Sept. 23, 1930. W. S. LE NOIR ET AL 1,776,262

COMBINED FOLDING SCREEN AND RAILROAD PLAYBOARD

Filed Jan. 24, 1930

Fig. 1

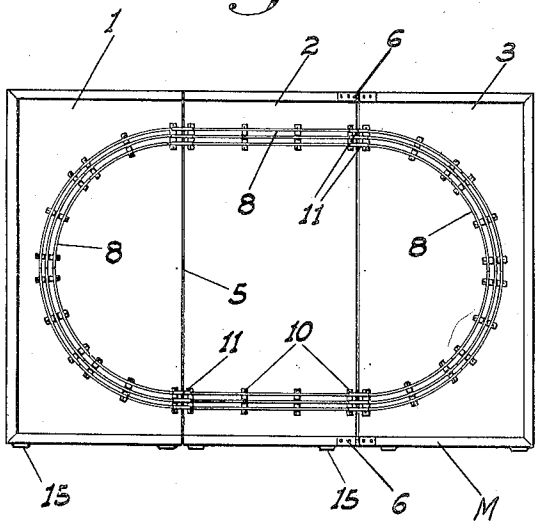


Fig. 2

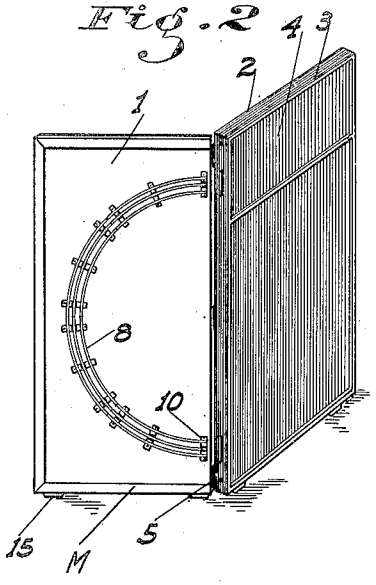


Fig. 3

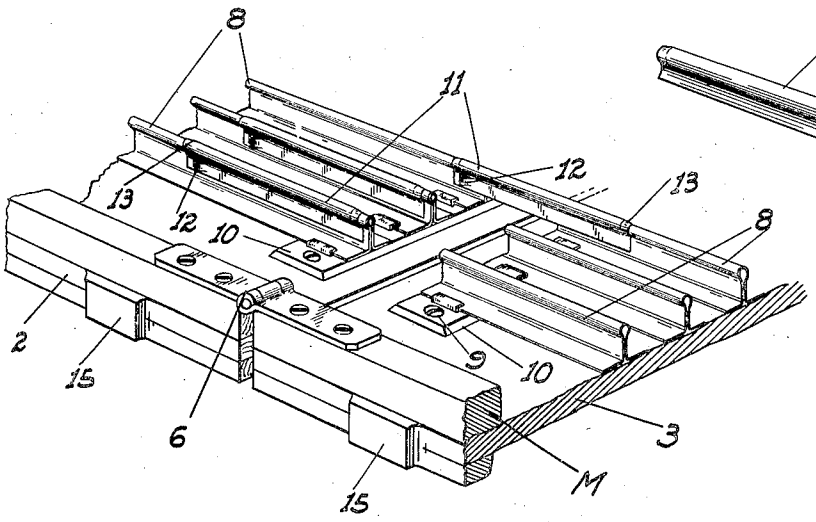


Fig. 4

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COMBINED FOLDING SCREEN AND RAILROAD PLAYBOARD

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This invention relates to toys, and particularly to toy railroads which besides the rolling stock and other equipment consists of sections of track adapted to be detachably connected together to form a continuous and endless railway line.

The track, as indicated, comes in sections arranged to be detachably socketed into connection with each other and which must rest on a flat surface such as the floor of the nursery or other room in which the children are playing. When they are through playing the track sections must be disconnected from each other if the floor is to be cleared. This operation is usually left undone by the children and as a result the tracks are frequently stepped on or stumbled against by persons crossing the room and are usually damaged. Even when the track sections are properly taken apart and stacked damage is apt to result, since the sections are relatively weak and they are easily bent or otherwise distorted so that they cannot be again successfully used. Also, being normally separated elements, the track sections are frequently lost.

As a result toys of this character while a source of great amusement to the children are apt to be looked on by the parents as somewhat as a nuisance and a source of constant expense for replacement of parts.

The principal object of our invention is to eliminate the above objectionable features by parmanently mounting the track sections onto a number of rigid portable and foldable panels of convenient size which not only serve to support the track, but are also arranged when the track is not in use to serve as an ornamental screen. This may be used to conceal the movable railroad equipment and any other toys which may be kept in the room, so that the latter will present a neat appearance with a minimum of work. The track being permanently mounted in place it is always ready for use and is not easily damaged, and the supporting panels being easily raised to a screen forming position there is little or no excuse for leaving the same outstretched on the floor when the children are finished playing. Not only does this structure enable the track to be used on a floor but the panels may also be easily lifted onto a table or supported by horses or the like. It can also be set up out of doors on lawns or similar surfaces, since the rigid nature of the panels enables the track to have the necessary even alinement regardless of small inequalities in the ground surfaces, but which are sufficiently prominent to prevent the present unmounted track from being set up out of doors and successfully used. The railroad game or toy is therefore no longer solely an indoor game but can be used either indoors or outdoors as may be desired. The panels being closely foldable against each other they may be easily passed through a door-way when conveying the device from one room to the other, and being then of relatively compact and flat form the device does not occupy any great amount of storage room.

