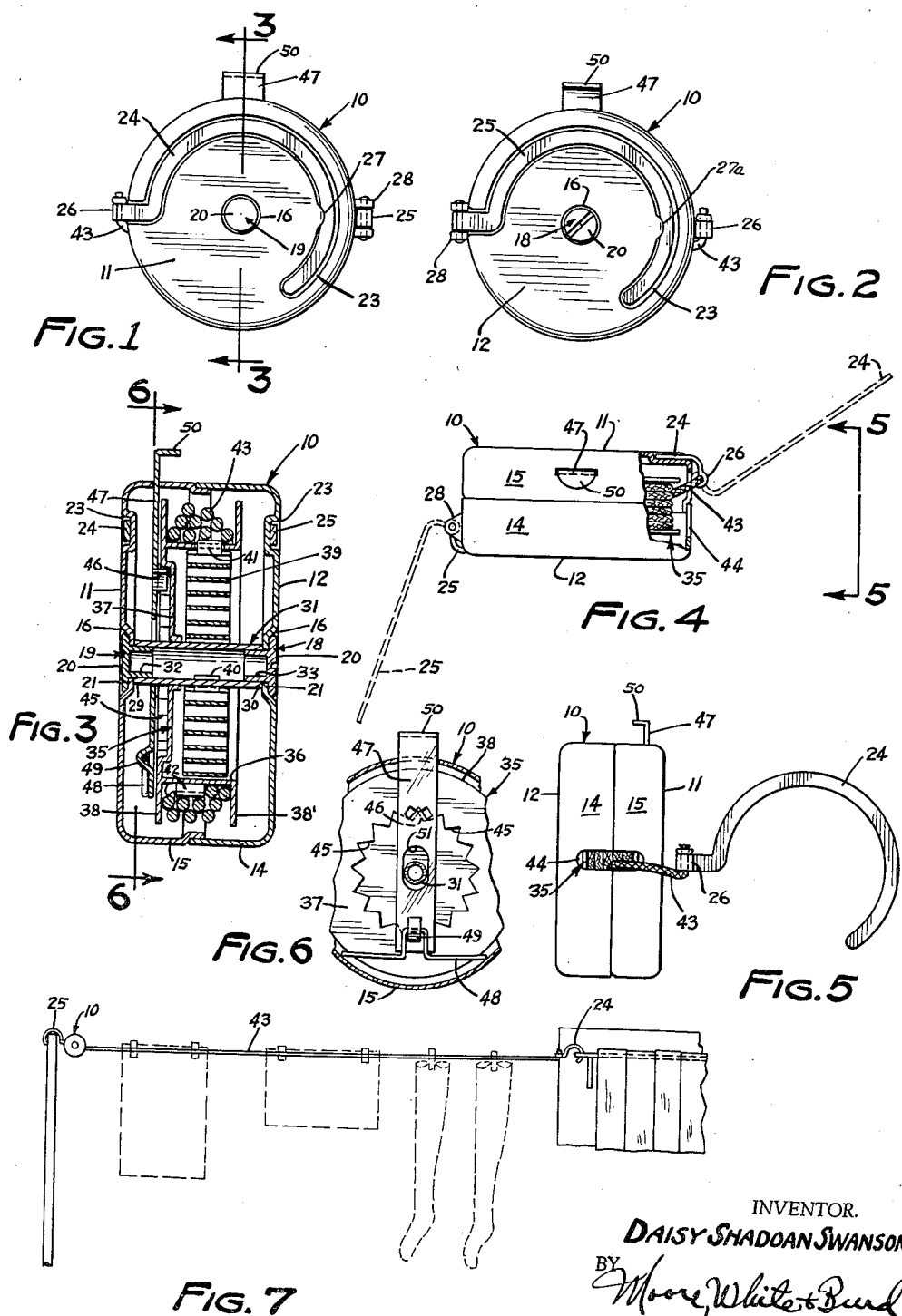


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PORTABLE CLOTHESLINE

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PORTABLE CLOTHESLINE

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1 Claim. (Cl. 242-107)

This invention relates to a new and useful portable clothesline contained in a small compact carrying case. More particularly, this invention relates to a clothesline that can be extended or retracted within the carrying case and quickly and easily installed for hanging laundered articles thereon.

