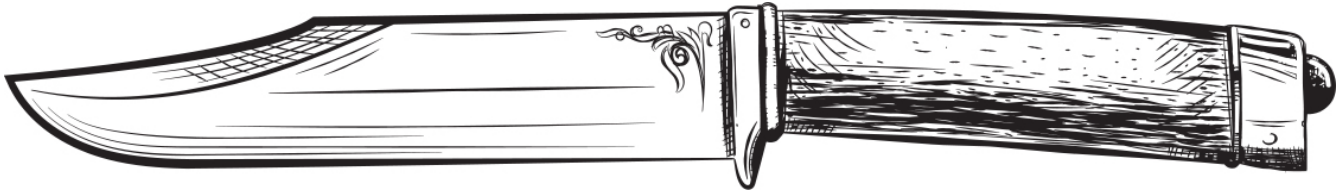


OLDE TOWNE

Post-Dispatch

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GREAT KNIFE STORIES IN HISTORY

AMERICAN CUTLERY RENAISSANCE

American Cutlery is now known as the finest in the world, rivaling the cutleries of Seki, Japan, Solingen, Germany, Toledo, Spain, Maniago, Italy and others. As we discussed in [Newsletters Volume III](#) and [IV](#), American Cutlery was borne out of the English Roots in Sheffield, England. For much of the 18th and 19th century, if you had a quality knife, it was probably made in Sheffield. That began to change in the late 19th century when [John Russel built the Green River Works](#) and created the largest cutlery factory in the world. As we moved into the 20th century, many fine cutleries rose to prominence as they attracted high quality cutlers as immigrants to the new world. The industrial revolution propelled men with great ideas who were driven to succeed to build cutlery empires; some of which can still be seen on the landscape of American Cutlery today. But there was a dark era on the horizon as the 20th century came to a close.



standard of fixed blades and decided that moving production to China was somehow a good idea. Meanwhile in Europe, the same trends were happening. Robert Klass and Kissing Krane quietly folded German production and moved to China. Sheffield cutleries hemorrhaged jobs and production due to shifting trends to Asia. The industry was

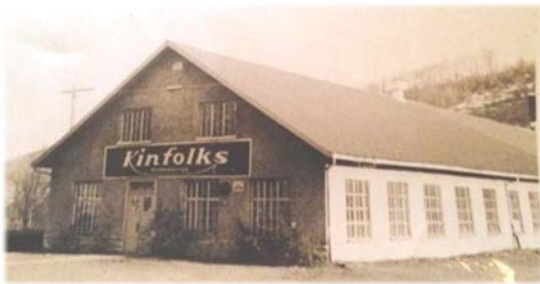
The last quarter of the century saw great change and consolidation in the industry. Western Cutlery teamed up with Coleman (the camping equipment producer) and then somehow veered into Camillus. Schrade had to fend off a hostile takeover in the 80's and ended up with an identity crisis. Marble's had been the gold



poised for a meltdown. Then it happened. In 2000, Marbles was essentially done; merely three years after the decision to take an iconic American brand and cheapen it with poor quality products. Schrade was the next giant to fall in 2004, and the once multi-million-dollar titan of the industry was essentially left with nothing more than the rights to the name, which it sold for peanuts. Then Camillus declared bankruptcy after failed labor negotiations crippled the company in 2007.

American cutlery was left reeling. The trend was to shift production to overseas imports and compete on price. Some resisted the urge, such as W.R. Case, but even Buck Knives and Ka-Bar plunged headlong into the confusing marketing nightmare of part American/part Asian production. The mindset of competing on price produced a period of stagnant creativity in production companies. The market was thirsty for innovative products, and these titans of industry sought the wrong solution. This created the perfect conditions for a renaissance in American Cutlery.

The consumer changed their mindset as well. Mass produced generic product was boring and unappealing. Americans demanded more, and it was now fashionable to buy local, buy American, and buy from smaller producers that don't make zillions of the same old thing. The attacks of 9/11 certainly had something to do



with this, and the Great Recession also affected the mindset. It wasn't just in knives, it was across all aspects of the American pocketbook. Just look at the brewery industry as a similar comparison. Thirty years ago, there were only Anheuser-Busch products, Miller and maybe PBR in the beer case. Today there are scores of micro-brews, unique brands, and a host of variety.

The list of companies that have filled the void is long. [Winkler Knives](#), [Spartan Blades](#), [Great Eastern Cutlery](#), [Southern Grind](#), [White River](#), and the list goes on. The custom market has absolutely exploded with creativity, and the recent Blade Show expansion into a second hall (and a second west coast show) is proof of the robust variety now available to consumers.

