Nov. 22, 1955 J. L. WHITTEN 2,724,124

INFANT HOLDING DEVICE

Filed July 30, 1953

FIG. 1.

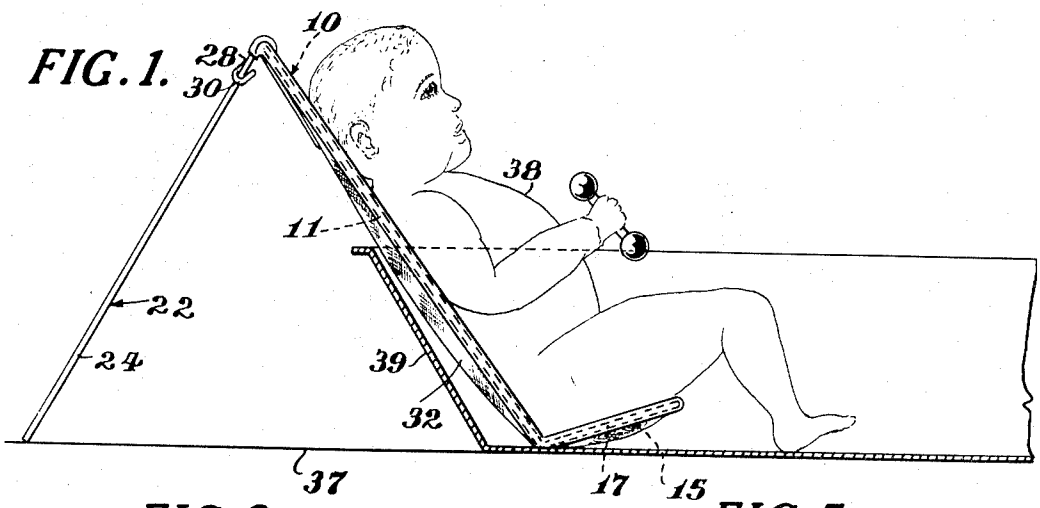


FIG. 2.

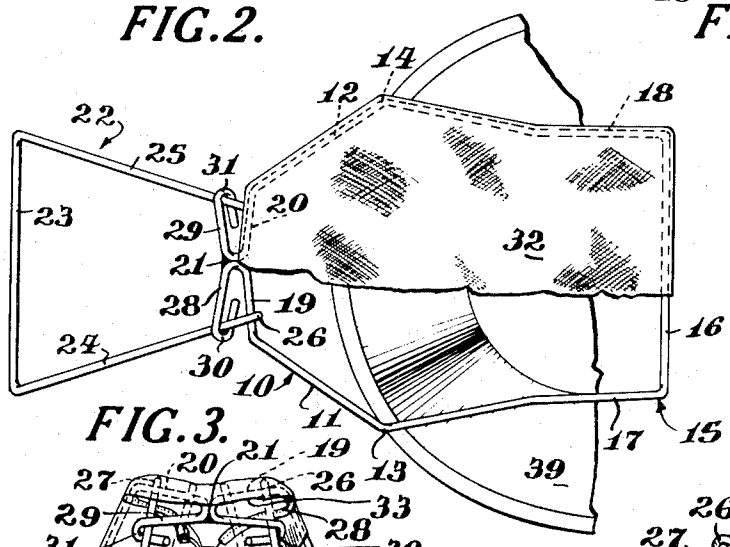


FIG. 3.

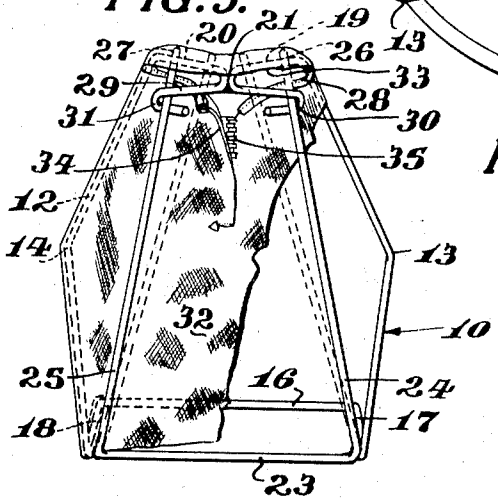


FIG. 5.

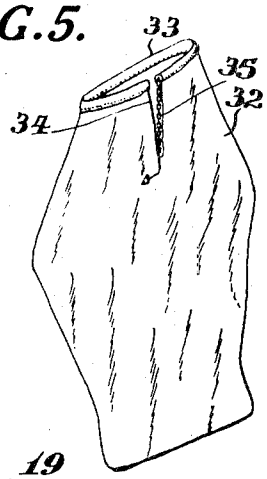
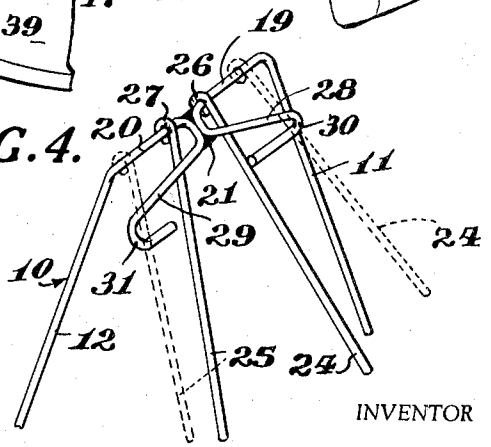


FIG. 4.



