

Pulled Bullets

By Frank F. Baugh



A “pulled” .58 Caliber “Minié Ball” bullet. I found this in relic hunting in The Hincheyville District in Franklin, TN.

I do not think my father was a sadist.

No, I am certain he was not.

But he and I, are and were, alike in many ways, and very different in others. I guess that haploid business with my mother's genes scrambled things up a bit.

My father has been long deceased. He truly was a great man, well respected in the Community, a County Magistrate — then commissioner — for seemingly all my life. But to really know him was to know, perhaps, a great mind, that I loved and still love to this day.

Back in the *ye’ olden days*, I thought he would have little effect on me. I was wrong. He was very complex in a singular manner. I, too, consider myself complex, but in a complexing way. I have wind knots in my fly casting. My mind is a messy room that has too much stuff in it, all over the place ... But, I know where everything is in that maelstrom. I confess age is making recollection a bit ... I think “difficult” is the word, creating unintentional “poetic license” with my memories. Well ... so be it.

An example of his mind, and its way of gouging me, was when I was in my teens, and one Christmas Morn my father gave me a black powder, [CVA .50 caliber Hawken Rifle](#) ... *Kit* ... meaning that I could not step outside, load it, and fire it, or inside either.

I know behind my father’s Stoic, ex-Marine Corps Officer, and Episcopalian Clergyman's face was a wry smile of deep heretofore unfelt satisfaction. He liked what must have been the expression on my face unwrapping this present.



A much younger version of the Author and his father on Christmas Morn.

For me, the building process was a chore, a means to an end. It was a very substantial project for a guy like me. That kit had a better chance of ending up in some closet gathering dust than being built, but I defied the odds!

Shooting from the inside, out, was not unheard of in our home off, what was then, Jordan Road. Shooting out open windows was an unaccepted behavior, unless the parents were not home. It became dicey when my little brother fired a snub-nosed .38 “Undercover Special” out the bedroom window over the garage and cut my father’s irrigation pipe to his garden. That drew his ire, but it was an excellent shot of twenty yards or more, cutting the PVC pipe, on the far side of the trash cans.

No, a Hawken Rifle *kit*. *I had to assemble it. That was not my forte*. I had always been awful with the plastic models that were so prevalent then, with that cool smelling glue. Some folks would “get high” sniffing that stuff.

For me, the first thing to go was the instructions, usually because I’d glue them together. What I built did not resemble the picture on the box, or anything else.

I was successful at one model, as follows.

I had a pet screech owl when I was young, I had raised it from an owlet after it had gestated late and been outgrown and left by its family. It grew up and would fly in and out the open windows all through

the trees as free as a ... bird. "Owl," its name, would silently fly and land on my shoulder like a veritable pin cushion. The little guy had needles for claws.



My father with "Owl" sitting on his shoulder.

They are completely quiet when they fly for hunting purposes. Owl would follow us about the yard and outdoors, sort of like a flying pet dog. Owl took naps in overhead light fixtures, and closets. I still have a cross-stitched clock of the White House, of all things, that my mother did. My father made the case and painted it black. I found it in the loft of the big red horse barn in the barn-lot behind Aspen Grove, considered disposable by my mother. I cleaned it up, put a quartz drive in it, and it still adorns my bedroom wall, keeping perfect time. On the top behind a small Federal Style Bonnet, there is still an Owl pellet stain. Owl did not poop in the house, but when Owl had to regurgitate a "[pellet](#)" Owl would let fly wherever the mood struck.

Owl gradually went back to the wild, as was intended. As not even in my teenage years, I was heartbroken. My brother Amos drove me to Franklin to what was then *The Book and Hobby Shop* on Fourth Ave. South, located where [Meridees](#) is now. I bought a near life-size model of a human skull. I was successful in bringing the model to fruition, 'ethereal spirit full,' teeth, even a spring-mounted jaw. I named it [Yorick](#). Yorick followed me through High School at Battle Ground Academy, through college at Ole Miss, and into my marriage where [its quietus was made, not with a bare bodkin](#), but gangland style — it got "disappeared." I still lament.

But back to the Hawken Rifle Kit — here, I had to dress the kit up entirely by sanding the stock, staining it, and applying a finish. Likewise, I had to "blue" the gun barrel, which involved heating it in the oven, and other dangerous chemicals. Then I had to get the black powder, the powder flask with the correct charge measure, the .49 caliber lead balls, the patches, grease, and percussion caps — all this just to fire it!

It took a couple of months, if I recall rightly, or more. I worked on it in spurts. Come to think of it, I think it was a bright green Spring day, the day I first fired it. It scared me to death. I was used to shooting

all kinds of long guns and pistols. But this scared me. The medium was different - no convenient shells or brass-cased bullets, but raw black grains of FFF sized black powder. I was not near as fearless in those days, so I wrapped my arms around a small tree, to protect my vitals, and fired the gun on the other side of the tree.

