



Ellenville Knife Company in July 1872. They were Major Dwight Divine, Alfred Neafie, and R. H. Brodhead.

From the start, the mainstay of the Connecticut men, as far as actual manufacture went, was **William Booth** (photo above, at right, with fine pen grinder Charles Joby, who also worked at the facility for over 50 years). Booth was born in Sheffield and, at age 14, was assigned for a period of seven years as apprentice to a Sheffield cutler. Upon completing that apprenticeship, Booth sailed to America, soon settling in Naugatuck. He was in the first wave of the Connecticut men who came to Ellenville to manufacture high-grade cutlery. When the cooperative concern failed, William Booth stayed on with the **Ellenville Knife Company**. And stay on he did, for more than 50 years, as superintendent, engineer, designer, and inventor. A lengthy article in Paine's "Cutlery Journal" in September 1927, said, "Mr. Booth was a pioneer in the



many changes in the American system of modern manufacturing, successfully applying the departmental plan to preparing and fitting knife parts. An inventor of superior talents, many of the finest stock models of the Divine concern sprouted in the mind of Mr. Booth." William Booth was the grandfather of Harold Booth, cashier of the *First National Bank* for many years, and of another William Booth, also of Ellenville.

Back to the **Ellenville Knife Company**. By 1875, it was evident that the new officers and trustees could not work together. A new stock company was formed in 1875 as **Ulster Knife Co.**, but more money was constantly needed. Finally, **Dwight Divine** (photo, bottom left) bought out the other shareholders in 1876 and assumed control. He withdrew from the mercantile firm he had been conducting with his father and others, and devoted himself to the knife company.

At the time, he was only in his 30s, known as "Major Divine," a rank he held when discharged from the Union Army. He was energetic, enthusiastic, and charismatic. He traveled widely in the first few years, building up knowledge of and demand for *Ulster Knives*.

A serious fire in 1880 destroyed the factory, machinery, and stock, but did not destroy Major Divine's determination. By 1881, **Ulster Knife** was making 600 styles of knives.

During the next 20 years, there were occasional closings, when water was too low, or when orders fell off. Overall, the factory went forward, making an ever-increasing number of designs, and earning a fine reputation for quality.

To be certain of a good backup supply of water for power, Dwight Divine bought several lakes. We call it **Cape Pond** now, but during Major Divine's ownership it was called **Ulster Lake** in honor of **Ulster Knife**. Divine built a dam and held the water in a beautiful lake where employees were allowed to build a clubhouse, and some even built their own cottages. The lake and dam remained in Divine ownership until 1948 when *Cape Pond, Inc.* purchased it for their membership. Long before that, **Ulster Knife** had ceased to depend on waterpower and installed electric power when it was available.

After 1900, the firm became **Dwight Divine & Son**, and then **Dwight Divine & Sons**, (letterhead from 1923, below) when both C. Dwight and John H. Divine joined their father, but always **Ulster Knife Co.**, appeared as the operating body.



At about the same time, two Carman brothers, trained by Dwight Divine, joined with W.D. Hoornbeek to form a rival company, **Napanoch Knife Company**, and began manufacturing knives in the old DuVall rake factory on **National Street**. In 1919, the factory was sold to the Winchester Repeating Arms Company of Connecticut. Many of the workmen moved to Connecticut.

Within two years, some of the veteran employees returned to Napanoch. John Cushner was one of them. He associated himself with Melvin Schoonmaker and Melvin Quick, both skilled knife makers, and George Brackley, who brought good business experience to the group and formed the **Honk Falls Knife Company**, setting up (again) in the old DuVall rake factory building. They were very successful and produced well-accepted knives, but a 1929 fire destroyed the building and its contents.

John Cushner had the heart to keep on trying and opened a small factory in the barn behind his home, operating as **Napanoch Knife Company**. (see label, next page, top left) 