May 7, 1929. P. ECKHARDT 1,712,448

SUITCASE

Original Filed July 13, 1925

Fig. 1.

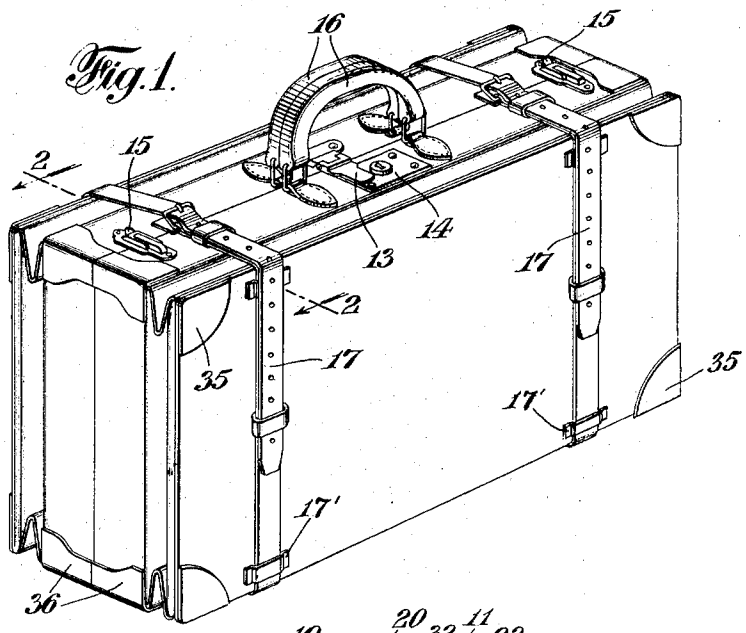
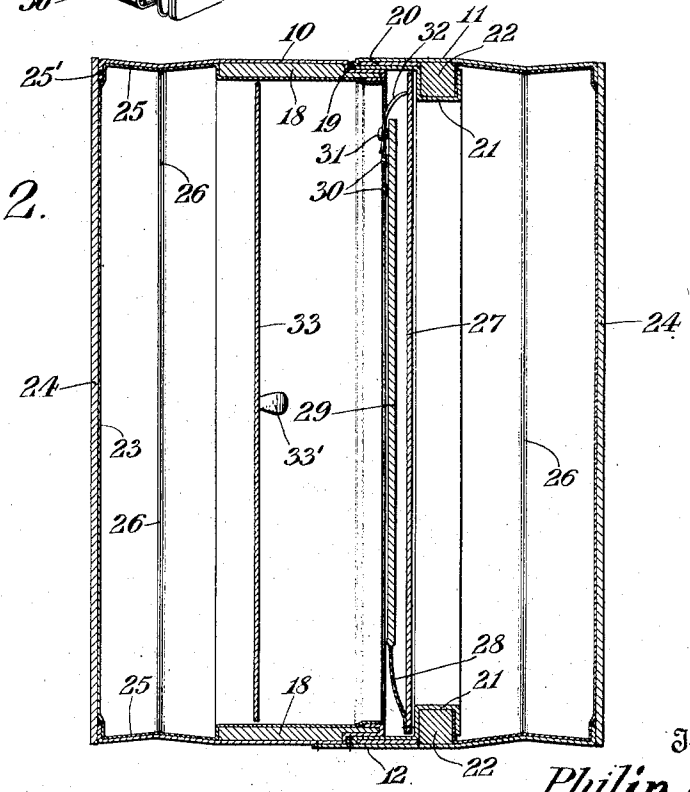


Fig. 2.



Inventor

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By his Attorney

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

PHILIP ECKHARDT, OF NEW YORK, N. Y., ASSIGNOR TO PHILIP ECKHARDT & CO. INC., OF NEW YORK, N. Y., A CORPORATION OF NEW YORK.

SUITCASE.

Application filed July 13, 1925, Serial No. 43,112. Renewed March 29, 1929.

My present invention relates to luggage and is concerned more particularly with dress suitcases.

