

The Doorknob Collector

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A Non-profit Organization Devoted to the Study and Preservation of Ornamental Hardware



The Gilbert Lock

By Steve Hannum

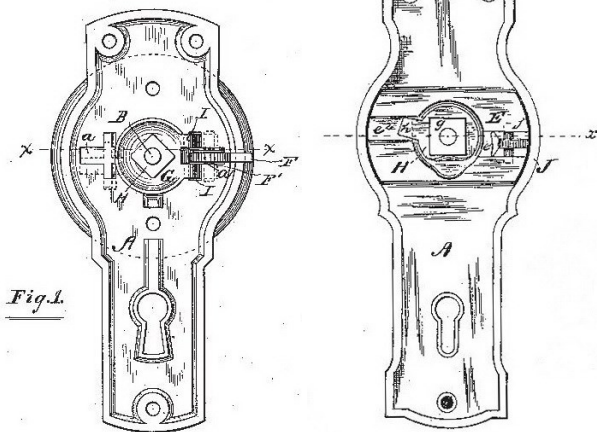
Orvellas H. Gilbert was born in 1823 in New York. The U.S. census in 1860 listed him as a dealer in real estate at Darien, Wisconsin, and in 1870 as a furniture dealer. His 1873 patent for a window sash lock had him still living in Darien. In 1875 he was living in Chicago and advertising himself as a lock manufacturer. In 1876, still in Chicago, Gilbert obtained a patent for his lock. By 1880 the Gilbert Lock Company was established in Newark, New Jersey.

The 1881 Gilbert Lock Company catalog identifies him as having thirty years-experience in the use of all the various aspects of Builders' Hardware as an Architect and practical builder who spent six years developing his lock, although this may be stretching the truth. The lock used a stationary doorknob with a lever to operate the latch-bolt. Some of the reported advantages were the small simple design of the lock and ease of operation. The knobs were highlighted for being able to simply grasp the knob and open the door. The knob could never get loose or fall off the door and would fit any door thickness without adjustment. The 1880-81 Newark City Directory listing for Gilbert Lock has O. H. Gilbert as President.

Even though the lock and knobs were in production in 1880, no patent had been filed for the knob, which seems odd since Gilbert had gone through the process to obtain two earlier patents, including the lock mentioned above. Taking advantage of this, Gary G. Calkins arranged for a patent to be filed and assigned to him. U.S. patent #294,934 was issued to Edward Taylor and assigned to Calkins on March 11, 1884 (at left). Gilbert notified the Patent Office of the fraudulent patent (with his 1881 catalog as part of the proof), and filed his own patent which was awarded as #335,349 on February 2, 1886 (at right). An investigation proved that Calkins paid others to make false claims, and so a Federal trial of Calkins on perjury charges was held in March 1886, and Calkins was convicted. At that time Mr. Calkins was president of the Novelty Lock Company in Chicago. Advertisements for their knobs and locks only appeared in the numbers 1 and 3 of the *Inland Architect and Builder*.

E. T. TAYLOR.
LOCK TRIMMING.

O. H. GILBERT.
DOOR KNOB AND ESCUTCHEON.



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The stationary knob did not gain popularity. The refrigerator model was sold to several makers, for example, M-12200 by Belding Manufacturing of Michigan. In an effort to expand the market, 1886 Gilbert also patented a door knob and escutcheon with a rotating knob that would work with his lock. The business continued to struggle and by 1889 Gilbert was shopping for someone to buy the company. Dayton, Ohio and several other communities were approached. A deal was made with people in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and Allentown Hardware Company was formed in 1889. A new factory was constructed, and the firm received all of the stock on hand, manufactured and in process of manufacture, machinery, tools, dies, factory fixtures, gates, patterns, electrotypes and patents from the Gilbert Lock Company. Allentown Hardware was not able to survive either. It failed in three years and was reorganized as Allentown Hardware Works, which also failed in 1897.



The Gilbert Lock Company was still listed in 1890 in Newark. The State of New Jersey cancelled the corporation's charter in 1897. The 1901 Brooklyn, NY City Directory listed Orvellas Gilbert as a lock manufacturer. In 1902 Gilbert Manufacturing Company, a maker of furniture, at 147 W. 35th Street in Manhattan listed Orvellas H. Gilbert as a partner. Gilbert died in 1913 at age 90, living in New York City.

