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2,628,876

FOOD PACKAGE HOLDER AND DISPENSER

Filed Dec. 9, 1949

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1

FIG. 2

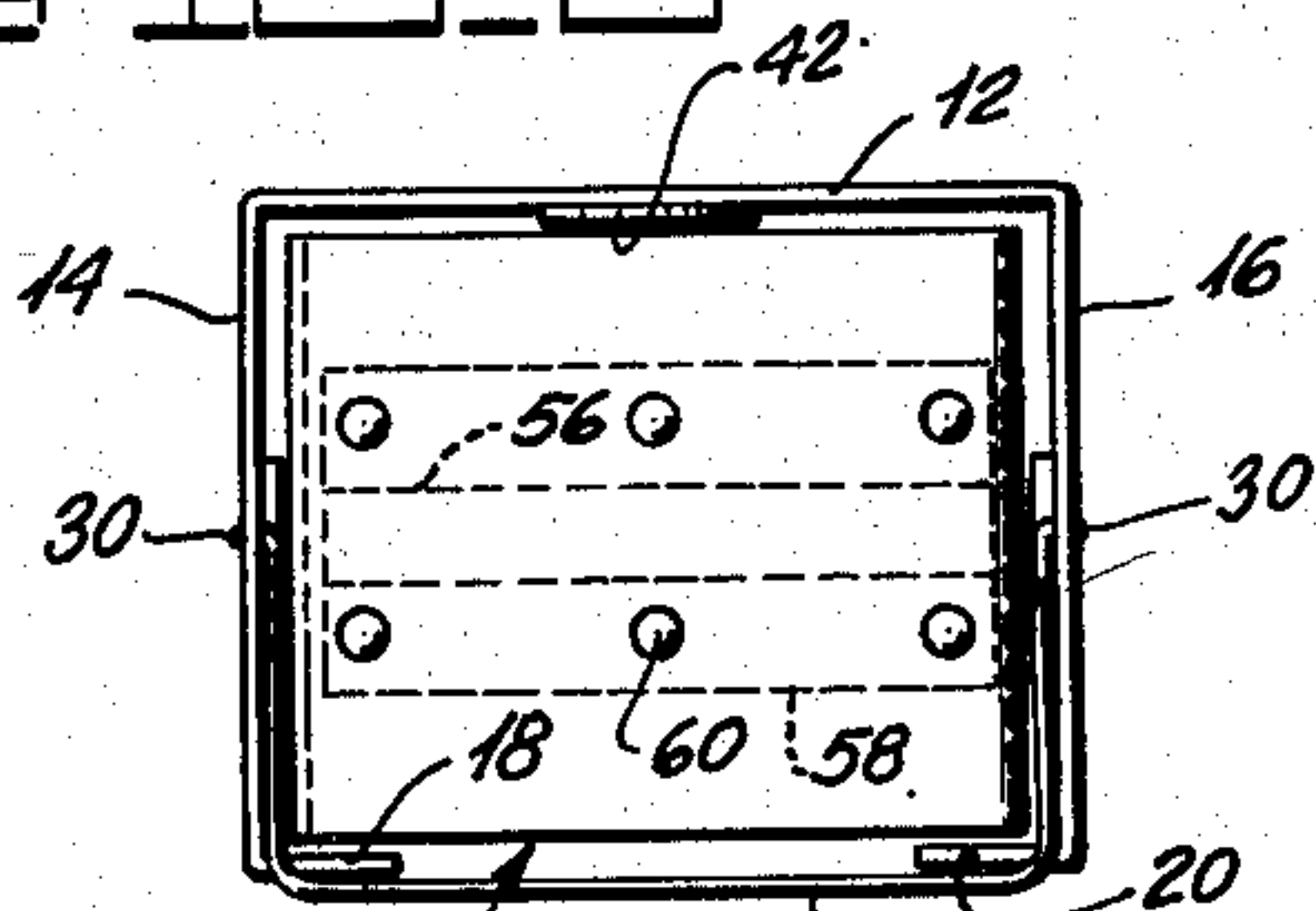


FIG. 4

