

Dec. 26, 1944.

M. I. NAKEN

2,366,046

CHEST FOR SILVERWARE

Filed Dec. 5, 1941

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

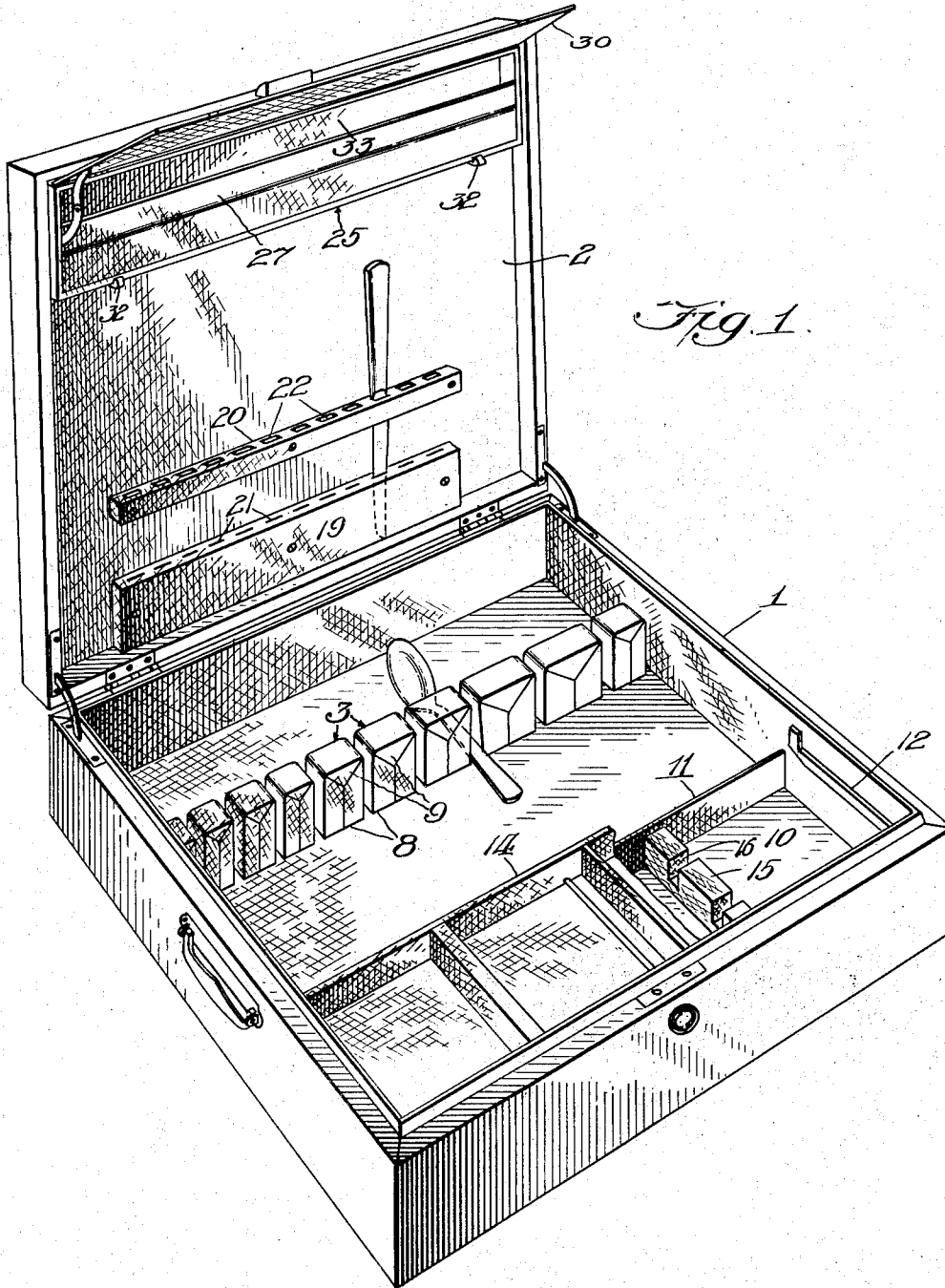


Fig. 1.

