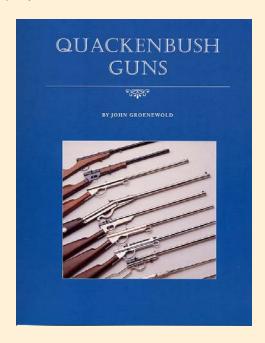
QUACKENBUSH GUNS

By John C. Groenewold Copyright by John Groenewold, January 1, 2000

When you mention H.M. Quackenbush or just Quackenbush to a gun collector, the first thing that usually comes to mind is the .22 caliber rim fire rifles made by the H.M. Quackenbush Company. When you mention H.M. Quackenbush to an air gun collector the first thing that usually comes to mind is the most common air rifle, the Number 1. Mention those words to anyone else and there is no telling what response you will get. Most people and many experienced collectors are just not familiar with the man, company or products. The company has been in existence since 1871.



It was this lack of knowledge and encouragement from Bronson Quackenbush, Henry Marcus Quackenbush's grandson, which convinced the author to undertake the task of documenting everything obtainable related to Quackenbush. As other collectors became aware of the author's efforts they began to apply pier pressure to publish his findings. Quackenbush Guns was the resulting book. It contains a chapter devoted to the man, his life, family, business, and company.

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 the author's book. One chapter per rifle type. Simple easy to read tables are included to make the process of dating a particular gun fast and convenient.

Very few air gun collectors, no matter how serious they may be, know how many different air guns were produced by H.M. Quackenbush. Let alone how many of each model, when they were produced or sold, or what the production quantities of each was. In fact there were 11 air rifles and 10 air pistols and one pistol which utilized percussion caps as a means of propelling a bb. One chapter is devoted to the pistols and one chapter to each different model of air rifle. Even the elusive Model Number 8 is not only illustrated, but is 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 in fact, many retail stores had NEW Quackenbush air guns 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. Air gun 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 ammunition until 1976! 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 a very ingenious inventor, engineer and businessman. In order to produce many of his products he also 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 flawlessly. His shot also functioned in most other air guns of the same caliber without malfunctioning. He also invented a machine to make felted slugs. Additionally, he invented a machine to make air gun darts. In fact, this machine was so successful that he made and sold several of the machines to competing air gun companies (Pope, Bedford and Walker, etc.). All the air gun darts sold by American air gun 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".

Order a copy of "Quackenbush Guns"

Visit our webpage listing of other Airgun Articles

Browse our Quackenbush Catalog