United States Patent

[11] 3,604,747

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[45] Patented Sept. 14, 1971

[54] **COMBINATION BOAT-TENT CAMPER-TRAILER APPARATUS**
10 Claims, 14 Drawing Figs.

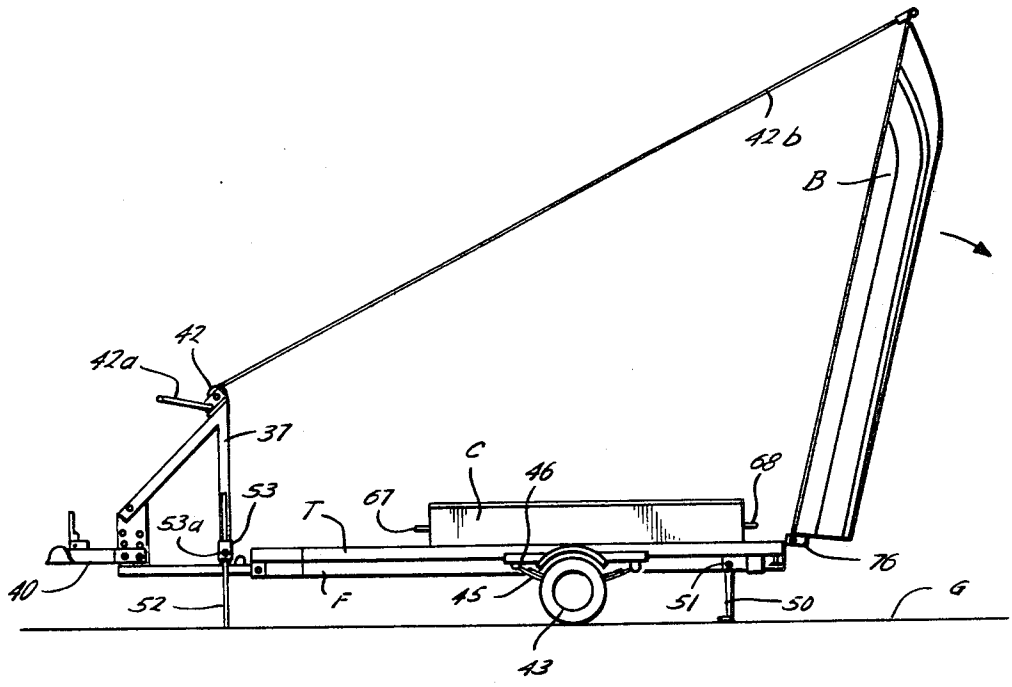
[52] U.S. Cl. ..... 296/23B, 135/1 A
[51] Int. Cl. B60p 3/34
[50] Field of Search ..... 296/23, 23 B; 135/1-5 A; 280/414

[56] References Cited
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2,792,237	5/1957	Paulson	280/414
3,348,874	10/1967	Gorman	296/23

Primary Examiner—Philip Goodman
Attorney—Pravel, Wilson & Matthews

ABSTRACT: A combination boat-tent camper-trailer apparatus wherein a tent camper is adapted to be removably mounted on a trailer with a boat removably disposed upsidedown over the tent camper on the trailer, whereby both the boat and the tent camper may be removed and floated together to a point remote from the launching thereof so that the tent camper is available at remote and otherwise inaccessible locations.



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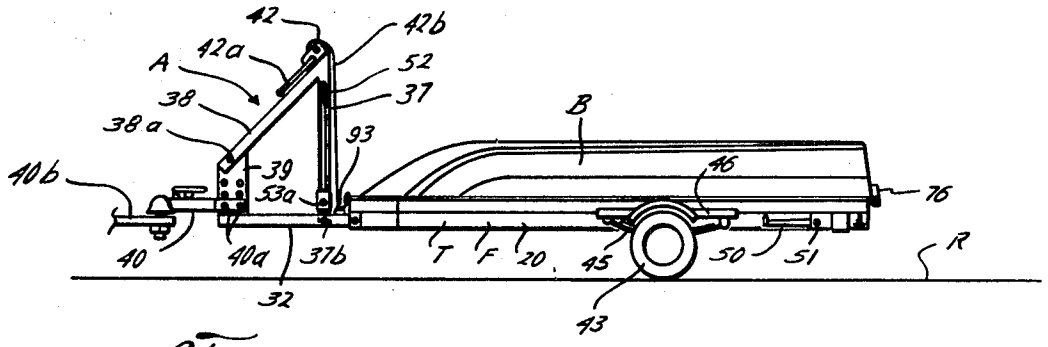


