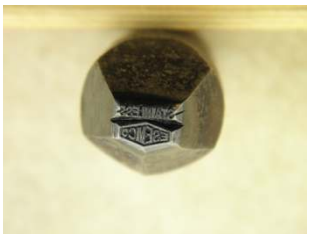
ESEMCO STAINLESS

Manufactured By

QUEEN CITY CUTLERY COMPANY

Titusville, Pennsylvania

A few years ago a box of old tang stamps were discovered here in the Queen Cutlery Factory. Found among them was this STAINLESS ESEMCO tang stamp.



ESEMCO is a Trademark of the Shiman Mfg. Co.

Included in this article are three items:

- An article from Knife World Magazine
- Photographs of several ESEMCO STAINLESS key fob knives
- Patent Documents

Part of an article by Bernard Levine in the October 2008 Knife World Magazine below:

"Back in June, Mr. Okey E. Simmons asked about a little jeweler's skeleton pen knife marked both on the master blade tang, and out on the blade, ESEMCO enclosed in a frame with STAINLESS over it. I wrote, "The ESEMCO (S M CO) brand is identified in Goins' Encyclopedia of Cutlery Markings. It belonged to a costume jewelry firm called Shiman Mfg. Co., located at 113 Aster Street in Newark, New Jersey. Its cutlery offerings included pen knives, scissors, and cigar cutters.

"On the internet I found a costume jewelry history website at www.illusionjewels.com. It says that Shiman Mfg. Co. was founded in

1906. Its brands included ESEMCO, Shiman of Newark, Cornelia's Jewels, and a footprint logo with an X at the toe. In 1971 the firm became Shiman Industries. It was still active in 1988." I then added, "This watch fob pen knife most likely dates from the late 1920s to the early 1940s, although it might be later.

"Typically jewelry firms bought in pen knife 'skeletons' from cutlery companies such as Wostenholm, Miller Bros., Empire, and later (after 1917) Imperial. Skeletons were finished knives without handle covers. The jewelry companies made and affixed the handle covers [also the bails], and distributed the completed knives."

Now Mr. David Clark of Georgia has provided some new information, identifying a hitherto unknown (to me) manufacturer of jeweler's skeleton knives, specifically those ESEMCO brand knives; pinpointing the time they were made (earlier than I had guessed); and also revealing the patented invention underlying those ESEMCO knives.

He writes:

"I bought one of these knives in mint condition a while back, a small 2-3/8 inch pen with gold covers. There is the date 1930 [presentation engraved] on one side of the knife. On the bail is 14KT PAT JULY 20 - 1915."

The patent turns out to be No. 1,147,683. It was granted to "Edward J. Morris of Newark, New Jersey, Assignor to Shiman Miller Manufacturing Company, A Corporation of New York."

Hitherto the typical jeweler's skeleton knife (called a "knife blank or knife body" in the patent) had accepted simple outer handle covers of precious metal, either flat or embossed. Morris's invention used the base metal scale (brass liner) of the knife to provide the finished shape of the handle (flat or embossed) which was then wrapped with only a thin sheet of precious metal, decorated or embossed to match the decoration of the solid base metal liner underneath it, and cemented or soldered in place. The thin wrapping covered the liner edges, and was finished flush with the outer polished edge of the backspring, giving the appearance and feel of a handle of solid precious metal, while using only few grams of thin sheet gold, silver, or platinum.

In concept, Morris's invention resembles old "Sheffield plate" (sometimes called "close plate"), in which thin sheet silver was fused (using heat) to thicker sheet copper, and the resulting sandwich wrought into decorative hollowware (dinner knife handles, bowls,

urns, etc.) that looked and felt like solid silver.

The Morris patent reveals some other information, too. First, the meaning of ESEMCO (S M CO), at least in 1915, was Shiman Miller (Manufacturing) Co. Second, although this company evidently had its factory or factories in Newark, New Jersey (where the inventor Edward Morris resided), the company was incorporated in the state of New York. Third, one of the witnesses to the patent application was a Simon Miller. Simon, Shimon, Szymon, Simeon, and presumably Shiman are all alternate spellings, in various languages, of the same given name. Perhaps this "Simon Miller" was the founder of ESEMCO.

Mr. Clark now continues the tale from another perspective. "I occasionally visit the Queen Cutlery plant in Titusville, Pa., and on one of these visits, a senior cutler showed me an old wooden box of tang stamps they had found in the facility. I was allowed to take an ink stamp pad, and make impressions of some of the old tang stamps. As you can imagine, most were SCHATT & MORGAN, QUEEN CITY, and a variety of QUEEN stamps. However there were several others there and one of these old stamps was STAINLESS over ESEMCO."

