No. 700,465. Patented May 20, 1902.

J. WILLY.

SYSTEM OF DEVICES FOR KEEPING HOTEL ACCOUNTS.

(Application filed Mar. 28, 1901.)

(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 1.

Fig. 1.

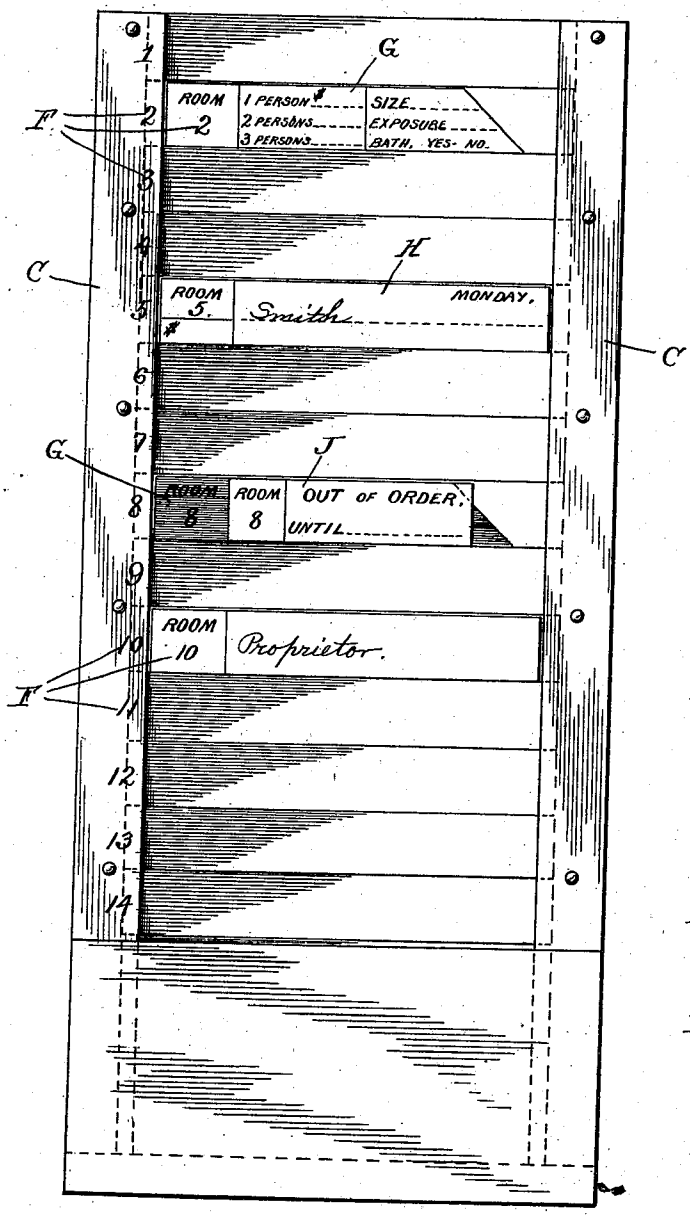
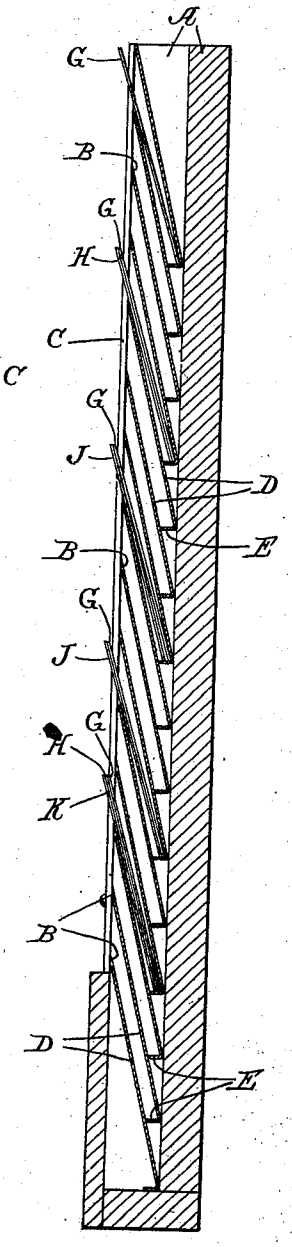



Fig. 2.




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(No Model.) 2 Sheets—Sheet 2.

Fig. 3.

