May 2, 1939. J. H. LOWE 2,156,859

JAIL OR THE LIKE

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Fig. 1.

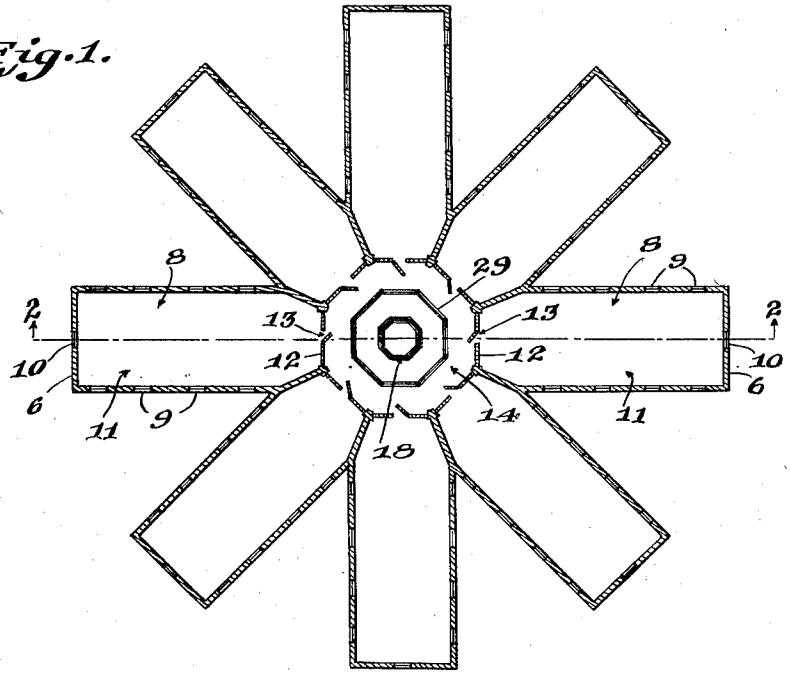

Fig. 2.

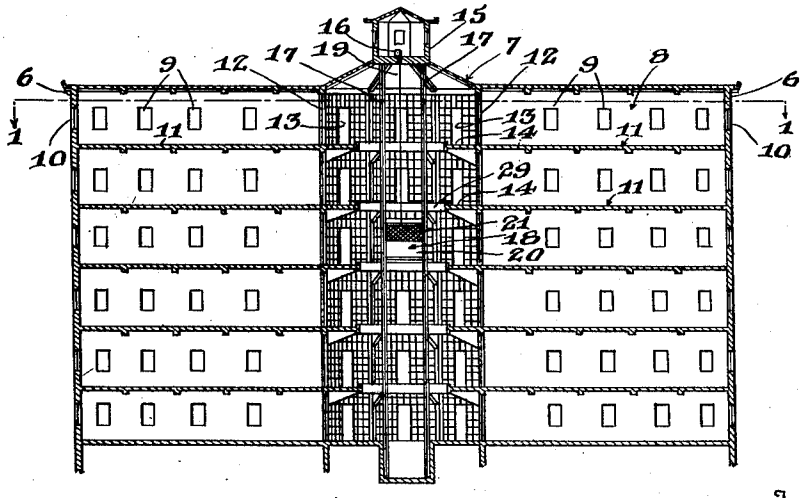

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Fig. 3.

