March 5, 1968 M. M. HECHTMANN ETAL 3,371,842

FOLDABLE CONTAINERS

Filed Aug. 10, 1966 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

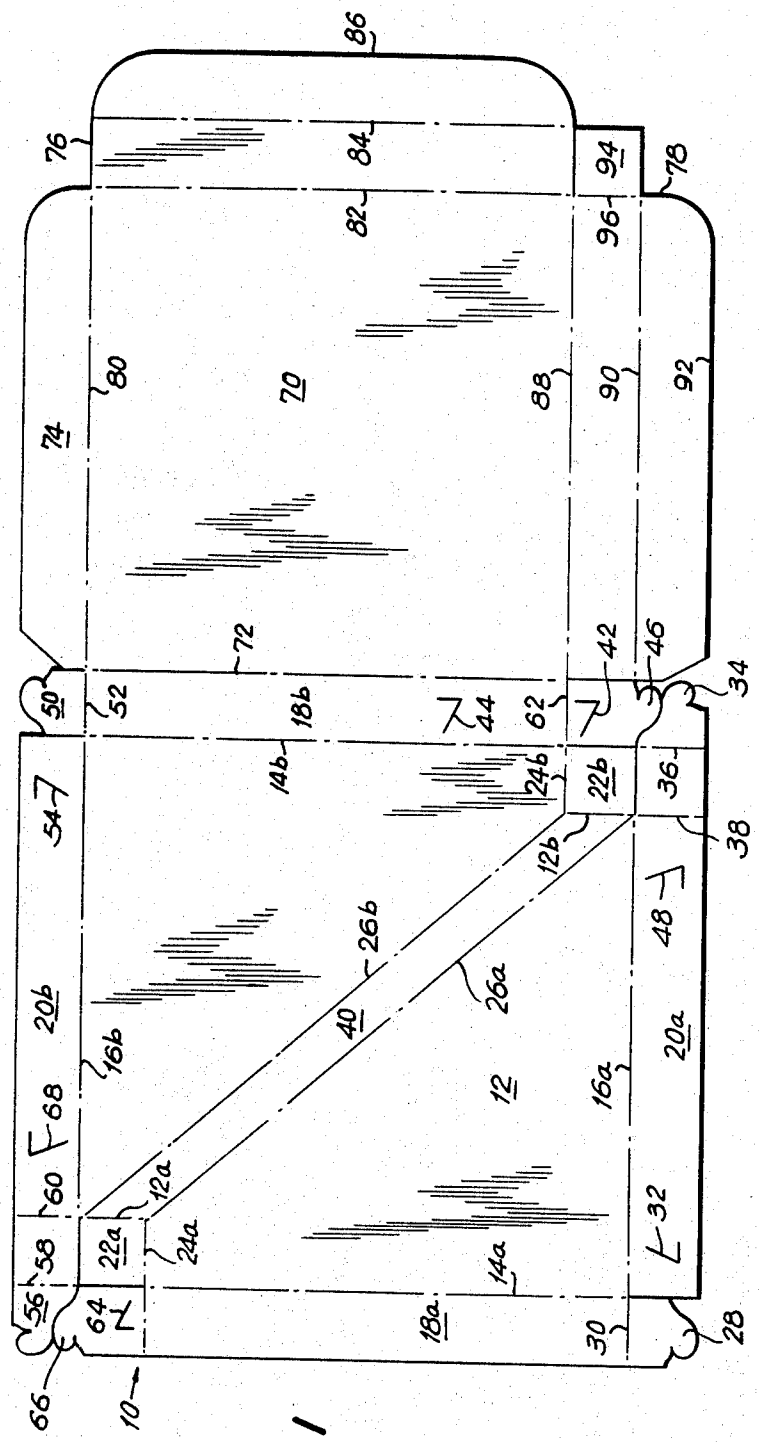


FIG. 1

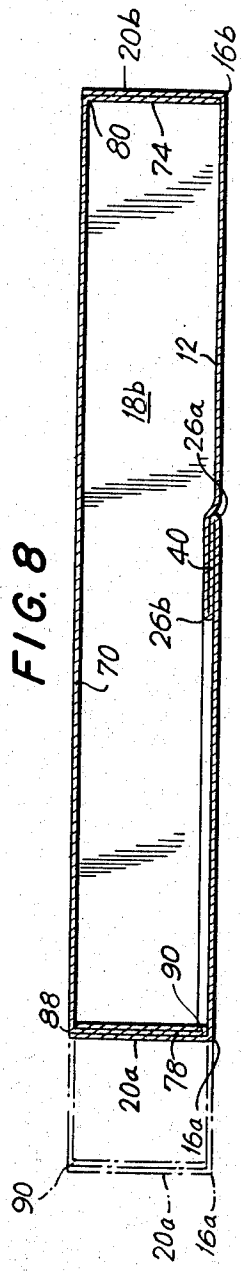


FIG. 8

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FOLDABLE CONTAINERS

Filed Aug. 10, 1966 3 Sheets-Sheet 2

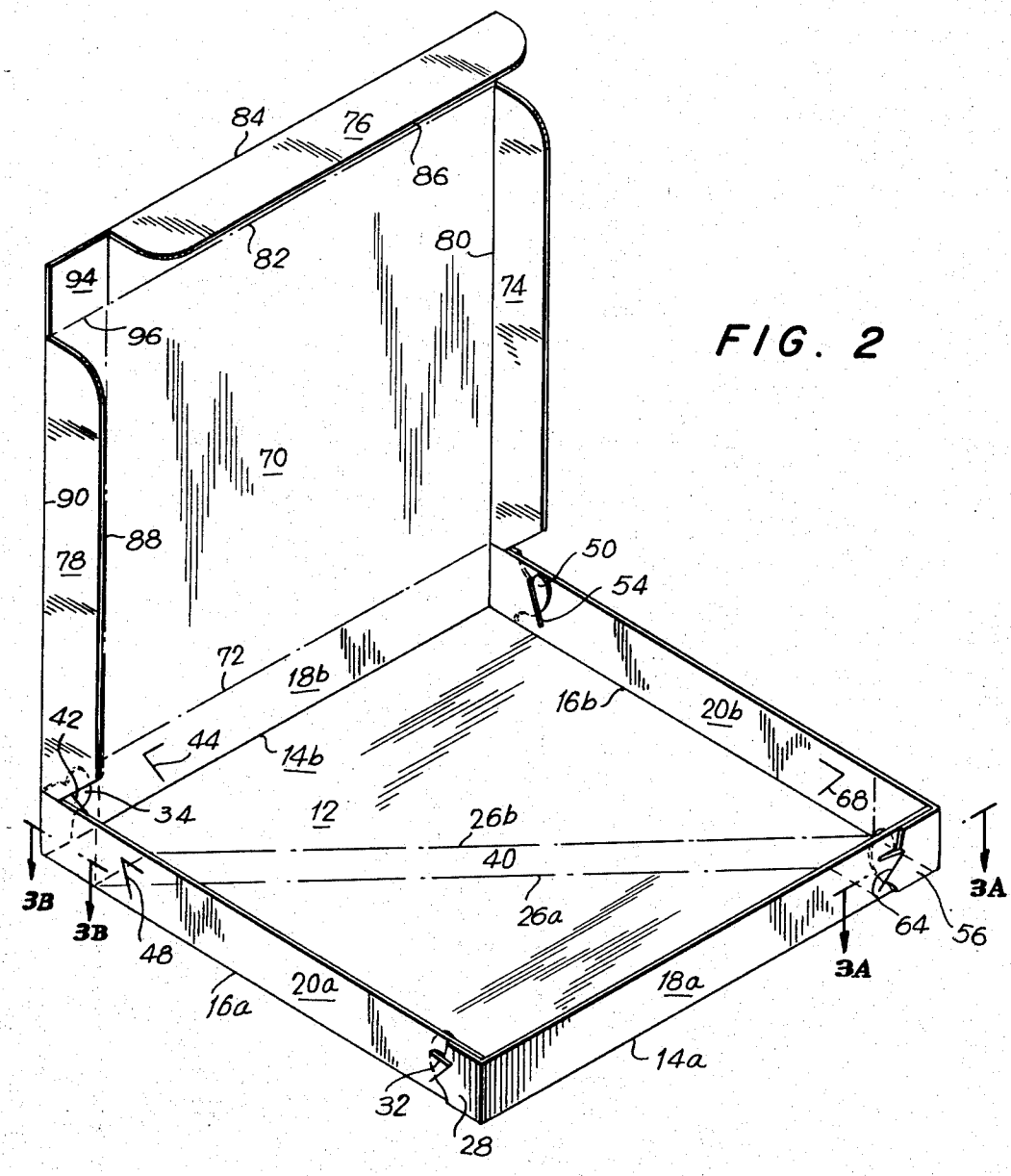


FIG. 2

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FOLDABLE CONTAINERS

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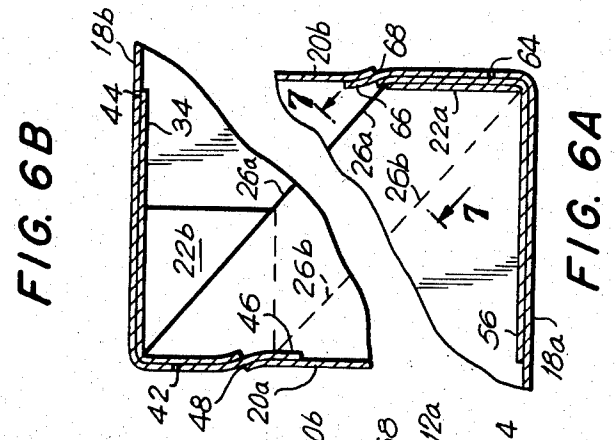


FIG. 6B

FIG. 6A

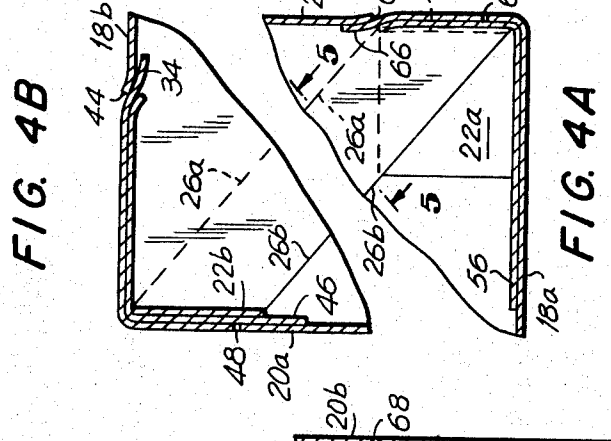


FIG. 4B

FIG. 4A

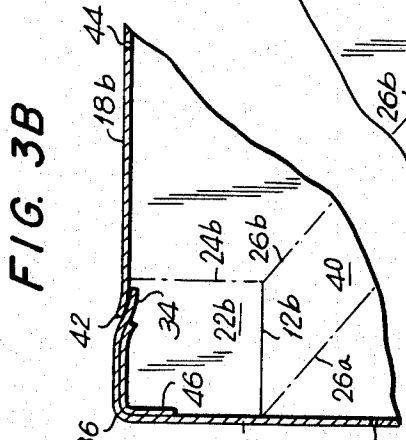


FIG. 3B

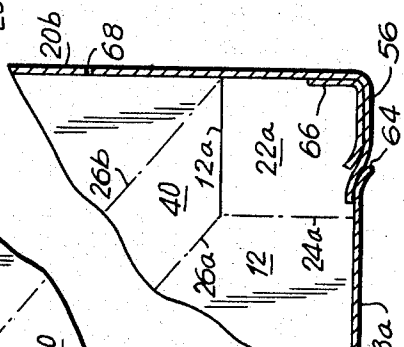


FIG. 3A

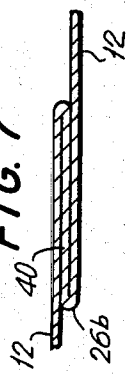


FIG. 7

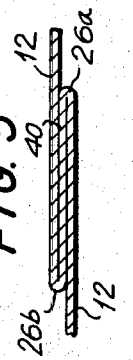


FIG. 5

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3,371,842

FOLDABLE CONTAINERS

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Filed Aug. 10, 1966, Ser. No. 571,542
10 Claims. (Cl. 229—33)

The present invention relates to foldable containers.

More particularly, the present invention relates to containers which are adapted to be formed from sheet structures which initially have the condition of a flat blank and which can be folded from this initial condition into a condition forming a container adapted to house any desired contents.

One of the inconveniences conventionally encountered with containers of this type is that it is essential to keep on hand a plurality of blanks of different sizes in order to provide containers of different sizes. Thus, it becomes necessary for the manufacturer of the containers to manufacture blanks of various different sizes according to the desired size of the container and it also becomes necessary for the purchaser of the blanks to purchase and store a large number of blanks of different sizes in order to provide containers of different sizes.

One of the objects of the present invention is to provide a container of the above general type which is capable of assuming two different sizes depending upon the manner in which the blank is folded from its initial flat condition.

It is furthermore an object of the present invention to provide a container structure capable of being folded from an expanded size to a smaller contracted size in a substantially foolproof manner which does not require a special folding technique.

In particular, it is an object of the invention to provide a container structure which can be folded in either of two different ways from an expanded to a contracted condition so that irrespective of the manner of folding the container can be displaced between its expanded and contracted conditions providing the large and small sizes of the container, respectively.

