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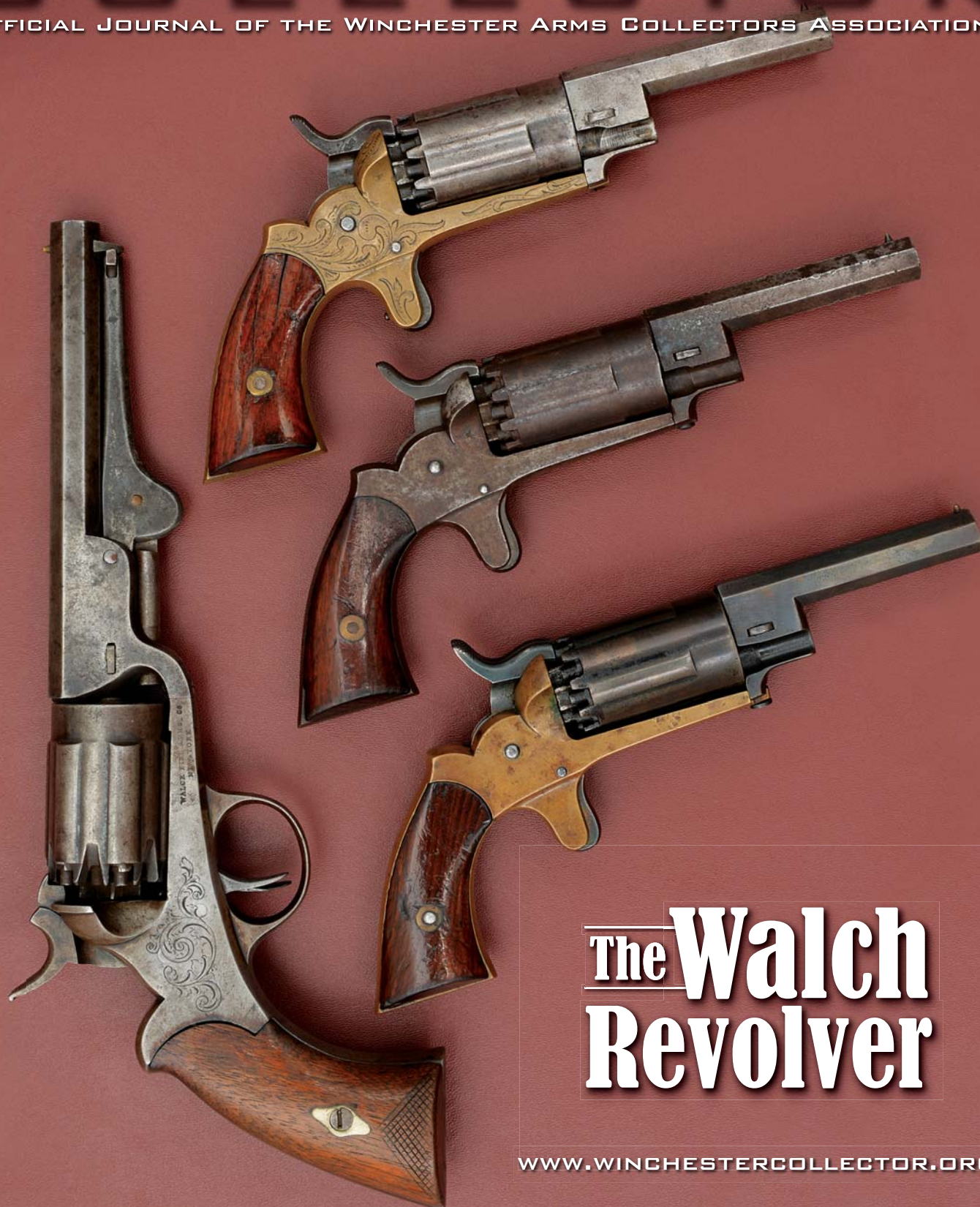
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THE

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# COLLECTOR

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The **Walch**  
**Revolver**

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Walsh 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1338

