



COLORADO GUN COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

From the President:

My wife and I have been moving into a new house this last month. We decided to downsize before we got too old and our kids had to sift through our lifelong accumulation of junk when we passed. It was a nice idea but what a headache, partly because of doing it over the holidays. One thing it has taught me though, is people accumulate a lot of stuff over the years, especially gun collectors. Along with guns, we accumulate books, ammunition, and accoutrements, and sights, and displays stands, and factory letters, etc. You get my drift. It turns into a lot of stuff. So I would suggest trying to clean things up a little after you retire. Organize, document, and whittle-down your collection so your heirs are not left with a mess. Decide which auction company your heirs should contact perhaps, or maybe do it before you are gone. For me though, I don't know when I will be done collecting and frankly it gives me something to look forward to too. Looking for that next addition to your collection keeps your mind active and helps keep you "young" in my opinion.

On a lighter note, I was in a gun shop recently and saw a German single shot target pistol from the turn of the 19th century into the 20th century. It had an action that I was not familiar with. As is my custom, I took a few pictures and went home to research it. Soon I found a similar pistol in one of Tom Rowe's books on German guns. Buying a new house, I didn't have the cash to buy it myself right then, but I called up my friend Jim who lives in another state, and who also likes German guns. I described it to him and sent him some pictures. He said if I wasn't going to buy it, he would be interested. So he bought the gun and hopefully when I go visit him, we can talk about it and maybe even go shoot it. My point is that it is almost as much fun to spend someone else's money as it is to spend your own. Hopefully I will get to go play with it, but I didn't have to spend any money!

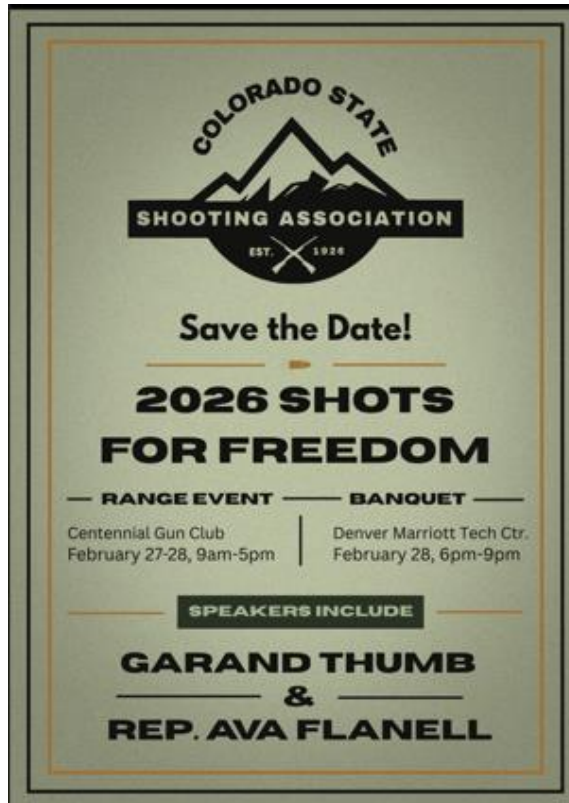
Good luck in finding the next piece for your collection, the hunt is part of the fun. Don't forget, if you run out of money, try to get one of your friends to spend their money!

Thanks,
Rick Wilson

Our next meeting will be February 17, 2026 at the American Legion Post 1; 7:00 PM.
Our program will be "Smith and Wesson: The Development of the 357 Magnum."
By Jarvis Hurd.

We have lost a member of our community, Raymond Schwindt. He has been a regular vendor at our Gun Show for many years.

We have received a new member application from Thomas D Godwin of Graham, WA. Thomas collects WWII Military special interest US M1 Carbine.



Please come enjoy a day or two with us at Centennial Gun Club.
11800 E Peakview Ave. Centennial, CO (Arapahoe Rd and Peoria Street.)
CGCA will have a display table at this event.

Friday, February 27 and Saturday, February 28 9 AM – 5 PM

Please visit our website at www.CGCA.com for club news and updates.

