

Dec. 2, 1941.

J. RITTER, JR

2,264,552

WARDROBE SUITCASE

Filed April 18, 1940

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

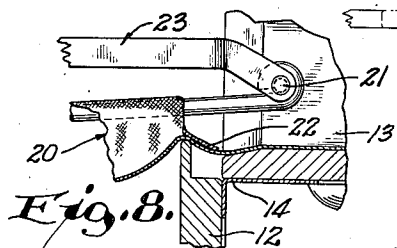


Fig. 8.

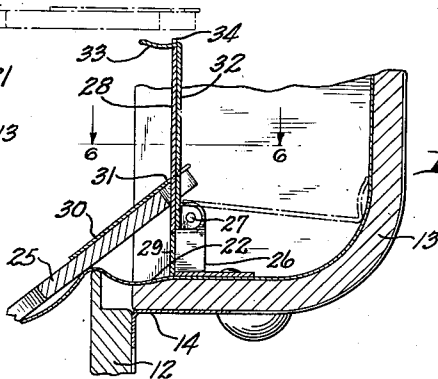


Fig. 5.

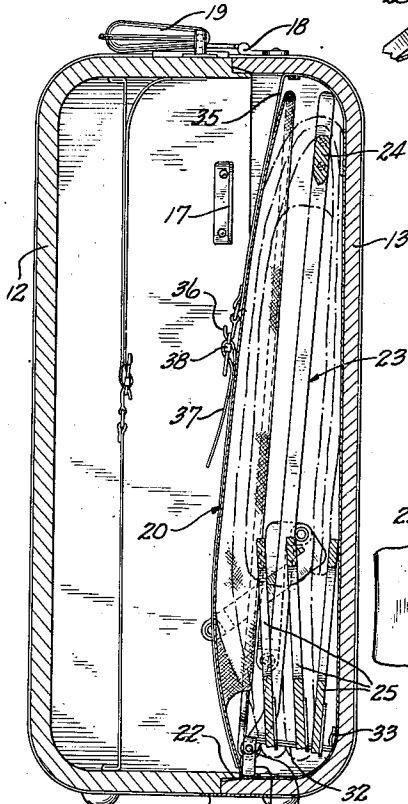


Fig. 2.

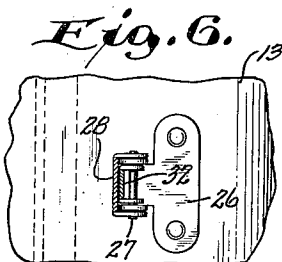


Fig. 6.

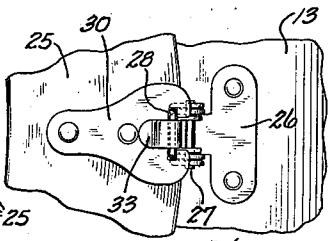


Fig. 7.

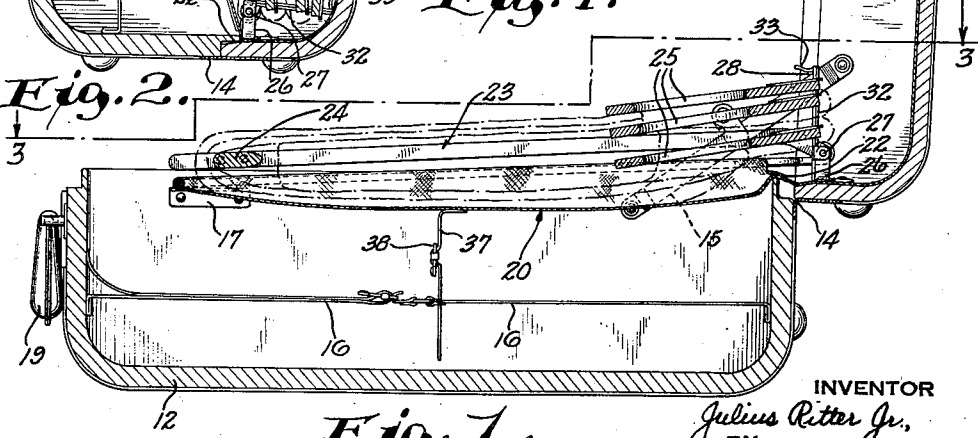


Fig. 1.

