

[54] **GAME WITH MAGNETIC EXTRACTION OF COUNTERS**

[76] Inventors: **Danny H. Sprouse; Muriel K. Sprouse**, both of 1830 Oak St., Paso Robles, Calif. 93446

[22] Filed: **Dec. 15, 1972**

[21] Appl. No.: **315,331**

[52] U.S. Cl. **273/139**

[51] Int. Cl. **A63b 71/06**

[58] **Field of Search** 273/139, 135 AD, 136 B, 273/137 AE, 134 AE, 131 AD, 130 A, 130 G, 134 BB, 131 BA, 1 M, 144 R, 144 A, 144 B, 140, 132, 133, 115, 123 A; 46/236, 238, 239, 240, 39, 45

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

3,053,538	9/1962	Roca	273/139
3,409,302	11/1968	Harrison	273/139
3,477,715	11/1969	Nekton	273/137 AE X
3,206,211	9/1965	Koplin	273/139

FOREIGN PATENTS OR APPLICATIONS

852,755	11/1960	Great Britain	273/135 AD
---------	---------	---------------------	------------

Primary Examiner—Anton O. Oechsle

Assistant Examiner—Arnold W. Kramer

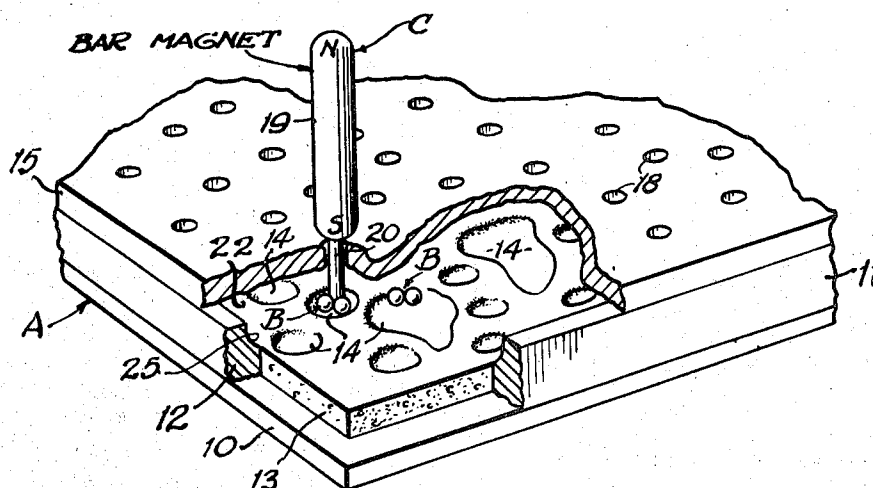
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Lynn H. Latta

