July 30, 1968 J. NELSON 3,394,438

ADJUSTABLE BELT

Filed Dec. 1, 1966 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

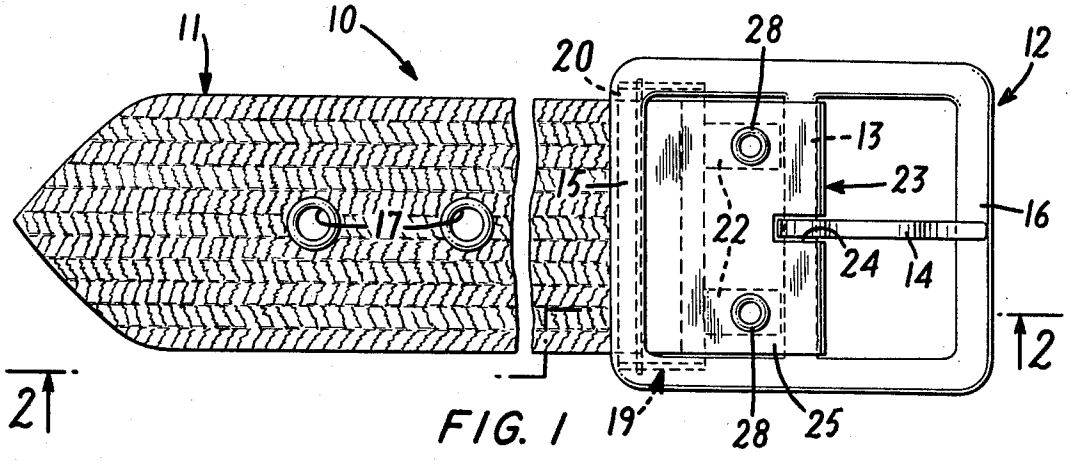

FIG. 1

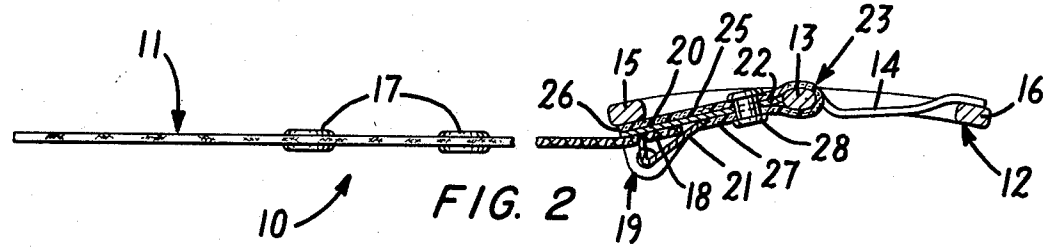

FIG. 2

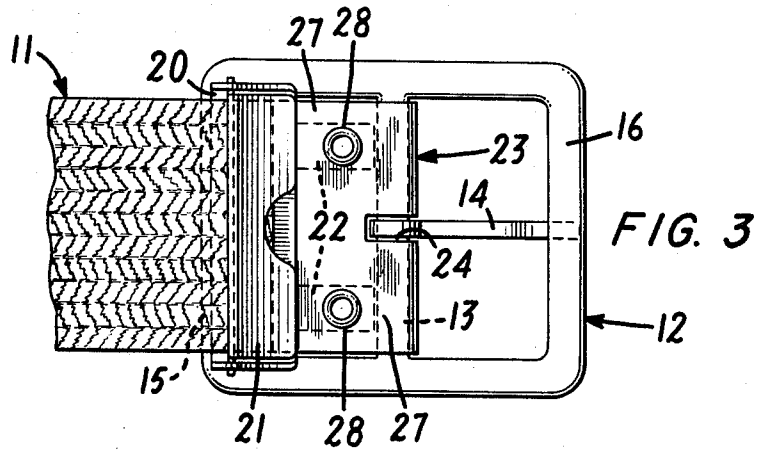

FIG. 3

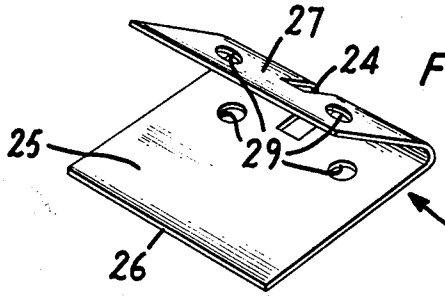

FIG. 4

INVENTOR.
JOSEPH NELSON

BY Brumbaugh, Free, Graves & Donohue

his ATTORNEYS

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ADJUSTABLE BELT

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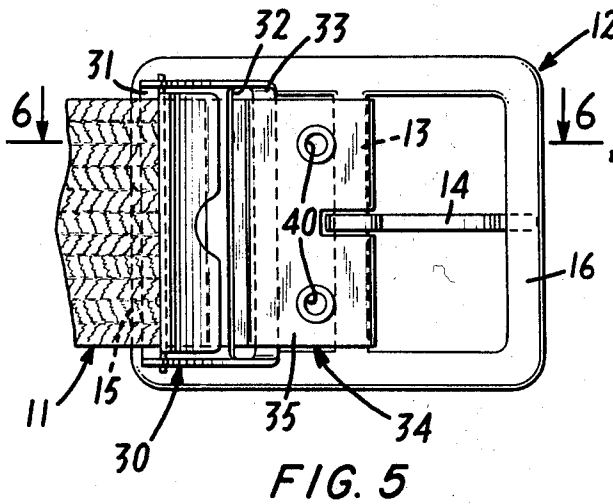

FIG. 5

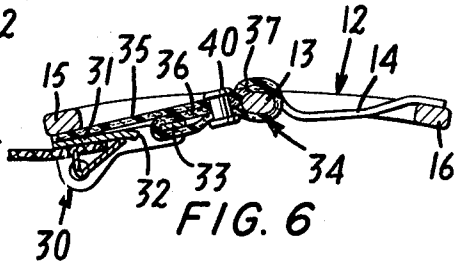

FIG. 6

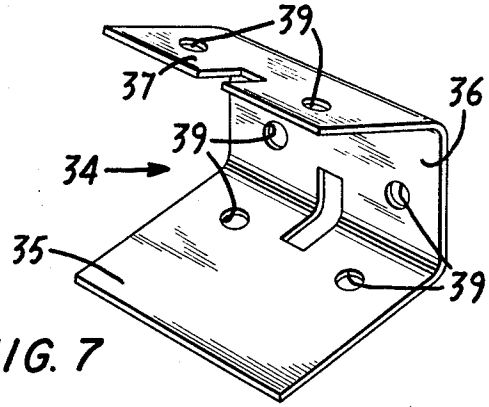

FIG. 7

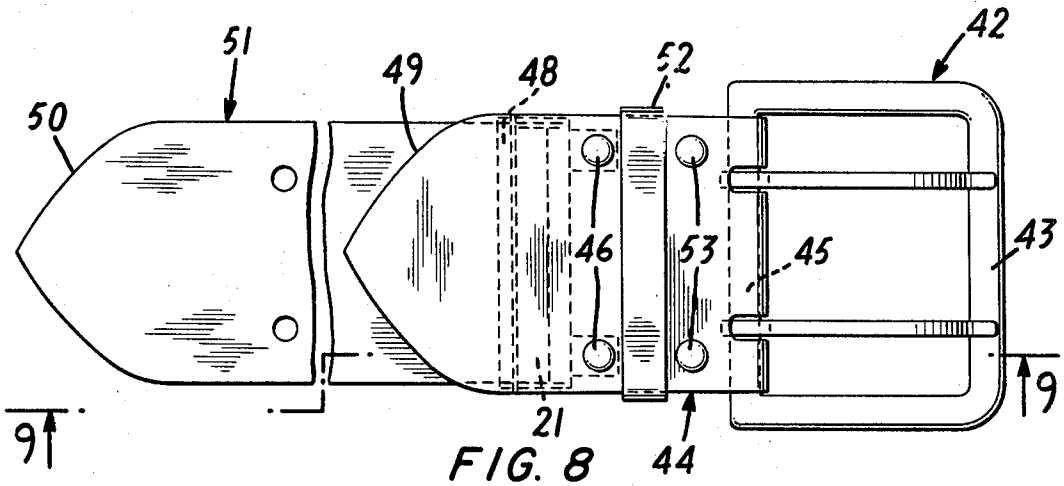

FIG. 8

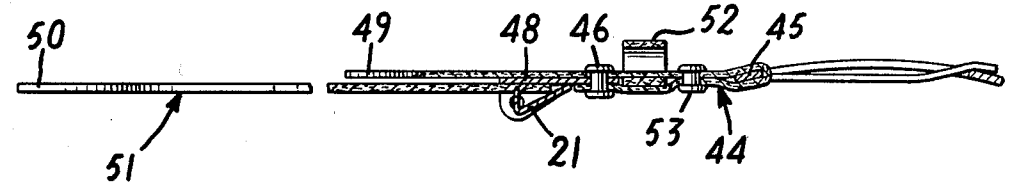

FIG. 9

INVENTOR.
JOSEPH NELSON

BY

Brumbaugh, Free, Graves & Donohue

his ATTORNEYS

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3,394,438

ADJUSTABLE BELT

Joseph Nelson, 281 E. Linden Ave.,
Englewood, N.J. 07631

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6 Claims. (Cl. 24—178)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In the embodiments of the invention described herein, a belt buckle is attached to a ratchet by a connecting piece of belt material and the main portion of the belt, adapted to be cut to a desired length, is removably attached to the ratchet. The belt material connecting the ratchet to the buckle may be the same as or different from that of the belt portion and either a center cross bar or harness buckle may be used.

