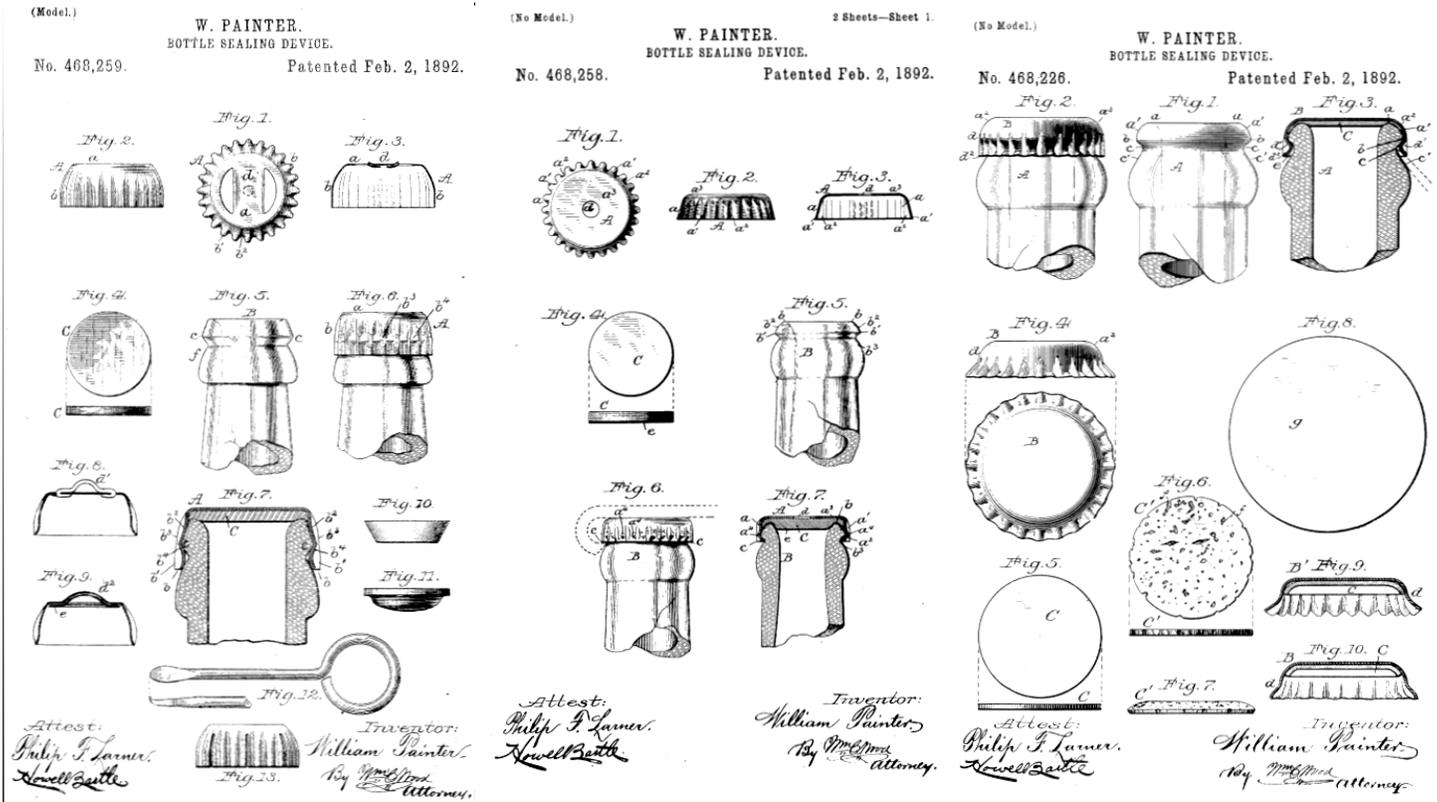


Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

Credit The Crown Cap and Opener To A "Remarkable Genius" - William Painter By Don Thornton

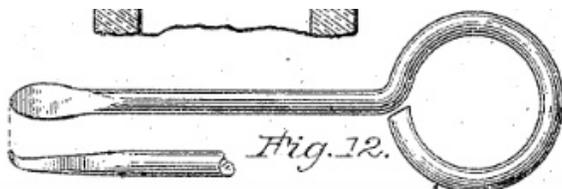
William Painter of Baltimore was granted three patents on the same day in 1892 for a "bottle sealing device," giving birth to the "crown cap" that for decades has sealed soda, beer and other beverage bottles.

