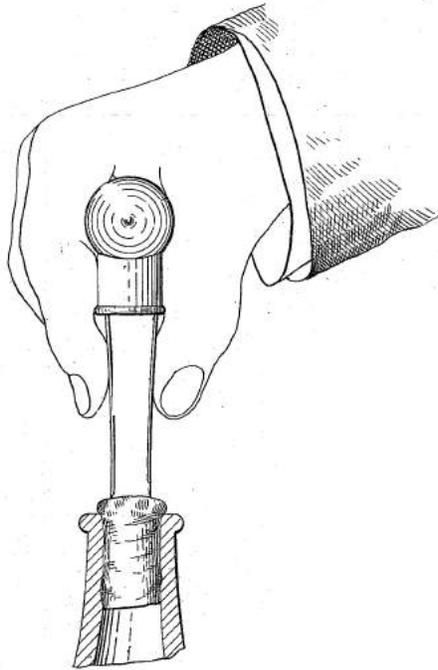


A Two-Pronged Sales Approach: Converse Cork Extractors with Advertising

by

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On May 9, 1899, Maschil D. Converse of New York, NY was awarded U.S. Patent number 624,457 for his Cork-Extractor; a rather straightforward example of the prong cork puller, his patent description explains:

Cork-extractors have been made with prongs which in use are inserted next the inner sides of the neck of the bottle on opposite sides of the cork by pressure to embrace the latter. It is to this class of cork-extractors that my present invention relates. In this type of cork-extractors heretofore various devices have been employed to adapt the prongs to operate on corkscrews of different diameters, involving more or less complication, consequent costliness of manufacture, and liability to derangement or breakage, and in all the flat external plane of surfaces of the blades or prongs have been arranged at right angles to the longitudinal axis or land of the handle, so that it is inconvenient to adjust the prongs astride the cork. The objects of my present invention are to overcome these several disadvantages, to cheapen the cost of manufacture, and to provide a cork extractor of the type described

that will be durable and that may expeditiously used, all of which I accomplish by means of the devices, combinations, and arrangement of parts and the forms of their construction hereinafter fully described and claimed, where in it will be found that my invention consists chiefly in first arranging the flat plane sides of the tapering prongs in planes parallel to the axis of the handle; second, in improved means of securing the prongs to the handle and in certain other particulars.

Converse had sixteen patents, and the fact that he was a patent attorney is an interesting side note. Until, of course, you come to find out that our man Maschil was actually the patent attorney for Lucien Mumford--whose pronged cork extractor (Patent No. 474,480, issued May 10, 1892) would have been one, "...involving more...complication, consequent costliness of manufacture, and liability to derangement or breakage..." that Converse describes in his 1899 patent.

In a 1913 catalog from the *Shapleigh Hardware Company*, they illustrate the Quick as a Wink (Converse patent) but also provide detailed instructions for use:

“QUICK AS A WINK”

Does not Injure the Cork

Directions



*Take the Puller into the hand so that the handle rests in the palm, putting the thumb on one tine and the forefinger on the other. Adjust the tines to size of Cork by pressing thumb and forefinger together, insert the tines each side of the cork **between Cork and Neck of Bottle**, work the tines carefully below the bottom of the cork by pushing one tine then the other (a rocking motion). When the tines are well below the bottom of the cork **turn the Puller around and around**, at the same time **pulling very gently**. Around goes the Puller, Cork and all, and out rides the Cork on the tines and drops from the Puller without labor injury to cork or spilling contents.*

If the cork has flattened edges out over neck of bottle push the tines through the flattened edges and operate as above; for Cork in bottles of Glue, Mucilage or other adhesive matter insert the tines in two or three different places before turning the Puller. Per dozen.

No. 35—Tempered Blued Spring Steel Tines; Maple Handle, Mahogany Stained and Varnished; Nickel Plated Brass Case; Length Closed 4 in; Length of Handle 3 in; Weight per dozen 3 lbs..... \$ 4.00

One Dozen in a Box.



When I was first collecting, I ran across an estate sale not too far from where we were living in Chicago, and having exhausted the various rooms, I headed down to the basement. And, in a toolbox amongst various wrenches and gadgets, I found my first

Converse Cork Extractor. When I headed over to pay for the item, I was told that it was free, and to have a good day. Free!

Over the years, many variations of the Converse have made their way into our collection; European and British made examples, the Converse in Sterling, the unusual patent applied for example, a variant made of ivory and Sterling marked SPAULDING GORHAM, and of course the subject of this article several Converse cork extractors with advertising.

Before we get to the various advertisements that appear on the Converse, we should actually start with the Hawley Manufacturing Company of Stepney, Connecticut.

