

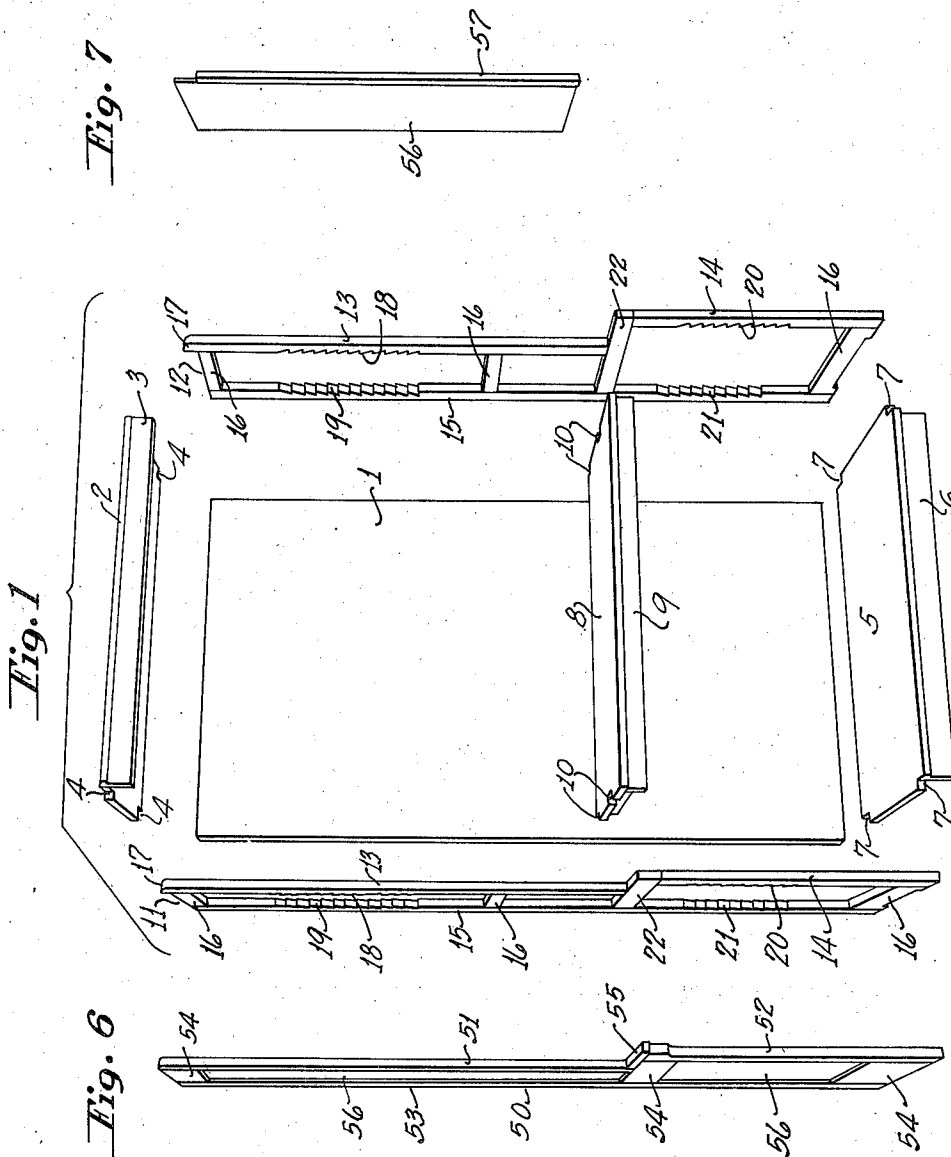
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T. C. THOMPSON
MERCHANDISE DISPLAY UNIT