I have also done some research in the library there in Titusville. Here are some interesting items I found there from the 1920s.

February 7, 1922. Queen City Cutlery was incorporated.

February 11, 1922. (The Titusville Herald). "Merchants to Assist Queen City Cutlery. - Queen City Cutlery, after the general depression that swept the country at the beginning of 1921, was in need of financial assistance. They approached the Merchants Protective Association requesting endorsement of their plan to sell $5,000 worth of preferred stock at $.07 per share, and $2,000 of common stock. The association agreed to the request."

April 4, 1922 (The Titusville Herald). "Queen City Co. Gets Big Order for Jackknives -- Order received from the Shyman, Miller Company of New York and calls for the delivery of 300 dozens of pocket knives every week for a year."

Mr. Clark noted that if just that one order had been filled, it would have totaled 187,200 knives. If those Queen City private brand skeletons had sold well for ESEMCO, the order might well have been

enlarged or extended.
"Shyman" was no doubt a typographic error for Shiman. Identifying the company as being in New York evidently reflects its state of incorporation, rather than the location of its plants."

Photographs of several ESEMCO STAINLESS skeleton key fob knives


STAINLESS


STAINLESS
STAINLESS

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

EDWARD J. MORRIS, OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY, ASSIGNOR TO SHIMAN MILLER MANUFACTURING COMPANY, A CORPORATION OF NEW YORK.

KNIFE.

1,147,683. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented July 20, 1915.

Application filed February 11, 1914. Serial No. 817,998.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, EDWARD J. MORRIS, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of Newark, in the county of Essex and State of New Jersey, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Knives, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to improvements in knives, and more particularly to the manufacture thereof, the object of the invention being to provide an improved knife which may be readily manufactured, and by means of which the manufactured article may be of approved and advantageous structure and design.

For this purpose my invention consists of the improvements set forth and finally pointed out in the claims.

In the accompanying drawing, Figure 1 is a side view of my improved knife, Fig. 2 is a vertical transverse section taken on line 2—2 of Fig. 1, Fig. 3 is a similar section with the outer plates removed, Fig. 4 has the inner plates also removed, leaving only the knife body, and Fig. 5 shows a vertical transverse section of the knife blank, from which the knife body is obtained.

Similar reference numerals indicate corresponding parts throughout the various figures of the drawing.

Referring to the drawing, and more particularly to Fig. 1, a side view of the knife is shown therein. The knife blades 10 and 11 are pivoted at 12 and 13 to the back-bone or spring 16 of the knife. The knife blades 10 and 11, with the spring or back-bone 15 and with side plates 17 and 18 secured to the spring or back-bone 15 by upset portions 19, form a knife blank or knife body, which are imported in large quantities into the United States, but which require further working to be put into a marketable condition. Hitherto it has been customary to apply to the outside of these plates 17 and 18 exterior plates, and affix the exterior plates to these interior plates 17 and 18 by means of solder or riveting or the like, but in these cases, the comparatively thin outer plates would not fit snugly into the inner plates 17 and 18, and therefore, on being struck, would be likely to be indented, and the knife thereby injured and made of comparatively less value.

My invention consists in removing completely the side plates 17 and 18 of the knife blank or body shown in Fig. 5, and securing to the knife back or spring 15, inner plates of base metal, such as shown by 30 and 31 in Figs. 3 and 4. These plates 30 and 31 are secured to the spring or back-bone 15 by a suitable upset portion 19, which passes between the same.

With the parts shown in the position shown in Fig. 3, the outer or exterior plates of precious metal are thereupon applied, the contour of which precious metal exterior plates is exactly the same as the contour of the inner plates 30 and 31, so that when said exterior plates are applied to the interior plates, a very snug fit of all its portions is obtained. This is clearly shown in Fig. 2, and shows the exterior plates 32, which are made of precious metal, as gold, silver, platinum or the like, secured to the inner plates 30 and 31, and snugly fitting thereto. These exterior plates are provided with flanges 37, so as to completely extend over the inner plates. The exterior plates 32 and 33 are either cemented or soldered to the exterior plates 30 and 31, so that a very smooth connection is obtained.

