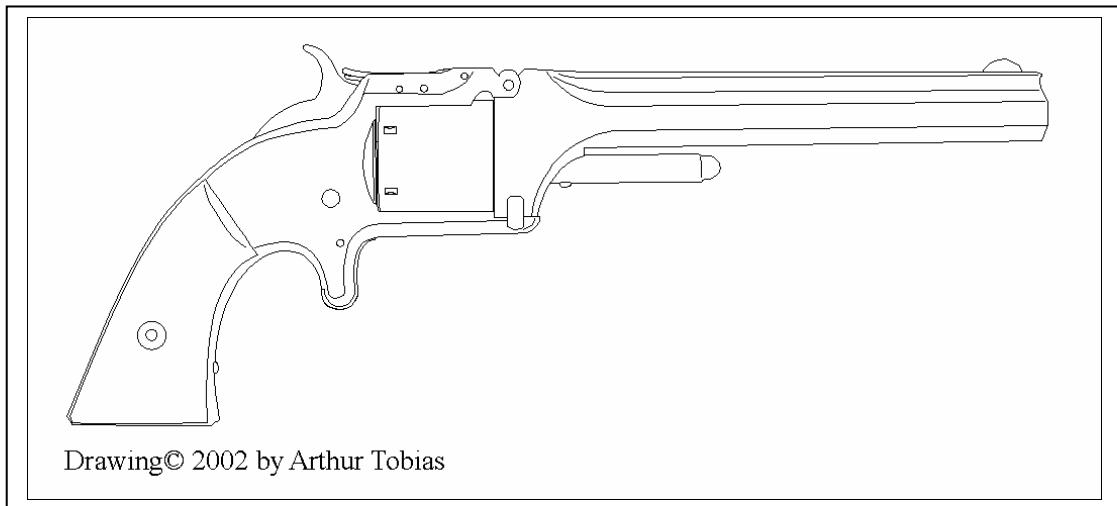


**SMITH AND WESSON MODEL 2 ARMY**  
By Ronald H. Curtis  
(Reprinted from Smith and Wesson Newsletter, July 1972)



Attempting a research project, making a study, or merely observing is both a rewarding and a frustrating experience. It is rewarding due to the new findings, the substantiating and documenting of theories, and the clarifying of known data. It also gives us an opportunity to share experiences and make new friends. The frustration is in the difficulty of securing enough data to make positive conclusions.

The observations made here are not the final work on the Model 2 Army. Indeed they are only a beginning, but hopefully they will be a stepping stone to enable the next student to do a better job. The primary data for this article comes from the works on Smith and Wesson already published, mainly John Parsons' Smith & Wesson Revolvers the Pioneer Single Action Models, and the classic work of Bob Neal and Roy Jinks, Smith & Wesson 1857-1945.

Added help and encouragement come from John Wilson, Richard Schaefer, James Brooks, Dr. C.J. Blank, Bob Neal, Tom Lewis, Roy G. Jinks, Slim Capps, Frank Sellers and the many collectors who helped on the original forms. A special note of thanks is due the St. Louis group of Ken Ehrmann, Robert McHale, and Art Ressel, who have worked so hard at securing the needed data.

So much for the background. Now let's take a look at what a year and a half of work has produced.

According to published sources, 88,699 Model 2 Army revolvers were made. To date, the serial numbers on observed specimens have not substantiated this figure, 76,642 being the highest number noted. Unfortunately, the Smith & Wesson factory records for this period are incomplete and do not give a comprehensive picture of production.

The first delivery of #2s was made on June 22, 1861, a shipment of three revolvers with 6 inch barrels to J.W. Storrs of New York City. Although these revolvers remained basically the same throughout production, many minor variations were introduced. Nine basic types have been identified:

Type I. Recorded serial range 45 - 312.

This first type has a two pin frame (see drawing) and a second grip retaining pin at the top of the rear strap. Barrel lengths are usually 6" and the lowest 5" noted is #173. No original nickel finish recorded.

Type 2. Recorded serial range 550 - 3647.

