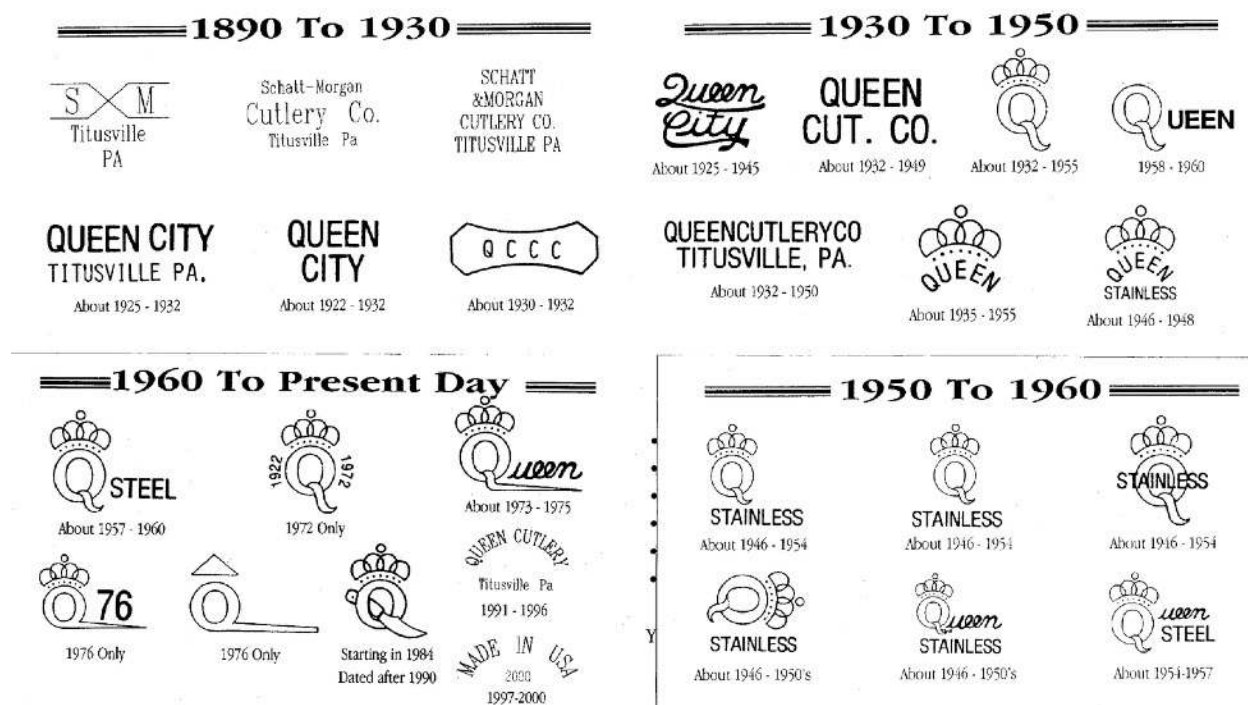


Queen's Forgotten Tang Stamp

by Bob Welch

Author's note: This article was originally written in 2005 and has been updated in 2015

Among the many interesting aspects of collecting Queen knives are the numerous tang stamps the company has used throughout its 93 year history. Because Queen tang stamps have been researched and well documented, collectors are able to determine with some accuracy the era or timeframe in which the knife was produced. Although well chronicled, the spans of years in which the various tang stamps were used did vary, depending upon the source of the information. In 2000 *Queen Cutlery Collectors, Inc.*, after further research, published what was believed to be the authoritative source on the subject of Queen tang stamps and their dates. The handy, folding *QCC* card documented 24 Queen tang stamps spanning the timeframe 1922 through the turn of the 21st century publication date. The card also included 3 stamps from Schatt & Morgan Cutlery Co., the assets of which Queen purchased in 1932.



In 2005 when I originally penned this article, it occurred to me the *QCC* tang stamp guide would have to be re-written. A previously undocumented Queen City stamp had come to light! By that time I had acquired two old Queens with this stamp. As of 2015 I have six. Before we get into the details, a little background is in order.

Near the end of the 2001 *QCC* show in Titusville, PA, Mark Zalesky, Editor¹ of *Knife World*, offered to sell me a small Queen City knife. I don't recall the pattern but I will never forget the tang stamp. In fact the stamp was the primary reason I didn't buy the knife (to my everlasting regret). I've expended considerable effort and a few dollars over the years, acquiring a good

assortment of early Queen City folding knives. Being older, these knives are more rare and it's always fun to find a nice one. Several of my old Queen City folders exhibit unusual features such as uncommon bone handle jigging and pinned shields (which are not often found on Queens). Yet all of them had one or the other of the known tang stamps. That was what initially troubled me about Mark's knife. The stamp was unfamiliar to me. I wondered if it was a fake. Mark commented he had never seen that stamp either. So I kept the \$70 or so in my pocket and avoided having to search out an ATM before driving home.

On that drive my thoughts kept coming back to that knife and how stupid I was to have passed it up. The editor of *Knife World* wouldn't go strolling around a knife show peddling bogus knives! The C.A.C. Hall² isn't some street corner in Hong Kong (where you can buy a "Rolex" for \$25)! Even if it was counterfeit, the curiosity value alone was certainly worth seventy bucks! Since that day I was determined to find another knife with that unusual tang stamp and to try to verify its authenticity. The quest took 3 years. I could find no photo, illustration or mention of it in any of my books covering or even mentioning Queen, by authors such as Mrs. D. Ferguson, Goins, Voyles, Sargent, Levine and Krauss.

