

Sept. 26, 1933.

C. L. FORTINBERRY
LICENSE TAG LOCKING DEVICE

1,928,527

Filed Nov. 21, 1931

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.

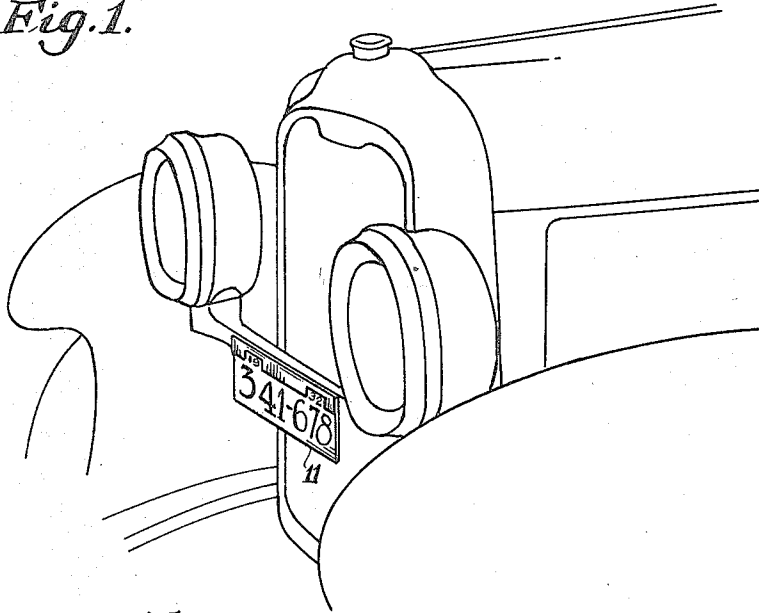


Fig. 2.

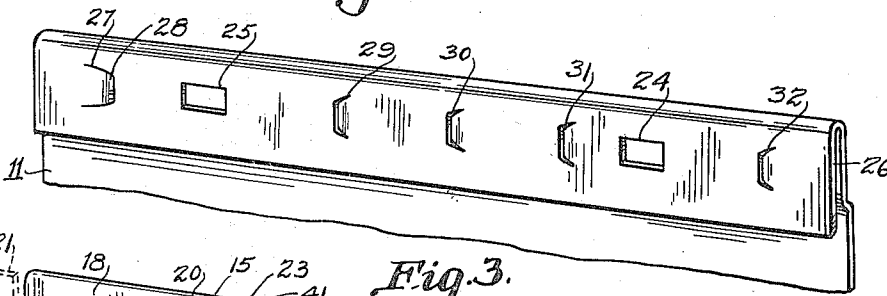


Fig. 3.

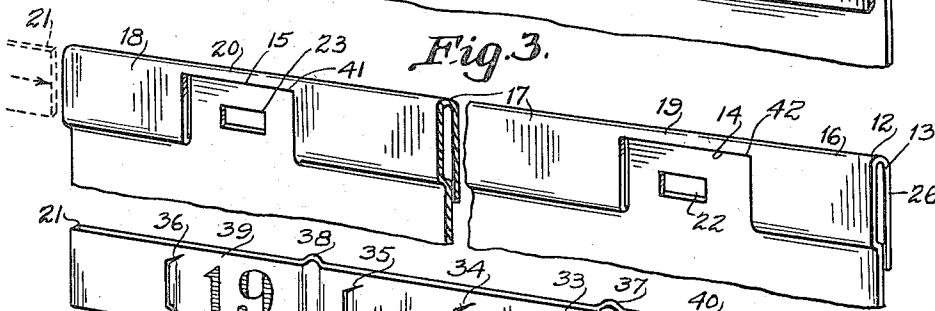
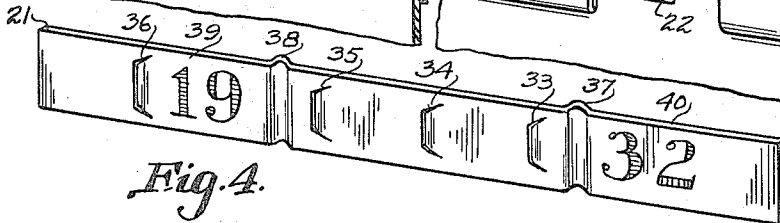


Fig. 4.



