June 18, 1963 J. J. PUNKE 3,094,258

ADJUSTABLE DISH HOLDERS

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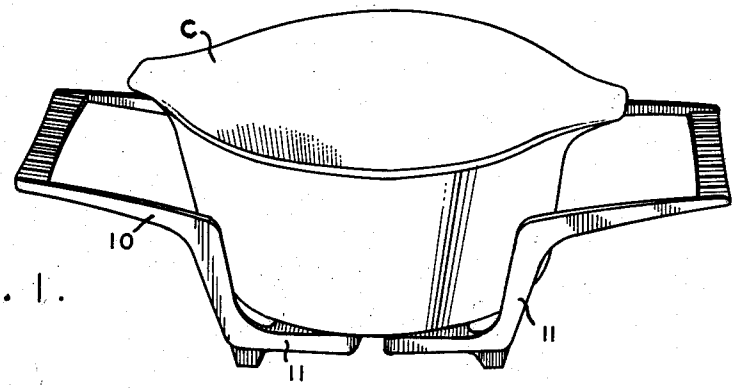


FIG. 1.

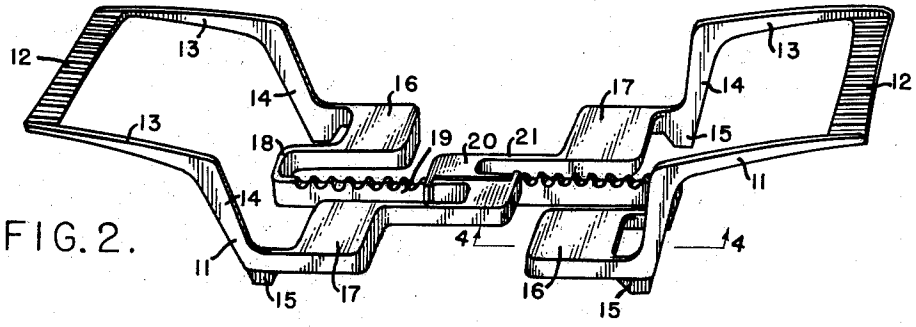


FIG. 2.

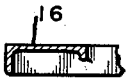


FIG. 4.

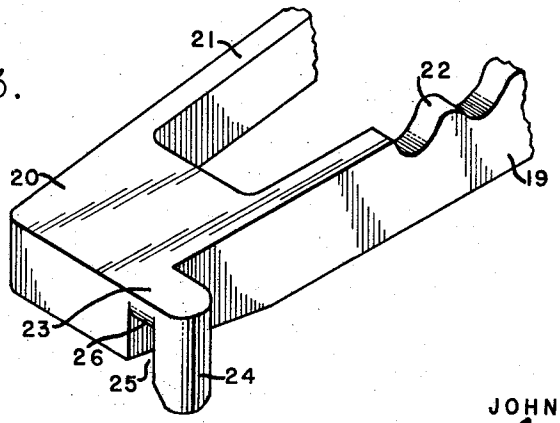


FIG. 3.

