

# R.L. WILSON ON COLT

## The Walker Colt

GENERALLY REGARDED AS the most desirable production model of all percussion Colt revolvers, the Walker presents a challenge to even the most advanced collector. If one accepts the possibility that the current population of Colt collectors is a minimum of 25,000, and a maximum of 50,000, then little wonder the high demand and substantial prices for the Walker Model. Quoting from *The Book of Colt Firearms* (p. 79):

To the advanced Colt collector, the Walker Model is the most necessary single item in his arms group. Production was limited, and nearly every specimen was subjected to use on the rugged frontiers of Mexico and the American West. Perhaps as many as 30% of these failed in firing due to burst cylinders. At this writing [1970] about 175 of the original 1,100 Walkers are known to the gun collecting fraternity. It is unusual to find these arms in better than good or quite used condition, sometimes with altered rammer levers, or even a very few converted to the metallic cartridge. A handful of Walker Colts are known completely rusted into a rough brown mass with the appearance and patina of iron sculpture. . . . The original Walker is rare and desirable in any condition. Because of this more reproduction and fake Walker revolvers have been manufactured than any of the other models of percussion Colt firearms. Expert opinion and a factual ownership pedigree are valuable assists to the prospective purchaser.

and in the new *The Colt Heritage*, is this assessment of the survival and scarcity of the Walker (p. 296):

Only about 180 original Walker Colts are known: 239 pistols had been lost within months of manufacture due to burst cylinders. An estimated 550 or 600 more were lost through natural and manmade causes. This means that perhaps 100 Walkers are yet to be discovered! So far this author has seen several times that number of aspirants — all fakes.

(H. E. Haber Collection)



The massive size of the Walker is presented in this group shot of No. 1022 (top left) with Transition Walker No. 1337 (presented to Ben McCulloch by Sam Colt, January 1, 1848), Third Model engraved No. 13128 (from magnificent cased pair), Third Model No. 16477 (by Gustave Young), and Third Model Hartford-English No. 643. Walker barrel length is 9", compared to the standard Dragoon length of 7½"; weight of Walker at 4 lbs. 9 oz., compared to 4 lbs. 2 oz. of the Dragons.

(Private Collection)



The exceptional condition of E. Co. No. 120 (numerically the last of the military model Walkers produced) helps to clarify a detail of manufacture which until c.1972 had remained undetected by the "experts". Collector Alan Caperton, a careful student of Colt firearms, noted that the cylinders on fine conditioned Walkers and early 1st Model Dragons appeared to have been made without finish! His comments to the author at that time inspired a search of other specimens, and the results proved that Caperton's observations were correct. The author has observed 1st Model specimens as high as No. 1804 lacking of blue as a feature of manufacture on the cylinder.

No finer military series Walker is known to the writer than E Co. No. 120.

Little wonder that the record price for a Walker Model is well into six figures, paid for the most valuable of all specimens, the only cased example, the subject of this month's **Man at Arms** centerfold.

For the history of the Walker, in exquisite, tantalizing, and (often) exciting detail, the reader can do no better than to peruse *Sam'l Colt's Own Record*, by John E. Parsons, published in 1949 by The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford. The work is based almost entirely on the original U.S. government contract, correspondence, and other documentary sources, in the Colt papers of the Society. Quite a bit of data is quoted verbatim. Technical matters are discussed, but not generally in a way which would prove helpful to the collector, in a quandry as to whether or not a specific example of the model were genuine, partially restored, or whatever. For that type data one must turn to such sources as *The Book of Colt Firearms*, *The Colt Heritage*, *Colt Pistol*, James E. Serven's *Colt Firearms From 1836*, and W.B. Edwards' *The Story of Colt's Revolver*.

The first Colt book to present some detail on the model was Henry Barnard's *Armsmear* (published 1866 by Mrs. Samuel Colt). Pages 192-3 show that the revolver's name originated with Samuel Colt himself;

[A] pistol similar to the TEXAS [Paterson] ARM was also made at Paterson [an error of early research, pistols were built at the Whitney Armory, Whitneyville, Ct.]. It was called the Walker pistol by Col. Colt, out of compliment to a distinguished Texan ranger of that name, with whom the pistol was a great favorite.

It was much larger and heavier than the Texas [Paterson] arm, and, although it differs in proportion of parts, was in form and arrangement very similar to the pistol known as Colt's Old Model Army Pistol.

The lever and rammer were attached to this pistol . . . Its calibre was .44-inch.

The OLD MODEL ARMY PISTOL followed the Walker pistol in 1847, and was extensively introduced as a weapon for cavalry. The calibre is .44-inch, and weight 4 lbs.

When studying the Walker, and particularly in considering purchase of an 1847 production model, the serious collector needs all the background information he can muster. A most valued reference tool is the supply of fine Walkers in museum collections. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has an unusually fine example, No. 1017, formerly in the John E. Parsons collection. The Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, has No. 1020, a gift to Sam Colt from Captain Walker (a bequest when dying, at Huamantla, Mexico, soon after



The "Walker Pistol", as pictured in Henry Barnard, *Armsmear*, 1866. The text states that "[the model] was called the Walker pistol by Col. Colt, out of compliment to a distinguished Texan ranger of that name, with whom the pistol was a great favorite."



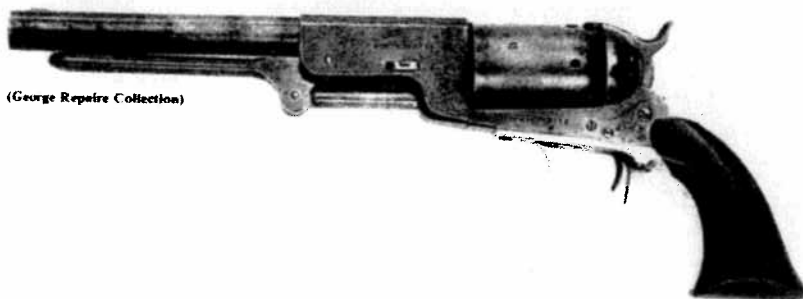
(S. P. Stevens Photograph)

Captain Samuel Hamilton Walker's grave marker, San Antonio, Texas. Erected by the International Order of Odd Fellows. Colt and Walker together designed the Walker revolver, and it was Colt who named the model after his friend. The full story of Walker Colt development is presented in John E. Parsons' *Sam'l. Colt's Own Record*.

receiving the pistols). The Museum of Connecticut History, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, had A Co. No. 19. It was stolen several years ago and is still missing -- they now display a replacement revolver (C Co. No. 33), which is restored in certain details. The Metzger Collection, at Texas A & M College, has A Co. No. 119 and D Co. No. 81. C Co. No. 154 is in the West Point Museum, and E Co. No. 58 is at the Springfield Armory Museum. Surprisingly, the U.S. National Museum,



One of the finest specimens of the Walker Colt, serial A Co. No. 19. From the original Colt factory museum collection, and part of the substantial gift of the company to the Connecticut State Library, 1957. Stolen from the State Library Museum on June 22, 1971, the gun has yet to be recovered. A substantial reward is offered for the return of A Co. No. 19. Contact the author or David White, Director, Museum of Connecticut History, Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06115.



