

Serial number sequence within examples pictured:

Top Row

3454	3589	4295	4819	5052
5331	5892	5957	5967	9569

Middle Row

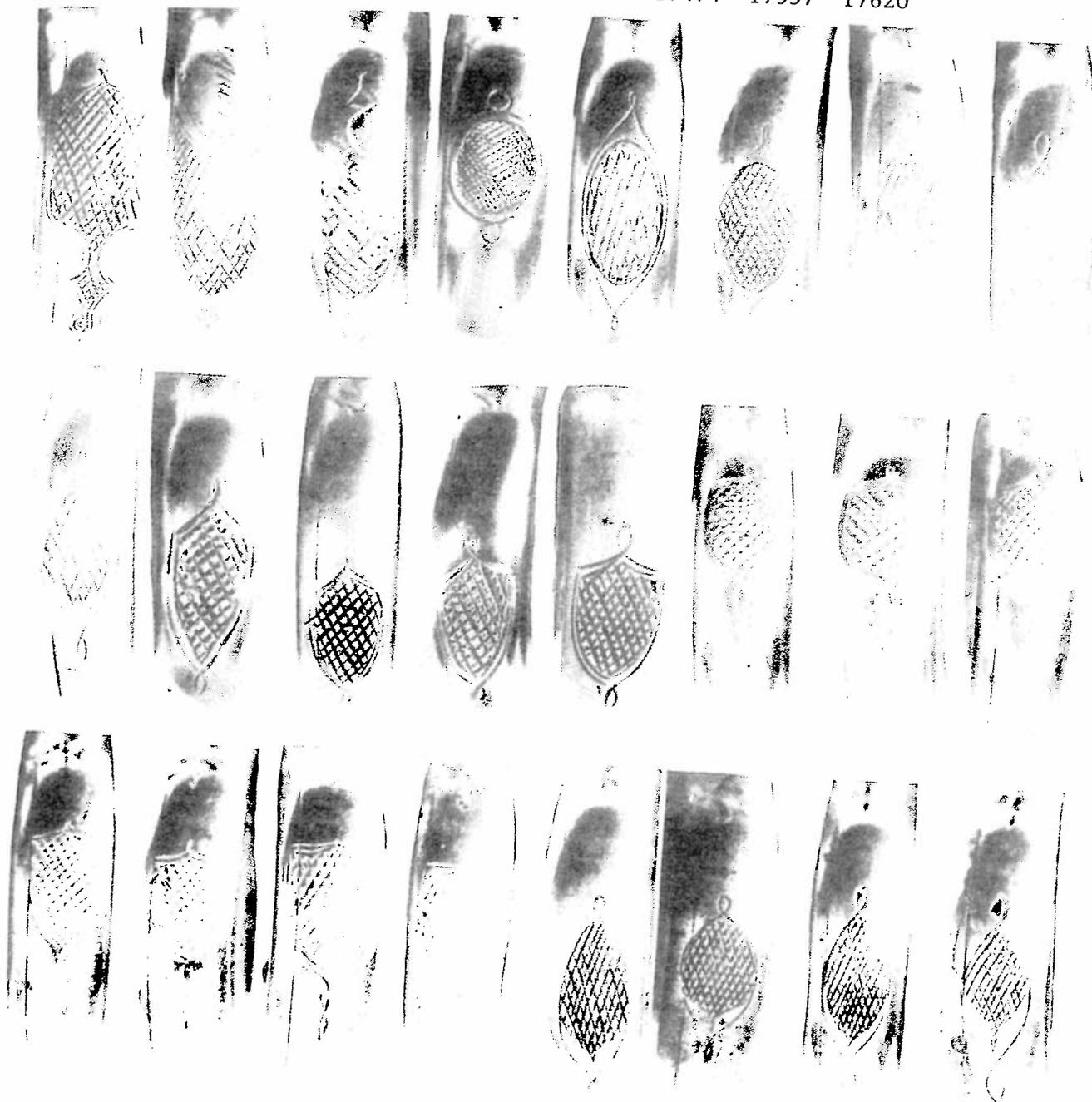
9931	9943	10528	13512	13796
14384	15120	15121	15923	16463

Bottom Row

17206	17474	17557	17620
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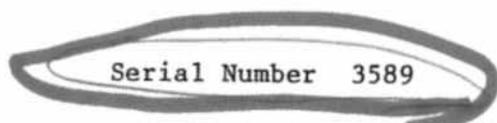
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Note early use of elongated oval having border with loops at top and bottom; then transformation to modified shield top in the oval pattern; then more pronounced shield. Lastly, return to the oval with periphery line merging with top of checkered oval.

Engraved within oval on backstrap is
J.M. Egnor in running script.
 One of the very few known with
 such inscription. Egnor
 later became Reid's
 son-in-law.



Contour of axle pin varied throughout production. The Type One variation is usually found with a "pinched dome" configuration; that is, curved top, sides with straight concave flutes.

1.4" (36mm) smooth surface barrel cluster of seven chambers. Rectangular locking slots at extreme rear. Smoothbore. This equates to cylinder but, with no barrel, have classified in the "multi-barrel" category.

Left rear of bottom strap:

MY FRIEND

No patent date as found on other types. Later types normally had the MY FRIEND, plus patent date, on left side of topstrap. There are exceptions, which will be noted.

