



## KNEWSLETTER IN A KNUTSHELL



- ✓ Elephant Ivory
- ✓ Bowie Knife Challenge
- ✓ Books on Bowie Knives
- ✓ Dickie Washer Bowies
- ✓ 2014 OKCA Club knife
- ✓ Western States Sheath Knives
- ✓ Showtime - almost here!!!

Our *international* membership is happily involved with "Anything that goes 'cut'!"

March 2014

## New Regulations On Elephant Ivory

Dan Westlind

On February 11, 2014, Barack Obama issued an executive order and signed a bill that regulates the interstate trade in elephant ivory. This will affect knifemakers and knife collectors. Starting in May, 2014, it will be illegal to transport, buy, or sell anything with elephant ivory across state lines. The only exception will be antique ivory that is 100 years old or older that has the proper identification and proof that it is at least 100 years old.

This law does not ban ownership of elephant ivory, nor does it ban the sale of elephant ivory products within the state you live, it merely stops the interstate trade of elephant ivory. This means that since I live in the State of Washington, I will not be able to take ivory handled knives out of my state. I will still be able to sell them within the State of Washington, or your home state. This also affects the sale of collectible/antique knives unless the owner of the knives can prove that the knife is 100 years old or older. I would not be able to sell or transport older pocketknives interstate unless I can prove that the knife is 100 years old or older.

Normally, a bill like this takes about two years to become a law after studies are done to find out how much "illegal elephant ivory" is being used in the country, if such a law will have any impact on "poaching" and the economic impact of such a ban. Due to the persuasion of Hilary and Chelsea Clinton, and other "concerned parties," Obama used his executive power to enact the bill starting in May.

If you want to do a search on the elephant ivory ban, I will warn you that your blood pressure will skyrocket when you read some of the comments stated by some of the people who initiated this bill. Things like "gun and knifemakers are the largest users of (poached) elephant ivory." One of the statements that bothered me the most was "we know that elephant



ivory is being smuggled into the U.S. disguised as mammoth ivory by staining and dyeing it (elephant ivory), and we will be closely looking at all ivory to make sure it is not elephant ivory made to look like mammoth ivory." In my experience with law enforcement officers concerning ivory, few know the difference between elephant, mammoth, or walrus ivories. This could lead to confiscation of any knife with an ivory handle if the law enforcement officer is "not sure" if it is elephant ivory or not. As a "targeted group" (knifemakers), let us hope that we do not see indiscriminate confiscation of any knife with an ivory handle. 🐾



# OKCA Bowie Knife Challenge

B.K. Brooks

As you know the OKCA Knife Show is right around the corner, but March 23 is the deadline to be listed as a person displaying and for inclusion in the April Show *Knewsletter*. I hope you have heeded my pleas and are bringing your favorite Bowie or Bowies. Contact me, not the Club, my information is below and let me know what you plan to bring. If this comes off, the Club will consider future specific knife themes. Please make an effort to boost the OKCA and participate. But first some more Bowie knife lore.

## California Bowies and Folding Bowies

As you have learned in my prior articles, Bowie Knives come in different sizes shapes and styles. The California Knife has been recognized nationally as an American Bowie style knife. Names like Hugh McConnell, Frederick Kesmodel, Frederick Will, Julius Finck, and Michael Price on the blade make the auctioneer's gavel slam down with high prices even for the most basic knife.

The gold miners needed a basic sturdy knife when they arrived, and these makers supplied them. When gold was struck, those same makers produced ornate knives for the lucky miners with handles of abalone shell, walrus tusk and elk horn. The unique blade and handle shapes clearly identify them as a California knife even when unmarked. Custom makers like Buster Warenski have taken those styles to new heights. Learn more about these knives by reading *Knifemakers of Old San Francisco* written by OKCA's own Bernard Levine.

A folding Bowie makes one think of some little jack knife, but yes there are folding Bowies. I stumbled on one that is over 12" long with plain wood handles, looking like a large jack knife. But when I saw ciphered on it a Liberty Cap, a Rough and Ready banner, two lions and Old Zack's head, with the manufacturers name being Wragg and Sons, I knew it

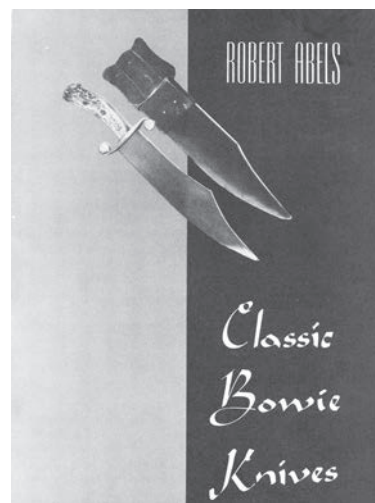
qualified as a folding Bowie. There are also beautifully crafted almost stiletto style folding Bowies whose long length make them a folding Bowie despite them being light in the hand and delicate in the construction.

## OKCA Bowie Knife Challenge Deadline March 23

As you have learned in my prior articles, Bowie knives have come in a range of styles, shapes and sizes. Most collectors have a few, and it is easy to participate in the theme of OKCA Bowie Knife Challenge. Please be a Club member that gets involved.

You know what to do, get your best Bowie knife or knives out and let me know what you're bringing. If you want to be properly listed in the April 2014 *Knewsletter* so people can come over and visit your table, you need to ACT NOW. I will need a description of what you are bringing, your table number and/or display table number. A short descriptive paragraph is what we need. Remember that any display or noted knife or knives need to be in place for the entire Show.

We are asking that you get your



information to me **preferably before our March 23 deadline**, so I can prep it and get it to the editor at the OKCA for publication in the April *Knewsletter*. The sooner before that date the better.

If you have a picture, send it along with the description; and if we have room, we may print it too. If you miss that date, you can still show; but you will not be listed in the April *Knewsletter*. We will have a display case available for members who are not table-holders if you want to enter and show your Bowie knife.

My email is : [beakersunset@gmail.com](mailto:beakersunset@gmail.com)

My phone is: (530)893-4836 📞



Knives by Mike Silvey. See at Show.

