

April 29, 1941.

U. HUTCHINSON

2,240,215

SERVING OR DISPENSING CONTAINER

Filed Dec. 18, 1939

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 2

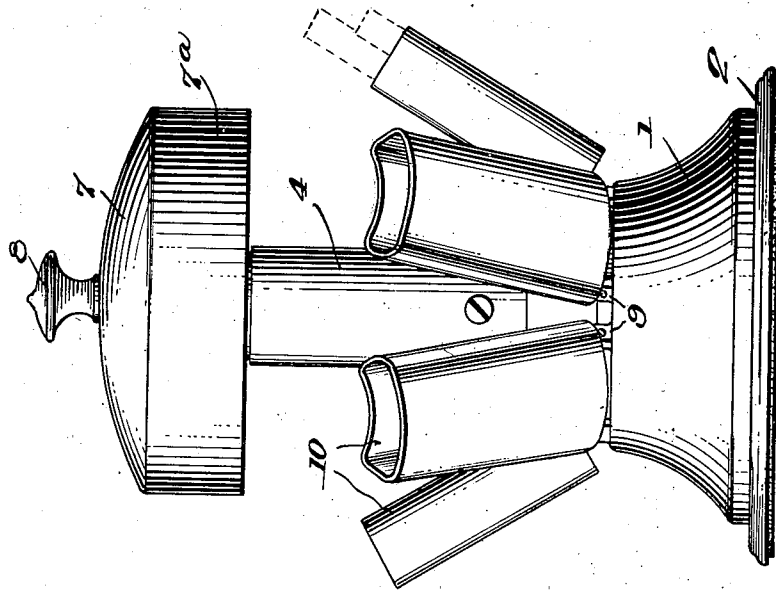
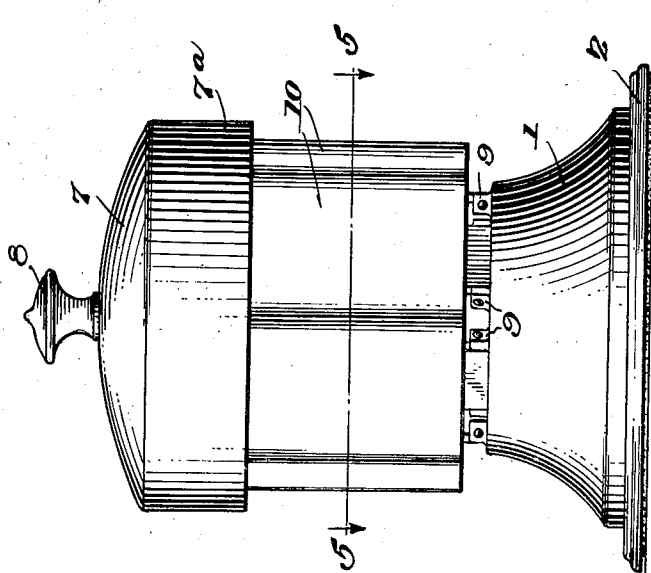


Fig. 1



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Fig. 4.

