

For 300 models, the first Buck models were contracted by Schrade, using Schrade metal for at least four years. Then Buck switched contractors and Camillus made the 300s. Every part including blades. Both companies would ship knives in bulk to Buck who then boxed them in individual Buck boxes. They used whatever they used, it was not BOS heat treated. Just consider it Schrade or Camillus blade metal. Beginning in late 85, Buck used 425m in the four models they took over making in the Buck factory and the other Buck 300s were still Camillus made with Camillus steel. BOS heat treating started on the four Buck made 300 models when he started heat treating the other Buck models blades. Over a period of time 300 models were phased out by Buck, aka Camillus contract, and only the four Buck made models remaining and still do today. Then a couple of other models were tried by Buck (310,312 and 314) and discontinued. SMKW's contracted with Buck and Camillus to make some special knives, such as the folding fish knife design called the 'California Toothpick', congress model, big and little barlow, etc. These will not have model numbers or date marks stamped on the blades. They will have Camillus steel. They were only sold thru/by Smokey Mountain Knife Works.

To further confuse things the imported 300 series are on their own, their construction and materials are designed by Buck but made by the contractor. The steel is generally thought of as 420J and to my knowledge the blades are not heat treated in the Buck factory.

This contracting stuff was very common, Camillus made dozens of other companies knives. All this twisting and turning in the factory/contract world can lead to some stuff people just don't realize. Such as the 307 Stockman was never made by Buck, only by Camillus contract and the blade steel was never BOS heat treated. No matter there are folks who swear the 307 is a darn good knife and I agree.

This was as simple as I could explain it. As you see it is not a straight forward metal history. You like the old knives for what they were and are; no matter who actually made them. Bucks warranty still stands and back in time your knife was repaired or replaced. Today old 300s are not repaired you will get a replacement

The quick way to see Schrade or Camillus

1. Schrade has NO visible bolster/blade pins
2. Camillus has NO swedge grind above the nail nicks. But pin is usually visible.

You first look for the swedge extending down the top of the main blade above the nail nick. In both Schrade and early Camillus models you have long nicks/pulls. In Schrades there is a swedge grind on top of blade above nail nick or pulls. Then breath on the bolster to confirm the lack of the pin coming thru the bolster for the Schrade. Breath a hot enough breath and you should see the Camillus pin.

I have a Cami 301 someone put bolster grooves on, just like the first model Schrade so watch for fakes. You will eventually be able to quickly see the difference in the scale pins and even, at a glance, be able to see that the Schrade nail nick grooves are not as deep and dark as Camillus ones. And when you get really good, the "S" shape of the knife alone will tell you its a Schrade