



BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB
TRAILBLAZER
 CONSERVATION PARTNER

TRAILBLAZER SPOTLIGHT

Trailblazers in Conservation represents a level of commitment from industry partners and others that supports the mutual interests of science-supported wildlife management and conservation, and hunter ethics and advocacy.



By CJ Buck
 B&C Regular Member
 Buck Knives President and CEO

In the little town of Leavenworth, Kansas, at the turn of the 20th century, (outside the prison, as my father is prone to add), a young apprentice blacksmith named Hoyt Buck, my great-grandfather, began making knives in his spare time. He was 12 years old, and blacksmithing helped support his mother and sister with additional family income. His passion was the heat treatment and forming of metal. Knives gave him a way to pursue that passion in profitable little pieces.

In review, I believe Hoyt's real satisfaction was providing people with dependable products that enabled them to handle their lives better. The knives he designed were honestly simple and functional. The lines were clean and his integrity infused each knife in ways that really became obvious when they delivered under extreme circumstances.

Hoyt designed his heat treat and tempering process through trial and error that was driven by that same integrity previously mentioned. It is a legacy that goes beyond just knives, and it still drives all aspects of our company today.

A high performing knife blade is achieved through the optimized balance of three different and competing performance attributes. It needs to be tough enough to withstand an impact without breaking or shattering, hard enough to hold an edge

TOP TO BOTTOM: Hoyt Buck in the 1940s. Al Buck is finishing a knife blade on his father's grinder. Al Buck (left) with Chuck (center) and Don Ham, discussing plans for their new plant on Federal Boulevard.



The original Buck Knives logo.

and all the while be resistant to corrosion. If you start with good steel and follow your heat treat process with fanatical precision, you will consistently draw the best of all three attributes from the steel. If you don't, you won't.

Just after the end of World War II, Hoyt was the pastor of a small church in Mountain Home, Idaho. His wife Daisy had been plagued by breathing difficulties and illness that was exacerbated by the cold winters. I can imagine the discussions that must have taken place while winter lingered. In the summer of 1945 they relocated to a small Navy town in Southern California. Their oldest son, Alfred "Al", had settled in San Diego after a stint in the Navy more than a decade earlier and was busy driving a bus and raising his four kids with his wife, Ida. Hoyt and Daisy would take residence in a plumbing-free "cabin" in Al's backyard.

Hoyt and Al constructed a lean-to against the side of Al's garage and Hoyt taught his son how to make knives before passing away in 1949. They named their business H.H. Buck and Son, Lifetime Knives. Father and son stood behind each knife they made, and if a customer was not happy, they made it right. We still have copies of ads that ran in the mid-40s in *Field and Stream* and *Popular Mechanics* magazines.

All through the '50s Al shepherded the legacy from his father, the custom knife mail-order business becoming famous for quality and customer service, while working with his two sons, Chuck and Frank, and his brother-in-law.

San Diego was a hub for defense contracts, so local companies drew the best and brightest from around the country. Al took some advice from his



ABOVE: Ida and Al Buck's family portrait. The back row is Frank, Ruth, and Chuck and the front row is Ida, Janice, and Al.

RIGHT: Ads such as this one were printed in the 1940s in publications such as *Field and Stream* and *Popular Mechanics*.

NEW POPULAR ALL-PURPOSE SIZE OF BUCK LIFETIME KNIFE THAT CUTS ANYTHING

HAND MADE

3 1/2" HAND HOLLOW GROUND BLADE

7 INCHES OVER ALL

No. 108

\$5 POSTPAID

EVEN CUTS BOLTS WITHOUT HARM TO BLADE

This Buck Lifetime Knife is a genuine product of the Old West, used by Forest Rangers and skilled hunters. Outdoorsmen everywhere say there's no finer knife made... no other that keeps its edge so long! The special high carbon steel blade is tempered by a Buck Family secret process to last a lifetime. The blade is hollow ground to razor sharpness... yet it's so strong you can cut anything. Yes, easily cut a bolt in two without damaging the blade. A beauty for looks, too, with hand-carved lucite handle (black, red, green or blue) and a hand-sewn saddle leather sheath. At your dealer's or clip this ad and mail with check or money order. No. 108 (shown above) is a new popular size. Other Buck knives are: No. 113, Skinning Knife, 4-in. heavy blade, \$9. No. 105, All-Purpose Knife, 5-in. blade, \$7. No. 107, Fishing Knife, 3 1/2-in. blade, \$5.25. Both the 105 and 107 in one double sheath, \$11. Satisfaction guaranteed. Prompt delivery. State knives and handle colors wanted.

THIS IS THE MAN WHO MAKES 'EM

H. H. BUCK

H. H. BUCK and SON
1272 Morena Blvd., San Diego, California
Rush to me at once _____ Buck Lifetime Knives at \$ _____ each. Handle Color _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zone _____ State _____
(In California add 20% State Sales Tax) OL-10

