

December 16, 2020

A new shotgun for next year.

It's been a long summer. Friendship was canceled as were all the NMLRA Territorials that I usually attend. I occupied myself by shooting and working on the guns I already owned. My brother came from Salt Lake and we went to the range every day he was here. We both had a good time.

Early in the summer I woke up before 7am made coffee and left for the Amana Sportsman's Club. I stopped at McDonalds and purchased a sausage biscuit. The range is about 15 miles away. I was able to drive on an oiled road through the field after field of corn with just a few bean fields to break up the monotony. The corn grew very tall and I felt I was driving through a canyon of corn.

At the range I would set up the trap range and get ready to shoot at 8am when we could start firing. I liked shooting very early in the day because a group of skeet shooters usually started shooting about 10. This range is used for trap, skeet and 5 stand. I don't like to inconvenience them. Most mornings were cool and damp but the sun warmed me up shortly. I had a 12 gauge flint shotgun made with an adjustable butt plate, adjustable comb and choke tubes. The barrel is 28 inches long and it has a Chambers Late Ketland lock. I knapped a bunch of Texas flint I had picked up in a city park in Austin a few years ago, so I had plenty of flints. I used a new one each day. I could get 35-40 shots without messing with the flint and the other 10 to 15 by adjusting or knapping the flint once or twice. 50 shots are two rounds, which I shot most days. After 15 to 20 range sessions, I came to the conclusion I this gun wasn't working. It felt different than my other shotguns. This was confirmed when I showed the gun to my brother Mike, who said this felt like the Ithaca he had as a kid, which he could never get to shoot.

I went to the IBPF Shotgun shoot at the Marshall Gun Club and found out I could order a Rice 12 gauge barrel with a jug choked bore. I called Rice a couple of weeks later and asked them to make me a 12-gauge jug choked 34-inch barrel. They asked me what the choke should be, and I responded it should be "Modified". I didn't even think they could make the choke a specific amount, who knew. It came about 3 weeks later. It was beautiful, octagon to round with the breach plug installed. I usually install my own plugs but decided to let them do it for me. When I un-breached the barrel, I found the plug was mated perfectly to the inside of the bore and screwed to the barrel just tight enough. I was impressed.

The Chamber's lock was back ordered a few months but came right on schedule. I usually buy my stock wood at Friendship during the spring or fall match but since the matches were canceled, I couldn't do that. I tried ordering a blank over the web but wasn't happy with the blank and the shipping was quite a bit.

I had read in a shooting magazine about a fellow (Johnson's wood products) who sold wood in Strawberry Point, Iowa. That is a short distance from me. I called him and set up a time to visit. I had a pleasant visit and purchased 3 stocks. A maple half stock, a walnut half stock and a Cherry full stock all for a reasonable sum. We had a pleasant visit. I chose the Walnut blank for the new 12 gauge.

I traced my BT99 on to some heavy paper and laid out how to make the flint gun feel like the modern cartridge shotgun. I haven't made pistol grip rifles so I had a time figuring out how to make pistol-grip shotgun. I usually start by marking the breach and working back from there but this gun was different because I need to get the trigger in the proper place within the pistol grip. Instead, I started with the

trigger, then placed the lock so the sear mated with the trigger and then placed the lock pan where the touch hole would be. This then determined where the breach would fall. I then could trace the paper drawing onto a sheet of plexiglass and cut it out. I marked the breach on the plexiglass and I was able to place the outline on the wood stock. The tracing just barely fit on the chunk of walnut.

The first picture is of the gun after the barrel and part of the lock has been inletted. I just cut away enough wood to fit the part I am working on. Notice the comb is still very high.



I really meant to take more pictures but just didn't get around to taking them.

One weird, to me, thing I did was to place the touch hole lower on the flat than the center of the bore. I figured the barrel at the breach is 1.25 inches and the bore is large that if I centered the touch hole the lock spring would hit the barrel. To avoid this is just lowered the touch hole a bit which lowered the lock enough to clear the barrel.

The next picture is of the shotgun while it is being finished. I use Homer Dangler's barrel browning solution on the metal parts and his reddish-brown stain on the stock. I use Tru-oil for the final finish rubbing it in with my hands on the last few coats. I rub the stock after each coat of Tru-oil with a green scotch-brite pad to knock off the sheen and to remove any rough spots.



The last picture is of the finished assembled shotgun.



Now all I need is for spring to get here and see if it shoots.