Sept. 20, 1938. S. E. WORCESTER 2,130,442

SADDLE CONSTRUCTION

Filed March 24, 1938

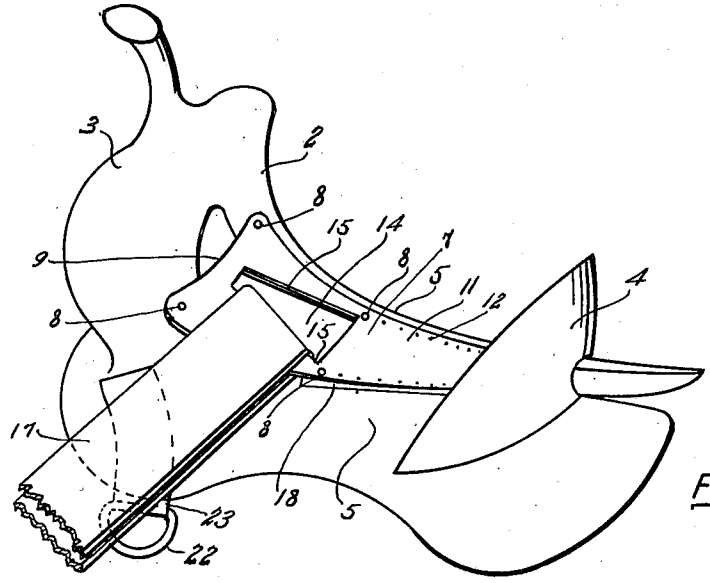


FIG. 1.

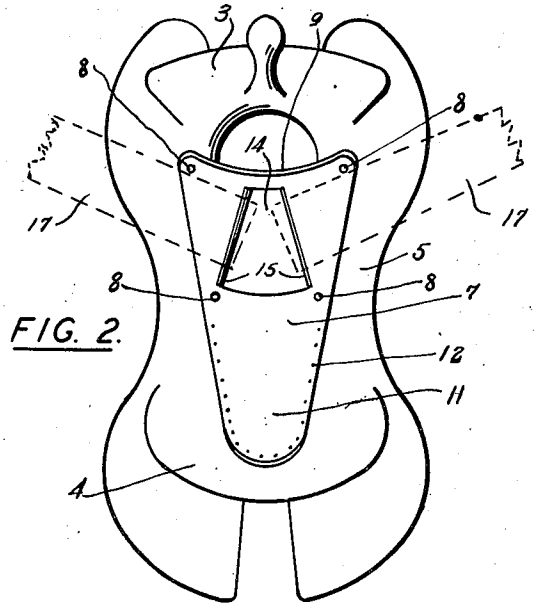


FIG. 2.

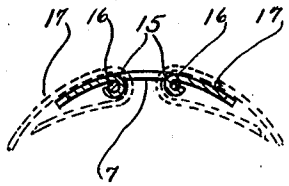


FIG. 4

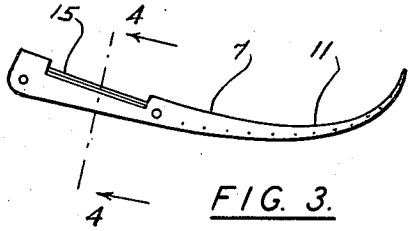


FIG. 3.

INVENTOR.
Stanley E. Worcester
BY Scott L. Norviel
ATTORNEY

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SADDLE CONSTRUCTION

Stanley E. Worcester, Phoenix, Ariz.

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4 Claims. (Cl. 54—44)

In the construction of Western stock type saddles having solid seat covering, it has been found desirable to cover the space between the tree rails with a metal plate to prevent the leather covering from sagging. In ordinary practice this plate is slotted at the side edges to provide a gap along the inner edges of the tree rails so that the stirrup leathers could be looped over the tree rails and thereby attached. It has long been recognized as desirable to have stirrup leathers swung from supporting bars, positioned centrally, above the tree rails so that both folds of the leathers may swing above the rails and free from interference with the front or pommel D ring and other parts of the rigging. While efforts have been made to provide elevated stirrup suspension bars to accomplish this, I have found these devices to be too bulky, too thick, and to require extensive blocking up of the seat bed. Further, no provision has previously been made for the attachment of a metal plate or strainer iron over the gap between the tree rails in conjunction with these devices. Aside from excessive costs of manufacture, the uses of these stirrup suspension bars results in a wide, flat top seat, and I have found that it has been practically impossible to incorporate these bars in saddle construction and at the same time produce a suitable, well shaped seat bottom.

To overcome the above objections and to attain further advantages in construction, I have produced an improved saddle construction which has for its objects:—

First, to provide a means for suspending the stirrup leathers centrally above the tree rails so that they will have a free maximum forward swing without adding undesirable bulk to the seat construction; second, to provdie such a stirrup leather suspension means combined with a metal plate forming a strainer iron and adapted to cover the gap between the tree rails; third, to provide a stirrup leather suspension means combined with a seat bed plate which may be efficiently and economically applied to a saddle tree with a minimum of under blocking; and fourth, to provide a combined stirrup leather hanger and strainer iron which may be cheaply and efficiently applied to a saddle tree without undesirable elevation of the saddle seat bottom. Other objects will appear hereinafter.

