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CHECKING APPARATUS FOR GARMENT RACKS AND THE LIKE

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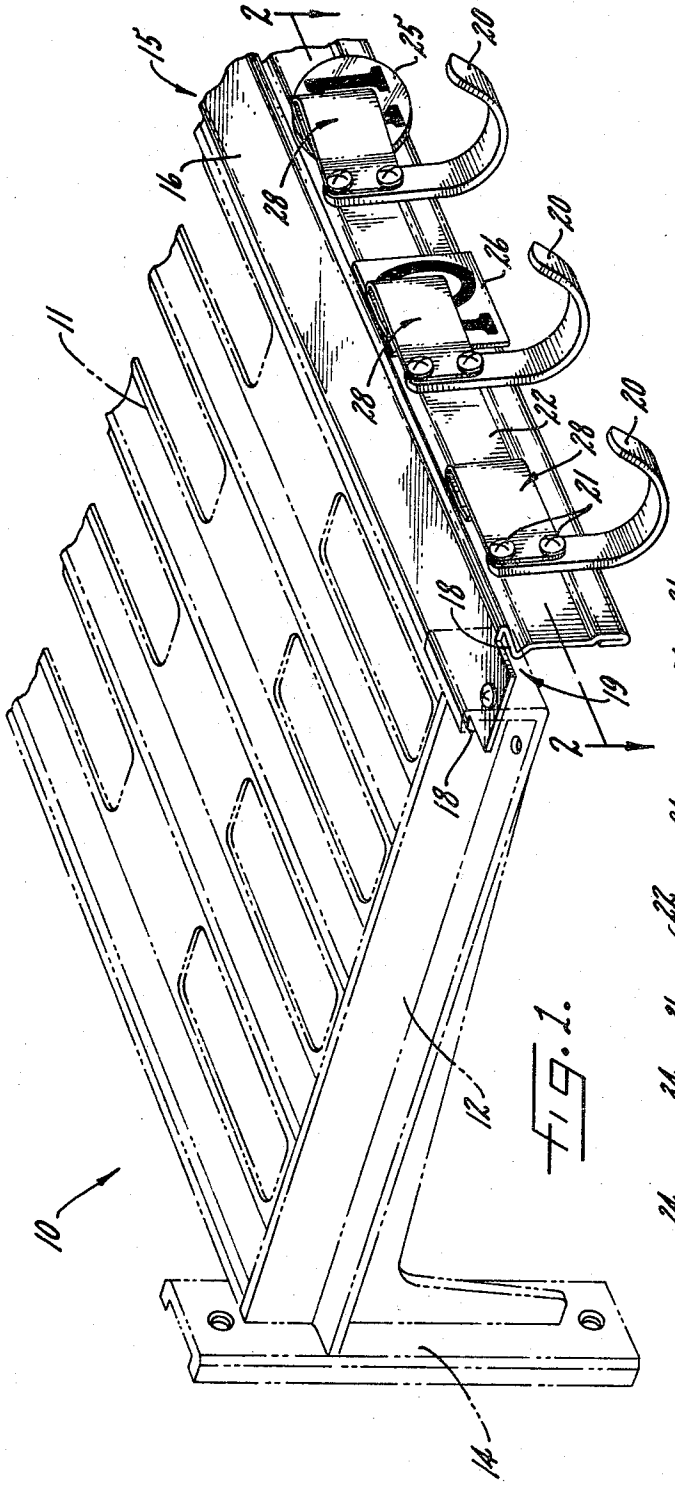


FIG. 1.

