

John Wesley Williams

Born: July 12, 1815

Died: July 7, 1886



Adam Clark Williams

Born: January, 22, 1848

Died: June 15, 1932



The Williams family was one of the most prominent industrial families in Chagrin Falls' early years. The Reverend Benajah Williams, his wife, Jerusha Smith Williams and their sons arrived in Chagrin Falls in 1840 from New York. Reverend Williams' son, L. D. Williams had already settled in Chagrin Falls in 1837 and would serve as a teacher, preacher and the first village postmaster. Reverend Benajah Williams purchased land at the west end of Pearl Street (Now West Washington Street) from Samuel Nettleton that was being used as a sawmill, furnace and tin shop. Reverend Williams had a hard time getting anything established at the site and eventually sold the property to his son, John Wesley Williams in 1844.

John Wesley Williams was born in Cazenovia, Madison County, New York on July 12, 1815. He was married to Fanny Tenny in Parma, New York on July 20, 1834. They had one son, Adam Clark Williams, who was born on January 22, 1848 in Chagrin Falls. Adam Clark Williams married Jennie F. Willey (1848-1906). They had a daughter, Mary Helen Williams (1868 – 1932). He then married Daisy Reed (1871-1909) and lastly, Edna Hazel Buck (1891-1927).

John W. Williams would serve as Village Marshall and was elected Mayor of Chagrin Falls in 1853, 1861 and 1868. John W. Williams utilized the existing furnace building at the mill site and added a small cupola of one-ton capacity and one molder and a few helpers. The mill produced chain pump reels, spouts, and plow points. When a wagon load of pump reels, spouts, and plow points was finished, John Williams would drive through the country trading his products for scrap iron and farm produce. Some of the farm produce was given to his few employees as pay and the balance placed with local merchants against which he would draw orders for the balance of his payroll. There was practically no money in existence and the majority of business was done via the barter system.

After a few years, John W. Williams began producing the 'Empire' wood burning stove. A few years later, the J. W. Williams Company started to produce old-style, short wagon boxes used on wagon axles and in the wheel hubs and also boxes for wrought iron axles and a few old-style polished flat irons. The business grew in spite of lack of money and a larger cupola was installed. A trip hammer was purchased to forge wrought iron axles and a contract was obtained by John Williams for cannon carriages used by the Government during the Civil War. Other castings were produced for the machinery used in the Pennsylvania oil fields. At about this same time, John Williams obtained a permit to manufacture seamless wagon skeins and from that time on, skeins and bolster plates for wagons were the principal products of this Company.

During 1865, John Williams' son, Adam Clark Williams, started working at the foundry on a full-time basis and became a partner in 1872 and the name was changed to J.W. Williams & Son. In 1870, a line of pruning tools was added. At about this same time, coke came into use as the fuel for melting iron instead of wood and charcoal. The coke was hauled to Chagrin Falls by team from Bedford, Ohio and the pig iron was hauled by team from Solon, Ohio.

John W. Williams died in 1886. At the time of his death, he had been in business in Chagrin Falls for forty-two years and was oldest man in business in Chagrin Falls with only three or four residents living in the town longer than he had. It was said of him at the time:

“Of all the men who have lived in Chagrin Falls probably no single one has ever done more for its material success than the subject of this sketch. Besides building up his large business interest, giving employment to many men, and the erection of his fine residence on Franklin street, his hand was ever at the front in all enterprise calculated for the development of our town. He was foremost in all railroad projects, until, through the exertion of himself and others who always are at the front in promoting the welfare of our fair town, an outlet was afforded, and Chagrin Falls was put in communication with the outer world, through the completion and successful management of the Chagrin Falls and Southern Railroad, of which he has been Superintendent ever since its completion in 1877.”

John Wesley Williams Burial information:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=16650550>



Reverend Benajah Williams grave in foreground, John Wesley Williams grave in background
Evergreen Cemetery, Chagrin Falls, Ohio

In 1886, Adam Clark Williams bought the business from his father and with five molders and a total of fifteen employees, he expanded the Company by adding a line of sad irons with wood handles. A narrow gauge railroad had been built by ten of the leading citizens of Chagrin Falls, A.C. Williams being one of these. This provided a means of transportation and greatly increased the business activity in the area.

