

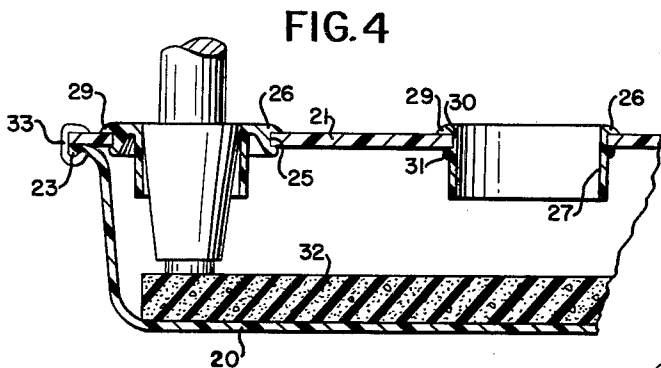
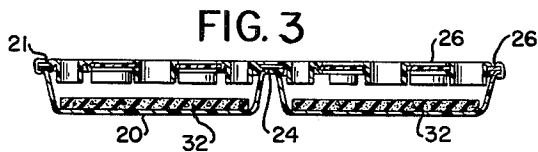
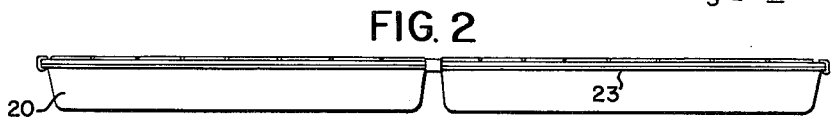
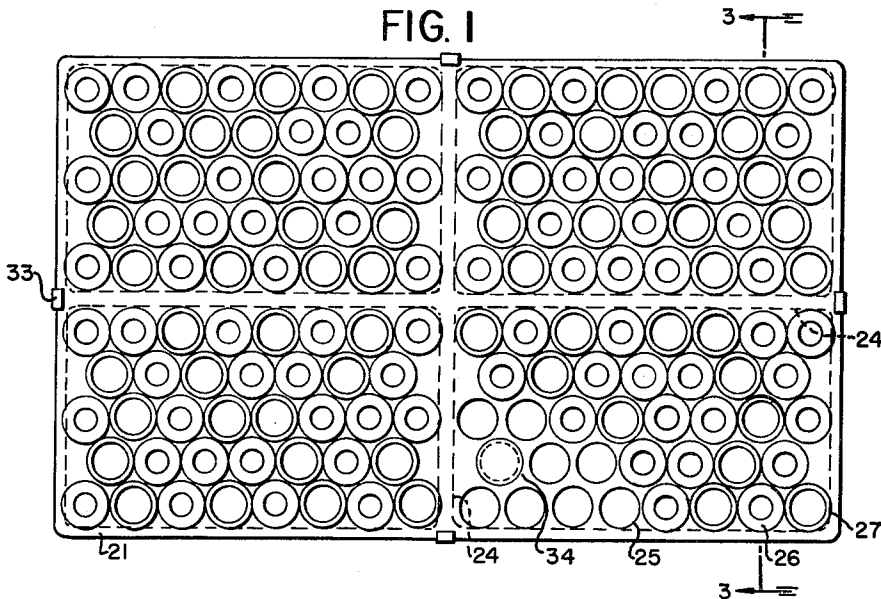
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INKING TRAYS

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INKING TRAYS

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1 Claim. (Cl. 101—333)

The present invention relates to a hand stamp holder or tray and more particularly relates to a tray-type holder having an ink reservoir and readily-interchangeable means for supporting a plurality of individual hand stamps.

The novel tray is to be used to hold hand stamps of the type disclosed in FIGURE 1 of United States Patent No. 2,633,799, which issued to George T. Brown, Jr., on April 7, 1953. These hand stamps have a stick-like handle terminating in a tapered end-portion which carries a porous rubber type member capable of printing fixed indicia. The type member is impregnated with ink and enables many imprints of the fixed indicia to be made, using the ink carried by its pores. The hand stamps are usually made with a small-diameter tapered end-portion for printing simple indicia and with a larger-diameter tapered end-portion for printing more complex indicia. While the hand stamp shown in the Brown patent cited above has a tapered end-portion, other hand stamps having end-portions of different configurations may also be used.

One use for this type of hand stamp is in the price-marking of merchandise, and, since each stamp can print only one fixed amount, a set of stamps must be used to furnish the different amounts in the price range to be printed. The set of hand stamps will vary in number from a few to over a hundred, depending upon the range and the variety of price-marking desired, and may include stamps for printing simple indicia as well as stamps for printing complex indicia.