New pictures are on our website.

If you have questions, please contact:

President Rick Wilson, President@cgca.com

Cindy Jewell, Secretary/treasurer 303-750-5645; sectreas@cgca.com

Dave Weddle, Show Chairman 720-482-0167 CGCASHow@cgca.com

THE MECHANICAL MARVEL OF MAINE

BY DAVE WEDDLE

The Evans Rifle is an amazing invention – it was developed in the 1860's as America's largest capacity, lever action, repeating rifle and it incorporates a unique design similar to the Archimedean screw.



Remember the old saying that was always used for the Henry and Winchester rifles "Load on Sunday and shoot all week"? With an Evans Rifle, it's more like "Load on Sunday and shoot all month"!

Developed by Warren R. Evans (dentist) and his brother George F. Evans (machinist) in Maine, it is the largest capacity lever action rifle ever made, with 38 rounds of .38 or 34 rounds of .44-100.

Now it seems that Warren and George did not just "dream up" the Archimedean Screw concept. The story is told that the brothers regularly went blueberry picking on Streaked Mountain in the 1860's. While they were out harvesting blueberries, they came across a blacksmith shop owned by Mr. Records. While at the blacksmith's, they saw a magazine rifle that Mr. Records had been working on and that is where they got the idea. This may have been in 1865-1867 as the first patent for the Evans Rifle was in September 1868.

There are 4 styles of the Evans Rifle. The very 1st style is the original experimental 1868 version made to hold 38 rounds of .38 caliber. This 1st style is what was patented in 1868 and 1871, when the Evans Rifle Company was formed. The reason I call it a 'Style' is that the official 1st model of the Evans Rifle is different than this 1st experimental model.

The 1st style is similar to the first model in that there is only an upper wooden butt stock above the magazine tube. The loading gate is at the bottom of the magazine tube, unlike the other 3 models that load through the butt. The spent cartridge is ejected out the left side of the breech block and the lever looks like a Winchester lever. There is one known example of this rifle and he is the 3rd owner.

In 1872 the United States Army had breechloading firearms testing trials. W.R. Evans was among the manufacturers for testing. The Evans rifle was 1 of 19 that passed the first testing procedures. The model used for the trials was the 1st style rifle in 44-110. The report from Lieutenant Metcalf on October 10, 1872 is as follows:

Mr. Evans fired 26 shots in 1 ½ minutes, using his piece as a single loader, and firing at will; no miss-fires. He loaded his magazine with 38 cartridges in 1 minute, and then fired the piece as a single loader, holding his magazine in reserve, and loading through the butt to supply the place of cartridges discharged, 18 times in 1 minute; no miss-fires. He fired the 38 shots from the magazine in 19 seconds; no miss-fires.

A Handful of dry, fine sand was sifted over the exposed parts of the breech, which together with a broken firing pin, effectually clogged the working of the piece. Mr. Evans claimed the breaking of the firing-pin during the previous trial was due to defective tempering of the metal.

Unfortunately, that test killed the US Army's interest in the Evans Repeating Rifle. However, that did not deter Warren as he went back to Maine and with his brother George, created a group of investors to organize the Evans Rifle Manufacturing Company incorporated in 1873.

The Evans Rifle Company produced their rifles in 4 configurations: Military Musket, Military Carbine, Carbine and Sporting Rifle. Evans continued to make all of these configurations through its various models.

In 1874, at approximately serial number 750, substantial design modifications of the 1st style were made, thus creating the 2nd style or what is called the "Old Model". The loading gate was moved from the bottom of the magazine tube to the center of the magazine tube, the lever design was changed from the Winchester style to the curvy shaped lever that was used on all Evans rifles from this point on. After about serial #200 a lever locking nut was added. It is estimated that about 500 "Old Models" were made. All of the "Old Models" had a top butt stock. The lower part of the magazine was exposed. These used the propriety Evans .44-100 (1" in length) cartridge which is typically called the Evans Short round.