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United States Patent Office

2,724,124

Patented Nov. 22, 1955

2,724,124

INFANT HOLDING DEVICE

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Application July 30, 1953, Serial No. 371,354

5 Claims. (Cl. 4—185)

This invention relates to infant holding devices, and particularly to a device adapted to hold an infant safely and comfortably during bathing or feeding.

A primary object of the invention is to provide a novel device for holding infants in natural, semi-reclining position, securely but without direct restraint. A related object is to provide an infant holding device including no straps or other elements requiring fastening and unfastening, or which would interfere with washing an infant supported in the device.

Another object is to provide an infant holding device singularly convenient to use, and collapsible to occupy minimum space when not in use.

A further object is to provide an infant holding device including a sturdy brace for support in operative position, and means for readily engaging and locking the brace in support position. The locking action of the device, furthermore, is implemented and maintained by the weight of an infant thereon.

Yet another object is to provide a device for holding infants during bathing which occupies minimum space in the bathing vessel, and permits use of small pans, basins and the like.

Still another object is to provide an infant holding device of simple and sturdy construction, readily manufactured and including a minimum number of parts. Further objects will be in part evident and in part pointed out hereinafter.

The invention and the novel features thereof may best be made clear from the following description and the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a side elevational view of a preferred embodiment of the device, in operative position and supporting an infant for bathing;

Figure 2 is a top plan view corresponding to Figure 1, without the infant and with the fabric frame covering partially broken away;

Figure 3 is a rear elevational view corresponding to Figure 1, showing the brace and the preferred selective locking means therefor;

Figure 4 is a partial view of the frame and brace arrangement, on enlarged scale, illustrating the locking section of the device and the manner of unlocking for folding, and

Figure 5 is a perspective view of the fabric frame covering.

Referring to the drawings in detail, the preferred embodiment illustrated in Figures 1, 2 and 3 comprises a frame indicated generally as **10**, including a center section composed of spaced coplanar lengths **11** and **12**. The center section lengths are roughly parallel, but preferably are most widely spaced approximately midway thereof and converge at both ends, this being effected most simply by the bends **13** and **14** in lengths **11** and **12** respectively.

From one end of the center section extends a U-shaped seat section indicated generally as **15**, comprising base **16** and legs **17** and **18**, the legs extending from corresponding ends of lengths **11** and **12**. As best shown in Figure 1,

the seat section elements are disposed in a common plane which is angulated with respect to the center section by about 60°. From the other ends of center section lengths **11** and **12** extend portions **19** and **20**, inwardly turned therefrom and extending into substantial adjacency. The inner ends of portions **19** and **20** are joined in conventional fashion, as by weld **21**, a clamp or the like.

Associated with frame **10** is a U-shaped brace **22**, including a base **23** and arms **24** and **25** extending therefrom. The brace **22** preferably is pivotally engaged to the frame, as by means of the loops **26** and **27** formed at the ends of arms **24** and **25** and enclosing, respectively, the inwardly turned portions **19** and **20** of the frame. For convenience in transportation and storage the brace may be folded flat against the frame, but to operatively support the frame the brace must be angularly positioned with respect thereto at an angle of from about 60° to about 90°, as shown in Figure 1. For this purpose means are associated with the frame for selectively engaging and locking the brace in desired support position.

The locking means may take the form of reversely curved end elements extending from the inner ends of portions **19** and **20**. Preferably, portions **19** and **20** beyond weld **21** are reversely curved in a plane substantially normal to that of the frame center section to constitute stop elements **28** and **29**, which may be of the same length as or slightly shorter than portions **19** and **20**. The stop elements **28** and **29** may parallel portions **19** and **20**, but desirably diverge slightly therefrom. The outer ends of elements **28** and **29** in turn are reversely curved in a plane substantially parallel to the frame center section to form lock sockets **30** and **31**, adapted to receive and retain the brace arms.

The brace **22** is desirably constructed of an integral length of wire, whereby it possesses inherent resilience permitting its arms **24** and **25** to be displaced from normal position relative to its base **23**. To arrange and lock the device in operative position, the brace arms may be forced together with the fingers of a hand, the arm loops sliding on frame portions **19** and **20**, and the brace then rotated outwardly from the frame to support position, whereat its arms encounter stop elements **28** and **29**, as shown in Figure 4. At this point the arms may be released, whereupon they will spring outwardly into lock sockets **30** and **31**, as illustrated in dotted lines in Figure 4. In this fashion the device is readily positioned for use and locked. The device is as easily unlocked and folded, merely by forcing the brace arms inwardly to clear the lock sockets and then rotating the brace toward the frame. The angularity of the brace in support position is determined by the stop elements, and may be adjusted in accordance with infant growth or as otherwise desired by bending the stop elements, or by bending the brace arms.