INVENTOR
Julius Ritter Jr.,
BY
Morsell, Lieber & Morsell
ATTORNEYS.

Dec. 2, 1941.

J. RITTER, JR

2,264,552

WARDROBE SUITCASE

Filed April 18, 1940

2 Sheets-Sheet 2

Fig. 3.

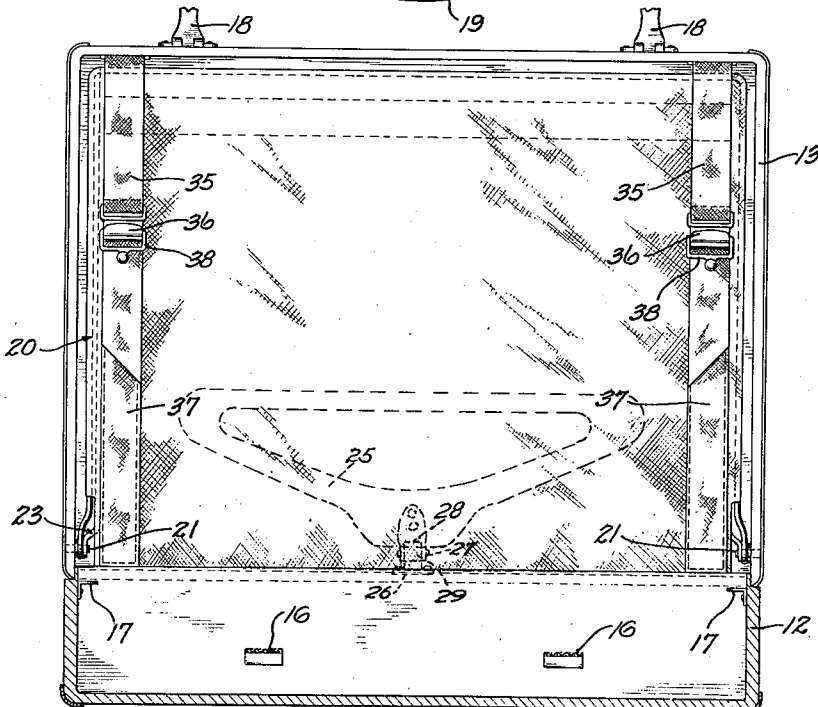
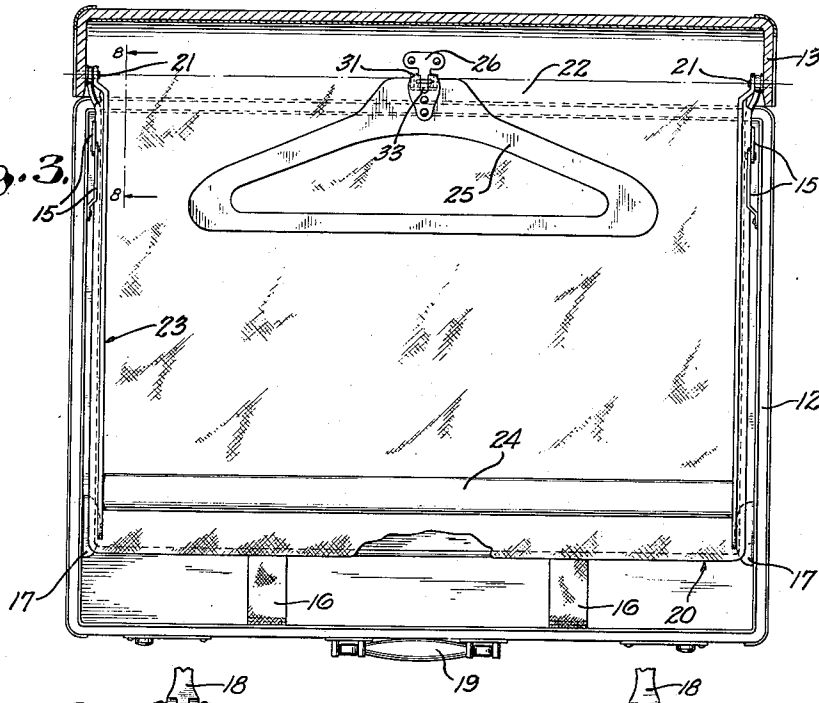


Fig. 4.