## Go to the website

Go directly to the website - Do not pass GO - Do not collect \$200. Why? Because we have posted two interesting web pages that relate directly to our Show. From the *Site Map* go to *Display Awards*. These are the knives that have been made to be awarded to the best displays around the room. From the *Site Map* go to *Silent Auction* and see the knives that you can bid on that have been donated to the Show. There are still more knives to come. Our address is [www.oregonknifeclub.org](http://www.oregonknifeclub.org) or do a *Google search on OKCA*. We should be first in line. You will have to check out the pen from *William Henry* and the knife by *Terry Davis* engraved by *Jerry Whitmore*. And there is more to come including an Oregon special set by *Steve Huey* that are in the colors of the Ducks & Beavers. Roy Humenick will again bring a special handmade folder to donate to our organization.

## Bowies Galore.....

**BK Brooks** has done a fantastic job of putting together our theme based Show incorporating the ever popular bowie knife. He has not had a plethora of response for the old, old bowies; so if you have one tucked aside, think about bringing it to our Show. No table? No problem. We are putting together a display case to place your bowie in while you are wandering the Show. It must be left for display until Show end to be eligible for judging. Members only. Make a card for the knife with pertinent information on it. Let BK know your intent via [beakersunset@gmail.com](mailto:beakersunset@gmail.com) or (530)893-4836.

## How to remember the April Show

Use these four numbers - 11 - 12 -13 -14. Start Friday as the 11. And 14 is the year. Four numbers in a row stand for the month of April. Got it? See you there.

## Club knives...

The Club knife project is another fund raiser. There is an application form in this *Knewsletter*, and a color rendition

of these knives on our web page. The pictures are not the final versions but will give you an idea of the knives. The idea is to present to the membership a quality investment, and the joy of owning something pretty special. Help out by purchasing this Queen Cutlery set.

## Display award knives...

One of the distinctions of the Oregon Knife Organization is the diversity of the "cut." We have collectors and makers. The support for each is evident when the collectors display their museum class collections at our April Show, and the makers handcraft knives that will be used as awards for the displays. Each year a blade blank is selected and given to those who want to contribute to this cause. This year the blank is a 6-1/2" clip point with a stick tang in O-1. Could be and is a bowie knife theme here. We have told the makers that their donation will be judged so there is a degree of competition here. **Gene Martin** is the coordinator for this event, and the participants are: **Bill Amoureux, Don Bell, John "Slim" Coleman, Wayne Goddard, Gary Griffin, Greg Haile, Cameron House, David Kurt, Gene Martin, Brett Matthews, Lynn Moore, Dietrich Podmajersky, Peter Pruyn and Sterling Radda.**

## Articles herein...

I want to thank **B.K. Brooks, Larry Davis, Martin Drivdahl, Rick Miller, Craig Morgan, Dan Westlind and Mark Zalesky** for their words in this issue. More words are needed, and I know that they are out there. Please share your knowledge, as this *Knewsletter* is a perfect medium for contributions from our membership. The *Knewsletter* is what floats the boat, so to speak and marks where the buoys and bowies are. We are using this issue to bring up the subject of ivory. Please read Dan Westlind's words on this subject.

## The Sizzler...

Don't forget our monthly meeting at the Sizzler restaurant. It is the third Wednesday of the month which makes it March 19, 2014. I always look forward to this gathering, so mark your calendar and come be with us.

## It ain't too early to...

Make lodging reservations for the April Show. The Valley River Inn, which is our partner in lodging for the Show, had a complete remodel; and, from the reports heard, it is one awesome place to stay. Get your reservations in early. The rooms fill up fast. Mention the Show when you register, as we are offered a special rate for the Oregon Knife Collectors. (541)687-0123. You might also note the Courtesy Inn - (541)345-3391 - the closest motel yet to the Knife Show. A Budget motel that has worked well with us over the years.




## A smile knife....

This knife was purchased on eBay as a Prest-O-Lite tool knife, however my smile did not happen when I looked at the knife. The claimed Prest-O-Lite(?) wrench hole was considerably larger than a true tank key wrench. A quick call to Bernard Levine to solve the mystery was answered within seconds. I had purchased a European (could be USA too) painter's knife. It was then I smiled and without telling more I hope you will smile too when you figure it out.



## Shaking hands

The great American tradition is the greeting with a handshake. I am generally good with that because it also tells me if the greeter is armed with a sword or knife. However with a history of pneumonia, I am quite sensitive about transferring "bugs" by the handshake. A recent documentary proved the transfer was dramatically reduced by greeting with a fist bump or a knuckle bump. I have adopted this method, since I am in sales which creates a lot of handshaking. So when we meet, this will be my greeting gesture. Might be yours too to avoid the "bugs." See you at the Show. 

# An Insider's View of the "Dickie Washer Specials"

BK Brooks

Happy go lucky Bill Adams (yes, the same Bill Adams who often sets up at OKCA Shows), was carefully and very truthfully selling a Fred James made "Dickie Washer Special" I\*XL Wostenholm Bowie knife that caught my eye. His long winded discussion on the provenance of said knife (under his eBay handle indiansilver) prompted me to send said listing to several people, and one of them came back with a reply ratting Bill Adams' identity out. Flushed from the cover of his eBay name, I took action to contact him; and he admitted to being the "Real Bill Adams," granted me permission to repeat his firsthand story for the OKCA *Knewsletter* and provided even more information to pin down the Richard Washer legacy.

Before we proceed, a bit of background needs to be reviewed. During the early 1970s Bill Adams was, in his own words, "scavenging in Sheffield's ruins" – purchasing old, out of date stock from Sheffield's surviving manufacturers for sale through his American business, Atlanta Cutlery (yes, that Atlanta Cutlery). At about the same time, a Sheffield craftsman by the name of Fred James was making Bowie knives in the style of the originals (though generally a bit too large and heavy) and marking them with old style markings (allegedly from original stamps), including but not limited to Wostenholm famous I\*XL trademark. A man named Richard ('Dickie') Washer had discovered a ready market for these same knives in America, where he sold them to gullible collectors as original 19th century Bowie knives. Yes, these "Dickie Washer Special" IXL knives made in the 1970s in England somehow magically (with a little rust, grease, dirt and a book) aged about 100 years older while jumping the pond to America and then were sold to the Yankee collectors who took a while to catch on. To further cloud the waters between fact and fiction, Richard Washer wrote a popular book when releasing these knives called *The Sheffield Bowie and Pocket Knife Makers 1825-1925* that was 95% factual but sprinkled with these 1970 made knives. Those deceived by this book probably still have bad memories of pointing to the pictures in this book, while declaring this knife is from the 1850s. So with that let's proceed to Bill Adams' historical story.

