

Sanders and Metzger collections show weapon evolution

By James Bernsen
The Battalion

Texas A&M University prides itself on its traditions. One little-known tradition has been almost 700 years in the making. A&M is home to the Sam Houston Sanders and Carl Metzger Gun Collections, which trace the history of firearms from the 1300s.

Joe Fenton, Class of '58 and curator of the collection, which is housed in the Sam Houston Sanders Corps of Cadets Center, said the collection is considered one of the top three in the country.

The central part of the collection is the Colt revolving rifle collection, which features several rifles with a serial number of one, he said.

The Sanders collection consists of 102 commemorative guns that mark anniversaries of famous events in the history of America.

The Metzger Collection consists of 340 antique and rare firearms and 120 powder flasks.

"It is one of the most complete, workable collections," Fenton said. "Every one (of the guns) can be shot."

The antiques are arranged into categories such as pre-Revolutionary War, post-Revolutionary War, percussion guns and pistols, frontier period, guns of the West, war guns and specialty guns.

Fenton said he often uses the guns to illustrate history to the children who visit, so they can visualize what life was like in the Old West.

"We come in here and tell them two things," he said. "Guns tell the story of America. They would never have been able to feed themselves or survive on the frontier without them."

He said he also uses the opportunity to teach children gun safety.

"We tell them to never assume a gun is unloaded," he said. "When we moved them from the MSC, after all those years, we found one of them was loaded."

The collection was moved into the Corps Center in 1992 to make it more accessible, he said. Many firearms are not exhib-

ited, as space is limited.

The placement of the individual guns in the exhibit was determined by a computer, and was designed to facilitate explanation and understanding.

Among the items in the exhibit is a Colt Walker, considered the most valuable of the collection.

There are less than 100 of these famous revolvers that were produced specially for the Texas Rangers.

The University also owns two shotguns that belonged to Bonnie and Clyde.

The guns were recovered after the final shoot-out with law enforcement officers in which the infamous bank robbers were killed.

The Bonnie and Clyde guns are currently on loan to the Texas Ranger Museum in Waco.

The collection also features a rare Henry Derringer, the same model weapon that was used to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. A Nelson volley gun of the same type as the one Jim Bowie took to the Alamo is also part of the collection.

There are also several guns that are the only ones of their kind remaining, including a Colt sniper rifle, one of which was used to kill Lord Horatio Nelson.

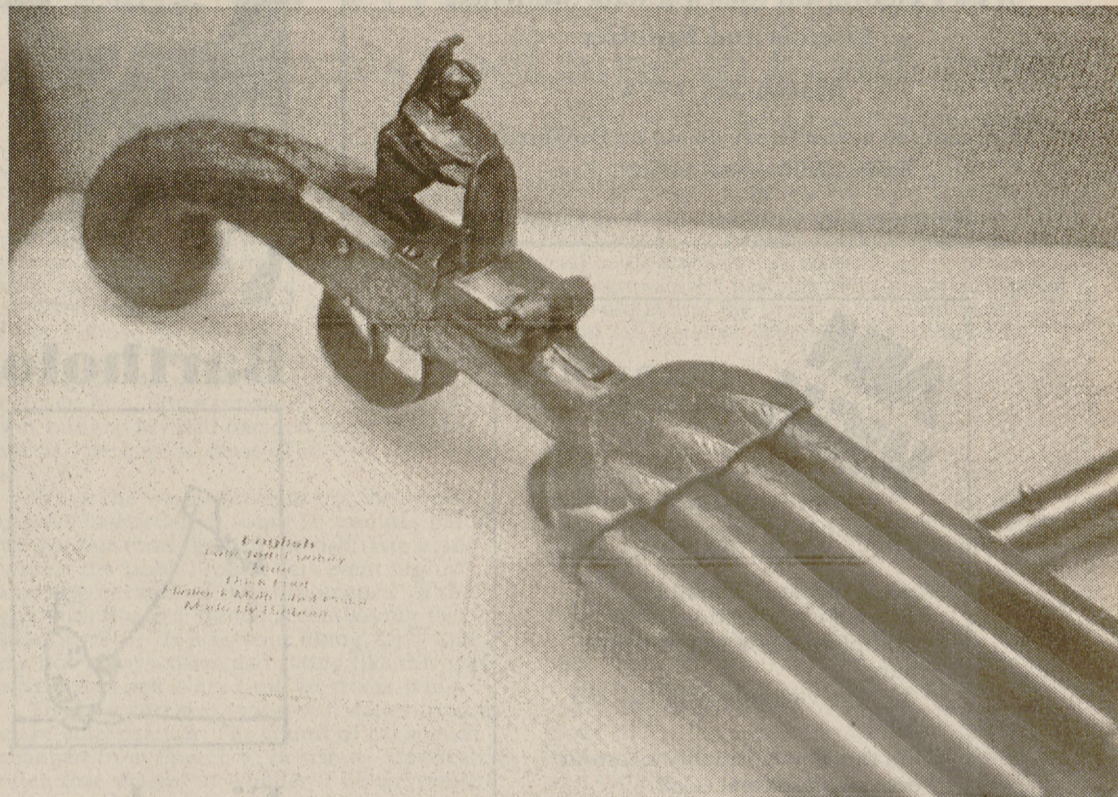
The oldest weapon in the collection is a 14th Century Chinese hand cannon.

