

Burgess Part II

The Inside Story

By

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There have been several articles on the Burgess in various shooting magazines, all of them commenting on how smooth the Burgess action is. There has also been speculation in the various articles and on the various CAS wires about how the Burgess action works. These comments range from it's a modified Lightning action to it's a very similar to a Winchester Model 92. However, none of these commentators have actually taken a Burgess apart. So at Winter Range I asked the kind folks at Taylor & Company if they would mind if I took one of their Burgess rifles apart since that would make a much more interesting article for the Cowboy Chronicle. After a prolonged silence, they asked in a quiet voice filled with trepidation, "well, do you think you can put it back together again?" After some assurances that they would indeed receive their rifle back in one piece, they gave the green light to dismantle a Burgess. So here it is exclusively for the Cowboy Chronicle, the inside scoop on what makes a Burgess tick.

Working the action and looking through the action ports we can see how the basic mechanism works. In **Photo 1** we can see that the cartridges slide into the magazine tube and are held in place by the extension on the bottom of the bolt assembly. The little arm hanging down at the front of the bolt in **Photo 13** is the same part shown in **Photo 1**. Moving the lever down and retracting the bolt we can see a cartridge stop pop up in the loading port. **Photo 2**. **Photo 3** shows a cartridge being held in the magazine by the stop. Looking down into the ejection port we can see a cartridge being held by a split carrier that grips the cartridge and holds it in place for insertion into the chamber as in **Photo 4**. OK now let's go inside and see how these parts work together.

First, remove the stock. Next, remove the large screw in the upper part of the left side of the receiver. This screw is a plug and keeps the link pin from falling out of the gun. In **Photo 5** the link pin is slightly to the left of the hole so it will, hopefully, be visible in the picture. The large headed plug screw is sitting on the receiver to the right of the hole. Put the screw away, line up the link pin in the center of the hole in the receiver and put a punch in the hole on the opposite side of the receiver. **Photo 6**. Tap the punch and the link pin will come out of the hole on the left side of the receiver. **Photo 7**. Next remove the large headed screw that retains the lever pivot pin in the receiver, **Photo 8**, and push the lever screw out the right side of the receiver. **Photo 9**. Note in **Photo 9** that there is a little pin in the top of the lever screw. When the rifle is put back together, make sure this pin lines up with the little slot in the receiver. The pin keeps the lever pivot pin from turning when you are loosening or tightening the lever retention screw shown in Photo 8.

You all have your safety glasses on right? If not, now is the time to go get them. Next you have to pull the lever out of the bottom of the receiver. Just under the edge of the receiver, in the left side of the lever, is a ball detent and spring. **Photo 10**. Cup your hand or put a rag over the lever and receiver or you will launch that little ball and spring across

your gunroom. The ball and spring engage a slot in the receiver and keep the lever closed when it is in its firing position. Next, remove the hammer screw and pull the trigger group out of the bottom of the receiver. **Photo 11**. Again, this is another interesting feature of the Burgess. The hammer screw shown in **Photo 11** goes through the hammer, but it does not actually retain the hammer. The hammer and the carrier both pivot around the little tube shown just below the hammer screw in **Photo 11**. The hammer screw goes through this tube.

Now the bolt can be pushed to the rear and removed from the receiver. **Photo 12**. **Photo 13** shows the bolt, the link pin, which goes in the large hole in the upper left of the bolt, and the lever with its single massive link. **Photo 14** shows a closer view of the bolt extension and link. In the end of the bolt extension is a roller. **Photo 15** shows a shell casing in the carrier. Directly below the carrier is the cartridge stop. (See also, **Photos 2 and 3**.) The roller in the bottom of the bolt, **Photo 15**, pushes the cartridge stop down as the bolt is closed to release rounds from the magazine. It's hard to see in **Photo 16**, but directly below the cartridge stop is a small trapezoid (a pyramid with the top cut off). As the bolt moves forward and forces the carrier downward the sides of the carrier contact the trapezoid and spread the carrier arms to allow the next round to slide into the carrier. As the carrier rises for the next shot, the carrier arms close and hold the round as shown in **Photo 4**. The lever operates the carrier and as the lever moves to the rear it contacts the carrier and pivots it up into position to chamber a round. **Photo 17**.