I attain the foregoing objects by means of the construction and devices shown in the accompanying drawing, in which—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a saddle tree equipped with my improved combined stirrup leather hanger and strainer iron; Figure 2 is a plan view of same; Figure 3, a side elevation of my combined hanger and strainer iron; and Figure 4, a section of my device taken on line 4—4, Figure 3.

Similar numerals refer to similar parts in all views.

The saddle tree is indicated by numeral 2. Its several main parts comprise the pommel 3, cantle 4, and rails 5.

As illustrated, construction of a saddle has just been commenced on the saddle tree 2 by the attachment of my combination stirrup leather hanger and strainer iron 7.

This device is formed from a flat, generally triangular shaped body of sheet metal, having a slight concave base edge 9, and a rounded apex 10. The base edge 9 of this plate faces forward and is attached to the pommel rise at about the middle of the bow. This portion of the plate is pressed against the tree so that it conforms to the contour thereof and is held in place by screws or large saddler's nails 8.

The rearwardly extending body of plate 7 covers the gap between the tree rails forming a strainer iron 11 and is of sufficient length so that the apex reaches well up onto the forward face of the cantle. It is of sufficient width to overlap the rails and receive saddler's tacks 12 in a position so that they may be driven into the body of the tree rails and onto the cantle, being conveniently spaced as indicated.

A centrally positioned opening 14 is cut in the wider forward portion of the body of plate 7. The front and rear edges of this opening are substantially parallel to the base edge 9, while the side edges 15 converge forwardly. These side edges are formed by rolling the metal cut to form opening 14 over rods 16 (see Figure 4). Thus these edges are stiffened and at the same time made smoothly round to adequately support the stirrup leathers without cutting.

In order to accommodate the under fold of the stirrup leathers, those portions of the plate edges on either side just back of opening 14 may be blocked up by a wedge shaped strip of leather 18. Aside from this, however, the entire plate is attached directly to the saddle tree.

The material most suitable for the construction of plate is No. 26 gauge soft steel, or its equivalent in other materials.

The pliant and flexible nature of this material permits the forward portion of the plate to be shaped to the pommel and the sides to be shaped over the rails, forming the strainer iron. While, at the same time, the rear portion may be bent up-

ward to conform to the rise of the cantle, as shown particularly in Figure 3.

My improved plate, when applied to a saddle tree, produces a structure greatly increasing the strength of the tree, provides a strainer iron covering the entire rail gap, and at the same time, affords a means for adequately supporting the stirrup leathers centrally above the rails to permit a maximum free forward swing. The position of the stirrup leathers is indicated in Figures 2 and 4 by dotted outlines **17**. In Figure 1 only the left hand stirrup leather is shown. In the latter figure the position of the stirrup leather **17** over the **D** ring **22** and its rigging **23** is clearly shown. The forward swing of the leathers, as usually mounted, would be limited by contact of the lower leather with the rear edge of rigging **23** and with the **D** ring **22**. However, with both the upper and lower folds of the stirrup leather mounted above the tree rails, the leathers may easily be swung to or even beyond the angle illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. The round edges **15** of opening **14** become, by means of the construction herein explained, stirrup leather supporting bars, and since they are an integral part of the entire plate and strainer iron, which is made of comparatively thin material, it is obvious that no extensive blocking up is necessary, in order to secure a smoothly rounded surface on which to attach the jockeys or other surface leathers to finish the covering of the saddle.

Having fully described my invention and explained its method of use in saddle construction, I wish to be limited only by the following claims:

I claim:

1. Saddle construction comprising in combination, a saddle tree, a plate affixed to the seat bed thereof, having means within its forward portion for supporting stirrup leathers centrally above the tree rails and a rear portion comprising a strainer iron plate adapted to cover the gap between tree rails.

2. In saddle construction the combination of a tree having parallel rails, a pommel, and a cantle, with a metal plate covering the gap between tree rails, and provided with a longitudinal opening in its forward portion having side edges rounded to receive stirrup leathers and means for attaching said plate to said tree whereby said stirrup leathers may be looped through the opening in said plate with both folds above the tree rails.

3. A saddle construction having a tree provided with parallel rails in combination with a plate of thin material attached thereto, and positioned over the gap between the rails, the forward portion thereof being wider than the rear portion and provided with a centrally positioned opening having the side edges smoothly rounded and converging toward the front, forming stirrup leather supporting bars, and means for attaching said plate to said tree whereby it is shaped to conform to the contour of the seat, extending from a position on the pommel slightly forward of the body to a position well up on the cantle, and blocking intermediate the tree and said plate, whereby stirrup leathers may be looped over said supporting bars with both folds above the rails of said tree.

4. A combination stirrup leather support and strainer iron composed of pliant material adapted to be shaped to conform to the contour of a saddle tree seat, and covering the gap between the tree rails, having means for attachment to said saddle tree and having an opening in its forward portion provided with forwardly converging inner side edges, smoothly rounded to receive stirrup leathers.

STANLEY E. WORCESTER.