

## Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910

By Andrew Clayman (Updated from Original Story)



**Museum Artifact:** Vaughan's Grip-Tite Bottle Stopper, Perfo-Siphon Bottle Stopper, and Fox Deluxe Punch-Style Bottle Opener, c. 1950s

**Made By:** Vaughan Novelty MFG Co., 3211 W. Carroll Ave., Chicago, IL [East Garfield Park]

The bottle and the bottle opener—a vital symbiotic relationship that's been mildly inconveniencing mankind for generations. No one ever knows exactly where their bottle opener is at any given moment, nor where it came from in the first place. It used to be on your keychain, probably, but then you let someone borrow it at a party once, and now, who knows?

Most openers double as advertising novelties—embossed with the logos of Coca Cola or Budweiser, or perhaps an old defunct brand of yesteryear, like Fox DeLuxe—"the Great Chicago Beer." What most of us fail to notice, however, is the manufacturer ID that's also cut into millions of these metal doohickeys. If it's a slightly older model, there's a good chance it says VAUGHAN—a name that removed more caps in the 20th century than every playing of the National Anthem combined.

Even during the early 1930s, when most manufacturers were wallowing in the economic sinkhole of the Depression, Chicago's Vaughan Novelty MFG Company was enjoying a significant upswing, cranking out truckloads of pocket-sized

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paraphernalia from its plant on Carroll Avenue. This included not only various weapons for dislodging cola bottle caps (not beer bottles, obviously, since they were illegal!), but also some ingenious tools for actually keeping said bottles sealed even as they poured, such as the “Perfo-Siphon” device in our museum collection.



It was in the latter half of the 1930s, though, that Vaughan really showed its knack for adapting to an industrial sea change. As Prohibition came to an end, upstart breweries like the Peter Fox Brewing Company (makers of Fox DeLuxe) needed a way to save on production and shipping costs. This ushered in the era of the aluminum beer can; a novelty that consumers were more than happy to embrace, if for no other reason that it saved them having to pay the extra deposit required with glass bottles.

This win-win innovation didn't arrive fully realized, however.

For one thing, beers and sodas poured from a tin can maintained a distinct, generally unpleasant metallic taste. Secondly, the airtight, factory-sealed tops of the cans were completely flat and



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had no pull-tab, making them frustratingly undrinkable without the appropriate, compatible device to pop them open. Using a knife was a dangerous undertaking, and older styles of can openers didn't always fit the bill for this modern drinker's conundrum.

The one proven solution was a new variation on the classic "church key" style of opener, developed by American Can Company employees Dewitt Sampson & John Hothersall in 1933—specifically to address the arrival of the drinking can. Their design (U.S. patent 1,996,550) was described as a "punch opener for producing a substantial pouring opening in containers having projecting end seams or joints." Since the item was a bit outside American Can Co's usual wheel-house, they outsourced production to the company already known as "the world's largest manufacturer of can openers"—the Vaughan Novelty MFG Co., of course.

The familiar punch-style openers that Vaughan produced in Chicago—like the ones in our collection advertising Fox DeLuxe—were made across several decades, and often have the original 1,996,550 patent number listed on them. Most are dual-purpose in design, as well, with a rounded bottle-opening end and a pointed can-opening end.

[The 1935 patent used for the punch-style "Fox DeLuxe" Vaughan can opener in our museum collection]

From kitchens to bar rooms to ballparks, just about everyone was either using a Vaughan appliance or sitting next to someone who was. And yet, from the 1910s to the 1990s, the company somehow remained largely anonymous despite its own ubiquity.

## History of the Vaughan MFG Co., Part I: Opening Up the Can

The whole thing begins with Harry L. Vaughan—born in Versailles, Kentucky, in 1871. His father, the respected Louisville physician Dr. Robert Vaughan, was a decorated Civil War veteran—a lieutenant colonel in the Union army who'd been wounded at both Fort Donelson and Shiloh. Young Harry was the baby of the family, and grew up admiring his four older brothers, as well as his pops.

Harry's education is hard to pin down, but it appears that he followed his brother Millard into a career in sales, rather than taking up his dad's path in medicine. One of Harry's early jobs was with Louisville's Weissinger Tobacco Company in the mid 1890s, which may have given him his unexpected entry into the field of tin cans and can

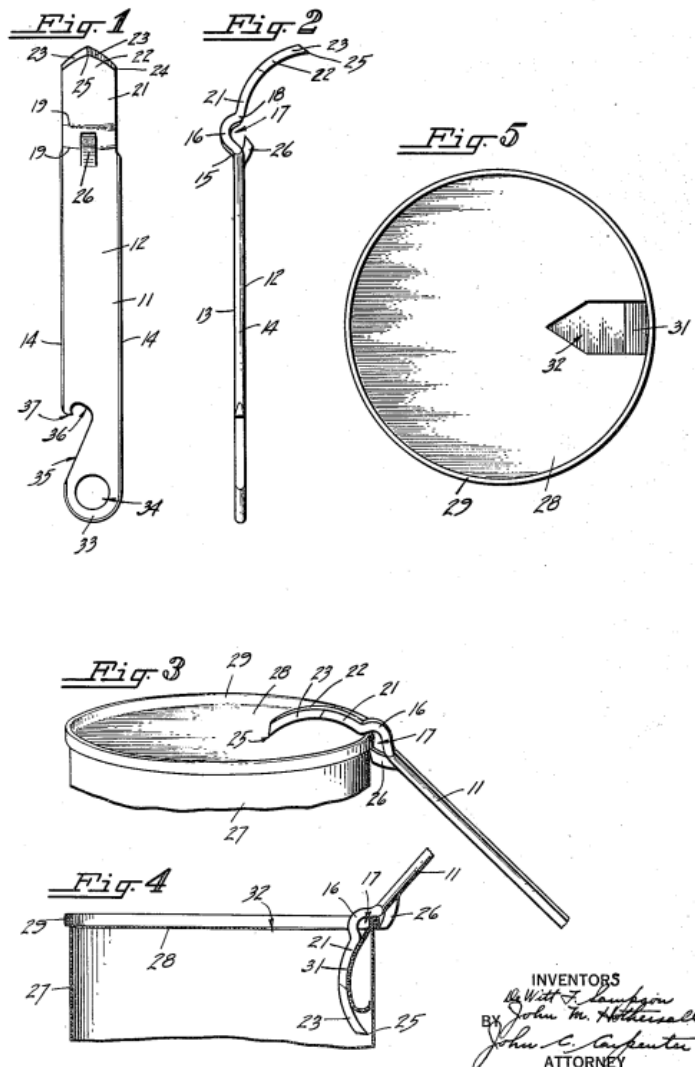
April 2, 1935.

