United States Patent

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[54] PORTABLE STAIRWAY

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **182/93,** 182/106, 182/178

[51] **Int. Cl.**.....**E06c 9/08**

[58] **Field of Search**.....182/178, 115, 106, 179, 93; 52/185

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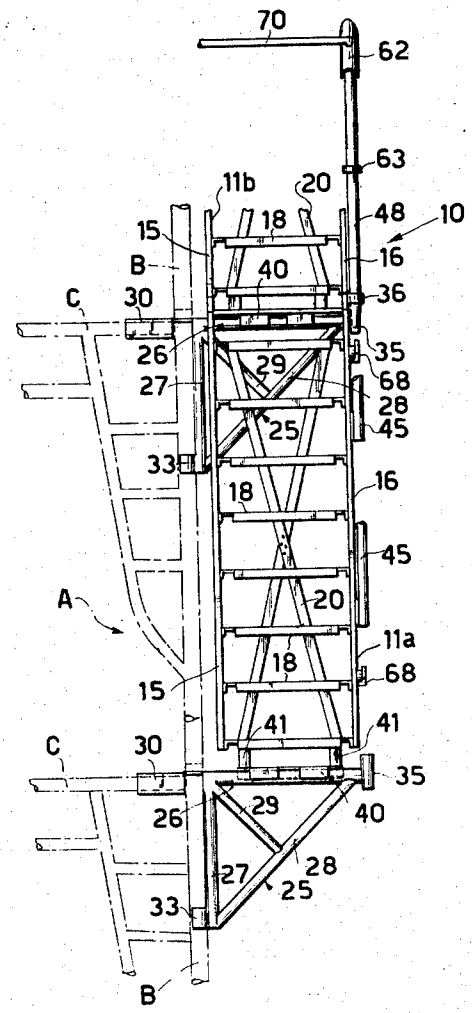
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A portable stairway comprised of sections is releasably lockably mounted onto an outrigger support in turn releasably lockably secured to scaffolding structure or the like. A safety side guard rail is hingedly attached to supporting posts which in turn are pivotally mounted to the stairway side frame. A support locking post hingedly attached to the upper end of the safety side guard rail is slidably received within a support tube carried by the outrigger to releasably lockably secure each stairway section to the outrigger support. An inverted U-shaped collar secured to the top of the support-locking post couples the safety side guard rails of adjacent stairway sections into a continuously extending rail. An end safety guard rail extends between the side rail and the scaffolding structure.