In the fall of 1889, A.C. Williams was on his way home from a business trip to Detroit and was unable to make railroad connections in Cleveland. He, therefore, remained overnight. He went to the Park Theatre and during the performance, a man came on stage and announced that if A.C. Williams was in the audience, he should call at the box office immediately. There he was told that his plant was burning and there appeared little hope of saving it. On arrival home the next morning, he found the plant completely destroyed.

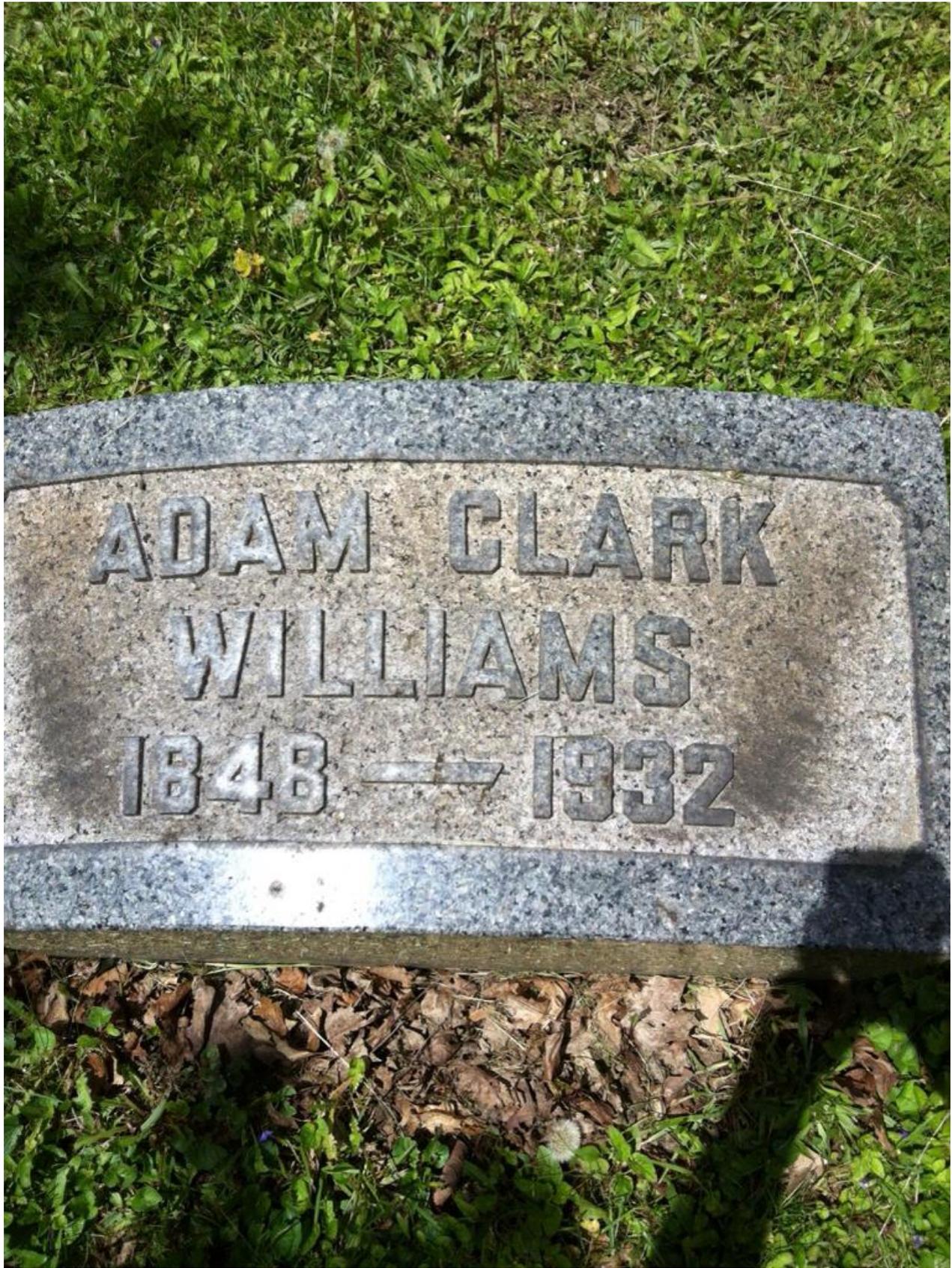
A.C. Williams was undecided about the future as he had not recovered from the financial depression and was deeply in debt. Citizens of Chagrin Falls urged him to rebuild and employees offered to work on the building without pay. The railroad offered to haul all building materials and machinery from Cleveland without charge. Owners of teams offered to haul the material and machinery from the depot free of charge. With this cooperative spirit, there was no choice but to rebuild.

