



Figure 5A and B. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #36591, assemblers letter E. This piece was brought into England by Von Oppen and has the Colt & C on the left side frame and the E.M. Reilly LONDON on the other side. This shows it was marketed by Reilly in the Cigar Casing shown here. This style casing is very rare. This photo is courtesy of the Woolaroc Museum and is part of the Phillip R. Phillips Collection in Bartlesville, OK.



Figure 6.



Figure 7. (National F. A. Co., Brooklyn, NY) 2nd Model National, this gun is very fancily engraved in the NYC style of L.D. Nimschke's shop. It is my opinion that it was made for a company executive or for an exposition. The fancy burl walnut grips are plain without checkering, this is a feature seen throughout the total production, with no particular pattern or reason. The piece originally was silver plated frame, gold wash was applied over the silver with a blued barrel. Less than 10 examples have this style of fancier engraving on the 2nd Model NATIONAL Deringer Serial #10,000.



Figure 8. (National Arms Co., Brooklyn, NY) 2nd Model with 2.5" barrel and brass frame. The piece is specially factory ordered engraving; it's typical NYC style from the shop of L.D. Nimschke. The gold plated frame, is stamped under the grips A&60 as are the walnut grips. The barrel is full silver plate that has never been polished and appears to be blued. The full Serial #5460 appears on the bottom of the barrel in the normal place. Deluxe finished National Deringers like this one are very rare.



Figure 9. (National Arms Co., Brooklyn, NY) Deluxe 2nd Model Deringer. This gun is Serial #7317 on the barrel as usual, and #BX17 on the frame under the factory pearl grips. The brass frame is gold washed, with silver plated barrel. It is .41 short rim fire caliber. National Deringers finished like this one are rare.

Other English dealers that sold Deringers not listed on these sheets are Williams & Powell of Liverpool, Watson & Hancock, Holland & Holland, Robert S. Garden, Thomas Watson, Watson & Son, and Watson Brothers. I believe all these Watson listings are the same family at various stages of their operations. There may be more obscure dealers, which I have missed.

I am now in the process of trying to rethink the old statements in my books as well as many others, that there was a total production of 3rd models of about 48,000. Rex Pope in England has also been working on this for many years. We have established that the serial numbers were started over at least three times, with the greater portion of 3rd models being manufactured after the open-grip-style frame and low hammer spur were brought into the line. I have survey sheets, if anyone wishes to help nail this down. I very much solicit all the help I can get.

Because 3rd model Deringers have been cataloged with serial numbers as high as 48,000, many collectors, dealers, and writers, including myself, believed that the numbers ran from serial #1 through 48,000, covering the five variations, with that figure being the total product.

I will show the five variations and the differences and give estimates as to the number made.

The very first type 3rd model was made with a thinner, lighter frame. They have the barrel screw bolster or pot-bellied frame. The COLT stamping on the barrel top is considerably smaller, measuring only about 11 mm or 7/16" in length. When the frame was beefed up because of cracking on or near the recoil shield after only a few shots, there was a new larger COLT stamp introduced at this point. This stamp was carried through until the end of production, circa 1912. It measures 17 mm or 11/16" in length. This first type 3rd model stopped being made after only a few days, with a total production of something less than 500 pieces finished and sold. These numbers were carried on into the 2nd variation.

As I stated previously, the 2nd variation is about the same size but the metal makeup of the frame was changed from a straight brass composition to a bronze makeup, to give it more strength in the same size pistol, making it stronger and the same weight, which is 210.5 grams or approximately 7.5 oz. The same bolster around the barrel pivot screw is present, as well as the high hammer, and the tight curve in the grip remains. There were approximately 2,400 pieces like this produced. This includes the first type, which numbered a little less than 500 pieces, making the second variation total just less than 2,000 pieces. At this point a new serial number series was started.

Figure 10. (3rd Model Colt, 1st Variation) The very first type 3rd model was made with a somewhat thinner lighter frame. They have the barrel screw bolster or pot bellied frame. The COLT stamping on the barrel top is considerably smaller, measuring only about 11 mm or 7/16" in length. When the frame was beefed up because of cracking on or near the recoil shield after only a few shots, there was a new larger COLT stamp introduced at this point. This stamp, carried through until the end of production circa 1912. It measures 17 mm or 11/16" in length. This first type 3rd model stopped being made after only a few days, with a total production of something less than 500 pieces finished and sold. These numbers were carried on into the 2nd variation which we will see now.

