An electric light ornament and decoration device for Christmas trees, in which a plurality of electric light bulbs are provided in a cluster or group on a body member, which is adapted to be installed interiorly of the tree, and with retractable cords for energizing the individual bulbs from the body member which itself is energized from an associated electric source.
CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENT AND DECORATION DEVICE

This invention relates to a set of decorative or ornamental lights for a Christmas tree, and, by the basic concept of the invention, a set of lights are each provided on a retractable cord emanating from a central body member hidden or concealed within the interior of the tree. An overall advantage of the retractability of the individual lights of the set, due to the several specific and advantages mentioned below, is that it provides a particularly desirable means for achieving the several advantages of a single-center light set in contrast to a linear strand type of light set.

By the single-center type, the tree-decorator may precisely locate or re-locate any certain light in its optimum or desired location, independently of the location of other lights in the set, an advantage not readily obtainable with linear strand light sets without great bother and decorating skill. Moreover, a single-center light set may be relatively easily added to a tree after many of the other decorations have been affixed, without unduly disturbing the other decorations; in contrast, linear strand light sets are desirably installed only in the first stage of the overall tree-decoration project, and this limits the ease of the tree-decoration project, particularly for "perfectionists" who may desire to improve the tree decoration. (Many persons who display no particular artistic aptitude throughout the remainder of the year probably consider themselves very skilled at decorating a Christmas tree, and are irritated and unsatisfied unless the tree decoration is nearly perfect, both to add artistic beauty to the tree and to effectively conceal irregularities and other imperfections of the tree itself. Decoration of the tree by children is easier, because of the above advantages, and adult supervision is not so much needed, nor need it be so strict as to cause family friction or cause the children to feel unduly inhibited.

The retractability of all the lights, with respect to a central body member, permits the several specific advantages: (a) The retractability permits entire set to be easily and conveniently thrust, as an entire assembly, into the interior of the tree during original installation of the set to a tree; (b) The retractability of all the lights similarly permits ease of removal of the set from the tree when the tree is to be "taken down" after the season is over; (c) The retractability of all the lights provides great convenience in many phases of the light storage, handling, distribution, boxing, etc.; (d) The retractability of all the lights permits relatively long cords but without the bother and inconvenience of snarling or tangling which is an inherently bothersome and annoying characteristic of linear strand sets or even some single-center sets; and (e) The retractability permits the individual lights to be located at various distances from the central body member, without leaving unsightly loops or sags in association with lights which are spaced or located at least distance from the body member than are other lights of the set, thus optimally permitting the location of individual lights at the specific location for the specific decorative arrangement or pattern desired, and also accommodating the use of the device on trees which lack symmetry of their trunk or branches, and on large trees or trees so located in a room that it is desired that any one of the light sets would be used for just a portion of a single face of the tree.

The above description is of introductory and generalized nature. More specific details and features of the overall inventive concepts will be further apparent from the following more detailed description of an illustrative embodiment of the invention, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a pictorial view of a Christmas tree with three of the light ornament sets of the present invention installed thereon, most of the tree foliage or needles being omitted in the drawing for more clarity of illustrating the light ornament sets;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged pictorial detail view of one of the light ornament sets installed around a portion of the tree trunk, one of the lights being shown as pulled outwardly of the cluster of the others;

FIG. 3 is a pictorial view of the ornament set shown in FIG. 2, but with the body member thereof shown in an open position prior to assembly thereof onto a tree;

FIG. 4 is a schematic electric circuit representation;

FIG. 5 is a further enlarged detail view of one of the lights of the light cluster or set of FIGS. 2 and 3, but generally in a cross sectional representation to illustrate extendability and retractability details of the individual light, the parts being in a locked position;

FIG. 6 is a cross sectional view similar to FIG. 5, but with the parts in a released position.

As shown in the drawings, three electric light ornaments and/or decorative devices 10 for a Christmas tree 12 are shown in FIG. 1, and the devices 10 or portions thereof are shown in FIG. 1 and in FIGS. 2 through 5, in an embodiment illustrative of the inventive concepts. Three of the device sets 10 in FIG. 1 illustrate a typical installation, but of course less or more could be used depending upon the user's tastes, other decorations, etc.

Each set 10 is shown as including a body member 14 having a plurality of electric lights 16 each having a socket or support 17 with a support clip 17a, and a flexible electric cord 18 for powering each light 16, and it will be understood (FIG. 4) that each cord 18 is electrically connected (in parallel circuitry manner) to a power circuit 20 carried in each body member 14, that circuit 20 shown having connected thereto an inlet circuit (in the form of a flexible cord 22 with a conventional male plug 24) and an outlet circuit 26 connected to a female receptacle 28 on the upper face of the body member 14, providing convenience of multiple-set installations, the lowermost cord plug 24 being plugged into a convenient power source (not shown) and the plug 24 of each successive cluster body 14 being plugged into the next-adjacent lower cluster body outlet 28.

According to the inventive concepts, the body member 14 provides a cluster grouping of the individual lights 16 of a cluster set, the power cord 18 of each of which is provided with retractability means. This provides that each individual light 16 may be individually withdrawn from the body member 14, and pulled to any selected position spaced from the body member or cluster 14 yet still electrically energized; and, further, the retractability is such that no substantial tension will exist between the body member 14 and the individual light 16 while it is in the selected light-decorative position; yet upon a certain retraction-actuating movement being applied with reference to that light 16, the retrac-
tion means causes sufficient tension to exist between the body member 14 and the light 16 as to cause it to be retracted to the body member 14.

