

March 12, 1957

L. E. BRIGGS
TOY THEATRE

2,784,523

Filed Nov. 2, 1953

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

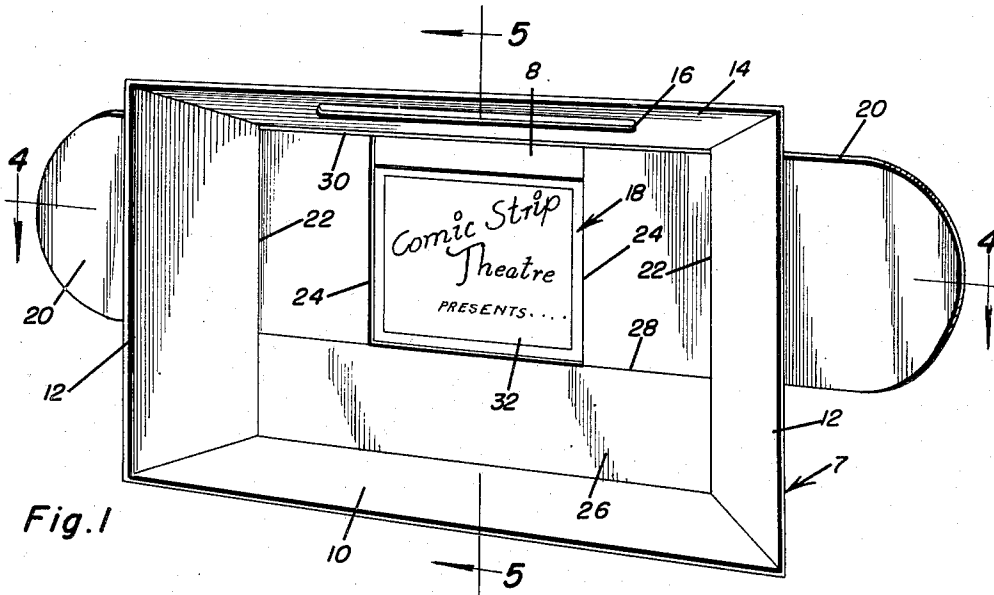


Fig. 1

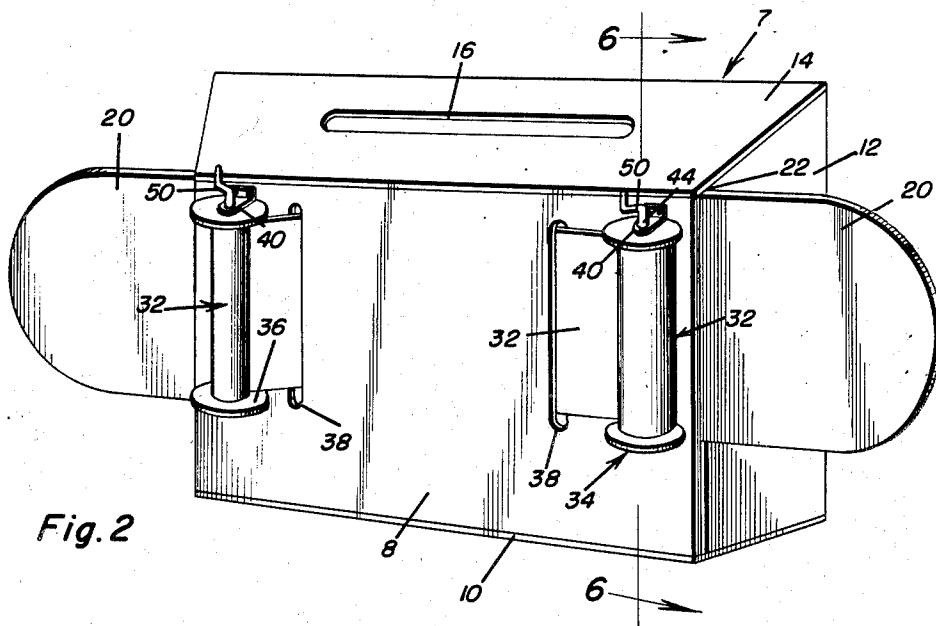


Fig. 2

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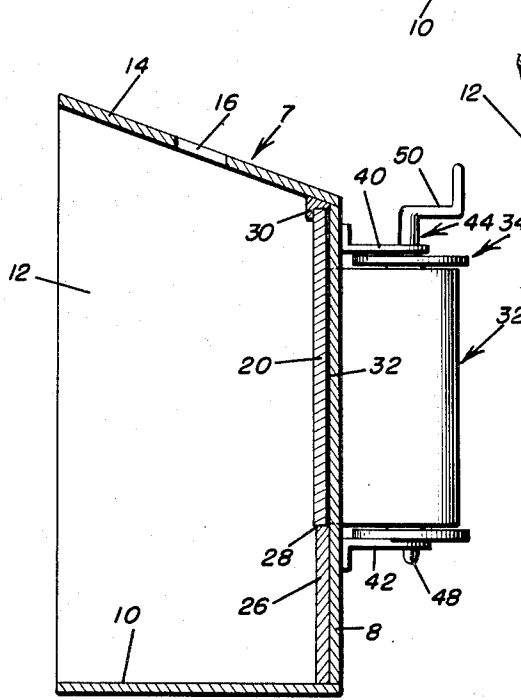
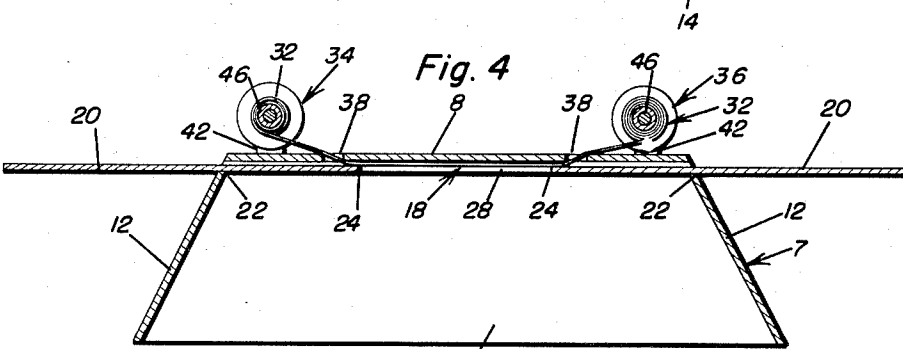
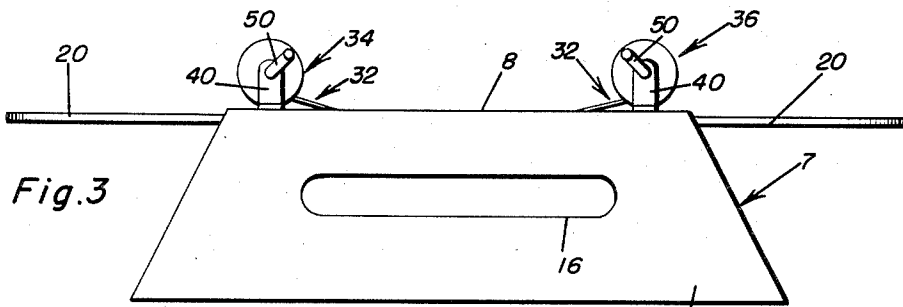


Fig. 5

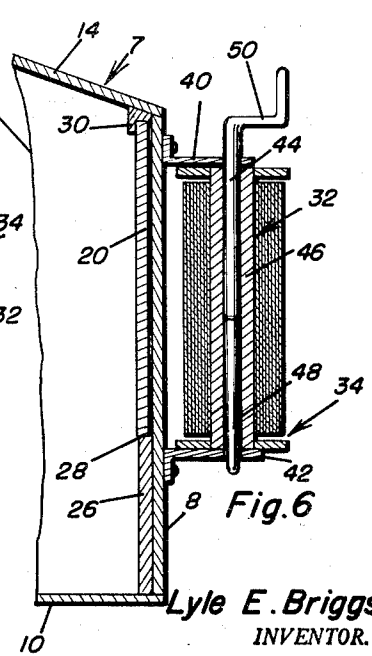


Fig. 6

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TOY THEATRE

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Application November 2, 1953, Serial No. 389,617

1 Claim. (Cl. 46—13)

The present invention relates to a toy theatre and has more particular reference to a miniature stage and complementary wings and equipment through the medium of which the user, usually a juvenile, may effectively display a movable web with motion-picture effects to viewers in his audience.