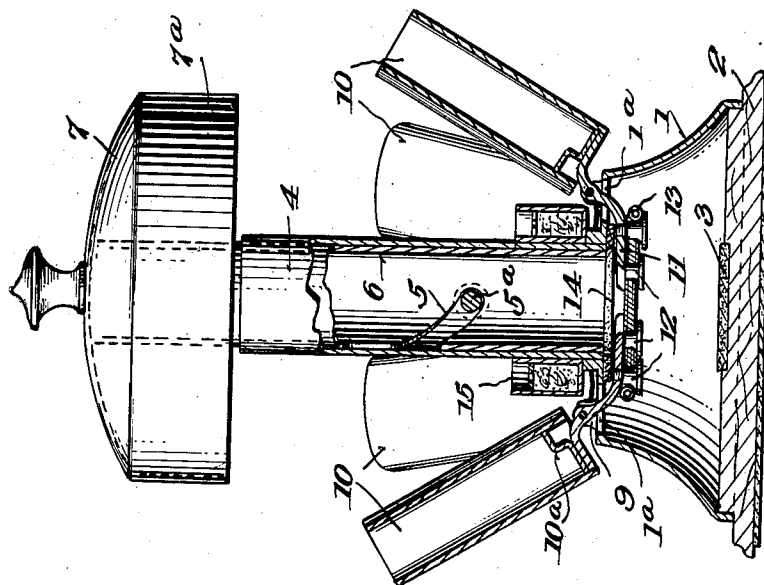
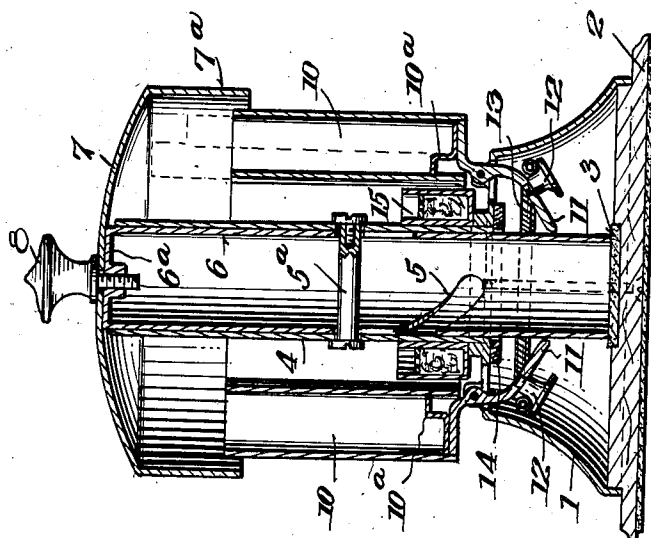


Fig. 3.



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Fig. 5

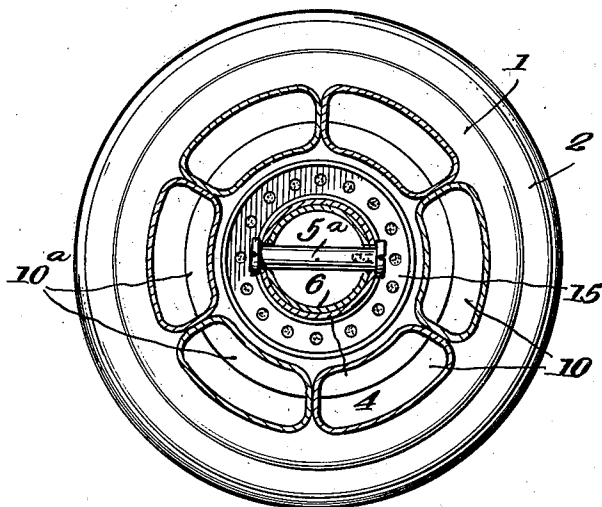
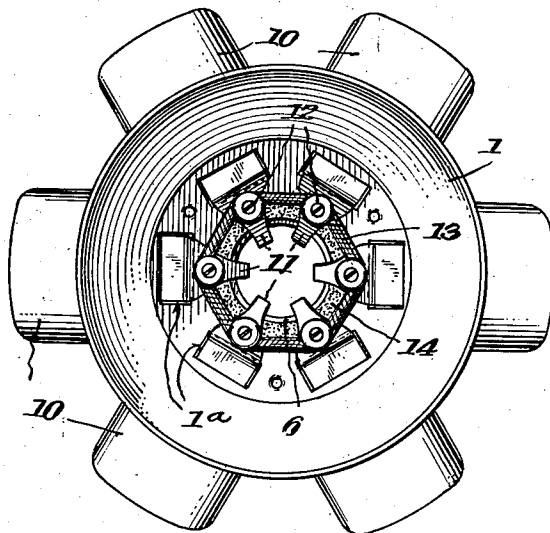


Fig. 6



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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SERVING OR DISPENSING CONTAINER

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Application December 18, 1939, Serial No. 399,904

6 Claims. (Cl. 312-73)

This invention relates to containers for serving and dispensing a plurality of articles such as cigarettes, matches, packs of cards, bottles of perfume, etc. and more particularly to a device in the nature of a portable stand, comprising a circular series of relatively movable receptacles.

The general object of the invention is to provide a device of this character, which shall be simple in construction, attractive in appearance, and capable of easy and silent operation.

More specifically, where the device is designed for use in serving or dispensing cigarettes, the invention contemplates arranging the movable containers in such manner that when in storage position, the space within the series of containers constitutes a substantially closed chamber, and providing a water receptacle within this chamber, so that the device functions as a humidifier.

