

(No Model.)

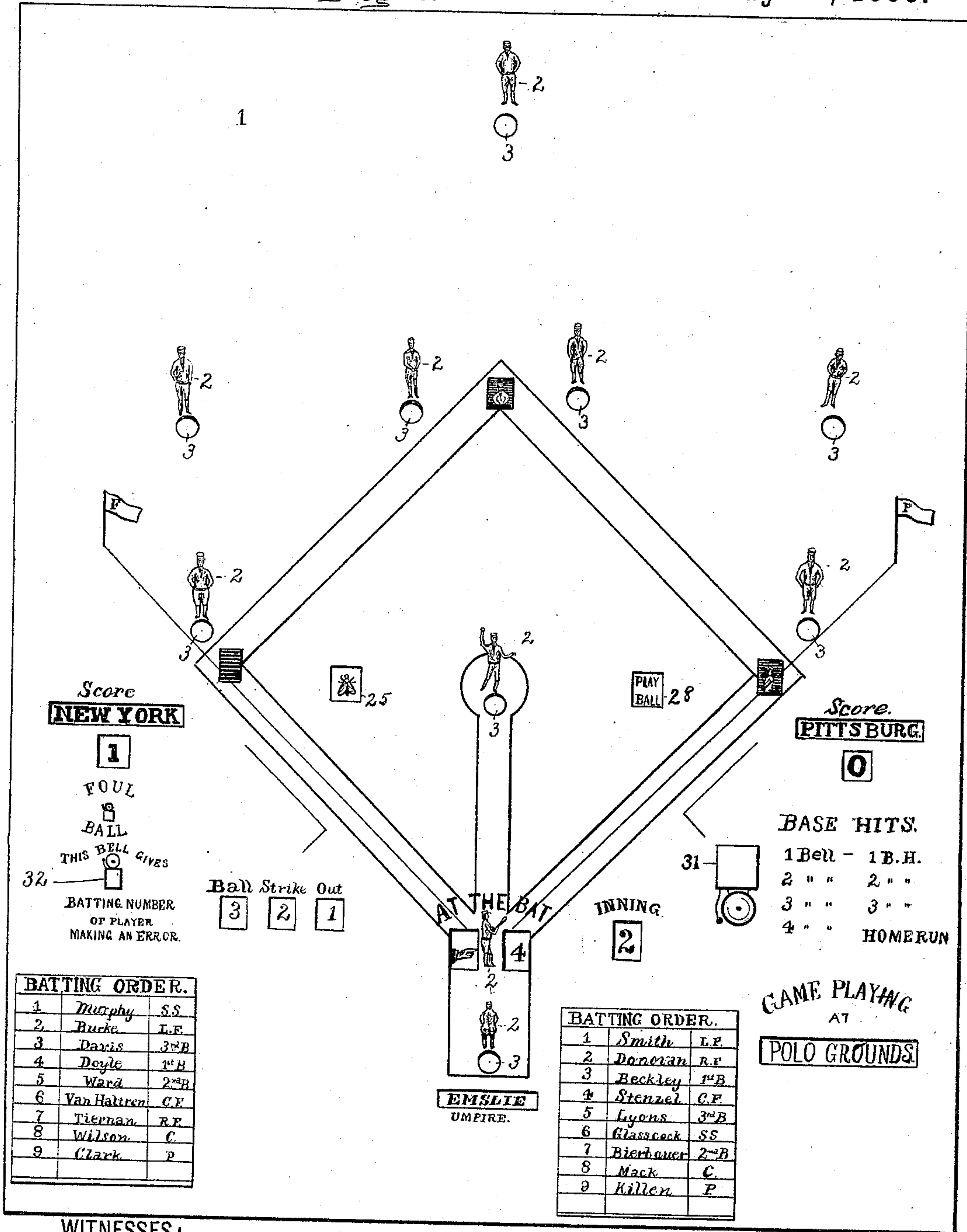
2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

M. D. COMPTON.
BASE BALL GAME ILLUSTRATING APPARATUS.

No. 540,089.