9 Claims, 10 Drawing Figures



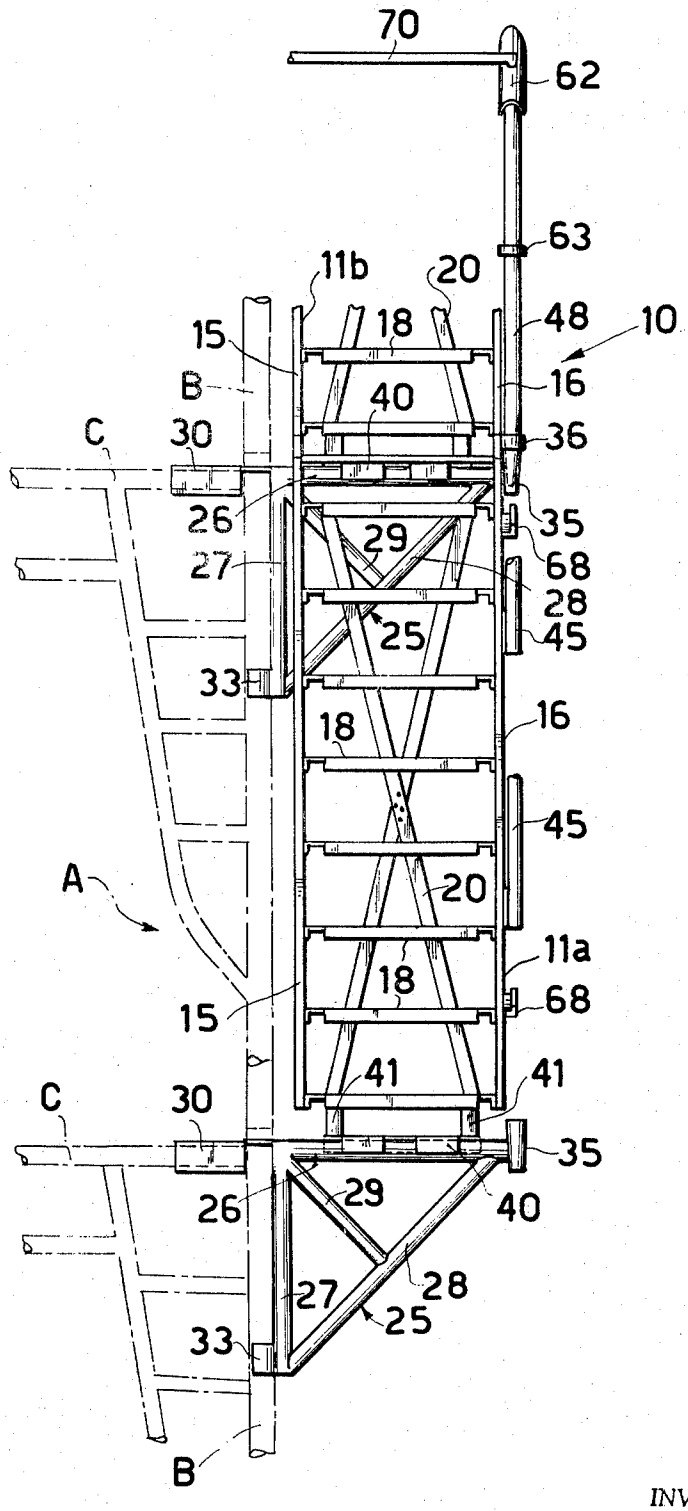


FIG. 1

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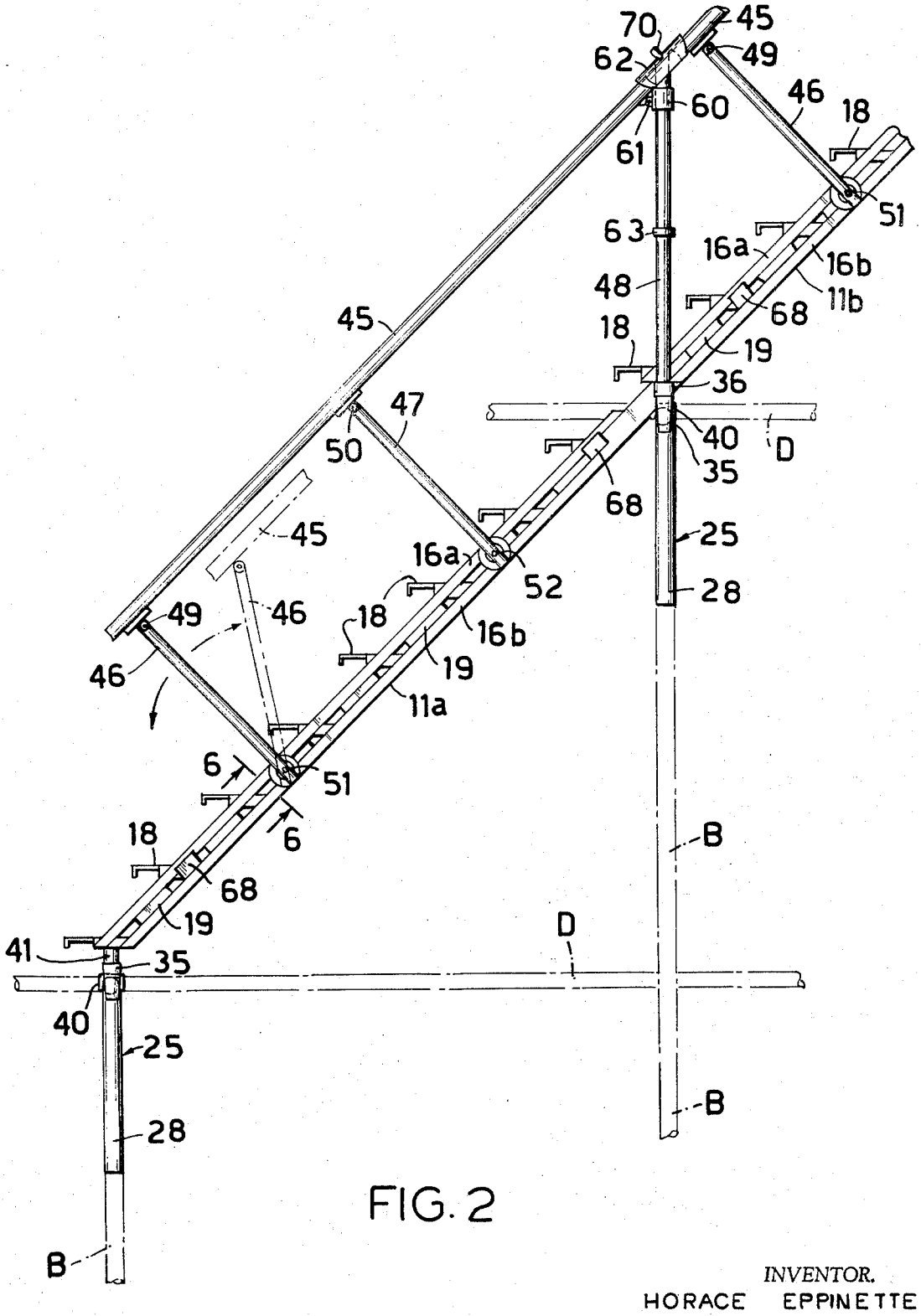


