Jan. 24, 1967 L. SCHUMER 3,299,930

KEY CASE

Filed Aug. 3, 1964

Fig. 1

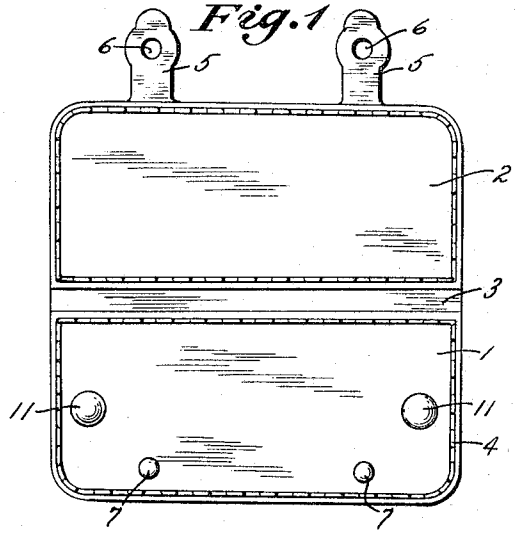


Fig. 2

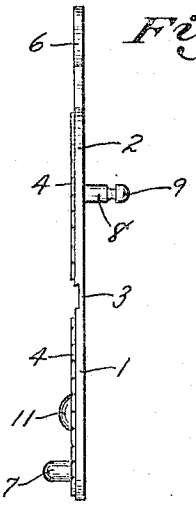


Fig. 3

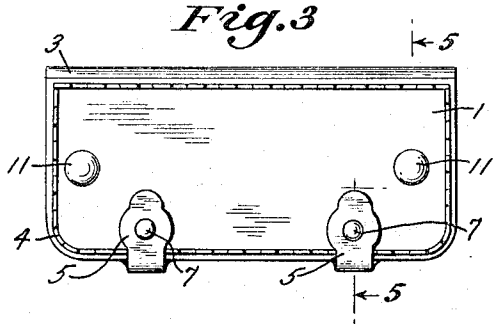


Fig. 4

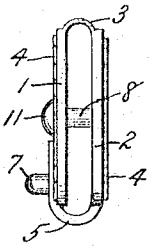


Fig. 5

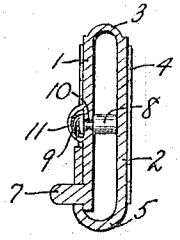


Fig. 9

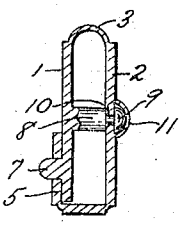
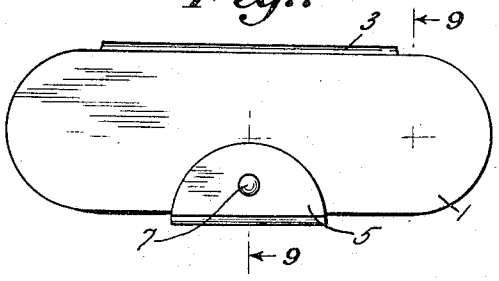


Fig. 7



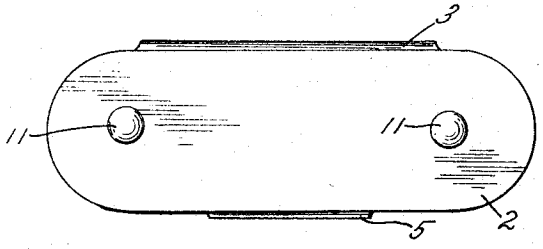
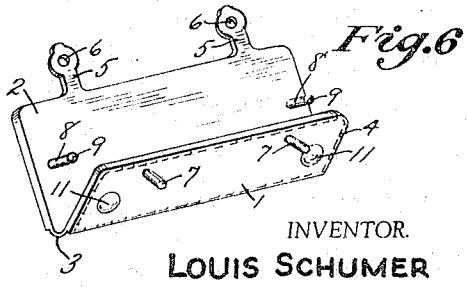


Fig. 8

Fig. 6



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United States Patent Office 3,299,930 Patented Jan. 24, 1967

3,299,930

KEY CASE

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Filed Aug. 3, 1964, Ser. No. 386,856
5 Claims. (Cl. 150—40)

This invention relates to new and improved compact key cases adapted to completely house a relatively small number of keys, and from which each key is selectively swingable for individual use and readily detachable.

The prior art is replete with key cases of many shapes and forms which possess a variety of desirable functions. However, the majority of such key cases have complex structures for pivotally holding the keys, such as a combination of threaded screws. Accordingly, the prior art key cases require the assembly of several parts, which tend to keep the cost high. The recent use of plastics in lieu of leather in the fabrication of key cases has considerably reduced the cost. However, the same disadvantages attendant the assembly of the leather key cases still plagues the plastic ones, namely, the necessity of fitting the posts into the proper openings in the key cases, the assembly of the two or more parts making up said posts, the insertion of a closure snap, etc. Thus, it is evident that the manufacture of key cases is complex and costly.

Accordingly, the principal object of this invention is to provide a compact key case out of a single molded plastic sheet having integral therewith the pivotal means for key retention.

Another object of this invention is to provide a resilient, flexible, durable key case which simulates leather.

Still another object of this invention is to provide an inexpensive, simply constructed compact key case.

Another object of this invention is to provide a compact key case which is convenient to use and from which a key can be readily detached and attached.

