

# My Favorite Part of RELOADING

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #168 –

Reloading and shooting often go together; but they’re separate hobbies — reloading requires less cash than factory ammunition, which allows for more shooting. Someone once said that when an old shooter/reloader dies, you can tell which hobby he liked best, because old shooters depart this world with all their cases empty, while old reloaders depart with all their cases full. My cases may be half-full and half-empty.

Reloading falls into six or so categories: shotgun shells, handgun ammo, modern rifle ammo, black powder cartridges, obsolete calibers and wildcatting. The first three simply require good components and processes to make good ammunition. However, black powder cartridges, obsolete cartridges and wildcatting can be a different story.

While I enjoy all reloading, the most satisfying has been obsolete calibers, when it has been necessary to modify cases to a different caliber, and cast and prepare suitable bullets.

My first effort at modifying cases was converting 30-06 military

to 7x57 (7mm Mauser), back in the early 1970s, when you couldn’t find 7x57 cases. The process was simple — clean, anneal, size, shorten to 57mm and anneal again. I made about 50 for my 1893 Mauser; that was quite a project.

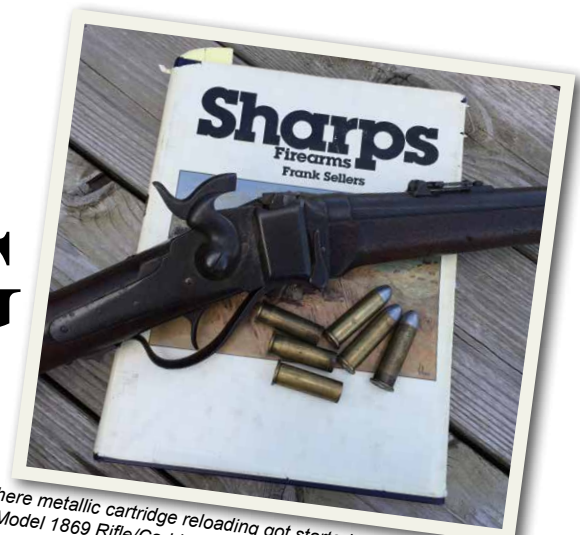
Later, I bought a Trapdoor Springfield, and began casting bullets and reloading for the 45-70 Government cartridge. Smokeless powder and cast bullets made from linotype metal was the recipe. I sized them .458, which is .001 over modern

bore diameter for the 45-70. But, back in the Trapdoor Springfield days the bore diameter was more like .462; which I didn’t know. My bullets key-holed at 50 yards! As I now know, in the old days, it was common practice for many military calibers to have a bore quite a bit larger than the bullet, relying on the pressure of firing to expand the soft lead or thin-jacketed bullet to fill the grooves. It worked well.

**"Getting old guns to shoot by handcrafting the ammunition..."**

Since then I’ve converted 30 Remington to 25 Remington and 8mm Nambu; and used 45-70 cases to make 33, 38-56 and 40-65 Winchester. I’ve made 50 US Army handgun ammo, by trimming a bunch off 50-70 cases, then milling the top off a bullet mold to reduce the weight from 450 to 300 grains. A batch of vintage 10 gauge brass shotgun shells were cleaned, sized, trimmed and loaded with black powder. That was rewarding. Getting old guns to shoot by handcrafting the ammunition, is still my favorite part of reloading.

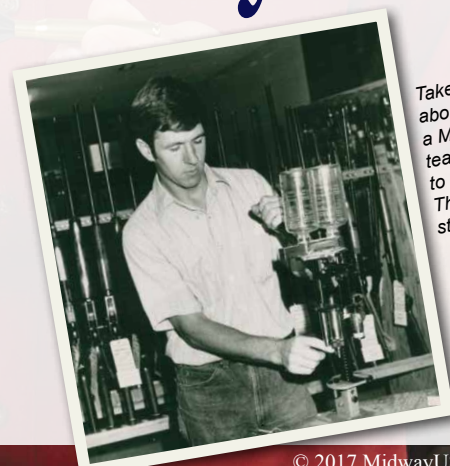
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*This is where metallic cartridge reloading got started (about 1870-1872), the Sharps Model 1869 Rifle/Carbine and the 50-70 Government cartridge.*



*On the GunTec set, I'm using RCBS equipment to reload a batch of 30-06 cartridges. Today's reloaders have the very highest quality and best selection of reloading equipment ever offered.*



*Taken in our retail store about 1982, I'm using a MEC Model 700 to teach a Customer how to reload shotgun shells. This is the same model I started with in 1970.*