FIG. 2

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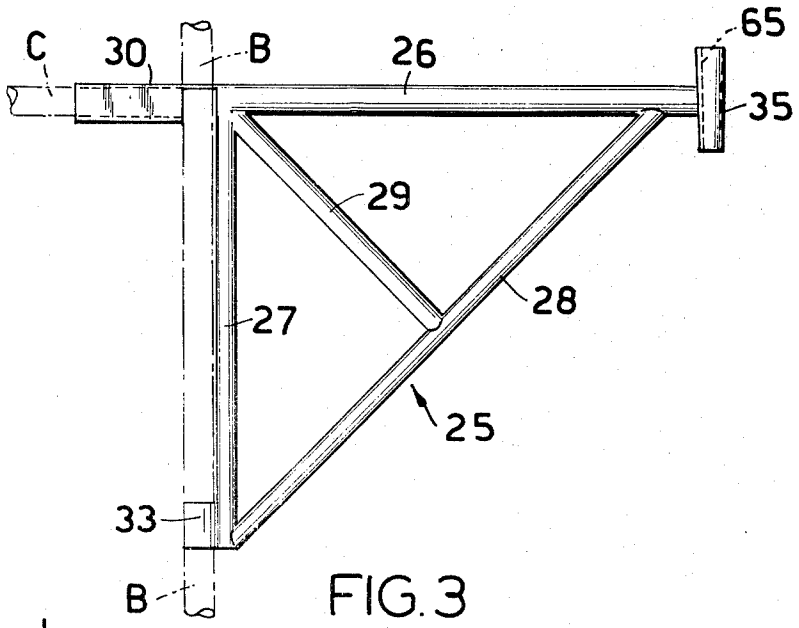


FIG. 3

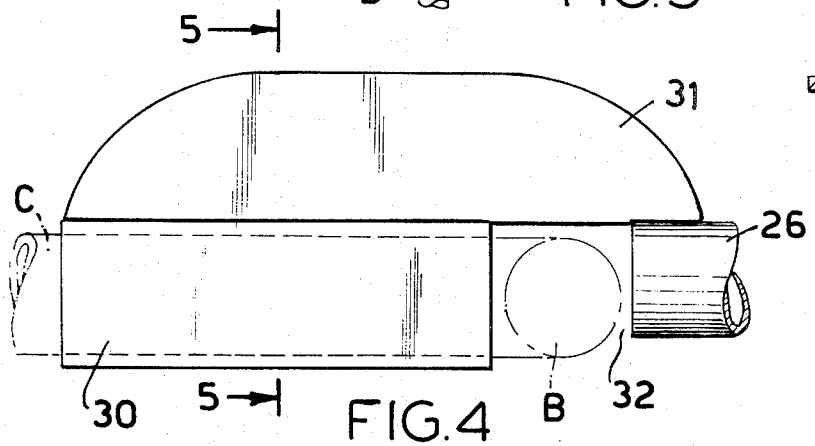


FIG. 4

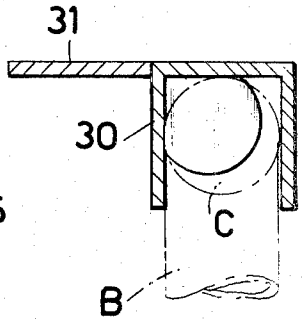


FIG. 5

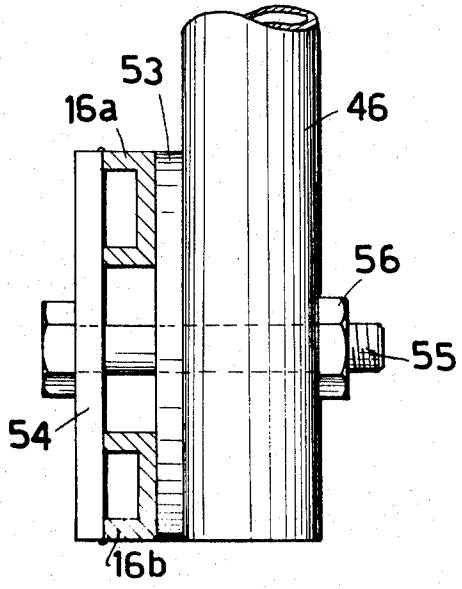


FIG. 6

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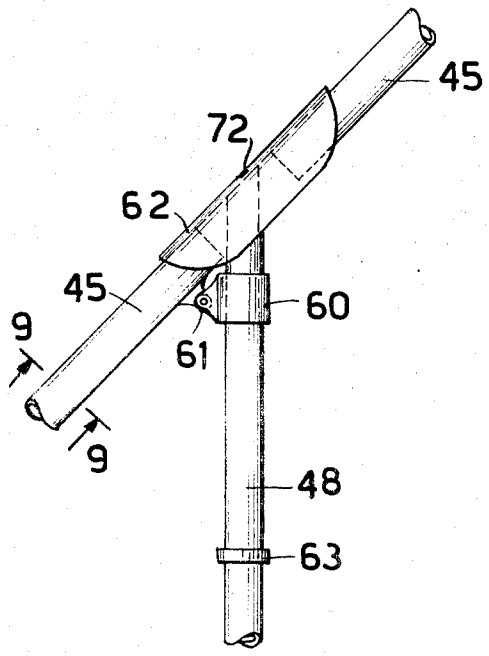


