March 11, 1941. T. A. MEALEY 2,234,531

DISPLAY FOR ARTICLES OF MERCHANDISE

Filed May 25, 1939 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.

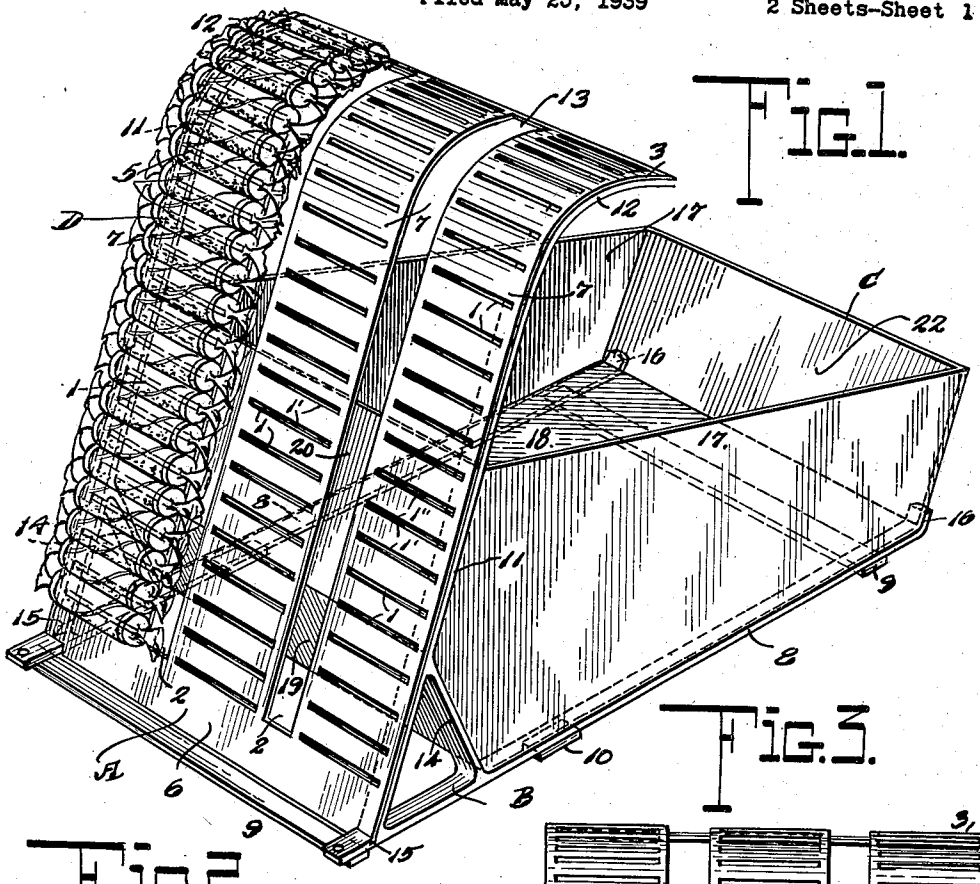


Fig. 3.

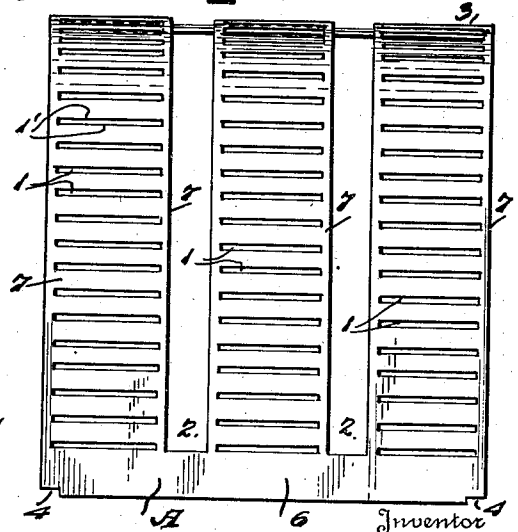
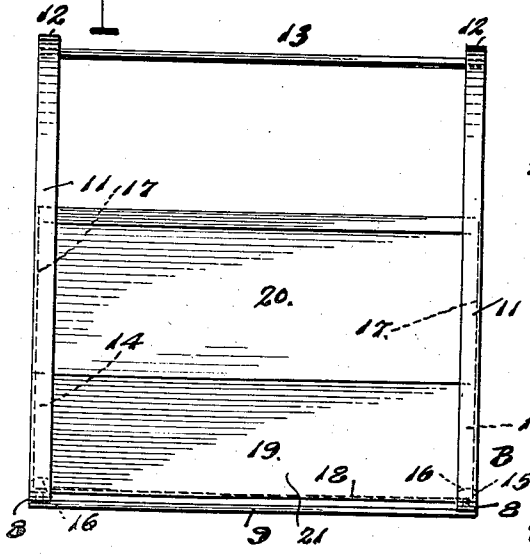


