

No. 702,061.

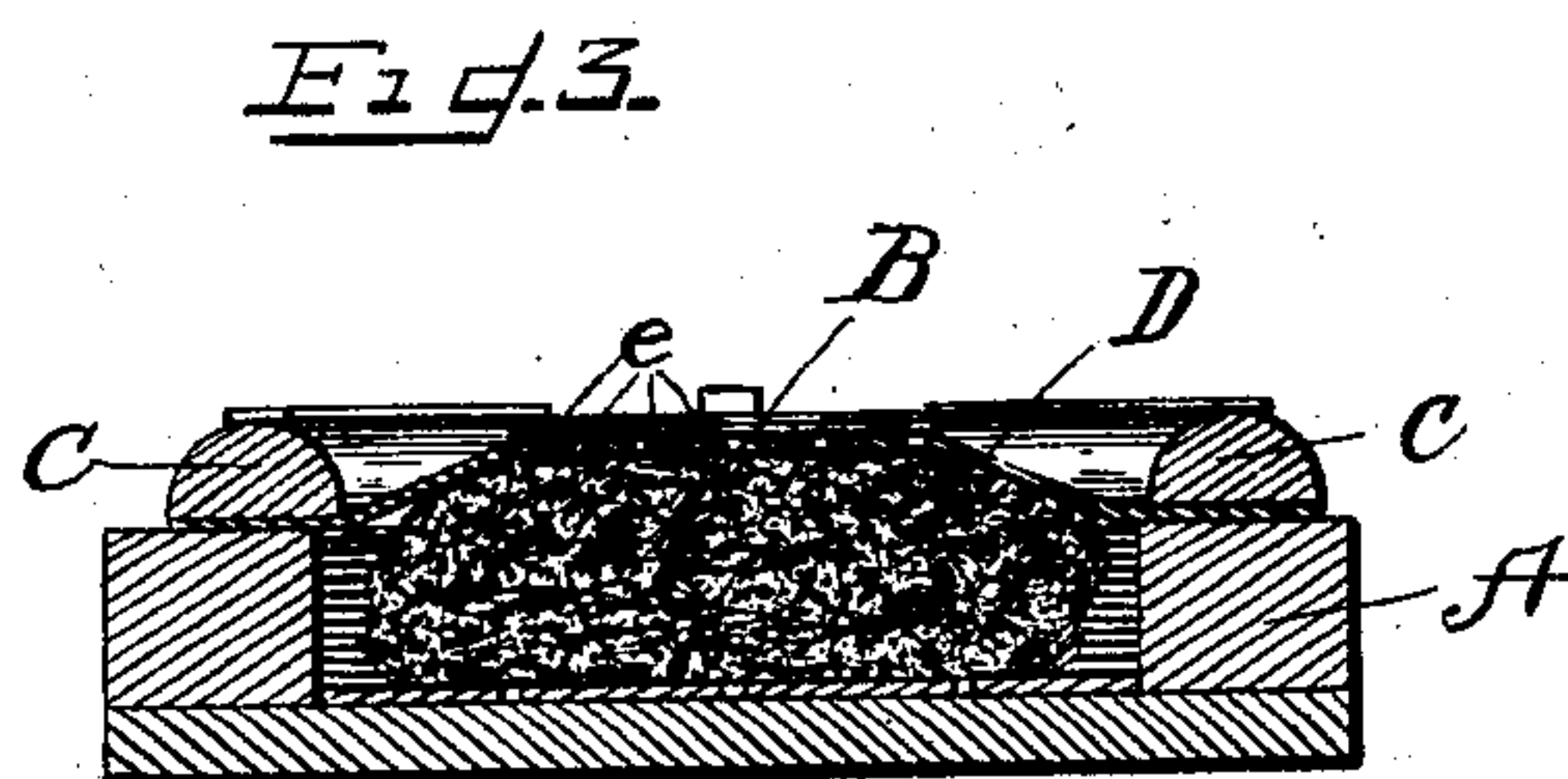
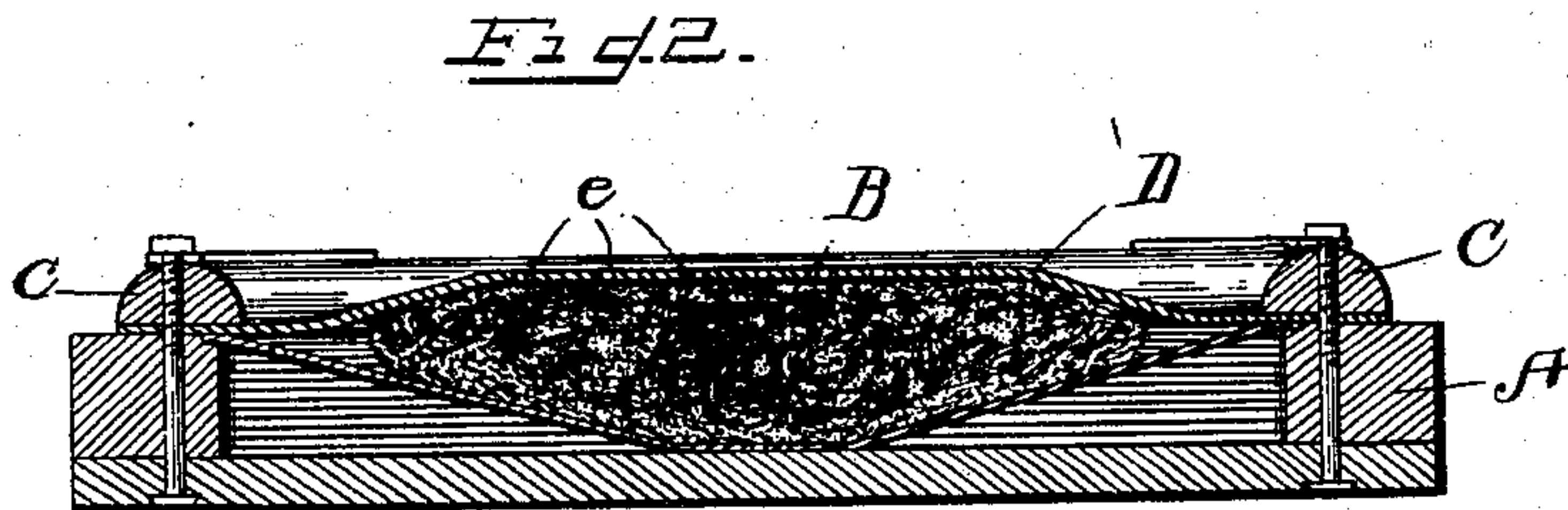
