# About The Compendium Digital Download Edition

This digital download edition (v. 1.1) of the Safety Razor Compendium has the same content as the CD-ROM (v. 1.0, 2005), but known errors, and most misprints have been corrected. The 1900-1904 patent pages are now searchable. No claim to completeness is made – there will never be a "complete" edition. Acrobat® Reader v. 4 or above is required.

## Downloading and File Organization

Downloads consist of ten Zip files containing the Adobe Acrobat PDF files listed below. The required disk space is 690 MB, and broad-band internet connection is recommended. The download time for a 100 MB zip file can be 10 minutes or more, depending on your connection speed. For example, the TOTAL download time for all the files would be 115 minutes at 10 KB/second. Download all files to one folder, unzip and place in the same folder.

Open the WELCOME.pdf file first. The links to CONTENTS (SRC_TOC.pdf) should work if all unzipped files are together in one folder. *IMPORTANT*: Do not change filenames or links will not work. Links are case-sensitive.

| Zip File | Zip File Size (MB) | No. of PDF files | Contents |
|---|---|---|---|
| SRC_01 | ~2 | 1 | Preview (free download) and read_me.txt. |
| SRC_02 | 1 | 3 | Welcome, Contents, Introduction and Preface. |
| SRC_03 | 100 | 4 | A to D. |
| SRC_04 | 83 | 4 | E to H. |
| SRC_05 | 89 | 4 | I to M. |
| SRC_06 | 82 | 3 | N to R. |
| SRC_07 | 117 | 5 | S to Z. |
| SRC_08 | 82 | 4 | Brands – ASR & Ever-Ready, AutoStrop, Durham-Duplex, Gem. |
| SRC_09 | 86 | 4 | Brands – Gillette, Kampfe, Rolls. |
| SRC_10 | 48 | 6 | Brands– Schick, USSR, Wilkinson.<br>Patents, Safety Razor Collectibles, Bibliography. |

## Compendium Organization

Alphabetical entries (A-Z) are organized by trademark or trade name. Separate sections cover the major manufacturers: AutoStrop, Durham Duplex, Gillette (two parts), Kampfe, Rolls, Schick, USSR, Wilkinson, and the American Safety Razor brands, Ever-Ready, Gem and Star.

The first Gillette Section lists the manufacturing dates codes used by that company on their razors and blades, some early blade trademark designs, and a Gillette history chart. The second Gillette Section contains a listing of some of the many Gillette razor models and trademarks.

The Patent Section includes an illustration from almost all of the safety razor related patents issued by the U.S. Patent Office through 1904. *Almost* all, since patent indexes are not cross-referenced and other safety razor patents may be lurking under headings that I missed. Following this is a table of selected safety razor related patents from 1905 through 1959; this list is complete only through c.1909. A Patent Years Section has tables of the starting numbers of U.S. utility and design patents by year from 1880 to 1959, British (GB) patents from 1916 to 1981, and German patents from 1877 to 1942.

Lastly is a Section sampling safety razor related collectibles and a Bibliography of sources.

## Searching 

Both Microsoft Windows® and Apple Macintosh® operating systems have built-in search functions: Windows Desktop Search and Apple Spotlight – the magnifying class icon. It makes is easier to search all the compendium files if they are placed in the same folder. Searches can be for a word, phrase, or number. Date searches must be in the same date format as used in the text: usually DD Mon YYYY (e.g.. 14 Nov 1914) but sometime Mon DD YYYY (e.g., Oct 1 1895). Omit commas when searching for patent numbers or dates.

## Printing

All files can be printed. Depending on your particular combination of printer, computer, and Acrobat Reader version, printing using the Acrobat Reader Print icon may work better than using File/Print. For more information check Acrobat Reader Help. The files contain a total of 587 pages.

## Preview Pages

Following are selected pages from various sections of the Compendium.

Reviews of the CD-ROM (v. 1) and example pages can be found at www.shaveworld.org

### Definitions

In descriptions I have rather loosely used 'wedge blade' to mean a blade that is thick at the back and tapers to an edge, usually hollow-ground. A 'thin blade' is a blade of uniform thickness, usually rigid, but sometimes thin enough to be flexible. I have used 'rib-back' blade to mean a single edge thin blade that has a piece of metal bent around the blade opposite the cutting edge for reinforcement, similar to the single-edge blades sold in hardware stores today. A 'Gillette-type' razor refers to a three-piece hoe-type razor (cap, guard and handle) that uses a standard double-edge three-hole or slotted thin flexible blade.