In addition, it is an object of the present invention to provide a blank of relatively simple inexpensive construction which will fulfill the above objects.

Furthermore, it is an object of the invention to provide for a container of the above type having side walls which can be fastened together either in the expanded or contracted condition of the container as well as a cover which can be displaced between a large size and a small size to close the container either in its expanded or in its contracted condition, respectively.

The container of the invention primarily consists of a sheet structure which initially has the form of a flat blank and which can be folded from its initial condition into a folded condition forming a container having at least a bottom wall and side walls extending upwardly from the bottom wall at outer side edges of the latter. This bottom wall has four side edges formed by two pairs of opposed parallel side edges and four side walls in the form of two pairs of opposed parallel side walls extending upwardly from the side edges of the bottom wall. In accordance with the present invention the bottom wall includes a foldable means extending diagonally across the bottom wall between one pair of diagonally opposed corners thereof for folding the bottom wall between an expanded condition and a contracted condition where the other of the pair of diagonally opposed corners thereof are situated closer to each other than in the expanded condition of the bottom wall. Furthermore, this foldable means of the bottom wall maintains each pair of opposed side edges of the bottom wall and the side walls extending therefrom parallel to each other in both conditions of the bottom wall.

The invention is illustrated by way of example in the accompanying drawings which form part of this application and in which:

FIG. 1 shows the blank of the present invention as it appears when looking toward that surface thereof which forms the exterior surface of the container of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective illustration of the blank of FIG. 1 folded to form the container of the invention, the container being shown in FIG. 2 in its expanded condition providing the larger size of the container, and FIG. 2 also shows the cover of the container in an upstanding open position;

FIG. 3A is a fragmentary section plan view taken along line 3A—3A of FIG. 2 in the direction of the arrows and showing the structure of FIG. 2 in the region of one corner of the bottom wall;

FIG. 3B is a fragmentary sectional plan view taken along line 3B—3B of FIG. 2 in the direction of the arrows and showing the structure of the container at a corner thereof diagonally opposed from the corner shown in FIG. 3A;

FIG. 4A shows the structure of FIG. 3A after it has been folded to provide the contracted condition of the container;

FIG. 4B shows the structure of FIG. 3B after it has been folded to provide the contracted condition of the container, FIG. 4B showing that corner of the container which is diagonally opposed to that of FIG. 4A;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary transverse section taken along line 5—5 of FIG. 4A in the direction of the arrows to show the folded condition of the bottom wall;

FIG. 6A shows the structure of FIG. 3A after it has been folded in a manner different from that shown in FIG. 4A also to provide a contracted condition of the container;

FIG. 6B shows the structure of FIG. 3B folded in a manner different from that illustrated in FIG. 4B to also provide a contracted condition of the container, the structure shown in FIG. 6B being situated at a corner of the container diagonally opposed to the structure shown in FIG. 6A;

FIG. 7 is a transverse section fragmentarily illustrating the folded condition of the container when it has been folded in the manner shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B, the section of FIG. 7 being taken along line 7—7 of FIG. 6A in the direction of the arrows; and

FIG. 8 is a transverse sectional view of the container in its closed condition illustrating the manner in which the cover cooperates with the container in its expanded and contracted conditions, the section of FIG. 8 being taken in a plane parallel to the front and rear side walls of the container.

Referring ot FIG. 1, the blank **10** of the invention is shown in FIG. 1 as it appears when looking toward the exterior surface of the blank **10**, this surface forming the outside of the container into which the blank **10** is folded. The blank **10** is made of a sheet structure which is flexible so that it can be folded and which may be made of paperboard, for example. This sheet structure can have a single thickness or it may be formed from a plurality of laminations or plies which are joined to each other in any suitable way, or it is even possible to utilize a corrugated sheet structure, for example.

The blank **10** includes a bottom wall **12** which is of a square configuration. In FIG. 1 all of the free edges of the blank are indicated by solid lines while all of the fold lines are designated by dot-dash lines and are formed by suitable scoring of the blank. The bottom wall

12 has a periphery defined by a front and rear pair of parallel fold lines 14*a* and 14*b* and a second pair of parallel fold lines 16*a* and 16*b*, these lines 14*a*, 14*b*, 16*a*, 16*b* forming the outer edges of the bottom wall 12. A front side wall 18*a* is adapted to extend upwardly from the bottom wall at its edge 14*a* and a rear side wall 18*b*, which is parallel to the front side wall 18*a* is adapted to extend upwardly from the bottom wall 12 at its rear edge 14*b*. A lateral side wall 20*a* is adapted to extend upwardly from the bottom wall 12 at its side edge 16*a* while another lateral side wall 20*b* is adapted to extend upwardly from the bottom wall 12 along its remaining side edge 16*b*.