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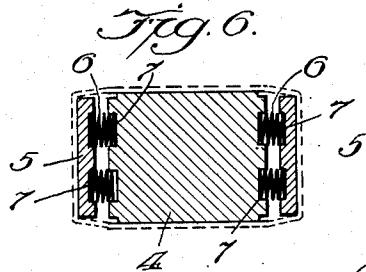
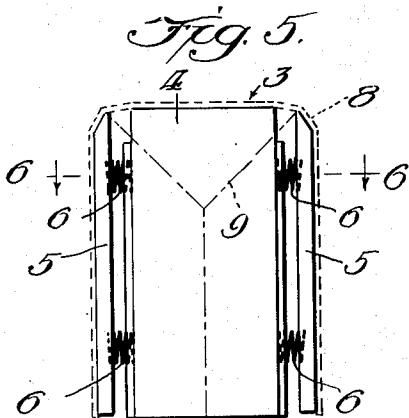
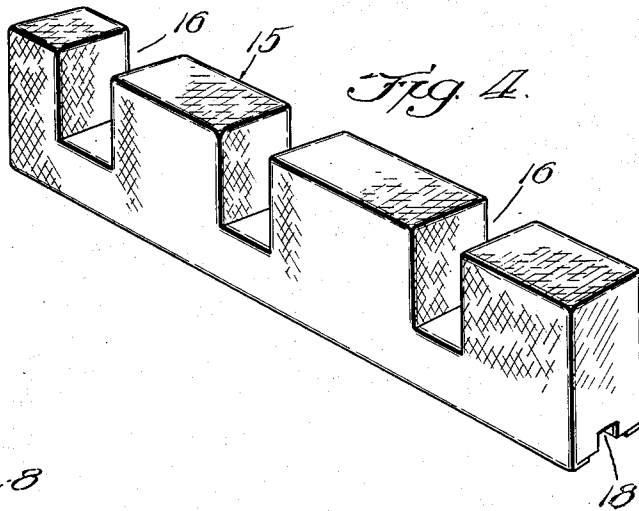
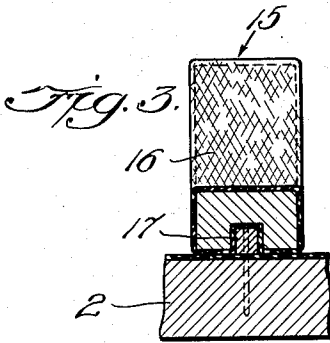
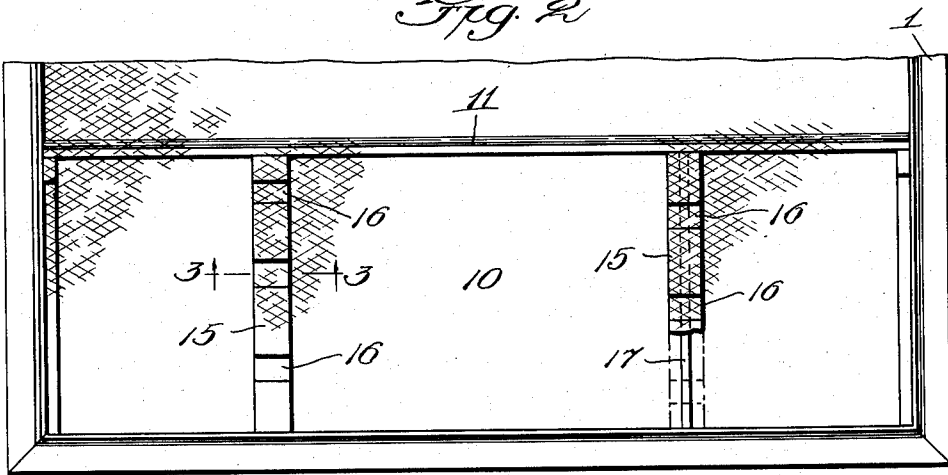
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Fig. 2.



