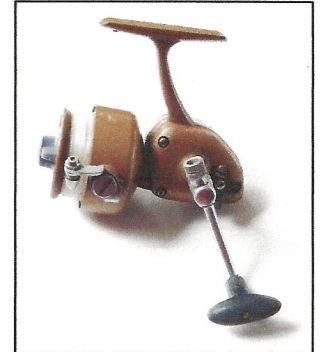
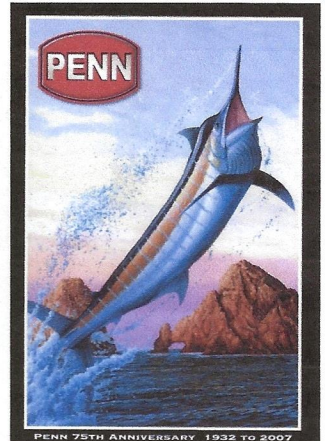


It's easy with
Benjamin's
'Thumezy'

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'Mad Man' Kirk
tackle – p. 23



Penn Anniversary
reels – p. 27



A Reel Edsel (left) – p. 4

Innovative, rare spinning
reels (right) – p. 12

Great auction finds,
dozens of reel photos, a
classic Corvette and
more, inside.



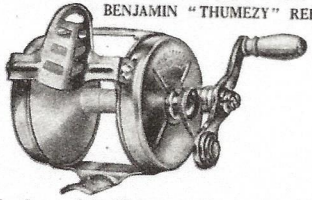
My favorite reel: The 'Thumezy'

By Ron Gast

All of us have reels that stand out in our minds as a favorite for one reason or another. Maybe it was one of the first ones you found in the field or one that was given to you as a family heirloom. It could have been one you were drawn to by its natural appeal. I personally enjoy and appreciate all reels, especially those made in Kentucky and New York. However, the Benjamin "Thumezy" stands out in my opinion as something special. Reuben Benjamin designed and made what I consider to be my favorite reel.

Reuben Berkley Benjamin was born May 20, 1869 in Fulton, N.Y. He received an Electrical Engineering degree from Iowa State College in 1892 and went to work for Commonwealth Edison Company in Chicago. It didn't take him long to demonstrate his ingenuity by receiving his first patent in Jan. 19, 1897

CASTING IS EASY IF YOU USE A BENJAMIN "THUMEZY" REEL



The Curse of the Fisherman is "Back-Lash"
The momentum gained by the rapidly revolving spool carries it around after the bait has ceased hurtling through the air. The experienced bait caster remedies this by "thumbing"—an art which requires several years' practice and makes many a born fisherman stick to worms and sinkers.

THE THUMBING LEVER
Makes casting easy for the beginner, increases the accuracy of the expert, and protects the thumb of both.
The line is not touched in casting. The Thumbing Lever operates the brake which controls the spool. The Thumbing Lever also automatically throws crank and gears out of action when casting, so that cast is made with free spool. Click and Drag are adjustable, and are set at varying tensions by Thumbing Lever for trolling. Only three principal parts, easy to take apart to oil and clean, by removing one thumb nut.

German Silver Frame — Satin Finish
Light Aluminum Spool — Capacity, 125 Yards

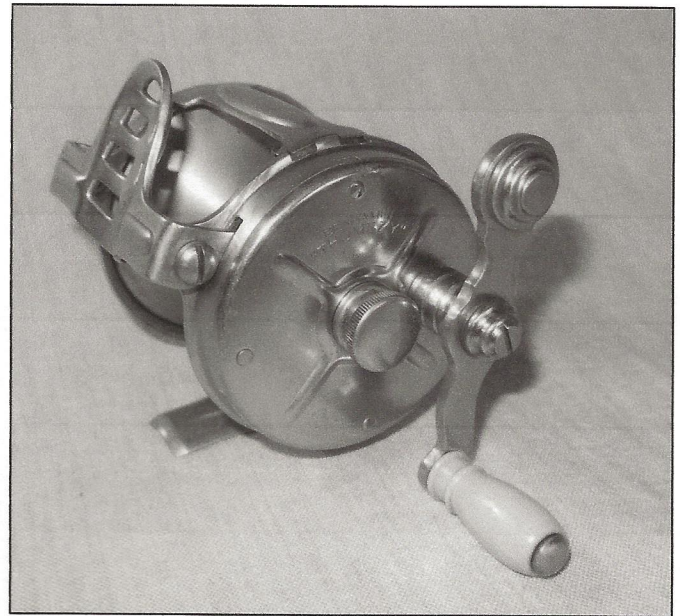
PRICE, \$6.00. Packed in Chamois Bag
Sent postpaid to any address on receipt of price, if your dealer cannot supply you.