Painter applied for the patents on November 5, 1889, June 16, 1890 and May 19, 1891. How all three applications were approved and granted on the same date – February 2, 1892 – with three different patent numbers remains a mystery.

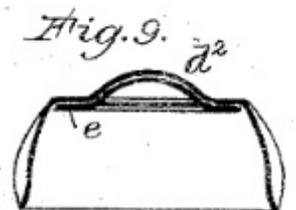
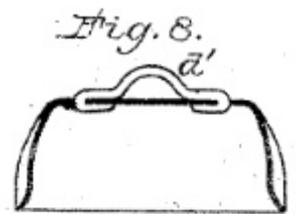


Painter's bottle cap would revolutionize the bottling industry, but there was an immediate problem. There was no easy way to remove the caps. The story gets a bit complicated as it unfolds but leads to what is believed to be the patenting of the first hand-held bottle opener.

As for the caps that led to the opener, Patent No. 468,259 had a loop at the top of the cap and the patent application said the hooked device featured in the patent drawing could be used "as a hand lever for wrenching the sealing-caps from bottles."



Patent No. 468,258 had a flat top that could be opened, as illustrated in the patent drawing, with a "hook-shaped lever ... fulcrumed on the top of the cap" to force it off.

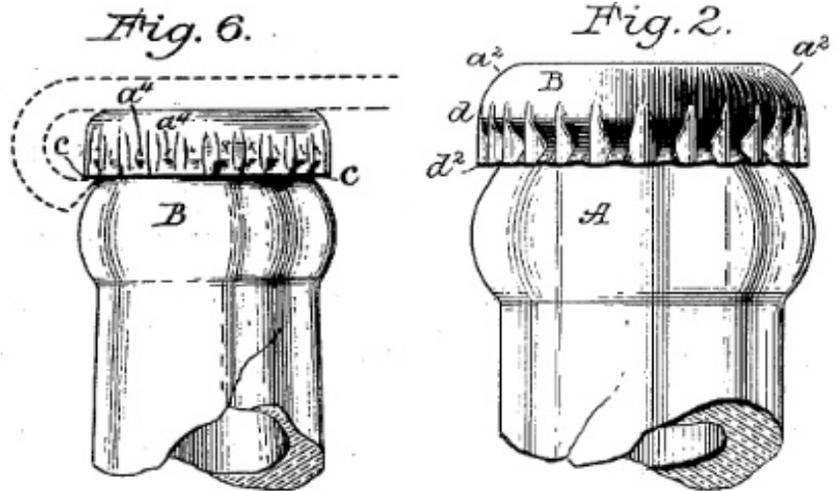


Credit The Crown Cap and Opener

To A "Remarkable Genius" - William Painter By Don Thornton

Painter, in that same patent application, revealed he would soon offer his own device specifically designed to open bottles, saying: "Bottle-openers devised by me ... and adapted to the removal of sealing caps by engaging with their projecting edges will be made the subject of one or more separate applications for Letters Patent."

In Patent No. 468,226, Painter took the opportunity to pat himself on the back. "So far as my knowledge extends, I am the first to seal bottles by means of sealing-disks each com-