Serial number appears on base of grip area below finger hole. Last two digits on axle pin. Earlier production on shank of pin, later found on axle pin head.

Reid used consecutive serial numbers throughout production of all models except the small single shot muff pistol made in New York City. When a batch of one model in one calibre was finished, the next batch of another model and/or calibre would simply continue with the next numbers. Serial number sequence at the New York City factory stopped at approximately number 3480. Standard production of the .22 calibre knuckler began at the Catskill factory in 1868 at number 3500.

More than 10,000 knuckledusters were made between 1868 and 1883 when production stopped.

Larger frame models were produced beginning in 1870. One model in .41 calibre was discontinued in 1872; approximately 150 .41 calibre knucklers were produced. The .32 calibre model continued in production till end of knuckler manufacture in 1883; approximately 3100 of this calibre were made.

James Reid
Catskill
New York



Serial Number 3589

Reid labelled this pistol "My Friend", but it was referred to as a "Knuckler". In more recent times, collectors often refer to the piece as a "Knuckleduster". The names, of course, are relative to its potential use as brass knuckles.

This could be considered a revolver without a barrel; however, it seems to fall more aptly into the pepperbox category as it does employ a cluster of barrels. The barrel cluster could be defined as a cylinder, and sometimes is.

Bronze frame, inspection plate on left. Removal of plate allows access to mainspring. Topstrap is grooved to act as rear sight.

Sliding safety bar housed in bottomstrap. Earliest pieces had an integral rounded spur to push for movement of safety; soon after production began, the spur was altered to a pointed projection. When safety bar is in rearward position, the front of bar enters a chamber in barrel cluster, thereby making it impossible to cock the hammer and rotate barrel cluster. Forward movement of safety bar withdraws the front stud and allows barrel cluster to rotate. The safety was eliminated on later types.

Three pins pass through frame in the bottom strap area; the one closest to breech holds the trigger return spring, the two forward pins secure the safety bar.

Axle pin has a right-hand thread. This was later reversed to a left-hand thread as the former direction would loosen pin as barrel cluster was rotated. The change took place at approximately number 6000. From that point onward, all types employed the left-hand thread.

The following four pages illustrate muzzle ends of knucklers in sequential serial number order. Basic patterns are covered, plus a few unusual ones. The last two pages are clusters showing very little in change, they are included to indicate uniformity toward end of production.

Comments, by serial number, follow:

3454. New York City prototype. No decoration. 1865

3589. Note periphery leaves, and petals surrounding axle pin. 1868

4295. Periphery decoration continues upward into topstrap area. 1869

4819. Unusual pattern, as is all engraving on this gun. 1869

5052 through 6728. Conventional radiating rays, periphery straight border line which does not extend into topstrap area. 1869

9931 and 9943. Conventional pattern without periphery border line. Both of these guns are of the transition period when safety was eliminated; both have fillers in safety slots in bottomstrap. 1872

10528 through 14384. Conventional pattern without periphery border line. 1878
1873 Note slight differences in secondary rays.

16463. Conventional pattern, but with clusters of punched circles at tips of 1880 some rays.

17557. Conventional pattern, but with concentric periphery border lines; some 1882 straight, some wavy.

17206 and 17620. Conventional pattern.

1881 1882

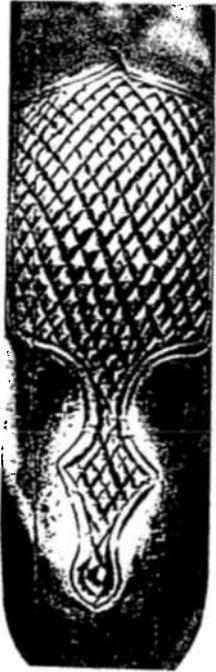
1882 1882
17557 and 17620 have iron frames. Toward end of production, muzzle patterns remained basically the same whether frames were of iron or brass.

3589

105+

REID KNUCKLEDUSTER; Center of Backstrap

105+



1865
3454

70



1868
3589

71



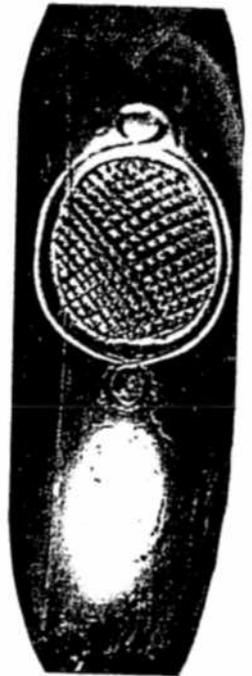
1868
3675

72



1869
4295

73



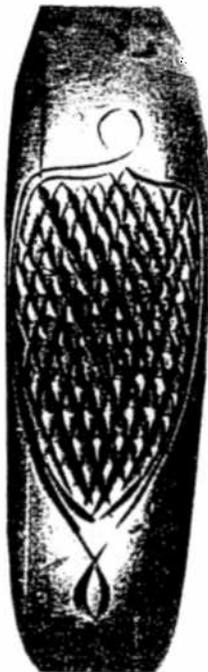
1869
4819

74



1869
5052

75



1870
6728

76



1879
15923

77



1881
17206

78



1882
17557

78