Fig. 1

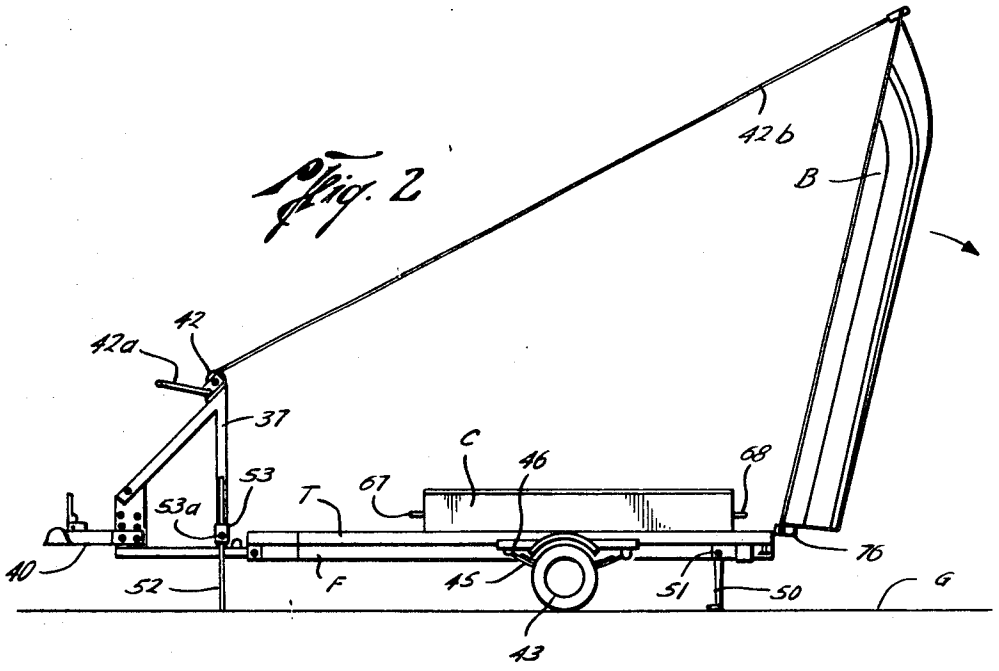


Fig. 2

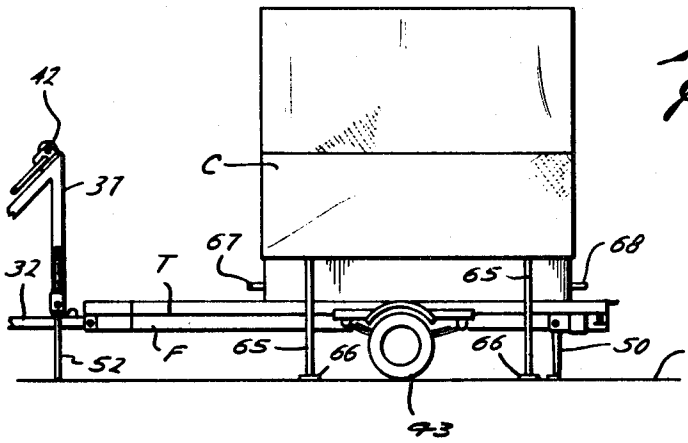


Fig. 3

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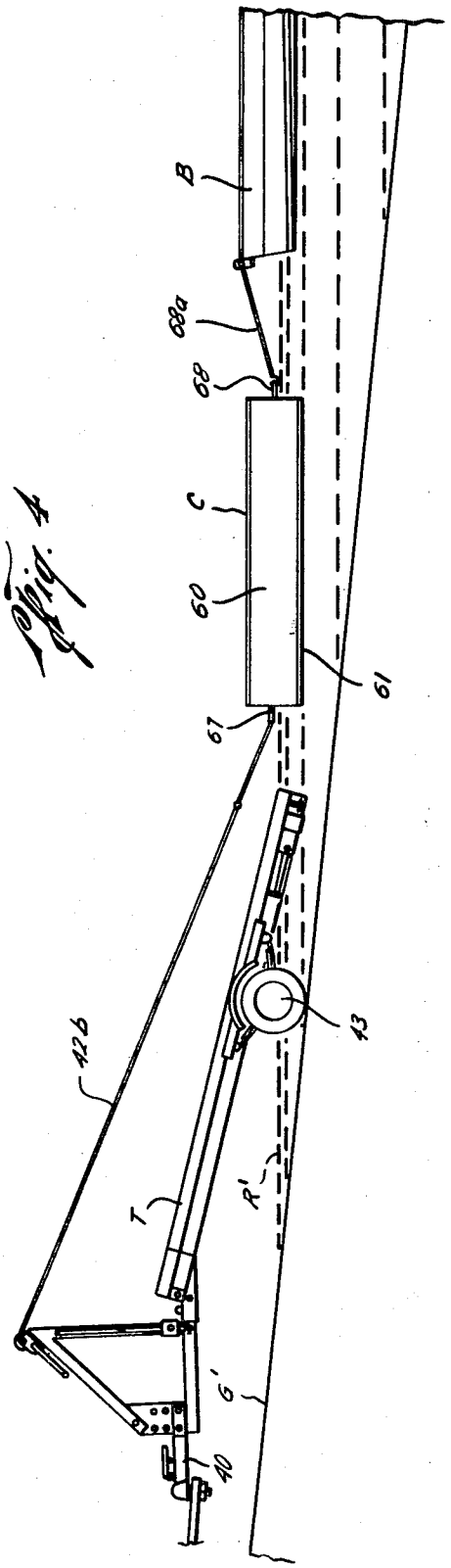


