

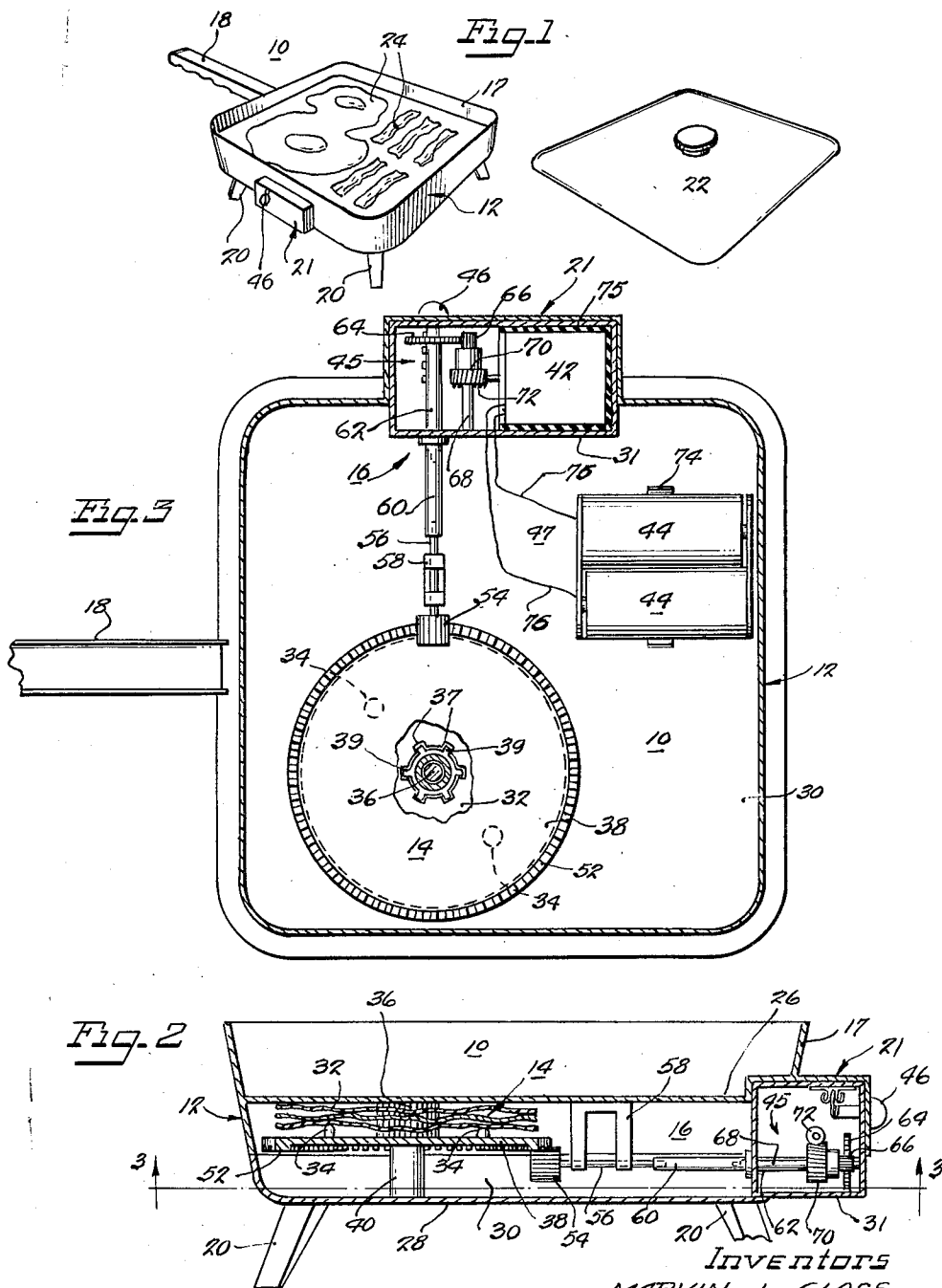
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TOY COOKING UTENSIL WITH SOUNDING MEANS

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3,120,717 TOY COOKING UTENSIL WITH SOUNDING MEANS

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This invention relates generally to toys, and more particularly to toys which are especially suited for young girls and which provide features closely simulating commonplace occurrences in the home, whereby heightened realism can be obtained when "playing house."

"Playing house" is a very popular activity for young girls who have always been particularly anxious to "act like grownups" and to imitate the actions of their mothers. In order to satisfy this natural desire of young girls, various toy items have been provided in the past, such as for instance, tea sets and toy appliances which were intended to permit play along the lines of mother's activities. Some cooking utensil companies have been produced miniature pots and pans so that the younger children can have play toys which are imitations of mother's pots and pans. However, allowing young children to use them on a stove would create quite a danger to the children. On the other hand, continued play with the toys without being able to use them puts a heavy load on the child's imagination and his interest tends to fade quickly.