Some questions about Gilbert locks remain. The 1883 Farley's Directory of the Metal Workers of the United States listed the Gilbert Lock Co. at 99 Van Buren Street in Chicago. In the presentation to Dayton city officials, it was reported that 50% of their goods were not manufactured in Newark, so perhaps some could have been manufactured in Chicago, or this tale told to potential Dayton investors could have been stretching the truth (again).

An example of a Gilbert knob and escutcheon is H-25700, shown below. Looking at the disassembled knob. The bolt which holds the knob and escutcheon together extends through the knob, the stem, the plate and is held in place with a nut. The bronze cup shape fits over a painted cast iron back to complete the knob. Tabs prevent the back piece from turning. The bronze stem has tabs that lock one end into the back of the knob and the other end to the plate. The lever with pin fit inside the rectangle cap that fits on the face of the plate. Notice the hole in the case is off center as are the two slots in the plate. This allows the lever to be on



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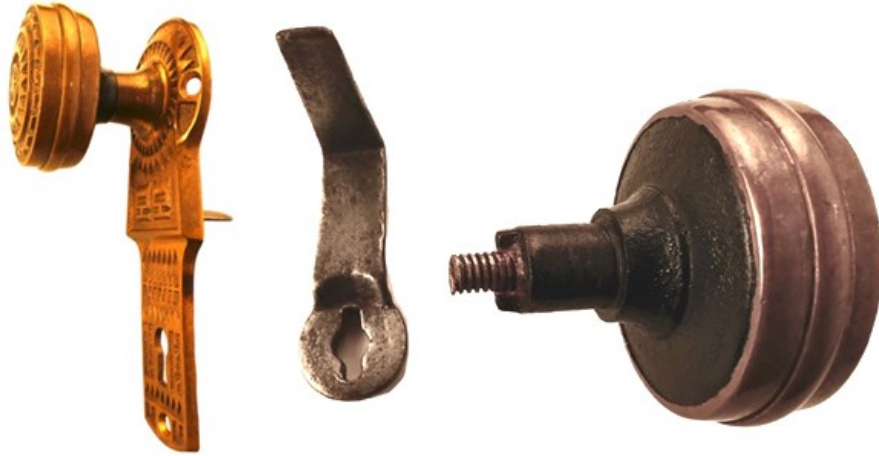
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the side of the plate farthest from the edge when mounted on both the inside and outside of the door. The bolt secures all of the pieces by tabbed washer and nut.

In order to increase the appeal of his lock Gilbert designed a knob and escutcheon with a rotating knob. He obtained two patents for variations of the design. The first was patented on February 9, 1886. The cast iron back is extended to form the stem of the knob. An L shaped piece is attached to the end of the stem. The end of the L extends into the lock so that when the knob is turned the L rotates to draw

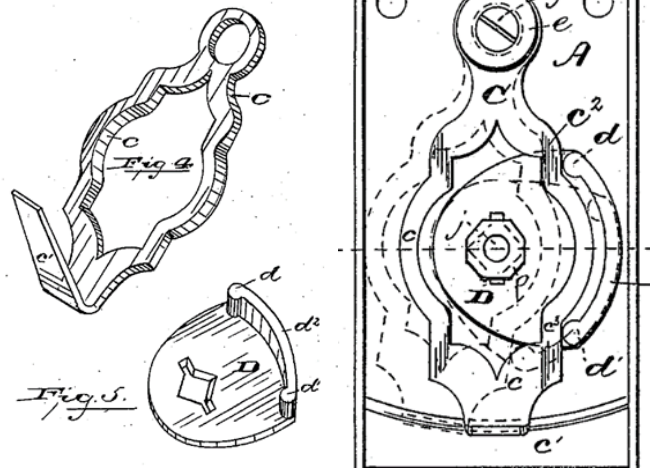
back the latch bolt. M-10700 pictured below is an example of this design. The L bracket and the stem of the knob are also pictured.

On July 13, 1886 Gilbert received a patent for the second variation of the rotating knob. In this design L bracket was attached to the escutcheon and a separate piece was attached to the end of the knob stem. This piece turned



with knob and caused the L bracket to withdraw the latch bolt. Below are drawings from the patent.

The 1890 Allentown Hardware catalog showed both designs as well as variations of these designs. In 1889 Gilbert obtained a patent for a lock contained in an escutcheon with an attached knob. No examples of this have been found.



