

# Yankee Moulds

## ***Yankee Specialty Company***

This project started during an e-mail discussion with Doug Elliott/floodgate over various mould manufacturers. It seems that there is lots of data around on the various old companies that produced moulds...excepting the Yankee Specialty Company, which produced what are known as "Yankee moulds."

My sole knowledge of Yankee moulds at that time was a small comment in *Sixguns*, Elmer Keith, Page 236. Keith comments on Yankee moulds:

"Belding and Mull made moulds of solid nickel, while the Yankee Specialty Company made theirs of bronze. These latter bronze moulds are very good and cast fine bullets with the least effort of any I have ever used. They also had a 255 grain bullet for the .44 Special that gave wonderful accuracy for me at extreme ranges, although being a round nose bullet, it has little stopping power."

Now, the old master was usually right about such things as bullet casting so I became more interested and started digging.

My next stop was the book *Complete Guide to Reloading*, Philip B. Sharpe, Page 216. Sharpe comments on Yankee tools. "The Yankee tool, manufactured by the Yankee Specialty Company, is now built by W. Rohrbacher, 851 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Erie, Pennsylvania." Sharpe covers most of the Yankee loading tools in this work.

Further information on the Yankee Specialty Company is provided in *Why Not Load Your Own*, Colonel (Ret) Townsend Whelen. Col. Whelen in 1951 lists the following entry in his appendices of manufacturers:

"Yankee Specialty Company ( W. Rohrbacher, successor), 513 Sanford Place, Erie, Pa.  
Yankee reloading tools, bullet moulds, swages, resizing dies."

*Handloading Ammunition*, J.R.Mattern, Published 1926, Page 43.

"YANKEE MOULDS. This maker has furnished a considerable number of excellent moulds during the past ten years, but does not make such an extensive line as other firms. Yankee moulds are made of both iron and brass and are of one-piece type. While usually single, they are also made double, one cavity cut in the upper end and the other end in lower end of blocks, when bullet length permits.

This firm appears to cater to the special order trade, and does not carry in stock a great number of moulds."

These extracts were gleaned from various old publications on reloading. I was at a dead end. Then Doug pointed me to Bill Aydt, Tom Quigley and Bob Carow of the Antique Reloading Tool Collector's Association (ARTCA) and I struck pay dirt.

These fine folks provided me with both a Yankee Specialty Company brochure and also a W. Rohrbacher brochure as well as much data on both Yankee and Rohrbacher moulds that they personally own. These brochures have been copied in below. Yankee in green and Rohrbacher in blue for your browsing pleasure. Both brochures are undated.

## **History**

Now, this is mostly circumstantial as I can uncover no company records at this time.

Yankee Specialty Company was started sometime in the mid teens. Mattern says in his book published in 1926 that Yankee had been producing tools for about ten years and that would place them starting about 1916 or so.

Sometime prior to 1937, Rohrbacher took over the business according to Sharpe.

According to *American Rifleman* comments, correspondence from the company from 1941 through 1949 was not forthcoming. No reason was given. Then in the May 1954 *American Rifleman* a note was published: "Yankee Loading Tool, formerly manufactured by the Yankee Specialty Co. of Erie, Pa., is no longer available as the company is now out of business due to the death of the owner."

A run of 38 years making good reloading tools and moulds and so few tools and information remains.

My question is, "What happened to the drawings, mould cherries and tooling?"

### **Yankee Loading Tools**

Apparently from reading the brochures and Sharpe's comments on the tools, Yankee made pretty nice stuff. They were customer oriented and made many special order items on a , "You send it and we'll make it" basis. From my reading, it looks like their tools were "state-of-the-art" for that time period. Particularly impressive to me was their reloading presses with the rack and pinion leverage. They also made a gas check punch, which Hanned Line tried to market for years. Their swage dies were nothing more than "bump" dies that are all the rage today.

### **Yankee Moulds**

I am really surprised that more of the moulds aren't seen on E-bay and at gun shows. Maybe people don't know what they are. With over 500 cherries advertised in their brochure by Yankee and over 800 by Rohrbacher I'm surprised that more don't surface.