# The Walch Revolver

by Rob Kassab #4144LB

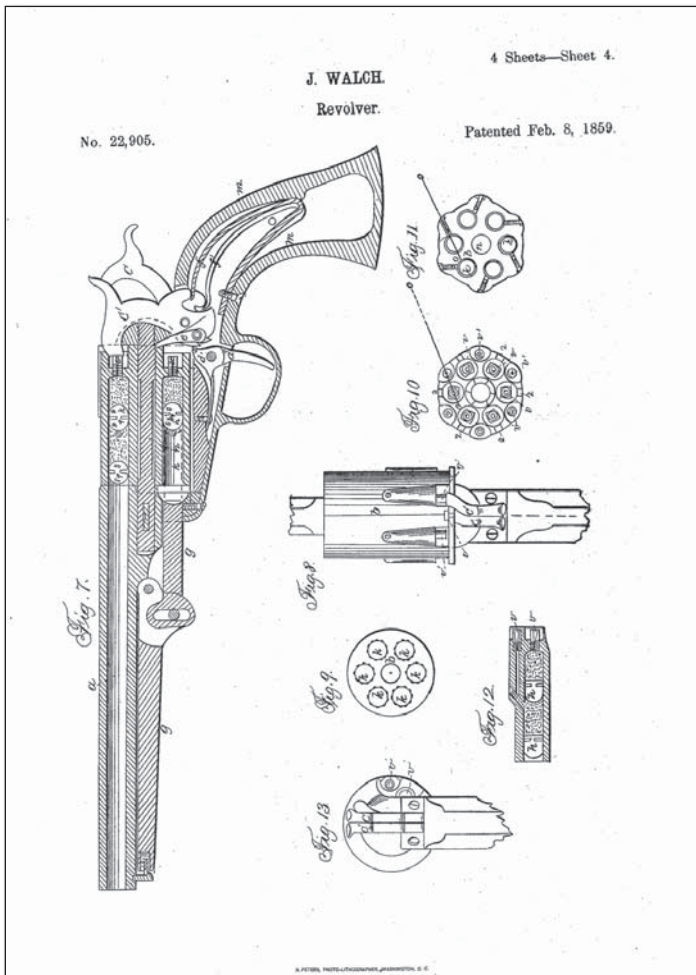
Much has been written about the innovative Walch Revolver, but very little published in the way of detailed photographs of these fascinating arms. I have therefore focused on that aspect along with some basic operational descriptions and patent information.

I know some are asking “Just what is a Walch Revolver article doing in a Winchester publication anyway?” The discovery of the Walch / New Haven Arms Company relationship begins with our late friend George Madis who actually stumbled across this connection during his research. In addition to what George has written in “The Winchester Book”, there has been some excellent articles written by Herb Houze as well as others; but the following excerpt from George’s book clearly describes the relationship between the two firms:

“Many years ago, this writer was examining copies of letters in the Winchester archives. One group of letters were of particular interest and importance to collectors, and started one of the long searches one may pursue in a study of antiques. The letter [from Oliver F. Winchester dated October 17, 1862], to E. B. Martin, is quoted [in part] here: *Five years ago last May the Company commenced*

*manufacturing the Volcanic Fire Arms, starting a large lot of each size, and in about 18 months thereafter began to turn out finished arms, and put them into the market. They at once found a strong prejudice against them among the dealers, and a few months vain efforts to sell them became satisfied that there were radical defects which would prevent their ever becoming a saleable article. We of course had no way but to finish up those we had commenced, as they would have been a total loss to have dropped them. This involved a large outlay. Most of that stock has been sold at a heavy loss; and nearly all of the costly tools and machinery for making them were rendered useless. While finishing up these arms, (taking about three years) we perfected and patented certain improvements, (Dec. ‘60) obviating the objections to the old arms, and making a perfect thing as applied to the rifle.*

*At this point we were too much exhausted, as we felt, to proceed in getting up the tools and fixtures to manufacture the rifle; but let them lay, and took a contract to make 3000 revolvers for a party in New York, calculating to clear some eight thousand dollars upon the same; (amounting to \$26,000.) but when the pistols were finished, the party failed*



