

Model 1913 .35 Automatic Pistol

could be used in the pistol. This would result in slightly bulged cases and a sacrifice in power and accuracy, but it worked in a pinch.

The removal procedure for the stocks on the pistol was novel. Once the retaining screws on each side were removed, the wooden panels had to be slid off downward, rather than being lifted off directly. They were attached to metal plates that were grooved into the grip frame. The first model of the pistol utilized a magazine release thumbpiece on the butt that moved to the side.

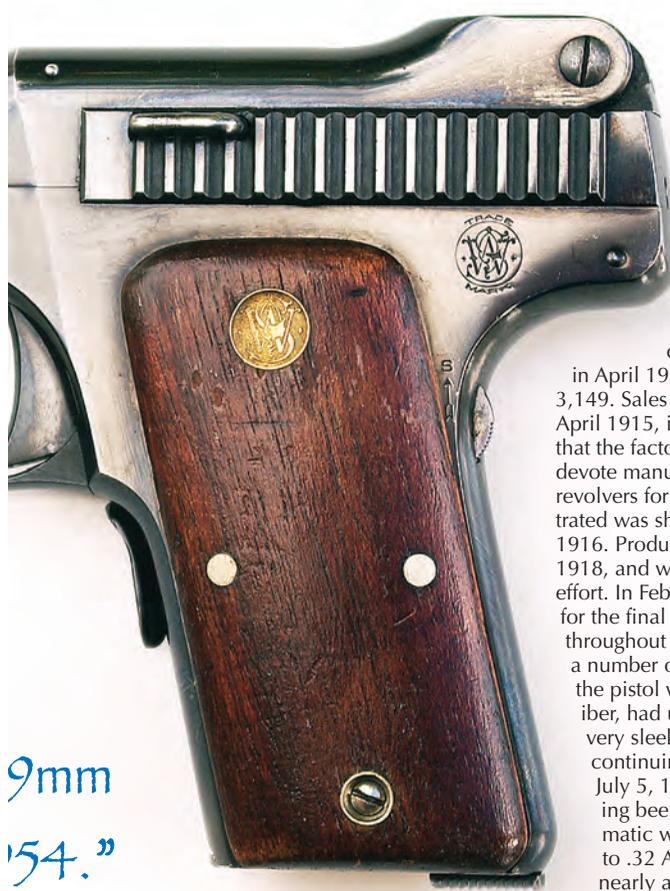
The barrel and recoil spring assembly could then be pivoted up around a transverse pin located above the slide at the rear of the pistol.

The unique manual safety was a bit controversial. It consisted of a very small rotating cam in the upper part of the backstrap. It was knurled and could be moved somewhat awkwardly by the thumb. When rotated up, the pistol was on safe. Rotated down, the pistol could fire. Always concerned with safety, Smith & Wesson saw this as a preventive measure against an unauthorized person using the pistol. Someone not familiar with the function of this tiny device would take some time to figure out why the pistol would not fire.

The tooling for Joe Wesson's new pistol was completed late in 1912, and production began on May 3, 1913. It was simply known as the .35 Automatic Pistol, and it was available in blue or nickel finish for \$16.50. It was billed as one of the safest and most dependable handguns in the world. The first production

change, the magazine catch, was made in April 1914, between serial numbers 3,000 and 3,149. Sales of the new pistol started off well. In April 1915, inventory of the pistols was sufficient that the factory ceased production in order to devote manufacturing capacity to producing revolvers for England's war needs. The pistol illustrated was shipped from that inventory in October 1916. Production started up once more in January 1918, and was then halted again for the U.S. war effort. In February 1919, manufacture was initiated for the final run. Six minor changes were made throughout manufacture, giving today's collectors a number of variations to collect. To its detriment, the pistol was made in an odd, non-standard caliber, had unconventional controls, and was not very sleek in appearance. With the pistol not continuing to sell well, production ceased on July 5, 1922, with a total of 8,350 pistols having been made. The successor to the .35 Automatic was a more streamlined pistol modified to .32 ACP, which, ironically, did not sell nearly as well. It was discontinued in 1937 with only 957 pistols having sold.

Smith & Wesson made no further semiauto pistols until the introduction of the 9mm Model 39 pistol in 1954. The Model 1913 .35 Automatic pistol was admittedly a dead-end failure for Smith & Wesson, but has become a definite classic for it being S&W's first semiauto pistol and its unique features. It is highly sought after by collectors, and excellent examples will command high prices today.



9mm
154."

This was later changed to one that moved back to release the seven-shot magazine. A Clement design feature that was retained was the innovative way the barrel was accessed for cleaning from the breech. First, the rear of the trigger guard was pulled down and forward to rotate it downward. This released a lug on the 3-1/2" barrel, allowing the front of the barrel to move upward.