Oct. 5, 1954 D. W. GRANT 2,690,941

SERVING TRAY ATTACHMENT FOR COFFEE TABLES

Filed Aug. 17, 1953

Fig. 1.

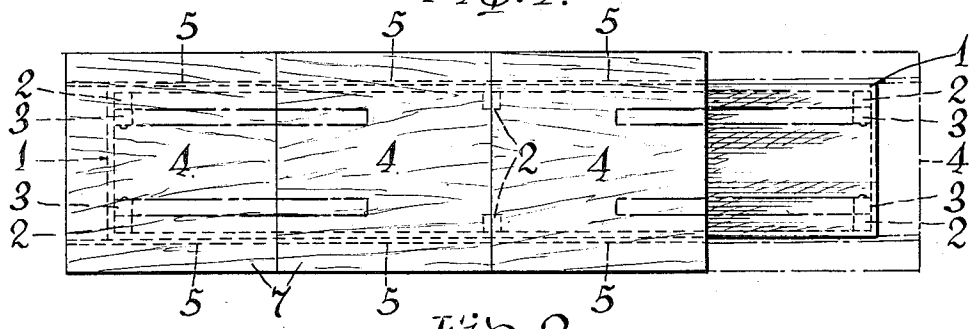


Fig. 2.

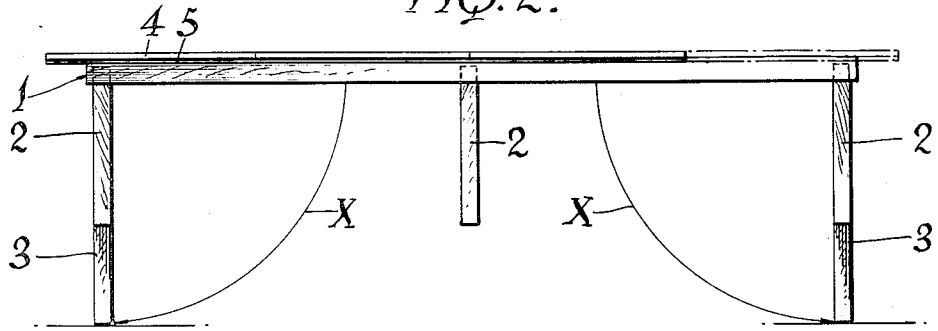


Fig. 3.

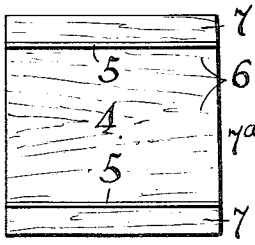


Fig. 6.

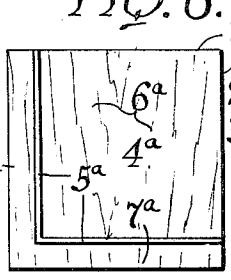


Fig. 4.

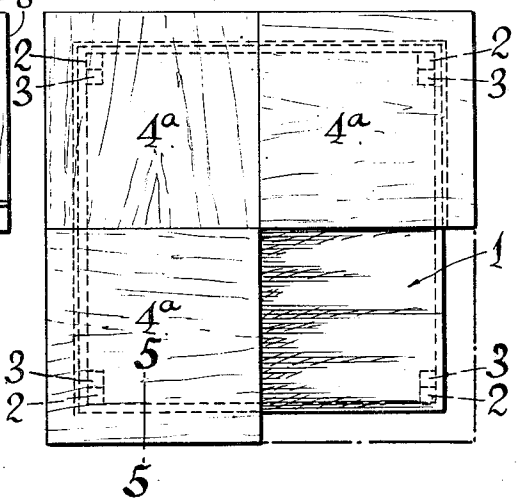
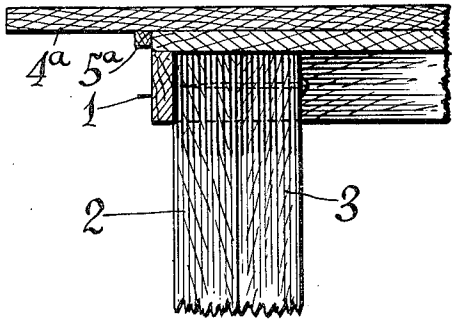


Fig. 5.