Basically the same as the first type # the extra grip retaining pin was dropped. This group is about equally divided between 5 & 6 inch barrel lengths and about a quarter of the recorded specimens are nickel plated.

Type 3. Recorded serial range 3109 - 10121

The very noticeable change in this type is the addition of third pin to the top strap to limit the travel of the cylinder stop. (See drawing) Note the overlap in serial numbers between this and Type 2. Such overlaps are common in S&W production. 2600 of this type were bought by S. Kittridge in 1862. These were marked "Manufactured for S. Kittridge & Co., Cincinnati, Ohio" on the left side of the barrel.

Type 4. Recorded serial range 10627 - 40044

This type is the same as type 3 except for an increase in the size of the serial number stamps. The tiny number dies used since the beginning of production on the 1<sup>st</sup> Model 1st Issue, were abandoned and number dies about twice as large were substituted. Most of the specimens observed in this group had 6" barrels, although there were some 5", two 4" and one 8" (#15702, sold Dec. 9, 1863 to J.W. Storrs, NYC.) The day books for this period also show 10 with 4" barrels shipped to N. Curry, San Francisco, on October 29, 1864.

Type 5 Recorded serial range 37188 - 59680

This variation appears to be an attempt at economy as the final milling cut on the breech face was eliminated. It is easy to imagine that this would have caused a problem with the swelled head of a fired cartridge case catching on the lower portion of the recoil surface. The majority of the #2's with oriental markings fall in this group.

Type 6 Recorded serial range 53565 - 60120

Mechanically the same as the last type, the only change in this is the barrel mark. The new die, although the same length as the previous one, has slightly taller letters. An easy way to spot the new die is the absence of the period after "Smith" which was present in the old die. It is interesting to watch the breaking up of the old die. On #3167 only the back of the G in Springfield is broken out. By #41812, the S, M, I, and T in Smith, 0 in Wesson, I, C, I, E, L, and D in Springfield and M, A, S in Mass, are partially broken and some others are thin in places. I am sure the die was changed prior to 50,000 serial range and after 44,602.

Type 7 Recorded serial range 60120 - 62242

Identical to Type 4 except for the barrel stamping. Either they used some old frames or returned to making the additional cut of the breech face.

Type 8 Recorded serial range 62471 - 71467

Parsons, on page 36 of "Smith & Wesson Revolvers" notes that #2 production ceased during 1867 and was not resumed until existing stocks ran out in 1868. It is probable that the Type 8 guns represent the new production at that time. The differences from the previous type are mostly in the smaller parts. The grip escutcheon is now dished instead of contoured with the grip and grip screw head is rounded instead of contoured (See drawing). The hammer knurling is changed and checkering added to the trigger. The barrel stamp has moved closer to the hinge. Inside of the grip strap of the frame, the mill cut that forms the recess for the lip of the grip is not as deep necessitating a smaller lip on the grip.

Type 9 Recorded serial range 71759 - 76662

Identical to type 8 except hinge screw changed to flat head flush with frame.

Several features of the Model 2 Army do not follow the "types" shown above. These include barrel length, finish, grips, and special order features.

The most common barrel length is 6 inches, followed by 5 inches, the 5 inch barrel is more common on earlier types than on later ones. A few 4 inch barrels were made (4 reported so far) as well as two 8 inch. One 2 inch has been reported but is of doubtful originality.

An assembly mark is found on the face of the cylinder, the rear of the barrel, and on the frame under the grip. This assembly mark may be numbers, letters, or a combination of both. All three assembly marks should match.

Blue was the standard finish, appearing on about 80% of these revolvers. About 10% were nickel plated, and a slightly lesser number had a "half plate" or "plated breech" which was a silver frame and blue barrel and cylinder. "Full Plate" of silver, gold, or any combination was available to order. Engraving, carving and gold and silver inlay was also available.

Rosewood grips *were* standard on this model but ebony, ivory, pearl, and possibly other materials were available. Grips could be plain, checkered, carved, or engraved.