Accordingly, the invention has for its principal object the provision of an improved toy which closely resembles a cooking utensil and which produces an activity closely associated with the use by mother of her pots and pans. Another, more specific, object of the invention is to provide a toy cooking utensil which produces a crackling sound resembling the sound produced by certain foods, such as for instance, bacon or fried potatoes, when they are being fried. A further object is to provide such a toy which is safe for young children.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a toy cooking utensil, such as a griddle or a frying pan, containing a suitable concealed mechanism for producing a crackling sound effect. A still further object of the invention is the provision of a toy of the type referred to above which is economical in construction but is, nevertheless, sufficiently sturdy and durable to provide long hours of play.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent by reference to the following description and the accompanying drawings of one embodiment of the invention.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a toy electric frying pan embodying various features of the present invention;

FIGURE 2 is an enlarged sectional side view of the toy frying pan shown in FIG. 1; and

FIGURE 3 is a sectional plan view taken along line 3—3 of FIG. 2, partially broken away.

The illustrated embodiment of the present invention is a toy electric, single unit, frying pan, simulating the appearance of a real pan of that type, and including means for simulating the crackling sound of foods being cooked. Without departing from its scope, the present invention may be implemented in a variety of ways other than in an embodiment such as that shown in the drawings, the most obvious examples being a griddle and a simple, old-fashioned frying pan used with a stove or heater unit.

Generally, the illustrated frying pan 10 comprises a body, frame or housing 12, and sound-producing means 14 connected to the body 12 for producing a sound simulating that of a food product being cooked. In addition, the preferred embodiment is provided with means 16 for selectively actuating the sound producing means 14.

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More particularly, and as seen best in FIG. 1, the illustrated toy frying pan 10 has the external appearance of a full-sized, single unit, electric frying pan of the general type which may be placed upon any supporting surface and plugged into an outlet by means of a suitable connection cord. The connection cord has been omitted in the preferred embodiment of the toy, making the toy simpler and safer, by providing the power necessary for its operation from its own low voltage batteries, as will be explained more fully below.

The body 12 of the illustrated pan 10 is a generally square box which is rounded along its bottom edges and has an upwardly extending wall 17 around its upper edges. The upper surface of the box provides the cooking surface for the pan. Secured to the body 12 are a suitable handle 18 and four supporting legs 20. To further enhance the realism, a simulated plug-in box 21 is provided at the side of the pan. If desired, a cover 22, such as that shown in FIG. 1, may be provided, as well as simulated food products 24, such as the eggs and bacon also shown in that figure. These food products 24 may be made from any suitable material such as rubber or plastic.

The body 12 defines a cavity or compartment 30 in which the sound producing means 14 and the actuating means 16 of the device are located. The body 12 may be constructed in a variety of ways, one convenient mode of fabrication being that shown in the drawings. As shown particularly in FIG. 2, the illustrated body 12 is comprised, primarily, of an upper section 26 and a lower section 28, which two sections may be secured together by any convenient means such as by the use of an adhesive or fasteners, to provide the compartment 30. A support box 31 is secured to the body 12 in one end of the compartment 30, and it provides a portion of the plug-in box 21 as well as a housing and support for certain mechanism of the device, as will be explained below in more detail.

The illustrated sound-producing means 14, generally comprises a plurality of flexible, resilient, thin corrugated or crumpled sheets 32 of material such as metallic foil or shim stock which will produce a crackling sound when deformed. The illustrated sound-producing means 14 also includes elements 34 which are so positioned and so movable relative to the sheets as to engage them to produce the desired crackling sound of food being cooked. More specifically, and as best seen in FIG. 2, a vertical cylindrical shaft 36 is fixed to the upper section 26 of the body 12 and extends downwardly in the compartment 30 toward the lower section 28. A generally horizontal, rotatable member or wheel 38 is positioned about the shaft 36 and is freely rotatable about its axis. The wheel 38 is supported intermediate the sections 26 and 28 by means of a bushing 40 fixed to the underside of the wheel 38, extending downwardly around the shaft 36, and resting against the lower section 28 of the body 12. In the illustrated device, a number of sheets 32 of washer shape are stacked upon one another and around the shaft 36, being located between the wheel 38 and the upper section 26 of the body 12. The sheets 32 are keyed to the shaft 36, to prevent them from rotating with the wheel, by virtue of notches 37 in the sheets which receive vertically extending and circumferentially spaced ribs 39 that are fixed to the shaft 36.

