

Dec. 10, 1968

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3,414,912

FURNITURE WITH INTERCHANGEABLE COMPONENTS

Filed Sept. 12, 1967

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

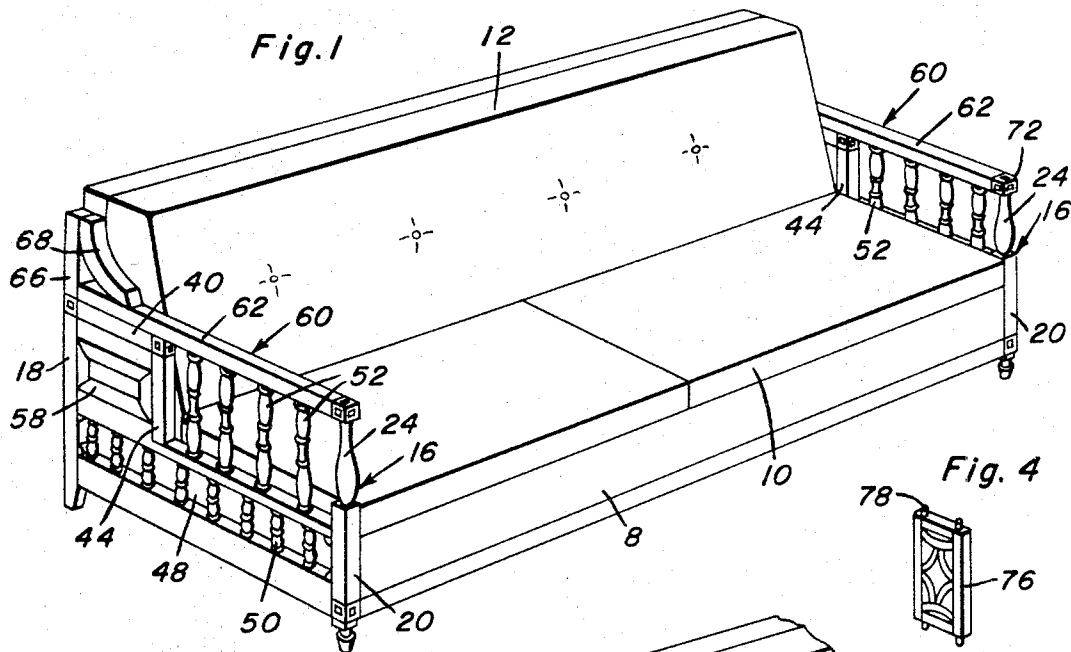


Fig. 2

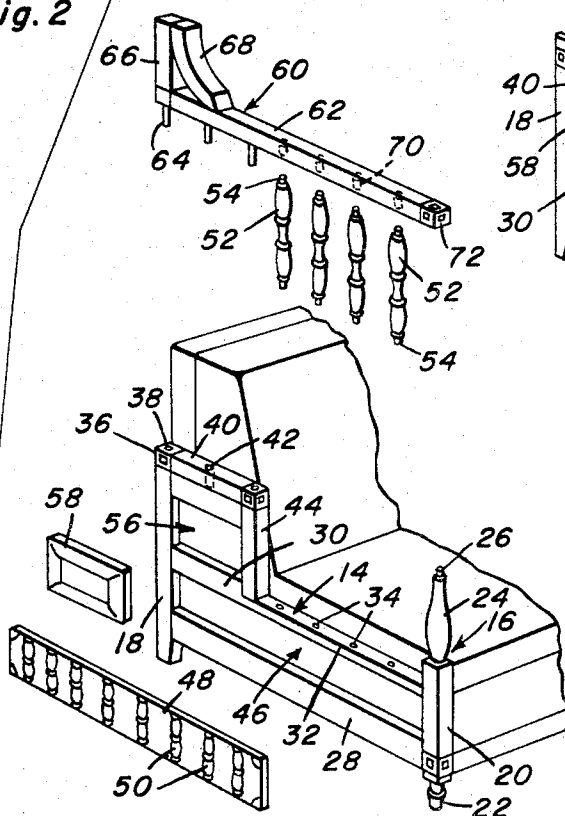
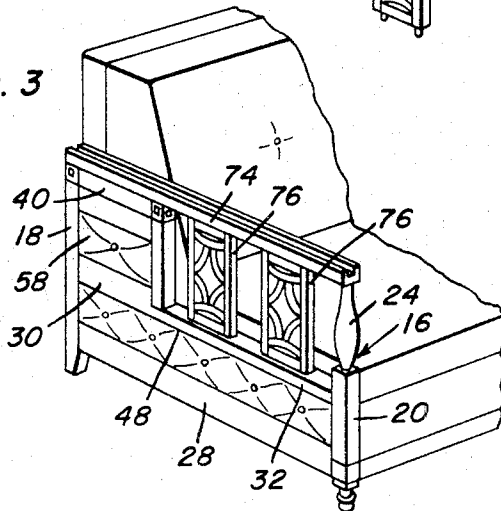


