F. C. Sebring.

Playing Parlor Base-Ball.

No. 74154 Patented Feb. 4, 1868

Fig. 1.

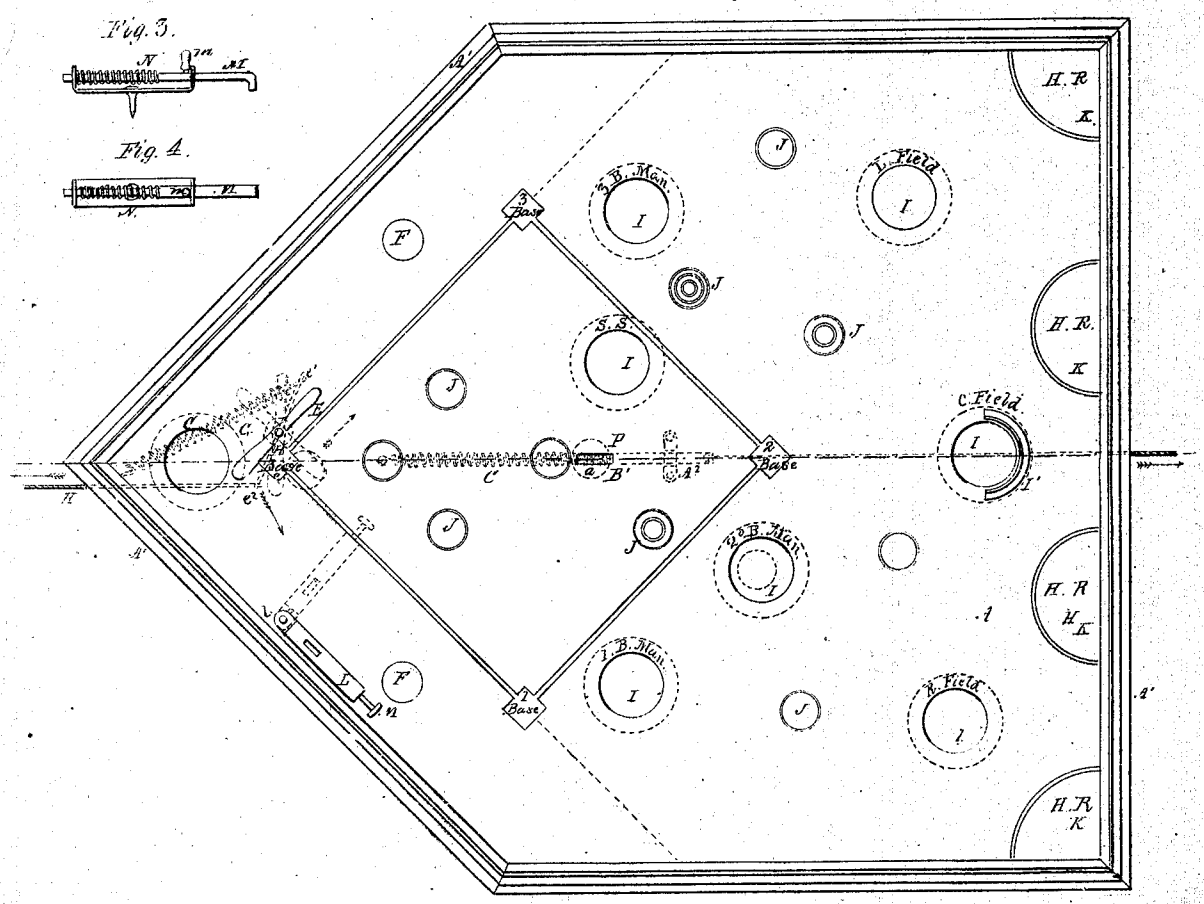
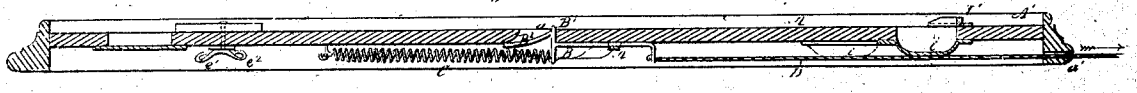


Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 2.