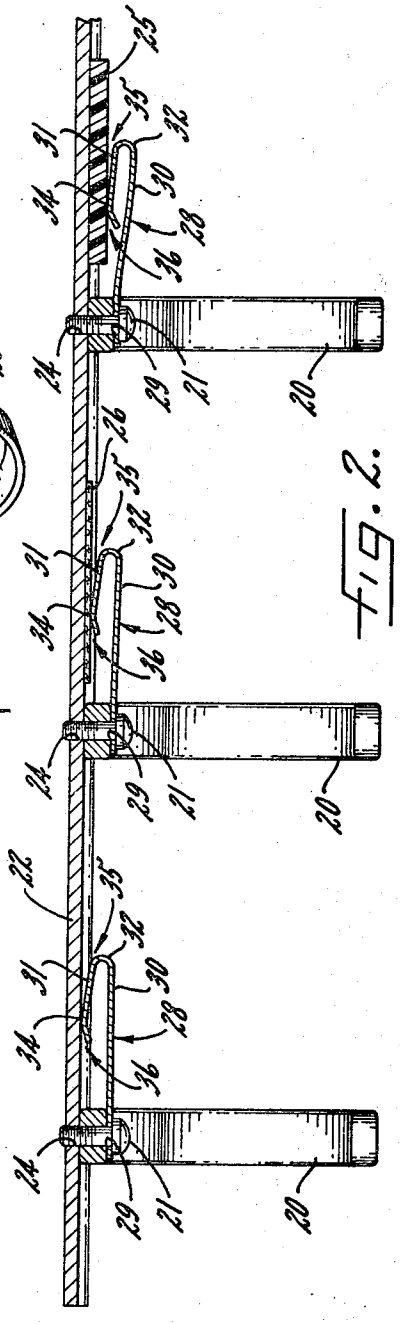


FIG. 2.

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CHECKING APPARATUS FOR GARMENT RACKS AND THE LIKE

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A garment rack having a plurality of garment support hooks and including a resiliently biased check retaining arm mounted in close proximity to each hook for retaining a garment identification check in a manner such that the hook and garment supported by the hook may be readily identified.

The present invention relates in general to garment suspension racks or the like and, more particularly, to an improved check retention device which is suitable for retaining a wide variety of different types of garment identification checks.

It is a general aim of the present invention to provide an improved device suitable for retaining garment identification checks in immediate proximity to the hook or other garment supporting component on which the checked garment is suspended. As the ensuing description proceeds it will become apparent that the invention will find particularly advantageous, but by no means exclusive, use in connection with garment support racks, whether portable or stationary, of the type employing a plurality of hooks for supporting garments in spaced relationship.

A more specific object of the present invention is the provision of an improved garment check retention device which permits of ease in fabrication and may be readily formed from inexpensive commercially available materials, yet which is reliable and versatile in its application and which may be used to effectively retain garment identification checks made, for example, of paper, cardboard, metal or plastic materials and wherein the particular check may have any of a wide range of thicknesses.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an improved garment check retention device which is void of any sharp projections which might tend to damage either the check or the fingers of attendants who are called upon to insert and remove the checks.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent as the following description proceeds, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing in which:

FIGURE 1 is a fragmentary perspective view here depicting in solid lines a typical assembly of hanger rail and garment supporting hooks together with the improved garment identification check retention means of the present invention, and depicting also in phantom an exemplary bracket and shelf structure of the type commonly used on garment support racks; and,

FIG. 2 is a vertical sectional view taken substantially along the line 2—2 of FIG. 1 and here depicting the present invention as used to retain different types of identification checks which have considerably different thicknesses.

While the present invention is susceptible of various modifications and alternative forms, a specific embodiment thereof has been shown by way of example in the drawing and will herein be described in detail. It should be understood, however, that it is not intended to limit the invention to the particular form disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, equivalents and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the invention as expressed in the appended claims.

Referring more particularly to the drawing, there is

illustrated in FIG. 1 a fragmentary portion of a conventional garment rack here indicated generally at **10**. As here shown, the rack **10** includes a foraminous shelf, depicted in phantom at **11**, the shelf being supported adjacent its opposite ends on a pair of support brackets, one such bracket being illustrated in phantom at **12**. The brackets **12** are preferably provided with an upright leg **14** which may have a channel shaped cross section suitable for securing the bracket, and hence the shelf, to a pair of spaced uprights or the like (not shown). As the ensuing description proceeds, it will become apparent that the present invention is not limited in its application to racks of the type here depicted only diagrammatically and, for this reason, an exemplary rack has been only briefly described for the purpose of facilitating an understanding of a typical environment within which the invention finds particularly advantageous use. Those interested in ascertaining more specific details of the rack construction hereinabove described are referred to my copending application Ser. No. 504,531, filed Oct. 24, 1965, and now U.S. Patent No. 3,358,847 and assigned to the assignee of the present invention.