The bolt face has a spring-loaded bushing surrounding the firing pin. **Photo 18**. As the fired shell casing is extracted from the chamber, the bushing acts as an ejector and the casing is flipped out of the ejection port on the top of the rifle. **Photo 19**. Looking at the back of the bolt the firing pin head has a rectangular profile instead of the normal round profile. **Photo 20**. The rest of the firing pin is also unusual. It is very long (the full length of the bolt) and curved in the middle to go up and around the link pin; it also has a firing pin retractor spring built into it. **Photo 21**. Finally, the mainspring is also unusual in that it has compound curves to clear other parts in the lower receiver. **Photo 22**.

So, why is the Burgess so smooth? First, Uberti builds fine rifles and the fit and finish of the Burgess is similar to that found on Uberti's 73 Winchester clones. Next, the Burgess design itself lends itself to being smooth. The lever pivot screw is huge compared to a 66, 73 or a Marlin. **Photos 8 and 9**. The lever is wide and has a lot of bearing surface on the pivot screw. Thus, there is more contact surface not only for the up and down movement of the lever, but there is also a lot more bearing surface to resist side-to-side movement of the lever. The 66 and 73 levers are narrower and are split to accommodate the carrier lifter arm. So, the actual lever-bearing surface is much smaller than the Burgess and this narrower lever sits on a much smaller diameter screw. Most 66 and 73 levers have noticeably more side-to-side movement than the Burgess. The Burgess bolt has full-length guide rails, **Photos 12 and 13**, and matching recesses machined in the receiver. A similar arrangement would be like a Colt 1911 slide and frame. Will the Burgess be a serious competitor to the 73? My personal observation is that a Burgess will be a fun rifle to shoot in the black powder categories. However, because of the

design it is doubtful anyone will be able to short stroke a Burgess so it will never attain the speed that can be achieved with a 73.

There you have it. The inside story on one of the smoothest and most interesting CAS rifles to hit the scene for quite a while.

