Nov. 11, 1947. L. C. OWNBEY 2,430,646

BACKGROUND FOR INTERCHANGEABLE DISPLAY CHARACTERS

Filed July 17, 1945

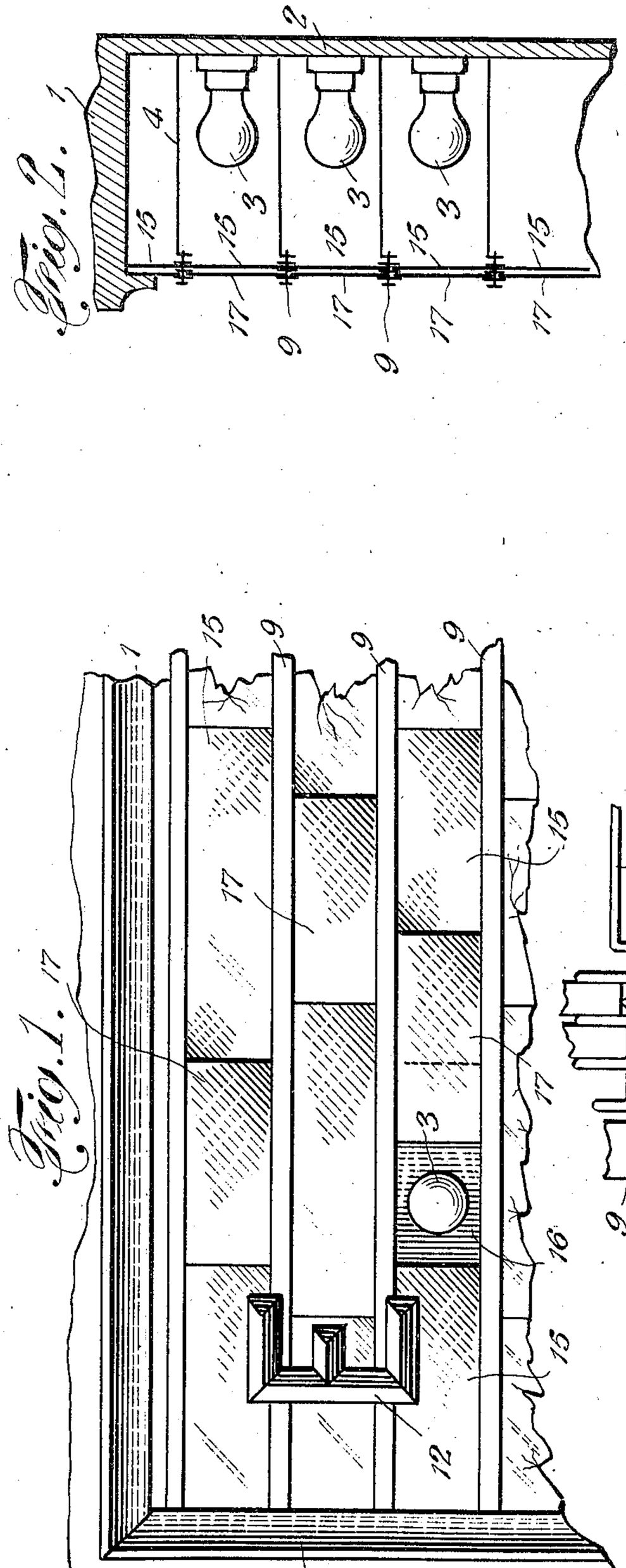

