

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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LETTER-FILE.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, WILLIAM F. MALONEY, a citizen of the United States, residing at Chicago, in the county of Cook and State of Illinois, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Letter-Files, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to certain new and useful improvements in files for holding letters, bills, invoices, ledger-sheets, photographs, and loose sheets of all kinds.

The object of this invention is to provide an inexpensive file of simple construction into which loose sheets can be readily arranged and secured and from which any of the sheets can afterward be as easily removed without disturbing or disarranging the remaining sheets.

Another object is to provide a novel locking device by which both sides of the file can be unlocked simultaneously to insert or remove sheets or either side unlocked without affecting the other side or the sheets adjacent thereto; and a further object is to provide a file of this character with a flat back for receiving labels and lettering and to avoid wear, so that it will lie flat upon a desk or table when opened and unlocked to facilitate the insertion and removal of sheets and in making entries on the sheets in some cases.

With these and other ends in view the invention consists of the peculiar construction and arrangement of parts hereinafter described, and illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 shows the file open and with one side unlocked. Fig. 2 is a sectional view on the line 2 2 of Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is a sectional view on the line 3 3 of Fig. 2. Fig. 4 is a plan view of that part of the file surrounding the locking device. Fig. 5 is a sectional view on the line 5 5 of Fig. 4. Fig. 6 illustrates a locking device which locks and unlocks both sides at the same time only.

Like letters of reference denote corresponding parts on each figure of the drawings, and referring thereto; A A designate the two covers, flexibly connected with the sides B B, which are attached to the back C by means of hinges c or otherwise. The sides are preferably composed of metal strips carrying prongs D, which are generally curved and ex-

tend across the back when the file is closed. I have found it desirable to provide a backing E of binder's board or other suitable material for the sides; but it is obvious that this backing may be omitted, if desired. The back and sides are generally made of some stiff material—such as wood, metal, or binders' board—and the construction is such that these parts can be made very compact, light in weight, and attractive in appearance. The covers may be made of leather or stiff material and covered, like the back and sides, with leather, cloth, or other binding material F. The back consists of a solid piece of material which is sufficiently rigid to provide a substantial and unbroken back, and it can be made of a thin strip of metal or some other material in an inexpensive manner. This back therefore provides a plain unbroken surface adapted to receive labels and lettering, which will not become injured by constant unlocking the file. As the hinges are at the side edges of the back and the back is solid and unbroken, I avoid the disadvantages incident to a back hinged in the middle, which causes the binding and labels to wear rapidly, mars the lettering, and in many ways interferes with the proper use of the file and injures its appearance. The sides are of sufficient width to provide a space inclosed thereby and by the back to receive the punched or perforated edges of the sheets filed, and by reason of the fact that the hinges are along the side edges of the back and not in the middle thereof the sheets will not be disturbed by the hinges when the file is unlocked, as sometimes happens with those files which break in the middle of the back. Furthermore, this construction provides a file which will lie perfectly flat on a desk or table when it is unlocked, as shown in broken lines in Fig. 2, which greatly facilitates the insertion and removal of sheets and can be availed of in making entries, especially when loose ledger-sheets are filed.

It is desirable in files of this character that either side may be unlocked without disturbing the other side or both sides unlocked together, and this I have provided for in my novel locking device. It is generally sufficient to provide one locking device at the lower end of the back, as shown; but I may provide one at each end, if desired. This locking de-

vice may be changed in the details of construction; but it consists, essentially, of locking jaws or devices engaging and locking with the sides and adapted to be operated separately or together. I provide two locking-jaws G G, carried by the plates H H and arranged to enter openings *g* in the sides. These jaws are normally held up in locking position by the springs I on the pins J, all of these parts being inclosed and protected by the housing K. The plates abut against each other or are otherwise suitably guided and are provided with thumb-pieces L, which extend at right angles beneath the housing or through an opening or openings therein into convenient position to be operated. Instead of the coiled springs I or in conjunction therewith I may use the flat springs M, Figs. 4, 5, which are fastened at their inner ends to the back C and have their outer ends extended through openings in the plates H and constituting thumb-pieces. This novel locking device is of great advantage in the use of files of this character, as it provides for unlocking both sides simultaneously by pressing upon both thumb-pieces at the same time or for unlocking either side while the other side remains locked, Fig. 1, with the sheets adjacent thereto undisturbed. This simplifies the use of the file and guards against the accidental displacement of sheets when they are being inserted or removed. The locking device is strong, simple, and positive in its action and is constructed so that it will lock when the file is closed. If it is not desired to provide for locking and unlocking each side separately, the two plates are made in one piece H', carrying the jaws G and having a single thumb-piece L', as shown in Fig. 6. My improved file, constructed as herein shown and described, presents many novel points of superiority over those of the prior art. It is exceedingly simple, light, and inexpensive in construction, but strong and attractive, and can be used with much greater facility than those commonly used at the

present time. It is a matter of especial importance that the file may be unlocked and spread out perfectly flat, Fig. 2, with some of the sheets held in a horizontal position by the prongs on both or either of the covers, so that entries can be made thereon with much greater ease and facility than in the usual bound book.

The back and sides may be hinged together in any suitable manner, and they can be made of metal strips having hinged connection, thereby dispensing with the separate hinges shown in Fig. 4.

Having thus fully described the invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. In a file for holding loose sheets, the combination of a solid back having a flat inner face, sides hinged to the side edges of said back and adapted to swing outward into the horizontal plane of the back, prongs carried by said sides to receive and hold the sheets, and a locking device carried by the back and comprising laterally-extending jaws arranged to engage and lock the sides in position at right angles to the back.

2. In a file for holding loose sheets, the combination of a back and sides hinged thereto, and a locking device located between the sides and above the back comprising spring-pressed jaws arranged to enter openings in the sides to engage therewith and to lock the sides in position at right angles to the back.

3. In a file for holding loose sheets, the combination of a back, sides hinged thereto, and a locking device comprising a pair of spring-pressed plates arranged side by side, jaws carried by said plates and adapted to enter openings in the sides to engage therewith and lock the sides in position at right angles to the back, and thumb-pieces on said plates.

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Witnesses:

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