Fig. 4

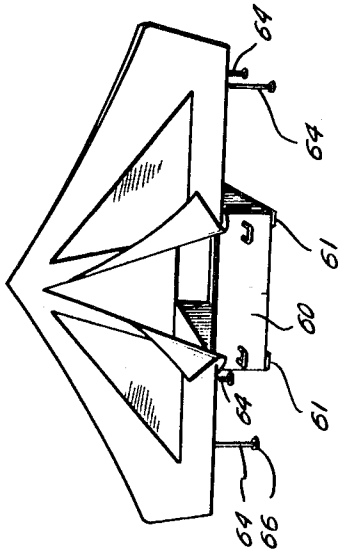


Fig. 6

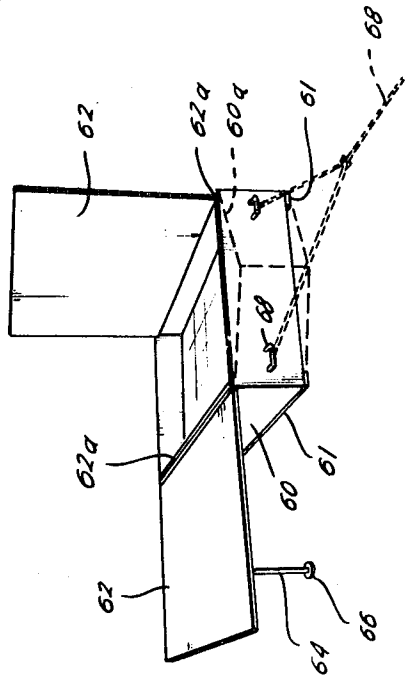


Fig. 5

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Fig. 7

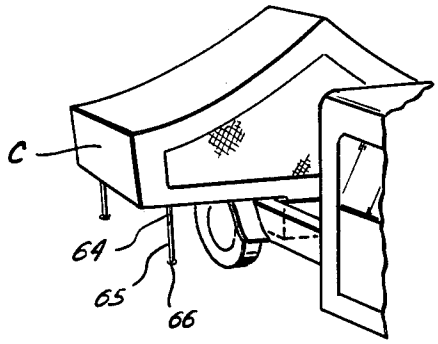


Fig. 8

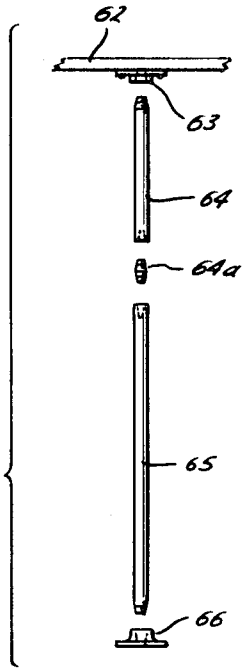


Fig. 9

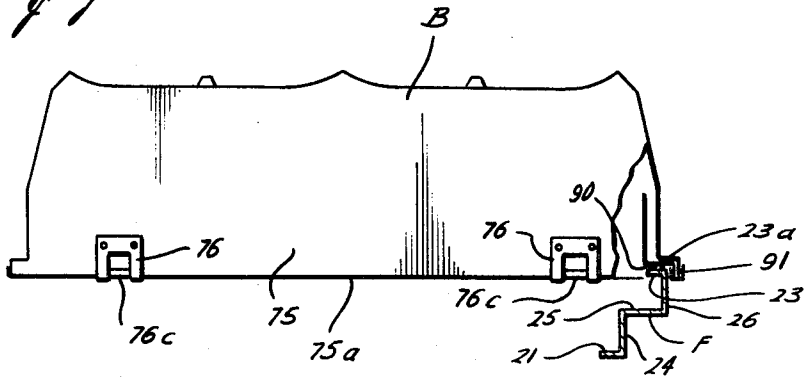


Fig. 10

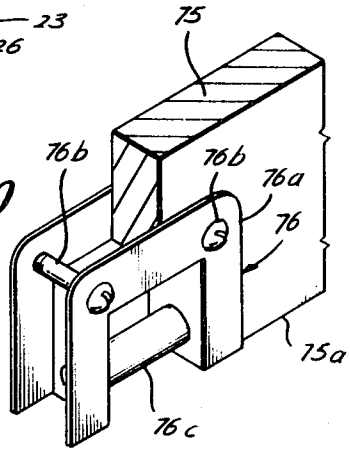
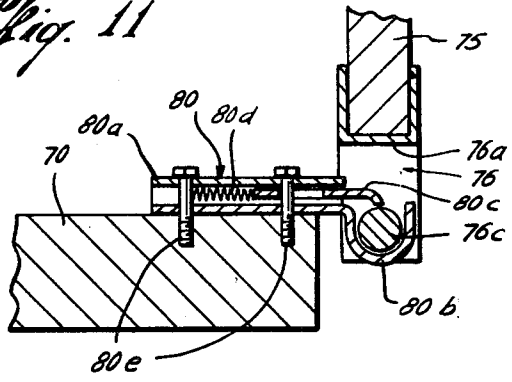


