

No. 855,910.

PATENTED JUNE 4, 1907.

J. F. SULLIVAN.
APPLIANCE FOR THEATRICAL AND SIMILAR PURPOSES.
APPLICATION FILED JAN. 8, 1907.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

Fig. 1.

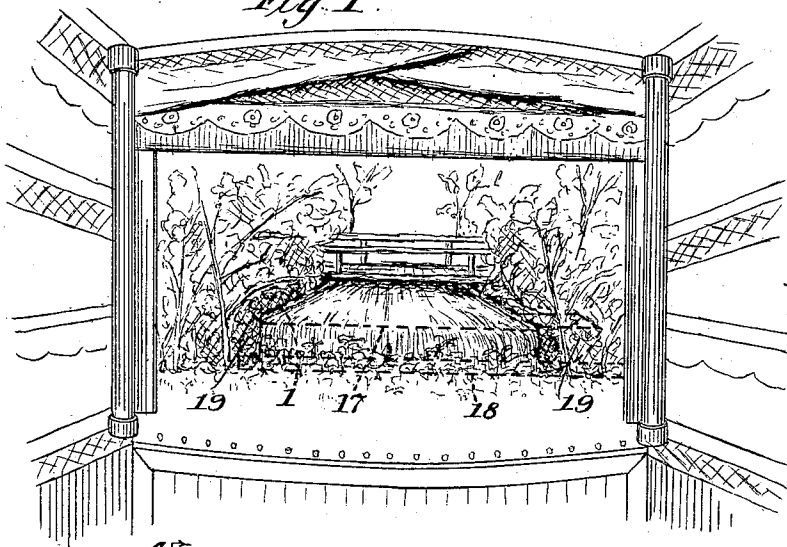
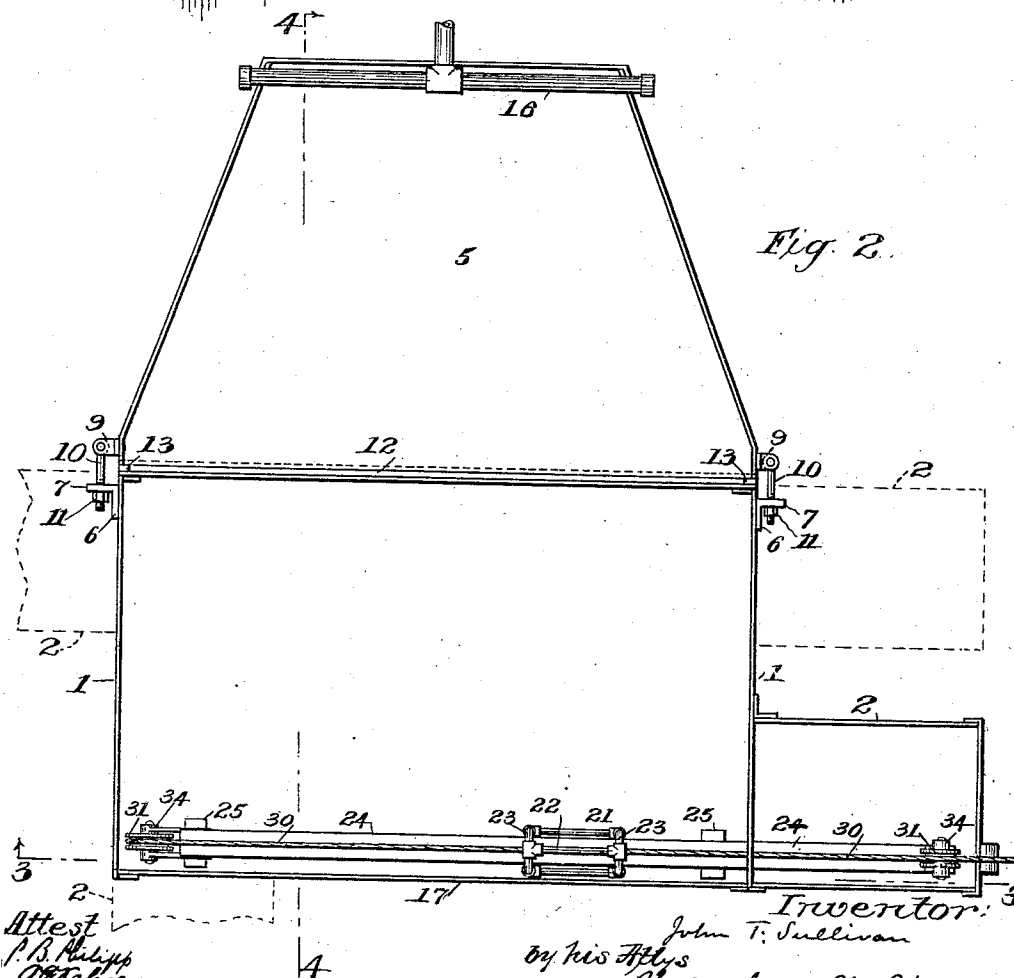


Fig. 2.