Fig. 1.

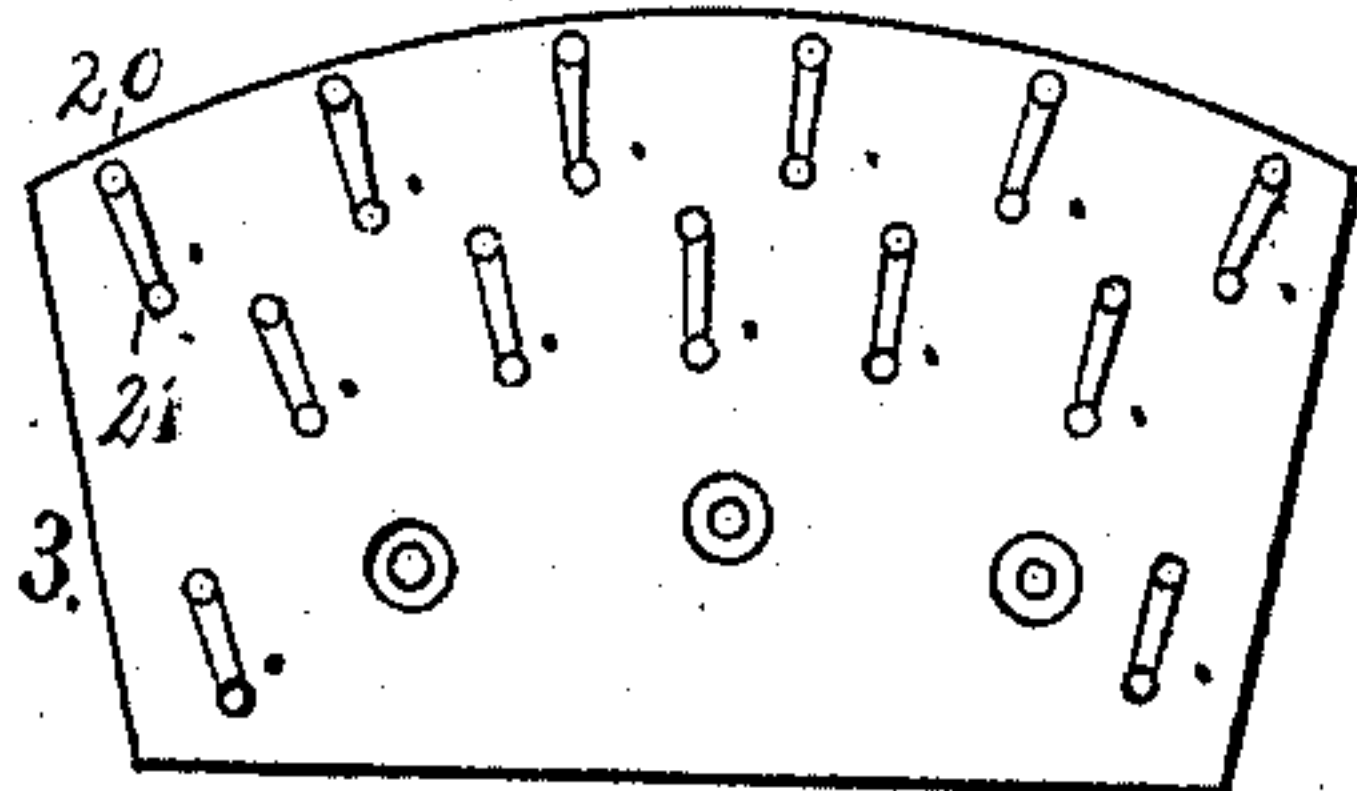
Patented May 28, 1895.



WITNESSES:

C. L. Belcher
C. M. Catlin.

Fig. 3.