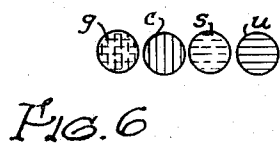
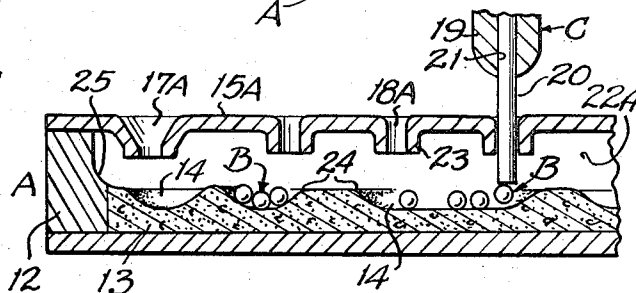
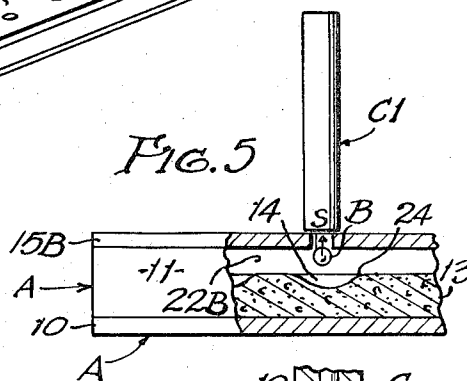
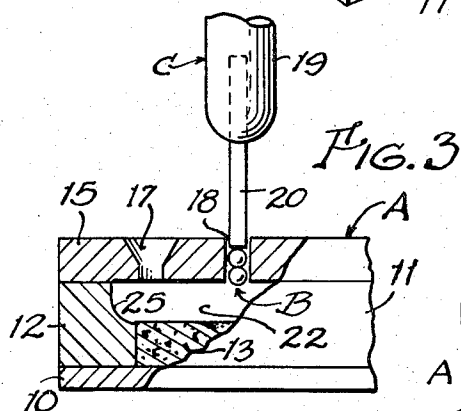
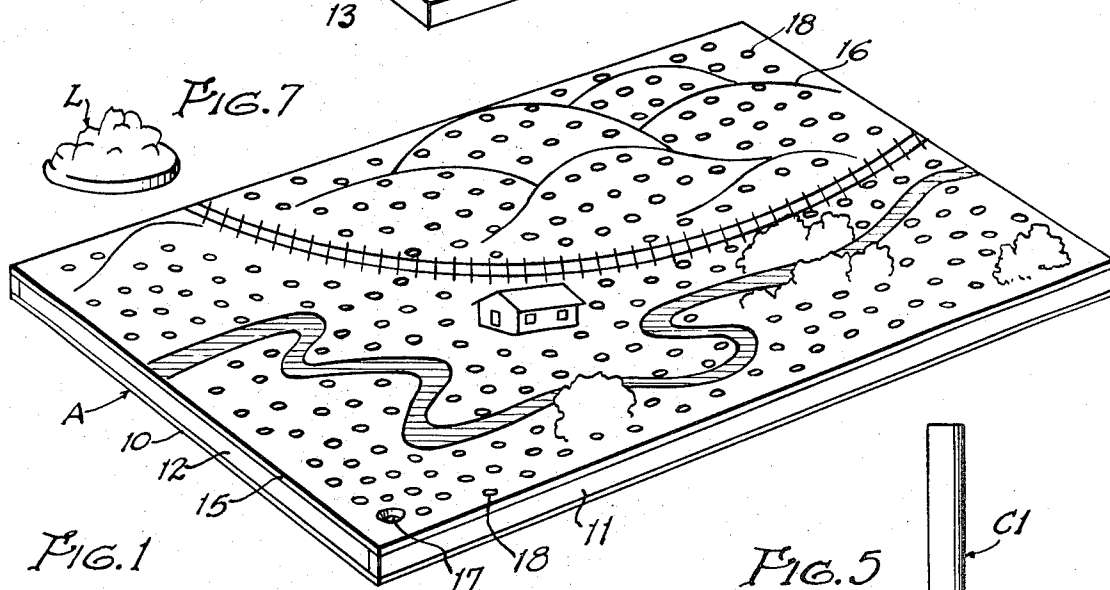
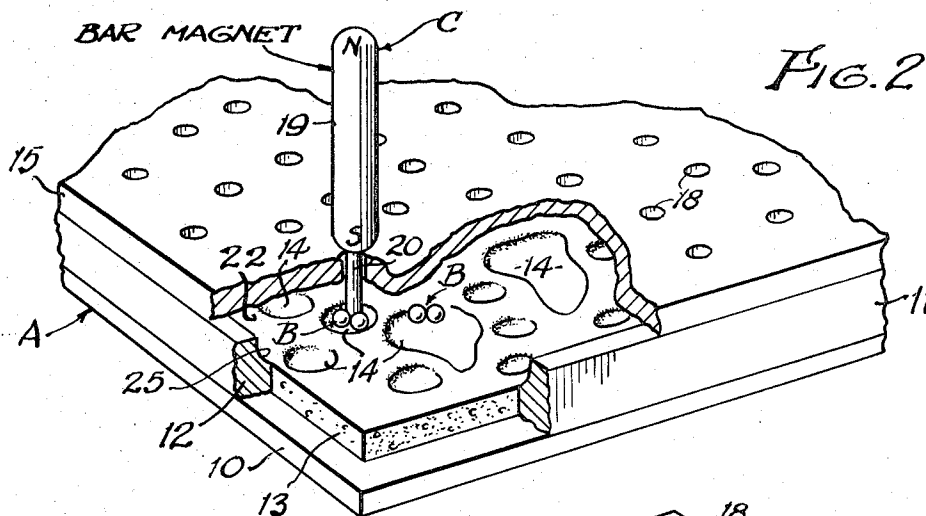
[57]

