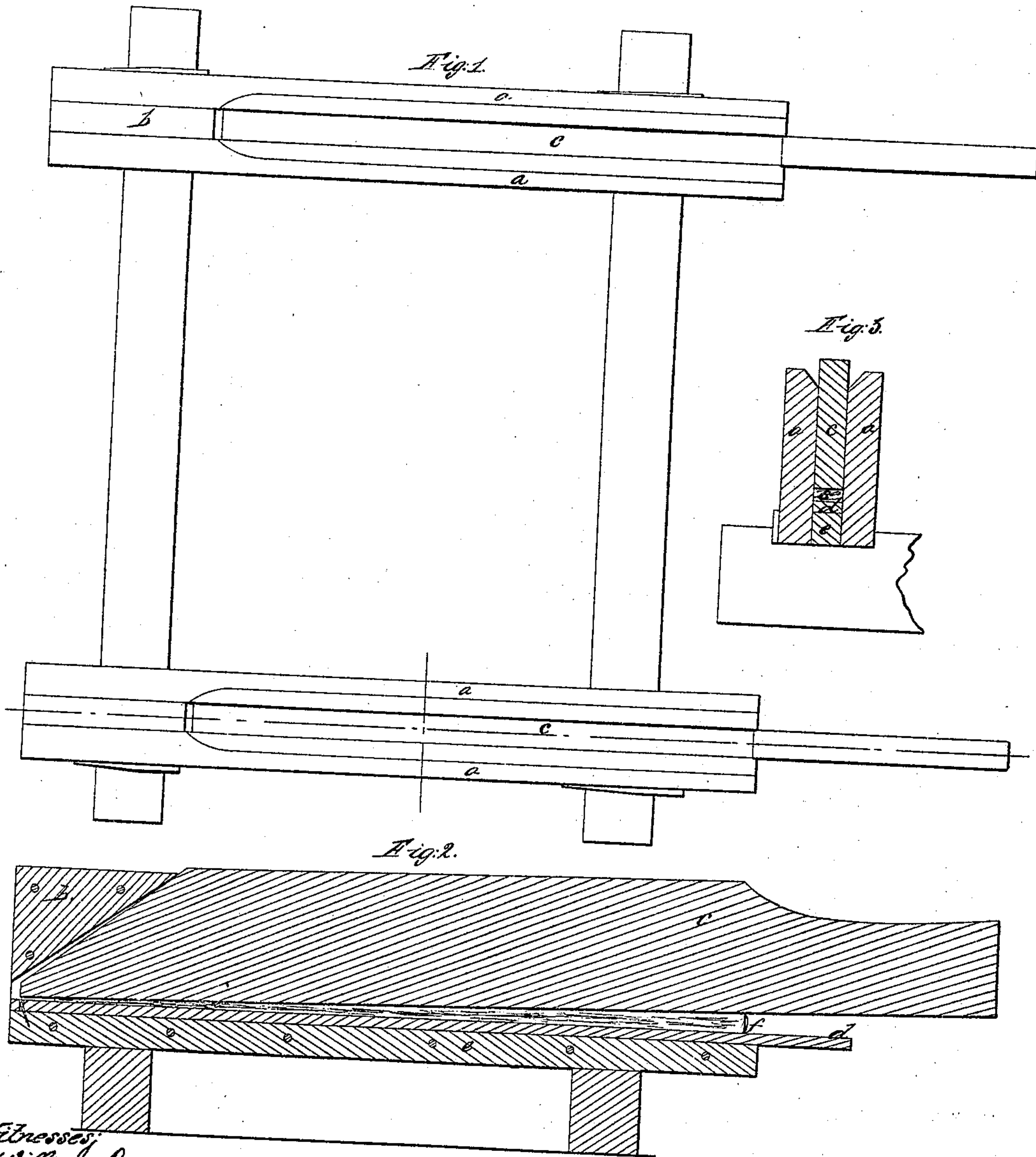


E. & W.B. Cunningham,

Tobacco Press,

No 23,831,

Patented May 3, 1859.



Witnesses:
Willis J. Dance
N. F. Gram, Clk. of Pmt.

