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# Mending a Broken Stock

**F**ROM TIME TO TIME I get requests to make a replacement stock to replace one that has been broken.

I follow the same drill each and every time I get such a request. Let me see the stock in question, as it may be repairable. This is especially so if the stock is XXX or XXXX wood.

Mending a broken stock is not as easy as it may seem to the layman. A lot of work and craft go into it and it is difficult to charge enough for the time it takes. Consequently I do repair work only for repeat customers.

Once I get the stock in my hands I examine it carefully to determine if indeed it is repairable. Typically, things to look for are:

1. A clean break, that is to say, not one in which the stock has been severely splintered.
2. No wood is missing at the break point, and if so, is it minor.
3. The cartridge used; to determine whether the

stock, after mending, will hold up. This is especially true of magnums. And finally

#### 4. How did the break occur?

I ask the last question mostly out of curiosity. Some interesting anecdotes have been uncovered over the years. For example, the Rolling Block stock in question (photos) was broken during a burglary. The customer told me his home was burgled and trashed. The Rolling Block in question was smashed until the stock broke at the wrist. It was indeed a sad story as the home was sprayed with catchup, mustard and other foods. Clearly a case of pure meanness. But I digress.

I looked the stock over carefully and it met the three requirements listed above. Besides the Roller was rebarreled to 22 LR, and it rare to see one in that cartridge. I deemed it a worthy project and took it on.

The stock while of a high quality was not checkered and. I always consider a stock to be unfinished if it is not checkered. Thus, after ascertaining the mend





High Wall stock with the break Acraglased and clamped.



You can see the break clearly in this view of the left side.



A left side view of the stock cleaned up and ready for sanding.

would be practically invisible after checkering, I explained that to the client and he gave me the go ahead. There was a small triangular missing piece of wood on the upper right portion of the wrist adjacent to the tang, which I determined to also repair.

I then cleaned up the break to be certain that no small splinters of wood were left to affect the fit of the two pieces. If done correctly the parts should fit together like a jigsaw puzzle.

My next challenge was then to figure out how to hold the two parts of the stock together after applying glue. The Roller does not have a stock bolt, which would have worked perfectly, so I rigged up a system

using an old bicycle inner tube. The trick is to tightly wrap the stock end for end without disturbing the fit of the broken parts. Once I figured that out it was time to go to work.

There are a number of modern glues on the market today, which will work. Cabinet-maker glues are so strong that the wood will break elsewhere rather than where the original break occurred. However cabinetmakers' glue requires that the joints be clean and smooth for them to be effective. I ruled them out, as the joint in question was quite irregular. For that reason I chose Brownell's Acraglas epoxy for the job in hand. Acraglas will fill in any voids and is as strong if not stronger than the wood surrounding the break.

I mixed up a batch of Brownell Acraglas gel (the 1 to 1 epoxy) and a bit of brown dye and liberally spread the epoxy on both surfaces. After affixing the inner tube, I set the stock aside overnight. Since this break was virtually perpendicular to the long axis of the barreled action, I simply set the rifle down on the butt using the weight of the rifle itself to hold things together. I was fortunate in that the action was fitted with a bull barrel weighing in the neighborhood of twelve pounds.

The next day I unwrapped the inner tube to take a look and must report that I could have done a better job of wiping away the excess epoxy that oozed from the repair. That had to be sanded away before I could ascertain the degree of success of my work. Having done that I was pleased. I knew that the repair would be invisible after re-finishing and checkering the stock.

While in the process of repairing the Roller I received a second broken stock to repair. This one was a C.Sharps reproduction Winchester M – 1885 High Wall. The customer told me that the stock was sent to a stock maker for fitting and when it was returned via the mail it was busted in two. Clearly a case of inadequate packaging. This stock met all of the aforementioned criteria and I took photos of the repair to show the clamping that was used. This stock unlike the Roller



A right side view of the stock. The break is barley visible.



A left side view of the stock complete and finished including checkering. The break is now invisible.

was broken transversely therefore requiring a different clamping technique. There are no set rules for these repairs. You work with what you have.

The High Wall stock was prepared with the action in place; there fore liberal amounts of release agent was applied to all metal surfaces to allow for disassembly after the epoxy cured.

The Roller stock was refinished in the usual manner and after setting the stock aside for a week to allow the finish to fully cure the stock was checkered. The customer was pleased with the results, as the break is nearly invisible.

As I mentioned earlier mending a broken stock may seem easier than it really is. But if you follow my four recommendations as listed above you can be assured of success. And if you are able to save a truly nice piece of wood, what greater pleasure can there be? ●

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