Fig. 3



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Fig. 5

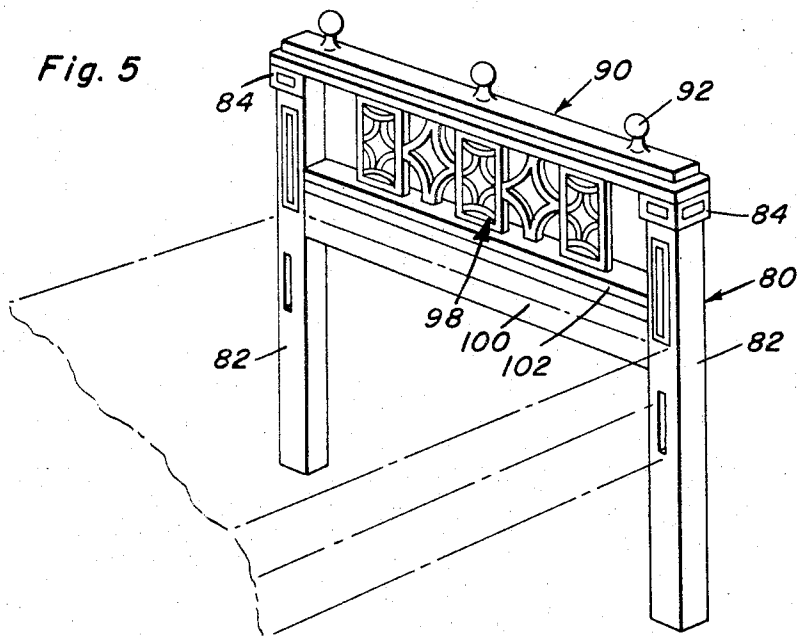


Fig. 7

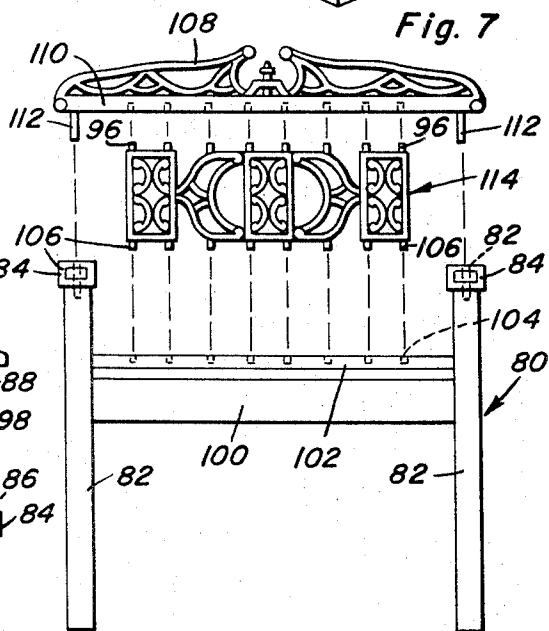
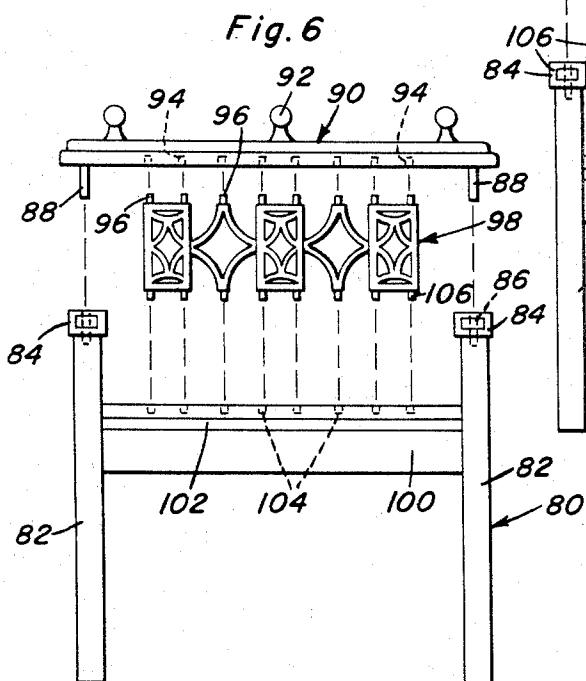