Attest
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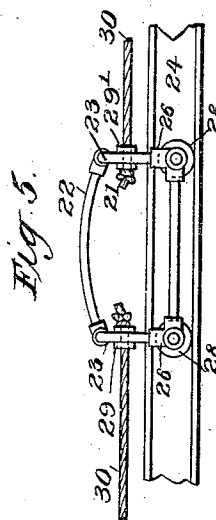
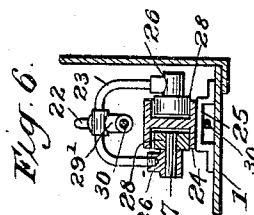
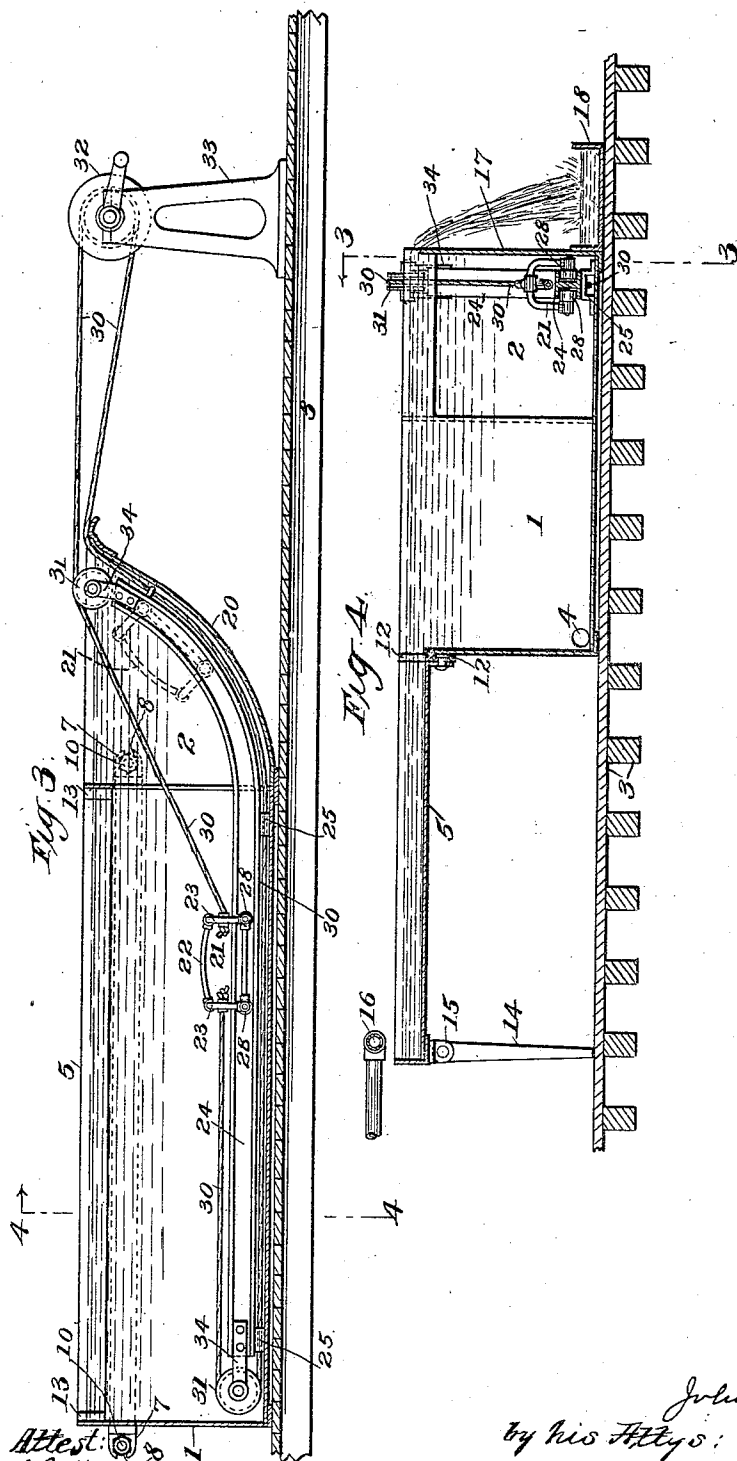
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2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.



