C. C. BUCHANAN.

INDEX OF LAND TITLES AND OTHER RECORDS.

APPLICATION FILED NOV. 18, 1913.

1,128,100.

Patented Feb. 9, 1915.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

FIG. 1

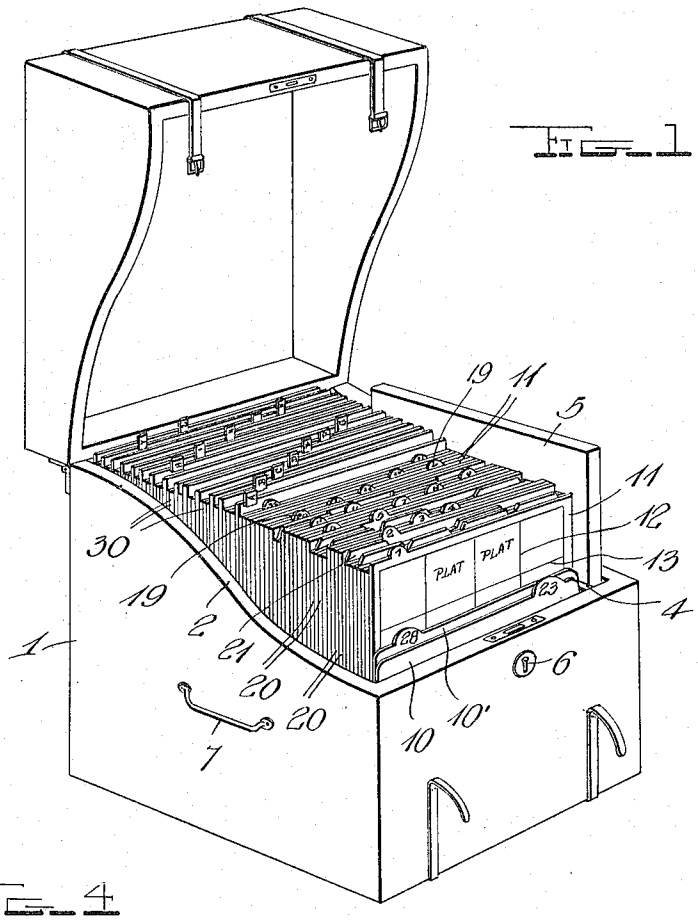
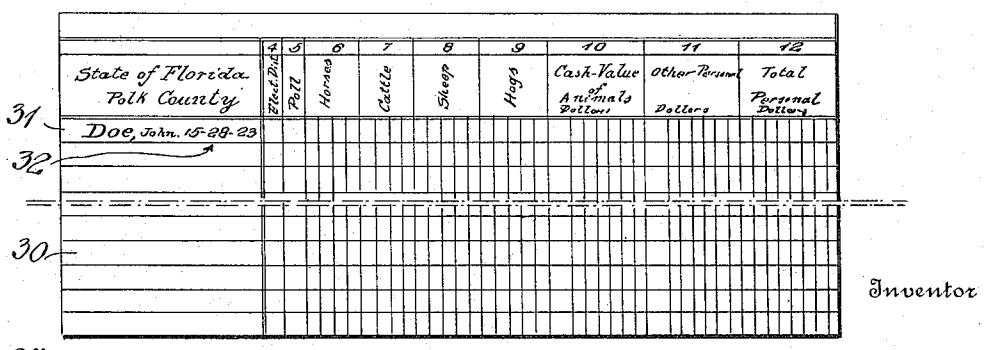


FIG. 4



Witnesses

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2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