"Yep, guilty, I am Bill Adams. I knew Freddy James, Dickie Washer, Sid Fowler, and the crop. If you look in Dickie Washer's book [*The Sheffield Bowie and Pocket Knife Makers 1825-1925*]... (I keep it on my fiction shelf), you will see marvelously similar knives all through that book. All of them were made in the Washington Works – the I\*XL Wostenholm factory in Sheffield!

At the time, I was Joseph Rodgers' North American Representative – the words look marvelous, but you needn't be impressed. I had wandered into Rodgers' factory one day, bought some knives, and told them I was interested in selling their knives in the U.S. They appointed me on the spot – the management at Rodgers' was made of a bunch of bankers – they didn't know any more about knives than I did; and I knew practically nothing! But the certificate was pretty; and I still have it somewhere, together with the letter they later wrote me, firing me because their knives would not sell in the United States.

So, I was in Rodgers' factory and several other Sheffield factories

in 1971. Inside Rodgers' factory (the factory was, at that time, located on St. Mary's Gate) was a knife sheath maker that rented space from Joseph Rodgers. The man making sheaths was in his eighties and was named Mr. Limb. And he was working on some sheaths of a size to fit this knife – an old style, with a nickel silver throat and tip, marked in gold "I\*XL" on the side of the sheath – pretty similar to sheaths made in the 1840s!

I asked Mr. Limb about those old-style sheaths, and Mr. Limb was very candid. He told me that he was making those old-style Bowie sheaths for Sid Fowler. And Sid Fowler was Managing Director of Wostenholm / I\*XL!! Mr. Limb further related that the knives were being made by Freddy James for Sid Fowler, and Mr. Limb even had the price per knife and sheath that Sid charged Dickie Washer for the knives – 22 pounds, 10 shillings for each knife with a sheath! The British exchange rate was then, best I recall, about 2.4 dollars to the pound sterling.

When I was in Sheffield, early '70s, there were two women doing etching on knives (they could etch anything). One was Doris Walch (sp?) who worked at Dennis Slater's (he owned H.G. Long, Jonathan Crookes, several other marks), and the other one was Mrs. Forest. Both these ladies were contract workers; and you took whatever you had to etch, together with the plates, they did the work, gave it back to you, and you paid them. There was a manuscript in the Sheffield public library about Doris Walch's etching work – it was available for a minimum charge, you had to promise it wasn't for publication and sale, as I recall.

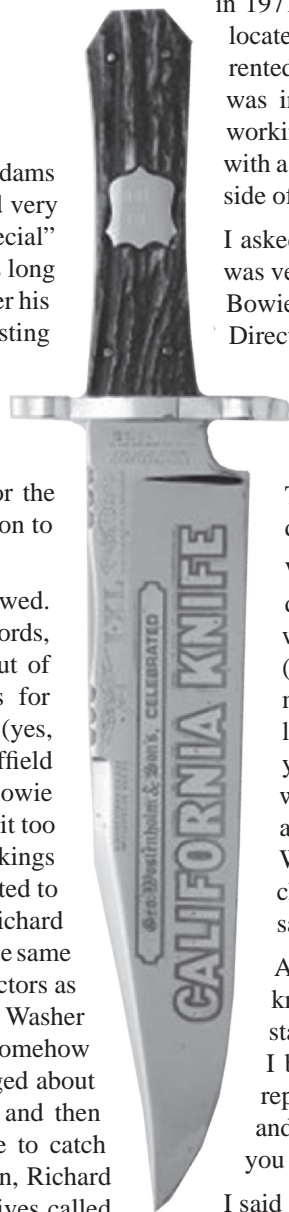
And, about late 1971, Mr. Limb died. At that point, nobody knew how to make the retro old-style sheaths. And you started seeing these big I\*XL Bowies without sheaths. I believe this one was actually made as a sort-of modern reproduction--you could buff out the handle shield numbers and dirty up the stag and rust up the blade a little bit, and then you could find an unsuspecting collector!

I said it like it is about Dickie and Freddy, except that I did not discuss that Freddy (since he worked for I\*XL and was making Bowies for Sid Fowler, Managing Director) had the original I\*XL etching plates in his home and used them on the Bowies. Later on, I talked with Freddy James about his making these I\*XL bowies – he filled me in on the rest of the trade route from Sheffield to the U.S.A., describing how Dickie Washer coated the Bowies with grease, then baked them in a low oven to cake and harden the grease, etc.

So this knife I am selling (on eBay) was made in the IXL factory – the Washington Works, by Freddy James, the I\*XL factory head of pocketknife production; and Freddy made it for Sid Fowler, who was the Managing Director of I\*XL Wostenholm. Well, is it a REAL I\*XL Bowie?"

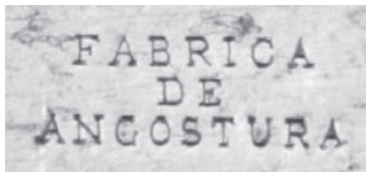
That's the end of his story, a fine piece of first hand history. Oh, there is one more thing. About another "Dickie Washer" Bowie he has, Bill Adams stated, "One of my prize possessions is a Bowie that Freddy made for Dickie, marked: 'Richard To Bob' and etched 'The American's Creed – Never Give A Sucker An Even Break.' Dickie gave it to Bob Abels, and Bob later gave it to Bill Williamson. I bought it at Bill Williamson's auction and overpaid for it." Then Bill ended this story with these words:

"Hell, I knew all those guys!"



# A Rare Knife From The Factory of Angostura

Rick Miller

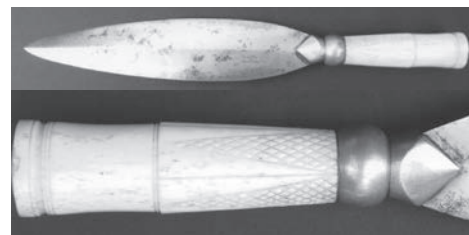


In the June 2011 issue of *Blade Magazine*, I came across a fascinating article by Ed Fowler entitled *Brass-Backers Bowies Reconsidered*. The main thrust (no pun intended!) of the piece deals with the controversial topic of brass-backers bowie knives existing in the “Golden Age of the Bowie” (circa 1827 to 1870). Mr. Fowler talks about the “Modern Greece,” a British owned blockade runner that sailed from England to Wilmington, North Carolina, carrying cargo for the Confederacy. The freighter sank on June 27, 1862 with some 200 bowie knives in the cargo hold. Mr. Fowler continues: “Many knives were found concreted with sand and shell, several very thin brass u-shaped ribs were found in cleaning, which has apparently fallen off the backs of some of the blades.”