Heretofore, it has been necessary for travelers and others desiring to use a small clothesline to fashion one from ordinary cord and conventionally suspend it between fixtures in a bathroom, kitchen, or the like. The conventional method always presents the inconvenience of tying the line to the fixtures as well as the problem of storing it when not in use. When traveling it is frequently necessary to launder small articles in a hotel or motel, and this presents the problem of carrying a suitable clothesline along with clothing and other conventional articles. In the event of a quick departure, it is often necessary to fold and store the line before it is completely dry. Also, an ordinary clothesline is difficult and inconvenient to pack. Furthermore, the housewife who desires to wash small articles in the home finds it inconvenient to tie lines about the bathroom or kitchen and a small line which may be quickly suspended and easily removed and stored when not in use is highly desirable.

It is therefore an object of this invention to provide a compact portable clothesline that can be easily carried by the traveler or the like and secured to conventional fixtures when in use.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a portable clothesline that can be extended from and automatically rewound into a small compact carrying case.

Still a further object of this invention is to provide a portable clothesline in an integral carrying case with hook means for supporting the line and case during use and which may be folded out of the way onto the surface of the case when not in use.

Other and further objects of this invention are those inherent and apparent in the structure as described, pictured and claimed.

To the accomplishment of the foregoing and related ends, this invention comprises the features hereinafter fully described and particularly pointed out in the claims, the following description setting forth in detail certain illustrative embodiments of the invention, these being indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the invention may be employed.

This invention will be described with reference to the drawings which corresponding numerals refer to the same parts and in which:

FIGURE 1 is a side elevation of one side of the carrying case of the instant invention showing the clothesline fully retracted into the case and hook means secured to the free end of the line seated in a depression along the surface of the case;

FIGURE 2 is a side elevation of the carrying case opposite to that shown in FIGURE 1 and showing hook means hinged to the case and seated in a depression along the surface thereof;

FIGURE 3 is an enlarged vertical section taken along the lines 3-3 of FIGURE 1 and in the direction of the arrows;

FIGURE 4 is a top plan view, partially in section, showing a portion of the spring tension reel and clothesline secured thereon, and retractable hook members shown in

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partially extended position by dotted lines and in seated position by solid lines;

FIGURE 5 is an end view of the instant invention showing the clothesline partially extended from the spring tension reel and one foldable hook means secured to the free end of the line;

FIGURE 6 is a vertical section taken along the line 6-6 of FIGURE 3, on a reduced scale, and in the direction of the arrows; and

FIGURE 7 shows the line in extended position with the free end of the line secured to fixtures in the bathroom or the like and articles represented by dotted lines secured to the line for drying.

Referring to the drawings, a carrying case or housing generally designated by the numeral 10 comprises two hollow cylindrical members 11 and 12. Each cylinder is composed of a generally flat planar surface integrally joined to cylindrical walls 15 and 14, respectively. Walls 14 and 15 extend inwardly toward each other at right angles from the planar surfaces of members 11 and 12. The peripheral edge of wall 15 is indented slightly to telescopically engage the periphery of wall 14 as shown in FIGURE 3.

The planar surface of each of the cylindrical members 11 and 12 is depressed at the center to form indentation 16 which is suitably apertured to receive rivets 18 and 19. Rivets 18 and 19 are forceably inserted through the aperture so that they fit with a tight press fit within the aperture and along the inner surface of a stationary axle 31, and hold it in fixed position between members 11 and 12. Rivet head 20 is forced through the aperture until its inner surface is flush with the flanges 21 of indentation 16. The shanks 32 and 33 of rivets 18 and 19, the aperture within indentation 16 and the hollow channel in axle 31 may desirably be noncircular so as to maintain axle 31 in stationary position. Alternately, the ends of axle 31 may be noncircular and extend through corresponding noncircular apertures in indentation 16. It is to be understood that if desired screws or bolts may be substituted for rivets 18 and 19 and threaded to members 11, 12 and axle 31, or the carrying case may be secured together in any other suitable manner so that members 11 and 12 may be easily separated for replacing cord 43 on reel 35 housed within housing 10.