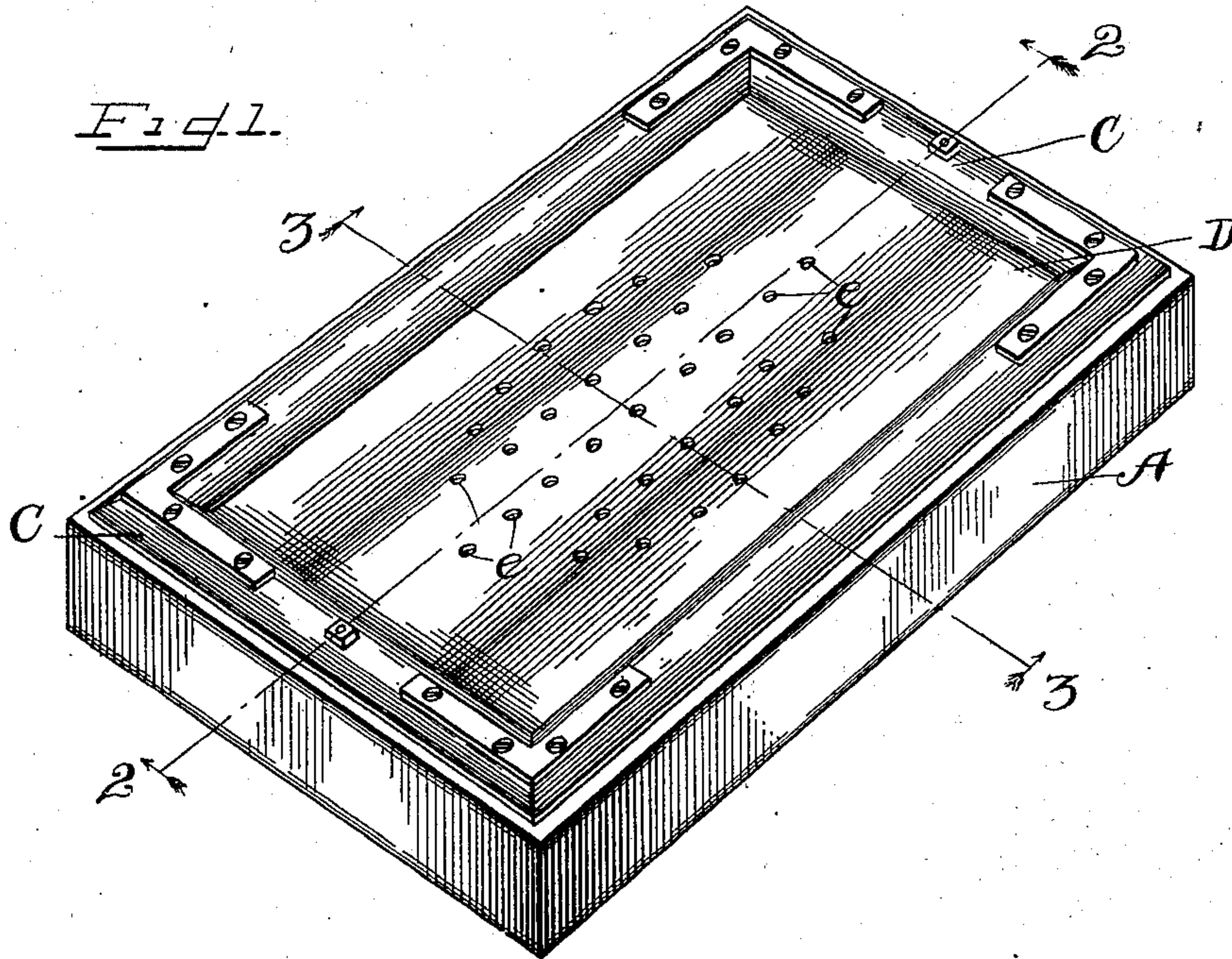
Patented June 10, 1902.

