

Winchester 1897 Shotgun - Manufacture Dates

The following serial numbers were assigned at the end of the years shown below

1899	96999*	1929	807321
1900	129332*	1930	812729
1901	161665*	1931	830721
1902	193998*	1932	833926
1903	226331*	1933	835637
1904	258664	1934	837364
1905	296037	1935	839728
1906	334059	1936	848684
1907	377999	1937	856729
1908	413618	1937	856729
1909	446888	1938	860725
1910	481062	1939	866938
1911	512632	1940	875945
1912	544313	1941	891190
1913	575213	1942	910072
1914	592732	1943	912265
1915	607673	1944	912327
1916	624537	1945	916472
1917	646124	1946	926409
1918	668383	1947	936682
1919	691943	1948	944085
1920	696183	1949	953042*
1921	700428	1950	961999*
1922	715902	1951	970956*
1923	732060	1952	979913*
1924	744942	1953	988860*
1925	757629	1954	997827*
1926	770527	1955	1006784*
1927	783574	1956	1015741*
1928	796806	1957	1024700*

* Estimates

In June 1897, after about 34,000 shotguns Model 1893 had been made, the following changes were made. (Evidently, A and B versions referred to the 1893) Then the gun was called the Model 1897, the serial numbers of the guns continuing.

- 1st. Top of cartridge ejecting opening in frame made straight.
- 2nd. Spring placed on inside of action handle encircling magazine.
- 3rd. Release pin and plunger (for action slide lock)
- 4th. New firing pin lock put in breech block.
- 5th. Friction spring put in under cartridge guide.
- 6th. Collar put inside of magazine to keep spring and follower from coming out.
- 7th. Screw put in receiver to hold magazine from turning.
- 8th. Receiver holding bolt made shorter.
- 9th. Buttstock made longer, drop changed, and outside shape changed slightly.
- 10th. Top of breech block made straight.

In February 1898, after about 47,000 shotguns had been made, some changes were made in the Model 1897. Then the gun was marked with the letter "C" over the serial number.

- 1st. A small wire was put into the receiver and connected to the action slide lock release pin, to hold it from coming out when the gun was taken apart.
- 2nd. Receiver made .015" thicker on each side. This was thought best on account of the increased cuts on the inside.
- 3rd. Action slide lock spring changed.

In April 1898, after about 50,000 shotguns had been made (Model 1893 & 1897) some changes were made, and the model 1897 detachable barrel and magazine put on the market.

Additional changes were made. The first Model 1897's had no ejector spring. (The ejector was a little block pinned to the receiver wall.)

"C" guns had ejector spring. I don't know if all "B" guns had rounded end magazine plugs. The end of the magazine plug was flat on "D" guns.

"E" guns had slightly deeper 5/16 wide grooves on the receiver ring.

Prior to "E" guns, cartridge stops were fastened with screws through the receiver sides and shells were difficult to release from the magazine. For unloading, most shooters worked them through the action.

On E models, the cartridge stops fastened through the bottom of the action and providing buttons which could be pushed to retract the cartridge stops.

These are not all the changes. Madis stated that 37 major and 52 minor changes were made in the first 12 years of production of the Model 1897.

Other items that may be of some interest:

1. Standard shotgun stock was 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ ".
2. Frame altered to use 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " shells
3. Brush gun was made available November 1897 to 1931. It had shorter stock with more drop and 26 inch barrel.
4. Standard gun was made with rolled steel barrels, full choke standard. Cylinder or modified choke on special order.
5. Standard barrel length 30 or 32 inch. 30 inch shipped if not specified.
6. Trap Gun 12 and 16 gauge (1897 to 1931). The gun had 30 inch rolled steel barrel, select fancy walnut handmade stock. Straight checked grip with oil finish and black diamonds in the grip, and checked rubber butt plate. It was first listed at \$47. Trap Gun was engraved on the breech block and could be had with matted barrel. Within certain limits, purchasers could specify stock dimensions.
7. Solid frame and takedown trap guns were made. After 1926 Trap Gun was not always engraved on the breech block.
8. Receivers on Trap, Tournament, Pigeon, Standard Trap, and Special Trap guns had matted groove.

The preceding information was from Illapah Red