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From the Selected Works of William B. Krohn

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Dubious dealings – the surprising story of the
1846 sockdologer.



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Dubious Dealings

The Surprising Story of the 1846 Sockdologer

I enjoy collecting metal fishing baits, especially some types of pre-1900 baits that are stamped, and suspect that I am not alone in this passion. To see a maker's name, the patent year, or other details deeply stamped into the lure's hard metal surface stirs images of the people, times, and places. Such images, of course, are in our minds only, and we must avoid the temptation to over-interpret a few letters or numbers stamped into metal. To more objectively interpret the markings on old pieces of terminal fishing tackle requires diligent research. Such research, as is the case here, can lead to totally unexpected and surprising results.

The oldest dated piece of terminal fishing tackle in my collection is an 1846 Job Johnson Spring Hook, hereafter referred to as the 1846 Johnson Sockdologer (also spelled "sockdolager;" meaning in part, "knock-out punch") (Fig. 4).

This spring hook was found in central Maine some three decades ago, and apparently saw little, if any, use. At its longest axis, the hook is 4 5/8" long. The flat surface of the striking hook is sharply stamped "Job Johnson No. 1." The front part of the stationary hook, partly hidden by the coil spring, reads "Patent 1846" on one side, and "Engelbrecht, Hale & Co." on the opposite side (Fig. 5). The 1846 Johnson is clearly described on page 16 by William Blausner and Timothy Mierzwa in their 2006 book, *Spring-Loaded Fish Hooks, Trap & Lures* (Ref. 1). On page 3 of a more recent book, *Patented Hooks, Harnesses & Bait Holders* (2008) (Ref. 2), Jeff Kieny shows an 1846 Johnson Sockdologer with a slightly different stamping. This spring hook simply stamped "Engelbrecht" and "Patent 1846" (hereafter called the 1846 Engelbrecht). Theodore F. Engelbrecht (also spelled

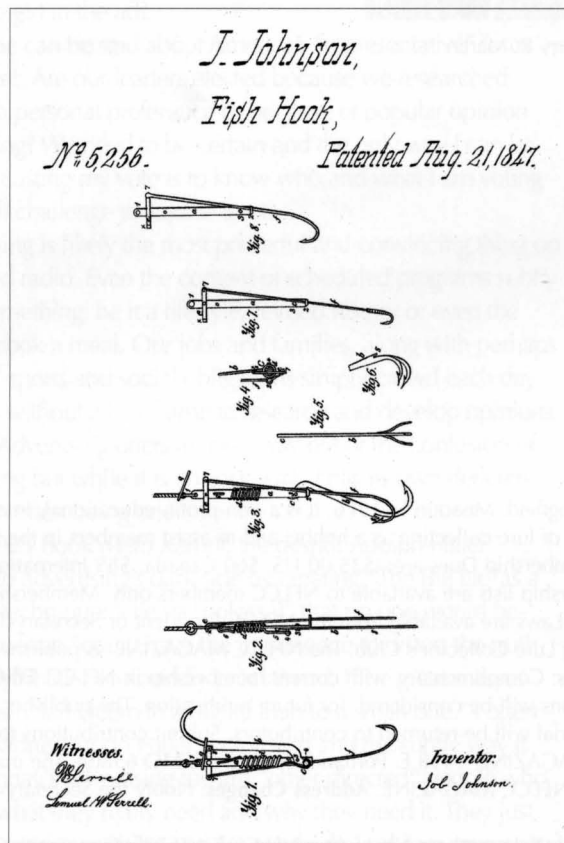


Fig. 1. The 1847 drawing for Job Johnson's Patent No. 5,256. This patent was one of five that Johnson held dealing with improvements in fish hooks. Johnson, being a gifted inventor, held some 38 patents during his lifetime. Courtesy U.S. Patent Office.

