

The 1855 Yankee and M. Sault: An Aesthetic Paring of Wood and Iron  
John Lambert



Yankee Paring & Slicing Machine

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Any parer collector worth his or her salt most certainly desires a Yankee or M. Sault apple parer and slicing machine. Even those aficionados who insist they only acquire cast iron models have these two unique early machines on their "want list". I first saw the M. Sault when I visited Marion Levy in Shaker Heights, Ohio in 1983. It was love at first sight. He told me it was a gift from Woody Keillor whose fabulous collection eventually was sold at auction and is featured in Linda Campbell's *300 Years of Kitchen Collectibles*. I first became aware of the M. Sault from a photo in Campbell's book but the real thing was something to behold. Until last year, collectors assumed this parer was the M. S. Ault, but Mike Viney's painstaking research identified the company in New Haven, Connecticut as M. Sault. With the name of the manufacturer stenciled in capital letters and extra space between the S and A, it was an easy mistake to make. A third version, without a stencil exists. It was manufactured by Tenney and French of Orange, Massachusetts. They attached a label to this rare version that illustrates a wooden shroud over the discharge side of the slicing disc. Although, the label illustrates this feature, the one Mike Viney examined did not incorporate the wooden shroud. I have seen one example that does have this wooden shroud, but it did not have the paper label.

Shortly after visiting Mr. Levy, a real gentleman, I called Tom Wiggins of Billerica, Massachusetts and put in my order for a Yankee, a more desirable version of this parer of which I had recently become aware. He said he would call me if he ever found a duplicate. It was 1988, a full 5 years before I received my first phone call from Tom, a man who did not call to discuss world events or even what was new in the collecting world. When my wife walked out into our front yard, as I was mowing, and said "it's Tom Wiggins", I held my breath. Tom was not one to just sell things. He waited until he had 20-25 nice pieces and sent out an auction sheet. His first words were "I found a Yankee and I'll take \$600 for it." I realize to readers of this article this sounds fair if not

a bargain in today's market. Keep in mind, I had already purchased a Nonpareil for \$40, a long Bergner for \$150, a Hudson and Leslie for \$36 and a Thompson for \$250. We settled on \$550 and then I awaited one of the first of many great pieces that were shipped to me without the luxury of examining them.

I have owned the perfect Yankee, Fig. 1, for 30 years and it still sets on the mantle in my living room, a spot reserved for my most cherished antiques. For its day, the Yankee Parer and Slicing Machine was an advanced design enabling the user to process a vast number of apples for drying or other purposes. A complete Yankee is a prized possession to any collector.



Figure 1 Yankee Parer & Slicing Machine

What sets it apart and elevates it above the slightly smaller M. Sault is the fabulous decorative stencil that adorns the side opposite the large drive gear. I know of no other manufactured parer with an aesthetic feature this stunning. All of the Yankee parers made by the manufacturer David F. Randall (1825-1869) of Chicopee, Massachusetts

have a well-preserved stencil. I dare say there is no dealer or novice collector who would be so ill-informed as to refinish or, heaven forbid, remove this elaborate detail.



Figure 2 M. Sault and Yankee Side by Side

Side by side, there are noticeable differences between the Yankee and M. Sault Fig. 2. The M. Sault had the fancier spiral spokes on an 8" drive gear with the Yankee having straight spokes on a 9" drive. The paring arms are 9 1/2" and 10 1/2" respectively. The base board on the M. Sault is narrower, causing the inclined board beneath the slicing wheel to have a much steeper pitch. This would seem to be an improvement because the apple slivers are less likely to stick to the wooden "slide" with the greatest pitch, but I have always assumed the M. Sault was the earlier version. The base board in the patent clearly is the one we find on the Yankee but the bearing on the shaft for the slicing gear are the ones found on the M. Sault. In this version, the bearings cannot be removed and the slicing wheel cannot be separated from the shaft. On the Yankee, these have been changed to be a cradle with a pin over the shaft to allow the slicing

assembly to be removed and taken apart, seemingly an improvement and, thus, later. Perhaps we will never know which model was manufactured first.