BENJAMIN-SELLAR MFG. CO.
557 W. Quincy St. CHICAGO, ILL.

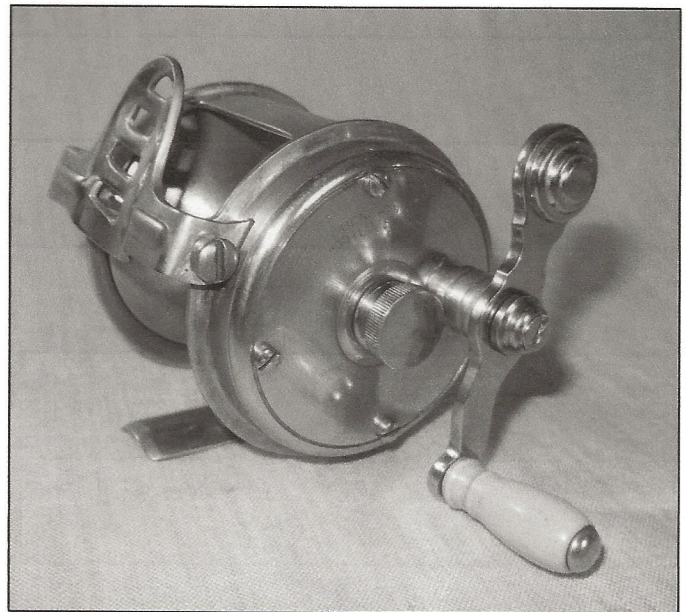
for an Incandescent Lamp Socket. This was the first of many patents he was to receive. By the time he died on Dec. 26, 1933, he had been granted over 350 patents⁽¹⁾.

Most of Benjamin's patents were associated with electrical lighting fixtures, switches, relays, and light bulb sockets. However, Reuben did have a

wide range of interests as shown by the diversity of patents he received. He received several patents related to the automobile industry such as for a carburetor, an explosive engine governor, an oiling attachment and a gas engine speed controller. He also received patents for safety devices for heavy machinery and for lighting attachments for firearms. All of these patents were assigned to the company he founded — Benjamin Electric Manufacturing Company. The breadth and desirability of the products that the company sold is demonstrated by the fact that the Benjamin Electric Mfg. Co. is still in

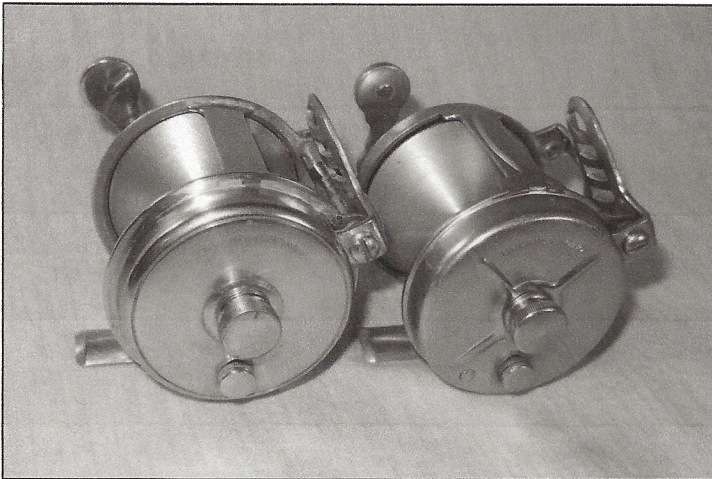


The first model Benjamin "Thumezy" above, and second model, below.



business today.

