

The Remington ROLLING BLOCK

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #258 –

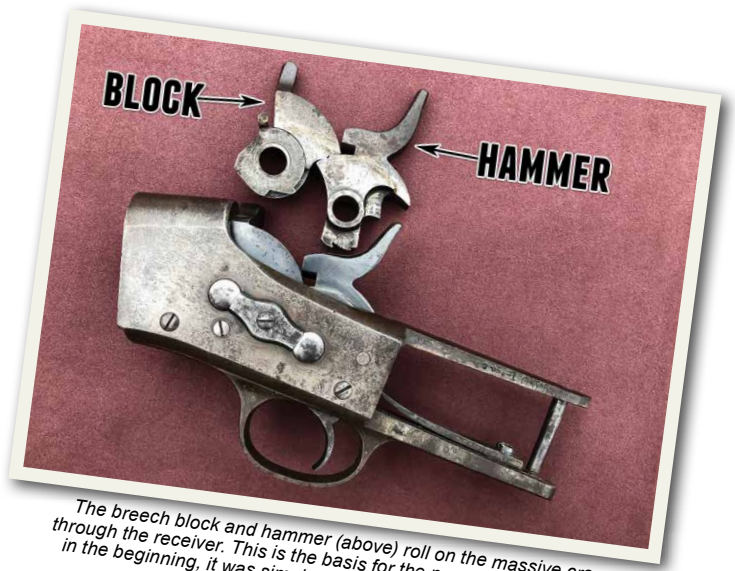
Old Remington rolling block guns have always fascinated me, because they are such an important part of Remington’s history, and frankly the history of the world. They’re interesting and frustrating to collect and a lot of fun to reload for – and shoot. I’ve probably studied, collected and shot them enough, through the years, to deserve some type of “certificate” of knowledge and perhaps lunacy; though there are a great many collectors that know much more than I do.

It all got started at the beginning of the cartridge and breech loading era of the 1860’s. The armies of the world were ready to convert from muzzleloaders to breech loaders. However, their countries had no capability to mass produce either guns or ammunition; the Remington Rolling Block was a great solution. In the latter part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, several of the Africa and the Middle East countries, as well as most of the South and Central America

countries, adopted the Remington Rolling Block rifle as their primary infantry gun – in various calibers.

Military rifles came first, with production beginning in 1864 for the US Army, then one country

after another up through 1916, when the French bought 100,000 for their rear-guard during WWI. The distribution of military rolling blocks, during this period, is a study of world geography and warfare. Today, the most common calibers encountered are 43 Spanish, during the black powder era, and 7mm Mauser during the smokeless era. The Egyptians were one of the first and largest Customers, starting in 1869; they were also at war with Sudan, to their south. Apparently,



The breech block and hammer (above) roll on the massive cross pins through the receiver. This is the basis for the name “Rolling Block”; but, in the beginning, it was simply referred to as the “Remington System”.

Egypt had better guns than leadership, as they lost several key battles, ending in their defeat at Khartoum, Sudan, in North Africa in 1885. When you hold an Egyptian marked rolling block, possibly it was captured from the Egyptian army and used against them and British General Charles Gordon at Khartoum.

Sporting rifle production started almost immediately after the military production. These were bought by army officers, buffalo hunters, big and small game hunters and target shooters, in the popular calibers of the day.

“...interesting and frustrating to collect...”

In addition to the large frame military rifles and carbines and large frame sporting rifles, Remington made smaller frame sporting rifles as well – #1-1/2, #2 and #4. They also adapted the rolling block design to a single shot handgun and a shotgun. The “Remington System” was quite adaptable.



Larry Potterfield

My Office
The MidwayUSA Campus
Columbia, Missouri
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This is a #1 Sporting Rifle. Some of the more common chamberings were .32, .38 and .46 rimfire (left) and 32/20 Winchester and 40/50 Sharps bottleneck centerfire (right); but Rolling Block guns were chambered for everything from .22 rimfire to 50/70 Government centerfire.



Probably the most famous Rolling Block was General Custer’s #1 Sporting Rifle in 50/70. He rode into the Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana - with Rifle in 50/70. He rode into the Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana - with Rifle in 50/70. This is a faithful reproduction, made from a #1 military action of the same vintage.