American Bolt & Screw Case Co. Dayton, Ohio.

By Neil Searle

19th century meant fasteners could be mass produced quickly. Hardware stores at the turn of last century were tasked with stocking large quantities of metal fittings in an assortment of types and sizes. The American Bolt & Screw Case Co. of Dayton made wooden organizational cabinets that were new machinery and manufacturing techniques in the sold nationwide, but one design radically changed how bolts and screws were accessed.



Fig. 1. This cabinet consists of 80 triangular drawers each with porcelain pull knobs, on a square base with additional 18 drawers. These used for larger carriage and tyre bolts, a total of 98 drawers.

Patented May 12, 1903, by George W. Chaffin, the octagonal cabinet featured wedge-shaped drawers on each of its faces and rotated around a central axis. Each drawer with white porcelain knobs was stenciled with numbers, corresponding with the measurements of the screws, bolts and nuts therein.



to versions that stood around 5'-6" tall.

Fig. 2. "CAR'E" is an abbreviation for carriage and "TIRE" is for Tire (Tyre) bolts. My example appears to be made of Poplar wood and Cherry stained. It is a revolving bolt case and not for screws, a separate revolving screw case was also an option to buy for the merchants, usually without the static base.

Principal Agents were Simmons Hardware Co., St. Louis and A. F. Shapleigh & Cantwell Hardware Co., St. Louis. By the 1900s, the American Bolt & Screw Case Company's wooden cabinets could be found in catalogs across the country. Available in a variety of sizes from small table top models



whichever products lay inside

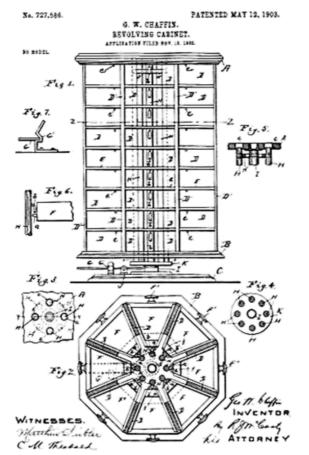
Fig. 3. Advertisement, Publication date, 1887. This layout proved to be incredibly successful as the rotating caddy allowed customers to easily search for their desired hardware; not to mention that its compact size was both convenient and took up little space in already crowded stores.

His design was unique in that the eight-

ris design was unique in that the eightsided fixture rotated on an octagonal
base around a vertical axis. In addition to
this, it also featured the construction of
triangular shaped drawers for extra
compartments which accommodated
the many different sizes of massproduced bolts and screws. Once built,
each compartment was adorned with
two carefully stenciled numbers that
correlated with the measurements of



Fig.4. I possit that the wooden dowels on top of the cabinet that you can see in



the photo and also on my example were to facilitate turning the revolving cabinet.

Robert Chaffin, the father of George (patent) was for five years, president of the American Bolt and Screw Case Co. of Dayton, O., his goods being sent to every country on the globe.

Fig. 5. Patent No. 727,586.

This particular patent "relates to means for locking and unlocking the several rows of drawers through the operation of a single lever".

He did have a system of locking all the drawers......

"This invention relates to improvements in revolving cabinets; and it consists of a frame of octagonal form or having eight sides, each of which contains a series of drawers. The cabinet is especially useful in hardware stores for keeping in a convenient manner a variety of hardware-fixtures. The invention relates to means for locking and unlocking the several rows of drawers through the operation of a single lever, all as is hereinafter more fully described."

In Fig.4. of the patent drawing you will see (Fig.7.) This relates to the drawer stop. My example has the hole above every drawer where this would have been fixed as it would have been an easy mistake to pull the drawer out completely and have the drawer and contents land on your foot.



Fig. 6. A selection of the type of bolts the cabinet would have held. Tyres were fastened to the wheels with nails, or tyre bolts. The metal tyres were drilled before being placed on the

wheel. Tyre-bolts were less likely than tyre-nails to fall off because they were bolted through the felloes. Both countersunk and flush finished to the wheel's outer surface.

The state of Ohio did boast the region's great history. At the end of the 19th century (1890-1900), The town of Providence had the "Five Industrial Wonders of the World": Brown & Sharpe, the world's largest tool factory; Nicholson File, the world's largest file factory; Corliss Steam Engine Company, the world's largest engine factory; American Screw, the world's largest screw factory and Gorham Silver, the world's largest silver foundry.

In researching the bolt and screw revolving cabinet, I did come across another earlier revolving cabinet, although this one is cast iron, patented by Henry Westphal, of Chicago, his patent dated April 11th, 1882. Production did start in 1874...

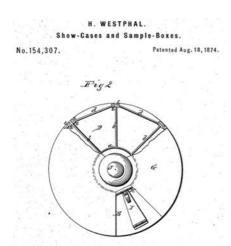


Fig.7. There is an uncanny resemblance between the two revolving cabinets, did Chaffin take some ideas from Westphals design?, it looks like he may have.

H. WESTPHAL. Show-Cases and Sample-Boxes.

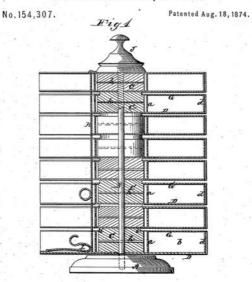


Fig.8. Westphal revolving cabinets were made of cast iron. These cabinets are very collectable, one very ornate example, sold at auction for USD \$23,809. They are said to be one of the rarest pieces of hardware store collectables in the market.

Ref: Past & Present Home Gallery. Ohiomagazine.com. Google patents