

Aug. 14, 1962

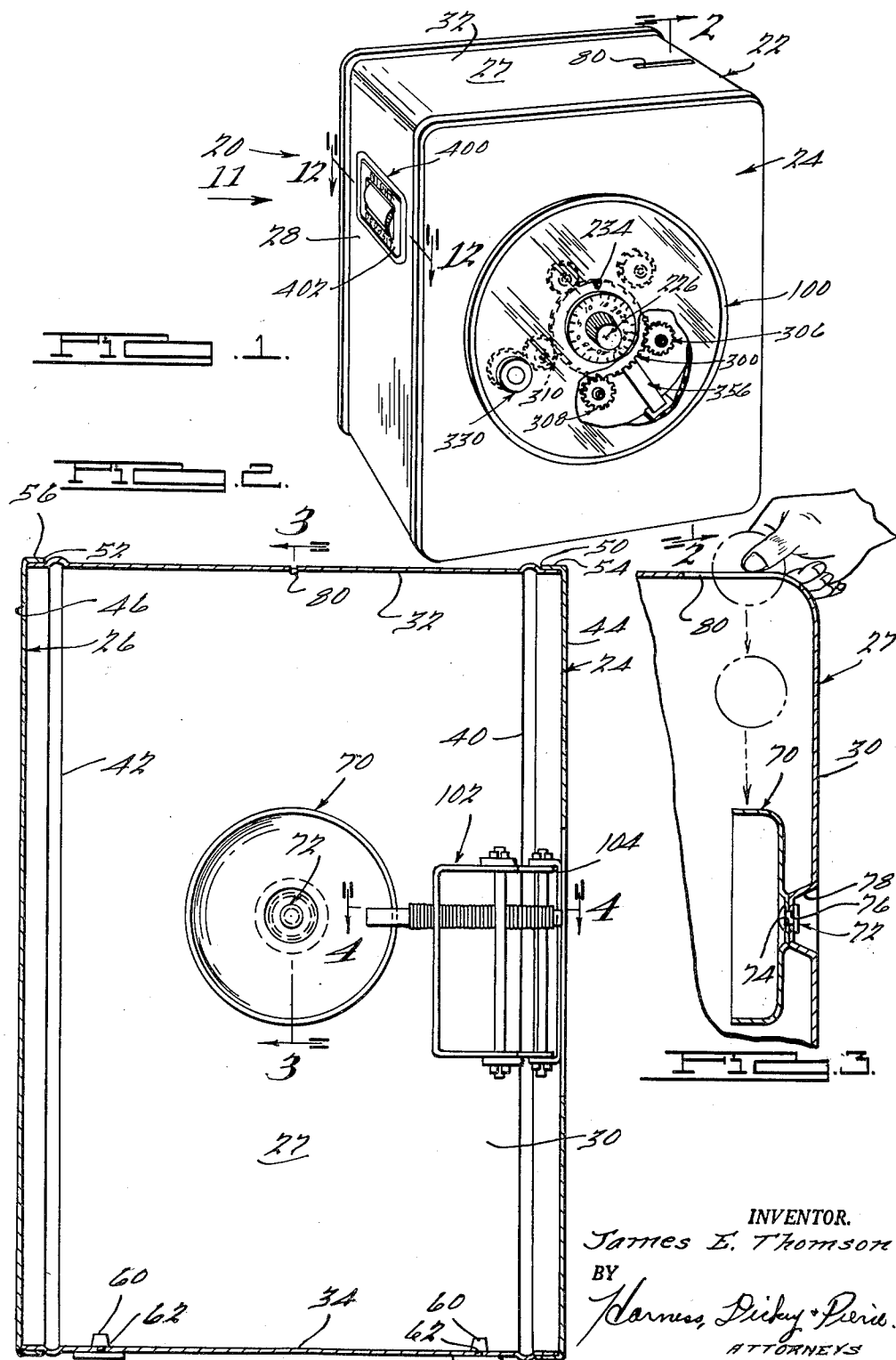
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3,048,940