ABSTRACT

A hollow game board has a top panel provided with apertures through which spherical counters of magnetic (e.g., ferrous) material are extracted by applying a bar magnet to an aperture above one or more of the counters resting therebeneath. A bottom, spaced below the top panel, has a plurality of shallow indentations in which the counters may collect after being distributed by shaking the board. Counters of different colors have varying values representing, for example, gold, silver, uranium, etc., or ground water, oil deposits, etc., or may represent other items of value such as fish or game. The game may take several forms such as prospecting, fishing, hunting, etc. The counters are hidden from view.

10 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures





GAME WITH MAGNETIC EXTRACTION OF COUNTERS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Games representing prospecting operations are represented in the prior art by such patents as Deaton, U.S. Pat. No. 2,299,803, disclosing the insertion of a probe through an aperture in the top panel of a hollow game board, and scoring in accordance with the probe's encounter with a blocking piece inside the board, or by the lack of such encounter, as the case may be. Denton does not, however, disclose the use of a magnetic probe, nor extraction of a counter through an aperture. Patents disclosing the use of magnets include the one to Frederick, U.S. Pat. No. 3,628,792, showing a cat and mouse and cheese game in which a magnet is inserted through an opening in the board to pick up a game piece of assigned value. It does not, however, disclose playing pieces in a form suitable for random distribution inside a hollow board, nor does it show a bottom with depressions in which the game pieces may collect in random distribution. Nor does it show a game in which the counters are hidden from view when in the board. Other U.S. Pat. Nos. disclosing magnetic games are Yarnall 611,545; Rawdon 1,991,626; Frazier, 2,590,002; Friedman, 3,082,004; and Tiley, 3,534,961.

RESUME OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a hollow board having a top panel with a plurality of apertures preferably of circular area, slightly larger in area than that of a plurality of small counters (e.g.) balls of magnetic material so that such balls may freely pass through the apertures when attracted by a magnet applied to the upper surface of the top panel. A quantity of the balls are contained within the hollow interior of the board, in some of a plurality of indentations in the internal bottom surface of the board. In playing the game, the board is shaken so as to distribute the balls in a random fashion over such interior bottom surface. The number of balls in proportion to the number of depressions is such that in the average situation only a portion of the indentations will hold balls after the board is shaken. The indentations are of such a size in relation to ball diameter that one or several balls can be held simultaneously in a depression, so that in some instances a player may withdraw several balls held together by magnetic attraction, thus increasing the playing interest in a game which may simulate the prospecting for oil or precious metals, or fishing, in which one or more balls representing fish may be caught simultaneously, etc.

With the foregoing in mind, a general object of the invention is to provide a game simulating prospecting, fishing, hunting or other undertaking in which there is pursuit of an elusive prize represented by counters, the obtaining of which involves a large element of chance, which stimulates playing interest. More specific objects are to provide a game in which the counters are distributed in a random fashion within a hollow board by shaking the board, are of magnetic material, and are recovered by applying a magnet to the top of the board in a selected position where a player hopes to find one or more counters beneath such position, retrievable by magnetic attraction through an aperture at that posi-

tion, and in which the counters are hidden by the top panel of the board while within the board, so that the player must select the position blindly without knowing whether or not a counter is retrievable at the position he selects; and wherein the board has an interior bottom surface provided with randomly positioned indentations each adapted to hold one or more counters pursuant to such random distribution, with no knowledge being available to the player as to the exact location of the counters in the indentations.

