

Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

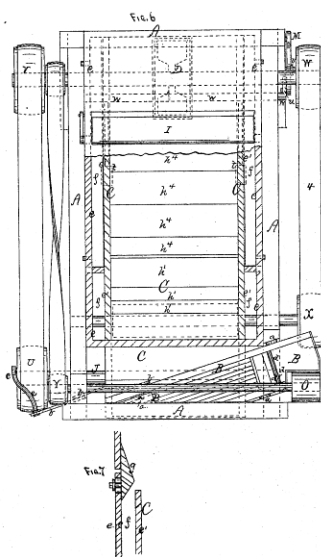
The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

The final curtain fell on August 28, 1923 for the Erie Specialty Company in Erie, Pennsylvania. It had been a righteous run, although the manufacturing firm had been on life support since the death of its founder, Edwin Walker, in 1917. It was a sad ending for a company that had become famous over the years for its corkscrews, ice cream dippers, cigar cutters, ice picks, lemon squeezers and bottle openers. A newspaper advertisement invited bidders to the 1925 auction of not only the once prosperous firm's machinery and equipment (362 lots) but its more than half an acre of land, brick and frame buildings and 285,000 pounds of "assorted steel and screw stock."

Edwin Walker was an amazing inventor. From 1874 to 1921 (four years after his death) he was awarded an astounding 51 patents (see table), covering 10 different subjects. A breakdown: corkscrew related 18; ice cream dippers 8; cigar cutters 6; work bench tools 5; kitchen tools 4; bottle openers 3; phonograph related 3; champagne bottle taps 2; turnbuckle 1; and middlings-purifiers 1.

Walker was 27 years old and working in Silver Creek, New York in the flour milling industry when he was granted his first patent with his father for, appropriately, a middlings-purifiers or flour cleansing machine. Patent No. 148,099 was awarded to "G. & E. Walker of Hamburg, New York" (George and Edwin) on March 3, 1874.

March 3, 1874. G. & E. Walker
MIDDLINGS-PURIFIERS
Filed Jan. 7, 1874 148,099



WITNESSES.
C. H. Woodward.
T. H. Thomas.

George Walker
Edwin Walker
INVENTORS. By
Burke, Fraser & Co
attys.

Harold J. Gross, James H. Hurley and E. Tudor Gross, Auctioneers.

988th AUCTION SALE

Tuesday, August 28th, 1923

at 11 O'Clock A. M., Eastern Standard Time, on the premises of the

ERIE SPECIALTY CO.

No. 512 West 12th Street, between Cherry and Walnut Streets,

ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

Manufacturing Plant

Consisting of: Tract of land fronting 165 ft. on West 12th street, extending back 165 ft., area 27,225 sq. ft., and group of brick and frame buildings, mostly modern mill construction, with floor area of approximately 35,000 sq. ft.; sprinklered; steam heating plant; electric lighting and power wiring.

Located on one of the best manufacturing streets of Erie, within one-half mile of the business center, and about the same distance from passenger and freight stations. Well paved street; electric car lines and tracks of Bessemer & Lake Erie railroad, in street. Spur track connection could be made.

362—Lots of machinery, equipment and stock—362
Including about 285,000 lbs. assorted steel and screw stock, etc.
To be sold separately, to the highest bidders, without limit or reserve.

Apply for descriptive catalogue to

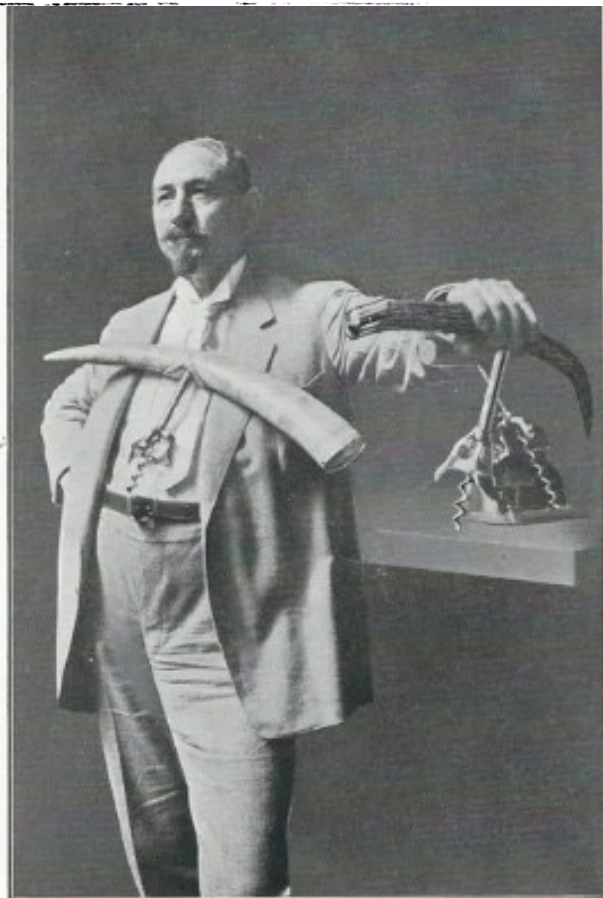
G. L. & H. J. GROSS

Established 1888.

