April 17, 1951 V. E. CLARK 2,549,573

GAFF

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Fig. 1.

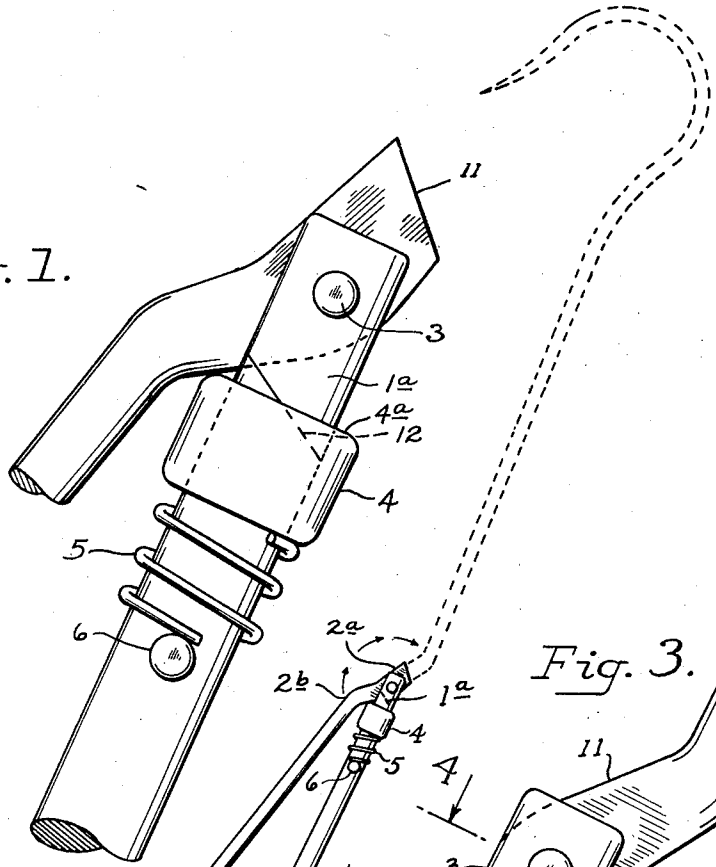


Fig. 2.

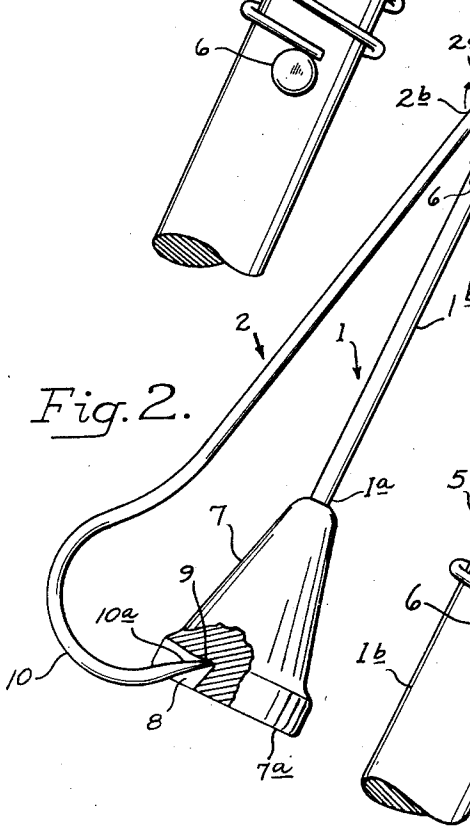


Fig. 3.

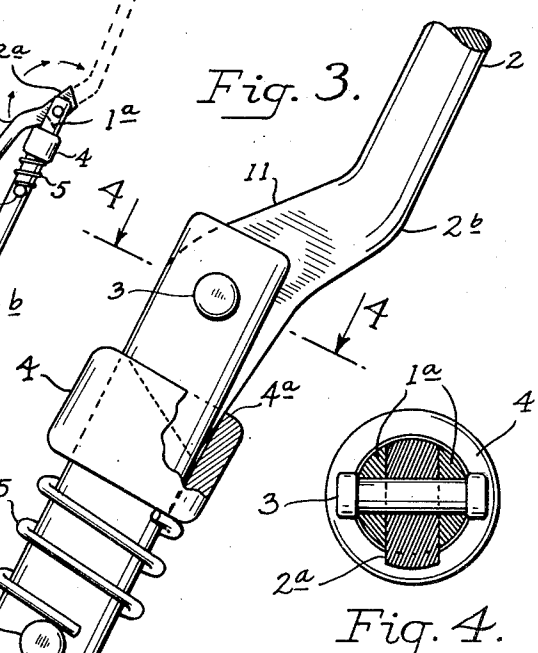


Fig. 4.

INVENTOR.
Vivian E. Clark
BY
Atty.

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GAFF

Vivian E. Clark, Forest Grove, Oreg.

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1 Claim. (Cl. 287—99)

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My invention relates to a folding-type gaff, that is the type of gaff which comprises two members pivotally joined together so that the gaff may be folded into smaller compass. The principal object of my invention is to provide a gaff of this character which may be held in folded or inoperative position but may easily be swung or flipped with the use of one hand into operative position where it will be extended to its ultimate length and in which the parts will be securely joined. This is important in landing fish because the gaff may be kept in a pocket or in a tackle box where the point will not be exposed and may be grabbed with one hand and swung so that the hooked end will be flipped into extended position and it will be securely locked in said position.

A further and more specific object of my invention is to provide a gaff of this character in which the parts are securely held, independent of wear of the parts. That is, said gaff will be securely engaged by a keeper, which keeper will accommodate itself to wear of the parts.

A further and more specific object of my invention is to provide the pivotal connection on a gaff of this character, so that the hook half will swing in one direction until it is a longitudinal prolongation of the handle half, and in this position, a keeper will automatically and securely join the halves together.