Attest
P. B. Phelps
Notary

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by his Attys:
Phelps, Sampson, Rice & Kennedy

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN F. SULLIVAN, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

APPLIANCE FOR THEATRICAL AND SIMILAR PURPOSES.

No. 855,910.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented June 4, 1907.

Application filed January 8, 1907. Serial No. 351,316.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN F. SULLIVAN, a citizen of the United States, residing at New York city, county of New York, and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Appliances for Theatrical and Similar Purposes, fully described and represented in the following specification and the accompanying drawings, forming a part of the same.

This invention relates to improvements in appliances for theatrical and similar exhibition purposes.

In some theatrical and like exhibitions, certain scenes require that one or more of the persons taking part in such exhibition shall jump or be thrown into a body of water and disappear from the view of the audience either for the remainder of the exhibition or for a short period of time, and be then rescued in full view of the audience. Such scenes require a water tank into which the person may jump or be thrown. To carry out the illusion that the person who has jumped or has been thrown into the water remains therein, means must be provided by which the person or persons may leave the tank without being seen by the audience, and where a rescue is to take place, means must be provided whereby the person may enter or return to the tank without being observed by the audience. The tanks used for this and similar purposes are necessarily limited in size, due to the fact that only tanks of a certain size can be put on the scenery cars furnished by railroads for the use of traveling companies. It is therefore necessary that the tanks employed shall be restricted as far as possible in size, and at the same time permit the desired effects to be obtained.

It is one object of the present invention to provide an appliance of this character by which the desired scenic effects may be carried out, and in which the tank employed may be of the requisite small dimensions used by traveling companies.

It is a further object of this invention to produce a tank construction in which, with small tanks, a comparatively large surface of water may be presented to the view of an audience.

It is a further object of the invention to provide means for guiding and assisting a person entering or leaving the tank.

With these and other objects in view, the

invention will now be described in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a front view of a theater stage, showing the stage setting and a tank, the latter being shown in dotted lines; Fig. 2 is a plan view of the tank construction, the widest part being turned toward the auditorium. Fig. 3 is a vertical longitudinal section on lines 3—3 of Figs. 2 and 4; Fig. 4 is a vertical section on lines 4—4 of Figs. 2 and 3; Fig. 5 is a detail, on an enlarged scale, of the carrier shown in Fig. 3, and Fig. 6 is a detail, on an enlarged scale, of the carrier construction, being shown partially in section.

Referring now to the drawings, which illustrate the preferred embodiment of the invention, 1 indicates a tank, which may be of any suitable material, preferably, when used for stage purposes, being composed of wood with a zinc lining. This tank may be of any suitable configuration, but for convenience in transportation is rectangular in shape, being of greater length than width, and as shallow as is practicable for the purposes for which it is to be used. This tank 1 is provided with one or more extensions or pockets 2, one such pocket being shown in full lines and other such pockets being shown in dotted lines, in Fig. 2, the purpose of which pocket or pockets will be more fully hereinafter referred to. This tank 1, into which the person jumps or is thrown, for ordinary purposes will be from two to three feet in depth, and is suitably supported, either on the stage itself, or on a support 3, raised up somewhat from the floor level, so as to make it appear to an audience to be of considerably greater depth than it really is. The tank 1 is supplied with water in any suitable manner, and is provided with an outlet 4 for draining the same.

The tank 1 may be used alone in some instances. In other instances it may be desirable that it appear from the front of the stage as if there was a large body of water on the stage. To accomplish this result, with the use of a small main tank, there is provided a second supplemental water tank 5, which tank is of any convenient shape, but which, as it is simply for holding water, is much shallower than the main tank. This second tank is made of any suitable material, and is coated on the inside with some dark compound to give the water therein the appearance of great depth. This second tank 5 is arranged to be detachably secured to the

main tank, so that it can be used in connection therewith, whenever it is necessary or desirable, and when it is not desired to be so used it may be readily separated therefrom and taken away. The means for detachably securing or uniting the two tanks together may be varied. As shown, however, there are provided at each side and at the back of the tank 1 a number of brackets 6 suitably secured thereto, the outwardly extending arms of which, 7, are slotted as at 8 (Fig. 3). The tank 5 is provided on its sides and front with ears 9, corresponding in number and position to the brackets 6, in which ears are pivotally secured bolts 10.

