OLDER KNIFE BOOKS (Mainly Pocketknives)

Alphabetical by author

(list compiled in 1993, slightly edited 1999 & 2004)
An incomplete list of useful older titles.
A few are still in print,
or new editions are available.

Bill Adams, Bruce Voyles, & Terry Moss, The Antique Bowie

Ed Bardy, Advertising with a Sharp Edge, #1 1972; #2 1975.
Advertising and figural knives, lots of photos, historical
background.

Giancarlo Baronti, Coltelli D' Italia, 1986. Italian
pocketknives, and tales of their criminal associations. All
color, handsome book. In Italian

of Pocket Knives and Folding Hunters, 1974. A pioneer work
about pioneering makers.

Lewis D. Bement, The Cutlery Story, 1950. Excellent primer by
the president of Russell-Harrington.

Ragnar Benson, Switchblade, The Ace of Blades.

Fougeroux de Bondaroy, L'Art du Coutelier en Ouvrages
Communs, 1771. Factory mass production of pocketknives more
than two centuries ago. Handsomely illustrated. Companion
volume to Perret. In French.

Detailed study of all known variants, plus re-issues, posters
and related knives.

Frank Buster, The International Fight'n Rooster Knife
first seven years of this popular limited production
pocketknife brand, plus photos inside the workshop in
Solingen where the knives are made.

William Cassidy, Knife Digest, #1 1974; #2 1976. Full of
interesting knife lore.

M. H. Cole, U.S. Military Knives Bayonets & Machetes, Book III and Book IV, 1979 and 1990 (all material from out-of-print Books I & II is in Book III). Detailed extensive coverage, mainly using superb line drawings, of both standard and unusual military knives.


Abel A. Domenech, Del Facon al Bowie, 1988. Mainly about gaucho knives and bowies; also has one chapter on "Cuchillos de bolsillo y plegables (cortaplumas y navajas)." In Spanish.

B. Ronald Dyson, A Glossary of Words and Dialect Formerly Used in the Sheffield Trades, 1936 (reprinted 1979). Fascinating.


Rafael Martinez Del Peral Forton, Las Navajas, Un Estudio y Coleccion, 3rd edition 1995. Spanish clasp knives; history,
lore, and lots of photos. In Spanish.

Charles Frazier and Revis Ferguson, The Knife Collectors Handbook. Catalog reprints, thumbnail histories, well printed, useful.

James S. Giles, Case, the First 100 Years, 1989. Handsomely produced volume, lots of early photos and illustrations, plus color plates of the factory knife collection.


LTC (Ret) Thomas Johnson, Collecting the Edged Weapons of the Third Reich, 8 volumes, with more planned. Thorough, detailed, accurate, clearly written, well illustrated.


Ben Kelley, Jr., The Complete Book of Pocketknife Repair, 1982. Methods of one of the last Case factory authorized repairmen.


M. H. Landrin, Manuel du Coutelier, 1835. An early pocket-sized how-to, in French.


Bernard Levine, Pocketknives, 1993; Identifying Pocket Knives, 1998; Pocket Knives, 2002 (same text and photos,
different publishers and formats). A concise primer on pocketknives for collectors, full color photographs. Editions in many languages.


G. I. H. Lloyd, The Cutlery Trades, 1913 (also later reprints). A classic on Sheffield methods.

Robert Mayes, Knife Album, 1970. A large volume of old catalog reprints.


Simon Moore, Pen Knives and Other Folding Knives, 1988. A brief but excellent primer by the most scholarly writer in the field.

Ben Myers & Lowell Myers, An Introduction to Switchblade Knives, 1982. History, mechanical principles, price guide, and photos, including some in color.

Camille Page, La Coutellerie Depuis L'Origine Jusqu'a Nos Jours, 6 vols., (1896-1902). Superb world-wide coverage by a leading cutlery manufacturer, collector, and historian of the time. Includes reprints of some of J.-J. Perret's plates, plus hundreds of original ones (also see Victorinox, below). In French.