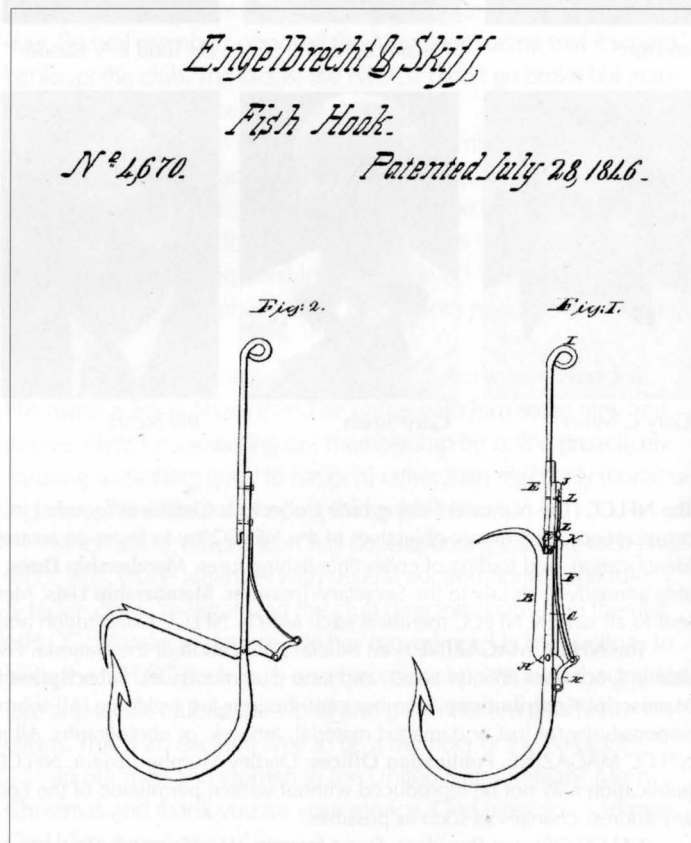


Fig. 2. The 1846 drawing for Theodore Engelbrecht and George Skiff Patent No. 4,670. This device, based on the spring hook made by the young George W. Griswold of upstate New York, was powered by a flat spring whereas Johnson's device patented in 1847 used a coil spring (see Fig. 1). Courtesy U.S. Patent Office.

"Engelbrecht") and George F. Skiff were issued a spring hook patent on 28 July 1846 (Patent No. 4,670) (Fig. 2), while Job Johnson did not receive a patent for his spring hook until 21 August 1847 (Patent No. 5,256) (Fig. 1). Because of these dates, Kieny attributed the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer only to Engelbrecht, and illustrates this sockdologer with a copy of the Engelbrecht and Skiff patent (p. 3 of Kieny 2008).

If we are to be confident with Kieny's attribution of the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer solely to Engelbrecht (i.e., Dr. Theodore F. Engelbrecht, see below), and Kieny's disassociation of this spring hook from Job Johnson, we must explore two sets of questions. First, who were: Job Johnson? Theodore Engelbrecht? The principals of Engelbrecht, Hale & Co.? Secondly, was there a working relationships among some, or all, of these individuals? If "yes," what was the nature of these relations? Without clear answers to these questions the issue of who invented and made the first patented spring hook powered by a coiled-spring – Theodore Engelbrecht or Job Johnson – remains debatable when an answer is based solely on the hooks' stampings.

To answer the above questions, I first asked: Is there any evidence that the individuals were known "in the same circle"? By examining the records of the American Institute of the City of New York, I found this answer to be "yes." The Institute existed from 1838 to around 1930, and was chartered as a public organization to encourage innovation and science. The Institute supported exhibitions, lectures, and other events to promote and inform the public of the latest technologies. At their annual exhibitions, a "Diploma" was the "third" prize, after the Silver (2nd place) and Gold (1st place) cups. In the Institute's annual reports for 1847 and 1848, I found the following related to newly invented fish hooks:

In the Fifth (1847) Annual Report under "Miscellaneous" on page 67:

"Engelbrecht, Hale & Co., Newark, N.J., for 'Sockdologer' fish hook. Diploma."

In the Sixth (1848) Annual Report under. "Fishing Hooks and Tackle" on page 89 (ordered as shown):

"Job Johnson, Brooklyn, L.I., for the manufacture of various kinds of fish hooks. Silver medal.

Geo. W. Griswold, Pottersville, N. Y., for the Griswold hook, (ingeniously made.) Diploma.

Theodore F. Engelbrecht, 79 John-street, for the Sockdologer hook, (highly finished.) Diploma.

J. & J. C. Conroy, Fulton, cor. Cliff-street, for a splendid display of fishing rods, reels and tackle. Silver metal."

Note that the 1847 award is not given to Theodore Engelbrecht alone, but to "Engelbrecht, Hale & Co." (While this source listed the company as being in Newark, I found no

other evidence suggesting that this was the company's home town). I suspect, because of the year of this award, that this recognition was for the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer. On 1 March 1847, page 3 (2nd column), the New York Herald ran the following advertisement:

THE Newly-invented and patented Sockdologer FISH-HOOK is now offered for sale to the trade by patentees.