Some items pictured in the L-W Book Sales publication, *Safety Razors: A Price Guide* are indicated by L-W followed by the relevant page number(s). The 1922 and 1932 trade name lists referred to are in Helmut Beerman's *Solingen* book. See Bibliography.

## About Safety Razors

A safety razor is a razor with a guard extending ahead of and beneath the blade edge to prevent major gashes while shaving. Safety razors may be divided into two general categories: straight razors with a blade guard and the hoe (or rake) type with the blade and guard held at right angles to the handle and having a removable blade. Straight guard razors may be either folding or non-folding and may have a fixed or removable blade.

The first guard razor probably was devised by Jean Jacques Perret of Paris, c. 1762. William Henson's 1847 British patent describes both a hoe and folding guard razor, but he did not claim to invent the guard. The Kampfe Brothers of New York City patented a hoe-type guard razor with a wedge blade in 1880. King C. Gillette's 1902 invention was a hoe-type safety razor having a double-edge, thin, flexible (and disposable) blade.

The earliest razor guards for folding straight razors had teeth like a comb and could be attached on only one side of the blade. One of the first improvements was the reversible guard. Razors with removable blades have been called frame-back razors. Frame-back guard razors appeared in Sheffield, England in the late 1820's.

Collectors often refer to folding or straight-handled safety razors as 'transitional' safety razors based on the supposed evolution from the 'cut-throat' folding straight razor (which is still used by barbers) to the hoe type safety razor.[*] Actually both types of guard razor were developed nearly simultaneously. As far as I have been able to determine, the razor makers never used the term *transistional*; they called their product a guard razor or (after the 1880's) a straight safety or some such term. Durham-Duplex called their replaceable-blade double-edge guard razor "the old-fashioned razor made safe."

The brothers Kampfe apparently coined the term *safety-razor*, for it first appeared as the title of their June 1880 patent for a hoe-type guard razor. The word *SAFETY* also appeared on a late 19th-century *Pampa* folding guard razor sold by Lockwood Brothers in England (exact date not known). Hoe-type razors with comb-like blade guards beneath thick wedge blades patented prior to Kampfe's razor were simply called a razor or shaving apparatus with a guard plate.

Razors were made that were convertible, that is, they could be used as either a hoe type or a straight-handled razor. Thomas Crookes of Sheffield, England patented one device in 1890, and another, the Everite, was patented as recently as 1952. Not all guards had comb-like teeth. A slip-on bar guard for straight razors was patented in 1881. The Curley Ideal, patented in 1886, had a corrugated or ribbed bar guard. Roller guards and spring guards also made their appearance about this time.

A removable blade could be either wedge-shaped with a thick back tapering to a sharp edge, like a cross-section of a straight razor and usually hollow-ground, or a thinner 'wafer' blade. The wafer blade could be one thin piece or have a strip or strips of reenforcing metal along the back edge as with today's single-edge blades (now mainly used for everything but shaving). Gillette's innovation was a blade thin enough to be flexible and cheap enough to be discarded when it was dull. Thus may have begun our disposable culture. Thin blades could have their edge restored somewhat by stropping on a leather strop but were not meant to be re-honed with an abrasive stone. Thick 'wedge' blades could be honed, stropped and used indefinitely unless damaged.

Thin blades were made having from one to at least six edges. Rectangular, rhomboid, square, triangular, hexagonal and round– all shapes appeared– including the band blade in the form of a coiled strip in a cartridge or in

[*] "Transitional razor" is neither apt nor accurate. I personally prefer "folding guard razor" or "straight-handled guard razor," as appropriate.

a break-off blade dispenser. Multiple parallel blades have been used, and are in today's cartridge blades. Almost everything has been tried – even mounting twin blades on tiny leaf springs!

Razor blades can vibrate up-and-down or oscillate from side-to-side. The blade movement can be powered by motion over the face, by wind-up spring mechanisms or by a-c, d-c, or battery-driven electric motors or vibrators.