INVENTOR.
JOHN J. PUNKE
BY Theodore E. Simonton

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ADJUSTABLE DISH HOLDERS

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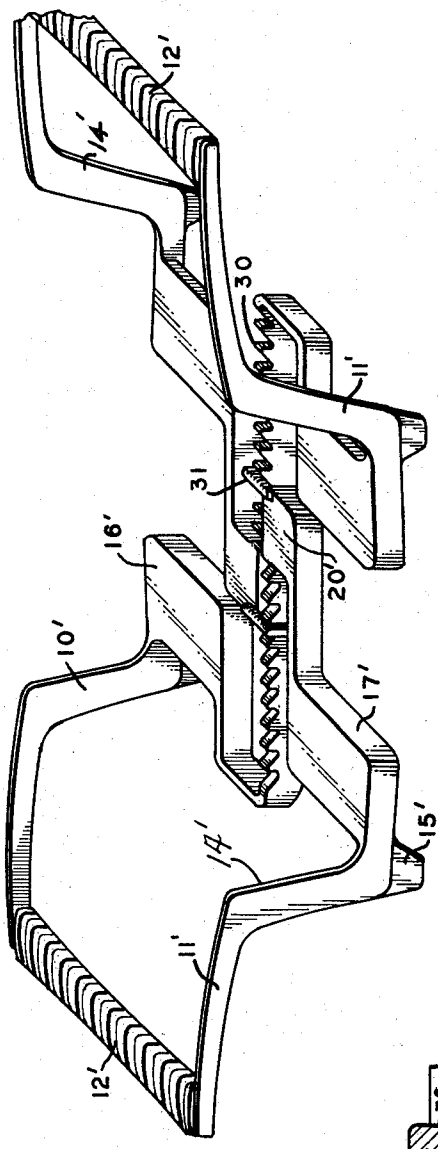


FIG. 5.

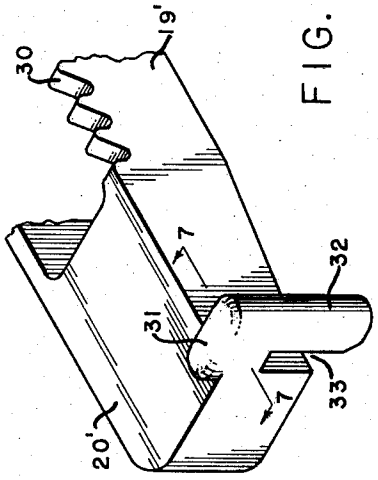


FIG. 6.



FIG. 7.

INVENTOR.
JOHN J. PUNKE
BY Theodore E. Simonton

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ADJUSTABLE DISH HOLDERS

John J. Punke, 2635 E. Genesee St., Syracuse, N.Y.

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This invention relates to adjustable dish holders, and relates more particularly to adjustable dish holders adapted for carrying casseroles, platters and like dishes and for supporting them on a dining table or the like out of contact with the table surface.

A principal object of this invention is to provide an adjustable dish holder which is simple and effective in operation, attractive in appearance, and economical to manufacture.

Another object is to provide a dish holder of the character described which consists of two identical members each of which is adapted to be made by a process such as die casting.

A further object is to provide an adjustable dish holder consisting of two identical integral members, in which the adjustment and the locking in the desired adjusted position is obtained by a fixed pawl on one member cooperating with a fixed rack on the other member, without recourse to any hinged or similarly movable parts, bolts, screws, springs or the like.

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a casserole mounted in a holder according to this invention;

FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of the casserole holder of FIGURE 1 shown in a more extended position;

FIGURE 3 is a detail perspective, on an enlarged scale, showing the inner end of either of the two halves of the holder of FIGURES 1 and 2;

FIGURE 4 is a detail sectional view taken on the line 4—4 of FIGURE 2;

FIGURE 5 is a perspective view of a modified form of dish holder according to this invention;

FIGURE 6 is a detail perspective, on an enlarged scale, of the inner end of either of the two halves of the holder of FIGURE 5;

FIGURE 7 is a detail sectional view taken on the line 7—7 of FIGURE 6.

Referring to the form of the invention shown in FIGURES 1 to 4, the holder **10** comprises two identical members **11** adapted to be adjustably interlocked together for supporting a dish such as the casserole C of FIGURE 1. The members **11** are preferably made as one integral piece of metal, for example, by die casting. Each member **11** comprises a handle **12**, which may be decorated as shown, and side arms **13** having inclined depending portions **14** terminating in feet **15**. Substantially rectangular base portions **16** and **17**, preferably hollowed out for lightness as shown in FIGURE 4, extend inwardly of the feet **15**. A loop extension **18** of the base portion **16** supports the outer end of a rack bar **19**. The inner end of the rack bar **19** is connected to a bridging member **20**, similarly hollowed out on its under side, from which a tie bar **21** extends to the base portion **17**, thus supporting the inner end of the rack bar.