An object of the invention is to provide a case of the type mentioned, the capacity of which can be readily increased in proportion to requirements to accommodate contents of volume far greater than that of the case in its ordinary state, yet without adding materially to the weight of the case or detracting from its strength or from its imperviousness to water and dirt.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the case includes a pair of hinged tray sections having relatively rigidly framed mating mouth portions and having bellows extensions normally retained in collapsed position by bag encircling straps. When the bag is packed to capacity, these extensions are fully distended. A feature of importance is the provision of a stiff folder which serves as a false side wall for one of the tray sections and which may be constructed for conveniently accommodating shirts or similar articles of clothing that should be retained in carefully pressed condition during transportation. This folder member seats on an internal rail in the reinforced mouth of one of the tray sections. Within the other tray section, there is a floating false wall so that when the suitcase is in fully distended position, the interior thereof is divided by vertical partitions into three longitudinal compartments and the contents of the suitcase will be retained against undesirable sagging, folding, dropping or crumpling.

Another feature of the invention is the manner of reinforcing the interfitting mouth portions of the tray sections to insure maximum strength and durability while avoiding unnecessary weight, which is accomplished by forming one of the frame sections of sheet metal encircling, when the case is closed, a complementary wooden wall in the other frame section. The invention will be more fully understood from the following description in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein:—

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a suitcase embodying the invention, and;

Fig. 2 is a view in transverse section therethrough on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1, the parts being shown as fully distended.

The case includes a pair of complementary tray sections 10, 11 hinged together at one edge by a plurality of laminations of flexible material 12, such laminations being preferably formed by extensions of the leather bag frame coverings. The free edge of one section carries a lock 13 received in a keeper 14 on the opposite section. These edges may also be additionally secured by the usual hasps 15. The frame sections near their free edges, each carry handle portions 16 which when the bag is closed, are disposed in cooperative relationship and adapted to be simultaneously grasped. The bag is encircled by retaining straps 17 of any appropriate construction, said straps being guided in loops 17′. The corners of the frame sections may be protected by the usual leather reinforce stays 36.

Section 10, as best shown in Fig. 2, includes at its mouth a rectangular frame 18 preferably of wood, reduced in thickness at the outer face of its free edge as at 19, where it is adapted to be embraced when the case is closed, in a metallic frame member 20 at the mouth of section 11. The frame is formed of a sheet metal strip and its edge contacts a rectangular wooden rail 22 fixed in the inner wall of the tray section 11. The frames 18 and 21 are covered on their exterior with the leather which forms the outside of the case and on their interior with lining material 23 of any suitable kind. The side walls 24 of the tray sections are of stiff heavy leather reinforced by leather cover pieces 35, and are connected to the frames 18, 21 by foldable extensions 25 of the thinner and more flexible leather which encloses the frames, the edge of which is stitched to the side walls at 25′. Sections 25 are centrally creased as indicated at 26 to readily fold inward as the walls 24 are drawn inward toward each other and serve as collapsible bellows to permit separation of said walls 24. As will be noted from Fig. 2, the minimum width of case is that determined by the combined widths of sections 18, 21 and rail 22 when the case is closed as shown, upon which the leather covering is rigidly sustained, the entire width of case in excess of this minimum being collapsible. If the contents of the suitcase are insufficient to cause or necessitate distention of the walls 24, these walls are retained in the collapsed position of Fig. 1 by the tightly drawn case-encircling straps 17

and yielding by press on the contents encircled by the rigid frames 18—21. In this connection, it is noted that the straps permit any degree of distension of these walls from the completely collapsed position of Fig. 1 to the fully distended position of Fig. 2, yet the case is completely closed in all positions of adjustment and does not afford access to water or dirt, as might be incurred were the case rendered adjustable by providing a telescoping rather than a bellows extension. The rail 22 acts as a limiting stop and has a seat for a false side wall 27 of light stiff material. The member 27 may be flexibly connected as at 28 to a second stiff flat plate 29 and the members 27, 29 conveniently serve to accommodate between them shirts or similar articles of clothing which must be transported in properly folded position. The free end of plate 29 carries a series of separable fastener elements 30 coacting with a fastener element 31 on the end of a strap 32 secured adjacent the edge of section 27. This adjustable strap permits a varying thickness of clothing to be snugly held between the false wall 27 and the plate 29.

