



Harvey Hubbell, inventor of the electric plug

When you fly into San Francisco at night, you see a brilliant mosaic of sparkling electric lights stretching for hundreds of miles from the Pacific Ocean to Yosemite.

Whenever I see a sight like this, I think of a man named Harvey Hubbell.

Harvey Hubbell was a Connecticut inventor who made it possible for us to easily use electricity. He was walking in New York City about 150 years ago when he came upon a penny arcade which was just closing for the day. The arcade included an electrically operated game where two boxers, who traveled along slots in the floor of a miniature boxing ring, threw right or left uppercuts at each other with the touch of a button. Harvey watched through the window as the janitor struggled to detach each of the power supply wires from separate post terminals extending outward from the wall, so he could move the big game to the side and sweep under it. Then the janitor sweated even harder to identify each wire and its proper terminal post, make the reconnections, and check each terminal so there wouldn't be any short circuits. At that moment, Harvey had a flash of insight.

He saw a product with individual wires that would be permanently attached in the right sequence and correct polarity, which could be easily and safely connected or disconnected. In other words, plugged in or out. Yes, Harvey invented the electric plug. He also invented the pull chain light switch and the flip light switch and a bunch of other things that make it easy for us to use electricity in our daily lives. With his brilliant, user-centered, incremental advances, I think of Harvey as the prototypical user experience designer.

*Hubbell's Windmill At St. Joseph's Manor, Long Hill, Conn.*





This 100-foot-tall windmill was part of a shirt factory on Main Street owned by Harvey Hubbell. His son Harvey Hubbell II, founder of Harvey Hubbell Electric Inc. in Bridgeport, invented the electrical plug and the pull-chain socket. A newspaper report in 1878 described “Hubbell’s Factory of Long Hill” as “a very thriving business” with “labor given to hundreds of people; the sewing machines are run by steam power, and fifty hands are employed to attend them (mostly women).” By that time, the business was run by Hubbell’s stepson G.F. Hadley. The property is now owned by St. Joseph’s Manor. The windmill was torn down in 1976.

## Harvey Hubbell, II



Bridgeport History Center

Harvey Hubbell II opened his manufacturing facility in a small loft on Middle Street in Bridgeport in 1888. Although he had some early successes in manufacturing, it was his new pull socket patented in 1896 that brought him real success.

The Hubbell pull socket, which he developed in 1896, brought success to the Hubbell operation. In 1909, Harvey Hubbell the second oversaw the construction of a new Bridgeport factory for the growing company off of State Street on Bostwick Avenue.

Harvey Hubbell II took photographs of the factory being built, and was joined by his little son, Harvey III. The four story U-shaped structure was designed to increase manufacturing efficiency and like the products the company produced, utilized the newest technology: reinforced concrete.

The Hubbell building served as a western gateway to the City's West End industrial area for decades to come, and was the first such building in New England.

Harvey Hubbell III grew up to take over the family business after his father died in 1927. He was only 26 years old at the time of his father's death. During Harvey III's tenure as president of Hubbell Manufacturing, the firm grew from a \$1 million annual business in 1927 to a \$21 million a year business in 1963.

Harvey Hubbell III invented many of the manufacturing devices built by the company, as had his father, Harvey II. The most remembered product made in the factory was the pull socket.

Once Interstate 95 was completed through Bridgeport, a large electric sign was on top of the Hubbell building's roof clearly visible to automobiles on the highway.

In 2008, Hubbell Industries demolished the Bostwick Avenue plant. Hubbell Industries is found throughout the world, including Shelton, Connecticut.



## The Original "Plug-In Anywhere"



*Back in the "horse and buggy" days of the electrical industry this duplex convenience outlet delighted secretaries, housewives and plant managers alike. First installation was the Equitable Building, New York City, January 1915, where a number of these dependable "old timers" are still in use.*

Since those early days Hubbell has introduced hundreds of *new* devices—connectors, sockets, switches, etc.—which form the electrical backbone of our present way of life.

Today, with an extensive plant expansion underway and several new products waiting to be introduced, Hubbell is in an excellent position to supply the rapidly growing needs of business and industry.