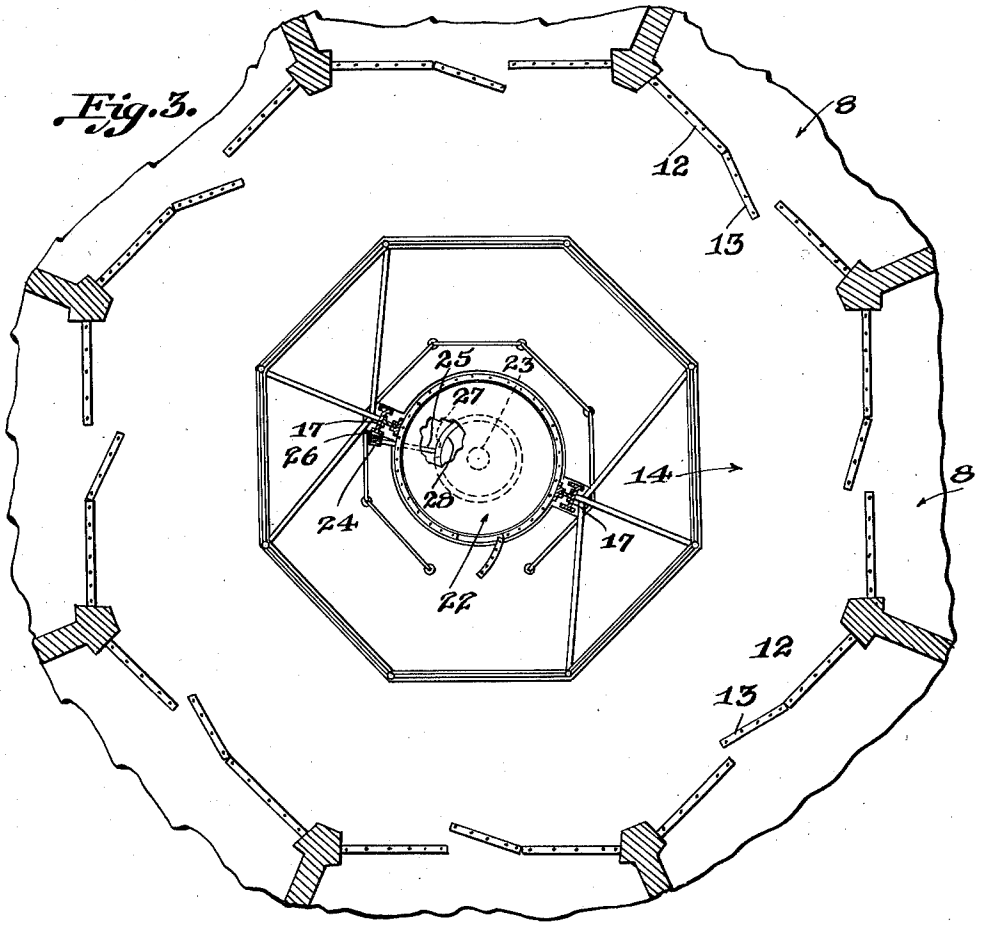


Fig. 4.

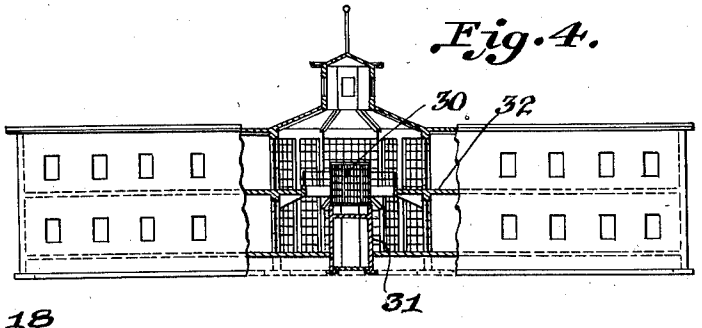
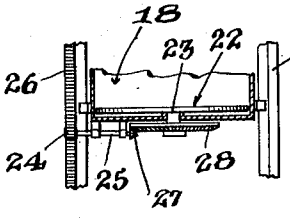


Fig. 5.



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Patented May 2, 1939

2,156,859

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,156,859

JAIL OR THE LIKE

John H. Lowe, Albany, Ga.

Application December 31, 1935, Serial No. 56,990

3 Claims. (Cl. 189—5)

This invention relates to improvements in jails or the like and the primary purpose of the invention is to provide a building for confinement purposes in which all inmates will not only receive an abundance of light and air, but in which a minimum number of attendants may be used for guard purposes. In accordance with my arrangement the various rooms or compartments going to make up the prison are arranged around a central shaft or apartment so that a single guard at the central portion of the building can observe all prisoners constantly at few minute intervals.

In accordance with my invention the jail may be one or more stories high, but even if it is more than one story, the guard compartment will be so designed as to permit a single guard to observe all of the rooms in which the prisoners are confined.

With the foregoing object outlined and with other objects in view which will appear as the description proceeds, the invention consists in the novel features hereinafter described in detail, illustrated in the accompanying drawings and more particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a horizontal sectional view of a preferred embodiment of the invention taken on line 1—1 of Fig. 2.

Fig. 2 is a vertical sectional view on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a floor plan of one floor of the central portion of the structure.

Fig. 4 is a vertical sectional view of the central portion of a modification of the invention.

Fig. 5 is a detail view illustrating means for rotating the floor of the guard cage or elevator.

In the embodiment of the invention illustrated in Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 5, my improved jail building 6 is of substantially star shape and consists of a central shaft portion 7 from which radiates a number of wings forming room sections 8. The rooms extend entirely beyond the central shaft section and they can be of such width and length as found desirable. As the main portions of the room sections are spaced from one another, each room may be provided with a number of side windows 9 and end windows 10. Of course, the room sections may be divided by floors 11 into any number of stories, and for the sake of illustration I have shown a jail six stories high.