S. L. HOLDEN.

FOOT DAMPENER FOR BOWLING ALLEYS.

(Application filed Apr. 19, 1902.)

(No Model.)



WITNESSES:  
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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## FOOT-DAMPENER FOR BOWLING-ALLEYS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 702,061, dated June 10, 1902.

Application filed April 19, 1902. Serial No. 103,721. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, SYLVANUS L. HOLDEN, of New York city, county and State of New York, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Foot-Dampeners for Bowling-Alleys; and I do hereby declare the following is a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification.

My invention relates to what are commonly known as "foot-dampeners," which are used in bowling-alleys and by the use of which the bowler wets or dampens the soles of his shoes, so as to prevent slipping on the smooth running-space of the alley when he goes to throw his ball. For a very great many years and up to within a comparatively late period it was common for the bowlers to use for the purpose of preventing this slipping what was called a "chalk-box" or a "foot-chalker," which was simply a piece of solid white chalk, either natural or molded into shape, boxed up within a wooden casing, say, from about five inches wide to nine or ten inches long, placed, usually, immediately in rear of the newel-posts of a pair of alleys and made slightly oblique on its top surface, on which the player previous to making his throw would rub the soles of his feet; but this old-fashioned method and contrivance of chalking the soles of the feet was for years known to be an imperfect and undesirable thing for the purpose, and lately the old-fashioned foot-chalkers have been replaced by a device for wetting or dampening the soles of the shoes composed always, so far as my knowledge goes, of a topless box or case of the proper size containing a sponge sufficiently large to fill the interior of the box, and the top of the box and sponge then being covered over by a piece of carpet securely tacked along its four edges to the top of the said sponge-frame. Then by keeping the confined sponge thoroughly filled with water the player by pressing and rubbing the soles of his feet one at a time on top of the carpet would have the sole sufficiently dampened by the natural inforcement of the water contained in the sponge up through the meshes of the woven material and onto the soles of his shoes.

This substitute for the old-fashioned chalking system, which substitute has now been in use for some time, while demonstrating that the wetting or dampening of the shoe-soles is better than the chalking of them, has been found very objectionable in practical operation, since the carpet top of the dampener very soon getting matted and dirtied up with the rubbing of the feet thereon so that it becomes necessary to remove the carpet and tack on a fresh piece.