TOY BANK VAULT CONSTRUCTION

Filed Nov. 14, 1961

5 Sheets-Sheet 1



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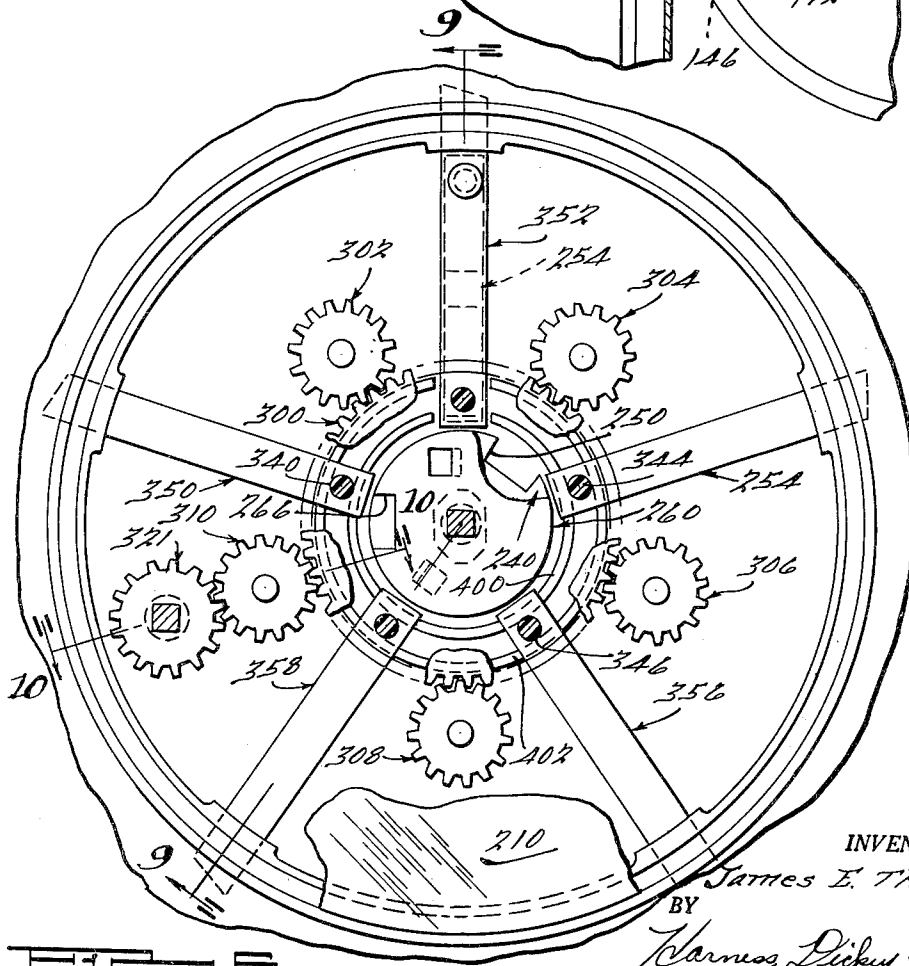
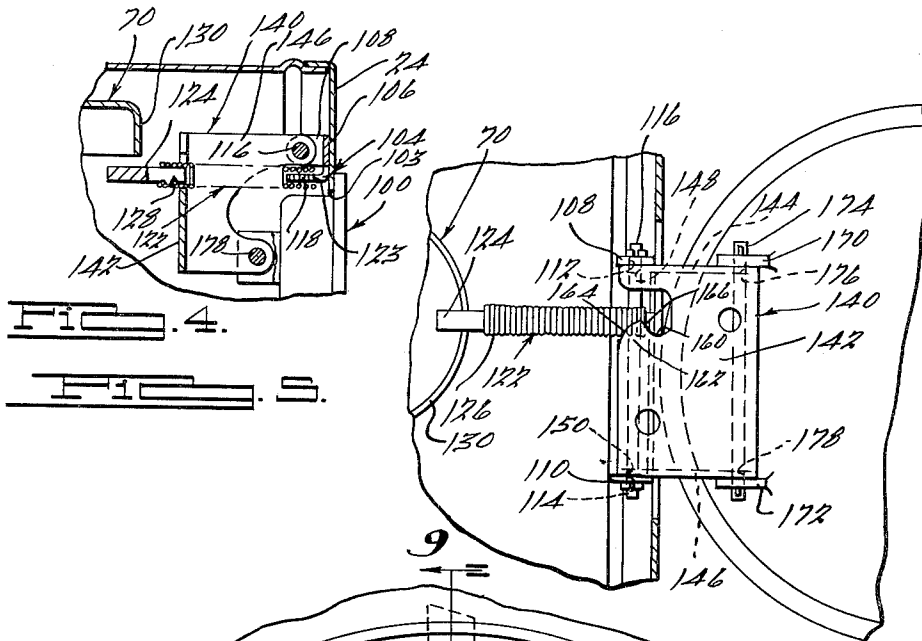
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TOY BANK VAULT CONSTRUCTION

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5 Sheets-Sheet 2



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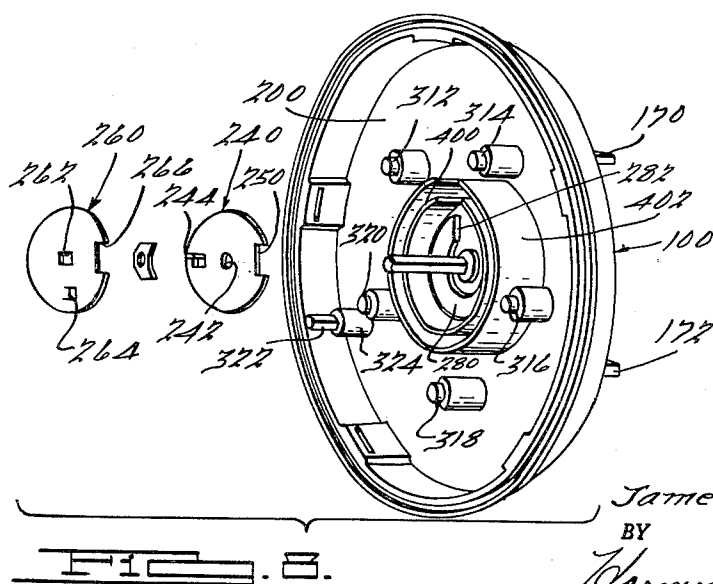
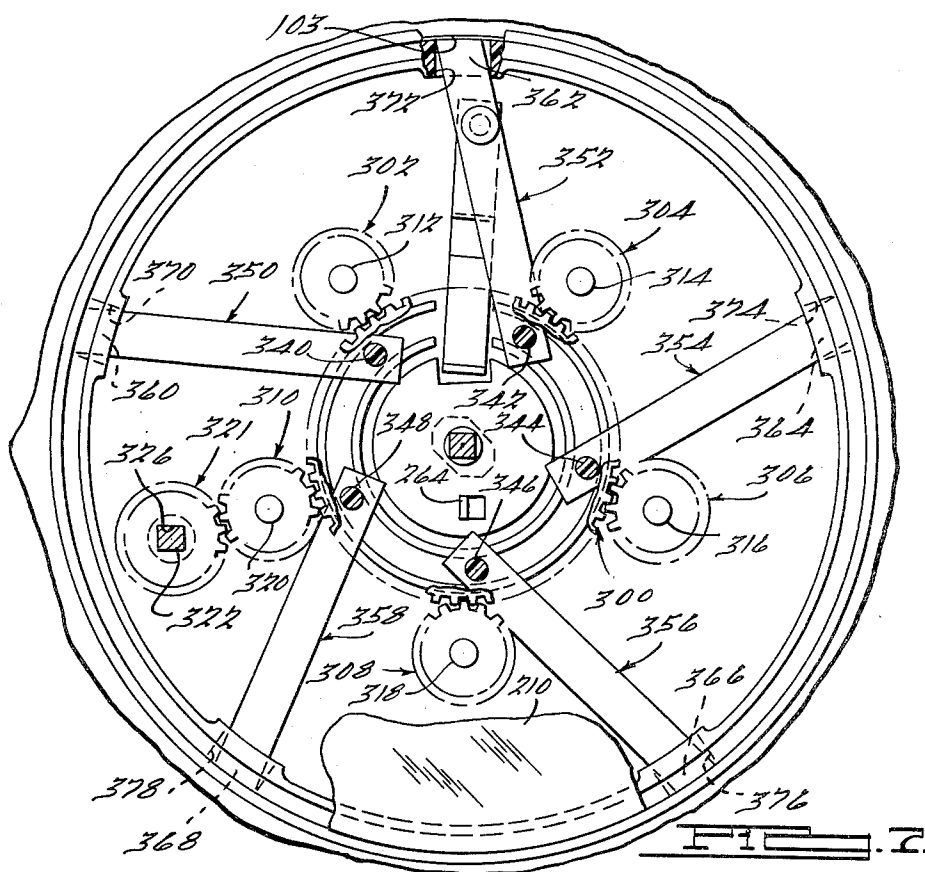
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TOY BANK VAULT CONSTRUCTION

