C. E. ECKELS.

METHOD OF AND APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING MOTION PICTURE TITLES.

APPLICATION FILED APR. 19, 1918.

1,294,249. Patented Feb. 11, 1919.

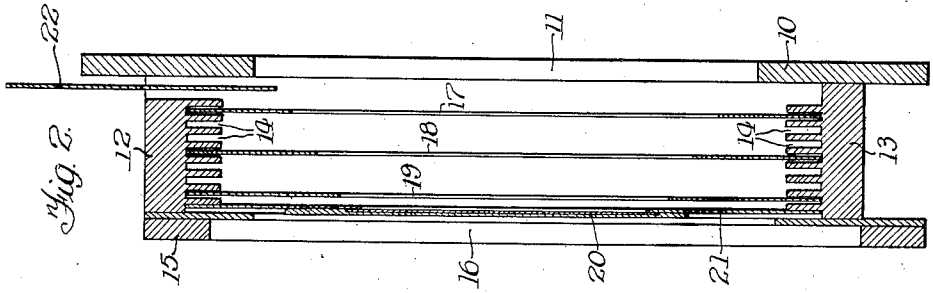


Fig. 2.

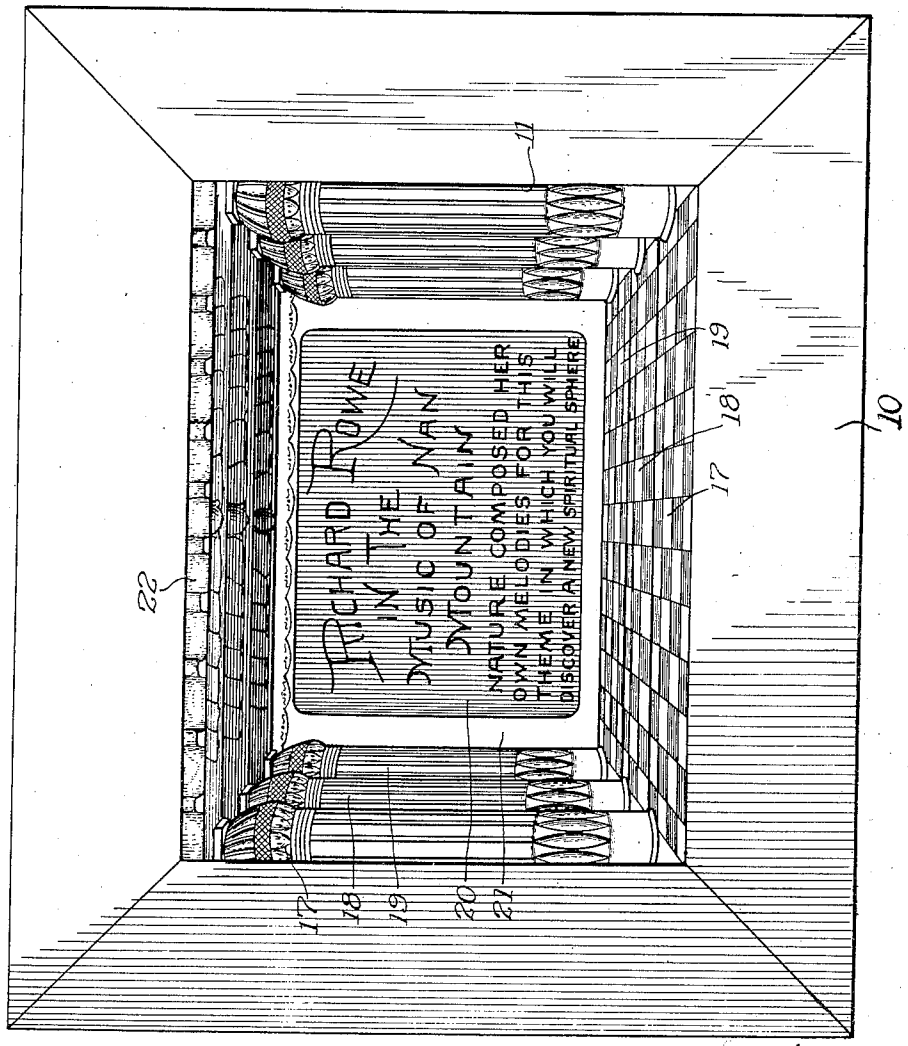


Fig. 1.

Witness:
Fred Davison

Inventor:
Clarence E. Eckels
By Chas. F. Murray
Atty.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

CLARENCE E. ECKELS, OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

METHOD OF AND APPARATUS FOR PRODUCING MOTION-PICTURE TITLES.

1,294,249. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Feb. 11, 1919.

Application filed April 19, 1918. Serial No. 229,580.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CLARENCE E. ECKELS, a citizen of the United States, and resident of Chicago, in the county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Methods of and Apparatus for Producing Motion-Picture Titles, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to a method of and apparatus for facilitating the production of moving pictures and particularly in producing the titles employed therein.

It is well known that in making complete moving pictures it is necessary to provide a multitude of titles located at many points throughout the film. These titles are employed in order to convey to the audience certain information which may or may not be apparent from the pictures themselves. The titles are usually conveyed to the film by photographing a drawing containing the title, the drawing being in some cases, artistically decorated. However, if a separate decorated drawing is made for each title the cost is prohibitive and much time is required for the production of the necessary drawings.