Fig. 2.



Inventor
T. A. Mealey
By Robb & Robb
Attorneys

March 11, 1941. T. A. MEALEY 2,234,531

DISPLAY FOR ARTICLES OF MERCHANDISE

Filed May 25, 1939 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

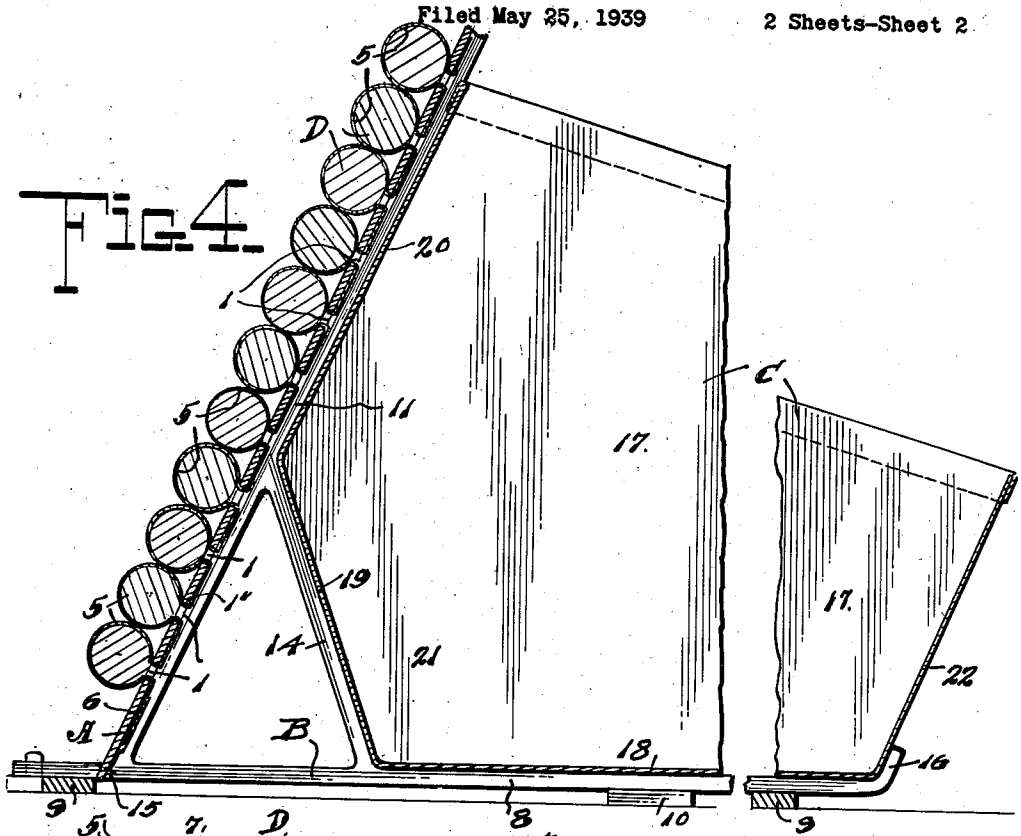


FIG. 4

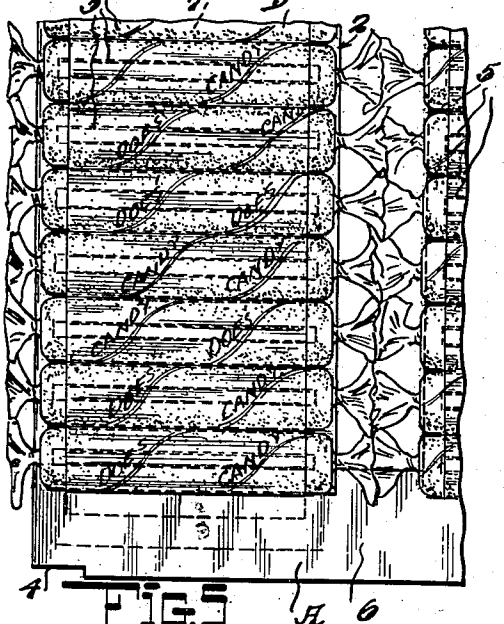


FIG. 5

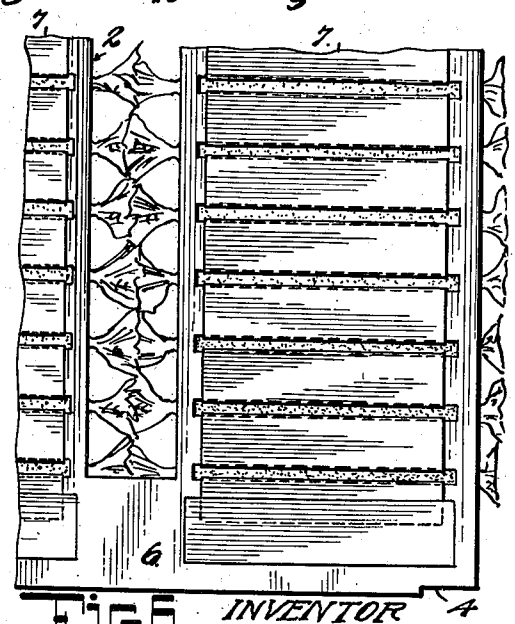


FIG. 6

INVENTOR
T. A. Mealey
By Robb & Robb
Attorneys

Patented Mar. 11, 1941 2,234,531

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,234,531

DISPLAY FOR ARTICLES OF MERCHANDISE

Thomas A. Mealey, Atlantic City, N. J.

Application May 25, 1939, Serial No. 275,772

8 Claims. (Cl. 206—44)

This invention relates to a display medium for articles of merchandise, and more especially, to an improved form of display for candy and similar confections which are made and/or packaged in the form of cylindrical or substantially cylindrical rolls. It is to be understood, however, that the invention is not confined to use for articles of cylindrical or substantially of cylindrical shape, nor is it limited to the confection art, as other uses will readily suggest themselves as the following description proceeds.

In the past, it has been the usual practice of those selling goods such as candy rolls, mints, and other similar articles, to dispense the same from open trays or receptacles which are supported on a counter or shelf, the articles being heaped in the receptacles and directly dispensed therefrom by removing the desired quantities from time to time as the sales are made. Obviously, such practices are not well suited for providing an attractive display of the merchandise, and inasmuch as the removal of the articles from the receptacles disturbs the piled or heaped arrangement each time a sale is made, a very unsightly condition is created where the articles in the receptacles are exposed to the public view.

Another common form of display is a card or other support on which a number of articles of merchandise are carried in such manner as to be individually detachable therefrom for dispensing purposes. This results in materially detracting from the appearance of the display by the vacant space or spaces presented in the display through the removal of one or more articles from the support.

It is one of the primary objects of the present invention to provide an improved form of display in which certain of the articles of merchandise become a relatively permanent display and are presented to view in a much more pleasing and attractive manner than has heretofore been proposed, and preferably with the further advantage that different forms, grades, flavors in the case of candy confections, etc., may be more readily distinguished one from the other for the convenience of the purchaser's selection.

A further object of the invention is to provide an improved display of the above character, wherein articles of the type which are enclosed in a wrapper carrying the name, trade-mark, advertising, or decorative matter of the producer or seller, are attached to a support in such a manner that the data on and/or color of the wrapper is clearly presented to view at all times, and is not concealed, blurred, or otherwise rendered indistinct by the attaching means, in whole or in part.