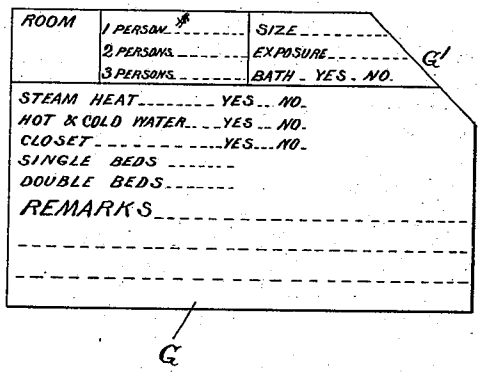



Fig. 4.

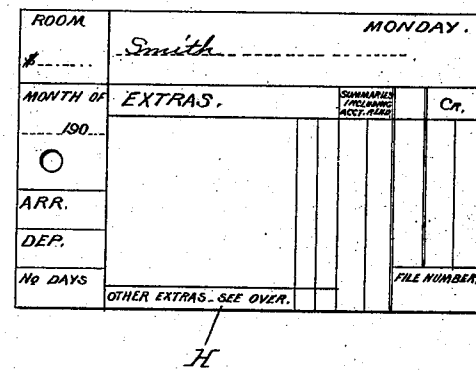



Fig. 5.

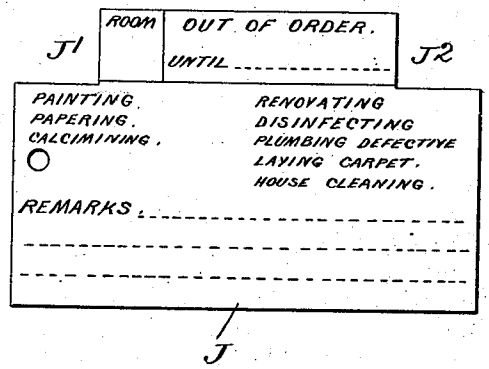
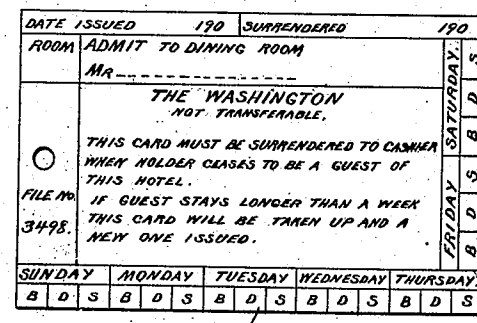



Fig. 6.




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THE NORRIS PETERS CO., PHOTO-LITHO., WASHINGTON, D. C.

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN WILLY, OF CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

## SYSTEM OF DEVICES FOR KEEPING HOTEL ACCOUNTS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 700,465, dated May 20, 1902.

Application filed March 28, 1901. Serial No. 53,236. (No model.)

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, JOHN WILLY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Chicago, in the county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented a certain new and useful Improvement in Systems of Devices for Keeping Hotel Accounts, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to systems of devices for keeping hotel accounts, and is particularly intended to provide means whereby the hotel clerks may have before them all the time and in a convenient position for use and examination the records of the various rooms and guests and the necessary information touching both.

My invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, wherein—

Figure 1 is a front elevation of a portion of a rack in connection with which my invention is set out. Fig. 2 is a vertical section through the said rack, but with the cards differently disposed. Fig. 3 is a view of one side of what I have called the "room-card." Fig. 4 is a view of one side of what I call the "guest-card." Fig. 5 is a view of one side of what I call the "condition-card." Fig. 6 is a view of one side of what I call the "meal-card."

Like parts are indicated by the same letters in all the figures.

A A are the sides and frame-pieces of the rack.

B B are a series of slots slightly inclined in the forwardly-projecting portions of the side or frame-pieces of the rack.

C C are the front metallic strips on the frame-pieces, which cover the ends of the slots.

D D are sheet-metal pieces which are inserted in the slots before the metal strips are attached. E E represent the lower end of each of these metallic pieces, whereby a kind of pocket is made between the two metallic pieces D D.

F F indicate the numerals, one associated with each pocket and also with the corresponding room.

G is the room-card, which should be of a given color—as, for example, brown. It contains, arranged in any desired manner, the information, more or less permanent, which is associated with such room. For example, as indicated on the card, it states the number of the room, the number of persons to be accommodated, and the facts as to size, exposure, heat, &c. This formation may be continued onto the back of the card and may go so far as to contain an inventory of the contents of the room. The card, of course, can be of any size, shape, color, or material, and this is true of all the cards hereinafter referred to; but I prefer to employ a color scheme by which the cards of a given color are always in a certain class and the colors of the different classes differ among themselves to indicate such classes. This room-card can of course have any desired matter upon it. The principal office of the card is to furnish by its presence and color in the cabinet evidence that the room is unoccupied and to furnish the necessary information to enable the clerk, whether he be familiar with the house or not, to determine in advance, so far as that may be possible, whether or not it is such a room as will meet the requirements of the guest.