There being a substantial width of case between false side wall 27 and the left-hand wall 24, especially when the corresponding bellows is distended, a floating plate 33 is provided therein, of substantially the area of the interior of the case to snugly engage said walls. This plate braces the contents and prevents it from dropping, sagging, folding or creasing when the case is carried. The plate 33 has finger grips 33′ between the ends thereof, by which it can be readily inserted, adjusted in position or removed.

When the case is not distended, the floating plate 33 forms the side wall of section 10 and if the material to be carried fills even less than the capacity determined with the bellows completely collapsed, the entire space between the false wall 27 and the adjacent wall 24 of frame section 11 may be left empty. In that condition, rail 21 sustains the false bottom 27, the entire volumes framed by the substantial thickness of said rail will be empty, as, of course, also the collapsed bellows. Thus when the goods are not sufficient to completely fill the case even in collapsed condition, but sufficient merely to fill the space between follower 33 against the collapsed bellows and follower 27 against rail 22, these false bottoms will nevertheless sustain the contents securely against sagging, dropping or other displacement.

Whether the case is partly filled and carries a minimum volume, as just noted, or is completely filled, the bellows being wholly distended, or is filled to an intermediate degree, each of the bellows being partly distended, the weight of the contents is inherently substantially symmetrically arranged with respect to handles 16, that is, the center of gravity is approximately directly below said handles, so that the case is easily carried, its weight bearing directly downward without torsional or twisting strain on the bearer. This is to be distinguished from cases with a bellows on but one side, the asymmetry of which not only detracts from the appearance but effects twisting strains on the hand or arm of the bearer. Moreover, the bellows construction even in collapsed condition provides a yielding surface, especially advantageous in carrying through crowds. Inasmuch as the metallic frame member 20 in the closed case embraces the wooden frame 18, the latter will be adequately protected without, however, providing the added weight needed to form the entire frame of metal.

It will thus be seen that there is herein described an article of manufacture, in which the several features of this invention are embodied, and which attains the various objects of the invention and is well suited to meet the requirements of practical use.

As many changes could be made in the above construction and many apparently widely different embodiments of this invention could be made without departing from the scope thereof, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

Having thus described my invention what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters-Patent of the United States is:—

1. A suitcase including a pair of tray-like sections hinged together at one edge and adapted to have their free edges locked together, said sections including substantially rigid interfitting frame portions and side walls connected to said frame portions by flexible material forming bellows extensions, an internal rail secured to one of the rigid mouth portions and a false side wall seating on said rail.

2. A suitcase including a pair of tray-like sections hinged together at one edge and adapted to have their free edges locked together, said sections including substantially rigid interfitting frame portions and side walls connected to said frame portions by flexible material forming bellows extensions, an internal rail secured to one of the rigid mouth portions and a false side wall seating on said rail, said false wall including a pair of rigid plates flexibly connected together at their edges and adapted to receive and press garments between them.

3. A suitcase including a pair of tray-like sections hinged together at one edge and adapted to have their free edges locked together, said sections including substantially rigid interfitting frame portions and side walls connected to said frame portions by flexible material forming bellows extensions,

and a floating side wall in one of the tray-like sections.

4. A suitcase including a pair of tray-like sections hinged together at one edge and adapted to have their free edges locked together, said sections including substantially rigid interfitting frame portions and side walls connected to said frame portions by flexible material forming bellows extensions, a floating side wall in one of the tray-like sections, and a false side wall having limited movement in the other section.

5. A suitcase of the class described including a pair of rigid tray sections, each having a side wall, bellows connecting said side walls to the tray sections, and a rail about the inner wall of one of said tray sections at the edge thereof adjacent the corresponding bellows and serving as a supporting rim for the corresponding collapsed bellows.

6. A suit case of the class described including a pair of rigid tray sections, each having a side wall, bellows connecting said side walls to the tray sections, a wooden frame about one of the tray sections, a metal frame rim about the other section enclosing said wooden frame in closed position of the case, a rail adjacent the inner part of the metal frame within the tray section and contiguous to the corresponding bellows, said rail serving as a supporting rim for the latter.

Signed at New York in the county of New York and State of New York this 8th day of July A. D. 1925.

PHILIP ECKHARDT.