Real Estate and Insurance.

Providence, R. I.

170 Westminister Street

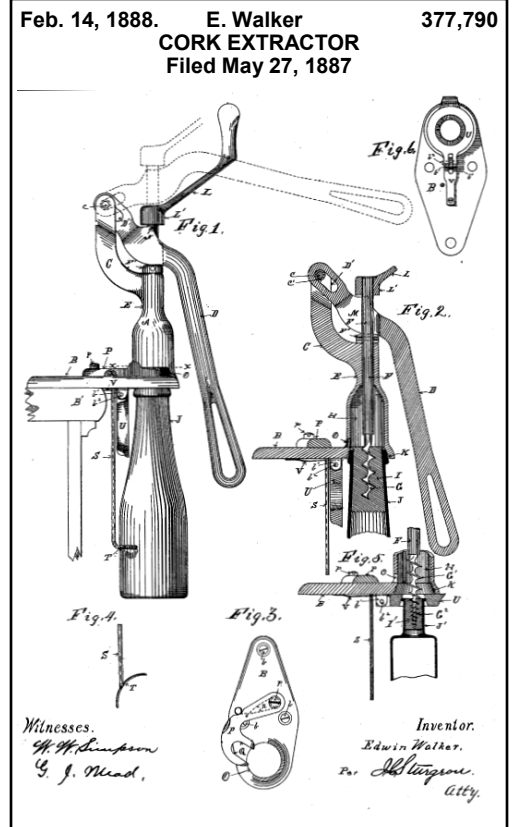


Just For Openers January-December 2025 2

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

The patent did not meet with success and in 1880 Walker moved to Erie, Pennsylvania where he remained the rest of his life. In Erie he worked as a pattern maker and draughtsman for three different firms, Sterns Manufacturing, Taper Sleeve Pulley Company and Skinner & Wood Engine Company, before going into business for himself in 1883. The E. Walker Tool Company offered a line of tools, including a combo device for chisels, an adjustable plane and a woodworking marking gauge, all patented by Walker.

In 1888 he sold the company and launched the Erie Specialty Manufacturing Company, later shortened to Erie Specialty Company. That same year he was awarded his first cork-screw patent, No. 377,790, on February 14. It was for a mechanical, table mount "cork extractor" with a circular turning arm to insert the worm and a lever arm to push down and pull out the cork. It was the beginning of Erie's "Quick and Easy" line of tools, later including lemon squeezers, ice cream dishers, ice cream dishers, and ice picks.



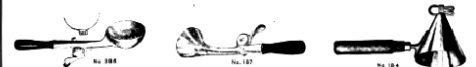
A WORD TO BUYERS AND DEALERS

As a reminder that NOW IS THE TIME to place your orders with us for your Spring and Summer requirements in our line of Quick and Easy Sellers.

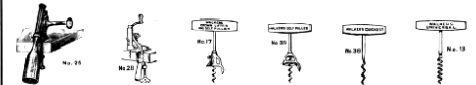
WALKER'S QUICK AND EASY LEMON AND LIME SQUEEZERS



WALKER'S QUICK AND EASY ALUMINUM, COPPER AND TIN ICE CREAM DISHERS



WALKER'S QUICK AND EASY CORK PULLERS AND CORK SCREWS



WALKER'S QUICK AND EASY SPRING AND SOLID ICE PICKS



A LARGE LINE OF OTHER QUICK AND EASY SELLERS in our fully illustrated 1909 catalog. New prices and discounts that will interest all buyers and dealers. Mailed upon request.

ERIE SPECIALTY COMPANY,

500 West 12th Street,

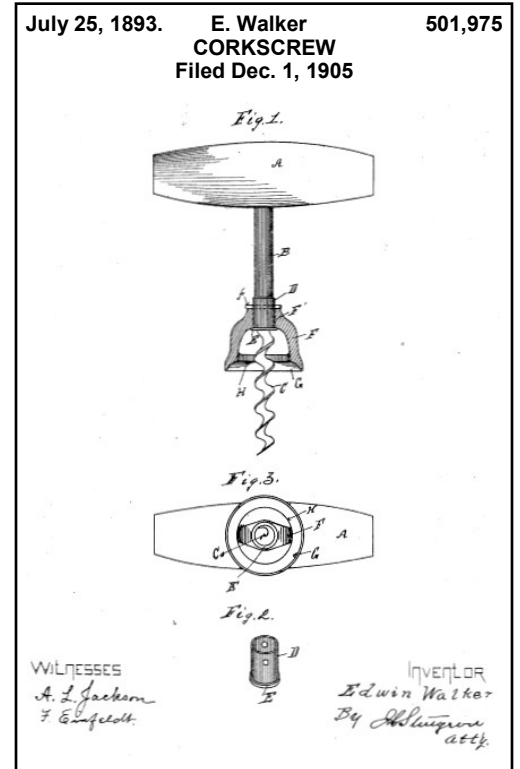
ERIE, PA., U. S. A.

