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2 Sheets-Sheet 1

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3,365,257

SHOWCASE FRAME

Filed Oct. 18, 1965

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FIG. 6.

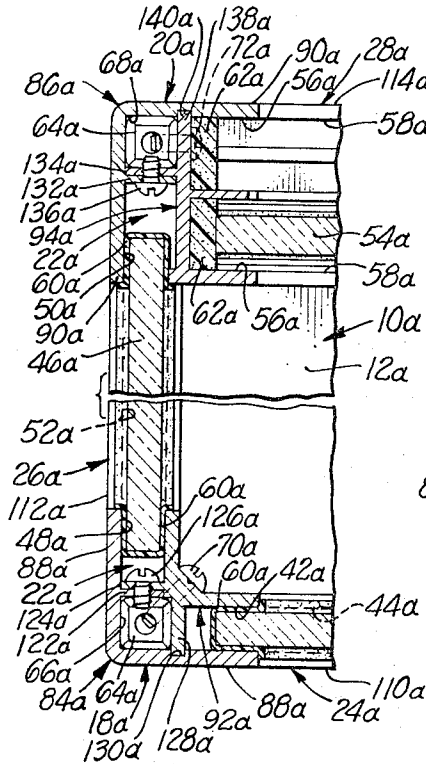


FIG. 7.

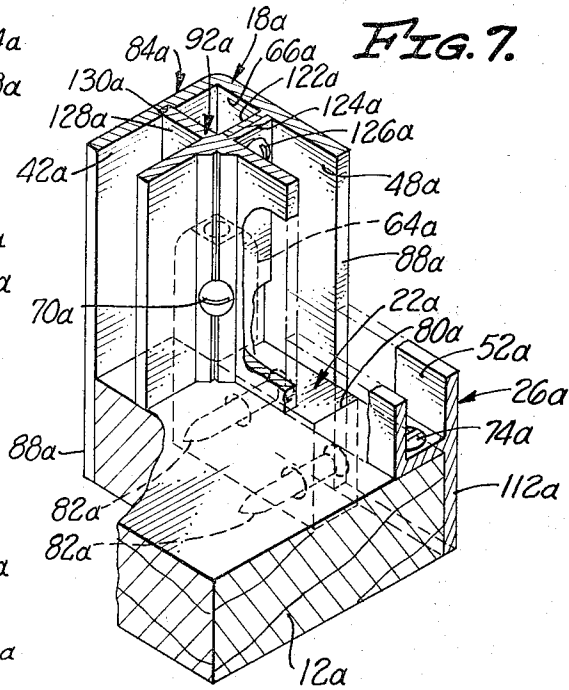


FIG. 9.

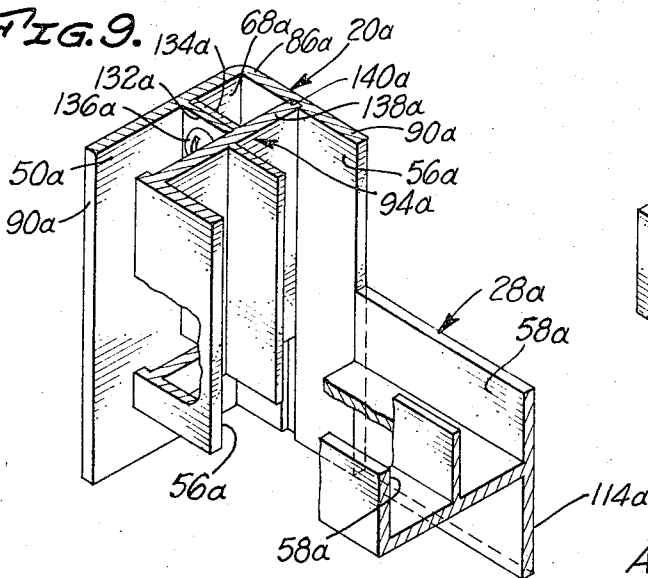
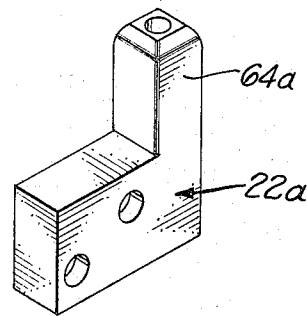


FIG. 8.



