

# TO BE AN ORIGINAL

By

Marlan J. Ingram

Imagine if you will, that you've just rode in off of a dusty trail, and you are tired and stiff from being in the saddle all day. You are looking forward to filling your big, battered tin cup with hot steaming coffee, and wrapping yourself around a hot plate of biscuits, beans, and steak. First, however, you've got to report to the local Marshall that yesterday, you had an encounter on the trail with a known outlaw. You survived the encounter without a scratch, and the outlaw got away, but you are sure that the affair isn't over. You stop your horse at a hitch rail in front of the Marshall's office, then dismount to the tune of jingling spurs. You've got a Starr Self-Cocking .44 revolver on your hip, but you take your Improved Henry out of the scabbard as well. You tie off your mount, and with stiff back and legs, you gingerly step up on the boardwalk in front of the Marshall's office, when 'BOOM!!', a shot whizzes by, and smacks into the wall!!! Without thinking, you dash behind the water trough for cover, and to your amazement, you spot that same outlaw, lining you up for another shot!

As people scream and scatter, you and the outlaw, both from behind cover, begin unloading loud, booming shots at each other with your rifles, filling the street up with black powder smoke. Suddenly, you click on an empty chamber, and the outlaw charges! You quickly draw your Starr revolver, and staying behind cover, keep firing on the charging outlaw until all is obscured by the heavy smoke! Suddenly, it's all over. There is no longer a charging outlaw in front of you. The only place he is heading now is a pine box. As you knock the spent caps from your Starr, you hear the Marshall's voice behind you: "You can get up now son, looks like you've got a reward coming."

Ok, this is all fun and fiction, and many articles dealing with Western Action Shooting start in such a fashion, giving prospective participants the idea that such events are meant to replicate some form of an Old West gunfight. Most stages at most shoots, whether they are SASS or NCOWS, follow the same basic format. Each stage usually requires 10 rifle rounds, 10 pistol rounds, and 4 shotgun rounds, sometimes more, and the pocket pistol is thrown in occasionally to make things more interesting. To shoot such a stage, each participant needs two revolvers, a lever action rifle, a shotgun, and a pocket pistol, plus a LOT of ammo, and a way to transport it all around in at a match. The most common method of carrying this armament and ammo is a gun cart.

However, if you read the scenario above, you will notice something different. The gentleman defending himself against the bushwacking outlaw only used a lever action rifle, and one revolver! Needless to say, this is a departure from the common SASS, or even NCOWS stage. Simply put, that scenario above should give you an idea of how a stage in The Originals category should be shot. Ok, so what is The Originals category, you ask? Read on, and I will explain.

First, the name is simple. With the clothing, armament, and accouterments, the intent in this category is to try to do things as close as possible (within reason) to how things were *Originally* done, back in the Victorian-era of the Old West. On the surface, it might seem that both SASS and NCOWS are already achieving this, but in The Originals category, you are restricted to items that can actually be documented as being either originals, or reproductions of things that actually existed in the Old West, from the period 1865-1899.

So, how will this be accomplished? How will this be conducted? The following points should give a good outline of procedures for this class.

1. Each participant is **REQUIRED** to have a Persona. This can be accomplished in as little as two or three paragraphs, or it can be two or three pages (or more). To put together a persona, you need a cut-off date (year of the persona), a birth date, and a basic explanation of how you came to be where you are. For example, since my Persona is circa 1875, and I wish to represent myself as 40 years old, then my birth date is 1835. Next, I simply write a brief outline as to how I came to be where I am.
2. Once you have your Persona, you simply document all visible items that you will use at events, and these items must go along with your persona. For example, if you are wearing a certain type of hat, and you have dated photos of people wearing such hats, write the dates down. Do the same for each visible item that you will use at an event. At least two pieces of documentation for each item are preferred. For steps one and two, these items must be 'juried', which will be explained on item number 6.
3. No gun carts are allowed in this category.
4. One (1) revolver is used in this category, and any legal, main match revolver is acceptable. One (1) rifle is used in this category, and any legal, main match rifle is acceptable. As a side note, the acceptable rifle and pistol is with the understanding that these items must be documentable as either originals, or as reproductions of originals that actually existed in the Old West. Reloading in this category is kept at a bare minimum, if at all (with the exception of rifles that hold less than 10 rounds, like the Spencer....which will simply have to be reloaded to meet the round count).
5. Participants in The Originals category will shoot **ONLY** against other Originals, and participants in this category will shoot together on the same posse. To score

this category, each participant who has been juried will receive the same score, which is a 'starting' score, which represents 50% of the possible score. The next part of the scoring process has to do with shooting, which represents 40% of the possible score. The final part of the scoring has to do with a vote among all of the Originals participants at a match, as to which participant in this category is closest to the ideal. This represents the final 10% of the score. This is why individuals in this category shoot together on one posse, and are only scored against each other.

6. This is a juried category. To initiate this, the charter members of this category will do the Jurying. Those charter members are Bob Chenault, Bill Proctor, Jerry Everett, and myself. We have all put together Personals, documented our items completely, and participated in juried events, sometimes events with very strict guidelines. With this experience under our belt, it is our intent to set this category up in such a way so that it is very easy to participate in, as long as the basic guidelines are followed. Once an individual has passed the jury process, that individual will be issued a certificate attesting to the fact that this individual is an Original. After that point, anyone wishing to be juried into the Originals category can go to ANY three Originals members to be juried. For those wishing to be juried, simply send your information to: Robert Chenault, 92 Smithfield Rd., Shelbyville, KY 40065.

This class will actually be held as a side-match at the 2005 National Shoot in Ackley, Iowa, and as a category at the NCOWS Eastern Regionals in October at Hooten Old Town in Kentucky. For anyone wishing further clarification, or with more questions regarding this, please feel very free to email me at: [historynut1@webtv.net](mailto:historynut1@webtv.net)