The M. Sault exists in a number of collections, at least 15, and probably outnumbers the Yankee 3-1. I have owned 2 Yankees and 5 M. Saults, actually 5 ½. Someone stripped the cast iron off one box, no doubt to use for another purpose. All Yankees I have examined were identical whereas the M. Sault's had several variations. I acquired one version with a pushoff rod that slid through the fork shaft and another version that had 2 "rabbit ears" on the gear opposite the forks. Under normal operation, there is one 1 ½" tapered post on this gear to enable the user to rotate the pared apple as the whirling knives chew away at the apple. These rabbit ears seem to have a dual purpose in that they provide a balancing flywheel function to the apple as it spins quickly in response to the large drive gear as it is being pared.

Some M. Sault's have the patent date prominently embossed on the top of the casting that swivels and holds the fork and gear assembly, Fig 3.



Figure 3

M. Sault Patent Date

Many do not have this marking, instead featuring it on the side of the box, Fig 4.



Figure 4 M. Sault Stenciled Patent Date

Mike Viney took photos of a parer similar to the M. Sault offered at a Denver antique show that had an original label identifying it as a Yankee Apple Paring Machine, Fig 5. This parer had no stenciling on the side and had the spiral gears. He had the presence of mind to snap a photo of it.

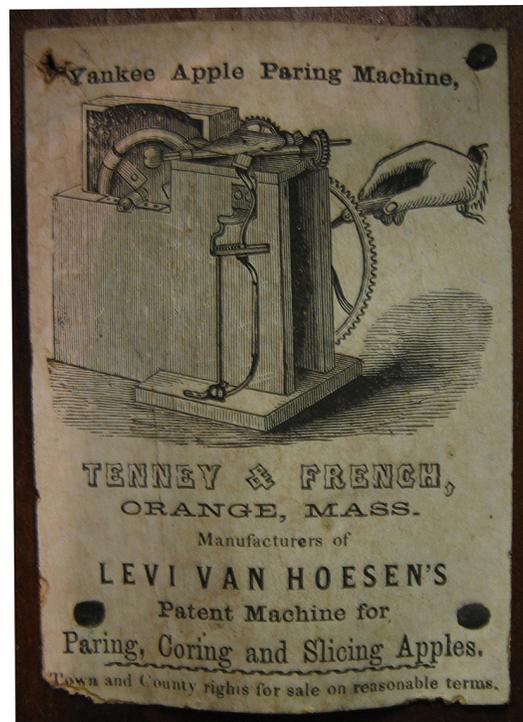


Figure 5 Yankee Apple Paring Machine

It is the only evidence of this parer with a label and this exact parer no doubt resides in a collection somewhere. Notice Tenney and French is another maker and “Town and County rights for sale on reasonable terms.”

A curious abnormality of the M. Sault’s is the apparent under sizing of the wood sides. They are a bit too short to accommodate the large drive gear. To allow enough clearance with the horizontal base, a trough had to be cut into the base. This may have been corrected at some point in production, but I believe it has been present in the 10 or so examples I have personally seen.

The wood and finish on a Yankee is superior. The wood appears to be walnut with an almost glossy finish whereas the M. Sault is made of a softer wood resembling pine or butternut with an oil finish. Don’t get me wrong, both are pieces of art, but the Yankee has that something special that puts it on the podium just ahead of the M. Sault.

The Yankee and M. Sault are prized machines, worthy additions for even the most demanding collector. I am certain that there is not a single collector who would not stop mowing to take a phone call to purchase one.

Happy-hunting,

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Levi Van Hoesen's Patented Apple Parer and Slicing Machine  
Mike Viney



Levi Van Hoesen's Patented Apple Parer and Slicing Machine M. SAULT

Levi Van Hoesen (1800-1866) was a farmer, blacksmith, and inventor. According to family lore, Levi had a small forge and enjoyed working with iron and other metals in his barn, tinkering with new inventions as well as improving existing designs (Gillespie-Stein, personal communication). Locally, Levi was known for making excellent cider. Levi and Samantha Barnes (1804-1901) were married on July 17, 1831. They had three children Mary Jane (1835-1917), Virginia (1839-1930), and Henry (1846-1907). Levi should properly be called junior as he was given his father's name. Levi Sr. was a poor farmer and Levi Jr. was determined to achieve economic success. The United States granted multiple patents to Levi Jr. for his inventions, a true testament to his intelligence, curiosity, and success.

