

The Queen Cutlery Catalog Project; Introduction and Methods

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Historically, documentation on knives produced by Queen Cutlery has been difficult to obtain. The company's energies were successfully focused on “*Getting the next knife out the door to keep the lights on,*” rather than on managing the kind of detailed records historians and collectors appreciate. The company is also famous for producing a variety of private label knives under contract. Legal agreements preventing disclosure of these contracts, along with focus on production, have probably contributed to a certain reticence by Queen to publicly document knives they have produced. Off-site management from 1969 – 2012, probably also made keeping a low profile a suitable corporate strategy. The change in ownership of Queen in 2012 has created a climate where improved understanding of the company's history and increased sense of a collector perspective have made this project feasible.

The goals of the Catalog Project include:

1. Assemble the largest possible collection of Queen Cutlery Catalogs.
2. Produce digital copies of all catalogs on the Queen Cutlery Historical Documents website to improve access by collectors and historians.
3. Produce a database of all cutlery products in each catalog, so that digital reports of knife patterns or Series of knives across all years can be prepared and made available for collectors on the Queen Cutlery Historical Documents website.
4. Integrate Sargent 7th edition visual images and documentation of Queen cutlery into the Queen Historical Documents website. (provide access to out-of-print standard reference)

Identification of Catalogs. In terms of Queen Cutlery's use of catalogs and sales literature, we suggest three periods that have noticeably different catalog strategies and availability;

The earliest period of Queen City production, 1922-1946; the Queen Cutlery post War period, 1947-1979; the current period, 1980-2013.

Queen City, 1922-1946. The Queen Cutlery Company began manufacturing pocket knives in Titusville, PA about 1919. Five men (Geza Revitzky, Frank Foresther, Erick C. Erickson, Harry L Mathews, and Jesse F. Baker), who had formally been employed at the Schatt & Morgan Cutlery Company, also in Titusville, Pa., named their start-up the Queen City



Early Photograph of the Queen City Cutlery Co. circa 1919 –
Photograph Courtesy of Joe and Betty Dial

Cutlery Company. In January, 1922, the company was incorporated as a Delaware corporation, they issued stock and wrote their bylaws. Revitzky and Baker left the company and the remaining three ran a successful cutlery through the 1920s producing large quantities of stainless steel pen knives for the jewelry companies in New York and New Jersey. The Schatt

& Morgan Cutlery went into receivership in the early 1930s. Queen City purchased the bankrupt cutlery in 1933.

Foresther, Mathews and Erickson ran the cutlery through WWII and at the close of the war they reworked their business plans from war time production to a post-war market economy.

Those of us in the knife collecting community have seen no printed company advertising literature or catalogs during these Queen City Years. While some new sales documents might always be uncovered, this period is roughly documented only by surviving knives.

Post-War, 1947-1979. In 1946, these three owners liquidated the assets of the Queen City Cutlery Company and reorganized as the Queen Cutlery Company, a Pennsylvania Corporation. They produced their first catalog about 1947, began a transition from carbon steel to stainless, began using a new Winterbottom bone as their primary handle material, and began a national sales effort. This is also the period when Queen introduced many new patterns of pocket and hunting knives, and offered large varieties of kitchen cutlery and shears/scissors. Catalogs from this period averaged 160 items per year.

Table 1 summarizes the Queen catalogs in this period. Catalogs were numbered, but only some were dated. It can also be noticed that while many of these catalogs were annually produced, others covered more than one year. It is probable that the pace of business and available catalog inventories determined whether or not a new annual catalog was produced.

Table 1. Queen Cutlery Catalogs, 1947 – 1979

Catalog No.	Year	Notes
82	1947 - 1948	Numbered only
82	1949	Numbered and dated on price list
85	1950	Numbered only
87	1951	Catalog Missing
88	1952	Numbered only
89	1953	Numbered only
90	1954	Numbered and dated
91	1955	Numbered and dated

92	1956 - 1958	Numbered and dated
93	1959	Numbered and dated
94	1960 - 1962	Numbered and dated
95	1963 - 1964	Numbered and dated
96	1965 - 1967	Numbered and dated
97	1968	Numbered and dated
No Number	1969 - 1970	Servotronics - No number or date
50	1972 - 1978	Numbered and dated on price lists

After Catalog #50, Queen shifted to dated catalogs and price lists. The transition occurring during 1978-1980, saw Queen Cutlery shift from large volume kitchen cutlery toward more highly finished pocket knives, and more innovation and variety in limited series and commemorative knives.

Current era, 1980-2013. Catalogs and price lists in this period are all dated. Some sales fliers are not dated, and especially in the 1980s and early 1990s materials were used for multiple years. These catalogs are characterized as more colorful, with glossy paper, but with multiple items per page, such that catalogs shrink from 60+ pages to approximately 15 pages. Catalogs from this period average 93 items per year.

As in the company's earlier years, some photographs of knives were used repeatedly, which obscures some of modifications made during the production history of certain knives. Most catalogs combine market information for Ontario knives as well as Queen – both under Servotronics ownership.

