Nov. 6, 1934. C. L. COUGHLIN 1,979,960

KEY

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Fig. 1.

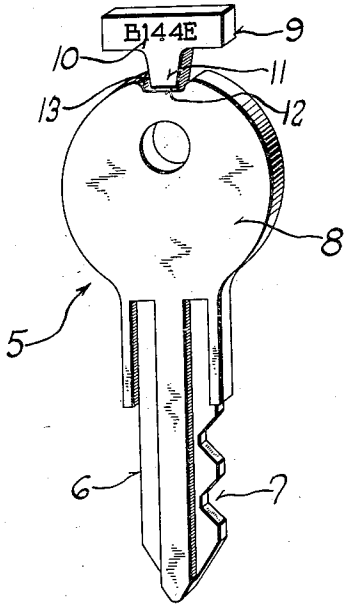
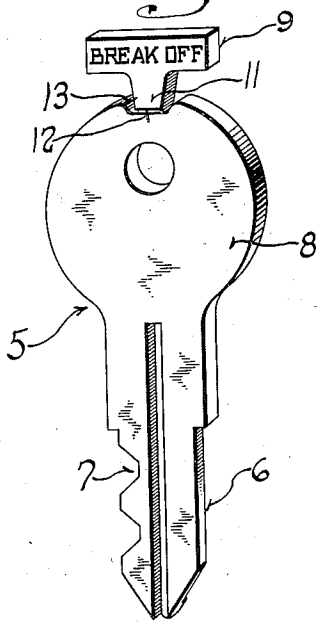


Fig. 2.



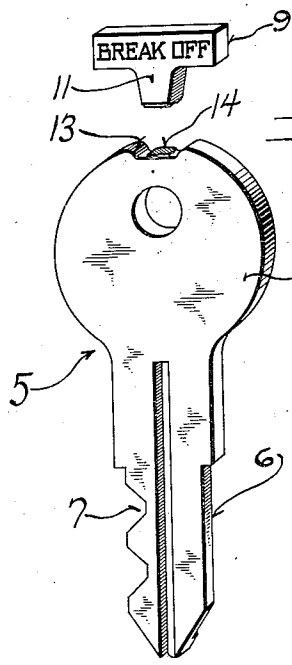


Fig. 3.

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KEY

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11 Claims. (Cl. 40—2)

This invention relates to certain new and useful improvements in keys and refers more particularly to keys for cylinder locks of the type employed on automotive vehicles.

Heretofore, it has been the custom for the lock manufacturer to stamp the number of the lock directly on the key. This was done primarily to identify the lock during the process of manufacture. The number on the key referred to the combination of the lock for which the key was intended, and which was obtainable through the use of code charts. Hence, any one in possession of a code chart and knowing the number of the key could duplicate it without the necessity of actually having the key. As a result, automobile thefts grew to wholesale proportions as it was only necessary for the thief to obtain access to the key of an automobile intended to be stolen, while in a public garage, read its number and by reference to the chart determine its combination and cut a key accordingly. Then, when the car was left parked on the street, it was a simple matter for him to use the key with which he had provided himself, and drive the car away without arousing the least suspicion.

This possibility could be avoided by eliminating the number from the key, but as pointed out hereinbefore, it is necessary during the manufacturing process of the locks and keys to have some identification on the key, and to carry this identification on through the manufacture of the automobile and up to and including delivery to the dealer.

This object could, of course, be attained by applying the identification number by means of a sticker intending that it remain on the key until the automobile was delivered to the customer, but this method of identification is open to obvious objections.

It is, therefore, an object of this invention to provide a means for identifying a key by number, which means is an integral part of the key until it is actually removed, and which requires some degree of force for removal so as to preclude its accidental detachment.

With the above and other objects in view which will appear as the description proceeds, my invention resides in the novel construction, combination and arrangement of parts substantially as hereinafter described and more particularly defined by the appended claims, it being understood that such changes in the precise embodiment of the herein disclosed invention may be made as come within the scope of the claims.

In the accompanying drawing, I have illustrated one complete example of the physical embodiment of my invention constructed according to the best mode I have so far devised for the practical application of the principles thereof, and in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view showing one side of a key equipped with the novel identifying means of this invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the opposite side of the key; and

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the key with the identifying means detached therefrom.

Referring now more particularly to accompanying drawing, the numeral 5 designates a key of any conventional construction having a shank 6, one edge of which is notched as at 7 for coaction with the tumblers of a lock, and a head 8. Heretofore, the identification number was stamped directly on the head of the key and thus became a permanent part thereof.

The present invention contemplates the provision of identification means which, although an integral part of the key, is so constructed that it may be readily removed therefrom by the use of a slight degree of force, and which is so constructed that if the dealer fails to detach the identification means, its presence makes the key cumbersome and the user or owner of the automobile soon detaches the same from the key.