It was smooth! It was cool with its pleasingly odor of sulfurous, billowing clouds of blue-white smoke! I used a tree about fifty yards away as my target, and was pleasantly surprised how easily I could sight it in. I had it hitting dead-on with its iron rear sight and German silver front sight that I had carefully tapped into the notch at the end of the barrel. I could hardly wait for my father to come home!

Believe it or not, I built the Hawken Rifle, assembled all the necessary accoutrements, and sighted its German silver front blade with the rear iron sights so it was deadly at fifty yards. With a bit of "[Arkansas Elevation](#)" I could easily reach out to 100 yards. I could vary my shots — the sight could be raised, and/or I could increase the powder charge a hair-bit or give it a good guess based on intuition. All that born of my practicing with the gun – a lot.

He did, at length, giving me time to make refinements, and even to clean it, a stinky but simple process involving a bucket of hot water and dish soap. I gained his attention as he climbed out of his pickup truck and beckoned his attendance at my demonstration. In silence, I loaded the gun before him. He attentively watched the process. This was a man that had been in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed onboard the [USS St. Louis](#). After OCS, he was assigned to the [USS Mississippi](#) as a fire control officer firing 14" guns — perhaps the last fired in battleship on battleship big gun fighting at the [Battle of Surigao Strait in the Battle of Leyte Gulf \(25 October 1944\)](#).

I told him about it having two triggers. You could just pull the first trigger that would fire the gun with a normal heavier trigger pull. The second trigger behind it was to set the trigger pull on the first trigger, which I had set to a hair trigger. With the first trigger set by the second, a mere light touch would set it off. There was some pull, but you never knew when it was going off, so it caught the shooter unawares, and not able to anticipate the firing, eliminating flinching. This allowed the shooter to concentrate on holding on the target, eliminating "[Flinter's flinch](#)."

I put the hammer at half-cock and place a percussion cap from my front pocket on the nipple. I handed it to him. He admired my somewhat less than excellent putting a finish on the stock, but it was all shiny and new. I said, "Pick out a tree over there in the woods. [Authors note: we lived very remote from anyone we might harm downrange.] Pick a spot to aim at and let fly with your best efforts."

"Is it sighted in? he asked.

"Yessir, at about fifty yards."

"Have you shot it?" he asked.

"Yessir. I had to, to sight it in."

"And, uh, nothing went wrong ... did it?"

"Here I stand, sir, without nary a scratch."

"I don't think I want to pull the second trigger first," he said.

“That’s fine,” said I.

He pulled the trigger. The percussion cap discharged almost instantaneous with the main charge letting fly a .49 caliber ball weighing 200 grains. I heard the bullet smack a tree. Neither of us could see the results because of the cloud of blue-white smoke rolling out in front of us. We had to walk out from around the slowly dissipating cloud.

“Which one did you fire at?”

“That one right there,” he said nodding his head in the general direction, helping not a bit, but he was also unnaturally grinning very broadly. He was plainly pleased! “That was really smooth! I thought it would kick more.”

“You want to walk out and look at where you hit?” I asked.

“No, that’s not necessary. I see where I hit, just under the dark spot I was aiming at on that hackberry. It knocked a hole in it!”

“Well, then, it must have been more like 55 yards away,” I said as serious as I could. He didn’t catch the firing range humor.

“Here he said,” handing it back to me. “Load it up again and let me watch so I can do it myself.”

Yes, it was a [groundhog](#) slayer!



Your basic “whistle pig” or Groundhog

It isn't cruelty to shoot groundhogs. I am not “the great white hunter” — not at all, certainly not now. I haven’t fired that rifle in perhaps forty years. Back, then, as now, Groundhogs are plentiful pests that excavate burrows that may break the legs of horses or cattle if unknowingly stepped in. And one can always find an active one in a soybean field, for they eat the young sprouting soybeans in an arc thirty yards from their den

Also, I had a code, perhaps learned from my father not to shoot anything you do not intend to eat, or is not a pest, or a danger to anyone of anything. So, to kill two of those three conditions, I had an out. I had this older black Gentleman friend, who lived off [Natchez Street](#), and he loved to barbecue them! They are not bad to eat at all, actually pretty good — a lot better than barbecued goat, he also fixed, that's for sure! Barbecue goat – and I have eaten enough of it in my day – tastes like a Billy goats’ smell. Nasty!

And then there was the time I had ground hogs burrowing at the end of my detached garage when I lived at Myles Manor. I could not use a gun in the Franklin City limits to shoot, but I could use subsonic rounds from a .22 rifle that sounded no louder than a pellet gun. But I did not see they were doing much damage to anything ... until they moved out. My next tenants announced their presence by night, their preferred time to move about, by smell. Skunks! It was touch and go there for a while. I had to install updated lighting, so we stayed out of each other's way. They do not care too much for light. Indeed, it was cute seeing a momma skunk being trailed by her string of babies across my garage floor just like ducks. I had to await their departure to gain access to my vehicle.

Anyway, the reason I mention the building of my own rifle, and my subsequent learning of all things black powder, is it taught me what a "pulled bullet" is. I have had to pull a few bullets myself with black powder weapons. So, I recognize one on sight.