D. F. SAMPSON ET AL

1,996,550

CONTAINER OPENER

Filed April 13, 1933



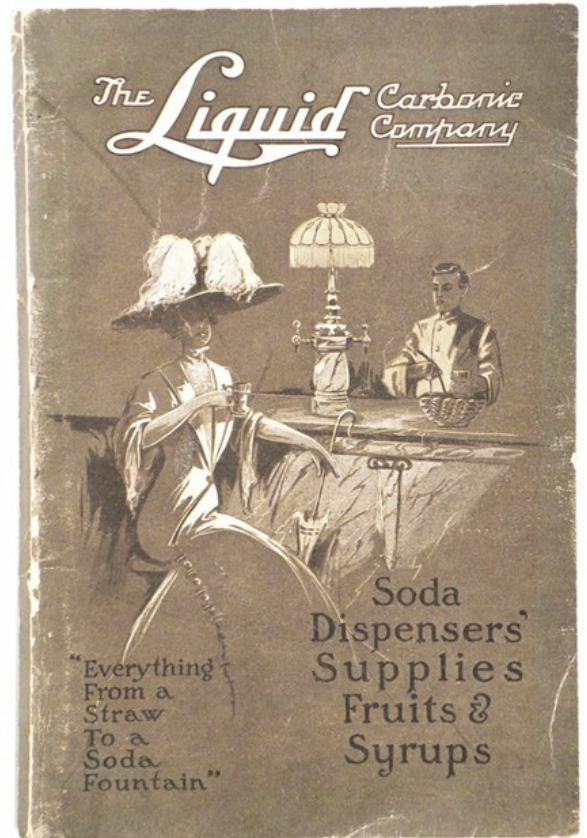
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openers, as well as other accessories such as tobacco cutters and kettle scrapers. By 1898, he had relocated to New York City as a sales agent, and soon caught on with the Liquid Carbonic Company—an industry leader in soda fountains.

Now, with an established background in canning, bottling, and beverages, a 34 year-old Harry Vaughan took the next logical step in 1905, joining Baltimore's massively successful Crown Cork and Seal Company as their western sales rep in Chicago. Crown Cork, still in business today as Crown Holdings, was the firm that had introduced the modern, disposable tin bottle cap (aka the "crown cork") in 1892. That cap design has remained the gold standard for the subsequent 125 years, so it's not surprising that Crown Cork was one of the fastest growing companies of its time, with manufacturing and distribution outposts around the world. This also made it no small responsibility for Vaughan to be the young face of that franchise in the Chicagoland market.

Over the next few years, Harry not only refined his skills as a salesman, but also learned the nuts and bolts of designing and manufacturing the twisty, turny, metallic arsenal of an evolving industry. This included paying close attention to the feedback of customers, particularly the growing complaints about bottles getting chipped when crown corks were pulled off with standard bottle openers.



[1898 ad for the Crown Cork & Seal Company]

In 1909, with a network of Midwestern connections firmly established, Harry Vaughan became something of an in-demand free agent of the bottle cap business. In January, he left Crown Cork and signed with the New York Specialty Company, makers of "Security" brand bottle stoppers.

"Mr. Vaughan will have headquarters in Chicago and will visit the middle west in the interest of his house," the *American Brewers' Review* reported. "His extensive acquaintance in the brewing trade ought to be a guarantee of his success."

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Harry was certainly successful, but not necessarily loyal. Just six months later, in the summer of '09, he cut bait with his new employer and bunked up with yet another corporate mistress.

"Henry L. Vaughan, formerly traveling representative of the New York Specialty Co., is now Western representative of the United Cork & Seal Co. of Millis, Mass.," *Brewers Journal* reported, "and will maintain headquarters at Chicago. Mr. Vaughan is well known to the trade and we wish him abundant success in his new position." [pictured: Harry Vaughan in his later years]

Well known, indeed. But again, not one to be tied down. Within a few months, Vaughan ended his tenure with United Cork, as well. Apparently nobody thought to make the guy sign a non-compete clause!

It's not clear if Harry was playing a game with all these companies, absorbing their secrets then jumping to the next one, or if his naked ambition was simply wearing out his welcome with employers. Whatever the issue, Vaughan finally decided there'd be no point in seeking any more suitors for his services. He was ready to set out on his own.



HARRY L. VAUGHAN (1937)



### II. The Crown Throat and Opener Company

You can't help but appreciate Harry Vaughan's gumption; not just for starting his own company, but for opting to call it the "Crown Throat and Opener Co." —a blatant attempt to piggyback off the trusted name of his former employer, Crown Cork & Seal. He would surprisingly keep this name for several years before doing the inevitable re-brand, likely under the threat of legal action.

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In the meantime, early ads for the Crown Throat & Opener Company wasted no time promoting its first flagship product, Harry Vaughan's own "Never Chip"—hailed as "the best stationary crown bottle opener made."

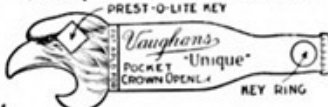
A 1910 edition of *American Bottler* magazine detailed Vaughan's triumphant entry into the big leagues.

"To overcome the long-continued complaints of the bottling trade, the Crown Throat and Opener Company, of Chicago, Ill., after months of experimenting, have at last perfected an opener, which they have appropriately named 'Never-Chip.' It is a very simple device, easily and quickly attached to the bar, the ice-box, or any other convenient place. It has been thoroughly tested by all the large breweries, and found an absolute preventative of chipped bottles."




**"One Good Thing After Another" VAUGHAN'S OF COURSE**

**\$13.50 per 1000 with ad - 500 - \$9.00**  
PREST-O-LITE KEY




Vaughan's "Unique" KEY RING  
Price 60c., Extra Tips, 35c.

**VAUGHAN'S INTERCHANGEABLE DROP PLUNGER**




TO RENEW TIP DRIVE OUT TAPERED PINLAND UNSCREW


**VAUGHAN'S Drop Plunger Tips cannot become Loose or Wobbly. THINK THIS OVER!**



VAUGHAN'S EXTRA INTERCHANGEABLE DROP PLUNGER TIP  
Prevent Leakage



VAUGHAN'S HANDY CROWN THROAT OPENER  
Price, \$3.00




INTERCHANGEABLE LINER  
PAT. APP. FOR.  
Price, \$1.00

**"WORTH TWICE THE PRICE"**  
No need to return to the factory for repairs


**For Sale by all Leading Supply Houses — Or Direct — Write for Samples —**

**"NICKLO" Combination Opener No. 1**




Price \$1.65 per gross No. 1  
Choice-Select Castings Nickered

**"KANT-SLIP" Hand Opener**



Price 50c. per gross No. 2  
Copper Finish

**IT'S FLEXIBLE!**



Price — per gro. Nickel \$10.00 Hot Tinned \$9.00 Japaned \$7.50  
VAUGHAN'S PATENT

**The Best Stationary Crown Bottle Opener Made**

**THE CROWN THROAT & OPENER CO. (NOT INC.)**  
Manufacturers and Patentees  
136 W. Lake Street CHICAGO, U.S.A.

Throat & Opener Co. advertisement, 1912]

As the company name suggested, Vaughan was also making "crown throats" and drop plungers intended to help standardize the bottle-sealing process. Tighter closure, easier removal.

"Mr. Harry L. Vaughan, inventor of these devices . . . is naturally familiar with every detail of the requirements of their manufacture."

The original Crown Throat factory was located at 136 W. Lake Street,

and by 1911, local sales agents were being recruited via ads in the Tribune's classifieds.