FIG. 7

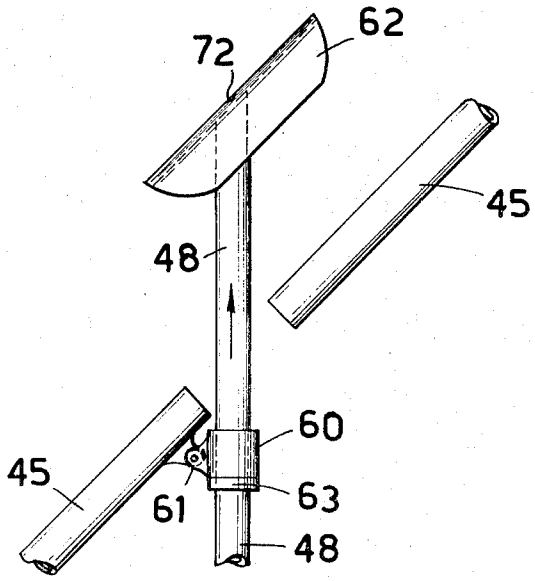


FIG. 8

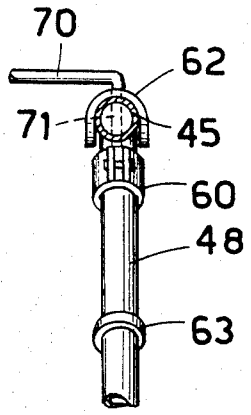


FIG. 9

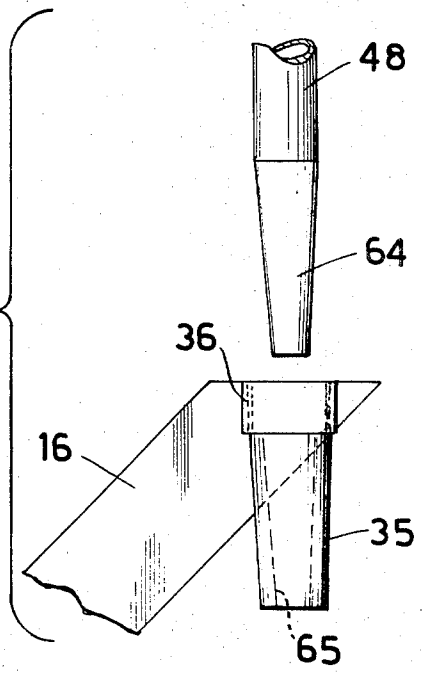


FIG. 10

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PORTABLE STAIRWAY

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to portable stairways of utility especially in the construction industry as demountable scaffold stairways, and relates more particularly to certain new and useful improvements in the construction of such demountable scaffold stairways which provide increased safety and versatility of use and permit easier erection, disassembly, transportion and storage.

Heretofore, no portable stairway has been commercially available to the construction industry. The customary practice for ascending and descending a scaffold has been to climb a ladder attached to the scaffold, or to climb an extension ladder resting on the scaffolding structure.

In the construction industry, such tradesmen as block and brick layers are frequently required to make special cuts in the blocks or bricks to accommodate electrical, plumbing or other utility outlets. Consequently, these workers or their helpers must make numerous trips in the course of a day carrying the bricks or blocks down from the scaffolding to a power saw located on the ground and thereafter carrying the suitably cut bricks or blocks back up the scaffold to be set in place. Hod carriers continuously climb up and down the scaffold in tempering the brick layers' mortar during the course of a working day.

Thus, it is presently the customary practice of these and other tradesmen to ascend and descend the scaffolding structure by means of ladders while carrying such items as blocks, bricks and other equipment and materials. This practice is highly disadvantageous since the ladders can only be ascended and descended at a slow pace while carrying tools or materials and with considerable exposure to substantial injury, since a person falling from a ladder falls directly to the ground and there is no side railing to guard against such a fall.

Demountable scaffold stairways have previously been proposed but their shortcomings and disadvantages have prevented their acceptance by the construction industry. Thus, one such prior proposal requires building one additional scaffolding unit in order to reach a second floor level, three additional scaffolding units in order to reach a third level, six additional scaffolding units in order to reach a fourth level, etc., and does not permit access to more than one floor level at a time. Also, this proposed scaffold stairway does not provide a safety rail as an integral part of the stairway nor is it readily assembled or disassembled. It also has no versatility of use beyond that with a scaffold.

It is therefore an object of this invention to provide a new and improved portable stairway.

Another object of this invention is to provide a portable stairway of utility especially in the construction industry as a readily assembled and disassembled scaffold stairway.

Another object of this invention is to provide a demountable scaffold stairway having improved safety characteristics.

Another object of this invention is to provide a demountable scaffold stairway in a plurality of sections which may be mounted as a single continuous stairway to a scaffolding structure and, when assembled, provides access to all levels of the scaffolding structure reached by the stairway.

Another object of this invention is to provide a new and improved demountable scaffold stairway which includes a continuously extending safety rail as an integral part thereof.

Objects and advantages of the invention are set forth in part herein and in part will be obvious herefrom, or may be learned by practice with the invention, the same being realized and attained by means of the instrumentalities and combinations pointed out in the appended claims.