A Little background

After the Battles of Ft. Henry and Ft. Donelson, the [Tennessee State Capital of Nashville was occupied](#) by the Union forces under [Gen. U. S. Grant](#) on February 25th of 1862.



First Union dress parade in Nashville after its capture.

The Confederate Army, or what was left of it, reeled backward to lick its wounds, and Franklin was occupied by Federal forces shortly thereafter. Franklin quickly became a hotspot for guerilla-style warfare, particularly lightening attacks by various Confederate Cavalry units under the commands of Generals like [Nathan Bedford Forrest](#) and [Earl Van Dorn](#). Some old accounts I have read indicate that the people of Franklin were kept on edge by this, plus being raided for food by both sides. It was General Van Dorn that had precipitated the [First Battle of Franklin](#) on April 10th, 1863. General Van Dorn led a reconnaissance in force, clashing with [Major General Gordon Granger](#) in the area that would later be a part of the more vicious and bloody [Second Battle of Franklin](#). The first Battle of Franklin entailed casualties of less than 250 men all total.

With such considerations, the immediate work of fortifying Franklin was commenced, by [Col. William E Merrill](#). He kept the soldiers busy creating earthworks of all kinds that can still been seen all around Franklin — to be honest, all over the Middle Tennessee area. [Idle hands are the devil's workshop](#), so he kept them busy, and for their own good. The men stationed to guard Franklin were put to work building [Ft. Granger](#), and many smaller redoubts, plus signal and lookout forts on the higher hills like [Roper's Knob](#).



Roper's Knob, with the home where I grew up, as it looked about the time of my birth. Today, all the front field, in this photo taken from Liberty Pike, is covered with Cadet Subdivision, which annihilated another small fort located just out of frame on the left when the subdivision was built over it. Today the Roper's Knob is totally overgrown and my home place demolished. I did get to participate in an archeology test dig while employed at the State of Tennessee. The archeologists allowed my assistance since I knew where I had found certain artifacts and below ground structures.

Many of these works are still in place, and impressive, though eroded from the passage of time or idiots riding motorcycles over them, as was the case with Ft. Granger at one time and Roper's knob.

The north of Franklin was well defended by the Harpeth River that wraps around it, though some bridges across the river had been burned. Col. Merrill had been very concerned about the southern and western approaches to Franklin. Lewisburg and Columbia Pikes, that were heavily used, came up from the south, and Carter's Creek Pike from the west. He therefore set to building the semicircular line of entrenchments from the Harpeth River east of Franklin, crossing the Lewisburg Pike, and then on to the high ground around the [Carter House](#) and farm at the crossing of Columbia Pike. He continued these works through [The Hincheyville District](#) of Franklin and Carter's Creek Pike, ending at the Harpeth River west of Franklin. From many accounts, the earth works would have been manned lightly by troops, more than likely bivouacked there for convenience. [Pickets](#) were put in place out in front of the works as an early warning system, since Confederate Cavalry probes were frequent and came quickly like lightening out of the blue.

Several years ago, I worked with a friend, and Surveyor, Mark Goodman, on a feature of land I could see driving past from New HWY 96. I assumed it at first to be an old farm roadbed that the construction of New Highway 96 bisected at roughly a right angle upon its construction. This feature in the earth is on the south side of new Highway 96 west, and just west of the intersection with Highway 431 north between the intersections of 9th Avenue north and 11th Avenue North. [A historic marker marks its location](#) today.



Photo of now faint entrenchment by the author.

Mark was called to work on it for the monument, and it was determined to be a remaining entrenchment, mostly filled in by erosion over the years. This shows the general area of the entrenchments after passing through The Hincheyville District.

I approached some very nice folks I know living in The Hincheyville Historic District. These are fine old Franklin families that my family, and I, have known, in some cases, all my life. They are always impressed with my efforts to search their well-manicured yards, leaving little trace, of my explorations. I have been using metal detectors to retrieve relics since I was twelve and instructed by the great [Larry](#)

[Hicklen](#) in 1968 and later. I developed techniques very early on to disturb as little as possible, watch for buried utilities wires or piping, and I take great pride in leaving as little or no trace. Considering my successes, other homeowners are asking me to check their property!

As already discussed, Franklin was a magnet for encounters between the two belligerent forces. The Hincheyville District was no exception, before and during the 2nd Battle of Franklin. The Federal forces would lightly man these trenches, keeping pickets out in front of the lines, like early listening posts, since the fine southern horsemen in the various Cavalry units roamed free in Middle Tennessee. Generally Southerners, being agrarian in lifestyle, with greater distances to travel for business, Church, or socializing, were much more familiar with horses, particularly the [Southern Gentlemen](#). They took great pride in their horsemanship. The Southern Cavalry Units proved time after time they could ride circles around the Federal invaders, which they ended up doing with the Federals firing from earthworks. Many of the Federals had grown up in major cities, and even their countryside towns and neighbors were much closer together. Horsemanship was not a major concern.

