



Queen Button Lock Knives: Review and Variations

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We gratefully acknowledge contributions of Mr. Rome D. Rushing on an earlier version of this article.

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Queen Button Locks are single blade knives that open manually with a nail nick and normal backspring pressure, but have a spring-loaded pin that engages an opening in the base of the blade, locking it open. The small button on the bolster at the base of the blade must be pushed to unlock and close the blade.

First Version of Button Locks

First offered in 1985, as 5170 (a large single blade hunter – like #44) and 5175 (a single blade copperhead, like #41). These knives were made out of 440C stainless steel (like Both the Rawhide and Hawk Series knives), had black staminawood handles with the slanted bolster Queen used in the early and mid-1980s in commemorative knives and in upper-end Hawk Series lockbacks. Figure 1. does convey the relative size of both knives. Note how the edges of the bolsters and handle are nicely rounded. These knives must have been innovated in the early 1980s, but were finally offered to the public in one of the worst periods for Queen – There have been no catalogs nor price lists found for those two years and the company was nearly bankrupt.



Figure 1. The first offering of Button lock knives by Queen, 1885-1986. The large hunter was 5170 (bottom) just over 5.30” closed, and the smaller Copperhead hunter, 3.75” closed, was 5175 (top). The larger knife shows a sad example of rough sharpening affecting blade and BOTH bolsters. Many of the smaller 5175s do not show a blade etch.

These knives got good reviews but they were only offered for a few years in their original form, as Queen faced a very hard economic time. An article by Steven Dick in the January 1986 National Knife Magazine named “field testing Queen’s bolster pin locking folders,” describes the larger knife and gives it high marks in use skinning a deer. (Admittedly, since the National Knife Collectors Association (NKCA) closed many years ago, this is a hard reference to find- we thank Rome D. Rushing for producing a copy). The shift away from the 5170 to the 44B, may have been a cost-cutting move by Queen since the angled bolster used more material and was probably a little more difficult to complete precisely, but we do not have a clear date when the change occurred. Figure 2, shows both knives together for comparison.



Figure 2. Comparison of two large Button Lock Hunters. 44B Chipped bark (top) and 5170 (bottom). Photo is not an exact measurement, but it does seem the 5170 is slightly longer due to the style/design of the lower bolster and a small amount “beefier” through the entire handle. Clearly, the 5170 uses more material for both bolsters.

A study of price lists (of course, no pictures of items to guide us) shows that the Button lock knives were offered in the 1987 price list, (and through 1999), but with the model number/pattern no. changed to the large Button Lock hunter as 44B and the smaller Copperhead Hunter as 410B, though the “code no” was retained as the earlier model numbers 5170 and 5175, as shown in Figure 3. The Chipped Bark Copperhead (9165) and the large hunter (9145) patterns would have meant that those handles would have fit the Button Locks exactly – no doubt, a cost-savings.



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**PRICE LIST AND ORDER
FORM EFFECTIVE
JANUARY 15, 1987**

OFFICE USE ONLY

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
CHIPPED BARK SERIES			
Brown Delrin Handles Q Shield - Chipped Bark Design			
.....	9105.....	2.....	9105.... 10.75
.....	9110.....	16.....	9110.... 12.35
.....	9115.....	26.....	9115.... 12.50
.....	9120.....	9.....	9120.... 13.20
.....	9125.....	66.....	9125.... 11.60
.....	9130.....	11EO.....	9130.... 8.50
.....	9135.....	19.....	9135.... 13.95
.....	9140.....	.....	9140.... 12.20
.....	9145.....	39.....	9145.... 15.95
.....	9155.....	.....	9155.... 13.65
.....	9160.....	61.....	9160.... 14.00
.....	9165.....	.....	9165.... 13.75
.....	9170.....	44.....	9170.... 13.85

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
RAWHIDE SERIES LOCK-BACKS			
.....	8445.....	.....	8445.... 10.90
.....	4225.....	8070.....	4225.... 13.65
.....	8450.....	.....	8450.... 21.00
.....	6150.....	6150.....	6150.... 26.50

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
POCKET KNIVES			
.....	4220.....	8065.....	4220.... 10.75
.....	4210.....	8055.....	4210.... 13.65
.....	4205.....	8050.....	4205.... 13.95
.....	8180.....	8180.....	8180.... 12.50
.....	4215.....	8060.....	4215.... 13.75
.....	4200.....	8045.....	4200.... 18.00

