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THE “MERWIN” REVOLVERS FROM “ANITUA Y CHAROLA”



Six shot, 44 caliber, single action “Merwin” revolver, barrel length 174 mm, marked “REVOLVER AUTOMATICO SISTEMA MERWIN Y HULBERT. Pat, Nov. 81” and “FABRICA DE ARMAS DE ANITUA Y CHAROLA. EIBAR”, serial number 488. The grips bear Mexican motifs.

The “Anitua y Charola” firm was formed by Miguel Anitua Echeverria and Ignacio Charola Achucarro; In the Eibar Industrial Register for 1880-81 it appears with one declared worker while in 1883 it declared 22; In volume it was “the first Eibar arms work shop” followed by that of Vicente Arizmendi; It held this ranking in 1885 when both shops reduced their roster drastically, “Anitua y Charola” declaring only 10; This downturn was reversed in 1886 when Vicente Arizmendi declared 31 and “Anitua y Charola” 19; From 1887 on it appeared as “Anitua, Charola y C^a” and it again took the primary position with 39, one more than “Larrañaga, Garate y C^a”.

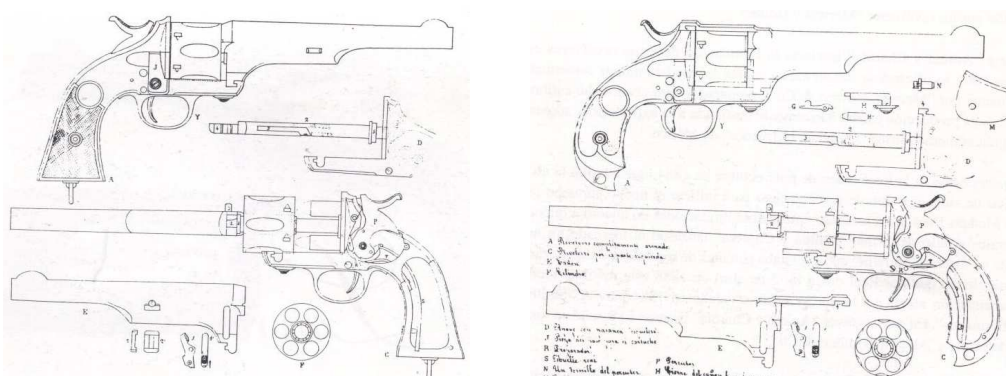
It stayed in that position during 1888 and 1889 with 39 and 34 workers respectively; From 1890 it appears with its old name of “Anitua y Charola” and for this

year and the next it was overtaken by “Larrañaga, Garate y C^a” although with the disappearance of this firm in 1892 it again occupied the primary position, in spite of having then only 16 workers; In 1893 it recovered and declared 35, sharing the first position with “Garate y Anitua” who declared the same number; From that date on it started its decline with only 6 workers between 1893-1898, and in 1899 it disappeared.

Its legal name appears as its trademark on Bull-Dog and Colt 1873 copies, in addition to revolvers based on those from the “Merwin, Hulbert & Co.” which were its “star product”; In July 1881 it applied for a five year patent for a “Merwin *revolver* Russian system” (maybe alluding to the “44 Russian” caliber) which was denied due to an administrative error in its presentation, but a month later they reapplied and this time it was granted; In 1883, 1887 and 1888 it applied for further patents for improvements to this revolver, and in this same 1888 he requested another one for “a procedure for verifying the automatic lock on all the Smith & Wesson revolvers” and also for the “modified Winchester carbine Md. 1886”; In 1889 he requested a patent for an “Abadia revolver”, based on the Belgian Abadie.

The revolver shown at the start of this article is the model patented by “Anitua y Charola” in 1881 and was a copy of the one produced by “Merwin, Hulbert and Co.” from 1876-1880; “Orbea Hermanos” also started to produce it and in 1883 “Anitua y Charola” sued them for breach of patent and won the suit in July of 1884 at the Court House in Pamplona.

This was a humiliation for “Orbea Hermanos” who, in 1885, sued in order to revoke the patent obtained by “Anitua y Charola” based on the fact that, when that patent was granted the revolver already was in domestic production, and they were able to prove that between July and November of 1881, the time between the first, denied, application, and the second, approved one, “Orbea Hermanos” had already started production of the “Merwin” revolver; This caused the annulment of “Anitua y Charola”’s patent in December 1886; By this time the patent was, anyway, about to expire and “Orbea Hermanos” had no interest in manufacturing the “Merwin” due to the success of their “ONA No. 7” which had been “recommended” for Chiefs and Officers of the Army in the Royal Order of October, 6, 1884.



Blueprints of the “Merwin” revolver as shown in “Anitua y Charola”’s patent applications.



Six shot, 44 caliber, double action, “Merwin” revolver for the Md.1884 cartridge; Barrel length 116 mm, marked “SISTEMA MERWIN REFORMADO Y PRIVILEGIADO” and “FABRICA DE ANITUA Y CHAROLA. EIBAR, ESPAÑA”.

“Anitua y Charola” hoped to compete with “Orbea Hermanos” in supplying the market created by the R. O. of October, 6, 1884 recommending the sidearm for Chiefs and Officers of the Army, and, in 1887 it presented its double action “Merwin” revolver for the 11 mm Md.1884 cartridge and also obtained a “recommendation” by R. O of April, 2, 1888, identical to the one enjoyed by “Orbea Hermanos” for its “ONA No.7” revolver; However, the military continued to prefer the “Smith”, although this was no reflection on the quality of the “Merwin”, which was excellent.

“Anitua y Charola” was succeeded by “Charola y Anitua” with the same partners, and it went on to produce the first “automatic” pistol of Spanish patent which was produced commercially; Its existence was brief and it disappeared in 1900 when Ignacio Charola continued to produce the pistol on his own and Miguel Anitua went into “electrical apparatus and arms” production under the name of “Miguel Anitua e Hijos”; In 1908 he attended the Eibar Arts and Industries Exposition and presented “several samples of the Merwin revolver and of his automatic pistol”, probably previously manufactured specimens.

Miguel Anitua died in 1910 and his son Ignacio inherited his work shop; Soon thereafter he joined forces with José Charola, son of his father’s ex-partner and they formed a new “Charola y Anitua” which represented and produced, not arms, but industrial machinery, up into the 1930s.