J. R. LARACY.

BAGGAGE CHECK.

APPLICATION FILED DEC. 16, 1918.

1,401,338. Patented Dec. 27, 1921.

Fig. 1.

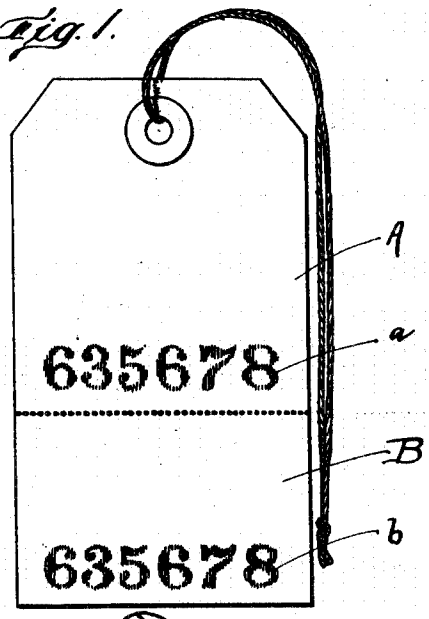
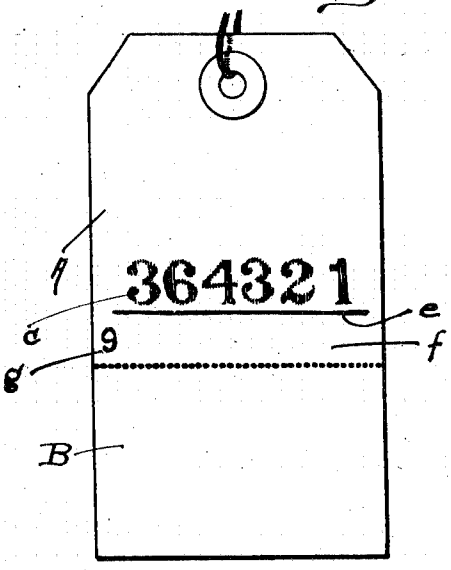


Fig. 2.



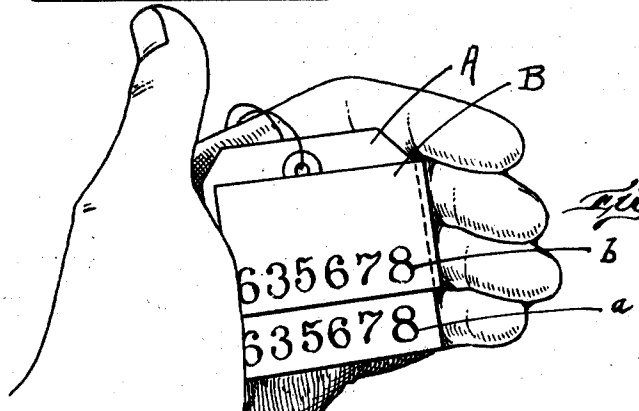


Fig. 3.

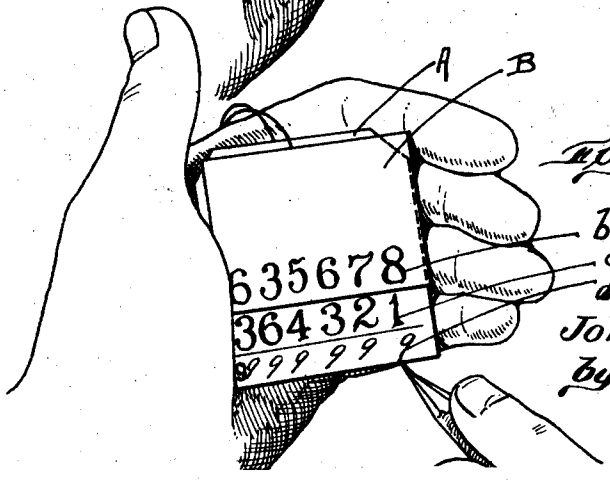


Fig. 4.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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BAGGAGE-CHECK.