But, this is not what really got my attention. In Mr. Fowler’s article he mentions that: “One of the bowie knives with a 7” long and 1-1/4” wide blade bears the partial marking ‘Fabr/De/ Angostura,’ the rest of the marking lost to deterioration.”

On January 28, 1997 at the William R. Williamson Bowie Knife Auction conducted by Butterfield and Butterfield in San Francisco, I acquired lot #3789, described as a Spanish dagger,

19th Century. I’m enclosing several photos of the knife. The spontoon-shaped blade is 9” in length and almost 2” wide. The overall



length of the knife is 13-1/2”. The handle is made of bone. The marking on the blade is “Fabrica De Angostura” (factory of Angostura). I believe that this knife is not Spanish, but made in Venezuela, South America.

Angostura, now called Ciudad, Bolivar, is the capital of Venezuelas’s southeastern Bolivar state. It was founded with the name Angostura in 1764 and renamed in 1846. The city lays at a narrowing of the Orinoco River. Today it’s one of the Orinoco Basin’s chief commercial centers with main products that include gold, iron ore, cattle, hides and rare woods.

In my almost 50 years of collecting 19th Century Toledo marked Spanish knives, this is the second time that I’ve come across the marking “Fabrica De Angostura” on a knife. I wonder how many others are out there somewhere!

By the way, I remember very well sitting in Bill Williamson’s den in Montecito, California, many years ago surrounded by his wonderful collection of bowie knives. He happened to mention to me that he would soon be leaving for North Carolina to “check out” some old bowie knives that had been found aboard a sunken ship! 🐞

## 2014 OKCA Club Knife Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



2013 OKCA Knife Number If Applicable: \_\_\_\_\_

OKCA - Queen folding knife set \$190.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Shipping, if needed, please add \$15.00 Total: \$\_\_\_\_\_

**Payment in full must accompany your order to reserve your knives.**

**Delivery on April 12, 2014 at the April Show**

# The Seek-Re-Tary Report

elayne

The next meeting for the OKCA will be March 19 at the Sizzler Restaurant. This will be the last meeting before our April 12-13, 2014 Show.

The February meeting was held February 19 at the Sizzler Restaurant. There were 30 present.

There were several topics of discussion. There are 10 tables remaining to be sold for the 2014 Show (as of this *Knewsletter* we are **SOLD OUT**). We have sold 35 of the Club knives. This is a fund raising project for our organization. Please help us with the purchase of a knife set. The order form is in this *Knewsletter*.

The Bowie Knife Challenge, coordinated by **B. K. Brooks**, has been an effective tool to create interest in our Show and to encourage participation from people who have been unable to do so in the past. It is a major commitment to purchase an eight foot table and set up a full display. We are happy this event has generated so much interest and participation.

The Silent Auction items have been arriving

thanks to the emails from **Brian Huegel of Country Knives**. The items which have been received are outstanding. We have created a web page with pictures of some of the items. We hope to whet your interest. I am also offering a special service - if you are unable to attend the Show but have an interest in a specific item, contact me. I will act as your representative to bid on the item in the auction. It is an unusual offer since we are very strict that you must be present at the auction's end to pay for your item. Just an opportunity for you to consider.

**Gene Martin** has coordinated the completion of the display award knives by the knifemakers who have graciously donated their time to our Show. We have received a number of the knives which are pictured on our website. We have the following: **Don Bell, John Coleman, Gary Griffin, Greg Haile, David Kurt, Gene Martin, Dietrich Podmajersky, Peter Pruyn and Sterling Radda**. Thank you for your contribution to our event.

Remember: You must be a 2014 member or a 2014 table-holder to gain entrance to the 2014 Show on Friday at 10:00AM or early hours on Saturday and Sunday. If you are a paid member and do not have your membership card, please contact me so I can mail you a current membership card.

If you are not a current member, forward your payment to us now. **Renewal memberships will be accepted after 2:00PM on Friday or 9:00AM Saturday.**

For those who are table-holders, your badges will be available for you outside the Showroom in the west lobby at the event. Your membership card or table-holder badge must be displayed during the special member and table-holder hours of the Show. We provide two table-holder badges per table-holder. If the name for your second badge has changed, please contact me. We will charge \$10.00 for those table-holder badges that are made at Showtime.

We rented a special mailbox for parcels shipped to the OKCA (USPS, UPS, FEDEX). The address is OKCA - 3003 W 11 AVENUE - PMB 172 - EUGENE OR 97402. The mailing address for letters is still P O BOX 2091 EUGENE OR 97402. We have also made arrangements with **Barons Den** for shipment of your merchandise to the April Show. The items can be stored in their vault until you pick them up for the Show. **DO NOT SHIP TO THE LANE EVENTS CENTER.** They will not accept shipment.

See you at the meeting March 19 at the Sizzler. ↘



## “Briar... One Smokin’ handle wood!!”

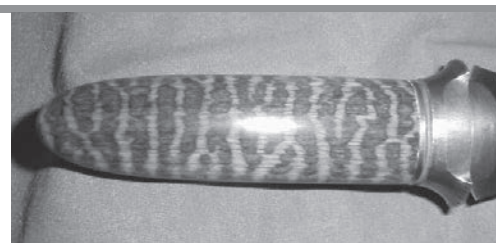
By Larry Davis

When I get stumped to fill a unique wood knife handle request, it's usually Briar burl. Not because we don't have Briar in the shop but because a high quality “perfect” piece suitable for this purpose is so rare. The super tight “eyes” and fine reddish colorings make it awesome for handles and scales. Briar is unpredictable with cracks, soft spots and awkward grain. The risk of cutting a large piece of Briar handle size is too great when a smaller block can be cut for a pipe bowl blank.

