



This article was written in December 2019 by Carl Bradshaw, for the Queen Cutlery Guide group.

The history of the Tuna Valley Cutlery knives is quite interesting, involving 3 of the most well-known knife companies from Pennsylvania; Case, Great Eastern, and Queen.

The name was originally used around 1905-1906. Just before this, in 1904, the knife business C. Platts' & Sons Cutlery, run by the Platts brothers in Eldred, PA were looking to expand their operations. In order to secure funds and grow the business, they merged their operation with Case Cutlery, run by Russ Case, and moved to Bradford, PA. The new operation was known as W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery.

However, it took time to build the new facility, and acquire all the machinery and supplies. In order to keep selling knives during the construction, remaining knife inventory was sold, and additional knives were ordered from Germany. Some of these German made knives were stamped Tuna Valley Cutlery Co. After the new Case plant was up and running, the name was never used by them again.

The name derives from the geography of the Bradford, PA area. The city of Bradford lies along the Tunungwant River, an Iroquois Native American term which translates to "Crooked Creek". The locals shortened the name, and still to this day refer to it as Tuna Creek. Therefore, the whole Bradford area lies within the "Tuna Valley".

Only a few different patterns with this stamp have been found. Most are very small and delicate pearl handled 2 blade knives. Estimates are that less than 600 were imported in late 1905 and sold during 1906, of which only a handful are known to still exist.

Shown here are examples of the pearl handled 1906 knives, and the tang stamp used.



In 2005, NKCA President Perry Miller revived the trademark, along with David Mullins. Even though very little was known about the stamp, the name was interesting, and at that time there was a surge of collectors buying up old unused knife company names. Perry then started Spaceport Cutlery, and was interested in doing a knife release of his own design.

In 2008, he placed his first knife order using the Tuna Valley name. The order went to the newly formed Great Eastern Cutlery out of Titusville, PA. This 1-year old cutlery business was owned by Bill Howard and Ken Daniels, and had already made a name for themselves with high quality knives made on historic patterns.

The first new Tuna Valley knife release was built on the GEC #73 pattern with stag handles, in a limited release of only 150 pieces, and was named the Scout Trapper. The knives sold out very quickly, due to both Perry's reputation, as well as the exquisite look of the knife. Each knife was serialized and came with a certificate of authenticity. Perry's theme for this brand was to keep the knives rare, and of the highest quality.

Shown here is an example of the 2009 Scout Trapper.



Perry's vision for the 2nd release, available in 2010, was a 4 blade Cigar Stockman, available in 3 different handle materials (Burnt Stag, Blood Red Jigged Bone, and Brazilian Cherry). This was the last Tuna Valley release available under Perry's ownership.

Shown here are the 3 different handles available on the Cigar Stockman in 2010.



No knives were made in 2011 under the Tuna Valley name, however in 2012, the rights to the name went to the Daniels family, who were part owners of Great Eastern Cutlery. As fate would have it, the Daniels would soon sell out their part of GEC, and acquire ownership of the Queen Cutlery factory. Therefore, part of the 2012 Tuna Valley knives were made at Great Eastern Cutlery, and other patterns that same year were made at Queen Cutlery. From 2013 through 2018, all Tuna Valley knives were made at Queen Cutlery.

With the Daniels leadership, production really began to take shape. Multiple releases per year, in various handle materials were available. Burnt Stag, Amber Stag, Ebony Wood, Buffalo Horn, and fluted Mammoth Ivory were offered. The Daniels were sure to honor Perry's original vision, only offering the knives in limited releases per year, in low quantities, and marketed towards high end collectors.

Most releases were made with only 25 or 50 pieces per handle material. In addition, the Daniels pledged that once a certain pattern with a certain handle was produced, it would never be made again in the same arrangement. Therefore, the collectability of these Tuna Valley knives is extremely high, and the knives often sell on the secondary market for higher than the original list price. Every knife was sold with a black velvet slip, and Certificate of Authenticity.

Beginning in 2014, very low limited special releases of patterns were available in a Timekeeper handle material, using old pocket watch parts in acrylic resin. These knives were very popular among a younger crowd of collectors.

Shown here is a 2013 Coke Bottle pattern in Burnt Stag, made at Queen Cutlery.



From 2012 – 2018 there were 18 different Tuna Valley pattern releases from the Queen factory, in various handle materials, along with a few rare prototypes and sample knives made. A common consensus among the knife collecting community is that these Tuna Valley knives represent some of the highest quality knives produced out of the Queen Cutlery factory in its final years.

With the closing of Queen Cutlery in 2018, the Daniels family retained the rights to the Tuna Valley name, and have intentions of using it in the future to keep the brand alive, and offer high end cutlery to the knife enthusiasts who have become fans of this brand. The next new Tuna Valley knife is intended to be available sometime in 2020.