Apparently, Yankee moulds were made in bronze, iron and brass. Their brochures say bronze but I have talked with folks who have both bronze and brass and have seen iron moulds.

Handles were wooden and attached where the normal ferules on a mould would be with fine twisted wire. Over the years, this arrangement could have broken down and any moulds encountered could have replacement handles in almost any configuration installed.

Mould configurations varied. Many were single cavity moulds. Double cavity, three cavity and four cavity moulds exist. It seems like a common configuration was to make a double cavity mould with the sprue plate reversible from top to bottom so that two different bullet cavities could be made in the same set of blocks.

Markings vary on the moulds. Most are unmarked. The Yankees may be seen marked with cartridge and sometimes with diameter and (maybe) cherry number as Lyman does now. Some of the Rohrbachers are marked, "W. Rohrbacher" on one of the blocks.

Packaging seems to be a plain brown box with pencil markings.

At this time, no illustrated listing of the various moulds that either company offered has come to light.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**

## **Figures 1-5**

.257" In Diameter

82.4 grains (Un-lubed w/o check) Spire Point

Round Ball is a .316"

(Courtesy of Bill Aydt)



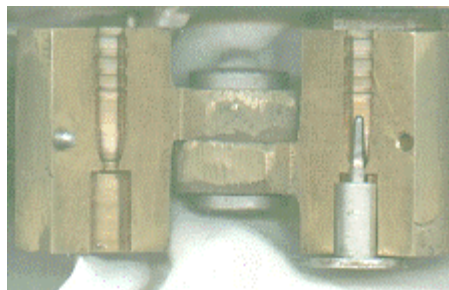
**Figure 6**



**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**



**Figure 10**

**Figures 6 through 10**  
7mm Hollow Point  
.286" In Diameter  
135.6 Grains Un-lubed, w/o check  
(Courtesy of Bill Aydt)



**Figure 11**  
**Yankee/Rohrbacher Moulds**  
 (Courtesy of Bent Ramrod/David Ciaramitaro)

**Figure 11.** These moulds are a Rohrbacher cut for a .257" diameter bullet the equivalent of Lyman's 25720 and weighs about 90 grains. It is marked "W. Rohrbacher, Erie, Pa.

The other is a Yankee mould cut for a bullet for the .45 ACP and is about the equivalent of Lyman's 452374. It is unmarked except for a "2" on one of the blocks.



**Figure 12**



**Figure 13**

**Figure 12 and 13** are a paper patched bullet mould in .44-45 caliber owned by Bob Carow  
 (Courtesy of Bob Carow)

The pages in green below are a reproduction of an original Yankee Specialty pricing brochure. Furnished courtesy of Bill Aydt, ARTCA,

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# Price List and Description

of

## YANKEE TOOLS

SPORTING GOODS  
MADE TO  
SPECIFICATIONS

YANKEE SPECIALTY CO.

851 East Sixth Street Erie, Pa.

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### PRICE LIST

Adjustable Reloading Tools -----\$7.00 per set.  
Regular Base Bullet Moulds-----3.00 each.  
Hollow Base Bullet Moulds-----3.50 each.  
Hollow Point Bullet Moulds-----3.50 each.  
Round Ball Bullet Moulds-----5.00 each  
Double Cavity Moulds-----\$5.00 to 6.00 each.  
Cup Forming Dies for making  
    Gas Checks-----\$4.50 per set.  
Full Length Shell Resizing Dies-----2.00 each.  
Bullet Resizers-----2.00 each.  
Bullet Lubricators (complete)-----5.00 each.  
Extra Lubricator Dies-----2.00 each.  
Swages-----6.00 each.

Special reamers, cherries and moulds made to order, prices quoted on application.

