

UNION ARMS AND CONTEMPORARY REVOLVERS.

By Henry M. Stewart, Jr.



HENRY M. STEWART, JR.

I come not to disagree with Herman Williams, but to clarify a bit if I may. I would like to dismiss the Union Arms Co. 2 Park Row, Hartford, Conn. Very quickly by offering as an exhibit a petition of insolvency dated as of December 1st, 1857 proving this company never got off the ground. I have a whole series of petitions and final agreement all furnished me by the Connecticut Historical Society attesting that they made nothing.

In late years knowledge of arms has been gained mostly by reading, whereas the old type collector depended on his mental storehouse of arms viewed and by physical comparison. The old school of gun collectors, of which a few of us are left, such as Sam Smith, Tom McHugh, myself and a few others, usually looked at a gun and tried to match it to something else that we

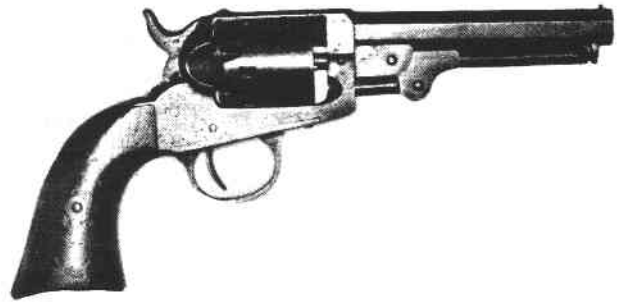
did know about. The unknown Union Arms Company solid frame that differs from any herein discussed, which was unmarked and written up in the Gun Collector as an unknown revolver by Sam Smith was typical of that type of research. Eventually I managed to get one with the name marked on it verifying the Union Arms and a tracing both to Bacon. Some of you may or may not know of the study we have put in on the cartridge infringement models by Lower, Grant, Uhlinger, Cone and dealers like that. When we got against those models by Lower and the others we invariably found that these people were dealers and as dealers there was no solution, we had to find the manufacturer. Sam came down to Philadelphia and when in Stokes-Kirk looked at a little Hankins percussion revolver, didn't buy it and I went right in behind him and bought it. Gentlemen the solution to the Lower, Grant, Uhlinger, Cone et al is that they were actually made by Hankins of Philadelphia who was associated with Sharps. The small pistol proved interchangeable and in one of the forth-coming works on the Sharps guns I believe this will be thoroughly clarified which brings me to the Union Arms Company study of finding an identical model by a known maker.

I have always been interested in Marston and have here with me all of my notes as I did not know just what Herman was going to talk about and thought that possibly they might help out because of the work that I had done tied in with the Union Arms Company. Getting interested in Marston led me to consult Doggetts, Trall of the financial listings of New York City and while digging out Marston's story I also dug out the Union Arms Company story and there was a confusion of a common name for many type arms in this thing that just didn't make sense. Let me, before I get into the meat of where the revolvers were made and where they come from, talk about the Union Arms Company musket. This musket, a contract of 25,000 arms is on record as actually a grouping of a number of contracts, and off the top of my head, I think the man that was president of Union Arms Company was a man named Gilleher. He combined all of the series of contracts into one and actually it is recorded that that Union Arms Company was of Newark, N. J. So for the sleuths from New Jersey, that is the New Jersey researchers, if they will look into this I think will find that this Union Arms Company was somewhere around the foot of Market Street in Newark and that this is the group that did make the musket. They had nothing to do, as far as I can find, with the revolvers. They did make muskets in 1863 though there is no recorded delivery to the government. I would imagine that in this room alone there must be five of those Union Arms Company muskets in collections, I know that I have one, Herman said that he had one and undoubtedly a show of hands would indicate that there were more than three extant. So it is my opinion, subject to your further scrutiny that the Union Arms Company musket had nothing to do with the Union Arms Company revolvers that we are examining.

As in the case of the study on the Hankins Company making the infringement cartridge revolvers, the first thing that I sought to do was to find a known manufactory that made a similar type of revolver to the Union Arms Company. Over there on the table there are specimens such as the Irving, Cliff Street, New York, which is totally different than the Union Arms Company altho facially resembling it. The Whitney, which I have here and if I may slightly change the classification of Herman, move every one of his identifications up one step and then go back and put in the first model, absically the difference being that the grip is square. A comparison of this gun with the first model of the Union Arms revolver and you will find that these are identical guns even to the deep cut back of the hammer to relieve the roller which only appears in the early sequence of the guns. Gentlemen, I offer you here a known manufactory, Phoenix Armory at Second and Twenty-second Avenue, New York City, owned and operated by W. W. Marston that was manufacturing revolvers and who made quite a number of the Phoenix Armory Marstons and the identically same model marked Union Arms Company. Over there on my table same model marked Union Arms Company. Over there on my table is a tracing of the various developments around the #1 Model. The first group consisted of five shot round cylingers, the second group as I classify them, consisted of five shot semi-fluted cylinders and the final group consists of six shot round

cylinders. There is also an example that came to me from California with a 7-1/2" barrel which upsets all of our knowledge of 3-1/4 and 4-1/4" barreled models.

