



L. LYNCH BOWIE KNIFE

By Wayne McNeese

Large, American – made, Southern Bowies with tin scabbards are rare and very desirable. A maker's name on that same Bowie really makes it rare. I am excited to present this recently found Bowie knife to you for study. In addition to the above niceties, this Bowie is the second one signed "L. Lynch" to surface. (If a member knows of another, I would like to know.) Ben Palmer pictures a signed L. Lynch bowie in his book *Bowie Knives of the Ben Palmer Collection*, in the article titled, "Battlefield Bowies". The two knives are not identical, but the signatures are, and the knives are very similar in a number of ways.

Ben Palmer commented that he hoped some future reader of his book might shed some light on the history of the L. Lynch Bowie that he pictures, and as to whether the name on the blade is the maker or an owner. Well, I can maybe do both. I do believe that the exact same stamped name on two similar Bowies indicates a maker.

I have not handled the other Lynch knife. Comparing this Lynch with the one pictured in Ben Palmer's book, I can see the same makers hand in features as follows: 1) a one-piece walnut handle, though shaped differently, 2) the same iron pommel cap 3) the same single iron pin, placed in the same location, an iron guard, though shaped differently, 5) similarly looking blade and grind, but with a longer clip and a ricasso on the knife I own.

When Mr. Lynch fashioned the guard on my knife he was surely influenced by a Sheffield maker. The guard is iron, about 3/16" thick and is scalloped-shaped similar to the guards on Sheffield Bowies shown on pgs. 191 and 205 in *The Antique Bowie Knife Book*.

The blade is a whopping 15 1/2" long, 1 3/8" wide, with a wicked clip, which is sharpened for 4 1/2" of its length. The sophistication of the blade design continues with the ample ricasso. The blade is just about 3/8" thick, very well ground with a median ridge. The clip is 5" long with a double bevel. Overall length is 20 3/4".

This Bowie knife turned-up in North Carolina, still in the family and still with its original tin scabbard. I was fortunate to be able to buy it from a picker, who bought it from an elderly lady who was the great, great, granddaughter of the southern soldier who owned it. His name was John Quincy Adams, from Wayne County.* Searching records I turned-up several John Quincy Adams in North Carolina. It was apparently a popular name at that time, anyway. My research continues on John Quincy Adams in Wayne County.

Searching census records, I found one L. Lynch that fits the time period in that county. His name is Lemmon Lynch and is listed as a carpenter. Obviously I cannot be sure he made these knives, but it is certainly possible. L. Lynch is not a common name. Just going by the name match, in the county where this soldier was from, and the time period, there are possibilities. My efforts will continue to make the positive connection.

It was exciting to find and add to my collection a signed bowie that I can compare to a similar bowie from an old collection that is already published.