As best illustrated in FIG. 1, a hanger rail **15** is interposed between the forward ends of the brackets **12**, the rail preferably being fashioned for reception of garment hangers (not shown in FIG. 1 but described and illustrated in detail in my aforesaid copending application). It will, of course, be appreciated that in addition to its garment hanger support function, the hanger rail **15** also serves to contribute to the rigidity of the rack **10**. Advantageously the hanger rail **15** can be formed from a single sheet of high strength metal such, for example, as steel so as to provide along its upper edge a longitudinally disposed top panel **16** having depending converging side flanges **18** formed integrally therewith and defining an inverted dovetail channel **19** suitable for reception of hanger receptacles (not shown).

In order to permit use of the illustrative garment rack **10** as a predetermined capacity rack and also for high speed garment checking, a plurality of hooks **20** can be installed on the hanger rail **15**. The illustrative hooks **20** preferably are provided with mounting holes which serve to accommodate mounting bolts **21**, the latter being threadably secured to a depnding flange **22** integral with the rail **15**. While the illustrative hanger hooks have here been shown as mounted only on the forward facing surface of the flange **22**, it will be understood that such hooks may also be positioned on the rearwardly facing surface of the flange **22** as illustrated in my aforesaid copending application. While not illustrated in the accompanying drawing, those skilled in the art will appreciate that the openings **24** formed in the flange **22** which serve to receive the mounting bolts **21** may also be utilized to receive the supporting loops of conventional hangers rather than the bolts **21** and their associated hooks **20**.

In accordance with one of the important aspects of the present invention, provision is made for securely, yet removably, retaining garment identification checks or the like in immediate proximity to each of the garment supporting devices (here shown as hooks **20** but which may also take other forms such as simply openings formed in the hanger rail **15** to permit reception of conventional hanger hooks), yet wherein the particular identification check retaining means employed may find equally advantageous use with virtually any type of identification check that might be employed such as prenumbered plastic discs **25** (FIGS. 1 and 2) or preformed discs formed of virtually any other material and having any desired thickness, prenumbered cardboard checks **26** (FIGS. 1 and 2) or checks formed of similar fibrous material, or simply sheets or scraps of paper which may be prepared

and suitably inscribed with identification material by either the checkroom attendant or the person checking his or her garment at the time such garment is checked. To this end, and as best observed by reference to FIGS. 1 and 2 conjointly, there is provided an improved check retention device which here comprises an arm **28** formed at least in part of spring material, the arm being provided with apertures **29** (FIG. 2) for receiving any suitable mounting means adapted to secure the arm to the rigid support defined by the flange **22** in immediate proximity to the hook **20** or other suitable garment supporting device. Where, as here, the garment supporting device comprises a hook **20** bolted directly to the hanger rail **15** by mounting bolts **21**, such bolts may also serve to rigidly secure the checking arm **28** to the hanger rail.

In carrying out the present invention, the arm **28** is preferably formed with a generally U-shaped configuration so as to define a first relatively long leg **30** and a second relatively short leg **31**, the two legs being generally parallel and interconnected by a smooth rounded portion **32**. The arrangement is such that the spring characteristics of the arm **28** are such as to bias the relatively short leg **31** towards engagement with the rigid support flange **22**. Preferably the relatively short leg is bent as indicated at **34**, or is otherwise provided with an angularly shaped portion intermediate its opposite ends. Thus, and as best shown in FIG. 2, it will be noted that the short leg **31** slopes away from the rigid support **22** in the direction of the rounded portion **32** of the arm **28** so as to define a relatively smooth entry throat generally indicated at **35**, which throat is completely void of any sharp projections. As a consequence of this construction, the checkroom attendant may readily insert any desired check into the throat **35** and into the region between the leg **31** and the flange **22** where the check is securely yet removably retained in place by the resilient biasing effect of the arm **28**. Since the arm **28** is formed of spring material, the attendant may easily insert relatively thin checks such as the illustrative cardboard check **26** or relatively thick checks such as the plastic disc **25** and either type of check will be effectively held in place adjacent a given hook **20**. Moreover, since the free extremity or rounded portion **32** of the arm **28** is void of sharp edges, there is no tendency for the check retaining arm to gouge or otherwise damage either the check or the fingers of the person placing the check.