But do not get the situation wrong, there were several excellent Federal Cavalry Units in the making, but they had to catch up. No larger-than-life Federal Cavalry Officers were of note were in the Western Theatre of the Civil War the records until later in the war. A fine Cavalry Officer that emerged at the 2nd Battle of Franklin was Major [General James H. Wilson](#). He bested General N. B. Forrest, contesting the fords of the Harpeth River, upriver, and east of Franklin, protecting the Federal left flank. He was outnumbered, but his Troopers had the advantage as supplied with the fast firing, rim-fire cartridge Spencer Rifle. They could lay out a fast wall of lead twice to three times that of the Confederates. General Forrest's Command had also been cut in half by General Hood, ordering half of Forrest's command under General Chalmers to the west side and flank of the Union Forces.

So, in the beginning of the occupation, it was better for the Federal Troops to have earthworks to use to hold off the attacks of horsemen. They manned all sides of Franklin with hilltop lookout and signal forts like Roper's Knob, as previously mentioned. Franklin is literally surrounded by various little forts and redoubts, several of which have been destroyed by the blade of the modern bulldozer. Quite a few still exist but are forgotten. Many do not look like much. Many escaped being mapped at the time. That is why I like to explore places that would make for likely posts or redoubts and do some relic sampling with my metal detectors. I have found redoubts and signal forts along Hillsboro Road as well, mostly atop prominent hills. So, many of these places remain forgotten when they should be located and preserved before they are lost.



The older version of Franklin Battlefield shows several extra hilltop redoubts and forts.

The same applies to all the locations where the relics of Native Americans may be found in abundance. The low land around Spencer's Creek has produced hundreds of broken and whole arrowheads for myself, my father, and brothers. And, usually, can be located by seeing chert or flint chips from where the Native Americans made, or knapped, their points, knives, and other tools. The Vanderbilt Golf course is situated atop, where my father, brothers, and I used to find them in abundance.



Arrowhead found by the author in his youth, riding a tobacco setter.

I pursue these sites and try to identify by any Civil War military relics. I know of two that were destroyed and built over. More exist unidentified. Part of what I try to identify these places by searching old maps and written accounts, looking at hilltops, looking for disturbances in the topography. Then I try to verify a location by finding period relics. I use the same techniques to find sites of old homes and farms. It is like hunting and fishing combined!

Many old homes were used by Officers, staff, soldiers, the sick, and wounded. I dug up many relics surrounding [Jasmine Grove at the apex of Myles Manor Court](#) and Aspen Grove before it was converted into the Tennessee Golf House.



A turn of the 20th Century photo of Aspen Grove provided by the author. The persons are unknown, but may yet be identified.

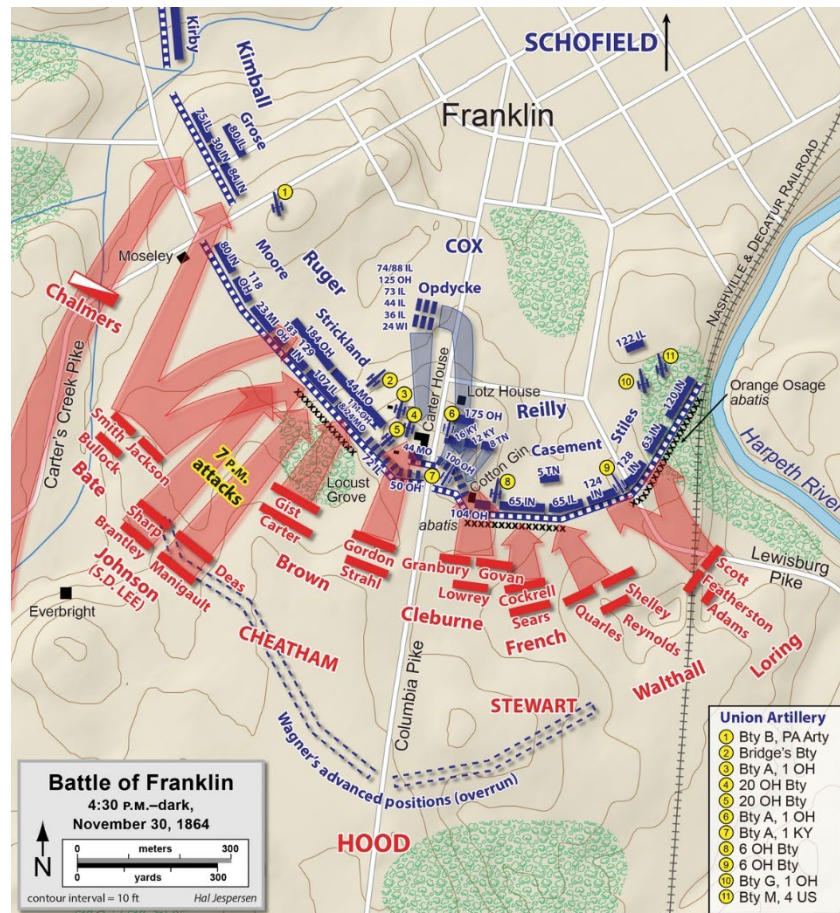


Relics I have recovered from around homes.