I propose to provide for use in the bowling-alley a device which will thoroughly and sufficiently dampen the soles of the feet rubbed on the top thereof, but which will not, like the carpet, become dirtied up and unfit for use very soon, but which, on the other hand, will be exceedingly durable, exceedingly cleanly, and subject to a perfectly orderly and operative condition at all times.

To this end and object my invention may be said to consist, essentially, in a water-tight box of the proper size and shape, adapted to contain a wetted sponge of sufficient size to approximately fill the space within the box and provided with a removable cover, which is composed of a simple frame adapted to fit down onto the upper edge of the water-box and formed or provided with a rectangular covering-piece or diaphragm made of sheet-rubber and perforated with numerous small holes, so that upon pressure of the foot on this perforated rubber diaphragm the water contained in the sponge of the box will be "sprayed" upward, so to speak, or will exude from the perforations of this diaphragm and just properly or safely wet the soles of the shoe, all as will be hereinafter more fully described and as will be most particularly pointed out in the claim of this specification.

To enable those skilled in the art to which my invention most nearly appertains to make and use a foot-dampener according to my invention, I will now proceed to describe the same by reference to the accompanying drawings, which form part of this specification, and in which—

Figure 1 is a top view of the article or device. Fig. 2 is a vertical cross-section taken in a plane indicated by the dotted line 2 2 of Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is a vertical longitudinal sec-



tion taken in a plane indicated by the dotted line 3 3 of Fig. 1.

In the central figures the same part will be found always designated by the same letter of reference.

A is a simple box, which may be made of any suitable material, so that it be watertight, within which box is placed a sponge B, which approximately fills the interior of the box to an extent such that when fully saturated and expanded its upper surface will (especially near the middle of the top of the sponge) project slightly above the level of a frame C, which is provided with a sort of diaphragm D, made of sheet-rubber and perforated, as seen at *e* in the drawings. Preferably the removable top, composed of the frame C, with its rubber diaphragm D, is secured in place by two or more lugs, which project vertically upward from the top edge of the box and passing through suitable perforations in the frame C may be provided at their upper ends with little thumb-nuts to permit the easy removal and replacement of the said frame or cover. The piece of sheet-rubber D is made, as illustrated, so that it has a sort of fullness or pucker in its superficies, which operates to keep the rubber in a sort of upwardly-bulged condition when pressed upwardly by the confined and expanded sponge and which permits it, however, to be pressed downwardly for the purpose of squeezing the sponge, the said rubber diaphragm being automatically thrown up again by the expansion of the sponge when relieved by the pressure of the bowler's foot after having dampened the sole of his shoe.

Now experiment and practice to a considerable extent has demonstrated that while this improved foot-dampener of mine is perfectly cleanly and operates in precisely the desired manner to sufficiently dampen the bowlers shoe as well is exceedingly durable,

requiring no permanent removal or replacement of any of its parts, though in the event of the small perforations in the rubber diaphragm becoming at any time partially choked up and in case of the lodgment on the top surface of the diaphragm of any dirt from the feet of the bowlers the cover or top of the dampener may be easily and periodically removed in cleaning up the alleys and may have its top and bottom surface as well easily cleaned off perfectly and its perforations rendered perfectly free and open without the expenditure of much time or labor.

Of course the sponge may be taken out periodically and squeezed or cleaned out if necessary, and it as well as the box within which it is confined may be perfectly and easily replenished with an ample supply of water very readily or quickly by simply removing the cover or frame with its rubber C and D, pouring a fresh supply of water into the box, and then replacing the cover.

Having now so fully described my invention that those skilled in the art may easily understand and practice it, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

A foot-dampener for bowling-alleys, composed of a suitable receptacle for the retention of water, and a saturated sponge and provided with a cover composed of a surrounding frame, within which is fitted a diaphragm-like sheet of rubber, perforated as specified, and adapted to bulge up and down, all in the manner and for the purpose hereinbefore set forth.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 18th day of April, 1902.

SYLVANUS L. HOLDEN.

Witnesses:

GEO. W. LOLLINGER,  
HENRY P. IDE.