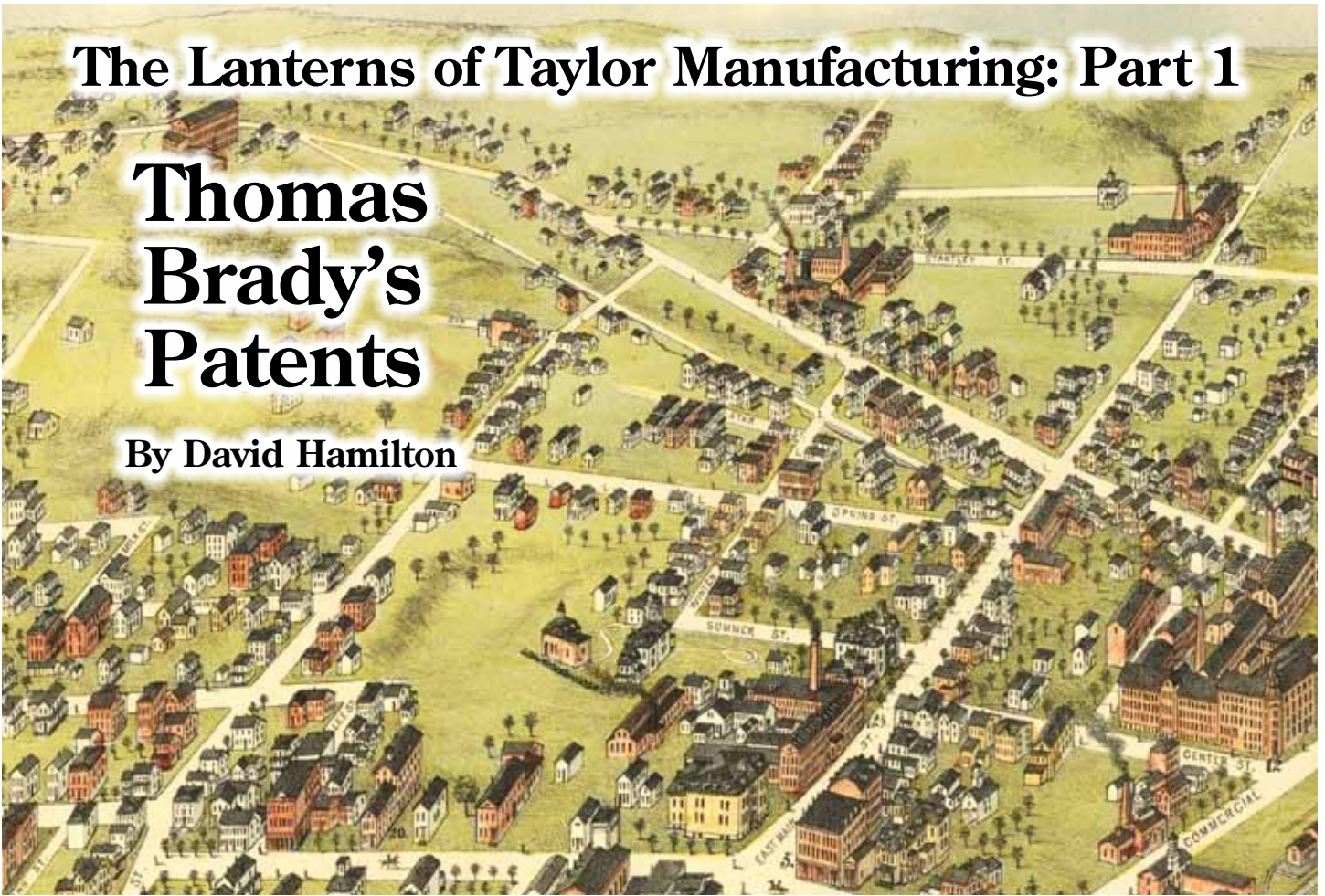


The Lanterns of Taylor Manufacturing: Part 1

Thomas Brady's Patents

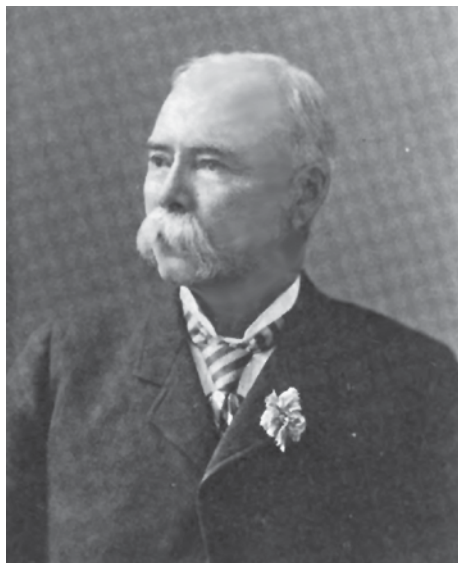
By David Hamilton



During the mid-nineteenth century, the city of New Britain, CT was well on its way to becoming an important center of commerce in New England's industrial revolution. Early sawmills and tinsmith shops, which had largely catered to an agricultural economy, had been joined during the 1830's and 1840's by brass foundries and hardware manufactories. By the Civil War era, brick factories lined the main streets, turning out products that were essential to the growth of the nation.

It was on January 25, 1843, in the booming city of New Britain, that Thomas H. Brady was born, the first of several children in a family of Irish immigrants. At a young age, Brady seems to have immersed himself in the developing industrial scene where his father worked as a laborer, and by his early 20's he had established himself in the tinsmithing and contracting business. How the subject of lighting came to Thomas Brady's mind has been lost to history, but on May 26, 1868 he was granted his first U.S. Patent, entitled "An Improvement in Lanterns." Letters Patent No. 78,180 described a newly designed frame that resulted in a more durable lantern that was well suited for the rigors of use by railroads. After

Part of a bird's eye view of New Britain, CT, published in 1875 by O.H. Bailey & Co. from the Library of Congress collection. The Taylor Manufacturing Company occupied the factory complex below the word "Manufacturing" in the article title.



Thomas H. Brady, as he appeared in the 1899-1900 edition of Taylor's Souvenir of the Capitol of the State of Connecticut. Brady's political career and his successful electrical supply business were highlighted, with no mention of the "Brady Lantern."