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

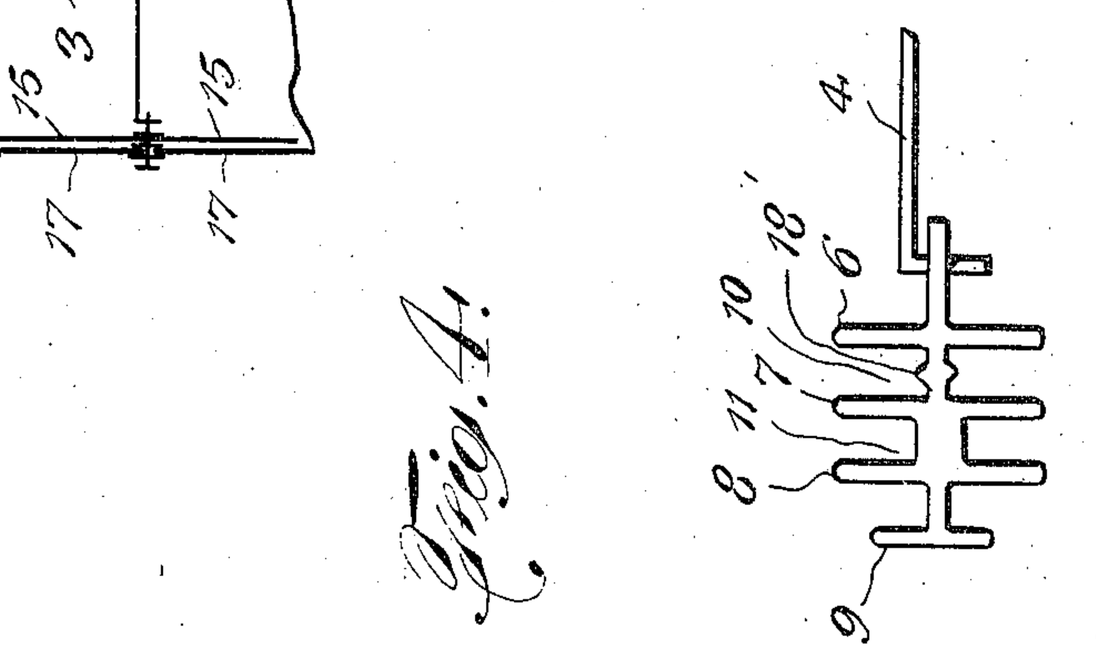

Fig. 4.

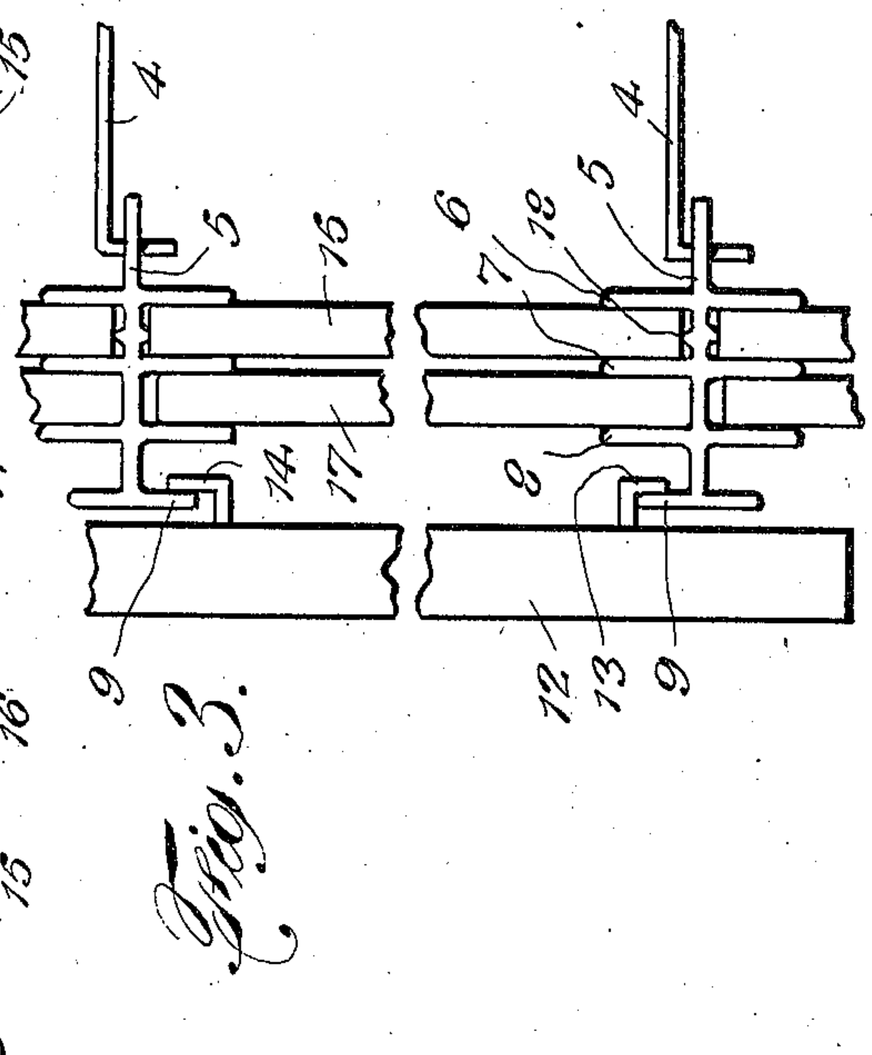

Fig. 3.