The invention consists in the novel parts, constructions, arrangements, combinations and improvements herein shown and described.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, the present invention is directed to a new and improved portable stairway adapted to be readily assembled for use and to be disassembled into a compact structure for ease of transportation and storage. The portable stairway is comprised of one or more sections which are adapted to be installed so as to extend parallel to the side of the structure onto which the stairway is mounted. Advantageously, each section has a length so as to extend approximately one story in height when installed directly adjacent to a building or to extend to the height of one tier of scaffolding when installed adjacent to a scaffolding structure.

Each stairway section of the invention comprises a pair of spaced, parallel side frame members having a plurality of steps secured therebetween so as to lie in spaced horizontal planes when the stairway is installed. The foot of each stairway section is supported by an inverted channel bar and a locking ring is secured to the upper end of the outside frame member.

An outrigger support is provided with each stairway section and is adapted to be releasably lockably secured to a building, scaffolding structure of the like. The outrigger support includes a horizontal supporting member which terminates at its outer end in a vertical supporting tube. When a first floor level stairway section is installed, the channel bar secured to the foot of the stairway section rests on the ground level and the upper ends of the side frame members rest on the horizontal supporting member of the outrigger with the stairway locking ring telescopically slidably received over the vertical supporting tube of the outrigger. When a stairway section of the invention is installed, for example, between the first and second tiers of a scaffolding structure or the like, the channel bar secured to the foot of the stairway is slidably received over the horizontal supporting member of the outrigger support attached at the first tier level of the scaffolding structure while the upper ends of the side frame members rest on the horizontal supporting member of the outrigger support secured at the second tier level of the scaffolding structure.

A safety side guard rail is hingedly attached to supporting posts which in turn are pivotally mounted to the side of the stairway frame which forms the outside frame member upon installation of the stairway. A support-locking post hingedly attached to the upper end of the safety side guard rail is adapted to be slidably

received within the outrigger support tube upon installation of the stairway to thereby releasably lockably secure the stairway section to the outrigger support. An inverted U-shaped collar secured to the top of the support-locking post fits snugly over the top end of the side guard rail when the post is received in the outrigger support tube and also overlaps onto the bottom end of the safety side guard rail associated with the next adjacent stairway section.

It will be apparent from the foregoing general description that the objects of the invention specifically enumerated herein are accomplished by the invention as here embodied.

Thus, erection of the stairway is readily and quickly accomplished without requiring the use of nuts and bolts, or other accessory fastening devices, and yet the stairway is fully lockably secured upon installation. The stairway extends parallel to the building or scaffolding structure to permit access to all floor levels to which the stairway extends. The safety side guard rail is mounted as an integral part of the stairway and, again, requires no accessory fastening devices to place it into position for use. Further, one of the side guard rail supporting posts also serves to releasably lock the stairway to the outrigger support, ensuring the use of the guard rail. While the portable stairway of the present invention may be used wherever an outrigger can be secured, it is particularly useful with scaffolding structures and, when so used, does not require the construction of any additional scaffolding units.

It will be understood that the foregoing general description and the following detailed description as well are exemplary and explanatory of the invention but are not restrictive thereof.

The accompanying drawings, referred to herein and constituting a part hereof, illustrate one embodiment of the invention, and together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a fragmentary view in front elevation, partly diagrammatic, of a portable stairway constructed in accordance with the invention for installation onto a scaffolding structure, the view illustrating, in dotted lines, a portion of a conventional scaffolding structure and, in solid lines, a complete section of the stairway mounted between the first and second tiers of the scaffolding structure and a part of an adjoining section of the stairway mounted between the second and third tiers of the scaffolding structure;

FIG. **2** is a fragmentary view in side elevation of the portable stairway shown in FIG. **1**;

FIG. **3** is a fragmentary view in front elevation, partly diagrammatic, illustrating the stairway outrigger support member secured to the scaffolding structure of FIG. **1**;

FIG. **4** is an enlarged, fragmentary view in top plan, illustrating the upper connection of the stairway outrigger support to the scaffolding structure;

FIG. **5** is a sectional view, partly diagrammatic, taken along line **5—5** of FIG. **4**;

FIG. **6** is an enlarged, fragmentary view in front elevation, partly sectional, taken along line **6—6** of FIG. **2**, illustrating the pivotal mounting of the safety rail support posts;

FIG. **7** is a fragmentary view in side elevation of the upper portion of the stairway locking post, the view illustrating the locking post in assembled, operative position with its elongated coupling cap spanning adjacent ends of the safety rails of two adjoining stairway sections;

FIG. **8** is a view similar to FIG. **7**, illustrating the locking post being disassembled and the stop ring functioning to prevent removal of the locking post from the collar member hingedly affixed to the safety rail;

FIG. **9** is a fragmentary view in elevation taken along line **9—9** of FIG. **7**, illustrating the horizontal end safety rail mounted in the locking post coupling cap and extending therethrough into the hollow locking post; and

FIG. **10** is an enlarged, fragmentary, exploded view in side elevation, illustrating the stairway locking ring secured to the outrigger locking post support tube and also showing the corresponding tapered portions on the outer surface of the bottom end of the locking post and on the inner surface of the outrigger locking post support tube.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring now more particularly to the preferred embodiment of the invention shown in the accompanying drawings, there is illustrated a portion of a portable stairway indicated generally by reference numeral **10**, assembled and releasably lockably installed onto a conventional scaffolding structure, indicated generally by the reference letter A.