"WANTED: Agents to sell 'A REAL HOME NECESSITY.' Vaughan's Improved Never-Chip Stationary Crown Bottle Opener. It's always ready for use and so simple a child can remove the tin caps easily and quickly. Made of steel and beautifully nickeled. Send 15c for sample and quantity price. Dept. A, THE CROWN AND THROAT AND OPENER CO., 136 W. Lake, Chicago."

Crown Throat's national advertising campaigns touted its products as "One Good Thing After Another," and called the Never-Chip "The Bottler's *Bottle Insurance*." Harry Vaughan's name was also increasingly emphasized as a brand unto itself.

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**A NEW ONE - JUST OFF THE DIES**

VAUGHAN'S UNIQUE BOTTLE OPENER

AD. STAMPED HERE

CIGAR SHAPE

KEY RING

CIGAR BOX OPENER

AUTO GAS TANK KEY

SPRINGFIELD, ILL. CHICAGO, ILL.

BOTTLE OPENER

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE

VAUGHAN'S "UNIQUE" POCKET CROWN OPENER

CIGAR SHAPE

is appropriate and effective AD.

**CAN YOU BEAT IT?**

Carried on the "key ring" and owing to its usefulness is

A DAILY REMINDER OF YOUR BRAND OF CIGARS

and think how long your "Ad" is HUNG ON --and for the mere trifle of a penny according to finish and quantity.

WRITE FOR PRICES AND STATE OF

THE CROWN THROAT & OPENER MANUFACTURERS

136 W. LAKE STREET CHICAGO, U. S. A.

PREST-O-LITE KEY

Vaughan's POCKET "U-Neek" CROWN OPENER KEY RING

PREST-O-LITE KEY

Vaughan's POCKET "U-Neek" CROWN OPENER KEY RING

"VAUGHAN's Opener," one ad read, "is a boon to the bottling trade; and indispensable for use on machine-made, or, in fact, all perfectly finished Crown bottles."

Along with the wall-mounted Never-Chip, Vaughan was also producing quite modern looking, pocket-sized bottle openers like the nicked "Nicklo", the copper finished "Kant-Slip," and the key-ring friendly "Prest-O-Lite." A line of "U-Neek" brand bottle openers / key rings also showcase how stylized and playful this once utilitarian product had already become in the 1910s. Some designs crafted the jaws of fearsome animals as the crown cap remover (moose, lion, eagle, etc.), while others were fashioned in the form of a female body. One such design came in two styles, one in which the stretched out lady was fully clothed ("The Suffragette") and one in which she had yet to dress herself ("Early Morn").

Production slowed during World War I, but Vaughan pushed forward, moving to a larger space at 711 W. Fulton Street. By 1915, the Crown Throat name had finally been scrapped, and—in a wise effort to leave the door open to more types of tools and gadgets—the Vaughan Novelty MFG Co. was born.

**Nifty**

Can Opener

**The Vaughan**

FOLDING CORN SCREW

Key Chain Ring

The Vaughan Line of Hardware specialties are both practical and durable. These articles are sold year in and year out by Variety, Drug, Hardware, Grocery, Novelty and Stationery Stores in the United States and Foreign countries.

There is a great demand for such articles wherever introduced.

Can Openers Key Chain Rings  
Cork Screws Corn Forks  
Bottle Openers Kettle Scrapers  
Trench Mirrors Orange Peelers  
All Metal Ice Pick Milk Bottle Covers

A number of these specialties are put up in attractive counter display boxes that create sales. All are moderately priced and give importers and dealers a substantial profit through their sale. Ask for catalog Number 20.

**VAUGHAN NOVELTY MFG. CO.,**  
3211-25 Carroll Ave., Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

### III. The Great American Novelty

The onset of the 1920s saw Vaughan Novelty relocate to what would be its primary home of the next 40+ years—a one-story, 100 x 100 ft. factory at 3211 W. Carroll Avenue in Garfield Park, built for just \$25,000. This wasn't exactly a sprawling operation, but when most of your goods fit in a person's pocket, a lot of stock can move from a pretty small room.

One newspaper report at the time now identified Vaughan as a "manufacturer of advertising specialties," a frivolous sounding trade that was becoming a powerful and lucrative industry in the Roaring '20s.

Vaughan did do some straight-to-consumer marketing, and they sold self-branded "VAUGHAN" gear direct to hardware stores and pharmacies. More of their revenue, however, was coming from arranged deals with other companies, in which Vaughan—acting like a pseudo advertising agency—customized its products with its clients' names emblazoned

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on the metal.

Since many can and bottle producers were essentially dependent on their consumers having one of these Vaughan tools at their disposal anyway, the relationship was almost too practical to pass up. Canada Dry, for example, could order a giant stock of Canada Dry bottle openers from Vaughan, then package those openers as "giveaways" with a six-pack of their ginger ale.

"Now is the time," a 1922 Vaughan ad claimed, "for the soda water bottler to make his name and his brands known. Advertise with Bottle Openers."

Vaughan Novelty Mfg. Co.  
MAKERS OF **KITCHEN TOOLS** with  
**No-Chip** WHITE ENAMELED HANDLES

Basting Spoons—Mixing Spoons—Whipping Spoons—Spatula Knives  
Bread Knives—Pancake Turners—Meat Forks—Soup Ladles  
Bottle and Can Openers—Ice Picks—Orange Peelers, Etc.

**VAUGHAN CAN OPENERS** sold all over the world.  
3211-3225 Carroll Avenue - CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

**IT'S FLEXIBLE** **MR. BOTTLER:** **IT'S STATIONARY**

*It is Up to You to Distribute*  
**BOTTLE OPENERS**

*Nifty*  
VAUGHAN CHICAGO PATENTED

**THE VAUGHAN LINE IS THE BEST**

Ask for Our Catalog No. 7 Showing Our Line of Bottle Openers Key Chains and Advertising Specialties

**"OVER the TOP" BOTTLE OPENER NO. 104**  
VAUGHAN CHICAGO

Now is the Time for the Soda Water Bottler to Make His Name and His Brands Known Advertise with Bottle Openers

A Slight Downward Pressure and off comes the cap in your hand.  
**NO CHIPPING**

**VAUGHAN NOVELTY MFG. CO. (Inc.)** **MANUFACTURERS** **CHICAGO, ILL.**  
3211 to 3221 Carroll Avenue



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Targeting the “soda water bottler” was, of course, a consequence of Prohibition. With alcohol now illegal, and no way to sell accessories to breweries and barmen above ground, Vaughan had to expand into new markets, including soda, dairy, and baked goods. The company started making more milk bottle carriers and cap lifters, mini spatulas for making pies, orange peelers, cork screws, ice picks, lemon squeezers, can openers, corn forks, and the aforementioned Perfo-Siphon—“the perfect mixer for blending fruit juices.” A patented cap lifter / corkscrew combo called the “Nifty” was another consistent hot seller.

Supposedly, even some of the prizes in Cracker Jack boxes originated from the Vaughan factory. It was, as the name would suggest, a true novelty company.