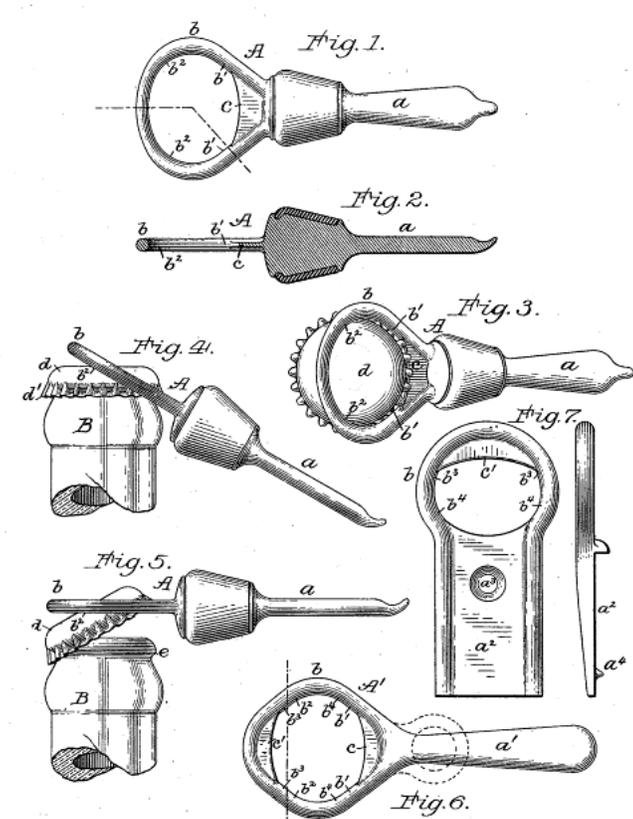


Painter's crown cap was the universal cap employed for carbonated beverages in glass bottles for generations, but there were a few changes. Over the years the cork disc was replaced with a plastic material and the cap's teeth, or flanges, were reduced from 24 to 21. Crown caps reigned supreme until the 1960s when soulless screw and pop tops virtually took over with only a few exceptions.

pressed into close solid contact with the lip of the bottle and maintained in that condition by means of a flanged metallic sealing cap, the flange of which is bent or crimped into locking contact." This patent, he said, refined the design of the cap to allow a bottle opener, including "a knife, a screw-driver, a nail, (or) an ice-pick to be readily applied."

Painter also is credited with inventing the machinery needed to manufacture the caps and was behind the incorporation of the Crown Cork and Seal Company in Baltimore in 1892. A year later, on June 5, 1893, he moved to fulfill his promise of a device specifically designed to removed bottle caps. On that date he applied for a patent for his "capped-bottle opener" and Patent No. 514,200 was granted February 5, 1894. The small device features "a cap engaging lip ... for removing the cap from the bottle."

(No Model.)
 W. PAINTER.
 CAPPED BOTTLE OPENER.
 No. 514,200. Patented Feb. 6, 1894.



Attest:
 Philip F. Larner.
 Howell Spitzer.
 Inventor:
 William Painter.
 By [Signature] Attorney.

Credit The Crown Cap and Opener

To A "Remarkable Genius" - William Painter By Don Thornton



The 3 1/2-inch cast-iron opener is marked on the handle PAT. 90, creating a bit of patent confusion.

But an examination of Patent No. 514,200 explains the 1890 designation. In his patent papers, Painter said, "The bottle opener here shown embodies not only my present invention but also certain features disclosed in Letter Patent No. 438,710, October 21, 1890, which not only enabled this opener to be used for removing certain inside loop seals as heretofore

patented to me, but also enable the opener to be used as a temporary stopper..."

Very similar to the **PAT. 90**, is another metal opener likely manufactured by Crown, but with the small hook at the top of the opener and not at the end of the handle. It is 4-inches long, ending with a small screwdriver.



Painter died July 15, 1906 at the age of 68, well before he had a chance to see Crown Cork and Seal grow into a massive, international enterprise with slick trade advertising and even postcards.

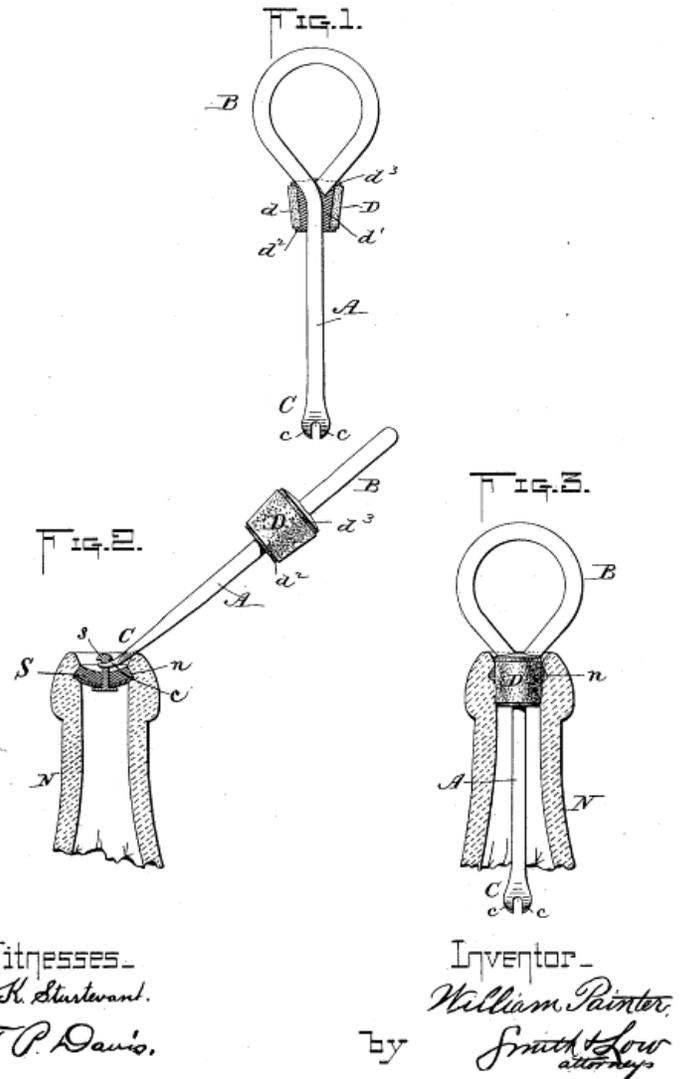
He was born in Triadelphia, Montgomery County, Maryland in 1838. His obituary in the *Baltimore Sun* said he was descended from old "Quaker stock, and was himself a birthright member of the Society of Friends." (Disregard Internet reports he was born in

