

Lockey and Howland Split Frame Parers: An Enchanting Trio

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Lockey & Howland "Tilted Split-Frame"

## To Push or Pull

The first apple parers were designed to take the peel off the apple as efficiently as possible. Subsequent inventors added design elements focused on coring, slicing and even removing the pared apple. During the mid-nineteenth century cast iron turntables, returns, lathes and arcs became popular. Many of these parers included clever push-offs designed to remove the pared apple from the sometimes, stubborn forks. Engineering a durable push-off turned out to be quite a feat as many designs were prone to breakage. You can sail a ship no matter the wind but you might have to sacrifice your mast. A unique and elegant design for removing the pared apple was utilized in three turntable apple parers manufactured under the Lockey & Howland brand.

Patents issued to William Robb and later David H. Goodell and William Robb attempted to solve the high stress push-off action with a novel approach. All other turntable, return, and arc parers with designs to remove the apple strived to push the pared apple off the forks. Instead of trying to exert enough force against the apple to loosen it from the forks the designs of Robb and Goodell were engineered to pull the forks from the apple. Many would claim this is the same thing. I assure you it is not. Try pushing a speared apple from an arrow. Even a child knows that to remove a tightly stuck object from an arrow, one should grip the object and pull the arrow out.

This is exactly the strategy employed by “split-frame” turntable apple parers manufactured under the Lockey and Howland name employing patents by Goodell and Robb, figs 1 and 2. One part of the frame keeps the apple in place while a second part of the frame literally pulls the forks from the pared apple.

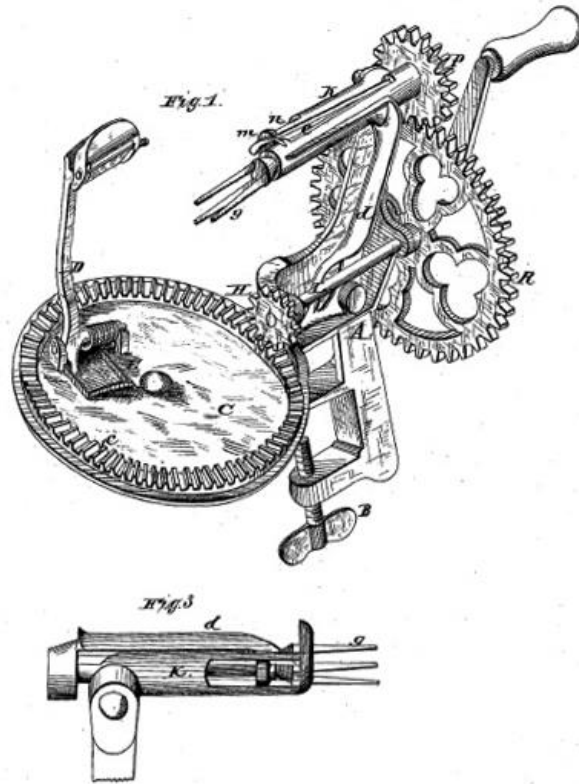


Figure 1 D. H. Goodell & W. Robb Apple Parer Patent 200,279 Fig 1 & 3

The part of the frame that includes the forks, fork shaft and small fork gear is separate from the rest of the frame. In one design this fork assembly slides away from the rest of the frame while in a second design it pivots away, fig 6.

Remarkably, to accomplish this task, the fork gear momentarily disengages from the hand-driven gear and then quickly reengages. It is a marvelous thing to observe, especially because everything has to reengage before the crank handle comes back to the 12 o'clock position where it will contact the shaft if it does not move back into its normal position quickly, see The Virtual Apple Parer Museum Video Section, (Viney, 2007).

## The Enchanting Trio

All three split-frame L&H parers bear three patent dates. The first two patent dates June 17 & December 16, 1856 were issued to Horatio Keyes for his turntable and cutter head designs. The third patent date of November 22, 1870 was issued to William Robb for his fabulous split-frame arc New Lightning apple parer. The L&H split-frame parers, like the New Lightning arc, used a split-frame design to remove the apple from the forks once paring was completed. The split-frame patent issued to David H. Goodell and William Robb on February 12, 1878 introduces an inclined (tilted) turntable, figs 1 and 2. Interestingly, even the canted (tilted) split-frame design described later does not bear this patent date.