Patents of Orvellas H. Gilbert

- Nov. 11, 1873 144,457 Sash Fastener
- May 30, 1876 177,933 Door Lock
- Feb. 2, 1886 335,349 Door Knob and Escutcheon
- Feb. 9, 1886 335,914 Latch Operating Device
- July 13, 1886 345,297 Latch Operating Device
- Nov. 5, 1889 414,518 Lock

References:

- Farley's Directory of the Metal Workers of the United States, Vol. 1, 1883. *Gilbert Lock Co. in Chicago*.
- Inland Architect and Builder, Novelty Lock Co. advertisement. Inland Publishing Co., Vol. 5, No. 3, April 1885.
- Western Manufacturer, Recent Patent Suits and Decisions. Vol. 14, February 27, 1886. *Garry G. Calkins Arrested*.
- Chicago Tribune, A Fight over a Lock. February 28, 1886
- Chicago Tribune, All About a Patent. March 3, 1886.
- Reading Times, Hello Reading, Wake Up! March 14, 1889.
- Philadelphia Times, Notes and Gossip of the Week from the Suburban Towns. March 31, 1889. *Gilbert Lock to move to Allentown, as Allentown Hardware*.
- Allentown Morning Call, A Big Failure. September 2, 1897.
- The Trow Copartnership & Corporation, Directory of the Boughs of Manhattan & the Bronx, City of New York. March 1902. *Gilbert Mfg. Co., 147 W.35th St.*

The 41st Annual ADCA Convention FINALLY!!!

By Allen Joslyn and Paul Woodfin

It has been a long dry period since our last real Convention. So here we are at the 2021 Convention (or, perhaps, the 2020.2 one). Last year's virtual Convention worked out remarkably well, but it was no substitute for real people. And equally important, one where we can handle the knobs and actually talk to our friends.

The Convention will be held in the Albany Hilton, which was extensively renovated 2 years ago. Albany is a hilly town, and the Hilton is half way up the hill, a handy location. This year's activities are perhaps less definitive than in prior years. For example, Olana, Frederic Church's Moorish house (at right) is nearby and wonderful, and we expect it to be fully open for tours by September, but at this point, nothing is guaranteed. But we will do the best we can. The doorknob on the porch is shown at left.



Another fantastic building is the State Capital (next page), a few steps from the Hilton. If it seems somewhat of a *mélange*, it is. During its period of construction, they say, the Governor did not have a lot of moxie, but he did have exclusive power over construction and decoration. So, in the course of three Governors, each tried to put his stamp on the building. You will be able to study the results. And the State Museum has some great exhibits, including architectural salvage shown at the bottom of the next page.

Albany was also the starting point for one of the country's most important infrastructure works, the Erie Canal. Albany is near where the Mohawk River flows into the Hudson. The Mohawk Valley, which stretches to Buffalo and environs, is one of the few breaks in the Appalachian mountain range North of Alabama, and the concept of a canal was long a subject of discussion. New York requested Federal funds to build it, given the beneficial impact it would have on the nation but was turned down. So the Governor of New York, Dewitt Clinton, decided that the State of New York would build it, beginning in 1817. Where the Mohawk River petered out, the Canal builders took over, digging over 350 miles of canal through New York's wilderness and locks to raise and lower the canal. When necessary, the canal was built on high bridges to span valleys (like in downtown Rochester).

When completed in 1825, it opened the way for midwestern products to reach the East, hence to New England, the Atlantic Coast, and to Europe. Traffic went both ways. With further canals, shipping could reach from Lake Erie to the Mississippi River. It cemented New York City's position as the center of commercial and financial activity.

In the 1820-30s however, railroads were being developed, and by the 1850s steam engines had been developed to carry heavy cargos up inclines. They were faster, not limited in terrain, did not require a constant flow of fresh water and did not have to close down in the winter. So canals gradually fell out of use. The Erie is still there (unlike most former canals elsewhere), occasionally carrying some freight. It also has canal boats which you can rent and tour with.

A final point: this year the Convention is around the dates for the Brimfield Show. To be precise, Brimfield largely opens on September 7, and continues to the 13th. So Convention goes can search Brimfield for four days (7-8th and 12-13th) without missing any of the Convention.