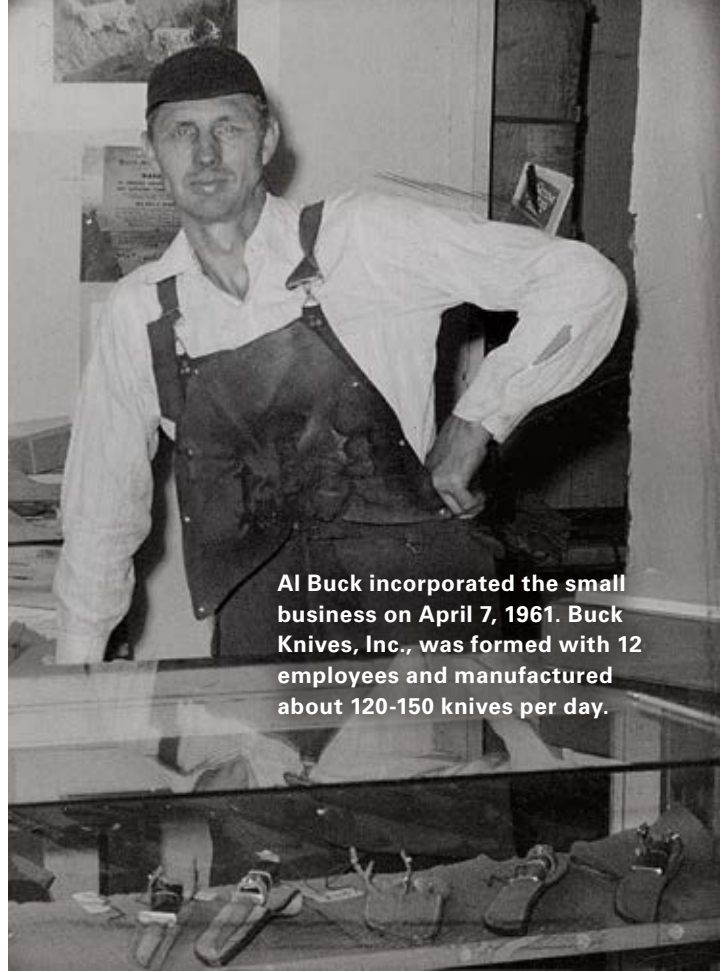


In 2005, after 60 years in San Diego, our company relocated to Post Falls, Idaho. We decided that the legacy of this company was to continue to manufacture. Our careful craftsmanship, together with the best materials we can find, create ideal products for situations that demand dependability and circumstances where the cost of failure is too great.

Early Buck ads featured Hoyt as "the man who makes 'em."



TOP AND ABOVE: The ErgoHunter blade and handle provide various grip possibilities. The Marksman straplock provides amazing strength to a folding knife. **BELOW:** The Paklite Kit's skeletal knives are light and easy to clean.



Al Buck incorporated the small business on April 7, 1961. Buck Knives, Inc., was formed with 12 employees and manufactured about 120-150 knives per day.

pastor and some founding board members drawn from his church choir, and he incorporated the small business on April 7, 1961. Buck Knives, Inc., was formed with 12 employees and manufactured about 120-150 knives per day. In 1964 we introduced the Buck No. 110 Folding Hunter—that knife, which has likely skinned out more animals than any other blade in history, celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

The family had a decision to make in contemplation of our 100th anniversary in 2002. Costs continued to skyrocket in California, and we toyed with different business structures. Should we become a product design and marketing company that imported its products and remain in California or should we relocate to a more cost-effective location to manufacture? In 2005, after 60 years in San Diego, our company relocated to Post Falls, Idaho. As evidenced by our new location, we decided that the legacy of this company was to continue to manufacture. Our careful craftsmanship, together with the best materials we can find, create ideal products for situations that demand dependability and circumstances where the cost of failure is too great.

Hunting has always been central to our brand because of the potential for hunters, intentionally or otherwise, to find themselves in awkward or even dangerous situations. Whether in the field prep of

animals or just general outdoor survival, hunters need simple, elegant, and highly functional equipment without gimmicks.

Buck continues to innovate with new blade steels and handle materials, new locking mechanisms and better ergonomics in blade and handle shapes so we can deliver real improvements in value and function for our customers. Our ever expanding pro-staff, combined with our own common sense and intrinsic interest in the outdoors, provide us with the real life experience to filter gimmick from innovation.

Since so much of our success has revolved around hunting, we felt it was important to give something back. We had been aware of the Boone and Crockett Club mainly because of the records book. Hearing folks speak of a non-typical 150-class whitetail or a typical 300-class elk, conjured instant visualizations of the animals described. When we were approached by the Club to do a licensing arrangement on knives, the records book was all we knew. As we got more involved, we were drawn into supporting one of the Triennial Awards events. Seeing the marvelous collection of heads and horns clarified for us that the records book was not about kudos or recognition, it was about the collection of scientific data on the health of North America's ecosystems that spanned a century. As we probed further, we discovered that the Club had been instrumental in the

introduction of almost all of the wildlife management agencies and a policy that has provided the amazing turnarounds in the populations of elk, whitetails, and turkeys, as well as the creation of national parks. Our involvement with the Boone and Crockett Club began as a licensing agreement but has become a true conservation partnership.

We have become increasingly concerned watching wildlife management evolve from a scientific process with a strong track record of results, to being politicized and emotionally driven. The Boone and Crockett Club sits in a very unique position to reach across partisan divides and between hunters and non-hunters to educate people in realizing that hunters and hunting have been the most effective and controllable wildlife management tool we have.

It is our great pride to stand alongside the Boone and Crockett Club in support of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, the guardianship of the real legacy of hunting, the promotion of fair chase and the protection of wild spaces and magical moments. ■

See a complete listing and find out more about Boone and Crockett Club's Trailblazers in Conservation online at www.Boone-Crockett.org