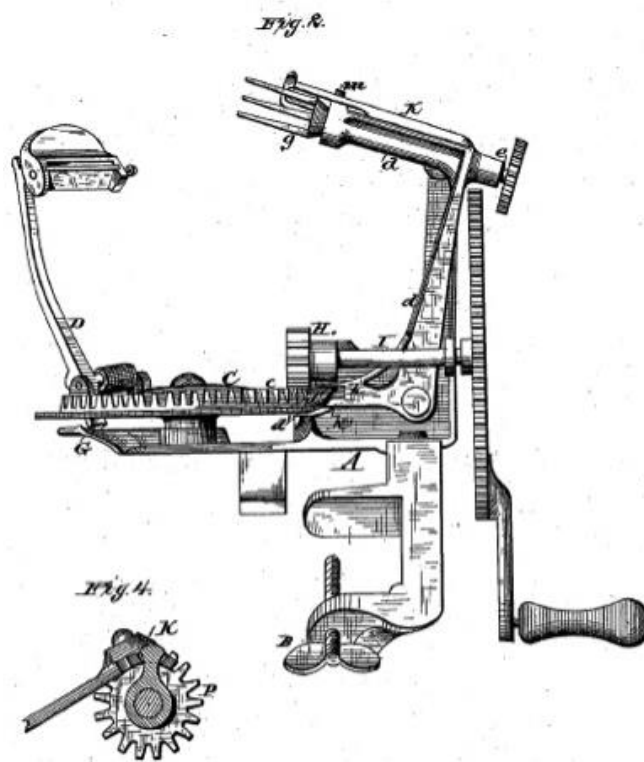


Figure 2 D. H. Goodell & W. Robb Apple Parer Patent 200,279 Fig 2 & 4

The most common of the three is illustrated in figure 3. Most medium sized collections, 50 or more, will have this model. Still, it is a worthy addition with its

slippery action unlike any others. This model is distinguished by the fact that the turntable is not elevated above the table and the movable part of the frame slides along an axle to pull the forks from the pared apple, fig 6, A.



Figure 3 Split-Frame with Low Base

The second model is commonly called the “Heavy” L&H, fig 4. Personally, I have always had a special fondness for this small but beefy model, which is not easy to find. It seems massive for its size and holding it makes one think it would last a lifetime even under the heaviest of use. The wide teeth give it a feeling of unleashed power ready to skin any apple. An example in fine condition is a welcome addition to even the advanced collector. Generally, collections of under 100 will not have this model. I acquired my own back in

1983 when I heard of a fellow selling his modest collection of 50 parers. Unbelievably, when I got his list he had a heavy L&H, a Reading Gem, and the almost unobtainable J. D. Browne. Sadly, the latter two had found new homes before I arrived on the scene, but I secured the “heavy” for \$50. That was in the



Figure 4 Heavy Split-Frame

midst of a very good year. I began the year with 16 parers and ended with 45. My wife was so proud. Incidentally, my best additions were a 6-blade Bergner for \$125 and a Nonpareil for \$40. I have had many opportunities to double my money on those!

The final L&H is the scarcest, fig 5. I have always referred to it as the “canted turntable”; although, many collectors refer to it as the “tilt-frame.” Constructed to repel the parings and juices was a mild improvement but it apparently did not

sell like the first model based on examples still remaining. I have only owned two of these in my life and both were acquired 30 years ago. One came from the massive Ray Barnes collection in 1986 for \$75 and the second was a year later at a



Figure 5 Tilted Split-Frame

sale in tiny Jackson, Ohio near the Ohio River. Both the heavy and tilt split-frame models utilize a first-class lever for the movable part of the frame that pulls the forks from the apple, fig 6 B.



Figure 6 A. Sliding Mechanism



B. Pivot Mechanism



### Who Manufactured the Split-Frame Turntables?

Who really manufactured the enchanting trio? In 1861 the Lockey and Howland factory was destroyed by fire. In 1865 Lockey bought out Howland's interest in the company. The Goodell Company started manufacturing parers for Lockey and Howland in 1869. All split-frame models carry Robb's 1870 patent. In 1871 Goodell purchased the Lockey and Howland company (Thornton, 1997, p 57). In addition to these facts, one should take note that all the split-frame L&H models feature the distinct four "acorn" design drive gear found on the Goodell '98 whereas the earlier L&H turntables sport the wide "Mickey Mouse" openings. Furthermore, the canted or tilt frame design is modeled after the 1878 patent issued to David Goodell and his employee, William Robb. I believe it is most likely the case that Goodell produced the L&H split-frame turntable apple parers.

### As Luck Would Have It

A fellow collector from farther west had seen an ad in *Antique Weekly* for a sale with "apple peelers". I was young and had the bug--bad so, I drove the almost two hours with little to go on. When I arrived at the vacant lot and saw only the foundation remaining from a burned out house, my heart sunk. All of the merchandise was displayed on what remained of the first floor that stood about 4 feet above ground. The area was roped off so no one could climb atop the suspect flooring. I could not examine any of the merchandise that would be auctioned. The auction company employees told us they would hold up the items to be sold. I circled and saw very little. I did see what I thought was the gear of a Turntable '98 almost hidden in a porcelain wash pan. As the auction began, I asked one of the helpers if he could lift the parer up so I could see it before I left. To my surprise, it was a perfect "canted turntable". Fifteen minutes



into the auction, I was the owner of the best piece sold that day. Oh, yeah, it cost me \$15. It would have been mine for my \$5 opening bid, but another bidder threw in a feeble \$10 bid and abruptly quit. I wasn't always lucky, but on a fine morning in a remote town in Ohio, I certainly was. I have purchased hundreds of peelers since then, but never another one like it.

I hope all of you who still have the bug like I used to will have a year like I had in 1983. Enjoy the hunt. It is the best part. I have owned almost every parer ever produced or sold. The thrill of acquiring every one of them wore off in time. But it still gives me great pleasure in describing them in detail and reliving the pursuit of them. I hope these articles add to the enjoyment of collecting for those who read my words.

Happy hunting,

John Lambert

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