A patent for the first wind-up safety razor was issued to one Miles H. Standish of Middleboro, Plymouth County, Massachusetts. Perhaps a descendent of the Miles Standish (1584?-1656), famous Mayflower passenger, and the inspiration for Longfellow's poem *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

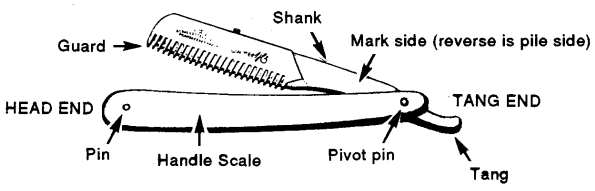
The first U.S. patent for an electric razor was issued in December 1898; it also happened to be the first patent for a razor with a reciprocating (oscillating) blade. The mechanism was very similar to an electric door-bell except that a blade vibrated rather than a bell hammer. Razor and shaver were initially synonymous, but 'shaver' has come to mean a razor with a blade just behind, and moving relative to, a thin perforated or slotted shield, often used without water or lather.

Throughout this Compendium are razor advertisements that list the U.S. retail prices at the time the razors were marketed. Here are some conversions to 2005 U.S. dollar values.

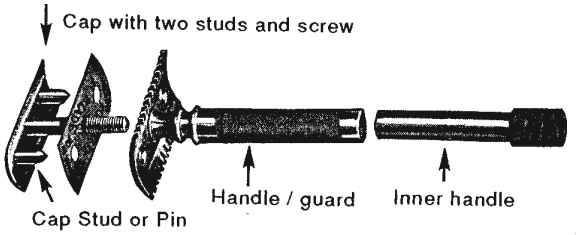
| What $1 would buy in: | In 2005 would cost about: | What $1 would buy in: | In 2005 would cost: |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1895 | $21 | 1915 | $18 |
| 1900 | $22 | 1920-1930 | $11 |
| 1910 | $20 | | |

## Parts of a Razor

Since safety razors come in a wide variety of designs there are many specialized part names. Below are some generic, or general, terms.




**Folding Guard Razor**




**Original Gillette-Type Razor**

**Straight-handle Guard Razor.** A razor with a guard and a straight handle parallel to the blade.

**Folding Guard Razor.** A folding razor with an integral or detachable guard.

**Hoe-type.** Handle at right angles to head. Some can also be rotated or assembled as a straight-handle razor.

**Lather-catcher.** Hoe type razor with a curved lather-collector behind and below the blade. Uses a single-edge wedge blade.

Wedge-blade razor with lather catcher

**Hood.** A closed portion between the handle and the top of the blade in a hoe-type razor.

**Gillette Type.** Hoe type; uses a double-edge –usually flexible – blade.

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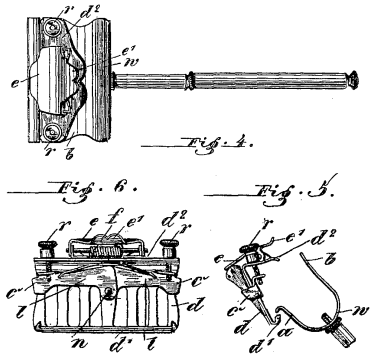
**Magii** – See Gordon Gleaner.

**Magma** – Mfr. unidentified.

**Magmatic** MAGMATIC
Joseph A. Nones, 180 Central Park South, New York, N.Y. TM first used 1933 Feb, TM filed 2 Jun 1936.

**Magna**
F. Koeller & Co., Solingen, Ohligs, Germany. German patent D.R.G.M Nos. 162416 and 162417. British patent 21 Dec 1901. U.S. Patent 690947, 14 Jan 1902, filed 5 Sep 1901, Franz. Josef Halbekann, Soligen, Germany. assigned to Koeller & Co., Solingen. Single-edge wedge blade, closed comb guard, lather catcher, two-piece tubular handle (note: handle in photo may not be original), stropping blade holder. In tubular oval lithographed tin. L-W, p. 28.



1902 U.S. patent


ml

dm

**Mag-Nis**
Mfr. unidentified. Gillette type, comb guard, knurled handle.

ml

**Magno-Zipper**
Ross Manufacturing Co. (Justin E. Ross), 1213 Wyandotte St., Kansas City, Missouri. TM first used 9 Aug 1941, TM filed 25 Aug 1941.

