(No Model.)

# J. W. WILDER.

## VEHICLE TOP.

No. 577,473. Patented Feb. 23, 1897.

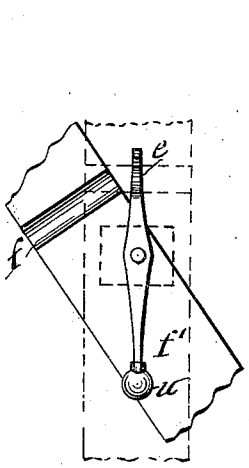


Fig. 7

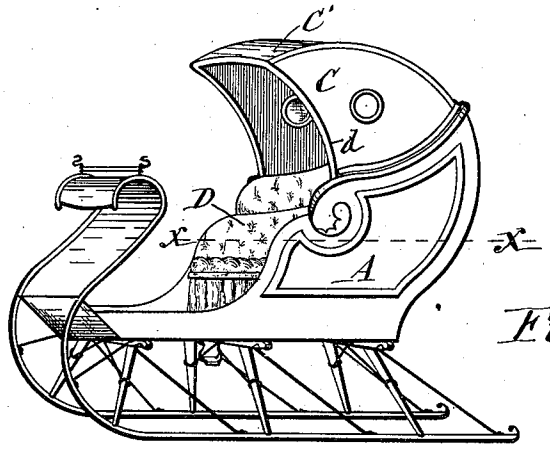


Fig. 1

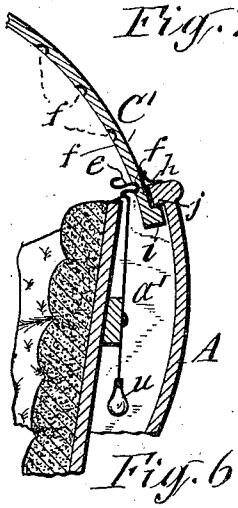


Fig. 6

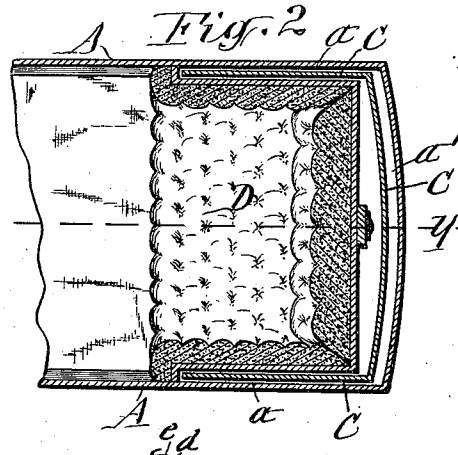


Fig. 2

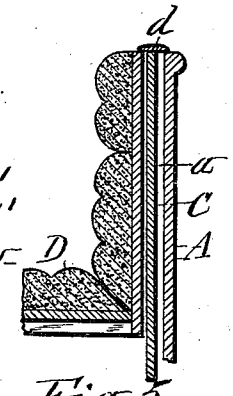


Fig. 5

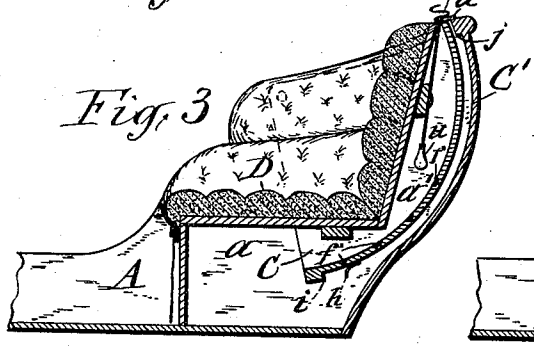


Fig. 3

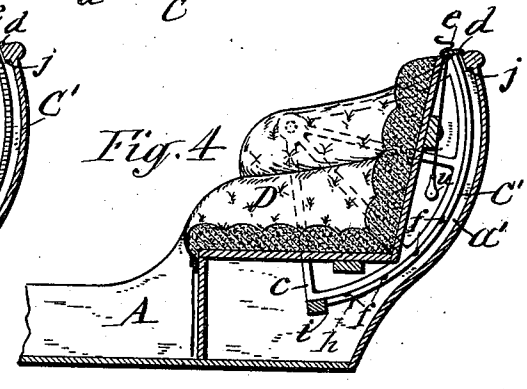


Fig. 4

WITNESSES:

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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN W. WILDER, OF PULASKI, NEW YORK, ASSIGNOR TO FRANK H. WILDER AND HOLLY W. WILDER, OF SAME PLACE.

