

Tuning Colt Open Top Revolvers

Compiled by Roy L. Oak

SHORT ARBOR

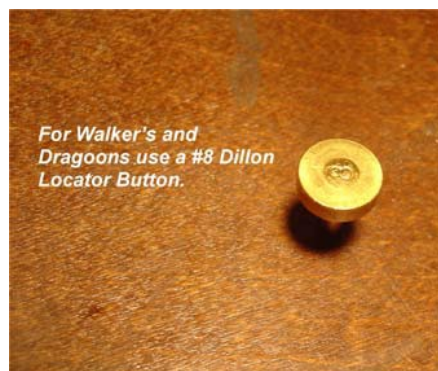


If you have an Uberti what follows is how to fix a short arbor. With Pietas' revolvers I have never had one with a short arbor. In one instance I had a Pietta Army 60 where the arbor was a wee bit too long which is an easy fix with a diamond flat file. There are several ways to check for a short arbor. I use Pettifogger's Method. It is the easiest to do. First you check to see if the arbor is short. Remove the barrel assembly and remove the cylinder. Replace the barrel making sure you insert the arbor into the arbor well but not the barrel. Turn the barrel so that the locking lug wells are at the 4 to 5 o'clock position and seat the arbor fully. If the arbor will not seat, make sure

the arbor well is cleaned out completely. Use a wood dowel that is a wee bit smaller than the arbor well and wrap 120 grit sandpaper around the dowel, and holding the sandpaper in place, rotate the dowel to remove burrs and other garbage from the arbor well. Do this until you can fully seat the arbor. If your revolver looks like the picture, then you know you have a short arbor. With Ubertis, the short arbor will also you to have a cylinder gap that looks like a "V" when it should look like this: "I". The Cylinder Gap should not exceed .010" to .003" using a feeler gauge. A short arbor will influence the accuracy of the Revolver.

Once you have corrected any seating problem of the Arbor in the arbor well, proceed to correct the short arbor. The first step is to locate and mark the exact center of the arbor. Once you have determined the exact center, we want to scribe that position. Using a sharp point hard metal punch, we will put an indentation in the exact center.

If you are working on an 1847 Walker or one of the three Model 1848 Dragoons, you will use a Dillon Locator Brass Button #8. If you are working with an 1849 Colt Pocket Pistol you would choose a Dillon Locator Brass Button #4. For 1851 Navy in 36 Cal. / Army 1860 in 44 Cal. / For 1861 Navy 36 Cal. and the Police and Pocket Pistols 1862 choose a Dillon Locator Brass Button #3. Dillon Locator Buttons can be found at https://www.dillonprecision.com/locator-buttons_8_48_25280.html.



For Walker's and Dragoons use a #8 Dillon Locator Button.



Side View of the Dillon Locator Button #8

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You will need a drill press, drill press vice and a 9/64th Drill Bit and a second Drill Bit the next size up. Secure the Revolver Frame inside the drill press vice securely so that the frame will not move when you start to drill. Position the drill press vice so that the 9/64th drill bit will align with the detent or scribe that you made in the center of the arbor. Make sure the revolver frame is level in the vice. Drill the hole slowly or the drill bit will go thru the center of the arbor and exit into the wedge slot of the arbor. Change the drill bit to the next higher drill bit and just

slightly countersink the hole just drilled. Take the Dillon Locator Button and see that it will seat fully into the hole that you just drilled in the arbor. The leg of the Locator Button should not protrude into the Wedge slot.

With the Button in place push the arbor into the arbor well, turn the barrel so that the locking lugs in the frame are at the 4 to 5 O'clock position when you seat the arbor. This will tell you how much of the brass Locator Button you must remove to get the correct arbor length.

Take the Brass Locator Button and secure it into your hand drill. Then using your Dremel with a 120 grit round wheel remove excess metal from the tip of the Locator Button or use a Flat Diamond File. Make sure you keep the end of the button flat and not rounded. Keep removing a little at a time to get the exact fit for the arbor.

If you had the button protrude into the arbor slot by accident, once you have the correct length, using a sharp pen or #2 lead pencil, scribe a line on the Brass Button Leg where it protrudes into the wedge slot. Using your Dremel with a cutting wheel shorten the leg where you scribed the line. You do not want the leg extending into the wedge slot. Next coat the locator leg with Loctite and let it dry for at least 24 hours.



After the Button with the Loctite has set and dried, place the cylinder on the arbor and secure the barrel to the frame using the wedge. With the hammer in the fire position the cylinder gap should look like this: "ll" and when using a feeler gauge the gap should not exceed 003".

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The short arbor has been fixed and it will last a lifetime.