The rack bar **19** is provided with rounded teeth **22**. The inner side of the bridging member **20** constitutes an extension of the rack bar and carries a sidewise projecting pawl **23** provided at its free end with a depending tongue **24**. A slot **25** is thus formed between the rack bar **19** and the tongue **24**, which slot serves to accommodate and guide the rack bar of the mating member **11**. The under side of the pawl **23** is rounded as shown at **26** to fit between and cooperate with the teeth **22** of the mating rack bar **19**.

In using the dish holder of FIGURES 1 to 4, before inserting the dish, the two halves **11** are adjusted manually to a size somewhat smaller than that of the casserole or other dish with which it is to be used. With the holder resting on a table in the extended position shown in FIGURE 2, a contracting adjustment may readily be performed by pressing down on the handles **12**, which will raise the pawls **23** out of engagement with their racks, and then sliding the two halves **11** of the holder toward each other. When the holder has reached a sufficiently small size, the handles **12** are released, whereupon the pawls **23** will drop into the notches between the nearest teeth **22**. A dish such as the casserole C of FIGURE 1 is then lowered into the holder. The side wall of the dish will engage the slanting inner edges of the depending portions **14** of the side arms **13**, and will rock or tilt the members **11** about the feet **15**, thus again releasing the pawls **23** from the teeth **22**. The two members **11** will thus be forced apart just sufficiently to accommodate the dish C and, as the dish approaches its lowermost position in which it is seated on the base portions **16** and **17**, the pawls **23** will again drop between the appropriate teeth **22**.

It will be observed that the dish itself serves to adjust the holder **10** in the expanding direction to the proper size and also, by its weight, locks the two members **11** together in that adjusted position. As will be seen in FIGURE 2, when the two halves **11** are thus locked together, the upper surfaces of the base portions **16** and **17** and the parts lying between them are all in the same plane, thus providing a smooth surface on which a flat-bottomed dish may rest. With the dish ensconced in the holder as shown in FIGURE 1, the holder may be picked up by its handles **12** and will securely support the dish for carrying from one place to another. When the holder with its dish is placed on a dining table, the feet **15** hold the main parts of the assembly away from the table surface, so that there is no danger of a hot dish marring the surface of the table.

It will be observed that the form of the invention shown in FIGURES 1 to 4 provides for automatic adjustment to size only in the outward or expanding direction of the holder, and that the initial adjustment to a smaller size should be performed manually before the dish is inserted in the holder. In the form of the invention shown in FIGURES 5 to 7, on the other hand, the initial adjustment of the holder, before the dish is inserted, may be to a size either larger or smaller than the dish.

The modified holder **10'** shown in FIGURES 5 to 7 is similar to the holder **10** of FIGURES 1 to 4 except as to the construction of the teeth of the rack bar and the pawl for mating with the teeth of the rack bar of the other half of the holder. Corresponding parts of the two modifications are given the same reference characters, but primes are attached to such reference characters in FIGURES 5 to 7, and distinct reference characters are applied to those parts that are altered substantially. As shown in FIGURES 5 and 6, the teeth **30** are shaped somewhat like saw teeth inclined outwardly, so that the pawl **31** may ratchet over them in the contracting direction. The pawl **31** projects from the inner end of the bridging member **20'** and terminates in a depending tongue **32**, leaving a slot **33** between the tongue and the bridge member. As best shown in FIGURE 7, the pawl **31** has a rounded nose **34**, an inclined surface **35** matching the inclined surfaces of the teeth of the mating rack, and a nearly vertical surface **36** matching the opposed tooth surfaces.

