

WMS

White men generally used fire arms: rifles, carbines, repeaters--light weapons for choice, with large bore and short barrels for close work, throwing heavy slugs. Those who used muzzle-loaders never bothered with ram-rods but carried powder loose in their coat pocket and the bullets in their mouths. At such close range, the size of the charge did not count, so they poured in the powder by guess, dropped the wet bullets on top, and sent the charge home by striking the butt on the horn of the saddle. A wet bullet was supposed to stick to the powder, for the muzzle was not depressed until the moment of firing. A dry ball, however, would roll towards the muzzle, and if it did, an explosion followed which might maim or kill the hunter or his horse. The famous mountain man, Fitz Patrick, earned his name "Broken Hand" in such an accident.

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