(No Model.)

J. M. ST. JOHN.

DOCUMENT FILE.

No. 352,585. Patented Nov. 16, 1886.

Fig. 1.

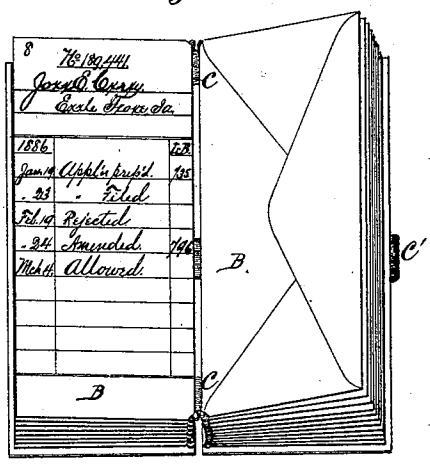


Fig. 2.

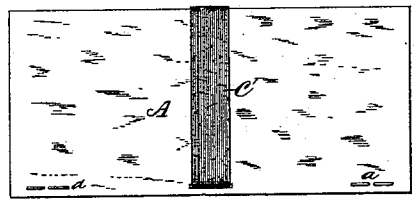


Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

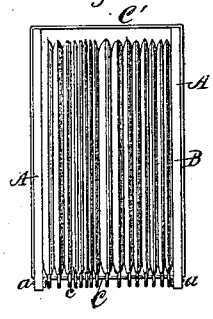
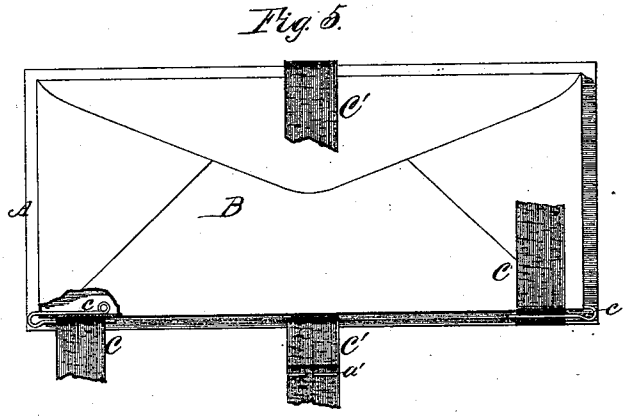


Fig. 5.



Witnesses.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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DOCUMENT-FILE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 352,535, dated November 16, 1886.

Application filed March 15, 1886. Serial No. 195,205. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JUSTUS M. ST. JOHN, a citizen of the United States, residing at Cedar Rapids, in the county of Linn and State of Iowa, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Document-Files, of which the following is a specification.

The object of my invention is to produce a neat, cheap, and convenient portfolio-file for documents; and the invention consists in providing the covers or sides of the portfolio with elastic connections at the back, to which elastic the pockets of the file are attached at fixed intervals.

The invention further consists in the novel construction and arrangement of the parts of the device, as will be hereinafter fully set forth and described.

In the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification, Figure 1 is a perspective view of the file open; Fig. 2, a side view of the same; Fig. 3, a modification thereof; Fig. 4, an end view, and Fig. 5 a sectional side elevation, of the invention, showing the attachment of the file-pockets to the covers.

Similar letters of reference indicate corresponding parts.

The file is in the nature of a book or portfolio. The sides or covers A A are made of stiff straw-board or like material, and are somewhat larger than the pockets B B. These covers have an elastic connection at the back, which may be continuous; but is preferably as shown, consisting of two narrow straps of elastic, C C. These are fastened to the covers near the ends and near the lower or back edges thereof. They may terminate at the fastening-point, or, continuing therefrom, pass entirely around the file, as shown in Fig. 3, serving thus as straps to hold the file closed. In practice, however, I prefer to use a supplemental strap, C', in the middle of the file, as the filling of the pockets naturally tends to expand the file in the middle, and if it is drawn together at the ends alone there is an unsightly bulge in the middle, unless the covers be very stiff. For convenience this strap is made of elastic material and should be somewhat stronger than the terminal elastics C C, so as to bind the file more in the middle than at the ends when it is closed. Evidently an inelastic strap adapted to fasten at various points, according to the relative expansion of the file, will answer the same purpose, but on account of the greater facility in the operation of the elastic strap it is preferred. It may be either fastened to the covers in the manner of the other straps shown in Fig. 3, or, passing through a slot, be otherwise disconnected, as indicated in Fig. 2. The end straps may be similarly passed through slots in the cover and fastened just above that point, as shown in Fig. 3, (it being understood that the rest of the strap is dispensed with,) or they may be secured to the inside of the cover, as shown in Fig. 4. The manner of fastening them is not so important as to require description, a common clinched staple-fastening being shown in the drawings. It is, however, important that these elastics be fastened to the covers, and this feature constitutes one of the principal improvements in this invention. When the file is closed, it is to a certain extent immaterial whether the elastics (supposing that they pass quite around the file) be fastened to the covers or not, as the strain of the elastics would draw the whole together closely enough for all practical purposes. It would be necessary, however, in view of the peculiar construction of the device in other respects, that the straps be placed near the ends of the covers, and this would cause the bulging of the middle before referred to; but if the elastics simply pass through holes or slots in the cover and are not otherwise secured thereto, they are loose and are apt to slip away from the rest of the file when opened, causing inconvenience and vexation. It is not pretended, however, that it is altogether new to provide the back of a file with elastics secured to the covers; but this construction, the elastics being adapted to connect direct with the file-pockets, is believed to be new.