Briar burl, the “holy Grail” of smoking pipe wood gets its name from the French word bruyere which means heath root. Heath (*Erica arborea*) grows all around the Mediterranean at elevations of 500 to 1000 meters. The best burls are found on remote rocky slopes. On fertile soil, it does not survive long in competition with other vegetation and is used for firewood if readily accessible. The heath survives on rocky slopes because the shallow soil does not allow tap roots to form; and the heath survives by forming a ball, or burl, between the roots and trunk. This ball-shaped mass sends out a root system which anchors it and feeds water and nutrients. Another marvelous example of Mother Nature's survival and adaptation process.

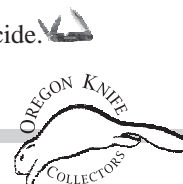
Arid conditions and infertile soil create very slow growth of the Briar burl, and it takes 30 years to produce a burl weighing 5-10

pounds---large enough for perhaps a half-dozen pipes. “Back in the day”, a century ago, burls of 2-3 feet in diameter and 350 years old were not uncommon.



So what makes Briar so valuable as a pipe wood? First, it's tough enough to withstand temps of 700 + degrees F from the heat of burning tobacco. The best burl in this regard is one that has died, and the burl has aged for years in the ground. This is called “dead-root” and is highly prized. Second, the grain structure allows it to absorb moisture contained in the tobacco and vaporized during combustion; but that starts condensing as soon as it's drawn away from the combustion zone into cooler areas of tobacco, the stem and the mouthpiece. Third, wood must not impart a bad taste to the smoke. Briar is one of the best woods in this regard; but saps, resins, tannin and other extractives of the wood must be removed or neutralized to make a pipe truly fit to smoke. After the burl is dug up, it may be stored under moist earth or straw for a few months before being cut into ebauchon, or blocks. The ebauchon are then boiled in water for 12 to 24 hours, dried for a few months, and then aged for a few years before they are fit for pipes.

So to smoke it? or sheath it?...you decide. ↘



# Show time is almost here

Just some facts about the upcoming Show. As of the first of March we are sold out. The Show will officially open with the Metallurgy Seminar on Friday at 8AM. (Thank you **Craig Morgan**.) More details in this issue. This event precedes the opening of the Show at **10AM**. The Show main room is open to table-holders and members at this time. It is stressed that all persons in the room must have table-holder badges or membership card badges **visibly displayed** on their persons. Friday is the custom knife competition starting at **2PM- 3PM** to submit knives.



Friday closing will be 7PM, and there will be overnight security.

**Two (2) table-holder badges** are issued per table-holder (not table). On Friday we are besieged by table-holders who have not planned ahead for their badges. We prepare the badges before the Show to expedite the process, being it is a time consuming chore. If badges are requested at the Show, you will be required to pay \$10.00 per badge. Please be sure to confirm if you are unsure you have requested the badges which will be needed. Thank you. Email [okca@oregonknifeclub.org](mailto:okca@oregonknifeclub.org) or call (541)484-5564.

**Friday is the cool day** because the table-holders can set up or not, cover up or not, arrive when they want or not. However that is Friday only. Saturday and Sunday are a you-must-be-set up and no-cover-up day. Leaving early is forbidden with dire results if you do. We advertise the hours and days, and we as a group need to adhere to that. Doors open at 7AM Saturday for table-holders and Sunday at 8AM. Hours for the public on Saturday are 8AM - 5PM. Sunday 9AM - 3PM. Demonstrations will take place all of Saturday but not Friday or Sunday. There will be no renewal of memberships until after 2PM on Friday.

**Tableholder haul-ins.** If you have heavy loads DO NOT wheel them across the tiles in the main entrance. Broken tiles result in heavy expenses to our organization for tile replacement and installation.

**The Silent Auction** held on Saturday is one of the major fund raising projects for our organization. If you have a knife or items of worth that you would like to donate... we could sure use your donation for this project. If not we could sure use your help to bid at the Silent Auction. Thus far we have many items that are pictured on our website.

## Camping on site

I inquired about the camping on the Lane Events property and got the latest info. About 30 powered sites are available. There is no water. \$20/night. No need to reserve as one can pay when you get here. Security checks are each night to make sure everybody is on the up and up.

## Packages

If you plan to send packages, donations or the display award knives, please send them to our West 11 mailbox. The West 11 Postal Stop accepts all carriers (UPS - Fed X - Carrier Pigeon and 18 Wheelers), and a signature secures the package. The Postal Stop also notifies us when a package has arrived. **OKCA 3003 W 11 PMB 172 EUGENE OR 97402**

If you would like to ship your knives to Eugene, you can send them to the Barons Den where they have a vault to keep your items secure until you arrive to pick them up. Go to our website for details on doing this.

## Be aware or beware..

There is an issue with elephant ivory these last few days so be prudent if you have articles that fall under this umbrella. In years past we have had legal beagles peruse our Show looking for products that fall under the fish and game division. We have also had agents from the customs department arrive at our Show who actually did a confiscation. The problem is all about identification, and a misinformed agent can easily confiscate your celluloid handled knife thinking it to be ivory. So let this be a heads up. Not to worry, just be aware. 🐾

# Recommended Reading for Bowie Buffs

Mark D. Zalesky

In this country, anyway, no knife commands interest like the bowie knife. It really is the classic American contribution to the cutlery world, and it represents a fascinating period in American history – from the late 1820s through the Mexican War, the Civil War and the opening of the West. In financial terms, if not historical ones, they are head and shoulders above all other varieties and are now, as they always have been, one of the greatest influences on modern handmade knives.

I don't think there's any better way to get a feel for the classic bowies of the 19th century than to handle as many of them as possible. Unfortunately, that's not always easy to accomplish – especially in light of the fact that most of the shows featuring quantities of them are located in the eastern half of the country. The second-best means of learning about them is through quality books and photographs, and this option, at least, is available to everyone.

