

[54] APPARATUS

[76] Inventor: James A. Thompson, Rt. 32, Box 500, Terre Haute, Ind. 47803

[22] Filed: Dec. 12, 1973

[21] Appl. No.: 426,676

[52] U.S. Cl. .... 54/44, 54/4, 54/66

[51] Int. Cl. .... B68c 1/00

[58] Field of Search ..... 54/4, 23, 37, 44, 66, 1, 54/71; 119/29

[56]

References Cited

UNITED STATES PATENTS

710,267	9/1902	Graf .....	54/71
767,003	8/1904	Mason .....	54/44
1,767,630	6/1930	Warren .....	54/37
3,438,177	4/1969	Houston .....	54/23

Primary Examiner—Louis G. Mancene

Assistant Examiner—J. Q. Lever

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Howard E. Post

[57]

ABSTRACT

A device for use by a bareback horse rider to enable use of stirrups for the rider's feet. A pair of cushion members are joined by a rigid gripping member in positions to lie on the back of a horse, forward of the rider. A first pair of rings are provided for attachment of a cinch strap, and a second pair of rings are provided for attachment of stirrups. Each cushion member includes a first flexible pad, fixedly positioned in the cushion member, and a second flexible pad movable in the cushion member to adapt the device to the contour of the particular horse.