Mr. Williams borrowed from about a dozen friends and from the local bank and on a Sunday morning, two weeks after the fire, work started on the new building. One hundred men were working at the site without any thought of pay whatsoever. The plant was completed and production started. Business prospered and the number of employees increased. Then, on Thanksgiving night of 1892, the factory was again completely destroyed by fire. Due to lack of fire protection in Chagrin Falls, and the relatively poor shipping facilities, A.C. Williams decided to move to Ravenna, Ohio, due to its easy access to railroads and better fire protection. While in Ravenna, the company began making many different types of cast iron banks. Some of the designs are shown below. The company is still in business today as the Lite Metals Company of Ravenna.

Adam Clark Williams passed away on June 15, 1932 and is buried in Ravenna, Ohio

Adam Clark Williams Burial information:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=110517967>



Adam Clark Williams grave in Ravenna, Ohio



- 1 Town Hall.
- 2 School House.
- 3 Post Office.
- 4 C. F. & S. R. R. Depot.
- 5 Merchant and Custom Flour Mill, W. Gates, Prop.
- 6 Chagrin Falls Creamery.
- 7 Enterprise Steam Flouring Mill, Williams & Hutchings, Props.
- 8 Woodware Manufacturing Works, Ballou & Merch, Props.
- 9 Wagon Sides and Sled Iron Manufacturing Works, J. W. Williams & Son, Props.
- 10 Saw, Planing Mill and Handle Manufactory, G. H. Ober, Prop.
- 11 Chagrin Falls Paper Co.'s Works, D. L., J. W., L. L. & L. I. Pope Proprietors.
- 12 Marble and Granite Works, H. A. Sheffield, Prop.
- 13 Chagrin Falls Experiment, J. S. Brantley, Prop.

PANO-RAMIC VIEW

CHAGRIN FALLS

CUYAHOGA COUNTY OHIO 1883.

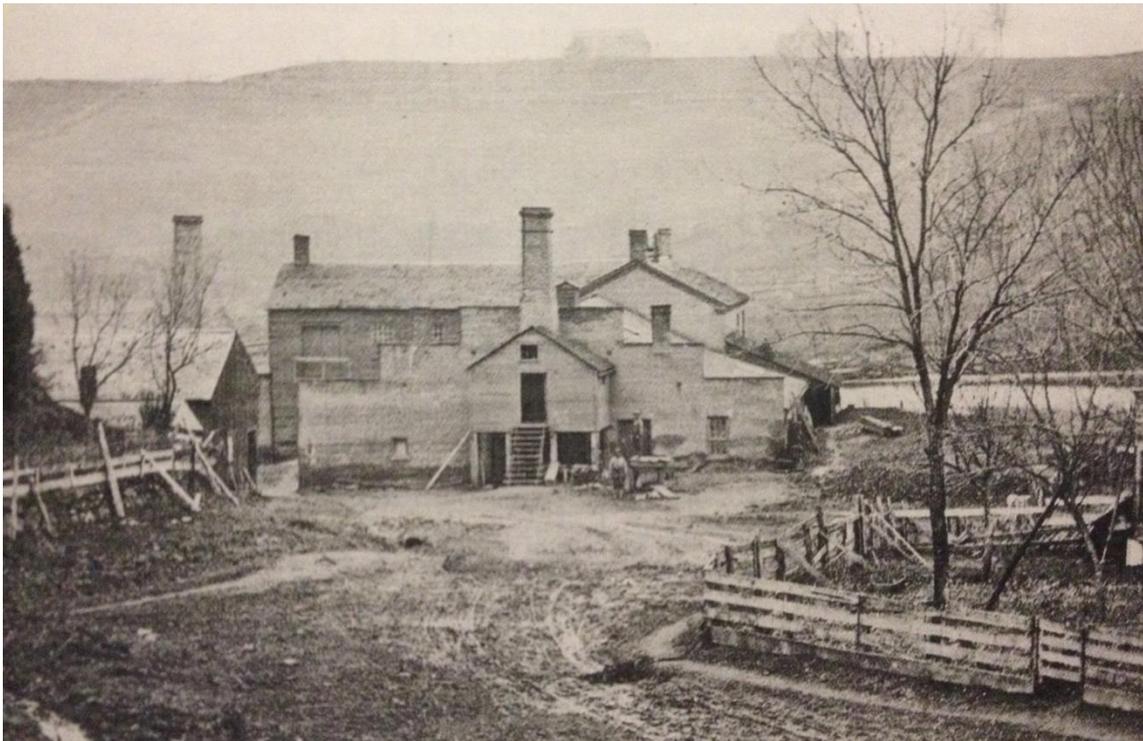
POPULATION - 2200
PUBLISHED BY J. J. STANNAN

