



American Rifle: A Biography

Alexander Rose

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George Washington insisted that his portrait be painted with one. Daniel Boone created a legend with one. Abraham Lincoln shot them on the White House lawn. And Teddy Roosevelt had his specially customized.

Now, in this first-of-its-kind book, historian Alexander Rose delivers a colorful, engrossing biography of an American icon: the rifle. Drawing on the words of soldiers, inventors, and presidents, based on extensive new research, and encompassing the Revolution to the present day, **American Rifle** is a balanced, wonderfully entertaining history of this most essential firearm and its place in American culture.

In the eighteenth century American soldiers discovered that they no longer had to fight in Europe's time-honored way. With the evolution of the famed "Kentucky" Rifle—a weapon slow to load but devastatingly accurate in the hands of a master—a new era of warfare dawned, heralding the birth of the American individualist in battle.

In this spirited narrative, Alexander Rose reveals the hidden connections between the rifle's development and our nation's history. We witness the high-stakes international competition to produce the most potent gunpowder . . . how the mysterious arts of metallurgy, gunsmithing, and mass production played vital roles in the creation of American economic supremacy . . . and the ways in which bitter infighting between rival arms makers shaped diplomacy and influenced the most momentous decisions in American history. And we learn why advances in rifle technology and ammunition triggered revolutions in military tactics, how ballistics tests—frequently bizarre—were secretly conducted, and which firearms determined the course of entire wars.

From physics to geopolitics, from frontiersmen to the birth of the National Rifle Association, from the battles of the Revolution to the war in Iraq, **American Rifle** is a must read for history buffs, gun collectors, soldiers—and anyone who seeks to understand the dynamic relationship between the rifle and this nation's history.

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