Scaffolding structure A conventionally includes a plurality of pairs of vertical supporting components B (only one component B of each pair shown in FIG. **1**) in one or more tiers, each vertical tier pair interconnecting first horizontal components at their upper ends and adjacent vertical tier pairs being laterally spaced by other horizontal components D and also by suitable cross-braces (not shown).

As best seen in FIGS. **1** and **2**, portable stairway **10** comprises one or more sections, a typical section **11a** extending between the first and second tiers, or floor levels, of the scaffolding structure. A portion of a similar stairway section **11b** is shown extending between the second and third tiers of the scaffolding structure. As each section of the stairway is identical, only section **11*a*** will be described herein in detail.

Thus, each section of stairway **10** includes a pair of spaced parallel side frames **15,16**, respectively, having a plurality of steps **18** suitably secured thereto so as to be substantially horizontal when the stairway is installed, as is more fully described hereinafter. Advantageously, and as here preferably embodied, each side frame comprises a pair of parallel elongated bars **15*a*,15*b*** and **16*a*,16*b***, respectively, spaced apart by supporting gussets **19**, advantageously provided between each step **18**. Also advantageously, steps **18** are spaced apart a distance so as to provide approximately a 10-inch rise between each step. An X-shaped supporting cross-brace **20** is advantageously secured to and extends between the top and bottom steps of each stairway section.

In accordance with the invention, outrigger means are adapted to be releasably lockably secured to a scaf-

folding structure or the like at the upper end of each tier thereof and means are provided for releasably lockably supporting the upper end of each stairway section to the outrigger means.

To this end, as best seen in FIGS. 3 and 4, as here preferably embodied, there is provided an outrigger support 25 which includes a horizontal stairway supporting rod member 26 having a vertically extending rod 27 secured perpendicularly thereto at the inner end thereof, rods 26 and 27 being suitably braced by diagonal bar 28 and cross-bar 29.

An inverted channel-shaped extension bar 30 is suitably supported, as by flange 31, in spaced relationship to the inner end of stairway supporting member 26. Channel bar 30 defines, with the inner end of the stairway supporting bar 26, a channel-shaped slot 32. It will be apparent from the foregoing that slot 32 is adapted to receive a vertical supporting component B of the scaffolding structure therein when bar 30 is fitted onto the top horizontal component C of the scaffolding structure. In addition, the lower end of vertical bar 27 is provided with an inwardly open collar 33, which also receives therein the vertical supporting component B of the scaffolding structure when extension bar 30 is fitted onto a scaffolding horizontal component C.

The outer end of stairway supporting member 26 carries a vertically extending tubular member 35. Tubular member 35 is adapted to telescopically slidably receive a safety rail locking post 48 therein, more fully described hereinafter, and a stairway locking ring 36, suitably secured as by welding to the upper end of the outer stairway side frame 16, is telescopically slidably received thereabout. It will thus be seen that locking ring 36 provides means for releasably lockably holding a stairway section, such as 11a, to the outrigger support 25 when the upper end of the stairway is installed with its upper end resting on outrigger supporting rod 26.

Means are provided for supporting the foot of each stairway section on horizontal supporting rod 26 of outrigger 25, or on the ground, as the case may be. To this end, there is advantageously provided an inverted channel bar 40, extending vertically from lower step 18 and parallel thereto suitably supported by vertical rods 41.

It will be understood from the drawings that, where a scaffolding structure or the like is, for example, two tiers high, channel bar 40 of the first stairway section rests on the ground while the upper end thereof is releasably lockably supported on an outrigger 25 in turn releasably lockably mounted to the top horizontal component C of the first tier of the scaffolding structure. Channel bar 40 of the second stairway section, illustrated at 11*a* in FIG. 1, rests on the same outrigger 25 as supports the upper end of the first stairway section, while the upper end thereof rests on an outrigger releasably lockably mounted to the top horizontal component C of the second tier of the scaffolding structure.

In accordance with the invention, continuously extending safety side guard rail means are provided as an integral part of a portable stairway, and, as here preferably embodied, means mount the side guard rail for pivotal movement into a position of use upon assembly of the stairway and into a compact collapsed position adjacent the stairway side frame upon disassembly of the stairway, for ease of storage and transportation.

To this end, each stairway section includes a safety side guard rail member 45 advantageously supported by supporting posts 46,47,48, respectively, the latter supporting post 48 also constituting a locking post, as previously mentioned and as more fully described hereinafter.

As best seen in FIGS. 2 and 6, the two lower supporting posts 46,47 are each suitably hinged to guard rail 45 as shown at 49,50, respectively, and are also each pivotally mounted to outer stairway frame member 16, as shown at 51,52, respectively. Advantageously, each of the pivotal mounting mechanisms 51,52 includes a washer 53 secured to the respective supporting post and a reinforcing plate 54 mounted to the inside of stairway side frame 16. A hinge bolt 55 passes through both reinforcing plate 54 and the respective supporting post and is secured in place by nut 56.