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
HUNTING KNIVES			
.....	4180.....	4180.....	4180.... 16.50
.....	4185.....	4185.....	4185.... 16.80
.....	4190.....	4190.....	4190.... 17.00

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
FISHING KNIVES			
.....	76.....	3130.....	76.... 8.50
.....	8185.....	8185.....	8185.... 9.45

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
HAWK SERIES LOCK-BACKS			
PATTERNS 1205-1210-1215-1220 INCLUDES A BLACK LEATHER SHEATH			
.....	1200.....	1200.....	1200.... 11.00
.....	1205.....	1205.....	1205.... 16.50
.....	1210.....	1210.....	1210.... 19.35
.....	1215.....	1215.....	1215.... 21.00
.....	1220.....	1220.....	1220.... 26.25

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
ORIGINAL FIXED BLADES			
.....	82.....	82.....	82.... 14.50
.....	84.....	84.....	84.... 17.50
.....	85.....	85.....	85.... 13.95
.....	95.....	95.....	95.... 14.95

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
GENUINE BONE			
.....	6130.....	6130.....	6130.... 11.95
.....	6135.....	6135.....	6135.... 12.70
.....	6140.....	6140.....	6140.... 14.25
.....	1175.....	1175.....	1175.... 14.00
.....	8425.....	8425.....	8425.... 12.35

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
ALUMINUM LOCK-BACKS			
.....	8455.....	8455.....	8455.... 8.25
.....	6125.....	6125.....	6125.... 11.50

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
TRADITIONAL POCKET KNIVES			
.....	10.....	1065.....	10.... 10.50
.....	14.....	1095.....	14.... 9.00
.....	22.....	1160.....	22.... 7.65
.....	35.....	1240.....	35.... 11.00
.....	43.....	1290.....	43.... 8.50
.....	45.....	1305.....	45.... 5.50
.....	45EO.....	5180.....	45EO... 6.75
.....	70.....	1445.....	70.... 8.25

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
HUNTER/BOOT KNIFE			
.....	3505.....	3505.....	3505.... 16.25

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
PUSH-BUTTON LOCKS			
.....	44B.....	5170.....	44B.... 23.00
.....	410B.....	5175.....	410B.... 17.25

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
MILITARY CUTLERY			
.....	Machete 1-18.....	1430.....	Machete 1-18... 7.00
.....	Machete Sheath. 1435.....	.....	Machete Sheath. 1435... 2.50
.....	Air Force Survival Knife	8440.....	Air Force Survival Knife 8440... 10.50
.....	Marine Combat Knife	6145.....	Marine Combat Knife 6145... 12.50

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
NAVY KNIFE			
.....	497.....	8420.....	497.... 28.00

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
POCKET KNIFE SHEATHS			
Brown and Black			
.....	8170.....	Brown.....	8170.... 2.75
.....	3530.....	Black.....	3530.... 2.75
Med. - fits pocket knives up to 3 1/4 in. long			
.....	8175.....	Brown.....	8175.... 3.00
.....	3535.....	Black.....	3535.... 3.00
Lg. - fits folding knives up to 5 1/4 in. long			
.....	PKS.....	Brown.....	PKS... Brown... 1415.... 3.50
.....	3555.....	Black.....	3555... Black... 3555.... 3.50

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
SHARPENING ACCESSORIES			
.....	Sharpening Stone.....	3185.....	Sharpening Stone..... 3185... 4.65
.....	Mini Dog.....	2185.....	Mini Dog..... 2185... 2.50
.....	Crookstick.....	2195.....	Crookstick..... 2195... 6.95

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
PRESENTATION BOXES			
.....	4 1/8 in. X 5 7/8 in. X 2 in.	6160.....	4 1/8 in. X 5 7/8 in. X 2 in. 6160... 5.75
.....	4 5/8 in. X 7 5/8 in. X 1 3/4 in.	6165.....	4 5/8 in. X 7 5/8 in. X 1 3/4 in. 6165... 6.50

QTY.	PATTERN NO.	CODE NO.	DEALER COST EACH
STEAK KNIFE SETS			
.....	8360.....	8360.....	8360.... 23.50
.....	8365.....	8365.....	8365.... 28.00

DISPLAY PACKAGES
See catalog for description of displays.