### Description of the Yankee Tools

#### Reloading Tools

Every operation in absolutely on the straight line and each tool is complete for the shell for which it is intended. They will remove the old primer and put in a new one just the same as they are put in, in a factory shell. They will resize the muzzle of the shell and have a special type of a muzzle expander, which also removes the crimp and slightly flares the muzzle of the shell, so the bullet will start easily. They will seat the bullet

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(and) also crimp the shell if necessary. These tools are adjustable for every operation and are made to order for any shell and bullet you send us. This is the only reloading tool on the market that will do all the operations necessary to reload the shell.

Extra parts can be furnished for each tool to reload any number of different size shells.

## Bullet Moulds

All bullet moulds are made of high grade bronze. They have steel cut-offs and wooden handles. Bronze is the best material that moulds can be made of and also the most expensive. The moulds never need to be broken in and are always ready to cast good bullets. They never chip at the edges and never need to be greased.

We have about 500 stock cherries ranging in size from .22 to .630 caliber. Moulds can be furnished with flat, round or sharp points in practically all calibers and weights. We also have a number of round ball cherries and cherries for cutting moulds for wad cutter bullets. Hollow base or hollow point bullet moulds can be furnished in all calibers.

We are prepared to make up special moulds for your own design of bullet.

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## Cup Forming Dies

These dies are made up for the purpose of making small copper cups, commonly known as gas checks, which are used in the base of bullets to prevent gas cutting. They are made to fit any bullet that is sent to us. The tool is complete for each bullet. It will shear out the round disc and form the gas check cup to fit the base of the bullet.

## Full Length Shell Resizing Dies

These dies are made of tool steel, hardened all the way through. Shells are sized by driving them in the die and then knocking them out with the plunger, which is furnished with the die.

## Bullet Lubricators

This is the old type of lubricator which has been used by target shooters and is the first type of lubricator ever made. This lubricator is made of steel and will not break and will never wear out.

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## Bullet Resizers

These resizers are tube fitted with plungers to fit the nose of the bullets.

The bullet is forced through the tube base first. This is the only way to resize bullets, as it leaves the base in a perfect condition, which is so much desired for accurate shooting.

## Swages

These swages are made to increase the diameter of the bullets a few thousandths or for changing the shape of the point of metal patch bullets. Special swages will be made to order.

## Special Parts

We are prepared to furnish and mount all types of sights that are made or make special sights to your specifications. Also, the following; new stock and parts for old guns, new parts for old reloading tools, special chambering reamers, special cherries and moulds to your order. Prices quoted on all special work.

We can also furnish you with primers, bullets, shells, guns and revolvers of all makes.

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The six pages below in blue are typed in from the Rohrbacher brochure.  
(A copy provided by Tom Quigley, ARTCA)

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**YANKEE TOOLS  
PRICE LIST  
and  
DESCRIPTION**

**SPORTING GOODS  
MADE TO  
SPECIFICATIONS**

**W. ROHRBACHER  
Successor to  
YANKEE SPECIALTY CO.  
851 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street Erie, Pa.**

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**MODEL "C" ADJUSTABLE  
TOOL**

Every operation is absolutely on the straight line and each tool is complete for the shell for which it is intended. The tool will remove the old primer and put in the new one, just the same as they are put in, in the factory loaded shell. It will resize the muzzle of the shell and it has a special type of a muzzle expander, which also removes the crimp, slightly flares the muzzle of the shell, so the bullet will start easily and so the shell will not shave the bullet. It will also seat the bullet and crimp the shell if desired. These tools are adjustable for every operation and are made to order for any shell and bullet you send to us. This is the only reloading tool on the market that will do all the operations necessary to reload the shell, without buying extra parts.

Complete for one size shell     \$7.00



Extra parts can be furnished for each Tool to reload any number of different size shells.

## MODEL "D" ADJUSTABLE RELOADING PRESS

This press will do the same operations that Model "C" tool will do, but works on a different principle. It has a rack and pinion and the rack plunger has a three inch

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travel. This tool has an abundance of power and make reloading the largest shells a pleasure. The net weight of this tool is sixteen pounds and the shipping weight is twenty pounds. Dies can be furnished for this press to make your gas checks, swage or sizer your bullets.

Complete tool for one size shell \$15.00.  
F.O.B. Erie, Pa.

