

Whitetail with a WINCHESTER 1895

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #227 —

This was our eighth annual Cowboy Hunt at the Nail Ranch in Shackelford County, Texas; it was always the first weekend of November, when Texas opened up their firearms season. As usual, we arrived at the ranch and drove to the campsite Friday evening. It was all set up and waiting for us; kind of like a homecoming. We enjoyed our traditional champagne toasts, then a great chuck wagon dinner, followed by gossip and tall tales around the campfire — till the cobwebs filled our heads, and we headed to our tents.

Before first light on Saturday morning, our guides had the horses saddled and waiting patiently. We ate our normal breakfast of biscuits and gravy along with bacon and eggs and coffee, and pocketed an extra biscuit for a mid-morning snack. Then, we slid our rifles

into the scabbards and rode off in different directions, in the cool November air, looking for Mr. Big. The first morning was always very exciting.

Through the years, my gun strategy had evolved from always bringing the same Winchester 1894 saddle ring carbine to bringing a different gun each year. Since this was a Cowboy hunt, the gun needed to be something that a cowboy might have used in the period of 1880-1920; not a replica, but an original gun from that period.

This year my choice was a Winchester Model 1895 (95) Saddle Ring Carbine, in 30/40 Krag. It was a late



Nothing special about this 8-pointer, but the 1895 Winchester Saddle Ring Carbine in 30/40 Krag was a special rifle to shoot him with.

production gun (made in 1932). Sure, this particular gun was a little late for the Cowboy period, but Winchester had been making it since 1895 so I felt ok with it.

As usual, this was a three-day hunt, filled with rattling and riding and rattling some more — always seeing lots of small bucks, but never just the one we were looking for.

"...something that a cowboy might have used..."

On the morning of the third day, being a little less fussy by now, I decide to shoot the next nice buck that came to the rattle; and there he was. We saw him about 250 yards out and he was coming straight in; but for whatever reason he hung up about 145 yards out. That's quite a stretch for a short-barreled saddle ring carbine with open sights, but it was what it was. Sitting in a small brush pile, I laid the rifle across a 4" limb, squeezed the trigger ever so slowly and made the shot.

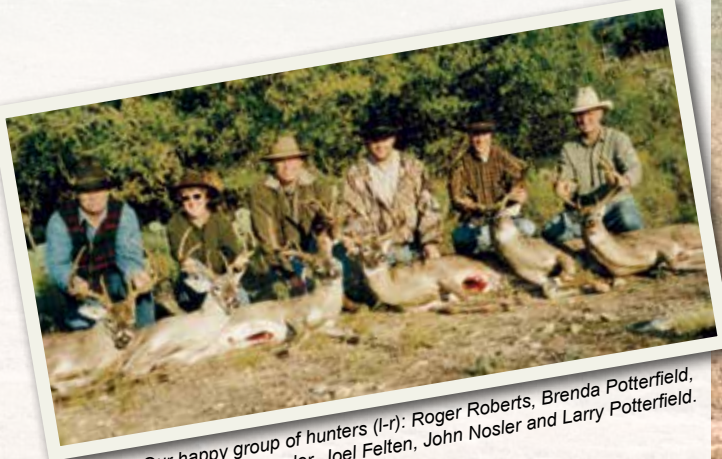


This was a "Cowboy" hunt and we hunted from horseback, riding from one mesquite flat or canyon to the next, rattling for deer. Lots of cactus and a few rattlesnakes.



Larry Potterfield

Western Camp
The Nail Ranch
Albany, Texas
November 2001



Our happy group of hunters (l-r): Roger Roberts, Brenda Potterfield, Bob Nosler, Joel Felten, John Nosler and Larry Potterfield.