



**Ronald Reagan's Gun:** On December 7, 1981, NRA Executive Vice President Harlon Carter, Texas gunmaker Christopher Hirsch, and others met with President Ronald Reagan, an NRA Honorary Life Member, in the Oval Office of the White House. The occasion was the presentation of a beautiful Pennsylvania long rifle (also shown below) created for Reagan by Hirsch. As evidenced by this photo, Hirsch did not know that Reagan shot lefthanded. After the presentation, Reagan asked Harlon Carter to display the rifle in the NRA museum, and Carter accepted, saying, "It will be on display in a prominent place for all Americans to enjoy." (*The White House*)

# Hunting Through

Matchlocks and wheellocks are the principal arms of early colonists; game is abundant and hunting provides much-needed food.

Short-barreled Old World jaeger rifle evolves into the Pennsylvania long rifle in the shops of colonial gunsmiths.

Using squirrel rifles and fowling pieces, citizens' militia defends Lexington Green and Concord Bridge from the attacking troops of English King George III. Independence is declared and won; American Revolution fosters golden age of flintlock riflemaking.

## 1600s

## Early 1700s

## Late 1700s

### By Philip Schreier

*"I have been playing at frontier hunter in good earnest ... I shot a couple of antelope and a deer ... I felt as absolutely free as a man could feel."*

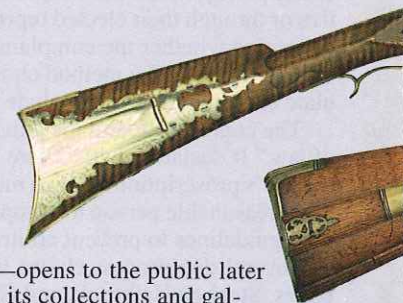
—President Theodore Roosevelt, NRA Life Member

**D**efense and sustenance: two reasons men like John Alden traveled to the new world in 1620 aboard the *Mayflower* armed with a wheellock musket. A featured firearm in the collection of the NRA's National Firearms Museum, Alden's musket is considered one of the oldest hunting arms known in North America. Its presence in the collection—along with numerous other rifles, shotguns, and handguns once carried afield—underscores the importance of hunting in the lives of millions of Americans, from the founding of Jamestown Colony in 1607 through current time.

When museum construction is completed and this unique archive—located within NRA Headquarters at Fairfax,



*After the Hunt* by William Harnett evokes hunts of the 19th century, when pursuit of game was not only a great challenge but also necessary to stock the larders of many families. A similar jaeger rifle from the museum collection (above right) is of early American manufacture and represents developments in hunting arms made by colonists and later immigrants who adapted technology from their homeland to conditions here in the United States. (*Huntington Art Museum*)



Virginia—opens to the public later this year, its collections and galleries will graphically illustrate what hunting has meant to America. It will also place hunting—and the guns used to pursue game—in context with the many other ways law-abiding Americans have used firearms: to carve a living out of wilderness, to fight for liberty, to protect family and home, for sport and recreation, and for the appreciation of artistry.

Today's hunters carry on in the tradition of President Theodore Roosevelt and oth-

**Opening soon, NRA's National Firearms Museum will trace American history through its arms and artifacts and pay lasting tribute to the feats and fame of shooters and hunters.**



A replica of Theodore Roosevelt's library at Sagamore Hill, Long Island, New York, will be featured as the "Age of Elegance Gallery" in the new museum. The gallery will highlight safari-grade rifles and shotguns, including two of President Roosevelt's own firearms. *Illustration By Nancy Zink White*

# History

Rev. Alexander Forsyth of Scotland patents the percussion cap. U.S. Army adopts rifled musket, an innovation hunters have been using for a century.

After War Between the States thousands of surplus military arms are converted into shotguns. National Rifle Association of America is formed in 1871.