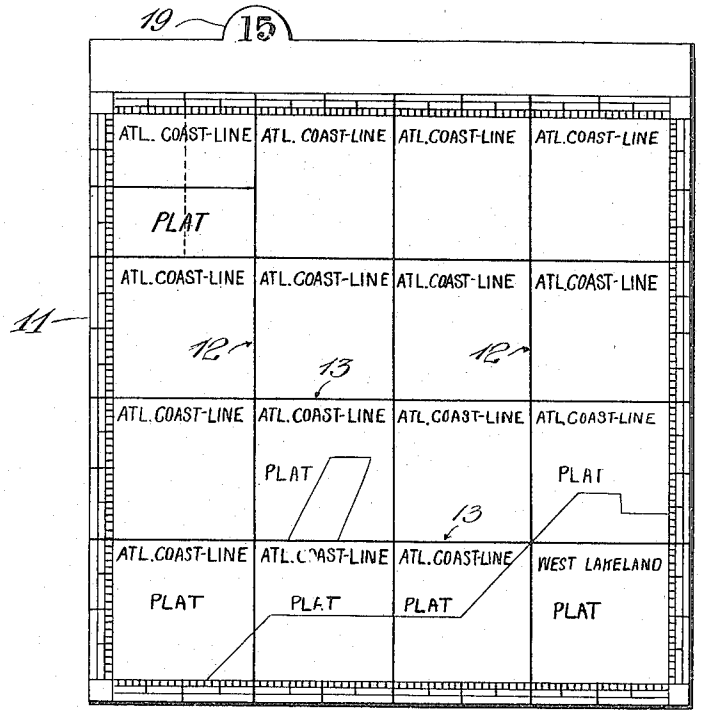


FIG. 2.

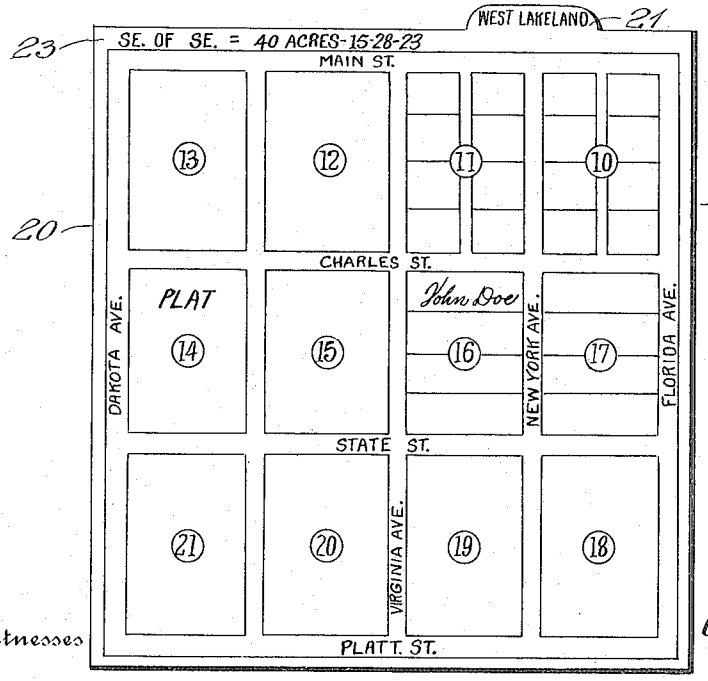


FIG. 3.

Witnesses

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

CLINTON C. BUCHANAN, OF BARTOW, FLORIDA, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-THIRD TO JOHN J. BOYNTON AND ONE-THIRD TO SOLON G. WILSON, BOTH OF BARTOW, FLORIDA.

INDEX OF LAND-TITLES AND OTHER RECORDS.

1,128,100. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Feb. 9, 1915.

Application filed November 18, 1913. Serial No. 801,713.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, CLINTON C. BUCHANAN, a citizen of the United States, residing at Bartow, in the county of Polk and State of Florida, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Indexes of Land-Titles and other Records; and I do declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

This invention relates to card indexes, and its object is to produce a system whereby the tax assessor or other proper official may keep on cards rather than in books the information relative to townships, sections, and smaller sub-divisions of land, and the various owners and residents occupying the same. The system described below is capable of expansion as homestead entries are located, residents move into the community, large tracts are sub-divided, or farms or smaller tracts are divided up into lots and parcels; because I start out with thirty six cards indicating the sections in each township and keep the information on these cards as long as possible or until the subdivisions become so fine that these cards are crowded, and then divisional cards are inserted in the system behind the section cards and each typifying a sixteenth or other subdivision thereof so that the finer sub-divisions of land can be drawn on these divisional cards on a larger scale. Manifestly the information so carded will be useful to the county surveyor, and in different communities it will be useful to other officials. The index which is used with this card system and whereof a page is illustrated herewith, I may also keep on the card system and on cards of the same size so that all may be stored within uniform boxes; and all such cards may well be twelve inches square more or less, each line devoted to a person giving considerable information such as county and State officials need. For instance the index card may be employed to record the person's nativity, color, age, politics, worth in real or personal property or both, and even detail as to the personal property itself. Strictly speaking the index card gives the name of the resident and numbers by which may be found every card containing plots of the ground he owns or occupies, but as the index card is rather large and has considerable space opposite each name, these other data may be recorded thereon.