2,108,516

Filed Dec. 5, 1936

3 Sheets-Sheet 1



INVENTOR
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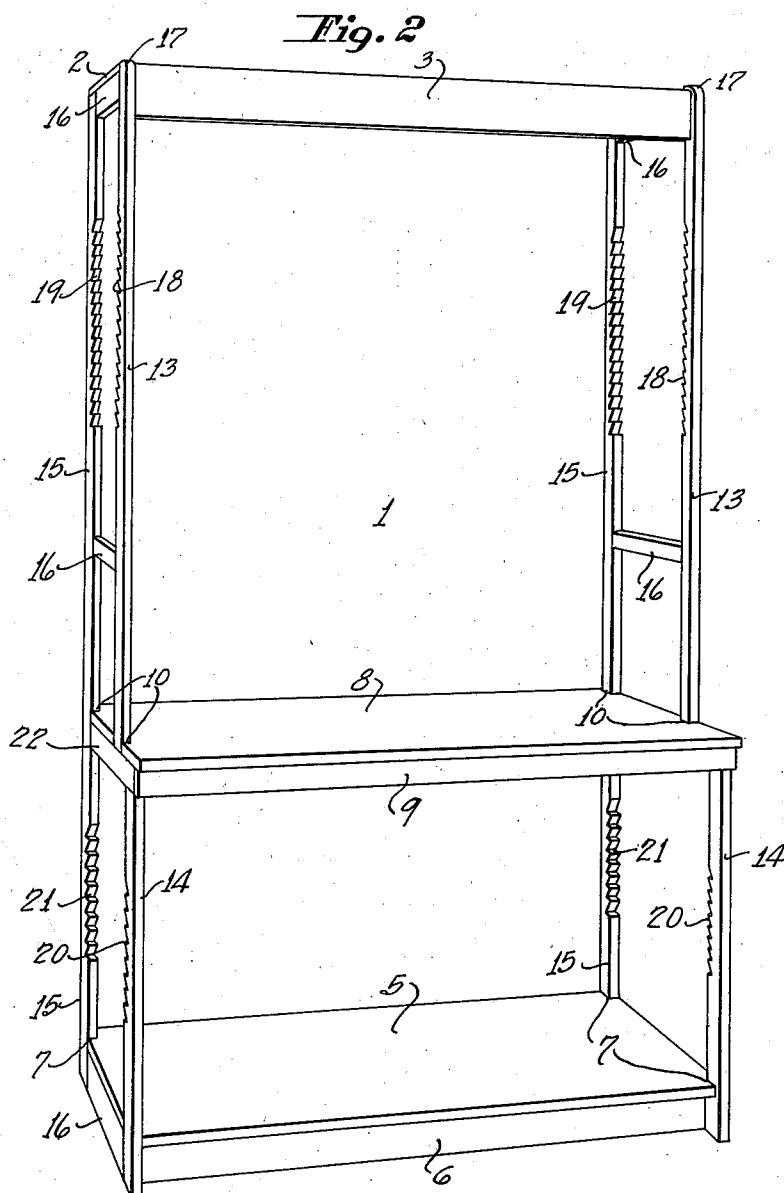
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3 Sheets-Sheet 2