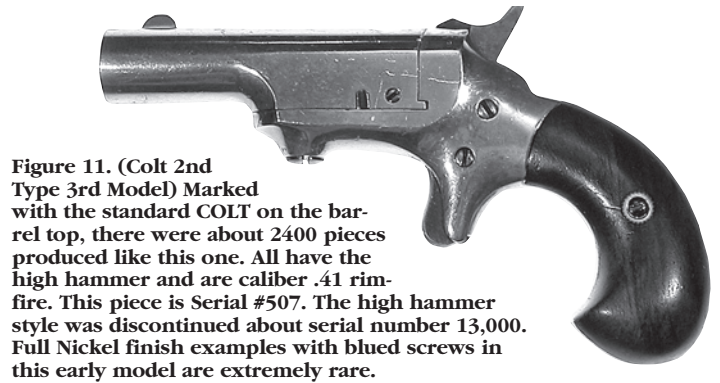


Figure 11. (Colt 2nd Type 3rd Model) Marked with the standard COLT on the barrel top, there were about 2400 pieces produced like this one. All have the high hammer and are caliber .41 rim-fire. This piece is Serial #507. The high hammer style was discontinued about serial number 13,000. Full Nickel finish examples with blued screws in this early model are extremely rare.



Figure 12. (3rd Model Colt) 2nd Variation, Serial #994, this style Deringer was manufactured up to about Serial #2400. Then the frame style was changed to make it stronger. This piece is factory engraved in the NYC style, Class C coverage. The factory ivory grips has the deluxe checkering pattern, which is seldom seen. Engraved examples of this variation are extremely rare.

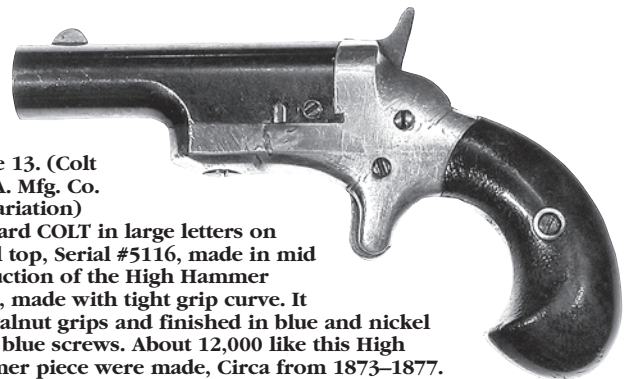


Figure 13. (Colt P.T.F.A. Mfg. Co. 3rd Variation) Standard COLT in large letters on barrel top, Serial #5116, made in mid production of the High Hammer series, made with tight grip curve. It has walnut grips and finished in blue and nickel using blue screws. About 12,000 like this High Hammer piece were made, Circa from 1873-1877.

The 3rd variation began when the barrel screw bolster was replaced with a solid frame, which added strength and a more streamline appearance to the piece. This style retained the high hammer and tight curve in the grip. There were approximately 13,000 of these made.

The 4th variation is a combination of 3rd variation frames with the tight-curve grip style and the introduction of a new streamline low-profile hammer spur. This style hammer would continue until the end of production. This variation is not commonly seen but serial numbers run as high as

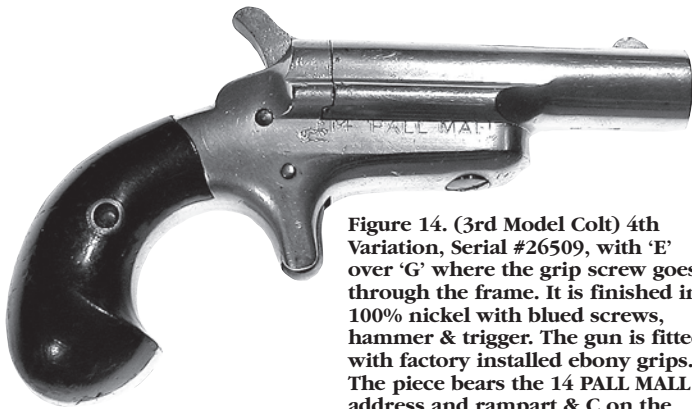


Figure 14. (3rd Model Colt) 4th Variation, Serial #26509, with 'E' over 'G' where the grip screw goes through the frame. It is finished in 100% nickel with blued screws, hammer & trigger. The gun is fitted with factory installed ebony grips. The piece bears the 14 PALL MALL address and rampart & C on the right side of the frame.