INVENTOR

Melvin D. Compton

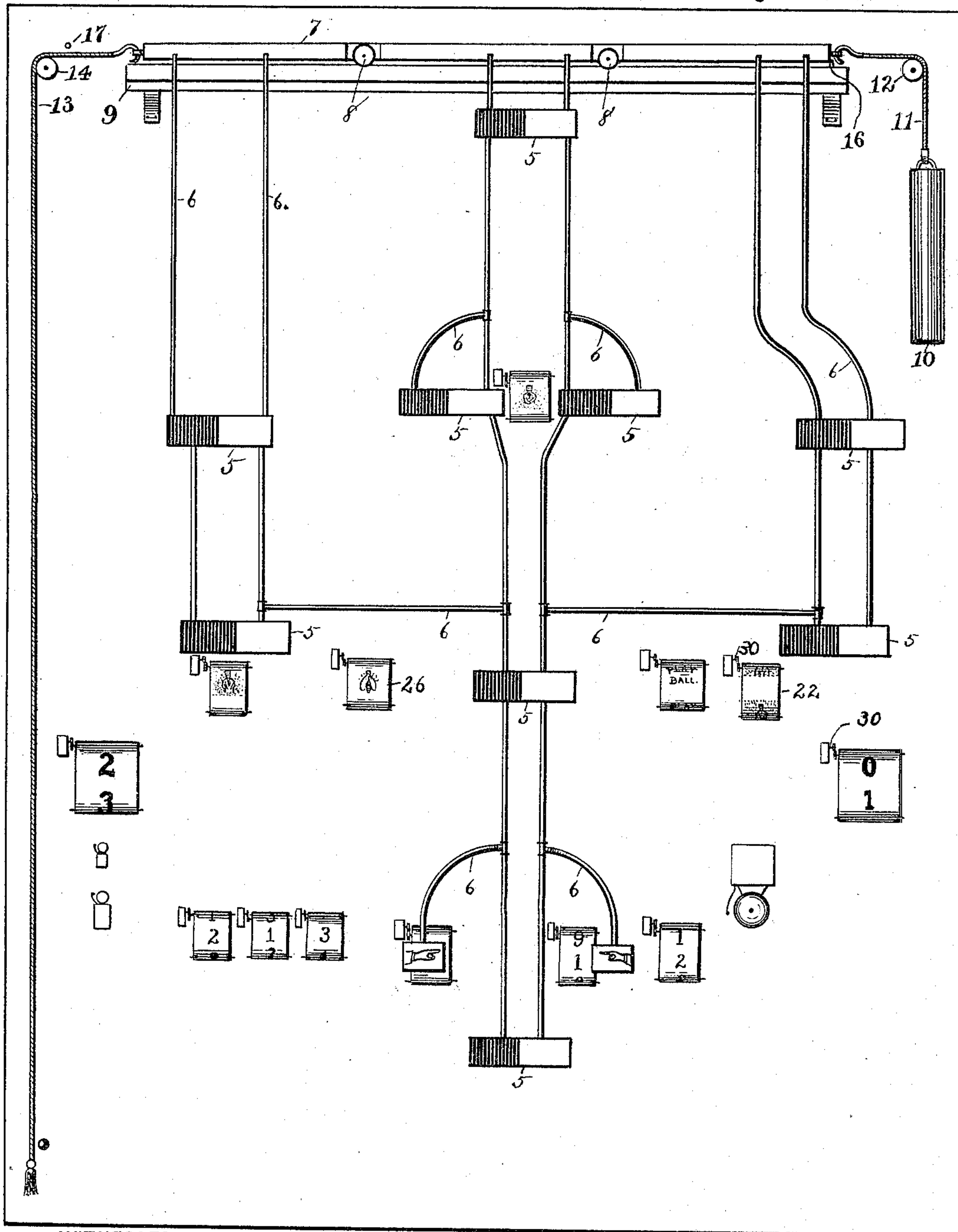
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2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

No. 540,089.

Patented May 28, 1895.



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Fig. 2

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

MELVIN D. COMPTON, OF NEWARK, NEW JERSEY.

