

## GREAT KNIFE STORIES IN HISTORY

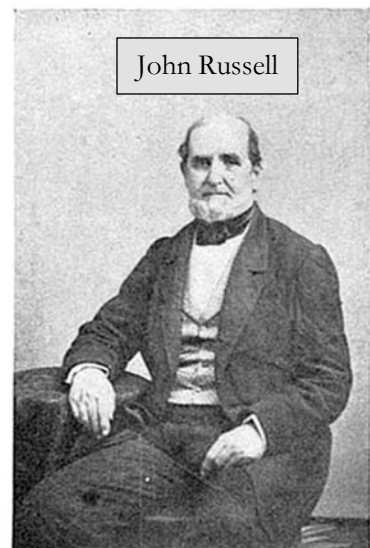
### THE ORIGIN OF THE BARLOW

There are some knives so famous that everyone knows what they are, including non-knife people; the Bowie knife, the Ka-Bar fighting knife, and the famous Barlow to name a few. Of all the well-known knives out there, the Barlow probably has the greatest following in the collector community and the most longevity in popularity. Though the Barlow can come in a variety of formats, we all agree on some basics in its design; slip joint, long bolster, one or two blades, classic teardrop lines, and great functionality. But where did it come from? Though we think of the Barlow as American as baseball and apple pie, its roots are deeper than our young country.

By the 1400's, Sheffield, England had become a center for cutlery due to its proximity to natural resources, which we discussed in [Volume III](#) of our newsletter. By the 1600's, the industry had formally organized, and a "Company of Cutlers" had been established; which is something a bit like a guild. It was in that century that a man named Obadiah Barlow made a knife which he branded with his namesake. But as many knifemakers will tell you, naming a knife after yourself doesn't make them instantly popular even if you are a super cool dude. Obadiah had a grandson who later joined the business and grew his exports to the British colonies in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

There are two other names that come up in research that are associated with the Barlow. Luke Furnace of Stannington, on the outskirts of Sheffield seems to have a connection, and Samuel Barlow and the Barlow Brothers are found in the Directory of Cutlers. As with popular patterns today, it is likely that all these makers produced a knife that shared many of the ancestral characteristics of what we call the modern Barlow.

Sheffield Cutleries continued to dominate the market in north America because American cutlery had yet to garner a reputation for quality. In fact, it was a big gamble for a fledgling knife company founded by John Russell to advertise the product as "Made in America" because of the stigma often associated with poorly made domestically produced items in the early 1800's. But when John Russell moved from



Augusta, Georgia to Greenfield, Massachusetts in 1830, he embarked on creating his vision for a massive cutlery facility that would rival the greatest of the Sheffield giants. John Russell established the “Green River Works” and equipped it with the most modern and efficient steam powered machines of the day.



We often think of Henry Ford as the king of mechanization and automation, but Russell implemented new power-hammers that abolished the labor-intensive hand processes which were so time consuming three quarters of a century before Ford. These innovations enabled the Green River works to produce exponentially more blades in a day than rival Sheffield firms and the quality was consistent and superb.

The Civil War must have been good to the company because in 1868, plans were set in place to develop the Green River Works into the largest cutlery house in the world. They made over 2500 different varieties of goods and produced a stunning 36,000 pieces per day. One of these was the Barlow, which was one pattern in over 150 different varieties of pocket cutlery offered.

But the Barlow was always a favorite. Why? Well the long bolster ensured strength and durability. The frame at 3.5” is just the right size for a pocket, and the shape is comfortable for whittling and general every day tasks. Plus, there is something about the shape and bolster proportions that made it an instant classic. The same reason why the ’64 Mustang is sexy is the same reason why the Barlow is always a favorite; because its’s just right and needs no improvement.

The company still exists today, though they do not produce the Barlow anymore. Today they produce the [Dexter-Russell](#) line of restaurant cutlery, and they dominate this two billion-dollar industry.

So, who has carried a Barlow? Well we know that George Washington carried one because it is in the Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia (though this one had to be British made ironically). Lincoln had one that was accompanied by one of his hilarious self-deprecating tales. And Story-Tellers include the Barlow for authenticity to their tales. Mark Twain referenced the Barlow in Huckleberry Finn and The Adventures of Tom Sawyer. Both Jerry Clower and Carl Hurley have referenced the Barlow in their “stories-told-funny”.







And what about those original Russell Barlows? Well, if you find one for sale in good condition, buy it immediately. ([Buyer beware of fakes; read up on how to spot them](#)). They have Russell's mark on the bolsters; an "R" with an arrow through it. They often had a sawcut amber bone and were found with several blade variants. Many companies have duplicated this knife over the years, but the Russell, though not technically the original Barlow, is considered the father of the American Barlow. For it was his manufacturing techniques, production capabilities, and classic style that brought the Barlow into every American's consciousness.

## MEET YOUR MAKER

### Joey Berry of J.B. Knifeworks

J.B. Knifeworks is the creation of Joey Berry from Buford, Georgia. Ever since he was a kid, Joey has had a knife in his hands, and developed such a proficiency at sharpening that "old-timers" would bring their knives for him to sharpen at the hunt camp. Joey is an avid outdoorsman and has been married for 22 years with two college aged kids. Joey was a High-School precision rifle team coach and enjoys shooting precision long-range rifles along with practicing Brazilian Ju Jitsu. A craftsman by nature, he even dabbles in craft beer, wine and soap-making.