3 Claims, 11 Drawing Figures

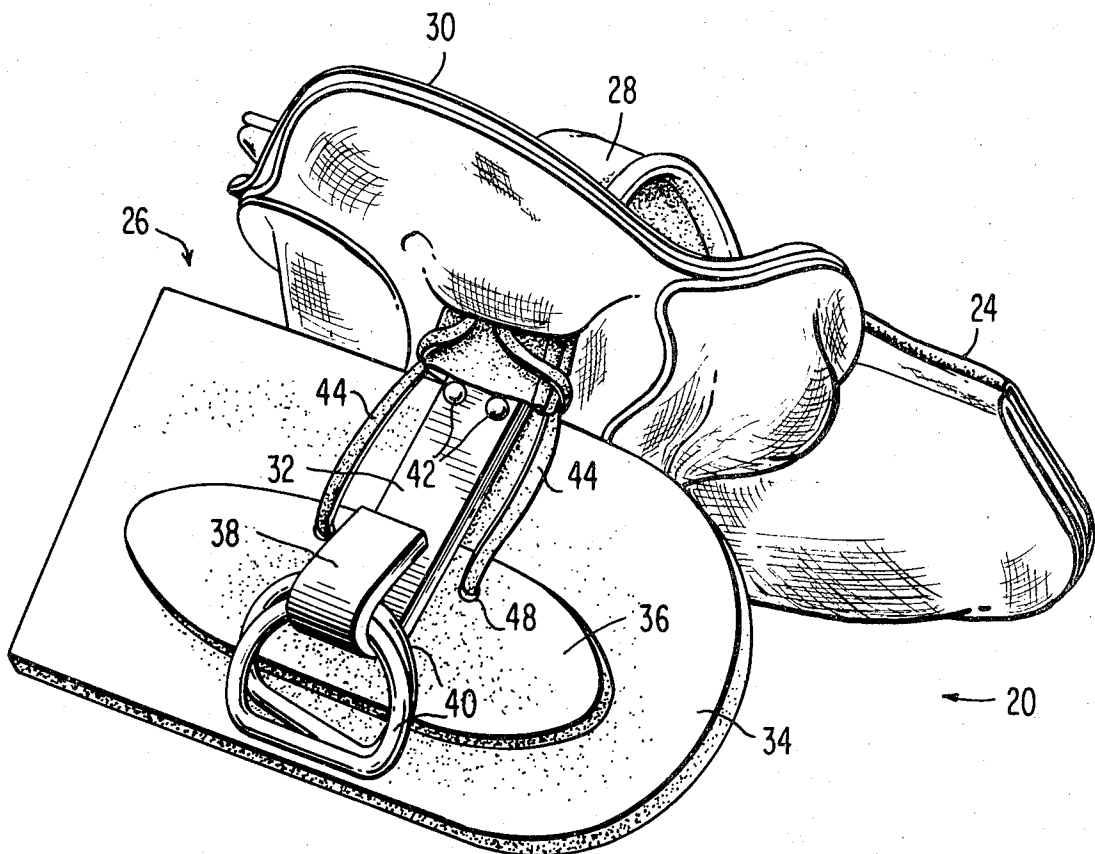




FIG. 5

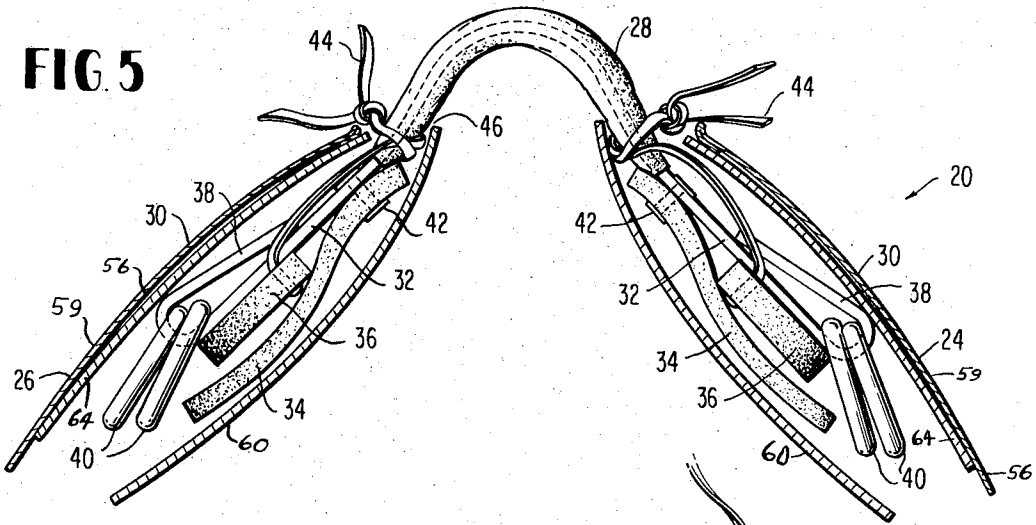


FIG. 7

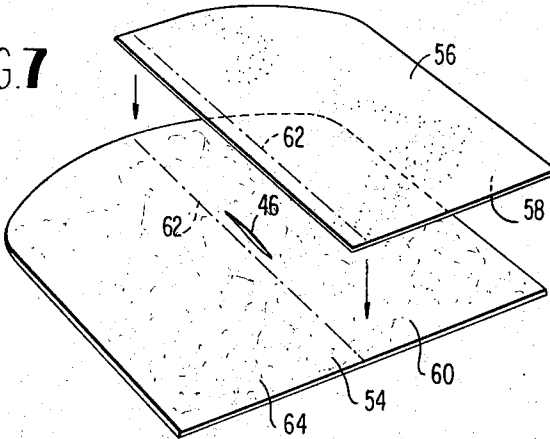


FIG. 6

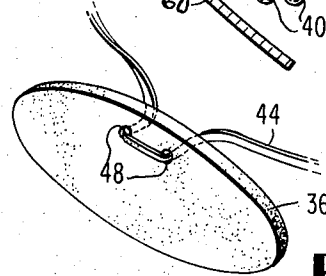


FIG. 7a

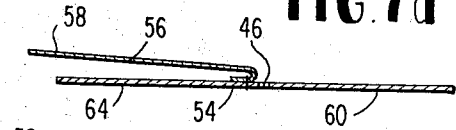


FIG. 7b

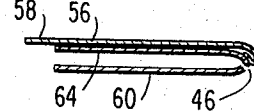


FIG. 8

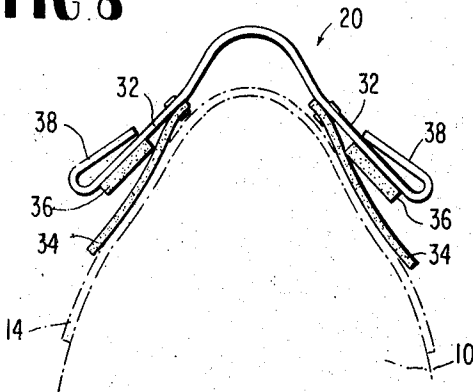
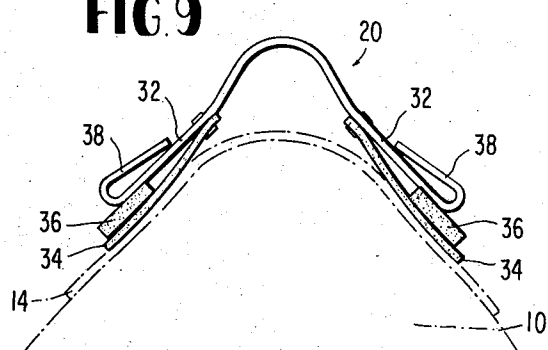


FIG. 9



## APPARATUS

The present invention pertains to a horseback riding implement. More particularly, the present invention pertains to a device for use on a horse to permit attachment of stirrups for use by a person riding the horse bareback, without a saddle.

Numerous people engage in horseback riding, both for pleasure and sport and for work. Many of the pleasure and sport riders enjoy riding a horse bareback, without a saddle. While bareback riding is enjoyable, it is also very demanding, since the rider does not have the advantage of a saddle to help him maintain his seat on the horse. Generally, a bareback rider is required to tightly grip the horse with his legs, since he does not have stirrups for his feet to help him maintain his seat. This tight gripping with the legs is tiring for the rider and in some instances can be irritating to the horse. In addition, because the grip of the legs is relatively insecure, the bareback rider who does not have stirrups is very unstable and so is likely to fall or to be thrown from the horse. This is particularly true of the person just learning to ride bareback. Reins can be gripped by a bareback rider to aid him in maintaining his seat. Alternatively, a device such as depicted in U.S. Pat. No. 3,438,177 can be utilized to provide a hand-grip for the bareback rider. Nevertheless, even with a hand-grip the bareback rider is required to maintain a tight grip with his legs, which provides only limited stability and which is tiring for the rider.