- A Congregational Church.
- B Bible Christian Church.
- C Disciple Church.
- D Methodist Episcopal Church
- E I. O. O. F. Hall.
- F Masonic Hall.
- G Cemetery.
- H Foundry and Machine Works
- K Adams & Co.'s Paper Mill
- L Cheese Factory.
- M Bank, E. B. Pratt, Banker
- N Irving House, H. W. Goodwin & Co. Props.

Williams Foundry located by arrow – west end of West Washington Street.



Williams Foundry in background, middle – downstream from natural falls



Williams Foundry as viewed from West Washington Street looking northwest.



A.C. Williams home on Walnut Street.



J.W. Williams home on South Franklin Street. At one time, the home and its carriage house took up the entire block from Maple Street to Center Street and S. Franklin Street to Walnut Street.

Sample Patents and products:



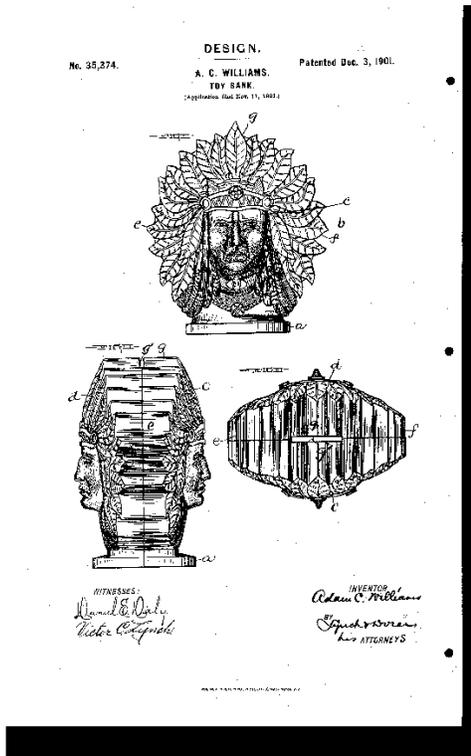
Sad Irons



Empire wood-burning stove

Toy Bank

<https://www.google.com/patents/USD35374?dq=ininventor:%22Adam+C.+Williams%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH5M7ahKfJAhVlox4KHZNoD-cQ6AEIJDAB>



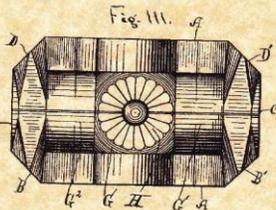
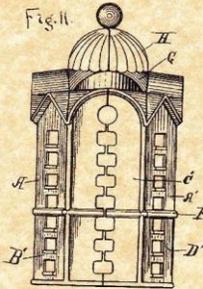
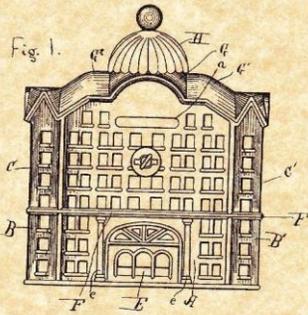
DESIGN.