Another primary object of the invention is to provide a support for displaying articles of merchandise, the same having provision for fixing thereto a plurality of articles arranged in closely abutting relation to each other so as to aid in mutually supporting each other.

To the above end, the support is preferably provided with a series of slots or slits for receiving an anchoring or attaching web or band of flexible preferably transparent material, and forming a plurality of substantially closed loops at one side of the support for closely embracing and substantially completely encircling a plurality of articles when each of the latter is inserted into one of the loops, the slots or slits being preferably spaced apart for a distance substantially equal to the distance from the center of one article to the center of the contiguous article, so that the articles cover and conceal the respective slots or slits, and if desired, substantially completely conceal the entire support.

A still further object of the invention is to provide an article support for display purposes, to which the articles are preferably permanently attached in closely abutting relation in the direction of the length of the support, the support being in the form of a substantially flat elongated relatively rigid member having one end curved rearwardly so that when the support is disposed in a generally upright position with the curved end uppermost, the articles thereon are presented to view as a continuous series gradually receding from the observer and giving the effect of an infinite continuation of the series, without exposing any abrupt termination of the upper end of the support.

The invention further contemplates the provision of a frame for maintaining the article support in a generally upright or somewhat inclined position as aforesaid, and said frame preferably having associated therewith a receptacle or tray from which the articles as represented by those displayed on the support may be conveniently dispensed, the tray being normally disposed behind the support in a substantially concealed position when viewed from the front and coacting with the support to produce a bracing and stabilization of the latter and the frame. The frame and tray are preferably further characterized by convenient separability, but so constructed that the article support tends to automatically establish an interlocking of the tray

with the frame when the support is mounted on the frame in its normal display position.

Other and further objects and advantages of the invention will be hereinafter described and the novel features thereof defined by the appended claims.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a candy display constructed in accordance with my invention, and illustrating one series of candy packages permanently attached to a support disposed at the front of a dispensing receptacle or tray;

Figure 2 is a front elevation of the frame and dispensing receptacle illustrated in Figure 1, as seen when the support for the display articles is removed;

Figure 3 is a view in front elevation of one form of article support as shown in Figure 1, and adapted for supporting several series of articles, with the series arranged in side-by-side relation to each other;

Figure 4 is an enlarged fragmentary vertical sectional view taken through the display assembly shown in Figure 1 on a plane intersecting one of the series of articles intermediate their opposite ends, and particularly showing the manner of permanent attachment of the articles to the support, with the articles disposed in closely abutting engagement with each other;

Figure 5 is an enlarged fragmentary view showing a group of articles attached to their support in accordance with my invention, and as viewed in front elevation; and

Figure 6 is a view generally corresponding to Figure 5, with the parts seen in rear elevation.

Like reference characters designate corresponding parts in the several figures of the drawings, wherein A generally designates a support to which articles of merchandise are adapted to be relatively permanently fixed for display purposes. The support is preferably carried by a frame generally denoted B, the frame being so constructed as to receive therein a dispensing tray or receptacle generally designated C. As best shown in Figures 1 and 4, these elements are each preferably so constructed and arranged as to mutually coact with each other in providing a relatively rigid, simple, and inexpensive display assembly of unitary form, with the frame B holding the support A in a generally upright position and also releasably interlocking the tray or receptacle C in the frame with the aid of the overbalanced weight of the support A and the articles of merchandise mounted on the latter.

In its broad aspect, the support A may be constructed of any suitable material and may have any desired size or shape, according to the type of article which is to be mounted thereon. The construction shown in the drawings and hereinafter described has been primarily designed for use for candy articles and the like which are normally made and/or packaged in cylindrical or roll form and individually packaged in a wrapper, the articles being generally designated D. As previously mentioned, the invention is not confined to any one particular article of merchandise, as it can be readily modified to accommodate various other articles. The articles D which have been shown for illustrative purposes only, are intended to represent the conventional form of salt water taffy packages wherein the wrapper encircles the roll of taffy and is twisted at its opposite ends to close the same, leaving the twisted ends of the wrapper protruding from the opposite ends of the article enclosed within the wrapper. The wrapper usually has printed or otherwise depicted thereon the name, trade-mark, or advertising matter of the producer or seller, and the printing and/or the wrapper itself may be in one or more colors for decorative purposes. These various conventional features have been mentioned to more clearly bring out certain important advantages which are ascribed to my improved display as will hereinafter more fully appear.