This invention relates to adjustable belts and, more particularly, to a new and improved adjustable belt in which the buckle is attached to the belt portion by a ratchet.

In order to avoid the necessity for maintaining a large stock of belts of different sizes in every style, it has been proposed heretofore to provide a belt in which the buckle is attached to the belt by a ratchet, thereby permitting adjustment of the length of the belt. In the past, however, the ratchet has been attached directly to the cross bar of the buckle, thus making the ratchet readily visible when the belt is displayed for sale. This not only detracts from the overall appearance of the belt but also requires a careful matching of the paint or finish of the ratchet with the color of the belt material.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a new and improved adjustable belt which overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages of the prior art.

Another object of the invention is to provide a new and improved ratchet-type adjustable belt in which the ratchet is effectively concealed.

A further object of the invention is to provide a belt of the above type which does not have the appearance of an adjustable belt.

These and other objects of the invention are attained by connecting the ratchet in an adjustable belt to the belt buckle by a piece of belt material which conceals the ratchet when viewed from the front of the belt. More particularly, a short connecting piece of belt material passing around the cross bar of the buckle is attached to the ratchet on the rear or inside and extends over the ratchet on the front or outside of the belt. In center cross bar buckles, the connecting piece of belt material may end beneath one end bar of the buckle so as to be invisible in use. For harness buckles, the connecting piece of material may be formed with an attractively appearing terminal edge.

Further objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent from a reading of the following description in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a front view of a representative adjustable belt arranged according to the invention;

FIG. 2 is a side view partly in section taken along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1 and looking in the direction of the arrows;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary rear view of the belt shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the connecting piece of belt material used in the embodiment shown in FIGS. 1–3;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary rear view of another adjustable belt according to the invention using a different type of ratchet;

FIG. 6 is a view in longitudinal section taken along the line 6—6 of FIG. 5 and looking in the direction of the arrows;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the connecting piece of belt material used in the embodiment of FIGS. 5 and 6;

FIG. 8 is a front view of another form of adjustable belt prepared in accordance with the invention utilizing a different type of buckle; and

FIG. 9 is a side view partly in section taken along the line 9—9 of FIG. 8 and looking in the direction of the arrows.

In the embodiment of the invention shown in FIGS. 1, 2, and 3, an adjustable belt 10 includes a belt portion 11, partly broken away for convenience in illustration, and an open buckle 12 having a center cross bar 13 supporting a tongue 14 and two end bars 15 and 16 on opposite sides of the cross bar. The belt portion 11 includes two or more eyelets 17 to receive the tongue 14 when in use and, in order to avoid the necessity for stocking various sizes, the adjacent end 18 of the belt portion 11 is joined to the buckle 12 by a ratchet 19. Consequently, the belt 10 may be stocked with only the longest required length of belt portion 11 and the end 18 may be cut to the proper length by the wearer and clamped in the ratchet 19.

The ratchet 19 is of the usual type and, in the belt shown in FIGS. 1–3, comprises a backing plate 20 supporting a rotatable clamp 21 and having two apertured extensions 22 projecting toward the center bar of the buckle 12. If desired, of course, any other type of releasable holding device may be used in place of the ratchet 19.

In order to attach the buckle 12 to the ratchet 19 while effectively concealing the ratchet in accordance with the invention, a short connecting piece of belt material 23, having an aperture 24 for the tongue 14, is wrapped about the across bar 13 of the buckle. The front portion 25 of the connecting piece 23 of belt material is cut long enough to completely cover the backing plate 20 of the ratchet and, in the illustrated embodiment, is cut so that its end 26 lies directly beneath the end bar 15 of the buckle. The rear portion 27 of the connecting piece 23 lies in back of the ratchet extensions 22 and, in the illustrated embodiment, is shorter than the front portion 25 so that it terminates adjacent to the end of the ratchet clamp 21. Two rivets 28, passing through corresponding holes 29 in the front and rear portions of the connecting piece and also through the apertures of the extensions 22, affix the connecting piece to the ratchet so as to retain the ratchet and the buckle 12 together.

