

Knifemaking

with Bob Loveless



**Build
Knives
with a
Living
Legend**

A.R.W. Loveless



Durwood Hollis

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WE ARE HONORED

Just as this book was going to the printer, we received the sad news that Bob Loveless, a member of the Blade Magazine Cutlery Hall Of Fame©, had passed away on Sept. 2, 2010.

The father of the modern custom knife movement, the man who popularized the dropped hunter, Big Bear sub-hilt fighter and other knives, and, along with Richard Barney, co-wrote *How To Make Knives*, the precursor to this book, was gone.

In 1999, I had the privilege of visiting Bob in his shop in Riverside, California, to conduct an interview for *BLADE® Magazine*. The thing that stood out was the cleanliness of both the shop and the man himself. Like the lines of his knives, Loveless and his shop were clean, uncluttered and unpretentious. Though he wore a blue denim shirt out over

his blue jeans, he was clean-shaven and his clothes were spotless. The ease with which he answered my questions belied a shop and personal appearance that—sans the untucked

shirt—would have passed most any military inspection. At one point he even grabbed a push broom and swept up some miniscule bits of dirt unseen to all but his discerning eye. Whether it was his polite way of telling me the interview was running long or he simply was that fastidious, I don't know. I do know that he had a sign on the wall that read, "Your mother does not work here. Please pick up after yourself."

We at *BLADE* and F+W Media are humbled and proud to present this work showcasing the knifemaking legacy of Mr. Loveless. Though knifemaking was but one of many pursuits that made this fascinating man tick, it is what he will be remembered for most.

We are honored to be able to add to the memories.

Steve Shackelford
Editor
BLADE

From the Author

DURWOOD HOLLIS

**THIS WORK IS DEDICATED TO
MY FRIEND AND KNIFE MAKER
LOYD THOMSEN.**

Loyd owns a ranch in the prairie country of South Dakota, where he raises cattle, feuds with coyotes and makes knives. Good friends are hard to come by. When you find such an individual, they become a part of your own extended family. So it has been with Loyd Thomsen. Thank you Loyd for who you are and your continued friendship.

[**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**]

The scope of this book was such that without Bob Loveless it would have never come to fruition. Throughout the course of several interviews, Bob was the consummate gentleman. Never growing impatient with my seemingly endless string of questions, he answered every inquiry with experience birthed out of more than half a century of knife making. Certainly, Bob Loveless is well worthy of my gratitude.

Likewise, I am thankful to knife maker and Loveless partner Jim Merritt for his insight into the career of a man who's become a legend in the world of handmade knives. There's no doubt that his long association with Bob Loveless has given rise to a true friendship between them.

I am also indebted to Utah-based knife maker Steve Johnson for sharing with me the time he worked with Loveless in the early 1970s. During our conversation about that relationship, you could hear the warmth in his voice when he said, "Bob treated me like a son."

Montana knife maker Steven Kelly is also deserving of my thanks. Steve was a consultant on several of the chapters of this book and his unselfish assistance was a tremendous contribution to this effort.

Loveless knife collector and purveyor John Denton provided many of the images contained herein. Those images

gave life to my words and served as a window to Bob Loveless' knife making career. For his generosity and kindness, I will be forever grateful.

I am also grateful to photographer Hiro Soga for allowing me to use many of his fine photos in this book. His stunning work clearly illuminates the purity and clean lines of a Bob Loveless creation.

Of course there are others who contributed to getting this book into print. Steve Shackelford, editor, and Joe Kertzman, managing editor of BLADE Magazine, worked behind the scenes at F+W Media/Krause Publications to "get the ball rolling." I truly appreciate the confidence and support of both men.

Lastly, Corrina Peterson, Editor, Firearms/Outdoor Books at F+W Media/Krause Publications encouraged me when things bogged down. I most certainly give thanks for her support and patience.

And a special "thank you" goes out to my wife Anita for putting up with the mess in my office during the months that this project was underway. This book has truly been a difficult taskmaster, but knowing that it will be found in the resource library of many future knife makers is a reward of uncountable measure.

[**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**]

Since childhood, Durwood Hollis has been regularly involved in outdoor pursuits. Game meals were a staple on the dinner table in camp and at home, and a sharp knife was key to proper game care. Durwood's first cutlery mentor was his father, who taught him knife safety, sharpening and field use.

For nearly 35 years, his writing has appeared in a wide range of outdoor magazines, including Outdoor Life, Petersen's Hunting Magazine, Guns and Ammo, Gun World, Tactical Knives, BLADE Magazine and Boar Hunter.

Over the course of his freelance writing career, Durwood served as the editorial director for The Complete Book of Knives (Petersen's Publications, 1985); and authored the Complete Game Care Guide (Brunton/Lakota, 1995); Elk: Strategies for the Hunter (Krause Publication, 2001); The Complete Book of Hunting Knives (Krause Publications, 2001); Hunting Monster Mule Deer in Arizona's Kaibab Region (Arizona Big Game Hunting, 2001); Hunting North American Big Game (Krause Publications, 2002) and Hunting Upland Game & Waterfowl (Krause Publications, 2003).

A lifelong resident of southern California, the father of six children and grandfather of a dozen grandchildren, the author resides near Los Angeles with his wife Anita and their youngest daughter Kailea.