

Tony M. from Beacon Falls, Connecticut

I was 7 years old when we moved to a dairy/fruit farm that had recently wound down their operations. That year, I found my first gun under the Christmas tree: a Daisy Model 25. Like most boys of the 1950's, cowboys were my heroes.

"Why didn't you buy me a lever action, Dad?"

He replied: "This pump will train you to shoot a pump action shotgun for when you get older. Besides, it has a better feed system and is more powerful and accurate. You can't learn to shoot well with an inaccurate rifle!"

I also learned that the BBs didn't rattle around and scare game when I was hunting. The rear sight was hinged and could easily be switched from a standard open sight to a peep sight. This also provided experience that would pay dividends later in my hunting and shooting pursuits.

While having breakfast one Saturday morning, Dad told me to get the Daisy and try to thin out some of the birds that had been marauding in our garden. A short time later, I came back to the house with a big one in hand. I don't know who was prouder, Dad or me!

The Daisy became the hub of my life at that time and was my practice vehicle for a being a responsible person. Dad said that as long as I was safe and responsible, I would have the privilege of using the Daisy by myself, even if he wasn't home. One mistake and he would take it away. I made sure that would never happen!

Tin can rolling while shooting from the hip quickly became a favorite hobby. I eventually got pretty good at small targets both on the ground and in the air. Grasshoppers became gourmet delicacies for my cat, Tiger, and they were easily hit with the Daisy. Shooting Elvis Presley and Gene Autry 78 rpm records out of the air was a snap.

My greatest accomplishment with the Daisy was head shooting my first ruffed grouse (we called them partridges back then). He was roosted and asleep when I sneaked up to him. To this day, it was the best game meat that I ever tasted.

I lost track of the total number of BBs that were fired through the Daisy, but I'm sure that they numbered into the 10's of thousands. After many years of almost daily shooting, the Daisy just plain wore out. That was over 50 years ago. I still miss it!