

Colt Frontier Six Shooter

Serial Number 67630

By Rusty Edwards

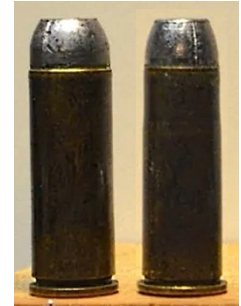


This Colt Frontier Six Shooter (CFSS) was made at the Colt factory in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1881; seven months before the famous gunfight at the OK Corral. Colt started making these revolvers in 1877, following the success of their Model 1873 Single-Action Army (SAA) revolver. The CFSS is a civilian version of the Colt SAA revolver chambered in .44 Winchester Centerfire (WCF), instead of .45 Colt.

The Colt Historian, Beverly Haynes, couldn't locate the factory shipping record for this revolver. She speculated it had been lost or misplaced over the years. This occasionally happens as the records were written on paper and have been stored for many years. Ms. Haynes did confirm that Colt shipped #67626 on May 2, 1881. Since the two serial numbers are only three guns apart, it's very likely this revolver was shipped on/or about the same day.

According to author Don Wilkerson, J. P. Moores & Sons coined the name "Frontier Six Shooter." In a letter to the Colt treasurer, they said they had good success with the new .44 WCF cartridge and wanted to promote it by having Colt mark each barrel with the phrase "Frontier Six Shooter." Colt liked the idea and began to advertise their .44 caliber model as the "Colt Frontier Six Shooter." From 1877 to 1889, they used acid to etch this information on the left side of each barrel. These impressions were typically very thin and prone to being easily worn off. To prevent this from happening, Colt roll stamped this legend on Frontier model revolvers after 1889. Today, it's difficult to find an early acid etched Colt Frontier Six Shooters with the marking still visible.

Winchester considered using the .45 Colt when they designed their Model 1873 rifle. Colt refused to share their .45 cartridge due to proprietary concerns. Winchester then decided to create a new round. They reduced the bullet diameter to .44 caliber and seated it in a slightly tapered shell casing. The .44 WCF was an instant hit. Fortunately for Colt, Winchester didn't restrict access to their new cartridge. In 1877, Colt built their first FSS in this caliber. This gave people the ability to use the same cartridge in both rifle and revolver. The *Colt FSS* and Winchester Model 1873 rifle quickly became one of the most common firearm combinations in the "Old West."





.45 Colt & .44 WCF

1881 was a tumultuous year in the Old West. "Billy the Kid" escaped from the Lincoln County Jail in New Mexico and was later killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett. Wyatt Earp, along with his two brothers and Doc Holliday, was in a deadly gunfight outside the O.K. Corral. Tombstone Marshal Virgil Earp was shot in the back by associates of the men killed in the O.K. Corral gunfight. Famous lawman Bat Masterson had his last gunfight in Dodge City. Judge Isaac Parker, known as the "Hanging Judge," sentenced five men to death on one gallows ride at Fort Smith, Arkansas. Sitting Bull surrendered to the US Army, and Texas Marshal Dallas Stoudenmire was in a famous gunfight referred to as "Four Dead in Five Seconds."

Colt made 11,000 single action revolvers during 1881. About 20 percent were chambered in .44 WCF. For record keeping, Colt considered the FSS to be the same as the SAA and grouped them together under the same serial number series.

Most Colt single action revolvers were used by ordinary people. Some, however, were carried by the most famous gunfighters, lawmen, outlaws, and ranchers of the time. Here are a few of them, along with the serial numbers (SN) of their guns. The serial number of this gun is 67630.

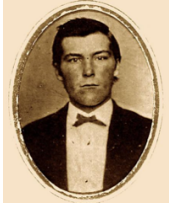
Photo	Name	Brief Biography	SN
	Tom Horn	Old West scout, Pinkerton agent, range detective, cowboy, soldier, and hired gun. This gun was presented to Horn in 1882 by the citizens of Tombstone for his service as scout with the 3rd U.S. Cavalry.	66306
	Lawman in the Indian Territory	Unidentified lawman who was killed in the Indian Territory while holding this gun. It is currently on display at the Ralph Foster Museum, the College of the Ozarks, MO. The hammer was repaired where it was struck by a bullet.	66617



Beau
McCutcheon

Cattle rancher in NW Texas who served on a posse led by Texas Ranger Captain John Hughes. Their gunfight with horse thieves is recounted in at least two books about the Texas Rangers.

67074



John Wesley
Hardin

Famous gunfighter, who is considered by many historians to be the deadliest man in the Old West. Court records confirm that Hardin owned this gun. It was listed as part of his estate after his death.

68837



Charles
Goodnight

Former Texas Ranger who worked closely with John Chisolm to establish the Chisolm Trail. In the novel Lonesome Dove, Call was a likeness of Charles Goodnight. The Colt factory letter shows this gun was shipped to him in 1881.

69125



Wyatt Earp

Legendary lawman who served in Dodge City and Tombstone. He was a central figure in the gunfight at the OK Corral. This Colt revolver was shipped to Earp before the shootout, but most historians don't believe it was used during the famous gun battle.

69562



Jesse James

Notorious killer and outlaw who robbed banks in Missouri and other states. This gun is well documented and a photo of it appears in the book "The Peacemakers Arms and Adventures in the American West."

70579



Jesse Jame's Colt Revolver #70579