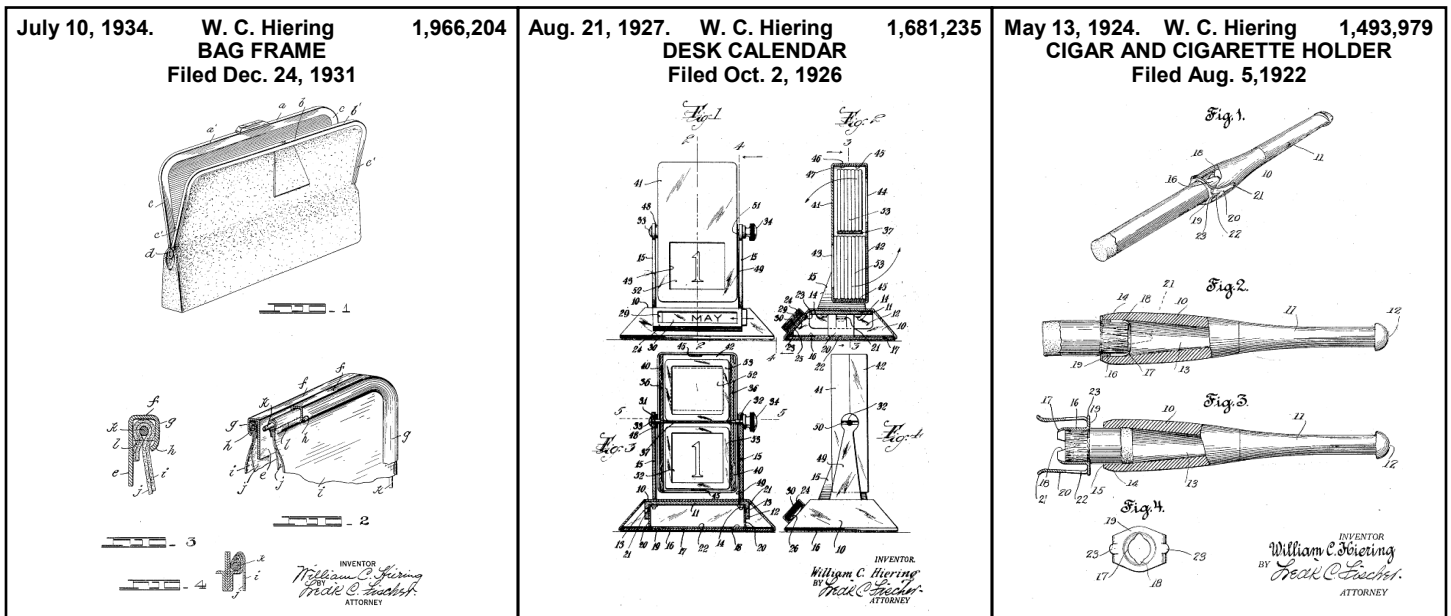


Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

William C. Hiering's Two Patents

For One Combo Opener By Don Thornton

William C. Hiering was granted at least a dozen patents in the 1920s and 30s, five of them related to women's pocketbooks or small purses. The Newark, New Jersey inventor also won patents for desk calendars and cigar/cigarette holders.



He assigned all of his patents to his employer, J. E. Mergott Co. of Newark. Established in 1878, Mergott was known for its purses, box cameras, matchbook covers and coin dispensers, among other things, with its JEMCO brand name.

In 1929 Mergott stepped outside the firm's established product line and manufactured a clever pocket device created by Hiering. Maybe it wasn't that big a step – Hiering was, after all, vice president of the company, a position he held until his retirement in 1939.

The J. E. Mergott Co.

Manufacturers of

Bag, Purse and Pocket Book Frames

Fancy Metal Goods
Advertising Specialties in Metals

308-364 Jelliff Avenue
New York Office, 200 Fifth Ave.

Office and Works

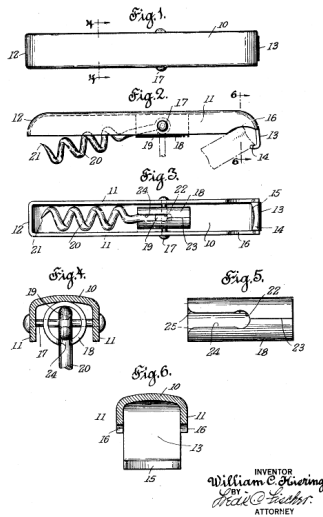
Newark, New Jersey
L. D. Phone, Terrace 3-1160

The device: a smooth combination folding corkscrew and bottle opener for which Hiering received two patents, one in 1928 for a "bottle opening implement" and the other in 1929 for a "pocket corkscrew."

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Dec 11, 1928. W. C. Hiering 1,695,098
BOTTLE OPENING IMPLEMENT
Filed Dec. 30, 1926

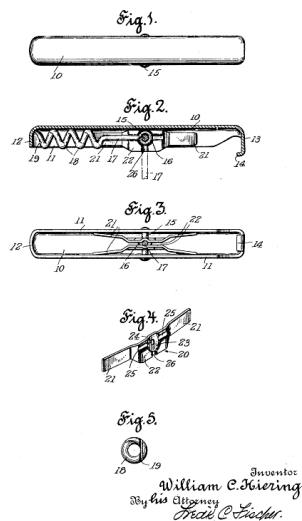


The 3 3/4-inch device was available for branding. Two examples are marked topside: THE CROWN CORK AND SEAL COMPANY BALTIMORE, MD. and CRACKER JACK ANGELUS MARSHMALLOWS. All are marked in tiny type on one side: PATENTED DEC. 11.28 FEB. 22.29. JEMCO THE J. E. MERGOTT CO. NEWARK, N. J.

In his patent papers, Hiering said the object of his invention was to provide “an efficient, practical and convenient appliance capable of being folded into small compass for carrying and storage and readily extended to present a firm spiral corkscrew provided with an effective handle grip.” He said another feature was “to combine with the handle a powerful lever suited to engage a bottle cap and remove it from its seat with facility.”



Feb. 12, 1929. W. C. Hiering 1,701,950
POCKET CORKSCREW
Filed Feb. 16, 1927



Don Bull wrote in his “The Incomplete Chicago Corkscrew Story” in 2012 that William C. Hiering applied for two patents adding a corkscrew to Vaughan’s “Over-the-Top” style opener (patented April 15, 1924 #1,490,149). The first was applied for on December 30, 1926 and was called “Bottle Opening Implement.” The second was applied for a month and a half later on February 16, 1927. Both patents were assigned to the J. E. Mergott Co. of Newark. The second application doesn’t reference the first and neither references the Vaughan patent.

Hiering died in 1959 at the age of 80. The Mergott company faded in the 1940s and was acquired in 1950 by the Fedders-Quigan Corporation.