



ARMORY AND OFFICE,

Hartford, Conn.

August 17, 2013

980

M

Bought of
THE SHARPS RIFLE COMPANY.

Sharps rifle serial # C53688 has been located in the original records of the Sharps Rifle Manufacturing Company, predecessor to the Sharps Rifle Company. It is listed in their Order Book as an Octagon Rifle, later termed the Model 1874 Sporting Rifle. It was invoiced at the Hartford factory on July 25, 1872 to R. W. Snyder of Buffalo Station, Kansas.

The rifle is described in the record as being .44 caliber, case length not specified, with a 30 inch full octagon barrel, double triggers, globe and peep sights and oil-finished stocks. The weight was listed as 14 pounds even. The price was \$55 less 15 %. A set of re-loading tools and two half-pound cans of lubricant were also sent. The net total of the order, including the wooden packing crate, came to \$52.90.

R. W. Snyder was certainly a buffalo hunter himself, but due to the fact that he bought eight Octagon Rifles and two Army Rifles from October, 1871 through June of 1873, he must have engaged in buying guns for other hunters. The records show that quite a few of the hunters bought more rifles than they could possibly have used personally, the assumption being that they either bought them for other illiterate hunters, or for re-sale at a profit. Seven of the ten rifles he bought were in .50 caliber, the most popular caliber during the Kansas Buffalo Hunt.

Snyder himself is an unknown, as is his given name. The Sharps correspondence archive in my possession dates only from 1875, consequently no letters are extant regarding these rifles. I do have letters from him in 1875, dated at Lodge Pole and Sidney, Nebraska which seem to indicate that he had gone into the freighting business and wanted to pay his remaining balance of \$130, if only they would send him some Carbines he was certain to sell at a profit. As such, he fits the picture of a typical frontier con artist, many of whom Sharps had to deal with. A copy of one of his letters is included herewith.

Trusting this information to be of value, I remain,

Yours very truly,

Dick Labowskie

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Serial number documentation from original records of the Sharps Rifle Company.