

# A SIMPLE MULTI-SORTER FOR SEPARATING EDGE-PUNCHED CARDS\*

By M. HALMANN<sup>1</sup>

Chemistry Department, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Upton, Long Island, New York

In the usual technique of manual sorting of punched cards, a needle is used to separate about 200 cards at a time.<sup>2</sup> With some skill, two needles may be used simultaneously for a double sort. Punched card files for literature references grow rapidly, and, as the number of cards increases beyond say 2000, the time required to recover cards with the desired information becomes excessive. By using several needles to search for several properties of the desired information simultaneously, this time will be shortened. Commercially available multi-sorters are excellent for large installations, but seem to be excessive in cost for an individual reference file.

The multi-sorter shown in the figure can be built easily in any machine shop. Threaded holes, fitting the positions of the holes of the

punched card, are bored in a brass bar (8 X 0.7 X 0.1 cu. inch was used). A brass rod handle is welded to the bar. Needles of tool steel (0.1 inch diameter and 6 inches long) were fitted with three threads at one end and were pointed bluntly at the other end. The letters or numbers from the edge of the punched cards were taped or grooved on the bar, along the holes. The needles easily can be screwed into the desired holes. In the author's experience, the use of three sorting rods limits the number of retained cards sufficiently. About 200 cards, or a handful, can be sorted at a time. The handle is shaken manually. For extended routine work, it may be clamped to a vibrating motor (a Vibromischer, A. G. für Chemie-Apparatebau, Zurich, operated at lowest amplitude to avoid tearing the cards, was found satisfactory).

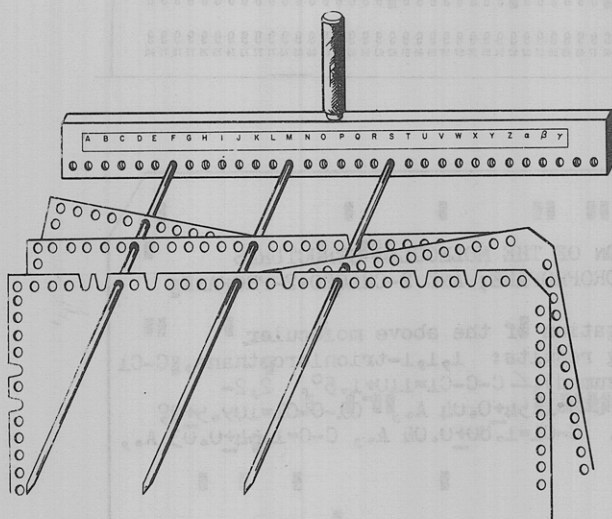
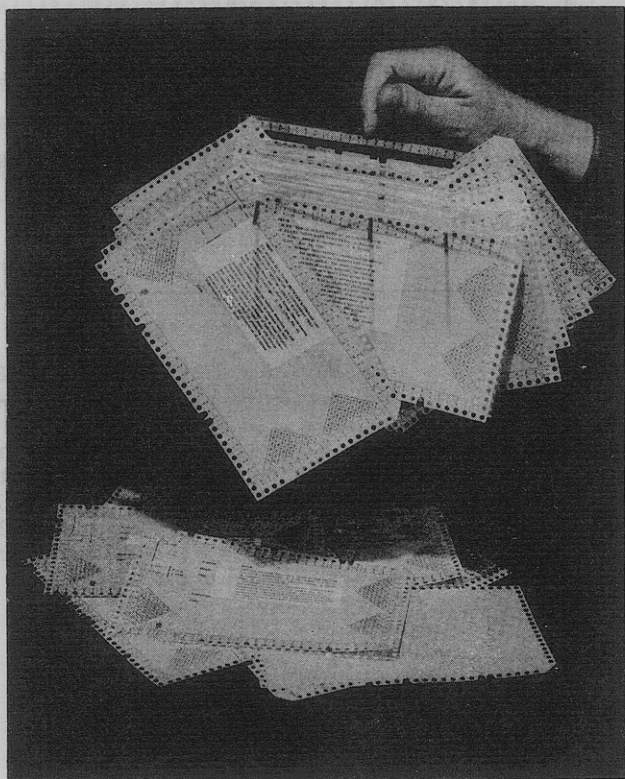


FIGURE 1



\*Work Carried out under the auspices of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>On leave from the Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovoth, Israel. The author's appointment is supported by the International Cooperation Administration under the Visiting Research Scientists Program administered by the National Academy of Sciences of the U. S. A.
- <sup>2</sup>R. S. Casey, J. W. Perry, M. M. Berry and A. Kent, "Punched Cards, Their Applications to Science and Industry," Reinhold Publishing Corp., New York, N. Y., 1958.