Our goal the convention this year is to be safe for all of our members, while allow everyone to do what we enjoy. Back in early March we conducted an on-line survey of 60 members who have recently attended a convention and newer members who have expressed interest in attending, and the feedback received along with the latest CDC guidelines give us a roadmap for our plans:



- The convention hall this year will be significantly larger than any from the last several years. This allow us to have enough room between our tables to be socially distant. We will all be visiting each other at all of our tables, and buying, selling and trading as usual, but will be wearing masks.
- Masks will be required for your safety and the safety of your fellow members. Many of us have health issues, and looking out for our fellow members and collectors is what friends do for each other.
- Vaccinations will be required for all attendees. Every respondent to the survey either has been or will be getting vaccinated as soon as they can, so we believe this will not be an issue.



- The Hospitality room will be open, and we have arranged for a 30% larger room than we had in 2019. This is one aspect of our convention which survey respondents expressed some real concern, and so we will continue planning between now and September.
- For the tour day, according to the folks at Olana, masks will be required once they reopen when touring and inside their facilities. We expect mask requirements will continue unless things change a lot between now and September. We may need to travel to Olana in personal vehicles, so if you are willing to drive and take other masked members on the 40 minute drive, please answer that question when you register to attend.

Ultimately, the measures above may be modified but we feel strongly that having great convention is what we all want, and we are all ready to see each other. As Allen and Sandra have said in their welcome letter in the enclosed Convention Packet, “We hope to see all everyone who can possibly make it there, September 8-11, 2021.”

Light in a Hardware Collection

By Nick Doto

On a cold January morning at the Golden Nugget Flea Market (the one we attended during the 2018 convention), we were open for business but there were no dealers there because of the bad weather. While doing my thing (i.e. looking for something exceptional), a friend and dealer informed me that another dealer had a stack of Power Plant Engineering magazines from 1925-26, and had asked the guy to hold them for me. So off I went, and when I found the dealer, the first things I saw was this lamp. The magazines quickly moved to second place in my dealings with this seller, but thankfully I left with both the lamp and the magazines.

While this pine piece of sculpture is primarily a lamp for lighting a room, it's also a night light that works separately from a switch on the back. Weighing about 25 pounds, the piece features a fourfold H-494 Dacia doorknob by Reading, a Norwalk Holland backplate which has been cut and braised for artistic purposes of the lamp), a pull plate, an icebox hinge, a railroad padlock and key (lock does not work), a railroad key, and the night lamp.

Will have at the September convention for everyone to see. Jean and I look forward to seeing everyone again in person soon.

By the way, Jim Romani, the area hardware dealer, recently passed away suddenly. He found many good pieces of hardware from the Philadelphia area, I have bought many items from him over the years, since he was a steady dealer at the Golden Nugget for decades. Many

of you may have bought from him as well.





Antique Doorknob Collectors of America

40th Anniversary

1981 - 2021



Second in a series of remembrances as the ADCA celebrates 40 years of service

CONVENTION?

As noted in the last newsletter, in February of 1981 Arnie Frederick offered to host a convention of collectors in Waverly, Iowa in September 1981. Not only did 22 collectors and many of their spouses (41 people in total) gather to meet other collectors from across the United States, buy/sell/trade hardware, and share stories, but they also were of a mind that a non-profit club focused on antique hardware, an annual convention, and a newsletter would be great ideas! Shown below are mostly color photos of the 22 collectors along with their spouses (where we have photos) from the first several conventions. The photo of Maud Eastwood and Art Paholke in particular shows two old friends happy to see each other again after Paholke missed the 1982 convention.

One of the interesting things your co-editor learned in compiling information for this article is that our Member numbers were not assigned until 1987. Members such as Darrell Razor, an attendee at the first and second conventions, passed away in 1985 and was never assigned a member number. There were 59 members who joined between 1981 and 1986 but did not maintain their membership in following years, so were not given a number. So the ADCA has actually had 1093 members to date.



Emil and Dorothy Ann Miller (NE) 1983



Tedi and Arnie Fredrick (IA) 1983



Len and Patti Blumin (CA) 1985



Art Paholke (IL) with Maud Eastwood (OR) 1983



Irma and E. P. Dick (MN) 1983



Fred and Ethadel Magnus (FL) 1983



Charlie and Mary Wardell (NC) 1988



Lee and James Kaiser (MN) 1985



Emmett and Marjorie Wiemer (AZ) 1985



Ray and Loretta Nemeec (IL) 1981



Kae and Ray Zyc (WI) 1983



Lois Hatch (WI) 1985



Gerald and Ardythe Leaders (IA) 1981



Alva and Charles Bednar (MN) 1985



Ralph and Florence Chelin (IL) 1985



John and Chlorene Holland (OR) 1985



Mark Davidovich (CA) 1989



Florence Jarvis (MI) 1985



Max and Barbara Liesman (IA) 1986



Dan and Judy Peterson (WI) 1986

Rich Kennedy had actually registered to attend, but in John Holland's letter to him dated September 25, 1981, says that "we are really sorry that you and Faye were not able to attend. You really missed a fine gathering of some of the finest people I've ever been with. I say this after attending at least two conventions a year for over thirty years in business".

