United States Patent [19]

Arciprete et al.

[11] **3,806,715**

[45] **Apr. 23, 1974**

[54] **VERIFICATION AND REJECT MARKING SYSTEM**

[75] Inventors: **Genio R. Arciprete,** Lexington; **Adrian P. Brokow,** Woburn; **Richard L. Dumais,** Ashland; **Richard F. Stucchi,** Hudson, all of Mass.

[73] Assignee: **Dennison Manufacturing Company,** Farmingham, Mass.

[22] Filed: **Feb. 10, 1972**

[21] Appl. No.: **225,320**

Related U.S. Application Data

[60] Division of Ser. No. 786,813, Dec. 9, 1968, Pat. No. 3,662,362, which is a continuation of Ser. No. 681,765, Nov. 9, 1967, abandoned.

[52] **U.S. Cl.... 235/153 A,** 235/61.7 R, 235/153 AS

[51] **Int. Cl.** **G06k 5/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 340/146.1 F, 174 ED, 174.1 B, 340/146.2; 179/100.2 T; 235/153 A, 153 AS, 61.7 R

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

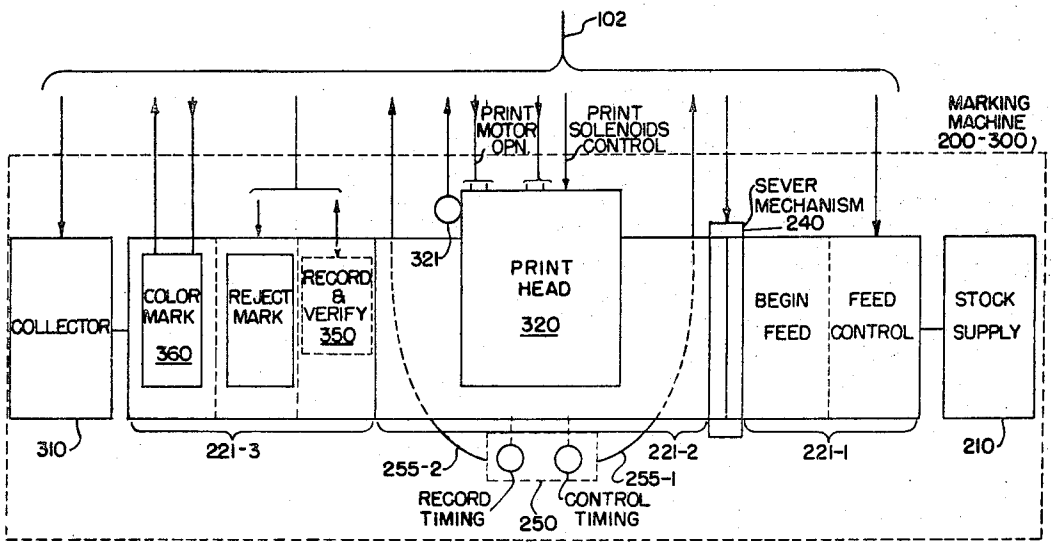
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2,914,746	11/1959	James	179/100.2 T
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3,243,789	3/1966	Ragle, Jr.	340/174.1 B

Primary Examiner—Malcolm A. Morrison
Assistant Examiner—David H. Malzahn
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Dike, Bronstein, Roberts & Cushman

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A machine for magnetically encoding a ticket or the like which includes a magnetically encodable media which includes read and write means for first magnetically writing data on the media in one circular sweep of the media, secondly, a second circular sweep of the media reading the data recorded and then comparing the data recorded with the data which was to be recorded to verify if the data to be recorded on the ticket has been properly stored thereon. The machine also includes a reject marker which is used to apply a void mark to the ticket if the data on the ticket is determined to be improper.

8 Claims, 36 Drawing Figures



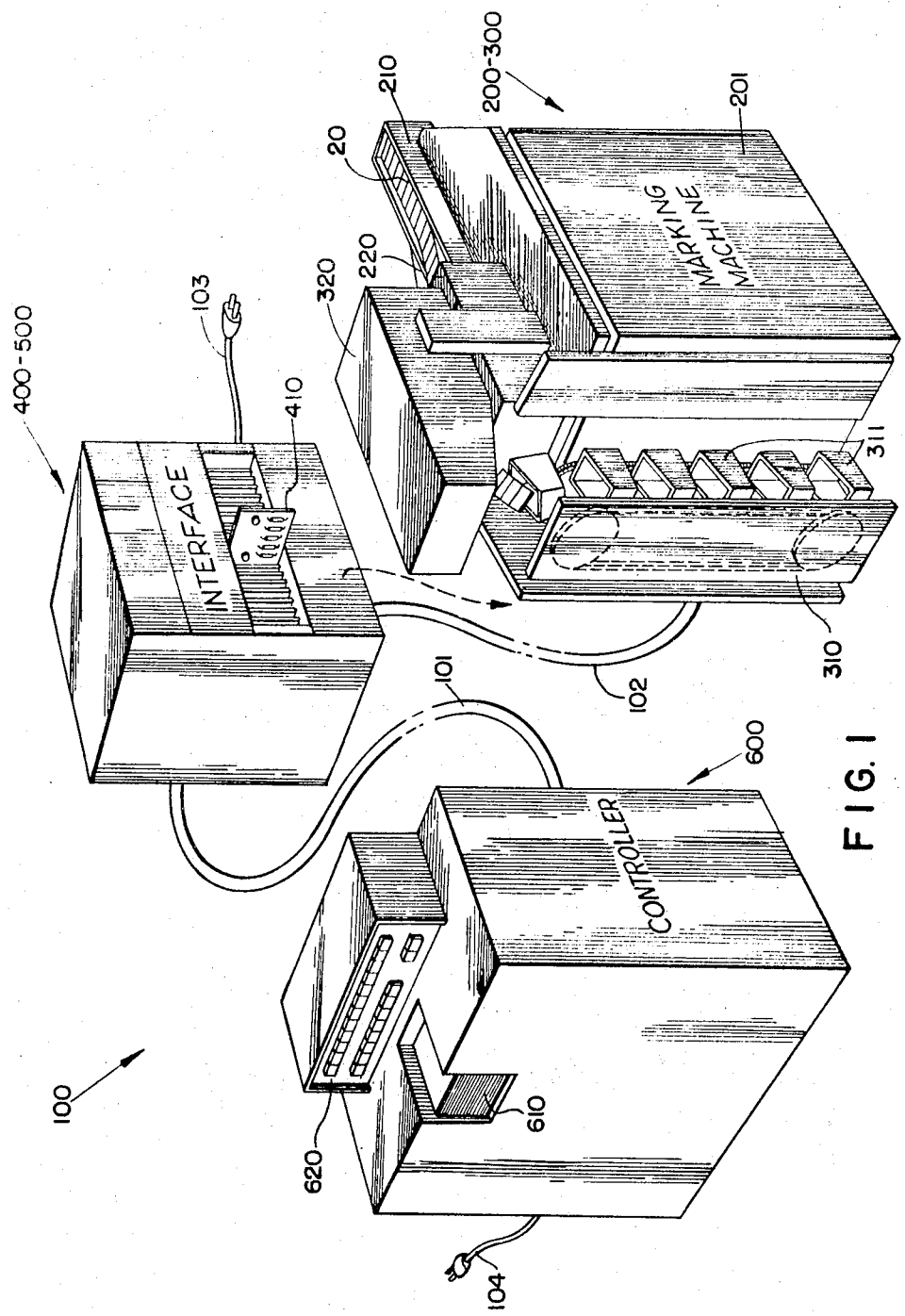

200-300
210
20
201
MARKING MACHINE
220
320
103
400-500
410
INTERFACE
311
310
102
101
600
CONTROLLER
100
610
620
104

FIG. 1

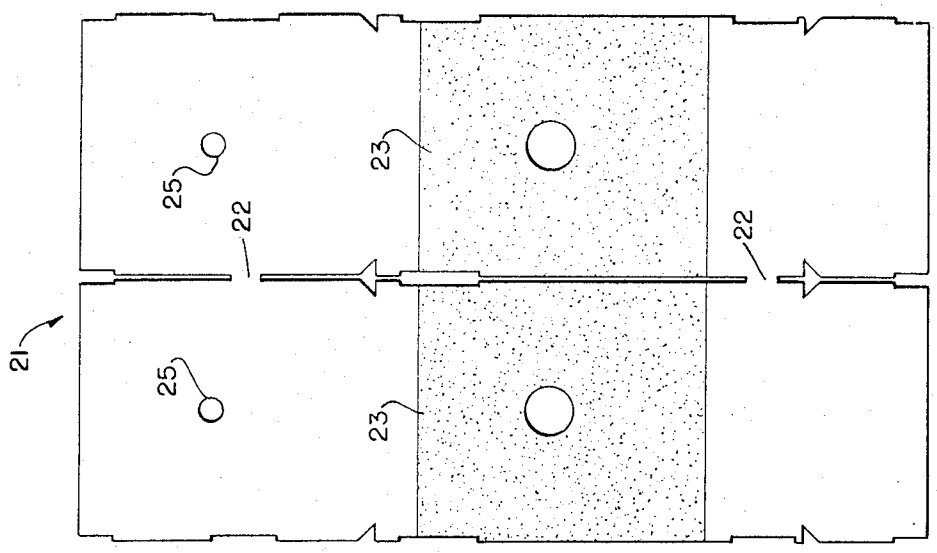

21
25
22
23
25
23
22

FIG. IB

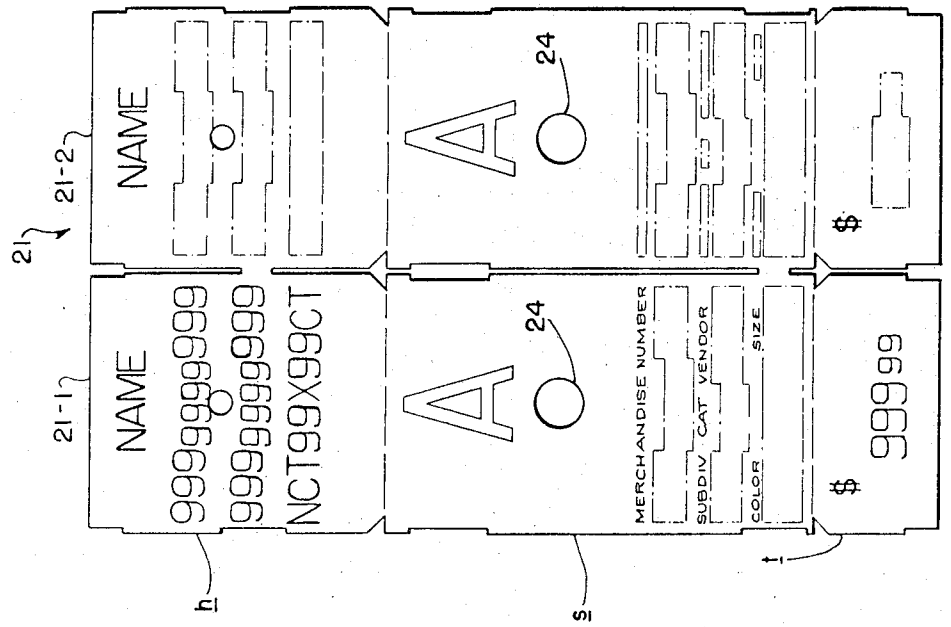

21
21-2
NAME
21-1
NAME
999999999
999999999
NCT99X99CT
24
24
MERCHANDISE NUMBER
SUBDIV CAT VENDOR
COLOR SIZE
$
$
99999
h
s
t

FIG. IA

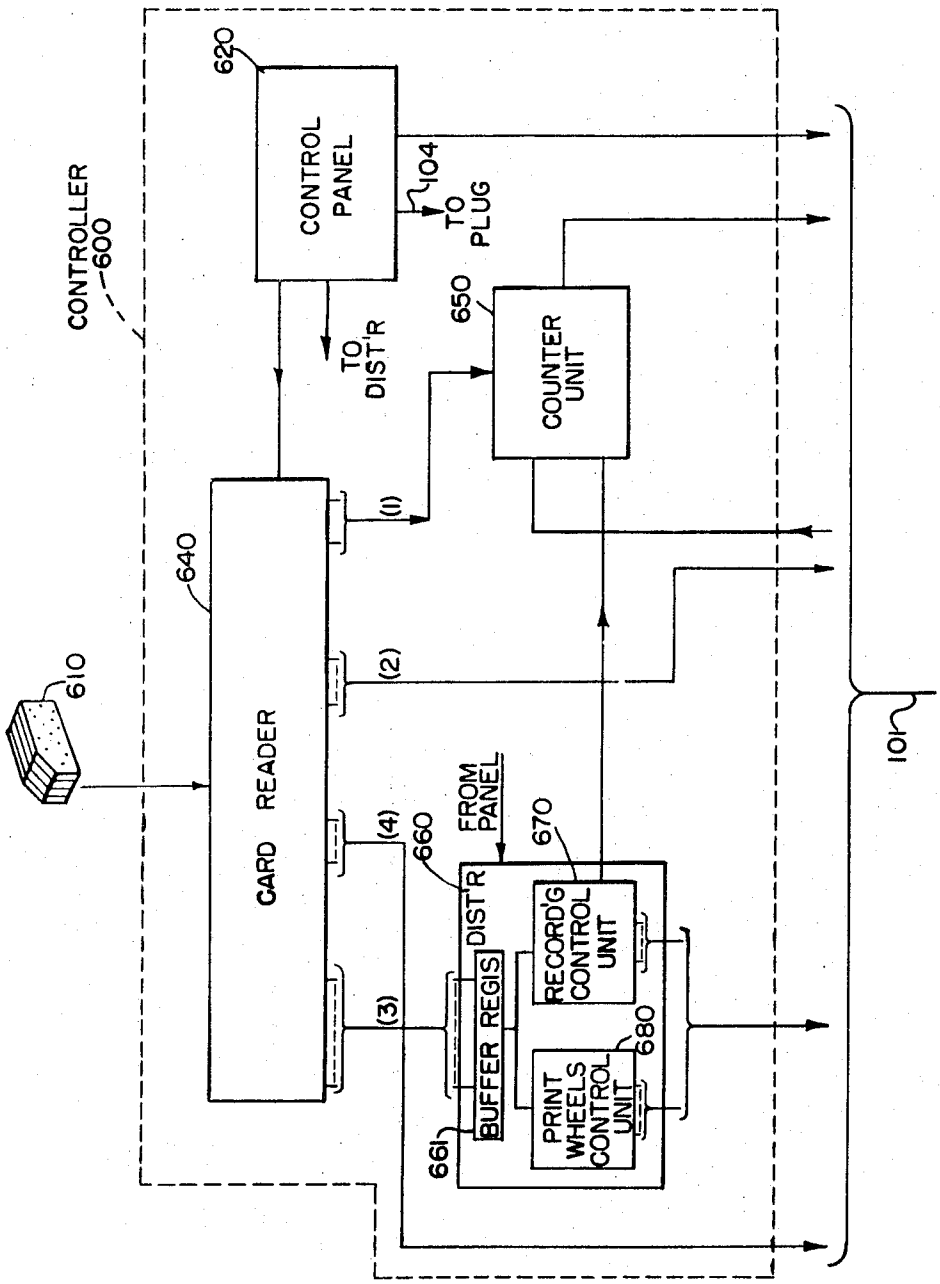


FIG. 2A

FIG. 2A	FIG. 2B	FIG. 2C

FIG. 2

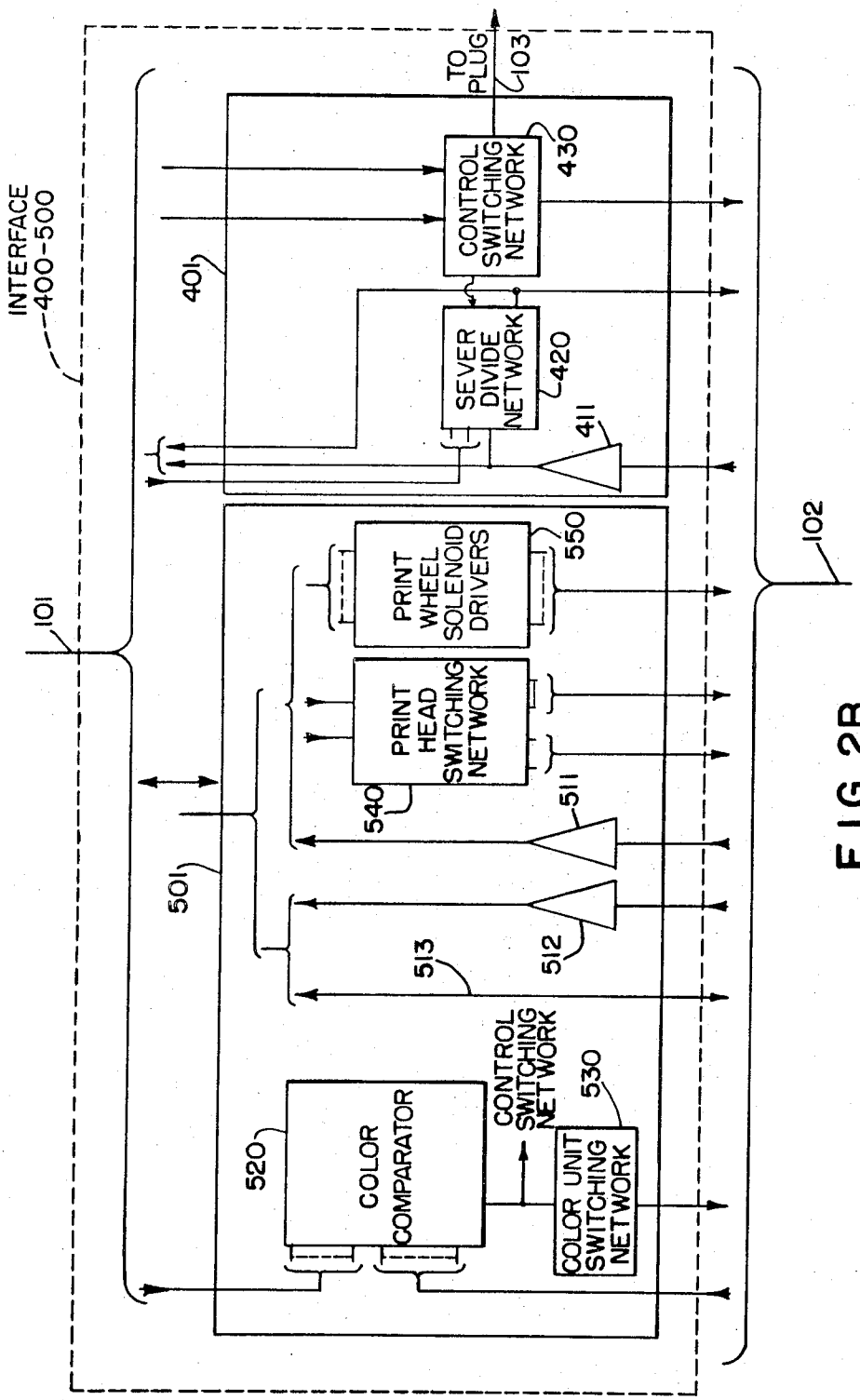

INTERFACE 400-500
101
102
401
TO PLUG 103
CONTROL SWITCHING NETWORK 430
SEVER DIVIDE NETWORK 420
411
PRINT WHEEL SOLENOID DRIVERS 550
PRINT HEAD SWITCHING NETWORK 540
501
511
512
513
CONTROL SWITCHING NETWORK 530
COLOR COMPARATOR 520
COLOR UNIT SWITCHING NETWORK

FIG. 2B

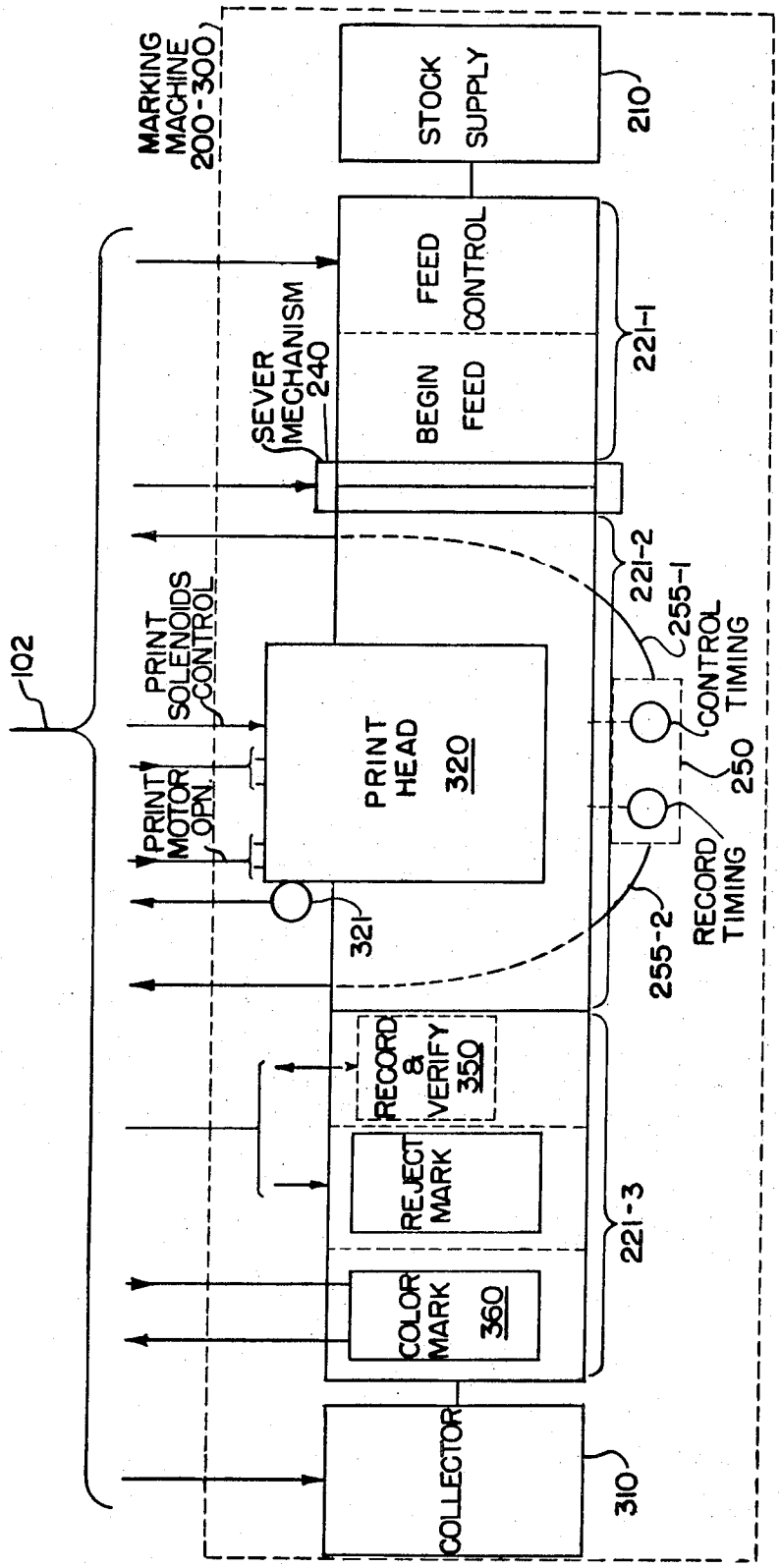

MARKING MACHINE 200-300
STOCK SUPPLY
210
FEED CONTROL
BEGIN FEED
221-1
SEVER MECHANISM 240
221-2
255-1
CONTROL TIMING
250
102
PRINT SOLENOIDS CONTROL
PRINT MOTOR OPN
PRINT HEAD 320
321
RECORD TIMING
255-2
RECORD & VERIFY 350
REJECT MARK
221-3
COLOR MARK 360
COLLECTOR
310

