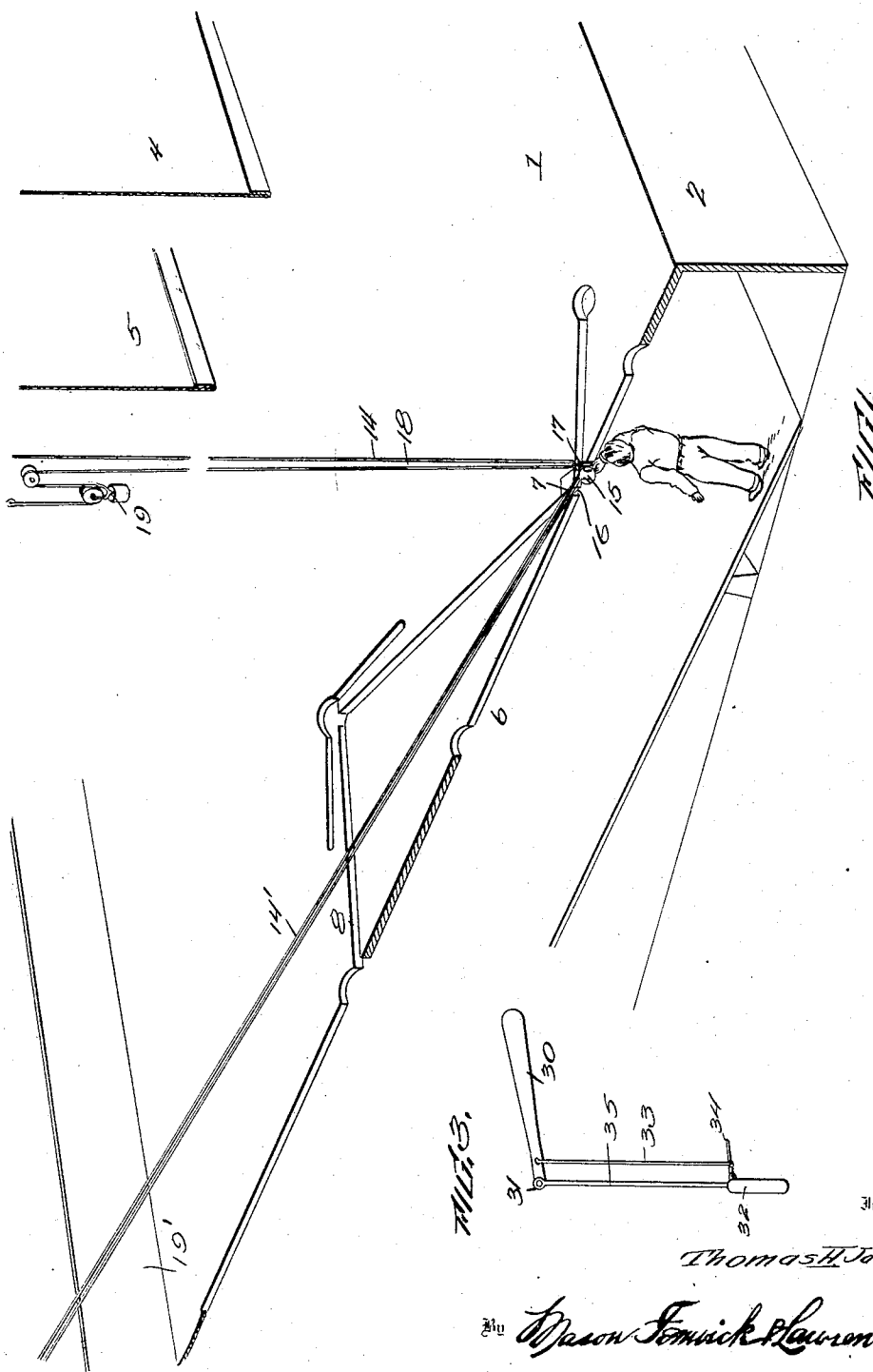


T. H. JACKSON.
MARIONETTE BASE BALL PERFORMANCE.
APPLICATION FILED MAR. 30, 1916.

1,195,023.