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SHOWCASE FRAME

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A showcase-frame having corners each comprising a post member and two rail members respectively having square-cut ends positioned in corner forming relation, and a corner connector having three prongs respectively plugged into longitudinally-extending sockets in the post and rail members and secured to such members by screws, the post and rail members having longitudinally-extending channels to receive corresponding edges of glass panels forming walls of the showcase. The lower ends of the post members are telescoped over upstanding lugs on base connectors located at the corners of a rectangular base. The lower ends of the post members have flanges concealing the base connectors and the corners of the base. Rail members seated on the adjacent edges of the base have flanges flush with the flanges on the post members and overlying and concealing the edges of the base, these rail members also having longitudinally-extending channels receiving the lower edges of the glass panels.

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present invention relates in general to showcases, or the like, and, more particularly, to a showcase having the general construction and advantages set forth in my co-pending patent application Ser. No. 467,468, filed June 28, 1965, the disclosure of this co-pending application being incorporated herein by reference the same as though it were fully set forth herein.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

As general background for the present invention, my aforementioned co-pending application discloses, and the present invention contemplates: a showcase having a construction such that it can be manufactured, shipped, assembled and installed at but a fraction of the cost of conventional showcase manufacturing, assembling, shipping and installing procedures; a showcase frame which requires no welding and subsequent grinding, polishing, cleaning, plating, and the like, which can be shipped disassembled to reduce shipping costs drastically, which is easily assembled and glazed at its destination, preferably utilizing glass obtained locally to avoid high glass shipping costs, and which can be assembled and glazed at its destination quickly and easily with but a few screws, or the like; a showcase frame which has a perfectly smooth exterior, all adjacent external surfaces being flush with each other, which has rounded corners at waist level to prevent injury to customers and employees, and which has no external screws, bolts, or the like, to mar the desired perfectly smooth exterior; a showcase frame comprising easily connectible post and rail members having longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels into which the corresponding edges of the glass panels may simply be slipped as the frame is assembled, thereby eliminating any necessity for fitting and attaching molding strips, clips, or the like, for securing the glass panels, and also eliminating the tremendous labor costs of, and the unsightly appearance resulting from, the countless screws needed for attaching such separate glass securing elements; a showcase frame wherein the various post and rail members have the required longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels formed integrally therewith so that

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each frame member is a single piece with no assembly of separate components required, the various frame members preferably being aluminum extrusions anodized, enameled, or plated, as desired; a showcase frame wherein the various post and rail members have square-cut ends, as opposed to mitered ends, engageable with complementary upper, corner connectors and lower, base connectors to produce the desired smooth, flush external contour, it being possible to furnish the various post and rail members in stock lengths which can be cut to the required lengths by the showcase manufacturer readily since only square cuts are required; and a showcase frame wherein the upper, corner connectors have prongs respectively plugged into longitudinally extending sockets in the post members and the corresponding, upper rail members, and wherein the base connectors are secured to a suitable base and have upstanding lugs respectively plugged into the lower ends of the longitudinally extending sockets in the post members.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF INVENTION

Summarizing the invention, it comprises a showcase frame which includes: a rectangular base having notches in its edges at the respective corners thereof; connectors respectively located in the notches and having upstanding lugs; means respectively securing the connectors to the base; upstanding post members respectively including longitudinally extending sockets having lower ends telescoped over the upstanding lugs, and respectively including longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels oriented laterally parallel to the corresponding edges of the base; means respectively securing the lower ends of the post members to the upstanding lugs; the post members including longitudinally extending, outer flanges having depending lower ends overlying and concealing the connectors; rail members seated on the base and extending along the respective edges thereof and having longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels registering with corresponding panel-receiving channels in the post members; the rail members having longitudinally extending, depending outer flanges overlying and concealing the edges of the base and flush with the outer flanges of the post members; and means respectively securing the rail members to the base.

