

# Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

## Fred Goodrich and Justus Traut In

A Moxie Mystery Patents Drama By Don Thornton & John Stanley

Fred Goodrich, president of the Taplin Manufacturing Company of New Britain, Connecticut, was granted Patent No. 757,548 on April 19, 1904 for a "bottle stopper and opener." It was his only patent, despite the fact that during his decades long career he oversaw the purchase of and the manufacturing of dozens of patented culinary tools.

April 19, 1904. F. Goodrich 757,548  
BOTTLE STOPPER AND OPENER  
Filed Feb. 15, 1904

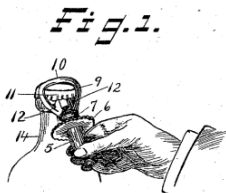


Fig. 2.

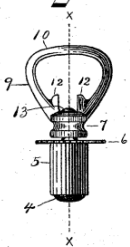
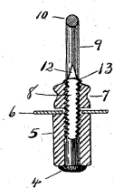


Fig. 3.



WITNESSES

L. D. Digel  
H. S. Wess

INVENTOR

Fred Goodrich  
By James H. Shepard  
Att'y.

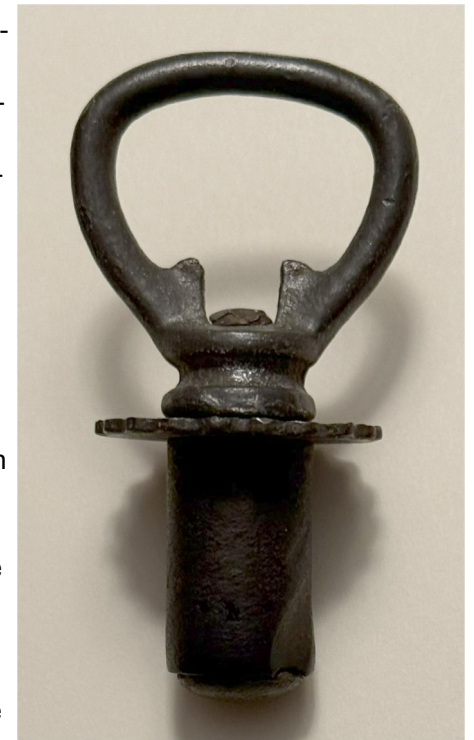
"My invention relates to expansible bottle stoppers and openers; and the objects of my improvement are simplicity and economy of construction and efficiency and convenience in use," Goodrich said in his patent papers. Taplin, a major manufacturer of eggbeaters and other kitchen tools, branded its new product "The Victor" and took out ads in 1905 in *Hardware Dealers' Magazine*, boasting: "Two tools in one and both perfect."

The Victor turned out to be a major disappointment for Taplin, never catching on with the public although one bottler made a go of it. That

bottler was then known as Beverage Moxie Nerve Food of Lowell, Massachusetts, later shortened to Moxie after passage of the 1906 Pure Food and Drug Act.

The stopper/opener is clearly based on the Goodrich patent, but is marked with a different patent date, Aug. 6, 89. That turns out to be Patent No. 408,364 awarded to Justus A. Traut, also of New Britain. Traut was a prolific inventor associated with the New Britain firms Stanley Rule and Level Company (later Stanley Works) and Traut & Hine Manufacturing Company.

**THE VICTOR**  
**Bottle Stopper and Opener**  
Will fit any ordinary bottle and make it perfectly  
**AIR TIGHT.**  
**A Rapid Seller.**  
In opening capped bottles the opener works perfectly. Two tools in one and both perfect.  
Sample on application.  
**The TAPLIN MFG. CO.**  
New Britain, Conn., U.S.A.  
155 Chambers Street, N. Y.  
Pat. April 19, 1904.