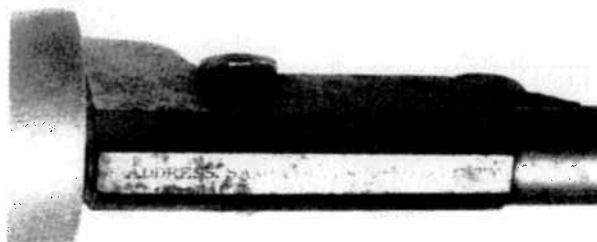
(George Repaire Collection)

The "Pulhamus" Walker, C Co. No. 13. An important specimen in the study of the Walker Colt, since Aaron Pulhamus had been a workman involved in their manufacture. When his Walker was discovered by James E. Serven many years ago (even before the cased specimen No. 1022 was known to American collectors), accessories were included. These gave a clear picture as to just what accessories went along with Walker revolvers.



(Private Collection)

Two views of a quite unusual, recently discovered Walker Colt revolver, C Co., No. 40. Discovered by writer-dealer-collector John R. Hansen, in Utah, the gun is attributed in use to Brigham Young's Mormon Legion. Among the intriguing features: The cylinder scene was purposely removed (since it carried the legend U.S.M.R. and showed the quite identifiable scene of Rangers fighting Indians), the U.S. on the right side of the barrel lug was marked over (for similar reasons), the serial numbers were obliterated as much as possible, and a safety notch was cut between two of the chambers at the rear of the cylinder. The purposeful removal of identifying markings and the hammer engagement notch on cylinder breech are details which have been associated with some Colt percussion arms, and copies thereof, which can be traced to Brigham Young's Utah.



Smithsonian Institution, does not have a fine Walker, nor do many other major museum collections which include American arms. However, being able to actually handle a museum-owned Walker, and to compare it with a privately owned specimen, may not be possible in many instances. As a result, having access to a privately held, known genuine example, is important. With the increasing emphasis on privacy among many collectors, even knowing who owns specific arms can be a problem. Fortunately, some of the finer gun shows offer opportunities to study a good Walker, but these pistols so seldom appear on the market any more that this avenue, too, presents a challenge. What remains? Sending pictures or getting the gun itself to a specialist who can supply a reliable, conclusive authenticating service.\*

\* Mr. Wilson offers this service on a professional basis, and in conjunction with his continuing research work on Colt firearms of all types. Ed.

*L. Wilson*

HISTORICAL CONSULTANT  
COLT FIREARMS, HARTFORD

AND TO

"IN THE BLOOD"—FILM & VIDEO  
"THE ART OF AMERICAN ARMS"  
—MUSEUM LOAN EXHIBITION  
"SON OF A GUN"—BBC-TV  
"COLT FIREARMS LEGENDS"—SONY

AND

"WINCHESTER FIREARMS LEGENDS"

CHAIRMAN  
ANTIQUE ARMS COMMITTEE  
U.S. HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SAMUEL COLT PRESENTS (1961)  
ARMS COLLECTION OF COLONEL COLT (1963)  
L. D. NIMSCHE, FIREARMS ENGRAVER (1965)  
THE EVOLUTION OF THE COLT (1967)  
THE RAMPANT COLT (1969)  
COLT COMMEMORATIVE FIREARMS (1969 & 1974)  
THEODORE ROOSEVELT — OUTDOORSMAN (1970)  
THE BOOK OF COLT FIREARMS (1971 & 1993)  
THE BOOK OF COLT ENGRAVING (1974)  
THE BOOK OF WINCHESTER ENGRAVING (1975)  
ANTIQUE ARMS ANNUAL (EDITOR)  
COLT PISTOLS (1976) (WITH R. E. HABLE)  
PATERSON COLT PISTOL VARIATIONS (1978) (WITH P. R. PHILLIPS)  
THE COLT HERITAGE (1979)  
THE "RUSSIAN" COLTS (1979)  
COLT ENGRAVING (1980)  
COLT HANDGUNS (JAPANESE, 1980)  
RARE AND HISTORIC FIREARMS (1981)  
WINCHESTER: THE GOLDEN AGE (1983)  
COLT'S DATES OF MANUFACTURE 1837 - 1978 (1984)  
THE DERINGER IN AMERICA (1985 & 1993) (WITH L. D. EBERHART)  
COLT: AN AMERICAN LEGEND (1985)  
RARE FIREARMS — A BENEFIT AUCTION (1985)  
COLT UNA LEGGENDA AMERICANA (1987)  
COLT UNE LEGENDE AMERICAINE (1988)  
WINCHESTER ENGRAVING (1989)  
COLT EINE AMERIKANISCHE LEGENDE (1989)  
WINCHESTER AN AMERICAN LEGEND (1991)  
THE PEACEMAKERS (1992)  
STEEL CANVAS (1994)

COLT WALKER MODEL REVOLVER  
Serial D Company No. 13  
Carried in the Mexican War  
by  
Joseph Leydendecker  
Later a Rancher Settling in Texas

Colt Walker Model Revolver, D Company No. 13 was first discovered by author-dealer Frank Sellers, who acquired the historic artifact from a descendent of Joseph Leydendecker, a veteran who carried the gun in the Mexican War. Following the war, Leydendecker became a rancher in the Laredo area of Texas. Eventually one of Leydendecker's descendants, who had played with "the big gun" as a boy, even loading it up with dust and shaking it to simulate firing.

D Company No. 13 retains its original markings, as follows:

✓ On the left side of the barrel, as well as on the left side of the frame, and on the buttstrap, are stamped:

D COMPANY No 13

- ✓ The o in the number abbreviation is raised, with a line beneath.
- ✓ On the triggerguard strap is stamped, in tiny letters and numbers:  
D COMY No 13
- ✓ The y and the o are raised.

✓ The number 13 is stamped on the left side of the triggerguard strap, located about 3/5 the way from the bottom (visible only when the grips have been removed).

✓ The letter marking P is stamped on the bottom of the triggerguard, at the juncture with the squareback configuration.

✓ Faintly visible on top of the barrel lug:

ADDRESS SAML COLT, NEW-YORK CITY

✓ (the L in SAML would have been raised).

✓ Also faintly visible on the right side of the barrel lug, no doubt with the date partially covered by the wedge screw:

US  
1847

✓ The cylinder number remains partially visible although the scene itself has been worn off with use. The stamps D and 13 are clearly readable.

✓ The number 13 is marked on the bottom of the cylinder pin, in line with the rear end of the wedge slot.


✓ Stamped upside down on the lower spacer face of the inside surface of the grips (visible from front when removed) is the number 13.

✓ The loading lever assembly is a period replacement, likely done by a Texas blacksmith. The loading lever stud a modern replacement; as is the wedge screw. The wedge has been liberally hammered, to tighten the barrel, but appears to be the original.

✓ The patina of D Company No. 13 is a rich dark bronze-like brown, with scattered areas of corrosion.

## CONCLUSION

The writer has examined most of the known Walker Colt revolvers, and regards D Company No. 13 as an example in better overall condition than most of these specimens. The revolver remains in its as-found condition, with substantial wear, including from holstered use.

Careful examination of the barrel address and the US/1847 lug marking reveals that these roll stampings had been purposely removed, likely to avoid reclaiming by the U.S. government. A similar revolver, C Company No. 40, with its cylinder scene removed, as well as other intended obliterations, is pictured and described in the author's "The Walker Colt," *Man at Arms* magazine, September/October 1979, page 31. C Company No. 40 had a Mormon Legion pedigree. 

In evaluating Walker revolvers, the following quotation from the author's *THE BOOK OF COLT FIREARMS* is important, and pertinent:

To the advanced collector of Colt firearms, the Walker Model is the most necessary single item in his arms group. Production was limited, and nearly every specimen was subject to use on the rugged frontiers of Mexico and the American West. Perhaps as many as 30% of these failed in firing due to burst cylinders....It is unusual to find these arms in better than good or quite used condition, sometimes with altered rammer levers, or even a very few converted to the metallic cartridge....At this writing about 175 of the original 1,100 Walkers are known to the gun collecting fraternity....The original Walker is rare and desirable in any condition.