An arcuate groove 23 extends substantially two-thirds of the distance along the periphery of the planar surface of each of members 11 and 12, to seat hooks 24 and 25 so that when the hooks are fully folded into the arcuate grooves, they will be flush with the planar surfaces of members 11 and 12 as shown in FIGURES 3 and 4.

Cord 43 is secured to eyelet 26 at the base of hook 24 and when the cord is fully retracted within housing 10, as hereinafter explained, hook 24 may be pivoted from the dotted line position of FIGURE 4 so that it is seated into arcuate groove 23 along the surface of member 11. It is secured in this position by forcing it under lip or tongue 27 positioned along the inside edge of groove 23 as shown in FIGURE 1. A hinge element 28 is die stamped, welded, or otherwise suitably secured to wall 14 for pivotally attaching hook 25 which may be swung from the dotted line position of FIGURE 4 so as to seat into groove 23 on the surface of member 12. Hook 25 is secured in place by lip or tongue 27a which is positioned along the inside edge of groove 23 in the same manner as lip or tongue 27. Thus, hook 25 is hinged to housing 10 and hook 24 is secured to the free end of cord 43.

Ends 29 and 30 of stationary axle 31 are forced firmly in place against flanges 21 by shanks 32 and 33 forming a tight press fit, as hereinabove explained, or otherwise secured, to prevent rotation of axle 31. A reel, generally designated 35, comprises cylindrical drum 36 which is coaxial with and radially spaced from axle 31 integrally

joined to and spaced inward from the peripheral edge of circular disc 37. Disc 37 is mounted for rotation about axle 31 in conventional manner as shown in FIGURE 3. Drum 36 is positioned short of the peripheral edge of disc 37 which forms a flange 38 around one end of drum 36. A second flange 38' extends outwardly from the other end of drum 36. The periphery of flange 38' is the same radial distance from axle 31 as the periphery of flange 38, thus flanges 38 and 38' serve as a channel to guide cord 43 as it is wound around drum 36. It is noted that reel 35 has only one circular disc 37 which supports the reel for rotation about axle 31, thus leaving one side of reel 35 completely exposed below the surface of drum 36.

A resilient flat spiral clock spring 39 is inserted in the open side of reel 35 and secured in position around axle 31 below drum 36. One end of spring 39 is fashioned in the form of a tongue 40 which is inserted in a centrally positioned aperture along the axle 31 to secure the spring. The other end of spring 39 is inserted in an aperture within drum 36 by means of a tongue 41. It is readily seen that by forcing reel 35 to rotate in a given direction, the tension of spring 39 will increase and tend to rotate reel 35 in a direction opposite to the given direction upon release of the opposing rotating force.

A U-shaped fastening member 42 partially shown in FIGURE 3 is soldered or otherwise secured to drum 36 to secure one end of clothesline cord 43 to reel 35. Clothesline cord 43 is made of a suitable quick drying material such as nylon or similar synthetic quick drying filament or cord. Cord 43 is reeled around drum 36 between flanges 38 and 38' leaving the free end of the line protruding through a slotted aperture 44 which is positioned within walls 14 and 15, as shown in FIGURE 5, for passage of cord 43. The free end of cord 43 is attached to hook 24 by means of eyelet 26. It can readily be seen that as cord 43 is pulled out through the aperture 44 by the user, reel 35 rotates about stationary axle 31 and causes flat spiral spring 39 to resiliently tighten itself within the reel 35 and about axle 31. When the outwardly extending force or pressure on cord 43 is released, the counteracting expansion of spring 39 will cause reel 35 to rotate in the opposite or retractable direction, thus winding cord 43 back onto the drum 36.