Inventor:
Ed. Cunningham
William B. Cunningham

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

EDWD. CUNNINGHAM AND WM. B. CUNNINGHAM, OF POWHATAN COURT-HOUSE, VIRGINIA.

IMPROVEMENT IN TOBACCO-PRESSES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 23,831, dated May 3, 1859.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, EDWARD CUNNINGHAM and WM. B. CUNNINGHAM, of Powhatan Court-House, in the State of Virginia, have invented an Improved Hand-Press for the Use of Tobacco-Planters; and we do hereby declare that the following is a full and exact description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification.

Leaf-tobacco is first put into bundles of suitable size for prizing or packing down into hogsheads; and it is of the first importance that the said bundles of tobacco should first be perfectly straightened, and then be compacted into a tapering quadrangular form before they are placed in the prizing-hogsheads. This straightening and compacting operation, which has heretofore been imperfectly performed by squeezing the bundles of tobacco in the hands of laborers, we propose to do in a much more rapid and perfect manner by the assistance of the above-mentioned improved hand-press.

All parts of our improved hand-press may be made of plank or of hewn timber, and in the simplest possible manner. We first form an open box of the two parallel sides *a a*, the bottom *e*, and the triangular fulcrum-piece *b*, substantially as represented in the drawings. A loosely-fitting false bottom, *d*, is then placed in said box, one end of which is pivoted to that end of the bottom of the box which is immediately below the fulcrum-piece *b*, and the other end of said false bottom projects a short distance beyond the opposite end of the box, as shown in Figure 2. A hand-lever, *c*, is then prepared to work in the said open box and compress the bundles of tobacco that may be placed therein. The fulcrum end of the lever *c* is beveled off on its upper side to such a shape that when it is inserted in its proper position beneath the fulcrum-piece *b* the said lever will compress the thin extremity of each bundle of tobacco as perfectly as it will the thickest portion of the same. The vibrating end of the lever *c* projects beyond the open end of the press-box a sufficient distance to allow it to be freely taken hold of by the hand of the operator.

In practice we have found it expedient to arrange our improved presses at such distances from each other that each presser can conveniently operate two presses, and in the following manner, viz: First, the levers being removed from the press-boxes, a bundle of tobacco is straightened out and placed in the box of one of the presses by the feeder. Then the presser inserts the fulcrum end of the lever near the center of said box and slides it along over the top of the tobacco until it is arrested by the fulcrum-piece *b*. He then forces down the lever upon the bundle of tobacco, and holds it in that position long enough for the feeder to straighten out a second bundle of tobacco. The presser then withdraws the lever for the feeder to place the said second bundle of tobacco upon the first bundle placed within the box, and then he replaces his lever and forces it down upon the two bundles of tobacco, and holds it in that position until the feeder has prepared a couple of bundles of tobacco for the adjoining press, and has placed one of said bundles within the box of the said adjoining press. Then the presser withdraws the lever from the first press, and by the same movement he elevates the outer end of the false bottom of the same high enough to enable the hand to take hold of and remove the pressed bundles of tobacco from the press for the purpose of conveying the same to the packer. The presser then leaves the first press and operates the lever of the adjoining press until two bundles of tobacco have been compressed into the box thereof by independent movements, and then at the proper moment he removes the lever from this press, raises up the false bottom of the same, and then returns to the first-mentioned press and operates the lever thereof, and then elevates the false bottom of the same, and so on.

A boy or a woman can feed the bundles of tobacco into the boxes of these presses, and they can also withdraw the pressed bundles from the presses and convey the same to the packer.

Aided by our improved hand-presses, three men and three women can put up a layer of one hundred and fifty-eight large bundles of tobacco in eight and one-half minutes, and

the same force can also shape and pack one hundred and ninety small bundles of tobacco in eleven minutes.

We do not of course intend to be understood as limiting ourselves to any particular method of operating our improved hand-presses.

What we claim as our invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

Producing an improved hand-press which is especially calculated to aid in compressing bunches of leaf-tobacco into the proper shape

for packing or prizing, the said press being composed of a narrow open box, which has a fulcrum-piece and a false bottom combined therewith, and a removable lever adapted thereto, substantially as herein set forth.

ED. CUNNINGHAM.

WILLIAM B. CUNNINGHAM.

Witnesses:

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R. F. GRAVES.