Fixed to the upper surface of the wheel 38, in the illustrated toy, are a pair of upwardly extending, spaced apart projections or elements 34 whose upper ends are rounded. As shown in FIG. 2, the illustrated elements 34 are located on a diameter of the wheel 38, being generally equally spaced on opposite sides of the wheel's center of rotation. The elements 34, the sheets 32, and the spacing between the wheel 38 and the upper section 26 of the frame should be such that the elements 34 will

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contact the crumpled sheets 32. The contact serves to compress or urge the sheets against one another and against the upper section 26 of the body 12. The elements 34 tend to deform and compress opposed portions of the crumpled sheets 32 which they contact, and also tend to induce the bending of the sheets along a line connecting the two elements and extending generally along a diameter of the sheets. When the wheel 38 is rotated, the elements 34, of the illustrated toy, move in circular paths and revolve the line of bending of the sheets, causing bending to take place along a succession of diameters of said sheets. The resilient nature of the material from which the sheets 32 are made causes a deformed portion of the sheets to spring or rebound back after an element 34 has moved past it. The continuous deformation and compression of the sheets 32 provides changing patterns of tension therein, providing a crackling sound simulating that of food being cooked.

As relative movement between the elements 34 and the sheets 32 creates the desired crackling sound, the disclosed construction constitutes only one preferred form. In this regard, the sheets could be moved while retaining the elements stationary. Also, the exact configuration and arrangement of the sheets may be varied and the number of sheets used may be changed. It also appears obvious that the particular arrangement of the elements 34, their particular size and number, and their exact location may be varied considerably, all within the teaching of the present invention.

The illustrated selective actuating means 16 which are operative to rotate the wheel 38 comprises, generally, a small electric motor 42 powered by a pair of batteries 44 to drive a gear train 45. A manually operatable switch 46 is provided to open and close a circuit 47 connecting the motor to the batteries.

Specifically, the underside of the wheel 38 has a plurality of teeth 52 arranged around its circumference. These teeth 52 engage with a small gear 54 fixed on a horizontal shaft 56 which, in turn, is rotatably supported by a bracket 58 secured to the upper section 26 of the body 12. Rotation of the gear 54 serves to rotate the wheel 38. The shaft 56 is connected by a flexible link 60 to a second horizontal shaft 62 which is rotatably mounted in the support box 31 of the body 12. Fixed to the shaft 62 is a gear 64 which meshes with another gear 66 that is fixed to a third horizontal shaft 68, also rotatably mounted in the support box 31.

Also fixed to the shaft 68 is a gear 70 which meshes with a worm gear 72 secured to the shaft of the motor 42. The batteries 44 are held in suitable brackets 74 on the body 12, and the motor 42 is mounted in the support box 31 of the body 12 in a rubber casing 75 to minimize vibrations. Suitable electrical wires 76, together with the switch 46, provide the complete circuit 47 between the batteries 44 and the motor 42. The switch 46, which may be located at any convenient point and is shown in the plug-in box 21 in the preferred embodiment, is movable between two positions: one position wherein the circuit 47 is completed or closed to operate the toy; and the second position wherein the

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circuit is open so that the toy is inoperative. Thus, when the switch 46 is turned on, the rotation of the motor is transmitted to the small gear 54 and then to the wheel 38, causing it to rotate, although obviously at a much slower speed than the motor 42.

The speed with which the wheel 38 rotates will effect the sound produced by the toy, and it may be made whatever speed is desired and is most desirable for a particular embodiment of the toy by any of a number of obvious means such as changing certain gears. It would also be within the scope of this invention to provide means for varying the speed of rotation of the wheel 38.

Thus, a self-contained, toy cooking utensil is provided which realistically simulates the operation of a real life cooking utensil, but which is not dangerous. The illustrated toy has concealed means for simulating the crackling sound of food being cooked, giving the child's mind a springboard to imagine herself preparing dinner in the world of grownup people.

The present invention may be varied in many respects without departing from its full scope, the specific examples set forth in the course of the description being only illustrative and in no way exhaustive of the many possible variations.

Various features of the invention are set forth in the following claim.

What is claimed is:

A toy comprising a unit having the appearance of a cooking utensil, sound producing means supported within said unit for creating a sound simulating the crackling of a food product being fried, said sound producing means including a plurality of relatively thin and flexible deformed sheets of a metallic material which produces a crackling sound when further deformed, said sheets being generally circular and positioned closely adjacent one another in superposed relation and having their central portions fixed to said unit, a circular rotatable member coaxially disposed with respect to said sheets and adjacent thereto, a plurality of projections on said rotatable member in positions of engagement with outer portions of the adjacent sheet, and drive means on said unit operable to effect movement of said rotatable member to cause engagement of said projections with successive portions of the sheets to thereby provide further deformation and relative movement of said sheets to produce a crackling sound in the unit.

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