In this way, the presence of the ratchet 20 is effectively concealed when the belt is viewed from the front as displayed for sale, for example, and the belt has the visual continuity of a fixed length belt. Moreover, if the connecting piece 23 is of the same material as the belt portion 11, it has the appearance of a conventionally attached belt and buckle. If desired, however, the material or the color of the belt portion 11 and the connecting piece 23 may be different, either to produce a desired contrasting effect or to conform the connecting piece to the appearance of the buckle where the belt portion 11 has a different type of surface such as that of a fabric. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 1–3, the belt 11 has a fabric surface whereas the connecting piece 23 is made of a smooth surface material such as leather, having an appearance similar to that of the buckle.

The arrangement shown in FIGS. 5 and 6 differs from that of FIGS. 1–3 in the structure of the ratchet 30. In this case, the backing plate 31 of the ratchet has a rec-

tangular central aperture 32 between the main portion of the plate and a parallel bar 33. To attach the buckle 12 to this ratchet, a connecting piece of belt material 34, having the configuration shown in FIG. 7, is used. In addition to the front portion 35 and a rear portion 36, this connecting piece also has an extension 37 of the rear portion which, as shown in FIG. 6, is folded back toward the cross bar 13 around the ratchet bar 33. Apertures 39 are provided in all three portions to receive corresponding rivets 40 so as to hold the connecting piece assembled to the ratchet and the buckle.

As shown in FIGS. 8 and 9, the invention is also useful in connection with a belt having a harness buckle 42 in which only one end bar 43 is included. In this case, a connecting piece 44 of belt material passes around the cross bar 45 of the buckle and is permanently attached to a ratchet of the type shown in FIGS. 1–3 with two rivets 46 in the same manner as described in connection with that embodiment. To conceal the presence of the ratchet, however, the front portion 48 of the connecting piece extends beyond the ratchet and terminates in a tapered end 49, complementing the tapered end 50 of the belt portion 51. In addition, because of the permanent attachment of the connecting piece to the buckle, a loop 52 of the same material as the connecting piece may be attached by passing it between the front and rear portions of the piece and retaining it in place by two further rivets 53.

If desired, in an alternative embodiment, the end 49 of the connecting piece 44 of FIGS. 8 and 9 may be cut square rather than tapered and the loop 52 may be mounted at the end of the front portion of the connecting piece so as to conceal the termination of that piece.

In the embodiments of FIGS. 8 and 9, the material of the connecting piece 44 is preferably the same as that of the belt portion 41. If desired, however, different materials may be used to provide contrasting effects. Moreover, in all of the embodiments, any of the conventional belt materials such as leather, plastic, fabrics and the like may be used for both the belt portion and the connecting piece.

Although the invention has been described herein with reference to specific embodiments, many modifications and variations therein will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, all such variations and modifications are included within the intended scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.

I claim:

1. In an adjustable belt comprising a buckle having a cross bar for attachment to a belt, a belt portion having a remote end adapted to be connected to the buckle in use and an adjacent end, and releasable holding means comprising at least two rigid relatively movable members which cooperate to receive and hold the adjacent end of the belt portion, the improvement comprising a connecting piece of belt material joining the releasable holding means to the cross bar of the buckle and extending in front of the entire portion of the releasable holding means disposed in front of the belt portion to conceal the releasable holding means completely as viewed when in use.

2. An adjustable belt according to claim 1 wherein the releasable holding means has a backing plate with at least one extension projecting toward the buckle cross bar and including means for affixing the connecting piece of belt material to the backing plate extension.

3. An adjustable belt according to claim 1 wherein the releasable holding means has a backing plate with an opening through which the connecting piece passes.

4. In an adjustable belt comprising a buckle having a cross bar for attachment to a belt, a belt portion having a remote end adapted to be connected to the buckle in use and an adjacent end, and releasable holding means for receiving and holding the adjacent end of the belt portion, the improvement comprising a connecting piece of belt material joining the releasable holding means to the cross bar of the buckle and extending in front of the releasable holding means as viewed when in use, wherein the buckle has two end bars and the front portion of the connecting piece terminates beneath one of the end bars.

5. An adjustable belt according to claim 1 wherein the buckle has only one end bar and the front portion of the connecting piece terminates in a tapered end.

6. An adjustable belt according to claim 1 in which the belt portion and the connecting piece are made of different types of belt material.

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BOBBY R. GAY, *Primary Examiner.*

E. SIMONSEN, *Assistant Examiner.*