

The Old 45 Peacemaker

By H. Cody Blake, 21 Greenpoint Avenue, Brooklyn, New York

During the last two years a number of interesting articles have appeared in the different sporting magazines on the old single action 45 pistol, "The Old Peacemaker," and the question asked, "Is the Old 45 Obsolete?" In none of the articles have I crossed the trail of any gent who claims that the old six gun has gone into the discard. Recently it was suggested to me that I express my opinion on the subject which interests particularly the old timers. I'm of the same opinion as those who have eased their minds in articles I have read and I'll make a few observations on the old Colt with the hope that others, especially the old case hardened, all alkali and hard luck sports, will follow suit.

My earliest recollection is playing with an old cap and ball Colt, the old "Walker." It was my first toy. For the best part of forty years I have packed a 45 during which time I got up as far as Seattle and hiked south as far as Mexico City. I have gone over nearly all of the old Spanish Trail from St. Augustine, Florida to San Diego, California. I have checker boarded fourteen of the twenty-six Mexican states and hit about all of the high spots in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Oklahoma. I packed a Colt for three years of the last Mexican Revolution and took it along "Over There" in 1914 to France and Belgium. I went to England in 1919 and returned to God's country in '22 when I took it off and shook the loads out of it, out of fear but not respect of the Sullivan law. Years ago folks went armed in the West for protection as it was necessary. You were safe to go unheeded in New York and the East. Today the condition is the reverse as New York City is harder than El Paso, Dodge, Deadwood or Frisco ever thought of being.

A good portion of those early years were in the saddle and when I was on a "hoss" I lugged along the one and only rifle, the old 44 Winchester. Now while it's nothing about which to brag and I'm not proud of it but I'm right now claiming to have fired at more human

beings and Mexicans with a 45 S. A. Colt between 1911 and 1918 than any living native born American. With three others, two of whom had punched cows for years in Texas and the other was no tenderfoot, I rode out of Mexico at Juarez in 1914 after three years of it in that section of the heritage, having done our share of reducing the census among the greasers. I was in the scrap in France and Belgium from 1914 to the finish, and being a non-combatant and supposed to be unarmed so had nothing for arms but my Colt which I used often enough to keep in practice.

The question is "Is the old 45 obsolete?" and I say "No." There are more single action Colts in "active service" in Mexico than all the other pistols put together, including American, French, German, Spanish, and British. Of these the last one, the English "Webley," is by far the best of the foreign makes, but it is not in the same category as the Colt, not on your tin type. The "Made in Spain" guns are the poorest. They are made up to imitate the good old Smith and Wesson. This Spanish defender is a dud and a dead card. You're safe in front of it for it won't hit a barn door thirty feet off, and seeing as how Greasers, like Injuns, do not savy the hind sight, there's no more chance of a Mexican hitting anybody with it than there'd be of a celluloid dog catching an asbestos cat in a chase through Hell. I met many British officers during the war packing the Webley and a lot had a Colt. As prejudiced and clannish as they are and ignorant concerning revolvers and cartridges as the average Britisher is, I don't recall one ever trying to run the blazer that the Webley had anything on the Colt.

I could have traded all the Colts I could get for Webleys. Is it obsolete? Just try to buy a second hand one in New York City and says he can't get one. The oldest and widest known dealer in old firearms in the world is in New York City and says he can't get

enough of 'em because the S. A. Colt is in such demand.

Regarding the West I have been away since 1914 so I can't speak authoritatively of present conditions but I'm pushing in all my chips that the old Peacemaker is just as numerous and popular as it was eleven years ago, and is now, as it was then and always has been, the one and only recognized pistol. I made a round up of the boys and Injuns, Sioux, seventy-five of 'em, in a rodeo I was with here last June and found eight Colts, five were the old S. A. 45, two were 38's and one, shown me by an old buck, was a relic of the Custer affair. The old Colt will never become obsolete and go into the discard in favor of the automatic until the new fangled guns become simpler in construction.

The West, particularly the southwest, is no place for a pistol with small, frail springs and a time lock device, or escapement hee-haw. It's too much like a dollar watch and no gent will pin his faith, which means risk getting hived, to an automatic carried in an open holster where there is dust or mud. It may buck and then where are you?

