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T. A. CAROTHERS
ART OF LAUNDRY MARKING

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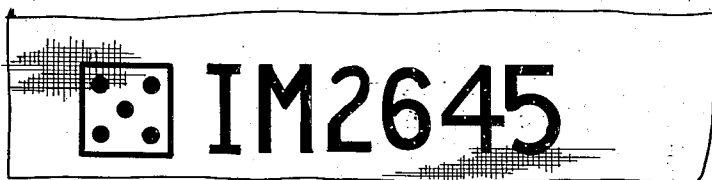


Fig. 3.

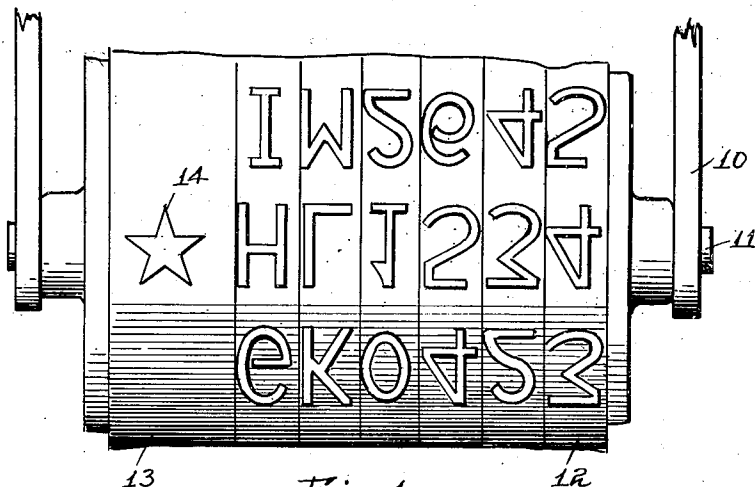


Fig. 1.

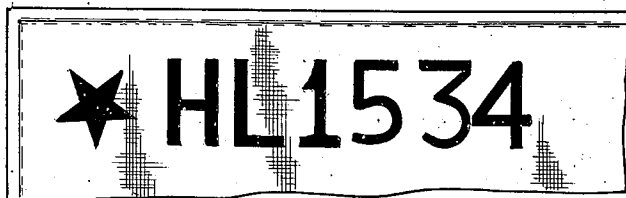


Fig. 2.

Inventor
Thomas A. Carothers
by *Onwig & Hagun Attys*

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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ART OF LAUNDRY MARKING

Thomas A. Carothers, Cincinnati, Ohio, assignor
to The National Marking Machine Company,
Cincinnati, Ohio, a corporation of Ohio

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1 Claim. (Cl. 101-1)

Heretofore it has been customary for commercial laundries to provide customers' identification marks applied to laundry articles whereby, after being commingled in the laundering process they can be accurately distributed into customers' bundles by reference to the laundry marks appearing thereon. Many laundries have adopted a system of laundry identification which consists in a mark in which there appears at the front of the mark the customer's initials, such, for instance, as "HL", and following it a set of letters or numerals, such, for instance, as "1534", and the laundry keeps a record of these individual customers' identification marks.

Recently there has appeared on the market and there is now in general use in some commercial laundries, a laundry identification marking machine in which there is contained large, broad-faced type, and the kind of ink that is employed is one which is normally invisible but which may be made clearly visible and brilliantly fluorescent under the action of radiant energy.

In this art of laundry marking as heretofore practiced, considerable confusion has existed resulting in the so-called "shorts and longs", that is to say, one customer's bundle will be short one article and another customer's bundle will be long one article, and a great deal of time has been unnecessarily expended in the marking and redistribution of articles thus marked.

The object of my invention is to effect a substantial saving of time, first, in the operation of marking the articles and, second, in the operation of redistributing the articles, and further to provide means whereby with only ordinary care on the part of the operators the so-called "shorts and longs" will be eliminated.

