

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JAMES D. CULP, OF GILROY, CALIFORNIA.

IMPROVEMENT IN CURING LEAF TOBACCO.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 123,154, dated January 30, 1872.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JAMES D. CULP, of Gilroy, county of Santa Clara and State of California, have invented a new and Improved Process for Curing Leaf Tobacco, of which the following is a full, clear, and exact description:

The object of my invention is to prevent the tobacco drying before it has reached the desired color, and also to prevent an escape of the aroma from the leaf.

The common mode of treating tobacco after it is cut is to hang it vertically with the butt of the stalk upward, and the leaves necessarily hanging more or less close together. Thus it is left to dry rapidly and unevenly, much of it with an ugly green color; and, as the drying is dependent upon the condition of the weather, the proper color of the leaf is not secured, and the aroma of the tobacco is lost.

By my improved process these difficulties are avoided, and the color of the leaf and the fine quality of the tobacco no longer depend upon the soil and climate.

When the tobacco has been cut and gathered into a close house it is packed in piles about six feet long and two feet high. It is allowed to remain in this position until it heats and reaches about 100° Fahrenheit. This may require from one to three days, according to the particular time of day the tobacco has been cut. When the "pile" has reached about the required state of heat the leaves of the tobacco will be found to be covered with moisture. The tobacco is then hung up in a horizontal position, thus allowing the leaves to hang apart. To hang the tobacco in a horizontal position I erect in a close room a scaffolding of scantling, and horizontally on each side of the vertical

scantling I nail strips of plank, the lower edge of each alternate strip being about an inch higher than the upper edge of the strip on the opposite side of the scantling. The butt of the tobacco-stalks are placed over the lower strip and the end brought under the edge of the higher one on the opposite side of the scantling, and the stalk is left suspended in a horizontal position, and the leaves hang vertically and separated. The arrangement I have described for hanging tobacco in a horizontal position I have found very convenient, but it may be varied to suit tastes or circumstances.

The tobacco having been hung up in the position described, all the surface moisture is allowed to evaporate, when the tobacco is taken down and subjected again to the heating process. As the purpose is to secure to the tobacco a rich brown color when cured, the piling and heating may have to be repeated three or even four times. An inspection of the tobacco being cured will readily indicate to the skilled manipulator when the leaf has been sufficiently heated. When the requisite color to the leaf has been obtained the tobacco is allowed to hang in the rack until sufficiently dry for packing.

By this process I am enabled to secure a fine color and a flavor equal to the best Havana tobacco, independently of both soil and climate.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The above-described process for curing leaf tobacco.

JAMES D. CULP.

Witnesses:

JNO. D. PATTEN,
A. H. EVANS.