The track lay-outs on the different panels must of course be kept separate from each other somewhat, so as to enable the panels to be folded in either direction. We have therefore provided a simple and easily operated means for enabling the gaps between the tracks of adjacent panels to be bridged when the panels are laid out flat so that a train may pass along the track between the panels without danger of derailment.

A further object is to produce a simple and inexpensive device and yet one which will be exceedingly effective for the purpose for which it is designed.

These objects we accomplish by means of such structure and relative arrangement of parts as will fully appear by a perusal of the following specification and claims.

In the drawings similar characters of reference indicate corresponding parts in the several views:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of the structure showing the panels outstretched and the track as ready for use.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view showing the panels upstanding and in a partially folded position.

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary enlarged view showing the bridging means between the separated rail sections of adjacent panels.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a modified form of gap bridging element.

Referring now more particuularly to the characters of reference on the drawings, 1, 2 and 3 denote separate panels on which the track is mounted. On the side on which the track is mounted the panels are smooth-surfaced throughout, except for an edge-molding M, but on the other side they may have moldings around the edges and elsewhere, and otherwise be given any desired ornamental finish, as indicated at 4, so as to present a pleasing appearance when used as a screen. The panels 1 and 2 are connected by double action hinges 5 of standard character, while the panels 2 and 3 are connected by strap hinges 6 secured on the faces of the mouldings M at the top and bottom, which not only permits turning and folding movement of the panel 3 either way relative to the panel 2 but permits the same to fold with the track supporting surfaces of the panels facing each other, and so that said panels are parallel and close to each other, even with the thickness of the two sets of tracks therebetween, as indicated in Fig. 2. The depth of the moldings M is such that they then abut against each other, while the tracks do not touch. The track sections 8 of standard form such as can be purchased in almost any toy shop, are assembled with each other to form an endless line or unit of any desired configuration, and are permanently secured onto the panels in any suitable manner such as by means of screws 9 placed through the ties 10 of the track sections and into the panels. The rails on the different panels while longitudinally alined with each other terminate short of the meeting edges of the panels, so as not to interfere with the folding movement of the latter in either direction. Also the ties are preferably mounted directly at the said ends of the rails as shown in Fig. 3, so as to prevent any possibility of the rails being deflected laterally and out of alinement with each other at any time. To bridge the gap between the rails slides 11 are closely mounted on the individual rails of one panel and adapted to slide over the gap to engage the adjacent ends of the corresponding rails of the adjacent panel. Lips 12 preferably project outwardly from the sides of the slides to serve as finger engaging means for readily manipulating the slides. The ends of the slides may be beveled off as shown at 13, so as to form as smooth a junction as possible with the rails and thus prevent possible jumping of the wheels of the rolling stocks as said wheels engage the slides.

The slides above described are intended to be permanently mounted on the rails which is advantageous in that they are not liable to become lost. If desired however detachable bridging means may be used instead, such as spring clips 14. These clips are similar to the slides except that they are intended to be placed in a bridging position by a direct downward movement, and hence their sides are flared out somewhat at their lower ends as shown so as to enable said sides to easily separate and pass by the heads of the rails as the clips are pressed down into engagement with the same.

When it is desired to fold the panels so as to stow the same out of the way it is only necessary to retract or remove the gap bridging elements, raise the panels to a vertical position and set them at any desired angle to each other. The lower edges of the panels are preferably provided with foot pads 15 to engage the floor when the device is being used as a screen.

When thus used all the ornamental sides of the panels of course face outwardly. When the device is completely folded the track engaging sides of the panels 2 and 3 face each other, so that the ornamental face of the panel 3 is outwardly, while the ornamental sides of the panels 1 and 2 are in facing and closely adjacent relation to each other, thus giving a very compact arrangement. Since the ornamental side of the panel 3 faces outwardly as above stated, the device may be placed against a wall in its folded position and still present a neat and attractive appearance.

Though we have shown and described a structure as consisting of three panels it will be obvious that in smaller or larger sizes a greater or lesser number of panels may be used. In any event the same advantageous end is attained, namely the permanent mounting of the track on the rigid foldable panels so that said track may be instantly put to use and as quickly removed out of the way when its use is not longer desired for the time being.

From the foregoing description it will be readily seen that we have produced such a device as substantially fulfills the objects of the invention as set forth herein.

While this specification sets forth in detail the present and preferred construction of the device, still in practice such deviations from such detail may be resorted to as do not form a departure from the spirit of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

Having thus described our invention what we claim as new and useful and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. In combination, a plurality of separate rigid panels hinged together along their adjacent edges for folding movement relative to each other, and a toy-railway track rigidly secured to the panels to form a continuous line when the panels are outstretched.

2. A structure as in claim 1, in which the faces of the panels opposite to those on which the tracks are disposed are of ornamental appearance whereby to enable said panels,

when upended, to serve as an ornamental screen.

3. In combination, rigid panel units, and an endless toy-railroad track permanently secured on one face of said units.

4. In combination, a plurality of separate rigid panels hinged together along their adjacent edges for folding movement relative to each other, a toy-railway track permanently secured to each separate panel, the track on one panel alining with that of the adjacent panel but having a gap therebetween in the plane of the joint between the panels, and means for engagement with the rails of the track at the gap when the panels are outstretched to bridge said gap and form an unbroken length of trackage.

5. In combination, a plurality of separate rigid panels hinged together along their adjacent edges for folding movement relative to each other, a toy-railway track permanently secured to each separate panel, the track on one panel alining with that of the adjacent panel but having a gap therebetween in the plane of the joint between the panels, and slides mounted on the rails of one panel adjacent the gap and adapted to be moved lengthwise of said rails across the gap, and into engagement with the corresponding rails of the other panel.

In testimony whereof we affix our signatures.

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