In order that the invention may be readily understood, reference is had to the accompanying drawings, forming part of this specification, and in which:

Fig. 1 is a side elevation showing my improved device as it appears when the containers are in closed or storage position;

Fig. 2 is a similar view showing the device as it appears when in open or dispensing position;

Fig. 3 is a vertical central section through the device, with the parts in the position shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is a similar view with the parts in the position shown in Fig. 2, some parts being in elevation;

Fig. 5 is a transverse section substantially on the line 5-5 of Fig. 1, looking in the direction of the arrows; and

Fig. 6 is an inverted plan view, showing the pedestal with the base plate removed.

Referring to the drawings in detail, 1 designates a base or pedestal shown as of substantially frusto-conical shape and secured to a suitable base plate 2. At the center of this base plate, on the upper surface thereof, is a pad or cushion 3, for the purpose hereinafter described.

Rising centrally from the pedestal 1 and rigidly secured thereto is a hollow tubular post 4, and mounted to telescope and freely reciprocate within the tubular post 4 is a second tube or plunger 6. This has its upper end closed, as shown at 6^a in Fig. 3, and firmly secured to this upper closed end by means of a screw stud having a knob 8 is a dome shaped cover 7, having a depending marginal flange or skirt 7^a.

From the flat top of the pedestal 1 project a series of pairs of lugs 9, and pivotally mounted between each pair of lugs, so as to swing about a horizontal axis, is an open top container or receptacle 10.

As shown in the drawings, six of these containers or receptacles are provided, and, as illus-

trated in Fig. 5, they are of somewhat arcuate shape in plan, so that their outer peripheries lie substantially on a circle. Other shapes may, however, be employed, without departing from the spirit of the invention. Thus the outer walls of the receptacles might be made straight, in which event they would constitute the sides of a hexagon or other polygon.

Formed integral with each receptacle 10 below the pivot thereof is a tail piece 11, these tail pieces passing downwardly through slots 1^a in the top of the pedestal 1 and extending radially inward within such pedestal. Secured to the lower side of each of these tail pieces is a button 12, and extending around the buttons is a helical spring 13. This spring tends to move the containers 2 and hold them in their outermost or dispensing position, as shown in Figs. 2 and 4. An annular pad or cushion 14 is preferably mounted on the inner surface of the top of the pedestal against which the ends of the tail pieces 11 strike when the receptacles reach their outermost position under the influence of the spring 13. This outward movement is thus cushioned and silenced.

In order to move the receptacles from the position shown in Figs. 2 and 4, to that illustrated in Figs. 1 and 3, it is only necessary to press down upon the knob 8. This causes the plunger 6 to move downwardly, thus engaging the tail pieces 11 and forcing them apart, thus swinging the containers 10 simultaneously inwardly against the tension of the spring 13, the plunger finally passing by the ends of the tail pieces and coming to rest against the pad or cushion 3. The ends of the tail pieces 11 bear against the sides of the plunger, and thus hold the receptacles or containers 10 in their innermost position.

When the device is intended for use for storing and dispensing cigarettes, I provide a water receptacle 15, shown as of annular shape, surrounding the post 4, and containing some absorbent material.

By reference to Fig. 5, it will be seen that the side edges of the containers 10 are in substantial contact when they are in their stored or innermost position, and that the depending flange 7^a of the cover closely envelops the upper ends of the containers, thus forming a substantially closed chamber inside of the series of containers, in which chamber the water receptacle 15 is located, so that the arrangement acts as a humidifier. It will also be noted that the dome or main part of the cover 7 is spaced a substantial distance above the upper ends of the containers 10. This not only is for the purpose of accommodating the upward projecting ends of the cigarettes, but also results in forming a space establishing communication between the inside of each container 10 and the central chamber in which the water receptacle is mounted, thus affording access of the

dampness to all parts of the containers. The flange 7^a of the cover preferably does not make a close fit over the upper ends of the containers, as I have found that a slight clearance, such as shown in Fig. 3, improves the operation of the apparatus as a humidor.