INVENTOR
Julius Ritter Jr.,
BY
Morsell, Sieber & Morsell
ATTORNEYS.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,264,552

WARDROBE SUITCASE

Julius Ritter, Jr., Racine, Wis., assignor to Hartmann Trunk Company, Racine, Wis., a corporation of Wisconsin

Application April 18, 1940, Serial No. 330,245

3 Claims. (Cl. 190—41)

This invention relates to improvements in wardrobe suitcases.

A general object of the present invention is to provide a fixture equipped wardrobe suitcase wherein the improved fixture members function to fold, compact, and retain garments, such as men's suits, within one section of the suitcase without mussing or dishevelment.

In certain forms of suitcases, garments are foldably supported by swingable rigid panels with which frame or flap members, as well as hangers, cooperate. These panels are rigid and cannot flex to adapt themselves to the number and thickness of the garments disposed thereon. Also, brackets for supporting individual hangers are customarily mounted directly on the panels. If, as in some structures, the hanger carrying brackets are mounted free of the panels or frames, they must be independently tiltable and as their points of pivot are not co-axial with the pivots of the other swingable elements of the fixture, stretching or shifting of the garments will occur when the fixtures are swung from one position to another as in packing operations.

It is, therefore, one of the objects of the present invention to overcome the objections and limitations of the prior structures above mentioned by providing a fixture equipped suitcase wherein a garment supporting flap, a folding frame, and a hanger bracket are all swingably mounted within a section of the suitcase and are arranged with coaxial pivots whereby distortion or shifting of the packed garments is entirely eliminated when the fixture devices are swung from one position another.

A further object of the invention is to provide a fixture equipped wardrobe suitcase wherein the garments rest on a flexible flap which can flex or bow inwardly or outwardly to accommodate the garments depending on their number and thickness, said flap also being extremely light.

A further object of the invention is to provide a fixture equipped wardrobe suitcase including a flexible flap, which, when swung into the cover of the case confines the packed garments therein and covers the same, there being retaining straps disposable over only the extreme side edges of the flap at the lines of least bulk or thickness, which arrangement permits intermediate portions of the flexible flap to freely bulge if the device is heavily packed.

A further object of the invention is to provide a fixture equipped wardrobe suitcase wherein a bracket for individual hangers is mounted on an

inner wall of the suitcase cover entirely free of the fixture flap or frame, said bracket having a tiltable mounting co-axial with the pivots of the flap and frame whereby when the flap and frame are swung with a garment carried by the fixture, the hanger bracket will likewise swing in the same direction.

A further object of the invention is to provide a fixture equipped wardrobe suitcase including a bracket for receiving, in superimposed relationship, a plurality of coat hangers, said bracket permitting the hangers to move or shift longitudinally thereon when the fixture is manipulated.

A further object of the invention is to provide, in a wardrobe suitcase, a hinged hanger bracket having simple and effective latch means for releasably maintaining hangers on the shank of the bracket.

A further object of the invention is to provide a wardrobe suitcase which is of simple construction, is strong and durable, is easy to manipulate and effectively packs and houses folded garments, is neat and attractive in appearance, and is well adapted for the purposes set forth.

With the above and other objects in view the invention consists of the improved wardrobe suitcase, and its parts and combinations as set forth in the claims, and all equivalents thereof.

In the accompanying drawings in which the same reference characters indicate the same parts in all of the views:

Fig. 1 is a vertical sectional view through the improved wardrobe suitcase in its open position with the garment folding and compacting fixtures in horizontal position over the body section of the case;

Fig. 2 is a transverse vertical sectional view of the suitcase in its closed carrying position, showing the fixture loaded and confined within the cover section of the case;

Fig. 3 is a horizontal sectional view of the showing in Fig. 1, indicated on line 3—3 thereof, only without any indication of garments on the lowered fixture;

Fig. 4 is a view of the open suitcase with the fixture disposed within the cover section of the case, the body section of the case being in vertical position;

Fig. 5 is an enlarged, fragmentary, detail sectional view showing the hanger bracket hingedly mounted on the inner rear wall of the cover of the suitcase and engaged by a hanger;

Fig. 6 is a detail sectional view taken on line 6—6 of Fig. 5 only with the hanger removed;

Fig. 7 is a plan view of the showing in Fig. 5; and

Fig. 8 is a fragmentary, detail sectional view taken on line 8—8 of Fig. 3 and on a larger scale.