A large number of special markings are found on the Model No. 2 Army. These include both factory and non factory markings. Factory markings include "second quality" (on 35 guns), markings put on for purchasers of large quantities of guns (such as the Kittridge marking mentioned above and markings put on for the foreign agents, (Crane and Nunn sales agents in England, Fd. Claudin Prevete A Paris in France, BBNA- British Bank of North America, etc-) The factory star was put on guns reworked or refinished at the factory from the late 1800's until 1953. Among the non- factory markings are minor dealer marks and the oriental markings. The oriental markings are usually registration markings. Those translated so far read: (Japanese) Imperial Arsenal, Police, and Army; and (Chinese) Arsenal and Police.

Certain special features cannot be attributed to the factory. Those gunsmith additions include shoulder stocks, safeties, re-line and re-chambering jobs, sights and quite often engraving.

To help continue this research, the reader is asked to send the following information on any Model 2 Armies in a collection to : Ron Curtis, 195 Porta Vista, Monterey, CA., 93940.  
Phone/Fax 831-647-8573.  
e-mail: wedgwood@garlic.com

- 1- Serial Number
- 2- Type (from chart)
3. Assembly marking,
- 4- Barrel length
- 5- Grip material
- 6- Finish
- 7- Unusual markings
- 8- Engraving
- 9- Inscription
- 10- Other data, (casing, history, and comments).

**MODEL 2 ARMY SERIAL NUMBER TABLE**, compiled from Day Book Records by Roy C. Jinks

1861	1 - 2122	1867	50160	- 54227
1862	2123 - 10511	1868	54228	- 62921
1863	10512 - 15859	1869	62922	- 67505
1864	15860 - 29358	1870	67506	77020
1865	29359 - 46475	1871	77021	77151
1866	48476 - 50159	1872	77152	77155

Table No. 1 will list all of the Number Two's we have identified and listed. If you own a model not on the list we would be happy to include it .

## Table No. One

### Model Number Two

#### Serial Number:

Number 2	was offered by the Devine Auction House in October of the year 2000. A partial description indicated that it had a civil war pedigree.
Number 8	was discovered by John Otteman. It was obvious that it was a restamp however on close examination it indeed is the serial number 8. The right 8 stamps were on the grips, it had the retaining pin and all assembly numbers matched. However the number 8 on the butt was much larger and did not look like the original S&W stamp.
Number 20	is just listed as a 6' no other data
Number 23	is an inscribed gun, Wm. Streeer, 1867. The gun is about 85 % nickel-plated. For years this was a prize in my collection as it was the lowest serial number I had obtained at the time.
Number 41	is a 6" blued 70% however the cylinder has been replaced
Number 45	is a 6"blued 50%
Number 46	is a 5" blued
Number 54	is a 6" blued
Number 56	is a 6" blued inscribed on the back strap "Wesley Shaver, Fredericksburg, VA. March 5 <sup>th</sup> , 1862 with CSA stamped on the butt.
Number 66	is one of a pair. I am not sure if the other one is number 65 or 67 however they were a consecutive pair. At the time of my first research one was in the possession of John Wilson, a collector from Peyote Texas. A well-known collector who at the time did not wish it to be known that it was in his possession owned the other. These were the Lombard guns, and both guns were engraved on the back strap with cannon and drum flags by LDN. (Nimschke) The grips were rose wood and there was no engraving on the cylinder.
Number 75	is a 6" blued
Number 80	is a 6" blued with no finish
Number 82	is a 6"blued with little finish

That completes the available data on two digit numbers Model Number Two's and gives an indication of what type of data we have compiled to date.

Where data is incomplete it is often due to the fact most of the information has been supplied by the owners and in some cases the information was minimal or consisted only of a serial number although in other instances we have several pages of documentation.

Following are details on some special Number Two's as reported in our study which may be of interest to the collector.

Number 148	Cylinder stamped R. White pat. Issued for use to defend R White patent. Featured in the Otteman Collection
Number 283	Back strap engraved in script F.A. Bushee
Number 613	5" Blue Inside left grip Lieut. H.H. Eaton
Number 634	5" nickel C.S.A. 62 stamped on the butt
Number 1033	6" Blue Heavy scroll engraved: Presented to HKC by his friends.

