

No. 656,917.

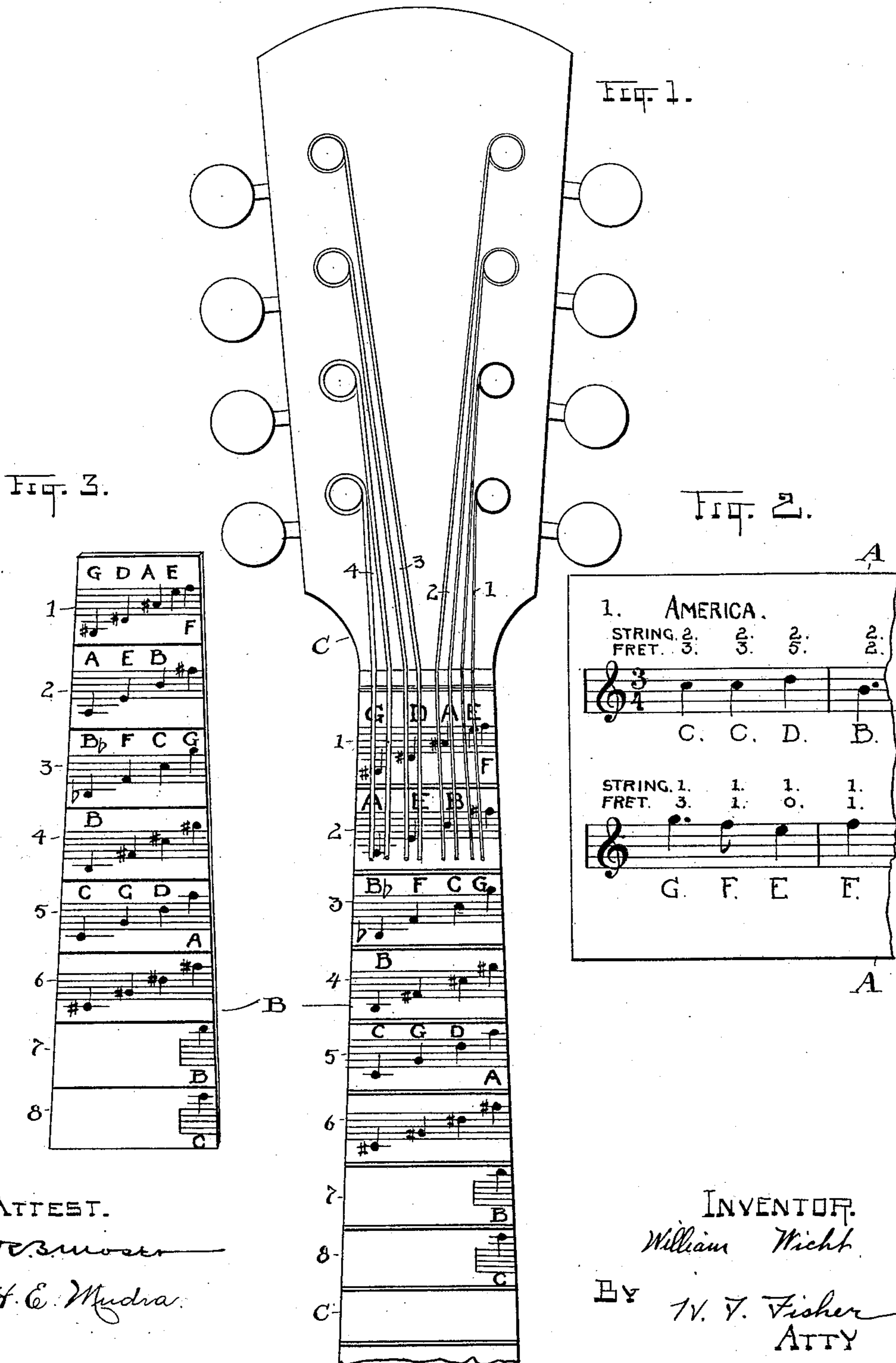
Patented Aug. 28, 1900.

W. WICHT.

FINGER GUIDE FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

(Application filed July 11, 1899.)

(No Model.)



UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM WICHT, OF CLEVELAND, OHIO.

FINGER-GUIDE FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 656,917, dated August 28, 1900.

Application filed July 11, 1899. Serial No. 723,515. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM WICHT, a citizen of the United States, residing at Cleveland, in the county of Cuyahoga and State of Ohio, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Finger-Guides for Musical Instruments; and I do declare that the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, which will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

My invention relates to finger-guides for musical instruments, adapted more particularly to the mandolin or the violin, but which need not necessarily be limited to these instruments; and the object of the invention is to provide a method or system of notation especially for the instruments named, and which is at once so simple and so easy to comprehend and follow that a beginner can take it up and speedily become proficient as a player without oral instruction and without help other than is contained in the matter furnished under this system.

Heretofore it may be said to have been the universal practice to have a special tutor and the pupil has been subjected to a long period of familiarizing or acquaintance with the instrument, involving what to him was only a humdrum practice of the most tiresome kind, and largely because it was a mere repetition of tiresome sounds and without harmony or pleasure to the ear. Hence only a comparatively-small per cent. of beginners have had the courage to go forward and complete the studies upon which they had hopefully entered. By my system I introduce the instrument to the beginner's hands with notes of melody and seek to employ this popular and enjoyable medium as an encouragement and incentive to him to go forward to the mastery of the instrument. By this means also he is enabled to note his progress and proficiency, and every improvement he makes he can see and find in it the stimulus to further and better endeavor. This practice thus obtained will also impress upon the student's mind in the quickest manner the complete scale of music and the position of notes or sounds on the instrument.

