

William Rockwell Clough

Inventor and Manufacturer of over a Billion Corkscrews



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Introduction



The history of corkscrew development and manufacturing in North America was dominated by three giants: William Rockwell Clough in Alton, New Hampshire, Edwin Walker in Erie, Pennsylvania and Cornelius Titus Williamson (and son William) in Newark, New Jersey.

Over the years there were many other patentees and firms such as the Vaughan Novelty Manufacturing Company, Chicago that produced a wide variety of bottle openers and corkscrews but all were relatively insignificant in comparison to the volume and diversity of these three manufacturing giants.

This book will deal primarily with the contributions of W.R.Clough, although C.T. Williamson comes into the picture as Clough's partner when the two formed a partnership "Clough & Williamson" on June 1, 1877. I must mention at the beginning that as the C.T. Williamson Wire Novelty Company continued to produce many Clough corkscrews well into the 20th century, relevant references occur throughout the text.



W.R. Clough was a diversified mechanical genius and prolific inventor! He was granted and involved in some way, in a total of forty-three patents. Twenty-five of these were related to corkscrews, including four patents in England and one each in Canada, France, and Germany. All but two of his inventions were wire related, the exception being for the manufacture of sealing wax and a hose supporter. His sealing wax and bill and paper file patents, were probably inspired by his early work as an accountant.



Before going further, you may wish to see the interesting item marked CLOUGH'S PATENT JUNE 16, 1874, a mahogany & nickel plated steel wire Bill File that surfaced as a mouse trap on Ebay in early 2000. Given the diversity of Cloughs' inventions, it was probably a reasonable assumption on the part of the seller!

This book is a biographical and chronological account of Clough's life and his significant impact on the manufacture of corkscrews around the world.



Relevant patent numbers are included in the text, with a more detailed explanation and photographs, if available, accessed by following the links.