FIG. 2C

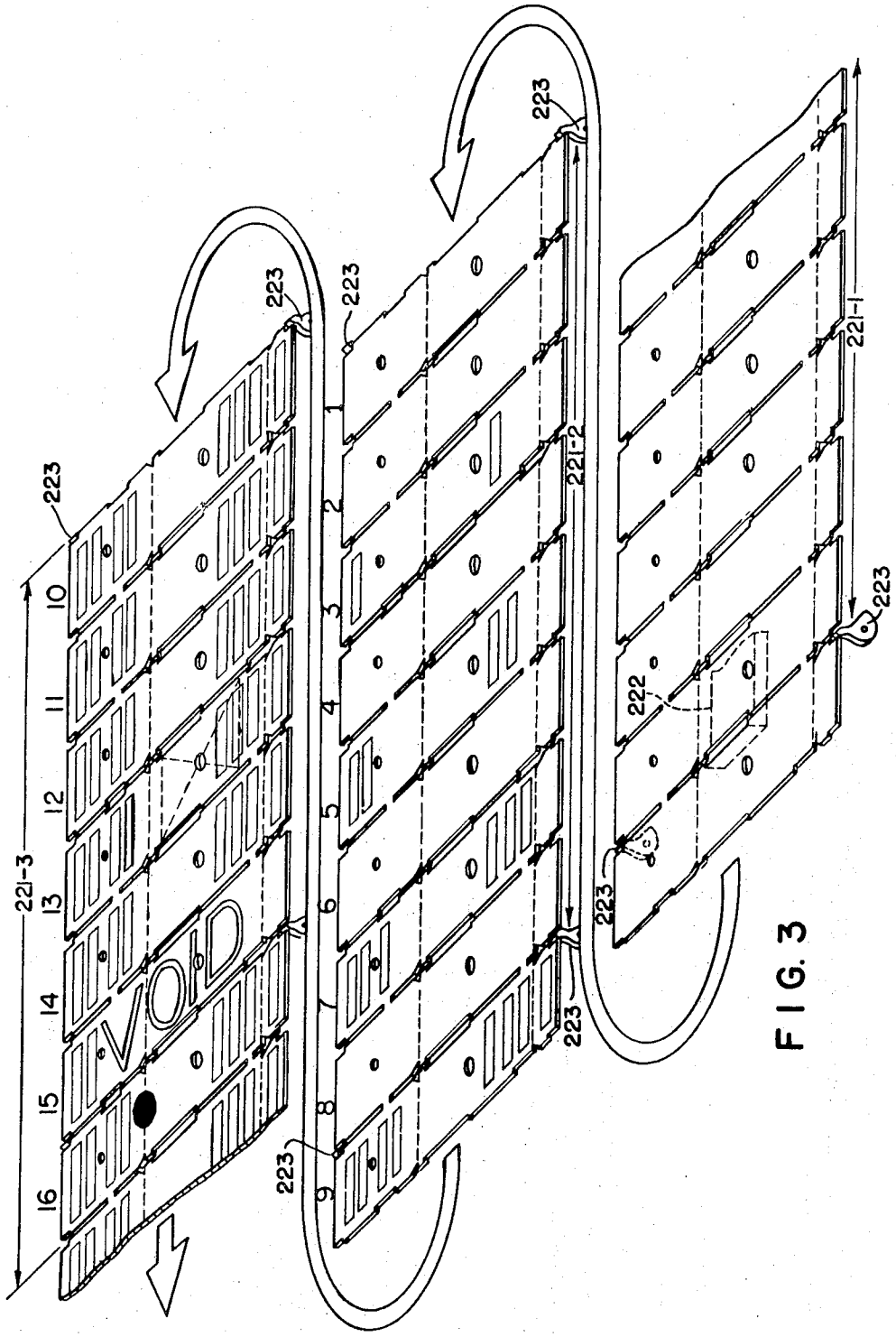
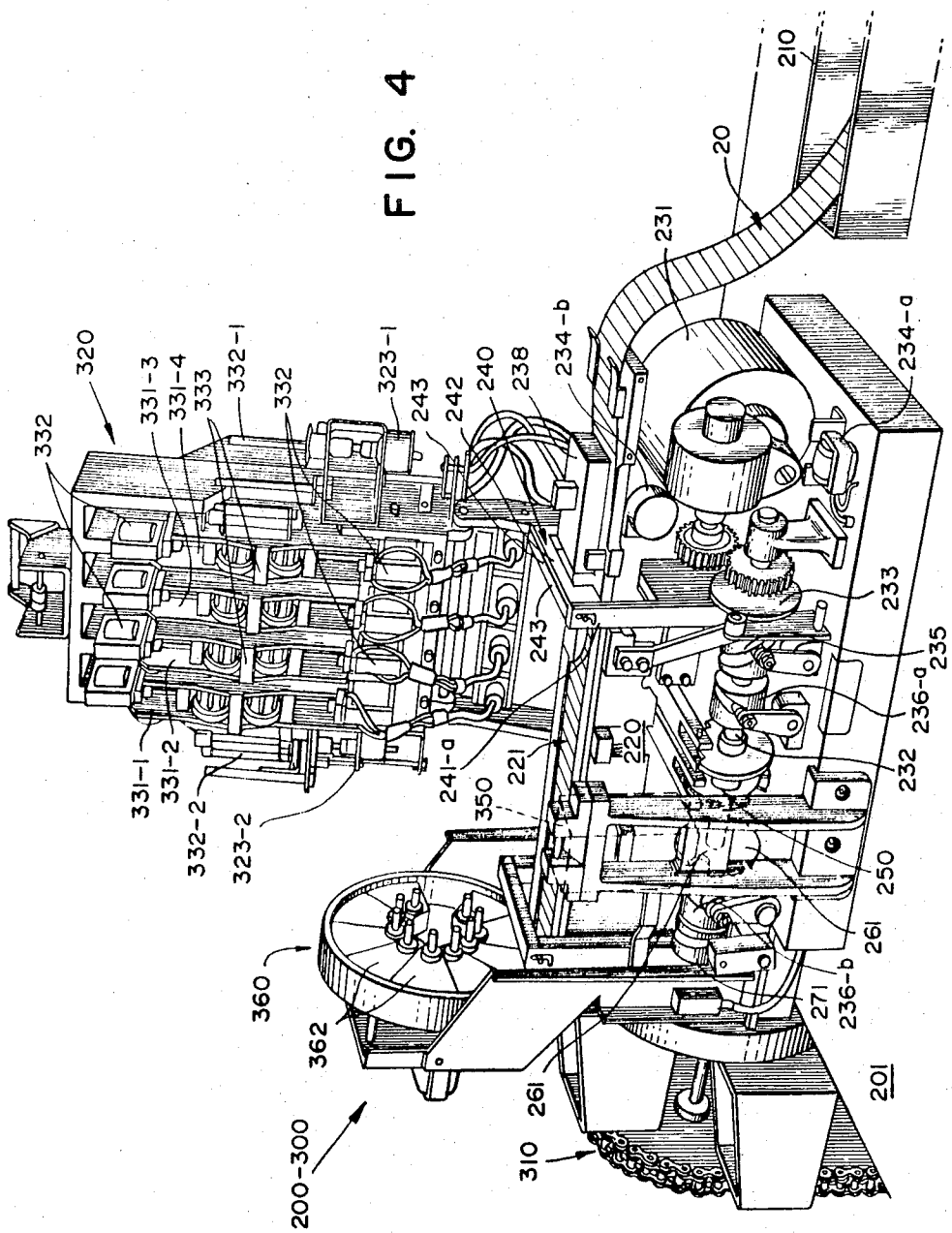

223
223
223
221-2
221-1
223
222
223
223
223
221-3
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
VOID

FIG. 3

FIG. 4


210
20
231
234-b
234-a
320
331-3
331-4
333
332-1
332
323-1
243
242
240
238
332
233
235
236-a
232
220
221
241-a
350
331-1
331-2
332-2
323-2
250
261
271
236-b
360
362
261
310
200-300
201

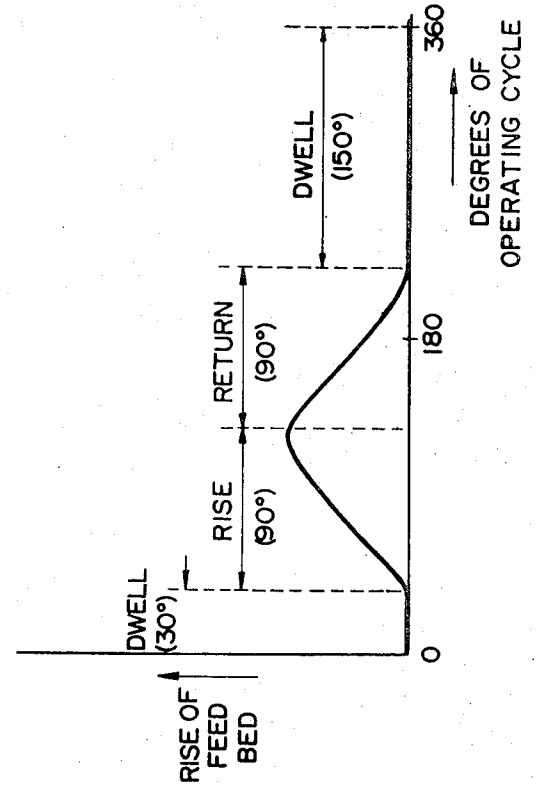

RISE OF FEED BED
DWELL (30°)
RISE (90°)
RETURN (90°)
DWELL (150°)
0
180
360
DEGREES OF OPERATING CYCLE

FIG. 4B

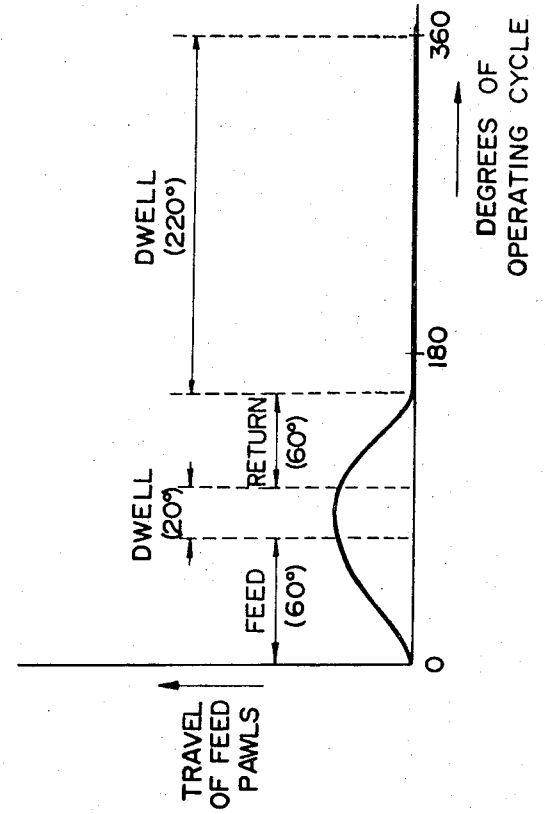

TRAVEL OF FEED PAWLS
FEED (60°)
DWELL (20°)
RETURN (60°)
DWELL (220°)
0
180
360
DEGREES OF OPERATING CYCLE

FIG. 4A

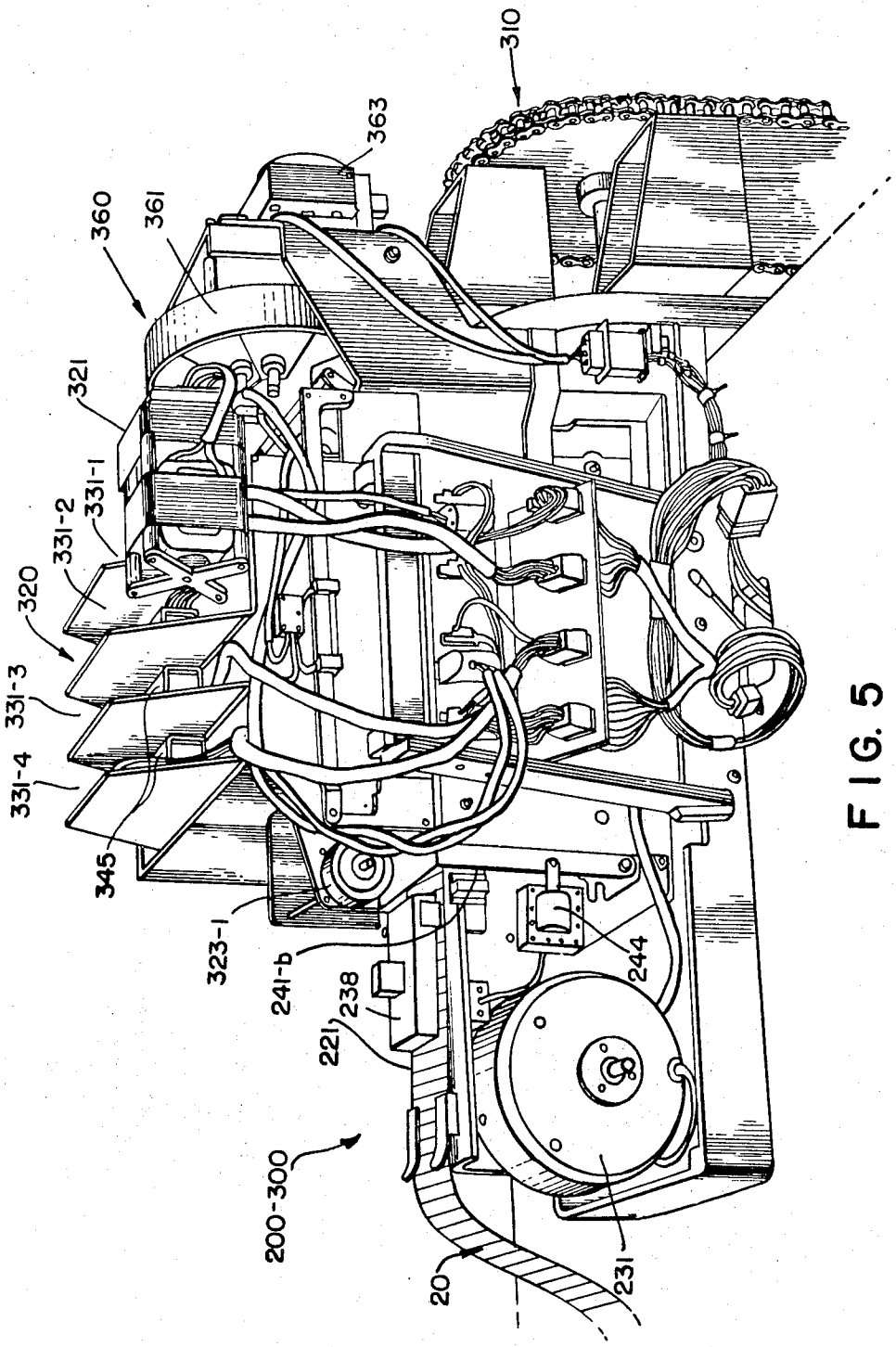

310
363
360
361
321
331-1
331-2
320
331-3
331-4
345
323-1
241-b
238
221
244
200-300
20
231

FIG. 5

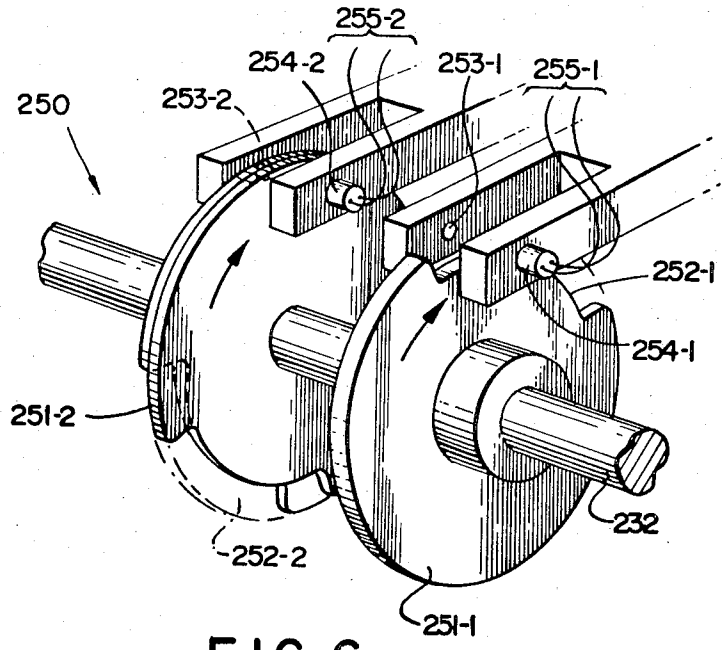

255-2
254-2
253-1
255-1
250
253-2
252-1
254-1
251-2
232
252-2
251-1

FIG. 6

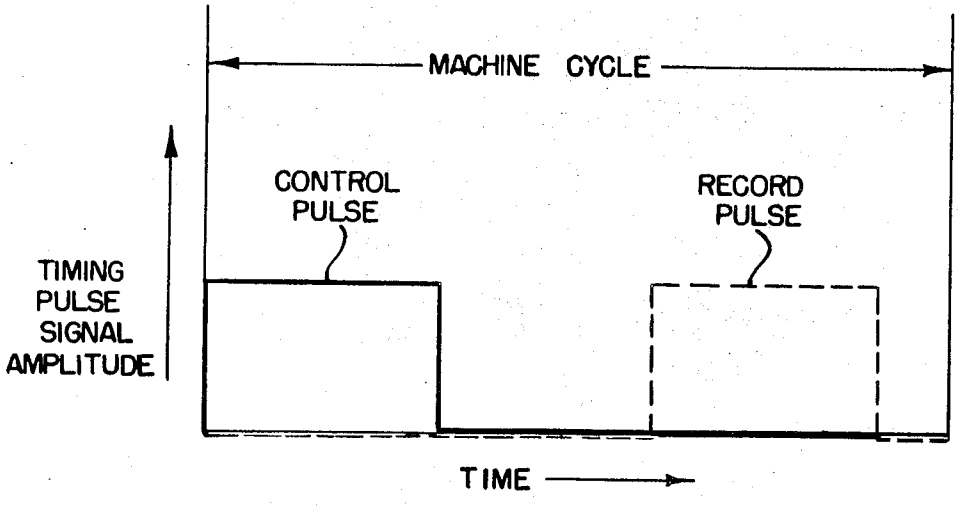

MACHINE CYCLE
CONTROL PULSE
RECORD PULSE
TIMING PULSE SIGNAL AMPLITUDE
TIME

FIG. 6A

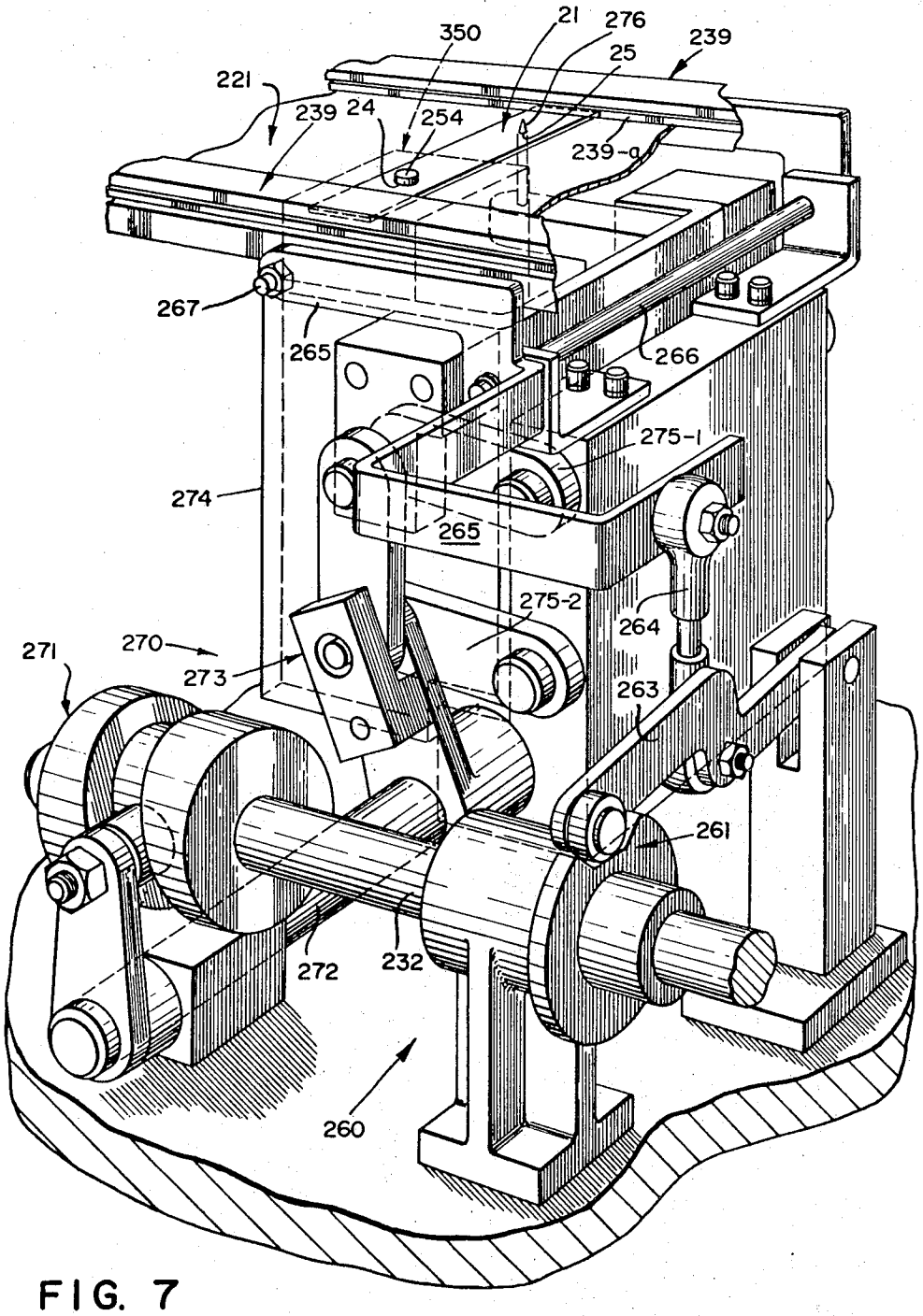

350
21
276
239
25
221
239
24
254
239-a
267
265
266
275-1
274
265
275-2
264
271
270
273
263
261
272
232
260

