

N. Thompson, Jr.

Life Preserver.

N^o 12,220. Patented Jan. 9, 1855.

Fig: 1.

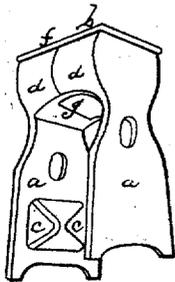


Fig: 2.

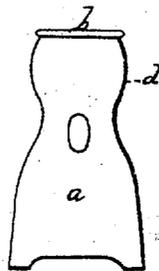


Fig: 3.

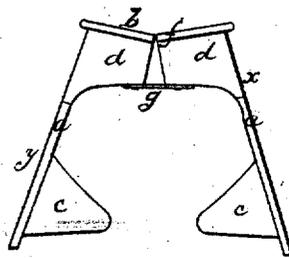


Fig: 4.

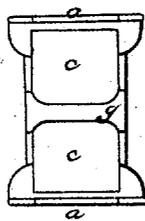


Fig: 5.

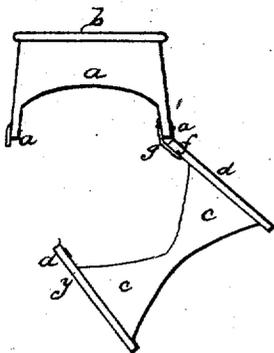
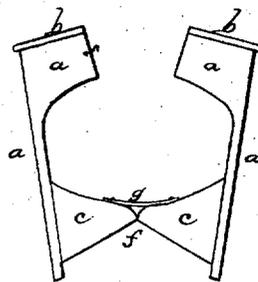


Fig: 6.



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

NATHAN THOMPSON, JR., OF WILLIAMSBURG, NEW YORK.

IMPROVEMENT IN LIFE-PRESERVING SEATS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 12,220, dated January 9, 1855.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, NATHAN THOMPSON, JR., of Williamsburg, Kings county, New York, have invented a new and useful Life-Preserving Seat, which I term the "Accommodating or Graduating Life-Seat;" and the following specification, taken in connection with the drawings, is a full and exact description thereof.

In the drawings, Figure 1 is a perspective view of the seat. Fig. 2 is an end view thereof. Fig. 3 is a side view with the seat partially open and nearly ready to be clasped around the body. Fig. 4 is a view from the bottom thereof or of the seat turned upside down, and Figs. 5 and 6 are side views of two different modifications of my invention.

The same letters refer to the same parts in all the figures.

This seat, like others heretofore invented by me, has the characteristics of a reliable life-preserver, capable of supporting the body upright, possessed of ample buoyancy, and not liable to derangement while in use or to rapid deterioration from age or hard service. It is, moreover, like the last life-preserver invented by me, capable of instantaneous adjustment to the person; but in addition thereto it has the further facility of accommodating itself to the bodies of persons of different sizes and of clasping them in such manner that it cannot easily, in consequence of any struggles of the user, be removed from its most advantageous supporting position, and as incidental to these advantages the peculiar construction necessary to attain them enables me to make a cheaper article and one whose height is no objection when applied to its ordinary use as a seat.

The nature of my invention therefore consists in providing an ordinary seat or stool with proper buoyants and in dividing said seats at some convenient point and in applying at the division a hinge and spring or their equivalents in such manner that while they permit the seat to be opened, the latter always tends to keep it in its closed position.

In order to construct a life-preserver after the principles of my invention, I procure a seat or stool of any ordinary construction, but as most convenient of the form and construction clearly shown in the drawings, and under

the bottom thereof and to the lower ends of the legs thereof I secure firmly any suitable number of buoyants—metallic chambers, pieces of cork, or light wood, or any kind of buoyant now known or in use. I next separate this stool into two at any convenient point, and apply at the point of separation a hinge and spring or some equivalent thereof, in such manner that one part may be opened away from the other, while at the same time they have a tendency to close toward each other as soon as the separating force ceases to act.