H indicates the guest-card, which, as above explained, should differ in color from the other classes of cards. This guest-card, as indicated in Fig. 4, contains information peculiar to the guest, but identifying him with the particular room. Thus it contains the name of the guest, the room-number, the rate, the day of arrival, and in the end the day of departure and the account. For convenience it contains, as indicated, a place for the enumeration of extras, and on the reverse side may also contain other information or blanks for accounts or records. As has just been stated about the room-card, so the guest-card may contain any desired information. The guest-card will be filled in—as, for example, at the lower right-hand corner—with the file-number assigned to the guest and will also have, preferably at the upper right-hand corner, the name of one of the days of the week. These two cards, coupled with the rack, contain the essential features of my invention; but I may use other cards in connection with these, as hereinafter explained.

J is a condition-card, upon which are contained blanks and spaces for the information necessary to indicate what the condition of

the room is and when it will be ready for occupancy. This card is shown not so much as being essential to the system, but as suggestive of the fact that various cards of different classes coming from different employees, for example, and thus indicating the condition of the room, could be employed. Thus this condition-card might have on it matter which would indicate that the room was occupied by a permanent guest or by a proprietor or clerk, and thus if the house were entirely full the clerk would see at a glance how many rooms were still occupied by the proprietor, permanent guests, or others and would be able to make arrangements for placing these rooms at the disposal of transient guests, should such action come within the practice of the hotel in question. Such condition-card might also contain information indicating any other special services. Broadly speaking, the condition-card is intended to indicate by its color or the matter upon it, or both, some condition of the room which takes it out of the class of rooms occupied by transient guests.

The meal-card may be regarded, broadly, as a guest's supplementary card, and such guests' supplementary cards may be employed in the manner and to the extent required. The particular card of this character described is a meal-card designed to have the successive meals as served punched, and thus it becomes a record and may be put in the rack with the other cards and associated with them permanently as part of the permanent records of the hotel.

The use and operation of my system is as follows: When a guest arrives, he registers. The clerk glances at the rack, sees what rooms are free, and agrees with the guest upon a given room. Opposite the name of the guest on the register is placed the room-number and also a file-number. The clerk then takes a guest-card bearing the name of the day of the ensuing week, indicating the time limit of the guest's account, enters on this card the name of the guest, the room-number, and a file-number, time of arrival, and other such data as may be required. This card—and we will assume that the guests' cards are all white—is put into the pocket over the brown room-card of the room in question, and thus the ledger-account is started. This renders unnecessary a transient ledger-book and avoids the necessity of opening a book-account. In this way three separate postings required by the old practice—that is, to the room-rack, the transient-ledger, and the weekly-bill book—are accomplished in one operation. The clerk then enters, if desired, the guest's name in the reference-book, with the room and file number and other information. As extras are from time to time charged they are indicated on the guest-card.

It is of course understood that any system or devices for keeping the cards and keeping the index thereof in any sort of reference-book, or index reference-book, or any other kinds of ledger and account books may be kept in connection with my system if and as desired or required. It will also be understood that the size, shapes, and arrangements, together with the color and matter upon the several cards, may be varied to suit convenience.

I do not wish to be limited to the particular form and shape of the rack, as any kind of rack which is capable of use with the cards in the manner described would be satisfactory, and the rack may be of such a nature as to be capable of other uses than those required for the application of my system.

I prefer to cut away the room-card at the corner, as indicated at G′, so as to make it easier to remove the guest-card. I prefer to cut out the condition-card at J′ or J², or at both places, so as to the more readily call attention. The condition-card should bear the room-number. The guest supplementary card, Fig. 6, is indicated by the letter K.

For convenience in understanding the system I would describe the room-card as brown, the guest-card as white, the condition-card as blue, and the guest supplementary card as green, and if other condition-cards or guest supplementary cards are used they should be of other colors.

