

TOWNSEND WHELEN 1900



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL IVES

AERICAN HUNTER, soldier, writer and outdoorsman Colonel Townsend Whelen was a legendary figure in early target shooting, attending the National Matches from the blackpowder era and helping to usher in the Krag-Jorgensen and M1903 Springfield rifles in both National Guard and U.S. Army competition.

But a turning point in his life came in 1901, when Whelen decided to go to British Columbia and made a momentous change away from his bolt actions to a new favorite for hunting—a lever gun.

One of the two rifles he chose for his trip was this Winchester Model 1895, a strong lever-action design chambered for the .40-72 cartridge. Originally ordered with a half-octagonal barrel, Whelen felt it to be “too whippy” and instead changed the barrel to a heavy round configuration. His records showed that this open-sighted gun would provide a reliable 7- to 8-inch group at 200 yards, perfect for his big-game hunting needs. His comment is telling: “Only accurate rifles are interesting.” Whelen’s expenditures for this hunting excursion, tallied in 1902, totaled only \$10. ☞

The NRA National Firearms Museum at NRA Headquarters in Fairfax, Va., the NRA National Sporting Arms Museum at Bass Pro Shops in Springfield, Mo., and the Frank Brownell Museum of the Southwest at the NRA Whittington Center each have fine selections of historic arms on display. Admission to each is free, and donations are gratefully accepted. For more information, visit www.nramuseum.com, phone (703) 267-1600 or email nfmstaff@nrahq.org.

W H E L E N ' S
WINCHESTER 95
“Only accurate rifles are interesting.”