So, just what does this mysterious stamp look like? In the original 2005 draft of this article I've come pretty close to simulating it but I'm not sure any of my software fonts are a precise match. Some photos accompany this article so you will be able to get a better look. The stamp comprises both lower and upper case lettering, with serifs. These are the subtle projections extending off the ends of the letter strokes.

Known Queen City tang stamps use either sans-serif (without serif), upper case block letters or, in one case, cursive script. If you will refer back to the *QCC* tang stamp card you can see the "Schatt-Morgan Cutlery Co. Titusville Pa" stamp resembles this newly discovered variant. On the card, you can also see some examples of early Queen City stamps.

The first of my "treasured" knives was found on eBay in June, 2004. It is a 3" swell center / balloon, 2-blade pen knife with brown bone handles having moderately course, peach seed jigging. The liners are brass, bolsters appear to be nickel-silver and the knife has a pinned diamond shield.



Is it genuine? I'm convinced. The knife matches Queen's #38 pattern perfectly. (Note: over the years Queen has used the #38 for 3 different knives: the 3" swell center pen, a 3 1/4" serpentine jack with 2 blades plus a leather punch and 5 1/4" saddle horn, swell center hunter.) I have other Queens with peach seed jigging, though with later tang stamps (1930's to 1950's era). I also have some Queen City folders with pinned shields, though this one is the first I've seen with a diamond shield. In short, from the standpoint of construction and materials this knife appears to be a genuine Queen City.

The knife is not mint. I would rate the condition 'Very Good' due to wear, light pitting and a 3/8" long gouge on the edge of the master blade. Being a Queen, it still walks and talks very well. If

someone were to counterfeit a knife, wouldn't it be a larger, more desirable pattern in much better condition? Further, wouldn't they use a tang stamp everyone could recognize, in order to avoid questions of authenticity?

In March 2005 I purchased another Queen City with this stamp, again on eBay, from a seller in Seattle. This knife is a 3 5/8" equal end jack. The handles are also brown jigged bone and, in fact, are most likely Rogers bone. The jigging pattern is more course than that of my first "serif" knife but it is very similar to other Queen City folders in my collection. The liners of this knife are also brass and both the bolsters and the pinned heraldic shield are nickel-silver. This early Queen was also a "user" and the condition can be considered 'Very Good' due to wear on both the long-pull clip master blade and the pen blade. As on most Queens, the springs have aged well and both blades walk and talk as they did 80 or 90 years ago.



The following year I acquired 3 of these knives! One is a 3" sleeveboard pattern, similar to the Queen #4 except the #4 is 3 3/8" long. The handles are jigged brown bone (possibly Rogers bone), with arrowhead shield. This knife has a spear and a pen blade. Due to heavy wear on the spear blade I'd have to rate this knife good. Again it has brass liners and nickel-silver bolsters and shield.



The second is a 3" swell-center balloon with tan jigged bone handles, a long-pull spear blade and a pen blade. Inlaid into the front handle is an oval shield. Liner, bolster and shield materials are the same as my other knives with this stamp. Condition is excellent due to moderate blade sharpening, as well as some pitting on the carbon steel blades.

The last of the knives I found in '06 was outside the norm. It is a 3 1/4" serpentine knife but the pattern is very subtly serpentine. It does not have bone handles and it is lacking a shield. Instead the handles are black with a fine swirl pattern. I think they're celluloid but frankly I'm not entirely sure. The swirl pattern somewhat resembles an enlarged fingerprint. The handle are secured with brass pins. The master blade is a long spear and the secondary blade is a pen. I'd rate the condition as excellent due to moderate blade wear and a little bit of pitting which



seems to indicate carbon steel material. The tang stamp is very crisp on this knife.

After 2006 I hit a long dry spell and didn't find another of these knives until 2011, while visiting the *QCC* show in Pennsylvania. This one is a 3" bowtie equal end pattern with jigged brown (probably Rogers) bone handles. It has a bar shield and would have had 2 pen-spear blades except one is broken. Liner, shield and bolster materials follow the usual norm. The saving grace for this beautiful knife was the unique tang stamp. The seller told me he had never seen it before.



It's interesting to note all of the knives with this unique tang stamp are small. I've never seen one over 3 5/8" in length. Most have bone handles and all those with bone handles have shields. I have no doubt they are genuine Queen knives. Were they manufactured by Queen in Titusville? That's hard to say. It's possible Queen had them made on contract to fill a void in their line. Considering they are approaching 100 years old it will be difficult to ascertain the back story on these knives.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, it was originally written in 2005 and submitted for publication in the newsletter of *Queen Cutlery Collectors*. Around that time *QCC* went to a free membership model and decided to do away with the newsletter so this was never published. Prior to writing, I had discussed this "unknown" tang stamp with several knowledgeable Queen knife collectors, including Fred Fisher, Howard Drake and David Clarke. All agreed it appeared to be genuine. After reading the article *QCC* president Mike Sullivan did some research of his own and decided to include it in the reissue of the "History of Queen Tang Stamps" card which *QCC* publishes and distributes.

The original computer file for the article was lost in a PC change but recently I found a printed draft which has been re-typed and updated here. I suppose it's just as well it wasn't published in '05, when I only had 2 such knives. With a little diligence and patience I was able to find half a dozen of them over a span of 14 years. There are more out there.

¹ Mark is now editor, publisher and owner of *Knife* magazine, the successor to *Knife World*.

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