These and other objects will become apparent in the following description and appended drawing, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a game board embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary break-away perspective view of a corner of the board, and of a magnetic probe, illustrating the playing of the game;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary elevational-sectional view of a corner of the board illustrating the withdrawal of a pair of playing pieces clinging magnetically to the end of a magnetic probe;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary sectional view of a playing board embodying a modified form;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary elevational-sectional view showing another modified form;

FIG. 6 is a detail view of the counters; and

FIG. 7 is a view of a "mining" claim marker utilized as a playing piece.

Referring now to the drawing in detail, I have shown in FIGS. 1-3 thereof, as one form in which the invention may be embodied, a game apparatus comprising, in general, a hollow board A, a plurality of iron or steel balls B therein, as counters, and an extractor (magnet) C in the form of a probe that can be inserted through the top of the board for engagement with one or more balls B therein. A "mining" chamber 22 is provided in the board.

Board A comprises a bottom panel 10, frame bars 11 and 12 secured thereon at the sides and ends of the board respectively, a false bottom 13 defining an internal bottom surface within the board, having a plurality of randomly positioned shallow rounded indentations 14 of varying areas therein, and a top panel 15 secured to the top edges of frame bars 11 and 12. Panel 15 is decorated with a picture 16, preferably in different colors, which may depict a landscape having mountains, meadows, a river, trees, etc., and may also show a small cabin and a railroad track, similar to geographical areas which may be suitable for oil or precious metal prospecting, or for hunting or fishing or other prize-pursuing activity. In the top panel 15 (which may be removably secured to frame bars 11 and 12) is a funnel-shaped filling mouth 17 and a large number of retrieval apertures 18 of relatively small size, just large enough so that counters B may freely pass therethrough.

Counters B consist of a series of magnetic pellets (e.g., of steel or iron) which are of a form (e.g., spherical) such as to be highly mobile in response to shaking of the board. They are preferably of several colors such as gold, silver, etc. By way of example, FIG. 6 discloses a ball G of gold color which may represent the metal gold; a ball C of red color which may represent the metal copper; a ball S of silver color which may represent the metal silver; and a ball U of blue color which may represent the metal uranium. The balls are of small diameter (e.g., about one-eighth inch) with smooth,

preferably polished surfaces, such as bearing balls, so as to readily roll within the chamber 22 and to be easily withdrawn through apertures 18 which are circular and slightly larger in diameter than the balls B. The balls B are sufficiently smaller than the areas of indentations 14 so that several balls may be nested in one indentation as shown in FIG. 4.

Extractor magnet C is a bar magnet 19 having north and south poles at its respective ends and having at one end a probe 20 in the form of a pin of magnetic material anchored to the magnet bar 19 (e.g., by being pressed into a bore 21 therein) so as to be magnetically integral with the bar 19. Probe 20 is of a diameter such as to be freely insertible through an aperture 18, and of a length such as to reach, or substantially reach, the interior bottom surface defined by false bottom 13, and to magnetically capture one or more balls B retained in a depression 14.

In FIG. 5 is shown a modified form of the game apparatus in which the internal space 22B is of such shallowness that a ball B may be retrieved by a modified form of magnet C1 having no probe pin, and placed against or adjacent the upper surface of top panel 15B (which is a thin sheet) the lower end of the magnet C1 being thus brought close enough to the ball in a very shallow indentation in false bottom 13, to magnetically attract it upwardly through the selected aperture 18.