Fig. 11



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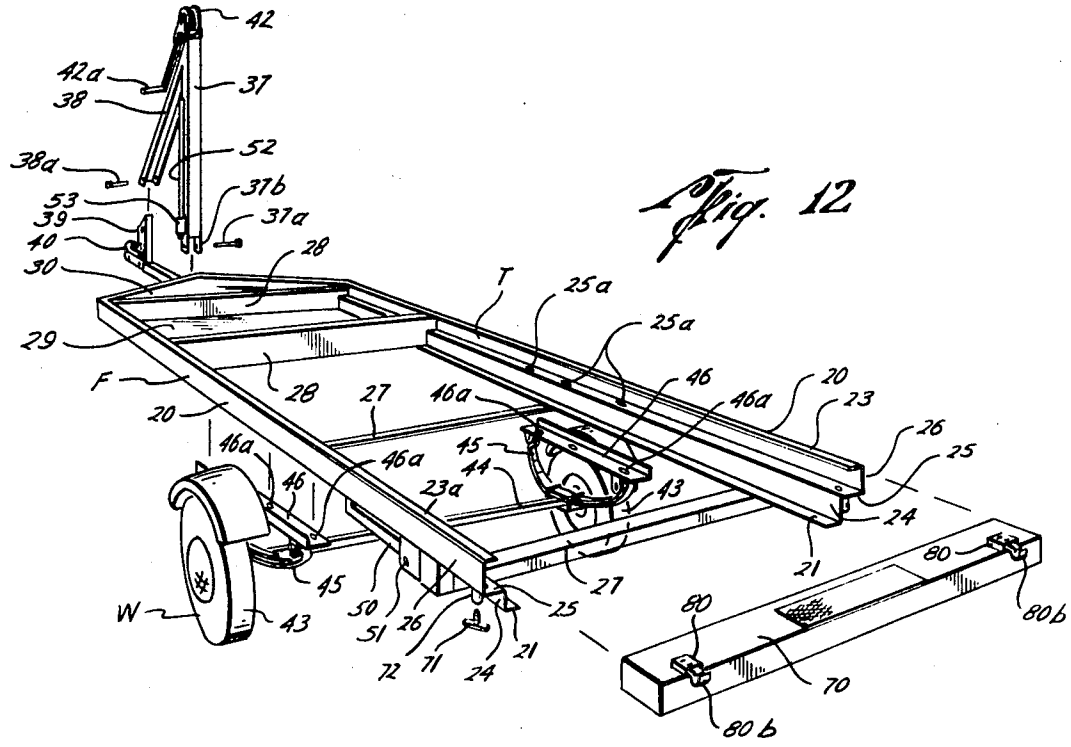


Fig. 12

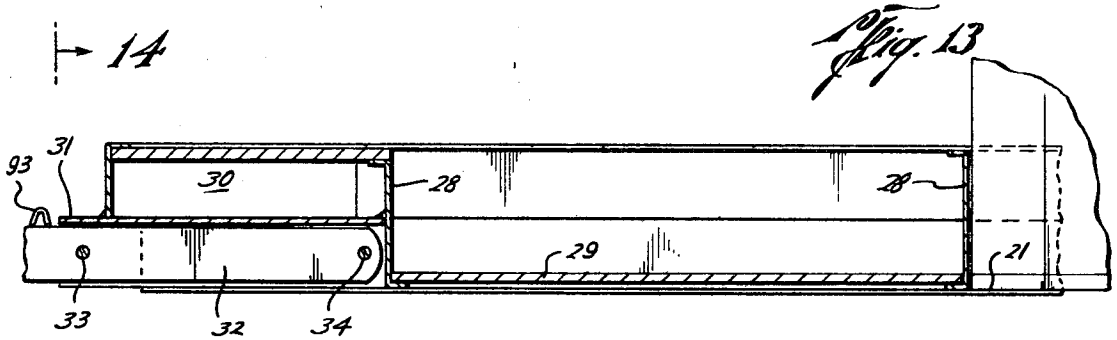


Fig. 13

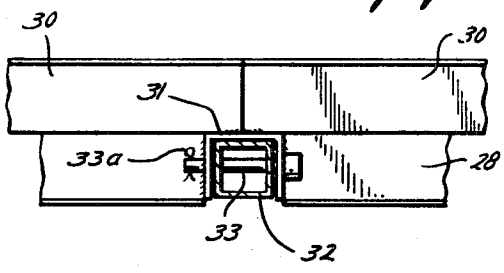


Fig. 14

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COMBINATION BOAT-TENT CAMPER-TRAILER APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The field of this invention is boating and camping apparatus.

In U.S. Pat No. 3,348,874, I disclosed a combination boat-tent camper-trailer apparatus which utilized a boat in an overturned position on a trailer to cover a tent camper mounted on the trailer. The tent camper was limited in its utility since it was a part of the trailer and could therefore be set up for use only in the location of the trailer.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is an improvement over the apparatus of said U.S. Pat. No. 3,348,874 in that the tent-camper is a self-contained unit which is detachably or removably mounted on a trailer, and which is also capable of floating, so that the tent camper may be removed from the trailer and towed or otherwise moved in a lake, river or other body of water to a point remote from the location of the trailer, so that the tent camper may be set up and used at an otherwise inaccessible place. The tent camper and the boat may also be returned to the trailer and repositioned thereon for movement together over the highway or other roads.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is an elevation of the preferred form of the invention in the assembled position for transportation over highways or roads;

FIG. 2 is a view, in elevation, of the apparatus of this invention, showing the removal of the boat from the apparatus;

FIG. 3 is an elevation of the apparatus of this invention, with the boat removed and with the tent camper unfolded and positioned for use upon the trailer;

FIG. 4 is an elevation of the apparatus of this invention, illustrating a preferred use of the apparatus of this invention, wherein the boat and the tent camper are both removed from the trailer and are both floated to a point remote from the trailer;

FIG. 5 is an isometric view of the preferred type of tent-camper forming a part of the apparatus of this invention, in a partially opened position;

FIG. 6 is an isometric view of the tent camper of FIG. 5 in the fully opened position for use, when disposed upon the ground or other base;