ensuring that the patent rights to his new lantern were protected, Brady set out to find a partner for its manufacture and sale.

Among the many businessmen that Thomas Brady no doubt approached, it was Augustus E. Taylor who took an interest in the lantern. Taylor Manufacturing had a fairly substantial factory at 230 North Stanley Street, which included brass & iron foundries and manufacturing facilities for various types of hardware. Upon making an arrangement with Thomas Brady for the rights to his new design, Taylor Manufacturing began production of the lantern in 1869. An advertisement in the September 11, 1869 American Railway Journal (repeated during 1870) announced that Taylor Manufacturing was the "exclusive manufacturer" of Brady's railroad lantern, and offered it for sale through the New Britain factory or from a store at 72 Beekman Street in New York.

Continued on Page 15

Continued from Page 14

Billed as “the strongest and best in use,” with the frame “capable of supporting a weight of four or five hundred pounds,” the lantern was claimed to be only slightly heavier than other types of lanterns. The construction of the lantern was such that the wire guards were riveted to heavy-duty flanges on both the top and bottom of the lantern, as opposed to simply being soldered to the sides. It was the arrangement of wire guards riveted to a rigid frame that gave the lantern its strength, and this was the unique characteristic of Thomas Brady’s patent. The circular openings in the bell bottom that are often associated with “Brady lanterns” were not actually a component of his patented design, and could very well have been added by Augustus Taylor.