Patented Aug. 15, 1916.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



Inventor

Thomas H. Jackson

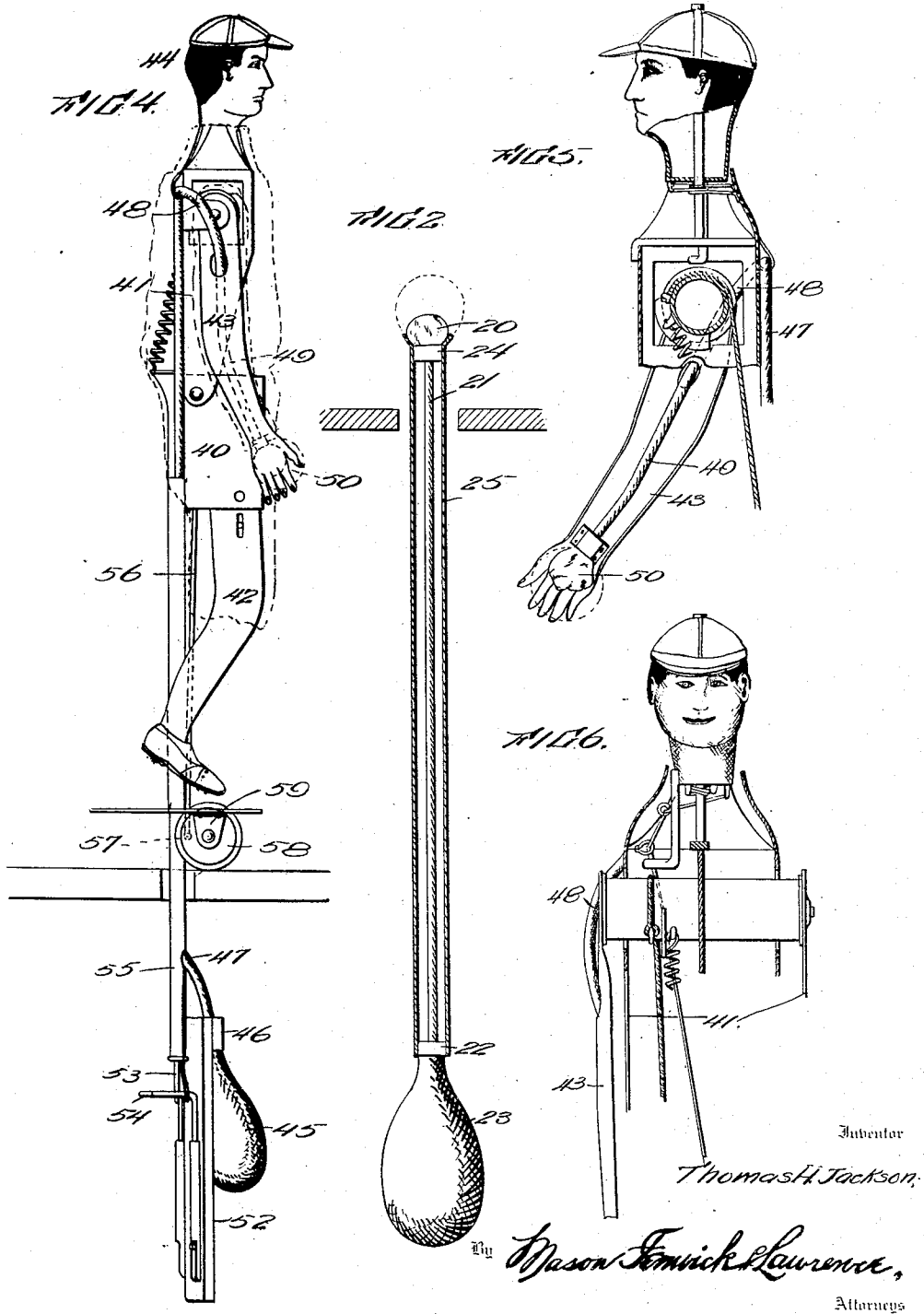
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS H. JACKSON, OF SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA.