My invention consists in employing for laundry marking purposes a normally invisible indelible ink which may be made visible and brilliantly fluorescent under the action of violet rays of light, and in employing in connection with this ink a distinctive individual trade mark for each laundry and associating said trade-mark with the usual customer's identification mark, and whereby the objects contemplated are attained.

Referring to the accompanying drawing, Figure 1 represents a side view of a portion of a laundry marking machine comprising the type wheels thereof, and these type wheels are arranged with the printing faces of the selected type at the center of the figure in line with the launderer's trade-mark;

Figure 2 illustrates a laundry mark of the kind

which can be produced by an impression from said type wheels shown in Figure 1; and

Figure 3 shows a similar view of another marking machine containing a different launderer's trade-mark and a different arrangement of a customer's identification mark.

The portion of the laundry marking machine illustrated in the accompanying drawing comprises a frame 10 in which is mounted a shaft 11. On this shaft is rotatably mounted a series of type wheels 12 containing type consisting of letters or numerals or the like, and preferably at one end of the said type wheels is a type wheel 13 preferably of greater width and which contains a launderer's trade-mark 14. Means not shown are customarily provided in these laundry marking machines for setting the type wheels 12 in any desired position and holding them there during a printing operation. With my improvement the type wheel 13 may have only a single type 14 for printing a launderer's trade-mark, and this is preferably always in fixed position for printing.

In practical use with my improvement in the art I employ type wheels of the size and shape shown in the drawing. Obviously, if laundry identification marks of that size were printed in black ink upon the surface of laundry articles they would be highly objectionable and not commercially practical. However, in the machines now in use in which these type are employed there is also employed an ink which is normally invisible but which is also indelible, and after a laundering operation the presence of a laundry mark cannot be detected even with a magnifying glass. However, when subjected to the action of ultra violet rays the ink becomes clearly visible and brilliantly fluorescent, and may be seen at a considerable distance, and on account of the large size of the type, an operator using only ordinary diligence could not make a mistake in the mark.

In the use of a marking machine and ink of the character described I find it highly efficient and commercially practicable to practice the use of laundry identification in an efficient time saving manner as follows: Each individual laundry is provided with a marking machine and with an individual distinctive trade-mark such as the mark "14", and all laundry articles marked by the said laundry are thus marked with this individual distinctive trade-mark.

In addition to this, the laundry provides a customers' list, and on this list there is assigned to each customer a group of letters, numerals or the

like, which is made a permanent part of the records of said laundry and by reference to which the laundry can at all times ascertain the identity of any individual customer. In this connection, it is the common practice at the present time in many commercial laundries to assign to each individual customer an identification mark consisting of some of the customer's initials, such, for instance, as "HL", and in addition thereto one or more numerals or letters, such, for instance, as "1534".

When a customer's bundle is received in said laundry, the bundle is opened and some of the articles therein are subjected to the action of an ultra violet lamp, and if said articles have been previously marked in the same laundry, this fact can be readily, easily and quickly distinguished by the operator by reference only to the launderer's trade-mark; and if upon such reference the said launderer's trade-mark is found, then the operator need only record the individual customer's identification mark following the trade-mark and set up the laundry marking machine to print the individual customer's identification mark, and then print upon all of the articles in said customer's bundle not previously marked, with the mark thus set up on the marking machine. In this connection a great deal of time is saved for the operator because the operator need pay no attention, whatever, to previous marks upon the laundry articles not associated with the said launderer's trade-mark. Furthermore, the operator need not go to the trouble and expense of crossing out or trying to obliterate other previous laundry identification marks on the articles applied by other laundries not employing the said launderer's trade-mark. Furthermore, the operator need not make a thorough investigation of each laundry article before applying the new mark, because no injury or delays or trouble of any kind is occasioned if the same normally invisible mark is applied at several places upon a single laundry article. To illustrate: It is the custom to mark large articles, such as sheets, in one of the corners, and it is the present custom to carefully examine all four corners of such an article to ascertain whether there is a previously existing mark before applying a new mark. With my improvement in the art this is unnecessary, and the operator simply examines one corner of, for instance, a sheet, and if no mark is found thereon, then a new mark is applied, and it is not at all objectionable if the same or different marks are found on each corner of the sheet. If, for instance, there are two or three marks containing the same launderer's trade-mark, then there is no difficulty in the re-assorting, and if the other corners of the sheet contain marks which do not have said laundry identification mark, then no particular injury is done because the assorting operator wholly disregards all of such marks and relies only on the marks containing the said trade-mark.

