

JOHN MOHR

August 1, 1980



My son, Dr. Richard J. Mohr, has advised me that he has presented to you a revolver which at one time was the property of Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, deceased, and which revolver was owned by me. The revolver in question was given to me by Mr. Clyde A. Tolson, deceased, who inherited it from Mr. Hoover. Mr. Hoover was formerly the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the revolver was presented to him as a gift. Mr. Tolson was formerly the Associate Director of the F.B.I. and a long-time friend of Mr. Hoover. It was Mr. Tolson who advised me the revolver had been presented to Mr. Hoover as a gift. Mr. Tolson not only inherited the bulk of Mr. Hoover's estate, but was also the executor of said estate. I was formerly the Assistant to the Director of the F.B.I. and Mr. Tolson was my superior and I regarded him as my friend.

To complete the ownership of the revolver, I presented it to my son, Richard, since he is an amateur collector of firearms. The revolver, which was in excellent condition when it left me is described as follows:

Smith & Wesson, Mod. 37, Serial #24325,
.38 Spl., with 2 inch barrel and a round
butt. The frame is engraved on the right
side "J. Edgar Hoover". My son advised me
that the engraving was done by Smith & Wesson.

It has been a pleasure to be of assistance to you in this instance.

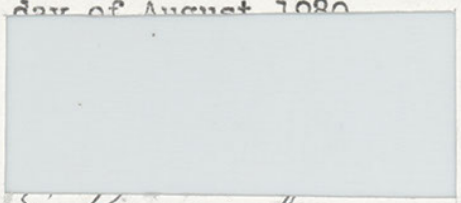
Sincerely yours,

John D. Mohr
(over)

JOHN MONE

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA,
COUNTY OF ARLINGTON:

Signed and sealed before me this 1st day of August 1983



Carolyn E. Russell

CAROLYN E. RUSSELL

My commission expires June 21, 1983

has advised as that
for which at one time
deceased, and
The revolver in question
was owned by me. The revolver
to me by Mr. Clyde A. Tolson, deceased, who
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the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation,
and the revolver was presented to him as a gift.
Mr. Tolson was formerly the Associate Director of the
F. B. I. and a long-time friend of Mr. Hoover. It was
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Director of the F. B. I. and Mr. Tolson was my superior
and I regarded him as my friend.

To complete the ownership of the revolver, I pre-
sented it to my son, Richard, since he is an amateur
collector of firearms. The revolver, which was in ex-
cellent condition when it left me is described as follows:

Smith & Wesson, Mod. 37, Serial #24225,
38 S&W, with 2 inch barrel and a round
butt. The frame is engraved on the right
side "E. Edgar Hoover". Tolson advised me
that the engraving was done by Smith & Wesson.

It has been a pleasure to be of assistance to you
in this instance.

Sincerely yours,
John Mone
(over)

SMITH & WESSON

A BANGOR PUNTA COMPANY
SUITE 506 BARR BUILDING
910 17TH STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006
TELEPHONE (202) 659-8190



January 29, 1981



In response to your telephone request for information concerning a Smith & Wesson Chief's Special air weight revolver with serial number 24325, I am pleased to forward the enclosed copies of data from our records.

The invoice corresponding to revolver number 24325 shows that this revolver left our factory on December 22, 1952. It was shipped to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Also attached are 2 copies from the proper page in our master handgun log book. The entry for this serial confirms the shipping date and the recipient of that revolver.

We are unable to locate records showing when or by whom the revolver was engraved; however, it is most likely that the name would have been inscribed by Smith & Wesson's engravers before the revolver was presented to Mr. Hoover.

I sincerely hope this information is useful to you in preparing your document for the Smithsonian. If you desire further assistance please call us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis B. Lee".

Dennis B. Lee
Director, International
and Government Liaison

Enclosure



Advertising (Cost of Sales SPRINGFIELD, MASS.
Acct)

Dec. 22, 1952

TERMS
F. O. B. Springfield, Mass, U. S. A.
Less 2 per cent. cash in ten days, 30 days net.
Interest at the rate of six per cent per annum will be charged after 30 days.
The averaging of invoice dates is not permitted under our terms.