The upper support-locking post 48 is slidably received in a collar 60, suitably hingedly attached to the upper end of guard rail 45, as shown at 61. An inverted U-shaped collar 62 is secured to the top of post 48 and is adapted to fit snugly over guard rail member 45. Collar 62 advantageously is of a sufficient length to overlap the top end of the safety rail 45 associated with the stairway section to which post 48 is hingedly attached and to also overlap the bottom end of the adjacent guard rail member 45 associated with the next adjacent stairway section. It will thus be seen that collar 62 forms a coupling between the safety side guard rail members of adjacent stairway sections and, hence, serves to provide a continuously extending safety side guard rail for the stairway.

Advantageously, a stop ring 63 is secured to post 48 intermediate the ends thereof so as to prevent the post from becoming disengaged from the guard rail collar 60.

As previously mentioned, the lower end of supporting post 48 is slidably received in support tube 35 of outrigger 25 when the safety side guard rail is in position for use, thereby serving to releasably lockably secure the stairway to the outrigger. Advantageously, a tight friction fit is obtained between post 48 and tube 35 by correspondingly tapering their mating surfaces as shown at 64,65, respectively.

It will be seen from the foregoing that, when not in use, the safety side guard rail 45 is pivoted about the mounts 51,52 until it lies adjacent and parallel to the side frame 16 of the stairway. Advantageously, bracket members 68 secured to frame 16 carry the safety rail 45 in this position during storage and transportation. At the same time, locking post 48 is pivoted about hinge 61 to also lie adjacent and parallel to frame 16 and to be stored in that position by brackets 68.

In accordance with the invention, and as here preferably embodied, there is also provided an end safety guard rail member 70 extending from the uppermost end of the side guard rail 45 across the stairway frame and suitably secured to the scaffolding structure. To this end, end rail member 70 is provided with a leg 71 at one end thereof extending normally thereto and adapted to be slidably received through opening 72 in collar 62. A suitable bracket member (not shown) attaches the opposite end of rail member 70 to the vertical supporting component B of the scaffolding structure. It will thus be seen that end rail 70 is secured in place by sliding the end portion 71 through collar 62

and securing the opposite end to the scaffolding structure.

It will be understood from the foregoing that the portable stairway of the present invention, as preferably embodied for installation onto a scaffolding structure, is erected as follows:

The outrigger support **25** is releasably lockably secured to a scaffolding structure by inserting the vertical supporting component B thereof into slot **32** and collar **33** and simultaneously inserting the top horizontal supporting component C of the first tier of the scaffolding structure into inverted channel bar extension **30**. A stairway section, such as **11***a*, is then placed in a vertical position at the base of the scaffolding structure with the inverted channel bar **40** supporting the foot of the stairway placed parallel to, but suitably laterally spaced from, the horizontal member **26** of the outrigger **25**. The stairway section is then gradually rotated in a clockwise direction from the vertical position towards the outrigger until the upper ends of the side frame members **15,16** come to rest upon the horizontal supporting member **26** and the locking ring **36** is telescopically slidably received onto the vertical support tube **35** of outrigger **25**. The safety side guard rail **45** is then rotated upwardly in a clockwise direction until it is substantially parallel to the stairway frame **16**. The support-locking post **48** is then rotated in a counterclockwise direction until the collar **62** thereof is substantially parallel to guard rail **45**, at which position the post **48** will extend in a substantially vertical direction. The lower end of post **48** is then inserted into the vertical support tube **35** of outrigger **25**, whereupon the stairway section is releasably lockably secured to the outrigger.

It it is desired to install additional stairway sections to the stairway, it will be understood that a second outrigger support is secured to the top horizontal supporting component of the second tier of the scaffolding structure in the same manner as previously described, in a position suitably laterally spaced from the first outrigger. A second stairway section is then carried up the first installed stairway section and channel bar **40** supporting the foot thereof is placed over the horizontal support member **26** of the first outrigger support **25** mounted at the first floor level of the scaffolding structure. Thereafter, the second stairway section is installed in place in the same manner as previously described.

When the uppermost stairway section is installed, the end safety rail member **70** is then installed by slipping the end portion **71** thereof into the uppermost collar **62** and securing the opposite end to the vertical supporting component B of the scaffolding structure.

The portable stairway of the invention is disassembled in the reverse order of the assembly procedure, as follows:

The stairway is ascended to the top and the end safety guard rail is removed. The support-locking post **48** of the uppermost stairway is then raised until the collar **62** thereof is clear of the safety side guard rail **45** and the bottom thereof is also clear of the stairway locking ring **36**. The lower end of post **48** is then rotated in a clockwise direction until the post is substantially parallel to the safety rail **45**. Holding the support-locking post **48** generally parallel to safety rail **45**, the latter is allowed to rotate in a counterclockwise direction downwardly until it is generally parallel with the stairway frame, at which point the safety rail and supporting posts come to rest in brackets **68** provided on the outside of stairway frame **16**. The stairway section is then raised to a vertical position by lifting the upper end thereof through a counterclockwise motion. The channel bar **40** supporting the foot of the stairway is then removed from its resting place on the horizontal supporting member **26** of the outrigger **25**, whereupon the stairway section may be carried to the ground. Thereafter, outrigger support **25** is disengaged and removed from the scaffolding structure by vertically raising the outrigger until the inverted channel bar extension **30** clears the horizontal supporting component C of the scaffolding structure and thereafter rotating the lower collar **33** thereof out of engagement with the vertical component B.

