

Joseph Manton double 14 gauge Flintlock Shotgun

Barrels marked on top rib: Joseph Manton's .. patent .. Elevation  
Breech plugs cut away (to provide closeness of locks on stock)  
Both breeches marked with Joe's late platinum escutcheons  
Short platinum band at rear of breech plugs, Platinum touch holes

Brass slightly bell shaped raw rod tip.  
Sling swivel on 2d ramrod pipe under bbl

Locks Joe's water-proof pans. Goose neck cocks.  
Marked Joseph Manton  
LONDON  
Square rear on lock plate  
7 ½ lbs overall weight

Not in 'The Manton Supplement'.

Purchased from Grover Johnson, San Pedro, Cal.  
Feb, 1968

The Ides of March, 1968

Dear Keith Neal,

I have had two long and delightful letters from Tony Groom in which he praised your book and expressed his thanks for your autograph and graciousness in sending it out to him. Actually I wanted it to arrive as a surprise but just after I got the bill for the book I received a letter from him that they were in the midst of a postal strike and that he had changed his address. So, in small panic, I wrote him what I had in mind and hoped that he would be able to locate the book even at the wrong address. Well, in all events, the book arrived and he has thoroughly enjoyed it. In the U. S. A. if mail is lost or misssent it often disappears forever and I did not want that to happen to his book. So I guess 'all's well that ends well.'

Since I last wrote you I have had the good fortune to find several Manton guns and to purchase three of them. The others were too high priced for the condition in which they had fallen. They would be no real addition to my collection and were simply too highly priced for such condition.

First I have the pleasure to pencil the following information immediately beneath Col Hawker's "Old Joe" gun in your book: "4370 ---- Mine."

4370	Double Barrel	Flintlock	30"	London Proofs	G.A. Ritter, Jr.
	16 bore	Joseph Manton	Joseph Manton's	4370	U.S.A.
	Shotgun	London	Patent Elevation		

This is an interesting gun to me in that it is pretty typical of the year and time for Joe's production. The engraving and hardware are correct and the stock, walnut, is typical and of good design, though slightly nicked and chipped on the fore-end. The Locks have been worked on by a good blacksmith in recent years. The pans have been built up to meet the pan cover, which has been reworked also and not well. The original contours of these elements have been altered. (I hope to have them reworked by a gunsmith who knows what he is doing.) The remainder of the locks look essentially untouched by this heavy handed smith. The one thing irregular about the gun is that the anti-friction roller is on the feather spring and not on the hammers. The springs are perfect mates and apparently have been on the gun for years. They are neat and clean and "fit" except that they do not have the little finial on the end at the base mounting. From inspection there is no way to tell whether they have been altered and I wonder if they might not have been originally provided. I fail to see any remark of Joe Mantons guns having this type of feather spring at this time but many of John's guns did. This information is lacking in many of the descriptions in your book. Joseph Manton, in script, and LONDON, in Roman capitals immediately underneath on the locks looks proper. The edge of the lock-plate is engraved with the typical feather design of Manton. This bordure is also on the outside of the hammers but there is no evidence of serial numbers or anything else on the hammers. The hammers have had the friction surface replaced and the outside of the hammers has file marks in evidence of alteration. Whether a serial number was ever here or not is impossible to tell now.

The barrels look good! The touch holes and the stamps on the breeches are in platinum. The top rib is typical, No engraving on the patent breech at this juncture, then about an inch of rib without engraving, then the elevated top rib immediately joining and engraved: Joseph Manton's PATENT Elevation. This looks correct in that the name is in script, then two periods, PATENT, in Roman Capitals followed by ~~the bottom~~ Elevation in script then two periods. On the underside, there is the number 4370 between small oval London Proofs and then 4370 on the bottom of the patent breech. This is on both barrels and breeches.

The locks appear very similar to your plate No. 103. The engraving is quite similar

with the sunburst in front of the cock and the globe and book etc. on the end of the plate. The arrangement of globe and book is slightly altered from the pictured one. But the feather spring is different as described above. The tail pipe is typical with the pineapple of the period. The finial of the trigger plate is pineapple of the correct type and the trigger guard tang carries the serial number 4370 reading from the muzzle. The guard itself is swollen and engraved correctly, though worn.

So, though I have this one I am still looking for a very good Joe flint. I have paid dearly for this one and will pay dearly, if need be, for a better one. Keep me in mind, if and when you find one.

