



Plymouth's Air Rifle Industry (Images of America)

Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens

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In the late 19th century, the Rockwellian city of Plymouth, Michigan, became the breeding ground for competitive air-rifle companies, putting this still-thriving suburban Detroit community on the map.

Plymouth's Air Rifle Industry hones in on the three air-rifle companies and the spin-off .22-caliber rifle company that dominated the Plymouth landscape for years. William "Philip" Markham and his company, the Markham Air Rifle Company, first received an air-rifle patent in 1887. The Plymouth Iron Windmill Company entered the competition in 1888, when founder Clarence Hamilton introduced his prototype to the board of directors. After firing the rifle, general manager Lewis Cass Hough declared, "Boy, that's a Daisy," and the Daisy air rifle was born; the company was renamed in 1895. The Plymouth Air Rifle Company opened in 1888 and ceased to exist after its building burned in 1894. Hamilton went on to develop a .22-caliber rifle and started the Hamilton Manufacturing Company in 1898. The rifle era ended when the last of the competitors, Daisy, moved to Rogers, Arkansas, in 1958.



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