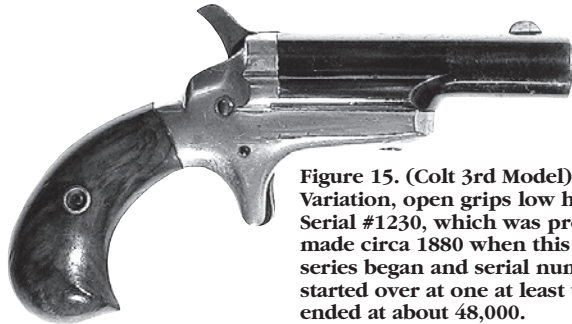


Figure 15. (Colt 3rd Model) 5th Variation, open grips low hammer. Serial #1230, which was probably made circa 1880 when this open grip series began and serial numbers were started over at one at least twice and ended at about 48,000.

27,xxx. This is confusing unless all the serial numbers ran consecutively through this variation. That would then indicate a production of around 12,000.

During late preparation to complete this article, I discovered that a gun in my book, which I showed earlier, is a 4th variation with the serial number 1230. You will see in the next photo a 5th variation piece with the same serial number. I believe this shows without a doubt another start over in the serial numbers, even before we get into the 5th variation, which we definitely know, were started over at least twice.

The 5th variation is where the serial numbers were started over again and the larger grip, open-curve style began. No engraving of dealership markings have been shown, to keep counterfeiting to a minimum! This is the type Deringer most people know and are most likely to encounter at gun shows and auctions, etc. There is strong proof that the numbers were started over again at least twice on this model. There is agreement between most advanced collectors of 3rd model Deringers that the highest serial number recorded of approximately 48,xxx is merely the highest number in the last batch.

The gun you see here is Serial #1230, illustrating that if the numbers ran straight through, this piece would be a high-hammer tight-curved grip, and bolster screw-style gun.

Using the best estimation system, my guess of a total production of all variations is at least 70,000 and could be as high as 100,000. They are certainly one of the most likely Deringers that one will see at gun shows and auctions. With all that said, it is a subject that can keep a collector searching most of a lifetime to obtain all the variations, dealer markings, casings, and finishes.

The following photos will show examples of 3rd models from my collection, which have the markings by the dealers I have mentioned. Also, a few cases, which are extremely rare, show a small sampling of the labels by some of the better known English dealers. Many English-proofed 3rd models only bear the proof marks and have no names, etc., to tell the collector, who actually sold them or when. Most of these were probably imported and distributed to other dealers by Von Oppen at 14 Pall Mall, London.

Thanks to my friend Jeff Norris, who did this photography.



Figure 16. (Cased Matched Pair of 3rd Model Colt Deringers) This set is English proofed and stamped with the rampart Colt and "C" on the frames. These guns were cased and sold in London by Baron Fredrich Von Oppen who was Colt's authorized dealer in London. The pair are Serial #19408 and #35702, both guns are cased in their original English Oak Casing, which is blue cloth lined and in excellent condition with the 14 PALL MALL label in the inside lid of the case. Serial #19461 was stolen out of this casing at the Louisville, KY show 2005. It was the factory mate to this set.





Figure 17. (Colt 3rd Model) 4th Variation, Serial #E26017. This piece is factory engraved Class C. It is English proofed on barrel bottom. The piece is in its original English oak single gun case, lined in green blase and the original dealer label is in the top inside lid, E. M. REILLY & CO./502 New Oxford Street, London.