My preferred manner of carrying out the invention is set forth in the following specification and shown in the drawings attached, wherein—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the entire card system located within its box or casing. Fig. 2 is a plan view of one of the section cards, and Fig. 3 a plan view of one of the divisional cards. Fig. 4 is a plan view of one of the index cards which is used in connection with this system.

In the embodiment of my invention herewith illustrated, the numeral 1 designates a box whose sides are by preference cut off on ogee curves 2 as shown so that the cover (which is preferably hinged at the rear) will disclose more of the contents of the box at the front of the latter than at the rear when said cover is thrown back as illustrated in Fig. 1. On the assumption that the cards forming the gist of this invention are about twelve inches square, the box will preferably be a little wider than it is deep, and a partition 4 may well be fixed across the box from front to rear near one side of the same so as to form a small compartment wherein may be stored a drawing board as indicated at 5, and possibly instruments not illustrated. This box may be of wood, although in some cases it might be of metal. If the card system is to contain the records of all the land within a State, doubtless one box will be too small and the same may be duplicated. To prevent tampering with the contents, the box may have a suitable lock whose key-hole is indicated at 6, and in order that the box may be lifted from its shelf or place of storage it may be provided with handles 7. If each box is substantially cubical, its capacity will be such that it will contain the records for several townships; and for the purposes of this specification I may assume that one box will contain all the records of a State—especially at first before the land becomes divided and sub-divided to any great extent—and I will confine this specification accordingly. I have referred below to an index, and when the number of the record cards is small, the index may be kept in the box with them, whereas when the record

cards grow in number so that eventually they occupy several boxes, one of the latter may be devoted solely to index purposes.

Foremost in the group of cards illustrated in Fig. 1 are "title cards" 10 and 10' which might be said to be the equivalent of the title page of a book, and these cards have containing figures the numbers of the base line and range. In the present illustration, the base line is 28 and the range is 23. Immediately behind the title cards will be thirty-six cards 11, each having a tab 19 as usual with card indexes, the tabs being arranged in stepped relation to each other in one line or more lines across the upper edges of the cards as indicated and bearing numerals from 1 to 36. The township is therefore divided into thirty-six divisions, and each card 11 designates one square mile. Each card 11 is ruled into sixteen squares by upright lines 12 and cross lines 13, and of necessity each square contains forty acres. When the territory is first opened to colonization large tracts of land including whole townships may become the property of one person, firm, or corporation; and in the example herewith illustrated in Fig. 2 almost all or we may say all of the township was allotted originally to the Atlantic Coast Line. Accordingly the recorder so marks the sixteen squares on his card. If the land should have been allotted in forty-acre tracts to—let us say—sixteen different homesteaders, the name of each would be marked in his respective square. It will not be necessary to draw anything on the cards if the land is allotted on lines which follow those in which the territory is laid off; but if it should so happen that the parcels are allotted on irregular lines, the recorder will mark these lines on the card and inscribe the plots accordingly.