In accordance with a particular feature of the present invention, the bottom wall has a foldable means enabling it to be folded between the expanded condition shown in FIG. 1 and a contracted condition described below, and this foldable means includes at one pair of diagonally opposed corners of the bottom wall 12 a pair of square tabs 22*a* and 22*b*. The tab 22*a* is connected to the bottom wall 12 only by a fold line 24*a* which extends perpendicularly from the edge 14*a*, while the tab 22*b* is connected to the bottom wall solely by a tab fold line 24*b* which extends perpendicularly from and inwardly of the rear fold line 14*b* which forms the rear edge of the bottom wall 12. The bottom wall 12 includes an inner free edge 12*a* extending from the inner end of the tab fold line 24*a* perpendicularly with respect to and up to the edge 16*b* of the bottom wall 12, and the bottom wall 12 has another free inner edge 12*b* extending from the inner end of the tab fold line 24*b* perpendicularly with respect to and up to the opposed parallel edge 16*a* of the bottom wall 12. A first fold line 26*a* extends diagonally across the bottom wall from the inner end of the tab fold line 24*a* to that end of the free edge 12*b* which is distant from the tab fold line 24*b*, while a second straight fold line 26*b* extends from the inner end of the tab fold line 24*b* up to that end of the inner free edge 12*a* which is distant from the inner end of the tab fold line 24*a*. Thus, the free inner edges 12*a* and 12*b* together with the first and second diagonal fold lines 26*a* and 26*b* of the bottom wall 12 define a parallelogram portion 40 of the bottom wall 12 extending diagonally across the latter in the manner indicated in FIG. 1.

The side walls of the container include a fastening means for fastening them to each other in a condition extending upwardly from the outer edges of the bottom wall both when the bottom wall is in its expanded condition as well as when it is in its contracted condition. This fastening means takes the form of a tongue-and-slit structure. Thus, the front side wall 18*a* has at one end a tongue 28 connected to the end of the wall 18*a* by a fold line 30 which forms an extension of the edge 16*a* of the bottom wall, and this tongue 28 is adapted to be received in a slit 32 which is formed in the side wall 20*a*. The side wall 20*a* has a tongue 34 connected to the wall 20*a* by a pair of parallel fold lines 36 and 38, the fold line 36 forming an extension of the edge 14*b* of the bottom wall while the fold line 38 forms an extension of the inner free edge 12*b* of the bottom wall 12. The tongue 34 is adapted to be received in a slit 42 of the wall 18*b* when the tongue 34 is folded at the fold line 36, while the tongue 34 can be received in the slit 44 when folded along the line 38, this slit 44 also being formed in the rear side wall 18*b* of the container.

The rear side wall 18*b* has at one end a tongue 46 which can be received in a slit 48 which is formed in the side wall 20*a*. At its opposite end the rear side wall 18*b* has a tongue 50 connected to the rear wall 18*b* by a fold line 52 and capable of being received in a slit 54 formed in the side wall 20*b*. The tongue 46 at the other end of the rear side wall 18*b* is connected to the side wall 18*b* by a fold line 62 which forms an extension of the tab fold line 24B, while the fold line 52 of the tongue 50 forms an extension of the edge 16*b* of the bottom wall 12.

The side wall 20*b* has a tongue 56 connected to the side wall 20*b* by a pair of fold lines 58 and 60, and the front wall 18*a* is formed with a slit 64 capable of receiving the tongue 56 when it is folded at the fold line 58. Finally, the front wall 18*a* has a tongue 66 which is formed with the slit 64, as shown in FIG. 1, and which is capable of being received in a slit 68 formed in the side wall 20*b*.

The blank 10 is completed by a cover 70 which is connected with the rear side wall 18*b* by a fold line 72, and the cover 70 has three flaps 74, 76 and 78. The length of the flap 74 corresponds to the length of the side wall 20*b* in the contracted condition of the bottom wall 12. The flap 76 has a pair of fold lines 82 and 84 parallel to its outer longitudinal edge 86, and it will be noted that the flap 74 is connected to the cover 70 by a fold line 80. The length of the flap 76 also corresponds to the length of the front of the bottom wall in the contracted condition thereof.

