

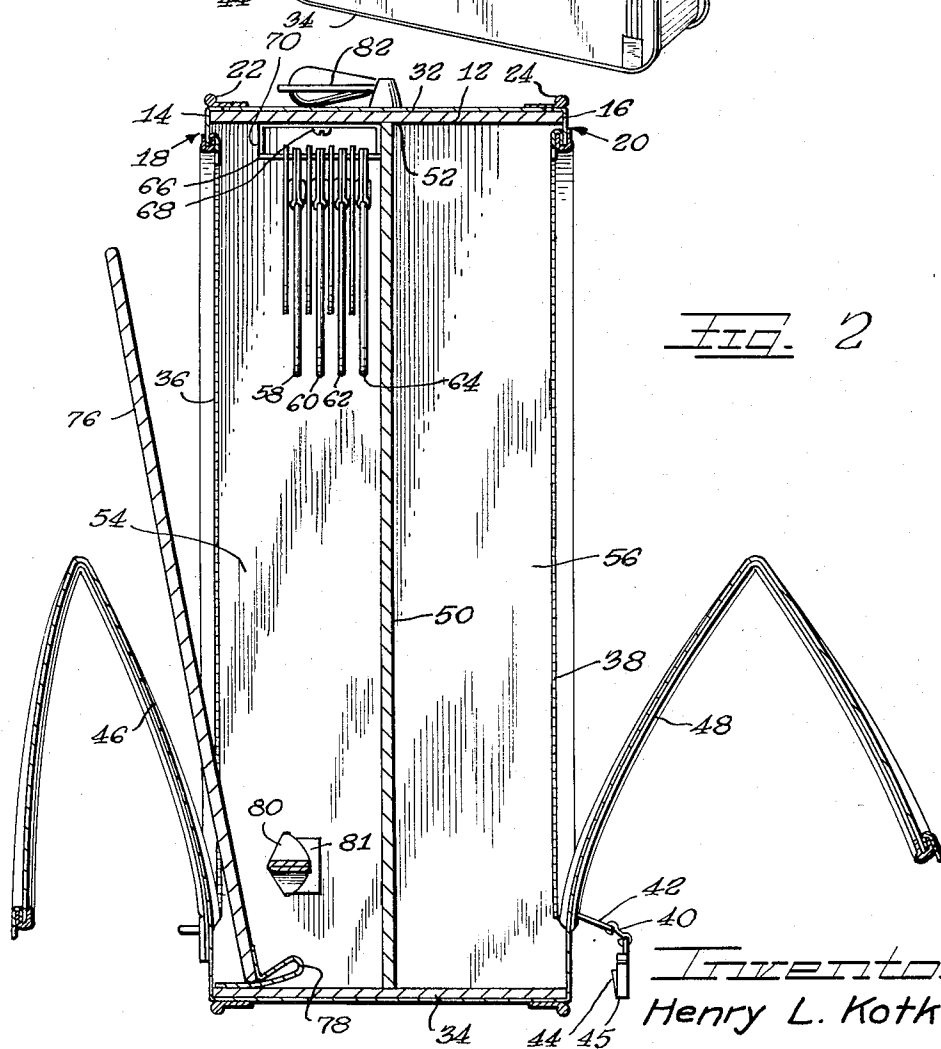
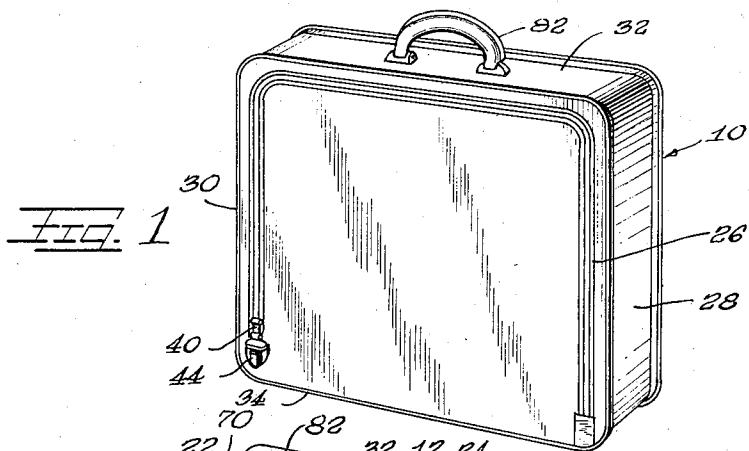
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H. L. KOTKINS
LUGGAGE CONSTRUCTION