Noting that my opinions are just that – opinions – here is an annotated list of books that might be useful to those interested in learning more about antique bowies and their kindred (like dirks, folding bowies, primitive knives, and such). I hope that you find it useful. [key: HC= hardcover, SC= softcover, OP= out of print (i.e. will take some searching to find)]

## “The Top Ten”

**The Bowie Knife: Unsheathing an American Legend** by Norm Flayderman, 2004 HC. This is quite simply the definitive book on the subject and will be for many years to come. Tons of superb photographs of superb knives; and for a real change of pace, an enormous amount of well-researched text. Simply put, if you buy only one book on bowies, BUY THIS ONE. (\$79.95)

**Confederate Bowie Knives** by Jack Melton, Josh Phillips, & John Sexton, 2012 HC. An amazing and beautiful resource covering the entire gamut of bowie knives made for the South's defense during the Civil War. Filled with an amazing amount of new research and over 856 photographs, this volume is without question the definitive guide to Confederate knives. (\$69.95)

**The Antique Bowie Knife Book** by Adams / Voyles / Moss, 1990 HC. The book you've been hearing about for years. Essentially a picture book of the best photographs of the best bowie knives in the world, and who can argue with that? OP (It's expensive, expect to pay in the ballpark of \$450)

**Knifemakers of Old San Francisco** by Bernard Levine, 1977 HC. An exhaustive study of a very important group of makers, a thoroughly enjoyable read, and a great influence on their popularity. The second edition replaces many woodcuts with photos of knives discovered since the original printing. OP (expect to pay \$40-50)

**The Antique Bowie Knife Collections** of Robert Berryman and Chas. Schreiner III, Butterfield's auction catalog - sale

4838A, 1992 HC/SC. Two superb collections of bowies, well illustrated, with many important pieces included. Having the auction's results doesn't hurt either. OP (expect to pay \$225 HC / \$175 SC)

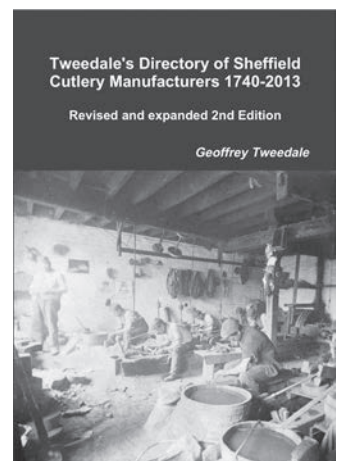
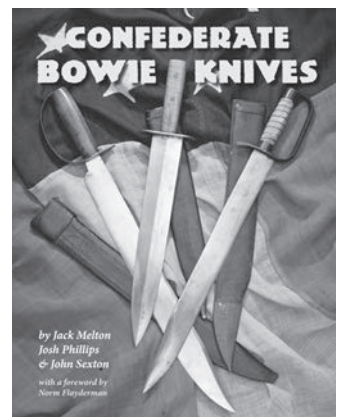
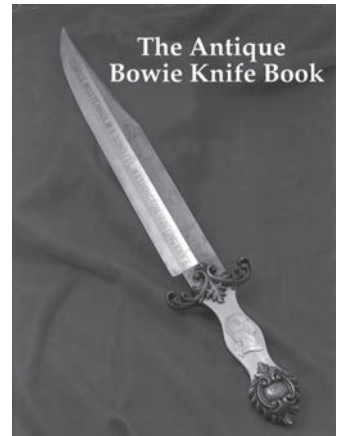
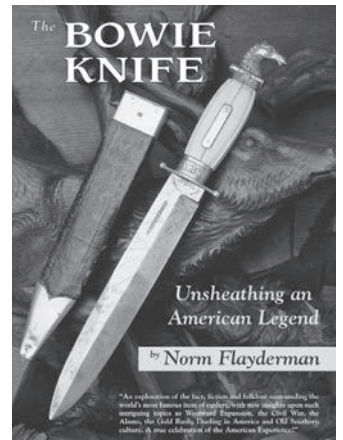
**The William R. Williamson Bowie Knife Collection**, Butterfield's auction catalog - sale 6552, 1997 HC/SC. The collection of the most prominent collector of his era. Many important knives, well illustrated, and of course it doesn't hurt to have the auction's results. OP (expect to pay \$175 HC / \$150 SC)

**Classic Bowie Knives** by Robert Abels, 1967 HC/SC. Abels' best grouping of knives and related items, though photos are marginal at best. OP (expect to pay \$200 HC / \$150 SC)

**Bowie Knives; From the Collection of Robert Abels and the Ohio Historical Society** by William G. Keener, 1962 SC. By far, the best photographs of any of the books on Abels' collection. OP despite being reprinted c. early 1980s. (expect to pay \$60-80)

**American Primitive Knives 1770-1870** by Gordon Minnis, 1983 HC. While not specifically on bowies, this book deals with them in the course of covering the range of knives made in America by hands other than those of the professional cutler. The information and advice for collectors at the beginning and end of the book is priceless, whether primitives are your thing or not. OP (expect to pay \$40-50)

**Tweedale's Directory of Sheffield of Sheffield Cutlery Manufacturers 1740-2013**, 2nd Edition by Geoffrey Tweedale, 2013 SC. - Since 90+% of the antique bowies we encounter were made in Sheffield, England, a detailed guide to Sheffield makers is a necessity. With 1600





listings spread out over 738 full size pages, this looks like a giant phone book but is so much better! (\$60.00)

#### **“20 Honorable Mentions” (in alphabetical order)**

**Accouterments I, II, and III** by James R. Johnston (1993, '95, '97). A series of picture books containing some great knives (primarily primitives), many of them previously unknown. Book I contains a variety, Book II some superb photos of Abels' knives from the Keener book as well as additional knives, and Book III an excellent chapter on primitives by Gordon Minnis, some fine primitives and more Abels photos. OP (expect to pay \$50-100 apiece)

**American Knives by Harold Petersen** (1957). Chock full of errors, I know, but what fabulous knives! In some ways, those typos have proven beneficial to us anyway (thanks for “Wills & Fink”, H.P.!) OP (expect to pay \$20-30)

**The Ames Sword Co. 1829-1935** by John D. Hamilton (1983). A superlative treatment of America's most important sword makers, who crafted many bowies as well. OP (expect to pay \$100 or more)

**Bowie Knives by Robert Abels** (early '60s). The 'red book' as collectors have come to call it, this is the one with Tah-Chee on the cover. Fabulous knives, and the photos are of decent quality, but they're quite small. Some interesting related material is also pictured. OP (expect to pay about \$40)

**Bowie Knives of the Ben Palmer Collection** by Palmer / Moran / Phillips (1992). Part of the collection of a bowie collecting pioneer, with some early articles and related material. Current reprint edition adds many period photographs, among other items. (\$44.95)

