

Whitaker of Wolverhampton

Michael Stuart ... 2019

On March 15, 1862, George Hamilton applied for a patent in the UK titled "Improvements in Tumbler Locks", which outlined the use of an "eccentric" that prohibited determination of lever (tumbler) position location through the application of pressure on the locking bolt. His design was used on lever safes produced by his company, George Hamilton & Co. These safes are collector items and can still occasionally be found in various parts of the United Kingdom and former British Empire.

The padlock is the only one that I have ever personally seen. It was apparently manufactured by Whitaker of Wolverhampton using the "Eccentric Patent" of George Hamilton. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find anything definitive on the Whitaker company, in Wolverhampton. A fellow collector was able to find a 1798 listing for a padlock maker in Wolverhampton by the name of Thomas Whitaker, who may have been a relation, but 70-80 years too early for this padlock. Also, there was a Whitaker & Company that operated as a brass foundry up in Bradford during the time period, but that is a long way to the north from Wolverhampton. Whitaker of Wolverhampton apparently still was in existence during WW1, however, as I have a separate, smaller, all brass lever lock in my collection with a Whitaker marking and stamped "1915", which I assume to be WW1 Era designation.

The large padlock of the subject is an incredibly well-made beast of a lock. It is double-chambered and double bolt locking, with three levers and an independent eccentric for each bolt. My current key only grudgingly operates the back bolt.