The present invention is a device for use on a horse by a bareback rider to permit the use of stirrups for the rider's feet, thus permitting the rider a more secure seat. In accordance with the present invention a device for use on a horse is provided comprising a pair of cushion members coupled together by a gripping member. Preferably, both of the cushion members and the gripping member are covered by a soft resilient material. The cushion members include attachment rings, permitting attachment of a strap to tightly attach the device to a horse forward of the point at which the bareback rider has his seat. With the device attached by such a strap, a second pair of rings is provided for attachment of stirrups for use by the rider. Preferably the gripping portion extends upwardly from the horse's back sufficient for the rider to obtain a secure grip thereon. The gripping member rigidly positions the two cushion members to fit on the back of the horse. Preferably, also, each cushion member includes a movable pad to adapt the device to the contour of the particular horse on which it is to be utilized, thus aiding the comfort of the horse.

These and other aspects and advantages of the present invention are more apparent in the following detailed description and claims, particularly when considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which like parts bear like reference numerals. In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view depicting a bareback rider on a horse and utilizing a device in accordance with the present invention for supporting a pair of stirrups for use by the rider;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view showing the device in accordance with the present invention ready for attachment to a horse;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a device in accordance with the present invention and having a portion thereof displaced to illustrate the inner construction;

FIG. 4 is a view taken along the line 4—4 of FIG. 2; FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken along the line 5—5 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 6 depicts a contour pad suitable for use in a device in accordance with the present invention;

FIGS. 7, 7a, and 7b illustrate a preferred form of construction of a device in accordance with the present invention; and

FIGS. 8 and 9 illustrate the device in accordance with the present invention mounted on horses of different contours.