Brady’s patent lanterns continued to headline Taylor Manufacturing’s product line for the next few years, supplemented by several other non-Brady lantern models which appeared by 1871. In an 1873 New Britain city directory, Taylor is listed as “hardware and lantern manufacturers” and “exclusive manufacturer of Taylor’s Door Bells, Brady’s RR Lanterns.” The Brady lantern is also included among a variety of Taylor Manufacturing lanterns in an 1874 catalog by hardware dealer J. Clark Wilson & Company. It appears that production of lanterns by Taylor ceased in 1876.

After granting the license to Taylor Manufacturing for the use of his design, Thomas Brady seems to have had little further involvement with lanterns. He expanded his plumbing, heating, and tinsmithing business to include gas

BRADY’S RAILROAD LANTERNS.



TAYLOR MFG. CO.,
Exclusive Manufacturers, 73 Beekman St., N. Y.

Advertisements for “Brady’s Railroad Lantern” by the Taylor Manufacturing Company began to appear in the American Railway Journal in 1869. This one from January, 1870 lists the railroads that were currently using the lantern.

stoves and lighting fixtures, establishing a store on Main Street in New Britain. Apart from an improvement in tinsmith’s shears in 1877, Thomas Brady did not apply for any additional patents for almost twenty years after his first one was granted. In the meantime, he became involved with politics, serving as a local alderman and eventually being elected to the Connecticut State Legislature.

The strongest and best in use; are made principally of Malleable Iron. Here lies the secret of their strength, the frame being capable of supporting a weight of Four or Five Hundred Pounds; and yet they are little heavier than ordinary Lanterns. The guards are riveted through the top and bottom flanges, the rings wound with wire where they cross the guards, and the whole frame tinned, uniting each piece with the other, making it the *strongest* Lantern ever offered to the public. RAILROAD MEN especially cannot fail to see that it will be economy to purchase these Lanterns, as there is no part that can be broken with ordinary use, except the Globe, which being adjustable, is easily and cheaply replaced with any color and at a small cost; the greater weight being at the bottom, it cannot readily upset. Now used on the following Railroads: New York and New Haven; Hartford and New Haven; Shore Line, Conn.; Providence and Worcester; Boston and Maine; Conn. and Passumpsic Rivers; Fitchburg; Rensselaer and Saratoga; Troy and Boston; Boston and Providence; Boston, Clinton and Fitchburg; Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta; Connecticut River; European and North American; Hartford, Providence and Fishkill; Mobile and Ohio; Portland and Kennebec; Boston, Hartford and Erie; Worcester and Nashua; Lake Superior and Miss.; Hudson River, and many others.

The trade supplied from our Store, or from the Factory, New Britain, Conn.,

Thomas Brady wisely became interested in electric power when it was introduced in the 1880’s, shifting the focus of his business to the application of this new technology. Over the course of the next three decades, he was granted over 30 patents for new designs in lighting fixtures, arc lamps, and electrical switches. His products were well received, with sales expanding beyond New Britain, across the entire country and to Europe and South America. Throughout his life, Thomas Brady continued developing innovative designs for electrical components, with his final patent issued a year before he died at his Westbrook, CT summer home on August 19, 1912.

The published biographical accounts of Thomas H. Brady’s life all focus on his public service and his successful electrical supply business, but there is no mention of his first invention: the Brady’s Patent Lantern. In fact, Brady’s lantern was but a small part of his long and illustrious career, but it did provide him with the capital to launch his other

The Taylor Manufacturing Co.,
Hardware and Lantern Manuf’s,
NEW BRITAIN, CONN.
Exclusive Manuf’s of Taylor’s Door Bells, Brady’s R.R. Lanterns.
A. E. TAYLOR, President.

The Taylor Manufacturing Company’s advertisement in the 1873 edition of Fitzgerald & Dillon’s New Britain Directory. Thomas Brady was listed as a “Tin Roofer” and “General Jobber,” indicating he was not involved with the business.