INVENTOR
Lloyd C. Ownbey
BY
Hasting W. Baker
ATTORNEY

Patented Nov. 11, 1947

2,430,646

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,430,646

BACKGROUND FOR INTERCHANGEABLE DISPLAY CHARACTERS

Lloyd C. Ownbey, Los Angeles, Calif., assignor to Theatre Specialties, Incorporated, a corporation of California

Application July 17, 1945, Serial No. 605,535

6 Claims. (Cl. 40—140)

1

The object of this invention is to provide a background for display characters. As is well known, theaters and other places of amusement constantly change the programs, and they advertise the play now being played and the names of the stars on the outside of the theater, so as to attract the attention of the public. The changeable letters are mounted on track-ways in front of a translucent background, so that the illumination from lights behind the background can pass therethrough so that the changeable letters may be viewed. It is sometimes desirable to have access to the area behind the background. For instance, the lights behind the background sometimes burn out so that it is necessary to replace them. With my improved background construction I have provided certain translucent panels, which are load supporting panels, which are interrupted at intervals so as to provide windows, and I provide slidable panels so that they can be moved sideways to uncover the window so that the light behind it can be replaced, and when the light has been replaced, the slidable panel can be moved to close the window.

Another object of the invention is to provide a plastic translucent track-way so as to avoid the unsightly opaque track-ways for the changeable letters, as have heretofore been employed.

Another object of the invention is to provide a single track with channelways to receive the load supporting panels and other tracks and channelways to receive the slidable panels. This same track is also provided with a front flange, on which the changeable letters are mounted, and is provided with a rear portion which serves as a means to prevent the displacement of the track laterally.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will appear in the detailed specification and claims which follow.

The invention may be better understood by referring to the attached drawings, in which

Fig. 1 is a front view of a portion of my improved background;

Fig. 2 is a vertical cross-sectional view through an intermediate portion of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an enlarged side elevational view showing two tracks and the parts coacting therewith; and

Fig. 4 is a detailed view of one track, but in a slightly modified form from that shown in Fig. 3.

The background is mounted on the front of a frame 1 having an open front portion and a rear wall 2, which carries the lights 3 and spacer bars

2

4, which extend into holes in the rear portion of the central plate 5 of the track.

There are four upwardly extending ribs 6, 7, 8 and 9 and identical downwardly extending ribs, all of said ribs being integral with the central plate 5. There is a rear channelway 10 between the ribs 6 and 7 and a front channelway 11 between the ribs 7 and 8; while, of course, there is also a channelway between the ribs 8 and 9, it is not used as a channelway. The changeable letter 12 is provided with rearwardly and downwardly extending lugs 13 and rearwardly and upwardly extending lugs 14. As shown in Fig. 3, the lug 14 is placed beneath the rib 9 of the upper track and raised until the lug 13 is above the rib 9 of the lower track, whereupon the letter is moved rearwardly and dropped so that the lug 13 is supported by the lower rib 9, and the lug 14 rests behind the downwardly extending rib 9 of the track above it.

The background is provided with tiers of fixed translucent plates 15, which extend within the rear channel 10 of the track below it and into the corresponding channel of the track above it. The upper track is supported by this fixed panel which, in turn, supports the fixed panel above it, so that these fixed panels are load supporting panels. As shown in Fig. 2, these load supporting panels 15 extend from the bottom to the top of the background, except for the slight spaces occupied by the central plate 5. As shown in Fig. 1, these panels 15 are provided with windows 16 in front of the lights 3. Slidable translucent panels 17 are mounted in the channelways 11, which are the channelways in front of the channelways 10. These panels 17 are slidable in the channelways so that the operator can move the slidable panels so as to uncover the window 16 so as to replace a light, and then can move it back so as to close the window.