While the present improvements will be hereinafter described as being applied to an ordinary suitcase, particularly designed for men's garments and luggage, it should be understood that it is not intended to thereby limit the scope of the invention since some of the novel features are obviously more generally applicable.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings it will appear that the suitcase comprises a main body section 12, and a cover section 13 swingably connected to an upper end wall portion of the body section 12 by means of a hinge 14. Foldable stays 15 are extended between portions of the body and cover sections for limiting the swinging movement of the cover section 13. The interior of the body section may be provided with releasable straps 16 for confining miscellaneous garments and traveling paraphernalia packed therewithin. Also, forward portions of the inner side walls of the body section 12 carry cleats or brackets 17 for supporting certain elements of the garment folding and compacting fixture when the latter is in its horizontal or lowered position. The cover section 13 is secured in closed position relative to the body section 12, as shown in Fig. 2, by means of conventional latches 18, and a handle 19 is affixed to an outer wall of the body section to facilitate the carrying of the suitcase.

The improved garment folding and compacting fixture includes a number of cooperating elements, the first of which is a swingable flap designated generally by the numeral 20. Said flap is of rectangular form and comprises a U-shaped wire member covered by flexible fabric. The transverse portion of the U-shaped wire frame of the flap is at the outer free end thereof and the inner ends of the side arms of this flap frame are offset slightly outwardly and are connected to inner side wall portions of the cover 13 by means of pivots 21. At the inner end of said flap the offset portions of the arms extend outwardly or free of the fabric covering and the inner end of the fabric covering is flexibly secured to the inner end wall of the cover 13 as at 22. The U-shaped frame of the member 20 therefore gives it form, while the flexible covering thereof permits the intermediate portions of the flap to bulge or yield in either direction. In its lowered position the flexible flap 20 is supported by the cleats 17 within the body section 12 of the suitcase.

A cooperating element of the garment folding and compacting fixture is a U-frame designated generally by the numeral 23 and comprising opposed side arms connected at their outer ends by a transverse garment folding bar 24. The inner ends of the side arms of the U-frame 23 are inwardly offset and are swingably mounted relative to the inner hinged end of the cover 13 by being mounted on the same pivots 21 which carry the arms of the flexible flap 20.

Another cooperating element of the garment folding and compacting fixture includes a hinged bracket for carrying, in stacked relationship, a plurality of coat hangers 25. This bracket includes a flanged base member 26 which is secured to an inner surface of the rear wall of the cover 13, intermediate the ends of the same. The bracket includes an upstanding portion of bifurcated form with the outer ends of the bifurca-

tions carrying a pintle 27. A hinged shank member 28, of flat plate-like formation, has right angular spaced ears formed on its inner end which pivotally receive the pintle 27. Relative to the base of the bracket the shank 28 may be moved from an outwardly projecting position, as in Figs. 1 and 5, to an inwardly folded position, as in Fig. 2. In the first mentioned position the inner end of the shank 28 engages and seats on the upper edge 29 of a stop plate on the base of the bracket 26 (see Fig. 5).

The coat hangers 25, which are adapted to cooperate with the hinged bracket 26, carry metallic plates 30 formed with T-slots 31 therein. The heads of these T-slots of the hanger plates are adapted to receive the shank 28 of the hinged bracket whereby one or more hangers 25 may be stacked on the shank of the hinged bracket, as shown in the drawings.

