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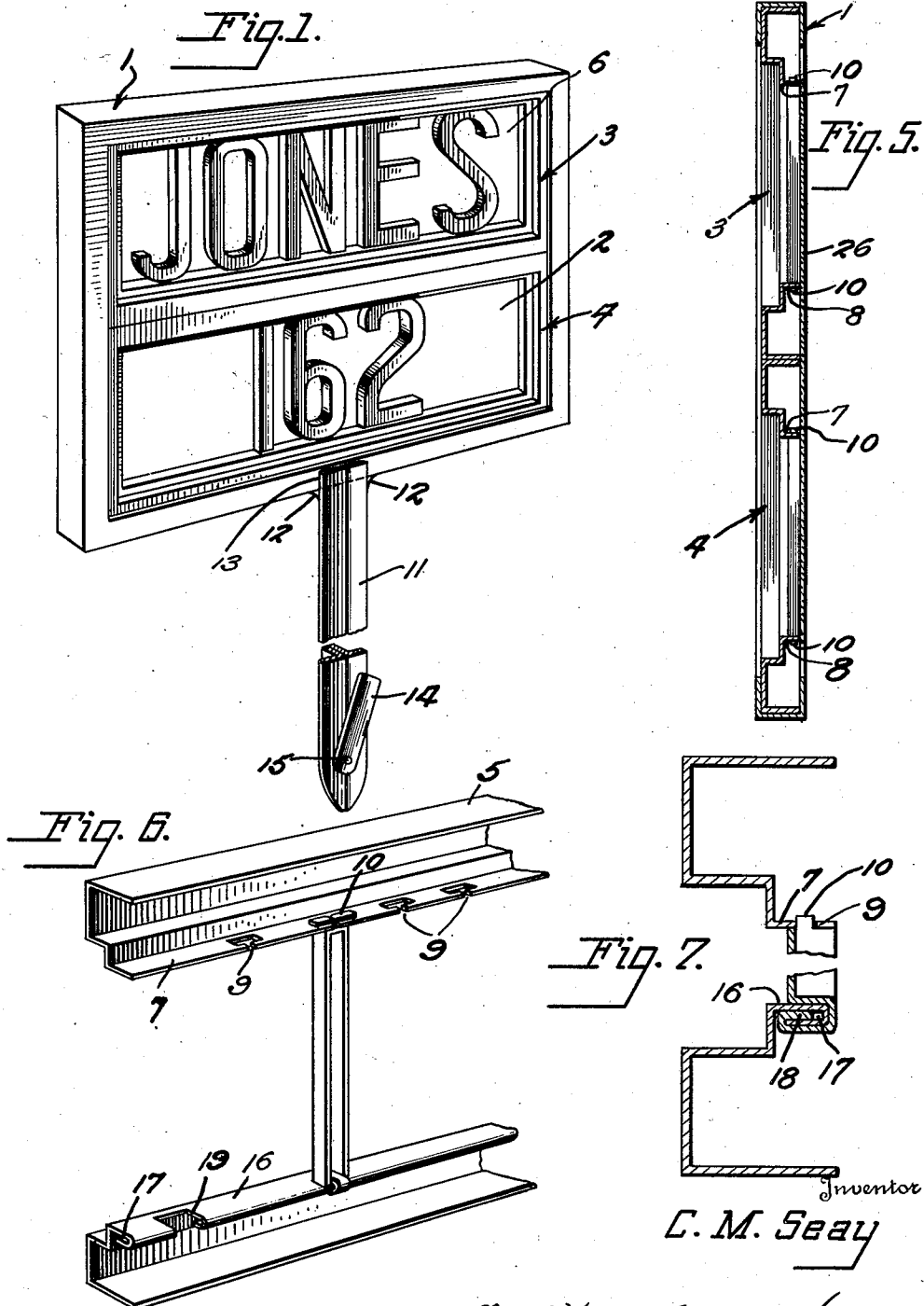
C. M. SEAY