FIG. 7

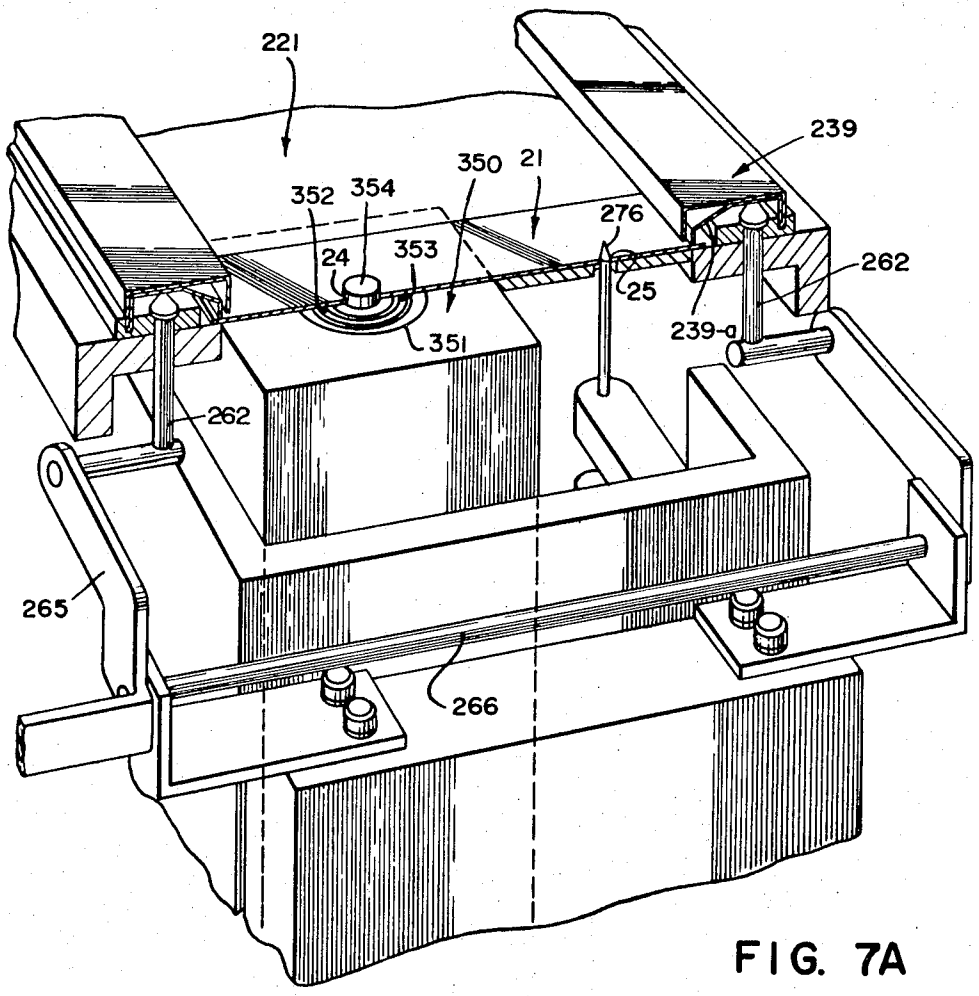

221
239
350
21
352
354
276
24
353
262
25
239-a
351
262
265
266

FIG. 7A

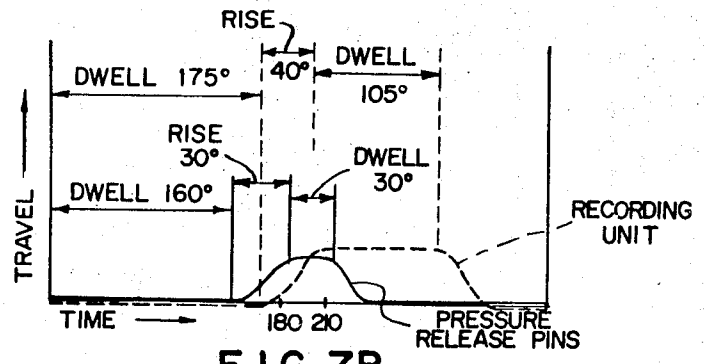

RISE
DWELL
DWELL 175°
40°
105°
RISE
30°
DWELL
30°
DWELL 160°
TRAVEL
RECORDING
UNIT
TIME
180 210
PRESSURE
RELEASE PINS

FIG. 7B

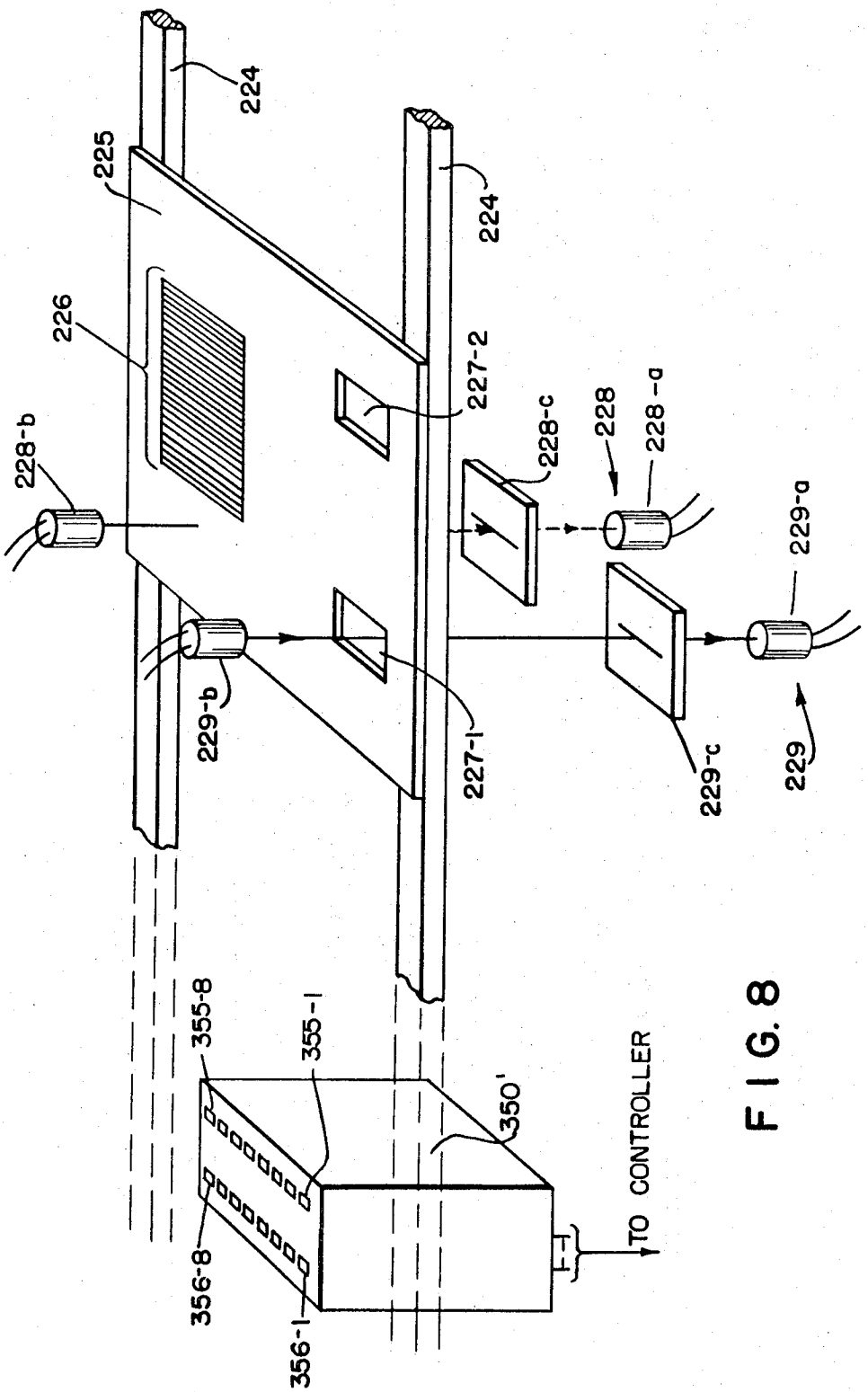

224
225
224
226
227-2
228-c
228
228-a
228-b
229-a
229-b
227-1
229-c
229
355-8
355-1
350'
TO CONTROLLER
356-8
356-1

FIG. 8

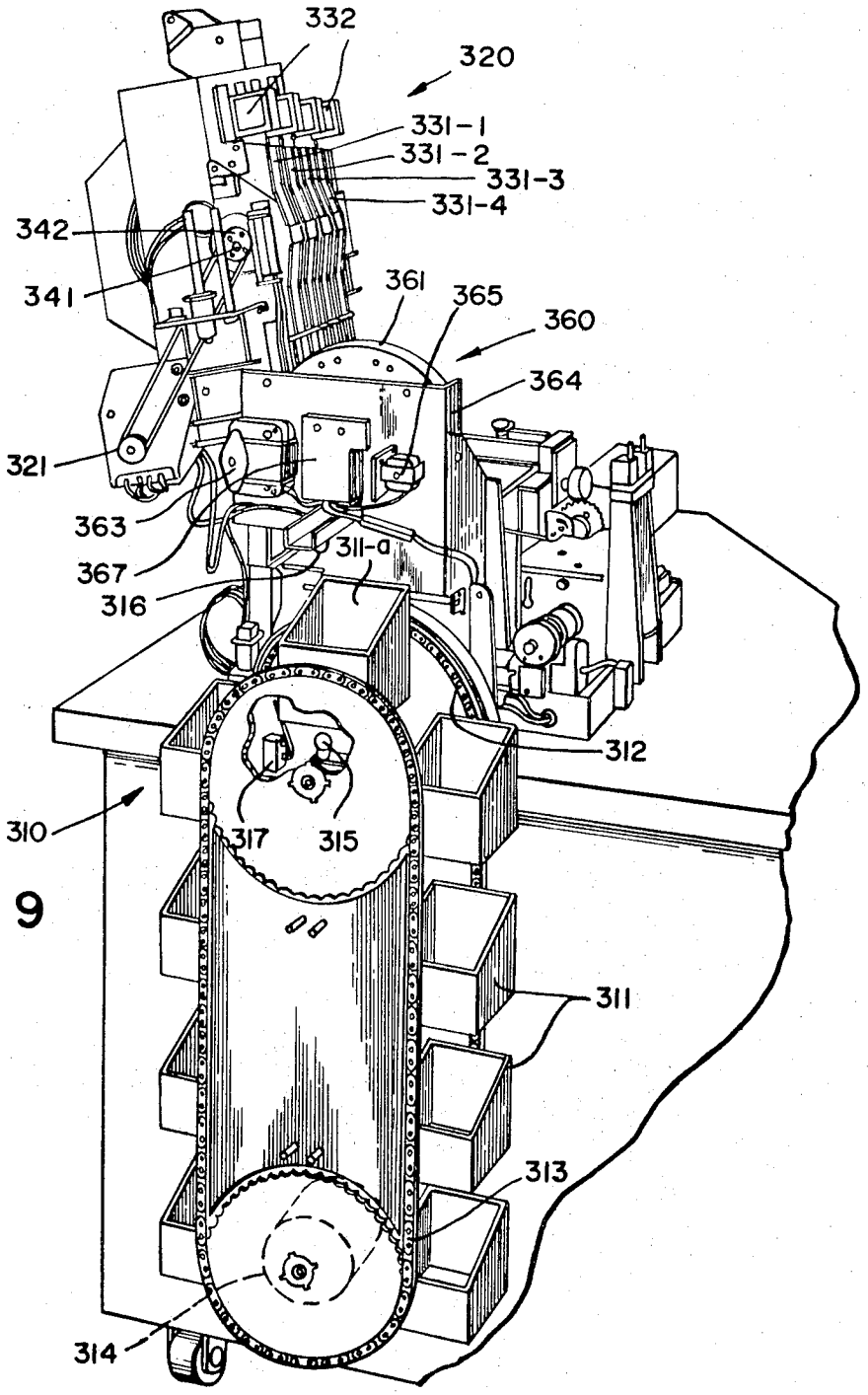

332
320
331-1
331-2
331-3
331-4
342
341
361
365
360
364
321
363
367
316
311-a
312
310
317
315
311
313
314

FIG. 9

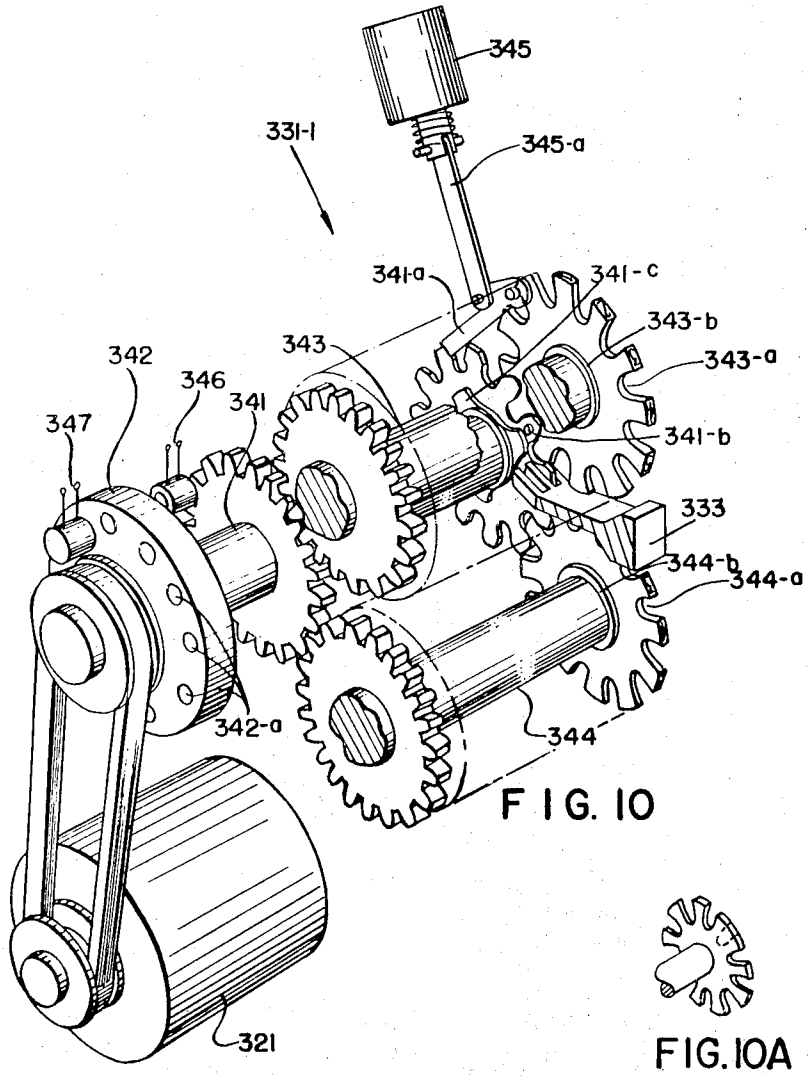


FIG. 10



FIG. 10B

FIG. 10A

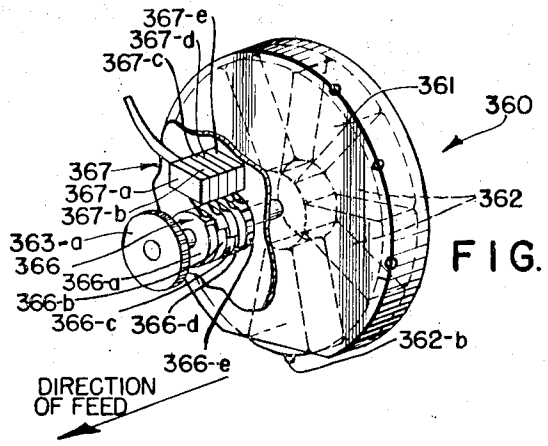


FIG. 11

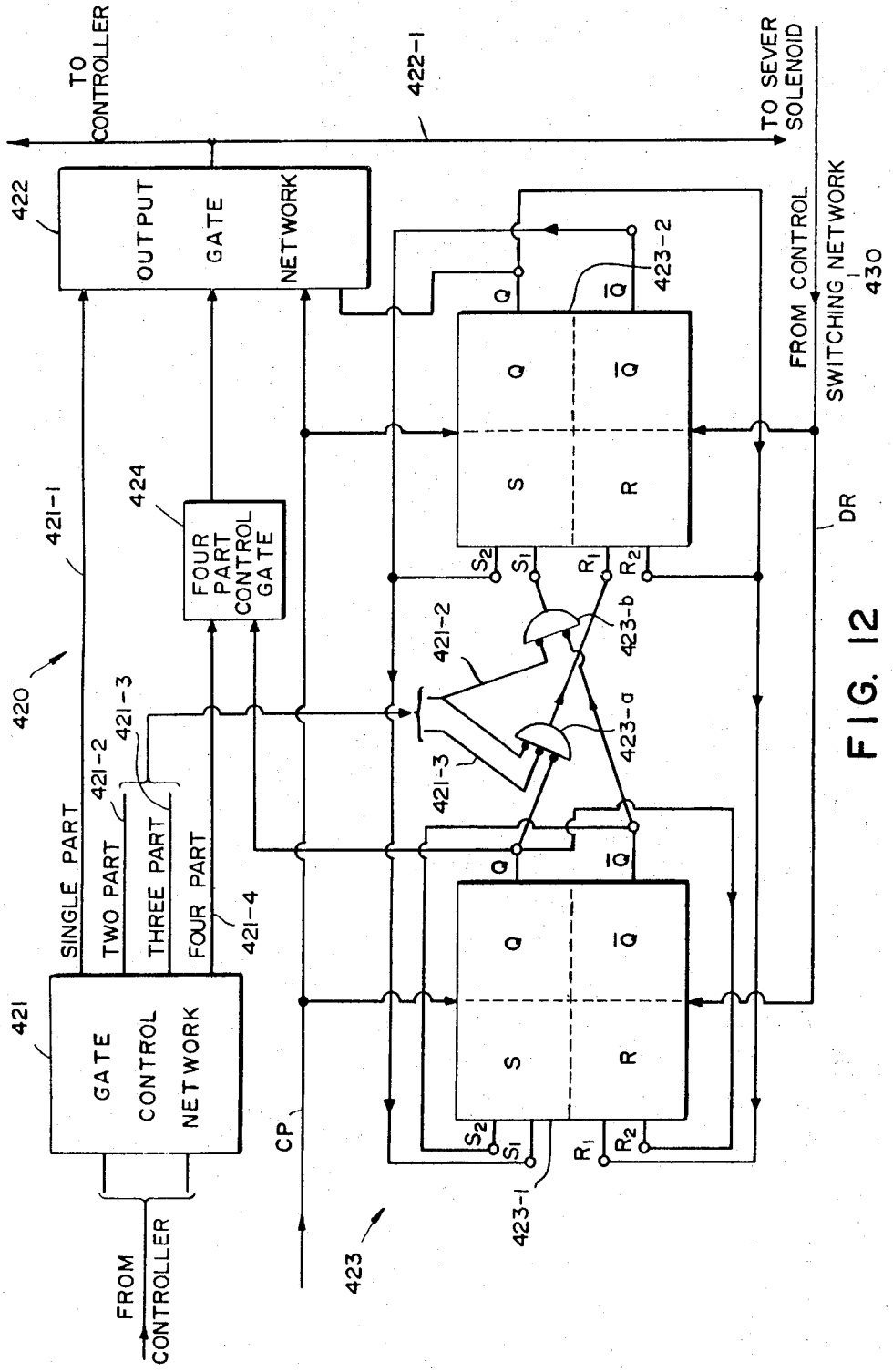

TO CONTROLLER
422-1
TO SEVER SOLENOID
422
OUTPUT GATE NETWORK
FROM CONTROL SWITCHING NETWORK 430
423-2
Q
$\bar{Q}$
S
R
424
FOUR PART CONTROL GATE
421-1
DR
S_2
S_1
R_1
R_2
421-2
423-b
420
421-3
423-a
SINGLE PART
TWO PART
THREE PART
FOUR PART
421-4
421
GATE CONTROL NETWORK
CP
FROM CONTROLLER
423
423-1

FIG. 12

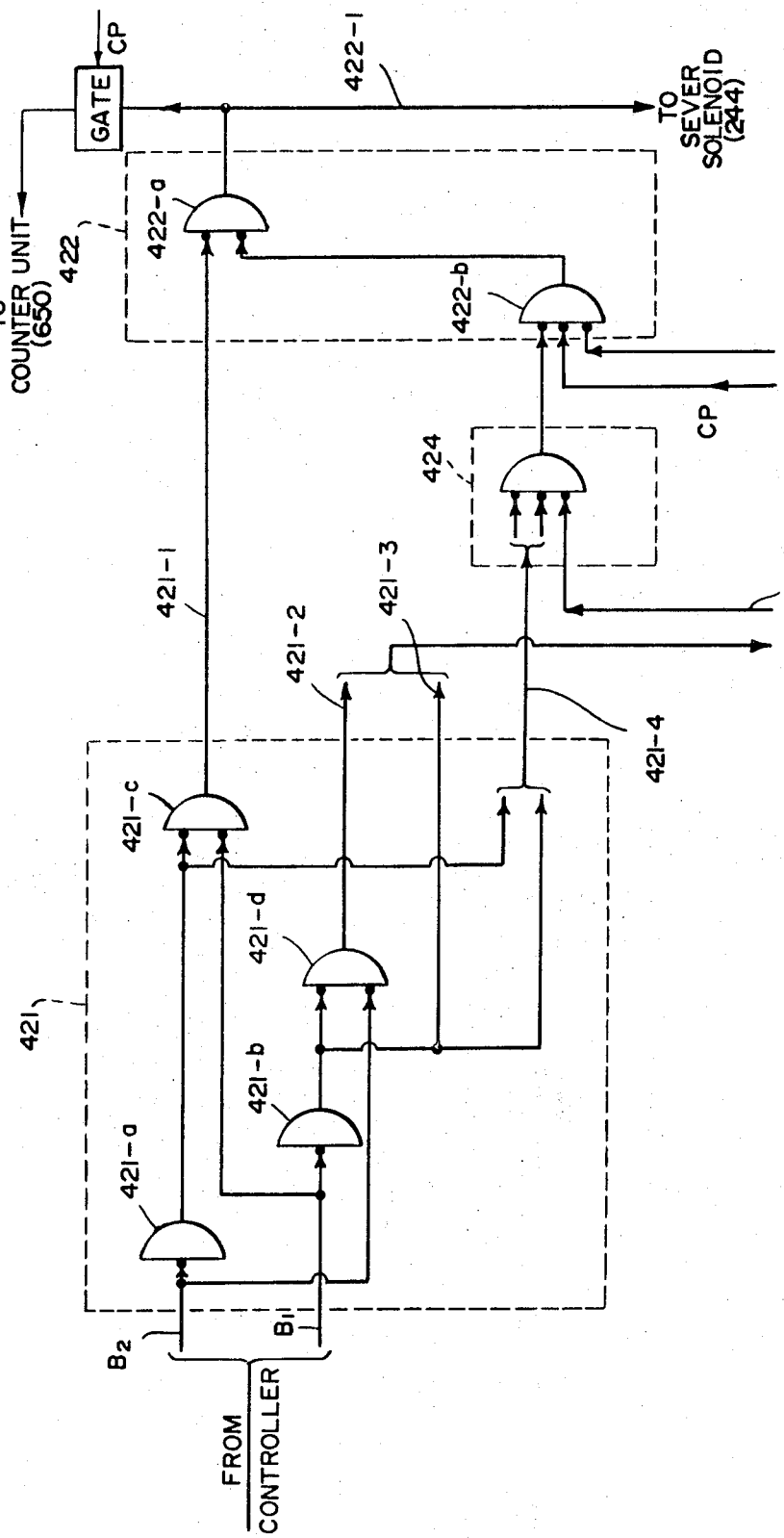

CP
GATE
422-1
TO SEVER SOLENOID (244)
TO COUNTER UNIT (650)
422
422-a
422-b
Q (SECOND STAGE)
CP
Q (FIRST STAGE)
424
421-1
421-3
421-2
421-4
421-c
421-d
421
421-b
421-a
B2
B1
FROM CONTROLLER

