their belts as a defense against vermin of all kinds. Usually double-barreled, smooth-bored and with thin barrel walls, these guns took grape shot shells from 9 to 15 mm (60cal). Construction was simple, embellishment crude to non-existent, execution cheap and workmanship questionable however they were usually rugged and made to withstand abuse and harsh treatment. Today's antique gun collector will come across these quite readily however finding one in good condition is not easy. Because of their use in the field and on horseback, exposed to the elements, dirt and dust, they are usually rusted, scratched, dented, chipped and bent. Find one in decent, working condition and the value rises dramatically. Extras

such as the belt clip and sliding safety, as well as undamaged grips, strong, complete springs and properly working drop-down triggers add value to an otherwise undervalued gun. The design is that of a typical "box lock": single action, double hammers with a half-cock and full-cock position actuated by double v-shaped leaf springs. Pressure from the same springs hold the two triggers in a recess flush with the underside of the frame until the hammer is cocked and the triggers drop down. This design is both simple as well as effective and useful in the absence of a trigger guard.



15mm Gaucho with belt hook

Barrels were hinged like a shot gun and released by a simple, spring-loaded latch underneath. The spring under the hinge causes the breech to break open automatically, making loading and unloading with one hand simple and fast. The recess in the top-mounted safety also serves to eject spent cartridges.



Hammer safety and ejector

All in all not a work of art, but one which served an important purpose, and surely saved many a Gaucho's "bacon"...

“Old Guns” Adds Antique Ammo

Due to the overwhelming demand from customers for antique, period ammo to complement their antique gun purchase, I have decided to source period ammo for sale with the guns in my lineup. Mostly American made rim fire ammo from .30 to .44 caliber dating from the 1860’s to 1950’s these are of varying values and price points. Some, like the tiny .32 extra short rimfire are so rare that a few rounds with original box will sell for \$750, whereas others, as single rounds can be had for as little as \$8 each. There are very interesting “teat-fire” cartridges, pin-fire and Flobert cartridges as well. New stock is arriving as quickly as Customs clears it...



Famous .30 cal teat-fire cartridges with a Moore’s patent teat-fire revolver

The Hammond .44 cal Single Shot Deringer

Connecticut Arms & Manf. Co of Naubuc, Conn. made one of the most unusual handguns of the Civil War years. Its massive .44 caliber “Bulldog” was the largest-caliber derringer of its time. The gun features a unique side-pivoting breechblock and automatic cartridge ejector which was both odd as well as ingenious. With the hammer in half-cock position, the action can be opened with the thumb of the shooting hand and a new cartridge inserted quickly and easily. The gun is heavy and solid; the breechblock feels very sturdy and is well fitted. This is an extremely well made gun, well designed and thought out.



Connecticut Arms Hammond Patent “Bulldog”

Patented on October 25, 1864 these deringers found their way into the hands of Union officers as back-up, and into the hands of gamblers, law men and prostitutes for self-protection. It is said that Doc

Holliday’s mistress “Big Nose” Kate packed one of these and was indeed shot by one of her customers with her own gun...



Pivoting breechblock of the Hammond “Bulldog”

The Connecticut Arms & Manf. Hammond deringer was manufactured from about 1865 to the late 1880’s, and some 8,000 of them found their way into the hands of the shooting public.

Upcoming Shows

This spring will be a busy time for collectors across Western Canada, with three large and well-known shows in short succession:

March 18 and 19 is the Historical Arms Collectors Society of BC annual 2-day show at Heritage Park in Chilliwack, BC. More than 600 vendors in three halls, lots to see and do.

April 14 and 15 (Easter Week end) is the famous Calgary show where gun collectors, knife makers and enthusiasts gather from all over Canada and abroad. This is the best show in the country, or so I am told, with over 950 tables in three halls .

April 22 and 23 is the two-day show in Kamloops. It is well worth seeing, and there is a large contingent of excellent and famous custom knife makers represented, too.

April 28 and 29 is the Cloverdale Rod and Guns Show, now known as the “Hunting and Fishing Show” because the Surrey politicians don’t like the word “gun” mentioned in public. Last year they banned antique handguns last minute, which put a big damper on the show and my own sales... This year, they finally got the message that antiques are not even guns, and they are allowing the likes of me to display and sell our stuff...This will be my second year there, and in Kamloops. Calgary will be a first for me this year, whereas Chilliwack has been on my regular circuit for years...

William P Uhlinger of Philadelphia

A little known, Swiss-born gun maker by the name of Wilhelm Peter Uhlinger (1823-1898) bought the machinery and stock of the William Hankins gun manufacture when Hankins went into partnership with Christian Sharps and divested himself of his old factory in 1861. Uhlinger was a machinist by trade however the increasing demand for side arms in the raging US civil war led him to the gun trade albeit in direct

Violation of the S&W owned Rollin White Patent. To avoid detection and possible prosecution, Uhlinger marked his guns with mostly fictitious names, such as D. D. Cole, J. P. Lower and W. L. Grant. There was a D. D. Cole, but he was a patent attorney in Washington, W. L. Grant was a dry goods retailer in New Jersey and Lower was only a lowly clerk at the time of the manufacture of these. Uhlinger marked a very few of his guns with his own name however they are very scarce. Many of his guns were also left entirely unmarked. Uhlinger guns are of an astonishingly high quality; they are well designed, well made and finished. Uhlinger produced about 10,000 guns in .22 and .32 caliber, and many found their way into the hands of soldiers on both sides of the war. The end of the war in 1865 saw a huge mass of martial weapons flooding the civilian market and the decommissioned troops of the union and the disbanded armies of the south no longer had a need for more guns. Many of the New England gun makers – both recent as well as well-established – saw their business dry up overnight. Uhlinger was one of them. He went out of business in 1865 and one cannot but wonder that he must have known his would be a temporary, quick-buck scheme. Uhlinger went on to invent an improved school desk for which he was granted a patent in 1868, and an improved machine saw which earned him another patent in 1869. Little is known about his later years; at some point he moved to California with his wife, son and five daughters, where he died in 1898.



Well-made William P. Uhlinger .32 rim fire revolver, marked J.P. Lower

