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The History of Marlin Firearms

John M. Marlin was born in Connecticut in 1836, and served his apprenticeship as a tool and die maker. During the Civil War, he worked at the Colt plant in Hartford, and in 1870 hung out his sign on State Street, New Haven, manufacturing his own line of revolvers and derringers.

The outstanding team of inventors he was able to attract developed breakthrough and enduring models, such as Models 1891 and 1893. Today known as Models 39 and 336 respectively, they are the oldest shoulder arm designs in the world still being produced. The lever action 22 repeater (now Model 39) even became the favorite of many exhibition shooters, including the great Annie Oakley.

When John Marlin died in 1901, his two sons took over the business and began a diversification program. In 1915, during World War I, a New York syndicate bought the company and renamed it the Marlin Rockwell Corporation. Marlin became one of the largest machine gun producers in the world for the US and its Allies. After the War, the sporting firearms part of the business became a new corporation, which staggered until 1923, when it went on the auction block.



Frank Kenna, Sr.
President 1924-1947



Roger Kenna
President 1947-1959



Frank Kenna, Jr.
President 1959-1995



J. Stephen Kenna
President 1995-1997



Robert W. Behn
President 1997-2007



Frank Kenna, III
Chairman 1999-2007

The story is told that the auction of the old Marlin Firearms operation in 1924 was attended by several curious children, a small dog and a lawyer named Frank Kenna. Kenna bid \$100 and the properties were his – along with a \$100,000 mortgage. The Marlin Firearms Company has been owned and run by the Kennas ever since, and has seen constant change and improvements. Kenna re-introduced several of the models

famous before World War I, and in 1936 established the Marlin razor blade business. His eldest son, Roger Kenna, assumed the presidency in 1947 and Marlin enjoyed steady growth until his death in 1959. When his brother, Frank Kenna, Jr. took over as President. Razor blade production was gradually phased out in order to focus attention on sporting firearms. Frank Kenna, Jr. became Chairman in 1995, and Roger's son, Stephen Kenna, formerly Vice President of Operations and General Counsel, became President. In 1997 he left to pursue other interests. Robert Behn assumed the presidency in May of 1997 and continued in that role until the end of 2007 when the company was sold to the Remington Arms Company. Upon Frank Kenna, Jr.'s retirement in 1999, his son Frank Kenna III, became chairman and stepped down from that role with the sale of the company.



Seeking constant improvement became a hallmark of Marlin engineers from day one, and that philosophy has been carried on and demonstrated throughout the 19th-21st Centuries. Beginning with the development of the first side-ejecting, solid-top receiver (called the "Marlin Safety") in 1889, to the

1953 introduction of the Micro-Groove® rifling system for improved accuracy, and through to the 2004 introduction of the T-900 Fire Control System for bolt action rimfire rifles, Marlin engineers have always made extraordinary effort to raise the bar in the firearm manufacturing industry.

The company John Marlin founded still remains dedicated to his original principles. Be assured that you can continue to look for dependable, long-lasting products bearing the name "Marlin."

A New Branch of the Family

In November of 2000, Marlin purchased the assets of H&R 1871®, Inc., a Massachusetts-based manufacturer shotguns and rifles.

Founded in 1871, and now located in Gardner, Massachusetts, today H&R 1871 employs over 200 people. Marketing its products under the brand names of Harrington & Richardson and New England Firearms, H&R 1871 is the largest manufacturer of single shot shotguns and rifles in the world.



From 1870-1899, Marlin produced extremely well-made derringers and revolvers in a wide variety of styles.



Annie Oakley, (Sitting Bull called her "Little Miss Sure Shot,") was a Marlin user. A special Model 1889 was made for her.



During World War I, Marlin improved and manufactured the Colt-Browning machine gun. An aircraft model was synchronized to fire through the propeller. A tank model was produced for some of the first tanks ever used in warfare.



Tom Mix, the first cowboy movie hero, starred in silent films. A Marlin user, he traveled with his own Wild West Show.



William "Buffalo Bill" Cody often joined Annie Oakley in shooting exhibitions with Cody's Circus



Captain Hardy, his Marlin 1897 and Indian head.