L. J. STEWART.

Oyster-Float.

No. 217,558. Patented July 15, 1879.

Fig. 1.

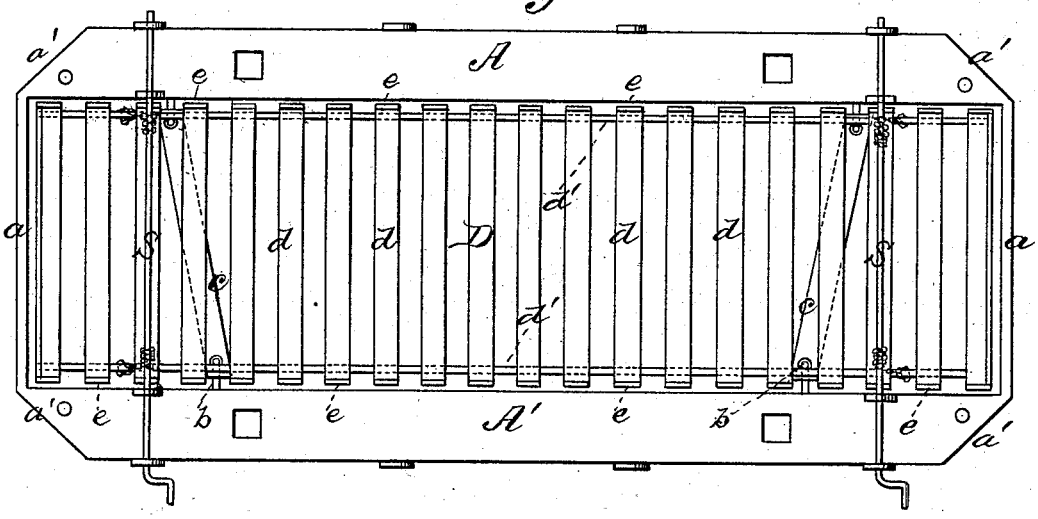
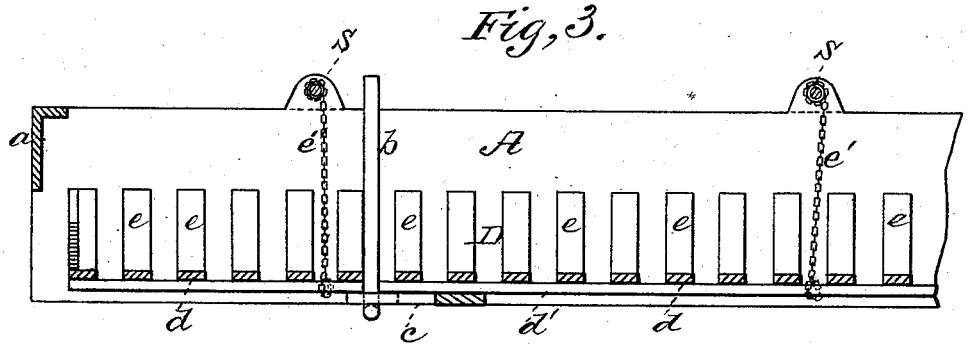


Fig. 2.

Fig. 3.



WITNESSES

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LEVIN J. STEWART, OF NORFOLK, VIRGINIA.

IMPROVEMENT IN OYSTER-FLOATS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **217,558**, dated July 15, 1879; application filed February 24, 1879.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, LEVIN J. STEWART, of Norfolk, in the county of Norfolk and State of Virginia, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Floats for Oysters, &c.; and I do hereby 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 pertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification.

Figure 1 is a top view, Fig. 2 an end view, and Fig. 3 a longitudinal section, of my improved oyster-float.

This invention has relation to improvements in oyster-floats.

The object of the invention is to devise means whereby, during a warm spell of weather, or during a period of small demand, oysters, clams, and other bivalves may be kept alive and in good marketable condition until the cessation of warm weather or until the bivalves are in demand.

The nature of the invention consists in an oyster-float, having a divided hull permanently connected at its ends, in combination with a carrier or grating raised or lowered by transverse winding-drums and connecting-chains, as hereinafter shown and described.

In the annexed drawings, the letters A A′ designate the hull or floats, connected together and maintained at a suitable distance apart by means of beams *a* secured at each end to the hull or floats, and, if necessary, at intervals from end to end of the same. These hulls or floats may be built especially for the purpose, but unseaworthy hulls of vessels, barges, and other disabled crafts may be utilized with advantage in still water. Sometimes these floats or hulls may be built of iron, and when circumstances warrant and justify the expense, I prefer to construct them of this material, and to bevel or point their ends, as shown at *a′*, to facilitate the towing of the floats or hulls into deep water.

b represents hooks, usually of iron, and rigidly secured in any suitable manner to the floats. These are secured to the bottoms of the floats or hull, and extend above the decks thereof. They are arranged out of line with each other, so that a wooden or iron beam, *c*, having holes in its ends to receive the vertical arm of the said hooks, will be oblique to both floats or hulls when engaged therewith. These hooks, which may extend downward below the keel of the hull or floats, carry the diagonal or oblique supporting-beams *c*, so that they receive the carrier or grating D and relieve the hoisting-chains of strain.

The grating is composed of a sufficient number of spaced wooden or metallic slats *d*, connected together by means of longitudinal braces *d′*, and provided with upturned ends *e*, which bear against the sides of the hull or floats, and prevent the grating from being forced by the tide from between the same, so that at any desired moment the said grating may be raised to the surface and the oysters exposed.

If it be deemed desirable, I shall construct a raised guard at the ends of the grating that will prevent loss of oysters by dropping off of the same. The grating is suspended by chains or ropes, *e′*, from transverse winding-shafts S, extending across the interval between the hull or floats, and provided with bearings thereon. These shafts may be provided with drums at each end, to which the ends of the hoisting-ropes are secured, or they may be secured directly thereto. They are caused to rotate, thus causing the chains or ropes to be wound thereon by a crank at one or both ends of said shafts, or by any other windlass rig or means that I may elect. These shafts will, of necessity, be controlled by a pawl-and-ratchet mechanism of any known form, or by means of an adjustable brake. Uusually the grating will be lowered upon its supports, the oblique beams *c*, before the shell-fish are cast thereon; but if I so elect, it may be made of such solidity as to justify the spreading of oysters, clams, and the like thereon before lowering it.

I am aware that camels for raising sunken or other vessels, having a series of windlasses on each side, with slings and cables for hoisting when said camels are placed suitable distances apart, are old.

I am also aware that an extensible sack or bag, made of webbing or sacking, which may

be placed within a boat, or when in use dropped below either side of it, the same being constructed and applied to life-boats, is not new; and I do not claim such invention.

What I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The oyster-float consisting of the divided hull A A′, permanently connected at its ends, in combination with the carrier or grating D, raised or lowered by the transverse winding-drums S and connecting-chains *e′ e′*, substantially as specified.

In testimony that I claim the foregoing as my own I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

LEVIN J. STEWART.

Witnesses:
M. L. DEZENDORF,
DANIEL G. HEFFNER.