

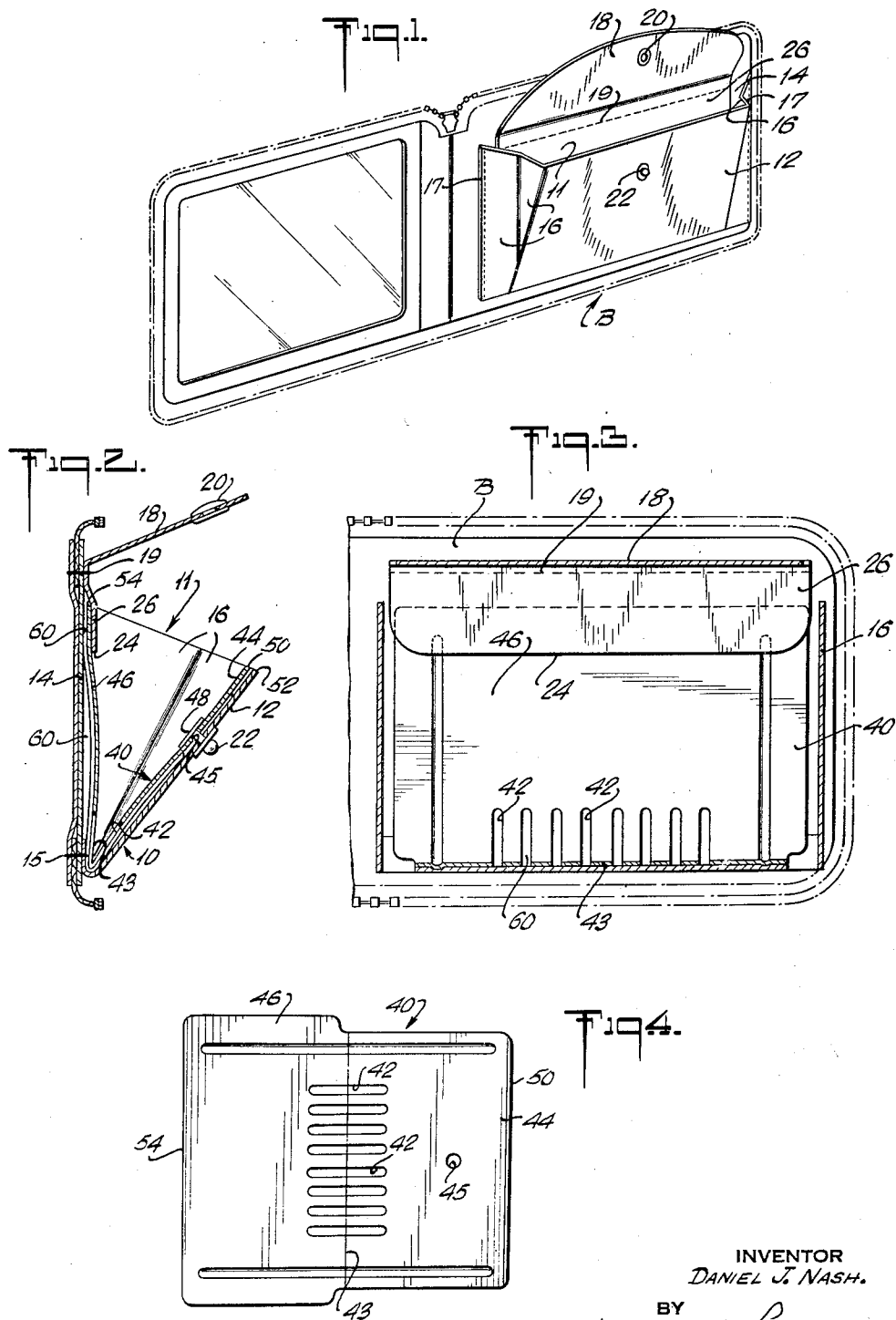
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D. J. NASH

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AUTOMATICALLY EXPANDING POCKET

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INVENTOR
DANIEL J. NASH.

BY
William R. Liberman
ATTORNEY

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AUTOMATICALLY EXPANDING POCKET

Daniel J. Nash, Jersey City, N. J., assignor to
Nash Inc., Jersey City, N. J., a corporation of
New Jersey

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The present invention relates to pockets, and in particular it relates to automatically expandable pockets. While the present invention will be described and illustrated in relation to a small pocket in a wallet or billfold, this is only exemplary and the invention is to be limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

The main and associated objects of the present invention are the provision of a pocket which will automatically expand or flare open throughout its width when uncovered; wherein the expanding or distending means comprise the lining of the pocket; wherein the pocket is closed by cooperating fastening means, which secures the distending means in collapsed position within the pocket; and wherein a portion of the expanding or distending means comprise a wall of a hidden pocket.

In the drawings annexed hereto, forming a part hereof:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a billfold or wallet showing the pocket in accordance with the present invention in open condition;

Figure 2 is a vertical central transverse section thereof;

Figure 3 is a vertical central longitudinal section thereof; and

Figure 4 is a plan view of the spring component of the pocket in accordance with the present invention.

The pocket according to the present invention is indicated generally by reference numeral 11, and comprises a front wall member 12, and a rear wall member 14. These may be stitched or otherwise secured together adjacent their lower meeting edges as indicated at 15. Front wall 12 may, and in the form illustrated herein does, include side portions which are folded inwardly lengthwise thereof to form gussets as 16, 16, the terminal ends thereof being secured to rear wall 14 as by stitching 17, 17. Pocket 10 is thus seen to be open at the top thereof, as indicated by reference numeral 11.

