

R.L. WILSON

1730 Kearny St., G-1
Telegraph Hill Tower
San Francisco CA 94133
Mobile: (415) 810-2224
wilsonbook@gmail.com
website: wilsonbooks.com

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

Feby 27.2015

James Julia
Fairfield ME 04937

Dear Jim:

Enclosed documenting letter on your March 15, 2015
sale Lot 1289, Colt Baby Dragoon No 13538/.

Printing from the disk will provide various backup/
Good luck with this outstanding Colt, Sincerely,



Nancy Noonan

From: Robert Wilson <wilsonbook@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2015 2:01 AM
To: Nancy Noonan; Robert Swartz
Subject: Re: Documenting Letter on Serial #13538 Baby Dragoon, Lot 1259 of March 15.2015 sale

PS

Nancy-Jim -

Was not able to download the large file sent the other day -
Please try again or with some other format.

Thanks,

Larry

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 27, 2015, at 10:35 PM, "R. L. Wilson" <wilsonbook@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Jim, Nancy and Bob Swartz:

Just to let you know that the documenting letter on the above-noted Baby Dragoon is going out via Priority Mail US mail from here in SFO the 28th February.

This is completed. All you will need to do is print out the backup from the disk - where I scanned various publications relevant to this rare Colt cased set.

Good luck,
Best regards,
Larry Wilson

--

R.L. Wilson
1730 Kearny St., G-1
San Francisco CA 94133
wilsonbooks.com website

? where
go whom will
it sent?

Nancy Noonan

From: R. L. Wilson <wilsonbook@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 28, 2015 1:36 AM
To: Nancy Noonan; Robert Swartz
Subject: Documenting Letter on Serial #13538 Baby Dragoon, Lot 1259 of March 15.2015 sale

Hello Jim, Nancy and Bob Swartz:

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Good luck,
Best regards,
Larry Wilson

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Theodore Roosevelt Hunter-Conservationist,
Boone & Crockett Club Publications

COLONEL COLT EXHIBITION PISTOL MADE for the CRYSTAL PALACE, LONDON -

"The Great Exhibition of 1851."

The Model of 1848

aka The Baby Dragoon

Serial No. 13538/.

Presentation and Exhibition Grade

Percussion Colt Revolver,

Decorated Specifically

On Order of the Inventor

For Display at the First World's Fair,

**The Great Exhibition of 1851,
Conceived by H.R.H. Prince Albert,
Consort to Queen Victoria,
Who Was Recipient of a Cased Set of
Colt Model 1848 Second Model Dragoon
and
Model 1851 Squareback Navy Revolvers,
While a Model of 1848 Baby Dragoon Cased Set
Was Presented by Colonel Colt to Their Son,
H.R.H. Prince Edward,
Prince of Wales,
Later King Edward VIIth.
The Serial Number on Prince Edward's
Revolver, No. 12371,
From the Same Group of Baby Dragoons
From Which Serial No. 13538/. Was Embellished.
The Style of Engraving Identified
in the Author's
The Book of Colt Engraving (1974) As:
Exhibition Style.
Since Identified as by Joseph Delaney.**

**Serial No. 13538/. Representative
of Samuel Colt's Marketing Genius,
As Documented in
Samuel Colt Presents (1961),
In Publication of the Text of a
Letter from Samuel Colt to His Brother Elisha,
Ordering Him to Prepare a Series of
Decorated Revolvers**

**“Got up for exhibition purposes,”
and Exhibited in Special Cases Made
on Colt’s Order in Vienna, Austria.
These Cases Were Identified by the Inventor
In That Historic Letter, Dated 18 July 1849,
Vienna,
in Which The Inventor Spelled Out His
Well-Thought-Out Plan
To “have made show Pistols, put up in
The most elegant stile possible.”
These Rare Cases Have Become Known
To Collectors by the Name Used by Sam Colt:
“Buhl”**

**The Exhibition Grade Colt Revolvers
Have a Distinguished History,
and Only a Handful of These
Have Been Located to Date.
The Only Specimens Known to the Author
Are the Following Serial Numbers:
12329, 12330, 12322, 12570 and 13538/.,
the Latter Subject of the Present
Documenting Letter.**

**The Cases Identified
with These Early Arms Include
the Following Significant Pieces:
The Prince Albert Presentation Set of
1851 Navy & Second Model Dragoon,
The Edward, Prince of Wales Baby Dragoon**