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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

Fig. 5.

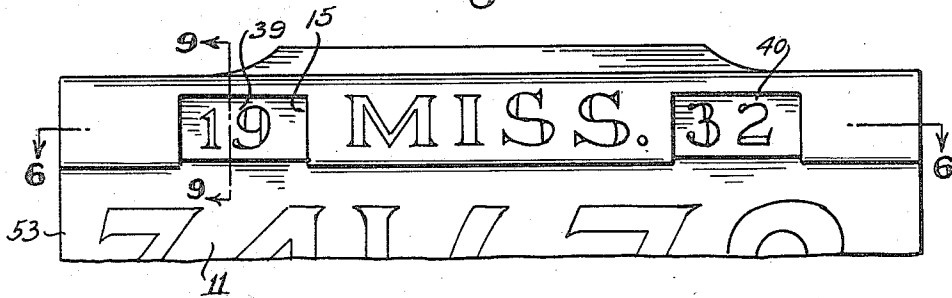


Fig. 6.

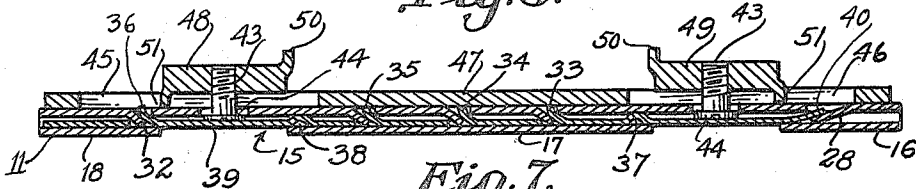


Fig. 7.

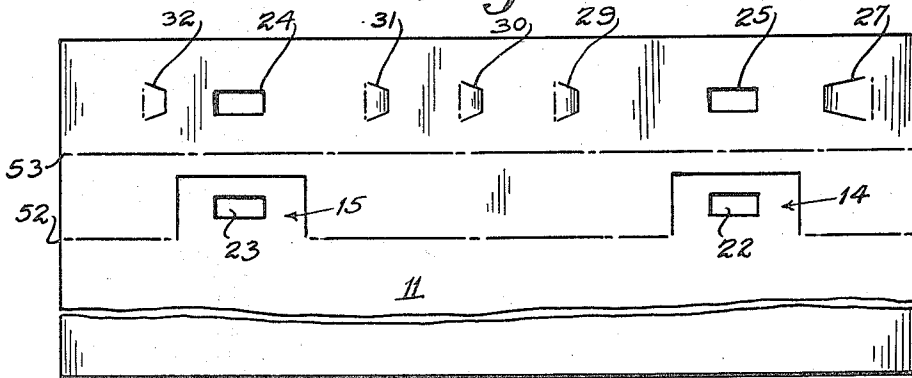


Fig. 8.

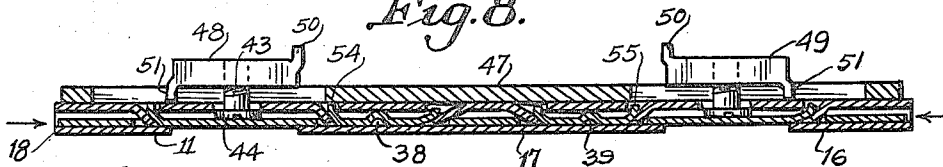


Fig. 9.