The story of American Cutlery did not end with the implosion of the industry in the late 20th and early 21st century. The shift to cheap Asian production only opened the door to new innovative young minds that were willing to bet on American workers and American quality. Benchmade, [ZT](#), Bark River and scores of others have proven that not only is there an appetite in the American consumer, the world demands American quality products as well. Never has there been a better time to be an American knife-maker.



As a final thought, we cannot dismiss overseas production as cheap and of poor-quality. The stigma of “Made in China” being junk is entirely self-inflicted. Until recently, Americans didn’t ask the Chinese to make a quality knife. We asked them to make a \$3 piece of crap. So, they did. Shame on us for thinking that was all they were capable of making. But somewhere along the line, someone asked them to make a quality product and boy did they. Just look at [Rough Rider](#), [Kizer](#), [CRKT](#) and [Spyderco](#). The list of premium Asian brands is growing, and their product is... well... outstanding.

Here at Olde Towne Cutlery we are as pro-American as patriots can be (the Patriot was even my Alma-Mater). We passionately support American jobs and manufacturing. But remember that the international trade is big business for America too. I grew up in Charleston, South Carolina, one of the largest ports in the country, and my family was in the shipping business. Stevedores, Longshoremen, crane operators, harbor-pilots and scores of supporting jobs are good paying careers that are entirely dependent on international trade.

So, what is the solution? BUY BOTH! You can’t have too many knives anyway! You need at least three of EVERY brand! Hehe. Happy knife hunting.

MEET YOUR MAKER

Scott Davidson of Solid Rock Knives

The quintessential southern gentleman is alive and well in the mountains of Georgia. Look no further than our friend and knife maker, Scott Davidson. When you stop by his table at any knife show, you will see a little display that says, “100%’er”. This means that he makes every part of the product to see. A “100%’er” must grind all the steel from a raw bar, do his own heat treat, all the handle material, and even the sheath work. To be a “100%’er”, you must be a tremendously accomplished maker, and Scott Davidson is exactly that; tremendously accomplished.

Twenty-four years ago, Scott started making knives. Since then he has produced well over 5000 finished pieces. His background in metal-fabrication with a welding certification from North Georgia Tech was an excellent foundation for a career as a knife-maker. As his skill increased, Scott saw great personal value in Guild membership. He joined the Georgia Custom Knife Makers Guild in 2003 and served two terms as President, and in 2010, Scott joined the National Knife-Maker’s guild.

Scott’s work is as varied as where it has ended up. The mark of a truly talented maker is when their





talents cross multiple genres and appeal to a wide audience. A proper representation of his work would include Scott's hunting and skinning knives, his "crossbreed" knives, EDC's, military/tactical fighters, camp knives, and even custom hoof knives for trimming horse's hooves. Scott will do full tang, hidden tang, stainless, carbon steel, specialty knives and even specialty tools and firestarters. Most of his work is done by the stock-removal process but recently he has been starting to explore the world of forging. This is another aspect of a true master-craftsman; they are always learning and expanding

their craft and knowledge. Scott has shipped knives to all 50 states and countries all over the world.

One of the things that is so nice about his work is that each knife comes with a custom leather sheath. Often a custom knife maker struggles in this area, but not Scott. Five years ago, he dove headlong into becoming a leathersman, and in truth his leather work is as good as his knives. Each sheath is meticulously hand-crafted for a perfect fit and appointed with beautiful designs and custom dyes to match the knife with which it is paired. The result is always a stunning masterpiece which you would be proud to own.

You may notice that Scott's mark and the name of his brand carry a powerful spiritual meaning. When you get the chance to meet him in person, you will immediately notice that he has an air of kindness and warmth about him that is infectious. Scott is a deeply spiritual person, and he will tell you that he attributes all his blessings to God. He has attended The Torch, Church of God for the last 18 years, where he can be found with Juanita; his best friend and bride of more than 30 years. They have two sons and a six-year-old grandson with sisters, quads (4), girls born on Jan 21, of 2017.



It is an honor to represent Scott and his beautiful work. Our friendship with him is one of the special ones that we are so fortunate to have made in this industry. There are lots of fine gentlemen in this business, but a finer one you won't find. Thank you, Scott!

