

## What is a Quackenbush?

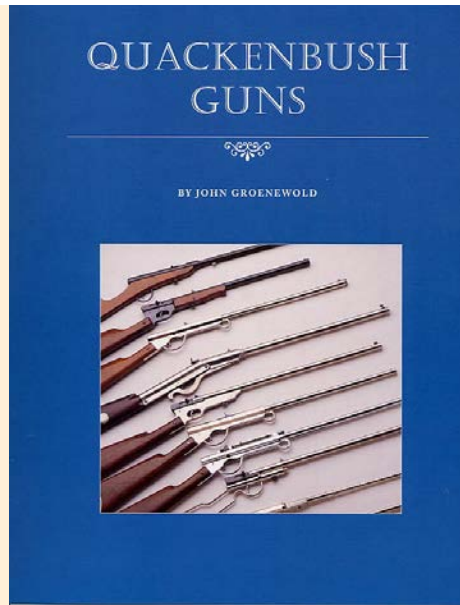
By John Groenewold,  
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When you mention H. M. Quackenbush or just Quackenbush to a person not familiar with guns, the first thing which usually comes to his/her mind are the nut crackers and nut picks made by the H. M. Quackenbush Company. Mention those words to anyone not familiar with them and there is no telling what response you will get. Their response might surprise you and include: bicycle, lathe, scroll saw, darts, stair rails, extension ladder, bathroom shelf, and many more items H. M. Quackenbush was responsible for. When you mention H. M. Quackenbush or just Quackenbush to a gun collector the first thing which usually comes to his/her mind is the .22 caliber rim fire rifles made by the H. M. Quackenbush Company in the late 1800s and early 1900s. When you mention H. M. Quackenbush to an airgun collector the first thing which usually comes to mind is the most common air rifle the Number 1. Most people, and many experienced collectors, are just not familiar with the man, company, or products. Ask someone who is responsible for the invention of the common extension ladder or two wheel bicycle (as we know it today, wheels of equal size and centrally located pedals) and all you will get is blank looks. In fact, the patents for these items are in the name of Henry Marcus Quackenbush. The company's most common product for the most of its 131 year existence was nut picks and nut crackers.

It was this lack of knowledge and encouragement from Bronson Quackenbush, Henry Marcus Quackenbush's grandson, which convinced me to undertake the task of documenting everything obtainable related to Quackenbush guns. As other collectors became aware of my efforts they began to apply peer pressure to publish these findings. *Quackenbush Guns* was the resulting book. It contains a chapter devoted to the man, his life, family, business, and company, as well as a chapter on each gun, airgun, the targets, ammo, and much more.

All that aside, the general gun collector who is aware of the rim fire rifles is usually not aware that there are three different rifles (including a bicycle rifle) with numerous variations present in each. These variations can be used to date the rifles since they were not serially numbered. All this is explained in great detail in three chapters of *Quackenbush Guns*. Simple, easy-to-read tables are included to make the process of dating a particular gun fast and convenient.

Very few airgun collectors, no matter how serious they may be, know how many different airguns were produced by H. M. Quackenbush. Let alone how many of each model, when they were produced or sold, or what the production quantity of each was. In fact, there were 11 air rifles, 10 air pistols, and one pistol which utilized percussion caps as a means of propelling a bb. One chapter is devoted to the air pistols and one chapter to each different model of air rifle. Even the elusive Model Number 8 is, not only illustrated, but described in great detail in the chapter devoted to it. The last Quackenbush air rifle made was the Model Number 10. The last one left the factory in the late nineteen forties. Many readers will be surprised to learn that many retail stores had NEW Quackenbush airguns on their display racks well into the nineteen fifties.



As part of their range of products related to the shooting sports, H. M. Quackenbush offered a selection of targets and ammunition. There were actually 8 different metal targets and of course paper targets, too. Airgun ammunition in the form of lead air rifle shot (BB's), felted slugs, and darts were offered in several different calibers. In fact, H. M. Quackenbush made and sold airgun slugs and darts until 1976! The machinery for these products was sold to the Benjamin Air Rifle Co. of St. Louis, Missouri and they made darts on the Quackenbush machine until 1993. One chapter of the book is devoted to the identification of the targets and one to the ammunition made by H. M. Quackenbush. Each target is identified and production dates and quantities for each are discussed in detail. The reader will also learn how to identify and date the different types of ammunition.

Henry Marcus Quackenbush was quite an ingenious inventor, engineer and businessman. In order to produce many of his products, he had to invent and make the machines needed to produce those products. For example, he invented a machine to standardize shot size. This allowed his guns, when used with his shot, to function significantly more reliably than any of his competitor's guns. His shot also functioned in most other airguns of the same caliber without malfunctioning. He also invented a machine to make felted slugs. Additionally, he invented a machine to make airgun darts. In fact this machine was so successful that he made and sold several of the machines to competing airgun companies (Pope, Bedford and Walker, etc.). Most of the airgun darts sold by American airgun companies until recently, were made on one of those Quackenbush dart machines. The only surviving Quackenbush dart machine with all the transferring documentation is in the author's collection. This was in use by the Benjamin Air Rifle Company until December, 1993. Additional descriptive details, illustrations, production data, dates of manufacture, and much more can be found in *Quackenbush Guns*.

There are three old Quackenbush catalogs reproduced in their entirety in *Quackenbush Guns*. These describe many other products invented, made, and sold by H. M. Quackenbush, including a scroll saw, foot powered lathe, stair rails, etc.

The author hopes that his efforts will provide useful knowledge to collectors and people interested in Quackenbush guns, airguns, tools, and other implements. For more information or to obtain a copy of the book *Quackenbush Guns* contact; John Groenewold, P.O. Box 830, Mundelein, IL, 60060-0830. Watch future issues of this publication for an in-depth article on the only Quackenbush Airgun Dart making machine in existence.

[Order a copy of "Quackenbush Guns"](#)