A primary object of the present invention is to provide a showcase frame, having the foregoing characteristics, which includes means for securing the base connectors to the base very easily and simply, and which includes means providing a smooth external contour for concealing the base connectors and the edges of the base to produce a clean-cut and pleasing appearance. Another advantage of providing the showcase frame with means for concealing the base connectors and the edges of the base is that it is unnecessary to provide the base with finished edges, thereby saving considerable expense.

More particularly, an important object of the invention is to provide a flat base, of heavy plywood, or other suitable material, having notches in its edges at the respective corners thereof, and to provide base connectors respectively located in the notches and secured to the base. Preferably, the notches for the base connectors are simple, rectangular notches, the base connectors having complementary configurations. With this construction, the base can be prepared for the installation of the base connectors simply by making a rectangular cutout at each corner, no expensive mortising operations, or the like, being required.

Regarding the means for concealing the base connectors and the edges of the base, an important object is to provide the post members and the bottom rail members with flush depending flanges overlying and concealing the base con-

nectors and the edges of the base. With this construction, the base connectors, the screws, or the like, for securing them to the base, and the raw edges of the base, are all completely concealed by the flush, depending flanges to provide a clean-cut and pleasing appearance.

More particularly, an object of the invention is to provide the post members with longitudinally extending, perpendicular outer flanges which define the upright edges of the showcase and which have depending lower ends overlying and concealing the base connectors and, in some instances, adjacent portions of the edges of the base. A related object is to have the depending lower ends of the outer flanges of the post members extend below the internal or inner portions of the post members, which inner portions include the panel-receiving channels and are seated on the upper surface of the base and/or the upper surfaces of the base connectors.

The post members may be one-piece extrusions, in which event it is necessary to remove the lower ends of the inner portions of the post members, as by milling or routing, in order to provide the outer flanges of the post members with depending lower ends for concealing the base connectors. An important object in this connection is to provide post members of two-piece construction, one piece providing the desired outer flanges with their depending lower ends, and the other piece providing the inner portion of the post member. With such a two-piece construction, the outer piece of each post member is simply made longer than the inner piece thereof to provide the outer piece with the desired depending outer flange ends for base-connector concealment purposes. The lower ends of the inner pieces of the post members are seated on the upper surface of the base and/or the upper surfaces of the base connectors.

Still another object is to provide the bottom rail members with longitudinally extending, depending outer flanges which overlie and conceal the edges of the base and which are flush with the lower ends of the outer flanges of the post members. This construction thus provides the showcase frame with a flush, depending skirt completely concealing the base connectors, their means of attachment to the base, and the raw edges of the base, which is an important feature of the invention.

The foregoing objects, advantages, features and results of the present invention, together with various other objects, advantages, features and results thereof which will be evident to those skilled in the showcase and analogous arts, may be achieved with the exemplary embodiments of the invention described in detail hereinafter and illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a vertical-front showcase embodying the invention;

FIG. 1a is a reduced plan view of a showcase base embodying the invention;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view taken as indicated by the arrowed line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary isometric view illustrating details of a lower front corner of the showcase frame of the invention;

FIG. 4 is an isometric view of a base connector of the invention;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary isometric view of a rear post member of the invention; and

FIGS. 6, 7, 8 and 9 are views respectively corresponding to FIGS. 2, 3, 4 and 5, but illustrating another embodiment of the invention utilizing two-piece posts or post members.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS OF INVENTION

In FIGS. 1 to 5 of the drawings, the numeral 10 designates a vertical-front rectangular showcase which em-

bodies the invention. It will be understood, however, that the invention may also be embodied in a slant-front showcase, or in showcases having configurations other than rectangular.

Considering the showcase 10 in a general way initially, it includes a rectangular base 12, shown as mounted on a rectangular pedestal 14 providing toespaces 16 along at least the front and sides of the showcase. Although the base 12 may be formed of any suitable material, it is preferably formed of wood, and may comprise a relatively thick rectangular sheet of plywood.

