

# About Guns!

Whether the weapon is a weathered stone, walking stick, firearm, or tool of warfare, the underlying animosity is what needs to be addressed.

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I grew up on our family's small farm in the Uinta Basin. My brothers and I hunted pheasants, rabbits, deer and other animals in the remote Uinta Basin desert and rugged Uinta Mountains, and fished the wild streams there. So, I guess I do believe in gun control, I brace my arms, take a deep breath, carefully squeeze the trigger, and skillfully hit the intended mark.

As a child, I only shot at something I intended to consume. I love being in the midst of nature. Harming any living thing without need to do so, goes against our inherent human spirit. Whenever I heard children or adults brag about brutality towards any life, it always seemed they were trying to meet some deviant standard of behavior. Any other reason for such talk and action would indicate that someone was frighteningly damaged and dangerous.

I always sorrowed for the pain caused in taking a life. Now that I have endured some painful illnesses, I have stopped inflicting that pain on any other living thing.

I still have my hunting firearms and I admire the craftsmanship and mechanical ingenuity to create a device that can contain an explosion, directing it to propel an object in an intended trajectory.

I am also intrigued with the mechanics of a tool which can utilize the force of an exploding cartridge to also eject the spent shell and place a loaded cartridge in position to be fired.

So, I can understand the intrigue of firing a device that can shoot multiple rounds in an instant. But I can never understand someone doing so with the intent to harm anyone. Such weapons are not designed to defend, but to assault. Since I never intend to assault anyone, I see no need for me to own a weapon intended and designed for that purpose.

There are many myths in all directions about firearms. Many of these myths were products of film makers. An old article I found in a Southern Utah newspaper tells of the death of a young man, who had a habit of practicing "quick-draw" with a hand gun, replicating what he was seeing in the movies of the early twentieth century. No one was present at his tragic death, but all indications were that it was from an accidentally self inflicted wound from his mimicry of movie maneuvers.

A story recorded in old news papers of the Uinta Basin tells of a man who noticed an acquaintance of his robbing someone at gun point. Since neither the man being robbed or the man who happened by had any weapons on them, the passer-by went into a store and borrowed a rifle. He then went out to confront the man who was robbing, (who had actually boarded temporarily at his farm home in Deep Creek). When he asked the man he knew, to put down the weapon and stop the robbery, the robber said "maybe I should shoot you instead," and proceeded to do so, then ran, with the wounded man shooting at him. The man who came to help, died of his wounds, and the man who'd attempted robbery, recovered from his wounds, and spent his next years in the Utah State Prison.

Such was the "real" west. Most people were going about daily life, farming, ranching or working in town. No one carried weapons, but an occasional person with ill intent. Armed conflicts were very rare, as a reading of old news stories succinctly verifies. Life in the old west required tremendous cooperation. Farmers and ranchers worked together to build and maintain canals and reservoirs, then plant and harvest yearly

crops. People in towns and cities worked together to maintain infrastructures and each ply their trade on behalf of the community.

Belongings were sparse in the past. Probate records, such as are found in the vast collection in the Latter-day Saint Family History Library, list all the items passed from one generation to the next upon the death of a family member. I am always amazed at the minimal list of belongings, all of which were basic to the daily needs, such as a table, chairs, some bowls and spoons, a saddle, a few tools. I never saw any weapons listed.

Any attempt to mass produce firearms was headed for quick oblivion, until the United States Government purchased weapons for soldiers. The mechanics of repeating rifles were developed for warfare. Machine guns, such as those produced by the Browning family who resided in Utah, were invented for war. Assault weapons, invented and designed for war are now at times implemented by disturbed, deluded individuals in crimes against children and families, who are merely going about in their innocent daily pursuits of life.

Yet these weapons of warfare, used by individuals to assault people in their places of work, school, and worship, were designed long ago.

With the invention of using explosive powder to propel an object through a pipe in a particular direction, it soon became a weapon.

In the 1700's attempts were made to create a device which could propel projectiles from multiple muzzle-loaded barrels at once or in succession.

For purposes of defense or assault it is common for people to design tools which can propel objects simultaneously or in quick succession; a handful of rocks, a bag of rocks for a sling, a quiver of arrows, a platform with several arrows in

place, a platform with muzzle-loading barrels, a bag of lead projectiles and horn full of powder, a paper cartridge with powder and projectile together, a breech-loading barrel, a metal cartridge case, a lever to eject spent shells, a chamber to contain cartridges, a lever to eject spent shells and insert a new cartridge sequentially, a mechanism to utilize the combustion energy to sequentially eject spent shells and insert new cartridges...and so forth, each new advance in technology making more effective weaponry to assault or defend.

Such ravages are not new to this continent or to humanity.

Conquistadors, Pilgrims, and other Europeans, used weapons of warfare to murder and assault American Tribes in their family shelters, places of worship and community villages. Tribes did so to other tribes.

Africans were brutally taken from their families, homes, places of worship and villages, placed in chains, ferried on ships, enslaved to ensure leisure and wealth of others.

Once freed from slavery, people of African heritage were murdered and assaulted in their homes, places of worship, and towns.

What to us seems so new and appalling, isn't new at all. But it is appalling, and needs to be stopped wherever, whenever and for whomever to it is occurring!

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I intend to keep my firearms, in case I wish, or need, to use them to obtain food, or protect myself, my family, or others.

Yet, statistically, the likelihood of my killing a dangerous home-intruder or a violent assailant is very small.

Statistically, the most likely person to die from my firearms or other weapons, is me, by accidental or intentional

infliction of a wound! Next most likely is a child or other family member, then a neighbor child or adult, next an innocent stranger, each by accidental or intentional infliction of a wound by self, family, friend, neighbor or stranger.

From the Biblical story of Cain slaying Able, to our recent attacks in schools and churches, it is hatred that needs to be halted, banned, and banished, by understanding, appreciation and love of each other, as brothers and sisters of one humanity, one family.

Laird