

# *the* Collectors

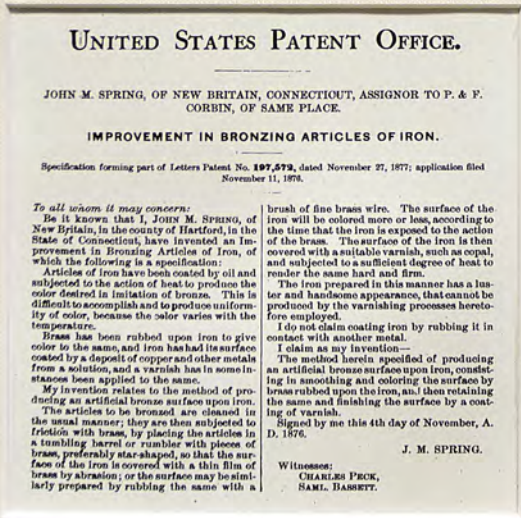


BY KRYSYAN VON SPEIDEL

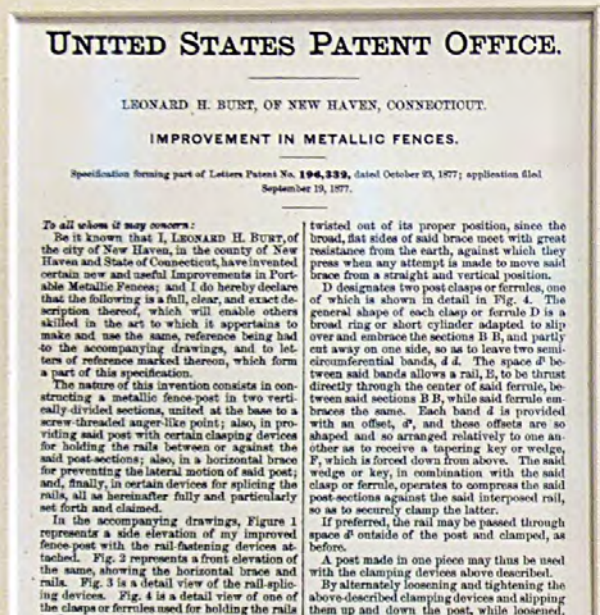
PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHEN DUNN

# Hartford

MAGAZINE



labus. “They’re very hard to find,” he says. From 1790 to 1880, the United States required patent applicants to submit a model of their inventions. The models were created by artisans specializing in detailed scale replicas. Many of the patent office original models were destroyed during fires in 1836 and 1877, greatly increasing their rarity. Cantor finds special interest in the models of inventions submitted for patent by Connecticut entities. The Cantor Colburn collection also graces the lobby of its building, and it presents a mini-museum of prime patent examples from the cradle of industrial design and ingenuity. Local inventors include Andrew Lippitt of New London and his 1868 butter dish that chilled butter using a lower chamber filled with ice; Hartford’s Junius Norton and his 1870 improvements to the safety match; and Otto Knipfer of Bridgeport, whose 1872 invention revolutionized the manufacture of wooden sleeve buttons.



## MICHAEL CANTOR

Attorney Michael Cantor has always found patent law fascinating. “It’s a way to marry an interest in technology with business and societal trends. It allows me to work with the newest and most interesting stuff,” he says. Following dramatic growth in the 1990s, the firm of Cantor Colburn is now the eighth largest intellectual property firm in the nation, with 110 lawyers working out of five offices around the country. Cantor started collecting examples of patented items shortly after entering the field of patent law. His personal office on the 22nd floor of the downtown Hartford headquarters showcases antique devices stamped with patent numbers and dates, primarily from the 1800s. “I’ve always had a strong interest in history,” he says. “I’ve been intrigued with the Industrial Revolution and how inventions changed society, especially in New England.” After Cantor started to teach patent law at the University of Connecticut, he grew intrigued by the sample patents in the syl-

# patent law