TALL TALES & TRUE TELLINGS

FIREARMS RESEARCH FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF THE TEXAS RANGER HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM
THE TEXAS RANGER HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

- Founded 1964
- Partnership between Texas DPS, The City of Waco, and private benefactors
- Appointed Official Museum of the Texas Rangers by the Texas Department of Public Safety – 1964
- Official Hall of Fame of the Texas Rangers by the Texas Legislature – 1973
- Official Repository of the Texas Rangers by the Texas Legislature - 1997
MISSION

To disseminate knowledge and inspire appreciation of the Texas Rangers, a legendary symbol of Texas and the American West; To collect, preserve, study and exhibit artifacts, artwork and archives relating to the Texas Ranger service; To permanently document and honor the service of Texas Rangers past and present.
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THE PROJECT

• **Purpose:** To gain an understanding of how to conduct a systematic determination, for insurance underwriting purposes, of a class of high value items in the museum collections
METHODOLOGY

1. Determine condition
2. Assess provenance
3. Research owner(s)
4. Compile comparable sales from major auction houses
   1. James D. Julia
   2. Rock Island Auctions
   3. Heritage Auctions
   4. Cowan Auctions
5. Recommend an insurance value
Wesson Target Rifle which belonged to Texas Ranger Jack Coffee Hays

*Description from catalog:* Percussion rifle, 42 cal. Percussion New England style target rifle with engraved German silver trigger guard, butt plate, toe plate, and patch box. It has a lead oval inlaid in the left side of the butt stock which has faint lettering on it. Target sights

**Inscription on barrel:**
- Wesson
- Hartford, CT
- Cast Steel

**Condition: Very Good**
- Front sight ring deformed
- Metal on front sight cracked
- Writing on lead oval illegible, looks like "HHH"
- Nicks and gouges in stock
- Wear on silver parts
- Tube holding ram rod is dented
- Ram rod end is broken off
- Wood at bottom of stock broken off
- Some rust on primer nipple and surrounding metal
- Some rust on bottom underside where ram rod rests
- Bore: Very Good, some rust in rifling and in false muzzle holes. Dust
- Possible lost section of the stock
  - Based on the accompanying painting, provenance, and general accuracy of the painting when it comes to the appearance of the rifle, it is possible that the rifle originally had a section of stock running halfway down the barrel, now lost.
- Wear on barrel on left side, some denting
ASSESS PROVENANCE / RESEARCH OWNER
COMPILE COMPARABLE SALES FROM MAJOR AUCTION HOUSES
<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>Date</th>
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JACK HAY’S EDWIN WESSON RIFLE

- Percussion rifle, .42 cal.
- New England style target rifle with engraved German silver trigger guard, butt plate, toe plate, and patch box.
- Lead oval inlayed in the left side of the butt stock which has faint lettering on it.
- Target sights
COL. JACK C. HAYES BY W.S. JEWETT,

APPRECIATION OF ART.—A short time since a gentleman who professed to be a great devotee to art, visited the studio of Mr. Jewett, on Merchant street, and after admiring the painting of Jack Hays, and dwelling with rapt wonder on the Californian landscape representing the Feather river, with the Butte Mountains in the distance, accompanying his admiration with extravagant remarks of praise on the softness of color, desired the artist to give him one or two sittings, and take the pay out in potatoes. With all the intelligence of our population, it must be confessed that there are some “sticks” here.

Alta California Dec 8, 1851
JACK HAYS

• One of the first Texas Rangers
• Served in Texian militia
• Worked as a surveyor
• Served in Mexican War
• Moved to California and was elected sheriff of San Francisco
• Cofounded City of Oakland
THE ENCHANTED ROCK FIGHT

"Sacred Ground" – J. Hester

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ISSUES WITH THE NARRATIVE – THE ROCK

- The real Enchanted Rock bears no resemblance to that of the accounts

“It was of large, conical shape, with a depression at the apex something like the crater of an extinct volcano. A dozen or more men can lie in this place and make a strong defense against largely superior numbers, as the ascent is steep and rugged.” - Sowell