The frame of the showcase 10 includes front and rear posts or post members 18 and 20 secured to the base 12 by base connectors 22 in a manner to be described. Front, side and rear bottom rails or rail members 24, 26 and 28 respectively extend along the front, side and rear edges of the base 12, between the corresponding posts 18 and 20, and are secured to the base in a manner which will be described. The showcase frame further includes front, side and rear top rails or rail members 30, 32 and 34 respectively extending along and defining the front, side and rear edges of the top of the showcase 10. The upper ends of the posts 18 and 20 and the ends of the top rails 30, 32 and 34 are interconnected at the top corners of the showcase 10 by corner connectors 36 in the manner described in my aforementioned co-pending application.

The top of the showcase 10 is formed by a top glass panel 38 carried by the top rails 30, 32 and 34 in the manner described in the co-pending application mentioned. The front of the showcase 10 is defined by a front glass panel 40 the respective edges of which are disposed in panel-receiving channels in the front posts 18, the front bottom rail 24 and the front top rail 30, such channels extending longitudinally of the respective frame members and being laterally oriented parallel to the front surface of the showcase. The channels in the front posts 18 for the front glass panel 40 are identified by the numeral 42 and the channel in the front bottom rail 24 for this panel is designated by the numeral 44.

Similarly, the front posts 18, the rear posts 20, the side bottom rails 26 and the side top rails 32 are provided with longitudinally extending channels laterally oriented to receive the corresponding edges of side glass panels 46. More particularly, the channels in the front and rear posts 18 and 20 for the vertical edges of the side glass panels 46 are designated by the numerals 48 and 50, respectively, and the channels in the side bottom rails 26 for the lower edges of these glass panels are designated by the numeral 52.

The rear of the showcase 10 is provided with bypassing sliding glass panels 54 in the manner disclosed in detail in my aforementioned co-pending application. More particularly, each rear post 20 is provided with channels 56 in side-by-side relation for the respective rear glass panels 54. The rear bottom rail 28 is provided with side-by-side channels 58 for the lower edges of the rear glass panels 54. Similar side-by-side channels, not shown, are provided in the rear top rail 34 for the upper edges of the rear glass panels 54, reference being made to the co-pending application mentioned for a specific disclosure.

The edges of the front and side glass panels 40 and 46 are set in plastic channels 60 pressed into the corresponding channels 42, 44, 48, 50 and 52 in the corresponding frame members. Such plastic channels hold the front and side glass panels 40 and 46 firmly in place in a very simple manner which is conducive to easy installation since no glazing compounds, or the like, are required. The channels 56 in the rear posts 20 for the rear glass panels 54 contain elastomeric bumper strips 62 for cushioning closing movement of the rear glass panels.

The base connectors 22 are provided with upstanding lugs 64 respectively plugged into the lower ends of longitudinally extending sockets 66 and 68 in the front and rear posts 18 and 20. Preferably, the upstanding lugs 64 and the sockets 66 and 68 are of square, or similar non-

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circular, cross section so that the posts 18 and 20 are firmly keyed to the base connectors 22 when the posts are pressed downwardly onto the upstanding lugs. The front and rear posts 18 and 20 are secured to the corresponding base-connector lugs 64 by self-tapping screws 70 and 72, respectively. The screws 70 are oriented diagonally and are threaded into the corresponding base-connector lugs 64 from the interior of the showcase, these screws constituting two of the small number of screws having heads visible from the interior of the showcase. The screws 72 are threaded into the corresponding base-connector lugs 64 from the rear channels 56 in the rear posts 20, being concealed by the corresponding bumper strips 62. It will be noted that the front and rear posts 18 and 20 are secured to the corresponding base connectors 22 with no external screws.

The front, side and rear bottom rails 24, 26 and 28 are secured to the base 12 by means of screws in the corresponding channels 44, 52 and 58, one of the screws in the channel 52 being visible in FIG. 3 and being designated by the numeral 74. All of the screws for securing the bottom rails 24, 26 and 28 to the base 12 are thus completely concealed, no external screws being necessary.

All of the foregoing structure of the showcase 10 is substantially identical to that disclosed in my aforementioned co-pending application. Consequently, reference is made thereto if a more complete description is desired.

