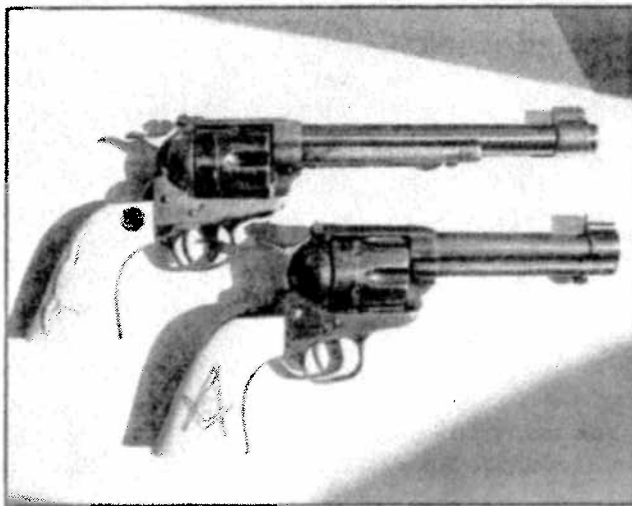


management put the time-honored single-action back into production. The present modern production Colt single-action is the same basic design as the early prewar model that was made from 1873 until World War II. It should have been improved and modernized, and the company should have used their old flat-top target design with further improvements and coil springs wherever possible.

MARCH

THE RETURN OF THE SINGLE-ACTION, PART THREE

At one time, Colt used to advertise they would furnish single-actions with barrels longer than standard at a cost of one dollar per inch over the 7½-inch barrel. Legend has it that Ned Buntline, a dime novelist of the 1870s and '80s, ordered four of them with very long barrels and gave them to such celebrities as Earp, Masterson, Tilghman, and Cody. Although this legend is unfounded, Colt collectors have named these long-barreled models the Buntline Specials. Some were fitted with excellent tang carbine rear sights, and they were very accurate for long-range gunfighting. Any fast gun man has only to try one for quick draw work to decide how hopeless such a ten or twelve-inch barrel is for really fast work. The gun must be hung very low where it is in the way both riding or walking, or else one would have to turn



Keith's collection of single-action revolvers was very extensive. He kept on shooting and hunting with them regardless of the popularity of the automatic pistol.

a back somersault to get it clear of the b was, however, an excellent arm in the game shooting or a longer-range gunfight with both hands, the long-barreled Colt a very accurate long-range sixgun.

Over the years, the movie industry has done much to keep the old gun alive, especially among the younger generations—more with them than any other group of shooters or collectors. The present showing of a great many twenty-plus-year-old films combined with modern Westerns on television, has created an even greater demand for Colt and other makes of single-action sixguns. The fact that the old gun balances and points better for fast hip shooting than any other design for the first shot adds to the demand. Combine this with the proven fact that the old single-action grip absorbs recoil with the least punishment to the hand when using heavy loads and you have another argument in favor of the single-action. It is also one of the safest guns made for the horseman.

Great Western guns have been chambered for the .44 Magnum, I understand. I consider both the Colt and the Great Western frames and cylinders too small for safety with this great cartridge. To properly and safely handle the .44 Magnum cartridge—which is fast becoming the most popular of all sixgun calibers among cowpunchers, mountain men, and guides—the frame of the Colt (and the old Great Western) single-action will have to be redesigned and made larger and longer. The cylinder will also have to be increased in both length and diameter. A redesign of the old Colt 1880-vintage flat-top target along the lines of the guns remodeled by Harold Croft and I in the twenties would be just the thing. It should be fitted with the best fully-adjustable target sights. The flat-top frame should also be extended back over the nose of the hammer.

The single-action has been with us and served us well for over a century. It will no doubt be with us for a great many more years to come. Treat it as a gun and a tool, not a plaything—and it will never let you down.

APRIL

SIXGUN SAFETY

For years, in my cowpunching and packing days, I wore a Colt Single Action the same as my pants. First I carried a .32-20, then a .38-40, and after finding them wanting in power, I went to

Elmer Keith
Gun Collection

April 1972

Handguns

Page 15 of 17

	Make	Calibre	Serial #	Value
124 ₁	P Smith & Wesson 4" BL	41 mag	S 237001	1000
125 ₂	P Smith & Wesson 4" BL	41 mag	S 237002	
First pair of 41 mag made. 3/8" Trigger, Hammer spur shortened Gold Front sight EK. engraved on side plates Killed 5 Caribou in Arctic by EK Circassian stocks				
P 126	Ruger 7 1/4 Dragons * SA	44 mag	15527	300
P 127	Ruger 7 1/4 Dragons xx SA	44 mag	1806	2000
x second pilot model xx Presented to EK by Bill Ruger engraved, & line enlaid w/ gold and platinum. Circassian				
P 128	Colt 1911	45 auto	2031NM	200
National Match Circassian walnut				
P 129	Smith & Wesson 7 1/4 Triple Lock	44 sp	4325	300
P 130	Colt S.A. Army 4 3/4 SA.	45 Colt	81965	500
Keith L.R. Front Sight Bisley Hammer 1 piece ivory stock EMK on left, Masonic on Right Swivel Stand for Jess Thompson's quick draw rig Carried into gold rush 1898 by John Newman used to kill cripples when guiding Killed one man in Alaska				
P 131	Smith & Wesson Model #39	9mm	1153	100
double action automatic presented to EK by S&W.				
P 132	Smith & Wesson 4" 1950 Target		S134169	250
narrowed Trigger EK engraved side plate rosewood stocks gift from Carl Hellstrom - President S&W.				
P 133	Smith & Wesson 4" 1950 Target	44 sp.	79233	500
fully engraved by Don Gowan EK on side plate, Grips Ivory Oxhead on right grip Gold Masonic on left stock Red Band front sight				