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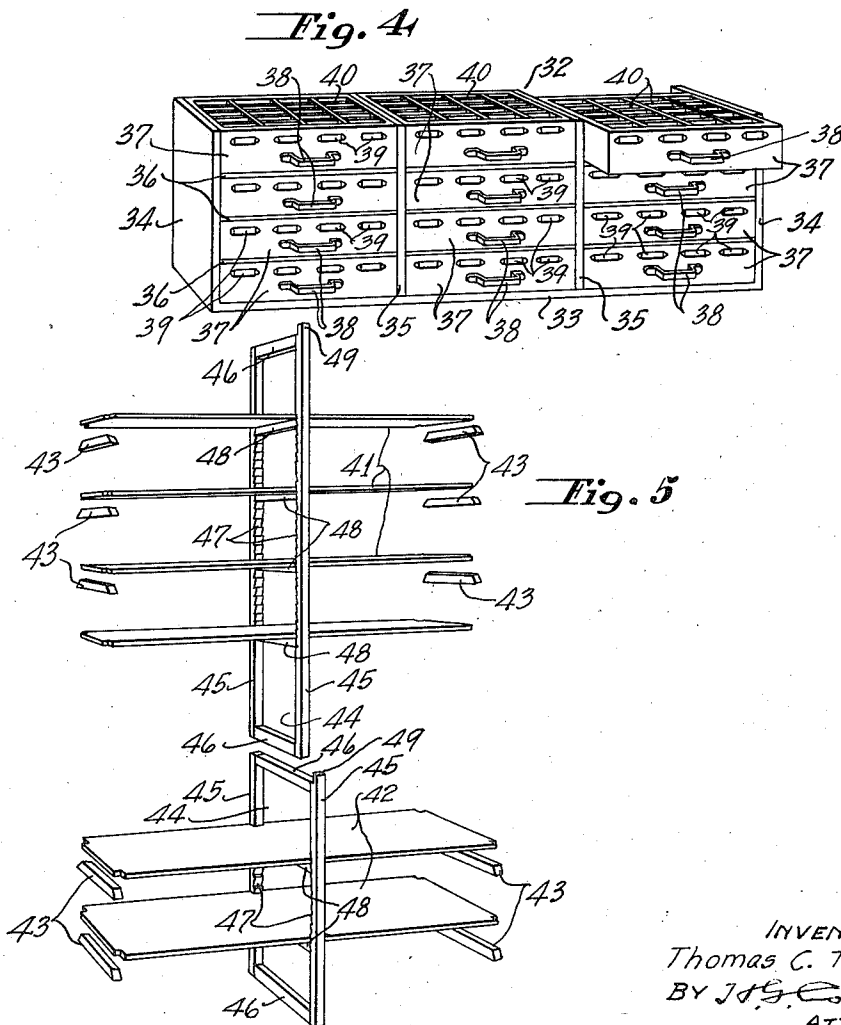
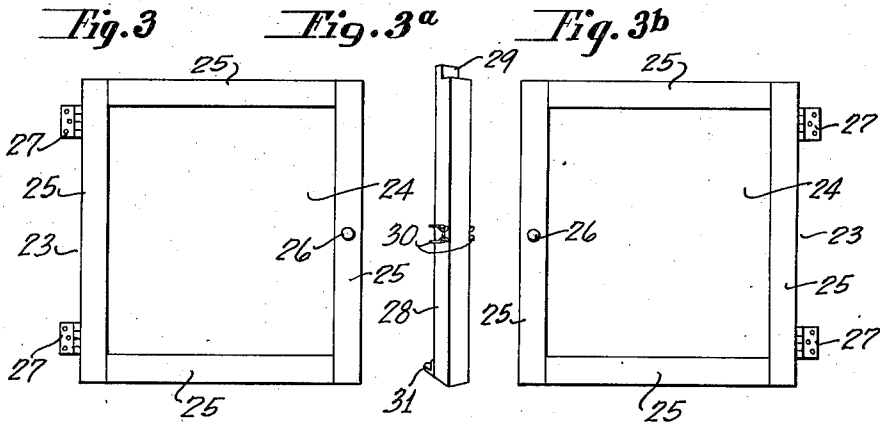
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3 Sheets-Sheet 3



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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MERCHANDISE DISPLAY UNIT

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Application December 5, 1936, Serial No. 114,301

4 Claims. (Cl. 312-107)

My invention relates to merchandise display units, and particularly to a knock-down display unit for merchandise composed of individual members of standardized dimensions and construction as to the basic member parts thereof, and additions to such basic unit, also of standardized dimensions and construction, as will greatly enhance the display and storage value of said basic unit. In a primary sense the individual members of the basic foundation unit are so constructed that each unit may be readily assembled by anyone without experience and may be put together in a simple and obvious manner with the assistance of a screw-driver, and the members when so assembled will constitute a complete basic foundation unit.

Another object of my invention is to produce a basic foundation unit of pleasing appearance, the individual members being made so that each part is adapted to fit into the unit when being assembled in such manner as to provide for a sturdy structure, capable of sustaining any required weight of the merchandise articles to be contained and displayed therein.

Another feature of my invention is the production of a unit, the individual members of which are interchangeable in any other unit, so that when a display is placed in one unit of a series of such units the member on which such display is mounted may be taken out of the unit in which it has been first arranged and moved to another unit, the member parts being simply interchanged, requiring a minimum amount of time to effect the change and permitting a wide range of selection of the merchandise being displayed as to adaptability and proximity to other articles on display in other basic foundation units.