MARIONETTE BASE-BALL PERFORMANCE.

1,195,023.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Aug. 15, 1916.

Application filed March 30, 1916. Serial No. 87,816.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, THOMAS H. JACKSON, a citizen of the United States, residing at Scranton, in the county of Lackawanna and State of Pennsylvania, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Marionette Base-Ball Performances; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

This invention relates to games and toys, and more especially to figure toys; and the object of the same is to produce a theatrical appliance by which a game of baseball can be depicted by means of figure toys including the ball, the bat, and marionettes representing the players and the umpire.

The present invention is an improvement on my patent issued February 18, 1913, bearing No. 1,053,817, in which was described and claimed a play figure or marionette having in one hand a small electric bulb which was illuminated when it was desired to indicate that the hand held the ball; and the basic principle of the present idea lies in the fact that I employ an inflatable ball which is enlarged by pressure exerted by the operator on a distant bulb, and communicated to the ball by means of fluid passing through a flexible conduit.

While I have hereinafter described the invention as carried out on the pneumatic principle and I do prefer to use air, it is clear that some other fluid might be employed without departing from the principle involved. If this fluid were a liquid, the term "hydraulic" would be more accurate; but for purposes of the present invention we may assume that the term "pneumatic" covers any fluid which when forced along the conduit will enlarge or otherwise alter the physical characteristics of the ball so that it may be seen by the audience, while at other times it is not observed. Therefore each player has a ball constantly in one hand though it is not always visible to the audience. There are other figure toys employed, such as balls separate from the players and

having their own controls, and a bat with its control.

My preferred manner of carrying out the invention is set forth in the following specification and shown in the drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a sectional view through a stage adapted for this performance, the half of the stage which is visible being shown slightly in perspective, and this view is also employed to show one form of the ball figure. Fig. 2 is an enlarged sectional view of another form of the ball figure, and Fig. 3 a perspective view of the bat figure. Figs. 4, 5 and 6 are sectional views of one of the marionettes or player figures.

The use of a luminous bulb to indicate the ball in play is now quite common in apparatus of this character, but it has the objections that the bulb is often broken or the wires parted in the rough and rapid manipulation which the figure must undergo, the filament at times burns out or the battery fails, especially where the battery is a portable one carried by the operator, and at best a light can only typify a baseball. I have adopted an inflatable ball of spherical shape which might be white in color and probably marked with lines to simulate the stitches; and I prefer to make this ball of flexible but durable material, and to connect it by a flexible and durable conduit such as a fine rubber tube, with a bulb attached to the handle of the figure and therefore always in position to be compressed by the operator. This bulb I prefer to make of heavier rubber, so molded that it normally expands and will therefore draw the air through the conduit and exhaust it from the ball, so that the latter is forcibly collapsed and almost if not entirely disappears from view. Therefore whenever the operator presses the bulb while holding the handle, he knows without looking through the platform that the ball is expanded and is visible to the audience, and it follows that as he runs along beneath the platform he moves the toy by means of its handle and imitates the movements of the ball while in play. On the other hand, if he be the operator who is working one of the marionettes, he can support it by the handle

and manipulate it by its manuals or keys without pressing the bulb, and therefore he knows that he is depicting the movements of a player who has no ball in his possession
5 which is visible to the audience.

Referring now to the accompanying drawings, the numeral 1 designates a stage or platform whose front is closed to the audience as at 2, 3 is the proscenium arch, and
10 4 and 5 are the drops. Upon the platform is depicted the ordinary baseball diamond or field, only half of which is shown in Fig. 1, and through the same are cut slots as 6 extending across the diamond and out
15 into the field from or radial to the home base 7, and other slots 8 on the outer lines of the diamond and across the field in various directions forming no part of the present invention. I prefer that the stage front
20 2 shall raise the platform so high that the operators may stand upright beneath it as indicated, and they will therefore have the free use of their hands for manipulating the figure toys yet to be described, and may
25 easily run from one point to another when carrying a marionette to simulate its movement over the field. If the auditorium be not so pitched toward the stage as to give all spectators a clear view of the baseball
30 field, the platform should be pitched toward the audience. At the rear of the stage or platform there will preferably be displayed a scoreboard so that the spectators may be constantly informed of the condition of
35 the game and need not keep their own score-cards. Information as to the progress of the game is received over the wires, and communicated immediately to the operators beneath the stage, and they in turn perform
40 for the benefit of the audience the same play that is taking place in a distant city. In order to do so, the figure toys employed, in this performance must include a ball or balls, a bat, and a number of marionettes.