Top item: an Officer's sword belt plate dug from behind Aspen Grove — now The Golf House. That area has been covered by construction.

Below left, an ammunition box shoulder strap Eagle Breastplate; right, an oval Federal ammunition box plate found during construction along Franklin Road at Liberty Pike by The Factory; Below left, stacked Burnside empty cartridges; Harmonica reeds (must have been very popular—I have found several); right, the possible tip of a sword scabbard; bottom left, four Burnside casings stuck together; center, possible Enfield Rifle trigger guard; rifle barrel stock end with groove for a ramrod, all found in Myles Manor Subdivision when I lived there.

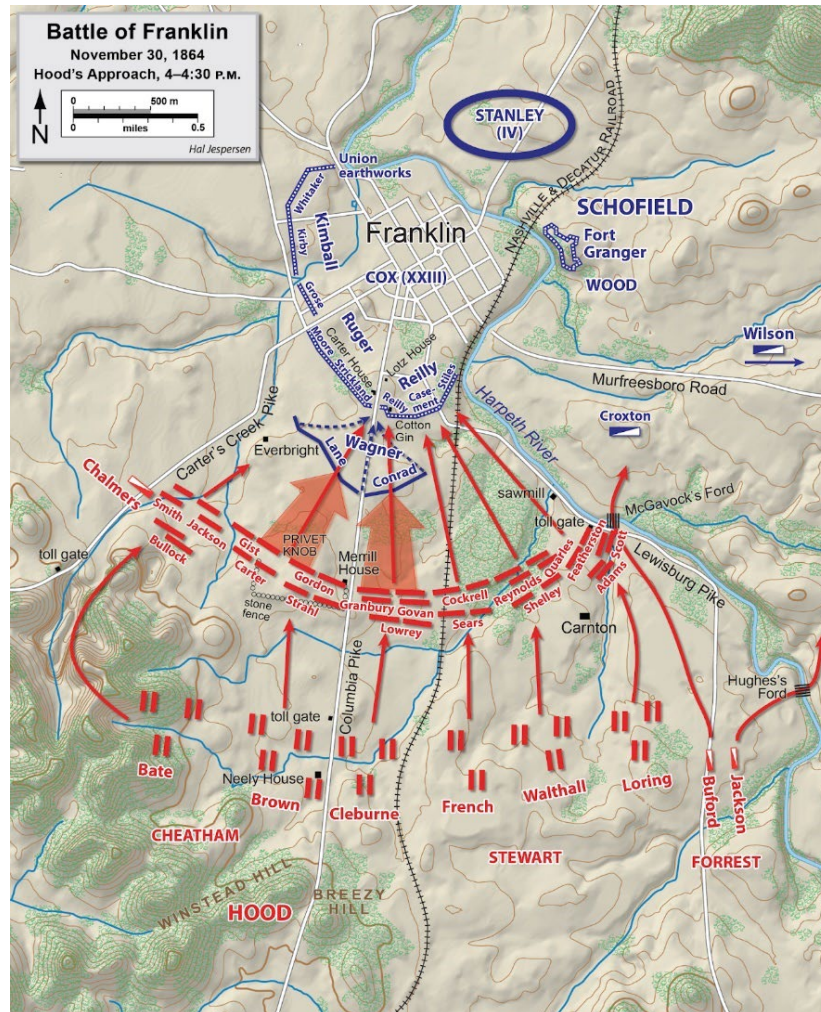
There was some considerable fighting in and near The Hinchyville District area after dark had fallen, oddly these Confederate units arrived late, because they had to cross rough ground and hills west of Columbia Pike. I read somewhere they led their attacks by torchlight! These Confederate forces were under the command of General [Benjamin Cheatham](#), and the Cavalry of [C.S.A. General Chalmers](#). General Chalmers was under the command of General N. B. Forrest, but his command had been split by commanding [General John Bell Hood](#), hamstringing the command of Forrest's Brigade.



Note the right of the map showing "7 PM attacks" in the Hinchyville area. Map courtesy to the Battlefield trust.

That Devil Forrest, by John A. Wyeth, I believe, mentions that Forrest gave General Hood a full description of the disposition and problems of the Federals. Gen. Forrest's Cavalry had tortured the rear guard of the Federals retreating from Springhill all day and fought an hour-long battle at Winstead Hill south of Franklin. Arriving at Franklin, Gen Forrest fully reconnoitered the Federal positions, and realizing the Federals were in a predicament, repairing bridges to get their army across the Harpeth River. Gen. Forrest had proposed taking his full Cavalry and a Division of Infantry, saying he could easily crush through US Cavalry and pass around the Federal left to cut Franklin Road. This would block General

Schofield's escape to join up with the forces at Nashville, the State Capital of Tennessee. General Schofield would be boxed in and probably forced to surrender or await assistance from the larger force in Nashville. That is called [defeating the enemy in detail](#). This is pure speculation but supported by many other thinkers. I have my doubts because Forrest's men and horses had to be dead-tired, and no matter their numbers, the Federal Cavalry on the north side of the Harpeth were armed with [Spencer Repeating Rifles](#). These rifles could lay out a wall of fire that might overcome the numerical advantage Forrest attempted to assemble on the eastern flank.



