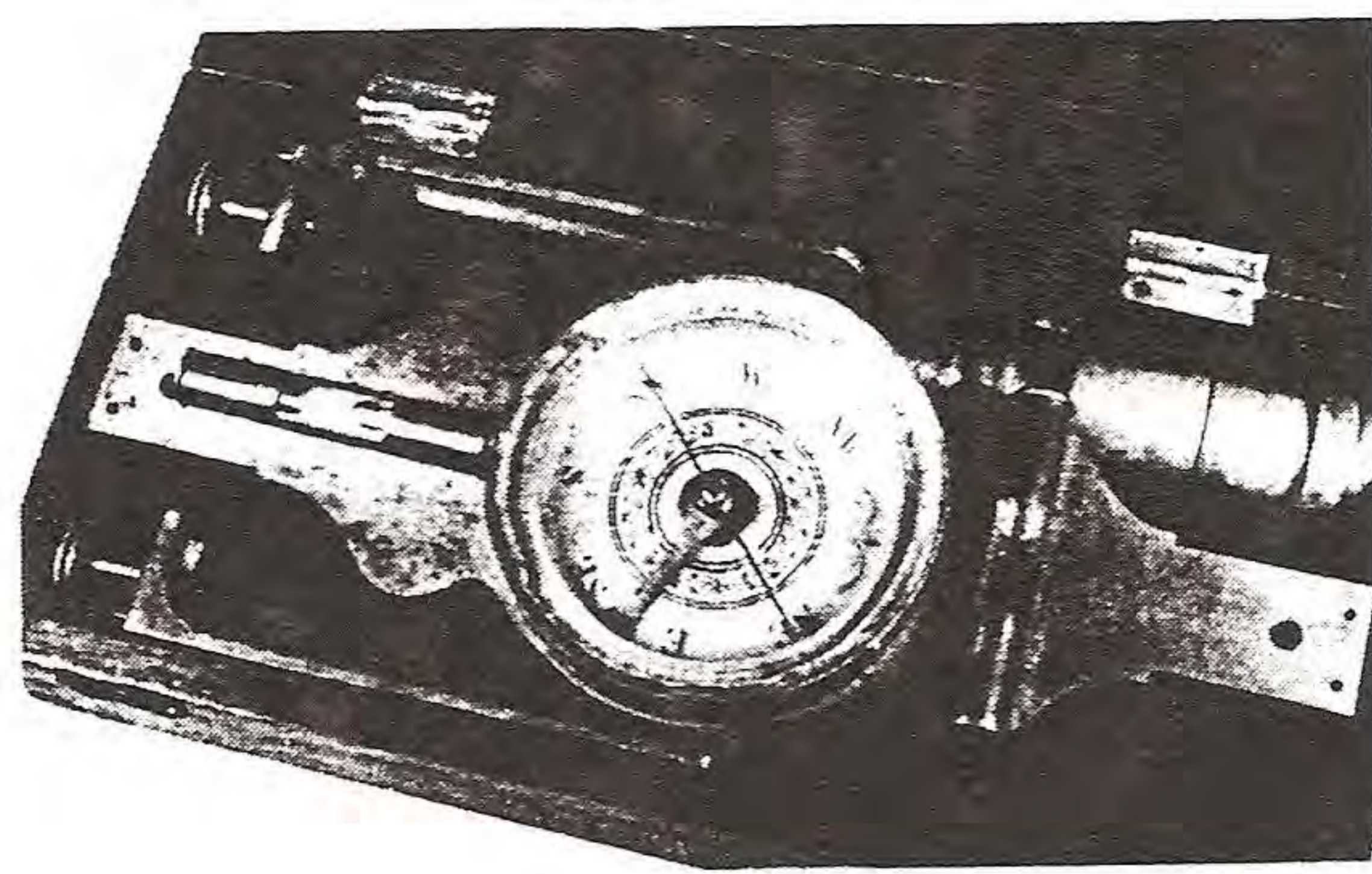


Levi Colton (1803-1885) was a native of Longmeadow, Massachusetts and learned the trade of jeweler and silversmith. He pursued this career in New York, Boston, Utica and other cities. He then worked in a life insurance agency. In 1854 he was listed as a maker of mathematical instruments in Hartford, Connecticut with a shop on Russell Street. A vernier surveying compass inscribed "L. Colton & Co., Hartford, Ct." is in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford. Several surveying compasses inscribed "L. Colton, New York" are in private collections.

Collector's Corner in the May/June 1983 issue. Levi Colton was born in Longmeadow, Massachusetts in 1803 and learned the craft of silversmith before opening a shop in New York City, where he also sold jewelry. He also worked in Boston, Utica, and other cities. Eventually he was involved with a life insurance agency. His name appeared in 1854 in Geer's city directory for Hartford, Connecticut as a maker of mathematical instruments with a home on Russell Street. A vernier compass inscribed "L. Colton & Co. Hartford, Ct." is in the collections of the Connecticut Historical Society. Other surveying instruments with the New York address are in several private collections. Colton died in New Haven, Connecticut in 1885.



The third and somewhat later compass is engraved "L. Colton New York Warranted." It is 11-1/4" long, and has a 3" needle. Levi Colton (1803-1855), who was born in Longmeadow, Mass., was in New York by 1846. That year the mathematical instrument maker, Richard Patten, wrote to Alexander Dallas Bache, Superintendent of the U. S. Coast Survey: "The bearer, Levi Colton, has been in my employ for upwards of six months. He is a quite steady and industrious man. He wishes to get employment, if you have any for him in the Inst. Shop. I think he would be serviceable as he is very handy at form work."³ Colton apparently did not get the job, as he soon went into business for himself, advertising as a jeweler, and making surveying compasses. Several Colton compasses are known, all dating from this period. There are two in the National Museum of American History--a plain compass signed "L. Colton, New York," and a vernier compass signed "L. Colton New York Warranted"--and one at the Connecticut Historical Society. Others were offered by The Antiquarian Scientist in 1977, and by Historical Technology in 1984. Colton moved to Hartford in 1854 and later sold life insurance. His last years were spent in New Haven, where he listed himself as optician and/or jeweler.