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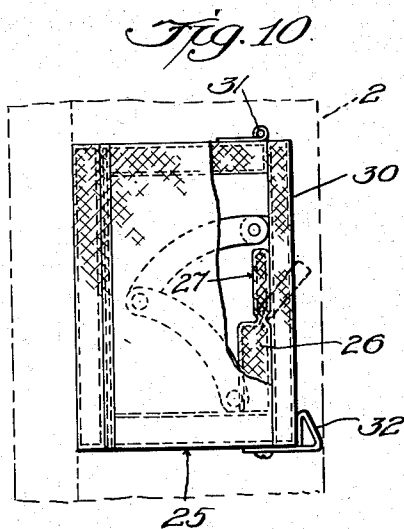
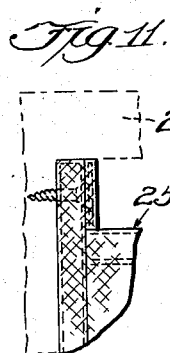
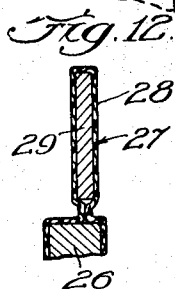
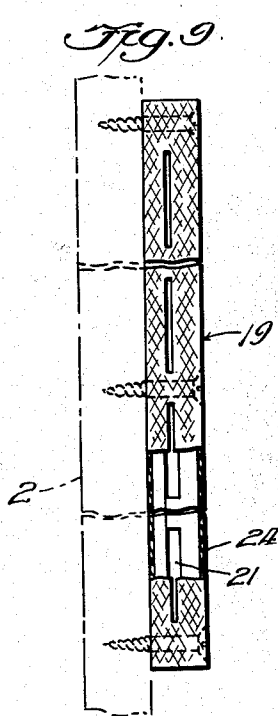
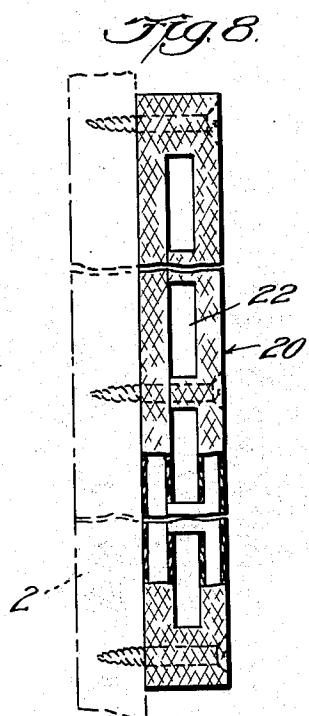
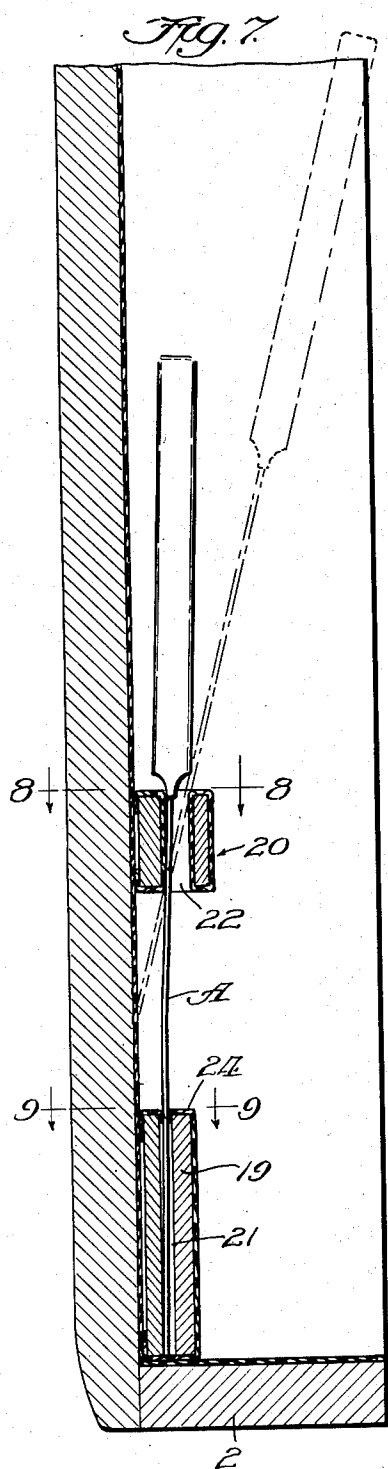
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3 Sheets-Sheet 3