ENGELBRECHT, HALE & Co.,

138 Willaims st., up stairs

Although a patent for the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer has

ACHIM JOHNSON,
— SUCCESSOR TO —
JOB JOHNSON & SON,
FISH HOOK and NEEDLE WORKS,
Cor. Myrtle and Bedford Aves., Brooklyn, N. Y.

— MANUFACTURER OF —
Best Cast Steel Wire, General Hardware,
AND
Different Kinds of Patent, and all other descriptions of Fish Hooks,
Sail Needles, Pack and Bag Needles, Mattress Needles,
Upholsterers' Needles, Surgeons' Needles, Spaying
Needles, Scarf Needles, Dissecting Needles, Dis-
secting Hooks, Plain and Swiveled Sail
Hooks, Sailors' & Sail-Makers' Pulms.
Straight Rod or Torsional Door Springs, Automatic Gate Hardware, Bur-
glar Proof Blind and Shutter Fastenings, The Universal Clothes
Line Holder, and all descriptions of Steel Wire
Goods, Machinery, Springs, etc., etc.
N. B.—Particular Attention paid to Tempering and
Finishing all kinds of Steel Wire Goods.

Fig. 3. Job Johnson, and two of it's successor companies (i.e., Job Johnson & Son, and Achim Johnson), manufactured a wide range of high-quality steel products. This advertisement dates to circa December, 1880 when Johnson's son established his own company (i.e., Achim Johnson). Courtesy of Jerry Girard.



Fig. 4. This Johnson Sockdologer is stamped "Job Johnson No. 1" on the striking hook (top hook in this photo), and "Patent 1846" and "Engelbrecht, Hale & Co." on the stationary hook (bottom hook). Stampings on the stationary hook are partly obscured by the hook's coil-spring (see photos below). Author's collection.



Fig. 5. Close-ups of the stampings on the striking hook of an 1846 Johnson Sockdologer (top photo) and on the stationary hook (middle and bottom photos). Because of the early date (i.e., 1846) that probably makes this spring hook the first stamped piece of terminal fishing tackle made in America, and given that so few of these hooks have been found, this coil-spring sockdologer is a highly desirable specimen for collectors of spring and mechanical hooks. Author's collection.



Fig. 6. The Job Johnson Sockdologer through time, with the 1846 version on the left (a), the next oldest in the middle (b), and the most recent on the right (c). In the upper photograph, note the great difference in the trigger of (a) versus (b) and (c). Examples (b) and (c) were based on Johnson's 1847 patent, and thus have leveraged triggers that were more efficient mechanically than a rotating trigger (a). The coil-spring sockdologer continued to be made and used after the turn-of-the century, more than five decades after its initial invention. Author's collection.

not been found, Engelbrecht may have assumed this hook (powered by a coil spring) was covered by his 1846 patent with Skiff (powered by a flat spring), and thus "patented" appears in the above advertisement. However, it is unclear from this advertisement as to exactly what version of spring hook was being sold (i.e., flat or coiled spring). As shown below, the principals of the company advertising this hook were Theodore F. Engelbrecht and Robert B. Hale, and their company operated out of New York City (i.e., Manhattan). George F. Skiff, as mentioned, had a spring hook patent with Engelbrecht, is not mentioned in this advertisement, nor in the Institute's awards, suggesting he and Engelbrecht had dissolved their working arrangement by March 1847, if not earlier. More about Engelbrecht and Hale is given below, but for now, back to the Institute's award listings.

Note that in 1848 Job Johnson was given a second place award for the "manufacture of various kinds of fish hooks," and not just his spring hook. This is not surprising considering that Johnson was the premier hook maker of his day. William H. Starr, the editor of *New York Farmer and Mechanic – The Spirit of American Institutes*, wrote in a July 1846 article entitled "Our manufactures - Fish Hooks," wrote that:

His [Job Johnson's] principal business is, at present, the manufacture of Cod hooks, which are superior in regard to form and shape to the English hooks, and wherever they are known are generally preferred, having attained a very high reputation among our experienced "Down East" fishermen, whose judgement cannot be questioned (Fig. 8).

