

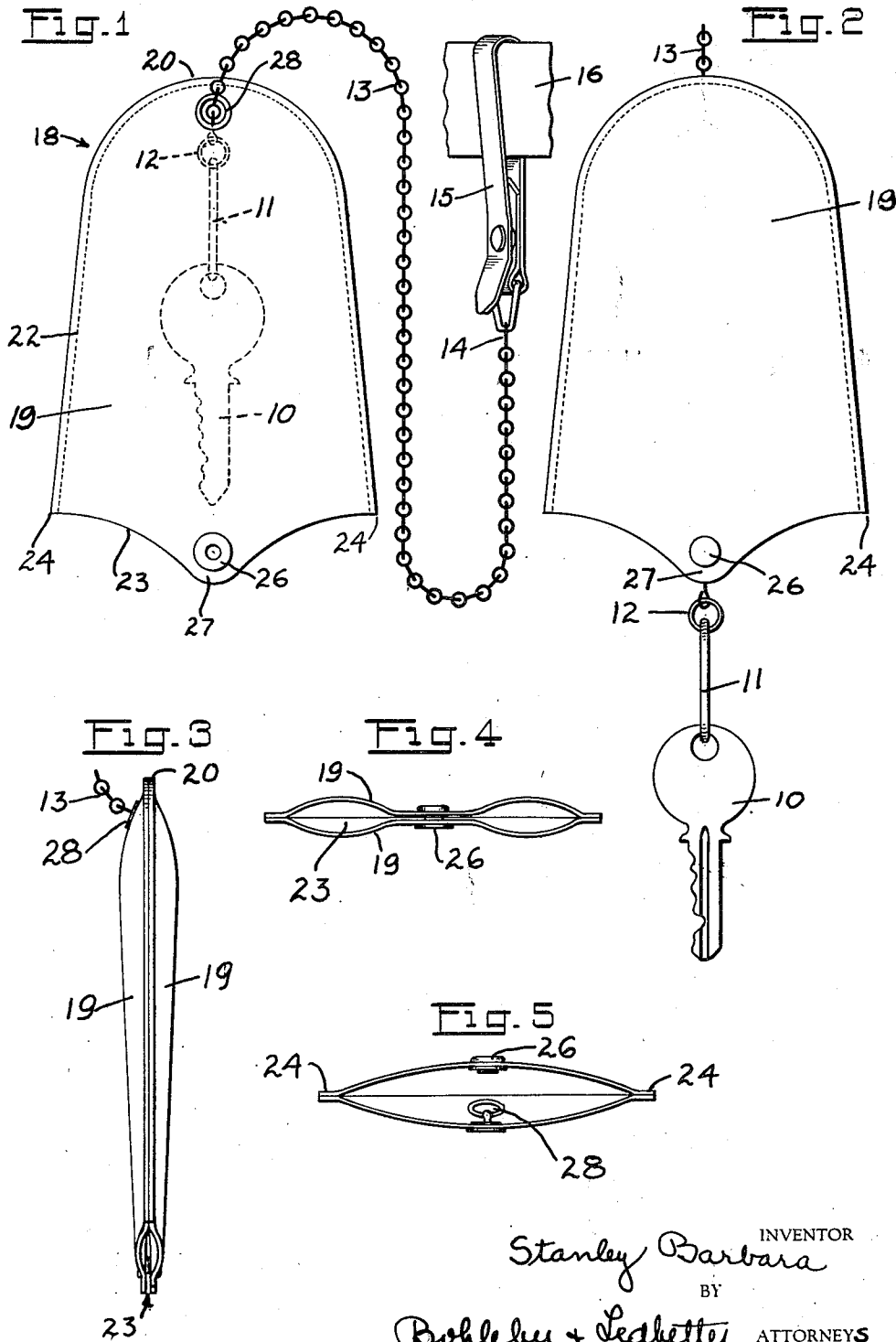
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KEY CASE

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KEY CASE.