We may now assume that time passes, and eventually the owner (herein the Atlantic Coast Line) sells off some property lying in one or more of the squares on a certain card. As soon as this occurs the recorder marks the square wherein the title is changed, as by a suitable legend or rubber stamp containing, possibly, the word "Plat" as shown in Fig. 2. This is to indicate that the name of the grantee does not appear on this card. Then he makes out another card 20 as shown in Fig. 3, and which by preference is of the same size as but of a different color than the card illustrated in Fig. 2; and this divisional card has a tab 21 at its upper edge which by preference is somewhat longer than the tab on the other card, so that if desirable, he may write on the tab 21 the name of the divisional which is here shown as "West Lakeland." This subdivision card is in effect an enlargement of the square on the main card in Fig. 2, and in its upper margin it is inscribed with a legend 23 which in the present illustration reads "SE. of SE., 40 acres, 15, 28, 23." This legend obviously indicates that the sub-division is the southeast quarter section of the southeast quarter, containing forty acres, and situated in township 15, which is on base line 28, and range line 23; and if the card should become displaced its proper position can readily be found by reading this legend. In the illustration herewith the divisional card 20 is part of the tract which is owned by the West Lakeland Co., and they have divided it into squares which they have numbered from 10 to 21 inclusive and certain of their squares have been sub-divided into lots. One of the latter in square 16 has been sold to John Doe, and the recorder so marks it. This card 20 is then inserted into the box immediately behind the section card 11, and in the present instance he will also have to make out other divisional cards corresponding with all the quarter sections on card 15 marked with the rubber stamp or other legend, and provides all said other cards with their individual legends 23. If the Atlantic Coast Line sells an irregular tract as indicated on section card number 15, it will require five divisional cards 20 to carry the land which they have sold the West Lakeland Co., although in some of the quarter sections the land owned by the Lakeland Co., is only a small fraction of the land indicated by the divisional card. In the second square on the third line of the section card appears another outline marked "Plat" which indicates that the Atlantic Coast Line has sold a plat in this square to someone, and the same course will be followed by the recorder in making out a divisional card to show its ownership. The first square in the divisional card 20 and in the second row thereof, which the West Lakeland Co. has numbered 14, also bears the word "Plat" in Fig. 3, although without any lines indicating that it has been sub-divided into lots, but as the word or rubber stamp "Plat" or whatever legend or symbol is used, always indicates that a card follows to which reference is made for details, in tracing a title one must look for a divisional or in this case a subdivisional card, following the card 20 for details of information as to this square No. 14. Let us assume that this square becomes very popular and is sold immediately from one person to another, or that it falls into litigation and passes from the hands of one person to another—the idea being that the ownership changes so often that it is impossible to keep it on the card 20 within the outline indicated by square No. 14. In that case, or if this should be the condition with respect to any of the finer sub-divisions such as the single lot owned by John Doe, the use of a larger sub-divisional card will be obvious so that

the recorder can cross off the name of the seller and substitute the name of the purchaser with or without the date of transfer and other data such as he may desire to keep. In communities which have been settled for many years, and especially which grow up into towns or cities where the change of ownership is frequent and the record becomes eventually voluminous, it may be wise from time to time to start anew, recording on the sectional cards 11 and the divisional cards 20 (and on the sub-divisional cards if they exist) the names of the owners of all parcels of land at this time, and then file away the previous card system for record in case the searcher cares to go back to the initial grant from the Government.

I have spoken above of the recorder of deeds, although it is my intention that this record be kept by the assessor of taxes. In some communities the two offices are held by a single man, or if there be two officers they work in conjunction with each other, and possibly also with the county or State surveyor. While my invention possesses all of the functions and advantages which arise from the use of the card system in place of the books wherein records of this kind have been kept from time immemorial, or in place of the more modern books with insertible leaves, a striking feature of my invention consists in the fact that it provides a check against fraud or mistakes in several ways. For instance, it is impossible for John Doe to deed his lot to Richard Roe, and then later to deed the same lot to someone else without the fact being discovered, because when the proper officer comes to record the transfer he crosses out the words "John Doe" and writes the words "Richard Roe" (if there be space which we will assume for purposes of this illustration), and on the next transfer of this lot when he comes to cross out the word "John Doe" he finds that the ownership is now in Richard Roe. Hence the deed from John Doe to the third party is a fraudulent deed and he takes steps accordingly. Again let us assume that the Atlantic Coast Line disposes of the south half of the quarter section indicated in the upper left hand corner of the card 11, and the recorder or assessor so marks it as shown in Fig. 2. Later the Atlantic Coast Line disposes of the north half of the same quarter section, but in preparing the deed a mistake is made and instead of "north half" they write it "east half." Then when the recorder or assessor comes to indicate it on the card, he would be compelled to draw a vertical line as indicated by dots in Fig. 2, and immediately he discovers the error which has been made in the deed and takes steps accordingly, so as to prevent double deeding or transferring of property and attendant difficulties and litigation. If this officer be working in conjunction with the other proper officer or officers, he may prevent the recording of the words of the deed in the books which are usually kept for that purpose, and doubtless both the grantor and grantee would be glad to have the mistake corrected before it has become too late. Again where the land lies within a State requiring a property qualification for the franchise, the proper officer may see at a glance over these cards which citizens own sufficient property to entitle them to vote, and the matter of the age, residence, poll tax, and other details bearing on this subject may be kept in the index as described below. Again, although not illustrated in the drawings, it is possible that this improved card system could be used by the proper officer to designate improvements on the land, such as stores, dwellings, out houses, and other structures erected by the hand of man; if the State has a geologist, an expert on forestry, or other officers whose duties refer to the nature of the land, its soil and topography, the manner of its cultivation, etc., they also could indicate their data on these cards. Finally my invention is cheap in manufacture, the cards are easily stored and may be kept in a fire-proof vault, they are readily accessible and cannot become lost if furnished with the legend indicated at 23, and they possess the merit of expansibility which is ever present in the card index system.