In the accompanying drawings, Figure 1 is a plan view of the extremity of the neck of a

mandolin carrying my new finger-guide, and hereinafter whenever the instrument is referred to it will be understood to mean a mandolin unless otherwise specially mentioned. Fig. 2 is a view of one end of a piece of music on which my new method of notation is illustrated in part; and Fig. 3 is a plan view of my finger-guide separate from the instrument and containing the interpreting notations for Fig. 2, whereby those appearing in the music are found and fingered out correctly on the instrument, whether mandolin or other string instrument, adapted to utilize or embody the invention.

Having in view now the object of the invention, the means employed involve, primarily, any preferred piece of music A—as seen, for example, in Fig. 2, where the usual notes are employed in the usual way. Over each note, above the staff and clearly visible to facilitate reading, are two figures, one above the other, and below the staff are a capital letter for each note. Now referring to Fig. 3, we have the “finger-guide” B, so-called because when applied to the neck C of the instrument, as seen in Fig. 1, it serves as an easy and accurate guide to the fingers to sound the note as it is found in turn on sheet A. This chart or guide carries forward the notation begun in Fig. 2 and enables the player at once to locate the note and to do so unerringly. He will at first be slow, necessarily; but if he desires to be always accurate he can be by these means, and from accuracy work up to speed and in this way unconsciously acquire the skill he is seeking.

Fig. 1 represents the neck C of what is understood to be a mandolin equipped with the usual strings arbitrarily numbered here 1, 2, 3, and 4 to correspond to the upper numbers on the music and which represent the strings to be played. The lower figures on the music indicate the frets, likewise numbered for the purposes of this description 1 2 3, &c., successively, as shown. The letters “G” “F” “E,” &c., indicate or represent the note to be played and are correspondingly present in both the sheet of music and the finger-guide or chart B. Thus the music to be played and the instrument itself are brought together in harmonious relation through these like characters on both, and it only remains for the

5 player to work them out on the strings. In
 doing this he needs only his eyes and his
 fingers and nothing else, and no other teacher
 or guide is required to enable him to become
 10 an accomplished player in a comparatively-
 short time, and the simplicity of the operation
 is obvious. Suppose he begins on the upper
 staff in the music to play the note C. He
 sees by the figures "2" and "3" that he is
 15 to play string 2 in fret 3, and these frets may
 be numbered on his instrument, if preferred,
 so that even here he has a character instead
 of a space to guide him. However, the usual
 cross-bars separating the frets are deemed a
 20 sufficient guide for this purpose. Instantly
 then he plays the right string in the right fret
 and articulates the right note. The next play
 obviously is a mere repetition of the first and
 it is quickly made. Then comes only a change
 25 of one fret, and that play is made, and so on,
 the performance being so simple that a child
 of ordinary intelligence who knows the char-
 acters can speedily acquaint itself with the
 system and the instrument. Of course the ac-
 30 complishment of playing involves the touch-
 ing of the string at the right place; and the
 object of this invention is to help the learner
 to acquire this knowledge with ease and fa-
 cility. The use of the finger-guide accustoms
 35 the eye of the beginner to the ordinary writ-
 ten music and serves also as an indicator
 that the note was played right, thus giving
 confidence and satisfaction in the work. It
 also promotes responsiveness between the fin-
 40 gers and eyes as they run over the notes,
 helping the player at last to find naturally
 the right place without special thought as to
 location in string or fret—the result of his ac-
 curate practice under this system.
 45 The finger-guide or chart is separately
 printed and prepared and glued to the finger-
 board of the instrument, and on it are rep-
 resented the staff and the pictures of notes
 as they appear in written music. In some
 instances the figures over the notes may
 be written side by side and they may be re-
 versed as to meaning, so that the upper ones

will indicate the fret and the lower ones the
 string. They might also be brought below
 the staff in exchange with the letters "G" 50
 "F" "E," &c., or they and the said letters
 might be placed together above or below the
 staff. The present arrangement is, however,
 altogether preferable.

In the foregoing description it will be un- 55
 derstood that the strings are numbered from
 right to left and the frets from end of neck
 down. There are no numbers shown on the
 frets corresponding to those over the notes
 and none are needed as to the strings, and it 60
 is optional whether they be placed to indi-
 cate the frets. Generally they are not used
 even if furnished, as the beginner soon ac-
 quaints himself with the positions of the
 frets; but the letters are used by the eye to 65
 help find location in the fret and serve to
 confirm or show the player that he has played
 aright. For example, suppose he plays "D"
 in the upper staff. This letter goes with the
 numbers "2" and "5" to string 2 and fret 70
 5, and instantly the position of D in that
 fret tells where to play. It helps even to as-
 sure as to the right string and familiarizes
 the player with the notes and their positions.

What I claim is—

75 As a new article of manufacture, a finger-
 guide for mandolins and like instruments,
 consisting of a flat rigid plate adapted to be
 removably placed on the neck of the instru-
 ment and having on its outer surface a series 80
 of subdivisions corresponding to the frets of
 the instrument and the frets thereon form-
 ing the lines of said subdivisions, transverse
 musical staves in said subdivisions, and notes
 on said staves and characters above each staff 85
 in each subdivision in line with the notes
 below to indicate the particular note to be
 played, substantially as described.

Witness my hand to the foregoing speci-
 fication this 3d day of July, 1899.

WILLIAM WICHT.

Witnesses:

H. T. FISHER,
 H. E. MUDRA.