Just For Openers January-December 2025 3

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co.

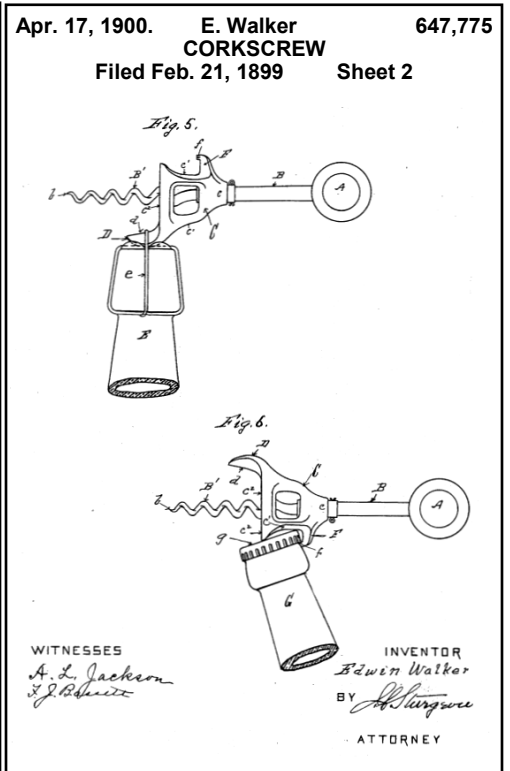
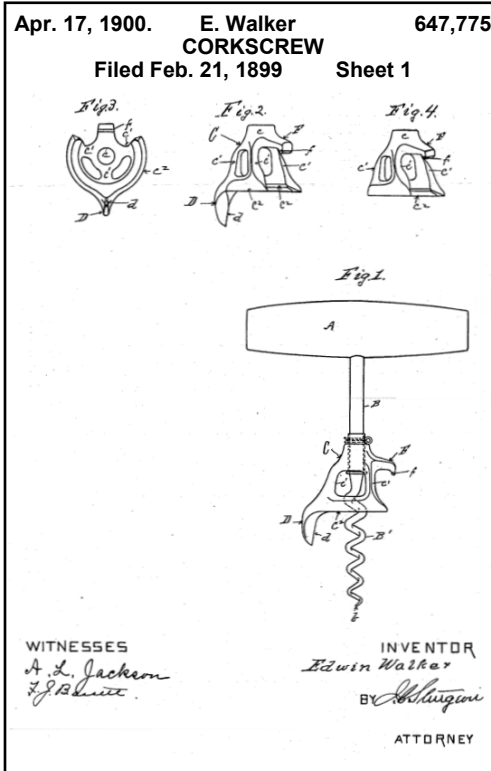
By Don Thornton and John Stanley

One of Walker's most important and popular corkscrews was patented in 1893. It was a "self-pulling" corkscrew with what Walker said was a "yoke" that fit on the top of the bottle. The yoke became known as a "bell" and thus the "Walker Bell Cap" corkscrew. Another popular extractor was patented in 1900 also featuring a "bell" and a hook to remove seal caps.



Just For Openers January-December 2025 4

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley



WALKER'S
Self-Pulling Cork Screws

WALKER'S
PAT. JULY 25, 1899
SELF-PULLER.

It's the Leader
No other Screw equals it
No Pulling required
Cuts the Wires

Every dealer should have this Screw in stock
It's what the people want
Special Steel fine temper

WRITE FOR CATALOGUE AND PRICES
ERIE SPECIALTY CO.
Mfrs. of CORK PULLERS, CORK SCREWS, &c.
ERIE, PA., U. S. A.



WALKER'S Stag Handle, Self Pulling
Cork Screw

ONLY \$1.25 POSTPAID

No. 170

Made of the finest steel, strong and durable, with finest nickel finish. The handle is genuine stag, and the whole makes a rich and serviceable article of household utility that will last a lifetime.

Mailed in fancy box.
Everyone Guaranteed.

This handy device does away with all exertion in removing corks from bottles of any kind, as no pulling is needed, the cork being turned out by the continuous turning of the handle. It cuts wires, removes corks, seals and aluminum stoppers; takes out the cork whole and without breaking the bottle or cutting the hands. It is the handiest device of its kind and so easy to use that a lady or child can operate it.

A Sensible Holiday Gift.

Every Walker Corkscrew is tested at the factory and guaranteed perfect. Ask your dealer for the Walker. If not there, take no other but send \$1.25 to us and we will mail you one at once, postage prepaid.

ERIE SPECIALTY CO., Erie, Pa.

Just For Openers January-December 2025 5

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

Walker applied for his first ice cream dipper (or disher or scoop) in 1905 and it was awarded in 1908. The object of his dipper, he said, "to provide an implement adapted to be conveniently operated for the purpose of removing cream, or a similar substance, from a receptacle and discharging the same into a plate or other container, the operations of dipping, and of releasing and discharging the contents of the dipper being easily and quickly performed by one hand." He advertised his line of eight dipper as "quick and easy."