One has only to look at Levi's patents to get a sense of his very diverse interests and talents. In 1829 Levi was awarded a patent for forming bats (Van Hoesen, 1829). In 1842 Levi patented his loom for weaving fishing nets (Van Hoesen, 1842). Levi was awarded a patent for a piano stool design in 1854, his daughter Virginia Van Hoesen was one of the witnesses for the patent papers (Van Hoesen, 1854). In 1856 Levi patented a fish trap (Van Hoesen, 1856). Levi's 1855 patent for his Apple Parer and Slicer is a marvel of engineering, his daughter Mary Jane Van Hoesen served as one of the witnesses for the patent papers, Fig 1.

In the December 4, 1855 patent papers Levi claims as his invention, "The combination of a paring with a slicing machine, when constructed and combined substantially as herein described that is, with an arrangement whereby the fork carrying the apple may be turned so as alternately to be brought into play with the paring knife and with the slicing wheel, being at the same time thrown into gear in the former case, and out of gear in the latter", (Van Hoesen, 1855).

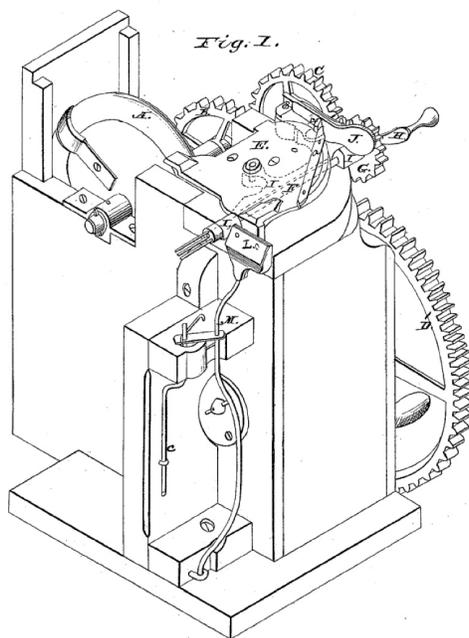


Figure 1 Levi Van Hoesen's Apple Paring and Slicing Machine Patent Drawing

Multiple manufacturers utilized Levi Van Hoesen's patent to make slightly different versions of his invention. *A List of Premiums, Awarded at the Seventh Annual Fair of Ohio, held at Cleveland, Sept. 23-26, 1856* seems to include Van Hoesen's parer (Harris, 1856, p. 6). J. K. Rice of Greenwich is listed as presenting Vanhouser's apple parer, cutter, and corer (Harris, 1856, p. 307). Note that the name is spelled differently, but in an expected way. It is unknown if J. K. Rice was a manufacturer or distributor.

Lambert (this volume) identifies three manufacturers utilizing Van Hoesen's patent, M. Sault of New Haven, Connecticut; Tenney and French of Orange, Massachusetts; and D. F. Randall (1825-1869) of Chicopee, Massachusetts. The relationship between Van Hoesen and these manufacturers is unknown. Parers made by M. Sault sometimes bear the Van Hoesen's patent date, but have no additional identification. Randall's parers are the most aesthetically pleasing and bear the name Yankee Parer and Slicing Machine along with the Van Hoesen patent date. Tenney and French name their parer the

Yankee Apple Paring Machine and indicate that it is “Levi Van Hoesen’s Patent Machine for Paring, Coring and Slicing Apples.”

The patent drawing has a wood extension to act as a shield for material launched during slicing. The Tenney and French label also has a wood box around the slicer for the same purpose, but an example of this parer I examined at the Denver antique show did not have this structure.

Watching this parer in action is a real treat; see video section of The Virtual Apple Parer Museum (Viney, 2016). There is still a lot of mystery around these parers. Hopefully, new clues will surface that will shed light on Levi Van Hoesen’s patented parer and the manufacturers that made his invention “come to life.”

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