2,918,997

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2 Sheets-Sheet 1



Inventor
Henry L. Kotkins

By Hill, Herman, Mann, Kross & Simpson Attys

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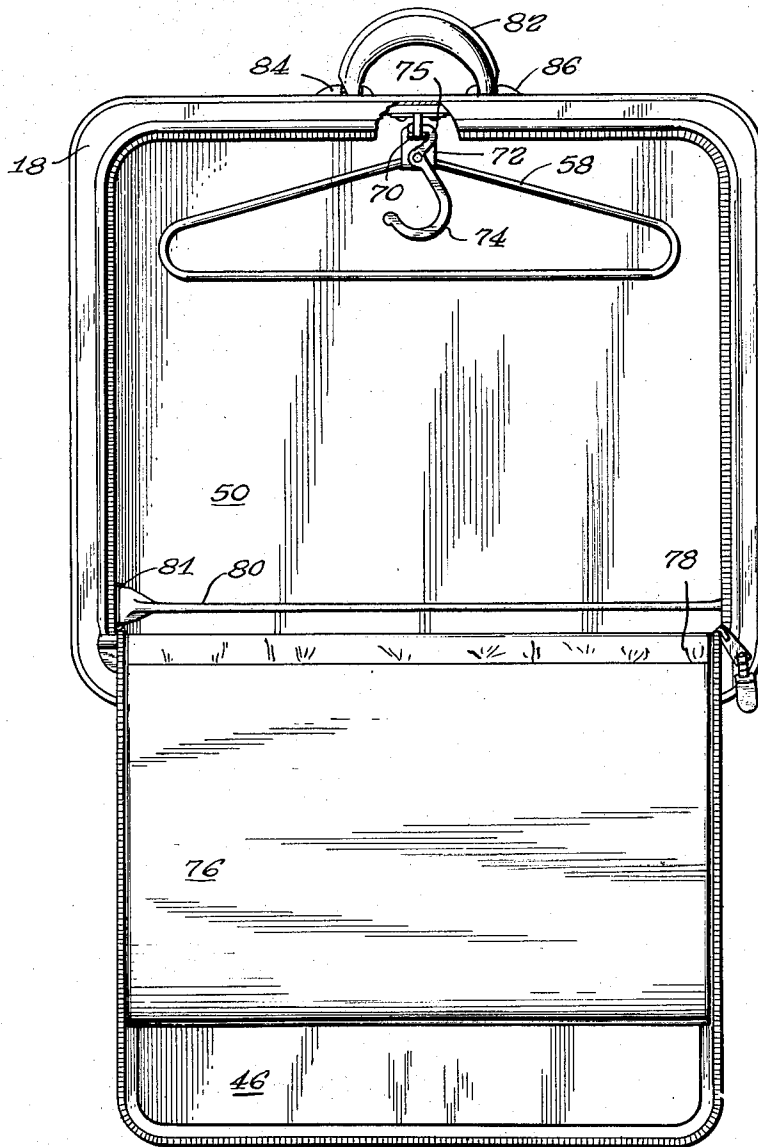


Fig. 3

Inventor
Henry L. Kotkins

By Lill, Sherman, Mason, Gross & Kimpel-Attys

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LUGGAGE CONSTRUCTION

Henry L. Kotkins, Seattle, Wash.

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4 Claims. (Cl. 190—41)

The present invention relates to improvements in luggage construction and more particularly, to a luggage piece having increased usefulness and simplicity of construction resulting from its central supporting frame and a partition therein which provides two separate and individually accessible compartments.