Through it all, Harry Vaughan was always very hands-on in every aspect of his business, from collecting patents on new designs to training the sales team and expanding the clientele both within the trade and out in the general public. He kept up these efforts despite a series of personal losses, highlighted by the deaths of three of his brothers—William, Millard, and Dudley—all in a four year span between 1919 and 1923 (Dudley Vaughan was also vice president of the company at the time). To cope, Harry seemed to embrace the bottling industry as his surrogate family, and as a nice bonus, they were making him a wealthy man.



“The ever growing business coming to me from all sections of the world,” Vaughan wrote in the intro to his 1927 catalog, “serves to increase the feelings of responsibility I have always felt towards my friends among the Bottlers. Their loyalty incurs upon me the duty not only of maintaining the quality and service that brings me their yearly specifications, but of constantly improving, by every possible means, the machinery of factory and office by which I serve these valued friends.”

### **IV. Beer’s Back!**

The Vaughan Novelty MFG Co. hadn’t exactly struggled during Prohibition, but they certainly were chomping at the bit when the 18th amendment was repealed in 1933. Shortly thereafter, a series of new steel-wire bottle cap removers were introduced for the traditional crown-style beer bottle, and, by 1935, the Vaughan “Quick & Easy” can opener became the No. 1 way to crack open a brand new canned brew.

Around the same time, an opportunistic businessman named Peter Fox purchased the former Hoffman Bros. brewery in Chicago at 2626 W. Monroe Street, eager to bring it back to its former glory. Embracing the canned beer trend, the Peter Fox Brewing Co. built up a regional following over the next few years, enabling Fox to buy out additional breweries in Marion, Indiana, and Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the 1940s. Naturally, he also signed a deal with Vaughan Novelty to produce exclusive Fox DeLuxe openers.

We can pretty easily surmise that the particular Fox DeLuxe + Vaughan artifacts in our museum collection were made in the late 1940s or early ‘50s. Metal rationing had made both beer cans and can openers relatively obsolete during the war years, and the Peter Fox Brewing Company went out of business by 1955, so we’re left with a fairly small window

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**DAIRY MILK CAP-LIFTER**  
No. 108

**VAUGHAN'S "SPATULA"**  
No. 117—VAUGHAN'S "SPATULA." Needed in every home for Pies, Cakes, etc.

The FINISH of our merchandise is "in a class by itself"

**ORANGE PEELER**  
No. 116—ORANGE PEELER

**BOTTLE OPENER AND FOLDING CORK SCREW**  
No. 63A—BOTTLE OPENER AND FOLDING CORK SCREW

**THE BEST BUY IN CAN OPENERS**  
No. 100B—THE BEST BUY IN CAN OPENERS

**NO. 104—SPECIAL**

- Key Chain Rings
- Kettle Scrapers
- Cork Screws
- Milk Bottle Cover and Carriers
- Condensed Milk Can Openers
- Etc., Etc., Etc.

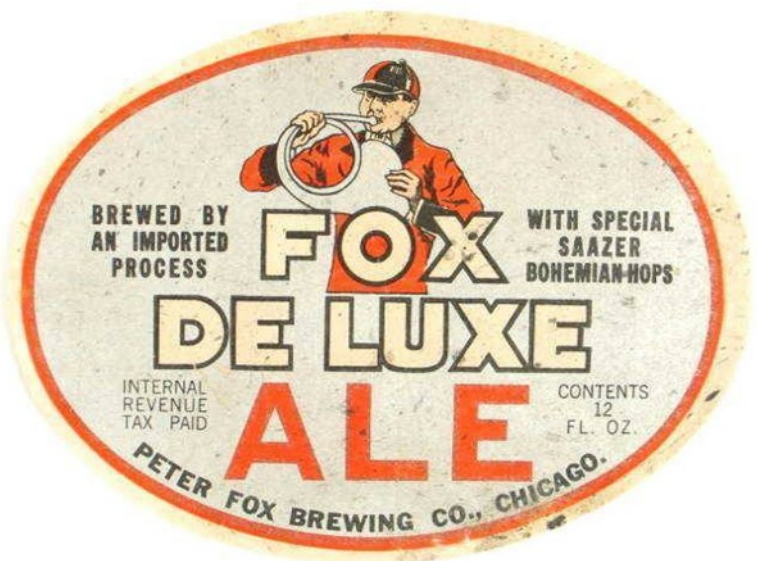
"It Would be a Pleasure to Send Samples and Prices." Ask for Our Catalog No. 20

**VAUGHAN NOVELTY MFG. CO., 3211 Carroll Avenue, Chicago, Ill.**

for these things to have been commissioned. We can also verify that Fox was using its "Great Chicago Beer" slogan during the same era, bringing the timeline together.

[Incidentally, the Fox DeLuxe brand didn't completely die with its parent company. It remained in circulation under new, non-Chicago ownership through the 1960s, and was recently revived again in 2017 by the Creston Brewery in Grand Rapids, MI, although the new version doesn't appear to have any connection to the original recipe.]

Again, it's worth emphasizing that all production of Vaughan's usual line of products was brought to a screeching halt during World War II. For a solid four



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years, from 1942 through 1945, the Carroll Avenue plant was an appendage of the U.S. government, making bomb fuses for the Army and Navy. It was a profitable enterprise, but it also left the company a bit rusty and unprepared when the war ended, as the peacetime demand for can openers ramped up.

“Canned beer is back,” the *Decatur Herald* reported on July 15, 1947, “but its return has accentuated another postwar shortage—the beer can opener.”



“Vaughan Novelty Manufacturing Co., which claims to be the world’s largest manufacturer of can openers, said today a pressing demand has forced it to expand facilities and that it soon would be producing 100 million beer can openers a year.”

[Left: 1950 ad for Vaughan’s Openers. Top Right: Fox DeLuxe neon sign, circa 1940s. Bottom Right: Harry L. Vaughan is presented a cake on his 70th birthday, 1941, while attending his favorite race track in Miami, Florida]

### V. The Post-War Era

Sadly, Harry Vaughan never got to see his business return to its usual peacetime affairs. He died of pneumonia in 1945 at the age of 74.

Though he was still the president and treasurer of Vaughan Novelty



at the time, he had long since moved into a life of pseudo-retirement, marrying his wife Dora late in life and spending much of the '30s and '40s jetting back and forth from high society events in their adopted second home of Miami. Back in Chicago, the pair were living in a swank apartment in the Edgewater Beach Hotel, with Harry leaving much of his company in the hands of his longtime second-in-command, John M. Grace.

In June of 1948, with Grace now serving as president, a small Garfield Park newspaper, the *Garfieldian*, published a story on the local business done good.

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“Cruising right through the years when solid housewives frowned on the flip young bride with a busy can opener,” the paper reported [weirdly], “the Vaughan company grew to become the world’s largest producer of can and bottle openers.

“... Still operating on its original [not actually original] site at 3211 Carroll, the factory, officially Vaughan Novelty Manufacturing Co., employs 125 persons whose main work is the production and packing of the openers.