D Company No. 13 is noted specifically on page 80 of *THE WHITNEYVILLE-WALKER PISTOL* book, by Lt. Col. Robert D. Whittington, III, in a tally of known Walker revolvers, from the A, B, C, D, and E companies, and the civilian production.

D Company No. 13 is an extremely interesting Walker, due to the accompanying history of Mexican War and frontier Texas use, by Joseph Leydendecker, the purposeful obliteration of selected markings, and the as-found patina and virtually untouched patina and condition.

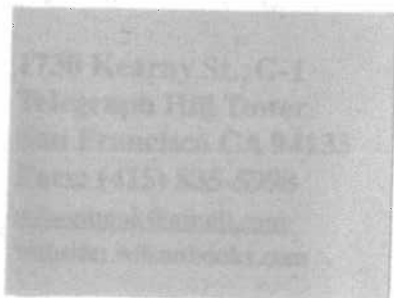
The author looks forward to picturing D Company No. 13 in the forthcoming expanded, two volume edition of *THE BOOK OF COLT FIREARMS*. Walker Colt revolver, D Company No.13, is well worthy of the finest museum or private collection of American firearms.

Note: In addition to the above observations, note the following - ~~The cylinder pin is a replacement, the serial number on the left side of the barrel lug has been refreshed.~~

*R C Wilkin*



# R.L. WILSON



## Historical Consultant

Colt's Manufacturing Co., Hartford  
and to

'The Art of American Arms'

and

'Silk and Steel Women at Arms'

Museum Loan Exhibitions

'Son of a Gun' - BBC-TV

'Colt Firearms Legends' - SONY

'The Guns That Tamed the West' - A & E

'The Story of the Gun' - A & E

'The Gun Industry in America' - BBC-TV/Open University

'Annie Oakley' - Riva Productions for PBS American Experience

Chairman, Antique Arms Committee (1990-2005)

U.S. Society of Arms and Armour/America Remembers

Fine Colts The Dr. Joseph A. Murphy Collection

The Arms of Tiffany (with Janet Zapata) (2014)

The Art of the Gun, Mini-Series, 5 Vols. (with RM Lee)

The Art of the Gun, Maxi-Series, 5 Vols. (with RM Lee)

A Life's Tapestry of a Collector - with George F. Gamble

Great Colt Treasures, with William L. Berg

Colt Dates of Manufacture, Blue Book Publications

Samuel Colt Presents

The Arms Collection of Colonel Colt

L.D. Nimschke Firearms Engraver

The Evolution of the Colt

Colt

Commemorative Firearms

Theodore Roosevelt Outdoorsman

The Book of Colt Firearms

The Book of Winchester Engraving

Antique Arms Annual

Colt Pistols (with R.E. Hable)

Paterson Colt Pistol Variations (with P.R. Phillips)

The Colt Heritage

The "Russian" Colts

Colt Engraving

Rare and Historic Firearms (Christie's)

Winchester 1 of 1000

Colt's Dates of Manufacture

The Deringer in America, 2 Volumes (with L.D. Eberhart)

Colt An American Legend

Rare Firearms - A Benefit Auction (Christie's)

Winchester An American Legend

The Peacemakers

Steel Canvas

Ruger & His Guns

The Colt Engraving Book (two volumes)

The Official Price Guide to Gun Collecting

The World of Beretta

The Paterson Colt Book, Dennis LeVett Colln.

The Guns of Manhattan (2014)

American Arms Collectors The Al Cali Collection

Things I Love The William I. Koch Collection

Theodore Roosevelt Hunter-Conservationist,

Boone & Crockett Club Publications

December 17th 2012

Dear John:

Here are the **Walker C Company No. 26** and the **Samuel Colt to EK Root Presentation Case** letters. And accompanying paperwork. And invoice (latter same as I emailed to you today).

Fortunately I was able to adapt research I had done previously on E.K. Root, and on the presentation Model 1851 Navy with carbine (in deluxe glass-fronted case) the single gift M1851 Navy, and the single gift Third Model Dragoon, to develop a specific letter for your Root case.

But this was still a complicated letter and time-consuming document to do, and is a subject unto itself requiring its own special study.

That letter will be important in opening the door to see the Root family archival and artifact collection. Which I feel is an untapped treasure trove.

Want to ask if you would want to come with me on the proposed visit to the Root Grandmother (with the Grandson), but if so, I can see if that could be arranged. It would mean more to them to actually meet the person who owns this treasure.

It is a pleasure to be working on all this during the quiet time of Christmas - sometimes the slowest time of the year for writing and research. And these are both captivating subjects.

With best regards, thanks, and best Holiday Greetings to You and Yours.  
Sincerely,

rlw

enclosures

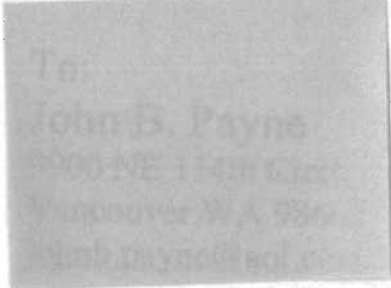
Letter on C Company No. 26 Walker Colt  
with backup papers

Letter on Colt to Root Presentation Rosewood Case  
with backup papers



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(415) 810 2224 (RLWn)

**December 16<sup>th</sup> 2012**



**INVOICE**

Documenting letter on Colt-Root presentation case, as per following:

**The Rare, Historic and Important  
Presentation from Colonel Samuel Colt  
To His Most Significant Colleague and Employee  
Elisha King Root (1808-65)  
The Colt-Root Model 1855 Sidehammer Pistol  
Cased Set  
"Finished in the Best Style"  
The Custom Designed Rosewood Case  
With Special Inside Glass Lid  
In a Rosewood Frame**

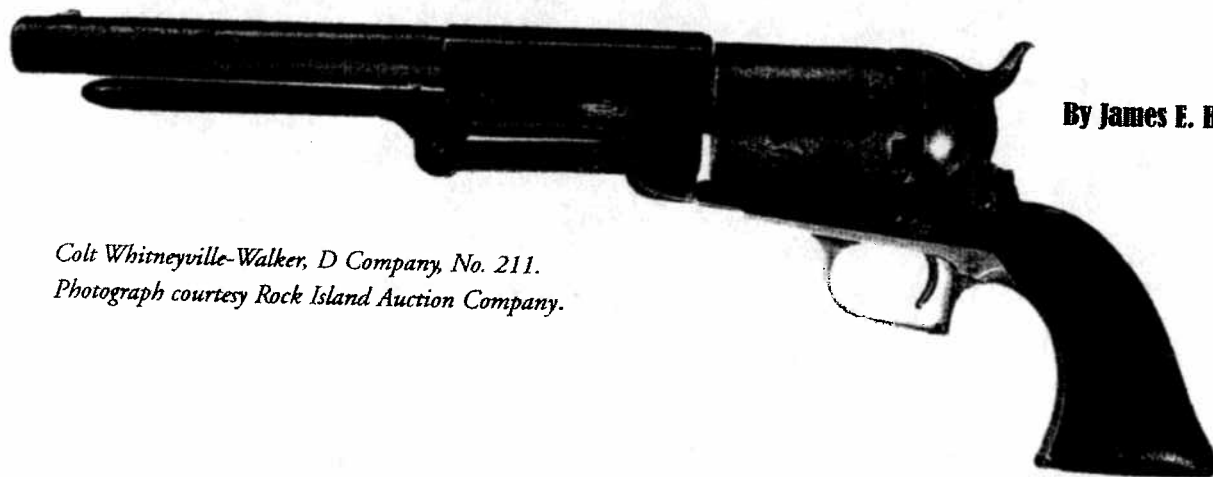
**\*\***

**The Case Lid Inlaid  
with Presentation Inscribed Silver Lid Plaque**

*Presented to  
E. K. Root  
By Col. Samuel Colt  
Prest. Colt's Lt. F. A. Mfg. Co.*

Still being found after 160 years

## Colt Whitneyville-Walker and Whitneyville-Hartford Pistols



By James E. Hargraves

*Colt Whitneyville-Walker, D Company, No. 211.  
Photograph courtesy Rock Island Auction Company.*

The survival rate for these rare percussion pistols is very low, with only a 17.4 percent survival rate for the Whitneyville-Walker, out of a total of 1100 produced in 1847, and only about a 12 percent survival rate for the Whitneyville-Hartford, out of a total of 240 (+) produced in 1847, of known specimens, as of March, 2008.