## VEHICLE-TOP.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 577,473, dated February 23, 1897.

Application filed April 15, 1896. Serial No. 587,583. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, JOHN W. WILDER, of Pulaski, in the county of Oswego, in the State of New York, have invented new and useful Improvements in Vehicle-Tops, of which the following, taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, is a full, clear, and exact description.

This invention consists in a novel construction of a vehicle-top which is more especially intended for cutters and sleighs, said top being extremely light, very compact, easily raised or lowered at will, and in case of the cutter or sleigh being upset the top automatically lowers and conceals itself instantly when the body of the vehicle is tilted to an angle of about forty-five degrees, thus allowing passengers to free themselves unharmed, and at the same time saves the said top from the general wrecking that ordinary tops are subjected to under the same circumstances. Cutters track only about three feet, and the extra height and weight added thereto by the common top requires but a slight unevenness in the road to overbalance the cutter and cause it to tip over. Besides this, my improved top dispenses with the so-called "top-joints," "top-props," and the usual "top-prop nuts," "prop-blocks," and "washers," "goosenecks," "arms," "shifting rail," "seat-loops," &c., and is readily brought into use when wanted and as quickly disposed out of the way and out of sight when so desired.

In the annexed drawings, Figure 1 is a perspective view of a sleigh or cutter embodying my invention. Fig. 2 is a horizontal transverse section on line X X in Fig. 1, showing the top in its lowered position. Fig. 3 is a vertical longitudinal section on line Y Y in Fig. 2. Fig. 4 is a vertical longitudinal section of a modification of my invention. Fig. 5 is an enlarged sectional view of one of the sides of the top, showing the valance. Fig. 6 is an enlarged detail view of the spring-latch which sustains the top in its raised position, and Fig. 7 is a front view of the automatically top-releasing prop.

Similar letters of reference indicate corresponding parts.

A denotes the body of the vehicle, which body may be of any suitable shape, according to the style of the vehicle, which in this instance is represented of the form of a sleigh or cutter.

C represents the top, which is pivoted to the sides of the body adjacent to the front portion of the seat D and designed to be concealed when in its lowered position. For this purpose I provide the body A with vertical pockets *a a*, extending along the sides of the seat D and meeting with a pocket *a'*, extending across the back of the seat, which pockets are formed immediately at the inner sides of the body or between the outer panel and inside wood lining.

I preferably form the sides of the top C sector-shaped and pivot the same at the junction of the radial edges to the body. The deck C' is arc-shaped to correspond to and is fastened to the segmental edges of the sector-shaped sides, and thus moves with the entire length of said deck in a uniform arc, and requires only a comparatively narrow pocket *a'* to receive said deck in placing the top in its lowered position.

The top or hood may be formed of any suitable material, but I prefer to form said top of stiff self-sustaining panels, which may be composed of either suitable veneers of wood or indurated fiber or metal covered with leather and lined with suitable cloth, or said top may be formed of rigid skeleton frames *c*, covered either with rubber or leather and lined on the inside, as shown in Fig. 4. To the front edge of said top I prefer to attach a suitable valance *d*, which, in placing the top into its lowered position completely within the pockets *a a a'*, covers the tops of said pockets and forms a border to the upholstering of the sides and back of the seat.