All of the catalogs identified for the period 1947- 2013, have been scanned and are available as PDF files on the Queen Historical Documents website.

Queen Cutlery Database and Reports.

An Excel spreadsheet has been assembled that includes a listing of each cutlery item identified in each Queen catalog or sales literature for a given year. While direct inspection of the now available catalogs provides great detail and visual images, a database allows for efficient summary across all

catalogs simultaneously. Summary reports from the database can target which catalog(s) need to be searched.

A total of 59 years of catalog entries provides 7,190 items. An additional 67 items are drawn from undated sales fliers for a total of 7,257 cutlery products. Catalogs or price lists for nine years (1948, 1957, 1962, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1979, 1985, 1986) have not been found to date, so this project has achieved approximately 86% coverage of the total 68 years when Queen used sales documents. The following 20 descriptive categories are used for each entry, although many sources do not provide complete information for a given cutlery item: Some reports use only a subset of these descriptions.

Model #, Handle Code, Pattern Name, Handle Material, Series, Edition Size, Serialized, Number of Blades, Blade Steel, Blade Length, Length, Bolster, Shield, Liner, Pins, Sheath, Source, Page Number, Year.

In order to give a more complete picture of the cutlery items offered for sale within a given year, price lists have also been used. Price lists offer very little information - only model numbers, but they link introductions of new patterns with a given year. Of course, knives were offered in times when we have a “gap” in coverage, but we have been conservative in extrapolating one adjoining year into another without a dated reference. Table 2 displays the sources used in the database for each year.

(April 15, 2015)				
<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Catalog</u>	<u>Price List</u>	<u>Entries</u>	<u>Not Used</u>
1947	82	0	40	
1948	82	0		
1949	82	PL 1-3-1949	67	
1950	85	0	110	

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Catalog</u>	<u>Price List</u>	<u>Entries</u>	<u>Not Used</u>
1951	0	PL 10-1-1951	139	
1952	88	0	135	
1953	89	PL 6-1-1953	159	
1954	90	PL 8-1-1954	173	
1955	91	PL 11-1-1955	180	
1956	92	0	170	
1957	0	0		
1958	0	PL 10-1-1958	190	
1959	93	PL 4-1-1959	191	
1960	94	PL 1-4-1960	187	
1961	0	PL 10-16-1961	190	
1962	0	0		
1963	95	0	166	
1964	95	PL 8-3-1964	185	
1965	96	PL 5-2-1965	182	
1966	96	0		
1967	97	0		
1968	97	0	157	
1969		PL 2-14-1969	159	PL 11-10-1969
1970	0	PL 11-2-1970	147	PL 1-1-1970
1971	0	0		
1972	50	PL 10-1-1972	180	
1973	50	PL 9-10-1973	181	
1974	50	PL 6-1-1974	179	PL 10-21-1974
1975	50	PL 9-15-1975	184	
1976	50	PL 5-15-1976	184	
1977	50	PL 3-7-1977	198	PL 10-15-1977
1978	50	PL 12-17-1978	150	
1979	0	0		
1980	0	PL 3-1-1980	150	

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Catalog</u>	<u>Price List</u>	<u>Entries</u>	<u>Not Used</u>
1981	Catalog 1981	0	110	
1982	Catalog 1982	0	61	
1983	80s sales fliers	0	73	
1984	0	PL 5-15-1984	55	
1985	0	0		
1986	0	0		
1987	0	PL 1-1-1987	61	
1988	0	PL 4-1-1988	74	
1989	0	PL 4-1-1989	88	
1990	0	PL 4-1-1990	106	
1991	0	PL 3-1-1991	111	
1992	0	PL 4-1-1992	119	
1993	Catalog 1993	PL 4-1-1993	91	
1994	Catalog 1994		93	
1995	Catalog 1995		99	
1996	Catalog 1996	PL 4-1996	63	

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Catalog</u>	<u>Price List</u>	<u>Entries</u>	<u>Not Used</u>
1997	Catalog 1997	PL 3-1-1997	68	
1998	Catalog 1998	0	87	
1999	Catalog 1999	0	76	
2000	0	PL 4-1-2000	83	
2001	0	PL 5-15-2001	76	
2002	Catalog 2002-03	0	133	
2003	Catalog 2002-03	0	132	
2004	Catalog 2004-05	0	164	
2005	Catalog 2004-05	0	158	
2006	Catalog 2006	0	113	
2007	Catalog 2007	0	82	
2008	Catalog 2008-09	0	97	
2009	Catalog 2008 -09	0	100	
2010	Catalog 2010-11	0	64	
2011	Catalog 2010-11	0	65	
2012	Catalog 2010-11	0	58	
2013	Catalog 2013	0	97 7190	

This project has been conducted by a small group of volunteers for the benefit of all cutlery collectors. It is a first effort and we welcome additional comment, corrections, or additions. We would especially appreciate catalogs or price lists from the nine missing years. Thank you in advance.