



# THE VIGILANTE



Volume 20 Issue 2/3

Editor: Nasty Newt SASS # 7365

Oct/Nov 2017

## The Monthly Chronicle of the Robbers Roost Vigilantes

### From the President

#### If it's November it Must be Nice Out

We did quite a bit of shooting in October and November. And most, if not all of us, went home with a smile on our face, every time out. That's why we do it. If it isn't fun, it's work. And we're not in this for the work.

On October 7, nine Vigilantes came out and slung some lead. When the dust had settled and the smoke had cleared, Bad Bascomb edged Venomous Doc, and M.C. Ryder, yours truly, and Cowboy Earl wound up in the top five.

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, five of us went out for one of Cowboy Earl's great Trail Walks. The muzzle loaders were booming, and when it was all over, M. C. Ryder beat me out, 22 to 20. Also rans were Cowboy Earl, Silver Badger, and Zach Newton.

On October 21<sup>st</sup>, nine shooters came out, which was a good turnout since we were missing some regulars who were at the Western Regional. M. C. Ryder beat me (again), and we were followed by Zig Mar, Wrangler Red, and Duelin' Tom

We debated whether to shoot on November 4. A lot of us were going to be missing in action for that one, but five stalwarts decided to do it anyway. Bad Bascomb wrote a "shoot the head off the snake" stage, involving clay pigeons and a short length of plastic pipe that he borrowed from an annual match. Bad Bascomb, M.C. Ryder, Zig Mar, Wrangler Red, and Silver Badger had a ball on that one and all the rest. Zig Mar shot the match clean.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, we had 10 shooters. Bad Bascomb's snake pit stage, which was so much fun and experienced by so few on the 4<sup>th</sup>, got a re-shoot. Goode Bascomb shot for the first time in a while, and did very well, finishing 6<sup>th</sup>. On the other side of that coin, Venomous Doc is now going to be out a while for shoulder surgery. The top five on the day were Bad Bascomb, Venomous Doc, Zig Mar, Duelin' Tom, and your humble editor.

All of the results from all of these matches are on the website.

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### The Colt Walker Revolver

Just how powerful was it?

M.C. Ryder  
SASS #16346

I'm sure you have all heard someone state that the 1847 Colt Walker revolver was as powerful as today's 44 magnum revolvers. I've heard that too, and I've always been very skeptical of that statement. Given that the only propellant available then was what we today call black powder (back then they just called it gunpowder), and that the metallurgy of the time wasn't all that advanced, it seems unlikely that the revolvers of the time could produce and withstand the pressures necessary to obtain the performance of the modern 44 magnum cartridge.

We can speculate all we want to, but it is more accurate (and fun) to do some experiments. So, I loaded up my replica Walker, grabbed my chronograph and headed out to the firing range.

My research indicated that the maximum load for the original Walker was 60 grains of 3f powder and a .457 inch round ball. It also appears that Walkers would occasionally blow up using this load, and Sam Colt himself recommended that the maximum load be 50 grains of 3f. In fact the follow on model, the Colt Dragoon, had a shorter cylinder in order to limit the load to 50 grains.

Throwing caution to the winds and putting my trust in modern metallurgy, I loaded 60 grains of Goex 3f behind a 144 grain round ball and fired away. My chronograph measured an average velocity of 1220 feet per second. Not bad, and faster than I had expected.

Round balls are light compared to a conical bullet, so I cast some .457 conical bullets, which have a weight of 200 grains. Conicals take up more space in the cylinder, so the maximum load using them is 50 grains of 3f. These

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In December we're shooting on the 2nd and 16th. We're on **Winter Hours**, so we will start signups around 8:00 and try to have the meeting by 8:45.

The match on the 16<sup>th</sup> will be our Christmas Turkey Shoot. We will draw for two \$50 GUNS4US gift cards after the match.

There are no other shoots scheduled, but that could change, TBA.

## **Robbers Roost Vigilantes**

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*Walker Colt continued from page 1*

loads had an average velocity of 1070 feet per second.

For comparison, a typical 44 magnum load is a 240 grain bullet at around 1400 ft/sec. Research indicated that the 45 Colt black powder rounds used a 250 grain bullet and 40 grains of black powder, and had a velocity of around 850 ft/sec.