One of the features that made the old frontier Colt so popular, back in the early days when everybody packed one, was that any cowpuncher, blacksmith, or saddle mender could do any little repairing it needed. Nobody ever went looking for a hammer to drive nails or tacks, the butt of a Colt was so convenient. If the old Colt required pulling apart you could do it and put her together again. This was back in the good old days when anybody who knew the difference 'tween whiskey and water could tend bar. The 45 will never be replaced by a lighter, smaller caliber revolver on the border so long as the Greasers pack the old gum. The peace officers, marshals, sheriffs, deputies, and town "Bulls" of the southwest will never shift to automatics or small calibers while they have to contend with the big bore.

It's no use drawing conclusion from conditions in the East. Here it is too crowded, lack of room, misunderstands or fails to savey the West. The frontier Colt has been the defense of more good men, the protector of more homes,

saved from death or capture by Injuns more women and kids, upheld law and order in more instances, been the finish of more bad characters, and done more to civilize the West than all the pistols ever manufactured.

As for the question "Will it become obsolete?" It may, when Mexico becomes civilized and stops inaugurating a revolution every pay day; when the Greaser becomes sufficiently patriotic to fight only for liberty and his rights; when the Mexican soldiers no longer desert from one side to the other by squads and companies for a few pesos or at request; when the so-called "bad" men and hard characters no longer exist down there and on this side of the Rio Grande; when the increased population together with the railroads, electricity, autos, trolleys, schools, movies and last but not least the churches "Easternize" the West, especially the Southwest, and it becomes as safe day and night as is Philadelphia on Sunday; when the constantly increasing farms reduce the size of the range till they become small enough to ride 'em with a Ford; when the cowpuncher is to be seen only in the movies wearing a necktie, silk shirt and kid gloves; when the Texas saddle and chapps, Mexican spurs, ropes and quirts, become memories of the past; when it becomes a violation of the town or city ordinance to pack or shake out the loads of a 45; then and not until then do I figure on the old pacifier becoming a dead card.

Happily this calamity isn't going to occur this year nor in our time. The manufacturers of the Frontier Colt which has done so much for the West and which has ever been the reliance of those who kept the law, the corrector and reprover of those who broke it, and a terror to, and the death of, those who defied it, will continue to make it, advertise it and sell it, upheld by all who possess it in their claim "The favorite of the Old and New West." More of these guns have been produced than any other revolver ever manufactured.

Samuel Colt wrought better than he knew.

Tell your friends about Frontier Times.

Old Amy, the Seminole Squaw

Written by John Warren Hunter in 1910

She was known to three generations as "Amy," and her acquaintance extended from Colorado to the Rio Grande. She had an Indian name but it is doubtful if any of her Texan descendants, of which she had quite a number, even learned to pronounce it. She gave me her Seminole maiden name, which I wrote on a slip of paper, and remembered it no more.

Amy was a first cousin to the celebrated chieftain, Osceola; at least that was her statement and I am led to believe her claim was just, as she told me more of the boyhood, manhood and warlike prowess of the great Seminole than I had ever been able to gather from the written history of the Florida Indians and the Seminole War. She was a maiden in 1817 when, with the Creeks, the Seminoles waged war against the whites in Georgia, and remembered seeing Gen. Jackson when some of the chiefs signed a treaty and agreed to a removal west of the Mississippi, in 1822. Osceola repudiated this agreement and with a handful of his followers retired to the Everglades, and for eight years maintained a war that cost the United States thousands of lives and ten million dollars. Being of the Osceola family, Amy followed the fortunes of her chieftain, and in the end witnessed his downfall.

As the world knows, Osceola was entrapped by means of the most shameful treachery on the part of those in command of the American troops in Florida, and he was told that if his people did not come in and surrender, at the end of ten days he would be hanged.

According to Amy's story, when the interpreter read this sentence Osceola rose to his feet and, with the hauteur of an Indian prince, told his captors that for eight long years he had led his warriors against a powerful nation in defense of the land the Great Spirit had given their fathers; that he had told them to neither ask nor give quarter, and that he would not now ask them to surrender as it would be useless and, furthermore, it would be beneath the dignity of a Semi-

nole warrior to ask others to do that which he would scorn to do himself.