Fig. 6



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FURNITURE WITH INTERCHANGEABLE COMPONENTS

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Filed Sept. 12, 1967, Ser. No. 667,103

8 Claims. (Cl. 5—52)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The above-entitled concept has to do, broadly speaking, with manufacturing and merchandising sofas, armchairs, bedsteads and the like. To the ends desired, a customer will purchase a living room sofa, for example, with a provision that within an acceptable span of time the seller, the furniture store, will, upon request, send an experienced man to the purchaser's home to change the style of her furniture on the spot, so to speak. In carrying out the idea, a basic skeleton one-piece frame is equipped with applicable and removable interchangeable auxiliary component parts or sections which when in place provide a self-contained but changeable furniture support unit preferably, but not necessarily, made up of prefabricated plastic members. The basic frame is a sturdy leg-equipped support and the auxiliary replaceable components are of predetermined standardized construction and appearance to achieve the stylized change-over effect desired.

This invention relates to certain new and useful improvements in period furniture which is distinct and unique in that the general appearance of a given piece of furniture can be changed from one characteristic style to another style while being displayed and shown by a salesman to a prospective customer and which also lends itself to a contemplated variation and prearranged change after it has been purchased by the customer in a manner which will hereinafter be set forth with understandable particularity.

While the above idea of expedient change for store displaying and selling purposes is in and of itself an innovation, the essence of the concept pertains, more explicitly, to that aspect wherein the purchaser can resort to and make changes in period furniture say from Spanish to Early American in her home. At present when an owner tires of the style of sofa or chair the practice is to have it re-upholstered or to sell and dispose of it in one manner or another and then replace it with a complete new suite. Merely covering the furniture with slip covers or reupholstering it does not result in changing the style. As will be hereinafter more fully recognized and appreciated the chief design of a sofa or chair is basically inherent in the arm-equipped leg-frames, so much so that experienced period furniture designers are inclined to agree that by merely replacing the same in whole or in part the over-all appearance can be and is significantly altered. It follows that all parties concerned, manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers are desirably served.

Although dining room and kitchen furniture is within the purview of the inventive concept, it will simplify the disclosure here by directing attention to upholstered living room furniture and bedroom furniture and, more particularly, that category which has to do with period furniture, namely, Italian provincial, Early American and the like. This concept will stimulate and promote sales by reason of the fact that a customer actually buys a piece of period furniture whose appearance can be conveniently altered in a feasible manner and at an acceptable price slightly above the original purchase price. The salesman in the store can display one article of furniture, a sofa for instance, then change the design in a matter

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of minutes to conform with catalogue cuts or picture illustrations and to suit a choice of the customer. Then, after using that sofa for six months, more or less, the customer can resort to the agreed-upon steps to change the period design and switch back to the original pattern or design, as often as may be desired. With the foregoing in mind it will be evident that the sale of a sofa or chair, or an exemplary headboard includes the extra prefabricated replacement parts of an alternate design.

As will be hereinafter evident the main or body portion of the furniture whether a sofa, chair, bed or the like will remain unchanged. Secondly, the basic leg-equipped frame part of the improved unit will be permanently attached, that is if the furniture is a sofa, chair or the like. The interchangeable component parts will be of a ready-to-assembly type with standardized assembling and retaining features.

Briefly the underlying principle of the concept pertains to a self-contained but changeable support unit. This unit, in turn, is characterized by a one piece basic skeleton frame embodying a pair of rigid spaced parallel members which may be referred to as uprights and also support members. These uprights have lower end portions with appropriate feet and provide legs. At least one horizontal brace of the frame spans the space between the uprights and permanently joins median portions thereof in cooperating frame-forming relationship. These uprights also have upper ends terminating in a common plane in a manner to accommodate the complemental appearance-changing means. This means is characterized by a bodily applicable and removable ornate rail which bridges the space between the upper ends of the uprights and has end portions seated atop and separably connected to the respectively cooperating upper ends of said uprights. This rail is spaced directly above and is parallel with the aforementioned one brace and serves to accommodate the companion prefabricated appearance changing component parts or interchangeable inserts which are fitted into the space provided therefor between the brace and rail, respectively. These component parts are of a predetermined period furniture design and are separably joined to the brace and rail. The rail and companion component parts make up the requisite assembly and are designed and adapted to be interchanged with a replacement rail and replacement component parts having a different period design and appearance.

These together with other objects and advantages which will become subsequently apparent reside in the details of construction and operation as more fully hereinafter described and claimed, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof, wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a view in perspective of a complete ready-to-use sofa embodying an appropriate seat structure and backrest and which is characterized at its respective left and right ends with the improved changeable leg-equipped support units.

