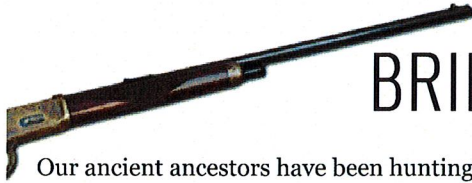


OLD-TIMEY SPORTSMEN

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BRIEF HISTORY OF HUNTING



Our ancient ancestors have been hunting for meat, skins, feathers and bone since long before the evolutionary arrival of *Homo sapiens*. Through the ages our forbearers constantly sharpened their skills at the arts of stalking, tracking, and trapping, while further developing evermore practical and sophisticated tools and tactics.



Both for hunting and defense, from a simple beginning of thrown rocks and sticks, in time they developed sharpened spears and chipped stone points. But it was not until the ingenious discovery of the use of mechanical advantage that mankind invented a weapon that was a truly inspirational breakthrough. This was the throwing stick, or "atlatl". Using leverage, the device was capable of delivering a deadly missile over considerable distance with great force and accuracy. Then, approximately 15,000 years ago, the bow and arrow appeared.

At about this same time in history humans gained a valuable new partner and companion to aid in their hunting endeavors. With its domestication, the wolf began its evolution into "man's best friend." Intelligent, loyal and with a keen sense of hearing and smell, the dog became an irreplaceable ally, slowly morphing into the many specialized breeds that we are familiar with today.

But these innovations were to pale in comparison with the invention of a new masterpiece of technological development. A metal tube and substance which, upon ignition, explosively propelled stones or pellets from its end with unimaginable effectiveness. The new device, then called a "hand canon," made its European debut in the 14th century. This was the birth of the modern firearm.



Over the next centuries, these first simple barrel loaded smooth bore guns underwent a dizzying evolution and refinement, first through the harquebus, blunderbuss and then to the musket. The carrying power and accuracy of the projectile was increased by the invention of rifling in the 16th century. The next century saw development of flintlock ignition, the breechloader, double barreled shotguns and the elongated bullet. The 1800s brought the introduction of the percussion principle, metallic cartridges, bolt action rifle and lever action loading.



Over the centuries, firearms, which had started primarily as weapons, gradually became more widely used by hunters. The "fowling piece," or shotgun, and the rifle became standard equipment for the market gunner and "sportsman" alike by the latter 19th century.

With the development of agriculture and the domestication of animals, mankind's reliance on hunting for sustenance has mainly evolved into the modern sport as we know it today, with Teddy Roosevelt's doctrine of "Fair chase", bag limits, off limits, and closed seasons.



But for the camaraderie, the challenge, the disappointments and successes, for days in the open and the meat on the table, today's modern hunters still enjoy and share in this oldest of human endeavors.