No.

Patented Jan. 31, 1899.

A. C. WILLIAMS.
TOY BANK.

(Application filed Dec. 29, 1898.)



WITNESSES:
Daniel C. Daly
Victor C. Lynch

INVENTOR
Adam C. Williams
BY
Lynch & Donnelly
ATTORNEYS



Toy Bank

<https://www.google.com/patents/USD37474?dq=ininventor:%22Adam+C.+Williams%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH5M7ahKfJAhVlox4KHZNoD-cQ6AEIHTAA>

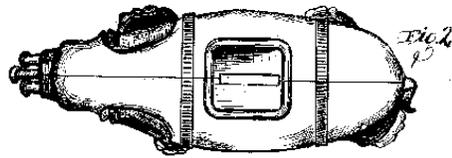
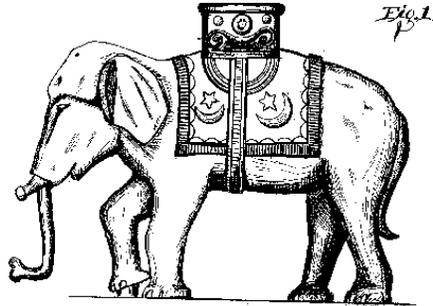
No. 37,474.

DESIGN.

PATENTED JUNE 27, 1905.

A. C. WILLIAMS.
TOY BANK.

ART. 4762A-1903 FILED MAY 16, 1904.



WITNESSES:
James C. Brady
Victor C. Lynch

INVENTOR
Adam C. Williams
BY
Lynch & Co.
ATTORNEYS.



Riveting Machine:

<https://www.google.com/patents/US676827?dq=ininventor:%22Adam+C.+Williams%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH5M7ahKfJAhVlox4KHZNoD-cQ6AEIKzAC>

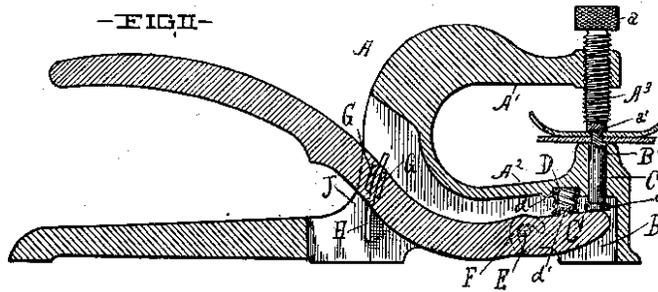
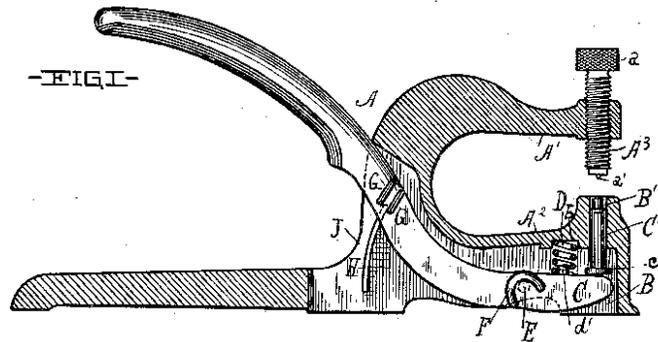
No. 676,827.

Patented June 18, 1901.

A. C. WILLIAMS.
RIVETING MACHINE.

(Application filed Mar. 1, 1898.)

(No Model.)



WITNESSES:
Daniel E. Daly,
Victor C. Lynch.

INVENTOR
Adam C. Williams.
BY
Lynch & Co. & Co.
his ATTORNEYS.

Sad Iron Handle

<https://www.google.com/patents/US998315?dq=ininventor:%22Adam+C.+Williams%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH5M7ahKfJAhVlox4KHZNoD-cQ6AEIOTAE>

A. C. WILLIAMS.
SAD IRON HANDLE.
APPLICATION FILED JAN. 12, 1911.

998,315.

