

A Pair of WESTLEY RICHARDS Shotguns

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #229 —

On the 15th of August in 1851, the great firm of Westley Richards of Birmingham, England, recorded the delivery of these guns to the man who presumably commissioned them to be built, Lord John Frederick Gordon Hallyburton, from Hallyburton House near Coupar Angus, Scotland (about 50 miles north of Edinburgh). It was Lord Hallyburton's 52nd birthday and since grouse season opened on August 12, we might presume that he put them to use immediately on the grouse moors of southern Scotland or northern England.

Lord Hallyburton (1799-1878) had a substantial position in English nobility; he was a member of Parliament from 1841-1851, and served as an officer in the Royal Navy, attaining the rank of full Admiral. We don't know how long his Lordship owned these guns, how often he got to shoot with them, or what the entire chain of

ownership has been up to this point; but it's likely they held a place of honor with their owner, as they have been very well cared for.

From hangtags inside the case, these guns were shipped from W. Keith Neal, a leading antique arms dealer from Bishopstrow House, Warminster, England via Naumes Forwarding Service in Chicago, IL to Mr. A. J. Crowley of 1901 Fairfax St., Denver 7, Colorado. Based on Mr. Neal's address at Bishopstrow House and the beginning of the United States zip code, this shipment seems to have occurred between 1950 and 1963. Although Lord Hallyburton died in 1878 and had no children of his own, presumably the guns were passed down to his oldest living male heir, and then, and then – until someone lost



The pair of guns, with accessories and components, in their original case —with top shelf in front. The case is made of mahogany, with brass corners and is lined with wool blaise cloth.

interest and they were bought by Mr. Neal and shipped to a collector in America.

These Westleys came into my possession through AuctionArms.com in September 2010, from Sunrise Pass Arms Co, in Minden, NV. One of the ramrods had apparently been lost or broken and poorly replaced, so we made a

"...he put them to use immediately..."

faithful replacement. One interesting note is that the silver stock ovals feature leaping dolphins, rather than initials – possibly because of Lord Hallyburton's long naval career.

Happy Birthday to these fine old shotguns, and also happy birthday to Lord Hallyburton. While percussion shotguns like these have been mostly obsolete for 150 years, perhaps one day I, or a future owner, will take them back to Scotland on the 15th of August – visit Hallyburton House and shoot a few grouse with them.

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15 August 2018



They are a matched pair of 14 bore muzzleloaders (between 12 and 16 gauge), with 30.5" length barrels. Serial #s are 7588 and 7589.



Loading a muzzleloader is a very methodical process. The powder and shot flasks dispense fixed charges; the wads must go in proper order and the primers go on last.