There has been a continuous effort to achieve a luggage construction which would contain a maximum amount of clothing or the like and which would be of lightweight, attractive appearance and substantial strength. However, luggage is typically formed in two cup-shaped sections hingedly secured together along either side thereof, although one of the sections may be dimensioned to serve as a cover. This structure is relatively cumbersome, and when clothing is placed in each of the sections to the maximum extent, it is often difficult to shut the suitcase. The clothes in the opposed portions are then crushed against each other, so that they are not likely to come out ready for use.

Accordingly, an object of the present invention is to provide a luggage construction which is strong and durable and which considerably relieves the difficulties involved in packing and unpacking the conventional luggage piece.

Another object of the invention is to provide a luggage construction which is exceptionally strong but lightweight, the central portion of the luggage piece being formed in a suitably rigid frame and the side walls thereof being of a light, preferably flexible material which is supported by the frame so as not to require extra reinforcement.

Another object of the invention is to provide a luggage piece as described in which a permanent partition is disposed midway of the central frame and the partition cooperates with the side walls to define two compartments, each of which is separately accessible by means of a closure in the side wall associated therewith.

Another object of the invention is to provide a luggage construction as described in which one of the compartments provided by the partition has hanger means therein for suits, dresses or the like while on the other side of the partition there is provision for the usual miscellaneous articles carried by travelers.

Another object of the invention is to provide a frame which is substantially continuous and centrally located so as to support the flexible side walls in a manner which will permit clothing to be placed in each of the compartments without interfering with the closing of the luggage.

Another object of the invention is to provide for luggage construction in which the flexible side walls are each provided with a zipper construction which is preferably disposed in approximate relationship to the end and upper edges of the side walls so that the lower boundary of the panel defined by the zipper permits the panel to be opened without the need for hinges.

Another object of the invention is to provide a luggage piece in which a flat retaining panel is disposed in the compartment containing the hanger means and movably

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secured to the solid frame, this flat panel being dimensioned so as to be easily received through the opening provided by the zipper means so as to afford ready access to the hanger means.

5 Another object of the invention is to provide a luggage construction as described which is extremely strong and attractive in appearance, while having a simplicity of construction and ease in use which affords unusual advantages over currently available side-opening luggage.

10 Other objects and advantages will become apparent from the teaching of the features of the invention in connection with the disclosure of the preferred embodiment in the specification, claims and appended drawings in which:

15 Figure 1 is a perspective view of a luggage construction according to the present invention;

Figure 2 is a vertical sectional view of the luggage piece of the invention with the panel closure open; and

20 Figure 3 is a side elevational view of the luggage construction shown in Figures 1 and 2.

While the features of the invention are illustrated in a preferred form, as embodied in a piece of luggage such as a suitcase, and the invention finds particular utility in the environment illustrated, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that it is not restricted to this particular form, which is shown for purposes of illustration.

As seen in Figure 1 the luggage case is preferably of a type such as is adapted for use in travelling, and is substantially of a rectangular configuration although other shapes may also be employed. The suitcase 10 has a continuously formed and substantially rigid frame 12, which encloses a space corresponding to the profile of the luggage piece 10. In a preferred form of the invention, the frame 12 is steamed and bent from plywood or other suitable material whose width corresponds to the transverse dimension of the suitcase so that its opposite edges 14 and 16 are disposed in substantially parallel relationship. As seen in Figures 1 and 3, the frame 12 affords a rounded construction for the corners of the luggage piece, which not only reduces stress at these points but provides an attractive appearance as well. The frame 12 may be covered by a tough, flexible plastic material such as vinyl, polyethylene or other suitable substance, which may be sealed thereto in the original mold or otherwise secured. As seen particularly in Figure 2, the suitcase or luggage piece 10 is provided with a pair of side walls 18 and 20 whose outer marginal edges are preferably formed continuously from the material used for the exterior surface of the frame 12 although any other suitable means may be used for securing the side walls 18 and 20 to the marginal outlines of the frame. In the example shown, the edges 14 and 16 are each provided with a protective bead 22 and 24 respectively, extending peripherally therearound. These beads may be stitched to the underlying fabric or otherwise suitably secured thereto.