For sustaining the top in its raised position I provide a suitable spring-latch *e*, pivoted to the back of the seat and engaging one of a plurality of recesses or sockets *f* in a metal or hard-wood strip *f'*, fastened to the inner or under side of the deck C'. Said plurality of sockets allows the top C to be sustained at different elevations. The latch *e* is extended some distance below its pivot and is weighted at its lower end, as shown at *u*, to retain said latch in a vertical position and cause it to automatically release the catch

or socket *f* when the vehicle is tilted excessively or toward upsetting position, as represented in Fig. 7 of the drawings. The top is thus released and allowed to automatically drop and permit the occupants of the vehicle to more readily escape therefrom in case the vehicle is upset.

To exclude dust and water from the interiors of the described pockets, I attach to the exterior of the described top weather-strips *h*, extending around the same near the bottom edge thereof, and preferably of rubber, to fold up and enter the pocket along with the top and elastic enough to unfold and cover any opening between said top and body of the vehicle when the top is raised.

In placing the top into its extreme lowered position it is completely housed and concealed in the pockets, and the vehicle presents the appearance of being deprived of a top, and the pockets are closed by the aforesaid valance *d*, which also furnishes a neat finish around the sides and back of the seat.

A cleat *i*, attached to the rear end of the top and coming in contact with a shoulder or stop *j* on the inside and near the top of the pocket *a'*, serves to limit the movement of the top out of the pockets.

If desired, the deck C' may be composed of leather or rubber and may be rolled up at the back of the seat when the top is lowered. In this case, of course, the side edges of the deck will have to be detachably connected to the sides of the top either by buttons and buttonholes or straps and buckles. Such a modification will readily suggest itself to a carriage-maker.

What I claim as my invention is—

1. The combination of a vehicle-body provided with pockets along the sides of its interior and a top connected to said body and movable from an erect position to a concealed position in the aforesaid pockets.

2. The combination of a vehicle provided with pockets extending along the sides and back of the seat, and a top pivoted to the sides of the vehicle-body adjacent to the front portion of the seat and sliding into the aforesaid pockets in its movement to its lowered position as set forth.

3. The combination with a vehicle, of a top having sector-shaped sides pivoted at the junction of their radial edges to the sides of the body adjacent to the front portion of the seat and provided with a corresponding arc-shaped deck, and pockets extending along the sides and across the rear of the seat for receiving said top in its lowered position as set forth.

4. The combination of a vehicle-body having the rear end portions of its sides formed with vertical sector-shaped pockets on the inner sides thereof and meeting with a pocket extending across the end of the body and curved from top to bottom to conform to the arcs of the aforesaid sectors, and a top having vertical sector-shaped sides pivoted to the body adjacent to the front of the seat and having a corresponding arc-shaped deck, all sliding into the aforesaid pockets in the movement of the top to its lowered position as set forth.

5. The combination of a vehicle-body provided with pockets extending along the sides and across the back of the seat, a top pivoted to the sides of said body and sliding into said pockets in its movement to its lowered position, and weather-strips attached to the exterior of the top near the bottom edges thereof substantially as set forth.

6. The combination with a vehicle-body, of a top formed with sector-shaped and self-sustaining side panels pivoted to the sides of the vehicle-body and having the deck shaped to conform to the segmental edges of said panels and pockets extending along the inner sides and across the rear end of the body to receive said top when in its lowered position.

7. The combination of a vehicle-body provided with pockets extending along the sides and across the back of the seat, a top pivoted to the sides of said body and sliding into said pockets in its movement to its lowered position, and a spring-latch connected to the body for supporting the top in its raised position as set forth.

8. The combination of a vehicle-body provided with pockets extending along the sides and across the back of the seat, a top pivoted to the sides of said body adjacent to the front portion of the seat and sliding into said pockets and housed therein when in its lowered position, and a valance on the front of the said top-covering and tops of the pockets and forming a border to the upholstering of the sides and back of the seat as set forth.

9. The combination with a vehicle-top arranged movable to and from its raised position, of a prop consisting of catches on said top, and a sustaining-latch pivoted to the vehicle and weighted at its lower end to retain it in a vertical position and cause it to automatically release the catch by excessive lateral tilting of the vehicle.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto signed my name this 23d day of March, 1896.

JOHN W. WILDER. [L. S.]

Witnesses:

L. D. POTTER,

F. H. WILDER.