The flap 78 has a length corresponding to the length of the side wall 20*a* in the contracted condition of the bottom wall, and this flap 78 is connected to the cover 70 by an inner fold line 88 and has an intermediate fold line 90 situated between and parallel to the fold line 88 and the outer longitudinal edge 92 of the flap 78.

The cover is completed by a tab 94 connected only to the flap 78 by a fold line 96 which extends between the fold lines 88 and 90 forming an extension of the fold line 82, as indicated in FIG. 1.

The blank 10 can be folded in an expanded condition to provide a container of relatively large size, or it can be folded further to a contracted condition so as to provide a container of relatively small size. The blank 10 is shown in FIG. 2 as well as FIGS. 3A and 3B folded to provide the container of relatively large size. For this purpose the front and rear walls 18*a* and 18*b* are respectively folded upwardly along the front and rear edges 14*a* and 14*b* of the bottom wall 12 to assume the condition indicated in FIG. 2 and the tongues 28 and 50 are inserted through the slits 32 and 54, respectively, at one of the pairs of diagonally opposed corners of the bottom wall 12. Of course, the lateral side walls 20*a* and 20*b* have in the meantime also been folded upwardly along the edges 16*a* and 16*b* of the bottom wall 12.

At the right front corner of the bottom wall 12 as viewed in FIG. 2 and as is shown in FIG. 3A, the tongue 56 of the side wall 20*b* extends along the exterior of the tongue 66 of the front side wall 18*a* and is received in the slit 64, the tongue 66 being bent in the manner indicated in FIG. 3*a*. The tab 22*a* remains in the plane of the bottom wall 12, and the same is true of the parallelogram portion 40 thereof.

At the diagonally opposed corner, where the tab 22*b* is situated, the tongue 34 of the other lateral side wall 20*a* extends along the exterior of the tongue 46 and is received in the slit 42 of the rear side wall 18*b*, while the tongue 46 is bent in the manner shown in FIG. 3B, and of course at this time the tab 22*b* is also situated in the plane of the bottom wall 12. Therefore, in this simple way the blank is set up to form the container of relatively large size.

As may be seen in FIG. 2, the flap 74 of the cover 70 is folded inwardly along the fold line 80. The flaps 76 and 78, however, are folded along their intermediate fold lines 84 and 90, respectively, so that in this way the cover 70 is given its larger size corresponding to the size of the bottom wall 12 in the expanded condition thereof shown in FIG. 2. At this time the tab 94 is situated in the same plane as the cover 70.

Therefore, with the container set up in the expanded condition shown in FIG. 2, providing the larger size thereof, when it is desired to close the container it is only necessary to turn the cover down around the upper edge 72 of the rear side wall 18*b*, and the front flap 76 will become situated alongside the front wall 18*a* while the side flaps 74 and 78 will become situated along-

side and will overlap the side walls **20***b* and **20***a*, respectively.

In order to provide the container with its smaller size, it may be folded into the condition shown in FIGS. 4A and 4B. For this purpose, the tongues **28** and **50** can still be placed in the slits **32** and **54**, since nothing is changed at the pair of diagonally opposed corners of the bottom wall where this fastening means is situated. However, at the pair of diagonally opposed corners where the tabs **22***a* and **22***b* are situated operations are carried out to provide the container with its smaller size. Thus, at the front right corner, as viewed in FIG. 2, the tab **22***a* is folded along its fold line **24***a* against the inner surface of the bottom wall before the side walls are fastened to each other at their diagonally opposed corners where the tabs **22***a* and **22***b* are situated. With the tab **22***a* thus folded downwardly against the bottom wall **12** at the inner surface thereof, as indicated in FIG. 4A, the bottom wall is folded around the fold line **26***a*, displacing the fold line **26***b* toward the corner where the tongue **28** is situated, and this folding of the bottom wall is continued until the bottom wall has the condition shown in FIG. 5 where the parallelogram portion **40** thereof is situated over that region of the bottom wall which adjoins the fold line **26***a* and beneath that region thereof which adjoins the fold line **26***b*, as indicated in FIG. 5. The result is that the inner free edge **12***a* of the bottom wall now becomes located over the fold line **24***a* of the tab **22***a*. The tongue **56** at the front end of the lateral side wall **20***b* now is situated inwardly of the front wall **18***a*, and instead it is the tongue **66** of the latter which extends along the exterior of the lateral side wall **20***b* and is inserted through the slit **68** so as to connect the side walls **18***a* and **20***b* in the manner shown in FIG. 4A. If desired, the tongue **66** could be situated inwardly of the wall **20***b* and instead the wall **18***a* could be provided with an additional slit to receive the tongue **56**.