A closure flap 18 is provided, having thereon a female component 20 of a snap fastener element, so located on flap 18 as to engage and grip the male component 22 of the snap fastener mounted on front wall 12 when flap 18 is folded thereover. Flap 18 is secured to rear wall 14 by a line of stitching 19, up from the lower edge 24 of flap 18, leaving a short flap 26 depending from the stitch line 19, the purpose and operation of which will be developed below.

Walls 12, 14 and gussets 16, 16 (which may be integral, as shown) are conventionally formed

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of a pliable material as leather, fabric, synthetic or the like, and when coins or other hard articles are disposed within the pocket, the walls thereof are bulged and buckled, oftentimes to such extent as to distort the shape of the pocket in an unsightly manner, and make it difficult to properly close flap 18 over front wall 12. In the present device, I have overcome and obviated this difficulty by the provision, location and securement of a spring member 40.

Spring member 40 comprises a thin, flat sheet of spring metal, stamped, die punched or otherwise formed of generally rectangular shape, Figure 4. A plurality of lengthwise extending slits 42, 42 are punched out of the spring body for reasons to be developed below, the slits 42, 42 being located in from the marginal edges thereof. The width of spring 40 is preferably slightly less than the width of the pocket into which it is to be disposed, and its length is substantially equal to the combined heights of the front and rear wall pocket components.

Spring 40 is bent transversely on itself across the slits 42, 42, along a line as 43 to form a front wing 44 and a rear wing 46, the wings being arched to curve outwardly and away from each other into V-shape, the legs of the V curving slightly from each other. A suitable opening 45 is punched through front wing 44. When spring 40 is disposed within pocket 10, front wing 44 thereof rests against front wall 12, and rear wing 46 rests against rear wall 14. A suitable rivet 48, passing through hole 45 and clinched to the male snap component 22, serves not only to locate and secure the male snap component 22, but also functions to position spring 40 properly inside pocket 10.

The upper edge 50 of front wing 44 of the spring 40 is aligned with the upper edge 52 of the pocket front wall 12, and the rear wing 46 of spring 40 is of such length as to extend upwards of the lower edge 24 of flap 26. The upper edge 54 of wing 46 is disposed beneath flap 26, as seen in Figures 2 and 3, and is held in such position by flap 26. Thus, when the respective parts are disposed and secured in the relative position shown in Figures 2 and 3, pocket 10 has one receptacle formed by spring 40 which has smooth surfaces and is sufficiently sturdy as to resist deformation when normally used items, as coins, etc., are disposed within. This receptacle, formed of relatively stiff material, protects wall 12 against distortion or deformation. Front wing 44 is fixed to pocket wall 12, by rivet 48, but rear wing 46 is free. Thus, when flap 26 is lifted, wing 46 may

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be swung away from rear wall 14 to define a second compartment between wing 46 and wall 14, as indicated at 60.

When snap fastener components 20, 22 are disengaged, the expansion of spring wing 44 from wing 46 causes pocket 11 to open, exposing the interior to ready access. The provision of slots 42, 42 permits spring 40 to flex longitudinally as desired. The slots 42, 42 are preferably quite narrow, to prevent small coins from dropping therethrough, or catching therein. When pocket 11 is to be closed, front wall 12 is pressed against the rear wall, flattening together spring wings 44, 46, and the snap components 20, 22 are engaged to retain wings 44, 46, substantially flatly against each other and against their normal biasing.

The provision of gussets 16, 16 and their in-folded positioning, disposes them, when pocket 11 is closed and wings 44, 46 are brought towards each other, between wings 44, 46 and particularly adjacent the fold line. The bulk of the gussets acts, more or less, as a point of levering between the spring wings and relieves the fold line 43 of stress and strain, increasing the life of spring 40 considerably.

While pocket 11 is shown to comprise a front wall 12 stitched onto a rear wall 14 which also forms the inner panel of a billfold, as B, this is merely exemplary. The pocket can be so formed, and within the scope of my invention, may be formed of two separate wall components. Further, the spring means, as 40, may be used in any pocket of coextensive area for automatically expanding same on release of closing means.

Having now described my invention, what I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. In a pocket having a front wall and a rear wall secured together along their bottom and side edges and open at the top, a V-shaped sheet of spring material disposed within the pocket, the legs of the sheet being substantially coextensive in area with the front and rear walls of the pocket, one leg of the V being permanently secured to the front wall of the pocket, the other leg of the V bearing against the rear wall of the pocket, the pocket having a pair of compartments therewithin, one compartment being formed by and between the legs of the V, and

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the other compartment being defined by the space between the rear wall and the leg of the V bearing thereagainst, the legs of the V-spring being biased to spread apart the free ends thereof.

2. A pocket comprising a rear wall, a front wall and closed sides, the rear and front walls being joined along their lower edges, said pocket having an opening therinto from the top thereof, a V-shaped spreader of flexible spring material disposed within the pocket, the apex of the V being disposed adjacent the lower edge of the pocket, the legs of the spreader normally diverging, and being substantially coextensive in area with the pocket front and rear walls, one leg of the spreader being permanently fastened to the pocket front wall by a snap fastener component for movement therewith, and a flap closure on the rear wall of the pocket having a snap fastener component cooperating with the fastener component on the front wall and its associated spreader leg to releasably close the pocket at the top thereof and swing the spreader legs flatly towards each other, whereby on disengagement of the closure flap from the front wall of the pocket the spreader legs automatically swing apart and move the entire upper edge of the front wall away from the entire upper edge of the rear wall, permitting full and free access into the pocket along the entire opening therinto.

DANIEL J. NASH.

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