As will be evident, the frame also may be constructed from an integral length of wire, whereby it possesses inherent resilience contributing materially to its novel and desirable functioning, presently to be described. For the purposes of the present specification and claims, the term "wire" is used in a broad sense, to include a slender rod of metal and also non-metallic materials of suitable resilience. Obviously, some synthetic organic plastic materials may be utilized to form the frame and brace.

In use, the frame and its seat section are enclosed by a fabric cover **32**, in the nature of a bag or sack shaped to conform generally to the frame and fit closely thereabout. As shown in Figure 5, the cover is conveniently provided with an open neck **33**, adapted to be enlarged by a longitudinal side slit **34**. With the slit open, the cover may be readily placed over the frame, and secured by closing slit **34** by any suitable fastening means such as the slide fastener **35**, whereupon the

cover neck will fit closely over the frame portions **19** and **20**. The slide fastener and slit also permit ready removal of the cover from the frame, to permit washing, replacement and the like. The cover **32** may be formed of any suitable woven fabric, film or the like.

The operative disposition of the device is illustrated in Figure 1. As there shown, when resting on level surface **37** the brace **22** maintains the frame center section inclined at the angle of 45° more or less, and an infant **38** may be positioned in the device merely by resting it directly on the frame cover as shown. The infant is supported thereby over a wide area in semi-reclining, half-sitting position, the angulated seat section serving to prevent it from sliding down. The cover **32** molds itself to the infant's form, and exerts inward tension on frame lengths **11** and **12** and the seat legs **17** and **18**, displacing them inwardly and causing them to resiliently engage and press against the infant's body. The result is that the infant is firmly held and may freely kick and wriggle without danger of spilling.

The resilient spring action of the frame and cover resemble suspension in a hammock, and resists inadvertent displacement of the infant in the same manner a hammock resists efforts to arise therefrom. The novel spring action of the device is enhanced by the bends **13** and **14** in legs **11** and **12**, which not only shape the frame in general conformity with an infant's body, but also tend to establish a center of suspension in the frame center section. Infant activity which changes its center of gravity so affects the resilient suspension that such changes are automatically compensated for and accommodated. The weight of the infant is effective, of course, to force the brace arms more firmly against the stop elements **28** and **29**. If these diverge slightly from the frame portions **19** and **20**, as is preferred, the infant's weight will thereby tend to force and maintain the brace arms outwardly in the sockets **30** and **31**. In this manner, the infant's weight itself may be utilized to insure against inadvertent unlocking of the brace.

Accordingly, then, the device is most convenient to use, an infant being securely positioned therein by mere placement on the frame cover. To remove the infant, it need only be lifted therefrom. The infant is supported in comfortable, natural position, unrestricted by straps, lacings, or pads. The absence of such elements not only precludes the necessity for fastening and unfastening thereof, but permits free access to all parts of the infant's body for washing. Figure 1 illustrates a further advantage of the device in that it occupies almost no extra space in the washing vessel. As illustrated, the frame may be placed adjacent the wall of a basin **39** with the brace **22** resting on surface **37** well outside the basin. This permits the use of a basin or similar receptacle of minimum size, and permits use

of the holding device with any vessel large enough to hold the infant in seated position.

It will thus be seen that there has been provided by this invention a structure in which the various objects hereinbefore set forth, together with many practical advantages, are successfully achieved. As various possible embodiments may be made of the mechanical features of the above invention, all without departing from the scope thereof, it is to be understood that all matter hereinbefore set forth or shown in the accompanying drawings is to be interpreted as illustrative, and not in a limiting sense.

I claim:

1. An infant holding device comprising a wire frame including a center section composed of two spaced coplanar lengths, a U-shaped seat section having legs extending fixedly from corresponding ends of said center section lengths in a plane angulated with respect to the center section plane, and inwardly turned portions extending from the other ends of said center section lengths into substantial adjacency, the inner ends of said portions being joined, a U-shaped wire brace having legs pivotally secured to said portions, means associated with the joined ends of said frame to selectively engage and lock said brace in fixed angular relationship thereto, whereby the device may be supported on a planar surface on the separated ends of said frame center section and said brace with said seat section maintained at an angle with respect to the supporting surface, and a fabric covering enclosing said frame.

2. An infant holding device according to claim 1, wherein said center section lengths are most widely spaced adjacent the middle of the center section.

3. An infant holding device according to claim 2, wherein said fabric covering is shaped to conform generally to the frame and fit closely thereabout, and includes fastening means to permit ready placement and removal thereof.

4. An infant holding device according to claim 1, wherein said selective engaging and locking means constitutes reversely curved end elements extending from the inner ends of said inwardly turned frame portions to define inwardly facing sockets adapted to retain the brace legs.

5. An infant holding device according to claim 1, wherein said frame and selective engaging and locking means are formed from an integral length of wire.

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