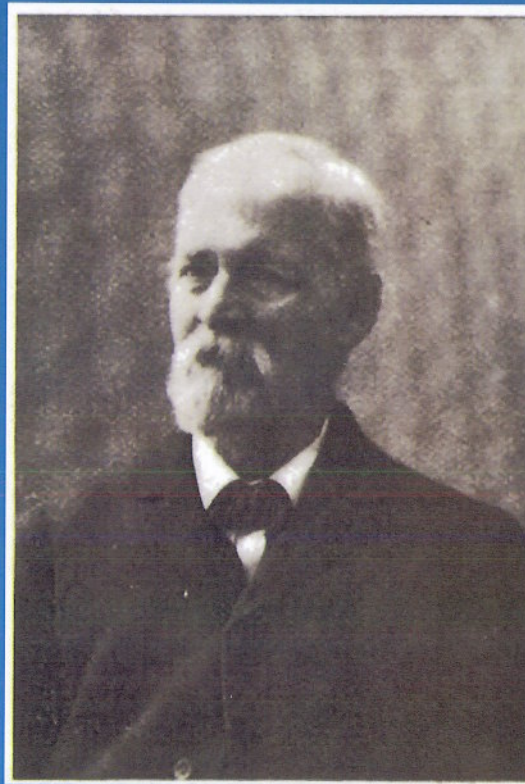


# Benjamin Franklin Meek Reels



Ron Gast  
<http://luresnreels.com>  
ORCA 2013 Convention  
September 6, 2013

# Meek Living in Frankfort

A very large and elegant stock of New Goods, suitable for Wedding and Holiday Presents, has just been received at B. F. Meek's Jewelry Store, Main street, Frankfort. Call and examine them.

Weekly Roundabout,  
January 11, 1879

**RARE CHANCE!**  
AN ASSIGNEE OF  
**B. F. MEEK,**  
I offer the entire stock of  
**Watches, Clocks, Jewelry, &c.,**  
**AT LOWEST CASH PRICES.**

The new goods bought this fall will be sold at first cost; the other goods for less than cost, and many articles for less than half cost, as the stock must be sold.  
**P. C. MEEK.**

Watches repaired in the best manner, and as low as any honest, competent workman can afford to do it.  
**B. F. MEEK.**  
Nov. 15-16.

Frankfort Roundabout,  
November 29, 1879

# Meek Moves from Frankfort to Louisville

It is to be regretted that so old a citizen of this city as Mr. B. F. Meek has disposed of his business here and determined to remove either to Louisville or Lexington. He has for many years been one of the prominent business men of the city, honorable, prompt, and reliable in all his dealings, and our city can ill afford to lose so valuable a citizen.

Frankfort Roundabout,  
September 30, 1882

**WATCHES, FINE CLOCKS, ENGRAVING, &c.**

**SAMUEL AYRES**  
(Formerly of Danville, Ky.)  
**WATCHMAKER**

SUCCESSOR TO

**B. F. MEEK,**  
*Main St., Frankfort, Ky.*

CONTINUES THE WATCH REPAIRING business at the old stand. By promptness and careful work he hopes to merit the patronage of those who desire to have their watches repaired without damage being done to them. Surveyors' compasses repaired, and other instruments requiring delicate and accurate adjustment.

In retiring from business in Frankfort, I take pleasure in expressing my entire confidence in Mr. S. Ayres, and from my long acquaintance with him as a workman, do not hesitate to commend him as every way capable of meeting the expectation of my former patrons.  
B. F. MEEK,  
206-17

Mr. A. T. Todd purchased, on Wednesday last, the handsome residence of B. F. Meek, Esq., on Third street, in South Frankfort, for \$5,100 cash.

Frankfort Roundabout,  
November 25, 1882

**Watches, Fine Clocks, Engraving, &c.**

**SAMUEL AYERS,**

FORMERLY OF DANVILLE, KENTUCKY,

**WATCHMAKER,**

Successor to B. F. Meek, Main Street, Frankfort, Ky., continues the watch repairing business at the old stand. By promptness and careful work he hopes to merit the patronage of those who desire to have their watches repaired without damage being done to them. Surveyors' compasses repaired and other instruments requiring delicate and accurate adjustment.

In retiring from business in Frankfort I take pleasure in expressing my entire confidence in Mr. S. Ayres, and from my long acquaintance with him as a workman, do not hesitate to commend him as every way capable of meeting the expectation of my former patrons.