This is illustratively shown in the drawings as follows: Noting particularly FIGS. 5 and 6, it will be noted that the body member 14 is shown as having a movable reel-support 30 associated with each light 16, each such support carrying a reel 18a of each wire 18 carried on a shaft 32 biased by a spring 34 to wound or light-retracted position.

The reel-support 30 of each light 16 is shown movably connected to body member 14 by small springs 36; and an actuator plunger 38 having an out-turned lower end 40 is disposed in a vertical hole 42 of body member 14, providing that the reel-support 30 may be manually pushed from a reel-locked position (FIG. 5) to a reel-released position (FIG. 6) by pushing downwardly on the plunger 38.

A simple twist of the plunger 38 from an in-line position (FIG. 5) to an out-turned position (FIG. 6), against the bias of springs 36, maintains the parts in reel-released position; although in the plunger-released (raised) position of plunger 38 it will be noted that the reel 18a is snubbed frictionally against the lowerside of body member 14, relieving tension in cable 18 in any position thereof.

The body member 14 is shown (noting particularly FIGS. 2 and 3) of two portions 14a and 14b each of a generally semi-circular shape, interconnected by a hinge means 42, the semi-circular inner wall 44 of each body-member 14a and 14b co-operating to embrace the trunk 12a of the Christmas tree 12.

Suitable releasable latch means 46a and 46b are desirably provided to hold the body-parts 14a and 14b in closed or trunk-embracing position.

As stated above, the cluster body 14, or as many bodies 14 are desired, may be installed each as a lighted unit onto the tree trunk 12a or some other interior tree location. All the cords 18 are in their retracted position.

Then, as each light 16 is desired to be utilized, its associated release actuator 38 is depressed with the user's one hand (FIG. 6 position) while he holds the light 16 with his other hand, pulling it against the tension of the associated reel-spring 34 and storing energy into that spring 34.

After suitably affixing that light 16 in a desired location, he releases the plunger 38 to permit the springs 36 to cause the reel 18a to frictionally bear against the body member 14, snubbing (as at 51) the reel 18a against further movement yet permitting the light-retraction energy of reel-spring 34 to remain stored and not be pulling on the light 16.

Then applying retraction-actuation movement to that light, here as shown by depressing the associated plunger 38, the retraction spring 34 will cause tension to exist in that wire 18, that is, between the body member 14 and that light 16, to cause the light to be retracted into the compact cluster until again it is desired to withdraw that light 16 for re-positioning.

It is thus seen that a Christmas tree ornament and decoration device provides novel and advantageous concepts and features of construction and operativity. Accordingly, it will thus be seen from the foregoing description of the invention according to this illustrative embodiment, considered with the accompanying drawings, that the present invention provides a new and useful electric light ornament and decoration device, having desired advantages and characteristics, and accomplishing its intended objects, including those hereinabove pointed out and others which are inherent in the invention.

Modifications and variations may be effected without departing from the scope of the novel concepts of the invention; accordingly, the invention is not limited to the specific form or arrangement of parts herein shown or described.

What is claimed is:
1. An electric light ornament and/or decorative device for Christmas trees, having a body member means and a plurality of individual light means, the several individual light means being electrically connected to a common electric power source associated with the said body member by flexible connecting wires of respective individual flexible cable means, in a combination in which there are provided retractability-providing means associated with the body member means and the said flexible cable means, whereby said individual light means may be individually withdrawn to any selected position spaced from said body member means still being electrically energized from said common electric power source, and in said selected position no substantial tension will exist between the body member means and the said individual light means so positioned, but, upon a certain retraction-actuating movement being applied to said so-positioned individual light means, the said retraction-providing means will cause sufficient tension to exist between the body member means and the said individual light means as to cause it to be retracted to said body member means;

and in which the said retractability-providing means is operatively associated with the flexible cable means of the individual light means so that its causing of tension in the said retraction operation is tension existing in the said cable means associated with said light means being retracted.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,752,407 Dated August 14, 1973

Inventor(s): Ronald K. Baugh et al.

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 1, after line 40, insert

Furthermore, the advantageous ease of tree-decorating with these single-center light set devices in that the single-center set may be installed by a simple "radial" thrust of the set into any opening in the periphery of the tree, either manually or with some simple tongs; and, similarly, any of the individual lights may be positioned merely by reaching inwardly of the tree periphery, manually or with some sort of tongs, at merely the location where a light is desired, which location, by the fact that it is a location where a light is desired, will usually be an "open" location or spot of the tree periphery.

The symmetry of lighting pattern may be thus made as detailed or perfect as desired, easily and conveniently, even after the other, and often fragile or easily-disturbed ornaments and decorations, have been applied to the tree. The lighting may be installed or changed even after tree coatings have been applied, such as "angel hair", "snow-foam", etc.

Further advantages are in removal of the light set after the Christmas season, for then the tree needles are usually particularly sharp and stiff; and thus the job of manually removing a light strand can be a quite inconvenient and even painful nuisance. Here, however, with a light set of central-body type, the set-removal is quite easy and convenient; for the user merely lets each light be drawn back to the central body member, and then the entire set is easily removed manually or by tongs, in what is in effect a single motion of removal of the whole set as unit. --.
UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,752,407 Dated August 14, 1973
Inventor(s) Ronald K. Baugh et al. Page - 2

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 4, line 36, before "still" insert -- while --.

Signed and sealed this 27th day of August 1974.

(SEAL)
Attest:

McCoy M. Gibson, Jr. C. Marshall Dann
Attesting Officer Commissioner of Patents