One of the important features of the present invention resides in the manner in which the base connectors 22 are secured to the base 12. As shown in FIGS. 1a and 3, the base connectors 22 are rectangular and are simply disposed in rectangular notches 80 in the edges of the base at the respective corners thereof. The upstanding lug 64 of each base connector 22 is located at one end of such connector, and the connectors are so oriented in their respective notches 80 that the upstanding lugs 64 are located at the corners of the base 12. The connectors 22 are suitably secured to the base 12 within the notches 80, as by means of screws 82, FIG. 3, extending horizontally through the connectors into the base. Preferably, the vertical dimension of the bodies of the connectors 22 is equal to the thickness of the base 12, and the horizontal dimensions of the notches 80 equal the respective corresponding horizontal dimensions of the bodies of the connectors. Thus, the body portions of the connectors 22 occupy the volumes removed from the base 12 in forming the notches 80.

The foregoing construction provides a very simple and inexpensive way of mounting the base connectors 22 on and securing them to the base 12. More particularly, preparation of the base 12 to receive the base connectors 22 requires only notching of the four corners of the base. This notching operation is a simple one, compared to a mortising operation, for example, and can be performed by relatively unskilled labor. Consequently, this base-connector combination of the invention represents an important feature.

Considering another important aspect of the invention, the outer or external portions 84 and 86 of the respective posts 18 and 20 are angle shaped to provide the respective posts 18 and 20 with outer flanges 88 and 90. At the lower ends of the respective posts 18 and 20, the outer flanges 88 and 90 depend below the inner or internal portions 92 and 94 of the posts, such inner portions having square-cut lower ends seated on the base 12 and the bodies of the corresponding base connectors 22. The outer flanges 88 and 90 depend below the lower ends of the inner portions 92 and 94 a distance at least equal to the thickness of the base 12 and the height of the bodies of the base connectors 22 so as to completely conceal the base connectors and the adjacent portions of the edges of the base, as will be clear from FIGS. 1 and 3 of the drawings.

Preferably, the posts 18 and 20 are cut from stock-

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length extrusions. In order to provide the depending outer flanges 88 and 90 for concealing the base connectors 22 and adjacent portions of the edges of the base 12, it is necessary to remove enough of the inner portions 92 and 94 of the posts 18 and 20, at the lower ends of such posts, to provide the necessary length for the depending portions of the outer flanges 88 and 90. This may be accomplished simply by means of a milling or routing operation, or the like.

It will be noted that one of the outer flanges 88 of each front post 18 is provided with a longitudinally extending rib 96, such rib cooperating with an opposed rib 98 on the corresponding inner portion 92 to form one side of the corresponding socket 66. Similar ribs 100 and 102 are provided on one of the outer flanges 90 of each rear post 20 and on the corresponding inner portion 94 of such rear post. Also, this same outer flange 90 of each rear post 20 is provided with another longitudinally extending rib 104 cooperating with an opposed longitudinally extending rib 106 on the corresponding inner portion 94 to limit insertion of the corresponding side glass panel 46.

Preferably, the ribs 96, 100 and 104 are not removed from the depending lower portions of the corresponding outer flanges 88 and 90. To accommodate the portions of the ribs 96, 100 and 104 on the depending portions of such outer flanges 88 and 90, the bodies of the base connectors 22 are provided with two complementary grooves 108 on opposite sides thereof. More particularly, the rib 96 fits in one of the grooves on one side of the corresponding base connector 22. Similarly, the ribs 100 and 104 fit into the grooves 108 on one side of the base connector 22 corresponding thereto. Further, the ribs 96 and 100 are so located that each is adapted to fit into the same groove 108 in one of the base connectors 22. With this construction, and by providing two grooves 108 on each side of each base connector 22, the base connectors are fully interchangeable, there being no need for providing different base connectors for the front and rear posts 18 and 20, and there being no need to provide "right hand" and "left hand" base connectors for the posts 18 and 20 at the left and right sides of the showcase 10.