At the corner which is diagonally opposed to that shown in FIG. 4A, and which is of course illustrated in FIG. 4B, the same folding action takes place with the result that the tab **22***b* now extends upwardly from its fold line **24***b* along the inner surface of the tongue **46** which is shown situated inwardly of the wall **20***a*, and of course the fold line **24***b* for the tab **22***b* is situated over the inner free edge **12***b* at this time. The tongue **34** of the lateral side wall **20***a* is now received in the inner slit **44**. In this case also, if desired, the tongue **46** could be situated outwardly of the tongue **34** along the exterior of the wall **20***a* in which case it would be received in the slit **48** shown in FIG. 1. Thus, with this construction the operator has the option of connecting either a tongue of the rear wall to a slit in a side wall or a tongue in a side wall to a slit in a rear wall, and of course the same feature could be provided at the front corner shown in FIG. 4A, as pointed out above.

It is not essential that the bottom wall **12** be folded in the manner shown in FIGS. 4A and 4B in order to be placed in its contracted condition. Thus, as indicated in FIGS. 6A and 6B, the bottom wall can have its parallelogram portion **40** folded around the fold line **26***b* so as to overlie the portion of the bottom wall adjoining the fold line **26***b*, as indicated in FIG. 7, and now the portion of the bottom wall **12** adjoining the fold line **26***a* is folded back to overlie the parallelogram portion **40**. To provide this second contracted condition of the bottom wall, where it will have the same size as in the contracted condition of FIGS. 4A and 4B, the tab **22***b* is folded along its fold line **24***b* downwardly against the inner surface of the bottom wall and then the bottom wall is folded around the fold line **26***b* to have the condition shown in FIGS. 6A and 6B, as well as FIG. 7, and at this time the tab **22***a* will extend upwardly from the bottom wall along the inner surface of the side wall **20***b*. The tongue **56** is still situated along the inner surface of the front wall **18***a* and the tongue **66** is again received in the slit **68**, as indicated in FIG. 6A. At the diagonally opposed corner shown in FIG. 6B, the tongue **34** is situated along the inner surface of the rear wall **18***b*, and the tongue **46** of the rear wall **18***b* is received in the slit **48** of the lateral side wall **20***a*. In this case also, if desired, the tongue **46** could be situated inwardly of the wall **20***a* and the tongue **34** could be passed again through the slit **44**, and of course an additional slit could be provided in the wall **18***a* to receive the tongue **56** in the event that it is desired to situate the latter tongue at the exterior of the front wall in which case the tongue **66** would be situated along the inner surface of the lateral side wall **20***b*.

The particular construction shown is preferred since in this way the front wall **18** has no slits or tongues of adjoining walls connected thereto when the container is set up in its contracted condition.

In either of the contracted conditions of the container, the cover **70** will have the smaller size indicated in FIG. 8 which is a transverse section through the opposed lateral side walls in a plane parallel to the rear wall **18***b* and the front wall **18***a* between these walls. It will be seen from FIG. 8 that the container is shown in the contracted condition of FIGS. 4A, 4B and 5. At this time the flap **74** still extends along the side wall **20***b*. However, the flap **78** is now folded twice so that it is folded along its inner fold line **88**, and the intermediate fold line **90** now forms the bottom edge of the flap which is folded in a condition of double thickness, as indicated in FIG. 8. The expanded condition of the container is shown in dot-dash lines in FIG. 8. When the container is folded to the contracted condition shown in FIGS. 6A, 6B and 7, the cover will still have the condition shown in FIG. 8, and the only difference will be in the folded condition of the bottom wall, as is apparent from a comparison of FIGS. 5 and 7.

Thus, with the simple structure of the invention it is possible to fold the blank **10** either into the relatively large size container shown in FIG. 2, or into a relatively small size container as indicated in FIG. 8, and the folding can take place in a foolproof manner since it makes no difference whether the diagonal portion **40** is folded about one or the other of the diagonal fold lines **26***a* or **26***b*.

What is claimed is:

1. A container consisting of a foldable sheet structure which initially has the form of a flat blank and which can be folded from said blank into a container having a flat bottom wall and side walls extending upwardly therefrom, said bottom wall having a periphery defined by two pairs of opposed parallel side edges and said bottom wall also including two pairs of diagonally opposed corners, and said sheet structure including foldable means extending diagonally across said bottom wall between one of said pairs of opposed corners for displacing said bottom wall between an expanded condition where said bottom wall has no folds and the other of said pairs of opposed corners are relatively distant from each other and a contracted condition where said bottom wall is in a partly folded condition and said other pair of opposed corners are closer to each other than in said expanded condition, so that said foldable means of said bottom wall enables the container to assume two different sizes.