Let us suppose that the holder is in the adjusted position shown in FIGURE 5, and that this adjustment is too large for the dish with which it is to be used. The dish may merely be placed in the holder, and the contracting adjustment may be made simply by the user pushing the handles **12'** toward one another with a slightly downward pressure. The rounded noses **34** and inclined surfaces

35 permit the pawls 31 to ride up the inclined surfaces of the mating teeth 30, and ratchet over the teeth until the inner edges of the depending portions 14' engage the outside of the dish. At this point, the pawls 31 will be seated in the appropriate notches between the teeth 30. Let us now suppose that the dish is too large for the adjusted position of FIGURE 5. In this case, the outside of the dish will engage the slanting inner edges of the depending portions 14', tilt the members 11' slightly about their feet 15' and force the members apart until the proper expanding adjustment is obtained, precisely as described in connection with the first modification. In either case, once the pawls 31 are seated between the teeth 30 of their mating racks 19', and are held there by the weight of the dish, the members 11' are prevented from moving in either direction due to the locking action between the pawls and the teeth.

As best shown in FIGURE 5, the tops of the pawls 31 project above the plane established by the upper surfaces of the base portions 16' and 17'. This is done merely for the purpose of giving the pawls 31 a larger cross-section affording adequate strength. This upward projection of the pawls 31 is unobjectionable because the large casseroles and platters with which the holder 10' is intended to be used, are invariably provided with a recessed bottom defined by a rim around the outer bottom edge of the dish. The pawls 31 operate within such a recessed bottom, and consequently do not interfere with proper seating of the dish in the holder. Should it be desired to use the general construction of the holder 10' for flat bottom dishes such as small casseroles, it would merely be necessary to raise the plane of the upper surfaces of the base portions 16' and 17' so that it lies at or above the top of the pawl 31.

While there is herein described, and in the drawings shown, illustrative embodiments of my invention, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited thereto, but may comprehend other constructions, arrangement of parts, details and features without departing from the spirit of the invention. I desire to be limited, therefore, only by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. An adjustable dish holder consisting of two members of like construction, each member comprising a handle, a pair of side arms extending inwardly of the handle and each including a depending portion, base portions adjacent the lower end of each side arm, a central longitudinally disposed rack bar supported from said base portions, teeth on said rack bar, and a pawl adjacent the inner end of and projecting sideways from said rack bar, the pawl of one rack bar being adapted to fit between the teeth of the other rack bar, whereby said two members may be interlocked at various positions of longitudinal adjustment.

2. An adjustable dish holder consisting of two members of like construction, each member comprising a handle, a pair of side arms extending inwardly of the handle and each including a depending portion terminating in a foot, base portions adjacent the lower end of each side arm, a central longitudinally disposed rack bar supported from said base portions, teeth on said rack bar, and a pawl adjacent the inner end of and projecting sideways from said rack bar, the pawl of one rack bar being adapted to fit between the teeth of the other rack bar, whereby said two members may be interlocked at various positions of longitudinal adjustment, and whereby such adjustment may be accomplished by rocking the two members about their respective feet while pushing them toward or away from one another.

3. An adjustable dish holder as claimed in claim 2 wherein said side arm depending portions have inwardly inclined inner edges adapted to engage the side wall of a dish, whereby said members may be automatically adjusted in the expanding direction by lowering a dish into the holder.

4. An adjustable dish holder as claimed in claim 3 comprising a tongue depending from the free end of said pawl and defining a slot for accommodating and guiding the rack bar of the other member.

5. An adjustable dish holder as claimed in claim 2, in which said rack bar teeth are rounded and provide rounded recesses therebetween.

6. An adjustable dish holder as claimed in claim 2, in which said rack bar teeth have inclined surfaces slanting outward, whereby the pawl of the other member is capable of ratcheting over the teeth in the contracting direction of adjustment of the two members.

7. An adjustable dish holder as claimed in claim 1, comprising a tongue depending from the free end of said pawl and defining a slot for accommodating and guiding the rack bar of the other member.

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