



# SMOKE SIGNAL

**Newsletter of the Alamo Muzzle Loading Gun Club, est. 1964**

**OCTOBER 2020**



*Source:* The UK National Firearm Centre—Royal Armouries, Leeds. A trio of under hammer percussion locks designed for use with militia muskets. The simplicity of the under hammer action recommended itself to a number of gunsmiths and firearms tinkerers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in New England, where the design had been employed for “buggy rifles” and other early percussion rifles.

***RANGE CLOSURE ANNOUNCEMENT:*** Gary Quandt, our Range Safety Officer, and maintenance go-to guy informs the members of the AMLGC that the gas company/ CPS will be working on the easement that abuts the LaCoste range October 27<sup>th</sup> through October 30<sup>th</sup> 2020. He has posted a sign at the range to catch

the attention of those who neither read the emailed newsletters nor go to the club webpage to consult the *Smoke Signal* posted there. THE GATE WILL BE LOCKED ON 27 OCTOBER until the crew working on the easement is finished. Thank you for your kind attention. We will reopen the range as soon as it is done.

CIVIL WAR Skirmish and MATCH 17 OCTOBER 2020

# **CIVIL WAR SKIRMISH**

**OCTOBER 17, 2020**

**ALAMO MUZZLE LOADING GUN CLUB  
LA COSTE, TEXAS**

**NEVER FIRED A CIVIL WAR ERA FIREARM? COME ON OUT AND TAKE A LOOK. YOU'LL GET A CHANCE TO FIRE MUSKETS, SMOOTHBORES AND CARBINES.**

**DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF SKIRMISHERS, AN APPROPRIATE NUMBER OF TEAMS WILL BE FORMED. EACH SKIRMISHER WILL SHOOT INDIVIDUAL TARGETS IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING AND THE USE OF MASKS IS ENCOURAGED.**

**THERE WILL BE MUSKET, SMOOTHBORE AND CARBINE MATCHES.**

**THE MUSKET MATCH WILL CONSIST OF 5 TARGETS; THREE AT 50 YARDS AND 2 AT 100 YARDS.**

**THE SMOOTHBORE MATCH WILL CONSIST OF 3 TARGETS; 2 AT 25 YARDS AND 1 AT 50 YARDS.**

**THE CARBINE MATCH WILL CONSIST OF 3 TARGETS, 2 AT 50 YARDS AND 1 AT 100 YARDS.**

**A PAPER TARGET WILL BE ISSUED TO EACH SKIRMISHER FOR EACH RELAY, WHICH WILL BE POSTED ON THE CLUB**

**TARGET FRAMES AT THE SPECIFIED DISTANCE.**

**EACH RELAY WILL LAST 5 MINUTES AND START AND STOP ON THE COMMAND OF THE RANGEMASTER.**

**EVERY HIT ON TARGET WILL BE ONE POINT. A HIT WILL BE ANY PART OF THE TARGET BEING HIT BY THE BULLET. THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES WILL BE FINAL.**

**AT THE END OF THE MATCH, TEAM SCORES WILL BE TOTALED AND AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED FOR FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD PLACE TEAMS.**

**THE SKIRMISH WILL BEGIN AT 8:30 AM WITH A SAFETY BRIEFING AND AT 9:00 AM, THERE WILL BE ONE HOUR FOR PRACTICE. THE MUSKET MATCH WILL BEGIN AT 10:00 AM. THE SMOOTHBORE MATCH WILL FOLLOW THIRTY MINUTES AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE MUSKET MATCH, WITH THE CARBINE MATCH 30 MINUTES AFTER THE SMOOTHBORE MATCH.**

**MATCH FEE- \$10.00 PER PERSON. UNIFORMS ARE REQUESTED BUT NOT REQUIRED.**

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The NRA National Firearm Museum in Virginia has a number of Civil War arms in its "A Nation Asunder 1861-1865" online galleries: <http://www.nramuseum.org/guns/the-galleries/a-nation-asunder-1861-to-1865/case-15-union-muskets-and-rifles/us-alfred-p-jenks-and-son-model-1861-percussion-rifle-musket.aspx>

*RANGE NEWS:*

We got some email messages inquiring about the guest policy. To reiterate, guests may now accompany members. Social Distancing and masking measures should be adhered to, in line with what Medina County and the Governor's guidelines are. The guest policy remains up to two guests per visit, more than two would require prior notification to the Board of Directors. Each and every time a non-member guest uses the range, he or she must fill out a lien release. There are envelopes too, right next to the lien release forms. A folded up lien release and ten dollars for non-member range use fee go in, and then it all goes into the box. The guest lien release and the range fee makes a guest a temporary member for that shooting session for insurance purposes.