The disposition and paths of attack on Franklin as ordered by General Hood.

Note Forrest's crossings at McGavock and Hughes fords.

In The Hinchyville District, there were attacks by Confederate troops arriving late in the area due to line of march and rough terrain. They did make some half-hearted attacks, under the circumstances of some being led by torchlight. These attacks were repulsed by a line of heavy, concentrated Federal Infantry.

Considering all this, I determined to find friends and homeowners amenable to allowing me to search their yards in The Hincheyville District for relics based on this information. One good friend agreed to let me hunt but told me that several people had already hunted the property and found nothing. Completely undiscouraged, I smiled and found, within a few minutes of searching, a William's Bore Cleaning bullet. That immediately confirmed my speculations concerning the area. Of course, I went to his backyard and found the *pulled bullet* pictured above. I am still hunting the site. I take my time and look at how the land has been shaped, seeking features that may have been a vegetable garden many years ago, or Federal earth works that may have been staggered about the area.

One matter few modern Franklin natives, or the thousands of tourists walking its street every year, realize is that Franklin was occupied by the Federal Troops for two to two-and-a-half years. In a broad sense, the Federal Cavalry perhaps were not as numerous, or possessed the skill of horsemanship of their Southern counterparts. This made for a fluid borderline of friction between the two forces. Federal Pickets and troops had to man this line of entrenchments because the Confederates were never far away. There were plenty of them, particularly as expressed in Confederate Cavalry raids by the likes of Generals Forrest, Van Dorn, their lieutenants and others, that would have kept occupiers and residents perpetually nervous. For example, Gen. Van Dorn kept his headquarters just a few miles away in Springhill. General Forrest never seemed to hold still.

Residents were pressed into housing Officers and providing food and other provisions for the occupying Federals, or if they had pulled out of an area, the Confederates. There were numerous clashes between the forces as they foraged for food in all surrounding countryside. It was an unsettling co-existence.

As for hunting relics, the relic hunter must not leave unsightly holes in a well-manicured lawn unsightly messes. I have been using metal detectors since I was twelve years old. There are two things of great importance to learn quickly. One is to not leave unsightly holes. You will not be allowed back to search. A good metal Detectorist learns how to cut the holes so that they can be refilled and replaced some that it will take some looking to find where I dug, and after a rain, impossible. Secondly, I learned that it is best to leave no evidence of where you dug so that other metal detectorists who inevitably follow afterward may find where you have been at work. One does not give away his best hunting spot.

Now, as for the pulled bullet pictured above. The term "muzzle-loader" implies a weapon loaded at the muzzle end, the shooting end, the end where the bullet comes out when fired. The projectile is a typical [.58 Caliber Minié ball or bullet](#). The bullet in all likelihood came from either an [American Springfield Model 1861](#), or perhaps the [British Pattern 1853 Enfield rifled musket](#). Both were used widely by Infantry of both forces. I am not sure what the set-up was for pulling misfired bullets in differing muzzle loaders. I just see the ball puller was sued to bore into the bullet at the base of the barrel. Muzzle-load weapons can misfire for a myriad of reasons. Trust me! Remember, I built, and still have, my own.

Being stationed in an area like Franklin, Tennessee, while being in the middle of things in the Western Theatre, was not all that exciting all the time. As the saying goes, "[war is pure boredom punctuated to moments of sheer terror](#)" applies. Most likely the weapon was loaded and not fired for a long period. Moisture probably intruded. Just the humidity of Tennessee, perhaps, given enough time, would penetrate through the percussion cap nipple into the firing chamber and powder charge under the bullet. Whatever — for some-odd reason – 160 years ago, some Infantry soldier's weapon would not fire. It

could have happened at the 2nd Battle of Franklin, It could be they were periodically checking their guns, test firing them. They checked them less frequently than they should have to be ready.

Here is what a [ball puller](#) is, and how it works.

First, I should point out that there are ball” worms” that performed the same function, but I have never worked with one of those. You have a problem. A large bullet is lodged over a gun powder charge that has become fouled. After checking the nipple upon which the percussion cap is fitted that when struck by the cocked hammer smashing the caps sets off [mercuric fulminate](#) contained in the percussion cap, much like the children’s cap guns of old. It could be that the gun was not loaded. The ramrod can usually determine that quickly. If loaded, and not firing, even after repeated attempts with percussion caps, it was time to “pull the bullet.”



I had to replace the ramrod on my .50 Caliber rifle. It used to be that the ball puller would screw the opposite way into the base of the ramrod. That was worrying for they are the size of a ... screw, and therefore easy to lose. I was always discovering I lost mine when I needed it most – out in the middle of nowhere with a clogged-up gun! This version stays with you since it screws in under the ramrod.

