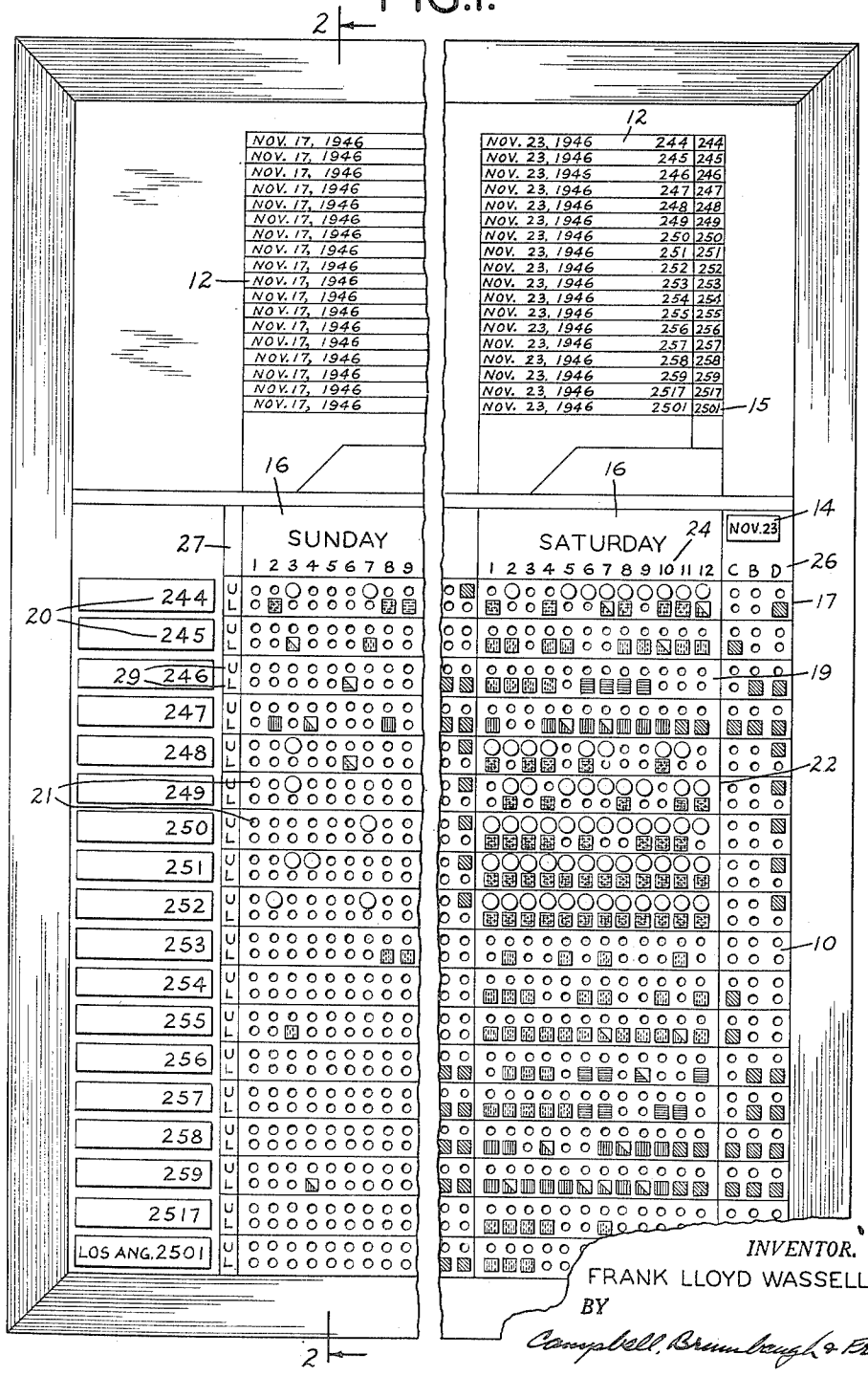
May 30, 1950 F. L. WASSELL 2,509,659

TRAVEL RESERVATION CONTROL MECHANISM

Filed March 12, 1947 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

FIG. I.



May 30, 1950 F. L. WASSELL 2,509,659

TRAVEL RESERVATION CONTROL MECHANISM

Filed March 12, 1947 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

FIG.2.