“... Manufacture of the openers is mostly a punch press operation. One of the liquid can openers is turned out complete by a punch press at the rate of 100 per minute. After punching the openers, or parts in some cases, they are rolled for many hours in drums filled with metal pellets or sand. This rolling action knocks off all sharp edges which may be left by the presses, and polishes the openers to a bright finish. Completed openers may be stapled on an instruction card or packed in boxes for distribution to stores or beverage companies.”



**Attention all Dealers!**  
*We give you \$3.00*  
*with Vaughan's*

**Special Bonus Assortment!!**

**Here's How It Works—**  
 Order Vaughan's Special No. 2450 assortment of proven fast-selling items (see other side) at a cost of only \$24.50 and you get a total retail value of \$39.06 PLUS \$3.00 extra profit from:

**One Dozen Safety Roll, Jr. Can Openers**  
**ABSOLUTELY FREE!!**

Order one box of each of our selected best sellers shown on other side. All are items you should carry as regular stock.

**START NOW WITH 47% PROFIT!!**

**ACT FAST! MAIL THIS ORDER BLANK NOW!**

VAUGHAN MFG. CO., 3211 W. Carroll, Chicago 24, Illinois  
 Please rush No. 2450 Assortment, to be shipped via jobber shown below.  
 YOUR JOBBER: \_\_\_\_\_ YOUR FIRM: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY & STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY & STATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
 THIS OFFER EXPIRES MAY 31, 1956

**Order Now**

Order now through your jobber... or if he is out of stock, use coupon at left.

**Vaughan's** Carded and Pre-Priced for Self-Service!

**Our Current Best Sellers**

 <p><b>No. 170-W "Safety Roll, Jr."</b> The all-time favorite everywhere! Packed 2 dozen per box; weight 1 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—25¢</p>	 <p><b>No. 500 "Master" Opener</b> Opens cans, bottles, friction caps. Packed 2 dozen per box; weight 2 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—29¢</p>	 <p><b>No. 100-J Economy Opener</b> Still a top seller! Packed 2 dozen per box; weight 1 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—15¢</p>
 <p><b>No. 330 "Flex-Whip"</b> For mixing muffs, eggs, dressings, sauces. Packed 1 dozen per box; weight 1 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—25¢</p>	 <p><b>No. 400-B "Top-Boy"</b> The all-purpose opener—can opener, bottle opener, corkscrew. Packed 1 dozen per box; weight 2 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—59¢</p>	 <p><b>No. 171-M Expansion Stopper</b> The fast-selling, double seal, "Grip-Tite" for carbonated beverages. Packed 1 dozen per box; weight 1 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—25¢</p>
 <p><b>No. 325 Wall Opener</b> Most terrific wall opener value on the market. Packed 1/2 dozen per box; weight 6 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—98¢</p>	 <p><b>No. 340 Kitchen Saw</b> Handy for frozen foods, roasts, etc. Packed 1/2 dozen per box; weight 3 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—59¢</p>	 <p><b>No. 20 Utility Tongs</b> For hot foods, eggs, barbecues, etc. Packed 1 dozen per box; weight 2 1/2 lbs. per dozen. Retail—25¢</p>

**VAUGHAN MFG. CO.** 3211 CARROLL AVENUE CHICAGO 24, ILLINOIS  
 World's Largest Manufacturer of Can and Bottle Openers

[Among the “best sellers” featured in the 1956 Vaughan ad above is the No. 171M Expansion Stopper, aka the “Grip Tite Bottle Stopper,” as featured in our museum collection.]

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### VI. The Curtain Closes on the Opener Business

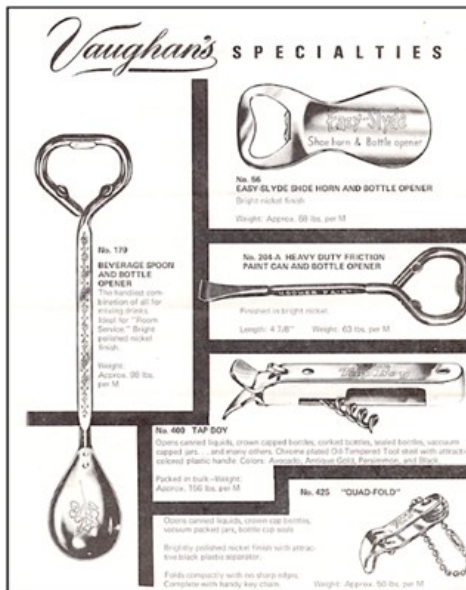
One could say that the first hints of Vaughan's eventual demise started appearing way back even before the war, as people were already experiencing a certain familiar annoyance.

*Forbes* magazine founder B. C. Forbes wrote a syndicated column in 1940 in which he referenced the "necessity for having either a can opener or bottle opener at hand before various products could be used," and pondered more convenient alternatives.

In the same article, the Vaughan Novelty MFG Company's executive vice president, R. C. Harris, offered a statement on the subject: "The point you make about the bottle cap with the tab, which requires no opener, is well taken," he said. "There are many angles to consider. One is the cost of the tab. Another is the employment furnished in manufacturing can and bottle openers—over 50,000,000 openers are distributed annually . . . We have constantly worked with can manufacturers and are now supplying one of our regular can openers with a can-punch built into the opener."

Forbes seemed unimpressed. "My contention," he concluded, "is that, if possible, every unit of merchandise should be made ready to be used without the necessity of having to find some contrivance."

Calling Vaughan's primary product a "contrivance" is a bit brutal, but over time, many shared the opinion, and new technology has borne out society's preference for something quicker and easier than "Quick & Easy."



[Vaughan catalog pages, circa 1970]

## Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910

By Andrew Clayman

Perhaps sensing the oncoming tide, president John Grace had the name of the company officially changed in 1950 to the Vaughan Manufacturing Co., dropping the “novelty” part in order to seem, perhaps, a bit more serious.

The inevitable arrival of the pull tab on soda and beer cans, however, cut deeply into Vaughan’s can opener sales from the 1960s onward. Screwtop lids on bottles was a further insult. And new competition from cheaply made imported openers backed Vaughan into a corner.

Even so, as late as the 1970s, Vaughan’s own catalog copy still referred to the company as the “largest manufacturer in the opener field,” with “maximum usefulness and attractiveness” built into each product. “We will strive to improve our industry for the mutual benefit of our customers and ourselves.”

Bold goals notwithstanding, Vaughan had already been forced to relocate by this point, leaving the old Carroll Avenue factory not for a fancy new facility, but for the rundown former plant of the Vanderkook & Sons printing press company at 900 North Kilpatrick Avenue.

The business appears to have ceased operations around 1984, but information is frankly scant when it comes to the later years. If you can connect the dots for us on the collapse of this once mighty can opening empire, please let us know.



## Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910

By Andrew Clayman



### VAUGHAN Bottle Openers Satisfy Bottlers—Thousands of Them-Everywhere

And for the reason that such lasting popularity must be deserved, we are sure, if placed before you, our openers would have your hearty approval.

So, in suggesting the advisability of taking 1925 requirements under consideration now, we group on the pages of this folder twenty of our most desirable numbers, and request that you ask for samples of those you like best.