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This invention relates to key cases of the kind adapted to contain one or more keys for the purpose of being carried in the pocket to protect the pocket against wear by the keys.

5 One object of the invention is to facilitate the opening of the key case. Accordingly, the key case is formed so as to permit its opening by the use of only one hand. More specifically the key case is formed as a pocket 10 having a single open end or mouth which is closed by a readily releasable fastening device and whereof the edges of the opening tend to separate the fastening device when the corners of the mouth are caused to approach one another by the fingers of one hand. 15 Preferably the walls of the pocket are formed of relatively stiff material. For instance the pocket may be formed of two sides of relatively stiff leather stitched together along the edges so that when the opposite corners 20 of the opening are caused to approach one another, as by the thumb and first finger, the relatively stiff sides will separate opening the mouth of the pocket and disengaging the fastening device. 25

A further object of the invention is the provision of means for permitting the ejection of the keys from the pocket so soon as the mouth is opened. To this end the keys are 30 carried with one end of a flexible member, such as a chain, which passes through an aperture in one wall of the pocket and carries at its other end means for attachment to the person as by a loop to be secured to the 35 wearer's belt. Thus the key case may be removed from the pocket with one hand, opened with the one hand and the keys permitted to fall out by the passage of the key chain through the aperture, the weight of the keys 40 serving to draw the flexible member through the aperture.

These and other objects of the invention and the means for their attainment will be more apparent from the following detailed 45 description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings illustrating a preferred embodiment thereof and in which:

Figure 1 is a view of the key case in side elevation with the pocket closed and the keys 50 contained therein.

Figure 2 is a view of the key case in side elevation upon the opposite side illustrated in Figure 1 with the pocket open and the keys ejected therefrom.

55 Figure 3 is an edge view of the closed pocket.

Figure 4 is a view showing the mouth of the pocket when closed.

Figure 5 is a view showing the mouth of the pocket when opened.

60 A bunch of keys carried in the pocket tends to wear the pocket and soon makes a hole therein through which the keys may slip out and be lost. A key case, usually of leather, is therefore frequently resorted to to prevent 65 contact of the metallic keys with the cloth of the pocket.

The bunch of keys is also frequently carried upon a key chain which may be fastened to a suspender button or belt and thus securely connect the keys with the person and prevent their loss. 70

A person carrying his keys upon a key chain and within a key case has been at a disadvantage particularly when attempting 75 to unlock a door while carrying bundles and the like, since these appurtenances have heretofore rendered it necessary to remove the keys from the pocket with the free hand and open the key case with the other hand and 80 extract the keys therefrom. Then the key case had to be carried in one hand while the key was inserted in the lock with the other hand. Hitherto, so far as I am aware, either one of the two elements, the keys or the key 85 case, has been free from the key chain so that there was always the possibility when opening the door to drop either the bunch of keys or the key case, whichever was not secured to the chain. The present invention seeks to 90 overcome the aforesaid difficulties by connecting both the keys and the key case to the key chain, all in a combination which may be opened and the keys removed ready for use, 95 with one hand.

Referring now to the drawings, the keys 10 are shown as carried on a key ring 11 connected with one end 12 of a chain 13, the other end 14 of which is illustrated as connected to a belt loop 15 so that the end 14 of the chain 100 13 may be conveniently connected to the wearer by means of the belt, a fragmentary portion of which is indicated at 16 in Figure 1.

The key case 18 is formed of two sides 19, 105 preferably of relatively stiff leather, of any convenient shape, but preferably having one rounded bottom end 20 and these sides 19 are connected at their edges by a single row of stitching 22 so as to leave the opposite end 110 23 open to serve as a mouth for the insertion or removal of keys.

For convenience in description, the rounded end shown at 20 at the top of Figures 1, 2 and 3 will be referred to as the bottom end 20 while the open end will be referred to as the mouth 23 and the corners where the two sides 19 are stitched together will be called the corners 24 of the mouth.