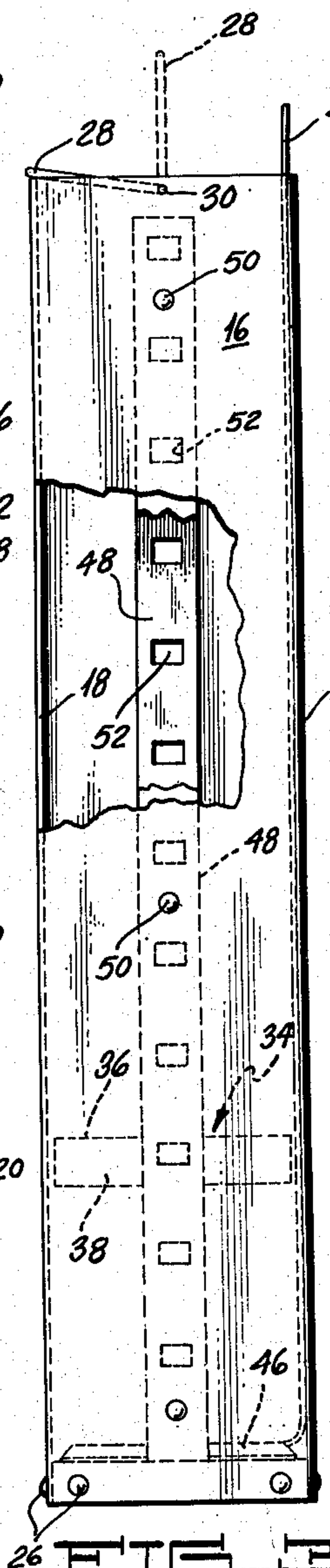
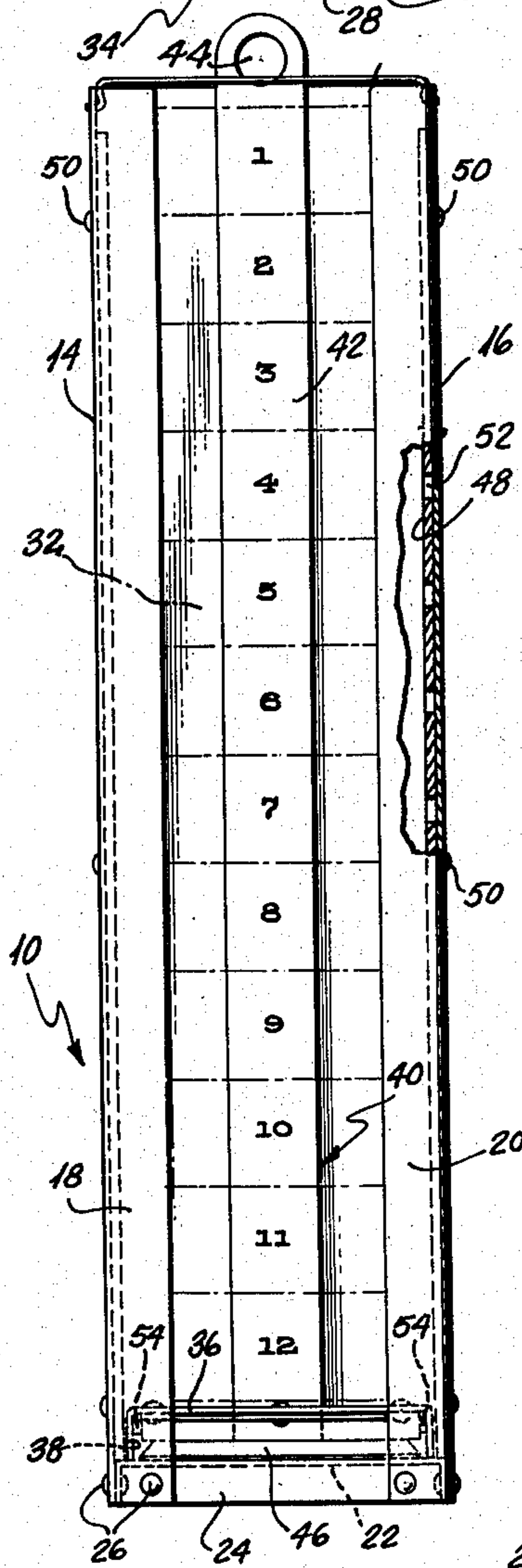
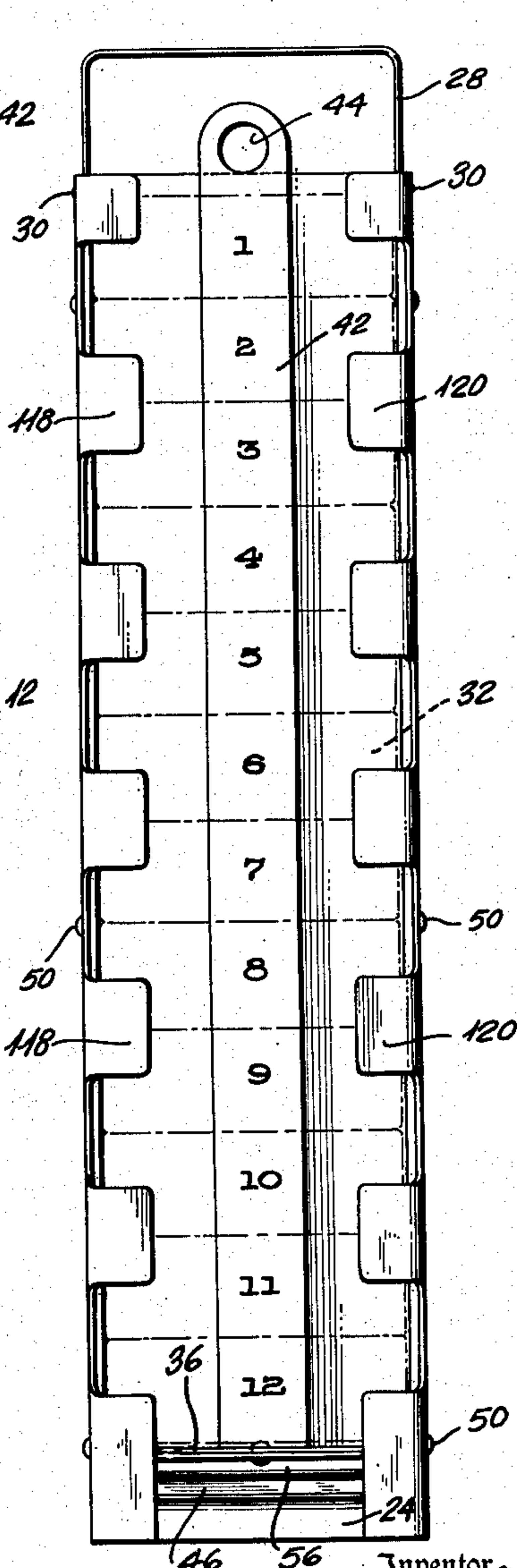