**Plus the Most Historic of All
Samuel Colt Presentations:
To His Attorney,
Edward N. Dickerson
A Set of Model 1851 Navy and Model 1849 Pocket
Revolvers In a Deluxe Buhl Casing,
Serial Nos. 3769/. and 19395/.
The Buhl Style Casings Are Even More Rare Than
The Revolvers Which Were Cased In Them**

**Engraver of Serial No. 13538/.,
Joseph Delany,
Was Employed at the Colt Factory
From c. 1849 to 1851,
And Was Employed at Colt's
London Factory from 1852 to c. 1858.
Among Historic Colt Revolvers
Decorated by This Talented Craftsman Are:
Presentation Model 1851 Navy from Samuel Colt
To President Franklin Pierce
and
Presentation Model 1851 Navy from Samuel Colt
To Famed Texas Ranger Ben McCulloch**

**Yet Another Factor of Importance with
Serial No. 13538/. Baby Dragoon
Is the Historic Print Published in
1853, Documenting Pistols
Exhibited by Samuel Colt
at the Dublin Irish Industrial Exhibition,**

England, in 1853.
That Print Was First Published by
The Author in 1974, in
The Book of Colt Engraving.
It Was Later Published in
The Two-Volume Set,
Magnificent Colts
Selections from the Robert M. Lee Collection.
The Caption to the Latter Volume Crediting:
“Illustration from *The Art Journal*,
The Illustrated Catalogue of the
Dublin Exhibition.”
That Revolver Bearing Serial No. 12329/.

**

Serial No. 13538/. Is Quite Close to
Serial No. 12329/., From the Robert M. Lee
Collection,
and Detailed on Pages 158-161 of
Magnificent Colts.
To Quote from That Volume:
“Serial no. 12329/. was part of a group
of only 50 richly engraved Holster,
Navy and Pocket Model revolvers,
Embellished specifically for exhibition purposes.
Three of the series ended up as presentations
To H.R.H. Prince Albert . . . and Edward,
Prince of Wales.”

**

Yet Another Crucial Contemporary Print
Relevant to No. 13538/. Is that on Page 176

**of *Magnificent Colts*, which
Further Identifies the Buhl Style Casing,
Since the Artist's Engraving Identifies
The Buhl Casing As Used in Samuel Colt's
Exhibition of Arms at the
New York Crystal Palace of 1853.
Clearly Visible Is the Decoration
of the Buhl Boxes, Proving That These
Special Casings were
Still in Samuel Colt's Repertoire
At That Time.**

**A Further Factor of Considerable Significance
to the Serial No. 13538/. Baby Dragoon is
The Historic List of Presentations of Colt Pistols
Planned and Partially Carried Out by
Colonel Colt, as the Display of Colt's Revolvers
Was Nearing Completion at the
Great Exhibition of 1851.**

**The Writer Is of the Opinion
That No. 13538/. May Have Been
Presented to One of the Carefully
Selected Dignitaries on Samuel Colt's
Historic List of Presentations of Colt Pistols
Planned and Partially Carried Out by
Colonel Colt, as the Display of Colt's Revolvers
Was Nearing Completion at the
Great Exhibition of 1851.
This Carefully Detailed Listing**

**Written Out by Samuel Colt Himself,
Has Been Confirmed as to Execution
by Identification Particularly of
The Following Presentation Arms:
Prince Albert's Cased
Model 1851 Navy and Second Model Dragoon,
and Prince Edward's
Pocket Model or Baby Dragoon.**

**The Writer Is of the Opinion
That No. 13358/. Was Likely to Have Been
Presented to Any One of
Such Personalities As
Samuel Colt Listed
In Determining the Fate of Colts Taken
From the Exhibit Stand.**

**The List Needs to Be Examined for
Likely Recipients of a Pocket Model –
Sometimes Actually So Marked –
Rather than a .36 Caliber Navy or Belt Model
or the .44 Caliber Holster Model or Dragoon.**

**Very Few of These Gift Arms Bore Inscriptions,
None Is Present on The Prince Albert Gift Set
or on the
Prince Edward Presentation,
These Facts suggest That In Many Instances,
No Time was Taken by Colt
To Have the Gifted Revolvers Inscribed.**

**With Its Special Attention to Engraving,
Grips and Finish,
Colt Model Baby Dragoon Pistol, Serial No. 13538/.
Played a Key Role in Colt's Campaign
To Market His Arms Internationally,
and in Establishing a Factory in London,
1852-57,
The First Factory Outside of the U.S.A.
to Be Organized by An American Company.**

**Further, Some Arms Were Presented
by Samuel Colt,
That Were Not on the October 29th 1851 List.
Among These Were a Navy Colt
to the Earl of Granville.**