Erastus “Deaf” Smith and scientific testing. Long-term readers of the *Smoke Signal* will recall the English and Spanish language will from Erastus “Deaf” Smith, the so-called “Texas Spy” who ran scouts and intelligence agents during the Texas Revolution, which included his firearms. I’d always thought he had scarlet fever or a similar childhood disease of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that had left him deaf, or mostly deaf. A group of scientists, including an Austin-based audio-forensics specialist Steven Beck, and Wendell Todd of Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia as well as long-time living historian and Texas Revolution historian John Potter and some other researchers are going to record the sounds of smooth-bore muskets and patched round ball rifles of the British/Spanish/Mexican and Texian-Tejano types used in the Texas Revolution at the Alamo Muzzle Loading Gun Club range at some point. So if you see their equipment and staff at our range, you’ll know what it is about. The intent of the experiment is tied to a possible ear problem that “Deaf” Smith may have suffered from.

Renewals of membership and the Yearly Business Meeting:

You might consider sending in your renewal check and paperwork soon, to beat the rush. The club’s website went down not too long ago, and when it went back up, the membership section was no longer a link that could open the document. A new document, of one page in length and links to the “fine print” will go up on the AMLGC web page soon—within the month. It might be a good idea to get your application materials and check in to either the secretary, Dave Carlson, at 212 Alexander Ave. San Antonio, TX 78201, or to the club treasurer, Mr. John Burke, Sr. of Elmendorf. Either one works fine.

Yearly meeting 2 January 2021: In years past, we’ve had a banquet and business meeting with door prizes at a Texas barbecue restaurant with a good-sized meeting room. Unfortunately, there are few banquet facilities available, and these are subject to the current pandemic concerns with so-called “social distancing” and various public health guidelines, which are subject to short notice changes and various recommendations that emerge on an ongoing basis. So, rather than try to deal with the Bexar County vs. Medina County restrictions and guidelines, and various attempts by restaurant owners to deal with those, the members of the Board of Directors decided to hold the 2 January 2021 meeting at the LaCoste range. We’ll have coffee and hot chocolate, but it might be rather chilly in early January, so please dress appropriate to the weather. Also, please bring your own chair or camping stool or folding chair, since we’ll have to spread out a bit, and there are not enough benches under the awning or on the range itself. You can still pay your dues, if you’d like, and there will be door prizes and reports from the members of the Board of Directors. There will also be the elections.

**SATURDAY 2 JANUARY 2021—Alamo Muzzle Loading Gun Club YEARLY BUSINESS MEETING and reports.**

Where: LaCoste, Texas AMLGC range.

When: 12 noon. The reports will commence at 1pm sharp, so come a bit early for space, and to take care of your renewal, should you desire to do so.

Recall, that while your four-digit membership number/ gate-key code is a new policy, the deadline remains 1 February. If you've not renewed by then, your gate key code will cease functioning.

Gary Quandt fixed the gate recently—Thank you very, very much!

*OCTOBER cross-sticks silhouette match results:*

	<i>50-yard porkers/hogs/swine</i>	<i>100-yd. rams</i>
CLASS A:	1. Bill Knipscher 100 2. Clif Denny 100 3. Lucky Pruitt 60	1. Bill Knipscher 90 2. Clif Denny 60 3. Lucky Pruitt 30
CLASS B:	1. Alex Michlberger 2. John Burke, Sr. 70 3. TIE—John Burke, Jr. & Ian Straus both 50	1. John Burke, Jr. 60 2. Ian Straus 50 3. John Burke, Sr. 20
Class A Rifle AGG:	1.) Bill Knipscher 190, 2.) Clif Denny 160, 3.) Lucky Pruitt 90	
Class B Rifle AGG:	1.) Alex Michlberger 110, 1.) John Burke, Jr. 110, 2.) Ian Straus 100, 2.) John Burke, Sr. 90.	

Congratulations to everyone who went out to the TSMLAssn. State shoot at Brady!

Last events of the year!

- **October 17th** – Civil War Match see above!
- **November 1st** – Cross Sticks, Turkey Shoot, Buffalo targets (50 & 100 yds), 25-yd pistol shoot
- **December 6th** – Holiday Shoot, Knife shoot, Round bull targets (25 & 50 yds), 25-yd pistol shoot

Texas Single-Shot Rifle Association Fall Match: On Friday and Saturday, 16-17 October 2020, the breech-loading fall match will be held at Dietzville near New Braunfels TX.

