

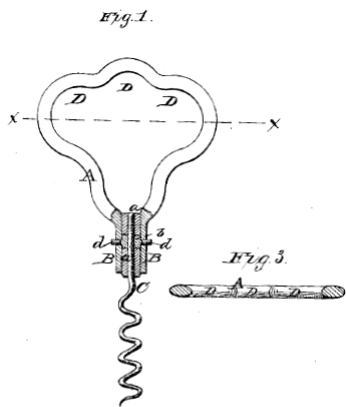
# Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

## No Unpleasant Feelings With George Havell's Corkscrew By Don Thornton

George Havell was a prolific Newark, New Jersey inventor who was granted at least 16 different patents from 1866 to 1907. It was an eclectic lot, including a bicycle lamp, an extensible hand fan, a shoe buttoner, a combination cigar and nail clipper, three other nail clippers and a corn and callous shaver. But the most popular (based on the large number surviving today) was his 1877 folding corkscrew.

Oct. 16, 1877. G. Havell  
CORKSCREW  
Filed August 9, 1877

196,226



WITNESSES  
Francis A. Comand  
Havell

INVENTOR  
George Havell  
Alexander Hamilton  
ATTORNEY

The 4 ¼-inch extended, 3-inch folded beauty is marked only: **PAT. OCT. 16, 77.** It was made by the George Havell Novelties Manufacturing Company in Newark.



In his patent application Havell said that corkscrews of the day were “usually made of round wire and shaped in such a manner that in drawing the cork the fingers are crushed together, which, besides being unpleasant, reduces the power of the hand.” But his corkscrew, Havell said, “was provided at its upper end with three indentations for the purpose of keeping the fingers of the operator separate, and thereby preventing injury and unpleasant feeling to the operator when the cork is being drawn.”

At some point the Havell corkscrew ended up in the product line of another Newark manufacturer, the C.T. Williamson Wire Novelty Company. And it was probably after this move that the corkscrew was changed – breaching the main design feature of the patent: the finger bows were eliminated from the handle, a probable cost-cutting measure. The new design is marked just like the old one with the patent date on the curve of the handle.



Havell's company was listed in the Newark City Directory from the 1870s through the 1920s, first as George Havell Metal Fancy Goods and later as Havell Manufacturing Co.

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**No Unpleasant Feelings**  
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The 1891 book "Newark, N.J. Illustrated," said the family firm dated back to 1837. In the complimentary style of the day, the book said: "This is the oldest, and has been the most successful house in this line in the country, having never met any business reverses and it bears the enviable reputation of supplying the most reliable goods among its many competitors in the United States. "Its main lines are gilt, silvered, nickel plated, steel and enameled metal fancy goods, specialties and patented novelties. Also table cutlery and razors."

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