FIG. 7 is a view of the tent camper preferably used with the apparatus of this invention, after such camper has been removed from the trailer and positioned in the bed of a pick up truck for use;

FIG. 8 is an exploded view of the preferred support for the sides of the tent camper forming a part of the apparatus of this invention;

FIG. 9 is an elevation, partly in section, illustrating the preferred means for mounting the boat on the trailer;

FIG. 10 is a fragmentary isometric view illustrating the preferred releasable attachment means on the transom of the boat for releasably attaching the boat to the trailer;

FIG. 11 is a sectional view illustrating further details with respect to the releasable attachment means of the boat to the trailer;

FIG. 12 is an isometric view of the preferred form of the trailer forming part of the apparatus of this invention and illustrating in particular the separate parts thereof for disassembly for shipping purposes;

FIG. 13 is a sectional view, partly in elevation, of a portion of the trailer of FIG. 12, and illustrating a portion of the tent camper thereon; and

FIG. 14 is a front end view taken on line 14—14 of FIG. 13 illustrating certain details with respect to the construction of the trailer of FIG. 12.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In the drawings, the letter A designates generally the apparatus of this invention which includes a trailer T, a tent-camper C, and a boat B. Briefly, the apparatus A is so constructed that the camper C may be removably mounted on the trailer T so that the boat B may also be removably mounted on the trailer T in an overturned or upsidedown position, covering the camper C for transportation over the highways or roads R (FIG. 1). In the preferred form of the invention, the tent-camper C is capable of floating (FIG. 4) so that when the boat and the camper have been removed, both the boat B and the camper C may be floated to a location which is remote from the trailer launching point. This makes it possible to use the boat and the camper together at a point remote from and in an otherwise inaccessible place, insofar as the trailer T is concerned.

Considering the invention more in detail, the trailer T has a frame F which preferably includes two side frame members **20** which are disposed substantially parallel to each other. The frame F has a tent camper support surface **21** formed on each side frame member **20** for receiving the lower portion of the tent camper C, as will be more fully explained hereinafter. The trailer frame F also includes a boat support surface **23** on each side frame member **20**, which preferably includes a strip thereon of rubber or other resilient material for contact with an edge of the boat B when in the overturned position (FIG. **9**).

A side portion of wall **24** which extends upwardly from each surface **21** serves to confine the camper C laterally when the camper C is disposed on the support surfaces **21**. An intermediate substantially horizontal portion **25** connects each side portion **24** to a vertical portion **26** which in turn is connected to each support surface **23** for each of the side members **20**.

The rearward ends of the side frame members **20** are open and are not permanently closed so as to permit the positioning of the camper C on, and removal from, the surfaces **21**, as will be more fully explained. Suitable laterally extending frame members **27** are disposed underneath the side frame members **20** for rigidly connecting the frame members **20** together without interference with the surfaces **21**.

Since the camper C is normally shorter in length than the boat B, the trailer frame F may also include interconnecting spacer members **28** which form a compartment forwardly of the surfaces **21**, which is closed by a board **29** of plywood or other similar material. Such compartment may be used for storage. The forward part of the trailer frame F is preferably provided with front members **30** having an inverted U-shaped tongue support member **31** welded or otherwise secured therebelow (FIG. **14**). A tongue **32** (FIG. **13** and **14**) is mounted in the tongue support **31** by one or more pins **33** and **34**. The pin **33** is preferably a removable pin which extends through suitable holes in the side of the support member **31**. A cotter pin **33***a* may be removably positioned through an opening at the outer extremity of the pin **33** so that upon removal of the cotter key **33***a* from the removable pin **33**, such pin **33** may be removed from the tongue **32** and from the support **31** therewith. When the pin **33** is thus removed, the tongue **32** is pivotally supported on the pin **34** which also extends through the tongue **32** and the sides of the support **31**. Such pin **34** may also be removed when it is desired to completely remove the tongue **32** from the frame F for shipping or other purposes. When the pin **33** is removed and the pivoting of the tongue occurs about the pivot pin **34**, an increased angle of inclination of the trailer T with respect to a vehicle pulling same may be accomplished (FIG. **4**).

The tongue **34** extends forwardly with respect to the frame F a sufficient distance to receive a vertical post **37**, which is preferably removably secured to the tongue **32** by one or more retaining bolts or screws **37***a* which extend through suitable openings in downwardly extending tabs **37***b* and the tongue **32**. The vertical post **37** is supported by an inclined brace **38**

which is releasably attached to an upright adjustable trailer hitch mounting structure 39 by a removable bolt or screw 38*a*. The bracket 39 has a plurality of holes therethrough for receiving a pair of bolts 40*a* on a trailer hitch 40 so that the height of the trailer hitch 40 may be adjusted to accommodate the elevation of the ball portion 40*b* of the trailer hitch which is connected to the automobile, truck or other vehicle pulling the trailer T. The trailer hitch 40 may be of any conventional type, the details of which form no part of this invention. At the upper end of the vertical post 30, a winch 42 having a conventional handle crank mechanism 42*a* therewith is mounted for the winding and unwinding of a cable 42*b* (FIGS. 2 and 4) relative thereto. As will be explained, the cable 42*b* is adapted to be releasably attached to the boat B for guiding and controlling same during the removal and repositioning of the boat B with respect to the trailer T. Also, such cable 42*b* may be used for controlling the removal and repositioning of the tent-camper C on the trailer T, as will be more fully explained.