FIG. 2 is an exploded perspective view of one of the units showing the basic rigid frame and the complemental applicable and removable component parts illustrated in ready-to-use relationship.

FIG. 3 is a view in perspective showing a fragmentary end portion of the sofa or couch and which compared with FIG. 1 illustrates the replacement component parts which, when in use, serve to achieve the desired period furniture change.

FIG. 4 is a view in perspective of one of the ornamental inserts.

FIG. 5 is a view in perspective which shows a modification, that is, a headboard for a bed wherein the aforementioned bed support unit is shown.

FIG. 6 is a view of the unit by itself with the applicable

and removable component parts separated from the basic frame and each other.

And FIG. 7 is a view like FIG. 6 and which serves to illustrate the fact that the ornamental rail is of a different design (compared to that shown in FIG. 6) and which is capable of use at will.

It will be evident that the self-contained changeable support unit is such that it is appropriately capable of use as an essential component of a sofa or chair as comprehended in FIGS. 1, 2 and 3 or as a headboard or footboard for a bed as illustrated in FIGS. 5, 6 and 7.

Referring first to FIGS. 1 to 3 in particular it will be evident that the sofa or couch is characterized by appropriate upholstered seat means 8, cushions (fixed or removable) as denoted at 10. The backrest, generally speaking, is denoted at 12. Inasmuch as the furniture support unit is the same at both ends in FIG. 1 a description of one adaptation will suffice. The basic skeleton one-piece frame, preferably, but not necessarily, made of appropriate moldable commercial plastics is denoted generally by the numeral 14. This frame comprises a front leg 16 and a back leg 18. The front leg embodies a post 20 having a suitable foot 22 and an ornamental upper post portion 24 whose upper end is provided with an assembling and connecting dowel pin 26. The rear leg or post is of appropriate construction as illustrated at the left in FIG. 3. A first horizontal brace 28 connects the uprights or posts in assembled relation and is fixed. A second brace is denoted at 30 and a portion 32 thereof is provided with suitably formed assembling or keeper sockets 34. The upper ornamental end 36 of the rear upright has a keeper socket 38 and is connected with an auxiliary brace 40 provided with one or more sockets 42. An auxiliary upright is provided at 44 and serves to connect the braces 30 and 40 together. With this arrangement it will be evident that there is a lower elongated opening or space 46 for insertion and retention (in any suitable manner) of a prefabricated component part which is here described as a panel 48. The exterior surface of the panel is provided with ornamental embossments 50 of desired design or configuration and which are matched to fit the insertable and removable spindles 52 provided at upper and lower ends with assembling and retaining dowel pins 54. The upper smaller space 56 serves to accommodate the insertable and removable panel 58. In addition to the interchangeable component parts or inserts so far described there is the aforementioned bodily attachable and detachable rail 60. This comprises the rail proper which provides an armrest 62 and which is provided at the left hand portion with assembling and retaining dowel pins 64, with ornamental members 66 and 68. The underneath side is provided with sockets 70 for reception of the aforementioned dowel pins 54. The end portion, which is ornamental as at 72 has a socket to receive the aforementioned dowel pin 26. When the attachable and detachable component parts are assembled they provide the complete ready-to-use support unit shown at the left in FIG. 1.

The only change in FIG. 3 is that shown and which utilizes a distinctively designed handrail or armrest 74 and filigreed inserts 76. These inserts take the place of the aforementioned spindles 52 and have suitable assembling and retaining dowel pins or studs 78. Thus by removing the parts 60 and 52 in that order from FIG. 1 and replacing the same with the replaceable component parts 74 and 76 the desired change over already described can be achieved.

With reference now to FIGS. 5 and 6 the support unit comprises, when completed, a headboard for a bed. The basic frame is denoted generally by the numeral 80 and embodies legs or uprights 82 whose upper ends are suitably ornamented at 84 and are provided with keeper sockets 86 for keeper pins or dowels 88 at the respective ends of the attachable and detachable complemental rail 90. This rail has suitable ornaments 92 thereon and the underneath side is provided with appropriately arranged

sockets 94 for reception of the dowel pins or keeper pins 96 on the multipart ornamental insert 98. The horizontal brace, that is the main brace between the uprights is denoted at 100 and the companion brace at 102, the latter being provided with properly arranged sockets 104 for reception of the assembling and retaining dowel pins 106.