Midway between the corners 24 the mouth is adapted to be closed, preferably by a snap fastener 26 which is shown in the illustrated embodiment as disposed, respectively, in outwardly curved portions 27 of the edges defining the mouth 23 so that the snap fastener 26 lies wholly without but closely proximate a line including the two corners 24. Furthermore the two side pieces 16 are of such shape and of such stiffness that the mouth is normally open as shown in Figure 5 but may be closed as illustrated in Figure 4 by means of the snap fastener, in which event the respective edges of the mouth on opposite sides of the snap fastener 26 bow outwardly as shown in Figure 4.

This snap fastener 26 is readily releasable so that when the corners 24 of the mouth 23 are caused to approach one another, say by engaging the corners 24 between the thumb and first finger of one hand, the tendency of the relatively stiff leather walls to bow outwardly will open the snap fastener and permit the mouth to gape open as shown in Figure 5.

In one wall 16 of the case 18 and preferably adjacent the bottom end 20 opposite to the open mouth 23, the wall 16 is formed with an aperture 28 for the passage of the key chain 13. This aperture 28 is preferably an eyelet of a diameter somewhat greater than the diameter of the key chain 13 so that the key chain may pass or slip readily therethrough.

The key case 18 with the keys 10 therein and the mouth 23 closed is normally inserted in the pocket in the condition illustrated in Figure 1. When it is desired to use one of the keys 10 it is merely necessary to withdraw the keys from the pocket say by pulling on the chain 13 and, as the key case 18 emerges from the pocket, slipping the hand along the key chain 13 until the key case 18 is within the grasp. Then by grasping the corners 24 between the thumb and forefinger of the same hand and causing the corners 24 to approach one another, the relative stiffness of the sides 16 cause the edges of the mouth 23 to spring outwardly to the position shown in Figure 5 thereby separating the snap fastener 26 and if the mouth 23 is directed downwardly, the keys 10 will fall of their own weight out of the key case 18 through the mouth 23 drawing the chain 13 readily through the aperture 28. It is then a simple matter when the keys have emerged to stop their further progress by closing the fingers about the walls 16 and the

desired key 10 may be readily selected by the fingers of the same hand and inserted in the lock.

To return the keys 10 to the key case 18 it is then only necessary to extend the hand so that the key case 28 travels along the length of the chain 13 with the chain extended thus drawing the keys 10 within the key case 18 and permitting the mouth 23 to be closed by the snap fastener 26 and the case returned to the pocket, all with the same hand.

Various modifications may be made in the composition and configuration of the component elements going to make up the device as a whole. For instance the walls of the case need not be wholly of stiff and spring-like material but merely the edges of the mouth may be made stiff enough to bow out when the corners of the case are caused to approach one another.

What I claim is:

1. A key case made of two sides of relatively stiff material, said stiffness being sufficient to bow against a holding pressure such as is exerted by a snap retaining means and being of sufficient stiffness to separate the parts of said retaining means, said two sides of material being secured together along three edges and left open along a fourth edge to form a mouth portion having substantially straight edges of sufficient length to assume a bowed-open position, and snap securing means near the center of the mouth and near the straight edges to releasably close the mouth, said snap securing means being releasable upon pressure being exerted along the straight unsewed edges toward the snap securing means to bow the stiff material at the mouth and transmit sufficient force to release the snap securing means and open the mouth by reason of the increased bowing-open effect.

2. In a case, two sides of flexible material placed together and forming a receiving space therebetween and sewed together at their edges except along one portion thereof which is left unsewed to form a mouth leading into the receiving space, the mouth being defined by unsewed free edges of stiff material and sufficient in length to bow open when pressure is exerted on the sewed edges from each end of the mouth inwardly toward its center, and snap fasteners being disposed substantially in the center of the mouth and in line with the position assumed by one's thumb and finger when gripping the mouth ends in applying a bowing movement thereto, and said bowing movement being exerted on each side of the snap fastener means and increasing until the force resulting therefrom causes the snap fasteners to be opened.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

STANLEY BARBARA.