Incidentally I have an offer out on a double flint by John Manton. I hope this works out to my advantage too.

Now for the other guns which are anticlimactic at this point. The first one is a single barrel flint (converted to percussion long ago) by John Manton. Using your book form for listing such information, I submit the following:

2046	Single barrel	Flintlock	barrel cut to	Large oval	G.A. Ritter, Jr
	16 bore	converted to	present 32"	London Proofs	U.S.A.
	Shotgun	Percussion	Gold stamp	&	
		MANTON	Manton	2046	
			London		

Typically the serial number is only on the underside of the barrel. The rest of the gun is correct and I anticipate using the style of this stock and furniture in making a gun to go with my earlier Manton locks, which I wrote you about earlier. Incidentally the lock on this gun, except for the alteration to percussion cock etc. is almost interchangeable with the detached pair I have. John must have made his locks very nearly to pattern at this time. Unfortunately this gun has suffered from exposure as the barrel is pitted except for that part protected by the stock, which is excellent. The barrel is octagonal for about 13 inches then a ferrule of dots and rings and then round to muzzle. I once had a perfect John Manton barrel that was exactly like this one. Wish I had kept it! The stock is walnut and has a lovely cheek piece in perfect condition and the wrist and forearm are checkered in the large almost square pattern of the time. It has two barrel bolts and the oval escutcheon plates are of steel not silver. All looks original with the exception of the drum and nipple conversion to cap-lock.

Next comes a good example of John Manton & Son. This gun is well worn but not ruined. It was in an almost perfect case with some accessories, but the gun was worn as if it had been carried every day since manufacture. Using your book form it is:

7857	Double Barrel	Caplock	29 3/4 "	WF	G. A. Ritter, Jr.
	10 bore	Jn <sup>c</sup> Manton	John Manton	London Proofs	U.S.A.
	Shotgun	& Son Patent	& Son	7857	
			Dover Street		
			London		

Now this is an interesting gun in that there is absolutely no evidence that it has ever been flintlock. This gun is quite similar to your description of your gun No. 7769. The stock is of bird's eye Maple. The case sounds similar and a great wad of flax tow is in the lock compartment of the case. However, nothing gives suggestion of flintlock origin except the serial number. The lock, except for engraving is nearly identical to your No. 7769 as in plate 55. If converted it was by John Manton and so complete that I cannot detect it. There is a large bar on the barrels to fit the lock plate, which would not have been on a flint gun and could not have been added. The very gauge, 10, would have made the gun so wide that the present stock could not have done service for a flint gun. The presence of the serial number in so many places apparently done with the same stamp suggests original caplock manufacture. The serial number is on both barrels between the proof marks and on the end of the breech hooks and on the shank of the cocks (inside) above the tumbler orifice. The lock nail goes through the standing breech. So what do you think???? The serial no. is engraved ACROSS the tang of trig. guard.



I will have to make some photographs of these guns and let you see them. I am hoping that you will be in the U. S. soon and that you can spend a day or so with me to inspect these pieces. I am proud of them and except for their condition, which lacks much, I think that they are as good an investment as gold at the moment.

I note that the NRA meets in Boston this year so I won't be going to the meetings. If you are anticipating coming however, please let me know and I may change my intention of the moment.

I still hope that you may be able to find me a pair of barrels (detached) for use on the John Manton locks I have. I want to make up a gun which will be as nearly correct as possible yet fitting me for shooting. I think that I want a pair of John Manton's barrels in something smaller than 12 gauge as the locks have to fit outside the breeches and nothing was cut away at this time. Anyway the locks are made to fit flush to the old style barrels. In your looking please keep me in mind. You mentioned a pair of Joe Manton barrels on a conversion to breech loader which you have. I don't believe that I should use them and you probably don't want to break up the gun anyway. But if a pair with the right pattern of stub twist appears, remember me. I don't care who made them so long as it is quality workmanship. I had thought of taking a modern pair of Greener barrels and using them but the stub twist pattern is not right for 1785. I fancy that I would like a bit of choke in the barrels as that is what many of the boys are doing to the guns today and they shoot better than the cylinder cores. I just hesitate to alter any of my good guns this way especially since I do kill game with them as they are.

Well let me know when you plan to be in the U. S. A. and bring along some merchandise. I am in the market for something good.

With kindest regards to your wife and daughter, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Guy A. Ritter, Jr.  
241 Craig Avenue  
Salem, Virginia 24153