**California's Best - Old West Art and Antiques** by Brad and Brian Witherell (1999). A large number of photographs of California knives; no text, but a required reference for anyone interested in the genre. (\$89.95)

**Collins Machetes and Bowies 1845-1965** by D.E. Henry (1995). While Collins' products are not often given due consideration by bowie collectors, they were there nonetheless. Very well researched. OP (expect to pay \$80-100)

**Early Knives and Beaded Sheaths** of the American Frontier by John Baldwin (1997). Many photographs and some superb background material on American primitive and early trade knives. OP (expect to pay \$100+)

**Exhibition Knives of Joseph Rodgers & Sons, The Samuel Setian Collection** by Abel Domenech, 1999 HC. With first rate photography and printing, this is a remarkable book documenting a remarkable collection. It also includes an excellent history of Rodgers. Bowies are included amongst a wide variety of other knives. (\$139.95)

**The History of the John Russell Cutlery Co.** by Merriam et al. (1976). A superbly done history of a firm that has fascinated collectors since knife collecting began. You won't find too much on bowies in this book as the firm tended more towards hunting and skinning knives, but you'll love the story. OP (expect to pay \$75+)

**I\*XL Means I Excel** by William R. Williamson (1970). WRW's first - and last - book. Seldom seen and often forgotten, this is an excellent, well written, well illustrated little booklet picturing 42 I\*XLs and some additional material. OP (expect to pay \$40+)

**The Knife in Homespun America** by Madison Grant (1984). Focuses on primitives and other knives used in early frontier America. More romantic and less analytical (and accurate) than Minnis, but still interesting. OP (expect to pay \$50+)

**Levine's Guide to Knives and their Values, 4th Ed.** by Bernard Levine (1997). Includes a good basic guide to bowies and excellent information on makers and dates (particularly for American makers). OP (expect to pay \$100+)

**New England Cutlery** by Phillip Pankiewicz (1986). Good short histories of New England cutlers, including those that made bowies. OP (expect to pay \$35-40)

**The Peacemakers** by R.L. Wilson (1992). Covers the arms of the old west, with several color photographs of previously unpublished knives from collections such as Norm Flayderman's. (about \$20-25)

**The Sheffield Bowie and Pocket Knife Makers 1825-1925** by Richard Washer (1974). Very shaky as a dating guide, but good trademark information and the pictures in the back are a great guide for spotting fakes, although that was NOT Washer's intent. OP (expect to pay \$75+)

**Sheffield Exhibition Knives** by Claussen, McMickle, Adams et al (1999). A beautifully done book on Sheffield's finest knives with information on the city, knife manufacture, and so forth. Few bowies are illustrated, but there are several folding dirks. (about \$50).

**The Sheffield Knife Book** by Geoffrey Tweedale (1995) Not much on bowies specifically, but a great deal on Sheffield and the firms that made bowies. Very well written and researched. OP (expect to pay \$60+)

**Steel Canvas** by R.L. Wilson (1993). Covers the gamut of embellished American arms, with several color photographs of previously unpublished knives. (about \$20-25)

**A Sure Defence; The Antique Bowie Knife Book** by Ken Burton (1988) The photos won't blow you away, but this is a very useful reference for the many less expensive knives pictured therein. OP, but not that hard to find (about \$40)

#### **Where to Get 'Em:**

Knife World Books, PO Box 3395, Knoxville TN 37927.  
800-828-7751,  
[www.knifeworld.com](http://www.knifeworld.com) | email: [knifepub@knifeworld.com](mailto:knifepub@knifeworld.com)

James D. Hayden Bookpeddler,  
541-746-1819 | email: [jhbkpdlr@pacinfo.com](mailto:jhbkpdlr@pacinfo.com)

Quality Blade Books,  
P.O. Box 41854, Eugene, OR 97404 or 541-688-6899

For information on the Antique Bowie Knife Association, write Josh Phillips, 3649 Dairy Road, Christiansburg VA 24073 or visit [antiquebowieknife.com](http://antiquebowieknife.com)

The author collects antique bowie knives, and sells knife books for a living in his role with Knife World. Mark can be found at table N02 at the April Show. 

# Early Western States Sheath Knives

Martin Drivdahl

Most knife collectors know the history of Western States Cutlery and Manufacturing Company which was started in 1911 when H. N. Platts, for health reasons, sold his interest in W. R. Case & Sons and moved his family west from Little Valley, New York, to Boulder, Colorado.

Pocketknives and razors were the only cutlery products made or sold by Western States from 1911 until 1928 at which time the very first sheath knife was manufactured and marketed. It was the number 63 and is a very simple knife with a full tang having bone or stag handle scales, no end-knob and only a self-guard made by bulbing out the tang between the handle scales and blade. The number 63 was followed by the number 45 which has a bowie-style blade with a solid tang, separate full guard, but no pommel. These were followed by other single tang knife patterns and the first of the double-tang designs invented by Harlow Platts and first produced in 1931. The double tang knives made in 1931 were stamped WESTERN or WEST-CUT with PAT. APPLIED FOR, followed from about 1932 to 1934 with PAT. PENDING. Sometime in 1934 patent number 1,967,479 was issued for the double tang design, and this patent number was stamped on sheath knives from 1935 until about 1950.



BLADE STAMP (ETCH)	NUMBER HANDLE MATERIAL	PRODUCTION DATE Probable	BLADE LENGTH
WEST-CUT BOULDER, COLO.	X245-5" Pearl Composition	Late 1920s to 1941	4-3/4" (actual)
WESTERN STATES CAMP KNIFE (etch)	No. unknown Bone	1928-1931	6-1/4" (actual)
WESTERN STATES (in arc) CUT CO. BOULDER, COLO	No. unknown	1928-1931	4-1/4"
WEST-CUT BOULDER, COLO.	BX38 Bakelite	1936-1941	4-1/2"
WESTERN BOULDER, COLO. PAT. NO. 1,967,479	237 Composition	1935-1941	3-3/8" correct length
WEST-CUT BOULDER, COLO. (Mark Side) PAT. APPLIED FOR (Pile Side)	X244-41/2" Pearl Composition w/Black Underlay	1931	4-1/4" (actual)
WEST-CUT BOULDER, COLO. PAT. NO. 1,967,479	X243	Mid to Late 1930s	4-3/4" 4-5/8" (actual)
WESTERN BOULDER, COLO. PAT. NO. 1,967,479	L49 Leather	1935-1941	3-7/8" correct length
WESTERN BOULDER, COLO. PAT. NO. 1,967,479	238 Pearl Composition w/Black Underlay	1935-1941	4-1/2" (correct) 4-5/8" (actual)