1,401,338. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Dec. 27, 1921.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN R. LARACY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Dorchester, in the county of Suffolk and State of Massachusetts, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Baggage-Checks, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to improvements in baggage checks. More particularly it relates to the construction of claim checks for baggage in such manner as to guard against erroneous delivery resulting from the mismatching of numbers. In the baggage system at present in universal use in the United States, the claim check is in two parts, one part being attached to the piece of baggage in the possession of the carrier, and the other being held by the passenger, bearing the same distinguishing number, so that by comparison of the numbers at destination the baggage claim is identified. The numbers necessarily run to high figures; and at any baggage delivering room, especially in large cities where travelers arrive from widely separate parts of the country, the numbers on checks from different points of origin may sometimes run close together. Moreover, the numbers coming from the same source on the same day lie rather close together. In either case, the agents charged with the identification of the checks by comparison of separated portions make mistakes despite all care, and despite corrections made in many instances on the spot by the person claiming, so that owing to this mis-matching, baggage is wrongly delivered. This may happen without conscious wrong, as when delivery is made to a local transportation agency in the absence of the owner. Two parties are thus inconvenienced. Claims against the transportation company usually result. Such claims, while few in proportion to the total number of pieces of baggage handled, amount in the aggregate to very considerable sums each year, and constitute what is probably the principal defect in the present system.

It is the object of the present invention to provide means by which such mis-matching can be avoided. Further objects of the invention are that such means shall be simple, so as to be workable by all sorts and conditions of men, as found in the baggage handling service throughout the country; shall be inexpensive, so as not to add materially to the present cost of checks, which in the very great majority of cases serve perfectly without a mis-match being made; and to do this in such an effective manner that mis-matching through the mental error of the baggage man, in concluding that the presented check has the same number as the check on the piece of baggage, shall be in a practical sense absolutely eliminated. Many efforts have been made in this direction, but all, so far as I am aware, either add seriously to the expense, or to the complication, or both. The error may occur from hasty inattention, or from mental fatigue. The present invention is calculated to guard against a mismatch resulting from either the condition or the temperament of the agent.

The preferred manner of accomplishing the objects of the invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, but variation may be made.

In the drawings,

Figure 1 is a face view of a baggage check embodying the invention;

Fig. 2 is a rear view of the same;

Fig. 3 is a view of the two portions of the check, matched; and

Fig. 4 is a view of the same, with the test applied.

Referring to the drawings, A indicates in diagram the carrier's or baggage portion and B the passenger's or claim portion of a complete baggage check ready to be put into use. It will be observed that in addition to the name and station of the issuing carrier, the route, the destination, and other matter which may be contained therein, the check contains the customary numbers, *a*, *b*, one on each portion, which are identical for each complete check, but which differ from the number on each other complete check, and which serve as the usual means of determining that these two portions belong together when one is presented by the passenger at destination, or elsewhere along the route. The feature of chief prominence in connection with the invention consists in the provision of a test number, *c*, printed preferably on the carrier's portion of the check a little distance above the bottom of its back with a line *e* and a space *f* below it. It is a selected number which is very different in appearance, but which, when combined with the number *b* on the passenger's portion of the check, by simple addition produces a test total which proves the true

identity. This test may be carried out in various ways. The method which I at present prefer is illustrated; and the application of the test is shown in Fig. 4, from which it appears that by the simple process of placing the two numbers, the identifying or check number *b* and the test number *c*, one over the other, and adding them, a test total *d* results, from which it is at once recognized that the two compared parts of the check belong together because of the remarkable fact that every figure in the total thus produced is a 9. Thus, the check numbers may be each 6 3 9 5 2 8; and the test number 3 6 0 4 7 1. Being thus arranged, the test proceeds as follows:—

6 3 9 5 2 8
3 6 0 4 7 1

9 9 9 9 9 9

If it happened that a passenger's check presented did not actually tally with the check on the piece of baggage, even though the baggage man should read it as tallying, and under the present system would deliver the piece upon the claim made by the passenger, that fact would be brought out sharply upon the application of the test by turning over the baggage check, placing the two portions together, and adding them. Thus if the number on the check presented were 6 3 9 2 5 8, which is an illustration of a sort of variation which occasionally leads to a mistaken delivery of baggage, especially by a man who is tired or whose attention is more or less distracted, the application to the test number would proceed as follows:—

6 3 9 2 5 8
3 6 0 4 7 1

9 9 9 7 2 9

The result sharply calls attention to the actual but unnoticed difference between the number on the baggage and the number on the claim check presented.