FIG. 1

FIG. 3

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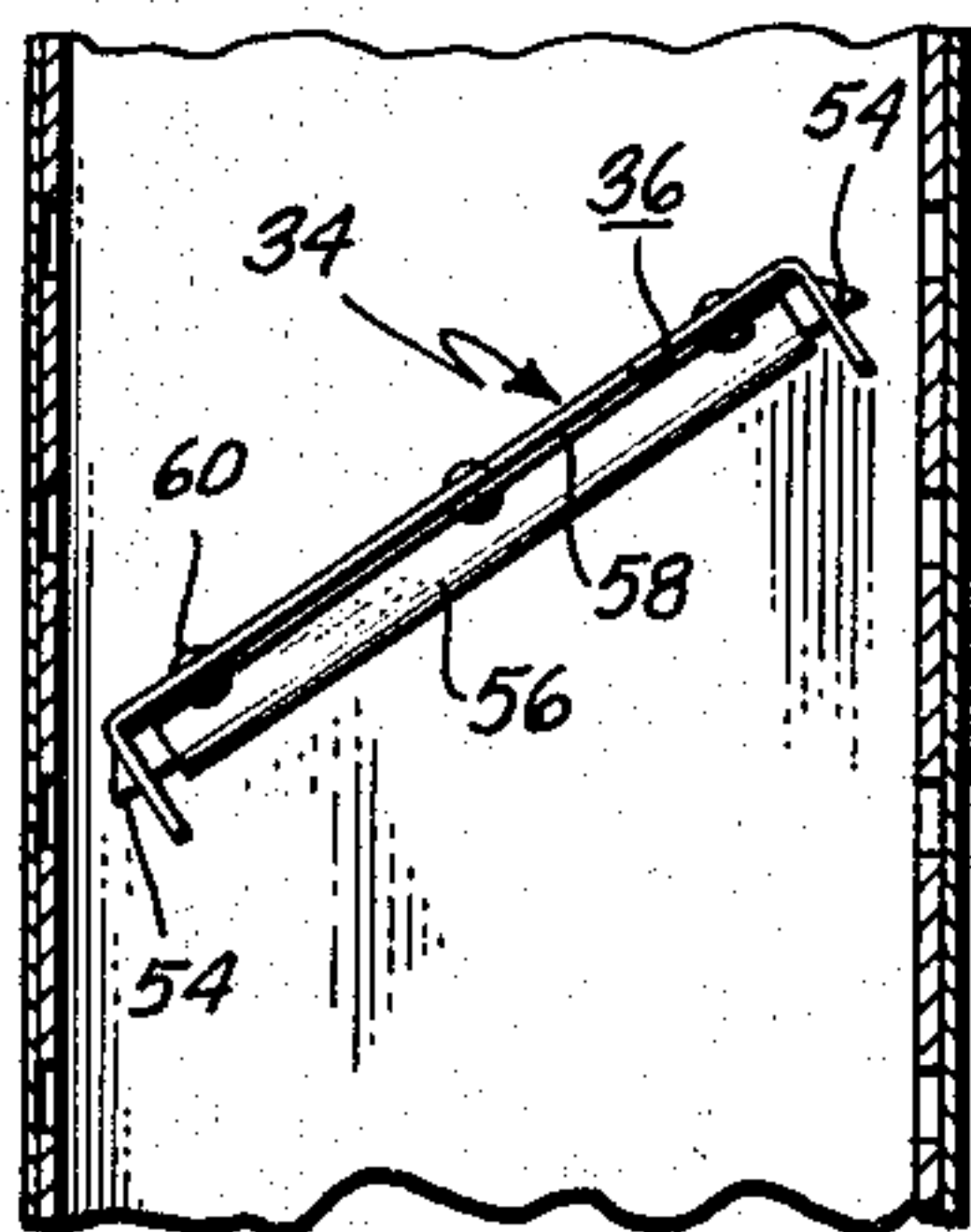
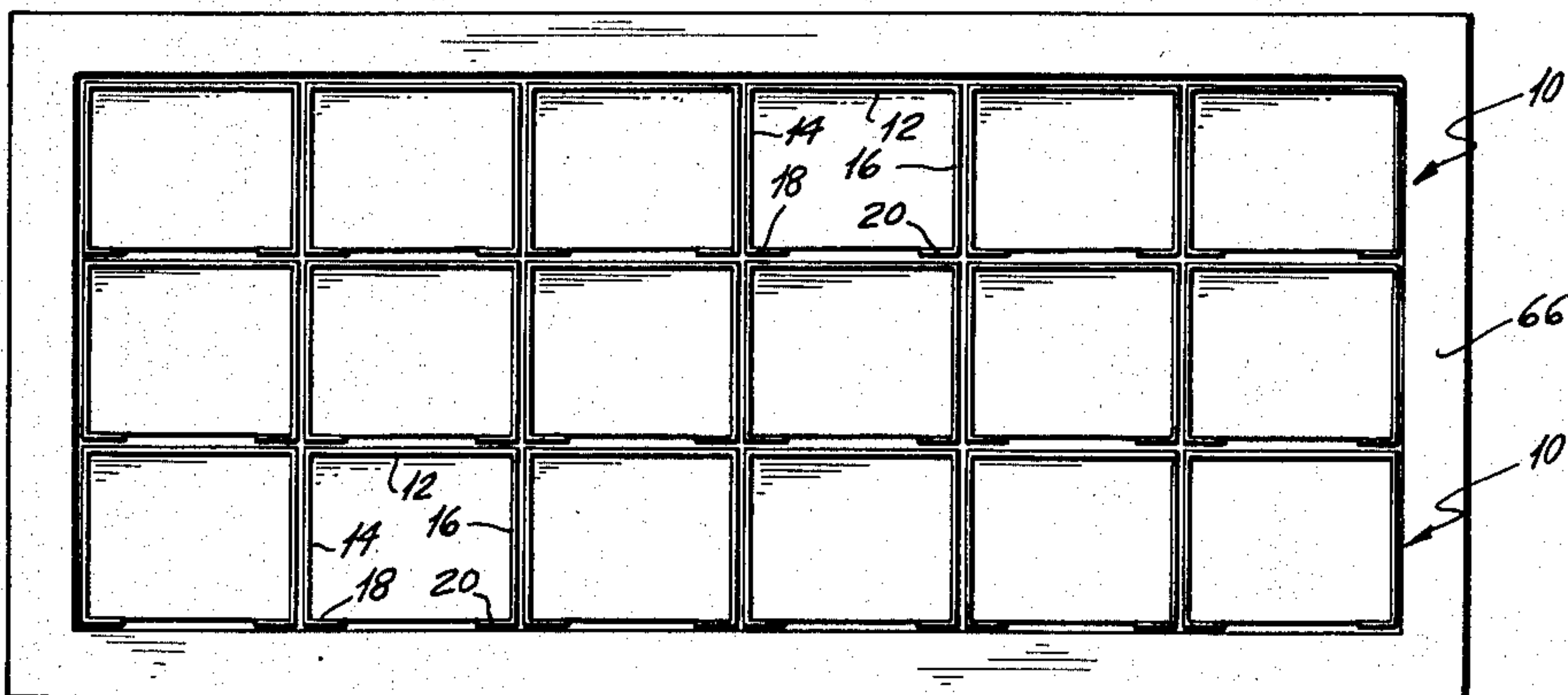
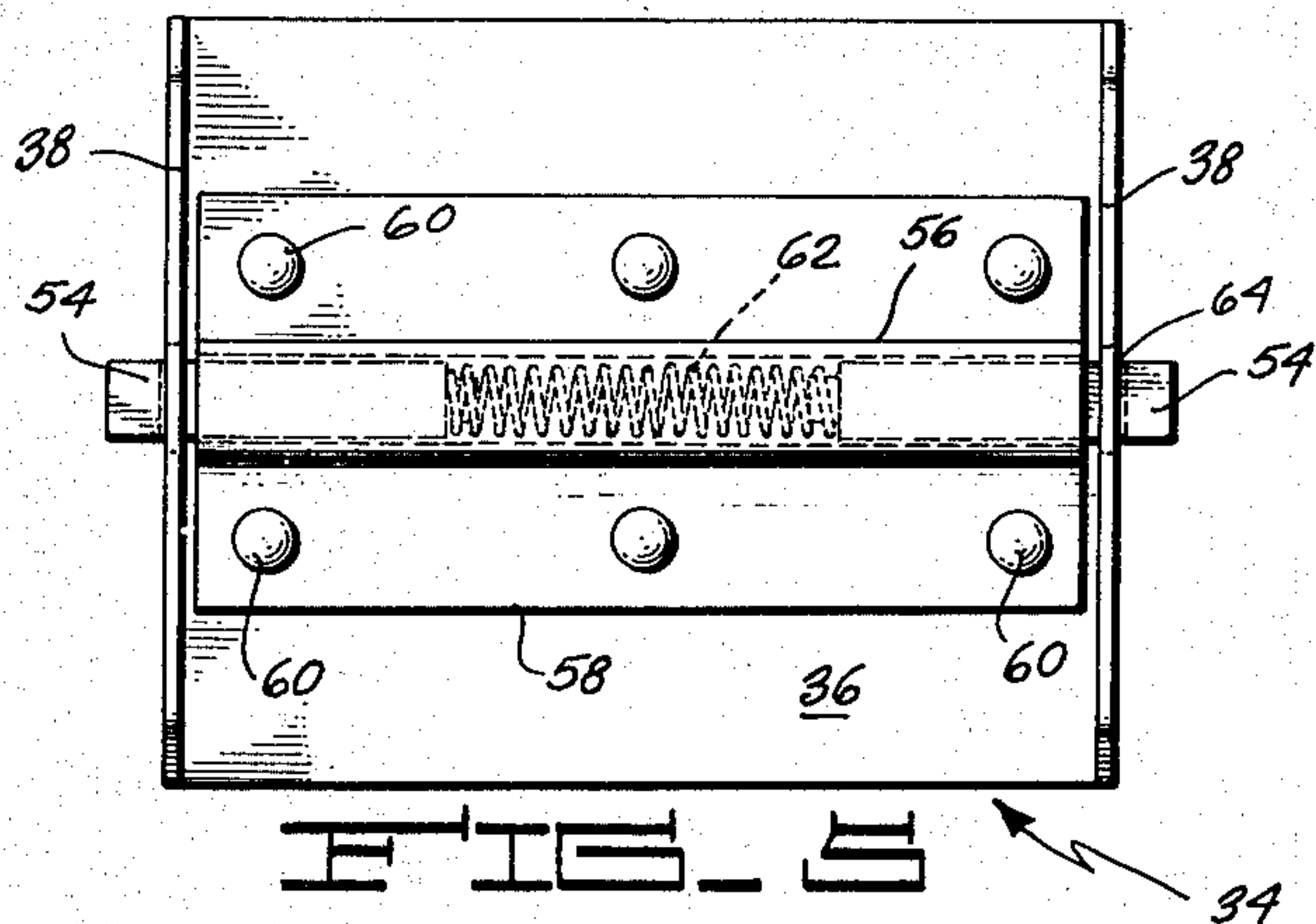
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2 SHEETS—SHEET 2