45 In Fig. 1 is shown a fine guide such as a wire 14 leading from a point near home base upward behind one of the drops and fastened in the roof of the stage. There could be several of these wires, one nearly
50 upright as shown and others leading farther to the rear behind other drops such as 5. An inflated ball 15 stands within a cavity 16 in the platform and has a ring 17 slidably mounted on the wire 14, and a
55 fine black thread 18 leads upward from this ball over suitable pulleys to a weight 19 which is supported in some way behind the drop. When a fly is batted, an operator removes the weight 19 from its support and in
60 falling it jerks the ball 15 out of the cavity 16 and carries it up the guide. This simulates a "fly" which is visible to the audience during its ascent but not during its descent, and some fielder or other player can then be

manipulated as explained below so as to
65 show he catches the fly ball when it falls. The ball 20 shown in full lines in Fig. 2 as collapsed and in dotted lines as
70 expanded, is connected by a conduit consisting of a small rubber tube 21 with a
75 bulb 23 whose rigid neck constitutes the handle 22. And in this case the ball is rigidly mounted in a cup-shaped socket 24 at the upper end of a tubular staff 25 which
80 is of some considerable length, the neck 75 or handle 22 being rigidly connected with the other or lower end of said staff as shown. The tubular staff therefore constitutes a rigid guard for the conduit 21,
85 and when this staff is moved along one of the slots in the platform while the ball is inflated, it simulates the moving of the ball along the ground on a line corresponding
90 to that followed by the slot. The operator may even raise and lower the staff to simulate the bouncing of a "grounder" when
95 batted out into the field. There may be several of these figures, one for each of the slots radiating from home base and near the latter, and the balls when collapsed
90 will not be visible to the audience. Thus it is possible to have several types of the ball figure, and in order to avoid confusion among the operators it may be well to make
95 the ball-bulbs of different shape or size from those bulbs which are yet to be described.

In Fig. 3 is shown a bat 30 which may be pivoted at 31 to an upright staff 35 having a handle 32 at its lower end, and a link
100 33 may connect the bat near its pivot with a manual or lever 34 movably mounted on the handle. This figure is obviously for use by the operator who is working the marionette depicting the batter. The bat may
105 be swung to simulate a "strike" by turning the handle and staff on their axis, and the bat may be raised and lowered by moving the lever 34 up and down.

110 In Figs. 4, 5 and 6 are shown different views of the marionette typifying one of the players, and of these there should be quite a number, part of them bearing the costume of one of the contesting teams, one
115 of them bearing an umpire's costume, and the remainder bearing the costume of the other team. Said costumes are merely the cloth coverings and caps, and need not be shown or further described. While the same is true of the mechanism for producing
120 the movements in the parts or members of each marionette, I might say broadly that the figure here shown comprises a fixed part 40 to which is hinged the upper body portion 41, and from which also hang the legs
125 42. From said body portion hang the arms 43, and on it is pivotally mounted a head 44. The support for the marionette is a rigid staff 55 having a handle 52 at its lower end,

