The present invention is a decorative end cap which is mountable to the top portion of fence pickets. The decorative end cap is manufactured separately from the picket and is mountable to the top end of the picket after the picket fence has been manufactured to give the picket fence a more decorative appearance. The top cap consists of a substantially flat top portion, having a top surface, opposing sides and opposing ends. The top cap also has a bottom portion which is provided with a cavity, configured to receive the top end of the wooden fence picket. A decorative member is mounted on the top surface of the flat portion and extends upwardly from the flat portion between the opposing sides. The cap also has a mounting bracket, which is adapted to mount the cap on the top end of the picket.
FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates generally to picket end caps for constructing decorative picket fences.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Picket fences are generally used to enclose residential properties. Traditionally, picket fences have been constructed from a series of broad wooden planks (referred to as pickets), mounted in a vertical orientation between two or more posts. The planks are usually mounted directly to long cross members, the ends of which are secured to the posts. To discourage people or animals from attempting to climb over these picket fences, the tops of the picket portion of the fences were pointed. Due to the rustic appeal associated with picket fences, the construction has generally remained of wood.

Building picket fences is generally a labour intensive exercise due in part to the construction of the decorative pickets forming the fences. In order to capture the rustic appearance of traditional picket fences, a person attempting to manufacture a picket fence would have to go through the laborious process of cutting each picket to size and then cutting a decorative pointed top onto the picket. Since manufacturing such a picket would also require finishing the decorative end of the picket by routing and sanding the edges, the cost of picket fences are relatively high. If a distinctive design, such as an ace of spades is desired for the decorative end of the pickets, then the construction becomes more elaborate and expensive. Due to the expense involved in manufacturing pickets with decorative tops, a majority of picket fences now manufactured in kit form are not provided with decorative pointed pickets. Therefore, there is a need for a system of picket fence construction which is both easy to manufacture and cost effective.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to overcome the drawbacks of the prior art by providing a decorative end cap which is mountable to the top portion of fence pickets. The decorative end cap is manufactured separately from the picket and is mountable to the top end of the picket after the picket fence has been manufactured to give the picket fence a more decorative appearance. The top cap consists of a substantially flat top portion, having a top surface, opposing sides and opposing ends. The top cap also has a bottom portion which is provided with a cavity, configured to receive the top end of the wooden fence picket. A decorative member is mounted on the top surface of the flat portion and extends upwardly from the flat portion between the opposing sides. The cap also has a mounting bracket, which is adapted to mount the cap on the top end of the picket.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will be evident from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings which illustrate the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1. Is a perspective view of a fence construction showing the top cap of the present invention mounted on a fence picket.

FIG. 2. Is a front view, partly in cross-section, of the fence cap of the present invention.

FIG. 3. Is a side view, partly in cross-section, of the present invention taken along line A-A of FIG. 2.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

Referring firstly to FIG. 1, a picket fence shown as item 10 generally consists of a series of vertically oriented pickets 12, which are attached to horizontal cross-members 14 having ends 16 which are rigidly attached to fence post 18. The cap made in accordance with the present invention is shown generally as item 22 and is securely mounted to end 20 of picket 12, via mounting elements 30 and 28. Cap 22 consists of bottom portion 24 and decorative member 26 mounted securely onto portion 24.

Referring to FIGS. 2 and 3, cap 22 consists of a substantially flat top portion 30 with a top surface 31, having opposing sides 33 and 35 (see FIG. 3) and opposing ends 37 and 39 (see FIG. 2). Bottom portion 24 extends below top portion 30 and is provided with a cavity 42 which is configured to fit on top of end 20 of picket 12. As best seen in FIG. 2, flat portion 30 has opposing side edges 33 and 35 and downwardly depending side edge walls 38 and 41, extending integrally downward from edges 33 and 35, respectively. Side walls 38 and 41 are provided with ridges 40 which extend into cavity 42 and are configured to grip the end of the fence picket. As best seen in FIG. 2, flat portion 30 has opposing ends 39 and 37 and downwardly extending end walls 43 and 32, integrally extending from ends 39 and 37, respectively. Cavity 42 is defined by walls 38, 41, 32 and 43. Decorative portion 26 extends upwardly from top surface 31 of substantially flat portion 30 and is preferably positioned between side edges 33 and 35 and opposing ends 39 and 37. Decorative portion 26 may consist of any desired decorative features such as a point, an ace of spade, a ball or some other decorative design. Top surface 31 is also provided with apertures 34 on either side of decorative portion 26. Apertures 34 are dimension to permit a mounting element such as a screw or nail to pass through aperture 34 in order to rigidly mount cap 22 to the top edge of the fence picket. It is important to position apertures 34 on both sides of decorative portion 26 to ensure the proper mounting of cap 22. If only one aperture 34 were provided, then it is likely that the force caused by the fasteners used to mount the cap will force the cap to rest at a slight angle relative to the rest of the picket. For aesthetic reasons, it is important to mount the cap such that decorative portion 26 is co-axial with picket 12, especially if the decorative portion consists of a point. By placing mounting apertures 34 on both sides of decorative portion 26, it is easier to securely position cap 22 such that the decorative portion is co-axial with picket 12.

It is possible to construct a picket top cap without end walls 32 and 43, although these end walls do give the finished product a more esthetically appealing appearance. If end walls 32 and 43 are not provided, then the end cap may be less expensive to manufacture.

A specific embodiment of the present invention has been disclosed; however, several variations of the disclosed embodiment could be envisioned within the scope of this invention.
[0013] It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

1. A top cap for capping a top end of a wooden fence picket having a opposite front and back faces, opposite side ends, a diameter and a width, the top cap comprising
   a substantially flat top portion having a top surface, opposing sides and opposing ends,
   a bottom portion having a cavity adapted to receive the top end of the wooden fence picket, 9
   a decorative member mounted to the top surface of the flat portion, said decorative member extending upwardly from the flat portion between the opposing sides,
   a mounting bracket adapted to mount the cap to the top end of the picket.

2. A top cap as defined in claim 1 wherein the bottom portion comprises a pair of edge portions located on the opposing sides of the flat portion, said edge portions extending integrally downward from the opposite sides of the flat portion, the cavity being defined by a distance between the edge portions, said distance being selected such that the top end of the fence picket can be snugly retained between the edge portions.

3. A top cap as defined in claim 1 wherein the top surface has an opening adapted to receive a retainer element for securing the cap to the end of the picket.

4. A top cap as defined in claim 2 further comprising a pair of end walls, said end walls integrally and downwardly extending from the opposing ends of the flat surface, the edge portions and the end walls defining the cavity.

5. A top cap as defined in claim 4 wherein the mounting bracket comprises an aperture located on the top surface, said aperture configured to receive a retainer element, said retainer element adapted to mount the cap to the end of the picket.

6. A top cap as defined in claim 5 wherein the mounting bracket comprises a pair of apertures, each aperture located on one side of the decorative member, each aperture configured to receive a retainer element, said retainer element adapted to mount the cap to the end of the picket.

7. A top cap as defined in claim 2 wherein the mounting bracket comprises a ridge located on at least one of the edge portions, said ridge extending into the cavity.

8. A top cap as defined in claim 4 wherein the mounting bracket comprises an aperture located on the end walls, said aperture configured to receive a retainer element, said retainer element adapted to mount the cap to the end of the picket.

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