

My Favorite Single Shot .22 Rifle

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #97 —

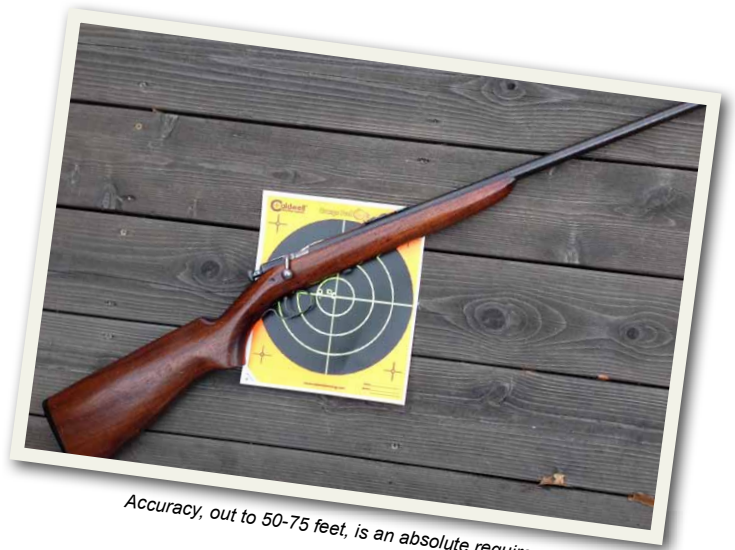
There's nothing in my childhood memories about shooting or hunting with a single shot .22 rifle. Dad had an old worn-out falling block .22, of some sort - that he used for killing hogs, when we butchered; but I don't remember ever shooting it. The .22 that dad always used for rabbits and squirrels was his Remington Model 12, pump action repeater; it was this gun with which I learned to shoot, when I was a kid.

So my experience with .22 single shot rifles, and the opportunity to choose a favorite, came after I was an adult, and began going to gun shows -- building a modest collection of guns. At the larger shows, a man could observe and handle most of the .22 single shot rifles ever made. At the Tulsa Gun Show (Fall - 2001), I saw my

first Winchester Model 60 and bought it. The sleek lines, weight and the balance of this little .22 were simply amazing, so I began to study it seriously.

As it turns out, this particular model was only produced for four years, in the

early 1930s. The Winchester Model 60 was the sixth generation of a bolt action rifle design that John Browning sold to Winchester in 1899. From this design, Winchester produced the Model 1900, 1902, 1904, 58, 59, 60, 67 and 68, .22 single shot rifles. The 1900 had an 18" barrel and only weighed two pounds-thirteen ounces; the Model 67 had a 27" barrel and weighed four pounds-fifteen ounces. Half-way through that run of models, Winchester achieved near-perfection, with the early production Model 60s. The early guns featured a walnut stock, without finger grooves,



Accuracy, out to 50-75 feet, is an absolute requirement. This rifle weighs four pounds-four ounces.

and a 23" barrel. During later production the stock was changed to gumwood, finger grooves were added and the barrel length increased to 27". In 1934, Winchester added a wing-type safety, made the bolt handle a little larger, went back to a walnut stock and renamed it the Model 67, which stayed in production through 1963.

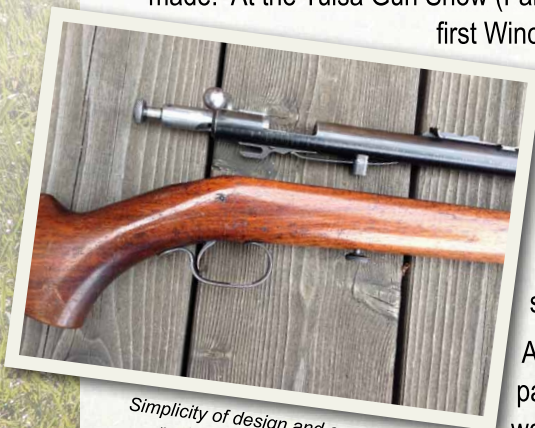
"The true test of a .22 rifle is..."

The true test of a .22 rifle is whether it's accurate, convenient and comfortable to carry - looks good and works every time you pull the trigger. In my mind, there is no gun that passes all those tests better than the early production Winchester Model 60, and that's the reason it is my favorite single shot .22 rifle.



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Simplicity of design and easy takedown are part of John Browning's original design.



For a kid growing up, or an adult like myself (who never grew up), rabbit hunting with a favorite .22 rifle is always a pleasant experience.