BOUGHT OF SMITH & WESSON, INC.

SMITH AND WESSON, INC. DO HEREBY
GUARANTEE THAT THE GOODS LISTED
HEREIN WERE PRODUCED OR MANUFACTURED
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL
CHILD LABOR ACT OF SEPTEMBER 12, 1916

MANUFACTURERS OF SUPERIOR REVOLVERS

Order of 12-5-52

1 Chiefs Special 2 - Aluminum

Ser. Nos 24325

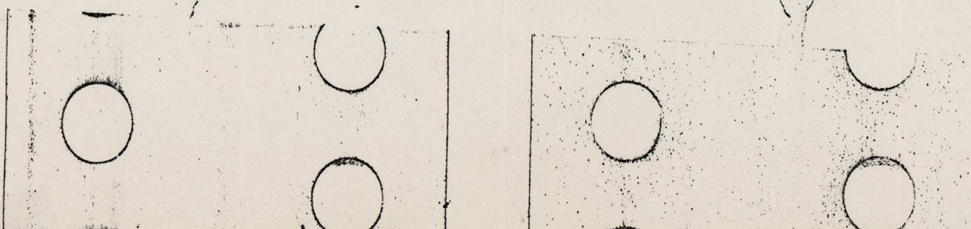
DO NOT SEND OUT OF OFFICE

Shipped to Mr. J. Edgar Hoover
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C.

By Prepaid Express

Charge Mr. Hellstrom \$1.00

Be sure to verify weights and examine seals before accepting goods from Transportation Company, and do not accept unless the weight on the case when received corresponds with that on the bill of lading, and seals are intact.





Springfield Mass November 21, 1989

Mr. Clark Cail
P. O. Box 154
Chiang, ME 04926

Dear Mr. Cail:

We received your letter of recent date in reference to the Smith & Wesson .38 Chiefs Special. The .38 Chiefs Special, or Model 36 as it is known today, was introduced in 1950 at the International Association of Chiefs of Police held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The name for the new revolver, "Chiefs Special", was selected by vote from all of the Chiefs of Police from all over the world.

This new unique revolver was the beginning of Smith & Wesson's famous J frame. Smith & Wesson was manufacturer of small frame revolvers using its old .32 caliber size frame called the I frame. However, when the factory wanted to upgrade its small revolver to the more powerful .38 special cartridge, it was necessary to develop a frame which had a window opening to accomodate a cylinder of sufficient length for the .38 special cartridge.

The early production Chiefs Special revolvers incorporated the small size grip and trigger of the I frame which made the revolver very uncomfortable to shoot. Like any newly engineered model this revolver underwent many engineering changes during its first ten years of production. These changes are of interest to many serious collectors but are too numerous to discuss in this letter. A list of some of the more interesting ones are: half moon sight to round sight, cylinder stop activated by screw and plunger to internal spring activated cylinder stop, side plate change from four screw to three screw, grip and trigger guard lengthened and enlarged, thumb latch from flat to raised, hammer from ball and socket to pin stirrup type. For details on these changes it is necessary to obtain a copy of the History of Smith & Wesson by Roy G. Jinks.



-continued-

SMITH & WESSON



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The .38 Chiefs Special was originally offered with a two inch barrel in blue and nickel finish, having a round butt. In December of 1950 a three inch barrel length was added and in 1952, the handgun was offered with both round and square butt.

In 1957, as the factory began to incorporate the use of computers, they assigned model numbers to all their various handguns. It was at this time the Chiefs Special became known as the Model 36.

We hope this brief history on the .38 Chiefs Special is of interest to you.

We have researched your Smith & Wesson Model 36 .38 Chiefs Special in company records which indicate that your handgun, with serial number 24325, was a gift from Mr. C. R. Hellstrom to J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the F.B.I. It was shipped from Smith & Wesson on December 22, 1952. The value of this revolver is very difficult to access because of its historical significance. It is a unique one of a kind items and is certainly one of the most valuable Smith & Wessons' of our time.

