

## BACKGROUND - CURRICULUM VITAE

### A. GENERAL.

Since 1971 I have researched the history and identification of knives, as well as the art and technology of knifemaking.

My initial knife business was "The Antiquarian Cutler" (1971-78), buying, restoring, and selling old cutlery of all types. I began with cutlery as tools, but shifted increasingly to collector items, as the knife collecting market developed.

I kept a list of every cutlery item I sold in that period (more than 13,000), and this formed the initial basis of the cutlery brand lists in my knife books. I examined at least ten knives for every one that I purchased, so I had a great deal of direct experience when I began to write about knives and cutlery. I have examined a large number of knives since then, as well, but I no longer attempt to keep count.

I also began to research the history of cutlery in the early 1970s, in academic libraries, the San Francisco Mechanics Institute Library, the California Genealogical Library, the Smithsonian, and the Library of Congress. I continue this work today, but now many others are also researching cutlery history, and for the most part we share our work freely.

At the same time I began to build my own library of knife books, magazines, catalogs, brochures, photos, business directories, and other related material, including microfilms of rare books and manuscripts. This collection is now very extensive, occupying five large filing cabinets, and more than 40 shelf feet of knife books -- plus extensive computer files.

In 1974 I began original research on my first knife book, and also sold my first knife-related articles. I published the book in early 1978. After that I gave up the "using" or functional knife business, although I continued to buy and sell antique knives for the collector market.

For the next two decades I attended knife shows all over the United States, to promote my

books, to meet and interview people active in the knife business, and to examine knives. I also visited many knife factories (including Russell-Harrington, Imperial, Schrade, Camillus, Colonial, Buck, Gerber, Benchmade, and Leatherman), and knifemaker workshops (including several visits to Randall). Today my travels are limited mainly to Oregon, but much of the knife industry is now located here, and the Oregon Knife Show is one of the biggest in the world.

Knife books I have written include four editions of the standard reference work in the field, *Levine's Guide to Knives and Their Values* (1985, 1989, 1993, 1997); also *Knifemakers of Old San Francisco* (1978; 2nd edition 1998), *The Knife Identification and Value Guide* (1981), *The Knife Collection of Albert Blevins* (1988), *Pocketknives, a Collector's Guide* (1993; 2nd edition 2002; plus numerous foreign editions), and *Identifying Pocketknives* (1998). I have been a frequent contributor to *Blade Magazine* since 1974 and to *Knives Illustrated* magazine since 1996; I have published hundreds of feature articles about knives in these and other periodicals. Since 1978 I have written the popular monthly "Whut Izzit" feature for *Knife World* magazine, in which I identify, explain, and evaluate unusual knives. From 1988 to 1996 I wrote the wide-ranging feature, "Bernard Levine's Knife Lore," for the *National Knife Magazine*, and "From U.S.A. Report" for Tokyo's *Knife* magazine.

I have served as an advisor and consultant on the history and technology of cutlery to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, to the California Academy of Sciences, and to other leading museums. I have testified as an expert witness in a wide variety of knife related court cases and commission hearings around the country. I have done knife research, consultations, and appraisals for hundreds of individual, corporate, and government clients around the world.

I am a life member of the National Knife Collectors Association, and an honorary member of the Knifemakers Guild and The American Bladesmith Society. In 1994 I was inducted into the Blade Publications Cutlery Hall of Fame, which is the only such recognition body in the cutlery industry, and which admits only two new honorees per year.

I am a native of Boston. I attended Commonwealth School 1960-1965 and Harvard College 1965-1969. From 1969 to 1987 I lived and worked in California. I now live in Eugene, Oregon, where I am active in the Oregon Knife Collectors Association.

## **B. SPECIFIC.**

### **The main elements in my 38-year professional study of knives are these:**

1. Business history, identifying and chronicling the individuals and firms that designed, manufactured and distributed cutlery. My history knowledge base is outlined in the "Brand Lists" in *Levine's Guide to Knives and Their Values*. These summarize the dates of operation and business type of every firm in the cutlery industry for which records or examples survive. I have written more detailed histories of dozens of firms in magazine articles, and in my columns for *Knife World* and the *National Knife Magazine*. I have also written monographs on particular firms as books or articles -- see the attached bibliography for titles.
2. Design history, tracing the evolution of knife design, both functional and aesthetic. My studies in this area are summarized in the "Pocketknife Pattern" and "Fixed Blade" chapters in *Levine's Guide to Knives and Their Values*.
3. Technology history, including the composition and production of blade metals, mount materials, and handle materials; the methods of fabricating and shaping these materials; and the methods of assembling these materials into cutlery. My studies in this area include: annotated translations of 18th century French treatises on cutlery manufacture; analysis of 19th century English and American accounts of cutlery manufacture; extensive research on 19th and 20th century cutlery patents (both for collector interest, and for discovering "prior art" for intellectual property law firms); explanatory articles on various aspects of knife technology, such as stainless steels, hardness testing, and sharpness.
4. Knife law, researching the history and evolution of knife law in the United States, and maintaining an Internet reference site of current U.S. federal and state knife laws.

**My study of the technology of knives has included the following elements:**

1. Reading: technical works about materials and processes; historical and current works about industrial technology in general, and cutlery manufacture in particular; a wide range of primary sources such as patents, catalogs, and advertisements.

2. Personal contact with people active in the cutlery industry: formal interviews and informal discussions about history and technology with merchants, manufacturers, and hand knifemakers; factory and workshop visits; trade show attendance; professional consultation. These contacts allowed me to observe processes firsthand, and to ask questions of people with direct firsthand knowledge -- about both technology and history.

3. Direct examination of all types of knives, including the trial use of many types. This began with my "Antiquarian Cutler" business in the 1970s, in which I examined tens of thousands of knives of all types, and bought and sold more than 13,000. It continues today.

4. Disassembly, destructive testing (induced failure), and repair of many types of blades and knives. I have examined countless broken or damaged knives, both folding and fixed blade. In the 1970s I repaired and re-handled many fixed blade knives, mainly kitchen and table knives. I have either done or observed tests on the breaking of blades, and on the failure of pocketknife joints and locks.

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