B. F. MEEK.

Sept. 30-17

Frankfort Roundabout,  
March 1, 1884

Weekly Kentucky Yeoman, October 3, 1882

# Meek Living in Louisville

Mr. B. F. Meek was in Louisville Tuesday, and secured rooms in the building on the southwest corner of Fifth and Jefferson streets, where he will commence the manufacture of fishing reels the first of November. He will remove his family to that city in the spring.

## Frankfort Roundabout, October 21, 1882

Mr. B. F. Meek has purchased a residence on Seventh street, between Chestnut and Broadway, Louisville, and will remove his family there early in February.

## Frankfort Roundabout, January 27, 1883

## Frankfort Roundabout, February 2, 1883

Happening to be in Louisville the first of the week, we called around at the establishment of Mr. B. F. Meek, and found him comfortable situated on the third floor of the building on the south-east corner of 5th and Jefferson. He has put in a splendid lot of machinery and is nearly ready to begin the manufacture of an improved fishing reel. His lathes and other machinery are all driven by a neat little gas engine that occupies no more space than an ordinary cooking stove, which can be started in a minute and run at an expense of about two dollars per week, and makes things hum.

Mr. Meek himself was not in when we called, but Mr. Pit. Meek kindly explained the workings of the new machinery and in what particular the reel they propose making will be an improvement over others. The pinions are to be made of drawn steel and wheels of wrought brass, the cogs being cut diagonal and spiral, and some of the sizes larger than those heretofore manufactured. He has a number of orders on hand already, and hopes to be able to begin filling them by the first of March. We can safely say that all our citizens wish Mr. Meek the greatest success in his new enterprise.

# B.F. Meek Reels

## THE FISHING REEL.

A Talk With the Veteran Maker,  
B. F. Meek.

NEVER SECURED A PATENT

Excerpt from:  
Frankfort Roundabout,  
April 13, 1895

"Mr. B. C. Milam, who had worked in the jewelry trade, returned from Mexico about 1847, and learned the reel-making trade with me in Frankfort, where he is yet following this work. In 1852 my brother and I failed, sold out and he came to Louisville to work for Kendrick, the jeweler, while I went back to my old trade of watch-making until 1882, when I came here and resumed the making of reels. Owing to effects upon my nerves, it had become hard for me to handle the extremely delicate parts of a watch, but to this day I can make as good, yes, better, reel than I ever could. Before leaving Frankfort I was in partnership for a time with Mr. Milam, he making reels and I working on watches. Two of my sons, Sylvanus and Pitman C., have been working with me, but I fear that Pitman, who has been ill for months, will never be able to work again."

jewel fishing reels. He uses carnelian because that is so hard to crush. Diamond, ruby, carnelian is the order he ranks stones as to resistance of crushing, but carnelian is his choice for reel work. Besides being a student of mechanical science and an expert workman, he has made the fishing reel a study in all of its parts and has designed improvements which many makers have eagerly adopted, for Mr. Meek never patented any one of his inventions, relying alone upon the excellence of his own manufacture. The care bestowed in their manufacture will appear when it is told that he and his three sons counted seven as the extreme number of fishing reels that they could complete in one month. The spiral gearing and provisions for retaining oil where most needed without permitting the oil to spread over and gum up the works are counted by Mr. Meek as his most important improvements. For the spiral gearing he designed and had made, at a cost of \$700, a complicated tool that is scarcely larger than a man's hat. By it the teeth of the wheels describe a section of a gentle curve and, furthermore, slant across the wheel so that when in use two teeth of the connecting wheels constantly have a bearing.

# The Meeks are Back in Frankfort

## Home Agin.

Mr. Ben F. Meek and wife, who, for so many long years, lived in this city (afterwards moving to Louisville), have returned and will make their home here in the future.

Mr. Meek is known all over the country as one of the best watch-makers of his time, and also as the maker of the "Meek Reel."

This aged couple are still hale and hearty, Mr. Meek being 82 years of age.

Their many friends will rejoice to have them back. They will reside with their daughter, Mrs. Richard Church.

**Frankfort Roundabout,  
October 22, 1898**

## A New Enterprise.

Mr. Sylvester Meek, an old Frankfort boy, who has been living in Louisville for the past twelve or fifteen years, has returned here to reside, and has established a fishing reel manufactory in one of the upper rooms of the Todd building, on St. Clair street. Mr. Meek is an expert workman, having learned the business under the splendid tutelage of his father, Mr. B. F. Meek, who has now retired, and will make a first-class reel, which he proposes to call the Elkhorn. We wish him success in his new undertaking.