	Name on butt Capt. H K Cooley
Number 4606	6" Blue Engraved on back strap Lt. Col. I B. Post 95 <sup>th</sup> N.Y.V. from D R Ryers
Number 4964	B. A. Farnham. Inscribed in the left pearl grip and on the brass plate in the lid of a fine French fitted case. 6" blue 90%. This gun was stolen from the Otteman collection.
Number 5071	6" blue. Engraved. Cased. Obtained in Whittier by John Otteman. Formerly owned by Benson Ford of the Ford family.
Number 5816	6" Blue. This gun belonged to Gen. Sterling Price. Weak providence
Number 5848	6" blue. See 9201 below.
Number 5966	6" silver 95% finish. Plain ivory grips cased in a standard case
Number 6764	6" blue. With #8426 this was my first purchase of a double casing. Arnie Chernoff saw it on Ray Petry's table at a gun show and called me to say it was the first French fitted double casing he had seen. The "Custer" guns were the second such.
Number 6903	5" Silver and Gold Carved Ivory grips engraved one of a pair
Number 6904	The matching gun to 6903. The guns are in separate collections.
Numbers 6926,	7137 and 7297 are all marked with the Kittridge stamp
Number 7410	6" Blue 98% Inscribed to Lieut. Frank C. Wilson by his Chicago friends, Sept. 25th, 1862
Number 7711	6" Blue Back strap, inscribed James W. Smith. ( accompanying document stating James W. Smith joined the army during the civil War as a musician
Number 8838	6" Blue 80% inscribed Lieut. C.B. Wilson, 53 Regt. Mass Vol.
Number 8426	Part of French double casing described under 6764 above.
Number 9119	5" nickel. This is an interesting gunsmith special, trigger filled in a firing mechanism by a button on the left side of the frame
Number 9201	6" blue. Along with Number 5848 these are English proofs in an English style case and are a feature item in the Otteman collection
Number 9678	5" Blue Killed two men in Providence. From the Arnie Chernoff collection
Number 9844	5" Silver 95% with carved ivory grips
Number 10542	6" No finish (in the white?) Frame, cylinder and barrel frame has boar scene on left side, deer scene on right. Period of engraving is questionable.
Number 10627	6" sleeved for 22 with over sized grips
Number 11182	6" blue 40% engraved thorough the blue. Question period of engraving.
Number 12487	6" 95% nickel with gold cylinder hammer and extractor. Relief carved ivory grips, portrait of bearded man on left side, scroll engraved frame cylinder, rear half of barrel. A nickel bbl and frame cased in partition casing with cartridge board. Featured in the Otteman collection
Number 13387	6" reblue inscribed Col D. McCook
Number 13805	5" Ivory grips Nimschke engraving, rough, and condition poor
Number 14584	Barrel cut to 2 7/8 fully engraved
Number 15140	4" bbl Only known engraved 4" Model # 2, with rare features, 4" bbl, with pearl grips and half plate.
Number 15437	6" silver plate 90% (but thin) Ivory grips
Number 15553	Bbl cut 2 1/2. Inscribed To Rosie O'Neal from her ardent admirer H.T.
Number 15894	6" reblue engraved
Number 16020	6" silver presentation to Geo ? presented by his friend. Boston. Sept 1863
Number 16490	6" Blue 98 %, in original box Showed up at Glastonbury gun show in 1973
Number 17006	6" engraved heavily, cleaned ivory grips.
Number 17160	6" silver engraved LDN pearl grips
Number 17248	6" engraved Nimschke. Note: we have a second one with the same serial number 6" blue
Number 17425	silver pearl grips inscribed on back strap Rea Vis ti AATC cased in fitted case. (No further information available.) Gun in France.
Number 18552	6" blue used May – June 1864. killed June 1864
Number 18636	6" silver engraved carved ivory grips cased with
Number 18778	6" silver engraved carved ivory grips cased with the above Number 2
Number 19222	6" nickel inscribed To Lt. Wetchaill from Co.C23nd regt. EMDM
Number 19671	6" silver fully engraved with pearl grips

