

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ABNER SPARKS, OF CAMDEN, NEW JERSEY.

## IMPROVEMENT IN MATURING AND COLORING LEAF-TOBACCO.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **211,641**, dated January 28, 1879; application filed July 11, 1878.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, ABNER SPARKS, of the city of Camden, in the county of Camden and State of New Jersey, have invented a new and useful Process of Coloring and Maturing Leaf-Tobacco, of which the following is a specification:

This invention relates to that class of processes for coloring or darkening and maturing leaf-tobacco to be used for wrappers for cigars, and which I shall more fully set forth as follows:

In carrying out my invention I take the quantity of leaf-tobacco I wish to color, and wet the same with water, rather more so than is usually the case when working the same. I then take an ordinary earthen or stone jar, or other suitable vessel, and place the wet leaf in it. I then cover the jar or vessel to make it comparatively air-tight, and place the same in a hot oven or similar place, so that the jar can be surrounded by heat and yet not come in direct contact with the fire. The tobacco being wet and the jar closed, the heat carries the tobacco through a sweating and maturing process, by which means I am enabled to color it to any desirable shade, according to the time it is allowed to remain in the oven, which varies from six to twenty-four hours, to produce the shade desired.

After I find, upon examination, that the leaf has attained the desired shade and is suffi-

ciently matured, I take it from the jar, spread it out smoothly, and expose it to the air until it is dry enough to work up.

It is well known that nicotine has a strong coloring property, and that tobacco and tobacco-stems are used to a large extent to color cotton and woolen goods. Therefore, by my process, the tobacco being made wet, I, by the means of the water and heat, develop the nicotine, and use it as a coloring-matter, and each leaf being wet the process extends to all, while the vessel being air-tight the nicotine is absorbed by the leaf and retained, so that the strength of leaf is rather increased than diminished by the process of coloring, which is not the case in steaming.

I do not claim steaming, nor confine myself to any kind or shape of vessel; but

What I do claim, and desire to cover by Letters Patent, is—

The process of maturing and coloring leaf-tobacco hereinbefore described—that is to say, saturating the tobacco-leaves with water, placing the leaves so saturated in a vessel, and covering the vessel so as to make it substantially air-tight, and then subjecting said covered vessel with its contents to heat in a heated oven or otherwise.

ABNER SPARKS.

Witnesses:

E. R. MCKEAN,  
S. M. POOL.