Up to and including 1973, the Dixie Gun Works catalog of gun parts published a list of 163 surviving Colt Whitneyville-Walker Revolvers or about 14.8 percent known by 1973. For example:

### **Original Dixie Gun Works list of known surviving Whitneyville-Walker revolvers, 1973-1984**

#### *U.S. Government Contract of 1000 guns, Company marked and numbered*

A Company: 1, 11, 12, 14, 19, 21, 24, 25, 31, 41, 45, 46, 47, 50, 53, 62, 64, 74, 80, 89, 90, 96, 111, 113, 119, 137, 150, 156, 162, 165, 177, 181, 182, 194, 196, 204, 209, 212, 220. A total of 39 guns known of 220 produced.

B Company: 10, 23, 24, 25, 26, 41, 42, 43, 47, 49, 52, 57, 58, 64, 78, 102, 123, 128, 130, 137, 160, 162, 163, 170, 175, 188, 204. A total of 27 guns known of 220 produced.

C Company: 10, 13, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 42, 43, 46, 56, 59, 69, 81, 96, 99, 101, 111, 118, 122, 125, 126, 128, 136, 150, 153, 154, 161, 162, 170, 172, 181, 192, 194, 203, 204, 219. A total of 37 guns known of 220 produced.

D Company: 3, 8, 11, 13, 29, 31, 25, 53, 65, 66, 73, 75, 76, 81, 93, 124, 135, 144, 148, 167, 176, 185, 189, 204, 211, 218. A total of 26 guns known of 220 produced.

E Company: 3, 13, 18, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 47, 58, 62, 71, 73, 75, 113, 115. A total of 18 guns known of 120 produced.

#### *Non-Military Contract Production of 100 guns, numbered 1001 to 1100*

Civilian: 1009, 1010, 1012, 1015, 1017, 1020, 1022, 1024, 1050, 1061, 1076, 1078, 1079, 1083, 1085, 1091. A total of 16 guns known of 100 produced.

Lt. Col. Robert D. Whittington, III, in his excellent book, *The Whitneyville-Walker Pistol*, published in 1984, provides a revised list of those Whitneyville-Walker pistols known to have survived and he includes the following additional five examples found by 1984:

#### **Additional Colt Whitneyville-Walker revolvers recorded by Whittington, 1973-1984**

A Company - 126

C Company - 98

E Company - 120

Civilian: 1007 and 1077

This is a revised total of 168 guns found, out of 1100 produced, for a 15.2 percent survival rate.

In the 24-year period from 1984 to 2008, a total of 24 additional Whitneyville-Walker pistols have been discovered and/or publicized, and these are as follows:

**Additional Colt Whitneyville-Walker Revolvers  
recorded by Hargraves, 1984-2008**

A Company - 30, 49, 147, 210  
B Company - 3, 4, 8, 40, 59, 143, 150  
C Company - 2, 12, 49, 164, 215  
D Company - 1, 55, 69, 58  
E Company - 22  
Unknown Company - 121  
Civilian - 1001, 1011

As of 2008, a grand total of 192 guns has been discovered, out of 1100 produced or a 17.4 percent survival rate.

Up to and including 1973, the Dixie Gun Works catalog of gun parts published a list of surviving Colt Whitneyville-Hartford pistols, with a total of 20 discovered out of 240 produced, or an 8.3 percent survival rate.

**Original Dixie Gun Works List of surviving known  
Whitneyville-Hartford revolvers, 1973-2008**

1104, 1118, 1123, 1136, 1146, 1151, 1161, 1195, 1200, 1214, 1233, 1245, 1247, 1277, 1291, 1293, 1318, 1337, 1344, 1437. A total of 20 out of 240 produced.

Some experts believe that these Whitneyville-Hartford pistols were marked from serial number 1101 to 1340, but two of those surviving pistols listed are out of sequence, (1344, 1437) and there may be others out of that serial number sequence, not yet discovered or misidentified.

In the 35-year period from 1973 to 2008, nine additional pistols were discovered of this model, that are known. Their serial numbers are as follows:

**Additional Colt Whitneyville-Hartford revolvers  
recorded by Hargraves, 1973-2008**

1142, 1215, 1216, 1226, 1250, 1270, 1325, 1327, 1331.

This is a grand total of 29 guns discovered, of about 240 produced, or a 12 percent survival rate, as of March, 2008.

The Colt Whitneyville-Walker was manufactured at Eli Whitney's factory in Whitneyville, Connecticut to fulfill a contract with Samuel Colt on Colt's contract with the U.S. Government.

The Colt Whitneyville-Hartford was manufactured by Colt at his new Hartford, Connecticut factory with parts left over from the Whitneyville Walker production. Both models were manufactured in 1847. The Whitneyville-

Hartford was a modified version of the Whitneyville Walker, but was a distinctly different model, even though they looked similar.

In the past 35 years or so, there have been 29 Colt Whitneyville-Walker pistols discovered that were previously unknown to Colt collectors. That is an average of one found about every 15 months. As Lt. Col. Whittington stated in his book in 1984, "The most challenging question still remains unanswered. Where are the surviving Walker pistols that are unknown to current firearms collectors? Some still exist ... For an indefinite period, there will always be one more." He was correct, as 24 additional Colt "Walkers" have been added to his lists in 24 years, since 1984, but the increased total is still only a 17.4 percent survival rate after 160 years.

Two of these pistols found in the second group of 29 are dug-up relics. Serial Number 1007 was badly rusted, but essentially complete, except for the grips and loading lever assembly. Serial Number Unknown Company-121 includes only the frame, cylinder, trigger guard, hammer, cylinder pin and a small portion of the barrel lug.

Also in the group is Serial Number Company D-No. 69 (frame), which has the barrel lug from Company D-No. 138; the cylinder from Company B-No. 162 and the trigger guard from Company B-No. 211. This mixture is believed to have occurred at the U.S. Armory by salvaging parts from other damaged or inoperable or incomplete Walker pistols in inventory. If so, it seems likely that parts from these three other guns exist on other Walker pistols.

Serial Number 1001 is a first prototype.

The original lists of 163 surviving Whitneyville-Walker pistols are found in the Dixie Gun Works-Gun Parts Catalog from 1973 to 2008, and probably before 1973, unchanged in those years, possibly originating in the early 1960s. The author of this original list is unknown.