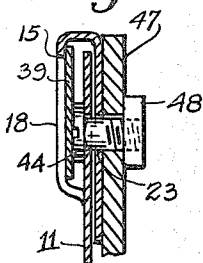
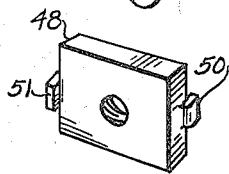


Fig. 10.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

1,928,527

LICENSE TAG LOCKING DEVICE

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Application November 21, 1931
Serial No. 576,570

15 Claims. (Cl. 40—125)

This invention relates to an automobile tag having an identification means.

The prime object of the invention is to provide a license tag with securing means bearing indicia which forms a part of the tag so that in order to remove the tag these indicia must be mutilated, thus indicating that the tag has been removed, and serving notice on the proper officials so that the matter may be investigated.

One of the principal agents in the commission of crime lies in the stealing of license plates, and placing the same on another automobile so that if the number is observed and traced, the real culprits escape.

Heretofore, generally the license plates have been secured by the use of ordinary bolts and nuts, and, in a few cases, efforts have been made to signify the removal of the tag by the breaking of the seal or disfigurement of the tag, but these have not proven satisfactory for various reasons.

In my invention, the securing strip actually carries indicia forming a part of the tag, and, in order to remove the tag, this strip must be destroyed so that if the tags are sought to be used again, the same will be incomplete and immediately arouse suspicion.

Another object is to provide novel securing means in which the strip bearing the indicia is locked in place against removal.

Still another object is to provide a very simple tag structure carrying the locking mechanism which may be stamped from a single piece of material.

Other objects will be disclosed in the specification and claims forming a part of this application. In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective of a fragmentary portion of an automobile showing the license plate in position;

Figure 2 is a perspective of the rear of the fragmentary portion of the license tag;

Figure 3 is a perspective of the front of a fragmentary portion of the license tag with the strip, shown in dotted lines, about to be inserted;

Figure 4 is a front perspective of a securing strip;

Figure 5 is a fragmentary front elevation of the assembled tag;

Figure 6 is a horizontal section taken on line 6—6 of Figure 5;

Figure 7 is a blank of the license tag before bending;

Figure 8 is a horizontal section of a modifica-

tion of the invention, showing the securing strip formed in two pieces;

Figure 9 is a vertical section taken on line 9—9 of Figure 5; and

Figure 10 is a detailed perspective of the lock nut.

Referring to the drawings, in which similar parts are designated by like numerals:

Numeral 11 designates a license tag having an offset portion 12 which is bent upon itself to form a channel 13. The hangers 14 and 15 are formed by cutting the metal and continuing that portion between the cuts in the same plane with the body of the tag 11 without offsetting the same. Bridges 16, 17, and 18 are formed by reason of the hangers. The hangers 14 and 15 do not extend to the top of the offset portion 12, but are spaced a sufficient distance from the top so that guards 19 and 20 are formed, and upon insertion of a securing strip 21, the guards 19 and 20 will extend over the upper edge of the strip 21.

Oblong openings 22 and 23 large enough for the average bolt used for installing tags are cut in hangers 14 and 15, and corresponding openings 24 and 25 are cut in flap 26 which is formed by bending the top portion of the license tag 11 upon itself. A stop member 27, having an inwardly bent tongue 28, is formed on the back flap 26, the tongue 28, as shown, extending to the right, and latches 29, 30, 31 and 32 formed of inwardly bent tongues extend in an opposite direction.

The securing strip 21, as shown in Figure 4, comprises four latches 33, 34, 35 and 36, which extend inwardly toward the back of the license tag 11 and in counter direction to the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32, and are of the same tongue construction. The latches in both the flap 26 and the securing strip 21 are cut wider at the base than at the end so as to permit flexibility of the latches. Crimps 37 and 38 are formed in the strip 21 intermediate the ends of the strip 21.

The latches 33, 34, 35, and 36 in the strip 21 are so constructed that the distance across the base is slightly greater than twice the distance from either outside corner of the latches to the edge of the strip 21, so that the latches have a greater amount of strength than the metal between the latches and the outside edge of the strip 21. Thus, if force is exerted to destroy the latches 33, 34, 35 and 36, the strip 21 will break before this is accomplished.