Photos Referenced

Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9

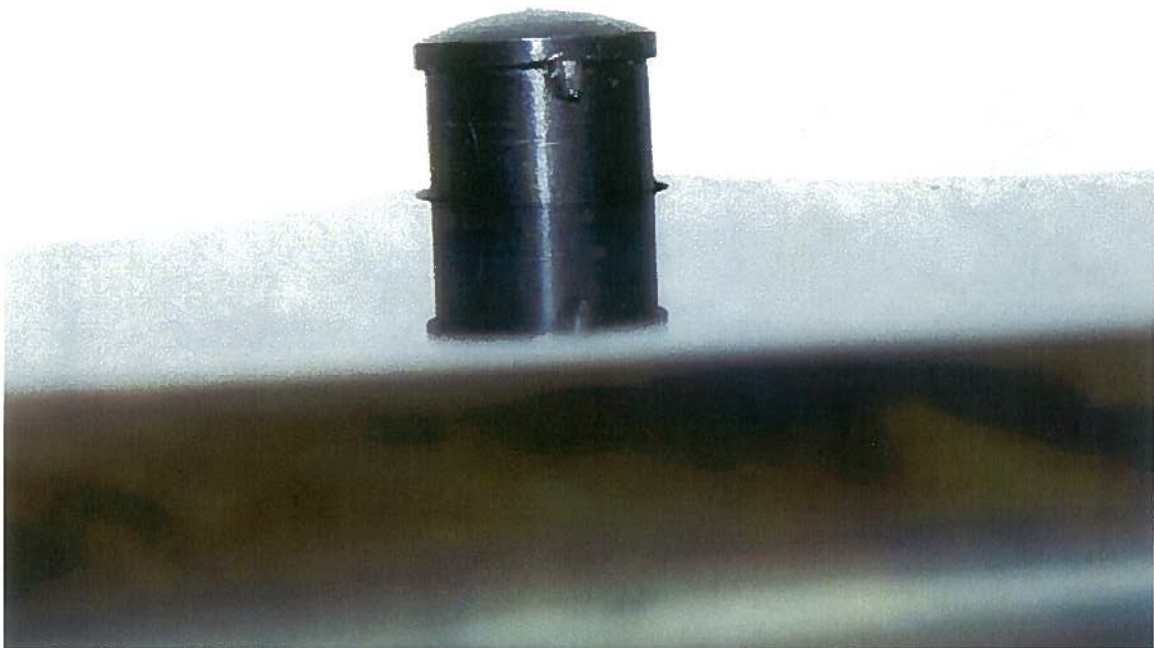


Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