In the drawings, *a a* are the legs, and *b* the top, of an ordinary stool, at the lower ends of whose legs are secured buoyants *c c*, while under the top thereof are fastened other buoyants *d d*. At the place of separation of the parts of the stool, wherever it may be, is attached a hinge *f*, and at or near the said point is also secured a spring *g*, the one permitting the two parts to open, the other tending to close them.

In Figs. 1, 2, and 3 the division is made at the top, of the stool, and the lower buoyants are distinct on the opposite legs, while the hinge is secured at the top of the stool. In Fig. 6 the division is in the same place, but the hinge and spring are attached to the lower buoyants. In Fig. 5 the lower buoyants on opposite legs are secured to each other, while the spring and hinge are attached near the middle of the legs. It is also clear that this arrangement might be variously modified. For instance, the hinge-spring and point of separation might be at the point indicated by *x*, Fig. 3, and the bottom buoyants might be distinct, as in Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6, or with the hinge at *x* the bottom buoyants might be secured each to each, and another opening might be cut at the point indicated by *y*, Figs. 3 and 5.

Now these seats have the same characteristics. They all serve as seats and are retained in that position by springs, and they all may be opened, and while held in both hands passed round the body, and the springs will then hold them in that position. They then through the agency of the buoyants act as life-preservers, and, it will be seen, adapt themselves to the size of the person inclosed between the legs and the buoyants, the two parts shutting closely to each other when

clasping the body of a small person and diverging as the bulk of the user is greater. They also hug or fit tight to the body and are instantaneous in their adaptation, and when applied support the user in an erect position in the water, balancing between the lower and upper buoyants, the one set located at his back and the other at his chest.

As this life-seat may be formed out of any ordinary stool by the addition of a hinge and spring and proper corks or buoyants, it is evident that its construction is inexpensive. It will therefore be more useful, as it will sooner come into general use, but not on account of its being safer than my other life-seats, and as it can remain open slightly when in use clasped around a bulky man, it need not contain between the chambers and legs an area large enough for men's bodies of unusual size. If when shut this area be enough for a small man, it will when slightly open contain a large one. This peculiarity enables me to construct a seat no higher than those convenient for general use.

I sometimes intend to apply to this life-preserver hooks or bolts, which shall retain it firmly in its closed position, but in no case will it be necessary to hook or clasp the parts in order to retain them in proper position around the body as a life-preserver.

Having thus described my adapting or accommodating life-seats and some of the modifications thereof, I would state that I do not claim herein hinged or adjustable buoyants attached to the legs of a seat, as the buoyants herein described are firmly secured to the legs of the stool. Neither do I claim a divided-top life-preserver in combination with

legs arranged in such manner that one half of said top may be in front and the other half in the rear of the person using it as a life-preserver, because in this life-preserver the whole of the top buoyant is on the same side or is wholly in front or in the rear of the user. Neither do I claim a buoyant seat generally, nor any special kind of buoyants, nor any precise method of construction, nor any specific materials. At the same time, however, I do not limit myself to any peculiar construction or any special materials so long as the two parts of a seat provided with top and bottom buoyants are separated and then connected by means of a hinge and a spring, as herein set forth, or substantially so. Neither do I claim any special kind of hinge or spring, nor do I limit myself to the use of one of each in each life-preserver, as two, three, or more hinges all in a line, or numerous springs, all effecting the same purpose, might be employed. Neither do I limit myself to any precise location of the points of separation so long as that point is so placed that it will serve the herein-described purposes.

I therefore claim as of my own invention and desire to have secured to me by Letters Patent of the United States—

The adapting or accommodating life-preserving seats whose components are a separated buoyant seat, a hinge, and a spring, combined with each other in the manner and for the purposes substantially as are herein specified.

NATHAN THOMPSON, JR.

In presence of—
C. MACRUE,
J. LEVITE.