and a number of manuals or keys 54 are mounted on this handle and connected by links or wires 53 with the several moving parts of the figure, so that by manipulating these keys the player may be caused to stoop, to turn his head in one direction or the other, and to raise or lower either arm. I prefer that the movements of the legs to typify running be controlled by links 56 connected with a wrist pin 57 on a wheel 58 which is journaled in a base 59 carried by the staff 55, and stands in position to be rotated by its contact with the surface of the platform alongside one of the slots as the operator moves the staff along such slot. The application of the underlying principle of this invention to said marionette is carried out by the provision of a bulb 45 whose neck 46 is securely attached to the handle 52, and a conduit consisting of a rubber tube 47 leading from said neck upward along the staff 55, to and past the shoulder joint as at 48, and down one arm 43 as at 49 to a ball 50 which is carried in one hand and which when deflated is so small as to be practically invisible. The operator carries this marionette by means of the handle 52 and manipulates its parts by the keys or manuals 54, and when the figure is to catch a ball he causes the arm 43 to rise and then presses the bulb 45 so that the ball 50 is inflated and becomes visible. Or he may cause both arms to rise, as when a fielder catches a ball, or he may cause the figure to stoop as in picking up a grounder. The head is moved most often when the marionette being operated is the pitcher, and a skilful operator can cause the pitcher to face the batter, take the ball in his hand and raise and lower it, glance over to first base at a runner who may be there, then raise his arm and turn his body, and finally appear to throw the ball over home base with great force—the bulb 45 at this moment being released so that the ball 50 becomes invisible.

As is well known in the game of baseball, the operator who is now working the batter marionette must cause him to raise his bat and either lower it again and step back, or swing it to make a strike. If he makes a hit the ball can then be shown by the figure illustrated in Fig. 2 if it is to move along one of the radial slots, or by the figure illustrated in Fig. 1 if it is to be moved both out over the field and upward to typify a "fly." Immediately the operator who is working the batter marionette must cause him to run toward first base as well understood. But if the pitched ball is not struck, the operator working the catcher marionette will press the bulb and inflate the ball in his hands, meanwhile raising both arms as usual. Meanwhile the operator working the

umpire marionette may cause him to perform the signal usually employed by an umpire, or might even also announce the work "strike" or "ball." As there may be several flies batted during a game, it may be well when the teams change sides that the operator above the platform reset his weight 19 and detach and let down his wire or thread 18 so that another inflated ball 15 can be attached to it from beneath the stage; or it might be possible to have this ball inflatable by means of a nipple and valve, and the operator above the stage could exhaust the air so that the ball would hardly be seen, then let it down on the thread 18 to the position shown in full lines in Fig. 1, and have another operator beneath the platform blow it up again. Obviously the cavity 16 and hole 17 should be large enough to contain and conceal at least one ball, and preferably more.

I have purposely omitted much of the mechanical detail which is not essential to the understanding of this invention, but have amplified those parts of the description which bear more particularly on the principle involved—a principle which is the pneumatic inflation of a ball in play, while all other balls are meanwhile deflated and practically if not entirely invisible. I lay no claim to the mechanical movements of the marionette, excepting that I consider it novel in this connection to turn the head from side to side—a human movement which is very popular and in fact necessary with baseball pitchers. When the operators attain their greatest skill in the manipulation of the marionettes, this head movement can also be given to other players in the infield, such as the first and third basemen, the runners, and the umpire. I do not wish to be limited to the use of a weight for jerking the ball 15 upward to simulate a "fly," for it might be raised by other mechanical means or by hand, or it might possibly be that this ball could contain a light gas so that it would rise of its own accord when released.

In Fig. 1 I have shown one guide wire 14' as leading from home base out across the field so that a play in which the ball is batted over the fence can be typified. This wire may pass over another wire 16' strung across the stage above the fence, and an operator behind the latter could move the guide wire 14' along the supporting wire so that the fly could be delivered over any desired point to the fence. A thread 18' will be used for this purpose, and will pass over the guide wire to the operator in the rear, who jerks on it when the ball is to move. I do not wish to be limited to the use of balls in the right hands of the marionette players because if the pitcher,