The additional 29 Colt Whitneyville-Walker Revolvers, and the additional nine Colt Whitneyville Hartford Revolvers were found listed in the following publications in the last 24 years: *The Rampant Colt Magazine*, *The Gun Report Magazine*, *Man at Arms Magazine*, Auction Arms Internet Catalog, *The Colt Whitneyville-Walker Pistol* by Lt. Col. Robert D. Whittington III, *The Book of Colt Firearms* by R. L. Wilson, James D. Julia Inc. Auction Catalogs, Texas Gun Collector's Association- "2003 Parade of Walkers", *Historical Arms Series No. 37*, Museum Restoration Service of Canada.

The current revised list of Colt Whitneyville-Walker surviving pistols as of March 31, 2008 is:

**New revised list of Colt Whitneyville-Walker revolvers  
by Hargraves, as of 2008.**

A Company: 1, 11, 12, 14, 19, 21, 24, 25, 30, 31, 41, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 53, 62, 64, 74, 80, 89, 90, 96, 111, 113, 119, 126, 137, 147, 150, 156, 162, 165, 177, 181, 182, 194, 196, 204, 209, 210, 212, 220. A total of 44 guns known of 220 produced, or a 20 percent survival rate.

B Company: 3, 4, 8, 10, 23, 24, 25, 26, 40, 41, 42, 43, 47, 49, 52, 57, 58, 59, 64, 78, 102, 123, 128, 130, 137, 143, 150, 160, 162, 163, 170, 175, 188, 204. A total of 34 guns known of 220 produced, or a 15.4 percent survival rate.

C Company: 2, 10, 12, 13, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 42, 43, 46, 49, 56, 59, 69, 81, 96, 98, 99, 101, 111, 118, 122, 125, 126, 128, 136, 150, 153, 154, 161, 162, 164, 170, 172, 181, 192, 194, 203, 204, 215, 219. A total of 43 guns known of 220 produced, or a 19.5 percent survival rate.

D Company: 1, 3, 8, 11, 13, 29, 31, 35, 53, 55, 65, 66, 69, 73, 75, 76, 81, 93, 124, 135, 144, 148, 158, 167, 176, 185, 189, 204, 211, 218. A total of 30 guns known of 220 produced, or a 13.6 percent survival rate.

E Company: 3, 13, 18, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 47, 58, 62, 71, 73, 75, 113, 115, 120. A total of 20 guns known of 120 produced, or a 16.6 percent survival rate.

Unknown Company: 121. (From Company A, B, C or D group).

Civilian: 1001, 1007, 1009, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1015, 1017, 1020, 1022, 1024, 1050, 1061, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1083, 1085, 1091. A total of 20 guns known of 100 produced, or a 20 percent survival rate.

A grand total of 192 guns are known of 1100 produced, or a 17.4 percent survival rate. A total of 908 guns are still missing, or unreported, leaving 82.6 percent of total production that has not survived or been discovered as of March 31, 2008.

The current revised list of Colt Whitneyville-Hartford surviving pistols, as of March, 2008 is:

**New revised list of Colt Whitneyville-Hartford  
revolvers by Hargraves, as of 2008.**

Serial Number: 1104, 1118, 1123, 1136, 1142, 1146, 1151, 1161, 1195, 1200, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1226, 1233, 1245, 1247, 1250, 1270, 1277, 1291, 1293, 1318, 1325, 1327, 1331, 1337, 1344, 1437.

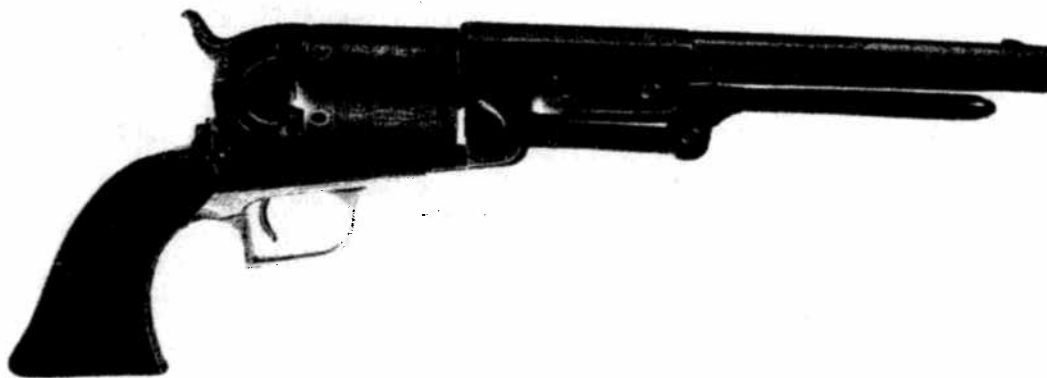
A grand total of 29 guns are known of 240 produced, or a 12 % survival rate. A total of 211 guns still missing, or unreported, leaves 88 % of total production that has not survived or been discovered as of March, 2008.

If anyone has any additional information on either of these models that has survived, but is not on the lists in this article, I would appreciate hearing from you, as I am sure that there are other examples still to be discovered or publicized to the Colt collectors, or that I have missed from the various gun publications, auctions and the internet listings in the past 24 years.

My contact information is James E. Hargraves, 7698 Lakeridge Circle, Elk Grove, California 95624-9650  
email: ieh7698@aol.com Tel: 916-682-9826

It seems likely that there are a few of these rare guns still out there somewhere, especially in the Colt Whitneyville-Walker Company D group and also the Colt Whitneyville-Hartford group, as both groups have a much lower survival rate than the others.

For those in the hunt: good luck, there may be a dirty, rusty old "Walker" just waiting patiently to be found by you, somewhere out there.



## C COMPANY

10, 13, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 42, 43, 46, 56, 59, 69, 81, 96, 98, 99, 101, 111, 118, 122, 125, 126, 128, 136, 150, 153, 154, 161, 162, 170, 172, 181, 192, 194, 203, 204, 219. Total 38.

## D COMPANY

3, 8, 11, 13, 29, 31, 35, 53, 65, 66, 73, 75, 76, 81, 93, 124, 135, 144, 148, 167, 176, 185, 189, 204, 211, 218. Total 26.

## E COMPANY

3, 13, 18, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 47, 58, 62, 71, 73, 75, 113, 115, 120. Total 19. Sub-Total, Companies 150.

## CIVILIAN 1001 to 1100

1007, 1009, 1010, 1012, 1015, 1017, 1020, 1022, 1024, 1050, 1061, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1083, 1085, 1091. Total 18.

## GRAND TOTAL 168

Some have been altered to various configurations and some have mixed serial numbers.

The most challenging question still remains unanswered. Where are the surviving Walker pistols that are unknown to current firearms collectors? Some still exist. C Company No. 204 was discovered in the state of Georgia in 1967 and C Company No. 98 was purchased in Mexico City in 1973. For an indefinite period, there will always be "one more".

Of chagrin to Colt firearms collectors is the sacrifice necessary to obtain an original Colt Walker pistol

(manufactured in 1847) that has already been located — say one on the preceding "found" list. Now, in order for a collector to make the purchase, he needs more than his VISA card, and usually has to either borrow a huge sum or sell one of his homes, the yacht, and one of the Mercedes.

For collectors with modest assets, the Colt Firearms Division manufactured a limited quantity of two Walker pistol variations in 1981 and 1982. Particulars on these pistols follow:

HERITAGE WALKER <sup>136</sup>			
SERIAL RANGE	QUANTITY	COMPLETED	
C COMPANY	1853	June 1981	
No. 1 to No. 1847, plus 6 excess pistols			
1847 WALKER			
32256 to 32500	245	September 1981	
1200 to 4120	2921	April 1982	

By the close of 1983, most of the above pistols had disappeared from dealer inventories, and the value of the pistols had commenced to increase. Buy one before you have to sell your wife's automobile in order to make the purchase!