More specifically, the invention has to do with a theatre or stage in which, for the most part, comic strips are utilized, this being done in such a manner that each individual scene or picture is momentarily framed in order that the members of the audience may effectively view and concentrate on each scene and with the result that as the web or film is suitably reeled off and payed out, a collective effect of the pictures and explanatory inscriptions thereon will provide the complete story in a sequential and comprehensive manner.

One of the objectives is to utilize daily sequences of comic strips, these being cut out and pasted together in web or ribbon form and in this manner provide the desired "film," one which is adequate to provide a continuous story effect.

Another objective is to provide a simple, practical and amusing comic strip theatre which is destined to provide a daily means of entertainment for grownups as well as children, which is endless, inasmuch as each issue of a newspaper or magazine or other source of supply provides the daily and never-ending film-making material for the young projectionist.

Then, too, it is an object of the invention to utilize the means herein revealed so that any and all members of the family interested may be busied compiling his or her own favorite comic topic or strip for showing when his turn to be the "projectionist" arrives.

What is more, the invention has to do with a structure and comic strip media which instills enthusiasm, promotes enjoyment, tends to create the ability to put together original subject-matter for current and future performances, the arrangements being also such that it is possible to use blank rolls of paper tape or film on which the artist-projectionist may display his own talent, ingenuity and entertaining ways.

Briefly summarized, the invention has to do with a stage which is characterized by a vertical panel constituting a background, outstanding marginal laterally disposed walls circumscribing said panel and defining the ceiling, floor, and wings, there being film winding and reeling spools mounted on the back of the panel and said panel having slots therein through which the tape, film, or comic strip is passed for staging and putting on the desired show.

Other objects, features and advantages will become more readily apparent from the following description and the accompanying sheets of illustrative drawings.

In the drawings, wherein like numerals are employed to designate like parts throughout the views:

Figure 1 is a perspective view showing the front of the miniature or toy moving-picture theatre constructed in accordance with the principles of the present inven-

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tion and illustrating the manner in which the same is set up and used;

Figure 2 is a rear perspective view of the same;

Figure 3 is a top plan view thereof;

Figure 4 is a horizontal section on the lengthwise line 4—4 of Figure 1 looking in the direction of the arrows;

Figure 5 is a vertical section on the line 5—5 of Figure 1 looking in the direction of the arrows; and

Figure 6 is a fragmentary view in section and elevation taken on the vertical line 6—6 of Figure 2 looking in the direction of the arrows.

Referring now to the drawings by way of reference numerals and accompanying lead lines, it may be said that the theatre, in an over-all sense, is characterized essentially by a toy or miniature stage 7. Structurally this stage is similar to what may be designated as an open-front box. More specifically, it comprises a vertical rectangular sheet-material-panel 8 which constitutes the background. This may be of any suitable size and material and is generally about 14 inches long, 6 or 8 inches high. The visor-like frame, which gives the depth effect, is 6 inches or so deep and is actually made up of a plurality of lateral forwardly extending walls. There is a bottom wall 10 at right angles to the bottom of the panel 8 and in a horizontal plane. Then, there are upstanding or vertical forwardly flaring end walls 12—12. The top flaring wall, which cooperates with the walls 12, is denoted by the numeral 14. These four walls are suitably connected and serve to define a sort of a frame or visor, as before stated and this arrangement assists in concentrating and focusing the vision of the viewers toward the "stage." There is a horizontal sighting slot 16 in the top which is there to permit the juvenile projectionist to glance down through it while standing at the rear of the stage and for centering the pictures which are to be viewed at what becomes a changeable viewing screen or sight 18. The opening 16 may be distinguished from the sight 18 by treating it as a peep-slot. The screen is uncovered through the medium of a pair of horizontal slides which are denoted by the numerals 20—20. These are to the left and right of the operator and they have their outer ends projecting through guide and assembling slots 22 provided in the vertical end walls 12. The inner vertical edges 24—24 define the variable screen. Actually there is an extra ply or thickness of sheet material superimposed upon and facing the obverse side of the panel 8 and this constitutes a filler strip 26. The upper edge 28 thereof forms a guide track for the cooperating lower edges of the slides 20—20. The upper edges of the slides are operable in a channel provided in the channel-shaped track 30 which is best shown, for example, in Figures 5 and 6. Thus, we have an upper track 30 and a lower track 28 defining a space for the inner end portions of the respective slides. With the slides operating in these tracks and the edges 24 movable toward and from each other and with the aid of the cooperating area of the back panel 8, a variable sight or so-called motion-picture "screen" is provided.