FIG. 12A

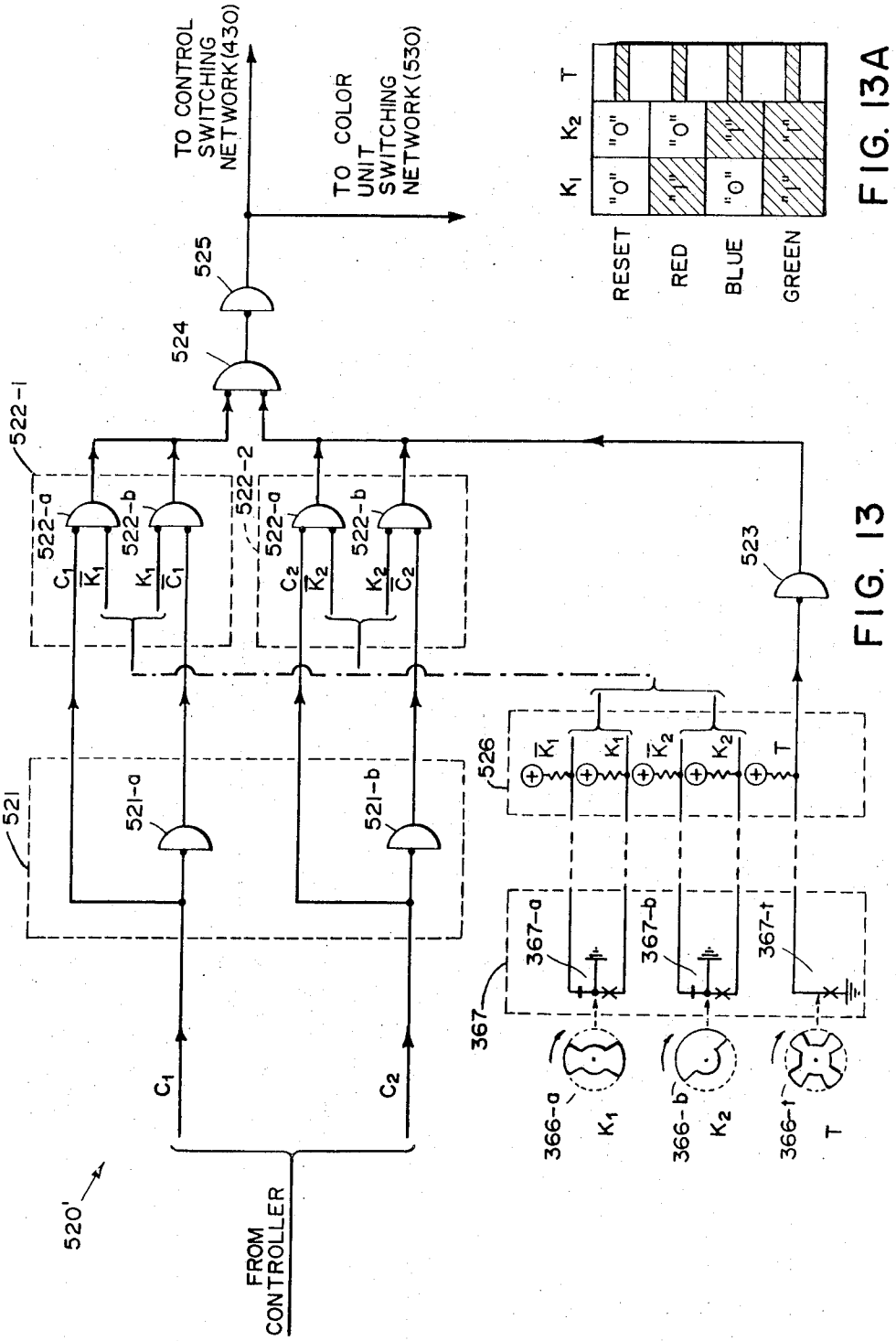


FIG. 13A

FIG. 13

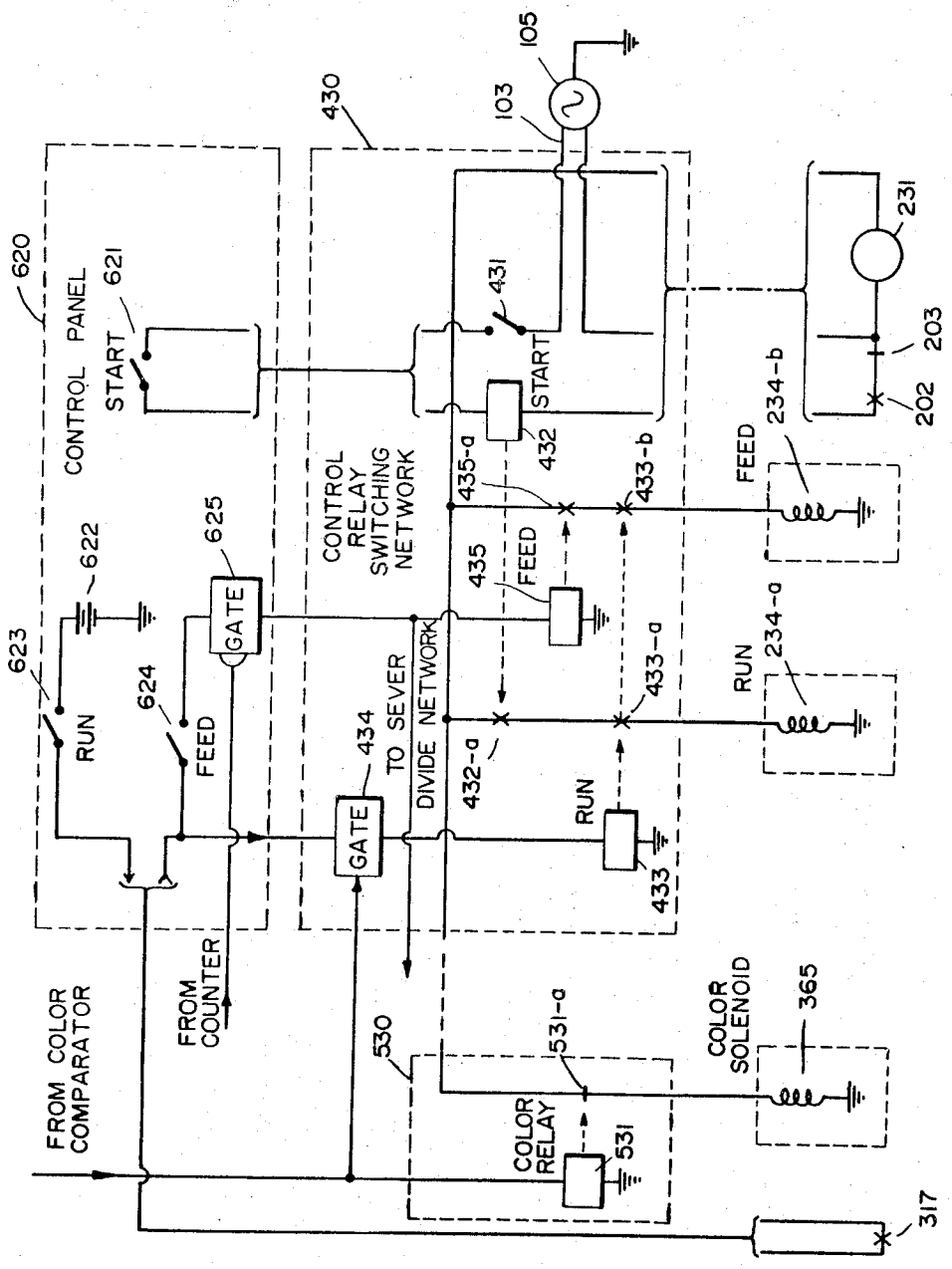

105
103
430
620
CONTROL PANEL
621
START
431
START
231
203
202
234-b
FEED
432
435-a
433-b
CONTROL RELAY SWITCHING NETWORK
622
625
GATE
435
FEED
623
RUN
624
FEED
434
TO SEVER DIVIDE NETWORK
433-a
234-a
RUN
432-a
GATE
RUN
433
FROM COLOR COMPARATOR
FROM COUNTER
530
531-a
COLOR SOLENOID
365
COLOR RELAY
531
317

FIG. 14

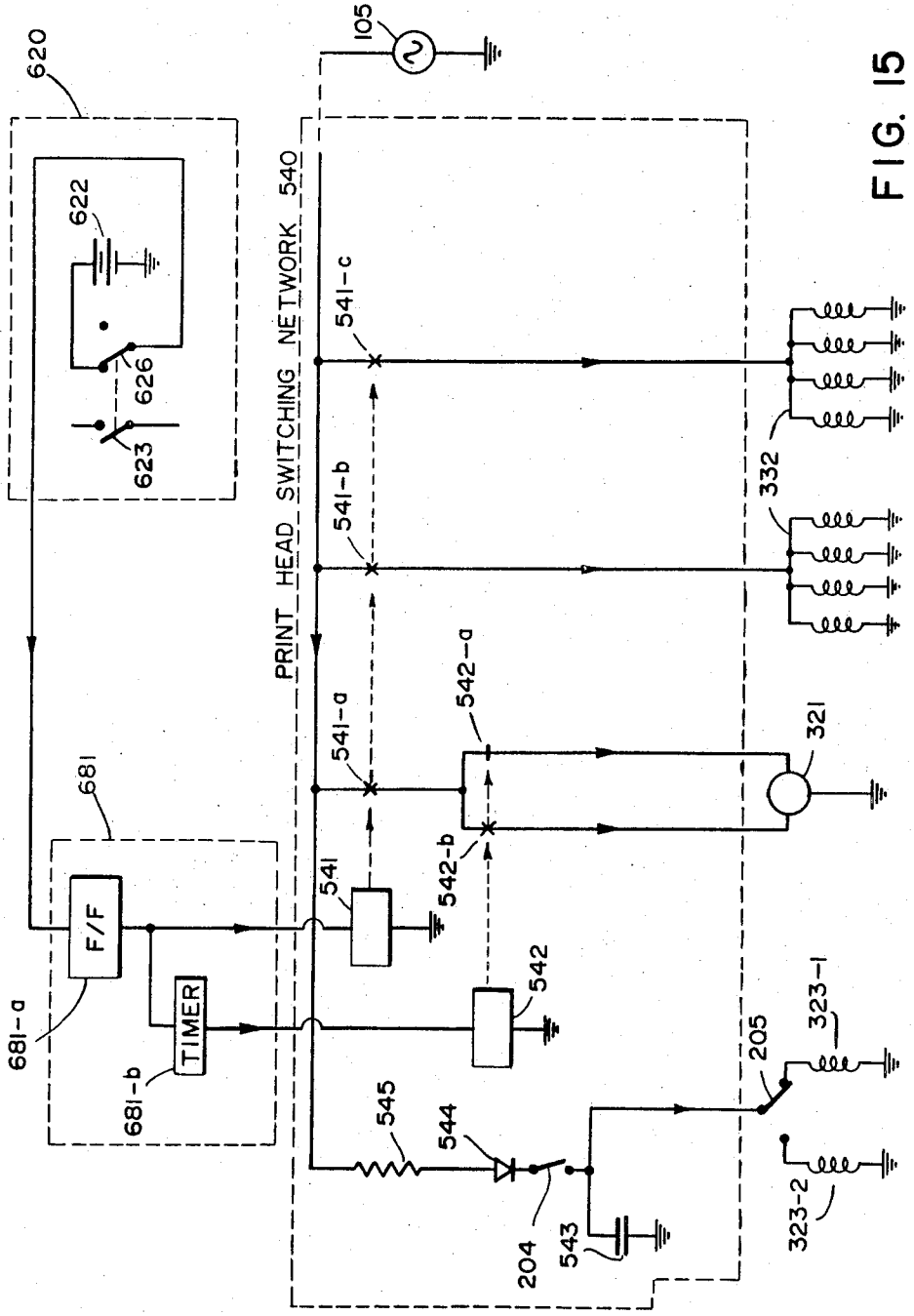

620
622
626
623
105
PRINT HEAD SWITCHING NETWORK 540
541-c
541-b
541-a
542-a
542-b
541
542
332
321
681
F/F
TIMER
681-a
681-b
545
544
543
204
205
323-1
323-2

FIG. 15

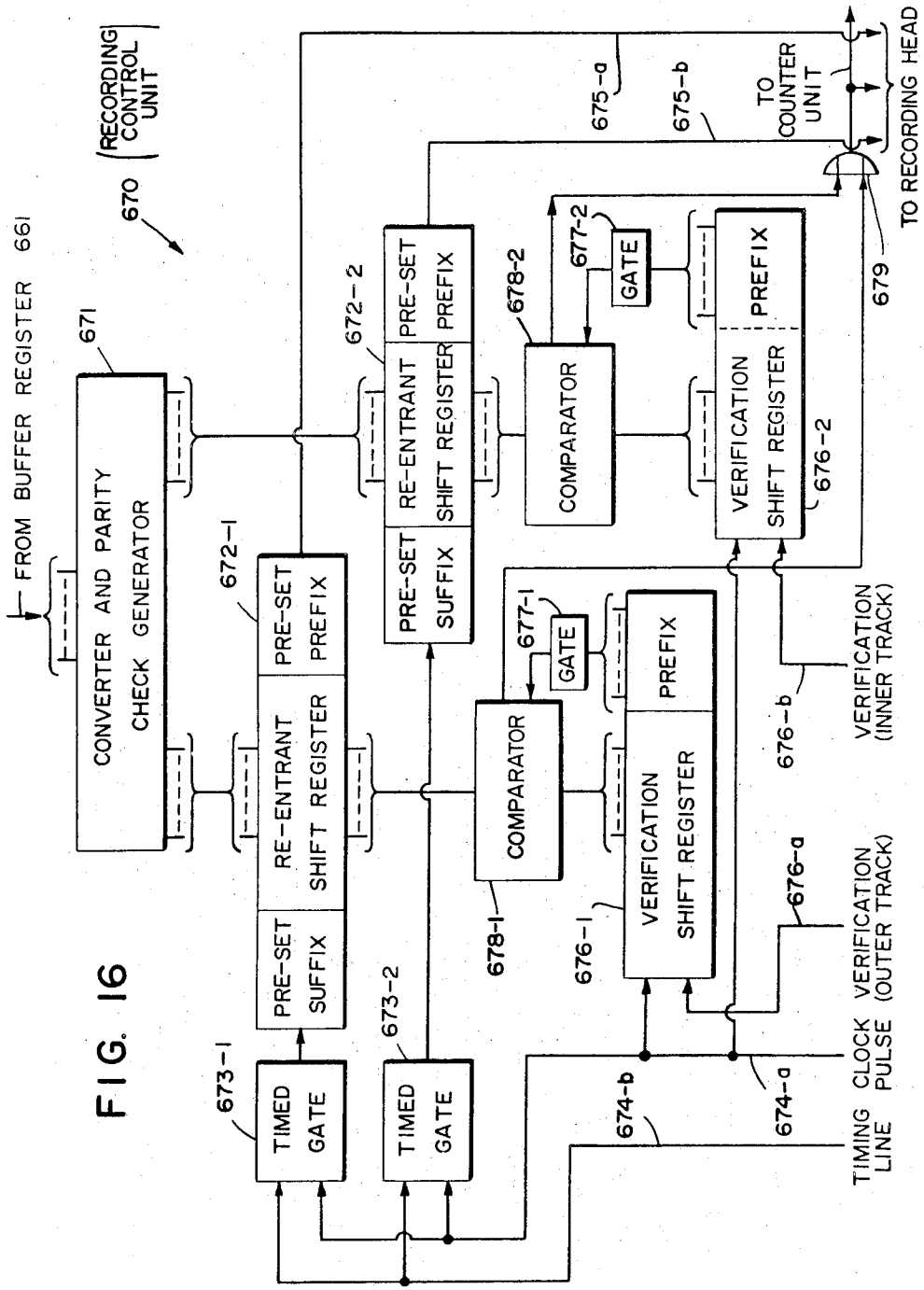
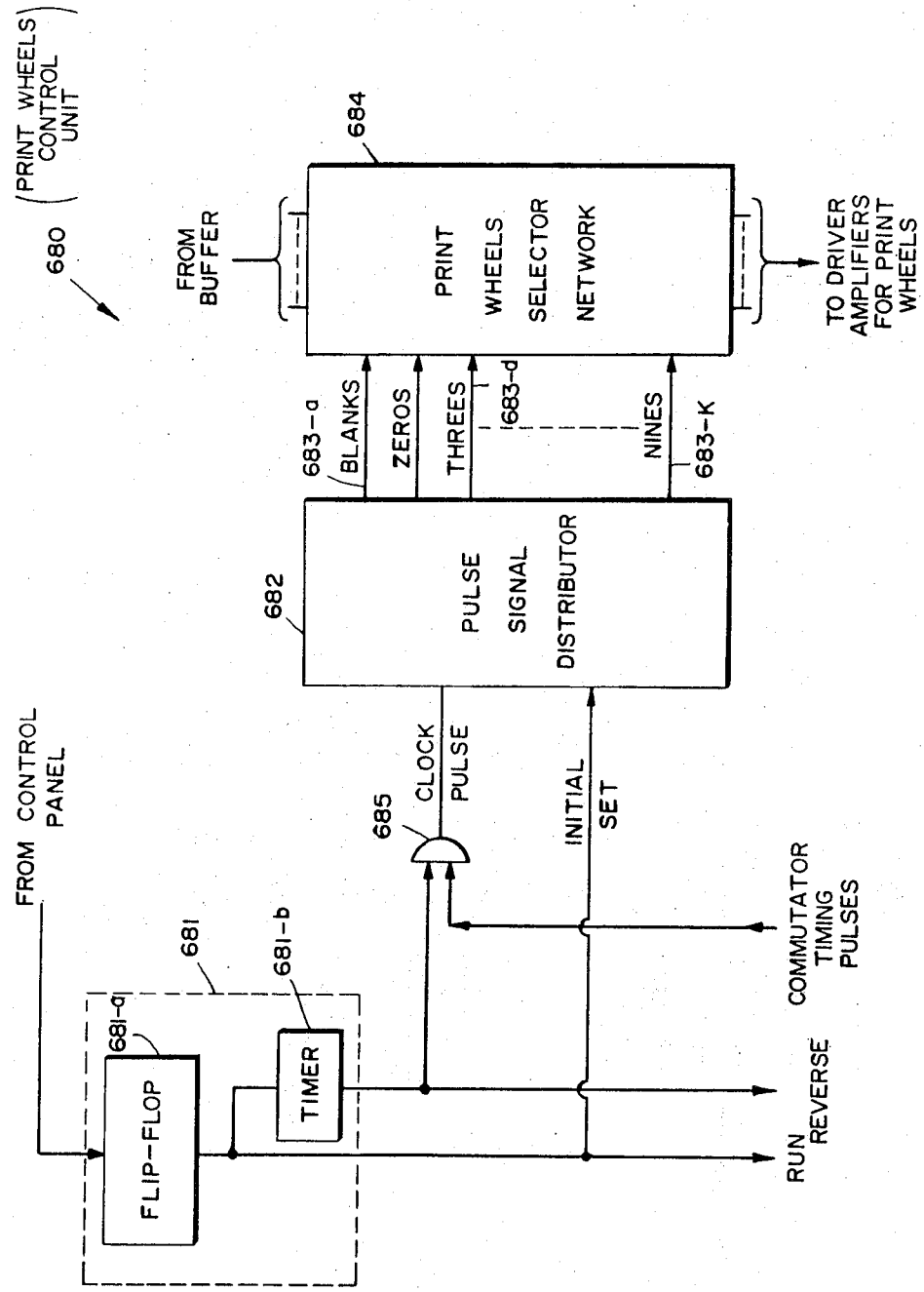

FROM BUFFER REGISTER 661
670
RECORDING CONTROL UNIT
671
CONVERTER AND PARITY CHECK GENERATOR
672-1
PRE-SET PREFIX
RE-ENTRANT SHIFT REGISTER
PRE-SET SUFFIX
672-2
PRE-SET PREFIX
RE-ENTRANT SHIFT REGISTER
PRE-SET SUFFIX
673-1
TIMED GATE
673-2
TIMED GATE
674-a
674-b
TIMING LINE
CLOCK PULSE
675-a
675-b
TO COUNTER UNIT
TO RECORDING HEAD
679
676-1
VERIFICATION SHIFT REGISTER
PREFIX
676-2
VERIFICATION SHIFT REGISTER
PREFIX
676-a
VERIFICATION (OUTER TRACK)
676-b
VERIFICATION (INNER TRACK)
677-1
GATE
677-2
GATE
678-1
COMPARATOR
678-2
COMPARATOR

FIG. 16

FIG. 17


(PRINT WHEELS CONTROL UNIT)
680
FROM BUFFER
684
PRINT WHEELS SELECTOR NETWORK
TO DRIVER AMPLIFIERS FOR PRINT WHEELS
683-a
BLANKS
ZEROS
THREES
683-d
NINES
683-K
682
PULSE SIGNAL DISTRIBUTOR
FROM CONTROL PANEL
685
CLOCK PULSE
INITIAL SET
COMMUTATOR TIMING PULSES
681
681-a
681-b
FLIP-FLOP
TIMER
RUN
REVERSE