2,230,389

SIGN

Filed Aug. 31, 1939

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



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Attorneys

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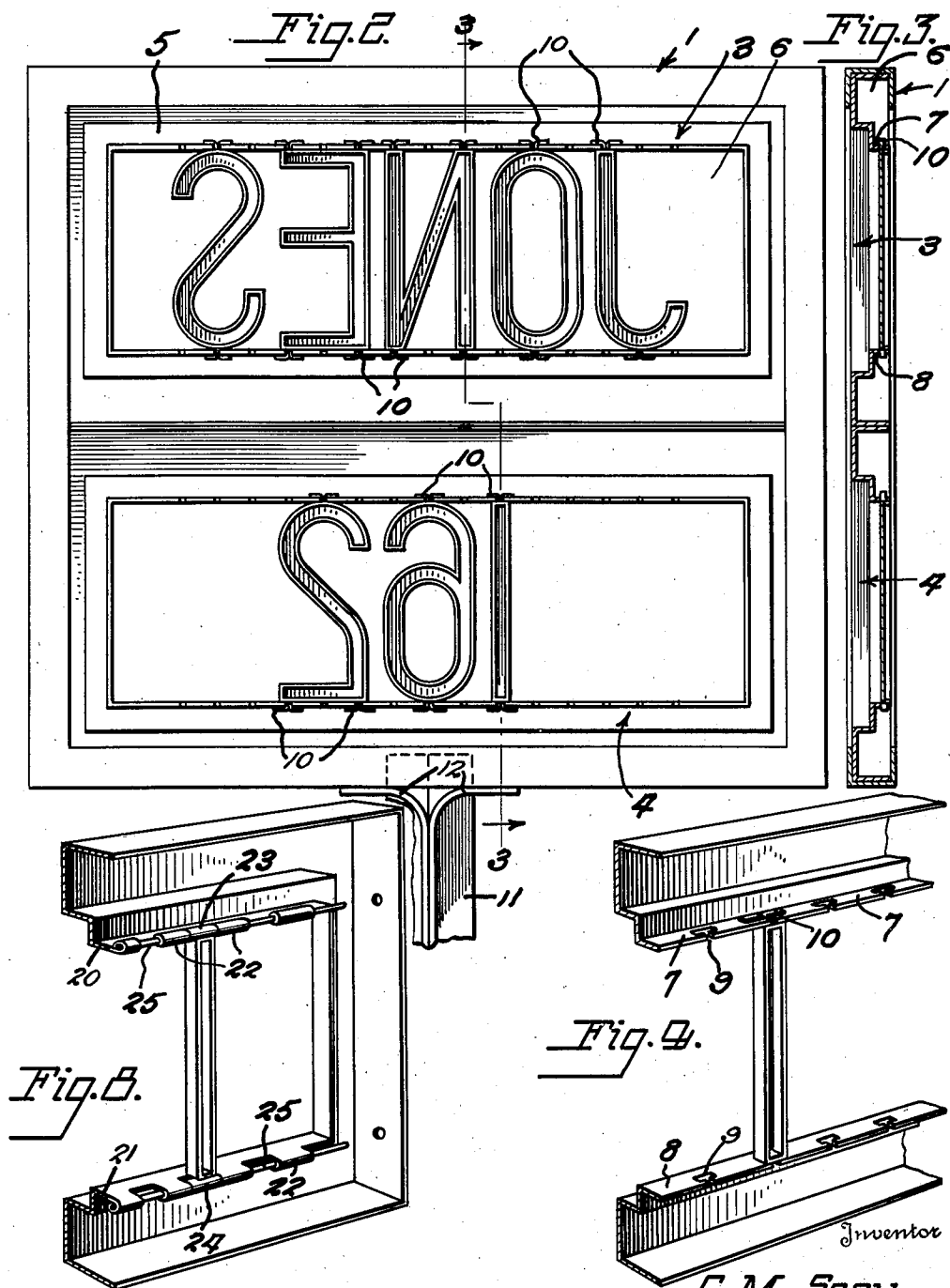
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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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SIGN

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Application August 31, 1939, Serial No. 292,951

9 Claims. (Cl. 40-142)

This invention relates to signs made up selectively from removable letters or figures.

One of the objects of the invention is to provide a sign construction in combination with a stock font or alphabet, including figures, so that any desired legend or number may be selectively set up, if need be, at short notice.

A further object of the invention is to provide a sign having character supporting bars and separably mountable characters with interlocking means between said bars and said characters.

Another object of the invention is to provide a sign frame unit which may be inserted singly or in multiple in a master frame, said unit including character supporting bars having interlocking features adapted to coact with complementary elements on the characters, for securing the latter in place.

A still further object of the invention is the combination of a sign construction as above described, with a back plate and block letters, the block letters and the frame unit in which they are mounted terminating in the common plane of the back plate whereby the combination, if the parts are made of the same material or similarly colored, gives the sign the appearance of a mono-block casting.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a back plate or equivalent structure which renders the characters irremovable from the completed sign.

Another object of the invention is to provide a transparent back plate whereby an illuminated sign is provided by placing it in front of a source of light.

Other objects of the invention relate to the specific interlocking means between the characters and the elements which support them, and as will appear as the following description proceeds.