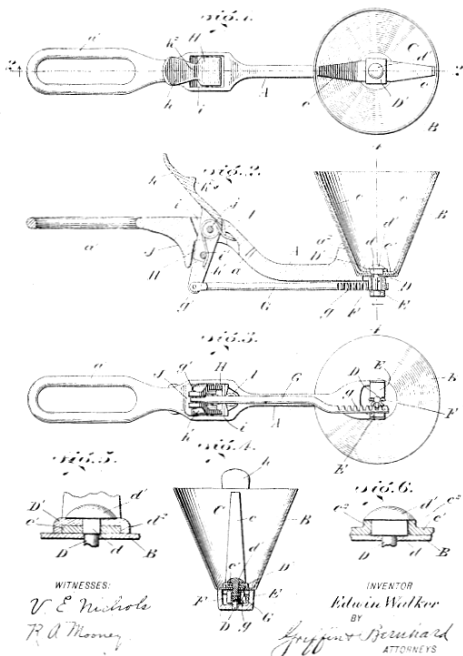
WALKER'S QUICK & EASY ICE CREAM DISHERS.

No. 186.

Thousands of these Dishers in use giving universal satisfaction. The knives are made of German silver, copper cups, and the handles are cast bronze. The entire Dishers is heavily nickel plated. There is absolutely nothing



July 7, 1908. **E. Walker**
ICE CREAM DIPPER
Filed Dec. 1, 1905 **892,633**



REMEMBER THE NAME
Walker's "QUICK AND EASY" Ice Cream Dishers
AND OTHER SODA FOUNTAIN ACCESSORIES

Our new 1912 Swinging Blade Dishers No. 389 is the strongest and cleanest Dishers made. **WRITE FOR BOOKLET.**

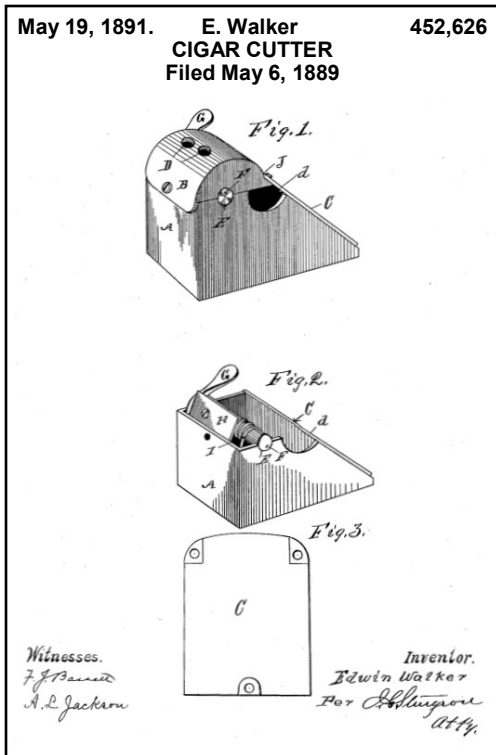
Adopted and Sold by all Soda Fountain Manufacturers and Jobbers

MADE ONLY BY ERIE SPECIALTY CO., 529 12th St., ERIE, PA.

Just For Openers January-December 2025 6

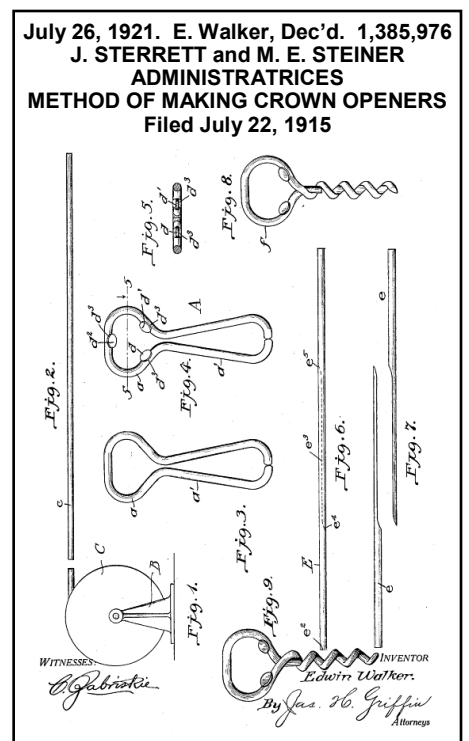
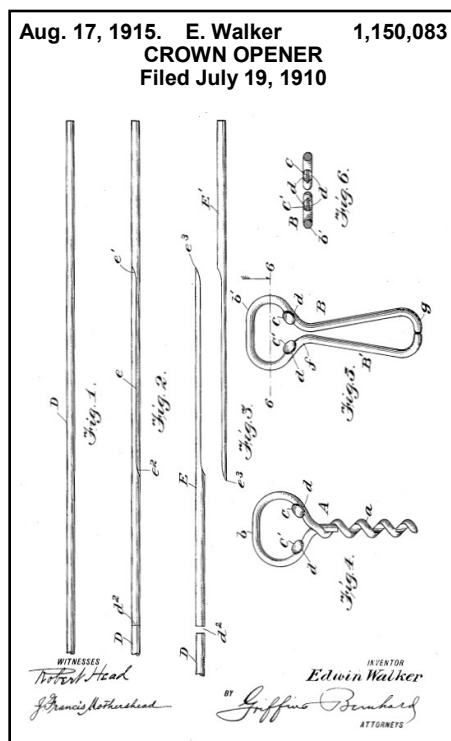
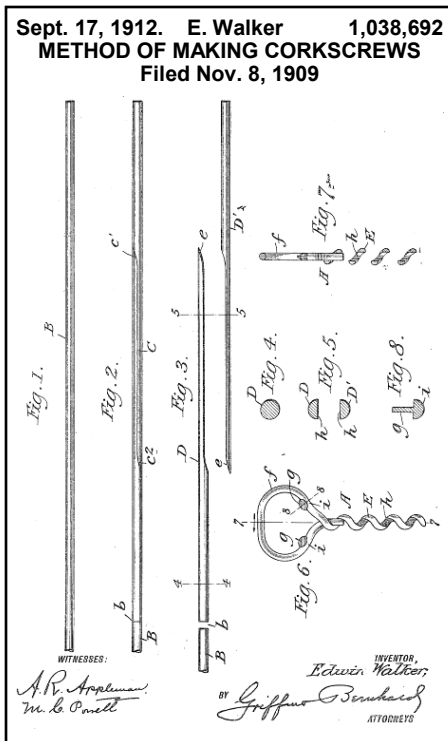
The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