Defined between the top panel 15 and false bottom 13, which is parallel thereto, is a shallow space providing the ore chamber 22 of a depth considerably greater than the diameter of balls B so that the latter may be freely circulated back and forth in chamber 22 by shaking the board in or approximately in its own plane. False bottom panel 13 is of Styrofoam or other cellular plastic material, or of any porous, lightweight or after equivalent material in which indentations 14 may easily be formed by pressure-indenting or by molding. Styrofoam has the advantage of being easily indented by pressing a male die or gang of punches having rounded ends into its surface, and of retaining the indentations thus formed. The round apertures 18 may be drilled or punched through top panel 15. In FIGS. 1-3 panel 15 is of sufficient thickness in relation to the diameter of apertures 18, so that the balls B can not be seen through the apertures, and are thus concealed from the view of the players, inside the board. A panel of such thickness can be fabricated from plywood. An alternative construction for the top panel is shown in FIG. 4. The top panel, here shown at 15A, is of a material such as sheet metal or sheet plastic, has the apertures 18A punched through the sheet in a manner such as to draw collars 23 downwardly around the apertures to a depth sufficient to provide the concealment of balls B as described above. Filling mouth 17A may also be drawn in the sheet material of panel 15A. The ore chamber is shown at 22A.

Indentations 14 are irregularly positioned and of only slight depth such as to avoid balls B collecting in any one spot with any regularity. They have rounded rims 24 merging with the flat upper surface of false bottom 13 so that balls B may freely roll into and out of the indentations in response to shaking of the board.

Frame bars 11, 12 have a cross-section such as to provide concavely rounded fillets or shoulders 25 adapted to guide the balls away from the margins of the chamber 22, thus preventing the balls from collecting at the margins.

PLAY

If the game is designed to simulate mining or prospecting, the counters B may represent various kinds of metal ore, a term which will now be used to refer to them.

The ore would be distributed approximately as follows: copper — 40 percent, silver — 30 percent, gold — 20 percent, fool's gold — 10 percent, and uranium — a very few pieces. The value of the ore would be as follows: copper — \$50.00 each (representing approximately 100 lbs. of ore); silver — \$250.00 each (something over 10 lbs.); gold — \$1000.00 each (about 1 ¼ lbs.); uranium — \$2500 (a huge premium due to the scarcity of uranium in the board, representing a huge "strike"); and fool's gold — nothing.

The face of the board is painted with a landscape including the following features: a mountain range, a railroad line, rock foothills, a stream, and some brush and trees. The cost of mining would be different for each of these areas. For example, the stream would be free for the first probe because of the ease of "panning" gold. However, if ore were discovered, it would be necessary for the player to spend perhaps \$200.00 for the cost of "building a sluice," which he could then use for successive probes in that hole as well as one adjacent hole. The mountains would be more expensive to mine because of the problems of transportation, excavation, etc., and would cost perhaps \$250.00 per probe. Mining in the rocks would cost \$50.00 for dynamite, and mining in the trees would cost \$100.00 for clearing away the brush. Mining in the foothills would cost \$150.00 for excavating, and mining in the holes adjoining the railroad tracks would require a payment of \$200.00 to the railroad (in care of the bank) in addition to the cost of mining in the mountainous terrain. The game is designed for two to four players, and one of the players or an additional person may serve as the banker. Before play begins the board is held by two of the players and shaken to scatter the ore. Each player is given a certain amount of play money — perhaps \$500.00 or \$1,000.00 — and one set of markers differentiated by different colors. The markers include a small container (not shown) divided into four or five compartments to hold ore, several "piles of rocks" (FIG. 7), and several thumbtacks. Each player would also have one magnetic probe.

The player who begins may select any hole on the board and inserts his probe into the hole. If he does not find any ore, he pays the bank the designated amount for mining in that area and his turn ends. If he does strike ore, he pays for the cost of mining and places his ore in his container (or he may sell it outright to the bank). In addition, he must file a claim in order to protect his mine.