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5 Sheets-Sheet 3



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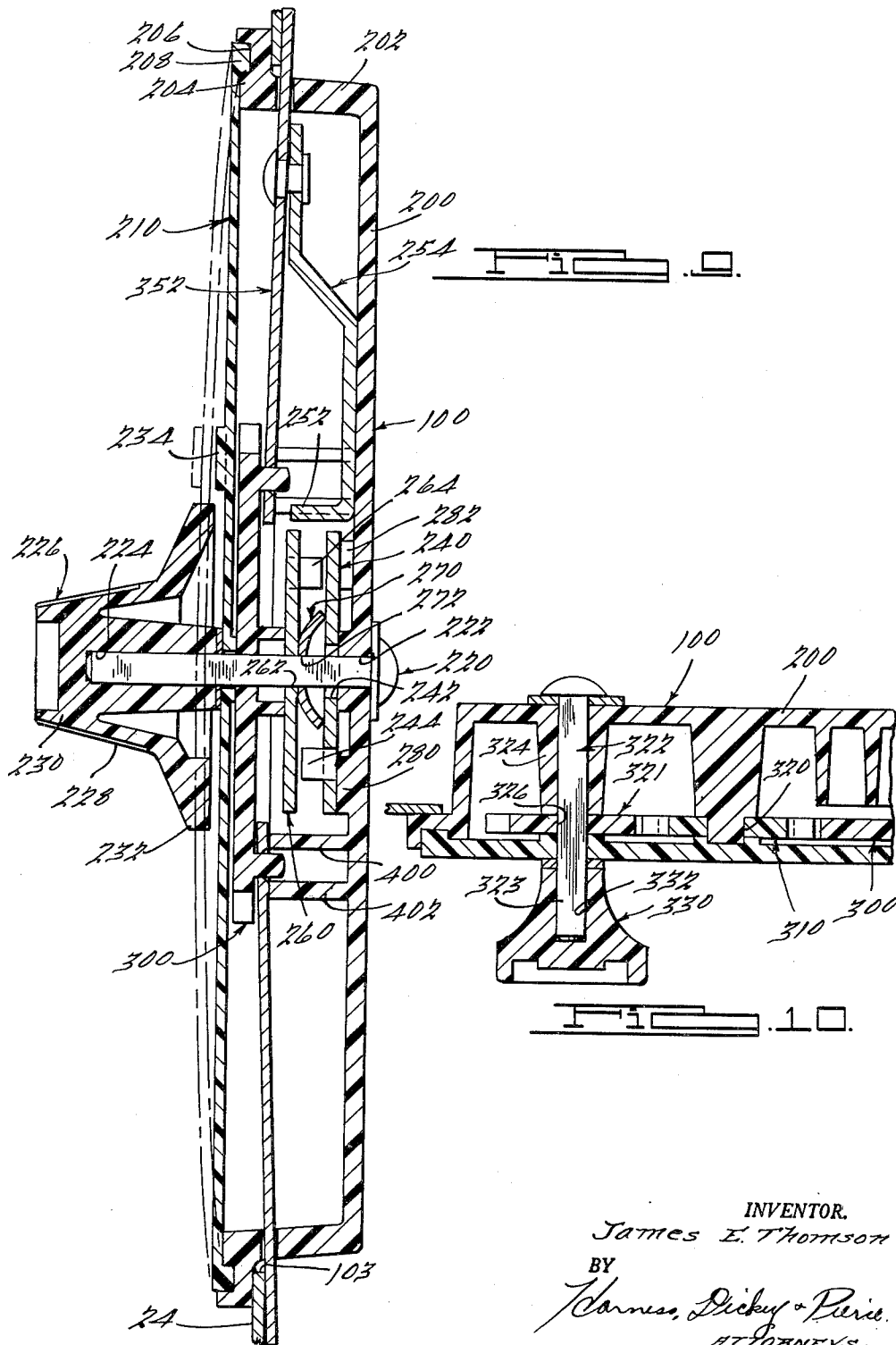
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TOY BANK VAULT CONSTRUCTION