The trailer T also includes a set of wheels W which are preferably secured together as a unit and which may be removed from the frame F and also secured to such frame F as a unit. Thus, as shown in FIG. 12, the wheel assembly W includes a pair of wheels 43 which are connected together with an axle 44, such axle 44 having a pair of leaf springs 45 secured thereto, and to which are attached connecting plates 46. The connecting plates 46 have holes 46*a* drilled therein which are adapted to be aligned with corresponding holes 25*a* in the substantially horizontal frame portion 25, and through which retaining bolts (not shown) are adapted to be positioned to thereby secure the set of wheels W below the frame F. By removing the bolts making the connection of the wheels W to the frame F, the trailer T may be more readily shipped. The wheels 43 may also be removed from the rest of the wheel assembly W for shipping or other purposes.

In some instances, it may be desirable to detach the trailer hitch 40 from the car or other pulling vehicle, in which case, it is desirable to support the trailer T in a substantially horizontal position. To accomplish such support, the trailer T may be provided with pivotally mounted rear support legs 50 which are pivoted at pivot pins 51 to the frame F (FIGS. 1–3). A forward support post 52 is slidably mounted in a retaining bracket 53 on the post 37. A holding setscrew 53*a* may be inserted through the bracket 53 into engagement with the support post 52 so as to hold same in the raised position of FIG. 1 when the trailer T is in transit. By releasing such setscrew 53*a*, the post 52 may be caused to drop downwardly until it engages the ground G (FIG. 2), with the trailer T in a substantially horizontal position. The setscrew 53*a* may then be reengaged in contact with the post 52 to prevent further relative movement between the post 52 and the trailer frame F.

The tent-camper C includes a housing 60 which is essentially square or rectangular in shape, although it may have a sharp prow shape 60*a* (shown in dotted lines in FIG. 5) to facilitate the movement thereof in the water when towing same. The housing 60 is watertight and waterproof so that it will float together with the contents therein. Suitable runner strips 61 of wood, metal or other suitable material are provided at the lower outer edges of the bottom of the housing 60 for sliding engagement on the support surfaces 21 of the trailer T. Such runners 61 also serve to keep the lower portion of the housing 60 off the ground when the camper C is used directly on the ground (FIG. 6).

The construction of the camper C may vary, but preferably, the camper C has one or more covers 62 which are hinged at 62*a* to the housing 60 so as to swing from a closed position over the housing 60 (FIGS. 2 and 4) to an open position, wherein such covers 62 serve as the deck or floor portion of the camper C (FIGS. 5 and 6).

When the hinged covers are in the open position, they are maintained in a horizontal position by suitable legs, an example of which is illustrated in FIG. 8. Thus, each cover 62 preferably has a threaded socket 63 secured thereto for receiving one or more legs 64 and 65. When the camper C is used directly on the ground as illustrated in FIG. 6 the short legs 64 are utilized together with a base 66 which is preferably connected thereto with a threaded nipple 64*a*. When the camper C is set up in the position for use shown in FIG. 3 while still on the trailer T, the longer legs 65 are used together with the base 66 for each of such legs 65. When the camper C is mounted on the bed of a pick up truck (FIG. 7), both of the legs 64 and 65 are connected together with a threaded nipple 64*a*, and with the base 66 mounted at the lower end of the legs 65. It will be appreciated that the upper end of the particular leg which is used is threaded into one of the threaded sockets 63, and normally, two legs of suitable height are used for supporting each of the covers 62 in the open position.

To facilitate the handling of the camper C with respect to the trailer T, a forward handle or eye 67 is mounted at the forward end of the housing 60 so that it may be releasably engaged by a suitable hook or clamp (not shown) on the end of the cable 42*b*. For towing the camper C in the water by boat B, a pair of handles or eyes 68 are mounted at the rear end of the housing 60 so that a rope or other suitable connector cable 68*a* may be attached from the boat B to such handles 68.

The camper C is adapted to slide on the support surfaces 21 and it is retained laterally by the side portions or walls 24. The camper C is confined at the front end of the trailer T by the laterally extending brace 28 at the forward end of trailer T. The camper C is retained at the rear end of the trailer T by a releasable and removable retaining bar 70 (FIG. 12) which is adapted to slide into the groove provided by the substantially horizontal side portions 25, the upright portions 26 and the support surfaces 23. When the retaining bar 70 is in such grooves of the trailer frame F, it closes the rear end of the frame F so as to prevent any rearward movement of the camper C. The retainer bar 70 is locked relative to the frame F by retaining setscrews 71 which are threaded into threaded pipes 72 welded to the rear part of the horizontal portions 25 (FIG. 12). The setscrews 71 are thus threaded upwardly through the threaded pipes 72 and engage the lower surface of the bar 70. If desired, a threaded socket (not shown) may be provided in the bar 70, into which the retaining screws 71 enter for holding the retainer bar in the end position within the trailer frame F.

For pivotally mounting the rear portion of the boat B to the trailer T, the transom 75 of the boat B is provided with two specially mounted pivot pin units 76. Each pivot pin unit 76 has a frame 76*a* which is connected to the transom 75 by one or more retaining bolts 76*b*. The unit 76 has a pivot pin 76*c* which is formed integrally with the frame or bracket portion 76*a* and is preferably disposed substantially in alignment with the normally upper edge 75*a* of the transom 75.