DISPLAY PACKAGE NO. 1 - 9 of our top knives, 3 sizes of sheaths, 3 sharpening accessories. 3 each 9115-9130-8445-4225-8450-4210-8455-45EO-70-8170-3530-2185. 2 each PKS 3185 & 2195. One each displayed (except 3185 & 2195) with balance as backup. QC14 display case. Dealer cost \$367.55 Can be customized.

DISPLAY PACKAGE NO. 2 - 8 of our top Rawhide patterns, 3 sizes of sheaths & 3 sharpening accessories. 3 each 8445-4225-4220-4210-4205-4185-8185-8170-8175-3185-2185. 2 each 8450-2195. One each displayed (except 3185 & 2195) with balance as backup. QC14 display case. Dealer cost \$362.05 Can be customized.

DISPLAY PACKAGE NO. 3 - 8 of our top Chipped Bark Patterns, 2 sizes & colors of sheaths, 3 sharpening accessories. 3 each 9105-9115-9120-9125-9130-9135-9145-9155-8175-3535-2185. 2 each PKS-3555-3185-2195 One each displayed (except 3185 & 2195) with balance as backup. QC14 display case. Dealer cost \$363.00 Can be customized.

**DISPLAY PACKAGE NO. 4
HAWK DISPLAY & CONTENTS.**
3 each 1200-1205-1210-1215-1220. One each displayed with two each as backup. Dealer cost \$282.30

DISPLAY NO. 8190T - A 60 knife package. Three of 20 different patterns. One each displayed in QC12T case, two each backup stock. Your choice of patterns.

DISPLAY NO. 8190B - A 60 knife package. Three each of 20 different patterns. One each displayed in QC12B case, two each backup stock. Your choice of patterns.

DISPLAYS NO. 8190T & 8190B can be stacked to make floor display.

Order Displays here	
QTY.	Display Number
.....

Shipping charges will be prepaid on orders \$200.00 or more within the continental United States. Orders under \$200.00 will be shipped F.O.B. Titusville, PA. -All backorders will be shipped prepaid. -No minimum order is required but a \$10.00 service charge will be applied on all orders less than \$50.00. Payment terms 2% 10 days, net 30 days. Prices subject to change without notice.

Purchaser's Signature Date

Figure 3, Queen 1987 annual price list with the first time "Push Button Locks" knives are listed, though with a new, different model number (more like the regular model numbers for the Queen Hunter and Copperhead, with a "B" added.)



Figure 4, shows a large hunter #5170 on the right side of the photo by “no date” that shows very sharp edges on both bolster and the wooden handles, and may be missing the etch on the blade as well. We speculate that this might be a 1986 knife with some fine finishing omitted to help save a little time and reduce cost of producing the knife. Note the sharp edges on the handle of the large hunter compared to the knives in Figure 1. (We gratefully acknowledge the photo by Rome D. Rushing in a discussion on IKnife collector.com in 2015. Left hand knife in this photo is a nice example of a version Queen completed for SMKW in the 1990s.)

Chipped Bark Button Lock.

The 410B is built off the regular #41 frame, “Copperhead” and the larger 44B is built off the traditional “Large Folding Hunter, #44 frame. All cataloged versions were offered only in Queen Steel with Chipped Bark Delrin, with a relief “Knife Q shield.” Like all Chipped bark knives, they had rounded edge bolsters with a 90° edge – not slanted. They did not have half stops. This design is shown in all three catalog pages we have for the Button Lock series, covering six years with an example in Figure 5, with 1993-1995 “Button locks page”. A different image with better close-up is used in catalogs for 1998 – 1999, as shown in Figure 6.



Button Locks

Lock releases by pushing small button on bolster - minimal pressure required. One of the easiest locking mechanisms available. Chipped Bark handles with cast nickel silver shields pinned to handles. Queen Steel blades.



Factory - 507 Chestnut St., Titusville, Pa. 16354-0367
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Figure 5, 1993-1995 and 1996-1997 for Queen Catalogs for Button Lock knives.

