

1 State of Arkansas  
2 92nd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2019  
4

As Engrossed: H3/28/19

# A Bill

SENATE BILL 557

5 By: Senators Teague, Hickey  
6 By: Representative Watson  
7

## For An Act To Be Entitled

9 AN ACT TO DESIGNATE WASHINGTON, ARKANSAS, AS THE  
10 BIRTHPLACE OF THE BOWIE KNIFE, ARKANSAS HERITAGE  
11 SITE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.  
12  
13

## Subtitle

15 TO DESIGNATE WASHINGTON, ARKANSAS, AS THE  
16 BIRTHPLACE OF THE BOWIE KNIFE, ARKANSAS  
17 HERITAGE SITE.  
18  
19

20 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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22 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 1, Chapter 4, is amended to add an  
23 additional section to read as follows:

24 1-4-134. Birthplace of the Bowie Knife, Arkansas Heritage Site –  
25 Legislative findings and intent.

26 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