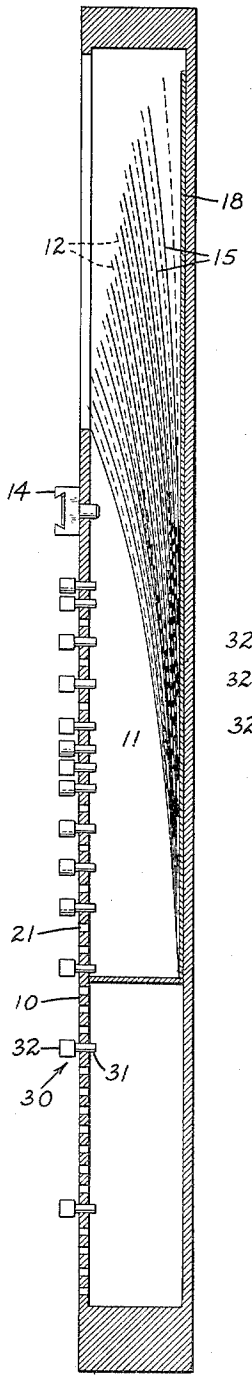
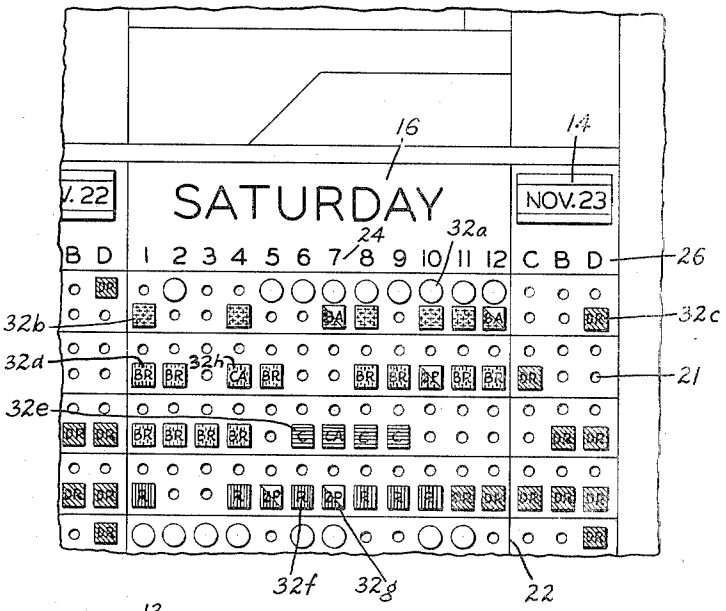


FIG.3.



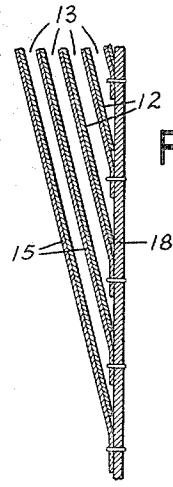


FIG.4.

INVENTOR.
FRANK LLOYD WASSELL
BY
Campbell, Brumbaugh & Free
HIS ATTORNEYS.

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TRAVEL RESERVATION CONTROL MECHANISM

Frank Lloyd Wassell, Westport, Conn., assignor to Georgene Parkin Wassell, Westport, Conn.

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1 Claim. (Cl. 116—136)

1

The present invention relates to a reservation control mechanism for maintaining a visible, running check on the type and availability of accommodations in transport vehicles, such as, trains, busses, aircraft, ships and the like; as well as hotels, tourist camps, theaters and the like.

Despite a persistent and urgent demand for a simple and effective means of maintaining up-to-the-minute information on available accommodations in the travel, hotel and amusement industries, it is common knowledge that the existing means of reservation control are antiquated and extremely wasteful of time and energy on the part of both the employees of such industries and the public in general. Thus, for example, a request for the reservation of a lower berth on a train scheduled to depart at some future date requires a ticket agent to select one group of car charts from a large number of groups and then to go through an average of say 7 or 8 of the car charts of a particular train to determine whether the requested space is available. In hotels a request for a future reservation usually requires an extended search through a reservation book listing the rooms reserved for future dates to determine in a negative manner whether any further reservations are available. These examples are indicative of the conditions that prevail in most industries handling reservations for accommodations or space in the future and result in long lines at ticket windows, exasperating delays on the telephone, last-minute cancellations due to duplication of reservations by employees handling them and consequently loss of good will by the industry concerned.

It has now been found that the difficulties and inconveniences that are now practically taken for granted in making and extending reservations for accommodations in trains, busses, aircraft, ships, hotels, tourist camps, theaters and the like can be avoided completely by employing a reservation control mechanism operable as hereinafter described. It will be evident from the description that the control device of this invention is applicable to uses in all industries that are concerned with the reservation of accommodations. It is to be understood, therefore, that although the invention will be described in detail only as it may be applied to control train reservations, it is not intended to limit the applicability of the invention solely to such use.