I am aware that standardized units broadly are not new, but I believe that I am the first to devise a basic foundation unit, the parts of which are so standardized as to dimensions and simplicity of construction of component members that no experience in assembling is required, and permitting of the rapid putting together of the member parts as well as the rapid interchange between like member units of similar member sections.

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a basic foundation unit with the member parts thereof shown disassembled.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a basic foundation unit in assembled condition.

Figs. 3, 3a, 3b, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are views of standardized additional member parts that are desirable but not necessarily parts of the foundation

unit. Fig. 3 is a standardized set of panel doors with division mullion strip; Fig. 4 is a standardized set of drawers for screws, small bolts, and the like; Fig. 5 is a standardized set of shelves for the upper and lower sections respectively of a foundation basic unit, showing the central supporting ladder for said shelves and the end supporting bars for said shelves; Fig. 6 is a standardized end panel for one side of a basic foundation unit; and Fig. 7 is a standardized inner liner to fit inside the foundation basic unit where it is deemed desirable to wall off one section of a basic foundation unit from an adjoining section, as well as to provide greater display surface.

A back member 1 is provided of rectangular shape and of a standard width and thickness, and preferably formed out of ply-board to prevent warping. A top member 2, also of a standard width and thickness, is adapted to be placed at the top of the foundation unit. An apron 3 is permanently attached to the front edge of the top member 1 and depends therefrom. The top member 2 is notched, as at 4, at the corners to receive the strips which will be hereinafter described. A bottom member 5, similar to the top member 2, is also provided, and, like the top member, is provided with a front depending apron 6 and is likewise notched, as at 7, to receive strips hereinafter to be described. An intermediate shelf member 8 is provided, also provided with a depending apron 9 and notches 10 to receive strips to be hereinafter described, similar to the top member 2 and the bottom member 5.

It will be understood that each top member 2, bottom member 5, and intermediate shelf member 8 is of a standard construction as well as of standard width and thickness, and preferably made of ply-board to prevent warping. Two skeleton side members 11 and 12 are supplied with each foundation unit and are adapted to be placed one at each side of each such unit. As each of these skeleton side members is of identical standardized construction, I will use the same reference numerals to designate the component sections of said members. The said skeleton members are composed each of an upper front strip 13, a lower front strip 14, and a rear strip 15, joined together by connecting bars 16 at the top and bottom and at an intermediate point between the top and bottom. The upper front strip 13 extends as at 17 a short distance above the top connecting bar 16 to accommodate the thickness of the top member 2 when the same is placed in assembled position on the foun-

dation unit for the purpose of presenting a pleasing finished appearance in the completed structure.

In the upper portion of these skeleton side members 11 and 12 are inside toothed notches 18 on the upper front strips 13, while corresponding toothed notches 19 are placed on the inside of the rear strip 15 and adapted to register with said toothed notches 18. Similar toothed notches 20 and 21 are placed on the inside of the lower strips 14 and the lower portion of the rear strip 15, and are in registration with each other. The purpose of these toothed notches will be hereinafter described.

A supporting bar 22 is located between the upper strip 13 and the lower strip 14 and connected to the rear strip 15. The supporting bar 22 supports the intermediate shelf member 8 and the notches 10 in said shelf receive the front upper strip 13 and the rear strip 15.

When the member parts shown in Fig. 1 are assembled the completed basic foundation unit appears as shown in Fig. 2, and the parts are all securely combined to produce a substantial and attractive merchandise display unit and one in which the member parts are interchangeable with similar member parts in any other foundation unit. A simple assembly chart is supplied with each knock-down unit in disassembled form, so that no skill is required to fit the member parts together.