These photos are part of three binders of photographs and convention materials that Maud Eastwood put together with Barbara Menchhofer in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the Menchhofers were our archivists. We are certain that many members helped with this and shared their photos, as the photos clearly were taken and developed at different places.

All of these photos and convention materials in these binders will be scanned over the next year and added to the www.antiquedoorknobs.org website on the Previous Conventions page. 1981 to 1986 are now on the site, along with all of the Convention programs from 1997 to now (below the list of convention years and locations). The Convention pages for each year can be accessed by clicking the year and location (the ones highlighted and underlined in burgundy) from the list. If you are like me, you will see the displays and some of the hardware that was available and wish you had been there!



Darrell Razor (WA) 1981

2015 Monrovia, California
 2014 Austin, Texas
 2013 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 2012 Buffalo, New York
 2011 Portland, Oregon
 2010 Baltimore, Maryland
 2009 Hartford, Connecticut
 2008 Lisle, Illinois
 2007 Portland, Oregon
 2006 Buffalo, New York
 2005 Charleston, South Carolina
 2004 San Francisco, California

2003 San Antonio, Texas
 2002 Saint Louis, Missouri
 2001 Bethlehem, Pennsylvania
 2000 Minneapolis, Minnesota
 1999 Portland, Oregon
 1998 Winnipeg, Alberta
 1997 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 1996 Grand Rapids, Michigan
 1995 Santa Monica, California
 1994 Milwaukee, Wisconsin
 1993 Gaithersburg, Maryland
 1992 Elgin, Illinois

1991 South Lake Tahoe, Calif.
 1990 East Windsor, Connecticut
 1989 Iowa City, Iowa
 1988 Indianapolis, Indiana
 1987 West Des Moines, Iowa
1986 Minneapolis, Minnesota
1985 Saint Louis, Missouri
1984 Waverly, Iowa
1983 Naperville, Illinois
1982 San Francisco, California
1981 Waverly, Iowa

The Doorknob Exchange

Members are reminded that your dues entitle you to advertise items for sale, trade, or wanted at no charge. ADCA is not responsible for any transaction or the condition of the items advertised.



Cheryl Blam (#204) is a Mallory Wheeler “water” knob (B-as shown at left. If you happen to have an extra one, please contact Cheryl at blamquilt@gmail.com or (516) 666-7002. And a big “Welcome Back” to Cheryl!



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 <p>Owner: Amy Larrimore Philadelphia, PA Phone: 215-645-2691 Website: requiemsalvage.co Email: hello@requiemsalvage.co</p>	<p>Settlers Hardware</p>  <p>Owner: Susan Neptune 1901 West Alabama Houston, TX 77098 Phone: 713-524-2417 Web Site: settlershardware.com Email: settlershardware@gmail.com</p>	 <p>Owner: Scott Tice 2405 SE Moores Street Milwaukie, OR, 97222 Phone: 503-284-0122 Web Site: ticeindustries.com Email: scott@ticeindustries.com</p>
<p>Tim & Julie's Another Fine Mess</p>  <p>Owners: Tim Harmon & Julie Crow 2901 East 10th Street Indianapolis, IN 46201 Phone: 239-293-2148 Web: timandjuliesanotherfinemess.com Email: timandjuliestore@gmail.com</p>	<p>Uniquely Olde</p> <p>Owner: Steven Carter Youngstown, OH Phone: 330-953-8518 eBay Store: overlyoptimistic Etsy Store: UniquelyOlde Email: smcarter@smc13.com</p>	<p>Village Salvage</p>  <p>Owners: Rick Lepley & Lauren Slaughter 85 S. Main Street Waynesville, OH 45068 Phone: 513-914-4177 Web Site: villagesalvage.com Email: villagesalvage@gmail.com</p>
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