

**Record Group 18**  
**Markham Air Rifle Company**  
**King Manufacturing Company**  
1887-1986  
1 and ½ manuscript boxes

Plymouth Historical Museum, Plymouth, MI  
Finding Aid Written by Christine Race, 12 January 2005  
Updated by Jennifer Meekhof, 21 September 2011  
Edited by Nathaniel Gibson, June 7 2013  
Updated by Patricia White, January 2014

**Creator:** Markham Air Rifle Company  
**Acquisition:** The King Manufacturing Company / Markham Air Rifle Company records were deposited in the archives at various dates including 2002 and 2003.  
**Language:** Materials in English  
**Access:** Records are open for research  
**Use:** Refer to Archives Reading Room Guidelines  
**Notes:** Citation Style: "Markham Air Rifle, King Manufacturing Company," Record Group 18, Archives, Plymouth Historical Museum

**Abstract**

The Markham Air Rifle Company began as a company called Markham Manufacturing Company, which produced wooden tanks and cisterns. In 1886, the company began to make wooden air rifles, called the "Challenger" and changed names to reflect the new product. In order to compete with the Daisy BB gun, Markham created the "King" metal BB gun in 1890. The name was changed to King Air Rifle Company in 1928. King continued to make air guns until 1940.

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**Important Subjects**

Air Rifles -- 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Local Companies – Plymouth, MI

## **Entry 1: Company Articles**

### **Box 1**

The American BB Gun, Markham King air rifles

“BB Guns of Plymouth, Michigan” by Jim Perkins, NRA Gun Collector, Fall, 1984.

“Captain Markham’s Dream” by Jim Perkins, Gun Report Magazine, Nov. 1999.

“The Demise of Markham” It’s a Daisy

Markham family history “The McCarthys and the Markhams,” by Dorr N. Wiltse Sr.

Additional information on Markham. Notes by Jim Perkins

## **Entry 2: Product Information**

Cardboard cut-out of the King air rifle

Price list of repairs for Markham air rifles

Price list of King air rifles and repair parts, 1940

Markham air rifles gun catalog

King Price catalog 1914

King Price catalog 1929

King Price catalog 1930

Markham catalog “A Brief History of the Air Rifle”

“How Air Rifles are made of Plymouth”

“The Story of the Air Rifle”

Patent information on Air Gun, January 29, 1907

Export Price List King air rifles and pop guns 1936

## **Entry 3: Newspaper Articles**

“Plymouth the Home of the Air Gun Industry,” November 18, 1911

Markham name change “An Old Concern with a New Name,” January 1928

“Markham fails in Los Angeles” November 13, 1936

“Society Snub Sent him to Hollywood,” December 9, 1974

“Markham House: Intriguing tale of Social Life in Old Plymouth,” Plymouth Observer  
October 13, 1975

“Dream Shapes Up for Old Main Street Air Rifle Factory,” The Community Crier,  
December 22, 1976

“The Landing to Open Soon,” March 15, 1979

“Plymouth 100 Years Ago: The First BB gun,” August 11, 1986

“Birth of Air Rifle Industry Quickly Followed Closing of Windmill Factory,” by Charles  
Bennett. Plymouth Mail, Thursday, March 13, 1952

Michigan Manufactures: “Plymouth : the Home of the Air-Gun Industry” Detroit Nov.  
18, 1911. Vol 7 No 21.

## **Entry 4: Advertisements**

Markham Christmas ad. December 1887, source unknown

King Air Rifles, “Every Boys Choice” October 1912

“Your Boy’s Aim” King ad. 1908

The King Rifle, October 1894

The King and Chicago air rifles

King pump gun announcement  
King air rifle ad  
Photocopy of a King air rifle sign  
King pump-gun announcement  
King air rifle ad  
Photocopy of a King air rifle sign  
King air rifle postcards, photocopied  
Ad for the King air rifle (postcard)  
King air rifle postcards, photocopied  
Ad for the King air rifle at Simmons Hardware Co.  
The Youth Companion, ad. For the new King repeating air rifle  
King ad in "Everybody's Magazine"  
King Christmas ad, Evening Post, 1915  
King air rifle ads in American Boy, November 1922  
"You can win a King prize" ad, November 1915  
"The Reward of today's Play is Tomorrow's Success" King ad  
King ad for Scholefield, Goodman and Sons  
Photograph of ad "Our Models", showing five Markham Air Rifles  
Saturday Evening Post King ad 11/18/1911