Reuben Benjamin and George Alan Sellar founded the Benjamin-Sellar Manufacturing Company in Chicago, Ill. George was born in 1877 in Aberdeen, Scotland. He was the secretary and manager of the company. Benjamin-Sellar sold mostly hand tools and toys. Their earliest joint patent, and most popular tool, was a screwdriver



The second model, at left, lacked the reinforcing ribs seen on the backplate of the patent model, right.

with a handle that had a ratchet activated by depressing it with the palm of your hand. Their most popular toy was a miniature cement block plant with block molds called The Boy Contractor. They also made and sold my favorite reel – the “Thumezy”.

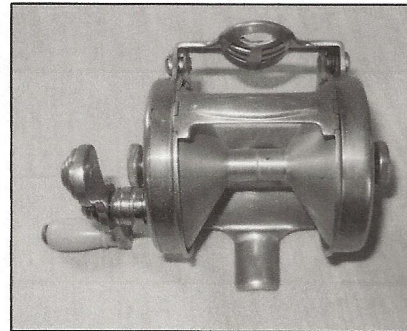
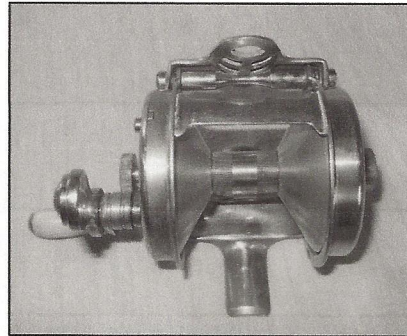
Benjamin received two patents that were the basis of the “Thumezy” reel. The first one was filed on Dec. 13, 1910 and was patented on Feb. 22, 1916. It



had a basic representation of the reel’s features, but not all the details as shown in Benjamin’s second reel patent. The second patent was filed on Jan. 2, 1914 and was patented in the same year as the first on July 4, 1916. The dates are interesting since the reel was first introduced to the

public in December 1912 in The Hardware Reporter and Commercial America magazine publications. The first advertisements for the reel are seen in sporting magazines in early 1913. The latest one I’ve seen is in 1914. This must have been a frustration for Benjamin having to wait 6 years for his patents. The later patent award dates is the reason why the reels are marked Patent Pending. By the time he received the patents in 1916, it is possible the reel was no longer being produced.

The Benjamin-Sellar made the “Thumezy” reel in two different models. The first model is depicted in the 1913 advertisements and in the patent filed in 1914. This one is referred to as the patent model. It has four distinct radially oriented reinforcing ribs



which provide stiffness to the end plates. It also has the internal free-spool mechanism plate riveted to the headplate with three rivets. The second model is noticeably heavier. It weighs 8 ½ ounces compared to the patent model which weighs 7 ½ ounces. The second model does not include the end plate reinforcing ribs

and attaches the internal free-spool mechanism plate to the headplate with three screws. Another difference is the second model has a reinforcing pillar underneath thumb cradle. There are also differences in the spool shafts. The thumb activated free-spool and spool-braking functions for both models are essentially the same.

Using the Thumezy is indicative of its name. While casting, the fisherman activates the free-spool mechanism by pushing the thumb cradle down once. The caster then removes pressure from the cradle by lifting the thumb when the line starts to spool out. Subsequent thumb pressure applied to the cradle acts as a spool breaking mechanism to prevent a backlash. The thumb never has to touch the spool during the cast. The spool winding mechanism gears are re-engaged by pushing the crank handle towards the headplate. That was “Ezy”.

If you have ever had the chance to play with the “Thumezy” reel, you will know what I am talking about when I say it’s a truly innovative and esthetically pleasing reel design. Holding one of these 100-year-old reels in your hands and playing with it is truly an enjoyment to a reel collector. These are the reasons why it’s my favorite reel.

Reference:

- (1) Wikipedia website – http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_Electric_Manufacturing_Company