Witnesses.

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FRANCIS C. SEBRING, OF HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY.

Letters Patent No. 74,154, *dated February* 4, 1868; *antedated January* 23, 1868.

APPARATUS FOR PLAYING PARLOR BASE-BALL.

The Schedule referred to in these Letters Patent and making part of the same.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that I, FRANCIS C. SEBRING, of Hoboken, in the county of Hudson, and State of New Jersey, have invented a certain new and useful Apparatus for Indoor Recreation, which I call Parlor Base-Ball; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof.

The game is an almost exact imitation, in miniature, of the popular American field-game of base-ball. For a field, I employ a board of convenient size to be laid on the table, or supported on the knees of the players, and for a ball, I use, by preference, one of the thick nickel coins of the denomination of "one cent," issued by the United States Government in and about the year 1860. The game is intended for two players, each of whom controls the movements of all the "men" upon one side. The coin is "pitched" by a mechanism adjusted and controlled by the player whose side is in the field, and is batted or struck at by a mechanism operated by the player whose side is "in." The several men may be represented by any suitable small objects. I prefer small pieces nicely turned, and resembling, in their general style, the pawns commonly used in the game of chess.

I will first describe what I consider the best means of carrying out my invention, and will afterwards describe the points which I believe to be new.

The accompanying drawings form a part of this specification.

Figure 1 is a plan view.

Figure 2 is a central longitudinal section.

Figures 3 and 4 show one of the springs, detached from the main apparatus.

Similar letters of reference indicate like parts in all the figures.

A is the board, and A^1 a moulded border. B is a piece of brass or other suitable material, adapted to traverse in the guide A^2, and drawn forward by the spring C. Its upper extremity, B^1, traverses in the slot *a*, provided in the board A. As it moves forward, in obedience to the spring C, its forward end is deflected by contact of the inclined portion, B^2, with the front edge of the slot *a*, so that the acting portion, B^1, sinks, or is withdrawn down into the board, allowing the coin to pass freely over the upper surface of the slot *a*, in case it should be so struck by the bat as to slide it in that direction. D is the operating-cord. It passes out through a hole, a^1, in the moulding A^1, and is operated by the player who is in the field. In order to pitch the ball, by which name the coin may be designated, the cord D is pulled, so as to draw back the piece B and extend the spring C. The coin is then placed in front of it, either centrally in front, as represented by the red circle in fig. 1, or a very little to one side or the other, according as it is desired by the player to pitch the ball. The cord D may be released either suddenly or gradually, and the coin will be projected with proportionate force. E is a bat, turning on the shaft *e*, and running in close proximity to the upper face of the board A. On the lower end of the shaft *e* are two arms, e^1 and e^2. The arm e^1 is drawn back by the spring G, and tends to hold the bat E in the position indicated by the red lines. A cord, H, is attached to the arm e^2, and passes out through a hole in the casing A^1, and is operated by the player who is "in." In preparing to receive the ball from the pitcher, the cord H is pulled, and the bat E is drawn into the position indicated in black outlines in fig. 1. As the ball is received, the cord H is liberated, and the bat E swings round, turning on the centre *e*. Much skill may be exercised in effecting this simple operation. The suddenness with which the cord is released determines the velocity with which the bat E turns upon its centre, and the time at which it is released, relatively to the motion of the ball, determines the position of the bat at the moment of its impact with the ball. Thus, if it is released early, it will receive the ball nearly in the position shown by the red lines, and will send it in the direction indicated by the red arrow; while, if it is released late, it will receive the ball nearly in the position indicated by the black lines, and will send it in the direction indicated by the black arrow. A medium timing of the movement will send it at the various angles intermediate between these. I I, &c., are cavities, made, by preference, quite through the board, and stopped on the lower surface by a plate of metal or other suitable material, as indicated by *i*. These cavities receive the ball when it is projected with the right force in the right direction. The stopping of the ball in either of these cavities, indicates that the ball is caught by the man who is supposed to be there stationed. A red circle in fig. 1, indicating that the ball, after being struck by the bat, has lodged in the position represented, indicates that the ball has been caught by the second-base man, and the man who is supposed to have made the stroke is thereupon declared to be out. I can make the cavities I serve