Job Johnson's obituary, published in the *New York Herald* on 20 April 1902, confirms that the selling of hooks for the New England cod fishery was a "considerable" part of his wealth. Johnson became wealthy with one source estimating that at the height of his power he had accumulated approximately half a million dollars. But in the 1840s, Johnson was just getting started. (for additional details about Johnson, see chapters 5 and 12 in Todd E. A. Larson's 2007 book, *The History of the Fish Hook in America* [Ref. 3]).

Note that in 1848 Geo. W. Griswold was also given an award by the Institute. (For more information about Griswold and his spring hook, see Chapter 11 of Larson [2007]). This award was appropriate because George Washington Griswold is widely credited with making, when only 16 years old, the first spring hook. Griswold's spring hook was patented in 1846 by T. F. Engelbrecht and G. F. Skiff. (see Larson [2007] for documentation). Finally, in 1848 Theodore F. Engelbrecht was given an award for a highly finished sockdologer hook. Because no other names are mentioned with this award, this suggests that Engelbrecht was capable of making, or having made, mechanical fish hooks. So who was Theodore F. Engelbrecht, and did he make mechanical fish hooks?

Dr. Theodore F. Engelbrecht was a physician, promoter, investor, and inventor (one of his patents was for an artificial leg) who owned homes in both Brooklyn (the same town where Job Johnson lived and worked), and in Manhattan (near to his downtown offices). While Engelbrecht wore

many hats, he was not a manufacturer, and thus would have been dependent on others to make his inventions (as so indicated in the news report below). Not only did he patented his own inventions, he was involved in helping others to obtain, and sell, patent rights as can be seen in following advertisement published in the *Scientific American* between January and March 1848 (a similar ad also appeared in the *New York Herald* in November 1847):

Theodore F. Engelbrecht

Inventor of the Improved Patent Sockdologer Fish Hook

Office – No. 79 Johns Street, New York

F.E. devotes particular attention to introducing and selling Patent Rights, or Manufactured Patent Articles throughout the United States and Europe, and flatters himself that he is eminently successful. Patentees and Inventors are invited to call (Fig. 7).

While Engelbrecht considered himself “eminently successful,” not all who did business with him would agree. One case that is especially relevant to this article was published on the front page (4th column) of the *New York Herald*, under “Police Intelligence,” on 29 July 1848. While this article is lengthy, its significance and irreproducible period pros requires its complete presentation:

Hooking a Gudgeon. - We believe that all fishermen, or at least those who have any pretensions to scientific fishing, are aware of the patent fish hook called the “sockdologer,” which is a long hook with two prongs to it, thrown up by a spring towards the line, arranged so that the instant the fish nibbles at the bait the spring flies off, and the hooks are thus thrust on the snout or head of the fish, making him certain game. The hook, we understand, was invented by Job Johnson, a Brooklyn resident; and patented by him as the “sockdologer hook or the more certain was of catching fish.” This Mr. Johnson it appears, had a partner for a time, by the name of Theodore F. Engelbrecht, but finally dissolved copartnership a few months ago [i.e. spring of 1848], the right and title of the sockdologer still remaining in Mr. Johnson. About the 3rd of July, an honest, shrewd-looking Yankee, by the name of Edwin Marsh, from the good old State of Connecticut, where the milk and honey flow, mixed in sometimes with a little pork and molasses, by the way of a sweetener, wended his way to York State, settling himself down in the great city of Gotham, in order to make a fortune, like many of his predecessors. Mr. Marsh having a few hundred dollars with him, the savings up of many years hard labor, felt disposed to invest it in some good and secure business, whereby he could in one year realize more than double his capital invested. Not being known, or conversant with city affairs, or the mode of doing business, Mr. Marsh resorted to the daily papers, running his eyes over the various clap-trap advertisements inserted therein, by a parcel of land sharks, for the purpose of catching the unsuspecting individuals who seek to do an honest business, finally fastened on the following:

“WANTED - A person having \$500, cash capital, can

purchase a business now paying \$1000 per annum, and will be disposed of only on account of other engagements. Apply at 89 Beaver street, up stairs, back office, from 9 to 1, or 3 to 5.”