Reference is made now to the reelable film or picture media. From a primarily physical point of view, this is a strip of paper tape but in most instances it will be a newspaper or equivalent comic strip. So, the end portions of the comic strip here denoted by the numerals 32 are mounted on spools 34 and 36. These strips are also referred to in the art as changeable picture webs and the display portion of the web is operable over the screen area and is permitted to move from the rear to the front of the stage by way of the slots 38—38. The projectionist simply winds the web from one spool to the other in an obvious fashion. He glances down through the peep-slot 16 and centers each picture frame or scene of the

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strip and then adjusts the slides with their edges 24—24 into position to "frame" each individual picture of the over-all web or comic strip. The spools in each instance are supported by way of upper and lower angle brackets 40 and 42, as shown for example in Figures 5 and 6. There is a tapered pin 44 which passes down through an aperture in the upper bracket and then through the bore in the hub 46 of the spool where its lowered tapered end 48 provides a sort of a spindle and rotates by way of crank 50 in the bearing opening provided therefor in the lower bracket 42. The tapered wedge effect provides a friction clutch action between the tapered pin and the hub and makes it easy to utilize the respective cranks. It also makes it possible to employ the cranks as retainers for frictionally retaining the reels in place.

As before stated, the theatre size is usually about 14" x 6" x 8" and may be constructed of wood or metal. The opening in the front is flared at an angle to permit better and wider audience viewing. To provide the film, daily sequences of comic strips are cut out and pasted together end to end to provide the desired story continuities. As these are put together they are wound on one reel with the picture side outward. When the completed sequence has been put together, the reel may then be put in place for viewing or showing of the comic strip picture show.

From the foregoing, the construction and operation of the device will be readily understood and further explanation is believed to be unnecessary. However, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the appended claim.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

In a structure of the class described, a background panel having vertical longitudinally spaced web accommodating slots, upper and lower brackets attached to the rear side of said panel, said brackets being disposed

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in pairs and there being one pair of brackets adjacent to but outwardly of each web accommodating slot, said brackets being provided with pin accommodating apertures, spools mounted between the respective pairs of brackets, each spool having a hollow hub portion, a tapered pin having a crank at the upper end of said pin, said pin passing downwardly through the apertures in the cooperating brackets and through the bore in the cooperating hub and having wedge fitting relation with the hub whereby to provide a driving connection and also to enable the pin to serve as a retainer, a panel bordering frame providing a visor-like canopy around the marginal edges of said panel and embodying top, bottom, and vertical end walls attached to and projecting from corresponding marginal edges of said panel, the front surface of said panel being provided with horizontally disposed upper and lower guide tracks, the vertical end walls of said frame having slots respectively registering with the adjacent and respective end portions of the guide tracks, and a pair of individual and selectively operable shutter-like slides having inner end and intermediate portions slidably mounted between said tracks with their inner adjacent ends adjustable toward and from the web accommodating slots to define a variable viewing area, the outer end portions of the slides projecting through and beyond the slots in the cooperating vertical end walls and being readily accessible to facilitate the act of catching hold of and adjusting the slides toward and from each other by way of the stated guide tracks.

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