**Frankfort Roundabout,  
November 26, 1898**

**Question: Was the Son's Name Sylvester or Sylvanus?**

# Meek Obituaries

## Death of Jonathan F. Meek.

Mr. Johnathan F. Meek, formerly of this city but more recently of Louisville, died at the residence of Mrs. John Baltzel, in this city, on Saturday morning at 4 o'clock. He was born in Albermar county, Virginia, in 1808, and removed with his father to Mercer county, in this State, in 1812, where he resided until 1830, when he came to this city and began the watchmaking business with the late Worham P. Loomis. He married the only daughter of Mr. John Baltzel, by whom he had one son, Mr. John B. Meek, of the firm of Ferguson & Meek, of this city. In 1852 he removed to Louisville, where he continued to reside until a few weeks since. He was considered the best workman in his line in Louisville and had all the business he could attend to until failing health forced him to leave his bench. He was a brother of Mr. B. F. Meek, formerly of this city but now of Louisville. In addition to his son, Mr. J. B. Meek, he leaves a daughter, by a second marriage, to mourn his loss. The funeral took place Sunday afternoon from Mrs. Baltzel's residence.

Frankfort Roundabout,  
September 22, 1883

## HONORED CITIZEN DEAD.

On Sunday night about 12 o'clock, Mr. Benjamin F. Meek, sr., died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Richard Church, Shelby street, aged 85.

Mr. Meek was one of the few old time citizens of this city, and was highly regarded by everybody who knew him, as an honest, upright gentleman.

By occupation he was a watchmaker and silversmith of the old style, and for many years he and Capt. B. C. Milam were partners in business, occupying the stand now occupied by Mr. A. G. Graham's tailoring establishment.

His work was always well and faithfully executed, and many watches are still in use in this and adjoining communities which were the product of his hands.

Frankfort Roundabout,  
June 29, 1901

In late years he had entered largely into the manufacture of his celebrated fishing reel. In the prosecution of this work he removed to Louisville and remained there until about two years ago, when the infirmities of age compelled him to stop work, and he returned here with his aged and beloved wife to spend the remainder of their lives in their old home.

Gradually his physical health gave way, until some month ago, he was confined to his room and bed. Loving friends ministered to his every want and tenderly anticipated his every desire.

He leaves an aged wife and two daughters (Mrs. J. F. Tillett and Mrs. Richard Church), and four sons (Ben. F., jr., Jas. F., Cloudas and Sylvester Meek), and a large circle of friends and relatives to mourn his departure.

The funeral services took place on Wednesday morning, services being conducted by Rev. Dr. Blayney, after which the remains were placed in the family lot in our cemetery.

# America-Meek Box Ad, circa 1904



## AMERICA-MEEK REELS

### FACTS

The name of B. F. MEEK stands preeminent among reel makers as the one who attained the highest perfection in the art, and the most expert fishermen to-day pay fabulous prices for original B. F. Meek reels, while there are many such reels in the United States which have been in use in the same family for thirty or forty years and are handed down as heirlooms from father to son.

B. F. MEEK is no longer living but he left children and among them one, SYLVANUS MEEK, who began reel making under his father at the age of fifteen, who remained with him until his death, and who has since continued in the trade as the facts related later will show.

### CONCERNING B F MEEK

Benjamin Franklin Meek was born in Danville, Kentucky, Sept. 15, 1816.

Began watch making with his older brother, Jonathan Fleming Meek, in Frankfort, Ky., 1832.

They soon began to make reels, and in 1834 B. F. turned his whole attention to this line.

In 1844 the Meeks associated with them B. C. Milam, who died Jan. 29, 1904, and for a number of years until 1869 their reels were stamped "Meek & Milam."

In 1882 Mr. Meek organized the firm of B. F. Meek & Sons, taking as partners his sons, Pitman, Paul, and later and most important, SYLVANUS, who worked with his father from



## AMERICA-MEEK REELS

### FACTS

1884 until 1898. The other brothers and the father are now deceased.

In 1898 the firm sold its business and its name to J. H. Sutcliffe & Co. of Louisville, Ky., where, in connection with the Blue Grass Reel Co., reels are still made under the name of B. F. Meek & Sons.

B. F. Meek died June 23, 1901, in his eighty-fifth year, but his skill is not lost. He constantly said of his son SYLVANUS that he had inherited all of his skill and in time would make even a finer workman than himself.

### B F MEEK'S FAMILY

Fleming,	deceased.
Pitman Cloudas,	deceased.
B. F., Jr.,	Collecting Agency, St. Paul.
James Fleming,	Insurance, St. Louis
Thomas Cloudas,	deceased.
Nellie,	now Mrs. Richard Church, Frankfort.
Addie,	now Mrs. J. C. F. Tillson, Dahlouega, Ga.
Paul,	deceased.
<u>SYLVANUS</u> ,	<u>AMERICA CO., ROCKFORD, ILL.</u>
Mrs. B. F. Meek,	aged 83, living with her daughter, Mrs. Church, in Frankfort.



