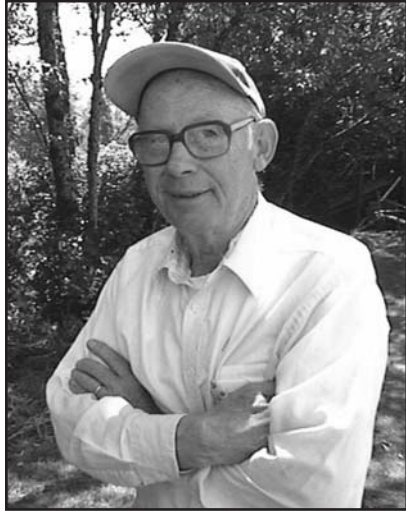


The Robeson Whittler

By ibdennis

For the last two years I have been running an ad in this publication for a Robeson whittler pocketknife. In truth I have been looking for a knife like this for the past 25 years. I have never seen one offered for sale, and those that were offered were close but not winners. So how does one become obsessed with finding a particular knife and why?

The story revolves around my good friend, Loy Moss. Loy and I are charter members of the Oregon Knife Collectors Association. Loy has been a good friend as well as a fellow knife collector. I have some real treasure knives that came from Loy. I have had some wonderful moments with Loy that go back to times spent in a power plant when he was working and other times spent on his farm. Good times.



About twenty five years ago Loy handed me a knife and asked me what I thought of it. I told him I liked it and liked it enough to buy it. This Robeson large equal end whittler pattern felt good in the hand and had a character that appealed to me. Loy felt the same way about it. In fact it wasn't a put in a display box knife but rather a carry in your pocket and use type knife. The shield bore the name "Pocket Eze". The shield name brought attention to the fact that this was a sunk joint knife that had no sharp corners that would tear holes in your pockets when you carried the knife. It had beautiful bone handles and was a 1930's vintage knife.

As we both liked it we struck on this idea that we could share the knife. I think I held out \$30 and suggested that I would carry it for awhile; and then when Loy wanted it back we would again trade dollars for the knife. I think we both thought that we would find another one, and both of us could have



this special pattern knife. For several years we traded dollars and that knife, and both of us were happy with the experience. We would meet on the streets and ask the other whether it was being carried and it would be brought out for inspection.

And then one day Loy approached me with a sullen expression on his face. He had lost the knife. It wasn't one of those misplaced and soon to be found lost; this was a lost it

forever type lost. My heart sunk. Loy was on the farm when it happened. He was working with a string tag baler and using the knife to cut the string. And then it was gone. A search around the field did not find it. In fact Loy spent hours looking for that lovely Robeson. He even said he would spend future years in hopes of finding it, but it never happened.

That was twenty five or so years ago. I vowed I would find another for no other reason than a memory of our friendship. I looked and

looked. I even had a Robeson collector keep his eyes open for one, figuring that he would spot one with no problem. Nothing! I haunted knife shows looking and hoping. Nothing!

And then one day I spotted a picture of one in a book. It was a pattern 633499 and had a spear blade. I couldn't recall whether the knife had a spear main blade, but this one was close enough. Now I had a number and a picture. But in reality it didn't get me closer to the knife I was wanting. This went on for years.

And then eBay happened. I had searches going on constantly for this knife. Nothing! Even automatic searches revealed nothing. And then one day Charlie Campagna wrote me an email asking if I had seen this Robeson whittler up for auction. My eBay search engine failed to find it so I looked where Charlie pointed. And there it was. Exactly what I was looking for. It was a pattern number 632498. And then it dawned on me that it was a clip point main blade that we had, and that this was the same knife. It wasn't the lost knife but was one just like it.

I told dear elayne that I was going to have that knife no matter what I had to bid for it. I told her what my maximum bid would be.

She gulped and rolled her eyes in a manner only she can do and said faintly, "go for it." I think she thought it would go for far less than that and I did too. All during the bidding process it looked like I would get it for a high but nominal figure. Even up until the last minute I gulped but had calculated the number it would stop at. It was fine. I should have known by the name of the bidder that put it into orbit that he might be nuttier than I. It was "slick Willy" or something like that. He came within \$20 of my ludicrous, outrageous, stupid, spendthrift, exorbitant and costly bid. But I won it. And dear elayne's exclamation when I told her will forever ring in my ears. And keeps on ringing.

I shared my victory with Loy and he was happy for me. We both agreed on the facts of the story. Loy asked what I had paid for it and I sheepishly told him. He helped in consoling me about it. I asked if he would be interested in carrying it in his pocket like we did all those years ago. He suggested not. Loy was always smarter than I when it came to reasonable amounts of money to spend. It is mine now. To carry and enjoy and bring back fond memories of a friendship.