Year indicia 39 and 40 is placed on the face of the strip 21, that is, to correspond with the face of the license tag 11, the indicia 39 and 40 coin-

ciding with openings 41 and 42 formed in the opposite portion 12 by reason of the cut-away hangers 14 and 15. The tongue 28, of the stop member 27, extends a greater distance than any of the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32, so that the securing strip 21 may be slid past the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32, but will still be in engagement with the stop member 27.

The crimps 37 and 38 formed in the securing strip 21 are of sufficient dimension so that even if the securing strip 21 is slid past the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32, any pressure exerted on the strip 21 to flatten latches 33, 34, 35 and 36 in order to remove the strip, will result in the crimps 37 and 38 straightening, and thus elongating the strip so that the latches 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36 will once more be in engagement with each other.

Bolts 43 with screwheads 44 are placed through the oblong openings 22 and 23 formed in the hanger members 14 and 15 and the openings 24 and 25 and extending through slots 45 and 46 formed in the bracket 47.

Lock nuts 48 and 49 having oppositely faced lugs 50 and 51 are threaded on the bolts 43 until lugs 51—as shown in Figure 6—enter the slots 45 and 46, after which the bolts 43 are tightened by way of the heads 44 with a screwdriver, until the nuts 48 and 49 are drawn tightly against the bracket 47.

Figure 7 shows the license tag 11 in blank form, a rectangular piece of metal being used. The hangers 14 and 15, openings 22, 23, 24 and 25, stop member 27, latches 29, 30, 31 and 32, being formed by a stamping operation. The blank is then offset along line 52 and folded upon itself along line 53 to form the channel portion 13. The securing strip 21 is likewise subjected to a stamping operation, resulting in the formation of the latches 33, 34, 35 and 36, and the crimps 37 and 38.

Figure 8 illustrates a modification which does not depart from my invention, except that instead of a single securing strip 21, I provide two securing strips which result in additional stop members 54 and 55 intermediate the ends of the license tag 11. It is obvious that although I have shown in my preferred form the securing strip being inserted from the right, that it may be inserted from the left by mere reversal of parts which comes within the scope of my invention.

As actually used, the license tag 11 will be secured to the usual bracket 47 in the manner described by way of bolts 43. Due to the fact that the lock nuts 48 and 49 have been tightly drawn against the bracket 47 and the lugs 51 fitted into the slots 45 and 46, it is impossible to undo the bolts 43 from the rear. By having lugs 50 on the opposite face of the nuts 48 and 49, it makes no difference which side of the nut is screwed onto the bolt 43. Thus the user must securely lock the license tag 11 in place.

The securing strip 21 is then slid in place in the channel 13 and slid past the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32 until the end of the securing strip 21 rests against the stop member 27. Since the latches on both the flap 26 and securing strip 21 are of spring tension and are oppositely faced, the securing strip 21 will readily slide into the channel 13.

It is obvious that the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32 will nest with the latches 33, 34, 35 and 36 and thus securely hold the securing strip 21 in place. Since the end of the securing strip 21 has ridden

up on the tongue 28 of the stop member 27, a satisfactory stop is provided.

It is likewise apparent that the securing strip 21 completely covers the screwheads 44 and that the only way the same may be reached with a screwdriver or other tool is by removing the securing strip 21.

Year indicia 39 and 40 exactly coincides with the openings 41 and 42 and forms a part of the completely assembled license tag. In order to remove the securing strip 21, these indicia 39 and 40 must be destroyed, and any license tag without this indicia 39 and 40 would be immediately recognized as an incomplete tag and the vehicle stopped for investigation.

Should an instrument be inserted under the securing strip 21 in an attempt to separate the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32 from the latches 33, 34, 35 and 36, the securing strip 21 would break before the separation would take place, since there is more metal in the latches 33, 34, 35 and 36 than there is in the securing strip 21 offsetting the respective latches.