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,366,046

CHEST FOR SILVERWARE

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Application December 5, 1941, Serial No. 421,748

3 Claims. (Cl. 208-1)

The majority of chests, for household use, in which table silverware is stored, are designed to accommodate only certain types of silverware. In other words, when spoons and forks, for example, are made with heavy or wide shank portions, these may not fit into ordinary racks provided for that purpose; and in general, almost every housewife is confronted, from time to time, with conditions that do not permit the satisfactory storing of table silverware in the chest which she has.

The object of the present invention is so to construct a silverware chest that it shall be adaptable to a much greater variety of types or styles of tableware and to more different kinds of articles than is true of the present chests.

The ordinary rack for receiving spoons or forks consists of little rectangular blocks covered with felt or velvet, spaced apart from each other to provide slots into which the shank portions near the bowls of the spoons or the prong ends of the forks are placed, or else slotted bars used in the same way. Such a rack operates successfully only in the case of a particular type of fork or spoon; for, if the shank portions are too wide, they cannot enter the slots and, if they are too slender, they will not be satisfactorily held. Also, if the portion of a shank to be received in a rack is tapered lengthwise, it will not be satisfactorily held, even though it can be inserted in a slot. One of the objects of the present invention is to produce a slotted rack of the type just mentioned which will accommodate and satisfactorily position and hold spoons, forks, and the like, having shank portions varying widely in widths and in shapes.

In carrying out this object of my invention, I so construct the rack that the slots therein automatically adjust themselves to the size and shape of the object that is introduced into the same so that in one of its aspects the invention may be said to have for an object an automatically adjustable slotted rack.

One of the difficult problems that has always confronted the manufacturer of silver chests is that of taking care of carving sets without using up too much space in the body of the chest. A further object of the present invention is to provide means for effectively supporting a carving set on the under side of the lid of the chest in such a way as to take up a minimum amount of space and insure against the release of any member of a carving set when the lid is opened.

In carrying out this second feature of my invention, I place on the under side of the lid,

with its open side not far from and facing the usual flange found on the free long edge of the lid, or an equivalent part, an open top receptacle in which a carving set may be snugly housed. Sufficient space must be provided between the top of the receptacle and the flange or equivalent element on the lid, to permit the insertion and removal of the various pieces of the set. In order to make certain that no piece will fall out of the receptacle during the opening and closing of the lid or during the handling of the chest, I provide the lid with a flap that can be swung down to overlap the receptacle for the carving set and span the distance between the same and the flange or equivalent element on the lid; suitable catches being provided to hold the flap in its working position. The long exposed side wall of the receptacle, when made of wood as is generally the case, must be fairly thick so as to have the requisite strength. It may therefore happen that when the chest is held in a certain position, the carving knife or fork, although it cannot escape from the receptacle due to the presence of the flap, may lodge on the upper edge of the outer side wall and drop out when the flap is raised. A further object of the present invention is to prevent such an occurrence which might be very dangerous to the person opening the chest. To this end I provide the exposed long side wall of the receptacle for the carving set with a gate-like upward extension which is held up by the flap and serves as a baffle to prevent anything from lodging on the upper edge of the wall from which the extension rises. This can conveniently be accomplished by carrying up the felt or plush facings for the outer or long side wall of the receptacle well above the top of that wall and introducing between them a strip of fairly stiff material that is much thinner than the wall above which it lies. By fastening the fabric around this strip, there is formed a light, thin wing or vane hinged to the upper end of the wall of the receptacle. The hinge connection thus produced is stiff enough to cause the gate-like extension normally to stand parallel with the wall from which it rises, but does not prevent the extension from being pushed outwardly and downwardly to give access to the interior of the receptacle.

In many silverware chests there is found a long, shallow compartment extending the whole length of the chest along the bottom, at the front end of the chest. Such compartments are useful for holding long or large pieces of silverware. One

of the objects of the present invention is to make it possible to use such a compartment as I have just described for holding not only large or long pieces, but also various small pieces, and to adapt it to be employed most effectively according to the articles which are being stored therein.

