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A BOOK REVIEW

The book is *A Guide to Collecting the M1 Garand and M1 Carbine* by Bruce N. Canfield. Those who read *Shotgun News* have seen the ads which refer to the author as a noted arms historian. Mr. Canfield is a former member of the Carbine Club, and is not the only one who has had carbine material published above his signature since leaving the club.

Only that part of the book dealing with the carbine will be reviewed, since the Garand is not within the scope of our club.

The carbine section of the book covers 63 pages, including 12 pages of brief history and comments, 22 pages about the carbines produced by the various prime contractors, 7 pages about carbine variations, 10 pages about accessories, 11 pages called "tables," and 1 page of references. About 20% of the space in the 63 pages is taken up by photographs and another 20% or so is taken up by the large wasted top margin on every page. The 22 pages about the carbines of the various contractors are presented in a format similar to the reports and updates in the Carbine Club Newsletters, with a paragraph covering one component such as bolt, magazine catch, etc. There are frequent errors and plenty of "vapor" speculation in these pages. Some contractors' names are not given correctly, with the most obvious being the omission of the hyphen in the Rock-Öla name.

Page 7, headed "Author's Preface," contains a statement "...speculation and supposition have been either eliminated or clearly identified as such. Too many erroneous 'facts' about these weapons have been carelessly tossed around...". In spite of this claim, the book contains much speculation and tosses around some errors as being facts. Examples will be given later.

There is another interesting statement on page 95: "A popular barnyard euphemism comes to mind when some self-styled carbine 'authorities' pontificate at length...regarding certain 'facts' about the carbine." Well said! That barnyard expression is indeed quite appropriate when non-factual material, such as much in this book, is flowing.

Going back to the early 1970s, there was little information available to collectors except for that contained in magazine articles and in short sections of books covering a wide variety of weapons. A good booklet with a yellow cover, *The M1 Carbine* by Konrad F. Scheier, Jr. was published in 1973. More good information was published in the 1974 two-part article, "All the Way with the M1 Carbine" by M.D. Waite in *The American Rifleman*. Another booklet was published late in 1976 at about the time the Carbine Club was started. This was Robert Gibson's *Guide to Collecting the M1 Carbine*. The next publication specifically for carbine collectors was Larry Ruth's book, *M1 Carbine: Design, Development & Production*. This book gave excellent historical background material, even though it was not very accurate in describing the carbine's features, code marks, etc.

It apparently served Mr. Canfield's purpose to do a "put down" of these publications which preceded his book. On page 96 he refers to "A couple of paperback pamphlets of varying degrees of usefulness..." and says, "Only one book specifically aimed at carbine collectors has been published but, regrettably, its actual value is limited...".

While the work of Scheier, Waite, Gibson and Ruth did not provide all the information wanted or needed by collectors, it did much to acquaint the public with the M1 Carbine, stimulate interest in collecting, and call attention to the need for more information.

Regardless of Mr. Canfield's words about "varying degrees of usefulness" and "actual value is limited," it should not be overlooked that the work of the earlier authors was largely their own work. It had originality, in that it provided information which had not been previously published for collectors. In contrast, readers of Mr. Canfield's book will find that it consists mostly of information published in these earlier works, or in the Carbine Club Newsletters, along with a goodly amount of needless speculation. The serial number references and other material taken from the Newsletters and other sources are not foot-noted to identify or credit their source, which could cause readers to think the material is the work of Mr. Canfield.

Let's get on with some examples of "errors being tossed around as facts" and of some vapor and speculation being used to fill space when the author brought up a subject and didn't have any accurate information to present, or was unsure of the facts.

Page 101: Mr. Canfield states that a 1949 barrel date is a post-WWII replacement. Not necessarily so. Underwood made a dating error in 10-43 and used a 10-49 date on a batch of barrels used by both Underwood and Standard Products.

Page 105: "The first variation WRA receiver has been observed on receivers numbered into the 1,160,000 range." Very misleading. Maybe a few stragglers exist, but the first type receiver was discontinued about 100,000 numbers earlier.

Page 106: "Most Winchester carbines will be found with the 'milled' rather than the 'brazed' type of trigger housing." Are we to believe that some Winchesters were made with brazed housings? This is an example of space filling "vapor."

Page 106: Referring to the push safety used by Winchester, "...used until approximately #1,350,000 when it was replaced by the rotary style." Way off base! The rotary safety is a rare item below the 7,000,000 serial numbers, if in fact any were used below this.