This advertisement appeared to suit Mr. March exactly, and early that morning he hurried down to the above number, fearing that the chance might be snapped up before he could get sight of it. On entering the office, he saw Mr. Engelbrecht, who represented himself to be the advertiser, and, after a short conversation, stated that he held the patent right of the sockdologer fish-hook, and, as he was about going into another business, he would sell out his right and title for the United States for \$1,000. While they were thus conversing together, who should come in but a Mr. Robert B. Hale. An introduction was then given by Mr. Engelbrecht, between the parties, and during the conversation on sockdologers, it was stated that Mr. Hale had made over \$700 the last year, by merely selling the article in different parts of the United States. This little bait, thus thrown out, was nibbled at by Mr. Marsh, and an understanding was soon brought about that Mr. March and Mr. Hale should buy out the patent right jointly, that is to say, Marsh was [to] pay down \$500 cash and Hale \$500, and enjoy all the profits that might accrue equally. This bargain was struck, and Mr. Marsh paid down \$500 in good Eastern bank bills, and Mr. Hale paid his half by a check drawn on one of the city banks, which was taken by Mr. Engelbrecht with the utmost confidence. After the money was paid out and the bargain consummated, Mr. Engelbrecht said, his man, who manufactured the sockdologers for him, at a very reasonable rate, would still continue for them, but unfortunately he had become suddenly sick, and therefore they must endeavor to get some other man. Mr. Marsh, in searching for some man to manufacture, heard of Mr. Johnson, in Brooklyn, and on calling on him for that purpose, was then informed that the patent right was vested in him (Johnson) and not in any way in Engelbrecht. At this astounding information, Mr. March began to find out that he had nibbled too strong at the sockdologer, his \$500 having sunk, evidently to him, to rise no more. On returning to Mr. Englenbrecht, he was put off with very unsatisfactory answers; ever his partner, Mr. Hale, fought remarkably. An office was, however, taken [up?] at No. 6 Courtlandt street, by Mr. Marsh, for the purpose of carrying on the business, when he was immediately notified by Mr. Johnson that if he attempted to manufacture or vend the sockdologer hook he would at once be prosecuted. This alarmed Mr. Marsh and in order to seek redress, laid his complaint before Justice Timpson, one of our efficient magistrates at the Tombs [a.k.a., New York City Halls of Justice and House of Detention], who, after hearing the facts in the case, took Mr. Marsh’s complaint against Engelbrecht and Hale for a conspiracy in cheating and defrauding March out of \$500 under the pretense of owning the patent right of the celebrated sockdologer, by which poor Marsh took a nibble and hooked himself to the tune of \$500. A warrant was issued for the arrest of the accused parties, and placed in the hands of officer Welch, who brought them up

Scientific American.

THE ADVOCATE OF INDUSTRY, AND JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC, MECHANICAL AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

VOLUME 5.]

NEW YORK, MARCH 9, 1850.

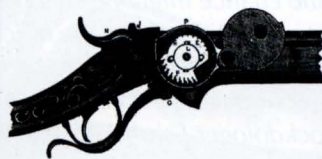
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and to the Editors, New York, New York.
S. Munn & Co., Publishers.
Respectfully request that all the principal cities and towns in the United States
be supplied with a copy of this paper, and
the remainder in 6 months.

Rail Road News.

Indiana Railroads.
Some thirty-four miles of the Indianapolis
and Hamilton Railroad, in Indiana, is now
in quite ready for the iron. The Company
have determined to lay the T rail, which they
expect to provide only in the season. This
portion of the track extends from Indianapolis
to Anderson, the County seat of Morgan.

SHARPS' BREACH-LOADING PATENT RIFLE.—Fig. 1.



This Rifle is the invention of Mr. C. H. Sharps, of Mill Creek, Pa. It is the only one of the kind in the world. The object of this patent is to enable the rifle to be loaded from the breech, and to be fired from the muzzle.

Useful Receipts.

Butter.
This is an article of domestic food, more of which is consumed in the United States than in any other country on the face of the globe. Good sweet butter, so low delicious. It is very often purchased among families in our cities, that they will purchase good sweet butter at the store, and which in a day or two becomes rancid in taste. This is owing either to the manner in which it is salted and packed, or the manner in which it is kept after it is purchased. Much butter is spoiled from using salt containing lime and other substances which hasten its decomposition. Salt can easily be purified by pouring upon it a little warm water and allowing it to drain; it dissolves and takes out the lime and other extraneous substances, and leaves the salt unaltered. The quantity usually added to butter is one ounce to the pound. After butter has become rancid it can be restored and made