The bracket 26 is also provided with a pivotal latch arm 32. The inner end of this latch arm is formed with right angular ears also receiving the pintle 27 of the base element of the bracket 26. In locking position the latch arm 32, which is narrower than the bracket shank 28, enters into the end portions of the T-slots 31 of the hangers and projects co-extensive with and against the bracket shank 28, being releasably latched thereto by an angular out-turned yieldable head 33 which seats in a recess 34 at the outer end of the bracket shank 28. When the hangers 25 are engaged on the shank 28 of the bracket 26 and the arm 32 is latched to the shank 28, the hangers may move longitudinally on the bracket shank 28 but cannot become disengaged therefrom. Due to the fact that both the shank 28 and latch arm 32 are pivotally mounted on the pintle 27, the connected elements may move or hinge from the outstanding position of Fig. 5 to the inwardly folded position of Fig. 2, which movement takes place when the entire garment folding and compacting fixture is shifted from the position of Fig. 1 into the position of confinement within the cover section 13 of the case, as in Fig. 2. When it is desired to remove coat hangers 25 from the shank 28 of the hinged bracket the yieldable head 33 of the latch arm 32 is disengaged from the slot 34 and said arm is swung to the broken line position of Fig. 5, whereby the hangers may be freely removed from the outer end of the shank 28. It should be observed that the bracket pintle 27 is coaxial with the pivots 21 on which the inner ends of the flap 20 and frame 23 are mounted. Therefore, the hinged bracket which carries the coat hangers will swing on the same axis as the flap and frame and there will be no distortion or shifting of the garments, or strain thereon in movement of the composite fixture from one position to another.

In Figs. 1 and 2 of the drawings there are broken line showings of garments mounted on the composite fixture in their proper folded relationship. These garments in practice would comprise two complete men's suits, with the coats thereof being mounted on the two lowermost hangers, while the uppermost hanger illustrated is free of garments. In order that the operation of the composite fixture may be fully understood a description of the manner of loading the same will now be given. To begin with, the flap 20 is extended in horizontal position over the open body section 12 of the suitcase and is supported by the cleats or brackets 17. A coat of a man's suit is engaged on a hanger 25 in the usual manner and the hanger is then mounted

on the shank 28 of the hinged bracket 26, the latch arm 32 of the same having been released. The coat hanger will settle to the bottom portion of the vertically disposed bracket shank and the coat should be stretched out forwardly over the top surface of the flap 20 and will initially extend or hang over the forward edge of the body section 12 of the suitcase. The vest of the suit is then laid on the top of the flap 20 in a folded condition and the upper ends of the trousers of the suit are positioned on the flap so as to extend lengthwise thereof, or transversely of the extent of the coat. The ends of the trousers will hang over a side wall of the suitcase. Thereafter the U-frame 23, which has been in vertical position within the open cover 13, is lowered horizontally onto the top face of the flap 20 over the garments thereon. The extending ends of the trousers are then folded back onto the larger portion of the trousers folding over a side arm of the frame 23. The outwardly projecting portions of the suit coat and sleeves are likewise folded over the transverse bar 24 of the frame 23 with the result that all portions of the suit are then confined on and supported by the upper face of the flap 20. At this stage, or before, the latch of the hinged bracket 26 should be closed so as to retain the hanger on the shank of the bracket. Now, the entire composite fixture may be swung into the cover section of the case for confinement therein. This movement is accomplished by simply engaging the forward end of the flap 20 and thereby swinging all of the parts into the cover of the case, with the flap, frame and hinged bracket all swinging simultaneously on their co-axial pivots.

At this point it may be stated that the composite fixture may carry one, two or three suits of clothing and the packing of additional suits is accomplished in the manner previously described, except that where several suits are carried the ends of the trousers are extended in opposite directions to fold over opposite side arms of the frame and balance the distribution of bulk. Each suit coat will, of course, be carried by a separate superimposed hanger 25, but all of the suitcoats will fold over the end bar 24 of the frame 23.

It should be observed that within the cover, and depending from upper side portions of the front or free wall thereof, are securing straps 35 which carry complementary clasp elements 36 at their free ends. The location of these straps is clearly shown in Fig. 4, and before the composite fixture is swung into the cover, said straps are flipped over the free front wall of the cover so as to be out of the way of the fixture. After the loaded composite fixture is swung into the cover, said straps 35 may be dropped over the outer face of the flap 20 at the extreme side margins of the same, until said straps 35 cooperate with complementary straps 37 in securing the loaded fixture within the cover section 13 of the suitcase. Said complementary straps 37 are secured to lower or inner side face portions of the flap 20 and their free ends adjustably carry clasp elements 38 to be engaged with the clasp elements 36. The bulk of the loaded fixture is at a minimum at the side edges where said retaining straps are applied. Due to the fact that the major portion of the flap 20 is of flexible fabric, if the fixture is heavily loaded, as is the case when three suits are packed, the major portion of the flap may bulge outwardly, as in Fig. 2, and said retaining straps, applied to