Button Locks

The lock releases by pushing a small button on the bolster. Chipped bark delrin handles. Features include: • QS14 blade steel • Brush finish • Cast nickel silver shields pinned to handles

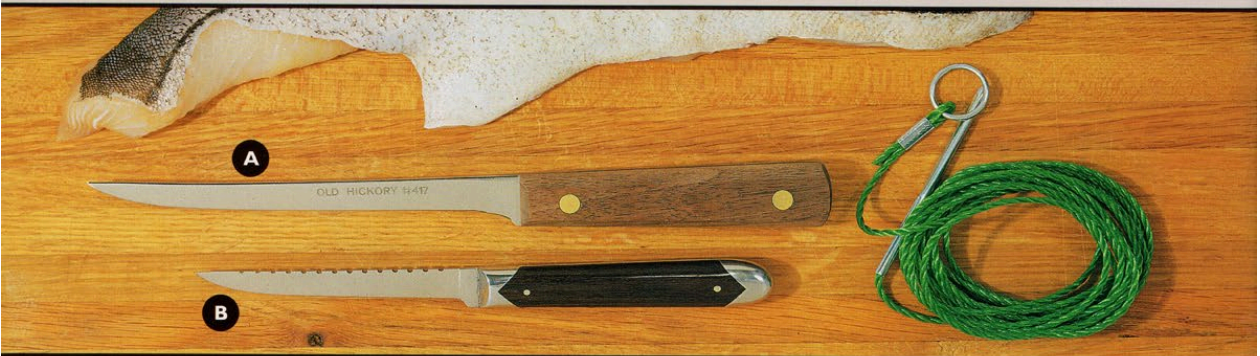


A. 410B Button Lock - 3-3/4" Closed

B. 44B Button Lock - 5-1/4" Closed

Fillet Knives

417 Fillet - QS 14 blade steel, full tang, hickory handles, brass rivets
76 Panfish - QS14 blade steel, fibron handles w/ aluminum casting, scaler top. Leather sheath included



A. 417 Fillet Knife - 11" Overall

B. 76 Panfish Fillet - 8-3/4" Overall

Figure 6, Queen 1998-1999 Chipped Bark large and small hunter at top of page, suggesting higher sales than the Fillet knives. (And generally showing 4 knives rather than 12 products on a page compared to the earlier 1990s catalogs.)

Smoky Mountain Version of Queen Button Locks

In 1993 through at least 1995, Queen produced a large contract of both Button Lock models for Smoky Mountain Knife Works (SMKW). They were notable for having rounded bolsters at 90° like Chipped bark versions, an “incised Queen” shield, and a rich brown/reddish staminawood handle. These are easily the most easily found button Lock knives. And interestingly, while the Queen production knives tend to load heavily for the large hunter, the collector market of SMKW apparently tended to favor the smaller knives – it is hard to find a large 44B as in Figure 8.



Figure 7. A pair of 410B small hunter Button Locks sold by SMKW. These knives are almost always found with a year of production on the tang stamp, and many times, they are in quite nice shape, especially compared to the smaller Chipped Bark 410B, which are often found in poor shape. Both these knives have been used, with the etch sharpened right off the lower knife. (Internet photo.)



Figure 8. A SMKW large 44B Hunter, giving a nice sense of the size of this knife. (Unknown source, Internet photo.) These large knives in the SMKW contract are much harder to find than the smaller version. This particular knife appears to be handled in darker brown staminawood.

Summary

The Queen Button Locks had a substantial production of almost 15 years with very few changes – they met with a lot of success with rural folks because the blade did lock securely and the press of a thumb on the bolster was a one-hand approach and a bit easier than reaching down to release a lock on the back of the blade. The pattern did not need a lot of modifications, other than changes in angle of bolsters. Not a lot of other companies were making a similar knife and certainly the SMKW contract provided a great additional reward for keeping the knife in production. There are no records available of how many of these knives were made, but unlike more recent Queen production, there were knives that were meant to be used and when you find them, many show rough sharpening and worn-out mechanisms.

Like some locking knives in the 1980s, Button Locks developed a reputation among some, for not wanting to lock up securely on opening. We are told that while the factory staff at the time reported getting a number of these back for service, there was usually nothing mechanically wrong with them. The solution was the pocket lint, and dried material from daily use (apple, orange juice, fingernail pieces, plain dirt – use your imagination) had to be occasionally cleaned out. A lesson most knife users have had to come to grips with – simply clean and oil your knife regularly. If kept reasonably clean, these knives gave reasonable service – the reason they are not easy to find today – in our opinion most of them have been “used-up.”.

If any of you have more to add to this story, especially in the early history of this series, or other Button Lock variations, please add it to this beginning. Thank you!