Figure 18. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #36093, with a 'P' on the frame under the grip. Factory ivory grips with entwining scrimshawed initials J.M.B. This piece has the rampart Colt & C and .41 CAL on the frame denoting it as being sold through Von Oppen in London. The piece is 100% nickel finished overall with blued screws and case colored hammer and trigger with the original mole skin carrying purse.

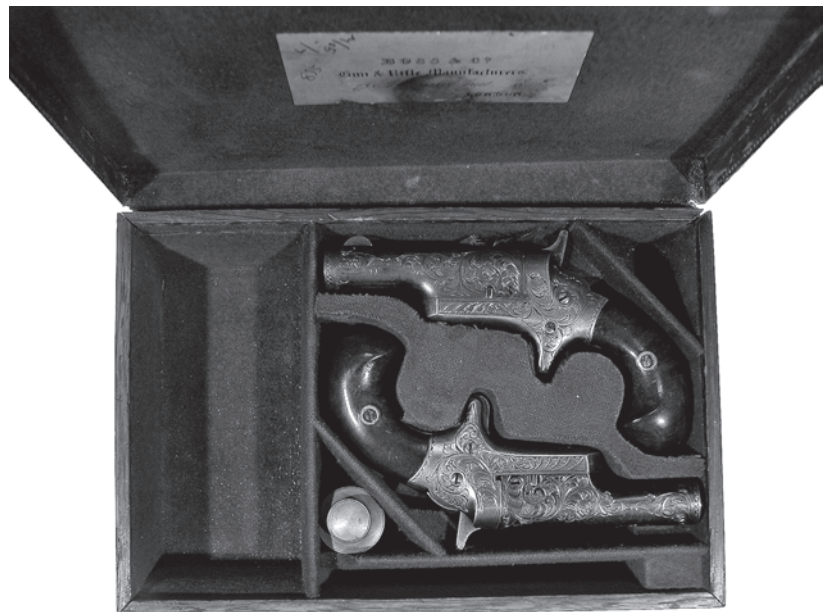


Figure 20. (COLT P.T.F.A. MFG. CO. 3rd Model, 3rd Type) This matched pair was sold in England by BOSS & CO., 73 ST. James St., London. They are cased in their original leather over wood casing with the original oil can and turn screw. Both Deringers are Class "C" engraved and British proofed. They are Serial #10101 and #11367, and fitted with Fancy Walnut grips. Factory cased sets are rare.

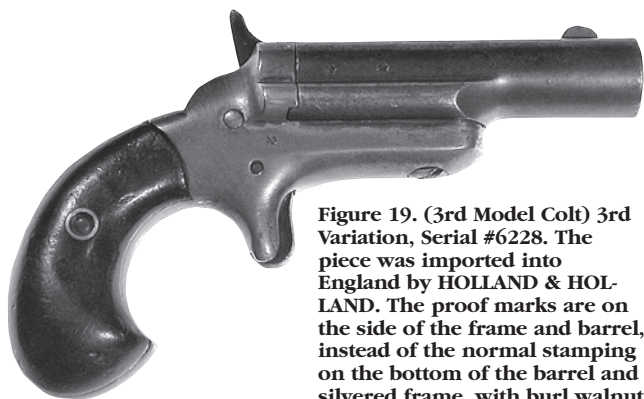


Figure 19. (3rd Model Colt) 3rd Variation, Serial #6228. The piece was imported into England by HOLLAND & HOLLAND. The proof marks are on the side of the frame and barrel, instead of the normal stamping on the bottom of the barrel and silvered frame, with burl walnut grips.