- Number 19710 6" engraved (no other info)  
Number 20793 6' etched plain pearl grips quite scarce  
Number 20834 6"engraved and inlaid silver inlaid with plain pearl grips  
Number 21001 silver, engraved gold wash hammer  
Number 22404 6"blue 98% inscribed Lt. Col. Kilpatrick Co B 5<sup>th</sup> regt. Ohio infantry, cased, this one has cameo of the colonel.  
Number 22697 6" nickel 95% Carved ivory grips gold cylinder & hammer English style case.  
Number 22901 6" blue. Part of Ron Curtis collection. Has photograph of J.H.Ward who was given his commission by Abraham Lincoln.  
Number 23443 6" blue 90% Engraved rosewood stocks  
Number 23495 6" nickel Along with 68507, a standard double partition style casing from the collection of Roy Jinks, which has given me great pleasure for many years. (Thanks, Roy, J.O..)  
Number 23612 6" nickel 50% engraved, pearl grips. Inscribed on back strap Lt. Col. M. Mullins 40<sup>th</sup>.Ky.Mtd. Inf..  
Number 24156 6" nickel rosewood grips. This gun is cased and definitely reworked.  
Number 25290 4 3/8" unusual in that it is a rim fire /center fire  
Number 25615 5" silver plate with carved eagle pearl grips. This is a deluxe cased Number 2 purchased from Tom Lewis.( RC comments) What is unique about this gun is the monogram in the lid. d.W. b. The quality would lead one to surmise that there is a chance this is D.B. Wesson's personal gun. (J.O. comments. This is truly the finest #2 I have ever seen except for a gold inlaid model in the collection of Roy Jinks. The casing of this #2 is probably the finest single casing of any revolver of any kind, anywhere.)  
Number 25971 6" silver engraved pearl grips under frame Capt. A.S. Libbey, cased  
Number 26212 6" silver 90% pearl grips inscribed Lieut A.E. Marshall 2<sup>nd</sup>. NHV  
Number 26252 6" silver Ivory carved left grip engraved  
Number 26610 6" blue 95% etched leaf pattern mate to 295509 I think these are the Custer Guns .  
Number 27632 6' Nickel 40% engraved barrel and frame, etched cylinder, cased in English case  
Number 27713 6" silver engraved acid etched cylinder  
Number 27992 6" reblue one of several marked US on butt strap (to date no significance)  
Number 29608 6" engraved with pearl grips  
Number 29686 6" nickel /Gold pearl grips Rt. Bbl. flat EC Gale Troy NY  
Number 32045 6" gold / silver pair ivory grips cased  
Number 31636 6" nickel plain ivory grips inscribed in grip Col. S.J. 1863  
Number 31892 6" silver 30% plain pearl grips engraved  
Number 32173 6" blue engraved plain pearl grips  
Number 33118 6" 60% blue Kittridge marked  
Number 34056 6" Gold wash fully engraved ivory grips carved portrait of three stars Civil War general  
Number 34077 6" pearl grips engraved.  
Number 34443 Blue 80% this has oriental markings  
Number 34602 6" silver frame blue bbl and cylinder 95% inscribed on side plate Best Shot in West. Dist. of Miss. Oct 1865. (This is one of my all time favorites I have visitation rights when I am in St Louis. RC.)  
Number 35071 5" nickel engraved (cut through the nickel) carved ivory  
Number 36438 6" nickel engraved rose pattern rose wood grips  
Number 37188 6" Blue scroll engraved ivory grips  
Number 37677 6" silver engraved Ivory grips inscribed M. Detched  
Number 39554 6" blue 96% Marked Kittridge & Co  
Number 39744 6" Blue 80% Japanese marked on left side  
Number 39807 6" silver 90% Silver inscribed G.G. Tanner in old English. This gun is featured in the Otteman collection  
Number 40338 5" silver engraved bone grips, carving of a head  
Number 40386 5" Silver engraved (appears to me to be in the style of the Young shop)  
Number 41106 6" Blue Japanese police  
Number 41286 6" Blue Japanese marked, has a lanyard ring left grip bronze plate