[To see a full listing of Solid Rock Knives, Click Here](#)

FEATURED PRODUCT AND REVIEW

With the renaissance of American Cutlery in mind, we selected a compliment of companies that we represent that are a part of this phenomenon. We are extremely proud to play our part in this exciting time in the industry. Take a look below and see if any of these knives “do-it” for you 😊

Tac-1 - Solid Rock Knives by Scott Davidson

The TAC-1 comes in natural canvas micarta with a black micarta bolster. The steel is 5/32” CPM 154 Stainless Steel and has skeletonized full tang. The blade measures 4 1/2” and is 9” OAL. As with all of Scott’s products, it comes with a custom leather sheath. This model has a thumb ramp with jimping, making it comfortable in the hand and giving you leverage for use. The TAC-1 comes with a beautiful embossed leather sheath that is as fine of quality as the knife itself. This would be a great EDC or make an excellent addition for any collector.



\$345.00

[To see all of the Solid Rock Products, Click Here](#)

Belt Knife in Tribal Markings – Winkler Knives

The Belt Knife is one of the most popular of all the Winkler products. It’s just the “right-size”. The blade is 80CrV2 with a Caswell finish. This one is a curly maple handle with Tribal Markings pattern and comes with a lined leather sheath for “silent draw”. Daniel Winkler designed this compact knife for high performance. Weighing between 6-7 oz. this knife is lightweight, and a comfortable carry. So, whether you want to display in a case or carry on your side, we’re sure this will be an addition to your knives!



\$385.00

[Cutler Approved!](#)

[To see all of the Winkler Products, Click Here](#)



Boy's Knife in Ebony - Great Eastern Cutlery

Great Eastern Cutlery has released the Tidioute #15 Huckleberry Boys Knife in Gabon Ebony. The steel is 1095 Carbon Steel with a 2 3/4" blade, and a closed length 3 1/2", and 6 1/4" OAL. The Huckleberry Boys Knife has an excellent, "walk and talk". This would be a beautiful knife to add to your display or if you're wanting a small EDC, this would be a great pick.

\$72.95



[To see all of the Great Eastern Product, Click Here](#)

Backpacker PRO in Black G-10 by White River

The White River Knife & Tool M1 Backpacker Pro knife is the ultimate S35VN Stainless Steel, Stonewashed finish, Black G-10 handle, 3" blade, 7" OAL, Kydex Sheath. This is the latest White River M1 Backpacker Pro knife and is the perfect EDC knife. It would be a great carry in an overnight pack, for hunting or hiking. It has an excellent grip for wet environments and the high finger choil provides the comfort you need for cutting. This would be a perfect choice to add to any camping/overnight trip. White River has a 100% satisfaction guarantee on their products.

\$115.00



[Cutler Approved!](#)

[To see all of the White River products, Click Here](#)



Pallas Folder by Spartan Blades

Spartan Blades make a phenomenal product. The Pallas is a CPMS35VN Stainless steel with a stonewashed finish and black mil spec anodized Aluminum frame. This Pallas button lock can be easily opened using the thumb stud or flipper tab. The thumb studs, spacers, screws and button hardware, are all stainless steel. The name Pallas is appropriate for this folder, as it means Titan god of war craft. With a beefy blade this would be an excellent EDC. Spartan blades uses only the most premium materials, from the frame, the steel, the clip, studs and spacers, thus making this knife one you want to invest in.

\$285.00



[To see all of the Spartan Products, click here](#)



**for a limited time, get a FREE Shermag, Challenge Coin, or Helmet Bead with all Spartan Product orders – You Select which! Just put in the comments section of your order.*

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

We gave away EIGHT knives at the Blade Show. Thank you to everyone who came by the booth to see these awesome makers. We were so fortunate to have so many awesome brands to represent and generous makers who donated product to the Give-A-Way. This was a tremendous success and we thank everyone for participation.



The lucky winners are:

J. B. Knifeworks – Pro Skinner – Jody K of Hiram, Georgia

Southern Longbeards - Clipped Hunter – Taylor S of Atlanta, Georgia

Dragonfly – Old Home Place Skinner – Aida T. of DeLand, Florida

Fiddleback – Sneaky Pete – Holly H of USMC 1st SGT

Cumming Bladeworks – Dress Necker – Michael C. of Ponchatoula, Louisiana

D-Rocket Squared – The Shark – Jonathan B. of Byram, Mississippi

Grange Park Knifeworks – Mini Chef – Jeri C. of Red Deer, Alberta

Due South Knives – Cumberland Island Drop Point – Aaron W. of Dahlonega, Georgia

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)

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

