

BRISTOL PLAINS PISTOLEROS

June 2018

Ankle Boot Review

page-6

I've been wearing the same Mule Ear boots since 2007 for both matches and more formal events such as banquets. They have served me well but are on their last leg. In searching for something period correct to wear to the NCOW Convention this past March, I discovered Ankle Boots.

Ankle boots are close-fitting, ankle-high boots with an elastic side panel. Charles Goodyear's development of vulcanized rubber enabled the invention of the elastic gusset boot. The advantage of elasticized boots meant they could be easily removed and put on again. By the late 1840's, the fashion began to catch on. This became a prominent style in the West until the onset of World War I. They often have a loop or tab of fabric on the back of the boot, enabling the boot to be pulled on. The boot dates back to the Victorian era, when it was worn by both men and women. The design is credited to Queen Victoria's shoemaker Joseph Sparkes-Hall. The shoemaker certainly claimed it as his own, patenting the design in 1851 and citing his royal wearer, saying: "She [Queen Victoria] walks in them daily and thus gives the strongest proof of the value she attaches to the invention". In his advertising of the period, he refers to the boot as J. Sparkes-Hall's Patent Elastic Ankle Boots. The boot became popular for horse riding as well as walking. Common names for this style of boots in the 1800's were Paddock Boots.

I shopped online and ended up purchasing a pair of Ankle Boots on line from Kohl's Department Stores. Kohl's Department stores is very good about accepting returns. (<https://www.kohls.com/product/prd-1623762/eastland-daily-double-leather-ankle-boots-men.jsp?prdPV=7>). They were on sale and my cost was \$84.61 including shipping. I was concerned about what appeared to be white stitching around the sole but the boots I received had black stitching. I don't like to buy shoes online but I was lucky and they were a perfect fit.

I wore only my new Ankle boots at the 2018 NCOWS Convention. I was on my feet for a quite a bit at times. They were one of the most comfortable pair of boots I've worn in recent years. These boots are well made. The soles appear to be some type of a non-slip rubber material. The leather on the boots has a dull matte finish to which I applied a coat of Skidmore's Leather Crème. Skidmore's will easily remove scratches and scuffs from this type of leather. Another good feature is these boots go on easily with a shoe horn (good for us old guys). They also have pull tabs on the front and back of the boot. Although these boots were comfortable from the start, I did insert a pair of Doctor Scholl's which added to the comfort of these. I wore these boots at the Bristol Plains Pistoleros May 5th and 6th Cowboy Action matches. I had no issues and the comfort was outstanding. I am very pleased with my purchase and highly recommend this boot.



by Johnny McCrae

(the above is my personal opinion only, not those of the Bristol Plains Pistolero's)