Western States Cutlery Co., from the onset in its production of sheath knives, had a numbering system which identified the handle material, the model number of the knife and sometimes the blade length. These numbers were shown in the earliest catalogs but weren't stamped on the knives until years later. Harvey Platts in 1978 published a book entitled *The Knife Makers Who Went West*. This book contains catalog page reprints from various years including Catalog No. 40 for 1932 which is the earliest catalog year that shows any Western States sheath knives. Most of the surviving sheath knives made by this company can be found in these catalog page reprints, but not all. The basic scheme for Western's numbering system has a letter or number code for the handle material, followed by the knife model number, followed sometimes by the blade length. Handle scale codes are L for leather, A for amber composition, B for Bakelite, 2 for pearl composition, 5 for genuine stag, 6 for bone and 7 for composition horn. The letter X is often used in combination with the other letters or numbers to identify a variation from the basic handle construction or blade design.

Included in this article number three is a photo of nine early sheath knives made by Western States Cutlery Co. The knives are numbered from left to right. Knives #2 and #3 cannot be found in any of the referenced catalog page reprints and are believed to have been manufactured prior to 1931. Knife #2 shows no marking but was confirmed to be a Western States Camp Knife from a photo of an identical knife which faintly shows this etching on the blade. Knife #3 is very distinctly blade stamped with the arced "Western States" stamping used on the early pocketknives, has a buffalo head stamped metal handle shield and a hollow match-safe handle. The accompanying table gives pertinent information for each knife, including knife numbers that were identified from the Western States catalog pages for 1932, 1936 and 1941. Note the knife numbers for the WEST-CUT stamped knives all contain an X, while those stamped WESTERN do not.



## OKCA Free Classified Ads

Free classified ads will run up to three issues and then be dropped. Available only to paid members. Write your ad on anything you have handy (except stone tablets) and email or snail mail to the OKCA PO Box 2091 Eugene OR 97402. The number and size of ads submitted by a single member will be accepted, or excepted, dependent on available space and the mood of the editors.

**SPYDERCO KNIVES wanted.** Entire collections. River Valley Knives (715)557-1688.

**AL MAR, BENCHMADE, PACIFIC CUTLERY** wanted. Entire collections. River Valley Knives (715)557-1688.

**Wanted:** 2012 Case XX USA medium stockman #6318 PU CV jugged bone w/punch w/signature of Skip Lawrie. Ralph Nuno Sacramento (916)682-9422.

**For Sale:** Burr King electric motor.1.5HP, 115/230volt.13.4/6.7amps.3450rpm, 1ph.This motor is new with a new switch and will be at my table in April. Paid \$680, sell for \$300. Will be at my OKCA Show table Q-03 in April. Gary DeKorte, Sequim, WA (360)808-9498.

**For Sale:** Buck knives. Large consignment. List available from Larry Oden. Typically have Buck standard production, limited edition, BCCI, Buck Custom and Yellowhorse models. Email loden@dka-online.com or call (765)244-0614 8AM-8PM EST.

**For Sale:** OKCA Club knives 1997-2012, full price \$8,861.00. From now until end of April Show only \$6,500.00. Last chance to own a complete set which includes Corrado, Davis, Swauger, Vallotton. (No Oregon specials). Call Fred Coleman (541)915-6214.

**For Sale** - Set of NKCA knives 1975 thru 2009, 48 knives made by the best companies. And a president set - dedication set, and 16 anniversary and museum set. \$3600.00. Call Fred Coleman (541)915-6241.

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Wanted: I am interested to purchase Wayne Goddard handmade knives. ibdennis@comcast.net

**TEACHER:** George Washington not only chopped down his father's cherry tree, but also admitted it. Now, Louie, do you know why his father didn't punish him? **LOUIS:** Because George still had the axe in his hand.....

**For Sale:** Randall Knives - A Reference Book. .8-1/2x11 hardcover format. 22 chapters with 252 pages, 250 full color photos. \$54.95 including domestic shipping, payable to Blue Star Knives P O Box 841 Bigfork MT 59911.

**Spyderco/Goddard Model C16POD** \$85.00; free shipping when you mention OKCA. Goddards 473 Durham Ave Eugene OR 97404 (541)689-8098 email: wgoddard44@comcast.net.

**For Sale:** Duplicates of my old "WOOD HANDLE" Coke knives, \$100.00 each. email: ronjoyceedwards@comcast.net

**For Sale:** older knives. Please visit HHknives at www.allaboutpocketknives.com. Thanks for looking.

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**Mosaic pins** and lanyard tubes by Sally. See at www.customknife.com, email at sally@customknife.com. Phone (541)846-6755.

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**Knife Laws on-line.** Federal, state, local. Bernard Levine (541)484-0294 www.knife-expert.com.

**Randall Made Knives.** Buy, Sell, Trade. Also a good selection of Case knives, and many custom knives for sale or trade. Jim Schick www.nifeboy.com (209)295-5568.

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## The Knewsletter

Oregon Knife Collectors Association  
PO Box 2091  
Eugene, OR 97402

### Metallurgy Seminar

Craig Morgan

The Oregon Knife Collectors will host a Metallurgy Seminar on Friday, April 11, starting at 8AM. We are pleased to welcome **Frank Cox**, Western Sales Manager for Niagra Specialty Metals. Accompanying Frank will be **Bob Skibitski**, Senior Process Metallurgist CPM, from **Crucible Industries**. There will be a power point presentation on the steel making process. It will cover alloy composition, heat treatment and tempering cycles, durability and edge retention. It will be specific to knifemaking

steels and will conclude with a question and answer period. Whether you are a novice or a professional, you will certainly benefit from the knowledge that these two gentlemen bring to the

table. The seminar will take place in the southwest meeting room at the Lane Events Center. Entry will be through the doors in the front at the southwest corner. We hope to see you there! 