In accordance with the invention, each of the side walls 18 and 20 affords access to the interior of the luggage piece 10 and thus defines a slit such as the slit 26 shown in Figure 1. The slit 26 extends in preferably proximately spaced relationship to the end walls 28 and 30 of the luggage piece and to the top wall 32 thereof. The slit 26 preferably terminates in proximate, substantially equally spaced relation to the bottom wall 34 of the luggage piece. In order to provide selective access to the interior of the suitcase as described, fastening means 36 and 38 are provided for each of the sidewalls 18 and 20 and their slits 26 which in the present embodiment are elongated zippers each having a grip portion 40 and 42 carrying a lock 44 and 45 respectively. Thus each of the slits 26 in the sidewalls 18 and 20 defines a panel for the sidewall which is adapted to be folded outwardly

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along the flexible lower edge thereof which is provided by the lower extremity of the slits. These panels are designated by reference numerals 46 and 48 as shown in Figure 3 and because of their flexible characteristic, they may be positioned as desired so as not to interfere with access to the interior of the luggage piece 10.

In order to divide the luggage piece 10 into two compartments, in accordance with the present invention, a permanent, relatively rigid partition 50 is secured midway of the frame 12 along the surface 52 thereof. If the surface 52 is covered with a lining, the partition 50 may be secured by stitching to such lining, although any other suitable means of permanently securing the partition in the frame may be utilized. Preferably, the partition 50 is disposed in predetermined spaced parallel relationship to each of the side walls 18 and 20 so as to define compartments 54 and 56 therewith which are accessible by means of the panels 46 and 48 as hereinbefore described. The panels 46 and 48 may have their inner surfaces lined with a cotton fabric or other suitable tough material to increase their attractiveness and wearability.

Each of the compartments 54 and 56 may be filled to the desired extent with clothes or other articles. In accordance with the increased range of application of the luggage piece, which eliminates crushing together of opposite compartments as is done with standard side opening luggage, hanger means such as the hangers 58, 60, 62 and 64 may be provided as suspended from a bracket 66 which may be secured by screw means 68 to the top portion of the frame 12. These hangers are of the type which affords releasable positioning on the bracket 66 by means of a channel 70 in an upstanding bracket 72 of the hanger in the example shown with respect to the hanger 58; while a hook element 74 carries a pivotally mounted channel closing element 75 to hold the hanger in place during travel. These hangers may be used for supporting coats, dresses, or other articles of wear and because the articles are not packed tightly against corresponding articles in another section of the suitcase, they may be removed after extended travel without creases or wrinkling. To assist in this purpose, a flat panel 76 having a rigid outline whose dimensions approximate those of the panel 46 is secured to the bottom wall 34 of the frame 12 by flexible means such as the cloth section 78, which may be stitched or otherwise fastened to the bottom portion 34 adjacent the edge 14 thereof. To further assist in this purpose, a resilient band 80 is preferably secured to the frame end portions 28 and 30 by means of suitable fastening means such as the bracket 81, the lower portions of the articles of clothing being resiliently retained by the band 80 and also by the flap or panel 76. The dimensions of the flap 76 permit it to be easily received through the opening defined by the slit 26 to afford ready access to the articles as desired. The compartment 54 may be utilized for materials which are transported during traveling such as razors, socks, underwear and the like.

It will be seen that the rigid frame 12 provides a dimensional stability for the luggage 10, which actually exceeds that of traditionally constructed suitcases by a considerable degree. However, this stability and strength is markedly increased by the partition 50, which reinforces the rigid frame 12 and serves to resist stresses exerted on the frame and directed inwardly of the luggage piece 10. Since the weight of the luggage is evenly distributed through the frame 12 and the partition 50, it may be easily carried without danger of deformation, by a handle 82 secured by spaced brackets 84 and 86 to the upper wall 32 of the frame 12.

