

Chubb Detector Door/Safe Lock

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Based upon research in the early Chubb registers, this lock appears to date between late 1820 to early 1821. It is based on the earlier Jeremiah Chubb patent which requires a regulator key to reset the detector after tampering. Unfortunately, I do not have the regulator key. The lock has been carefully disassembled and cleaned of debris and surface rust, prepped for full restoration, and is in fully operational with original parts and hardware. It is my earliest Chubb piece, and I consider myself extremely fortunate to have found such a beautiful, and rare, early example.

A Chubb detector lock is a type of lever tumbler lock with an integral security feature, a form of re-locker, which frustrates unauthorized access attempts and indicates to the lock's owner that it has been interfered with. When someone tries to pick the lock or to open it using the wrong key, the lock is designed to jam in a locked state until (depending on the lock) either a special regulator key or the original key is inserted and turned in a different direction. This alerts the owner to the fact that the lock has been tampered with.

Any person who attempts to pick a detector lock must avoid triggering the automatic jamming mechanism. If the automatic jamming mechanism is accidentally triggered (which happens when any one of the levers is lifted too high) the lock-picker has the additional problem of resetting the detector mechanism before their next attempt to open the lock. This introduces additional complexity into the task which slows the process down significantly, thereby increasing the degree of lock-picking skill required to a level which very few people would have. The first detector lock was produced in 1818 by Jeremiah Chubb of Portsmouth, England, as the result of a Government competition to create an unpickable lock. It remained unpicked until the Great Exhibition of 1851, where Alfred C. Hobbs picked the lock.