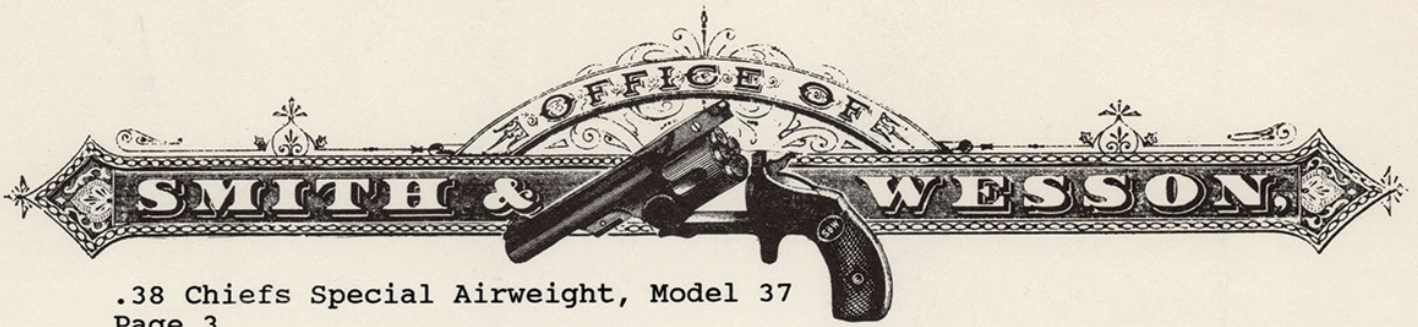
We trust that the information furnished will be helpful and of interest.

Sincerely,

SMITH & WESSON

Roy G. Jinks
Historian





.38 Chiefs Special Airweight, Model 37
Page 3

We trust that the information furnished will be helpful and of interest to you.

Sincerely,

SMITH & WESSON

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Roy G. Jinks".

Roy G. Jinks
Historian

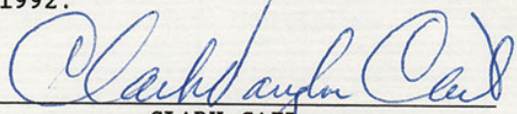
RGJ/sg

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF

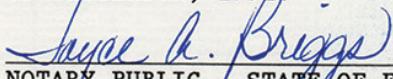
SMITH & WESSON MODEL 36 .38 CHIEFS SPECIAL
SERIAL NO. 24325 ENGRAVED "J. EDGAR HOOVER"

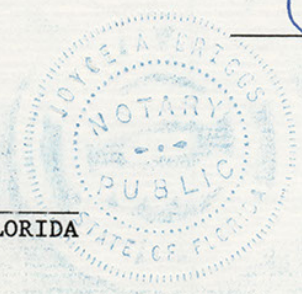
1. December 5, 1952 - Requisitioned by Smith & Wesson for delivery to J. Edgar Hoover as authorized by Mr. Hellstrom.
2. December 22, 1952 - Delivered to J. Edgar Hoover, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C. See Exhibit "A" - Copy of Smith & Wesson's Master Handgun Log Book evidencing delivery.
3. May, 1972 - Upon the death of J. Edgar Hoover, the gun was inherited by Mr. Clyde A. Tolson, the Associate Director of the F.B.I and the Executor of the Estate of J. Edgar Hoover.
4. Date Unknown - Gifted by Mr. Clyde A. Tolson to John P. Mohr of Herndon, Virginia, former Assistant to the Director of the F.B.I. See Exhibit "B" - Letter from John P. Mohr, evidencing his receipt and subsequent gift to his son, Dr. Richard Mohr.
5. Date Unknown - Gifted by John P. Mohr to his Son, Dr. Richard Mohr. See Exhibit "B".
6. Date Unknown - Sold to John J. Tonkovic III by Dr. Richard Mohr.
7. 1988 - Sold to Clark Cail of China, Maine by John J. Tonkovic, III.
8. September, 1992 - Sold to Anthony V. Pugliese, III of Boca Raton, Florida by Clark Cail.