2. A container as recited in claim **1** and wherein said side walls include means for fastening said side walls to each other either in the expanded or the contracted condition of said bottom wall with said side walls extending upwardly from said bottom wall in both conditions thereof.

3. A container as recited in claim **1** and wherein said sheet structure includes a cover connected by a fold line to one of said side walls along an outer edge thereof distant from said bottom wall and turnable with respect to said one side wall between a position overlying said bottom wall to close said container and an open position

displaced away from said bottom wall to give access to the space surrounded by said side walls.

4. A container as recited in claim 3 and wherein said cover includes means for changing the size of the cover between a large size corresponding to that of said bottom wall in said expanded condition thereof and a small size corresponding to that of said bottom wall in said contracted condition thereof.

5. A container as recited in claim 4 and wherein said cover includes along three sides thereof flaps which overlap all of the side walls except that one to which said cover is foldably connected in the closed position of said cover, all of said flaps having a length equal to that of said side walls when said bottom wall is in said contracted condition thereof and that one of said flaps which is opposed to said one side wall to which said cover is foldably connected and one of the remaining flaps being formed with a pair of parallel fold lines extending parallel to outer longitudinal edges of the latter two flaps so that each of the latter two flaps has inwardly of its outer longitudinal edge a pair of fold lines one of which is an intermediate fold line situated between an inner fold line and the outer longitudinal edge of the flap, whereby each of the latter two flaps can be folded at its intermediate line to provide the larger size of the cover and at its inner line to provide the smaller size of the cover.

6. A container as recited in claim 5 and wherein said cover includes a tab of rectangular configuration foldably connected with one of the latter two flaps and extending from an end thereof and from the region between its fold lines alongside the region of the other of the latter two flaps between the fold lines of the latter when the cover is in its larger size condition, said tab being folded inwardly and overlapping said one of said latter two flaps when the cover is in its smaller size condition, whereby said tab completes the covering of said bottom wall by said cover when the latter has its larger size condition.

7. A container as recited in claim 1 and wherein said means for folding said bottom wall between its expanded and contracted condition includes a pair of tabs respectively forming part of said bottom wall and situated at said one pair of diagonally opposed corners thereof, said tabs being connected with said bottom wall only by a pair of fold lines which extend perpendicularly inwardly from one of said pair of opposed parallel side edges of said bottom wall so that the latter tab fold lines respectively have inner ends situated inwardly of the latter pair of side edges of said bottom wall, respectively, and said bottom wall including inner free edges extending from said inner ends of said tab fold lines perpendicularly up to the other of the pairs of opposed side edges of said bottom wall, respectively, said means for folding said bottom wall between its contracted and expanded conditions including a first straight fold line extending from the inner end of one of said tab fold lines diagonally across said bottom wall to an outer end of that one of said inner free edges of said bottom wall which extends perpendicularly from the other of said tab fold lines and a second straight fold line extending from said inner end of the other of said tab fold lines diagonally across said bottom wall to an outer end of the other inner free edge of said bottom wall which is distant from said inner end of said one tab fold line.

8. A container as recited in claim 7 and wherein said first and second diagonal fold lines are parallel to each other and define with said inner free edges of said bottom wall a parallelogram portion having a pair of opposed relatively short sides formed by said inner free edges of said bottom wall and a pair of opposed parallel long sides formed by said first and second diagonal fold lines, said parallelogram portion of said bottom wall being foldable around either one of said first and second diagonal fold lines so that when folded around said first fold line said parallelogram portion will overlie the area of said bottom wall immediately adjacent said first fold line and the remainder of said bottom wall can be folded back around said second fold line to overlie said parallelogram portion while when said bottom wall is folded with said parallelogram portion thereof around said second diagonal fold line said parallelogram portion will overlie the region of said bottom wall which is adjacent said second fold line and can be folded back around said first fold line so that the portion of said bottom wall adjacent said first fold line will overlie said parallelogram portion of said bottom wall, whereby in either of the contracted conditions of said bottom wall said parallelogram portion thereof will be situated between adjacent portions of said bottom wall.

9. A container as recited in claim 8 and wherein said side walls include fastening means for fastening said side walls to each other in positions extending upwardly from said bottom wall both when it is in its expanded condition as well as when it is in either of said contracted conditions.

10. A container as recited in claim 9 and wherein said fastening means includes cooperating slit and tongue structures carried by said side walls in the regions of said corners.

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