

SLIDING HANDLE FOLDING CANDLESTICK

by Wendell Wilson

It never ceases to amaze me how many different mechanical solutions American inventors have come up with for the simple problem of making a miner's candlestick that can fold up so as to fit in a pants pocket without poking holes. I documented a wide variety of mechanical folding candlesticks in my 2021 book, *Antique Miners' Candlesticks*, and yet new variations keep popping up. For example, I recently acquired a hookless model in which the spike folds back through the *middle* of the split thimble—never saw one like that before. And now Dave Gresko has come up with a real beauty that operates in yet another way never seen before.

Dave's candlestick has a large side-knob that loosens the components so that the hook can be folded down flat against the spike (nothing unusual in that), fitting into a neat little notch on the top side of the thimble... and then the slotted handle slides forward to entirely cover the spike as well as the tip of the hook—*that* is a clever, original idea. When the knurled knob is tightened up, everything is held tightly in place. When the candlestick is in the fully opened configuration, tightening the knurled nob not only holds all the components firmly in place, but also tightens the thimble at the same time, to secure the candle. Marvelous.

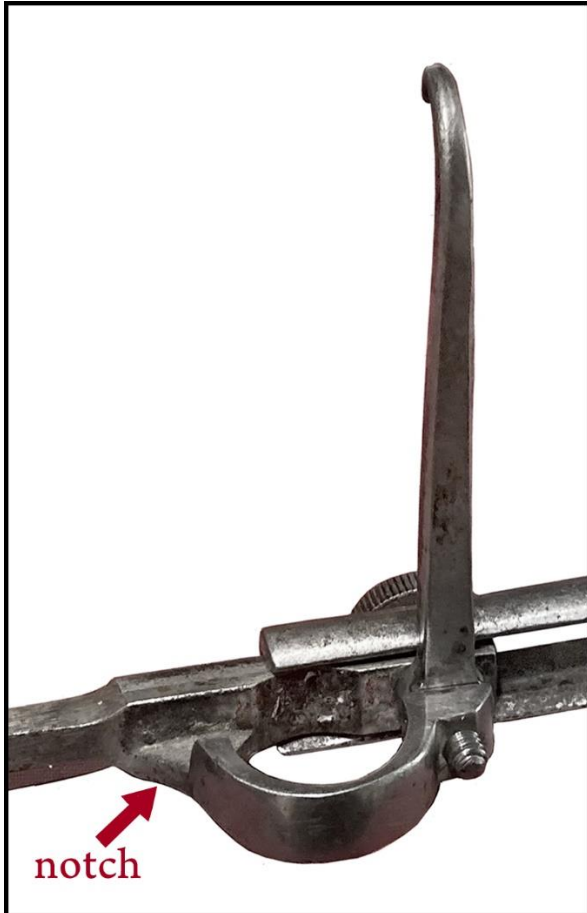
The whole candlestick looks expertly designed and professionally manufactured, and was fully nickel-plated, though some of the plating has flaked off here and there, because of corrosion of the underlying steel—a sure sign of age (this is not a recently made imitation of an old candlestick). In fact, it shows some signs of actually having been used. Surprisingly (and unfortunately), it bears no stamping to identify the maker, and it bears no resemblance to any known patent, though the design was certainly original enough to merit a patent. All that is known is that it turned up in Colorado. If any reader knows more about the origin of this candlestick, I will be happy to amend this article. Here are some pictures supplied by Dave:



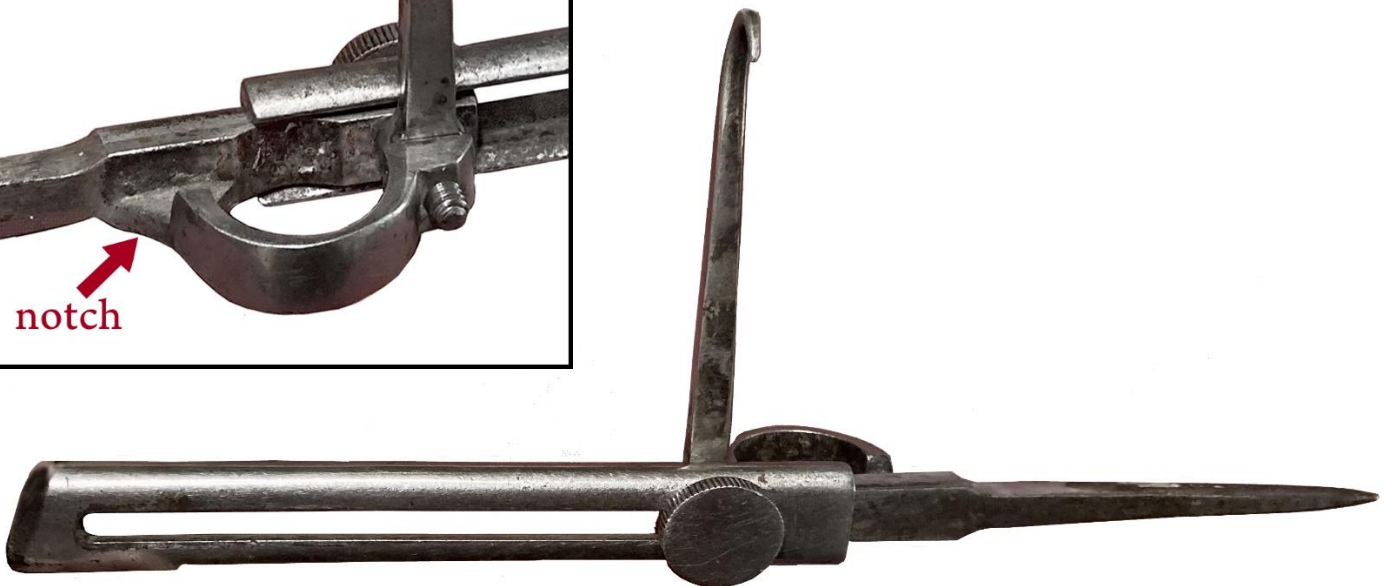
Stowed configuration (4⅞ inches), with handle slid over the spike and hook tip



(above) Hook folded down position



Note the notch cut out from the top of the handle, where the folded hook will fit (red arrow).



Fully open configuration (8 3/8 inches).