

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

MAROON B. SARKEES, OF PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-THIRD TO JOHN P. CARROLL, OF PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, AND ONE-THIRD TO ROBERT M. COOK, OF WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

METHOD OF CURING TOBACCO.

No. 847,698.

Specification of Letters Patent.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MAROON B. SARKEES, a subject of the Sultan of Turkey, residing at Philadelphia, in the county of Philadelphia and State of Pennsylvania, have invented a certain new and useful Improvement in Methods of Curing Tobacco, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to an improved method of treating tobacco by which the leaves are quickly aged and cured and given a fine flavor.

In carrying out my invention the tobacco is cut after the flower of the plant closes and is protected from rain and water in all succeeding steps in the process. Immediately after cutting the leaves are buried in the ground for a period of about three days. For this purpose a trench is dug in natural soil and lined with matting or other similar material, which will prevent the moisture in the ground from coming in direct contact with the tobacco. The tobacco after being completely surrounded with the matting is covered with soil to a depth of eighteen to twenty-four inches, more or less, and precautions are taken to prevent the trench from being flooded and the tobacco from becoming wet, in case of rain, by a suitable shed or water-tight covering placed over the trench. While the tobacco is inclosed in the trench fermentation and sweating of the freshly-cut leaves takes place, which, if too long continued, would ruin the tobacco. At the end of about three days the tobacco is removed from the trench, when it will be found to have a somewhat moldy appearance, owing to the exudation of the salts in the tobacco. At this stage in the process the tobacco is only partly aged and colored. After removal from the trench it is made up in "hands" and exposed to the action of the sun and the air for about seventy-two hours, more or less, according to the condition of the weather, the hands being turned at intervals to expose all parts of the tobacco to the sunlight. The action of the sun and air removes the natural dampness and greenness from the tobacco and arrests fermentation, and it also causes the reabsorption of the salts, leaving the tobacco of a light reddish or brownish color.

The trench should be located so that after

the removal of the tobacco the interior of the trench will be exposed to the direct rays of the sun and should be kept dry, so that the rank odor of the green tobacco will disappear from the trench. After the tobacco has been exposed to the air and sunlight for about seventy-two hours, more or less, it is again buried in the trench, protected by matting, as before, for a period of about three days, during which further but less active fermentation, aging, and coloring of the tobacco takes place. After being in the trench a second time for the period of time mentioned it is removed and then exposed to the night air only for from three to six nights. For this purpose the tobacco is placed in the open air after sundown and taken in before sunrise. After this step the tobacco has a rich brown color and a pleasant and peculiar aroma and flavor.

The covering of eighteen inches or more of earth while in the trench protects the tobacco from the atmosphere, so that the tobacco sweats and ferments in an earthen inclosure from which the air is excluded and in which the vapors from the tobacco are retained. The earth removes a rank or bitter flavor from the tobacco, and the exclusion of the air and retention of the vapors causes rapid fermentation and more uniform coloring, flavoring, and aging of the tobacco.

After the curing process is completed the tobacco is sprinkled with a solution of arrac and water or other wine spirits or liquors diluted with water. The tobacco is then pressed in bundles of suitable size and placed within a cloth covering and stored in a dry place for from three to four weeks, after which it is ready for the market.

This method of curing tobacco is much shorter than the ordinary methods, and the flavor and aroma of the tobacco are very much improved.

In all stages of the process the tobacco should be protected from objects and material from which it might absorb odor and flavor, and the soil in which it is buried should be the natural soil free from any such contaminating material. The principal features of my process are the preliminary fermentation in the trench, the subsequent exposure to the sun and air, and the further burial and fermentation for a short period,

which steps jointly result in quickly aging, curing, and preserving the flavor of the tobacco.

What I claim is—

5 1. The method of curing tobacco which comprises placing the freshly-cut leaves in an earthen inclosure, adapted to prevent the circulation of air through the tobacco, for a few days, thereby causing fermentation partial aging and coloring of the tobacco in said
10 earthen inclosure, then removing the tobacco from said earthen inclosure and exposing it to the action of the sun and air for a few days, and then again placing the tobacco in a similar earthen inclosure for a few days to cause
15 further fermentation aging and coloring of the tobacco therein.

20 2. The method of curing tobacco which comprises placing the freshly-cut leaves in an earthen inclosure, adapted to prevent the

circulation of air through the tobacco, for a few days, thereby causing fermentation, partial aging and coloring of the tobacco in said earthen inclosure, then removing the tobacco from said earthen inclosure and exposing it to the action of the sun and air for a few days, then again placing the tobacco in a similar earthen inclosure for a few days to cause further fermentation aging and coloring of the tobacco therein, and then exposing
25 the tobacco to the night air only for a few nights. 30

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of witnesses.

MAROON B. ^{his} × SARKEES.
mark

Witnesses:

JNO. MOYNIGAN,
JOHN P. CARROLL,
JAMES I. McCAREY, Jr.