

Lewis Jennings

Courtesy Dayu Chen ... August 2019

The only American padlock from the 19th century with a changeable bit key. Made by Lewis Jennings, a famous gunmaker in New York, and patented in 1850. In 1851, he was recorded as having received a gold medal "for the best bank lock". His locks clearly did not fare well with the public, however, as this is the only known example, and it might not be so surprising as Jennings was competing against Lewis Lillie, Solomon Andrews, Robert Newell and the like at the time.