Patented July 18, 1911.

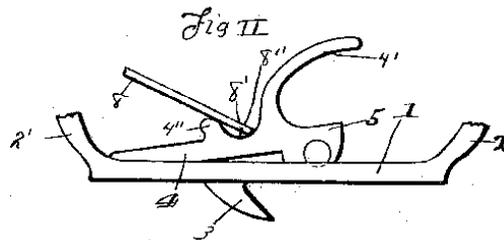
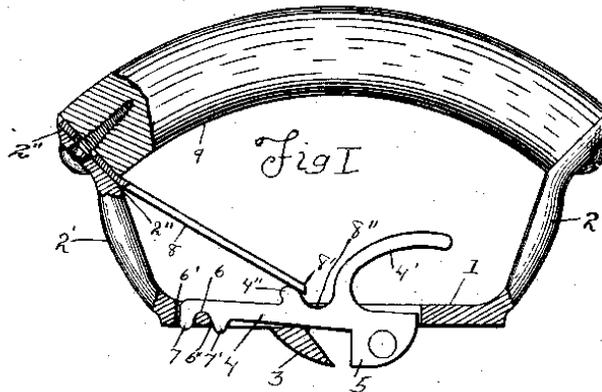
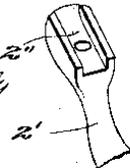


Fig. III

WITNESSES
John J. Donnelly
Lena A. Gregg



INVENTOR
A. C. Williams
BY

W. E. Donnelly
HIS ATTORNEY

Raisin Seeder frame

<https://www.google.com/patents/USD25869?dq=ininventor:%22Adam+C.+Williams%22&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiH5M7ahKfJAhVlox4KHZNoD-cQ6AEIMjAD>

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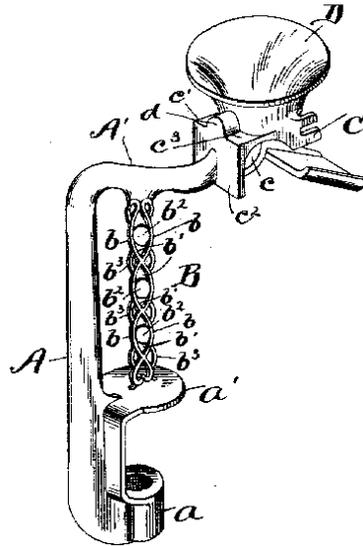
OR D 25,869

DESIGN.

A. C. WILLIAMS.
RAISIN SEEDER FRAME.

No. 25,869.

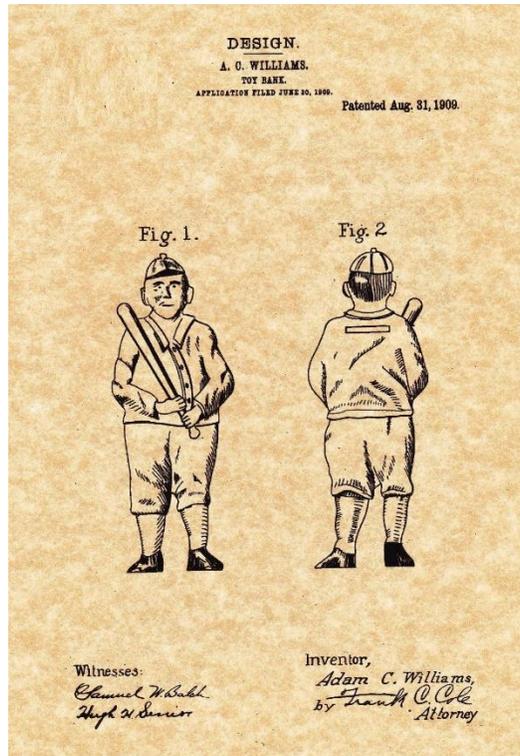
Patented Aug. 4, 1896.



Witnesses:
E. B. Gilchrist
Ella E. Tilden

Inventor:
Adam C. Williams
By
Synch Doran & Donnelly
his Attorneys

Ball Player



Devil's Head