14



Photo 15

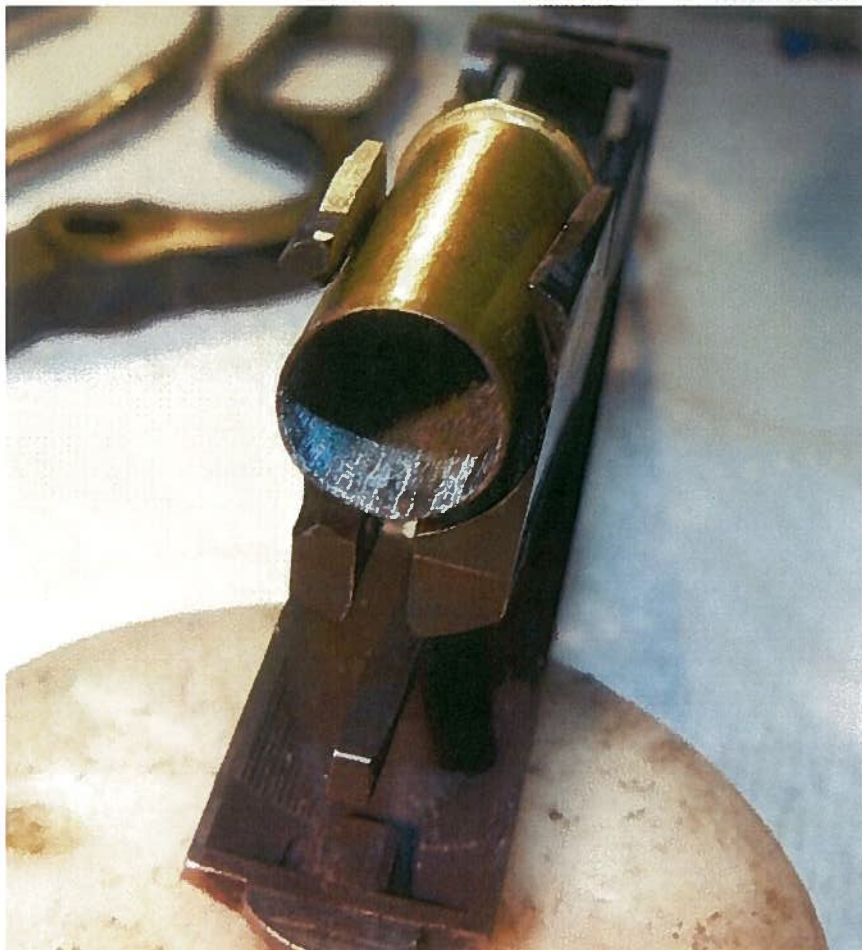


Photo 16

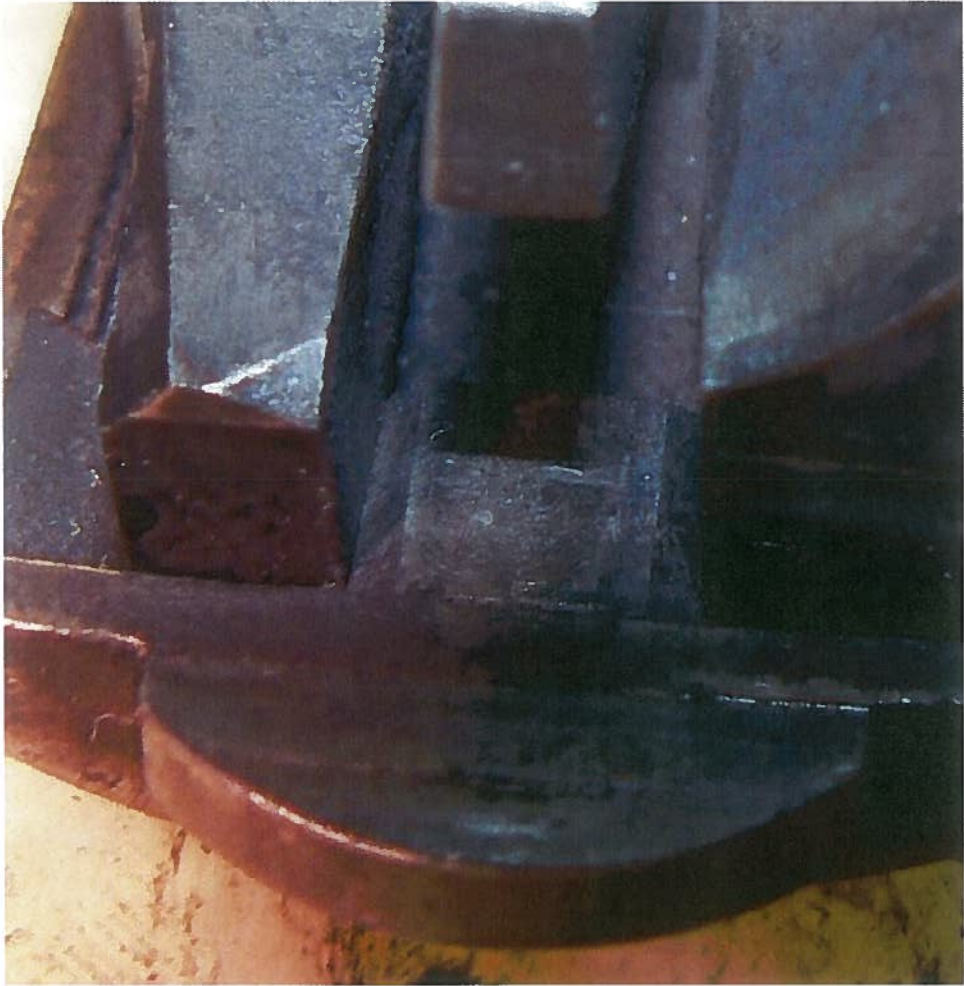


Photo 17