A further object of the present invention is to produce a simplified and very efficient means for holding ordinary table knives on the under side of the lid of the chest, in a manner to take up a minimum amount of space and make the insertion and intentional removal of the knives simple and easy. In carrying out this feature of my invention, I provide the lid with a rack in the form of a wide slat-like bar extending along the marginal portion at the hinge edge; this bar being provided with slits extending through the same from edge to edge and adapted yieldingly to grip knife blades inserted in said slits. These racks are preferably between two and three inches wide, so that more than one-third of the length of the blade of an ordinary table knife can be received therein. At some distance above this rack is a second, thicker bar, parallel to the other and provided with holes through which the knife blades may be loosely passed before being inserted in the lower rack. Beyond this second bar is a wall or ledge arranged on the under side of the lid, parallel to the racks and spaced apart from the lowermost rack a distance somewhat greater than the length of a knife. This wall or ledge may conveniently be the usual flange on the lid, along the edge opposite the hinge edge, when it is possible to make the chest of such a size as to permit this to be done. However, whether this wall or ledge be an edge flange on the lid, or a separate element attached to the lid at some distance from the long free edge, it will prevent the knives from coming loose and dropping out of their holders in case the chest is handled improperly; but, at the same time, the knives can be easily removed by lifting them clear of the lower rack and then tilting them forward at their upper ends so as to clear the overlying wall or ledge.

The various features of novelty whereby my invention is characterized will hereinafter be pointed out with particularity in the claims; but, for a full understanding of my invention and of its objects and advantages, reference may be had to the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a silverware chest embodying the various features of the present invention, the lid being shown raised; Fig. 2 is a top plan view of the front portion of the body member of the chest, the loose tray belonging in this part and the chest being omitted; Fig. 3 is a section on line 3—3 of Fig. 2, on a much larger scale than Fig. 2; Fig. 4 is a perspective view of one of the separable racks appearing in Figs. 2 and 3; Fig. 5 is a front elevation of one of the automatically adjustable rack sections, the fabric sheathing being indicated simply in dotted lines; Fig. 6 is a section on line 6—6 of Fig. 5; Fig. 7 is a vertical section through and at right angles to the plane of the lid when the lid is upright, showing only a part of the lid; Fig. 8 is a section on line 8—8 of Fig. 7, a fragment of the covering for the slotted bar being shown in section; Fig. 9 is a section on line 9—9 of Fig. 7, a portion of the fabric covering or sheathing being broken away; Fig. 10 is an end view of the unit for containing a carving set, as actually

constructed, a fragment of the end wall being broken away and a fragment of the lid being indicated in dotted lines; Fig. 11 is a top plan view of the unit appearing in Fig. 10, only one corner being shown, and a fragment of the lid for the chest being indicated in dotted lines; and Fig. 12 is a transverse section through the wall 26 and its extension, only a fragment of the wall being shown.

Referring to the drawings, 1 represents the body member and 2 the lid of a chest of any usual or suitable construction; the lid being hinged to the body member and being preferably adapted to stand in an upright position when raised. In the bottom of the chest is a long rack for holding forks, spoons, or other articles provided with parts comparable to spoon handles. This rack is composed of a series of block-like sections 3, arranged in a row and separated from each other to provide slots for receiving the articles to be held therein. These units or sections are so constructed that the slots in the rack automatically adjust themselves to accommodate elements of various sizes and shapes and yieldingly to grip those which exceed a predetermined width. This end may be accomplished in a great variety of ways without departing from the principle of my invention. However, for the sake of brevity, I have illustrated only a single preferred form, best illustrated in Figs. 1, 5 and 6. It will be seen that each adjustable block or unit comprises a central body or core 4 and a pair of plates or shoes 5 arranged on opposite sides thereof; the plates or shoes of consecutive units or sections bounding the sides of the slot between the latter. Interposed between each of the plates or shoes 5 and the corresponding core or body member are a plurality of compression springs 6, preferably set at their ends into sockets or depressions 7 so that they will not accidentally become displaced. The assembly is conveniently held together by simply inserting it in a bag or casing 8 open at one end; the bag or casing being composed of any of the usual fabrics that serve as linings for chests of this general type, or of any other desired flexible sheet material. The bags or casings are made sufficiently small in cross sectional area to hold the springs under an initial compression. In the arrangement shown, as can be seen in Fig. 1, each bag or casing is formed from a simple strip of sheet material which is laid on top of the adjustable block device, is then folded down over the faces of the shoes or plates, is then folded laterally so as to cover both faces of the body or core member, and then has the triangular wings or ears 9 of double thickness that are left at the top folded down against the sides of the core member. The sheathing material may conveniently be glued to the core or body member and also to the outer faces of the yieldable shoes or plates, if desired.