The support A preferably comprises a relatively flat rigid elongated plate having one or more series of spaced slots or slits 1 formed therein, the spacing running in the direction of the length of the plate. According to the form of the support illustrated in the drawings, the same is constructed with three separate series of slots or slits 1, each slot of one series being preferably aligned with the corresponding slot of the other series, and being of a length slightly less than the length of the articles D. Each slot or slit is also relatively narrow in the direction of its short dimension for reasons which will be hereinafter more particularly referred to. The supporting plate A is provided with an elongated relatively wide slot 2 between each row or series of slits 1, and extending generally perpendicularly to the latter, or in other words, running in the direction of the length of the plate. One end of the supporting plate A is curved as at 3, and the opposite end is preferably notched at 4—4 for engagement with the frame B. The rows of slots or slits 1 commence near the notched end of the plate, which becomes the bottom end when in use, and the rows extend relatively close to the opposite curved extremity of the plate, which will be hereinafter considered as the upper end.

For the purpose of attaching the articles D to the supporting plate A, I provide a web or band 5 for each row of articles preferably formed of flexible transparent material such as "Cellophane," the band being suitably attached as at 6 to one end of the support A at the back of the same and extending lengthwise of the supporting plate, with intermediate portions of the band depressed through each slot or slit 1 and forming a series of substantially closed loops at the front of the supporting plate. These loops serve as article receiving pockets and are adapted to closely and snugly embrace each article and substantially completely encircle each individual article. In applying the articles D to the supporting plate A, the band 5 is first fixed at one end of the plate as at 6 and then depressed through the first slot or slit nearest the fixed end. One of the articles is then inserted in the loop thus formed, and the free end of the band is thereupon pulled tight and then depressed through the next slot to form another loop for receiving a second article. Again the free end of the band is pulled tight and thereafter depressed through the next slot or slit, and so on until the complete row of articles is formed and attached or anchored to the supporting plate, whereupon, the end of the band 5 opposite to the end initially fixed at 6 is suitably secured to the opposite end of the supporting plate A. The attachment of the ends of the band may be effected by the use of suitable adhesive or in any other manner desired, following which, the articles D will be relatively permanently mounted on the supporting plate A for use only for purposes of display.

The spacing of the slots or slits 1 one from each other in the same row is preferably such that the distance between adjacent slots is approximately equal to the distance from the center of one article D to the center of the next article, or in other words approximately equal to the diameter or transverse dimension of the respective articles. Due to this arrangement, the articles D will be fixed to the supporting plate A in closely abutting engagement with each other, as clearly shown in Figures 1 and 4 to 6 inclusive, thus aiding to mutually support each other. By forming the slots or slits 1 relatively narrow in the direction of their short dimension, the band 5 substantially completely encircles each of the articles D in close contact therewith, which affords the important advantage of rendering the wrappers enclosing the articles plainly visible and distinct when a transparent attaching band such as "Cellophane" is used. Moreover, the attaching band 5 becomes practically invisible, and the articles D present the appearance of having no visible means of attachment or support. The articles themselves conceal the slots or slits 1, and by spacing the slots 2 in the supporting plate 1 so as to divide the plate into panels 7, each approximately equal in width to the length of the bodies of the articles D, the articles substantially conceal or hide the entire supporting plate A when applied to the respective panels. As best shown in Figures 5 and 6, the twisted ends of the wrappers in which the articles D are individually packaged, project over the slots 2 and abut or overlap with the twisted ends of the wrappers of the contiguous row, thereby substantially concealing the slots 2.

Due to the formation of the slots or slits 1 so that their short dimensions disposes the opposing edges 1' of the supporting plate A relatively close together at the long sides of the slots 1, the ends of the respective loops formed by the web or band 5 are maintained relatively close together and are substantially tensioned and maintained under tension when the web is drawn tight around the articles D as they are successively inserted in the loops. In other words, the acute angle formed by the web as it passes about each of the long edges 1' of the slots or slits 1, aids in maintaining a snug or tight engagement of each loop with its article therein.