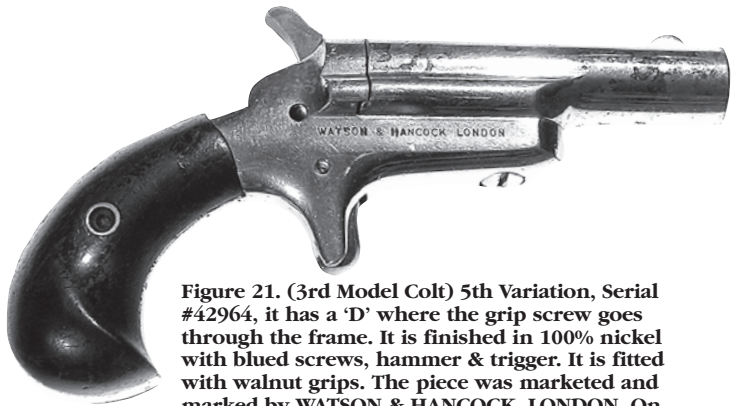


Figure 21. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #42964, it has a 'D' where the grip screw goes through the frame. It is finished in 100% nickel with blued screws, hammer & trigger. It is fitted with walnut grips. The piece was marketed and marked by WATSON & HANCOCK, LONDON. On the reverse frame it has the .41 CAL stamp instead of the standard .41 CAL stamp.

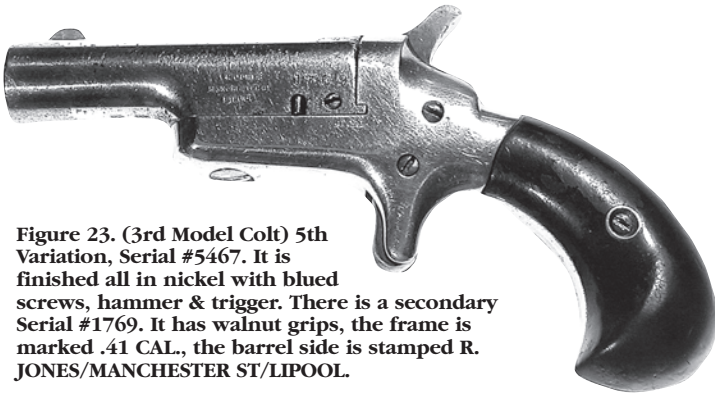


Figure 23. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #5467. It is finished all in nickel with blued screws, hammer & trigger. There is a secondary Serial #1769. It has walnut grips, the frame is marked .41 CAL., the barrel side is stamped R. JONES/MANCHESTER ST/LIPOOL.

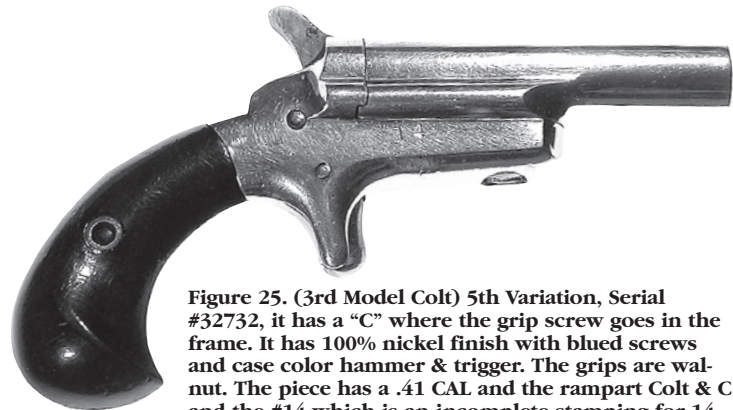


Figure 25. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #32732, it has a "C" where the grip screw goes in the frame. It has 100% nickel finish with blued screws and case color hammer & trigger. The grips are walnut. The piece has a .41 CAL and the rampart Colt & C and the #14 which is an incomplete stamping for 14 PALL MALL.

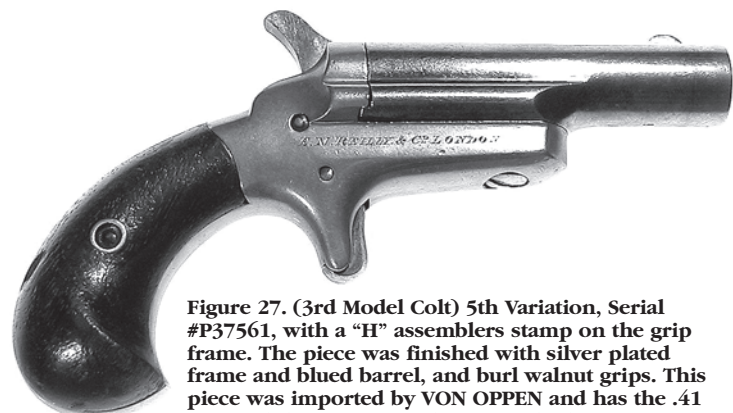


Figure 27. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #P37561, with a "H" assemblers stamp on the grip frame. The piece was finished with silver plated frame and blued barrel, and burl walnut grips. This piece was imported by VON OPPEN and has the .41 CAL and the rampart Colt & C on the left frame side. It was then sold to E.M. REILLY & Co. LONDON, because it has their dealership name on the right side frame. This double dealership stamping is seldom seen.