**Exhibition Grade Baby Dragoon Revolver,
Serial No. 13538/.,
A Star Attraction at
The Great Exhibition of 1851
Qualifies This Revolver
In a Special Class of Rarity
and Distinction.
And Will Be Featured in
The Author's Forthcoming
Art and History Volume (2016):
*Sam Colt and His Legacy:
Chronicling the Legend.***

Samuel Colt's extraordinary international success at the Great Exhibition of 1851 played a key role in his mastery of designing, inventing, manufacturing and marketing his revolutionary revolving repeating arms. His unmatched and unprecedented mastery of all phases of what it takes to be a leading gun manufacturer and marketer owed a tremendous amount to the reputation he so brilliantly forged in London, 1851 and 1852.

Besides emerging as the star attraction of the American exhibits at the Great Exhibition, the brash Colonel was awarded the Telford Medal, by the Institution of Civil Engineers, London – the first time this coveted prize was presented to an American.

Poems were written about Sam Colt, and his publicity campaign for the Great Exhibition was typically prolific and widely welcomed. The papers were full of Samuel Colt and his glowing achievements, as documented in Joseph G. Rosa's *Address Col. Colt London*, and in the more recent publication, *Magnificent Colts Selections from the Robert M. Lee Collection*.

The prologue to the latter title makes clear in words and pictures how important Colt's triumph in London at the Great Exhibition was to his career, and to the opportunity he grasped to open his own factory in London - the first by an American outside of the

United States. Even appearing before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, Colt had a platform in which he could tout his mastery of mass production and parts interchangeability – the American System of Manufacturers. For which tenet his factory has been rightfully termed “The Cradle of the Industrial Revolution.”

And Samuel Colt is now identified historically as the First Industrial Tycoon, and the Steve Jobs of his day.

The subject of the present documenting letter, **Serial No. 13538/. Baby Dragoon or Old Model Pocket Pistol**, is representative of the amazing Samuel Colt, and was part of his strikingly impressive comprehensive display of Arms at the Great Exhibition. The saga of **13538/.** - undoubtedly held in the inventor’s hands during this grand performance in London at the Crystal Palace - is fascinating. How often can one say of a rare and important Colt arm, that the hands of the inventor touched it. One of the features of Colt’s London stand was that the public was permitted to hold sample arms, and to test the uncanny mechanism, by cocking the hammer, rotating the cylinder, and hefting the feel and weight.

To quote from *The British Army Dispatch*, 1852:

We’ll come (if paid)

*Quick to your aid,
“Six-shooters” o’er the water,
The French shall dance
Right back to France
With non mock-turtle slaughter.*

These words were credited as “Colonel Colt’s Answer to John Bull,” a poem which had been published in the September 1851 issue of *Punch*, under the title of “John Bull to Colonel Colt.” For the full text of these poems, see the author’s *The Colt Heritage* and *Colt An American Legend* books, page 62.

Tabulation of Known Examples of Great Exhibition of 1851 Engraved Model 1848 Pocket Model (*aka* Baby Dragoon) Revolvers

The author’s research on the Exhibition Style engraving on the Colt Dragoon, Navy and Pocket model revolvers began in the 1950s, as a youthful collector in Minnesota, traveling to museums and collections, particularly the Stagecoach Museum, in Shakopee. Although Osborne Klavestad did not have an engraved 1851 London Exhibition Colt, I would soon view in person the presentation cased set of the Dragoon and Navy, from Samuel Colt to His Royal Highness, Prince Albert, and the Pocket Model gift to H.R.H. Edward, Prince of Wales, then at Windsor Castle.

That occasion was afforded while doing a semester abroad, serving an internship at the Royal Armouries, H.M. Tower of London. My mentor there, William Reid, arranged for me to visit Windsor, and view these Colts in person. Later, they were lent to the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, for the major exhibition, "Samuel Colt Presents," from November 3rd 1961 to January 14th 1962.

The Great Exhibition of 1851, or as it was formally known, "Exhibition of the Works and Industry of All Nations," was Samuel Colt's entry onto the world stage. Held at the Crystal Palace, in Hyde Park, and designed by Joseph Paxton, Colt presented a display of his arms that became a sensation of the entire event.

When a stunningly beautiful chromolithograph poster was created by Joseph Rodgers honoring the American exhibitors at the Exhibition, a Colt Dragoon revolver was at the upper left, near a strikingly beautiful American Eagle. And the Dragoon was immediately to the left of the famed yacht, the *America*, which won the first competition of what came to be called the "America's Cup."