BASE-BALL-GAME-ILLUSTRATING APPARATUS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 540,089, dated May 28, 1895.

Application filed February 4, 1895. Serial No. 537,185. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MELVIN D. COMPTON, a citizen of the United States, residing at Newark, in the county of Essex and State of New Jersey, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Electrical Reporting Apparatus; 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.

My invention relates to a system of displaying in the presence of a large number of spectators the reports of base ball games or other sporting events and more particularly to objectifying such reports, as far as possible, so as to make appear before the spectators a picture of the game or other event, as it actually progresses at some distant point. I have more particularly in mind the presentation of such reports in halls, theaters or other inclosed spaces where the lights and the other accessories can be suitably arranged for assisting in the reading of the reports and in the creation of an imposing general effect. To this end, the more conspicuous part of my apparatus may be regarded as a theatrical scene or curtain behind and in front of which the mechanism which I employ is arranged. Taking a base ball game as the type of a sporting event, I may, for present purposes, disregard all other games or events of the same general class, although it will be understood that other such events are not excluded from the scope of my invention. It being clear, then, that the scene or curtain (which may in practice be a stiff partition made of boards, if preferred) represents a base ball field, I prefer to arrange upon the said curtain figures of players in substantially their proper positions in the field and I then provide a shifting apparatus for indicating by different colors which set of players are "out" and which players are at the bat or waiting for their turn at the bat. For any given game, as between the New York club and the Pittsburg club, one color, say red, would represent one club, and another color, say white, would represent the other club. I also provide a series of shifting devices or rolls marked with successive numbers from 1 on, as far as may be necessary, by means of which

I indicate clearly how many balls or strikes have been called by the umpire, how many men are out, the batting number of the man at the bat, the number of the inning and the number of runs standing to the credit of each club at any given time in the game. I provide other convenient indications, some visual and some audible, as, for example, when one bell indicates whether the batter makes a hit for a single base, for two bases, or three bases or a home run, while a smaller bell at another portion of the scene indicates the batting number of the player who makes an error. As the batting order of the players in the competing clubs is conspicuously shown upon the curtain, the batting number serves as a means of identification for each player in a very convenient manner.

One of the interesting features of my invention consists in the indication of a fly ball upon the scene whenever a batter has struck a ball into the air. Another indication is that of the moment when play is resumed after any interruption, either by the natural shifting of the players at the end of each half inning or from any extraordinary cause. As soon as the resumption of play takes place, the words "play ball" appear behind an opening in the screen or curtain. Now, all these indicating devices are under the control of a single operator who usually sits at the forward edge of the stage and manipulates an electric key board, thereby controlling the motors for the several indicators. Of course, it would amount to the same thing if some of the devices were under the control of some one else besides this operator.

My invention will be clearly understood by reference to the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 represents that part of a scene or curtain such as I have described which shows the players in position and the various indicating devices to which I have called attention. Fig. 2 is an elevation of a portion of the mechanism behind the curtain, the curtain itself being taken away. Fig. 3 is a plan of a keyboard employed for controlling the motors.

In the drawings, 1 is a scene, curtain or board, having upon it figures 2, of men in the attitude of ball players and occupy, approxi-

mately, the positions of men in actual play. The players so represented upon the curtain are the catcher, pitcher, short stop, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, left
 5 fielder, center fielder, and right fielder of the nine which happens to be in the field. Besides this there is represented upon the curtain the figure of a batter, supposed to belong, of course, to the opposing nine. Near
 10 the center of the curtain appears the representation of a base ball diamond and the figures referred to occupy their proper respective positions with respect to the said diamond. Near each of the men in the field is an open-
 15 ing 3 behind which stands a board or similar piece painted with two colors, red and white—that is to say, that half of the board which is at the left behind the screen is painted one color, say red, and the half at the right is
 20 painted a nother color, say white. These devices are shown in Fig. 2, together with means for shifting them from right to left or from left to right as the case may be.