It will be obvious from the foregoing that instead of employing a supporting plate A on which the articles are mounted in a plurality of rows, the plate may be constructed to accommodate only a single row where such form of display is preferred. Needless to say, the different rows of articles may be respectively composed of articles of different flavors, in the case of confections, or the same may be made up of different grades, sizes, or brands of articles, or the like.

As will be best understood from reference to Figure 1, when the support A is disposed in a generally upright or somewhat inclined position, with the articles D anchored or attached thereto by the band or web 5, the display creates the effect of an infinite continuation of the respective rows of articles when viewed from the front, this effect resulting from the gradual recession of the row or rows away from the eye of the observer, as established by the rearwardly curved form given to the upper end of the support at 3. Also, the curved end 3 disposes the articles D on the upper end of the support A so that they normally hide the extreme upper end of the support, and presents a somewhat more attractive and pleasing appearance than would be created by abruptly terminating the supporting plate A without curving the latter.

Passing now to the frame B, it will be seen that the same comprises a base composed of laterally spaced bars 8—8, suitably interconnected by cross bars 9—9 fixed thereto near their opposite ends and extending therebetween at the lower sides thereof. Pads or blocks 10 may be fixed to the lower sides of the respective bars 8—8 intermediate their opposite ends to prevent sagging of the base formed by those bars. Extending upwardly from each of the bars 8—8 near their forward ends is a bar 11, the same being preferably inclined rearwardly and curved at their upper extremities 12 corresponding to the curvature of the curved end 3 of the supporting plate A. The upper extremities of the bars 11—11 are preferably interconnected by a bar 13, and form therewith an easel-like frame or rest. A brace 14 may be interposed between each of the generally upright bars 11 and the bar 8 of the base to brace the same. Just forwardly of each upright bar 11 the bars 8 are transversely notched as at 15 to receive the lower notched end of the supporting plate A, as will be best understood from reference to Figures 1 and 4, these notches 15 serving to restrain the supporting plate A against accidental displacement when mounted on the frame B. Due to the rearward inclination of the upright bars 11—11, the supporting plate A, with the articles D attached thereto tends to automatically tilt to the rear by its rearwardly overbalanced weight, and is only restrained by the easel-like frame formed by the interconnected bars 11—11.

The rear extremities of the bars 8—8 which form the base of the frame B, are bent upwardly at 16 at an obtuse angle to receive the receptacle or tray C between the same and the easel-like part of the frame. The receptacle may be formed of sheet metal or other suitable material having substantially vertical side walls 17—17 extending upwardly from a bottom 18, and interconnected at the front by a wall 19, the upper portion of which is inclined rearwardly as at 20 so as to lie approximately parallel and in abutting engagement with the rear faces of the bars 11—11. The lower portion of the front wall 19 is rearwardly inclined downwardly as at 21, substantially parallel with the braces 14—14, and adapted to abut against the rear side of the latter. The rear wall 22 of the receptacle is preferably inclined upwardly and rearwardly, and is of less height than the front wall 19, the upper edges of the vertical side walls 17—17 being inclined downwardly from the front wall 19 towards the back wall 22. The receptacle or tray is so constructed as to be about as wide as the width of the frame B and article support A, and when the parts are assembled as shown in Figures 1 and 4, they become one unit of substantially uniform width, enabling other units of a similar character to be placed along side of the same in close engagement with each other.

The bars 8—8 and 11—11, which form parts of the frame B are more or less resilient or yieldable so that the upper portion of the easel-like rest against which the supporting plate A lies may have a limited movement relative to the base of the frame, thereby allowing the tray or receptacle C to be mounted on the frame in the position shown in Figures 1 and 4. When

so mounted, the tray or receptacle automatically becomes interlocked with the frame, and this interlock through the relative yielding action of the parts of the frame is aided and maintained by the rearwardly overbalanced weight of the supporting plate A carrying the articles of merchandise D. After mounting the receptacle or tray on the frame, the receptacle tends to brace the easel-like rest part of the frame and stabilize the assembly as a whole.

