

# The MEDICINE GUN for Lions

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #11 —

It's fair to call me traditional, plus I'm a gun collector and like to hunt. Rolling those three things together is the basis for this story. As a gun collector, old Winchester lever action rifles have always fascinated me. Everyone knows that the Winchester 1873 was the gun that won the west, but not as many people know about the last and most-powerful of these guns, the Model 1895. This model is best remembered for its most-powerful chambering, the 405 Winchester, and Teddy Roosevelt's referral to it as "the medicine gun for lions" in his famous African safari of 1909/1910. Most serious Winchester collections include a Winchester 1895 in 405 Winchester; mine certainly does.

But remember, I am not just a gun collector but also a hunter – a safari hunter; so it seemed perfectly logical for a traditional person like me to take my 405 to Africa and shoot a lion with it.

It was Brenda's safari car that first spotted the lion, guarding what was left of a buffalo he had killed the day before. Circling vultures had led them to the kill site. Fortunately for me, Brenda didn't have a lion license; so that evening over dinner my PH and I made plans to go after that lion first thing the next morning. Since the Model 1895 wasn't designed for a scope, it was important not to arrive before there was enough light to see the open sights. The lion was two hours from camp, so we were up quite early, to arrive at first shooting light – 6:00 am.



*Upon returning to camp, the staff celebrated the success of the hunter, in killing the lion.*

We went in from downwind, very, very quietly through the bush and into the opening of the kill site, but the lion wasn't there – at least not where we thought he would be. But then he challenged us from a slightly different position, trotting straight toward his kill, and us, stopping about 125 yards out.

“It was a standoff for a few seconds...”

It was a standoff for a few seconds; that was the limit of my range, but I wouldn't take a frontal shot. Then he turned and walked away, at which time my PH roared like a lion. The brute stopped and turned broadside.

My shot was on the mark and the 405 did its job, just as it had for Roosevelt a hundred years earlier.

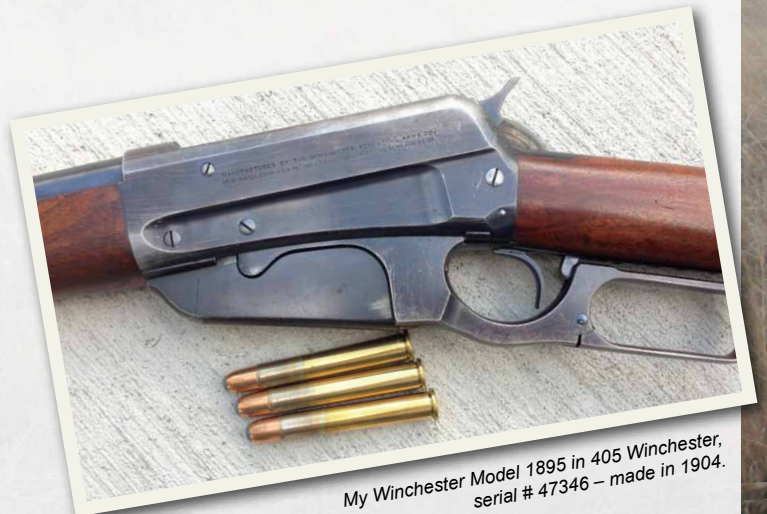
Larry Potterfield

Luwele Camp  
Selous Game Reserve  
Tanzania, Africa  
8 December 2003

**USA**  
**Midway**



*A fine lion, shot with a grand old rifle.*



*My Winchester Model 1895 in 405 Winchester, serial # 47346 – made in 1904.*