Fig. 7. *Scientific American*, first appearing in August 1845, not only published articles about recent scientific discoveries, but also regularly reported on the activities of the U.S. Patent Office. This weekly magazine routinely documented the latest patents, including those relating to many types of sporting goods. Theodore F. Engelbrecht who was, among other professions, a patent agent who assisted inventors in obtaining patents, frequently advertised his patent services in this periodical during the 1840s. Illustration courtesy of Dwight B. Dermeritt, Jr.

before the magistrate, who detained them in custody for a further hearing. On further affidavits being made touching this conspiracy to defraud, two other individuals have been implicated in the matter; one by the name of John W. Porter, and the other calling himself Daniel Deshen; who were both taken into custody yesterday, on a warrant issued by the Justice; and in default of bail, committed to the Tombs for further examination. Thus, in throwing out a bait for the unsuspecting Yankee, they have hooked themselves with their own sockdologer.

The above article raises a number of important issues. For example, was the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer the spring hook Engelbrecht, Hale and Co. advertised for sale early in 1847? Who made the sockdologers that Engelbrecht and Hale sold? Exactly why did the partnership between Engelbrecht/Hale and Johnson dissolve? Which spring hook was Engelbrecht and Hale attempting to sell to Marsh in 1848? My efforts to obtain more details about the above legal proceedings from the New York City courts failed. Thus, I am forced to interpret the available information as best I can. In doing so, realize that the author's subjective judgement is bound to creep in. What follows is one interpretation, and until more information is uncovered, alternative narratives that tie together the available facts are also plausible. So readers beware; grasp the facts and judge for yourself the story proposed below.

Generally, patents do not realize significant returns until the product is made, distributed, and sold. Thus, to earn a return from their 1846 patented spring hook, Engelbrecht and Skiff had to first find a manufacturer and distributors. Skiff, a lawyer from upstate New York (for details, see Larson 2007: 253-254), apparently found these task too demanding, and early-on may have had Engelbrecht buy-out his share of their July 1846 patent. With Skiff no longer in the picture, Engelbrecht still needed help to make the spring hook and get it to market. At some point post-Skiff, Hale became a partner, handling distribution and sales. Now

the operational issue shifted to who was going to make the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer. Engelbrecht lived in New York City, and in the mid-1840s there was only one local manufacturer for quality fish hooks – Job Johnson. In assessing the original Engelbrecht/Skiff spring hook, Johnson probably realized that this design was too complex to be profitably produced. Johnson, or perhaps both Johnson and Engelbrecht, needed to envision a design that would be easier, quicker, and less expensive to make; and with the addition of a coil versus flat spring, this would be a more effective hook. Whatever the exact roles of Engelbrecht and Johnson in creating this new spring hook, their collaboration resulted in the 1846 Engelbrecht Sockdologer. Engelbrecht, wanting to protect his product and assuming that it was covered by the July 1846 patent (which used a flat spring but mentioned the coil spring), had Johnson stamp this sockdologer “Engelbrecht” and “Patent 1846.” When Engelbrecht requested that more of these sockdologers be made, Johnson probably wanted his efforts to redesign and manufacture this product recognized; hence, “Job Johnson No. 1” was added to the stamping. By early 1847 (based on the March 1847 sales ad place by Engelbrecht, Hale & Co.), Engelbrecht had Hale as a partner so his name was also stamped on the hook. The “Patent 1846” remained the same, being positioned on the same part of hook as the patent year, whereas Johnson’s stamping was place of the secondary hook. Always looking for new products, especially spring hooks early in his career (see Larson 2007), Johnson realized that the 1846 Engelbrecht could be improved by changing to a levered trigger. The new trigger not only improved the hook’s effectiveness, but it also created a sockdologer different enough from the 1846 Engelbrecht-Skiff and 1846 Engelbrecht sockdologers that it could be patented. On 21 August 1847, Johnson received a patent for his coiled-spring sockdologer, and in late 1847 or early 1848, informed Engelbrecht that he would no longer be making mechanical fish hooks with him. So, in the spring of 1848, Johnson struck out on his own and the partnership between Engelbrecht/Hale and Johnson fell apart. To cut his losses, Engelbrecht had to sell out of Engelbrecht, Hale and Co. To do so, a new partner had to be found because Hale, who had success selling sockdologers in 1847, wanted to continue. Engelbrecht crafted a newspaper advertisement, and in the summer of 1848, Mr. Marsh entered the story. Unfortunately for Marsh, the past interactions among Engelbrecht, Hale, and Johnson were unknown to him and he entered into a business deal that was, to put it kindly, dubious.