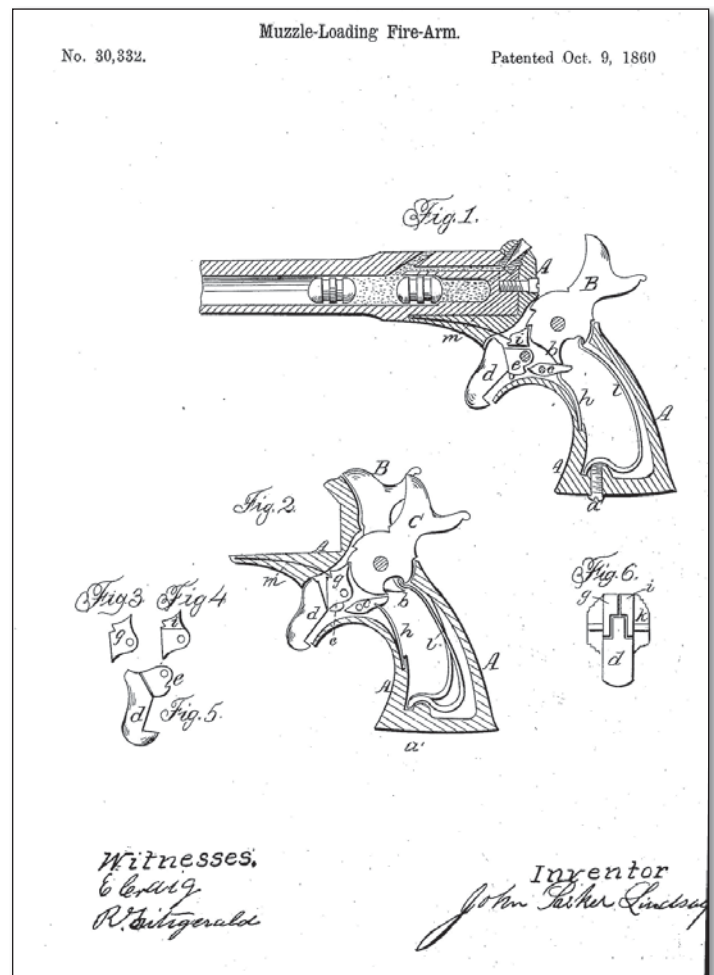
Walch 12-Shot Revolver Patent #22,905, February 8, 1859

to respond. We now have them on hand, and consequently the capital they cost locked up in a lawsuit.

“Then, in the hands of a collector, there appeared a letter from Oliver F. Winchester to Abraham Vance, a firearms dealer of Gradyville, Kentucky. The letter was dated November 25, 1862 and a copy was later found in the Winchester letter file in the Museum. The copy of this letter has the Museum number 161. The letter states in part: “We have on hand about 100-4 inch Volcanic pistols carrying 6 balls, a very pretty weapon. Retail for \$12.75 to 18.50. Will sell for \$7.00 each. Box of 200 cartridges will cost you \$2.00. We have some 10 shot revolvers, double hammers, which retail for \$15.00 to \$18.00, which we will sell to you for \$9.00. On receipt of \$18.00 will send sample of each pistol and 200 balls.

“A further search uncovered information on the Walch revolvers, and piece by piece the evidence mounted. John Walch, John Parker Lindsay and Cyrus Manville were all involved in the contracts and patents.

“John Walch had patented his double hammer system on February 8, 1859 [above]. John Parker Lindsay had patented the use of the trigger system for the double hammer



Lindsay's Single Trigger Patent #30,332, October 9, 1860

firearms on Oct. 9, 1860 [above]. On the Walch revolvers, the Lindsay triggers were used with the double hammers of the Walch patent. Lindsay's two-shot arms were known to have been made for the War Department; a search revealed that Cyrus Manville was surety for Lindsay in connection with his Government contracts. A further search revealed that although Lindsay used a New York address (often the same one as the Walch Company), no manufacturing or any work was done by him in New York. Cyrus Manville was paying the taxes on the New York Office. Cyrus Manville also had a firearms manufacturing shop in New Haven at 208 Orange Street, and this address was also the address of J. P. Lindsay Manufacturing Company for a time.