"Then you have no message to send to your people?" demanded the American commander, when he found that his prisoner was so defiant. "Yes; I would send a message to my people," said Osceola, and taking up a piece of soft pine, with his knife he fashioned a stick with flat sides and about two feet long. To one end of this stick he tied securely a white feather, and to the other end a black feather. He next cut ten notches on the edge of this stick near the middle, and then gave it to Amy's mother, who chanced to be present and who, with a son 12 years old, was to carry the message to the tribe in the recesses of the Everglades. He instructed her to carry this stick to his people and tell them that on the going down of each day's sun to cut out one of these notches and that when, on the evening of the tenth day, they had cut out the last notch they would know that Osceola was no more.

This remnant of the Seminole tribe divided, some coming in and surrendering, while a portion went on board a Spanish ship and escaped to Mexico, where their descendants are yet living.

Amy was not a full blood Indian. She was a quadroon negro, above the average in size and stature of the American woman. In physical strength she had been a giantess, and up to the time of her accidental death at an age which was doubtless bordering on or past the century mark, she was more active than many of her sex who have not reached their twentieth year.

She told me of the passage of the remnant of her tribe from Pensacola to New Orleans, and the long voyage by boat from New Orleans up the Mississippi to the Arkansas and the slow trip up the Arkansas to Fort Gibson, and how glad they were to reach their allotted hunting grounds in the Indian Territory. She was a widow with two children nearly grown at time, her first husband having fallen while fighting at the side of her cousin, Osceola. The Seminoles

were moved to the Territory in 1838. Amy said that after they had been there about two years dissension arose in the tribe and a band, of whom she and her husband (she had married again) were members, left the Territory and under the leadership of Wild Cat started to Mexico intent on joining their tribesmen who had gone from Florida. On reaching Eagle Pass, her husband was employed by the government as a post guide, scout and trailer, while the rest of the band crossed into Mexico and joined their kindred in the Santa Rosa Mountains. Two years later her husband was killed in an action between the Regulars and Comanches, after which Amy continued to reside about the army posts. It is not known when she came to Fredericksburg, but old pioneers who remember the building of Fort Martin Scott along about '49 or '50 recall having seen Amy, the Seminole, living nearby. When Fort Mason was established Amy was early on the ground and remained in the vicinity the rest of her days. Children—girls—she raised and these married Mexicans, and in her latter days she resided with a grand-daughter who had grand-children nearly grown.

A year before she died Amy came to me and said she wanted to go back to her people in the Indian Territory. This was at Mason in 1898, and she asked me to correspond with the chief of the Seminoles and learn if they would receive her back into the tribe. As proof of her identity she gave me a list of the names of a number of the most prominent chiefs and braves whom she knew in Florida and later in the Territory, and also her Indian name and that of her husband. I wrote Governor Brown, chief of the Seminoles at that time, and in reply he informed me that this woman was without question a member of the Seminole tribe, as she was remembered by survivors who once knew her; that her name appeared in the tribal record of 1838; that she was a kinswoman of Osceola, and that a vast sum in the way of tribal annuities awaited her, all of which latter she had forfeited when she left the territory of the United States and crossed the Rio Grande and took up her abode with the renegade remnant of the Seminole nation in Mexico. I read

Governor Brown's letter to Amy and she declared that she had never been in Mexico, altho' her cousin, Juan Cano, a noted bandit and chief among the Lipans and Seminoles in that region, had often visited her clandestinely and importuned her to go to his people. She had always remained in Texas and in proof of this fact she cited a Mr. Parker, an old scout and ranger, who then lived near Mason and had known her since the day she and her husband first reached Eagle Pass. Armed with her statement and the testimony of Mr. Parker, I again wrote to Governor Brown who, at the time, being in Washington, my letter remained unanswered until his return.