INVENTOR.
Denison W. Grant,
BY
John Powers.
ATTORNEY.

Patented Oct. 5, 1954

2,690,941

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,690,941

SERVING TRAY ATTACHMENT FOR COFFEE TABLES

Denison W. Grant, Franklin, Pa.

Application August 17, 1953, Serial No. 374,641

2 Claims. (Cl. 311—39)

1

In living rooms a table, colloquially referred to as a "coffee table," is arranged in front of the settee, and various articles, appropriate to the living room, are placed upon it within reach of those using the settee. The seat of the settee is relatively low and the elevation of the table top is correspondingly low. Although the coffee table is used, in informal entertaining, for the service of beverages, hors d'oeuvres and the like, it is not satisfactorily useful for the service of meals. This is for the reasons that the lowness of the table prevents those using the settee from sitting in a normal and comfortable upright position during the meal and the area of the table is inadequate for dining table use. On the other hand, it is frequently desirable that meals be served in the living room where the only permanent article of furniture available for such use is the coffee table.

The elevation of the seat of the settee or equivalent piece of furniture is of the order of eighteen inches and the elevation of the coffee table is usually of the order of fifteen inches. The standard coffee tables have tops of either oblong or square outline.

This invention relates to a mechanical adaptation of standard coffee tables for meal service purposes and has for its objects (1) to enable the normal use of the coffee table, qua coffee table; (2) to enable its use in association with the settee for the consumption of meals with substantially the same convenience as a standard dining room table; and (3) to insure minimum work and optimum convenience in "setting" the tableware and in the removal of the tableware when the meals have been eaten.

The invention, generally speaking, is a combination of cooperating elements which includes the standard coffee table, means associated with it for raising its top to an elevation convenient for the consumption of meals by those sitting upon the settee or upon chairs having seats of settee height, and serving trays, which may be called "meal adapters," and, bearing the tableware and viands, may be carried from the kitchen, which increase the meal supporting area to an extent suitable for at least more than two persons, which in service positions have an articulated relation with the top of the table such that there is no liability of displacement, and which may be instantly and effortlessly placed in and removed from service positions.

I have determined empirically that with a standard settee having a seat at an elevation of eighteen inches a table for the consumption of

2

meals may have its top at an elevation of twenty-six inches. With the table top at such an elevation, those occupying the settee may sit in an erect position and eat as conveniently and comfortably as those seated at a standard dining room table, which has its top at an elevation of thirty inches. Those not occupying the settee may use chairs having seats at settee height, that is to say at the same height as the seat of the settee. The table, therefore, is equipped with appropriate means, such as foldable auxiliary legs, by which its top may be raised to the desired height. The meal adapters are serving trays upon which the tableware and viands may be placed in the kitchen. These trays are provided on their under faces with projecting parts which provide recesses to accommodate the underlying portion of the table and which articulate the tray with the table in a manner such that there is no liability of displacement of the tray. This articulation of the trays with the table involves merely the placing of the trays upon the table in an appropriate position. This is done virtually without effort. The articulating projecting parts are located suitably inward of the margins of the trays whereby the tray portions projecting beyond them provide hand grips by means of which the trays may be carried from and to the kitchen and placed upon and removed from the table top and also whereby the trays in combined relation will provide an appropriately large and uninterrupted area for the support of the tableware and viands. When the meal has been consumed the trays, bearing the tableware, are lifted without effort from the table top and returned to the kitchen after which the table is lowered to its normal height in which it is available for use as a standard coffee table.

As an example of an application of the invention let it be assumed that the top of the coffee table has an area of six feet by fourteen inches, and that the coffee table is associated with a settee of appropriate length. In this instance the table will carry four meal adapters, each twenty inches square which are symmetrically placed upon the top of the table and provide for the support of tableware and viands an uninterrupted oblong surface twenty inches wide and eighty inches long. For the consumption of meals four persons may be seated very comfortably, two upon the settee and two upon settee height chairs at the ends of the table.