Obviously, the panel 17 could be of the same height as the panel 15, provided the thickness of the central plate 5 were greater adjacent the panel 15 than it is adjacent the panel 17. Such a construction is shown in Fig. 3, in which ribs 18 extend upwardly and downwardly from the central plate 5 at the base of the channelway 10, so that the distance between the extremities of the ribs on upper and lower tracks would be less than the distance between the central plate 5 of upper and lower tracks adjacent the channelways 11.

An alternative construction is shown in Fig. 4, in which the peak of the rib 18′ extends to substantially the same height as the bottom of the channelway 11. With such a construction, the

movable panel 17 should be of a slightly less height than the height of the fixed panel 15, so that the slidable panel can be readily moved.

I realize that many changes may be made in the specific form of the invention shown by way of illustration herein, and I, therefore, desire to claim the same broadly except as I may limit myself in the attached claims. Having now described my invention, I claim:

1. In a background for display characters, a plurality of vertically aligned spaced tracks, each provided with two sets of laterally offset upwardly and downwardly extending channels, a tier of translucent load supporting fixed panels each nested in a corresponding pair of channels of the tracks above and below such panels, said panels and tracks resting upon each other, such panels being interrupted at spaced intervals forming windows, and slidable panels movable in the offset channels and adapted to cover or uncover said windows.

2. In a background for display characters, a plurality of vertically aligned spaced tracks, each provided with two sets of laterally offset upwardly and downwardly extending channels, a tier of translucent load supporting fixed panels each nested in a corresponding pair of channels of the tracks above and below such panels, said panels and tracks resting upon each other, such panels being interrupted at spaced intervals forming windows, slidable panels movable in the offset channels and adapted to cover or uncover said windows, and illuminating means behind said panels.

3. In a background for display characters, a plurality of vertically aligned spaced tracks, each provided with two sets of laterally offset upwardly and downwardly extending channels, a tier of translucent load supporting fixed panels each nested in a corresponding pair of channels of the tracks above and below such panels, said panels and tracks resting upon each other, such panels being interrupted at spaced intervals forming windows, slidable panels movable in the offset channels and adapted to cover or uncover said windows, and a flange carried by said tracks on which display characters may be supported.

4. In a background for display characters, a plurality of vertically aligned spaced combined track and character supports, including two upwardly facing laterally displaced channelways and two similar downwardly facing channelways, and a flange in front of said channelway, a tier of load supporting transparent panels extending

into corresponding channelways of the tracks above and below it and supported by the track below each of said panels, and each of said panels in turn supporting the track above it, said panels between two tracks being interrupted at various points forming windows, and translucent panels slidable in the channelways offset from the channelways in which the load supporting panels are mounted, so as to cover or uncover the windows, said front flange serving as a means to support the display characters.

5. In a background for display characters, a plurality of vertically aligned spaced tracks including front and rear upwardly and downwarly extending channelways, a tier of fixed translucent panels each supported in one of the upwardly extending channelsways and extending into a corresponding downwardly extending channelway in the track above it, and serving as a support for the last-named track and the panels and tracks thereabove, adjacent panels being spaced apart forming a window therebetween, and a slidable translucent panel movable in an offset pair of said channelways adjacent said window and serving as a means to close said window.

6. In a background for display characters, a plurality of tracks including front and rear upwardly and downwardly extending channelways, a tier of fixed translucent panels each supported in one of the upwardly extending channelways and extending into a corresponding downwardly extending channelway in the track above it, and serving as a support for the last-named track and the panels and tracks thereabove, adjacent panels being spaced apart forming a window therebetween, a slidable translucent panel movable in an offset pair of said channel-ways adjacent said window and serving as a means to close said window, and means carried by said tracks whereby display characters may be supported.

LLOYD C. OWNBEY.

REFERENCES CITED

The following references are of record in the file of this patent:

UNITED STATES PATENTS

Number	Name	Date
1,620,386	Osborn	Mar. 8, 1927
2,313,724	Adler	Mar. 16, 1943
2,319,910	Adler	May 25, 1943