# Meek Company Names

- | <u>Year</u>   | <u>Reel Marking</u>                                         |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| • 1883 – 1892 | B.F. Meek                                                   |
| • 1893 – 1898 | B.F. Meek & Sons                                            |
| • 1898 – 1916 | B.F. Meek & Sons<br>(Sutcliffe, Carter & O'Conner - Owners) |

New Kentucky Corporation.  
FRANKFORT, Ky., Dec. 12.—B. F. Meek & Sons, reel-makers, of Louisville, filed articles of incorporation with the secretary of state Friday. Capital stock, \$6,000.

Owingsville Outlook,  
December 15, 1898

# B.F. Meek Reels

- Meek claimed the following about his reels:
  - First to incorporate spiral cut gears
  - First to incorporate jeweled spool pivot bearings
    - Not surprising since he was a watchmaker

# 1902 Ad Showing Spiral Gears



Here's the **Wheel**, that runs the **Reel**, that **MEEK** makes.

'Tis the **Spiral Gear**, the **Anti-Friction Bearings**, the **Light Running Spool**, the **Sentient Touch**, the **Powerful Action**, and **Exquisite Design**, that are peculiar characteristics of

*The* **MEEK FISHING REEL**


For more than sixty-six years the **World's Standard Bait Casting Reel**. It is the *finest* fishing reel produced.

Write for Booklet **R**

**B. F. MEEK & SONS, Louisville, Ky.**

Reels for all angling from **Trout to Tuna**.

IN MEEK SPIRAL GEARING, THE TEETH ARE CUT AT AN ANGLE FROM THE WHEEL'S AXIS.



## B.F. Meek No. 3 Reels



S/N 396

S/N 477

S/N 729

- Came with either **Balanced Handle or Crank Handle**
- Came with or without **Jeweled Pivot Bearings**
- Came with both **Click and Drag**