Like all her race, Old Amy had a consuming thirst for strong drink. I never heard of her being drunk, and never heard any of her many acquaintances say they had ever seen her intoxicated. When exceedingly dry, she would go to the saloon, buy her whiskey, pay for it and go on her way. I think it was in the summer of 1899 when Amy met a premature death. She was then living with her grand-daughter in Fredericksburg, and had come up to Mason alone, a distance of 45 miles, to see me about the Governor Brown correspondence. She was driving a gentle pony harnessed to an open-top buggy, and on the morning of her departure for Fredericksburg she called at Mart Moran's saloon in Mason, bought a quart bottle of whiskey, and set out on her homeward journey. Ten miles south of Mason was Mrs. Anna Martin's store and residence. On this particular day there were quite a number of people about the store. These were almost transfixed by the sudden appearance of a horse and vehicle coming down the road at lightning speed, leaving in their wake clouds of dust and a volume of smoke that seemed to spin out its serpentine shape and length to the sky. The fleeing horse was turned out of the main road and took up against a tree, and the fire which was consuming the vehicle was extinguished, not, however, before the bed of the buggy had been almost destroyed. The poor horse's tail was as bare and brown as that of a river rat; every hair had been burnt off and it was the flames

(Continued on Page 48).

Mrs. Rebecca J. Fisher

Mrs. Rebecca J. Fisher, affectionately known as "the mother of the Republic," died March 19. She had been ill for several weeks and because of her great age her death was not unexpected.

Her name was always spoken in reverence, she being affectionately known by all over the State as "the mother of Texas," as she was a charter member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the organization which she has served as president for many years. With her passing, Mrs. H. H. Sevier of Austin, first vice president of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, becomes president of the organization.

Mrs. Fisher is survived by her daughter, Mrs. R. J. Blandford of Austin; two granddaughters, Mrs. Ben Wright of Austin and Mrs. H. M. Little of Austin, and great grandson, Ben F. Wright Jr., adjunct professor of government of the University of Texas. Two great granddaughters in New York also survive her.

Mrs. Fisher was Rebecca Jane Gilleland of Philadelphia, Pa., and was born August 31, 1831.

When she was only a small child her father joined a party of friends who planned to aid the Texas Republic in its struggle against Mexican supremacy and the family came by water to Galveston. There were three children, Rebecca Jane, Thomas Battle and William McCalla. From Galveston the family went to Refugio County and the father entered the army under Captain Thromaison.

Released from the army subject to recall, he returned to look after his family and it was at this time that he and his wife were killed by Indians and the two children. Rebecca and William, were taken captive. Thomas, the other son, had died after the family had come to

For a day and night the children were carried along by their captors until soldier comrades of their father, who had heard of the tragedy and set out in pursuit, began to press them when they were left for dead, Rebecca from a blow on the head with a heavy instrument and the boy from a wound through the body.

Mrs. Fisher told the story of her capture by the Indians on the occasion of her

ninety-fourth birthday anniversary, eighty-six years after the incident occurred and she spoke of the incident with remarkable clearness of memory.

Mrs. Fisher in that interview did not remember how long she remained unconscious, but when she survived she saw figures approaching in the distance and, thinking they were the Indians returning, she dragged her little brother to the shelter of near-by woods and there the two children lay suffering from hunger, thirst and terror, until called by their names by the soldiers and assured they were friends. Albert Sidney Johnston was a member of the rescuing party and Mrs. Fisher related how the soldiers wept over the pitiful plight of the two helpless children, orphaned, grievously wounded, their eyes swollen from weeping, their clothing torn and blood-stained.

The two children were placed with a family which lived near by and later taken to the home of a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Mr. Blair, in Victoria, who cared for them with the love and kindness of a father. The plan was to take them to their father's sister, Mrs. Jane Trimble, who lived in Galveston, but the unsettled condition of the country and the danger from hostile Mexicans and marauding bands of Indians delayed this plan for many months. They were finally taken to Galveston to this aunt with whom they remained for several years.

In 1844 Rebecca was sent to Ruetersville Female College, the only college in the State, which drew its students from Houston, Galveston, LaGrange and other true by the Indians on the occasion of her and here she was married in May, 1846, to the Rev. Oreenith Fisher, a Methodist minister. The young wife entered into her husband's work with untiring zeal and together they served churches in Texas, Oregon and California. Finally the importunities of Texas friends called them back to finish their life work in Texas and in 1872 they were in Austin in charge of the First Methodist Church on Tenth Street. Dr. Fisher died many years ago