In the accompanying drawings which form a part of the following specification, and throughout the several figures of which the same characters of reference have been employed to designate identical parts:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a lawn sign embodying the features of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a rear elevation of the same;

Figure 3 is a cross-section taken along the line 3-3 of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a rear perspective view of a fragment of the sign illustrating the block form of letter having its rear face terminating in the plane of the supporting elements;

Figure 5 is a cross-section similar to that shown in Figure 3, with the addition of a back plate;

Figure 6 is a rear fragmentary perspective view showing an alternative interlocking means;

Figure 7 is a vertical section through that form of the invention shown in Figure 6, the intermediate portion being broken away; and

Figure 8 is a rear fragmentary perspective of still another alternative form of interlocking means.

Referring now in detail to the several figures, and first adverting to that form of the invention shown in Figures 1 to 4, inclusive, the numeral 1 represents a master frame which in the illustrated embodiment of the invention is rectangular in form, of pressed sheet metal, and surrounding a rectangular opening 2.

Said master frame is shown enclosing the frame units 3 and 4, which are similar to one another and seated in the master frame to which they are permanently connected as by soldering or its equivalent.

Each frame unit, for example, the frame unit 3, comprises a sheet metal frame 5 which, as shown, is rectangular in form and likewise composed of pressed sheet material surrounding the rectangular opening 6. The frame 5 is preferably formed with rearwardly extending flanges 7 and 8, which are continuous with side flanges, but as the latter are not of particular moment as regards the present invention, it will not be necessary here to designate them.

As is indicated in Figures 1 to 4, the two frame units shown are of the same width. This, however, is not essential to the invention, for they may be of different width, if desired.

The space between the flanges 7 and 8 of each frame unit are designed to be bridged by characters, either letters or figures, selected from a stock font, and arranged to make up the desired legend. With this end in view, the flanges 7 and 8 in that modification of the invention now under description, are provided with series of slots 9 which in this instance are T-shaped, with the stem of the T opening in the free edges of the flanges.

The characters, both letters and figures, are provided at suitable points with elements adapted to enter the keyhole slots and interlock therewith for holding the characters in place.

Figure 4 shows that the interlocking means carried by the letters comprises a cotter pin 10, the limbs of which are parallel or may be brought into parallelism for insertion into the narrow entrance to a slot, and which expand or may be

separated into the wide portion or bight of the slot. Narrow characters, such as the letter I, have one cotter pin at the top and one at the bottom. Wide characters, such as H, have two
 5 cotter pins at the top and at the bottom spaced apart, and the slots in the flanges 7 and 8 are preferably spaced apart a distance equal to one-half the spacing of the cotter pins on the wide letters, so that in the making of a word the wide
 10 and narrow letters may be accurately spaced according to the tenets of the art of printing.

After the characters have been secured in position, the frame unit or units are mounted in the master frame. In the lawn sign illustrated
 15 in Figures 1 to 4, inclusive, the master frame has a standard 11, which as shown is formed of two angle bars arranged with their front flanges in the same plane and their side flanges welded or otherwise secured in abutment with one another.
 20 The upper portions 12 of the side flanges are bent outwardly forming a rest for the lower horizontal member of the master frame, while the front flanges extend a short distance above the lower edge of the master frame and in contact
 25 with the front surface thereof, being welded thereto, as shown at 13 in Figure 1. The standard 11 is designed to be thrust into the ground, and a "dead man" or detent 14 of any suitable construction is provided at the lower end of the
 30 standard and acts as an obstruction to prevent the easy withdrawal of the standard from the ground.

As shown, the "dead man" 14 is pivoted to the standard at 15. When the standard is thrust
 35 into the ground, the "dead man" lies parallel to the standard, and offers substantially no obstruction to the insertion of the standard. When it is attempted to pull the standard out, the "dead man" is frictionally pulled sidewise, resisting
 40 the pulling out of the standard.

In that form of the invention shown in Figures 1 to 4, inclusive, the flanges 7 and 8 and the upper and lower ends of the characters are both provided with the same type of interlocking
 45 means, namely, the spreadable cotter pin which coacts with keyhole slots in the flanges.

In Figures 6 and 7, a slightly modified form of the invention is shown, in which the lower
 50 flange, now designated by the reference character 15, is intumed to form a channel 17 and the bottoms of the characters are formed with oppositely turned tongues 18 which slidably engage within the channels 17. Suitable slots 19
 55 are provided for the initial insertion of the tongues 18, after which the characters are slidably moved to their proper position within the frame unit 3. Then the cotter pin 19 is inserted within the adjacent slot and the ends expanded
 60 outwardly in the bight of said slot, as shown in Figure 6.

Still another form of interlocking means is illustrated in Figure 8, the free edges of the upper and lower flanges 20 and 21 being formed with interrupted tubular sections 22 similar to the
 65 leaves of a piano hinge, and the characters being formed with corresponding tubular ends 23 and 24 which may be selectively fitted in the intervals between any two of the sections 22, and secured
 70 in place by a pin or wire 25 thrust endwise through the entire series of sections. It is obvious that at least one end of the frame unit 3 must have a hole aligning with the bores in the sections 22 to permit the insertion of this pin.

