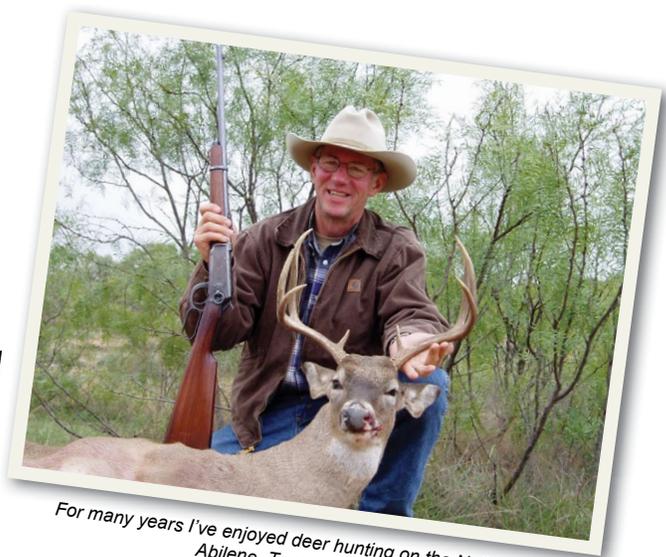


My FAVORITE 30-30 RIFLE

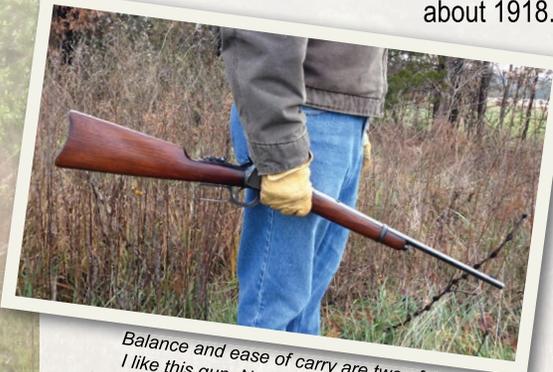
— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #91 —



For many years I've enjoyed deer hunting on the Nail Ranch, near Abilene, Texas; usually, I take my favorite 30-30.

It just seems right for a man to have a 30-30 lever action rifle and to find the time to use it, for its intended purpose. For me, that's mostly whitetail deer and coyotes, with an occasional rattlesnake and some target practice thrown in. Actually, my favorite 30-30 rifle is not technically a rifle at all; it's a Winchester Model 94 Saddle Ring Carbine with a 20" barrel.

The 1894 Winchester was John Browning's contribution to the design of the lever action rifle. He also designed the Model 1886 and 1892 lever actions, introduced by Winchester in those respective years. The 1894 was made in both rifle (longer barrel) and carbine (shorter barrel) versions, with the carbine standing the test of time. The model number was shortened from 1894 to simply 94, about 1918.



Balance and ease of carry are two of the reasons I like this gun. Notice the button magazine, which improves the balance and reduces the weight to only six and a quarter pounds.

The 30-30 is an old cartridge; Winchester introduced it in 1895 in their 1894 lever action rifles and carbines. It was called the 30 WCF

(Winchester Center Fire), and so marked on the barrels, until after WW II; then it was changed to 30-30. When the folks at Marlin began chambering their 1893 lever actions for this cartridge, shortly after Winchester, they called it the 30-30; and that name stuck. 30-30 means 30 caliber, 30 grains of powder. This cartridge was a game changer for hunters – a smokeless powder round that was powerful enough to kill anything on the continent; and the guns were lightweight and easy to carry.

Dad had a Marlin 30-30 carbine for hunting whitetail deer and through the years I've owned several lever action 30-30s made by Winchester, Marlin and Savage, but none of them ever gave me that special feeling. Then, at the Tulsa Gun Show one spring, I found what has become my favorite 30-30.

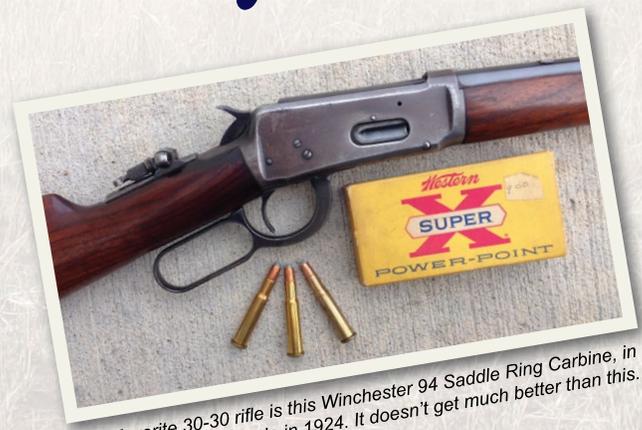
"The 30-30 is an old cartridge..."

Possibly the button magazine is the tipping point. It changes the lines of the barrel end of the gun, provides a slight reduction in weight and a minor change in the balance point.

This is a carry gun; it's so lightweight (6-1/4 pounds) and easy to carry that a sling simply isn't necessary. With a round in the chamber and the hammer on half-cock, it smoothly moves from the carry position to a well-sighted round downrange on a running coyote in a couple of seconds. It carries well, points well and shoots well; no wonder it's my favorite 30-30 rifle.



Larry Potterfield
The Nail Ranch
Albany, Texas
November 5, 2006



My favorite 30-30 rifle is this Winchester 94 Saddle Ring Carbine, in 30 WCF, made in 1924. It doesn't get much better than this.