

State of Arkansas  
92nd General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2019

As Engrossed: H3/28/19  
**A Bill**

SENATE BILL 557

By: Senators Teague, Hickey  
By: Representative Watson

### For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE WASHINGTON, ARKANSAS, AS THE  
BIRTHPLACE OF THE BOWIE KNIFE, ARKANSAS HERITAGE  
SITE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

### Subtitle

TO DESIGNATE WASHINGTON, ARKANSAS, AS THE  
BIRTHPLACE OF THE BOWIE KNIFE, ARKANSAS  
HERITAGE SITE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 1, Chapter 4, is amended to add an  
additional section to read as follows:

1-4-134. Birthplace of the Bowie Knife, Arkansas Heritage Site –  
Legislative findings and intent.

(a) The General Assembly finds that:

(1) The Bowie knife has been designated the official knife of  
the State of Arkansas;

(2) The Bowie knife is recognized as Arkansas's most famous  
blade weapon and the national American Blade;

(3) Arkansas blacksmith James Black crafted an original Bowie  
knife in Washington, Hempstead County, Arkansas, in 1831;

(4) Washington, Arkansas, and James Black became almost  
immediately famous as the birthplace and creator of the Bowie knife,  
respectively;

(5) James Black continued to refine and improve his Bowie knife



design into the world's toughest but most flexible knife from his shop in Washington, Arkansas; and

(6) Because of the Bowie knife's national reputation, Washington, Arkansas, later became the location of the world's first recognized school of bladesmithing.

(b)(1) Washington, Hempstead County, Arkansas, is designated the "Birthplace of the Bowie Knife, Arkansas Heritage Site".

(2) The designation of Washington, Hempstead County, Arkansas, as the "Birthplace of the Bowie Knife, Arkansas Heritage Site" is essential to:

(A) Celebrate, protect, and preserve the history and status of the Arkansas-created Bowie knife throughout Arkansas, the United States, and the world; and

(B) Preserve bladesmithing history and heritage, promote heritage arts and bladesmithing tourism in the area, and provide a historically accurate site designation for a heritage arts and bladesmithing enthusiast.

(c) The University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana is designated to develop and operate a school of bladesmithing located in Washington, Arkansas, to promote and protect the art of bladesmithing and the Bowie Knife crafted there.

(d)(1) The Arkansas Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Department of Parks and Tourism and the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana, shall design a sign that displays the words and any logo for the "Birthplace of the Bowie Knife, Arkansas Heritage Site".

(2) The sign shall be placed on or about the location of the school of bladesmithing developed and operated in Washington, Arkansas, by the University of Arkansas Community College at Hope-Texarkana.

(3) Information regarding the proper placement of copies of the sign at additional locations to promote and direct tourism to Washington, Arkansas, shall be made available by the Arkansas Department of Transportation.

(4) The sign in appropriate scale shall be used as the symbol on the state highway map and in all tourism mediums published by the Department of Parks and Tourism to indicate "Birthplace of the Bowie Knife, Arkansas Heritage Site".

(e)(1) The Department of Arkansas Heritage shall promulgate rules necessary to implement this section.

(2)(A) When adopting the initial rules to implement this section, the final rule shall be filed with the Secretary of State for adoption under § 25-15-204(f):

(i) On or before January 1, 2020; or

(ii) If approval under § 10-3-309 has not occurred by January 1, 2020, as soon as practicable after approval under § 10-3-309.

(B) The department shall file the proposed rule with the Legislative Council under § 10-3-309(c) sufficiently in advance of January 1, 2020, so that the Legislative Council may consider the rule for approval before January 1, 2020.

/s/Teague

**APPROVED: 4/9/19**