In the event that it is desired to have the exterior plate provided with ornamentations in the form of embossments, then it is necessary to provide the same with configurations on the interior plates. This is shown clearly in Fig. 2, where the inner plates 30 and 31 are provided with depressions 39 to take up the embossments 36 of the exterior plate. By this co-acting of parts, the exterior plate fits very snugly to the interior plate, and in the event that the exterior plate should be struck in any manner, it will not become indented or injured as was the case heretofore.

By the means proposed, a knife is obtained which has better mercantile qualities and advantages than the knives known hitherto in the art, and a very compact and efficient knife is obtained. An economy in the saving of valuable metal is obtained, as the exterior plate can be made very much thinner and of better metal than the exterior plates heretofore, because the co-action of the inner plates fits so snugly to the exterior plates that it acts as a support for the precious metal outer shell, whereas in the old knives such support was not had, and therefore the exterior plate or shell had to be considerably thicker. Furthermore, an improved appearance is obtained, as a flatter and thin-

ner knife is enabled to be produced than was possible hitherto. Also a firmer and more compact knife is obtained, and in view of the fact that the precious metal shell is backed up by the inner plate or support, it is not likely to be indented. Furthermore, by the improvements described a knife may be produced which will assay at a desired quality, ten, fourteen, or any karat, as the entire outer shell is of precious metal, and does not become decreased in its value soldering auxiliary plates, and the like. Also, by the improvements described the cost of manufacture is reduced, and at the same time a better article in every respect is obtained.

I have shown an embodiment of my invention, but changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention, as defined in the appended claims.

Having thus described my invention, I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent:—

1. An improved pocket knife, comprising inner supporting plates of base metal, having a contour corresponding to the finished design of the knife, blades pivoted between said plates, a spring member supported between said plates and having its outer surface extending beyond the lower edge of the said plates and forming part of the finished surface of the knife, and controlling the action of the said blades, outer plates of relatively thin precious metal previously shaped to finished design secured to said inner plates, the outer surface of the said inner plates and the inner surface of the said outer plates being snugly contiguous to each other at all points, the said outer plates having their edges extending over the edges of the said inner plates to the inner sides of the said inner plates, thereby entirely covering the outer surface of the said inner plates of base metal, and abutting at the lower edge of the said knife the said extending portion of the said spring member, and lying flush therewith to form a smooth outer surface.

2. An improved pocket knife, comprising inner supporting plates of base metal, having a contour corresponding to the finished design of the knife, and having an ornamental design incised thereon, blades pivoted between said plates, a spring member supported between said plates and having its outer surface extending beyond the lower edge of the said plates and forming part of the finished surface of the knife, and controlling the action of the said blades, outer plates of relatively thin precious metal previously shaped to finished design secured to said inner plates, and having an ornamental design embossed therein registering with the ornamental design of the said inner plates, the outer surface of the said inner plates and the inner surface of the said outer plates being snugly contiguous to each other at all points, the said outer plates having their edges extending over the edges of the said inner plates to the inner sides of the said inner plates, thereby entirely covering the outer surface of the said inner plates of base metal, and abutting at the lower edge of the said knife the said extending portion of the said spring member, and lying flush therewith to form a smooth outer surface.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my invention I have signed my name in presence of two subscribing witnesses.

EDWARD J. MORRIS.

Witnesses:

SIMON MILLER,

E. VICTORIA SMITH.

E. J. MORRIS.

KNIFE.

APPLICATION FILED FEB. 11, 1914.

1,147,683. Patented July 20, 1915.

Fig: 1.

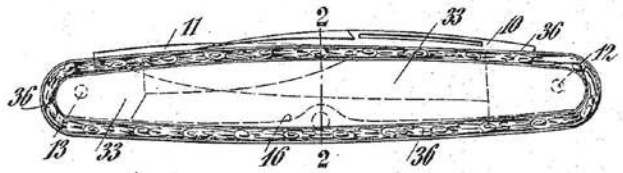


Fig: 2.

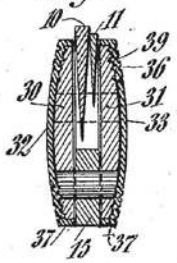


Fig: 3.

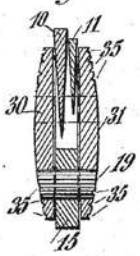


Fig: 4.

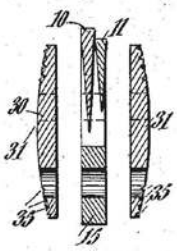
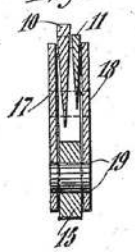


Fig: 5.



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