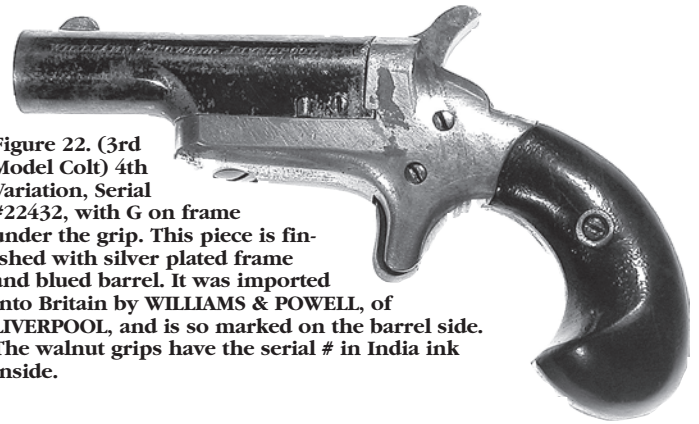


Figure 22. (3rd Model Colt) 4th Variation, Serial #22432, with G on frame under the grip. This piece is finished with silver plated frame and blued barrel. It was imported into Britain by WILLIAMS & POWELL, of LIVERPOOL, and is so marked on the barrel side. The walnut grips have the serial # in India ink inside.

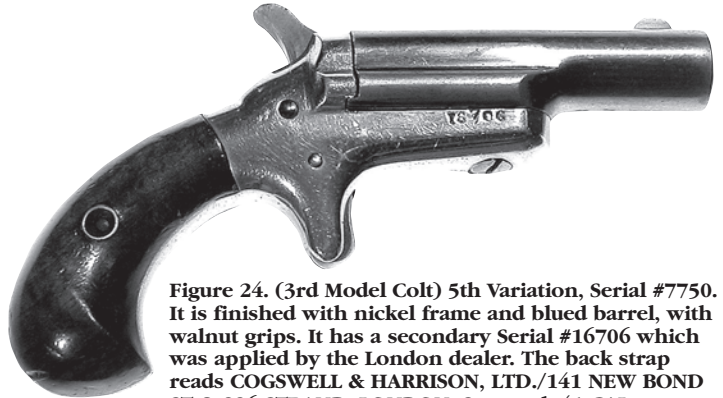


Figure 24. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #7750. It is finished with nickel frame and blued barrel, with walnut grips. It has a secondary Serial #16706 which was applied by the London dealer. The back strap reads COGSWELL & HARRISON, LTD./141 NEW BOND ST & 226 STRAND, LONDON. Stamped .41 CAL on frame. The address is all hand cut engraving.

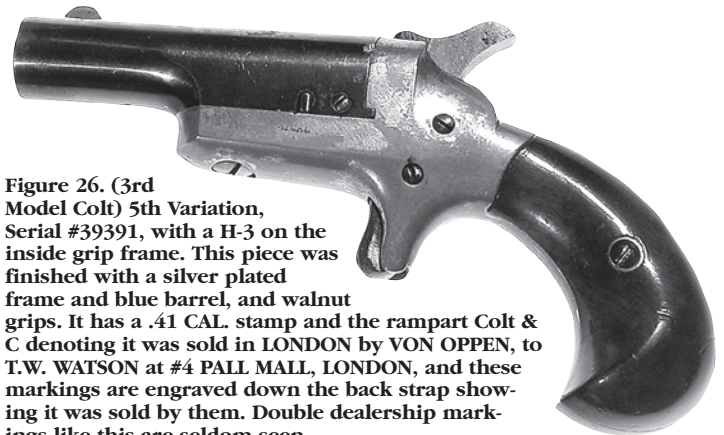


Figure 26. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #39391, with a H-3 on the inside grip frame. This piece was finished with a silver plated frame and blue barrel, and walnut grips. It has a .41 CAL stamp and the rampart Colt & C denoting it was sold in LONDON by VON OPPEN, to T.W. WATSON at #4 PALL MALL, LONDON, and these markings are engraved down the back strap showing it was sold by them. Double dealership markings like this are seldom seen.

