

# Women Can Shoot

**Furthermore, the Expert Who Thrilled the World by Her Shooting Believes That There Should Be Rifle Range in Every School.**

By ANNIE OAKLEY

I have often been asked if women, as a class, can shoot a rifle or shot gun as well as men. My reply has been, "Sex makes no difference."

From many years of experience I have come to the conclusion that, except in some extreme cases, it is largely a matter of determination and practice that make good marksmen and women.

Every day during the summer women came to me at the Wentworth, N. H., school for shooting, who were so frightened at the sound of a little 22. calibre rifle that they would put their fingers in their ears. After a few days this timidity would depart and they would become enthusiastic over the sport.

Most of them never had experience in any kind of outdoor sport and with a golf club or a tennis racquet they would be exceedingly awkward, yet after a little patient attention I found them doing well with the rifle and shotgun and keen to excel. We gave a prize each week to the woman making the highest score and it was surprising the number of supposedly "idle" women who became capable of handling firearms.

As I have taught nearly 15,000 women how to shoot, I modestly feel that I have some right to speak with assurance on this subject. Individual for individual, women can shoot as well as men.

I had many talks with the late Theodore Roosevelt and Hudson Maxim, both of whom had strong and forcible opinions about this question. I have often and persistently maintained that women should be prepared; not necessarily for war, although it would not be undesirable to have them ready for extreme emergencies in war time, but to defend themselves.

Even in the best and most peacefully civilized countries many occasions arise when a woman versed in the knowledge and use of firearms may find that information and skill of great importance. And surely the great war has revealed many instances when a woman with a pistol and no fear of using it might have been spared torture, shame and death. We know that some countries even went so far as to employ their women on the firing line.

I have been teaching woman to shoot for many years at Wentworth in summer and Pinehurst in winter, without compensation because I had an ideal for my sex. I have wanted them to be capable of protecting their homes.

I have enjoyed unusual health most of my life and have been before the public here and in Europe for a great many years, but I have always maintained that outside of heavy manual labor anything a man can do a woman can do practically as well. Cer-

tainly this is true in the use and manipulation of firearms.

In all these years of teaching I have had many interesting cases. One woman, wealthy, from the Back Bay district of Boston, came to me as frightened at the sight of a rifle or pistol as a rabbit is of a ferret. In a very short time she had progressed so far that her husband presented her with a fine pistol. She went home one day and found a man in her room with the silverware packed and ready to depart. She didn't become frustrated, but she got her revolver, covered the man and 'phoned the police. She wrote me saying that her successful capture was due to the training she had had with me. If she had not learned the use of a revolver she would have fainted away and the crook would have gotten away. It turned out afterward that the thoughtful husband had removed the cartridges in order to obviate all danger. However, since

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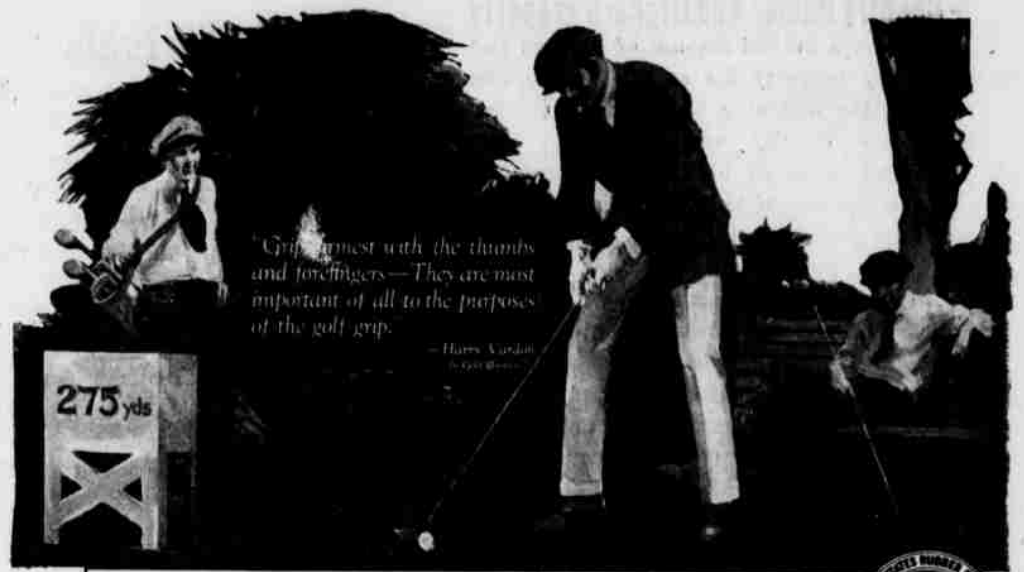
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