Herein the invention is disclosed in two forms, in one of which the table top is of oblong outline and in the other of which it is square.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a plan view of the adaptation in which the table top is of oblong outline, this figure showing three of the metal adapters in full lines in adjoining relation and an end adapter in broken lines, the underlying portion of the top of the coffee table being shown in plan.

Figure 2 is a side elevation of the adaptation shown in Figure 1. This figure conforms to Figure 1 in respect to showing in full lines three meal adapters in adjoining relation and in broken lines an end adapter.

Figure 3 is a bottom plan view of one of the adapters.

Figure 4 is a plan view of the adaptation in which the table top is of square outline, this figure showing three of the meal adapters in full lines in adjoining relation and a fourth adapter in broken lines, the underlying portion of the top of the coffee table being shown in plan.

Figure 5 is a detail fragmentary sectional view on line 5—5 of Figure 4.

Figure 6 is a bottom plan view of any one of the adapters provided in the form shown in Figure 4.

Referring to Figures 1 to 3:

The coffee table is shown at 1 and is of oblong outline, being provided with permanent legs 2, a pair at each end and preferably an intermediate pair by which it is supported at its normal elevation of approximately fifteen inches. According to the invention the coffee table is provided with means, normally not in use, whereby it may be supported at an elevation appropriate for the service and consumption of meals by those occupying the adjacent settee. This means may consist of auxiliary legs 3 located inwardly of the legs 2 and of suitably greater length. The legs 3 are pivotally mounted, preferably at points adjacent the upper ends of the legs 2, and thereby are foldably connected to the frame of the table 1 in such a manner that they are normally held under and parallel to the top of the table 1, as indicated by broken lines in Figure 1, in substantially the same manner that the legs of a collapsible bridge table may be folded and held and that when their use is required they may be swung downward into positions in which they are parallel to the legs 2 and normal to the table top as sufficiently shown in Figure 2. The additional length of the legs 3 as compared to the legs 2 results in the table top being held at an elevation, approximately twenty six inches, convenient for the consumption of meals by those occupying the settee. An important aspect of the utility of the invention is that the table 1 is available for serving more than two persons and for the use of the settee by one or more of the persons served. The table 1 is therefore made of a length appropriate for this purpose, a length of six feet being preferred whereby four persons may be seated at the table for the consumption of meals.

The meal adapters are in the form of flat trays. In the example assumed the tables are of oblong outline. There are four trays 4, each twenty inches square. The trays 4 are arranged successively in adjoining relation, thereby to provide an uninterrupted surface for the support of tableware and viands which is adequate for four persons, two seated upon the settee and two occupying settee height chairs at the ends of the table.

The trays 4 are provided on their undersurfaces

with longitudinal rib-like projections 5 which are parallel to one another and to the side edges of the trays. The projections 5 delimit recesses 6 in the form of channels and have a mutual spacing sufficiently greater than the width of the table (fourteen inches in the example assumed) to enable the trays to be conveniently placed from above upon the top of the table which has an easy fit with the recesses 6 with the projections 5 adjacent its outer side faces, the projections so articulating the trays with the table that there is no liability of displacement. The projections 5 are located inwardly of the side faces of the trays whereby each tray has co-planar portions 7 extending laterally beyond the projections to an extent sufficient to enable them to be used as hand grips in carrying the tray to and from the table and in placing the tray upon and removing it from the table and also to an extent which sufficiently accords with an area appropriate for the support of tableware and viands. In the example assumed the portions 7 project to an extent of slightly less than three inches beyond the projections 5.

In the use of the adaptation the coffee table 1 is first raised to the required elevation, as shown in Figure 2, by swinging the legs 3 from their folded positions, to their vertical positions through the path indicated by the lines X of Figure 2. The viands and tableware are then placed upon the trays 4 in the kitchen and the trays are carried, one by one, to the raised table and fitted upon it in the manner above described and as sufficiently shown in Figures 1 and 2. When the meal has been consumed the trays, bearing the tableware, are lifted from the table and carried back to the kitchen after which the legs 3 are folded to lower the table 1 into its normal position for use as a coffee table.