In Fig. 3 is shown a pair of panel doors 23 of standardized construction, consisting of a removable panel 24 and frame members 25. The panel 24 is secured by screws in suitable cutaway portions (not shown) in the frame members 25. A pull-knob 26 is applied to the inner frame member of each panel door 23, and hinges 27 are applied to the opposite frame member, whereby said panel doors may be mounted on a basic foundation unit. A standardized mullion strip 28, having an upper tongue section 29, is supplied with each set of panel doors 23. Catch members 30 are attached to two sides of said mullion strip, which is adapted to be engaged by a member (not shown) on each panel door 23 for the purpose of holding said doors securely in closed position.

It will be understood that the tongue 29 is adapted to enter into a notch (not shown) for its reception in the forward center of the top member 2 just back of the front apron 3 on said member 2. A bracket 31 is attached to the lower portion of the mullion strip 28 for the purpose of fastening with a screw said bracket and said mullion strip to the intermediate shelf member 8. It will be understood that the use of the panel doors 23 in the foundation unit is optional with the user of said unit. As each of the foundation units contains an upper and lower section, one above and one below the intermediate shelf member 8, panel doors 23 and mullion strips 28 of standardized construction, as above described, are provided for each such section.

In Fig. 4, I have shown a standardized set of drawers 32 designed to fit into one section of a foundation unit but not adapted to be secured thereto. Such drawers are at all times easily removable. I provide a rectangular frame consisting of a bottom member 33, two side members 34, two vertical, intermediate, division members 35, and three horizontal division members 36. By this arrangement spaces are provided for the reception of the individual drawers 37. To each drawer is applied a pull 38 and a series

of card holders 39, whereby the contents of each drawer may be designated. The drawers 37 are preferably supplied with racks 40 to contain screws, small bolts, and the like.

In Fig. 5, I have shown a set of standardized shelves 41 adapted for the upper section of the foundation unit, and a similar set, only wider, of shelves 42 adapted for the lower section of the foundation unit. These shelves 41 and 42 are adapted to be supported at the ends by the bars 43 which are removably fitted into the toothed notches 18 and 19, and 20 and 21, of the skeleton side members 11 and 12. The lower shelf of the upper section is supported at each end by the fixed bars 16 on said skeleton side members. 15

Each set of shelves 41 and 42 are supported intermediate their ends by a ladder 44 formed of side strips 45 and top and bottom connecting bars 46. Toothed notches 47 are provided on the inside edges of the side strips 45, which notches are adapted to receive the supporting bars 48 on which the center of said shelves 41 and 42 are adapted to rest. The forward side strips of each set of ladders 44 terminate at their upper ends in an extension 49 adapted to enter into notches (not shown) in the lower front face of the top member 2 and the intermediate shelf member 8, thereby securely, but removably, holding said ladders 44 in proper position in the foundation unit. 30

In Fig. 6, I have shown an end closure panel 50 of standardized construction. There are two of these end closure panels, one for the left end and one for the right end. They are adapted to be employed, usually, where a series of foundation units are placed side by side and the two end closure panels are used to close the opposite ends of said row of foundation units. In structure the end closure panels are formed of upper and lower front strip members 51 and 52 and a rear strip member 53. Connecting bars 54 at the top and bottom and intermediate portion are secured to the upper and lower strip members 51 and 52 and the rear strip member 53. A molding piece 55 is placed on the top of the lower strip member 52 and part of the intermediate connecting bar 54, and is employed primarily to give a finished, pleasing appearance to the assembled units. Upper and lower panels 56 close the space between the upper and lower strip members 51 and 52 and the rear strip member 53. 50

In Fig. 7, I have shown one of the inner liner members 56 which is of standardized construction. A strip of molding 57 is secured to the front edge of said liner member 56, and terminates short of the top of the liner member 56 to accommodate the apron 3 of the top member 2 when the inner liner members are employed.

By the construction of my basic foundation unit I am enabled to accommodate in each individual unit a great variety of fixtures for displaying and holding articles of merchandise, whereby each of said fixtures may readily be transferred from one unit to another. For instance, a standardized bolt rack, a standardized glass tray, and many other standardized fixtures may be employed as the user may desire. All member parts and fittings are readily applied and in such manner that great security of attachment is obtained, and the units and associated parts and fittings are extremely mobile. A screw-driver is the only tool required in assembling any foundation unit or the associated parts thereof.