This same theme is carried out in FIG. 7 wherein the like parts are designated by like numerals, the difference being that instead of using the style of rail 90 (FIGS. 5 and 6) a different design or style is here employed. This attachable and detachable rail is differentiated by the numeral 106 and has ornamental members 108 of an appropriate period design. The rail proper is denoted at 110 and has depending keeper pins 112 at its respective end portions. It would be within the purview of this aspect of the concept to completely restyle the insert 114 as suggested in FIG. 7 or to employ another design or style in keeping with the selection and choice of the purchaser.

The foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention as claimed.

What is claimed as new is as follows:

1. For use in conjunction with convertible furniture, for example, a sofa, an armchair, a bedstead, end table or the like, a self-contained but changeable support unit comprising, a one piece basic skeleton frame embodying a pair of rigid spaced parallel uprights having lower end portions providing legs, and at least one horizontal brace spanning the space between and permanently joining median portions of said uprights in cooperating relationship, said uprights also having upper ends terminating in a common plane, and auxiliary complemental appearance changing means for said basic frame comprising a bodily applicable and removable ornate rail bridging the space between said upper ends and having end portions seated atop and separably connected to the respectively cooperating upper ends of said uprights, said rail being spaced directly above and being parallel with said one brace, and prefabricated appearance changing component parts fitted into the space between said brace and rail, respectively, said component parts being of a predetermined period design and being separably joined to said brace and rail respectively, whereby (1) said rail and (2) said companion component parts can be removed and interchanged with a replacement rail and replacement component parts having a different period design and appearance.

2. The furniture support unit defined in and according to claim 1, and wherein said rail is of a predetermined ornamental type and said component parts are of a harmonizing ornamental type so that the unit can be fully assembled to vertiably represent an Italian provincial style, Early American style or any authentic style at will merely by utilizing the basic frame and selecting and employing the prescribed rail and complemental component parts in conjunction therewith.

3. The furniture support unit defined in and according to claim 1, and wherein said changeable support unit, including the component parts and complemental assembling and retaining rail, is designed, constructed and adapted to serve as an end frame and arm at an end of a sofa, a chair, desk or the like.

4. The furniture support unit defined in and according to claim 1, and wherein said support unit, including all interconnected parts thereof, is expressly designed, constructed and adapted to serve as a headboard for a bed.

5. The furniture support unit defined in and according to claim 1, and wherein said unit is made from moldable plastic material, the upper longitudinal face of said brace and opposed underneath longitudinal companion face of said rail have alignable dowel pin receiving and retaining

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sockets, and said insertable and removable component parts have upper and lower marginal edge portions residing in firm abutting contact with the adjacent cooperating surfaces of said brace and rail, respectively, and are provided with integral laterally projecting assembling and retaining dowel pins fitting telescopically and retentively into their respectively cooperable sockets.

6. The furniture support unit defined in and according to claim 5, and wherein said uprights are vertically elongated to define leg-equipped pillars for a headboard, the upper ends having accessible keeper sockets, said rail being ornamented to provide a design effect suitable for a given style headboard and being provided at its ends with depending keeper pins plugged telescopically and retentively into their coacting keeper sockets, and said component parts being of integrated filigreed patterns to achieve a desired fanciful design effect.

7. The furniture support unit defined in and according to claim 5, and wherein said uprights are distinguishably ornamental and serve as front and rear sofa legs as well as armrest supports, said rail constituting a rigid-type sofa armrest and being provided at its forward and rearward ends with depending assembling dowel pins fitting telescopically into keeper sockets provided therefor in the upper ends of their respectively cooperable uprights, said component parts comprising ornamental members and, in combination, a second brace below and spaced from said first brace, and an insertable and removable panel fitted in and closing said space, said panel having exterior surface ornamentation styled to harmonize from a standpoint of design with said rail and coacting component parts.

8. A self-contained convertible support unit attachable to one end of a sofa or an armchair comprising, a one piece basic skeleton frame embodying front and rear companion vertical legs having coplanar upper ends, a plu-

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5 rality of horizontal braces situated between and joining said legs in fixed relationship, said braces being spaced apart and defining spaces, replaceable ornamental space spanning panels fitted removably in the spaces provided therefor between said braces, an upper face of at least one of said braces being provided with upwardly opening sockets, said front leg being of a predetermined shape and design, an applicable and removable ornamental horizontal rail providing an armrest and bridging and removably mounted atop said legs and having its underneath side provided with sockets which are alignable with said first-named sockets, and a plurality of vertical ornamental changeable inserts located fittingly and removably between said rail and said one brace and having axially aligned projecting dowel pins fitting telescopically and retentively in the respectively cooperable sockets, said inserts being of a design which has the capability of matching the design of said front leg and armrest in keeping with a predetermined style of period-type furniture.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

5-279, 285; 297-440, 445