A ratchet mechanism, best shown in FIGURE 6, provides the user with a control over the rotation of reel 35. The outwardly facing surface of disc 37 is indented within the circumferential confines of the drum 36, as shown in FIGURE 3. A plurality of ratchet teeth 45, desirably in the form of isosceles triangles, are die stamped or otherwise formed along the periphery of the indented portion of disc 37 to engage a pawl or lug 46. Pawl 46 is formed in an inverted V-shaped configuration to conform with the configuration of teeth 45 and when urged upward in relation to FIGURE 6, engage the edges of teeth 45 to stop the rotation of reel 35. Pawl 46 may be die pressed, welded or otherwise secured to an elongated latch release member 47 which extends substantially across the diameter of housing 10. Member 47 is resiliently supported in the locking position shown in FIGURES 3 and 6 by wire spring 48 inserted through a retaining loop 49 at the lower end of member 47. The ends of wire spring 48 are compressed against the inner surface of housing wall 15 and serve to resiliently urge the member 47 and pawl 46 upward to engage teeth 45. The top portion of member 47 is of L-shaped configuration and protrudes through a suitable aperture in wall 15 to form thumb tab 50, which when pressed by the user, forces member 47 downward against the resiliency of wire spring 48 and thus disengages pawl 46 from teeth 45. It is readily understood that as soon as the user releases the pressure on tab 50, the spring 48 will urge member 47 upward and thus re-engage pawl 46 with teeth 45. A centrally positioned elongated aperture 51 through which axle 31 passes, al-

lows release 47 to be moved longitudinally without frictional engagement with the axle 31 regardless of whether member 47 is pushed downward by the user or resiliently urged into the position of FIGURE 6.

When the portable clothesline of this invention is in use, hook 24 is swung outward to the dotted line position of FIGURE 4 or beyond and hooked onto any convenient fixture such as the shower curtain rod shown in FIGURE 7. The user then engages thumb tab 51 which moves pawl 46 downward and out of engagement with sprockets 45. Tab 51 is maintained in this position by the user as long as it is desired to allow reel 35 to rotate and play out the cord 43. Once hook 24 is securely tightened to the fixture, housing 10 is then guided by the user to the opposite fixture while reel 35 allows cord 43 to be played out of the housing 10. As reel 35 rotates, coil spring 39 increases in tension as hereinabove explained and tends to urge reel 35 in the opposite or retracting position. Retraction is prevented, however, by the user exerting enough force to counteract the resiliency of spring 39 or by releasing the pressure on tab 51 so that pawl 46 is instantly urged into engagement with sprockets 45 to stop rotation of reel 35. When the desired length of cord has been extended, hook 25 is swung out to the dotted position of FIGURE 4 or beyond and hooked onto any convenient fixture such as the top of a door as shown in FIGURE 7. Clothes may then be hung on the extended cord 43. Once tab 51 is released it is readily seen that pawl 46 prevents reel 35 from playing out additional cord which would otherwise be urged out of housing 10 by excess weight hung on the cord 43. When it is desired to remove the line, hook 25 is removed from the fixture and swung and seated into arcuate groove 23. Tab 51 is pressed downward and held in this position, thus, disengaging pawl 46 from sprocket 45 and allowing coil spring 39 to wind reel 35 and draw in cord 43. When cord 43 is completely rewound within housing 10, eyelet 26 of hook 24 abuts the elongated aperture 44 shown in FIGURE 4, and the hook 24 may then be conveniently folded out of the way by seating it into arcuate groove 23.

It is apparent that many modifications and variations of this invention as hereinabove set forth may be made without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. It is to be understood that the specific embodiments described are given by way of example only and the invention is limited only by the terms of the appended claim.

What I claim is:

A portable clothesline apparatus having a housing, means to permit extension and automatic retracting of a clothesline out from and into said housing, and foldable hook means attached to said housing and to said line for securing the said housing and clothesline in position for hanging laundered articles on said line, the opposite faces of said housing being provided with a generally arcuate recess, one of said foldable hook means being hinged to said housing and adapted to be folded into one of said recesses and the other hook means secured to said clothesline being adapted to be received in the other of said recesses when said clothesline is fully retracted into the housing.

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