

Michael Stuart --- June 2019

Every now and then, “lock luck” strikes and I acquire an unusual piece that has something interesting about it, or an interesting historical story to tell. This happened last week; I was able to acquire an extremely well-made, brass padlock, quite by accident, that comes together with an unusual door key that I acquired last year as well.

In the photos below, you will find both a padlock, and an extendable door key manufactured by James J. Deally, of Louisville, KY.

Who was Deally, you ask? Never heard of him until last year myself!

The following is an excerpt from <https://luresnreels.com/deally.html>

“James Deally was born in Pennsylvania in 1825. He moved to Louisville, KY and was a locksmith that made locks and keys. His company was James Deally & Co., and he received a patent for a door key on May 29, 1860. The Louisville City Directories list him as a model maker from 1885 to 1891. He later was listed as a fishing reel manufacturer and model maker from about 1892 until 1897. In the 1894 Louisville City Directory, he his listed alongside B.F. Meek as Fishing Reel Manufacturers. From 1898 to his death in 1901, he is listed as only a fishing reel manufacturer. He had the mechanical ability and realized the market for high quality reels. His earliest reels were not marked with the size number. Later, he followed the style of his fellow Kentucky reel makers and marked a size number on the reels. The reels have been found with both ivory and buffalo horn handle knobs. All his reels are high quality and made of nickel silver. His reels are considered scarce and desirable by collectors. The reels have been found in sizes varying from the typical No. 3 size to the large No. 12 size.”

While not known very well for either his key design or his locks, even though they are both very well made, antique Deally casting reels are highly sought after by fishing gear collectors.

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