Now we will say that the game represented
 25 upon the screen is a game going on at the Polo grounds between the New York and the Pittsburg base ball clubs. We will say also that the color red stands for a New York player and the color white for a Pittsburg
 30 player. Now suppose the New Yorks are in the field and the Pittsburgs are at the bat. In that case, the red color will appear at all the openings 3 and the white color will appear at the opening near the batter which is
 35 marked *a*. Upon this white board will appear a hand pointing toward the batter while on the other side of the batter will appear the batting number of the player at the bat. When the colors are shifted, white will appear
 40 at all the openings 3, but at the opening at the right of the batter will appear a red board with a hand pointing to the batter in the opposite direction from the hand shown in Fig. 1. At the same time in place of the hand
 45 shown in Fig. 1, there will appear the batting number of the players stationed at the bat. Whenever in the progress of the game a runner reaches first base the figure of a player appears behind an opening at that point and
 50 the same is true when a runner reaches second base or third base. If there is a runner on every one of the three bases, this fact will be indicated by the figures referred to.

We now come to the means for shifting the
 55 color boards and the other means for indicating various things which have been referred to in the foregoing; and, first, let us understand that the various boards 5, are supported by suitable frame work 6, the frame itself
 60 depending from a carrier 7 supported upon rollers 8, 8, bearing upon a horizontal ledge or support 9. At one end a weight 10 is attached to the carrier 7 by a cord 11 running over a pulley 12. To the other end of the carrier is
 65 attached a cord 13 running over rollers 14 and 15 and extending into reach of the oper-

ator in front of the stage or behind the curtain, as the case may be. When he wishes the red colors to show behind the openings in the curtain he releases the carrier and lets it
 70 move under the influence of the weight 10 until it is brought to rest by coming against a stop 16. By pulling upon the cord 13 until the carrier is brought against the stop 17, the operator can make the white color appear be-
 75 hind the openings. By the same operation the hands near the batter are altered inversely—that is to say, the board carrying the hand at the left is painted white and the board carrying the hand at the right is
 80 painted red, thereby causing the proper change. These boards carrying the hands are so mounted as to be interposed between the rolls carrying the batting numbers of the players and the openings opposite the rolls,
 85 in order that when a side goes out there will be no necessity for turning the roll backward, said roll being left for operation when the side returns to the bat.

I will now describe the means for making
 90 the players appear at the several bases as already described and the means for making the other indications set forth. Preferably at the forward edge of the stage of a hall or theater, I locate a key board 20 having a set
 95 of keys or switch arms 21, each one of which controls a different motor behind the screen or curtain. For example, one key controls a motor which operates a roll behind the opening at the first base. This roll, numbered 22,
 100 has upon it alternate figures and blank spaces, so that by operating it to a certain distance a figure will appear behind the opening and by operating it still further a blank will appear. Another key controls a motor for operating a
 105 similar roll behind the opening at the second base and another key has the same relation with a roll behind the opening at the third base. Toward the left of the infield is an opening 25 behind which is a roll 26. This
 110 roll has upon it alternate blank spaces and the figure of a fly repeated a number of times. The action is obvious. Toward the right of the infield is an opening 28 behind which is a roll bearing at intervals the words "play ball"
 115 with intervening blank spaces. To the left of the batter are three openings with rolls behind them bearing successive numbers. The roll behind the opening marked "out" has upon it the numbers 1, 2 and 3 repeated in
 120 this order several times. There is a similar roll behind the opening "strike." The roll behind the opening marked "ball" has upon it the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, repeated a number of times in regular order. Behind the open-
 125 ing marked "inning" is a roll with numbers running from 1 to 14 or 15, to provide for all contingencies.

At the left and right, respectively, of the curtain appear openings under the words:
 130 "Score: New York" and "Score: Pittsburg." Behind these openings are rolls bearing num-

bers in regular order from one up to any reasonable number within the probabilities of the score.