It is to be understood that the articles of merchandise which are to be dispensed are normally placed in the tray or receptacle C, and are more or less hidden by the support A and the articles permanently displayed thereon, when viewed from the front, while at the same time the tray or receptacle affords convenient access to the articles within the same when their removal is required for purposes of sale. Of course the articles displayed on the front of the support A may be changed from time to time, if desired, by severing or otherwise removing the anchoring or attaching band or web **5**, and reattaching other articles to the support A in the manner previously described. On the other hand, the support A and the articles D attached thereto may be substituted in their entirety by other supports of the same character having the same or different articles supported thereby. In any case, the support A may be easily removed from the assembly by lifting the lower end of the supporting plate out of the notches **15** in the base of the frame B to enable the support to be moved away from the frame against which it normally rests by its own weight.

While the specific details of construction have been herein shown and described, the invention is not confined thereto as changes and alterations may be made without departing from the spirit thereof as defined by the appended claims.

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

1. A display device comprising a panel support provided with a plurality of elongated relatively narrow slots or slits arranged in parallel spaced relation to each other and at a distance apart substantially equal to the transverse dimension of the article displayed, and said slots being parallel to the longitudinal axis of the article displayed, and an attaching member formed of a transparent web or band depressed through each slot or slit in the same direction, with the opposite ends of each loop maintained relatively close together and tensioned by the closely spaced edges of the support at the respective slots or slits aforesaid, whereby when the articles are mounted in the loops pressure is exerted on the web at the ends of each loop and the sides of the articles are in contiguous relation to thereby hide the slits and face of the support between the slits.

2. A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the openings have the form of elongated relatively narrow slots or slits arranged in spaced relation to each other, with their major axes separated one from another at a distance approximately equal to the transverse dimension of the respective loops, and the length dimension of the slits is less than the length of the articles held by the loops to thereby occlude the supporting surface upon which the articles are displayed.

3. A device of the class described, comprising an elongated relatively flat substantially rigid support having a plurality of rows of spaced slots or slits therein, the slots of each row being parallel and having their major axes arranged transversely of the support and parallel to the longitudinal axis of the article displayed, and said support having elongated openings formed therein intermediate the rows aforesaid and extending normal to the axes of the first mentioned slots or slits, and a flexible web or band extending through the slots or slits of the respective rows and forming a continuous series of substantially closed article receiving loops at one side of the support, with the central axis of each loop disposed parallel to and substantially in register with a slot or slit in its corresponding row, the opposite ends of the bands being fixed to the support at the opposite ends of the respective rows of slots or slits.

4. A device as claimed in claim 1 wherein the support has the form of a relatively flat, elongated, substantially rigid plate having the openings formed in a row extending lengthwise thereof, and one end of the plate being curved towards one side of the plane thereof.

5. A display device of the class described, comprising an article support for displaying articles of merchandise when affixed thereto, a frame for mounting said support in a generally upright position comprising spaced upright bars against which the support rests and rearwardly extending horizontal tray supporting bars, and a tray or receptacle removably mounted on said frame horizontal bars behind said support, said support, frame, and tray or receptacle being so constructed and arranged as to mutually brace each other as a unitary assemblage.

6. A display device of the class described, comprising a relatively flat, rigid article support for displaying articles of merchandise when affixed thereto, a frame for mounting said support in a generally upright position, said frame including a tray holding base and a rest member extended upwardly therefrom at the front of the base at an angle thereto and serving to sustain the article support in a rearwardly inclined position; a tray or receptacle removably mounted on the base of said frame behind the article support and rest member, with its forward end in abutting engagement with the latter, and the base of the frame having upwardly extending abutments at its rear end disposed in abutting engagement with the rear end of the tray or receptacle.

7. A device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the article support and the rest member of the frame are rearwardly curved to overlie the forward end of the tray or receptacle.

8. A device as claimed in claim 6, wherein the base and rest members of the frame are yieldably movable relative to each other so as to cause the rearwardly overbalance weight of the article support to normally urge the tray or receptacle into firm abutting engagement with the abutments at the rear end of the base.

THOMAS A. MEALEY.