Still another important feature of the present invention is that the bottom rails 24, 26 and 28 are respectively provided with flush, longitudinally extending, downwardly depending flanges 110, 112 and 114 which extend downwardly from the top of the base 12 the same distance as the depending outer flanges 88 and 90 of the posts 18 and 20, and which are flush with such depending outer flanges. The depending flanges 110, 112 and 114 of the bottom rails 24, 26 and 28 cover the portions of the edges of the base 12 which are not covered by the depending outer flanges 88 and 90 of the posts 18 and 20. Consequently, the depending flanges 88, 90, 110, 112 and 114 provide the base 12 with a continuous peripheral skirt which completely conceals the base connectors 22 and the edges of the base itself.

The foregoing construction is important because it eliminates any necessity for providing the base 12 with finished edges. For example, the base 12 may be a relatively thick sheet of plywood with raw edges since such edges are completely concealed. Furthermore, since the base connectors 22 and their securing screws 82 are completely concealed by the depending outer flanges 88 and 90 of the posts 18 and 20, there is no necessity for providing the base connectors with finished surfaces suitable for external use, and the base connectors may be secured to the base 12 very simply by means of the horizontal screws 82.

Since the posts 18 and 20 are one-piece extrusions, it is necessary, as hereinbefore discussed, to remove the lower ends of the inner portions 92 and 94 thereof in order to provide the outer flanges 88 and 90 with depending lower ends for concealing the base connectors 22 and adjacent portions of the edges of the base 12. FIGS. 6 to 9 of the drawings illustrate posts which eliminate the necessity for

removing such inner post portions by utilizing two-piece constructions.

Showcase 10a

Referring to FIGS. 6 to 9 of the drawings, illustrated therein is a showcase 10a which is very similar to the showcase 10. Consequently, only the differences will be described. To correlate the various components of the showcases 10 and 10a, the same reference characters will be used for corresponding components, except that the reference characters for the components of the showcase 10a will include the suffix "a."

The principal differences between the showcase 10a and the showcase 10 are that the showcase 10a includes two-piece front and rear posts 18a and 20a and includes base connectors 22a omitting the grooves 108 of the base connectors 22.

More particularly, the front and rear posts 18a and 20a respectively include outer pieces 84a and 86a which respectively provide the posts 18a and 20a with mutually perpendicular outer flanges 88a and 90a having depending lower ends concealing the base connectors 22a and adjacent portions of the edges of the base 12a. Additionally, the front and rear posts 18a and 20a respectively include inner pieces 92a and 94a which are seated on the top surface of the base 12a and/or the top surfaces of the base connectors 22a.

The outer and inner pieces 84a and 92a of each front post 18a cooperate to form the panel-receiving channels 42a and 48a and the longitudinally extending socket 66a for the corresponding base-connector lug 64a. Similarly, the outer and inner pieces 86a and 94a of each rear post 20a cooperate to provide the panel-receiving channels 50a and 56a and the longitudinally extending socket 68a for the corresponding base-connector lug 64a. Thus, it will be seen that the front and rear posts 18a and 20a are very similar to the front and rear posts 18 and 20, respectively.

In order to secure the outer and inner pieces 84a and 92a of each front post 18a together, these pieces are respectively provided with surface-abutting flanges 122a and 124a secured together by one or more screws 126a, the heads of the latter being concealed in the panel-receiving channel 48a. Also, the inner piece 92a is provided with a flange 128a disposed in a groove 130a in the outer piece 84a to key the two pieces together in the proper relative positions.

Similarly, the outer and inner pieces 86a and 94a of each rear post 20a are provided with surface-abutting flanges 132a and 134a secured together by one or more screws 136a the heads of which are concealed in the panel-receiving channel 50a. To key the outer and inner pieces 86a and 94a together in their proper relative positions, a flange 138a on the inner piece is disposed in a groove 140a in the outer piece.

In making up the post 18a, the inner piece 92a is cut sufficiently shorter than the outer piece 84a to accommodate the thickness of the base 12a so that the outer flanges 88a will conceal the corresponding base connector 22a and adjacent edge portions of the base 12a. It is necessary to remove a small portion of the connecting flange 122a on the outer piece 84a, but this can be done very simply with readily available tools. The rear post 20a may be made up in a similar manner.

In all other respects, the showcase 10a is substantially identical to the showcase 10 so that no further description is required.

Various approaches may be used in glazing the showcases 10 and 10a. Such approaches are fully described in my aforementioned co-pending application so that it is unnecessary to repeat them herein.