To show some of the advantages of my system while further explaining its use, I may state that in the making out of bills the live account is found on the instant, there being no dead accounts to delay the finding, as in the book-ledger. The meal-card also aids in the making of settlements, for in the event of a guest not remembering the number of his room this card gives the information without recourse to the reference-book. A very great advantage over the book-ledger is in the making of settlements—as, for instance, two or more cashiers are able to work with this system at the same time, thus relieving the strain during busy seasons. Also in the checking it is a great advantage, for by this card system the checker can take the settled cards at any time of the day or night and check up the accounts without interfering with the cashier, (as is the case where the book-ledger is used,) and it is an easy matter to compare the totals of the checked cards (kept in the order of settlement) with the cash-book entries. In the event of a guest disputing his bill or any item charged upon it the transient-card with entry of items can be exhibited for his satisfaction without exposing the accounts of other guests, as would be the case were the book-ledger open before him. When the guest settles his bill and departs, the time of departure is entered in the reference-book from the settled transient-card. The names in alphabetical order in the reference-book are upon occasion found quickly, and this not alone aids the room-rack-ledger system, but is useful for many other purposes, such as affording in-

formation for the mail-clerk or to answer inquiries as to guests past or present.

A further aid to this system is to have hooks fastened alongside the room-rack ledger for holding the settled cards prior to filing, pending the checker's use of them, also for making the room-changes list for the housekeeper, also for unpaid accounts, and for other particular requirements. Holes such as shown punched in the transient-cards and the meal-cards are serviceable for this purpose. The filing of the settled cards in consecutive number facilitates the finding of old accounts when occasion calls for. The same boxes in which the cards come from the printer can be used for the files.

The use of the device where the room-card alone is employed is illustrated in the space opposite the numeral "2" in Fig. 1, where the room-card, preferably brown, is shown. This, of course, should be the condition of all the rooms not otherwise indicated; but for convenience the card is shown in but one pocket. Opposite the numeral "5" in Fig. 1 is shown the guest-card, which is inserted over and thus covers up the brown room-card. When the guest-card is to be removed, it can be easily done without interfering with the brown card, because of the cut-away portion of the latter. When the room is out of order, there will be no guest-card in the pocket; but the condition-card will be placed there, as indicated, opposite the numeral "8." It is preferably cut away, as indicated, to expose the room-number of the room-card, and thus the observer will always know that there is no mistake, because he sees the two numbers side by side. This condition-card need not be cut out at the opposite corner, as indicated in the drawings. Opposite the numeral "10" is shown another condition-card not cut out at any point, indicating that it is the room occupied by the proprietor. In the pocket opposite the numeral "12" in Fig. 2 is shown the room-card, the guest-card, and the meal-card; but the two last-named cards would be removed and preferably hung at the side or near by until they were ready to be transcribed into the permanent records or until the cards were ready to be filed as a part of the permanent record. They are shown in this arrangement in Fig. 2 only to suggest that the two cards thus filed together can be kept together for the purpose of completing the record.

I claim—

1. In a system of devices for keeping hotel accounts, and room and guest records, the combination of a suitable rack having a series of numbered pockets, one for each room, with a permanent room-card adapted to be inserted in each pocket containing information and marks or signs applicable to the room in question, and a guest's card adapted to be inserted in the same pocket and containing information and marks or signs applicable to the particular guest in connection with the room in question, said room-cards and guest-cards of different colors, each of said cards containing matter which distinguishes it from the other cards and assigns it to its peculiar duty or service.

2. In a system of devices for keeping hotel accounts, and room and guest records, the combination of a suitable rack having a series of numbered pockets, one for each room, with a permanent room-card adapted to be inserted in each pocket containing information and marks or signs applicable to the room in question, and a guest's card adapted to be inserted in the same pocket and containing information and marks or signs applicable to the particular guest in connection with the room in question, said room-card cut away at one corner to facilitate the removal of the guest-card, each of said cards containing matter which distinguishes it from the other cards and assigns it to its peculiar duty or service.

3. In a system of devices for keeping hotel accounts, and room and guest records, the combination of a suitable rack having a series of numbered pockets, one for each room, with a series of room-cards, one for each pocket, a series of guest-cards for said pockets where required, and a series of condition-cards for said pockets where required, said cards differing among themselves in color, each of said cards containing matter which distinguishes it from the other cards and assigns it to its peculiar duty or service.

4. In a system of devices for keeping hotel accounts, and room and guest records, the combination of a rack having numbered pockets, one for each room, with a series of room-cards one for each pocket, and a series of condition-cards for said pockets where required, said condition-card cut away so as when in position to expose a part of the room-card, each of said cards containing matter which distinguishes it from the other cards and assigns it to its peculiar duty or service.

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