## B.F. Meek No. 3 Reels



S/N 396

S/N 477

S/N 729

- Engraving the Owner's Name was popular in these Victorian Times

## B.F. Meek No. 3 Reels



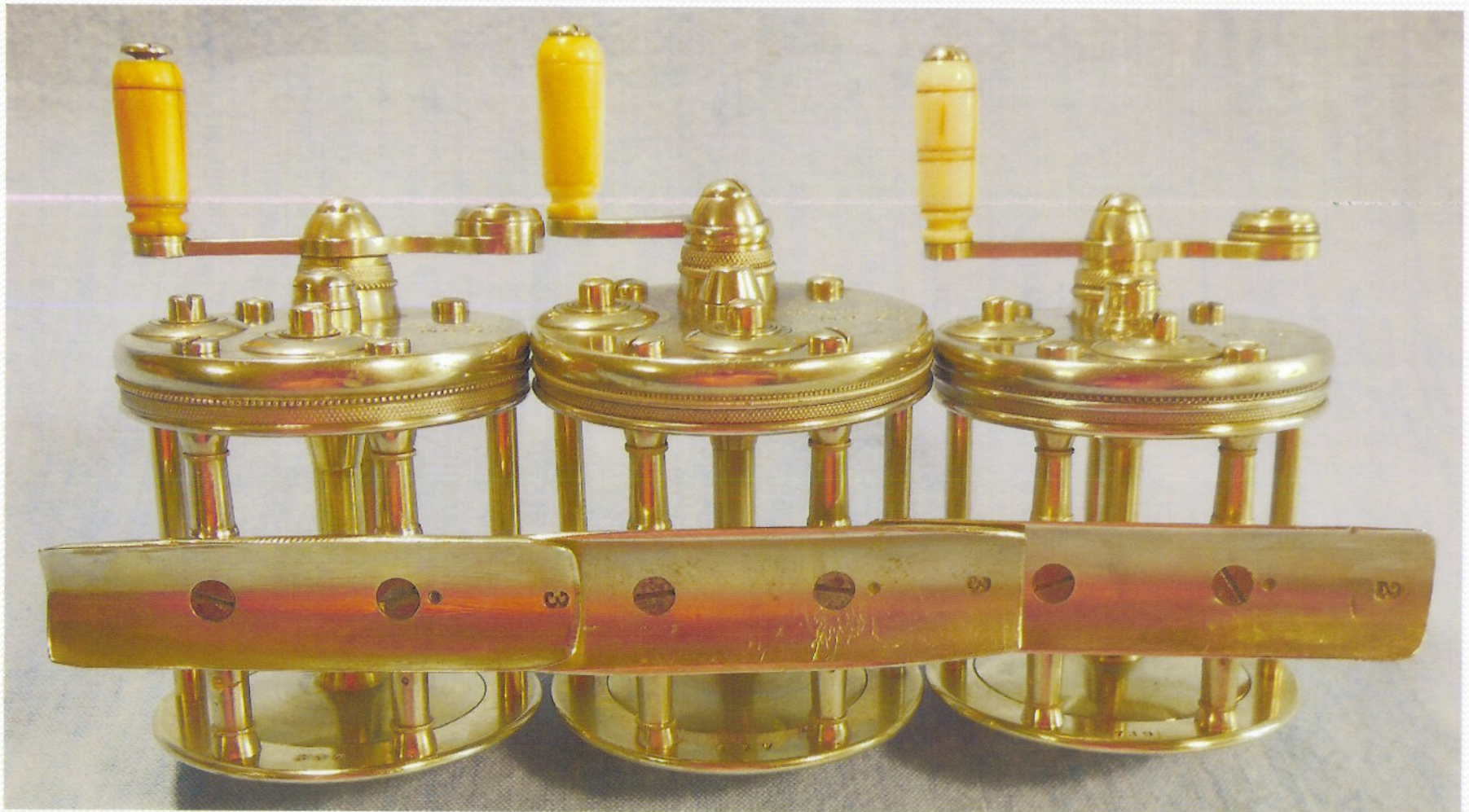
S/N 396

S/N 477

S/N 729

- **Similar interior design**
- **Note Maker's mark – 3 or 1 dots**

## B.F. Meek No. 3 Reels



- Steel Foot Screws

## B.F. Meek Pinions and Bearings



- The Pinion was cut from a solid bar of steel drill rod
- The Bearings are made from “anti-friction” metal (brass)
- The design of the Bearing includes features to retain oil for lubrication



# Attention to Detail



- Shouldered screws
- Dome shaped crank collar , washer and screw
- Slightly tapered ivory knobs

# B.F. Meek Reel Sizes No. 7 to No. 1



# Meek Reel Changes in 12 Years



S/N 1467

S/N 571



S/N 1467

S/N 571

# B.F. Meek & Sons Reels



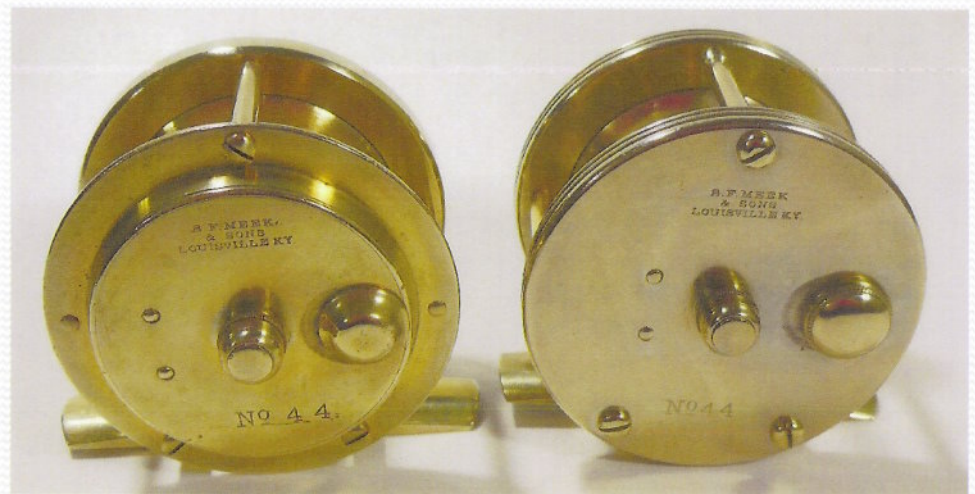
S/N 781



S/N 850

- The first B.F. Meek & Sons reels very similar to B.F. Meek reels
- Triple digit serial numbered reels had same design features
- Serial numbers on rear and tail plates between foot pillars

# B.F. Meek & Sons Fly Reels



## B.F. Meek & Sons Reel Size No.'s 11, 10, 8 & 6



## If Anybody Runs Across This Reel, Please Let Me Know

**LOST.**

A Meek & Milam brass reel No. 2, with pole and line. It was lost Friday night on the road between the Wash Hancock place and Mangan & Darnell's stable. A liberal reward will be paid for its return to this office.

2-tf.

Frankfort Roundabout,  
October 15, 1892