This is all good data, but what does it say about how "powerful", or if you prefer, "effective" these loads are? There are (at least) two schools of thought about this. One proposes that what is important is momentum (mass x velocity) and a big hole in the target. This favors large caliber, heavy bullets. The other school looks at kinetic energy ( $\frac{1}{2} * \text{mass} * \text{velocity squared}$ ). This school likes medium size bullets going very fast. I'm not going to get into which school of thought is correct, both have their merits. One might think the best of both would be a large, heavy bullet going very fast, but not too many people can handle a 454 Casull handgun.

The easiest way to compare is with the table shown in the red box below. Note that the commonly used concept of "power factor" (bullet weight in grains \* velocity in feet per second divided by 1000) is really just momentum with non-standard units.

It seems that despite the legend, the Colt Walker is no 44 magnum. However, it is fair to say that it is equal to the 45 Colt, which didn't come along until 1872. I doubt that anyone would argue that the 45 Colt is not an effective cartridge. Considering that the Walker preceded the 45 Colt by 25 years, I think it was reasonable back then for one to say that "If I had a big horse pistol like that, I wouldn't be afraid of no boogerman."

Load	Colt Walker 60 gr Goex 3f Round ball	Colt Walker 50 gr Goex 3f Conical bullet	44 Magnum Factory Conical bullet	45 Colt 40 gr Goex 3f Conical bullet
Bullet weight (gr)	144	200	240	250
Velocity (ft/sec)	1220	1070	1400	850
Power Factor	175.68	214	336	212.5
Energy (ft-lbf)	475.44	507.94	1043.48	400.68

## Business Card



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## How to Join the Robbers Roost Vigilantes...

Come out to a RRV match, held the third (and sometimes first) Saturday of every month, or call Nasty Newt at 760-375-7618, or MC Ryder at 760-384-2321, or mail it in. Our membership application is here [RRV Membership Application](#) Annual membership dues for the RRV are: single membership \$25, member and spouse \$30, family membership (including children under 18 living at home) \$35. First time shooters will be able to take their FIRST (1) NEW SHOOTERS CLASS for \$10, any subsequent new shooters class or RRV match shoot will be \$10 members, \$15 nonmembers. Donations for shooting regular monthly RRV matches will be \$10 members, \$15 non-members. Memberships run from September 1 - August 31. New memberships purchased after September will be prorated depending on the number of months remaining and the type of membership. **RRV members are encouraged to become Single Action Shooting Society (SASS) members.** Please call SASS at 877-411-SASS. SASS membership information can be found here:

<http://www.sassnet.com/Membership-Main-001A.php>

SASS membership is not required for membership in RRV, or participation in RRV regular monthly matches. **RRV encourages all shooters to join and support the NRA and the NRA Foundation, and Ridgecrest Gun Range Association.** For further information visit our website at [www.robbersroostvigilantes.com](http://www.robbersroostvigilantes.com).

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## Schedule of Monthly Matches

### RRV Match Dates:

Dec 2, 2017 Cowboy

Dec 16, 2017 Cowboy Turkey Shoot

**Winter Hours:** Sign up starting ~ 8:00,  
Safety Meeting ~ 8:45.



The 1847 Colt Walker revolver is said to be the result of a collaboration between Texas Ranger Captain Samuel Walker and gun maker Samuel Colt. Walker liked Colt's 36 caliber, five-shot Paterson revolver, but asked Colt to make a more powerful six-shooter that would not only take down a man, but also a horse, and would be faster to reload as well. As outlined in M.C. Ryder's very informative article, the Walker filled the bill admirably, and maybe was even a little too powerful for its own good. A total of only 1,100 were made: 1,000 for the army contract, and another 100 for civilian sale. Colt contracted with Eli Whitney, Jr., for the manufacturing of these guns. At 4 ½ pounds each, they were carried in saddle-hung pommel holsters.

Capt. Walker received his two revolvers shortly before his Texas Ranger company entered the Mexican-American War. He was killed at the Battle of Huamantla, Tlaxcala, Mexico, on October 9, 1847. He was 30 years old. His revolvers are lost to history.

NOTE: The gun in the photo is a modern replica made by Uberti.

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