

The FAJEN YEARS

– LARRY’S SHORT STORIES #189 –

“Larry, you should buy Fajen; it’s for sale.” Those were the words of Marty Fajen, when we met at a sporting clays event in the spring of 1992. On July 15, the deal was done; the Reinhart Fajen Gunstock Company had changed hands. (So much for due diligence!) Fajen was a small, well-established, well-respected company in Warsaw, MO, “the gunstock capital of the world.” The 80 Employees were all local, and possessed the knowledge and skills to hand fit, hand shape and finish sticks of walnut into pieces of art. Business was divided between three missions, shaped but unfinished stocks, The Custom Shop and O.E.M. (Springfield M1A and Remington 90-T stocks were the primary O.E.M. products at the time).



The 1996 Fajen Catalog Cover featured a picture of our daughter, Sara.

The things that Fajen needed, in my opinion, were CNC technology, computerization, modern leadership and management principles and a new plant. My vision was to modernize everything as soon as possible, believing that the “new business” would be even more respected and successful. Unfortunately, the demand for the gunstocks we were developing the capacity to produce didn’t exist; and I never did that research.

CNC equipment was the first priority, to help increase the O.E.M. business and expand the line of Finished Drop-In stocks. Fajen was the first to apply this technology to gunstocks. The learning curve and costs for CNC were far beyond anything I ever imagined – programming was very difficult and time consuming. The four Shoda 4-spindle, 4-axis machines and one single spindle, five-axis machine



This is the updated Fajen logo.

were very expensive. We also worked unsuccessfully with an outside contractor to build a CNC Zuckerman outside shaping machine.

Land near Lincoln, next town to the north, came up for sale and we built a large, expensive building. It was well underway in 1995, when Bishop, the other – and original – gunstock business in Warsaw, was offered for sale. We bought it, and now controlled most of the independent stockmaking capacity in the U.S. In retrospect, the Bishop purchase added no value, just additional expense.

“On July 15, the deal was done...”

In our new plant, with CNC machining well established, we needed more business. A few, small, difficult contracts were landed and delivered to Browning, Ruger, Winchester and Weatherby. Unfortunately, we learned that there wasn’t enough wood gunstock business to support the expensive operation we had put together. It not being possible to “back up”, we closed the plant in October 1998 and sold everything at auction. The Fajen years were over.



Larry Potterfield
Reinhart Fajen, Inc.
Lincoln, MO
October 1998



One of the more popular stocks we created on the CNC equipment was this Thumbhole Silhouette for the Ruger 10/22. The inletting and outside shaping was all done with our CNC equipment. Sanding and spray finishing was done by hand.