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FOOD PACKAGE HOLDER AND DISPENSER

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1 Claim. (Cl. 312-71)

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This invention relates to means for dispensing packaged food, and more particularly to a packaged food container especially adapted for use with deep freeze food cabinets.

As is well known to retailers and consumers and others having occasion to use the conventional deep freeze food cabinets, both the placing within the cabinet and the removal therefrom of packages of food are attended with certain inconveniences. For example, in the absence of the provision of separate package containers, which may be loaded outside of the cabinet and then placed therein, the package loading or stacking must be carried out by hand, necessitating repetitious exertions on the part of the loader. On the other hand, the purchaser or consumer in obtaining a desired package from one of the package stacks must bend over and reach into the cabinet, particularly if the stack is fairly well depleted. Other obvious disadvantages will either be known or will occur to those having some familiarity with food cabinet usage.

It is the purpose and intentment of the present invention to mitigate the problems and inconveniences of the above-mentioned type encountered in the use of frozen food lockers or deep freeze cabinets by providing a package container adapted to hold a stack of packages and embodying means for moving the stack upwardly in the container to maintain the topmost package of the stack at the top or upper end of the container, at which position it is readily accessible.

In summary, the package-containing device of the invention comprises an elongate casing open at its upper end and so dimensioned as to accommodate therein a stack of uniformly sized food packages, a platform member within the casing upon which the package stack is supported, a lift member having a handle portion extending sufficiently above the upper end of the casing to be freely grasped and having a foot portion extending beneath the platform member in lifting relation thereto, and cooperative and complementary stop means embodied in the inner walls of the casing and the sides of the platform member adapting the latter upon being raised to a selective position through manually caused upward movement of the lift member to be retained in said position against downward movement. The lift member, when not in actual use to raise the platform member, rests against the bottom of the casing, thus insuring that the upper end of the handle portion thereof will not impede the closure of the cabinet door. The casing is preferably three-sided, having an open front side, with package retaining means for the fourth side being in the form of short flanges integral with the pair of oppositely disposed side walls. As will hereinafter appear, the short flanges constituting the fourth side of the casing may be discontinu-

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ous, or notched, to enable the removal from the casing of other than the top package of the stack, as when a miscellaneous group of packages is carried within the casing.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will appear from the following description taken in conjunction with the drawings forming part of this specification, and in which:

Figure 1 is a view in front elevation of a package holder device embodying the subject invention, with a portion of the side wall being shown in section;

Figure 2 is a top plan view of the device of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a view in right side elevation of the device of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is a view in front elevation of a modified form of the package holder device;

Figure 5 is an enlarged view in bottom plan of the platform member of the device;

Figure 6 is a detail view in elevation of the package holder, with the casing flanges broken away and showing the package support member in tilted position for lowering; and

Figure 7 is a somewhat schematic showing in top plan view of a plurality of banks or rows of the package holder devices in place within a deep freeze cabinet.

Referring to the drawings for more specific details of the invention, the casing or container proper, indicated generally at 10, comprises rear wall 12, side walls 14 and 16, front flanges 18 and 20, and a bottom wall 22 having integral therewith a dependent peripheral flange 24 secured to the front and side walls and to the flanges 18 and 20, as by rivets 26. The walls 12, 14 and 16 and the flanges 18 and 20 are preferably formed out of a unitary sheet of metal, such as aluminum. For the purpose of handling or carrying the casing there is provided a bail-type handle 28 shown as being pivotally mounted in opposed apertures 30 of the side walls 14 and 16.

In order to support the packages 32 in movable relation within the container or casing 10 there is provided a platform member or saddle indicated generally at 34 and comprising the transverse or horizontal planar portion 36 having integral therewith a pair of oppositely disposed foot flanges 38 which, when in engagement with the bottom wall 22 support the portion 36 in spaced relation above said wall 22.

For the purpose of raising the platform member 34 and the packages 32 carried thereby so as to make successively available at the upper open end of the container the topmost package of the stack, there is provided a lift member, indicated generally at 40, comprising a vertically disposed handle portion 42 provided with a finger orifice 44 and a horizontally disposed foot por-

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tion 46 extending beneath the platform member 36 and between the foot flanges 38 therefor. As the lift member is manually moved upwardly the platform member and packages carried thereby are correspondingly raised.

Means are provided in the package holder device for retaining the platform member 34 at the level to which it has been raised, i. e. to prevent a downward or return movement of said member, and we have shown such means as taking the form of a pair of oppositely disposed metal strips 48, secured, as by rivets 50, to the inside surfaces of the side walls 14 and 16, provided with correspondingly spaced apertures 52, and a pair of oppositely disposed latching spindles 54 mounted at the underside of the platform member 34, as within the offset channel portion 56 of bracket 58 secured, by rivets 60, to the platform member, and yieldingly urged outwardly, under the action of compression spring 62, through apertures 64 in foot flanges 38 into engagement with locking apertures 52. The ends of the latching spindles are appropriately bevelled at their upper sides to allow the camming of the same inwardly by the upper edges of a set of apertures 52 against the action of spring 62 when the platform member is raised from one position to another.

