The present invention relates to billiard or pool cues, and more particularly to a means for protecting them against use by unauthorized persons.

The present invention has been applied for patent to the United States Patent Office an application for patent for a Cue Lock under Serial Number 222,850, under date of April 25, 1951. At the present, the games of billiards and pool are usually played indoors in open places, and the cues with which the games are played are kept in racks, so that the cues are available to the playing public for individual selection. Since such cues are made in various weights, lengths, diameters, and degrees of taper, and have tips with individual characteristics such as degree of hardness, arc of crown, and thickness, it may be readily seen that although all cues are usable, each discriminates player may prefer his own particular type of cue. The result is that the room operators encourage their regular customers to label their preferred cues with their names, and the room operators thereupon attempt to keep such labeled cues isolated from availability to the general public. This is often done by providing locked racks or chests of drawers, but since such racks or drawers are usually operable by a single key, and since the key is usually available to anyone having a private cue, the customers often use cues which have not been assigned to them individually. This unauthorized use of a cue may be done for experimental purposes, through curiosity, or the individual's private cue may be out of the rack for repositioning, so he uses another player's private cue rather than selecting one from the unlocked racks which are available to the general public.

Another type of lock rack has been provided in which the cue is locked in the rack by locking the butt end of the cue in a lock fixed to the rack. This type of lock usually requires that scene decoration or alteration be made to the end of the cue in order that the lock may be attached, and the locks are permanently fastened to the rack. Also too many players prefer to own their own cues rather than depend upon procuring a suitable one from the operator of the parlor.

Since billiard cues are made of wood, they are prone to become best if left leaning against a wall or lying flat in a drawer. It is a well established fact that the best way to keep a cue straight is to suspend it from the tip, so that its butt end hangs downward.

The principal object of the present invention is to overcome the above objections by providing a cue guard or lock that is locked on the cue adjacent its tip end, and when so installed prevents the cue from being used in play. Cues thus protected may be stored at random without fear of their being used by an unauthorized person.

A further object is to provide a guard for the purposes set forth, which is sufficiently small and light in weight that it may be readily carried in a man's pocket when not installed upon the cue.

Another object is to provide a cue guard so designed that each one of the cues is an individual lock and consequently an individual key.

An additional object is to provide a cue guarding mechanism of this class, which may also act as a hanger by which the cue may be suspended in a vertical position from a wall hook or other wall projection.

Still another object is to provide a cue guard that may be used upon any conventional cue without the cue being altered, deformed, or any change made thereon.

Yet another object is to provide a cue guard for locking, which is comparatively cheap to manufacture.

Other objects will be apparent from the following description when taken in conjunction with the accompanying single sheet of drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is an elevational view showing the device of the present invention operatively installed upon a billiard cue;

Figure 2 is an enlarged fragmentary elevational view of the tip-end portion of a conventional billiard cue;

Figure 3 is a fragmentary view of Fig. 2 but showing a portion of the cue in cross-section;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a part of the device;

Figure 5 is an enlarged elevational view of the device installed on a cue tip;

Figure 6 is a top view of the device taken substantially along line 6—6 of Fig. 5, with cue removed; and,

Figure 7 is a cross-sectional view partly in elevation, taken substantially along line 7—7 of Fig. 6.

Like characters of reference designate like parts in those figures of the drawings in which they occur.

In the drawings:

The reference numeral 1 indicates a vertical wall, having a horizontal hook or bracket 2 rigidly anchored thereto.

The reference numeral 3 indicates, as a whole, a conventional pool or billiard cue having an enlarged butt-end portion 4 and a smaller tip-end portion 5. As is common with cues of this class, the tip-end portion of the cue 3 has a bone or hard-fiber ferrule 12 which is tubular in form, and which is disposed around and is cemented rigidly to an upstanding stud 7 which forms the end of the cue, per se. The cue 3 and stud 7 are integrally, and are both made of hard wood. A leather tip 8 is cemented to the outer end of the ferrule 6, in a conventional manner.

When the ferrule 6 is placed upon the stud 7, the end 9 of the ferrule 6 does not make a tight seal with the shoulder 10 of the tip-end portion 5, Fig. 3, for the purpose of forming a groove therebetween. It is into this narrow annular groove 11, Fig. 3, which is exaggerated to show more clearly, that a part of the device of the present invention fits therewith to make it operable.

The reference numerals 11 through 14 indicate conventional structure, and the elements indicated are portions of the device, per se, of the cue lock constituting the present invention. The elements constitute, in stand, structure with which the device of the present invention is associated.

