



Queen Cutlery Boxes, 1980s

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While beginning in the 1970s, Queen made major steps to becoming a "collector" oriented company during the 1980s. They began to box most of their knives and came up with special boxes for different series. The 1980s, especially the middle of the decade was a very difficult time for the company as is shown by their decision about boxing their knives.

An early success for Queen occurred with a two-blade Copperhead set in both Mother of Pearl and Stag and matching serial numbers (see Figure 1) in an edition of 500 each. Price lists show these knives were sold out before they were offered to distributors. These knives were not boxed as a set or in any display format.



Figure 1, Copperhead set in Mother of Pearl and stag, 1981



Figure 2. A brown lightweight cardboard box that opened from the end, with a stamped model number, was used in the early 1980s, as shown by the "Queen knife" logo. Chipped Bark knives were usually delivered in this box. Note: This image shows a rooster knife, usually made on the #10 jack knife frame, suggesting that this box (from a larger fisherman's knife) has been added to improve re-sale – an example of a disconnect between knife and box.



Figure 3. A black printed, heavier cardboard two-piece box, still using the "knife Q" logo, was used a little later in the 1980s. Some had printed labels. Others were handwritten. This American Walnut Doctor's knife with Schatt & Morgan tang stamp, but no blade etch or shield, might have been a preliminary offering about shortly after 1991, and sold in a regular Queen box at the time or someone added the box.



Figure 4. The Rawhide series were provided knives in boxes, sized to the knife with a stamped model number rather than a label, from the earliest days in 1980 till the series ended in 1998. These boxes open at the end – not a two-piece box and are frequently found with considerable damage, if at all. Some smaller Rawhide knives were occasionally shipped in the early '80s Brown box.



Figure 5. The 1984 Drake Oil well commemorative mid-size lockback (#1500) had a deep gold etch and came in a black clamshell with velveteen interior. A smaller lockback, (#8445 in the Rawhide Series) was similarly produced (see Figure 8). Both knives were made in editions of 1,500 and had serial numbers on the bolsters. They were delivered with a white heavy cardboard sleeve to protect the clamshell box, and had internal documentation included (see figure 6).



Figure 6. A heavy card included with the Drake Oil well commemorative 1984 knife provided details on the edition. While some of these knives were used, the "package" was so nice that many of these knives can still be found, usually with the box and paperwork inside.

Queen produced another version of the same stag lockback as an advertising gambit at the 1984 6th annual Shot show for customers, with a total edition of 150 knives – These knives were Not specially boxed either.

A Special Factory Order for 100 of the same knives was requested by the Cytemp Steel Mill in Titusville, PA, also in 1984, with a bold block etch on the blade (see Figure 7). As part of the roll-out for the new company name, these knives were presented to executives in a glass-topped wooden display case. To our knowledge, these were the first Queen "collector" knives provided in a wooden box. (For more on Cyclops and Cytemp, see References.)



Figure 7. Mid-size stag lockback, "CYTEMP" Special Factory Order, possibly the first knife in a wooden display by Queen Cutlery, 1984.



Figure 8. Smaller Drake Well Commemorative Lockback, #8445. 1984

As said earlier, the 1980s was a difficult time for Queen – In fact, no catalogs for the years 1985-1986 has ever been found. The Chipped Bark and Rawhide series were retained throughout the lean decade. – At least in part, so the company could focus on collector military contracts and specialty knives .

In 1988, at the 66th anniversary of the company's founding, they released two special knives, a Congress and a muskrat in separate oak boxes with clear glass, using the same format as the 1984 CYTEMP knife (See Figure 9). These knives were the first Commemoratives where Queen jiggled and colored their own bone, and offered the display knives to the public.



Figure 9. 1988, for the 66th Anniversary of Queen Cutlery Founding, A jugged bone muskrat with anniversary etch and unusual shield in oak display box.

These knives did not sell exceptionally well, but they did demonstrate to other in the knife industry that Queen could act as a premier source for knives for other makers. In particular, when James Parker was in charge for Case and introduced the "Case Classics" line, Queen was able to use its old machinery, its contract to produce reproduction Winchester knives for Bluegrass Cutlery, and the increasing skill of its cutlers to make approximately 66,000 high quality knives under Case's name. This set the stage for the re-introduction of the famous Schatt & Morgan line in after 1991.

Reference.

<https://nwpastories.com/2017/11/13/cyclops-cytemp-a-short-history-of-steelmaking-in-titusville/>