## BEWARE OF COUNTERFEITS AND PATENT INFRINGEMENTS

*"One Hundred and Ninety Eight Colt's revolving pistols have been ordered sent to you from the New York Depot. You will hold these for the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen"*<sup>131</sup>

The Regiment of Mounted Riflemen departed Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in May of 1849 for Oregon. There the riflemen deserted in droves (taking their Colt pistols) to go to California and join in the search for gold. In 1851, a mere skeleton of the regiment returned to Jefferson Barracks.<sup>132</sup>

The letter that reveals the destination of the 1000 Dragon pistols purchased under the third contract of 8 January 1849 was sent from Brevet Brigadier General Talcott to Major Thornton on 11 June 1849. Talcott stated:

*"Sir, A requisition has been received for 122 Colt's pistols, with implements and equipments complete for the use of Companies D and E, Second Regiment of Dragoons, to be delivered at St. Louis by the 20th of August next. As this requisition can only be complied with in case of a delivery of the number required, by Mr. Colt, on the Order for 1000 pistols for this Regt. given him in January last, you will please advise me of the probability of receiving them in time to reach St. Louis by the date specified. In order to do this they should be at your Post by the 1st of August"*<sup>133</sup>

Brigadier General William S. Harney was the Colonel of the Second Regiment of Dragoons and he had

specifically requested that Colt's pistols be issued to his regiment. The 1000 pistols ordered under the third contract for the Second Regiment of Dragoons were accepted at the New York Depot on the following dates:

2 October	1849	200
18 November	1849	300
27 December	1849	300
26 January	1850	200
Total		1000 <sup>134</sup>

Returning to the Walker pistols and the twentieth century, the question at this point is how many of the pistols have survived and are known to be in public or private collections? Any list on the surviving pistols can only be controversial. The following one is no exception, and comments from readers to improve the list will be very much appreciated.<sup>135</sup>

#### A COMPANY

1, 11, 12, 14, 19, 21, 24, 25, 31, 41, 45, 46, 47, 50, 53, 62, 64, 74, 80, 89, 90, 96, 111, 113, 119, 126, 137, 150, 156, 162, 165, 177, 181, 182, 194, 196, 204, 209, 212, 220. Total 40.

#### B COMPANY

10, 23, 24, 25, 26, 41, 42, 43, 47, 49, 52, 57, 58, 64, 78, 102, 123, 128, 130, 137, 160, 162, 163, 170, 175, 188, 204. Total 27.



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The COLT  
WHITNEYVILLE-WALKER  
PISTOL



By  
LT. COL. ROBERT D. WHITTINGTON, III

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**Most Desirable Recipients of the  
Walker Colt Revolvers.**

**\*\***

**The Most Sensational and  
Innovative Firearm  
of  
The Mexican War  
And  
with Its Own Unique History**

**\*\***

**Exceptional Condition,  
Including Cylinder Roll Scene,  
The Cylinder Remaining "In the  
White"**

**As Originally Manufactured,  
And Thus One of the Few Walkers  
Known Which Maintains the  
Desirable  
"In the White" Cylinder Condition.  
All Major Parts Original and  
Matching  
with Extra Feature of Fine Quality**

**Rear Sight on the Barrel Breech,  
and Matching Refinement to the  
Front Sight Blade –  
for Improved Accuracy**

**\*\***

**Details of Markings and Lack of  
“US/1847”**

**Indicating that This Revolver  
Had Been Liberated from  
The U.S. Mounted Riflemen Service  
and  
Passing Into Private Civilian Hands.  
At Least Two Other Walkers with  
Similar “Liberated” Features  
Are Known to the Author**

**\*\***

**C Company No. 26 Listed in the  
W.F.S. Quick  
“1955 Revision of Colt-Walkers  
Pistol Owners” As:  
“Owned by F.P. Mills, Old Deerfield,  
Mass. . . 1955”**

**\*\***

**Considering All Details,  
Serial Number C Company 26  
One of the Finest and Most Historic  
of Known Walker Colt Revolvers**

**\*\***

**THE WALKER MODEL  
An Icon in the History of Colt Firearms  
and  
Featured in Numerous Books and Articles**

In more than sixty years as a collector of firearms, the author has had the opportunity to study more than half of the known examples of the Holy Grail of Colt collecting: The Walker Colt revolver. Only approximately 200 authentic Colts of this model are presently known to students and collectors - from the original production estimated at 1,100.

Many of the best examples are displayed in museums, such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art (from the John E. Parsons Collection, in the Robert M. Lee Gallery of American Arms), the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History (Washington, D.C.), The Colt Collection of Firearms at the Raymond Baldwin Museum of Connecticut History (Hartford), the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum

of Art (Colonel and Mrs. Samuel Colt Collection, also in Hartford), The P.R. Phillips Collection at the Woolaroc Museum (Bartlesville, Oklahoma), the Cody Firearms Museum of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (Cody, Wyoming), the Metzger Collection at Texas A & M University (College Station, Texas), the Texas Ranger Museum and Hall of Fame (Waco), the National Rifle Association's National Firearms Museum (Fairfax, Virginia), and the Greg Martin Colt Gallery of the Autry National Center of the American West (Los Angeles).

Among the private collections featuring Walker Colt revolvers, the most significant is that of Robert M. Lee, featured in *Magnificent Colts Selections from the Robert M. Lee Collection*, published in 2011, honoring the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the Colt company (1836). The Lee Collection features the only known cased Walker Colt (serial no. 1022) and one of the finest examples of the military issue Walker, serial no. D Company 204. An enormous advantage of the *Magnificent Colts* book is that some 80% of the firearms featured are in actual size.

Therefore, in authenticating a Walker Colt, one could do no better than to have the book available, open to Chapter III, which features the Walker and Dragoon models of Colt percussion revolvers. There in pages of detail, exquisitely presented in the ultimate of digital photography, and the highest degree of

quality in the printing arts - are these two exquisite Walkers, as if they are laying before the reader.

This unprecedented book offers a unique opportunity to study Colt firearms, in all their artistry, mechanical perfection, and fascinating history - with cases and accessories, and complemented by period photographs, advertising, miscellaneous documents, and an array of special features never before presented to historians, museum curators, collectors, dealers and the general public.

*Magnificent Colts* is therefore relevant to the subject of the present documenting letter - **Colt Walker Model Serial B Company No. 25.**

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTIONS and MARKINGS of the MILITARY WALKER COLT REVOLVER, SERIAL C Company No. 26**

### **Serial No. C Company No. 26**

The number **26** appears on the face of the frame, between the two pins which engage the lower section of the barrel lug.

The number **26** also appears as follows:

- on the rear surface of the barrel lug

- the bottom of the cylinder pin

- right side of the grip strap, beneath the grip

Marked on the buttstrap:

**C COMPANY No. 26**

The tiny number 26 is marked on the cylinder, within cartouche which is part of the cylinder roll scene.

Note Rear Sight mounted on top of barrel breech. For a similar refinement of a rear sight at the barrel breech, see William B. Edwards, *The Story of Colt's Revolver*, page 221, where D Company No 93 is pictured.

.44 Caliber cap and ball (percussion)

6-shot Cylinder with roll engraved Comanche Indians

and Texas Ranger decorative scene

9-inch Barrel, with Loading Lever

Carefully modified German silver front sight, to make the blade more refined, and to better serve with a more accurate front sight picture.