“A search in New Haven, Hartford and elsewhere revealed that Oliver F. Winchester brought suit against Cyrus Manville in May of 1861 for his failure to accept the revolver when ready and to pay for them. Apparently a settlement was reached because the case is not recorded as going to trial. The New Haven Arms Company later allowed Manville and Lindsay to purchase the revolvers as they sold them with the New Haven Arms Company and Oliver F. Winchester also selling some of the revolvers from time to time.



Engraved Walsh 12-Shot "Navy" Revolver s/n 117 Right Side - Note double triggers

"The New Haven Arms Company was producing the revolvers from late 1860 to 1861, but assembly continued to 1862; the Walch revolvers and Henry Rifles were therefore made concurrently for a time. A total of 3000 revolvers were made; the first contract called for 2000 with a later contract for 1000. From all appearances, the first 2000 were made in a very short time, using gunmetal (bronze) frames cast outside the New Haven Arms Company plant. The additional 1000 frames for the revolvers were cast of steel, again outside the plant. Nehemiah Bradley cast the brass revolver frames for the New Haven Arms Company, but no

Joseph Merwin's ad for the Walch 12-Shot "Navy" Revolver published in Samuel M. Wolfe, *Helper's Impending Crisis Dissected* (J.T. Lloyd; New York 1860)

**JOSEPH MERWIN,**  
*Manufacturer and Manufacturers' Agent for the Purchase and Sale of*  
**GUNS, RIFLES, PISTOLS, PERCUSSION CAPS, &c.**  
**267 BROADWAY, near Chambers St., New York,**  
*Where may be found the Newest and most Perfect Styles of Fire-Arms of every Description.*

**SOLE MANUFACTURERS' AGENT FOR WALCH FIRE-ARM Co.'s NEW 12-SHOT REVOLVER,** 80 balls to the lb., and LINDSAY'S "YOUNG AMERICA" SINGLE BARREL 2-SHOT DERINGER, 40 balls to the lb.  
**SMITH & WESSON'S SEVEN-SHOOTER. PROTECTION SIX-SHOOTER,** imitation Colt's new model. **EXCELSIOR REVOLVER,** imitation Colt's old model. **COLT'S** old and new model. **WESSON'S NEW BREECH-LOADING REPEATER. GENUINE DERINGER'S,** at Trade Prices. **A NEW CARTRIDGE PISTOL,** 60 balls to the lb.  
 Also, sole Agent for the United States for the Volcanic Repeating Rifles and Pistols, Wesson's new breech-loading Rifles and Pistols, American G. D., C. T., U. S., Hat and Water-proof Percussion Caps, with a full and complete assortment of Single and Double-barrel Guns, Rifles, and Pistols, of the most approved manufacture; Bowie Knives, Drinking Cups, Powder Flasks, Shot Bags, Sporting Powder of the best quality, &c., &c.

record can be found for the iron frame castings.

Since only 3000 of the Walch revolvers were made by the New Haven Arms Company, they are a fairly scarce gun now and with publication of the information here they may be expected to advance in price and become unavailable rapidly."

In addition to the 10-Shot .31 caliber Pocket Revolver manufactured by the New Haven Arms Company, there was a larger 12-Shot .36 "Navy" Revolver version as well. It has been estimated that only 200 of these 12-Shot models were produced, and with a very low survival rate, these guns are considered rare by today's collectors. Sam E. Smith provides a thorough description of these arms in his article in the May 1950 issue of *The Gun Collector*:

"Walch's patent No. 22,905 as finally issued on February 8, 1859 shows drawings of two distinct types of 12-shot revolvers. In the first type, the nipples for the foremost charge are placed midway up the cylinder and reached by a long-nosed hammer. The rear charge was fired by a stub hammer riding in a slot in the longer hammer. So far as is known, none of the first type were produced. The second type corresponds very closely with the 12-shot Walch revolver as known to collectors. In this both "ranges" of nipples are placed at the rear of the cylinder. The right hammer fires the foremost charge, the nipple it strikes communicating with the front load through a channel drilled in a rib going part way up the cylinder.