It will be seen that each shoe or plate may move bodily from and toward the stationary body or core member with which it is associated, or it may rock on the latter as though supported by a universal joint, or it may combine such rocking movements with a bodily movement from and toward the core. Consequently, if the slots in the rack formed from these automatically adjustable units are initially narrow, slender shanks or handles not only can be received in the slots, but can be yieldingly gripped. When wide pieces are inserted, the slots simply expand to accommodate them. When shanks are tapered so as to be wider at one end than the other, the slots

take the same shape so as to engage the shanks throughout the entire thickness of the rack.

In the bottom of the chest, at the front, is a shallow compartment 10 frequently found in chests, and formed by having a shallow wall 11 extend entirely across the chest parallel with the front wall or side. As is customary, in constructions of this kind, ledges or shoulders 12 are provided on the side walls of the chest at the ends of this compartment to support a loose tray 14; thus permitting articles to be stored both in the tray and in the compartment below the tray. In accordance with one feature of my invention, I provide this compartment with at least one and preferably a plurality of removable racks 15 which may be simply long bars provided with suitable slots 16 and encased in suitable fabric or other flexible material. These racks are just long enough to fit frictionally between the wall 11 and the front wall of the chest. In order better to hold these racks in place, I fasten little cleats 17 to the bottom of the chest and provide each rack with a longitudinal groove 18 in the under side for the reception of one of these cleats. When the racks are set down on the cleats, they are held against displacement in any direction except vertically. It will be seen that the racks can be removed entirely, if desired, so as to leave the compartment below the rack free to receive articles of any kind that are small enough to enter the same. Also, by locating the series of slots so that they approach nearer one end than the other of the rack, as shown, two racks may be so placed that their slots are in staggered relation to each other or aligned with each other. When the slots are staggered, twice as many pieces can be placed in the space between two racks, each being supported at one end by one of the racks, as would be possible if the slots were aligned.

For the purpose of supporting knives on the under side of the cover, I have provided two bars 19 and 20, both parallel to the flange at the hinged edge of the lid; the bar 19 being close to this flange and the bar 20 being spaced substantially less than the length of the knife blade from the bar 19. The bar 19 is fairly thin and has a width of preferably somewhat more than two inches, and it lies flat against the lid. The blades of knives are adapted to be inserted into slit-like passages 21 extending through the bar 19 from the upper edge of the latter after having passed through larger or wider holes 22 in the bar 20. As best shown in Figs. 7 and 9, the bar 19 is sheathed with any usual or suitable fabric or other flexible material 24; this material being carried down into the passages 21 so as to bear against both sides of the knife blades without scratching the same. It will be seen that the holes 22 are spaced apart from the inner or under face of the lid a little farther than are the slits 21. Therefore, since a considerable portion of each knife blade, toward the free end of the latter, is held substantially parallel with the inner or under face of the lid, each blade must bend a little, as indicated at A in Fig. 7, as it approaches the bar 20. In this way the knife blades are placed under a light tension which holds them against rattling if the chest is shaken. Although the yielding pressure exerted by the knives themselves is ordinarily sufficient to hold the knives in place, I prefer so to place the bars 19 and 20 that the upper ends of the knives approach closely enough to some wall, ledge or flange on the under side of the lid to permit the latter to serve

as stops if the chest should be set on edge with the handles of the knives pointing down, but not so close as to prevent a knife from being intentionally removed in the normal way by drawing it up and tilting it as indicated in dotted lines in Fig. 7. In the arrangement shown, there is placed on the under side of the lid, adjacent to the free long edge that is opposite the hinge edge, a container 25 for a carving set or the like. What may be termed the bottom wall of this container serves as the baffle to prevent the knives from falling out in case the chest be placed in a position so that the handle ends of the knives are down.