Walker was a cigar smoker, which likely got him interested in cigar cutters. He was awarded his first cutter patent in 1891. "The object of my invention," he said, "is to construct a cigar cutter consisting of a box" equipped with a lever for "an oscillating cutter." The box also had a compartment in which "the severed cigar tips" would accumulate and be "readily discharged." Another important feature, Walker said, was the front plate on the box could be used for advertising. The box would perform two functions – "that of a cigar-cutter and that of an advertising device." Many of these devices, advertising cigars, ended up on cigar store counters for use by customers.



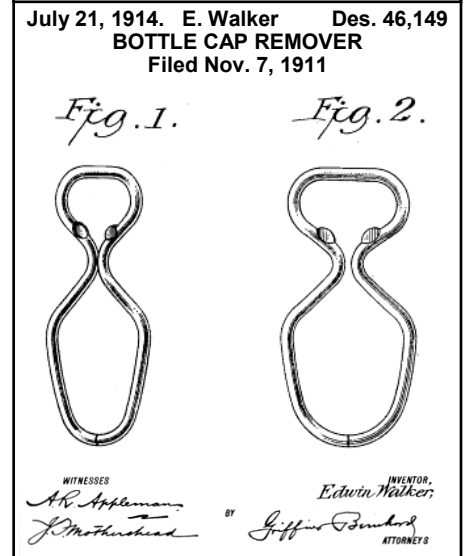
The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

Walker, a pioneer of wire-style American bottle openers, was awarded four patents related to the popular and very collectible opener. Warning: Three of these patents overlap each other and can be confusing. The first patent, No. 1,038,692, dated September 17, 1912, was for the "method of making corkscrews" from a metal rod with a worm on one end a crown cap lifter on the other. The patent dealt mostly with the making of the worm, but at one point near the end of the text Walker noted: "Although I have shown and described the crown opener as a part of the cork screw, it is manifest that the crown opener may be made as a separate and distinct article... The crown opener and the method of producing it forms the subject of a separate application filed by me July 19,



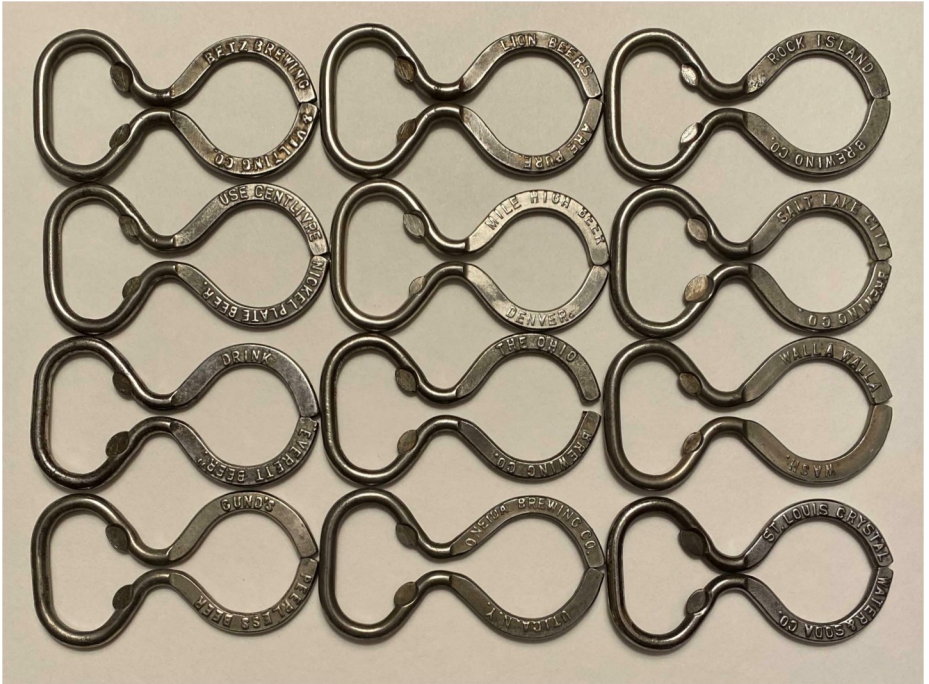
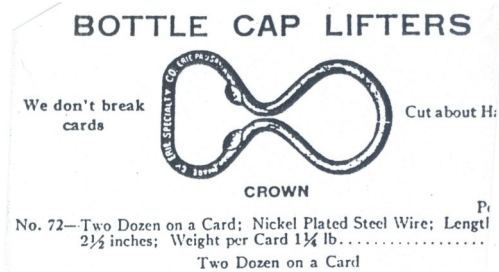
1910, Serial No. 572,681." Walker was awarded Design Patent No. 46,149 on March 25, 1913 for a "bottle cap remover" that became the rough design for all other wire openers produced over the years. That patent was followed by No. 1,150,083 on August 17, 1915 in