James Parker and Bruce Voyles, The Rodgers Exhibition and Ceremonial Knives, and Other Fine Selected Cutlery Items. Elegant full-color catalog, includes photos reproduced from Rodgers's Under Five Sovereigns.


Jean-Jacques Perret, L'Art du Coutelier III vols., 1771. Still the best knifemaking how-to ever published. Incredible folio-sized plates. Perret said that the real test of a master cutler was to be able to draw a steel rod out into a wire 6 inches long and 1/6 inch in diameter, then using a breast drill to make a 1/12 inch diameter hole through it -- the long way. Volumes II and III are about surgical instruments. In French.

Jean-Jacques Perret, La Vie de la Coutellerie. His biography. In French.

Harold Peterson, American Knives, 1958 (also later paperback reprints). The first, and for many years the best, general book on the subject. Though now somewhat dated, it is still worthwhile.
Harvey Platts, The Knife Makers Who Went West, 1978. History of Western States Cutlery Co., also of Platts and Case, by the then president and son of the founder. Superbly illustrated, including reprints of all catalogs to that date.


Sylvia Pybus, Damned Bad Place, Sheffield; An Anthology of Writings About Sheffield Through the Ages, 1994. Compiled by the Local Studies Librarian of the Sheffield City Library.


(Joseph Rodgers & Sons), Under Five Sovereigns, 1918. Official company history.


Konrad F. Schreier, Jr., Marble's Knives & Axes, 1978. The Marble's Safety Hunting Knife, made in nearly a score of variants from 1902 to 1942, is much in demand among
collectors.

Michael Silvey and Gary Boyd, United States Military Knives, Collector's Guide, 1989. Not as thorough as Cole, but illustrated with photos. [Mr. Silvey has several newer books available now.]

Joseph Smith, Explanation or Key to the Various Manufactories of Sheffield, 1816 (reprinted 1975). The very first illustrated catalog of cutlery and tools made for the U.S. market. Wonderful pictures of wonderful knives. Some reproduced in Levine's Guide.


Rhett Stidham, Napanoch, "A White Man's Knife with a Red Man's Name," 1972. Brief history of this firm, which became the nucleus of Winchester's cutlery operation, plus catalog reprint and splendid old factory interior photos.


Tracy Tudor, The Old Knife Book. A good and varied selection of catalog reprints, well printed.

Geoffrey Tweedale, Sheffield Steel and America, A Century of Commercial and Technological Interdependence, 1987. Scholarly history by the man who is my mentor on this subject.

Geoffrey Tweedale, Giants of Sheffield Steel, 1986. Biographies of ten key figures.


(Victorinox) The Knife and its History, 1984. Victorinox (Switzerland) centennial volume, includes reproductions of many plates from C. Page, old Elsener catalog pages, color photos inside factory (editions in many languages).
J. Bruce Voyles, American Blade Collectors Association Price Guide to Antique Knives, 1990. Includes moderately detailed coverage of 31 brands, illustrated with old catalog cuts; limited coverage of other brands; useful background material and charts, English silver hallmarks.


J. H. Whitham & D. Vickers, ...Register of Trademarks of the Cutlers' Company of Sheffield..., 1919.

J. H. Whitham & A. Sykes, ...Register of Trademarks of the Cutlers' Company of Sheffield..., 1953.


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Original hardware and cutlery catalogs: priceless primary sources.

Cutlery catalog reprints. Dozens of old pocketknife catalogs have been reprinted since 1970. All but two or three of these are now out of print. All are both useful and interesting.

DISCONTINUED CUTLERY MAGAZINES

Messer und Feile (in German), published 1894-1912.

American Cutler, also Cutlery Journal, and Paine's Cutlery Journal, published 1909-1940s, sometimes as separate magazines, sometimes combined.


Blue Mill Blade, published circa 1972-1977 (forerunner of the National Knife Magazine, now also discontinued).