As will be apparent from the foregoing description, the present invention materially reduces manufacturing, assembling, shipping and glazing costs by providing a showcase frame which requires no welding and subsequent grinding, polishing, cleaning, plating, and the like, which

can be shipped disassembled, or various components of which can be shipped in stock lengths and cut to size at the destination, and which is easily assembled and glazed at the destination, preferably utilizing glass obtained locally to avoid high glass shipping costs. The invention further provides a showcase frame which can be assembled and glazed at its destination with but a few screws, or the like. The invention still further provides a showcase frame which has a perfectly smooth exterior, all adjacent external surfaces being flush with each other, which has no external screws, or the like, and which utilizes a depending peripheral skirt for concealment of the base connectors and the edges of the base. This smooth, flush external construction, with no external screw heads, provides a pleasing appearance and is easy to clean. Additionally, the installation of the base connectors in simple notches in the corners of the base greatly facilitates and minimizes the cost of assembly. Furthermore, the various posts and rails disclosed require only simple, square-cut ends, such square-cut ends producing only hair-line joints at their abutments with other components.

Although exemplary embodiments of the invention have been disclosed herein for purposes of illustration, it will be understood that various changes, modifications and substitutions can be incorporated in such embodiments without departing from the spirit of the invention as defined by the claims which follow.

I claim as my invention:

1. In a showcase frame, the combination of:

- (a) a rectangular base having notches in its edges at the respective corners thereof;
- (b) connectors respectively located in said notches and having upstanding lugs;
- (c) means respectively securing said connectors to said base;
- (d) upstanding post members respectively including longitudinally extending sockets having lower ends telescoped over said upstanding lugs, and respectively including longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels oriented laterally parallel to the corresponding edges of said base;
- (e) means respectively securing the lower ends of said post members to said upstanding lugs;
- (f) said post members including longitudinally extending, outer flanges having depending lower ends overlying and concealing said connectors;
- (g) rail members seated on said base and extending along the respective edges thereof and having longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels registering with corresponding panel-receiving channels in said post members;
- (h) said rail members having longitudinally extending, depending outer flanges overlying and concealing the edges of said base and flush with said outer flanges of said post members; and
- (i) means respectively securing said rail members to said base.

2. In a showcase frame, the combination of:

- (a) a rectangular base having notches in its edges at the respective corners thereof;
- (b) connectors respectively located in said notches and having upstanding lugs;
- (c) means respectively securing said connectors to said base;
- (d) upstanding post members respectively including longitudinally extending sockets having lower ends telescoped over said upstanding lugs, and respectively including longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels oriented laterally parallel to the corresponding edges of said base;
- (e) means on the inner sides of said post members respectively securing the lower ends of said post members to said upstanding lugs;
- (f) said post members including longitudinally extend-

- ing, outer flanges having depending lower ends overlying and concealing said connectors;
- (g) rail members seated on said base and extending along the respective edges thereof and having longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels registering with corresponding panel-receiving channels in said post members; 5
- (h) said rail members having longitudinally extending, depending outer flanges overlying and concealing the edges of said base and flush with said outer flanges of said post members; and 10
- (i) means in said panel-receiving channels in said rail members respectively securing said rail members to said base.
3. In a showcase frame, the combination of: 15
- (a) a rectangular base;
- (b) connectors respectively located at the corners of said base and having upstanding lugs;
- (c) means respectively securing said connectors to said base; 20
- (d) upstanding post members respectively including longitudinally extending sockets having lower ends telescoped over said upstanding lugs, and respectively including longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels oriented laterally parallel to the corresponding edges of said base; 25
- (e) means respectively securing the lower ends of said post members to said upstanding lugs;

- (f) said post members including longitudinally extending, outer flanges having depending lower ends;
- (g) rail members seated on said base and extending along the respective edges thereof and having longitudinally extending panel-receiving channels registering with corresponding panel-receiving channels in said post members;
- (h) said rail members having longitudinally extending, depending outer flanges overlying and concealing the edges of said base and flush with said outer flanges of said post members; and
- (i) means respectively securing said rail members to said base.

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