Americans embrace developments like metallic cartridges, smokeless powder, and repeating lever- and pump-actions. Mauser perfects bolt-action and introduces the M98, most successful rifle action to date.



ers, aware of the impact they can and do have on conservation of our rich natural resources, willingly shouldering the burden through millions paid in license fees and taxes. These contributions have too often gone unknown and unrecognized, but the National

This collection of "nimrods" (the dictionary defines the word as "hunter"), photographed in Pennsylvania in 1937, called themselves "The U.S. Senate Nimrod Club." On the far left is a future President, Sen. Harry S. Truman, and the man standing third from the right is then-Vice President John Nance Garner. The Winchester Model 70 bolt-action (above), one of several in the museum's collection, is a rare pre-'64 carbine in .375 H&H. (*Harry S. Truman Library*)



# Hunting Through History

Pres. Theodore Roosevelt leads a growing conservation movement, setting aside millions of acres of public land.

The NRA Museum opens in Washington, D.C. Winchester debuts the Model 70 bolt-action—"the rifleman's rifle."

Post-war game populations rise rapidly; hunters gravitate to magnum calibers and scope sights. Resurgence in muzzleloading is led by modern in-lines.

NRA's new National Firearms Museum reopens to the public at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, Virginia.

## Early 1900s



When he wasn't fighting Indians on the frontier, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer was a keen hunter, as evidenced by the trophy elk taken down with his Remington rolling-block rifle. The finest rolling-block in the museum's collection is a contemporary of Custer's. The Remington at left was won by D. Barclay as an NRA team member in an international match in England in 1874. This rifle was the first gun in the museum's collection. (*Chicago Historical Society*)

Firearms Museum will stand as a constant reminder and tribute to the fact that hunting remains a positive force in our world.

Galleries within the new museum will display 2,000 firearms from the museum's total collection of over 3,400. Among those arms on exhibit will be representative pieces from every chapter of American history. When the Minutemen rushed to the defense of liberty at Concord Bridge in 1775, they were armed with squirrel rifles and fowling pieces, having taken everyday tools—their plowshares—and turned them into swords for freedom. In the years following the War Between the States and the Second World War, the reverse was true, as firearms dealers sold hundreds of thousands of surplus rifles and carbines, cut down or altered for civilian hunting use.

Exhibits with a hunting theme will include: a display of hunting rifles from 1700 to the present; the development of the shotgun throughout history; youth rifles; and displays on wingshooting upland game and waterfowl. For those

At the end of his term in office, President Theodore Roosevelt set out on a year-long African safari with his second oldest son, Kermit. This rhino was brought down by Roosevelt's Winchester 1895, one of many firearms that Roosevelt took on the trip. The rifle shown here is from the museum's collection and belonged to noted outdoorsman and writer Col. Townsend Whelan. (*Library of Congress*)

## 1937

## 1950-1990

who grew up in New York City, where the only place to hunt ducks was at the Winchester Shooting Gallery on Coney Island, there will be an original gallery on exhibit, recently restored to working order!

Thirteen permanent exhibit galleries and one changing exhibit gallery will showcase the collection that NRA has built over the last 127 years. Nearly all the firearms, save perhaps a half dozen, were donated to the museum by members, friends, and industry. The stories they tell will enlighten the uninitiated and reaffirm the positive attributes of hunting and its role in our history to those for whom the sport remains a passion and a way of life.



The museum will open to the public in June of this year. Gallery sponsors, museum donors, and volunteers are still needed. For information write: Director; NFM, Dept. AH, 11250 Waples Mill Rd, Fairfax, VA 22030-9400.



Though he was better known for his golf swing, President Dwight David Eisenhower thoroughly enjoyed hunting. This photo, taken at the hunting lodge of Coca-Cola CEO Bob Woodruff, shows a beaming President and his custom Winchester Model 21 (also shown below), a gift from Woodruff and a request to the NRA from Eisenhower in 1969. (*Mr. & Mrs. Jack E. Manning*)