Colt's stardom led to testifying before the House of Commons, in a committee formed to find out why America had surpassed Great Britain in the world of manufacturing. Further, Colonel Colt was invited to

address the august Institution of Civil Engineers, the text and illustrations from which were published soon thereafter. And Colt was awarded the Institution's exclusive Telford Medal - never before presented to an American. In recognizing his accomplishments, the inventor was also the first American to be made an Associate Member of the I.C.E.

Recognizing the importance of Colt's participation in the Great Exhibition, that landmark achievement was covered in detail in the 2011 book, *Magnificent Colts*, and for the first time, the Colt stand was pictured in color (page 7) from the elaborate scroll produced by the *Illustrated London News*.

Special “Buhl” Casings Made on Samuel Colt's Order in Vienna, Austria

With the extraordinary significance of Samuel Colt's participation in the Great Exhibition of 1851, the identification of any firearms involved with that presentation gives each piece a special aura and importance. An expression of the importance of these arms is a letter Samuel Colt penned to his brother Elisha, about a new style of deluxe casing the inventor had discovered on his European travels, in 1849. In that letter Colt specifically referenced his desire to have “show Pistols, put up in the most elegant stile possible.”

Colt Pocket Model Serial No. 13538/. is one of those distinguished and rare firearms. It was revolvers of this advanced state of the engraving arts in America that were selected for these quite elaborate casings.

Samuel Colt's detailed letter, of July 18th 1849, to Elisha, complete with spelling errors left exactly as Colt purposely made them, was first quoted in *Samuel Colt Presents* (p. 236):

My Dear Sir

I shall leave here tomorrow on my return to France & England, via Switzerland, & down the rine [Rhein], stoping a few days at the places of most interest.

Since here I have been engaged with an artist making designs for Pistol cases of a peculiar description of inlaid work called by the Austrians "*Buhl*" & have left orders & money for making & paying for the following number & sizes vix.

5 Boxes for Large size pistols in Pares

5 " " " " " single

10 " " Small " " in Pares assorted

5 " " " " " 3 in. single

5 " " " " " 4 " "

5 " " " " " 5 " "

35 " in all & for which I want you to have made show Pistols, put up in the most elegant stile possible. The cases or boxes will be the most

beautiful specimens of inlaid work ever seen in America & I want the pistols intend[ed] for them to be as good as can be made. Some of the boxes will be finished & ready for shipment in about six weeks, & whither I am home or not I want to have specimens of our arms prepared as above & exhibited in their boxes at the annual fairs of the American Institute & the Mechanics institutes of N. York, also the fairs to be held this fall in Boston & Philadelphia & any other places where they award gold medals in premium for the best inventions. These medals we must get & I must have them with me in Europe to help make up the reputation of my arms as soon as I begin to make a noise about them & I must get duplicates of the old ones that have been lost all these things go a great way in Europe & it would pay for a special trip to America to secure them if they cannot be got without my presence there.

Examples of these cases appear in illustrations enclosed, and in several of the author's books, first in *Samuel Colt Presents* - page 110 (presentation set from Samuel Colt to his principal patent attorney E.N. Dickerson) and pages 235-239 (to H.R.H. Prince Albert and H.R.H. Edward, Prince of Wales). Color illustrations appear in *Magnificent Colts* (pp. 166-173 - the Dickerson set) and in *Colt An American Legend* [pp. 41 (Dickerson set) and 130 (Dickerson again)], as well as in *The Colt Engraving Book, Volume I* (page

56; Dickerson, yet again). And in *Steel Canvas The Art of American Arms*, pages 119 (Dickerson) and 337 (a Model 1855 Sidehammer revolver).

List of the Deluxe Pocket Model Colts Engraved on Colt's Order for His Display at The Great Exhibition of 1851

Although records have yet to be discovered specifically listing by serial number arms displayed by Colt at The Great Exhibition, there is a listing in Sam Colt's own handwriting of arms he intended for presentations, during and following the Great Exhibition. This listing appears in the Joseph G. Rosa book, *Col. Colt London*, "Appendix A: Colt's List of presentation pistols to prominent persons and institutions" (pages 195-198). A copy of the list in Colt's own hand appears in the author's *The Book of Colt Engraving*, Appendix A (pages 409-413), and a printout of this is within accompanying papers to the present documenting letter.