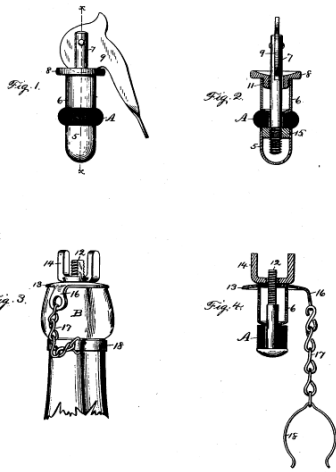


## Fred Goodrich and Justus Traut In

A Moxie Mystery Patents Drama By Don Thornton & John Stanley

Aug. 6, 1889. J. A. Traut 408,364

**BOTTLE STOPPER**  
Filed May 16, 1889

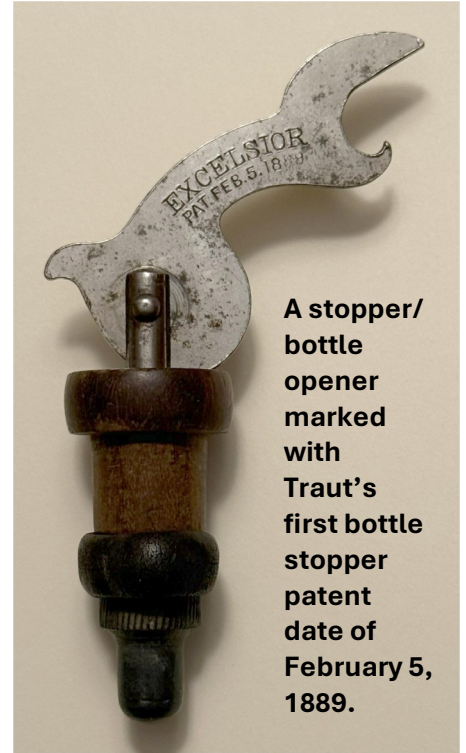


Witnesses:  
John Edwards Jr.  
John S. Rogers

Inventor:  
Justus A. Traut  
By James Shepard  
Att.

There are at least two connections between the two patents: Both were for stoppers and both inventors and their companies were based in New Britain, then known as “Hardware City.” It’s a mystery that will probably remain unsolved although there is the possibility the Moxie people just mixed up their patent dates. It’s interesting to note that the two men in all probability were acquainted as manufacturers in New Britain, a town of about only 25,000 in 1900.

Traut was 68 when he died in New Britain in 1908. His obituary in *The Day* of New London, Connecticut, said he was “one of the leading inventors of the country. He could not himself tell how many patents he



A stopper/  
bottle  
opener  
marked  
with  
Traut’s  
first bottle  
stopper  
patent  
date of  
February 5,  
1889.

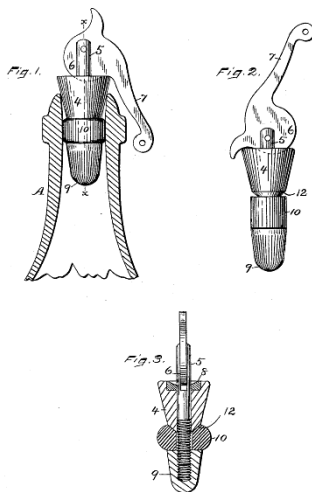
had granted, but a conservative estimate is 700.” Goodrich was 66 when he died in New Britain in 1906. *The Morning Journal-Courier* of New Haven described him in an obituary as “one of the best known businessmen in New Britain” having been associated with Landers, Fray & Clark for 20 years and 10 years as president of Taplin. The obit did not mention his one patent. However, it noted that “during the Civil War he was with the Army of the Potomac during its entire campaign, acting as a drummer boy, being too young to carry a gun.”

**SIDEBAR:** Fred Goodrich was into the semantics of patents at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – or he had a sense of humor. In his 1904 patent application he described his rubber-clad stopper in detail and gave this explanation for adding an opener: “As a bottle-stopper the article is used in the ordinary manner, but before using the stopper the bottle must be opened.”

**Two other 1889 Traut stopper patents that were versions of the August patent.**

Feb. 5, 1889. J. A. Traut 397,449

**BOTTLE STOPPER**  
Filed Nov. 17, 1888

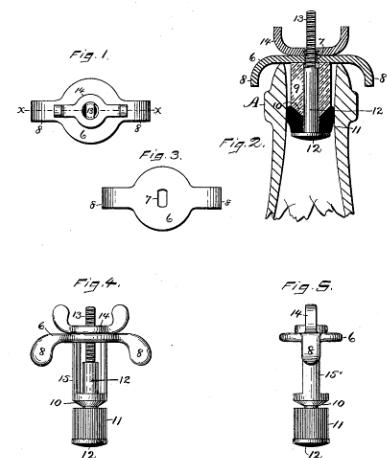


Witnesses:  
John Edwards Jr.  
John S. Rogers

Inventor:  
Justus A. Traut  
By James Shepard  
Att.

Mar. 26, 1889. J. A. Traut 400,272

**BOTTLE STOPPER**  
Filed Feb. 13, 1889



Witnesses:  
John Edwards Jr.  
W. H. Pance

Inventor:  
Justus A. Traut  
By James Shepard  
Att.