The retainer bar 70 has suitable releasable latch means 80 (FIGS. 11 and 12) mounted thereon to releasably latch the hinge pins 76*c* to the trailer T. In the form of the invention illustrated in the drawings, each releasable latch means 80 includes a hollow latch portion 80*a* having a substantially U-shaped pivot pin bracket 80*b* formed or connected therewith. Each pivot pin bracket 80*b* extends rearwardly of the retainer bar 70 and is adapted to receive a pivot pin 76*c*. A slidable latch plate 80*c* is slidably disposed in the tubular portion 80*a*, and it is urged to its rearward latching position by a spring 80*d*. Each latch means 80 is secured to the retainer member 70 by means of a pair of bolts or fasteners 80*e*, with one of such fasteners 80*e* serving to limit the rearward extent of movement of the latch plate 80*c*. By manually pushing the latch plate 80*c* rearwardly, the open portion of the pin bracket 80*b* is exposed so that the pin 76*c* may be inserted therein or removed therefrom to thereby position or remove the boat B relative to the trailer T.

The particular shape and construction of the boat B may vary, so long as the boat B is capable of covering the camper C and is also of such length as to conveniently fit upon the trailer T. Normally, the boat B is of substantially the same length as the trailer T and it preferably is formed with a specially shaped gunwale which includes a gunwale surface 90 (FIG. 9) which

rests in contact with the resilient seal strip 23*a* when the boat B is in the upsidedown or overturned position. Also, an outer lip 91 is formed at the gunwale so as to overhang the outside edge of the frame F and to thereby provide a closure which prevents water and foreign objects from flying upwardly into the boat B during the transit of same on the trailer T. When the boat B is in the upsidedown or overturned position over the camper C (FIG. 1), the forward end of the boat may be tied down by any suitable means, and if desired the cable 42*b* may be used for such purposes by passing same through an eye 93 which is welded or otherwise secured to the upper end of the tongue 32 (FIG. 1). The boat B has a suitable eye or connector (not shown) secured to it at its forward end to receive a conventional hook (not shown) on the cable 42*b* for such holddown purposes.

In the operation or use of the apparatus A of this invention, the camper C is initially slid or moved longitudinally forwardly on the supporting surfaces 21 of the trailer T to its location substantially midway over the wheels 43 (FIG. 2). The retainer bar 70 is then secured to the rear portion of the trailer frame F by the retainer screws 71. Thereafter, the boat B is releasably hinged with its hinge pins 76*c* to the latch mechanism 80 for each of such pins 76*c*, and is lowered to the upsidedown position shown in FIG. 1. The forward end of the boat B is then secured in any suitable manner, and the entire apparatus A is then ready for transportation by pulling same with any type of suitable vehicle connected to the trailer hitch 40. The boat B provides a streamlined cover for the camper C during transit. Also, the plywood bottom 29, and the bottom of the camper C essentially cover the entire lower portion of the boat B so as to protect its inside surfaces during transit.

When the trailer apparatus A has thus been transported over a roadway R to a suitable location for the use of the boat B and the camper C, the boat B is first removed from the trailer T. Although it is preferable to pivot the boat about the hinge pins 76*c* from the substantially horizontal upsidedown position of FIG. 1 to that of FIG. 2 and ultimately to an upright position in the water (FIG. 4), the boat B may be moved off of the trailer T by turning same on its side or by otherwise simply lifting the boat B vertically and moving it laterally away from the trailer T. However, when the boat B is relatively heavy, the preferred procedure for removing it is illustrated in FIG. 2 wherein the cable 42*b* is attached to the bow or forward portion of the boat B to facilitate the guiding and lowering of the boat B from the substantially vertical position to a substantially horizontal position about the hinge pins 76*c*. When the boat B has reached the substantially horizontal upright position, the releasable latches 80 are released by pushing the latch members 80*c* forwardly against the springs 80*d* so that the hinge pins 76*c* can be moved out of the hooks or brackets 80*b*. Thereafter, the boat B may be moved away from the trailer T, as desired. The end of the cable 42*b* which is connected to the boat B may be disconnected when the boat reaches its substantially horizontal position, so that the cable 42*b* may be rewound on the winch 42.

If it is then desired to use the camper C on the trailer T as shown in FIG. 3 the camper C is set up in the usual manner so that it assumes the position shown in FIG. 3.

However, if it is desired to remove the camper C from the trailer T, the retainer bar 70 is removed after first removing the retainer screws 71. Then, the camper C may be slid or moved longitudinally rearwardly with respect to the frame F. To control the rearward movement of the camper C, particularly when lowering same into a body of water R' such as illustrated in FIG. 4, the cable 42*b* is preferably secured to the hook or eye 67 at the forward end of the camper C.

With the trailer T on the ground G' at the edge of the water R', the tongue pin 33 may be removed to place the trailer T at a steeper angle with respect to the trailer hitch 40 and the vehicle with the trailer T. The camper C may then be slid rearwardly more easily from the trailer T into the water R'. The boat B may be connected to the rear end of the camper C by using the line or rope 68*a* to pull the camper C and also control same after it gets into the water R'. The connection of the cable 42*b* to the hook or eye 67 of the camper C controls the speed of movement of the camper C as it slides into the water. After the camper C is in the water the cable 42*b* may be released and rewound on the winch 42. Thereafter, the trailer T may be moved to a storage point while the user of the boat B and the camper C may proceed on the water to any location desired which may be remote from the point of launching the boat B and the camper C. For example, the user of the apparatus A may be a fisherman who desires to proceed to an island in a lake, river or other body of water. The island would be inaccessible to the trailer T, but with the floatability of the camper C, the user of this apparatus may pull the camper C to the island and there pull it upon the ground and set it up for use in proximity to the point at which he is also using the boat in the water.