Practically nothing is added to the cost of the baggage checks by this method, if suitable mechanism is used in their manufacture, for the numbers are printed on the face as usual, and the number which is printed on the back can be printed at the same time that the other printing is placed on the back of the check.

Although "9" is the key to the above illustration, and is, I believe, preferable because it permits the use of all possible numbers, and because the test result is most clearly and simply produced thereby, yet other figures may be used as the test number. In that case, however, the instructions for applying the test cannot be stated quite so simply, for when the digit in the check number is larger than the key, for example, the addition applied by the test produced a total larger than 10 and the rule has to be that one observes merely the unit figures resulting from the addition, and ignores the 10's which would ordinarily be carried into the addition of the next column. Thus, using the same check number with a test key of "3":—

Check number	6	3	9	5	2	8
Test number	7	0	4	8	1	5
	$^{1}3$	3	$^{1}3$	$^{1}3$	3	$^{1}3$

Or, the rule might be that ordinary and regular addition produces the test result, thus:—

Check number	6	3	9	5	2	8
Test number	6	9	3	8	0	5
	$^{1}3$	3	3	3	3	3

Speaking theoretically, it is not at all necessary that the test result be a number in which all figures are alike. The test number can be any number, and the test total can be printed or indicated on one part or the other. Hence, even when this total is not self-verifying, it can always be told whether the total produced by adding the check number to the test number produces the proper total. However, it is preferred for practical reasons to use a test number which gives a test total that is self-verifying, as for example, one in which all figures are the same. And in such a case it is not necessary that the test total, or even the key to it, be printed as at *g* (Fig. 2), for it appears automatically what it is, when attempt is made to add to the test number any check number, correct or erroneous, which is close enough to the correct check number to be mistaken for it. If correct, the proof will be clear; if incorrect, attention will be directed to the disparity, and the mis-matching that was imminent will be prevented.

The foregoing may be in addition to visual indications already well known, such as letters of the alphabet, or series numbers, or other devices, to distinguish different series of numbers, or to distinguish checks emanating from different traffic centers, which may be using simultaneously checks whose numbers run somewhat the same, in case it is preferred not to rely merely on the name of the source for that distinction.

Although herein referred to only as used for baggage, it is obvious that the invention applies to any sort of identification device whose operation depends on the comparison of the two numbers.

I claim as my invention:—

1. An identification check having two separable parts marked with identical check numbers; one of said parts being marked

also with a test number; said test number being such that when added to the check number it makes a predetermined test total.

2. An identification check having two separable parts marked with identical check numbers; one of said parts being marked also with a test number; said test number being such that when added to the check number it makes a self-verifying test total.

3. An identification check having two separable parts marked with identical check numbers one of said parts being marked also with a test number; said test number being such that when added to the check number it makes a test total in which the figures under the columns added are all alike.

4. An identification check having two separable parts marked with identical check numbers; one of said parts being marked also with a test number; said test number being such that when added to the check number it makes a test total in which all figures are 9's.

5. An identification check having two separable parts marked with identical check numbers; one of said parts being marked also with a test number; said test number being such that when added to the check number it makes a predetermined test total; one of the numbers which is to be added being located near the edge of its part of the check; and one of the parts having a space adjacent to its number which is to be added, whereby the two check parts may be positioned, one overlying the other, with their numbers adjacent to each other, and with said adjacent space in position to receive the total resulting from the addition of the numbers on the two check parts.

Signed at Boston, Massachusetts, this eleventh day of December, 1918.

JOHN R. LARACY.