## **TEXAS SINGLE SHOT RIFLE ASSOCIATION**

FALL MATCH: OCTOBER 16-17, 2020 @ 8:00AM Old Muzzle Loader Range at Dietzville, on

Range Rd. New Braunfels, TX

**COURSE OF FIRE**

**ALL MATCHES 10 SHOTS AND RE-ENTRY EXCEPT NOS. #5, #10, #11**

200-YARD Matches: #1 Any Sight Bench Rest/ ASSRA Target 5 #2 Any Sight Offhand/  
ASSRA Target 3 or 4 #3 Iron Sight Bench Rest/ ASSRA Target 3 or 4 #4 Iron Sight Offhand/  
ASSRA Target 3 or 4

Jed Kraai Memorial Aggregate of Match 1 & 3 #5 Cliff Payne Memorial-1 OH & 1BR

100-YARD Matches: #6 Any Sight Bench Rest .22rf/ ASSRA 6- bull #7 Any Sight Offhand  
ASSRA #1 or 1-1/2 #8 Cowboy Lever ASSRA Target 3 or 4 #9 Military ASSRA Target 3 or 4  
#10 **Schrenschleibe** 1 shot at a painted target 100 and/or 200- yards (Winner  
provides next year's target).

**#11 100-shot bench rest at 100 or 200-yds. (May be fired over 2 days) SCORING**

Rimfire matches are scored to *lead edge*; Centerfire matches are scored to center of hole  
*except match #11*. Shots outside scoring rings will be scored by measure down to ten.

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Snacks provided for lunch. Bring your own drinks, lawn chairs, etc. FREE dry camping with  
outhouses, no electricity.

For more info: Geo. [Harris—georgeharris94@yahoo.com](mailto:georgeharris94@yahoo.com) Bill Wimberly  
[vesperb1941@gmail.com](mailto:vesperb1941@gmail.com) 830.832.8884

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

Trick-or-Treat origins?

Halloween is one of the only holidays that has mask wearing already built-in! Of  
course, “social distancing” is not... What are the possible origins of the “trick-or-  
treating” associated with the Halloween holiday?

There are pre-Christian antecedents of course. Celtic peoples in what is now northern France, the British Isles, and Ireland thought that the dead returned for various reasons on the so-called “Samhain” on 31 October. Bonfires were lit, and sacrifices and homages offered to the various spirits of the deceased. As pre-Christianized peoples, there were dances, costumes, some of them including animal skins, and while people also celebrated the harvest season, food and drink was also offered to placate the spirits.

Early Christians converted the old pagans, but incorporated some of their observations and festivals. During the Medieval period, “mumming” a possible precursor to the modern-day “trick-or-treating” arose. In the early Catholic tradition, the 2 November became All Soul’s Day, the time to venerate and honor the deceased. This remains the basis—albeit combined with the pre-contact Mexican civilizations animist and pagan observations—for the Día de los muertos, or the distinctive Mexican Day of the Dead with its candied calavera skulls and visits to family cemeteries and household ofrendas and altars. In the early Middle Ages, it is thought that Catholic celebrations pretty much resembled the old pagan Samhain observances.

Wealthier folks would bake “soul cakes” that would be offered to the poor and peasantry in exchange for prayers for the souls of the departed relatives of the bakers. This “souling” practice of effectively soliciting prayers came to involve children who would go from door to door in the community to receive food, ale, or small sums of money.

Enter Scotland and Ireland: “Guising” in costumes and accepting offerings in exchange for songs, poems, jokes, or one or another “trick” emerged. “Treats” could be fruits, or other types of food like bannocks or similar items, or even small coins. The “tumshie,” Lowland Scots for turnips or a foolish person, became a turnip-based lantern. The tumshie was carved into a grotesque face, with a slow match or candle inside to make it glow. The scraped out bits of turnip were added to stew or soup, or used to pelt people who refused to “treat” the “tricksters” or for other mischief.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century religious wars and conflicts, a Catholic, Guy Fawkes, attempted to blow up parliament in the so-called 1605 gunpowder plot. While some wags might think that Guy Fawkes thus entered Parliament with “honest intentions.” He is typically burned in effigy every year in parts of the UK, with children carrying effigies, wearing masks, and so on. The real Guy Fawkes spent a very agonizing and terrible year in dungeons before he was hung, drawn, and quartered—clearly the stuff of Halloween horror, but in real life. Many early Guy Fawkes observances were particularly anti-Catholic in tenor.

Catholic Irish immigrants—the “mere Irish” or *Irishry* didn’t particularly care for the Anglo-Protestant observances of Guy Fawkes night in their adopted homeland, and so the Irish and Scottish souling and guising and Halloween traditions were

adopted, albeit early Halloween in the United States appears to have often been a rowdy affair oftentimes. Indeed, some communities considered banning it for those reasons, as well as the holidays barely-concealed pagan origins.

Over time, Halloween became rather more civilized, and a community would organize the affair and orient it more toward children. World War sugar rationing curtailed the “treats” handed out, but the postwar suburban demographic boom and low-cost, high-calorie candy and treats, the manufacturers of which marketed in tandem with the rising popularity of the holiday, made Halloween really become a big deal among the “Baby Boomers.” It might be hard to believe, but after Christmas, Halloween is thought to be the second-largest commercial holiday.

*Have a happy and safe Halloween! Feliz día de los muertos!*