The principal objection, however, to the common method of production of titles is that at best the production is flat there being no perspective or variation in light effect.

My invention contemplates the employment of a miniature stage, which may be in the form of a box or casing having a plurality of guides within which the scenery or stage setting members are accommodated. The stage setting elements in the form of slides may be constructed of cardboard or thin sheets of metal, parts being provided corresponding to front and back drops, wings, flies, foots and set pieces. The box or casing which corresponds to the stage is relatively shallow and properly proportioned which fact permits of perfect focus and perspective.

What such a stage-set title most prominently does is to bring out the shadows, highlights, depth, tones and untold other touches which are lamentably lacking in the flat drawing. Its subsidiary features are the lighting possibilities from within and without from any angle; mask effects permissible by shooting through the sets; great economy in art work, once a large catalogue of sets and pieces has been assembled; general speed of pocketing the title proper and not having to await a special drawing by an artist.

The method is particularly adaptable for use in connection with production work in the field. Multiple exposure and mask methods, to say nothing of dissolving, fading and irising, so much in vogue with the better class of direction, invariably call for the titles in the field. Often, too, in conjunction with this situation, a change of some sort in the location, script or adaptation may cause a drastic change in the title and setting, apropos. Here is where the title stage will permit of any alterations and quickly proves its acclimative value.

The method and apparatus will be more readily understood by reference to the accompanying drawing, wherein,

Figure 1 is an elevation of a device with which the desired result may be secured, and,

Fig. 2 is a transverse sectional view through the center of the same.

It will be seen that the apparatus employed may be of a very simple character and comprises a front wall 10, having an opening 11, therein, through which the movable sets are visible for the purpose of photographing. The structure also includes top and bottom members 12, 13, respectively, which are grooved as at 14, the grooves at the top and bottom being alined, a plurality, preferably eight or more, being provided. The rear of the device may have a wall 15, having an opening 16, therethrough, which is preferably of a size somewhat larger than the front opening 11. The scenery is formed by cutting out and suitably decorating certain transverse slides, indicated at 17, 18, 19, these being arranged in a well known manner to secure the desired perspective. With an assortment of scenes it will be apparent that there is a possibility of unlimited variation in the settings for the title or action. Preferably the title will be disposed on a sheet 20, formed as a part of or secured to a slide 21, this member corresponding to the back drop. Preferably also a slide 22, will be provided which will be decorated to simulate a curtain, the same being slidable vertically in the box in order that it may, if desired, be raised at the beginning of the exposure of the setting. The drawings

illustrate only a few of the many adaptations of scenery, it being understood that the view may be embellished with any desired flies, foots or set pieces.

After the scene is arranged and the title disposed in proper relation thereto, the camera is focused on the small box and the necessary number of exposures made. It will be understood that by reason of the arrangement described the lighting may be varied within wide ranges. Border lights, proscenium lights, wing lights and footlights may be utilized as desired to secure the necessary shadows and effects and lights may be disposed behind drops for the purpose of emphasizing any particular part of a title or subject.

If the device is to be employed to produce mask effects by exposing the action through the setting, the back drop is omitted, or small openings may be made therein through which the action is visible. A perfect mask with property scenery may in this manner be secured, the desired soft effect being secured because of the lack of focus on the scenery.

The apparatus may further be employed for what is known as "trick photography". In other words, a trick aeroplane can be moved across the flies and be filmed in action; also a trick automobile or a trick bicycle can be moved along the stage floor in the same manner during the action of filming.

Also, the silhouette photograph of the star or some character in the play can be put in one corner or at one side of the stage while it is being filmed, in fact, many little pieces of set properties such as furniture, houses, barns, silhouette of various animals for a farm scene can be set on the stage and filmed in connection with the title.

I claim:

1. The method of making screen titles which consists in preparing a miniature stage with movable scenery, displaying the desired title on a piece corresponding to a drop, then photographing the setting on the desired length of film, substantially as described.

2. The method of making titles for moving pictures, which consists in preparing appropriate miniature scenes, then displaying the desired title at a point beyond the scene, then locating the camera in such proximity to the scene as to relatively magnify the same, and then reproducing the composite display on the desired length of film, substantially as described.

3. The method of making moving picture titles, which consists in preparing a miniature stage with appropriate wings, flies and drops in spaced apart relation, displaying the desired title in association with the stage setting, then taking moving picture photographs of the arrangement, substantially as described.

4. Apparatus for use in making moving picture titles, comprising in combination a casing having a front opening and provided with alined guides arranged transversely of the opening, miniature stage scenery adapted to be removably held in said guides, and a removable back member adapted to contain the title to be photographed, substantially as described.

5. A miniature stage for use in making moving picture titles, comprising in combination a box having an opening, and miniature scenery adapted to be slidably and removably mounted in the box, the scenery including a transverse member corresponding to a back drop on which the title to be photographed is exposed, substantially as described.

Signed at Chicago, Ill., this 15th day of April, 1918.

CLARENCE E. ECKELS.

Witness:
K. A. MEEHAN.