One object of the present invention is to provide means for visibly indicating at a glance the number, location, type, availability and reservation status of every accommodation normally available.

2

Another object of the invention is to provide a device which, by a very simple manipulation, will record changes made from time to time in the reservation status of the various accommodations.

These and other objects as well as the utility and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description and from the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is an elevation of a typical reservation control mechanism designed particularly for an eighteen-car transcontinental train scheduled to depart each day of the week;

Figure 2 is a cross section of Figure 1 taken through lines 2—2 looking in the direction of the arrows;

Figure 3 is a detailed view, on an enlarged scale, showing a portion of the device illustrated in Figure 1; and

Figure 4 is a detailed view on an enlarged scale showing another portion of the device illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

The reservation control device includes a display board 10 and a pocket 11 for receiving a number of car charts 12 equal to the number of cars that make up the train. These charts 12 may, if desired, be maintained in staggered relation as shown in Figures 1 and 2 by inserting them into a visible index containing vertical pockets 13 and formed, for example, by stapling a number of guide members 15 to a removable support 18, as shown in Figure 4. One pocket 13 is preferably provided for each car card 12. This visible index permits speed of accessibility to the individual car card and quick extraction of the car card from the index. It also permits extraction at departure time of the entire number of car cards with the index for the individual train for an individual day and the replacement of that set of car cards with a new set of car cards for the next date set up on the train.

Car charts 12 may be of the type conventionally employed by the railroads and of themselves form no part of this invention.

Display board 10 of the reservation control mechanism is divided into seven main vertical columns 16 labeled Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc., to indicate the dates of departure of the particular train for which this mechanism is used. The face of display board 10 is also provided with a number of horizontally disposed subdivisions 17 superimposed upon and extending across

columns 16 to form a number of rectangular areas 19. The number of horizontally disposed subdivisions are at least equal to the number of cars that make up the train and are labeled with the car numbers as shown at 20. Each of the rectangular areas 19 which, by reason of the designations applied to vertical columns 16 and horizontally disposed subdivisions 17, are reserved for a given car of said train leaving on a given date, is provided with a number of perforations 21 at least equal to the number of accommodations normally available on said car. Rectangular areas 19 may be further subdivided into two or more subdivisions, such as is accomplished by means of vertical line 22, to show the compartmentization of the cars into two or more sections, that is, for instance, a section of upper and lower berths and a section containing one or more compartments, bedrooms and drawing rooms.

As shown in Figures 1 and 3, each rectangular area 19 is preferably provided with two horizontal rows of perforations 21. The first twelve perforations, counting from left to right, in column 16 may be numbered consecutively as shown at 24 and the next three perforations may, for example, be labeled "C," "B" and "D" as shown at 26 to indicate compartments, bedrooms and drawing rooms, respectively. A narrow column 27 adjacent the car numbers 20 may be provided to bear the characters "U" and "L," as shown at 29, to designate "upper" and "lower," respectively. It will thus be seen, for example, that if car 244 is a standard sleeping car having twelve upper and lower berths as well as a compartment, a bedroom and a drawing room at one end of the car, the rectangular area 19 for that car will be provided with a top row of at least twelve perforations, that is, one for each upper berth, and a lower row of at least fifteen perforations, that is, twelve for the lower berths and three for the compartment, bedroom and drawing room.

Perforations 21 in display board 10 are adapted to receive indicator pegs 30 comprising a shank 31 adapted to be engaged in perforations 21 and a head 32 marked by its shape, color, or a printed designation or any combination thereof to indicate the type and/or availability of a given accommodation. Thus, for example, the indicator pegs to be used in connection with perforations 21 indicating ordinarily available upper berths may have round heads and be white in color as shown at 32*a*. Pegs 32*b* adapted to be inserted into the perforations designating ordinarily available lower berths may be made with square heads and be provided with a yellow color or the letter "L" or both. Pegs for drawing rooms, bedrooms, compartments and roomettes, for example, may likewise be made square, round, oval, polygonal, or any desired shape and/or distinctive color such as, for example, green, lavender, blue, and pink to designate the type of accommodation that is available. These are shown in Figure 3, for example, at 32*c*, 32*d*, 32*e* and 32*f*, respectively. The heads 32 of indicator pegs 30 may also be provided with a line of separation between two different colors to indicate that the spaces represented by the perforation in which they are inserted are reserved but not sold and may further be provided with number and alphabetical symbol to denote the time limitation on the reservation. Thus, for example, the designation "2P" superimposed on a head 32*g* having a triangular area colored pink would indicate that roomette 7 of car 247 on the train leaving Saturday, November 23, has been reserved until 2 p. m. If desired, pegs may also be provided with a marking such as "CA," as shown at 32*h*, to denote the cancellation of an accommodation that had been reserved earlier.