The container 25 to which I have just referred may be regarded as an open top receptacle adjacent to a flange or other wall on the lid, although I have shown it as a self-contained unit which need simply be fastened to the lid; the box-like container having a low wall portion extending throughout the length thereof, above which is a wide or deep window or opening also extending throughout the length of the container. As best shown in Fig. 10, the member 26 may be regarded as either the exposed side wall of a shallow receptacle or as a low wall below a deep opening extending throughout the length of a box-like container. The wall 26 has an upward gate-like extension 27 which extends partway across the opening or window in the exposed side of the container. This extension is conveniently produced by extending the fabric or other flexible covering 28 beyond the upper long edge thereof and forming thereof a sleeve or sheathing enclosing a thin, fairly stiff strip 29. Normally this extension stands upright, as shown in Figs. 1 and 12 and in full lines in Fig. 10, but it may be swung out as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 10 to give access to the interior of the receptacle. Co-operating with the receptacle and, in effect, forming the outer wall of the container 25, is a door or flap 30 hinged at its upper edge to the upper wall of the box-like container, and adapted to be swung down past both the wall 26 and its extension 27. Suitable spring catches 32 are provided yieldingly to hold the flap or door 30 down and prevent it from swinging away from the wall 26 and its extension.

When it is desired to place a carving set or the like in the receptacle, the door or flap 30 is raised as in Fig. 1 and the extension 27 is swung outwardly and downwardly so as more fully to uncover the opening 33. After the articles have been placed in the receptacle, the flap or door 30 is simply swung down and latched, as shown in Fig. 10, so that the receptacle is closed tightly and nothing can escape therefrom until the flap or door is again opened.

It will thus be seen that I have greatly increased the field of usefulness of the usual rack for holding nested groups of forks and spoons, by reason of the automatically adjustable slots; that the shallow compartment in the bottom of the chest, at the front, is made much more useful because of the removable and reversible racks; that knives, whether having long or short blades, are held much more securely than heretofore, against the inner or under face of the lid, as a result of the peculiar construction and arrangement of the holding bars through which the knife blades may be thrust and which cause the blades to be flexed somewhat to create a gripping effect of the bars thereon; and that means have been provided effectively to store carving sets in a small, confined, out of the way place from which they cannot accidentally escape, but from which

they may readily be removed when it is desired to do so. Obviously, if it is not desired to employ the bottom of the container for a carving set or the like as a baffle to cooperate with the knives, as previously explained, this container may be placed any where on the under side of the lid as long as it is substantially parallel with the hinged edge of the lid.

While I have illustrated and described with particularity only a single preferred form of my invention, I do not desire to be limited to the exact structural details thus illustrated and described; but intend to cover all forms and arrangements which come within the definitions of my invention constituting the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A device adapted to form a section of a rack for receiving and yieldably gripping a spoon handle or like object, comprising a block-like body member, loose, flat shoes on opposite sides thereof, compression springs between the shoes and

the body member, and a bag-like container of flexible sheet material holding the assembly together.

2. A rack comprising a series of fixed blocks spaced apart to provide slots open at the top to receive objects, a sufficient number of flat shoes adjacent to said blocks to define at least one side of each slot, springs between each shoe and the adjacent block to allow the shoe to yield in a direction to widen the corresponding slot, and a flexible container for each block and the adjacent shoe or shoes.

3. A rack comprising a series of fixed blocks spaced apart to provide slots open at the top to receive objects, a sufficient number of flat shoes adjacent to said blocks to define at least one side of each slot, springs between each shoe and the adjacent block to allow the shoe to yield in a direction to widen the corresponding slot, and a sheathing provided with pockets each containing one block and any shoes adjacent thereto.

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