Under penalty of perjury, I hereby confirm that the above accounting of the Smith & Wesson .38 Chiefs Special Model 36, made expressly for J. Edgar Hoover, the former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, owned and held until his death in 1972, is a true and absolute correct chronological history dating from its inception to this 24th day of September, 1992.


CLARK CAIL

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED
BEFORE ME THIS 24TH DAY
OF SEPTEMBER, 1992


NOTARY PUBLIC, STATE OF FLORIDA



My Commission Expires:



Mr. Anthony V. Pugliese, III
Crystal Corporate Center
2500 Military Trail
Suite 200
Boca Raton, Florida 33431

Springfield Mass November 9 19 92

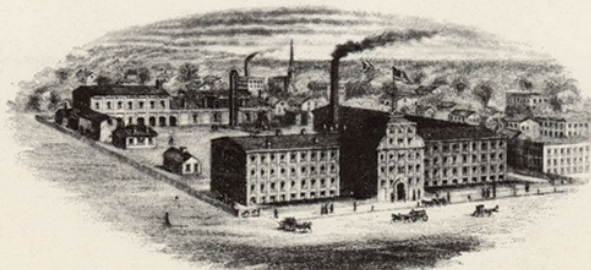
Dear Mr. Pugliese:

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding the .38 Chiefs Special Airweight, Model 37.

This revolver was originally developed in 1951 to be the lightest weight revolver available.

The plans for the revolver specified that the frame and cylinder be produced from high tinsel strength aircraft aluminum. The barrel, yoke and internal parts were to be produced of regular steel. The first of the production models of this revolver were finished in December of 1952. These early Airweight Chiefs Specials had a 2 inch barrel and weighed only 10 3/4 ounces thus accomplishing the factory's objective of producing an extremely lightweight revolver. This first group of production models completed were serial numbered in the standard J-Frame serial number series with the beginning numbers being the 24000 serial number range.

Several revolvers from the first production lot of Airweight Chiefs Specials were presented to chief executives of the various ammunition companies and leaders of the top law enforcement agencies in the United States. The most distinguished member of the law enforcement community to receive one of those handguns was Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI.



SMITH & WESSON



.38 Chiefs Special Airweight, Model 37
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A few of these very lightweight models were evaluated by the U.S. Air Force as part of their Air Crew Program. This resulted in an order for 605 of this model. These revolvers were serial numbered with a special Air Force serial number which was prefixed with "A.F." and the numbers provided by the Air Force to Smith & Wesson were 1795 to 2399.

These revolvers had Air Force property markings and the grips utilized a Air Force medallion rather than the regular Smith & Wesson logo monogram.

The collector should use caution as there are numerous fakes of the Air Force Model.

It was produced with the alloy cylinder until 1954 when a steel cylinder was incorporated to meet the requirements of the higher velocity ammunition. The original .38 Chiefs Special Airweight weighed only 10 3/4 ounces whereas the later version having a steel cylinder weighed 12 1/2 ounces. It is important that if you have an aluminum cylinder version of the Chiefs special Airweight, that you do not fire it with modern ammunition and return it to the factory to have a steel cylinder installed at no charge. We will return the handgun to you and the original cylinder to protect the collector value.

In 1957 when model numbers were being added to our line of handguns this revolver was called the Model 37. This revolver has been a very popular handgun and continues in production today.

We have researched your Smith & Wesson Chiefs Special Airweight in company records which indicate that your handgun, with serial number 24325, was shipped from our factory on December 22, 1952, and delivered to J. Edgar Hoover, Washington, D.C. Our records also indicate that this handgun left our factory with 2 inch barrel and aluminum cylinder. The handgun was charged to President C.K. Hellstrom at a cost of \$1.00.