

DEER & COYOTE

a Texas Pair

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #25 —

The Nail Ranch has lots and lots of whitetail deer – and a fair number of coyotes. In my many hunts there I have almost always got my buck and sometimes shot a doe or two for herd management; and every trip or two I get a coyote. In the early days, this was a true western hunt; we had a tented camp in a far off pasture called northwest Collins. Each morning we saddled up our horses, grabbed our Winchester saddle ring carbines and headed out to hunt. Besides the hunting and camp camaraderie, the very best part was the chuck wagon with an award-winning cook. He prepared three wonderful squares each day and told us stories around the campfire after dinner.



"That's a pretty-nice buck" said the guide, and he was quite surprised when I blasted the coyote first.

Time changes everything, they say; the old cook retired, the horses were replaced with pickup trucks, and we gave up the tented camp for the bunk house. It's still a wonderful hunting experience, but certainly not like the old days. For me personally, I haven't given up the tradition of the old guns and always take a period Winchester, Remington or Sharps rifle from the 19th or early 20th century.

This ranch is a great place to rattle for bucks during the rut, as the buck to doe ratio is quite high. A routine morning or afternoon is to drive around in the pickup, stopping at every canyon or mesquite flat where the wind is right and see what we can rattle up. Most of the deer we shoot there come in to the rattle.



When deciding to shoot the coyote, it never occurred to me that the buck would hold, but he was with a doe that was bedded nearby – and never moved.

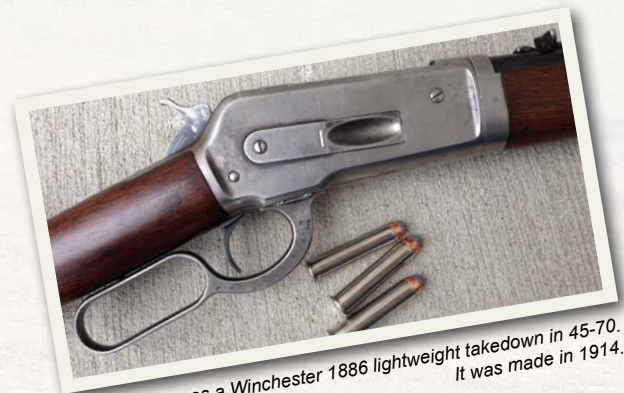
However this particular afternoon we were looking over the flats and spotted this nice buck a ways off, and began the stalk. We were moving slowly through the scattered mesquite trees and had gotten undetected to within 125 yards – my self-imposed maximum for the open-sighted carbine. Then all of a sudden a coyote came into view from the right side at about 80 yards.

"That's a pretty nice buck."

The guide said "that's a pretty-nice buck"; my response was that there were lots of nice bucks on the Nail and the coyote would be first. Maybe we would still have a chance at the buck. The coyote fell from a single shot and the buck didn't move an inch, so I levered another round into my Winchester and fired again. One coyote and one deer – about five seconds apart.



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Shackelford County
Albany, Texas
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My rifle was a Winchester 1886 lightweight takedown in 45-70. It was made in 1914.