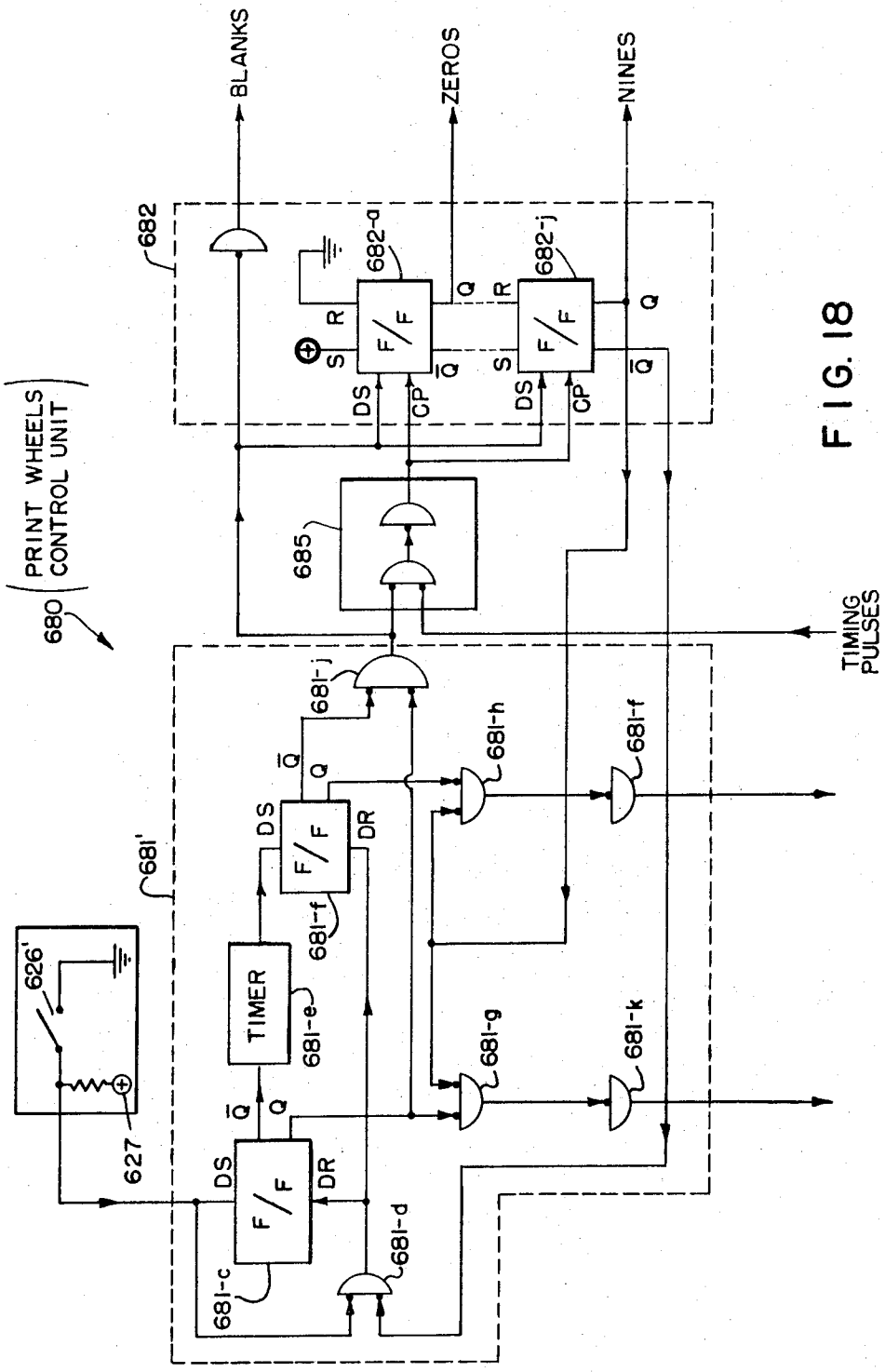

PRINT WHEELS CONTROL UNIT
680
BLANKS
ZEROS
NINES
682
682-a
682-j
F/F
R
S
Q
DS
CP
685
TIMING PULSES
681'
681-j
681-h
681-f
681-g
681-k
681-e
681-d
681-c
TIMER
626'
627
DR

FIG. 18

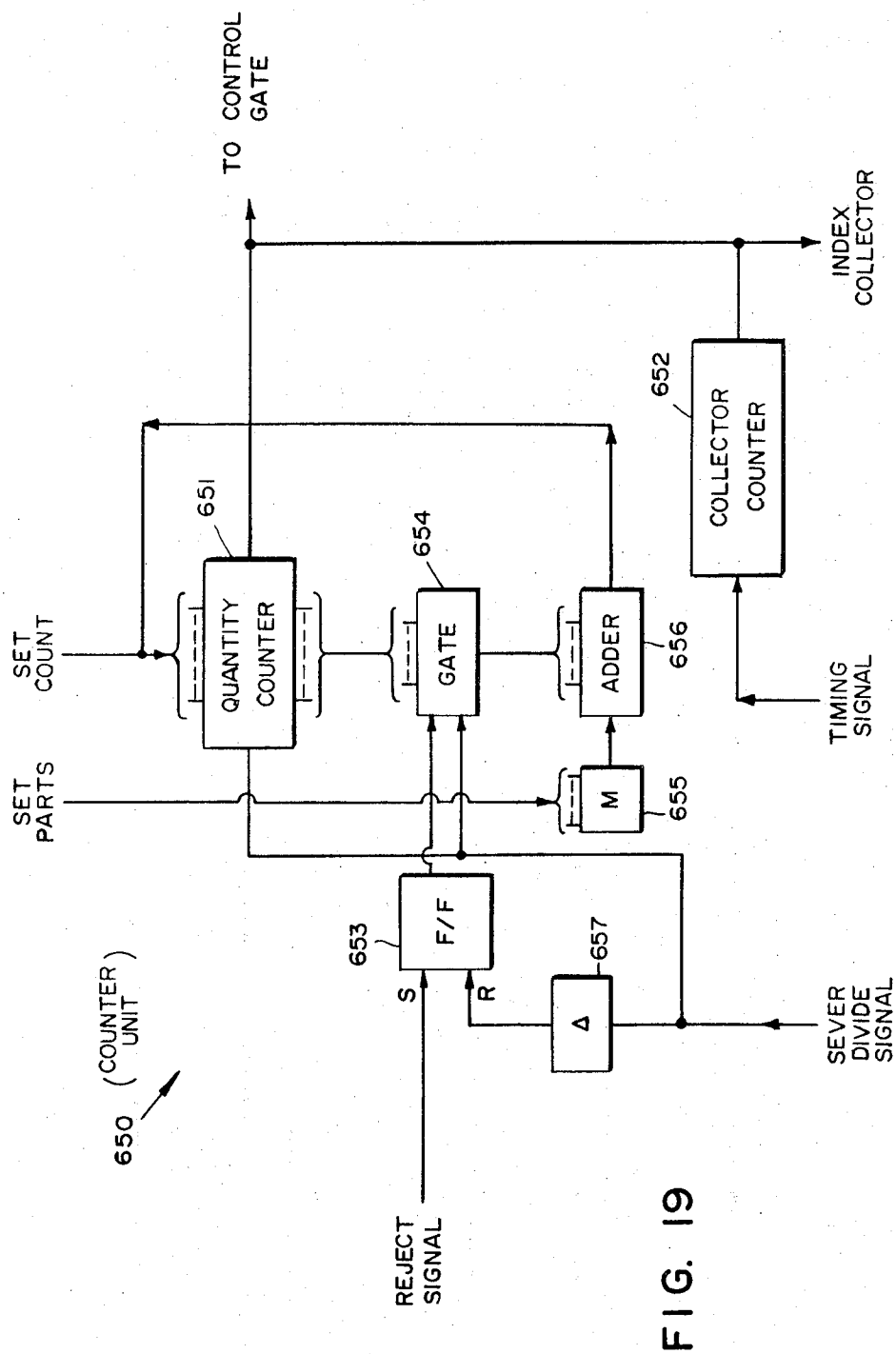

TO CONTROL GATE
INDEX COLLECTOR
652
COLLECTOR COUNTER
651
654
SET COUNT
QUANTITY COUNTER
GATE
ADDER
656
TIMING SIGNAL
SET PARTS
M
655
653
F/F
S
R
657
Δ
SEVER DIVIDE SIGNAL
650 (COUNTER UNIT)
REJECT SIGNAL

FIG. 19

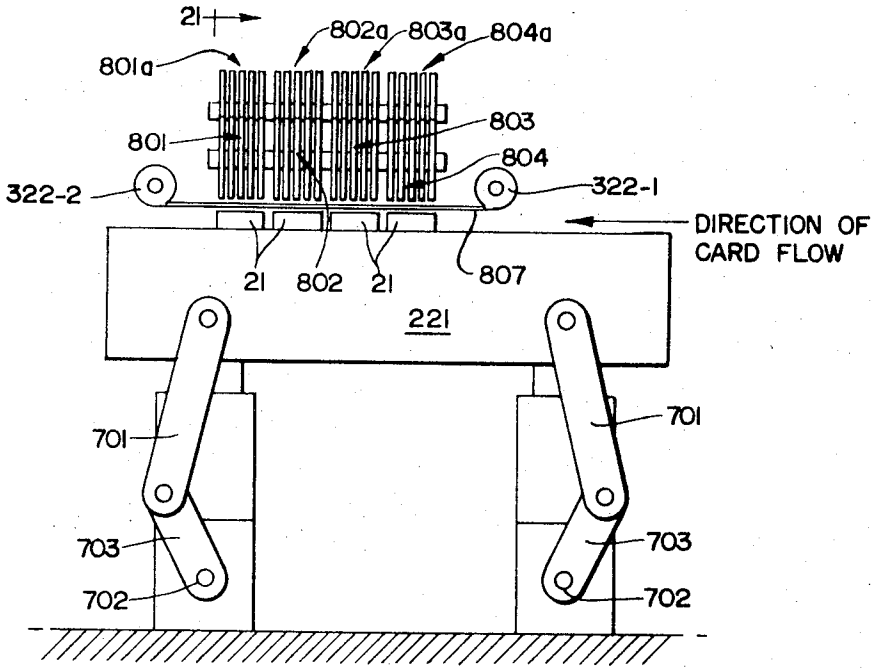


FIG. 20

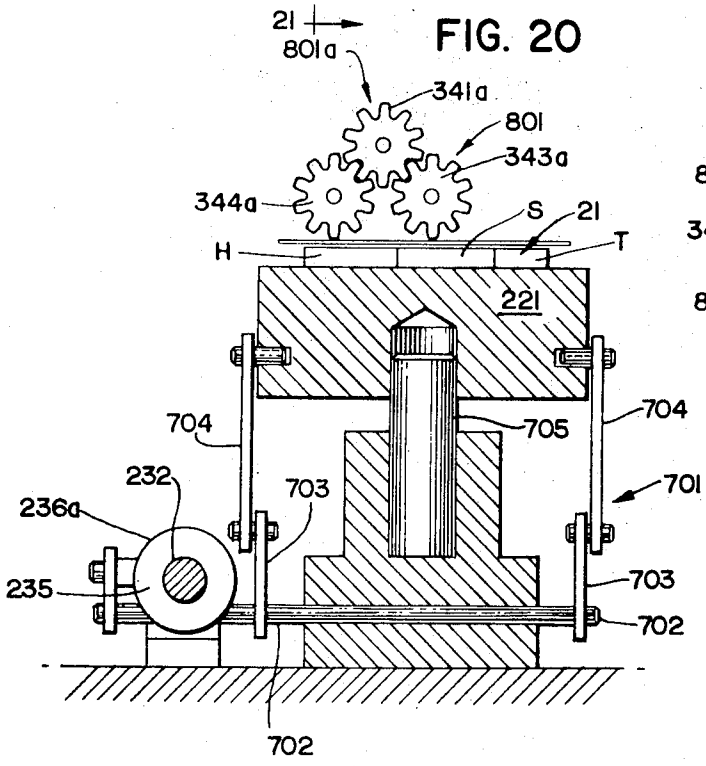


FIG. 21

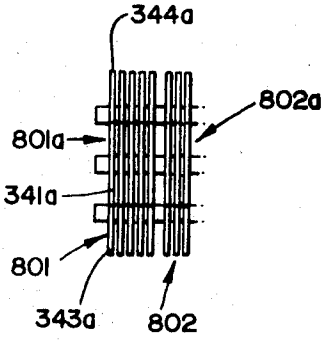


FIG. 22

VERIFICATION AND REJECT MARKING SYSTEM

This is a division, of application Ser. No. 786,813, filed on Dec. 9, 1968, now U.S. Pat. No. 3,662,362 which is a continuing application of U.S. application Ser. No. 681,765 filed Nov. 9, 1967 now abandoned.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to the marking of record members and, more particularly, to the marking of control tickets, such as those used for merchandise identification, classification and inventory control.

Frequent use is made of record members which carry control information. Typical examples are the ticketing of merchandise and the control of manufacturing work in process. It is advanteous for such control tickets to have a number of sections. One section can remain with the item for identification; the other sections are detached as needed.

When a detached section carries imprinted information it can be processed manually; however it is advantageous for each detached section to carry machine readable information so that the processing can be automated.

With many control tickets, the machine readable information appears in the form of punched perforations. Such perforations are undesirable. They detract from the appearance of the ticket; they cause confusion; and have to be sufficiently large for correct sensing by ticket reading equipment. As a result, there is a limit to the amount of machine readable information that can be entered on a ticket of specified size.

In the case of non-visually interpretable information, the occurrence of an error cannot be detected by physical inspection. Tickets that are erroneously marked could seriously disrupt the subsequent processing of control information.

The information entered on a ticket structure by a marking machine is ordinarily set by the manual manipulation of various keys and dials. This can be tedious and fatiguing for an operator and lead to setting errors. When the amount of information to be set is extensive, as is typically the case in modern merchandising and inventory control, the possibility of error is increased. In addition, because of the numerous variations characterizing even modest inventories, the length of the average ticket marking run is likely to be short, with the machine being re-set at the end of each different run. Where the number of runs is large, the cumulative time that is expended in making frequent changes of setting can become appreciable. Another consideration is that the marking information generally originates away from the machine site. The result is further delay and likelihood of error between the time the information becomes available and the time that it is actually set on the machine.

Once the information to be printed has been specified, it is advantageous for the corresponding marking instrumentalities of the machine to be set collectively. This reduces the amount of time expended in each setting operation. Even when accomplished directly at the machine site, the collective setting of print wheels generally involves components of considerable bulk and mechanical complexity. Where the print wheels are to be set remotely, the problems of structural bulk and complexity are increased.

In addition to printing, other forms of visual marking are often desirable on a ticket structure. For example, selective tickets may have a color mark to indicate the category of the associated item or a change in the information originally marked. For flexibility in color marking, the number of different colors should be appreciable.

In addition to the information that is marked on the ticket structure, it is desirable to specify other matters at the remote location, such as various control operations, the number of tickets to be marked and the number of parts in each ticket. In doing so, account must be taken of the fact that many of the ultimate operations of a marking machine are mechanical in nature.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with still a further aspect of the invention, the information which is recorded upon ticket is specified at a remote location and is verified there by having a reading operation follow each writing operation. When there is a failure of verification, a signal is generated to operate a reject marking unit at the machine.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Other aspects of the invention will become apparent after considering several illustrative embodiments, taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

FIGS. 1 through 3 are general views illustrating a ticket marking system in accordance with the invention as follows:

FIG. 1 is an overall perspective view of the marking system;

FIG. 1A is a plan view of the front side of a multiple ticket produced by the system of FIG. 1;

FIG. 1B is a plan view of the reverse side of the ticket of FIG. 1A;

FIG. 2 is a key to the general block diagram of the marking system of FIG. 1, as set forth in FIGS. 2A through 2C; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective veiw illustrating ticket feed in the marking system of FIG. 1.

FIGS. 4 through 11 are views of the machine portion of the system and its constituents as follows:

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the marking machine with its cover removed;

FIGS. 4A and 4B are graphs illustrating ticket feed and bed movement in the machine of FIG. 4;

FIG. 5 is a perspective rear view of the machine of FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of timing signal generators in the machine of FIG. 4;

FIG. 6A is a graph of the timing pulse signals produced by the generators of FIG. 6;

FIG. 7 is a partial perspective view of a recording head and associated control linkages for the machine of FIG. 4;

FIG. 7A is a fragmentary view of FIG. 7;

FIG. 7B is a graph illustrating the motion of the linkages of FIG. 7;

FIG. 8 is a fragmentary perspective view of an alternative timing mechanism for controlling magnetic recording in the machine of FIG. 4;

FIG. 9 is an end view showing the output side of the machine of FIG. 5;

FIG. 10 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of a print head for the machine of FIG. 4;

FIGS. 10A and 10B are diagrams of alternative print wheels for the machine of FIG. 4;

FIG. 11 is a fragmentary perspective view of a color mark unit for the machine of FIG. 4; and

FIGS. 12 through 15 are views of constituents for the interface portion of a ticket marking system in accordance with the invention as follows:

FIG. 12 is a block and a schematic diagram of a sever divide network for the system of FIG. 1 and the interface of FIG. 2B;

FIG. 12A is a schematic diagram of a control gating arrangement for the network of FIG. 12;

FIG. 13 is a block and schematic diagram of an illustrative color comparator for the system of FIG. 1 and the interface of FIG. 2B;

FIG. 13A is a diagram illustrating the operation of cam segments used with the color comparator of FIG. 13.

FIG. 14 is a schematic diagram of a control relay switching network and a color unit switching network for the interface of FIG. 2B; and

FIG. 15 is a schematic diagram of a print head switching network for the interface of FIG. 2B.

FIGS. 16 through 19 are views of constituents for the controller portion of a ticket marking system in accordance with the invention as follows:

FIG. 16 is a block diagram of a recording control unit for the controller of FIG. 2A;

FIG. 17 is a block diagram of a print wheels control unit for the controller of FIG. 2A;

FIG. 18 is a block diagram of an alternative print wheels control unit for the controller of FIG. 2A;

FIG. 19 is a block diagram of a counter unit for the controller of FIG. 2A.

FIG. 20 is a side view, partially in diagrammatic form, showing the location of the print means, the ticket, and the mechanism for moving the bed of the marking system; and

FIG. 21 is a sectional view, partially in diagrammatic form, taken along line 21—21 of FIG. 20.

FIG. 22 is a top plan view of the print wheels and setting gears according to the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Turning to the drawings, an overall marking system 100 in accordance with the invention is illustrated in FIG. 1 as formed by three units: a marking machine 200–300, an interface 400–500 and a controller 600.

The machine 200–300 is capable of being operated remotely from the controller 600 by electrical signals sent over a connecting cable 101, through the interface 400–500, and over a connecting cable 102 in order to produce single or multiple control tickets from a stock 20 of ticket material in a supply bin 210. Power for the machine 200–300 is supplied from the interface 400–500 through a cable 103; the controller 600 is powered separately through a cable 104.

The stock 20 of ticket material is fed through the machine 200–300 over the bed of a feed mechanism 220 and subjected to selected operations. The latter includes the marking operations of printing and magnetic recording, following which completed tickets enter the hoppers 311 of a collector 310.

A representative multiple ticket 21 produced by the system 100 of FIG. 1 is shown in front and reverse views by FIGS. 1A and 1B, respectively. The ticket 21 is multi-part with two-parts 21-1 and 21-2 joined together by narrow land areas 22. In addition, each part 21-1 or 21-2 is multiplex with a triplex of a header *h*, stub *s*, and tab *t*.

The front surface of the ticket 21 (FIG. 1A), which is illustratively used in merchandising, is imprinted by instrumentalities in a print head 320 of the marking machine 200–300 with information such as (1) catalog number, (2) size, (3) color, etc. The reverse surface (FIG. 1B) bears a coating 23 of magnetizable material for receiving code signal counterparts of the imprinted merchandising information. The code signals are applied by a recording head (not visible in FIG. 1) positioned within the marking machine 200–300 below the bed of the feed mechanism 220.

The only apertures in the ticket structure 21 of FIGS. 1A and 1B are centering holes 24 for positioning the ticket with respect to the recording head and string holes 25 by which the ticket 21 can be attached to an item of merchandise, such as a garment. Accordingly, the resulting ticket is not disfigured by randomly appearing punch marks of the kind characterizing other marking systems.

The merchandising information marked on the ticket 21 of FIGS. 1A and 1B is specified at the controller 600 of FIG. 1. Illustratively, that information, as well as other control information, is pre-coded on punched cards 610 which are read by suitable units within the controller 600. Other control signals can be established by operating selected switches of a control panel 620.

Information and control signals from the controller 600 are sent to or through the interface 400–500. The signals that terminate at the interface 400–500 are converted to form suitable for operating relays and drive motors at the machine 200–300. For that purpose the interface 400–500 contains a number of banks of printed circuit cards, of which one such card 410 has been partially withdrawn from an intermediate bank.

The particular interface unit of FIG. 1 is intended for storage within the base 201 of the marking machine 200–300, as indicated by the dashed-line arrow. The interface 400–500 could alternatively be located in or near the controller 600. When the controller 600 is intended for a remote location it is desirable for the equipment at the actual marking location to be adaptable to other kinds of remote controllers, such as a unit permitting the manual setting of marking indicia, or a general purpose computer. Consequently, the interface 400–500 can also be regarded as a conversion unit to enable input signals to be applied from a wide variety of control equipment.

In addition to signals from the controller 600, the interface 400–500 also accommodates signals from the machine 200–300, some of which are used at the interface, while others are channeled directly to the controller 600.

I. GENERAL BLOCK DIAGRAM CONSIDERATION OF THE SYSTEM

General constituents of the various units 800–300, 400–500 and 600 of FIG. 1 are outlined by the block diagram of respective FIGS. 2A through 2C of FIG. 2.

At the controller **600** (FIG. 2A) the information carried by the punched cards **610** specifies (1) the number of tickets to be marked; (2) the number of parts in each ticket; (3) the color of any desired color mark; and (4) the information to be printed and recorded. This information is converted into coded electrical form by a card reader **640.**

Signals from the card reader **640** corresponding to the first three categories of the input information respectively enter (1) a counter unit **650** of the controller **600** in order to specify ticket quantity; (2) a sever divide network **420** in the control portion **401** of the interface **400–500** (FIG. 2B) in order to specify the number of parts per ticket; and (3) a color comparator **520** in the information setting portion **501** of the interface **400–500** in order to specify the desired color mark. Signals from the fourth category of information, indicating what is to be printed and recorded, enter the storage register of a signal distributor **660** in the controller **600.**

The signals stored at the distributor **660** are used for setting the printing instrumentalities of the machine **200–300** (FIG. 2C) before ticket feed commenses and for magnetic recording and reading during feed.

To set the printing instrumentalities, a switch is operated at the control panel **620.** This actuates a drive motor **321** at the print head **320** of the machine **200–300** through relays **540** at the interface **400–500.** Operation of the drive motor **321** produces timing signals which are transmitted through an amplifier **511** of the interface **400–500** to the controller. The timing signals indicate when the printing instrumentalities are at various positions, and act with the stored information of the distributor **660** to control setting solenoids at the machine **200–300** through solenoid drivers **550.**

Once the print head has been set, the machine is placed in operation by pressing "start", "run" and "feed" buttons at the panel **620.** These buttons activate relays of a switching network **430** in the interface **400–500.** The relays in turn control run and feed solenoids at the machine **200–300.**

In the machine **200–300,** the feed bed can be considered as having three consecutive portions **221-1, 221-2, 221-3,** each including a number of stations that are individually the width of one ticket part, e.g. the width of ticket part **21-1** or **21-2** shown in FIGS. **1A** and **1B.** The sections **221-1, 221-2** and **221-3** are respectively devoted to (1) control operations, (2) printing operations and (3) other marking operations. For the particular embodiment of FIG. **2,** the ticket parts from the supply **210** remain joined together by land areas until they reach a sever assembly **240** between the control section **221-1** and the printing section **221-2.**

Station-by-station movement of ticket parts over the feed bed **221-1** through **221-3** is illustrated by the progression of ticket parts indicated in the direction of the solid arrows in FIG. **3.** The progression is continuous except at either the beginning or the end of a ticket marking run. The various ticket groupings shown in FIG. **3** correspond to the bed portions **221-1** through **221-3** of FIG. **2.**

Over the control portion **221-1** of the bed, adjoining ticket parts are interconnected by narrow land areas, as is the stock **20** at the supply source **210.** Ticket feed over the bed is initiated by a central feed finger **222** and edge pawls **223.** Other edge pawls **223,** of which only representative ones are shown, are present at each station over the marking portions **221-2** and **221-3** of the machine bed.