for instance in an original baseball game, is a left-hand thrower, the marionette player should likewise throw the ball with the left hand, and the same may be said of the batter or any other player. While it not new broadly to have both hands move, their independent rise and fall are particularly useful in a baseball game. When a ball is to be caught, both hands are raised to the desired height and the ball in one hand inflated; and it may lend attractiveness to the performance depicted if a skilful operator will cause a marionette figure to stoop and reach out both hands to catch a grounder. To depict the throwing of a ball, the marionette player is made to drop one hand and raise the other with the inflated ball in it, then to face the direction in which he is about to throw, and then to suddenly drop the raised hand, at which time the operator deflates the ball to typify that it has left the player's hand and has been thrown. It is needless to say that, excepting when the ball is depicted as rolling or bouncing along the ground or as rising along one of the guide wires, it is really not visible in its supposed passage from one point to another; but the illusion is almost as realistic as the natural play wherein the eye can hardly follow through the air a ball which has been thrown or batted swiftly.

What I claim is:

1. In a miniature theatrical performance, the combination with a slotted platform; of a marionette figure above the platform, and means projecting through a slot for inflating it and for moving it at will from a position beneath the platform.
2. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with a platform bearing the field; of a ball, means for inflating it at will, and means for moving it to simulate its travel during the game.
3. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with a platform bearing the field and having slots in it; of an inflatable ball above the platform, a bulb beneath the platform, a conduit connecting the ball and bulb, and a guard surrounding the conduit where it passes through a slot.
4. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with a platform bearing the field; of an inflatable ball, a handle, a bulb carried by the handle, and a conduit connecting the bulb and ball, for the purpose set forth.
5. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with a platform bearing the field and having openings through it; of a marionette figure including an inflatable ball, and means projecting through said openings for moving the figure and for inflating and deflating the ball to simulate features of the game.
6. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with a platform bearing the field and having slots on lines across it; of a marionette figure including a ball, means for inflating the ball at will, and means projecting through a slot for moving the figure along said lines to simulate its travel during the game.
7. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with the ball field having slots in it; of a ball, a staff supporting the ball and adapted to be moved in a slot, a handle on the staff, and pneumatic means leading from the ball along the staff to a control on the handle for inflating or deflating said ball.
8. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with the ball field having slots in it; of a ball, a tubular staff supporting the ball, and pneumatic means at the lower end of the staff connected through such staff with the ball for inflating or deflating it.
9. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with the ball field having slots in it; of a ball, a staff supporting the ball, a handle at the lower end of the staff, a bulb on said handle, and a conduit extending along said staff and connecting the ball with the bulb for inflating or deflating the ball by manipulating the bulb.
10. A marionette ball-player having a swinging arm, means to move the marionette, and means to swing the arm; combined with an inflatable ball in the hand of said arm, and means to inflate or deflate said ball at will, for the purpose set forth.
11. A marionette ball-player having a swinging arm, a staff for supporting the marionette, and a manual on the staff to move the arm; combined with an inflatable ball in the hand of said arm, and pneumatic means on said staff for inflating or deflating said ball, for the purpose set forth.
12. A marionette ball-player having a body portion and an arm pivoted at the shoulder thereto, a rigid staff for supporting the marionette, a handle at the end of the staff, a manual movably mounted on the handle, and connections between the handle and arm for swinging the latter; combined with an inflatable ball in the hand of said arm, a bulb on said handle, and a tube leading from the bulb along the staff, past the shoulder pivot, along the arm, and connected with the bulb, for the purpose set forth.
13. In a marionette baseball performance, the combination with a platform bearing the ball field and having slots through it; of a marionette ball-player having movable members including a head, a rigid staff adapted to pass through a slot and support the marionette above the platform, a handle

at the lower end of the staff, manuals there-
on connected with said moving parts and
including means for turning the head from
side to side, an inflatable ball in one hand of
5 the marionette, a flexible conduit extending
thence up the arm, past the shoulder joint,
and down the body and staff to said handle,
and means on the latter connected with said
conduit for inflating and deflating the ball

at will, regardless of the movements of said 10
members.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature
in presence of two witnesses.

THOMAS H. JACKSON.

Witnesses:

N. L. COLLAMER,
JOHN L. FLETCHER.

**Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents,
Washington, D. C."**