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5 Sheets-Sheet 4



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TOY BANK VAULT CONSTRUCTION

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5 Sheets-Sheet 5

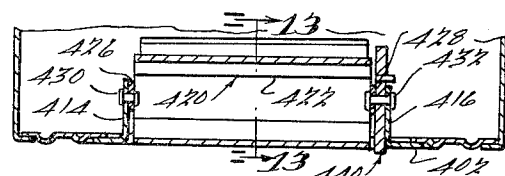


FIG. 12.

FIG. 13.

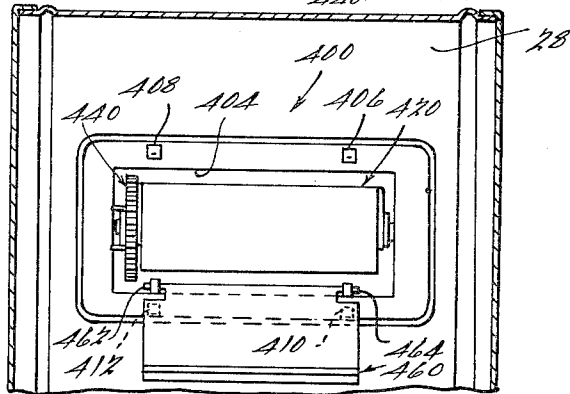


FIG. 14.

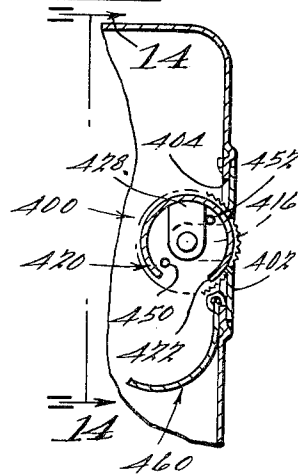


FIG. 15.

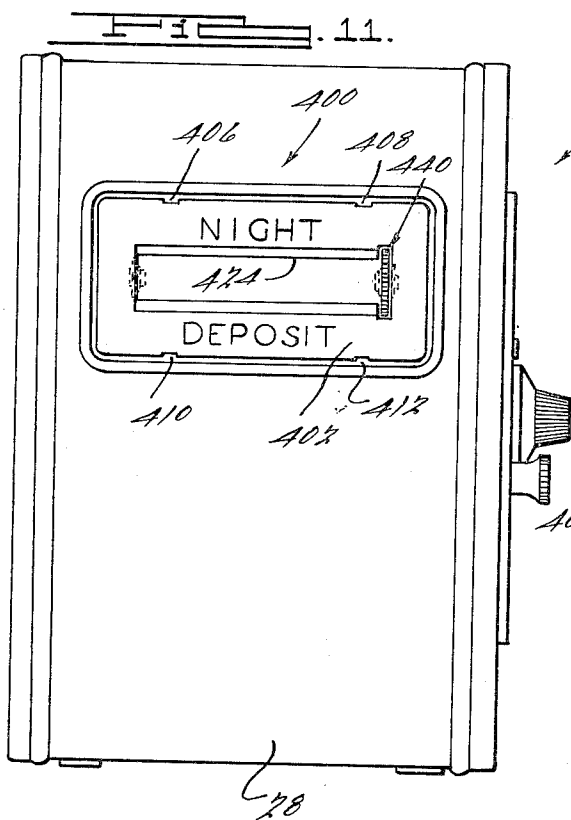


FIG. 11.

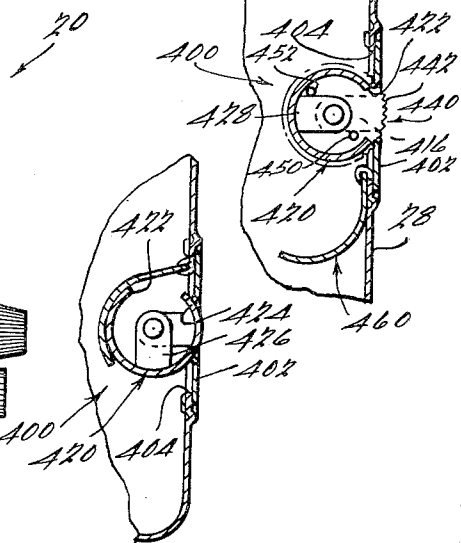


FIG. 16.

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TOY BANK VAULT CONSTRUCTION

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6 Claims. (Cl. 46—3)

This invention relates generally to educational toys and more particularly to a toy bank vault.

One problem faced by toy manufacturers is determining which features attract the attention of adult purchasers, as well as be attractive to a child. The motivation behind the purchase of a toy is subjective to the point of being whimsical and therefore the solution to this problem defies precise definition or reduction to formula. Further, the toy manufacturer is faced with a problem ancillary to sale of the toy in that the features of a toy that stimulated its purchase are not necessarily the same features which sustain interest in the toy after the purchase.