In early 1874 it is said that the "Transition Model" was developed. The major improvement to the "Old Model" was adding a second butt stock to the bottom of the magazine, resulting in a top and bottom wooden buttstock. This is the quickest way to identify a "Transitional Model" from an "Old Model". Neither of these models have a cover over the ejection port.

The year of 1876 was a grand one, being the Centennial of American Independence with the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia. There is a drawing from Harper's Weekly November 18, 1876 that shows a civilian holding and working the action of a Transitional Model in front of an Asian and military officer at the Exposition.

Merwin and Hulbert were the general agent for Evans at the time of the Exposition and had a large display of the Evans rifles, and there was also another distributor at the show, from Canada, Ralph H. Kilby. The Evans Rifles sold by Kilby had the patent date of July 26, 1876 and the word Montreal added. It is estimated that there were about 50 Montreal marked Evans rifles. Of the Transitional model there were about 1,050 Sporting rifles, 150 Military Muskets and 450 Carbines for a total of about 1,700 manufactured.

On July 3, 1877 a second patent was issued to George Evans for improvements to the Evans Rifle, thus the New Model was created. The New Model had 2 significant improvements; 1. It used a more powerful .44 cartridge, the .44 Evans Long. This cartridge was ½" longer than the Evans short. That, however reduced the number of cartridges that could be loaded into the magazine, so instead of holding 34 cartridges the New Model only held 28. That was still 3 ½ times more ammunition than a Henry or Winchester. 2. A mechanical cover over the ejection port was added, which significantly helped in the long-term functionality. The New Model Evans rifle production is estimated at 3,000 Sporting Rifles, 3,000 Military Muskets and 4,000 Carbines.

When you look at these three rifles it is easy to distinguish which one is and "Old Model" (top, with no lower stock) a "Transitional Model" (middle, has both an upper and lower stock) and the "New Model" (lower, with a dust cover over the ejection port).

As is typical the Evans Repeating Rifle found its way around the Globe. Some Evans rifles were used by Turkey during the Russo-Turkish war. After the war the Russians became very interested in the Evans rifle and sent a Russian Steamer to Southwest Harbor in Maine in May of 1878. It has been said that 3 Russian Officers went to the Evans Rifle plant in Mechanics Falls and were very pleased with the demonstration of the Evans Rifles.



Although there are no “official” records of the Russians ordering Evans Rifles it seems that Evans Rifle Company did build some for the Russians. I have an Evans Carbine with a bayonet stud and it is chambered for .44 S&W R. I have a friend that has actually seen Evans rifles in Russia and I have a copy of an article about Evans rifles in Russian.

With the glut of arms on the market after the Civil War and the fact that the Evans Rifles all required the proprietary Evans 44 Short or Long cartridge, the downfall of the Evans Rifle Company was on its way. By December 5, 1879 the Evans Rifle Company was in Bankruptcy. Merwin & Hulbert were owed over \$94, 000 by the Evans Rifle Company and that caused Merwin & Hulbert to go out of business as well.

More in-depth information about Evans Rifle can be found in the book “Maine Made Guns & Their Makers” by Dwight B. Demeritt Jr. which was a key resource for this article. There are a few websites that have information about the Evans Rifle Company, such as Wikipedia and several gun websites. You still can have Evans Short and Long cartridges made. One source is Colorado Custom Cartridge.

It is also fun to look for Evans Rifles, in movies and video games. Wilford Brimley, as Joe Gill, used one in ‘Crossfire Trail’, as did Forrie J. Smith as Pony Deal in ‘Tombstone’. When Wilford Brimley was asked “Why do you use that old rifle” he responded, “it’s got 28 rounds and I ain’t a very good shot”.

COMING SOON Get your tables and your hotel room

60th Annual Colorado Gun Collectors Show

**OUR COLORADO GUN COLLECTORS SHOW IS
MAY 16, AND MAY 17, 2026
VIP DAY ON MAY 15, 2026.**

**WE STILL HAVE TABLES AVAILABLE.
ISLAND GROVE EVENT CENTER, GREELEY, CO
PLEASE CONTACT OUR SHOW CHAIRMAN,
DAVE WEDDLE 720-482-0167.**