The Phoenix Armory is quite a facinating place. In my research on Marstons I found out that there were five Marstons working in New York City as gunsmiths and I have here a complete chronology of their various places of business, the years they worked and the cross-overs and tie-ins of all of them. This lists the five Marston gunsmiths and their places of business right up to the end. What happened to their businesses? On July 13th to 15th, 1863 they decided to draft the boys from New York City to fight the poor Rebels, there were riots and it is a matter of record that one of the places of business that was burned to the ground was the Phoenix Armory. That apparently was the end of the manufacturing there.



W. W. MARSTON REVOLVER

This additional bit of information might as well go into the record, William F. Brooks made the Gibbs carbine and none of quite knew where that one was manufactured. We knew that he was a manufacturer of copper goods and flues and it turns out that he had gotten himself a gun making associate to produce the Gibbs Carbine. He apparently produced them at the Phoenix Armory because William W. Marston was his manufacturing associate. Their last deliveries were made the end of June 1863 and on July 13th the place was burned down and that was the end of the Gibbs contract. May to June were the only deliveries on the Gibbs contract.

I have a study of the various factors of evolutionary change in the designs which will be shown later, but I sincerely believe that based on evidence of examination of the common manufactured models that this particular type of revolver was made at the Phoenix Armory in New York City for this fictitious Union Arms Company even as we had London Arms Company being made by Bacon. The other guns that are over there, the open frame type, are manufactured under Gruler and Rebety's patent as I recall it and they were manufactured by Bacon Arms Company and marked as Union Arms Company. B. J. Hart who was mentioned earlier was a dealer at 55 Broadway, New York City. He sold many imitation guns including a very, very cheap imitaion of the Webley Double Action as well as this particular type of open frame. I believe Bacon was the manufacturer for any of these dealers for that type of gun and stamped it as they wished.

This is all that I have to say on these arms and hope that I have given some help in unraveling the picture on the Union Arms Company.

A GROUP OF POCKET AND BELT MODEL REVOLVERS IN CALIBER .36 MANUFACTURED BY THE PHOENIX ARMORY, NEW YORK CITY, FOR THE UNION ARMS COMPANY THAT HAVE BEEN STUDIED FOR EVOLUTIONARY FEATURES AND PROGRESSION FROM ONE MODEL TO THE OTHER WITH REGARD TO PLACING THE BELT MODEL REVOLVER IN THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE POCKET GROUP. CONDUCTED.....1956

Items observed are.

- 1..Advent of the 5 and 6 shot clyinder.....round or fluted
- 2..Grip fit to frame, either square or rounded, a la Walker
- 3..Loading lever and rammer, alone or plus linkage
- 4..Securing of cylinder pin by screw or tapered pin, clear thru or partial
- 5..Location of screw or pin, with regard to above, below or on center-line of cylinder
- 6..Cylinder pin flattened on top or round
- 7..Shape of end of cylinder pin where rammer loading lever is fastened, flat or round
- 8..Barrel, octagon or rounded, length
- 9..Trigger guard, brass only or brass with iron flat plate
- 10..Marking on barrel

SERIAL #

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|-----|
| 1097 | 5 rd | Square | Alone | Bolt Thru | CL |
| 1882 | 5 rd | Round | Alone | Bolt Thru | CL |
| 3032 | 5 rd | Round | Alone | Bolt Thru | CL |
| 6940 | 5 flt | Round | Alone | Bolt Thru | CL |
| 8142 | 5 flt | Round | Alone | Bolt Thru | CL |
| 10452 | 6 rd | Round | Alone | Bolt Thru | Abv |
| 11741 | 6 rd | Round | Link | Pin Thru | Abv |
| 12133 | 6 rd | Round | Link | Pin Thru | Abv |
| 12858 | 6rd | Round | Link | Pin Thru | Abv |

SERIAL #

| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|-------|-------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| 1097 | Flat | Flat | Oct 4-1/2 | Brs-Iron | 2 line |
| 1882 | Round | Rounded | Oct 7-1/2 | Brass | 2 line |
| 3032 | Round | Rounded | Oct 3-1/4 | Iron | 2 line |
| 6940 | Round | Rounded | Oct 6-1/4 | Brass | 2 line |
| 8142 | Round | Rounded | Oct 4-3/8 | Brass | 2 line |
| 10452 | Flat | Rounded | rd 5-3/8 | Brass | 1 line |
| 11741 | Flat | Rounded | Rd 4-1/2 | Brass | 1 line |
| 12133 | Flat | Rounded | Rd 4-3/8 | Brass | 1 line |
| 12858 | Flat | Rounded | Rd 4-1/4 | Brs-Iron | 1 line |