A piece of spring steel, preferably, is formed into a small ring 12 with the metal disposed edge-wise forming an inner wall 15 and outer wall 16, which are perpendicular to the wall 15 of the ring 12. The edge-wise thickness of the knife-like projections 17 and 18 is somewhat narrower than the height of the groove 11, and their width is less than the permitted depth of the groove 11 into which they are intended to fit. The diameter of the ring 12 is of a size that when in open position, as shown in Fig. 4, the knife-like projections will pass freely over the periphery of the ferrule 6, and the spacing of the ends 13 and 14 is such that when the ring 12 is compressed or closed, the inner wall 15 will contiguously surround the tip-end portion 5. A slidable recess 19 is made in the periphery of the wall 16, centrally located opposite the projections 17 and 18, for the purposes more fully explained hereinbelow.

Referring to Fig. 6, the reference numeral 20 indicates, as a whole, a conventional key or ward, typifying a conventional key operated body 21 and a conventional U-shaped shackle 22, with a curved portion 23. It is preferred that the lock be small for convenience in handling and carrying but the shackle must have an opening sufficiently large enough to receive the ring 12 in its open position. The ring 12 is attached within the shackle
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3. In parallel relation therewith, by a screw 24 through a perforation 25 in one side of the ring 12, with one of the projections 18 adjacent the curved portion 23 of the shackle 22, is provided with a rigid inwardly projecting conical protrusion 26, with its tip seated within the recess 19 opposite the projection 18. To the outer surface of the curved portion 23 is attached an eye-screw 27 by which the device and cue may be hung on the bracket 2, Fig. 1. Centrally located on the lock body 21, between the legs of the shackle 22, is a rigid inwardly protruding conical portion 28.

As an alternate embodiment the ring 12 may be made of any suitable metal and in halves as by a transverse cut through its wall adjacent the perforation 25. Each half of the ring 12 is then rigidly attached to the inner surface of the curved portion 23 of the shackle 22, at the position of the protrusion 26 and to the upper part of the lock body at the position of the protrusion 28, respectively, each half so disposed that the projections 17 and 18 are longitudinally aligned.

The device, as shown in Fig. 6, is placed upon the tip-end 5 of a cue 3, Fig. 5, with the projections 17 and 18 aligned with the annular groove 11, and the lock 20 is snapped shut which pushes the protrusion 28 into the recess 19 opposite the projection 17, and compresses the ring 12. As the ring is compressed, the projections 17 and 18 enter the groove 11, Fig. 7. With the device thus in place, the cue 3 may be hung upon any suitable hook or bracket 2. When it is desired to use the cue, the lock is unlocked by the mating key and as the shackle 22 snaps open, the spring steel ring 12 regains its normal position with its ends 13 and 14 in spaced apart relation and the device may be removed from the cue end. Likewise with the alternate embodiment, the knife-like projections 17 and 18 enter the annular groove 11 when the lock is closed around the tip-end of a cue, and is released therefrom when the lock is unlocked.

Obviously the invention is susceptible to some change or alteration without defeating its practicability, and I therefore do not wish to be confined to the preferred embodiment shown in the drawings and described herein, further than I am limited by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. In combination with a billiard or pool cue having a ferrule adjacent its tip end, and a key-operated lock having a U-shaped shackle, a spring steel split ring carried by said shackle and longitudinally surrounding a portion of the tip end of said cue, and a knife-like projection within said ring whereby as said shackle is locked around the cue adjacent its tip-end portion, said knife-like projection enters a groove formed between the cue-tip ferrule and the upper end of the cue body for holding said body, shackle and cue securely together.

2. Structure as specified in claim 1, and said ring having an annular recess in its periphery; and co-operating protrusions carried by said shackle and said lock, which have a rigid and adapted for seating whereby the recess of said ring for gripping the same compressing said ring when the lock is closed.

3. In combination with a cue having a ferrule adjacent its tip end, and a key-operated lock having a U-shaped shackle, a split ring carried by said shackle and continuously surrounding a portion of the tip-end of said cue; and edge-wise aligned co-operating oppositely disposed knife-like projections rigidly carried by said ring whereby as the lock shackle is locked around the cue adjacent the tip-end portion, said projections enter a groove formed between the cue-tip ferrule and the upper end of the cue body for holding said body, shackle and cue securely together.

4. Structure as specified in claim 3, and said ring having a centrally disposed circumferential recess; and co-operating protrusions rigidly carried by said shackle and said lock for seating within the recess of said ring for compressing and holding the same when the lock is closed.

5. In combination with a cue having a ferrule adjacent its tip end, and a key-operated lock having a U-shaped shackle, a spring steel split ring carried by said shackle for circumferentially continuously surrounding a portion of the tip-end of said cue; and a pair of edge-wise aligned co-operating oppositely disposed knife-like projections rigidly carried by said ring whereby as the lock shackle is locked around the cue adjacent the tip portion, said projections will enter the groove formed between the cue-tip ferrule and the upper end of the cue body for holding said body, shackle and cue securely together.

6. Structure as specified in claim 5, and said ring having a circumferentially centrally disposed recess; and a pair of co-operating protrusions rigidly carried by said shackle and said lock, each having a tip end for seating within the recess of said ring for compressing and holding the same when the lock is closed.

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