In accordance with the instant invention, one solution to the problem of creating toys that are attractive to both adult purchasers and children and that sustain interest after the purchase, is to reduce a relatively complex inherently mysterious mechanism into a relatively simple mechanical movement in such a manner that it is practicable for incorporation into a toy. Purchase of the toy is stimulated because the structural components of the mechanism are displayed in a manner that educates the purchaser to the orientation and mode of operation thereof. In accordance with another feature of the instant invention, simplification of the complex mechanism is discreetly handled so that continuing interest is maintained in the toy.

Another desirable attribute of a toy is that it be reasonably priced so that it commands a relatively wide market. However, to realize a low manufacturing and therefore selling cost for a toy, the number of different parts in the toy must be minimized, requiring that the components of the toy be so designed and orientated that they are multifunctional in nature.

The present invention is directed to an educational toy in the form of a toy bank vault that renders a relatively complex and mysterious planetary gear combination lock mechanism comprehensible to a child. Simplification of the lock mechanism is accomplished in a manner that renders it practicable for incorporation into a toy, yet is subtly treated so as to conceal the configuration, orientation and function of an essential component of the mechanism and thereby maintain interest in the lock mechanism.

The toy bank vault of the present invention is realistic in configuration and features a vault door of authentic relative dimensions. The door has a transparent frontal face that exposes a system of planetary gears. The latch elements of the lock and the mode of operation thereof are visible and relatively easily understood. However, the combination discs of the lock are hidden from view in such a manner that continuing interest is maintained in the lock mechanism. The toy bank vault features a warning bell that signals opening of the vault door as well as the insertion of a coin. The bank vault has a novel night deposit receptacle that is structurally and functionally authentic. Further, the toy bank vault is constructed so as to maximize production economy consistent with maintaining authenticity.

Accordingly, one object of the present invention is an improved toy bank vault.

Another object is a toy bank vault having a realistic door.

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Another object is a toy bank vault having a bell that signals the insertion of a coin.

Another object is a toy bank vault having an alarm that signals opening of the vault door.

Another object is a toy bank vault having a night deposit receptacle.

Another object is a toy bank vault having a planetary gear combination lock mechanism that effects locking and unlocking of the vault door.

Another object is a toy bank vault having a combination lock mechanism with visible latch elements and hidden combination discs.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent in the following specification, claims and drawings wherein:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a toy bank vault in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially along the line 2—2 of FIGURE 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially along the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially along the line 4—4 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary view similar to FIG. 2 with the vault door rotated to the open condition;

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary front view of the toy bank vault with the combination dial removed therefrom;

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary front view of the door for the toy bank vault similar to FIG. 6 with the latch arms thereof moved to the unlocked condition;

FIG. 8 is an exploded perspective view of the locking discs of the locking mechanism for the vault door;

FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially along the line 9—9 of FIG. 6;

FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view taken substantially along the line 10—10 of FIG. 6;

FIG. 11 is a view taken in the direction of the arrow 11 of FIGURE 1;

FIG. 12 is a view taken substantially along the line 12—12 of FIGURE 1;

FIG. 13 is a view taken substantially along the line 13—13 of FIGURE 12;

FIG. 14 is a view taken substantially along the line 14—14 of FIG. 13;

FIG. 15 is a view similar to FIG. 13 with the receptacle rotated to the coin-receiving condition; and

FIG. 16 is a view similar to FIG. 15 with the bank inverted to show operation of the anti-theft flap.

As best seen in FIGURE 1 of the drawings, a toy bank vault 20 in accordance with an exemplary constructed embodiment of the present invention, comprises a vault body 22 for the reception of coins and other valuables. The body 22 comprises a sheet metal front panel 24, a rear panel 26 (FIG. 2) and a continuous sheet metal strip or member 27 defining a side panel portion 28 and a side panel portion 30, a top panel portion 32 and a bottom panel portion 34. Appropriate radii are formed at the intersections between the side, top and bottom panel portions of the sheet metal strip 27 to give the bank vault 20 an aesthetically pleasing configuration and to render the toy bank vault 20 safe for handling by children. The end portions of the sheet metal member 27 (not shown) are joined as by welding.

The side panel portions 28 and 30 and top and bottom panel portions 32 and 34 of the member 27 are provided with continuous beads 40 and 42 that are spaced inwardly from front and rear edge portions 44 and 46 thereof, respectively. As best seen in FIG. 2 of the drawings, the beads 40 and 42 position and protect the vertical edge portions 50 and 52 of normally related peripheral flanges 54 and 56 on the front and rear panels 24 and 26, respectively. The beads 40 and 42 thus extend outwardly

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contiguously with the vertical edge faces 50 and 52 to preclude a child from cutting itself on the relatively sharp edges inherently formed on the flanges 54 and 56 in a drawing operation. The beads 40 and 42 also function as stiffening ribs for the member 27 of the vault body 22.

As best seen in FIG. 2, the bottom wall 34 of the vault body 22 is provided with a plurality of rubber feet 60 that extend through complementary apertures 62 so that the toy bank vault 20 may be placed upon a finished surface without marring the surface thereof.

As best seen in FIGS. 2, 3, 4 and 5, an alarm in the form of a bell 70 is mounted on the side wall 30 of the vault body 22 as by a rivet 72. The rivet 72 extends through complementary apertures 74 and 76 in the bell 70 and in an inwardly directed embossment 78 in the side wall 30 of the body 22.

The top wall 32 of the vault body 22 is provided with a slot 80 for the acceptance of coins. The slot 80 is vertically aligned above the bell 70 so that, when the toy bank is in its normal orientation, coins dropped through the slot 80 strike the bell 70, giving an audible indication of the insertion and acceptance thereof within the toy bank vault 20.