I preferably employ ply-board, where the same 75

is adaptable, for making the associated member parts and fittings, as ply-board does not warp and renders the member parts and associated fittings always interchangeable with like parts in any basic foundation unit.

I claim:

1. A structure of the class described comprising opposed skeleton side members of unitary form which extend from the bottom to the top of the structure in rigid connected-together arrangement and which are provided with lower portions of greater width than the upper portions thereof, said opposed side members including vertically extended, spaced apart elements, a solid bottom member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the bottoms thereof, a solid top member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the tops thereof, a solid intermediate shelf member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the points where the wider lower portions of said opposed side members meet the narrower upper portions of said opposed side members, said bottom member, top member, and intermediate shelf member being provided with notches at the opposite ends of each thereof which receive said vertically extended spaced apart elements of said opposed side members to produce the assembled structure, portions of said opposed side members being provided with notches adapted for the support of shelves other than the aforesaid intermediate shelf, other shelves supported by said notches of said opposed side members, and vertically extended means forming parts of the assembled structure for supporting said other shelves intermediate of their opposite ends.

2. A structure of the class described comprising opposed skeleton side members of unitary form which extend from the bottom to the top of the structure in rigid connected-together arrangement and which are provided with lower portions of greater width than the upper portions thereof, said opposed side members including vertically extended, spaced apart elements, a solid bottom member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the bottoms thereof, a solid top member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the tops thereof, a solid intermediate shelf member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the points where the wider lower portions of said opposed side members meet the narrower upper portions of said opposed side members, said bottom member, top member, and intermediate shelf member being provided with notches at the opposite ends of each thereof which receive said vertically extended spaced apart elements of said opposed side members to produce the assembled structure, portions of said opposed side members being provided with notches adapted for the support of shelves other than the aforesaid intermediate shelf, other shelves supported by said notches of said opposed side members, and vertically extended notched means forming parts of the assembled structure for supporting said other shelves intermediate of their opposite ends.

3. A structure of the class described comprising opposed skeleton side members of unitary

form which extend from the bottom to the top of the structure in rigid connected-together arrangement and which are provided with lower portions of greater width than the upper portions thereof, said opposed side members including vertically extended, spaced apart elements, a solid bottom member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the bottoms thereof, a solid top member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the tops thereof, a solid intermediate shelf member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the points where the wider lower portions of said opposed side members meet the narrower upper portions of said opposed side members, said bottom member, top member, and intermediate shelf member being provided with notches at the opposite ends of each thereof which receive said vertically extended spaced apart elements of said opposed side members to produce the assembled structure, portions of said opposed side members being provided with notches adapted for the support of shelves, other than the aforesaid intermediate shelf, other shelves supported by said notches of said opposed side members, vertically extended notched means forming parts of the assembled structure for supporting said other shelves intermediate of their opposite ends, a solid rear wall forming a part of the assembled structure for closing the rear portion of the structure, and doors for closing a forward portion of the structure.

4. A structure of the class described comprising opposed skeleton side members of unitary form which extend from the bottom to the top of the structure in rigid connected-together arrangement and which are provided with lower portions of greater width than the upper portions thereof, said opposed side members including vertically extended, spaced apart elements, a solid bottom member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the bottoms thereof, a solid top member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the tops thereof, a solid intermediate shelf member supported by and extended from one to the other of said opposed side members at the points where the wider lower portions of said opposed side members meet the narrower upper portions of said opposed side members, said bottom member, top member, and intermediate shelf member being provided with notches at the opposite ends of each thereof which receive said vertically extended spaced apart elements of said opposed side members to produce the assembled structure, portions of said opposed side members being provided with notches adapted for the support of shelves, other than the aforesaid intermediate shelf, other shelves supported by said notches of said opposed side members, vertically extended notched means forming parts of the assembled structure for supporting said other shelves intermediate of their opposite ends, a solid rear wall forming a part of the assembled structure for closing the rear portion of the structure, doors for closing a forward portion of the structure, and solid side members forming parts of the assembled structure for covering said opposed skeleton side members.

THOMAS C. THOMPSON.