In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, the relatively short leg **31** is also shaped so as to slope away from the flange **22** from the point of contact **34** towards its free extremity, thus defining a second entry throat generally indicated at **36** in FIG. 2. Again, the arrangement is such that when a check is mounted in place as shown in conjunction with the two righthand hooks of FIG. 2, the check may be readily removed by the attendant without danger of the free extremity of the short leg **31** biting into the check. Rather, the smooth surface of the angularly bent portion **34** of the short leg **31** will simply slide across the face of the check. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the provision of a second entry throat **36** is particularly advantageous when the attendant is required to use relatively thin and easily damaged checks formed of a material such as paper, yet where the attendant wishes to reuse such checks in subsequent garment checking operations.

It will be apparent from the foregoing that there has been provided an improved check retention device which is characterized by its simplicity and yet which is reliable in operation and may be used for securing a wide range of different types of identification checks in place. While the illustrative embodiment of the invention has been depicted in conjunction with a springlike retention arm **28** which is secured to the rigid support flange **22** by means of the same bolts **21** used to mount the hooks **20**, the invention is not restricted to this particular construction. Thus, it will be apparent that a separate set of

mounting bolts or similar securing means could be employed for securing the arm **28** to the flange **22** immediately adjacent a hook **20** or other suitable garment support device.

I claim as my invention:

1. In garment checking apparatus for garment suspension racks, shelves, hooks and the like of the class having a plurality of independent garment support devices mounted on a rigid support and identification checks for identifying the owners of garments supported thereon, the combination with each of said support devices of a check retainer for holding said garment identification checks, said check retainer comprising:

an arm angularly disposed with respect to said garment support device and in position to be easily accessible after a garment is supported on said support device,

means for securing said arm to said rigid support in proximity to one of said support devices, and

means resiliently biasing at least a portion of said arm into engagement with said rigid support whereby insertion of an identification check into the region between said arm and said rigid support the identification check is resiliently and removably held in place in proximity to a particular one of said support devices and is readily visible and accessible after a garment is supported on said support device.

2. The combination as set forth in claim **1** further characterized in that said arm is perpendicularly disposed with respect to said garment support device and is formed at least in part of spring material.

3. The combination as set forth in claim **2** further characterized in that said arm includes an angularly shaped portion intermediate its ends whereby said arm engages said rigid support in the region of said angularly shaped portion and slopes away from said rigid support towards its free extremity so as to define an entry throat for facilitating insertion of the identification check.

4. The combination as set forth in claim **2** further characterized in that said arm includes an angularly shaped portion intermediate its ends whereby said arm engages said rigid support in the region of said angularly shaped portion, said arm sloping away from said rigid support in both directions from the point of engagement between said arm and said support so as to define a first entry throat for facilitating insertion of the identification check and a second entry throat for facilitating removal of the identification check.

5. The combination as set forth in claim **1** further characterized in that said arm is formed of resilient material and has a generally U-shaped configuration including a relatively long leg and a relatively short leg generally parallel thereto and joined together by a smooth rounded portion, said arm being secured to said rigid support adjacent the free extremity of said long leg and having at least a portion of said short leg biased towards engagement with said rigid support whereby said short leg and said rounded portion together define with said rigid support an entry throat void of sharp projecting portions for facilitating insertion of the identification check.

6. The combination as set forth in claim **5** further characterized in that said short leg includes an angularly shaped portion intermediate its ends whereby said short leg engages said rigid support in the region of said angularly shaped portion and slopes away from said rigid support towards said rounded portion so as to define an entry throat void of sharp projecting portions for facilitating insertion of the identification check.

7. The combination as set forth in claim **5** further characterized in that said short leg includes an angularly shaped portion intermediate its ends whereby said short leg engages said rigid support in the region of said angularly shaped portion and slopes away from said rigid support towards said rounded portion so as to define a first entry throat for facilitating insertion of the identifi-

cation check, said short leg also sloping away from said rigid support towards its free extremity so as to define a second entry throat for facilitating removal of the identification check.

8. The combination as set forth in claim **2** further characterized in that said arm has a generally U-shaped configuration including a relatively long leg and a relatively short leg generally parallel thereto and joined together by a smooth rounded portion, said arm being secured to said rigid support at the free extremity of said long leg whereupon said short leg is biased toward engagement with the rigid support by the spring characteristics of the material from which said arm is formed, and an angularly shaped portion formed in said short leg and projecting away from said rigid support so as to define a relatively smooth entry throat for said identification check.

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