which Walker cited his 1912 "method of making corkscrews" patent but stated this application "pertains only to the crown or cap opener." What followed was more overlap and confusion. Walker's daughters, Jesse Sterrett and Mary E. Steiner, acting as "administratrices of said Edwin Walker, Deceased," applied for a patent for the "method of making crown-openers" (as opposed to cork-



The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

screws). It was granted July 26, 1921. The patent cited the July 19, 1910 previously mentioned application and said this division from it was for "a method of making crown openers which consists in bending a metal rod or wire into a loop and swaging the metal at a plurality of points with the loop..." Apparently the daughters acted to really nail down credit for Walker for the wire style opener.



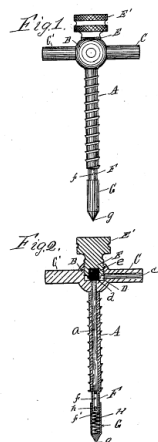
Walker had one other "opening" device – a champagne bottle tap. He was granted two patents, No. 692,951 in 1902 and No. 757,794 in 1904, both designed to tap through the cork with a hollow gimlet to allow a person to pour a drink without fully uncorking the bottle while keeping the bottle's pressure for later use. Many of these taps came in their own wooden box with printed instructions, including: "Do not remove wire or cap from bottle. Insert gimlet in center of tin cap and bore hold in center of cork to shoulder." In the 19th Century and into the 20th, champagne was considered a medicine, or therapeutic tonic, to be taken in small amounts for different ailments – thus a need for taps to trap the pressure.

Photo Courtesy of CCCC
(Canadian Corkscrew Collector's Club)



Feb. 11, 1902. E. Walker
BOTTLE TAP
Filed May 17, 1901

692,951

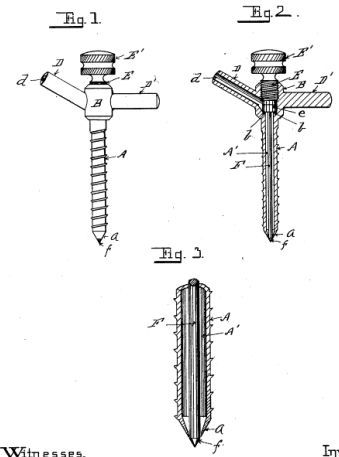


Witnesses.
J. J. Bennett
H. J. Thompson

Inventor.
Edwin Walker
By J. J. Bennett
att'y.

Apr. 19, 1904. E. Walker
BOTTLE TAP
Filed Sept. 2, 1903

757,794



Witnesses.
G. J. Maud
Florence Storkert

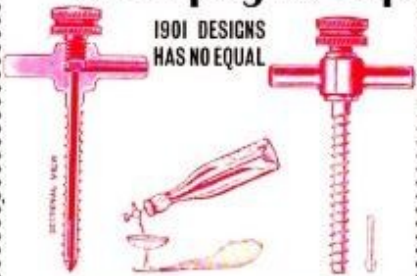
Inventor.
Edwin Walker
By J. J. Bennett
att'y.

Just For Openers January-December 2025 9

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

Walker's Quick and Easy Champagne Tap

1901 DESIGNS HAS NO EQUAL



ABSOLUTELY GAS TIGHT AND CLEANABLE

By removing Screw Valve all passage ways can be easily cleansed. A new and very important feature in a Tap, long desired in the sick room and hospitals, by physicians and nurses. The most sanitary Tap manufactured. Put up one in a box with gimlet, one-half dozen Small Points, wire for cleaning and full directions.

MANUFACTURED ONLY BY
Erie Specialty Co., Erie, Pa., U.S.A.