(No Model.)

W. PAINTER.
BOTTLE STOPPER EXTRACTOR.

No. 438,710.

Patented Oct. 21, 1890.



Just For Openers January-December 2025 4

Credit The Crown Cap and Opener

To A "Remarkable Genius" - William Painter By Don Thornton

Ireland and immigrated to the U.S.)

The *Sun* said Painter "was one of the most prolific inventors Maryland has ever produced and certainly one of the most successful" with nearly 100 patents to his name. He served as secretary and general manager of Baltimore's Bottle Seal Company from 1882 to 1902 when it was succeeded by the Crown Cork and Seal Company, of which he was an officer.

The newspaper paid this tribute to Painter: "To those personally and professionally acquainted with Mr. Painter he appeared a remarkable genius for everything of a mechanical and scientific nature ... He possessed that somewhat rare combination of the inventive faculty with an excellent talent for business methods." Painter's obituary in *The Brewers Journal* magazine gave this insight into the inventor: "Personally Mr. Painter was an interesting and agreeable man, and was always most considerate in his relations with his fellow men."

There's Big Business In BOTTLE CAPS

That's what our dealers are finding out by displaying the two feature brands of caps in packages. You can add another quick-selling, profitable staple to your line.



"HOME USE" BRAND

The standard quality cap. Made to meet the popular demand, clean, sanitary, packed in convenient, attractive cartons--every cap uniform. It's the greatest value on the market today and users have made it the fastest selling brand in the country.



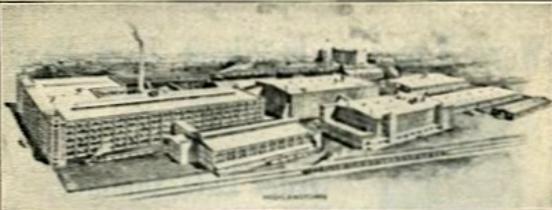
"PYRAMID" BRAND

The highest quality cap that includes the latest patented improvements and refinements. The only cap on the market with the famous "cushion-seal." A new paraffin coating to keep the cork live and soft. The safest seal made. Laboratory tested. Sold in sealed, sanitary packages only. Costs more--and worth it.

Write today for samples and prices on these two sure-selling Crown Cork Products.

CROWN CORK & SEAL CO., Baltimore, Md.
World's Largest Bottle Cap Makers

The National Magazine of the Grocery Trade **THE PROGRESSIVE GROCER** 131



This \$15,000,000 Plant is Making PROFIT for Your Store

If you handle Bottle Caps you know that Pyramid and Home Use Brands are different. The picture above illustrates why they are different from any bottle cap on the market.

Here's the Plant where these remarkable caps are made. The originator, the pioneer in the industry--this business today is the largest of its kind in the world.

Here in this Plant are combined three factors of vital importance to you--

- Vast production--which means lowest possible cost per gross.
- Modern plant--with specialized machinery, insuring accuracy and uniformity to the highest degree--and absolute cleanliness throughout.
- A complete Service--ample stocks newly made, ready for immediate delivery from factory or branch nearest you.



These well known brands in Sanitary packages are fast superseding the uncertain loose bulk goods.