More specifically, this invention relates to key case formed from a single sheet of resilient plastic comprising two panels of substantially equal size and thickness, preferably of rectangular shape, joined by a narrow, longitudinal thin strip of the same material which is integral with said panels, a key retaining means for pivotally supporting keys and from which the keys are readily swingable, disposed on opposite ends of either the rear panel or front panel, said key retaining means comprising a molded post situated on one panel and terminating in a poppit which engages a recess in the opposite panel, said key-retaining mechanism also functioning as a closure device, an additional locking device consisting essentially of a flange or flap extending from the longitudinal edge of the rear panel which overlaps the front panel and engages a stud protruding from the front panel.

Other objects of this invention will become apparent upon reading the following specification in connection with the drawing in which:

FIGURE 1 is a plan view of the outer surface of the completed key case as it is received from an injection mold.

FIGURE 2 is a side elevational view of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 3 is front elevational view of the key case in accordance with FIGURE 1 in a closed position.

FIGURE 4 is a side elevational view of FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 5 is a sectional view through line 5—5 of FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 6 is a perspective view of the key case in an open position.

FIGURE 7 is a front elevational view of an alternative form of key case in a closed position.

FIGURE 8 is the rear view of FIGURE 7.

FIGURE 9 is a sectional view on line 9—9 of FIGURE 7.

Referring to the drawings, the key case of the present invention comprises a plastic key case molded in its entirety and in a single manufacturing operation, from a sheet of resilient flexible plastic which simulates leather. The method preferably or usually employed is injection molding of plastic pellets such as polyethylene, polypropylene, or the like, whereby said pellets are extruded in a single operation into a mold of the instant key case. More specifically the molded key case received from the mold is ready for use per se without the addition of any parts, and comprises essentially two panels of uniform thickness, a front panel **1** and a rear panel **2** joined along its inner edge by a hinge means such as a narrow strip **3** of thin plastic to facilitate flexing. The outer appearance of panels **1** and **2** may be smooth as shown by FIGS. 7 and 8 or have stitching, **4** along the outer edge of each panel as shown by FIGS. 1 and 2.

The outer edge of rear panel **2** terminates in one or two flanges or flaps **5** having an opening **6** therein, which fastens onto studs or pegs **7** situated along the outer edge of the outer surface of front panel **1**. Flaps **5** may be small and elongated as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 or wider and semi-circular as illustrated by FIGS. 7 and 8 the smaller flaps being preferably used in pairs, whereas the larger one is usually used singly. The flap and peg combination constitutes the fastening means which assists in holding the key case in a closed position. The pressure of the front and rear panels against the keys housed within the key case created by this fastening means prevents jiggling of the unused keys while the ignition key is inserted in the instrument board of a car.

The key retaining mechanism consists essentially of a post **8** terminating in a poppit **9**, protruding from the inner surface of rear panel **2** and situated on opposite sides of panel **2**. Poppit **9** engages recess **10** situated on the inner surface of front panel **1**. Recess **10** protrudes to the outer surface of panel **1**, as semi-circular projection **11**. The post and poppit may protrude from the inner surface of the front panel in lieu of the rear panel as shown in FIGURE 9. Poppit **9** is preferably rounded and snaps into rounded recess **10** by simply applying pressure with two fingers. Poppit **9** firmly engages recess **10** to form both a key retaining mechanism and a locking device. The resiliency of the plastic material enables poppit **9** to engage recess **10** in a tight and secure fit.

Another variation, not illustrated, comprises lengthening flaps **5** so that opening **6** latches onto poppit **9** extending through opening **10**, thereby eliminating pegs **7**.

The simplicity of using the above poppit locking device enables the driver to remove a key from the case by simply opening one side of the key case by disengaging the poppit from its recess and slipping out said key without disturbing the other keys. This is most often used when parking a car in a lot which requires leaving the ingition key in the lock, and taking the key case with the other keys with you. The present key case is particularly adaptable in a car where the ignition key pivotally swings from the locked case containing the other keys. The ease with which a key can be removed without disturbing the other keys is particularly desirable to drivers.

Accordingly the advantages of the present key case are many. The key case is particularly designed to be compact and only hold approximately four keys, 2 keys pivotally suspended from post **8** on either end of said case. The resiliency of the pastic material renders the key case more durable and stronger than leather. The versatility of the plastic material utilized enables one to manufacture the key cases in a variety of colors and

designs heretofore unavailable with leather. The simplicity of manufacture from a single sheet of resilient plastic material enables one to manufacture these key cases at a very low cost, heretofore unknown. The snap action of the poppit mechanism renders it particularly efficient with respect to the ease of attaching and detaching keys. The necessity of unscrewing the post as in prior art key cases in order to release or attach a key is completely eliminated by the present use of poppits.

While the invention has been described with reference to various embodiments thereof as hereinbefore set forth, it is clearly understood that the invention is not limited thereto, but includes various modifications and equivalents within the scope of the instant invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A compact key case molded from a single sheet of resilient plastic material comprising two panels of substantially similar outline joined together along one longitudinal edge by an integral hinge means, key retaining means for pivotally supporting keys and locking means, all formed as an integral unit, said key retaining means consisting essentially of a post protruding from the inner surface of one panel and terminating in a poppit which engages a recess disposed on the inner surface of the opposing panel, said locking means comprising a flap extending from the outer longitudinal edge of one panel and containing an opening therein which engages a peg protruding from the outer surface of the opposing panel.

2. A key case in accordance with claim 1 wherein a pair of key retaining means are situated on opposite ends of said panels.

3. A key case in accordance with claim 2 wherein said locking means comprises a centrally located flange which engages a centrally located peg.

4. A key case in accordance with claim 1 wherein said locking device comprises a pair of flanges engaging a pair of pegs.

5. A key case in accordance with claim 1 wherein said hinge means comprises a thin narrow strip of said plastic.

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