Because of the nature of the material on which the price is stamped, the ink in the pores of the type member is usually of a highly-volatile nature, which requires that the ink be protected from exposure to the atmosphere as much as possible.

In the past, trays for holding sets of stamps were made of wood or plastic material and were provided with wells or holes of a depth substantially equal to the length of the tapered end-portions of the stamps. The tapered end-portions of the stamps were placed in the holes, and the stamps were arranged for ease of selection and use. These trays were fixed, in that they had small holes in certain areas to receive the smaller-diameter stamps and had larger holes in other areas to receive the larger-diameter stamps; hence, if the number of stamps changed, or if the ratio of small-diameter stamps to large-diameter stamps changed, or if a different arrangement of small- and large-diameter stamps was desired, an entire new tray had to be obtained. In many instances, rather than obtain a new tray, the user would put the stamps which could not be accommodated in the holes of the tray into a box or other container, which provided no protection against loss of ink and made selection of the stamps difficult.

Further, the prior trays had no provisions for reinking the porous type members of the stamps.

Under these conditions, it was found that the type members of the hand stamps became hard and brittle due to the removal of the ink from the pores by the printing operation and also by evaporation due to their exposure to the atmosphere during a price-marking operation.

The improved tray of this invention overcomes these drawbacks because it can be easily converted to receive any desired combination of large- or small-diameter

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stamps merely by changing inserts in the top of the tray, which minimizes the loss of ink due to evaporation, and has provision for replenishing the ink supply in the pores of the printing members while they are not being used.

It is, therefore, an object of this invention to provide a tray apparatus which will support any number of hand stamps.

It is another object of this invention to provide a hand-stamp-supporting tray having an ink reservoir, the tray being so constructed as to minimize the evaporation of any highly-volatile component of the ink.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a tray apparatus which will support hand stamps of different sizes, and which can readily be changed to hold any combinations of stamps of different sizes.

With these and incidental objects in view, the invention includes certain novel features of construction and combinations of parts, a preferred form or embodiment of which will hereinafter be described with reference to the drawing which accompanies and forms a part of this specification.

In the drawing:

FIGURE 1 is a top view of the tray, showing the cover of the tray, containing some of the holes without any inserts located therein, with the remainder of the holes containing inserts to accommodate stamps of various sizes.

FIGURE 2 is a front view of the tray, showing the separate compartment construction of the tray.

FIGURE 3 is a detailed side sectional view of the tray taken on line 3—3 of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 4 is an enlarged partial detail view of FIGURE 3, showing the mounting of two inserts in the cover to accommodate different-size hand stamps.

Referring to FIGURES 1 and 2, there are shown views of the novel tray, which is composed of a base 20 and a cover 21 of plastic material, which, for example, may be polystyrene. The base is formed to produce four identical compartments, as shown in dotted lines in FIGURE 1, separated by web portions 24. Each compartment has an outer lip 23 (FIGURE 4), and the compartments are attached to each other by the web portions 24 (FIGURE 1).

As shown in FIGURES 1, 3, and 4, the cover 21 contains a plurality of circular holes or apertures 25, each having a uniform diameter. While the holes or apertures 25 are shown as being round and of the same diameter, it is within the scope of the invention to use holes of other shapes so long as they all have the same shape and size. Associated with these holes are a series of inserts 26, which may be inserted into any of the holes 25 to receive the hand stamps. Each of the stamp-receiving inserts is formed with a cylindrical portion 27, forming a stamp-receiving thimble, the diameter of which varies depending upon the diameter of the end-portion of the hand stamp with which it is to be associated. As shown in FIGURE 4, the insert at the left is formed with a thimble which accommodates a hand stamp having a small-diameter end-portion, while the one at the right accommodates a stamp having a larger-diameter end-portion. The upper edge of each of the inserts is of a similar construction regardless of the size of the thimbles, each being composed of a flange 29, having a portion 30, which is of the same size and shape as the hole and which engages the cover 21, as shown in FIG. 4. Extending about the lower edge of the portion 30 on each insert is a rib section 31, which yieldingly engages the under side of the cover to retain the insert in engagement with the cover 21 when the inserts are in the holes 25, and provides a substantial seal against evaporation of the ink. It will be seen from FIGURE 4 that the circumferential diameter of the portion 30 of each insert is the same, thus allowing inserts formed with any size of thimble to be

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inserted into any of the holes 25. The thimble acts as a guide and a support for its associated hand stamp, as described hereinafter.

