

(No Model.)

H. E. LE VALLEY.  
MUTE FOR BANJOS.

No. 520,439.

Patented May 29, 1894.

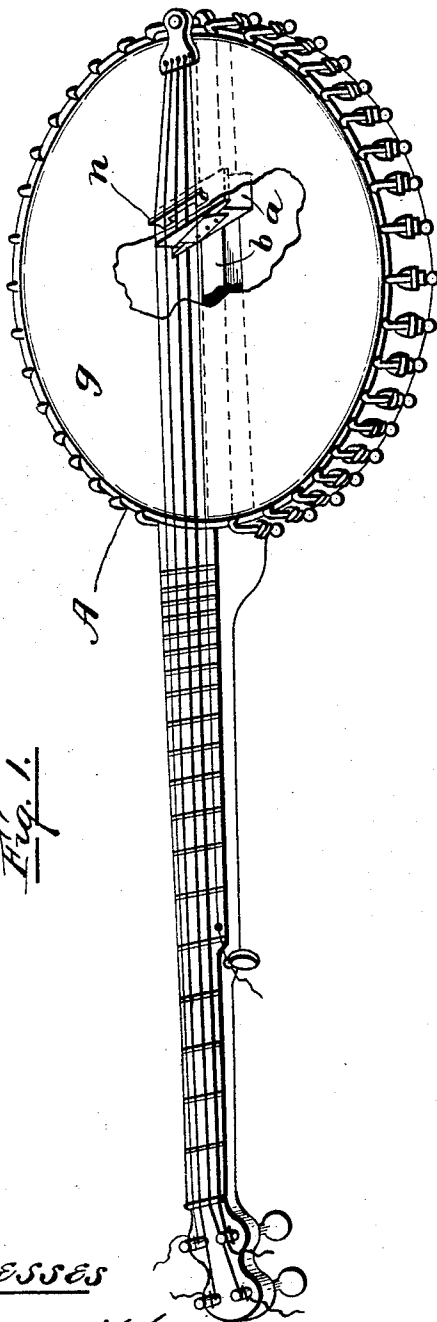


Fig. 2.

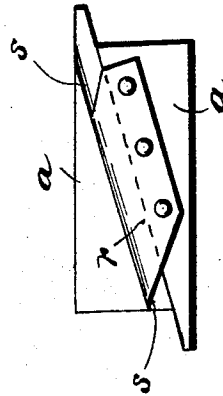
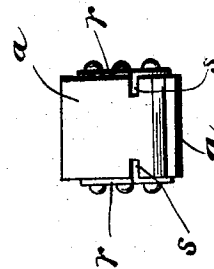


Fig. 3.



Witnesses

Charles Hamigan  
John B. Gough

Inventor

Henry E. Le Valley  
by Berry Arnold  
Attor.

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

HENRY E. LE VALLEY, OF PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

## MUTE FOR BANJOS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 520,439, dated May 29, 1894.

Application filed July 17, 1893. Serial No. 480,685. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, HENRY E. LE VALLEY, of Providence, in the county of Providence and State of Rhode Island, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Mutes for Banjos; and I do hereby declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

This invention relates to that class of devices designed to modify the tones of stringed musical instruments, and belongs more especially to banjos and instruments of like construction. It is fully illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

Figure 1, presents a perspective view of a banjo, with a part of the head removed, to show the device in place for use. Fig. 2, shows a side elevation of the device, separate from the instrument. Fig. 3, is an end elevation of the same, as shown in Fig. 2.

The subject of this invention is called, from its character, a "mute," and its object is to modify or lessen the sound of the instrument when played upon, so as not to be audible to any one but the one playing, or persons near by. The imperfect character of the music made by a person learning to play, is generally so disagreeable to others that many opportunities for practice, or playing nights or otherwise, are lost for fear of annoying other people.

The "mute" is an inexpensive device consisting of two wedge-shaped pieces of wood *a, a*, placed one on the other so that their outer sides are parallel, and retained in that position by thin metal plates *r, r*, that are secured to the sides of one of the pieces *a*, and have a small portion of their upper edges turned over at a right angle to enter grooves *s, s*, made one on each side of the other piece *a*,

parallel to the meeting sides of the two pieces *a, a*. The plates *s*, allow the pieces *a*, to slide endwise on each other, and increase or diminish the thickness of the two combined parts. This device composed of the two pieces *a, a*, so combined, is placed directly under and parallel with the bridge *n*, between the banjo head *g*, and that part of the handle *b*, that extends in through one side of, and across the rim *A*, and it is held there by the pressure of the head *g*, on it. In this position, the parts *a, a*, can be slid a little endwise on each other, and the thickness of the device increased to press harder on the under side of the head and lessen the sound produced by playing, to the degree desired.

This "mute" is not designed to modify will one part of a tune or piece with regard to the rest of the piece, as in the case of the piano soft pedal; but for a permanent damper for the time being, to make the sound inaudible so far as possible, to anyone but the player, for the reasons above stated.

The "mute" can be adjusted either when in place in the banjo or when it is out, and it can be put in place in a moment or removed as quickly, when the full sound of the instrument is desired.

Having thus described the construction and operation of my device, I claim as my invention—

A "mute" for banjos and musical instruments of like construction, consisting of two wedge-shaped pieces of wood, arranged to fit between the head or bridge, and that part of the handle under the head, and to slide on one another, to increase the pressure on the head, substantially as described.

HENRY E. LE VALLEY.

Witnesses:

BENJ. ARNOLD,  
JOHN B. GOUGH.