If the above interpretation is correct, then there was really only one 1846 sockdologer, with two slightly different stampings: the first one bearing only one name, “Engelbrecht,” and a latter variant stamped with “Engelbrecht, Hale and Co.” and “Job Johnson.” Both variants carried the “Patent 1846.” Given this scenario, who deserves credit for American’s first spring hook powered by a coil spring – Theodore Engelbrecht or Job Johnson? Should it go to the person who first envisioned this hook? Or to the person

who turned this design into a reality? Or the person who first patented it? Or advertised it? Or sold it in quantity? While all of these criteria are worthy of consideration, the history of this early piece of terminal tackle is so intertwined between the two principals that it's impossible to clearly assign individual credit for specific tasks. Thus, I would suggest that we recognize and honor that for some period of time Engelbrecht and Johnson did have a working relationship, and that this partnership – however short in duration and fractious in nature – did result in America's first spring hook that used a coil spring.

While Johnson apparently fabricated the first American spring hook that used a coiled spring, the 1847 Engelbrecht-Skiff patent does mention the use of a coil spring, stating that "The construction of a self-acting spring, and slide-lever hook for catching fish, constructed as above described, and whether spiral or other springs [bolded by present author for emphasis], are employed." Given this wording in the 1847 patent, and that Engelbrecht and Johnson were at one time partners (as stated in the news article quoted above), I conclude that both Engelbrecht and Johnson deserve equal credit for creating America's first spring hook powered by a coil spring although it's highly likely that neither of these individuals, if living today, would concur with this conclusion.

In the last chapter in his book about the history of American fish hooks (Ref. 3, pp. 270-71), Dr. Todd Larson quotes an article published in *Scientific American* on 25 December 1847 (date should be 9 September 1848). Larson characterized this short article, entitled "Patent Fish Hooks," as "one of the most tantalizing blurbs in the early history of the spring snap hook." The article's first sentence is follows: "Many of our readers are aware, that some trouble about Fish Hook Patents was experienced in this city by the purchase of part of a patent by a Mr. Marsh of Connecticut,

who came here with \$500 to speculate, but who unfortunately, (for we believe him to have been deluded or demented) lost both his money and his freedom." (I found no information stating that Marsh, as implied here, went to jail. Most likely, Engelbrecht returned the \$500 to Marsh and Hale ceased selling the sockdologer in question). After reproducing the complete article which give no details about Marsh or his failed business dealings, Larson writes that "Of great interest is the story behind the mysterious Marsh and his fate, which as of this writing remains unknown. It would make for a fascinating and important vignette in the history of American fish hooks."

While additional details about Mr. Marsh and the other principals involved in this story may still be uncovered, we now know the basic relationships among Mr. Marsh and Engelbrecht, Hale, and Johnson. Given this new information (or more accurately, the recent uncovering of old information), we can now say that not only is 1846 Sockdologer America's first dated spring hook powered by a coiled spring that evolved through time to long and useful history (Fig. 6), but that this spring hook is an especially fascinating piece of terminal fishing tackle to collect because of the dubious dealings that will be forever associated with it. 🐟

I wish to thank Ron Goddard who first introduced me to spring hooks, and for hooking me on sockdologers. Also, I would have little direction when digging into the historical fishing literature if it were not for the pioneering efforts of William Blauser, Jeff Kieny, Todd Larson, and Timothy Mierzwa; my sincere thanks to each. Finally, I thank Jerry Girard for providing a much needed illustration, and Bill Blauser, Jeff Kieny, Todd Larson, and Ellen Krohn for reviewing earlier versions of this article.

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- (2). Kieny, Jeff. 2008. *Patented Hooks, Harnesses, and Baited-Holders: Identification and Value Guide with Collections*. The Whitefish Press, Cincinnati, Ohio. 385 pp.
- (3). Larson, Todd E. A. 2007. *The History of the Fish Hook in America: An Illustrated Overview of the Origins, Development, and Manufacture of the American Fish Hook*.



Fig. 8. The cod fishery in the North Atlantic Ocean provided a large and lucrative market for Job Johnson's high-quality fish hooks. Illustration from Harper's Weekly (August 6, 1892). Author's collection. This illustration was drawn by A.W. Buhler and is titled "Cod-fishing on the Grand Banks - Hauling Trawl." Author's collection.