For pockets common envelopes made of strong Manila paper have been found to answer the purpose admirably, the flap serving to hold the contents in place, whether left outside or tucked inside the envelope. They may be suitably numbered, ruled, and otherwise adapted for the keeping of a record of the contents and of other facts connected therewith.

I make no claim to the use of the envelope,

except in combination with other elements of the device; neither do I confine the invention in this respect to the envelope, as other styles of pockets may be applied to the file in the same manner as the envelope.

Where a permanent attachment of the pockets is desired they may be sewed to the elastics in the same manner as the leaves of a book, or pinned thereto, or otherwise secured in any of the well-known ways. In general, however, it is desirable to have the pockets removable, so that when one of them has served its full purpose in the file it may be taken out and another inserted in its place. To this end the device is provided with a removable fastener, *c*, which when attached holds the envelope securely to the elastic at any given point. The fastener represented is technically known as a "newspaper-pin," and is in the nature of a "split key," the limbs of which hold the material between them by the spring of the wire of which it is formed. These are applied in the manner indicated in Fig. 5, one limb of the fastener (preferably the one with the eye at the end) being inserted in the end of the envelope at the back or lower edge and the other passed beneath the elastic. The fastener is easily and quickly applied and as easily detached. It also serves to protect the elastic and the edge of the envelopes from wear, and the file when in the position represented in all the figures of the drawings except Fig. 1 rests upon these fasteners and the edge of the covers.

The fasteners need not be of the particular form shown, though I regard a fastener in the nature of a split key as best adapted to the purpose.

The attachment of the envelopes direct to the elastic constitutes an important feature of this invention. Hitherto it has been common to provide for the expansion of the pockets by means of gussets or crimps in the back, and in some cases the file has been provided with a supplemental elastic to draw the pockets together when the file is closed. Where the several pockets are connected together by gussets there is a liability of the gusset turning out instead of keeping its proper position, especially when the pocket is full, producing an unsightly appearance. Furthermore, if an independent elastic be used to connect the covers, the effect will be to draw them together at the back when opened, while the rest of the file will spread loose and unconfined above, and difficulty will be experienced in closing the file quickly and smoothly. In the case of separate and independent pockets attached to an inelastic connection made long enough to allow for expansion, the file when opened will be still more loose and unmanageable. On the other hand, the pockets in the file herein described are kept in the same relative position whether the file be opened or closed, and while the elastic is strong enough to draw them snugly together when closed and prevent displacement when opened it admits of the file, whether empty or full, being operated in the same manner and with practically the same effect as a common limber-backed book or portfolio, a feature that is indicated in Fig. 1. As the covers are mainly for protection to the pockets, they may be dispensed with and only the pockets and the elastics used. In this case it would be rather necessary to have the elastics in the form shown in Fig. 3. It is, however, desirable to use the covers, not only on account of the protection to the pockets, but because they serve by their stiffness to keep the file in a straight and trim shape. As the cover of a temporary file it may be used indefinitely in connection with the removable pockets.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. In a document-file, the combination of the side-boards or covers A A, and the elastic connections C C, securely attached to said covers, and adapted to connect with the lower edge of a series of file-pockets, substantially as and for the purpose set forth.

2. In a document-file, the combination of elastic straps C C, and envelopes or equivalent file-pockets securely fastened to said elastics at fixed intervals, substantially as and for the purpose specified.

3. In a document-file, the combination of the side-boards or covers A A, the elastic connections C C, secured to the covers, and the envelopes B B, or equivalent file-pockets, fastened securely to the elastics at fixed points, substantially as and for the purpose set forth.

4. In a document-file, the combination of the elastics C C, the separate and independent file-pockets B B, and the removable fastener *c*, or its equivalent, substantially as specified.

5. In a document-file, the combination of the covers A A, the elastic connections C C, secured to the covers, the elastic strap C′, and the envelopes or equivalent file-pockets B B, all constructed, arranged, and adapted to operate substantially as and for the purpose set forth.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

JUSTUS M. ST. JOHN.

Witnesses:
E. R. WATTERS,
FRANK G. CLARK.