The containers 10 are preferably of slightly less height than the internal height of the compartment of the deep freeze cabinet 66, shown in Figure 6, to allow for the protrusion above the container of the tip of the handle portion of the lifting member and, possibly, for the height of the bail-type handle 28, if the latter is rigidly fixed in a vertical position rather than being pivotally mounted, as shown. Since the lift member when not in actual use assumes the position shown in Figure 1, it will be seen that regardless of the position of the platform member the lift member will not impede or block the closure of the cabinet door, which, conventionally, is located in the top of the cabinet and is pivotable about a horizontal axis.

It will be noted that Figure 1 shows the handle portion of the lift member as being provided with numbers 1-12, corresponding in number and spacing to the number and spacing of food packages occupying the casing of Figure 1. These numbers are a definite aid to the person, such as a driver-salesman, whose job it is to service the package holders within the frozen food cabinet. He may use the numbered lift member as a package level gauge, and, by lifting said member until it engages the platform member, may read the lowermost number disclosed as a true indication of the number of packages which must be placed within the holder to refill it.

When the stack of packages within a container has been exhausted, the container may be manually lifted out of the cabinet by means of the handle 28 preparatory to reloading. The platform member 34 may then be lowered to the bottom of the container by lifting and tilting it to free the latching spindles 54 from engagement with the apertures 52 followed by a manual lowering of the platform member while in its tilted position to the bottom of the container. Figure 7 illustrates the platform member in tilted position ready for lowering to the bottom of the container.

The modification of the device of Figure 4 differs from that of Figures 1-3 only in the form of the package retaining flanges corresponding to

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flanges 18 and 20 of the above-described embodiment of the invention. The flanges of the container of Figure 4 are comprised, respectively, of a plurality of spaced apart ears 118 and 120, with the spacing therebetween being slightly in excess of the thickness or depth of a food package 32. The flange ears 118 and 120 are so disposed that each pair of opposed ears is in overlying relation to a pair of adjacent packages, thus preventing accidental removal of the packages, or protrusion of the same, through the open front of the container. The flange arrangement of Figure 4 is particularly adapted for use with a miscellaneous stack of packages, i. e., one in which the packages, while identical as to size, contain different food contents. In such event the purchaser who desires a particular package within the stack may obtain the same without the necessity of removing from the container the packages above the desired one. By simply raising the stack, by means of the handle portion 42 of the lift member, the relatively slight distance necessary to align the desired package with the space between adjacent pairs of flange ears, the package may then be removed through said space.

While an embodiment of the invention, as well as a modified form of said embodiment have been shown and described, it is to be understood that the scope of the invention is to be limited only by the scope of the appended claim.

What we claim as new and desire to obtain by Letters Patent is:

Food package holding and dispensing apparatus comprising a casing open at the upper end and at the front side thereof and adapted to accommodate therein a stack of packages, a member normally supported by the bottom of said casing and having a platform surface in spaced relation to said casing bottom adapted to support said package stack, a lifting member for said package supporting member comprising a handle portion extending above the upper end of said casing, one way stop means comprising complementary means carried by said casing and said package supporting member adapted upon the raising of said member a predetermined distance by said lifting member to retain said member against downward movement from the position to which it is raised, and a plurality of spaced pairs of package retaining flange members at the front side of said casing adapted when said package supporting member is in a position of engagement with said casing to prevent the removal of packages through the front side of said casing, with adjacent flange pairs being spaced apart a sufficient distance to enable the removal therebetween of a package when said package supporting member has been raised a predetermined portion of the distance to its next position of engagement with the casing.

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