Photo 18



Photo 19

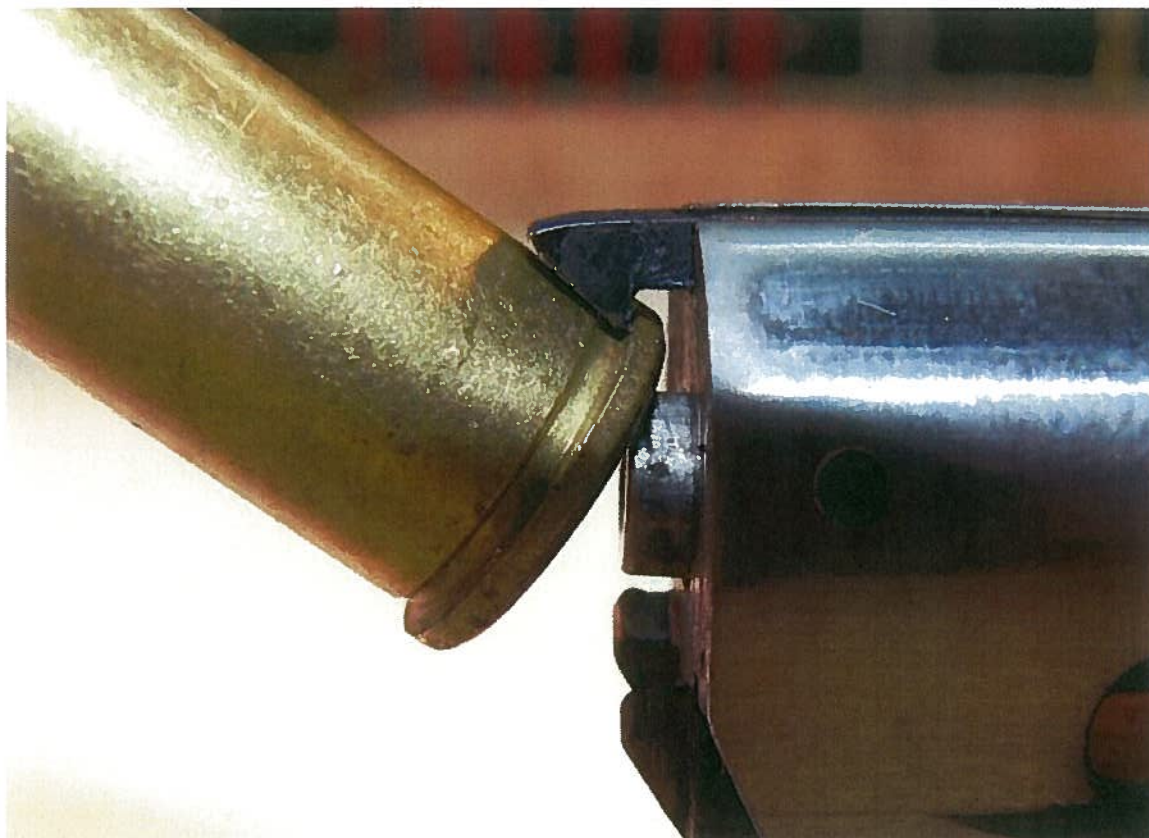


Photo 20

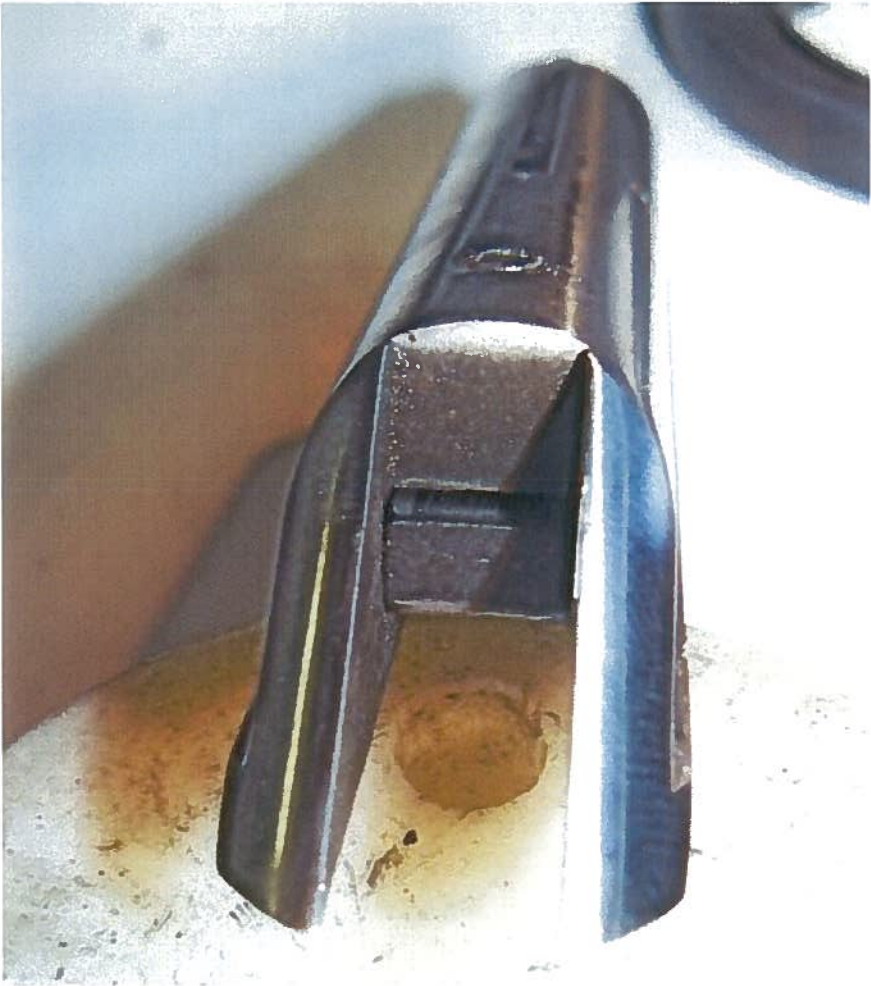


Photo 21



Photo 22