Additional stairway sections are disassembled in the same manner.

The invention in its broader aspects is not limited to the specific embodiment herein shown and described but departures may be made therefrom within the scope of the accompanying claims, without departing from the principles of the invention and without sacrificing its chief advantages.

What is claimed is:

1. A portable stairway for releasable lockable installation adjacent and generally parallel to a structure to be ascended and descended, comprising:

a plurality of stairway sections, each of said stairway sections including

a pair of spaced, parallel stairway side frame members having a plurality of step members secured therebetween, and

a safety side guard rail member mounted integrally with said stairway section for pivotal movement between an upright position upon installation and a collapsed position for storage and transportation;

a plurality of outrigger supporting members equal in number to said plurality of stairway sections;

means releasably lockably securing each of said outrigger support members to said structure to be ascended and descended;

said stairway sections adapted to rest on said outrigger supporting members upon installation in such relation thereto that said step members are positioned in substantially horizontal planes; and

means releasably lockably securing said stairway sections to said outrigger supporting members.

2. A portable stairway as claimed in claim **1**, including:

an end safety rail member extending between the upper end of said side safety guard rail member and said structure to be ascended and descended.

3. A portable stairway as claimed in claim **1**, including:

means coupling said safety side guard rail members of adjacent stairway sections together when said rail members are in said upright position to provide a continuously extending safety side guard rail member.

4. A portable stairway section for releasable lockable installation onto a scaffolding structure or the like including suitably braced vertical supporting components and connecting supporting horizontal components at at

least the upper level of each scaffolding tier, said stairway section comprising:

a pair of spaced, parallel stairway side frame members having a plurality of step members secured therebetween;

outrigger support means including:

an elongated supporting surface terminating at one end in a support tube extending normal to said elongated supporting surface; and

means releasably lockably securing said outrigger to said scaffolding structure so that said elongated supporting surface extends horizontally outwardly therefrom;

said stairway section adapted to rest at one end on said elongated supporting surface of said outrigger support means in such relation thereto that said step members are positioned in substantially horizontal planes;

locking ring means secured to one of said stairway side frame members at the end thereof which is adapted to rest on said outrigger elongated supporting surface,

said locking ring means adapted to be telescopically slidably received over said outrigger support tube when said stairway section rests on said outrigger elongated supporting surface;

a safety side guard rail member secured to the stairway side frame member carrying said locking ring means, so as to be located on the outer side of said stairway section when the latter is placed in said resting position on said outrigger elongated supporting surface; and

means mounting said safety side guard rail member for pivotal movement between an upright position upon installation and a collapsed position for storage and transportation; and

means releasably lockably securing said locking ring means to said outrigger support tube.

5. A portable stairway section as claimed in claim **4**, wherein said means releasably lockably securing said outrigger support means to said scaffolding structure includes:

an inverted channel bar supported in spaced relationship to the inner end of said outrigger elongated supporting surface;

said inverted channel bar and said inner end of said outrigger supporting surface defining an open-ended slot having a laterally disposed opening; and

a collar member vertically spaced from said slot, said collar having a side opening facing inwardly of said outrigger support means,

each of said inverted channel bar, said slot and said collar member adapted to slidably receive therein conventional supporting components of a scaffolding structure,

whereby said outrigger support means is releasably lockably secured to said scaffolding structure by slidably inserting a horizontal supporting component thereof into said inverted channel bar and simultaneously slidably inserting a vertical supporting component thereof into said slot and said collar member.

6. A portable stairway section as claimed in claim **4**, wherein said means releasably lockably securing said locking ring means to said outrigger support tube includes:

a locking post slidably hingedly attached to said safety side guard rail member adjacent the upper end thereof when said stairway section is installed;

said locking post adapted to pivot about said hinge into a generally vertical position when said safety side guard rail member is pivoted to said upright position; and

said locking post adapted to be telescopically slidably received within said outrigger support tube in a tight friction fit when pivoted to said vertical position.

7. A portable stairway as claimed in claim **4**, wherein:

the foot of said stairway section is supported by an inverted open-ended channel bar spaced inwardly from said stairway side frame members and adapted to receive said elongated supporting surface of said outrigger therewithin,

whereby said outrigger support means is adapted to support both the upper ends of the stairway side frame members of a first stairway section and said channel bar supporting the foot of a second adjacent stairway section.

8. A portable stairway as claimed in claim **6**, wherein:

said locking post is telescopically slidably received within a collar member, and

said collar member is hingedly attached to said safety side guard rail member.

9. A portable stairway as claimed in claim **8**, including:

an inverted, open-ended, elongated cap member secured intermediate its ends to the top end of said locking post,

the lower end of said cap member adapted to cover the safety side guard rail member of said stairway section upon insertion of said locking post into said outrigger support tube and the upper end thereof adapted to cover the lower end of the safety side guard rail member of the next adjacent stairway section.

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