To remove the bullet a puller would be affixed or was already attached in some fashion to the ramrod, would be put down the barrel to the bullet. The soldier would be able to feel the soft lead. He would endeavor to get the screw centered as much as possible, as the one that is the subject of this article shows as well done. Then it was a matter of applying pressure and screwing into the lead like a wood screw. Once it was deep enough to have a firm grasp, the bullet pulled, sometimes grudgingly, from the barrel. Depending on the circumstances, the soldier could do a thorough cleaning of the barrel, or if it was in a battle situation, quickly scrape around to dislodge and remove the old, fouled powder, and reload to get back in the battle. In either case, as with me, the bullet was usually discarded.

I sometimes wonder if some relic hunter with a metal detector has dug up one of my old pulled bullets, seen the screwed hole in it, and launched off into wonder. Lead oxidizes quickly in the ground turning white, like the one in the example.

So, if you ever wondered... well, now you know.

[1] <https://www.midsouthshooterssupply.com/dept/muzzleloaders/rifle/50-cal>

[2] *“Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how abhorred in my imagination it is! My gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?” ~ Hamlet, VI, Shakespeare. Yes, I read all kinds of stuff as a child. I was an avid reader.*

[3] The Author: there is no good definition on the internet to describe what ‘Flitner’s Flinch’ is, Its origins implied by the allusion to a Flintlock weapon. With flintlock weapons, when the gun is fired with the shooter sighting down

information on the [First Battle of Franklin](#).

[Federal Breastworks](#) held by Grose’s Brigade, Kimball’s Division of the Fourth U.S. Army Corps on Nov. 30, 1864.

[4] Author's note: Fred, who lived off Natchez Street, in Franklin, invited his friends and I to gather when the barbecue was done. I stood out like a sore thumb, being the only Caucasian on hand. That was not a problem, for I knew most of his friends, too. I had worked farm labor with them, baling hay, and all parts of the tobacco process with them. And, yes, he would slip in BBQ goat as well. I'm not fond of

[3] [https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Battle_of_Franklin_\(1863\)](https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Battle_of_Franklin_(1863))

[3] [Federal Breastworks](#) held by Grose’s Brigade, Kimball’s Division of the Fourth U.S. Army Corps on Nov. 30, 1864.

Author's Notes

[a] Though I hunted doves, which are very good to eat, I was fondest of hunting quail with well-trained bird dogs. It is a beautiful thing to observe without the shooting, but quail makes for an unbelievable meal with gravy and homemade biscuits. It makes my mouth water as I remember and write this.

I also was extremely fond of hunting rabbits with beagles. After a while I gave up on shooting the rabbits because I simply did not want to skin and clean them, and, well ... I like them. I occasionally shot squirrels for it was the first hunting season to open in the late summer/early fall.

Everything I shot, I took home, cleaned and my mother cooked. and it was all good, even squirrel! I eventually went rabbit hunting with my beagle and intentionally missed. My beagle would give me a disapproving glance as he dashed past continuing the chase until the rabbit went to ground usually in an abandoned Groundhog den.

My heart had softened with age. I didn't like killing things so much anymore, Plus, I had to clean them and beg my mother to cook them, or do so myself, which was never as good.

Therein lies another story. When I was in college at The University of Mississippi (Ole Miss), a passel of my frat brothers (Kappa Sigma) were avid deer hunters. They had seen my .50 caliber black powder Hawken, and told me that I could hunt deer in the primitive weapon preseason. This took place before official deer season opened. They shot compound bows, but told me that black powder qualified as a primitive weapon.

These guys were the real deal Mississippi outdoorsmen and hunters. I fit in nicely — except my heart had softened by that point.

They took me on a primitive season deer hunt one day. Of course, there was late consumption of alcohol the night before and we arose with pots of coffee and ragged looks to go out in the dark to get our "hides," They gave me a "good hide." I figured that it was not the best hide or even a good one for they would save those for themselves. They were all loaded with bows and arrows. I was the only one with a black powder weapon. I had not been there long enough for my coffee to cool and to finish my second cigarette - odors that would discourage any deer, but after stomping out my second smoke I looked up and there was a massive buck, with antlers like tree branches, stand stock still just about thirty yards away. I was stunned, and the buck was oblivious.

I slowly raised the rifle, levelled it at center mass, right behind the bucks front shoulder. Hitting him there was destroying all his major organs, and I was loaded with the maximum charge. That buck was dead. He might have taken a few steps when I pulled the double set front trigger. Pulling the rear trigger first, set the front trigger as a hair trigger, that was a bit different so you really don't know when it is going to discharge so you could not guess the discharge and flinch off target. The discharge took you by surprise. This all happened in less than a second.

The hollow boom of the gun rattled the woods. "Bambi" took off like a rocket, not trailing blood but untouched, but there was a large bullet hole in the tree behind him right over his back.

You see, I had seen them field dress their kills. It was a very involved process, one that I did not want to do. Plus, he was such a majestic beast, too. The buck had heard me cock my hammer to full cock and looked my way. I raised my barrel and fired int the tree behind him six inches above the buck's back. I spoke so no one would hear me, "Run, Bambi, run!"