- Number 41812 6" 98% blue inscribed BBNA 8 (British Bank of North America)  
Number 41984 6" Blue Marked Kittridge on left side of bbl.  
Number 43154 6" Silver 90% acid etched Roman bust carved on left grip. Ivory.  
Number 43768 6" blue. Cased with a new Model 1 1/2 (The only known model to date.) formerly part of the Ron Curtis collection now featured in the Otteman collection  
Number 45297 6" nickel 70% grips pearl plain, inscribed Col. J.W. Larkess. Left grip carved  
Number 45398 4" blued Model 1 1/2, cased with 43768 above.  
Number 47308 6" Blue Rim fire/Center fire  
Number 47480 6" nickel . 85%. Engraved (Have pictures of this one)  
Number 47767 6" blue 75% scroll engraved. Featured in the Otteman collection (J.O. comments. This was my first purchase of an engraved No.2 from Arnie Chernoff, whom I followed around at gun shows for almost three years before getting it. Arnie was positive it was a real Nimschke engraved gun. When asked how he knew something was real, Arnie replied, "When you look at enough good guns, you will know in the pit of your stomach.")  
Number 50847 Used in a murder, light documentation, interesting story  
Number 51580 5" nickel plate on the bottom for skeleton stock.  
Number 51816 5" blue engraved  
Number 52323 6" silver, ivory grips Obtained from old time (now deceased) dealer Chris Anderson by John Otteman.  
Number 53565 6" blue, plate added on the bottom for stock rim fire/center fire  
Number 54864 6" blue Japanese mark left side of the bbl.  
Number 55106 6" blue Japanese mark left side of the bbl  
Number 55263 Blue engraved. English proofs Ivory grips  
Number 55488 6" Blue Japanese mark on left side of the bbl  
Number 57479 6" Experimental thumb cylinder lock  
Number 58668 5" Blue Chinese mark right side of the bbl.  
Number 59680 6" blue Japanese mark on left side of the bbl.  
Number 60120 6" Blue Inscribed J H Crane sales agent Royal Exchange of London  
Number 60288 6" blue Japanese mark on the left side of the bbl.  
Number 61206 6" blue Japanese mark on the left side of the bbl  
Number 61286 6" blue English proof  
Number 65654 6" blue engraved ivory grips BBNA (British Bank of North America)  
Number 66427 6" blue, French maker, inscribed on bbl. Inscription on card cannot be read other than Paris However I had one in nickel in my collection with the same mark.  
Number 67079 6" nickel inscribed Claude Brevet a Paris. I would guess from what I can determine it is the same as the above listed gun.  
Number 68507 6" nickel standard double partition style casing. Part of a pair described under 23495 above.  
Number 69752 5" blue 75%. Cased, English proofed, inscribed Jose Febarzo Ortua 1873. (He was the Chilean ambassador to the Court of King James.  
Number 69867 5" blue. English proof  
Number 70480 6" blue 80%. French address in French style casing.  
Number 71388 6" profusely engraved. Mother of pearl grips.(J.O.) Obtained from eastern dealer Alan Kelly who died in a plane crash. Roy Jinks calls this one of the finest 6" bbl # 2's he has seen.  
Number 71467 5" silver engraved (appears as if engraving is recut.)  
Number 72089 6" rimfire/centerfire  
Number 73304 6" blue. Hard rubber grips sleeved for 22 calibers. Marked on left side bbl. 22 NRA ctg.  
Number 73609 6" silver. Engraved ivory-checked grips.  
Number 75381 5" silver. Full engraved rosewood grips.  
Number 76487 5" silver engraved.  
Number 76565 5" nickel 95%. Gustavo Young engraved.  
Number X10 6" nickel 98%. Ivory grips, rim.  
Number X 6" nickel 85%. Butt slots for stock drilled and tapped hole in back strap.