Complete tool for .30-06, .30-40, 7.62  
Russian and .30-30 Winchester \$18.00

Complete set of parts to reload one size  
Shell \$3.00

Photograph of either Model "C" or  
Model "D" is \$0.15 each.

Bullet puller to fit Model "D" Reloading  
Press \$2.50 each.

### ***BULLET MOULDS***

All Yankee moulds are made of high grade bronze. They have steel cut-offs and wooden handles. Bronze is the best material that moulds can be made of and also the most expensive. These moulds never need to be broken in and are always ready to cast good bullets. They never chip at the edges and never need to be greased.

We have cherries for practically every bullet that is made and have about 800 stock cherries, ranging in size from .22 to .630 caliber. Moulds can be furnished for bullets with flat, round or sharp points in practically all calibers and weights. All bullet moulds

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can be made for hollow point bullets. Wad cutter bullet moulds can be furnished for regular base or hollow base bullets.

Regular base bullet moulds -----\$3.00 each.

Hollow base or hollow point moulds - \$3.50 ea.

Round ball bullet moulds-----\$5.00 each.

Double cavity regular base bullet moulds  
\$5.00 to \$6.00 each.

Special reamers, cherries and moulds made to order.  
Prices quoted on application.

We are prepared to make up special moulds for your own design of a bullet.

### ***CUP FORMING DIES***

These dies are made for the purpose of making small copper cups, commonly known as gas checks and which are used on the base of cast bullets to prevent gas cutting. They are made to fit the base of any bullet that is sent to us. The tool is complete for each bullet. It will shear out the round discs and form the gas check cup to fit the base of the bullet.

Price \$4.50 per set.

### ***Full length shell resizing dies***

These dies are made of tool steel, hardened all the way through. Shells are resized by driving it in the die and then knocking them out with the plunger, which is furnished with the die.

Price \$2.00 each.

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## **BULLET LUBRICATORS**

This is the old style lubricator which has been used by target shooters and is the first type bullet lubricator ever made. It is operated by turning the handle and forcing the grease in the grooves around the bullet. This lubricator is made of steel and will not break or wear out.

Price complete with one for one size bullet \$5.00 each.

Extra lubricating die and punch \$2.00 each.

## **BULLET RESIZERS**

These resizers are tubes fitted with plungers which fit the nose of the bullets. The bullet is forced through the tube base first. This is the best way to resize bullets, for it leaves the base in a perfect condition, which is so much desired for accurate shooting.

Price \$2.00 each.

## **SWAGES**

These swages are made to increase the diameter of the bullets a few thousandths or for changing the shape of the point of metal patch bullets. Special swages will be made to order.

Price complete \$6.00 each.

## SPECIAL PARTS

We are prepared to furnish and mount all types of sights that are on the market, or make special sights to your specifications. Also, the following; new stock and parts for old guns, new parts for old reloading tools, special chambering reamers, special cherries and moulds to your order. Remodeling. Sight bands and barrel bands made to order. Prices quoted on all special work.

We can furnish you with primers, bullets, shells, guns and revolvers of all makes.

Formula for making explosive mixture and instructions for making explosive bullets. Not necessary to use a primer.

Price \$1.00.

Formula and instructions for making smokeless powder.

Price \$1.00

Formula for making your own gun bluer, with instructions on how to use it.

Price \$1.00

Price for making your own bullet lubricant.

Price \$.50  
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This is what I presently know about Yankee/Rohrbacher moulds and loading tools. My quest will continue and I'll add to this article as time goes on.

If you happen to be cruising gun shows, antique shops or E-Bay and spot old tools and brass or bronze moulds, stop and take a closer look. You might be missing something old, fine and a part of the history of our hobby.

If you own one of these pieces of history, take especially good care of it as little enough exists now about these special tools.

**John Goins/akabeagle**

My thanks to Tom Quigley, Bill Aydt, Bob Carow and David Ciaramitaro who made their pictures and resources available for this article so that others may be enlightened.

For Information on joining the Antique Reloading Tool Collector's Association (ARTCA) contact Tom Quigley at:

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