**Magnus** –,See Rowiro.

**MagUnet** – See U-Magnet.

**Mahoganite**
MAHOGANITE American Safety Razor Corp., New York and Brooklyn, N.Y. TM filed 18 Mar 1922, used since 1 Oct 1921 for razor sets.

**Majestic**
International Safety Razor Corp. Bloomfield, New Jersey. TM first used 31 Oct 1936, TM filed 11 Nov 1936. Double edge razors and blades.

**Majestic**
*Majestic* Matthews & Lively, Atlantia, Georgia. TM first used 26 Feb 1904, TM filed 19 Apr 1913. TM for razors and razor blades.

**Majestic Safety Razor**
Majestic Razor Co., Kansas City, Missouri, but probably made by Unsinger Razor Blade Co., Fremont, Ohio. Single edge, thin rigid blade, bar guard with fine closely-spaced grooves attached to a knurled handle; marked PAT'D AUG 31, 1909 on cap. Dark green box with gold letters marked: PRICE $1.00 / SAFETY MAJESTIC RAZOR / Manufactured By / Majestic Razor Co. Kansas City, Mo. See Unsinger Adelene.

**Majo**
Mfr. unidentified. England. Gillette type double-edge cosmetic or corn razor, bar guard, knurled handle, special blade. Labeled: LADIES TOILET RAZOR.

ml

**Major**
Prybrands, Inc. 36th St. & 47th Ave., Long Island City, N.Y. TM first used 1 Mar 1934, TM filed 9 Apr 1934.

**Maktor**
MAKTOR THREE EDGE Maktor Safety Razor Co., Ltd., 87 Southwark Street, London, S.E. 1, England. Triangular head and blade, plastic guard, smooth bar guard on three sides, metal cap, metal or dark maroon cylindrical plastic handle. Also all metal version. British Patent No. 329127, 15 May 1930, filed 19 Apr 1929, Florence Minnie Goddard, London, England. L-W, p. 24.

million razors and 19 million packages of blades. The thick concave blade for the razor continued to be offered in the Sears catalog through 1926 and then it, too, disappeared. The Star wedge-blade safety razor had survived for about 40 years. The Star trademark lived on and has been used on single-edge blades, on a razor exactly like the thin-blade single-edged Gem, and finally on double-edged blades ("Famous Since 1880") and for safety razors identical to the Gillette. The Kampfe name survives as Lake Kampfe in Passaic County, New Jersey, near the site of the Kampfe estate purchased in the early 1890s by Frederick Kampfe.

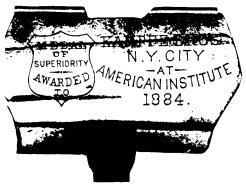
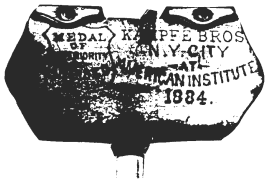
– Adapted from articles by Robert K. Waits in *Knife World,* December 1986 and January 1987, and reprinted in *The Razor Anthology*, Knife World Publications (1995).

## Kampfe Brothers Star Wedge Blade Razors

rw

Kampfe Star razor, c. 1902
Type HR-14A head, rosewood handle

At least twenty-five frame design variations have been identified for Kampfe Bros. Star wedge-blade razors made between 1880 and c. 1919. The following table is based on Howard Hazelcorn's *Guide to Kampfe Bros. Wedge Blade Star Safety Razors & Kampfe Razors*, 2nd Edition. The frame designs are classified by Models (HR–1 to HR-14) and Types (A to C). Within a Model, Types generally differ by patent dates and the design stamped on the frame. Models HRS-1 and HRS-2 are sterling silver and were probably made after 1902. The *Last Date* column lists the most recent patent year stamped on the razor frame.

| LAST DATE | MODEL TYPE | | DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1880 | HR-1A |  ml | Frame: closed.<br>Guard: fixed, straight rake.<br>Blade adjustment screws: none.<br>Handle: short wooden. |
| 1884 | HR-1B |  hh  ml | Same as 1A |
| 1884 | HR-2A |  rw  hh | Frame: closed.<br>Guard: fixed, angular rake.<br>Blade adjustment screws: none.<br>Handle: metal, two-piece tubular, plain. |
| 1887 | HR-3A |  ml  rj | Handle: metal, two-piece tubular, dot design.<br>No holes in stropping blade holder.<br>L-W, p. 28. |