After the completion of the laundering processes and the laundry articles of various customers are commingled, it is necessary to redistribute the articles into customers' bundles, and this redistribution must be done with the greatest possible accuracy. With my improvement in the art the laundry articles are placed upon a suitable support and subjected to the action of ultra violet rays. Each article is examined by the distributing operator, and this operator need only look for such marks as that prominently associated with the particular

launderer's trade-mark, and, obviously, this can be readily, quickly and easily done without loss of time, by simply glancing at the mark.

Assuming that there are numerous other fluorescent marks on the same article not containing the individual launderer's trade-mark, such marks are wholly disregarded by the operator and the operator need not waste any time in further investigation of them but continues her examination of the article until she finds the mark containing the said launderer's trade-mark and then, and then only does she in any way need consider the rest of the mark which consists of the customer's identification mark, and the redistribution from that point is conducted in the same manner as is now the common practice.

Heretofore it frequently happened that a certain customer would have his laundry articles laundered in a number of different laundries, and since it is the practice for many laundries to have their laundry identification mark consisting of, first, the laundry owner's initials, followed by one or more numerals, it sometimes happened that the numbers following the customer's initials were the same in two different laundries. Obviously, in view of that circumstance, it became impossible for the redistributing operator to accurately determine the particular customer to whom the laundry article belonged, because in the meantime someone else having the same initials may have been assigned the same set of numerals. In view of that circumstance and other similar ones, it has been the practice in commercial laundries for the operator who opens the bundle and prepares the articles for marking, to first carefully examine all portions of the laundry articles and cross out or otherwise obliterate all existing previous marks thereon. When this has been done with black indelible ink it has resulted in very serious injury to the appearance of the laundry article and has become so objectionable to the customers that laundries have been compelled to resort to many of the so-called "no mark" systems and net systems now in use.

With my improvement it is wholly unnecessary to make such careful examination of previous normally invisible marks, and it is not necessary to in any way eradicate or cross out the previous visible marks. With my process, if the operator can easily, quickly and readily find a previous mark normally invisible on an article, which previous mark contains the launderer's trade-mark, then she need not go to the trouble of remarking such article, but if said launderer's trade-mark and individual mark should be on an article and not readily and easily found by the marking operator, then no time need be lost in attempting to hunt for such other mark, but the article can be marked with the type set up on the marking machine and no injury or delay or difficulty of any kind is occasioned by duplication of said marks, as they are normally invisible and otherwise unobjectionable, and because they do not result in any confusion to subsequent laundry marking operations, because even if duplicated the operator need only perform the marking and redistributing operations by reference to the launderer's trade-mark first, and thereafter to the customer's identification mark.

By the use of the term "launderer's trade-mark" herein I mean to include technical trade-marks and other identification trade-marks by

which a particular laundry employing same may be positively identified.

I claim as my invention:

5 An improvement in the art of laundry identification, consisting in providing a series of movable type selected to impress on the laundry of a customer a predetermined identification mark peculiar to that customer, with such type
10 for marking laundry, further providing type defining a mark particularly identifying the laundry service, with such latter type also much

larger than that customarily employed for marking laundry, arranging all type for marking impressions on the laundry at a single operation, with normally invisible ink as the transferring medium, then during subsequent laundry markings determining the necessity for re-marking
5 by reference only to the launderer's identification under circumstances rendering the mark visible, and providing identification marking for lost articles.

THOMAS A. CAROTHERS.

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