

### ***“Don’t Play with Guns!”***

This is an incident that happened in that same year, and I believe it is worth mentioning. At least it improved my learning about *what not to do*.

Jimmie Pringle and I had been playing in the barn and corrals. Upon becoming tired, we went to the bunkhouse to rest. We noticed a rifle that ordinarily would have been out of reach for kids. Jimmie examined it thoroughly and said, “Say, this has got bullets in it!”

So the thing to do was to shoot it! Between us we carried it some distance away. Neither of us could have done so without dragging it. (The gun was a 45-70 Winchester 86 Model).

Jimmie and I then had an argument as to who was to shoot first. Jimmie reminded me that he was two years older than I, but I said that “Since the rifle was my folks’, I should fire the first shot.” (There was no second shot.)

I laid down with the gun, resting it on a large bunch of grass, aimed it at a large rock target, and pulled the trigger. After the black powder smoke had blown away, the gun was where I had left it... and I was about four feet back of it and felt as though my right arm and shoulder would be of no further use to me. We could see a line where the bullet had plowed up the prairie sod for a long distance.

We managed to get the gun back to where it had been. Jimmie left for home. (Ordinarily, he would have stayed for supper.)

I was questioned that evening as to why my right arm hurt me. I said, “Jimmie pushed me out of the back door of the hay barn.”

The next day I heard Uncle George ask the bunkhouse crew “Who in the h--- left an *empty* in my rifle?”