I told all my Bros. the story of how I had missed and showed the bullet hole in the tree. Rookie mistake, eh?

They boosted my spirits by taking me to the "snake pit" to fish.

I still to this day love to fish, and back then fished all over northern Mississippi at their "best spots" wading in cypress swamps that were inevitably nearly chest deep.

No. I have never worn a pair of waders in my life.

These cypress swamps were where lake Sardis had backed up into woods and then the trees had died and were submerged, all but the cypress trees. It was dangerous for boats because of the logs, Secondly, there was no time I was fishing there, that I could not see a venomous snake — Cottonmouths and Copperheads — swimming somewhere on the lake. Copperheads, so I was told, have a habit of climbing up on and into floating things — like boats, so their use was eschewed. They bothered you less if you were in the water with them. My frat brothers advised me to carry my old .38 Colt Police Positive 1908 loaded with rat shot in my top pocket. I had inherited the cool pistol somehow from my Great Uncle John on my mother's side. He had been a train conductor for L&N Railroad in Louisville KY. My frat brothers told me to load it with rat shot, sort of like a mini-shotgun in my shirt pocket, so it would stay reasonably dry. The .38 rat shot was to discourage snakes, permanently, if they decided to become social with a wading fisherman. But, all that aside, you would get a strike on nearly every cast of a chocolate colored plastic worm rigged to be weedless. I catch several three to six pound Largemouth bass that day.

[b] Author's note: Fred, who lived off Natchez Street, in Franklin, loved to barbeque groundhog. To me a groundhog is a rodent, a big-un', and I often refer to them as giant ground squirrels," or "Whistle pigs," because of the sharp whistle they give when they spot trouble - like me. It was the habit of myself and fellow hunters to whistle like them to make them all stand up on their hind quarters around a crop field, as is their way, so we could where they were. Then we would spread out to stalk them, sneaking up on them using gullies and stream beds if a closer shot was needed.

Fred barbequed all I brought to him, as far as I know, over a pit in the ground with a metal grate to hold the meat above the fire. He covered that with solid corrugated hood to hold in the smoke.

When all was ready he invited his friends, making him popular in the Natchez District back in the "Unicorn Days." [b] He invited me, too.

These were dangerous times in race relations back in the early seventies when I was at Battle Ground Academy, my College Preparatory high school. I stood out like a sore thumb, being the only Caucasian on hand as a rule. That was not a problem, because they knew I had shot the meat, and obviously was proficient with firearms, and packing, which I frequently did — an "Undercover Special" Charter Arms .38, which, and still does, in my pants pocket.

I knew most of his friends, anyway, so there never was reason for concern. I had worked farm labor all my teenage years with many of them, baling hay, and for several farms with all parts of the tobacco process from riding the setter, to cutting and spearing, to hanging the top tiers of the tobacco barns. Most of them worked in tobacco, too.

Some I knew from being legendary in their community in both good and bad ways, but I never had an ounce of trouble with anyone, and a *really* good time was *had by all*. There was always plenty of

alcohol about the perimeter, and pot, though I did not indulge in that. I say around the perimeter for Fred, being an older Gentleman, and mainstay of his Church — a Deacon, perhaps — disapproved of such as well as the card and dice games. I avoided those games figuring that to be too dangerous an assumption on my part to play with them.

Yes, Fred would slip in barbequed goat, too. I'm not fond of goat. They taste like they smell, and to know how they attain their unique odor is to turn one's stomach!

[b] Author's note: "Unicorn Days" is a term the Author picked up in a local - still odd to the author - bar on Main Street in Franklin, TN. The Author grew in Franklin, TN, and it was a completely different town in his youth, where almost everyone knew, or of, each other. There were no bars as alcohol was not sold by the drink in any establishment, at least legally. It could be purchased at the local licensed liquor store, and cold beer could be bought at licensed groceries and convenience stores. That was it.

In past days, say as late as the early 1980s, Franklin was a small town of "indigenous species," as the Author likes to describe them and himself, of original Franklinites. Many were of old lineage families, such as the Author's paternal family dating to the early 1830s, and his family were considered still by other families, almost condescendingly as "newcomers."

Franklin slowly began changing certainly by the late 1980's with an influx of "out-of-towners," who often expressed the wish to "closed the door behind them," as expressed by Bob Canaday, a good friend of the Author, upon whom the Author conferred his Masonic Degrees at Hiram Lodge #7 on 2nd Avenue South, and who recently passed away.

Liquor by the drink followed these changes and Franklin caught the eye of many monied Country Music notables and others (wannabe swells - nouveau riche - with too much money and no taste) who moved there to get away from Nashville workplaces, a short commute, and live with the rest of the "swells."

The Author bought his first home in 1987. Foolishly he sold it as his family grew, and it was too small. It recently sold for over 1.1 million dollars demonstrating how the town has, in the Author's opinion, negatively evolved, particularly since he sold that home long ago at a modest profit before prices steeply climbed.

The term "Unicorn" is what the overwhelming numbers of newcomers refer to original Franklinites, as finding one as being as rare as finding a Unicorn.