



EDITORIAL

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A Man And His Gun

ONE of the prize possessions of manhood since our forefathers first settled America always has been the gun. This attitude toward firearms has become an historic tradition in the United States. It represents a priceless freedom won by our forefathers which few other nations enjoy. So strong was their conviction about the right of reputable citizens to own and use firearms for lawful purposes that they amended our original Constitution to provide that "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed". So important was this limitation that it immediately follows the prohibition against violations of the rights of religion, speech, press, and assembly.

The right to keep and bear arms was exceedingly precious to men who faced dangers of many kinds in their daily lives. Colonial farmers with their muskets had helped win the Revolutionary War. On the frontier, a gun was usually the pioneer family's only protection against wild animals and prowling savages. It was necessary and accepted that young and old alike be intimately acquainted with firearms and use them as tools of everyday life.

Yes, guns have been and continue to be constructive tools in America. Today they are used to build healthy minds and bodies; to develop self-discipline, initiative, and team spirit; and to help prepare our young men to defend our American ideals, should the need arise, as did their forefathers. Hunting and shooting are wholesome forms of recreation which may be enjoyed for a lifetime. The development of firearms traces the historical progress of our nation and collecting them offers a fascinating hobby with historical value.

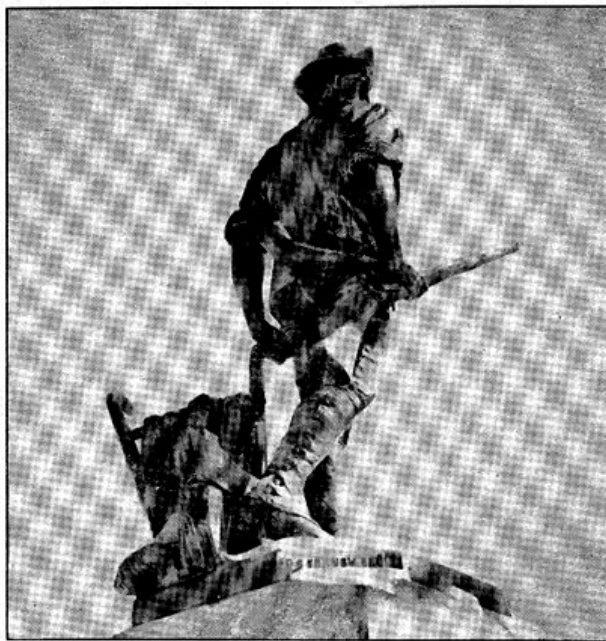
Unfortunately, there is a growing prejudice against

firearms. More and more excuses constantly are being found to propose legislation, at the state and local levels, which denies the right to possess and use firearms for personal protection, for marksmanship training, for recreation, or even as collector items. Many anti-gun laws are presented by persons who believe that laws will prevent crime and accidental shootings. Others are advanced by individuals or groups who seek, through legislation, greater assistance in the arrest and conviction of lawbreakers. All of them are pointed in the wrong direction. They are aimed at the gun rather than the person who uses it improperly.

We who prize the ownership and use of firearms are to blame if we permit the prejudice and opposition to grow. We cannot afford to underestimate, until it is too late, the worth of guns to us and to America. We cannot be guilty of "not missing the water till the well runs dry". It is our responsibility to win more support from more people in our efforts to prevent anti-firearms legislation, to teach firearms safety, to encourage marksmanship, and to promote shooting and hunting as a wholesome form of recreation. It is our responsibility to see

that criminals who use firearms for unlawful purposes are severely punished. It is our responsibility to insist that all who own firearms use them properly.

The right to keep and bear arms is a foundation stone of American liberty. We owe it to our ancestors to preserve unimpaired that right which they have delivered to our care. We owe it to future generations that their inheritance not be destroyed. Let's act now to make certain that Americans always will have the freedoms, the values, and the pleasures signified by a man and his gun.



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