The operation of the reservation control mechanism is extremely simple and provides an instantaneous, visible check upon the number, type, location and reservation status of available accommodations. When the time for the taking of reservations on available space arrives, the ticket agent will consult car charts 12 and place the appropriate indicator pegs in the appropriate perforations to indicate the types and locations of accommodations represented by said indicator pegs available as passenger space. The ticket agent may then insert the car charts 12 in their individual pockets 13 and place the visible index in pocket 11. He need not consult them again until shortly before the scheduled departure of the particular train for which they are made out. Whenever a given accommodation is sold the ticket agent need merely remove the appropriate indicator peg and can, therefore, determine instantly and at any time prior to the departure of the train, the type, number and location of accommodations that remain available. Thus, for example, Figure 3 would indicate to the ticket agent that in car 244 of the particular train leaving Saturday, November 23, upper berths 2 and 5 to 12, lower berths 1, 4, 8, 10 and 11 and the drawing room are still available, that lowers 7 and 12 have been reserved until 8 a. m., and that the remaining accommodations have been sold. Shortly before train time the ticket agent will remove the visible index from pocket 11, mark up car cards 12 on the basis of the information visible on the display board 10 and hand them to the train conductor.

Thus, it is apparent that the device of this invention can be used without altering the existing and conventional practice as far as the car charts are concerned and that consequently the adoption by a railroad of the mechanism of this invention would not involve abandonment of the conventional use of such car charts.

It is also manifest from the foregoing description of the invention that the reservation control mechanism illustrated by way of example in the four figures of drawing is susceptible to numerous modifications, alterations and uses that will readily occur to those skilled in the art. Thus, for example, the shanks of the indicator pegs could be provided with or made of conductive material capable of engaging with electrical connections in or behind the surface of the display board and such connections could be hooked up with similar connections on other control boards serving other ticket agents so that the reservation status of each accommodation will be immediately perceptible to all ticket agents served by such boards. The perforations and pegs could be replaced by other indicating means such as rotatable cylinders or disks bearing appropriate designations and which may moreover be connected by electrical or other means with other control boards.

The arrangement of the indicator mechanism may also be varied considerably depending upon the purpose it is designed to serve. Thus, for example, an airline would find it appropriate to substitute flight numbers for the car numbers shown in Figure 1 and each flight number may designate a horizontally disposed subdivision containing four horizontal rows of perforations to

simulate the seating arrangement on some of the larger passenger planes. If it is desired to use the mechanism for indicating the reservation of hotel rooms, each horizontal subdivision may, for example, be designated with a floor number on which the rooms individually designated by the perforations and indicator pegs, are situated.

The foregoing suggested modifications and alterations are but a few of the many that will readily occur to those skilled in the art upon reading the description of this invention and it is to be understood that all such alterations, modifications and changes as come within the scope of the appended claim are intended to be included within the invention.

I claim:

A travel reservation control mechanism for maintaining a visible running check on the number, reservation status, type and relative location of passenger accommodations in transport vehicles comprising, a control board having a plurality of vertical columns on its face, said columns being subdivided into horizontally disposed subdivisions forming a plurality of rectangular areas, a plurality of groups of pockets having openings and formed to hold charts in progressively higher positions in the face of the board and adjacent the respective vertical columns, each chart indicating the number, reservation status, type and relative location of the accommodations that are normally available in one of said vehicles and visibly identifying a given vehicle, a given chart being assignable to a given vehicle, a given area being assignable to the given vehicle and corresponding in position in the column to the position of the corresponding chart in the group of charts, perforations in the face of the control board arranged within the given rectangular area to indicate the number and relative location in the given vehicle of the accommodations that are normally available, the indications provided by the perforations arranged within said area corresponding to the indications as to the number and relative location of accommodations normally available in the given vehicle as indicated on the given chart in the pocket, and indicator pegs adapted to be positioned removably in said perforations, said pegs, in cooperation with the perforations in the given rectangular area being adapted to record visibly the number, reservation status, type and relative location in the given vehicle as permanently indicated on the given chart.

FRANK LLOYD WASSELL.

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