by giving them very little depth, by simply providing the further or back edge of each with a raised rim. This rim may be made of metal or any other suitable material, and should extend half round, as indicated by the blue outline I′, at the centre-field position in fig. 1. It should be of such height as to effectually stop the ball as it is projected past it; but it is well to sink the edges, so that the ball striking there may not stop, but may be simply deflected upward, and allowed to pass on. J J are spots on the surface of the board. They represent throws by the men in the field. When the bat sends the ball so that it stops in a position either entirely or partially to cover one of the spots J, it gives the player who is in the field a privilege, as follows: He may place the ball on any one base, thus putting out the man who must make that base. The game may be played according to any rule dictated by local custom, or otherwise; but I will describe it as if played in accordance with the rules now generally approved in this locality, which require that three of the men shall be put out before the entire side is out, when the board is turned round, or the players exchange positions, the player who was originally playing the side which was in the field, taking the opposite position, and playing the part of the side which is in. Returning to the description of the spots and their functions, it will be observed that there are two of the spots which have an internal circle, and one which has two internal circles. The stopping of the ball, partially or entirely, upon either of these, entitles the player who is in the field to still greater privileges, as follows: If the ball stops upon either of the spots which has one internal circle, it entitles him to place the ball upon two bases in succession, and thus he may have the privilege, under some circumstances, of putting out two men. If the ball stops partially or entirely upon that spot J which has two internal circles, the ball may be placed successively on any three of the bases, thus giving the chance, under some circumstances, of putting out three men. K K K K are areas on the extreme verge of the board, bounded by arcs of circles, as represented. When the ball stops, covering any portion of these areas, it gives the player who is in the privilege of making a "home-run," completing the runs of all the men who are upon either of the bases, and also allowing the "striker"—the man who is supposed to have made the lucky stroke—to pass successively the first, second, and third bases, and to reach the home-base. L is a moving casing, pivoted to the board at the point *l*, so that it may be turned about in various positions. M is a slide, having a rounded head, as represented, and adapted to be drawn back by the thumb-piece *m*, when it is forced outward by the spring N, which is enclosed in the casing, and turns with it. This mechanism, L, M, N, is, under ordinary circumstances, turned out of the way, as indicated by the black outlines of fig. 1, but is liable to be put in use very frequently, by the call of the player who is in. Whenever the latter wishes to change the position of either of the men from one base to another, without having struck the ball, he notifies the opposite player of the fact, indicating which man he chooses to make the run, of course thereby indicating the base next succeeding, which base he intends he shall make. In such case, the player who is in the field may swing the casing L into position, and drawing back the slide M, he places the ball in front of it, and projects it with such skill as he can command. If he can succeed in leaving the ball in that cavity I which represents the corresponding base-man, the man who was to make that base is pronounced out. If the ball does not stop in that cavity I, the base is made, the man is left standing on the coveted base, and the pitching and batting of the ball are resumed.

Having now fully described my invention, and the manner in which it should be used, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. I claim the partially-revolving bat E, arranged as represented, moving close to the upper surface of the board A, and operated at the will of the player, so as to allow the striking of the ball in the several different positions, and with the several different effects, according to the skill of the player, substantially as herein set forth.

2. I claim the spring G, in combination with the partially-revolving bat E, upon a parlor base-ball board, and adapted to move the bat as the operating-cord H is released, substantially as herein set forth.

3. I claim the automatic pitcher B, mounted on a parlor base-ball board, and adapted to project the ball at several angles approximating to the right direction, at the will and according to the skill of the player, substantially as herein specified.

4. I claim the descending motion, in combination with the forward motion of the pitcher, by which the pitching-device is carried so low, at the termination of its motion, as to be out of the way of the returning ball.

5. I claim the semi-rims I′, arranged relatively to the cavities I, or the corresponding-marked spaces in which the ball is to be stopped in passing, substantially as and for the purpose herein set forth.

6. I claim the swivelling-case L and its attachments, mounted on a parlor base-ball board, and adapted to operate relatively thereto, substantially as herein specified.

FRANCIS C. SEBRING.

Witnesses:

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W. C. DEY.