

John C. Reid
Moody H. May

Law Office of
REID & MAY.

Selma, Ala May 2nd, 1876

Hon. John H. Caldwell
Washington D.C.

My Friend,

My apology for writing to you on the subject matter herein after named, shall be made to you when we meet. Suffice to say you are my personal friend, and I choose to "check" on you in the matter. I am glad to observe, through the public prints, that you are doing your duty, and adding to your well earned fame as "a statesman." I need hardly mention that the many "public documents" which you have; it may be, sent me have not yet arrived, But I will take the will for the deed &c.

Now to Business

A friend & I have been [?] lately. And have about brought to perfection an improvement in the way of gun shells, which has any

amount of utility in it. The improvement enables the gun to carry much farther, much closer and more accurately, its pellets, than does the ordinary shell. Experiments show that with a charge of -

2 1/2 grams powder,

1 1/8 Oz. No.8, shot, at distance of 75 yards in a breach-loading gun of No.12 Caliber, far better shooting was done than could have been done with any charge, in a common shell. Of course, if the above charge was increased the result would show improvement in shooting.

The principle is to ignite the powder simultaneously, by our plan. The old plan, i.e. present, applies the fire on the rear, and centre, of the powder, Hence, often times much of the front or forward part of the powder, is expelled unburnt. By this improvement ignition

occurs at the front, and at four sides of the nipple, about midway and in the centre of the charge of powder, at the same instant. The improvement is adapted to all breach-loaders, which are discharged by percussion caps, or [?], be they fire arms, cannon, torpedoes, etc.

Herewith, you will find one of the tubes by which this improvement is shown. The small orifices are designed, like the ordinary tube, to convey the fire from the cap to the powder which surrounds the inner shaft of the tube.

For you to see its operation, we send a shell also.

Now "to fix" the tube, you insert the cap and [?] in the mouth of the shell; and with a small screw driver screw it in the small orifice fast, so as to admit "the cap" on the nipple.

Also find a common tube

which is operated in the manner last described.

Now to repeat, substantially. After the tube is fixed, you will find that the powder lays all around the shaft, through which it is to be fired, in five different places, (and the number may be increased if desired).

Fix the ordinary tube, and by inserting your finger to the bottom of the shell you will find but one place to fire the powder at, and that at the bottom, or rear of the load.

Now then, while this is a [?] improvement over all shells in our knowledge; it may be that some ingenious "sport," has already invented same or something so near alike, as to make this an infringement on his patent.

Hence, to you, the matter is intrusted, that you may do us the favor to learn

whether the obtaining of a patent is practicable or not. If we applied to a patent lawyer a fee of twenty five dollars, would be required before anything was done.

You can, by a [?] intervene with the "head man" in the Patent office, obtain the desired information, and when you inform us the way is open, a model, description, &c, shall be forwarded in proper form, &c.

With the hope that you will not be unconvinced by this request; and that, if the invention is [original], advantage will not be taken of you as my friend,

I remain very truly
yr. friend

Jno. C. Reid [John C. Reid]

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