For this purpose, the head of the key has a substantially T-shaped tab 9, formed integrally therewith. One side of this tab has the identification number 10 stamped thereon as illustrated in Figure 1, and the other side carries the words "Break off", or some similar designation indicating that the tab is to be broken off from the key.

As the tab is attached to the head of the key by its stem which forms a restricted throat or neck 11, it is easily broken off. To facilitate breaking off the tab, the opposite sides of the restricted neck or throat are scored as at 12. The presence of the score marks also locates the line of break and precludes the formation of rough burrs which might project beyond the faces of the key.

To further preclude the projection of rough edges which might tear the pocket of the user, the head of the key at the point of attachment of the tab, is recessed as at 13, so that the slight projection 14 left on the head of the key after the tab is broken off, as shown in Figure 3, does not project beyond the circumference of the head extended as an imaginary line across the top of the recess 13.

From the foregoing description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing, it will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, that this invention affords a simple solution to the problem presented by the heretofore objectionable presence of lock numbers on the keys.

What I claim as my invention is:

1. In a key having a shank insertable into a lock and an external portion which is located outside the lock when the key is in the lock, an identification tab attached to said external portion by a restricted throat so as to be readily broken off.

2. In a key having a shank insertable into a lock and an external portion which is located outside the lock when the key is in the lock, a part projecting beyond the regular periphery of said external portion of the key and having means to identify the key, said part being attached to the external portion of the key proper by a restricted throat so that said part may be readily broken off.

3. In a key having a shank insertable into a lock and an external portion which is located outside the lock when the key is in the lock, a part attached to said external portion of the key and projecting beyond the regular periphery thereof, said part having means to identify the key, and means at the point of attachment of said part to the key to facilitate breaking said part off from the key.

4. In a key having a shank insertable into a lock and an external portion which is located outside the lock when the key is in the lock, a part carried by said external portion of the key and projecting beyond the regular periphery thereof, said part having means to identify the key, and means at the point of attachment of said part to the key to facilitate breaking said part off from the key and to preclude the formation of burrs projecting beyond the opposite faces of the key.

5. In a key having a shank insertable into a lock and an external portion which is located outside the lock when the key is in the lock, a part attached to said external portion of the key and extending beyond the regular periphery thereof, said part having means to identify the key, and there being score marks on opposite sides of said part at its point of attachment to the key to facilitate breaking said part from the key and to preclude the projection of burrs beyond the faces of the key.

6. In a key, a part projecting beyond the regular periphery of the key, and having the sole means for identifying the combination of the key, said part having a narrow restricted throat by which it is attached to the key, and said restricted throat having its opposite sides scored at its point of attachment to the body of the key to facilitate breaking said part from the key and to avoid the projection of burrs beyond the faces of the key.

7. In a key, a part projecting beyond the regular periphery of the key and having means to identify the key, a restricted throat at the point of attachment of said part to the key, and means on said restricted throat to facilitate breaking said part from the key and to locate the point of break inwardly of the regular periphery of the key so that any burr incidental to breaking said part from the key does not project beyond the edge of the key.

8. In a key, a part projecting beyond the regular periphery of the key, said part having means to identify the key and being attached to the key by a restricted throat, the portion of the key adjacent the restricted throat being recessed so that said restricted throat extends inwardly of the regular periphery of the key, and means on said restricted throat inwardly of the normal periphery of the key to facilitate breaking said part from the key and to locate the point of break inwardly of the regular periphery of the key.

9. In a key, an identification tab formed as an integral part thereof and attached to the head of the key by a restricted throat, the head of the key being recessed at the point of attachment of said restricted throat, and means on said restricted throat to facilitate breaking the tab off and to locate the line of break adjacent the bottom of the recess so that any burrs incidental to breaking the tab off of the key do not project beyond the normal periphery of the key.

10. In a key, a substantially T-shaped identification tab formed as an integral part thereof and attached to the head of the key at the foot of its stem, the head of the key being recessed at the point of attachment of the tab thereto, so that the stem of the tab extends inwardly of an imaginary line continuing the regular periphery of the key across the top of the recess, and means adjacent the bottom of the recess and on said stem of the tab to facilitate breaking the tab off from the key and to locate the point of break inwardly of said imaginary line continuing the regular periphery of the key across the top of the recess.

11. In a key having a shank and an enlarged head, an identification tab formed integrally with the key and projecting beyond the regular periphery of the head of the key, said identification tab being so shaped and of such size as to present an objectionable projection on the key and having a part of reduced cross section to facilitate its being broken off by the user.

CHARLES L. COUGHLIN.