March 12, 1929. C. DOMERUDE 1,705,241

TOOTHPICK HOLDER

Filed March 28, 1927

Fig. 1

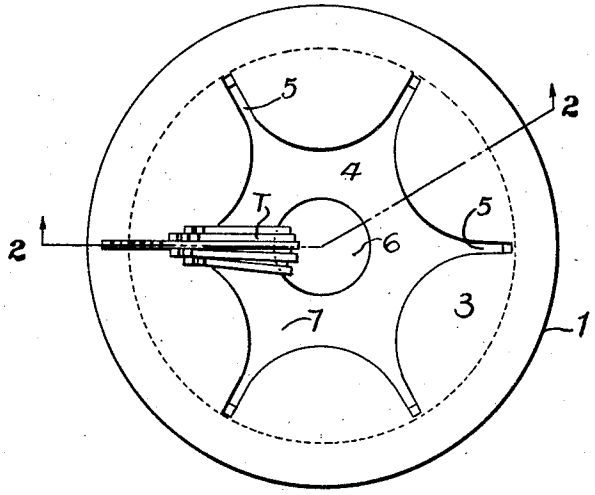
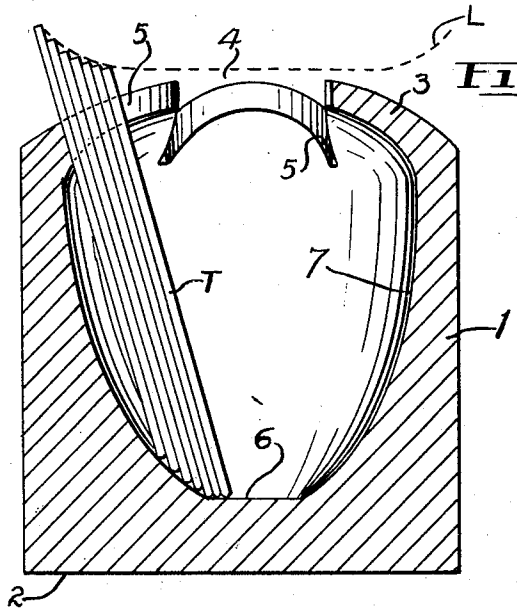



Fig. 2




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# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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## TOOTHPICK HOLDER.

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My invention relates to a holder for such articles as toothpicks and matches, which are frequently laid out for the convenience of patrons in restaurants, for example, in such manner that the patron may help himself. One object of the present invention is to provide such a device in which the articles, toothpicks for example, may be supported in such a manner that they naturally fall into a number of individual files or rows, and to insure that the outermost in each file is projected sufficiently above the adjacent toothpick that it may readily be grasped without the necessity of touching or handling in any manner the adjacent toothpick. This is of advantage in two ways, in that it precludes the tendency to pick up several toothpicks at a time, and largely eliminates the necessity of patrons touching more than the single toothpick which he will extract, and is thus conducive to sanitation.

A further object is the provision of such a device which may be simply and cheaply constructed, and which may be conveniently filled, and so shaped that the natural tendency of the toothpicks, when inserted, is to position themselves as indicated above.

My invention comprises the novel article, shaped as shown in the drawings and as hereinafter described, and as more particularly defined by the claims terminating this specification.

In the accompanying drawings, I have shown my invention embodied in a form and shape as now preferred by me, though it will be apparent as the description progresses that variations may be made in the form and in the particular shape, without departing from the spirit of this invention.

Figure 1 is a plan view of my invention, showing a number of toothpicks in position therein;

Figure 2 is a section on line 2—2 of Figure 1.

The article comprises a cup-like vessel generally designated by the numeral 1, which may be made of wood, or molded in glass. This is adapted to rest in an upright position upon its base 2, and it is provided with a top 3 which extends inward from the edges of its side walls 7. The top, however, has an aperture, preferably centrally located, which I will designate as 4, which aperture permits the simultaneous insertion of a number of toothpicks as in a bundle.

Extending outward from this main aperture 4 are a series of slits 5. These slits are preferably of a width equal to the thickness of a single toothpick, but preferably not wider than this. Thus the aperture 4 and the radiating slits 5, in the preferred form, form a substantially star-shaped aperture, the slits terminating adjacent the side walls of the vessel.

The top 3 of the vessel is spaced above the bottom 6 a distance less than the length of the toothpicks to be employed. The base 6 may be flat or may be curved, but the distance from this base 6 to any portion of the top is less than the length of the toothpicks T. The bottom 6, if flat, preferably does not extend farther from the center of the vessel than the outline of the main aperture 4, but may be smaller than this. The side walls 7 of the vessel curve outwardly and upwardly from this bottom 6, so that the walls of the vessel immediately below the inwardly projecting top and the slits 5 are curved in such a manner that the toothpicks, which normally would tend to remain substantially vertical, will rest not on the bottom 6, but will extend upward along the curved walls 7.

This is best illustrated in Figure 2. The outermost toothpick lies well up the curved side 7 of the vessel, and the successive toothpicks inward thereof lie at successively lower levels, and their ends consequently project less. Inasmuch as the slits 5 permit the toothpicks to align themselves in single file only, it will be evident that the outermost, and consequently the uppermost, toothpick will extend in position to be grasped readily without the necessity of touching the other toothpicks. The tops of the toothpicks will then lie substantially in a curved or dished plane indicated by the line L. The tendency of one toothpick in being withdrawn will be to raise the adjacent toothpick with which it contacts, and this will tend to draw this adjacent toothpick farther up the curved side 7 so that when it falls to the bottom of the slit 5, from which the toothpick has just been withdrawn, it will lie at about the level that the preceding toothpick assumed, and will thus extend above its neighbor and be in position to be withdrawn as was the first.

The device may also be used for matches, and while the sanitary feature is not prominent here, it will be found of advantage in that it will eliminate the tendency to take several matches when one only is needed. It may be used for the dispensing of various arti-

cles of a small stick-like character, and may be variously shaped or decorated externally, if desired.

What I claim as my invention is:

1. A holder for toothpicks and the like comprising a cup-like vessel having a top extending over its bottom and spaced thereabove by an amount less than the length of the toothpicks to be received therein, said top having an aperture to permit the simultaneous insertion of a plurality of toothpicks in a bundle, and having slits extending from said main aperture of a width substantially equal to the width of a single toothpick and adapted to receive a plurality of toothpicks.

2. A toothpick holder as in claim 1, the inner wall of said vessel beneath the said slits being curved upwardly and outwardly from its bottom, whereby each of the toothpicks in said slits extends above the one next inward therefrom.

3. A holder for toothpicks and the like comprising a cup-like vessel having a top extending over its bottom and spaced thereabove by an amount less than the length of the toothpicks to be received therein, said top having a main aperture centrally disposed, and adapted to permit the simultaneous insertion of a plurality of toothpicks, and having radial slits extending from said main aperture, of a width substantially equal to the thickness of a single toothpick, the walls of said vessel, outward of the central aperture, extending outwardly and upwardly, whereby the vertical distance from such wall to the top decreases with the distance from the center of the vessel.

4. A toothpick holder as in claim 1, the outer surface of the top being convex, the bottom of said holder beneath said slits being curved upwardly and outwardly, whereby the outer toothpicks project above said top a greater distance than those inwardly thereof.

5. A toothpick holder as in claim 3, the intermediate portions of the top between the slits projecting inwardly toward the center of said top and adapted to direct the toothpicks into said slits.

Signed at Everett, Snohomish County, Washington, this 22nd day of March, 1927.

CARL DOMERUDE.