Between the control section **221-1** and the printing section **221-2** the sever mechanism **240** is selectively operated to cut the land areas joining the ticket parts. Illustratively, the sever mechanism **240** is operated by the divider network **420.** The latter receives a timing pulse from a timing mechanism **250** through an amplifier **411** each time a ticket is advanced along the bed of the machine. Thus, if the divider network **420** is set to divide by three, i.e. produce an output pulse for each three input pulses, the result is a three-part ticket shown illustratively in FIG. **3** at the printing grouping **221-2** and at the other marking ticket grouping **221-3.**

Beginning with the printing portion of the feed, the stations of FIG. **3** are numbered sequentially from **1** through **16.** Printing takes place simultaneously on the header and the remainder of each ticket part, one line at a time, at stations **3, 5, 7** and **9.** These printing stations are respectively for the first or top line, the second line, the third line, and the fourth or bottom line.

The printing instrumentalities are set from the controller **600** through the interface **400–500,** making use of timing signals from the machine **200–300.**

The set of stations following printing, namely stations **10** through **16,** is devoted to other kinds of marking operations. The first such marking operation is at station **13** where each ticket part receives code signals on its underside coating of magnetic material, shown in dotted outline, by a facing recording unit **350** (FIG. **2**) under the control of timing signals supplied to the signal distributor **660** from the timing assembly **250** through an amplifier **512.** Provision is also made for verifying the recorded information. For that purpose the recorded information is read and compared with the stored information at the controller **600.** If there is a failure of comparison, the ticket part is rejected at the next marking station, number **15,** by operation of a stamp bearing the letters "VOID" as shown.

The last marking station for the feed depicted in FIG. **3** is at station **16** where a color mark can be imprinted on the ticket part from a setting made by the controller **600.** On the next cycle of machine operation, the completed three-part ticket enters a hopper of the collector **310.**

II. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE MARKING MACHINE

Perspective views of the marking machine **200–300** of FIG. **1** with its cover removed, are set forth in FIGS. **4** and **5,** from the front and rear respectively. The base **201** of the machine serves as a cabinet for the interface unit **400–500** (FIG. **1**).

Mounted above the base **201** is the bed and feed mechanism **220.** The mechanism **220** is an adaptation of similar structure disclosed in detail by U.S. Pat. No. 2,890,650 which issued to A. R. Bone et al. on June 16, 1959.

In addition to the bed and feed mechanism **220,** the machine **200–300** includes (1) a print head module **320,** shown in its hinged opened position above the bed **221** in the front view FIG. **4** and in its hinged closed position in the rear of FIG. **5;** (2) recording unit **350** positioned beneath the bed **221** near its output end; (3) a rotatable color mark unit **360** mounted above the bed

221 beyond the recording unit 350 and (5) an indexable collector 310 for completed tickets at the output end of the bed 221.

During operation of the bed and feed mechanism 220, a drive motor 231 produces rotation of a drive shaft 232 (FIG. 4) through a clutch 233. Each rotation of the drive shaft 232 constitutes a feed and marking cycle of the machine.

Actuation of the clutch 233 to bring about the operation of the drive shaft 232 is through a run solenoid 234-a which couples the drive gear of the motor 231 to a driven gear of the shaft 232. Details of the clutch mechanism are disclosed in the Bone patent referenced above.

The drive shaft 232 includes a cam 235 (FIG. 4) for operating a slide (not visible in FIG. 4) beneath the bed 221 to which the ticket feed pawls 223 (FIG. 3) are attached. The slide and the attachment of the feed pawls 223 are similar to what is disclosed in the Bone patent.

Once the pawls are operative, they are brought into contact with the stock 20 of ticket material by actuation of a feed solenoid 234-b which brings about the lowering of a lift finger, of the kind disclosed in the Bone patent, to bring the tickets into engagement with the feed pawls. This engagement is promoted by the use of a weight 238 above the bed. At the end of a ticket run, the solenoid 234-b is deactuated so that the lift finger can rise through an aperture of the bed and lift the stock out of contact with the bed pawls.

The feed pawls reciprocate longitudinally. This motion advances the ticket material by one station per cycle as shown graphically in FIG. 4A. During approximately the first 60° of drive shaft rotation, the feed pawls engage the edgewise feed slots of the ticket parts (FIG. 3) and move forwardly to carry the ticket part to the next station. The feed pawls dwell at the next station for about 20°, following which there is a return movement. The feed pawls then dwell at the return station for about 220° until the next operating cycle.

Besides the cam 235, the bed mechanism includes additional cams 236-a and 236-b, see FIGS. 4, 20 and 21 which operate through followers 701 (only one is shown in FIGS. 20 and 21) to rock shafts 702, which shafts are connected by toggles 703 and 704 to lift and lower the bed 221. In addition there are provided pins 705 (only one of which is shown in FIG. 21) which slide within the bed 221 to guide the bed 221 during its up and down motion. A description of the bed reciprocating means disclosed herein is shown in prior art U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,036,520; 2,890,650; 3,095,807 and 2,968,236 all of which are incorporated herein by reference hereto.

The movement corresponding to the motion of cams 236-a and 236-b is illustrated graphically by FIG. 4B. Initially, the feed bed 221 is in its lowermost position. After approximately 30° of dwell at the beginning of each operating cycle, the bed rises harmonically over about 90° of drive shaft rotation. At the end of this movement, the bed has reached its maximum height and the ticket parts at various stations are in full contact with the various printing and marking instrumentalities above the bed. Following the peak of its rise, the bed executes a rectograde return movement for about the next 90° of drive shaft rotation. The bed thereafter dwells at its lowermost position for approximately 150° until the next cycle.

The upward motion of the bed 221 is also important in conjunction with the operation of the sever assembly 240 by which the severing of single or multi-part tickets takes place from the stock 20 of ticket material.

The sever assembly 240 includes pivoted arms 241-a and 241-b, shown respectively in FIGS. 4 and 5. Each arm has a reversed L-shaped aperture that receives a lateral pin of a spring loaded sever bar 242. The bar 242 is slidably mounted with respect to vertical positioning pins (not shown) of a stop bar 243. In the position indicated by FIG. 4, the bar 242 is carried upwardly as the bed rises, with its pins riding in the stem of the inverted "L." However, when the arms 241-a and 241-b are pivoted rearwardly by a solenoid 244 (FIG. 5) the pins of the bar 242 move from the stem into the base slot of the inverted "L" so that the bar is held in place and comes into contact with the ticket material when the bed again moves upwardly. To produce the severing illustrated by FIG. 3, the bar 242 includes punches for the land areas 21. The bar 242 alternatively can include a knife edge that extends from one side to the other of the bed 221.

Besides the cams 235, 236-a and 236-b the drive shaft 232 includes a timing cam assembly 250 and cams 261 and 271 for linkage assemblies 260 and 270. Cam assembly 250 is used in generating separate timing signals for severing and magnetic recording. Linkage assembly 260 is used to relieve tension on tickets in the vicinity of the recording units 350. Movement of the recording unit 350 is controlled by linkage assembly 270.

(A) TIMING CAM ASSEMBLY

Details of the timing cam assembly 250 are illustrated by the perspective view of FIG. 6. Separate disks 251-1 and 251-a are provided for general control timing and magnetic recording timing. Each disk includes a peripheral notch 252-1 or 252-2 that permits light from a bracket mounted lamp 253-1 or 253-2 to activate a photocell 254-1 or 254-2 during each notch interval. The positions and aperture openings of the disks 251-a and 251-b can be made adjustable. The supply voltage for the lamps 253-1 and 253-2 is applied in conventional fashion. The result, for each revolution of the drive shaft 232, is a control timing pulse signal applied to the interface 400–500 (FIG. 2) over a timing cable 255-1 and a record timing pulse applied over cable 255-2. The timing pulse signals are applied to respective amplifiers 411 and 511 which are of conventional design, desirably mounted on printed circuit boards, such as the board 410 of FIG. 1.

Illustrative timing pulse signals are shown in FIG. 6A. In a tested embodiment of the invention the time for each rotation of the drive shaft 232, and hence the machine cycle time, was about 400 milliseconds. The control timing pulse generated by the notch 252-1 appeared at the beginning of each cycle and endured for approximately 120°. Because of the radical displacement of the record timing disk 252-2 with respect to the control timing disk 252-1, there followed an interval of about 100° during which the disks 251-1 and 251-2 blocked their respective photocells and there was no timing output. The record timing pulse was then

generated for approximately 120°, leaving a no-output interval of about 20° until the end of the cycle.

As a result of the fixed interval between the different classes of timing pulses, the control operations, i.e. severing and the operation of the control relays, can be timed so as not to occur during recording. Actuation of a control relay invariably produces electrical disturbance effects. If magnetic recording were to take place at that time, there could be electrical interference with the code signals applied at the recording station. The fixed disposition of the timing disks **251-1** and **251-2** with respect to each prevents any such overlap, as could occur because of drift if an electronic delay unit were to be employed.

(B) LINKAGE ASSEMBLIES

The linkage assemblies **260** and **270** shown in detail by FIG. 7 control the operation of the marking machine in the vicinity of the recording station **13** of FIG. **3.**

Both sides of the feed bed **221** on the machine include gripper fingers **239.** These fingers serve to hold the ticket parts against the bed, but they have sufficient flexibility to permit ticket advance by the feed pawls. They are in the form of sections that span several stations of the bed.

The pressure exerted on the ticket parts by the gripper fingers **239** in the vicinity of the recording station is relieved by the action of the linkage assembly **260.** This permits proper positioning of each ticket before recording takes place.

For the oppositely positioned gripper fingers **239** in the vicinity of the recording station, one of which is shown in FIG. **7,** there is a lower spring flange **239-a** (FIG. 7A) that extends for the length of the gripper section. The spring flange **239-a** is mounted at a downward angle so that an upward component of thrust applied to it will produce an upward movement of the associated finger. The material of the flange **239-a** and the finger **239,** the angle between the two, and the point at which the thrust is imparted, determines the relative displacement of the finger with respect to the ticket **21** (FIG. 7A).

In the embodiment of FIGS. 7 and 7A, upward thrust is imparted to the flange **239-a** by a pressure release pin **262,** which is operated through the linkage mechanism **260** from the cam **261.**

During each rotation of the drive shaft **232** there is a point where the follower of the pivoted arm **263** enters a recess of the cam **261.** The resulting downward motion of the arm **263** is transmitted through a linkage **264** to arm **265.** The latter is affixed to a roll shaft **266** that is pivotally mounted beneath the bed **221.** An extension **267** of the arm **265** acts against the pressure release pin **262.** An arm (not shown) on the other side of the bed, similar to the extension **267** and affixed to the roll shaft **266,** controls a laterally opposite release pin (not shown). The shape of the arm **265** between the pivot point and the linkage **263** is governed by the structural configuration of the machine.

That portion of the machine cycle during which the pressure of the gripper fingers **239** is relieved is illustrated graphically by the solid line curve of FIG. **7B.** The gripper mechanism dwells for approximately 160° of drive shaft rotation and then causes a rise of the pressure release pin for about 30° followed by a dwell of 30° and a return of 30°. By comparison with the graphs of FIGS. **4A** and **4B,** it is seen that the pressure is not released until the ticket part has been advanced as far as it will go during the cycle. The pressure remains released for a short interval after the bed has returned to its original position.

While the gripper finger tension is being relieved at the recording station, the unit **350** of FIGS. **7** and 7A is being raised into position, where it remains for the approximate 105° dwell interval indicated by the dashed-line curve of FIG. 7C.

The recording unit **350,** as seen in FIG. 7A, is adapted for rotary operation. It has a cylindrical support **351** with two heads **352** and **353** that are of conventional construction and are used for both magnetic reading and writing. The center of the support **351** includes a spring-loaded spindle **354** about which rotation takes place. As a result, the recording pattern on the magnetically coated undersurface of the ticket **21** consists of two concentric tracks, one for each of the heads **352** and **353.**

The operation of raising and lowering the unit **350** when a ticket **21** is in position for recording serves to reduce wear on the heads **352** and **353** by the iron oxide of the ticket coating **23.** In addition, the transverse movement of the recording unit **350** facilitates the proper positioning of the ticket **21** with respect to the heads **352** and **353** by making use of the spindle **354** for centering.

Control over the transverse movement of the recording unit **350** is by the linkage mechanism **270** which converts the movement of the cam **271** into a swinging rotation of a transverse shaft **272.** The latter is connected to a toggle linkage **273** that is pivotally mounted on an L-shaped bracket **274** of the recording unit **350.** The bracket **274** is supported for vertical arcuate movement of a pair of linkages **275-1** and **275-2.**

In addition to carrying the recording unit **350,** the bracket **274** is connected to a mount for a locating pin **276.** Consequently, the transverse movement of the locating pin **276** is synchronized with that of the recording unit **350** and enters the string hole **25** of the ticket **21** before the spindle **354** engages the stub hole **24.** This fixes the ticket **21** in place and prevents inadvertent movement by virtue of the rotary contact of the moving heads **352** and **353** with the magnetically coated undersurface of the ticket **21.**

When the support **351** is in its transversely upward position, and while it is rotating, recording takes place by energizing the heads **352** and **353** from coils (not shown) positioned within the unit **350** and operated from the controller **600.** In a subsequent revolution of the support **351,** the magnetic field pattern produced in the coating during recording energizes internal coils that are used for reading the recorded information. This allows a comparison to verify the correctness of the recorded information with the signals stored at the distributor **660** (FIG. 2A).

From the curves of FIG. 7B it is seen that the gripper fingers **239** at the recording station return to gripping engagement with the ticket **21** while the unit **350** is in recording position. This creates a clamping effect on the ticket **21** and assists the locating pin **276,** as entered into the string hole **25,** in preventing inadvertent rotation of ticket **21.** The locating pin **276** is convexly tapered from its end to promote proper engagement with the string hole **25.**

The recording technique illustrated by the embodiment of FIG. **7** makes use of the fact that the forward

feed motion of the pawls has terminated by the time recording is to take place. This kind of recording makes use of a cyclic timing signal, such as that provided by the timing cam assembly **250** (FIG. **6**), to gate stored signals from the distributor **660** (FIG. **2A**) to the recording unit **350.** Where the recording support does not rotate continuously, the timing signal can also control an internal drive motor (not shown).

In place of circular recording, the invention also provides for linear recording by a substitute unit **350'** shown in FIG. **8.** The substitute unit **350'** makes use of a line of recording heads **355-1** through **355-8** for recording one binary code word at a time, followed by a line of reading heads **356-1** through **356-8** for verifying the correctness of what has been recorded. Each head records the electrical counterpart of a binary digit, or bit. There are eight heads in each line to allow for six data bits (to represent up to 64 alphanumeric characters), one party bit (for error checking) and one bit to serve as a clockpulse (for decoding). Where self-clocking is used only seven heads are needed.

The desired timing is obtained using a slide **224** (FIG. **8**) that is otherwise used for the feed pawls of the machine. As can be seen from the graph of FIG. **4A** the travel of the feed pawls is non-linear. Nevertheless, to facilitate decoding and reduce error, it is desirable for the recorded information to be of uniform density, i.e. linear in the direction of feed.

A linear recording pattern is obtained for the embodiment of FIG. **8,** despite the non-linearity of the feed motion, by the use of a slotted timing plate **225.** The plate **225** includes a set of slots **226,** therebeing one slot for each code word to be recorded. In addition, there are slots **227-1** and **227-2** to indicate the beginning and the end of each timing interval.

Each set of slots **226** and **227** is used with a photocell circuit **228** or **229.** The photocell circuit **228** includes a photocell **228-a** that is illuminated from above the plate **225** by a lamp **228-b** through a slit plate **228-c.** The photocell circuit **229** includes similar constituents **229-a, 229-b** and **229-c.**

As each slot of the timing plate **225** passes over its associated photocell **228-a** or **229-a** a pulse is produced. The slits of the plates **228-c** and **229-c** are narrower than the narrowest slot of the plate. This produces pulse signals with relatively abrupt transitions at their leading and trailing edges and promotes precision in timing.

(C) THE PRINT HEAD MODULE

Turning to the details of the print head module **320** of FIGS. **4** and **5,** a further view showing its drive motor **321** is given by FIG. **9.**

As indicated by FIGS. **4, 5** and **9** the print head module **320** includes four separate bays **331-1** through **331-4,** each containing two groups of print wheels. The print wheels of each individual bay are set simultaneously from the controller **600** (FIG. **2A**) and are then held in their set positions by solenoid actuated locking bails **332.**

The print head module **320** also includes mounting spindles **322-1** and **322-2** (FIG. **4**) for a ribbon (not shown) which is advanced by ribbon solenoids **323-1** and **323-2** during each machine cycle. Drive for the ribbon solenoids **323-1** and **323-2** is from the interface **400–500** (FIG. **1**) and is discussed below.

As shown by FIGS. **9** and **10,** the motor **321** is belted to a setting shaft **341.** A commutator disk **342** attached to the shaft **341** is used to generate the print head timing signals shown applied to the distributor **660** of FIG. **2A.**

Since the groups of print whels in adjoining bays **331-1** through **331-4** (FIG. **4**) are not axially aligned, conventional gearing is used for transmitting the motion of the setting shaft **341** for the first bay **331-1** successively to the non-axially aligned setting shafts of the other bays **331-2** through **331-4.**

Details of print wheel setting are illustrated by the partial perspective view of FIG. **10** for the first bay **331-1.** Within the bay **331-1,** there are two groups of print wheels on respective shafts **343** and **344,** of which, for simplicity, only a pair of selected members **343-a** and **344-a** are shown. In particular the print wheel **344-a** is used to print the righthand character of the price line on the header *h* of FIG. **1A,** while the print wheel **343-a** is used to print the right-hand character on the tab portion of the ticket in FIG. **1A.**

For a full complement of print wheels, there are five on each of the shafts **343** and **344,** since both the fourth line of printing on the header *h* and the line of printing on tab *t* have five numeric characters in the illustrative two-part ticket **21** of FIG. **1A.** The other lines have 10 characters each and their bays **331-2** through **331-4** contain two sets of 10 print wheels each.

The representatives print wheels **343-a** and **344-a** in FIG. **10** have 12 teeth each, the first 10 of which are faced with prescribed alphanumeric characters. The eleventh tooth is for a null character, i.e. a blank setting; while the 12th tooth is for re-setting. Since there are 10 character positions, any of the 10 numbers may be included. Alternatively, some of the characters may be non-numeric and used to imprint color or size. The particular print wheel configuration of FIG. **10** is merely illustrative.

The print wheels **343-a** and **344-a** are mounted for independent rotation on their respective shafts **343** and **344,** being held in place by fixed retaining rings **343-b** and **344-b.** Consequently, when the wheels are obstructed, their shafts can continue rotating.

Rotation of the print wheel shafts **343** and **344** takes place from the setting shaft **341** through conventional gearing. The print wheels **343-a** and **344-a** have a setting gear **341-a** that is slippably mounted on the setting shaft **341,** being in side contact with a spring disk **341-c.** As a result, rotation of the setting shaft **341,** produces rotation of the setting gear **341-a.** It is to be understood that a similarly mounted setting gear is employed with the other print wheels ordinarily found in the bay **331-1.**

The teeth of the setting gear **341-a** are in mesh with those of the print wheels **343-a** and **344-a.** In addition, the setting gear **341-a** is engaged by an arm **345-a** of a setting solenoid **345-1.**

Since the setting gear **341-a** and the enmeshed print wheels **343-a** and **344-a** are slippably mounted on their respective shafts, the print wheels cannot rotate if the arm of the solenoid is in place, even though the drive motor **321** is operating and its shafts **343** and **344** are turning.

The setting gear on each other pair of print wheels has such a setting solenoid **345,** some of which are visible in FIG. **5.**

Accordingly, before the print wheels **343**-a and **344**-a can be set, the setting solenoid **345-1** is activated to withdraw its arm **345**-a from the setting gear **341**-a, allowing the latter to rotate with the print wheels **343**-a and **344**-a.

The setting gear rotates through the teeth of a comb structure **333** that spans the sidewalls (not shown in FIG. **10**) of the bay **331-1** and is positioned between the groups of print wheels as indicated in FIG. **4.** In addition, the setting gear **341**-a includes a stop pin **341**-b on one of its teeth. When the stop pin encounters the side of a tooth of the comb **333,** rotation of the setting gear **341**-a terminates even if the shaft **341** continues to rotate. The location of the pin **341**-b is such that when it is stopped by a tooth of the comb **333,** the print wheels have null characters, or blanks, in printing position.

During rotation of the setting shaft **341,** the commutator disk **342** generates timing signals for the controller **600** of FIG. 2A. The commutator includes apertures **342**-a corresponding to the various positions adopted by the print wheels **343**-a and **344**-a. As the comutator **342** is rotated to permit light from a source **346** to pass through the apertures **342**-a, a photocell **347** is energized.

Accordingly, to set the wheels of the print head module **320,** each setting solenoid of the module, such as solenoid **345-1** of FIG. **10,** is energized to release the associated print wheel setting gear. The setting shaft **341** (FIGS. **9** and **10**) is then driven in one direction of rotation by the drive motor **321** until all of the print wheels are returned to their blank positions, i.e. re-set.

Subsequently, the direction of rotation of the setting shaft **341** is reversed and the timing signals generated from the commutator **342** are coordinated with the setting information at the controller **600** until, for each pair of print wheels, the number of timing pulses corresponds to the position desired. A setting solenoid is then de-activated to stop the setting gear and the associated print wheels. If more than one pair of print wheels is to be set for the same printing position, their setting gear solenoids are de-activated simultaneously.

When the setting cycle is completed, the solenoids of the locking bales **332** are de-activated to align the print wheels by group and provide further locking.

In the embodiment of FIG. **10,** the movement of the print wheels **343**-a and **344**-a is terminated at their re-set position by having the stop pin **341**-b of the setting gear **341**-a contact a tooth on the comb structure **333.** Alternatively, the print wheels can be stopped by having adjoining teeth filled (FIG. **10**A) so that rotation of the setting gear cannot continue beyond the re-set position. Another alternative is to employ a raised tooth on each print wheel (FIG. **10**B) or on the setting gear. Such a tooth can terminate rotation by contacting another gear or wheel or a stop of the housing.

FIGS. **20** thru **22** show diagrammatically four groups **801-804** of print wheels, normally supported within the bays **331-1** through **331-4** (FIG. **4**) as described above. It should be understood that within each bay there are two groups of print wheels in a side by side relationship as described in the description of FIG. **10** such that a line of the head of the ticket **21** may be printed at the same time that a line of the stub or tab of the ticket **21** is printed. In FIG. **20,** each group is shown with five print wheels and in addition, there is shown groups **801**a–**804**a of five setting gears each for driving the print wheels of each group or row positioned within each bay. In FIG. **21,** there is shown, two print wheels **343***a* and **344***a* (see also FIG. **10**) of the two groups of print wheels positioned in bay **331-1.** Print wheel 343a is one of five print wheels of the group **802** shown in FIG. **20** and positioned in bay **331-1.** In FIG. **21** there is also shown a setting gear **341**a for positioning the print wheels **343**a and **344**a as described above. In FIGS. **20–22** the print wheels groups **801–804** as well as the group of setting gears **801***a* and **804***a* of adjacent bays **331-1** – **331-4** are diagrammatically shown for convenience as mounted on common shafts, although it should be understood as described with reference to the description of FIG. **10** and as shown in FIG. **4,** the print wheels as well as the setting gears of each adjacent bay are not ordinarily axially aligned, but are offset to print on different parts of the ticket and are usually driven by separate shafts conventionally geared to shaft **341** as previously described.

