

357 MAGNUM BRASS

– LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #67 –

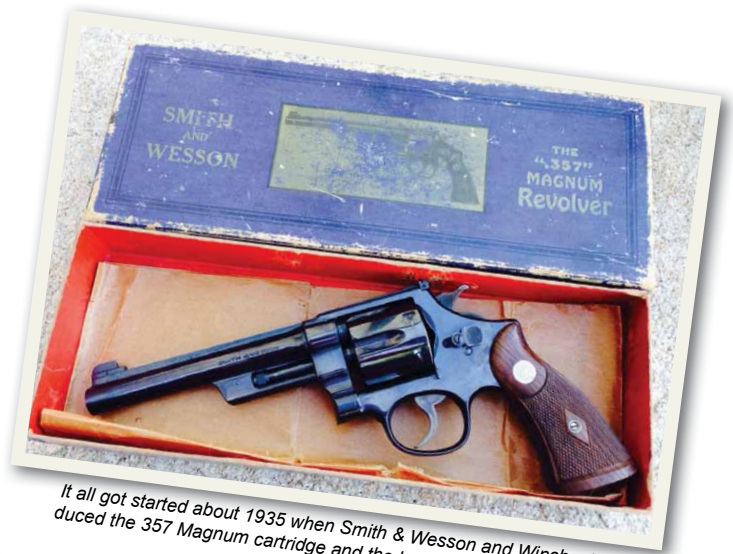
Important changes often come from small, unknown companies, rather than large and long established ones; such was certainly the case with the availability of bulk reloading components. It all started with unprimed cartridge brass – and two unknown companies – Midway and Starline.

The chain of events goes like this – in 1969, Sierra Bullets, of Santa Fe Springs, CA, sold out to The Leisure Group, who hired Bob Hayden – a young engineer from the Lake City Army Ammunition Plant in Independence, MO – to run their new company. Paul Knepp and Frank Snow (former Sierra Bullet owners) and Bob Hayden incorporated Starline to make cartridge cases. They started from scratch with surplus arsenal equipment, refurbishing and building their own tooling; first production was 38 Special in 1979, followed by 357 Magnum in 1980.

In late 1980, Midway learned that Starline was looking for someone to distribute their 38 and 357 Magnum brass. For an initial order of 200,000 pieces, Starline would put the Midway headstamp on each case at no extra

charge. We placed the order, becoming their first distributor – and also put ads in Shotgun News; the phone rang and the mail came – and our industry started changing.

The brass came packaged in large drums and needed to be repackaged by the 1,000 for sale. We designed and ordered the boxes, then bought an electronic scale for \$1,800 -- pretty new technology in 1980. Finding the source of the cases, ordering boxes, buying an electronic scale, creating a repackaging process and special



It all got started about 1935 when Smith & Wesson and Winchester introduced the 357 Magnum cartridge and the large-frame revolver to fire it in.

advertising were all barriers that kept traditional companies out, but allowed an unknown like Midway to get started.

Starline added other handgun calibers and Midway offered them to the trade; then, three other important events occurred. First, Winchester, not wanting to be left out, began to offer bulk brass in 1984; our first order was for over a million dollars.

**"...our industry
started changing."**

Second, in 1986, the Firearms Owners Protection Act (Volkmer/McClure) became law; it amended the 1968 Gun Control Act to allow for the sale of ammunition and reloading components to 'individuals' across state lines. Third, last, and just before our tenth anniversary in 1987, Remington began offering bulk components and we became a distributor. No one could have predicted in 1980 the future impact that the original order of 357 Magnum brass would have on Midway, Starline and the reloading products and shooting sports industry. But today, it's quite clear.

**USA
Midway**

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The addition of a carbide steel insert, into the bottom of the resizing die, made reloading both the 38 Special and 357 Magnum a lot easier.



A dream come true for many reloaders in the early 1980s was a batch of fresh, shiny 357 Magnum brass, ready for loading.