

BOOK REVIEW

BY WILLIAM P. HOOD JR.

Pocket Fruit Knives: A Synopsis of Their History From the United Kingdom, France, Northern Europe & USA

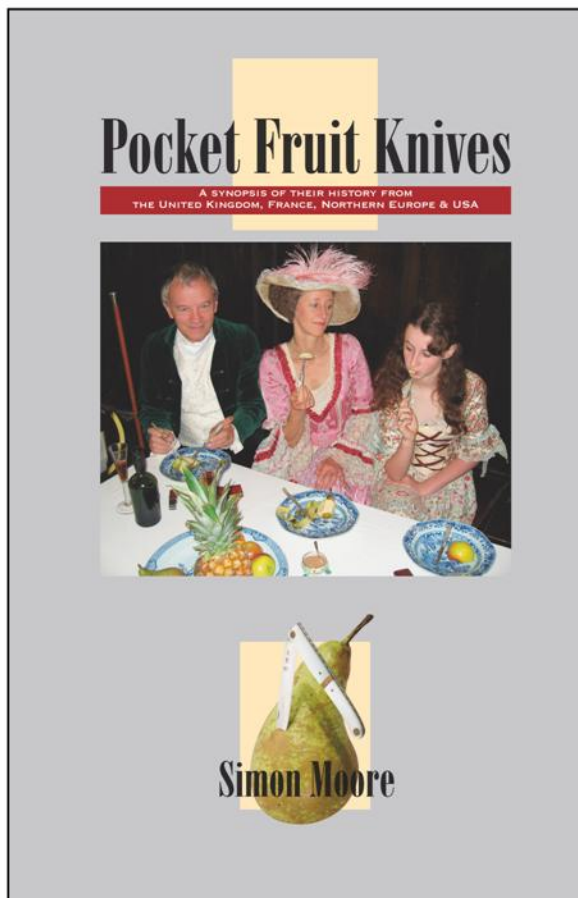
Author: Simon Moore

Publisher: Antique Knives Ltd., Slough, UK

Hardcover with dust jacket, 7 3/4 x 11 1/8 inches, 286 pages, more than 500 illustrations, the majority in color

ISBN 978-0-9559507-0-4

Available in North America through Knife World Publications, Knoxville, TN; 800-828-7751; or online at knifepub@knifeworld.com; US \$87.50 plus shipping.



This book on folding pocket fruit knives (and forks) is written by the world's expert on the subject. He has been studying, collecting and selling them for forty years, and has already written extensively on the subject. American readers may be most familiar with his three-part series on "Collecting French and mechanized fruit knives" that appeared in *Silver Magazine* in May/June, July/August and September/October 1997.

Pocket fruit knives and forks have silver, silver-plated or gold blades/functional ends to avoid the undesirable taste reaction and discoloration that occurs when fruit acids come into contact with carbon steel. The manufacture of these implements has been largely

restricted to France and England, where they originated. The major exception is the USA, where pocket fruit knives were produced during the last half of the nineteenth century.

The present work is divided into a chapter covering the history of pocket and fruit knives in Europe up to 1650, one on early French pocket fruit knives; five chapters on the history of English pocket fruit knives from the 1700s to 1940, and one chapter on pocket fruit knives from other countries, most particularly the USA.

The coverage is extensive in terms of materials, decoration and workmanship, and examples shown range from the very common to the very rare. The book is richly illustrated with excellent-quality photos of specimens and also reproductions of catalogue pages.

The novice collector will find a chapter on Collecting, Construction, Pitfalls, Fakery and Faults to be especially helpful. It includes a diagram labeled with proper nomenclature and a useful glossary.

In addition to a list of references, there



Above:
English and French fruit knives

is an appendix listing the marks of Sheffield, Birmingham and other cutlers and goldsmiths known to have made pocket fruit knives. There is also a price guide in the form of an insert.

It is hard to imagine that any book could be more authoritative or comprehensive in its coverage of the subject of pocket fruit knives and forks than this one, and anyone with a serious interest in cutlery or flatware in general will rush to add this volume to his or her library.

William P. Hood Jr., M.D. is a retired cardiologist and former university professor who lives in Alabama. He is the author of "Tiffany Silver Flatware 1845-1905, When Dining was an Art", Suffolk, 2000, and numerous articles about flatware in antiques publications.



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