I have not thought it necessary to illustrate the details of every one of these rolls, because the description I have given will sufficiently indicate their character and because they are all operated in the same way by means of separate electric motors, the operator simply closing the circuit of any given motor until he sees the proper indication appear at the selected opening and he then breaks the circuit whereupon the motor ceases to operate and the indication stands.

At 30 I show the driving shaft of an electric motor connected by a cog with the uppermost of two rollers on which the roll 22, for example, is mounted. The rotation of the motor shaft carries with it this upper roller and moves the roll itself by a winding process until the proper indication appears behind the opening. It is understood then that every key controls one of these motors and that there is one separate motor connected with each roll. Manifestly, therefore, the operator at the key board has full control of the several indications described, whether through the medium of the motors and the rolls connected therewith or through the medium of the cord 13 and the carrier and painted boards behind the curtain. It will only be necessary to say that he also has control of keys or buttons upon the key board for closing the circuits of the bells 31 and 32. A single tap upon the former bell (resulting from a single closure of the circuit at the key board) means that the batter has made a single base hit. Simultaneously, with the ringing of this bell, the operator will touch the key controlling the motor for the roll 22 and will thereby cause the figure of a man to appear behind the opening at the first base. Two taps on the bell 31 mean a two base hit, three taps a three base hit and four taps a home run. As the runner goes around the bases, figures will appear successively behind the openings behind the second and third base. Suppose one of the fielders makes an error, the operator closes the circuit of the bell 32, times enough to indicate the batting number (which identifies him) of the player making such error.

Near the bottom of the curtain or board appear the names of the players on either side together with the order in which they bat and the fielding position which they occupy. This is to assist the spectators in following the game intelligently. At the lower right hand corner appear the words "Game playing at Polo grounds," this indication being changed to correspond to the facts. The name of the umpire appears behind or below the catcher. In all these cases the matters which are subject to change are placed upon detachable or removable pieces while the permanent indi-

cations are preferably painted or otherwise attached to or upon the curtain itself.

I have omitted to mention the small bell 36 which is also under the control of the main operator for indicating when a foul ball has been struck.

The several indications are made upon the apparatus described upon receipt of telegraphic messages direct from the grounds where the game is going on. These messages come to the operator in control of the apparatus and the progress of the game is indicated in a very lifelike manner upon the curtain in view of the spectators, often within a very few seconds of the actual occurrence of the events in the game itself.

What I claim is—

1. In a reporting apparatus for a base ball game or other sporting event, a screen or curtain having upon it a picture of the general scene and openings corresponding in position to the playing positions of the several players and a movable frame behind the curtain having a plurality of separate bi-colored indicators adapted to simultaneously alter the colors appearing through a number of the openings.

2. In a reporting apparatus for a base ball game or other sporting event, a screen or curtain having upon it a picture of the general scene and openings corresponding in position to the playing positions of the several players, a sliding bar behind the curtain having a plurality of bi-colored indicators depending therefrom at different distances, and means for shifting said bar and causing the colors at some of the openings to be simultaneously changed.

3. In a reporting apparatus for a base ball game or other sporting event, a screen or curtain having upon it a picture of the general scene and openings at the bases or other points corresponding to those likely to be temporarily occupied by players in the game, rolls located behind said openings and having pictorial or numerical indications alternating with blank spaces of a size at least equal to the size of the opening, and means for operating said rolls intermittently in one direction.

4. In a reporting apparatus for a base ball game or other sporting event, a screen or curtain having upon it a picture of the general scene and two openings adjacent to the location of the batter, a pair of intermittently movable rolls bearing numerals behind said openings, and a pair of connected boards movable in the space between the screen and the rolls and adapted to expose one roll simultaneously with the concealment of the other.

In testimony whereof I have signed my name, in the presence of two witnesses, this 26th day of January, A. D. 1895.

MELVIN D. COMPTON.

Witnesses:

G. H. STOCKBRIDGE,
C. L. BELCHER.