Located on the bottom of the tray is the ink reservoir, comprising an ink pad 32, saturated with marking ink. The pad construction may be of any porous or absorbent material, such as foam rubber or any similar material which will retain a supply of ink and will allow the ink to be absorbed by a hand stamp positioned on top of the pad. As shown in FIGURE 3, there is a pad 32 for each compartment of the tray. In FIGURE 4, there is shown a portion of a hand stamp located within its associated thimble and having its type member resting on the ink pad 32. The inside diameter of the thimble is of such a dimension as to provide a sliding fit with the outside diameter of the end-portion of its associated hand stamp but is small enough to restrict the clearance between the hand stamp and the thimble so as to prevent any substantial evaporation of the ink contained in the ink pad 32. Some support will also be derived from the thimbles, as the hand stamps are guided by the thimbles toward an upright position. It will be seen from the above-described construction that each hand stamp will be supported on the inking pad, resulting in the stamp portion of the hand stamp remaining soft and pliable, which therefore gives greater stamp life.

In case the number of hand stamps on hand are less than the number of holes in the top of the tray, closures 34 (FIGURE 1), which are constructed with flanges 29, portions 30, and ribs 31, as are the other inserts, but which have no stamp-receiving openings, are available for covering all exposed holes, thus preventing the evaporation of the ink from the ink pads. Also, due to the construction of the inserts 26 and the closures 34, the inking pad is not exposed to the air. This restricts the evaporation of any volatile component of the ink, thus allowing the ink to remain in the inking pad for longer periods of time.

The cover may be attached to the base 20 by any suitable means. It may be fastened by an adhesive or cement to the outer lips 23 and the upper surfaces of the web portions 24, or may be fastened by clips, as 33, suitably placed about the edge.

If the full complement of stamps is not required and a smaller tray is desired, the tray and the cover can be split along the web portions 24 to provide trays having a half or a quarter of the stamp capacity of the tray of FIGURE 1.

The novel tray, therefore, has many advantages over prior trays. The provision of uniform-diameter openings in the cover, together with the removable inserts, having different-size thimble portions, enables any desired arrangement of different-size stamps to be obtained, and this, with the web construction, enables different-size trays to be obtained. Further, the web formations of the base provide strength and rigidity to the tray and also form spaces for accommodating ink pads upon which the stamps can rest, to be reinked when not in use. Also, the snug fit of the inserts in the cover and the use of insertable closures, together with the fit of the stamps in the thimbles, minimize the loss of ink from the tray. All these features combine to produce a tray which is capable of re-inking the stamps automatically when they are not in

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use, and which is extremely flexible in the number and arrangement of the stamps which it can support.

While the form of the invention shown and described herein is admirably adapted to fulfill the objects primarily stated, it is to be understood that it is not intended to confine the invention to the one form or embodiment disclosed herein, for it is susceptible of embodiment in various other forms.

What is claimed is:

10 An inking tray for supporting and reinking a plurality of elongated hand stamps having end-portions of different diameters, the end-portions carrying porous, ink-impregnated printing members, comprising a pan-like base having a plurality of web portions extending up from the bottom of the base and dividing the tray into a plurality of compartments, said web portions providing rigidity to the tray and allowing each compartment to be separated when required;

a removable cover secured to the edges of the base and to the web portions, said cover containing a plurality of circular apertures each having the same diameter; a highly-volatile-ink-saturated pad positioned at the bottom of each of said compartments;

a plurality of different-size readily insertable inserts mounted within some of said apertures, each of said inserts having a top flange portion, a portion having a diameter substantially the same as the diameter of the apertures for mounting said inserts within any of said apertures, a retaining portion which engages the edge of the aperture and yieldingly retains the insert in an inserted position for substantially sealing the aperture, and a cylindrical thimble portion for receiving the end-portion of one of said different-diameter hand stamps, said cylindrical thimble portion having an inside diameter of such a dimension as to provide minimum clearance with the end-portion of its associated hand stamp to allow the printing member of said hand stamp to rest on said ink pad to be reinked thereby whenever the hand stamp is supported in the tray but to prevent substantial evaporation of said highly volatile ink;

and a plurality of readily insertable solid inserts similar to said different-size inserts but having a solid center portion in place of a thimble portion, said solid inserts being mounted within the remainder of said apertures and being effective to prevent any substantial evaporation of the ink from those apertures for which no stamp-receiving insert is provided.

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