As best seen in FIGS. 4 and 5, a vault door 100 of authentic circular configuration and axial depth, is mounted for rotation about a vertical axis with respect to the front face 24 of the vault body 22 by a hinge 102. The door 100 is accepted within a complementary circular aperture 103 in the front face 24 of the vault body 22. The hinge 102 comprises a hinge mounting bracket 104 that is secured to the front face 24 of the body 22, as by welding. The bracket 104 is of U-shaped configuration defined by a bight portion 106 and leg portions 108 and 110. The leg portions 108 and 110 have apertures 112 and 114 therein, respectively, for the acceptance of a hinge pin 116.

The mounting bracket 104 has a flange 118 thereon (FIG. 4) extending generally normally to the bight portion 106 thereof for the acceptance of an end portion 120 of a helical coil spring 122. The flange 118 is preferably provided with a series of teeth or grooves 123 on the upper and lower edges thereof so that the spring 122 may be threadably engaged therewith. A clapper bar 124 is fixedly secured to an outer end portion 126 of the spring 122 as by a saw tooth notch 128 therein. The striker bar 124 is maintained in alignment with an edge portion 130 of the bell 70 so that, upon oscillation thereof due to the inherent spring bias of the coil spring 22, the striker bar 124 strikes the edge portion 130 of the alarm 70 to signal opening of the door 100, as will be described. The door 100 is provided with a hinge 140 of generally U-shaped vertical cross section defined by a bight portion 142 and leg portions 144 and 146. The leg portions 144 and 146 are provided with apertures 148 and 150, respectively, for the acceptance of the hinge pin 116 thereby to rotatably support the hinge 140 with respect to the hinge bracket 104.

As best seen in FIG. 5, the bight portion 142 of the hinge 140 is provided with a cut-out or aperture 160 that defines an upwardly extending goose neck or spring latch portion 162. The latch portion 162 has a cam face 164 that is engageable with the spring 122 to deflect the spring 122 upwardly so that, upon rotation of the door 100 to the fully closed position, the spring 122 is accepted within the arcuate cut-out portion or aperture 160. Upon rotation of the hinge 140 due to opening of the door, the spring 122 is carried along by the latch portion 162 of the hinge 140 until such time as the resilience thereof effects movement of the spring up a cam face 166 on an inner edge of the latch portion 162, whereupon the spring 122 rides upwardly and off the latch portion 122 snapping to its normal condition and carrying the striker bar 124 into engagement with the bell 130 to sound the alarm. Thus, the alarm 70 is sounded both when the door 100 is opened to insert or remove something from

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the toy bank vault 20 or when a coin is dropped through the slot 80 therein.

The hinge 140 is secured to a pair of integrally molded ears 170 and 172 on the door 100 as by a pin 174, the pin 174 extending through suitable apertures 176 and 178 in the leg portions 144 and 146 of the hinge 140.

As best seen in FIG. 9, the door 100 is authentic in appearance since it is relatively deep and circular in construction. The door 100 is formed as a plastic molding comprising a housing portion 200 and a cylindrical side wall 202. A frontal flange 204 extends radially outwardly from the cylindrical side wall 202 and has an annular groove 206 therein for the acceptance of a complementary annular rib 208 on a transparent frontal face or window 210.

As best seen in FIG. 9, the frontal face 210 is so constructed that the diameter of the rib portion 208 thereof is slightly larger than the diameter of the annular groove 206. Thus, the frontal face 210 is required to be initially dished so that the rib portion 208 thereof is accepted within the groove 106. After insertion of the rib 208 in the groove 206, the frontal face 210 springs to its original or normal configuration, thus resiliently locking the rib 208 within the groove 206, thereby to positively secure the frontal face 210 to the housing portion 200 of the door 100.

A combination knob support and inner combination disc drive pin 220 is rotatably supported in a complementary aperture 222 centrally of the housing 200 of the door 100. The pin 220 has an outer end portion 223 of square vertical cross section so as to be drivably accepted in a complementary aperture 224 in a combination knob 226. The knob 226 is provided with suitable corrugations 228 on a forwardly extending projection 230 thereof to facilitate hand rotation of the knob 226 and pin 220. The knob 226 has a radially outwardly extending flange portion 232 with suitable indicia thereon (FIG. 1) to index rotation thereof with respect to a pointer 234 formed on the frontal face or window 210.

An inner combination disc 240 having a circular aperture 242 therein, is disposed about the shaft 220. It is to be noted that the aperture 242 is larger than the pin 220 so that the disc 240 is freely rotatable with respect to the pin 220.

The disc 240 has a laterally or axially extending ear portion 244 extending outwardly of the door 100. As best seen in FIGS. 6 and 8, the disc 240 is provided with a key notch 250 for the acceptance of an end portion 252 of a slidable key 254, as will be described.

An outer combination disc 260 having a square aperture 262 therein complementary to the square vertical cross section of the pin 220 is drivably mounted on the pin 220. The outer combination disc 260 has an axially folded ear 264 thereon that extends into radial alignment with the ear 244 on the inner combination disc 240. The outer combination disc 260 has a slot 266 similar to the slot 250 in the disc 240 for the acceptance of the end portion 252 of the key 254, as will be described.

