

# The Los Angeles Silhouette Club

Floyd's Mould

By: Glen E. Fryxell

This article reprinted with permission of  
Glen E. Fryxell and [Sixguns.com](http://Sixguns.com)

It was a gun show just like any other small-town gun show. Located at the county fairgrounds -- outside the air was heavy with the aroma of fresh manure, and inside the air was scented with grilled sausages and fresh brewed coffee. The gun people inside were sociable and polite. There were about 100 tables or so, with offerings from all of the major manufacturers; some brand new, some "rode hard and put away wet" and some showing the glow from years of tender loving care. This was a good gun show in that I had some money to spend, but didn't have anything in particular that I was looking for -- that fun kind of anticipation that comes from stalking a good deal down the aisles, and never knowing which box of rusty parts that special find is hiding behind.

There were some pieces at the show that caught my attention; a 3 1/2" Model 27 in like-new condition, a 5-screw .44 Magnum in about 95%, a 6 1/2" Model 24 (that I used to own!) in like-new condition, as well as several .41 Magnum Blackhawks (both 4 5/8" and 6 1/2"). There was a rather unusual S&W 1917 .455 that had had the barrel re-lined and bobbed to about 3", and the chambers lined and everything bored to .32 S&W Long, and the whole mess nickel-plated. There was a 1911 from 1918 that was in 95+% condition and all-matching (gorgeous!), and a Colt SAA 7 1/2" .44-40 shining in its nickled splendor.

There were a number of dealers there that I've known for years, and Lyle and I stopped and had very pleasant visits with Mark, Jim, and the rest of our friends as we passed down the aisles. There were also a couple of guys that experience has taught me are known shysters. I made a point of quickly skirting around their tables, no need to even look. I've been attending gun-shows in this area long enough (both as a dealer and a customer) that I can usually recognize most of the faces at these small-town gun shows. There's the president of such-n-so club, there's the police sniper instructor, and Joe over there's the owner of that little shop over in Olde Towne, and such. But there are always new faces that I don't recognize. Sometimes it's the newbies with all their new-found enthusiasm, high-capacity mags and cammies; sometimes it's a wide-eyed gingham-clad young lady, intimidated by the massive display of weaponry she's suddenly in the middle of; sometimes it's the freckle-faced 7 year-old little boy with his Red Rider BB gun, gazing wistfully at the guns that someday he hopes to own. Every face tells a story.

As I came round the bend towards the back of the room, I came upon a face that I didn't recognize. It belonged to an older gentleman, a tall lean man, with a shock of white hair. He was folded uncomfortably into a small folding chair behind his table, reading quietly amid all the bustle of the show around him. His table

was piled high with every manner of old gun-related stuff you could imagine -- barrels, triggers, sights, scopes, dies, moulds, etc., in addition to a handful of rifles and shotguns standing in his rack. There was nothing less than 20 years old that I could see, and most of his stock was considerably older than that. As I stopped to inspect his wares, he put his book down, and looked up. There was no polished sales schtick, only solid eye contact and a polite "Good morning."

"Good morning, Floyd." I replied, stealing a glance at the name tag he wore, boldly printed with a black magic marker in the shaky hand of advancing age. As we chatted, I soon learned that this soft-spoken gentleman didn't shoot as much as he used to, and he had all this stuff that had accumulated over the years that was just taking up space and getting in the way, and the kids had all grown up and moved away, and well they didn't shoot much anyway, and he just thought that the time had come for a little house cleaning.

During our conversation, a bright-eyed, chipper young lady came walking up, "How the heck are ya Floyd? Where's Mary?"

"Well, she's not feeling too good today. You know how her medication can slow her down some days... I'm going to call her after lunch and see if she wants to get out of the house and come sit with me down here this afternoon."

"Oh that would be nice for her. What all are you selling?"

"Junk, it's all junk. Time to clean house." came the terse response.

"I see. Well if I miss Mary, you make sure to give her all of our love, won't ya Floyd?" and with that the bouncy young blonde was on her way. It wasn't too hard to read between the lines -- Floyd wasn't getting rid of his shooting stuff because he wanted to. After all, shooting had clearly been a major part of his life for decades. He was selling it off because he had to. It sounded like there may have been medical bills and the money had to come from somewhere.

As Floyd and the blonde had been chatting, I was digging through his goods. Now there's nothing that quite catches my eye like used bullet moulds, and Floyd had several. Hollow-based Minie balls, some .30 cal stuff, and a couple of .45s. Back in the back there was a 2-holer on a pair of handles that I almost didn't pick up because of how trashed it looked on the outside -- the sides of the blocks were badly dented, the sprue plate was gouged and the adjustment screws were all loose -- this mould had obviously been used, and used hard. But something told me to pick it up anyway. On the outside it was marked "Geo. A. Hensley, San Diego", and it's stamped with the number "51358 160". Clearly, this was a Hensley mould that pre-dated his partnership with Gibbs, and it was a design for a 160 grain .357 SWC (design #51?). Swinging back the sprue plate and opening the blocks revealed that the faces, alignment pins and cavities of this mould were in pristine condition. The price tag read \$30.

Very interesting, but the last thing I need is another .38 mould (I have a couple dozen already), so I carefully placed the mould back on the table, placing the price tag so it would be clearly visible to the next customer who happened by. I thanked Floyd for his time and for letting me browse through his goods, and then I worked my way on down the aisle. Running through the rest of the show, there was really nothing notable, and I found Lyle back at the front of the room. Neither of us had bought anything (quite unusual, to say the least). Lyle asked if anything had piqued my interest. We compared notes on a couple of interesting guns that we'd seen, but the bottom line was the only thing that had really caught my eye was Floyd's mould.

I realized that this mould incorporated all of those features that I like in a bullet and that while I had a bunch of .38 moulds, I didn't have this particular mould design, and when would another opportunity arise to buy a Hensley mould with handles at Lee mould prices? Especially one with faces, pins and cavities in the pristine condition that this one was in? Yeah, it looked horrible on the outside, but the bullets come from the inside. I told Lyle to wait for me and headed towards the back of the room.

Floyd was in the middle of a conversation with another man when I got back to his table. I checked -- the Hensley mould was still there, tucked away in the back. I pulled out my wallet and dug out a pair of 20s. As Floyd turned his attention to me, I asked if he had any change. He did and the sale was consummated with a handshake. This wasn't a salesman's "Hi-how-are-ya handshake", or a politician's "working the crowd handshake", this was a handshake that meant something, an old world handshake. A handshake with eye contact, with firmness, with respect. A handshake that too many today have forgotten the meaning of. "Thank you Floyd. I look forward to casting with this mould." He nodded acknowledgement, and smiled gently as he waved goodbye. I think we both understood one another as I walked off with a little piece of Floyd's past.

That night as the lead pot warmed up, I tweaked and tightened the sprue plate, etc. and found that everything tightened up right nicely. After burning the oil out of the pores of the metal, Floyd's mould started dropping exquisite bullets time after time (smoother and rounder than some of my new moulds, in fact). It quickly became obvious that this battered old mould had many, many years left of producing excellent bullets.

Thanks for taking such good care of your mould, Floyd. I promise that I will also take good care of your mould, at least until it's my turn to put on a name tag boldly printed with a black magic marker in the shaky hand of advancing age and sell off all of my "junk" to a younger shooter. I hope they appreciate it as much as I do...

- Glen E. Fryxell

[The LASC Front Page](#)   [Index to all LASC Articles](#)  
[Glen E. Fryxell Article Index](#)