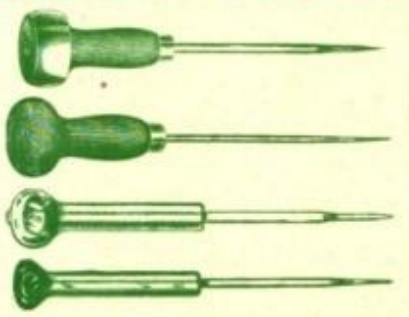
WALKER'S No. 42
QUICK AND EASY LEMON SQUEEZERS



The Squeezer combines a squeezing, rotating movement which is adjusted so that it extracts every particle of juice, making it the most economical Squeezer made, and Quick and Easy to operate.

ERIE SPECIALTY CO., Erie, Pa., U.S.A.

WALKER'S Quick and Easy Ice Picks



Made of Crucible Steel, oil-tempered, anti-rust, nickel-plated. Will not bend, break or rust. Each one tested and guaranteed. Several other styles illustrated in our 1906 Catalogue.

ERIE SPECIALTY CO., Erie, Pa., U.S.A.

According to the 1909 book "A Twentieth Century History of Erie County, Pennsylvania," Edwin Walker was a force to be reckoned with. "Mr. Walker has natural gifts in the lines of inventor, mechanic, manufacturer and salesman, in combination with great executive ability and business acumen," the book said in typical high praise of such publications of the day. "He has a thorough knowledge of all details of his business, and is equally efficient in the office, the factory or on the road as salesman, a combination rarely found in one individual." The book also reported that Walker's son, Clarence, was at the time "treasurer and superintendent" of the company and "one of Erie's well-known young manufacturers."

Edwin died in 1917 and Clarence apparently was the new boss. The following year the C.T. Williamson Novelty Company acquired Erie's opener business. The companies were believed to be friendly competitors, sharing advertising space over the years in *Hardware Dealers' Magazine*, dating back to 1899. It apparently was not a hostile takeover. The Erie Specialty Company reportedly was moving into making machine parts for aircraft and automobiles before fading away and the subsequent 1923 auction.

HARDWARE DEALERS' MAGAZINE 873

No. 17. WALKER'S CROWN LIFTER AND SELF-PULLER



WALKER'S Self-Pulling CORK SCREW

Patents Granted. Turns the Cork out. Cuts the Wires. Removes Crown. Nickel Plated. Every Screw Tested.

ERIE SPECIALTY CO. ERIE, PA., U. S. A.

NEW HAND POWER Combination Cork Screw Crown and Seal Opener ALSO WIRE CUTTER



FANCY ROSEWOOD HANDLE. MADE OF CRUCIBLE STEEL. ALL OTHER PARTS HEAVILY NICKEL PLATED. TEMPER WARRANTED.

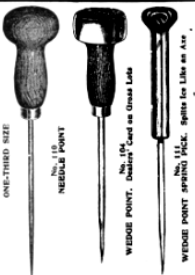
This Screw will remove Crowns, Ballroom Seals, Brass Wires and Extract Corks, virtually combining four articles in one.

No. 1942, by the doz. - \$3.00 Net

THE C. T. WILLIAMSON NOVELTY CO. NEWARK, N. J.

JUNE 1915 HARDWARE DEALERS' MAGAZINE 1085

WALKER'S Quick and Easy Steel Tempered Anti-Rust Ice Picks



ONE-THIRD SIZE. No. 10. NEEDLE POINT. No. 104. WEDGE POINT. Double End as One Side. WEDGE POINT. Double End. Spills Ice Like an Axe.

WALKER'S Quick and Easy Steel Tempered Anti-Rust Ice Picks

May be depended upon to draw the cork out whole.

No stripping or untwisting. No broken bits of cork to get into the bottle. Braced for every strain. The Handle remains firm after many years of use.

C. T. Williamson Novelty Co.

3738 Mulberry Street, Newark, N. J.

JUNE 1906 HARDWARE DEALERS' MAGAZINE 1045

The Latest Corkscrew Novelty



Cut Pull Size

Crown Seal Cork Opener. No. 4 Wooden Cork Extractor. No. 4 Metal Tube. Mounted on a Card. 1 or 2 dozen.

WALKER'S Quick and Easy Steel Tempered Anti-Rust Ice Picks

Write for Catalogue and Prices

ERIE SPECIALTY CO., Erie, Pa., U.S.A.

C. T. Williamson Novelty Co. 64 Ridger Ave., Newark, N. J.

***Just For Openers* January-December 2025 10**

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

MAY, 1907.

HARDWARE DEALERS' MAGAZINE

897

Moulding and Punch Bowl

Hooks

HANDY READY

Three Finishes



WILL NOT BEND

Send for prices and samples to
C. T. Williamson Wire Novelty Co.
64 Badger Ave., Newark, N. J.

A
NICKEL-PLATED
SPRING

ICE PICK

YOU CAN SELL FOR

10 Cents

Walker's
Quick and Easy
No. 147

SEVERAL OTHER STYLES
Illustrated in our 1907 Catalogue

ERIE SPECIALTY CO.
ERIE, PA., U. S. A.

JANUARY, 1908.