Since each of the compartments 54 and 56 is relatively shallow, articles contained therein will be readily available without the need for searching through a considerable depth of material before reaching the desired article, as is required with conventional side opening luggage. Either of the closures 46 and 48 may be

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opened as desired and the articles removed from the corresponding compartment without disturbing the articles in the other compartment, and articles such as shoes may be kept separate from shirts, if desired, by keeping them in separate compartments, since the partition 50 forms a safety protection which is not available in other types of luggage. The elimination of hinges and fasteners means that the entire luggage piece may be packed and unpacked with a minimum of effort, and the provision of a single, central, solid frame portion reduces the total weight of the article in comparison with conventional luggage so that a considerable improvement in ease of transportation is achieved.

Although I have herein described my invention with respect to certain principles and details thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that these may be varied without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the hereunto appended claims.

I claim as my invention:

1. A luggage piece for use in transporting articles of clothing comprising a frame of predetermined width and formed of relatively rigid material, said frame being continuous and defining an enclosure corresponding to the dimensions of the luggage, a partition of strong, relatively rigid material secured midway of the frame and substantially parallel to the side edges thereof, a flexible side wall extending across each of the sides of the frame, said partition cooperating with said side walls to define two compartments, a closure panel formed integrally in each of said side walls, means for releasably holding each of said closures in closing relationship to the side wall thereof, retaining means for removably supporting clothes in one of the said compartments and a flat panel movably secured in said one compartment and dimensioned to permit outward movement from said compartment when the closure therefor is opened.

2. A luggage piece of light, durable construction and attractive appearance comprising a case of generally rectangular cross section including a central closed, substantially rigid frame providing top, bottom, and end walls for the case, a pair of flexible side walls, each of said side walls having zipper means extending in proximately spaced relationship to the top and end edges thereof, the end portions of each of the zipper means terminating in substantially equally spaced relationship to the bottom edge of the side wall on which the zipper means is formed, a relatively rigid partition in said frame extending in substantially parallel relationship to the said side walls and secured permanently to the inner surfaces of said frame and cooperating with said frame and affording a stress resistant construction for said luggage piece, a flat panel having a rigid marginal outline and an extension movably secured to the bottom portion of said frame adjacent one of said side walls, said panel being dimensioned to approximate the dimensions of the panel defined by the zipper means of said side wall and adapted to be received through said side wall when the zipper means is in open condition, and handle means on the upper external portion of said frame, said partition and said frame cooperating to transmit stress evenly from the handle.

3. In a luggage construction, a rigid frame extending in a closed pattern corresponding to the profile of the luggage, said frame having a predetermined width and having its side edges disposed in substantially parallel relationship, a relatively rigid partition disposed midway in said frame and fastened securely therein in substantially parallel relationship to said side edges, said relatively rigid partition cooperating with said rigid frame in affording a high degree of stress resistance for said luggage construction, a side wall across each of said side edges and permanently secured thereto, each of said side walls defining a flexible panel in spaced proximate relationship to the outer edge thereof, means for releasably

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closing said panels, a flat panel movably secured in one of the compartments defined by the partition, hanger means in said compartment and handle means fixedly secured to a portion of said frame whereby stress from materials carried in said luggage piece is evenly distributed over said frame.

4. In a luggage piece of strong, durable, light construction, a pair of flexible side walls, a frame supporting said side walls in spaced parallel relationship, a permanent, relatively rigid partition fixedly secured to the inner surfaces of the frame in spaced, parallel relation to the side walls, a panel in each of said side walls, means for fastening each of the panels in fixed position in the side walls, lock means for said fastening means, handle means on said frame, hanger means depending from the portion of the frame to which said handle is secured and in one

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of the compartments defined by said partition and said side walls, and a flat panel movably secured in said compartment and adapted to extend through the side wall panel adjacent thereto when said panel is opened to provide access to said hanger means.

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