The index used in connection with this improved system is also illustrated in Fig. 1, and one card 30 therefrom is shown in Fig. 4. As usual this index card is ruled with transverse lines on which the names of the parties indexed are written—here shown as Doe, John, in the upper line if we assume that this is the "D" card of the index—and on the same line with the name are figures which in the present case are 15, 28, 23, which means as we know that on section card No. 15, of the township which is on base line 28 and range line 23 will be found some record with reference to John Doe. Turning to this card in the illustration herewith we find that it has been sub-divided and is marked with the word "Plat," and therefore we must search the divisional cards to find John Doe's property. It may be that in time nearly or quite all of the section cards will have divisional cards behind them, and then the numerals in the index lines can be amplified to designate not only the section cards but the divisional cards, and the searcher will be directed at once to the latter. The index card 30 therefore has a wide column for the name as indicated at 31, and the reference numbers can be writ-

ten in the same column as indicated at 32 or may have a column of their own; and as above suggested, as this card is quite wide, it may be well to rule it with a number of other columns opposite the name 31 so that details with respect to this property owner can well be kept thereon. In the illustration herewith these columns are headed with legends indicating the data which they contain, and I do not describe the same and do not wish to be limited in this respect. If the officers of a State or county work in conjunction with each other, it is quite possible that this so-called index may be made out by some other officer than the tax assessor or the land recorder. For the purpose of description we may assume that a person's name will be inscribed on this index as soon as the infant is born. The next data appearing on the public record will be with respect to schooling, and a column for this might be provided; the next would be with respect to the franchise if the person recorded were a male, and a column or columns for this purpose may be provided; and eventually the person recorded may own real or personal property, for which space is left as shown. As soon however, as the person recorded comes into possession of real property, whether by inheritance, purchase, or coming of age, reference numerals will appear at the point 32 and proper inscriptions are made on the cards 11 or 20. In the drawings I have shown the index cards 30 as separated by divisional or other cards carrying index tabs which will by preference be of leather, my purpose obviously being to prevent wearing and soiling the index cards themselves by repeated handling.

I do not wish to be confined to the size, material, or details with respect to the box; the cards may be of any suitable grade of stock, and by preference will nicely fit the box so that they can be removed and replaced without wearing them excessively, and the lines upon them may be printed, lithographed, or in some sections omitted entirely as where one person owns immense tracts of land. The tabs on the cards and on the divisional cards between the index may be formed in any approved manner. If several groups of cards indicating three or four townships are kept in one box, I would by preference use cards of different colors, and the divisional cards will doubtless always be of heavier stock than the others. I have only suggested that a rubber stamp be used for the word "Plat" to indicate that a divisional card 20 follows the section card 11 so marked, but any suitable means may be employed for giving this information. The margin of the divisional card shown in Fig. 3 is rather small and blank, whereas that of the sectional card shown in Fig.2 is marked with a scale so that lines across the card and its divisions can be drawn with ease; these and other details may be left to the manufacturer and form no essential feature of the present invention.

What is claimed as new is:

In a card index, the combination of a basic card indicating one square mile and having thereon two series of lines extending across its face in planes at right angles to each other, the lines of each series being arranged in spaced relationship and dividing said cards into four rows of four blocks, each of the latter indicating forty acres, scales of measurement situated at the extremities of the lines and circumscribing the card, a companion card indicative of one of said forty acre sections of the basic card, and having thereon means to indicate the location of the forty acre section on the basic card of which it is representative, the subsequent subdivisions of said forty acre section, together with the grantees of the latter, of a title card coöperating with the other cards and having thereon means for imparting information as to the number of the township designated by the basic and companion cards together with the base and range line of the same substantially as and for the purpose set forth.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand in presence of two subscribing witnesses.

CLINTON C. BUCHANAN.

Witnesses:
C. E. HUNT,
N. L. COLLAMER.

Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C."