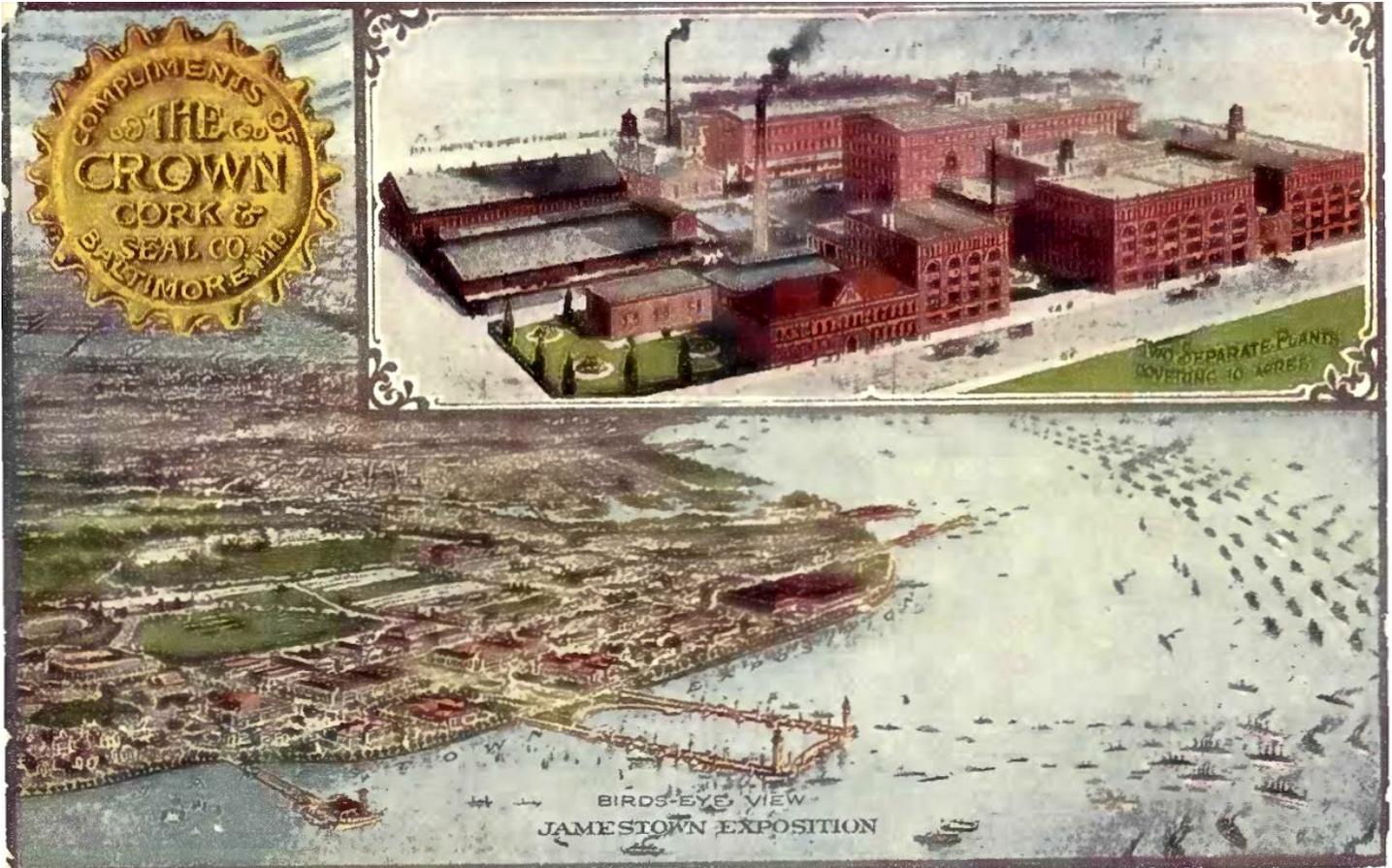
If you are not making money on bottle caps, write today for our special proposition.

CROWN CORK & SEAL COMPANY
World's Largest Makers of Bottle Caps
BALTIMORE - MARYLAND

***Just For Openers* January-December 2025 5**

Credit The Crown Cap and Opener

To A "Remarkable Genius" - William Painter By Don Thornton



The end of an original wooden box of Crown Cork & Seal "Oriole" wire bottle openers with each one advertising "New Orleans Brew. Co. Drink 4x Old Stock". For more information on William Painter, see <https://just-for-openers.org/William-Painter-By-Mark-Woodard.pdf>