Page 109: "Most Inland trigger housings were marked 'Inland' in a triangular box." Did the author ever look at an Inland housing? Has anyone else seen the triangle?

Page 111: "All indications point to Underwood (sic) using just the plain face magazine catch without serrations. A few of the very late production Underwood carbines could have used the 'M' marked catch...". Pure speculation, and wrong on both points.

Page 112: Discussing Underwood handguards, "...and the later stocks were usually teamed with the 4 rivet handguard." This is false. The barnyard comes to mind.

Page 113: "...it appears that Rock Ola (sic) carbines only used the unmarked type of (magazine) catch without serrations." Speculation again, wrong again.

Page 120: Discussing Standard Products trigger housings, "...the stamped brazed type came into use fairly early in the production somewhere around serial #2,225,000." Serial number 2,225,000 was not fairly early - it was made during the last month of Standard Products' production. The brazed housing came into use at least 100,000 numbers earlier than Mr. Canfield says.

Page 120: "Most of the SP carbines were fitted with the early 'dog leg' type of hammer...". This is more erroneous guesswork or speculation. Dog leg hammers were used in less than half the SP carbines.

Page 121: Discussing Saginaw, "Two and four rivet handguards may be found." "... it is possible that some stamped/brazed trigger guards (sic) may have been used there." "One, however, cannot rule out the possibility that some of the round bolts may have been used...". Has anyone found a four rivet handguard? Or a brazed housing? And is there anyone who does not know that Saginaw used round bolts?

Page 138: The statement is made that original WWII M4 bayonets will have a distinct sunburst staking pattern on top of the hilt. Possibly the author has never seen a Case M4, or looked at the staking pattern used by Case.

Finally, one last example which tends to reflect further upon the credibility of this book: On page 103 he rightly states, "There have been a number of incorrect restorations observed which certainly does (sic) not add to the desirability or value of the carbine. Generally these are cases in which early style parts have been installed on carbines that actually left the factory with later parts or when incorrectly coded parts have been used by the 'restorer'" and "Any genuine 'GI' carbine in decent condition is a good collectible and any incorrect or inept 'restoration' may do more harm than good." These are very

valid remarks; yet on page 113 there is a picture of an Irwin-Pedersen carbine from Mr. Canfield's collection. It is equipped with an early flip-type sight, yet the picture clearly shows a double serial number stamping. This after Mr. Canfield remarked on pages 102-103: "...the serial numbers of some early carbines were hidden from view when the later adjustable rear sights were installed by the military. On some of these, the carbine's serial number was re-stamped on the receiver in front of the rear sight. Thus, if the later sight were replaced by an early type, two separate sets of identical serial numbers would be revealed." This photo is a perfect example of an "inept" restoration.

The quoted material above is a sampling of what a reader will find. Maybe the writer just didn't know enough to give correct information on all the subjects he attempted to write about. Some of the vapor is inexcusable, such as that on page 120 about Standard Products' housings and hammers. Carbine Club Newsletter 35 was listed on the reference page, and this Newsletter covered SP housings and hammers.

The discussion on page 126 about what carbine is correct for the M1A1 stock is largely a re-phrasing of material from Carbine Club Newsletter 47. The description on page 131 of what constitutes an M3 carbine is practically verbatim from Newsletter 45. The table on page 151 showing the number of carbines delivered by months is an exact duplicate of the figures estimated from graphs by H.J. Saunders and J.B. Powers and published in Newsletter 47. The table is not footnoted, nor is any other paragraph, to identify its source.

SUMMARY: The book has some good photographs. Mr. Canfield's writing style is easy to read. A person who does not know anything about the M1 Carbine could learn something from this book, but would be somewhat confused and puzzled about those points where the author served up vapor instead of beef. Any member of the Carbine Club who reads a page or two will probably recognize some early newsletter material, plus some incorrect speculation, and decide that his money can be better spent on something else. All the above comments, I might add, were made after referring to government or contractor documents or to references where the comment can be verified and confirmed. They are not simply the "pontificating of a self-styled carbine 'authority'." These are documents Mr. Canfield could have had access to had he chosen to do more in-depth research prior to publication. This book is not of benefit to knowledgeable collectors. It does not add much of anything to the field of published carbine information, except a different signature. As Mr. Canfield points out on page 96, "Hopefully, someday a well-researched and documented book on the carbine will be written..."

Mike Stratton