When the tanks are to be secured or united together, the bolts 10 are slipped into the slots 7 of the brackets 6 on the tank and the two tanks are brought together by screwing up nuts 11 and locked firmly together. In order that the water in the two tanks may form one continuous sheet, and thus present the appearance of a large body of water, means are provided for preventing leakage between the two tanks, so that the water can flow from one tank into the other, as, for instance, from tank 5 into tank 1, or vice versa, depending on the source of water supply. Any suitable means may be provided for accomplishing this purpose. As shown, however, there is provided a rubber strip or gasket 12 having upwardly extending portions 13 at each side thereof. This rubber gasket 12 is placed in between the two tanks, and when they are brought together by screwing up the nuts 11, this gasket is squeezed in between the two tanks and effectually prevents any leakage of water between them, the upwardly projecting portions 13 of the gasket preventing any overflow at the sides. The tank 5 is shallower than the tank 1, and means are provided of a suitable character for supporting tank 5. As shown, there is provided a support or supports 14, which supports are pivotally secured at 15 to that end of the tank 5 opposite the end which is united to the tank 1. With this construction, when it is desired to detach tank 5 from tank 1, the supports 14 may be swung up close against the bottom of the tank, thus taking up very little room. Water may be supplied to the tanks, as before stated, in any suitable manner, in this instance by supply pipe 16 delivering to tank 5.

The tank 1, when used for stage purposes, is or may be so constructed that some of the water therein may be permitted to overflow the front thereof so as to produce a waterfall effect. For this purpose, the front wall 17 of the tank 1 is made slightly lower than the side walls, as shown in Fig. 4, the water running over this front wall. To carry this overflow away, a trough 18, suitably arranged at the base of the front wall, is provided.

As hereinbefore stated, means are preferably provided by which a person falling into the tank may leave the same, and if necessary return thereto, without being seen by an audience, to produce the illusion that the person falling into the tank remains there. To hide the movements of the person, the sides and front of the tank are protected by suitable masking 19, as shown in Fig. 1, this masking being so arranged around the tank as to effectually conceal it at the front and sides from the view of the audience, this masking in the front, however, not hiding the surface of the water in the tank, or a view of the water flowing over the front thereof. Preferably there are provided for this purpose a means of egress from the tank, which means of egress may be varied to suit particular circumstances. The means of egress employed by the present invention are such that the person may enter or leave the tank beneath the surface of the water therein, thus allowing a small tank to be used. As shown this means comprises an extension or pocket 2, this extension or pocket projecting laterally from the side of the tank and being of relatively smaller dimensions than the tank, the person entering or leaving the tank through the extension. The employment of this pocket or extension permits of the use of a small tank and lessens the quantity of water, which is important owing to the great weight of a large quantity of water which is dangerous on many stages. One or more of these pockets may be employed, as occasion may require.

When the tank is used for stage purposes, one of these pockets is usually sufficient. The construction of these extensions or pockets is identical and the best construction of one of them will now be described. These pockets 2 (see full lines Figs. 2 and 3) are of any suitable configuration. The pocket 2 is suitably masked by the masking 19, as shown in Fig. 1, so that it is not visible to an audience, the masking coming down over the top and front of the pockets, as shown, the masking at the top extending beyond the edge of the main tank. Preferably, and as shown, these extensions or pockets are formed with an upwardly curved bottom 20, so that the person leaving the tank by way of the pocket will strike the incline and know that by so doing he will be behind the masking and can lift himself out of the water. Means are preferably provided for guiding the person into and out of the pocket while beneath the water when entering or leaving the tank. Such means may be of any desired character, but will preferably include a movable carrier, this carrier being operated by some means outside of the tank. As shown, there is provided such a carrier 21. This carrier comprises a hand grip 22, which may be of any desirable metal. This hand-grip is carried by

two supports 23 of similar material. The carrier may be moved in any suitable manner. Preferably, however, there are provided guiding and retaining means for holding the carrier in position while it is being moved to and fro in the tank. As shown, there is provided a track 24, which track is an I-shaped structure suitably supported on a support 25. The supports 23 of the carrier end in blocks 26, in which blocks are mounted spindles 27, which spindles support the carrier-wheels 28. These carrier wheels 28 are carried in between and guided by the upper and lower flanges of the I-track.

To each of the supports 23 are secured blocks or studs 29, 29', one such block being provided on each support. To these blocks are suitably secured the two ends of a cable 30, one end of the cable being secured to the block 29' and the other end of the cable to the block 29. This cable 30 runs over and is guided by pulleys 31, a pulley being provided at each end of the track 24, and extends out over one end of the tank to an ordinary crank and wheel windlass 32 suitably supported in a frame 33. The pulleys 31 are supported in brackets 34, one such bracket being provided at each end of the track 24. These brackets 34, in addition to their function of supporting the guiding pulleys 31, also perform the function of stops for limiting the movement of the carrier in either direction, thus preventing the carrier from being pulled off the track when it enters or leaves the tank. The track 30 is arranged to conform to the upwardly extending shape of the extension or pocket 2, so that a person grasping the carrier may be carried into or out of the extension or pocket on entering or leaving the tank.