In addition to the two collections, A&M owns two water-cooled machine guns that were used on aircraft in World War I and training rifles that have been used at A&M throughout its history.

Fenton said with all the controversial arguments about guns today, it is still important to remember that guns are, in a way, the history of the United States.

"They were tools in the frontier era," he said. "You had to have that old muzzle-loader leaning on a stump nearby if something came up."

He credited the repeating rifle as winning the American West, which, whether good or bad, is a very important part of history, he said.



By David Birch/The Battalion

A late eighteenth century, English multi-shot and Metzger gun collection on display in the Corps of Cadets Center.

Suspected thief arrested for using I.D.'s to hide crimes

The Associated Press

LONG BEACH, Calif. — The man allegedly threatened several off-duty police officers with a gun. But when police arrested him several days later, they got more than they bargained for.

Twelve driver's licenses and some matching Social Security cards. A leather suitcase with \$44,617 in cash, \$12,000 in traveler's checks, three Rolex watches and other jewelry.

A computer check on the man revealed three fugitive warrants, including one from Texas for attempted murder.

"I told myself, 'I'm in over my head,'" said arresting Officer John Bruce. He turned to Detective Joe Bahash of the career criminal apprehension team, who settled on one ID for the man: Kourosh Mojallali, born Jan. 6, 1965.

A search of the man's apartment after his arrest March 4 turned up papers for an airline ticket to Iran the next day. They also found a chrome .44-caliber Magnum handgun, loaded with hollow-point bullets, plus three more Rolexes.

Other property was packed for shipping to Iran, including \$20,000 worth of new clothing.

"Every hour I'm finding something new," Bahash said. "I've never come across anyone who has so many different accounts with different names."

Bahash said he'd found evidence of \$200,000 in credit and insurance fraud associated with the man. Reports of bad credit card debts in Hawaii go back three years.

Other allegations turned up by Bahash:

—The traveller's checks in the suitcase were reported stolen in an effort to get the money back.

—The man told credit card companies his card was stolen and charges weren't his. "He has a motorcycle, which he said he didn't buy," Bahash said.

—He bought a new Toyota Camry on credit under an assumed name.

"In looking through his papers, it seems like every flight he takes, he files claims for stolen luggage," the detective said.

In a recent transaction, the man wrote checks to himself on a Hawaii account he had closed last year and deposited them in a Long Beach account, Bahash said.

The Long Beach bank credited the checks to his account without waiting for them to clear, and the man withdrew \$20,000 from it the next day, the detective said.

The case folder is 5 inches thick and growing, Bahash said.

Mojallali was being held without bail in county jail on the Texas warrant, issued in Dallas in 1988. Bahash said he was still preparing a fraud case against him.

Mojallali was arrested four days after an encounter with three off-duty police officers and a probation officer at a bank teller machine. The man asked the group for a pen, but they didn't have one, and one of the officers told the man it wasn't a good idea to leave his car running.

The man yelled obscenities at the officer and, minutes later, drove up to the group, got out, pointed a gun and said, "I could kill you all."

He then drove away, police said.

He was arrested after police spotted the man's car at another bank, tailed him and pulled him over for speeding.

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