The added presence of the rear sight professionally added on the top of the barrel breech would also contribute to greater accuracy.

Weight: 4 lbs. 9 oz.

Top of barrel marked:

**ADDRESS, SAM<sup>L</sup> COLT, NEW-YORK CITY**

**Finish:** the cylinder in-the-white as per issue, blue on the frame, barrel and barrel lug. The varnish on the

grips was added during the revolver's 19<sup>th</sup> century service.

Color case-hardening remains present on the loading lever and hammer.

The serial number markings normally on the left side of the barrel, left side of the frame, and on the triggerguard strap, were carefully and purposely removed after liberation from the U.S. Mounted Rifleman and Texas Mounted troops possession. Also carefully and purposely removed was the **US/1847** stamping on the right side of the barrel lug. The **COLT/USMR** marking within the cylinder roll scene remains, since this was also a standard marking on production, non-military issue, Walker and Dragoon revolvers. The inspection markings of **WAT** and **NWP** from the grips were also carefully removed, as they too were part of the identification of this revolver as a U.S. issue service weapon. A few screws were replacements, and the wedge appears to be a replacement.

It has been suggested that the finish on **C Company No. 26** was by the Philadelphia gunsmith, Sedgley. The writer does not accept this suggestion for various reasons. Among these is the fact that collectors and dealers were unaware that the cylinders were finished in 1847 at the factory "in the white." Therefore, Sedgley would have refinished the cylinder as well as the rest of the revolver. Furthermore, he would have most likely attempted to restore the serial



number markings, and the US/1847 marking, rather than leaving them as is.

## **TWO COMPARABLE WALKER COLT REVOLVERS, WHICH HAD ALSO BEEN LIBERATED FROM FEDERAL SERVICE**

Two similar Walker Colts which were documented by the author approximately 20 years ago are serial C Company No. 40 and Serial D Company No. 13. The first of these rare revolvers was discovered in Utah, and evidence of its having been liberated from U.S. Ordnance service use are as follows, quoting from page 31 of *Man at Arms* magazine, September/October 1979, in the writer's article, "The Walker Colt" (pages 29-37):

**Two views of a quite unusual, recently discovered Walker Colt revolver, C Co., No. 40. Discovered by writer-dealer-collector John R. Hansen, in Utah, the gun is attributed in use to Brigham Young's Mormon Legion. Among the intriguing features: The cylinder scene was purposely removed (since it carried the legend U.S.M.R. and showed the quite identifiable scene of Rangers fighting Indians), the U.S. on the right side of the barrel lug was marked over (for similar reasons), the serial numbers were obliterated as much as possible, and a safety notch was cut between two of the**

**chambers at the rear of the cylinder. The purposeful removal of identifying markings, and the hammer engagement notch on cylinder breech are details which have been associated with some Colt percussion arms, and copies thereof, which can be traced to Brigham Young's Utah.**

The other liberated Walker Colt noted above is Serial D Company No. 13. Its special features indicative of being liberated include the following (quoting from a letter written on this pistol, by the author, in the 1990s):

**The writer has examined most of the known Walker Colt revolvers, and regards D Company No. 13 as an example in better overall condition than most of these specimens. The revolver remains in its as-found condition, with substantial wear, including from holstered use.**

**Careful examination of the barrel address and the US/1847 lug marking reveals that these roll stampings had been purposely removed, likely to avoid reclaiming by the U.S. government.**

Thus in the case of Serial C Company No. 40, the adjustments by or for the perpetrator went even further than on C Company No. 26, having carefully

removed the entire cylinder roll scene, besides attempting to obliterate the serial markings.

## **FURTHER SOURCES on the WALKER COLT, SURVIVAL RATES and SERIAL NUMBER SHIPMENT DATA**

With the intense interest amongst collectors, dealers and historians on the Colt Walker series of revolvers, W. F. S. Quick of Tacoma, Washington, began a tabulation of these revolvers. A copy of his 1955 copyrighted listing is enclosed. **Serial C Company No. 26** is on page two, marked with a red arrow.

The collector owner at the time was Fred P. Mills, of Old Deerfield, Massachusetts. Mr. Mills is well known in the history of arms collecting for his having discovered Serial No. 1 Single Action Army Colt. The pedigree since then includes its most recent owner, Bobby Smith, of Nashville, Tennessee. It was at the Rock Island Auction company sale of December 2<sup>nd</sup> 2012, that the revolver changed hands most recently.

Enclosed is a copy of the detailed description of **C Company No. 26**, from the Rock Island Auctions catalogue, volume II, Lot 1255.

Also enclosed with the present documenting letter is a copy of the article from *The Rampant Colt* magazine, issue of Winter 2008 (pages 46-49), entitled "Colt Whitneyville-Walker and Whitneyville-Hartford Pistols," by James E. Hargraves. Each citation in that article to **Serial C Company No. 26** is marked with a red arrow.

Yet another source presented is Lt. Col. Robert D. Whittington, III, *The Colt Whitneyville-Walker Pistol*, where C Company and other company and civilian revolvers, are detailed (see Xerox copy enclosed). Further information from the Whittington source is noted in the next section of the present letter.

### **SHIPPING INFORMATION on the WALKER COLTS OF C Company, CAPTAIN WALKER'S OWN UNIT**

The sequence of the C Company revolvers once they left the Whitney Armory, Whitneyville, Connecticut is the following, according to Lt. Col. Robert D. Whittington III (*The Colt Whitneyville-Walker Pistol*, page 37):

**On 10 June 1847, the 220 C Company pistols, intended for Captain Samuel H. Walker, packed 20 each in eleven packing boxes, were delivered to the New York Ordnance Depot. . . .**

Then Whittington traces the next shipment (p. 37):

**On 8 July Captain William Maynadier of the Washington Ordnance Office wrote Walker that the first 220 pistols had been forwarded to Lieutenant Josiah Gorgas, Ordnance Corps, Officer In Charge of the Vera Cruz Ordnance Depot, with instructions to issue *as many as required* to arm Walker's company . . . .**

Further according to Whittington, the 220 C Company Walker Colt pistols were in the Vera Cruz Ordnance Depot (unissued) as of September 30, 1847.

Whittington then reports (page 50), the following:

**On 15 October only the C Company pistols had arrived at Vera Cruz. On that**

day, Gorgas issued the 11 packing boxes to the First Regiment, Texas Mounted Volunteers....

On 19 October 1847, Colonel John Coffee Hays, of Tennessee, a Texas immigrant and Commander of the First Regiment, Texas Mounted Volunteers, signed for 214 Walker pistols marked C Company. Following is a list of what he signed for and a copy of the original receipt for ordnance and ordnance stores is in the appendices herein: . . . .

