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Inventors Henry & Maurice Roberts and

Save-Cap, Tite-Fit & So-Ezy Stories By Don Thornton

A curious patent play by father and son inventors resulted in a popular combination bottle opener and stopper in the late 1920s. And to add to the odd mix, a worm was later thrown in.

Henry P. Roberts and Maurice H. Roberts were the father and son team behind the Roberts Specialty Manufacturing Company in Boston, makers of the device. The nearly 2 ½-inch by 1 ½-inch pocket-size tool is marked SAV-CAP DEC. 7, 1926 BOSTON.



Henry started it all. He was granted Patent No. 916,198 on March 23, 1909 for a “device for sealing bottles” with a hook opener. However, it sat idle for 17 years until son Maurice was granted Patent. No. 1,610,158 on December 7, 1926 for a “bottle stopper” with a hook opener. (It should be noted Henry was 76 years old at the time.)

The drawings for the two patents are startlingly similar, although the texts are very different. The common practice at the time was for inventors to describe their creations as an “improvement” of an existing product and cite the original patent. Not in this case. Maurice did not call his combination tool an “improvement” nor did he cite his father’s patent.

It was branded the SAV-CAP and Roberts began production shortly thereafter. One 1928 newspaper advertisement listed the sale price at 9 cents. A help wanted ad the same year sought “Saleslady-Cavassers” to sell the

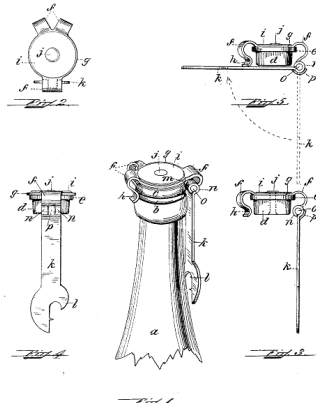
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Save-Kap, Tite-Fit & So-Ezy Stories By Don Thornton

Sav-Kap to “hardware, drug, delicatessen, tobacco and soda shops” for resale.

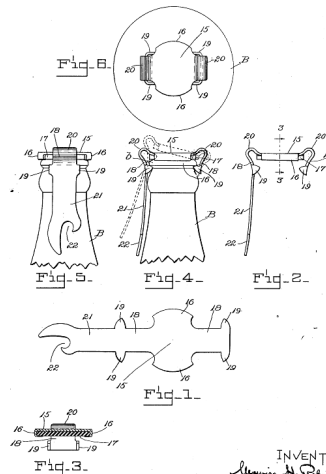
Mar. 23, 1909. H. P. Roberts 916,198
DEVICE FOR SEALING BOTTLES
Filed June 8, 1908.



Witness:
W. M. Brewster
George W. Johnson

Inventor:
Henry P. Roberts
By Charles E. Hume
his atty.

Dec 7, 1926. M. H. Roberts 1,610,158
BOTTLE STOPPER
Filed August 16, 1924



INVENTOR:
Maurice H. Roberts
By Howard Allen, Alfred W. Pike
ATTORNEYS

The Famous “Sav-Kap”

Every home where charged waters and fruit juices are served need a “Sav-Kap.” It fits the bottle and keeps them fresh, sparkling and in perfect condition.

All on sale Saturday for only 9c.

SALESLADY-CAVASSERS with following to sell “Sav-Kap” to hardware, drug, delicatessen, tobacco and soda shops: permanent connection for workers, counter cards holding 24 sell for \$2.40, pays 90c. commission. Phone Liberty 1859: Mr. Dordoni, ROBERTS SPECIALTY MFG. CO., Inc., 38 Chauncy St., Boston.

Ser. No. 260,352. THE ROBERTS SPECIALTY MANUFACTURING COMPANY, INC., Boston, Mass. Filed Jan. 19, 1928.

SAV-KAP

Applicant disclaims exclusive use of the word “Kap” apart from the mark as shown in the drawing.
Particular description of goods.—Bottle Cap and Combined Bottle Stopper and Opener.
Claims use since May 15, 1927.

Also in 1928, the company was granted a trademark for its “bottle cap and combined bottle stopper and opener” Serial No. 269,352, published March 20 1928. The Roberts later added another catchy name, the “Tite-Fit,” to its product line but more on that later.

The SAV-KAP story doesn’t end there. Five years after Maurice was awarded his opener/capper patent, Albert W. Charbonneau, also of Boston, entered the picture with a worm or corkscrew. He was awarded Patent No. 1,814,895 July 14, 1931 for a “compound appliance.”

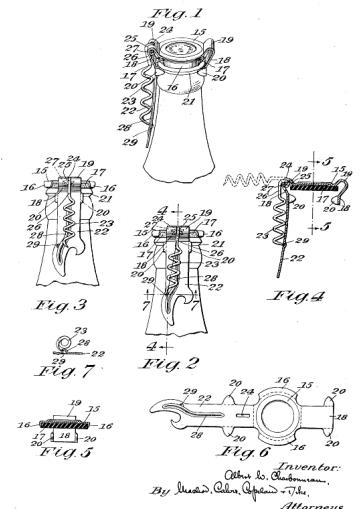
He said his device was “an improvement on the combined bottle opener and temporary closure shown and described in the patent to Roberts No. 1,610,158, December 7, 1926, and consists in utilizing certain of the

essential portions of the patented construction for the purpose of attaching and housing an added instrumentality, preferably a corkscrew.”