A generally U-shaped leaf spring 270 is disposed about the shaft 220 to normally bias the inner and outer combination discs 240 and 260 axially apart. The spring 270 has a central aperture 272 for the acceptance of the pin 220. It is to be noted that the housing 200 of the door 100 is formed with an annular boss 280 having a radial slot 282 therein for the acceptance of the end portion 252 of the key 254. The annular boss 280 functions as a brake or clutch face engageable with the inner combination disc 240 to preclude rotation thereof upon rotation of the knob 226 and outer combination disc 260. The spring 270 biases the inner combination disc 240 against the annular boss 280 so that relative rotation therebetween is normally restrained. It is to be noted, however, that upon rotation of the outer combination disc 260 due to the rotation of the knob 226 and shaft 220, the ear 264 on the outer combination disc 260 en-

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gages the ear 244 on the inner combination disc 240 thereafter effecting concomitant rotation of the inner and outer discs 240 and 260. Thus, after rotation of the knob 226, shaft 220 and outer combination disc 264 through an arc sufficient to effect engagement of the ear 264 with the ear 244 on the inner disc 240, subsequent rotation of the knob 226 will move the inner combination disc 240 until the notch 250 in the inner combination disc 240 is vertically aligned with the key 254 for the acceptance of the end portion 252 thereof. This position is indexed by aligning a certain number on the knob 226 with the pointer 234 on the frontal face 210 of the door 100.

After rotation of the inner combination disc 240 to this initial position, the knob 226 is rotated in the opposite direction, thus disengaging the ear 264 thereof from the ear 244 on the inner combination disc 240. The knob 226 is thereupon rotated through an arc, necessarily less than 360 degrees, until such time as the slot 266 in the outer combination disc 260 is vertically aligned with the end portion 252 of the key 254 and axially aligned with the slot 250 in the inner combination disc 240. The key 254 is now conditioned for movement to the unlatched condition.

It is to be noted that rotation of the knob 226 and outer disc 260 in the opposite direction from the first direction of rotation thereof does not effect rotation of the inner combination disc 240 due to the aforementioned frictional engagement thereof with the annular boss 280 on the back wall 200 of the door 100. Obviously, the aforementioned axially aligned relationship of the slots 252 and 266 with the key 252 can be related to appropriate indicia marked on the frontal face of the knob 226, alignment of appropriate indicia with the indicator 234 on the frontal face 210 reflecting subsequent positions of the inner and outer combination discs 240 and 260, respectively.

Unlatching of the door 100 from the vault body 12 is effected by an eye-catching interpretation of a relatively complex movement in the form of a visible simulated planetary gear complex comprising a sun gear 300 and a plurality of planetary gears 302, 304, 306, 308, and 310. The planetary gears 302, 304, 306, 308 and 310 are rotatably mounted on complementary posts 312, 314, 316, 318 and 320, respectively, that are integrally formed in the housing 200 of the door 100. A spur gear 321 is mounted on a shaft 322 that is rotatably supported by a post 324 formed integrally with the housing 200 of the door 100. The shaft 322 has an end portion 323 of square transverse cross section that is drivably accepted in a complementary square aperture 326 in the gear 321. A latch knob 330 (FIG. 4) has a complementary square aperture 332 therein for the acceptance of the end portion 323 of the shaft 322. Rotation of the latch knob 330 controls latching and unlatching of the door 100.

The gear 300 is provided with a plurality of axially extending latching arm support posts 340, 342, 344, 346 and 348, for the rotatable support of the radially inner end portions of a plurality of radially extending latching arms 350, 352, 354, 356, and 358, respectively.

As best seen by comparing FIGS. 6 and 7, rotation of the gear 300 effects a displacement of the arms 350, 352, 354, 356 and 358, thereby tending to retract the outer end portions 360, 362, 364, 366 and 368 thereof, respectively, into complementary slots 370, 372, 374, 376 and 378 in the annular wall portion 202 of the door 100.

As best seen in FIG. 9, the radially outer end portions 360, 362, 364, 366 and 368 of the arms 350, 352, 354, 356 and 358, respectively, are normally engageable behind the frontal face 24 of the body portion 22 of the vault 20 to effect locking of the door 100. Retraction of the end portions 362, 364, 366 and 368 permits opening of the door 100.

It is to be noted that the arm support posts 340, 342, 344, 346 and 348 on the sun gear 300 extend into and move within a pair of annular ribs 400 and 402 (FIG. 9),

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so as to retain the arms 350, 352, 354, 356 and 358 on the posts 340, 342, 344, 346 and 348 and also to conceal the mode of operation of the combination discs 240 and 260.

As best seen in FIGURES 1 and 11 through 16, the toy bank vault 20 of the instant invention has a novel simulated night deposit 400 mounted on the side wall 28 thereof for the reception of materials incapable of insertion through the aperture 80. The night deposit 400 is authentic in construction and operation, since it is rotatable between an accepting and discharge condition and includes an anti-theft flap to preclude pilfering from the vault.

The night deposit 400 comprises a frontal plate 402 that is secured within a complementary aperture 404 in the side wall 28 as by a plurality of tabs 406, 408, 410 and 412. The plate 402 has a pair of inwardly extending ears 414 and 416 for the support of a rotatable receptacle 420. The receptacle 420 is of tubular construction and has a longitudinal slot 422 therein that, in an accepting condition, is alignable with a slot 424 in the frontal plate 402. The receptacle 420 is supported for rotation with respect to the side wall 28 by a pair of radially extending ears 426 and 428 that are pivotally secured to the ears 414 and 416, respectively, as by suitable rivets 430 and 432.

The receptacle 420 has a manual operating disc 440 at one end thereof to facilitate rotation between the acceptance and discharge conditions. The disc 440 has serrations 442 on the periphery thereof to facilitate manual rotation of the receptacle 420.

It is to be noted, as best seen in FIGS. 13 and 15, that the disc 440 has a pair of axially extending posts 450 and 452 thereon that are engageable with the ear 416 on the plate 402 to index rotation of the receptacle 420 to a receiving condition, as seen in FIG. 15, and a discharge condition, as seen in FIG. 13.