“apex of a high round hill very difficult to climb. In the center of this rock there is a circular hollow sufficiently large to allow a small party of men to lie in it, and its perpendicular sides formed an effective breastwork.” - Wilbarger
ISSUES WITH THE NARRATIVE – THE ROCK

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Copyright Texas Parks and Wildlife
1835 – Wesson opens his shop

1847 – Wesson moves to Hartford

1850 – Hays sits for portrait

c. 1840 – Enchanted Rock Fight

1849 – Wesson dies
COLT WALKER REVOLVER
COLT WALKER REVOLVER

• Manufactured beginning in 1847
• 1 of approximately 1,100
• 1,000 produced for the Texas Rangers in five series
  • Companies A, B, C, D, E
• Additional 100 produced for commercial sales and presentations
• First two sent to Captain Walker in Mexico
• 187 confirmed surviving examples
COLT WALKER REVOLVER
COLT WALKER REVOLVER
WINCHESTER 1873 WHICH BELONGED TO J.B. GILLETTE
WINCHESTER 1873 WHICH BELONGED TO J.B. GILLETTE

• Produced 1873 – 1919
• 720,610 Manufactured
• Produced in three variants
  • Carbine
  • Rifle
  • Musket
J.B. GILLETTE

• June 1, 1875 – Sworn in as Texas Ranger at 19
  • Issued Sharps .50 Cal rifle and one Colt Pistol
• Shot and killed fugitive Dick Dublin
• Assisted in apprehension of bank robber Sam Bass
• Kidnapped a wanted murderer from Mexico
• Retired 1885

Courtesy The Texas Ranger Museum
SIX YEARS WITH THE TEXAS RANGERS

- Gillette’s memoir
- Published 1926
- Used as a history textbook in 17 states
carbine number 13,401, and for the next six years of my ranger career I never used any other weapon. I have killed almost every kind of game that is found in Texas, from the biggest buffalo to a fox squirrel with this little .44 Winchester. Today I still preserve it as a mement of the early days of the Texas Rangers.
COLT SINGLE ACTION ARMY REVOLVER WHICH BELONGED TO CAL ATEN

- Originally produced 1873 to 1940
- Shipped with “soft” finish, indicating aftermarket engraving
- Sent to Hartley and Graham, NYC in November 1885
CAL ATEN

• Ranger Family – Brother Ira
• Joined the Rangers at 19
• Lay in wait for fugitives the Odle Brothers on Christmas Eve 1889
• Retired from the Rangers not long after and worked as a rancher
plain legal assassination. However there would have been someone else assassinated if we hadn't got in the first shots.” Cal Aten felt the logic is easy to grasp. It was a case of them, according to at least one report, Mayor Aten, the civilian posse, hadn't or didn't notice or ambush. After the shooting, his Winches himself was indicted. “You may not have to have you indicted now or not. I expect to make some fees in the matter.” Though from the judicial standpoint Cal Aten knew his actions were defensive, the killing troubled him, at least minimally—but not legally. Later, writing his memoirs Cal reflected:

I have held a dying outlaw [Alvin Odle] in my arms. One of the worst ever-known in the Southwest. Took his pistol out of his dying hand. The same pistol I keep under my mattress now. It was a wonderfully beautiful gun then without a blemish on it, beautiful engraving. I was sorry for that boy. Just a few years older than I and I have often wondered what he would have done had our positions been reversed. Just rode off and left me like a dog, I think, but this would be another story and I intended to tell you of my first scout.”

What Cal Aten, modestly, failed to mention is that taking out the Odle brothers, as least in the mind of Captain Frank Jones, put the lid on an Edwards County crime wave; “and as the detachment moved eastward, the ofcomers floundered in the mud as they pressed forward.”
NOTE
CONCEALED
IN GRIP

“Taken from hand of Alvin Odle as he lay dying at East fork of Bullhead Mt. Edwards Co., Tex. Xmas night 1889”
FAVORITE CURIOSITIES