The entire inner wall 12 of each room is preferably formed of iron bars or grill work to confine the inmates of the room and allow a guard in the central shaft section to have a complete view of all points of any room. Each wall 12 is provided with a grill door 13 so that occupants may pass from galleries 14 in the central shaft section into the rooms.

From the foregoing it will be noted that the central shaft section forms an annular jail in itself, and at the top of this section there may be a guard station 15 housing elevating mechanism 16.

For convenience I have shown a building with eight rooms on each floor radiating from a central octagonal shaft section 7.

To eliminate unnecessary drawing, I have not shown a complete design of the building, illustrating the layout of the different rooms, but the main entrance will be on the first floor in one wing and this may have the only outside door to the entire building. The stairway and elevator for prisoners, and the visiting rooms will be in this wing. In the basement under the wings may be placed heating equipment, laundry rooms and the like.

In order to permit a single guard to observe all prisoners, the central section is provided with elevator rails 17 to guide an elevator cage 18 that is connected by the cable 19 to the elevator mechanism 16. The construction will be such that the elevator will slowly move continuously, first up, then down, and obviously such movement can be controlled by a guard in the cage 18 in accordance with usual elevator practice. The cage itself should be so constructed as to protect the guard from injury by firearms. For example the lower portion 20 of the wall of the cage may be formed of imperforate sheets of thick metal so that a guard sitting in the cage will only have his head exposed above the wall 20 and can lower his head if necessary to entirely conceal himself behind the wall. The upper portion 21 of the cage may be formed of grill work and the top and bottom may be solid plates.

The floor 22 of the cage is preferably swiveled on a vertical central shaft 23 so that the resulting turn table will make a complete revolution as the cage passes each floor. The turn table may be revolved by any suitable means. For example, a pinion 24 on a shaft 25 supported by the bottom portion of the cage can be operated by a vertical rack 26 on one of the elevator guide rails 17, and another pinion 27 on the shaft will drive an annular gear 28 on the bottom of the turn table. Obviously the teeth of the rack, pinions and gears will be so designed as to impart the desired movement to the turn table.

In practice, the speed of the cage both going

up and coming down will be very slow and there will be an automatic switch at the top and bottom floors, and I prefer that the turn table mechanism be provided with a clutch (not shown) so that the table will remain stationary when desired.

By such a construction and arrangement, the prisoners may be comfortably housed and at the same time a single guard can keep track of all of them. Furthermore, the guard will be protected, as each gallery 14 is spaced from the cage by a central shaft 29 which will prevent the inmates from reaching or molesting the guard.

In the event that the jail is only one story high, of course, the guard cage need not be movable. Moreover, if the prison is only two stories high the guard cage while still stationary may be so arranged as to enable a single guard to observe all rooms. For example, as shown in Fig. 4, the guard cage 30 may be supported in an elevated position by a hollow shaft 31 and the cage itself will be positioned at the second floor line 32. Therefore a guard occupying the cage can look downwardly and observe all prisoners on the first floor or he can look upwardly or horizontally and see all prisoners on the second floor. Of course, in this construction the cage will also be built for the guard's protection and may be provided with a turn table floor if desired.

While I have disclosed what I now consider to be some preferred embodiments of the invention, I am aware that changes may be made in the details disclosed without departing from the spirit of the invention as expressed in the claims.

What I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A jail or the like comprising a central shaft section from which radiate a multiplicity of rooms, grilled walls forming the boundary of the central shaft section and the inner ends of said rooms, a guard cage positioned in the central portion of the central shaft section and spaced from said walls to permit a guard occupying the cage to observe the entire interior of any of said rooms through said grilled walls, said cage being provided with a turntable floor, and means for rotating said floor.

2. A jail or the like comprising a central shaft section from which radiate a multiplicity of rooms, grilled walls forming the boundary of the central shaft section and the inner ends of said rooms, a guard cage positioned in the central shaft section and so arranged as to permit a guard occupying the cage to observe the entire interior of any of said rooms through said grilled walls, and means for elevating and lowering said cage.

3. A jail or the like comprising a central shaft section from which radiate a multiplicity of rooms, grilled walls forming the boundary of the central shaft section and the inner ends of said rooms, a guard cage positioned in the central shaft section and so arranged as to permit a guard occupying the cage to observe the entire interior of any of said rooms through said grilled walls, said cage having a turntable floor, means for raising and lowering said cage, and means for automatically rotating said floor as the cage ascends or descends.

JOHN H. LOWE.