

Gangster Gun

Before reading this article, please understand I am in no way arguing for or against gun control in today's world. My only goal is to share interesting information about how a law affected trapping equipment in the past.

In June of 1934, the National Firearms Act was passed and placed restrictions on two types of guns: machine guns and short-barrel firearms. It did not attempt to ban either weapon, but merely imposed a tax on any transfers of such weapons.

In the 1930s, the United States faced a run of much publicized gangster violence led by such well-known criminals as John Dillinger, Al Capone, Baby Face Nelson, and Bonnie and Clyde. The sensationalistic aspect of their crimes convinced the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt that something needed to be done to control the spread of weapons into the general population. U.S. Attorney General Homer Cummings and his staff began the process of drafting recommended legislation that would achieve this goal. Cummings and his staff quickly determined that, rather than ban weapons and run afoul of the Second Amendment, they would try to tax such weapons out of circulation. As passed by Congress, it covered "a shotgun or rifle having a barrel of less than eighteen inches in length, or any other weapon, except a pistol or revolver, from which a shot is discharged by an explosive if such a weapon is capable of being concealed on the person, or a machine gun."

The statute levied a \$200 tax on each firearm, meeting the above definition, when transferred. The tax was to be paid by the transferor, and to be represented by appropriate stamps to be provided by the commissioner. It was unlawful for anyone to sell or receive a firearm in violation of this section, and they could be fined \$2,000 and imprisoned for up to five years for violating it.

of each firearm, along with the owner's name, address, place where the firearm was stored, and place of business or employment.

The Act classified the Marble's Game Getter Gun as a gangster gun. It was a compact folding double barreled rifle with one barrel on top of the other. The basic one had a .22 caliber and a .44 caliber barrel manufactured in 12, 15 and 18 inch barrels. The .22 caliber was suited for killing trapped furbearers and bait for the trapline, while the other barrel was intended to supply meat for the camp. In December of 1937, F.Q. Bunch said it was an ideal gun for the trapline.

If anyone has information contrary to what was written in this article, I encourage them to respond via phone, email, regular mail or in the magazine.

References:
Marbles Outing Equipment Advertisement. Hunter Trader Trapper. December 1923.

National Firearms Act. Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.
<https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/national-firearms-act>.

National Firearms Act of 1934 Legal Definition.
<https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/national+firearms+act+of+1934>

Notice to Trappers. The Trapper. F.Q. Bunch. December 1937.

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The Act required dealers of the listed firearms to register with the Secretary of the Treasury and required persons who owned them before the effective date of the Act to register, with the collector of the district in which he resides, the number or other mark identifying