That’s right – all he did was add a folding corkscrew. Charbonneau assigned the patent to the Roberts Specialty Manufacturing Company, meaning Henry and Maurice were in on the deal. This is how Fred O’Leary described it, tongue in cheek, in his inclusive 1996 book *Corkscrews*, “The improved patent...added a corkscrew and nothing else to the advancement of science.”



July 14, 1931. A. W. Charbonneau 1,814,895
COMPOUND APPLIANCE
Filed Nov. 17, 1928



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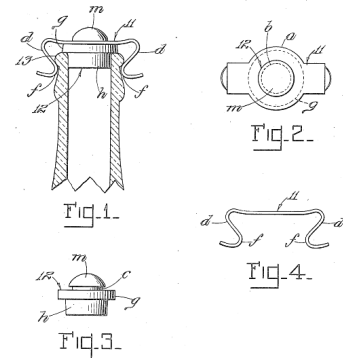
Now for the Tite-Fit story and another patent with a curious history. Henry was granted a "bottle stopper" patent on November 6, 1923, Patent No. 1,473,048 that ended up the property of Modern Metal Products of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

By the time it was manufactured, a bottle opener hook had been added. The 2 3/4-inch by 1-inch device is marked on the top of the stopper TITE-FIT MFD BY MODERN METAL PRODUCTS CAMBRIDGE, MASS. and on the extending bottle opener WET RUBBER BEFORE USING PAT. NO. 1473048.



It is not known why Roberts did not manufacture the combo tool, nor how it became the property of Modern Metal Products. What is known is that the Tite-Fit did not come on to the market until decades later. The first newspaper advertisements for the device were in 1934 and peaked in 1947.

Nov. 6, 1923. H. P. Roberts 1,473,048
BOTTLE STOPPER
Filed Feb. 9, 1921



INVENTOR:
Henry P. Roberts
by Mackintosh, Cullen, & Co., Attys.



Tite Fit Bottle Cap and Opener

Bottle opener and Tite Fit Cap for all size bottles. A real handy item for the kitchen. (49-87A)

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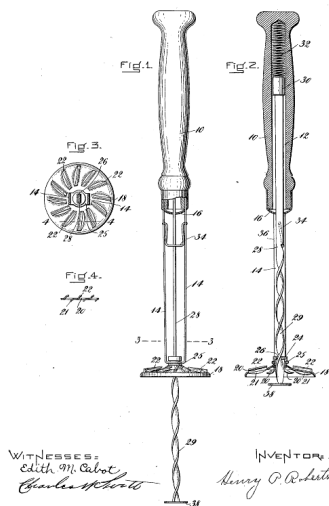
Now for a bottle opener/corkscrew puzzle. The abbreviated, easy to identify and remember names of SAV-KAP and TITE-FIT were joined at some point by the SO-EZY. The 3-inch combination bottle opener with hinged corkscrew is marked on the top of the bottle opener MADE IN U.S.A. PAT. PEND. "SO-EZY."



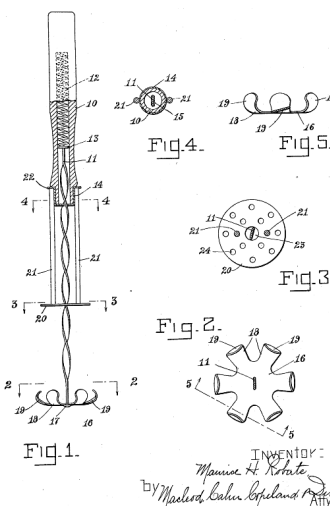
It was never advertised in newspapers nor has its patent, if it indeed has one, ever been found. O'Leary said in *Corkscrews* that the "SO-EZY" is among "a host of corkscrews having the magic word 'PATENT' implanted in some context on the surface, but lacking the confirmation of a patent." He included a photo of it in a section of the book titled "Patent Wannabes."

SIDEBAR: The Roberts Specialty Manufacturing Company was famous for its fine line of eggbeaters, and Henry and Maurice had a beater patent overlap action similar to the SAV-CAP. Henry was granted Patent No. 1,090,567

Mar. 17, 1914. H. P. Roberts 1,090,567
BEATING AND MIXING DEVICE.
Filed June 21, 1912.



Apr. 25, 1922. M. H. Roberts 1,413,874
EGG BEATER.
Filed Aug. 11, 1921.



March 17, 1914 for a spring-loaded Archimedes eggbeater. Eight years later, Maurice was granted Patent No. 1,413,874, April 25, 1922, for his own handheld, push-down Archimedes mixer.

Again, the two patent drawings are very similar but the texts are very different. Maurice said his device was an "improvement" in beaters but did not cite his father. The two beaters were manufactured and are very valued by kitchen collectors.