Referring again to FIGS. **20** and **21,** the ticket is shown at **21** and includes a head (h), stub (s) and tab (t). In FIG. **20** the tickets **21** are shown moving in the direction of the arrow (right to left) of the figure and are shown positioned below the print wheel groups **801–804.** The ribbon **807** of the machine is shown positioned above the tickets **21** but below the print wheels groups **801–804** so that when the bed **221** is lifted upwardly, to force the ticket against the ribbon and the print wheels, a line of type will be printed on the ticket. In FIG. **21,** the ticket is shown in position to be imprinted by the two print wheels **343***a* and **344***a* and in this case the print wheel **343***a* is positioned to print on the stub (s) portion of the ticket and the print wheel **344***a* is positioned to print on the head (h) portion of the ticket.

(D) COLOR MARK UNIT

The machine **200–300** has a unit **360,** shown from the front in FIG. **4** and from the side in FIG. **9,** for applying a mark of prescribed color as shown at station **16** of FIG. **3.**

The color mark unit **360** includes a rotatable carousel within a housing **361** with individual container **362** of marking fluid. The carousel is driven by a motor **363** on a mounting bracket **364** upon command from the controller **600.** The mounting bracket **364** also has a solenoid **365** which locks the carousel **361** in place when a designated one of the containers **362** is in marking position.

A fragmentary perspective view of the color mark unit **360** is shown in FIG. **11.** The rotational position adopted by the carousel within the housing **361,** and hence by the containers **362,** is determined by the interaction between segments **366**-a through **366**-d of a cam assembly **366** and corresponding switches **367**-a through **367**-d of a switch assembly **367,** positioned above the segments as shown in FIG. **11.** The cam segments contain lobes which are positioned relative to each other in accordance with a particular code pattern. As the segments **366**-a through **366**-d rotate in unison, they operate associated switches **367**-a through **367**-d, positioned above them, to generate the electrical counterparts of the cam code pattern, which is compared with code signals set at the color comparator **520** (FIG. **2B**). In addition there is a timing signal generated

by a cam segment **366**-e operating with switch **367**-e for precise positioning of the selected container. When there is coincidence between the compared code signals the desired container, e.g. container **362**-a, is in position for marking. As long as there is a failure of comparison, the carousel is rotated by the drive motor gear **363**-a until code coincidence is obtained.

Thus, for example, the desired container **362**-a shown in marking position in FIG. **11** may contain green ink. If the corresponding code is **1000**, comparison is obtained when the first switch **367**-a is activated by the lobe of the first segment **366**-a and the remaining switch **367**-b through **367**-d are not activated by a lobe of their corresponding segments **366**-b through **366**-d.

With the container **362**-a in position, color marking takes place, as shown at station **16** of FIG. **3** as the bed of the machine rises against the tip and **362**-b of the selected container. This depresses an internal valve (not shown) to allow the marking fluid to pass from the interior of the container in known fashion.

(E) THE TICKET COLLECTOR

The ticket collector assembly **310** employed in the machine of FIG. **1** is shown with its cover removed and parts broken away in FIG. **9**. Th collector includes a number of demountable hoppers **311** which are carried between mounts of outboard and inboard chains **312** and **313**. The chains are in turn carried by upper and lower sprockets with the lower sprocket being driven by a solenoid activated motor **314**. A lamp **315** mounted within the assembly **310** is used with a photocell **316** on a mount projecting outwardly from the frame of the color mark unit to indicate whether or not the uppermost hopper **311**-a is empty and, consequently, available for ticket collection.

In addition, as each hopper moves into collection position an arm **311**-a closes a switch **317** that serves to indicate to the controller **600** (FIG. **2A**) that the uppermost hopper is in its proper position to receive completed tickets.

The motor **314** is operated with a clutch (not shown) of a standard design such that the weight of tickets collected by the hoppers **311** will not cause reverse rotation.

In a tested embodiment of the invention, the clutch of the collector motor **314** was of a quarter revolution variety for which each actuation of its solenoid indexed the lower sprocket by 90°.

III. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERFACE

Referring to FIG. **2B**, the circuitry of the interface **400–500** has been grouped for convenience into two sections **401** and **501** which respectively exercise control and information setting functions.

The control circuitry **401** serves as an interface between certain switches of the control panel **620** (FIG. **2A**) and the feed bed **221** of the machine (FIG. **2C**) through a control switching network **430**. In addition, the control circuitry **401** includes a sever divide network **420** for operating the sever mechanism **240** (FIG. **2C**). In effect, the sever network **420** "divides" input timing pulse signals supplied from the timing mechanism **250** through an amplifier **411** in order to produce periodic sever control pulses in accordance with the number of parts prescribed at the controller **600** (FIG. **2A**) for the ticket structure of FIG. **3**. The output of the amplifier **411** is also used in controlling, for example, the total number of tickets to be marked by the machine.

In the information setting circuitry **501**, the constituents serve as an interface between the controller (FIG. **2A**) and various marking instrumentalities of the machine, particularly the print head **320**, the recording unit **350** and the color mark unit **360** (FIG. **2C**).

The print head portion of the circuitry **501** includes a switching network **540** which operates the print head drive motor **321** and the bail-locking solenoids **332** (FIG. **9**). In addition, the switching network **540** includes components for operating the ribbon solenoids **323** (FIG. **4**). There is also a set of amplifiers or "drivers" **550** for each print head setting solenoid **345** (FIG. **10**). The setting solenoids are enabled to release their associated setting gears whenever the print wheels are to be set with specified marking information. To supply sufficient signal strength to the setting solenoids, the "drivers" **550** take the form of individual amplifiers.

During setting of the print wheels, rotation of the motor **321** brings about the generation of timing pulse signals that are supplied to the distributor **660** from the setting circuitry **501** through an amplifier **511**. By making use of the print head timing signals, the distributor is able to release the various setting solenoids **345** (FIG. **5**) at prescribed times and thus set the individual print wheels as desired.

With respect to the recording of prescribed marking information on tickets, the setting circuitry **501** supplies timing signals generated at the machine (FIG. **2C**) and gated by a mechanical "ticket-in-place" switch to the distributor **660** through an amplifier **512**. The information to be recorded is then sent to the machine over a cable **513**. Included in the cable **513** are leads for verification of what has been recorded and for operating a reject marking unit if there is a failure of verification.

Besides serving as an interface for recording and printing, the information setting circuitry **501** includes a color comparator **520** for controlling the position of the color unit **360** (FIG. **11**). As long as the position of the color unit differs from what has been specified at the controller, as indicated by a mis-match at the comparator **520** between the code signals received from the color unit and those set from the controller, the color unit is rotated by its drive motor **363** (FIG. **11**). When there is a comparison, rotation of the drive motor is terminated through a color unit switching network **530**. Since rotation of the color unit, while the machine is operating could produce a smear on tickets at the color mark station, the machine is prevented from running until there is a comparison, at which point the output of the comparator **520** operates a gate in the control switching network **430**.

The various amplifiers **411**, **511** and **512** of the interface **400–500** are of conventional design, as are the amplifiers of the print wheels solenoid drivers **550**. These amplifiers are desirably mounted on printed circuit boards, such as the board **410** shown in FIG. **1**.

Details of the sever divide network **420**, the color comparator **520**, the control relay switching network **430**, the print head switching network **540** and the color switching network **530** are discussed below.

(A) THE SEVER DIVIDE NETWORK

A schematic diagram of a suitable sever divide network **420** for the interface **400–500** of FIG. 2A is set forth in FIG. **12.** This network is operated from the amplifier **411** and the control switching network **430** to produce a sever output for single or multiple tickets, as specified by binary code signals applied to a gate control network **421** from the controller **600** of FIG. 2A. Each binary code signal is in one of two possible states that are typically (1) a relatively high magnitude signal level representing a binary "**1**" or (2) a relatively low magnitude signal level representing a binary "**0.**" The particular sever divide network **420** of FIG. **12** can be set from the controller for single, two, three or four-part tickets. Consequently, two input binary code signals are required at the gate control network **421** since the maximum number of ticket parts, i.e. **4,** is the binary base digit **2** raised to the second power.

However, in the case of a single-part ticket a continuous output is provided directly at an output gate the gate control network **421.** As a result, the single-part output is independent of the input from the timing amplifier **411.** This eliminates the clocking that would otherwise accompany the cyclic actuation of the sever solenoid **244** (FIG. **5**).

In the case of multi-part tickets, a shift register **423** of the network **420** is used in dividing the timing pulse signals obtained from the amplifier **411** by **2, 3** or **4** and, accordingly, a sever pulse appears at the output gate **422** for every second, third or fourth timing pulse to operate the sever solenoid **244.**

The shift register **423** of the sever divide network **420** is formed by two stages **423-1** and **423-2.** An output terminal Q of the second stage **423-2** is connected to the output gate **422** for two and three-part tickets. In the case of four-part tickets, the output from the second stage **423-2** is used in conjunction with an output gated from the first stage **423-1** through a control network **424.**

The shift register **423** is re-entrant in that the output leads Q and $\bar{Q}$ of the second stage **423-2** are crossed-coupled to input leads R_1 and S_1 of the first stage **423-1.** In addition, the stages **423-1** and **423-2** are crossed-coupled through NAND gates **423-a** and **423-b.** Each such gate produces an output corresponding to a binary "**1**" whenever it has any input corresponding to a binary "**0.**" Conversely, the presence of all "**1**"'s at the inputs of a NAND gate produces an output "**0.**" NAND gates are also the principal constituents of the various control networks **421, 422** and **424.** The NAND gates **423-a** and **423-b** are controlled from the network **421** according to whether a double, triple or quadruple-part ticket is desired.

The stages **423-1** and **423-2** are known as clocked "flip-flops" and are biased in conventional fashion. The term "flip-flop" refers to the fact that each stage has two stable and interchangeable signal states that are present at the respective output terminals Q and $\bar{Q}$. When one of the terminals Q or $\bar{Q}$ is in a "**1**" state, the other terminal $\bar{Q}$ or Q is in an "**0**" state. Thus, the signal state of Q is the inverse of $\bar{Q}$. "Clocking" has reference to the fact that the interchange of signal states between the terminals Q and $\bar{Q}$ is controlled by a regularly recurring clock or timing pulse signals that act in conjunction with applied inputs. The clock pulse signals are supplied to both stages **423-1** and **423-2** from the amplifier **411** of FIG. 2B over a clock pulse line CP.

In the schematic representation of the sever divide network of FIG. **12,** the setting portion S of each stage **423-1** or **423-2** has two input terminals S_1 and S_2 while the re-setting portion R has two input terminals R_1 and R_2. The input terminals S_2 and R_2 of each stage are cross-coupled to the output terminals $\bar{Q}$ and Q. When there are "**1**"'s on both setting terminals S_1 and S_2 and at least one "**0**" on the re-setting terminals R_1 and R_2, the occurrence of a clocking signal will set the stage with a "**1**" at the Q output terminal (and an "**0**" at the $\bar{Q}$ terminal). Conversely, the presence of "**1**"'s on both re-setting terminals R_1 and R_2 and at least one "**0**" on the setting terminals S_1 and S_2, with a clocking signal, produces and "**0**" at the Q output terminal (and a "**1**" at the $\bar{Q}$ terminal).

In addition to the setting or re-setting of individual stages in conjunction with clock signals, direct re-setting can take place on the direct re-set line DR. In the system of FIG. **12** initial re-set occurs over the line DR when a feed signal is applied by closing a switch on the panel **620** of the controller (FIG. 2A).

In a tested embodiment of the invention, the shift register stages **423-1** and **423-2** of FIG. **12** were integrated circuit modules of the kind sold and marketed by the Motorola Company under the designation MC **845** P. Each such module is advantageously packaged on a printed circuit board, such as the board **410** of FIG. **1.**

To produce a single-part ticket, the output gate **422** of FIG. **12** is enabled continuously by having the code signals supplied from the controller to the gate control network **421,** in order to specify a single-part ticket, produce a "**0**" on the single-part control line **421-1.** Because of the NAND logic used in the output gate **422,** the result is a continuous output.

To produce a sever pulse signal at the output gate **422** for every second timing pulse on the clock pulse line CP, both interstage NAND gates **423-a** and **423-b** have "**0**"'s applied from the gate control network **423** over the two-part control line **421-2.** Hence, both the setting and re-setting terminals S_1 and R_1 of the second stage **423-2** are always enabled. Because the second stage is cross-coupled to itself, there is a change in its output for every clock pulse, irrespective of occurrences elsewhere in the sever divide network. The output of this stage is applied to the output gate **422** and is converted into a sever pulse on the sever divide output line **422-1** by each second timing pulse on the clock pulse line CP at the output gate **422.**

To produce a sever pulse signal at the output gate **422** for every third timing pulse on the clock pulse line CP, only one of the interstage NAND gates **423-a** or **423-b** is continuously enabled. If the NAND gate **423-a** connected to the re-set terminal R_1 of second stage **423-2** has a "**0**" applied to it over the three-part control line **421-3,** its output will always be a "**1.**" The second stage **423-2** changes state every third cycle of operation so that, in effect, the output on the sever line **422-1** is obtained by dividing the input on the clock pulse line CP by **3.**

Each "divide-by-three" sequence is summarized in Table I below for the successive application of a re-set signal DR and three clock pulses CP_1, CP_2, CP_3:

TABLE I

Pulse Signal	State of First Register Q–$\overline{Q}$	State of Second Register Q–$\overline{Q}$
DR	0–1	0–1
CP_1	1–0	0–1
CP_2	1–0	1–0
CP_3 (Output Generating Signal)	0–1	0–1

The divide-by-three sequence begins with both stages **423-1** and **423-2** in the state "**0**"-"**1**" for Q and $\overline{Q}$, as established by signal on the direct re-set line DR. Subsequently, the first clock pulse CP_1 of the sequence causes a change in state of the first stage **423-1**, but not of the second stage **423-2**. The second stage fails to change state because "**0**"s occur on both the setting terminal S_1 and the re-setting terminal R_2 so that these terminals are disabled. Upon the occurrence of the second clock pulse CP_2 of the sequence, there is a change in stage of the second stage **423-2**, but not of the first stage **423-1**.

Thus, at the end of the second clock pulse CP_2 of the sequence, both stages have changed state in the same way and there is a "**1**" output on the Q terminal of the second stage **423-2**. Consequently, when the third clock pulse CP_3 of the sequence is applied there, the output gate **423** is enabled. At the same time the stages **423-1** and **423-2** are re-set.

To produce a sever pulse signal at the output gate **422** for every fourth timing pulse on the clock pulse line CP, the interstage NAND gates **423-a** and **423-b** act as inverters. Consequently, the changes in state of the two stages **423-1** and **423-2** are staggered, and there is a complete permutation of states for every fourth cycle of operation. In effect, there is an output on the sever line **422-1** that is obtained by dividing the input on the clock pulse line CP by **4**.

Each divide-by-four sequence is summarized in Table II below for the successive application of a re-set signal DR and four clock pulses CP_1, CP_2, CP_3 and CP_4:

TABLE II

Pulse Signal	State of First Register Q–$\overline{Q}$	State of Second Register Q–$\overline{Q}$
DR	0–1	0–1
CP_1	1–0	0–1
CP_2	1–0	1–0
CP_3	0–1	1–0
CP_4 (Output Generating Signal)	0–1	0–1

As with the three-part setting; the divide-by-four sequence begins with both stages **423-1** and **423-2** in the state "**0**" – "**1**" for Q and $\overline{Q}$, as established by a signal on the direct re-set line DR. Subsequently, the first clock pulse CP_1 of each sequence brings about a change in state in the first stage **423-1**, but not of the second stage **423-2**. The second stage **423-2** fails to change state because both a setting terminal S_1 and a re-setting terminal R_2 are simultaneously disabled. Upon the occurrence of the second clock pulse CP_2 of the sequence, there is a change in the second stage **423-2**, but not of the first stage **423-1**. To that point, the divide-by-four sequence is like the divide-by-three sequence, except that different setting and re-setting terminals are enabled. However, upon occurrence of the third clock pulse CP_3 of the sequence, only the first stage **423-1** returns to its re-set state. The second stage **423-2** does not change because there is simultaneous disenablement of a setting terminal S_2 and a re-setting terminal R_1. The second stage **423-2** returns to its re-set state following the occurrence of the fourth clock pulse CP_4.

The output of the second stage, in conjunction with the NAND gate **424**, serves to generate an output during the fourth clock pulse DP_4.

Details of the gating networks **421**, **422** and **424** for the sever divide network **420** are set forth in FIG. **12A**.

The gate control network **421** has two binary inputs B_1 and B_2. The relationship between the inputs and the number of ticket parts is summarized by Table III, below:

TABLE III

Binary Inputs B_1–B_2	Number of Ticket Parts
0–1	1
1–0	2
1–1	3
0–0	4

The gate control network **421** makes use of NAND logic. Both the complemented and uncomplemented inputs are needed to avoid ambiguity. The complements are generated by inverters **421-a** and **421-b**.

For a single-part ticket, the binary inputs B_2 and B_1 are "**0**" and "**1**." Because of the inversion of the input B_2, "**1**"s appear at a single-part control NAND gate **421-c**, which produces an "**0**" output on line **421-1**. The latter enables a NAND gate **422-a** of the output gate network **422** to produce a continuous output on the line **422-1**.

For two-part tickets, the binary inputs B_2 and B_1 are "**1**" and "**0**." Because of the inversion of the input B_1, "**1**"s appear at a multi-part control NAND gate **421-d**. The result is an "**0**" on the two-part control line **421-2** which enables both interstage gates **423-a** and **423-b** (FIG. **12**). When the direct output Q of the second stage **423-2** becomes a "**1**" the corresponding output of the first stage **422-1** is an "**0**." The latter is converted to a "**1**" by a control gate **424** and applied to an input NAND gate **422-b** of the output gate network **422**. The direct output Q of the first stage also appears at the gate **422-b**, so that the subsequent occurrence of a clock pulse CP at the gate **422-b** generates an "**0**" which converted to a "**1**" on the output line **422-1** for the duration of the clock pulse interval.

For three-part tickets, a control "**0**" is obtained on the line **421-3** for the interstage gate **423-a** from the output of the second inhibit gate **421-b**, which is "**0**" only for a three-part ticket. The four-part control gate **424** has a "**1**" output because of an input "**0**" from either inverter **421-a** or **421-b**. Therefore, the occurrence of each third clock pulse CP_3 in a three-part sequence produces a "**1**" on the output line **422-1** for the duration of the clock pulse interval.

In the case of a four-part ticket, both inverters **421-a** and **421-b** apply "**1**"'s to the four-part gate **424.** From Table II, it is seen that the direct outputs Q of the first and second stages **423-1** and **423-2** are "**0**" and "**1,**" respectively, for each fourth clock pulse CP_4 of a four-part sequence, and an output on the line **422-1** is produced accordingly.

The output from the gate network **422** is also gated by the clock pulse line CP at a unit **425** to supply pulse signals to the counter unit **650** (FIG. 2A).

In a tested embodiment of the invention, the various NAND gates and inverters of the sever divide network **420** of FIGS. **12** and **12A** were integrated circuit modules. Suitable modules are of the kind sold and marketed by the Motorola Company under the designations NC832P, MC846P and MC862P.

Each module **832P** includes two NAND gates of four input terminals each. The gates have a high current-handling capacity, and one such module is illustratively employed for the constituent gates **422-a** and **422-b** of the output gate network **422.**

In the case of the module **846P** there are four NAND gates per module. Each gate is able to accommodate two inputs, but where inversion is desired only a single input is used. Accordingly, a single module can be used for the inverters **421-a** and **421-b** and the NAND gates **421-c** and **421-d** in the gate control network **421.**

The module **862P** has three gates per module, with three **34** inputs each. The gate **424** and the interstage gates **421-a** and **421-b** are illustratively on one such card.

(B) THE COLOR COMPARATOR

The color comparator **520** of FIG. 2B provides an output whenever the color mark unit **360** has been rotated to the position specified at the controller **600** (FIG. 2A). The number of binary code signals needed for that purpose depends upon the number of individual containers **362** within the housing **361** (FIG. **4**).

In general, the relationship between the number k of binary code signals and the number n of containers is given by equation(1);

$$_2k-1 < n < {}_2k \qquad (1)$$

Thus, where the carousel **361** has ten color mark containers **362,** four binary signals are needed.

An illustrative color comparator **520'** making use of NAND logic is set forth in FIG. **13.** Such an arrangement permits construction of the comparator with modules having only NAND gates. For simplicity the circuitry has been limited to accommodate four color mark containers. Consequently, only two binary setting signals C_1 and C_2 from the controller are needed. It will be appreciated that the circuitry of FIG. **13** can be expanded to accommodate any number of color mark containers.

In the circuitry of FIG. **13,** setting signals from the controller are compared with counterparts signals from the color mark unit **360** (FIG. **11**). The result of the overall comparison is coordinated with a timing signal from the color mark unit to identify the time in the positioning cycle when a container is in a pre-specified position.

The comparison is made by a bank of comparator units **522-1** and **522-2,** there being one such unit for the signals representing each pair of bits being compared. In making the comparison, a direct signal from one source is compared with the inverse of the corresponding signal from the other source in an internal NAND gate **522-a** (or **522-b**). This provides an enabling, i.e. "**1**" output whenever a comparison is attained, regardless of whether any particular input is a "**1**" or an "**0.**" In addition, within each unit **522-1** or **522-2,** a second comparison is made of the counterpart signals of first comparison using a second internal NAND gate **522-b** (or **522-a**). This avoids any spurious enabling, i.e. "**1**" output because of ambiguity in the logic.

Inputs C_1 and C_2 from the controller are supplied directly to the comparator units **522-1** and **522-2.** Inverse inputs $\overline{C}_1$ and $\overline{C}_2$ are supplied from inverters **521-a** and **521-b** of a gate control network **521.** The latter is similar to the control network **421** used for the sever divide network of FIG. **12.** Direct inputs K_1 and K_2 from the color unit, as well as inverse inputs K_1 and K_2 are supplied from a switch assembly **367,** shown mechanically in FIG. **11** and schematically in FIG. **13.**

When there is coincidence between the inputs C_1 and C_2 from the controller and the inputs K_1 and K_2 from the color mark unit, the internal NAND gates **522-a** and **522-b** of the comparator units **522-1** and **522-2** have "**1**" outputs. In addition, if any color mark container is in its position, there is a "**1**" at the output of the inverter **523** on the timing signal line T. The coincidence condition is sensed by a NAND gate **524,** producing an "**0**" output. The latter is inverted by an output gate **525** to provide a positive going, i.e. "**1**" output to the control switching network **430** and the color unit switching network **530** (FIG. 2B).

Considering the operation of the switch assembly **367** in FIG. **13** with respect to the comparator units **522-1** and **522-2,** there are two cam segments **366-a** and **366-b** for the color unit signals K_1 and K_2. There is also a timing cam segment **366-t** for a timing signal T. The cam segments **366-a, 366-b** and **366-t** set upon associated switches **367-a, 367-b** and **367-t.**

The switches **367-a** and **367-b** are shown as sets of transfer contacts in FIG. **13.** An "X" is used to indicate normally open contacts, while a bar is used for normally closed contacts. Each terminal extending to a set of transfer contacts is biased from a network **526** by a voltage source and an associated voltage dropping resistor. The result is an "**0**" on lines containing closed contacts, and a "**1**" on lines containing open contacts. When the switches **367-a** and **367-b** are operated there is an interchange of conditions, with the normally closed contacts becoming open and the normally opened contacts becoming closed.