HARDWARE DEALERS' MAGAZINE

43

**DON'T MISS A
GOOD THING**

Cut Full Size



**CROWN
SEAL
CORK**

**OPENER
LIFTER
EXTRACTOR**

NO. 4 WOODEN
NO. 4½ METAL
MOUNTED
ON A
C. T. WILLIAMSON
Wire Novelty Co.

TUBE
TUBE
1 or 2 DOZEN
CARD

54 Badger Avenue
NEWARK, N. J.

**WALKER'S
CROWN LIFTER AND
SELF-PULLER**



*Now is
the
Time*

For every DEALER to examine our large line
of cork Screws, Ice Picks, Cork Pullers, Ice
Cream Dishers, Ice Cream Spoons, Lemon
Squeezers, Lime-Squeezers, etc., for 1908 busi-
ness. We are the largest manufacturers of
this line of goods, all of which are designed for
up-to-date requirements. Finely illustrated
catalogue with prices and discounts will be
forwarded to all dealers on request.

ERIE SPECIALTY CO., ERIE, PA., U.S.A.

**ERIE SPECIALTY
COMPANY**

ERIE, PA.
U.S.A.

E. WALKER'S
PATENTS

1909



"THE QUICK & EASY LINE"

1909

ERIE SPECIALTY COMPANY

ERIE, PA., - U. S. A.

MANUFACTURERS OF

FINE HARDWARE, KITCHEN, HOTEL, BAR, DRUGGIST SUNDRIES
AND SODA FOUNTAIN SPECIALTIES

ALSO

ADVERTISING NOVELTIES

CABLE ADDRESS "SPECIALTY" WESTERN UNION CABLE



Just For Openers January-December 2025 11

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

TABLE OF EDWIN WALKER PATENTS

148,099 Middlings-Purifiers (George & Edwin, father and son)	March 3, 1874
291,820 Combination Tool	January 8, 1884
318,331 Adjustable Faced Plane	May 19, 1885
357,429 Tool Handle for Interchangeable Tools	February 8, 1887
359,336 Combined Surface and Marking Gauge	March 25, 1887
377,790 Cork Extractor (table mount)	February 14, 1888
452,625 Cork Puller (table mount)	May 19, 1891
452,626 Cigar Cutter	May 19, 1891
501,975 Corkscrew	July 25, 1893
515,411 Automatic Cork Puller	February 27, 1894
515,412 Cork Puller	February 27, 1894
543,224 Cork Puller	July 23, 1895
D25,776 Corkscrew Collar	July 14, 1896
557,734 Cork Puller (table mount)	April 7, 1896
579,200 (Cork) Stopper Extractor	March 23, 1897
611,046 Corkscrew	September 20, 1898
D31,505 Corkscrew Head (See 647,775)	September 12, 1899
647,775 Corkscrew	April 17, 1900
649,498 Cork Puller (table mount)	May 15, 1900
676,013 Cork Puller (table mount)	June 11, 1901
692,951 Bottle Tap(see #757,794)	February 11, 1902
694,591 Cigar Tip Cutter	March 4, 1902
713,540 Bottle Neck Clamping Mechanism for Cork Pullers	November 11, 1902
753,941 Cigar Tip Cutter	March 8, 1904
757,794 Bottle Tap	April 19, 1904
789,892 Vegetable Masher (table mount)	May 16, 1905
792,864 Cigar Tip Cutter	June 20, 1905
805,600 Composite Sound Producer (phonograph)	November 28, 1905
892,633 Ice Cream Dipper	July 7, 1908
951,467 Cigar Cutter	March 8, 1910
961,184 Screw Driver	June 14, 1910
962,481 Cigar Cutter	June 28, 1910
962,603 Meat and Fruit Press (table mount)	June 28, 1910
964,588 Bottle Holder for Cork Puller and Other Machinery	July 19, 1910
1,012,944 Ice Cream Dipper (w/son Clarence L.)	December 26, 1911
1,038,692 Method of Making Corkscrews	September 17, 1912
1,057,021 Automated Cork Puller	March 25, 1913
D46,149 Bottle Cap Remover	July 21, 1914
1,115,754 Lemon Squeezer (table mount)	November 3, 1914
1,138,703 Ice Cream Dipper	May 11, 1915
1,138,704 Ice Cream Dipper	May 11, 1915
1,138,705 Ice Cream Dipper	May 11, 1915
1,138,706 Ice Cream Dipper	May 11, 1915
1,150,083 Crown Opener	August 17, 1915

Just For Openers January-December 2025 12

The Twists and Turns of Walker's Erie Specialty Co. By Don Thornton and John Stanley

1,162,116 Ice Cream Dipper

November 30, 1915

D48,269 Lime Squeezer (handheld)

December 7, 1915

1,194,685 Ice Cream Dipper

August 15, 1916

1,203,666 Phonograph

November 7, 1916

1,203,667 Phonograph

November 7, 1916

1,226,830 Turnbuckle

May 22, 1917

1,385,976 Method of Making Crown Openers (deceased)

July 26, 1921

Filed by daughters, heads of estate, relates to application on July 19, 1910 Serial No.

572,681 "novel crown opener and method of making"