While this invention has been described with particular reference to use for stage purposes, it will be understood that it may be used for other exhibition purposes, such as outdoor shows at summer resorts and like places, and that the invention is not limited to a use on a stage of a theater.

What I claim is:—

1. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes comprising a water tank, a means of egress from said tank, and means positioned in the tank for guiding and assisting a person on entering or leaving the tank, said egress and tank being suitably masked so as to permit a person to enter or leave the tank without being seen by an audience.

2. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, a means of egress from said tank, a movable carrier in the tank for guiding and assisting a person entering or leaving the tank, said egress and tank being suitably masked so as to permit a person to enter or leave the tank without being seen by an audience.

3. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, said tank being provided with an extension forming a means of egress therefrom, said extension being suitably masked to permit a person to enter or leave the tank without being seen by an audience.

4. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, an extension projecting laterally beyond the main portion of the tank and forming a means of egress therefrom, said extension being suitably masked to permit a person to enter or leave the tank without being seen by an audience.

5. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, said tank being provided with a plurality of extensions forming a means of egress therefrom, said extensions being suitably masked to permit a person to enter or leave the tank without being seen by an audience.

6. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, said tank being provided with a plurality of extensions projecting laterally beyond the main portion of the tank, said extensions being suitably masked to permit a person to enter or leave the tank without being seen by an audience.

7. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water containing tank, a mask for use in connection therewith, an extension projecting from the main portion of the tank having an upwardly curved bottom and concealed by the masking so as to permit a person to enter or leave the tank by the extension without being seen by an audience.

8. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, a second supplemental tank shallower than the first tank, means for detachably securing the two tanks together, and means for preventing leakage between the tanks, so that the water in both tanks may mingle to form one continuous sheet.

9. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, a second supplemental tank shallower than the first tank, a support for the second tank, means for detachably securing the tanks together, and means for preventing leakage between the tanks so that the water in both tanks may mingle to form one continuous sheet.

10. An appliance for theatrical and like purposes, comprising a water tank, a second tank shallower than the first tank, a swinging support therefor, means for detachably securing the tanks together, and means for preventing leakage between the tanks so that the water in both tanks may mingle to form one continuous sheet.

11. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank, a movable carrier located therein for guiding

and assisting a person entering or leaving the tank, and means whereby the carrier may be given to and fro movements in the tank.

12. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank provided with an extension extending laterally from one side thereof, a carrier located in the tank, and means for moving the carrier into and out of the extension.
13. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank provided with an extension pocket extending laterally from one side thereof, a track positioned in the tank and extending into the extension, a carrier positioned on the track, and means for moving the carrier on the track into and out of the extension.
14. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank provided with an extension having an upwardly curved bottom extending laterally from one side thereof, a carrier located in the tank, and means for moving the carrier into and out of the extension.
15. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank provided with an extension having an upwardly curved bottom extending laterally from one side thereof, a carrier located in the tank, means for moving the carrier into and out of the extension, and means for preventing the carrier from being moved entirely out of the extension.
16. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank provided with an extension having an upwardly curved bottom at one side thereof, a track positioned in the tank and extending into the extension, that portion of the track extending into the extension being also upwardly curved, a carrier positioned on the track, and means for moving the carrier into and out of the extension.
17. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank, an I-shaped track located in said tank, a

wheeled carrier positioned on the track, the wheels of the carrier running between the upper and lower flanges thereof, and means for giving the carrier to and fro movements on the track.

18. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank, an I-shaped track located in the tank, a wheeled carrier positioned on the track, the wheels of the carrier running between the upper and lower flanges thereof, means for giving the carrier to and fro movements in the tank, and stops provided at each end of the track for limiting the movement of the carrier.

19. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank, a track located therein, a carrier positioned on the track and provided with a hand-grip to which a person may hold and be guided in entering or leaving the tank, and means whereby the carrier may be given to and fro movements on the track.

20. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank, a movable carrier located therein for guiding and assisting a person entering or leaving the tank, means whereby the carrier may be given to and fro movements in the tank, and guiding and retaining means for holding the carrier in position while it is being moved to and fro.

21. In an appliance for theatrical and like purposes, the combination of a water tank provided with an extension extending laterally from one side thereof, the bottom of said extension being sharply inclined, a carrier located in the tank, and means for moving the carrier into and out of the extension.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

JOHN F. SULLIVAN.

Witnesses:

J. A. GRAVES,
PHILIP N. TILDEN.