"Both the Walch and Lindsay operate by cocking both hammers and in order to prevent confusion it is necessary that the right hammer fall first to set off the foremost charge before the left hammer falls to perform a like service for



Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1338



Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1338 - Note corresponding serial number stamped inside of grips and lower frame



Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1338 - Note double hammers with sighting groove on left hammer



Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1338 - Note single trigger

the rear load. To ensure that the charges went off in proper succession, Walch's patent included a single trigger which released the right hammer before the left one could fall. The use of a single trigger this early may surprise collectors who associate the double side-by-side triggers with Walch 12-shots and First Model (two trigger) Lindsays and the single trigger with later models.

"The Walch single trigger pulled back part way to release the right hammer and when pulled





Engraved Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 321 Right Side



Engraved Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 321 Left Side



Iron Frame Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1873 Right Side



Iron Frame Walch 10-Shot Pocket Revolver s/n 1873 Left Side



Engraved Walsh 12-Shot "Navy" Revolver s/n 117 Left Side



Engraved Walsh 12-Shot "Navy" Revolver s/n 117 Exploded View



Engraved Walsh 12-Shot "Navy" Revolver s/n 117 s/n Marking



s/n 1873 Cylinder



s/n 1873 Assembly Numbers

further back dropped the left hammer. While the loads will thus theoretically always discharge in the correct order, if the shooter jumped the trigger or flinched it was boom-boom but fast.

“So far as we know only one revolver with this built-in mental-hazard exists and that is illustrated in Gluckman’s “United States Martial Pistols & Revolvers.” This revolver differs from the usual 12-shot Walch in that it does not have a hump on the grip and in this respect it conforms to the patent drawings.

“The usual 12 -shot Walch revolver has two triggers each acting directly on its hammer, the right trigger protruding slightly forward of the left. This could be fired in the same way as the original single trigger model, a part squeeze letting off the first charge and a continued pressure touching off the left trigger. It had the advantage that if your nerves weren’t feeling up to it, the right trigger could be let off with the tip of the finger obviating the possibility of a flinch firing the second charge. While an improvement on the original design it was still not a satisfactory arrangement and one which was to be later improved.

“The two-trigger Walch 12-shot has a 6 inch octagonal barrel engraved on the left side in three lines “Walch/ Fire Arms Co. / N.Y.” and on the right side “Patented. Feb. 8.1859.” An assembly number appears on barrel under the rammer, on the right side of the rammer, on the wedge and on the butt. A corresponding number is in the front of the cylinder. It is .36 caliber rifled with 6 clockwise grooves as are all the Walch and Lindsay pistols. The cylinder is counterbored with a slight shoulder for seating the rear bullet a feature not shown in the Walch patent but appearing in the later Lindsay patent. It has a 2-1/8” cylinder with the nipples in two rows, one inside the other. Nipples in the inside row line up with the center of the chambers while those on the outside row are offset to the right of the cylinder to be fired, and communicate with the front charge through a channel drilled in a rib placed between the chambers. Double-hung hammers the left being centered and having a sighting notch while the right hammer is offset to the right. The rear of the cylinder has a double set of ratchets one for turning and one for locking.

“The Walch 10-shot revolvers are found in two models, the only difference being that the earlier model has a brass frame (Fig. 3) and the later and otherwise identical model has an iron frame (Fig. 4). The 3-1/4” octagon barrel is caliber .31 rifled with six clockwise grooves, stamped on top in two lines, “WALCH FIRE-ARM.S. CO. NEW-YORK / PAT'D. FEB. 8 1859”. The 2” long cylinder has the nipples in a single row, the nipple for the rear charge lining up with the top of the top of the chamber while that for the front charge is to the right of the chamber. Cylinder has counterbored chambers for seating rear bullet. Serial numbers are found

**LINDSAY'S  
YOUNG AMERICA FIRE-ARMS.**

1859 MODEL

1859 MODEL

Weight, 11 oz. Balls, 40 to the lb.