Continued on Page 16

Continued from Page 15

ventures, and was also responsible for encouraging Augustus Taylor to enter the lantern business. It is perhaps fitting then, that collectors often refer to the various types of Taylor lanterns as “Brady’s,” regardless of whether or not they utilize his design.

Of course, the Brady lantern is only one part of the story of the Taylor Manufacturing Company, and we’ll explore more of it in future installments. *Editor’s Note: Photos of Taylor lanterns and scans of advertising or catalogs are requested from KL&L members.*

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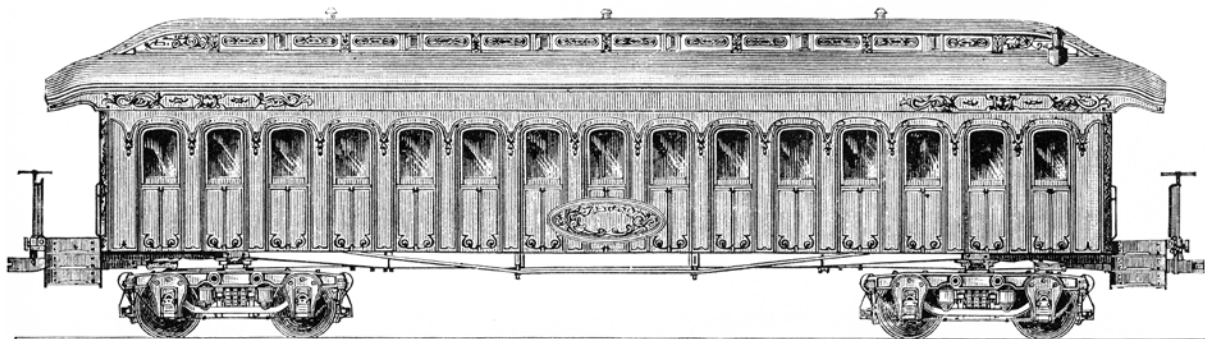
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The Taylor Manufacturing Company entered the lighting business with the unique “Brady’s Patent Railroad Lantern.” Collection of David Hamilton.



While most lantern collectors associate the unusual characteristic of circular openings in the bell bottom with the Brady Lantern, that feature was not actually addressed in Thomas Brady's patent, and may have actually been conceived by Augustus Taylor. This type of bell bottom also appeared on non-Brady models that were produced by Taylor Manufacturing in later years.

Thomas H. Brady filed almost three dozen patent applications over his lifetime, including designs for electric lamp and railroad components, but his 1868 Letters Patent No. 78,180 was the only one for an improvement in hand lanterns. Brady's unique design involved riveting the lantern's wire guards to heavy collars or bands, instead of soldering them directly to the side of the lantern, as was typical at the time. This provided for a more durable lantern, and facilitated disassembly for the replacement of the globe.

Brady's original U.S. patent application is reproduced below, and the photo of the lantern at right shows the details of his riveted wire guard design. While the Brady lantern disappeared after only a few years in production, later lanterns made use of a similar principle, in attaching the guard wires to a wire ring.



United States Patent Office.

THOMAS H. BRADY, OF NEW BRITAIN, CONNECTICUT.

Letters Patent No. 78,180, dated May 28, 1868.

IMPROVEMENT IN LANTERNS.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, THOMAS H. BRADY, of the town of New Britain, in the county of Hartford, in the State of Connecticut, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Lanterns; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 represents a section of the band and collar, with the collar reversed,

Figure 2, vertical section of the guard with collar.

Figure 3 is a bottom view, and

Figure 4 a top view of a section of the band B.

Like letters refer to the same parts in all of the figures.

The nature of my invention consists in constructing guards for lanterns, and attaching such guards to the lanterns by lugs and thumb-screws, in riveting the vertical guard-rods to the band so as to make a strong and secure attachment of a detachable guard to a lantern.

To enable others skilled in the art to make and use my invention, I will describe its construction.