After the camper C and the boat B have been used and it is desired to return them to the trailer T, the reverse procedure to the launching steps is then carried out. Thus, the trailer T is positioned substantially as shown in FIG. 4 adjacent the body of water, the cable 42*b* is connected to the eye or hook 67 on the camper C, and the camper C is pulled longitudinally into the open rear end of the frame F so that the lower portion of the camper C slides upwardly on the support surfaces 21 of the frame F. The camper C is pulled as far forwardly as possible and then the cable 42*b* is detached from the camper C.

The retainer bar 70 is then placed in position on the trailer frame F and the retainer screws 71 are secured thereto for thereby holding the camper C in position on the trailer T.

The boat B is then moved into position with its stern adjacent the end of the trailer F to reconnect the hinge pins 76*c* in the U-shaped brackets 80*b* of the latch means 80. If the pin 33 has been removed for such returning operation of the camper C, the trailer T may be tilted to its raised position (FIG. 1) and the tongue 32 may then be rigidly connected to the bracket 31 with the pin 33. After the pins 76*c* have been inserted into the brackets 80*b*, the free end of the cable 42*b* is connected to the bow or forward end of the boat B so that it is then possible to pivot or swing the boat B upwardly from the substantially horizontal upright position to the upsidedown position. When the boat reaches the substantially vertical position (FIG. 2) the lowering of the boat B then moves by gravity to its overturned or upsidedown position shown in FIG. 1. The forward end of the boat B is then secured to the frame F and the entire apparatus A may then be moved again over highways and roads by pulling same with a vehicle.

It will be appreciated that variations in the apparatus A may be made within the scope of this invention. For example, a sheet of plywood, metal, or other material may be secured to the braces 27 between the side support surfaces 21, or therebelow, to serve as a dust cover for the interior of the boat B when it is in the upsidedown position.

The foregoing disclosure and description of the invention are illustrative and explanatory thereof, and various changes in the size, shape, and materials as well as in the details of the illustrated construction may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention.

I claim:

1. A boat-tent camper-trailer apparatus, comprising:
   - a tent camper having an outer housing and a tent adapted to be folded and disposed within said housing:
   - a trailer having a frame and tent camper support surface for removably supporting said tent camper housing thereon;
   - said trailer frame also having a boat support surface for removably supporting a boat thereon in an upsidedown position over said tent camper; and
   - releasable retainer means releasably secured to said frame for retaining said camper housing on said frame until released from the frame.

2. The structure set forth in claim 1, wherein:
   - the rear of said trailer frame is open to enable said camper to be moved rearwardly on said tent camper support surface for removing said camper from said trailer when said releasable retainer means is released.

3. The structure set forth in claim 1, wherein:
the rear of said trailer frame is open to enable said camper to be moved rearwardly on said tent camper support surface for removing said camper from said trailer when said releasable retainer means is released; and
said releasable retainer means includes a retainer bar adapted to extend laterally across the open end of said trailer to prevent rearward movement of said camper from said frame, and means releasably attaching said bar to said frame so that said retainer bar may be removed for permitting the rearward removal of said camper from said trailer.

4. The structure set forth in claim 1, including:
releasable pivotal connection means releasably attaching said boat to said trailer in said upside down position over said camper for enabling said boat to be pivoted relative to said frame to and upright position and to be released from the trailer.

5. The structure set forth in claim 1, wherein:
said tent camper support surface is disposed below and extends inwardly of said boat support surface; and
said frame has an upright side between said tent camper support surface and boat support surface to interconnect same and to serve as lateral retainer walls for said camper housing.

6. The structure set forth in claim 1, including:
releasable pivotal connection means releasably attaching said boat to the rear of said trailer frame in an upsidedown position over said camper for enabling said boat to be pivoted upwardly to a vertical position and then lowered to a substantially horizontal upright position; and
guide means releasably secured on the front end of said boat and mounted on said trailer for controlling the lowering of said boat from its vertical position to its substantially horizontal upright position.

7. The structure set forth in claim 1, wherein:
said camper housing is watertight and is floatable with the tent and contents therein so that said camper may be floated together with said boat to a point remote from the place which said boat and camper are launched from said trailer.

8. The structure set forth in claim 7, including:
guide means releasably secured on the front end of said camper housing and mounted on said trailer for maintaining a releasable connection between said trailer and said camper as said camper slides rearwardly from said trailer into a body of water.

9. The structure set forth in claim 8, wherein:
said guide means also is releasably attachable to said boat for controlling the lowering thereof to a substantially horizontal upright position prior to sliding the camper from the trailer.

10. The structure set forth in claim 1, including:
said camper housing having at least one hinged cover mounted on one side of said housing for forming the upper cover for said housing during transit and for forming a portion of the deck of the camper when unfolded to a laterally extended position; and
variable length support members for said cover to support same at different elevations relative to the ground when is said extended position, whereby said camper may be supported in use on said frame, a pickup truck bed, on the ground or other base.