Shown here is a 2017 Humpback Whittler pattern in Mammoth Ivory, made at Queen Cutlery.



A list of available Tuna Valley knife releases from 2009 – 2018 is shown at the end of this article.

Thanks to David Anthony, and his article “Tuna Valley Cutlery” published in the May 2010 issue of Knife World Publication, which contains very detailed information and research about the Tuna Valley name.

Thanks to Bobby McMahon for providing the 1906 pearl knives to photograph.

Thanks to Ryan Daniels from www.danielsfamilyknifebrands.com for providing information and answers to any questions.

Shown here is a group of knives in buffalo horn handles, made at Queen Cutlery.



PATTERN NAME	RELEASE DATE	HANDLE MATERIAL	QUANTITY
Scout Trapper	Nov 16, 2009	Burnt Stag	150
Cigar Stockman	Aug 1, 2010	Brazilian Cherry Wood	100
	Aug 1, 2010	Blood Red Jigged Bone	98
	Aug 1, 2010	Burnt Stag	100
	Feb 7, 2012	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
Lock Back Trapper (w/ spear blade)	Feb 7, 2012	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
Lock Back Trapper (w/ clip blade)	Oct 24, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Oct 24, 2012	Genuine India Amber Stag	40
Cigar Stockman (w/ dimpled bolsters)	Feb 29, 2012	Blood Red Jigged Bone	35
Lock Back Trapper (w/ engraved bolsters)	Mar 6, 2012	Brazilian Cherry Wood	50
	Mar 22, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Apr 8, 2012	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
Swing Guard Lock Back	Apr 18, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
Lock Back	Apr 18, 2012	Ebony Wood	50
Cigar Stockman (w/ engraved bolsters)	May 1, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	15
Cotton King	May 13, 2012	Ebony Wood	50
	May 21, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	25
	May 21, 2012	Genuine India Amber Stag	30
	Aug 13, 2012	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	13
Sleeveboard Sunfish Whittler	Jun 11, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	35
	Jun 11, 2012	Genuine India Amber Stag	35
Sleeveboard Sunfish Whittler (w/ engraved bolsters)	Jul 23, 2012	Genuine India Burnt Stag	7
	Jul 23, 2012	Genuine India Amber Stag	7
Swell Center Moose	Feb 11, 2013	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Feb 11, 2013	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	May 27, 2013	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
	early 2016	Timekeeper Acrylic	2
Sway Belly Trapper	Apr 23, 2013	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Apr 23, 2013	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Sep 9, 2013	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
Coke Bottle	Sep 18, 2013	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Sep 18, 2013	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
Tadpole	Nov 18, 2013	Genuine India Burnt Stag	125
	Nov 18, 2013	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Feb 2, 2014	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
Gunstock Jack	May 5, 2015	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	May 5, 2014	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Oct 20, 2014	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
	Oct 2, 2015	Timekeeper Acrylic	10
Scout Knife	Jun 1, 2014	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Jun 1, 2014	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Feb 9, 2015	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
	Feb 8, 2016	Timekeeper Acrylic	8
Fish Scaler	Oct 6, 2014	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Oct 6, 2014	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Oct 6, 2014	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25

PATTERN NAME	RELEASE DATE	HANDLE MATERIAL	QUANTITY
Yankee Muskrat	Feb 2, 2015	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Feb 2, 2015	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Feb 2, 2015	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25
	May 27, 2015	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
	Sep 15, 2018	Orange Maple Burl Wood	2
Railsplitter	May 20, 2015	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	May 20, 2015	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	May 20, 2015	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25
	Sep 30, 2015	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
Easy Open Tear Drop	Feb 17, 2016	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Feb 17, 2016	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Feb 17, 2016	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25
	May 20, 2016	Timekeeper Acrylic	25
	Aug 19, 2016	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
Carpenter's Whittler	July 18, 2016	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	July 18, 2016	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	July 18, 2016	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25
	Nov 28, 2016	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
	Apr 26, 2017	Timekeeper Acrylic	25
	Jun 7, 2018	Buckeye Burl Wood	5
Cattleman	Dec 31, 2016	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Dec 31, 2016	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Dec 31, 2016	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25
	Mar 13, 2017	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
Humpback Whittler	Aug 1, 2017	Genuine India Burnt Stag	50
	Aug 1, 2017	Genuine India Amber Stag	50
	Aug 1, 2017	Genuine India Buffalo Horn	25
	May 18, 2018	Fluted Mammoth Ivory Bark	25
	Jul 25, 2018	Mother of Pearl	10
Express Auto	early 2017	Mammoth Ivory Bark	3