The toy bank vault 20 is relatively easily inverted and therefore must be provided with means to prevent theft from the bank through the night deposit when in the inverted condition. The night deposit 400 of the toy bank vault 20 is provided with an anti-theft flap 460 that is mounted for rotation relative to the wall 28 of the vault 20, as by a pair of ears 462 and 464. The flap 460 is of arcuate configuration complementary to the receptacle 402 and, as best seen in FIG. 15 of the drawings, normally depends downwardly due to its own weight to accommodate insertion of materials into the bank 20. However, upon inversion of the bank vault 20, the anti-theft flap 460 pivots to the position shown in FIG. 16 thereby preventing the passage of coins and other materials into the receptacle 420 through the aperture 422 thereof. Thus, since the receptacle 420 is indexed by the pins 450 and 452 to rotation of approximately 90° between the acceptance and discharge conditions, it is virtually impossible to orientate the bank vault 20 so that coins will pass into the receptacle 420 and then outwardly of the aperture 424 in the night deposit 400.

From the foregoing description, it should be apparent that the toy bank vault of the instant invention is both attractive and educational because of its novel interpretation of a relatively complex door mounted planetary gear latch mechanism. The lock associated with the latch mechanism is concealed so as to maintain continuing interest in the toy bank vault.

In operation, the simulated planetary gear mechanism cooperates with the plurality of radially extending latching arms to effect both rotation and translation thereof, which movement, coupled with rotation of the planetary gears incident to movement of the latching arms, is striking to the eye. The foregoing movement is extremely practical since it effects locking of door at a plurality of circumferentially spaced points around the periphery of the aperture in the vault enclosure.

The vault door is of authentic configuration since it is

relatively deep axially. It is supported for rotation with respect to the vault enclosure by a hinge mechanism that cooperates with a bell supported within the enclosure to signal opening of the door. The bell within the enclosure is disposed in underlying relationship with respect to a coin-accepting aperture in the top wall of the enclosure, thereby to signal insertion of a coin.

The authentic vault door is relatively economical to manufacture and assemble, since the number of different parts is minimized and many of the parts are multi-functional in nature. This ultimately results in a relatively low selling price for the toy bank vault.

It is to be understood that the specific construction of the improved toy bank vault construction herein disclosed and described is presented for the purpose of explanation and illustration and is not intended to indicate limits of the invention, the scope of which is defined by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A toy bank vault comprising a relatively thin-walled generally rectangular enclosure having
 - a front wall with a circular aperture therein to provide access into the vault,
 - a realistic circular vault door of relatively large axial dimension for closing the aperture in said enclosure comprising an opaque radially extending back wall and an axially outwardly extending annular side wall, latch means on said door movable radially outwardly relative to the central axis of said door for engagement with the front wall of said enclosure to latch said door in the closed condition and movable radially inwardly relative to the central axis of said door for conditioning said door for movement to an open position,
 - a combination lock disposed centrally of said door including means conditionable to preclude radially inward movement of said latch means and conditionable to permit radially inward movement of said latch means, selectively, and
 - a manual operator having combination indicia thereon rotatable about the central axis of said door and overlying the conditionable means of said combination lock,
 - manually operable means for moving said latch means radially inwardly when the conditionable means of said lock is conditioned to permit such radially inward movement,
 - a transparent cover forming a substantially part of a front wall for said vault door and overlying and visibly exposing a portion of said latch means, and
 - hinge means secured to said door and enclosure for supporting said door for rotation between the open and closed conditions with respect to the aperture in said enclosure.
2. A toy bank in accordance with claim 1 wherein said vault door includes
 - a simulated planetary gear complex comprising
 - a sun gear rotatable about the central axis of said door and a plurality of circumferentially spaced and orientated

planetary gears in meshing engagement with the sun gear so as to be rotatable therewith upon rotation of the sun gear, the periphery of said sun gear and said planetary gears being visible behind the transparent cover on said vault door.

3. A toy bank in accordance with claim 2 wherein said latch means comprises
 - an arm extending radially outwardly from behind said sun gear between said circumferentially spaced planetary gears and through the side wall of said vault door.
4. A toy bank vault in accordance with claim 3 wherein said arm has
 - a radially inner end portion pivotally connected to said sun gear and rotatable therewith to effect retraction of
 - a radially outer end portion thereof relative to the side wall of said vault door.
5. A toy bank vault in accordance with claim 1 wherein said enclosure has
 - an aperture in a top wall thereof for the acceptance of coins,
 - a bell in said enclosure vertically aligned with the coin accepting aperture therein whereby a coin dropped through the coin accepting aperture rings said bell,
 - a bell striker engageable with said bell, and
 - means on said door operable upon opening of said door for moving said striker against said bell to signal opening of said vault door.
6. A toy bank vault in accordance with claim 1 wherein a side wall of said enclosure has an elongated aperture therein, and including
 - a simulated night deposit receptacle comprising
 - a generally tubular member rotatable about an axis spaced from and generally parallel to said side wall of said enclosure between a coin accepting and a coin discharge condition, said tubular member having
 - an aperture complementary to the aperture in the side wall of the enclosure for accepting coins when said member is in the accepting condition and
 - a wall portion for closing the aperture in the side wall of the enclosure when said member is in the discharge condition,
 - manually operable means for rotating said member between the accepting and discharge conditions and gravity operated anti-theft means for precluding the passage of materials into said member when said member is in the discharge condition and said bank is inverted.

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