

That Indian and His Revolver

The early morning sun glistens from the snow covered fields of Stone Arabia. It is late February of the 14th year of our new century. The writer of this narrative has a decision to make. Does the reader realize that with advancing age even reasonable simple decisions are more difficult to make or adhere to for that matter? What is the decision facing me? Does this old bird emerge from his warm bed where he is engrossed in a story by Bret Harte of the Californian Gold Rush days or roll out to put his pen to paper to write of a happening from his own life many years ago. The decision is made. I'll write the story that has been in the back of this old mind for some time. Just how many of the pages of yesterday I will have to leaf through to reach a beginning is not certain. Let's try 75 years. My parents, grandpa Garlock and I were living in grandpa's house along the creek at Marshville, NY some four miles south of Canajoharie.

This writer was emerging as a collector even back then. Rummaging through yesterday's leftovers was something really special. It just happened that a long building that was doubtless built by grandpa from leftover lumber was located not far from the house. Downstairs was the garage for the family car. It was upstairs that was so interesting to me. Let's climb that steep rickety stair. The building was quite long so there was lots of old stuff up there. Much had survived from the old family farms of several generations and had reposed there for years. There was a large heavy wooden box with a tight fitting cover to keep the mice out. I could lift the heavy lid to expose old photo albums and lots of books. That is where I found the photograph of the very old man with white whiskers. Grandpa said it was of his grandfather Elijah Garlock who had been born in 1818 and was a "Good old grandfather."



What I want to tell you about is an old book about the western United States. As I leafed through its pages an illustration of an Indian chief with dark piercing eyes stared at me. He was dressed in the distinctive trappings of the American Plains. I would judge from the late 1860s to mid or late 1870s. Across his chest he held a huge revolver. I may not have known just then that firearm with its distinctive

profile was made at Ilion, NY not so far from where I lived. I learned that it was a Remington Percussion army revolver which had the distinction of being one of the principal arms of the Union Cavalry in America's Civil War. I asked my gun collector friend Willard White if he had one of those revolvers. He did and I was allowed to hold that piece of American history in my hands. I decided right then and there that I had to have one. Questioning everyone I came in contact with I finally found that the father of a girl in our county school had his father's old Remington pistol he had used in the Civil War.

He was not willing to sell it probably because of my young age. I told grandpa about my find. Nothing much was said. Christmas was fast approaching. Guess what—I found that old Remington in my Christmas stocking. That old pistol regretfully slipped away in some of my early trading ventures in an effort to keep in spending money. However, through all the years I have never been without owning one of those old Remington army revolvers. I still can hold one in my hand and have the experiences of Civil War and Indian War days. That picture of the Indian chief still peers at me from my long ago memory.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, February 25, 2014