Were the plunger 6 to reciprocate freely within the tubular post 4, the parts would move too rapidly, resulting in noisy operation. In order to positively retard the movement, I form in the plunger 6 an inclined or spiral slot 5, and working in this slot is a pin or stud 5^a extending transversely through the post 4, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

If the device is in the position shown in Figs. 1 or 3, and it is desired to open the same to dispensing or serving position, the operator grasps the knob 8 and pulls upwardly on it. If, as would frequently happen, the pull exerted is sufficient to lift the entire device from the table on which it was resting, and especially if the knob 8 be gripped so that it is held against rotation, the entire base, together with the post 4 and the receptacles 10, will gravitate downwardly, and in so doing the spiral slot 5 acting on the pin 5^a will cause the base and containers to revolve or whirl through a partial revolution as they move to open position. This has the effect of frictionally retarding the movement of the parts and causes a relatively slow and quiet operation. The spring 13 is of sufficient strength to sustain the weight of the plunger 6 and cover 7, so that the parts will remain in the position shown in Figs. 2 and 4, after they have moved to that position, and the device is set down on its base again.

When it is desired to restore the device to the closed or storage position, the operator presses down upon the knob 8, at the same time permitting such knob to turn. The plunger 6 then moves downwardly, engaging the tail pieces 11 and moving the containers up into vertical position, as shown in Figs. 1 and 3, and at the same time the cover 7 rotates as it goes down, due to the action of the cam slot 5, and this again retards the movement.

It will thus be seen that I have provided a base and a cover which are capable of relative reciprocal movement toward and from each other, and also of relative rotation with respect to each other, and that this rotational movement serves to frictionally retard the reciprocating movement. Also it will be noted that the containers 10 are moved to open position by the spring 13 and are simultaneously returned to closed position by the plunger 6, which moves with the cover 7.

When the containers 10 are made for the purpose of holding and dispensing cigarettes, each container is preferably formed at its bottom with a step 10^a of a width substantially equal to the diameter of a cigarette. The cigarettes adjacent one wall, therefore, will rest upon this step, and the upper ends of such cigarettes are thus caused to protrude beyond the ends of the others, thereby making it easy to withdraw them from the container. In Figs. 2 and 3, the cigarettes, in the stepped position just described, are illustrated in dotted lines.

What I claim is:

1. A device of the character described, com-

prising a base, a circular series of open top containers each pivotally mounted at its lower end on said base to swing outwardly and inwardly about a horizontal axis, means for simultaneously swinging said containers, the sides of said containers, when in their innermost position, being in substantial contact, and a vertically movable cover overlying the upper ends of said containers, said cover comprising a top portion which, when the cover is lowered, is spaced from said containers and a depending marginal flange portion embracing said containers, thus forming within said series of containers a substantially closed chamber communicating with the interior of each container.

2. A device of the character described comprising a base, a series of open top containers each pivotally mounted at its lower end on said base to swing outwardly and inwardly about a horizontal axis, each container having a part projecting below said pivot, spring means acting on said projecting parts for simultaneously swinging said containers outwardly, and means for simultaneously swinging them inwardly against the tension of said spring means.

3. A device of the character described comprising a base, a circular series of open top containers each pivotally mounted at its lower end on said base to swing outwardly and inwardly about a horizontal axis, spring means for simultaneously swinging said containers outwardly, a vertically movable cover for the upper ends of said containers, and means movable with said cover for simultaneously swinging the containers inwardly, against the tension of said spring means.

4. A device of the character described comprising a base, a circular series of open top containers each pivotally mounted at its lower end on said base to swing outwardly and inwardly about a horizontal axis, spring means for simultaneously swinging said containers outwardly, a vertically movable cover for the upper ends of said containers, means for causing said cover to revolve as it moves, and means operated by the movement of said cover for simultaneously swinging the containers inwardly against the tension of said spring means.

5. A device of the character described comprising a base, a circular series of open top containers each pivotally mounted at its lower end on said base to swing outwardly and inwardly about a horizontal axis, means for simultaneously swinging said containers, a cover for the open ends of said containers, said cover being mounted for relative movement toward and from said base, and means operated by said relative movement for causing relative rotation between said cover and base.

6. A device of the character described comprising a base, a circular series of open top containers, each pivotally mounted at its lower end on said base to swing outwardly and inwardly about a horizontal axis, a vertically movable cover for the open ends of said containers, means operated by the movement of said cover for simultaneously swinging said containers and for causing relative rotation between said cover and base, and frictional means for positively retarding such swinging and rotational movement.

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