Weight, 19 oz. Balls, 50 to the lb.

“DOUBLE DERINGER,” Single Barrel.

“TEN-SHOOTER,” no larger than the ordinary Revolver.

**TESTIMONIALS.**

From Maj.-Gen'l JOHN A. DIX.  
Washington, 10th July, 1861.

Dear Sir: I have tried your pistol, “Young America,” and am exceedingly pleased with it. It shoots with great force and accuracy. I have given the best evidence of my confidence in it by purchasing it for my own use.

I am truly yours,  
JOHN A. DIX.

I fully concur in the above.  
CHAS. TEMPLE DIX,  
Adj.-Camp to Maj.-Gen'l DIX.

From 9th REG'T MICHIGAN INFANTRY.  
CAMP MULBROW'S HILL,  
Near Paducah Ky., Dec. 2d, 1861.

Mr. J. P. Lindsay,  
Dear Sir—My Company of the 9th Regiment Michigan Infantry have supplied themselves with your ten-shooters, and are highly pleased with them. I am frank to say it is the most reliable revolver I have ever seen.

Very Respectfully,  
Lt. B. W. HOLMBECK, Co. I,  
9th Regiment Michigan Infantry.

WASHINGTON, D. C., 16th July, 1861.

Sir: Years of the snath is at hand. I can say in reply that your pistol, “Young America,” has been thoroughly tested by me in the presence of several officers of the staff, and I pronounce it to be the most reliable weapon I have seen. The amount of lead thrown, and the great force and accuracy, make it an invaluable side-arm.

Very Respectfully, etc.,  
DRAKE DE KAY,  
A. D. C. to Maj.-Gen'l MANSFIELD.

I witnessed the experiments with the pistol, “Young America,” and fully concur in Mr. De Kay's opinion as to its merits.

GEO. L. SCHUYLER,  
A. D. C. to Maj.-Gen'l WORTH.

Gen'l BAKER says:  
“I would especially recommend Lindsay's Double Repeaters to all volunteers.”

**Extracts from the Press.**

“We consider the LINDSAY repeaters the *se plus ultra* of Fire-Arms.”

“For personal defence Lindsay's Fire-Arms have no equals.”

“The pistols put up by the J. P. LINDSAY Manuf'g. Co. are thoroughly and perfectly made, and have no superiors.”

“Mr. LINDSAY has demonstrated the fact that ten shots can be fired from a single revolver with as much ease and safety as five.”

“The LINDSAY Repeaters have elicited the strongest approval wherever used. We commend them to our brave volunteers.”

“It is not larger than the ordinary revolver, but is twice as effective, and shoots with greater force.”

“One of LINDSAY's pistols is in fact a pair of the common pistol.”

“For a pocket-pistol, and as a ready means of self defence, LINDSAY's single-barrel Double Deringer is unequalled.”

“The safety and rapidity in firing make the LINDSAY arms superior to any arm yet invented. Many brave volunteers will save their lives from the fact of having TWO shots at command by ONCE COCKING.”

“One very great and important advantage of the LINDSAY arms is:—TWO SHOTS CAN BE FIRED, IF DESIRED, AT THE SAME TIME, WITH PERFECT SAFETY.”

The J. P. LINDSAY MANUF'G CO., Naugatuck, Conn., are sole Manufacturers of Lindsay's Patent Fire-Arms; also, Manufacturers of Camp Knives, Forks and Spoons, Knives and Forks, and Table Knives for Army use.

We defy competition in QUALITY AND PRICES.

J.P. Lindsay Manufacturing Company's ad promoting Lindsay's *Young America* superimposed load deringer and the Walch 10-Shot Revolver (reproduced from the *Gun Collector*, May 1950, p 418)

on the frame inside grips and on flat of cylinder pin.”

While slightly on the fringe of Henry & Winchester collecting, the Walch Revolver is an important part of Oliver F. Winchester history and is a wonderful addition to any serious Winchester collection.

*All Walch revolvers pictured in this article, with the exception of s/n 1338 on page 48, are from the Rob Kassab collection.*

## References

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