the side edges of the flap, do not restrict this bulging tendency. This advantageous arrangement permits the flap to partially bulge into the confines of the body section 12 of the suitcase when it is packed and imposes no strain on the fixture elements, nor does it result in an overpacking of a single section of the suitcase. Another advantage is that if the composite fixture is packed with relatively light garments or only one suit, for instance, then the body section of the suitcase might readily be overpacked and the flap 20 may flex in the opposite direction and accommodate bulging material in the body section of the case, without straining any of the walls or suitcase parts and equalizing the disposition of masses as between the several sections of the suitcase.

From the foregoing description, it will be apparent that the invention provides simple, compact, and readily accessible means for confining garments within a suitcase in a properly folded condition and without wrinkling or crushing the garments. The improved composite fixture, besides being extremely light and easy to manipulate, provides for original packing of suits and light garments over the body section of the suitcase, with the ultimate disposition of the packed fixture within the cover section of the case, leaving the body section of the case entirely free and accessible. All movable elements of this composite fixture swing on aligned pivots so no strain or improper shifting of the garments results, and the flexible supporting flap permits bulging in either direction to compensate for overpacking of one section of the suitcase and underpacking of the companion section of the suitcase.

It should be understood that it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact details of construction herein shown and described, for various modifications within the scope of the claims may occur to persons skilled in the art.

What is claimed as the invention is:

1. In combination, a pair of hingedly connected, complementary suitcase sections, a composite swingable garment folding and compacting fixture movable from a position over one of the suitcase sections to a confined position within the other suitcase section, said fixture including a supporting, confining and protecting flexible flap formed with a rigid frame, a garment folding frame, a tiltable hanger bracket, and a garment hanger removably carried by said bracket, pivot members independently co-axially mounting the inner ends of the flap, the frame, and the bracket within the hinged end portion of the last-mentioned section of the suitcase, and releasable straps extending entirely along and engaging only the extreme side edges of said flap when it is in the last-mentioned suitcase section to hold the flap and the other fixture elements within said suitcase section, said straps not restricting flexing of intermediate portions of said flap.

2. A wardrobe suitcase, comprising a body section, a cover section hingedly connected to the body section, a composite swingable garment folding and compacting fixture movable from a loading position over said body section to a packed confining position within said cover section, said fixture including a supporting flap, a garment folding frame, a tiltable hanger bracket, and a garment hanger removably carried by said bracket, said flap consisting of a U-shaped rigid frame having side arms and an outer transverse strip, and a flexible covering for said frame, common pivot members independently mounting the free

ends of the flap frame arms and the garment folding frame within the hinged end portion of the cover section, the inner end of the flexible covering of the flap being flexibly secured to the inner end portion of the suitcase cover section, and means for independently hingedly mounting said hanger bracket on the inner rear wall of the cover section co-axially with the pivot members for the flap arms and frame.

3. A wardrobe suitcase, comprising a body section, a cover section hingedly connected to the body section, a composite swingable garment folding and compacting fixture movable from a loading position over said body section to a packed confining position within said cover section, said fixture including a supporting flap, a garment supporting frame, a tiltable hanger bracket, and a garment hanger removably carried by said bracket, said flap consisting of a U-shaped rigid

5 frame having side arms and an outer transverse strip, and a flexible covering on said frame, common pivot members independently mounting the free ends of the flap frame arms and the garment folding frame within the hinged end portion of the cover section, releasable straps extending entirely along and engaging only at extreme side edges of said flap when the fixture is in confining position within the cover section 10 of the suitcase, the fabric covering on the frame being adapted to bulge inwardly or outwardly to compensate for unequal distribution of bulk within the suitcase sections on both sides of said flap, and the hanger bracket including a foldable shank, the axis of which is aligned with the axes of the pivotal mountings for the flap and frame arms. 15

JULIUS RITTER, JR.