FIG. 1 illustrates a horse 10 having a rider 12 riding thereon without a saddle. If desired, the rider 12 may utilize a blanket 14, although this is optional. To aid the rider 12 in maintaining his seat, a pair of stirrups 16 are suspended by straps 18 from a device 20 in accordance with the present invention, with device 20 held onto the horse 10 by a second strap 22.

As illustrated in FIGS. 2 through 5, device 20 includes first and second cushion members 24 and 26 which are joined together by rigid gripping portion 28. Each cushion member 24 and 26 includes a soft flexible outer cover 30 within which are positioned a number of support and cushioning components. FIG. 3 depicts device 20 with one of the outer covers 30 raised to illustrate these components. A rigid support member 32 extends from one cushion member 24, through gripping member 28, to the second cushion member 26. Within each cushion member 24 and 26 the end of rigid support member 32 is curved to form a retaining portion 38 which retains a pair of rings 40 such as D rings of, for example, steel. Support member 32 can be made, for example, of a rigid metal bar such as a steel bar having a thickness in the order of about one-eighth to about one-fourth inch and a width in the order of about one inch.

Within each cushion member 24 and 26, a large semi-flexible pad 34 is fixedly connected to support member 32 by means 42 such as rivets or bolts. Large pad 34 is made of somewhat flexible, slightly rigid material such as a hard rubber which is capable of flexing while retaining its shape. Each pad 34 is of a size and shape to substantially fill flexible cover 30, which, for example, might have a size in the order of about six inches by about ten inches. A small semi-flexible pad 36, which likewise can be formed of a hard rubber, is positioned between large flexible pad 34 and rigid support member 32. Small pad 36 is held in place by flexible tying means 44, which, by way of example, can be a leather thong passing through openings 48 in pad 36, as illustrated in FIG. 6, around rigid support member 32, and through an opening 46 in flexible cover 30.

As shown in FIG. 4, gripping portion 18 preferably has a soft resilient padding 50 such as a felt, for example paper mill felt, surrounding rigid support member 32, with an outer covering 52 of a soft, flexible, tough, tear-resistant material, such as leather or imitation leather. Padding 50 and cover 52 can be wrapped about rigid support member 32 and fastened thereon by a means such as stitching 53.

FIGS. 7, 7a, and 7b illustrate a preferred manner of construction of covers 30. As seen in FIG. 5, each cover 30 includes an outer side 59 and an inner side 60. Outer side 59 includes an outer layer 56 of soft, flexible, tough, tear-resistant material such as leather or imitation leather and an inner layer 64. Both inner side 60 and inner layer 64 are formed of a single piece 54 of

soft, flexible material such as felt, for example a paper mill felt. Opening 46 is formed in inner side 60 near the center of piece 54. In constructing cover 30, layer 56 is positioned to overlay inner side 60 of piece 54, with the finished or tanned side 58 of layer 56 adjacent portion 60 of piece 54, as depicted in FIG. 7. Layer 56 is then fastened along a line to piece 54, for example by sewing or stitching along lines 62 of FIG. 7. Layer 56 is then folded over so that it overlays portion 64 of piece 54, as depicted in FIG. 7a. Layer 56 is then fastened to portion 64, for example by outer stitches 66 depicted to FIG. 2. Portion 60 of piece 54 is then folded under portion 64 as depicted in FIG. 7b, forming inner side 60. A second, inner row of stitches 68 is then applied adjacent each side of cover 30 to stitch inner side 60 to layers 64 and 56 of outer side 59. While FIG. 2 illustrates the second row of stitches 68 extending adjacent the lower edge 70 of cover 30, as well as adjacent each side edge 72, the stitches adjacent lower edge 70 do not fasten under layer 60 to layers 64 and 56, but instead an opening is provided along lower edge 70 for access to the components within cover 30.