It is our sincere opinion that now is the time to buy for 1925, and, given the opportunity, every effort will be made to serve you.

This means quality, service, price—everything that can be done to merit your business.

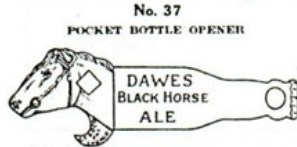
**Vaughan Novelty Mfg. Co.**  
Incorporated  
MANUFACTURERS  
3211-25 Carroll Avenue  
CHICAGO  
Ask for Complete Catalog of Advertising Novelties

#### Eagle Head Design No. 5



Polished and Double Plated.  
Weight About 2 1/4 lbs. per M.

#### Horse Head Design No. 37



Weight about 2 1/4 lbs. per M.

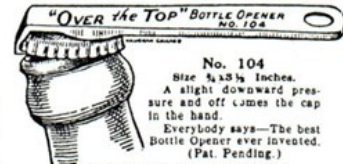
#### Cigar Design No. 6



Weight about 2 1/4 lbs. per M.  
Prices of all numbers on this page:  
Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$5.00 9.00 16.00 15.00 14.00 13.00M

POCKET OPENERS ENCLOSED

#### "Over the Top" Bottle Opener Reduced in Price



No. 104  
Size 4.25 Inches.  
A slight downward pressure and off comes the cap in the hand.  
Everybody says—The best Bottle Opener ever invented. (Pat. Pending.)  
Just THE OPENER FOR THE HOME  
Nickel Steel—Polished.  
Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$10.50 10.00 18.00 17.00 16.00 15.00M.  
Weight about 2 1/2 lbs. per M.

#### "Perfection" Hand Bottle Opener No. 50



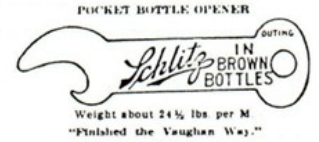
A Special Opener to Meet a Certain Demand.  
Made of Nickel Steel.  
Minimum Quantity Stamped with Adv.—50 Gross.  
Price \$2.00 per Gross  
Stock Shipments, any quantity, \$2.00 per Gross.  
Weight about 2 1/2 lbs. per M.

#### "Nifty"



No. 63  
COMBINATION POCKET BOTTLE OPENER AND FOLDING CORK SCREW  
—Attach to Key Ring—  
YOUR "AD" HERE  
Patented.  
Weight about 2 1/4 lbs. per M.  
A Combination Hard to Beat.  
Sold All over the World.  
Polished and Double Plated.  
Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$13.50 17.50 30.00 29.00 28.00 27.00M.

#### "OUTING" Key Style No. 12



Weight about 2 1/4 lbs. per M.  
"Finished the Vaughan Way."  
Polished and Double Plated.  
All Flat Openers Packed in boxes of 100

#### Vaughan Special No. 70



Weight about 1 1/2 lbs. per M.

#### Lion Head Design No. 4



Actual Size 2 1/2 Inches Long  
Polished and Double Plated  
The Head is Stamped Both Sides.  
Weight About 2 1/4 lbs. per M.  
Prices of all numbers on this page  
Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$5.00 9.00 16.00 15.00 14.00 13.00M

#### "NEVER CHIP" No. 1 "Sold the World Over" Note Below—Lower Price for 1925!



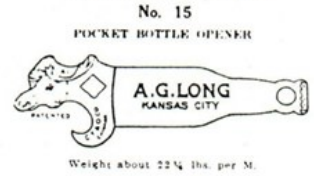
#### FLEXIBLE STATIONARY BOTTLE OPENER

—Screws to Wall—  
"ALWAYS READY FOR USE."  
Prevents Chipping.  
Insures the Bottler's Bottles  
Made only of Special Steel, nickel plated. No rubber, no anything to tear and wear.

#### It Lasts!

Atlantic City, Dec 31st, 1923  
"We have made free use of your Never Chip Openers during the past four years to prevent loss of bottles through chipping by use of other and inferior openers. Your openers are satisfactory in all respects and are preferred and appreciated by our customers."  
COCA-COLA BOTTLING COMPANY  
2 1/2 Inches Long.  
Minimum Quantity Stamped with Advertisement 10 Gross.  
Packed in Individual Folding Cartons with Two Screws.  
Stock Shipments, \$1.00 per Gross. \$1.00 per Doz.  
Weight about 1 1/2 lbs. per M.  
A Wonderful Opener At Low Price.

#### Elk Head Design No. 15



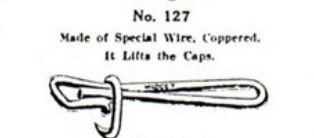
Weight about 2 1/4 lbs. per M.

#### Dancer Bottle Opener No. 16



Advertisement Stamped on Reverse Side.  
Weight about 2 1/4 lbs. per M.  
Prices on Nov. 15 and 16  
Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$5.00 9.00 16.00 15.00 14.00 13.00M.

#### Midget No. 127



Made of Special Wire, Coppered.  
It Lifts the Caps.  
Patented.  
Smallest, Strongest, Cheapest.  
Packed in Lots of 5, 10, 25, 50, 100 and 200 Gross.  
Price, Twenty-five Cents per Gross.  
Weight about 2 lbs. per Gross.

IN ENVELOPES \$2.00 Per M. EXTRA

#### Wood Handle ICE PICK and Bottle Opener No. 130



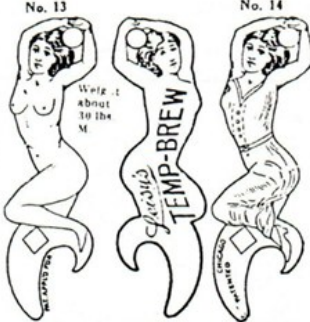
Hardwood, Varnished. Ad. will not rub off. Advertisement printed in black or black and red at same price. Two Steel Blades with Needle Points, Ground and Hardened.  
Length Over All About 10 Inches  
Weight About 7 1/2 Lbs. Per M.

Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$20.00 37.50 70.00 67.50 65.00 63.00M.

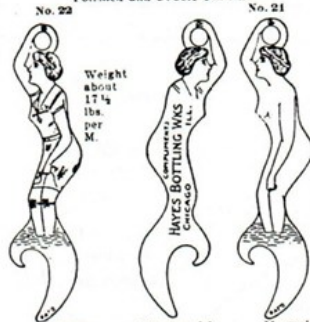
NOTE: All Bottle Opener prices cover type-stamped advertisement on one side of opener only. Special Style Lettering, Trade Marks, etc. require engraved die for which the minimum charge is \$7.50 on orders under \$200.00. Reverse side stamping extra.

VAUGHAN NOVELTY MFG. CO., Inc.  
3211-15 Carroll Avenue  
Chicago 3

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



Early Morn Showing Reverse Side Calendar Girl  
A CLEVER ENCLOSURE WITH LETTERS OR STATEMENTS Polished and Double Plated.



Bathing Girl Showing Ad. Reverse Side Mermaid  
Quantity 250 500 1000 2500 5000 10,000  
Price \$5.00 9.00 16.00 15.00 14.00 13.00M.

**Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910**

By Andrew Clayman

THE AMERICAN BOTTLER

5



Length of Opener, 2 1/2 Inches

**The Bottler's "Bottle Insurance"**

**VAUGHAN'S  
"NEVER-CHIP" CROWN BAR OPENERS**

Approved by those who know



Length of Opener, 2 1/2 Inches

Made of cold rolled steel, shaped with a round edge, and flexible. The only Crown Bar Opener worthy of a name—NEVER-CHIP. It is practically impossible to chip bottles with VAUGHAN'S "NEVER-CHIP."

Many Brewers and Bottlers are sending these Openers into Private Homes; being stationary, they last for years, and will eventually save thousands of dollars in the giving away of hand openers—not mentioning millions saved in the chipping of bottles.

VAUGHAN'S Opener is a boon to the Bottling Trade; and indispensable for use on machine made, or, in fact, all perfectly finished CROWN bottles.

Each Opener is packed separately, with two screws, in a paper carton, ready for use, and put up in shipping cases of one half gross, of either finish—nickel or oxidized. They are an ornament for Bar or Home. We guarantee these Openers to PREVENT chipping.

**5 to 1  
Your favor and Mine**

One "NEVER-CHIP" Crown Bar Opener is equal in wearing qualities to FIVE Bar Openers of any other make. Cheaper to buy ONE Opener than FIVE—and a heap better for your bottles.

—VAUGHAN.



Price Complete, \$3.00 Each  
"WITH INTERCHANGEABLE LINING"

For use in ALL Crown Machines where Stoppers are Hand Fed. Also for use in CONNECTION with ECONOMIC FEED Attachment (by removing Catches).

SAVE TIME AND MONEY BY USING Vaughan's Patent Interchangeable Crown Throats

**VAUGHAN'S  
PATENT  
Interchangeable  
CROWN THROATS**

The BEST money can buy and more satisfactory



EXTRA LININGS  
Price, \$1.00 Each

These Linings are EASILY REMOVED and RENEWED.

We have done away with "Old Style" Dogs, and Catches used cannot fall out.

Special Composition Metal LINING for Vaughan's "HANDY" Interchangeable Crown Throat

We wish to call special attention to the fine Composition Metal used in VAUGHAN'S PATENT CROWN THROAT LININGS. This metal is a secret process and required many months of experimenting to perfect, and WE CHALLENGE THE WORLD on a NON-CORROSIVE metal, for wear, durability and strength. A metal for such use must be right, or the bottler pays the penalty. We guarantee ours.

**LOOK OUT FOR SUBSTITUTES**

FROM UNSCRUPULOUS PIRATES—those who have no interest, except to prey upon inventions of others, and endeavor to imitate. See that your CROWN THROAT AND EXTRA LININGS are packed in boxes with name of this Company—THE CROWN THROAT & OPENER CO.—printed thereon.

A TRIAL ORDER IS SOLICITED

**The Crown Throat & Opener Co.**

N. B.—Our devices may be obtained through the leading Bottlers' Supply Houses

154 E. Lake St., Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.



# Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910

By Andrew Clayman

*Vaughan's* SAFETY ROLL JR.  
**CAN OPENER**  
*saves your fingers*



Nothing like it! Works like magic! Opens all cans with ease. Prevents cut fingers. Over ten million in use. Get your modern can opener—Safety Roll Jr., (also wall model stationary can opening machine) at your dealers. For sale everywhere.

**VAUGHAN NOVELTY MFG. CO., Inc.**  
World's Largest Mfgr. of Can Openers  
3211 Carroll Ave., Chicago, U.S.A.

**VAUGHAN'S** No. 100B **CAN OPENER**

Has Genuine Tool Steel  
Tempered Blade



**SOLD ALL OVER THE WORLD**

Ask for **No. 20**  
Catalog

*Sold by Jobbers or Direct*  
Spatula Knives, Ice Picks, Milk Cap Openers,  
Bottle Openers, Key Chains, Bottle Cappers, etc.

**VAUGHAN NOVELTY MFG. CO., 3213 Carroll Ave., CHICAGO**



## **Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910**

By Andrew Clayman

### **SOURCES:**

"Lull in National Economic Upturn Analyzed by Forbes," *The News-Palladium*, Benton Harbor, MI, Feb 2, 1940  
*Brewer's Journal*, Vol. 34, August 1909

"Track Luncheon Hour at Hialeah Park" – *Miami Daily News*, Jan 29, 1937

"Opener Expert Offers 60 Styles" – *The Garfieldian*, June 10, 1948

"Container Opener" [Patent 1,996,550](#), 1935

"Bottle Opener" [Patent 1,490,149](#), 1924

"Heart Disease Terminates Dr. Vaughan's Useful Career" – *Courier-Journal* (Louisville), April 8, 1898

"Canned Beer Back, But How to Open the Cans Is Another Problem" – *Decatur Herald*, July 15, 1947

"Ghosts of Breweries Past," [Beervana Blog](#)

"Vaughan Novelty MFG Co." by Donald Bull, [Bullworks.net](#)

"Just For Openers from 1892 to the Present: A short history of bottle openers," by John Stanley, [go-star.com](#)


"Bottle Insurance" – *American Bottler*, vol. 30, 1910

*American Brewers' Review*, vol. 23, 1909

"Just For Openers" Newsletter, October 2010

### **Archived Reader Comments:**

"I remember Mr. Vaughn, and helped tend his bulldog when he went south, on vacation. My friend's father Hugh Feely worked at the factory. If I remember right, Mr. Vaughn vacationed in Cuba. During the war, Hugh Feely brought home things to put together for some use in the war, and I helped put the springs on the brass metal part, and filled each box with these. Mr Feely was very close to Mr. Vaughn, and I was close friends with Sonny Feely, Hugh's father. We used to go to the factory on Carroll often in the summer, and I remember the salt tablets in the containers around the factory. I never even knew the Mr. Vauhn's first name. In those days, it was always Mr. or Mrs. with their last name only." — *Beverly Holcomb, 2018*

"I still have the container opener and it is dated 1935. I remember using this as a child. I just used it today!  " — *Lori A. Horner, 2018*

"I still have the bottle opener with the cork screw. Have used many times thru out the that have had it. I keep it with my utensils so that I don't lose it. Can't be without it." — *Peter Orta, 2018*

Posted by [Andrew Clayman](#) (Two Online Comments Below)

I collect pocket matchbook holders, a 20th century version of the match safe, which held a paper matchbook rather than loose stick matches. Vaughan produced aluminum and nickel-plated brass examples beginning in 1922. There was a patent pending that probably covered a finger tip sized hole in the back of the holder which would have made it easier to remove an empty matchbook after the 20 matchsticks were used. All of the 12 Vaughan examples in my collection are inscribed (around the hole): "Push Out Here. Pat. Pend. Made in U. S. A." Eight are also marked on the front: "Vaughan Chicago," and one says: "Vaughan Nov. Co." I have been unable to locate more information on the patent. Does anyone know when it was applied for? Was it ever issued?