Other and further details of my invention are hereinafter described with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a fragmentary elevation of the hinged portion of a gaff embodying my invention, showing the parts as they lie in inoperative position;

Fig. 2 is an elevation of a gaff embodying my invention with the parts shown in full lines in inoperative position and with the hooked half shown in dotted outline as it would lie extended, the arrows indicating the path of movement of the hooked half as it moves from inoperative position to operative position;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged fragmentary view of the parts shown in Fig. 1 when they are extended, a portion of the annular keeper being shown broken away to disclose how it accommodates itself to wear of the parts adjacent said pivot; and

Fig. 4 is a transverse view taken through the pivotal connection of said half.

A folding gaff embodying my invention comprises two halves, a handle half 1 and a hook half 2. Said parts are joined together by a rivet or pin 3, which joins said halves adjacent the interconnected ends of said halves, the connection

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being made at a point spaced from the extremities, however. An annular keeper 4, preferably slidable upon the handle half, encircles said half and is urged into engaging position by a compression spring 5, which bears against a transverse pin 6. Preferably, the end 1*a* of the handle half, which carries the rivet or pin 3, is bifurcated, as is shown in Fig. 4, and the end 2*a* of the hook half lies intermediate said bifurcation. The opposite end of said handle half carries a grip 7. The diameter of the grip is substantially larger than that of the shaft of the handle half so that it may be securely held in the hand. Said grip terminates in an enlarged butt end 7*a*.

A transverse groove 8 is formed in the butt end 7*a* and this terminates in a declivity 9 at the inner end of said groove. Thus when the hook half is arranged in inoperative position, the point 10*a* of the hook 10 seats in said declivity. There is sufficient spring in said hook to permit the point to enter said declivity, but it may not be disengaged without some substantial force. Said declivity thus forms a sheaf or protection for the point which must be kept sharp. It also tends to prevent injury because the sharpened point is always shielded and is thus not exposed. The point, however, may be removed by swinging the hook with a decided flip from the position it occupies in solid lines in Fig. 2 to the point it assumes in dotted outline.

When said hook is flipped to assume the position it occupies in dotted outline in Fig. 2, the parts will be arranged as is shown in Fig. 3. The annular keeper 4 surrounding the shaft 1*a* is urged upwardly by the compression spring 5, and it will move upwardly until it engages the end 2*a* of the hook half and holds the two halves virtually in axial alinement.

Attention is directed to the fact that the extremity 11 of the end 2*a* forms an oblique angle to the sides of said end and a complementary seat 12 is formed at the end of said bifurcated end 1*a* of the handle half so that said two portions will come into abutment. That is, the plane of the extremity and its seat form an oblique angle with respect to the axis, about which the gaff halves move in moving from inoperative position to operative position. Stated otherwise, the abutting planes of said parts are not tangential to said axis. Thus the parts may move into position where they are alined by rotating clockwise, as is viewed in Figs. 1, 2 and 3, but after they are in alinement, they will move no further past axial alinement. Also, the oblique end of the extremity 11 tends to engage the upper surface 4*a* of the an-

nular keeper and to push it down as the hook half swings from the position shown in Fig. 1 to the position shown in Fig. 3. This prevents the annular keeper from holding the parts out of axial alinement before said keeper can encircle the end 2*a* and engage the sides thereof. It is to be noted in Fig. 3 that said sides diverge from the extremity 11 towards the plane of the rivet or pin upon which the section 4—4 is taken. Thus if the bore of the annular keeper is enlarged by wear, if there is any play about the rivet or pin, or if the sides of said hook half become mashed or distorted, the annular keeper will seat itself firmly. This is because the compression spring tends to remain under compression even after said annular keeper is arranged in the position it occupies in Fig. 3.

The hook half is offset at 2*b* so that it may extend about the annular keeper 4 and lie more closely in parallelism with the handle half 1. This offset portion also permits the hook 10 to be smaller and yet permit its point 10*a* to enter the slot and be seated in the declivity 9, as has been pointed out.

The gaff normally is carried in the position it occupies in full lines in Fig. 2. To operate it, it is merely necessary to grasp the grip 7 and flip the hook half, outwardly. This causes the hook point 10*a* to move out of engagement with the declivity 9 and to move the hook half into the position shown in dotted outline. The parts are alined, as has been pointed out, and the annular keeper thus can move into encircling engagement with the end 2*a* of the hook half and to hold the parts in extended position. This function is performed automatically by the keeper and the parts will be held rigidly in extension without further attention. Said parts may be disengaged by moving the annular keeper downwardly on its handle until it no longer overlies the end 2*a* of the hook half. Then the parts may be swung in the opposite direction until they are returned to the position first described. When a gaff is needed, it is necessary that it be available quickly and with minimum attention. It is essential, also, that the gaff not catch and thus engage clothing, or to be tangled up in the many things carried in a tackle box. This is accomplished by sheathing said point and permitting the gaff to be swung open, as has been pointed out. The butt end 7*a* of the grip also prevents the gaff from slipping from the grasp, because it provides an enlarged knob-like end which prevents slipping or relaxing of the grip upon said gaff.

I claim:

A folding gaff comprising two elongated hinge halves, pivotally connected adjacent, but spaced from, the ends thereof, one half serving as a handle and the other half carrying a hook, a spring urged annular keeper slidably mounted upon one half and adapted to overlie and encircle the other half when said halves are in substantial alinement, the butt end of said handle half having an elongated slot formed therein for accommodating and shielding the point of the hook on the other half, said slot terminating in a slight declivity at its inner end to engage and hold said point against inadvertent retraction therefrom.

VIVIAN E. CLARK.

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