FIGS. 8 and 9 illustrate the manner in which device 20 is positioned on a horse. Cover 30 is not shown in FIGS. 8 and 9 for ease of illustration. Horses have different shapes, and small pad 36 is adjusted to cause device 20 to conform to the shape of the particular horse on which the device is to be placed. FIG. 8 illustrates device 20 mounted over a blanket 14 on a horse 10, with the horse 10 being relatively thin. Each small pad 36 is drawn up toward the junction of large pad 34 and rigid support member 32. This causes pad 34 to move away from rigid support member 32, thus more closely conforming to the relatively thin contour of the horse. In FIG. 9 a more full horse is illustrated, and each small pad 36 is positioned adjacent the lower end of its associated large pad 34, permitting the large pads 34 to flex outwardly so as to conform to the contour of the more full horse. Once the desired positions of small pads 36 are determined, thongs 44 are passed around gripping portion 28 and tied as illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 5 to retain the small pads 36 in the desired positions. Inner portion 60 of each cushion 24 and 26 is preferably of a material such as a paper mill felt which resists sliding on the back of the horse, particularly when blanket 14 is utilized. In addition, gripping portion 28 has sufficient rigidity to position cushions 24 and 26 in positions minimizing any tendency of device 20 to slide or rotate. Outer layer 56 is preferably of a material such as leather which enhances the appearance of device 20 and assures comfort for the rider should he contact it.

To utilize the device of the present invention the device is placed on a horse and the desired location of the pads 36 is determined. Pads 36 are then placed in these positions and held there by fastening thongs 44. Device 20 is then placed on the horse and attached by a cinch strap 22, which fastens to one ring 40 of each cushion member 24 and 26. Stirrup straps 18 are then fastened to the second ring 40 of each cushion member, and the horse is ready for riding. Blanket 14 may be placed on the horse before device 20 is fastened to it, if desired. Not only does device 20 then permit the rider to utilize

stirrups to aid in retaining his seat and to lessen his fatigue, but also gripping portion 28 has sufficient rigidity and extends sufficiently above the back of the horse, as seen in FIGS. 8 and 9, that if he desires, the rider can hold gripping member 28 to aid in retaining his seat. The soft padding 50 and covering 52 assure a comfortable grip for the rider, and still the rigidity of support member 32 assures a secure grip.

While the device has been described with reference to bareback horse riding, the device could, of course, be utilized by a rider using a saddle but preferring to attach his stirrups from the device of the present invention, which advantageously, would permit him to grip the gripping portion 28. In addition, of course, the device could be utilized in riding animals other than horses. Numerous modifications and rearrangements could be made, and still the result would come within the scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. Apparatus for use by a rider in riding an animal comprising:

a first cushion member, said first cushion member including a first attachment ring adapted for attachment thereto of a cinch strap first end, said first cushion member including a second attachment ring adapted for attachment thereto of a stirrup strap to suspend a stirrup therefrom;

a second cushion member, said second cushion member including a third attachment ring adapted for attachment thereto of a cinch strap second end, said second cushion member including a fourth attachment ring adapted for attachment thereto of a stirrup strap to suspend a stirrup therefrom; and

a support member joining said first cushion member to said second cushion member and permitting placement of said apparatus on an animal with said attachment rings positioned for attachment thereto of a cinch strap to hold said apparatus on the animal and stirrup straps for receipt of the feet of a rider on the animal; each cushion member including a first semi-flexible pad fixedly connected to said support member, a second semi-flexible pad, and tying means for adjustably connecting said second semi-flexible pad to said support member, and each cushion member further including a cover substantially enclosing said first and second semi-flexible pads and having an outer side with an outer layer of a soft, flexible, tough, tear-resistant material and a soft, flexible inner layer and a soft, flexible inner side.

2. Apparatus as claimed in claim 1 in which said support member includes a rigid bar having a first end connected to said first cushion member and a second end connected to said second cushion member.

3. Apparatus as claimed in claim 2 in which said bar first end is curved within said first cushion member to form a first retaining portion for retaining said first and second attachment rings and in which said bar second end is curved within said second cushion member to form a second retaining portion for retaining said third and fourth attachment rings.

\* \* \* \* \*