For example, with the switch **367-a** in contact with a depression of the cam **366-a,** the normally closed contacts remain closed and the normally open contacts remain opened. As a result, there is an "**0**" on the line $\overline{K}_1$ and a "**1**" on the line K_1. This results from the fact that the voltage of the biasing source associated with the line $\overline{K}_1$ is dropped by its associated resistor through the closed contacts of the switch **367-a,** but the voltage of the line $\overline{K}_1$ is not dropped because of the open contacts of the switch **367-a.**

An illustrative relationship between the cam segments **366-a, 366-b** and **366-t** and various colors of marking fluid within containers **362** of the carousel **361** (FIG. **11**) is shown by the layout of FIG. **13A.** The shaded regions of the layout represent the depressions

on the various cam segments and, consequently, "1"'s for the direct signals K_1 and K_2, while the unshaded regions represent cam lobes and, consequently, "0"'s.

Thus, to set the color mark unit **360** so that a container with blue ink is in marking position, the code signals applied from the controller are C_1 = "0" and C_2 = "1." With the cams **366**-a, **366**-b as shown in FIG. **13**, the signal K_1 is "1" and the signal K_2 is "0." Consequently, the inputs to all of the gates of the comparator units **522-1** and **522-2** are "1"'s. As a result, the output gate **524** produces a "1" which is inverted to a "0" by the gate **525**. The motor **363** (FIG. **5**) of the color mark unit is operated until K_1 becomes "0" and K_2 becomes "1." At that point the comparator units **522-1** and **522-2** have "1" outputs. Nevertheless, there will still be no output to the various switching networks **430** and **530**, to terminate the operation of the color unit drive motor and permit commencement of a ticket marking run, until the timing cam **366**-t is in a position to provide a "1" output through its inverter **523**. The timing cam **366**-t assures proper selection of the correct color mark container.

As noted earlier, the various constituents of the comparator **520'** in FIG. **13** are multiple or single-input NAND gates, the latter serving as inverters. Consequently, fabrication of the comparator is facilitated by permitting the use of printed circuit modules with a single type of gating structure.

In a tested embodiment of the invention with ten color mark containers, making use of two additional comparator units (not shown) for control signals C_3 and C_4, five integrated circuit modules were employed. Four of the modules were of the type MC **846P** discussed in conjunction with the sever divide network. Of the four modules, one was used for input control signals C_1 through C_4 in circuitry patterned after the gate **521**; two modules were employed in circuitry patterned after the comparator gates **522-1** and **522-2**; while the fourth module was used for the NAND gate **523**, the inverter **524** and additional gates (not shown) at the control switching network **430**.

(C) THE CONTROL SWITCHING NETWORKS

Switching within the interface **400–500** takes place in networks **430, 530,** and **540** which respectively control the bed mechanism **220**, the color mark unit **360** and various constituents of the print head **320**.

Considering first the feed control network **430** and the color mark control network **530**, their components are shown in FIG. **14** with related switches of the controller switch panel **620**.

Associated with the feed control network **430** is a start switch **431** that is closed by an operator at the machine site in order to ready the marking system for operation. This action applies line voltage from an external power source **105** to the drive motor **231** (FIG. **4**) by way of the cable **103**. Even though the drive motor begins rotating, the feed bed remains inactive until the run solenoid **234**-a is actuated. The latter is controlled remotely from the panel **620**.

To initiate operation of the run solenoid **234**-a, and bring about a periodic raising and lowering of the machine bed, a start switch **621** is closed at the control panel **620**. A start relay **432** will then be energized if the contacts **202** and **203** of mechanical switches on the machine bed are in a closed condition. The contacts **202** are normally open and close only when ticket stock **20** (FIG. **4**) is present on the bed. The other contacts **203** are normally closed and open only when the ticket stock becomes jammed.

When the start relay **432** energized, it closes normally open contacts **432**-a in a voltage supply line of the run solenoid **234**-a. The latter is then operated when a run relay **433** is actuated to close normally open contacts **433**-a.

The run relay **433** is powered from a direct current source **622**, at the control panel **620**, through a run switch **623**, a position switch **317** for the collector **310** (FIG. **9**) and a gate **434** of the network **430**. If the collector has not been indexed so that one of its hoppers is not in position to receive completed tickets, the position switch **317** is open, and the run relay **433** cannot be energized. Similarly, the run relay **433** cannot be energized unless the color unit **360** (FIG. **11**) is in the desired position, since there will be no enabling output from color comparator (FIG. **13**) and the gate **434** will be open.

Thus, the gate **434** prevents the feed bed of the machine from being raised and lowered as long as there is rotation of the color mark unit. The gate **434** is advantageously formed by NAND logic. Since the output of a NAND gate is an "0" when its inputs are "1"'s, an inverter is used to provide a positive going "1" output for operating the run relay **433**. It will be appreciated the gate **434** may take other forms, including a conventional AND gate.

With both the start and run relays **432** and **433** energized, the run solenoid **234**-a acts upon the clutch **233** and brings about rotation of the drive shaft **232** (FIG. **4**) to periodically raise and lower the bed of the machine.

The feed of tickets to the various marking stations of the machine is subsequently commenced by the closure of a feed switch **624** at the control panel **620**. If there is no output from the counter unit **650** (FIG. **2A**) to operate an inhibit gate **625**, a feed relay **435** operates to close a set of contacts **435**-a. These contacts are in the supply line that extends to the feed solenoid **234**-b through contacts **433**-b, which were previously closed by the run relay **433**. As explained previously, the feed solenoid lowers the ticket stock at the input of the feed bed into contact with feed pawls **223** (FIG. **3**). When the counter unit signals the end of a ticket marking run, the inhibit gate **625** disables the feed relay **435**.

Turning to the print head switching network **540**, details are shown schematically in FIG. **15**. The drive signals that bring about the rotation of the print wheel motor **321** (FIG. **10**) are initiated at the control panel by the closure of a switch **626**. The latter is connected to the direct current source **622** of the control panel **620** and is ganged with the run switch **623** so that the print wheels are settable only when the machine is not running. This permits the print wheels to be set without interference because of the raising and lowering of the feed bed.

Closure of the print wheels setting switch **626** causes a flip-flop **681**-a within a print wheels control unit **680** of the distributor **660** (FIG. **2A**) to change state. The flip-flop **681**-a is of standard design and, upon changing state, activates a print motor relay **541**. This closes relay contacts **541**-a and permits current from the external power source **105** to be applied to the print motor **321** through the normally closed contacts **542**-a of a motor direction reversal relay **542**.

Simultaneously with the powering of the print wheel motor relay **541**, the flip-flop **681**-a enables a timer unit **681**-b to produce a pulse output at the end of a predetermined time interval. The latter produces an output for the time interval during which the direction of rotation of the print motor **321** is to be reversed. Accordingly, it activates a direction relay **542** and closes normally open contacts **542**-b, while opening normally closed contacts **542**-a. Since this changes the connection of the supply lead, the motor **321** reverses its direction of rotation.

Operation of the drive motor relay **541** also closes contacts **541**-b and **541**-c to allow current from the source **105** to be applied to the bail locking solenoids **332** (FIG. **4**) in order to release the print wheels.

The network **540** additionally includes components for driving the ribbon (not shown) used with the print head **320**. The ribbon is carried by spools (not shown) mounted on spindles **322-1** and **322-2** (FIG. **4**) and driven by rotary solenoids **323-1** and **323-2**. When one of the solenoids is used for clockwise rotation of its associated spool; the other solenoid is used for counterclockwise rotation of its spool.

Power for the solenoids **323-1** and **323-2** is obtained through a diode **544** and a limiting resistor **545**. The latter are switched to a capacitor and one of the solenoids to cause the armature of that solenoid to rotate and engage a ratchet attached to the ribbon spool. When the solenoid is de-energized, it pulls away, freeing the spool. The duty cycle, i.e. "on" - "off" time, of the solenoid is regulated by a switch **204** that is cam-operated every machine cycle.

A latching relay, represented by a switch **205**, is actuated to select the solenoid that is to be operated.

The position of the latching relay **205** is established by eyelets of the ribbon to bring about a change in setting each time the ribbon is substantially taken up by one of the spools. Each eyelet, at the end of ribbon travel in one direction, moves a linkage to re-set the latch relay **205**, i.e. connect the energizing circuit to the other ribbon solenoid. In a tested embodiment of the marking system, the eyelets were positioned to allow approximately 90 percent of the ribbon surface to be used.

Thus, the ribbon is steppingly advanced during each cycle of machine operation until unwound from one spool and wound on the other, after which the switch **205** is tripped to bring about the stepping advance of the ribbon in the opposite direction beginning with the next cycle of machine operation.

IV. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTROLLER

In addition to the control panel **620**, the controller **600**, as outlined by FIG. **2A**, includes a card reader **640** for supplying setting signals to the sever divide network **420** and the control comparator **520** of the interface (FIG. **2B**). The card reader **640** also supplies setting signals to the counter unit **650** and the distributor **660**. The signals sent to the distributor specify the information that is applied to the tickets by the print head **320** and the recording unit **350** (FIG. **2C**).

(A) THE CARD READER

The card reader **640** is of standard construction and is operated by switches of the control panel **620**. It is used to read individual cards **610** that are prepunched in accordance with the particulars of a ticket marking run.

Thus, each card is punched to specify (1) the information to be imprinted and magnetically recorded on the ticket structure; (2) the total number of tickets in the run; (3) the number of parts in each ticket; and (4) the color of any desired auxiliary mark.

The cards **610** are advantageously of the type used in conventional data processing. Each card is able to accommodate up to 80 columns of information in 12 rows per column. Thus, for the ticket structure of FIG. **1A** the first 35 columns of a card are used to identify the 35 characters constituting the merchandising information imprinted in four rows of the header *h* and duplicated in three rows on the stub *s* and in a single row on the tab *t*. The rows of each set contain ten characters each, except for the fourth row of each set which has five characters illustratively indicating price.

Beyond the first 35 columns of the punched card there are four columns that allow up to 9,999 tickets to be designated per run. In practice it has been found that the average run generally is less than 100 tickets. For illustrative machine under consideration the number of parts per ticket is four or less, and only a single column is needed for that purpose. Finally, the color unit has ten individual containers as specified using two additional columns. Consequently, 42 columns are needed in all.

Since the foregoing information makes use of no more than 11 different characters, including the "blank" character, a single punch per column suffices. While some print wheels have alphabetic characters, the total number of characters on any print wheel is nevertheless no greater than 11. In the general case, alphabetic characters are represented by plural punches per column.

In the case of punched information specifying ticket quantity, the number of ticket parts, and color mark, the card reader **640** is pre-wired to provide a binary coded output signal, The print wheel and recording information, on the other hand, is transferred directly to the distributor **660**.

For reading, a switch of the panel **620** is closed to feed an individual card into the reader **640**, where the punches are sensed mechanically, electrically or optically. A second switch is closed to transfer the information that has been read.

(B) THE SIGNAL DISTRIBUTOR

Pulse signals corresponding to the information to be imprinted and magnetically recorded on the ticket structure enter a buffer register **661**, containing eleven flip-flops for each column of the card. From the register **661**, information signals are transferred to a recording control unit **670** and to a print wheels control unit **680**.

Referring to FIG. **16** and the details of the recording control unit **670**, the signals from the buffer **661** enter a converter **671** that is pre-wired to produce a six bit binary code word for each column of the punched card. This format has been chosen for compatibility with the ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) system which allows each code word to represent any one of **64** alphanumeric characters. While the print wheels on the print head of the illustrative system are each limited to eleven characters, including the blank character, so that four bits would suffice, the re-

corded information can be more extensive. Further, the converter **671** includes parity bit generating equipment so that each six-bit word is accompanied by an additional bit which is "**1**" or "**0**" depending upon (1) whether the parity is to be odd or even and (2) the number of "**1**"'s in the code word. The presence of the parity bit is important when the recorded information is decoded for control purposes.

Thus, the card code representing the number **3** includes a single punch in one of the card columns. The punch is translated by the converter **671** into a six bit binary counterpart or 000011. In addition, in the case of odd parity, a seventh or parity bit is generated, resulting, for example, in the code word 1000011.

From the converter **671,** the binary code signals are transferred in two separate groups to shift registers **672-1** and **672-2,** since the recording unit **350** (FIG. 7) employs two readwrite heads **352** and **353.** Each register **672-1** or **672-2** is pre-set with prefix and suffic code words to identify both the beginning and the end of each recording sequence. Illustratively, each suffix or prefix code word consists of seven consecutive "I"'s. The informational code words from the converter **671** enter the registers **672-1** and **672-2** either directly or through gates (not shown) that are controlled from the switch panel **620.**

In the recording unit **350** (FIG. 7), rotation of the cylindrical support **351** generates internal clock pulses. These are carried to the recording control unit **670** by a clock pulse line **674-a** and are applied to the shift registers **672-1** and **672-2** through timed gates **673-1** and **673-2.** The latter are enabled by the timing signal received from the record timing mechanism **250** (FIG. 2) on a timing line **674-b.** The timing of the gates **673-1** and **673-2** is such that recording will take place only during a pre-specified interval. In addition, the shift registers **672-1** and **672-2** are re-entrant so that as the clock pulses cause the stored information to appear serially on the recording lines **675-a** and **675-b,** the same information is returned to the registers for use during the next machine cycle.

The serial bit stream on the recording lines **675-a** and **675-b** energizes internal coils of the unit **350** to record the desired information in the magnetic coating of the ticket structure. One of the lines **675-a** or **675-b** is for the outer recording track, while the other is for the inner recording track.

Recording is completed during one revolution of the read-write heads **352** and **353.** During the next revolution, the magnetic field produced in the coating is sensed by the heads **352** and **353,** giving rise to bit signals on verify lines **676-a** and **676-b.** The signals on these lines are applied to respective verification shift registers **676-1** and **676-2.** When a prefix code group enters the prefix portion of each register, indicating that a replica of the recorded information is present, respective control gates **677-1** and **677-2** operate to allow a bit-by-bit verification of the replica with the original in comparators **678-1** and **678-2.** Whenever verification cannot be made, a signal is supplied through an OR gate **679** to the reject marking station of the machine and to the counter unit **650.** This signal activates a solenoid to operate the reject marking stamp; it is supplied to the counter unit **650** to permit an adjustment in the specified ticket quantity count.

The circuitry of recording control unit **670** of FIG. **17** is adapted for serial recording. Alternatively, where the recording unit **350'** of FIG. **8** is employed, the circuitry of FIG. **17** is adapted for parallel recording with control pulses obtained from the photocell assemblies **228** and **229** (FIG. **8**).

(C) THE PRINT WHEELS CONTROL UNIT

A block diagram of an illustrative print wheels control unit **680** is set forth in FIG. **17.** Operation of the unit **680** is initiated from the control panel **620.**

As explained in conjunction with the discussion of the print wheel switching network **540** (FIG. **15**), enablement of a flip-flop **681-a** initiates rotation of the print wheels drive motor. It also sets a signal distributor **682,** so that there is a gating output on each of its terminals **683-a** through **683-k.**

Rotation of the print wheels drive motor generates commutator timing pulses, which serve as clock pulses for the pulse signal distributor **682.** After an interval determined by a timer **681-b,** a motor reversing signal is produced, and an AND gate **685** is enabled to allow the commutator timing pulses to act upon the distributor **682.** The AND gate **684** prevents any change in the distributor **682** until after the print wheels have been collectively re-set to the blank character.

The pulse signal distributor **682** responds to the commutator timing pulses to produce successive changes in signal level on output lines **683-a** through **683-k.** The latter are associated with successive characters, e.g. "blanks," "zeros," "threes" of the individual print wheels.

The print wheel information signals in the buffer register **661** and the outputs of the pulse signal distributor **682** act jointly upon a selector gate network **684.** Illustratively, the network **684** has 11 flip-flops for each column of print wheels information carried by any control card of the deck **610.** This in order to imprint 35 characters upon a control ticket, the flip-flops in the network **684** form a matrix of 35 columns with 11 rows each.

One of the flip-flops in each column is set from the buffer register **661** according to the particular character desired for the associated print wheels. Each flip-flop that has been set is gated from the distributor. As the outputs of the distributor change at the successive terminals **683-a** through **683-k** in successive instants of time, the outputs from the selector network **684** are selectively terminated. For example, if the second print wheel column of a card contains a punch mark corresponding to a three, the third row flip-flop in the second column of the matrix network **683** will be enabled. This energizes a setting solenoid and retracts an arm that otherwise prevents a setting from moving freely. When the output of the pulse distributor on the "threes" terminal **783-d** terminates, the flip-flop in the third row of the second column in the matrix network **683** is no longer gated and there is no longer any output to the particular print wheel setting solenoid.

An alternative embodiment of the print wheels control unit **680'** makes use of NAND logic and is shown in FIG. **19.** An initiating flip-flop **681-c** is used of the kind employed in the sever divide network **420** (FIG. **12**), except that the input signals are applied to a direct set terminal DS and a direct re-set terminal DR. The mode of operation for such a flip-flop is summarized in Table IV, below:

TABLE IV

Inputs DS-DR	Output Q-$\bar{Q}$
1-1	Unchanged
0-1	1-0
1-0	0-1
0-0	1-1

Before the switch **626'** is closed at the controller, a local direct current source **627** applies a "**1**" to the direct set terminal DS of the initiating flip-flop **681-c** and to one input of a NAND gate **681-d**. The other input terminal of the gate **681-d** is also supplied with a "**1**," since the $\bar{Q}$ output of the last stage of the distributor **682** is "**1**" before re-set takes place. Consequently the direct re-set input DR of the initiating flip-flop **681-c** is "**0**." The corresponding Q-$\bar{Q}$ outputs are therefore "**0**" - "**1**."

When the switch **626'** is closed, the source **627** is grounded and a "**0**" is applied to the direct set terminal DS. This causes a change in output, which initiates a sequence of actions comparable to those described for the circuitry of FIG. **17**, except that the operations of the various flip-flops are in accordance with Table IV.

The distributor **682** consists of a cascaded chain of flip-flops **682-a** through **682-j** of the kind used in the sever divide network **420** (FIG. **12**). These flip-flops are pre-set so that when a direct set signal is received at the terminals DS a "**1**" appears at all of the Q terminals. As the clock pulses are applied, the flip-flops are successively re-set. After the tenth timing pulse has been received, the tenth flip-flop **682-j** is re-set and an output supplied to NAND gates **681-d**, **681-g** and **681-h** to terminate the operation of the print wheels drive motor and to re-set the flip-flop **681-c**.

Instead of taking the form of matrix of rows and columns, with each position of the matrix having a single flip-flop, the selector network **684** (FIG. **17**) may include manually controlled 11-point, i.e. 11-contact switches, with one switch for each column of the matrix. The row positions of the switch contacts are ganged together, with successive rows connected to the "blanks," "zeros," etc. lines of the print wheels control unit **680**. The wiper of each switch is connected to a driver amplifier of a setting solenoid.

(D) THE COUNTER UNIT

The counter unit **650**, as shown by FIG. **19**, includes a quantity counter **651** and a collector indexing counter **652**. The quantity counter **651** is set from the controller and it is decremented by the output pulses received from the sever divide network **420** (FIG. **12**). When the counter **651** has been decremented to a zero it produces an output which acts upon gate **625** (FIG. **14**) and terminates further operation of the machine.

Whenever there is a failure to verify the information that has been magnetically recorded, a reject signal from the recording control unit **670** (FIG. **17**) sets a flip-flop **653**. Upon the occurrence of the next sever divide output a gate **654** is operated to allow the pre-existing quantity count to be supplemented in an adder **656** by the number of tickets parts *m*, as set in a register **655**. This restores the counter **651** to the condition that existed before the occurrence of the reject signal. The reject flip-flop **653** is re-set through a delay line **657** by the sever divide signal at the end of the multi-part count interval. Thus a rejection may take place anywhere during a multi-part interval without affecting the counting operation.

The collector indexing counter **652** which appears in the counter unit **650** receives the single-part timing signals from the amplifier **411** (FIG. **2A**) and is decremented accordingly. It is mechanically pre-set for a convenient count, such as **144**, that depends upon the capacity of the hoppers used in the collector (FIG. **9**). When the collector counter **642** is decremented to zero, it supplies an indexing pulse signal to the drive motor **314** of the collector **310** (FIG. **9**). The output used in indexing the collector may be controlled manually from the control panel.

While various aspects of the invention have been set forth by the drawings, it is to be understood that the foregoing detailed description is for illustration only and that various changes in shape, proportion, arrangement of parts, as well as the substitution of equivalent elements for those shown and described, may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

We claim:

1. In a system for magnetically recording information on a plurality of tickets one after the other to provide a predetermined number of tickets, each of said tickets including a magnetic recording media layer on which said information is recorded, said system including at least first, second and third stations, supply means at said first station for supplying said tickets one at a time, magnetic write means at said second station for magnetically recording information on said magnetic recording media layer of each of said tickets, magnetic read means at said second station for reading the information magnetically recorded on each magnetic recording media layer, visiually observable reject marking means at said third station for applying a reject mark to a ticket, means for moving the tickets from said first station to said second station and then to said third station, storage means coupled to magnetic write means for supplying information to said write means, first control means coupled to said storage means and said write means for providing a control signal to write the stored information on said magnetic layer, second control means coupled to said read means for providing a control signal to read the information stored on the magnetic layer after writing of the information thereon by said write means, comparison means coupled to said storage means and said read means for comparing the information in said storage means and the information read by said read means to determine if the information recorded is the same as the information in said storage means and to develop a reject signal if the information is not the same, and means for providing said reject signal to said reject marking means in order to apply a reject mark to said ticket when said ticket arrives at said third station.

2. In the system of claim **1** in which means is provided for determining the number of reject marked tickets to provide an add ticket signal to said supply means, said supply means supplying one additional ticket for each visual reject marked ticket in response to said add ticket signal in order to provide a predetermined number of the tickets without reject marks applied thereto.

3. In a system of claim 1 in which said write means comprise rotary write means for recording information on said magnetic layer in a circle.

4. In a system of claim 3 in which said read means comprise rotary read means for reading said information.

5. In a system of claim 4 in which said write means and said read means comprises a common read-write magnetic head.

6. In a machine for magnetically recording information on tickets carrying a magnetic recording media, first means for supplying one ticket at a time at one of a plurality of stations of said machine, second means at one of said stations for magnetically recording data on said recording media, third means at one of said stations for reading the data recorded on said recording media, storage means coupled to said second means for storing and providing the information to be recorded to said second means, verification means coupled to said storage means and to said third means for determining if the recorded data matches the data in said storage means and providing a reject signal in the event the data does not match, reject marking means at another one of said stations responsive to said reject signal for applying a reject mark to tickets which have been indicated as bearing information which produced a reject signal, means for setting the number of tickets to be supplied at said one of said stations by said first means and means responsive to the reject signal to provide a control signal to said first means to provide an additional ticket for each ticket to which a reject mark has been applied, and means for moving the tickets between said stations.

7. In a machine according to claim 6 in which said second and third means comprises a read-write head and in which there is provided means for rotating said head to record data in a concentric circle on said media and thereafter to read the data recorded.

8. In a machine according to claim 6 in which said reject mark is a visual observable reject mark.

* * * * *