Insofar as the invention has been described up
 75 to this point, the characters have been alluded

to as "block" letters or figures. It is, however, obvious that flat or sheet characters would be equally applicable.

However, the sign finds its most practical embodiment in the use of block characters, the rear
 5 edges of which terminate in a plane embracing the rear edges of the upper and lower flanges, in combination with a backing plate 26 contacting the edges of said flanges and of said block
 10 characters. Where all parts of the sign are made of the same material, particularly metal, such as copper, or where all parts of the sign are of uniform color, the close contact of the backing plate with the said flanges and block characters
 15 gives the sign the appearance of being a heavy mono-block casting. The backing plate also performs a very important function of closing the stems of the slots, so that the characters cannot be unauthorizedly removed from the completed
 20 sign.

It is not necessary to the invention, however, that the backing plate 26 be of the same material as the rest of the sign. In certain embodiments of the invention the backing plate is made of
 25 translucent or transparent material, so that when the sign is set in front of a source of illumination the characters show out against an illuminated background instituted by the transparent backing plate.

The uses of such a sign as has been herein
 30 described are many. Probably one of the most practical utilizations is as a lawn sign or house marker, which may be set up on short notice, for example, by an itinerant salesman, and which
 35 although it may be extremely inexpensive, yet resembles a dignified and expensive construction.

The interchangeability of the characters makes the sign well adapted to any situation in which the factor of interchangeability as well as economy play an important part, such for example, as
 40 the changeable displays in front of motion picture theatres. The illuminated form of sign is especially suitable for this purpose.

While it is contemplated that the master frame shall be of such size as to take a single one or
 45 any multiple of the frame units, this size relationship is not essential to the invention, for one or more frame units may be used in a master frame which they do not fit in widthwise direction, through the interposition of a suitable filler.
 50

While I have in the above disclosure described what I believe to be a preferred and practical embodiment of the invention, it will be understood to those skilled in the art that the specific details as shown and described are by way of ex-
 55 ample, and not to be construed as limiting the invention.

What I claim as my invention is:

1. In a sign, spaced flanges perpendicular to the plane of the front face of the sign, said
 60 flanges having spaced notches with narrow mouths opening rearwardly, and a character of a length to bridge said flanges, said character having spreadable limbs extending lengthwise of the character at each end adapted to slide into
 65 opposed notches and to be spread into locking engagement with said flanges.

2. In a sign, spaced parallel supports and a character adapted to be bridgingly held between
 70 said supports, having a slide at one end engageable with a guide on one support whereby said character may be slid into a selected position, and a cotter pin secured at the other end of said character having spreadable limbs adapted to enter into and expand within a narrow
 75

mouthed slot formed in the other support, for securing said character in its selected position.

3. Sign as claimed in claim 2, said supports being the opposite members of a rectangular frame unit and a master frame in which said unit is secured.

4. In a sign, a rectangular frame, the opposite sides of which constitute spaced parallel supports and a character adapted to be bridgingly held between said supports, having a transverse tubular socket at one end at least, adapted to be axially interposed between any pair of a series of similar tubular sockets, formed on at least one of said supports, one side of said frame having a hole in alignment with said tubular sockets and a pin extending through said axially aligned sockets and the hole in said side for securing said character in place, and a master frame surrounding said frame unit occluding said hole to prevent subsequent unauthorized removal of said pin.

5. In a sign, a master frame including a surrounding annular member enclosing a rectangular space, said master frame having a standard for supporting it in the ground, one or more frame units seated in said master frame having spaced parallel supports, and a character adapted to be bridgingly held between said supports having cotter pins secured at its opposite ends, said cotter pins having spreadable limbs adapted to enter into and expand within certain selected

narrow mouthed slots of series of such slots formed in said supports.

6. In a sign, a frame unit having opposite spaced parallel flanges with their free edges extending toward the rear of the sign and provided with rearwardly opening slots, and characters adapted to be bridgingly held between said flanges, interlocking means carried at the ends of said characters for removably securing said characters in selected slots in said flanges, said characters being of block formation with their rear faces in a plane which embraces the rear edges of said flanges and a backing plate contacting the rear edges of said flanges and said block characters securing said characters in position and giving the sign the appearance of a mono-block casting.

7. Sign as claimed in claim 6, the backing plate being of light transmitting character.

8. Sign as claimed in claim 6, said interlocking means comprising elements projecting endwise from said characters engaging in slots in said flanges, said slots being closed by said backing plate.

9. Sign as claimed in claim 6, said interlocking means comprising cotter pins secured to at least one end of each character adapted to enter into and spread within certain of a series of keyhole slots formed on one of said flanges, said keyhole slots being closed by said backing plate.

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