[page 52]

214 Pistols, Colt's Patent  
218 Powder Flasks  
220 Combination Tools  
16 Rings for Spring Vices  
22 Sets of Extra Springs  
8 Sets of Lock Work  
8 Sets of Cones (6 each)  
8 Sets of Screws  
22 Bullet Moulds casting one  
Ball  
4 Bullet Moulds casting Six  
Balls  
50,000 Percussion Caps      Small  
Cones  
1,250 lbs Bar Lead

## **200 lbs Rifle Powder**

By October 26, 1847, the 214 C Company Walker Colts had been issued to the First Regiment, Texas Mounted Volunteers. This was noted on page 53 of Whittington's Walker book, and includes the further reference:

**Stolen [Walker Colt revolvers]  
6 marked C Company**

Further identifying the progress of the C Company Walker Colts, Whittington notes (pp. 57-58):

**Duty for the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen for the remainder of the war was characterized by police duty, hard riding after guerillas, and occasional encounters. Notable among the latter were the fights at Matamoros, 23 November 47; Galaxra, 24 November 47; and Santa Fe, 4 January 1848. The regiment left Vera Cruz on the transport *Tyrone* on 7 July 1848, reaching New Orleans on 17 July. All weapons belonging to the regiment, including the Walker pistols issued to Company C, were retained as the unit was part of the**



**Regular Army. At New Orleans, the regiment boarded the transport, *Aleck Scott*, arriving at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, on 24 July 1848 . . . . Later, we will see what variety of Colt pistols they received prior to their departure for duty in Oregon.**

### **MILITARY WALKER COLT REVOLVER, SERIAL No C Company No. 26**

The Colt Walker was one of those rare firearms which achieved instant status in America's industrial, cultural and frontier history. This exalted position was partly due to Samuel Colt himself, and his aptitude at marketing and self-promotion. But there were other factors as well, not the least of which was the revolutionary power and performance of the 4 lb 9 oz. .44 caliber hand cannon, and proof of its prowess in the hands of the United States Mounted Rifleman, on the front in the Mexican War.

To quote Colt's collaborator on its design, Captain Samuel Hamilton Walker, in a letter to the gunmaker dated February 6, 1847: "I flatter myself that the best argument I can use [on behalf of Colt's revolvers] will be in the field."

On receipt of his set of the new pistols, Walker wrote up his own views on the gun which Colt himself

would give the appellation: "The Walker Pistol" (see *Samuel Colt's Own Record*, by John E. Parsons).

Samuel Colt's own views of the new arm was voiced in a letter of June 1847, to Brigadier General David E. Twiggs (a draft with Colt's usual erratic spellings, punctuations and grammar):

**Permit me to present you with a pare of my newly improved Pt' Repeating pistols in token of my respect & remembrance of your kind treatment to me in florida in 1837 when yourself [and] Col Harney exercised your valuable influance in causing the first introduction of my arms into the U.S. servace Since that time I have been constantly experrimenting & have succeded I think at last in producing an arm for mounted men that will meet with general favour in the service - I trust you will make such experiments as will satisfy you of the improvements I have made & give the arm such further consideration & support its introduction into the service as your conviction of its merits & distinguished military position will admit.**

But a month later, in early July, Colt wrote to U.S. Secretary of War William L. Marcy that he had made the new pistols "in every respect supereor to the moddle or any other arm ever built of my construction . . ."

Furthermore, the inventor's widow, Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt, made her own contributions to the legend of her husband and his career, by publishing, in 1866, the memorial book, *Armsmear*. In that rather thick and detailed tome, the researcher and author of the firearms section, Professor J.D. Butler of the University of Wisconsin, wrote affectionately of this iconic handgun.

The Walker Pistol was featured in the book's text, as well as by an engraved illustration following page 192. That image was likely drawn by the artist based on Walker Colt Civilian variation serial no. 1020, from Samuel Colt's own collection. Such treasures of Colonel and Mrs. Colt were then housed in Colt's mansion, Armsmear. The caption in *Armsmear* read simply:

### **WALKER PISTOL.**

The history of Colonel Colt's own Walker Pistol – a gift from Captain Samuel Walker - has been presented in several texts, including the author's first book, *Samuel Colt Presents A Loan Exhibition of Presentation Percussion Colt Firearms* (page 30) and *The Arms Collection of Colonel Colt* (page 16).

**WALKER COLT C Company No. 26 LISTED  
IN LT. COL. ROBERT D. WHITTINGTON,  
III, *The Colt Whitneyville-Walker Pistol***

Inspired by a Walker serial number inventory listing by collector and Walker enthusiast W.F.S. Quick, Colonel Whittington's *The Colt Whitneyville-Walker Pistol* lists known serial numbers of the Walker. These cover both the Military numbers for companies A, B, C, D and E, as well as Civilian variation numbers from 1001 to 1100.

Photocopies of the subject pages (79-80) from the Whittington title are enclosed. **C Company No. 26** appears on page 79, as marked with a red arrow.

## CONCLUSION

The opportunity to acquire an authentic Walker Colt revolver, whether the Military or the Civilian variation, does not come often to collectors. Reliance on the source of that revolver, vouching for its authenticity, is extremely important.

**Walker Colt Military Model Serial C Company No. 26** is an authentic example, with the Texas Rangers and Comanche Indian cylinder roll scene motif and the markings either visible, or determinable with magnification, or the naked eye.

The author has long felt that in the early Paterson and Walker Colt firearms, those that show patina, and

wear, and the exigencies of frontier use, have the most history to tell – of service in the Mexican War or on the Frontier, particularly in Texas and often in the California Gold Rush as well.

It was Captain Jack Hays (1817-83), such an important friend and ally of Colonel Colt, who served heroically in pioneer Texas and then in the Mexican War – armed with a pair of Holster Patersons and then with a pair of Walker Colts – who later moved to California, becoming the Sheriff of San Francisco. It was men like Captain Hays and Captain Samuel H. Walker himself (1817-47), to whom Samuel Colt was indebted for the supreme success story of the Walker pistols.

For more than 50 years the author has taken pleasure in having the opportunity to authenticate and document prized examples of Colt arms, including several specimens of the near legendary Walker Colt. It is a pleasure to do so with **Walker Colt Military Model Serial C Company No. 26**, with a unique history and in a condition ranking this revolver within the top 15 examples known.



## **Addendum**

### **Literature on the Walker Colt Revolver – A Sampler – and Commentary on Replica Walker Revolvers**

The subject of the Walker Colt has fascinated arms enthusiasts since the first revolvers were manufactured in 1847. A partial listing of the hundreds (if not more) of such publications relating to the Walker is near the end of the present documenting letter.

To date no comprehensive technical book has been devoted to the Walker Colt Model *per se* – but such a title is very much in need. The considerable number of replica Walker Models that have appeared on the market, particularly since the early 1970s, has hastened the temptation for certain individuals to alter these and patina them into an alleged antiquity. The first accurately rendered Walker replicas on the market in any quantity were those issued by the Colt Company itself, known as the 2nd Generation revolvers.

### **Literature**

Berkeley R. Lewis, "Sam Colt's Repeating Pistol," *The American Rifleman*, May and June 1947.

Berkeley R. Lewis, *Small Arms and Ammunition in the United States Service*, *Smithsonian Miscellaneous*

*Collections*, published by the Smithsonian Institution,  
August 14, 1956.

James E. Serven, *Colt Dragoon Pistols*.

-----, *Colt Percussion Pistols*.

-----, *Colt Firearms from 1836*, various  
editions.

W.F.S. Quick's "Annual [1953] Revision of Colt-Walkers  
Pistol Owners," lists B Company No. 25 as then known to  
collectors.

John E. Parsons, *Samuel Colt's Own Record Samuel Colt's  
Own Record of Transactions with Captain Walker and Eli  
Whitney, Jr. in 1847*.

Lt. Col. Robert D. Whittington, III. *The Colt Whitneyville-  
Walker*

*Pistol*, which lists serial B Company No. 25 on page  
79 (as  
noted above).

R.L. Wilson, ed., *The Antique Arms Annual*, 1971.

*The Book of Colt Firearms*, various editions

*The Colt Heritage*

*The Paterson Colt Book* (special section on the  
Walkers, pages 286-297; the Aaron Pulhamus  
Walker, serial C Co. 13, is detailed on pages  
294-295)

*Colt An American Legend*

"R. L. Wilson on Colt: The Walker Colt." *Man at  
Arms* September/October, 1979: 29-37.