Referring to Figures 4 to 6:

In this example the table 1 is of square outline and has the permanent legs 2 and the foldable legs 3. It is raised and lowered as above described. The trays 4*a* are of square outline and are preferably twenty inches square as in the example previously described. The projections on the bottom of the trays are shown at 5*a* and on each tray are provided as a pair in right angle relation, the projections delimiting recesses 6*a* which accommodate the underlying portions of the table and have open sides 6*b* opposed to the projections 5*a*. The trays have co-planar portions 7*a* which correspond functionally to the portions 7 of the previous example and extend beyond the projections 5*a* to an extent of three inches, more or less. In this example the trays have a cornerwise articulation with the table, the right angle of the projections 5*a* of each tray conforming to the right angle at which adjacent edge faces of the trays meet and the projections abutting said edge faces when the trays are properly placed in service positions. The trays are fitted in service positions upon the table as shown in Figure 4 from which it will be apparent that there is no liability of displacement. As in the previous example the tableware and viands are placed upon the table in the kitchen and, the table having been first elevated, are brought to the table and placed in the positions described. At the completion of the meal the trays are removed from the table and, bearing the tableware, are carried back to the kitchen.

In this example two persons may occupy the settee before two adjoining trays and two persons may sit at the opposite side of the table upon

settee height chairs before the other two trays 4a.

In the foregoing description I have suggested with reference to trays which carry a meal serving for a single person that they be twenty inches square. I have determined that these dimensions are in accord with the dimensions of the majority of coffee tables and also afford an increased and ample uninterrupted supporting area for the viands and tableware. It will, of course, be understood that within practical limits consistent with the purpose of the invention departures from these dimensions may be made. While trays which carry a meal serving for a single person will be preferable in the majority of instances it may be found desirable in certain instances to use trays which will carry meal servings for two people. For example, in the case of tables such as shown in Figure 4 which seat four people, two at opposite sides facing one another, the trays may be dimensioned for the service of both persons at the same side of the table. In other words two double trays having the articulating projections and the hand grip portions may be used instead of four single trays.

I claim:

1. A coffee table and tray combination comprising a coffee table with a rectangular top, means to support the coffee table at a normal height, normally concealed means operable to elevate the coffee table for meal serving purposes to a height compatible with the type of seating furniture used with a coffee table, a plurality of rectangular individual meal serving trays adapted to be placed upon the coffee table top in an edge abutting relationship to entirely encompass said top with two edges of each tray extending beyond the margin of the top to provide hand grip portions for each tray, each of

said individual serving trays being of a size such that when they are assembled on the coffee table top they will conform to the configuration of the table top with an equal width hand grip overlap margin, and guide stop means on the bottom of each tray engageable for cooperation with an adjacent outer edge of the coffee table top to prevent displacement of the trays when positioned on the coffee table top.

2. A coffee table and tray combination comprising a supporting frame having a square top, four removable square tray members supported by said frame top to form when in place, a continuous square table top, said table top being in surface area greater than said square frame top, each of said trays having guide stop means on the underside thereof and in one corner thereof for cooperating with a respective corner of said frame top so as to centrally position said table top with respect to said frame top and to define a marginal area of constant width around the underside of said table top, said guide top means formed at a right angle which angle extends in the same direction as that of said tray corner.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

Number	Name	Date
885,630	Mason	Apr. 21, 1908
919,708	Faulkner	Apr. 27, 1909
1,319,803	Sicher	Oct. 28, 1919
1,738,429	Heyman	Dec. 3, 1929
1,872,740	James	Aug. 23, 1932
2,419,229	Preis	Apr. 22, 1947
2,556,943	Reisman	June 12, 1951
2,574,924	Larson	Nov. 13, 1951
2,602,011	Sanders	July 1, 1952