Should the latches 33, 34, 35 and 36 be moved past the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32 up onto the stop member 27, which is possible due to the tongue 28 being longer than any of the latches 29, 30, 31 and 32, and which is necessary since in order to properly nest the latches, the latches on securing member 21 must pass beyond the latches on the flap 26; and, in an attempt made to flatten out the latches the crimps 37 and 38 would likewise be flattened and the securing strip 21 elongated so that the respective latches on the securing strip 21 and flap 26 will be nested once more.

It is obvious that should it be deemed advisable, the same tags may be used year after year by obtaining new securing strips each year from the State, since the securing strip 21 bears the year indicia 39 and 40. The production of the securing strip 21 would cost little as compared with the production of the entire license tag.

Although I have used the automobile as an illustration of the use of my invention, I do not intend to limit myself to such use, as it is obvious that it may be used in connection with all types of vehicles.

What I claim is:

1. A plate holder comprising a support having a pair of slots formed therein, a license plate having at the upper part thereof a flange parallel with the body of the plate, registering apertures formed in said plate and flange, said apertures being formed to register with the apertures in said support, bolts passing through the registering apertures in said plate and support, nuts on said bolts having means engageable with the apertures in said support to prevent rotation of said nuts, and means slidably mounted on said plate for preventing access to the heads of said bolts when the slidable means and plate are assembled together.

2. A license plate having apertures formed therein adapted to register with apertures in a support, securing means adapted to be placed in said apertures to secure said plate to said support, said plate having a channel formed opposite the securing means, a strip slidably mounted in said channel adapted to cover said securing means and cooperating means on said plate and strip to lock the strip in aperture covering position on said plate.

3. A license plate having apertures formed therein adapted to register with the apertures

in a support, securing means adapted to be placed in said apertures to secure said plate to said support, said plate having a channel therein with openings opposite the securing means, a strip slidably mounted in said channel adapted to cover said securing means and having indicia forming a part of the license assemblage adapted to coincide with the said openings, and cooperating means on said plate and strip to lock the strip in aperture covering and indicia showing position on said plate.

4. A license plate having apertures formed therein adapted to register with the apertures in a support, bolts placed in said apertures to secure said plate to said support, a nut having a lug forming the securing means on the backside of said support, said lug adapted to fit into said aperture provided in said support, said plate having a channel formed opposite the bolt head, a strip slidably mounted in said channel adapted to cover said bolt head and cooperating means on said plate and strip to lock the strip in bolt covering position on said plate.

5. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel and having apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the apertures with openings formed therein adapted to receive securing means, a strip slidably mounted in said channel to cover said securing means and cooperating means on said plate and strip to lock the strip in aperture covering position on said plate.

6. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel and having apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the apertures with openings formed therein adapted to receive securing means, a strip having license indicia thereon mounted in said channel adapted to coincide with said apertures and cooperating means on said plate and strip to lock the strip in aperture covering position on said plate.

7. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel, the rear portion being in the nature of a flap having openings therein, apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the apertures with openings formed therein coinciding with openings formed in the flap adapted to receive securing means, a stop member formed at one end of said flap with a tongue bent inwardly, latches formed in said flap having tongues bent inwardly and faced in an opposite direction to said stop member, a strip having a corresponding number of latches to those formed in the flap but faced in an opposite direction and adapted to slide in said channel, the end of said strip adapted to ride up on the tongue of said stop member and the latches to nest with each other to form locking means, the strip adapted to cover said support securing means to prevent removal of the plate without destroying the strip.

8. A license plate having apertures formed therein adapted to register with the apertures in a support and having a channel formed at the upper part thereof, a strip slidably mounted in said channel adapted to cover said apertures, cooperating means on said plate and strip to lock the strip in aperture covering position on said plate, said plate having a crimp formed therein to elongate said strip upon pressure being

applied thereto and to more firmly lock said strip in position.

9. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel, the rear portion being in the nature of a flap, apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the apertures with openings formed therein coinciding with openings formed in the flap adapted to receive securing means, a stop member formed at one end of said flap with a tongue bent inwardly, latches formed in said flap having tongues bent inwardly and faced in an opposite direction to said stop member, a strip having a corresponding number of latches to those formed in the flap but faced in an opposite direction and adapted to slide in said channel, the end of said strip adapted to ride up on the tongue of said stop member and the latches to nest with each other to form locking means, the strip adapted to cover said support securing means to prevent removal of the plate without destroying the strip, said strip having a crimp formed therein so that upon said strip being flattened the strip will be elongated and more firmly nest the latches.

10. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel, the rear portion being in the nature of a flap, apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the apertures with openings formed therein coinciding with openings formed in the flap adapted to receive securing means, a stop member formed at one end of said flap with a tongue bent inwardly, latches formed in said flap having tongues bent inwardly and faced in an opposite direction to said stop member, a strip having a corresponding number of latches to those formed in the flap but faced in an opposite direction and adapted to slide in said channel, the tongue of said stop member being longer than the tongues of any of the latches, the end of said strip adapted to ride on the tongue of said stop member and the latches to nest with each other to form locking means, the strip adapted to cover said support securing means to prevent removal of the plate without destroying the strip.

11. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel, the rear portion being in the nature of a flap, apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the apertures with openings formed therein coinciding with openings formed in the flap adapted to receive securing means, a stop member formed at one end of said flap with a tongue bent inwardly, latches formed in said flap having tongues bent inwardly and faced in an opposite direction to said stop member, a strip having a corresponding number of latches to those formed in the flap but faced in an opposite direction and adapted to slide in said channel, the end of said strip adapted to ride up on the tongue of said stop member and the latches to nest with each other to form locking means, the latches of said strip being broader at their base than the outside adjacent portions of the strip so that the metal will break before the latches, the strip adapted to cover said support securing means to prevent removal of the plate without destroying the strip.

12. A license plate having the upper part thereof offset and bent upon itself to form a channel, the rear portion being in the nature of a flap, apertures formed in the offset portion with bridges in between, hangers formed in the aper-

tures with openings formed therein coinciding with openings formed in the flap adapted to receive securing means, a stop member formed at one end of said flap with a tongue bent inwardly, 5 latches formed in said flap having tongues bent inwardly and faced in an opposite direction to said stop member, a strip having a corresponding number of latches to those formed in the flap but faced in an opposite direction and adapted to 10 slide in said channel, the tongue of said stop member being longer than the tongues of any of the latches, the end of said strip adapted to ride up on the tongue of said stop member and the latches to nest with each other to form locking 15 means, the strip adapted to cover said support securing means to prevent removal of the plate without destroying the strip, the latches of said strip being broader at their base than the outside adjacent portions of the strip so that the metal 20 will break before the latches.

13. A license plate having apertures formed therein adapted to register with apertures in a support, securing means adapted to be placed in said apertures to secure said plate to said support, 25 said plate having a channel formed therein in horizontal alignment with the apertures, a strip slidably mounted in said channel adapted to cover said apertures and the securing means therein, and cooperating means on said plate and strip

to lock the strip in aperture covering position on said plate.

14. A support, a license plate, clamping means having part thereof extending through said plate and support and operable only from the face of the plate remote from said support for detachably 80 clamping said plate to said support, an indicia bearing strip narrower than said license plate and slidable in one direction on said plate to a predetermined position over the operable end of 85 said means, and cooperating means on said strip and plate for locking said strip in said position to prevent a releasing operation of said clamping means without mutilation of said strip.

15. A support; a license plate; clamping means 90 having part thereof extending through said plate and support and operable for unclamping, only from the end of said clamping means adjacent the face of the plate remote from said support; a separate indicia-bearing strip narrower than 95 said license plate; means on said plate and strip for fixing said strip in a predetermined position on said plate to cover the said operable end of said clamping means to prevent a plate releasing operation of said means without mutilation of 100 said strip, said strip having a weakened portion tending to break on unauthorized tampering therewith.

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