A claim is filed by paying the bank a certain designated sum (for example \$100.00), which entitles the player to put his "rock pile" marker on or beside the mine. In addition, if a player feels that he may have struck a particularly rich pocket or vein, he may file claims for one or two other adjoining holes at the same time, with the same "filing fee" applying to each mine. If however another player desires these mines, he may bid for them, with the ultimate high bidder placing his markers on the mines and thus establishing ownership.

If a player, after discovering ore, should not file a claim for the mine either on purpose (assuming that he had gotten all the ore in his first probe) or accidentally, any other player could mine that hole on his next turn and thereby "jump" the claim. A player's turn ends 5 when he mines a hole and does or does not file a claim. An empty hole would be marked with a thumbtack, and a mine still being "worked" would be marked with the player's pile of rocks.

Since all touching pieces of ore will cling together 10 when magnetized by the probe, it is possible to withdraw as many as six or seven pieces of ore at one time by using care. However, occasionally a few pieces of ore will drop off and can be heard dropping back into the chamber. When this happens it is possible that they 15 will roll to an area beneath another mine, in which case it might be desirable to remine a hole that had previously been found empty. This may be done according to the same procedures as mentioned above (only by the owner, of course).

If a player should at some time require a loan, he may obtain a "grubstake" from the bank of any amount he should need. The amount of interest would be equal to half the amount of ore he discovered in his next producing mine, and the entire amount would be repay- 25 able within a certain designated number of turns.

Play would end when a certain amount (perhaps \$100,000.00) were acquired by any player, or when mutually agreeable with the richest player being the winner. All the ore in possession of the players and the bank would be returned to the inside of the board via the funnel-shaped filling mouth 17. We claim: 30

1. A game for blind retrieval of hidden counters, comprising:

a playing board including spaced top and bottom 35 panels and a marginal frame cooperatively defining a shallow, counter-retaining chamber; said top panel having a plurality of retrieval apertures;

means on said bottom panel defining a plurality of 40 counter-retaining indentations in an internal bottom surface opposed to said apertures;

a plurality of counters of magnetic material of pellet 45 form subject to random distribution over said internal bottom surface and into some of said indentations by chance, in response to shaking of said board, the form and dimensions of said counters being such as to readily travel over said bottom surface and to pass through said apertures, said counters normally being contained within said chamber; 50

at least a majority of said indentations being of sufficient area horizontally so that a plurality of said counters may be contained in a single indentation side by side;

and an extractor comprising a bar magnet adapted when applied to a selected retrieval aperture above a counter resting in an indentation beneath said selected aperture, to extract said counter through said selected aperture, and in some instances, when several counters are in said indentation and within the zone of magnetic action of said magnet when applied to the selected aperture, to extract several counters clinging to one another.

2. A game as defined in claim 1, wherein said counters are of spherical ball form.

3. A game as defined in claim 2, wherein said counters are of a ferrous metal.

4. A game as defined in claim 1, including a filling opening of funnel shape, for returning extracted counters to said chamber.

5. A game as defined in claim 1, including a representation of a landscape appropriate to the retrieval operation of the game, displayed on the exposed surface of said top panel, said counters representing ore to be mined and being of different colors representing different values.

6. A game as defined in claim 1, said apertures being of such depth in relation to diameter as to hide the counters within said chamber from the view of the players.

7. A game as defined in claim 6, wherein said top panel is of a thickness such as to provide said depth of the apertures.

8. A game as defined in claim 6, wherein said top panel is of thin material and said aperture depth is provided for by integral collars depending therefrom and defining said apertures.

9. A game as defined in claim 1, wherein said extractor includes a probe depending from said bar magnet and receivable in a selected aperture, said probe being of a length such as to substantially reach said internal bottom surface.

10. A game as defined in claim 1, wherein said extractor is a plain bar magnet and said chamber is of such shallowness as to bring the counters therein within the zone of magnetic attraction of said magnet when applied to said top panel.

* * * * *