Joey honed his metal working skills as a gunsmith, and that meticulous attention to detail and exacting fit and finish are evident in his work. As a butcher in high-school, Joey learned how knives are supposed to perform and feel in the hand. These experiences taught Joey important lessons which gave him a great foundation as a knifemaker.

J. B. Knifeworks products are practical in design, feel exceptional in the hand, and perform beautifully in the field. Joey's style includes full flat grinds and full distal tapers, which reduce weight and makes for a phenomenal balance and feel. All knives are hand finished and individually made with exacting precision.

# FEATURED PRODUCT AND REVIEW

So, after all of that, how about a few Barlow Knives and some AMAZING J.B. Knifeworks knives!?! Well we have some awesome Vintage Cripple Creek Barlows, some fantastic knives by Joey Berry, and let's not forget the new Will Dutton Hand-Forged knives made the old-fashioned way!

## Vintage Cripple Creek Barlow

This beautiful Vintage Cripple Creek Barlow is an exceptional knife. The blade is 2 3/4", 3 1/2" closed, 6 5/8 OAL open. The Sawcut Bone is traditional and makes for a classic Barlow like the Russell Green River ones discussed in this month's Newsletter. This knife was made in 1994 and comes in the original sleeve. This is a superb collector knife and it is in MINT condition.

\$125.00

We use the NKCA Grading Standards for all Vintage Product we sell. For a detailed explanation, see:

[The NKCA Grading Standard](#)

[To see the entire Vintage product offering \(and more Barlows\), Click Here](#)



## J.B. Knifeworks Pro Skinner

Joey Berry with J.B. Knifeworks makes a phenomenal product. Pro Skinner, Natural Canvas Micarta scales, Yellow Pinstripe, Full Distal Taper, Skeletonized Full Tang, .170 or 11/64" 1084 High Carbon Steel, 3" blade, 7 1/2" OAL. Joey's knives are excellent, from the finish, fit, to execution and you will not be disappointed! Designed for use for hours on end as a comfortable knife, this pattern is exceptionally well balanced and ergonomic! This knife would be a great EDC or for a Hunting/Fishing trip.

\$320.00

[To see the entire line of J.B. Knifeworks, Click Here](#)





## Will Dutton Hand-Forged Straight Back

Bladesmith Will Dutton makes a phenomenal hand forged knife. This one is a straight back in curly maple, and has a nickel silver guard, hidden tang. It is hand-forged from 1/8" 5150 Model A spring steel, and measures 3 3/8" blade length, 7 1/2" OAL, and comes with an outstanding custom leather sheath. We think his knives "fit" very well with our product offerings. This would be a great EDC or a perfect addition to your collection.

\$225.00

[To see all the hand-forged Will Dutton Knives, Click Here](#)



## ALFA-KNIFE AK-5

If you aren't familiar with Alfa-Knife and Damon Lusky, you are missing the boat. These knives are EXCEPTIONAL. The AK5 is one of his best sellers, and this one comes in black/grey Richlite scales, with a black liner and black pinstripe. The steel is 1/8" AEBL Stainless with a stonewash finish, skeletonized full tang, and measures 3 1/4" blade, OAL 7 1/4", and comes with a custom Kydex sheath. This would be a great pick for tactical carry and it's the perfect size to wear on your side as an EDC.

\$230.00

[To see all of the ALFA-Knife products in stock, Click Here](#)



## *AND THE WINNER IS...*

Our Knife Display Giveaway was EXTREMELY popular. The goal was to raise awareness of our company on social media, and it worked! So well in fact that we plan to give these away regularly. So, if you didn't win, don't worry, there will be another chance just as soon as we can make another one! Make sure to follow us on social media (links below) for the next giveaway.

*The lucky winner is James M. of Northridge, California!*

The display is on its way to you James!

Thank you for being a subscriber to our newsletter!



You may have seen the greatest customer photo ever. It was quite popular. We got so many comments that we have decided to offer our customers something that may help them with these sorts of... um.... situations.



## WINNER

You have been selected by **OLDE TOWNE Cutlery**  
as the winner of this cool free knife!



This voucher is to be presented to  
hostile spouses, irritable significant others,  
nagging parents, whining kids who are  
concerned about their inheritance, or anyone  
who does not understand Knife-Addiction.

**Soooooooo... ~~Piss-Off~~ because it was free!**

**[www.oldetownecutlery.com](http://www.oldetownecutlery.com)**

**1-833-GOT-KNIVES**

So, look at this “voucher” and see if this is something that could help you. All you need to do is ask for one in the comments section of the order (sorry, no actual free knife) and we will include the “Winner Voucher” with your knife. This way, when your significant other freaks out on you, just present this and all your problems will be solved. In fact, you can then say that since it was free, you should go buy another knife!

We sincerely appreciate our wonderful customers and friends. Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. We appreciate your interest and support. Have a great weekend everyone!

*Lee & Melissa*

**1-833-GOT-KNIVES (468-5648)**

**[OLDTOWNECUTLERY.COM](http://OLDTOWNECUTLERY.COM)**

Please don't forget to follow us on Social Media!