#### **Entry 5: Markham Letters**

Receipt 1889  
Resignation letter, May 6, 1893  
Resignation letter, February 21, 1899  
Letter to Village Council, July 31, 1903  
Letter to The Soo Hardware Co., October 22, 1913

#### **Entry 6: Envelopes**

Markham Manufacturing Co.  
Envelope from Albert Rakovsky  
Envelope from Fredrick Neuburger and Co.  
King envelope  
King envelope  
Envelope from Drogueria Charpentier  
Envelope from Casa Limon  
King Air Rifles envelope

#### **Entry 7: Photos**

Photocopy of 1933 #102 Gun  
Box photo of King Building  
Photocopy of the Markham Air Rifle Co. building  
Markham employees  
Markham employee pictures  
Markham employees  
Markham employees, 1900  
King/Markham employees

Markham employees, 1900  
Second floor woodworking shop, yr. 1900  
Markham family photo  
View of the King plant, July 1938  
Outside view of Markham Building, 1977-81  
Photos of Markham, Markham's home, his yacht, and rifles  
Markham Air Rifle Co. Building and workers, ca 1900 Photos  
Markham Air Rifle Co. Band, ca. 1890  
Front of building, with employees, horse and buggy, 1895-1898  
Negative of above  
Drawing, Markham Mfg. Co. front  
Drawing, front and side of building, Markham on side, King on front  
Inside the Markham factory  
4 King Air Rifles  
3rd, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> models, Markham Air Rifles  
Chicago rifle, Plymouth rifle (with missing trigger), first model Daisy rifle  
Chicago Air Rifle with patchbox  
Drawing, Chicago Air Rifle patent  
Negative sheet, Markham Co.  
Negative sheet, Markham family  
Negatives of Markham factory and family photos done by Jim Perkins for magazine articles  
Photo of drawing of King Plant  
Photo of ad for Plymouth breech loading air rifle  
Photo of ad for 4 Markham rifles  
Photo of gun  
View of plant across railroad tracks 2012  
Back of plant in 2012  
Postcard of exterior  
Markham building 1954  
Four men interior of Markham building

### **Entry 8: Correspondence about King or Markham**

Information from Richard Usenia about King rifles

### **Entry 9: Materials for Jim Perkin' articles: "Captain Markham's Dream," Gun Report magazine, November 1999; "BB guns of Plymouth, Michigan," The NRA Gun Collector magazine, Fall 1984**

Notecards (11) giving part of history of Markham Air Rifle Co.  
Large paper chart with timeline of Markham Air Rifle Co.  
Original typed copy of "Phil Markham's Dream" by Jim Perkins, 5 pages plus title page  
Handwritten notes about Markham family, 3 and ½ pages, on yellow letter-size paper  
4 handwritten letters on Wesley E. Powers, Jr., letterhead about Markham Air Rifle Co., family, etc.  
Part of article from Air Gun Digest, n.d., about Markham BB guns

Letter from Robert Sears, NRA, to Jim Perkins about Perkins article on Markham Air  
Guns

Letter from A. Youness to Jim Perkins re Markham house in Glendale, CA.

Letter from Mary Ann Bayer to Jim Perkins

Photo captions for "Markham's Dream" article by Jim Perkins

Misc. notes, presumably by Jim Perkins, for articles: Photo captions, Quackenbush air  
gun production totals, names, price list

**Entry 10: Court Records**

Federal Register #258: Herman vs. Markham Air Rifle Co., Nov. 4, 1918