I worked for Vaughan Mfg. right out of high school for two years until joining the Navy in 1972. The building on Kilpat-

## Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910

By Andrew Clayman

rick ( actually mostly on Iowa Street ) was torn down quite some time ago and is an empty lot. Vaughan also bought a small chair company, Precision Chair, that was right across the street on Walton Street.

I was the shipping clerk, boxed freight, scheduled the pickups, loaded trucks, sort of a jack of all trades. Fun, innocent days...



Fox Deluxe ghost ad at 1635 N. Ashland Ave.



**Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910**

By Andrew Clayman



**Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910**

By Andrew Clayman

*I would thank you for sample of  
The "Shoe Note" shown me.*

NEW YORK OFFICE  
1265 BROADWAY

PHONE MAD. SQ. 7187 SUITE 811 AT 32ND ST.

*Vaughan Novelty Mfg. Co.*  
SUCCESSORS TO THE HOUSE OF BOTTLE OPENERS  
METAL SPECIALTIES  
Crown Throat & Opener Company  
MANUFACTURERS OF ADVERTISING NOVELTIES  
703-711 FULTON ST.  
Chicago, U.S.A.

PRESENTED BY  
**DUDLEY C. VAUGHAN**  
VICE-PRESIDENT

YOUR "AD" HERE

VAUGHAN CHICAGO PAT. ALL D.

PERSONAL APPEAL METAL SPECIALTIES

PATENT PENDING

SEPARATE YOUR KEYS

CHICAGO SAVINGS BANK AND TRUST CO.

DISC NUMBERED SAFETY IF LOST

ATTACH TO KEYRING

BOTTLE OPENER SCREW DRIVER SHOE BUTTNER

YOUR AD HERE

VAUGHAN CHICAGO PAT. ALL D.

**A NEW ONE - JUST OFF THE DIES**

VAUGHAN'S UNIQUE BOTTLE OPENER

AD. STAMPED HERE

CIGAR SHAPE

CIGAR BOX OPENER

AUTO GAS TANK KEY

BOTTLE OPENER

KEY RING

VAUGHAN CHICAGO PAT. ALL D.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE

VAUGHAN'S "UNIQUE" POCKET CROWN OPENER

CIGAR SHAPE

is appropriate and effective Advertising

**CAN YOU BEAT IT?**

Carried on the "key ring" and owing to its usefulness is

A DAILY REMINDER OF YOUR BRAND OF CIGARS

and think how long your "Ad" is HUNG ON TO --and for the mere trifle of a penny or two, according to finish and quantity.

WRITE FOR PRICES AND STATE QUANTITY

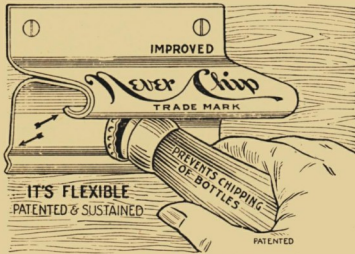
**THE CROWN THROAT & OPENER CO.**  
MANUFACTURERS

136 W. LAKE STREET - CHICAGO, U. S. A.



**Vaughan Novelty MFG. Co., est. 1910**

By Andrew Clayman



Length—2½ inches

**CADMIUM PLATED TO PREVENT RUST**  
Weight 23 lbs. (10.4 kilos) per Gross

**NO. 2 NEVER-CHIP BOTTLE OPENER**, same as above, length 1½ inches, can be supplied if required. No Advertisement. Weight 14½ lbs. (6.6 kilos) per Gross.

**NO. 1 NEVER-CHIP**  
Known Everywhere Bottles Are Opened as  
**THE ONLY FLEXIBLE STATIONARY**  
**BOTTLE OPENER MADE**

The flexibility of the Never-Chip prevents chipping of bottles.

Solid cast iron openers, after a short time in use, "wear off" and break bottle necks.

Minimum Quantity Stamped with your Advertisement—5 Gross, No Extra Charge.

Packed in individual illustrated cartons with 2 screws, one gross to corrugated shipping carton.

**The Best Bottle Insurance**

*Vaughan Novelty Mfg. Co.*  
INCORPORATED  
MANUFACTURERS OF

**HARDWARE SPECIALTIES**  
**ADVERTISING NOVELTIES**

**Acknowledgment** 7/5/38

We thank you for your order of 7/2/38

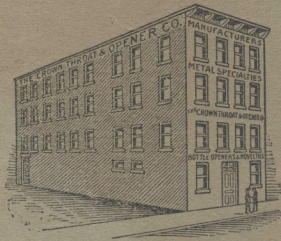
thru Mail

This will be shipped promptly

*Vaughan Novelty Mfg. Co., Inc.* MB

3211-25 CARROLL AVENUE CHICAGO, ILL.

Catalog No. 200



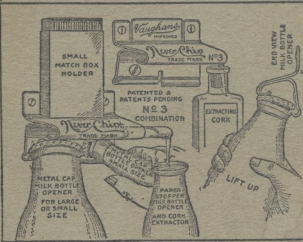
March 1st, 1913.

TERMS:

F. O. B. CHICAGO  
2% ten days, 30 days net

**THE OPENERS**

WITH A  
**NAME AND REPUTATION**  
**BEHIND THEM**



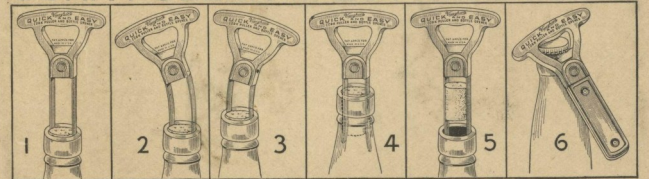
**CROWN THROAT & OPENER COMPANY**  
MANUFACTURERS

Metal Specialties : : Advertising Novelty  
701 FULTON ST., CHICAGO, ILL., U. S. A.

Exclusive Manufacturers of Vaughan's Patents

Members of Manufacturers and  
Dealers Association of Chicago.

EASY TO USE *Vaughan's* WILL NOT Damage the Cork  
**NO. 164—"QUICK AND EASY"**  
**CORK PULLER AND BOTTLE OPENER**



**FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS AND YOU CAN'T GO WRONG.**

**DIRECTIONS**—Insert tips of prongs (1). Rock back and forth as you press down all the way (2, 3 and 4). Twist as you pull (5). An efficient bottle opener (6) DO NOT attempt to push prongs down without rocking, or you will push cork into the bottle.

F-227—Printed in U. S. A.

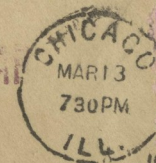
AFTER 5 DAYS RETURN TO

*Vaughan Novelty Mfg. Co.*  
INCORPORATED  
MANUFACTURERS OF

CAN OPENERS ||| BOTTLE OPENERS  
HARDWARE SPECIALTIES ||| ADVERTISING SPECIALTIES  
KITCHEN TOOLS

3211-25 CARROLL AVENUE  
(GARFIELD PARK STATION)  
CHICAGO, ILL., U. S. A.

USE HAND STAMP



Rieger's Duplicating & Mailing Service, Inc.  
319 Third Ave.  
Pittsburgh, Penna.

USE HAND STAMP