The band B, I make of malleable cast iron, or of brass, in the form shown, or in other convenient form, and to the upper surface I attach the projections *a*, fig. 4, for the reception of the ends of the vertical guard-rods E. I drill or countersink holes into these projections, and for two or more of the rods E, I drill the holes through so as to rivet the guard-rods below. It will usually be found sufficient to rivet two of them, as the others are countersunk and soldered. To the lower edge or side of this band B, I cast or otherwise attach lugs *a* and *b* in casting. Those marked *a* can be cast in the position shown at *b*, and be afterwards bent or turned into position. Into the lug or projection *b*, I insert a thumb or set-screw, *c*, which can be made to pass under the edge of the band or disk A, or under a shoulder, *d*, on such band, or on the base of the lantern. The same arrangement can be used with advantage for securing the top or dome to the guard. In that case the band, or that portion of the cap which it represents, will be inserted or turned over, as shown at fig. 1. The rings of the guard D are made in the usual manner, as are also the rods E, with the exception of those which extend through the rings or bands B and C, which are made of sufficient length to be riveted to both rings or bands.

The band or ring C is also made of cast malleable iron or brass, in shape of an inverted U, as shown, and holes are drilled or otherwise made through it for riveting the guard-rods, which are riveted below, so that the guard will be firm and strong, without the use of any solder; but in order that all the rods may be attached to the band, I solder those not riveted, and those riveted may be soldered in addition, if desired.

If the lantern-globes are to be taken out of base, then the band A, or some equivalent for it, will need to be used to connect the guard with the base, but if contracted at that point, and the globe is taken out at the top, then it is not necessary at that point, but will be transferred to the top, or some equivalent for it.

The dome can be connected in the form shown, by a hinge and spring, or by any other suitable means, and the base, with its oil-pot or lamp, can be attached to the band or disk A in any desirable mode, thus making a cheap, strong, and durable lantern.

Having thus fully described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—
A lantern-guard, having the upper and lower rings, or either of them, made of cast metal as described, as a new article of manufacture.

THOMAS H. BRADY,

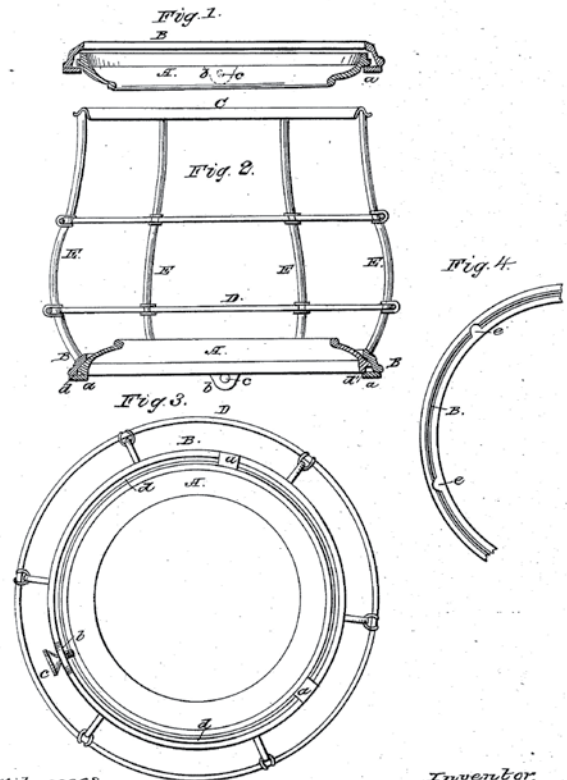
Witnesses:
L. L. BOND,
E. A. WEST.

T. H. BRADY.

Lantern.

No. 78,180.

Patented May 26, 1868.



Witnesses
L. L. Bond
E. A. West.

Inventor.
Thomas H. Brady

SCOTT'S PHOTO-LITHOGRAPH, WASHINGTON, D. C.