The list of serial numbers of engraved Pocket Model Colt Revolvers at the Great Exhibition compiled by the author to date is as follows:

12329 . Robert M. Lee. *Magnificent Colts Selections from the Robert M. Lee Collection*, and *The Colt Engraving Book, Volume I*

12330 M. Lane *The Colt Engraving Book, Volume I*

12322 Woolaroc Museum, Philip R. Phillips Collection; pp. 204-205, Robert Jordan, *Colt's Pocket '49 Its Evolution*

12570 Saunders Memorial Museum, Berryville, Arkansas

12571 presentation to Prince Albert; *Samuel Colt Presents & The Colt Engraving Book, Volume I*

12613 This cased and backstrap-inscribed revolver, to George Clavering Redman from Colt, appears on p. 71 of *Samuel Colt Presents*

12872 William H. Myers Collection, *The Colt Engraving Book, Volume I*, pp. 36-37

12874 *The Colt Engraving Book, Volume I*, pp. 42, 43

13538/. Private Collection.

Colt Baby Dragoon or Old Model Pocket Pistol, Serial No. 13538/.

Serial No. 13538/. is embellished with the distinctive “Exhibition Grade” scrollwork on the barrel, loading lever, frame, hammer, gripstraps and wedge. As indicated by the dot [.] marking accompanying some of the serial numbers, finish throughout was prepared by the factory for hand engraving. Accordingly, the grips were of best quality select grain walnut, with high grade finish, as was the silver-plating to the brass gripstraps, and the blue on all other parts excepting the color case-hardened loading lever, frame and hammer.

The Engraved Decoration of Serial No. 13538/. and Its Exhibition Grade Contemporaries

Embellishment of Serial No. 13538/. and its comparable revolvers has been detailed in the Robert M. Jordan and Darrow M. Watt standard work of reference, *Colt's Pocket '49 Its Evolution Including the Baby Dragoon & Wells Fargo*, published in 2000 – as well as in other volumes, cited in the present documentation. Pages 204 and 205 detail photographs of Serial No. 12322, and make reference to the Prince of Wales Colt (12571), and notes revolvers in the range of 12300 to 12900. **13538/.** was discovered at a later date, and extends the estimated serial range from the 12000s to approximately 14000.

Note the special attention to detail on the screws: those on the frame and loading assembly have a floral motif decoration; whereas the screws on the backstrap, the triggerguard and the wedge are more conventional in form of a starburst.

The embellishments on 12322 are closely matched to that on **13538/.**, and printouts from pages 204-205 accompany the present letter. Being hand work, there will always be some variation in execution, but the style is distinctly identifiable. Recent research has published Joseph Delany as the engraver of this style, as also identified in papers accompanying the present letter, reflecting fresh material in the H.G. Houze title, *Colt Factory Engravers of the 19th Century*,

Conclusion

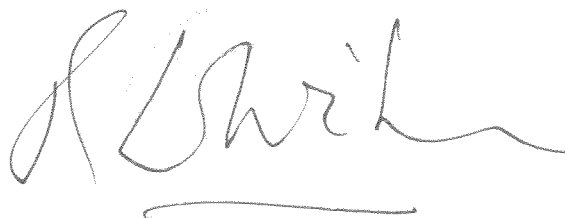
In the collecting and study of Colt firearms, rarely does one have the opportunity to chronicle a revolver of the rarity and desirability of **The Great Exhibition of 1851 Baby Dragoon Pocket Pistol, Serial No. 13538/.** An early example of a revolver design that proved not only brilliantly conceived, but manufactured with considerable care, created to protect the owner from potential death.

The new Colt revolvers – in pocket, belt and holster sizes - not only proved to be practical life insurance for the clientele of the inventor, but were key to the development of America's superiority in the world as a manufacturer of exceptional products in the most modern, high-tech manner.

The evolution of a jewel of a product like the Model 1848 Baby Dragoon, and the other models which emerged from Hartford late in the 1840s and early in the 1850s established Samuel Colt as the First Industrial Tycoon and his factory as "The Cradle of the Industrial Revolution." Like Steve Jobs approximately 125 years later, Colt was master of his own invention and of its design and manufacture, saw that it was a product of best quality and of striking beauty, and that it was entirely functional and was something for which contemporaries felt the need to own.

Samuel Colt's story was history in the making, and **Serial No 13538/. Colt Baby Dragoon** was right there assisting the Colonel himself while that saga evolved before a fascinated international citizenry.

Accordingly the writer looks forward to featuring **Serial No. 13538/.** in his forthcoming fresh presentation: *Sam Colt and His Legacy: Chronicling the Legend.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. B. White", with a horizontal line underneath.