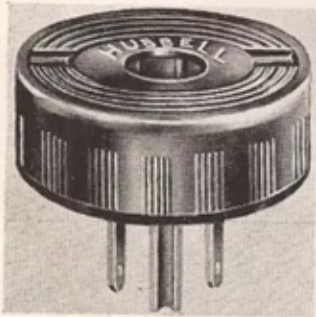
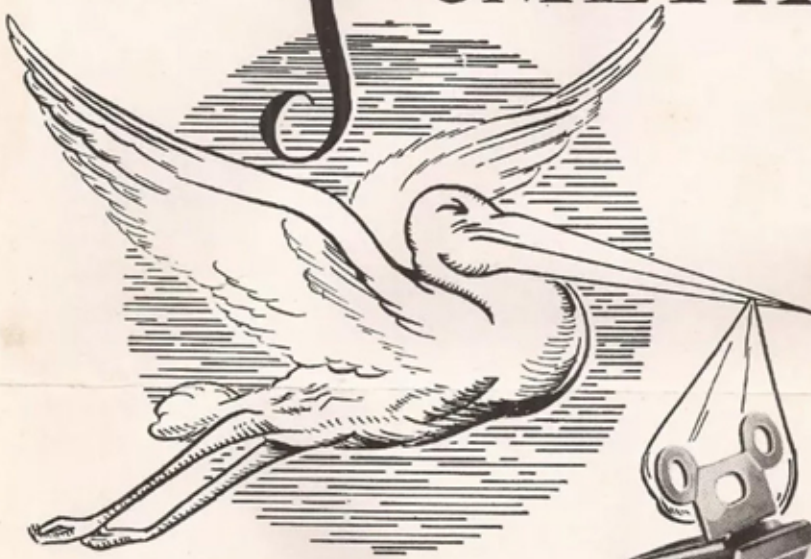
# Harvey Hubbell, Inc.

BRIDGEPORT 2. CONNECTICUT

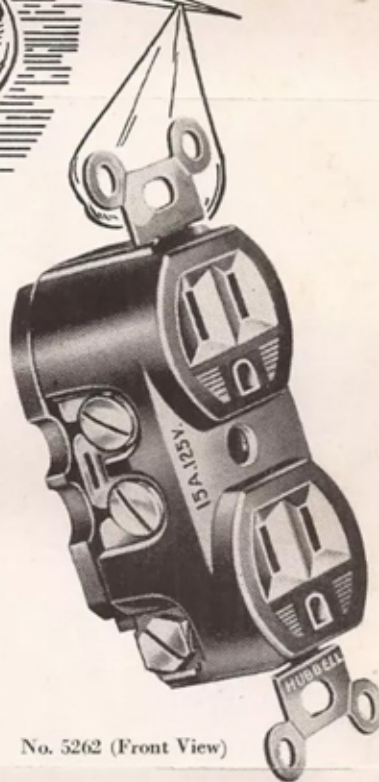
YESTERDAY, TODAY, TOMORROW . . . FIRST IN THE DESIGN AND MANUFACTURE OF QUALITY WIRING DEVICES.



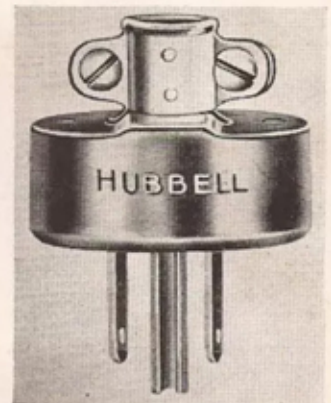
# SOMETHING NEW



No. 5263



No. 5262 (Front View)



No. 5264

## No. 5262 GROUNDING RECEPTACLE TO NEW "NEMA" STANDARDS

Prevents improper insertion of Caps.

Also takes Standard Two Wire Parallel Plug Caps.



HUBBELL DIVISION

**CROUSE-HINDS CO. OF CANADA LTD.**

**TORONTO - CANADA**



# Hubbell Pull Sockets

with Extension Eyelet

Patented August 11, 1895; May 8, 1900; July 30, 1901; February 17, 1903;  
April 10, 1906

National Electrical Code Standard

Our Extension Eyelet permits the use of the Pull Socket with husks or other fixtures in which the limited space will not admit of the use of our regular Socket.

Unless otherwise specified, sockets with one inch extension will be furnished.

See opposite page for prices