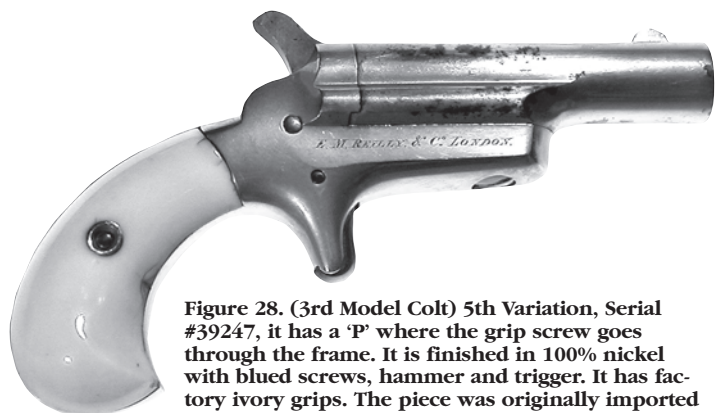


Figure 28. (3rd Model Colt) 5th Variation, Serial #39247, it has a 'P' where the grip screw goes through the frame. It is finished in 100% nickel with blued screws, hammer and trigger. It has factory ivory grips. The piece was originally imported by Von Oppen and has the Rampart Colt & C, and was probably sold by them to E.M. REILLY & Co. of LONDON, as it also has their dealership marking. This dual dealer marking is rare.

Figure 29. (3rd Model Colt) 4th Variation, Serial #15753, it was finished with blued barrel and silvered plated frame with fancy walnut grips. It is British proofed, probably sold by Von Oppen in London.

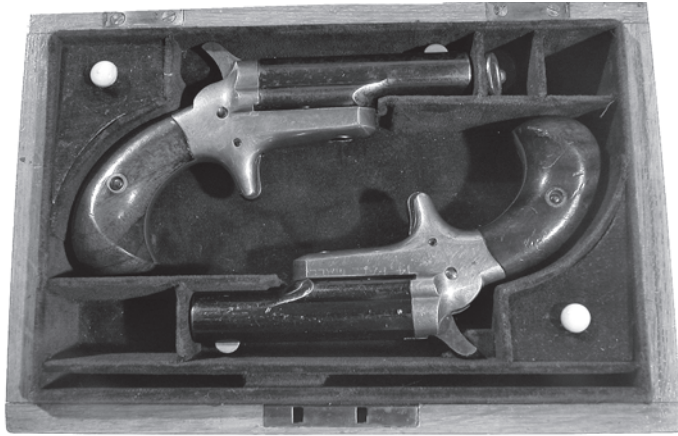
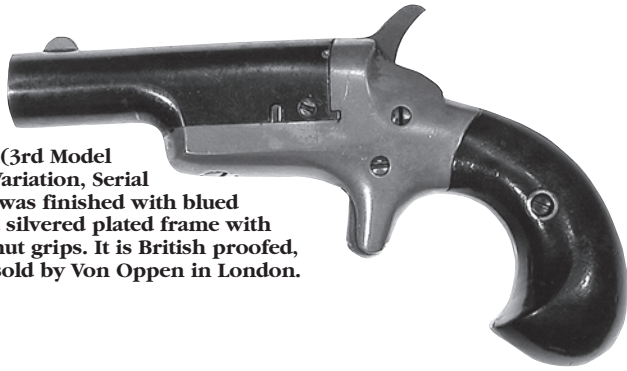


Figure 30. (3rd Model Colt) Cased pair Serial #38250 and #39046, both guns are of the 5th Variation, and have the Von Oppen markings as well as the 14 PALL MALL address. They were marketed by WATSON & SON in LONDON, circa 1900. Each has the British proofs and was finished in blue and silver with walnut grips.