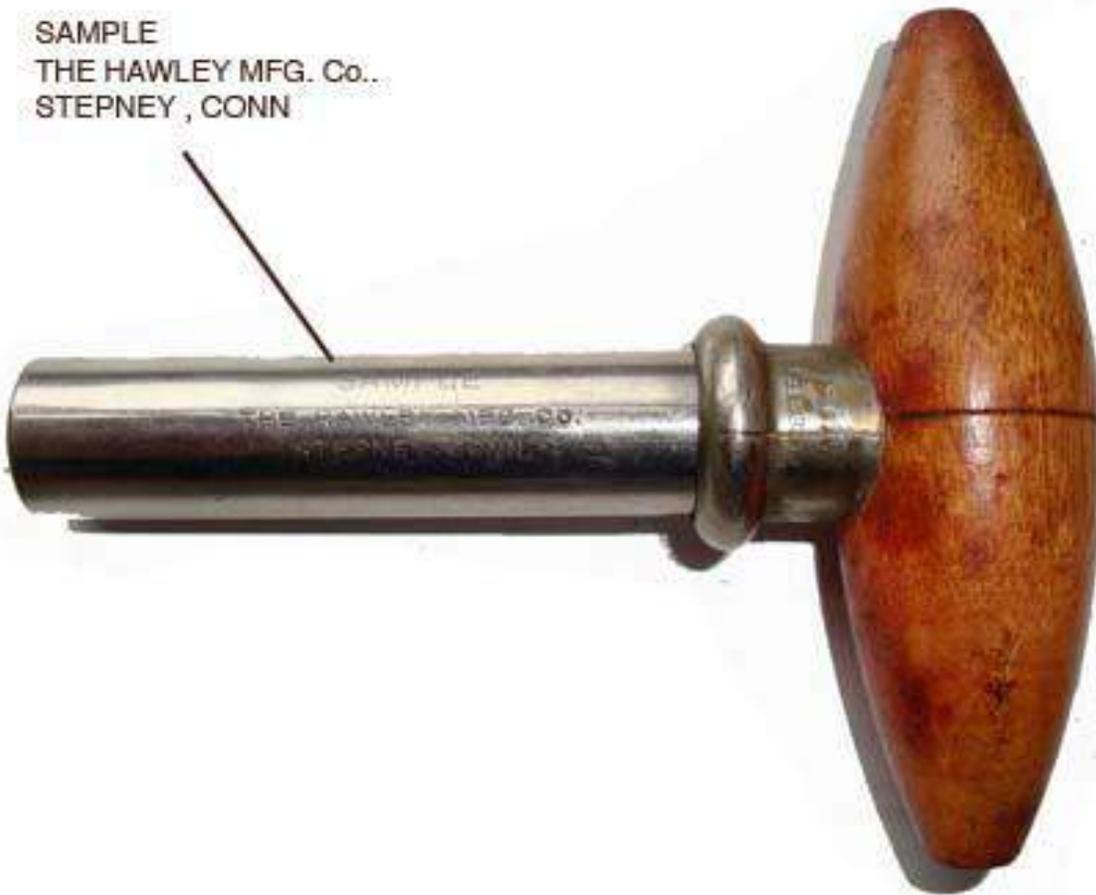
Hawley placed many ads in various newspapers at the time, looking for sales people for their product.

**AGENTS WANTED—BOYS OR GIRLS—To
sell a Patent Cork Puller to Ladies. Be our
agent and make money quick. Hawley Mfg.
Co., Stepney Depot, Conn., Dept. C.**

And, upon the sheath a few Converse's have turned up that were indeed salesperson samples.

These salesperson samples, beyond providing a means through which to demonstrate the cork puller itself, they also demonstrated the usefulness of the sheath as an avenue for advertising one's business.

SAMPLE
THE HAWLEY MFG. Co..
STEPNEY , CONN



The list that follows are the Converse with advertising that exist within our collection, with one addition from collector John Stanley and another known example from collector Robin Preston.

ALAMEDA COMPANY, WINE AND BRANDIES, 104 TREMONT STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

CH RITTER, DETROIT, MICH, SOLE PROP'RS, WESTMINSTER RYE WHISKEY (marked across the handle, rather than on the sheath)

COMPLIMENTS OF FRIEDMAN, KEILER & CO., DISTILLERS OF BROOK HILL

CW GRIFFING, WHOLE SALE LIQUOR DEALER, FARRELL, P.A.

Arthur Lehmann & Co., used the converse for several of their products; **Elmore Bourbon, Lehmann's Rye, and Jersey Whiskey.** Lehmann also made "May Bloom", "Richland", and "Spring Valley." Could there be other Converse that carry advertisements for these brands?

ELMORE BOURBON – ARTHUR LEHMANN & CO. – PEORIA, ILL

LEHMANN'S RYE – ARTHUR LEHMANN & CO. – PEORIA, ILL.

JERSEY WHISKEY – ARTHUR LEHMANN & CO. – PEORIA, ILL
(according to a past eBay sale per Robin Preston of pre-pro.com)

FRANK RIPLEY WHISKEY BEST FOR FAMILY USE, L. HEINEMAN JAMESTOWN N.Y.

GREEN VALLEY WHISKEY, CASEY BROTHERS, SCRANTON, PA
(collection of John Stanley)

HOLIHAN BROS, WHOLESALERS TO THE PEOPLE, LAWRENCE, MASS

MC CORMICK'S STRAIGHT WHISKEY

MURRAY HILL CLUB WHISKEY, JOS. A. MAGNUS & CO, CINCINNATI, O.

The Converse Cork Extractors with advertising listed above, as mentioned, are largely examples from our own collection, and clearly the list is not exhaustive. What others are out there?



If any of you have a Converse with different advertising, I would love to add it to the list, and keep a running inventory of Converse cork extractors with advertising.